

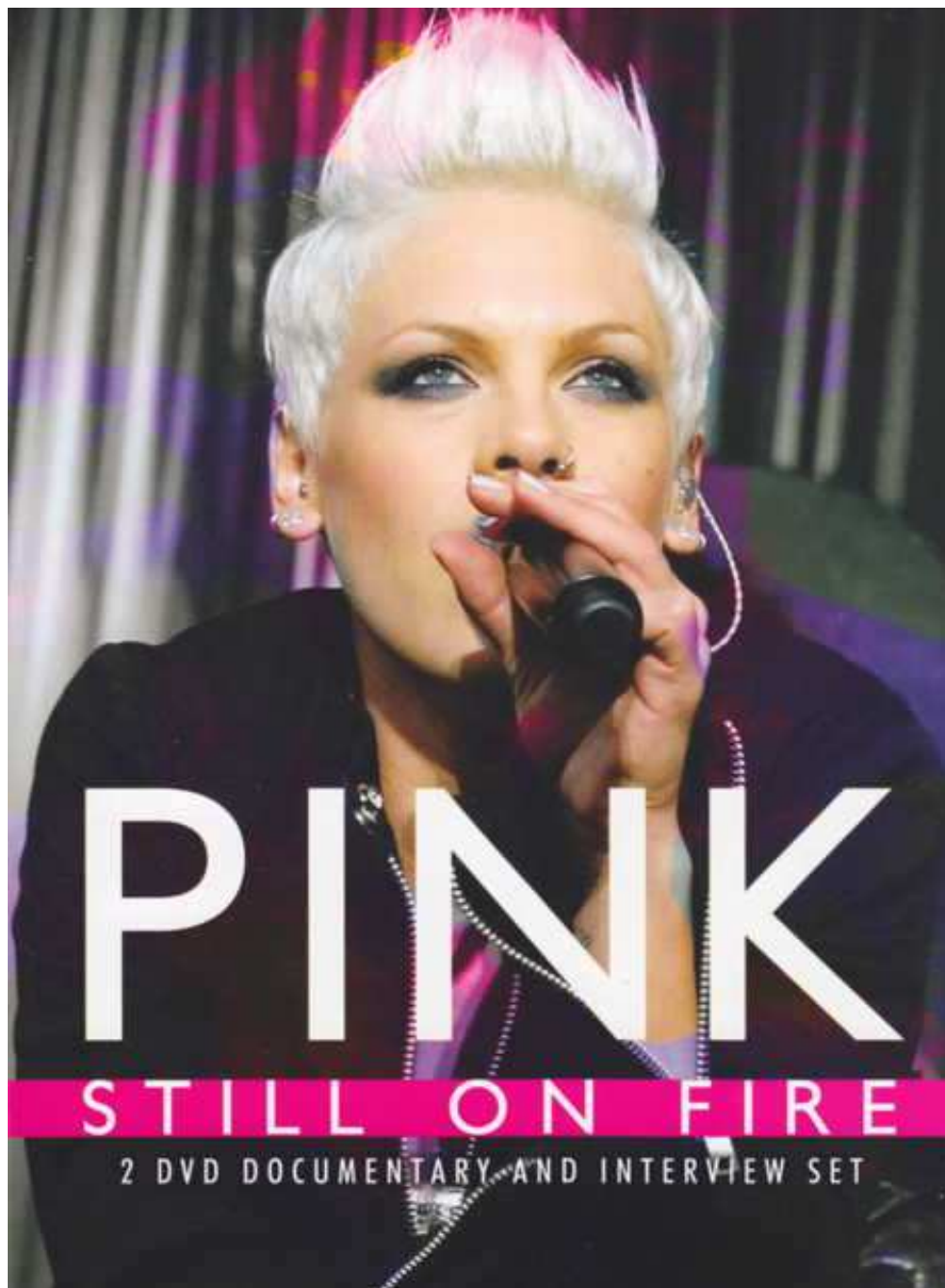
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## Post-Valentines column looks at Pink and few newbies worth a listen

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This post-Valentine's column kicks off with a CD tribute to the songs of Tim Hardin, followed by a DVD presentation about Pink. After that, I'll be reviewing new albums from Seattle's Red Jacket Mine, Washington, D.C.'s The Riverbreaks and a singer/songwriter named Samantha Crain.

### **'Reason To Believe: The Song Of Tim Hardin,' (Full Time Hobby, HHHH)**

This Feb. 26 CD came with a red balloon representing the record label, and also represents the same-named song originally written and recorded by Tim Hardin. It also came with a record-company sticker.

Oregon troubadour Hardin (who died in 1980) is one of the most respected singer-songwriters. The tribute album's title is one of Tim's best-known/most commercial songs but this album spotlights some of the obscure numbers as well, often performed by artists unfamiliar to me.

Highlights include The Phoenix Foundation's anthemic "Don't Make Promises You Can't Keep," Mark Lanegan (Screaming Trees) does a heartfelt "Red Balloon," Gavin Clark's "Shiloh Town" channels "Nebraska"-era Springsteen and the odd orchestration of Pinkunoizu's "I Can't Slow Down."

Fans of Hardin's songs will enjoy at least some of this worthy tribute CD.

### **'Pink-Still On Fire,' (MVDvisual, HHHH)**

This two-disc DVD released Feb. 19 provides folks like me an informative look at Pink, who was born Alicia Moore and has had a metamorphic career since she started releasing recordings at age 19 with the R&B/hip-hop flavored "Can't Take Me Home" album. This wasn't a kind of music she was very much at home with, though subsequent releases had some dance-pop beats. Her second album, "Missundaztood," was co-produced by Linda Perry (initially leader of 4 Non-Blondes) and had a much rockier edge, although its biggest hit was the dance-driven "Get This Party Started."

She's been through more changes since then, and some since the documentary on disc two was completed in 2009. In fact, my only complaint here was that the boring interview disc was disc one rather than the interesting documentary on disc two. That disc tells more about Pink as an artist and contains lots of video performance footage. Pink fans and those who'd like to be will really enjoy this presentation if you watch disc two first.

### **'Someone Else's Cake,' Red Jacket Mine (Fin Records, HHHHH)**

This Feb. 19 release comes from Seattle, but sounds more like a product of post-punk Britain, when Elvis Costello, Nick Lowe, Graham Parker and Squeeze ended up on the UK charts along with other literate singer-songwriter pop masters. This outfit is led by singer-songwriter/guitarist Lincoln Barr. The tight rhythm section is Matthew Cunningham on bass and vocals and Andrew Salzman on drums percussion and vocals. That trio makes extremely cool music along with keyboardist Daniel Walker and producer Johnny Sangster on percussion, guitar and vocals along with other studio cohorts. There are so many good songs that it's hard to pick highlights, so here's a few flavorful sonic dishes, starting with the opener, "Amy."

Early Elvis Costello and prime-time Squeeze are valid instrumental comparisons for tunes such as "Nickel & Dime," the garage-soul "Engineer," the insanely catchy "Ron Nasty" and the playful title song.

This is a heaping helping of intelligent, brainy music that will win many fans.

### **'Kid Face,' Samantha Crain (Ramseur Records/Sony/Red, HHH 1/2)**

This Feb. 19 CD's title refers to what people say about singer/songwriter Samantha Crain: namely, that she has a "kid face," but the title song is darker, as are many others on this album produced by John Vanderslice and recorded on analog tape.

The opener "Never Going Back" has a sprightly tempo without much lyrical darkness; "Taught to Lie" reveals more haunting levels of Samantha's alto and wordplay. The edgy "Paint" contains emotional cracks that show as the song nears the chorus. Other highlights include the subtle throb of "Churchill," the spooky title tune and the anxiously complaining about life's pace "Somewhere All the Time."

Fans of Americana music with a dark edge and heartfelt singing will enjoy this album.

### **'Wildfire,' The Riverbreaks (Independent Release, HHHH)**

This February release comes from a Washington, D.C., band whose genesis stems from four band members attending UNC Chapel Hill. That's also where they began working with producer Chris Stamey, who was one of the legendary dB's. The graduated Tar Heels are acoustic guitarist/vocalist Ryan Bailey, electric guitarist Jesse Prentice-Dunn, keyboard whiz Andrew Satten and violinist/vocalist Neela Rajendra. Bassist Drew Ball completes the basic line-up, with drummer/percussionist Logan Matheny at the top of the "guest" list. Stamey plays harmonium, cello and synthesizer, Caitlin Cary sings, and other studio guests abound.

The opener, "Wild Fruit," shows the band's up-tempo side. Other highlights include "Field of Sparrows" and "Paper Moon," which segue into each other with slow-dripping intensity and the sorta-funky "Waiting on the Rapture."

Fans of alt-alt country and adult pop music will enjoy this one.

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