

Timbaland on this track, "Outta My Head" evokes the '80s electro that Kenna dropped on his Chad Hugo-produced debut while unapologetically aping Gwen Stefani's first solo disc's weirdness. But little Ashlee isn't actually weird, and while the production is cool and the video expensive, her vocal performance is so contrived you wonder if the girl has any real feelings. Supposedly Santogold and the Neptunes appear elsewhere on the album, which pretty much confirms that Simpson's next foray into pop stardom will be a well-designed collection of music someone else should have gotten the right to perform. **Zel McCarthy**
File under: Stacy Q, Samantha Fox, Gwen Stefani



Sunny Day Sets Fire / "Stranger"

Remix EP (IAMSOUND) In advance of their debut album, UK indie-uber-pop band Sunny Day Sets Fire have wisely offset their fairly ordinary lead single with appearances by The Slips, CSS, and the Cool Kids. Each provide a mix of "Stranger" or another album track for many who might otherwise be uninterested in the band. Sounding like a drug-induced pop heavy, demonic possession, the CSS remix of "Wilderness" is very good. The Cool Kids, however, take home the prize for the best treatment of the EP's title track. The mix, sounding remarkably similar to the generic theme of a medieval 8-bit Nintendo-era RPG, is disjointed in a creepy sort of way, but still a worthwhile and entertaining haunt. Even if you don't like the originals, the replicates are diverse, sexy and worth your attention.

Alex Steed

File under: Junior Senior, Teenagers in Tokyo, Lush



Switches / "Lay Down The Queen" (Crystal Castles Remix)

(Degenerate/Interscope) This isn't so much a remix as it is a mashup of two tracks, "Lay Down The Law" and "Drama Queen." Both are pelvic thrusting adrenaline-rushing rockers in their maiden form, but Crystal Castles' Ethan Kath pitches down Switches' frontman Matt Bishop's lovely voice and slices and dices the two songs within an inch of their lives. This is effectively a Crystal Castles track that samples Switches tracks. It's not bad, but we're concerned that maybe it's just impolitic? **Zel McCarthy**

DVDs

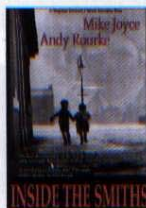
reviews by Darren Ressler



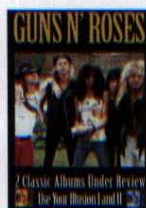
Control: Joy Division Film (Genius Products) Anton Corbijn's much celebrated account of Joy Division's Ian Curtis is a stunning, wonderfully directed biopic. Corbijn's moody black and white style captures the essence of Manchester in the '70s and masterfully details Curtis' life, from a frustrated boy who listened to Bowie albums alone in his bedroom to husband to the force behind one of the most important bands of the 20th century. Actor Sam Riley's portrayal is gripping and intense, while never forgetting to show Curtis' essence in a telling way. Bonus footage includes interviews with the late Tony Wilson, New Order and Pete Shelley from the Buzzcocks are equally was fascinating.



The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story (MVD Visual) John Edginton's 2006 documentary detailing the rise of Pink Floyd pays special attention to the brilliance of the late Syd Barrett, who was responsible for infusing psychedelia into much of the band's early recordings. Edginton presents telling interviews with members Roger Waters and David Gilmour, who freely discuss Barrett's fragile state. Noted rock photographer Mick Rock paints an even more vivid portrait of the artist, who eventually lived the rest of his life in silent seclusion from the press and his fans. This DVD also include three acoustic performances of Barrett's songs; one by Robyn Hitchcock, the other from ex-Blur member Graham Coxon.



Inside The Smiths (MVD Visual) Can you imagine what the '80s would've been like without The Smiths? This is the rhetorical question that this decent documentary attempts to answer on footage shot in the UK, Europe and America over the course of three years. Through candid interviews with members Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke (The Other Two, as many have call them), the duo provide interesting firsthand accounts of the band's birth and its sudden end at a chip shop. Though some of the editing is a bit corny, this is an essential viewing for anyone who prays at the alter of gloom and doom.



Guns N' Roses / Two Classic Albums Under Review: Use Your Illusion I and II (Sexy Intellectual) While the world waits (and waits) for a new album from Guns N' Roses to materialize, true fans will have to take what they can get. This DVD examines the band's classic double-set through the eyes of journalists, local DJs and those who were on the LA scene before the band blew up. Though we're presently with some "rare" backstage footage and "seldom seen" photographs, this set doesn't shed all the much insight into one of rock's most important albums.