

albums

3Ds Hellzapoppin (Flying Nun)

The 3Ds have sold out. Yes, and I'm a stockbroker...

Actually, the 3Ds have made an album so full of verve and life that they can do what they damn well want so far as I'm concerned. Their American label First Warning must be delighted that the modicum of extra cash it provided has turned up a record like this one. The 3Ds previous recordings have had their merits, but they tended to obscure rather than highlight their talents. Fish Street Studios has never smelled better than it does on *Hellzapoppin*.

The band were apparently concerned that they shouldn't over-rehearse before recording and it was emphatically the right approach. It sounds as lively and ragged as only fresh tunes can. The opening shot 'Outer Space' is the most exuberant song about rampant alienation that you're ever likely to hear.

The weird issue (in the case of *Teacher Is Dead* very weird) of David Mitchell dominates, but *Hellzapoppin* is clearly the product of three distinctive songwriting voices. David Saunders' title track and 'Sunken Treasure' (which constantly threatens to break into Wire's 'Outdoor Miner') positively ooze life and Denise Roughan, author of gorgeous LBG songs of yore, chips in the nicely creepy 'Sunken Head' and the twinkling 'Jewel'. When he's not playing his own tunes, Mitchell continues to haul in his lead breaks from the fourth dimension and born-again drummer Dominic Stones remains as strong and silent as his legendary flatulence.

This will work a treat in the US market, but it's anything but premeditated. Where so many American bands pay rather too close attention to the Received Rules of Rock, the 3Ds just stagger down their own path, falling over instruments as unlikely as the erhu and the Appalachian dulcimer along the way. Long may the sea roll under them.
RUSSELL BROWN

JESUS & THE MARY CHAIN Honey's Dead (Blanco Y Negro)

The title's a lie, of course, the Honey for whom Jim had so much trouble eating up the scum on *Psychocandy* is as alive and well as an ageing Glaswegian junkie consumptive could hope to be. On their fifth album the boys are pursuing her interests — Christ eroticised on the cross, the collapse of love/lust into the death



Ian McCulloch

instinct, the search for the ultimate one chord reverberation, more single minded than ever. So much so that the backing vocals from 'Nine Million Rainy Days' and the bassline from Honey's cover 'Sidewalking' are reproduced note for note. But this kind of obsessiveness is an aesthetic in itself, and the knowledge that it's approaching its perfect expression just adds to the thrill of a song like 'Reverence' which goes 'I want to die like Jesus Christ/ I wanna die/ I wanna die' over a riff that kicks more anus than Mudhoney ever dreamt of (without sounding like Lynrd Skynrd). 'Teenage Lust' is just as goddam awesome, the absolute embodiment of its title. Why do these thirty plus media professionals know all about unhealthy urges while today's teenagers are turned on by baggy shorted Red Hot Chili Addiction bozoz?

There are other outbreaks of sublimity on *Honey's Dead*, not least the savage 'Sugar Ray' (this group are perhaps the only one in history to make noisy guitar rock and big budget productions make sense together) and 'Good For My Soul', a piece of amplified frailty recalling 'Playing With Fire' era Spacemen Three. There are, however, far too many of those in-between sort of songs that fill up CD (humbug) space, the not very loud or quiet airplay ready ones in the tradition of 'Happy When It Rains' or 'Halfway To Crazy'.

Despite that, the continued, if sporadic ferocity of the mid-career, financially comfortable Jesus And Mary Chain is proof that the active ingredient in records that bristle with narcissism and sexual tension is not "authentic" artistic suffering but the ability to pose and be convincing.
MATTHEW HYLAND



Eric Clapton

DAVID BYRNE Uh-Oh (Sire) IAN McCULLOCH Mysterio (East West)

Boys without bands — can they keep swinging and if they can who really cares?

With Talking Heads a thing of the past, Byrne now has a whole future of individual excesses and eccentricities before him, but on *Uh-Oh* he's accepted an eclectic approach with occasional Latin flourishes that's close enough to the band's sound to be regarded as an apology for overly distancing himself from Talking Heads in the past.

This doesn't mean *Uh-Oh* is a successful return to Byrne's peak powers of inspiration — in fact his sociological statements show that he's still hung up on the peculiarities of human behaviour that he explored in the irritating *True Stories* movie. At best he's dropped the self-conscious idiosyncracies of his writing to allow himself the luxury of the spinal snap of 'She's Mad', the sparse alienation of 'Monkey Man' and the catchy allegory of 'Tiny Town'. But elsewhere the messages, the off-beat humour and the carefully wrought funkiness are too familiar Byrne trademarks to lift *Uh-Oh* out of the predictable.

Ian McCulloch shares a similar predicament — how to stay relevant a decade away from his best work. His first solo album, *Candleland*, released nearly three years ago, was a rich and heartfelt response to personal tragedy, a reversal of the half-realised fantasies that the Bunnymen were lapsing into in their self-celebratory latter days.

Mysterio returns to the feel of a band format, but whereas the Bunnymen became trapped inside their own mythology, *Mysterio* works as a collection of songs with the McCulloch ice-cool touch, but minus the narcissistic tendencies to image making. In other words, 'Close Your

Eyes, 'Webleed' and 'Heaven's Gate' are beautiful songs devoid of affectation and 'Lover Lover Lover' is a Leonard Cohen cover par excellence. 'Damnation' is the obligatory ass-kick and 'Magical World' turns the irony of its title into something of a minor anthem.

Whereas Byrne's songs struggle to shake off his mannerisms, McCulloch's best ensure that *Mysterio* is removed from his worst past failings.
GEORGE KAY

PUSH PUSH A Trillion Shades Of Happy (Tail Poppy)

Almost a pointless exercise trying to review this one, as I'm sure just about everyone who has even a vague interest in new music has made up their minds about *Push Push*. Unfortunately, this is more often than not without hearing the album, which certainly does these boys a huge disservice. Sure they're pretty boy, hair wagging

groin thrusting rock stars, but they've actually gone and made a very good hair wagging rock album. It's not as mainstream as you'd imagine, there are moments of the completely raucous craziness that first propelled them to the public eye. The likes of 'Beating Up Bullfrogs' is a great celebration of being young, happy and in control of a large amplifier, and of course there's 'Trippin', which is without a doubt one of the best locally produced pop songs ever. Part of the album's success can be attributed to the sound, there's no half-assed flat local production job here, the whole deal sounds huge, very clean, powerful and professional. Sure there's weak spots here, I'm not entirely sold on the spaced out moments and at times some tracks seem just too mainstream corporate rock for my taste, but those are the songs that come from a band who like Guns N Roses et al, and those are the songs that will cause millions of kids to buy

this. Overall, *A Trillion Shades Of Happy* is as close to ideal as a local band can get with their debut, it catches not only the spirit of where they come from musically, but it's a great representation of them in a live sense, which is how we are used to them. Love them or hate them, *Push Push* are at least out there doing it, and doing it well.
KIRK GEE

ERIC CLAPTON Rush (Reprise)

During most of the 80s Ry Cooder was the only rock guitarist making a creditable job of movie scoring, writing and recording soundtracks that were worth replaying without the accompanying pictures. Then Clapton entered the field with his astonishing music for TV's *Edge of Darkness*, although subsequent work — for example on Mickey Rourke's *Homeboy* — was not quite as



White Zombie (L-R): Ivan de Prume, Rob Zombie, J, Sean Yseult.



Push Push

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