

Craft

"Void" CD
(Southern Lord)



Vicious and fiery black metal from Sweden that transcends the usual black metal sound by going even more brutal. For their 4th album, Craft dredge the depths of despair and fan the flames of hate with a powerful and crusty attack of simplistic but bowel-churning riffs and rhythms. Solid, solid work here.

Darshan Ambient

"Dream In Blue" CD
(Lotuspike)



An ambient electronic homage to Miles Davis and John Coltrane, "Dream In Blue" cruises along with spacious jazz-based grooves, hinting at the exotic Indian and African notes of these masters. Still, this falls more on the 'ambient' side, rather than 'jazz', per se. Darshan Ambient's Michael Allison evokes similar moods to his heroes, while retaining his own identity.

The Bobby Clark Band

"Carnival" CD
(self-released)



Quality roots blues/country rock in a mature vein, and from Evansville talent, no less! Clark is here joined by local names Tommy Stillwell, Jon Rochner, and Jimmy Cummings for their first album in 7 years. Fans of stuff like John Mellencamp or Tom Petty will be quite pleased, as Clark and company stir it up Midwestern-style. Superb!

— Todd Zachritz 4U

Justin Vanderberg

"Synthetic Memories" CD
(Spotted Peccary)

★★★★★



Composer Vanderberg's second album is a delightful and wistful collection of deep ambient electronic sounds that gently ebb and flow in a relaxing manner. It's an ambient album with depth and clarity, combining the best of modern electronics with a timeless, Eno-esque quality that works equally as well as background listening or immersive contemplation.

"When I Walk" is a droning, meditational piece with celestial inclinations, while the title track brings a gorgeous collage of serene strings alongside percolating sequencers, like classic Vidna Obmana meeting Vangelis somehow. This is a standout, being simultaneously majestic and mysterious. "The Path" ushers in a heavy rolling rhythm of an almost trip-hop or industrial nature, which works well alongside the crystalline strings. "Dusk" shows a hint of darkness around the edges, but remains true to the album's gentle overall vibe.

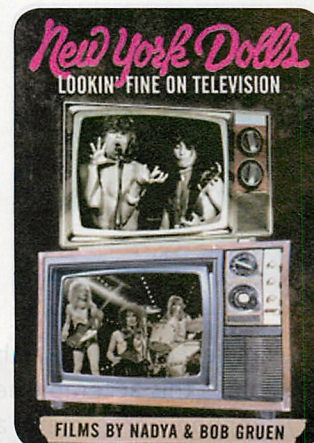
"Synthetic Memories" is a superb work from a composer I'll be curious to hear more from.

— Todd Zachritz

New York Dolls

"Lookin' Fine On Television" DVD
(MVD Visual)

★★★★★



Hailing from New York (of course) in the early 70's, the NY Dolls were progenitors of the yet-to-break punk movement. The band, centered around frontman David Johansen and guitarist Johnny Thunders, rocked with as much swagger and androgyny as the early Stones, only with less blues and more of a raw, garage vibe, inspiring bands from the Sex Pistols to Guns 'N Roses in their wake.

This DVD collects a number of rare and long-lost TV appearances from the bands' heyday, and it's obvious that these VHS tapes were on the verge of decay. Fortunately, the poor, grainy, and often black-and-white footage is collaged and seamlessly mixed with quality audio and interspersed interview and backstage bits. So this turns into a cohesive 70-minute set of prime Dolls. Well-done, especially with the limited footage and resources. Maybe this one isn't a must-see for most punk fans, but completists will find "Lookin' Fine" more than essential.

— Todd Zachritz