

DEATH VESSEL

Nothing is Precious Enough for Us

82%



SUB POP

Spooky and somehow soothing, the childlike voice of Joel Thibodeau is certainly uncanny. It's rightly been likened to Neil Young, though it lacks Shakey's witchy bite and quivering acidity. With little of Joanna Newsom's fairy dust or Antony's torch song simmer, Thibodeau sings almost matter-of-factly, not addressing the eerie register reached by his pipes. A long way coming, the sophomore release from his Rhode Island-based outfit Death Vessel is a fine enough introduction to newcomers who missed its 2005 debut, *Stay Close*. Pleasantly palatable and gentle throughout, *Nothing is Precious Enough for Us* sustains the antebellum lilt and spare arrangements of the first album. There's a plucky, twinkling cheer reminiscent of Christmas tunes with some bonus anthemics. But Thibodeau also sets into a woozy barroom dirge for "The Widening," while the electrically charged coils of "Peninsula" may just point ahead to greater things. **BERNARDO RONDEAU**

DARKER MY LOVE

2

83%



DANGERBIRD

It's hard to overlook that 2 is Darker My Love's second album. Originally started as a side project five years ago, it now seems that the five members of Darker My Love have found the means to explore their artistic vision. Hopefully, the group will stick around and keep exploring. The new album of well-composed songs is a journey; something of a cosmic dream. But what on earth did you eat before you put your little head down on the pillow? A habanero burrito, a deep-fried ice cream sandwich, or was it the mushrooms you munched on out of boredom? Who knows, but these songs' strong and steady rhythms quickly set you in motion; the ambient tangents let you expand and drift, and the ethereal vocals lift you and never let you touch the ground. **GAVIN OKINHAR**

THE SATURDAY KNIGHTS

Mingle

75%



LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

There is an admirable and freewheeling creativity here. However, buckshot through this embezzled spectrum of rap, rockabilly, pop, jam-band noodling, surf, hip-hop and calypso is the tedious psycho-to-mimetic hubris of "I like expensive cars, boats, etc., wear designer brand clothing, drink only the best cognac and know how to pimp the bitches." And the wryly aloof addendum: "Also...I have a graduate degree." The latter assertion, the Knights apparently hope, will validate their experimental rakishness and excuse choosing mediocre variety over doing one thing well. A band needs tremendous presence to leap naked and gallant across the spiked fence of categorization to land in the sylvan pastures of "new sound," as did the Bad Brains when they fused reggae into the American hardcore scene. Props for pluck, but this LP is at best a curiosity—not exhibiting the girth necessary to mount the sacred pony of transcendence. **MARKUS von PFEIFFER**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Weeds, Music From The Series: Vol. 3

70%



LIONSGATE

It turns out that Randy Newman's cover of "Little Boxes" is just as apt to open the new *Weeds* soundtrack as it is to play over the intro of the psychotropic television series, but for entirely alternate reasons. The 1962 Malvina Reynolds classic—a satire of bourgeois conformity—was written during a road trip through the San Francisco suburbs, emblemized perfectly by *Weeds*' fictional home of Agrestic, California. The soundtrack, however, seems to bud more from the lyric, "they're all made out of ticky-tacky." Still, it might be fitting, as the song selection process here does seem to resemble a stoner raiding the depths of the cupboard in a munchie-driven frenzy: From the stale bread of Ween's "You Fucked Up," to the utterly congealing "Buttmachine" by That 1 Guy (uh...Buttmachine?), the majority of this collection hits harsher than bong rips of pure ash. Not even a Kevin Nealon cameo can clear it. **KYLE MACKINNEL**

