

Sound Bites

by Lorne Caborn

Alternative is the flavour of this week as five new groups check into the music spotlight. Semisonic's EP *Pleasure* is just as the title suggests, it being one of the better selections I sampled this week. The limited cuts that are available on this disc have a sound similar to Stone Temple Pilots or Pearl Jam and offers the listener something different to listen to.

Challenging, compositional music is the way The Wooden Stars describe their music, but alternative is what I'd call it...alternative to good music, that is. This self-titled CD sucks, plain and simple. The only thing left to say about this one is not to buy it.

Back on a positive note however is *Sublime*. This one really has to be heard

to be believed. The music styles on this one range from rap to thrash so the only way I can describe it is alternative, or just entertaining because it's definitely just that.

Sparklehorse offers yet another style, but I'd only suggest picking up *Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot* (catchy name, huh?), if your alternative collection is complete. It's good but better discs are still out there.

Rounding off this week's list of titles is *Machines of Loving Grace*. I didn't think it could get any worse than *The Wooden Stars* until I heard *Grace's CD Gilt*. If parents wanted to punish their kids they should make them listen to this junk. That's it for me, keep your ears open.

Shed Seven
Change Giver
(Polydor)

A new breed of musician has emerged from England in the last five years -- the whining, anal-retentive lad who firmly believes he is the centre of the universe. Northern Brit band Shed Seven represents this category with lyrics such as "You are the greatest thing I ever saw and I'm the greatest thing ever born." The inconsistency is that Shed Seven have actually produced an impressive collection of type-cast tunes in their latest offering *Change Giver*.

The songs sometimes sound as if Paul Banks, Tom Gladwin and Alan Leach thought odd time signatures and unexpected chord changes equalled originality. As well, sometimes vocalist Rick Witter comes up with a complete clunker ("I can see through all your see through clothes/I've got to see you cause I like you loads"). But overall *Change Giver* is a worthwhile effort. Sure, it's nothing new, but Shed Seven have at least given reason to watch out for them.

-- Geraldine Quinn

Lisa Loeb and Nine Stories
Tails
(MCA)

Lisa Loeb is best known for her hit single "Stay" from the Reality Bites Sound-track. Her latest release features this song and several others which match, and even surpass that single in quality. You will find yourself humming along with the wide range of musical styles and vivid lyrics. This is an excellent release and once you put it in your car stereo it will never come out again.

-- Aldera Chisholm

Reading & ART EXHIBIT

Writer and artist

Karen McLaughlin

reading from her novel

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