



JOHN WESLEY HARDING
Confessions of Saint Ace
Mammoth

Harding is heavily influenced by Elvis Costello in both vocal delivery and song writing style, but, despite having intelligent lyrics and a consistent sound quality, it never quite lives up to Elvis.

-SML

PHOTEK
Solaris
Astralwerks

Drum and bass music can either be really cutting edge, or extremely dull. Photek falls into the later category. Chock full of repetitive, seven minute long techno music cliches, this album grows tiring very quickly.

-SML

**MUSIC FROM THE
 MOTION PICTURE
 ALMOST FAMOUS**
Dreamworks

Contained on this CD is half of a really great soundtrack. The half that's missing includes familiar classic rock songs like Paranoid, Search and Destroy, and (Jimi Hendrix). But the half included has all sorts of 70's rock rarities often overlooked by people who put soundtracks together. The Almost Famous soundtrack also includes a fictional band from the movie, Still Water, and their Zeppelinesque stadium rock anthem, Fever Dog featuring Pearl Jam's Mike McCready on guitar. Even though the music works better in the film than on this CD, there are enough good songs on it to make it almost perfect.

-SML

MARK BROWNING
Years of Sadness
Little Mountain Records

Browning is a rootsy-folk singer from the Vancouver area. He's coming to town. He phoned me six times. While my initial reaction to this was, "What kind of dweeb phones me six times," after listening to his CD, it changed to "Hmm, this guy is talented." I hope I see

you at his show on September 27th at Baba's.

-ROC

BUCKETHEAD
Giant Robot
Virgin-EMI

Buckethead wears a Kentucky Fried Chicken container on his head. He also plays guitar. He's also wackier on his twanger than Steve Vai. If you're looking for some insanity, this is it. In a nutshell, this CD features 19 different tracks that evolve into amusing stories about Buckethead and his adventures within his little world. If you're looking for an album that is equal parts Leatherface, Frank Zappa, and Colonel Sanders, this is it.

-ROC

THE VANDALS
Look What I Almost Stepped In...
Nitro Records

Plus ca change, plus c'est pareille... After their 1998 release *Hitler Bad, Vandals Good*, one of SoCal punk's little miracles, I expected a little more from these "Chinatown" chanting chaps. Unfortunately *Look what I almost stepped in...* had a bit of reheated beef chow mein aftertaste – the first serving was better, tastier.

-SKM

BABY BLUE SOUNDCREW
Private Party Collectors Edition
Mixed CD
Universal

If you like hip hop, R&B and ragga, this is definitely a mix for you. Toronto's Baby Blue Soundcrew put together this mix CD, which has some of the best American hip hop hits from last year, and some of Toronto's finest representing on this compilation. My only problem is that the shit is edited, which is good for radio DJs, but for the average fan, it's annoying.

-JMAMA

SHIRLEY BASSEY
The Remix Album...Diamonds Are Forever
EMI

To review this album with even a small amount of seriousness would be impossible. *The Remix Album...Diamonds Are Forever* has to be one of the cheesiest albums of the year. The album has 10 techno/dance remixes of old Shirley Bassey songs. Each track has been remixed by a different artist, including two different remixes of Bassey's cover of the Doors classic, "Light My Fire." Combining 60s cheese with 00s cheese is amusing for a while, but then I just have to pause and ask, "Why?"

-JC

Song Smiths

There is something about the name Smith that seems to inspire some of the finest songwriting. Could it be that Smith actually means someone who works hard at his or her craft? These albums only prove our point that the name Smith=friggin' awesome songs.

METHOD MAN (CLIFFORD SMITH)
Tical
JMAMA: "Because 'I came to bring the pain, hardcore from the brain, let's go inside my astroplane'"

FRED EAGLESMITH
Water in the Fuel
KJB: "The best Canadian songwriter since Gordon Lightfoot tells us about the water in his fuel."

Ron Sexsmith
Ron Sexsmith
SML: "The best Canadian songwriter since Gordon Lightfoot lets us in on his secret heart on his debut album."

JAZZY JEFF AND THE FRESH PRINCE
And In This Corner
ROC: "Not because Will Smith's rhymes are anything special here,

but Jeff Towne's spectacular turntable skills make this album a cut above the rest of the field."

THE SMITHS
The Queen Is Dead
SML: "Morrissey and Marr provide sharp, witty, literate lyrics and music on one of the finest albums to come out of Manchester."