

KILLER TRACKS[↑]

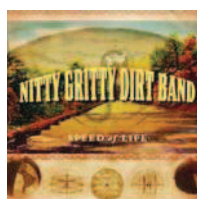


The Direct Buzz offers reviews by a team of professional music critics. Any AirPlay Direct artist or label interested in being considered for a review, should contact us. Choose three songs from your DPK, and we'll give you our opinion of them. We can't guarantee a rave review, but we can assure you that it will be honest and constructive. We will try to honor all requests, but it might take a while. As such, your patience is appreciated.

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

Speed of Life

AirPlayDirect.com/NittyGrittyDirtBand



The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band has lasted longer than just about any other act from their era (the hippie-dippie '60's). In fact, forty-four years later, Jeff Hanna, Jimmie Fadden, Bob Carpenter and John McEuen are still going strong, albeit in a slightly different direction. Instead of a crazy young jug band, they're now a seasoned country act. Their new album, *Speed of Life* is a freewheeling affair with energy to spare. Its old-timey country sound discards the polished productions of their earlier years and, instead, hunkers down with the basics of solid songwriting. "Tulsa Sounds Like Trouble" and "Brand New Heartache" jump with country pickin' that's hoedown worthy, while "Resurrection" contains such a beautiful melody it sticks with you long after the last note. The title track is a folksy number, mellow yet memorable. Throughout this exceptional collection, the band's chops are impeccable, the vocals are outstanding, and the production makes it seem as if you're standing in an Appalachian hollow. These guys have obviously improved over the years. It's easy to understand why they're critically acclaimed award winners. In fact, if this is what aging can do for you, we all have something to look forward to. *Bernard Baur*

Tomas Doncker

Inside Out, Small World

AirPlayDirect.com/TomasDoncker



Although Tomas Doncker is more of an R&B artist than anything else, his songwriting covers a wider approach than one might expect. He has a wonderfully sensual vocal style reminiscent of Marvin Gaye. It makes you want to sip a glass of Chardonnay and sit by the fireplace with someone you love. In "Children of Darfur," however, the fiery bass lines and pulse of the congas are almost misleading. Tomas conveys his feelings subtly, using simple lyrics and smokin' tracks that grow in urgency. Halfway through the song, the real impact becomes clear. A female narrator speaks: "we were sleeping when the soldiers came, and my mother said 'run, hide, quick, hide, run'..." Meanwhile, a female voice is wailing with a slapback delay going from side to side. Visualizing the horror, you may feel compelled to switch from Chardonnay by the fire to Whisky by the checkbook. Tomas lightens the mood with "Don't Throw Our Love Away" and "License For Love," sweet tunes with excellent textures. "License For Love" has so many interesting elements it leaves you wondering: How do you label this music? "Extremely Artistic Soul" would be a good start. To say the least, this artist is extremely gifted. *Jeanie Cunningham*

Craig Johnston

(Indie Artist)

AirPlayDirect.com/CraigJohnstonMusic



Craig Johnston is an unsigned artist, yet he is pulling in deals such as a commercial with "Mastercard" and recording for the London Film School and Film Academy. So how does an indie artist pull off such an impressive feat? First, you have to have talent and know how to utilize it. Second, you have to establish a connection with your audience, making them feel like the music was written for them. Johnston nails it all with his own style of acoustic pop fused with an earthy folk sound. His voice is solid but doesn't stand out from his competitors. Instead, he sounds like many mainstream pop artists today.

The best of the lot is "Disembody," Its light electronic feel catches your ear right from the beginning. "Before I Fall" is a close second with a sweet touch of piano and meaningful lyrics. Johnston's music is catching fire and is starting to attract some major attention with prospective film and TV licensing opportunities. Indeed, he is an inspiration to other indie artists wishing to make their mark. If he can establish a vocal trademark that is uniquely his own, he has a good chance of having a lengthy and successful career. *Tom Laurie*