

AURAL GRATIFICATION

Spinning right 'round

Everclear and Mac Charles, both from Portland, release their first albums

by Aaron Bong

EVERCLEAR World of Noise

Not until recently did I honestly sit down and start to listen to the local groups in Portland. Everclear is one of the local groups that I have yet to see perform. What a pity, because they seem to be more of a performance band than a recording band.



Their style of music, for many people, would be way too abrasive. However, I actually found them to be somewhat comforting and relaxing. Everclear plays loud party music, but *Fire Maple Song* starts out really mellow and low-key. It almost sounds like it could be a Pearl Jam, or Stone Temple Pilots ballad.

Not a CD for the faint of heart or delicate of ear.

MAC CHARLES Mac Charles

The sound from Mac Charles is not only impressive but almost awe-inspiring. His sound is quiet and relaxing but full of the energy only an experienced performer can muster. This is coupled with personable and well-written songs.

The 13-track debut CD from this native Portlander is relaxing and showcases his talent quite well. Exciting and easy to listen to, and worth the look to find it.

ROMANOVSKY AND PHILLIPS Brave Boys: The Best and More of Romanovsky and Phillips

I guess one could say that Romanovsky and Phillips could be the queer gospel singers. (Only unlike Michael English they wouldn't get their backup singers pregnant.)

In this "best of" collection Romanovsky and Phillips have compiled 13 songs and added five new ones. Sometimes it seems that they have been around forever, and most queers have at least heard of them.

One of my favorite songs on the CD is "I Like to Polka," from the 1992 album *Hopeful Romantic*. It's a humorous, queerified-Weird-Al-Yankovic sort of song that is chock-full of accordion. And who can argue with the logic behind lyrics like: "when I meet a man and he wants to hold my hand/ I take out my accordion and polka."

Another equally cute and humorous song is "If There Is a God (He's a Queen)," off of the 1994 album titled *Let's Flaunt It*. The song lists reasons

that Romanovsky and Phillips believe that God is gay.

This was actually the first chance I have had to listen to R&P, and, in all honesty to my readers, I have to say that I wasn't truly impressed. The sound was really secondary to other queer acts. If R&P wants to keep up with folks like Melissa Etheridge, k.d. lang, or The Flirtations, they will have to do something more. I would suggest beginning by working on the vocals, then the lyrics and instrument lines.

BIG AUDIO Big Audio



All you really need to know is that too much hype is surrounding this album. I cringe every time I go past a particular record shop on Stark Street and see the huge window display of this CD. I heard nothing really big—or exciting—and nothing to shout about.

OTHER CD OPTIONS TO LOOK FOR

RCA Victor has recently released digitally remastered original recordings of some classic Broadway shows:

1. *Carousel*, featuring John Raitt, Eileen Christy, and Susan Watson. Great musical—my favorite song: "If I Loved You." Excellent remastered recording.

2. *Showboat*, featuring Barbara Cook, Constance Towers, Stephen Douglass, and David Wayne. Of course you know what the musical is all about, now you can hear the original voices that made this a staple of the American music theater.

3. *Gigi*, featuring Alfred Drake, Agnes Moorehead (you remember, Endora from *Bewitched*) and Maria Karnilova. OK, so the production on Broadway failed miserably. So what, it's Lerner and Loewe!

Got a CD you would like to see reviewed?
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