



# Evening Standard

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CDs OF THE WEEK

**POP**

**MICHAEL FRANTI & SPEARHEAD**

All Rebel Rockers (Anti)

★★★★☆

THERE are political musicians, and then there's Michael Franti. Instead of just singing about Iraq, the 42-year-old has actually performed in Baghdad and his song Bomb the World has become an anti-war anthem. You might therefore expect his music to be as much fun as eating tofu, but this sixth album has an enjoyable bounce. Kingston-based producers Sly and Robbie add deep dub echo to All I Want Is You and an irresistible rhythm to Remote Control. If Franti's lyrics often descend into platitudes, thankfully any preachiness is absent.



DAVID SMYTH

**THE DANDY WARHOLS**

Earth to the Dandy Warhols (Beat the World)

★★★★☆

UNDERSTANDABLY dumped by their label after 2005's almost unlistenable Odditorium Or Warlords Of Mars, The Dandy Warhols have wisely refocused and have mostly ditched the doodling and childish shouting. The spiralling Wasp in the Lotus is their most thrilling moment of recent years and Love Song features an unlikely appearance from Mark Knopfler. All is not wholly well: the final third of the album is clogged with stodge but there's enough here to keep them going.



JOHN AIZLEWOOD

**THE VERVE**

Forth (Parlophone)

★★★★☆

LIFE goes on as ever on planet Verve. Sit and Wonder opens in an atmospheric swirl, then sets off down rock's dusty trail for the umpteenth time. This would be fine if it were not for the lyrics. Richard Ashcroft is unafraid to tackle the larger themes of love, pain and the universe but all he brings to the task are cliché and sixth-form poetry. The best advice is close your ears to the words. Love Is Noise, Judas and I See Houses will satisfy instrumentally. And, harking back to the good old days, Valium Skies proves that, for this band, the drugs do work.



PETE CLARK

**JAZZ**

**TORSTEN GOODS**

1980 (ACT Records)

★★★★☆

SON of a German father and Northern Irish mother, this dynamic singer-guitarist speaks jazz fluently. One detects a George Benson accent, although his formal studies in the US were with Mike Stern, John Scofield and the legendary Les Paul, who dreamt up his showbiz surname. His new album focuses on the year of his birth. Crazy Little Thing Called Love, by Queen, therefore joins the set-list but it's jazz all the way. Singer Rigmor Gustufsson guests on Need You So Bad and Andreas Oberg shares a duet version of So Much Guitar. Highly recommended.



JACK MASSARIK

**WORLD**

**KIRAN AHLUWALIA**

Wanderlust (4Q Records)

★★★★☆

AHLUWALIA is clearly something special. She writes beautiful music and has a warm voice that hovers its way through these ghazals — Urdu songs, full of beauty and longing. She was born in India and now lives in New York. Alongside yearning sarangi fiddle, so central to the romantic sound of ghazal, Ahluwalia has brought in Portuguese guitar. Jo Dil, the opening track, with tingling guitarra, makes time stand still. Elsewhere she duets with Pakistani Sufi singer Shahid Ali Khan. It's rare to encounter a glorious new voice and talent with such potential.



SIMON BROUGHTON