



Keak Da Sneak
That's My Word
SUMDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Since Cougnut (RIP), there hasn't been a voice grimmer coming from the Bay than Keak Da Sneak. His latest venture, *That's My Word*, runs 10 tracks deep, and truly defines the sound and feeling of the thriving Bay Area rap game. The lead single, "Super Hyphie," has been burning up the streets for a second with its simple but dirty drums and slang-infested hook. With the exception of a few slower tracks, *That's My Word* is that cinder-block-in-the-trunk-over-a-speed-bump-type music. Straight up, dude has the illest, most unorthodox flow in rap, which could be hard for some to catch, but those who appreciate originality should feel Keak. If it was only longer...

Corey Bloom



Ladytron
Witching Hour
RYKODISC

Ladytron's new album makes me want to be a robot. A hip, stylish, British robot from outer space. *Witching Hour* has all of the delicious elements for a good synth-pop album: interesting sounds that are almost danceable but sufficiently strange, good beats that don't overwhelm, and an ethereal lead singer whose vocals are at once catchy and out of reach. This quartet from Liverpool has finally reached their potential with their third album. My only complaint is that by halfway through the album you start feeling a sense of *déjà vu*, too many of the songs sound the same. But if you're having a dance party and looking for something mellow to play, *Witching Hour* is an apt choice.

Emilie Clark



Devo
Live 1980
MVD

Devo has always prided themselves as being the proponents of "de-evolution," not evolution, as the guiding force in life. In a world filled with plastic—from their plastic hats to hairpieces to jumpsuits—there was something warm and human about their music. Often rigid and mechanical, their lanky nerd rock was influential musically as well as stylistically and shaped the new wave movement.

As a captivating live band whose music has always run parallel with their image, Devo's performances never failed to disappoint. In this concert, recorded in 1980 at the Phoenix Theatre in Petaluma, CA, their jerky stage choreography and outlandish outfits were in perfect balance. Appropriately kinetic and jumpy, their silhouetted figures with their angular and robotic movements, during "Snowball" almost seem to be the ancestral link to Blue Man Group. While the uneven and problematic audio of the DVD leaves a bit to be desired, the visuals make up for the shortcoming. Fortunately, side two of the disc is a CD of the same concert whose sound has been equalized and mastered to be far more listenable without the changes in volume or quality.

Since the concert was recorded a year before the release of the pivotal *New Traditionalist*, such staple Devo songs as "Beautiful World" and "Jerkin' Back and Forth" had not been released, which is a shame. While their early material held tightly to the concept of devolution (the idea that man isn't evolving but regressing), it's the later material that expanded the man-as-robot theme and humanized much of their metal machine music. While sonically flawed, the DVD still manages to prove that they still have a 20-step advantage ahead of the curve.

Rey Roldan



Lagwagon
Resolve
FAT WRECK CHORDS

With each new Lagwagon CD, reviewers and pop-punk fans the world over bite their nails with anxiety, asking themselves the ultimate question: "Will they or won't they have the galloping horse, '90s new school drum beat?!" Well friends, you can sleep a bit easier tonight; *Resolve* does indeed include said drum beat, as well as just about anything else you could ever want from an old-fashioned BroCal metallipunk CD: scooped-out crunching guitars: check. Nasal, melodic-but-edgy vocals: check. Sheer unadulterated awesomeness: check. Lagwagon practically invented the genre, and while many of their peers have long since fell off the meat wagon, Lagwagon continue to soldier onward, putting out decent effort after decent effort. Totally decent!

Daniel Taylor



Lambchop/Hands Off Cuba
Colab EP
MERGE

Rarely do two stylistically different artists collaborate on a recording of such bizarre beauty. While the chamber-country sounds of Nashville, TN's Lambchop seem like they'd be incompatible with the sampling of electronic duo Hands Off Cuba, *Colab* knocks this suspicion down. Built around delayed guitar plucks, soft piano and Kurt Wagner's soothing vocals, "Prepared" is the EP's most straightforward song. The other three ("Blur," "Women" and "Gus") are lengthy arrangements of Lambchop tunes done by Hands Off Cuba's Scott Martin and Ryan Norris. The duo manage to capture the group's bittersweet sound while incorporating eclectic loops and samples, making each song stunningly original. *Colab* is easy listening for the melancholic adorned in raver pants, sucking on pacifiers.

Nick Walker