



DESCENDENTS

Filmage: The Story of Descendents/ALL

This doc shows how the unlikely band of punk-rock nerds, fueled by gallons of coffee and adolescent angst, welded hardcore volume to drummer/mastermind Bill Stevenson's SoCal hooks, pioneering pop-punk 15-plus years before it went mainstream. Loaded with interviews, archival photos and footage, it also examines the offshoot project ALL, and reveals how Stevenson and the bands trumped long odds. – **Dennis Pernu**



RHIANNON GIDDENS

Tomorrow Is My Turn

With supermodel looks and charisma to spare, it was inevitable that Giddens would become more than just the clawhammer banjo player in the Carolina Chocolate Drops. Thankfully, she didn't abandon roots styles on her solo debut. Colin Linden supplies distorted lead on Sister Rosetta Tharpe's "Up Above My Head" and tasty slide on a Dixie-esque treatment of Patsy Cline's "She's Got You." – **DF**



THE DILLARDS

Back Porch Bluegrass!!!Live!!!Almost!!! Pickin' And Fiddlin'

When the Dillards' first three albums were released (1963 to '65), they were the most visible bluegrass group, thanks to their alter egos, the Darlings, on "The Andy Griffith Show." Doug Dillard's banjo, Dean Webb's mandolin, and the group's close

harmonies got driving support from Rodney Dillard's rhythm guitar. Their third album added 19-year-old fiddler Byron Berline on a stellar all-instrumental set. – **DF**



PUNCH BROTHERS

The Phosphorescent Blues

Riding the bluegrass revival crest, this quartet is far more than a Bill Monroe homage act. Part chamber-music escapees, part rockers, they could be labeled prog bluegrass. Blending virtuosity with subversive humor this adventurous album kicks off with the 10-minute-long "Familiarity." – **MD**



ULI JON ROTH

Scorpions Revisited

The godfather of neo-classical metal returns to his old band to revisit past glories, offering a stimulating, double-disc re-imagining classic old-school Scorpions. Masterful guitar playing, great songs, a killer band, and vocalist Nathan James make this release highly recommended. – **OJ**



JOHN TROPEA

Gotcha Rhythm Right Here

Veteran guitarist Tropea recalls the heyday of the New York City funk-jazz scene of the '70s and '80s on his latest. Great arrangements set up his clean, tight, funky guitar playing to perfection. As you'd expect, lots of old friends like Steve Gadd, Lou Marini, Randy Brecker, and others join in, making this a tasteful fusion treat. – **JH**



THE WORD

Soul Food

Fourteen years later, The Word returns with 12 ditties featuring the talents of John Medeski, Robert Randolph, and Luther Dickinson. This rich musical stew is an earthy blend of gospel tinged Southern-cooked rock. Randolph's pedal steel and Medeski's organ intertwine harmoniously, as Dickinson's guitar punches and soars among the best in the jam-band tradition. – **OJ**



ELIZA NEALS

Breaking and Entering

Big plus marks to Detroit blues singer Neal who loads the deck with some of that musically rich town's finest guitar players, including strongman Howard Glaser, who co-wrote several of these tight, sassy tunes with Neal. You'll love Glaser's Dobro on "Detroit Drive," their bucolic ode to the joys of the Motor City. – **RA**



TOTO

Toto XIV

Reuniting core members Steve Lukather, David Paich, Steve Porcaro, and David Hungate with Joseph Williams on vocals, this disc is saturated with perfectly constructed mood-softening production, tranquilizing prog-pop-rock, and smooth ballads. Steely Dan drummer Keith Carlock offsets the atmosphere with skillful muscle, supporting Lee Sklar, Michael McDonald,

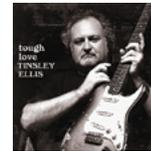
and Tal Wilkenfeld. Lukather's guitar is fierce throughout. – **OJ**



SWEET & LYNCH

Only To Rise

George Lynch, formerly of Dokken, and Michael Sweet of Stryper join bassist James Lomenzo and drummer Brian Tichy for some upper-echelon late-'80s metal. Sweet and Lynch get along famously, providing a fist-pumping mix of fresh, melodic anthems, and hard-charging rhythms. Diabolical riffs, demonic solos, and stratospheric vocals reign awesomely supreme. – **OJ**



TINSLEY ELLIS

Tough Love

Ellis' latest is workmanlike (in the best sense of the word) blues, soul, and rock. Whether it's a classic slow blues like "Should I Have Lied," a minor-key shuffle such as "Seven Years," acoustic pop/soul on "Give It Away," or some country funk à la Mark Knopfler with "Hard Work," Ellis delivers. Deft solos with a lot of soul highlight each cut. – **JH**



RYLEY WALKER

Primrose Green

Walker blends pastoral acoustic fingerpicking, British folk, trippy jams, and a self-serving wink to David Crosby and Pentangle. He impresses the millennials by successfully excavating obscure strummy psychedelic acoustic acts of the '60s, awarding him well-earned hipster cred. Combined with impassioned NYC folk scene vocals, Walker's got talent and soul in those fingers. – **OJ**