

The Big Takeover > top-ten

Jack Rabid's Top Ten — December 18

by **Jack Rabid**

18 December 2005

1. **Dead Kennedys** – *Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables* [CD and DVD] (Manifesto)
Hands down their best LP, and a true punk touchstone. It's also **JELLO BIAFRA**'s greatest lyric sheet, filled with astonishingly funny yet piercing black humor, and this 25th Anniversary reissue's remastering improves the overall sonic impact of **EAST BAY RAY**'s great guitar. The new DVD is a long, fantastic documentary on the 1978-1980 early days—even though without Biafra's input/involvement/blessing it feels incomplete.
2. **Go-Betweens** – *Oceans Apart* (Yep Roc)
Easily the best of their three LPs since their return, this largely recaptures later-1980s allure. **ROBERT FORSTER** and **GRANT McLENNAN** wisely rehire producer **MARK WALLIS**, who did so very much for their 1988 first-go-round swansong, *16 Lovers Lane*, and this oozes substance and art while others in the sorry field elicit brief, meaningless distraction.
3. **Once For Kicks** – *In the Dollhouse* (Book)
Sure, we all love blasting, boisterous, big-sounding, roaring, rock, 'n', roll with slamming chord changes, bright melodies, chunky guitars, and booming drums. So why do so few bands make it these days? These Seattle vets, now beefed up with **FASTBACKS** and **YOUNG FRESH FELLOWS** ace **KURT BLOCH** do.
4. **Sexsmith and Kerr** – *Destination Unknown* (Gas Station Canada)
A rather sweet **Everly Brothers** / **Louvin Brothers**-style album by Canadian troubadour **RON SEXSMITH** and his longtime (going back 18 years) drummer/harmony singer **DON KERR**.
5. **Metric** – *Live it Out* (Last Gang)
Sophomore slump? Ha! Metric's follow-up to 2003's entertaining *Old World Underground* is even better, playing down the mildly retro new wave tendencies and playing up what these Canadians do best: rock.
6. **Ipanema** – *Me Me Me* (Boss Tuneage U.K.)
Has it really been a decade since Farnborough (nowhere), England's **MEGA CITY FOUR** split up, depriving us of one of the best and most honest singer/songwriters from those isles? There have been precious few fixes for fans of **WIZ** since. Imagine old, punky Megas classics like "Miles Apart" and "Me Not You" with a decidedly grungy flavor. This is scorching, but supremely tuneful, angst-ridden stuff.
7. **Nada Surf** – *The Weight is the Gift* (Barsuk)
Looking for first-rate, modern power pop? Look no further. How could this New York City trio take such an old dog and teach it such new tricks?
8. **For Against** – *December* [reissue] (Independent Project/Words on Music)
Having previously reissued this incredible Lincoln, NE, group's 1987 debut, *Echelons*, Words on Music now digs out its equally hard to find, even better 1988 follow-up—our #1 pick in *Big Takeover* issue 25. A record that starts strong and sweeps you along with the strength of its

sheer cumulative force, the well-named *December* is stuffed with overpowering moments, while **JEFFREY RUNNINGS**'s hurt fulminations border on **Ian Curtis** scariness.

9.

Franz Ferdinand – *You Could Have it So Much Better* (Domino/Epic)

Expecting Franz Ferdinand to fall on their face after 2004's debut sold a few bazillion ignored the aplomb and zeal with which they handled that sudden fame. This crackles with verve and get-up-and-go.

10.

New York Dolls – *All Dolled Up* DVD (Music Video Distributors)

I'd never heard that **BOB GRUEN**, the greatest rock photographer of the '70s, and his wife **NADVA** had made 40 hours (!!!) of thoroughly documenting video footage of the Dolls over the two years of their prime, just for the fun of it. It's like this DVD dropped out of the sky, 30 years later!!!

Comments

Jack,

Talk about dropping out of the sky... There's a three-disc Dolls bootleg box set due out by years end, "From Here To Eternity," from the same label that did such a good job with the MC5 bootleg box earlier this year. Plus, David Jo and Syl are set to enter the studio next month to record the first new album under the Dolls brand since, oh, 1974. When it rains, it pours.

— Clark Paull 2005-12-19 10:11 #

With partial respect to your number four pick, I'm actually looking for a recording featuring Ron Sexsmith and Jim Kerr, not Sexsmith and Don Kerr. Look; we all know how great Ron will sound with his longtime drummer/harmony singer Don Kerr, but simply imagine what he would sound like with the vegetarian/frontman from Simple Minds Jim Kerr.

And here's some Simple Minds trivia: Apparently, the group had recorded albums and played live long before the release of their song "Don't You Forget about Me."

— odonoghue 2005-12-19 16:56 #

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