

Celebrate Good Times With Alexander Keith's



Spiritualized

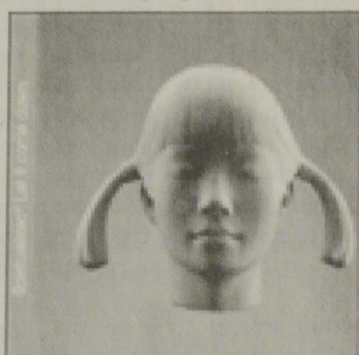
(Arista/BMG) *Let It Come Down*

Jason Spaceman is not the easiest man to work with. After the release of his last album, he fired practically his entire band and recruited an entire orchestra and a massive gospel choir to take his place. You have to admire his ambition.

Spiritualized's fourth proper album, *Let It Come Down*, is a huge, sprawling record that doesn't hold back on anything - the arrangements are over the top and sometimes it can be a little too much to take, yet there's something very beautiful about them too.

Some of the songs veer rather close to easy listening territory, but the spectacularly overblown arrangements do compensate in some way for that. And just when it all gets too syrupy, Jason

> top pick <



manages to take things back to the brink again (like on the Velvet Underground-ish 'The Twelve Steps').

Let It Come Down is an album that is out of step with most of the other music being recorded at the moment, and it is all the better for it. It might not be for everyone, but those who will like it will like it a lot.

• Michael Edwards

Top Ten # 1:

Alan Moore, considered by many to be one of the greatest creators in the industry of comics, is well known for doing super-hero comics in very bold and different ways.

His *Swamp Thing* comics were controversial, touching and terrifying, his work on *Miracleman* featured a dark and unique take on a Superman-styled hero and his work on *Watchmen* is considered to be, by many, the greatest comic story ever told.

Many first time comic readers may find super-hero comics hard to get into and with good reason: the over-population of heroes in comics. Alan Moore has a unique take on that: his comic *Top Ten* features a city where everyone is a hero, villain, robot, god, alien or some other bizarre sci-fi or fantasy type character. A city where everyone, from the lowliest bum to the richest man, is some kind of super-powered creature. Even the pets and vermin aren't normal. This city is Neopolis.

The story (or stories) of *Top Ten* are about the cops and

detectives of Precinct 10 (aka Top Ten). Each one of them has a story, many of them interconnecting. The cast is huge but Moore seems to handle it perfectly. From the cold, no-nonsense Jeff Smax, to the unprepared rookie Toy Box, to the wisecracking, talking canine Sergeant Caesar, the series is alive with cool, likable and bizarre characters. The city itself seems to be an incredible place. With different super-humans and such, new prejudices and ethnic slurs have sprung up (IE, shape-shifters are called Blob Jobs, robots are called Clickers, etc.) and the ghettos are filled with super-human prostitutes and junkies. Also, each situation the cops have to deal with has is an incredibly involving story that sometimes overlaps with each other. Some of these cases include a mysterious serial killer, a giant drunken Godzilla demanding the release of his son, a telekinetic wacko who thinks he's Santa and

the homicide of a deity.

The series is both touching and humorous. An example would be the scene which features an officer coming to grips with the fact that he indirectly caused the death of a prostitute when he decided to not arrest her while a serial killer was on the loose. There is also a

hilarious scene in which another officer and his mother call an exterminator (called

the

Exterminator) to deal with super-powered mice (who bear more than passing resemblance to various superheroes). The Exterminator calls in super-powered cats to deal with the problem.

Top Ten is a comic series that is highly entertaining, very intelligent and exceedingly addicting. The enormous cast is handled wonderfully and is helped by the extremely detailed art of

Gene Ha. Look at the art and you'll likely find at least a dozen pop culture references. It's great to find a comic that as fun to look at as it is to read.

While the series is on temporary hiatus a mini-series is coming out about Smax and Toybox, after which the series will continue once more. I suggest picking up the first trade paperback (which collects the first seven issues). Trust me, it's well worth your buying dollar.

• Stefan Robak

WORD BALLOONS



Alicia Keys

(J Records) *Songs in A Minor*

It's a rare treat these days when a young artist's debut album lives up to the hype its lead off singles create.

That is exactly what 20-year old Alicia Keys' *Songs in A Minor* does. Alicia, a classically trained pianist and true musical prodigy from New York, can take most of the credit for this album as she has written and arranged almost every track. Also, being a discovery of media tycoon Clive Davis has helped her get the mainstream attention she deserves.

Her first gem to hit airways was the collaboration with Jermaine Dupri on the song 'Girlfriend', a lyrically insightful piece about her jealousy towards her boyfriend's best friend.

Nevertheless 'Girlfriend' does not even begin compare to the song that made me want to run out and review this album; the track 'Fallin'. Her most soulful and strongest work to date, 'Fallin' has made her a household name and one of radio's most requested artists.

Although there are quite a few slow tempo jams they are so lyrically sound that there are no throw away tracks on this disc. Even her bonus track shows that she is head and shoulders above her peers (Mandy, Jessica, Britney, etc.) and sets up the groundwork for why I predict she will sweep award shows in the coming months.

This album covers such a range of emotion that it could be the entire soundtrack to the next *Soulfood*-esque movie unleashed upon us. Don't just expect to have 'Fallin' on repeat.

Others that are mentionable are covers of Prince's 'How Come You Don't Call Me' and Brian McKnight's 'Never Felt This Way' while a gorgeous duet with Jimmy Cozier could be a possible next single.

Her voice is a smooth blend of Erykah and a young Mariah, but seems to possess an expressiveness and touch of class that Ms. Carey never appeared to have. I will, however, have to eat those words if Alicia marries a music mogul twice her age by the time this goes to print. Alicia's one-two punch (i.e. her stunning beauty and incredible musical talents) will secure her place on both TV and radio for many years to come.

• Stewart Sarchfield

Depeche Mode

(Reprise/Warner) *Exciter*

Depeche Mode are one of those bands that just won't die, despite such major events as members leaving and lead singer Dave Gahan almost dying (on several occasions). Yet somehow they've stayed together and have overcome the odds and reached album number forty-seven. Or something like that.

Not all that much has changed during the past four years when it comes to the music - business as usual. If anything, the songs have a more clinical sound with a distinct lack of emotion despite the unusually intimate lyrics that address Gahan's drug use and other of the band's personal demons.

There's nothing here that will win the band a new huge following - the days of filling stadiums are long gone - but every so often everything does click (such as on 'Shine') and its like the good old days again.

• Michael Edwards

Various Artists

(Virgin) *Strait Up*

Nothing gets the adrenaline of your average music-lover going like their favorite bands getting together on one album. *Strait Up*, a tribute to the singer of the band Snot, not only isn't that album, but also disappoints tripped-out young adults like myself.

Jonathan Davis and Brandon Boyd (KoRn, Incubus) are two of the twelve artists who show up to pay their respects to Lynn Strait, the singer killed in a December 1998 car accident. The songs' styles range from punk to metal and everywhere in-between.

That's the catch, though. Even though these songs are good to bang your head to (not that I do that often...), the lyrical content gets old. Fast. All songs on the record basically say the same; how they miss Strait, or how they can still "feel" him. I bet. It would have been nice to hear a cover or two of Snot's music, since I'm not too familiar with the band and would like to know more about them. But that's me.

I, personally, wouldn't buy this CD. 'Divided' and 'Take it Back' are two tracks more than enough to show my interest in this album...

Not much.

• Andre Suley

Missy Elliott

(Warner/Elektra) *Miss E...So Addictive*

Take heed to what Missy Misdemeanor Elliott has to say, cause her latest album, *Miss E...So Addictive*, truly was "addictive." However, the diversity and appeal of her third album extends much deeper than its appropriately chosen title.

Miss E...So Addictive is laced with typical Missy style: a mix of club and R&B tracks, and to quote Timbaland on the hot hot 'Whatcha Gonna Do', "...a buncha dope beats and a buncha dope lyrics too..." Timbaland holds true to this statement by lending his dope production skills to all but one of the tracks. But, unlike previous albums, this one brings with it a fresher edge. There seems to be an unparalleled emphasis on the beats. Vocals don't overwhelm each track, allowing it to border on a rave feel. The album truly does feel unique.

Ohgr

(Spitfire / EMI) *Wah*

This is Ohgr's debut to the music world, but despite that, this band still carries an interesting pedigree. The band is named after its founder Nivek Ogre, best known as the voice of Canada's own Skinny Puppy. This album was created after Puppy's demise in 1995, but due to contractual disputes it was not released until 2001.

This is a rather odd signing for Spitfire (whose roster includes such metal acts as Yngwie Malmsteen, Dio, and Testament) as Ohgr's music tends to be a poppy industrial/techno/trance hybrid. There's definitely some experimenting going on here, to good and bad effect, with some things becoming a little to samey. High points would include the hypnotically musical 'Earthworm', the dance-oriented 'Lusid', and the catchy 'Cracker'. The downside would be represented by the noisy 'Pore', the excruciatingly boring 'Suhleap' and the stiff march of 'Minus'.

Overall, not a bad debut, lord knows I've heard worse. Ironically, this stands a better chance of being a success in rave-oriented 2001 than it did in post-grunge 1995. Get it, but only if you're expecting something different from Skinny Puppy.

• Jeff Budd

John Critchley

(Sound King) *Crooked Mile*

Let me start by saying I rarely like an album on the first listen. Some of my favourite records took three, even four listens to warm up to. But after two weeks and four aborted missions, I finally made it all the way through this album, and it doesn't hurt any less the fifth time.

There is nothing specifically wrong with it. The first song 'EZ2B' is a catchy sing-along tune; followed by pop gem 'Too Much Too Late'. The album is off to a grand start, and indie pop buffs that remember Critchley's pop band 13 Engines will be all set to get back into the groove.

But Critchley's voice is strained, nasal and flat, and his lyrics are tired. He has a knack for catchy guitar riffs, but a riff played faster or louder is still the same riff, and repetition kills the excitement. The album is a series of good ideas that are then flogged to death, and it seems to go on forever.

I know Critchley as a talented live performer - perhaps this is just a case of solo-debut anxiety. After four years away from the scene, maybe he just needs a little time and a second chance. I wouldn't buy this album, but I'll definitely keep watch for the next one.

• Rachel Long

Mariah Carey

(Virgin) *Loverboy* (single)

Could "Loverboy" be Mariah Carey's last single before spending the rest of her life in a mental institution? Hard to say right now, but more than likely we'll be seeing more of her in the near future. At least I hope so, because "Loverboy" would be a very weak single to end her career.

"Loverboy" is a disappointment compared to vintage Mariah material. The track has the potential for success, but too many effects. The beat feels fragmented and thus lacks flow. As well, Mariah's vocals fail to stick in my mind, which is not usual of her material.

The *Loverboy* (single) was a disappointment. I really hope that Mariah recovers from her 'exhaustion', so that she can return to do what she does best: Make hot tracks.

* 1/2

• Troy Neilson

KRS - One

(KOCH) *Sneak Attack*

KRS - One (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over nearly everyone) receives my vote for most aptly titled album of the year. This latest album from the hip hop fundamentalist figure and rap pioneer, KRS-One, truly is a *Sneak Attack*.

It might be said, that KRS-One has done more for hip hop than any other artist in the past decade. He's put clarity into the minds of those who struggle to understand the difference between rap and hip hop. He's helped to change the way the world views hip hop, allowing rap as an artistic impression to prosper. Alas, *Sneak Attack* is an attack on the world as a whole.

KRS-One hits hard on this album with lyrics of a superior intellectual capacity mixed with hard, funky, boom-bap, old skool beats, presenting a true to the ground style, that can't be touched. The lead single, "Hot", calls out all "ballers" to think about their lyrical influence, and for all those fake-ass rappers to step down... cause they aren't "hot." "HipHop Knowledge" is a legendary song, recounting the history of KRS-One's career. "False Pride" is a spoken poem (with no beat) that shines of

the listings

Music

Fri 5th
Shameless, Dolan's
ORJAZZM, jazz, Cellar, \$3
Misery, Metallica cover band, Upperdeck

Sat 6th
Interstellar Root Cellar, Calgary funk/soul/groove, Cellar \$3
Grand Theft Bus, Chestnut
Shameless, Dolan's
Heksenketel, CD release, Upperdeck
Rockets Red Glare (Toronto hard rock), AV (Halifax), and The Sympathy Girls (Toronto), Bugaboo

Sun 7th
More Plastic, Sonic Unyon gasoline-rock, Cellar, \$3

Mon 8th
Jazz Night, Capital

Wed 10th
Flush, from PEI, Upperdeck

Thurs 11th
Clear Sailing, from Cape Breton, Dolan's

Fri 12th
Jomomma, trip-funk, Cellar, \$3
Clear Sailing, Dolan's

Art

Brown Bag It! Film Series presents The Eighteenth-Century Woman, Thurs. Oct 11th, 12:30 pm, Beaverbrook Art Gallery. Free. Bring a lunch, coffee will be served. Gerald Baulieu: X-ray Specs. UNB Art Centre, until Oct 21st.

Garry Neill Kennedy: *Work of Four Decades*. Beaverbrook Art Gallery, until Jan 16th.

Locations

Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 703 Queen St. Bugaboo Creek, 422 Queen. Cellar, SUB, UNB Chestnut, 440 York St. Dolan's, 349 King/Pipers Lane. Sweetwaters, 339 King. The Capital, 362 Queen. UNB Art Centre, Memorial Hall, UNB. Upperdeck, 375 King.

To have your event in • the listings • please fax or email the information to The Bruns (Attn: Rachel) by Tuesday at 5:00pm.

email: bruns@unb.ca
fax: 453-5073

wisdom. Other truly blazing tracks are "Get Your Self Up", "Hush", and "The Lessin'."

You'd be hard-pressed to find an album more influential or powerful than *Sneak Attack*. Everything is on point on this album, and at this moment, KRS-One seems more at one with hip hop and rap than any other artist in the industry. If you truly think you're down with hip hop, then you've already got this album in your collection.

**** 1/2

• Troy Neilson

The Favourite Beer of UNB & STU

Those who like it, like it a lot.

