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New Releases



Tricky
"Juxtapose"
Island Records
Grade: B+

Until now, Tricky's music could best be described as claustrophobic. His recorded output was the aural equivalent of pent-up dread, uncertainty and heightened paranoia. While his debut, "Maxinquaye," hinted at Tricky's darker side, his next two albums "Pre-Millennium Tension" and the underrated "Angels With Dirty Faces" burrowed deeply into Tricky's troubled mind. The songs were difficult, directed inward and demanded patience in listeners. "Angels" also revealed Tricky's distrust of the business in which he makes his living. Several songs on the

album were rants against record companies - particularly Island - and how they sucked the creative life out of their artists. While much of this was certainly true, Tricky's obsession bordered on paranoia. In interviews, Tricky blamed record companies for such disparate events as Kurt Cobain's suicide and the murders of Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. And though his albums were fantastic, his claustrophobic sound had already been taken as far as it could go without sounding melodramatic or worn out. Tricky probably realized this, because "Juxtapose" is his most concise and warm effort yet. The album lacks the weight of Tricky's previous work, but it sounds like an interesting new direction. Tricky has been promoting this as a hip-hop album, and it most assuredly is. But it is hip hop unlike any heard before. Tricky, like Prince, creates a hybrid of sounds that are wholly unique. He creates music that is free of reference points, alien and other. Cypress Hill's DJ Muggs and DMX's producer Grease helped Tricky produce the album, but it sounds nothing like those high-profile rappers. The beats are light and airy, and guitars play as much of a role

in the songs as the drum machine. "Wash My Soul" even has a guitar riff that wouldn't have sounded out of place on PJ Harvey's "Rid of Me." The songs work well together, and the light beats, melodic bass, acoustic guitars and weird synthesizer effects are almost hypnotic. However, a few of the songs nod to hip-hop clichés, to the album's detriment. "Hot Like a Sauna" has a Missy Elliott/Timbaland-style beat and a pointless remix of the song mars what is otherwise a cohesive album. "I Like the Girls" takes a page from the "bitches and hoes" school of rap with a sexist rant about lesbian prostitutes servicing guest rapper Mad Dog. And Mad Dog's rhyme skills, which consist entirely of speed rapping in a faux-Jamaican patois, are fortunately on little of the album. Long-time vocalist Martine Topley-Bird is conspicuous in her absence. Her wonderful voice was a perfect complement to Tricky's mumbled speak-sing, and sound-alike replacement D'Na's voice is too thin to make up for it. Despite these gripes, Tricky has made a surprising, interesting and unusual album. May his career last as long as Prince's.

- Josh Krauter

Section of unfinished 'Fruits' to be published for first time

NEW YORK (AP) — In the summer of 1850, Henry David Thoreau was sharing a house with his parents and wondering what to do. He had completed his second book, the now-classic "Walden," but had no idea how to follow it. "I feel ripe for something, yet do nothing," he wrote in his journal. Having started a surveying business, he chose to ponder the "rich and fertile mystery" of the wildlife around Concord, Mass. He spent the last decade of his life compiling data, apparently for a comprehensive natural history of Concord. Now a section of that unfinished project, "Wild Fruits," will soon be available for the first time, nearly 140 years after the author's death. The book is being published this fall by W.W. Norton. "Prior to 1851, Thoreau was writing about himself in nature," said Bradley Dean, the book's editor. "With 'Wild Fruits,' he seems to be getting out of the way. He writes about nature itself." Dean also edited another portion of Thoreau's project, "Faith in a Seed," which was published a few years ago. Because Thoreau has long been celebrated as one of the greatest American thinkers and prose stylists, it seems unthinkable that even fragments of Thoreau's work took so long to be published. At its best, the writing in "Wild Fruits" is clearly comparable to his more famous books. And Thoreau remains highly influential among writers and environmentalists. "Thoreau is the most compelling among classic American writers in spelling out man's relation to the envi-

"*Prior to 1851, Thoreau was writing about himself in nature. With 'Wild Fruits,' he seems to be getting out of the way.***"**

BRADLEY DEAN
editor of 'Wild Fruits'

ronment," said Dean, who has taught at several universities and now works at the Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Mass., less than a mile from Walden Pond. Thoreau was just 44 when he died of tuberculosis in 1862, passing away in the front parlor of his family home. Shortly before his death, he had wrapped the manuscript for "Wild Fruits" in heavy paper, tied string around it and placed it in a wooden chest, where he kept thousands of pages from other projects. It took decades for his works to be stored safely, in the New York Public Library. By then, the wooden box had vanished and the pages were scattered. And even in mint condition, Thoreau's handwriting was virtually illegible. "I started reading his manuscripts back in the late 1970s," Dean said. "I was reading manuscripts of works that had been published. I would come across a word I didn't know and compare it to the published text. You do that a thousand times, and after a while you become an expert." Much of "Wild Fruits" is a catalogue of Thoreau's observations. Each plant or fruit has its own entry. He offered poetic descriptions of the elm tree ("we owe to it the first deepening of the shadows in our streets"), the

dandelion ("that little seedy spherical system") and the strawberry ("better call it by the Indian name of heart-berry, for it is indeed a crimson heart"). A famous believer in Transcendentalism, which worshipped nature as divine, Thoreau attacked commercialism, status-seeking and other forms of materialism. In "Wild Fruits," he cited the difference between buying fruit and gathering it yourself. "It is a grand fact that you cannot make the fairer fruits or parts of fruits matter of commerce," he wrote. "You cannot buy the pleasure which it yields to him who truly plucks it." Dean said additional papers remain to be transcribed, including "Moonlight," a volume inspired by Thoreau's nighttime walks. Influenced by the then-recent publication of Charles Darwin's writings, Thoreau apparently was trying to apply the theory of natural selection to his own work. "He wanted to get his mind around the entire phenomenon of Concord," Dean said. "He wanted to know it scientifically, historically, aesthetically. He was trying to compile the natural history of Concord, which nobody had tried anything like before."

Lax crowd mars Semisonic show

SEMISONIC from page 15

cert from a completely ill-fated State Fair appearance was something that, as the all-too-true cliché would have it, came in a small package - time-wise, anyway. Matt Wilson, a former bandmate of Dan Wilson and Munson in Minneapolis art-rock orchestra Trip Shakespeare, took the stage for a few

numbers with Semisonic. The highlight came when the brothers Wilson sang backup to Munson on "Lulu," a song from Trip Shakespeare's final full-length album of the same name. The song speaks true to exactly how I feel about Semisonic's former (and better) incarnation. "Lulu" puts it right: "Lonely when I hear the band/That used to play when we were looking for music/Lonely when I hear

the band/Do you remember? Do you recall?" Unfortunately for listeners everywhere, Matt Wilson is not a permanent member of Semisonic, but this concert provided a glimmer of hope that collaboration between the two will follow. Just that chance made Saturday's concert well worth it - even without any Prince covers.