



Keb Mo
The Reflection
YoLaBelle/Rykco

Guitarist Keb Mo bends those notes in a Memphis hot stew and when he starts singin' there's an inherent joyousness in his voice. When the girls come in to add some vocal sugar, he slides those notes like JJ Cale; understated, distinctly discreet, the effect on "The Whole Enchilada" is positively enchanting. The groooooove continues on "Inside Outside," a tasty hunk of irresistible taffy. Ditto for "All The Way."

Keb has always been the softer bluesman: He's Al Green to Taj Mahal's Otis Redding. His albums up to now, though, have lacked an inner toughness. Basically, they've been too nice. *The Reflection* is beyond nice, it's downright celestial. Every note is in place. Heavenly. And steamy too. Like his duet with India.Arie, "Crush On You." The heat rises here. Considerably. If the track was a movie, they'd be talkin' 'bout chemistry between these two. Maybe they got a little something goin' on?

His cover of The Eagles' "One Of These Nights" brings out the tune's inherent soulfulness, proving yet again that most of those songs Don Henley and Glenn Frey wrote back in the '70s were soul songs. Mo gives the tune that slippery aesthetic it deserves, complete with alto sax solo by the great Dave Koz. The Vince Gill duet, "My Baby's Tellin' Lies," features Gill's unique "high lonesome" harmony and works beautifully in this context. You want funk? "Just Lookin'" is badass. Polite badass, though, 'cause that's how Mo rolls.

In A Word: Classy
—by Mike Greenblatt



only memorable track from *In Parallel*. Each of the other 10 songs, mixed by Alex Newport, are proof of the band's talent. Lead singer Dave Yang will win the hearts of many listeners with his cathartic voice, lead guitarist Matt Haar embellishes the album with his numerous solos, bassist Max Kimbrel and drummer Daniel Benjamin complete the instrumental genius Extra Arms has to offer with their solid rhythmic foundation. The four members have formed a band that has been able to complete a goal all musicians strive for: To create an album of varying lyrics and melodies, while also staying true to their own unique sound and genre.

In Parallel includes 11 tracks of experimental indie-rock, complete with unconventional singing and musical techniques; though each track is distinct and introduces a new element to the general feel of the album. Overall, it is a powerful album made so by its inspiring lyrics, unique instrumentals and many layers of depth. Music lovers will appreciate its soulful melodies and the sheer talent they show.

In A Word: Cathartic
—by Marissa Savino



Right On Dynamite
In Vino Veritas
MeccaLecca

Right from the start you can tell from their lively brand of indie rock that this band is from Brooklyn. A few years ago the group released a five-track self-titled debut and embarked on their first-ever U.S. tour. This past summer the trio released *In Vino Veritas*, their first full-length album.

The first track of an album should really kick it off with some energy and originality. "Playing A Part," however, was a bit too simple and safe, dragging on longer than it should have. While the second track, "See You Yesterday," is better, offering a brighter, fuller sound that is more interesting all around. I know they can do better when I hear the guitar lead come alive, evoking a 1980s glam metal lead. This is the best part of the song.

The beginning chords to "What Would Ringo Do" reminds me of Van Halen's cover of The Kinks' "You Really Got Me," but goes down deeper with tambourines and colorful guitar change-ups. Dynamic drum beats and guitar leads build up "No Fights" with flowing guitar leads that are beautifully done.

Tambourines start off "Anti-Meditation Song," a short and haunting melody that gives off a stoner vibe, while "Monsters" is upbeat, filled with groovy bass hooks and tight drums. The album ends with "All For Naught," an anthem with chanting words that to me, don't make much sense. However, the band redeems themselves as the lead guitar and drum solo come alive and become carefree, bringing the song to its end.

The record isn't bad, but it isn't great. I felt Right On Dynamite held back from who they truly are. The songs were a bit too generic. I didn't hear any hits, and I feel that with their talent, they could have done better by adding more of themselves as oppose to trying to stay genre-specific.

In A Word: Alluring
—by Ariel Vreeland

Gold Beach
Habibti
Independent

Gold Beach has a warm, soothing, airy sound that drags the listener into a relaxed state. *Habibti* starts off on the mellow side with both "Habibi" and "Until You." The mood of the album is picked up a bit with up-swinging keys, drums and summery vocals and rhythms, which will make the listener want to snap their fingers. "Everyone I Know" features melancholic yet optimistic tone that makes the song memorable and fills the listener with hope. Next, "Perfect Weights" casts a shadow over the album.

Habibti picks up again a love song



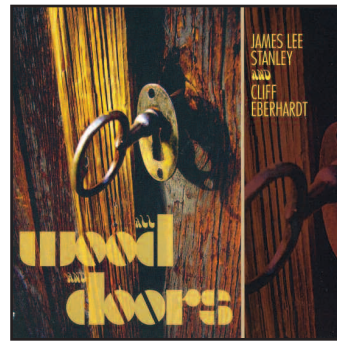
titled "Skin Of Yours." What makes this track shine, is the bass and piano. The final cut on *Habibti*, "Diving Bell" starts with an intense amount of reverb on the vocals, which seemed a bit overdone. Oddly enough, the drums are what stood out the most for me during the course of the song. Each crash of the cymbal or boom of the kick just grabbed my focus away from anything else that was going on, which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

I never thought a band could be too mellow for me, but Gold Beach proved me wrong. If you're in the mood for something with a little more spunk, I'd say put it down until you need to relax or veg out.

In A Word: Dreamy
—by Roz Smith

James Lee Stanley And Cliff Eberhardt
All Wood And Doors
Beachwood

Totally odd yet mesmerizing, imagine 12 of the greatest songs by The Doors—with no keyboards!—reconfigured, re-imagined, rearranged and turned inside-out as backporch bluegrass stringband jams. It's as if they sucked the innards out of such time-tested gems as "The End," "Soul Kitchen," "Break On Through," "Light My Fire," "Strange Days,"



"Love Me Two Times" while an array of world-class musicians sang 'em sweet and soft as folk songs. Vocalist/guitarist/percussionist James Lee Stanley has done this kind of thing before. His *All Wood And Stones*, with John Batdorf, was soothing 'n' satisfying, and so is this.

Add Doors drummer John Densmore and Doors guitarist Robbie Krieger. Then add Eagle Timothy B. Schmit is as one of four singers oohing and aahing up a lush cloud of Beatles-esque background voicings. The all-acoustic, rather rustic sound (like early Grateful Dead crossed with current-day Levon Helm) features nifty zig-zag curlicue lead guitar solos by the likes of Paul Barrere (Little Feat), Laurence Juber (Wings) and Peter Tork (The Monkees).

You wouldn't think "Take It As It Comes," "Touch Me," "Crystal Ship" and "Riders On The Storm" would prosper with this kind of treatment. You'd be wrong. Sometimes a song will start with a chorus instead of verse or a verse instead of a chorus, that's how jumbled and bizarre it all is... but that's exactly what makes it work.

Here's hoping James Lee Stanley does this to other bands. I suggest Credence Clearwater Revival, Pink Floyd and The Kinks.

In A Word: Different
—by Mike Greenblatt

disc of the week

Boots Electric

Honkey Kong

Dangerbird

Boots Electric, the solo project of Jesse Hughes of the Eagles Of Death Metal, is releasing its debut album, *Honkey Kong*. The 10-track release is mainly electronic with some twists thrown in. "Complexity" brings a city vibe to the beginning of the album with car horns and the sounds of a busy metropolitan area blended with '80s power pop. The album goes old school with your standard kick/snare drum beat for a spoken word like tune titled "Speed Demon." *Honkey Kong* gets a boost of attitude with the funky synth line in "Boots Electric," which features sexual undertones, and is perfect for the kickass alter-ego inside us all.

The second half of the album starts off with a ballad titled "No Fun." The under three-minute track has the narrator realizing their mistakes through heart-wrenching vocals. Following "No Fun" is "Oh Girl," which has a semi lo-fi sound, especially in the vocals. One track seems to be perfect for a soundtrack, and that cut is "Trippy Blob." The heavy bass and effects in the beginning set the scene



perfectly as the blob forms, creeping in the shadows as the narrator tells us about the evil mass. The end of the album closes on a country note, complete with bluesy vocals and ending with hound dog howls.

Boots Electric's debut album is overall entertaining and is full of hooky beats that will capture the listener the first time through.

In A Word: Humorous
—by Roz Smith