

LIVE MUSIC - COMPACT DISCS - BOOK REVIEWS - POETRY - THEATRE

## ENTERTAINMENT



# Sound Opinions

by Mike Beagan

Hello again, readers. This week I have a pile of discs that are guaranteed to make your ears bleed, but in a good way. Since Steppenwolf coined the phrase Heavy Metal so long ago, it has been a powerful force in music. Ever changing, ever feeding off its past, metal has been an influence on the music of millions. Few are more influential than my first subject this week.

Ozzy Osbourne has come out of retirement, again, and released a fine example of his metallic prowess on *Ozzmosis* (EPIC). Retirement hasn't mellowed metal's "Grand Old Man" in any way, however, he has lost a little of the cartoonish posing that his previous albums were marred by. Fans or Ozzy's days with the original (and best) Black Sabbath will be pleased to hear that Sabbath bassist Geezer Butler's distinctive crunch is heard throughout the album. Though *Ozzmosis* isn't likely to win many new fans for Oz, his millions of minions are sure to be pleased.

Sabbath fans will also be happy to hear that Geezer Butler has formed a new band featuring Ozzy drummer Deen Castronovo, and Fear Factory vocalist Burton C. Bell. *G/Z/R/ Plastic Planet* (TVT) is the heaviest album I have ever heard with such intelligence of lyrics. Megadeth take notes, please. If you like your music loud, fast, and smart, than give this one a spin.

Life Of Agony's sophomore release *Ugly* (Attic) is the one of the best albums I have heard in months. These guys from New York City have the audacity to produce an album of "songs" rather than "singles". This great disc has no frills to get in the way of the music. Simple power chords and a clockwork rhythm section back up the superbly melodic vocals of Kieth Caputo. Metal with melody -- what a concept. As proof of their diversity, Life of Agony even perform an outstanding cover Simple Minds' 80s hit "Don't You Forget About Me".

Ontario's ACME have produced a fine debut in *Fighting Among Ourselves* (IMD). They have played with the likes of Our Lady Peace, Rhymes with Orange, Killjoys, and 13 Engines. Uncomplicated in style, but very catchy and more intelligent than average, ACME have a definite presence that will please many fans of modern heavy rock. You know, that stuff that they call alternative, but isn't because it outsells everything else.

Rather than producing a new album, Living Colour have decided to use their latest release to reintroduce themselves. *Pride* (Epic) features four previously unreleased tracks, their biggest hits "Glamour Boys" and "Cult of Personality", and several tracks from each of their previous four albums. They are, of course, still the world's best all black metal band. This is something that they prove on every track of this album. Each song is a lesson in diversity, and worth a listen.

That does for this week, but I hope to be back soon with another collection of ear bleeders. Stay tuned. By the way, have you tried Zorba's Psychic Network yet? Man, my life will never be the same.

## SOUND BITES

Speech  
Self-titled  
(EMI/Virgin)

Speech, formerly of Arrested Development, picks up where the group left off with his self-titled debut. The music, for the most part, resembles the work he did with Arrested Development but appears to be lacking something -- the group. Fans of the group will still appreciate the works presented on this CD, but I doubt any of the tracks will match his previous successes.

Mr. Mirainga  
Self-titled  
(MCA/Way Cool Music)

The press release for Mr. Mirainga's debut release finishes by saying that the "music is guaranteed to have you scratching the walls like a baby in a microwave." How poetic, but after hearing this CD I wanted to hop in the microwave with the baby. The band was also featured on the latest *Ace Ventura* soundtrack, so you might want to avoid that one as well as this self-titled offering.

David Wilcox  
*Thirteen Songs*  
(EMI)

The latest release from David Wilcox has an acoustically based sound with a jazz feel. Just picture Harry Connick Jr. with the singing abilities of a dog. After taking a listen to the tracks on this one I wanted to head to the nearest coffee shop in my black turtleneck and shades, order some bizarre chink and call everyone a "cool cat." Those who watched *So I Married An Axe Murderer* will realize David Wilcox belongs in the bar where the lead character "sang", and not in music stores.

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