

seems to be deconstruct a rock song, but work with the same dynamics that a 'real' song uses. Thus you get sweet songs that almost collapse into buzz, and those fun tortured electronics noises that retain some delicate melody throughout. Crank 'Too Hot Too Dry' up a ways and you'll get the drift, a band who are as reliant on emptiness as they are on sound, and when it all comes off alright they can create some pretty satisfying moments.

KIRK GEE

#### HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH Cracked Rear View (Atlantic)

With a name that reads like some kinda in-joke, this South Carolina four piece have gone some ways to restoring the Springsteen/Southside belief in full blooded, 'conventional' rock 'n' roll.

Hootie is the big gospel voice of Darvis Rucker, whose leadership has already made the incredibly anthemic 'Hold My Hand' one of the reasons this album was voted one of the *Rolling Stone* magazine's best of last year. 'Time' and 'Running From An Angel' are great emotional rockers, and if the odd ballad drags the chain, there's enough gusto and naturally assimilated rootsiness to make you forget that rock 'n' roll has seen better days.

GEORGE KAY

#### QUICKSAND Manic Compression (Island)

Quicksand is brown sticky stuff. Quicksand's album is neither brown or sticky. Quicksand doesn't make much noise other than the occasional whimpering of a small furry animal choking to death. Quicksand the band make plenty of noise, in between the quiet bits that is. There are plenty of quiet bits on *Manic Compression*. There are also plenty of loud bits. Sometimes they occur in the same song. In the quiet bits the singer croons, a la Perry Farrell, until an angry guitar comes in and spoils the serenity. The guitars are probably angry because they really want to rock out and get stuck into a good grumpy riff, but are continually being reined in. Quicksand are a bit serious looking for any really hedonistic head banging riff-o-ramas. The lyrics are mood evoking (melancholic), rather than being readily decipherable, and match the angst of the expressionistic album art. Quicksand should be investigated by all those serious music fans traumatised by Helmet's last album — just don't get too stuck in.

KEVIN LIST

## NEW ZEALAND

#### JAN HELLRIEGEL Manic (Is A State Of Mind) CD Single (Warners)

'Manic' is the type of menacing, pop chiller you can just imagine will be awesome live. The voice belonging to Jan Hellriegel has never sounded more full-bodied and in control. If the 12 songs on the forthcoming album *Tremble* are all of this class, it's going to be a stunner.

#### DEAD FLOWERS Same Same CD Single (Wildside)

A personal favourite from the Dead Flowers' second album *Sweetfish*, 'Same Same' is an epic pop track with a long fuse. Strung together with a simple but effective piano line, it chugs along with crashing choruses that drop midway through into a soaring guitar solo. Clever pop made to sound easy. Tracks two, three and four are acoustic renditions, recorded at York Street Studio for a bFM live-to-air. There's a beautiful, raw version of the always awesome 'Plastic'. 'Home' is transformed into a slow, reggae jam, and the punkish 'What Do You Take Me For?' gets an odd Mexican once-over, courtesy of Riqi Hadfield's ad-libs. The jury's still out on that one.

#### SHIHAD You Again CD Single (Wildside)

The opening track on Shihad's forthcoming album *Killjoy* is an ominous, brooding monster. 'You Again' smashes and breaks into a mixture of explosive shards of angular bass and guitar, all laid under a series of sinister vocal interludes. 'NIL' provokes the opposite of a peaceful, easy feeling — using edgy, repetitive riffs to slowly drill its way into your head. Not at all pleasant. Shihad stay faithful to the Bowie/Eno tune 'Boys Keep Swinging', it bounces along just fine on Karl Kippenberger's jolly bass line, and is the closest they'll ever come to a party tune.

#### UPPER HUTT POSSE As The Blind See CD Single (Tangata/BMG)

Dean Hapeta, the man behind 'Do It Like This', 'Against The Flow' and 'Ragga Girls', is back with another Posse classic. 'As The Blind See' cruises by on a thick, slick, funky bass line and a clever, swirling slice of Hammond organ. Track three, the stuttering 'Wise Up', works brilliantly live, but on record sounds thin in the bottom-end department.

#### URBAN DISTURBANCE Robert Jane CD Single (Deepgrooves)

First up, 'Robert Jane' has the best cover art-

work ever seen on a Deepgrooves release — con-grats to Oli Green. The song itself has immediate impact with a basic 4/4 drum pattern layered beneath the dreamy guitar track from Bob Dylan's 'Buckets Of Rain'.

While a clarinet twists its way in and out of the mix, Zhayne and Ollie rap tongue-in-cheek, about what I'm still not exactly sure. Superb. The funk-lite feel of 'For Real' flows into 'Whack MC', a tough sounding track featuring the sharp rhyme skills of Sonny Sagala (ex-Pacific Descendants). The closer is the too-long-by-far 'Listen'.

#### OTARA MILLIONAIRES CLUB We R The OMC (Remix) CD Single (Volition)

Originally on the *Proud* compilation, 'We R The OMC' gets the remix treatment four times here; twice by the Australian production team Boxcar, the heavy funk of 'Remix Radio Edit' being the top choice, while mixes three and four are handled by *Proud* producer Alan Jansson. The main appeal of the song still remains the rapping of Backstab and Payback and, in all honesty, the original version is all you need.

#### GRACE Desert Moon CD Single (Deepgrooves)

The choice of 'Desert Moon' as a single will easily please programme directors at the easy-listening stations that playlist Grace. It's nice and polite in a Cadbury Flake ad kind of way, but is not my choice. The second tune, the grand 'Soldier Boy', is a tension-filled, atmospheric epic, complete with intricate marching band drumming from Luke Casey.

#### KNIGHTSHADE Television Eyes Cassingle (Hark)

Knightshade's first single in years is a very dated, blues influenced, fast-tempo rocker. This is nothing that hasn't been heard a squillion times before. Its single saving grace is the fine voice of Wayne Elliot. The B-side is the 1995 remix of the likeable 'Physical You', Knightshade's ode to getting your leg over with no strings attached.

#### THE BRAINCHILDS Thinking About You CD Single (Jayrem)

Groan. This sound could only take shape in the theatres and cafes of Wellington. Basically, intellectuals desperate to give pop music a go.

JOHN RUSSELL

## singles

In what has been a good couple of months for small revolving bits of plastic, **S\*M\*A\*S\*H** scoop the honours with an absolutely glorious belt of

melody and aggression, 'Another Love' (Rise), which kicks into their seven track EP. The line 'I have seen the Starship Enterprise' leads to a love-is-the-drug message, and a song that defies 90s power-pop. Grab. And salivating all round for **Gene's** continued top form. Rossiter has the press eating out of his hand, as he steers the band through another inspired combination of melancholy and wonderful pop hooks in 'Haunted By You' and 'Do You Want to Hear It From Me?' (Polydor).

From the potential future of British pop to it's founders means institutions the Fab Four and the Stones. The cracking Lennon reading of 'Baby It's You' (Apple) is lifted from the available BBC sessions leaving 'I'll Follow the Sun', 'Devil In Her Heart', and 'Boys' as the unavailable BBC attractions. **The Stones** arrive in a tear shaped CD package, for their passable country twang of 'Out Of Tears' (Virgin), but the pick of this EP is the knock-about rock 'n' roll of 'Sparks Will Fly'.

By now **Throwing Muses** full on live assault will be a fond memory, but don't forget 'Bright Yellow Gun' (4AD), where Kirstin Hersh's private demons seem a lifetime away, as she guides the band through a memorable tune aided by gently meshing guitars and words like 'I think I need a little poison'. Right up there is ex Muse Tanya Donnelly's **Belly**, with a four track EP that displays her knack at covering the main rock 'n' roll bases, from the aching pop of 'Now They'll Sleep' (4AD), to the balladeering of 'Thief' to the full tilt of 'Baby's Arm'. Mandatory.

Up there quality wise is the **Wolfgang Press'** 'Going South' (4AD), where their obligatory drollness is carried by an unforgettable, ingratiating chorus and four fine mixes, the pick of which is Jah Wobble's inspired ambience. Still brilliant, and the riff of the month has to be **Sebadoh's** 'Rebound' (Sub Pop), which twists it's way around a great guitar lick, leaving Lou Barlow to get acoustic and plaintive on the other three tracks.

Down a notch, but in hard case territory, and **Faith No More** whip up their usual blend of focus and frenzy on 'Digging the Grave' (Liberation), before doing another couple of straight, tongue-in-cheek ballads, like the Bee Gees' old chestnut 'I Started A Joke.' Ha-ha.

Meanwhile, reasonable Pearl Jam copyists queue here. First and best is **Silverchair's** 'Pure Massacre' (Murmur), with it's deceptively laidback, into making way for hack-saw guitar. **Bluetongue's** 'When You Gonna Learn' (Slam) and **the Flaming Lips'** 'She Don't Use Jelly' (WEA) are routine noises, leaving the Reverend Horton Heat to press the reverb pedal on their frantic rockabilly 'One Time For Me' (Sub Pop). Fair. As is **Urge Overkill's** faithfully dramatic version of Neil Diamonds 'Girl You'll Be A Woman Soon' from the Pulp Fiction soundtrack. But ending on something special, and that means **Ween's** 'Voodoo Lady' EP, where the attention is grabbed by the hilarious funeral bandito ballad 'Buenos Tardes' (White) and a priceless piss-take of Johnny Cash, 'There's A Pig'. Adios amigos.

GEORGE KAY



# Vika & Linda

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