

Music Reviews

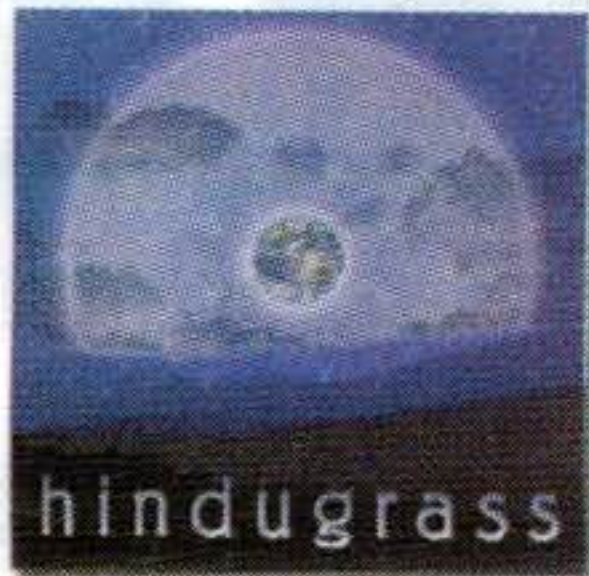


The Gutter Twins Saturnalia (SubPop) - CD



Every so often a recording comes out that infuses fresh energy and packs a wallop into the world of rock and roll. Rock maybe an aging genre, but recordings like this keep the flame burning and the amps humming. The Gutter Twins, Mark Lanegan (ex-Screaming Trees) and Greg Dulli (ex-Afghan Whigs), are incisive and charismatic rock frontmen. Their individual voices and styles are recognizable and established, but when they converge, as on this recording, the results are nothing short of brilliant. *Saturnalia* is a combination of gothic blues inlaid with shards of punk energy resulting in slow burning rockers. Lanegan's thick lumberjack voice can send shudders down listeners' spines. The trance-like "All misery/flowers" is a fine number that rises in intensity as it builds steam and the rest of the disc features acoustic songs as well as sizzling Screaming Trees-like rockers. *Saturnalia* is already on my list as a contender for Top ten releases of 2008.

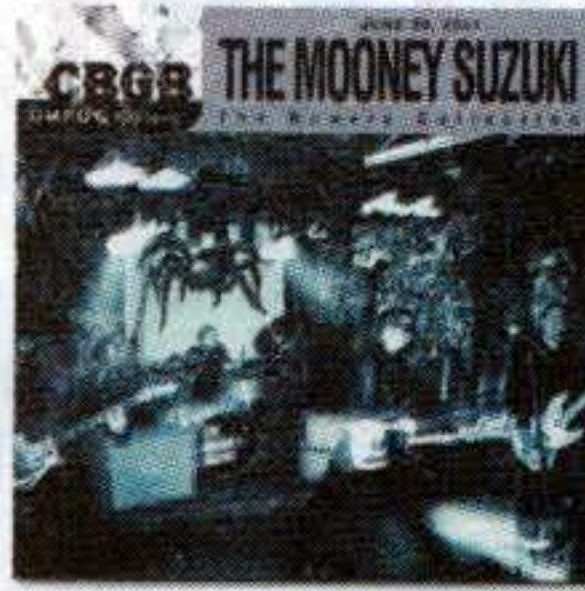
Hindugrass Self-titled (hindugrass.net) - CD



As the world becomes smaller through human migration and expanding global communications such as the Internet, musical worlds are also converging. Some styles collide when brought together by musicians. But there seems to be a natural connection between Appalachian bluegrass and Hindustani music. Hindugrass is a combo based out of Durham and Los Angeles that gently weaves bluegrass with timeless Hindustani music. The quartet, led by John Heitzenrater on sarod, composes instrumentals with a definitive South Asian mood. Heitzenrater is a student of Pandits Rajeev Taranath and Swapan Chaudhuri. Hindugrass was formed in 1998 as an acoustic vehicle to explore the common threads between North Indian folk music and music of the Appalachians, specifically from the Southeastern United States. Even though the two styles are thousands of miles apart, the melodic and rhythmic structures from the Hindustani ragas and music from the Appalachian tradition meet in a warm and emotive middle. The music creates an emotional and musical

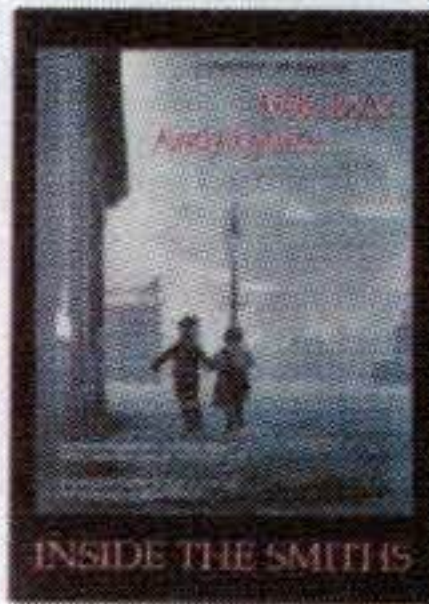
balance. Other members include Carolyn Balfe (violin), Yuniar Terry (bass), Evan Fraser (morsing, bones, calabash, percussion), and Austin Wrinkle (tabla, doumbek, udu, kanjira, calabash, percussion).

The Mooney Suzuki Live June 29, 2001 - The Bowery Collection (MVD Audio) - CD



Native NYC rockers the Mooney Suzuki's raucous garage, punk and 70s hard rock has a foundation of unease in every song. Their live gigs are frenetic and have a rep of making necks ache. One such gig is documented here and was recorded at the now defunct CBGB's in the Bowery. The liner notes are by Handsome Dick Manitoba and the stack of songs include "In a Young Man's World" and "I Woke up This Morning." Raw and documented in their primal environ, on the stage in a sweaty club, the boys heat up a hot summer night with guitars blazing. The Mooney Suzuki debuted in 1996 and love to crank up the amps, but the blokes don't forget the melody and write raw Stonies' rockers that could have appeared on *Exile on Main Street*. Their latest studio recording is the stripped-down and acoustically inclined *Have Mercy* from summer of 2007. But if you want a document of a feisty live show by the Mooney Suzuki, then pick this disc up, pronto.

Inside the Smiths (MVD Visual) - DVD



This documentary takes a peak into one of the coolest bands of the rock era. The Smiths emerged out of Manchester England in the 80s and quickly became a groundbreaking band that influenced myriad others. The Smiths also disbanded at the height of their popularity and were together for a short five years. *Inside the Smiths* features interviews and long chats with bassist Andy Rourke and drummer Mike Joyce. The blokes give an insight into how the band formed, worked, became stars, and then imploded. Frontman Morrissey and guitarist Johnny Marr were the face of the Smiths, but Joyce and Rourke were the steady backbeat. The documentary is quite beautifully directed and filmed where many contemporaries of the Smiths weigh in on the discussion including Peter Hook (New Order) Buzzcocks, Mark E Smith (The Fall), Kaiser Chiefs, Matt Osman (Suede) and others. Filmed over three years in the United Kingdom, Europe and the USA, the film gives a perspective of the Smiths by one half of the band. Joyce and Rourke are quite forthright in their assessments of the band's inner workings and the relationships among the members and Rourke talks openly about his drug addiction, which threatened his life and his standing in the band. Don't look for any Smiths performances here, but the documentary is well worth viewing for casual and long-running fans.