

SONGS TO:

WAKE YOU UP WITH A SMILE



THE CARDIGANS
Super Extra Gravity (Polydor)
A decade after establishing themselves as indie-pop's most seductive band, The Cardigans have lost none of

their charm. Thanks to bittersweet melodies and Nina Persson's dismissive, look-don't-touch vocals, their sixth album is a sly return to form, quietly delivering anthem after tenderly twisted anthem.

PLAY LOUD ON THE CAR STEREO



PAUL WELLER
As Is Now (v2)
If last year's excellent covers album hinted that the Modfather might be ready to return to the fray, *As Is Now*

is the confirmation. From the tumbling guitars of 'Blink' to the Style Council-y shimmy of 'Bring Back The Funk' and 'Come On Lets Go's Jam-like stomp, it's vintage Weller through and through.

LOUNGE BY THE POOL TO



JAMIE CULLUM
Catching Tales (Universal)
Less piano bashing, more shimmering soul, diminutive jazz sensation Cullum has done well not to simply rehash

his 2.5 million selling *Twentysomething*. Instead he's pushed forward, written more, hired hip hop producers, and continued to carve his own niche. The result is laid-back, sun-drenched and (whisper it) quite brilliant.

INSPIRE YOUR NEXT TRIP



SIGUR RÓS
Takk (EMI)
Iceland's Radiohead are no strangers to comparisons with desolate glaciers, and their fourth album is a staggering,

synth-and-string-laden epic of strange and alien beauty. While most bands are influenced by their surroundings, few conjure them quite so vividly, nor with such guitar-crashing majesty.

DRIFT OFF WITH



MOZEZ
So Still (Apoc)
Like the two Zero 7 albums which introduced his folk-soul vocals to the chill-out crowd, Mozez's solo debut is awash

with lush lullabies and aquatic atmospheres. A mix of computer-aided ambience and 1970s orchestration, it delivers a rich, sensual and gravity-defying backdrop for some spellbinding melodies.



EX-HAIRDRESSER SHARLEEN SPITERI IS STILL TRYING OUT NEW STYLES. INTERVIEW: TIM EDWARDS

Texas are about to take the stage at the Skanderborg Festival in Denmark, and lead singer Sharleen Spiteri's excitement is obvious. "Playing is the easiest part of the job," she confides over the phone. Having just completed the hardest part of the job, recording a new album, she has every reason to be chirpy.

"It's a really good record," she says of *Red Book*, the Scottish guitar-pop band's seventh album. "It's been described as *White On Blonde*-plus, which I think is referring to the fact that there's a lot of variety." And her own thoughts? "It's difficult to explain what a Texas record is. It's like trying to sum up your own personality on one of those dating agencies."

Now aged 38, Spiteri was a 22-year-old hairdresser in Glasgow when the band's first top 10 single, 'I Don't Want A Lover,' was released in 1989. Sharing songwriting duties with the band's other creative force, Johnny McElhone, they have since sold 20 million records. Which perhaps explains why, despite the band's rock'n'roll sound, critics have always filed them under 'pop.' "Maybe you just come to terms with it," says Spiteri. "You reassess what being a pop band means. Pop means popular music: the Beatles were a pop band. We want to sell as many records to as many people as we can. That's our pat on the

back; that's the fans saying we're relevant."

As if to demonstrate how little they care about genres, Texas brought in Sugababes producer Brian Higgins to help with four radio-friendly tracks on the album. They include 'Can't Resist' – a Kylie-esque number that has Spiteri sighing over a pumping electronic bassline – and the 80s synth-pop of 'Get Down Tonight'.

Other highlights on *Red Book* include the St. Etienne-flavoured 'What About Us,' which is ridden with urban angst, and 'Sleep' – an artistic coup in the form of a duet with the reclusive Paul Buchanan of critically-acclaimed fellow Scots band, The Blue Nile.

I try one more time to pin down her own thoughts on the new record, but Spiteri is having none of it. "Some musicians back themselves into a corner," she insists. "They talk a load of s**t about the record, instead of saying, 'why don't you have a listen to it and then let me know what you think?' I'm so bored of reading about records rather than listening to them."



Red Book is out on 31 October on Mercury Records. For more information, visit www.texas.uk.com