

Love it / hate it



Despite my hatred of this CD, it has, on some weird level, registered as "good." I haven't quite figured out why I like it. Or do I? I have a very schizophrenic response to it.

Royal Trux
Thank You
Virgin/EMI

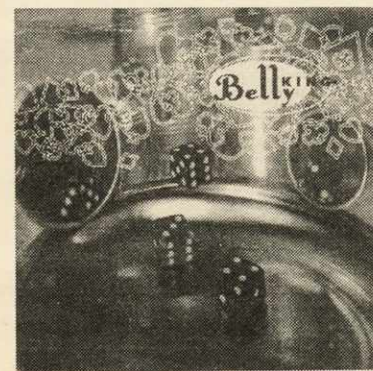
Here are some reasons to hate it: It's a 70s Rolling Stones rip off complete with "cool" basslines. The vocals are androgenous and highly annoying. They're the friggin' Black Crowes with some street 'rep' because they used to make completely indulgent, heroin-induced albums.

Here are some reasons to like it: umm... maybe the basslines are cool in a good way, the band has a cool logo, and maybe I am a sucker for druggie Stones rip off acts (with the exception of the Black Crowes).

Good? Bad? I still can't make up my mind, but in the meantime the CD has obnoxiously crept into my collection, wedged firmly in between Reservoir Dogs and Rush.

Michael Graham

Belly hits the button



After the release of *Star*, Belly's first CD, many wondered if this brainchild of Tanya Donnelly would last. Would she keep producing the light accessible pop-rock that made *Star* so enchanting? Their follow-up, *King*, although not a total departure, shows traces of Belly's former life as rock stars.

Belly
King
Sire

Star was pretty much created by Donnelly, and the recording was more of a concept than an actual entity at the time. As Tanya expanded out of the Throwing Muses, where she had been since the bands inception, and passed through the Breeders, she apparently discovered something in herself that became *Star*. Much of this has returned on *King*, but with less of a child-like perspective. Perhaps she is trying to play down the 'little girl' angle that was so promi-

cd reviews, abuse, news and spews

nent on *Star*, or perhaps she has matured and changed after touring over the last two years.

One change involves the writing duties: six of the eleven tracks were co-written with band mates, making this Belly's first collaborative CD, and perhaps more indicative of things to come. This, however, is not the only striking difference. Songs lyrics now deal with more mature-everyday subjects: "We make a strange and furious pair/ I want you locked in the middle," which is a departure from *Star*. These differences in lyrical content are balanced by Tanya's familiar and desperate singing that adds so much to their interpretation: "I'm not the hero I could be/ but I'm not the dog I was."

Musically, Belly seems to have moved on from the studio driven songs that dominated *Star* and moved to a more "live-friendly" set that may drive away some of their fan-base. This new outlook on songwriting is no doubt a result of touring over the past few years, and isn't all that bad. Songs are not as "clean" sounding, but still retain that quality that made *Star* so fresh.

Clean guitars are often replaced by the dronings of distorted riffs, but remain hiding in the background, probably waiting to pop out in the live shows for a powerful effect. It seems a bit odd thinking about how a song would sound live, but I get the idea that was exactly the feeling in the studio. Much of this sound may have to do with veteran producer Glyn Johns, who has been around since the '60s and produced people like the Stones and the Beatles (most notably "Let it Be," which was later taken over by Phil Spector), likely giving Belly a more back-to-basics feel.

This is a good effort, and Belly fans will like it. It just needs time to grow on you. A warning for those who expect "Star II" — this isn't.

Peter Brown

Confusion is sex



Originally released in 1983 as Sonic Youth's first full-length album, *Confusion is Sex* and their follow up 12" EP, *Kill Yr. Idols* have been re-released as one 51 minute CD.

Sonic Youth
Confusion is Sex/Kill Yr. Idols
(re-issue)
DGC/MCA

Confusion is Sex followed Sonic Youth's self-titled debut EP. It is probably the most experimental of their albums, containing structured ambi-

ent noise and songs that only a mother (or die-hard Sonic Youth fan) could love. While Duran Duran were conquering the pop world, Sonic Youth were putting out records like this, and touring with The Swans.

This record is not amazing, but it does contain some great stuff, such as a meandering instrumental which is crudely interrupted by a live and chaotic rendition of The Stooges' "I Wanna Be Your Dog."

Some of the instrumentals work and others just drone on and on. Overall, however, it is an interesting collage of avant garde noise-rock, but not for the uninitiated.

Michael Graham

Oasis is what you need



I'm sure that there are too many reviews that start off saying that Oasis is good new music for thirsty ears or that Oasis is an oasis in the vast musical desert — but it seems too easy to start off that way.

Oasis
Definitely Maybe
Epic

In Oasis not only do we have one of the new/old British media hypes but we also have another example of a first CD brainchild. The first CD by Oasis is a look into the thoughts and feelings of Noel Gallagher who wrote *Definitely Maybe* and also provides lead guitar/ backing vocals.

This five piece from Britain delivers eleven tracks of guitar driven pop with a twist. This is no Brian Adams or Cheap Trick though. There is something about Noel's melodies and Liam Gallagher's voice that make this CD stand out.

It might be the melodic chord progressions that are continually overlaid which keep you listening and stop the songs from getting boring. Noel has built up a fine backdrop for his songs, with catchy guitar riffs and fills, and his brother Liam provides punchy drumming and excellent vocal delivery. It is perhaps the interplay between Liam's vocals and the guitar riffs that make the whole package come off so well.

This is undoubtedly the reason that the "hook" is so elusive. There is not one thing that stands out. The vocal or guitar may pull you in, but everything gives you a reason to stay. This quality is undoubtedly a result of the production by both Oasis and Mark Coyle, allowing everyone to contribute to the finished product with someone to facilitate fitting things together.

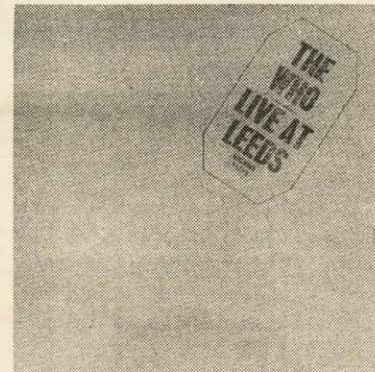
Michael Graham

Lyricaly the CD is very good, starting out with "Rock n' Roll Star," which seems to be something close to Noel's heart, as many of the references throughout the CD are to music and stardom. With "Live Forever" he likens himself to legends of rock and the endearing quality of music "maybe you're the same as me/ we'll see things they'll never see," and asserts his own identity and feelings in songs like "Supersonic": "I wanna be myself/ I can't be no one else." Overall the lyrics show a little pessimism, but always tempered with a good outlook.

With *Definitely Maybe* I found myself feeling like a fish: I looked, and there were no obvious hooks — just bait, but I was caught anyway. If you want some slippery new music that's really good (but not the 'be all' and 'end all'), then Oasis is what you need.

Peter Brown

Who's better, Who's best



This past year has been the year of the re-issue and double CD retrospectives (the year before was the year of the box set). We've had The Beatles, The Go-Go's, Blondie, New Order, Kirsty MacColl, and Sonic Youth — to name a few. But the re-issue I had been waiting for since the day I heard it was coming out was The Who's *Live at Leeds*.

The Who
Live at Leeds (re-issue)
MCA

The original album is brilliant, capturing The Who at the top of their game, but this re-issue is better. It has eight extra songs, an excellent booklet which puts the album in context, and superb remastered sound. Time to retire my warped and scratched second-hand vinyl copy.

Songs included (with great liner notes on each) are "Heaven and Hell," "I Can't Explain," "Fortune Teller," "Tattoo," "Young Man Blues," "Substitute," "Happy Jack," "I'm a Boy," "A Quick One, While He's Away," "Amazing Journey"/ "Sparks," "Summertime Blues," "Shakin' All Over," "My Generation," and "Magic Bus."

The thing runs for about 77 minutes and it smokes. It was recorded on Feb. 14, 1970 at a concert Hall at Leeds University, United Kingdom. By this time, Pete Townshend had gained confidence in his guitar playing and he wails on every solo. John Entwistle plays incredible improvised bass runs. Roger Daltrey's de-

livery is strong and Keith Moon is a maniac on drums.

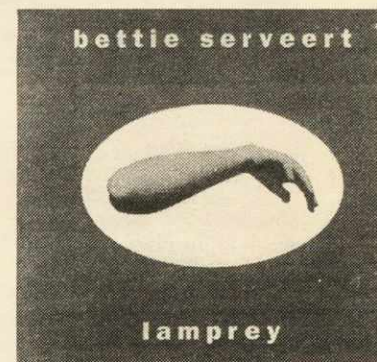
All of these elements come together perfectly in every song, especially the blistering, 14 minute version of "My Generation."

Whereas a band like Cream would disintegrate during long jams, The Who are a cohesive powerhouse.

The "best live rock album ever" tag is not a joke or an exaggeration. This album has no equal, especially now that it has been reissued as a more complete and enjoyable show. Who better? You bet!

Michael Graham

Play it again, and again...



It is rare that you get an album that can be played in its entirety with every single song being a pleasure to hear. I guess that makes *Lamprey* a rare and brilliant album all the way from the Holland based band Betty Seveert.

Betty Seveert
Lamprey
Warner

With a refreshing mix of Neil Young guitar wailing, early REM basslines, Velocity Girl-esque vocals, and beautifully melodic song structures, Betty Seveert is a band worth checking out. "Crutches" even adds some tasteful organ work reminiscent of early Blue Rodeo. It can't really be called "the standout song" or "obvious single" because the entire album is superb. Every song.

The vocals are both plaintive and unbelievably beautiful. Carol van Dijk's voice is distinctively precious. Her completely free style gets across a sweeping range of emotions that leaves you hmmm.... happy really. This cd will make you happy. It is beautifully honest. The voice is the hook though. What can I say? Wow!!!!

I guess that if you have nothing bad to say, you look stupid. So be it. At least I'm not alone, considering that *Lamprey* debuted at number two on the CKDU charts. It's a well-constructed, brilliant, solid album — something you don't come across too often.

Michael Graham

Traci bites it (again)

Traci Lords
1000 Fires
MCA

After breaking free from the world of teen-porn, Traci Lords has made the great transition to techno/dance slut. Prostituting her hideous voice behind some merciful distortion, she "sings" her songs of lust, sex, sex, and more sex to a techno beat. I felt dirty after listening to it. *shudder*...

It was awful.

Michael Graham