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Tuesday, January 13, 2009 10:44:07 AM

CD Reviews



John Frusciante

Title: The Empyrean

Label: Record Collection

Year: 2008

Rating:

A sonically-blissful trip into the mind of John Frusciante is what 'The Empyrean' is all about. Almost like a spiritual journey into the mind of a tripped out soul-searching individual, 'The Empyrean' delivers on all levels. John Frusciante, famous for being the axe-wielding funk master of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, has created an album that definitely defies gravity. John, not known best for his vocal abilities, still has not excelled vocally on this record but does an excellent job manning the vocals anyways. Being one of the most underrated guitar players of all time, in my opinion, John's fretwork on this record is undeniably one of his best pieces of work so far either from RCHP or his own solo projects. 'The Empyrean' is John's 11th studio solo album and he has definitely mastered the art of creating diverse, original and mind-blowing albums. 'Unreachable' is a true example of John Frusciante's creative talent that will sure be a fan favorite right from the start. The heart of the record lies in track 5 'Dark/Light' which presents a catchy bass line, pyschedelic guitars, and John Frusciante's signature vocal style. Overall, 'The Empyrean' is not the album of the year but it sure does have the creativity and originality that is itching to be heard. Is 'The Empyrean' worth your time and money? You betcha

Gian Erguiza - December 23, 2008



Woe Of Tyrants Title: Kingdom Of Might

Label: Metal Blade Records
Year: 2008

1 Cai. 2000

Rating:

Ohio's Woe Of Tyrants must've been schooled in the school of shred cause that's what they do and they do it good. Dueling guitars, blast beats and guttural screaming ornate this magnificent record. Reminiscent of bands exploding on the scene these days but with more balls, Woe Of Tyrants shred lightning fast, throw it down and let it all hang out.'Break The Fangs' explodes with a massive metal assualt with raging speed and straight forward brutality. Vocally, Chris Catanzaro can hold his own. Aside from teh band's obvious musical talents, Chris is definitely the driving force of this band. Woe Of Tyrants is going to be expanding greatly and turning heads with 'Kingdom Of Might' as this record will sure propel the band into the throes of metal's 'Bands to watch in 09.' In all honesty, I was not going to listen to this record because of the band's name.....reminded me of something from Pirates Of The Carribean...But alas, I did and I'm super stoked that I did since this is the type



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 HAUNTED have
 announced details of new
 double disc compilation
 that details the bands
 time with Earache...

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of metal I really dig. To add to the already impressive aspects of this record, the average age of the guys in the band is 21. Their myspace page claims that they're going to bringing 'Real Metal' with them out on the road, might not be the most real, but it sure is brutal metal. The overall verdict is that Woe Of Tyrants artistic metal expression in the form of 'Kingdom Of Might' is going to declare the real arrival of Woe Of Tyrants.

Gian Erguiza - December 19, 2008



Ephel Duath

Title: Through My Dog's Eyes Label: Earache Records

Year: 2008

Rating: ***

First off, let's start with 'What The Fuck? A Concept Extreme Album, Through A Dog's Eyes?' Indeed. The album is supposedly seen through the perspective of a dog's eyes. Now if concept and extreme were to go hand in hand, this is the outcome. Ephel Duath is known for mixmashing all sorts of genre's of music but most likely, avant-garde jazz with black metal. Only a band like Ephel Duath can even concieve of such a crazy concept but hell, they ran with it and out came 'Through My Dog's Eyes' which is an awesome piece of a record. This record's going to be one of the most innovative records to come out in 09' no doubt. With metal getting more experimental and out of the box these days, these guys got the memo way back, when no one did. This album is far more experimental than their previous but somehow is most likely, their best offering. You can hear the insane wizardry of this creative group with track 4 'Silent Door.' Another original innovative song off this clever masterpiece would be the almost hilarious but only true to the fact 'Guardian.' Hey metal head! Tired of your boring collection of typical growl sing scream metal, check out 'Through My Dog's Eyes' and reinvigorate your ears with some experimental metal that truly kicks ass!

Gian Erguiza - December 18, 2008



Kyle Andrews

Title: Real Blasty

Label: Elephant Lady Records

Year: 2008

Rating: ***

Magnanimously great! Kyle Andrews delivers a non-stop, all-original, versatile, creative energy on his latest release, "Real Blasty." Covered in bright-electro pop sure to make you dance, Kyle hits it big on all levels. The lyrical content of the album is not only originally smart but has a genuine authenticity that Kyle comes off as a true musician songwriter that has something new to offer, not some re-hash of another artist. The album is filled with natural harmonies and melodies that really sink into your skin and after 3 spins, will either have you humming along, dancing like it's nobody's business or singing the songs with a huge boy-ish smile vacating your face. Some songs that really smoke on the album are 'Sushi,' 'Polar Bear,' 'Take It to The Heart' and 'Put Your Hands Up.' The song that captured my ears from the first listen was 'Call and Fade.' The song genuinely seems to be the heart and soul of the album, surmising Kyle's talent and soul as a musician. You can really hear Kyle's passion on that one and hear Kyle's beautifully textured voice. Fresh new ideas line up song by song on 'Real Blasty,' offering the listener a variety and versatility where most musician songwriters of today fail miserably. Great songwriting, great arrangements and great compositions, what more can you ask for? Kyle Andrews' 'Real Blasty' is one of 2008's break through albums, no doubt.

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 Noah And The Whale Announce David

Gian Erguiza - December 16, 2008



The Von Bondies

Title: Love, Hate And Then There's You

Label: Majordomo Records

Year: 2009

Rating: ***

After a four year silence, The Von Bondies have returned with 'Love, Hate And Then There's You.' With lots of time to prep the album and lots of time to work on the songs, the album is dauntingly good without a doubt. Mr. Jason Stollsteimer (Yes, the one that Jack White slugged, did someone say 2nd round?) is still the man leading the charge but this time, backed by a new line up change from their previous effort back in 2004, 'Pawn Shoppe Heart,' with considerable effect. With a bunch of different producers (Butch Walker, Rick Parker) as well on hand helping to craft the record, 'Love, Hate and Then There's You' turned out to be a great indie/alternative record, production wise and sound. Guess the four years off gave Mr. Stollsteimer a good introspect of what it entails to make a great record. The heart of the album definitely lies in 'Accidents Will Happen' while the soul of the record is the ultra-catchy rocker '21st Birthday.' Two other notable tracks would be the Beatle-esque rocker 'Earthquake' and the straight forward 'I Don't Wanna.' The album is full of indie-pop rock gems that will definitely set your soul on fire and maybe your feet too from dancing and rockin' out like it's 1999. Needless to say, The Von Bondies are back to save you from your boring, musicless life.

Gian Erguiza - December 23, 2008



Yahowa 13

Title: Sonic Portation Label: Prophase Music

Year: 2008

Rating:

Did I just eat some peyote or have I gone into a mushroom trip? Yahowa 13 certainly made me feel like it, not that I know what that feels. Prophase Music's Yahowa 13 must be some of the most out of this world musicians on this planet. Blending guitars, chants, different array of percussions and drums and a penchant for going way out of the box while making music, Yahowa 13's 'Sonic Portation' is well....'Sonic Portation' into the unknown. Track 1 'E Ah O Shin' sounded like something out of the movie '300.' The sound of chants and drums made my imagination go wild like I was about to be part of an epic fight that was to determine the outcome of a generation. Think I'm going nuts, pop that song in and you'll hear the calling. After six songs of pure earthly sounds entangled with a head trip, it was apparent to me that Yahowa 13 is not here to please the critics nor the nay sayers, but instead are here to play for the sonic and spiritual people nationwide. These guys channel the spiritual nature of this earth with massive sonic wisdom. Hell, reading the insert on the CD gave me a head trip, that's how powerful this stuff is! Although not the album of the year, Yahowa 13's 'Sonic Portation' is most likely going to be the 'trippiest' stuff you will hear this year, mark my words.

Gian Erguiza - December 12, 2008



Modern Skirts

Title: All Of Us In Our Night Label: Modern Skirts

Year: 2008

Lynch Inspired UK Shows

Noah And The Whale have announced details of a unique UK tour for March. The tour, dubbed Club Silencio (a...

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Rating:

'All Of Us In Our Night' is a magical journey into the alternative with Modern Skirts driving behind the wheel. The soft and mellow approach accompanied by the beautiful structuring of the instruments wound into one really makes the record. Modern Skirts have this genuine ability of piecing songs together without forcing melodies and parts together, which definitely comes across clearly after the last song. 'Radio Breaks' would have to be one of the best tracks on the record with all of the makings of a hit song. Not far behind that would have to be the emotional harmony of 'Yugo' and the playful sounding 'Motorcade.' But I believe the song that best represents Modern Skirts would have to be the lyrically smart intuition, 'Face Down.' I like this band. I don't say that much but this band seems to have all of the fundamental components of becoming a huge breakout band. I guess it helps as well that Mike Mills of R.E.M. helped produced a track (Motorcade) and David Lowery of Counting Crows fame producing a few tracks to give the album the additives it needed. Nonetheless, Modern Skirts have a fine record on their hands with or without the help. The musical structure of the record overall is simply great!

Gian Erguiza - December 17, 2008



CIAM
Title: Anonymous

Label: CIAM Year: 2008

Rating:

CIAM's 'Anonymous' is a wonderful blend of electronica slowly and sexually cavorting with experimental music. Sounding a bit like Depeche Mode, maybe because of producer John Fryer (NIN, Depeche Mode) at the helm, the album treads on the same water but with a more darker and depressing sound. CIAM's ability to overlay the songs with strings (guitars, violins, viola) gives their arrangements a much more compounded and dysphoric feel. Track 5 'Misunderstood' is easily the lifeline of this album with beautiful melodies and soulful layers, shining through a sea of semi-melancholic songs. Frontman Jeff Shapiro's vocal exertions and 'echoing' style vocals adds the necessary ingredients to complete CIAM's musical atmosphere. I for one probably could not listen to CIAM's 'Anonymous' on an every day basis but can sure pop it in the CD player on days that feel earnest. There are other gems on the album such as 'Looking For Love' but for the most part, every song strings together like one big opus minus the climactic ending, Matter of fact, the beginning as well falls on the bleak side. Although CIAM's not for everyone, hardcore fans of electronica, experimental and art rock can grow to appreciate 'Anonymous' after a few spins.

Gian Erguiza - December 19, 2008



Brent Amaker And The Rodeo

Title: Howdy Do

Label: Gravewax Records

Year: 2008

Rating:

Giddy up cowboy! Brent Amaker and the Rodeo's 'Howdy Do' is a romp roarin album of a good time! Taking cues from old school greats like the man in black himself, Johnny Cash, with a touch of modern day cowboy living, Brent Amaker and the Rodeo hit the bulls-eye dead square on the forehead. Brent Amaker's tonal voice is not your regular American Idol but does serve the country sound

well. The first thing that hit me was Brent Amaker's lyrics. With lyrics such as "They Make Cowboys In Montana, But In Texas They Make Men" accompanied by that awesome country twang and attitude, Brent's lyrics are a riot! Title track 'Howdy Do' is a saturday night banger for line dancing and them good ol' cowboys would definitely have no problem drinking, fighting, dancing or hanging out to said song. In the tongue in cheek 'Knock You Out,' Brent flexes his lyrical humor some more but I doubt he was trying to be funny....bet he could really 'Knock' someone out. The album and the packaging also caught my attention which led me to open the CD and stick the thing in, glad I did too. Quips of love seems to make an appearance on this record quite often along with guns and 'the man' which I assume equals a good country record....hhmmm...'Howdy Do' is a loaded gun full of country songs to make the cowboys shoot guns in the air in appreciation. Yee-Haw!

Gian Erguiza - December 15, 2008

Faces Of March Title: Confessions



Label: Kurfew Records

Year: 2008

Rating:

Gia's vocals are simply angelic and powerful. Fronting the Miami, Fl. hard rock band, Faces Of March, gives her the chance to bellow out her distinct vocal style while giving the band their much needed edge. Aside from Gia's vocals though, nothing was shocking about this album. Faces Of March's 'Confessions' is an album with great production but lack of originality. Taking cues from Evanescence, the album's creativity hinders on what Evanescence had already established. A little more substance in the in the song writing could've also helped this record. The direction of the album is not lost which is a plus since most band these days tend to try and tackle all of music' genre's in one album. Musically, the band is sound and versed with great blends of rock elements from start to finish. I wish they could've gone outside of the box a little more though to focus on Gia's vocal capabilities which could've really propelled this record to being great, instead of just good. I will in part say that this band has great talent and potential which can ultimately turn this band into a great band to rule the charts one day. For now, this is a great introduction to Faces Of March.

Gian Erguiza - December 17, 2008

The Music Lovers



nnnn Label: Le Grand Magistery Records

Rating:

Like a savior from uninspiring pop music comes The Music Lovers 'Masculine Feminine.' With all the ingredients, musings and the pop sophistication of a great pop band, The Music Lovers hit a high note with 'Masculine Feminine.' Vocalist Mathew Edwards' beautifully textured voice fit the arrangements like pieces of the missing puzzle. As great musicians writing great compositions, The Music Lovers have the pop sensibility and pop angst that has long been lost only to be found by The Music Lovers. So many select tracks jump out from this record but 'Bobbie Gentry,' 'The Weekender,' and 'The Wherewithal' are sure winners. The heart of the album lies in the song 'Saturday' with its upbeat tempo, crafty rhythm sections and witty lyrics. The touches of strings and other brass instruments also lends a huge helping hand in shaping the sound and atmosphere of the album giving the album that 'one up' over other

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pop albums. I thoroughly enjoyed this album and under a rainy day, it was just perfect. The overall verdict for The Music Lover's 'Masculine Feminine' is a beautiful pop album sprinkled with great melodies, great vibe and most notable, great songs.

Gian Erguiza - December 15, 2008



AC Newman

Title: Get Guilty

Label: Matador Records

Year: 2009

Rating:

As the head writer for The New Pornographers, AC Newman has blessed us with his majestic 2nd solo offering in 'Get Guilty.' A wonderfully layered and catchy album with songs full of melodies, 'Get Guilty' can easily get stuck in that musically inclined head of yours. AC Newman also delivers crafty lyrics over uplifting arrangements complete with "I've Got You Hooked' choruses that ring in your ears even after the record has reached its end. Title track 'Changeling(Get Guilty)' is the most prominent track on the record armed with a great message and a lovely chorus. Get your dancing shoes out for Track 3 'Like A Hitman, Like A Dancer' which is a fun charged song with humorous lyrics and infectious rhythm to make your behind sway from side to side. Although AC Newman didn't reinvent the wheel with 'Get Guilty,' he definitely made a fun and majestic record worth the listen. 'Get Guilty' is not the answer to your economic hardships but he sure is an answer to your ears when you need some indie alternative music.

Gian Erguiza - December 23, 2008



MUCC

Title: Shion

Label: Spinefarm Records

Year: 2008

Rating:

One of JRock's biggest and most accomplished import is the band called MUCC. Pronounced 'Mook,' the japanese import definitely has the chops and the talent to rival bands from all over the continent. MUCC's sound can be best described as Rock meets Metal=makes love to alternative. With an original take on an already existing structure in metal, MUCC delves deeper with stabs at alternative elements and vocal distinction, thanks to vocalist Tatsuro and Miya (guitarist) manning the mixing boards. I read up on Tatsuro's lyrics and found deep, edgy lyrics about love, the world and existence. I decided to read up on Tatsuro's lyrics since the whole album is sung in his native tongue, Japanese. Track 2 'Fukurou No Yurikago' explodes into an industrial metal opus with Tatsuro's distinct vocals soaring over the madness. The slow and dark 'Flight' is a definite showcase of MUCC's musical versatility showing they can slow it down and dig deep into their musical souls. MUCC's 'Shion' is a great album. Hell, I don't even understand one single line of lyric but my ears instantly knew that this band is no joke. MUCC knows how to make that authentic rock music without the bullshit. JRock made a huge splash in the U.S. in 2008 and with MUCC being one of the front-runners for the JRock movement, JRock, along with MUCC, will most likely make a bigger splash in 2009.

Gian Erguiza - December 17, 2008



Titus Andronicus 'The Airing Of Grievances' is a raw, angsty-esque, drunken madness of a record, perfect for those cold New Jersey nights. The band's raw energy pours out from each song like a top spinning out of control. The energetic pump of 'My Time Out Of the Womb' will get your ass in full gear on the dance floor. Track 7 'No Future, Pt.1' is the totally awesome dark horse of the album in the veins of Velvet Underground while Track 8 'No Future, Pt.2:Days After No Future' has got to be the cherry on top. Listening to Titus Andronicus reminds me of sweaty good times in a dive while trying to keep my beer afloat among a midst of rowdy hipsters, indie and punk rock types. Not huge on the vocal and lyrical aspect of the album but do indulge in the implosive screaming and the enraged singing, I mean who doesn't like implosive enraged singing right? The guitar amps seem to be on 'Spinal Tap' volume (11) as well which makes the record sonically fuzzy great, sometimes almost dissonant in sound. Wearing their hearts on their sleeves, this album is a soundtrack to american pride sung and performed by Titus Andronicus, screaming angst.

Gian Erguiza - December 18, 2008



Title: Ghost Of The Salt Water Machines

Label: Metal Blade Records

Rating:

'Ghost Of The Salt Water Machines' is a great beginning or introduction to the madness that is Architect. A bruising record in extremeties, it definitely stands on it's own two feet. This album is sure to gain Architect a legion of fans across the demographic and will for sure land Architect in some great company. Not for the melody hungry, for those of you that like your metal melody-filled, but this one is for the hardcore metal head that wants it nothing but heavy. The album itself has a lot of weight, especially in production where a wall of heaviness comes crashing down hard after a soft intro of 'Camelot In Smithereens.' The axe begins to grind on 'Uninventing the Wheel' and continues to pummel through song for song in an overwhelming 40 minute metal jaunt. Vocalist Keith Allen also has political messages entrenched in his lyrical assualt and along with group vocals, standard in hardcore, Keith sometimes sounds like a general barking orders. The only quam I had with this record was that in ends in a sort of bleak way with a wall of screaming guitar noise. Architect surely did not reinvent the wheel with 'Ghost Of The Salt Water Machines' but they sure did create a record that slays.

Gian Erguiza - December 16, 2008



Label: Adrenaline Records/Warner Music Group

Year: 2008

Rating:

'Truth & Consequence' is the new record from Orange County rockers, Damage. A hard rock album that proclaims the band as a tireless band in search for the coveted top spot in hard rock. Having numerous achievements under their belts such as 'Hard rock band of the year 2006' by the Southern California Music Awards, Damage is again on the pounce with 'Truth &

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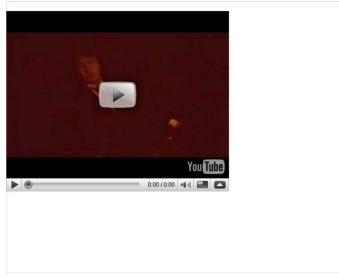
Consequence.' Track 4 'My Point Of View' has the fundamental elements of a great hard rock song. The evocative 'No-One' showcases the band depth and understanding of their music. Most of the songs on this album are primed to be a hit and the album certainly seems to be written with creating 'hit songs' in mind. Damage obviously does not reinvent the wheel with their latest release but the sound production of the album itself is pretty impressive. I do find their brand of music a bit cliche' on the downside. I find that their brand of hard rock falls relatively close to 'Corporate Rock' which I truly despise. I also found a lack of originality and creativity with Damage's music. With that said though, I don't take away what Damage, as musicians, have done with their record. The record sounds absolutely polished and primed to take top spots at hard rock radio stations across the nation. If you like bands like Stone Temple Pilots, The Answer, or Daughtry, you'll surely like Damage's 'Truth & Consequence.'

Gian Erguiza - December 18, 2008



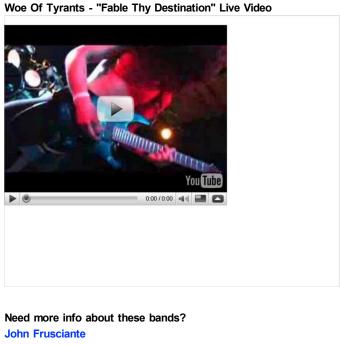
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