



CD Reviews

High Performance
Royal Grand Prix
(Wrong Records)

Acting upon testosterone-injected instincts, I gave this album a try. The cover is made to look like the cover of a car magazine, with nice old Dodge cars and Mopar stuff all over it. I can't resist an old Charger. Cars like that make

me think of Big Sugar and also bring me back to the "Dukes of Hazard" days of my youth. Surely someone who recognizes the beauty of cars like these has something good to offer. I was right. Turns out these four Romoli brothers are one of the hottest live acts of Vancouver, and the disc showcases that energy well. These guys are car nuts. The guitar

riffs sometimes mimic the rev of a "Well Oiled Machine" (one of the song titles).

Many songs are car-related, and the CD is a tire with their name on it. When you remove the CD, the car's wheel well is behind it, like you've just removed the tire. Yeah, it's a cheap gag, but I like it, so leave me alone. The music is loud, fast rock, with a hint of

punk, and just a pinch of surf. Some of the lyrics are a hoot. In "Scabies", they sing, "My baby's got scabies, aw yeah, I don't want to touch her!". In "Full Service", they sing something that just might have a double meaning: "Holdin' your hose, you know it's a bore, I won't do self-service no more" (Hee-hee). Also, in the super song "Squeegee Boy", they

attack squeegee kids; "Hey mon ami, you missed a speck, just like a dime you ain't gonna get", and "...had a bad day, you're a sitting duck." This CD is a no-nonsense, all killer no filler, rockin' fun time. If you ever saw it for a nice price, you might want to pick it up. "Squeegee weedgie doo-wop, slop-slop doo-wop..."
-Stephen McQuaid

National Steel
Colin James
(Warner)

Hands down, this is the best CD submitted for your approval this week. Released in 1997, this CD was mainly performed by James, and Colin Linden. It is a 14-song collection of 12 songs from the greats of classic blues (like Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, Taj Mahal, Willie Dixon, Otis

Redding, etc.), and one original song from each Colin. I've heard this CD described as a national treasure, and that's pretty much true. This disc is truly a classic. James is known for his rock and swing, but his roots are mainly in the blues, much like many other top artists of today. I find that most musicians, rock or otherwise, with strong ties to blues put out the far better music of today, and their music seems to stand

the test of time far better than the music of other bands. The music here is pure, mostly stripped-down, and genuine. If you listen closely, you can hear the squeak of chairs on the floor. The sound isn't really rough, though; just real and heartfelt. Some songs are slow and genuinely blue, while others are quite upbeat, like "Postman's Sack", "Ride & Roll", and "Somebody Have Mercy", just to

name a few. Anybody with any sense of what music is good music should enjoy and appreciate this album. Many Islanders (especially us younger ones) that may be blues-ignorant may like to pick this up to get a bit of a feel for the blues, like a "Blues For Dummies" or something. So, rather than gush about this CD anymore, I'll cut this short and let you use the extra time to go out and buy this CD. It really is

good stuff.

P.S. - If you want Colin and the Little Big Band to come back to PEI as much as I do, send an e-mail to colinfan@istar.ca (It'll go to Donna, his manager), stating so. Maybe they'll come back when a bit of interest is shown.

-Stephen McQuaid

Survival of the Illest - Live from 125-NYC
Various Artists
(Def Jam)

In the animal kingdom that is rap, survival of the illest is everything. Def Jam, which has been a long standing rap label, can boast that many of its artists are on the top of the hip hop food chain. Some of these artists were in full force on the summer's *Survival of the*

Illest tour. Although the tour did not make it to Chartown, people here and everywhere else can experience the next best thing, the *Survival of the Illest* CD. Luce from New York this CD includes group performances by Onyx and Def Squad and solo performances by Cormega and he's joined by his Firm partner Foxy Brown for "Affirmative Action" and "Slow down." Up next is Onyx who performs

tracks for all three albums, but the highlight is "Throw Ya Gunz" even though they kept the crowd crazy for all six of their songs. Def Squad's performance included solo efforts by each group member: Keith Murray, Erik Sermon and Redman as well as group performances. The members' joints include "I Shot Ya," "Whateva Man," "Pick It Up," "Get Lifted" as well as others, but the crowd got hyped the

most when Redman's partner in rhyme, Method Man, came out to help with "How High." To finish off the night was the dog known as DMX. X had help form The Lox to perform "Money, Power, Respect" and Method Man and Redman joined in to do "4,3,2,1." DMX kept the crowd bumpin' for his entire set with tracks like "Stop Being Greedy" and "Get at me Dog," but the crowd favourite appeared to be "Rough Ryders'

Anthem."

Looking at the tracks listing of this album may cause one to say u already have most of the songs but the live performances are different., It's not a CD for everyone but true hip hop heads will enjoy it. I'm not going to give you a played out corny rating system but tell you simply if you like the artist featured on the CD then you'll like then CD.

-Marc MacDonald

Slam - The Soundtrack
Various Artists
(Sony Music Soundtrax)

Many hip hop soundtracks today are disappointing efforts, half-filled with R&B tracks or lots of big name rap artists that just don't deliver. *Slam*, however, is not one of those soundtracks. There are no R&B songs and the big

names (of which there are many) come through. *Slam* is a movie about a poet and rapper who is trying to maintain his art while spending time in prison. The soundtrack contains four skits, from the movie, of people reciting poetry. This is a nice break from the usual rap album skit of someone getting smoked. Among the good songs are tracks by

Goodie Mob and Esthero, Noreaga, Flipmode Squad, and Cappadonna with Tekitha. The best songs and the ones that are most likely to be singles are Black Rob's "I Dare You," soundtrack kings Ol' Dirty Bastard and Coolio pairing to do "The Park," and Mobb Deep's "Feel my Gat Blow." Other notable tracks that will probably be slept on are Q-

Tip's "Hey" and Brand Nubian's "Time is Running Out." This Brand Nubian cuts, like other songs on the soundtrack, are very politically conscious with rhymes like "my old uncle Sam/ fought in the war Viet Nam/ got caught with napalm and burned off half his f**king arm/ the government knew then about the lasting affects/ and they cut off his

cheeks/ and if he wyle out he'll be murdered/ or possibly headed / to the V. A. hospital were they got him under one roof/ where they can conceal the proof/ you can see shit changin/ cat it can't stay the same/ damn I wish the government didn't have my real name..." This soundtrack is one of the best hip hop soundtracks and in my opinion better than *Bulworth*.

-Marc MacDonald