

Sund reviews of the biggest and best in new music

Salvation

by kirby ferguson

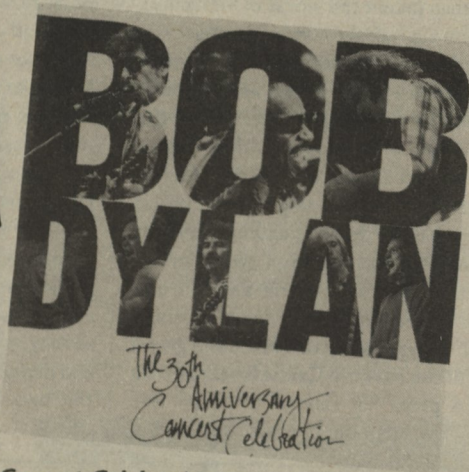


Become What You Are
The Juliana Hatfield Three
(Attic)

Produced by Scott Litt (of REM fame) *Become What You Are* (4) features that melancholy jangle, but it's the Husker Du-inspired, tightly syncopated explosions that keep me coming back, along with Hatfield's vulnerable, tuneful vocals. But her pre-pubescent voice matches her pre-pubescent mind: obvious shots at models; she hates her sister, the chick's a real bitch, man; she finds a maimed birdy, it croaks right in her paw, she gets all teary-eyed, offers us a ditzy insight into human nature; et cetera. But the imagination of her songwriting and the agility of the band's sing and sting swamps the lyrical silliness. PJ Harvey sounds less impressive all the time.

Depravation
Deborah Harry
(Warner)

Wowee, really awful stuff. Dance music played with all the hipness of yer mom. Anyone curious about who this lady was should check out Blondie's *Parallel Lines* (recently reissued on CD) or the widely and cheaply available Best of.



Bob Dylan: The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration
Various Artists
(Sony)

First of all, who could mess-up a night of Dylan songs? Well, besides Bob. Sounding quite a bit like *The Last Waltz*, the Band's concert/film farewell performance, and reuniting much of the same cast, *The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration* (4) is generally predictable and generally listenable. It starts out especially strong with John Mellencamp's rocking "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat," Stevie Wonder's gospel reworking of "Blowin' in the Wind," which proves that when he stays away from the studio bells and whistles he can still work magic, and Eddie Vedder and Mike McCready's version of one of Dylan's least eloquent protest songs, "Masters of War," interesting here for the choking anger of Vedder's vocal. But the man among boys here is Lou Reed's furious "Foot of Pride," an *Infidels* outtake that first appeared on the *Bootleg Series*. From then on out the *Celebration* is less inventive, descending into country banalities for the middle of Disc One (and a truly oddball version of "It Ain't Me, Babe" by the Cashes), but most of the time this is pretty likeable. Other nice moments include Mary-Chapin Carpenter, Roseanne Cash and Shawn Colvin's "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," Neil Young's *Ragged Glory* renditions of "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" and "All Along the Watchtower" and Tom Petty's "License to Kill." Less interesting is Eric Clapton's boring blues turn, George Harrison's "Absolutely Sweet Marie," the Robbie Robertson-less incarnation of the Band (kind of like the Stones without Mick Jagger) and all-star jams always look better than they sound. Trying my patience was a lot of "We love you, Bob," "You're a genius, Bob," "You're God, Bob," "All bow to the almighty Bob," like that. For the sake of maintaining the reverent vibes the bit where Sinéad O'Connor gets booed off the stage by a bunch of shockingly cruel Dylan nuts has been excluded. Also absent, for unknown reasons, is Sophie B. Hawkins' "I Want You." I'd sooner have parted with Kris Kristofferson or any of the many washed-ups.

Clocking in at almost two-and-a-half hours this is tough to get through in one sitting, but at its best *The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration* offers several revelations, much great music, and, among the perennials ("Like a Rolling Stone" "The Times They Are a'Changin'" et al), a few insights into the Dylan canon ("Foot of Pride" "Seven Days"). What easily could have turned into oldies hell sounds, to me, as resonant, if not as inspired, as *The Last Waltz*. And Bob himself does just fine.

RATINGS:

- 5- Holy biscuits!
- 4- Oh my my
- 3- Not bad
- 2- Not good
- 1- Ow

Siamese Dream
Smashing Pumpkins
(Virgin)

The affecting sense of compassion to Smashing Pumpkins' sound is what separates *Siamese Dream* (3.5) from the rest of the goon squad. Tunes, lots of strings and a few voyages into interstellar overdrive galvanize the band's potent power game. There's a sameness to it all, but their ebb and flow is highly addictive. Best line: "What I choose is my choice."