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# Fusion

## New release music roundup

### Golden oldies and contemporary gems found

By Paul Freeman  
Daily News Entertainment Writer

With an avalanche of new releases, it's difficult to sift through the rubble and fool's gold to get to the genuine nuggets. But have faith — they're definitely out there.

#### Latest discs

**Rykarda Parasol, "Our Hearts First Meet"**  
San Francisco's Parasol, backed by her excellent band, dazzles with this album. Her musical tales, tinged with darkness, never fail to enthrall. With literate lyrics she calls to mind a female Nick Cave, though her voice is far more pleasing. Parasol's remarkable, evocative vocals cut right to the heart. There's not one weak track, but the haunting "Hannah Leah" and unnerving "Lonesome Place" stand out. An amazing work.

**Ween, "Shinola, Vol. 1"**  
Trying to wean yourself away from Ween? Their new CD "Shinola Vol. 1" won't help. It's brimming with addictive non-released material. Enjoy their eclectic eccentricities.

**John Fluker, "The Sound of Peace"**  
Gladys Knight's musical director John Fluker makes his solo debut with compositions inspired by the passing of his father, who found piano music soothing. The New Age instrumentals wistfully wind their way towards serenity and wonderment.

**Elise Lebec, "Possible Dreams"**  
Fluker's isn't the only superb new CD of piano compositions. Lebec's melodies cascade like lily waterfalls. When you want to relax, this music will take you to a lovely, quiet, reflective place. Its healing powers will affect you, whether you're focusing on the sound or letting it drift through the background.

**Snakes & Music, "Isabelle"**  
There's a freshness to the alternative rockers' sound. Their compelling lyrics convey a healthy sense of alienation. Imaginative touches keep you off guard. You'll notice folk, psychedelic, blues and country influences. Infectious songs such as "Treading Water" and "Burn The Bridges" will have you reaching for the repeat button.

**Dylan Dray, "Seven Year Itch"**  
In her debut, Dray, who divides time between France and Australia, delivers electrifying performances. Her marvelously moody, unadorned yet provocative rock gets under your skin. "Jesus is Coming to Town Today" is undeniably riveting. Dray, who seems destined for stardom, plays San Francisco this winter. Order at [dylandrays.com](http://dylandrays.com).

**Powerman 5000, "Destroy What You Enjoy"**  
The band hurls itself into a hard, punk mode, succeeding with blasts of raw energy. Lead singer Spider One (Rob Zombie's kid brother) rants his way through fiery numbers like "Return to the City of the Dead." "Who Do You Think You Are" revels in exuberant vehemence. An unexpected satirical moment comes with the countryish "Miss America."

**Castles in Spain, "Again"**  
This deliciously distinctive San Francisco band

serves up exotic rock spiced with world music flavors. Biachi is a revelation as she unleashes alluring, swirling vocals and hypnotic guitar passages. The rhythms intoxicate. "Tribalicious" surges with a primal power. Passion pours through each song. This is an album you'll want to hear again and again.

**Bargain Music, "American Born"**  
Essentially a solo acoustic effort by the Long Beach band's lead guitarist/vocalist Josh Fischel. He offers amusing lyrical twists, singing on the title track "I've got the mind of a revolutionary, trapped in a couch potato's body." Appealingly offbeat and sparsely produced, the album is occasionally poignant. Interesting covers including Peter Tosh's "Till Your Well Runs Dry," which glows with Fischel's Tim Hardin-esque jazz-folk vocal.

**Jade, "Banned in America"**  
A native of China now based in Vancouver, Jade is stirring up a ruckus with "Banned In America." Already a chart success in Canada with "Lay Me Down," she's finally getting airplay on this side of the border. Edgy guitars coexist with techno sounds as Jade segues from goth to metal to unabashed pop.



**Solomon Burke, "Nashville"**  
This soul institution brings his emotive voice to "Nashville," due Sept. 26. Guests include Emmylou Harris, Patty Loveless and Dolly Parton. Gillian Welch joins Burke for the heartrending "Valley of Tears." Material comes from many top country writers. But one highlight is a rollicking hoedown of Springsteen's "Ain't Got You." The album's crossover concept is no gimmick, as proven by the powerful results.

**Delta Wires, "Them That's Got"**  
Years of gigging has made the Oakland-based Delta Wires an incredibly tight, hot R&B band. They're led by the authentically soulful vocals and harmonica-playing of Ernie Pinata. With sweet horns, a rock solid rhythm section and the fluid lead guitar of San Mateo's Richard Healy, the band cooks. From traditional blues to funk to swing, this album stirs excitement. Among the grabbing tunes are "Crazy, Crazy Lovin'" and "Runnin' Blue."

**Slow Motion Reign, "Slow Motion Reign"**  
System of a Down's Serj Tankian makes his producing debut with this outstanding, 21st-century art rock band. Slow Motion Reign conjures up complex, melodic and often majestic music. Some of the recordings are reminiscent of a grungier Pink Floyd. Tankian's production is far removed from his own group's sound, achieving textured grandeur.

**Maia Sharp, "Eve & the Red Delicious"**  
This limited addition, seven-song EP (available at [maisharp.com](http://maisharp.com)) shows that Sharp is among today's most gifted singer-songwriters. With a little help from her friend Darren Embry, she creates a simple and simply beautiful sound. The opening number, "The Edge," will take listeners' breath away. Intelligent lyrics, engaging melodies and heartfelt emotions combine to captivate.

**Tefflon, "The Morning Way"**  
Alicia Ruggiero's plaintive violin lends a modern

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