

Glitter gutter TRASH

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A psychotic candyland full of glam glitz, trashy pop, new wave, post-everything, retrofuturisms and distorted beauty

Shadow Project

And Then There Was Death (DVD)

MVD

Shadow Project = gothic subculture + pure 70s punk & glam

Street: 07.12

And Then There Was Death is a strangely hallucinatory experience. At least three different live appearances make up the live footage, often weaved on top of each other. It discards time, various line-up changes and ultimately it makes little difference because you find the only person you're watching is **Rozz Williams**. Certainly there is some gothic rock royalty in the various line-ups: **Eva O** bows her guitar, **William Faith** bounces about and pin-up **Paris** tends to look as bored as a zombie behind his keyboard. But Rozz, he was always sort of an enigma, even more so than your typical cultural icon. I always saw him as someone gentle who had a lot of violence inside of him. A few have referred to Rozz as the Kurt Cobain of gothic rock and I've can't say I'm exactly comfortable with the comparison but it does seem to fit on the surface. I was never a devotee, would hardly call myself a fan even though over the years I've owned many Rozz William albums. I was an interested bystander who saw a tragic character driven to reach his end. **Shadow Project** was Rozz's strongest, albeit most straightforward, project following his departure from **Christian Death** and their strength is well represented from the grind of "Here and There" to the final notes of Bowie's "Holy Holy." The footage isn't pristine, the sound isn't brilliant (often cavernous) but all of that seems lost in the performance. Sadly the bonus features are slight, a brief interview and a clip of spoken word with a gallery of photos showing only a brief moment of the person behind the performer.

Cut Copy

Bright Like Neon Love

Modular

Street: 05.18.04

Cut Copy = Daft Punk + Kraftwerk

Look, I know the album is a year old, but still it popped up in my box, seeing as Cut Copy have landed an opening slot with **Franz Ferdinand** on their U.S. tour. So here we are: *Bright Like Neon Love*. Caught somewhere between the late 90s and the disco sway of guitars, just a few steps left of a **Gary Numan** record mashed into a melancholy **Kool & the Gang**, it sounds like the sort of music **The Scissor Sisters** would listen to when they unwind. But to call this a generic chillout record would be a disservice. Cut Copy: not nearly as funky as an old **Saint Etienne** single but pretty close.

The Lovetones

Meditations

Tee Pee

Street: 10.13

The Lovetones = 60s psychedelia + everything worthwhile since. **Matthew J Tow** (formerly of **Drop City** and briefly **Brian Jonestown Massacre**) kicks off The Lovetones' second album with "Mantra"; a track that recalls the finer days of **The Dandy Warhols** merged with the lyricism and subject matter of fellow Australians **The Church**. This proves to be a sign of things to come, although not in the way you might expect. *Meditations* is an album full of mixed influences. You'll find **The Doves** mixed in with a Motown hook on "(I Gotta) Feel" before diving deep into **The Beatles'** psychedelic experimentation with a hint of **Bowie** on "Stars". That's just the first three songs. Later you'll hear a touch of **The Doors**, some **Elliot Smith**, and a large amount of LSD-inspired treachery. If this doesn't sound appealing to you, it should. Where less talented musicians might stumble in

their tributes, **Tow & Co.** excel with pleasant melodies and simple, yet effective lyrics.

Echo & the Bunnymen

Siberia

Cooking Vinyl

Street: 09.20

Echo & the Bunnymen = abundance of confidence + subtle textures + Post-Punk Pop Bliss

When **Ian McCulloch** and **Will Sergeant** resurrected the Bunnymen, the world expected a masterpiece à la *Ocean Rain* or *Heaven Up Here*. The world would have to wait through two decent, yet underachieving albums before finally getting *Flowers*. Hollywood would have ended the story there, maybe allowing for the career-celebrating live album that followed, but certainly scrolling the credits before anyone had the chance to screw it all up. What does Hollywood know? Nothing. *Siberia*, like its predecessor, is full of the grandeur (part anthem, part ballad) that **Coldplay** lifted. Ian's vocal and Will's guitar egging each other on with the sort of swagger you'd expect from well-aged fighters. You could pin the songs on a wall and throw darts to pick the next single. "Stormy Weather" or "All Because of You Days," it really doesn't matter. I'm not going to call *Siberia* perfect, but I've yet to really find any flaws. I suppose you could complain that it sounds too much like a Bunnymen album. But it's such a good Bunnymen album.

Leiahdorus

Parallel Universe

A Different Drum

Street: 09.06

Leiahdorus = Anything Box + De/Vision

I've never been overly crazy about American synthpop. I guess you could call me an elitist for preferring the prevailing darkness that haunts European electronic music (and I'm not just talking the harder-hitting industrial or EBM). Nonetheless, having been quite taken by Leiahdorus' live set at this year's Synthpop Festival, I was more than anxious to give them a more focused listening. One listen and I set it aside. The pianos, which had dominated the live mix, were submerged beneath the electronic wash. The charm was lost; or so it would seem. I returned to the album, forgetting any preconceived notions or desires. In truth, mixing issues aside, *Parallel Universe* is quite good. Rather than relying on big beats and fancy analog bubbling, Leiahdorus are more concerned with structure and depth. Yes, there is a rather optimistic tone in the music, the piano parts are very reminiscent of **Coldplay's** *Rush of Blood* ... which I quite like in this context, but like **Erasure**, the music is deceptive, hiding the more moody subject matter of the lyric. Even the lingering female vocal that drifts here and there plays out like a sad whisper. Strangely, over the past few weeks, I've become more and more certain that *Parallel Universe* is the best American synthpop release since **Anything Box's** heyday in the mid-90s. It isn't necessarily a club release, although there is plenty of dancing to be found within. The charm wasn't lost at all; I just had to find it again. Might I suggest an acoustic album? It worked brilliantly for **De/Vision**.

SLUG

