few years plus Brendan O'Brien on organ, Dylan runs through 11 songs (12 on the video), mostly from his sixties heyday, with
varying results. When he tries, as on “Deso-
nation Row,” “With God on Our Side,” and
“Love Minus Zero/No Limit” (available only
on the video), he reinterprets and gives new meaning to old material. At
other times, however, as on “Tombstone
Blues,” “All Along the Watchtower” and
“Like A Rolling Stone,” Dylan merely
blurs lyrics indifferently. The Unplugged
set is also noteworthy for its inclusion for
the first time on an album of “John Brown,” a 1963 antiwar outtake from The
Times They Are A-Changin’, which is an-
other of the set’s most moving moments.

Despite the inability or refusal to grace
his audience with new material, Dylan con-
sistently finds ways to reinterpret his older
work and keep it fresh. And notwithstanding
his sloppy lead guitar work and the occa-
sional phlegm gurgling in his throat as he
sings, Unplugged is, for the most part, a job
done well. (Columbia) df

The Existers
Of Coffins & Carousels

If you’re searching for the perfect antedote
to help you escape the $30 million media
blitz which attempts to convince us
Michael Jackson is still the King of Pop,
then The Existers’ Of Coffins & Carousels is just
what the doctor ordered. Forget the
moonwalking monkey lover and slip into
a psychedelic haze as Existers’ multi-instru-
mant mastermind J.D. McKean leads you
through his personal Neverland of freaks
and harlots and bitter sweet musings on en-
tropy and decay. Here love is a Car O’
Nine Tails, a disease that “lurks in shadow-
woed wait,” while on the title cut McKean
laments the emptiness of contemporary life:

“If there no sadder equation/then all that
lives must fall blitter & die/Trapped in this
solemn occasion/with nothing to wear but
this/black suit and tie....

The ghost of Ian Curtis would approve.
But imagine a subdued reworking of The
Residents’ Freakshow produced by Ray
Manzarek, replete with happy-orgy-of-
death keyboards, laid-back John Densmore
drums courtesy of writer Richard Christian
Matheson and Jim Hagonian’s lead guitar
which sounds like it could have been re-
corded sometime in ’66 and exhumed from
the Elektra Record vaults. Wrap this au-
dio web around McKean’s lyrics and plaintive,
almost wounded vocals and the result is a
near perfect selection of psychedelic blues
shot through with some surprises. Like
“Letter From David,” an excerpt of a tape-

der letter played over a Vic Mizzi Munsters
theme-like arrangement. (Skeleton Music,
Box 9078-150, Van Nuys, CA 91409) pn

Marianne Faithfull
A Secret Life

Faithfull’s wither-hag wheeze remains in-
tact, but her first album of original material
in 12 years is a boring and at time pre-
ciously pretentious affair. Her self-penned
lyrics, which emphasize sad tales of down-
and-out women in sordid predicaments, are,
however, frequently compelling. But
using excerpts from Dante Alighieri’s Di-
vine Comedy and Shakespeare’s Tempest as
bookends for her tales of woe is a mistake.
Moreover, Angelo Badalamenti’s accompa-
nying music, which leans toward a Euro-
cabaret sound - heavy on the orchestration
and synth arrangements - lacks compelling
melodies, while the backing playing is ut-
terly faceless. (Island) df

Foctus

“Welcome to hell, motherfucker,” Mr. Jim
Thirlwell spat as he walked by me to the el-

climate stage at the back of the black-walled
D.C. punk palace otherwise known as the
9:30 Club. And while I was never quite
sure I was in the infernal regions, I would
just like to say if what I subsequently ex-
perienced was the hell below, then, oh baby,

do.

The Fuzztones
Lysergic Ejaculations

Perhaps America’s longest-running ’60s
punk garage band. Until they broke up a
year or so ago. Since that time there have
been a number of cool posthumous releases,
ied. Nine Months Later, the Halloween LP
and this fab double lp set. The packaging is
A Number One daddy with a gatefold

sleeve and full color artwork throughout.

The cover features two crossed, erect pe-

nises spewing paisley. The inside collage


Galaxy Trio
In The Harem

They play it slow. They play it fast. They
play it with aplomb. Mysterioso lo-fi surf

instrumental. You’ve heard it before. Nev-