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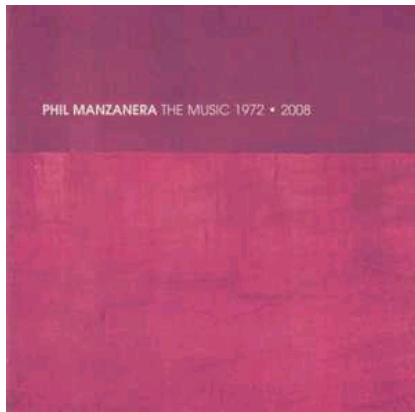
Thursday, Nov. 11, 2010
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Manzanera selects his best, The Cringe shakes the shack, plus 2 cool books

This week, I'm presenting a career-spanning collection from ace guitarist/producer Phil Manzanera, a "playful" effort from The Cringe and two books that gift-giving readers may find appealing for music fans from different camps.

'The Music 1972-2008,' Phil Manzanera (Expression Records/MVDaudio, HHHH)

Some readers know Phil Manzanera as Roxy Music's guitarist, a tasteful player who served the songs without hogging the spotlight and also produced songs/albums for others. Others know him from his solo work and some of the aforementioned projects. This collection released Oct. 5 shows both sides on two CD audio discs and a documentary DVD.



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There is such a wide variety of songs and musical genres represented here that I lean toward the Roxy material while wondering why some favorites ("Love is the Drug," "More Than This," "Jealous Guy" and "Just Another High" among them) weren't included. However, "Manifesto," "Over You," "Running Wild," "Take a Chance With Me," "Amazona" and "Out of the Blue" are cool cuts that show Phil's guitar, Andy Mackay's sax and Bryan Ferry's voice off to good effect.

Disc two features both instrumental and vocal tunes from Manzanera's post-Roxy career. The instrumentals are more fun because Phil's regular-guy voice doesn't hamper them. Highlights include the Zappa/blues-flavored "Green Spikey Cactus," the atmospheric "Mystic Moon" and the charging "6PM."

The DVD presents an informative Phil interview plus several performances, including one from the 50th anniversary of the Fender Stratocaster and scenes from "Guitar Legends."

Roxy Music and international guitar fans will enjoy this combo.

'Play Thing,' The Cringe (Listen Records, HHHH)

It was a busy summer for New York rock combo The Cringe —singer/songwriter/guitarist John Cusimano, lead guitarist James Rotondi (ex-Air, Mr. Bungle), bassist Jonny Matias (ex-Crash Moderns) and drummer Shawn Pelton ("Saturday Night Live" Band, Springsteen) — and their activity is accelerating heading into fall. Since the June 8 release of their third album, "Play Thing," they've kept busy on the road, online and in the media.

The Cringe's music is hard-hitting, but there are more hooks than many "modern rock" or "alternative" releases. Highlights include the propulsive "Ride," the harmony-laden "Knee Deep," the blazing "Where It Hurts," the snotty "Friends & Family" and the gritty "Give and Take."

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 - Education
 - Environment
 - Gas prices
 - Hurricane
 - Insurance
 - Katrina
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 - News Updates
 - Obituaries
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 - Transportation
 - Neighbors
 - Upload photos
- WORLD / NATION**
 - Elections
 - Nation
 - Top of the Wire
 - Weird News
 - World
- SPORTS**
 - Brett Favre
 - Colleges
 - Columnists
 - Golf
 - High School
 - Hornets
 - LSU
 - Mississippi State
 - MLB
 - Motorsports
 - NCAA
 - NFL
 - Ole Miss
 - Outdoors
 - Saints
 - Scoreboard
 - Scores & More
 - Sea Wolves
 - Southern Miss
 - Tennis
 - That's Racin'
- BUSINESS**
 - Casinos
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 - Financial Markets
 - Money Savers
 - Personal Finance
 - Physician's and Healthcare Directory
 - PR Newswire
 - Tax Tips
 - Wire
- ENTERTAINMENT**
 - Calendar Of Events
 - Celebrities
 - Comics
 - Games
 - Horoscopes
 - Marquee
 - Movies
 - Music
 - Television

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- @Home
- Food
- Horoscopes
- Columnists
- Arts
- Books
- Celebrities
- Comics
- Games
- Events
- Faith & Values
- Food
- Health & Fitness

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- Opinion
- Sound Off
- Letters
- Blogs
- Columnists
- Forums

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- Jobs
- Classifieds
- Cars
- Real Estate
- Apartments
- Online Ads
- Better Health & Living
- Yellow Pages
- Ask the Expert
- South Mississippi Store

- Horoscopes
 - Love & Relationships
 - Marquee
 - Movies
 - Music
 - Neighbors
 - Obituaries
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