

me under the waves, tonight/Be free for once', the experience is truly chilling. If anything, these songs lack a little of the high-octane drama of the *Grace* tracks, which perhaps explains why Buckley had reconvened to Memphis, with *Grace* producer Andy Wallace, for further recording sessions. But it wasn't to be, as on May 29, 1997, Buckley strolled into the waters of a Memphis marina for a swim and

these five gringos are actually from the western town of Southport, just north of Liverpool, UK. Averaging out at the ripe old age of 22, they're singing songs of an R&B and country and wasted ilk that was in its heyday before they were born. And we're talkin' of Lowell George meeting Tom Waits and let's say Midge Marsden in the vocal style of Ian Ball or Tom Gray (it ain't specified who's

matic 'Tupelo' — in which Cave combines the birth of Elvis with the Old Testament flood creating a new mythology. Also here is 'The Carny', and the alarmingly chaotic death row ballad 'The Mercy Seat', right beside the sinister 'Red Right Hand', the plaintive 'Are You The One That I've Been Waiting For', and the exquisite romance of 'The Ship Song'. And whatever the omissions or different contexts, this



FUGAZI

the rest, as they say, is history. Disk two is for hardcore Buckley-philes, the disk consisting mainly of the four-track recordings made by Buckley in Memphis shortly before his death. They are raw in the extreme, but provide a fascinating insight into Buckley's creative processes. One can only guess at what these songs would have sounded like when worked up by the full band and properly recorded by Andy Wallace. I would hazard that 'Demon John' and 'Jewel Box' would have been particularly terrific. The great pity of it is that now we'll never know.

MARTIN BELL

DRUGSTORE
White Magic For Lovers
(Roadrunner)

GOMEZ
Bring It On (Hut)
Indefinable Brits introduces Drugstore's enigmatic Brazilian born Isabel Monteiro. You can't pigeon-hole this gal, one minute she's the new age hippie that calls her album *White Magic For Lovers* (what is that??!!) and asks people to listen to the album with headphones as it's not "today music, more of a time that exists in your head." And the next minute she's the hard-nosed rebel of 'Mondo Cane', or one half of the lovely, evocative duet with Thom Yorke on 'El President'.

So, a woman made for these times? No, she's more passionate and honest than most with her band crashing around her on the escapist sentiments of 'Spacegirl', or reinforcing her valedictory wishes that her ex-lovers will remember she had a 'cunt made of gold' on the closing track 'The Funeral'. Honest, complex and passionate, Monteiro can't be easily labelled or dismissed. Worth visiting.

Next, and the name Gomez conjures up images of Lonesome Dove and the Rio Grande, but

who) on the absolutely bluesy, homegrown grittiness of 'Get Miles' and 'Make No Sound'. On 'Bubble Gum Years' these hard-boiled gunslingers sing of a 'whisky bottle and a 45' and on 'Tijuana Lady' they send a lonesome call from 'Mehico'. Magic, imaginatively 'authentic' stuff, but the killer punch is the crackling slide guitar magnum opus boogie of 'Rie's Wagon', a fitting climax and proof, beyond reasonable doubt, as to how young men can sing the olds. Believe it, these guys could be better than the originals.

GEORGE KAY

NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS
The Best of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds
(Mute)

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds have spent the last 14 years making some of the most remarkably individual, challenging and far reaching music in the history of rock 'n' roll. Last year, *The Boatman's Call* marked a significant career turning point with Cave's most personal, direct and emotionally naked songs to date, so now is as good a time as any for a retrospective — a difficult job though, as almost every song on their 10 studio albums (and the respective singles) is exceptional enough to merit a place. Presumably space limitations meant the compilers went for the safer choices, ie. mostly A-sides. Unrepresented here is the 1986 covers album *Kicking Against the Pricks*, plus there's no non-album tracks, and *Murder Ballads* is represented by the Kylie Minogue and PJ Harvey duets, at the expense of the swaggeringly misanthropic violence of a song like 'Stagger Lee'.

Still, you get the wild-eyed edginess of the only-just-post-Birthday Party 'From Her To Eternity', the magnificently dra-

is fucking great. A special edition includes a nine song live album, with mainly recent material recorded last year at the Royal Albert Hall. A significantly more sedate affair than 1993's *Live Seeds* collection, the highlights include a beautifully tender rendition of 'Lime Tree Arbour', a deeply affecting 'I Let Love In', and a strange treat with 'Where The Wild Roses Grow', featuring the 'unusual' vocal style of Blixa Bargeld taking Minogue's place on the duet — the surprising results proving in this case it's the song and not the singer that counts.

TROY FERGUSON

SCOTT WEILAND
12 Bar Blues (Atlantic)

Scott Weiland, grunge's bad boy makes good on his debut album. The sometime Stone Temple Pilots singer surprises all pundits by turning in an eclectic and all round listenable record — a fact which seems all the more astonishing when one considers that *12 Bar Blues* was made during Weiland's battle with a serious heroin habit. Certainly the shadow of Bowie is all over this — check the almost note for note similarity of 'Barbarella', or the latter Bowie decadence of 'Cool Kiss', or the posturing of 'Jimmy Was A Stimulator'. Producer Blair Lamb has assembled a great band for *12 Bar Blues*, featuring Porno For Pyro's guitarist Peter DiSefano, Samian's drummer Victor Indrizzo, and the ubiquitous Daniel Lanois on synth. Sheryl Crow even pops up on 'Lady, Your Roof Brings Me Down', playing accordion! It's a dark and rather claustrophobic record and seems to lose its nerve midway through, but Weiland's never less than interesting, and for once his press kit's description of the album as 'baroque sonic cabaret' is spot on. GREG FLEMING

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