



**PRESTO**  
*Magic LP*  
Concrete Grooves

I met Presto back in 2000 in Los Angeles at a small venue on Santa Monica Blvd. where he was putting on a release party for his first project *Concrete Grooves Impressions*. He was a genuine person whom you could tell was all about music and not about fame. I liked him already. He gave me a copy of the compilation and I wore that sucker out. Now five years later he's released a true long player full of crafty, solid hip-hop that's made for contemplating as well as dusting off any stale dance floor. I can't complain about the lack of quality hip-hop music now because there really is a ton of it out there these days, and it's a hell of a lot more accessible now. But there's still a need for melodic song craft that inspires and stimulates the mind and Presto's work does just that. Not that he does it alone; he's very wise in his choice of collaborators and he really lets their talents shine through, which is the mark of a great producer. *Magic* is full of the laid-back stuff that you are familiar with from Presto's previous work, but thanks to fierce vocal delivery and quality writing by Lowd, Kim Hill, In-Q, Raashan Ahmad, 3rd Khind, L Scatterbrain & DJ Mino and others—plus some uptempo block party beats—this album bumps and grinds quite a bit. It definitely represents L.A. (and hip-hop) very well, especially with the reminiscence of "Back in '92" and missing lost friends on "Soloist Virtuoso" (featuring: Sach & LA Jae), and even continuing with a posthumous showcase of the dearly departed DJ DusK. You have to respect that and the fact that Chris Douglas and his family are all self-taught, self-respected, self-empowering, self-financed and auto-replayed again and again, working hard to make good music and chilled out fare for every lover of hip-hop to enjoy in the really real world. *JW*



**RICHARD DORFMEISTER VS. MADRID DE LOS AUSTRIAS**  
*Grand Slam*  
G-Stone Recordings

Grand Slam is a fine collection of remixes by Dorfmeister and MDLA. Now when I say "fine" I mean something like one of those tired adjectives we use all the time like: "sick," "dope," "fabulous" —don't act like you never bust out a "fabulous" every now and then—"awesome"...you get the idea. Anyway I'm back to the word "fine" because it works well in describing the smooth, funky sounds found on this release. I'm not super crazy about Zero 7 but these guys most definitely turned out their remix of "In the Waiting Line"; they also crushed Willie Bobo's "Spanish Grease" with a fat, double bassline and its ghostly Latin sounds lurking in the background. *Grand Slam* is pretty much a house music party on the whole disc but it's an excellent quality of house that will sound great to people who think they don't like the very popular genre. There are some rough and tough jams a little later on too. Like Koop's "Relaxin' at Club F\*\*\*\*n." It's obvious what that spells but the funky bass action just might get you laid if you play it for the right person. I never heard the original version of Pressure Drop's "Back 2 Back" (and I love me some Pressure Drop) but Dorfmeister & MDLA make them sound like freaking champions. Oh it gets better. They even have some original smokers on here too. "Make Dis Real" is so damn hot with its funky breakbeat and slick, soul-man vocal, it will get rocked again and again by pro DJs and iPod-button-pushers alike. Now if you like what I'm saying you should definitely buy this disc, or the download version, or even the wax if you can find some. Just don't steal it because people who make music this good deserve to get rich. *JW*

Welcome to the first edition of "You Slept on It!" The fantastical game show where we talk about some great music that quietly slipped under the radar. In this case, as a consolation prize for our ignorance, we get a funky, hyper, punked-out album that will lube up the music player and get any indolent ass all hot and sweaty. All Out Fall Out, the band's second album, was released almost a year ago, and like many of the releases on Ninja Tune, it's experimental, raw and fun—so much, that we're still checking it out after all this time.

Pest is a five-member band; you know...guitars, bass, drums, vocals and—naturally—DJs too. They mix up funk, jazz, hip-hop, rock and some other noisy stuff and wrap it all up with some humor to remind heads that music doesn't have to be all serious and stuff. They are substantial musicians though, and naturally they travel around performing their joints live at various venues across Europe.

There are a few vocal numbers on the album that give the music a sort of song-structure here and there, but it's mostly a lot of jamming and not a lot of studio trickery, so pretty much what they put down is what you get. The uptempo first track "Delucid" has a nice groove that really builds thanks to a subtle, almost subliminal chant that may be a vocalist, or even a sample—whatever it is, it works. There's an interesting number called "Wuju" that probably does well in their live sets and is more likely intended for the hometown audience, but we foreigners can easily get down to it. Other notables are slow tempo "Downward Steps" for its brass and guitar work, and the UK garage sound of "Ogres," which is quite a nod-inducer as a result of two-step breaks done the right way when so, they can always get the toes wiggling.

There is so much music out there it's real easy to have the good stuff slip through the cracks. And it's always nice when you step back and check out something fresh even when it may have already been nudged-over on the shelf by some newer releases. And although we can't always rescue all of the good ones, All Out Fall Out from Pest is one that's most definitely worth picking up. Besides who out there hasn't picked up a long player, dug it, and was then nicely surprised when the band's newest record is suddenly released soon after? *JW*

**MUSIC REVIEWS**  
*the slept-ons*



**PEST**  
All Out Fall Out  
Ninja Tune / 2005

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**FELIX LABAND**  
Dark Days Exit  
Compost Records / 2005

Here is the truth: Felix Laband's *Dark Days Exit* is pure genius and a privilege to hear. If you meet the time, this album will reward you. This is not music for members of the short attention-spanned. Here is the sad truth: This record will probably slip under the radar and not be heard by as many as it should. Honestly this album was discovered by us solely on the fact that there was a *Kruder & Dorfmeister* promo sticker on the CD sleeve that said something like, "This album is super brilliant, buy it now!" Not that *KSD* are the almighty gods of taste, but when you're tired of copping 16 bucks on crap albums with only one or two good tracks, a little push like that can make all the difference. Without that little sticker, this masterpiece might still be buried in the sea of mediocrity of Tower's "Dance" section. Now that another mundane lesson in marketing and advertising is over, here's the quick scoop:

Laband is one of South Africa's premier electronic musicians. This is his third album but according to him, "my first true album with no one else's input." Unlike the average clubber, he will most likely not find time or head space for this beauty, those who spend endless hours trying to create and construct will recognize—and most likely slip off—many of the original and yes, organic—or shall we say, integral and essential—elements of this gem. This is music that breathes and understands space. A certain minimalist space with echoed and delayed layers of well constructed and intelligent drums, sounds, and manipulations. There's plenty here to enjoy being spaced out to, while your mind is still forced to stay sharp and focused to digest its genius.

The CD version has 10 tracks that appropriately flow together continuously, while the vinyl version has only 8 cuts, one being a vinyl exclusive. It's not clear whether this is another clever marketing tool to get you to buy both the CD and wax, or if it's just a there's-not-enough-room-on-the-record-for-all-the-songs deal. Either way, it doesn't really matter, because *Dark Days Exit* deserves to go platinum but won't, so buy both! The opening track on the CD version, "Whispering in Tongues," slowly builds on a classical guitar and delayed fuse with sounds of echoed water and whistles over a soft bossa-jazz-reggae tempo. The anticipation of what's next builds and grows almost to a breaking point... and then the drums hit, which reward you to the

fullest for your patience. The next track, "His Tears with its warm, playful vibe would make former Rock Hi-Fi maestro Biggiboutz smile big time. The tightly defined, "Crossed Breath," which reminds me of DJ Terastar mixed with Boards of Canada. Each time I listen to the album this track just pulls me in deep. I thank my glass or pump my fist to express my gratitude. It's song is essential, with each taking you to its own space, but somehow perfectly weaving into one and for a complete experience. Wow, #1

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**MARIBUS ARTISTS**  
Come a Jail EP  
Shookout Records / 2005

Shookout—a TigerBalls sublabel focusing on the rawness of jungle, dub and sound system culture—put this stellar EP featuring Gregory Isaacs. "Taste a Song" is a song that's been around for a long time, but it's a song that's been done so well that it's hard to top. Porter's Strategy wins for the best reggae song in the States reggae bassline and leading for the light house lover to prize, while providing support by some early chopper keys and atmospheric reminiscent of London dancehall circa '80. On the CD, C builds up a deep, deep drum and bass version of the lacing chopped-up Amen breaks. A la Squarpush, a twisted-out DJ breakdown has never sounded so cheerful, much thanks to DJ C's adept splicing of 16 vocal. A most impressive release of latched, wicked reggae. #1

**I wrote this review about four or five times and it kept on sucking. We finally managed to get it somewhat right. I loved the album but I had a terrible time writing about it.**

**It's a good thing RE:UP has a great editor. He pushes me to do my best.**