



The Charlatans

spoken style of vocal was distracting but Doc knows his voice and its limitations. The songs and the performance won me over. Faster material verges on 'rock out', the sort of thing that would set a bar crowd on fire, while the slower songs have a quality and feel not often produced on these shores. Some may say that rock and mb are old fashioned and outdated (unless you are young, have long hair and a fast cut video) but hey at least he doesn't try and sing with an American accent or, praise the lord, rap. Honest music done well, what more can you ask for. There is no excuse for this material not getting commercial airplay as it as strong as similar stuff from overseas currently entertaining our FM ears. Well, ok Mr PD, I guess there is one reason. It's not on CD, and that my friends is probably enough.

JOHN PILLEY

COWBOY JUNKIES
Black Eyed Man
(BMG)

A friend of mine called this group 'ambient country for tired new agers'. Rather harsh perhaps, but you can see his point. Margo Timmins sings in a voice that rarely rises above a fragile whisper. The tempo can be terminably languid and the predominant mood is of after-hours barroom melancholy. Two or three such tracks may provide a welcome change in anyone's musical diet — but a whole album of the stuff? Well, to their credit the Junkies are varying the approach a bit. The second half of 'Oregon Hill', for example, moves beyond its gentle blues-with-piano-and-accordion by introducing some New Orleans-sounding tuba and trombones. On another number Ms Timmins pits herself against croaky-throated John Prine in duet.

And — gasp, surprise — here and there the pace is wound up to . . . um . . . mid-tempo. 'Southern Rain' and the title track might even be said to rock! (gently though).

As per usual, nearly all the songs are Michael Timmins originals and, again as usual, if some of his tunes may waft towards weightlessness, their verbal subjects are grounded in gritty reality. The title 'Murder, Tonight, In The Trailer Park' gives an indication. Several of the lyrics here show Timmins displaying the craftsmanship of a good short story writer.

In the past Cowboy Junkies have covered eminent songs by the likes of Neil Young, Lou Reed, Patsy Cline and Rodgers and Hart. This time out the only two non-originals are by the considerably lesser-known Townes Van Zandt. Even so, the strongest songs, a couple of which are very beautiful indeed, are all Timmins' own. Maybe it's an indication that, with only their third album, Cowboy Junkies are confident enough about themselves not to feel the need to lure their audience by re-recording the famous and the familiar.

PETER THOMSON

PANTERA
Vulgar Display Of Power
(Atco)

Pantera always have seemed a little suspect, what with an album called *Cowboys From Hell*, the band doing a beer-drinking rock lout impression very well and the singer seeming to cop his moves straight from Rollins. Once again first impressions were so far wide of the mark it's embarrassing. Lord knows what the *Cowboys* thing was about, but *Vulgar Display Of Power* is one seriously hard album, both musically and conceptually.

Pantera play incredibly tough metal, all the really fast bits of the likes of

Slayer compressed down into aural punches that Mike T. would be proud of. Tracks like 'Rise' are among the nastiest I've heard all year, completely unrelenting, the drums alone are a wall of sound. Phil Anselmo's vocals are no rip-off of anyone, he has a great half growl, half scream that you'd expect from a metallor, but he also does a few near ballad tracks that let him sing as well as show he's capable of writing more than the standard 'Kill everyone, you all suck' stuff. 'Hollow' makes up for his digressions into the demons and sixth dimension nonsense that sucks no matter how good the band is. Outside of that, *Vulgar Display Of Power* is an interesting album in a genre that is so often horribly cliched. There's one track that pretty much sums it all up, and that is 'Fucking Hostile'. Be warned, this certainly isn't Mr Big.

KIRK GEE

HELVELLN
Helvelln
(White Label)
HAVE A NICE DAY
Explore
(White Label)

Let's ferry across the Tasman and sample some Australian mediocrity. Melbourne trios Helvelln and Have A Nice Day sound as though they've

skipped a decade or two before surfing in on the supposedly wave-catching White Label. Helvelln, a name lifted by drummer Nick Green from an English tourist map, try boyishly to retread old Sports' out-takes, but end up sounding on tracks like 'T-Shirt and Cigarettes and Beer' like tired Exponents of powerless pop. Avoidance compulsory.

Everything's relative and so by comparison the hard-ish rock foundations of Have A Nice Day are an improvement. With Kiss cited as major gurus and Concrete Blonde's Johnette Napolitano's verbal support of the band it's not difficult predicting where their sonic rumbles are gonna fall. The turgid metallic cloak of 'Throwaway' opens but isn't representative and vocalist Fiona Maynard leads the band through the more kinetic, spacious and intelligent forays of 'Lisa Don't Answer' and 'Slipped Away'. But at the end of this not so nice day *Explore* is nothing more than a surge of competence from an undistinguished trio.

GEORGE KAY

GREEN ON RED
The Best Of
(China)

Not really a 'Best Of' as it only

features stuff from the last three albums, missing out the achingly brilliant *Killer Inside* amongst others, but still a good little compilation. Green On Red are among the few survivors of the early 80's 'cowpunk' (possibly the most banal musical classification ever) boom, and they've actually got better and better as the years go by. The main reason for this seems to be the fact that they do this musical thing simply because they're driven, mainmen Dan Stuart and Chuck Prophet probably couldn't do anything else even if they wanted to, and this rock thing gives them a great outlet for whatever it is that makes them so screwed up. Thus we have here some of the best twisted country rock around, music born of some very bad heartaches and hangovers along with some biting observations on human nature at its worst. Musically Green On Red shuffle around with some mournful and rough country rock, sort of like the Meat Puppets on downers, and occasionally brighten things up with some very sixties sounding pop moments. For anyone new to the band, *Best Of* is a good taster and a fine place to work back from.

KIRK GEE

Shakespears

Sister

Hormonally

Yours

THE NEW ALBUM IS OUT NOW

FEATURING THE HIT SINGLE *Stay*

PolyGram

CD IMPORT HOTLIST
REAL GROOVY RECORDS

438 QUEEN ST, AUCKLAND. PH (09) 377-5870. FAX (09) 307-0493

TSOL — Live '91	\$39.95
VOIVOD — Angel Rat	\$33.95
MY DYING BRIDE — Symphonair Infernus	\$19.95
MONSTROSITY — Imperial Doom	\$39.95
MASTER — On the Day	\$39.95
DARK THRONE — A Blaze in the Sky	\$35.95
CARCASS — Necroticism	\$39.95
AUTOPSY — Fiend for Blood	\$19.95
AGNOSTIC FRONT — One Voice	\$39.95
CATHEDRAL — Forest	\$39.95
CONFESSOR — Condemmed	\$39.95
DEATH — Human	\$35.95
CEREBAL FIX — Bastards	\$39.95
DECEASED — Luck of the Corpse	\$39.95
DISMEMBER — Ever Flowing Stream	\$39.95
GRUNTRUCK — Inside Yours	\$35.95
GORGUTS — Considered Dead	\$39.95
GODFLESH — Pure	\$39.95
GOREFEST — Mindloss	\$39.95
MORBID ANGEL — Abomination	\$39.95
VANILLA TRAINWRECK — Sofa Livin'	\$35.95
GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL — Blood Music	\$35.95
HOLE — Pretty on the Inside	\$35.95
OLIVELAWN — Sophomore Jinx	\$35.95
POSTER CHILDREN — Daisychain Reaction	\$35.95
GIRL TROUBLE — Thriosphere	\$35.95
DWARVES — Thank Heaven	\$35.95
PRIMUS — Miscellaneous Debris	\$19.95

SOME TITLES AVAILABLE ON LP & TAPE — WRITE OR PHONE
FOR DETAILS Mail Order add \$2.00 for first CD, 50c for each extra

I wish to pay by:

- CHEQUE/CASH
 VISA/MASTERCARD/BANKCARD/AMEX

Expiry Date:

Name

Address

Daytime Tel. No.