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## EXCLUSIVE

# LEE POMEROY TAKE THAT

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THERE'S NO OTHER WORD  
FOR IT"

## ON THE RECORD

# PLAN B'S THE DEFAMATION OF STRICKLAND BANKS

## ELRICK

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AND EVO  
PLATINUM 5

## REVIEWED

## PEAVEY

GRIND BXP

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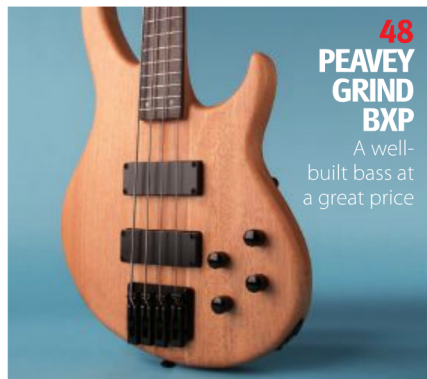


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## Abstract Logix Live The New Universe Music Festival 2010 Abstract Logix

BGM RATING **★★★★☆**



The **F-word** – ‘fusion’ – has been something of a dirty word since the DX7 keyboard-laden, mullet haircuts and muscle-vested days of the 1980s, as what was once a free-wheeling amped-up alternative to acoustic jazz became sullied with a sterile kind of marketing man's musical dream. Today this is more representative of the bafflingly popular phenomenon of ‘smooth jazz’, while things on the earthy authentic side of the music couldn't be healthier – large amounts of evidence of which can be found on the release schedules of the Abstract Logix label, so much so that last November they held their first ‘New Universe Music Festival’, with a glittering array of current fusion heroes to showcase just how vibrant the scene has become. Recording and filming the entire two-day festival has resulted in this double-disc album and will be followed by a mouth-watering double DVD later in the year. What's so encouraging about all of this is not just the music's popularity but its stylistic openness, which here finds the pyrotechnical guitar work of Alex Machacek soon followed by Indian drum monster Ranjit Barot's supercharged Indo-jazz electro funk with violinist Bala Bhaskar recalling the sound of L Shankar in his Shakti heyday. Guitar guru Wayne Krantz steps up twice here – first with Matthew Garrison/Scott Kinsey's explosive global-groove heavy Human Element quartet, then again with his acclaimed power trio with bass god Anthony Jackson and drummer Cliff Almond on disc two. Return to Forever drum icon Lenny White kicks out some mighty jams of his own with help from the incredible blues-soaked guitar work of Widespread Panic/Allman Brothers man Jimmy Herring, but inevitably it's jazz-rock's prodigal son John McLaughlin, here in a stellar closing onslaught with his 4th Dimension Band and tabla master Zakir Hussain, who steals the show.

## Mike Prigodich A Stitch In Time Mexican Mocha Music

BGM RATING **★★★★☆**



**To be ambitious** is admirable, but to be ambitious with life-threatening obstacles in your way is to go above and beyond everyday limitations – such is the case for gifted Portland-based pianist/composer Mike Prigodich who, in 2008, discovered he had cancer. Yet this was to be the catalyst for him to reignite his passion for jazz, one that had taken a back seat to his day job as a software engineer, and the results are extremely good indeed. This kind of a backstory in no way detracts from the fact that his debut as a leader is an impressive one, featuring finely poised Chick Corea-esque compositions pristinely arranged and performed with energy and elegance by a top-notch group of musicians. Thus *A Stitch In Time* stretches and burns like the work of a veteran leader and band, which notably features rising-star bass guitarist Damian Erskine on immaculate form throughout, be it locking down any number of varying grooves, nimble unison lines or popping through the mix with his signature rhythmically pungent solo style. Yet Prigodich has pulled together a fine cast here, including the biting sax work of John Nastos and fine guitarist Brandon Woody, all adding spirited performances. Perhaps most memorable are the compositions often featuring multiple time signatures and a winning way with melody, like the brilliant classical-folk-tinged ‘Anneka's Dance (Fantasy And Allusion)’ with its snaking flute top line and dervish-like twists and turns. *A Stitch In Time* is proof positive that it's always best to trust and follow your instincts, especially when you're as talented as someone like Mike Prigodich.

## John Escreet The Age We Live In Mythology Records

BGM RATING **★★★★☆**



**You could be forgiven** for not having heard of British-born pianist John Escreet, so deeply is he ensconced in his adoptive home of New York, yet he's become a lynchpin among the city's most creative players. Indeed he brought some of these with him when he headlined Ronnie Scott's last year, joined as he was by Blue Note-signed trumpet sensation Ambrose Akinmusire and hugely influential, hard-soloing alto saxophonist David Binney; but this is all with good reason, as Escreet himself is a ferociously talented player and increasingly prodigious composer. It's this latter trait that made his previous album, *Don't Fight The Inevitable*, so engaging – the title a direct attack on backwards-facing attitudes to the direction in which jazz, and music generally, are moving that can prevail today. While that album showed great promise, *The Age We Live In* provides the knockout blow Escreet has been promising to deliver for some time. Yet here the veritable avalanche of compositional ideas are given a rocket-fuelled rock edge thanks to the presence of gnarly fusion guitar hero Wayne Krantz, while an attitudinal Binney on alto, the explosive drums from Marcus Gilmore and the deep bass grooves of Tim Lefebvre all fuel the album's fire. And while there's a fusion-esque feel to sections of the record, Escreet's widescreen imagination creates a brave new sound world where coruscating solos edge up against film noir themes, and bold brass figures, jagged funk, rock and jazz all mingle amid writhing chordal textures. Yet for all its multilayered conceptual brilliance, *The Age We Live In* has a natural flow, an unbridled energy and virtuosic abandon that result in a thrillingly contemporary musical vision. A brilliant album, this is high-energy, heady stuff.

## Mister Barrington Mister Barrington [www.misterbarrington.com](http://www.misterbarrington.com)

BGM RATING **★★★★☆**



**Take three session/solo artist maestros**, add a dollop of surreal soul, messed-up funk and no shortage of greasy grooves and silly samples and what do you get? Mister Barrington is what – a refreshingly odd yet accessible trio comprising UK keyboardist/singer Oli Rockberger, US bassist Owen Biddle and drummer/producer Zach Danziger. Formed through various mutual associations with Rockberger/Danziger meeting via their stint with electronica artist Mocean Worker, aka Adam Dom, the latter a mutual friend of bassist Biddle who's best known for his seriously funky playing with acclaimed rap band The Roots, this quirky three-piece are the perfect antidote to either noodly fusion or lifeless, processed R&B. With all three boasting production experience, and with collective session credits including work with Duffy, John Legend, Sting, Common, Mos Def, Elvis Costello, Booker T, Randy Brecker and Wayne Krantz, this album is bursting with musical and sonic creativity. The eponymous character Mister Barrington, a mythical straight-laced English gent, serves as a unifying concept for the album's playful direction, the resulting technicoloured tunes intended to represent his much more colourful inner self, with songs like ‘Place In My Mind’ and the cool ‘Mister Barrington's Daydream’ providing aptly trippy soundscapes. With myriad melodic hooks, delivered via Rockberger's vocodered voice, Biddle's undulating basslines and Danziger's impressively creative beats, this set effortlessly dodges between J Dilla-style hip hop and a twisted 21st-century take on Stevie Wonder. If it sometimes stumbles under the weight of its own ambition, it's more than saved by the irreverent energy and endearing sense of fun throughout. Overall, a spiffing good listen.