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2008

OPIATE FOR THE MASSES

Manifesto

Century Media 2008

"Opiate for the Masses hits hard and heavy from the get go. They inject plenty of power and anger into track after track of their latest album Manifesto. There are a few down-tempo tracks here and there, but their just as apocalyptic as the rest. However, I don't know how well their industrial feel will play out since that genre died out quickly here in the U.S."

[Official Site](#)

--George Dionne



out of 5

SAFETYSUIT

Life Left to Go

Universal Motown 2008

"Don't let the record label mislead you; this is a pop-rock record. The band couldn't have picked a better name, because their music is safe; safe for rock radio, pop radio, adult contemporary, and possibly Radio Disney. That's exactly what is wrong with it too. There's enough bands with this "safe" sound out there that there's no way you would recognize Safetysuit from the rest. They're even clean cut and what not. Don't get me wrong, they are good musicians, but they seem way too corporate."

[5 Questions with Safetysuit](#)

[Official Site](#)

--George Dionne



out of 5

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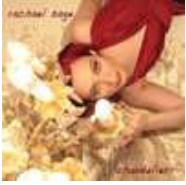
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RACHEL SAGE
Chandelier
Mpress 2008



"Okay, so Rachel's music isn't exactly my cup of tea, but there was something about this songstress that captivated me. Maybe it was how personal the lyrics were? Maybe it was the sweet tone and emotion in her voice? Maybe it was her skillful piano playing? Maybe it was those beautiful eyes of hers on the inside cover that hypnotized me? Actually, it was all of the above."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

ALESANA
Where Myth Fades to Legend
Fearless Records 2008

"It's emo meets screamo on the latest album by Alesana. What I want to know is who's buying this garbage? The two sounds are like night and day and don't work well together, at least in this case. Either whine and moan or growl like cookie monster. Poppy upbeat music cannot be mixed with hardcore vocals. And let's face it, whining is not singing. I know, there's an entire culture devoted to emo, but it's been played out already in music. The band even tries to seem prolific with their album titles, but that only makes a pure rock fan like me more annoyed with the album."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

JESSE JAMES DUPREE AND DIXIE INC***Rev It Up and Go-Go*****Mighty Loud Entertainment 2008**

"The name may not sound familiar, but I'm sure if you were around in the 80s, you remember the chainsaw. Jesse James is the lead singer of Jackyl. Sure, Jackyl wasn't as renowned as their hair metal contemporaries, but they were just as wild, raunchy, and energetic as the rest. In fact, I think they once held the World Record for most number of shows played in a day or week or something like that. So what does Jesse James sound like these days? The answer to that is pretty much the same. The guitars are rocking, Jesse is his cocksure gritty self on the microphone, and the song are simple and to the point. There is more of a country flair to his sound, but it doesn't overshadow the rock vibe. The skits are a little corny, but wasn't Jackyl a little corny anyway?"

Official Site

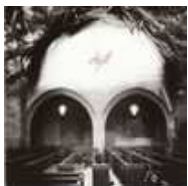
--George Dionne



out of 5

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM***Drift [Remastered]*****Metal Mind Music 2008**

"The band says *Cuatro* was their pinnacle, and a lot of fans agree. I however disagree. *Drift* is by far Flotsam and Jetsam's best work. It was their most mature effort and certainly one that could be appreciated outside the heavy metal genre that was associated with the group. I would liken it to Megadeth's *Youthanasia* or Metallica's black album. How the band did not get noticed after this album is beyond me.



The trash elements are still there, but the band itself shows how they improved as musicians and songwriters since *Doomsday for the Deceiver*. The songs deal with personal issues as well as issues facing everyone at the time. The Remastered edition (only 2000 made) includes a handful of bonus tracks. If you buy one Flotsam and Jetsam album, *Drift* is the one. Then go buy the rest!"

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

TIAMAT
Amanethes
Nuclear Blast Records 2008

"Prior to this I have only heard one Tiamat song, "Brighter Than the Sun." It's apparent that the one song I've heard is not a great representation of the group. Tiamat's latest is dark, haunting, and down-right brutal. Not the good fist-pumping brutal, but more of the 'God this sucks' kind of brutal. If you can decipher or pronounce the titles, you've already faired better than me. Beyond that, the concept is cloudy and the music is boring. There's no structure to the songs at all. It's almost as if the vocalist said to the band, you play something and I'll say what comes off the top of my head. "

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

STONERIDER
Three Legs of Trouble
Trustkill Records 2007

"Sex, drugs, and rock n roll! That sums up the debut album by the dirty southern-fried rockers Stone Rider. Vocalist Matt Tanner has the perfect gritty/raw tone that you look for in this style of music. Picture the Black Crowes meets Iggy Pop meets Jet (remember them?). Stonerider keeps the energy flowing from beginning to end. Their cover of "Hair of the Dog" is a little rough, but so many have covered it before them. It must come off killer live."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5



RADARS TO THE SKY
The Big Bang EP
Self-Released 2008

"Despite the slower, more contemplative opening song on this CD EP, the band soon settles into a more up tempo groove which highlights the bands song structures and minimalist textures. Just as the EP itself has a few

songs, the band's own songs are almost less than songs. Not in structure or detail, but that the band itself is seemingly fond of stripping everything away but the most essential elements.

While at first the effect of this choice almost overwhelms the songs, after adjusting to it one actually finds that it highlights the songs by allowing their nuances to be able to be heard with minimal fuss. Not a real party, pump-your-fist record to be sure, I am really excited about what this group has done and at least their style is different from the usual cookie-cutter sounds most bands put out there. Very interesting disc and I am looking forward to hearing more music from this group."

Official Site

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

TELEPATHIQUE

Love and Lust

Urban Jungle Records 2008

"Now, for something completely different! One name that seemed to keep popping up early in Brazilian funk circles was Sao Paulo's DJ Periferico, aka Érico Theobaldo - mostly due to his insanely cool remix of 'Dadinho' from the 'City Of God' soundtrack. Periferico also lent his production skills to other artists but he is now known for his work with vocalist Mylene Pires on this project. The music for this weird little deal seems to be an interesting mix of punk, rave, funk and electro all fighting it out for supremacy but no one style wins here as the resulting madness is too interesting to classify.

This new EP gives the rest of the world a chance to hear their intense music. I am not really a big fan of this type of music but I am really impressed with it and feel this may be a starting point for some exploration into some genres I have never checked out before. This is for people interested in expanding their musical horizons."

Official Site

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

SUPER 400***3 and the Beast*****Self-Released 2008**

"The band manages to use the two-guys-and-a-girl trio sparseness intelligently and come up with an interesting full sound which often resembles the riff-heavy leanings of metal but add an undeniable funkiness and bluesiness not often seen these days. I feel the band takes more from Hendrix than their peers but manages to add a thrilling modern edge to it that is quite interesting. The band also understands dynamics and doesn't overpower everything or go full bore at every opportunity.

Guitarist is quite good while the bass and drums are really solid and funky. Vocally, Hendrix and Lenny Kravitz come to mind in the singer's full-throated yelp. The band does quite a bit with the simple instrumentation. I like this album and have hope they'll be able to create something even better down the line, when they have a better handle on who they are so they can add a little more originality to the mix. Still, very good release and hoping there will be more soon.

5 Questions with Super 400**Official Site**

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

DANGER RADIO***Punch Your Lights Out*****Atlantic/Photo Records 2008**

"This is just a brief showcase here, just a five-song EP. Almost Latino-rock like sound filtered through some punk pop. Not quite your typical punk-pop outfit but not too much different than the norm. Singer sounds incredibly young but the music sometimes shows signs of a deeper record collection than one might expect coming from a band so young and sounding like they do. The song construction also sounds quite advanced for what they are trying to do which shows some excellent room for growth in the future.

Drummer is fantastic with short bursts of power throughout each song. Makes you wish it were a full album because the band seems to add new nuances to old formulas. They manage to add quite a bit of funk as well. I am impressed and would like to hear a full album of material from this group."

Official Site

--*George Dionne*



out of 5

ALEX NACKMAN
Still Life Moves
 Long Road Records 2008

"Quite an interesting release as Nackman plays all guitars and most of the keyboards on the album. Not your usual singer/songwriter drivel. Like a lot of recent solo discoveries, Nackman manages to realize there is a lot to draw from if one visits the R&B well. Though not totally neo-soul, Nackman's music has a lot of modern R&B elements to it and borrows as much from soul artists as he seems to from U2's Bono in his soaring vocals. Nackman tries to conjure up a decent atmospheric bed for each song to rest in and sometimes succeeds but fails just as often, though they are interesting failures to be sure.

Guitar playing is good if not spectacular, vocal range and delivery are decent, if not really noteworthy. I don't really think I would hear this guy on the radio yet but with a few more albums under his belt maybe he would be ready. Songs are kind of lifeless but its' obvious he has the right idea, just needs to sharpen his craft a bit."

Official Site

--Scott Homewood



out of 5

RENEE ZAWAWI
Legends
 Self-Released 2008



"Though Zawawi is a pretty girl, the music contained on this CD compares to the picture of Zawawi on the CD art: pretty on the surface but seemingly little on the inside worth your time. This album is full of your typical dance pop drivel, this time featuring a female artist with an extremely thin voice and no real singing talent whatsoever singing banal lyrics making no sense.

She seems to think that the more lyrics she is able to pack into a song the more intelligent it will make her seem like that horrible show *The Gilmore Girls* where the writers thought if they could use as it might, if everything she wrote wasn't as poorly constructed and boneheaded as some of this stuff is. One of the most horrible CDs I have ever listened to. Studios really should not be allowed to just give anyone studio time. No talent whatsoever."

Official Site

--Scott Homewood

ZERO out of 5**BLIND MELON**
For My Friends
Wishbone Recordings 2008

"I know what your thinking. Of all the bands to attempt a comeback, why Blind Melon? I'm sure most people think since the 1995 passing of lead singer Shannon Hoon that Blind Melon just wouldn't be the same. Well more than ten years later Blind Melon have decided to give it another go round with new singer Travis Warren, and you'd swear Boon never left us. Warren has all of the hippy and trippy vocal tones that Boon brought to the table.

On *For My Friends* the group captures a rootsy, jam-band sound, and delivery some relaxing and memorable tune. I was quite shocked myself. Perhaps the band should have tried a new band name though. I don't know how much mileage the Blind Melon name is going to get since they were really only known for one song in the 90s. One has to wonder if that song would have even been popular had Boon not passed so tragically.

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

ELBOW
The Seldom Seen Kid
Geffen Records 2008

"You're probably going to need someone to throw a few elbows to wake you up from this mediocre and boring musical affair. *The Seldom Seen Kid* barely breaks mid-tempo and brings nothing interesting to the table. Take the worst of Coldplay and Peter Gabriel and you have Elbow. "

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

JOSH PRESTON***Exit Sounds*****Me and the Machine Records 2008**

"Preston isn't exactly the most energetic or charismatic singer, but the guy can sure write an emotional and thought-provoking song or two. Josh harkens back to the singer-songwriter days of Simon & Garfunkel and John Lennon. He's far from a political folk protester though. His music hits very close to home and is rich with personal experiences. "

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

JOE SATRIANI***Professor Satchafunkilus and the Musterion of Rock*****Epic/Red Ink Records 2008**

"Let's get this out of the way; Satriani gets the award for worst album title of the year. Who can even pronounce it? He's also inching closer to the worst song titles too. What Satch lacks in titling ability, he more than makes up for in guitar mastery. After numerous albums, Satriani is not afraid to experiment a bit. DJ record scratching is a great touch on "Musterion," yet it makes you wonder if he's recreating the sound on guitar. "I Just Wanna Rock" is anthemic in it's delivery. "Professor Satchafunkilus" brings the funky grooves to the show. "Come on Baby" is a beautiful instrumental ballad (if there is such a term). "Asik Vayse!" blends Middle Eastern tones with straight up rock. I wish my professors rocked like this."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

Review: Joe Satriani - *Is There Love in Space* (04)

BRONZE RADIO RETURN**S/T EP****26 Mile Records 2008**

"The debut EP by singer/songwriter/guitarist Chris Henderson's band shows much promise for his burgeoning jam band. Sounding vocally and instrumentally like the Dave Matthews Band, Bronze Radio Return shows a polish most new bands can't muster. The band seems as if this is its fourth album judging by their sound. Color me very impressed! Though it's not a genre I listen to a lot, I can see myself listening to and enjoying a full-length album or concert by this band should the band decide to keep moving forward.

This is very radio-ready stuff and I can see a bigger label snapping up this band in a second as their sound is both very organic yet very accessible. I predict great success for this band and I wish there were more than five songs on this EP as I am interesting in hearing more from Bronze Radio Return and hope they take their name to heart and return with a new full-length sooner rather than later."

Official Site

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

J-HENRY**Code Red****Adrenaline Music Group 2008**

"Featuring a misguided cover of Led Zeppelin's Whole Lotta Love and a bunch of songs containing a ton of undistinguished Bruce Springsteen-isms, John Mellencrap and other so-called "everyman" drivel, it's no wonder why mysterious artist J-Henry has decided not to reveal his true name. Really, it's quite dull stuff. Playing is okay as major label releases usually are at least up to instrumental snuff, if not lyrically or emotionally. This is very ordinary, by-the-numbers bar band stuff. Bad music as boring wallpaper. Stay away unless you just love the startlingly ordinary."

Official Site

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

DONA OXFORD**Step Up****Fountainbleu Entertainment 2008**

"Oxford, who has paid her dues playing keyboards in blues woman Shemekia Copeland's (daughter of Texas blues guitarist Johnny Copeland) band, acquits herself quite well on her newest release. Helping her out on the production side of things is roots rocker Carla Olson while The Waters Family sings backup throughout. Needless to say (but I'll say it anyway) this is very soulful stuff and Oxford's vocals and piano are excellent in an old school Aretha Franklin style, and though she really doesn't quite reach the heights of the queen of soul, who does?

In her own right, Oxford does quite well on this new batch of future soul classics and it's easy to see all Oxford needs is some key exposure (her music in a television commercial or a movie perhaps) to get her career off the ground. There's no doubt Oxford has the talent to make it big should she get a solid opportunity to show off her abilities."

5 Questions with Leopold & His Fiction**Official Site***--Scott Homewood*

out of 5

LEOPOLD AND HIS FICTION**S/T****Self-Released 2008**

"Ever since The White Stripes became the darlings of the music world, more and more acts have explored the interesting sparseness and power possibilities of the two-man musical band. Thankfully (although I like the White Stripes) this two-man (Daniel Toccalino - guitar and vocals and Ben Cook - drums) blues guitar band takes more from The Flat Duo Jets and traditional gutbucket blues than anything else, though the vocals borrow from The Stripes a little bit and The Red Hot Chili Peppers too with a decent dollop of country thrown in. Atmospheric stuff, which means it's been done right as it's also pretty emotionally gripping as well, not to mention they show great taste by covering Johnny Cash's "Understand Your Man". Pick this up if you like you some gutbucket!"

Official Site*--Scott Homewood*



out of 5

Five Questions with Leopold and His Fiction

VOYAGER ONE ***Afterhours in the Afterlife*** **Loveless Records 2008**

"Jeremy Koepping (guitars, keys, programming) and Peter Marchese (vocals, guitars, bass, drums, keys, programming) are the main cogs in Voyager One, meeting after answering an ad in a Seattle music magazine. Though it was an inauspicious beginning, the band has made its mark with its intricate, textural space rock.

Ever since the two-man group revolution started these types of bands have been popping up all over the place, though the band is not rootsy like The White Stripes, Black Keys and other bands of that ilk. This band pulls from '80's new wave and dance music for their inspiration. Compelling stuff with plenty of cool textures going on through the music, yet still poppy and accessible. I could definitely hear this stuff on the radio. Singer has a charismatic vibe and putting the vocals back in the mix a little bit adds to the atmosphere - this is nighttime music for driving."

Official Site

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

SETH ***Capillarious*** **Epiglotic Records 2008**

"Very interesting release as the cover art grabs you right from the start with its picture of a person's face made of meat. Seth handles lead and backing vocals, guitars, banjo, dobro, percussion and completely makes this album his own. The recipe for this release is equal parts blues, jam band and country - but this CD would be much better if the lyrics weren't as boring as hell.

The riffs and songs are well arranged and constructed though and if more time had been spent constructing better lyrics these songs would be much more listenable. Ultimately, the album is disappointing as the songs are almost there but nothing to really distinguish them or make them special in any way. Seems Seth has fallen into the same trap a lot of artists are encountering these days of trying to duplicate that low-key loping Wilco

sound but no one quite has it like Jeff Tweedy so if I were Seth I would try to come up with something more original."

Official Site

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

THE MORNING LIGHT
The Sounds of Love EP
Fearless Records 2008

"The Morning Light's new 6 song EP serves as a welcome stopgap between full-lengths. A five member band (Harrison Wargo - piano and vocals, Bobby Garver - vocals, Matt Colussy - guitar, Nick Baxter - drums, Andy McDonald - bass) which rose from the ashes of Pittsburgh's much-missed Transition, The Morning Light is not your typical Fearless Records band. When I usually get something from the Fearless label I expect some hardcore punk or something of that stripe, not interesting, intricate pop music. But it is very good pop music, with a youthful energy.

Strong melodies with some great instrumental touches and synth washes – very mature songwriting with some great guitars right where they should be, like on the anthemic choruses. I can see this being played on the radio as it is very good Green Day-styled stuff with more of a power pop element than most bands of this kind. Very accomplished and very catchy – great stuff. I am hoping for another full-length album soon."

Official Site

--*Scott Homewood*



out of 5

BEN JELEN***ExSensive*****Custard Records 2008**

"Multi-instrumentalist/singer/songwriter Ben Jelen is joined on this disc by producer/songwriter Linda Perry who also helps co-write most of the songs. Sheryl Crow producer Bill Bottrell is also on hand and helps mix a couple of the songs on the album. Jelen previously released an album of lush, orchestral pop on Madonna's Maverick Records which was quite decent as pop music goes but didn't really do well sales wise. With his guest producers and co-songwriters he seems to have some heavyweight help this time which bodes well for the success of the album.

Perry and his producers have taken Jelen's decent material and spiffed it up to another level, honing his song craft and giving it some needed oomph. Pop music from the '60's and '70's seems to form the basis of much of this disc's material including the almost Small Faces-sounding title track. While this is no doubt Jelen's album, Perry brings her formidable talents and almost takes over, somewhat overwhelming Jelen's playing with her everything-and-the-kitchen-sink production style.

With Perry's help Jelen and his piano get over the mopey singer-songwriterness of his first disc to transform into a common man trying to attack the worlds' problems. Those who liked Jelen's first record will be pleasantly surprised by how much he's matured on this release. Best-seller or not, this album bodes well for Jelen's career."

Official Site--*Scott Homewood*

out of 5

TODD MARTIN***Mont Clare*****Todd Martin Music 2007**

"Todd Martin has certainly got the songwriting chops necessary to take the musical world by storm. Mont Clare opens up with the superb "Listen Like You Should." It continues onward with a number of up-tempo songs.

I kept trying to pin down whom Martin sounds even remotely like, but I was never really able to come up with someone. I think that is a pretty good indicator of how much talent he has. The contemporary pop feel that comes across never dips into the schmaltz and there is no danger of falling into a ballad rut either.

Tight song arrangements, solid vocals, and superb lyrics make this CD something to really sink your musical

teeth into. You need to check out "After The Sunset", "Runaway" and the lengthy "For Better." While I really liked the CD, I didn't really care for "Greener is Home" and "Attention". I'm sure others will like the songs but they just didn't catch my fancy."

Official Site

-- Jay Roberts



THE BANGKOK FIVE
We Love What Kills Us
Long Live Crime Records 2008

"With a name pertaining to a gang reference more than a band, the Bangkok Five know about togetherness and responsibility because everything the band has achieved, they've done on their own. From booking their first national tour through their MySpace page to releasing their first EP in 2005 themselves, the band (comprised of dudes called Frost, Holcomb KS, Sweeney, Coatez, and Blanco) is a perfect example of what happens when DIY is done correctly.

Their first full-length CD was issued by Universal Records in 2006 and was hailed as one of the best sleaze-rock record of the past ten years. Dirty guitars and reckless energy permeated every track and although the public didn't really latch on to the record (Universal has subsequently dropped them) the band solidified it's own vision of what they were (a West Coast version of The Strokes crossed with Hanoi Rocks) and proceeded to create a hard rocking sound that left ears grimy for weeks. In other words, the band makes fun rock and roll best used for fighting and fucking!"

Official Site

--Scott Homewood



WALLS OF JERICHO
Redemption EP
 Trustkill Records 2008

"Hardcore guitar attacks, wailing and intense vocals...all gone! At least for now. Walls of Jericho take a different road on their latest pet project, Redemption. The group dusts off their acoustic guitars and delivers five surprising melodic ballads ripe with sorrow and darkness. Vocalist Candace Kucsulain proves there's a soulful songstress beneath her rough exterior. Perhaps the Jericho learned a thing or two from their producer Corey Taylor when he made the switch from Slipknot to Stone Sour. It's great to hear some versatility from such a powerful and heavy band."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

GINA GERSHON
In Search of Cleo
 Takes the Biscuit 2007



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"The actress turned singer-songwriter finds her debut disc filled with an array of alternative rock/pop songs and a few torch or cabaret type numbers as well. The lead track is pure torch song. It's a decent little way to open the disc. "Midnight Girl" is another good song, but the best track on this album has to be the bluesy stomp of "Marie".

Sadly, while I'm sure there is an audience out there for this type of material, I am definitely not among that crowd. I found the rest of the songs rather ponderous and thunderously painful to listen to for review purposes.

I guess for me, I need a little more rock to go with the pop. Gershon is a good actress but I just can't see her doing music full time if this album represents the best of the written material she has. She's got a good voice, but you can't make it on a good voice if there's nothing to sing about."

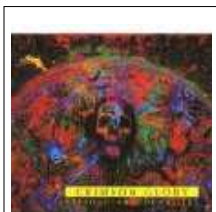
Official Site

-- Jay Roberts



out of 5

CRIMSON GLORY
Strange and Beautiful
Metal Mind Productions 2008



[Strange & Beautiful](#)

Crimson Glory

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"Metal Mind Productions has done it again. They've reached far into the metal vaults to unearth some lost classics with the reissues of the Crimson Glory catalog. I would have loved to review all four, but I had to pick just one. Strange and Beautiful was the bands third album, and with most bands that have gotten that far, they chose to branch out from their, let's say unique progressive rock, and went with more of a commercial approach.

Gone were the silver masks, gone was the cosmic imagery. Crimson Glory got right down to basics on this one; sexually charged rock and roll. Not traditional rock and roll though. The bands still captures their unique edge, but just tries to appeal to a broader audience.

While "Strange and Beautiful," "Love and Dreams," and "In The Mood" really get the juices flowing, it's the tender ballad "Song for Angels" that steals the show. Get your copy today because this is a limited run of 2000."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

BLACK TIDE
Light From Above
Interscope Records 2008

"Has power metal finally gone commercial here in the States? Black Tide come out with their axes on fire with their debut album. There's no lack of energy here. Black Tide can punch it upbeat and energetic, or dark and somber. The album's only weakness is the band's take on Metallica's "Hit the Lights." "Warriors of Time" is the albums highpoint."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

LIONS SHARE

Emotional Coma
Locomotive Records 2007

"European heavy metal with shades of power metal thrown in for good measure. In-your-face vocals, double-kick drum, and evil riffage dominate from beginning to end. As good as they are, they don't quite have that 'thing' the distinguishes them from the other bands like them."

[Official Site](#)

--George Dionne

**TO-MERA**

Delusions
Candlelight Records 2008

"If there is such a genre as progressive gothic, then To-Mera must be leading the charge. Despite the soft and melodic tones of vocalist Julie Kiss, you can hear a lot of pain and heartache and sense just a little bit of evil. Each instrument is exploited to it's fullest potential within each 7+ minute track. Sometimes the instrumental sections go a bit long, but progressive geeks will eat it up. You have to respect a band that can incorporate swing music into one of their songs while still remaining heavy."

[Official Site](#)

--George Dionne



OURS***Mercy ...Dancing to the Death of an Imaginary Enemy*****American Records 2008**

"Ours' latest release proves you can't judge a CD by it's cover. It may be easy to dismiss the group as a heavy or death metal band based on the raw skull and death images. In fact, only the lyrics draw from the cover art. Ours is more of a dark and tortured version of U2. Emotional vocals and haunting melodies will draw you into this world of darkness. As the album nears the end, some of the emotion is a bit over dramatic, and becomes a little stale."

[Official Site](#)

--George Dionne



out of 5

SIX***Between the Warning and the War*****1605 Records 2008**

"It's been four years since Six's blood-thirsty debut *The Price of Faith*. This time around the band abandons their nu-metal sound (thank God) for a straight up hardcore delivery. Frontman Lauren is still one angry, angry fellow. Not just vocally, but lyrically too. But his rage and pain is your reward. That reward being 13 tracks of pure metal intensity."

[Official Site](#)

--George Dionne



out of 5

[Review: Six - The Price of Faith \(2004\)](#)

SAVING ABEL**S/T****Virgin Records 2008**

"Saving Abel comes out swinging with the energetic rocker "New Tattoo," but shortly after that they turn into mid-tempo Creed. That's not to say that they don't craft well written songs or catchy melodies, but starting with the one and only powerful track leads you to expect one thing, when in reality you get another. Saving Abel does know how to craft emotionally charged and moving music, such as "18 Days," "Sailed Away," and "Out of My Face."

5 Questions with Saving Abel**Official Site**

--George Dionne



out of 5

ASIA**Phoenix****EMI 2008**

"You know, a clever blurb such as, 'Asia rises up from the ashes with the reunited line-up' would probably work perfect here. However, that's what you would expect, and I suppose the band sets us reviewers up for that one too. Either way, the progressive melodic rock band is back with their all-star line-up after 25 years apart.

Phoenix is a true Asia affair with beautiful melodies courtesy of John Wetton, textured keyboards, crunchy but not over-powering guitars, and plenty of memorable grooves and singable lyrics. The two three-part medleys are where the group really flexes their musical muscle. If you've heard any of the Wetton/Downes albums over the years, then you'll know what to expect. Just add more prominent guitars.

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

Review: Wetton*Downes - Icon**Review: Wetton*Downes - Icon Acoustic****Review: Asia - Aria & Arena Special Editions**

WILLIAM HART STRECKER
Smoke and Clouds
 WHS Music 2007

"Strecker is a rock crooner that sings from the heart and from personal experiences. William has had his share of good times and bad times, and shares them with you through mid-tempo ballads and his journeyed yet enduring vocals."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

IN FLIGHT RADIO
The Sound Inside
 Last Broadcast Records 2008

"Angelic vocals over acoustic melodies is what makes The Sound Inside so enjoyable. Vocalist Peira is really a one-woman show with her beautiful melodies and commanding delivery. She reminds me of a blend of Natalie Merchant and Sarah McLaughlin. The song selection is sure to tug at your emotions. I still can't get "Yelling Up to the Sky" and "Just Walk Away" out of my head."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

NEW FOUND GLORY
Hits
 Geffen Records 2008

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 New Found Glory
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NEW FOUND GLORY
Hits
 Geffen Records 2008

"Despite listening to the hundreds of CDs that come in here yearly, I do get a chance to listen to the radio. Usually to hear what's popular or new, even if it's not rock related. I don't want to be too much out of the loop. Like many of you, I have a diverse musical pallet. I even catch stuff on the radio that doesn't get sent here.

I've heard classics and new releases by the likes of Alan Jackson, Mariah Carey, Snoop Dog and others. When they come on the radio, I recognize them (or at least their sound). I couldn't recite the songs word for word,

but you know what I mean.

I guess it's just plain sad that I didn't recognize one song on New Found Glory's Hits collection. Not a one. Oh, I am familiar with their emo sound however. You can't mistake that Fall Out Boy, Plain White T's, Simple Plan, Good Charlotte, etc...sound.

I guess you could argue since NFG is releasing a best of collection, then they must be some type of pioneer for that genre. God help us. I think the 'S' should be at the beginning of the album title."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

HAALE
No Ceiling
Self-Released 2008

"No Ceiling is a journey into a dark and sometimes haunting realm. Middle-Eastern inspired rhythms give gypsy-like qualities to the musical output. It's not the kind of music you'd hear in your average everyday coffee shop. But late at night, when that coffee shop turns into that hip underground club, that's where you'll find Haale."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

ALL CRAZY
Sex, Drugs, and Hip Rock
Self-Released 2007

"Rap style lyrics and rock music have never done it for me. I always believed the reason vocalists rap is because they can't carry a tune. It's the same reason they scream. However, All Crazy is the first group to prove me wrong.

The Philadelphia-based hip rockers churn our one hell of a debut. What makes this album such a stand out is the diversity. Vocalists Wild Bill and Big Soup trade off. While one raps, the other is belting out melodic grooves. It makes each songs chorus hook that much more captivating. Songs like "Scarface," "Wrong Time," "Walk Away," and "One Shot" are sure to burn in your cranium long after the CD ends.

In addition to the vocal stylings, the group mixes it up musically. Not only is there a real live backing band, but the gang infuses orchestral elements, smooth jazz brass, monster guitar riffs, and just about any other instrument you wouldn't expect. If hip-rock is the future, count me in.

The release could have done without the vocal intros that most rap CDs contain these days. I don't anyone cares what Duby thinks.

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

IRON MAIDEN Live After Death DVD UME 2008

"Iron Maiden in the studio and Iron Maiden live cannot be touched by any other metal band of their kind. However, Iron Maiden recorded live, is a completely different story. I think I'm the only reviewer saying this, but it's true. Recording the power and energy has not been the same as being there in person. Something always gets lost in the presentation.

Live After Death captures a 1985 tour stop at the Long Beach Arena where the group was in the middle of their 193 date Powerslave tour. This performance has previously been released on home video and as a live CD. Dickinson, who is normally on his game, shows sign of cracking right from the get go of "Aces High." Yes, Bruce tends to over-sing live, but this time, it just sounds off-kilter.

The stage is set up like egyptian ruins and of course matches the theme of the Powerslave album. The band is flawless with their respective instruments. The show was lit-up and shot well. The crowd was massive and out of control. Maiden deliver the goods hit wise; "2 Minutes to Midnight," "The Trooper," "Flight of Icarus," "Number of the Beast," and "Run to the Hills" are only a few of the 13 song set."

The bonus disc includes a documentary that features bonus concert footage. Two more Iron Maiden live sets are featured as well; Behind the Iron Curtain and Rock in Rio '85."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

Review: Iron Maiden - A Matter of Life and Death
Review: Iron Maiden - Death on the Road

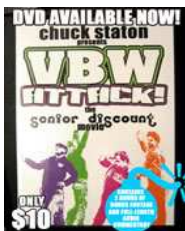


[Iron Maiden](#)
Nicko McBrain, Ste...

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Review: Bruce Dickinson - *Tattooed Millionaire***CHUCK STANTON PRESENTS:
VBW Attack! The Senior Discount Movie
Self-Released 2008**

"Senior Discount is a punk rock band that doesn't take themselves too seriously and delivers some pretty cool rock tunes. I gave their 2006 album 4/5. I never got the chance to see them live so I jumped at the chance to view their latest DVD. Well...it's not that kind of DVD. You do get SORT OF an insight into the band, but not so much of a music related one. The best part of the DVD is the opening song performance. After that, it's a bunch of juvenile yahoos acting like Jackass rejects.

It's a shame too. The band is quite talented for still being on the local level, and they go and waste their time on such a stupid non-music project. Injecting enemas and defecating in your high school parking lot is not "rock and roll." I can't imagine anyone outside their circle of friends enjoying such a piece of shit (pun intended)."

Official Site

--George Dionne

ZERO out of 5

**THOMPSON ROBINSON WILLIAMSON
Rivers of Paradise
Frontiers Records 2007**

[Rivers of Paradise](#)

Thompson Robinson ...

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"The debut album from TRW features a superbly pedigreed trio of musicians that have recorded and played with notables such as Eric Clapton, Phil Collins, Steve Winwood and many more. The musicianship is without question. The members are big fans of classic rock and roll and the reverence they hold shines through.

The track "Gonna Be Some Changes" features some superb guitar work, "One Good Woman" holds up just fine under any critical scrutiny, and the song "Indiscretion" is a truly incredible recording. Sadly, for me at least, I found the rest of the material to be strictly adequate.

There was a bit of a flat feeling to tracks like "Only A Letter" and "Love Comes Calling." I think that there is undoubtedly more to be heard from TRW, but right now, this just didn't click for me fully."

Official Site

-- Jay Roberts



out of 5

TRISHA YEARWOOD
Greatest Hits
MCA Nashville 2007

"The newest collection of one of country music's brightest stars runs the gamut of her albums from first to last. All the big hits like "She's In Love With The Boy", "Wrong Side Of Memphis", and "XXX's And OOO's (An American Girl)" are included in the 17 track set.

I was disappointed to see that they stuck to strictly the radio hits instead of including a couple of the more popular album cuts, but then again this is a hits collection and that normally implies radio success only. The two new cuts on the album "Just A Cup Of Coffee" and "Nothin' To Lose" are both good songs. I wouldn't necessarily included them among a best songs Yearwood has recorded, but they are good.

She has long been considered by this reviewer to be the premiere interpreter of other writer's songs and I always lean towards her decision to record a song. This album, all in all, is a decent if relatively unspectacular package to encapsulate her career to date."

Official Site

-- Jay Roberts



out of 5

CHANA ROTHMAN
We Can Rise
Oy!Hoo Records 2007

"The debut album from the folk slash singer-songwriter Chana Rothman finds the listener swept up in her quite obvious talent for melody. The lyrical content of the songs ranges from love to religion to social concerns. I'm not always a big fan of preachy type lyrics but when done right you can still hear an interesting viewpoint and be entertained musically. For the most part Rothman does the latter instead of the former.

I didn't care for the plodding "One Stone" or the simply lacking "Draw A Circle" but I found myself really liking the rest of the album's tracks. The song "Summer" is an outstanding combination of lyrics and music while "The Wind" has a slower paced delivery that echoes after the song ends. The very pointed "Walk A Mile" is probably the best example of the issue-oriented lyrics shining alongside with solid musicianship. In other words, a

really good debut disc from a voice I'm sure we'll hear more of in the future."

Official Site

--Jay Roberts



out of 5

WINGER
Live DVD
Frontiers Records 2007

"A fantastic performance from a hair metal classic. Kip Winger gives such a great performance with his meaty vocals and connection with the audience. Not only does he handle bass duties, but he switches it up between piano and acoustic guitar as well. The individual band member's solos are kind of boring, except for Reb Beach's fiery guitar solos. The band as a whole never skips a beat, and delivers some of the most melodic backing vocals. Each and every Winger hit is included and sound great. Even the new material sounds good.

It's not hard to tell that Kip has improved vastly as a songwriter. The material is far more thought-provoking. It was nice to see that the band can have a good laugh at themselves. During their performance of "Seventeen," the group changes the lyrics in the third chorus to 'she's only thirty-five.' Has it been that long? I though the group should have closed with this one, but they chose their first hit "Madeline." A definite 'must have' for any fan of the hair metal era or fans of great melodic rock in general."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

[Winger Live](#)
Winger, Jack Edwar...
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THE LIMIT
Reinventing the Sun
The Limit LLC 2007

"On their latest album, The Limit decides to mix things up a little bit, in comparison to their 2005 EP. Whereas the EP was a four song dedication to feel-good rock and roll, *Reinventing the Sun* is more of a throwback to the fuzzy grooves of the seventies mixed with the mundane sounds of 90s grunge. The EP had me cranking the volume up, but this album had me advancing quickly to the next track. It just seemed to go on and on. The production is a bit more diminished as well. I had high hopes for The Limit, but somewhere along the way they took a detour."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

KAMELOT
Ghost Opera
SPV Records 2007

"Kamelot is one of those European power metal bands that tends to get overlooked in comparison to their contemporaries Helloween and Gamma Ray (probably doesn't help they're all on the same label either). However, every album I have heard from Kamelot has been top-notch power metal at its best. *Ghost Opera* takes it to the next level.

Yes, employing orchestral elements seems a bit overdone these days, but mixed with Kamelot's dark and powerful delivery, it truly enhances the texture of the album. *Ghost Opera* is so full of passion and great storytelling that it can easily be compared to a Hollywood movie blockbuster. I would venture to say that *Ghost Opera* is a dark, haunting movie (worthy of a creepy Johnny Depp performance) confined to audio."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

DAVID BOWIE
Buddha of Suburbia
 Virgin/EMI Music 2007

"Released for the first time on CD, *Buddha of Suburbia* is a collection of music that Bowie composed for a famed British play around 1993. The title track is perhaps the most catchy and most memorable. Bowie experiments with effects heavy vocals on "Sex and the Church". Other vocal tracks range from mellow to emotional. There are a few instrumental tracks that take away from the concept of an album, but in the context of listening to it as a play, it all makes sense. You'd probably have a better appreciation for it if you saw the play, but either way, it's pure David Bowie from beginning to end."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

COLLECTIVE SOUL
Afterwards
 El Music Group 2007

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"I wanted to give Collective Soul's latest album a feature review, but I just couldn't find enough to say about it. I was a thrilled with the outcome of their last album *Youth*, but found out quickly that *Afterwards* falls below the standard that album. It's not necessarily bad, but it's just not that interesting. The group for goes up-tempo tracks from slow, adult-contemporary material.

However, the group doesn't falter on the songwriting front. The only tracks that really grabbed me were the guitar heavy opener "New Vibration" and the album's first single "Hollywood" (which you are probably familiar with as the theme to this year's American Idol auditions). I'd like to hear Collective Soul kick up the rock quotient a little built instead of treading the safe waters of adult-oriented pop."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

Review: Collective Soul - *From the Ground Up* (05)
Review: Collective Soul - *Youth* (04)

KATAGORY V
Hymns of Dissension
 Nightmare Records 2007



"The group refers to themselves as progressive metal, but they are so much more than that. *Hymns of Dissension* mixes the best of classic metal with the best of progressive metal. It's almost if you're combining classic Queensryche with current Queensryche. Katagory V know just how to produce the most powerful, guitar-heavy, vocal driven metal. It's a damn shame they just lost their singer and guitarist."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

Review: Katagory V - *The Rising Anger* (06)

GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DESTROYERS
Bad to the Bone [25th Anniversary Edition]
 Capitol/EMI Music 2007

"Has it been 25 years already? Damn! Despite several albums prior to this one, *Bad to the Bone* is the one that put Thorogood and company on the map. It was an unlikely success too because the group really defied what was hot at the time. No one else was delivering dirty bar band blues like Thorogood. No one else was crafting two and three chord progressions that made you want to pound down the beers and fight either. The album's title track is legendary, but the album is so much more than that.

"Back to Wentzille" is classic up-beat blues, while "Blue Highway" is the best of the slow jams. Each track contains the heart and soul of the blues while telling a mini-story in-between. For this release, the group includes re-recorded versions of six cuts from the album. This was not a good move. While the group sounds the same for the most part, they also sound a lot older and slower. Most of the six tracks come off comparable to the originals except the one song you want to, "Bad to the Bone." What a crappy arrangement and delivery! The album is a classic, skip over the added material."

Official Site

--George Dionne



out of 5

Review: George Thorogood - *The Hard Stuff* (06)

GODHEAD
The Shadow Line
Cement Shoes Records 2006

"Godhead's most recent disc finds the band in peak form. The lead track "Trapped In Your Lies" is a real attention grabber. It's a classy and classic rocker for the future to come. You'll also want to check out "Once Before". The song is another fantastic example of what makes Godhead so good.

The band has a superb handle on how to approach their songwriting and it shows throughout the album because other than "Another Day" which I didn't think much of, the musicianship and lyrical content is top-notch. They can rock with the best and then bring out the more moderate tempo for tracks like "Your End Of Days". Godhead is a fantastic live act and The Shadow Line CD lives up to the standard set by their performances."

Official Site

-- *Jay Roberts*



out of 5

2007 Archive

2006 Archive

2005 Archive

2004 Archive



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