

# Arts & Entertainment

**Monifah**  
*Mo'Hogany*  
(Universal)



With an exquisitely sultry voice, Monifah undermines her own talent too often with tracks that are designed for sexual stimulation rather than musical expression.

Her anthem "Bad Girl," of which there are two versions on the CD, is too obvious

and unintelligent for anyone to take seriously. Songs like "Suga Suga" and "Touch It" are just a little too graphic for me.

However, by track five, "Have You Ever Been Loved," Monifah moves in a totally different direction. She

finally challenges the listener with strong lyrics and subtle melodies that showcase her abilities as an artist. "Fallin' In Love," produced by Queen Latifah, and "Better Half of Me" are also extremely easy to listen to.

The rest of the CD lacks

the originality and character of those three choice tracks, with lack-lustre writing and highly repetitious chording.

If Monifah would focus on her artistic integrity rather than her sex appeal, she could produce an impressive album. As it stands, she hasn't.

**Eagle Eye Cherry**  
*Desireless*  
(Sony)



This is an "enh" album. While Eagle Eye Cherry has an interesting voice, his lyrics are not spine-tingling and the music is, for the most part, forgettable.

There are two songs worth a listen: "Permanent Tears" and the title track,

"Desireless," but the rest never really take the listener anywhere at all, though it feels as if they should. The title track steps away from all the other songs so dramatically, by introducing piano and trumpet after a steady diet of acoustic and electric guitar, that it al-

most doesn't belong in the collection.

Songs like "When Mermaids Cry" made me pause and ask the question, "What was that all about?" while "Shooting Up in Vain" left me ready to fall out a window.

The album focuses largely on various types of melancholy, which, though not necessarily a bad thing, can prove rather tiring after an hour is over.

When all is said and done, I wouldn't go out of my way to get a copy of this CD.

**Big Sugar**  
*Heated*  
(A&M/PolyGram)



Big Sugar is notorious for being an excellent live band but a somewhat less perfect studio band. Their musicianship may be evident on stage, but it doesn't translate very well onto disc.

monotonous where dynamics are concerned. The tracks all sound the same, with perhaps one or two variations every so often. It would seem that this group doesn't see the need for melody and variation in rhythm.

offnote. They just lack imagination when it comes down to writing the music. Tracks like "Cop a Plea" and "Kickin' Stones" come close to interesting and almost make it, but their originality is lost in the

Lights On."

However, they do possess a great deal of energy which, to be fair, can be hard to capture in the studio. And it's energy that counts when you're on stage. So, save your

**The Phoids**  
*The Phoids*  
(Ng Records)



Here is a band that I rather like. Though not amazingly innovative, The Phoids have a highly melodic sound that is pleasant and fun to listen to. They jump back and forth from laid-back folk rock to a soft version of soul.

The lead singer, Jac, has a soft tenor voice that cracks from time to time and occasionally misses the note. His mistakes don't stand out too much though, as they fit the style of music well enough to blend in.

Tracks like "Iowa," "Vertigo," and "Spark on the Horizon" are among the strongest works on this CD. Instruments used range from tamborine and tenor sax to accordian and piano, in addition to the usual guitars and

percussion.

The album didn't take my breath away, but it did leave me nicely surprised after having reviewed several disappointing CDs, and I recommend it to those who like an easy listen.

**Dance With Me**  
Various Artists  
(Sony)



For a collection that could have been absolutely fantastic, this is not. Words like disappointing, uninspired, and monotonous come to mind repeatedly when listening to this CD.

I am a huge fan of Latin

and Spanish music but only a few tracks managed to impress me. Forget Vanessa L. Williams and Jon Secada with their wimpy, poorly written ballads that completely lack any kind of originality. Add to the reject pile Gloria Estefan's

"Heaven's What I Feel," and Electra's "Jibaro" (the "Dance With Me" '98 Remix).

What is worth paying attention to is the somewhat fun "Fiesta Pa' Los Rumberos," performed by Albita and Ana Gabriel's lovely "Eres Todo

En Mí." Gloria Estefan also manages to redeem herself with "Tres Deseos" - 12" Remix and Mónica Naranjo's "Pantera En Libertad" is not a bad dance track.

Overall, however, the album is a wash.