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Classic rock anthems, Miles Davis, vintage Frampton, new Hart

New Commander Cody, David Bowie

Published: April 4, 2013



My first April column kicks off with a live recording from Commander Cody, followed by my opinion on an album that you've probably read lots of reviews on, David Bowie's first new recording in years. Next on deck is a review of a collection of German concerts by three different editions of the late Jeff Healey's blues band. A continuation of last week's Pre-Punk Postscript winds things up.

'Live From The Island,' Commander Cody and his Modern Day Airmen (Woodstock Records, HHH 1/2)

This March 12 CD release unites 1970s hit-maker, pianist and vocalist Commander Cody with a new

group of "Airmen": longtime guitarist/vocalist Mark Emerick, Professor Louie on piano/accordion/vocals, Steve Barbuto on drums/vocals, Randy Bramwell on bass/vocals and Miss Marie on vocals/percussion. Together, they're playing some of the Commander's favorites, including the classic "Hot Rod Lincoln," in Bayshore, Long Island. That big hit wasn't much like the 1970s Top 40, so it's no surprise that the set list combines old warhorses played well with (I assume) Commander Cody album cuts.

Highlights on this boogie-fied collection include the snapping "House of Blue Lights," the high-octane opener "Too Much Fun," Emerick's nifty guitar, Cody's propulsive piano-playing and the immortal "Lost in the Ozone Again."

Boogie backers should buy this barn-burner ASAP.

'The Next Day,' David Bowie (ISO Records, HHHHH)

This new release is David Bowie's first album in 10 years, and it's produced by Tony Visconti, whose deft touches made classics of T. Rex's "Electric Warrior," Bowie's "Hunky Dory" and many others.

Visconti's string arrangements and other production techniques help make this less of a "comeback" album than a return to rock 'n' roll form. Sympathetic backing by drummer Zachary Alford, bassist Gail Ann Dorsey, Visconti, and a host of guitarists bring the songs to life.

Unique cover art appears to paste a white square across the cover of the widely-acclaimed "Heroes" and hints at Bowie's DIY spirit. The opening/title song rocks like a vintage classic, followed by the honking "Dirty Boys."

Other highlights among a crop of strong songs include a chugging "The Stars (Are Out Tonight)," the stutter-stepping "Love Is Lost," the beautiful "Where Are We Now?" and the throbbing "Valentine's Day."

Bowie backers and lovers of mature, exciting music will enjoy this disc.

'As The Years Go Passing By: Live In Germany,' Jeff Healey (Inakustik/MVDAudio, HHHH)

Blind Canadian blues-rock/jazz/guitarist-vocalist Norman Jeffrey "Jeff" Healey (March 25, 1966 - March 2, 2008) attained musical and personal popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. When he was 1 year old, Healey lost his sight to a rare cancer of the eyes called retinoblastoma. His eyes were surgically removed, and he was given artificial replacements. He died of a different form of cancer a few years ago after amazing audiences and peers with his unorthodox, intrinsically soulful playing.

This triple-CD April 9 release celebrates concerts across an 11-year period recorded live in Germany. Each show features slightly different band line-ups. Disc one features the trio of Jeff on guitar/vocals with longtime mates bassist/vocalist Joe Rockman and drummer Tom Stephen. Disc two adds second guitarist Pat Rush to the mix, and guitarist/vocalist Philip Sayce rounds out the group on disc three.

Disc one highlights include "I'm Torn Down," "When the Night Comes Falling From the Sky" and "See The Light," all featuring Jeff's melodically inventive playing and tight rhythm section work.

Highlights of the longer disc two set include a fiery cover of Spirit's "Got a Line On You," an energetic "Stop Breaking Down," the soulful "As the Years Go Passing By" and smoldering versions of The Doors' "Roadhouse Blues" (also on disc one), Hendrix's "Angel" and Lennon's "Yer Blues."

Disc three repeats some songs (John Hiatt's "Confidence Man" and "Angel Eyes" are on both discs, as are "Roadhouse Blues" and "See the Light") and contains more Healey originals ("My Little Girl," "Which One," "Love is the Answer," "Feel Better" and "See the Light," which is on all three discs).

Blues guitar fans, this is a triple-shot for you!

Pre-Punk Postscript: The Move -- Electric Light Orchestra Connection

Many of The Move's songs showed classical connections, even early ones, such as "Night of Fear."

The lack of U.S. success for the band, plus the pressure on Roy Wood as the primary songwriter, made him want to transition into another band that blended rock 'n' roll and classical influences more directly. So, after the final two trio-based Move albums Wood, Jeff Lynne and drummer Bev Bevan joined with a