

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."