

records



Seneca

SWEETER THAN BOURBON

WEST POLE M&M RECORDS



"Research now shows that the lack of natural talent is irrelevant to great success. The secret? Painful, demanding practice and hard work." My good friend Geoffrey Colvin, senior editor at Fortune Magazine on what it takes to be successful. He could have been talking about Seneca but for one immutable fact, they have talent in spades. If hard work alone gets you places then they're going all the way and their debut album 'Sweeter Than Bourbon' is a testament to that hard work. It's an album way ahead of its years. June 13, 2008 saw the band release its second single 'Clarity', the first single 'Smile' released late last year made it to number 27 in the Irish charts. Insiders expect 'Clarity' to make an immediate impact on Irish radio and work it's way swiftly into the Top Ten on the charts. Capitalizing on the momentum generated in Ireland, Seneca is formalizing plans to release Sweeter Than Bourbon in the U.S. Tentative tour plans include a September 2008 start date for a tour to include Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

As debut albums go, this one is as good as it gets. Seneca deserve top marks for giving us just that, top quality. I worry sometimes when an album has such an immediate feel-good effect that maybe it's to be short lived, wearing off all too quickly but 'Sweeter Than Bourbon' shows no signs of being a one trick pony and I expect this very tasty album will taste just as good next year and beyond. **ADL**



Weezer

WEEZER (THE RED ALBUM)

UNIVERSAL ISLAND RECORDS



An award for most underrated band on the planet and these guys would be contenders. Partly their own fault because while they have turned out some amazing tunes they can sometimes divert into the realm of the pretty ordinary. Since 1994 and the release of the "Blue Album" featuring the anthemic "Buddy Holly" they have been plugging away and releasing killer albums, a mix of great rock tracks with a bit of fun thrown in. 'The Red Album' features the classics that you come to expect from a Weezer album, the difference between this and others is the solidity of whole package. Standout tracks are complemented by slow burners that get better with each listen. An album of two halves, the first carries the crackers 'Troublemaker', 'Pork and Beans' 'Everybody Get Dangerous' - great power pop, punchy lyrics, screeching guitar and rolling bass. Also featuring 'The Greatest Man That Ever Lived' a melange of genres (everything from Queen to Public Enemy) knitted together in a manner begs the question how the hell did that work? But work it does. The second half is more introspective and contemplative. The slow down is a bit of a jolt to the system but after a few listens that too knits together especially "Automatic" and the final original track "the Angel and the One". The fine finish is provided by two great covers, The Band's classic "The Weight," followed by the not so classic "Life is what You Make It" from Talk Talk, both suit Weezer's tongue in cheek style. If you like your music with a sense of humour check out the Red Album, or if you just like good music its well worth a listen too.



Leon Jean Marie

BENT OUT OF SHAPE

UNIVERSAL MUSIC | JULY 19



Leon Jean Marie is a dreadlocked East London looker that trips through the full gamut of pop styles on his debut, and sounds a lot like lots of people but refuses to stay in the box that you think he fits in, so that for a finish you have to give him a little kudos, and maybe his own box. LJM's sound was polished by the producer du jour, Mark Ronson, these days almost the golden ticket to success for an artist. The comparison to Prince is unavoidable, every new black kid on the block who sings and plays guitar with some funk has this one thrown at them. LJM skills extend to the drums, bass, keyboard and knowledge of the workings of a recording studio. Prince like wanderings are evident but not overarching on this album, most notable on 'Fair', Raspberry Beret with more treble and a softer jiving bass. 'Bed of Nails' has a Beatles-esque 4/4 swing to it, tripping merrily through sweet and tidy lyrics. 'Scratch' see LJM do 'heavier' with fuzzy guitar and a singing down the phone effect. Britney/Kylie Swedish production duo Bloodshy & Avant also had a hand in this debut, with The Rural from Gorillaz bringing Bristol trip hop edges to 'Gotta Have It. Purists sometimes assert that to sound like someone else sounds the deathknell of originality, LJM may reference the styles of some revered artists but he mixes it up and creates refreshing music that reminds this reviewer of what 'pop' can actually be when not totally formulaic and served with a healthy side of funk. Touring with Amy Winehouse and Mika, LJM's team are priming him for big sales and stardom on both sides of the Atlantic. I wonder what he may be if he used all his skills and let rip but at the very minimum he has a good voice and the songs a the melody and finish that means you won't have to change the station when LJM pops on. **Sarah**