



TIGERS ABOVE TIGERS BELOW

Ellis • Rubberneck Records

We buy organic vegetables because we know they're better for us and so we can support a positive agricultural practice. We won't buy products produced in sweatshops. We like to support small businesses rather than dropping our paychecks at Wal-Mart.

So, by the same token, why not pick up a copy of *Tigers Above Tigers Below*, the latest release by Ellis, whose musical independence and hard work has made her one of the most respected queer musicians today.

Her fourth and most ambitious album yet, *Tigers* has been compared to early Ani DiFranco and Edie Brickell, no doubt because this Texas expatriate conveys so much in her songwriting—experiences extracted straight from her young yet turbulent life that seduce with their mature, bluesy hooks. Guest appearances by Travis McNabb (Better Than Ezra) on drums and Julie Wolf (DiFranco) on keyboards round out the album perfectly.

This holiday season, support independent music and gift that special someone with one of the best-kept secrets in folk music today.

—Jodi Darby

ZANNA, DON'T!

Original Off-Broadway Cast • PS Classics

Full disclosure: I'm completely inclined to love this original cast recording of the off-Broadway hit musical; my cousin Tim Acito wrote it. But don't take my word for it. This is what *The New York Times* had to say about this upside-down tale of forbidden heterosexual love in a gay universe: "Few shows have the appeal of *Zanna, Don't!* It would take a hard heart to resist Tim Acito's candy-flavored melodies that have theatergoers lining up in the lobby after the show to sign a mailing list for the CD. He has turned out a number of Top 40-worthy hits."



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Featuring *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy's* Jai Rodriguez as the cupid-like Zanna, the musical packs a surprisingly emotional punch as well. Get a head start on learning the tunes now—the show is scheduled to reopen on the Great White Way next fall, and that means an eventual Broadway-to-Portland tour.

—Marc Acito

ONLY ONE LIFE: THE SONGS OF JIMMY WEBB

Michael Feinstein • Concord Jazz

Last year, Norah Jones' mellow brand of jazz earned her an armful of Grammys, so it's really no surprise that other singers might try taking a walk on the mild side.



In the case of cabaret star Michael Feinstein, the soft touch suits him, and this collection of Jimmy Webb songs makes for lovely atmosphere and an interesting departure from his usual walk down Tin Pan Alley. His slow and smooth reimagining of "Up, Up and Away" is particularly ingenious and charming. Feinstein's tremulous voice sounds both appealingly breathy and lusciously creamy as needed, and the arrangements are up to his usual high standards.

—MA

EVOLVE

Ani DiFranco • Righteous Babe

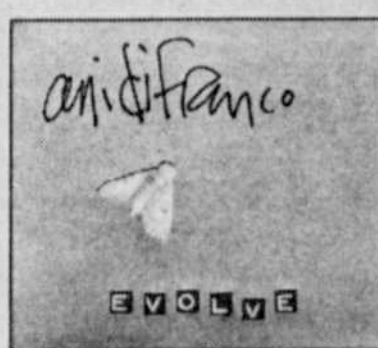
If there's one thing we've learned during the past 13 years, it's you can't put Ani DiFranco in a box. (Unless, of course, it's a small plastic one with a shiny compact disc inside.)

DiFranco's 15th full-length album moves beyond her signature brand of guitar-driven folk rock and explores a variety of musical styles including jazz and funk. Like her last two releases, *Evolve* showcases her touring band—Julie Wolf on keyboards; Hans Teuber on saxophone, clarinet and flute; Jason Mercer on bass; Daren Hahn on drums; and Shane Endsley, Ravi Best and Todd Horton on trumpets.

If you prefer the early-day acoustic Ani, don't worry—beneath the horns and harmonies, our beloved little folk rocker is still there. Her fierce finger-pickin' guitar playing, her powerful acrobatic vocals and her intimately honest lyrics conveying sarcasm, humor and pain haven't gone away.

On "O My My" DiFranco sits down at the piano and gives us a jazzy tune with a hint of the blues. On "Serpentine" she gives us 10 minutes of passionate spoken word. The title song refers to her personal journey and throws a few jabs at the government.

As a singer/songwriter/guitarist/producer/



bisexual/feminist/poet/entrepreneur/political activist/folkie and overall artist, Ani DiFranco continues to evolve.

—Jamie Bolyard

THE MOVIE ALBUM

Barbra Streisand • Sony Music

Barbra Streisand has made an astonishing 60 albums. The latest, *The Movie Album*, is a compilation of 12 of her favorites from movies spanning the years 1935 to 1988. Some of the songs are more memorable than the movies they were in, such as 1935's "I'm in the Mood for Love" from *Every Night at Eight*.

Accompanied by a lush 75-piece orchestra, Streisand sounds marvelous, and the songs are infused with the kind of meaning that only her unique voice can add. For instance, her rendition of "Smile," from Charlie Chaplin's 1936 film *Modern Times*, is heartbreaking in its simplicity and poignancy.

Streisand is the highest-selling female recording artist ever, and *The Movie Album* is one that every fan on your gift list should add to his or her collection.

—Floyd Sklover

SUN AGAIN

Kinnie Starr • Maple Music

You might know bisexual singer Kinnie Starr (her real name) from the indie movie *Down and Out with the Dolls*, Kurt Voss' rather dreadful tale of a troubled Portland rock band. The Vancouver, British Columbia-based trilingual musician plays Reggie, the hot drummer girl with 'tude.

If you haven't already, forget the movie and, instead, run to a record store to check out Starr's latest disc. This third (and first all-English) release could very well be your most fought-over holiday gift, so bestow it wisely on all your friends.

In its articulate, freestyle lyrical fashion, Starr's 2000 disc *Time-Up* effortlessly hip-hopped its way through loaded political issues about race, gender and sexuality. The groovy new *Sun Again* retains her attitude and genuine vulnerability, this time bringing sounds that are more polished and more trip-hoppy, displaying a style that has mellowed yet retains riot-grrl spunk.

As the title and the happy beats announce, things are looking up and moving forward. Give this seductive production a try. You (er, your gift-receivers) will not be disappointed.

—Els Debbaut



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