

albums



Foo Fighters

FOO FIGHTERS Foo Fighters
(Roswell/Capitol)

It's too wicked to even consider the circumstances which made Dave Grohl a superstar drummer, before hurling him the opportunity to truly come into his own, so we mustn't. Besides, *Foo Fighters* must be allowed to stand on its own mighty merits, and this ain't difficult.

Track one is the single, 'This is a Call', and if you're not smiling by the end of it, you must have had your mouth removed. You'd be forgiven for believing this song is all pop-rock ever needed to be, but you'd also be wrong. Then there's the not small matter of punk revival, which has been so poorly addressed by so many until now (Green Day, my ass), for Grohl is a true originator after the fact. If he wanders into Nirvana territory occasionally, we can only thank him, for it's his turf and he knows how to stake it.

Foo Fighters chief strength is the way it binds all of the above, with a tightness that's pulled off as breezily as the proverbial falling off a log. Check the mellow meets madness of 'I'll Stick Around', with its spat out and irony riddled chorus line: 'I don't owe you anything.' That's followed by the Lemonheads-lovely 'Big Me'. 'Alone + Easy Target' crosses so many boundaries you'd need a passport to physically keep up with it. As for the speed of 'Good Grief', you can

practically hear the sirens' screams fading in its wake. 'Weenie Beenie' is the mutant monster of the piece (with megaphone distorted vocals), but its riffs still manage to be catchy enough to require serious protection from. There's even a country twang (although not for long) on the groovy 'For All the Cows'.

Contrary to popular belief, and the sleeve's band photos, Grohl is the sole man responsible for all the playing (and writing) on this album (save Afghan Whig Greg Dulli's guitar on 'X-Static'). The rest of the band will mean very little to us as Foo Fighters until they get the hell over here. I, personally, will be pulling nose hairs until that day comes.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

THERAPY? *Infernal Love*
(Polydor)

The third album from Ireland's finest, and they're torn between the high velocity, melodic punch of *Troublegum* and a more expansive, ambitious bout of doubt and depression. The only problem is, they only do a half decent job of both styles, with only 'Bad Mother' being a convincing blend of the grandiose and the kinetic.

Infernal Love is a pretty average album that paves the way for gothic, Joy Division-style slabs of pain like 'A Moment of Clarity' and 'Bowels of Love'. Not bad, but they're

hardly classic pieces of melancholy, and this album's answers to 'Screamager' and 'Nowhere', namely 'Stories', 'Misery' and 'Loose', don't have their counterparts' breathtaking pace or melodic might. All up, *Infernal Love* is only a passable album from a band that have temporarily lost the opportunity to build on *Troublegum*, and so become the planet's foremost practitioners of manic, melodic rockin' out.

GEORGE KAY

FILTER *Short Bus*
(Reprise)

In Cleveland Ohio, the Short Buses transport 'challenged' kids to school. On record, Filter's debut is a three quarter hour ride through rush hour traffic, with Otto, man, at the wheel. Cool!

Formerly with Nine Inch Nails, Richard Patrick (with Brian Liesegang) steadfastly continues that band's loud/soft industrial approach to song crafting. This type of 'music' is not recommended for those of a sensitive, non-violent proclivity ('I hate it when you preach your case / It makes me want to stick my fist through your face.').

If, however, you have been waiting for a worthy successor to NIN's *Pretty Hate Machine*, look no further.

MARK DONOVAN

SOUL ASYLUM *Let Your Dim Light Shine*
(Columbia)

Slacker extraordinaire he may be, but Soul Asylum's singer and songwriter Dave Pirner is writing at the top of his talent on *Let Your Dim Light Shine*. His tales of prostitutes, losers, workers, boozers and plain girls locate him firmly in the grand tradition of Bukowski and Reed, although he falls from grace as often as he hits the vein.

Pirner and the band's weaknesses have always been for fast, riff-driven rants, which more discriminating bands would've left for encores or B-sides. The silly 'Hopes Up', 'Shut Down' and 'Caged Rat' show it's a habit they haven't broken. Still, in a way, it makes the best songs here sound more

remarkable.

'To My Own Devices', 'I Did My Best', the single 'Misery' (I was worried they took themselves seriously till I saw the video) and the superb 'Eyes of a Child' possess a humility and subtlety that was only hinted at on their previous breakthrough LP, *Grave Dancers Union*. And just to show Soul Asylum aren't just a bunch of sweaty faces, guitarist Dan Murphy turns in the lovely 'Promises Broken', which Pirner himself suggests is the best song on the record. It's not — 'Eyes of a Child' is — but maybe you should make your own mind up about that.

GREG FLEMING

GUIDED BY VOICES *Alien Lanes*
(Matador/Flying In)

In an industry where pampered mega-stars seem to release albums only when their contracts oblige them to, the anti-industry and unusually prolific Guided By Voices first release for 95 is all you would expect and more. Now signed to highly regarded indie label Matador, the Australasian release of *Alien Lanes* comes with a bonus CD of tracks from the boxed set of Guided By Voices' first five LPs, entitled *Box (abridged)*. In tandem with *Alien Lanes*, that means a total of 52 tracks — a bountiful, if somewhat daunting, harvest. Luckily (although, really, there's no luck involved) both *Alien Lanes* and *Box (abridged)* are suffused with Guided By Voices' customary maverick genius. Echoes of the Beatles, the Byrds, Syd Barrett, Eno, Bowie, the Soft Boys and countless others resonate through these albums. A list of stand-out tracks would fill a whole column, but suffice to say that while not every song will make your toes curl, more hit the X-spot than the laws of probability would rightfully seem to allow.

For all that, however, there remains a sense that *Alien Lanes* alludes to a greatness that continues to elude Guided By Voices. Superlative song writing or not, *Alien Lanes* sounds as if it's been recorded on a tape machine spooled with damp string, rather than the usual magnetic tape. I'm not saying they should be going for that big

Therapy?



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