

ULYSSES 010 (Eenie Meenie)

Robert Schneider just can't slow down. Leader and songwriter of The Apples In Stereo, Marbles and now Ulysses has released a total of seven albums and produced a handful of discs from his Elephant Six Collective. Despite having his hands in several projects, he can't get away from the friendly, happy Beach Boys-inspired pop that The Apples are known for. Ulysses isn't as explicitly Brian Wilson as some of his older projects, but that Schneider voice always oozes with pop. There are some great tracks here, like the Pavement-esque "Glacier" and the punky "Frustrated," but it's nothing Schneider hasn't done before. www.eeniemeenie.com—**BB**

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VARIOUS ARTISTS *A Winter's Night: The Best of Nettwerk Christmas* (Nettwerk/EMI)

Yes, it's Christmas compilation season again. Each year, record companies bombard the marketplace with discs showcasing their roster of artists singing holiday standards. Fortunately, *A Winter's Night* is one of the better offerings, with Nettwerk's roots-oriented songwriters perfectly suited for singing a few carols. Highlights include Jack Johnson's Bing Crosby-esque croon on "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer," Sarah McLachlan's warm and wonderful cover of Gordon Lightfoot's "Song For A Winter's Night" and Dido's ethereal version of "Christmas Day." Other artists getting into the holiday spirit include the Barenaked Ladies, Neil Finn and Martina Sorbara. www.nettwerk.com—**DM**

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VARIOUS ARTISTS *Enjoy Every Sandwich: The Songs Of Warren Zevon* (Artemis/Sony)

It's obvious that Warren Zevon was well respected amongst his peers — just look at who's paying tribute to the late singer-songwriter. Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan both appear on this record and (along with the other performers) help give listeners a well rounded view of Zevon's various moods. There's his acidic observations on society on "Lawyers, Guns And Money" (The Wallflowers), as well as his own chaotic life with "Ain't That Pretty At All" (The Pixies). While long-time fans of Zevon will take pleasure in this tribute, let's hope it acts as more of an eye opener for those that have never been able to see past "Werewolves Of London." www.warrenzevon.com—**The Mouth**

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VARIOUS ARTISTS *Maybe This Christmas Tree* (Nettwerk/EMI)

The third edition of Nettwerk's holiday series follows the formula of its predecessors perfectly: take some contemporary artists (preferably members of the Nettwerk family) and let them take a stab at the standards or, in a couple cases, original Christmas songs. Volume three (or, er, *tree*) is as consistent as the first two, with decent contributions from The Polyphonic Spree ("Happy Christmas [War Is Over]"), Pilate ("Fairytale Of New York") and Ivy ("Christmas Time Is Here"). Unsurprisingly, there are some clunkers (Lisa Loeb, Jars Of Clay), but as far as non-traditional carol collections go, this one is more candy cane than lump of coal. www.nettwerk.com—**ECB**

CCC

VELVET ACID CHRIST *Between The Eyes Vol. 3: 1994-1995* (Metropolis/Fusion III)

The third installment of Velvet Acid Christ's *Between The Eyes* collection is an industrial freak's wet dream. Outtakes, rarities and original versions from *Church Of Acid* and *Calling Ov The Dead* make up this record. From the brash guitars of "Masked Illusion" through the heavy electronic beat of "Melting" and the creepy straightforwardness of "Dead Flesh," there is very little about this release that fails, despite the relatively obvious track selections. Some may question the need to revisit this aging form of industrial, but with one listen, they'll honour the brilliance and purity of VAC. www.velvetacidchrist.com—**KC**

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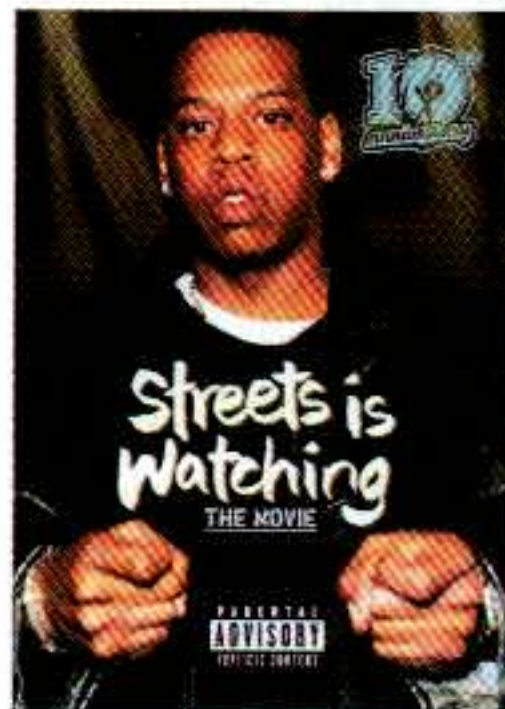
WU-TANG CLAN *Disciples Of The 36 Chambers: Chapter One* (Sanctuary/EMI)

With U-God's recent beef with RZA, Ol' Dirty Bastard's court-imposed curfew and Method Man's long slide into B-list Hollywood territory, it would seem easier to get your high school hockey team together for a Will & Grace marathon than re-unite the Wu-Tang Clan. But there they are — all nine of 'em — on a live recording from their July '04 San Bernadino, CA concert. There's nothing quite like hearing thousands of fans yelling "Wu-Tang Clan ain't nothin' to fuck with," but the energy and novelty of this 34-track album (which features very little post-*Wu-Tang Forever* material) belies its poor, often sloppy vocal quality and will just leave you longing for *Enter The 36 Chambers*. www.wutangcorp.com—**JR**

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Contributors:

Bryan Borzykowski (BB), Marc Boudignon (MB), Elizabeth Chorney-Booth (ECB), Keith Carman (KC), Julia Coey (JC), Steve English (SE), Amanda Factor (AF), Geoff Girvitz (GG), Caitlin Hotchkiss (CH), Joanne Huffa (JH), Ted Kritsonis (TK), Dan Lovranski (The Mouth), Joel McConvey (JM), David McPherson (DM), Andre Mihsin (AM), Brian Pascual (BP), Jason Richards (JR), Pete Richards (PR), Matt Semansky (MS), Shannon Whibbs (SW), Brian Wong (BW)

**JAY-Z** *Streets Is Watching: The Movie* (Roc-A-Fella/Universal)

Streets Is Watching: The Movie is a montage of new music videos that are meant to tell a cohesive story of how Jay-Z grew up in the projects. Roc-A-Fella buddies Damon Dash and Kareem Biggs join Jigga on this musical trip down memory lane, which couples funny anecdotes with dangerous scenarios. It's supposed to be believable and it seems to be in many ways, but many of those stereotypical hip-hop video elements are still here.—**TK**

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**DEVO** *Live In The Land Of The Rising Sun* (Sick Video/MVD)

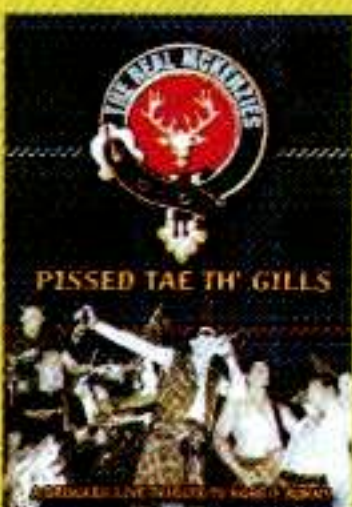
Live In The Land Of The Rising Sun proves that time hasn't done a thing to harm the relationship between Akron, Ohio's favourite art rockers and their fans in the East. All the hits are here, including "Girl U Want," "Whip It" and a version of "Gates Of Steel" that'll make you wanna run out, buy a red energy dome and start your own cover band. The sound quality fades at times, but *Live* is almost as good as being there. And the interviews with Mark Mothersbaugh and Gerry Cassales are nothing short of brilliant.—**JH**

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**WILLIE NELSON & FRIENDS** *Outlaws And Angels* (Eagle Rock)

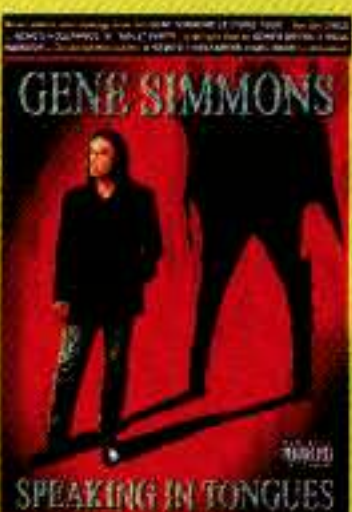
It ain't neat and tidy, but this celebratory concert is a full-energy collection of performances from musical royalty that include Bob Dylan, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carol King and Al Green, just to name a few. This 70th birthday celebration for The Braided One is more of a party than a display of pure musicianship, but if the energy worked for Willie, it will for you.—**GG**

CCC

**THE REAL MCKENZIES** *Raise A Glass To Robbie Burns* (MVD)

Few bands are able to match their live show in any sort of document like Scottish-influenced punks The Real McKenzies. Capturing yet another rousing performance from these brash drunken goons with this extended DVD, you quickly realize that there's nothing quite like (thank God) being stuck in the middle of a zillion sweaty people screaming, "Scots Wa Hae!"—**KC**

CCC

**GENE SIMMONS** *Speaking In Tongues* (Sanctuary/EMI)

Everyone's favorite A**hole lets us in on a few secrets of his success via a spoken-word show in Australia and a tour of his relatively palatial home. The gist of Gene's advice (don't get married, make lots of money, wear snakeskin boots) has already been documented. The production of *Speaking In Tongues* (the puns never stop) is similar to that of a *Girls Gone Wild* video — buxom young women, jerky camera work and hokey graphics. Difficult to get through, even for fans.—**JH**

CC

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Festival Express Special Edition* (MGM)

This newly compiled film follows the ill-fated rock circus that snaked through Canada via train in 1970. With very little footage from the train, *Festival Express* is more of a collection of performances (from The Band, Janis Joplin, The Grateful Dead and others) than a true doc, making it a little tedious for non-diehard fans. Still, with a treasure trove of bonus features (more performances, interviews and other staff), this little slice of Canadian rock history is pretty fascinating.—**ECB**

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