

ENTERTAINMENT

Technique • Friday, August 31, 2001

Looking for fun?

If you want to find a live musical act here in Atlanta this weekend, you've found the place. **Page 12**

Want to laugh?

See what thoughts our Two Bits Man has cooked up about Virginia and the Highlands that share the name. **Page 13**

'Branch'ing out the definition of 'pop'

By Jon Kaye
Contributing Writer

Album: *The Spirit Room*
Artist: Michelle Branch
Genre: Pop
Label: Maverick
Tracks: 11
Length: 42:25
Rating: ★★ ★ 1/2

With the recording industry's target marketing what they refer to as "debbies" (fourteen-year-old girls,) it is often hard to find a pop album worth buying for someone of college age. However, seventeen-year-old rookie songwriter, Michelle Branch changes stereotypes about young singers with her debut album, "The Spirit Room."

Branch's music is about halfway between Jewel and Britney Spears. With a caressing voice gracefully floating over a mellow guitar, Branch vaguely reminds her listeners of Jewel, yet unlike Jewel, Branch sings upbeat pop without an ostensible political agenda. Through heartfelt lyrics in which she speaks her mind,

Branch sings songs of love and hope that are certain to inspire.

"The Spirit Room" begins with "Everywhere," Branch's first foray into top-forty radio. Receiving nationwide play, including on Atlanta's Star 94, "Everywhere" has quickly gained fame for Michelle Branch. Showcasing her beautiful voice and adroitly played guitar, this cut proves to skeptical audiences that she is one teenage singer who really can perform. In this track, Branch wistfully sings to her lover that he is "everything I know that makes me believe I'm not alone."

Another cut worthy of note is "All You Wanted." With a simple melodic progression and unobtrusive percussion, this track has potential to be Michelle Branch's next top-forty hit. Arguably, this song is better representative of Branch's immense songwriting skill than the aforementioned "Everywhere."

As an added bonus, "The Spirit Room" is an enhanced CD, offering the listener the opportunity to view promotional photos of Michelle Branch or view the video of "Every-



By Tim Gaylord / MAVERICK RECORDS

Michelle Branch is 17 years old, but listen to her music and you'll determine that she charts her own course and is the anti-Britney.

where." While some enhanced CDs are computerized advertisements for the artist or label, this one actually offers the listener a chance to visually experience the music.

While Michelle Branch's upbeat brand of pop is certainly not for those looking for angry, controversial lyrics, it is unmistakably among

the best music to reach pop radio of late. This musical prowess is especially impressive due to that fact that Branch wrote or co-wrote every song on the entire album, something rarely done by her musical peers. In short, if you want a simple yet pleasing album for your collection, this is the one to buy.

Dave Ralph "Naturalizes" electronica

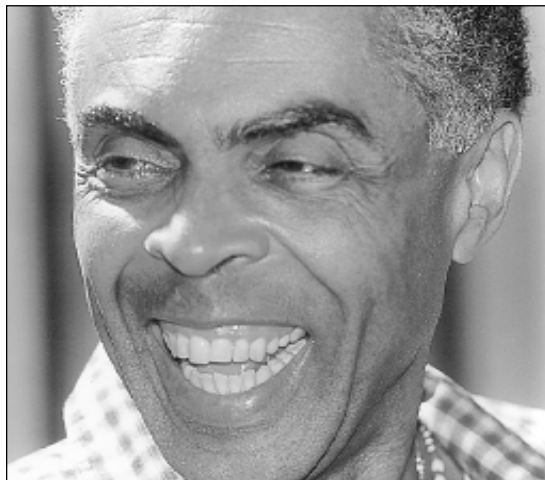
By Jamie Schulz
Advertising Manager

Artist: Dave Ralph
Album: *Naturalized*
Label: Kinetic Records
Rating: ★★ ★

I suppose that the label is somewhat of an oxymoron: there's nothing that natural about electronica, or dance, or techno, or whatever you want to call it now. However, compared to the other mixed and compilation albums that have passed through my hands, *Naturalized* is a better pick among them. The best thing going for the mix is that David Ralph actually took the time to have the tracks blend smoothly together. Actually, there may be some delay between tracks if the CD is played using a media player on your computer. Other than that, the theme of a track slowly fades and becomes the next track without there really being a noticeable change. The two CDs are pretty much ready to play for the dance floor.

In essence, since the CD is a mix or compilation of other mixes, Ralph should not get all the credit for the CD. Though Ralph did do a good job of arranging the tracks so that they progress nicely, it's the artists themselves who deserve the credit, or some of the credit. When they're doing a remix of something, it's hard to tell who the actual

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Courtesy Atlantic Records

Brazilians find their musical bliss together

By Alan Back
Senior Staff Writer

Artists: Gilberto Gil & Milton Nascimento
Album: *Gil & Milton*
Label: Atlantic
Rating: ★★ ★ 1/2

Latin influences showed up in popular music well before the likes of Ricky Martin were in diapers. Dizzy Gillespie loved to work with artists schooled in Cuban rhythms as he developed his style of playing jazz after World War II. Twenty-five years later, Chick Corea made his fusion lineups sizzle and dance. And people like Gilberto Gil and Milton Nascimento helped lead the charge from Brazil to spark crazes in bossa nova and samba.

Gil & Milton, the first full-length joint effort from these last two, gives a hint of why this fascination took hold so strongly. Shifts in style and instrumentation—everything from a simple piano to full string and wind sections—crop up throughout the album's 15 tracks and highlight the range of material they opened up to composers after them.

It's hard to believe that both men are nearly 60, judging from the way they sing. They trade verses and lines in Portuguese on just about every track and make the language a part of the overall picture, even for those who don't speak a word of it. (The only track recorded in English is their reggae-infused take on the Beatles' "Something.")

The contrast between the stars' approaches comes through most strongly on "Trovoada." A languid,



By Café / WARNER BROS. RECORDS

Gilberto Gil (above left) and Milton Nascimento have earned their own reputations as stars of Brazilian music. *Gil & Milton* is the end result of the meeting of these two minds for their first full-length joint project.

melancholy tone runs through the first part, written by Gil; when Nascimento takes it over, he drops the guitar and brings in a backing chorus to push things along more urgently.

"Lar Hospitalar" also points up their differences nicely. Nascimento's melody would do fine in a crowded dance hall, with the bar doing good business. Read over Gil's lyrics, though, and you get a much bleaker impression—hopelessness mixed with anger at social injustices.

The disc starts to lose steam on some of the tracks penned by other composers, with "Maria" and "Yo Vengo a Ofrecer Mi Corazón" sliding a little too far into easy listening and almost sounding like Muzak. The two performers are more consistent when it comes to their own material, even when they send almost everybody else out of the studio. Pay close attention to the Nascimento vocal/piano feature "Dinamarca" for an eloquent lesson in how to make just a little bit of

See *Brazil*, page 18

New record not for the closed-minded

By Jon Kaye
Contributing Writer

Title: *Eternally Hard*
Artist: Bitch and Animal
Genre: Alternative
Label: Righteous Babe
Length: 59:58
Tracks: 13 + 1 hidden
Rating: ★★ ★ ★

It is hard to seriously accept a band baring the moniker Bitch and Animal. With song titles like "Best Cock on the Block" and "Ganja," this band outwardly appears to be a complete farce, yet this New York based duo will become a favorite after the first spin. Signed to Ani DiFranco's Righteous Babe Records, Bitch and Animal offer the same borderline punk eccentricity that listeners have come to accept from that label. The only way to even attempt to explain their sound would be a fusion of Luscious Jackson and the Grateful Dead. Their music, not unlike Luscious Jackson's, has a sporadic flow, punctuated with aggressive electric bass and strong percussion, yet the mellow folkiesque sound heard on some of the slower tracks reminds one of the Dead.

Place this disc in your CD player, and "Best Cock on the Block" will completely catch you off-guard the first time you play it. While the song almost comedically relates the singers' promiscuity, the musical skill here is anything but silly. Bitch and Animal demonstrate their musical acumen with intense tribal beats and confident use of bass. The sharp rhythms and assertive vocals simply encourage dance, so this is definitely a track worthy of your next party.

On a less serious note, Bitch and Animal sing about angels' experiences with marijuana in "Ganja." Borrowing its melody from a popular Christmas carol, they replace "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" with "Ganja, in excess, ain't dangerous." While this song lacks the inspired groove of the other tracks, it recovers itself with delightfully offbeat lyrics. A song completely unacceptable to the deeply religious, the band advances their theory that the Immaculate Conception was a product of drug-induced date-rape.

This album completely violates any popular standards enacted by the mainstream. With irreverent lyrics and unconventional use of the instruments, "Eternally Hard" breaks from musical tradition. While this album is not for the closed-minded, it is a must-have for the unique.

Onward and Crossword: Gimme an S!

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*By Kit FitzSimons
Entertainment Staff*

ACROSS

1. Sell tickets illegally
6. More than two
10. Chummy people
14. Wisner's partner
15. Mystical energy fields
16. Declare
17. Give safe harbor? (4 wds)
19. Start over
20. Kind of sauce or milk
21. "By _____!" ("Blimey!")
22. Query
24. Greenhorn
25. Dre's medium
28. Emulate a snake in 69 DOWN
32. Mexican empire of yore
35. Window part
36. Frasier's dog
37. Artist's cap
38. Heads? (4 wds)
40. OK city, NE of OK City
41. It follows wnter.
42. Likable pres?
43. Record types, for short
45. Annoy
47. Ruth of baseball
51. Arabian bites? (2 wds)
56. Hank of baseball
57. Licorice flavor
58. Egg (on)
59. Staircase
60. Ernie's roomie, et al.
61. It might be a 2-door (abbr)
62. Dined
63. "_____ Kosh..."
65. Competent
67. B line?
70. Gunky masses
73. Plays Bianca of "The Rescuers"? (2 wds)
77. Opera part
78. Saunters
79. Boring and stupid
80. Bored in a stupor
81. Cruella's love
82. A noble gas

DOWN

1. Cries uproariously
2. Disney's 'Pinocchio' fish
3. "An apple _____" (2 wds)

4. Short triangle side
5. Presentation or report
6. Better
7. Spanish gold
8. Scratch the Porsche
9. "Como _____?"
10. Meter maid matter? (2 wds)
11. Blvd.
12. Had followers
13. Sold-out initials
15. Really or almost, e.g. (abbr)
18. Tic-tac-toe win?
23. T-bone, for one
24. Sharp tongue? (3 wds)
26. Swiss mt.
27. Arafat's grp.
29. DCCCLXXIV + DLXXVII
30. Computer scheduler or calculator (abbr)
31. Type of shirt
32. Homer's dad
33. _____ Buddha
34. More than di-
35. Sci. exper. conditions, usually
39. (Neat) freak
41. Fast plane
44. The media
45. Unappreciative folks
46. Parisian st.
48. Exist
49. Hit with a rubber mallet
50. Naval rank (abbr)
51. Use a swab
52. 45 degrees c.w. from 76 DOWN
53. Naval academy word
54. Hot cocoa drinker's need
55. Historical period
56. Comical Viking
62. On tap item
64. Hemi- meaning
66. Butterfinger variety
67. James of 'Misery'
68. First 007 flick (2 wds)
69. Utopia
70. Woman, to Tex
71. _____-Gel
72. "That's show _____!"
74. Debt receipt
75. Car Talk & Fresh Air provider (abbr)
76. 45 degrees c.c.w. from 51 Down

To find the answers, check page 13. We make no apologies if you don't know the answers. Sorry.

Attack your eardrums over the long weekend with a fresh batch of live music!

CJ'S LANDING (270 Buckhead Ave.) (404) 237-7657

8/31—Dan Adams Band, Settlene, Regatta 69
9/1—Big Jack Pneumatic, Freelander
9/6—13 Stories, Liquid Jungle
9/7—6 Against 7, Chris McCarty Band, Love Over Gravity

Web site: www.cjslanding.com

COTTON CLUB (152 Luckie St.) (404) 688-1193

8/31—Chain Poets, Annapolis Red, Solar Krush, Favorite
9/1—420 Monks, Minus, Da Shiz, Virtual
9/6—Bob Schneider
9/7—Acres, Vynl, Mary's Eyes, Mango

Web site: www.atlantaconcerts.com/cottonclub.asp

DARK HORSE TAVERN (816 N. Highland Ave.) (404) 873-3607

8/31—Slangbanger, Exit 8, Conflicion
9/1—Combread, Suburban Love Junkies, Cloud 10
9/4—David Dunning

9/5—Social Chaos, Pezunk, Discord
9/6—Soundtrack Mind, Catalytic, Sonomama

ECHO LOUNGE (551 Flat Shoals Ave.) (404) 681-3600

8/31—The Close, Chocolate Kiss, The Remuxers, Rizzudo
9/1—Rival School, Thursday, Ghost
9/7—Hot Water Music, Alkaline Trio, Cave In, Thrice, Selby Tiger, Mark Park Speaking, The Eyeliners

Web site: www.echostatic.com/echolounge

EDDIE'S ATTIC (515-B N. McDonough St.) (404) 377-4976

8/31—Trackside Tavern Reunion
9/1—Jennifer Nettles Band
9/2—Christine Kane
9/4—Laura Methvin, Shiloh Parker, Amy Loftus
9/5—Rich Healy, John Zedd, Ben Dunlap
9/6—Alastor, Paul Melancon, Weaklazzlyar
9/7—Diane Durrett, John McVey

Web site: www.eddiesattic.com

MASQUERADE (695 North Ave.) (404) 577-8178

8/31—Sick Speed, Minus, Ajax Heavies, Munkigrip
9/1—Saves the Day, Dashboard Confessional, No Motiv
9/2—Jubilee feat. Perry Farrell
9/3 (Music Park)—Buju Banton, Toots & the Maytals, Yellowman, Morgan Heritage
9/6—Self Denial, IDD, Cauldron Born, Chronic M.D.

Web site: www.masq.com

RED LIGHT CAFE (553 Amsterdam Ave.) (404) 874-7828

8/31—Marc English, Blues Pond
9/1—Gary Stier, Zack Carr
9/7—Impaired Vision, Artificial Jungle, Ryan Kipp, Jeremy Salas, Thin Man, Casper, Ramadamafia

Web site: www.redlightcafe.com

ROXY (3110 Roswell Rd.) (404) 233-7699

9/7—Dexter Freebish, Chrystina Lloree

Web site: www.atlantaconcerts.com/roxy.asp

SMITH'S OLDE BAR (1580 Piedmont Rd.) (404) 875-1522

8/31—Cool for August, Charlie Mars Band, Nillah
9/1—Scott Miller & the Commonwealth, Heritage Cherry
9/2—Gran Torino
9/3—Transmatic, Diggity
9/5—The Tom Collins, Flair, Girl Chris
9/6—Kevn Kinney, David Dunning
9/7—Soulhat, Tonohoney

Web site: smithsoldebar.citysearch.com

STAR BAR (437 Moreland Ave.) (404) 681-9018

8/31—Pardner, Used Carlotta, Anna Kramer
9/1—Dave Brokie Experience
9/5—Gargantua, X-Impossibles
9/6—Rev. Uncle Laffo's Talent Sideshow

Web site: www.cloun.com/starbar.html

VARIETY PLAYHOUSE (1099 Euclid Ave.) (404) 521-1786

8/31—The Flower Kings, Z-Axis

Web site: www.variety-playhouse.com

Brazil

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sound speak volumes.

There's no denying the effect that Gil and Nascimento have had on popular music, both above and below the equator. In one sense, *Gil & Milton* is something out of a time warp; in another light, it's a pleasant bit of proof that some things never really go out of style.

For English translations of the lyrics on *Gil & Milton*, visit www.atlantic-records.com/gilberto_gil.



The *Technique* rates films and music out of a possible five stars.

Ralph

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artist is. But what the particular artist (or remixer) has on the track is good; upbeat tempo, a good mix between the highs and lows, no track is overcome by bass or percussion.

What is annoying is the common use of vocals. It just doesn't make sense to have one repeated line over and over again. For starters, it's hard to understand the line used in Psychomanteus, and the fact that the artist (Manhattan) keeps skipping back to the beginning half-

way through the speech. This seems unnecessary, and often aggravating, since you're trying to figure out what the person's saying instead of listening to the music.

Another setback is to how composed the album feels. It just has a manufactured quality to it. While all the tracks are good in their own and complement one another to make a great CD set to dance to, there is nothing that stands out of all the tracks. At points, such as with Jurgen Dreissen's "Counter Culture", you may find yourself wondering if you haven't heard the song in either a Volkswagen or Mit-

subishi commercial.

In terms of progression, the tracks, as stated, gel nicely. But the CDs on this two-disc set also progress themselves. The first CD starts with Dave's "Islands of Light", with the aforementioned annoying speech, this one announcing "Welcome." To what, I'm not certain, I guess over two hours' worth of music. The track moves into Moonwatcher's "This is..." and the tempo continually increases to a more dance/club-oriented feeling. The same can be said for the theme of the songs. As "Islands..." has a mellow feel to it, then begins into a more energetic

groove, trading genial sounds to a more synth-pop orchestration. The energy continues on through to the second CD, picking up where the first left off. Fragma's "You are alive" begins to wind down the album, with Junkie XL's "Sinycho" finishing off the album.

Naturalized no doubt has a very techno/dance feel to it. It would situate itself nicely at any dance or club, a good backdrop for conver-

sation or critiquing the other patrons at the bar. The beats are strong and continuous, and there is no lag between tracks. While the CD definitely won't have you rushing out to grab your glow sticks and pacifier or breaking into impromptu dork-on-the-dance-floor club moves, it could have you dancing a little to the tracks. Granted there aren't any roommates around for you to entertain.



Cover art courtesy Kinetic Records

Dave Ralph's *Naturalized* would "situate itself nicely at any dance or club, a good backdrop for conversation or critiquing the other patrons at the bar," and will hit your local music store on September 11.