

above his evocative playing. It's the perfect ending. – JH



Ahmond
A Boy You Once Knew

Ahmond

From the opening/title cut, former child actor Arthur Lee Ahmond shows an exceptionally clean and creative hand on guitars acoustic and electric, as well as mandolin on cuts like the highlight track, "Everything Eden."

Ahmond is a pretty good if somewhat deliberate singer. Perhaps the approach is tied to his choice, as producer and engineer, to keep the level of his vocal

tracks almost even with the instruments, perhaps to give each part equal weight.

Ahmond has a musical foot in the world inhabited by the likes of New Bohemians, Cat Power, and the Crash Test Dummies. But where those bands seem desperate to prove they were too cool to care, Ahmond has a humanity and emotion in his delivery that would make them all sneer. It'd be nice to hear that reflected – or more clearly heard – in his vocals.

While definitely worth a listen, the disc comes off more like a presentation to be assessed dispassionately from a distance than it does a performance meant to engage our emotions and reveal his.

Despite his world-music-meets-Bleecker-Street-folk approach and

unique layering of elements, we only get enough of Ahmond, the man, not the technician-cum-craftsman, to inspire high expectations for what he comes up with next. – RA



John Idan
The Folly

Pebble Beach Music

In the late '80s, "Detroit John," as he was known then, moved from his native Michigan to London and got a gig as singer and second guitarist in the Topham-McCarty Blues Band – led by Yardbirds drummer Jim McCarty and the group's original (pre-Clapton) lead

guitarist, Top Topham. That eventually led to his current gig as bassist and singer in the reformed Yardbirds. He can be heard pulling double duty (spelling original bassist Paul Samwell-Smith and the late vocalist Keith Relf) on the band's star-studded *Birdland* (2003).

On his self-produced solo debut, Idan supplies all instruments (except for a string quartet) – recorded, he stresses, in analog in real time and on real instruments – though, to his credit, the overdubbed one-man-band aspect would be impossible to detect if he hadn't divulged details.

The biographical opener "The Ballad Of Myself" has a distinctly Cat Stevens feel – not coincidentally, no doubt, as the CD was mixed by Robin Black (known for his work with Stevens,

EXTRA! EXTRA!



ful package. Every tune will give you goose bumps. – SS



Howard Tate,
Blue Day, (Evi-
dence Records)

His voice is as soulful as ever, and producer Jon Tiven and guests like Mike Farris, Steve Cropper, Joe Bonamassa, and others are a perfect complement. The opener, "Miss Beehive," is a treat that aims a word of caution at a certain young British soul/jazz/rock. Clever and funny, it makes a great point about stardom. – JH

two-disc edition includes demos and alternate takes of "Carmelita," "Poor Poor Pitiful Me," and other classics. – DF



Jim Croce,
**You Don't Mess
Around With Jim**,
(Rhino) Part of a

set of Croce reissues, this is the perfect example of why he became a beloved performer, singer, and songwriter. Songs like the title cut, as well as "Operator," and "Rapid Roy (the Stock Car Boy)" are gems. Check out the fabulous joined-at-the-hip guitars of Croce and Maury Muehleisen. – JH

singing tone from his Gibson and stretches out on "Why I Sing The Blues," "Sweet Little Angel," "Thrill Is Gone," and other favorites. – DF



Mudcrutch,
**Extended Play
Live**, (Reprise
Records) Tom

Petty, Mike Campbell, and friends do a four-song set highlighting what they do. As you'd expect, proceedings are carried by Petty's lyrics and vocals, as well as Campbell's extended soloing on cuts like "Crystal River." Rounding it out is a great cover of the Jerry Lee Lewis classic, "High School Confidential." – JH

Francisco reveal, in engineer Bruce Botnick's words, "a true document of the Doors without constraints." Who knew guitarist Robbie Krieger & Co. were such a decent garage band hiding beneath all that drama and pretense? – DF



**Jimmy Thackery
and the Drivers**,
Inside Tracks,
(Telarc Blues)

A departure for Thackery as he takes on various kinds of music, delving less into the blues. Fans of his guitar won't be disappointed, as he time and again solos with fire. – JH



**Colleen Mc-
Farlan**, **Let It
Shine** (High
Horse Records)

McFarlan's fourth album is 13 original songs, equal parts country, folk, and Muscle Shoals white soul. The tunes are catchy and heartfelt, and stylistically she can go from quiet introspection to put-out-the-lights blues belting in less than four beats. "Drowning the World" could break your heart, if you let it. – SS



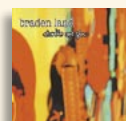
**Andy Friedman
& the Other
Failures**, **Weary
Things** (City Sal-
vage Records) A New Yorker

cartoonist turned roots-country singer, Friedman's tunes have garnered a ton of praise from critics who should know better. His overly cerebral take on Americana may be a turn-on for jaded urban dwellers, but to this Colorado hick, his efforts – and that is what they are – try too hard and rarely succeed. – SS



Gurf Morlix,
**Last Exit To
Happyland** (self-
distributed) Much

sunnier than the cover portends, Morlix's mature perspective and multi-instrumental chops make this a formidable solo project. His songs combine dark lyrics with bright hooks and bridges even if his vocals won't win any awards. Duo partners Patty Griffin and Ruthie Forster do make up some of the ground, vocally. – SS



Braden Land,
**Stumble And
Glow** (Exodus Re-
cords) Land has a

pleasant voice and a style that makes you feel comfortable as you listen. A good player, he's not afraid to sit back and pick – a trait rare in acoustic folk. It adds up to an album that's a little on the soft side, but substantive and enjoyable. – RA



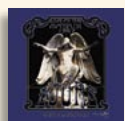
Warren Zevon,
Warren Zevon
(Asylum) Ap-
parently, when

Jackson Browne produced Zevon's major-label debut in 1976, God wasn't available. So he had to settle for David Lindley, Waddy Wachtel, and Lindsey Buckingham on guitars (and bassist Bob Glaub, saxophonist Bobby Keys, and drummer Larry Zack). This



B.B. King, **And
His Orchestra Live**
(Acrobat) The

master is in fine form, with a crack band led by trumpeter Calvin Owens, captured in concert in Cannes, France, in 1983. B.B. gets a



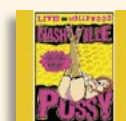
The Doors, **Live
At The Matrix
'67** (Rhino) Two

CDs of the band near its inception, in a tiny (and nearly empty) club in San



Raul Malo, **Lucky
One** (Fantasy
Records) The

Mavericks front-man's latest solo project is all original material that bounces from country to Tex-Mex to roots rock and roll. Regardless of the mood, Malo's mellifluous tenor combines equal parts Sinatra, Jones, and Orbison in one beauti-



**Nashville
Pussy**, **Live!
In Hollywood**
(MVD Visual)

An appropriately raw concert DVD of hair-shaking, Marshall-melting metalbilly from the Atlanta quartet. SG queen Ruyter Suys more than holds her own on guitar while husband Blaine Cartwright screeches through a set of originals, with Tina Turner's "Nutbush City Limits" thrown in for good measure – DF



**Bob Seman-
chik**, **Standard
Interpretation**
(Tuneful Tunes)

The title is literal; there's a swinging "The Way You Look Tonight" and a fresh "Take 5" on this pleasant, very playable disc of mostly instrumental versions of standards and pop hits from Connecticut guitarist/instructor Semanchik. And who can't hear "Georgia On My Mind" one more time? – RA



**Porter Batiste
Stoltz**, **Moodoo**
(High Steppin')
With Meters

bass great George Porter, ex-Nevilles guitarist Brian Stoltz, and New Orleans mainstay Russell Batiste, Jr. on drums, calling this funky would be an understatement. Stoltz exhibits a strong Hendrix influence, and Phish keyboardist Page McConnell joins in on this extremely live set. – DF