

passing this March, *Queen Of Rock'N'Roll* celebrates 50 years of

Tina Turner's solo career by compiling all of her singles in chronological order. It was only later that people joined up her work as younger belter and later granddame, and this set allows appreciation of the years prior to her 'comeback'. It begins with her swampy, showstopping version of Led Zeppelin's *Whole Lotta Love*, the tremendous pomp of *Acid Queen*, and the infectious cabaret funk of *Music Takes Me Higher*. When it arrives, the ultra-modern *Let's Stay Together* crowned Turner the queen of populist machine soul. This writer would gladly never hear *The Best* again, but the beauty of *What's Love Got To Do With It* – amply demonstrating an artist of such experience was able to imbue their recordings with biographical heft – underlines what a talent she was.

Daryl Easlea

Midge Ure The Gift

★★★★
Chrysalis Records (2LP, 4CD)
Ultravox-era debut solo album



Alongside the legacy of Ultravox and Midge Ure's charity work, the synth-friendly Scot's solo career has gone largely unheralded. This 1985 debut was his bona fide commercial hit, largely on the back of the sky-scraping pop epic *If I Was*, although other singles *That Certain Smile* and the suitably dystopian *Wastelands* were less exciting than the quirky electronic rework of Jethro Tull's *Living In The Past*, the frosty grandeur of the title track and Ure's Japanese koto experiments on *Edo*. The double-LP features a second disc of extended versions, while the four-disc release includes B-sides, rehearsal and live versions, and a few special interest curios: his *The Man Who Sold The World*, the *After A Fashion* single with Japan's Mick Karn; and four tour rehearsals (including *Fade To Grey*) with Mick Ronson. *David Pollock*

Venom

Live From The Hammersmith Odeon Theatre

★★★★
Cherry Red / Dissonance DISS 0232
CDVD (CD/DVD)

Cataclysmic live show

Having played a landmark UK show at Hammersmith Odeon on 1 June 1984, *Venom*

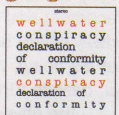


followed up the release of their fourth album *Possessed* with a world tour, returning to Hammersmith on 8 October 1985. "We don't do gigs. We do shows. It's fucking massive," the band once claimed, and the cameras were on hand once again to capture the spectacle of Cronos, Mantas and Abaddon live and unfettered by studio restrictions. This set combines the audio and visuals of what was an expansive and explosive night – ramshackle in parts and total genius in others – and is a great testament to the power and intensity of the influential Geordie trio. Booklet interviews with Napalm Death's Shane Embury and one-time drummer (and Cronos' brother) Antton Lant help set the scene.

John Tucker

Wellwater Conspiracy Declaration of Conformity

★★★★
God Unknown Records GOD 101
Psychedelic excursion from grunge stalwart

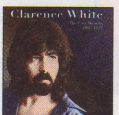


Soundgarden and Pearl Jam drummer Matt Cameron exemplifies

the collaborative spirit that's remained central to Seattle's tight-knit grunge scene since Temple Of The Dog issued their enduring debut, five months before *Nevermind*. In 1993, Cameron set out in search of space with psychedelic power trio *Wellwater Conspiracy*, accompanied by Soundgarden rhythm partner Ben Shepherd, and former *Monster Magnet* guitarist John McBain. This vinyl reissue of their 1997 debut, *Declaration Of Conformity*, serves up extra tracks (including a convincing cover of Syd Barrett's *Late Night*), and holds up well, by virtue of the players' evident love for *Nuggets*-style garage psych, evidenced in the infectious energy and pop craftsmanship underpinning the authentically groovy, far-out sonics of *Sleeveless* and *Nati Bati Yi*. *Rich Davenport*

Clarence White The Lost Masters 1963-1973

★★★★
Liberation Hall LIB 5035 (CD)
Guitar hero's masterclass



Exquisite, rare country/bluegrass tracks, mostly instrumentals,

from the virtuoso guitarist who was a Byrd for five years following Gram Parsons' departure. That Byrds line-up (Roger McGuinn, Skip Battin and Gene Parsons) is on *Byrd Jam* while the beautiful *Yesterday's Train* just features Parsons, who was singing. Earliest track, *No Title Yet Blues*, has Eric (Duelling Banjos) Weissberg and there are plenty of speed-fingered demonstrations as things progress from acoustic picking to electric workouts. Quite extraordinary is a live *Ode To Billie Joe* that sounds more like Jimi Hendrix while the finale is *I'm On My Way Home Again*, a 1969 Everly Brothers full band rehearsal with White on stringbender guitar and a pair of Parsons: Gene on banjo and Gram on rhythm. *Nick Dalton*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

... And You Don't Stop: A Celebration Of 50 Years Of Hip Hop

★★★★★
Tommy Boy Music TB 545 91 (6LP)
Innovative indie's quest for the perfect beat



Is it bold of Tommy Boy to put itself at the centre of hip hop's 50th anniversary celebrations? Tom Silverman's label launched almost a decade after Kool Herc's movement-starting block party, and Sugar Hill Records had ushered the music into the mainstream three years before Tommy Boy went super nova with *Planet Rock*. But for most of the 80s

and into the 90s, Silverman competed in the big leagues. His critics – even from within – have accused him of simply chasing novelty; but with the A&R vision of Monica Lynch, Tommy Boy knew what would work in the moment while letting its artists define what that moment would be. At 50 tracks, ... *And You Don't Stop* is the most comprehensive collection yet of the label's pace-setting years, revealing the true breadth and depth of a roster that pushed the envelope for electro, hip house and jazz-minded crate-digging, and, in a flagrantly male-dominated era, made space for female voices such as Queen Latifah and LeShaun (RuPaul's dance-pop hasn't made the cut here, an omission presumably based on narrative angle). Noreaga's Neptunes-produced *Superthug* is a reminder that Silverman's stable just about squeaked into relevance at the turn of the 21st century, but, amid it all, it's De La Soul's *Plug Tunin'* and *Me Myself And I* that represent the pinnacle of Tommy Boy's innovations. If we can get comprehensive reissues of the sorely neglected *Digital Underground* catalogue next, the label's other geniuses will finally get the shine they deserve. *Jason Draper*

Down Home Blues: Chicago Volume 3 – The Special Stuff

★★★★★
Wienerworld WINRCD 5121 (4CD)
Sixth box in superb series



Containing 108 rare tracks by 36 artists including alternate takes and previous unissued cuts, this excellent box set compiles blues recorded in Chicago between

1941 and 1961 with a bonus unreleased five track session by Magic Sam and Shakey Jake recorded at Sam's apartment in 1966 by Australian blues fan Rick Milne. Big names represented by rarely compiled tracks include Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Little Walter while gems from little known artists include Minnie Thomas' *Don't Let It Happen To You*, Morris Pejoe's *Screaming And Crying* and Lucky Carmichael's 1961 take on *Blues With A Feeling* with guitarist Matt Murphy. An alternate version of Eddie Taylor's *Ride 'Em On Down* is another highlight.

Jon Harrington

Heavenly Cream: An Acoustic Tribute To Cream

★★★★
Quarto Valley Records QVR 0186 (CD, 2LP)
A strange and brilliant brew



Despite setting a template for early hard rock, Cream's cranked amps and

virtuosity were balanced by Jack Bruce's gift for insidious vocal melodies and Eric Clapton's imaginative grasp of dynamics. Accordingly, this collection of acoustically reworked Cream gems (with four of their blues covers) emphasises the quality of their songwriting, all the more apparent in hearing familiar tracks from refreshingly different angles. It's a family affair; the late Ginger Baker drummed on five tracks (accompanied by Joe Bonamassa and the recently departed Bernie Marsden on a rousing *Sunshine Of Your Love*), Malcolm Bruce subs ably for his dad, and lyricist Pete Brown turns in accomplished vocal performances, as do Maggie Bell and Deborah Bonham. *Rich Davenport*



Wellwater Conspiracy: Matt Cameron's psychedelic side-project revisited