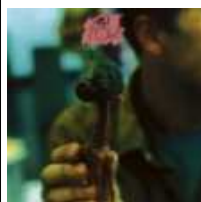


Reviews

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Little Wings - *Soft Pow'r* (RAD)

The seventh release from Kyle Field's Little Wings, 'Soft Pow'r' is a truly delicate, raw, austere, yet sensitive piece of lo-fi alt. Americana. The quiet, sparse, fragile, broken delivery sounds as if they rarely leave their chairs and compare in texture and tone to Kurt Wagner's Lambchop. 'Scuby' serves to set the precedent for this short, but well (in)formed album including gorgeous (high / low) double-tracked vocals and drum loops which underpin the overtly acoustic nature remarkably. Understated guitar presides in the backing, accompanied by piano and brushed drums. 'Warming' does lift the tone slightly, 'Beep About' is marginally jazz inflected and 'Free Bird' draws similarity to 'After the Gold Rush' - era Neil Young. A powerful heartfelt yearning dispensed so softly (as the title clearly suggests!).

www.marriagerecs.com

Will F.

-

British Sea Power - *Do You Like Rock Music?* (Rough Trade)

Their third album and possibly their best. Certainly it's a return to form after the disappointing 'Open Season'. 'Do You Like Rock Music?' captures the density of sound that the band forge at their live shows and although this maybe nothing more than a trick of production, I'm putting it down to the band's passion and commitment. An early contender for year end gongs.

Rob F.

-

Biirdie - *Catherine Avenue* (Love Minus Zero)

Their MySpace page describes them as 'Healing & Easy Listening'. Cool, but for me their Brian Wilson / Phil Spector sonic inclinations and wordy talents point more toward summery psychedelia and luscious indie-folk-pop. And possibly that's selling them short. Further to their other faculties, their instinct for champion tunes and tender harmonies, they gently transcend any genre limitations and become something far more inspirational. Their debut 'Morning Kills The Dark' received the sort of critical praise usually reserved for second comings or Radiohead albums, and while 'Catherine Avenue' doesn't quite reach those heady heights, it's not far off. Or maybe I've just not lived with this one long enough. It doesn't matter - I'm already finding 'Catherine Avenue' indispensable. Find their MySpace and have a listen. www.myspace.com/biirdie

Rob F.

-

Jon Michaels - *I Hear A Clock* (Independent)

Based in Nashville, the Tennessee home of thousands of ace musicians and studio bods, it's no surprise that Jon Michaels' album is a beautifully produced collection of songs. The tone is rich and balanced, and it sounds like there's been a lot of time and money spent getting it right. In reality, I imagine a lot of favours were called in and a credit card took a beating, but it was worth it. Stylistically, Michaels is somewhere between late period Mavericks - when they got poppier and better - and classic Chris Isaak. High and lonesome, yet so very accessible to non-country fans, it can only be a matter of time before a big label takes note. See if you can beat them to it. <http://jonmichaelsmusic.com>

Rob F.



-

Roxy Music - *The Thrill of It All: A Visual History 1972-1982 DVD* (EMI)

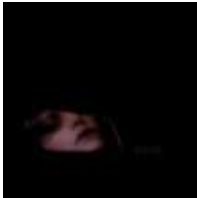
Features a fantastic collection of live footage and promo videos of one the most influential and eclectic British rock bands of all time. Early Roxy Music are a must for any serious music fan and it's a thrill to watch these films and see the band, over time, come to grips with the medium. Many favourite songs are present, including 'Ladytron', 'Virginia Plain', and 'Love Is The Drug', though some are mimed, and are lifted from Top Of The Pops type shows. It doesn't matter, and with well over 30 tracks featured, it really is a treasure trove for the Roxy Music fan.

Rob F.

-

Time of Orchids - *Namesake Caution* (Cuneiform)

New York outfit, Time of Orchids release their fifth album (3 self releases and last on John Zorn's Tzadik label) since their inception in 1999. Dividing the album crudely into two sees tracks 1-5 deliver



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powerful progressive orchestral rock / pop based compositions, beyond which tracks 6-10 elongate and the pace and dynamic continually shifts to encompass reflexive and violent traits. As a whole 'Namesake Caution' could best be described as cutting the middle ground between the frenetic shifts in tempo and rhythm of Frank Zappa, the complex and perfectly executed vocal harmonies of the Beach Boys, the sweeping keys of prog-rock (ELP / Yes et al), the angular guitar phrasing of some of the more demented 80's indie bands (think the likes of Stump) with sprinklings of Beefheart's Magic Band.

www.cuneiformrecords.com

Will F.

Jack Johnson - Sleep Through The Static (Universal)

The fifth album from singer-songwriter, filmmaker and former pro-surfer Jack Johnson. Recorded in Los Angeles, there have been claims that 'Sleep Through The Static' would mark a radical new direction from Johnson, but I'm struggling to find it. Johnson sticks like glue to his laid-back pop / rock style while playing a little more electric guitar this time. That's it - the wheel has not been reinvented.

Rob F.

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