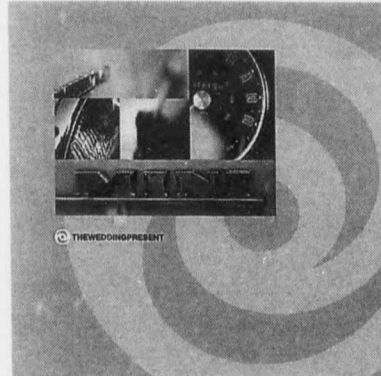


# GENRECIDES

MICHAEL EDWARDS

## A WHOLE BUNCH OF STUFF

There's nothing quite like March Break to give you the chance to catch up on all that 'studying' you've been meaning to do all term. Or something like that. It also gave me the chance to listen to a whole bunch of music which has been building up. And, of course, do an awful lot of studying too. Really, I did. Honest.



rather than the very poppy *Watusi*. There is a vague car theme running through the original six tracks ('Drive', 'Convertible', 'Sports Car', etc.) although it hardly matters because David Gedge adds an "unhappy love song" slant to every single one. Poor guy. Add a tasteful cover of Butterglory's 'Waiting On The Guns' (The Wedding Present always knew the cool bands to cover - remember 'Box Elder?'), and their re-ascent to the top of indie music is complete. Very good stuff.

There comes a point in every band's career when it makes sense to issue a collection of b-sides and other rare tracks; do something for the fans. But to be perfectly honest, it is unlikely after one album that a band has enough material to do so. Yet that is exactly what

To begin with, I'd like to welcome back one of my favourite bands from days gone by - The Wedding Present. They may have been kicked off another major label, but it hasn't gotten them down. Instead, they just hop onto Cooking Vinyl, and come up with *Mini*. Or *Mini Plus* to be more accurate as there are three bonus tracks added bringing the song count to nine for the North American market. Not much has



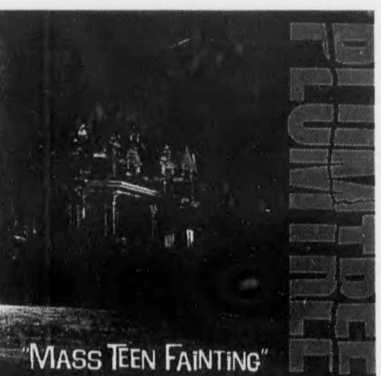
UK bands have made their own, but Marion have a power in their music which is so refreshing, it's like a rush of energy washing over you. And that alone separates them from so many other bands, and makes *This World And Body* worth a listen.

Compilation CD's don't normally fill me with excitement, but *Absolute 90's* comes pretty close despite one of the

technology. Nevertheless, a nice introduction to the wild and wacky world of 'alternative' music.

Next, another one of those 'supergroups' that turn up periodically. The Replicants are an amalgam of Tool and Failure, and their entire album consists of cover versions. And not very good cover versions at that. The better ones are the straight-forward ones that sound pretty much like the originals (such as Tubeway Army's 'Are Friends Electric?' and T-Rex's 'Life's A Gas'). Then there are the nastier ones that try something more imaginative - imagine Wings' 'Silly Love Songs' slowed to a dirge that lasts seven and a half minutes. Hmm. Basically, this is one to avoid.

-simple. The melodies and lyrics are both on the simple side, and also incredibly similar over the duration of the entire album. That means that small doses are recommended or else your teeth might just rot. Still, this is their first album and so there is time for them to develop - I'll reserve my final judgement for now.



Some people always seem to get more critical acclaim than sales, and Aimee Mann is one of those poor unfortunates. Her latest brush with fame came when one of her songs, 'That's Just What You Are', was featured on *Melrose Place* and it almost brought her the prominence she deserved. But not quite. Maybe things will change thanks to *I'm With Stupid*, but I have this sneaking suspicion that they won't.



Gene have done with *To See The Lights*. Weird. Don't get me wrong - the songs sound as good as they ever did, but I have heard almost all of them before. If you are a fan of the band, there is a good chance you will already own the majority of the songs. And if you are not, but want to buy an album, you can simply toss a coin to decide between this and their real debut, *Olympian*. I'd probably go with the latter though.



Napalm Death have come a long way over the years. Their initial claim to fame was as the grand-daddies of the British thrash metal scene, and also having recorded the shortest song ever (a one second grunt). But it sounds like they have come a long way on *Diatribes*, though their trademark frantic drumming and loud guitars are still very present. It is another one of those trademarks that makes *Diatribes* such hard going - Barney Greenway's vocals which are grunted rather than sung. While the songs were shorter and had less structure, it wasn't nearly so bad but now the vocals have an element of parody that makes it hard to take the whole thing seriously. Might I suggest a new singer? Just a thought.



Sigh. And that's a real pity as it really is a wonderful album with her usual quota of good songs. This time round, most songs seem to be dealing with failed attempts at relationships which makes me think that Aimee isn't the luckiest person in love in the whole world. It also makes for a rather samey subject material over the duration of an entire record. Even though the lyrics are more than a little sceptical, the music definitely sweetens things up with drum loops, adventurous guitars and memorable tunes - it seems quite apt that there is a song called 'Sugarcoated'. All in all, *I'm With Stupid* continues Mann's winning musical streak.

changed over the years for The Wedding Present - they did have a run in with Steve Albini at one point (but doesn't every band?), but *Mini* finds them sounding more like the glory days of *George Best*

It feels like every second band releasing an album these days come from the UK, and Marion are no exception. And like Gene, there is a little touch of a Smiths influence in their

most horrid titles in quite some time. It features a good mix of bands, but also picks out decent songs by all of them too - there's not a bad track on it. All areas are represented by the likes of Elastica, The Flaming Lips, Sonic Youth and Weezer, and all things maple-flavoured are embodied by Sloan, The Killjoys and The Gandharvas. Two complaints though - first of all, why say that Dinosaur Jr.'s version of 'Just Like Heaven' is previously unavailable when it has been available for quite some time? And secondly, why stop at 61 minutes when 4 more songs could have been added for a nice round 20 track compilation? Make the most of that CD

Halifax's Plumtree are going to be fighting off the word 'cute' for a long, long time. And *Mass Teen Fainting* isn't going to do much to change that. Listening to it transports me back in time, back to about 1986 when such bands as Talulah Gosh and The Shop Assistants roamed the Earth and things were so much simpler. And that is the word that springs to mind when listening to *Mass Teen Fainting*

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