



OBITUARY

Greasy, heavy, dazed and confused, acid rock it may be, but without the monotony or pretensions that usually make that genre so boring and redundant. Set the controls for the heart of the sun with this one.

TROY FERGUSON

UNLEADED
Rubberman (Independent)

Having become increasingly cynical about young NZ bands raised on lame *Rockquest* culture, it's refreshing to hear something like this. Unleaded, although they have a way to go, cut through the shit presently masquerading as fresh guitar music in this country. Sure, they sound pretty rocky in an American kinda way, but with songs this good who cares. The four tracks here are quality, so it's not surprising the Mt Maunganui boys go down well with surf and skate crowds. But their music isn't the usual substanceless, hardout 'punk' that is often assumed to be representative of this scene. Unleaded are more... clever.

GAVIN BERTRAM

FOAMING NOT DREAMING
Foaming Not Dreaming (Cursor)

An album of sophisticated trance blended with breathy jazz guitar; an album with a welcome organic element in a genre which is becoming more dehumanised.

The soundscapes created on this partly instrumental offering, offer greater variation than most, and sounds (perhaps of yesteryear?) such as the spacey synth on 'Chill', work fantastically

with that song's muted vocal delivery. The adjective 'seamless' springs to mind. 'Taste' is one visit back to the days of new romanticism, and as the chorus soars the feigning/straining emotion is all too unreal/real, and you just have to drag your fists down from in front of your face in mock pain (just like Simon Le Bon used to do).

But apart from that single outpouring it's all totally ice cool stuff; it's standing by the pool at midnight rappin' with a guy called Chico... Yeah, it's a cool record.

JESSE GARON

COAL CHAMBER
Coal Chamber (Roadrunner)
SUGAR RAY
Floored (Lava)

The current breed of the young, loud and snotty just powers ahead, both on indie and major labels — and these two are a real indication as to how far that new(ish) metal thing that Korn epitomises has its hooks into hard rock consciousness.

Coal Chamber, veterans of the Ozzfest tour, are perhaps the least palatable (though that should pay dividends in the durability stakes), and their debut ventures into some slamming stuff — big, bad bottom end, aggressive riffs, and a seemingly emotionally unbalanced vocalist. It's just fine until that Kornography sneaks in.

Sugar Ray return with their second album, and take things a little further out there, with a DJ providing extra whizz, a ragga dude taking the lead on a couple of cuts, and a cover of Adam and

the Ants', 'Stand And Deliver' — spookily close to the source, and all the better for it. They're better still when they pick up the pace and keep the songs short. Anything, but not that clipped, chugging, detuned drivel — please.

TROY FERGUSON

QUEENSRYCHE
Hear In The Now Frontier (EMI)

This Seattle five-piece have been around for a lot longer than most bands from their area, and still have a sizeable following across America. They've developed from a raw Judas Priest-like metal outfit, into a polished Rush-type rock group, and their albums have improved accordingly.

Hear In The Now Frontier is as good, if not better than anything else they've done, but would've been better still if they'd trimmed it down just a bit. Cliche commercial choruses like that in 'Some People Fly' are slightly cringe making, but this is probably a moot point. 'Saved', which follows, is more like it, with solid playing and singing, as heard also in 'Sign Of The Times'. 'Hero' has a fine blend of acoustic, electric and slide guitar, which gives it a more laid back feel, that appeals more than the serious stuff. There's enough quality material here to warrant their existence, but there seems to be fewer good hard rockers around these days to compete with the likes of Queensryche. It's the old story of those who are already converted will love it, but the rest of the world couldn't give a toss.

GEOFF DUNN

THE YIPS
The Blue Flannel Bathrobe
Butterfly (Siltbreeze)
ASHTABULA
River Of Many Dead Fish
(Siltbreeze)

The Yips, from Ohio love punk rock, and hell, punk rock just loves them right back. Falling into that GBV ethos of songs not production, noises not technical proficiency, the Yips continue to do their own thing, through punk stabs like 'It's A Way Out'. The Yips aren't afraid to stretch

themselves beyond their ability so you can feel the thrill of playing music yourself without even picking up a tennis racket to strum along.

Ashtabula, featuring Bob Malloy of Strapping Field Hands, play in similar paddocks (the same label at least) as the Yipsters, and swap the punk part of the ethos for psych, spewing out twisted organ grinding slabs. Our own Puddle were apparently significant in Ashtabula's inception and the comparison is more than conception, listen once and you'll know why. Slurred comes close to describing the 'loose' connection, but the true link is the sense of retro deja voodoo, keeping close to the best things of psychedelia — 'Lucifer Sam', 'Easter Everywhere', 'Da Capo' — all the while putting a distinctive signature to it all which I can't quantify just yet.

MAC HODGE

ENTOMBED
To Ride, Shoot Straight, And Speak the Truth
(Music For Nations)

To put it simply, Entombed are the best band working within the 'metal' genre, by my definition. 1993's *Wolverine Blues* was an awesome amalgam of raw heavy power and classic rock, with enough smirking irony to detach them from their dim contemporaries. Vocalist LG Petrov possesses a voice as ragged as Lemmy's, and the guitars of Alex Hellid and Monster (that's what it sez) Cedurland are as thick as a European black metalhead, and a lot more sinister and fun. Production-wise, *To Ride...* sounds incredibly raw, like it was done live, although it's obviously had a lot of time spent on it. 'Wound', 'Damn Deal Done', 'Wreckage', and the title track, to name a few, are what heavy music should be about but very rarely is. The bonus disc has covers of MC5, King Crimson, Venom, and Black Sabbath, and those four totally different bands are equally good reference points for the hairy, drooling beast that is Entombed. Absolutely filthy rock 'n' roll.

GAVIN BERTRAM

NZ SINGLES



Dead Flowers

DAM NATIVE
featuring CHE FU The Son
CD Single (Tangata)

Dam Native have pulled out all the stops to secure major radio airplay for 'The Son', the third taster of their long-promised album, *KDRU*. 'Chains' crooner Che Fu has been employed to deliver the king hit, soul-styled choruses (in a similar manner to DLT's chart topper), while Danny D and MC B-Ware drop rhymes over a head-nodding, funk groove. Slick and smooth it is too. Ignore the 'radio edit', and enjoy the extra 60 seconds of the album version.

DEAD FLOWERS Ain't It The Truth / I Wanna Know
CD Single (Wildside)

Dead Flowers mix the Exponents and You Am I, and come up with 'Ain't It The Truth', a cocky, 'middle-finger' of a rock song, guaranteed to be a stomper live. Next up is 'I Wanna Know', a pop anthem of classic proportions, for which Bryan Bell should be put on a pedestal. I'm in awe. And for that reason, the less said about the two rather pointless remixes of *Sweetfish's* 'Shades', the better.

DLT featuring MARK JAMES Poison
CD Single (BMG)

A lesson in moderating your pleasures from DLT: 'Too much of anything makes you a sucker'. Featuring the Rhythm Slave on lead rap, the stark beat underpinning 'Poison' reminds me of the Mo' Wax classic 'Clubbed to Death'. A mix by Beastie Boys sidekick Mario Caldato Jr gifts the track a magnificent funk feel, and thankfully beefs up Slave's vocal. Equally classy is Englishman Mark X's bass-heavy jungle remix of

Trueschool's 'Black Panther', and to close is an almost unrecognisable mish-mash mix of the same track by Fun-da-mental.

EYE TV Snakes And Ladders
CD Single (Antenna)

It's clever 'n' all, the new single from Eye TV, with its noodling guitars and intricate rhythms, but 'Snakes And Ladders' is only one volume level away from the folksy jangle of the Flying Nun old guard that singer Sean Sturm has told me he despises. So, it's not bad then if you like that sort of thing. On the frenetic 'Fallen Angel', Luke Casey throws in a handful of flashy drum fills, while Eye TV are hardly bothered by melody on the acoustic track, 'First Day of the New Year'. The best is saved for last; the hypnotic delicacy, 'Call 4 Help'.

BIKE Circus Kids
CD Single (Flying Nun)

Flying Nun's press blurb describes this song as a 'local contender for single of the year', and Andrew Brough as, 'our premier writer of majestic guitar pop'. I guess they've never listened to that Neil guy? 'Circus Kids' has an optimistic feel to it — a nice antidote to the doom 'n' gloom of 'Save My Life' — and features all of Brough's trademark patterns and manoeuvres; gentle layers of melodic guitar strum in the verses, and blustery waves of chiming guitars when the chorus hits, with Brough's airy, golden voice ebbing and flowing over the top. Nice... if you like your surprises unsurprising. 'Messed Around' picks up speed while sounding very Byrds-ish, before Bike end with the crescendo building pop of 'In the Dark'.

JOHN RUSSELL

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