



check this out!



reviews



FIGHTING OFF
THE END
OF THE WORLD

Sleater-Kinney play like they mean it on *The Hot Rock*

How do you follow up one of the most powerful, in your face, soul-saving albums of the decade?

That was the dilemma that Sleater-Kinney faced when they went into the studio to backup the epic, play it like you mean and believe it **Dig Me Out**. The **Dig Me Out** that threatened to blow out speakers from coast-to-coast. The **Dig Me Out** that had you thinking Corin Tucker's vocal chords were going to come shooting out of her mouth and smack you in the face at any moment. The **Dig Me Out** that had Carrie Brownstein staking her claim as the new Gunslinger in town with a guitar attack that could have been spawned by a cross-generational breeding of Townsend and Jonesy. The **Dig Me Out** that had Janet Weiss stake down a rhythm so bulletproof you forgot about ever wanting to hear basslines.

The answer is - you reload and come back as strong as ever with the same punch plus an added kick of more knowledge and maturity.

Sleater-Kinney's latest, **The Hot Rock**, is just that answer. What they came away with after three weeks



check this out!



reviews

More Sleater-Kinney

in the studio was something rare in these days of mega corporation owned Third Leg Hootie Blind Goo Goo Fast Pitch Doll clones. A no bullshit, the power is yours album, with a tinge of darkness and self-doubt, but grounded with a fearlessness of the future.

Make no mistake about it, this is not Sleater-Kinney's best. The best will be the next one. This is a transitional album. The **Give 'Em Enough Rope** that bridged **The Clash** and **London Calling**, if you will. As the last song on **The Hot Rock** ("A Quarter to Three") fades away with the sad sounds of a melodica, you know that this is a foreshadowing of things to come. This is a band that is just about ready to burst onto something new. Evolving to where they will meld together the intensity and clarity of **Dig Me Out** with the higher plane of lyrical, musical and social knowledge that they have acquired.

The Hot Rock opens with the kind of bigger than life proclamation that only Sleater-Kinney and the Manic Street Preachers seem to be capable of in the midst of the worst rock era since the days of REO Speedway.



On the opener "Start Together," Tucker sings "If you want, everything's changing/If you want, the sky would open up/If you want, your eyes could open up." - a call for change and personal empowerment.

The standout songs "Don't Talk Like," "Get Up," "The Size of Our Love" and "A Quarter to Three" all break new ground for Sleater-Kinney with their more complex melodies.

But it is the trademark interplay between Tucker and Brownstein, both guitar and vo-

cal, that holds everything together.

"Get Up" has one of those monumental rock 'n' roll moments, like the Richard's guitar on "Satisfaction" or all of "Complete Control." "Get Up" builds tension with Tucker and Brownstein trading off lead vocals until the climaxing =shouts of "Get Up!"

The Hot Rock proves that this is a band that is not afraid of change and the future. This is the best band in the world.

- Gerry Belsha



check this out!



What's your pleasure - Jazz Roots Ska or the hip Cross-breed?

New York Ska-Jazz Ensemble
Get This! (Moon Ska)
The Adjusters **Before the
Revolution** (Moon Ska)

Thirty-five years ago ska was pretty much a homogenous thing. But with the proliferation of groups that have appeared via the two major revivals, ska has become a pretty diverse genre, as this pair of discs attests.

The first is a mostly instrumental set that celebrates the jazz roots of the original ska musicians. Rave up readings of Horace Silver's "Filthy McNasty" and "Comes Love," made famous by Billie Holiday sit alongside blistering original material. Two current Skatalites (Devon James and Nathan Breedlove) are present and the results are shimmering.



The Adjusters, whose LP is produced by Victor Rice of the New York Ska-Jazz Ensemble, on the other hand, like their ska in a more pop stew, where James

Bond-style instrumentals and '60s go-go pop tunes are injected with ska stylings to create a hip cross-breed.

- Bobby Tanzilo

The Gladiators **Bongo Red**
(Heartbeat)

Albert Griffiths' Gladiators are one of the few self-contained bands to boast a successful career in the Jamaican music scene. Since "Hello Carol,"

their first big hit in 1968 (not included here), the group has never really gone away.

This 17-track set collects unreleased and some of the more obscure tracks from The Gladiators' oeuvre recorded at Coxson Dodd's legendary Stu-

dio One, including the urgent title track. A pair of hard-to-find tunes recorded for Lee Perry ("Time" and "Ungrateful Girl") add extra value to a set that already is long overdue.

- B.T.



check this out!



reviews

Ranglin crosses jazz and reggae boundaries

Ernest Ranglin **In Search of the Lost Riddim** (Palm Pictures)

Despite his longevity, Jamaican-born guitarist Ernie Ranglin has not always managed to issue a lot of records, due mostly to changing fashions and the like. But with ska and jazz very much in vogue these days, Ranglin is pumping out the discs, no fewer than four in the past two years alone.

His latest is the lavishly-packaged **In Search of the Lost Riddim**, which sets Ranglin's fluid guitar lines into a mesh of African rhythms. Recorded in Dakar with a Senegalese band, **In Search of the Lost Riddim** is a project Ranglin conceived on a trip to that country 20 years ago with Jimmy Cliff.

The result is a genre-bending set that deserves to be filed under jazz as much as in the reggae or African sections of a record shop.

The Roots All Stars **Gathering of the Spirits** (Shanachie)

Jamaican dub poet Mutabaruka decides that the



young crop of reggae stars and fans need to be reminded of the craftsmanship of yesterday's breed.

What results is this 12-song set of big names like Culture, Big Youth, The Mighty Diamonds, Marcia Griffiths, Judy Mowatt, Ernest Ranglin, and others, backed by the cream of Jamaica's studio musicians: Sly & Robbie, Chinna Smith, and others. Although no one's contribution equals their best work, the work as a whole is a fluid, enjoyable set that achieves its goal admirably.

- Bobby Tanzilo

Michael Rose **Party in Session Live** (Heartbeat)

One of Jamaica's most distinctive singers cut his stage teeth touring the globe repeatedly as a member of Black Uhuru. That experience has served him well, as is evidenced by this, his first live LP as a solo performer.

While many reggae singers appear to be sinking on stage, Rose is charismatic and vibrant, offer-

ing up distinctive versions of his studio hits supported by a top-notch band.

Why he relies so heavily on Uhuru material (10 of 15 tracks date from his days with the group he left in 1985) is a mystery when some of his material in the past few years has been of similar quality.

- B.T.

