



Gran, the graf generator:
Beverley Martyn

1983 reprise, captures them in their element at London's Roundhouse in 1976. Esoteric have done their usual, forensic best with the material, extending it to three discs and remastering the lot. It's this release, over the budget run-through, that will delight fans. *Jan Zarebski*

Manchester Orchestra

Cope

★★★★

Loma Vista/Favorite Gentlemen, cat no tbc (CD / LP)

Rockers head home for fourth LP

Clocking in at just shy of 40 minutes, Manchester Orchestra's fourth long-player appears to have been recorded with the aim of going back to basics. Cut at their home studio and self-produced, there's a notable attempt to serve up something more stark and raw than 2011 fan favourite *Simple Math*. The result is an album that flips between blistering, all-out jams and plodding, overwrought workouts that edge dangerously close into teenage emo territory.

Opener Top Notch is unquestionably the album's standout track. It thunders along relentlessly, all power chords and throbbing bass, forcing you to sit up and pay attention. Likewise, Choose You proves that the band are at their best when working at full throttle. They clearly have the ability to channel "Foo Fighters before they sucked" vibes and deliver something fresh and interesting. Unfortunately, tracks such as the leaden See It Again only serve to break up the tempo.

Indentations is the pleasing exception. A slowed down, emotionally visceral tune, it demonstrates that Manchester Orchestra have a real breadth

in their songwriting. Elsewhere, the title track's QOTSA tinge should work well, but the chugging guitars only mean proceedings close with a whimper rather than a bang. *Joe Minihane*

Beverley Martyn

The Phoenix And The Turtle

★★★★

Les Cousins LC 018

Beverley's beautiful, understated return

Known predominately for her work with – and marriage to – John Martyn, many forget how brightly Beverley Kutner's talents shone in the late 60s. She played with Simon & Garfunkel and released some great singles of her own before hooking up with Martyn and cutting their two albums together. Though contributing to his subsequent records, Beverley curtailed her career as a solo artist.

The Phoenix And Turtle is, unbelievably, only her second full-length release. The voice is not as rich and sonorous as you recall, but in its place is a character that beguiles, taking in nine songs written throughout her career. Women And Malt Whiskey is a touching reflection on her former husband and players on the London folk scene; Potter's Blues a sweet paeon to the *Blue Remembered Hills* of Dennis Potter's writing. Meanwhile, Nighttime is an insistent standout, evoking the soulfulness of Joan Armatrading's early work. Of greatest interest, however, is the moving Reckless Jane, a song Martyn began writing with Nick Drake in 1974, and which she has only recently been able to finish.

Produced by Mark Pavey, with ex-Los Lobos drummer Victor Bisetti and ex-Counting Crows bassist Matt Malley

supporting, *The Phoenix And The Turtle* is a warm, engaging, record. A fitting capture of an illustrious career. *Daryl Easlea*

Frankie Miller

Original Album Series

★★★★

Chrysalis 25646 36188 (5CD)

Bluesy Celtic rock from the 70s – boxed!

Though beset by health problems since the mid-90s, Scotland's Frankie Miller is nothing short of a national treasure. These five albums – *High Life*, *The Rock*, *Full House*, *Double Trouble* and *Falling In Love* (titled *Perfect Fit* in the US) – chart the period between 1973 and 1979, with the last album containing his one major UK hit single, Darlin'.

Quality-wise, the set peaks early with the Allen Toussaint-produced *High Life* and *The Rock*, helmed by Elliot Mazer. *Full House* was a goodtime rockin' effort in 1977 that showed Miller's backing band of that name off to full advantage, but received little press attention in punk's annus horribilis. *Double Trouble*, with Aerosmith producer Jack Douglas, was thus aimed at the US market, but lacked subtlety. *Falling In Love*, despite containing the hit, is the least satisfying, and it remains an irony that Miller's biggest success was with a song he didn't write.

A previous package of the singer's Chrysalis output included two more albums (his first and last for the label), plus bonus tracks and sleeve notes; as with all these releases, this *Original Album Series* set offers no context. You pay your money... But if you like gravelly vocals, tough but tender rock songs (never better than when Miller collaborated with Free's Andy Fraser) and choruses that still lodge in your head four decades on, then no

referendum is necessary – vote Frankie Miller! *Michael Heatley*

Minibus Pimps

Cloud To Ground

★★★★

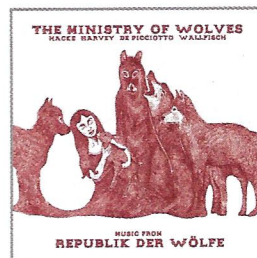
Susanna Sonata SONATACD 010

Pimps of circumstance

Let's imagine that you're an ex-member of Led Zeppelin, and have therefore earned the right to do nothing more than administer generalised beneficence from a throne made of Californium-252, while supplicants bathe your nuts in asses' milk. Or bathe your ass in nut milk. Fortunately for everyone in this distressing scenario, John Paul Jones is actually a man of principle, with a commendably unconstrained musical curiosity. His latest project, Minibus Pimps, unites him with Norwegian electronics adventurer Helge Sten – aka Deathprod – on an instrumental album with a loosely conceptual remit. Which is to say, the titles all reference "geophysical anomalies, remarkable luminous phenomena in nature".

The music herein is facilitated by Kyma software, whereby conventional instrumentation is fed into the system and spat back out in radically mutated form. In principle, no different from any signal-processing chain, then: but in practice, unquantifiable by any genre-defining yardstick. Black Aurora, solemn and monstrous, might be the closest anyone has come since Tangerine Dream's *Zeit* to conveying the fear, awe, nothingness and everythingness of deep space. The title track, meanwhile, pits ominous poltergeist bells against an apocalyptic cathedral organ rolling in on a thunderhead.

The album was recorded live at venues in the UK and Scandinavia, but fear not: there's no whooping, nor anyone yelling for Black Dog. *Oregano Rathbone*



The Ministry Of Wolves

Music From Republik Der Wölfe

★★★★

Mute, cat no tbc

A Grimm outlook

Attention, creatives: if you're in sore need of inspiration – by-example, here's an object lesson in what's achievable when your stars are aligned.

Enticingly, it's a collaboration between Einstürzende Neubauten veteran Alexander Hacke, inexhaustible ex-Bad Seed Mick Harvey, Danielle de Picciotto from Crime And The City Solution, and Paul Wallfisch, musical director of Theater Dortmund. The theatre in question recently premiered *Republik Der Wölfe*, a production based on the salutary fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, and to which this music provides an intoxicating, deeply affecting soundtrack.

If you miss having delectably creepy stories read to you at bedtime, and wish to revisit that realm without going the route of donning an adult nappy, here's your golden ticket. Hacke and Picciotto narrate with unwholesome relish: on Rumpelstiltskin, for example, the former heroically braces himself against an auditory vortex, its circular piano figure assailed by elemental creaks and groans. Picciotto, meanwhile, is witchy on The Gold Key and inscrutably, disturbingly perky on Cinderella, an otherwise plangent Klezmer lamentation. Above all, Rapunzel (As Isadora Duncan) is as enveloping as cedar smoke, with doll fingers of toy piano obtruding. Hacke's sin-inviting baritone makes you reflect that The Doors could have sounded like this had they fully indulged their Brechtian impulses – and had Morrison foresworn that early bath. *Oregano Rathbone*

Gary Moore

Live At The Montreux Blues Festival

★★★★

Salvo SVX015 (CD+DVD)

Late great Irishman's blues rediscovery live

Subtlety was never Gary Moore's middle name – but fans lapped up his over-the-top blues excursions with alacrity as he returned to his musical roots after a decade or two spent in hard-rock purdah. This 1990 performance was first released on DVD 10 years ago and has now been re-presented as a keenly priced Sound & Vision package – albeit without the standalone item's bonus tracks from a 1997 Montreux appearance.

A four-man brass section and three-man backing band led by (current Deep Purple) keyboardist Don Airey offer support, but the camera is constantly on the black-clad Irishman's "guitar face" and/or his flying fingers. He shamelessly plays to the gallery on Texas Strut, impersonating Billy Gibbons and Stevie Ray Vaughan, following that by wheeling on a flesh-and-blood bluesman, Albert 'Iceman'