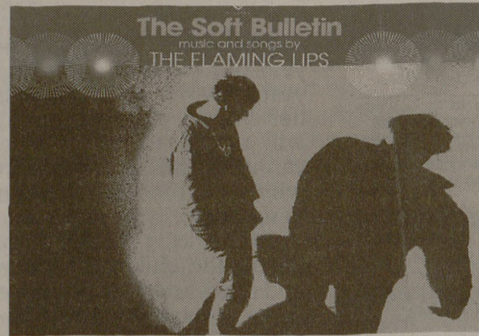


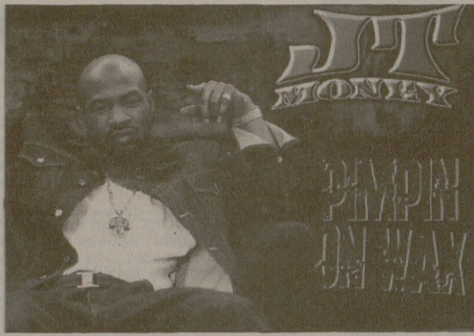
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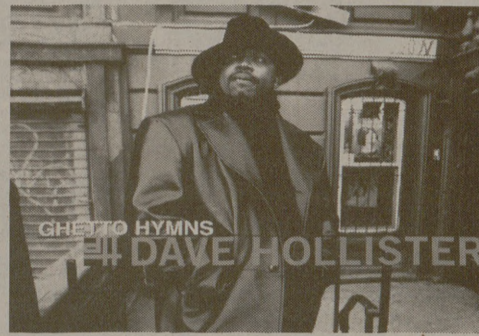
Various Artists
Wild Wild West Soundtrack
CD Courtesy of
Interscope Records



The Flaming Lips
The Soft Bulletin
CD Courtesy of
Warner Bros. Records



J.T. Money
Pimpin' On Wax
CD Courtesy of Priority Records



Dave Hollister
Ghetto Hymns
CD Courtesy of
Dreamworks Records



Kenny Garrett
Simply Said
CD Courtesy of
Warner Bros. Records

It is quite amazing how a film about racy antics in the Old West can inspire so-called musicians to write about the modern urban ghetto. It is also equally amazing that such a collection of songs can sound so similar.

Over half the songs on the album sound exactly the same with the same three drum samples that could be programmed on a cheap Casio keyboard.

The only difference in most of the songs is the singer, a few of which are very talented, but the monotony of the music takes away from the performance.

Will Smith's token theme song "Wild Wild West" is actually enjoyable, but takes most of it's music from an old Stevie Wonder tune.

"Balimos," performed by Enrique Iglesias is an excellent tune, but fans of the song will want to look elsewhere for the talent behind the song. Although the song was performed by Iglesias, it was written, produced, programmed, engineered and mixed by the Groove Brothers.

For the most part this CD is less of a collection of music and more of a good drink coaster. (Grade: D)

—Kyle Whitacre

The Flaming Lips is a band that has come a long way since its days of writing songs about girls who smear Vaseline in their hair.

The band was groundbreaking even in those days, but the albums that followed proved The Flaming Lips was at the top of its space rock game. The Lips' records bring to mind what bands such as Spiritualized, Trans Am and Tortoise could sound like with fewer chord changes and more melodies.

The last "album" released by The Flaming Lips, *Zaireeka*, was a four record sound experiment that required each CD to be played on a separate stereo simultaneously. The idea was a curiosity at best, but it showed the potential of a band on the cutting edge.

The Flaming Lips' newest album, *The Soft Bulletin*, proves that larger-than-life singalongs like "The Gash" can exist in perfect harmony with soft ballads like "Waitin' for a Superman." The Lips has successfully combined the grandiose ideas presented in *Zaireeka* with the band's tried and true pop sensibility to create what could be the *OK Computer* of 1999. (Grade: A)

—Riley LaGrone

In a music industry saturated with rappers it would seem that the competition would spur creativity.

At least this competition should provide listeners with unique rappers, each slightly different than their fellow artists.

Sadly, for J.T. Money, this is not the case.

J.T. Money is just another rapper molded by the industry and record companies.

J.T. Money raps about little but the standards of living the life of a gangsta. He raps about his problems with ho's, being a pimp, gang bangin' and weed.

It is the same old song and dance everybody has heard over the past several years.

This album is not necessarily all that bad, it just lacks a creative flow.

Maybe if Money had spent less time pimpin' on wax, he could have been making his album a little more creative. It seems he is just going through the motions of making an album.

With only a couple of songs worth listening to, nobody is suffering from not listening to this album. (Grade: C)

—Scott Harris

On the upside, Dave Hollister delivers as expected on his newest release, *Ghetto Hymns*.

On the downside, he delivers exactly what is expected of an album entitled *Ghetto Hymns*.

Listeners would be too optimistic to expect Hollister's stolen sound to be a metaphor for his admitted ghetto upbringing. After all, wouldn't a thug musician steal another's sound and call it his own? Unfortunately, he lacks the creative drive to even think up this excuse.

Listeners would also be too optimistic to expect anything other than the standard G-funk inspired instrumental backdrop that acts like Blackstreet, Dru Hill and dozens of others have already run into the ground.

Hollister's belting delivery deserves more than this institutionalized hard knocks drivel. His talent is evident even on tracks like "Come In the Door Pimpin'."

Listeners should not be too optimistic to expect him to evolve into a truly original artist. Until then, take Hollister at face value. (Grade: C)

—Stephen Wells

In these post-Kenny G days, it is amazing someone would consider pressing another album of a feature saxophonist, especially one named Kenny, performing with nothing more than a rhythm section to back him up.

It is even more amazing when the album does not cater to some aging wannabe Casanova's love pad mood-setting needs and instead follows Garrett's inspiration without compromise.

Viewed in this light, *Simply Said* is quite an accomplishment.

Purists will not wince during a long-winded ballad into which today's saxophone players, especially soprano players, find themselves easily trapped.

While Garrett is the star, his supporting cast gets a chance every now and again to exercise their chops.

Unfortunately, these opportunities are few and far between. Garrett seems to suffer from a lack of faith in his backing musicians, which takes a heavy toll on the quality of the album.

In this respect, he has relegated an otherwise talented, if not memorable, performance to the annals of jazz mediocrity. (Grade: B)

—Stephen Wells

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

New coin honors Diana's memory

LONDON (AP) — A special 5-pound coin honoring Princess Diana goes on sale July 1, her birthday.

The coin, worth about \$8, features a portrait of her profile.

A portrait of Queen Elizabeth II is on the reverse side.

Limited editions in gold and silver were sold earlier this year.

All proceeds go to charities recommended by the fund set up after Diana's death in a Paris car crash in 1997.



DIANA

Fireworks burn Michael Jackson

MUNICH, Germany (AP) — Michael Jackson received minor burns from fireworks used in a charity concert.

The pop star was treated and released after Sunday's show featuring 30 performers, including Luther Vandross and Boyzone.

Jackson's burns were "nothing serious," a hospital spokeswoman said.

It wasn't his first brush with pyrotechnics.



JACKSON

He was hospitalized with second-degree scalp burns in 1984 after his hair caught fire from a smoke bomb while filming a commercial.

The concert raised \$1.6 million for UNESCO, the Red Cross and the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.

England's royalty curbs spending

LONDON (AP) — In another year of belt-tightening, Queen Elizabeth II and her family saved more than \$8 million in expenses for travel and the upkeep of their eight palaces, Buckingham Palace said Monday.

They did not exactly take to bicycles, like the more laid-back

Scandinavian royals, but economies included fewer trips on the royal train and renting a modern helicopter instead of flying to engagements in two Royal Air Force helicopters.

The royal household has achieved substantial savings and better value for money, declared one government official.

It was the second successive year the royals have disclosed details of travel costs — part of seeking to make the monarchy less expensive, more open and more modern.

The queen also now pays in-

come tax, supports relatives previously on the government payroll and has also opened Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle to paying visitors.

Peck rewarded for charity work

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Gregory Peck was honored by the city for his humanitarian work.

The 83-year-old actor received the second annual Marian Anderson Award on Saturday in front of 400 friends and fans.

Peck received a crystal sculpture and \$100,000, which he donated to several charities.

Among Peck's achievements are his starring role as Atticus Finch, the Southern lawyer who crusaded against racism in the 1962 film *To*

Kill a Mockingbird.

He is also an outspoken supporter of gun control and has raised money for many causes, including cancer research and civil rights.

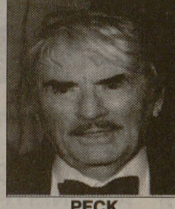
"Our Congress has been going around and around this past week," said Peck, referring to the battle over gun control legislation. "What is wrong with keeping guns out of the hands of the wrong people?"

The award is named after Marian Anderson, the late opera singer and Philadelphia native.

Anderson was the first African-American performer to sing at the White House.



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