



Marianne Faithfull

A Perfect Stranger - The Island Anthology

A Perfect Stranger - The Island Anthology is not a greatest hits album per say-- it's the re-construction of a life. Marianne Faithfull was a songstress chanteuse in the 1960's and very much part of the pop-music scene (including a relationship w/ Mick Jagger). But the demands of the industry became too much for her, and she descended into a world of drugs and disappointment, only to resurrect herself in 1979 with the release of *Broken English*. The resurrection revealed Marianne as a woman--womanhood reached through her struggles with the abuse and control of sexism, the means of escaping it, and her fight against it.

The two discs of this comprehensive collection contain music from the teeth of her struggle, her evolution beyond it and an exploration of the troubled music of others. There is not much of Faithfull's recent work that's been left out. The album includes six tracks from *Broken English*, her version of "Sister Morphine", which she originally wrote with Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, and covers of work by Kurt Veil, Bono, Tom Waits and John Lennon.

Marianne Faithfull is a true musical luminary. She is able to collaborate with the pop scene's notables as well as write her own music. With her jagged, seasoned voice, which gives all her songs a signature twist, even her covers sound like originals.

-- Elizabeth Gariti



Pearl Jam

Live On Two Legs

Their first live album, *Live On Two Legs* captures the energy and charisma of Pearl Jam in performance, making tracks like 'Daughter', 'Elderly Woman. . .', ("Longest title in the Pearl Jam catalogue," according to Eddie), and 'Untitled' sweeter, riper, better.<p>

All the recordings on this CD render Pearl Jam classics with a different, vital energy. "Go" becomes a raw, desperate cry of obsessive love and failure. The climax of "Black" is suffused with a long, eerie guitar note that sounds like the dust of time disintegrating in a red haze. And 'Given to Fly', which stood out when I saw them in concert, also stands out on the CD and soars in a way it doesn't on the studio recording of *Yield*.

If you haven't been lucky enough to catch Pearl Jam in concert but want the Pearl Jam Live experience, grab this CD. It truly is the next best thing to being there.

-- Elizabeth Gariti

Willie Nelson

Teatro

If all the world's a stage, Willie Nelson's *Teatro* sets the scene for the day's closing act. Produced by Daniel Lanois and featuring Emmylou Harris, the music hints of a desert afternoon's danger--conjuring cracked adobe villas, tumbleweeds and the sun's abandonment.

Daniel Lanois also produced Emmylou Harris' hit album, *Wrecking Ball*. He's worked with U2, Peter Gabriel, and produced Bob Dylan's *Time Out of Mind* as well. Lanois' work is described as "haunting," and *Teatro* is no exception. His song, "The Maker", embellished with Nelson's lonely vocals and Harris' backing, resonates with the stillness of a spiritual journey's end.

The talents of Lanois, Harris and Nelson create a musical triad which makes *Teatro* spicy, poignant and deeply layered--atypical from most country albums today. It's guaranteed to get you through the end of the day end and the beginning of the night.

-- Elizabeth Gariti



Cake

Prolonging the Magic

Sacramento, C.A.'s Cake is back with a pleasing, straightforward album strangely reminiscent of The Roches. Cake uses the same uncomplicated musical focus which highlights the complexity of their lyrics. Lyrics which initially seem simple, but reveal their depth with repeated listenings.

The whole album is duplicitous: perky and pleasant on the surface while divulging a darkness underneath. It's comprised of tunes about life and love in a small town and the resulting confusion and tangles.

The most is made of Cake's main quintet of two guitars, bass, drums and trumpet. Again, here's complexity creating the illusion of simplicity. They also discreetly add other instruments and sound effects to the mix: mandolin, musical saw, and even a dial tone to open the single, "Never There".

Cake is likeable because they are derisive and self-deprecating, dealing with the usual rock n' roll themes of love and loss, but with a strangely plaintive irony. In this CD, it almost seems as if Cake has given up on love.

But don't give up on Cake—they are making their way, piece by piece.

-- Elizabeth Gariti



Alanis Morissette

Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie

Seems like everyone's using their newest release as therapy these days. Sheryl Crow self-admittedly did it with *Globe Sessions*, and now Alanis is thrusting her self-analysis upon us with *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie*. (The title speaks for itself.)

This album deals with co-dependent relationships and the trauma of instant fame. As genuine as Alanis' feelings may be, it's hard for those who crave the life and fame Alanis has to believe, that for her, success has been troublesome. But often the lyrics' stories help the songs rise above their overdone themes.

And, at times the album's atonal musical experiments undermine the lyrics. Alanis has such a unique voice, you wish she'd just sing. But she does use the tonal discordance as a springboard for her range and flexibility.

There **are** gems on this CD. "That I Would Be Good" conveys vulnerability and self-revealing sincerity. "Would Not Come" aptly portrays our universal struggle for self-acceptance, and "Unsent" smiles resignedly through many sentiments left unsaid.

"Ironically", despite the occasional musical and lyrical self-indulgence, the CD gets better with repeated listenings. Her discomfort with it notwithstanding, future success for Alanis seems imminent.

--Elizabeth Gariti