

XTC Takes Listeners Inside the Music

Written by John James
Tuesday, 15 May 2001 18:00

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• Fans of the delightfully bright pop of XTC should start practicing their “sick day cough” and get ready to huddle up to the stereo for repeated listening of this Tuesday’s release of Homegrown, a 20-track collection of demos, song sketches, and alternative takes from last year’s Wasp Star (Apple Venus Volume 2) sessions. As they did with 1999’s Homespun set, the collection of demos from Apple Venus Volume One, the band invites us to look inside its enigmatic craft with in-studio banter, original handwritten lyric notes, and song-creation process. Some of the new collection’s highlights include a jug-band version of “In Another Life” and a lounge version of “Standing in For Joe.”

• This Tuesday also brings the long-awaited seventh CD from the In The Fishtank series of unusual sessions from Holland’s Konkurrent collective, distributed here in the States by the Touch & Go label. This time the offer was extended to Minnesota’s Low and its lonesome ethereal call. As with previously invited artists like Tortoise, June of 44, Snuff, and No Means No, Low was given two days to record 30 minutes of whatever the setting inspired. What makes the improvisational result even more magic is the inclusion of friends Dirty Three, who happened to be coming into Schiphol Airport while Low was starting to twist knobs and reel tape. The product of their serendipitous labors takes both bands to new levels, as Low’s husband-and-wife vocal union takes a “crooning” deviation against banjo and mournful violin, the highlight being a chilling on-the-spot nine-minute cover of Neil Young’s “Down By the River.” Highly recommended.

• The Caroline label has just reissued two of King Crimson’s most compelling albums newly remastered by founder Robert Fripp using 24-bit technology. Look for both Beat (from 1982) and Three of a Perfect Pair (from 1984) to feature limited-edition cardboard-sleeve packaging to resemble the original album art.

• Two of Sly & The Family Stone’s final – and lesser-known – albums (from 1979 and 1982) are finding their ways to the digital light this month by the mad archivists at Rhino’s Handmade imprint. Pressed in a limited handcrafted edition of 5,000 CDs, both Back on the Right Track and Ain’t but the One Way are collected in a single disc under the title Who the Funk Do You

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Think You Are: The Warner Bros. Recordings and available only through (<http://www.rhinohandmade.com>).

Television Alert:

The Tonight Show with Jay Leno welcomes Weezer tonight, David Gray on Thursday, and the Dave Matthews Band on Monday; The Late Show with David Letterman hosts former Talking Head David Byrne tonight; Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher digs deep with Blink 182 on Friday overnight; The Late Late Show With Craig Kilborn gets weird with Stone Temple Pilots on Friday overnight, and David Gray on Tuesday overnight; and Saturday Night Live's musical guest this weekend is Weezer.

New Releases Coming Tuesday, May 22:

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

Adam-X – On the One & One (Instinct) mix CD

American Analog Set – Through the '90s (Emperor Jones) singles and rarities including a rejected musical submission to Dr. Pepper

Attention Deficit – The Idiot King (Magna Carta) featuring Tim Alexander of Primus and Alex Skolnick of Savatage

The Beach Boys – Hawthorne, CA: Birthplace of a Musical Legacy (Capitol) two-CD collection of rare studio sessions, a cappella mixes, live tracks, and commentary highlighting the band's 40th anniversary

Binocular – Binocular (Maverick)

Bon Jovi – One Wild Night Live 1985-2001 (Island)

The Bouncing Souls – How I Spent My Summer Vacation (Epitaph)

The Briefs – "Squash Me Like a Bug" (SubPop) seven-inch single described as Devo meets the Buzzcocks

Calexico – Even My Sure Things Fall Through (Quarterstick) collection of European B sides and rare tracks, including a cover of American Music Club's "Chanel No. 5"

Nikka Costa – Everybody Got Their Something (Virgin)

Dickies – All This & Puppet Stew (Fat Wreck) long-awaited return of these hyperactive punk pioneers of the late 1970s

Dislocated Styles – Pin the Tail on the Honkey (Roadrunner)

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DJ Logic – The Anomaly (Atlantic/Ropeadope) with guests Vernon Reid of Living Color and Melvin Gibbs of the Rollins Band

Echo & The Bunnymen – Flowers (Spinart) brand new and on tour in the U.S. in July

Mark Eitzel – The Invisible Man (Matador) the fourth solo album from the American Music Club singer-songwriter

Flotsam & Jetsam – My God (Metal Blade) all new from these Phoenix, Arizona, metal legends

Fontanelle – F (Kranky) seven-song CD EP also available on white vinyl LP on the Audraglint label

Husking Bee – 4 Color Problem (Doghouse) video-enhanced CD from this Tokyo punk act

Joe Jackson – Steppin' Out: The Very Best of (A&M) two-CD anthology featuring a cover of Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder They Come"

The Ladybug Transistor – Argyle Heir (Merge)

Leftover Crack – Leftover Crack (Hellcat) featuring former members of Choking Victim

Mogwai – Pardon Our Dust as We Grow to Serve You Better (Matador)

Murphy's Law – The Party's Over (Artemis)

MXPX – The Renaissance (Fat Wreck Chords) nine-track EP

No Innocent Victim – Tipping the Scales (Victory)

John Phillips – Pay, Pack, & Follow (Eagle) legendary "lost" 1977 studio sessions from The Mamas & The Papas founder featuring Keith Richards, Mick Jagger, and Mick Taylor

Pinehurst Kids – Bleed It Dry (Barbaric)

Portastatic – Looking for Leonard (Merge) new solo stuff from Mac McCaughan of Superchunk

The Proclaimers – Persevere (Nettwerk) the first album in seven years from Scotland's Reid brothers, with Pete Thomas from Elvis Costello's Attractions

The Rapture – Out of the Races & onto the Tracks (SubPop) CD EP

Red House Painters – Old Ramon (SubPop) limited edition two-LP format in a gatefold sleeve

Redman – Malpractice (Def Jam) with guests Treach of Naughty By Nature and Scarface

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Spain – I Believe (Restless)

Stabbing Westward – Stabbing Westward (Koch)

Staind – Break the Cycle (Elektra)

Static-X – Machine (Warner Bros)

The Strokes – Modern Age (Beggars Banquet) seven-inch and CD five-inch single from this hot Manhattan band fresh off touring with Guided by Voices and The Doves

Systematic – Something in Between (Elektra)

Third Eye Foundation – I Poopoo on Your Juju (Merge) with remixes by Tarwater, Blonde Redhead, and more

Glenn Tilbrook – The Incomplete (Valley Entertainment) all new from the Squeeze founder with guests Aimee Mann and Ron Sexsmith

Ike Turner – Here & Now (Bottled Majic) his first album since 1978

Tyrese – 2000 Watts (RCA) the well-known model's second album with production by Babyface and Jermaine Dupree

various artists – The South Beach Trance Album (Streetbeat) featuring a unique Quiver mix of Led Zeppelin's "Baby, I'm Gonna Leave You"

Waldeck – The Night Garden (E-Magine) downbeat trip-hop

The Wanna-Bes – The Wanna-Bes (Panic Button) Ramones-influenced pop punk

War & Peace – Light at the End of the Tunnel (Shrapnel) new from Jeff Pilson of Dokken and Dio

Wellwater Conspiracy – The Scroll & Its Combinations (TVT) with guests Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam and Ben Sheperd and Kim Thayil of Soundgarden

Whiskeytown – Pneumonia (Lost Highway)