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whitewashed genre-bending doesn't have
the immediate appeal or focus of alums like
Underwood or Clarkson: It's Michael
McDonald's blue-eyed Motown one
moment and barking rocker the next. When
the show closes with the record's best, "The
Right Place," Hicks finally slips into his
comfort zone, though by then we've already
changed the channel. — **Nate Cavalleri**

Neil Young & Crazy Horse Live at the Fillmore East 1970

(Reprise)

For at least a dozen years, Neil Young fans
heard rumors of this album's release. Orig-
inally intended to be an addendum to a
never-released, 10-disc boxed set, *Live at
the Fillmore East 1970* is the first chance
many diehards have to hear Crazy Horse
live with original guitarist Danny Whiten,
who died of a heroin overdose in
1972. Though Whitten was often eulo-
gized by Young through the years, notably
on "Needle and the Damage Done" and
Tonight's the Night, this release feels like
the truest homage yet.

An electrifying rhythm guitarist, Whiten
provided the perfect foundation for
Young the axeman to fly off, exploring sin-
gle-note tangents, explosive solos, and foot-
stomping riffs — ingredients he's flavored
his music with ever since. The perform-
ances here are absolutely transcendent,
with Whitten's country-soul harmonies
giving Young's high-pitched whinny the
bottom end it needed at the time. Some
might balk at another live album from
Young featuring "Cowgirl in the Sand" and
"Down by the River," but a spiritedness
propels this music; it's that burst of anx-
iousness an artist feels when he knows he's
fulfilling his goals. And in the case of Neil
Young & Crazy Horse in 1970, they accom-
plished what so few do: They explored
uncharted territory. — **Brian J. Barr**

covers: "Subterranean Homesick Blues,"
"Loop De Loop," "Rock Around the Clock,"
and the arresting opener, a weeping version
of Jimmy Cliff's "Too Many Rivers to
Cross," on which Walkmen singer Hamil-
ton Leithauser transforms his gravelly voice
into a bed of jagged slate.

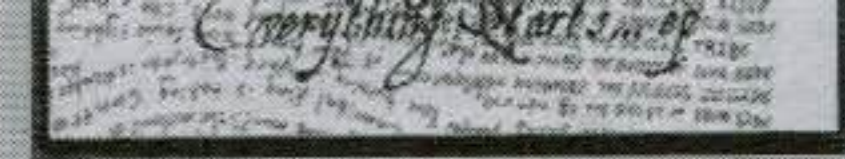
The centerpiece remains, of course,
Nilsson's own "All My Life," an upbeat ditty
that brings a greasy, Bizet-like string section
into the shenanigans. They call the original
the ultimate buddy album of the '70s. Well,
the updated version is a pal to lost week-
enders everywhere. — **Jason Harper**

Various Artists Santa Baby

(Starbucks Hear Music)

Starbucks peddles more than gingerbread
lattes during the holiday season. The
omnipresent coffeehouse also issues one of
the more reliable Christmas compilations.
But unlike previous editions, *Santa Baby*
doesn't emphasize the kitsch. Though it
still maintains the series' hip mix of the old
and new — despite such missteps as Sarah
McLachlan's warbly tribute to Joni
Mitchell, Diana Krall's forced phrasing on
"Sleigh Ride," and Sinatra's melodramatic
rendition of "The Christmas Song."

In contrast, Dean Martin gets all nice
'n' loose on the lost nugget "Christmas
Blues," saving the production from
overzealous strings. Meanwhile, Peggy
Lee, Billie Holiday, and Eartha Kitt croon
classic carols, and the new girls on the
block hold their own. Aimee Mann drifts
gracefully through "I'll Be Home for
Christmas." And Pink Martini's "Little
Drummer Boy" opens with bubbling bongo
drums and swooning vocals from China
Forbes. The exclusive track then grows
incrementally, with layers of Cuban jazz
that are hot as a fire and cooler than any
known version of "Frosty." — **D.X. Ferris**



Wounded creatures can be the
most dangerous. Take Lovedrug:
The Canton group's elaborate
indie pop, featuring frontman
Matthew Shepard's warbly, high-
pitched croon and lead piano,
sounds tougher than most modern
rock. Not only does his take on
Nirvana's "Heart Shaped Box"
invite comparisons to Jeff Buckley
it also sounds as disarmingly frac-
tured as the original.

This is par for the course when
listening to Lovedrug's shimmering
new EP, a sampler of an upcoming
LP (liner notes promise it'll be out
by February) that's far more emo-
tive than any emo and harder-rock-
ing than Radiohead has been this
century. And though the band has
since shuffled its lineup, this disc
features the original rhythm section
of bassist Adam Ladd and drummer
Matthew Putman. Letting them
leave must have been tough, but a
guy who can lay down anything as
beefy as the bass line from "Ameri-
can Swimming Lesson" can do
whatever he wants. — **Ferris**

Lovedrug CD release, with Brandtson.
Sunday, December 10, at the Lime Spider
in Akron.

Bizzy Bone Live in Concert DVD

(MVD)

If the three albums he's dropped
this year haven't kept you Bizzy
enough, then a live DVD from the
estranged Bone Thugs-N-Harmony
MC should be just the thing. Unfor-
tunately, that volume of product
suggests Bizzy's become a fans-only
proposition, and this amalgam of
two live shows from 2005 (one of
them a hometown gig at Peabody's)
confirms it. Tinny audio and abrupt
segues sell short some deserving
solo hits, including a still-impres-
sive trio of tunes from Bizzy's 1998
debut, *Heaven's Movie*.

The best feature is the between-
songs, backstage freestyling that's
sometimes funny and occasionally
inspired. But even those bonus
rhymes from Bizzy's machine-gun
tongue aren't enough to make this a
suitable Christmas gift for anyone but
the BT&H completist. — **Dan LeRoy**

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Kelly Price, "God's Gift (To the World)"
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What's Moving

Top 10 sellers at Bent Crayon (11600 Detroit Avenue)
for November 27 to December 3:

1. Michael Mayer, *Immer 2* (Kompakt)
2. Kode9 & Spaceape, *Memories of the Future* (Hyperdub)
3. Joanna Newsom, *Ys* (Drag City)
4. Thomas Brinkmann, *Klick Revolution* (Max Ernst)
5. Ricardo Villalobos, *Fizheuer Zieheuer* (Playhouse)
6. Prurient, *Pleasure Ground* (Load)
7. Various Artist, *Warrior Dubz* (Planet μ)
8. Jeff Samuel, *Step* (Trapez)
9. Sunn 0)))/Boris, *Altar* (Southern Lord)
10. Animal Collective, *Hollinndagain* (Paw Tracks)