

Brad's Top Ten Alternative Albums

10. Dead Kennedy's - *Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death* (1987)

The final entry from America's finest punk group, this one intertwines live performances of DK favorites, reissues of older tracks, and just enough new material to leave you wanting so much more. Sigh...

9. PiL - *First Issue* (1978)

PiL's gone pretty much pop these days, but their first album was a joy, recorded at a time when frontman John Lydon stood caught between his old punk habits and the exciting prospect of helping the "new wave" movement grow.

8. Ministry - *The Mind is a Terrible Thing To Taste* (1989)

An industrial feast! (Or can I call it industrial?) At any rate, this one, Ministry's fourth, stands as the album that marked the band's complete metamorphosis from a trendy techno-pop outfit, like they were in their early days.

7. Love and Rockets - *Express* (1986)

Trendy? Artsy? Pretentious? Do any of these words describe Love and Rockets? Well, yes, but not to a T.

6. Fugazi - *Fugazi* (1988)

Beautiful, marvelous, brilliant.

5. R.E.M. - *Life's Rich Pageant* (1986)

R.E.M. albums are never completely satisfying to me, but for once this one was. A little faster and harder than anything else the group has done, this one was the first R.E.M. album to go gold, beginning the quick ascent to the superstar status the group maintains today.

4. The Smiths - *The Queen is Dead* (1985)

This one and its follow-up, *Louder Than Bombs*, are both masterpieces, but this one's a bit better. Well-rounded with few weaknesses, this one has been an alternative staple since it came out, and probably will be for quite some time.

3. Pixies - *Doolittle* (1989)

Everything the Pixies touch seems to turn to gold, and on this album, the band stumbled across some much needed popular acclaim. Probably the only definitive pop-thrash group around these days, nothing released since by the quartet has lived up to *Doolittle*'s standards, but those standards are pretty high.

2. Joy Division - *Closer* (1980)

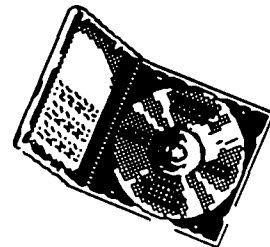
Brilliant is the perfect word to describe Joy Division, a band that is no longer with us, but one that left a quite a legacy. The day this, their second and final, studio album was released, lead singer Ian Curtis hung himself which makes for an eerie listening experience since *Closer* does sounds like a suicide note.

1. U2 - *War* (1983)

Yes, yes, no countdown is complete without any mention of this gem, the album that proclaimed that "new wave" was stale and stagnant, a sign of things to come. So many wonderful songs are here, an eloquent punctuation mark to the just deceased punk era.

Music Review:

Compilations: Wading through a lot of crap for the good stuff



by Brad Kane

The Collegian

Compilations are a good thing. In fact, at times they can be great. Why, instead of being locked into listening to the same type of music for 45 minutes or so, one can experience different styles and flavors of music on a compilation.

One bad thing about a compilation, though, is that at times one may have to wade through a lot of crap to get to the good stuff. Sadly, here are two examples of that.

First we have *I'm Your Fan: The Songs of Leonard Cohen*, a conglomeration of the renderings of Leonard Cohen tracks by various groups who've been touched by the songwriter's work.

At first what appears to be an impressive lineup turns sour upon first listening as too many of the acts appearing here seem too far out of their elements. The result: an admirable, but, in the end, less-than-filling attempt.

R.E.M.'s rendition of "First We Take Manhattan" is thoroughly disappointing. A dark, driving song, "Manhattan" just doesn't suit a band who has begun to leave dark, cryptic songs in their past.

Almost as big a letdown is the Pixies' "I Can't Forget." At a time when the Pixies are getting back to their musical roots (read: harder, slashier), "I Can't Forget" is just too slow and bouncy. It all makes for a pedestrian performance.

As well, it makes one wonder how deeply affecting Cohen's music was to these aforementioned bands. This reviewer can see the connection lyrically but not musically.

There are some highlights, but they belong to the show stealing less popular acts. For instance, the Irish group That Petrol Emotion turns in a solid performance on the darker "Stories of the Street," and fellow countrymen, The Lilac Time, do well with "Bird On The Wire."

The veteran English group James do surprisingly well with "So Long Marianne," and those critically acclaimed darlings, The House of Love, do a fine take on the stark, stripped down "Who By Fire."

But these highlights are indeed few and far between. Nothing here is really awful, but there's certainly not much to leave one wanting more. In all, a pretty average effort.

Slightly better, and only slightly, is the soundtrack to the Wim Wenders film *Until The End Of The World*. Supposedly, Wenders wanted the bands contributing a song to make each track sound as if it were written in the year 1999, the year when the film is set. This may not sound too simple, but a few of the acts live up to the task. Then again, a few, more simply, don't.

U2 probably has the album's finest moment with "Until The End of the World" which the group also placed on its latest album *Achtung Baby*. Drenched with a pulsating bass line and the beautiful vocal melodies of Bono, the song is a surefire hit and deserves to be released in single form.

Another track that appears not just on this album is Lou Reed's "What's Good," which also pops up on his latest, *Magic and Loss*. Reed is at his stripped down finest here, recalling the gritty textures of his last album, 1989's

New York.

Just as good is Talking Heads' "Sax and Violins," which, with the use of various synthesized sounds, seems most likely to be taken from 1999 charts than anything else here.

Another gem is R.E.M.'s "Fretless." Much better than "Manhattan," "Fretless" finds the group fusing their new found pop harmonies with Michael Stipe's time honored cryptic vocals. The two elements mix surprisingly well, making for a track that's better than a lot of the material on *Out Of Time*, the quartet's latest release.

But wait, there are some negatives, don't worry. Neneh Cherry's (Neneh Cherry??) "Move With Me," is very very out of place here, and besides, the track sounds like a bad early eighties song more than the futuristic vision it is supposed to be.

Elvis Costello's "Days" is just basically bland, "Calling All Angels" by Jane Siberry and K.D. Lang is boring at best, while CAN's "Last Night Sleep" seems too pretentious and inaccessible to be listened to even critically.

Through it all, Wenders thought enough of his composer Graeme Revell, to include bits of Revell's symphonic work on the soundtrack. A wise move, Revell's dark renderings fit in well with the essence of the album.

So at least the artists on *Until The End Of The World* are on the same wavelength - although a dark and, at times, depressing one. It makes for a listenable mix, but not a very enlightening one.

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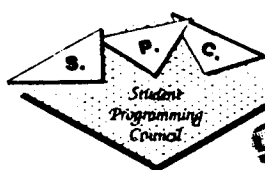
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