AUDIO BRIEFS

Heathen by David Bowie
Throughout his 35-year
recording career, David Bowie
has never stagnated, consistently absorbing new ideas. He conly absorbing new ideas. He con-tinues that tradition with Heathen, his latest release.

tinues that tradition with Hacitien, his latest release.

On Sunday, the opening song of the disc, the 55-year-old's the-atrical baritone is as powerful as eyer. Subtle electronics and strange, almost mournful chords shwly build to a dramatic drumbeat in the final minute of the song. It's exhilarating, but very serious sounding, as are most of the songs on Heathen.

Bowie creates wonderful and sophisticated sound textures with his string arrangements, which are dark and beautiful. The songwriting is profoundly modern on the sublime, elegant leve song I Would Be Your Slave, reminding listeners that Bowie is a poet. The lyrics are simple, yet, evecative.

Bowie remains a master at this combination: hipness and artistic sensibility.

artistic sensibility.
—Jim Collins, AP Writer

The Osbourne Family Album

Fins of the MTV reality series
The Osbournes — who just can't
seem to get enough of heavy metal madman Ozzy Osbourne and his dysfunctional family — will love *The Osbourne Family Album*. This eclectic collection features Ozzy covers and

family,

The disc opens with a Las Vegas-atyle cover of Ozzy's anthem Crazy Train by Pat Boone, the family's former next-door neighbor. But the strangest offering is daughter Kelly's method neighbor. But the strangest offering is daughter Kelly's method of the strangest offering is daughter Kelly's method by Preach, which surely exists because daddy is rich and powerful enough to insist that it be so. System of a Down offers a nice hyperspeed cover of Black Sabbath's Snowblind, and Ozzy's wife, Sharon, picked Eric Clapton's Wonderful Tonight because it reminded her of the couple's days when they were dating. Wenving all this together are snippets of the kind of virtually incoherent, incomprehensible bubble the Osbournes spewed ach week on their show, including the Godfather of Heavy Metal urging kids not to drink or do drugs.

Metal urging kids not to drink or do drugs.

While entertaining at times, the disc wanders aimlessly and lacks focus. An Internet chat room would be a better forum for members of the Osbourne clan to list this characteristics. st their favorite songs and why

they like them.

— Wayne Parry, AP Writer

Bramble Rose by Tift Merritt
Expectations were high for Tift
Merritt's debut album, mostly
based on some measnerizing live
performances in front of a whole
bunch of music business types.
So, let's crawl out on a limb here:
There ian't going to be a better
debut album this year. Not just
in the rather indefinable Ameri-

cana, alt-country, whatever-yawanna-call-it genre — but in any
genre. Bramble Rose is an
ssured release by a star in the
making, recorded the old-fashioned way — live in the studio.

The single, Virginia, No One
Can Warn You, is an irresistibly
catchy confection that would be
playing on all car radios this
summer in a more perfect world.
Morritt's phrasing at times
sounds a little like Lucinda
Williams, her breathy ache,
especially on Are You Still in
Love With Me? recalls Emmylou
Harris, but mostly she sounds
just like Tilt Merritt, which is a
mighty dam good thing.

— Eric Fidler, AP Writer

Instant Vintage by Raphael

Instant Vintage by Raphael Sandiq a Although Raphael Sandiq is making his album debut with Instant Vintage, he's hardly a novice. The former lead singer of the '30s R&B group Tonyl Tonil Tonel was more recently a member of the short-lived tric Lucy Pearl, and is also a popular producer.

Pearl, and is also a popular producer.
Sandiq borrows from all those experiences to create Instant Vintage, a fabulous 19-track album of goopel, blues and funk.
During his days with Tony!
Toni! Tone!, violins, organic guitars, heavy drums and a deep bass were at the center of the croup's musical arrangements. group's musical arrangements. He continues that tradition on

tunes such as Doing What I Can, a hip-hop-flavored cut, and Body Parts — very-Curtis Mayfield orchestra soul. The experimental funk he dabbled in with Lucy Pearl is evident on the tracks You're the One I Like, featuring prickly, rockabilly guitars, and Faithful, a funky dance gem dedicated to two friends who inspired Sandiq to be more faithful to his mate. He also showcase blues and gospel on Charlie Roy and Tick Tock.

— Lynda Lane, AP Writer The Willies hand Sanda Can.

The Willies by Bill Frisell For the past 20 years, guitarist Bill Frisell has seamlessly woven various American musical tradi-tions into a unified and unique

voice.
His new CD, The Willies, is a His new CD, The Willies, is a delightful meditation on bluegrass and country music themes. Frisell's musical palette is colorful and rich, yet serency simple. Tape loops and other electronics subtly augment his superb technique.

subtly augment his superb technique.

The Willies opens with the traditional Sittin on Top of the World. For those familiar with the tune, it will be hard not to fill in the lyries. But Frisell's playing is narrative in itself, captivating and utterly entertaining.

taining.

He is joined on the disc by guitarist-banjo player Danny
Barnes and bassist Keith Lowe.
Together they create an othereal

soundscape that sparkles.

— Jim Collins, AP Writer

Directions in Music: Live at Massey Hall by Herbie Hancock, Michael Brecker, Roy Hargrove Pianist Herbie Hancock, tenors axophonist Michael Brecker and trumpeter Roy Hargrove honored two of their jazz ancestors, Miles Davis and John Coltrane, in an October 2001 concert in Toronto.

The concert has now been

content in Toronto.

The concert has now been released as Directions in Music:
Line at Massey Hall, a remarkable new disc.

Their intention in performing this celebratory concert was not to merely mimic the work of Davis and Coltrane, but as Hancock put it. "... take the very pieces they were associated with and put our own spin on it."

Directions in Music incorporates Davis and Coltrane compositions with original works by

sitions with original works by Hancock, Brecker and Hargrove. The new compositions are writ-ten and performed with an eye vard the styles of the two mas ters. Brecker's D Trane captures the aggressive attack and unusu-al choral ideas characteristic of Coltrane's later period. But it's the group's interpretation of the classic Coltrane ballad Naima, featuring a blistering solo by
Brecker, that is the highlight of
the disc.

— Jim Collins, AP Writer.

Tales of Wonder by Nneena Freelon

Jazz singer Nnenna Freelon pays tribute to Stevie Wonder, one of her greatest influences, on the new CD Tales of Wonder's songs a fresh approach, while retaining their integrity. Hersuccess lies in the arrangements, where she plays the song in a different yor urses a different jazz style. Add to that her creamy, full-bodied vocals, and the songs sound like you're hearing them for the first time. Freelon makes this vocal trib-Jazz singer Nnenna Freelon

ing them for the first time.

Freelon makes this vocal tribute a Wonder-ful experience. She
gives his contemporary standard
Lately a bossa nova arrangement
with a midtempo pace. She also
uses that arrangement for Send'
One Your Love, though the pase. One Your Love, though the pace is much slower with harmonica accents, just like Wonder did originally

Lynda Lane, AP Writer

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