

7	das Bruce I Think I'm In Love (ook Child)		
	Label:	Northport Records	
	Producer:	B. Tate, Bradley Parker-Sparrow	
	Engineer:	Patrick Halliwell	
	Recorded:	Sparrow Sound Design	
Reviewer:	Michael Finnegan		

Rarely will I ever review a single song, and rarer still, a dance single since both my left feet are pointed firmly backwards. This is an exception. das Bruce (Bruce Tate), with a close group of friends from his day job, have cut together eight different versions of "I Think I'm In Love (ook Child)," none of which is nearly the same as any of the others and all of which show a style and respect for many genres of Chicago music.

The original mix was done with Bruce performing vocals and synthesizer, Billy Tuggle on backing vocals, Brian Keigher handling percussion, Tony Jones on guitar and Sherman Story on sax. The many remixes were performed by DJ Warp, M. Jones, Ezekiel Blue, Jerathon Monteiro and Patrick Petty. All of the tracks are diverse and, although they are based on the same song, you end up with eight individual entities, each a gem in a larger jewel.

The first seven tracks are the title song, DJ Warp's Arabian Nights Mix, Jak Jazz Headphone Mix, Masterbabies Nite Soul Mix, "Used By Petty" Mix, El Nino Dub Mix, and Jak Jazz Headphone Instrumental. After these, Bruce performs das "Poem" "Love By Definition" which is a hard rock at modern love, just ask the janitor. The CD exits with "More Masterbabies" and dances on into the night. Here, I found something for every dancing body.

For more information on das Bruce, call Northport Records at 773.281.8510 or check out their website at www.chicagosound.com. The CD is available at Tower Records (play match the artists names on the disc to the employee name tags at the Clark Street location).


10	Epicycle Orange		
	Label:	Idiot Savant Music	
	Producer:	Epicycle	
	Engineer:	Epicycle	
	Recorded:	Angel City Studios Super Sound Recording	
Reviewer:	Michael Finnegan		

Orange is a splash of trippy-jazzy-funky, twisted poetry and painterly pop music. Epicycle is Tom and Ellis Clark, two ultra-talented baritone songwriters with profound instrumental prowess and a savvy fashion sense. *Orange* is like Poi Dog meets Crash Test Dummies while hanging out in Timbuk 3 playing all their best old Beatles on drugs albums! I say this even though I don't believe the popular music of the late sixties was ever this much fun, nor was it anywhere near as good as the stuff on this disc.

Tom plays drums, percussion and keyboards and vocals. Ellis provides vocals, acoustic and electric guitar, bass guitar, percus-

sion and work on the Lawrey organ. Epicycle also gets help from host of other talented musicians that appear throughout the disc. The influences include just about everything under the musical sun including salsa, jazz, funk, punk, a smidgen of glam (it's there, I swear it is), pop, rock and spy theme music. These twelve songs knit together to create a stellar whole, with my favorites including "The Fat Girls Gonna' Dance Naked," "Weslie Willus," "I Could Have Had It All," "Tortured Artist Song," "Pleasant Valley Sequel," "Crystal Clear," and "Brian (Hello High Llamas)." Most of these songs have a sense of humor and all of them have an attention to detail that will leave you finding new things in the music for years to come. It's like caramel coated surprises with popcorn and a peanut inside!

For more information about Epicycle, you can email them at info@epicycle.co.uk. Samples of the music can be heard at <http://idiot-sevant.com/epicycle.html>.

8	My Scarlet Life Dance Amour		
	Label:	DivaNation	
	Producer:	Various	
	Recorded:	Kliktrax	
	Reviewer:	Robert F. Gabella	

With *Dance Amour*, My Scarlet Life lets go of the reins a bit as songs from their first two DivaNation albums, *Trypnotica* and *Buzzbomb*, are re-mixed by a range of mix masters including MSL bandleader Preston Klik himself.

Ethereal to begin with, the tracks take on a new gauziness at the hands of the various contributors. The usually up-front vocals of Christy Cameron Smith and Julie Schreiber, along with Klik's often percussive keyboard and sample work, find themselves rearranged along with the drums, guitars, percussion and bass of Amy Spina and Paul Fini. I've spent a lot of time with the *Buzzbomb* CD, so the new arrangements were a bit hard to swallow at first. I kept expecting certain things to fall into place, or to happen more quickly than they did. But expectations are made to be shattered, right? After a few more spins, I had already developed a new attachment to "Cloud Seeding," Drew Pluta's remix of "Cumulus" from *Buzzbomb*. It's punchier than the original, which is considerably more dreamy, and has taken on a life of its own. When "Machine Rock," Scobie's version of the bouncy "Crushed Desire," flattened Schreiber's rap of a refrain into the background, and nearly pushed her chorus with Smith aside, I had to take a deep breath. No problem, though, as we all come out alive. The melodic arrangement is more than what you might expect from a remix, and a worthy contender amongst the other entries on the disc.

A signature tune like "Reflection" is hard to top, though Goink's "Here I Go Again" version gives it a shot with a rounded, wobbly keyboard intro and a faithful reverence to the original guitar work. Scobie's "Machine Rock" is the most reverent of all, with much of the original intensity retained.

Klik takes a stab at both "This Fine Line" from *Trypnotica* (the "Layo Layo" remix) and "Ruby Kisses" from *Buzzbomb* (the "Goin' South" remix). With "Layo Layo," the tribal percussion and sirenic vocals blend to perfection. This is an excellent dance cut either way,

but it's extra-special here. Likewise with "Goin' South," the rock-pop of "Ruby Kisses" hits the dance floor. In both cases, Klik's closeness to the music gives the arrangements a certain integral fidelity to the original.

Danse Amour is a relatively light and trippy addition to the usual heavy-handed club mixes so widely available, which just proves that a mix doesn't have to thump-a-thump-a-thump to have a beat. Besides, this disc is just plain good listening!

For more information, contact DivaNation Records at 773.728.2787 or e-mail at DivaNation@aol.com.

7	Pasted On <i>Pasted On</i>	
	Label: Northport Records	
	Producer: B. Sparrow & Joanie Pallatto	
	Engineers: B. Sparrow, P. Halliwell and Dan Strack	
	Recorded: Sparrow Sound Design	
	Reviewer: Michael Finnegan	

Alternative. Now there is a phrase that I don't usually use as a compliment these days since it's used by so many people who would like you to believe that their trite, overused riffs are anything but trite and overused. But, in the case of *Pasted On*, alternative is not only a good thing, it is a deserved and appropriate label.

Band members Dan Strack (guitars, vocals, pedals, bass and keyboards), Mark Hill (guitar, keyboards, vocals and recorder) and Jim Heron (drums and vocals) describe their music as original art and experimental rock. I believe that it is closer to psychedelic grunge (same neighborhood...different house) and was surprised by how many times they reminded me of Syd Barrett era Pink Floyd or the early David Gilmore *Umma Gomma*. The vocals are not very strong and could use some work, but the strong song structure and inventive instrumentals lend an artistry to a beautiful music form that is, lamentably, so rarely performed.

I thoroughly enjoyed "Mellow Drama," "Over There," "Balloons & Old Tires," "Don't Fly Too High," "White Song," "Self-Propelled," "Vertical Sonerity" and the extended jam "Face The Facts." All in all *Pasted On* is a very good freshman release.

Pasted On is available through Tower Records or order forms can be obtained from Northport Records by calling 773.281.8510. Or check out the Northport Records website at www.chicagosound.com. You can also e-mail them at northport@chicagosound.com.

9	Rob Ryndak <i>Boundless</i>	
	Label: Southport	
	Producer: Rob Ryndak, B. Parker-Sparrow and Joanie Pallatto	
	Engineer: Sparrow and Patrick Halliwell	
	Reviewer: Michael Finnegan	

I am a prejudiced man. I love music put together by percussionists. Bob Moses, Bill Bruford, Michael Shrieve... I love them all. And now there's Rob Ryndak, a mostly traditional jazz player with more than a hint of Latin spice.

Ryndak is more properly a pianist/percussionist, which is splitting hairs since piano is an instrument you strike, putting it (along with guitar) in the percussion category. Ryndak uses horns, and occasionally woodwind, to drive the melody. Performances by Bobby Lewis on trumpet and flugelhorn, Steve Wunder on alto, tenor and soprano sax, Vince Benedetti on trombone and Jim Johnson on flute lead the quick pace of this vibrant album. Ryndak's hand in the arrangements can be felt holding down the rhythm, whether on acoustic or electric piano, synthesizer, ram stick, vibraslap or finger cymbals. He is amply augmented by Ruben Alvarez on bongos, congas and a host of other Latin percussion, Jim Gifford on drums, Mike Staron on acoustic and electric bass, Paulinho Garcia on acoustic guitar and cowbell and Dave Ness on electric guitar.

I absolutely loved "Bouncing Back," "Dance In The Park," "Boundless," "Jade (named for Ryndak's wife Jader)," and "Sable." The mix and arrangement of these twelve instrumentals is perfect, and as a jazz lover, I highly recommend it.

This CD can be found at Tower Records, or ordered through Southport Records, who will provide a list of all their artists and an order form. Write to: 3501 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657-1433 or call 773.281.8510. They can also be found on the web at: www.chicagosound.com.

7	Larry McCray <i>Born To Play The Blues</i>	
	Label: House Of Blues Records	
	Producer: John Snyder	
	Engineer: Jay Newland, Malcolm Springer	
	Recorded: Dockside Studios, Maurice, LA House Of Blues, Memphis, TN	
	Reviewer: Odysseus Johnson	

A mere eight years ago, Larry McCray appeared to be the blues man most likely to succeed. Signed to Virgin Record's Point Blank label, his debut release, *Ambition*, sold over 50,000 copies worldwide (no small feat for a blues debut). The album came out of nowhere to springboard the career of McCray, a former General Motors machinist, whose blistering flying V fretwork immediately evoked memories of another legendary GM alumni, Albert King.

McCray's sophomore release, *Delta Hurricane*, failed to break any new ground for the artist and reports of a falling out with his record label were confirmed when Point Blank failed to pick up his option for another album. Truly a shame because many of his pre-production tracks, which have made it onto *Born To Play The Blues* had to be shelved for nearly five years, with the artist in limbo waiting to land a new record deal.

Thankfully, it appears that McCray has found a nurturing atmosphere at House Of Blues Records. He's a breathtaking guitarist, fluent in virtually every traditional and contemporary blues/rock styling. Seeing him open up for Buddy Guy at The Vic Theater a few years back, it was easy to see Larry's potential as a crossover artist. Mesmerizing the crowd with a high-energy set, he left a house full of blues fans arguing over who, in fact, was the "baddest" guitar player on the planet. (You haven't seen Larry opening for Buddy since, have you?)

"Born To Play The Blues" is an autobiographical tune that will cer-