

SINGLES

Another release packed month, and first offering is **Oasis**, or is that a desert in the midst of an oasis? The latter seems the more likely verdict on 'Roll With It' (Epic), a sing-along boogie that was deservedly pipped by Blur's nagging 'Country House' in Britain's fight for top of the pops. The crime is that the Oasis EP conceals two great, yearning acoustic forays in 'It's Better People' and 'Rockin' Chair', and their promo only single, 'Morning Glory', shows they're back into hard, driving, Lennon-styled aggression, and that 'Roll With It' should indeed have been consigned to album-only status.

Hey, hey, it's **Neil Young**, godfather of grunge, with **Pearl Jam**, going to the 'Downtown' (Reprise) that Young wrote with Crazy Horse's Danny Whitten way

back in 1971, when hippies ruled the earth. Pearl Jam sound a bit plodding and bloodless, but there's a bit more character to their playing on 'Big Green Country'.

Next, and the angelic meets the damned on the **Shane MacGowan** and **Maire Brennan**, Celtic tinged love song 'You're The One' (ZTT). Vandross and Carey this ain't, and thank god for that, as MacGowan's hun-gover croak is the ideal antidote to Brennan's often precious gossamer poignancy. So, a very pleasant balance of two opposites, and padded out by another two tracks from MacGowan's invaluable *The Snake*.

The unstably eccentric but often brilliant **Julian Cope** is at his most annoyingly promising with 'Try Try Try' (Liberation), a combination of a mundane and repetitive chorus with just the hint of a genuinely uplifting pop tune/sentiment. It's just one of the muthas lifted from his new

album, *20 Mothers*, leaving three other Cope oddities, like 'Baby Let's Play Vet', to again ask the question, genius or madman? What's the difference?

Sitar noises, a burst of rap, then it's the familiar Shaun Ryder sneer and vocal swagger, and the band hits a marvellously natural groove like the Happy Mondays had never split up. Yeah, it's **Black Grape**'s inescapably funky 'In The Name Of The Father' (Radio Active), and it's awwwllrrllllight.

Urge Overkill don't do no funky chicken, but they've lifted three fine songs from their excellent *Exit the Dragon* LP. 'Somebody Else's Body' (Geffen) is like prime Los Lobos, with its low key, loping acoustic energy, while 'And You'll Say' crackles around a twisting electric guitar line. These guys have arrived.

Departures include the **Chili Peppers** 'Warped' (Warners). With a new guitarist in residence, they are high on indistinguish-

able from the restless riffery of the likes of Faith No More.

Missing Soundgarden or Stone Temple Pilots? Queensland's **Powderfinger** (no prizes for guessing origin of name) do imitations almost better than their mentors on the five track 'Mr Kneebone' (Polydor). Worthy of special attention is 'My Urn', which has the audacity to try to emulate the tortured cinematic balladry of 'Jeremy', and they come close.

Meanwhile, we've lost count of the number of singles **REM** have torn from *Monster*. Let's just say 'Tongue' (Warners) is another, with three live tracks also from the same album. Greenies they may be, but they've flogged this poor animal to death. They can always blame the record company.

Rock 'n' roll women bring the curtain down on the column this month. There's nothing better than **Jenny Morris**' gorgeous, heart-tuggingly regretful 'In Too Deep' (rooArt), although the unabashedly romantic, wind-swept strains of *Road To Amber*'s 'One Of These Days' (Festival) and winsome 'You're Gone' are hard to resist.

Meanwhile, new wonder woman **Heather Nova** seems to have all the bets covered on her 'Maybe An Angel' EP (Liberation), as she flits from Björkian hysteria to folk vulnerability — and that's all on the title track.

Finally, what's got three tracks, is virtually unlistenable and goes for nearly 75 minutes? Why, **Holland/Skin/Tunnel**'s EP, of course. See ya.

GEORGE KAY



Heather Nova

NZ SINGLES

DAM NATIVE Hori'fied One
CD Single (Tangata)

Danny D and co-producer Zhayne Lowe have cooked up ultra-smooth, crisp bass beats on this, *Dam Native*'s debut single, and guest vocalist Teremoana Rapley has been gifted the catchiest chorus line any NZ rap track has ever had. Sadly, the staunch, booming vocal Danny gets going in a live situation isn't captured here, killing the impact 'Hori'fied One' deserves, as it's essentially a wicked tune. Two versions of the stoned-sounding 'Realms Of Existence' are here also.

SHIHAD Gimme Gimme
CD Single (Wildside)

There's a lot of competition, but 'Gimme Gimme' shines through as the best song on Killjoy. Karl Kippenberger's thunderous bassline explodes into life, and shunts 'Gimme Gimme' through a bout of aggressive tub-thumping from Tom Larkin, while Jon Toogood barks angrily over the top, and guitarist Phil Knight coaxes some melody out from the bowels of the industrial thrash. Manic and

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