

the snacks

the deli's CD reviews

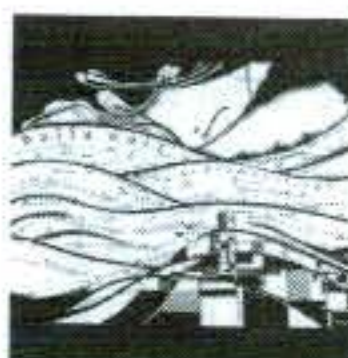


Rachael Sage Chandelier

Rachael Sage is sugary sweet and gentle with her wispy

vocals that waver and twinkle as she sings her hopeful romantic lyrics. Her music reminds one of early '90s singer-songwriter meets R&B meets gospel choir music. Flooding her songs with horns and smooth jazz drums, Sage writes songs that range from triumphant to soulful to new age hippie. With songs that drift from topics of being a touring musician ("Site-Seeing") to falling into a new relationship ("Moonlight & Fireflies"), Sage is able to place herself and her style in multiple settings throughout this album with unbelievable ease. Her personality and openness are clear in all of her songs: She does not hide behind a sound or persona. Sage allows herself to be an open book as well as a brilliant storyteller in "Chandelier," where her voice and instrumentals shimmer like thousands of reflected lights. -L.P.

www.rachaelsage.com



Bella Noir Premonitions

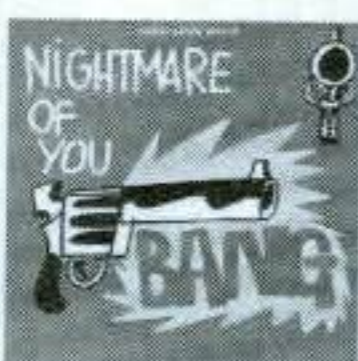
Like the tales of lust, betrayal and murder dominant in film noir, Bella

Noir (fittingly named) have a knack for channeling dark emotion, desperation and ethereal beauty. Each song on "Premonitions" bleeds sounds wrapped in the milieu of societal decay and human anguish—yet, somehow, there is an undercurrent of hope that ties everything together and keeps listeners from reaching for the nearest vice. "Try" opens with quiet contemplation; the bass moves indecisively, while the guitar and ambient keys search the musical horizon for something that, when it arrives, is a pre-chorus laced with otherworldly guitar texture and calming atmospherics. "On the Floor" has a build that sees Bella Noir preparing for apocalypse: Femme fatale singer Wilneida's sensual vocals sound cautious and aware of impending doom, and the ensuing sonic explosion halfway through confirms her premonition with distorted guitar and pounding drums that evoke both X and Siouxsie and the deli

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the Banshees. There's elements of shoegaze, punk and maybe some electro here, but all in all, Bella Noir taps into the dark recesses of the mind to find a beautifully grotesque sound that is all its own. -B.D.

www.bellanoirmusic.com



Nightmare of You Bang

Nightmare of You just left home to spread their upbeat

pop mixed with disco, punk and a little bit of twang across the States. The sweet and catchy melodies running throughout their songs are nicely balanced with heavy bass lines, and their head-bopping tunes contrast well with the rockin' breakdowns. Singer Brandon Reilly's voice has a touch of nasality that only grows more endearing, and after only three songs, he demonstrates his wide range and ability to add emotion into the most appropriate places. Guitarist Joseph McCaffrey has mastered the simple yet creative and engaging solo, and the whole band maintains a tight sound while transitioning from one style to the next. "Bang," their danciest number blending at least four genres, shows off their sexy side, while "Thumbelina," a power-pop love anthem, instantly takes on an Arcade Fire feel. Nightmare of You will make all Williamsburgers proud when they sing about Bedford Avenue to sold out venues in the future. -B.F.

myspace.com/nightmareofyou



Renminbi The Phoenix

Somewhere under Renminbi's fractured guitar onslaught and pulsating

synth stabs hides vocal soundscapes that ultimately elevate "The Phoenix" from its sparse, post-punk roots to a patchwork quilt of melodies that flow through the band's art-damaged fabric. Vocals only appear on six of the 11 tracks, but these are the songs that find the three-piece at its best. "Lachine" fills up in the middle

with a pop hook reminiscent—but not derivative—of Sleater-Kinney, and "Caveat" marries guitarist Lisa Liu's expressive playing to cathartic singing that builds to epic proportions. As for the instrumental aesthetics, "Siren" stands out as a prime example of Liu's seemingly free-form guitar playing; jagged riffs and dissonance hit the musical canvas like Jackson Pollock's paint drops, and "A Delay" channels Sonic Youth and Yo La Tengo but remains undeniably Renminbi. With such a promising full-length, it's hard not to feel excitement over the sonic barriers this up-and-coming band will break through next. -B.D.

www.renminbinyc.com



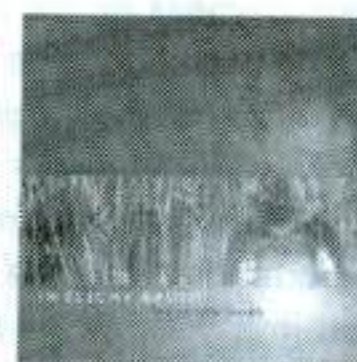
Steven Alvarado Let It Go

There's an excellent book, "I'll Take You There: Pop

Music and the Urge for Transcendence," that talks about music that tries to take the listener to a different emotional - almost spiritual - plane. Transcendence in music, the author argues, isn't necessarily a religious experience: It might just come in the form of a particularly gifted songwriter who can take a moment and make it so universal that it transforms into a truth. Steven Alvarado's latest effort, "Let It Go," definitely has its moments of managing to achieve this concept. "Let It Go" managed to pull this particular reviewer in from the very first riff of the opening track, "Get This Far" (not an easy task, by the way). How? It was a note-perfect homage reminiscent of David Bowie's iconic opening riff to "John, I'm Only Dancing." Transcendence in the form of Bowie, you ask? Why not? It certainly worked on Flight of the Conchords. But it's not just Bowie that Alvarado manages to (consciously or unconsciously) channel in this album.

Alvarado's voice is equal parts Tom Waits and Bruce Cockburn - deep gravel by the way of Leadbelly's "Goodnight, Irene." And when you manage to channel Leadbelly, you better believe you've achieved transcendence. -S.R.M.

www.stevenalvarado.com



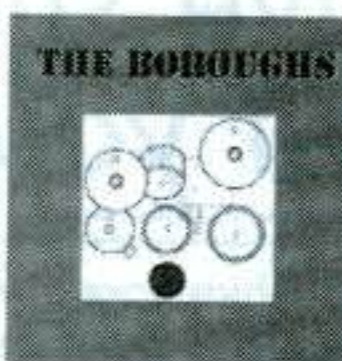
In Flight Radio The Sound Inside

In Flight Radio's sophomore CD, "The

Sound Inside" offers soothing tunes that suddenly burst with hope on life's many issues. It's a well-crafted album with infectious lyrics, a hard-hitting guitar matched with a peaceful, haunting voice from a woman debating over love and running away. "Red Flags" starts off slowly but is immediately shaken up by the female bandleader, who confidently holds high-pitched notes that can calm down even the most hardcore rocker. "Someday" starts off like a track right out of Bono's hidden collection. The lush, melodious tune carries Peira's angelic vocals and impulsive howls, showing one determined woman searching for what she desires. "Wait" is a hidden gem dominated by Saric's simple guitar strumming united with Mike Dawson's persistent drumming. Like a magical chant, the melody captures listeners with sad, whispery and hopeful vocals that don't shriek or beg for attention.

Pop divas should take note from this Brooklyn blonde. "The Sound Inside" may be too mellow for those itching to dance or headbang, but In Flight Radio proves that good music doesn't have to be overpowered by repeated hooks. -S.N.

www.inflightradio.net



The Boroughs Self-Titled

The Boroughs rarely write topical music—their songs

tend to be about getting dumped hanging out and playing rock 'n roll—but their full-length debut is a de facto treatise on local politics. Owing an obvious debt to hometown heroes the Ramones, the Queens-based trio is the antithesis of Brooklyn gentrification, trendy noise bands, silly fashions and the intellectualization of indie rock.

With the exception of several stylistic departures—the garage stomp of "Good Times" and haunted-house ska of "Another Sad Song," most notably—the