

AMPLIFIER SELECT



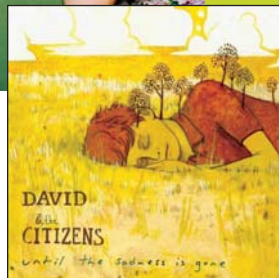
David And The Citizens

Until The Sadness Is Gone

Friendly Fire Recordings

Singer David Fridlund of David & The Citizens is an energetic, appealing frontman, and his clever observations combined with a blistering delivery charge every number on the Swedish outfit's new album with breathless desperation. The boy's got a crack band as well, and whether it's syncopating drums ("The End") or a charming bouquet of marching horns ("Silverjacketgirl"), The Citizens match Fridlund step for step, giving him ample sonic cushioning to lean in and push these songs into the stratosphere. And that's exactly where they end up: "Greycoated Morning" is a rushing classic, "New Direction" is perfectly played twitchy new wave pop, and "On All American Winds" is a heartbreaking ballad set against a dramatic string arrangement. There are indie-rock rumbas ("Until the Sadness Is Gone" and "Long Days"), introspective acoustic numbers ("Sore Feet + Blisters") and jangly pop winners ("Let's Not Fall Apart"), all of which are buoyed by Fridlund's coiled urgency. The sequencing on *Until The Sadness Is Gone* is such that there are no breaks between tracks, leaving one to blend into the other with seamless precision. That being said, what you've got here is either fourteen amazing songs, or one big great one. It's your call.

-ALEX GREEN



Dyrdin

Dyrdin

Skipping Stones

What makes great indie pop? Sensitive lyrics? Adorability? When you sing in Icelandic about dreamy ski instructors and mesh an infectious blend of girl-pop and C-86, there is no rubric for pop; there is just Dyrdin. Short and sweet, Dyrdin's debut clocks in just over 27 minutes. "Prins I alogum" and "Mr. Spock" dish out the album's surprising brand of pop-punk, which succeeds in connecting Blondie to the Primitives. On "Bubble Girl," the line "I'm a bubble girl in a bubble world" reminds all of Madonna's "I'm a material girl in a material world," further exemplifying the group's more pop-oriented roots and glistening girl band aesthetic. Like Sweden's [ingenting], Dyrdin's infectious pop is not hampered by language barriers. American audiences will delight in this off-kilter debut as they sing about Star Trek's famed Vulcan philosopher and love affairs with zipper eating extra-terrestrials.

- WES BARKER

Earl Greyhound

Soft Targets

Some

Too much of today's rock music is overly precious, ironic, or preoccupied with being hip. *Soft Targets* is like a much-needed pill for the masses. Earl Greyhound comes from the Led Zeppelin school of rock and roll, and the band knows the value of a heavy groove, a blistering riff, a well-placed guitar solo, and a killer vocal wail. Check out the balls-out guitar, over-confident vocals, and background woo-woohs of "All Better Now" or the unironic "Come on!" shout in "Like A Doggy." But when the Robert Plant-like howl of "S.O.S." disintegrates into gentle backing harmonies, you can tell that there is more to Earl Greyhound than mere in-your-face bravado. The band knows when to be subtle, to hook into a groove and lay back. Still, the band may be at its best when it puts the pedal to the metal, as in the 8? minutes of sludgy, Black Sabbath riffage that is "Monkey." So turn it up and blow your speakers out.

- FRANK VALISH



El Perro Del Mar

El Perro Del Mar

Control Group

From the opening drum dirge of "Candy" to the mournful saxophone of "Here Comes That Feeling," Sarah Assbring - who records under the moniker El Perro Del Mar - whispers her woes in her make-believe, tambourine-laden girl group blues. The first half of the album, especially the tracks "God Knows" and "Party," focuses on her unbearable and distressing troubles, as she aches for redemption and a second chance at love. Halfway through "I Can't Talk About It" the album's mood switches to a more bouncy pop sound, as Assbring sings "Baby there's a lot going on/ lately I've made a life on my own." Even on "It's All Good," she is "taking the road and never looking back," while skipping and humming to her optimistic new beat. "Here Comes That Feeling," however, revisits her sorrow as she confronts the blunt reality that the blues will never disappear. Certainly not an optimistic album, *El Perro Del Mar* does uplift with its frank reality and keen observations.

-WES BARKER

The Fags

Light 'Em Up

Idol

Anyone who argues that power pop is a moribund genre needs to listen to *Light 'Em Up*. With monstrous choruses, blast-furnace guitars and a sense of urgency, these eleven tracks lay that notion to rest once and for all. Of course, if The Fags were simply another cog in a well-oiled machine churning out an endless slew of similar-sounding tunes then that would be another story. But the band has more than that up its sleeve. Part of the genius of *Light 'Em Up* is the ease with