

Maybe the word 'Witchseason' is broader, as in Joe Boyd's late-sixties alliance with the first full flowering of British folk, and especially Nick Drake's aching, still waters. "Below The Waves" is equally and unnervingly calm; Berry's unforced, unstretching quaver is still as vulnerable as more possessed, diva voices, but this collection of ballads, marked out by acoustic guitars, violins and pianos, is almost disengaged, in retreat, hardly showing a ripple or tear (as in 'rip', but...). Such a well of melancholy never overflowing into doleful misery, and don't you believe that's an easy achievement. One potential industry snag is that Berry should be fearsome competition, but since most of the late-eighties rising and risen women singers are 'characters' of sorts, her reticence - at least as you hear her - might be a problem. But the roots scene must surely take to her openheartedly. **MA**

#### **TORANAGA**

##### **Bastard Ballads**

**(Peaceville VILE005) LP/CD**

Well, I reviewed this a few months back and Toranaga seem to be the darlings of the Metal world now. So nothing new to say from the old review except this is now re-released in a spiffing "sinister black sleeve" OR in CD format! As with Manic Ears' compilation, CD fever hits the punk labels! Crazy. **KJ**

#### **THE PIXIES**

##### **Doolittle**

**(4AD CAD/C/905/CD) LP/MC/CD**

Once you're fist-deep into "Doolittle", you won't miss Steve Albini's bag o'spanners production touch on "Surfer Rosa", nor maintain that Gill Norton's cleaning up of their rhythm section is off the mark, as it's more than balanced by his concentrated campaign to sharpen those serrated, pointy Pixie parts, leaving a newly unleaded, but pure performance bone machine. If "Surfer Rosa" had one gigantic forward punch, "Doolittle" is a contortion of gleaming hooks. The Pixies are garageland in excelsius, with knobs on, and have no equals.

All their trickeries are present and correct; the scouring guitars pounding down yet another of Black Francis' adhesive, angst-beaten, blue-black gut-pop Beantown melodies, Kim Deal's backing wail,

the sex, blasphemy, shrieks, bile, surreal cartoonery, manic laughter etc, but "Doolittle" is 15-track non-stop ecstatic crunching. The slash-and-run Pixie world of "Mr Grieves", "Crackity Jones" and "Tame" is familiar, but there is plenty of diversity: 1) the lame reggae riff prising open "Mr Grieves"; 2) the outrageously cool, sarcastic surf bubblegum of "La La Love You", sung by hunk drummer David; 3) the cutest Shangri-La teen-pop of "Here Comes Your Man"; 4) Kim's parched ballad-with-spurs, "Silver"; 5) the ongoing redefining and reclaiming of the Noo Wave Riff. With The Pixies, rock '89 isn't just a historical compilation, and that in rewriting the chapters, The Pixies have drawn up a new textbook.

Totally worthy saviours. **MA**

#### **PETER COYLE**

##### **I'd Sacrifice 8 Orgasms With Shirley**

##### **Maclaine Just To Be There**

**(Big Big Massive BBMLP/CD001)LP/CD**

#### **THE SNEETCHES**

##### **Sometimes That's All We Have Creation**

**CRELP/CD43) LP/CD**

Peter Coyle has certainly come a long way since his days in the Lotus Eaters. So far, in fact, that some might say he has lost it altogether. Not so, however, on this evidence at least. Coyle insinuates and tricks his way into hearts made flabby by too much pop pap. He nudges and winks and makes obscene suggestions and we forgive him every time because he has something special. That something is talent! A rare commodity in any shape or form. Here it is given expression in a set of jagged, unhinged, even beautiful songs. In a few years time this will be a landmark of sorts.

The Sneetches are a departure for Creation, geographically at least. Hailing from Statesville they look set to continue the label's impressive roster and build upon a back catalogue that reads like a history of our time. The Sneetches snort and growl and breath fire in an odd individual kind of way. The Sneetches have a way about them that is winning, and of course we all know where that will get them. **SM**

#### **MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO**

##### **Storm The Studio**

**(Sweatbox SDX040/CD) LP/CD**

After receiving rave reviews for their live shows, Meat Beat Manifesto