



## DEAN ALGER

*The Legendary Lonnie Johnson*

Author Alger comes through with a long-needed biography of the great Lonnie Johnson, firmly cementing his place in jazz and blues history. And as a guitarist as well, Alger is adept at analyzing Johnson's music and contributions to guitar history. — MD



## SELWYN BIRCHWOOD

*Don't Call No Ambulance*

There's a whole new generation of bluesmen that would seem to indicate the music will survive just fine; with this debut, Birchwood may be at the forefront. Hard-edged Albert King-style blues mix with boogie and some minor-key excursions that would make Tom Waits smile, all highlighted by Birchwood's guitar and vocal expertise, signaling an artist who can carry the torch. — JH



## FO' REEL

*Heavy Water*

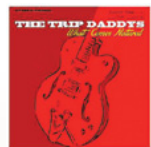
A gathering of veterans including long-time Dr. John and Nevilles bassist David Barard and guitarist/writer Mark Domizio. This kind of shindig works best built around classic gems, but some of Domizio's originals, like the rhythmically dreamy "What Can I Do" — written with sublime vocalist C.P. Love — are engaging. — RA



## WILLIE NELSON

*Band of Brothers*

Nine of these 14 songs are new originals Nelson co-wrote with producer Buddy Cannon, with two by Billy Joe Shaver and a revival of Vince Gill's 1994 hit "Whenever You Come Around." At 81, Nelson's voice shows his age but retains its power amid austere arrangements. The guitar moments come from Nelson and Bobby Terry as well as steel guitarists Tommy White and Mike Johnson. — RK



## THE TRIP DADDYS

*What Comes Natural*

St. Louis stalwarts return with a brash blend of rockabilly originals and recast covers, such as Bill Monroe's "Rocky Road Blues" and Ray Charles' "What'd I Say." Leader and guitarman Craig Straubinger's riffing and vocals power the trio. — MD



## MIRANDA LAMBERT

*Platinum*

Lambert's elemental, tough-minded performances retain her characteristic edge and twang on 16 well-crafted tunes fusing modern honky-tonk and rockabilly, plus a straight-ahead western swinger backed by Nashville's Time Jumpers.

Producers Frank Liddell, Chuck Ainlay, and Glenn Worf maintain consistency by using a core session band with Worf on bass and guitarists Randy Scruggs, Richard Bennett, Jay Joyce, and Greg Leisz. — RK



## CHRIS SMITHER

*Still On the Levee*

Celebrating 50 years in music, New Orleans-raised singer-songwriter icon Smither delivers a two-CD retrospective of folk and blues. Packaged in a stylish folder with oversize lyrics book, the double album is a worthy tribute to an ongoing career. — MD



## CRAZY ACES

*Surfadelic Spy-a-Go-Go*

Nashville super-surf-group is back with more spy themes, noir jazz, Japanese eleki, rockabilly, and all-round funky-cool instrumentals. Guitarists Jeff Senn and Kiwamu Stewart lead the riffing. — MD



## MICHAEL STANLEY

*The Job*

Stanley's latest is more of the meat-and-potatoes rock and roll he's always been known for — in the best sense of the term. Well-written songs, great vocals, and fine guitar work from

Stanley and Bob Powers push the music. It's an introspective record that manages to rock and provoke thought at the same time. — JH



## STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND VARIOUS ARTISTS

*A Celebration of Blues and Soul*

This DVD (with an extra hour of never-before-seen concert footage) of the 1989 Presidential Inaugural Concert includes SRV and brother Jimmie, Bo Diddley, Albert Collins, Dr. John, Sam Moore, Billy Preston, Koko Taylor, Percy Sledge, and more. Need we say more? — MD



## DAVE KELLER

*Soul Changes*

Another winner from Keller, who keeps a retro soul vibe while still sounding new and fresh. The first six cuts find him at Willie Mitchell's Royal Recording Studio in Memphis with many of the folks who made that studio hum, including guitarist Teenie Hodges. Back to Brooklyn for the last five tunes doesn't change anything with more great songs and performances. — JH



## RICHARD THOMPSON

*Acoustic Classics*

Thompson revisits 14 of his own songs, recasting them as solo acoustic tunes. The sound is glorious, the feeling intimate, the new versions luminous. — MD