



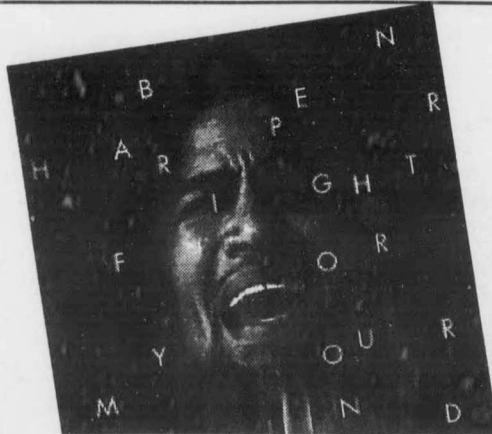
The Presidents of the United States of America

This debut full-length from the Presidents presents us with a sound which we could almost take for original, if we hadn't been sucking back Primus for the past few years.

Although the Presidents are occasionally exciting and fun to listen to, I can't help but think that the lead singer is Les Claypool's long lost brother. And it's not just the music content. The Presidents also tackle the same type of subject matter, often in the form of long narratives talking about people—too reminiscent of Primus cuts like, 'My Name Is Mud' & 'Jenny was a Racecar Driver'. I must give the Presidents some credit though, the MCS cover of 'Kick Out the Jams' is a valiant attempt and a good groove. But as another one of the Presidents' songs goes, 'We're Not Gonna Make It'. Not because "there's a million other bands with better songs," but because there's a million other bands with the same songs.

- Jon Bartlett

The Presidents of the United States of America



Ben Harper - Fight For Your Mind

Sometimes you get lucky when you reach in the Brunswickan's CD drawer and you strike gold. Having never heard two things about Ben Harper before, I didn't expect much from *Fight For Your Mind* and only hoped to hear something a little better than average. I got a lot more than that. The bluesy thread that ties the album together is enough to turn some heads and pique some interest, but Harper's sweet voice takes the whole experience to another level, not to mention some fine percussive additions by Leon Mobley. Harper sounds much like a sedated Aaron Neville - beautiful, listenable, incredibly soothing night on the porch, just relaxing and taking life in.

Fight For Your Mind recounts some of Harper's struggles, mostly ones of love, and also speaks of his spiritual faith. Overall, the album is an incredibly moving piece of work, and definitely worth checking out.

- Jon Bartlett

Dandelion - Dyslexicon

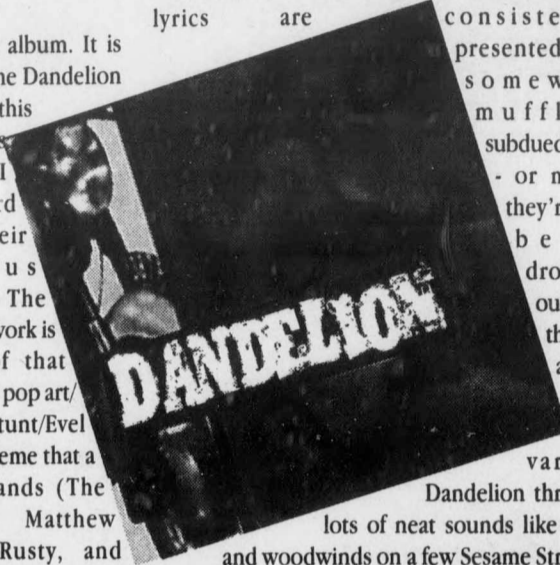
Light, fluffy, fast-paced, pulpy, Americana grunge. Well, it's not harsh at least. And it is grunge, that vastly ambiguous and overused (but this time it *actually* applies) term used for that distorted, sighing, tired sound produced by only too many bands over the last few years - Nirvana, Foo Fighters, and many smaller names, including Dandelion.

Dyslexicon is Dandelion's latest album. It is supposedly very much the same Dandelion sound as before - I say this based on a friend's comments, since I had not heard any of their previous material. The cover artwork is more of that tasteless pop art/racing/stunt/Evel Knevel theme that a lot of bands (The Offspring, Matthew Sweet, Rusty, and Quicksand leap to mind) seem to be into these days, however it has no influence on the music.

The first few tracks bounce by at a very catchy, poppy clip, reminding me of the Foo Fighters somehow. The lyrics are often just simple repetitions of the song titles - particularly on the



wonderful 'Trailer Park Girl' and 'What a Drag' although a punk influence shows up on 'Retard' and 'Whatever'. Across the whole album the lyrics are



consistently presented in a somewhat muffled, subdued voice - or maybe they're just being drowned out by all the fuzz and buzz. For variety, Dandelion throw in lots of neat sounds like flutes and woodwinds on a few Sesame Streetish parts into the traditional mix of distorted thrashing. This is perhaps the most noticeable part of the album - it distinguishes it ever so slightly from the rest of the amorphous grunge amoeba.

This album is pretty catchy at times, but it really isn't very different from anything that's been done before. It's just more grunge. Of course if you're one of those "I just can't get enough of that grunge sound" type of people, then check it out, it's done well - it's *good* grunge. If I hadn't been blasted to death by this sort of thing over the last few years, I'd give it a much better review. But in the final analysis, *Dyslexicon* is just another tired yet tried-and-true offering to the grunge gods.

- Andrew Rosenfeld



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