

# albums

salutes one of the greatest bands that ever was.

GEOFF DUNN

## POP WILL EAT ITSELF

Two Fingers My Friends (Liberation)

## GOING GLOBAL SERIES Voila (London)

I'm not sure this is the best of moves for the Poppies. Being re-mixed by a bunch of the biggies just makes their originals sound shoddy. Their short messy bile spews from *Dos Dedos* *Mis Amigos* have been expanded (Youth), injected with ethno (Transglobal Underground, Fun-da menata), and Jah Wobble, JG Thirwell and the Orb all make monuments out of their tracks. It's like turning fish and chips into a twelve course meal at the Ritz.

So, their very metal noise pollution has lifted. *Two Fingers* isn't just a re-mix album, it's a blinding view of the potential that the Poppies could never reach.

*Voila* gives some old world music classics a kicking. An offshoot of French label Barkley (who were the first to pick up WM artists like Mory Kante and Cheb Khaled in the 80s), the Going Global Series pools the talents of Justin 'Lionrock' Robertson, re-mixing 'Voila Voila', Hardfloor squeezing another hit out of 'Yeke Yeke', and Sakan making 'Time Fax' a sweat machine. And then there's more — a plethora of international sounds getting beaten into dance floor fodder.

You know the world music review routine — musical melting pot/sonic nation uniting — there's squillions of shite descriptions for mixing old and new, East and West. But at the end of the day, if it makes you jump around a bit and gives you a great soundtrack to get shit-faced to, it's done its job. *Voila* does both. Shame about the boring CD cover.

JOHN TAITE

## MARIANNE FAITHFULL A Secret Life (Island)

It would be deceptively easy to get snide here. Faithfull delivers her first album of (mostly) original material in 12 years and it's only 35 minutes long! Composer Angelo Badalamenti re-uses his best melody for three of the 10

tracks, albeit in different orchestrations.

Considering Faithfull's recently vaunted rep' as a wordsmith — that autobiography may be rivetingly candid, but it's not without pretensions — she only manages to take sole responsibility for half the lyrics. Other lyricists include Irish playwright Frank McGuinness (in whose work Faithfull has recently performed), English playwright Will Shakespeare (in whose work Faithfull once performed), and Italian poet Dante.

But let's not get snide. *A Secret Life* has much to recommend it. Initial predictions may have been for an album combining the depressing ennui of Faithfull's 1987 covers collection *Strange Weather* with the lush melancholy of Badalamenti's *Twin Peaks* soundtrack. While there are certainly hints of this, overall the album transcends expectations. Darkness may be present, but the general mood is more one of artistic confidence.

Faithfull's voice is sounding richer, more vibrant and expressive than we'd ever thought it capable. Badalamenti's music is frequently more interesting than his work for David Lynch and Julee Cruise.

Such is the beauty of his 'She' theme, for instance, that I am happy to hear it reworked behind Faithfull intoning Prospero's closing speech from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. What could easily have been tacky and clichéd works a treat, which just about sums up the whole album really.

PETER THOMSON

## MANPUSSY Foreskin 500 (Priority Records)

Von Schweinehunds' cold, angular form filled the doorway. "Is 0800 a broken man yet?"

His ferret faced subaltern raised a ferrety face. "Nein," he said, and then, luckily, slipped into bad English. "Ve haf even tried ze *Melody Rules...* but he is just laffing at it."

Schweinehunds raised a cold eyebrow. "Most strange... time for ze Foreskin 500."

The ferrety one took a pack back. "Mein gott, inhuman, that is."

For the next hour, room 010 was a cacophony of demented screams, as well as an occasional whimper from 0800. More painful than 0800's predicament was the ghastly sounds of Manpussy, a horrible concoction of the American dream gone sour. It was the sound of Amercian males in rebellion; the sound of a thousand pierced dongs beating off in time to the rhythm of the highway — the highway to hell! 0800 shifted queasily in his chair, as yet another wave of sequenced guitar broke upon

his ears. By god, if he ever escaped from this jam, Al Jourgensen was going to pay — with his life.

But first, he must escape. Luckily, throughout the ordeal he'd chanted an ancient tibetan mantra backwards, warding off the worst excesses of sub-industro-disco-punk-biker-sludgecore™ guaranteed to turn the weak-minded into leather cap wearing, pincushions of modern primitivism. Now, as the insidiously hummable trash tailed off with wimply, mumble ballad, he siezed his chance and, unbeknownst to the ferret, reversed the polarity of the neutron flow, turning the aural equivalent of mustard gas upon his captors.

Because his tormentors lacked 0800's buckets of spunk, they promptly wilted, and the free world belched loudly in relief.

Next week 0800 visits the lair of Foreskin 500, to find Al Jourgensen's behind everything, except Al's been dead since 89 and is, in fact, the scruffiest one from White Zombie, who turns out to be Trent Reznor wearing a wig. Probably!

KEVIN LIST

## ORB Orbus Terrarum (Island)

## YELLO Hands on Yello (Polygram)

What sets ambi apart? What makes The Orb so popular? Media attention? Yup — better the confuser you know. But there's more: their samples (a radio play about slugs on 'Slug Dub!'), amazing sounds (all of them), and the structures that don't exist until you think about them.

So much of their material sounds organic, like the songs always existed, clouded by silence, and the Orb just liberated them from the nothingness.

After two old tracks, 'Valley' and 'Plateau' (last heard on Orb Live 93), we move into fresh realms of Dr Paterson and co. 'Oxbow Lakes' is pure drama — a typically plain piano solo drowns as it's banished to the bottom of the ocean. There it transforms into a hungry Pac-monster of throbbing sound, building and building until the original notes return, ghostly, immaculate, slaying the beast they had become.

Ambi defies any kind of real review (as I'm sure you've noticed). Symphonies of the electronic age, dazed and fuzed, background or foreground music, depending on how you're standing. Means nothing. Says everything. The

Orb are back and certain stocks at the corner dairy are running low.

Now, the idea of a Yello tribute album, put together by a bunch of today's dance finest is a grand one. Who better to have an electronic make-over than the forefathers of electric weirdness. And dance's remix has always been held in higher esteem than pop's cover version. More sound than sentiment I suppose.

The only drawback with this compilation is that some of the artists involved were so totally in awe of the Swiss masters (read the sycophantic liner notes!) that they've tried to keep a lot of the original flavour — to the detriment of stamping their own distinctive feel. Moby's sexy slink on 'Lost Again' oozes out with finesse — but it'd be nothing without re-using Boris' original doomed atmos and Dieter's original sleazy vocals.

When the Orb and Jam and Spoon completely deconstruct 'You Gotta Say Yes to Another Excess', we're getting exactly what the project promised. Plutone's jungle stomp through 'Oh Yeah' gives the original a kicking, and Carl Cox's transformation of 'L'Hotel' is a gas.

A hit and miss compilation. Very Yello, really. JOHN TAITE

## DRUGSTORE Drugstore (Go! Discs)

The best way to experience Drugstore's debut album is to curl into the foetal position in a darkened room and let it envelop you (drugs optional — no marks for subtlety in the band-name department). After 43 minutes of this you'll feel as if you've been in an isolation tank for a week. Drugstore's Brazilian-born singer Isabel Monterio's breathy, other worldly vocals imbue the songs with a characteristic languid and effortless quality, somewhat at odds with the often disturbing lyrics. Musically, the essence of the songs is akin to the likes of Mazzy Star, the Cowboy Junkies, the Jesus and Mary Chain and Codeine. The overall effect of the album is of it existing in a parallel universe without reference points.

*Drugstore* is at once evocative and timeless, with individual tracks rising to the consciousness of your memory, before slipping back into the seamless whole. It's full of cerebral, selfish moodiness, but then, who hasn't felt selfish or moody at times? As a downer companion, *Drugstore* is perversely cathartic and oddly uplifting — some weird shit, sure, but well worth trying. Me? I'm hooked — perhaps they should call their next album *Pusher*.

MARTIN BELL

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