

ALBUM REVIEWS

POP

► **PETER GABRIEL**
Shaking The Tree/Sixteen Golden Greats
 PRODUCERS: Various
 Geffen 24326

There is scarcely anything here that diehard Gabriel fans won't have, save a new solo recording of the magnificent "Here Comes The Flood." But come-lately enthusiasts may be drawn in by lesser-known early material, which is just as fine as later smashes like "Sledgehammer" and "Big Time." In all, a fine holiday package, although lack of longbox could create some display confusion.

FALLING JOYS
Wish List
 PRODUCERS: Adrian Bolland and Falling Joys
 Nettwerk/I.R.S. 13058

Aussie four-piece comes on strong with neat vocal harmonies, sharp pop hooks, and lead vocals sometimes reminiscent of Natalie Merchant's, matched by a rock sensibility that often recalls Divinyls. Alternative/college programmers have a host of fine melodies to choose from, but could start with "Lost Addiction," "Robinson Crusoe," "Lock It," "Jennifer," "Dream Hangover," "You're In A Mess," and "Shelter."

RIK EMMETT
Absolutely
 PRODUCER: Rik Emmett
 Charisma 91606

Former Triumph guitarist strikes out with a solid, fairly conventional pop/rock effort that plants him squarely in the Winger/Journey mode. Album is a blend of power ballads, up-tempo pop, and rockers. First single, "Big Lie," sounds like it belongs on a Rick Springfield album, and a video push could make it happen. Also ripe for radio is snappy "Saved By Love" and Warrantlike "Smart, Fast, Mean & Lucky."

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Harry Chapin Tribute
 PRODUCER: Stephen Chapin
 Relativity 1047

Loving tribute to late singer/songwriter recorded in 1987 at Carnegie Hall to celebrate his receiving the Special Congressional Gold Medal is just now being released. Collection includes Bruce Springsteen covering "Remember When The Music," "Sandy" from Graham Nash, and "W*O*L*D" from Richie Havens and Chapin's siblings, Tom and Stephen. Will definitely appeal to Chapin aficionados.

ALIEN SEX FIEND
Curse
 PRODUCER: Alien Sex Fiend
 Sinclair 1005

Newest album from Nik Fiend and Mrs. Fiend results in a characteristically noisy, theatrical collection of distorted/reverbed tracks that should lose them no admirers amongst the postpunk horror-show crowd. Others might take their chances with such cuts as "Now I'm Feeling Zombified" or "Burger Bar Baby."

BEGGARS & THIEVES
 PRODUCERS: Steve Thompson and Michael Barbiero
 Atlantic 82113

Hard rock four-piece debuts with a

collection of metal-oriented tunes that, while winning no awards for musical innovation, have an enjoyable (if sometimes lead-footed) pop touch that should appeal to like-minded programmers and listeners. Highlights include "Billy Knows Better," "Let's Get Lost," "Love's A Bitch," and "Heaven & Hell."

★ **GREGSON & COLLISTER**
Love Is A Strange Hotel
 PRODUCERS: Clive Gregson & Christine Collister
 RNA 70961

English folk/pop duo scores a lovely coup with this sublime album of cover versions of songs both familiar and obscure by Bruce Springsteen, Joni Mitchell, 10cc, Jackson Browne, and others. Collister's throaty singing and Gregson's guitar and piano propel these subtle, intimate readings, which are worthy of attention beyond the pair's folk/rock cult.

★ **WILLY DeVILLE**
Victory Mixture
 PRODUCER: Carlo Ditta
 Orleans 1001

Here's a nice idea, beautifully executed: R&B vocalist DeVille shines in some bouncy New Orleans sessions that recall Crescent City's glory days of the '50s. Such talents as Allen Toussaint, Dr. John, Earl King, and the Meters' Leo Nocentelli and George Porter add some stomp to the proceedings; Barbara George of "I Know" fame duets handsomely with DeVille on "It Do Me Good." Contact: 828 Royal St., #536, New Orleans, La. 70116.

SKINNY PUPPY
Too Dark Park
 PRODUCERS: David Ogilvie & Devin Key
 Capitol 946832

Vancouver electroterrorists return with yet another flyover replete with grue-flecked vocals and clanking, mind-blistering noise. The industrially damaged sector of the alternative nation may fall for this, but there is little here that isn't done more persuasively by the Chicago-based bands led by the Pup's erstwhile mentor Alain Jourgensen.

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS
Basic Pain Basic Pleasure

PRODUCERS: Algis Kizys, Carolyn Master & Wharton Tiers
 Triple X 51055

In a gloomy vein, this is more like it. Transplanted Chicago-to-New York outfit churns it out in bleak, Joy Division-meets-Swans style that never quite sinks under its own morose weight. Atmospheric postpunk rhythms could make favorable impact at dirge-oriented collegiate and modern rock locales.

THEY EAT THEIR OWN
 PRODUCER: Jeff Eyrich
 Relativity 88561

L.A.-based rock outfit shows some promise on first release. Key to band's impact is assaultive style of vocalist Laura B., who delivers often-punishing lyrics on top of a generally brazen guitar attack. Songs aren't always top-notch, but numbers like "No Right To Kill" and "Why Don't You Disagree?" are pointed enough to win modern rock champions.

TAV FALCO'S PANTHER BURNS
Return Of The Blue Panther
 PRODUCERS: Rene Coman & Panther Burns
 Triple X 51051

Psychobilly redivivus: Demi-legendary Memphis combo lurches back into action with a raw-cous serving of slash'n'trash rock both ancient (covers of Ray Charles, Hank Snow, Slim Harpo oldies) and up-to-date (Rev. Horton Heat's "Love Whip"). How one feels about the generally shambolic proceedings depends on one's empathy for old-fangled 'billy derangement. We vote "yea."

REVEREND BILLY C. WIRTZ
Backslider's Tractor Pull
 PRODUCERS: Reverend Billy C. Wirtz, Bob Greenlee, Harry Simmons & Mark Williams
 Hightone 8024

Pianist, humorist, and part-time evangelist (he's pastor of the First House of Polyester Worship, folks), Wirtz lays waste to Southern fundamentalists on this musical parody of TV pulpit-pounders. Songs like "Sleeper Hold On Satan" or "Honky Tonk Hermaphrodite" may never make the Heavenly Hit Parade, but they may tickle someone whose idea of a good time is an off-color, redneck Firesign Theatre.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

RALPH TRESVANT
 PRODUCERS: Jam & Louis; Darryl Simmons & Kayo; Kyle West; Wolf & Epic; Timmy Gatling & Alton "Wokie" Stewart; Vassel Benford; John Barnes
 MCA 10116

Last of New Edition members to take solo turn makes an impressive debut. The tunes range from the springy New Edition-like "She's My Love Thang" to sleek first single "Sensitivity" to rap. Though each producer leaves a distinctive stamp, Tresvant's ready, willing, and able vocals keep a strong continuity running throughout the project. There are singles aplenty here to take the record through 1991. Next single should be jack-infected "Stone Cold Gentleman."

THE SIMPSONS
The Simpsons Sing The Blues
 PRODUCERS: John Boylan; Bryan Loren; D.J. Jazzy Jeff & John Boylan
 Geffen 24308

Don't have a cow, man—this collection of originals and covers done by Homer, Marge, Lisa and, of course, Bart should be an instant Christmas stocking-stuffer. Does it really matter what music is here? Bart's numbers fare the best, including first single "Do The Bartman." Likely follow-up is Bart's "Deep Deep Trouble," produced by D.J. Jazzy Jeff.

JIMI HENDRIX
Lifelines/The Jimi Hendrix Story

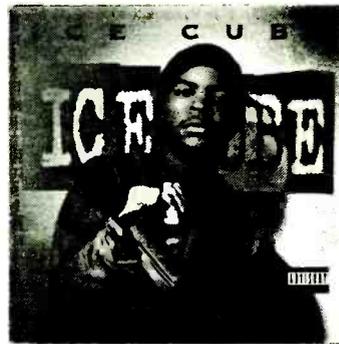
REISSUE PRODUCER: Bruce Gary
 Reprise 26435

Last major rock boxed set project of the season—a four-CD/cassette tribute to the late guitarist—should ring his fans' holiday chimes. Three-quarters of package is derived from a 1988 radio special; downside (too much obtrusive narration) is more than balanced by upside (a trove of unreleased or alternate sides from stage and studio). Highlight is a hitherto unreleased concert recorded at L.A.'s Forum in 1969; Hendrix and the Experience (two months before its breakup) wail throughout. Legion of axeman's acolytes should make this a winner.

RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK
"Rahsaan": The Complete Mercury Recordings Of Roland Kirk
 REISSUE PRODUCER: Kiyoshi Koyama
 Mercury 846630

"Boxman" Koyama, who did such a superlative job with "The Keystone Collection" and similar set devoted to trumpeter Clifford Brown, hits pay dirt again with masterful 10-CD look at Mercury dates by the brilliant, quixotic, multireed man. Kirk is heard in a variety of settings, as leader and sideman in sessions ranging from small groups to big bands; as usual, the producer has unearthed some outstanding unreleased tracks. A late-breaking contender for jazz reissue of the year.

SPOTLIGHT



ICE CUBE
Kill At Will
 PRODUCERS: Ice Cube, Sir Jinx & Chilly Chill
 Priority 7230

Like his former group, N.W.A., Cube fills the product gap since his platinum debut with an EP that comes up short on new material. Highlights of this lean package are brooding, moving "Dead Homiez" and raging uptempo number "The Product" (latter is included on label's "Explicit Rap" compilation). Remixes and filler make up the remainder; while cynics might look at package as slim pickings, fans will probably put this over the top at Yuletide.

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK RECORDING

The Civil War
 PRODUCERS: Ken Burns & John Colby
 Elektra Nonesuch 79256

The country can't seem to get enough of Burns' masterful 11-hour PBS history, so soundtrack for same will likely be a healthy seasonal seller. Album features a number of rigorously arranged and performed period airs and the series' compelling theme, Jay Ungar's "Ashokan Farewell." An evocative, intelligently crafted score.

R&B

TONY TERRY
 PRODUCER: Ted Currier
 Epic 45015

Soulster lets loose on collection of diversified R&B tunes. Current single, "Head Over Heels," is doing well, and though rest of the set is derivative of countless other records, several tunes, including "Baby Love" and "Bad Girl," are well-delivered and would sound fine on radio.

JAZZ

LEO GANDELMAN
Solar
 PRODUCER: Leo Gandelman
 Verve Forecast 846 350

Reedman Gandelman comes through with an effortlessly listenable program of Latinized demi-fusion, with some simpatico pairings with a noteworthy label mate, guitarist Ricardo Silveira. Tracks like "Solar" and "Baganas" would be welcome additions to playlists at mellow contemporary jazz outlets.

★ **BRUCE FOWLER**
Ants Can Count
 PRODUCER: Bruce Fowler
 Terra Nova 9002

Trombonist Fowler, a veteran of Frank Zappa's groups and Captain Beefheart's Magic Band, sparkles on this superior outing that features excellent work by four other members of the musical Fowler clan. Original compositions, which reflect influence of serialist composers and free-blowing avant-garde jazzers, will satisfy the most demanding listener. Contact: 818-352-5598.

COUNTRY

JIMMY MARTIN
You Don't Know My Mind
 PRODUCER: Not listed
 Rounder CD SS 21

Martin is the once and future king of high-octane bluegrass. The 14 selections here are reissues from his 1956-66 Decca period in which he is graced with such impeccable sidemen as J.D. Crowe, Grady Martin, Chubby Wise, and Benny Martin. Best cuts: "Hit Parade Of Love," "Sophronie," "Hold Whatcha Got," and the title tune.

NASHVILLE BLUEGRASS BAND

The Boys Are Back In Town
 PRODUCER: Jerry Douglas
 Sugar Hill 3778

Fresh songs, rich vocal harmonies, and inventive picking from a quintet that here includes the founder and mainstay of the legendary Kentucky Colonels, Roland White.

MARIE OSMOND

The Best Of Marie Osmond
 PRODUCERS: Sonny James, Paul Worley, Kyle Lehning, James Stroud
 Curb 77263

Includes a remake of Osmond's 1973 hit "Paper Roses" (again produced by Sonny James), as well as the duets "Meet Me In Montana" (with Dan Seals) and "You're Still New To Me" (with Paul Davis).

EDDY RAVEN

Greatest Hits
 PRODUCERS: Various
 Warner Bros. 26302

These choices chronicle Raven's breakthrough days of the early '80s and include "Who Do You Know In California," "She's Playing Hard To Forget," "I Should Have Called."

CLASSICAL

MOZART: PIANO CONCERTOS NOS. 11 & 12
Mitsuko Uchida, English Chamber Orchestra, Tate
 Philips 422 458

A delight from start to finish. Uchida's total command of the keyboard, making everything seem simple and preordained, is a rare attribute, shared by few artists today. Her cycle of the Mozart concertos, with the sensitive collaboration of Tate, is shaping up as one of the glories of the catalog.

TCHAIKOVSKY: SYMPHONY NO. 5/BORIS BLACHER: VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY PAGANINI

Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Inbal
 Denon 6364

Inbal packs plenty of emotion in his reading of the Tchaikovsky, but it's without the kind of soggy drool that sometimes mars this all-too-familiar masterpiece. What's more, it is given the kind of spacious, realistic recording by the Denon team that's a model of its kind. This recording clarity and natural acoustic is especially useful for the dramatic and colorful Blacher score.

SPOTLIGHT: Predicted to hit top 10 on its appropriate genre's chart or to earn platinum certification.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY: Highlights new and developing acts worthy of attention and other releases of special interest.

PICKS (►): New releases predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the format listed. CRITIC'S CHOICE (★): New releases, regardless of potential chart action, which the reviewer highly recommends because of their musical merit.

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