



NEXT WEEK OUT WED 13 OCT

POP RACKETEERS THE HYSTERICAL INJURY

MUSIC

CD reviews

Tom Bellamy

'Beauty from Ashes' (EP, self-released)

● With this, his debut EP, Bristol's Tom Bellamy has thrown his hat into a notoriously crowded ring – that of the sensitive, lyrical singer-songwriter. And is there enough here to stand him out from the pale-



and-interesting crowd? Definitely. Each of the five tracks on 'Beauty From Ashes' is a strong, rich grower – from the hilltop serenity of 'Fear of Falling' to the hillbilly exuberance of 'Angel Creek', with its barrelhouse piano, tumbling violins and delicious minor-major key changes. Bellamy has much to draw on: a beguiling voice, drawled and lazy but surprisingly rich; musical arrangements that tread a fine line between nakedness and rich orchestration; and, best of all, a rich lyrical songbook and a keen sense of drama. This is best heard on 'She Knows', whose beat stamps along like a cavalcade of horses through some Arthurian forest and where surreal, Dylanesque strings of images tumble from Bellamy's mouth. Songs that both head and heart will grow to love. (Steve Wright) ★★★★★ www.myspace.com/tombellamy

Afterlite

'Eden Abandon' (LP, ScreamLite Recordings)

● This 10-track anthology charts several years of Afterlite's haphazard evolution. Thus we get a mixed bag – much of it bollock-twistingly awful, laden with bizarre lyrics and delivered with such



a sincere, tone-deaf conviction that it's got the uncomfortable scary/funny power of being alone on the Tube with a nutter. Then later – around track six to be precise – some proper angry punk blistering erupts, the po-faced maudlinism replaced by something altogether more compelling. It remains a pretty lumpy cocktail, mind – but there are good points: the lyrics are often pleasingly bizarre ("God becomes a Russian doll/when you live with a killer's bookcase/you feel like Christ, Karl Marx and Socrates rolled together into a cigarette hanging from the ceiling"), the keyboards occasionally – if you really squint your ears – sound like The Cure and it closes with a sweet, wordless acoustic guitar study. That's it. (Mike White) ★★★★★ www.myspace.com/afterlitetheband

Jebo

'Settle Up Or Settle Down' (LP, self-released)

● The employment of name producer John Burns has given this second album a rich, expansive sheen. It's smooth Classic Rock from an era when Supertramp and Yes strode the Earth like colossi. 'No Angels' is a



song that any savvy publisher would be pushing towards Robbie Williams. 'Given The Chance' sneaks up as tricky prog and evolves into a genuinely ingenious epic thanks to songwriter Rob Allen's hugely impressive craft and pop nous. New lead singer Kevin Messinger sounds suitably stranded mid-Atlantic. '40 Miles' nods the wink via XTC towards The Beatles and there are excellent stacked harmonies on the George Michael-ish 'As Long As Love Remains'. I feel a bit like the chap who heard Queen's demo tape. It's all there. Here's hoping today's completely changed music business can find a place for Jebó as they're undeniably brilliant. (Kid Pensioner) ★★★★★ www.myspace.com/jebomusic

Shaun McCrindle

'Come Around' (LP, self-released)

● Wry humour and faultless musical chops highlight this second album from Bristol's McCrindle as a cut above the rest. From 'When Tuesday Comes Around' – an exploration of the ethics of pulling a sickie to play a gig ("I know a doctor who loves his music") to the tale of a treasonable terrine in the Orkneys ('Swan Song'), there is barely a dull or predictable moment. McCrindle is confident enough, too, to build his stories with concrete detail: cameos for Christmas Steps and Colston Street (the apparently factual 'Bob Dylan's In A Joke Shop'), and Park Street in The Divine Comedyish 'Bristol Babes' ("Nowhere else compares to Bristol/Cept for maybe San Francisco"). Things stumble a bit in the second half with the inclusion of supernatural Oirish saga 'Brigid Was Her Name', but otherwise Shaun McCrindle stakes his claim as Bristol's own Jonathan Richman. "I ain't no fun," he growls towards the end. Oh, come now. (Anna Britten) ★★★★★ www.myspace.com/shaunmccrindle



Sounding Off *Everything Everything*

For the uninitiated, what is the sound of Everything Everything?

Quixotic pop. R'n'b filtered through math rock. 13% Sliint. 20% Smiths, 33% Wu Tang, 21% Rhianna. 12% Beatles.

Yourselves, Efterklang, Dirty Projectors, Battles... Is it just us or is there now more of an appetite for 'complex' music than there has been for years? Why might that be?

Because taste always shift, wax and wane. We've been spoon-fed 10 years of post-Libertines shit, where jeans and hair were valued above art. It's perfectly natural that we should turn to the antithesis.

You're headlining the Festival of Dreams. As such, you're allowed to pick three support acts (mortality no object). Who's on the bill? Michael Jackson; The Beatles; Debussy.

Our readers should come out to your Bristol show because...

Because it's always a good night at the Thekla. It's a club on a boat! We just try to enhance the nautical vibe. Plus the music we play is fairly unusual and quite enjoyable in places.

EVERYTHING EVERYTHING
PLAY THE THEKLA, BRISTOL
ON MON 11 OCT. SEE DIARY FOR
DETAILS