

they were doing. It's all there – the chops, the production, the sound... Even the songwriting seems on par with the Nashville big shots in contemporary country music. While not exactly my thing when it comes to music I normally listen to, there is no denying there is a market out there for what Michael is doing here. What we find here is an album of safe, radio-friendly country tunes without the vocal twang that typified the genre in decades past. It's the new breed of country music star that can tiptoe into the pop charts as well, and it would appear that is what Michael is trying to prove he can do on *Some of That*. Again, not really my thing, but if everything released were "my thing," the world would just be too awesome for even poets to accurately describe and the whole system would collapse as everyone attempted to out-awesome one another.

- Brad Linzy • Rating 3

Original Darkness CD

Christina Carter

(Kranky)

www.kranky.net/artists/carterc.html



As a half of Charalambides, Carter has been a major player in the modern folk/psychedelic realm. She has released numerous solo recordings, many of which in insanely limited quantities (read: collector's bonanza), and this is her third (relatively major) release on Kranky. Created almost solely by Christina herself, *Original Darkness* is the result of a single-minded vision indeed. Her wispy, ghostly ethereal songs here seem to function as an exorcism of sorts - but in a subtle and understated way. There are

no rants or soul-rending here, as Carter's tense collection of moody, sometimes flighty, other times intensely and quietly introspective songs flitter and float above, casting a gray and shadowy cloud just overhead. She works her distinctive and vulnerable voice along minimal drones, gently-strummed/plucked guitars and atmospheric keyboards to create magical songs that are more like incantations rather than hummable melodies or 'pop' songs. Christina Carter's songs follow her own intuition, rather than established patterns or structures. *Original Darkness* is a deeply personal and internal dialogue that at times can be as unsettling as it can be liberating.

- Todd Zachritz • Rating 4

Pull the Trigger

Anthem for a Massacre

www.anthemformassacre.com



Yet another local group here in Anthem for a Massacre. Their live shows have drawn them some notoriety in local heavy metal circles, and the high energy of those shows carries over into this release. The production is stellar as the instrumentation is well balanced and easily distinguished. It is in the area of instrumental execution that I find fault here. As with nearly all recordings that choose to dispense with the click track in the studio, the music suffers from tempo drag in spots. As I have explained in the past with other

releases, this is not a problem if the emotional direction of a particular song calls for such drag. Heavy metal/hardcore metal is not one of those genres where this is an easy trick to pull off without losing intensity. Furthermore, the vocals go out of synch with the music on several occasions that, to my ears, seemed unintentional and jarring. A retake or a little digital editing could have taken care of these faults, but they were, for some inexplicable reason, overlooked. Leaving these glaring faults aside, the writing isn't exactly what I'd call groundbreaking for this genre. The riffs are similar to something you might hear on any number of other metal records of the past 10 years. And while this might be something up-and-comers aspire to – to sound just like their guitar heroes (sans ripping solos) – I would have expected a band such as Anthem, whose reputation as a great live band precedes them, to be a bit more adventurous and exploratory. A little more musical maturity on these young guys will go a long way. I look forward to seeing how their sound and direction evolves on future releases.

Brad Linzy • Rating 2

CBGB OMFUG Masters - Live August 19, 2005 - The Bowery

Collection CD

Living Colour

(MVD Audio)

www.myspace.com/livingcolourmusic

Unjustly overlooked NYC heavy rock act Living Colour are probably seen as being relics of the late Eighties, with their riff-heavy radio hit "Cult Of Personality" being their main claim to fame. But little did I realize that the band has reformed in recent years, and this well-recorded live docu-



ment proves that the band (fronted by charismatic Corey Glover and anchored by guitar virtuoso Vernon Reid) is as relevant as ever. Combining elements of funk with heavy, almost metallic rock, this band's wise and politically/socially-charged attack shows a much more intelligent and literate angle than their supposed peers in the rock world. But message aside, the band can fire it up musically as well as anyone out there, too. "Funny Vibe" is a tremendous showcase for Reid's guitar pyrotechnics, and even shows his proven jazz chops. It's wild and ferocious, and certainly lively until the end, which dips slightly into a near-psychedelic freakout mode.

Cool stuff. "In Your Name" flirts with electronica and drum & bass, though don't let that scare you away - this material is still guitar-based, through and through. "Open Letter To A Landlord" is a muscular jam that has a special pertinence in relation to CBGB's and owner Hilly Kristal, who supported the band way back from the start, and to whom this recording is dedicated. 'Terrorism' is a fittingly strong and amped-up rally cry against, well, our very own (American) regime. "Glamour Boy" lightens things up a bit, and "Cult Of Personality" closes it out with flair and fervor. A fine, fine album, with passion and energy to spare. I am impressed!

- Todd Zachritz • Rating 4 ●



Rating Scale:

- 5 Wins Place in Shrine in Bedroom
- 4 A Cut Above

- 3 Didn't Make My Head Explode
- 2 Needs More Cowbell
- 1 My God, What is this Abomination?