

# SOUND BITES by Lorne Caborn

Hard core rock. Thrash. Alternative. Whatever you want to call **Wickerman's** self titled CD, there is one real easy way to describe it -- noise, and lots of it. With titles like, "You Annoy Me", "S--- Kicker" and "Pussycat Motorgasm", you can pretty much tell where I am going to file this one -- Straight under "G" for garbage

**Salif Keita** has a new CD out with traditional African music set with a jazzy undertone. *Folon...the Past* has that soft rock feel and is reminiscent of Paul Simon's *Graceland*, although not nearly as powerful and moving. This isn't a real bad CD but it is way off from being good.

If you are looking for that folk feel with an acoustic flavoring but are tired of the run of the mill stuff already out, you may want to take a listen to **Tiddas**. The trio's new CD, entitled *Sing About Life*, uses there beautiful voices with an aboriginal backdrop. The CD also contains a traditional aboriginal song and if you are looking for a good CD, but want something a little different, then pick this one up.

*Manic Compression* is the CD. **Quicksand** is the band. Headache is what I had after reviewing them. It is alternative music and at first I was going to compare them to Nine Inch Nails, but I then realized they are not even close to being in the same class. Sloppy, sometimes non-

existent lyrics really drag the CD down, making me think this would have been better as an instrumental.

Don't call it a comeback. *Mr. Smith* is the latest, following a string of hits from **L.L Cool J** and he does not disappoint on this CD. With rough songs like "I Shot Ya" to ballads such as "Hey Lover" there is something on this one for all his fans. Enlisting the help of Boys II Men didn't hurt either, and I can easily say watch out for this one because it is going to be a major hit.

**Facepuller**, the Canadian punk rock group, has just released their fifth CD. *Unauthorized Volume Dealers* contains the same loud, hard and fast style which has gained them success via snowboarding videos. Music fans that like loud music that's constantly in your face may want to go grab this one fast.

*Burn* is the latest release from **Sister Machine Gun**. In case you've never heard of them, think U2 with an edge. The music is great but hardly supported by the lyrics which at times you can't even make out. This may have been the band's intention but it must sounded like noise to me and I can get that for free.

The self-described energetic, melodic pop band **Small** certainly created an interesting way of depicting their music. I'd call it Green Day on prozac. *Silver Gleaming*

*Death Machine* may have a hard core title but the music contained on it is anything but and I think it would be safe to avoid shelling out cash for this one.

In the line of debut CDs, there's **Fledgling** and their brand new self-titled offering. Fitting the description of alternative to a tee, the lead singer has a Jane Siberry sound wailing over some great backbeats. Alternative fans should watch out for this one because they should have a hit or two on their hands before long.

Those math fanatics out there looking for something to help them draw perfect circles may want to pick up **Birdbrain's** latest. I couldn't find any other use for their CD *Bliss*, it was bad even as a coaster. If you want to lump them into a category it would have to be alternative, although that gives all the other bands in that category a bad name.

*Bi-Polar Cowboy*. Just the name of this CD should tell you to stay away. If someone tries to give you a copy of **Picasso Trigger's** latest CD just turn and run away. Don't walk. Run! I think they do sing (or scream at least) on this, one although at times it's hard to tell. Their bio describes them as pissed off punk and I think they're pissed because this one turned out so badly.

**Abde Ali Slimani**

*Mraya*

(EMI/Virgin Records)

Algerian Rai dance music.

Think the Vision Network. Think long and hard before buying this one. Some danceable beats can be found but I tend to enjoy music more when it's in a language I can stand listening to. No offense but this isn't going platinum anytime soon.

**R.Kelly**

Self-titled

(BMG/Zomba Records)

This is R.Kelly's third in a long line of smash CDs and it looks like another hit. His usual mix of juiciness, ballads and hip hop grooves can be found on this one. A guest appearance by the Notorious B.I.G. gives you just one more reason to grab this one fast.

**Rolling Stones**

*Stripped*

(EMI/Virgin Records)

*Stripped*. What an appropriate title, as the Stones are stripped of whatever edge they had. Some fundamentalists may enjoy the simple acoustic sounds but with only one classic song, "Angie" and one remix, Bob Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone", I got more enjoyment out of the CD Rom features. This is only for true Rolling Stones fans, assuming there's still some alive out there.

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