

Spurlock, make it the perfect opener. The songs that follow become more atmospheric, with Chapman remembering Krekel through various forms of music; “Down To Mexico” is bolstered by the guitar of Will Kimbrough. Krekel’s son, Jason, plays on the very funny “Sick of Myself,” a song written by his dad and Chapman that describes the musicians wanting to trade places. “Tim Revisited” and “I Can’t Stop Thinking About You” are reflective pieces with soulful vocals from Chapman and more great playing from Kimbrough and Jim Hoke on steel.

The bond between the two is illustrated in the closing track, recorded live during Krekel’s last gig with Chapman. It shows an amazing band playing old-fashioned bar boogie with nasty slide from Krekel and great singing from Chapman.

Given the sorrow associated with it, *Big Lonesome* can be a tough listen. But the obvious affection felt for Krekel by Chapman and the contributing musicians is nothing short of triumphant. — JH



Tumbledown Empty Bottle

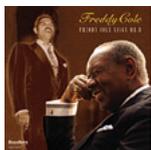
End Sounds

From punk to rockabilly – it feels like a perfectly natural progression for Mike Herrera. Part of the 1990s punk trio MxPx, Herrera has stepped back in, with his group Tumbledown.

Tumbledown marked its debut with the band’s 2009 disc. Led by Herrera on vocals, guitar, and songwriting duties, the group includes lead guitarist Jack Parker, standup bassist Marshall Trotland, and drummer Harley Trotland.

Empty Bottle is rockabilly for a new era. While the band may tip its hat to the Sun sound, its music is current, with closer ties to punk and the alt country of Lucero, Old 97s, and Hank Williams III’s alter-ego Assjack band.

They kick off with “Places In This Town,” which is high-energy vintage country/rock and roll – but with a sheen that takes the music far from Memphis. “Dead Man Walking” is wrapped in glorious reverb and echoing guitar work, while “Drink To Forget” is no-apologies modern honky-tonk with a fine punk twang. — MD



Freddy Cole Sings Mr. B

HighNote

Asked what younger jazz guitarists stood out to him, in his March ’10 VG interview, George Benson listed Norman Brown, Mark Whitfield, Russell Malone, and “the guitar player who’s playing with Freddy Cole.” He may not have remembered Randy Napoleon’s name, but he called him “spectacular.”

The 33-year-old previously played on Cole’s live *Dreamer In Me* CD, backed vocalists Michael Buble and Melissa Morgan, collaborated with organist Jared Gold, and was a member of the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra. In addition, Napoleon’s 2006 solo album, *Between Friends* (featuring another former leader, pianist Benny Green), showcased what Benson called his “all-fingers approach.”

Napoleon arranged 10 of the album’s 12 songs – handling the doubly daunting task of doing justice to Cole’s voice (very similar to his legendary brother, the late Nat “King” Cole) as well as songs associated with Cole’s friend and mentor, Billy Eckstein. The Brooklyn native approaches these chores with the same sensitivity and insight he brings to his guitar playing – from the solo arpeggios that support Cole’s honey-toned vocal on “Tender Is The Night” to the octave runs that follow, as the ensemble joins in to establish a relaxed, swinging groove, before he trades a tasty single-note solo with special guest Houston Person’s tenor sax. For “Cottage For Sale,” the sad tale of a dream cottage now abandoned, Cole asked for a George Shearing feel, and Napoleon cleverly references the optimistic “Folks Who Live On the Hill” in the intro.

Throughout, he coaxes a warm but round tone from his Stadler archtop (a 17” Free Verse with floating humbucker) and reveals his biggest influences, Wes Montgomery and Joe Pass. Others “who swing and have a deep blues feeling” – including Benson, Barney Kessel, Grant Green, and Charlie Christian – are evident on “Jelly, Jelly.” A fitting tribute to them and, of course, to Mr. B. — DF



Don Stiernberg with Rusty Holloway and Jeff Jenkins Swing 220

Blue Night Records

Many musicians play swing, but few swing with the authenticity of Don Stiernberg, with whom the expression “Dig your well deep” comes to mind.

On *Swing 220*, Stiernberg is joined by Jeff Jenkins on guitar and Rusty Holloway on upright bass.

For this session, Jenkins uses a 1949 Epiphone Emperor while Stiernberg plays his ’96 two-point Nugget, and Holloway plays a 19th-century Collin Mettzin double bass.

The songs come from the great American songbook – standards including “Night and Day,” “All of Me,” “Pennies From Heaven,” “Lady Be Good,” “Stardust,” “Honeysuckle Rose,” “How High the Moon,” and “Limehouse Blues.” The arrangements aren’t flashy – they begin with a statement of the melody then the trio races off with solos for all. As the leader, Stiernberg takes the first improv solo pass, followed by Jenkins’ guitar. Both have the swing sensibility so thoroughly ingrained that while they go

out on improvisational limbs, they never step outside the melodic and harmonic conventions of traditional swing music. This is a lovely album of beautifully played traditional American music. — SS



John Scofield New Morning: The Paris Concert (DVD)



Eddie Henderson

For All We Know

Furthermore Recordings

These two new releases showcase guitarist John Scofield in far different ways. The DVD finds Scofield in a quartet setting and is the perfect vehicle for his skills, displaying chops on cuts like “Ten Taken,” where he navigates changes at a breakneck pace, and the organ-based “Slinky,” a soul tune that shows how funk often intersects with his jazz side through the use of octaves and chords. His first solo sets the table, and as the band swings back to him, he plays in that weird-but-beautiful-intersection where the blues meets jazz meets rock and roll.

His band is perfect for this setting, especially drummer Bill Stewart, who’s at the top of the jazz field at this point. Not only does the DVD show the great playing, but a short feature and interview with Scofield is a bonus.

On the Henderson disc, Scofield’s role is different. His atmospheric chording and beautiful laid-back soloing are the perfect foil for Henderson’s trumpet. His sense of harmony structure on the title cut finds Henderson soloing over Sco’s beautiful chordal work.

These two releases perfectly showcase the difference between being a sideman and a leader. — JH



Pan-Americans

Pan-Americans

Flat Fish

If you’re a member of Pan-Americans, “among others” is part of your resume – in terms of bands you belong to as well as instruments (and roles) played in them.

The band’s ad hoc leader is Joao Erbetta, singer/guitarist with Sao Paulo’s Los Pirata and producer and composer for TV and videogame soundtracks. The CD was recorded at L.A.’s Powow Fun Room, sonic laboratory for Pete Curry, who has played lead with the Halibuts, bass with Los Straitjackets and Davie Allan, and drums with the Torquays and Deke Dickerson. On bass is Rob Douglas, formerly with Everest and Chuck Prophet and producer of the way-cool *Joe South Tribute Album*. And

guitarist number two, Eddie Angel, is a charter member of Los Straitjackets in addition to stints with the Planet Rockers, Neanderthals, and Ronnie Dawson – among others. (As if that weren’t enough multi-taskers, Ron Dziubla adds sax, organ, and melodica on a few tracks.)

The supergroup’s debut culls Brazilian songs from the ’70s all the way back to the ’30s. “Baia,” written by Ary Barroso (composer of the standard “Brazil”), is named for the Brazilian state Bahia and was featured in the 1944 film *The Three Caballeros*. It has an African-Brazilian feel, corresponding with the region’s music and culture, and Pan-Americans’ rendition is a bit smoother than the Mickey Baker version that inspired it. “Baiao,” on the other hand, is named for a rhythm from Northeast Brazil, and has a funky, Booker T. groove.

Erbetta plays the songs’ heads (beautifully stating the Jobim ballad “Ligia,” for instance), while Angel takes most of the solos. Their soloing duel on “Americanizada” could be a Chuck Berry/Dick Dale cutting contest.

Equal parts rock and easy-listening, this could have fit nicely between Al Caiola and the Shadows in the golden age of “electric guitar” vinyl. — DF



Jeffrey Foucault & Lisa Olstein

Cold Satellite

Self-distributed

Cold Satellite is a concept album with songs co-written by Jeffrey Foucault and Lisa Olstein. Longtime friends, they began to collaborate in 2007, when Olstein sent Foucault a bunch of unpublished poems plus snippets of poems. Foucault sat with his guitar and began to put them to music, and this is the result.

The opening song, “The Deserter’s Information Center,” sets the mood with funeral-like slow solo acoustic guitar, snare drum, and solo vocals. As the song progresses David Goodrich’s electric guitar and Alex McCollough’s pedal steel elevate the energy level from just this side of dead to rock anthem powerful. The title cut is a straight rocker a la John Cougar what’s-his-name, with a dash of Steve Earl-ish funk, along with that other F word thrown in to keep it off NPR.

Olstein’s lyrics are beautiful, and often chilling. They contribute to the dangerous aura of the music – no June, moon, spoon, stuff here. Rather, they’re reminiscent of Jim Carroll’s best stuff – dark, full of anarchic Bacchanalian energy waiting to bust out.

Foucault’s arrangements modulate from acoustic minimalism to hard rock to electronic weirdness on a moment’s notice. This almost guarantees that some part of a tune might be a bit “much.” But his eclecticism is endearing because he’s willing to go to such measures to keep a song interesting. And interesting songs they are – every tune