

...cont'd from previous page

BC — are able to combine all these genres and produce something that really kicks ass. *Selling the Sizzle* is definitely one of the most original and energetic albums I've heard over the past year.

Co-released by BC's Mint Records and Berkeley, California's Lookout! Records (of Green Day fame), this record is the fifth by The Smugglers. Their four other LP's, along with millions of other singles and compilation appearances, have been released by labels around the world, in places such as Spain, Japan, and Australia. As well, they managed to pick up a YTV Achievement Award in 1992 as best Canadian teen band...try not to hold that against them.

Every once in a while, an album that has no shred of seriousness whatsoever is very fun to listen to. *Selling the Sizzle* definitely falls into this category. It contains songs such as "To Serve, Protect, and Entertain," a slam on '90's police shows, and "Pick 'em up Truck," which is self-explanatory. There is also a secret track on this album in which guitarist David Carswell records, by himself, the entire Little Red Riding Hood story, complete with wolf effects.

These guys like to have fun, and it is very evident on *Selling the Sizzle*. If you are ever looking for some surf-influenced hillbilly punk rock, give The Smugglers a listen.

ERIC HEMPHILL



The Boy With The X-Ray Eyes
 Babylon Zoo
 EMI

Babylon Zoo isn't really a group (or a zoo, for that matter). Essentially, it's just Jas Mann, the latest British freakazoid to burst onto the music scene. His debut record, "Spaceman," accounted for a third of all British single sales in its release week. It was brought to the public's attention by those very clever people at Levi's who used it in their current ad campaign.

The Boy With The X-Ray Eyes is a collection of tracks that are similarly infectious. Mann's musical style is bizarre — it's kind of a Soundgarden meets The Happy Mondays meets early Pop Will Eat Itself — yet it's effective. Mann sneers through the vocals like an angry pre-pubescent. Tracks like "Don't Feed The Animals" and "Is Your Soul For Sale?" pay homage to the pent-up frustrations of a generation.

Whilst sticking to the same formula throughout his album,

Mann manages to provide a variety of styles within it. One minute the guitars are going nuts in a good-ol'-fashioned rock sort of way, the next minute Mann is whining not terribly unlike Lee Majors (from the La's) in an airy-fairy, stoned-out-of-your-tree whisper. Just have a listen to "I'm Cracking Up I Need A Pill."

"Spaceman" is undoubtedly the best track on this CD, but "Caféine," "Confused Art," and "Paris Green" aren't bad either. The title track is a little disappointing, however, though it is better than most of the recent releases 'round here.

Babylon Zoo provides an escape for Mann, who lives in the Midlands' industrial suburban hell that is Wolverhampton. He told Britain's *Sky* magazine that "Babylon Zoo is role play, my songs are different characters. Babylon comes from my colourful Asian past and Zoo is the concrete jungle that I live in." Of himself, Mann says "I'm just a glorified Punch and Judy show." Hopefully those nice people with the sandals-and-socks problem will and subsequently reconsider their strategy.

The Boy With The X-Ray Eyes appears to pave the way for the New Romo movement and we can only hope for the best. Mann is doing his bit for the sanity of the planet and hopefully others will follow suit (soon). No doubt sales of this album are currently being buoyed by the sheer infectiousness of "Spaceman." However, the record has staying power. It will probably prove to be one of the best albums of the year, if it isn't already.

EUGENIA BAYADA

This World and Body
 Marion
 London Recordings

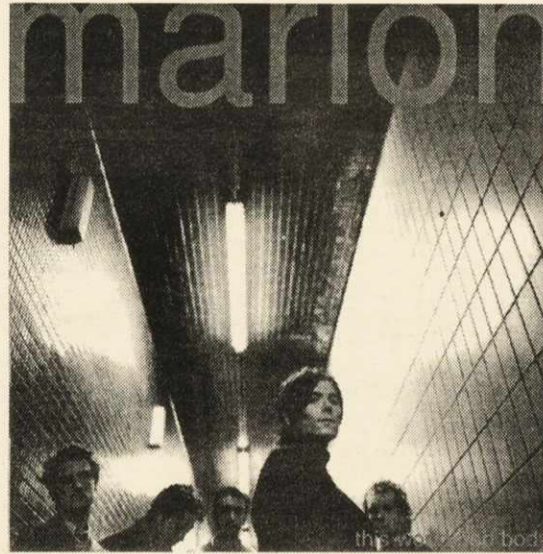
Ludwig Wittgenstein believed that if art was to be evaluated, it should be compared with its peers. The merits of a musical

piece should be argued as if in a court of law. A person with one opinion could argue certain points relating to other similar cases and, in fact, the arguing parties should be able to come to a consensus as to the art's merit. Assuming this position of Wittgenstein's as being the best way to criticize music (not wholly uncontested), and also assuming that my opinion is always correct (almost wholly uncontested), I can evaluate the value of *This World and Body*, the new album by Marion.

Pretending that Marion's peers include the widely-known Blur and Oasis, it is acceptable for me to compare the three in order for a relationship to be seen. If you are not familiar with Blur or Oasis, do two things: one, move out of North Weymouth; and, two, call in a request to CKDU now!

Marion is a London, England quintet who represent the latest trend of UKers shunning the "Britpop" label espoused by circus atmospherics Blur. Marion doesn't spend as much time tinkering in the studio as Albarn et al do. They seem to adopt more of a Who-circa-Pete Townsend approach — they cut their tracks as they would play them live.

Whereas Oasis promote them-



selves as too godlike to relate to "common people." Marion feel more approachable. *This World and Body* revives memories of early U2. The Cult, and my perma-fashionable parachute pants.

Marion are not of the same

calibre as Blur or Oasis, but it is commendable that they are comfortable, and competent, on their own stage.

Visit the corporate angle: <http://www.rise.co.uk/marion>

A. NEIL MACLEAN

Jesus Freak
 DC Talk
 Forefront

This is as musically diverse as you get. DC Talk bandmates Toby McKeehan, Kevin Smith, and Michael Tait have produced an album quite unlike their previous three efforts.

Jesus Freak is a smorgasbord of styles. Michael Tait provides the arrangements on this album, and he works vocals and music around hip hop, neo-grunge, R&B, and pensive acoustic ballads. While I don't place his work on the same level as Take 6 and Boyz II Men, it is very impressive and flows quite smoothly around a very diversified sound.

Kevin Smith's voice has power and range which rivals Bono's astonishing vocals from the early days of U2. His abilities place him at the top of the short list of lead vocalists on the alternative scene.

Toby McKeehan has definitely steered this band in a fresh direction with *Jesus Freak*, releasing a lot of abilities and energy that was previously untapped.

The record is somewhat lacking, however. Some tracks try to do too much; they're over-polished. Other songs really feel at home and have less shine.

The lyrics on *Jesus Freak* are great. The band shares songwriting duties, but the words on this record address some very hard issues in a very positive-without-being-pessimistic-or-pukey-happy sort of way. Kevin Smith, also a published poet, is definitely a plus in this department.

The problems with the sound on this album result from lack of experience, but the effects aren't too detrimental. The record is a fun one to listen to, and it demonstrates a huge leap forward for this band since their last effort. *Jesus Freak* is broad in scope and reasonably well done, and you'll enjoy it for at least a few years.

PAUL WOZNEY

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