

**Modest Mouse, *Good News for People Who Love Bad News*, EPIC RECORDS 2004.**  
By Amy McCullough

*Good News for People Who Love Bad News*, the latest from Northwest natives Modest Mouse, may throw fans for a loop. While the opening track, "The World at Large," eases listeners in with a feeling of familiarity, it comes only after a jolting horn blast and singer Isaac Brock's menacing laugh, hinting that he knows something you don't. The anthemic, "Float On," reinforces that idea by delivering exactly what you don't expect from Modest Mouse, the surprisingly positive idea that everything just might turn out alright. The heavy keyboards and new-wave feel of the irresistibly catchy, "The View," delivers a sound reminiscent of the Clash and Talking Heads, which may coax skeptics into liking what they hear.



Sleeper hits later in the album such as the melodic, piano speckled, "Blame it on the Tetons," blasphemous "Devils Workday," and lyrically clever "Black Cadillacs," will keep listeners interested even after a disturbing, horn-rattled peek into Brock's neuroses. The knowing chuckle (again) at the onset of "Bukowski," however, makes you wonder just how much fun he's having messing with our heads.

Too interesting to ignore, *Good News* deserves a listen, and the last laugh.

**Gavin DeGraw, *Chariot*, J RECORDS 2003.** By Scott Lansing

Released in June of 2003, Gavin DeGraw's soul-filled debut album, *Chariot*, conveys the poetic wisdom of a village elder. With a voice exuding charisma that makes you drop everything and focus your complete attention on your stereo, 26-year-old DeGraw has everything it takes to succeed in today's music scene. The self-proclaiming lyrics of "I Don't Want to Be" unleash a refreshing punch in the face, telling you to wake up and smell your own independence. DeGraw's passionate interpretations of love and life are well-executed through his piano playing and guitar strumming. His raw, emotive lyrics top everything off.



The release of *Chariot* is one of the best things to happen to music within the last year and the future of Gavin DeGraw looks luminescent. A true bard is among us.

**DJ Layla, *Eastern Eyes*, 2004.** By Jon Young

A Eugene electronic DJ working her ethnic-infused Techno since December of 2000, DJ Layla's *Eastern Eyes* fuses technologically enhanced beats and samples with tribal drums and a throbbing bass to move you like the spirit of the gods ...

Layered with and entwined by Middle Eastern and Indian songs, chants, and instruments, the sound is spiritual, exotic and reaches far to create a soundscape fully capable of moving bodies on any dance floor. An aural journey, the electronic, ethnic blend of *Eastern Eyes* spans cultures and technological advancements, displaying electronic music's infinite layers, borderless freedom and progressive maturity.

This is "ethno-techno" for the spiritually inclined, open-minded listener. With such artists as DJ Cheb I Sabbah and song titles such as "Arabian Fever," "Mother India," and "Radhe Krishna," *Eastern Eyes* pulsates with unique sonic flavors, adding some Eastern spice to your mind, body and soul.

Neglect to experience DJ Layla's delectable spread of fresh sounds served on *Eastern Eyes*, or during her local, live sets, and you may experience some *bad* karma ...

**N.E.R.D., *Fly or Die*, VIRGIN RECORDS 2004.** By Katie Matthews



N.E.R.D. (No One Ever Really Dies) is actually the production team of The Neptunes creating their own music. Blurring the lines between what's considered rock, hip hop and every other style of music, the duo strives to break from the hip hop mold that brought them their initial notoriety.

*Fly or Die* utilizes brilliant production tricks that hip hop fans cling to, while maintaining the unique hodgepodge of genres introduced on their first album, *In Search Of...*

A bizarre lyricist, front man Pharrell Williams will one moment sing of a love lost, and the next, of how "... her ass is a spaceship I want to ride." With an aggressive beat and shameless lyrics, "Thrasher" easily earns the album's catchiest song award. Taking second is "She Wants to Move," the anthem of inhibited girlfriends, and also N.E.R.D.'s first single.

If the only thing you've heard about N.E.R.D. is how they produced a Nelly tune called, "Hot in Herre," then don't buy this album. However, if you're able to appreciate a surprising mixture of sounds and styles, then by all means familiarize yourself with N.E.R.D. and their underrated work.

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