

MUSIC

# Survey says...

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz! Three new CDs fall short of the mark, but do so in interesting ways

BY KATY DAVIDSON

**YOU RIDE THE PONY (I'LL BE THE BUNNY)**  
Black Kali Ma • Alternative Tentacles Records

I can't put my finger on Black Kali Ma. Even if Black Kali Ma were a piñata in a small room and I had the biggest baseball bat in the world, I think I would repeatedly swing and miss until I became too exhausted and finally gave up.

Without a doubt, these are the emotions I experience when I listen to this band's debut CD, *You Ride the Pony (I'll Be the Bunny)*.

Black Kali Ma is the newest creative outlet for Gary Floyd, a musician who has been around the punk rock block. Floyd once fronted the seminal Texas-based band called Dicks; now he has joined forces with some of San Francisco's rootsy rock musicians to form this raw new five-piece.

One weird thing about Black Kali Ma is that, although the band isn't doing anything stylistically new or unique, its songs are still all over the map. The first three tracks are unforgiving rock tunes that anchor heavily in the blues pool. However, when the fourth song, "Wonderful," cranks into gear, it sounds notably modern rock, kind of like a gruff version of U2.

The next track, "Evil Clowns," plays like an indie rock follow-up to "Wonderful," and it's actually pleasantly melodic for the first few measures, but then it becomes muddled and crappy.

The disc ends with two anthemlike rockers that are riff-oriented enough to make you believe Black Kali Ma is an '80s hair band. On the contrary, the CD booklet sports a photo of the group, crew cuts and all (for the most part). Hmmmm.

Considering that Alternative Tentacles Records is known for releasing hip acts such as the dyke-driven Tribe 8, it's surprising they picked up this band. Black Kali Ma seems a little outdated and classic-rockish for San Francisco's young scene.

**THE NEXT BEST THING**  
Various artists • Maverick Records

Long, long time ago, way back in the 1990s, movie soundtracks started to make a bigger splash than ever before. Hollywood producers suddenly realized how much untapped potential rested in the aural realm of their latest blockbusters, then—boom! Star-studded soundtracks started popping out of record stores like hyperheated corn.

However, after a while listeners began to realize that the music always sounds much better in the theater when it matches up with a story line, and that no matter how you look at it, a Top 40 song is just a Top 40 song.

The soundtrack to Madonna's and Rupert Everett's new movie, *The Next Big Thing*, offers no new hope for the future. It does have a few shining moments, but on the whole it can be lumped in the same "overhyped, undertalented" category into which the majority of blockbuster soundtracks fall.

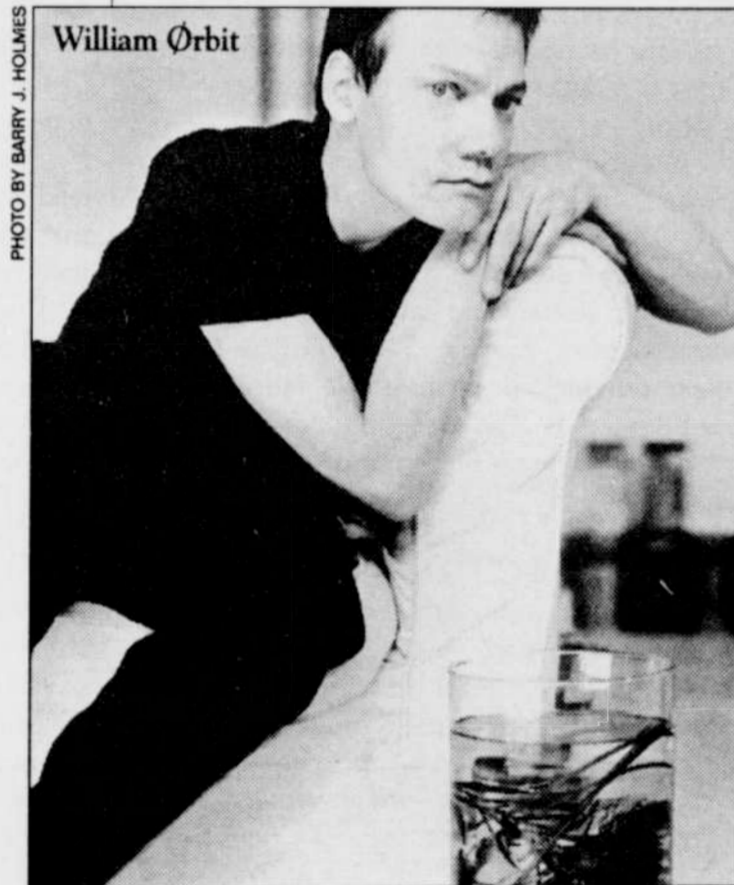
The beginning of this CD sounds like an onomatopoeia party. First, Metisse seductively lures the listener in with the Latin piano melodies and smooth beats of "Boom Boom Ba." Then Manu Chao jumps the same smooth

vibe train with the next song, "Bongo Bong."

Further on in the compilation, Madonna herself (who is also the soundtrack's executive producer) contributes a condensed cover of Don McLean's long-winded classic "American Pie" to the potluck that is this soundtrack.

This must be one of the weirdest recording decisions made all millennium, and weirdly enough, I somewhat enjoy hearing it. The song sounds like a folksy pop mixture stirred into a slow-paced Atari game. If that's not bizarre enough, we're treated to some surprise backup vocals from Everett (who campaigned to get the tune on the CD).

This soundtrack does have gems. But the oh-so-distant '90s taught us something important: Gems are never reason enough to hold onto a soundtrack longer than the movie remains in our memory. In time, these gems will lose their shine.



William Orbit

PHOTO BY BARRY J. HOLMES

**PIECES IN A MODERN STYLE**  
William Orbit • Maverick Records

**Q:** What does any good pop musician do when he can't make up any good melodies?

**A:** Steal them!

William Orbit, the producer and songwriter most known for his collaboration with Madonna on her last album, *Ray of Light*, has just released *Pieces in a Modern Style*, an MTV-friendly disc of remastered, reorchestrated classical songs.

This collection plays like the Boston Pops on a synth and reverb diet. Orbit's first (ahem) single, Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings," swells with emotion and sentiment, and thankfully is reproduced without too much technological enhancement.

*Pieces'* version of Pietro Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" is fueled by leftover *Ray of Light* energy. Its timbre and presentation are more than reminiscent of Orbit's other work—it's catchy and fun.

If you're numb to the classical music world but you're seeking an easy-to-swallow introduction, Orbit's disc may be a good pickup for you. If you're a classical snob already, you may find this disc a little cheesy.

■ KATY DAVIDSON is a Just Out staff writer who never sleeps and thinks she knows everything.

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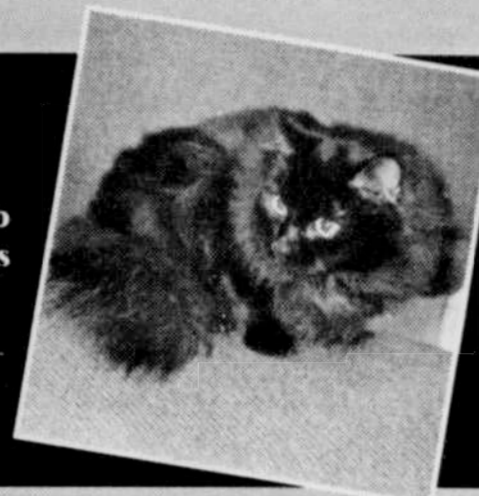
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