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## Cool Spins

Mar 1, 2006 12:00 PM

THE MIX STAFF MEMBERS PICK THEIR CURRENT FAVORITES

### VARIOUS ARTISTS

#### *I Believe to My Soul*

#### Rhino/Worksong/Hear Music

As mentioned elsewhere in "Recording Notes," a handful of great CDs have been released in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to benefit those in need. *I Believe to My Soul* was recorded in June of last year for producer Joe Henry's Worksong label, and when Henry and his distributors witnessed the terrible destruction in New Orleans, they committed a sizable portion of the CD's revenue to hurricane relief. This collection would be well-worth purchasing, however, even without its worthy purpose. It's Henry's latest heart-stopping, soulful lovechild, a sort of follow-up to the Grammy-winning comeback album he produced for Solomon Burke, *Don't Give Up on Me* (2003). The producer felt so inspired after completing that project, he was driven to record more of the living legends of soul. Yet, as on Burke's release, he aims to surprise listeners a bit with what he calls "a contemporary version of authentic soul." Henry stirs it up with spare, funky arrangements, this time showcasing soul luminaries Mavis Staples, Ann Peebles, Billy Preston and two New Orleans fixtures: Irma Thomas and Allen Toussaint. Anyone who shares Henry's musical passion, and his concern for the Katrina victims, will be moved by Staples' version of Curtis Mayfield's "Keep on Pushing" or Peebles' "When the Candle Burns Low." If you see this on the counter at Starbucks, buy it there: \$10 is donated to hurricane relief from sales by the coffee giant; \$3 from all others.

Producer: Henry. Engineer: Husky Huskults. Studios: Capitol Studios, L.A. (recording), The Mute Matrix, L.A. (mixing). Mastering: Gavin Lurssen/The Mastering Lab (L.A.).

— *Barbara Schultz*

### ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

#### *Brokeback Mountain*

#### Verve Forecast

It's been a while since I've been so moved by a score during a film, and I would have enjoyed an entire CD of just Gustavo Santolalla's spare, gorgeous and haunting country score, with its atmospheric acoustic and pedal-steel guitar and occasional tasteful string accompaniment. Instead, that music is pushed somewhat into the background in favor of other country-ish song tracks, several written by Santolalla, by a fine cast of singers, including Willie Nelson, Emmylou Harris, Teddy Thompson, Rufus Wainwright and Steve Earle. Tracks range from folk-tinged country to a few rock numbers, and there are no clunkers in the batch. But the short Santolalla instrumental segments unfortunately become more like "filler."

Producers: Santolalla, Larry Campbell, Thompson, Wainwright, Earle, Ray Kennedy. Engineers: Anibal Kerpel, Tony Peluso, Steve Addabbo, Helik Hadar, Larry Klein, Earle and Kennedy. (Hollywood). Additional credits at [www.mixonline.com](http://www.mixonline.com).

— *Blair Jackson*

### ELVIS COSTELLO

#### *My Flame Burns Blue*

#### Deutsche Grammophon

Costello fans have been waiting for a live album for decades. This set — recorded in The Netherlands at the North Sea Jazz Festival with the Metropole Orkest — isn't the pumped-up rock 'n' roll show some listeners might dream about, but it's a musical feast. The set opens with a boisterous interpretation of Charles Mingus' "Hora Decubitus," with Costello-penned lyrics, before entering *slightly* more familiar territory. Costello performs his own tunes in orchestral arrangements with jazz leanings — a complex marriage of styles that has prompted some critics to evoke Gershwin. A bonus disc contains the *Il Sogno Suite*: the classical score Costello wrote for Italian dance company Aterballetto's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Costello's musical interests and talents are boundless; listeners who are similarly open-minded will be richly rewarded.

Producer: Gert-Jan van den Dolder. Engineers: Gert de Bruijn, Al Schmitt. Studios: Capitol, The Hague. Mastering: Doug Sax and Robert Hadley/The Mastering Lab (L.A.).

— *Barbara Schultz*

### DEFAULT

#### *One Thing Remains*

#### TVT Records

When Default hit the charts in 2001 with *The Fallout*, there were few other bands working the melodic rock scene. Today, wannabe hard-rockers have flooded the airwaves with songs full of monotone guitar lines, inexpressive vocal leads and steady, but annoying, drum hits. However, Default maintains a hard-hitting edge with their latest CD, bringing in Nickelback's Chad Kroeger (who discovered Default on a demo tape) and Marti Fredrickson, a frequent contributor with Aerosmith, to bring back rock to its glorious default setting: soaring guitar riffs, melodic (yet sometimes strained) vocals, evocative drums. It's a wonderful sound full of bleed and hiss and *energy*. Throw producer Bob Marlette (Tracy Chapman, Black Sabbath) into the pot, and you've got one fine straight-ahead rock record.



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Producer/engineer/mixer: Bob Marlette except "Count on Me" with Chad Kroeger and Joey Moi (producers) and Ron Saint Germain (mixer). Additional engineering: Sid Riggs, Jake Davies. Additional credits at [www.mixonline.com](http://www.mixonline.com).  
— Sarah Benzuly

**MIMI FOX**  
***Perpetually Hip***  
**Favored Nations**

What's a straight-ahead jazz guitarist like Mimi Fox doing on rocker Steve Vai's record label? Well, she's got chops galore, as evidenced by this fine two-disc set: one featuring her fronting a solid piano/bass/drums group from New York on a set of tunes that mixes her originals with standards by Kern & Hammerstein, Cole Porter and the inescapable Alan and Marilyn Bergman (with Sergio Mendes); the other is solo guitar musings on tunes by Ellington, The Gershwins, Jimmy Van Heusen and others. (The "Band" disc also has a lovely solo, "Night and Day.") An admitted acolyte of the late Joe Pass, Fox plays crisp lines with a clean, undistorted tone, and has a great sense of both melodic construction and rhythm. It's hip *and* it swings.

Producer: Mimi Fox. Tracking engineer: Randy Crafton. Studios: Kaleidoscope Sound (Union City, N.J.), San Pablo recorders (Berkeley, Calif.). Mixing: John Evans. Mastering: Michael Romanowski/Paul Stubblebine Mastering (S.F.)  
— Blair Jackson

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