

**Steve Morse Band**  
**Outstanding in Their Field**

(Ear)



There's much to admire about the way Steve Morse has bolstered the Deep Purple sound, but it's always a treat when you hear him let off the leash. At the helm of his power trio, Morse fuels this set of instrumentals with a vitality and versatility (not to mention lashings of spot-on technique) that's impossible to ignore. Jazz, rock, country and funk are mixed together in perfect harmony. Bliss.

**The Brian Setzer Orchestra**  
**Songs From Lonely Avenue**

(Surfdog)



The Gretsch-wielding rockabilly alchemist returns with another album filled with propulsive rhythms, twang-tastic leadlines and wicked minor key changes. As good a fretting exponent

as the former Stray Cats man is, he's never been afraid to leave the dirt and grime in his playing, giving proceedings a dramatic dynamic that sweeps away all other thoughts.

**Them Crooked Vultures**  
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(Sony)



The words 'super group' can be off-putting but this is a notable exception. The bulky reputations involved here are all enhanced by a host of pile-driving riffs and sinister grooves that will shake you forcibly into submission. Dave Grohl's drumming is uncompromising, John Paul Jones' bass is as masterful as in his Led Zep days, and Josh Homme of Queens Of The Stone Age delivers an intensely brash Bowie-esque falsetto while laying down some of his best guitar work.

**Steve Conte & The Crazy Truth**  
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(Varese Sarabande)

Rough, tough rock'n'roll with a punky twist from the man who helped the New York



Dolls rediscover their mojo with his sublime six-string mastery. Conte has conjured a fistful of quality songs that sound like they belong on a jukebox on the wrong side of the tracks. The quieter moments do touch on the rockier side of Brian Adams but it's all deftly balanced with sharp, angular Tom Waits-style forays too.

**AC/DC**  
**Backtrack**

(Columbia/Albert)



Billed as the 'ultimate AC/DC experience', this deluxe limited edition box set should impress even the most hard-bitten fan. Three CDs and two DVDs of rarities from road and studio are bolstered by a vinyl LP, a coffee table book and facsimiles of authentic memorabilia. For the less obsessed, the standard version with its two CDs and single DVD might do.

## Snap Judgements

**Dave Rawlings Machine**  
**A Friend Of A Friend**

(Acony)

A stunning solo debut from Gillian Welch's co-writer and sideman, with Rawlings' dazzling picking skills actually eclipsed by some achingly beautiful tunes.

**Stereophonics**

**Keep Calm & Carry On**

(Mercury)

We thought Kelly Jones and team had made an all-out rocker when opener *She's Alright* kicked in, but things quickly settle to more familiar melodic pop-rock.

**John Mayer**

**Battle Studies**

(Columbia)

Mayer is a frustrated guitar geek itching to show off his fine chops but this time out he's cast as a heart-throb crooner. Nice version of *Crossroads*, though.

**Peter Barton & Jerry Donahue**

**Fallen**

(Organic Mountain)

Master of the Telecaster Donahue teams up with Animals singer/bassist Barton for mutual fun and righteously rocky'n'rootsy thrills.

**The Gilded Palace Of Sin**

**You Break Our Hearts, We'll Tear Yours Out**

(Central Control)

Taking a name from Gram Parsons and lessons from Nick Cave and Tom Waits, this Manchester threesome make guitar-laden misery sound very beautiful indeed.

**Steve Morse**

**Prime Cuts Volume 2**

(Plastic Head)

Those who've come late to the Steve Morse canon of work can check out some of his history - and some blistering playing - on these sessions with Magna Carta.

### DVDs

**Rush**  
**Working Men**

(Anthem)

Canadian prog heroes Rush have combined the best bits from all their three previous live DVDs to make an impressive 'best of'. All the concerts are fairly recent with no earlier footage than the cuts from the 2003's *Rush In Rio* film



but old favourites are still present with *Closer To The Heart*, *Spirit Of The Radio* and

of course *Working Man* (from the band's first album) all performed with ageless gusto. An added bonus is a rendition of the previously unreleased *One Little Victory*, and you get hear Geddy Lee introducing songs in German. If you can make do without the pictures it's also available as CD.

### Books

**Fender Telecaster**  
**Haynes Manual**  
**Paul Balmer**

(JH Haynes & Co Ltd)

After publishing guides to the Strat and Les Paul the smart money was on a Tele tome, and neither Balmer nor Haynes have disappointed, as the history of the Tele is revealed in an



accessible way. There are also, of course, plenty of tips on buying, setting up and

repairing your Tele, and plenty of individual models are featured here. This manual's one of those books where you'll dip into to find something specific and realise some time later you've read way more than you originally planned - always the sign of a job well done.