

records

COSMO JARVIS

Humasyouhitch/Sonofabitch

(Wall of Sound)



Woah there, settle down youngster. Teenaged anti-folk, pop-punk hybrid Cosmo Jarvis goes

hurtling into his musical career with a double album to showcase the deepest workings of his lyrical brain.

Split across two sides of opposing moods, the songs offer a ragbag collection of personal tales of his youth and the troubles of adolescence, alongside

witty skits about his dreams of getting Jessica Alba's number. Humasyouhitch is full of dainty ditties about girls, with the darker underbelly of Sonofabitch tackling alcoholism and parents divorcing, underpinned by a brutal, Eminem-style honesty. Inevitably, with 18 self-recorded songs bursting out, there is something of a lack of quality control, with

both sides hitting peaks and troughs, from the excellence of single She's Got You to the Goldie Lookin Chain-esque rambling of Mel's Song.

Jingly rhythms and rambling narratives make for an intriguing listen. Having claimed to have written more than 200 songs there will be plenty more to come from the Cosmo Jarvis.



BOB DYLAN

Christmas In The Heart

(Columbia)



While his gruff exterior may be more Grinch than Buddy the Elf, Dylan has pulled another surprise out of the sack. It's not even blue, blue tales of holiday heartbreak, these are tangled up in tinsel, whistle and bells Christmas songs. It's a bizarre concoction

and at times you have to remind yourself this really is Bob Dylan, yes *the* Bob Dylan, singing: "Who's got a big red cherry nose? Santa's got a big red cherry nose." At times it sounds like Otto, the school bus driver from the Simpsons, on karaoke and it is, if not intentionally, hilarious. Turn your back and boo if you like, but its for charity so you can't dislike it or that makes you a skinflint as well as a Scrooge.



TORI AMOS

Midwinter Graces

(Island)



This is everything you would expect from a Tori Amos album, delicate, haunting and, well, just a little bit weird. Some of it is perfectly delivered English traditional folk, while her reworking of some classic festive tunes are full of surprises. The dramatic

Star of Wonder is a highlight while some tracks, including the tender Snow Angel and the jazzy Pink and Glitter, stand up beyond the novelty of the seasonal aspect. Her multi-layered sound and unique vocals are perfectly suited to an ethereal, winter theme. It's hardly going to replace Mel and Kim on the stereo at the office party but worth a listen wrapped up in a Christmas jumper.



STEREOPHONICS**Keep Calm and Carry On**

(Mercury)



Stereophonics continue their onward journey towards dad rock obscurity with their latest album, littered with middle of the road tunes. Album opener She's Alright does a good

impersonation of a Who tribute act, while others do little to spark any real interest in a band who are seemingly trading on their early successes with inexplicably good effect.

But of course it is coming out just in time for Christmas so it'll make the perfect present for the one-CD-a-year dad rockers out there.

**MR HUDSON****Straight No Chaser**

(G.O.O.D Music/Mercury)



It may be a little heralded fact but Mr Hudson is actually from Birmingham. Now firmly rooted in London, the Oxford graduate has charmed his way into the affections of the Radio 1 playlist, due in no small part to his buddying up with hip-hop star Kanye

West. His debut album under the previous moniker of Mr Hudson and the Library hinted at his ability to weave cross-genre sounds and maintained a semblance of raw soul. But much of that has been squeezed out amidst sappy, radio-friendly dance effects and overbearing vocoders, which cynics may suggest were a nifty trick designed to mask the limits of his vocal ability. Have we learned nothing from Cher?

**Charlie Winston****Hobo**

(Real World Records)



Charlie Winston topped the charts in France, no doubt where he is not held back by his hackneyed lyrics. That sounds a tad harsh, but at times his perky tunes are let down

by clichéd rhymes. Overall it's a pleasant folk romp, with a hint of lounge jazz, drawing comparisons to a bohemian Jamie Cullum, with his penchant for an easy listening tune and doubtless musical talent. But it rarely maintains the heights of quirky My Life As A Duck and lacks the edge to live long in the memory.

**WORLD OF FOX****Everything is for the Best**

(Commercially Inviably)



Everything is for the Best is Simon Fox's first foray into a solo, full length album under his moniker, World of Fox, and it boasts a depth that belies its home recording. Showcasing his talents on a range of instruments including banjo, theremin, brass and

woodwind, it goes beyond the standard soloist with an acoustic guitar formula. Tracks such as opener Please Take Your Time hold an almost Nordic feel with similarities to the eerie calm of Kings of Convenience, while the record maintains an experimental edge. Despite the delicate feel, his post-rock roots still manifest themselves in the reversed guitars, building melodies and an overall sense of drama.

