

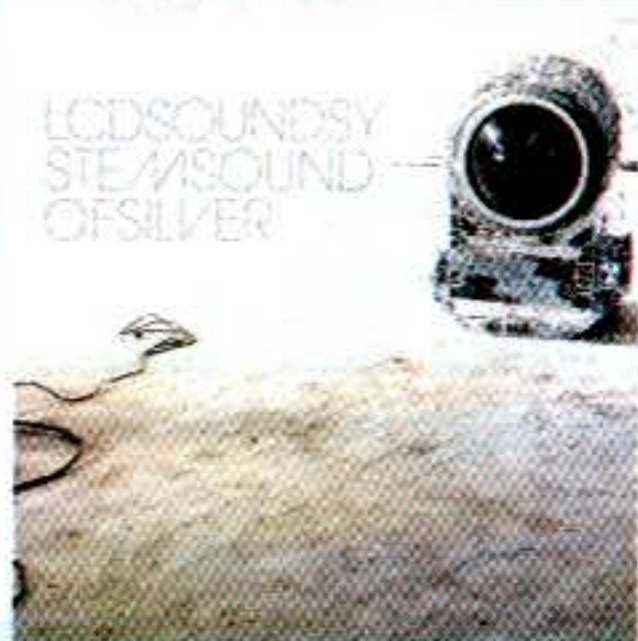
THE NEIN *Luxury* (Sonic Unyon)

North Carolina quartet The Nein are tough to pin down. Their fourth LP runs a gamut of styles and seems deliberately designed to surprise, with each song adding a layer of sonic oddity. The beauty in *Luxury* is that it's easy to hear and understand how the songs are constructed, so the genre switch-ups don't feel forced or disjointed. Second track "Attitude And Mirrors," for example, opens with a burst of Alex Empire-style noise before evolving to something softer, with a nice little guitar hook over top. "Sweet Vague" and "Decollage" slip in some nature sound effects, while fuzzy, downbeat dub appears on "Wreck We Um Dub." As a bonus, the first example of guitar-driven "squelch farting" cameos on "The Future Crumbles." www.sonicunyon.com—**KR**
CCC½

THE OPERATION M.D. *We Have An Emergency* (Aquarius/EMI)

A side project featuring Cone McCaslin of Sum 41 and Todd Morse of H2O should logically sound like a punktastic byproduct of those two bands' signature sounds, but the duo have thrown a bit of a curveball. The album starts off as the raucous, testosterone-fuelled party album you expect it to be. Somewhere in the middle, though, the guys switch gears and slow things down. While piano-laced acoustic numbers would typically kill the momentum, slower songs, such as "Dirt," are actually the record's best tracks. Unlikely influences from The Violent Femmes and The Kinks make them stand out over the lukewarm rockers. The disc suffers from "side project syndrome" with its fair share of filler, and yet the handful of memorable songs makes it a surprisingly decent listen. www.aquariusrecords.org—**SJ**
CCC½

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM



Sound Of Silver (DFA/EMI)
What makes me so giddy about LCD Soundsystem dance songs is that they're never afraid to go long. James Murphy is capable of dragging out a beat with nothing more than a minimal bass groove, and I'm still dancing with my glasses and underwear on for some reason. You'll probably do the same with *Sound Of Silver*. The infamous cowbells, hand claps and electric indie-disco beats are still here, as are the punk attitude and lyrics, especially on drum-heavy whoo-hoo anthem "Watch The Tapes" ("Read all the pamphlets/And watch the tapes/You turn 25/And now you're out of escapes"). What's new on *SOS* are the obvious influences blaring through. The album's piano-rock ballad closer, "New York I Love You," is an update on Bowie's "Rock 'N' Roll Suicide," and "All My Friends" is an intense New Order tribute. Traditional techno and Italiano-disco elements are also sewn through the indie dance record. Adding immensely to the carefully orchestrated chaos is the fact that Murphy seems to be having a lot of fun.

www.lcdsoundsystem.com—**Phil Villeneuve**
CCCC

ELVIS PERKINS *Ash Wednesday* (XL/Beggars)

This album would be well suited for a vinyl release. Side A would cover the relatively upbeat first half of this record, replete with acoustic strumming, the gang vocals of "May Day!" and the easygoing nighttime sway of "Moon Woman II." Side B would see a turn into mournful, dark, depressive introspection with more focus on solitary piano lines and the sighing strings of "It's A Sad World After All." This polarization represents Perkins' struggle to come to terms with the death of his mother in the 9/11 attacks. He has a mellow, pleasant voice that's paired with solid guitar skills and some lyrical panache. However, he often fails to stand out from the dearth of acoustic singer-songwriters. *Ash Wednesday* passes enjoyably, but easily fades into the background. Factoid: He's the son of Anthony Perkins, a.k.a. Norman Bates from *Psycho*.

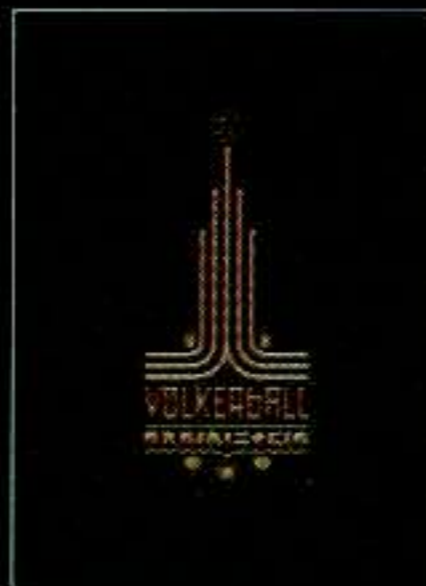
www.elvisperkins.net—**SW**
CC½

WAYNE PETTI *City Lights Align* (Outside)

Cuff The Duke frontman Wayne Petti has broken out of the Oshawa alt.country outfit as an acoustic singer-songwriter with this surprisingly low-key debut. As a troubadour, his vocal delivery is slight, airy and suited to this collection of innocuous tunes, which are mostly mournful or boyishly romantic in tone. Petti demonstrates a sense for musical drama during a few bouncy, foot-tappin' moments, but overall this album's impact is faintly felt. There's too much subtlety. "The Only Only One" and "I Wait" build slowly toward the odd flourish, but while we're waiting, we get the same guitar riff over and over, with limp vocals. Although this brand of balladeering is meant to be mellow, Petti should have mustered more emotion. www.outside-music.ca—**KR**
CC

POP LEVI *The Return To Form Black Magick Party* (Counter/Outside)

I get the distinct impression that Pop Levi is constantly glancing over his shoulder, keeping an



RAMMSTEIN *Volkerball* (Universal)

If you're a fan of Rammstein, you're probably a little upset that they rarely tour North America. However, you'll become absolutely livid after seeing them on *Volkerball*. Unless you're planning a trip to Europe in 2008 in time for the band's scheduled return, this is as close as you'll get to seeing their spectacular theatrics, seizure-inducing lighting effects and battering-ram fusion of metal, industrial and electronic music live. Plus, Rammstein's dazzling pyrotechnics display makes every other band's effort to play with fire on stage look like a singalong around a campfire.

—**AM** **CCCCC**

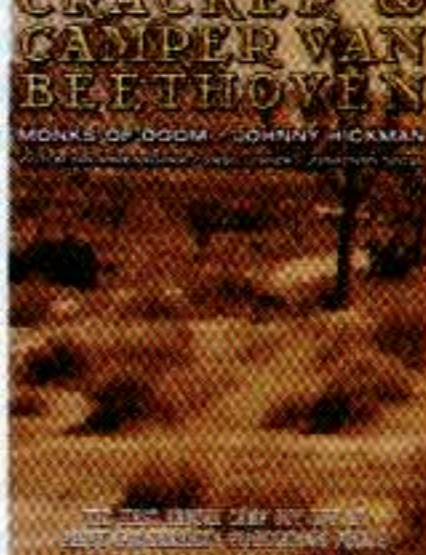
CHILDREN OF BODOM *Chaos Ridden Years Stockholm Knockout Live* (Spine Farm/Fontana North)

Children Of Bodom are about one album away from really making it big in North America's heavy metal scene, and it looks as though they're saving a great DVD release until then. So for now, COB fans will have to settle for *Chaos Ridden Years*, which includes a visually muggy yet solid live performance and a predominantly "talking head" documentary that doesn't reveal anything that diehards don't already know. You do get all the band's videos, but considering this is Bodom's first official DVD release, it lacks impact.

—**AM** **CCC**



CRACKER & CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN



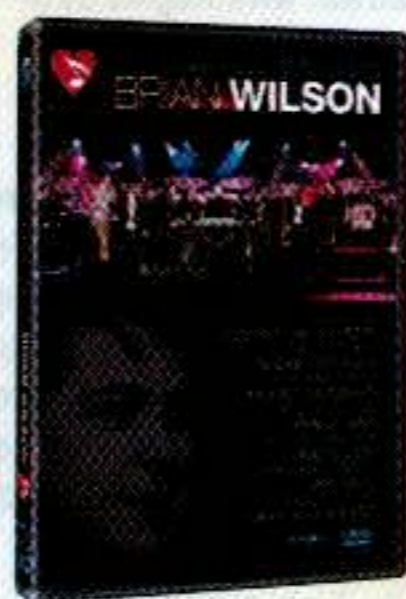
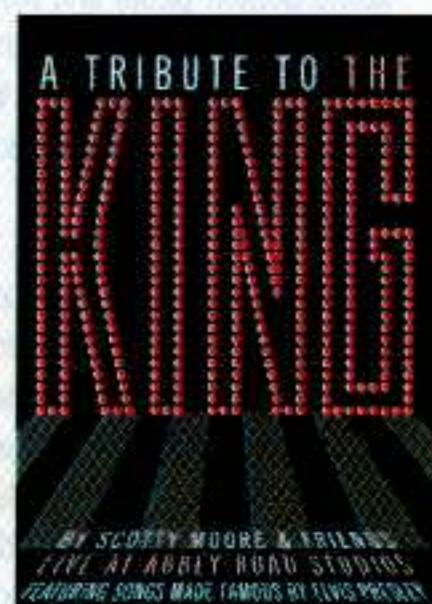
The First Annual Camp Out Live (MVD)

In the California desert in September 2005, David Lowery (Cracker, Camper Van Beethoven) launched the first annual Camp Out festival. In addition to the Lowery-fronted bands featured on this DVD, lesser members of each group and the Monks Of Doom side-project are unfortunately given a few songs each. While Cracker guitarist Johnny Hickman shines on his three acoustic numbers, the same can't be said for the others. So be happy to hear "Take The Skinheads Bowling," "Teen Angst" and "Low," but be prepared for lots of filler. The performances in front of a relatively small crowd are shot intimately, but the filming looks somewhat amateurish.

—**SM** **CC½**

A TRIBUTE TO THE KING BY SCOTTY MOORE AND FRIENDS (Universal)

How many more Elvis tributes does the world really need? Scotty Moore, Presley's friend and former guitar player, decided to ride the Elvis gravy train a few stops further with this get-together. The tribute focuses on old-school blues-rock played by the old masters. It's worth watching to see Presley classics performed by Eric Clapton, Mark Knopfler, David Gilmour, Bill Wyman and Ron Wood. But the rest is annoying filler by pseudo Elvis impersonators Paul Ansell and Mike Sanchez (Have you heard of them? Me neither) and a couple of shrivelled-up Brit blues guys who wish they were as famous as Clapton and the Stones. —**SW** **CCC**



MUSICARES PRESENTS: A TRIBUTE TO BRIAN WILSON (Eagle Vision)

Tribute concerts are always a hit-and-miss affair, and this one is no exception. Red Hot Chili Peppers covering "I Get Around" replete with full-on Beach Boys harmonies? Awesome. Richie Sambora singing "City Blues" accompanied by his wanky guitar playing and cheesy vocals? Not so much. And the Backstreet Boys are a little long in the tooth to pull off "When I Grow Up To Be A Man" without seeming a tad creepy. But Shelby Lynne, Barenaked Ladies, Darlene Love and, of course, Brian Wilson himself set the bar high. The legend's songs are so good that even when someone mangles them, they still turn out OK. —**SW** **CCC**