

MUSIC

WITH
SALLY
BROWNE



PLAYLIST

ROCK

GRAVEL AND WINE

Gin Wigmore



New Zealand singer-songwriter Gin Wigmore bares her heart, soul and wrath on this powerful follow-up release to her successful debut *Holy Smoke*. Expertly melding sultry blues tunes with dark rock 'n' roll sounds and a touch of rockabilly, the 25-year-old showcases an impressive versatility on *Gravel and Wine*. The

album kicks off with a bang with the first single, *Black Sheep*, followed by the infectious *Man Like That* and soulful *Poison*. The record tempers down with a few bluesy ballads, each of which expose Wigmore's raw vocals. Jazz tune *Kill of the Night* stars with its spectacular hook and beats. **Samantha Landy**

HIP-HOP

QUAKERS

Quakers



The seismological activity shakes to the highest magnitude on the long-awaited arrival of *Quakers*. Geoff Barrow, of *Portishead*, combines with *Portishead* engineer 7stu7 and Australian producer *Katalyst* to create a mix unlike any other. Selecting some of the very best artists from the

Stones Throw label, Aloe Blacc returns to his roots, while *Guilty Simpson* and *M.E.D* take on *Radiohead* military style, with a marching rhythm of *Fitta Happier* bringing attention to the quirky takes on the album. This is the hip-hop album of the year. **Jennifer Holmes**

ROCK

LOCKED DOWN

DR JOHN



This is a classic "but" album. A top-notch band works its way through a strong song list with insightful lyrics addressing the world's concerns. The playing is flawless. *Locked Down* almost defies the critic to find fault - save that this is the least Dr John album yet. Maybe the great Mac Rebennack

wants it that way, a calculated move to broaden his base. The sounds are swampy, but not in that New Orleans way the 71-year-old has made famous. It is missing those flourishing piano runs and his distinctive vocals. Still he wears his heart on his sleeve. **Henry Lyall**

TRIBUTE

HITS, HOLLYWOOD . . .

Doris Day



For what seemed an eternity - in fact, it was 20 years, 39 films, 128 episodes of her TV show and more than 800 recordings - blonde, beautiful, ever-smiling Doris Day, now 88, was the world's sweetheart. Day was not a great actor but when it came to singing,

she had few equals. The three-disc *Hits, Hollywood & Broadway* showcases her vocal art on songs as diverse as *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, from *Oklahoma!*, and *As Long as He Needs Me*, from *Oliver*. **Bob Crimeen**



MACY FACES HER TRY-ALL

Her 1999 hit single may well be regarded as the refrain to a busy career that covers music, film and television, as well as being a mother to three teenagers, writes **Sally Browne**

There's no stopping Macy Gray. Our interview is postponed by 2½ hours because the singer and actor is putting the finishing touches to a voice-over recording for the movie *The Paperboy*. She plays the family housekeeper and narrator in the suspense thriller starring *Nicole Kidman*, *Matthew McConaughey*, *Zac Efron* and *John Cusack*.

When she does get home and is available for a chat on the phone, the conversation is interrupted by random shouts to her teenage children as she gets her son ready for basketball.

Gray, a working mum at 44, is a busy woman. She's got a new album in the works, several movies on the boil, and three teenagers to manage. But she's happy to talk about her latest record *Covered*, a collection of, you guessed it, cover songs, that have become part of her live repertoire during her 13-year career.

Not only is the album a varied collection of quirky and soulful reworkings of some of her favourite tracks, from the Eurythmics to *Metallica* to *Colbie Caillat* and *Radiohead*, it also features comical interludes of dialogue between Macy and some good friends. In fact, Gray's comedy stylings are so natural she should be a regular on *Saturday Night Live*.

"I think so too!" she laughs. So perhaps it's somewhat appropriate that the producer of her record was *Hal Willner*, who was musical director at *Saturday Night Live* from 1981 to 1990.

The ad-libbed dialogue includes such treasures as comedian *JB Smoove* advising her she should make her fans "more scared" of her and *Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger* telling Macy her hit song *I Try* was "cool and all" but she really needs to move on and be more well-rounded "like *Britney Spears*" or sing like *Alanis Morissette* or *Shakira*. It's a brave girl who says something like that.

Many stars have a successful song in their repertoire that they never quite exceeded. Some might suggest that *I Try*, which was a mega hit for Gray in 1999, winning her a Grammy award for best female pop vocal performance and selling millions of records worldwide, is a lot to live up to. But for Gray, it launched her career.

"It was a big surprise for me," she says. "I never expected it to be the huge song that it is. When I wrote it I thought it was too wordy. You know how hooks are really quick, like 'who let the dogs out'. You want to have a catchphrase . . . I didn't think it was a big song, so when my label wanted to put it out, I was telling them they needed to do a different song. So I was really surprised by all the success that it's had."