



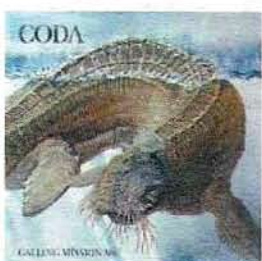
of what the band has recorded in the past. *Phobia* is an easy listen, in that it showcases a great band at their best and each song is just as strong as the one before it. Honestly, there is not one bad thing I can say about this album. All fans of Breaking Benjamin, past, present or future, will find plenty to dig here. If you don't like this album, there is simply something wrong with you. Since I've put this album into my car CD player, I haven't been able to stop listening to it (Paul Atanasov).

BRIGHT EYES
Noise Floor (Rarities: 1998-2005)
(Saddle Creek)

When you hear and read that Conor Oberst writes a song a day, it's no wonder why he has 14 plus releases. But what about all his unreleased songs? Where did they go and what happened to them? Well, this is your answer. *Noise Floor* is a collection of selected Bright Eyes singles, one-offs, unreleased tracks, collaborations and covers recorded from 1998-2005. Being a big Bright Eyes fan I was quite interested in hearing this album and as usual, young Conor did not disappoint. Bearing in mind that many of his recordings were done inside of his friends and his own basements (many of them when he wasn't even a teenager), you may have to excuse some segments of this album like the opening track 'Mirrors and Fevers'. But aside from that, the songs chosen for this album are outstanding. Collaborations with Mike Mogis, Tim Kasher (Cursive) and many others, excellent unreleased songs with Matt Ward and beautiful songs from the 3 *Hit Songs EP* show off Oberst's range of emotions. This release seemingly covers enough ground for a newcomer to familiarise themselves with Bright Eyes' old material and bring them into his career around the time of *Lifted...* (Alec T).

CODA
Calling Mission Mu
(Silent)

This record has unquestionably established Coda as the most fantastic band in Australia. Coda have always been a great force both in the studio and in the live setting, yet *Calling Mission Mu* sees them rise in maturity to a level of mind boggling brilliance that is rarely achieved. In the past they have ventured into eastern territories in what seemed like a celebration of strings, whereas now they have taken the experience and understanding of such realms and crafted it into a piece that is truly their own. They have captured a perfect balance of music that shows they understand the value of a reference point. A booming string section is made all the more powerful when sitting next to a smooth bass and drum groove, and the best thing is they know how to perfectly sew the smooth and boom together into the one creation. *Calling Mission Mu* is the soundtrack to an ocean that regains its most treasured quality - its imagination (Jake 3).



CRADLE OF FILTH
Thornography
(Roadrunner)

I was really disappointed with this - the seventh full-length release from Cradle of Filth. *Dusk and Her Embrace* still stands as one of my all-time favourite metal albums and, despite the massive amount of Cradle hating that goes on in the metal community, I have found all of their albums (excluding *Damnation and a Day* and *Nymphetamine*) thoroughly enjoyable. As the ever changing line-up woes that have plagued the band since their peak continue, so too does their form slump. *Thornography* has some decent moments on it ('Dirge Inferno', 'I Am the Thorn' and 'Tonight in Flames') and a great atmospheric intro, however most of the elements that made albums like *Dusk...* so special have been removed from the band's formula. Gone are the gothic/black metal epics full of romantic keyboards, poetic lyrics and even better artwork - now the band's corpse has been stripped back to a mediocre blend of galloping punk, thrash, death and black metal. The album isn't a complete shocker and may please fans of their post millennium material, but with songs like the horrendous 'Temptation' (easily the band's worst ever song) included, I'm starting to run out of excuses to help defend what was once an important band (Gav).

DAMIEN RICE
9
(Warner)

If you are unaware of a female presence in Damien Rice's work, you may get a slight surprise when the first voice that pours from the speakers is his counterpart, Lisa Hannigan. While her soft voice introduces 9, she fades away virtually straight away to make way for the dominant presence of Damien's soulful, folk inspired voice. His last few albums have relied on little else but the strength of his voice and the clarity of emotion that floods each song. His latest album, however, experiments with louder music that rivals his voice instead of merely fading into the background. It's difficult to pinpoint a recurring theme throughout 9; he curses his way (ever so politely) through anger and resentment in 'Rootless Tree', but shows a gentle side with the sad ambience of '9 Crimes'. The only thing that remains clear is his ability to create music that not only provides an easy listen, but invites the reader to interpret the meaning behind each lyric that escapes his mouth, and undoubtedly, his soul (Nikita Lee).

DEAD DAY SUN
Bless the Brooding Heart
(MGM)

As a child of the '90s, I've been looking over my shoulder, waiting for the fateful day when that decade would come back to haunt me. And here it is, in the guise of *Bless the Brooding Heart* by Sunnybank five-piece Dead Day Sun. This is a soaring stadium-friendly album boasting grungy guitars



with a vague Zeppelin influence, and angsty vocals with occasional falsetto and Brian Johnson-esque yelps. The problem is that these elements have been used a thousand times before, and Dead Day Sun haven't yet developed a unique personality to set them apart from their heroes, making the results fairly predictable. There's some great moments here, like the first-in-the-air rockers 'Harmony', and the title track; but it's the watery guitar and broodingly earnest vocals of the ballads 'Ordinary Life' and their hit single 'Still' that stand out here. They're already scoring goals in the US and are playing at the Coca Cola Live & Local tour, so if you're a fan of bands like Matchbox 20 and Nickelback, you should buy this album and get out there and see them. With some more original material and a little support, these guys could be huge (Strom).

GLASSHOUSE
Restore factory settings
(Bonefinger)

"This city is burning down around me..." That's the warning from Glasshouse, the hidden gem of the Brisbane music scene. Glasshouse are individual in more ways than one and boast a sound that is big, sometimes haunting, and lyrics that cover themes that most bands shy away from. Lyrically, Glasshouse see humankind as the last stop before oblivion. The album's title *Restore Factory Settings* lays the theme on the table. They talk of a fear that there is no turning back in 'Just So', and 'This City' portrays the human race's final collapse. It may sound depressing and something straight out of *Apocalypse Now* but Glasshouse cover the themes with maturity and always build on powerful melodies. Without fear they question everything, tackling the harder issues. But the delight of their obvious lyric talent is they don't do their questioning perched on a soapbox ranting about their woes. Rather, they share the inner turmoil that arises from everyday life and its effect on the individual and their relationships (GR).

GREENSKEEPERS
Polo Club
(Stomp)

Yes, this is the same Greenskeepers that released 'Lotion' - the clever little ditty that featured the eerie dialogue made famous by fictional serial killer Buffalo Bill. Yes, it was a great track, but now it's time to see if these guys can stand on their own two feet without the help of the legacy left by *Silence of the Lambs*. My first instinct is no. *Polo Club* stands as a piece of synthesised dance rock, similar to the music forged by Scissor Sisters and such. It comes across sleazy and perverted - Nick Maurer's vocals, similar to those found on 'Lotion', sound freaky and perverted. But although the quartet's music has its origins in dance and rock, I just don't get an urge to dance or rock out. The first two singles 'Polo Club' and '15 Minutes' do little to excite me, and while 'Bloodclots' stands as a funky little number, I find I'm really searching to find a positive. In



CODA

Calling Mission Mu

Undercover

Coda are a mischievous act whose musicality is never tempered by their creativity. *Calling Mission Mu* is a subtle and magical beast, which serves as both an album and a soundtrack to an imaginary dream of sorts. By using technology and their string arrangements Coda are always tantalising and refreshing.

Nick Wales as usual heads the project with his interesting sound scape designs and electronics. *Marine* is a wonderful instrumental opening the album with a lush aquatic sound. *Superpod* then puts the rhythms first and builds a mesh of sounds similar to some of the tracks of their first album. Not content to use traditional arrangements and string lines, this second album enjoys the open-ended structures of the instrumental and the more eastern lines for the strings.

This music is perfect for the festival scene and the venues that appreciate the ambience of the more exotic acts. Tracks like *Rocking Horse* also let the band rock out in their own unconventional way. The effects on the violin usually played by Naomi Radom are fascinating and never predictable. I could imagine Coda doing an album with selected vocalists in a similar fashion to Paul Mac. Perhaps it's an idea for next time around.

Everything from gypsy to electronic genres get a look in here. With some of the best artwork I have ever seen this album is spectacular in its vision and breadth. Coda take their time and do things their own way which is always a treat for the listener.

SEBASTIAN SKEET

DRUM MEDIA 14/11/06



HELLO CODA

ROCK BAND

Start off with some gently swelling strings, add a catchy bassline, the thump of drums – and then vamp it up with some zany costumes and dance routines: CODA doesn't exactly fit your basic model of a rock band. Their musical free-for-all (their style encompasses classical, rock, electronic and jazz) is best summed up by their own tag: "Music for the eyes."

On viola and electronic keyboard is Nick Wales, who teamed up with violinist Naomi Radom to form CODA in 1994, after both felt hemmed in – physically as well as creatively – by the orchestra pit. "We plugged our instruments into amps and started playing in pubs," recalls Wales.

Within a couple of years they were joined by Jared Underwood on drums and Oliver Smith on bass, making it possible for them for the first time to create a layered, lush instrumental sound. After a few national tours they

had attracted a loyal following, and rapturous reviews from the likes of *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Their versatile mix of classical instrumentation and amplified rock, Wales explains, allows them to play at venues as diverse as the Woodford Folk Festival, the Big Day Out and the Sydney Opera House. CODA will play at the Adelaide Festival Centre on November 17 and 18, and have a new CD out, *Calling Mission Mu*.

There have been some memorable moments on stage, such as at Sydney's Kirk Gallery in 2004, when their show – provocatively entitled "The Peep Show" – attracted what Wales describes as an S&M fetish crowd.

The band members, who grew up in Sydney (except Radom, who hails from Canberra), take turns at composing and choreographing. Says Underwood: "Everyone's involved."

Report Toni Eatts
Photography Andy Baker