

albums

ting edge social sentiments. Sure there's his classic love songs here, 'Fool For You' from Branford Marsalis & the Impressions, Aretha's 'The Makings Of You' and Springsteen with 'Gypsy Woman', but songs like 'Keep on Pushin'' (Tevin Campbell), 'It's Alright' (Stevie Winwood), 'Woman's Got Soul' (B.B.King), 'People Get Ready' (Rod Stewart), 'I'm So Proud' (Isleys) are among his finest songs and continue to be eloquent affirmations of black culture and human rights.

That Mayfield was prolific is illustrated by the fact that songs such as 'Moving On Up' (Paul Weller) and 'Something He Can Feel' (En Vogue) have also been covered in recent years but are not among the 17 songs here.

A lovingly created collection, with those warm modern recordings I like, celebrating one of the most beautiful people to ever write a song.

MURRAY CAMMICK

NZ

3DS

Beautiful Things/Hey Seuss (Flying Nun)

Wow-wee! This is a beautifully packaged Ltd Edition CD featuring several of the 3Ds' finest. The first CD contains the pop anthem 'Hey Seuss' and the anarchic epic 'Man on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown', both from *The Venus Trail*. A brand new track, the subtly demented 'River Burial' is last up. CD two features the versions of 'Beautiful Things' and 'Summer Stone' that were released last year on a Merge Records 7-inch single. On the final track the 3Ds envelope Smelly Feet's (aka Brent Hayward) 'Song For the Whole World' with their twisted pop coating. Pure genius all round.

POP ART TOASTERS

(Flying Nun CD EP)

Here is one from the old boys network. The Pop Art Toasters were formed last year by Martin Phillipps (The Chills) and David Kilgour (Clean, GU, Stephen etc) primarily to play a bunch of obscure late 60s pop songs. On this five-track EP they are joined by Mike Dooley (Toy Love), Alan Starrett and Noel Ward for a run through of several little-known gems. Major highlights are a breezy version of the Dovers 'What Am I Going To Do' and a remarkably Chills-like rendition of 'Go Ahead', a song originally performed by the Squires. Also included is the ethereal 'I Won't Hurt You', 'Circles' by the Who and 'Everyone's Gonna Wonder' by NZ's own Avengers. It's great to hear Martin Phillipps' voice again.

FUEMANA

Closer (Deepest Grooves CD Single)

Mmm... super smooth swingbeat from South Auckland's Fuemana. This re-working of Roberta Flack's 'Closer' contains a piano hook and a deceptively catchy verse-chorus combination that are instantly memorable, although it doesn't benefit from Matty J's spoken word involvement halfway through. 'Cool Calm' almost sounds like Soul II Soul and the final track 'I Love U' is the ideal soapbox for the beautiful soul voice of Phil Fuemana.

BABEL

A Is For Atom (Deepest Grooves CD Single)

Babel were one of the very few lucky recipients of a QE II Arts Council grant last year. The result of which is this very busy five-track debut release. Following on from the clever spoken word 'Intro' comes 'Jack In The Box', a song that draws a comparison with the more laconic moments of NIN. Vocalist Kieren Cooney (Salad Daze, Balance) couldn't get much further away from the style of his past if he tried. 'Crib' is full of oddly familiar and interesting samples while 'The Diabolical Dr. Screwball' contains elements of early H. Chickens. First prize though, goes to the heavy funk groove of 'Mr Fathead.'

MAREE SHEEHAN

To Be Free (Kia Tu Mahea) (Tangata CD Single)

Maree Sheehan's follow up single to last year's superb 'Fatally Cool' is a rapid blast of fast tempo pacific beats combined with a brilliantly catchy vocal melody. Backing vocals are provided by the Waka Huia choir who sang on Crowded House's *Together Alone* album. Their performance, combined with the almost techno speed of the Polynesian flavoured percussion, propel a song that positively deserves to be a hit.

BLACKJACK

Spinning Wheel (Hark Cassingle)

Yet more anthemic power rock from Hamilton's BlackJack. 'Spinning Wheel' is a semi-delicate ballad driven more by the vocals of Gavin Dempsey rather than wailing guitars. On side two, 'Young, Single And Dangerous' is a classic example of your standard, dime-a-dozen rock song about fast chicks with f.m. boots.

MELON TWISTER

Stylo (Manu CD Single)

This is a very different Melon Twister from the band I saw at bFM's 1990 Bomb-a-Thon, much more importance has been placed on the rhythm section to propel songs. This is most evident on the potential dance hit 'Stylo' and the heavy grooves of 'What's In It For Me.' Two versions of 'Wine' don't cut the mustard, sounding very mid 80s UK influenced despite the jazzy saxophone backing. The choice cuts here are the two versions of 'Stylo', particularly the 'styli mix' that features the scratching of DJ DLT.

PROUD

An Urban-Pacific Streetsoul Compilation (Second Nature CD)

This is a 14-track collection of ten South Auckland artists who appeared during the recent nationwide PROUD tour. Styles range from the soulful rap of Sisters Underground and Di-na-ve to the extremely smooth Semi MCs to the acappella doo-wop of Vocal Five. On side two MC Slam's 'Prove Me Wrong' contains some fine scratching, though the beats don't match his staunch vocal delivery, and Puka Puka's drum epic 'Pacific Beats' is stunning. Most memorable are the harder edge rap numbers from Radio Backstab & DJ Payback ('Bassed on a Lost Cause'), the Pacifican Descendants' oldie, 'Pass it Over.'

JOHN RUSSELL

TEXAS TORNADOS The Best of (Reprise)

If Midge Marsden, Sonny Day, Wayne Mason and Bunny Walters all took too much salsa and tequila at a wedding, then jumped up to play, the result would be the Kiwi Tornados: loose, unpretentious, ethnically unique party music. That's basically how this quartet of Tex-Mex legends got together. All were sharing a mid-life crisis, then suddenly found another career more lucrative than their heyday. Between them, Doug Sahm, Augie Meyers, Freddy Fender and Flaco Jimenez can play any polka, honky tonker, ballad or pop tune you care to request on a jukebox in San Antonio.

After three albums — and presumably as a tie-in with the *Beverly Hillbillies* soundtrack — here's a greatest hits. But if you've got the Tornados' self-titled debut, this is rather redundant — and, at only 33 minutes long, too damn short. The selection leans more on straight Mexican numbers than their diverse, energetic albums do, so by the end you're polka'd out. The Doug Sahm vehicles such as 'Who Were You Thinkin' Of' and 'Is Anybody Goin' to San Antone' are included here and

irresistible. But they're on the debut, which I'd recommend over this. To explore further, delve into the Tex-Mex pop of the Sir Douglas Quintet, fuelled by Meyers's inimitable Vox Continental organ riffs.

CHRIS BOURKE

THERAPY? TroubleGum (A&M)

Therapy? are the new kings of Northern Island's rock n'roll, heirs to a wasteland once propped up by Stiff Little Fingers and the Undertones. Now Therapy? have revived Ulster fortunes with their own less political, more personalised brand of brainsaw neuroses. First up, 'Screamager' (read teenager, they like puns) the second song on TroubleGum and a classic in the 'Alternative Ulster' / 'Teenage Kicks' tradition, one of many from Andy Cairns and his band who've discovered breaking necks can be tuneful as well as physical. 'Knives' starts proceedings in nasty fashion but from there it's intense killer pop all the way taking in reverent reconstruction of Joy Division's 'Isolation', crashing shards of melody and structure like 'Nowhere' and hardcore depression in the shape of 'Unbeliever'. For-

get the question mark, this is therapeutic. GEORGE KAY

YOU AM I Sound As Ever (Ra)

THE STIFF KITTENS Eat the Peanuts (Psychic)

A couple of Aussie guitar heads bring us to You Am I with a debut recorded in Minnesota and produced by Sonic Youth's Lee Renaldo. Superlatives, and comparisons with Husker Dü and Nirvana have been heaped on *Sound As Ever* and on Tim Roger's songs. There's no doubt that Rogers is the perfect post-grunge minstrel and Renaldo has made the most of his guitar and vocal growl and slur. Too early for Cobain comparisons and there's little evidence of the Mould/Hart brilliance, but Rogers is making appropriate noises even if they're hardly his own.

As their name suggests, Melbourne's Stiff Kittens don't take themselves too seriously as they busy themselves on this six track mini-album, picking up where vintage Lime Spiders/Radio Birdman aesthetics left off. In fact the opening two songs, 'Don't Think Much' and 'Hot Sands' are classic Birdman riffs and

YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO ROCK



★ ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK ★ REALITY BITES "Reality Bites" is a new film starring Winona Ryder, Etham Hawke and Ben Stiller. The soundtrack features new tracks from Big Mountain, Dinosaur Jr, The Posies, U2, Crowded House, World Party, Lenny Kravitz, The Juliana Hatfield Three and many more.

★ HOODOO GURUS ★

CRANK After three months in Los Angeles, buried deep in a studio with renowned producer Ed Stasium, The Hoodoo Gurus were ready to roll "Crank" on to the



track and fire it up. The sixth studio album from the Hoodoo's is the album that comes closest to capturing the unquenchable energy and fire that marks every Hoodoo Gurus live show.

★ THE CHARLATANS ★ UP TO OUR HIPS

Steve Hillage meets



The Charlatans. An unlikely combination but "Up To Our Hips" is evidence of a pop marriage made in heaven. The first example of this is the single "Can't Get Out Of Bed" which is a classic, simple and totally encompassed pop moment. From the funky instrumental jam "Feel Flows" to the gnnding second single "Easy Life". "Up To Our Hips" is a hard contender for the best album The Charlatans have ever made.

★ BECK ★ MELLOW GOLD

"An onslaught that whips together distortion, John Lee Hookerish blues stomps,



accordions, hip-hop backbeat melanges, and puddle-of-consciousness folk philosophizing." (Spin, December 1993)

★ Weirdly passive scraps of guitar folk, ragged hip-hop and punk-rock ground up in a Juicerator and spat out as noise." (Los Angeles Times, November 26 1993)

★ Singer-songwriter-guitarist Beck, who has played his own concoction of folk/blues/hip hop/punk in bars and coffeehouses for the past five years, is "at the center of one of the most dramatic buzzes to come out of the Los Angeles music scene in nearly a decade," according to Billboard magazine.

COMING SOON ★ SONIC YOUTH: EXPERIMENTAL JET SET, TRASH AND NO STAR ★ ROLLINS BAND: WEIGHT ★ HOLE: LIVE THROUGH THIS

