

Jessie Nelson



Meet the first babe signed to Righteous Babe Records since Ani DiFranco.

Courtesy Righteous Babe Records

Mike Meyer



Didn't you hear? Goggles are the next big thing.

Frank W. Ockenfels III

MUSIC CHARTS

Week ending February 7

BILLBOARD HOT 100: TOP 20

1. Irreplaceable, Beyonce
2. Say It Right, Nelly Furtado
3. This Ain't A Scene, It's An Arms Race, Fall Out Boy
4. It's Not Over, Daughtry
5. The Sweet Escape, Gwen Stefani (feat. Akon)
6. Runaway Love, Ludacris (feat. Mary J. Blige)
7. I Wanna Love You, Akon (feat. Snoop Dogg)
8. We Fly High, Jim Jones
9. You, Lloyd (feat. Lil' Wayne)
10. Walk It Out, Unk
11. What Goes Around ... Comes Around, Justin Timberlake
12. On The Hotline, Pretty Ricky
13. Make It Rain, Fat Joe (feat. Lil Wayne)
14. Here (In Your Arms), Hellogoodbye
15. Cupid's Chokehold, Gym Class Heroes (feat. Patrick Stump)
16. Fergalicious, Fergie
17. How To Save A Live, The Fray
18. Smack That, Akon (feat. Eminem)
19. Ice Box, Omarion
20. Welcome To The Black Parade, My Chemical Romance

BILLBOARD 200 TOP ALBUMS: TOP 20

1. Not Too Late, Norah Jones
2. Katharine McPhee, Katharine McPhee
3. Daughtry, Daughtry
4. A New Journey, Celtic Women
5. Late Night Special, Pretty Ricky
6. Konvicted, Akon
7. Soundtrack: Dreamgirls
8. Wincing The Night Away, The Shins
9. The Evolution Of Robin Thicke, Robin Thicke
10. 2007 Grammy Nominees, Various Artists
11. Oh, My Nola, Harry Connick Jr.
12. Jill Scott Collaborations, Jill Scott
13. Soundtrack: Jump In!
14. All The Right Reasons, Nickelback
15. The Confessions Tour, Madonna
16. FutureSex/LoveSounds, Justin Timberlake
17. Corinne Bailey Rae, Corinne Bailey Rae
18. Totally Country 6, Various Artists
19. Loose, Nelly Furtado
20. Alright, Still, Lily Allen

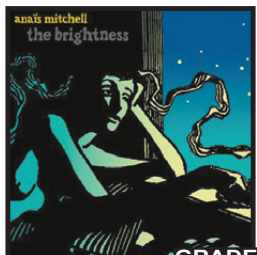
ALTERNATIVE/MODERN ROCK

1. Snow (Hey Oh), Red Hot Chili Peppers
2. Pain, Three Days Grace
3. Face Down, The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus
4. Anna-Molly, Incubus
5. From Yesterday, 30 Seconds To Mars
6. Starlight, Muse
7. Famous Last Words, My Chemical Romance
8. Dashboard, Modest Mouse
9. Welcome To The Black Parade, My Chemical Romance
10. This Ain't a Scene, It's An Arms Race, Fall Out Boy

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Anais Mitchell is the newest woman to join the Righteous Babe army, but she didn't want to be a songwriter upon first glance at the guitar. "I used to tell people I wanted to be a journalist. There is a lonely egotism and self-composure to journalists. Not unlike artists, they're always traveling, always writing, loving their loneliness, feeling somehow that they have their finger on the pulse — worshipping the truth and trying to render it legible," Mitchell explained. Her debut disc is filled with stories that almost scratch the surface of the heart and human condition, but don't go quite deep enough. With tales alternately spun on guitars and piano, with horns and percussion

lightly interspersed, the 11 tracks give a good insight into where Mitchell is coming from. But because she almost writes folk songs reminiscent of the Woody Guthrie era, she sounds a bit outdated in the process. While you can't nail her for overproduction, the disc is a bit anti-climactic, as opposed to the usual nails-to-the-board offerings Righteous Babe has previously presented.



GRADE
B

ANAIS MITCHELL

The Brightness (Righteous Babe Records)

Sounds Like ...



Rachael Sage *The Blistering Sun* (MPress)

Veteran singer songwriter has existed on a lower tier of popularity than contemporaries like Sara McLachlan and Alanis Morissette, despite the fact that she often has more to say, and says it better.



Suzanne Vega *Solitude Standing* (A&M)

Vega, a highly respected singer-songwriter that opened mainstream music in the late '80s to a new breed of female artists, found a hit with this album's "Luka."

A FAIR TO REMEMBER

Dallas prog metal band Fair to Midland lives up to the hype

Despite being signed to a major label and receiving critical acclaim for the recent *Drawn and Quartered EP*, Fair to Midland lead singer Darroh Sudderth shows no signs of rock star egotism. Speaking in a distinctive Texas drawl, Sudderth frequently ends sentences with "sir" and apologizes for being a "bland" interviewee.

"I'm still getting used to this," he said near the end of a recent phone conversation with *College Times* about his band, their ongoing tour with Dir En Grey and their upcoming full-length debut on System of a Down frontman Serj Tankian's Serjical Strike label.

Sudderth's humble demeanor is likely due to both his Texas upbringing and his band's nine-year road to the brink of mainstream success.

Fair to Midland formed in 1998 in Dallas and self-released an EP in 2001 followed by a full-length album in 2004.

"We won't claim that one," Sudderth laughed when asked about the early EP. "It's a terrible album. It is what it is. It's a bunch of kids trying to be in a rock band."

Still, Fair to Midland sold approximately 1,500 copies of the EP and more than twice that many copies of 2004's *inter.funda.stifle*, which caught the ear of Tankian and led to the group's signing.

Sudderth said the Dallas music scene, where the band honed its sound, is not in the best of shape.

"It's kind of sad right now," he said. "There's really a lot of good bands down there that just aren't getting any attention. The scene is dying. It's not necessarily the music as much as it is the support for the music. A lot of clubs have

been closing recently. It's pretty sad."

The Dallas scene could be given a jolt of life in June, when Fair to Midland release *Fables From a Mayfly: What I Tell You Three Times is True*, their full-length debut on Serjical Strike. Despite comparisons to prog metal storytellers The Mars Volta and Coheed & Cambria and the album's epic-sounding title, Sudderth said the album is not a concept album.

"Obviously, I'm going to go to the recurring themes, just because any lyricist is going to do that, but I wouldn't call it a concept album at all," he said. "It's just you're ... I wouldn't say 'basic,' but it's just a rock album. A kind of experimental, but not too far-fetched, album."

"It's out there, but I hope to god it's not too far out there for people to be able to latch onto."

Sudderth is acutely aware that the band's future in the often fickle music industry is directly tied to the album's ultimate success or failure.

"It's definitely a make or break kind of industry," Sudderth said. "Depending on how well this album does, dictates whether or not we get to make a second album. And if we do get to make a second album, still, how this one does and how it's received by the general public dictates how much interest will be paid by the general public to subsequent albums."

"It's a very scary place to be, and I already have anxiety as it is."

Dir En Grey w/Fair to Midland, Bleed the Dream, Marquee Theatre, 730 N. Mill Avenue, Tempe, 480.829.0607, Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m., \$30