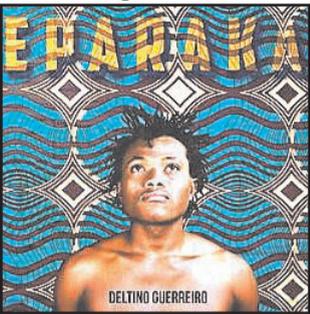


ALBUMS

WORLD

Deltino Guerreiro
Eparaka

Guerreiro is from Mozambique and while you could call this world it's actually pop, Guerreiro drawing in influences from a variety of musical cultures. It most reminded us of *Moonflower* (vintage Santana, which combined the energy of Brazil with tribal rhythms and western rock.

Guerreiro developed his sound travelling from the north to the south of his country, from soul and RnB to the musical tradition of northern Mozambique, with lyrics in Portuguese, English and Macua.

Opener *Three Estações* is the kind of pop you can hear blasting out of your internet radio if you tune to Caribbean/African radio stations. For those who don't tune into Zoukstation Kizomba, it's close to the feel-good light pop tunes you might hear on holiday in Spain but with a funky Isley Bros style guitar solo at the end.

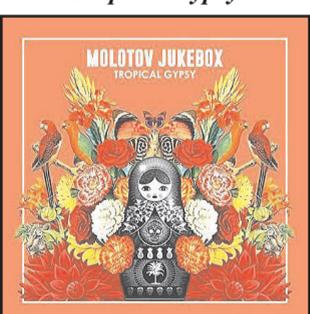
Sonho is the first of the songs that evoked classic Santana, a chilled vocal over a lazy groove and solid bass.

Faith opens with acoustic guitar and ululating. We might have suggested it closes with a touch of Wham style sax — and the next song is *Faith* — but that might be reading too much into it. *Faith* is a chilled jazz/pop song that's almost lounge music as is *Freedom*, with its Santanastyle keyboard noodling. *Se Eu Te Dissesse* crosses the line into bland lounge music and was the weakest song on the album.

Okinkela is more "world" while *Duas Caras* borrows from Michael Jackson for groove, the end similar to *Thriller*.

We enjoyed this and will continue to play it, but it might be too pop for world music geeks and too eclectic for fans of pop.

It's out now on Amazon but officially in the UK on 8th April. JMC

Molotov Jukebox
Tropical Gypsy

Most albums start off well and then tail off; Molotov Jukebox do the opposite and opener *Pineapple Girl* (nice snare solo at the start) is a little saccharine for us, like the music from a kids' television show. But it's not bad, with its horns and energy, and it gets the party started.

This is a party album, or at least a sat-in-a-field-with-a-pint-of-cider album — see this set played in the sun at a festival and you're going to be thinking life doesn't get much better.

Track two *Just The Thrill* beefs out the sound and slows it down a little, a proper tune instead

of a dance anthem from *Justin's House*.

It's party music so lively beats are to the fore, with Latino horns, accordion and violin and various dance rhythms, from samba to the accordion-led fohó (a style of music from north eastern Brazil, but you knew that) and cumbia (Latin American dance) to Balkan.

It's mostly upbeat and relentless cheerful, though songs like the reggae-influenced *Halfway There* (reggae with Balkan horns and it speeds up after a bit) offer space for a breather.

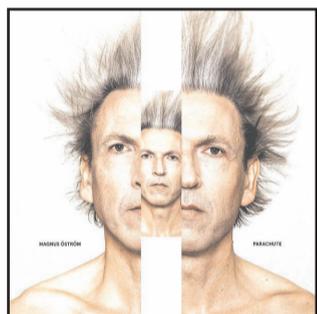
We've got no lyrics but apparently the themes of the human condition such as love, lust, regret and death are featured. If you want references (aside from "the Madness-inspired brass band, we once saw in Holland") they're a cross between Gogol Bordello and No Doubt.

The singer is Natalia Tena, a Wildling in *Game of Thrones*, the one who didn't say: "You know nothing, Jon Snow."

They're out touring this and play Gorilla, Manchester, on Saturday, 30th April.

JMC

JAZZ

Magnus Öström
Parachute

Öström was a member of the famous Esbjörn Svensson Trio (no, us neither, but presumably if you like jazz you're all over them), until Mr Svensson perished in a tragic diving accident.

Öström says in the Press release: "During the years after Esbjörn's death I struggled to find my way back to life. At times it has been really dark. When I have been at my lowest, the music has always been there to save me; it has been my parachute."

That explains a lot about this album. It's basically smooth jazz in its best sense, with complex arrangements and instrumentation but lots of melody, and, given that Öström is a drummer, tons of rhythm.

We mention in the Mmoths review (elsewhere on these pages) that the Review Corner has been bathed in a warm sea of happiness this week and this is one of the reasons: it's just a nice album. There's a sunny, happy vibe — because of, not despite, the bleakness Öström suffered following the death of his friend — and the music draws in various other genres to infuse the jazz, such as RnB and even prog. The songs are all solid (because he's a drummer we guess) so never sound like anything other than jazz, particularly in the solos from guitarist Andreas Hourdakis.

There's some trumpet from Mathias Eick on *The Shore of Unsure*. If opener *Dog On The Beach* doesn't soothe your heart, you need to check your pulse.

He's doing some dates to promote this, but only plays Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, London, on Tuesday, 26th April and Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival in July.

JMC

READERS' VIBES

Bought a newly released album? Whether it's pop, rock, jazz or classic, send us a short review.

AMBIENT

Luneworks Mmoths



We've been bathed in a warm sea of happiness this week in the Review Corner, thanks to some lovely music across several genres.

Luneworks *Mmoths*, is one. Yes, it's ambient, which too often denotes hoochy Zen background music sold in wacky shops that believe lumps of rock can make you emotionally stable. Or Clannad. Ugh.

There are exceptions: Steve Hillage's *Rainbow Dome Musik* is fantastic or even The xx or James Blake. Jack Colleran, who is Mmoths, has produced another. It's got enough impetus to have the appearance of rhythm so it moves forward and while there's a lot of swooshing and sighing on the synths, it's meaty and upbeat. It's deeper than deep house.

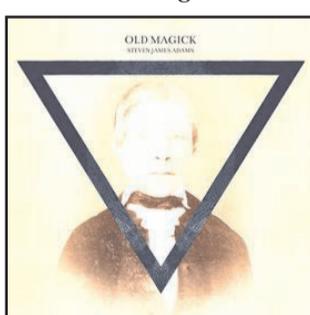
As soon as it came on we started feeling much better about the world. There's a movie about a happy but solitary spaceman just waiting to be made around this.

The downside is that you put it on to play and while you're thinking of what to say about track one, it's played to track five without it being really obvious where one stopped and the next started. However: *You* has some kind of robotic voice toning gently under swooshing waves of synth, the crests of which have hard edges, giving a little bit of edge and development. *Deu* is gentler but with a nice keyboard sound, while *Phase In* has a more spaced out intro. *Para Polaris* almost has a beat and some quite strident sounds and is almost a dance tune.

Excellent.

JMC

ALT COUNTRY

Steven James Adams
Old Magick

One of the Review Corner's favourite band stories concerns Steven James Adams's former group, The Broken Family Band, back when he was merely Steven J Adams. All the band members had good jobs, so band money was band money only. One night while on tour, they went out for a meal and blew the entire night's fee on good food and wine. The other bands on the tour were not impressed — their gig money was all they had to live on, and they'd dined on the likes of hot dogs and warm beer. They didn't have proper jobs (one of the Broken Family Band is a plastic surgeon and one works for a biscuit factory is all we can remember). It's a great story for any hobby musician, who for once gets the upper hand over "proper"

musicians. It perhaps indicates why the BFB's pleasing alt country with witty lyrics was never bigger. They were good but they didn't have to try: take or leave it, they don't at the end of the day care, as they have good jobs and families to worry about.

BFB is now gone but Adams remains and this is his second solo album and in some ways it's similar to his former band. Downbeat, world-weary tunes with some great one-liners but as a whole the album lacks the urgency of a man whose life will collapse round his ears if he can't make back the advance from the record company.

It reminded us of our 1916 edition of the *Chronicle*: it took a lot of work and it's very good but we want it to sell for personal satisfaction only. (Now on sale in Tesco, £1.25 for 72 pages, a bargain.)

Anyway. The album opens with *Together*, a pleasant tune with Adams's trademark gentle vocal; it appears to be about someone coming back home, possibly an errant partner (we're guessing, we've got no lyrics) "You are welcome here / You've been taken for a ride" it says. *King Of the Back Of The Bus* laments the loss of youthful enthusiasm in a friend: he or she was the king of the back of the bus but now it's "just massage music in your house". The narrator, of course, sees himself differently: "I think I move with the times / Maybe you disagree."

It's a gentle album and if you listen to the music alone it's a bit samey and you need the stories revealed by the lyrics to make it complete, though overall the deadpan presentation combined with Adams's heart-warming vocals make it appealing.

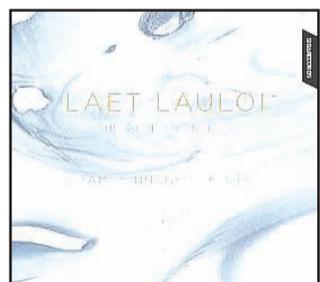
Adams has in the past written about black magic but we could see little evidence on here, the title and sleeve image aside. (As well as our favourite story, the Broken Family Band produced one of our favourite lyrics: "This house well the sun would come in nearly every day / Now the drapes and the altar and the pentagram get in the way / And there's blood in the kitchen, and blood in the bathroom / And blood on the sheets and black candles wherever I step ... You're a devil woman / Your heart is black / But your body drives me crazy".)

This is out now: for BFB fans, *French Drop* sounds most like the old days.

He's out promoting this, shifts at the day job allowing: he plays the The Eagle Inn, Manchester, tonight (Thursday).

JMC

CLASSICAL

Sami Junnonen
The Chant Enchanted

We've also been enjoying this album by flautist Sami Junnonen, though it's hard to describe. It's an album of flute music by a Finn (he was born in 1977 in Tampere) but at various places sounds English (Vaughan Williams) and European (Mozart, chamber music) and at other times exotic — one featured composer is Michio Miyagi, an expert on the koto, a Japanese stringed instrument.

The album opens with a Miyagi piece, *The Sea In Spring*, written for shakuhachi and koto but transcribed for flute and kantele by Junnonen and Eva Alkula.

Miyagi went blind after a sighted childhood, and this piece is doubly evocative as he remembers the sea and the seeing of his childhood.

The second piece is by Finn Janne Ikonen (b. 1975), *Sprout For Flute And Kantele*, the music flowing freely, like a plant from seed. It's a mystical piece, which in some ways sounds more eastern than Miyagi's opener.

Johann Sebastian Bach, *Sonata In C Major* and then Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Sonata In A minor* follow, this section giving the music a more traditional European feel, and virtuosity overtaking atmosphere as the musical precedent in places. Carl Philipp's pieces veer slightly towards the avant-garde, which leads nicely into the more modern sounds of works by Aki Yli-Salomäki (b. 1972), Jimmy López (b. 1978) and Ulfas Pulkkis (b. 1975). These take the album off into dreamer realms, though never challenging.

This is one of those albums that's been made to play, not analysed. It creates an atmosphere that is off-kilter enough to divert the listener from normal life but is not so edgy that you can't relax into it.

Junnonen, who holds a master of music with distinction from the Sibelius Academy, performs on 24-carat and 14-carat gold flutes, handcrafted by the Muramatsu Flute Co.

JMC

LIVE

Simple Plan on tour



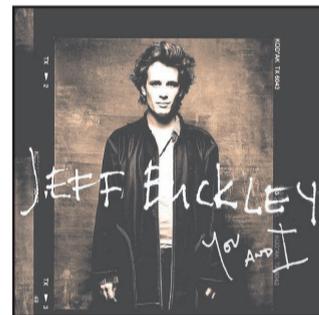
Legendary pop-punk five-piece Simple Plan have released a new studio album *Taking One For The Team*, which should be reviewed here next week.

They've announced a UK headline tour. Dates include Wednesday at Manchester O2 Ritz.

(Submitted photograph.)

ARCHIVES

Jeff Buckley You And I



Poor old Jeff: died too young after rashly going swimming in a big river with his boots on, leaving us with one album and memories of a fantastic voice.

That lone album *Grace* contains his cover of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*, one of the finest tracks ever recorded. Never mind scouring the world for inspiration, Nasa only needs to stick this one song in a space ship travelling to the outer reaches and it would tell aliens everything they needed to know about human life: the beauty of the human voice, the bible and religious belief, emotions from melancholy to joy, and why governments have to issue public service announcements to otherwise intelligent people about the dangers of swimming with your clothes on.

Grace's title track is a good sign of Buckley's own talents as a songwriter, too; you get a dubious cover of Elkie Brooks' *Lilac Wine* but nothing is perfect.

Buckley would have been 50 this year and doubtless a global act, with a classy back catalogue. Instead his estate is putting out this hodge-podge of demos and out-takes, tracks that would never have seen the light of day except on a collectors' box set of rarities. Given that they are basically him messing about with his guitar there's little variation and its overall feel is so downbeat it makes Leonard Cohen sound like the Vengaboys.

Opener *Just Like A Woman* is ok; Buckley, guitar, Bob Dylan tune, it would make a nice background track in Starbucks. The Smiths cover *The Boy With the Thorn In His Side* is ok, too, though only The Smiths can do it properly. Would he have ever released it? No. The bluesy *Poor Boy Long Way From Home* is not

College is praised after good Ofsted grading

South Cheshire College was praised by Ofsted inspectors following a good grading inspection in February.

As a result, the Crewe college confirmed its position as a leading further education provider in the region.

The inspection team observed a range of classes and college activities and met with students, employers and stakeholders and were impressed with what they saw and heard.

Inspectors commented on the "good teaching, learning and assessment" and highlighted that the "large majority" of learners made good progress compared to their starting points and the majority of learners met or exceeded their target grades.

They also said that teacher feedback following assessment was good and they provided thorough feedback that helped learners to improve their work.

A-level student Lydia Whittaker, chairman of the college's student executive committee, said: "This grade is great news for the college and well deserved. This is a fantastic place to study and feedback from students on many different courses here is very positive."

College principal Jasbir Dhesi said: "We are delighted with the outcome. This was very much a team effort and the Ofsted inspectors who visited went away with a positive impression of the college."

"I am proud and privileged to work with amazing staff and students who make South Cheshire College a special place. It has been a great couple of weeks for the college with our financial health being assessed as outstanding by the Skills Funding Agency."

"Our financial strength has allowed us to invest an additional £1.5m over the last 18 months to further enhance the world-class learning facilities at our purpose-built £74m campus."