

VARIOUS ARTISTS
A TRIBUTE TO DAN FOGELBERG
 BMG (CD)

★★★
 One of the great things about tribute albums is that they often reveal how wide an artist's fan base can actually be. For Dan Fogelberg, the recently released tribute to his music reveals that his appeal was wide, and that his songs connected with an amazingly broad range of performers. It's rare that you can find a celebrity fan base that goes from Zac Brown to Donna Summer to Train. But Fogelberg was a master at crafting songs that told personal stories. Whether it was with "Leader of the Band" where he delivered a beautiful homage to father Lawrence, or "Same Old Lang Syne" where he tells of a chance reunion with an old flame, Fogelberg found a way to create tunes that were timeless. Over the years, I have often been taken a bit aback when I have learned that one of his songs was the favorite of a close friend. For me it always seemed so random. For them, it was an inarguable position. Fogelberg earned that kind of loyalty from even his most casual of fans.

As fascinating as this can be, tribute albums can also be uneven and choppy. This is especially true with compilations that contain songs recorded by a wide variety of artists, across a number of genres, over a span of many years. That's the case here. Playing the record from start to finish is more of an exercise than a pure listening experience. Everything seems cobbled together, and random. Introducing Donna Summer on track two was a bit disarming. Train's version of "Same Old Lang Syne" re-

moves the personal touch that made the original so powerful. What people loved about that song was the story being told. Train's version puts all of that behind a pop radio perfect synopsis that seems entirely out of place with what the singer is feeling through the lyrics. A "country music tribute to Dan Fogelberg" or something more structured might have avoided a lot of this.

There are however some real gems to be found here. Boz Scaggs continues to impress with his ability to interpret modern days classics with his own kind of sophisticated cool. Here he offers a turn on "Hard To Say" that's a mature blue-eyed soul take on a Fogelberg hit. It's just far enough right of the original to stand firmly on its own.

Zac Brown closes the record out with an acoustic version of "Leader of the Band" that is strong and respectful to the original. It's a proper legacy to Dan Fogelberg who among the hits made music that will live on and make specific holidays sparkle a bit brighter for years to come. — Ray Chelstowski



THE REPLACEMENTS
FOR SALE: LIVE AT MAXWELL'S 1986
 RHINO (2-CD, 2-LP)

★★★★
 Recorded at Maxwell's in Hoboken, New Jersey on February 4, 1986, this double-disc live recording captures Minnesota rockers The Replacements at a very important juncture in their career. The set featured in this collection contains both their quite raucous early songs as well as some of the more nuanced material that Paul Westerg had been writing. While

QUICK PICKS

BY LEE ZIMMERMAN

WILCO A.M./BEING THERE Rhino (CD, LP)

Genre: Americana
 Wilco's first two albums – the follow-up to the work that Jeff Tweedy and company began with the band Uncle Tupelo, the band that effectively redefined Americana music – are decidedly worth a revisit, especially considering the fact that both works hold up extremely well today. *A.M.* is the more modest of the two reissues, even with eight bonus tracks added on. *Being There*, on the other hand, goes for the lavish box set treatment with a choice of five CDs or eight LPs that add unreleased songs, alternate takes and two discs of live material recorded at the Troubadour in Los Angeles and radio station KCRW in L.A.

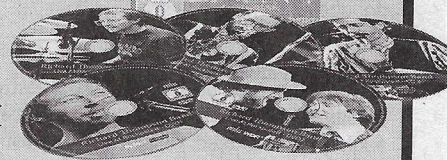
REM AUTO-MATIC FOR THE PEOPLE

Warner Bros. (CD, LP, Blue-Ray)
Genre: Indie Rock
 Marking the 25th anniversary of one of the most important albums in the REM canon, this generously expanded edition of *Automatic For The People* not only boasts the original album's set list – many of which became staples of the band's live repertoire – but a disc of previously unearthed demos, a live concert from 1992 and a Blu-ray disc featuring videos from the same era. A coffee table-sized hardcover book adds photos, the backstory and lyrics, making this a veritable treasure trove for devotees and archivists alike.

QUEEN NEWS OF THE WORLD Hollywood (CD, LP, DVD)

Genre: Brit Rock
 Considering the fact that Queen never felt restrained when it came to extolling excess and extravagance, this sumptuous box set, marking

the 40th anniversary of one of the band's milestone recordings, does due justice to their lavish overindulgence. Along with the original track list, it boasts an additional two discs of live, demo and alternate takes, the latter of which are dramatically different from the archival recordings. Posters, a press kit, a backstage pass and a 60-page picture book take things over the top, as befitting a band that immodestly proclaimed "We Are the Champions" and found no argument from anyone.



RICHARD THOMPSON LIVE AT ROCKPALAST
 Rockpalast (CD/DVD)

Genre: Folk Rock
 It's a tribute to Richard Thompson's enduring proficiency and prowess that this 3-CD/2-DVD combo, recorded for Germany's famed Rockpalast music series, covers such a wide expanse of his music and yet only hints at the broad spectrum of his recorded catalog overall. Nevertheless, even in this middle peak of his career, Thompson could claim a rich and varied catalog, from his early efforts with Fairport Convention through his tumultuous marriage to wife Linda and the signature songs that reflected his remarkable wit, whimsy and circumspect. An essential acquisition for Thompson fans, it represents one of the best career encapsulations that's ever been offered.