

DARRYL STERDAN

Sounding off about the latest music

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## My humble opinion

Analyzing recent issues so that you don't have to do it yourself

# Are these worth another look?

■ **Paul McCartney — Off the Ground:** A few months ago, Paul McCartney gave us *New*. Now here's the old: Macca's lightweight but overly serious 1993 solo album *Off the Ground*. Despite a couple of songs co-written with Elvis Costello and a "live in the studio" recording philosophy — the band rehearsed one song at a time and then recorded each cut in a single pass — it's still an underwhelming and turgid affair with few memorable tracks. Even worse: This remastered reissue doesn't even bother to include any of the dozen bonus tracks that were part of a previous foreign reissue. For Beatlemaniacs only.

■ **Dain Bramage — Laundry Room Demos '86:** Online find of the week: A collection of long-

lost demos — and a Grand Funk Railroad cover — recorded by Dave Grohl's high-school punk band in the mid-'80s. Smells like teen spirit.

■ **Beachwood Sparks — Desert Skies:** When is a reissue not a reissue? When it's the previously unreleased (and remarkably accomplished) 1997 debut from these cosmic California country-rock throwbacks. Dig out your Nudie suit.

■ **Doug Sahm — Inlaws & Outlaws: 1973 Radio Broadcast:** He's about a mover. The late Texas Tornado is in typically fine, freewheeling form here, serving up a platter of Tex-Mex, country, blues, soul and even '60s garage-rock. A groover's paradise.

■ **Thelonious Monk — Paris 1969:** Straight, no chaser? Yes and no. The eccentric jazz pianist is relatively restrained in this late-career concert video — but still presents a master class in keyboard brilliance. Bop till you drop.

The remastered reissue of Paul McCartney's *Off the Ground* is strictly for Beatlemaniacs only.



Play it  
Music on DVD and Blu-ray

Stevie Nicks



## '83 US Festival: Days 1-3

Various Artists

Well, not full days. More like two hours of poorly edited highlights of U2, Stevie Nicks, Judas Priest and others — but sadly, without VH, Pretenders, Bowie or Ozzy. Just do a box set already.

★★★★

## Gregg Allman

I'm No Angel Live

He may have been born a ramblin' man. But this 1988 performance by Allman and his band is short and to the point, with a handful of solo hits and ABB classics jammed into 50 minutes.

★★★ 1/2

## Archers of Loaf

What Did You Expect: Live at Cat's Cradle

Another great band with a bad name. Thankfully, they balance it with this engaging 90-minute doc about the beloved '90s indie-rockers and their reunion tour in 2011. Unexpectedly engaging.

★★★★ 1/2

## In the pipeline

The albums and artists to listen for in the weeks ahead

Feb. 4



Toni Braxton

**Nicole Atkins**  
Slow Phaser

**Big Head Todd & The Monsters**  
Black Beehive

**Scott H. Biram**  
Nothin' But Blood

**Bombay Bicycle Club**  
So Long, See You Tomorrow

**Mike Bloomfield**  
From His Head to His Heart to His Hands

**Broken Bells**  
After the Disco

**Aretha Franklin**  
The Queen of Soul

**The Haden Triplets**  
The Haden Triplets

**Otis Redding**  
The King of Soul

**Paul Rodgers**  
The Royal Sessions

**Xiu Xiu**  
Angel Guts: Red Classroom

**Toni Braxton & Babyface**  
Love, Marriage & Divorce

★★★★ 1/2

## Scorpions

MTV Unplugged in Athens

Hallo everybodee!! We are Scorpions band!! And we are still here!! Even though we said we were retiring!! That was a total lie!! Yes!! Thank you so much!! But we are very old now!! So instead of the running and the jumping on our latest live album, we do the sitting down with acoustic guitars — Rudolf Schenker has even an acoustic Flying V — and get a string section to help us play two hours of screechy rock anthems for mullethead boys and smoochy power ballading for girlies!! You might say we will folk you like a hurricane!! Ba-da-boom!! Thank you!!

## More reissues

### Crosby, Stills & Nash

★★★★ 1/2

CSN

Hey, what's that sound? It's a smaller but unabridged reissue of the 1991 four-disc box containing nearly five hours of folk classics (including two dozen rarities) from CSN (and sometimes Y).

### Frank Sinatra

Frank Sinatra

Old Blue Eyes is back. More precisely, this 2009 box set featuring six Big Apple performances from 1955 to 1980 is back in print — in a smaller package and without the accompanying DVD.

★★★★

### Doucette

Mama Let Him Play & The Douce is Loose

Can't name a Doucette song besides *Mama Let Him Play* and *All I Wanna Do*? Remedy that with these reissues of his late-'70s Mushroom releases — and enjoy classic CanCon in the process.

★★★★ & ★★★★★

### Keith Jarrett

★★★★

No End

Bandmates? Jarrett don't need no stinkin' bandmates. The mercurial pianist does it all on this recently unearthed 1986 album, playing guitar, bass, drums and more on noodly jazz-funk improvs.

Frank Sinatra

