



QUASI
When the Going Gets Dark
TOUCH AND GO

A visit to Quasi's homepage (on what lead singer and instrumentalist Sam Coomes calls "the vastly overrated world of the Internet") reveals some troubling ideas if you're walking around relatively comfortable with the state of things. To summarize, Coomes is worried. He's certain we are on the brink of severe havoc as a species, some terrible repercussions for our oddly dim-witted existence of consuming, shitting, fighting, grandstanding, etc. Pretty heavy stuff.

So it makes sense that *When the Going Gets Dark* is grave, striking and pensively heavy, a definite marker of where Quasi is at internally and artistically. The record continues the war-wary themes of 2003's *Hot Shit*, and Coomes' adroitly atonal piano and "organ" (roxichord) remain a central force in the overall sound. However, Janet Weiss' wrist-breaking drumfills play a much less lolling role in its furious construction; there is a mapped distance between this and past Quasi records. It feels like the

duo is headed farther into the principled blues and jazz structures of their more recent efforts while also assuredly swimming in the fitful fuzziness of earlier work. At his most straightforward, Coomes squeals "peace and love ain't no game" over the thick prattling of what could be an old Victorian upright, a somber marker of his preoccupations. From there, the record stretches across a terrestrial, distorted path, becoming more pellucid on highlights like "I Don't Know You Anymore" and "Death Culture Blues," then wallowing in more anfractuous melodies on experiments like "Presto Change-o." Altogether, it reveals that Quasi are on a contemplative path when it comes to their creation. In no way sounding like a bar band, yet sounding like the loneliest and most urgent corner of a barroom, *When the Going Gets Dark* is clearly a sobering and vital record.

Shelby Hast



PATRICK RYAN
Knowledge
8 EARTH

Despite his Midwestern upbringing, Patrick Ryan crafts an upbeat, Afro-Caribbean sound. Far more than just guitar and vocals, Ryan also performs bass, keyboards and programming: a regular reggae Reznor. But don't pigeonhole *Knowledge*; it includes a range of styles, incorporating rock power chords, '80s pop synthesizer noises and DJ scratching. Ryan uses his voice to simulate the ocean and its breezes, spreading a message of harmony with one's self and the world. He also decries marijuana laws, sampling pot smoker staple flicks and singing about the evils of criminalized medicine. Ultimately, purists would scoff at a "reggae" label here; it has more of a pop-y college radio vibe. Ryan sounds good, but not great; smooth, but potentially hook-heavy and annoying.

Ky Junkins



THE SMALL FACES
Under Review
CHROME DREAMS - DVD - NOT RATED

The Small Faces never quite broke free from the shadows of the other three big-name rock 'n' roll groups of the 1960s, yet they still managed to land singles on the top of the charts during their brief three-year run. This informative, unauthorized DVD brings the Small Faces under review and examines their story, history and legacy from both a cultural and contextual perspective, which gives way to a larger social meaning of their impact as a pop band. Four experts on the Small Faces, Swinging London, Mods and American R&B weigh in on what exactly made them an extraordinary band and why they tend to be unfairly forgotten. Rare footage galore and impressive bonus features make this a must-have for Small Faces fanatics.

Matt Kiser



STUNT ROCK
This Is Stunt Rock Volume Three
COCK ROCK DISCO

If the acronym "WTF" could be recorded, the finished result would most likely come out as *This Is Stunt Rock Volume Three*. William Flegal, the mastermind/retard behind Stunt Rock can be held responsible if you find your brain hemorrhaging out of your ear upon listening. With samples thrown on top of each other like dead bodies in 'Nam, Stunt Rock is sure to confuse a few folks. While seemingly pretentious, Flegal, a man known for drinking from cups he urinated in, gives a redeeming amount of self-deprecation in one of the track's subtitles: "I've really lost it because this shit is starting to sound like a washed-up, half-assed Fatboy Slim ripoff with a twelve-year-old's sense of humor."

Nick Walker



SUN KIL MOON
Tiny Cities
CALDO VERDE

Combining two great things doesn't necessarily yield great results. In this case, Mark Kozelek's latest project, Sun Kil Moon, have asserted themselves as one of the great producers of sad bastard music. And even soccer moms have come to recognize the perverted pop genius of Modest Mouse. But when Sun Kil Moon takes it upon themselves to reinvent the songs of Modest Mouse, the result is considerably less sublime. The tunes aren't so much bad as utterly pointless. In order to make Brock's unique songwriting style jive with the Kozelek's signature sound, Sun Kil Moon is forced to change the songs so completely, one wonders why they didn't just write a fresh batch of songs for his longtime fans.

Daniel Bond