



The  
Summer  
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by KIRBY FERGUSON

**W**ell folks, I believe we've seen the best summer in rock'n'roll in quite some time. I mean really, when have we ever seen the likes of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, The Cure, U2, Faith No More, The Black Crowes and Metallica in the top twenty? It's a fucking revolution, y'all. Anyway, on to the tune stack...

A potential humungoid star in the mould of Prince, Bruce or M.J., Sophie B. Hawkins topped the charts this summer with the Zep beats and yearning chorus of "Damn I Wish I Was Your Lover." Unfortunately, *Tongues and Tails* (6) is a fairly conventional work, somewhat redeemed by her melodic touches and a great voice that conveys innocence, vulnerability and toughness. *Tails* is certainly the work of a potential great, but until she moves a little further away from the intrinsic banalities of the top ten, that album can stay right there on that shelf, Mr. Record Store Guy. Presenting the other extreme, is Tori Amos with her second album, *Little Earthquakes* (5), an ambitious, confessional album that could also be the dawning of a major new talent. It's cold, arty and grandiose, with heavy-handed arrangements and while the best songs, "Silent All These Years" and "Winter," are quite beautiful, the rest are aimless, forgettable and not otherwise interesting enough to justify a free-flow. Combining these two extremes is Annie Lennox with her --to me-- shockingly good solo debut, *Diva* (7), which earns my Best Commercial Pop Album of the Year award (topping Michael's last one). Smoothly forceful state-of-the-art blue-eyed soul, *Diva* sports a nearly flawless collection of accessible yet imagi-

native pop packages.

Expecting a return to "roots" after the *To Be Continued* box and *Two Rooms* tribute, Elton John's latest, *The One* (3), is, not surprisingly, just more of the same old synthesized, disposable, sterile junk. Mind you, John invests it with some melodies that suggest there's a minor pop genius lurking in there somewhere. But in general *The One* bops along to the inhumanly precise beat of the electric drum, keeping time for the inhumanly precise everything else. About as natural as his new hair-do.

If popsicle pop is what you're after, check out Lindsey Buckingham's *Out of the Cradle* (8), the frosty but tremendously tuneful third solo outing from the former Fleetwood mastermind. Filled with Buckingham's brilliant harmonies, memorable tunes and some oddities to keep one foot outside the mainstream, this nabs the Best Commercial Pop Album thing right outta Annie's paws.

Almost as worthwhile is Del Amitri's *Change Everything* (7), a high spirited sleeper that combines Stonesy rock'n'roll with pop sense and tons of hooks. It's almost shamelessly radio-friendly, not far removed from, say, *Reckless*, but the varied instrumental touches, natural production and the imagination of their songwriting make this an immensely appealing, feel-good album, charming in its lack of pretensions.

Released recently was the fourth album from Canada's own Blue Rodeo. While containing moments that suggest a world class rock band (mainly the slower tunes, like "Rain Down on Me" and the title track), *Lost Together* (5) is cursed with bad songwriting, as heard in dreadful guitar raunch-rockers like "Reckless." Also, the album is very derivative; after three albums they have yet to de-



FAITH NO MORE

*Angel Dust*



sing

BEASTIE BOYS



CHEK YOUR HEAD