

Records

DD Smash
Live: Deep In The Heart
Of Taxes
Mushroom

Recordings of live gigs are often unsympathetic things. And when you're drawing from a single performance, it's even worse. Most live albums are culled from a series of performances, lifting the best from each one. When you're confined to the product of one show, you're decidedly naked. At the best, you have an honest depiction of a band in its live context. At the worst, you excuse it as being an off night.

Fortunately for DD Smash, the off nights don't come too often, even though I have heard them play stronger shows than this. There's very little in the way of bum notes and feedback, and Andrew Clouston must be patted firmly on the back once again for some superb blowing. Dobbys's sense of humour comes through even stronger when he has an audience to feed off.

The slightly tentative playing occasionally in evidence would have to be put down to fatigue (constant hopping back and forth across the Tasman) and the natural apprehension about recording one gig for both television and an album.

For the record, the tracks are: 'Your Best Friend's A Moose'

(Scott Calhoun's instrumental, first performed by Big Sideways), 'Solo', 'The Devil You Know', 'Outlook For Thursday', 'Guilty', 'Itinerary' and 'The Gambler'. 'Guilty' and 'Itinerary', the newer songs, show again that Dobbys is a wonderfully emotive singer and is at a creative peak.

The sleeve notes describe this as "a one night, one shot recording," showing that Dobbys is a realist, above all else. A stopgap until the next studio effort, but a very tasty one all the same.

Duncan Campbell

The Great Unwashed Clean Out Of Our Minds Flying Nun

This is an odd album. I've had trouble making up my mind about it because it's difficult to gain a clear picture of what it's about.

The description is thus: a collection of songs recorded at home in Christchurch in the barest possible way, with a maximum of two people involved in each. Some of the melodies have a sixties feel to them, there are also bluesy and folksy touches. Stir in the odd bit of feedback, offbeat rhythms and quite a bit of primitive reverb and you've got the general idea.

David Kilgour's songs work best, simply because his singing is stronger. Brother Hamish (who mixed the album) has put his already quiet vocals way back, often behind the rhythm track, which quite alters the character of the songs. It also tends to make them non-assertive. Personal favourites are 'What You Should Be Now', 'Hold Onto the Rail',

'Small Girl' and Hamish's quirky 'It's A Day'.

This album sounds a little like an experiment and I think the next Kilgour brothers recording will be better. As it is, it's definitely growing on me.

But why the quote from 'Revolution No.9' on the back? Is there something I'm missing?

Russell Brown



Altered Images

The Grammar Boys Daring Feats EMI

This album has been a long time coming and the recording dates back some time. It originally began as a Garage Crawlers record but none of that remains now.

The single 'World of Our Own' opens things and it's a good, brisk start. 'Something Strange' was written by Jed Town, currently of Fetus Productions and, in a way, bears his mark.

The best of the rest are 'Is It Me' and the edgy ballad 'Lynley'. The songs that work are the ones with that vague 60s feel. The ones that don't are the over-clever XTC-ish tunes like the irritating 'Incognito'. The lyrical content is well above what you might expect from a straight pop album and it's obviously grounded in reality.

But when it comes to the crunch, something seems to be missing. The songs are a little too nice, they lack bite. With a couple of exceptions it's palatable without being startling. There are plenty worse bands around than the Grammar Boys, but there are also better.

Russell Brown

Neil Young & the Shocking Pinks Everybody's Rockin' Geffen

Neil Young's last album, *Trans*, saw him dabble in synthesised vocals and walls of electronic sound, the music of the 80s — but

if you looked through the overlays the music had a consistency with his previous work. His latest album bears virtually no relationship to what he has done before. Backed by a new bunch of musicians called the Shocking Pinks, the album takes a trip back in time to the rock'n'roll of the late 50s.

Everybody's Rockin' comprises half covers and half originals but it's almost impossible to tell which is which. The production gives the album the ambience of an old record. Old classics such as 'Mystery Train' and 'Rainin' in My Heart' are lifted by Young's harmonica, while Bobby Freeman's 'Betty Lou's Got a New Pair of Shoes' features piano right out of the Jerry Lee Lewis songbook. Blues gets a brief look in with a chugging version of Jerry Reed's 'Bright Lights, Big City'.

The originals are basically old songs with new names. The exception is 'Payola Blues', a rock'n'roll equivalent of Elvis Costello's 'Radio Radio'.

A strangely disorientating album and there will be complaints over the playing time, which is ungenerous, to say the least. Whether you like it will depend on your appreciation of old time rock'n'roll, but I wonder if Young's policy of rushing from one end of the pop spectrum to the other is wise in the long term.

David Perkins

Altered Images Bite Epic

All consideration of Altered Images begins and ends with Claire Grogan. Initially her ingenuous charm (reinforced by her movie role in the delightful *Gregory's Girl*) was sufficient to seduce the British rock press. Pretty soon however, the appeal of musical nursery rhymes and party frocks began to wear thin. Pamela Stevenson's parody of Claire's nursery bounce on *Not The Nine O'Clock News* was the most devastating since the skewering of Kate Bush. It was time to alter the image.

Bite boasts a striking cover portrait of our girl as a fifties' femme fatale. Unfortunately her voice hasn't undergone comparable transformation. Still, for all its stubborn immaturity, Claire's beat is generally less than her *Bite*. That's because there's an enhanced surround, and although the band's make-up has altered somewhat, the new sound is probably more due to the work of production

hitmeisters Mike Chapman and Tony Visconti. With control of four tracks apiece they've successfully hauled Altered Images' approach out of impacted amateurism into the trans-Atlantic pop mainstream.

Trouble is, the band's material doesn't always measure up and barely half the numbers rise above Kleenex level — use once and discard. But 'Thinking About You' and 'Love To Stay' are attractively low-key mood pieces; otherwise 'Don't Talk To Me About Love' is the strongest track and quite rightly the single. One only hopes that it's being sold in a picture sleeve.

Peter Thomson

Wall of Voodoo Call of the West CBS

The band says this album is almost an excuse for not having made a movie. Creating pictures with their music though, they use imagery and focus to examine their own heritage, both past and present. Wall of Voodoo are much more than another quirky bunch of American crazies.

The album begins with Tomorrow's song about procrastination that accordingly doesn't get out of first gear. The trip really begins with 'Lost Weekend'. We get a backseat ride in a car taking a couple away from Las Vegas where they've lost. The song is wryly maudlin, both hopeless and hopeful.

It typifies writer Stanard Ridgeway's very human view of life. This is again shown on 'Factory', a mumbling understatement on the life of a hardhat. The music is a bedlam of harmonica sirens, steam and clanking guitars. Two observational, streetwise songs round off the side. Both maintain the slightly crazed edge, the final 'Hands of Love' in particular has one of the best shots at harmony on the record, coupled with discordant organ backing.

The single 'Mexican Radio' opens the flipside. So damn clever. A song Ridgeway wrote about Mexican stations bouncing into LA one day, being gone the next. A song about vanishing urban communications. It'll stand a good deal of thrashing on NZ radio. Next song, 'Spyworld' is the closest the Wall come to cartoon-like Devo-ness. The basic lyrics and music of 'They Don't Want Me' make it the album's most direct shot. Fitting then that it leads into the most complex.

The title track begins with an

instrumental straight out of a Western matinee. From there 'Call of the West' uncoils into a bronco ride through the joys, fears, hopes, ambitions of Americans who came to tame the West. It is now a faded dream? As the old-timer says to the greenhorn "Son you're a long way off from yippee yi yay." The song is a brave attempt to construct a modern-day Wild West epic. With High Noon type guitar, rattlesnake percussion and vocals whipping in across the prairie the Wall create their own call of the West.

A record to howl at the moon to. Can't wait for the movie.

Mark Everton

Bauhaus Burning from the Inside Beggars Banquet

Once again the curtain rises — but this time will be the last, it seems. With the news of the band's recent split, which leaves frontman Peter Murphy to pursue a solo recording career, it is fitting that Bauhaus' final performance is intended to portray the conflicts and tensions existing within the group. To this end, *Burning from the Inside* is very much a composite effort of their individual talents, resulting in a fresh new sound, diverse in style and mood.

Side One opens down-tempo with 'She's In Parties', a morbid classic in the old Bauhaus tradition. From here the pace shifts to that of a frenzied psychobilly in 'Antonin Artaud', nicely tempered by the satanic intonings of 'King Volcano' which follows. 'Who Killed Mr Moonlight' concludes the side on a superbly subtle and melancholy note.

This combination of sophistication and primitive urgency is used to even greater effect on the second side. The mellow and deceptively soothing acoustic arrangements characteristic of their new style give way to the old harsh romances without warning. The opposition created keeps the music wavering on the brink of collapse and we are dragged along with it.

Side Two contains the album's highlights, 'Slice of Life' and the title track. Two schizophrenic masterpieces in their own right.

The overall effect is rich and exciting. Self indulgent? Perhaps, but understatement provides the key to the album's success and they manage to never sound too grandiose. This is a disturbing last performance, consistently brilliant, one not to be missed.

Raymond Russell

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