



**The Screaming Jets**

DO\*YA (SonyBMG)

**A** beefed-up rock album. Though what else would you expect from these Aussie stalwarts?

The Screaming Jets are huge – in every way. And *DO\*YA* is, as the band would have intended, a rock feast.

The Jets have been playing long and hard, and don't look like slowing down. Like an old-school Mustang, there is plenty of fuel left in this bad boy.

Dave Gleeson's voice stands up and takes no prisoners. From a powerful yet understandably Jets-like beginning, some of the more musical tracks have been left to the end. *1 4 1* is sound, while *Knock Knock* leaves its shoes at the door. It's punchy, but polite about beating your head in. Turn it up.

But although *DO\*YA* may rock, it still feels like watching an old episode of *Neighbours*. You know it's from a different time.

No doubt the tunes will have the life they deserve out on the live circuit – but at the end of the day, these aren't going to tempt the contemporary ear.



**Steve Kilbey**

Painkiller (Karmic Hit Records)

**A**ustralian psychedelic rock band The Church is suitably skilled at conjuring all encompassing melodies and slower burning workouts often within the same track, and songwriter Steve Kilbey has had much to do with this.

I remain fond of the detailed Byrds-like pop music on albums such as *Heyday*, also splashed across this engaging musician's latest solo effort.

When inspiration strikes, Kilbey has complemented his main band with a bunch of mostly engaging solo albums going back to the late 1980s. These consistently wrap the listener in the kind of minor-key melodies upon which bands like New Order have made their reputation.

*Painkiller* also moves along these lines. It opens with *Outbound's* fluttering melodics. These are enhanced by an insistent rhythm and sparse instrumentation which befits following tracks to which Kilbey sometimes likes to add subtle electronics when the mood requires. Although he provides opened-up expanses of sound on a couple of 10-minute-plus space rockers, Kilbey also knows that hazy atmospherics should never get in the way of a good tune. And *Painkiller* is bursting with them.

Dan Bigna



**Downsyde**

All City (Illusive)

**A**ll *City* is a great new album by the West Australian hip hop troupe of MCs Optamus, Dazastah, Shabazz and DJ Arnee, four years after their third and last landslide release *When The Dust Settles*.

*All City* represents a further progression of their mixed style, using laid-back and acoustic instrumentals matched with fat and full rhythms to produce an upbeat and groovy feel.

The album features guests such as Howling John Stone, Guru (from New York) and Stamina MC (England) who spit out some great word play.

*Hot Town* and some other tracks have very similar basslines to tracks on Downsyde's previous albums. But it doesn't really matter because they're all great beats that are worth revitalising and capitalising.

*Watucamehere 4* (featuring Guru) is a lyrical narrative about unscrupulous corporate life, but as uninteresting as that may sound, it's got a nice rolling flow and really funky beat.

Another top-notch Aussie hip hop album that's well worth going out and buying for your own Christmas stocking. Not to mention a nice alternative to Christmas carols.

Owen Hrabanek



**Lucinda Williams**

Little Honey (Lost Highway)

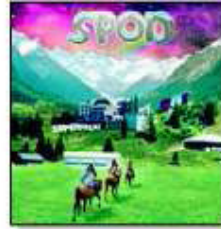
**J**ourneywoman Williams returns to the fray with her most successful (commercially at least) album, but where are the songs?

Actually, that's a bit harsh. True, there's nothing to match Williams's breakthrough hit, *Passionate Kisses* (which garnered a songwriting Grammy for Lu and a performance gong for Mary-Chapin Carpenter when it featured on the latter's marvellous *Come On, Come On* album in 1993). But album opener *Real Love* does kick things off in fine style; the song is at the hardest end of Williams's rock ambitions, and, backed by some fine backing vocalising from Susannah Hoffs and Matthew Sweet you'd be forgiven for thinking that *Little Honey* was a harder-than-normal album. But it's not.

Pretty soon we're back on track and into normal territory, with the vituperative melancholia of *Rarity* in particular hitting the spot. Elsewhere Elvis Costello adds his talents to the amusingly ragged duet *Jailhouse Tears*, which, appropriately for this time of year, has a *Fairytale of New York* feel in its abusive call-and-response structure.

This is good stuff, but really for hardcore fans only overall.

Scott Adams



**Spod**

Superfrenz (Valve Records/MGM)

**I**t's a small miracle Spod's second LP has seen the light of day. After the original was lost in a hard drive crash, he was ready to chuck it in, but luckily a group of his mates – the Superfrenz of the title – rallied round the white-suited MC/producer and he rebuilt the album from scratch.

And thus we have another instalment of cheesy keys, 8-bit hip hop beats, hair-metal guitars and unhinged rhymes – delivered with tongue firmly in cheek.

I hesitate to use the words "more mature", but to some degree *Superfrenz* leaves behind the 2 Live Crew-esque sex rhymes of his debut *Taste The Radness* – though there's still room for a synth-fuelled tribute the upper half of the female form in *Norx*.

Another album highlight, the full-throttle electro assault of *Nitefallz*, pits Atari Teenage Riot and Suicide in a battle to the death.

There are, however, a few misfires; *Cats!* is built, predictably, around sampled "meows" and while initially amusing quickly becomes tedious.

Overall, it's consummate dance-floor fodder. Look no further for your summer club jamz.

Peter Krbavac