

Jackson Steppin' Out in New Re-Issues

Written by John James

Tuesday, 07 August 2001 18:00

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• Joe Jackson is getting the royal treatment on A&M Records' re-issue of his first two albums this Tuesday. Both albums from 1979 are seminal pop songwriting, combining Jackson's touching melodies and heartbroken sneer in hits such as "Is She Really Going Out with Him," "It's Different for Girls," and "Fools in Love. " Look Sharp! was originally released in January, and I'm the Man was released nine months later to fawning critics and fans on both sides of the Atlantic. These second servings feature complete lyrics, rare photos, copies of original advertising, and bonus B sides, as well as a live cover of Chuck Berry's "Come On." At the time, Jackson's songwriting talent was in the good company of contemporaries Elvis Costello and Graham Parker, serving up an acid-tongued punch under the surface of popular songcraft – an angst-charged fist against the long-haired, gluttonous rock-star culture of the 1970s.

• And while generation dot-com fills today's air with manufactured boy bands, clueless Lolita tarts, and music to date-rape by, have no fear, my friends. There are plenty of jewels in the latrine, as this summer is serving up some of the smartest and best singer-songwriter releases in memory. My big pick of the week is the recent domestic issue of The Turin Brakes' The Optimist album on the Astralwerks label, a stunning collection of songs from their three previous EPs along with seven new tracks. The Turin Brakes – made up of the duo of Olly Knights and Gale Paridjanian, childhood friends since their choir-boy days in Britain – have produced a heartbreaker of soft melodies, pulsating acoustic rhythms, gorgeous slide guitar, and quiet harmonies gliding and rising like the horizon of a cross-country road trip. The surreal images painted by the stream-of-consciousness lyrics are reminiscent of a softer Michael Stipe and louder Art Garfunkel whispering over the chords of a back-porch America, fragile and shimmering in flickering detail. Highly recommended.

• This Tuesday,TVT Records and Sevendust unveil the Retrospect DVD, packed with an entire Live & Loud concert, all the band's videos (including the previously unreleased "Licking Cream" clip featuring Skunk Anansie frontwoman Skin).

• Attention vinyl purists: The Sundazed Records label has just re-issued the MC5's classic 1968 live album Kick Out the Jams on 180-gram virgin wax, completely uncensored and in a nice gatefold sleeve with John Sinclair's unexpurgated liner notes. ... Old-school rap sensation Biz Markie is back, as the Groove Attack label has just released a new 12-inch single, "Turn

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Tha Party Out," produced by Prime Minister Pete Nice of 3rd Bass fame. The B side features Pittsburgh's Lone Catalysts, and a new album is scheduled for next year.

- The Lazy Cowgirls have just released a live set entitled Here & Now on the Sympathy for the Record Industry label. Instead of rehashing the hits, this new record features five new tracks, songs selected from the band's catalog of rare seven-inch-single-only songs, and older tracks rewritten and rearranged. The grits 'n' boogie outfit of garage rock 'n' roll, R&B blues, and country pump out some fun covers, too – from Bill Monroe, Billy Joe Shaver, The Flamin' Groovies, and Nat King Cole.

- Fans of Phish can seek a new two-CD tribute album that features a surprising list of contributors and supports a great charity. Feeling the love is the Mockingbird Foundation, a not-for-profit organization put together by Phish fans to benefit music-education programs for children. The album, entitled Sharin' in the Groove, features Phish covers by Dave Matthews, Hot Tuna, Arlo Guthrie, Son Seals, the Tom Tom Club, Preston School of Industry, Merl Saunders, Lake Trout, and more.

Television Alert:

The Tonight Show with Jay Leno welcomes Mandy Moore on Thursday and Usher on Monday; Late Night with Conan O'Brien hosts Slipknot on Friday overnight and Dropkick Murphys on Monday overnight; Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher gets chatty with Roger Daltrey of The Who on Friday overnight; The Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn features Jimmy Eat World on Monday overnight; and Saturday Night Live's musical guest this weekend is Don Henley.

New Releases Coming Tuesday, August 14:

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

3 Mustaphas 3 – Play Musty for Me (Omnium) collection of live performances

Michelle Branch – The Spirit Room (Maverick) debut from this 17-year-old

Lindsey Buckingham – Gift of Screws (Reprise)

Sam Cooke – SAR Records Story 1959-1965 (SAR/Abkco) two-CD set featuring two 36-page booklets

Jermaine Dupri – Instructions (Columbia)

Rick Ferrell – Different Point of View (Dreamworks) debut from the Portsmouth, Ohio, songwriter responsible for a number-one Tim McGraw hit

J Church – Meaty, Beaty, Shitty Sounding (Honeybear)

Jadakiss – Kiss Tha Game Goodbye (Interscope) solo debut from this Ruff Ryder featuring guests Snoop Dogg, DMX, Timbaland, and Carl Thomas

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Jay & Silent Bob Strike Back – original motion picture soundtrack (Universal) with music from Bloodhound Gang, Morris Day & The Time, Stroke 9, and Afroman

Alison Krauss & Union Station – New Favorite (Rounder) all new hot off the success of her vocals on the O Brother, Where Art Thou? soundtrack

k.d. lang – Live by Request (Warner Bros) CD, DVD, or VHS video featuring a cover of the classic “MacArthur Park”

Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly – Live in New Orleans (The Right Stuff) 5.1-channel surround sound DVD

New Order – “Crystal” (Warner Bros) import-only two-part CD single featuring extended mixes

Papa Chubby – How’d a White Boy Get the Blues (Blind Pig)

Philistines Jr. – Analog vs. Digital (Tarquin/Bubblecore) with guest Moby

Grant Lee Phillips – Mobilize (Zoe/Rounder) the Grant Lee Buffalo founder’s new solo work incorporating electronic textures

Primer 55 – New Release (Island)

Puddle of Mudd – Come Clean (Flawless/Geffen) the debut release of Fred Durst’s new boutique label

Swimming Pool Q’s – The Deep End (DB Records) CD re-issue of the band’s 1981 LP with 12 bonus tracks

Tight Bro’s from Way Back When – Lend You a Hand (Kill Rock Stars) all new from Olympia, Washington’s prodigal sons, featuring covers of Joe Tex’s “Show Me” and the Animals’ “Inside Looking Out”

various artists – Twisted Forever (Koch) tribute album to Twisted Sister featuring Joan Jett, Sebastian Bach, Cradle of Filth, Nashville Pussy, Motorhead, Fu Manchu, Chuck D of Public Enemy, Sevendust, The Step Kings, and more

various artists – Ozzfest 2001: The Second Millennium (Divine/Epic) 16 live tracks from Black Sabbath, Mudvayne, Disturbed, Slipknot, Papa Roach, and more

Youngstown – Down for the Get Down (Hollywood)