

ALBUM REVIEWS

FEATURED ALBUM



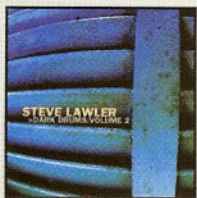
URSULA RUCKER

Supa Sista

(IK7)

Rucker's seductive tones have appeared on albums by artists from King Britt to the Roots and Josh Wink. Part of the ever-burgeoning Philly scene, Rucker's is the voice of social consciousness and truth that hip-hop has gotten too egomaniacal to express. Her spoken word is intimate, startling, and powerful. Stripped of all useless posturing or needless rhymes, she comes with a pure flow that is intensely honest. The musical backing is a fusion of jazz, hip-hop and soul. 4Hero's jazz n' bass graces *What???* as Rucker twists her verbal barbs around the skittering beat. 7 maintains a more downtempo mood as Rucker and MC M.A.D. recount a fantastical romance. Rucker flips the standard hip-hop lexicon to add urgency to her point and invert your pre-programmed sense of meaning. This is a masterful album not for the faint of mind. *Supa Sista?* No doubt. (Lucy Beer)

FEATURED COMPILATION



STEVE LAWLER

Dark Drums Volume 2

(Bliss Productions)

Ok, to get us started with this review lets not waste any time and make one thing clear: This mix is absolutely sick! With only a few months left in the year, I'll be surprised if another one comes out that can change my mind that this should be the best DJ mixed compilation of 2001. Why, you may ask? Well, it's because every record that Lawler drops is a bomb and it holds up the entire way through. Just when he has pummeled you with dark drums and spooky voices, he unleashes some funky basslines, switches gears and makes you shake. I think this is the first time in a while that I've listened to a mix until the end and popped it right back in the player to listen again. Danny Tenaglia had better watch out cuz Steve Lawler is right on his ass with some serious skills. (Blips)

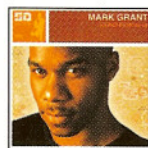
ALBUMS REVIEWED

Soulfather Rasco has created another masterpiece with his second full length release. Ras once again serves all phony MCs with his battle rhymes and proves that his lyrical skills aren't affected by the sophomore jinx. El Da Sensei, Planet Asia, and 427 make an appearance on the album and the *Gunz Still Hot rmx* features ED O.G. and Reks. Eerie organs, tight flute loops, and a monotonous piano playing chopsticks are an example of the variety of beats that will keep your head nodding in every direction. Cali Agent number one comes hard but also displays his loving father figure role on *Sunshine*, a song dedicated to his daughter. (DJ Echo)

MARK GRANT

Sound Design Vol. 2

(Om Records)

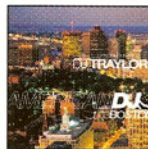


Facing the task of following up Marques Wyatt's masterful first volume in the series, Mark Grant flinches not and pulls out a stellar selection of jazzy, soulful and infectious deep house grooves. The mix bursts with colorful energy from start to finish; each track is a choice cut, shimmering with tropical percussion and good time vibes. Some immediate highlights include the sassy funk of Inland Knights' *Feel This Way* and the tribal drums and vibrant, jazzy horns of Atmosfear's *Dancing In Outer Space*. Jerome Sydenham and Kerri Chandler's *Deconstructed House* is another example of their sublime, sunshine vibe. Grant combines seamless mixing and impeccable programming into this faultless collection, making it essential for any house fan. (Lucy Beer)

MIKE TRAYLOR

American DJ Series Vol. 3

(The Right Stuff)



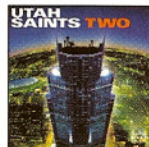
For those of you who can't decide what kind of electronic music you like, and/or can't stand a CD with one genre represented, Mike Traylor spins this one for you. Jumping off with some nu-skoool breaks, General Midi and BLIM and Katie, he ventures through some progressive house, funky house, trance, tech-trance, and progressive trance. Timo Maas, Tomba Vira, Angel Alanis, Haitras, and Junkie XL are all represented here, helping encompass a DJ's DJ in his/her bedroom, just

pulling random tracks and throwing them on the tables. I didn't get a strong sense of purist track programming, and there are a few less than perfect mixes, but I also understand Traylor's love for diversity and just the overall joy of hearing good tracks one after another. (Steve-O)

UTAH SAINTS

Two

(Netzwerk Records)



Along with the KLF's *The White Room* and Candyflip's *Madstock*, the Utah Saints' self-titled first album (1992) until very recently was part of an elite fraternity in my collection of one hit "please do another but probably won't" wonders. From what this LP has to offer, it's very likely that the Utah Saints will never have to learn the lesson that it was much easier to be original in the early 90s than it is today. It's got interludes, its got blitzing anthems, stadium-wide power-cord guitars and its got narrations about Oprea singers and rhinoceroses. What have they been doing for 10 years besides living off residual? Who cares, this album is the Jolly Green Giant armed with a fifty-foot glock, and he's got your tiny brain in his crosshairs. About the frequent voice-overs and surreal narrations; my only distraction whilst listening to the CD was a small, frightened part of my brain repeating the phrase "Please Jesus...Jesus and Baby Jesus don't let that be Michael Stipe." Of course it is. Bleh. He's creepy. (M.von Pfeiffer)

GATECRASHER

Discotechgeneration

(Sony/UltraRecords)



Dress me in up in shaggy bell-bottom chaps and call me Sunshine. When you put the word Gatecrasher on an anthology these days its bound to sell like flapjacks at a lumberjack convention. Although this anthology tends towards the more generic end of the increasingly popularized trance genre, you shouldn't be ashamed on spending your hard-earned dollars (or pesos if you live in SoCal), on this solid two-disc set. Leading off the usual "here and now" wolfpack of Max Graham, D: Fuse, Factor 9, and Fatboy Slim is an impressive track from WAY back in 1991 from The Future Sound of London. If slam-

ming, straightforward trance for less than the price of a plane ticket to the UK is what you're looking for, this Bud's...errr Red Bull's for you. (M.von Pfeiffer)

DJ KRUSH

Zen

(Sony/Japan)

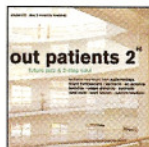


This guy should write a book for his next artistic endeavor: *Zen & the Art of Crafting Beats*. A long time master in his musical kung fun, DJ Krush provides a harmonious flow with this latest effort. Calm, centered and artful, *Zen* is a 63 minute hip hop, downtempo enlightenment. I'm particular into the straight Japanese *Candle Chant* and the stirring prophecy of *Paradise Bird Theory*, but I already love all 12 tracks. Krush has a superb sense of mixing and composing his sound, the beats meander like a slow stream, soothing the listener into a state of peaceful awareness. Soul saturated, well thought grooves. I must also point out the beautiful artwork on the insert, also by Krush. Ya gotta love the all-around artists! (Sharee) www.mmjp.or.jp/sus/krush

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Outpatients 2

(Hospital Records)



The consistently innovative Hospital Records crew have come up with their second compilation of the year, this time devoid of the drum & bass that they've become known for. Like their recent d'n'b comp, *Plastic Surgery 2*, the highlights on *Outpatients 2* come from the home turf talent, not the all-star guests. There's the sublime two-step of *Hear My People* by Landslide, and the laid back house of *Talk Box* by Future Homosapiens AKA label owners London Electricity. Audiomontage submit the sexy deep house track *Come With Me*, while other "outpatients" fail to live up to their compilation hosts with decent but not outstanding tracks like *Shinobi* by Jazztronik and *Samba Sun* by Solid Roots. The closer, *Bird of Paradise*, is also the best track on the album, an uplifting but emotional nu-jazz piece with vocals by Nicola Bright-Thomas. The boys at Hospital Records have once again proven their exceptional talents in a myriad of musical styles, despite the few flaws on this compilation. (Jesse Mann)

TARRENTELLA; REDANKA

Playback Engineering

(Bliss)



These two may be the Sasha and Digweed of the new millennium. Chris Bourne and Andy Holt a.k.a. Tarrentella and Redanka are not "superstar DJs", but the way they engineered PE they can have whatever label they choose. These Brits stand tall, alone with a plethora of scorching releases and remixes for giant labels like Hooj, Whoop, and Polygram. It was inevitable that this super duo would put out a mixed CD, but I had no idea that it would be so damn good. Listening to this may counter the effects of any ADD drugs, i.e. Ritalin. T.R have tossed their names into the hat for the 2001 dynamic duo DJs of the world with this first venture. They give you progressive tracks like no other; spacey, tribally, playful, sinister, colossal, and beautiful vocals. Hell, it may even wean you off of Prozac. (Tru Pham)

RHYTHM MASTERS

Disconnect Your Head

(Tommy Boy Silver)



Here's another collection of crunchy, smashing sort of disco-filtered house/ breaks from the Tommy Boy Silver Label. It's loaded with laser stabs and other such dub excursions, but not restricted to them. Producers Steve McGuinness and Rob Chetcuti aren't afraid to show their feminine side when it comes to soulfully estrogen-drenched tracks like *Angels*. Nor are they afraid to show their b-boy side with Beastie Boys like track, *One in a Million*, or their industrial side with *21st Century*. The rest of the tracks are teeming with vocoded and filtered vocals over funky up bass lines and effect-singed synth riffs. Yeah, the song title *Don't F*** With My Filter*, pretty much sums up the Rhythm Masters' approach. Don't f*** with their filters cuz if their filters get f***ed with any more, they're gonna have to bust out the lube. (Eric Bowler)