

Stores Full of Solo Albums, Side Projects, and Spin-Offs

Written by John James

Tuesday, 13 February 2001 18:00

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· Solo projects abound in the coming weeks as individual members of past-and-present successfully busy bands take a sidestep, releasing new side-project CDs. One of the tastier offerings: Limp Bizkit's Wes Borland tries on the mask of his new alter ego as Big Dumb Face and the Duke Lion Fights the Terror set on the Geffen-distributed Flawless/Flip imprint on March 6.

· Lars Fredericksen and Tim Armstrong must not get enough of each other as co-founders of Rancid; the pair has spun off a new musical identity as Lars Fredericksen & the Bastards. Armstrong's Hellcat label will issue the duo's debut on March 20, promising cover versions of Billy Bragg's "To Have & Have Not" and Motorhead's "Leaving Here."

· As the primary guitarist on Michael Jackson's Thriller album and a founding member of Toto, Steve Lukather has been a staple touring player and session musician on the West Coast for 25 years. Next month the Favored Nations label is issuing his new guitar experiment with reigning jazz guitar master Larry Carlton entitled No Substitutions: Live In Osaka. Recorded over a recent three-week tour of Japan, this new venture features 14-minute-plus jams on Miles Davis' "All Blues" and Jeff Beck's "The Pump."

· Look for former Soundgarden drummer Matt Cameron and his Wellwater Conspiracy project to release its new album The Scroll & Its Combinations this spring. Teamed with former Monster Magnet guitarist Jon Paul McBain, the newTVT Records album will feature contributions from guest guitarist and former Soundgarden mate Kim Thayil.

· The new side project I'm really looking forward to is Les Claypool's latest incarnation as leader of the Fearless Flying Frogs Brigade, featuring former members of Rat Dog, Primus, Sausage, and Galactic. Two separate new albums are scheduled for release this spring, as Set One and Set Two on Claypool's Prawn Song imprint. Set One promises covers of King Crimson's "Thela Hun Ginjeet" and Pink Floyd's "Shine On You Crazy Diamond," while Set Two takes the Floyd trip even further as it completely recreates the entire Animals album.

· My pick of the week is VoizNoiz: Urban Sound Scapes, an adventurous sound collage from artisan Michel Banabila and his Rotterdam, Holland, collaborative. This funky electronica-based watercolor is simply dripping with melodic tones, samples, and snippets – reminiscent of

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Jean-Michel Jarre's Zoolook masterpiece from 1977. Just as Jarre sampled animal noises and 25 spoken languages as the cubist threads of his electric growl, Banabila has similarly collected found sounds recorded on the street and inside the stations of Yeman and Holland. The treated languages and calliope circles roll and undulate into a mesmerizing trip-hop listening experience that's rather cinematic, tipping its European hat fondly to Brian Eno's and David Byrne's My Life In the Bush of Ghosts, Yellow Magic Orchestra, Laurie Anderson, and Little Wolf. This new release, from the wonderfully quirky Tone Casualties label, is worth searching for and highly recommended.

Television Alert:

The Tonight Show with Jay Leno welcomes Dido on Monday; The Late Show with David Letterman hosts Destiny's Child tonight; Late Night with Conan O'Brien features Coldplay on Friday overnight and Badly Drawn Boy on Monday overnight; Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher opens up a different side of Vitamin C on Thursday overnight and Herbie Hancock on Monday overnight; and Saturday Night Live's musical guest this weekend is Shaggy.

New Releases Coming Tuesday, February 20:

... and like the winds, young grasshopper, are subject to change.

The Anomoanon – The Anomoanon (Palace)

Backfire – Still Dedicated (Victory) from Holland

Bis – Music for a Stranger World (Lookout) six-track disco-inspired EP from the Glasgow, Scotland, trio

CAB – 2 (Tone Center) a jazz-rock-fusion wet dream with guitarist Tony McAlpine, keyboardist Brian Auger, bassist Bunny Brunel, and drummer Dennis Chambers of Parliament Funkadelic

Kate Campbell – Wandering Strange (Eminent) singer-songwriter's album of new material and interpretations of early 18th- and 19th-century hymns and a cover of Gordon Lightfoot's "The House You Live in"

Leonard Cohen – Field Commander Cohen: Tour of 1979 (Columbia) Canada's most poetic pen and seductive voice with backing vocalist Jennifer Warren

Crooked Fingers – Bring on the Snakes (Warm) new from Eric Bachmann of Archers Of Loaf

Sam Densmore's Silverhawk – Flowers in June (Pop Sweatshop) EP

Diesel Boy – Rode Hard & Put Away Wet (Honest Don's)

Face To Face – Standards & Practices (Vagrant)

The Fatal Flying Guilloteens – The Now Hustle for New Diaboliks (Estrus)

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Annie Hayden – The Rub (Merge) new solo album from the former Spent member

Richard X. Heyman – Heyman, Hoosier, & Herman (Turn Up) delightfully intriguing new album featuring guest Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits

Kleenex/Liliput – LiLiPuT (Kill Rock Stars) two-CD collection from the Swiss pre-Riot Grrl post-punk artist whose singles and albums on the Rough Trade label in the late 1970s and early 1980s go for hundreds of dollars in the collector's market

Labradford – Fixed Content (Kranky) recorded with producer Steve Albini

The Lillingtons – The Backchannel Broadcast (Panic Button/Lookout)

Buzzy Linhart – Buzzy Linhart Loves You: The Buddha Years (Razor & Tie)

Jeff Lorber – Kickin' It (Samson)

Love – Forever Changes (Rhino) deluxe edition with seven bonus tracks

Elliott Murphy and Ian Matthews – La Terre Commune (Eminent) with covers of Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, and Jesse Colin Young

The New Year – Newness Ends (Touch & Go) new from Matt and Bubba Kadane of Bedhead

Findley Quaye – Vanguard (Epic)

The Queers – Today (Lookout) Beach Boys-inspired pop punk featuring a cover of their own "Salt Lake City"

Henry Rollins – A Rollins in the Wry (Quarterstick) new spoken-word album recorded in the summer of 1999

The Rosenbergs – Mission: You (Discipline) big buzz on this power-pop group featuring backing vocals by Tina Weymouth of the Talking Heads and Tom Tom Club

Saint Etienne – Interlude (SubPop) featuring a cover of The Beach Boys' "Stevie"

The Slackers – Wasted Days (Hellcat) Jamaican mambo rocksteady

The Spastic Boys – Torture (Checkered Past)

SPIV – Everybody's a Rock Star Tonight (Pop Sweatshop) EP produced by the Posies' Ken Stringfellow

Spoon – Girls Can Tell (Merge)

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David Thomas and the Two Pale Boys – Surfs Up (Thirsty Ear) new from the Pere Ubu founder

Tortoise – Standards (Thrill Jockey)

Willard Grant Conspiracy – Everything's Fine (Rykodisc) with former members of Sugar, Come, Silos, and Walkabouts

Rev. Billy C. Wirtz – Best of the Wirtz: 15 Years on the Road with a 77-Inch Pianist (Hightone) mirthful collection of live tracks, hits, and a gosh-darn “rasslin” interview

Zero Down – With a Lifetime to Pay (Fat Wreck)