

Album of the week

FIONA SHEPHERD



SWEETNESS AND RAGE KEEP EMINEM RELEVANT AND HIS AUDIENCE ON EDGE



EMINEM: THE MARSHALL MATHERS LP 2
AFTERMATH, WEB ONLY
★★★★

I want to move on," declares Eminem on his eighth album. Marshall Mathers III has just turned 41; perhaps he is looking for closure after years of spitting bile and hatred. Even so, it is a surprise to hear him utter the words "I love you Debbie Mathers" on *Headlights*. Making peace with his mum? He's definitely changed his tune since *Cleaning Out My Closet*.

But, as usual with Eminem, there is a contradiction at the heart of the track. His words may be sentimental but he delivers the olive branch at an aggressive pitch. This sort-of-sequel to his most successful album to date is nostalgic only in that Em-

inem effectively mines the white hot rage which made him such a volatile proposition in the first place, while making playful backwards references here and there for the trainspotter fans. His old stalker pal Stan pops up again on opening track *Bad Guy*, for example.

Hip-hop may be enjoying a commercial purple patch these days thanks to the numerous ruling rappers and young pretenders who have emerged since Eminem first stamped his mark on the genre but, boy, is it invigorating to hear this clever, witty word-smith in full furious flow once again, wishing death on his woman on the cartoonish yet unsettling *So Much Better* or sticking it to his dad (now that he's big pals with mum) on *Rhyme or Reason* which samples and retools The Zombies' psych pop reverie, *Time Of The Season*, for evil ends.

Bleeding heart angst doesn't suit Eminem – we can hear that much

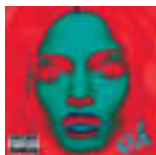
as soon as he breaks out his pained singing voice on *Stronger Than I Was*. Instead, he is in his element on the catchy *Love Game*, executing an impressive vocal gymnastic routine with the album's only guest rapper, Kendrick Lamar, over bubblegum backing, or delivering the epic diss of *Asshole* over a Hollywood blockbuster backdrop of ominous strings and clattering tribal drums.

As the album draws to a close with *Evil Twin*, he decides to bury the hatchet with Britney, Christina and other soft targets of yore. But, in case anyone feared for his impropriety, he can still do unreconstructed sexism and homophobia – the pugnacious, bratty *Berzerk* samples and apes early Beastie Boys.

Eminem says he wants to move on – fair enough. But thankfully it sounds like he won't go gently into middle age.



POP



M.I.A.: MATANGI
XL, £15.99
★★★

M.I.A.'s fourth album has been a

long time coming. When her label originally rejected Matangi, apparently for being "too positive", she forced their hand by threatening to leak the album herself. However, the delay has given her the opportunity to add a skit referring to her current beef with the NFL following her Superbowl appearance ("brown girl, turn your s**t down"). Otherwise, it's back to business as usual with a stew of hip-hop beats and Asian rhythms coupled with cheeky cultural steals and conscious antagonism. Even though the title track's shout-out to "Bali, Mali, Chile, Malawi" is hardly her most eloquent moment, recent single *Come Walk With Me* confirms that she can write a sweet pop melody when she chooses.



CATE LE BON: MUG MUSEUM
TURNSTILE, £13.99
★★★★
Cardiff-bred, Los

Angeles-based musician Cate Le Bon follows her lovely guest vocal on the new Manic Street Preachers album with this audacious folk-pop offering which is just as likely to employ the spare, off-kilter rhythms of post-punk acts such as The Slits as draw on the psych-folk balm of the Laurel Canyon troubadours.

There is both an idiosyncrasy and a purity to Le Bon's voice – imagine a Welsh-accented blend of Joni Mitchell, Judy Collins and Nico – which commingles exotically with Perfume Genius on the androgynous duet, *I Think I Knew*. But this is only one of several tracks here to get under the skin with a bewitching combination of delicacy and stridency.

FIONA SHEPHERD

CLASSICAL



SCHUBERT: DEATH AND THE MAIDEN & STRING QUINTET IN C
SUPRAPHON, £20.99
★★★★★

When a quartet can sound as spontaneously good on recording as it does live, you know there's something special going on. Such is the direct

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impact of this major coupling of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden Quartet* and the wonderful *String Quintet in C*. The latter is thrilling and emotive, a riveting exploration of Schubert at his most expansive and dramatic, with guest cellist Danjulo Ishizaka fitting like a glove into the Pavel Haas mould. Both works are presented with the perfect mix of poise and panache.

KEN WALTON

FOLK



SALT HOUSE: LAY YOUR DARK LOW
MAKE BELIEVE RECORDS, £13.99
★★★★★

This is an album of delights and surprises, with one of the finest young voices on the Scottish folk scene, Siobhan Miller, in the ostensibly motley but inspired company of three other seasoned musicians – guitarist and singer-songwriter Ewan MacPherson, Black Isle fiddler Lauren MacColl and busy jazz double-bassist Euan Burton, who proves to be no mean songwriter in his own right.

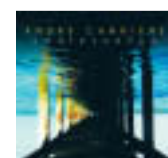
Miller's clear enunciation combined with the contemporary nature of

songs such as MacPherson's *Strong Dark Souls* or Burton's *Setting Sun* is at times strikingly reminiscent of Karine Polwart. Elsewhere, in *Little Birdie*, MacPherson's winsome lyrics ride MacColl's windblown fiddle and the traditional *She's Like the Swallow* continues this graceful arc, with Miller poised above a chamber-like accompaniment.

The band works up an edgy thrum to carry the timeless wistful declamatory of *Katie Cruel* – Miller unshackled by the accompanying pulse – and things come to a powerful conclusion with a haunting setting of *She Walks in Beauty*, drawing on lines by Byron and others.

JIM GILCHRIST

JAZZ



ANDRE CANNIERE: COALESCENCE
WHIRLWIND RECORDS, £13.99
★★★★★

The American-born trumpeter has emerged as one of the most compelling artists on the current London jazz scene, and this follow-up to his acclaimed *Spaces* more than justifies that claim. His rich and flexible tonal range and highly inventive improvisations are supported by a powerful quintet which includes pianist Ivo Neame and guitarist Hannes Riepler, and a subtle and supportive rhythm section of Ryan Trebilcock on bass and drummer Jon Scott.

Each of the musicians is alive to the textural and rhythmic twists of Canniere's skillfully structured compositions, all inspired by specific events or experiences outlined in his sleeve note. Topics range from childhood memories in Sweden Hill to his opposition to fracking in *Gaslands* and US gun laws in *Point Zero*.

KENNY MATHIESON

WORLD



STAND UP, PEOPLE: GYPSY POP SONGS FROM TITO'S YUGOSLAVIA 1964-1980
VLAX RECORDS, £14.99
★★★★★

The story behind this CD is as fascinating as its music. Nat Morris and Philip Knox trawled the former Yugoslav republic for the pop which ordinary people listened to during the darkest Communist years, and their quest for this forgotten music took them to flea-markets, dusty attics, and the vaults of Serbia's national library. The results are wonderfully evocative – songs for all the eventualities of village life, some by performers who became stars, others by singers who made just one record and then, under family pressure, were forced back into obscurity.

MICHAEL CHURCH