

# albums

## PM DAWN Of The Heart, of the Soul and of the Cross (Gee Street)

Let's not mess around, the philosophy expounded here belongs to the incense burning generation and not the Uzi blasting one. It's all cloudy New Age nonsense, everything seems to be about transcendental values, reality is something to escape from rather than meet head-on and kick its butt. Okay, so maybe you're sick of all that 'bitches and money' schtick but is there any need for lines like 'Imagine yourself as a cloud in the sky' and track titles like 'To Serenade A Rainbow'. Well, perhaps I'm old fashioned but something like this disturbs me, let alone the intro with 'Welcome you to a utopian experience — what's up? to God'. Yep, what's up? To god!! Yes, the album is a salute to that great homeboy in the sky.

Naturally, it's a very smart well put together sound, pop sensibilities mixed in with the mysticism, like the summer glint of 'Set Adrift On Memory Bliss' and a strange homage to Todd Terry, the late eighties house master, called 'Shake'.

One track that has a hardness the others lack, 'Comatose', with astute sampling from 'Walk On Gilded Splinters' by Dr. John. You can ignore the words because the backbeat is so good. Same with the chorus of 'Paper Doll' with the re-structured roach clip beat.

Apart from those likeable moments, I got lost in the mist that surrounds Prince B and Minutemix's conceptual works. Who knows, you might find the whole thing illuminating. Me, I prefer things of a darker nature.

KERRY BUCHANAN

## GREEN ON RED Scapegoats (Liberation)

Green on Red have been kicking around the edges of the rock world for a while, usually in a haze of alcoholic depression which probably explains why they've never really been huge despite making some sublime albums. Mainmen Dan Stuart and Chuck Prophet are masters at creating an anguished country sound, and tingeing



P.M. Dawn



Paris Angels



Green On Red



Real People

it with a hint of psychedelia, sort of a contemporary version of the Byrds, but with none of that peace and love stuff. *Scapegoats* continues that fine tradition, but it seems as though Green On Red have become, dare I say it, happy. Gone is the feeling of outright pain that has always haunted their albums, and although I'd hardly say they're the most positive of folks, there is a pleasant feel to *Scapegoats*. Some of this can probably be attributed to producer Al Kooper who also lays down some nice keyboards, adding greatly to that authentic sixties sound. Lyrically things are a little brighter too, like the nice little love song 'A Guy Like Me', although Dan Stuart is a long way from abandoning his world of losers,

bums and lovelorn failures. *Scapegoats* may still be a long, long way from the mainstream public consciousness, but as long as Green On Red can write stuff this strong, that's just fine by me.

KIRK GEE

## THE CRAMPS Bad Music For Bad People (IRS)

## THE RAMONES Loco Live (Chrysalis)

Two of NYC punk rock's all-time survivors are here with new but old offerings, and fun they are. The Cramps offering is a US greatest hits from a while back, and worth noting as

it is now on CD. It contains utterly depraved stuff from the first two albums and the hard to get 'Uranium Rock'. If like me, your copies of these records are years old and scratched to hell, then it's amazing just how good this stuff still sounds. For the uninitiated it's a good compilation too, as the track selection is great and it's still some of the finest weirdo rock you've heard. Elvis didn't die in vain.

Fellow CBGB's alumni The Ramones also have a sort of new album too, in the form of another double live compilation. Recorded largely in Spain, this is a traditional full-on live attack from the Ramones featuring the usual classics and a bunch of stuff that's not been officially available on a live

record before. There's not really much you can say about the Ramones live except the sound quality is great, the between song banter non-existent and if I can still rock this hard when I'm as old as these guys then I'll be very, very proud of myself.

KIRK GEE

## R.E.M. The Best Of (IRS)

This is called flogging the golden goose. With REM riding a commercial high with *Out Of Time*, a *Best Of* is fortuitously released prior to Christmas much to the annoyance of Stipe and Co who must have felt that *Eponymous* had their greatest moments on *IRS* pretty well summed up.

The *Best Of* with its arty printed hessian sleeve and dutifully informative liner notes attempts to give a redundant product a credibility it doesn't deserve. There can be no argument that it traces the artistic ascendancy of one of the two or three best American bands of the past decade, as archetypal REM songs like 'Radio Free Europe' to 'Fall On Me' and 'End of the World' will testify. But it's no substitute for their first fine albums and *Chronic Town* EP and it's a very scant improvement on *Eponymous*.

GEORGE KAY

## THE LILAC TIME Astronauts (Creation) PARIS ANGELS Sundew (Virgin) THE REAL PEOPLE The Real People (CBS)

Three largely unrelated English bands except all are slightly adrift of the prevailing musical fashions and all three are making music that demands to be heard.

'Demands' is probably too strong a term to describe Stephen Duffy's Lilac Time. Creation's pastoralists, their songs hit you over the head with flowers but make no mistake, their fragrance lingers on. Appropriately recorded in the English countryside, *Astronauts*, like previous efforts, is quietly dazzling, so unassuming that initially it's tempting to pass it off as bland, plain.

That would be a mistake as Duffy is a durable and magical writer. Any one of *Astronauts*' lovingly woven songs would prove that but 'Hats Off, Here Comes The Girl' and 'A Taste For Honey' are delicious lust songs and the more sombre 'The Darkness Of Her Eyes' recalls early Simon & Garfunkel.

But that's praise. After the reminiscence of 'North Kensington', sheep baas as an introduction to 'Hadersfield', a beautiful, evocative piece of English country mysticism. So Duffy won't ever sing for Anthrax, but in his niche he's a king.

The Paris Angels, by all accounts, are regarded as the Mancunians who missed the bus. Rather than pinch haircuts and ideas from old *Ready Steady Go* re-runs, they've used New Order as a launch pad for their own vibrant brand of northern guitars and electronic dance therapy on their *Sundew* debut.

'We Must Be In Heaven Now' is the Woodstock sample used to kick off the album and the band get close to that on 'Fade' which is top-shelf New Order while on 'Perfume', a dance rhythm meets a decent tune. Meanwhile 'Breathless' is good enough to have made the Electronic album and 'Purest Values' has that timeless, pure feeling that you could get from Arthur Lee's Love songs.

*Sundew* can't sustain those standards and too many songs slip into the forgettable category but Paris Angels have the quality and focussed variety to make their next all-formats worth killing for.

West to Liverpool and meet the Real People, the Griffiths brothers Tony and Chris, hard men, Sean Simpson and Tony Elson. Got a problem with that mate? Critically they're usually mentioned in the same breath as the La's — which is probably a Liverpool kiss for you mate, but they have the same edge, simplicity and a Mersey nasal twang. OK?

But they're not hung up on recreating the organic sound of the early Who or of whinging about how shitty their album is. *The Real People* is a good album, not as good, unfortunately, as the La's but good enough to put Liverpool up for grabs. They're peeking at the Beatles, the supreme scousers, in the lightly psychedelic 'Open Up Your Mind' and 'Another Day' and the People classic 'Window Pane' is a lurching rush of adrenalin, almost indistinguishable from the La's.

They're no slouches either when they get their hands on acoustic guitars for 'In Your Hands' and 'Looking At You' and you're left with the impression as you listen again to the truncated 'Day Tripper' riff of 'Another Day', that Liverpool might be in good hands.

GEORGE KAY

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