

Too Short
Cocktails
(Jive Records/BMG)

I approached this album with some misgivings. It wasn't the parental advisory logo on the front cover, nor the fact that the majority of the words in the song titles had been replaced by asterisks. It might, however, have been the combination of what all the asterisks added up to say, and the fact that the album cover sported the pictures of three young women wearing high heels and boa constrictors artistically draped around their loins. I figured that it would be unfair to review this album without having listened to the whole thing, so listen to it I did. The whole thing. Once. No more. All I can say at the end of it is...that I just don't get it. Mr. Short's main claim to musical fame is that he's now in his early thirties, has produced ten or more albums, and back in high school, he and some of the other boyz in da hood developed a unique way of saying "bitch" which could be transcribed as "beeyitch". He sprinkles this phrase throughout the songs, at regular intervals, regardless of context. At one point in the album, it occurred to me that he hadn't yelled "Beeyitch!" in a while, but as soon as I was finished thinking that, Mr. Short obliged me by screeching it again. At least he's consistent.

Let's see. Not only was this gangsta' rap dealing with unpleasant subjects in an unpalatable and violent way, but it was Lousy gangsta' rap. Every song on the album sounds the same, there is none of the skill with words that other top rappers exhibit, and the background music sounded like a lounge piano player with a nervous tic. I couldn't imagine the horror of ten other albums just like this one, which Mr. Short has apparently produced. So, if songs like "Ain't Nothing Like Pimpin'", "Can I Get A Bitch", and the advice all our mothers gave us, "Don't F--- For Free" appeal to you, go find an album by someone who actually knows how to rap, and don't waste your money and your nerve endings on this drek.

Danielle Christensen

John Mayall
"Spinning Coin"
(Silverstone Records)

This would almost qualify as country, but some of the songs have too fast of a beat. Personally, I liked this tape because I like country and this tape is quite similar. One song, "Double Life Feeling", is almost like a blues song. The words to all his songs are great. He talks about real life experiences that most of us can relate to. This tape is not for people who like alternative or rock music. If you like listening to the depressing stories of others, then buy it. I must say I plan to listen to it again. One track, "Remember This", is almost seven minutes long, which is just too long for the song. All in all, this tape is okay for a country/blues tape. However, I do think my grandparents will like this tape a lot more than my friends will.

(3)
Mary MacDonald

Rodrigo Leao & Vox
Ensemble
Five Mundi Luminar

As you may have noted from the title of this recording, it is a Portuguese ensemble. It's not for everyone, but I found this CD incredibly enjoyable. Soft instrumentals, including cello, violin, saxophone, oboe, flute, and english horn, mixed with haunting vocals makes this CD excellent background music. As in most recordings, some tracks are weaker than others, but even the weakest are pretty good. In the wrong mood, or on an overcast day, however, this CD might be somewhat depressing. This being my biggest criticism, however, I would recommend the ensemble to anyone who enjoys either light instrumentals or something just a little different.

Gregory O'Connor

Hard Rock Miners
Rock'n Roll Welfare
(Hypnotic/A&M)

The style of the Hard Rock Miners is probably best described as, well... drinking music. Rock'n Roll Welfare is loaded with pub-party beats and odes to many forms of inebriation. The song structures are simple, but not stupid, and the Miners throw in plenty of Celtic-tinged touches to keep things interesting and somewhat original. This sound is better suited to live performance, but the recorded product is still worth a listen.

(3.5)
Mike Beagan

More
Music

John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers
Spinning Coin
(Silverstone/BMG)

John Mayall, the Godfather of the 1960's British blues scene, has produced another near perfect representation of the simple beauty of the blues. On *Spinning Coin*, Mayall's legendary Bluesbreakers are as tight and heavy as they have ever been in their thirty year history. Simultaneously laid back and intense, Mayall's music has an undeniable appeal to any fan of blues based music. New guitarist Buddy Whittington's considerable talent upholds the Bluesbreakers reputation as a training ground for incredible guitarists. Whittington holds his own among the ghosts of former members Eric Clapton and reclusive genius Peter Green. *Spinning Coin* is a very satisfying release.

(4.5)
Mike Beagan