



rock
Bliss Release
 Cloud Control
 Ivy League
 ★★☆☆

FUSING psychedelic leanings with a pop sensibility, Cloud Control's debut LP *Bliss Release* is a sublime album. It has a joyous energy reminiscent of the Beach Boys, full of jangly guitars, thriving bass lines and vocal harmonies so sweet you could spread them on a crumpet. There is only one real problem: it's being released in winter. This isn't exactly a valid criticism, but I don't think there is another album out there better suited to drives along the coast and days spent frolicking in the sun. Since relocating to Sydney from the Blue Mountains in 2007 to release its self-titled debut EP, Cloud Control has had a great run of success during the past two years, including touring with Supergrass and Josh Pyke, as well as being invited to play the Great Escape Festival in England alongside some of the most successful emerging acts in the world. As if this weren't enough its first single from the album, *Gold Canary* was single of the week on BBC6's Rebel Playlist. It's no wonder that so many people seem to love this band. It has that sort of sound that you might hear accompanying a montage of the golden memories of childhood, and with *Bliss Release* it has not so much found its sound as polished it up and in the process discovered nuances that were never there before.

Michael Carr



jazz
Away
 Christine Sullivan
 Fuse
 ★★☆☆

RECORDED over an eight-year period, this album is a good introduction to the unique style of emotional engagement in song by Melbourne vocalist Christine Sullivan. Although classified as a jazz singer and accompanied here by some superior jazz players, Sullivan's approach also takes her into areas of alternative folk and contemporary soft rock. There are two sensitive interpretations of Joni Mitchell songs, *River* and *Black Crow*, plus a gently moving version of Bruce Hornsby's *Shadowlands*. The other five tracks are Sullivan originals and a common thread is her gossamer fragility, as in the title track *Away*, featuring some floating guitar backdrops from producer Craig Moss and a subdued saxophone solo by Tony Buchanan. There is an ethereal atmosphere throughout the album, exemplified in the opening track, *Oestre*, with Sullivan's wordless vocals gliding restfully in an Asian modality in front of David Jones's delicate hand drumming and Buchanan's soothing flute sequences. *Quiet Now* has a more pronounced rhythm initiated by bassist Evri Evripidou and has strengthened vocal work lifting slowly into the upper register. Sullivan's cover of *Black Crow* reflects the introspective mood of Mitchell's darkly enigmatic song, while the other cover by the same composer, *River*, is stronger and more dramatic. *Murdanna* is not so much a song as a whispered recitation against a vague instrumental wash, but also uses some wordless tranquil vocals.

John McBeath



art pop
Together
 The New Pornographers
 Matador/Remote Control
 ★★☆☆

CHALLENGERS in 2007 was a mellow detour for Canadian indie supergroup the New Pornographers, but *Together* is a welcome return to the irrepressible power-pop of 2005's *Twin Cinema*, which won them international acclaim. New Pornographers founder A.C. Newman says his dream is to find the middle ground between Led Zeppelin and the Fifth Dimension and he comes close on the album opener *Moves*, which starts with the ominous rumble of a Black Sabbath riff then

sprouts wings of sunshine harmony. *Crash Years* and *Valkyrie in the Roller Disco* contain bows to Jeff Lynne of ELO and the Traveling Wilburys; in particular his tremulous vocals, love of bottom-end booming cellos and multi-layered phased harmonies. The name game can go on forever. *Your Hands (Together)* is styled towards Cheap Trick. *Daughters of Sorrow* begins with a vocal that is a dead ringer for Tom Rapp, he of the obscure but enduring mid-60s psychedelic folk group Pearls Before Swine. Elsewhere Neko Case and Kathryn Calder confidently match ABBA's Agnetha and Frida. The New Pornographers make smart, cafe-society pop-art redolent with wordplay that teases meaning and music that cavorts from one reference point to another, cramming a hitherto unimaginable number of glistening hooks into 3½ minute pop songs. Most important, they convey a sense of delight and wonderment throughout.

Anthony O'Grady

world/jazz

The Hour of Separation

Joseph Tawadros
 MGM

★★★★★

AUSTRALIAN oud prodigy Joseph Tawadros is no newcomer to jazz. Six years ago, when barely out of his teens, he performed with some of Sydney's finest players at a concert in Italy, which later became the Wanderlust album *When In Rome*. While only a passenger in that vehicle, the young master of the Arabic lute is in the driving seat here. Tawadros's fellow travellers on *The Hour of Separation* comprise younger brother James on percussion and, more pertinently, three of America's most distinguished jazzmen: electric guitarist John Abercrombie, bass man John Patitucci and Jack DeJohnette, drummer of choice for Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Keith Jarrett and other giants of the genre. Recorded in New York City, the album is no exercise in tokenism. It offers a genuine dialogue between musicians of comparable ability and is worthy of comparison with some of the most notable oud-jazz collaborations by Anouar Brahem, Rabi Abou-Khalil and Dhafer Youssef. Mutual admiration and respect is evident throughout, epitomised in the exquisite exchanges between lute and guitar on the opening tracks *Phoenix* and *Fly Away*, in the bottom-end oud and upright bass duet on *Give or Take*, and in the astonishing jam between percussion that includes req (a small Egyptian tambourine) and stripped down drumkit on the equally well-named



Conversations in Time. A full dynamic range is achieved when all five instrumentalists come together for the pulsating *Forbidden Fruit*, which brings the set to a natural conclusion. There's plenty to savour along the way, with Tawadros's melodic compositions scoping emotional depth as they alternate between up-tempo flourish with thrilling oud and guitar runs and reflective contemplation with every note carrying gravitas. *Rose* blossoms into a Mediterranean sun dance after a mellow bass intro. The oud's Middle Eastern inflections provide the dominant mode in solo form for the start of the achingly beautiful *Midnight Prayer* before being joined by bowed bass and muted electric guitar. One of the most striking features of Tawadros's seventh album is the seamless synthesis of Egyptian influences and jazz. *The Hour of Separation* is as much a reflection of the artist's extraordinary collaborative vision and his skills as an arranger as the players empathetic appreciation of dynamics, articulation and tone.

Tony Hillier



blues
Rednecks & Gentlemen
 Chase the Sun
 Only Blues Music
 ★★☆☆

A GREAT voice and some fiery fretwork allows Jan Rynsaardt and Chase the Sun to deliver a thumping blues-rock album with a terrific live feel. With touches of early ZZ Top and Stevie Ray Vaughan, the Sydney trio's new album is a powerful collection of impressive world-class originals from Rynsaardt, bassist Ryan Van Gennip and former Leonardo's Bride drummer Jon Howell. The album's raunchy instrumental title track, *Rednecks & Gentlemen*, sets the pace

for a guitar tour de force that is as much rock as it is blues. It is a good launchpad on a journey that ranges from the heavy crunch of *Long Gone* to the frenetic, toe-tapping virtuosity of *Living Free* and the slide-backed sleaze of *Sweet Candy*, a slow blues burn about an old man's unapologetic lust for a younger girl. While there are enough changes of pace to keep the ball rolling, the album softens only for the acoustic guitar and poignant lament of *Live On* and the jaunty falsetto of *Living Free Part 2*. A strong contender for a single would be the funky *Dream Maker*, featuring Lachlan Doley on Hammond organ, although there is no shortage of prospects. *Rednecks & Gentlemen* demonstrates why *Chase the Sun* is the award-winning band it is and underscores Rynsaardt's emergence as a top guitar talent. It also provides 11 excellent reasons to catch the band live.

Steve Creedy

spin doctor

Iain Shedden



WELCOME to this week's *Spin Doctor*, which comes to you for the first time in 3-D. And don't bother running off to get the specs the kids had at *Ice Age 3*. Fat lot of good they'll do you. You will of course need a 3-D version of the newspaper to experience fully the technological wonder of being able to read this column in 3-D. But don't worry if you don't have the technology yet. You'll still be able to read the column the old way, at no extra cost. It's just that it won't be the same, because pretty soon one of your friends is going to get a 3-D copy of the paper and will be laughing at you for persisting with something as old-fashioned as looking at things in two dimensions. I mean, it's so-o-o yesterday.

FOR example, you won't catch Aussie dance-pop darlings Rogue Traders poncing about in boring old 2-D in their latest video. Well, you will, unless you've got a 3-D TV, which most of us haven't. The Traders are said to be the first Australian act to release a 3-D video, this one for their song *Hearts Beat as One*, the anthem they have concocted for the Socceroos, who go into battle at the World Cup in South Africa next weekend. Surely by coincidence, the Socceroos' slender victory over New Zealand before their departure for South Africa was the first Australian sports broadcast in 3-D, which was followed a couple of days later by State of Origin in 3-D. *Spin Doctor* is not one for conspiracy theories, but we can't help having a theory that this sudden splurge of 3-D innovation is a conspiracy to get everyone forking out more cash. That's our theory.

IF it's spectacle you're after in the three-dimensional environment, perhaps it would be worth shelling out for a ticket to see Muse. In a rare move for a band of such standing, the bombastic three-piece is coming back to Australia in the same year it headlined the Big Day Out. The English outfit had to scale back its whiz-bang stage show for the BDO, so it has decided to bring the lot in December to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

POOR old Bono's back problems forced U2 out of this year's Glastonbury later this month, with Damon Albarn's Gorillaz stepping in to replace them. Gorillaz is one of the names being banded around in connection with next year's BDO. One other possible contender is Grinderman, Nick Cave's alter-ego, which has just announced a new album and a European tour but no Australian dates. As everybody knows, St Nick likes to pop home at Christmas, so surely a run of shows in January would slip easily into the diary.

CANADIAN rock crusader the Arcade Fire came up with an innovative way of promoting its third album *The Suburbs*, due for release here on August 2. A vinyl copy of the double A-side single *The Suburbs/Month of May* was found in a Glasgow record store before its release. It was planted there, apparently. The songs are now available on the net and both are worth hearing. Maybe the Montreal band, which appeared at the BDO in 2008, could make a return in 2011.

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