

keeps taking those themes just a little further on. Guitars, keyboards and a rhythm section combine to create some pretty sinister, driving sounds. It's New Yorkers so cool you could store meat in them, doing what sounds like Kraftwerk fed PCP and downers, except it's better than that. Basically, if it was a perfect world, Depeche Mode, NiN and co. would be banished back to day jobs as bank tellers and towel boys at the local Turkish baths, while albums like this would be beating fans off with a stick.

KIRK GEE

BOXCAR Algorithm (Volition)
SEVERED HEADS Gigapus (Volition)
SINGLE GUN THEORY Flow, River of My Soul (Volition)
FALLING JOYS Aerial (Volition)


Four glimpses of the Aussie alternative/independent scene begins with the lightweight techno aerobics of Sydney's Boxcar. *Algorithm* is 12 tracks of electronic confectionary with 'Spirit' and 'Dust' being the most impressive since they're the closest vocalist Brett Mitchell can sound to New Order's Barney Sumner (and he's pretty damned close). Pleasantly hyperactive and ideal for testing the lycra, but don't expect innovation or exploration.

According to the usual hyped up bio, Severed Heads' pivotal member, Tom Ellard, is generally recognised as one of the pioneers of techno. He's sure been working at it long enough, as he formed the band in 1979 and *Gigapus* is something like his tenth album. He covers all



Adrenalin

IT HAS
NOW ARRIVED



WHY DO YOU ASK?

"A doggedly different drink"
TIM GREGG, The Oxford

"The almost infamous Two Dogs - all lemonade
should taste this alcoholic"
DUNCAN MILLER, The Universal

"A brilliantly conceived but slyly dangerous drink"
JOHN McGRATH, The Adelaide Review

ASK FOR TWO DOGS AT YOUR LIQUOR OUTLET
OR FAVOURITE DRINKING SPOT

the reference points, from the bounding electro-pop of 'Heart of the Party' to more menacing fare like 'Arrivederci Coma', with his most effective extensions being the ambient explosions of the last four tracks. Not a leader in the genre, contrary to company claims, but a very fine exponent.

Sydney trio, Single Gun Theory, are still under the Indian/South East Asian influence that pervaded their last album, 1991's *Like Stars In My Hands*. The OE travel influences aren't quite so dominant on *Flow, River Of My Soul*, but they try to conjure up an exotic brew of samples, the odd eastern chant and floating melodies carried by Jacqui Hunt's vocals in the obligatory gossamer production. Soothing, seductive, yet incredibly boring.

That leaves stalwarts Falling Joys, who apparently nabbed the No. 1 Independent Act at the Australian Music Awards. That's the least they deserve as Suzie Higgie proves on this, their third album, that she's developed into an acute and intelligent writer with the ability to combine her sensitivities into memorable, melodic pop songs. As a band, Falling Joys have gradually moved from the harder rock phases of patrons like Concrete Blonde, to the more left-field, stylish pop of Throwing Muses, Belly et al. Stuff like 'Fiesta', 'Calendar Blues' and 'XYZ' prove that *Aerial* is an album from a band that deserves bigger plaudits than an Australain Music Award.

GEORGE KAY

ADRENALIN Open Your Eyes (Adrenalin Music)
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Adrenalin's debut kicks off with a track that was apparently a favourite in the bFM office earlier this year, the righteous ballad 'Delightful Lady'. Second up is the cheeky blues rock of 'Moving Forward', and the remainder of the

album falls somewhere between these two extremes.

In today's musical climate, Adrenalin would be, without a doubt, considered old-fashioned, but who cares? They know what they like. *Open Your Eyes* was recorded at Mountain Studios with Phil Rudd behind the desk, and the band couldn't have wished for anyone better. The production is crisp and punchy, with the melody-heavy vocals out front. Tracks like 'NZ Green', 'Sweet Cherry' and 'Open Your Eyes' represent the more hard rock/blues side of Adrenalin, but they're more than capable of producing the goods on head-down pop songs like 'Twister', and the traditional-style power ballads 'Falling Down' and 'Crystal Clear'.

Adrenalin aren't breaking any new ground, and they wear their influences like medals, but *Open Your Eyes* hold its own in its genre.

JOHN RUSSELL

WAYNE KRAMER The Hard Stuff (Epitaph)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Brother Wayne Kramer is back, and he is ready to show all you youngsters how to Rock (capital R intended). After all, he served his time in the mighty MC5 who, although they aren't the originators of all hard rock (as many grunge and journo types would have us believe), did manage to put out a couple of albums that blow most contenders out of the water. After a 12 year silence, Mr Kramer is back, and showing no signs of softening up. Epitaph gave him a selection of its young punk guns to provide backing, and they handle the job admirably. Otherwise non-eventful acts like Clawhammer lay down the goods here, while Mr Kramer deals out his (mostly) utilitarian guitar work — a little wild and dirty but pretty much all meat and no filler. There are a few meandering moments, yet the album never loses the thread and turns dull. *The Hard Stuff* is proof positive that some people can find that X factor and keep it functioning no matter what.

KIRK GEE

SPIRITUALISED Pure Phase

There are gimmicks to Spiritualised. Recently they've changed their name to Spiritualised Electric Mainline. Uh-huh. Sounds a bit too much like Electric Light Orchestra to me. And this CD cover, well, elaborate, a glow-in-the-dark square tomb (meaning they're impressive night listening and average daytime listening?).

Jason Pierce formed the group when Spaceman 3 split (and they don't sound all that dissimilar). Then *Laser Guided Melodies* made critics drool at their keyboards in 92, and now this. Not so many melodies. It's more numb. Remember 'Run' from their debut? Sounded like wading through porridge with your eyes shut. Spiritualised are a womb. A cocoon. Their electric storms remain in the distance, barely audible as Jase gives us some iron lung assisted R&B warbles. That is apart from 'Electric Phase', which gives us some metal machine music. Then they hypnotically float back into 'All of My Tears' which sonically throbs and whimpers while violins weep.

Right now they're like the elaborate orchestral big brother of Verve. Isolated. Unaware of the external. Bewildered. And without much charting potential anywhere outside of England.

JOHN TAITE

DODGY Homegrown (A&M)
DEUS Worst Case Scenario (Island)

Two contrasting but ultimately satisfying perspectives on what constitutes thrilling pop music introduced Dodgy — an English three-piece totally smitten with the idea pop should be joyous, tuneful and largely fuelled by Beatles influences. *Homegrown*, their second album, is a more cohesive and consistent refinement of the unaffected and timeless hooks and harmonies that graced their eponymously titled debut *The Dodgy Album*. There's a soaring, melodic opening, in 'Staying Out For The Summer', that's complicated perfection, with the self-explanatory 'Melodies Haunt You' and the big, Beatlesque 'Grassman' being other random representatives from an album that's a flawless exposition of how good classic pop music can be.

Belgian five piece Deus approach from a different angle, but their aim to thrill is nearly as true. Their nagging, disruptive but often soothing experimentalism fluctuates through these 14 songs, with their single, 'Suds and Soda', providing an early indication they're going to be difficult bastards, and the better for it. Visions of Waits, Beefheart and Pere Ubu lurk in the background, with more recent glimpses of My Bloody Valentine and the Boo Radleys making an appearance. Yet this is Deus's showcase, a coherent and challenging stab at avant garde pop.

GEORGE KAY

SLAVE D.L.B. S.J.



one inch
PUNCH

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