

Entertainment

WRECKED REVUES



Colin James and The Little Big Band
(Virgin/EMI)

The new Colin James album is one of the most exciting releases this year. The album is a return to the roots of Rock'n'Roll with a jazzy blues edge. Not only is Colin's raw vocals and bluesy playing a highlight, so are the rest of the musicians who are known as "The Little Big Band". They give this album of mostly covers a 1950's jazz feel. It's a fun record and it's very evident that Colin and his band had a blast recording it. His band is faithful to the original while also giving the songs a new vitality which makes each song seem fresh while also giving the songs an old time feel which many people might not have yet experienced. Colin James sings with more emotion than we have ever heard on his first two albums and his guitar playing has never sounded better. Some of the best cuts are "Cadillac Baby," "Breakin' up the House" and "Train kept a Rollin". This album should prove Colin as a master musician and shows that he has the chops to play with the best. Definitely one of the best albums of the year and come Juno time we should hear his name often.

-Patrick Slaney



Plan B
Cyber Chords and Other Stories
(Ariola/BMG)

On first listen, I wanted to hate this band. The guitar playing sounds particularly recycled. They need serious help writing a chorus: when they're not directly lifting stuff out of Depeche Mode songs ("Cops Pin Rap On Batman"), they can sound like the Clash on an unbelievably bad day ("Telecom Communication Cripples"). And those voices on "Life's A Beat"—ughh! They've got a Falcoesque English-as-a-second-language problem that, combined with mildly annoying juvenile lyrical tendencies, makes the actual words to their songs nothing special. They've also included the biggest kiss-ass list of influences I've ever seen—Prince, REM, Sugar, the Clash, Jesus Jones, Stereo MCs, U2, Neil Young, Jimi Hendrix, Das Efx, Beastie Boys, Nirvana, and on and on and on!

But, if you can forgive the heavy-handed treatment they give Sinead O'Connor's "Jump In The River", the album isn't so bad. The combination of electronic beats with

lots of incidental noises within typical pop structures actually works. Uninspired guitar notwithstanding, the album sounds pretty good—the noises catch the ear, and the energy is high. Sure enough, you can actually hear some of the influences they've listed (the Clash and Jesus Jones) and a few others (most notably Depeche Mode, and perhaps EMF), but they avoid rip-off charges because they throw so much into the melting pot. The resultant mix isn't gourmet fare, but it isn't terrible either.

-Andrew Snedden



Rick Astley
Body and Soul
(RCA/BMG)

The arrival of goody packages from record companies in the mail is the highlight of the day in the Bruns office. The staff huddle around the entertainment editor's desk, offer cut knives and keys as she fumbles with the packaging and eagerly wait to see what they've sent us this time. Rarely, they send something that everybody has waited for. Often, they send stuff nobody has ever heard of. This time however, they sent something that sent up a chorus of groans (I think somebody whipped out a crucifix and held it up for protection).

"No, no, no!" said the entertainment editor, "Wait a minute, his hair is different. Maybe the music will be too!" "Oh, please! NOT!" "No, wait a minute, give it a chance. Go get the tape player from the darkroom...OK, now give it at least to the chorus." They huddled in fear.

The synthesizer-violins whined and Rick

started up on a sobber about street kids "Is it good for you? Is it good for me?" Free-beer Bill whipped the tape out of the player, stood on a desk, solicited a lighter from somebody and set fire to Rick. As the stench of burnt plastic and the curly residue from the mini funeral pyre wafted across the office, Bill grinned "Yup, it's the same crap as before..."

-staff



Kate Bush
The Red Shoes
(Capital/EMI)

It's been four years since Kate released her last album, *The Sensual World*. I found that album to be spotty and inconstant. This one is inconstant, but in a positive sort of way. *The Red Shoes* has a wide range of treats to offer, from the bouncy single "Rubbleband Girl," the Caribbean flavored "Eat the Music," two mellow tracks featuring guitar legends (Clapton pops in for a visit on "And so is Love" and Jeff Beck helps out on "You're the One"), on a couple of tunes Nigel Kennedy fiddles away (he's the guest of every pop star going these days) and the joyous sex-religion romp of the Prince (or whoever he is now) duet "Why should I love you?"

There are times when I miss the charming weirdness I always associated with Kate (a la Side 2 of *Hounds of Love*) that shows itself only only a couple of tracks: "Lily" and the title track. However, the album is very strong, if a little restrained. Kate fans should not be disappointed.

-Lilith

Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince
Code Red
(Jive/BMG)

Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince's latest release is worth getting excited about. I was pleasantly surprised to discover Boom! Shake The Room—a funky, danceable medley on this cassette. I was even more thrilled to discover that this track has to discover that this track has multiple hits. "I'm Looking For The One (To Be With Me)", "Twinkle Twinkle (I'm not a Star)" as well as the title track have potential for radio play—if they don't make the charts. "Boom! Shake The Room" is already worthy of club play, but the street remix on side two—Well... can stay on the street.

Code Red is an upbeat, charismatic, soft-core, rap-dance concoction—with a meaning. Will Smith AKA Fresh Prince delivers a message in his light-hearted tunes. "Twinkle Twinkle (I'm not a Star)" describes the underside of stardom and fame while criticizing the backward social values regarding status today. "I used to buy records at this audio store. I barely had a dime when I

walked out the door. I tried to get a paper, but they could never seem to cut me, but now that I've got money they wanna give me stuff free; that's something that I'll never understand. Yo, I can afford it give the break to the next man."

"You say I'm a star cause I'm large in the land, but 'excuse me' what I do doesn't define who I am." Furthermore Smith, who co-wrote all 12 pieces on the release, has managed to incorporate some of his original good humour to most of his work—especially Code Red. When I listened to this storytelling rap I was swept back to Parents Just Don't Understand mode and I could mentally picture every move he dictated in silly high speed fashion. Code Red laments an episode when "Another brother just couldn't control his head — the other one. Code Red!" Other raps notable for their obvious moral messages are Shadow Dreams, and Ain't No Place Like Home.

On the downside, there is one noisy, annoying, over-packed, rap, but one out of 12 ain't bad. I wanna Rock - is a whiny jam -

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