

Yes, there are a lot of music reviews this week. Just as we did with the book reviews, we wanted to give you an idea of some good (and not-so-good) music which is out-and-about now. Find that special band and give it to the person you love, or, of course, if you hate someone, give them something that sounds like trash. It's as simple as that!

**The Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos**  
**Canto Noel**  
**(EMI)**

Following up on their surprise hit, *Chant*, the monks are back with a Christmas CD. For those of you who aren't familiar with these monks, they released a disc last year which became shockingly popular. They perform a Gregorian chant, if you can call it a performance. The chant is mellow and melodic, and makes great background music for studying. There are no intricate rhythms or clever lyrics to distract you from your work.

*Canto Noel* is a seasonal title, and the cover is decorated with red, green, and gold; however, the music doesn't have a holiday sound, and no one will confuse it with Boney M's version of "Feliz Navidad" (although the disc does contain a Latin version of "By the Rivers of Babylon"....)

Despite the unusual type of music, this is a good disc. It's not an absolute favourite, and not everyone will enjoy it, but the Gregorian chant is peaceful and relaxing. Therefore, don't expect to see the basketball Panthers warm up with this disc pounding in the background.

(3.5)  
-- Marko Peric

**Big Chief**  
**Platinum Jive: Greatest Hits 1969-99**  
**(Capitol/Revolution)**

Big Chief has been making waves in the underground music world since the band's conception in 1989. For this, their major label debut, they have decided to forgo the usual format and release a greatest hits retrospective. The fact that they don't have any greatest hits is beside the point— they did a great job making some up. *Platinum Jive* covers most styles of popular music, and each track fits perfectly into the period in which it was supposedly recorded. The majority of the tracks are bass and guitar heavy, and range in style from grungy-grindcore to funkafide gangsta rap to just plain fun rock 'n' roll. Not all of the album's sixteen tracks are perfect, or even listenable, but there are enough quality tunes to make this disc worthwhile. I look forward to their sophomore release (probably a four disc box set).

(4)  
-- Mike Beagan

**Machine Head**  
**Burn My Eyes**  
**(Attic/Roadrunner)**

Amazing! It is simply amazing that something so loud can be so boring. *Burn My Eyes* is a dissonant mix of tired power chords (yawn), amateurish vocals (double yawn), and apocalyptic lyrics (zzzzzz). The songs are so frighteningly similar, it's just plain laughable. Unless you find jackhammers musical, this album is not recommended.

(2.5)  
-- Mike Beagan

**Various**  
**The Glory of Gershwin**  
**(Mercury)**

Elton John, George Martin, Jonathan Shalit, and Sting are credited as the driving forces behind this formidable compilation of George Gershwin's greatest. The album is not only a celebration of Gershwin, but of the master harmonica-player Larry Adler. Adler is featured in almost every song.

All of the performers featured on the album are well known in their fields of expertise. Elvis Costello does an amazingly smooth job of "But Not For Me". Pop starlet Lisa Stansfield struts her stuff in "They Can't Take That Away From Me". Cher gives a disappointing performance of "It Ain't Necessarily So", and Jon Bon Jovi, with Richie Sambora on feature guitar, does a blasphemous version of the standard "How Long Has This Been Going On". Finally, the performances were rounded out by a wonderful interpretation of "Rhapsody in Blue".

The star attraction for this reviewer was the orchestra. The strings, horns and percussion were wonderful, and could have represented Gershwin's work just as beautifully (if not moreso) without the "big names" singing in front of them. I highly recommend this album. If you appreciate the music of Gershwin's by-gone era, this collection is definitely worth investing in.

(3)  
-- Steve Ellis

**Urban Species**  
**Listen**  
**(PolyGram)**

Basically another rap album, with a twist of French, reggae, and a few curse words. This album is spiritually oriented with love, brotherhood, and God emanating from all the songs (along with a good beat). If you enjoy rap at its deepest moments, then this London-based group is the one for you.

(5)  
-- Jason Roberts

**Johnny Clegg & Savuka**  
**"In My African Dream"**  
**(EMI)**

This "Lion King Sound-Alike" is just that. Taken the right way, that means there are some awesome background vocals (Savuka) that express the deep, soothing music found in the African culture. Then there is the lead vocalist who tries his best to fit in, but I don't think this white guy has quite got a grasp of the African language. But Johnny Clegg's songs are filled with a knowledge of what Africa is really like (in his eyes, anyway). I would recommend this album to most any listener, but be sure to read the words to each song as you listen or you will probably get lost.

(3.5)  
-- Jason Roberts

**Collectible Spoons**  
**MCA Records**

The 80's are over and they should remain forgotten. The first time anyone heard of the Spoons was about 10 years ago, and this CD contains songs recorded during that period; "Old Emotions" is probably the most memorable, but it's in the middle of the CD and I haven't been able to listen to it long enough to get there. The music is really mellow, so I usually fall asleep after the third song. For die-hard Spoons fans, this CD is kind of neat because there is a description of the beginning ideas of all of the songs in the cover, but that is the only appealing thing about it.

(1)  
-- Kathy Giesbrecht

**Dada**  
**American Highway**  
**Flower**  
**(I.R.S.)**

It's R.E.M. all over again! I.R.S. has managed to pick up another awesome band just as they did when they grabbed Michael Stipe and his generation-shaping pals back in the eighties.

Dada is an amazing group that has managed to make an extremely rare combination in its music. Their musical ideas are fresh and vibrant and their lyrical style is uncommonly insightful. I'm speechless to describe the thirteen wonderful tracks on the disc. All I can say is listen to it and love it....oh, and don't be deterred by the crucified fruit on the album cover.

(5)  
-- Steve Ellis

**Green Jelly**  
**(BMG/Zoo)**

Unofficially known as their 'half-Satanic' album, *Green Jelly*'s second release is full of their trademark stupidity: it's loud, stupid, loud, incomprehensible, loud, full of ripped-off guitar riff, and it's loud. And you know what? I loved every minute of it.

While nothing on this tape approaches the creative idiocy of their previous release, it does have a few things going for it. One is the music, which is loud, fast, half-stolen, and easy to thrash to. The other is the bizarre, disturbingly simple lyrics. Once you understand them (which takes a while) you discover that they're singing about the trials of a man with a Pinata for a head ("Pinata Hed") or the differences between play and suicide (the very insightful "Jump"). You even get (at no extra charge) the "Bear Song" (a parable of ursine mountain climbing, with a cameo by a certain smarter-than-average cartoon), a tribute to a Spider-Man villain (Carnage Rules) and a fun retooling of the "Green Jelly Anthem."

What else can I say? It's fast, fun, stupid, and lovable... oh, and some of these songs were stripped down and used as background music for Acclaim's *Maximum Carnage* video game.

(4)  
-- Trent Drake

more music reviews to come...