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ADIEMUS

Songs Of Sanctuary (Virgin)

In essence pseudo classical bollox written to give commercials some implied class. However the wordless chorals conceived by ex Soft Machiners Ratledge and Jenkins rather cleverly straddles a Celtic and Voices Of Bulgaria ambience that gives the album a calm, almost mystical appeal.

*** Sam Mitchell

APACHE INDIAN

Make Way For The Indian (Island)

Or "Make Way For The Dollar", if the recent decision to cancel the UK tour in favour of a Stateside jaunt is anything to go by. Still, if Handsworth's finest has a shot at the real big time, good luck to him. His in-yer-face rap and reggae inspired grooves may not sit easily alongside some of the reactionary tosh we white, middle-class Brum Beat scribes tend to champion (huh!? Ed.), but there's more to him than a blend of two black styles and it would be a fool who suggested otherwise. Whatever pigeon-hole his music fits, he makes it well and he makes it enjoyable. At the end of the day, that's what counts. A line in the title track says "Much respect to the reggae sound of Birmingham". Much respect to The Indian, say I.

**** Andy Mabbett

BOY GEORGE

Cheapness & Beauty (Virgin)

George's guitar rampage, as signalled by the album's lead single Funtime (which sounded awful on radio but gutsy here) can neither contain nor subvert his one great gift - melody. However punky or glam he may consider the rockier cuts, his voice, sounding better than in a good while, is simply too tuneful. What's more the pop butterfly refuses to keep to the announced plot; If I Could Fly is a sumptuous ballad whilst Same Thing In Reverse is popfluff given A country edge by Wonder Stuff Fiddly's violin.

That said it's a move away from the nostalgia doll that many might prefer - a notion consolidated by the parallel publication of the biog, the nostalgia pix in the sleeve and the sampled answerphone messages. Time to ditch the common perceptions and move on. It may not be a big move, but it's a positive one.

*** Steve Morris

GUY CLARK

Dublin Blues (Asylum - Import)

[I guess you should know by now that,] anyone who kicks off an album with the line "I wish I was in Austin" wins my vote from the get go. Ten songs later, you're left in little doubt that the big guy has done it good [again]. If he set his own personal standard at the outset [two decades ago !] with Old No. 1 then Dublin Blues is right up there vying for the title ... best ever ... Through the mid eighties and into the early nineties, I pretty much lost faith with the big guy. His recording career stumbled, following the release of Better Days in '83. A few years back, with the simple addition of his son Travis on fretless bass and vocals, for me, those old tunes took on a new life in concert. Boats to Build confirmed in '93, that there was still fire in the pen of the old sea dog. Which brings us to these Dublin Blues ...

There are songs on the subject of, love with and without that essential element - humour [the title cut and Shut Up and Talk to Me], growin' up [The Cape] and life in general [Stuff That Works and Hank Williams Said It Best]. In closing, there's a reappraisal of The Randall Knife ... with regard to the latter version, all I can add is ... phew!!!! It was a classic song from the outset. If you let it, this interpretation simply tears your heart out. If there's a conclusion to be drawn, it must be, never ever doubt this Guy Clark.

***** Arthur Wood

DEEP FOREST

Boheme (Columbia)

Well, knock me down with the proverbial feather ... as someone genetically incapable of terpsichorean activity, I have a deep seated loathing of anything remotely labelled 'dance'. And Deep Forest are categorised as that very thing by their record company's press release.

But ... this album is simply quite wonderful. Hmm ... sure the dance beats are there, though without the drum fascism that marks most of the genre but there's also an imagination and a manifesto that leaves 'dance' behind.

Deep Forest's Boheme is a sample encrusted piece with the samples coming from Hungary, Taiwan, Mongolia, Bylorussia and beyond. Thus listening is somewhat like spinning a radio dial into the unknown. A disorienting and wonderful experience. It's an odd trip that continually wrong foots the listener, but in a totally enrapturing manner. In many ways this could be seen as a world music take on Malcolm McLaren's enormously influential Duck Rock album though it's a far more cohesive work and by far more generous in spirit.

**** Steve Morris

MATT DEIGHTON

Villager (Focus)

An imprint of the Acid Jazz label provides the vehicle for the solo debut by Mother Earth's guitarist/vocalist, an acoustic project (with added flute, piano and strings) that wears its influences openly on its sleeve. Since these happen to be Nick Drake, John Martyn and David Crosby, it makes for a well embroidered coat, one Deighton's fashioned with considerable style. All very English summer driftwood and hedgerows, you can well believe he spent the summer listening to John and Beverley Martin's Stormbringer (he did) when you hear the likes of Hey My Mind and Pure English Honey (a reminder that Paul Weller's rebirth wasn't totally midwifed by Traffic), moods extended through the jazz-folk likes of Jesus Loves The Rain, Two Pieces Jigsaw Puzzle and the instrumental The Windmills of Norfolk. Best of the set is the lengthy Villager/Bone Dry Coat which lets the music mood float free, but it's all recommended lazing on the hay listening.

*** Mike Davies

EAST RIVER PIPE

Even the Sun Was Afraid (Sarah)

Apparently a one-man singer-songwriter jangling guitar 'band' from an apartment in Queens, FM Cornog turned in ERP by way of a lightbulb factory job, too much booze, bad acid, and an absence of friends and finance. It's a bruised heartache existence that's given rise to some beguiling bittersweet yearning that sits comfortably at home amid the label's other under produced DIY shamblers. Short bursts of shimmering, chiming pop with tinkling cascades of melody, the likes of Here We Go, Marty and Hide My Life Away From You waft breezes reminiscent of early Robyn Hitchcock, the Cleaners From Venus or the early Go-Betweens. Slight but loveable.

*** Mike Davies

MARIANNE FAITHFUL

A Secret Life (Island)

Faithful is doomed never to recapture the majestic bleakness of her Broken English album, but if this latest effort is anything to go by, whatever it was she traded with the Devil in exchange for the talents she still has in abundance, it was a sound investment. For all her tales of illicit sex, boredom, loss and loneliness, she even manages a rare note of optimism, albeit understated, in the final song. A word of advice though - skip the pretentious prologue and epilogue.

**** Andy Mabbett

FEAR FACTORY

Demanufacture (Roadrunner)

Blimey, this rocks! Searing punk-metal from one LA's most uncompromising outfits, bent on scaring the living shit out of us. "I've got no more goddamn regrets! I've got no more goddamn respect!" growls vocalist, Burton C. Bell over a punishing barrage on the title track. Whatever you say is alright by me, man! Intense!

**** Max

HEATMISER

Cop And Speeder (Frontier)

Guitar heavy pop from Oregon's er...heavy popsters. A fuller and more fleshed-out sound than the one displayed on last year's satisfying Yellow No.5. There are still Nirvana-isms in there, which is no bad thing - it just means that Heatmiser are adept at fusing cool melodies with raunchy grooves in one song, as illustrated on closer, Nightcap. Recommended.

**** B.Lee

ASHLEY HUTCHINGS

The Guv'nor Vol.2

THE ALBION BAND

Albion Heart (both HTD)

The past and present of a man who, with no little exaggeration, they're prone to call the father of English folk rock. Vol.2 of the ongoing Guv'nor series offers a couple more tantalising glimpses into the Fairport Convention scrapbook with Sandy Denny's vocalising and a generous measure of The Albion Band with its ever changing face and sound. The back of the booklet adds a Hutchings discography which dramatically demonstrates the eclecticism of the man, the vast amount of

recorded delivery

pretations, Led Zep deserve to be commemorated by better performances from better artists. On second thoughts, they deserve never to have their memory diluted in this way at all. And just what is Robert Plant doing on his own tribute album?

★★ **Andy Mabbett**

VARIOUS

Beyond The Beach (Upstart / Direct Distribution)

Surf instrumentals have always been around - well since the sixties, though to many readers that's always, right? - but Tarantino's hepcat patronage of The Master, Dick Dale, should open a few more ears to this brilliant package that pulls together the best surf instrocombos from Scandinavia (is sledding/skiing/snowboarding a surfing variant?), Austin Texas, Athens Georgia and beyond to celebrate the twang and deep, resonant reverb that's endemic to this genre.

And, Bowie completists, the surfing white duke's part time combo, Tin Machine have donated a previously unreleased morsel, Needles On The Beach. Whoa! Bowie hanging ten, riding the pipeline ...

★★★★ **A Shadowy Man From A Shadowy Land**

VARIOUS

The Sound Gallery (EMI Studio 2 Stereo)

There are those who will tell you that the sound of easy listening is the sound of hip. They'll point to Perez Prado's TV ad driven hit as the tip of an acceptance iceberg and wax lyrical about the Herb Alpert Tijuana Brass revival. They'll also point to old Studio 2 albums as being some kitsch audio holy grail.

Well EMI have crammed 24 Studio 2 pieces onto one CD to test the theory and the truth is that unless you're either terminally addicted to sixties series such as Jason King, The Persuaders et al as they reappear on Bravo or an old git replacing the worn originals, you'll have to keep a brave face as you rave about this fashion accessory. Emperor's New Clothes. Piss take. You recognise the phrases?

These (top - ha!) tunes may be the work of respected studio rats - take a bow John Cameron, Brian Bennett, John Keating, Joe Loss (Joe bleeding Light Programme Loss!) - but who's gonna keep a straight face as you play The Night Rider (a Cadbury's Milk Tray ad by another name) or Shout About Pepsi (both present here)?

Mind you, I do like it being 'A Jerry Cornelius Production' and it'll be something to play when the old folks drop in ... ★★ Steve Morris

SCOTT WALKER

Tilt (Fontana)

Obtuse to the point of impenetrability, there's still something awesomely hypnotic and compelling about Walker's lyrics, like catching fragments of some cut up surreal conversation, or listening in on strands of dislocated memories. Sartre, Pasolini, Bergman, Stockhausen. Any and all could be held up as reference points for the structure of the lyrics, the sometimes painfully bleak, sometimes blissfully mystical nature of the music. Alienation's in there among other such possible big themes as death and transfiguration. It's disorientating, its oppressive, it's even sometimes full of terror with its white noise, industrial tones and, on the title track in particular, David Rhodes's harsh, tortured guitar. Powerfully impressionistic it works most effectively as a whole, an industrial choral work perhaps, rather than individual tracks (though the opening Farmer in The City has a mesmerisingly hypnotic quality all its own). In a world of disposable music that exists on the understanding that you have to switch off your brain before listening, this is a demanding work that requires real effort. But if you're not scared of the challenge or frightened of what you might find, it offers incredible rewards.

★★★★★ Mike Davies

(Absolutely spot on Mike. Ed.)

LARI WHITE

Wishes (RCA)

Songs about women taming rough diamonds, about wanting to kick off the sensible shoes, about nursing broken hearts, and about dreaming of love, a familiar set of country subject matters rehearsed with confidence and the right degree of practised emotion by the latest newcomer on the Nashville block. White's written for Wynette, and you can hear the vocal influence seeping through on several occasions, though That's My Baby clearly casts its musical eyes in Tom Petty's direction. Not yet up there in the same league as Trisha Yearwood or Patty Loveless, but when one of your most active supporters is Rodney Crowell it's a reasonable bet it's only a matter of time.

★★★ **Mike Davies**

WILCO

AM (Sire)

Rising from the ashes of Uncle Tupelo, Jeff Tweedy continues his love affair with 90s dust track country, as much a jukebox for the truck stop as the honky tonk. Not as pure Gram country as the Jayhawks, not as graunchy as Neil Young (though Shouldn't be Ashamed aspires to wear the jacket), Tweedy nonetheless knows which way the signposts point, sliding into bluegrass on That's Not The Issue, crying into his beer while the pedal steel wails along for It's Just That Simple, taking a Dylan backroad on Passenger Side, and joining the line dancers for the funky chops of Casino Queen. Unlikely to give either Chuck Prophet or the high flying stetson brigade much cause for concern, it'll still serve as a suitable soundtrack next time you're drinking away the misery.

★★★ **Mike Davies**

DAR WILLIAMS

The Honesty Room (Razor & Tie - Import)

The guitar introduction to When I Was A Boy comes flowing and burbling out of the speakers like a fresh young, mountain stream. The "as I was growing up" lyric, shares flights of fantasy as well as reality, sustains the [humorous] injection of a few sexual references, contemplates the reversal of gender roles and smacks you right between the eyes with, humanity and honesty. Planetwide, there's ample room for those commodities these days. And Dar Williams ... she most surely possesses a refreshing and infectious enthusiasm for this precious life, because this cynical old scribe has been captivated. The unrefined teen spirit already quoted in the opening cut, permeates the album end to end. Possessed of one of those crystal clear folk voices, Dar's melodies rise and swoop over subjects as far ranging as, the best babysitter ever [one black mark has been jointly awarded for the Lavin speak mid section, followed by the two lines of Siberry song ... naughty naughty], growing up, taking to "the road", a child molester and finally, her parents. Somehow it seems natural that the closing cut is titled, Arrival ... and it is.

I Love, I Love Dar Williams and I don't care who knows it.

★★★★ **Arthur Wood**

WARREN ZEVON

Mutineer (Giant)

Zevon may have been of the booze and drugs for a while, but whatever he was taking at his excessive peak clearly did a number on his brain. Quite what the apocalyptic fuck he's on about when he sings Monkey Wash Donkey Rinse ("going to a party at the centre of the earth") only he and his analyst knows, but then even if you know Seminole Bingo relates to the exploits of a junk-bond king it doesn't exactly illuminate matters much. As idiosyncratic as any of his recent albums (by comparison those early outings were as mainstream as Take That), the strutters rework familiar Zevon melody lines but as ever he's at his best at the strummed mid-tempo, folk-inclined material, most notably represented by The Indifference Of Heaven, and piercing ballads, Mutineer a touching piece of reflective romantic imagery and he woundingly moving simplicity of Jesus Was A Cross Maker. Mind you, the sharp wordplay of Zevon's satirical wit still makes a good showing with Poisonous Lookalike, a clever twist on the souring relationship saga ("you're not my girl, poisonous lookalike what have you done with her") while Rottweiler Blues is simply the best urban paranoia fuck off song you'll hear all year with the unforgettable chorus line "don't knock on my door if you don't know my rottweiler's name."

★★★ **Mike Davies**

SINGLED OUT

Claimed as the 'first ever trad Irish / reggae / instrumental' SHARON SHANNON's The Might Sparrow (Grapevine) offers three variants on the title track; radio mix, live mix and a Dennis Bovell dub - and they're all bloody glorious ... Six of 'em! Six! Six different summery pop songs on the BOO RADLEYS' new single, Find The Answer Within (Creation) ... MOONHEAD's Forever (MH) is a fine, Chilli Peppery slab of funky rock ... Breathless (Ultimate) is BANG BANG MACHINE's strange, heavy pop extravaganza ... ED BALL's If A Man Ever Loved A Woman (Creation) is a beautifully evocative acoustic number ... it's out! Finally you can groove to REEF's awesome Naked (Sony) in the privacy of your own home ... for the truly weird, there's the funky, bluesy, well-magnificent JON SPENSER BLUES EXPLOSION Remixes (Matador) by the Beasties who have their own Root Down EP (Capitol) about with multi mixes of the title cut alongside half a doz or so others and a 'secret' track. For an EP it's almost an album! ... THE POLICE signal the live album with Can't Stand Losing You (A&M) which hides an E Smove mix of Voices ... DODGY are Staying Out For The Summer (A&M) with a BBC recorded quartet of songs from the recent tour ... SUNSET HEIGHTS Runnin' Blind (Coast To Coast) is plodding AOR stuff that lacks both song and performance fire ... BOB DYLAN takes the 2CD route for the Unplugged Dignity (Columbia) with both discs baiting fans with previously unavailables ... JOY DIVISION's Love Will Tear Us Apart (London) has been unnecessarily remixed whilst FAITH NO MORE's Ricochet (London) mauls Al Martino's Spanish Eyes for a bonus ... the 2CD release of SHERYL CROW's Can't Cry Anymore (A&M) adds five non album tracks to the fifteen or so non album specials that adorn previous singles ... THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN may well Hate Rock'n'Roll (Blanco Y Negro) but doncha bet they just love the royalties ... GRANT McLENNAN's Simone & Perry (Beggar's Banquet) simply proves that if you don't have his Horsebreaker Star album yet, your life's still empty ... SCHTUM's New Year Dawning (Big River Records) is guitar spitting pop with a brooding edge ... OUT OF MY HAIR's Mister Jones (RCA) is a slice of well constructed pop that's bettered by the third track on the single; a sparse acoustic Comfort In My Life. Promising ... THE WHISKY PRIESTS Dol-li-a (Big Easy) is the typical rousing north east folk that makes the band's lack of commercial breakthru a mystery. There's five versions of the song here plus a Christmas Song (!) ... finally, look out for - or beware - PETER ANDRE's Turn It Up (Mushroom) is generic popfunk with Home And Away beefcake good looks. Can't fail! **M.F. / B.L. / S.M.**