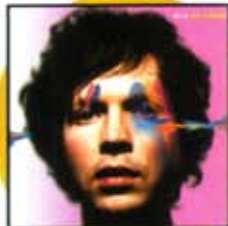


# Music

Beck

"Sea Change"

Geffen/Interscope



Following his foray into camp-funk homage on 1999's *Midnite Vultures*, Beck returns to more serious territory on his newest offering, *Sea Change*. Drawn from the breakup with his long-time girlfriend, *Sea Change* finds Beck lamenting lost love in a world of melancholy. The lyrics are possibly the most straightforward of Beck's career, sung with a newfound sense of gravity. Gone is the winking performer of "The New Pollution" and "Sexx Laws," replaced by the baritone crooner of "Lonesome Tears." The production, headed by Radiohead alumnus Nigel Godrich (who also produced Beck's similarly mature *Mutations*), is alternately sparse and lush, culminating in a mix of psychedelic country and orchestral folk. While as sonically diverse as anything Beck has released, he has reigned in his penchant for freewheeling experimentation, producing a song cycle that effectively showcases his artistic strengths. Luckily for the listener, the only irony present in *Sea Change* is that Beck's pain has resulted in his best album. *-Dave Conkin*

Hot Water Music

"Caution"

Epitaph Records

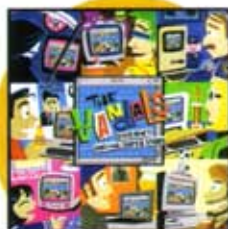


When the latest Hot Water Music arrived in my hand, I grew a bit uneasy. I am a fan of their 1998 release, "Fuel for the Hate Game," but feel the band's follow-ups lacked the power and energy found on that album. Maybe the complacency of the hardcore/emo/punk scene had settled in. However, upon listening to this latest offering, I'd say HWM has done their best work since "Fuel..." With one song distinguishable from the next, the band has returned to something called variety. "It's all related" is a loud and rocking tune, with "Not for Anyone" proving gentler than the rest. Great production, thunderous guitars, tight melodies, and Ragan's strong vocals have reinstated my belief in the hackneyed phrase, "Don't knock it 'til you've tried it." *-Anthony Q. Casasnovas*

The Vandals

"Internet Dating Super Studs"

Kung Fu Records



Did anyone back in the day have the Vandals skateboard with the AK-47 graphic on the bottom? Me neither, but that's because I was always leery of Skull Skates wood, which were the manufacturers of the said Vandals deck, as well other "band" boards like the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Social Distortion and Gang Green - none of which any skaters with skills would be caught dead riding. I remember when kids would roll up with the Christian Hosoi hammerhead board [also a Skull product] and them shits would chip and flake like pastry, making it an effective tool for self-mutilation, basically giving the word "shindig" a whole different meaning. *Internet Dating Super Studs* is a product unlike the Vandals foray into the lucrative action sports market - tight and strong. Sure they do that played-out SoCal, stereotypical skatepunk - nyeah nyeah ne-nya nyeah - but these guys are seasoned musicians and you can tell: they start, stop and turn on a dime without delaminating. Solid pop. Cop this slab and impress your friends. *-Girth Gilbert*

Cassius  
"Au Rêve"  
Astralwerks

Nasty. That's all I have to say regarding the first track "Hi Water" which starts off on a straight psychedelic, k-holistic medicinal, hodge-podge of tribal drums, slap bass, then breaks down as if Jimi Hendrix played keyboards and lit them shits on fire. Straight groovable, but if you could actually dance to it, Alvin Ailey has an open position in his upcoming tour with your name on it. The rest of the album is very danceable, straight-forward disco - french disco, which is not entirely surprising, since these cats hail from Paris and disco seems to be de rigueur. Standouts include the first single "I'm A Woman" featuring Salsoul diva Jocelyn Brown - she got a set 'o pipes on her, boy. "Under Influence" and "Til We Got You and Me" are fierce enough to shake badunkadunks and sin culos, alike: cashmere vocalist Leroy Burgess does some serious damage on them both. Don't go running out to Tower just yet. There are some two-left-foot, fall-flat-on-your-face duds: The hippity-house "Thrilla" featuring Ghostface Killa would send even homolthugs back to the bar. "Telephone Love" has a monotonous telephone ring loop - hmmm... I wonder how long took them to come up with that title? Miscues aside, this is a solid effort from the dynamique deus of Bombass and Phillippe. Steve Rubell would've hooked 'em up with a couple of hummers, at least. *-Girth Gilbert*

Lyric  
"Young & Sexy"  
J Records

"Yo, this cat sound like Fabolous"  
"Nah, I think it's Loon"  
"It's that bwol on that 'I Need A Girl' joint."

Fabolous  
"I Need A Girl Pt. 2?"

"It's Loon."  
"Is that his name? Loon?"  
"Yeah"  
"I thought it was Fabolous, 'cause it sounds like Mase"  
"Loon sounds like Mase"  
"They both sound like Mase"

Looks at the press photo of three lip-smackin', finger-lickin' pigeons...

"Gawd, I take the one in the middle."  
"Silssshh - I like the one on the right."  
"Whatsamatter you ain't feelin' the darkskin one?"  
"She look like my girl Neesa from up in Providence. I had to call her up just today, just to say I'm thinkin' about her."  
"Keep 'em strung out, huh?"  
"You know it."

Has that look of concern on his face

"They sound like another TLC."  
"Yeah... or Total"  
"Totally New Bitches"  
"Huh huh... TNB"  
"They sound manufactured"  
"Yeah comin' out of a conveyor belt near you"  
*-Girth Gilbert*



**Dredg**  
"El Cielo"  
Interscope Records

Brooding is clearly the hip thing to do these days. Dredg vocalist Gavin Hayes makes a point to sound as wounded as humanely possible throughout *El Cielo*, the quartet's sophomore effort. An eccentric collection of sixteen songs, ranging from the Latin-inspired to the 80's dark-wave-influenced, *Cielo* is a rather misguided attempt to crush genre barriers. This, combined with numerous substandard sampling and odd instrumentation, leads one to believe that this is something of a musical show-and-tell session: long, poorly executed, and near its tail end, an ingratiating pain in the ass. Despite the lush tones of Hayes' vocals and the occasionally well-placed layered guitar effects, *Cielo* simply screams, "Lookit, we're experimental like Dream Theater!" Not only does Hayes segue from a holy wall to anguished, emo-laden cries, but the band's sound alternates between prog-rock and what could easily be mistaken as the spawn of the Cure and the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos. Keep sticking your lower lips out, though. Pouting makes everything sound better. **-Sharon Steel**



**MC Paul Barman**  
"Paulelujah!"  
coup d'etat Records

In the tradition of Jewish underground hip-hop, MC Paul Barman is a short man casting a long shadow. Six years after Barman's debut with the untouchable "It's Very Stimulating", *Paulelujah!* showcases this artist's ubiquitous verbiage with improved production and more involved samples. The two "experimental" tracks on the album – one a spoken word piece, the other a folk rap – both fall flat on their asses. But he balances such flaws with rhymes like "I'm a brainiac with a veiny sack, resting on the brow of Erika Blaniak."

With a hip-hop arsenal consisting of: a vocabulary worthy of the native tongue family, more wordplay than Parker Bros., and thoughts so filthy they'd warm the heart of Slick Rick; *Paulelujah!* packs some serious hardware. Pick it up for a tongue lashing. **-Zipper McZipper**



**Dragpipe**  
"Music For the Last Day of Your Life"  
Interscope Records

There are some bands that really deserve to have their place in the music industry questioned. Such is the case with Dragpipe. This alt/nu-metal group on Interscope Records, is neither good enough to possess some sort of short-lived fame on the radio nor MTV, nor eclectic or unique enough to build a lasting presence in the underground scene. These hardcore mafos thank "hookers, strippers, drug dealers, and homeless fucks for understanding" in the album's liner notes. 'Cuz yo, seriously, life be mad hard growin' up in the 'burbs of Jersey. Perhaps their annoyingly generic sound and "hip-hop" aesthetics are a reason for thanks. Thanks to the Lord that I'm not touring in a band like this. You've heard this crap before and have probably heard it done better. Unless you absolutely wish to punish yourself with this on your final day of existence, as the title implies, leave this mess on the shelf. **-Anthony Q. Casanovas**



**Bad Wizard**  
"Sophisticated Mouth"  
Tee Pee Records

Following a late night of Foul-style tomfoolery (read: drunken crochet marathon), my buddy and I wound up back at the pad for some Foul-as-fuck partying (read: two drunk and single males who enjoy crochet-ing; now playing Mario Party 2). I stumbled over to the stereo and put on my review copy of Bad Wizard's

"Sophisticated Mouth." An intoxicated ramble flowed from my pal's mouth once the CD started: It sounded a bit like this, long pauses and bodily sounds left out for ease of readability. "What the hell is this? A bar band? They sound a lot like Deep Purple, AC/DC, maybe even Motörhead. Production is kind of weak though. Still jammin' though. Want to order some Quan's? I'm starving." So, there you have it. **-Anthony Q. Casanovas**

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