

Offbeat music

Iguanas debut with diversity; The Barons return to reign



Courtesy of Margaritaville Records



The Iguanas "The Iguanas" Margaritaville Records

As a rule, I usually try to avoid anything that Jimmy Buffett is involved with. I've seen too many drunken, failed high school jocks singing along with "Margaritaville" at lame parties not to feel that way.

Therefore, I was a little wary of the Iguanas' self-titled debut — Buffett is the executive producer, and the CD is on his label, Margaritaville Records.

Fortunately, the Iguanas have a unique sound that doesn't have too much in common with Buffett. The band is based in New Orleans. But members come from all over the country (vocalist and sax-man Joe Cabral was raised in Omaha), and the band's music reflects this diversity. It's got that jazzy, New Orleans-cajun feel, but there's a lot of Tex-Mex-roots rock in there, too — kind of like the Neville Brothers meet Los Lobos.

All of these styles are represented on "The Iguanas." Songs like "Para Donde Vas" and "Por Mi Camino," sung in Spanish, are smoky, south-of-the-border tunes. "This Night of Sin" chugs along like a forgotten '50s Elvis tune. The leadoff song, "Late At Night," eases you into the album with a laid-back feel that has New Orleans written all over it.

I don't know if a CD is really the best way to hear the Iguanas, though — a lot of times the music sounds too recorded, as if it was being played in the studio by guys wearing three-piece suits and ties.

Walking down Bourbon Street, Hurricane in one hand and Po' Boy in the other, passing a packed, sweaty, hole-in-the-wall bar with the Iguanas cooking up on stage — that'd probably be more like it.

— Matt Silcock



Courtesy of Hightone Records

The Pleasure Barons "Live in Las Vegas" Hightone Records

The Barons are back! Together again for the first time anywhere! Country Dick Montana, formerly of the Beat Farmers, Mojo Nixon, recording and movie star, and Dave Alvin, late of "X," have released their "Live in Las Vegas" CD to accompany their tour of the western United States, scheduled to run through March 29. Unfortunately, the Barons won't come any closer than Denver on March 19.

It's a shame because the gonzo rock 'n' roll that the Barons spew forth on "Live in Las Vegas" defies definition. It's part Chuck Berry and part Dr. Demento.

From the first lines of "Closing Time" ("All the girls look better at closing time") to the last strains of "The Definitive Tom Jones Medley" with Country Dick singing "What's New Pussycat?" in his Foghorn-Leghorn basso, The Pleasure Barons are an excursion into a musical Twilight Zone.

The listener is treated to such tunes as "Debbie Gibson is Pregnant (with My Two-Headed Love Child)" and the semi-metaphysical "Elvis is Everywhere," which proclaims Michael J. Fox to be the anti-Elvis.

If this sounds a bit bizarre, it is. But the Barons also serve up some straight, serious rock 'n' roll, covering the rockabilly classic "Who Do You Love?"

Dave Alvin sings the blues about the stresses of modern society on "Games People Play."

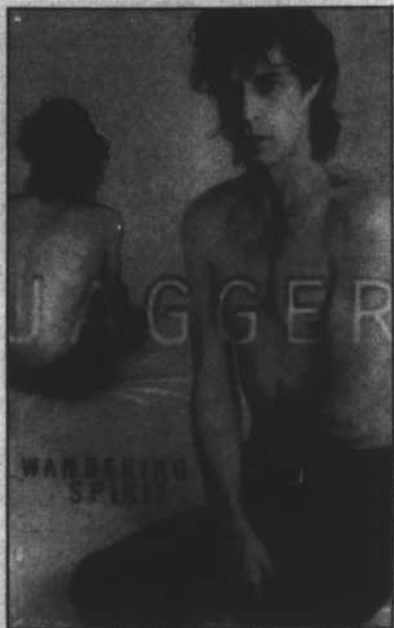
Country Dick belts out a blues-country rendition of "Gangster of Love" with a punch and sings a C & W ode to his favorite southern city in "Jackson" — a pleasant alternative to "Achy Breaky Heart."

The music is energetic, even if the words are a bit hard to catch at times (as is true of most live albums), and calls for hitting the "loud" button on your stereo. The liner notes, a stylistic tribute to P.J. O'Rourke, are perfect reading to accompany the music. The Pleasure Barons are the perfect party band — the more people and beer, the better.

— Sam Kepfield

They're back

Old favorites return to the rock-music scene, giving fans better-than-ever tracks, albums



Courtesy of Atlantic Records

Mick Jagger "Wandering Spirit" Atlantic Records

In the past, solo releases by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards pretty much followed a set pattern. Keith's albums showed that he was the ragged rock 'n' roll force behind the Rolling Stones, and Mick's albums were really, really lame.



This year, there was no surprise with Keith's "Main Offender." Rough and Stony, it was true to form. The surprise was Mick's latest, "Wandering Spirit."

Not only is it easily his best solo album, it's probably better than the past few Stones albums. A lot of credit has to go to Mick's co-producer Rick Rubin. You may recognize Rubin's name; he's worked with everyone from the Red Hot Chili Peppers to Danzig.

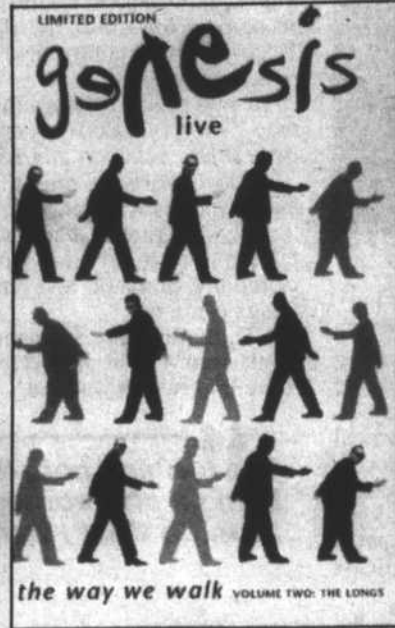
He is just what Jagger needed. Musically, there's a lot of different styles on "Wandering Spirit," and they're all done well.

The first single, "Sweet Thing," has that cheesy, disco falsetto Mick used way back on the Stones' "Miss You," and it's great to hear it again.

On "Use Me," a cover of an old Bill Withers tune, Mick and special guest Lenny Kravitz get down and dirty over a riff that is even funkier than the bass line by Flea, another special guest.

There's plenty of other musical excursions, too. Gospel, country blues, folk, '60s soul — there's even a couple more rock songs. Mick should keep hanging out with Rick Rubin and making albums like "Wandering Spirit."

— Matt Silcock



Courtesy of Atlantic Records

Genesis "Genesis Live: The Way We Walk Volume Two: The Longs" Atlantic Records

Following the success of the first live volume chronicling Genesis' 1992 World Tour, Atlantic Records has released Volume Two of "The Way We Walk," subtitled "The Longs." Volume One has gone gold and is nearing platinum. Volume Two promises to equal this mark.

Genesis won the 1993 American Music Award for Favorite Band, Duo or Group in Pop/Rock, and also received a Grammy nod for the single, "I Can't Dance." Their '92 Tour was the hottest act of the summer, grossing more than all other bands.

"The Longs" showcases the band's evolution, containing numbers from the Peter Gabriel era in the early '70s ("The Musical Box," "Firth of Fifth") to the band's transformation into a commercial and critical success in the mid-1980s ("Home by the Sea," "Driving the Last Spike," "Domino"). "The Longs" marks the 20th anniversary of their first U.S. concert appearance and celebrates 20 years with the Atlantic label.

Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks are again joined by Daryl Sturmer on guitar and Chester Thompson on drums to produce a musical extravaganza for the ears (with a few liner notes giving glimpses of the band's video show, as with the first volume). Collins and Thompson join forces for a "Drum Duet" that should please fans of percussion, hearkening back to Collins' solo work with "In the Air Tonight."

"Genesis Live: Volume Two" is, like the first volume, available for a limited time only, through April 30, 1993.

— Sam Kepfield



Courtesy of Capitol Records

Paul McCartney "Off the Ground" Capitol Records

Any mention of Paul McCartney having once been the sweetheart of The Beatles is no longer necessary or important, especially since his solo career spans 20 post-Beatles albums.

By now he knows a lot about music — which is especially evident in his latest release, "Off the Ground."

Besides being backed by a band tighter than dried leather (Hamish Stuart, Robbie McIntosh, Wix Wickens, Blair Cunningham and Linda, McCartney's wife of 23 years), McCartney recorded "Off the Ground" live in the studio, instead of layering songs, track upon track.

The result is a kaleidoscopic of fresh sound and compositions ranging from the MTV video single "Hope of Deliverance" to "Peace in the Neighborhood," a track promoting unity.

And what McCartney album would be complete without love songs?

Enter, "I Owe it All to You," proving that after about 30 years of performing, McCartney's boyish looks and voice can still strike major chords in the hearts of fans.

He's not all mush, though.

Besides a smattering of love songs, McCartney incorporates humor in his lyrics.

A fast-paced ballad, "Biker Like an Icon," tells the tale of a girl "who loves the biker like an icon. . ."

After said biker finally notices her, he takes advantage of her physically, but in the end, love prevails and the girl and her biker live happily ever after.

"Off the Ground," rich in musical textures and meaningful lyrics, has to be one of McCartney's best albums.

— Jill O'Brien

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Konzert GALENDAR

Tonight — Les Miserables at Lied; Def Leppard at Pershing Auditorium; Lincoln Symphony Orchestra with William Henry Curry at Kimball Hall; Gared at Red & Black Cafe; On the Fritz at Royal Grove; Monkey Meet at Zoo Blues Bar; All-Star Blues Review at Howard Street Tavern in Omaha; All Good at Ranch Bowl.

Tuesday — Les Miserables at Lied; Lincoln Symphony Orchestra with William Henry Curry at Kimball; The Brave/Masada, Christian hard-rock, at Nebraska Union Ballroom; No Left Stone CD Release Party at Duffy's Tavern; Monkey Meet at Zoo; On the Fritz at Royal Grove; Tommy Keene/Revelation/Hopeless Romeos at Howard Street; White Zombie at Ranch Bowl; Wynton Marsalis at Omaha's Orpheum Theater.

Wednesday — Les Miserables at Lied; On the Fritz at Royal Grove; Hanna's Porch at Duffy's; Leroy and the Liars at Zoo; Jazz 3x's at Coffee House; The Brave at Ranch Bowl; Monkey Meet at Howard Street.

Thursday — Les Miserables at Lied; On the Fritz at Royal Grove; The Whiskey Sour Notes at The Edge; Mighty Jail Breakers at 9th Street; Randy Mollner at Red & Black Cafe; August Red, alternative rock, at Rockin' Robin; Not All There at Zoo; Beyond the Pale at Howard Street.

Friday — Les Miserables at Lied; On the Fritz at Royal Grove; Mighty Jail Breakers at 9th Street; comedy and music featuring One Straight Guy at Panic!; Cheatin' Snakes at The Mountains; Epso Facto at Rockin' Robin; Lucky Peterson at Zoo; Sideshow/Dr. John Walker at Red & Black Cafe; Sandy Creek at Beatrice's Getaway Club; Fish Heads at Howard Street.

Saturday — Les Miserables at Lied; On the Fritz at Royal Grove; Mighty Jail Breakers at 9th Street; Owen Munch & the Debtors at The Mountains; Epso Facto at Rockin' Robin; They Came in Doves at The Edge; Lucky Peterson at Zoo; Liberation Surrealist Duo at Red & Black Cafe; Sandy Creek at Getaway Club; Fish Heads at Howard Street.

Sunday — Les Miserables at Lied; Truck Stop Love/Strawdog at Duffy's; Aelia at Howard Street.

Out-of-State — In Kansas City, Kan.: Suicidal Tendencies at Memorial Hall on Wednesday.

In Kansas City, Mo.: Neil Diamond at Kemper Arena on Monday; Warrant at Lone Star on Thursday.

In Columbia, Mo.: Soul Asylum/Goo Goo Dolls at the Blue Note on Wednesday.

— Compiled by Jill O'Brien