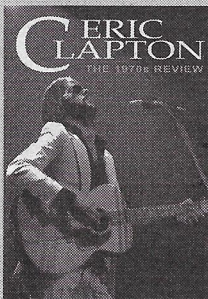


Quick Picks

By Pat Prince



ERIC CLAPTON THE 1970S REVIEW

Sexy Intellectual (DVD)

Summary: Passionate recollections by Clapton collaborators such as Bonnie Bramlett and Bobby Whitlock should captivate even those only interested in Clapton's psychedelic-macho Cream era.

OUR TAKE: BUY

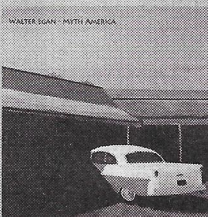


RED DRAGON CARTEL RED DRAGON CARTEL

Frontiers Records (CD)

Summary: It's refreshing to hear Jake E. Lee bringing his unique heavy metal guitar sound back to form with an exciting new band combining the top elements of '70s and '80s hard rock/metal.

OUR TAKE: BUY

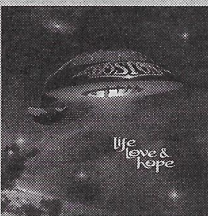


WALTER EGAN MYTH AMERICA

ClassicMusicVault (CD)

Summary: This release by songwriter Walter Egan has the raw and loose basics of a garage band with the easy, melodic swagger of early rock 'n' roll.

OUR TAKE: BUY



BOSTON LIFE, LOVE & HOPE

Frontiers Records (CD)

Summary: Tom Scholz' sound is still a pleasure to listen to. The compositions on this new album, however, sound like watered-down retreads of Boston's bygone days. Better off seeing the band live for nostalgia purposes. And, BTW, where's

Michael Sweet (see below) when you need him?

OUR TAKE: BORROW



STRYPER NO MORE HELL TO PAY

Frontiers Records (CD)

Summary: Christian metal's forefathers have been resurrected (sorry, couldn't resist) for Millennials. When the band resists the temptation of recording cover songs, studio albums like this one are top-notch melodic metal with excep-

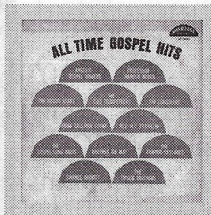
tional vocals by Michael Sweet.

OUR TAKE: BUY

Age blacksmith, a Christian monk, a turnpike innkeeper and Prince Albert.

Given the scope, it's appropriate that a four-disc, limited-edition deluxe set – complete with a 60-page hardback book, a bonus DVD of interviews and behind-the-scenes footage and a second CD filled with commentary and demos – is offered. Fortunately, the music is suitably compelling, mixing Anderson's trademark wit, whimsy and theatricality. Tull may be terminated, but Anderson is alive and deliberating.

– Lee Zimmerman



VARIOUS ARTISTS I HEARD THE ANGELS SINGING: ELECTRIFYING BLACK GOSPEL FROM THE NASHBORO LABEL 1951-1983

Tompkins Square (CD)



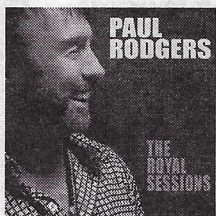
Like Chess in Chicago and Peacock in Houston, independent label Nashboro/Excello of Nashville,

Tenn., became a player of international proportions in the blues, R&B and gospel fields. This stunning four-CD set features the best of the gospel best, and it still left out hours of other electrifying performers. We hope a second volume is in the works.

The 80 chosen tracks are performed by artists including The Radio 4, The Consolers, The Swanee Quartet, The Supreme Angels, Madame Edna Gallmon Cooke, The Angelic Gospel Singers, Brother Joe May, The Gospel Keynotes, The Pilgrim Jubilees, The Fairfield 4, The 5 Singing Stars and The Gospel Harmonettes. Some of the label's lower-profile artists also appear.

The depth of emotion portrayed within track after track – no filler! – reaches out and grabs the listener with a visceral gut punch. It doesn't matter that these artists are singing about God. They could just as easily be singing about baser topics like sex. The passion is the same. That's why a godless agnostic like me can relate to all this wild testifyin' in the name of the Lord. Just like you don't have to be Jewish to like blintzes and sour cream, you don't have to have faith to be moved by this dramatic and oh-so-soulful sound. And it just gets better with repeated listenings.

– Mike Greenblatt



PAUL RODGERS THE ROYAL SESSIONS

429 Records (CD, LP)



Paul Rodgers had already assured his standing in the rock pantheon, courtesy of his stints with Free and Bad Company. Never mind his brief partnership with Jimmy Page in The Firm, or an ongoing solo career that's found Rodgers more or less foundering on the fringes. The man does possess one of the most distinctive voices in popular music and it's long about time he made an album that could help him regain the rarified stature he deserves.

Whether "The Royal Sessions" is the album to accomplish that feat remains to be seen. But if nothing else, it ought to establish him as an artist worthy of tackling whatever choices he takes on. No matter whether he's emulating Muddy Waters or immersed in an unlikely pairing with Queen, Rodgers never has emerged worse for wear. In essence, then, "The Royal Sessions" is a return to his roots, a visit to the familiar firmament that's been Rodgers' home base for the past four decades. Ostensibly a salute to the music of Memphis, Tenn., it finds Rodgers covering songs by Otis Redding, Albert King, Ann Peebles, Dionne Warwick and other artists who took soul to the pop mainstream. With the sole exception of the Burt Bacharach/Hal David standard "Walk On By," – rendered here with an edgy, unnerving backbeat – these versions differ little from the originals. Yet that also allows Rodgers to prove his mettle, and on classics like "Born Under A Bad Sign," "I've Got Dreams To Remember" and "I've Been Loving You Too Long (To Stop Now)" he effectively captures both the verve and vulnerability conveyed in the originals.

It's nice to know that even in challenging circumstances, Rodgers still rules.

– Lee Zimmerman