



Dwight Yoakam



MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO

The World Has Made Me the Man of My Dreams ● EmArcy

In **Meshell Ndegeocello's** universe, planets are ethereal beats, spare melodies and odd time signatures that expand and contract like the soundtrack to a journey through the cosmos. Leading off with an echoey warning about the future of music, movement and sex against a backdrop of electronic sound, "Hidatha"'s out-there ambience is a misleading premise given the album's accessible mix of jazz, metal and rock. "The Sloganeer: Paradise" adds **Scott Mann** and **Chad Royce's** new wavey beats to a dark admonition about suicide and desire. Other tracks showcase the breathiest spectrum of Ndegeocello's vocal skills, her voice employing the same delicate R&B vibe she applies to her guitar, bass and organ work. Despite a predominance of delicate, clean rhythms, the music can also get manic, ("Article 3") as collaborators **Pat Metheny** and **Robert Glasper** recall their fusion chops or when "Shirk" benefits from **Omou Sangare's** hauntingly high-strung voice. Channeling a post-punk universe of drum programming, dark emotions and weighty ideas about faith and existence, the album lives up to the bonus track's title, "Soul Spaceship." ★ *Jennifer Odell*



DWIGHT YOAKAM

Dwight Sings Buck ● New West

Dwight Yoakam is a popular country artist, but one who walks the fine line between mainstream commercialism and laid-back cool. Yoakam goes for—and attains—cool on his latest outing, following the classic country album tribute of recreating the music of a dead icon, in this case his friend Buck Owens. This works because Owens wasn't the typical country crooner or honky tonk warbler either. He was the first real pop country artist, melding West Texas swing with electric California rock glitter into the "Bakersfield Sound," arguably the first real alternative to Nashville country. Yoakam adds his own flare, yet remains fairly faithful to that sound. "Act Naturally," a hit for The Beatles, skips along on twangy guitar and vocal warbles, while the borderline yodeling on "Down on the Corner of Love" adds a homey feel. With sleepy pedal steel over crackling voice, "Crying Time" becomes the loneliest place on the planet. In all, the 15 tracks here represent but a tiny piece of Owens' catalog, but each receives the royal treatment it deserves. ★ *Glenn BurnSilver*

photo: Randee St. Nicholas

VITAL Viewing



THE PINK FLOYD AND SYD BARRETT STORY ●

Zeit Media

The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story is the most comprehensive documentary detailing the early days of the band and Barrett's solo work to date, making the elusive specter of Pink Floyd ironically more mortal in the wake of his passing. The interviews include perspectives from all of the members of Floyd plus former managers, friends and associates of the band giving a well-rounded insight into both his genius and the realities of his tragic condition. The documentary includes rare early footage from the heyday of the London psychedelic scene and photo stills, most of which will be new to even the most fanatic Floyd fans. In addition to the documentary, the two-disc set includes performances of Barrett songs by Blur guitarist Graham Coxon and Robyn Hitchcock, plus extended interviews and a brief biography of Barrett. ★ *Rebecca Carter*



THE BEATLES

Help! ● Apple

Freshly minted stoners all, The Beatles bounce, chirp and giggle through a crisply restored print of *Help!*, their 1965 madcap caper flick. The plot—in which exotified Eastern death cultists pursue Ringo and lads around the globe—is flimsier by the year, but the Fabs' charisma carries Charles Wood's charming dialogue. With former *Goon Show* collaborator and surrealist comrade Richard Lester directing, the band's glee pops in hyper-rich '60s color as they romp through battlefields, mad scientists' lairs, and their tone-coded bachelor pad and occasionally find excuses to play songs. A bonus DVD adds obligatory making-of featurettes and teases with stills of an excised scene, but scrapes bottom with a drab documentary about the restoration process and interviews with, er, George's stuntman. Not as legitimately arty as the previous year's *Hard Day's Night*, *Help!* still excites. ★ *Jesse Jarrow*