

music.

Various Artists

The Art of Darkness
(Universal)

An impressive album all around.

This CD was full of great music and the whole album was a treat to listen to. I knew half of the bands featured before hearing the record (Skinny

Puppy, Marilyn Manson, Nine Inch Nails, The Cult) but there were some totally new bands to me and many of them turned out to be even better than some of the ones I knew, such as Fields of Nephilism,

The Mission UK, and Gene Loves Jezebel.

The songs were generally all of a similar theme -- the dark atmospheric music that is *en vogue* these days -- and was relatively consistent

throughout. Some songs, such as the Cult's "Rain," were a bit out of the theme, but are still great songs. This CD is strongly advised; it's bloody wonderful.

-by Richard Haines

Dan Bern

Fifty eggs

This is one of the worst CDs I have heard in years. What we have here is a man who not only lacks any talent as a musician, but also a man who tries to make up for his inability to

sing by talking about his own anatomy. In my mind the CD has no redeeming qualities whatsoever. The music was mediocre at best and dull -- the themes left nothing to be desired. Although some songs

were not as crude as others, they did not themselves make up for this album's other failings. Frankly, I wonder what the point of this album was at all. I was particularly disappointed by this album because

my own expectations had been increased by the fact that a worthwhile musician, Ani DiFranco, had produced this dud.

-by Richard Haines

Henry Rollins

Think Tank
(Dreamworks)



Henry Rollins is a rock 'n' roll icon. Singer, rocker, author, straight-edger, this guy has been out there for the last twenty years giving his all every night on stage. This guy exudes energy and honesty. He is not a "liar." This guy is in your face and as straight

forward as they come. He will get his point across to you if he has to pound it into your skull. Have you ever seen the size of this guy? He's huge! His neck is the size of a Douglas fir. If I did not know who Henry Rollins was and I happened to be walking down a lonely dark street some night in some faceless urban wasteland and I ran across this behemoth I would run and duck for cover. But luckily I do know who he is and what he stands for; therefore I would walk up to him and say, "Good day Hank! How ya doin'?"

Can you tell me a story?"

Which is exactly what he does on *Think Tank* -- his newly released spoken word double CD. Spoken word? That is correct, but do not be afraid. Rollins tells his story with as much energy as he sings that rock music with (sorry, no head banging on this CD, only stories about it). There is more than two hours of sometimes hilarious, sometimes thought-provoking, sometimes enlightening storytelling. His audiences at these live shows are so familiar with Rollins that he delivers his bits with the ease of

talking to a best friend. His topics range from waiting in lines at airports to rock 'n' roll doctors. Two of my favorites are his stories of how he knocked himself out on stage at a festival in Brazil, and his visit to a hospital in Chicago to see a kid with cancer who was a fan of his. There is some mature subject matter but Rollins tells it all with such intelligence and PC that he makes everything he says justifiable. Overall I thought this CD was great and I am glad to make it a part of my collection.

- Shawn Griffin

Local H

Pack Up The Cats
(Island/Polygram)

Pack Up The Cats is the third and newest album by the Chicago based two piece combo Local H. Yes, that is right, there are only two of them; Joe Daniels covers drumming duties while Scott Lucas wraps guitarist, bassist and vocalist all up in one. Lucas plays a guitar with bass pickups on the low strings so that he can play guitar and bass at the same time. Supposedly their

big gimmick is having such a big sound for such a small band. "Man, their sound is so full yet there are only two of them. How do they do it?" you might hear someone exclaim while listening to this CD. The answer to that is studio over dubbing and lots of it. I would be very curious to hear these guys live because I am sure that their sound would be quite a lot sparser.

They are definitely good musicians though and know how to write a catchy riff or play a cool groove. Their sound is somewhere between the Rolling Stones (who are worthy of imitation) and Stone Temple Pilots (who are not). In fact, Dean DeLeo of STP even plays a guitar solo on "Cool Magnet." So, while all of the music on this CD does not agree with me there is enough here to

make me want to listen to it some more, and the more I hear it the more I like it - it's one of those CDs. Songs of interest: "Cha!" Said the Kitty," with its closing chorus of kitty cats, and "500,000 Scovilles," which is highlighted with Daniels' sonic percussive prowess.

-Shawn Griffin



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