



JOSH TURNER

Everything Is Fine
(MCA)

Born in 1977 in Hannah, South Carolina, Turner did a lot of singing, both

as a bass and baritone, in several choirs in his church. In the mid-'90s, he took piano lessons while attending college. His first big break occurred in December of 2001 when he was invited to sing on the Grand Ole Opry. The song, "Long Black Train," which he had written after listening to a Hank Williams, Sr. box set, evoked a standing ovation before it was over, so he sang it again for an encore. His first album, *Long Black Train*, was released in 2003 and turned platinum, as did *Your Man*, released in 2006. Turner received 2007 Grammy nominations for Male Country Vocal Performance ("Would You Go With Me") and Country Album (*Your Man*).

Seven of these twelve tracks were written by Turner, including the title track, which describes a life that, while not necessarily wonderful, is certainly good in a satisfying way. Another original composition, "Trailerhood," portrays the relaxed life style of certain neighborhoods that opt out of stressful activities, while "South Carolina Low Country" is an autobiographical sketch set to music. A duet with Trisha Yearwood on "Another Try," written by Chris Stapelton and Jerry Spillman, provides a nice demonstration of Turner's wide-ranging baritone blending with Yearwood's perfect harmony. His induction into the Grand Ole Opry on October 27th of last year by Vince Gill may have seemed a bit premature, but when a good-looking singer who epitomizes family values and has a voice capable of producing chills shows up in Nashville—why wait?

—Scott Peavler



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Juno Soundtrack
(Rhino Records)

Though Rhino consistently releases great albums, it's the little-soundtrack-that-could that delivers

their first Billboard chart-topper. Rhino's president, Scott Pascucci, believes "it's fitting that the *Juno* soundtrack should become Rhino's first-ever Number One album. Like Rhino, the soundtrack is a combination of quirky and cool that people seem to love."

The *Juno* soundtrack is definitely quirky and cool, which also fits the profile for the Moldy Peaches' Kimya Dawson, who is featured on eight of the nineteen tracks. With idiosyncratic lyrics like "I like boys with strong convictions/and convicts with perfect diction/underdogs with good intentions/amputees with stamp collections" from "So Nice So Smart," Dawson is the queen of quirk and an ideal match for the eccentric Juno. In the liner notes, the film's director, Jason Reitman, tells us that he asked *Juno*'s star Ellen Page, "What kind of music do you think Juno listens to?" She replied, "The Moldy Peaches!" Although Juno herself pledges allegiance to punk rockers like Iggy Pop and the Stooges, Page could not have picked a better fit for her character. One of the highlights of the soundtrack, and the film for that matter, is the duet between Juno and Bleeker (Michael Cera), where they actually cover the Peaches' "Anyone Else But You."

In addition to Dawson's unconventional lyrical style, the soundtrack contains classics like Buddy Holly's "Dearest," the Kinks' "A Well Respected Man," Mott the Hoople's "All the Young Dudes" and the Velvet Underground's "I'm Sticking With You." Coupled with the trendy sounds of Cat Power and Belle & Sebastian, this compilation contains perfect doses of the old and the new, in a combination of elements that expresses the personality of the film completely.

—Ali Green



PHANTOM BLUES BAND

Footprints
(Delta Groove Records)

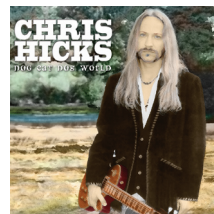
This is a tasty smorgasbord of soul, jazz, R&B, reggae and of course, blues. Having stepped out of Taj Mahal's shadow, his backing band displays dazzling diversity on their second release as the Phantom Blues Band, a collection of marvelous talent. Among them are Mike

Finnigan on keys (Joe Cocker, David Crosby), Denny Freeman on guitar (Bob Dylan, Doyle Bramhall), Johnny Lee Schell on slide guitar (Gregg Allman, countless others), and Tony Braunagel on drums (Laurie Morvan, Blues Brothers). Add to this roster great horn players and master producer, John Porter, and the results are staggering.

Horns kick in with Howard Tate's soul hit "Look at Granny Run." Then it's a nod to Freddie King's "See, See Baby" with Joe Sublett blowing his tenor saxophone as if his life depends on it. "Leave Home Girl" has a funky, strutting R&B groove, punctuated by staccato horn riffs. Just as you're settling in for more toe-tapping stuff, the ballad "Cottage for Sale" is rendered so tastefully that it instantly grabs you. We're back to the funk with a cover of Rufus Thomas' "Fried Chicken," followed by "Barnyard Blues," a bawdy blues rave-up powered by the interplay of Schell and Freeman's guitars. "Your Heartaches Are Over" features bassist Larry Fulcher's soulful lead vocal with harmonies from Finnigan and Schell, hearkening back to the glory days of '60s' soul music.

Humor returns with "My Wife Can't Cook." "When Malindy Sings" has Schell stepping out on slide, and "Chills and Fever" is another up-tempo horn-swaddled R&B romp. "A Very Blue Day" features a gutsy trumpet excursion by Darrell Leonard. The ballad "A Fool for You" has Mike Finnigan singing from the Ray Charles songbook. The Fulcher-penned reggae tune "When the Music Changes" closes this masterpiece. Wow, these guys can play!

—Jim Hynes



CHRIS HICKS

Dog Eat Dog World
(Ramblin' Records/
Shout! Factory)

Growing up in Macon, Georgia, there wasn't much chance that

a burgeoning guitarist could go in any direction *but* southern rock, and Chris Hicks has certainly made his mark on the genre. In high school he covered songs by the Marshall Tucker Band, never believing, in his wildest dreams, that one day he'd be playing with them. But that came only after a nine-year stint in the Florida "guitar