



Jah Wobble's *Invaders of the Heart*



Paris

albums

succumbing to mid-life bloat, Sinatra created a considerable body of undeniably magnificent music.

The years under contract to Capitol, 1953-62, saw the recording of his very greatest work. With seemingly nonchalant grace he set a new peak in vocal phrasing — rarely equalled since — and became the definitive interpreter of many of the finest pop songs ever written. Such albums as *Only The Lonely* and *Songs For Swinging Lovers* remain among the pinnacle recordings of 20th Century music.

This triple CD collection can hardly attempt to be so definitive, covering 75 tracks from the over 300 he made with Capitol. Obviously there must be important omissions — for example, there's only one track from the seminal first album *Songs For Young Lovers*. Unfortunately there's also a fair dollop of stodge included in this selection, even a couple of downright turds ('Love and Marriage' and 'High Hopes'). But such lapses pale beside the wealth of musical magic on offer. Sinatra's voice was never to be as rich

or mellow again and included are essential versions of compositions from the likes of Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, the Gershwins and Rodgers and Hart.

Another important factor in the greatness of these Capitol recordings is that Sinatra was working with such wonderful arrangers, chief of whom was the incomparable Nelson Riddle. Thankfully these CDs give generous representation to the work with Riddle.

As a kid I used to despise Sinatra's music. It seemed to represent everything that rock 'n' roll had come along to destroy. Then, one night years later, after getting seriously sated on an hour or two of Jimi Hendrix, a friend put on an album of his dad's Sinatra. I still remember the shock of revelation as I discovered the magic of finest Frankie. Such revelations are still available to the neophyte and the cynical. They're repackaged here within these shiny CDs. And there's an excellent 58-page book too.

PETER THOMSON

CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE *Signature* (Alligator)

A white bluesman with roots and pedigree sounds promising. Charlie Musselwhite was born in Memphis where he learned guitar from Son

Brimmer and Fury Lewis and later moved to Chicago where he picked up on the lyrical electric harmonica style of Little Walter Jacobs. As a 60s contemporary of Butterfield, Musselwhite retained his roots sound while Butterfield experimented with rock.

Signature starts off well with the fast Muddy Water's styled shuffle of 'Make My Getaway' but drops away through the rest of the album with a mixture of middling originals and uninspiring covers. Musselwhite is no great singer with a limited vocal range but he is proficient and eloquent harp player. Basically this set lacks muscle. I mean it was recorded in Sausalito, California's "cholesterol free zone". 'What's New' is late night new age musing and even his old mate John Lee Hooker can't salvage much on the 50s styled 'Cheatin' On Me' jam. The credits tell us that Musselwhite plays Lee Oskar harmonicas and that is who he sounds like much of the time.

If you like the sound of the afore mentioned Oskar or our own Brendon Power this might be worth a listen. However if you want to hear Musselwhite's roots sound, then check out his early 70s Arhoolie albums.

JOHN PILLEY

PARIS *The Devil Made Me Do It* (Tommy Boy) UMC'S

Fruits Of Nature (Wild Pitch)
After what seems like an awful big dry spell, rap or hip hop, or whatever it is you want to call it, seems to be on the upswing. Although there's nothing wildly new happening here, it is at least stuff with some degree of quality. Paris, who I remember vaguely from a couple of average singles, seems to have really found his mark.

The Devil Made Me Do It is a seriously tough album and I don't mean 'I'm packin' a nine millimetre and I'll shot you all now' style tough, I mean uncompromising tough. The beats are stripped back, Paris has a fast, old-school style and a really tough afrocentric perspective. The liner notes feature a lot of information on the Black Panthers and they are a fitting comparison to Paris' style. Although there's plenty of hooks, and moments like the title track or 'Escape From Babylon' are verging on commercial, *The Devil Made Me Do It* is pretty raw and honest. No frills, but lots of power, it's an essential item.

On the other side of the rap thing is *Fruits Of Nature*, which is the UMC's getting in on the De La Soul / Tribe Called Quest thang. They use the same sort of organic funk feel and seem pretty enthused by 'Blue Cheese'. There's not a lot of bite, but *Fruits Of Nature* isn't unpleasant to listen to, there's some nice moments, like 'One To Grow On' and I'm sure the inner city individuals who dig that whole hippy-hop thing will love this to death.

KIRK GEE

SON SEALS *Living In The Danger Zone* (Alligator)

Son Seals has been recording under his own name since the early 70s having paid his dues as a drummer for Robert Nighthawk, a stint on guitar with Albert King. On this, his sixth album for Alligator, Seals invokes the southside soul sound of Chicago, leaning on Magic Sam, Otis Rush and Buddy Guy to create an urban blues

sound for the 90s.

Seals has a rougher deeper voice than his mentors but retains the emotive growl of Buddy Guy and the soulful wail of Junior Parker. His rich fluid guitar burns with intensity and control. Seals may not play as fast and frantic as he used to but the sparse arrangements, particularly the drifting chords of Sid Wingfield's organ over Johnny B. Gayden's cracking drums show that the man is offering quality, not quantity. The more souful material such as 'Tell Another Fool' introduces Red Groetzinger on sax hitting an Albert King Stax Groove. 'Bad Axe' gets down right funky and 'My Life' is a slow blues with a mournful vocal and features the bitter sweet harmonica of Sugar Blue.

The urban blues of Chicago is safe with Seals, breaking no new ground (apart from a wistful flute on the title track), solidly upholding the tradition that drifted up from the delta and settled in the big city.

JOHN PILLEY

JAH WOBBLE'S INVADERS OF THE HEART *Rising Above Bedlam* (East West)

Since his departure from PiL, Jah Wobble has plotted an erratic musical course — but it's always been interesting and this latest effort is no exception. Jah seems to have been on holiday in Spain and Northern Africa, because the music of these areas is strong throughout *Rising Above Bedlam*.

There's a full scale horn section filling out the technology on 'Erzulie' and elsewhere classical guitars rub shoulders with Mr Wobble's very impressive bass sound. Add to all this a great range of 'guest vocalists', including Sinead O'Connor and things are looking very serious indeed. Unfortunately, Jah himself decides to handle most of the lead vocals and that's the record's one weak spot as he's no Sinatra. Despite this, the album is still listenable and I'm sure the World Music collides with New Age House sound will make it a big fave in fashionable homes and restaurants everywhere.

KIRK GEE

funky st.

SOUL CLASSICS Original Artists (Atlantic)

A compilation of the songs featured in the movie *The Commitments* as performed by the original 60s soul artists has to be a winner and it is. There's obvious soul classics like Aretha's 'Chain of Fools', James Brown's 'Please Please', Joe Tex's 'Show Me' and Wilson Pickett's 'Mustang Sally' and 'Midnight Hour' but the Otis Redding selections (four here) include rarer tracks such as 'Mr. Pitiful', 'I've Got Dreams to Remember' and 'Hard to Handle' (Black Crowes) plus the tracks by Percy Sledge ('Dark End of the Street') and Clarence Carter ('Slip Away') are superb, and thankfully not their most over-exposed tracks. And from the *Commitments* love scene, that romantic classic, Isaac Hayes' 'Shaft'.

MURRAY CAMMICK

OTIS REDDING *Immortal* *Live in Europe* *Dock of the Bay* *Pain In My Heart* (Atlantic)

Atlantic are reissuing the original Otis Redding albums from his brief but mighty career. His first album is here *Pain In My Heart* from January 1964, and he died slightly less than four years later in December 1967.

It's interesting that Otis Redding is the soul performer whose material features the most heavily in the movie *The Commitments*, as he was a superstar in the UK (voted No.1 Male Vocalist in *Melody Maker*) before his death and the posthumous 1968 No.1 hit 'Dock of the Bay'.

What made Otis Redding so big in the UK was the *Stax/Volt Revue* tour that stormed through Europe March 1967 with Otis, Sam & Dave, Booker T & the MGs etc. The album *Live In Europe* was recorded then and Redding performs at a crazed frenetic pace, struggling to follow the slick



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