

TONGUE IN GROOVE

THE POINTER SISTERS

Highlights from *Ain't Misbehavin'* • RCA Victor

Having been raised by a woman who had an affinity for musicals, I found myself listening comfortably to this latest RCA Victor release. What piques my interest in this particular CD is the fact that it showcases an almost forgotten trio of women that once dominated the pop music charts. I vividly recall getting down to some of The Pointer Sisters' greatest hits and couldn't help but belt out "I'm So Excited" when I saw this disc in my mailbox.

Aside from the already known fact about the Pointers' reputation as vocalists, the collaboration that produced this CD seems to have been an inevitable success. Richard Maltby Jr. and Murray Horwitz conceived of a production based on the triumphant musical career of Fats Waller. Combined with The Pointer Sisters' commanding stage and sound presence, the result is a match made on Broadway. The release of this CD (and cassette) is in conjunction with a 29-city, 10-month North American tour prior to the production's Broadway opening.

Ain't Misbehavin' will play April 10-14 in Portland at the Civic Auditorium. (See Theater listings for more information.)

THE BRAND NEW HEAVIES

Excursions, Remixes and Rare Grooves • Delicious Vinyl

The funkafied sound of the Brand New Heavies returns to the music scene with this new release. It's a compilation of sorts that highlights some of their hits—remixed and regrooved. "Dream on Dreamer," one of the Heavies' products that had a lot of air play, is remixed with a funkier and even more danceable rhythm in this latest CD. Another one of my favorites, "Worlds Keep Spinning," is also included on this shiny thang.

I must say that one of the reasons that this was a true auditory pleasure was the heavenly voice of N'Dea Davenport gracing every song. As demand for raw, dance-inflected funk, jazz and soul continues to grow, the Brand New Heavies—in light of their history—can be viewed as pioneers.

PIZZICATO FIVE

The Sound of Music by Pizzicato Five • Matador

One of my housemates chuckled when I mentioned to her that I was about to listen to some Japanese lounge music, thinking that I was joking. Well, the moment the P5 sounds rose from my stereo, my housemate knew I was no joker.

Pizzicato Five, or P5 to some of us, is one of the few Japanese recording groups that is well known to U.S. audiences. Way before the re-birth of the lounge music scene, P5 had already earned a reputation as trendsetters with a unique blend of techno-disco-kitsch-cocktail hour-Brazilian jazz tunes. Their penchant for humorous, albeit cheesy, subjects only complements the flavorful combination of sounds and styles that is the P5 trademark. What's even better is the fact that tracks are also almost always bilingual—where Japanese and English lyrics are sung in alternate unison.

One of the tracks on the exquisitely designed CD (complete with booklet and faux credit card), "Happy Sad," may sound familiar, since it was part of the soundtrack for the movie *Unzipped*. The rest are songs less traveled; I can only attribute this to the fact that P5's innovative music-making has yet to be comprehended by the U.S. sound market. But for a sushi-chomping, cheesy-Filipino-love song-memorizing, underground-'zine-reading, immigrant dyke like me, P5 makes my wasabi a blissful inferno.

BONNIE TYLER

Free Spirit • Atlantic

The first thought that crossed my mind the moment this CD started playing on my stereo was: "Is it just me, or am I stuck in the '80s?"

Sounding much like Kim Carnes with that husky, raspy voice, Bonnie Tyler rocks out in this, her debut release. The 14-song CD was enjoyable, though at times it seemed redundant. Having once been an Air Supply fan, I found Bonnie's cover of "Making Love (Out of Nothing at All)" a pleasant "lemme sing along with ya" surprise. The same sentiment goes for her "Bridge Over Troubled Water" cover.

The definitely danceable ditty "Sexual Device" is a great innuendo song, crossing that boundary between pop/rock and dance club music without being too overpowering. My guess is that the marketing people at Atlantic will hope that Bonnie's estrogen-powered rock will appeal to the same audience that Melissa Etheridge attracts; with a little bit more exposure and some time, that may well happen.

BEL CANTO

Magic Box • Lava/Atlantic

A band I've never heard of until now, Bel Canto currently sits among my "definitely dig discs" category. With its unconventional mixture of various music styles—from Middle Eastern instrumentation to electronic sampling—coupled with lead vocalist/lyricist Anneli M. Drecker's enchantingly hypnotic voice, Bel Canto exudes energy and originality that is refreshingly exciting. The Norwegian-based group boasts not only musi-



Nils Johansen (left) and Anneli M. Drecker

cians formally trained in instruments such as the violin and piano, but an inundation of newborn children—band manager Per, guitarist Nils, and Anneli all recently entered parenthood—that served as inspiration to a number of songs on the CD. Throughout *Magic Box*, the group interweaves various Asian and Indian instruments with dance beats and rhythms from African and Middle Eastern hand drums. What comes out is a beautiful conglomeration of ear fodder that sustains its flavor well after the last note fades.

Reviews by Rachel Ebor, a.k.a. Raging Eye, who eats sushi regularly and burps in public. Inquiries and other insults may be directed to her on the Net at tongueout@aol.com; check for snail mail, fax and phone info under the general Just Out stuff.

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