

albums

PAUL McCARTNEY Unplugged — The Official Bootleg (Parlophone)

Just before he died John Lennon said Paul McCartney was good at dinky-poo acoustic guitar numbers — "so is John Denver." But he was being a bitch. Here, the world's richest musician stands naked, performing his hits and old standards with his band in an all-acoustic setting. At last. Both songs and singer benefit from the exposure, stripped down to their essentials.

Recorded for an MTV special, *Unplugged* is at its best when McCartney springs a surprise: his very first song, the Holly-esque 'I Lost My Little Girl' (written at 14) or the perennial 'San Francisco Bay Blues' and 'Blue Moon of Kentucky'. Little is added to the predictable Beatles selections, which were virtually

acoustic anyway, but an unexpected treat is the bluesy reworking of 'That Would Be Something' with the swampy Dobro of Robbie McIntosh. McCartney is in fine voice and in this setting the melodies soar. How many of today's chart hits will feature in a singalong in 25 years? Will there still be singalongs?

Cutesy patter aside, there is a warmth and charming honesty here that was absent from the recent live dinosaur. This has all the intimacy and spontaneity of Al Hunter at the King's Arms, every Saturday afternoon after the league.

CHRIS BOURKE

MAGGIE'S DREAM Maggie's Dream (Capitol)

The 60s huh? I'm told they never actually went away. I'm not so certain of that in general, but it's definitely a fact around wherever it is that Maggie's Dream come from. These boys who I know absolutely zip about have gone and made one of my favourite flower power-ish albums. The



Maggie's Dream

reason they get the vote of confidence over a straight down the line revivalist like Lenny Kravitz is because they segue some modern elements in nicely with acoustic guitars and dopey lyrics. Mildly funky basslines and jazzy drumming drift in and out, not so obviously that they dominate but enough to 'colour' the music, or something hippyish like that. At times, Maggie's Dream sound sort of like a gentler Living Colour — 'Change For The Better', for instance — it's largely in the soul sounding vocals.

The entire second side of the album is the down and dirty stuff though, major mellow out time. It's all this really big sounding intense material, but get past the overly idealistic lyrics and it's all really listenable. If this sort of thing is going to come back into fashion then at least let it be through the efforts of smoeone like Maggie's Dream who have some degree of talent and class, even if they have no idea of how to dress themselves without looking like clowns.

KIRK GEE

CROWDED HOUSE Chocolate Cake (Capitol)

Although this doesn't have the anguished feel that made their last album so wonderful, it does have that real nice pop sound these guys are so good at. Great retro organ feel and a cool 'n' cheesey harmonica. Lyrics are all a bit obvious and liberal but they, a burn an evangelist types is always worth extra points.

KIRK GEE

BIRDLAND Everybody Needs Somebody (Lazy) 12" EP

The latest release from the perfect blonde Beach Boys of English pop/thrash thrills if not sending one into Ramone heaven. Snarling vocals sounding like the offspring of '78 punk and '88 pop hook although the band sound like they are holding something back — could well be the constipated production. Even so, Birdland put pussy tryhards like the Pale Saints and the Darling Buds to shame. I dunno what they are doing on the B-side 'untitled' but this is the future of non-dancy English pop.

Buy, sing "don't hang on" to your lover and check out those pouting lips on the teenybop record cover. Yeah! SHIRÉE LOVE

THE FLESH EATERS Dragstrip Riot (SST)

The 1991 university year began and I spent the first two weeks pissing around changing subjects and shit, taking ones with less grind involved and just getting depressed in general 'cos nothing had changed and people still repulsed me and everything, but by Monday of the third week I was more or less "set". So I opened the Beefeater and by lunch that day I'd given it back to the ground, twice, and passed out flat fucked insane. Woke up around 5, sat up, stood up, and slurred "Never again". Held my word for about a week, mainly 'cos even the smell of gin brought on a sorta nausea, but then the necessity of viewing the world thru a drunken haze became greater as varsity got worse so I switched to Johnnie Walker after various attempts to get blasted on assorted rum-type concoctions to which I seemed sadly immune. But there came a day when I was sober and on this day I wandered downtown and into some opening sale where I picked up a Sun Ra CD for the price of 4 ice cream Moros then wandered over to the "alternative" section. And pretty much freaked at what I saw. *Dragstrip Riot*, a new Flesh Eaters double no less! Dig! I had no idea they were back. Okay, quick dope for squares: the Flesh Eaters were (along w/ X, Flag, Germs) THE hap'nin' p-rock band of early 80s LA. Centring around the giant vocal goop and lascivious lyrical lustings of Chris Desjardin, plus the swingiest, beatest buncha musos you could wish for in a decade about to launch Madonna as an icon for anything except pseudo-sado tit holders perhaps. And then they split. Mr D went into the equally hot tho' lots different Divine Horsemen, and for one album, *Stone By Stone*. But now he figures the old name should return, if

not the actual band, but they're prolly dead, so who fucks a give? The cover alone dripped with swellness, no need for naked babes with a group this cool. But would the contents be equally swank? Before you could say "Is it real? Is it relevant? NO, it's Andrew rushing home to sample his latest score", I was loading my deck for an answer. Now, after I'd cooled down and accessed my analytical antennae the following became apparent: It's not everything I'd hope for in a new Flesh Eaters album, half the songs are too long and don't go anywhere in their length either, but that's okay, 'cos the prime moments scorch where they should. Pretty damn fine, more sexual tension than, I dunno, Guns'n'Roses even. Listen to Wayne James' (since departed) guitar growl, howl and *throb* thru 'Soul Kiss' 'fore Mr D spouts "If I couldn't kiss yr. pussy I wouldn't wanna live" and try telling yourself that it's not the absolute goods you're hearing. You won't be able to. Opening cut 'Tomorrow Never Comes' is prolly the "best", 4 minutes 29 seconds of pent-up screw-the-future love-me-today anguish layed atop a perfectly realised CLASSIC (gulp) rock move. Next track 'Youngest Profession' has some difficulty sitting *next* to it, but tomorrow will come and you won't worry about it. Then again, if you're an existential prick tomorrow *won't* come and your life will still be equal parts depression, frustration and poop, and as such it'll be nice to have a disc like this to play. 'Cos it embraces escape by enervating the opposite, pretty much like everything "wise" peeps (such as I) listen to: Stooges, Jimi, Coltrane, the twirl of the bottle top, the sloshing of the liquid, the floor as your face bites it, the men in the trees, the monsters on the moon, the ultravixens in your dreams, the POUNDING in your head, the, uh . . . fug it.

ANDREW P

singles

ICE-T OG Original Gangster (Warner Bros) Cassingle

Excellent slab of realism from Mr Ice's new album about how he started out just wanting to be a happy rapper throwing his hands in the air, like he just don't care. But reality kept on getting in the way. No pop song but that's not what he wants. The other song is 'Bitches 2' about how "some of you niggas is bitches too!" A bit of a twisted feminist argument here, best thing is the Parliament back beat, the coolest thing to sample at the moment.

KING KURLEE (featuring Blackmore Jnr) Smoke On The Water (WEA) 12"

Well, this is terrible. It has to be Swedish or Dutch, the home of terrible rap records. Yep, it's DP's classic song of my youth hung out to dry and beaten into putty. A novelty of sorts, having, I assume, Ritchie Blackmore's young son on axe duties. This is a good argument for strong parental guidance.

SAMANTHA FOX (Hurt Me! Hurt Me!) But the Pants Stay On (Jive) 12"

As a frequent observer of Ms Fox's career, I would say this is an attempt at respectability, doing a safe sex song and all that. Looking very demure on the cover, what with the tattoo and chain mail, some would call it symbolic.

A house grinder, especially in DJ Pierre's remix, using CC and music company beats and that full force vocal style.



THE TRIPLETS You Don't Have To Go Home Tonight (Mercury) 7"

"Dem Wilson Philips broads sure did shift some heavy units. The kids love that wholesome shit, you know the family that sings together stays

together, we're talking good people here . . ."

Yep, the talk behind media consultants closed doors was thick with speculation — what next for the middle market. Well, nothing new, just three cute girls sitting on rocks in the middle of the desert singing about sex. I'll buy that for a dollar!

REBEL MC (featuring Tenor Fly) Wickedest Sound (Desire)

For the adventurous only, a clash of dancehall reggae and bleep beats like real intense. Should really come with some amyl nitrate and a strobe light for full effect, not that I'd ever use a strobelight on my body, I'm a clean living boy. Ultra cool at loud volume, all those bleeps set off my neighbours car alarm and his Phil Collin's tapes exploded. Wicked!!

CHRIS BAILEY Bridges (Mushroom) 7"

Talking about my neighbour — he'll like this. It's sensitive, thoughtful, reflective, well it's just plain mature. It's non-disturbing, which disturbs the hell out of me.

Oh yes, keep those cards and letters coming, it's always heart warming to know you have an audience that cares. KERRY BUCHANAN

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