



power pop of Xuxu Pedals, and the Celtic pop strains of Page. *Harder Faster Baby!* is unfortunately (depending on your taste) pretty one-dimensional boy bands with singers who grunt like Rottweilers with laryngitis about masturbating to survive. Thankfully there is some humour buried in there, honest! But the admission is rewarded by Snort lending a female perspective with 'Yo Father Fucker', and Blast Off doing 'Rangiora Uber Alles'.

Good on RDU. If they playlist any of this stuff they certainly don't play the safe media-student radio format which is infesting the airways up north, but where are Christchurch's Lo-tech stars Oglala? Write RDU C/- UCSA, Private Bag, Christchurch.

MAC HODGE

**WEEN**

12 Golden Country Greats (Elektra)

Why do I get the terrible feeling the people who should be reading my Johnny Cash review will be reading this one instead? It's that Generation X thing, I guess, where 'The Kids' reckon a song can't work unless it's tongue's jammed firmly in its cheek. Like, irony, man — or how to drown in a very shallow pool.

The reason for my jaded musings is the event of an actual country album

from those wackiest jokers in the pack, Ween. While the added bonus of some real live country greats as band guests takes the edge of this gag, providing some truly faithful genre entries ('Japanese Cowboy' most notably) musically, at least, song titles such as 'Help Me Scrape the Mucus Off My Brain' and 'Piss Up a Rope' give you a big idea of what to expect lyrically. The latter's Dr Hook-ish appeal will only work for it so long — by all means savour it while it does, but don't build it up too loftily before playing it to friends.

'Fluffy' is a love paean to a dog that goes nowhere — well, nowhere past the front path — very slowly, and ends the album on the kinda warped territory that's managed to take Ween beyond parody in the past, even if it doesn't everywhere else on this album.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

**LUSCIOUS JACKSON**

Fever In, Fever Out (Grand Royal)

They've still got it. New York's Luscious Jackson have returned with a new collection of songs which prove undoubtedly their brilliant debut, *Natural Ingredients*, was no fluke. Their unique style of wiggled-out funk blended with sampled sounds of urban America just seems to sound better and better as LJ's main writers,

Gabrielle Glaser and Jill Cuniff, mature in their craft.

*Fever In, Fever Out* begins with killer track 'Naked Eye'. It's the sort of song you'll find yourself humming along to hours after the first listen — that is, unless you're humming another of the album's instantly catchy tunes (listen to 'Mood Swing' or 'Electric' for overwhelming evidence of this). Most of *Fever In...* has the same kind of hook-ability which made much of the band's first album sound so inviting. The only difference is, the songs appear to have been worked a little harder by the band. This deeper, more intricate sound could have something to do with the skills of big-name producer Daniel Lanois. The production is slick, but also open to the organic vibe Luscious Jackson like to go for. There are also some nice cameos in there as well: the one and only Emmylou Harris lends her voice to a couple of tracks, while N'Dea Davenport (Brand New Heavies) also turns up on one song.

Keep 'em coming.

DOMINIC WAGHORN

**JAMIROQUAI**

Travelling Without Moving (Sony)

London's new age soulster and genuine all round 90s answer to Stevie Wonder, Jamiroquai is gradually getting his shit together in the long playing format. *Travelling Without Moving* is about travelling back in time to the Wonder-ful sleek and funky, fidgety grooves and tunes of 'Virtual Insanity' and 'Use the Force'.

On 'Cosmic Girl' he works a Saturday Night Fever-era disco treat with a synthesiser bassline to match, and even indulges in some convincing Steel Pulse Anglo-reggae on 'Drifting Along'. The latter half of the album loses some impetus through its didgeridoodlings, but the eight-minute organic band funk of the fourteenth track, 'We're Going to a Funk Down' suggests Jamiroquai is in the right groove. And improving.

GEORGE KAY

**THE LEMONHEADS**

Car Button Cloth (TAG)

Or should that read the Latest Lemonheads? Yep, it's a complete turnover in band members here, save the one we all know will be there, no matter what's happened to him in the interim (check 'Losing Your Mind' and

I won't have to tell you that's been plenty). From the outset ('It's All True'), Evan Dando assures us he hasn't fallen down since he learned to walk, then goes on to prove no matter what the gutter press say about him (whether his antics are feeding them or not), he can still pull together a band that help him come on like man-child most likely to be cuddled in the rock and pop year book.

'Hospital' and 'C'mon Daddy' — a song surely told from Liv Tyler's point of view — are typical of half the album, in that they come on like a snuggle when you need one most (and it seems Evan's been in need of more than a few of late), while the other half go down like a spoonful of sugar, leaving your heart leaping and your mouth doing the old ear-to-ear. There's a sweetened-up version of 'The Outdoor Type', which Evan previously sang on Sharon Stoned's *License to Confuse*, while the Lemony twist on the traditional 'Knoxville Girl' leaves it sounding almost folk-danceable. And who but our Ev could deliver a line like 'and I'm givin' the dog a bone' ('If I Could Talk I'd Tell You'), and have it sound everything less than sleazy and possibly even (gasp!) literal? Follow the lead of 'One More Time' and get this whole album looping through your summer super smartly.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

**VARIOUS**

Info City Overground: A Wellington Sonic Sampler (Engine)

A few months back I stumbled into Bar Bodega in Wellington after one of those free booze type parties feeling nicely sozzled, to check out local talents Cattle and Jawload. Big guitar, big drum sound, with an acceptable freakish display of vocal talent out front, impressed me for the first few songs. Whether it was the alcohol or reading too many articles designed to convince our generation we have an attention deficiency disorder (probably the former), I stumbled back into the night looking for another tourist thrill.

Then recently, to my delight, I received this here compilation to assist my search for short-term memory recovery. Including Cattle and Jawload there are eight Capital sensations, some already known to the country by their piggybacking Head Like A Hole and Shi'had such as the Letterbox Lambs, Weta and the aforementioned.

The common thread throughout the compilation is *guitars*, lots of 'em, and the louder the better. Personally, aside from Jawload's 'Gimp', 'Thaw' by Cattle, and Weta's 'Dedication', I was hoping for more variation between the bands and their songs, and the attention disorder thing came back (I wasn't drunk either time I listened to it!). But remember, personality comes into music every time you put the needle down, so judge for yourself by writing to PO Box 11855, Manners Street, Wellington.

MAC HODGE

**CHUCK D**

Autobiography of Mistachuck (Mercury)

Chuck D is back with a solo album, and he's not letting up. Every track is a hard hitting verbal assault on everything from the music industry ('Free Big Willie') and talk show fools ('Talk Show Created the Fool'), to sample ownership ('Paid'). Musically, *Mistachuck* is a strong diverse album. It never hits you with the force a Public Enemy album once did, but then, those halcyon, revolutionary days when a new PE album inspired mass hysteria are over — hip-hop has become mainstream, and *Mistachuck* (to its credit) reminds you of nothing, if not the Bomb Squad sound.

It's just a little more restrained, and on tracks like 'Mistachuck', there's innovation in the form of dynamic, sweeping synths you'd usually expect to hear in a trance set. The album ends with a secret track where Chuck outlines his ten biggest resentments against the music industry, his voice is put through a barrage of constantly changing effects, and he sounds like the lovechild of Darth Vader and Alvin and the Chipmunks.

The success of this album hinges on how many people are prepared to put up with Chuck's relentless lecturing, maybe the traditional 'white kids in the suburbs' demographic will lap it up, but the black kids in the projects will skip this in favour of some East vs. West, Tupac shit.

ANDY PICKERING

**HOUSE OF PAIN**

Truth Crushed to the Earth Shall Rise Again (Liberation)

'You make me sick like strawberry Quik.' Ugh. Up until hearing *Truth Crushed...* this was the biggest

impression House of Pain had made upon me. Needless to say I had dismissed them as easily marketed, MTV-friendly, white-boy, hip-hop pulp — something that's impossible to do with this album. HOP seem to have gone in search of something with more substance than the standard posturing and rap-along singles, and have enough sense to get some help.

First single 'Heart Full of Sorrow' stands out as the album's highlight. The angry and muscled Everlast shares rapping duties with Sadat X, and this, along with the kind of bassline that will incite the youth to sit on their decks in summer and smoke skunk, makes for a muderously smooth piece of hip-hop. Guru's also in there on the remix of second single 'Fed Up'. But the biggest outside contribution comes from Divine Styler and Cockni O Dire, the original Scheme Team, whose association with House of Pain goes back almost 10 years. Their presence on several tracks gives the recording a depth (and probably a credibility) the group couldn't possibly hope to achieve otherwise.

I suppose it was too much to ask that there be no tracks starting with 'this one's for all them dirty bitches out there' ('What's That Smell'), and I could do without hearing about Everlast's sexual prowess ('Shut the Door'), but if you ignore some of the lyrical shite you'll find some slamin' beats for your jeep or gangsta low-ride... or customised Jap import (big shout out to all my homeboys in Remuera).

DAVID HOLMES

**COUNTING CROWS**

Recovering the Satellites (Geffen)

Anyone who's heard this album's first single, 'Angels of the Silences', will already know Counting Crows have picked up their pace and dug their heels into rock 'n' roll's dirtier soils for their second album, but it hasn't helped Adam Duritz's heartachin' none. Things are as painfully confessional as ever, and at double-vinyl (single CD) length, this means *Satellites* provides plenty of relief from the battering anyone with half a trampled heart left will have been giving its predecessor, *August and Everything After*, for the past two years.

Ironically, it's when the focus swings all the way to someone else, as it does on the lilting 'Another

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