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Sound Check New traditional country, classic metal and more

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This week's Sound Check kicks off with consideration of Neal McCoy's first new recording in five years and a cynical cinematic look at the music biz featuring the late David Carradine. Then, we head into British metal territory with new recordings from Fastway and Ignitor. Finally, this edition wraps up with my review of a new disc by Chicago blues guitarist/vocalist Lurrie Bell and a teaser about upcoming columns.

'XII,' Neal McCoy (Blaster Records, HHH1/2)

As stated above, this is McCoy's first album in a long time, and he's on a new record label with all-star help. Award-winning country couple Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton co-produced the CD along with Brent Rowan. They probably won't be along when Neal appears in Biloxi on May 18, but his reputation as a powerhouse live performer precedes him.

The lyrics aren't quite as witty or the music as hard-hitting as Amy Dalley's recent album, but this is a good modern country album with more than a little traditional feeling. Highlights include the mariachi-flavored "Borderline Crazy," the optimistic opener "A-OK," the slide guitar-powered "Real Good Feel Good," the Western Swinging "Mouth" and the touching "Judge a Man by the Woman."



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Country fans should dig this one.

‘American Reel,’ Directed by Mark Archer (MVDvisual, HHH)

This March 20 DVD stars David Carradine (“Kung Fu,” “Kill Bill”) as an uncompromising musician, James Lee Springer, who reaches major success in spite of himself. Mariel Hemingway (“Manhattan”) and Michael Maloney co-star. The thing that seems to amaze and bother everyone is that Springer’s “overnight rise to fame” took 20 years.

Carradine wrote and sang some of the songs, Thom Bishop wrote others plus the soundtrack music. Many of these are bonus features along with commentary from Carradine and Maloney. This isn’t the best

music film ever, but it’s far from the worst. Fans of the main actors and fans of rags to riches movies will enjoy it.

‘Eat Dog Eat,’ Fastway (MVDaudio, HHH1/2)

This April 10 CD is the first new release from Fastway since 1990. The band name originates from way back when guitarist “Fast” Eddie Clarke (Motorhead) and bassist Pete Way (UFO) joined together during a hiatus from their respective groups. Many personnel shifts later, new bassist/vocalist Toby Jepson (Little Angels) and drummer Matt E. [complete](#) the line-up on this album. Jepson is also the producer/acoustic guitarist here.

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