

Scandinavian accents add to the sense of a pop era unmoored from its time and place, and reconfigured into one coherent record with cool precision. **NICK HASTED**

LIAM FINN I'll Be Lightning

VEP/ROC

★★★★

Kiwi chip off the old block does DIY with flair

The modestly engaging first solo album from the 23-year-old son of Crowded House's Neil Finn boasts the wistful melodiousness – if not the existential weightiness – of Dad's music. In one sequence, Liam sprays "Lead Balloon" with ratty guitar distortion, strums and "ahhhs" his way through the pastoral "Fire in Your Belly", channels Harry Nilsson on the multi-tracked a cappella "Lullaby" and wails on his detuned drums in the rollicking acoustic number, "Energy Spent". His willingness to scribble over the pretty surfaces of his songs brings a bristling edge to his Beatlesque pop, twisting the familiar into intriguing new shapes.

BUD SCOPPA

FOETUS Vein

ECTOPIC/BIRDMAN/CD

★★★★

"Reimaginings" of Foetus' Love LP

Instead of the usual dancefloor makeovers a remix album implies, Foetus man Jim Thirlwell has commissioned a finely judged coterie of electronic puffers and tweekers to meddle with his parts. Most inventive are Jason Forrest, who converts "Not Adam" into thunderous pomp-orchestral breaks; Matmos shaking the percussion out of "Not In Yr Hands"; and Tom Recchion, who puts several of the original tracks into a digital crucible. Laptoppers Fennesz and Tujiko Noriko wrings some harmonic poignancy out of "Pareidolia" and "Don't Want Me Anymore". Thirlwell does himself over on "Mon Agonie Douce", with a mid-European accordion lurch.

ROB YOUNG

FRISKA VILJOR Bravo!

CRYINGBOB

★★★★★

Would-be heartbreak album finds happy-go-lucky momentum

You might expect mournfulness. Joakim Sveningsson and Daniel Johansson bonded over break-ups with girlfriends and a vow to write and record only when drunk, and in Stockholm, drunk tends to mean more than tipsy. Yet for all their intentions to capture desperation and

bitterness, *Bravo!* is a decidedly upbeat affair, buoyant enough to sidestep genre ruts with tingling, spirited energy. Sure, there are I'm-so-lonely themes, but the acoustic purity and boyishness of the LP seems to suggest that ultimately, there are plenty more fish in the sea. **CHRIS ROBERTS**

GOLDENBOY Underneath The Radio

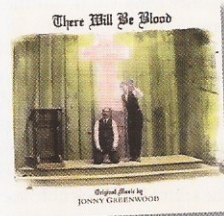
SPLIT RECORDS

★★★★

Second from accomplished US journeymen

If you can judge an artist by the company they keep, then it's no surprise that this Californian duo's stock-in-trade is alt. pop of the sweetly mournful, gently chiming and sun-glazed variety. Guitarist/vocalist Shon Sullivan has served time with Elliott Smith (who nicknamed him "Goldenboy"), Johnny Marr, and Eels, and the spirits of Smith and Morrissey loom so large over these songs (particularly, the hushed "I'm Still Down" and "Motorbike") they're not so much homages as acts of craven worship. Goldenboy are a fine songwriting team, but they'd shine brighter if they avoided their tribute-act tendencies.

SHARON O'CONNELL



JONNY GREENWOOD There Will Be Blood OST

NONESUCH

★★★★

Second soundtrack from Radiohead man

From his initial role as guitarist, Jonny Greenwood has since taken on a role as all-purpose envelope pusher for Radiohead – a navigator to Thom Yorke's Captain. Provider of many a spooky ambience as well as his share of the band's minor key arpeggios, it's this tack he pursues as composer – he doesn't play – of this score for PT Anderson's new movie. Here, there's plenty of drama and glumness – the most fitting reference points on the likes of "Open Spaces" are classical composers like Shostakovich, as, with Greenwood at the controls, the BBC Concert Orchestra do their thing. Anderson's movies have a strong relationship with music – this may yet provide quite a few alarms, even some surprises. **JOHN ROBINSON**

BRITISH SEA POWER

Do You Like Rock Music?

ROUGH TRADE

★★★★

Eccentric indie-rockers ask the big questions

They've staged concerts on the Scilly Isles, on board a Mersey ferry and down a Cornish slate mine. Since 2005's *Open Season* they've released a split single with The Wurzels and attempted a live collaboration with Krautrock curmudgeons Faust that ended with bassist Neil Wilkinson getting punched in the face by one of his supposed collaborators.

British Sea Power are literally on a different map to most of their contemporaries. Behind the silly title of their third album is a serious quest for the essence of rock music – and naturally British Sea Power aren't searching for it in the backstage toilets of the London Astoria but on the dark slopes of mighty Helvellyn. Not since Julian Cope have musicians worked so hard to equate rock with rocks.

Aided by Graham Sutton of vaporous post-rockers Bark Psychosis, BSP have summoned a typhoon of swooshing sonics to bolster their biting guitars. The awesome elemental racket of "Lights

Out For Darker Skies" matches Arcade Fire for pomp and circumstance. When a twinkling celestial choir pipes up at the end of instrumental "The Great Skua" it's a successful attempt to muscle onto Sigur Rós' glacier.

Strip away the raging atmospherics though, and the milieu is still stodgy indie rock, with BSP's old debts to Joy Division and Echo & The Bunnymen remaining unpaid. At least the expansive lyrical concerns of the Wilkinson brothers are a source of fascination. "H5N1 killed a wild swan/It was a kind of omen of everything to come" runs the opening line of "Canvey Island" – only BSP could turn the bird flu panic into a pensive estuary elegy.

This band still lack a "Wake Up" or a "Float On" but *Do You Like Rock Music?* is exhilarating in its ambition, full of songs that will warm the cockles at whichever National Heritage site they choose to play next.

SAM RICHARDS

► uncut.co.uk for more on British Sea Power

Q & A SCOTT WILKINSON



UNCUT: You recorded in Montreal, Cornwall and Prague. Where did it start coming together?

WILKINSON: When we were recording by ourselves at Fort Tregantle in Cornwall. The Royal Marines were doing their exercises nearby and suddenly 30 men with guns would appear on the

horizon. We got some great recordings of Chinook helicopters. Originally we were planning on doing a series of live Krautrock jams – the album turned out very far from that, but we hope it still conveys the adventure we had recording it.

How are we meant to interpret the album title?

It's meant to be funny, but we also wanted to emphasise our appreciation of The Stooges, Julian Cope, Jerry Lee Lewis... Rock music is in danger of dying out. It's become feeble and incapable of giving purpose to the world. So we thought we'd have a go at expanding its remit. **INTERVIEW: SAM RICHARDS**

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