

Rating System

- 5: Orgasmic
- 4: Oh-me-oh-my
- 3: Not too bad
- 2: Getting worse
- 1: Oh god, throw this out!



DGC
Rarities Vol. 1
Various (DGC)

Rarities Vol. 1 is the David Geffen Company's latest attempt to suck some extra profit out of their top acts. Included are outtakes, and demos by some of hard alternative's heaviest players. While listening to this album, it is important to remember that there are reasons for these songs being previously unreleased.

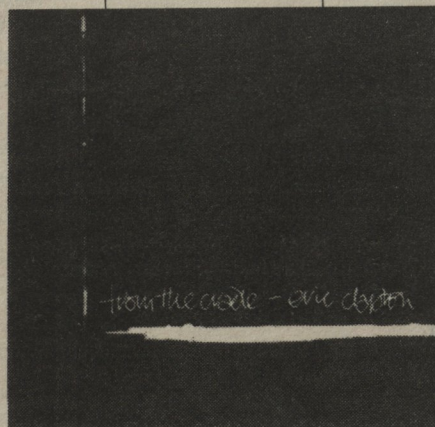
Nirvana, Weezer, Cell, Hole, Counting Crows, Sloan, and St. Johnny offer some half-decent tunes, but they are nothing to scream about. Teenage Fanclub, that dog, The Posies, Murray Attaway, and The Sundays provide some quality tunes. Sonic Youth's contribution is completely forgettable. The overall feel of this album is solid, and considering the featured acts, it should sell zillions. I recommend it to all fans of the genre that once was known as alternative/grunge.

(4)
-- Mike Beagan

Eric Clapton
From The Cradle
(Reprise/Duck)

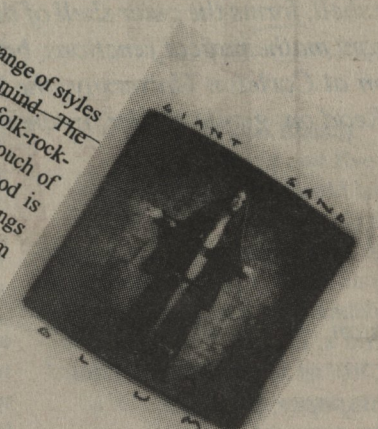
The god of Guitar has returned, and for the first time in too many years Clapton proves he is still worthy of his title. Finally, a complete blues album. Fans who have been waiting years for his return to his roots will not be disappointed. *From The Cradle*, recorded live in the studio, is a collection of blues standards and classics featuring Clapton's crunchiest, most intense playing since his 60's days with Cream. Gone are the wimpy pop songs and plastic synthesized rhythms which tainted his work throughout the 70's and 80's. The playing is emotional, flawlessly tight, and yields a spontaneous sense of fun. If you love blues, or are a fan of Eric Clapton's Bluesbreakers/Cream/Dominos days, then this disc is a must have.

(5)
-- Mike Beagan



Giant Sand
Glum
(Imago)
This release is just plain weird. The range of styles represented herein simply boggles the mind. The closest description I can come up with is folk-rock-country-metal-jazz-hillbilly music with a touch of classical to keep things civilized. The mood is loose, so loose that I get the impression the songs were made up as they went along, and the album was mixed by a preschooler. It all feels a little too schizoid for me, but if you're into that kind of thing, here you go.

(3)
-- Mike Beagan

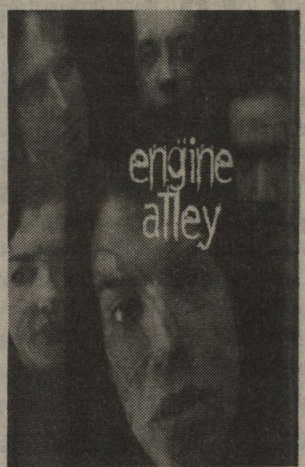


Music reviews...
for your
aural stimulation

Paul Smith
Extra Measure
(Intersound)

It's hard to explain what makes *Extra Measure* a great CD. Paul Smith is certainly a talented vocalist, having four previous releases to his credit, in addition to his days in the Imperials. The music runs the gamut from catchy and upbeat to quiet and thoughtful, but all of it makes great listening. Also, it holds wide appeal, and the lyrics are surpassing in their depth and meaning. Choice songs include "Every Little Thing", the cleverly-rhymed opening cut, and "It Won't Break My Heart", the quiet ballad which ends the disc. "Unimportant Things" is another notable track, and its message is memorable, exposing the folly of selfish materialism which pervades our times. This is one of my absolute favourite CDs, and I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who loves quality music.

(6)
-- Marko Peric



Engine Alley
S/T
(Mother/Island)

Engine Alley's self-titled album offers some original, light alternative-type music. They come from across the sea, Ireland to be exact, with a somewhat tasty blend of shimmering guitars and a solid rhythm section. They rely heavily on string arrangements and acoustical ambience. The songs are fast, fun, and completely nonsensical. Some of the tunes are a little too light and pointless for their own good; however, *Engine Alley* does make decent background noise for study periods.

(3.75)
-- Mike Beagan

Think about it, it's a gift