

Celebrate Good Times With Alexander Keith's



Mark McGinnis/The Brunswickan

If you missed Moneen when they were in town last week, head to Saint John tomorrow (Saturday) to see one of Canada's best live bands. Visit www.moneen.com for more tour information.

Willie Nelson

(Lost Highway) *The Great Divide*

Yup, Willie Nelson is still pumpin' out the tunes after a long career and, well, he should have stopped. Although some glittering diamonds for songs shine through the rough - 'Recollection Phoenix', they are left marred by the rest. This 'sell-out' album (sorry for the bluntness) incorporated such folk from the mainstream as Kid Rock, Sheryl Crow and Brian McNight. Poor Willie even covers 'Time after Time' (of Cindy Lauper infamy). Overall, however, the album has a pretty placid appeal, which is in keeping with the Nelson style. Still, I recommend this album only if you may be using it as a step from the mainstream to Willie's original work.

*** • Greg LeBlanc

Weezer

(Universal) *Maladroit*

If you've heard 'Dope Nose', the racey first single from this new album, there's not much that I can do for you. You've already licked the coating of what this album tastes like. It's filled with short, catchy tracks consisting of harmonious speed-rock and rock ballads.

From 94's *Blue Album* up until now, Weezer has been the off and on king of Modern Geek Rock. It's fair to say that this quick follow-up is making up for lost time. That's right, it's living up to the ultra-catchy, ultra-groovy, and ultra-grungy standards that we've come to expect from Weezer. If you're just looking for the best of *Maladroit* then download what I consider to be the cream of this killer crop: 'Dope nose',

Rita Chiarelli

(Northern Blues) *Breakfast at Midnight*

Breakfast at Midnight couldn't have been a more appropriate title for this rather unspectacular blues offering. The musicianship is high, and the production values are excellent (Colin Linden produced the album and plays on most of the tracks), but there is something missing. I did like most of the tracks on this disc, but none stood out. For the most part, these songs are tight bar blues numbers. The lyrical content is largely concerned with life on the road and lost loves; reflective of a musician who has not had tremendous success with their craft or their heart. A decent blues offering, but not that innovative or unique.

*** • Kirby Arbeau

'Keep Fishin', 'Take control', 'Slob', 'Slave', and 'Love Explosion'.

**** • Gavin Simms

Ben Kweller

(ATO/BMG) *Sha Sha*

Ben Kweller has been hanging around the spotlight for a few years now. His previous band, Radish, caused a bidding war before finally releasing their debut album, but it looks like it is going to be Ben himself who is going to reap the harvest of that early potential.

Sha Sha is a collection of songs that Kweller has been demo-ing for some time now, and now that he's spent some time in a real studio, they sound a lot more beefed up and full. His sound could best be described as power-pop, but with a healthy dose of rock too - handy comparisons could include Ben Lee, Jonny Polonsky or Ben Folds (particularly when Kweller sits at his piano).

There's some really good songs here that will stick in your head after just a couple of listens - 'Wasted & Ready' and 'Lizzy', but other than a few songs being a little bit long, there's not much to complain about here. It looks like a lot more people will be hearing of Ben Kweller very soon.

***1/2 • Michael Edwards

Various Records

(Virgin) *Blade II Soundtrack*

Happy Walters' production of the 1994 *Judgement Night* soundtrack stands as a revolutionary movement towards the fusion of rap and metal/alternative. Without surprise, Happy is at it again with *Blade II*'s mix of hip-hop and electronica.

Unfortunately rap does not unify with electronica as strongly as it does metal. However, the album produces four standout tracks on Cypress Hill & Roni Size's 'Child of the Wild West'; Mos Def & Massive Attack's 'I Against I'; Volume 10 & Roni Size's 'Raised in the Hood'; and Trina, Rah Digga & Groove Armada's 'Gangsta Queens'.

Despite the all-star lineup of Eve, Ice Cube, Busta Rhymes, Moby, Fatboy Slim, The Roots, The Crystal Method, Jadakiss, Bubba Sparxxx, and Mystikal, several collaborations remain feeble. Nonetheless, I enjoyed the album. If you enjoy electronica and hip-hop, be sure to pick this one up.

*** • Troy Neilson

Ed Harcourt

(Heavenly/Capitol) *Here Be Monsters*

Ed Harcourt has been in the fortunate position of having praise heaped on him at every point in his brief career - his demo recordings managed to build up enough of a following that the positive reviews for his debut album were merely a formality. But not without good reason.

Here Be Monsters is a complex and ambitious album that goes back to the time when singer/songwriters ruled the world. Harcourt obviously has a little bit of a fixation with the 70s, and you can hear touches of Elton John, Harry Nilsson and even some more contemporary artists like Radiohead creep in to stop it from sounding like he's stuck in a time warp.

The music doesn't subscribe to any current fashions - with a combination of Harcourt's gruff Tom Waits-like voice (that also has an unexpected range when required) and the rich orchestration that adorns most songs, this is a rewarding record that keeps revealing more with each subsequent listen.

**** • Michael Edwards

CD rating guide

- ***** Wonderful. Simply Wonderful.
- **** Like a warm, silky massage.
- *** It'll do in a pinch.
- ** Why bother getting out of bed?
- * No, never.

Iron Maiden

(EMI) *Rock in Rio*

Are you kidding me? I don't even have to take the shrink-wrap off this bad boy to know that it fucking rocks. The trippy holographic image of the Rock in Rio stage on the album cover is mesmerizing enough to make that task impossible anyway. When you move the CD around Eddie appears in the background and looks like he's about to devour the whole goddamn festival. But you just know Eddie's going to wait until the boys are done a-rocking, because interrupting Maiden isn't even safe for the undead.

This is two discs of live Maiden from January 2001 at the Rock in Rio festival in front of God knows how many thousands of people. And if nineteen tracks of metal wizardry courtesy of the Maiden catalogue old & new isn't enough to leave you sweaty and dazed, there are two video segments from the show to be played on your computer. The footage, incidentally, is culled from a double DVD documenting this monumental chapter in rock history. Buy both of these items right now, then rock out. Up the Irons!

***** • Burt Muston

Chore

(Sonic Unyon) *The Coastline Fire*

When I reviewed Chore's first release, *Another Plebeian* (1997), I said that they were "aggressive, yet melodic." Five years and two albums later, I'd say they've ditched the aggressive tendencies nearly to the point where I'd call this Ontarian four-piece lullaby music. If you like alterna-rock that's melodious, nicely polished and drifting towards the emo-indie scene, go check them out at The G-Spot April 17th.

* • Candace Mooers

John Mayer

(Sony Music) *Room for Squares*

Simply put, John Mayer is one of the best up and coming folksy artists out there. Recently Elton John talked up Mayer as one of his favorite artists on the Rosie O'Donnell show.

The first time I heard John Mayer a few months ago, I became an immediate fan. His music stylings remind me of a bit of Sting and Dave Matthews on guitar, Dave Matthews on vocals and Jack Johnson song wise. Mayer's guitar work is as excellent as it is refreshingly melodic.

Each song on the album, *Room for Squares*, is a piece of work, none of which I have any complaints about. I recommend this album to any fan of the Dave Matthes Band, Jack Johnson, David Gray or any other folk rock fans.

***** • Andrew Culbertson

Various Artists

(Fox) *Moulin Rouge 2*

Easily the most innovative film of 2001, *Moulin Rouge* provided a brilliant soundtrack with the likes of Bono, Beck, Fatboy Slim, and of course those conservatively dressed *Lady Marmalade* Divas. Unfortunately not all of the spectacular musical numbers made the cut. A second volume had to be released. Again, it is an eclectic mix of songs: Highlights include the original film versions of *Sparkling Diamonds*, performed by Nicole Kidman and the cast and Jim Broadbent's show stealing cover of *Like a Virgin*. On the remix list are the Tony Phillips cut of *One Day I'll Fly Away*, which is fantastic, and the hyper redux of *Bolero* which closes the picture. If you loved the film and already have volume one, this is a must have compliment.

***** • Nick Logan

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