

# Music Reviews

## Money Talks *The Album* (Arista Records)

Considering all the CD's I review for this paper I do a lot of movie soundtracks and compilation albums, and take it from me, they mostly all sound alike as you may already know. This one however is so full of big name artists that there has to be someone you like.

From start to finish this CD is fairly good, even though some of the songs seem like they were thrown on there just to fill up some space. Some of the featured artists are Mary J. Blidge, Puff Daddy, Faith Ewans, SWV, Naughty by Nature, .... and the Refugee Camp All Star. Wow! What makes this CD even better is that all the artists are doing really well with their own albums so it makes this one look like an R & B all star line up.

The songs are put together very well with your mix of fast and slow songs, making it a very good buy if you can find it anywhere. I give it a four out of five rating.

## Soul in the Hole *The Album* (Loud Records)

Hello all you hard core rap/basketball fans. I've found the perfect CD for you! Inspired from the movie all about basketball. This album is the epitome of playground ball and just puts you in the mood to play.

There are few groups that you've heard or probably heard like Wu-Tang clan Mobb-Deep and Brand Nubian, but there are fifteen songs so 12 other artists you probably never heard are here to give you a nice surprise. Even though a lot of the beats are the same, the no-name artists are good enough to make you glad you bought this album.

My favorites on this album are "Late Night Action" by Organized Konfusion and the title track "Soul in the Hole" by the Wu All Stars. All in all, I give this CD a 3.5 out of 5 rating.

## Sandbox *A Murder in the Glee Club* (EMI)

With their sophomore release, Sandbox is well on their way to becoming a powerhouse in the Canadian rock scene. Their debut album *Bionic* produced several hit singles, and garnered a Juno nomination. The band spent the last two years on tour, and even opened for the Smashing Pumpkins this spring.

The new album features an even more pronounced melancholic tone than *Bionic*, with the same catchy sound and pop hooks as before. Fans of the band should definitely check this new disc out. People unfamiliar with Sandbox, who like upbeat guitar based rock might want to give *A Murder in the Glee Club* a try.

## Kiss *Carnival of Souls* (Mercury)

This disc was recorded last year, but in the hoopla following the reunion of the original line-up early last year, it was temporarily shelved. When the reunion was made official and Bruce Kulick and Eric Singer were given the boot for good, it seemed that *Carnival of Souls* would never be released. However, in typical Kiss fashion (that is: "we love money"), they saw fit to release it as an afterthought. And that's an absolute shame, because this is possibly the strongest disc Kiss has done in years (seriously, it rivals *Revenge*). It's an atypical Kiss disc, in that the lyrics are a departure from the usual sex/rock and roll/sex/party/sex odes we've come to know and love; they stretch to loss ("Childhood's End"), and parental love for a child ("I Will Be There"), while other songs ("In My Head", "Master and Slave") are noisy strolls through the dark side of the soul. Musically, this lineup was the strongest ever, and it's shown in full force here. The guitar work by Bruce Kulick (who sings for the first time, on "I Walk Alone") is excellent here, far surpassing anything Ace Frehley has ever done (face it folks: Ace isn't fit to carry Bruce's guitar case). The only criticism I have is the CD's packaging - there's no lyric booklet, and the front and back cover photos are studio shots, obvious signs that Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons put no effort into this release. This incarnation of Kiss may be no more, but this disc gives a clue to what could've been if the lure of megabucks wasn't so strong.

4/5 - R.W.

## John Lennon *Lennon Legend: The Very Best of John Lennon* (EMI)

The pop icon from Liverpool produced his most politically meaningful lyrics when he went solo (well, along with Yoko anyway). "Imagine" and "Give Peace a Chance" bookend this anthology of one of rock's greatest artists who unfortunately left this earth much too soon. The compilation has some rarities like "Mother" and Lennon's version of Ben E. King's "Stand By Me". In addition, witnessing the collaborations with mega-producer, Phil Spector, is uplifting and delightful. It's hard to argue with greatness and this album doesn't disappoint whatsoever. His contribution to The Beatles has always been evident, but the younger generation may not realize the importance of Lennon's solo career. Just in time for Christmas, Beatles fans of all ages will gain from this anthology of John Lennon's work.

## Ocean Colour Scene *Marchin' Already* (Universal)

Picking up where Oasis left off, this British group again shamelessly rips off Beatle-esque anthems and late 60's riffage. The state of the British pop scene has become unoriginal and boring. The thirteen track album brings together bright and beautiful guitars with an Anglo drawl that is seen on singles like "Hundred mile high city", "Better day" and "Travellers tune." Ocean Colour Scene's glam rock tendencies are also seen all throughout the album. Its too bad to see that the record companies have been so slow in recognizing that the love of Britpop is on its way down. Certainly this quartet would have had something to offer the music scene a few years ago, and I am sure that is the time that they started their career. For better or worse, Britpop has become boring; heck, they even copy themselves sometimes...see Oasis, once again.

## Manbreak *Come and see* (Universal/ALMO)

A highly exciting and entertaining disc which melds loud fast rules sensibility, samples and back breaking beats. Manbreak hails from the same label as Garbage and in a way speeds up the Wisconsin band's formula and creates a pop album for the 90's. Influences that stand out right away are the experimental 80's bands like Jesus Jones who just too ahead of their time. Tracks like "Ready of not", "Kop karma", and "morning" hit the speakers with beautiful intensity and power. A very strong debut disc, this band will be a hit in dance halls bringing electricity under its dominion. Manbreak never hesitates in producing tracks at breakneck speeds and comes up with a great 12 song album.