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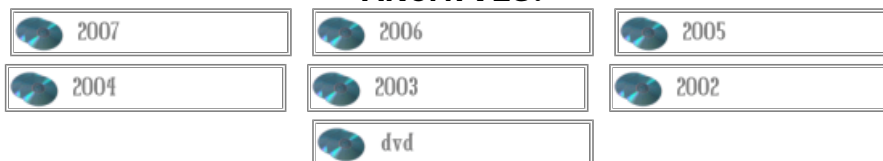
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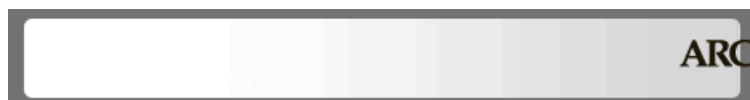
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Featured Review:



[James Blunt](#) - *All The Lost Souls*

Thanks to his first album, *Back To Bedlam*, in 2005, the British singer James Blunt became one of the most popular artists in the world in a very short period of time. It is thus with a lot of pressure on his shoulders that he offers his new CD, *All The Lost Souls*. His fans won't be too much lost since he continues in the same direction than with his previous one, in spite of a very beautiful evolution. It remains in the adult pop rock genre, but it flirts somewhat with folk music, which makes it possible to compare him with **Neil Young**, **Cat Stevens** and **Elton John**. The melodies are of first quality and he can count on splendid orchestral arrangements for wrapping his music well. You certainly already know the hit "1973" which is played in all the radios throughout the world since its release. Several other tracks have the

potential to get as much success of which "One Of The Brightest Stars" and "I'll Take Everything". *All The Lost Souls* is at least as good as his previous one and there is no reason so that it does not obtain as much success.

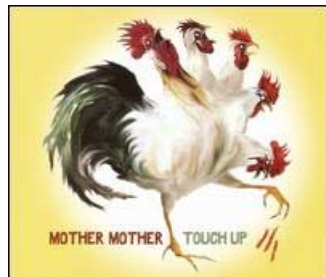
[Atlantic](#) / [Warner](#)

★★★★½



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Featured New Artist:



[Mother Mother](#) - *Touch Up*

Mother Mother is a quintet from Vancouver which exists since 2005. They offer us an indie pop and folk rock sound rather weird based on experiments and vocal harmonies. One can seize their jazz influences on various occasions, all having studied jazz and classical art forms. One can especially compare the group with the **Pixies** and the **B-52's**, but the first track, "Dirty Town", also made me think of **Primus**. *Touch Up* was released in 2006 on an independent label, but their contract signing with Last Gang Records allowed the re-release of it with new artwork, overdubs and 2 new tracks. It is a creative album rather difficult of approach, in spite of always good vocal harmonies. The beat is seldom constant and the group seems to go in any directions, which can be a bit mixing. It is an album for the amateurs of different sounds...

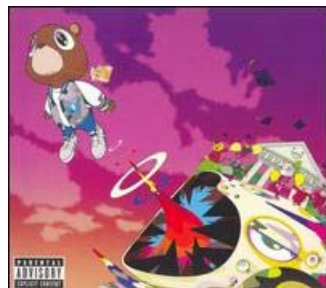
[Last Gang](#)

★★★★



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Other CD Reviews:



[Kanye West](#) - *Graduation*

It is a whole reputation Kanye West built in a few years only. [The College Dropout](#) is recognized by several like the best hip hop album of the 2000s and [Late Registration](#) came to eclipse all the other albums in the category in 2005. It is thus with much interest (and apprehension) that we awaited his 3rd album, *Graduation*. He offers here an album a little more personal, a little less imposing than his precedent. Less great orchestrations, less guest artists of big reputation and only 51 minutes (rather than the 70 minutes which became a standard in the hip hop industry) make of this CD an album a little more intimate and of a great softness. He uses the synthesizers a lot, often in a style which approaches the 80s ("Flashing Lights", etc). Sampling is once again quite present and is particularly obvious on "Stronger" whereas it uses abundantly and in a very beautiful way the song "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger" by **Daft Punk**, making it one of my favorites of the CD. "Good Morning" opens the album magnificently, gently awaking us before the listening of the album. Other tracks of first quality include "Good Life", "Can't Tell Me Nothing" and "Drunk And Hot Girls". The piano on "Everything I Am" is superb, all in softness. The weak moments are rare on the album, the worst in my opinion being "Barry Bonds". It is an album of very great quality offered once again by Kanye West, an album which is perhaps even better than [Late Registration](#) even if it is in a slightly different style. It acts certainly as the best hip hop album of the year until now.

[Roc-A-Fella](#) / [Universal](#)

★★★★★



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[Manu Chao](#) - *La Radiolina*

Here is a new album by this former member of **Mano Negra** which pursues a solo career since already ten years. The French man with a Spanish background again gives us an album with Latin colors with especially obvious elements of rock on tracks like "Rainin In Paradize" and "The Bleedin Clown". He sings primarily in Spanish, but with occasional lyrics in English, Italian and French. The major part of the CD is very warm, typically Mediterranean, a music which would certainly not displease in Latin America. Always energetic, even in its softest moments, the music of Manu Chao unceasingly has the advantage of being involving. This is music of the world which wants to be ideal to bring the people together. In spite of an occasional lack of creativity, *Radiolina* is an extremely effective album with few annoying moments, an album which is extremely likely to turn in loop in your home. In bonus, you can hear 5 additional tracks and a multimedia portion presents us the video for "Rainin In Paradize" which shows touching images of the atrocities of war in Africa.

[Warner](#)

★★★★½

Buy it at
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[Tiësto](#) - *In Search Of Sunrise 6: Ibiza*

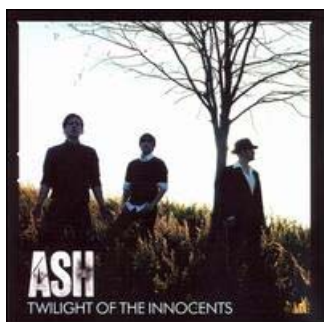
After one year of anticipation for his fans, the well known DJ Tiësto is finally back with the 6th album of the series about the places which inspired him the most throughout the world when he was on tour around the globe. This time, it features the island of Ibiza in Spain, an island known for its imposing events and its night clubs where the best DJs of the planet perform. This double compilation perfectly mixed during 155 minutes offers uninterrupted techno trance music to the manner of Tiësto. He was able to reproduce the atmosphere of Ibiza in a splendid way, at such point that we have the feeling to feel the sun and the atmosphere of the island. Those which already went there will be even more capable to realize it. Tiësto has this single capacity to choose the good pieces and to create a perfect fusion with them, and it again comes to prove that he is probably the best DJ in the world in this moment. A first choice double CD to place you in the environment of the dance floors of Ibiza...

[Black Hole](#) / [Fusion3](#)

★★★★½

Buy it at
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[Ash](#) - *Twilight Of The Innocents*

The alternative rock group from Northern Ireland Ash is back with a new album, 15 years after its beginnings. Ash returns as a trio to present us what they say should be their last album, because of the changes which occur in musical industry making it more favorable to release only singles. If it is indeed their last album, one can say that it is successful, since we can hear their best CD in many years. It's true that Ash always evolved in a style which was largely overexploited since a dozen years and that their sound is not so different from all the other bands. The fact remains that the guys present here some quite good songs, of which the hit "You Can't Have It All" with its very good beat, the ballad "Polaris" with its imposing orchestrations and "End Of The World". Certain tracks are a little less huge and leave us somewhat indifferent, but the whole album is fun to listen.

Infectious / [Warner](#)

★★★★½



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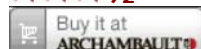


[Against Me!](#) - *New Wave*

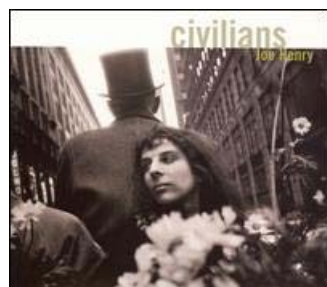
After 3 albums on independent labels, here is the major label debut of Florida band Against Me!. The group could count on the work of the legendary **Butch Vig** as producer for the album, a guy who worked with [Nirvana](#), **Smashing Pumpkins**, **Sonic Youth** and **Garbage**. Against Me! offers us a folk and punk sound which is rather difficult to compare, that one could perhaps associate with **Rise Against** and **Billy Bragg**, with some elements of **Tom Waits** and **Bruce Springsteen**. On "Stop!" on the other hand, the group proposes a power pop sound which can approach **Franz Ferdinand**. One can thus say that it acts as an original group which has a single style amalgamating various influences. The album starts strongly with the title-song and "Up The Cuts". Thereafter, it is the first single, "Thrash Unreal". A little later, the Canadian singer **Tegan Quin** (**Tegan And Sara**) comes with her pretty voice on "Borne On The FM Waves Of The Heart" to make a counterweight with the raucous voice of **Tom Gabel**, the leader and composer-songwriter of the group. Against Me! presents socially engaged lyrics on a creative music. It is thus a group which deserves all our attention.

Sire / [Warner](#)

★★★★½



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[Joe Henry](#) - *Civilians*

After *Tiny Voices* issued in 2003 and considered by several specialists like his best album in career, the pressure was heavy on Joe Henry for the writing of his 10th album. The author, composer, singer, musician and producer tried to return to a style a little more stripped down on *Civilians* and the result is rather effective. The quality of the melodies being undeniable, there is no need for an over-production. It again offers us a country/rock and folk sound with influences of **Neil Young** and **Bob Dylan** and which one could partly compare with **Ron Sexsmith** and **Wilco**. Henry works here with the musicians of the album *Strange Weirdos* by **Loudon Wainwright III**, an album co-produced by Joe Henry that was released last May as the soundtrack for the movie *Knocked Up*. Besides, he covers here one of the tracks of that album, "You Can't Fail Me Now". In addition to this excellent song, it offers us other great tracks like "Civil War", "Scare Me To Death", "Our Song" and the title-song. The beginning of "Time Is A Lion" reminds us of "Money" by [Pink Floyd](#), which makes us hesitate between interest and embarrassment. Some other titles are ordinary, but *Civilians* is anyway a first quality album for those who like introspective music. We can certainly regard this 10th album as a part of the first half of his recordings.

Anti- / [Epitaph](#)

★★★★½


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[Chiodos](#) - *Bone Palace Ballet*

After a first album of quality with [All's Well That Ends Well](#), Chiodos is back with *Bone Palace Ballet*. Whereas the first record was extremely eclectic, almost difficult to follow per moments, this new album brings the group much further with a greater cohesion. They are in a territory skillfully occupied by **Coheed and Cambria** and **My Chemical Romance**, but their music of a great creativity differentiates them from the mass of the post hardcore and emo bands. Perhaps does the group try to make competition with **Fall Out Boy** with incredible titles like "Is It Progression If A Cannibal Uses A Fork?", "Bulls Make Money, Bears Make Money, Pigs Get Slaughtered" and "If I Cut My Hair, Hawaii Will Sink", but in any event, it approaches them somewhat musically on certain occasions. *Bone Palace Ballet* caused a whole surprise at its release reaching #5 of Billboard Top 200 with sales of 39,000 copies at its first week. It is an exceptional performance for an unknown group by a large audience which does not have a contract with a major label. It acts as an excellent album with imposing orchestrations which any amateur of emo and post hardcore music is extremely likely to appreciate.

[Equal Vision](#)

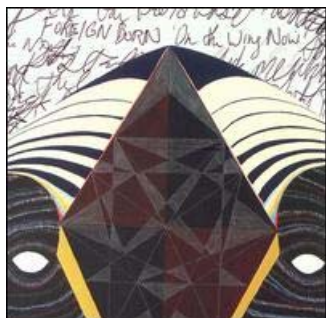

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[Orange](#) - *Escape From L.A.*

Here is the 2nd album by the excellent young pop punk band from California Orange. I had liked their first album, [Welcome To The World Of... Orange](#), which had the advantage of being different from most of the current pop punk bands with a sound a little more British. The group continues in the same direction here. One can make some parallels with **Sum 41**, **Green Day** and **Social Distortion**, but it's really necessary to go back to explore 1977 English punk to find the true points of comparison for this group. We have to say that the production certainly has something to do with it with a sound a little less polished than most of their contemporaries. The powerful voice of the singer, **Joe Dexter**, can sometimes disturb the sensitive ears whereas we have the feeling that he's too close to the microphone to vociferate that way, in a [Sex Pistols](#) way. In spite of this sound which can seem sometimes a little too raw, the melodies are so effective that we cannot do anything else but singing. Finally, if you resisted singing until the end, the 11th track will make you give up whereas they skillfully cover the mega-hit of the 80's "Karma Chameleon" by **Culture Club**. *Escape From L.A.* is once again a very good CD which gives a new breath to Californian pop punk.

[Hellcat](#) / [Epitaph](#)


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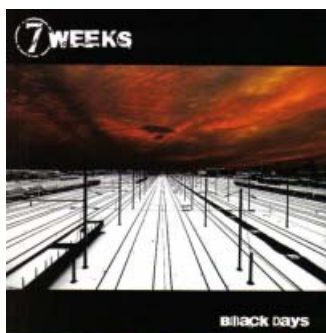
[Foreign Born](#) - *On The Wing Now*

Foreign Born was formed in Los Angeles in 2003 and presents us now its very first album, *On The Wing Now*. One can compare them with **The Arcade Fire**, **Echo & The Bunnymen** and **Radiohead**. They have an indie rock sound with sometimes acoustic elements (intimist) or atmospheric (more imposing). The compositions are solid without however being totally creative. Then, we can hear some tracks which I found rather annoying, which comes somewhat to waste the album. Foreign Born is anyway a good group which it will be necessary to check out closely in the future.

[Dim Mak](#) / [Earshot](#)



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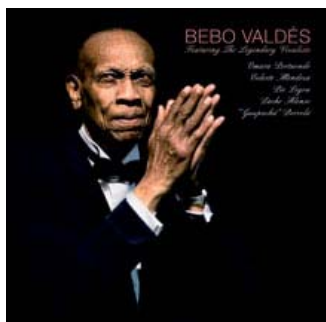


[7 Weeks](#) - *B(I)ack Days*

7 Weeks is a young group from Limoges in France which proposes stoner metal music. They present us here a very first 31-minute independent EP with 8 tracks. Forget the fact that they are new in the industry and that they are French (it's not the best country for metal music) and listen to this CD without any preconceived idea. You will see quickly that one can compare them with the most important bands in the genre and that they do not have anything to envy **Queens Of The Stone Age**. We can also compare them with the sound of Seattle like **Soundgarden** and **Alice In Chains**. The production of great quality emphasizes perfectly the music with effective melodies of **Julien Bernard**, the leader of the band. An EP of this quality by such a recent group is surprising and refreshing. The continuation has to be checked out closely, hoping that they can sign a record deal.



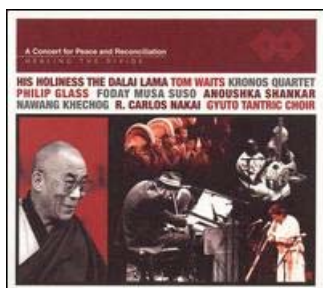
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[Bebo Valdés](#) - *Featuring The Legendary Vocalists*

Bebo Valdés is a legendary Cuban pianist who was very present in Havana with his group, **Sabor de Cuba** (Flavor of Cuba). What is presented here is nothing less than 25 songs recorded with famous vocalists like **Omara Portuondo**, **Celeste Mendoza**, **Pio Leyva**, **Pacho Alonso** and **"Guapacha" Borcela**. These songs were all recorded in Havana between 1957 and 1960, most of them in 1960. They are traditional Cuban jazz with a very good mixture of dancing tracks and pieces a little more romantic and soft. The CD is presented in a very beautiful digipak case and is accompanied by a detailed booklet which will make you learn much about the artists featured here. Not only this 73-minute compilation brushes an excellent portrait of the musical talent of Cuba, but it presents a page of history of that single country. It is definitely an album to add to your collection...

[Disconforme](#) / [MVD](#)

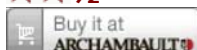

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Healing The Divide: A Concert For Peace And Reconciliation

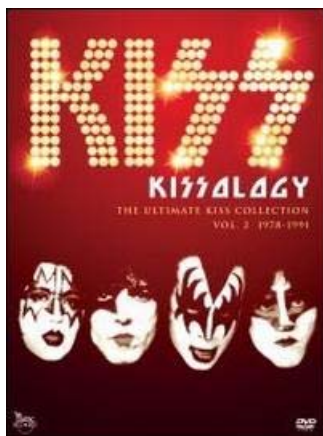
Healing The Divide is a non-profit organization founded by **Richard Gere** in 2001 and that is dedicated to collaborative solutions to humanitarian crises. This CD presents a benefit concert which took place on September 21, 2003 at the Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City during His Holiness the **Dalai Lama** 20-day tour of the US. The funds raised with the proceeds from CD sales will go obviously to the organization. This concert features **Tom Waits**, and his 50-minute performance is summarized here in 4 tracks interpreted with **Kronos Quartet** and **Greg Cohen**. One also finds an introduction by the Dalai Lama, as well as the music of **The Gyoto Tantric Choir**, **Anoushka Shankar**, **Nawang Khechong**, **R. Carlos Nakai**, **Philip Glass** and **Foday Musa Suso**. *Healing The Divide* wants to bring together the east and the west, but it should be acknowledged you will hear primarily music from the east on this CD which will like especially the amateurs of Asian music... and of Tom Waits. A completely eclectic album which has as only advantage of helping the organization.

[Anti- / Epitaph](#)

★★★½


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DVD Reviews:



KISS - KISSALOGY: The Ultimate KISS Collection Vol.2, 1978-1991 (3 DVD + bonus DVD)

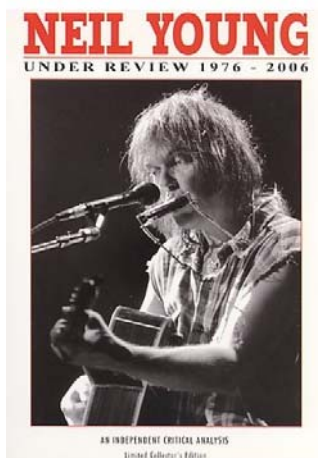
After a first DVD box set covering the beginnings of the group and, at the same time, their most creative years musically, here is now the follower. These 3 DVDs make it possible to have an overview of the best years of the band in concert, but they also go through the poorest years musically which presented some good hits, but nothing to compare with their classics. One sees the passage of **Vinnie Vincent** on guitar replacing **Ace Frehley**. Later, it is **Bruce Kulick** we can see on stage. One also sees the substitute of **Peter Criss** on drums, **Eric Carr**, and what impresses quickly, it is to see at which point he contributed to improve the rhythm section of the band, hitting much stronger than his predecessor. The 3 discs present 2 complete concerts of great quality: one captured in Sydney in Australia in 1980 (which is possibly the best concert I saw from them) and one captured in Detroit in 1990 which makes us discover their greatest hits of the Eighties in addition to their classics. Several other concerts are presented, but only in their strong moments and without repeating once again the classics they have interpreted in each one of their concerts for 30 years. Moreover, we can see various TV appearances, including their first appearance without make-up on MTV. Finally, it includes videos and a rather poor fantastic film from 1979 featuring KISS (*KISS In Attack Of The Phantoms*). In bonus, there is a 4th DVD presenting a concert captured in Tokyo in 1988. The whole package is once again offered in a splendid box including a detailed booklet.

406 minutes

★★★★



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[Neil Young](#) - *Under Review 1976-2006*

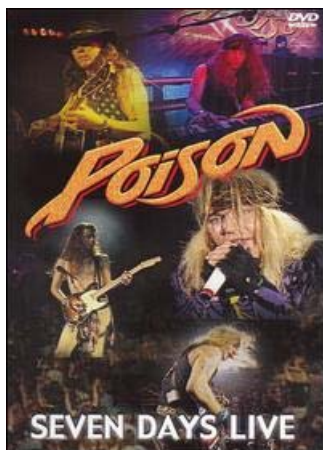
After [Under Review 1966-1975](#) released earlier this year, here is a documentary presenting a retrospective of the 2nd part of the career of Neil Young. Many experts trace a portrait of the various albums issued by Young. They explain how he was wrongfully associated to the punk movement at the end of the Seventies, whereas he had only applauded the movement. The influences of punk and Neil Young do not have in fact anything in common. The DVD presents sometimes rare performances on stage, as well as rare extracts of interviews, which adds enormously to this unauthorized documentary. *Under Review 1976-2006* is an excellent way of discovering most of the career of Neil Young, even if you should also get the first DVD of the series to have an outline of the best years of his career.

79 minutes

Sexy Intellectual / [MVD](#)



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[Poison](#) - *Seven Days Live (2006)*

On April 23, 1993 was captured a concert in Hammersmith Apollo Theater in London by the hard rock group Poison, and it's what we can see here during 82 minutes. 15 tracks are offered obviously presenting all their greatest hits from 1986 to 1990. Unfortunately, this is a concert from the *Native Tongue* tour with **Richie Kotzen** replacing **C.C. DeVille** on guitar, with the result that there are several tracks from that rather poor album. On the other hand, the 4 guys remain at the top of their reputation of great performers. Firmly supported by very good images and a surround sound, the band gives us a lot for our money, and gives good memories to its hardcore fans, 20 years after the release of its first album.

82 minutes

Cherry Red / [MVD](#)



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Other New Findings:

[Justin Timberlake](#) - *Futuresex/Lovesounds* (2006)

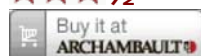
Here is maybe the best pop album of 2006, with many hits including "Sexyback".

★★★★½

**[Mogwai](#) - *Mr. Beast* (2006)**

A very good album by this Scottish indie rock band that was formed more than 10 years ago.

★★★★½

**[Johnny Cash](#) - *The Essential* (2002)**

All the greatest hits by this country legend presented chronologically on 2 CDs.

★★★★½

**[The Beatles](#) - *Yellow Submarine (Songtrack)* (1999)**

The re-edition of the soundtrack from 1968, without some of the film tracks that were replaced by greater hits by the band that didn't appear on the original version of the album. A very good CD...

★★★★★



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Reviews Coming Up Next Month:**[Radiohead](#)***In Rainbows*

+

50 Cent - [Curtis](#)Blue Rodeo - [Small Miracles](#)Hot Hot Heat - [Happiness Ltd.](#)Motion City Soundtrack - [Even If It Kills Me](#)Bettye LaVette - [The Scene Of The Crime](#)Dragonette - [Galore](#)Preach - [Transatlantic](#)Farewell - [Isn't This Supposed To Be Fun!?](#)Galactic - [From The Corner To The Block](#)Modern Life Is War - [Midnight In America](#)

and much more...

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