

Note: If you can read french, go to the french section for additional content.

FEATURED REVIEW: [Avenge Sevenfold](#)

FEATURED NEW ARTIST: [Pascale Picard](#)

OTHER CD REVIEWS:

[Neil Young](#) - [Biffy Clyro](#) - [Roz Bell](#) - [Buck 65](#) - [Otep](#) -
[David Wilcox](#) - [Parkway Drive](#) - [Queensrÿche](#) - [Led Zeppelin](#)

DVD REVIEWS:

[Billy Talent](#) - [Bruce Springsteen](#) - [Elvis Presley](#)

[OTHER NEW FINDINGS](#)
[REVIEWS COMING UP NEXT MONTH](#)
[KEY FOR THE STARS](#)

ARCHIVES:



You can also search by artists names if you visit the [artists directory](#).

Featured Review:



[Avenged Sevenfold](#) - *Avenged Sevenfold*

After the [City Of Evil](#) album which brought them at the stardom level, the guys of Avenged Sevenfold were very excited to go back into the studio to record a new album. They were locked up by themselves in the studio to work on a record which would serve "to blast some heavy shit out the window" for their young fans. So, we discover now this very simple eponymous album which wants to be a return to the basis of metal with many winks at the Eighties, while preserving their unique rhythm section and their solos in the **Yngwie Malmsteen** style. After the excellent "Critical Acclaim" and "Almost Easy" which start strongly the CD, we lose certain metal elements which made them so unique on their previous

album. Some tracks, too much polished, rather bring us in a common pop rock sound. The occasional inclusion of violin, piano, brass and even of a children's choir (on "Unbound (The Wild Ride)") can give the impression of a richer sound, but it has the opposite effect whereas one feels a discordance with the base of their style. We can hear a weird track in the **Mr. Bungle** style, "A Little Piece Of Heaven", which is undoubtedly different, but not really impressive. The voice of **M. Shadows** presents on this new CD a great evolution compared to the past, mainly because he had to have a surgery to his vocal cords and to work with a vocal coach. His voice reminds us per moments of **Chris Cornell** and on other occasions of **Mike Patton**. In spite of an interesting energy and an unquestionable evolution, this new album by Avenged Sevenfold unfortunately doesn't present compositions as great as on their previous CD.

[Warner](#)





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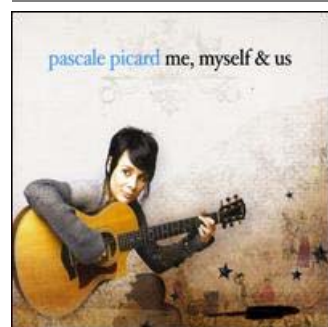


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4
AVENGED SEVENFOLD
products
[Prev](#) | [Next](#)

[↑](#) Top of page

Featured New Artist:



[Pascale Picard](#) - *Me, Myself & Us*

Pascale Picard is a lady from Quebec City who decided to sing in English and one can say that the decision was rather advantageous to her until now considering the success she had in 2007. This young songwriter gives us folk, contemporary pop and urban music with certain well marked dashes of rock. Her music is built around acoustic guitar, sometimes supported by a passably heavy electric guitar, even metal on "Annoying". But, which draws the attention immediately is Pascale's voice. At the same time soft and powerful, while being filled with emotion, she reminds us of **Lisa Loeb**. The solidity of the young woman supported by the huge talent of her musicians gives to this record a balance seldom seen for a first album. From the mega hits "Gate 22" to the excellent "Thinking Of It" and "Smilin'!!", *Me Myself & Us* comprises very few weaknesses and quickly succeeds in captivating us. It's an excellent CD which not only allowed us to discover a young promising singer, but also to have under the hand one of the good albums of the year from Quebec.



[↑](#) Top of page

Other CD Reviews:



[Neil Young](#) - *Chrome Dreams II*

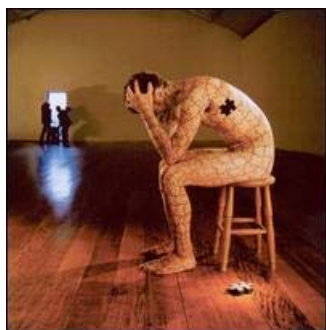
By seeing the title of this new album by Neil Young, one seeks quickly in his discography to see when the first disc of this series was issued to finally realize it doesn't exist. In fact, *Chrome Dreams* had been recorded circa 1977, but had been rejected by Young who had simply included the tracks on subsequent albums. Some of these songs proved to be among the bests of his career: "Like A Hurricane", "Powderfinger", "Pocahontas", and so on. By entitling his new album *Chrome Dreams II*, Young gives himself a certain pressure since it must equal the quality of an album he had judged not sufficiently good to release it, but which contained first quality tracks. This new album contains only 10 titles but adds up 66 minutes anyway. One finds good songs on this including the opening part somewhat country "Beautiful Bluebird". "Ordinary People", recorded in 1988, has an unforgettable melody and is the central piece of the album, even if it becomes straightforwardly interminable with its 18 minutes. One finds another part of more than 14 minutes, "No Hidden Path". The album, which is primarily a joining of songs around "Ordinary People", approaches especially the sound and the environment of [Freedom](#) issued in 1989. We cannot obviously compare it with his great classics, but *Chrome Dreams II* constitutes a very good record anyway.

[Reprise](#) / [Warner](#)

★★★★½



[↑](#) Top of page



[Biffy Clyro](#) - *Puzzle*

Biffy Clyro is a Scottish pop punk group which was formed almost 10 years ago. On the other hand, they were not able to catch attention before this year in spite of the recording of 3 albums before *Puzzle*. This new CD, recorded in Vancouver and mixed in New York City, finally made it possible for them to go on tour with a major band like **Bloc Party**, in addition of opening for **Muse**, the [Rolling Stones](#) and **The Who** on different occasions. The group could also present its own concert, particularly in festivals. In North America, the group belonged to Vans Warped Tour and stopped in Toronto and Montreal. *Puzzle* is an album which definitively brings the group to another level, passably moving away from punk music for rather joining **Franz Ferdinand**, **Weezer**, **Foo Fighters** and brit pop of the late Nineties. The trio presents solid compositions which don't have anything to envy to the most important artists on the current pop rock scene. We realize quickly that they are talented musicians who have a large experience. The melodies are effective and some will stay in your mind for a long time. The group already offered us 5 singles from *Puzzle*: "Semi-Mental", "Saturday Superhouse", "Living Is A Problem Because Everything Dies", "Folding Stars" and "Machines". This is a very good album, by a group to be discovered.

[14th Floor](#) / [Warner](#)

★★★★½



[↑](#) Top of page



Roz Bell - *The First Sunbeams*

Kevin Rosaire Bellemare (Roz Bell) grew up in a small village north of Toronto. As of his youth, he bathed in country music, listening to some of the greatest classics. *The First Sunbeams* is his very first album and it gives us a pop rock sound with folk, country, reggae and hip hop influences. We can partly compare him with **James Blunt** and **Jack Johnson**, but many other names can come to your mind throughout the record. You certainly already know his hits "Yesterday Man (I'm So Lonely)" and "Papercut" which play in loop on the radio. If you like them, you will appreciate undoubtedly this whole album which doesn't contain anything revolutionary but is rather pleasant to the ear. The singer has a cordial voice which is ideal to deliver his light and really catchy pop melodies. His music contains deepness but stays simple and easily reachable. It's a good first test by this artist whom it will be necessary to check out closely in the future.

Enacy / [Universal](#)



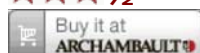
[↑](#) Top of page



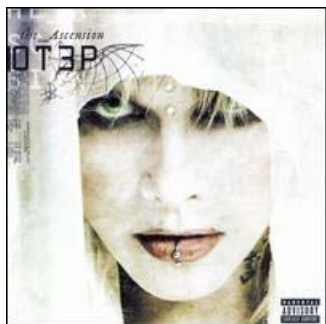
Buck 65 - *Situation* (CD + DVD)

Richard Terfry, better known as Buck 65, is back with a new album, *Situation*. The rapper from Nova Scotia now offers us an album about the year 1957, including the song with that title. According to him, the events of 1957 determined everything we can see today, 50 years later. From [Elvis Presley](#), who made rock n' roll popular, to the first American nuclear tests, everything seems to have taken an important turning at that precise time in history. The album title was inspired by the organization Situationist International founded in Italy in 1957. Musically, it offers us the same alternative type of rap which made him known until now, without much evolution. After the very good "1957", "Dang" is almost embarrassing whereas its chorus reminds us a little too much about "Bawitdaba" by **Kid Rock**. Throughout the CD, one finds a groovy music which is pleasant to listen, but doesn't reverse any barrier. His fans won't be too much mixed up and will still appreciate, but I have big doubts that he can accommodate a new audience with *Situation*. The limited edition with a DVD is completely useless whereas one finds a short film of less than 10 minutes around the topic of 1957, as well as an interview and other bonus features to fill the DVD and to try to justify its presence. You can definitively satisfy yourself with the [regular version](#) without the DVD.

Warner



[↑](#) Top of page



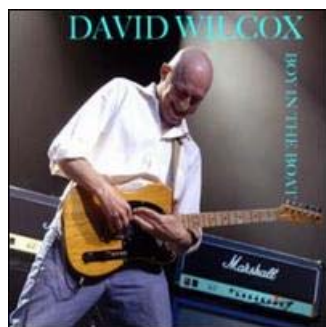
Otep - *The Ascension*

Otep is a metal band with gothic and industrial influences which was formed in Los Angeles in 2000. *The Ascension* is their 3rd album and it sounds somewhere between **Slipknot** and **Evanescence**. The record was in fact produced by **Dave Fortman** who also worked with Evanescence and **Mudvayne**. The group, led by female singer **Otep Shamaya**, presents here a change of personnel with the addition of guitarist **Karma Cheema** and drummer **Brian Wolff** which are joining with Shamaya and band founder, bass player **eViL J (Jason McGuire)**. Mudvayne guitarist, **Greg Tribbett**, collaborates to the album in co-writing 3 songs, "Invisible", "Crooked Spoons" and "Confrontation". The first single from the album is their very good cover of "Breed" by **Nirvana**, whose [video](#) was produced by **Paul R. Brown** who worked in the past with **Smashing Pumpkins** and **James Blunt**. The remainder of the album comprises good moments whereas the group is passably different from what it did in the past. On the other hand, their sound can somewhat be hard on the ears on certain occasions. The rhythm section takes even per moments death metal tendencies ("Eet The Children", "March Of The Martyrs"). At other times, they fall into ballads in the Evanescence style ("Perfectly Flawed", "Invisible"). It's thus rather difficult to find a guideline to this CD which seems to go into any direction. It integrates various elements to please almost everyone at one moment or another, but few people are likely to like the entire unit, except perhaps for their fans from the beginning who will find here an interesting evolution.

Koch



[Top of page](#)



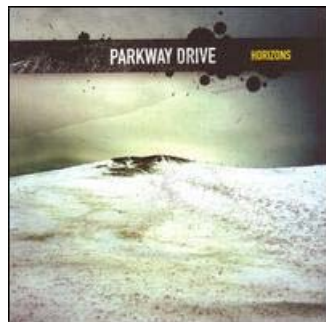
David Wilcox - *Boy In The Boat*

The Canadian blues rock singer and guitarist David Wilcox (not to confuse with the American folk singer with the same name) presents us a very new album. Wilcox offers us a sound with country and rock accents, the whole presented with much energy. He seems to be in a better shape than ever before. Dynamic "Drop The Pressure" and "Pistol Packin' Mama" start greatly the program and automatically cause great expectations for what is remaining to come. Thereafter, the beat slows down passably for the blues of "Catman". It's this type of variation which we can hear throughout the 12 tracks of the album for a total of 38 minutes on which one finds 5 original compositions through classics and traditional songs. *Boy In The Boat* is an album which is pleasant to listen to, the perfect album for any fan of blues rock.

Stony Plain / Warner



[Top of page](#)



Parkway Drive - *Horizons*

Hardly more than one year after the release of its first album in America, *Killing With A Smile*, the hardcore Australian band Parkway Drive is back with *Horizons*. The group continues in the same direction aiming at pushing back the borders of hardcore metal, even if it's rather difficult to revolutionize a limited genre which saw everything during the last 25 years. Perhaps that in Australia they propose a completely new sound, but it's not really the case when we leave that country, from the United States to England, including the Scandinavian countries and Germany, without forgetting Quebec. We can in fact recognize a little bit of the early **Voivod** on certain occasions, even if the group is compared especially with its contemporaries of **Killswitch Engage** and **Hatebreed**. If you appreciated their first album, you will like as much this new record which offers the same heavy riffs, sometimes slow and sometimes quicker, capped with a guttural voice. On the other hand, the group doesn't go really further, in spite of a few good moments.

Epitaph




[↑ Top of page](#)


Queensrÿche - *Take Cover*

The progressive metal group Queensrÿche was unable in the 90s and 2000s to equal its reputation which it created for itself with the excellent albums [Operation: Mindcrime](#) and [Empire](#). Therefore, the best way to bring back the attention on them is to offer an album of covers. So, here is *Take Cover*, a CD of 11 tracks presenting some of the favorite songs of the band. The album begins with the excellent cover of [Pink Floyd](#)'s "Welcome To The Machine" before an extract from *Jesus Christ Superstar*, "Heaven On Their Minds" of **Tim Rice** and **Andrew Lloyd-Webber**. One finds then 2 parts from Crosby Stills Nash & Young: "Almost Cut My Hair" and the classic "For What It's Worth". Other good interpretations are those of [Queen](#) ("Innuendo"), [Black Sabbath](#) ("Neon Knights"), [The Police](#) ("Synchronicity II") and **Peter Gabriel** ("Red Rain"). The album is ending with the best track of the CD, [U2](#)'s "Bullet The Blue Sky" in a version of more than 10 minutes recorded live. An album of covers is never completely satisfactory, but the talent of the musicians of Queensrÿche and the powerful voice of its singer, **Geoff Tate**, largely make us appreciate these songs of quality.

[Rhino](#) / [Warner](#)

★★★★½


[↑ Top of page](#)


Led Zeppelin - *Mothership*

More than one greatest hits collection was released for Led Zeppelin over the years, but a few succeeded in filling the requirements of the fans. The most relevant ones remained to date [Early Days](#) and [Latter Days](#) covering each one half of their career. The 2 discs were then re-edited together for a double compilation covering the whole career of the group. *Mothership* comes here to fill the same mandate except for some differences. One presents as main advantage of this new collection of hits that they were chosen by the band members themselves (it was produced by **Jimmy Page**), but at the end we can hear about the same usual hits. There are 24 tracks, presented chronologically: 13 on first CD covering the first 4 albums of the group and 11 on second CD making a summary of the last 4 albums. Excellent parts adored by the fans (as "Moby Dick" for example) were left aside, just like all the [Coda](#) album, an album of rarities issued after the band's break-up. They could certainly have added some of those whereas nearly 25 minutes remain available, but we can hear anyway the best of the best by this group which is regarded as one of most influential bands in the history of rock. The 2 discs are firmly supported by a very complete booklet containing a detailed biography and information on each song presented. With *Mothership*, as much the fans than the neophytes will have in their hands the so much awaited ultimate compilation making a complete summary of the career of Led zeppelin.

[Atlantic](#) / [Warner](#)

★★★★½


[↑ Top of page](#)

DVD Reviews:



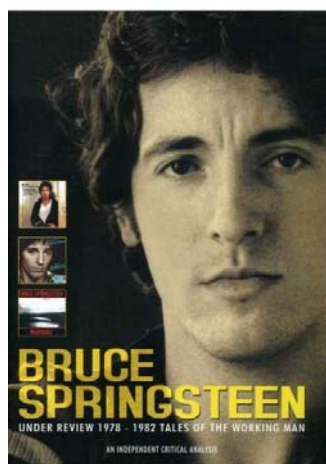
Billy Talent - 666 Live (DVD + CD)

The tour which followed the release of their 2nd album brought Billy Talent almost everywhere around the world, at some of the largest venues. There is a very good outline of it with this DVD and CD package. The DVD contains the equivalent of an entire concert, but divided into 3 cities: Brixton in England, Dusseldorf in Germany and the MTV Rock AM Ring festival in Germany (a mega outside concert). For the CD, one finds the integral concert in Dusseldorf captured on February 20, 2007. The whole is offered to us in a beautiful digipak case, even if the booklet doesn't explain much and most of all shows photographs of the concerts. The worst thing about the DVD, which is at first sight very interesting, is the weakness of the 5.1 surround sound mixing. Volume varies constantly and at a certain time we have the feeling our system is defective, whereas it's rather the balance between the instruments which they completely missed, especially when one passes from the whole group to only one instrument and vice versa. In bonus, the DVD offers other photographs on a music background, but it's too little too late. Whereas the DVD should be the major part of this box, it's in fact the CD which becomes more interesting and it deserves to pay the price. The fans will surely appreciate nevertheless, in spite of some growls of impatience while listening to the DVD in the 5.1 version.

Warner



[Top of page](#)



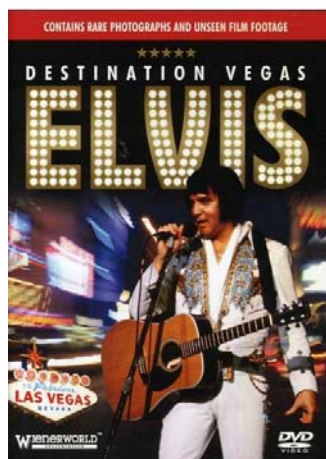
Bruce Springsteen - Under Review 1978-1982: Tales Of The Working Man

The American rocker Bruce Springsteen had his best years between the mid-Seventies and the mid-Eighties, between the albums *Born To Run* (which made him famous) and *Born In The U.S.A.* (his most successful record). This documentary presents briefly these 2 albums, but especially the 3 discs he did between them, *Darkness On The Edge Of Town*, *The River* and *Nebraska*. Several specialists talk about his best years as an author, making of Springsteen the worthy successor to **Bob Dylan**. Through comments of specialists, we can discover various music extracts or interviews with the singer himself. The 82-minute documentary does a very good portrait of this legendary American singer, which thus makes of it an interesting DVD for his fans. On the other hand, there are a few interesting elements for those who don't know well his work.

Sexy Intellectual / MVD



[Top of page](#)



[Elvis Presley](#) - *Destination Vegas*

Destination Vegas is an unauthorized documentary which wants to make a return a little more in-depth over the years of Elvis in Las Vegas. Until now, that period of his life had especially been subject to mockeries because Elvis was not more than a caricature of himself, with a health which was degraded quickly. The film lasts unfortunately only 45 minutes and the first half is devoted to make an overview of his career since the beginning, which either is rather interesting, but is not the goal announced at first. It only makes also a simple overview of his years in Vegas with new audio and video extracts. What I found oddest, it's the way the assembly was carried out whereas one returns unceasingly with performances of his beginnings. For example, they speak about a song of 1969 and the following image brings us back to a televised performance of his early years which doesn't have anything to do with that song. They bring us back even 2 times to the same performance of "Tutti Frutti". This is thus a rather weak DVD which is offered to us, a documentary which will not really satisfy the fan of Elvis sufficiently far, and that the least important experts will find uninteresting. Other new audio extracts are offered to us in bonus, as well as a series of photographs, but it's nothing to recover the obvious lack of interesting material.

[Wienerworld](#) / [MVD](#)



[↑ Top of page](#)

Other New Findings:

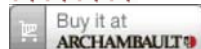
[Bran Van 3000](#) - *Rosé*

Bran Van 3000 is now based in Los Angeles and this is their comeback after a 6-year hiatus. *Rosé* includes 21 tracks with very few weaknesses. It's a warm and sunny album that is very pleasant to hear from the beginning to the end.



[The Beach Boys](#) - *The Warmth Of The Sun*

The Warmth Of The Sun is a companion to the excellent greatest hits collection [Sounds Of Summer: The Very Best Of The Beach Boys](#) issued in 2003. The only problem with it is that they didn't include anything from their best album, [Pet Sounds](#). "Caroline, No" should be on one of those 2 compilations.



[Black Sabbath](#) - *Greatest Hits 1970-1978 (2006)*

The best compilation about the **Ozzy Osbourne** era of Black Sabbath, the best creative years for the band. There are 16 tracks in chronological order covering every album of those years. The booklet is also very detailed.



[The Band](#) - *Greatest Hits (2000)*

The best greatest hits collection at this time for The Band with 18 tracks in chronological order accompanied by a detailed booklet.





[↑](#) Top of page

Reviews Coming Up Next Month:



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

+

Dolores O'Riordan - [Are You Listening?](#)

Mika - [Life In Cartoon Motion](#)

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

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[↑](#) Top of page

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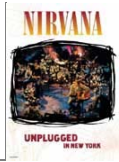
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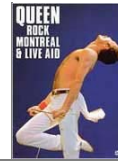
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 [Haut de page](#)

 [Top of page](#)

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