

MUSICREVIEWS

BELLAFEA



CAVALCADE
POST-PUNK



Uncertainty permeates *Cavalcade*, Bellafean's long-awaited follow-up to 2004's *Family Tree* EP.

"Punish me with the cruelest summer/Terrify me with silence/Make me desperate/Let me wake alone/Make me cry rivers," front-woman Heather McEntire pleads on "Telling The Hour," her exasperated voice carried by a minimal drum beat, haunting choral voices and piercing strings.

It's a moment as tender as a just-picked scab, oozing and throbbing with a pain that is entirely palpable.

Musically, the record is filled with moments of cable-thick tension. McEntire's guitar leads the charge as drummer Nathan Buchanan and new bassist Eddie Sanchez pulse along with her, veering into surprising territories, circling back again and winding up someplace new entirely.

With the added backing of Sanchez and a stockade of musical contributors, *Cavalcade* shows a fuller, more voluminous Bellafean than on *Family Tree*. But the bigger sound doesn't make the record safe.

It makes it more moving, more exciting and more dangerous.

-Bryan Reed

morning record. The type of country record that is built on ultra-personal reflection and subtle guitar strums.

And as the day begins, and Bickford continues, it builds to the end, offering a clear view of a day that is offered without the dregs of sleep and with the experience of a life well lived.

-Jamie Williams

R.E.M.



ACCELERATE
ROCK



No one would argue the merits of R.E.M. But, it is easy to say that the band began to lose its way several years ago, releasing a few albums not deserving a spot on the same shelf as *Murmur* or *Automatic for the People*.

Well, that phase is over.

Accelerate, to put it quite simply, is a return to form. It sounds like the R.E.M. that took the college-rock scene by storm in the '80s. There is urgency, there is passion, and there is a sense of timelessness that the band's most recent releases have lacked.

The album's single, "Supernatural Superserious," is the highlight, mixing Michael Stipe's subtle political musings on acceptance with a pop-styled guitar riff and well-placed backing vocals.

"Everybody here comes from somewhere/But they would just as soon forget and disguise," Stipe sings.

And while there is plenty of room for heavy-handed commentary, it doesn't seem appropriate, because its just a rock song. Its not hurtful, its not combative, it's just fun.

And that characterizes the entirety of the record until the final track, "I'm Gonna DJ," closes with its kitschy hook, "It's pretty final/I'm collecting vinyl/I'm gonna DJ at the end of the world."

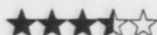
But don't let that dreadful lyric distract from the quality of the rest of the record.

And after the band's most recent output, it is allowed at least one stinker on an otherwise stellar LP.

-Jamie Williams

CLOUD CULT
FEEL GOOD GHOSTS (TEA-PARTYING THROUGH TORNADOES)

INDIE POP



There's no way to know what to expect on Cloud Cult's *Feel Good Ghosts (Tea-Partying Through Tornadoes)*.

The forces of nature that influence the group are probably guilty of causing the congenial chaos and calmness that ensues.

The LP could be used as a teaching mechanism for what to do when encountered with an ecological predicament. Strings, keys and effects dominate the bulk of the album that includes a volcano's will and a survival guide to fire and hurricanes.

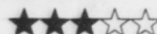
And like a painter practicing his craft, "The Tornado Lessons" is taken at whirling dervish pace and accentuated by mousey squeaks and pounding drums like the contrast of delicate and broad brush strokes against a canvas.

Feel Good Ghosts amounts to a tutorial on the bedlam and tranquility nature can create, which Cloud Cult has the ability to express through the means of classical-infused, experimental pop tunes.

-Benn Wineka

SHAKERMAKER
SHAKERMAKER

INDIE POP



One word summation of Shakermaker's self-titled LP: agreeable.

The Chapel Hill quartet creates indie pop tracks that wash over the listener and elevate them with an air of affability.

A cut such as "Sunday Ladies" employs the vintage short-play singles format, cashing out at just shy of two-and-a-half minutes, but is potent enough to lead it to become a memorable experience on every listening.

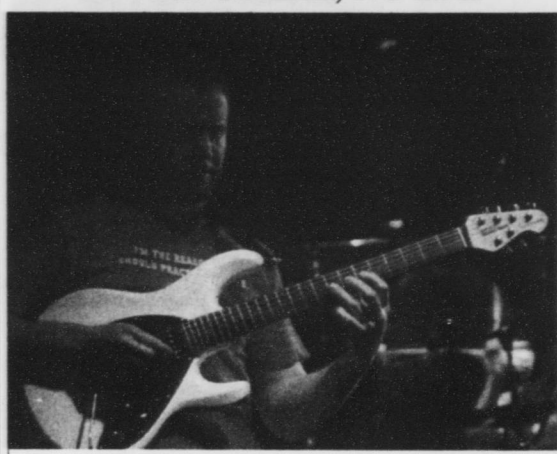
Shakermaker never complicates arrangements, allowing the musical elements — such as the occasional pedal steel guitar — to dictate the varying influence on each song. The often overlooked quality of country and Brit-pop inspired tracks keeps the album fresh from song to song.

The band seems content when making music, which leaves *Shakermaker* with an easygoing, homey feeling.

But the band could become that much better by stepping beyond the bounds of its — and its listeners' — comfort zones.

-Benn Wineka

IT WAS GREAT, NO LYE



DTH/JORDAN LAWRENCE

Guitarist Josh Bauman of Saint Louis' Lye By Mistake works through a complicated line as his band performed Thursday at Cat's Cradle. The band had an energetic sense of proggy fun that was refreshing to see in a metal band as it opened for N.C. bands Giant and BTBAM.

THE STRUGGLERS
THE LATEST RIGHTS

COUNTRY/FOLK



In a way that is vaguely reminiscent of stretching your arms and wiping the sleep from your eyes just as the sun begins to peak through the bedroom window, *The Latest Rights* is the type of record that grows steadily from front to back.

Beginning with the pleasant groove of "Morningside Heights," Randy Bickford's soft baritone offers a warm, familiar handshake from an old friend before a perfectly placed fiddle adds a new layer of lament.

As the record struts slowly but confidently through its nine tracks, Bickford's voice and rich lyrics provide the strength, while the appropriately minimal arrangements make sure those strengths receive the amount of attention they deserve.

The Latest Rights is a Sunday

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