



FOO FIGHTERS WASTING LIGHT

★★★★★



YOU'VE heard the hype: Butch Vig's behind the desk, original guitarist Pat Smear's back in the fold, and Dave Grohl's garage has become the most talked about out-building in rock. Hell, even Krist Novoselic pops in for a cuppa. This time around it's all about stacks, distortion and a career's worth of killer riffs (opener *Bridge Burning* has three before the first verse). There's even a bona fide guitar solo on first single release *Rope*. With six previous albums to draw on, it'd be easy to make comparisons. Sure, *White Limo* will maul your face off *Weenie Beenie* style. *Back & Forth* and *A Matter Of Time* deliver the perfectly crafted power pop that made you fall in love with *The Colour And The Shape*. But *Wasting Light* stands strong in its own right as the sound of a band that's just accomplished their best work in a decade. This is the album that will save guitar music in 2011.

Stuart Williams
Download: *White Limo*

ALBUMS

Portrait: Andy Willsher



MICK ROSS FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

"IT WAS *Porcupine* by Echo & The Bunnymen, on 12-inch vinyl. To me, that album reinvented the way I thought about playing guitar and arrangements for writing songs. It has the perfect balance between riffs, atmospheric and, above all, dynamics. It's an incredible lesson on when not to play. Will Sergeant is a genius!"

Our ratings explained

★★★★★
EXCEPTIONAL

★★★★☆
EXCELLENT

★★★☆☆
GOOD

★★☆☆☆
FOR FANS ONLY

★☆☆☆☆
POOR



GLEN DROVER METALUSION

★★★★☆

THE former King Diamond and Megadeth axeman flexes his shredding muscles across 10 instrumental tracks, half of which are superb metal interpretations of Al Di Meola, Zappa and Jean-Luc Ponty tunes, while the remaining are original compositions, mainly serving as backing tracks to accommodate guest soloists including Jeff Loomis and Fredrik Åkesson. With the exception of *Illusions Of Starlight*, the songwriting is lacking in the hook department, but *Ground Zero* is a real treat for fans of Phrygian and proves that the strength of this album lies in the playing.

Charlie Griffiths
Download: *Egyptian Danza*



TWIN ATLANTIC FREE

★★★★☆

JESUS. Harry. Christ. TG has always enjoyed Twin Atlantic's brand of melodic alt rock, but we never expected a record of this quality. No longer a B-side Biffy, they've made noticeable advances in their songwriting and production, and *Free* sounds far more expansive than their debut *Vivarium*. The gigantic choruses of *Edit Me* and *Apocalyptic Renegade* see them step out of Simon Neil's shadow, while *The Ghost Of Eddie* houses some colossal grunge guitars. They've certainly hit the nail on the head this time, but frankly, with riffs this size, it would be pretty hard to miss it.

Matthew Parker
Download: *Apocalyptic Renegade*



SKINDRED UNION BLACK

★★★★☆

THE Welsh band are still leaders in a genre of one, but their ragga metal has been perfected here. While 'heavier but more melodic' is a well worn cliché, this mix of intensity with songcraft is undeniable. Mikey Demus' thick down-tuned tone provides breeze block riffs, but he often opens up with delay to entwine with the increased electronic and rhythmic layers. Placing the laidback reggae/drum 'n' bass hybrid of *Gun Talk* beside the nu metal groove of *Own Ya* is testament to a band for whom versatility is instinctive, but the songs have never sounded so consistently strong and anthemic.

Rob Laing
Download: *Cut Dem*