

MUSIC Reviews

Various Artists

Cocktail - Shaken and Stirred
BMG

If you have missed the recent kitsch revival, it is time to wake up, smell the java and get ready to tango. This compilation is proudly presented by Jaymz Bee and the Royal Jelly Orchestra, with a different artist featured on each of the 11 tracks. This collection features melodious covers of such hits as "You Oughta Know" with the Beehive Singers, "American Woman" with Frank Nevada, "Safety Dance" with Kyree Vibrant, and "Sunglasses at Night" with John Southworth. The liner notes add the olive and swizzle stick to the mood, with suggested cocktails and dance moves to perfect the ambience -- there are even some recipes for martinis. This album is perfectly fun for daytime or evening. Tim Tamashiro's version of Loverboy's "Turn Me Loose" is the way it should be. Everything retro has had its glory day at one time or another, and obviously lounge lizard mentalities were due for their day in the sun as well. For some reason, this latest look back to yesterday provides a bit more than the usual faddish whims. These cocktails, shaken and stirred, are class, plain and simple. It is time to get back to the basics and the smoke filled-lounges. It is time to get back to when music was music. And it's going to start right here with The Royal Jelly Orchestra. The next big thing.

by H. Madge Magnasson

Suzanne Vega

Nine Objects of Desire
A&M Records Inc.

Let's get it out of our systems once and for all: "Tom's Diner". There. There shouldn't be any need to seek therapy. It was the trendoid of days gone by. Everybody was doot-doot-doing it. Suzanne Vega is older now. Things are a little different, though her voice is still thin and raspy and lacks much command while chanting words over sound. Her lyrics still seem a bit too trite to warrant any serious contemplation. It could be just as easy as listening to dismiss her as a has-been that should have taken her hit and run. Fortunately (or unfortunately), Suzanne is adept at weaving an atmosphere from what wisps her voice does allow her, and the mesh of this and the eclectic music -- ranging from exotica to tribal rhythms to more sterile produced sounds -- is somewhat palatable. Each of the 12 songs is a nod to "alternasophistapop", with all of the tracks clocking in at under three minutes and 38 seconds. The fan of days of yore will still be pleasantly pleased at what she has done yet again, but those still frightened by that diner on the corner should probably keep browsing.

by H. Madge Magnasson

Black Crowes

Three Snakes and One Charm
American/Warner Brothers Music

If you like the Black Crowes at all, you will love this album. The follow-up to *Shake Your Money Maker*, *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*, and *America*, this album has more of an edge. Songs range from the Crowes' typical rock n'roll blues, to subdued ballads, notably "Girl From a Pawnshop" and "How Much for Your Wings?". Even without the unusual and interesting lyrics, the music itself is enough to make you want *Three Snakes and One Charm*. All the songs feature excellent guitar riffs with lots of percussion backup.

My favourite track is "Blackberry", the latest single released from this album. It's hyper, fun and upbeat. The video for "Blackberry" is cool also; the band magically appears inside your favourite 3-D Viewmaster stories. (You've got to love these guys!). "Good Friday" is a little more mellow. It will make you want to wave a lighter as you groove to the sound of a wailing blues harmonica solo. I loved virtually every track on the CD, but I'm obviously a biased Black Crowes fan, so buy the album and listen for yourself. Listen to it loud in the car...on the way to work...anytime! I guarantee immediate musical satisfaction.

Rating: *****

by Quicksilver Girl

Holly Cole

It Happened One Night
Alert Music

What can I say? This live recording of selected numbers from a concert which took place in Montreal in 1995 speaks for itself. Holly Cole is an amazing performer and a talented songstress.

The material on this album incorporates songs from all three of Cole's previous recordings. It includes two of my personal favourites, "Cry (If You Want To)" and "Don't Let The Teardrops Rust Your Shining Heart", written by Ben Watt of Everything But The Girl during their pre-techno era. All the songs on the album are as spell-binding live as they were in the studio.

It Happened One Night is only a short album. It contains only 8 songs probably because most of the space on the CD is taken up by an interactive multi-media portion. Unfortunately, I did not get to review this part of the CD because I do not have the computer capability. Instead, I will let you in on what is included. There are four full-length live performances, the original videos for "Calling You" and "I Can See Clearly Now", as well as a discography, profiles of the band members and a Q&A session with Cole herself.

When asked why she made this recording, Cole said "For the fans and ourselves. I wanted to make a live recording." I hope she and her band members are satisfied. I am sure her fans will be.

Steve Ellis

Various

Transmissions Volume 1
Virgin

DJ John Acquaviva has a magic touch. This mix, though silver in colour, is just short of being pure gold.

The beat is infective. I listened to this album for the first time while stuffing envelopes and found myself bopping around in my chair with a building urge to get up and "bust a move".

The beat is also repetitive. Most of the tracks have the same pseudo-snare sound as the underlying rhythm. This was great for the continuity, but some variety would have made this recording even better. By the time I had finished listening to the album the whole way through, I was beginning to find it tiresome.

Of all the songs on the CD I only dislike one, specifically "Logan's Run" by L. A. Williams. The rest are quite good, including the final track, "Phreakin'" by DJ HMC, which, in my opinion, is the best of all.

I highly recommend this album. You may have a hard time finding it in Charlottetown, though. Happy hunting!

Steve Ellis

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**A bubbling, frothy
broth of carnal
delight**

**Nutritionally
complete, high in
fibre; tastes great**

**TV Dinner:
Satisfying - could
use more salt**

**Microwaved Chef
Boy Ardee... not
quite done**

**Cold, Clammy
leftover goulash**