

'Redemption Song', both in subject and sound), yet Harper's writing is often predictable and simplistic — even on a love song like 'Gold to Me'. While unlikely to get people talking, *Fight For Your Mind's* best material — the dirty boogie of 'Ground on Down', the bluesy rap of 'Excuse Me Mr' — may at least get them listening.

GREG FLEMING

THE GERALDINE FIBBERS

Lost Somewhere Between the Earth and My Home (Hut)

The Geraldine Fibbers formed early last year in Los Angeles, and worked with producer Steve Fisk (Screaming Trees, Nirvana, Soundgarden) on this debut album. The press release offers the country style of George, Hank and Merle, and the Velvet Underground as references.

An uneasy alliance of genres you might think, and you would probably be right, because GF sound nothing at all like any of the above. OK, Jessy Green (violin) doubles on viola, but whereas John Cale would 'star' for the VU, partially defining their early recordings, Mr Green aggrandises on only the closing 'Get Thee Gone', adding nothing to a song which was mud to start with.

Overall, GF's sound is more Sonic Youth go country, refusing to discard their electric guitars. This comparison is perhaps best illustrated on 'The Small Song' (their best song), which could be SY circa *Daydream Nation*. But this disc is nearly 60 minutes long, and life is too short to persevere with bands so depressingly short on ideas.

MARK DONOVAN

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Basketball Diaries Soundtrack (Island)

This album gives a bitterly tantalising taste of what to expect from the upcoming movie based on street poet Jim Carroll's autobiographical novel. Carroll himself contributes vocals on two songs: the opener, 'Catholic Boy', and the 1980 track, 'People Who Died'. Pearl Jam and Chris Friel play rockin' accompaniment to the former, while the Jim Carroll Band do the damage on the latter.

Carroll also teams up with the film score's composer, Graeme Revell, and reads three excerpts from the novel, including 'Devil's Toe' (the perfect companion to PJ Harvey's 'Down

By the Water', which follows, with its talk of a dare which involves jumping into a sewer deposit-sullied river), the deeply moving 'I Am Alone' (a way less rockin' take on the themes in 'People Who Died'), and the painful writer-junkie blues musings of 'It's Been Hard'. Flea's gently melodic solo contribution, 'I've Been Down', comes close to matching the latter in its perception.

The Doors' 'Riders on the Storm' falls in fine context, making it easy to forget how it's possible to hear some songs too many times in your life, no matter how good they are. The Posies juxtapose a creeping guitar dirge with mournful affirmation in 'Coming Right Along'. Rockers HiFi and Massive Internal Complications take opposite ends of the shelf with the breezy beats of the former's 'What a Life' and the latter's tripped out 'Strawberry Wine'. Soundgarden deliver the excellent 'Blind Dogs', which I've seen prompt a few people to say: "This is pretty good, sounds kinda like Soundgarden." It might not be the peak of their powers, but getting close to them should be considered a mighty fine thing in anyone's book.

It's certainly a thought provoking compilation, and consistently listenable. It's strange how tales of addiction can be so addictive.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

UNDERGROUND LOVERS Dream it Down (Polydor)

Dream It Down is the third album from a Melbourne band whose first releases, *Get to Notice* and *Leaves Me Blind*, impressed Robert Smith enough for him to grant them support status for the Cure's Australian tour.

UL sound nothing like the Cure (who does?), but on *Dream it Down*, they are moving further towards deep ambient house danceability. For evidence, check 'Weak Will' — it's just plain weird — effluvious, miasmatic and psychedelic, with underpinning shuffled drum patterns and precious little in the way of 'real' instruments.

Regrettably, the album is not well paced (too many of the structured, and best, tracks appear too early on) the 'less is more' philosophy leaving too much 'dead air' on the more spacious outings. A better grounding in the dynamics of the studio environment could lead to a more satisfying whole on their next recording. For now, we still have 'Losin' It' and the ethereal 10-minute epic 'Recognise'.

MARK DONOVAN



Belly

A two month pile-up of the customary white-assed rock 'n' roll awaits, so it's straight into the **Jesus and Mary Chain's** 'I Hate Rock 'n' Roll' (WEA). The Reid Brothers have returned to their beloved buzzsaw guitar distortions and delirium for an invective on the commercial failings of the wonderful world of rock: 'I love MTV / I love it when they're shittin' on me.' Sheer poetry. Also of note on the EP is '33', a crackling hymn to disintegration and despair.

Next is Butch Vig's **Garbage**, who start with the malevolent might of 'Vow' (White). The fairly-predictable tread of 'Subhuman' just doesn't take off, but, thankfully, 'Number One Crush' recovers the danger count.

Staying Stateside for a while, and **Pearl Jam** prove that they're becoming dab hands at penning classic, rolling guitar ballads with intensity and feeling, on 'Immortality' (Epic), and Butch Vig gets his name in lights again, this time as producer of **Soul Asylum's** anthemic, FM air-punching 'Misery' (Columbia). Meanwhile, **Mudhoney** continue their quest to perfect literate, deadpan garage, on the just fine 'Generation Spokesmodel' (WEA), and **Belly** keep turning out four track, gatefold EPs, passable riffs and animated Tanya Donnelly vocal deliveries, like 'Super-Connected' (4AD). **Faith No More** continue to lift their best songs from the patchy *King For A Day*, and this time it's the semi-controlled frenzy of 'Digging the Grave' and 'Midlife Crisis', and an airing of the sensitive 'I Wanna Fuck Myself'. Go ahead.

To conclude the American part of the programme, there's a couple of scratchy, sonic,

awkward little cusses on LA's indie Dry Hump label. They go by the names of **Flourescein**, whose 'Fall Out' is controlled abrasive pop, while **Vim** knock out persistent garage riffs. Not bad.

To the crusty isles, where there's been a certain smugness since the decline of grunge, as they believe they've wrested the rock 'n' roll initiative from the Yanks. There's nothing this month that will confirm that, although Scotland's **18 Wheeler** take the innocent disillusionment of 'Bodha' (Creation) from their excellent second album, *Formanka*, and follow it with the even more charming title track of the album. Sweet. 'Dance, drink and screw / 'Cause there's nothing else to do,' wails Jarvis Cocker, on Pulp's ambivalent 'Common People' (Island). Cocker can't help but hide a hint of loathing in this rising insistent social study. Tired of waiting for chief La Lee Mayers to get his finger out, bassist John Power has formed **Cast**, and the big things expected get close to early realisation in the full blooded, guitar-driven hook of 'Fine Time' (Polydor). **Sleeper's** Louise Wener could even live up to her reputation, as there's plenty of potential on the Blur-styled examinations of London life on the mundane but lively three track EP, 'Inbetweeners/Little Annie/Disco Duncan' (Indolent).

Finally, **New Order's** classic crossover of melancholia and disco, 'Blue Monday' (London), gets even more treatment. The new mixes are too fast and empty-headed, making the fortunately included original 12 inch version sound even more regal. See ya.

GEORGE KAY

Blind Melon

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