

a one page zine of reviews, poems, stories, shorts, rants, scraps, & junk...glints of real, flickers of true, cultural triggers, mental activation, emotional light, trips, wonderment...

An All-Reviews Issue

REVIEWS

thirteen

mp3 songs

<http://artists.mp3s.com/artists/13/thirteen.html>

Loose but hard hitting alternative hard rock from the Deep South. You can expect to find basic guitars, bass and drums here.

Anal aficionados who like their music tight-assed might accuse thirteen of being a bit too sloppy in their playing and singing; charitable types might recognize something more comfortable and family-oriented here. A bunch of guys enjoying themselves is more like it. Far be it for me to insist that alt-rock has to be acute and precise at all times!

The songs I liked best were Lo La La and The Problem Solving Ability of Chickens. While there's no doubt that this is straight-ahead alternative rock, thirteen's sound has a chugging locomotion to it that hearkens back to Southern Roots Rock.

- J. esch

Maria Marocka

Selections from "So Lo-Fi"

evol egg nart recordings
p.o. box 570763
Miami, FL 33257
www.mp3.com/mariamarocka

As you might gather from its title, Maria's exploring solo lofi spaces. The preview CD I listened to contained 5 songs -- strong on strummed acoustic guitar and Maria's rich, airy voice, which evokes the softer side of Alannis and vintage Edie Brickell. The electro/volume gets bumped up on "the height," which has a revved indie-rock drive to it. I like the intimate, home studio vibe lifting off these tunes -- as a preview of things to come, these cuts prove auspicious."



-J. esch

Tonewelders

Five Sticks

<http://www.tonewelders.com>
Plan Z Records
PO Box 5883
Gainesville, FL 32627

TSongs by David Glennon with a rollicking, traditional American folk rock feel. "It's a Guy Thing" has a funny Randy Newman sarcastic bite to it. Many of these songs hark back to time-tested song structures of old time fifties and sixties rock 'n roll. "If I Could Take My Own Advice" shows off some homegrown country-rock roots of the Neil Young variety. I don't think Glennon will ever be accused of taking himself too seriously -- case in point: "Plan Z", maybe the catchiest song on the album.



- J. esch

The Curious Hair

Happiness EP

evol egg nart recordings
p.o. box 570763
Miami, FL 33257
www.mp3.com/hairnart-mail@juno.com

A ragged, trashy, slow groove stew of lo-fi rock rambles.

The feel is deliberately (one assumes) off-the-cuff, collaborative, chock full of snatches from disparate styles sandwiched together into intriguing new deli combos. It's a blended, welcoming sound, like melted cheese on rye toast, and it grows on you. Worth a visit to their mp3.com site for sure.



- J. esch

Ernesto Diaz-Infante

UCROSS JOURNAL

<http://www.propellerheads.com/friends/PaxRecordings>
Pax Recordings
PO Box 697
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
itzat@earthlink.net

Ernesto's spent some time in Wyoming and has come up with a lovely set of solo piano pieces to express the wide-open, vacant spatial modalities conjured by those vast Western landscapes. This is a deeply meditative album: thirty short piano studies that will calm you down and lift you up. Recommended.



- J. esch

Xylox

various mp3's

www.mp3.com/xylox

Cool, well produced trip hop and fusion jazz psychadelia from the mind of Ray Sammartano. It's like audio collage you can dance to. The songs are long downloads, so modems beware, and be patient, because this intricate multilayered music is worth the wait.



"Playgroundsound" is a playful, funky trip hop ramble through lots of vibes -- something almost middle-eastern going on here, among the synth washes, samples, grooves, and sounds of playing children. I like it. It seems like an attempt to grab a vibe long lost.

"Jazz Ripple Sandwich" starts out grainy and then gets frenetic real fast. If it were a video, it'd be moving by at the quick cut pace of a coked-up MTV sequence. So much forward motion here, it nearly trips itself up in the rush to get ahead.

"Universe Eye" squishy synths and a somewhat slower albeit still jerky groove here. Kinda spacey, as if walking down dark, airy neural causeways.

There's a lot more than these three songs available on the Xylox mp3 site. Have fun wiggling out!

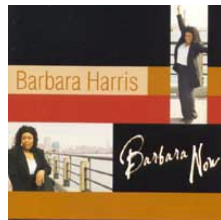
-J. esch

Barbara Harris

Barbara Now

Baheej Records
www.barbarastoy.com

This is a good story. Barbara had a hit single with the 60's girl group, The Toys. The song was "A Lovers Concerto" and topped the charts for six weeks in 1965. Since then, she left the group, raised seven children and worked the local music scene. And now, thanks to DIY recording, Harris is able to release a mature set of soulful R&B.



Harris's voice is sweet to listen to -- like Diana Ross with a little more hump and attitude. I really dig the bass lines on these tunes. The songs owe a lot to classic 70's R&B, as well as the more sprightly drum machine beats of the 80's. Harris's refreshing take on maturity is uplifting. Just think. She could have turned her youthful success into a pining for the past; instead, she affirms the present. That's a testament to the power of independent recording.

I gotta also give a wink and a nod to Ken Wiltshire, co producer and composer, who actually gives his AMIGA computer an album credit. I'm with you Ken, and I understand completely!

-J. esch

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The Renovators

Rhythm & Blueprints

www.renovators-music.com

A nice set of dyed-in-the-wool, gutsy barroom blues played by a set of talented vets. The Renovators are best at straight-ahead blues/rock, but they demonstrate an impressive versatility, covering the entire spectrum of rhythm and blues: from country and rockabilly to jazz-inflected tunes. Aside from a couple missteps like the unfortunate "Blue Reggae," fans of Blues music will find this CD thoroughly enjoyable.



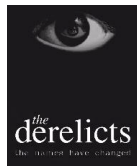
-J. esch

The Derelicts

the names have changed

www.mp3.com/TheDerelicts

Cleveland hard rock outfit. Shades of 80's rock hover here -- artists like Simple Minds, perhaps a bit of David Byrne and Bowie. Done with "classic rock" production values, the Derelicts are anything but -- this is polished rock, strong on synth and guitar.



A few thoughts on some of their mp3 songs: "The Harbinger" -- loud and catchy guitar hookfest. "DreamWorld" is good old fashioned American head-banger rock. "What About Me, Mr. President" has strong harmonies and an acoustic thrust that puts me in the mind of sixties-style chamber pop. Which is to say that you'll find diversity of approach among these Derelicts.

-J. esch

Weed Inc.

Trampled, Beaten and Obeyed

<http://www.weedinc.com>

Hammerin' rock. Most of this album is relentlessly heavy on the chuggin' rhythm guitar and bass. It's all very well done, tight and roadworthy, but you might get to the end of the trip feeling like you've been too long in the front seat. Among the highlights: "Queen Bee" -- a well-worn Americana groove for it -- shades of Mellencamp and Credence. "Paint a Picture" -- breaks some of the hard rock monochromatic-ness with the addition of a piano to the mix. "Tumble Into the Sun" and "Trampled" put me in the mood of bands like "Live." And "Fuck Your Minivan" has my favorite chorus on the CD. Given the right mood, with the right people, trucking down the right highway, with the volume cranked to the right level, this album has the power to fuel the mood.



- J. esch

Contributors

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