

...take up the tunes, be it on  
...lessly melodic opener *Golden Age* or the taut,  
...Too Much Sunshine. Midnight Oil sound as

by Andrew Drever  
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...nd All That Could  
...ave Been  
...e Inch Nails  
...thing/Interscope) ★★★

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...are no cheery crowd singalongs or witty  
...er from gloomy frontman Trent Reznor on  
...e Inch Nails' first live album. Things are lean  
...mean on this document of the band's 2000 US  
...just the way Reznor likes them. The listener  
...ashed instantly and without fanfare into the  
...s of *Terrible Lie* and the 1980s new-wave  
...ions of *Sin*. The epic *March of the Pigs* is  
...diary, pent-up anger, rage and frustration  
...ding among saccharine piano breaks, pulsing  
...s and jagged guitars. Powerful stuff. So, too,  
...almost jazzy *Piggy*, in which Reznor reveals  
...self to be a useful blue-eyed crooner. The  
...ed moods, atmospheres and tempos on NIN  
...s mean boredom isn't a factor until the hits,  
...er and *Head Like a Hole*, late in the piece,  
...nding uncomfortably close to earlier recorded  
...ons. The bruised, bluesy confessional *Hurt*  
...es proceedings harshly and suddenly, with no  
...well. Maybe you had to be there.

Andrew Drever



**Libraries Are Fun**  
*Artificial*  
(Creative Vibes) ★★★☆

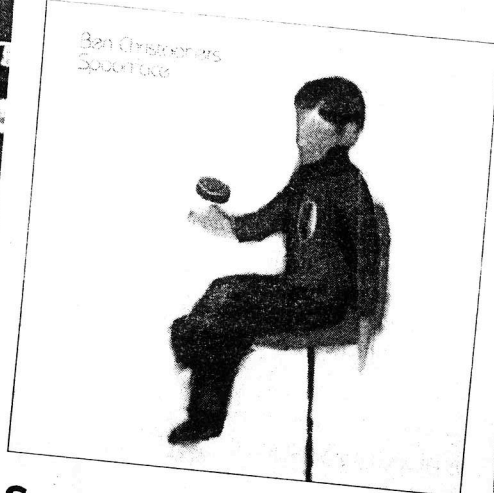
The Doris Day of Melbourne techno? Or the Nana? One of these is probably true, as Nicole Skeltys, half of B(if)tek and all of Artificial, trades heavily in kitsch. Hers is a kind of op-shop sound, a velour, corduroy and ribbed-satin situation. B(if)tek, after all, were the ones who covered *Wired For Sound*. And as Artificial she just can't resist kooky samples from lost British TV shows. What's that sound sliding around inside *Peppy and Cheap*? Is it the *Coronation Street* theme? But it's not all loopy loops. Skeltys also constructs intense ambient-techno soundscapes here, such as the Mille Plateaux-Basic Channel-influenced *Whatever Turns You On* and *Bibliothèque Nadir*. *Aux Pommes*, which, far from being funny, is pretty scary, as well as experimental and brave. Idiosyncratic is the word. As in, there's no one else doing it like this.

Chris Johnston

The Melbourne Age 2003

...bosses Mark Rae and Steve Christian  
...how to produce funky, soulful hip-hop that doesn't  
...lose sight of Brit roots, as their last album,  
*Sleepwalking*, did.

Andrew Drever



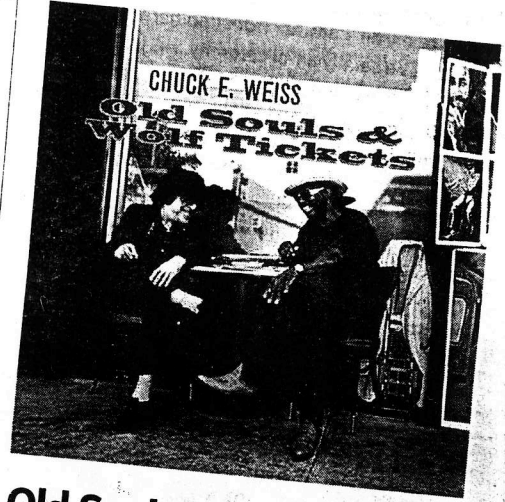
**Spoonface**  
*Ben Christophers*  
(Zomba) ★★★☆

"Why does my sorrow make me feel so good?" In the past few years, Britain has produced its fair share of melancholy music, which often falls into the category of wet and self-indulgent (Coldplay, Starsailor), but also reveals potential singer-songwriter geniuses such as Ed Harcourt and Ben Christophers. Christophers comes on like a mellower Led Zeppelin, with graceful, dreamlike, bluesy instrumentation, cascading melodies and muted electronics underpinning his poetic lyrics and soaring, choirboy falsetto reminiscent of Perry Farrell, Thom Yorke and Art Garfunkel. On *The Stream*, co-producer David Kosten balances acoustics with electronics to come up with Dandy Warhols-style space-folk, while his layering of Christophers' vocals atop jangly guitars on *Easter Park* evokes a full choir. On the upbeat *Transatlantic Shooting Stars*, however, they're trying too hard to be the new Beck. Still, on the evidence here, Christophers will be worth checking out next month when he tours as part of the East Coast Blues and Roots Festival.

Patrick Donovan

...strung into one  
...strong number. The set highlights Jay-Z's  
...showmanship, his patter and patois between  
...tunes as much a part of the set as any of his  
...vicious rhymes.

Anthony Carew



**Old Souls & Wolf Tickets**  
*Chuck E. Weiss*  
(Rykodisc/FMR) ★★★☆

Tucked between a funky *Sneaky Jesus* and a New Orleans-styled *No Hep Cats is Down the Road a Piece*, recorded with Willie Dixon in 1970. The blues icon said of Chuck E. Weiss - friend to Johnny Depp, Rickie Lee Jones and Tom Waits, and a cult figure among metal musicians and actors in LA - "the little old Jew-boy with the big head be the best musician in this town, this country, even". And most of *Old Souls & Wolf Tickets* is down-in-the-alley, sly, neckbone-reeking blues, with *Jolie's Nightmare* and *Two-tone Car* rocking with rhythm and power, highlighted by clanging rhythm guitar and freewheeling sax. For someone who digs vintage cars, clothes and records - and "dames" - and goes out of his way to stay uncontentemporary, it's amazing Weiss has made two excellent albums, 1999's *Extremely Cool* and this one.

Terry Reilly