

mo' better beats

LAD

Ridin' Low (Hollywood Records)
If you like the title track (currently getting heaps of airplay on Mai FM and Max TV) you'll love the album. The Latino old school flava shines out on every track — you kinda imagine LAD just went out and made the sort of record their own hood wanted to hear. It's hard at times, but life is also more than just gang banging, and these guys know how to party. The album just bumps along, it's funky, funky, funky. Singer Darvy Traylor (that old geezer in the vid) really lifts their game, his voice is as smooth as old leather. Ten tracks in all, with a bonus remix of the title track; if you buy this album and aren't satisfied send me your copy and I'll give you a refund — it's that good. Perfect for kickin' back and chillin'.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

In the Neighbourhood (Warner)
On first glance this compilation album seems a little dated, but on closer inspection I think you'll find it contains a treasure trove of kiwi hit singles that you meant to buy but didn't. Excuse me, but where else can you get Dam Nalive, Headless Chickens, 3 the Hard Way, Annie Crummer, Emma Paki, OMC, Sisters Underground... blah... blah... all on one album? Eighteen songs by 18 different artists, all from NZ, all with that funk/rap/R&B/soul flava. Check this out, it's excellent.

J'SON

J'son (Hollywood Records)
Don't be fooled by the short review, this is for a whole album. J'son has a great voice — honestly, this kid can *siiiiinnngg*. Funk/soul/R&B, he can do it all. Trouble is, as soon as his balls drop, he's gonna be down the road robbing the local Drycleaners. You see, J'son is just like Tevin Campbell — ie, a prepubescent black vocalist who makes prepubescent girls squeal, and post-adolescent women think: 'Hmmm, I'd like to pinch those cheeks.' The album is good — very much in the vein of his current radio hit 'Take a Look' — I just worry about the boy's future. Anyone heard from Tevin lately?

EUSEBE

Do Something (EMI)
Hey, nigger, get up off yo' fat lazy butt and do something. Girlfriend, stop bitchin' about how you deserve better and do something about it. After all that gangsta rap we've been getting for the last six years you may have noticed recently, the pendulum is starting to swing back. Very slowly, sure, but it's a start. Eusebe keep the lyrics positive, but they're no fools either. On 'Police', they make it clear they're from the hood; and with 'Do Something' and 'Piece of the Pie', they make it clear you shouldn't let others stop

you getting what you want. And they don't mean using an Uzi to do it! A good beat with good lyrics, I've probably made them sound more preachy than they actually are.

DENI HINES

Imagination (Mushroom)
Very smooth, but not too sweet. Hines sounds mighty fine indeed in this mid-tempo soul groove. There's a very nice brass sound running across this track, and the bass guitar isn't too bad either. Recorded and mixed in London, this should get airplay everywhere.

PET SHOP BOYS

Before (EMI)
This four-track EP includes a remix of 'Into the Night', which is basically just an instrumental, and makes the song sound like a rehash of their earlier hit 'Money'. The PSB roots are firmly grounded in Euro-house, but they shy away from the mindless/simple keyboard hook, and instead choose a much lush, over-the-top orchestral score (but the keyboard hook is still there, underneath!). 'The Truck Driver and His Mate' is a pleasant diversion, with a much harder, 'butcher sound'.

BANANARAMA

Every Shade Of Blue (Festival)
Like the PSB, Bananarama emerged in the mid-80s and had a truckload of mindless pop hits. Mindless, but great! They were lots of fun. We all danced, they were the sound of our mindless 80s generation. Now, 10 years later, the trio is down to a duo... with only one original member. They've kind of lost the plot. A bit like the 80s generation, I suppose. This song works best when the remixers move in, reduce the girls to backing vocalists, and let the dancebeat take over.

D'ANGELO

Lady (EMI)
A lot of people have actually asked me if the two of us are related, and I have to admit: yes, he's my brother (he ain't heavy, I am). But I would never let that influence my review... besides, we were separated at birth and I hardly know him. From his album *Brown Sugar*, this is remixed by DJ Premier and features AZ on guest vocals. This song gives some indication of the depth of talent that D'Angelo possesses, and I get the feeling he could become a long term prospect in the music industry (as opposed to those flash in the pans you never hear from again, after they've had their 'big' year).

MATTY J RUIJS featuring Lolé

I Love Everything About You (EMI)
Following on from his last hit 'Cruisin'', (a cover of the Smokey Robinson classic — who was the moron who said it was by Marvin Gaye?), Ruijs decides to release another cover version, this one originally by Stevie Wonder (no dis here, Ruijs has written plenty of hits himself). He's joined by local vocalist Lolé, who has her own single out at the moment. Together the

two are sublime, as is the production by Mark Tierney. This has hit written all over it, it's great. The only (minor) fault is the arrangement of one vocal line — it reminds me of Neil Sedaka in 'Calendar Girl'!

BEL CANTO

We've Got to Work it Out (Festival)
This is weird shit, the brother's been smoking some strange blunts. Details are scant, but I think it's Italian Euro-house. A great piano riff with a driving beat, and then some wacked-out opera baritone (or is that tenor?) laid over the top. A variety of mixes, ranging from the Sleaze Sister to Gregorio, with a jungle mix from the Booyaka Crew thrown in for good measure. It grows on you (the song) and I quite like it a lot.

EUROGROOVE

Move Your Body (Festival)
Jeez, how many songs have had this title? But, hey, I guess it's not about lyrics really, is it? It's about dancing, and this groove should do the trick. It doesn't hurt when you've got both Todd Terry and the Happy Clappers kickin' in on the remix front either. This is hardcore pop Eurohouse (if you can figure that out!), with just a touch of old school Black Box lingering in the background. A definite hit for most club floors.

NICK D'ANGELO

DANCE REVIEWS

BLUESPEAK

The Drinking Set (Pagan)
Excellent. Another local jazz album and it's a killer. This, the second album from Bluespeak, is a collection of covers of various down tempo odes to the demon drink. Greg Johnson, of course, takes care of the vocal duties in his own drunkenly, blundered, melancholic style. He's a smooth old crooner. The band, meanwhile, are smooth like Baileys and potent like chartreuse. Led by Tom Ludvigson's Hammond organ, each song is a smooth, confident work-out, with no unnecessary frills, just the groove, baby. This is a collection of songs made for dinner parties, cafes, 3AM at Celebre, and anywhere else where you're lucky enough to have good company and the pure luxury that is a bourbon in one hand, a Marlboro in the other. Cheers to the drinking set.

HOWIE B

Music for Babies (Polydor)
This is an unusual, conceptual, bizarre album, from enigmatic trip-hopper (who'd hate to be called that) Howie B. I'm sure you're familiar with some of his work on countless trip-hop (there I go again) compilations, and his own excellent Pussyfoot label. This is, however, an altogether different sound. Howie and his girlfriend had a baby, Chill, recently, and she is the inspiration for the album. It's

usually very ambient and quite dark in places, with titles like 'Shag', 'Cry' and 'How to Suckie'. It's full of strange noises which, with the aid of a darkened room and listening enhancements, could quite possibly invoke the feeling of being back in the womb. Or not. There is also the occasional looped beat (phew!), and some weirdo sleeve notes you have to see for yourself. It's not something you'd play every day (or every week), but it's quite an intense trip if you're up to it.

BEASTIE BOYS

The Sound in From Way Out (Grand Royal)
Ever notice how every B Boy album has three or four tracks that are just straight out space-funk instrumentals, which often wind up being your favourite bits? Now the spoilt, bratty, punk kids turned Generation X trend setters (the music, the clothes, the magazine...) have compiled all those funky instrumental jam sessions in one place. Wise move. The music's cool, and all the classics are here, such as 'Groove Holmes', 'In 3's', 'Lighten Up', 'Shambaia' and heaps more of your favourite stoner funk blues.

SUNSCREAM

Change or Die (Sony)
Sunscreen were quite big back in 1993, their first album, *O3*, spawned four Top 20 hits in the UK. After that we heard nothing for awhile, but they've continued to play some dynamic live dates and completed a second album. Make no mistake, this is pop dance music, but hell, it's full on, emotional pop with a heart, and dance music with balls. First track, 'Exodus', starts off very quietly, fooling you into turning up the volume, as it keeps kicking in with more intense rhythms. There's also a lot of good old-fashioned stadium guitars in the mix, which is no doubt part of why they are such crowd pleasers. The singer can sing too. On 'Syclik' they stick to cool, instrumental trance and its pure quality. This album leaves M-People for dead.

TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND

Boss Tabla EP (Nation Records)
I guess we all know the what to expect from the Underground. Mystic, Eastern influenced grooves, featuring tabla, sitars, the chants of the ancient wise ones. To be frank, sometimes it works and sometimes it's a load of old tosh. This is a four track EP, and best track for me is 'Psycho Karaoke' — an up tempo, breakbeat led, world music sort of affair. The other three tracks are down tempo, breakbeat led, world music sort of affairs. If you like that stuff, then you'll like this. Simple really.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Fine Gold — A Compilation from Dorado Records (Dorado)
Dorado are an excellent UK label that release jazzy, soulful hip-hoppy type grooves, and this is their third compilation. While they don't have the visibility of, say, Mo Wax or Ninja Tunes, they are just as worthy of your discretionary dollar. Jhelisa (Rebirth of Cool) contributes two

very nice jazzy tracks, featuring her distinctive vocals. Outside offer 'Remembrance', which is a hip-hop groove based around a truly haunting violin led string section. Best cut for me is latest drum 'n' bass prodigy Kid Loops' remix of Cool Breeze's 'Can't Deal With This'. The Kid fuses electro, soulful vocals and deadly jungle breaks, to come correct with a drum 'n' bass master-plan. Overall, a very laidback compilation — not necessarily essential, but totally satisfying.

BUSTARHYMES

The Coming (Elektra)
Strictly coming with an East Coast agenda, the busted one is high on some confusing shit. Seems my man thinks the end of the world as we know it is nigh. The year 2000 is the year this 'event' is supposed to happen. I can't quite grasp exactly what's going down, but the Busta urges you to: 'Handle your business, keep it movin', stay strong and get money.' It's like he's on some conspiracy theory tip, kinda like the whole Wu-Tang, Free Mason thing. I gotta admit, I'm starting to get worried. Don't worry about the album though — mad, phat East Coast beats from Easy Mo Be, the Vibe Chemist Backspin and DJ Scratch, with guest spots from Q-Tip and the Def Squad's Redman and Keith Murray.

PROPHETS OF THE CITY

Muthaland Funk (Nation Records)
The Prophets are a conscious hip-hop act from South Africa, and this mini EP contains remixes from Fundamental, Live It! and the Sea. 'Muthaland Funk' is an okay song, kinda funky, with some Eastern chants and tabla style percussion, very similar to what Fundamental do actually. Which leads us to the next surprise: the Fundamental remix uses a big grunty guitar sample from 'Don't Look Down In Anger', by Supergroove. With the chant of 'We've got that funk / We've got that Muthaland funk', it's surprisingly similar to Supergroove's sound. So, yeah, good to see some offshore folk being inspired by Aotearoa.

THE INFINITY PROJECT

Stimuli (Perfecto Fluoro)
Perfecto Fluoro is a goa trance spin off from Perfecto. Goa trance ain't really my thing, I'm much more impressed by the 'BT' sound. Anyway, this is goa trance in all it's drizzly, widdly, noodly glory. 'Stimuli' itself doesn't do anything for me, but I like the Man With No Name mix. It does at least have a decent kick drum to hold it down. Maybe I'm just too straight right now...

LIONROCK

An Instinct for Detection (Deconstruction)
Debut album from Justin Robertson, and his Lionrock cohorts MC Buzz B and Roger Lyons. First single is 'Straight aat Yer Head', which is initially a bit of a surprise. Rather than being a full on dance-floor stomper, it's a slow breakbeat groove, featuring MC Buzz B rapping (well, almost rapping) about the state of the world today. Nice. 'Fire Up the Showshaw' and 'Don't Die Foolish' are

adrenalised breakbeat numbers, and at the risk of sounding like a lazy journalist, it's a very similar sound to the Chemical Brothers, if a little more refined. A very well rounded effort, and full of the most obese basslines this side of the...

DUB SYNDICATE

Ital Breakfast (ON-U Sound/Flying In)
Yes, well, speaking of phat motherfucker basslines, it's another album from the mighty Dub Syndicate. There last couple of efforts were, by their own standards, a little patchy, but with *Ital Breakfast!* they return to the arena with a deadly set of organic dub flavors to warm the cockles of your heart. Anyway, as you tend to expect with the Dub Syndicate, there aren't a lot of surprises. It's produced very well, by Adrian Sherwood, Skip McDonald drops by with his guitar, and it's just one big bad, bottom heavy package.

ALEX REECE

Feel the Sunshine (Remixes) (Island Records)
Mr Reece has had a big buzz around him for a while now. He's an exponent of the more mellow, jazz inflicted side of drum 'n' bass. What with his joining Photek and Goldie in signing to a major label, it should be easier for non-vinylheads to get hold of some super lovely drum 'n' bass. This is certainly very accessible gear, but no way has Alex sold out. 'Feel the Sunshine' has a nice vocal, and it's basically a live drum sample, looped and chopped to bits, set to a nice driving bassline, with lots of added sparkly keyboard bits. 'Jazz Master' has some nice sax touches, and is remixed by DJ Krust and Kruder & Dorfmeister. Smooth as you like.

ANDY PICKERING (DJB)

BACKBEAT

I don't know who the person in Paul Kelly's songs is, but he sure spends a lot of time in the sack ('Everybody Wants to Touch Me', 'Just Like Animals', etc). Live at the *Continental* and the *Espanade* (White) sees Kelly on his home turf of Melbourne, where there are four seasons in each day but the clock on the silo always reads 11 degrees. The band is virtually the same as he brought here recently — like a more sophisticated Messengers — driven by the melodic riffs of ex-Was Not Was guitarist Randy Jacobs. Kelly pushes them through a range of dynamics, with songs dating back to *Gossip*: guitar rock ('Pouring Water'), sensitive social comment ('Maralinga') and his trademark narrative ballads ('To Her Door'). Satisfaction is guaranteed, it not surprises.

Taj Mahal can also be relied on to deliver, in his role as the hip lecturer in R&B101. *Phantom Blues* (BMG) is like an improved version of his recent *Dancing the Blues* — a mix of originals and R&B standards — but here

1000 TWO COLOUR A2 POSTERS PRINTED

FROM ALL COLOUR SEPARATED A3 LINE ARTWORK

Only **\$350** + GST

INCLUDES COURIER FEES TO ANYWHERE IN NZ

We are happy to quote you for printing of any size poster.

PHANTOM BILLSTICKERS

Fax us on: (03) 332-0068

Send art to: PO Box 7303, Christchurch.

UNITONE HiFi REWOUND + RERUBBED



REMIXED BY:

ROCKERS HiFi • FUNKI PORCINI
DROME • DIGIDUB • SPECTRE
MUSLIMGAUZE • IMMERSION
NEMESIS DUB SYSTEMS
EGON ZO+ZARGO • MANASSEH
BLACK STATE CHOIR • UNITONE HiFi

inc/ming!  IN

A Year in America (kids provided)

If you're 18-26 with a driving licence and childcare experience, this is your big chance to work in the USA for a year.

You'll get:

- subsidised return flight
- free live-in accommodation
- up to US\$125 a week pocket money
- US\$500 study allowance
- a J-1 cultural visa
- free medical insurance
- free counsellor support

Check us out, we're the best in the business.
Ph (09) 623 0126 (24 hours) or write to:
Au Pair in America NZ Office
Nannies Abroad
PO Box 90034, Auckland.

au pair in AMERICA