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Critiques A-Z ↓

Bozzio, Terry & Metropole Orkest
Chamber Works
Terry Bozzio

Media Type: CD
RATING: 10



I have to admit, I used to think drumming superhero **TERRY BOZZIO** had lost his mojo somewhere between his mini-hat and his pedal-activated 8" piccolo tom. That is, until I heard Chamber Works. In addition to containing some of the drummer's most extraordinary performances since his Zappa days (e.g., "The Black Page"), this CD also unveils an adventurous new direction for the MD Hall of Famer—as a modern symphonic composer. His "Five Movements For Drumset And Orchestra" is a tour de force full of meticulous tom/cymbal melodies, signature foot ostinatos, and explosive solo sections that can only garner one response—Bravo!

Michael Dawson



Check Point Charley
Songs One Through Twelve
Kevin Packard

Media Type: CD
RATING: 7



Checkpoint Charley's Songs One Through Twelve delivers everything pop/rock fans crave—great songs, beautiful harmonies, and hooks for days. Drummer **KEVIN PACKARD** (who co-wrote all the songs with Jesse Anderegge) does an excellent job not only on drums but also on lead vocals and guitar. Packard's drumming is rock-solid and right in the pocket, and he never overplays the song. If you're a fan of the band Jellyfish, get your hands on this CD. (www.checkpointcharley.net)

Billy Amendola

Vol. I & Vol II



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Mars Volta The
Scabdates
Jon Theodore

Media Type: CD
RATING: 8



The bad news first: This live set from prog-punk alchemists Mars Volta doesn't feature anything from recent studio disc *Frances The Mute*. So to feel drummer **JON THEODORE's** jaw-dropping Latin-to-Zeppelin transitions on "L'Via L'Viaquez," catch them next time they're in town. **Scabdates** still shows the Mars Volta live experience to be a scorched-earth happening. Their dexterous chops never undermine the sixth-gear intensity of the "Take The Veil Cerpin Tax" suite, which highlights Theodore's adeptness at firing whiplash accents and keeping the odd-meter tangents tight. And the structural depth beneath the sax skronk and vocal pyrotechnics on "Concertina" proves that live, Mars Volta won't sacrifice melody for absurdity.

Patrick Berkery

OK Go
Oh No
Dan Konopka

Media Type: CD
RATING: 6

(Capitol)



Three years after their groovin', head-bobbing self-titled debut, OK Go have returned with *Oh No*, a decidedly sturdier affair. There's more gusto emanating from the entire ensemble this time around. Drummer **DAN KONOPKA** in particular digs in a little harder, with washy crashes and a satisfying if sometimes looser approach to the overall beat. The subtle tom hits on the chorus of "Here It Goes Again" break things up nicely without much fuss, and the dead kit on "Oh Lately It's So Quiet" elicits a late-'70s radio pop ambience that feels just fine here. Fun, funky, and familiar, OK Go get the party started with *Oh No*.

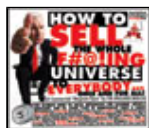
Waleed Rashidi

Sir Millard Mulch

How To Sell The Whole F#@!ing Universe To Everybody...Once And For All

Media Type: CD

RATING: 8



This extraordinarily creative three-CD set is insanely entertaining. On this parody of modern motivational sales techniques, composer/multi-instrumentalist Mulch reflects Zappa-esque qualities, namely complex musical passages combined with esoteric lyrical dialog. Musically, it's all over the map, though for drumming highlights go right to disc two, where the prog rock epic "Hemisphere III: Hermes" features **VIRGIL DONATI** shredding in 13/16, a blazing **NICK D'VIRGILIO**, and Euro-prog drumming whiz **MORGAN AGREN**, all thrown into a blender of extreme compositional excess. Ingenious, indignant, cerebral cacophony. (www.sirmillardmulch.com)

Mike Haid

Sunlight Square

Sunlight Square
Steve Gadd

Media Type: CD

RATING: 9



Composer/keyboardist Claudio Passavanti has created a rhythmically diverse collection of modern dance club tracks he labels "urban dancefloor jazz." Passavanti's creative dissection of well recorded, amazingly performed acoustic drum tracks from the master of groove, STEVE GADD, shapes a deep pocket around a fresh compositional variety of jazz, Latin, drum 'n' bass, and funk. Gadd plays with the same spirited fire that his legendary reputation was built upon. Witness the future of synthetic rhythm being built upon by the best acoustic qualities of the past. (www.sunlightsquare.co.uk)

Mike Haid

Transplants

Haunted Cities
Travis Barker

Media Type: CD

RATING: 9



(LaSalle/Atlantic)

Transplants, unlike drummer **TRAVIS BARKER**'s more established act, Blink-182, rarely stick to an overriding style. Yet that allows Barker to showcase all sorts of amazing approaches. On "Not Today," featuring Cypress Hill's Sen Dog, Barker busts out crisp, powerful beats that complement the song's punk/rap grit. Then, on "Apocalypse Now," the drummer navigates a techno-y, politically charged romp with drum 'n' bass beats, clanging percussion, and whirlwind rolls. And as Rob Aston's vocals and Tim Armstrong's instrumentation steal the show on "Gangsters And Thugs," Barker's catchy rhythms and experimental chops push things in the right directions. Transplants hardly find a permanent sonic home, but their type of wandering works quite well.

Jeff Perlah

Trio Bobo

Trio Bobo
Christian Meyer

Media Type: CD

RATING: 8



(VideoRadio)

Trio Bobo is a wonderful example of less being more—and for that matter, the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. It's amazing hearing these three musicians—drummer **CHRISTIAN MEYER**, guitarist **Alessio Menconi**, and bassist **Faso**—orchestrating on the spot, listening, feeling, playing off each other like an electric version of the Keith Jarrett Trio. Meyer's instinctive, understated style—with a feel that's part Stewart Copeland and part Brian Blade—fits well with his dramatic use of sounds. Opener "Drama In Jamaica" flows from light reggae-funk, to avant-garde space, to high-grade rock, and it all sits well in the pocket. "Faso Tabarin" is a classy one-minute marvel, "Acid Bobo" is a celebration of inside-outing, and "Calcutta's Joy" is a playful wink at fusion pioneers like Mahavishnu Orchestra.

Robin Tolleson

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