

**Kristen Barry**

**The beginning. The middle. The end.**  
(Virgin)

Variety, variety, variety! This CD has a little, not much, but a little. It's not your typical girl band sound. The vocals are rather reminiscent of Sinead O'Connor, but with a different edge. It's getting harder and harder nowadays to find a band that doesn't mass produce one song after another, all sounding the same. Thankfully, once in a blue moon, we discover someone worthy of our precious attention. The songs are not loud and thrashing, not too mellow. The majority of the songs are not too fast, not too slow. Definitely one to sing along with, which is what I've been doing these past few days. Those that stick out in my mind would be "Nothing's Too Good" and "Cool". There's also a really funky surprise at the end of the CD. Yes, a hidden track, but it won't be spoiled by my telling you about it. You'll just have to check it out yourself.

Rating: \*\*1/2

- Sheryl MacDonald

**Frogpond**

**Count to Ten**  
(Sony)

Frogpond's sound is anything but original. Their style is somewhat grunge with a little bit of tuned down grrl punk thrown in. Vocalist/guitarist Heidi Phillips adds a soft touch to the band's guitar-dominated sound. If you're looking for just your run-of-the-mill, everyday sound, then this is your CD. It will in no way change your life. With all of this said, like every other dime-a-dozen bands out there, it can quickly grow on you. However, there's nothing deep about the lyrics ("Why won't you talk to me/I told you twice already/I like you..." of "Talk to Me"). Most of the songs, however are "driving" and of course catchy, like "Even Now" and "Red Spider". I find that this release makes me want to get up, jump up and down and bump into things....

Anybody up for moshing?

Rating: \*\*\*

-Sheryl MacDonald

## Christian Music Corner

**Marko Peric****Carolyn Arends**

**Feel Free**

(Reunion)

When artists have a successful debut album, often they find it difficult to make an equal effort on a second disc. Arends has avoided that pitfall. By adding a backup band and more aggressive music, she has developed an edgier style. At the same time, her vocals remain consistent enough to avoid alienating fans. This reviewer thinks Arends has gone in the right direction.

Like 1995's *I Can Hear You*, this disc features subtle and clever lyrics. Arends' songwriting, already impressive, has improved. As well, she remains true to her message without being blatant and heavy handed. Some excellent tracks include "New Year's Day" and "Last Thursday (Call Me Crazy)". Listen for one of these to get some radio airplay.

If you liked Arends' previous disc, but thought a little more aggression wouldn't hurt, check this album out. And if you've never heard her before, *Feel Free* is definitely worth a look.

**Paul Q Pek**

**Touch the Ground**

(Absolute)

Astute fans may notice that this album was produced by Dez Dickerson, who has done production for Whitecross and other notable bands. But don't worry, this is nothing like Whitecross. However, Pek's sound is hard to place. Mellow with a more than a touch of aggression, it falls somewhere between Genesis and U2, if that helps any.

I can't really say if you'll like this or not, but there are some really wonderful cuts, like "Sea Creature", "If I Were President" and the title track. Some of the others don't quite match up. Even so, on the whole the disc is quite enjoyable. Give it a listen.

# Strawberry plays the Seven Eyeball Wall

By ELLENHARDY

Island rockers Strawberry have recently returned home to Charlottetown after a trip to Montreal where they recorded their first CD.

The album, tentatively titled *Strawberry Plays the Seven Eyeball Wall*, was produced by the band themselves with a little input from their engineer. It's scheduled date of release is sometime in August of this year.

When asked if they were pleased to be back on the Island and if they had any immediate plans, the group consensus was "No," and "not really." They do not have a drummer at this point in time, and say that it is difficult to put on a show with only their drum machine. The band also expressed their views that there are not many venues to play here because of past damage done to places like the Arts Guild. There were plans in the works to do a show at the Barn with ThEwoks, but once informed of the Barn's new policy of no admittance to Dry shows for those people who do not attend a post-secondary institution, the plans were changed to a possible show at the Arts Guild.

Strawberry does not concur with the associations they have to the so-called "Halifax sound." Although they do claim that there are a lot of great bands associate with it, they feel that "except for maybe early on we're not really involved in that." I agree. After being compared to bands such as the Cranberries and (imagine this) the Cowboy Junkies, Strawberry is finally being recognized as having a sound of their own.

Although they were full of "sometimes," "possibly's" and "maybes," I accredit this to being part of a transition period for Strawberry as they ready themselves for the release of their new CD and, with it, a different view of the band.

## BOOK

**Keith Carter**

**bones**

(Raincoast Books)

*bones* is a pictorial journey through a dog-lover's life and an very enjoyable journey it is.

Photographer Keith Carter has compiled more than 60 photos of dogs over the years. This book is a true appreciation for the majesty and grace of canines, both domestic and wild, as well as a superb example of fine photography.

Keith Carter provides an explanation for the book in the foreword. Not only does he enjoy photography, but he adores dogs as well. This book is his effort to make "all creatures great and small equal before the lens" as he journeys "under porches and down dirt roads and up cotton rows" to capture the spiritual element of these dogs. The dogs in these photographs take on human qualities. As a dog-lover myself, I truly enjoy looking at this book which provides more meaning about the essence of dogs than any written account could ever do on its own.

Rating: \*\*\*\*\*

-Emilie Adams