

aside from that, neither band delivers anything more to the cause/genre/pile than land fill.

MAC HODGE

MADDER ROSE

Tragic Magic (Warners)

When Madder Rose principals Mary Lorson and Billy Coté first began recording together in 1991, they were backed only by hip-hop style beats and loops. Fast forward to 1997 to find Lorson and Coté, stuck in a creative cul-de-sac with the Madder Rose sound. In an effort to broaden their horizons for 'the difficult third album' Madder Rose looked to their own past for inspiration. By re-employing the beats and loops which have since become de rigour in modern music making, Lorson and Coté sought to recapture their music's original essence, as well as update their sound for the post-Beck generation.

That approach crystallises perfectly on 'Hung Up In You', where the multi-textured production meets a winning melody, and Lorson's girlishly intoxicating vocals. And there's plenty more to hold the interest on *Tragic Magic*. From 'Scenes From Starbright', which recalls Throwing Muses, to a hidden bonus track straight out of a Butlins Holiday Camp revue, the album is a thoroughly enticing brew. All the typical Madder Rose virtues remain intact, but in *Tragic Magic's* fresh and sonically rich setting, Madder Rose gain a new edge and a new lease of life.

MARTIN BELL

PAGE

Page (But Wait!)

Who says you need years of 'industry' experience to learn the tricks of the music trade? Not Christchurch three-piece Page that's for sure. The cheeky young trio with an average age of 16 and a bit years, show on their debut self-titled album that songwriting is just as much something you're born with as something you learn.

That's not to say Page haven't got a lot to learn — many of the songs seem a little unfinished,

and rely too much on one idea. Also, some of the songs do sound a little derivative — 'Beams From Andromeda' and 'Phased' both have the sort of overly-controlled distortion you'd

OBITUARY

Back From The Dead (Roadrunner)

Along with Death and Morbid Angel, Obituary were pioneers of death metal in the mid-80s.



ASH

hear on a rank Smashing Pumpkins track. But mostly Page manage to find their own style and show that they've got a real head-start on most budding musicians their age. The lyric writing of singer Tom Page shows real imagination — a mix of personal thoughts and tales of bizarre characters like Boney Maloney. Page aren't quite there but they're definitely on track.

DOMINIC WAGHORN

Obituary were extreme, nasty, and pretty fucking scary, so it's hardly surprising they have remained popular, even as death metal has virtually vanished. *Back From the Dead* is described as "a flashback to their earlier days", and whether that's a good thing is debatable — what's the point of looking backwards? Even so, Obituary's sound is as aggressive and full as ever, with John Tardy's death growl reigned back

in slightly, in favour of more recognisable vocals. The guitars sound great; fat and face ripping, without meandering off into stupid squealy solos every minute, and the rhythm section are the solid, precise spine this type of music requires. Although their taste in covers is incredibly lame, Obituary have again created an album of unremitting heaviness. Death's not dead!

GAVIN BERTRAM

DEAN SAVAGE

It Hurts (Uma)

Of hangovers and broken hearts... Urban country melancholy and punishable offensives of love. Dean Savage mixes them together in an emotional cocktail to satisfy the senses.

The opener, 'Lonely, Hungry and Drunk' is a royal rumble of a song with a Jerry Lee Lewis sneer and a rough ride of pedal steel courtesy of Glen Campbell's guest appearance (one of several dotted throughout the album). But rather than keeping up the driven angst, Dean Savage lets itself wallow in fashionable pity as in 'I Been Bad', where the protagonist lists his kicks to the solar plexus with apparent booze doomed moments of clarity. At first Mark Beesley's vocals might seem a touch bland up front, against the fabulous wailin' sax and the rattle of Martin Denny-inspired percussion, but the voice grows on you, and after a few listens fits in perfectly with the low beat suave of the songs.

Drenched in indigo tone previously associated with a David Lynch road shot, Dean Savage has created a record for people with hearts, although a thousand times broken, still beat with a memory of yesterday's kiss.

JESSE GARON

GARY MOORE

Dark Days In Paradise (Virgin)

Thankfully Gazza hasn't got the blues anymore (well, maybe just a little). He'd really done it to death over four albums, and it was getting a little yawn-

inducing. While he hasn't returned to the powerful guitar rock of his glory days, this is a step in the right direction. But, precisely what direction is not very clear. There's straight pop for 'One Good Reason', and 70s soul impressions with groovy wah wah effects on 'I Have Found My Love In You'. He's even got a bit of drum 'n' bass happening on 'Always There For You', while 'Cold Wind Blows' is a cool combination of old blues samples with guitar (along the lines of Skip McDonald's Little Axe). What Gary Moore does best of course, is let the guitar do the talking, and on the wonderful accomplishment, 'Like Angels', he does reach the heavens. The final piece, 'Business As Usual' is 13 minutes long, but doesn't really amount to much. *Dark Days In Paradise* would be a good listen, if you didn't know how much more Gary is capable of.

GEOFF DUNN

THE DRAPES

The Silent War... (Onefoot)

THE TIE THAT BINDS

Slowly Sinking Under (Onefoot)

Portland band the Drapes play the kind of speedy punk rock we've come to expect from the Onefoot stable. Actually, they're better than most of the generic fodder that label has released thus far, coming, as they do, with stronger songwriting and Hüsker Dü style vocal harmonies. In addition, there's a Jack Nicholson/Dennis Hopper sample from *Easy Rider* for instant cred. *The Silent War* consists of 15 slices of the sort of music that makes angsty teens leap around in their rooms when they're grounded.

The Tie That Binds, from Houston, are described as emo-core, and are compared to Jawbreaker. The five-piece crank out cynical, socially conscious punk, with nice guitar interplay, and some damn good lyrics. If Onefoot released more material like this they might inspire a little more respect.

GAVIN BERTRAM

RICKIE LEE JONES

Ghostyhead (Reprise)

After the hypnotic, Leo Kottke-assisted *Traffic From Paradise*, *Ghostyhead* is a big disappointment. Clearly it's an attempt by Jones to push the boho-acoustic-gal envelope — here embellished with helpings of trip-hop electronica courtesy of co-writer and co-producer Rick Boston (former member of Low Pop Suicide). Nice idea on paper. Unhappily the result is a mess with Jones's stoned doodlings and Boston's annoyingly obsessive bpmms never coalescing, satisfying neither camp. And everything is given a go here — from the Eastern/mysticism of 'Cloud Of Unknowing' to the street realism of old (see 'Howard'). At times it might work as soundtrack — but I for one don't wanna see the film. *Ghostyhead*, Jones's first album for Reprise, is what happens when hippiechicks get in front of the computer. Save your money.

GREG FLEMING

ACRIMONY

Tumuli Shroomaroom (Peaceville)

You get a good clue as to which part of the valley these Welsh boys are exploring, from the album title, artwork, kooky liner notes, and the way the first lines of the album invoke 'The great mushroom goddess'. This sort of frazzled-consciousness hard rock is of the same gene pool that Hawkwind and Monster Magnet crawled out from — the realm of heavy mid-tempo rhythms, and superfuzzed wah-wah pedal guitars. With *Tumuli Shroomaroom* it's really the vibe that counts. Acrimony have the mindspace and musical style nailed, and approach it with a non-pedantic, fresh perspective. The melodious touches they bring to their songs prevent them from drowning in a quagmire of dirgey self-indulgence, and the knowing sense of humour displayed in such tracks as 'Motherslug (The Mother of all Slugs)' and 'The Bud Song', ensure that they won't be laughed all the way back to the 70s.

LIVE MUSIC EVERY WEEK

Pumping through the Ruapehu
ski season with New
Zealand's biggest bands.

HOT LAVA

Thames Street Ohakune
Ph 06 385 9232

INTENSIFIED

Wellington's hottest new
venue is booking bands
NOW!

Good PA

Advertising Budget
Relaxed Atmosphere
300 Capacity

Run by experienced musos.
Good dates still available

171 Cuba Street, Wellington
Ph/Fax 04 3844769

Two free Strings in every packet!!

(8 strings for the price of 6)



String your electric guitar
with the quality it deserves!

DARCO

Electric Rock

by The Martin Guitar Company, U.S.A.

Sole NZ Distributor: Lyn McAllister Ltd.
PO Box 90014 Auckland. Ph: (09) 3034-936