



# Riffs

## GP EDITORS' TOP THREE CD PICKS

### MATT BLACKETT



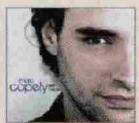
**Jason Falkner**  
*I'm OK, You're OK*  
 Fans of Falkner's work with Jellyfish and the

Grays will find a lot to love about this record. Chimey Hagstrom 12-strings, crunchy Jazzmasters, compressed clean tones, and hook after hook after hook. Falkner played pretty much every sound on this album as well as singing his butt off. Dang! **Cobraside.**



**Raul Midon**  
*Synthesis*  
 Midon's funky, groovy guitar work is all over

this release, with the smoothest octaves this side of Benson, flawless technique, and impeccable note selection. When you factor in his compositional skills, unearthly singing ability, and how ridiculously easy he makes it all seem, it's undeniable: This guy is a one in a million talent. **Emercy.**



**Marc Copely**  
*Harp & Plow*  
 You might have heard Copely's soulful guitar

work on Daniela Cotton's last record or Billy Squier's last tour. Here he's on his own, playing killer slide, gritty Stones-style rhythm, swampy Dobro, and more. Highlights include the dreamy textures on "Disarray," the lap work on "Shine On," and the trippy trem of the title track. **Valcope.**

### ART THOMPSON



**Johnny A.**  
*One November Night*  
 This CD/DVD set features Johnny

A at the top of his game, playing cool instrumental songs with killer tones and great feel in a small club setting. For a live and non-edited production, it's quite impressive. **Agalophone.**



**Jake Hertzog**  
*Patterns*  
 Echoes of Metheny, Stern, and Breau

(among others) surface in Hertzog's playing, but his dazzlingly adventurous approach puts him in a jazz league all his own. What a gifted guitarist, and at 22, he's just getting started! **Buckyball.**



**Ali Farka Toure & Toumani Diabate**  
*Ali and Toumani*  
 This mesmerizing album by

these Malian greats—Toure on guitar and vocals and Diabate on kora—features 11 songs that intertwine melodies and tonal textures to create a unique musical conversation. A beautiful last statement from Toure, who passed away in 2006. **World Circuit/Nonesuch.**

### BARRY CLEVELAND



**Makajodama**  
*Makajodama*  
 Swedish guitarist, bassist, keyboardist, and

pedal-steel player Mathias Danielson is flanked by violin, cello, drums, and guest brass, reed, and woodwind players on this magnificent disc of largely improvised instrumental avant-rock. Shades of Crimson, Floyd, Can, Art Bears, and Faust reflect within the facets of this unique and engaging gem. **The Laser's Edge.**



**Timucin Sahin Quartet**  
*BAFA*  
 Wielding his signature Erkan

Sizarlar 6- and fretless 7-string double-neck, Turkish guitarist Timucin Sahin's truly avant-garde jazz concept is brilliantly realized by New York young lions saxophonist John O'Gallagher, drummer Tyshawn Sorey, and contrabassist Thomas Morgan. Sahin's playing ripples, quavers, glissandos, squawks, and soars in a confluence of high art and earthiness. **Between the Lines.**



**The Julien Kasper Band**  
*Trance Groove*  
 Exquisite tones, masterful execution, and innate soulfulness drive this

jazzy, funky, bluesy, Sco-and-Beck-meet-Hendrix-for-drinks-at-the-Harvard-Psychedelic-Club instrumental joyride. **Toulcat.**

### MICHAEL MOLENDA



**Faith In Phantoms**  
*Faith In Phantoms*  
 Here's a talented young band that can't quite decide

whether it wants to be a slick, Rembrandts-style pop band, or an edgy rock group armed with melodic hooks. Still, guitarist Alex Lasner is someone to watch, and when he's not being blandly "pop clever," he really burns. **FIIP.**



**Bruce Kulick**  
*BK3*  
 Kulick is a devastatingly ballsy, inventive, and

melodic guitarist, and BK3's blend of '70s and '80s rock styles gives him plenty of room to blow your mind. There's some truly astounding playing here, I just wish the songwriting and vocals (excepting those by the late Doug Fieger and John Corabi) were as thrilling as the guitar parts. **Twenty4/Rocket Science.**



**Disco Biscuits**  
*Planet Anthem*  
 This alternately vibey and driving electronica

release is dorky, cheesy, kitschy, and kinda dumb, but it's also strangely seductive and tons of fun. If I were driving through Hades in a convertible Mustang, I'd definitely be blasting this CD to keep the devils shakin' and groovin'. **Diamond Riggs.**

