



G.B.H.
Perfume And Piss
Hellcat Records/Epitaph

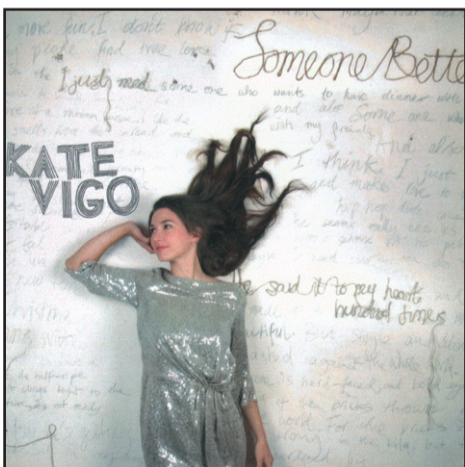
Along with The Exploited and Discharge, Birmingham's G.B.H. were at the forefront of the second wave of UK punk at the beginning of the 'eighties. Iconic albums such as 'City Baby Attacked By Rats' and 'City Baby's Revenge' were full of fast, furious and metal-tinged anthems, railing against all manner of social injustices and were a clear influence on many punk and hardcore who followed in their Doc Martin footprints. One of those bands was Rancid and it seems things have come full circle with G.B.H. now signed to Hellcat Records (the punk label founded by Rancid singer and guitarist Tim Armstrong) and new album 'Perfume And Piss' being co-produced by Rancid guitarist Lars Frederiksen.

Throughout a career now entering its fourth decade (and impressively with three-quarters of the original line-up intact) they have continued to maintain the rage, lyrically and musically. 'Perfume And Piss' shows that G.B.H. are not only still true to their roots but also have more passion, aggression and great hooks than many bands half their age.

The thirteen songs blaze past in not much more than thirty minutes. Over a cacophony of buzz saw guitars, singer Collin Abrahall vents his fury against terrorism (Invisible Gun), reality TV (This Is Not The Real World) and a particularly dodgy former associate of the band (Dead Man Working). There is some respite from the righteous rage, however, in songs like Going Sideways, a song about the joys of motorcycle grass-track racing and the galloping rockabilly of Cadillac One. Elsewhere there are some passing sonic similarities to Social Distortion on Time Flies and the Joe Strummer tribute San Jose Wind.

Tempered with a typically black sense of humour, 'Perfume And Piss' is simply a first rate, no frills street punk album that reassuringly proves G.B.H. remain the genuine article.

James McKenzie



Kate Vigo
Someone Better EP
Independent

Sitting nicely amongst the recent emergence of Australian independent female artists is Melbourne's Kate Vigo, with her 'Something Better' EP.

Beginning with the upbeat title track, comparisons to Regina Spektor (without the dark and ominous Russian undertones) might be the best way to describe how she introduces herself. There's more than a hint of mo-town in *The Way You Are*, but it's a

pretty consistent throughout.

At this stage I was prepared to conclude that this would be a relatively straight forward release, staying within the pop genre, using strong and polished musical arrangements tied together to showcase Vigo's vocals which are obviously suited to a range of styles of song, without really ever taking off.

But then comes *Left Alone*, two versions of the song actually one after another, and something darker crept in. This really tweaked my curiosity, because this is where Vigo begins to show some personality. Her vocals move between octaves like honey, and suddenly the music is baying me to respond, and I start to form a more constructive opinion.

If you enjoy music driven by vocals, then Vigo has a lot to offer. However, if you're more drawn towards a complete sound, where the vocals are on the attack and the music is equally ominous in creating the feel of the song, then you'll be keen on the two aforementioned tracks.

Perhaps I don't have the broadest knowledge of Vigo's sort of musical influences to describe this properly. I can tell there's a lot of thought going into each track, a unique combination of what seems like a combination of pop, R'n'B., mo-town and a bit of rock is there, but I can't find the words for how it all comes together.

I guess to surmise, this release is at it's most alluring when it demands something of the listener. Combine the right ingredients and Vigo could be a name you'll be noticing.

Ryan Winter



The Battery Kids
We're Just Hanging While The Rats
All Gather And The Vultures Circle
Overhead
Independent

It's a strange cross-culture presentation I've seen attempted before; the rockabilly/gothic thing. It's not worked completely in the past, aside from some 'cult' level followings. Although it hasn't worked this time either, the incarnation of the sound on The Battery Kids' 'We're Just Hanging While The Rats All Gather And The Vultures Circle Overhead' isn't far off.

There are some truly great ideas present here; *Swinging On A Thread*, *The Real Monster*, *Underneath Her Skin*, *Dancing In The Shadows* and *Numb, Blind, Death and Dumb* all have little bits and pieces that warrant attention and *Ancient Curse* is, as well as the stand out track on the album, really interesting musically and really enjoyable to listen to.

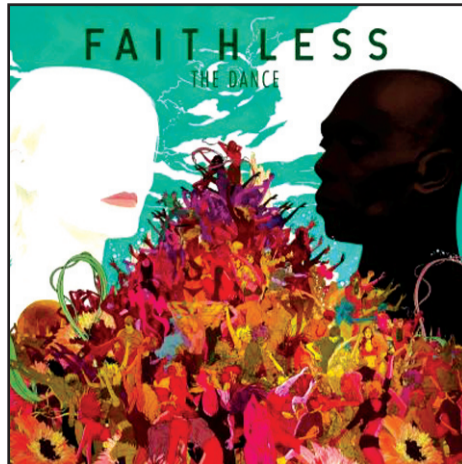
I'm always concerned about bands like this, however, that present themselves geared towards a specific niche. If the band isn't quick to expand their sound and image, they are quickly pigeon-holed in to whatever image they started with and, if they try to change later, will forever be branded sell outs or simply ignored by everyone else, if not both.

With genuine hope that The Battery Kids won't succumb to any such fate, I've got to say that, although rough, these local lads are worth keeping an eye on and I'd definitely be interested in seeing them live, as their music really sounds like it goes off live.

Production wise, there is definitely credit due on this CD, the recording and mixing is spot on! For a local release, the quality of the album's sound is incredible. While not a quality worth buying it for, do yourself a favor and give the production of *Ancient Curse* a listen, then consider buying it and the rest

of The Battery Kids' 'We're Just Hanging While The Rats All Gather And The Vultures Circle Overhead'.

Alastair Collins



Faithless
The Dance
Nates Tunes/Liberator

It has been four years since Faithless' last album, and upon hearing this, their latest long play, it's as if those four years never happened. There is no denying the impact that Faithless has had on dance music, with many of their releases reaching anthemic proportions, and live shows forever etched in the memories of millions.

But there is just something missing with 'The Dance.' I get a sense that Faithless are sticking to the formula that has garnered them so much success, and there is definitely nothing wrong with that. I have no doubt that tracks like *Tweak Your Nipple*, *Feelin Good*, *Sun To Me*, and the lead off single *Not Going Home*, will be proven successes for the group thanks to their driving beats and head nodding synth melodies. But for me, personally, I would have loved to see some sort of progression from Faithless after all these years.

The atmospheric *Flyin Hi*, the electro pop folk of *Love Is My Condition*, and the reggae *Crazy Bal'Heads* goes in some way of showing some production venture, as well as Maxi Jazz showing a bit of vocal flair, but all in all, Faithless seemed to have gone the safe route with this album.

Speaking of Maxi Jazz, I can't help but notice that the energy that we have grown accustomed to has tapered somewhat. His level of introspective is still as deep as ever, but it is as though all these years of recording and touring have caught up with him, who, at times during the album, sound flat and tired.

This album will still provide Faithless with many more hit releases, with some reaching the same anthemic heights as previous hits. But there is just nothing in this album that I haven't heard before. To have been one of the most influential and definitive dance acts of the last 15 years, I expected at least some level of progression from the group. 'The Dance' is a good album, but I am just left wanting more.

Leo Varona



LCD Soundsystem
This Is Happening
EMI

Welcome to the third and (unfortunately) final LCD Soundsystem album, 'This Is Happening'. Apparently LCD's architect James Murphy thinks his recent turning 40 years of age as an excuse to retire LCD Soundsystem and try something new. But

he'll freely admit it's not the first time he has made such comments, so let's hope its not the end of the band as each successive album just gets better.

The thing I love about LCD Soundsystem albums is that there is never any filler. Nothing is out of place. When they try a new sound, it's still *that* familiar LCD sound. Unfortunately albums like these are few and far between these days, too many albums contain the stock standard 3 or 4 radio tracks and the remaining 6 or so tracks are filler. It's an absolute pleasure to listen it over and over.

Opening track *Dance Yrself Clean* will feature in the same "great album openers" book like the first tracks on the previous albums. Like *Daft Punk is Playing in My House* did on the eponymous *self-titled* debut (2005) and *Get Innocuous!* did on *Sound Of Silver* (2007), *Dance Yrself Clean* sets the listener up for an eargasm.

Drunk Girls and *One Touch* keep the dance party going before taking it down a notch...in fact a few notches. *All I Want*, while a million miles away from first single *Drunk Girls*, has this gut-wrenching, depressing feel without the need to slash your wrists. The subtle looping keyboards still gives the track a pop feel.

I Can Change delves into a subject Murphy would normal steer clear from of - love. The oft repeated lyric "this is why I fell in love" shows his softer side, while being bloody honest. Although not destined to be a big dance floor hit, Murphy demonstrates that you don't need a fat beat to make a great track.

The dirty disco beats return for *You Wanted a Hit*, *Pow Pow* and album closer *Home*. *You Wanted a Hit* is the album highlight. A slow building, bar bones track that spans for just over nine minutes with its hypnotic melody that only requires you on a set of headphones and a repeated bob of the head. LCD at its best.

Definitely a top 5 album for 2010.

Darren Bevington Leach

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