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"if you know what's good for you" ...
a regular look
by kevin madigan

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The fall season brings with it a whole bunch of new releases, so it behooves us to mention a few of them, lest we fall hopelessly behind:

First off, **The Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash** have a new album out, ambiguously titled *Distance Between* (Artemis) that resonates with pure country chops. This band appears unfettered by trends and ploughs on regardless of whatever else is occurring in the real world. In a similar vein is **Two Dollar Pistols'** *You Ruined Everything* (Yep Roc), and they're almost as good. Best known for the *Two Dollar Pistols with Tift Merritt* EP from a couple of years back, this new CD revels in itself, while the lyrics take on the mournful tone endemic in real country music. Main man **John Howie Jr.** is a miserable bastard, but he's quite willing to wallow in it as long as you're dancing, dammit.

While we're in that territory, be sure to check out *This Is Americana Volume One: A View From Sugar Hill Records*, which features some of the very best of that genre: **The Gourds, Rodney Crowell, Jerry Douglas, James McMurtry, Maura O'Connell, Hot Rize** and **Doc Watson & Frosty Morn**, among many others.

Soundtracks are an iffy business at the best of times, best approached with caution. You know very well that it's just another marketing ploy, and yet sometimes the choices of artists and songs provide an interesting mixture. Such is the case with *Swimfan* (TVT), which combines the disparate talents of **Ash, Wayne, Pay The Girl, Llama** and **Pacifier** to good effect. The movie isn't too shabby either, placing at the top of the box office on its first weekend, much to the surprise of its makers.

Peter Case has been putting out records for years, and they're always worth a listen. *Beeline* (Vanguard) continues the trend of good tunes and intelligent lyrics. The same can be said for **Tess Wiley**, whose album *Rainy Day Assembly* (Effanel) is remarkably assured for a relative newcomer.

With **Talking Heads** long gone, it's good to know that offshoot **Tom Tom Club** can still be relied upon. Under the auspices of a new label (iMusic), the veteran funksters deliver a solid double album called *Live At The Clubhouse* which defies you to sit still and contains numerous hits. **Mustard Plug** will make you want to shake a leg as well. Ska and punk are mixed intoxicatingly together on *Yellow #5* (Hopeless). Also, keep watching this site for an upcoming give-away featuring several bands on the Hopeless label.

Until next time...