



FIVE POINTS BAND

Ida the Spider and the American Dream
(Self-Produced)

Ida the Spider is a real rock 'n' roll record: funny, wild and intense, the kind of thing there's not enough of in our cookie-cutter world. It has raw animal power and sweet teardrops to put in your morning tea. The music, drunken and loosey-goosey, has that beautiful quality of things that feel like they can fall apart at any second but never do. It's not too uptight to let the jams do what they do on their own, but when it wants to tighten up and whack your head off it does...at its leisure. It is full of surprises, spirit and good-feelin' rockin'.

The playing is great; JBird Bowman's drumming is thoughtful and artful, bashing when need be. His singing proves great too, especially on "Stealin'," my feel-good anthem of the summer. That song will make Pigpen jump out of his grave and do a merry jig. Robin the Hammer's guitar displays all feel and soul and color, and his singin'—just rockin', like the guy on the corner who sings for his supper, but if you actually take the time to listen you'll be there all day emptying your wallet.

The songs all have their own flavor and exist because they had to get out of someone's heart. *Ida the Spider* is a narrative in the Stagger Lee tradition: the talking lives in that special place where a fucked-up lunatic becomes an insightful genius, and I love hearing a good story. There are surreal songs like "Long Toad Evening" where toads, voodoo and the mysteries of our own cocks and pussies rain from the sky, a bolero freak-out called "Clanky Bar" and the blast-your-face-off "Down the Road."

Rock 'n' roll is about facing your demons; it is scary work and I wanna go to battle with the Five Points Band on my side. This record gets inside ya and makes ya feel good. Rock on Five Points Band.

—Flea



VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Very Best of Outlaw Country
(Legacy)

Wow. Twenty fabulous cuts by

almost that many artists, and not one empty bottle, dead tap, seed or stem among them.

"Outlaws" refers to the renegade country artists who fled Nashville for California, Austin and the occasional local lockup (or worse), because they chafed under traditional country music recording rules (also traditional haircuts, traditional hats, and traditional take-the-edge-off substances—basically, rules in general). Waylon Jennings led the escape in 1973, with Willie Nelson and his posse close by his heels.

Legacy has this compilation thing down: great songs from the backlist, a couple classics to keep us grounded, and alternative recordings of songs we know so well we tend to drift off when we hear the hit version. For example, the CD leads off with Waylon Jennings' "Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way," but it's toned down, somber and stripped, with a few lyrics changed from his big hit—I listened, and heard it new all over again. Similarly, Willie Nelson's "Whiskey River" is a live version.

Exceptional but undersold talents appear, with Billy Joe Shaver's "I've Been to Georgia on a Fast Train," David Allan Coe's "You Never Even Called Me My Name," and Steve Earle's wonderful tale of multi-generational multi-lawbreakers, "Copperhead Road." Gretchen Wilson's "(I'm) Here For The Party" stands in stark contrast to the synthetic *American Idol* world, where a gal throws a hissy fit and vandalizes Boyfriend's SUV (which, BTW, will not guarantee he doesn't cheat, but will make him think twice about dating nutcases). Here, in the real *Outlaw Country*, Waylon announces "All My Rowdy Friends Are Coming Over Tonight" and—thank God—we're invited.

—Suzanne Cadgene



THE BOSS MARTIANS

Pressure in the S.O.D.O.
(MuSick Recordings)
Seattle rockers the Boss Martians

have always exhibited an uninhibited, volatile, contagious level of energy in their music and their latest offering, *Pressure in the S.O.D.O.*, is certainly no exception. Produced by guitar-thrashing, electrifying frontman Evan Foster from his home studio, *Pressure in the S.O.D.O.* is an unrelenting, sonically orgasmic assault on the senses.

This quartet, rounded out by bassist Scott Myrene, organist Nick Contento and drummer Thomas Caviezel, combines everything that is sexy in rock (punk, garage, raw soul) into a delicious stew of rock 'n' roll that goes down like a flaming shot of Yukon Jack. "Power of Doubt" blazes through your head at hyper speed; "Mars is for Martians," featuring Iggy Pop (FUCK YEAH!) pounds unmercifully through an alphabetical master list of everything that is rock. And just when your mind is begging for mercy, "If You Only Knew" soothes your brain with a soulfully (Small Faces, Spencer Davis) lush mid-tempo security blanket. "And She's Gone" and "Hey Hey Yeah Yeah" push more into the arena rock vein with the latter making its bid for the next rock anthem of notoriety. Continuing in that vein, "Don't Wanna See You Again" and "Stiletto" sound like the kind of rock that Bon Jovi were making when they were still relevant.

Touted as "rising stars" and "the future of pop" in the press, the Boss Martians appear to be limited only by their (or their label's) inability to get the kind of exposure that they deserve and by the buying public's insecurity in seeking out the road less traveled.

—Steve Walbridge