

# albums

Acid Jazz doesn't always fall on its feet though. Don't rush out and buy the very pedestrian *Dub the Millennium*, just because it's got the Acid Jazz label on it. Talk about spacious nothingness. And Dread Flimstone's *The Bionic Dread* album is some cringeworthy reggae-meets-soul-to-have-a-drink-of-sugar-water-with-hip-hop. One of their few signings from the States, and hopefully one of their last.

Acid jazz is still hanging around, but only just.

JOHN TAITE

## FIGHT A Small Deadly Space (Epic)

Judas Priest have not been heard of since vocalist Rob Halford left to form Fight. He obviously wanted to move on from their rather dated metal approach, into something more relevant to the 90s.

A *Small Deadly Space* is the second Fight album, and it's more akin to Pantera than Priest, although Halford's trademark scream-pitched singing makes for inevitable comparisons to ye olde studded leather attired ones.

Best moments are the overloaded 'Blowout in the Radio Room' and 'Mouthpiece', which effectively starts with railway bells until the band plough through like a freight train. The guitarists concentrate more on heavy repetitive riffing, instead of lead breaks, which is certainly powerful, but gets a bit mind numbing by the time you get to the seven minute final track, 'A World of My Own Making'. Definitely one of the heaviest releases to come out so far this year.

GEOFF DUNN

## THE MALCHICKS Mercury (Failsafe)

Auckland four-piece the Malchicks owe their name to a slang term from Anthony Burgess' seminal novel *A Clockwork Orange*. But where Burgess was concerned with a

grim vision of a future Britain, the Malchicks prefer to stare earthwards and to the immediate English past for their musical cues. When bassist Coralie Martin takes lead vocal duties on the album's high point, 'Milestone', the band sound for all the world like an antipodean Lush — which is both a blessing and a curse. For, while favourable comparisons with the English shoe-gazing school of Lush, Ride etc. are appropriate, the Malchicks fail to add anything new to the territory already staked out by their British classmates. Too often songs start promisingly enough — witness the pounding intro to 'Stranded in Lost Time' — but fail to kick on, despite some uniformly splendid guitar riffery from Matthew Dalzell and Simon Matthews.

What *Mercury* lacks is a sense of drama and urgency — individual tracks being left to meander inconclusively, without ever delivering that single crystalline moment that marks a song out as being more than merely 'good'. Without that *raison d'être*, 'good', unfortunately, is all that *Mercury* can aspire to be — something less than the sum of its often excellent parts.

MARTIN BELL

## PAUL BRADY Spirits Colliding (Mercury)

Little known on this side of the world, Paul Brady has been a vital part of the Irish folk/rock scene for years, and was singled out by Dylan in the liner notes to the *Biograph* compilation as 'a secret hero'. *Spirits Colliding* sees Brady working with other writers (John Prine among them), resulting in his strongest set of songs since 1981's *Hard Station*. You get the sense that Bonnie Raitt is already lining up to cover the R&B tinged 'Just in Time', and the opener, 'I Want You To Want Me', wouldn't be out of place on the more recent Van Morrison albums. (*Spirits Colliding* is mixed by Mick Glossop, who has worked on a number of Morrison projects.)

Unfortunately, Brady also shares with Morrison the tendency to lapse into platitudes — cue 'You're the One', 'After the Party's Over' and 'Love Made a Promise' — where clichés and not spirits are colliding. Throughout, of course, he sings like an angel, but *Spirits Colliding* will do little to

change the perception of Paul Brady as a songwriter's songwriter.

GREG FLEMING

## ULTRASOUND Ultrasound (Mushroom)

Ultrasound are Deborah Conway, her partner and guitarist Willy Zygiel, ex-Crowded House member Paul Hester on drums, and Bill McDonald on bass. A cynic might suggest it is Conway's maternity album — it's playful, light, and at times ('Evil Homer') funny. One senses here the input of Hester, whose mix of slapstick and humour enlivened many a Crowded House gig. A cover of 'Anyone Who Had A Heart' is perhaps the only cloying point, even the numerically named 'One', 'Four', 'Six', 'Ten', 'Twelve' and 'Fifteen' (all quirky soundscapes) rarely outstay their welcome. Quite whether anyone needs *Ultrasound* is another matter entirely. Still, never underestimate the power of old mates and lovers (Conway is/was involved with two out of three, says the press release) in the same room.

GREG FLEMING

## PROMETHEUS Prometheus (Deep Music)

Two of the players involved with Prometheus were members of Robert Fripp's league of craft guitarists, and it shows. Local musician Nigel Gavin (Gitbox, Nexus, Aunties etc.) teamed up with American guitarists/songwriters Steve Ball and Sanford Ponder, to create some sonic, progressive guitar rock that is not that far removed from the music of Mr Fripp himself. Current King Crimson drummer Pat Mastelotto plays on the album.

The mainly instrumental, metallic discipline of tracks like 'Sardukar' and 'Angst' are proof of Prometheus' proficiency. The 23 minute 'Redemption' leans more toward the ambient style of Eno, and is so quiet you may not even realise anything is happening at all unless the volume is well cranked up. It's a complete contrast to the other eight tracks, which have so much happening in them that one or two listens is not enough to take it all in.

This is an interesting project, that lays the groundwork for Prometheus to further devel-

op their songwriting and musical identity.

GEOFF DUNN

## FLAMINGOES Plastic Jewels (Festival)

A healthy scepticism is advised when perusing the English music press. Both *Melody Maker* and... *News of the World* have rated Flamingoes among the UK's brightest hopes. Why? A little background information may be of interest.

Formed in Hitchin, Enlgand (birthplace of yours truly... and Simon LeBon), they moved to Camden "to become stars". A mutual passion for eyeliner (hmmm), the Jam's *All Mod Cons* (yesss!), and pre-fame Adma Ant (doh!), resulted in their first single, 'The Chosen Few'. An unimpressively derivative song, it nevertheless paved the way for future successes. 'Teenage Emergency', their second UK single, is the business. Elastic sans chicks; Pulp if they were any good. Both are included on their debut, along with their third single, 'Disappointed', a song about disco alienation.

MARK DONOVAN

## SCORPIONS Love Bites (Polygram)

Goodbye communism, g'day rock 'n' roll. By the late 80s, the youth of Eastern Europe had had enuff of missing totally boffo bands like the Scorpions. The generic commie spoil-sports would stop the young grooving no more, for the winds of change were wafting from the McDonalds munching free West, sending the Berlin Wall tumbling like Jerichos in Antiquity. Finally the kids could rock, could groove, could hold lighters aloft with tears in their eyes. Now you too can share the magic of Mittel Europe's finest, the Scorpions, live. Sing along with half the population of Russia, Poland, America etc, as Meine, Schenker and co. fill the stadiums the world over with good lovin', good rockin', and funny accents.

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KEVIN LIST

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\* Both lessons in this video are included in Series One The Complete Beginner

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- 3 Learning 'Malaguena' — Spanish traditional song.

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- 2 'Buffalo Gals'.
- 3 'Nine Pound Hammer'.
- 4 'Silver Sand Rag'.

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- 2 Twelve bar Blues using Jazz chords in A.
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#### LESSON 6

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- 6 'Take Five'.
- 1 Learning how to play Ragtime style.
- 1 'Nobody Loves You When You're Down and Out'.
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- 3 'Ragpickin'.

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