

shove on the dance floor. And if you don't like being shoved, expect this to be played in a yuppie exotic gift shop near you.

Country r'n'b Melbourne gentleman Chris Wilson couldn't be further from the strained effort at originality of Single Gun Theory. With a voice dripping rural eloquence, it's easy to see why he's been rubbing shoulders with Paul Kelly and Archie Roach.

Landlocked, the second album on Aurora, is unashamedly unfashionable in its country and r&b roots and although it doesn't break any new ground, songs like 'Alimony Blues', 'Wreckage' and 'The Big One' testify to Wilson's unaffected knack at blending the two styles. Worth catching.

GEORGE KAY

TINNITUS

Futures Past (Flying Nun)

"Ambient" seems to be pretty much a term of abuse in "alternative" circles these days. This is a shame, not only because the Muzak Corporation of America have recently given the losers who think lardass Morrison was some kind of latter-day Rimbaud the pipes n'strings version of 'Light My Fire' they always deserved (fact!) but because when confronted with something like Tinnitus most people can only think of airports and Brian Eno. Consequently they miss out on just about the only form of recorded music around that isn't designed to be received passively: the best stuff on this compilation of six years' recorded material worked as part of "ritualistic" live performances and makes just as good a soundtrack to doing the vacuuming. With so many people using sampling as nothing more than a short-cut to boring precision, Tinnitus' willingness to take risks with the technology is heartwarming; the resulting inconsistency isn't a problem because the next five seconds might always be seismic or celestial or both. In fact the long collage of live, generally improvised performance excerpts is the best thing here, some of the subsequent song-length pieces suffer from the attempt to impose direction on fundamentally nomadic music. Only one part sucks unconditionally, though: 'Winds of Chaos', featuring somebody's embarrassing "spiritual" poetry is as sad as the "Theatre of Alchemy" Mike erroneously allowed onto the "Rotate Your State" bill. But what the hey (as the Americans are reputed to exclaim), you can drown it out with your own dub-noise: just pump up the volume on the vacuum cleaner.

MATTHEW HYLAND

THE SMITHS

Beat Of... 1 (Warner Music)

Many still think of the Smiths as "those miserable bastards" but the glamour of Morrissey's poetic diffidence coupled with Johnny Marr's guitar mastery made them the most important British band of the eighties, no question. They were the James Dean's of the music industry, outsiders that made everything else seem irrelevant and whose truncated existence assured their legend.

No "best of" is going to please everyone (and if your favourite isn't included there's always *Best... 2* in a couple of months). They had too many great songs to sum up and any one selection fails to convey the personalities of their individual albums. But that aside, their ability to smash male stereotypes and liberate through passionate sadness is alluded to on the 14 tracks offered here. 'This Charming Man' bounces along with its up-tempo brilliance, the poignant misery of 'How Soon Is Now?' and the snide 'Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before' haven't lost any of their potency. In fact you could go through every song and rave about their appeal and importance (well, with the exception of 'Half A Person' and 'Some Girls' perhaps).

Forget ironic comparisons with the record company necrophilia of 'Paint A Vulgar Picture'. Turn a blind eye to the fact that Warners are cashing in on the Smiths back catalogue now they've secured the rights. Let's just assume that Morrissey and Marr's rather commercial selection for this compilation is designed for the uninitiated. Because if you missed their timeless perfection the first time round, and you don't get this album, you'll go through life with a gaping hole in your musical experience.

JOHN TAITE

ALTERN-8

Full On Mask Hysteria (Network)

Whether or not techno says anything to you about your life, it isn't

going away — well not yet anyway. This resistant strain of acid house just keeps getting bigger, harder and more addictive. Altern-8 are techno's biggest pop hopes. They're not pop in a commercial mainstream sense but they are masters of the distinctive bite-sized tune. *Full On Mask Hysteria* proves they're also capable of filling an album without becoming tedious and from a genre that's never been strong outside of 12 inches, that's saying quite a bit.

Though they're not quite as progressive as, say, the Orb, Chris Peat and Mark Archer are masters of the present techno wave. The beats are pulverising, the atmosphere is immediate and the overall effect is designed to numb you into a state of euphoria.

Tracks like 'A-D-8 With Plezure' are full of the obligatory air horns, crowd cheers and epileptic wooze synth. And classics (?) like 'Infiltrate 202' and 'Hypnotic St-8' still rough it with the best of them. If it's a solid hit of techno blasting you require, blow your speakers to pieces with this.

JOHN TAITE



Cruel Sea

ANGELO BADALAMENTI
Twin Peaks — Fire Walk With Me (Warner Bros)

If you've been following the David Lynch/Angelo Badalamenti axis you probably know pretty much what to expect by now. Some very laid back instrumentals: schmoozing sax, noodling piano, cool vibes with an occasional hint of the dissonant. After hours jazz for not quite nodding off to. Then there's another Julee Cruise swoon to add to your collection.

So much so usual. Still good though. What's new is a spooky androgenous vocal track from Lou Reed's mate Jimmy Scott. Oh yeah, and Badalamenti does a couple of "aren't I weird" spoken tracks — the sort of thing Peak's freaks adore and the rest of us ignore. Neat sleeve photo of Laura Palmer though.

PETER THOMSON

TELEVISION

Television (EMI)

It's a tribute to Television's continuing relevance and the legacy created by their two classic studio albums, *Marquee Moon* and *Adventure* that any sense of excitement and anticipation could be created by their reformation. If Mott The Hoople tried to reform we'd all be laughing up our sleeves but Television's music has a timeless quality that set them apart in their 1970s heyday. In the fourteen intervening years since they split, front man Tom Verlaine has had a chequered solo career, bouncing from record label to record label. Now he's home to roost with his old band and when the guitar intro to the opening track '1800 Or So' rings out, it's like they've never been away. Somehow everything gels and the distinctive intertwining twin guitar sound of Television is with us again. The next two tracks, 'Shane, She Wrote This' and 'In World' maintain the flow superbly. Richard Lloyd pulling a trademark guitar solo from his bag of tricks for 'In World'.

Sounding like a great undiscovered out-take from *Marquee Moon*, 'Call Mr Lee' is up next. This tale of cold-war mischief can reach out and send shivers down your spine, through the ferocious guitar work of Lloyd and Verlaine. It's damn near impossible to top and anything is going to be a let down after that, 'Rhyme' being a typical piece of Verlaine whimsy.

Side Two can't quite maintain the heady momentum of that open-

ing brace of songs, although 'No Glamour For Willi' and 'Beauty Trip' rock along purposefully, while the sound collage 'Rocket' features some interesting cut-up vocals. The album draws to a rather strangled close on 'Mars' with Verlaine singing as if he's gargling razor blades.

Television were the best two-guitar band of the seventies. If Verlaine can rid himself of his "gee shucks" lyrical tendencies and write more songs of the calibre of 'Call Mr Lee' and 'Beauty Trip', then they could reclaim that title for the nineties.

MARTIN BELL

CRUEL SEA
This Is Not The Way Home
THE LOW ROAD
Beasts of Bourbon
(Red Eye Records)

I gotta big car — a fast car. We're gonna take a ride. A drive through bleak and bastard country. With us, the Cruel Sea's *This Is Not The Way Home* and the Beasts of Bourbon's *The Low Road*. Perfect. Both recordings share some common ground. Originating close to home in Aus-

tralia on Red Eye Records they've taken their time to reach the Shakey Isles. Tony Cohen, noted for his work with Nick Cave and more recently for the Straitjacket Fits, has taken the production credits, with the bands themselves co-producing. Then there's Tex Perkins, frontman for both bands. With Kim Salmon for the Beasts and Dan Rumour for the Cruel Sea, Tex has penned half the tunes.

Can he sing? Hell yes. This voice is anything but smooth, packed with gristle and groan, yet expressive and explosive. I like this man. He knows how to tell a story even when it isn't his own. eg Beefheart's 'Sure 'Nuff' on *This Is Not The Way Home* and the Jagger/Richards composition 'Cocksucker Blues' on *The Low Road*.

Musically they use the same instrumentation; guitars, keyboards, bass and real drums, yet come up with two contrasting sounds. *This Is Not The Way Home* is clean. Imagine a full, crisp, very live sound. It has a country feel but with a bent. The guitars all vibrato and whammy bar, the keyboards Forfisa on 45, filling out an already lardy mid-range. Plenty of tops though. The bass and drums swing the thing along like some lead pendulum. The band shows off too, with four instrumentals. I liked up-tempo number 'Fagin' Hoons' reminiscent of 'Radar Love' and final track 'High Plains Drifter' which had dub elements and whistling!

Vocal standouts are the title track, the lover's litany of 'Cry For Me' and sound advice for life 'Don't Sell It'.

Let's hit the low road. This is the Beasts of Bourbon in better than kick-ass form. One track even has a social conscience, the slow groove of 'There's A Virus Goin' Round'. Though mostly it's solid rock themes; sex — 'Just Right' and 'Straight, Hard and Long', drugs — 'Chase The Dragon' and desperation — 'The Low Road', 'Can't Say No' and 'Something To Lean On'. Overall the third testament from one helluva hard working band. It makes compelling listening for its fine guitar work and no crap approach.

I think we need to gas up.

BARBIE

ROGER WATERS
Amused To Death (Columbia)

War, strange narratives, dogs barking and more songs about war... that's right Roger Waters has an-

Check Your Ears



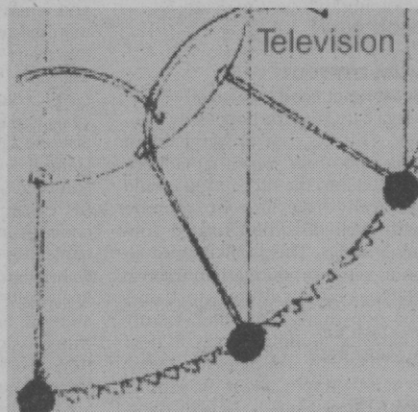
CONCRETE BLONDE
Walking In London

Fronted by Johnette Napolitano, Concrete Blonde is a band that has grown musically and professionally with each release. *Walking In London* is the band's most moving and mature work to date. Johnette has penned nine new songs of love and anger, hope and despair, and the canvas of their musical approach is broader than ever before. TVFM are currently running a competition to win a trip to London — each week a different Concrete Blonde clip is featured on the show. One listen to *Walking In London* makes it all clear — Concrete Blonde are back with possibly their best album yet!

TELEVISION
Television

Tom Verlaine, Billy Ficca and Richard Hell were in a band called the Neon Boys until around 1973. This group evolved into Television with the addition of Richard Lloyd. Fred Smith was soon recruited from the ranks of Blondie to replace Richard Hell as Television's bass player.

There isn't much to say about this new album except that they retain the original sense of humour, the paranormal, deadly seriousness and the absurd all combined in each song.



ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT
3 Years, 5 Months and 2 Days in the Life of...

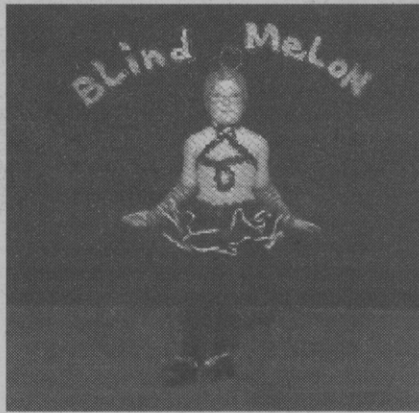
3 Years, 5 Months and 2 Days... is devoted to nudging folks in the direction of freedom and spiritual evolution. Speech, chief songwriter and rapper, thinks of AD's work as "cultural-southern-hiphop-folk-ethnic-funk". Already established in NZ with their first hit 'Tennessee', and super funky follow up single 'People Everyday' the album is currently Top 15 in the US.

Take a mental journey with this debut album — if you're interested in progressive music (in the true sense of the word) then you should experience Arrested Development today!

BEASTIE BOYS
Check Your Head

The recent gig at the Powerstation in Auckland proved to ecstatic fans that the Beastie Boys are as diverse and funky as ever!

The ancient B-Boy proverb goes "When all around you are losing their heads, check yours." In finishing their long-awaited third album the Beasties have done just that. *Check Your Head* has remarkable musical vision, incorporating a variety of styles that would make most bands explode with confusion and envy. From the heavy rhythm power to the hush hush whispered crooning, the album boasts a wealth of influence that makes it appear timeless — *Check Your Head* and you'll understand.

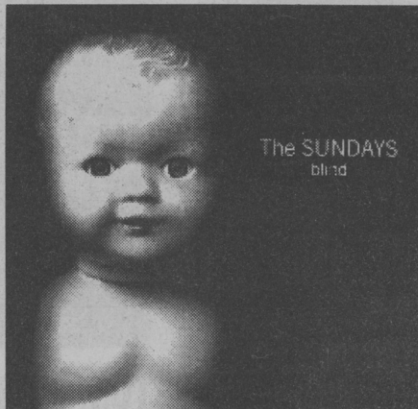


BLIND MELON

Blind Melon's songs reach out like a friendly hand, listening becomes a warming experience. Shannon's vocals soar and dive, playing with — and against — the surrounding music like a separate instrument. The harmonies fly and float. Rogers and Christopher supply rhythmic grooves that jump in and out, solos that are always tasteful. Brad and Glen are a pivotal rhythm section, but loose and ready to spin in any direction. Produced by Rick Parasher (Temple of the Dog, Pearl Jam), it's an album with a freshness that doesn't go away with repeated listening. Picture a psychedelic picnic on a floating dreamscape: it's a good workout for your imagination. So is listening to Blind Melon.

THE SUNDAYS
Blind

The 1989 debut album from English band the Sundays was released to massive critical acclaim, charting Top 5 in the UK. With a creative core of two — Harriet Wheeler (vocals) and David Gavurin (guitar) the Sundays have supplied a superb follow-up album — a magical collection of songs that will entice and bewitch you.



The SUNDAYS
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