# spins

## THE BE GOOD TANYAS

*Hello Love*

(Nettwerk)

Not that their first two albums were slouches by any stretch of the imagination, but the third time's the charm for The Be Good Tanyas. The patchwork theme of the album's packaging is fitting because the disc includes originals by the bandmates as well as covers of songs by Neil Young, John Hurt, Sean Hayes, Jeremy Lindsey, and even Prince, alongside a pair of traditionals.

Young's "For The Turnstiles" and Hayes' "A Thousand Tiny Pieces" follow one another and are treated with the utmost reverence, while at the same time becoming a part of the trio's oeuvre. As for the original numbers, "A Little Blues" is colorful and jaunty, the rainy title track is a heartbreaker, and the mysterious "Song For R." is simply haunting. The Be Good Tanyas are also very good to Prince on their "hidden track"/insurgent country treatment of "When Doves Cry."

8

Gregg Shapiro

## KEITH URBAN

*Love, Pain & The Whole Crazy Thing*

(Capitol Nashville)

Listening to *Love, Pain & The Whole Crazy Thing* without placing Keith Urban's fourth solo album within the context of his personal life is nearly impossible. Lines like "I close my eyes and I see you standing right there/Sayin' 'I do'" and "They're throwing the rice in our hair" from opener "Once In A Lifetime" immediately bring to mind his June nuptials with Oscar winner and fellow Aussie Nicole Kidman. Those and "There's a past in everyone/You can't undo, you can't outrun," from "Used To The Pain," seem to foreshadow his admission of alcoholism and retreat to rehab, forcing Urban to cancel a tour and all press engagements tied to the album's release. Underneath the hoopla lies a fine record that switches genres from straight-up country ("Raise The Barn") to Celtic-influenced rock ("I Told You So"). Urban's guitar-slinger reputation is in full force, but he turns on enough romantic charm to bewitch the most adamant country music hater. Heartbroken vocals add extra weight to a cover of "I Can't Stop Loving You" until the chorus breaks in and there's no escaping the song's Phil Collins residue.

7

Janine Schaults

## ESTEBAN

*Best Of Esteban*

(Dreambox)

Late-night infomercial icon, Zorro impersonator, and classical and world music guitarist Esteban does actually make records when he's not selling guitars on the tube, and this *Best Of* collection spotlights his blues, classic rock, jazz, and flamenco styles. Esteban is an excellent guitarist and, while no new musical turf is covered here, he should appeal to the smooth instrumental crowd. Check out "Fuego Malguena" and his reworking of Del Shannon's "Runaway" to get a taste. He has the skills to be taken seriously, but his costume-shop image puts a lot of people off who might enjoy his playing, otherwise. If you can get past it, tune in for some excellent nylon-string guitar slinging with a fine supporting cast.

6

Mike O'Cull

## ARMY OF ANYONE

*Army Of Anyone*

(EMI)

Years after Scott Weiland rediscovered rock stardom with Velvet Revolver, his ex-Stone Temple Pilots mates Dean and Robert DeLeo have decided to create a "supergroup" of their own. Theirs joins forces with Richard Patrick (former Filter lead vocalist) and veteran drummer Ray Luzier to create the new entity Army Of Anyone. All of the individual elements blare loudly and clearly on each track of their debut – Patrick's patented sweeping angst-ridden vocals, and the DeLeos' driving guitar riffs. But the true test of success for a rock supergroup mind-meld is whether the final product can be greater than the sum of its parts, as Audioslave was able to prove in producing a sound that was beyond Soundgarden + Rage. Army Of Anyone hasn't quite accomplished that yet, proving they either need more time to meld or simply don't have the chemistry. While none of the tracks are bad enough to skip over, none of them are memorable enough to replay either. It's simply a group of seasoned rockers making seasoned rock music.

4

Carter Moss

## EMILY HAINES & THE SOFT SKELETON

*Knives Don't Have Your Back*

(Last Gang)

In her role as lead singer for nuevo new wavers Metric, Emily Haines comes of as part Kim Wylde, part Kim Gordon: that band's herky-jerk rhythms, antiquated synth-lines and fist-waving power hooks could be total "Kids in America"-style nostalgia-fodder if it weren't for the blonde bombshell's detached mien, icy wit and tendency toward Chomsky-esque consumer critique. This solo excursion finds most of Haines' cardinal personality traits intact, but in a musical context strikingly different from Metric - it's a straight-up, piano-powered, singer-songwriter record. Most of the songs are decidedly downbeat, if self-protectively sarcastic ("Crowd Surf Off A Cliff," anybody?) and she even delivers the most incendiary Neil Young answer song since "Sweet Home Alabama" in the form of the proto-post-feminist "The Maid Needs A Maid" ("Bros before hos is a rule, read the guidelines/You trouble me, your breasts heave when you sing," quoth she). All in all, *Knives* is an intimate set of clever, memorable songs from an intriguing, increasingly multifaceted artist.

8

Scott Faingold

**Appearing: 1/12 at Lakeshore Theatre.**

## FRIDA HYVÖNEN

*Until Death Comes*

(Secretly Canadian)

Frida Hyvönen's stunning full-length debut is an absorbing and seductive listening experience. Don't let the title put you off, as this is one of the most vibrant and alive discs in recent memory. Bare-bones opening track "I Drive My Friend," with its layered harmonies, sounds like it could be a Ditty Bops demo. It smoothly sets the tone for Hyvönen's no-frills performance style. There are emotions on the surface of practically every song, but Hyvönen applies a clinical distance that actually works in her favor. Comparisons to Laura Nyro, another singer-songwriter closely associated with her piano, are inevitable, especially on "You Never Got Me Right." But you can also hear elements of Björk's theatrical style on "Today, Tuesday" and Regina Spektor's modern cabaret touches on "Once I Was A Serene Teenaged Child" and "The Modern." Throughout, Hyvönen remains her own woman, something evident on songs such as the girl-group homage "Come Another Night" (complete with '60s beat, tambourine, and horn section) and "N.Y.," a love song to New York that even incorporates the *ultimate* love song to the city, Kander and Ebb's "New York, New York."

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Gregg Shapiro

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