



GARY MILLER

**LIVE SHOT**

**TOM WAITS**  
Palladium, Dallas, June 23

Monday night in Dallas, Tom Waits walked onstage, and it got 10 degrees hotter. There were reports that Mr. Waits himself wanted the air conditioner turned off during the show, but there he was, dressed in a black jacket and bowler, lit red as the devil, stomping around in front of a towering wall of loudspeakers. Resistance was futile, so we all became the heat with him. Waits' career has been somewhat of an anomaly: He's nearing 60, and his catalog only gets stranger and more experimental (2006's *Orphans*), but his voice still sounds like the perfect combination of sawdust and gravel. For close to two hours, his band, including son Casey on drums, held down the pages for our storyteller, and though there was little in the way of banter, save for a few very Waitsian asides about Texas food, the songs became a thread. "Way Down in the Hole" and "Innocent When You Dream" from *Franks Wild Years*, "Anywhere I Lay My Head" from *Rain Dogs*, and "November" from *The Black Rider* fleshed out Waits' midcareer works. There was the stomped "Get Behind the Mule" from *Mule Variations* and dazzling bark of "Eyeball Kid," for which Waits donned a bejeweled hat and became a human disco ball. He took to the piano for a glorious rendition of "Invitation to the Blues," from 1976's *Small Change*, but that's where the early stuff ended, sadly. Throughout the show, Waits grabbed maracas, wielded a bullhorn, strapped on a guitar, and sweated along with the rest of us, right up until the encore, which included "Make It Rain" and a growled "Jesus Gonna Be Here." It was a relatively low-key affair, but St. Tom made it worth the pit stains.

— Audra Schroeder

**DUFFY**

*Rockferry* (Mercury)

Billed as the next Amy Winehouse, oh-so-blond Aimee Anne Duffy snores coffee-shop product. Debut LP *Rockferry*, written with Suede guitarist Bernard Butler, attempts to smooth Winehouse's edges via a straightedge singer and former contestant on Welsh megahit *Wawffactor*. Wanna guess the show's premise? Vanilla as it is carbon, *Rockferry* opens with its promising title track, a lilting, 1960s orchestra seduction, but as the octaves rise, Duffy cracks. Single "Serious" glues white-girl soul, R&B, and rap to En Vogue/Nelly Furtado effect; blues riff "Syrup & Honey" retches on the Mississippi Delta; and closer "Distant Dreamer" floats teeth-numbing confetti. Hell, the girl didn't even win *Wawffactor*. Duffy's the Clay Aiken of nuevo "soul."

★

— Darcie Stevens



**EMMYLOU HARRIS**

*All I Intended to Be* (Nonesuch)

Emmylou Harris goes down like fine wine, more elegant and potent with each passing year. Harris' first solo album in five years reveals the 2008 Country Music Hall of Famer lingering poignantly retrospective with longing and resolve. Reuniting with original producer Brian Ahern contributes to reflective covers of Merle Haggard's "Kern River" and Billy Joe Shaver's "Old Five and Dimers Like Me," as well as contemporary cuts like Patty Griffin's "Moon Song" and Tracy Chapman's "All That You Have Is Your Soul." Originals strike the strongest chords of loss, however, Harris' twang subtle on "Broken Man's Lament," rasping delicate though "Not Enough," and trembling into the McGarrigle sisters' harmonies on "How She Could Sing the Wildwood Flower." Dolly Parton and Vince Gill shimmer alongside on "Gold," while "Take That Ride" and "Sailing Round the Room" shudder free the mortal coil. Transcendent.

★★★★★



EMMYLOU HARRIS

— Doug Freeman

**DIZZEE RASCAL**

*Maths + English* (Definitive Jux/XL)

**EMMANUEL JAL**

*Warchild* (Sonic360)

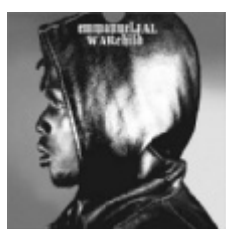
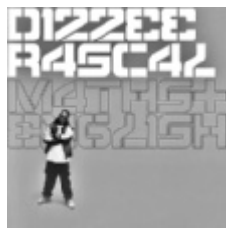
East London's Dizzee Rascal rushes the "World Outside" with third LP *Maths + English*, cold grime bodied up by the genre's pioneer. "Young, black, rich, and ruthless," boasts Dizzee on psychotic diss track "Pussy'ole" to a cut up of Rob Base's "It Takes Two to Make a Thing Go Right," while reeling in UGK's Pimp and Bun for cross-genre anthem "Where's Da G's." Beatmaker Shy FX reaches dizzying speeds on summertime jam "Da Feelin'," *Maths* adding up to an all out "Flex" of muscle and clout. One of music's most inspirational stories via a 2008 documentary bearing the same name, *Warchild*, aka Sudan's Emmanuel Jal, beats up on "50 Cent" and paints a vivid picture of a war-jacked childhood. Though Jal's still coming along lyrically, *Warchild* survives on moving backup band the Reborn Warriors and Jal's haunting tale. The eye-opening "Forced to Sin" tells it best: "Left home at the age of 7. One year later, leave with an AK-47." Some real talk.

(*Dizzee Rascal flips off Emo's Monday, July 21.*)

(*Maths + English*) ★★★★★

(*Warchild*) ★★★

— Chase Hoffberger



EMMANUEL JAL

**DVDNDS**

**LOVE STORY**

(Start)

"Why weren't we as big as the Beatles?" murmurs Arthur Lee, holding court, attired as if he were still in prison. "One is because I didn't cooperate," he acknowledges, wagging his head. Then up shoots his chin. "And the other is, I'm not gonna go out and eat shit ... out on the road!" The tacked-on tour reference doubles as rationalization for his outburst. *That's why*, Arthur. Wrapped like the bandana under Lee's top hat with a lucid, nostalgic – addictive – audience upside the black sunglasses of rock & roll's genius answer to Ledbelly, *Love Story's* a weeper. Filmmakers get the lifelong erratic to drive them past his high school and later tour a crew through the L.A. castle his band, Love, once called its crash pad. The band's original members comment to historical effect, especially Lee's childhood pal turned ice-pick guitarist Johnny Echols and Lee's musical foil Bryan MacLean, who all agree touched off 1967 avant-folk-rock masterpiece *Forever Changes* with his supremely insecure "Alone Again Or." Production, vintage video, and big-league cred celebs match the documentary's bottle-of-wine budget, though Elektra Records architects Jac Holzman (president) and John Densmore (the Doors), 40 takes of "7 and 7 Is," and "My Little Red Book" survive Lee, 61, who died in 2006 shortly after participating in *Love Story*. "Tell you the truth," admits Lee, "I was afraid."

— Raoul Hernandez



**SHEET MUSIC**

**THE ADVENTURES OF GRANDMASTER FLASH: MY LIFE, MY BEATS**

by Grandmaster Flash with David Ritz  
Broadway Books, 258 pp., \$22.95

Grandmaster Flash didn't create the break. That credential belongs to neighborhood hero Kool Herc. Rather, Flash made the modern DJ. He turned the role from a playground party fixture to a staple of clubs across the country. And with Melle Mel, Kid Creole, and the rest of the Furious Five, the Grandmaster transformed the MC into one of American culture's most stigmatic roles. The backstory's all found in *The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash*, from the drugs, to the booze, to the women and parties, almost completely in that order. The man known for his hands caught a nasty spell when crack hit, and his journey to the "ether-infested basement" paints a Flash completely removed from the one rocking Europe on the Sugar Hill dime. When he was on point, he was a revolutionary, filling previously unfrequented uptown nightclubs with B-boys, while disco ruled his late-1990s spot DJing *The Chris Rock Show*. His 2007 induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the first (and currently only) by a rapper, wasn't only symbolic. It was grand.

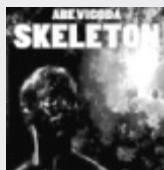
— Chase Hoffberger



**ABE VIGODA**

*Skeleton* (Post Present Medium)

Vampire Weekend coined the genre "Upper West Side Soweto," an Ivy League version of the tropical mess concocted by L.A.'s Abe Vigoda. Emerging from the same skuzzy art-punk scene that birthed No Age, Mika Miko, and Health and taking its name from the *Godfather* and *Barney Miller* actor, the college-aged quartet takes a decidedly lo-fi approach to Nigerian high life on its second full-length. The opening one-two



of "Dead City/Waste Wilderness" and "Bear Face" treads knee-deep through the sparkling Afro-pop of Paul Simon's *Graceland*, adding puddles of reverb to bright guitars and burying vocals deep within Man Man-esque percussive rhythms. This convulsive rush bleeds into finer moments "Lantern Lights" and "World Heart," but the lack of strong hooks and an incredibly muddy mix makes *Skeleton* shake as if one long variation on a theme. Playful, energetic, call it "Underground Californian Calypso." (**Abe Vigoda goes fish at Emo's Tuesday, July 1.**)

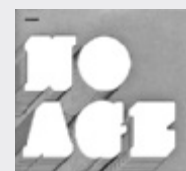
★★★

— Austin Powell

**NO AGE**

*Nouns* (Sub Pop)

No Age became poster bros for the burgeoning DIY scene bred out of L.A. punk club the Smell. *Nouns*, drummer Dean Spunt and guitarist Randy Randall's Sub Pop debut and follow-up to last year's raw comp, *Weirdo Rippers*, comes packaged with their scene: photos of people (fans), places (clubs), and things (cassette collections). However, for all the loud-fast ethos, the album



feels like it's balancing on one leg. The electric surge of opener "Miner," pop-punch of "Teen Creeps," and guitar snap of "Cappo" and "Sleeper Hold" embody the duo's talent for fusing volume and energy into short bursts, but the other half of *Nouns* takes on the narcotic haze of samples and effects pedals, and Spunt's vocals often drown in the whirlpool. Live, No Age is 10 times more pulsive than anything here, and therein lies their strength, in both legs. (**No Age stands tall at Emo's Tuesday, July 1.**)

★★★

— Audra Schroeder