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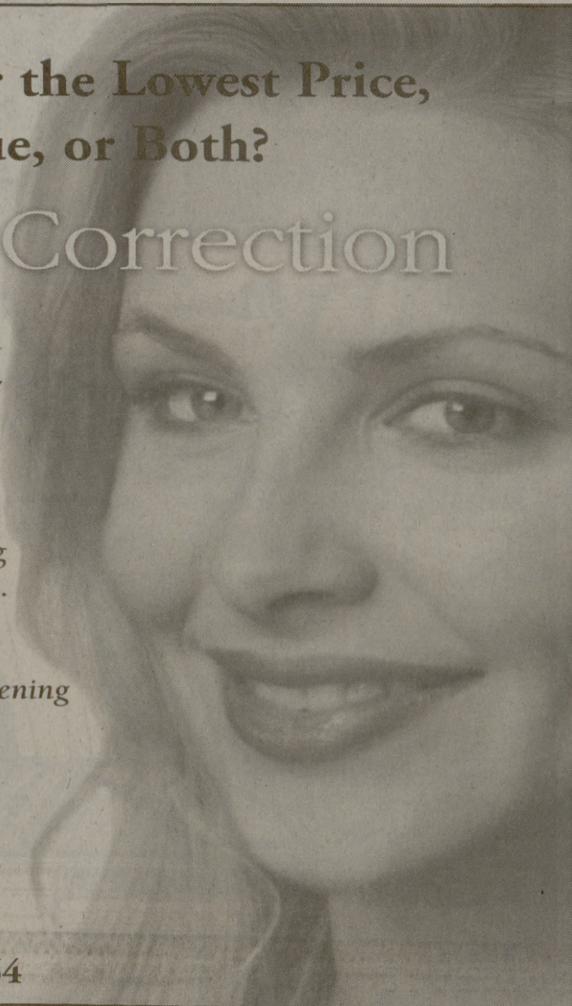
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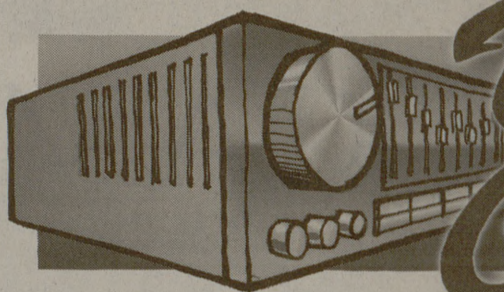
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Volume Control

Odyssey Number Five
 Powderfinger
 CD Courtesy of Universal Records

Australian band Powderfinger has been certified platinum five times in Australia, proving that Australians have just as much appetite for the banal as Americans.

The first three songs are so forgettable, the average listener will probably not be able to remember what they sound like immediately after listening to them. This monotony is broken by the fourth track, "Like a Dog," which begins with a light acoustic section accompanied. It breaks into a harder and more melodic chorus, but, unfortunately, the song keeps returning to the terrible style it begins with.

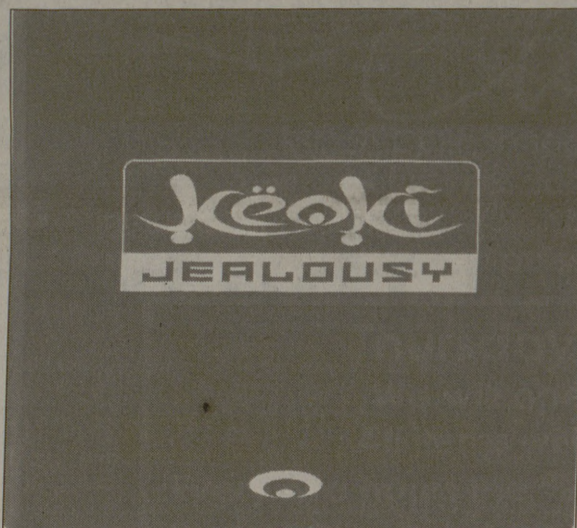
Accompanying lead singer Bernard Fanning's vocals with a group of back-up singers trying to reach a few octaves too high seems to be a recurring theme.

The sixth song, "Up and Down and Back Again," is the first bright spot. With guitar riffs sounding like a slightly more commercial Radiohead with understandable vocals, this is a decent slow song. The only problem is that Radiohead has already done it.

The album becomes more melodic and polished toward the end, with songs like "My Kind of Scene" and "Whatever Makes You Happy," but there is nothing new here. Still, it might spawn some interesting competitions between friends trying to decipher what band Powderfinger is trying to sound like with each song. (Grade: D+)

— Jason Bennyhoff

Jealousy
 Keoki
 CD Courtesy of Moonshine Music



This CD is too long and too bad to describe. In its 70 minutes, Keoki packs in a whopping 10 tracks for an average song length of seven minutes, and the longest track tops out at a ridiculous 10 minutes. Add in the fact that eight of the 10 songs are outright horrible, and the listener is left feeling nauseous and cheated.

Keoki appears to have been aiming to recreate '80s synth pop and '70s disco, right down to the Blondie sample and cover of Frankie Goes to Hollywood's "Relax."

The songs are not only long but also bad. Keoki combines long introductions with long songs that have no real progression. He also performs the vocals, which are poorly written and badly sung. The line, "New York, New York, a place so nice, everybody said so, so they had to name it twice. That's right," is typical of the bad lyrics on the CD.

"Realize" is a bright spot, although it has little to offer beyond the drum section. However, in the hands of a competent drum 'n' bass mixer, this could be a good track.

"Veronica" is a decent song, sounding much like DJ Ikey's vintage breaks. Unfortunately, it has one good riff and not much else.

This is mindless party music, though, and something can be said for that — just not much. (Grade: D)

— Jason Bennyhoff

Midnight Vultures
 Beck
 Geffen Records Inc.



Beck draws in his fans once again with *Midnight Vultures*, and even though *Mutations* might have been in first, this is a logical follow-up to *Odelay*.

This sultry record incorporates sounds of the soul train, providing a funky dance beat. It is a balanced set — easily identifying it as a Beck/Bing Crosby Beck's new album makes references to new-wave dance shows and radio funk.

In most of his tracks, he tends to take guises, and is especially noticeable in "Debra." He refers to the felt last song and wanting to get with "Debra." By the time of the main chorus, he wants to get with her sister.

If nothing else, the funky beat that Beck brings to this album with the banjo fade out in "Sex" makes this a must-listen.

This album is like no other Beck has made. Today, the Hu combines the best of his music's attributes — fling and collage-like references, which, to an ear, make no sense at all. *Midnight Vultures* is music that stays true to Beck's sound. It is guaranteed to be a "Loser." (Grade: B)

— Rupert

To Record Only Water for Ten Days
 John Frusciante

The first impression one gets when listening to *To Record Only Water for Ten Days* is why Frusciante is the lead guitarist for the Red Hot Chili Peppers and a lot of them.

Listeners will not be let down by Frusciante's tar playing. However, he has a singing voice that is kindly described as "different" and more accurately labeled as "grating."

What is disappointing about Frusciante's singing is that it does not have to be such a hindrance to his beautiful guitar playing.

Frusciante can pull off a decent falsetto, hitting notes in a raspy, sweet kind of way. For the best of this, listen to the Chili Peppers' single "Scar Tissue," and hear how Frusciante's lofty background vocals balance out Anthony Keidis' during the chorus.

Frusciante unleashes his higher range on songs "Remain," "Saturation" and "Wind up Space," and result is an interesting combination of piercing wood drum machines and a lightly picked guitar. Even better are the two instrumental tracks on *To Record Only Water for Ten Days* — "Ramparts" and "Murderer's." Only bad part about these two tracks is they are short. They finish right when the listener starts getting into the song.

Most of Frusciante's songs are mellow and scored. Using synthesizers and drum loops, Frusciante creates a sonically sparse musical landscape that sounds a bit like Radiohead. The instrumentation and rhythm of *To Record Only Water for Ten Days* is so unique and refreshing in a world of three-chord riffs that one almost overlooks Frusciante's vocals almost. (Grade: B-)

— Eric Dick

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