

CD REVIEWS

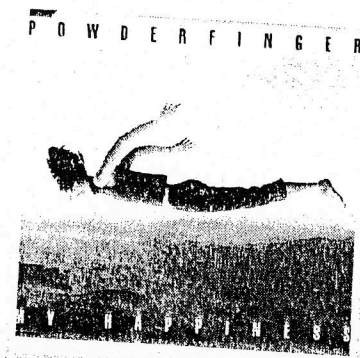


**feature album of the week**

**2020**  
**B(iff)tek**  
*(Murmur/Sony) ★★★½*  
 The crossover of previously marginalised Australian dance music into the mainstream continues, however late — think Friendly, Sonic Animation, Groove Terminator, Pnau, and now B(iff)tek. And if we're being honest, we'll accept that these artists are not necessarily the ones major record companies are going to make money from. Instead, the corporate mentality is that if, say, Sony signs, say, B(iff)tek, the company will appear more sympathetic to underground music; then, all going well, the next Fatboy Slim multimillion-seller will come to them, not their competitor. This is from the horse's mouth, by the way, not just some wild theory. Not this time. So the one-time Clan Analogue weirdos B(iff)tek — Nicole Skeltys of Melbourne and Kate Crawford of Canberra — somehow find

themselves on the same label as silverchair. But brilliantly, unlike silverchair, there's no trace of compromise on 2020, the pair's second album. Excepting the strange Cliff Richard '80s cover *Wired For Sound*, there's nothing remotely commercial on it. B(iff)tek just continue their merrily wayward journey into minimal techno, robotic avant-garde soundscapes and analogue disco. There are a couple of older tracks on here, including the fierce big beat of *Bedrock* and the sexy tech-house of *We Think You're Dishy*, but most is new, and most is thrillingly bold. In particular, there's *Luxury*, a righteous paean to dance pioneer Giorgio (*I Feel Love*) Moroder, and *Modern Woman*, which is deep, cut-up techno of the highest intensity. B(iff)tek are still freaks. And the rock-world mainstream music biz still doesn't quite understand.

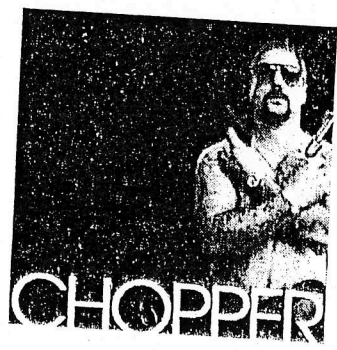
Chris Johnston



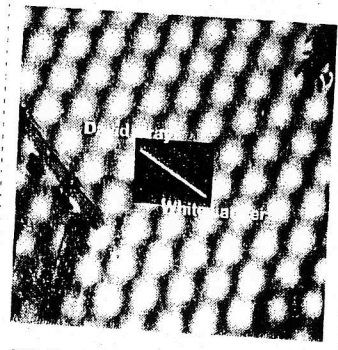
**feature single of the week**

**My Happiness**  
**Powderfinger**  
*(Grudge/Universal) ★★★*  
 The first single off the next album from Brisbane's finest is a top-notch song with loads of potential for high-rotation FM radio play. *My Happiness* has the tried-and-true structure of the slow start that builds to a big, satisfying chorus hook. A few million fans will recognise the full, warm sound, courtesy of the team that brought us last year's *Internationalist*, with producer Nick DiDia (who also works with Pearl Jam) again in the chair in Melbourne's Sing Sing Studios. Track two, *My Kind of Scene*, has more muscle and is perhaps a better reason to buy the forthcoming *Odyssey Number Five* LP. Complementing the album tracks are two worthy B-sides, the rocking *Nature Boy* and the melodic *Odyssey #1 (demo)*. Bernard Fanning's in terrific voice and the band are good as ever.

Jeff Giorfeld



**Chopper: Words and Music Various**  
*(Liberation) ★★★*  
 Mick Harvey of the Birthday



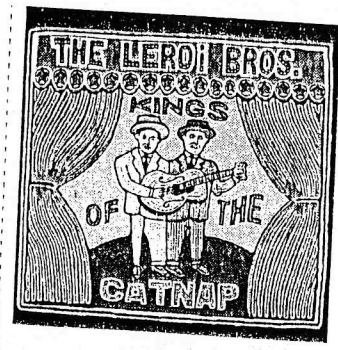
**White Ladder**  
 David Gray  
*(IHT) ★★*



**Respect: The Soundtrack to the Soul Generation**  
 Various  
*(Liberation) ★★★*



**Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump**  
 De La Soul



**Kings of the Catnap**  
 The Leroi Brothers



**Defending Ancient Springs**  
 Jackie Leven