

Sloan

Four Nights at the Palais Royale
(Murderecords/Universal)

I've heard some mixed reviews on this new 28-song, 2-CD set; people who've said they loved it, and people who've said they're disappointed. Myself, I'm pretty happy with it. The packaging and look of it are great. It's a live compilation from one of Canada's best-ever bands. So, you can't really go wrong with it. However, some tracks can come off a little forced, where it's obvious they're recording this for the CDs,

pumping up the crowd and whatnot. They also get the crowd to sing too much, like in the song "Deeper Than Beauty." They stop the whole song to just let the crowd do a long vocal solo, essentially ruining the track, in my opinion. While some folks may wonder where their favourite tune is, like "Sugartune," they still includes songs like "Torn" and "Marcus Said". I think we should all be happy

with what we got. Most of the best stuff is here. It sounds great, has the realness of live flaws, and although they've pieced it together so that it sounds like one big performance, I still like it. It's not perfect, but what is? I'd give it an appropriate "4" out of five, keeping in mind that it may become a classic some day.

-Stephen McQuaid

Jim Cuddy
All In Time
(Warner)

Jim Cuddy won best male vocalist at this year's Juno Awards - and it's not because Leonard Cohen wasn't nominated this year. The man can sing, as we should all know, from his years in Blue Rodeo (No, they haven't broken up - yet). This CD is a mix of rockin'

folk tunes and soulful ballads with a bit of a country (don't be scared) tinge. I'm sure most folks are familiar with the songs "Disappointment" and "Too Many Hands," but the remaining nine tracks are good as well, like the tunes "Whistler" and the tear-jerk-

ing "Everybody Cries." Many people also guest on this CD, such as Melanie Doane, Bazil of Blue Rodeo, Gavin Brown (Danko Jones, ex-Big Sugar), and Jeff & Jay of Wilco, to name a few.

-Stephen McQuaid

Wilco
Summerteeth
(Reprise/Warner)

Never have I ever heard synthesizers sound so good. Well, Ok, maybe Frank Zappa, but that's different. Refreshing is a good way to explain this album. Or perhaps, very easily enjoyable. Any way you look at it, it's pretty darned good. It's one of the better and unique things I've heard in a long time. Their sound is sort of folk-based, with bits of rock, synthesizers and electronic tones, and more instruments

than you could shake a stick at. The bells and timpanis add a tremendous strength and power to the songs they are included on, making it a sort of "grandiose folk" sound (lite/folk Radiohead?). Sometimes it sounds a bit like Paul McCartney stuff. It's pretty hard to describe, which is good, though, because that means it's original. The music is great on all 16 tracks, as well as the lyrics,

whether they be happy ("My Darling") or disturbing, like in the song "Via Chicago" ("I dreamed about killing you last night / And it felt alright to me..."). Ouch. This is really great sounding stuff, and it's nice to see Wilco come out with something new. It shouldn't be hard for this one to stick around and make it to many 1999 top-ten lists.

-Stephen McQuaid

MUSIC REVIEWS

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