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FEATURED REVIEW:



[Bon Jovi](#) - *Lost Highway* (2007)

For 20 years, we cannot say that Bon Jovi was particularly effective from a creative

point of view. Except perhaps for [Crush](#) released in 2000, few albums really succeeded in catching the attention of critics. Despite everything, the group continued to sell millions of albums and to fill arenas on tour (with concerts based on their material of the Eighties of course). The coming of *Lost Highway* thus left me rather indifferent and this is why I awaited a hollow in the release of major albums to write some lines about it. At first, this new record can seem adventurous whereas the group makes a crossing between its usual hard rock style and contemporary country music. It's an interesting mixture which makes the group progress in a beautiful way. On the other hand, the band remains to its best when it presents catchy pop melodies like it's the case for the title-song, the ballad "(You Want To) Make A Memory" and "Whole Lot Of Leavin'". Obviously, one still finds a batch of unbearable ballads which became their trademark. As a whole, *Lost Highway* is far from being a bad album, but it will not make it possible yet for the group to change the face of music. At least, they tried to move forward.



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FEATURED NEW ARTIST:



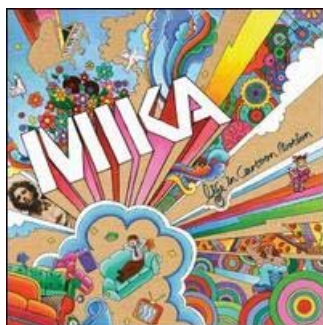
[The Good, The Bad & The Queen](#) - *The Good, The Bad & The Queen* (2007)

Whereas **Gorillaz** worked on its 2nd album, [Demon Days](#), its leader, **Damon Albarn**, began this side project to return to his London roots. In fact, one finds more links with the group which made him famous, **Blur**. He's surrounded here by the legendary bass player of [The Clash](#), **Paul Simonon**, guitarist of **The Verve**, **Simon Tong**, as well as drummer **Tony Allen**. **Danger Mouse**, a former collaborator of Gorillaz, ensures the production of the album which pricks already curiosity before we have even heard only one chord of it. Musically, the record offers a rather slow beat, filled of melancholy, where Albarn's piano occupies an important place. Few titles distinguish truly from the batch which can seem deadening at first and can thus discourage certain listeners. On the other hand, it's about an excellent album which the fans of Damon Albarn and his various projects will like undoubtedly. Don't miss next month my review of the album by Gorillaz, [D-Sides](#).



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OTHER CD REVIEWS:



Mika - *Life In Cartoon Motion* (2007)

From the issue of the album one year ago, and its first single, "Grace Kelly", the British pop singer born in Lebanon, Mika, has an incredible success almost everywhere around the world. This success continued with the following singles: "Love Today", "Big Girl (You Are Beautiful)" and "Relax (Take It Easy)", certainly the best tracks of the CD with "My Interpretation". A perfect mixture between **Elton John** and **Scissor Sisters**, Mika offers merry, energetic and dancing music, a sound which is thus perfect for FM radio. Even if it offers very good moments of surprising creativity, it remains that some songs somewhat have difficulties to follow the others on that territory. Despite everything, this is a particularly pleasant album to listen to and it has very good pop moments.



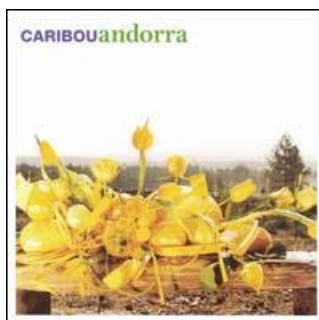
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Dolores O'Riordan - *Are You Listening?* (2007)

Since the break-up of the **Cranberries** in 2001, singer Dolores O'Riordan was rather discrete. It's because during the last years, she was devoted to her family, before returning into the studio in 2006 for her first solo album. In spring of 2007, she thus offered us *Are You Listening?*, a record of a great maturity. One can hear a sound which is not so different from what she did with her former band, even if rock sounds are passably left aside. It's rather in pop melodies and atmospheres that she points out the sound which made her famous. The addition of orchestrations and complex arrangements gives certain majesty to this record which doesn't have anything intimate. Thanks to all her experiment from the past, Dolores O'Riordan thus presents us an album of a great solidity which will seduce undoubtedly her fans from the beginning. A very good first solo album!





[Caribou](#) - *Andorra* (2007)

Caribou is in fact a guy by himself in the studio, **Dan Snaith**, becoming a quartet on stage. They play an indie pop/electronic sound most of the time soft and rather creative which reminds us of the Californian pop sound of the Sixties (**Beach Boys**, **The Mamas & The Papas**). Named **Manitoba** before, Caribou is now presenting its 2nd album, its more accomplished at this time. As soon as at the opening track, "Melody Day", we can certainly hear the best composition of Snaith's career. The very particular atmosphere of the CD will involve us without any problems until the end of the 9 excellent songs adding up 43 minutes. I acknowledge that I didn't wait for anything in particular to the listening of *Andorra*, but I was very impressed by it. To be discovered...

[Merge](#)



[Daft Punk](#) - *Alive 2007* (2007)

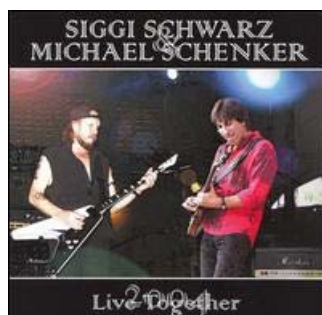
Here is the 2nd live album for Daft Punk, 10 years after *Alive 1997* which was possibly the best electronic concert album ever issued. Recorded at the Omnisport Palace in Paris Bercy in June 2007, this new album by the French duo presents obviously all of their greatest hits ("Around The World", "Harder Better Faster Stronger", "One More Time", "Da Funk", and so on). They all are admirably mixed together during 74 minutes over which we can hear the crowd react on several occasions to the concert they are attending. Whereas the previous live album presented a handle of tracks only but stretched very much, here we can count 5 times more tracks, very often curtailed and being used only as transition towards another. The pieces from the album [Human After All](#) seem to take again a place of choice in this context, even if little among them dissociates truly from the batch. The few titles a little weaker than we can hear scattered a little everywhere throughout the concert make so that *Alive 2007* cannot be included in the same category than the first album of the series, but it's anyway a very good concert album. The deluxe edition includes a 2nd CD containing the 10-minute encore of the concert (with "Human After All", "Together", "One More Time (Reprise)")

and "Music Sounds Better With You"). There is also a bonus video presenting the track "Harder Better Faster Stronger". The whole is offered to us in a very beautiful book with rigid cover containing several photographs of the concert.

[Virgin / EMI](#)



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[Siggis Schwarz](#) & [Michael Schenker](#) – *Live Together 2004* (2007)

Siggis Schwarz and Michael Schenker are 2 German electric guitar virtuosos specialized in the hard rock from the Seventies and the Eighties. The second played among others with **UFO**, **Scorpions** (he is the brother of **Rudolph**), **Contraband** and **Michael Schenker Group (MSG)**. Accompanied by singer-bass player **Martin Hesener** and drummer **Bernd Elsenhans**, they joined forces for this concert recorded in December 2004 in Heidenheim in Germany. They play some of their favorite songs, starting with the classic from the **Kinks**, "You Really Got Me". One finds also several titles from **Free** and **Bad Company**, as well as 3 tracks from UFO. The sound, which was not re-arranged in studio, is particularly great whereas the mixing places the 2 guitars well ahead, always played to perfection. The fans of hard rock from the Seventies which appreciate electric guitar will have the ears full with this brilliant duo.

[MVD](#)



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[The Great Kat](#) - *Worship Me Or Die!* (1987) (2007 re-edition)

Katherine Thomas was born in England, but grew up in Long Island, New York. After having taken piano and violin courses at a very young age, she studied classical music before converting to heavy metal. Guitar virtuoso, she quickly specialized in speed metal with the ambition of transforming classical music into metal. Her first album, *Worship Me Or Die!*, issued in 1987 but re-edited 20 years later, contains music truly violent. Entirely based on never-ending guitar solos, her music can quickly become cacophonous with many changes of beats, a noisy drum and a throaty voice not really seducing. Her

lyrics like to provoke ("Death To You", "Satan Goes To Church", "Kill The Mothers") and throughout the album, we really have the feeling she was trying to exorcise all her demons and she found the way to do that without taking the time of going in subtlety. It's thus an album which is located somewhere between the hard rock of **Yngwie Malmsteen** and **Lillian Axe**, the thrash metal of **Metal Church** and **Anthrax** and the burst madness of **Green Jelly** and **Gwar**. Musically, one cannot say that it truly is successful, but for an interesting mixture of virtuosity and craziness, *Worship Me Or Die!* can likely do the work. Don't miss next month my review of her 2nd album, *Beethoven On Speed*, also re-edited in 2007.

[Metal Mind](#) / [MVD](#)



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DVD REVIEWS:



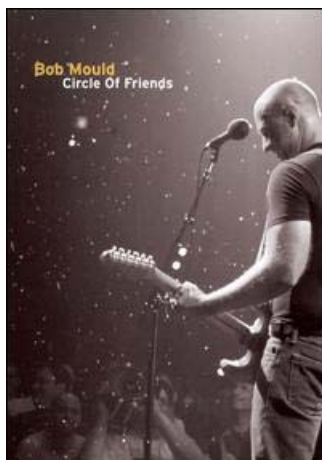
[Finger Eleven](#) - *Us Vs Then Vs Now* (DVD + CD) (2007)

Here is the first DVD for this Canadian alternative band. It contains 2 performances captured in Toronto and Vancouver in 2007 which enable us to discover all their energy on stage. There's also a whole list of archive tracks including some in concert, performances at MuchMusic (with one from the time of **Rainbow Butt Monkeys**), interviews and their videos. You will thus hear all there their hits in a form or another: "Good Times", the ballad "One Thing", "First Time", "Paralyzer" and so on. A CD is also included and it contains 14 rarities: never released songs, demo versions and a remix of "Sick Of It All". The main disadvantage of the package is that we can hear many different things all mixed up together. On the other hand, what is presented here makes an excellent overview of the group's career, and the fans as well as the neophytes who will want to discover them will like it as much. *Us Vs Then Vs Now* has definitely much content for our money!

[Wind-up](#) / [Warner](#)



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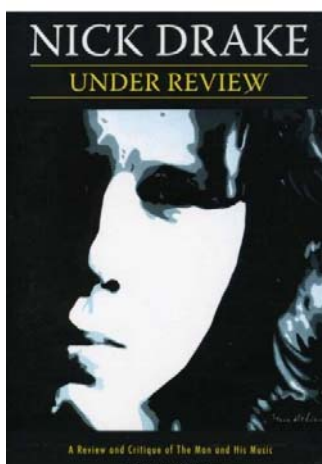


Bob Mould - *Circle Of Friends* (2007)

Captured at 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C. on October 7, 2005, this concert by Bob Mould was released on DVD exactly 2 years later. For his first concert to be offered on DVD, he is surrounded by keyboardist **Richard Morel (Morel)**, bass player **Jason Narducy (Rockets Over Sweden, Verbow)** and drummer **Brendan Canty (Fugazi)**. Chemistry settles greatly between the 4 musicians and Mould benefits from it to offer us the best of his entire career. He indeed draws in the material by **Hüsker Dü** and **Sugar** including his whole solo career until [Body Of Song](#), his latest album (at the time of the concert). Mould is not very talkative but he's full of energy and he connects 23 tracks during more than 90 minutes. Lightings can seem sometimes aggravating, but anyway the entire place is left for the music in this excellent concert which will charm his fans from the beginning. A 10-minute documentary begins the DVD and makes some kind of an introduction to the musicians. Don't miss next month my review of Mould's most recent release, [District Line](#), his first album for the Anti label.



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Nick Drake - *Under Review* (2007)

Completely unknown during his short career, Nick Drake became a true legend after his death of an overdose of antidepressants in 1974, whereas he was only 26 years old. On his 3 albums, he was able to reinvent British folk rock in a very "English" single style, thanks to his voice as well as his guitar. This DVD makes an excellent retrospective on

his life and career, showing at the same time at which point he influenced the future generations. The unauthorized documentary of 90 minutes presents comments by various journalists, musicians and friends, who were close to Drake or who were inspired by him. One can also hear various extracts of his music, in addition to seeing a great number of photographs. *Under Review* is a very good way of discovering a little more on Nick Drake.

Sexy Intellectual / [MVD](#)



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OTHER NEW FINDINGS:

[The Fratellis](#) - *Costello Music* (2006)

The first album by this excellent indie rock band from Scotland. We can hear a very good energy which is making a first record particularly exciting.



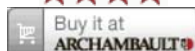
[Rob Zombie](#) - *Educated Horses* (2006)

It took 5 years to Rob Zombie to come back with a new album. *Educated Horses* presents good moments, but some tracks sound like deja vu.



[Rush](#) - *Gold* (2006)

Double compilation of the greatest hits of Rush. The first CD includes the 70s and the second CD, the 80s. There are 29 tracks.



[Mano Negra](#) - *Best Of* (2005)

The ultimate compilation by the French band Mano Negra including its 24 best tracks in career in Spanish, French and English. We can hear as bonus track a 2005 version of "Out Of Time Man", and a 2nd CD counts 16 unreleased live tracks.



[John Lennon](#) - *Imagine* (DVD) (1988) (2005 re-edition)

A DVD presenting very well John Lennon in the 70s and also the **Beatles** with footage Lennon accumulated himself. A great DVD to discover the man and his former band.





Mana - *Esenciales: Sol, Luna, Eclipse* (2003)

Here are 3 compilations for the Mexican group Mana which are sold separately. *Sol* (Sun) gathers their best rock songs, *Luna* (Moon) contains their best ballads, whereas *Eclipse* makes a summary of the first 2 discs while emphasizing on the best of the best. It's thus obvious that *Eclipse* is the best compilation to have among the 3, except that if you want to go a little deeper, the 2 others become also interesting.

Sol: ★★★★★^{1/2} 

Luna: ★★★★★^{1/2} 

Eclipse: ★★★★★ 

Paulina Rubio - *Paulina* (2000)

The best album by the latin pop singer from Mexico Paulina Rubio, including the mega hit "Y Yo Siguo Aqui".

★★★★★^{1/2}

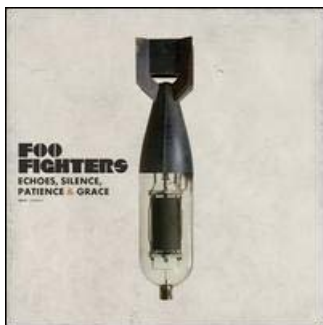

The Tragically Hip – *Fully Completely* (1992)

The best album by this Canadian band.

★★★★★


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REVIEWS COMING UP NEXT MONTH:



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- + Kylie Minogue - [X](#)
- Bob Mould - [District Line](#)
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