

hard to quibble over trivia. Plus, it's a friggin' beautiful package. For diehards and dilettantes alike, this is a winner. (Mute; www.mute.com) *Phil Freeman*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Electric Ladyland: Clickhop Version 1.0

From chest-beating hip hop to skittering glitch hop.

After six volumes (two of them double-disc sets), the ultra-macho, skull-cracking mutant hip hop of the *Electric Ladyland* comps was getting a little tired. It didn't help that a regular cast of characters (Alec Empire, Techno Animal, Spectre) had basically taken over each successive release. This new incarnation is decidedly refreshing, though, and not just because it's glomming onto the sound of the moment. The off-kilter, vaguely unsettling sounds of digital error are the building blocks here, as a bunch of artists most folks won't recognize create tracks that would make Timbaland fill his baggy jeans with jizz and hot feces. Even DJ Spooky's contribution doesn't suck. This is a great leap forward (that's a joke, son; see the cover art for details) for the series. Good for them, staying relevant like that. (Mille Plateaux; www.mille-plateaux.com) *Phil Freeman*

ANDRE ESTERMANN

Balloon

Faceless, yet addictive, post-house.

It's all been done before, sad to say. The algebraic beat structures, ascending synth melodies, touches of post-production effects tweaking—it's all so

1997. Why, then, is *Balloon* so compelling? Maybe it's due to Andre Estermann's reluctance to toe the cold and limp line of most IDM producers, and his desire to inject his metallic beats with some passion. Translating house and straight-up pop (his synth work is highly lyrical—check track nine) through Autechre's fragmented lexicon, Estermann assembles 12 tracks into a kinetic whole, meant for consumption both at home and at the club. (Sellwell; www.sellwell.de) *Jason Olariu*

FAUST

The BBC Sessions +

Vintage weirdness from the weirdest krautrock group of them all.

This archival release adds to Faust's reputation as the unknown German supergroup from a parallel universe. Faust never cared about being successful, and were essentially the result of a major record company's unbelievable lapse of judgment. After the band had messed around in their subsidized communal house/studio from 1970-73, smoked a lot of dope and produced nothing of commercial value, the embarrassed record company finally bailed. The high point of this release is a medley recorded live at the BBC Studios in 1972. Overall, the Faust "sound" displayed on this CD is a mixture of Soft Machine, early Sonic Youth, Glenn Branca, the Incredible String Band and a bunch of stoned loonies. Amazing stuff for 1972, and still amazing, as a matter of fact. (ReR; dist. by Cuneiform; www.cuneiformrecords.com) *Bill Tilland*

FOETUS

Blow

Industrial pioneer's latest album gets remixed by some creative producers.

Foetus axis Jim Thirlwell's latest release, *Flow*, was an indulgent, uneven experiment, but thanks to a royal butchering by the dance world's finest jocks, this remix album is a bona-fide miracle cure. Amon Tobin can sensualize the ugliest noise, and on *Blow* he screams "Cirrhosis Of The Heart" with the full Brazilo-batucada treatment. Young Gods leader Franz Treichler buries "The Need Machine" in Doppler-effect delay that makes Thirlwell's gritty voice fade in and out like a drowning man's. And so on, through the meat grinder it goes: Jay Wasco pummels "Victim Or Victor" with ear-chafing free-jazz skronk; Ursula 1000 gives "Someone Who Cares" a reverby Hawaiian-blue makeover; Kidneythieves throw every F/X trigger they have at the helpless "Grace Of God," while Thirlwell's own lyrical clichés intensify the queasiness of DJ Food's "Suspect." Only Phylr fully frees the ghost from the machine with the eerie "Mandelay." (This guy oughta score horror movies full time.) *Blow*'s greatest asset is its inclusiveness, coralling styles as disparate as ex-Nine Inch Nail Charlie Clouser's angular grind ("Quick Fix"), Pan Sonic's icy drizzle ("Kreibabe") and the Cuisinarted glitch of Kid606 ("Shun"). Thirlwell's overlong remix of "The Need Machine" is serviceable drum & bass exoticia, but the only one who doesn't live up to his customary greatness is German techno fiend Panacea, who delivers a lackluster take on "Hueldoch 7B." (Thirsty Ear; www.thirstyear.com) *Andrew Lentz*

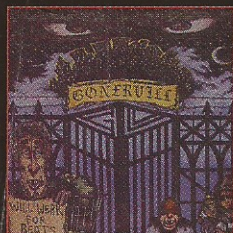
DJ FOOD & DK

Solid Steel Presents: Now, Listen!

Ninja Tune DJs make their cuts click on this phenomenal mix CD.

Originally meant to commemorate the Ninja Tune label's 10-year anniversary, *Solid Steel Presents* became a series capturing the mixologist spirit of "Solid Steel," the Monday-night BBC Radio show created by label founders Matt Black and Jonathan More (a.k.a. Coldcut). The series' first installment, *Now, Listen!*, sees DK (Darren Knott) and DJ Food (PC and Strictly Kev)—"Solid Steel"'s erstwhile hosts—culling and cutting their favorite tracks in the service of MC flows and hep cat jazz. To wit: Blackalicious' "Alphabet Aerobics" gets speedily overrun by a "Cut Chemist 2.5 Minute Workout"; X-ecutioners scratch along with woofer-busting boom-bap over flatulent synths and shrill horns on "Musica Negra"; and Sabu Martinez' percussion meltdown, "Hotel Alyssa—Sousse, Tunisia," recalls an all-night Fela Kuti jam session.

Furthering the disc's rapcentric thrust, Mr. Scruff's already killer "Ug" becomes fodder for DJ Vadim to spit over. Almost as if to prove they love more than just hip hop, Food and DK include the Beat's "Mirror In The Bathroom" with its ska glory mostly intact; proto-trip-hoppers Art Of Noise loom nostalgically with "Moments in Love"; and finally, the rarefied atmospheres of Boards Of Canada's "The Colour Of The Fire" cater to IDM eggheads. Even *Now, Listen!*'s "intermissions" are edifying, especially the trap-set lesson on "Let's Play Drums." (Ninja Tune; www.ninjatune.net) *Andrew Lentz*



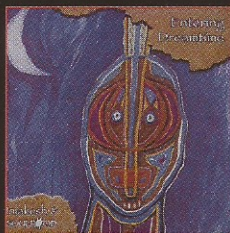
GONERVILL
Album > Gonervill (INNER-HYTHMIC; www.innerhythmic.com)
Rating > 7
Who? Bay Area DJs Eddie Def and Extrakd (both El Stew) and drummer Brain (Primus, Praxis), aided by guitarists Buckethead (El Stew, Guns N' Roses) and M.I.R.V. (Limbomaniacs).
Sounds like: Freakily funky, warped instrumental hip hop accentuated by dynamic turntablism and guitar heroics.
How is it? A weird party soundtrack for next-level hip-hop headz, played live with no samples.
Kindred spirits: Live Human, El Stew, DJ Disk



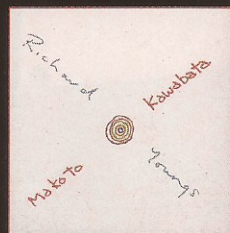
HALO
Album > Guattari (From *The West Flows Grey Ash And Pestilence*) (RELAPSE; www.relapse.com)
Rating > 8
Who? Fiercely malevolent Australian duo R. Allen and S. Klein with a reissue of their 1999 album.
Sounds like: A holocaustic vortex of distorted guitars and vocals over monstrously heavy beats.
How is it? Heavier than Osama's karmic debt; a slow-motion sonic apocalypse in glorious monochrome.
Kindred spirits: Godflesh, early Swans, Earth



HEY MERCEDES
Album > Everynight Fire Works (VAGRANT; www.vagrant.com)
Rating > 7
Who? Three-quarters of beloved emo champions Braid, with new guitarist Mark Dawursk rounding out the foursome.
Sounds like: A bit like Braid, actually—heartfelt vocals, slashing guitars, powerhouse drumming.
How is it? Not too far removed from what the trio had been doing before, but still better than your average emo.
Kindred spirits: Braid, Alkaline Trio, Saves The Day



INLAKESH & SOULFOOD
Album > Entering Dreamtime (SOULFOOD; www.soulfoodmusic.com)
Rating > 8
Who? Tanya Gerard and Rob Thomas (Inlakesh) and DJ Free (Soulfood), who met at a Whole Life Expo. They're now based in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
Sounds like: Soul-levitating mantras for didgeridoo, tabla, flute, Tibetan monk chants and electronics.
How is it? Ideal for yoga, meditation and chakra-aligning sessions: a new-age triffecta in one CD.
Kindred spirits: Big Swifty, Mickey Hart, Dr. Didg



MAKOTO KAWABATA/RICHARD YOUNGS
Album > Makoto Kawabata/Richard Youngs (VHF; www.vhfrecords.com)
Rating > 9
Who? Guru of Japanese psych-rock gods Acid Mothers Temple and postmodern Scottish troubadour.
Sounds like: Transcendently beautiful duets for acoustic guitar, autoharp, organ and electronics that build to slow-motion miasmas of sound.
How is it? Deserving of heavy rotation in the waiting room of Paradise.
Kindred spirits: Toho Sara, Popol Vuh, Tower Recordings



TAKAGI MASAKATSU
Album > Pia (CARPARK; www.carparkrecords.com)
Rating > 7
Who? Tokyo multimedia artist with his debut album, which includes a bonus disc with five Quicktime videos.
Sounds like: Childlike melodies submerged in slurred digital effluvia, and all the more poignant for it.
How is it? Like a new kind of Muzak for data-entry worker drones and computer-graphic artists, *Pia* will keep tedium at bay for such wage slaves.
Kindred spirits: Nobukazu Takemura, Marumari, Microstoria