



Andrew Farriss and Michael Hutchence are songwriters as well as singers on INXS' X.

The following reviews are anything but random. In most cases, they are albums I bought for the simple fact that I figured I would like them. If that reeks of bias to you, then so be it. After all, it's difficult being so disgustingly rich. Enjoy.

The Replacements All Shook Down Sire

Their jacket includes a sign strapped to a telephone pole with the lettering, "Have you seen lucky?" The message is much more than silly triviality for the down-on-their-luck Replacements. Once the pride of the American underground scene, Paul Westerberg goes for broke with *All Shook Down*.

Down is not a true Mats album, but a solo project instigated and supervised by Westerberg after Sire balked at his solo aspirations. Stinson, Dunlap and Mars appear only sporadically on *Down* and with little impact.

How does Westerberg fare without his drunken side show? At first listen, I cursed it for not being *Let It Be*. After a few more few plays, I've decided it's the second best thing Westerberg has ever done. It's still tame, at least Westerberg's bite and personal animosity can be found again on "Attitude" and "Happy Town." And there's a certain classic 'Mats style grovelled within. Elderly anarchy.

INXS X Atlantic

Yawn. Alright, so I'm probably the least likely person to appreciate anything by INXS. *Kick* was tolerable, but *X* is boring, pandering to what else: the fruitless search for love, with a neo-disco beat box to back it.

After seven albums, INXS is lyrically stagnant, although not all of *X* singularly evolves around the quest for intimacy. Both "The Stairs" and "Faith In Each Other" portray the need for greater relationships and understanding. But, Michael Hutchence offers little to be excited over when gargle turns to gurgle, or rejection turns to satisfaction. It's all the same here.

Worst of all, the music is the true turncoat, and when the beat flatlines for a one-track band like INXS, it's MTV or bust.

The Cure Mixed Up Fiction

One of my greatest fears is that the major labels will exploit the artists of the '80s like they have the artists of the previous three decades. The multitudes of greatest hits, rarities, and previously unreleased, live and special collections albums leave an ugly ring around the idealism of modern music.

I've said many prayers for the purification of today's artists, but alas, here we are with the Cure's latest release. The 11-song *Mixed Up* features, what else — 10 remixed tracks. "Never Enough," the new song, is a strong, aggressive number, but the rest of *Mixed Up* seems pointless.

Of the remixed tracks, the dancier numbers such as "Hot! Hot! Hot!" and the "The Walk" fare better than the more reticent numbers, such as "A Forest," which loses its tranquility. The point is, why tinker with already great songs? It's not as if the Cure has reached a creative drain. Remixes are the domain of one-time wonders like Paula Abdul, not for a band that despite breakup rumors shows no sign of creative stoppage.

The only answer can be money. And since Robert Smith is actively promoting *Mixed Up*, I must blame him. Shame on you, Robert Smith.

Indigo Girls nomads•indians•saints Epic

Bitten by a lack of separation from *Indigo Girls*, *nomads* is a mediocre collection of social, spiritual and environmental awareness. The songs funnel within one another, and the lyrics, although well-intentioned, seem grandiose.

Dan Murphy, Dave Pirner, Karl Mueller and Grant Young find musical therapy as members of Soul Asylum on *And The Horse They Rode In On*.The Replacements' newest album, *All Shook Down*, may not be their best, but it's worth listening to.

But, at least Indigo Girls set their sights beyond their own lives, refusing the narcissism cited in the opening, "Hammer and a Nail." The lead-lined arrangements next echo the sparkling themes. A good example is "Hammer and a Nail," a faster, catchy number, and even the quasi-ominous "Welcome Me" incurs noticeability. After that, song distinction is lost.

I realize most Indigo Girls' fans appreciate the simplicity of the acoustic backdrop, and Saliers' and Ray's preoccupation with the Dylan theme, but the consequence is stagnation, and *nomads* is full of that.

Brian Eno/John Cale Wrong Way Up Opal/Warner Bros.

I never thought I would hear Brian Eno croon another pop song. Roxy Music's original keyboardist, who despite his anonymity has remained a critical favorite and industry wizard (U2, David Bowie and Talking Heads), swore he would never return to the pop fold after a string of influential new wave-avant garde-pop albums (he broke the promise somewhat when he collaborated with German ambient artists, Cluster).

Eno, a forerunner of today's yuppieville New Age movement, should

have realized the inevitability of such an unequivocal statement. *The Unforgettable Fire* and *The Joshua Tree*, as well as co-producer Daniel Lanois' solo work, set the stage for Eno's return in this ambitious project with another ambitious demigod, John Cale (Velvet Underground, *Songs For Drella* with Lou Reed).

While *Wrong Way Up* isn't as memorable as Eno's *Another Green World* or Cale's *Paris 1919*, it is a welcomed return for two of modern music's most important performers. Also, I happily report that Eno does not emulate *The Joshua Tree*. Actually, for better and worse, it seems time has not changed Eno. He still sounds the same.

Soul Asylum And The Horse They Rode In On A&M

Soul Asylum is a very promising band that misses the finish line with *Horse*. The album has several congratulatory moments, such as the opening "Spinnin'" and the slower "Nice Guys (Don't Get Paid)," but mostly dies from a dearth of spontaneity.

Horse fails to capture the raw vibes of a Replacements, which appears to be the direction Soul Asylum seeks. The musical competence is evident, but the dissemblance is not.

One good example of a smooth edge that needs to be roughened out.

SAMIAM SAMIAM New Red Archives

Another promising, California indie, SAMIAM is an erratic collection that contains several gems. The angry "Home Sweet Home," the ispirin' "Bridge" and the self-pityin' "Sympathy" head a strong side one. The rhythm is fast and furious, but with melody and direction; the lyrics are poignant and to the point; and the vocals are strong and distinctive.

Side two, however, loses a little of the above trio, especially on points one and two. Plus, the group should be shot for its lyrical insertion of "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" on "Trusty." Still, it's definitely worth the trouble, but I wish it had been an EP.

Rollins Band Turned On Touch n Go

"The last person you blame is yourself when you feel like a victim, and it feels great... to be put upon by love. This song is called 'You Didn't Need to that to Me.' Let's all revel in it."

Henry Rollins has an uncanny ability for touching on commonality through his harrowing despondence. *Turned On*, an album worth reveling over, is also one that poignantly captures Rollins Band's fatalistic stumbling, and Rollins' witty yet wicked tongue.

Turned On's strength lies in the double album's six new songs (all either strong and graphic, or very funny), and Rollins' perverse efficiency at extracting laughter from tense atmospheres. Only uneasy laughter can follow a song about mental and spiritual destruction.

As for the sound, the reproduction is good, but unfortunately, sloppy editing (especially fade-ins and -outs) mars the album's continuity.

Wartime Fast Food For Thought Chrysalis

Wartime is a Henry Rollins and Andrew Weiss (bassist of Rollins Band) production that bares no relationship to its father. Wartime is an alliance of Rollins' individualistic fervor and Weiss' bass experimentalism.

The pairing is perfect. Rollins' modulated vocals induce clear, metallic warbles and ominous whispers to contrast with his usual vindictiveness. Weiss' equally modulated bass sound, and catch-all, rhythmic percussion forge the novel atmosphere, void of guitar, drumming and keyboards.

The tone is aggressive, yet definitely infectious, with the opportunity for commercial appeal.