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song has vitality. For a couple of twenty-two-year-olds who aren't djs, they sure manage to come up with the nicest samples.

Source and Vibe magazines are probably hastily screaming "classic" already, joined by any number of impressionable teenagers, but this album is certainly flawed compared to the last one. Gone is the sincerity and honesty, and the higher level of consciousness is either secondary or absent on many of the cuts this time around. The guest MCs are for the most part a distraction, particularly Nas who should be embarrassed at how much he's fallen off. And the lack of a dj, breakbeats, and any freestyle flavour still leaves a little something to be desired.

Nonetheless, when tracks like "Bloodsport" or "Get Dealt With" come on, my head starts to nod same as everyone else's.

SOHRAB FARID

Bleed your Cedar
Elysian Fields
Radioactive Records

Pleasant, relaxing, easing music that you can simply drift away to, *Bleed Your Cedar* is the second album from Elysian Fields.

This New York band plays a style of music which puts you in a trance as you listen to it. *Bleed Your Cedar* is a very slow CD which does not have too many upbeat moments, but stays very easygoing. Jennifer Charles' voice floats over the music, reminding



me very much of Portishead and Sheryl Manson from Garbage. The music seems to be background noise for her great voice.

The best song on *Bleed Your Cedar* is the track "Fountain of Fire", with "Jack in the box" and "Sugarplum arches" as honourable mentions. This is the sort of music to curl up in bed and listen to as you fall asleep.

STUART MCMILLAN

The Future Sound of London,
Dead Cities
Various
Sony

This lengthy techno CD toys with your emotions. No matter what kind of mood you are in there is a song on the album for you. From the upbeat, very danceable "We Have Explosive" to the slow, passive tracks of "Eve-

ryone in the World is Doing Something Without Me" and "Max", you can let *Dead Cities* take control of you. Just put on your headphones, sit back and let all of those noises swirl about in your head from ear to ear.

This is a fairly mellow album overall. There are no lyrics on the album with the exception of a few spoken word samples.

The only problem is that out of the seventy minutes of music there is an awful lot of filler. Parts of songs are repeated several times throughout the album. On a techno album are you allowed to do this? Can you have samples and weird noises appearing, then disappearing?

Why not? On *Dead Cities* you have the sounds of things breaking and people falling into swimming pools intertwined with blasting trumpets and keyboards.

STUART MCMILLAN

Absolute
Jacksoul
Ariola Records

Hey people, I've finally got back into the swing of things doing CD reviews for all you R&B, rap and soul lovers out there. This week's selection is Jacksoul.

I've never actually heard these lads before but apparently my friends have, (are they really my friends?). The majority of tunes on *Absolute* are a righteous combination of jazzy upbeats with R&B traces here and there. When blended, the results are smooth



and relaxing, pleasant and easy on the auditory receptors — perfect for a break from the books and stress we face day to day. You can actually picture yourself listening to the songs in a live setting; they seem to have that live ring to them.

"Confection" gets my vote for best song (it's about finding love right under your nose) while "Unconditional" comes in second (another song about love).

All in all, I enjoyed Jacksoul. If you're a soul/jazz lover, give it a try.

AGE MURPHY

Blue Gills
Blue Gills
Atomic Theory Records

As the name indicates, this is a true blue Blues band — with a fishy twist.

The cover art of soulful, blue-coloured cartoon fish complements the CD inside that is filled with the music of some very capable musicians. Blue Gills' traditional sound, reminiscent of late forties and early fifties nightclubs, is carried by the tones of a feminine trio. With vocals similar to the Supremes, this soundtrack swings.

The names of the songs truly kick ass. The word funk pervades their world in several titles.

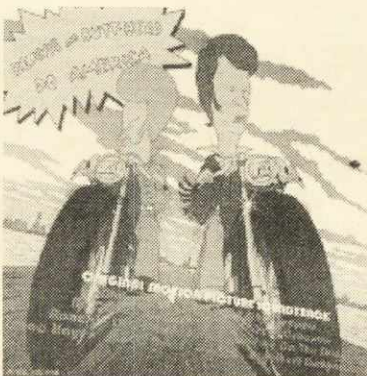
If you want to tune into the

past with a band that exists today, Blue Gills are great. My one question is, "Where are horns?" Too bad they are not in this band!

TAMARA BOND

Beavis and Butthead Do America
(OST)
Various
BMG

Surprising as it may seem, these two annoying characters have made it to the big screen, and they have a soundtrack to go with the movie. The timing of the release seems a bit off, because these guys were more popular a year or two ago. A film about these two characters travelling across America in search of their television set doesn't grab my attention; neither does listening to the two of them for an hour and a half. Fortunately, on the soundtrack you do not get to hear Beavis or Butthead rave about anything,



Unfortunately, the material that the soundtrack is made up of is not very good.

The album seems mostly to consist of B-sides from many big bands. Take for example White Zombie (who seem to appear on every single soundtrack), whose contribution to the album doesn't stand up to the standards that they set for themselves on *Astro Creep 2000*. Ozzy gets a bit too whiny on "Walk on Water" while the Red Hot Chili Peppers don't rise to their finest on "Love Rollercoaster". AC/DC is on the soundtrack, but unfortunately "Gone Shootin'" (from Bon Scott days) is not the best that they could have delivered. No Doubt brighten up the album slightly, but overall this is a disappointing release.

If Beavis and Butthead were to listen to this soundtrack they would probably say, "Heh heh heh, this album like sucks, heh heh heh."

STUART MCMILLAN

Grace of My Heart (OST)
Various
MCA Records

Grace of My Heart attempts to follow its movie back in time with artists like Elvis Costello and Jill Sobule. Love songs like "God give me Strength" are interspersed among faster l'il ditties like "Take a Run at the Sun".

When taken in as a cohesive unit, this album comes off as "easy listening" music (i.e. Phil Collins slowed down times ten), fashioned with the past in mind. If you can tolerate lines like, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" (even when social psychologists disagree), these guys are good. And if you can't understand one of the cheesy lyrics, it is printed in bold in the liner notes.

If you are a romantic or a closet romantic or even a sensitive new age guy (SNAG), you will

probably like this album. I did. Great for relaxing and maybe if you need it, a good sob. If you really want to flash back to the sixties, do it with the movie and live the mood.

TAMARA BOND

Truth Crushed to Earth Shall Rise Again
House of Pain
Attic Records

From the opening track "The Have Not's" on their third album *Truth Crushed to Earth Shall Rise Again*, House of Pain, once again, spout out their bouncy, bassy, basic rap. They are joined this time by two more rappers — Di-



vine Styler and Cockni O' Dire.

House of Pain made a name for themselves a short while ago with the hit "Jump" but on this release they do not appear ready to repeat their past success. This is partly because they use fewer samples on this release than on their past two albums.

One cool part is that they have toned down their claims to being Irish — these guys are about as Irish as the Queen.

The first single is "Fed Up", which doesn't appear to stick out or be much better than any of the other songs off the album. Every beat in every song is exactly the same. It is only the philosophical wisdom of the stimulating lyrics that make the thirteen songs in any way different.

The lyrics are what you may expect of a rap album. In the song "Shut the Door", there are lyrics like, "Rip off your stockings and take down your drawers...we can take it to the wild side, behind closed doors."

Rappers like House of Pain continue to crawl along with sexist lyrics, although in this particular album they are not as bad as usual.

STUART MCMILLAN

SLOAN

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