

**SoUnDsAlVaTiOn**  
**ByKiRbyfErGuSoN**



**Brutal Youth**  
**Elvis Costello**  
**(Warner)**

Despite reuniting him with the Attractions for the first time since 1986's *Blood and Chocolate*, Elvis Costello's *Brutal Youth* (3) sounds closer to the baroque-pop of *Mighty Like a Rose* than the spare brilliance of *My Aim is True*. Since those stunning early albums Costello has pretty much been in a tailspin, erratically hopping from genre to genre and tantalizing us with albums brilliant enough to suggest that his best music is not necessarily behind him. With last year's *The Juliet Letters*, a collaboration with the Brodsky Quartet, Costello eloquently executed what is normally the most revolting of all concoctions: the pop/classical hybrid. Gorgeous in its restraint, grace and simplicity, the album exposed a vital and unexpected new facet of Costello -- but with typical impatience, Costello has abandoned that direction and reunited with his original backing band, the Attractions. Supposedly inspired by listening to his Ryko rereleases, Costello doesn't seem to have learned a thing from listening to those early albums -- *Brutal Youth* is showily clever, forced and busy. While his melody-making has certainly been more bracing, the album does deliver a barrage of hooks that most songwriters could never dream up; but Costello isn't content to let his melodies stand on their own, needlessly dresses them up in masses of overdubbed vocals and rushes of sonic stunts. It's a shame, too, considering the quality of songs like "Kinder Murder," "You Tripped at Every Step," "Rocking Horse Road" and "Sulky Girl." Still, he could have pulled it all off if his singing weren't equally overwrought. Sounding more nasal and ugly than ever, Costello -- like Bob Dylan, also once the possessor of a very unique, nasal voice -- has become a self-parody. When he doesn't push so hard Costello can still sing, and he can certainly still write, but *Brutal Youth* only frustrates us with its uncut (or maybe overpolished) diamonds.

**A Tribute to Curtis Mayfield**  
**Various Artists**  
**(Warner)**

With the Impressions, Curtis Mayfield was the driving force behind one of the 60's greatest soul groups. He was paralysed in a freak stage accident in the late 80's, and subsequently has been recently honoured by the Grammys in some sort of way. We now have this tribute album featuring a host of inoffensive heavyweights: Eric Clapton, Rod Stewart, Whitney Houston, Phil Collins. *A Tribute to Curtis Mayfield* (3) consists largely of slick, contrived, modern r&b. Hearing such transcendent stuff turned into pleasant lite soul is a tad offensive, but Mayfield's material seems invulnerable to all but the most inept of performances: the Isleys sound like anyone; Stevie Wonder is in fine voice, but his rhythms percolate along like he's on autopilot; Whitney Houston is Whitney Houston; Gladys Knight is Gladys Knight. Meanwhile, Bruce Springsteen, Stewart and Clapton, among others, do some solid reinterpretations. It sure ain't the real thing, but it's all right.



**The Downward Spiral**  
**Nine Inch Nails**  
**(Warner)**

Trent Reznor has to learn that the straighter he plays it the better. Reznor has yet to top "Head Like a Hole," in which he ignited his white noise with a genuine melody and dance beats. The rest of the less-than-wonderful *Pretty Hate Machine* suggested that Reznor was a popster at heart, but Nine Inch Nail's latest, *The Downward Spiral* (3.5), seems to indicate that Reznor's musical goal is simply to frighten us with abrupt blasts of aural shrapnel. Fortunately, he succeeds, though there's no kind of structure to offset Reznor's formidable onslaught of automated chaos, and his lightning-like mood swings will leave many a few moods behind. But as always the utter intimidation of it is impressive. As a lyricist, Reznor displays the same philosophy: shocking and numbing us with disturbing images of sex and violence, often combined. Misanthropic and narcissistic, he's a bitter bore, and despite the chilling qualities of Reznor's electronic apocalypse, *The Downward Spiral* would only get more potent with added structure.



**Superunknown**  
**Soundgarden**  
**(Polygram)**

Soundgarden continue to get better and better as their songwriting improves, relying more and more on melody and dynamics than sheer volume. *Superunknown* (4) is their tastiest batch of rifforama yet; there's an overwhelming grandeur to this band's guitararchitecture. The way "Spoonman" kicks into overdrive towards the end floors me. At seventy minutes, though, it's tough to stay at the level of songs like that or "Let Me Drown" or "My Wave," and the band still sometimes seems a little plodding and single-minded, but the majority of the time *Superunknown* is devastating.

**Mellow Gold**  
**Beck**  
**(MCA)**

The one-man band Beck seems poised to become the next big thing on the college scene: "Loser" is an addictive single and the new album, *Mellow Gold* (3.5), is a fun, diverse affair displaying influences from Clinton (George, that is) to Dylan to Zeppelin, which should have a little something for everyone. The sleepy, bluesy stuff is okay, but he's the most fun on the Beastie Boys-ish hip-hop cuts, like "Loser" and "Beercan." The guy has a winning melodic way about him, even at his most abrasive. His stream-of-consciousness lyrics are pure Dylan and I find them quite interesting, and sobering, in their complete and total meaninglessness.

**Time's Time**  
**Dead Reckoning**  
**(BMICanada Inc.)**

The trio of Dead Reckoning have done very well with their most recent release *Time's Time*. Performing what could for the most part be classified as alternative music, they have an acoustical sound which gives them a very original and pleasing product. Though you probably won't hear their material on the charts or over the radio, *Dead Reckoning* shouldn't be missed. At the very least, a 3 out of 5.  
--Dana Dennis

**RATINGS:**

- 5) aaoogah
- 4) hey hey hey
- 3) hmmm
- 2) uh uh uh
- 1) blachzinbal

**CIMN's**  
**Top 15**  
**March 15**

Artist	Title
1. Sarah McLachlan	Fumbling Towards Ecstasy
2. Crash Test Dummies	God Shuffled His Feet
3. Ramones	Acid Eaters
4. Crowded House	Together Alone
5. Anna Beaumont	Rise Above
6. Skydiggers	Just Over the Mountain
7. The Lemonheads	Come on Feel
8. The Cranberries	Everybody Else is...
9. Teresa Doyle	Stowaway
10. Tom Gallant	Clean Get Away
11. Alice in Chains	Jar of Flies
12. Marc Lanegan	Whisky for the Holy Ghost
13. The Boo Radleys	Barney (and Me)
14. Cub	Betti-Cola
15. Entombed	Wolverine Blues

**CIMN News**

For those of you who somehow missed last week's article in this paper, I'm writing this article to let you know what is going on at CIMN. CIMN T-shirts are at the printers, and will sell for around ten dollars. All CIMN volunteers are invited to the Student Union's Year End Banquet. If you are a Student Union Volunteer and do not get an invitation, call the Student Union. If you are not a volunteer, drop by the third floor of the Barn, fill out an application form, and become one.

This station has recently sent all information needed for the technical brief to the engineer who will be doing the brief. This brings us one step closer to getting an FM license from the CRTC.

Reserve Saturday, March 26 for the last CIMN music pub of the year. The Stand GT, from Ontario, and several other bands will be highlighted. Don't miss it. Until next time, keep listening.