

## Album reviews

### Bruce Springsteen

#### Wrecking Ball

★★★★★

Somehow, 37 years after Bruce Springsteen was declared 'the future of rock'n'roll' – and 28 years since he fell into laughable parody by cavorting with Courtney Cox in the 'Dancing in the Dark' video – the 62-year-old is cool again. The Boss's rehabilitation from plodding dad-rocker has been glacial: 1991's career low *Human Touch* was eventually excused by 2002's post-9/11 tub-thumper *The Rising*. But that was nothing compared with the frankly embarrassing embrace afforded his latest effort.

Billed as 'Bruce vs Wall Street', *Wrecking Ball* has prompted normally sober critics to unleash frenzied, schoolboy-like testimonials to the (multimillionaire) blue-collar hero aiming his Fender Telecaster at 'all them fat cats, [who] just think it's funny'. Finally arriving in UAE stores five months after it topped charts in at least 15 countries, you'd be forgiven for feeling left out.

The hype's not entirely misplaced. Bruce sure sounds angry, and his bombastic, snare drum-destroying, fist-waving anthems are an ideal vehicle to channel this angst of the

masses. But alongside the trademark stomp there are dashes of Irish tin whistle, Italian mandolin, gospel choir, a rap, and even a Mariachi band. The Boss has extended his sonic palate far and wide to reflect the American downtrodden.

The finished product can be a bit overwhelming – charging Bruce Springsteen with a lack of subtlety is more than missing the point – but, true to its name, *Wrecking Ball* does most damage when it offers swinging, tectonic-shaking blows. It may not be the masterful critique some have rhapsodised, but it's hard to think of a more fitting target for the growing pains of an elder statesman of rock.

Rob Garratt



### Passion Pit

#### Gossamer

★★★★★

When Passion Pit emerged in 2008 with their *Chunk of Change* EP, they sounded box fresh. And that box was full of approximately 234 ideas, samples, instruments and hooks, all herded together and made sense of by chief songwriter Michael Angelakos.

This kaleidoscopic formula proved a winning combination on the Massachusetts band's 2009 album

*Manners*, but recently Angelakos's sonic hoarding had gone into overdrive, heaping more than 150 instrumental layers on a single track. *Gossamer* is, consequently, a bewildering earful. 'I'll Be Alright' is a digi-pop explosion of helium-squeaky samples and skittering beats, while 'On My Way' and 'Hideaway' are shrill Flaming Lips facsimiles. Throughout, Angelakos sugar-coats lyrics of strife and self-loathing with skippy sunshine melodies, adding yet another – this time rather more welcome – layer. Kim Taylor Bennett



## This week's bar review

### Barzar

Far from being bizarre, Barzar is a pleasant evening hangout, though the food could do with improvement

It's a shame that Barzar fails to live up to its clever name. It doesn't evoke any of the ethnic exoticism you might associate with the term 'bazaar'. And there's really nothing about the place that could be considered 'bizarre' – except how they can get away with serving such below-par food, but we'll get to that.

Despite being known for its chilled beanbag-laden terrace, we've found this Madinat nightspot to be a reliable weekend night-time spot during the summer. It's thankfully free from that nasty affliction that sees some venues uncomfortably empty when the city slows down – yet it hasn't gone too far the other way. Stop by on a Thursday night and it's normally possible to find somewhere to perch, distinct from that unlikely specimen of Dubai venue that inexplicably transforms into a rowdy zoo over summer, crammed with hops-hungry gents fighting for elbow space.

While there's nothing excessively exciting or offensive about the decor, it's refreshing to find a venue that's going for neither chic lounge or traditional pub – instead Barzar opts



for bold, sweeping artistic statements, such as steels bars and exposed bricks. One favourite such statement is the huge chasm of a balcony in the centre of the upper floor. Grab a spot nearby and you have a perfect vantage point to people-watch the busier lower deck.

However, we feel obliged to inform you about the food. Barzar's limited and expensive range of bar munches, currently served after sundown, can be recommended only for necessary sustenance to those too lazy to leave their bar stool. Otherwise, though, this is a decent indoor spot to catch up with mates. Open daily 7pm-2am during summer. Madinat Jumeirah (04 366 6197).

## 20 drinks deals

### Happy hours

**Barrels** Selected drinks are half price all night, every night until the end of August. Daily 8pm-3am. Until August 31. Majestic Hotel Tower, Bur Dubai (04 501 2540).

**Der Keller** Selected drinks Dhs25. Daily 7.30pm-8.30pm. Ongoing. Jumeirah Beach Hotel (04 406 8999).

**Dhow and Anchor** Enjoy a wide range of drinks from Dhs25. Daily 7.30pm-8.30pm. Ongoing. Jumeirah Beach Hotel (04 406 8999).

**Dubai Marina Yacht Club (Aquara Lounge)** Buy one drink, get one free at this popular post-work spot. Daily sunset-8.30pm. Ongoing. Dubai Marina Yacht Club (04 362 7900).

**Horizon Lounge** Half-price deals on selected drinks. Daily 8pm-9pm. Ongoing. Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa (04 399 5000).

**ICON Bar & Lounge** Drinks from Dhs19. Daily 8pm-9pm; Fri sunset-1am. Ongoing. Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Media City (04 366 9111).

**Moods** Guests can enjoy half-price house beverages for an hour every evening. Daily 8pm-9pm. Ongoing. Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort, Dubai Marina (04 399 5533).

**Rosso** Selected drinks Dhs20 to Dhs25, with draft hops at Dhs28. Daily sunset-9pm. Ongoing. Amwaj Rotana, Dubai Marina (04 428 3088).

**The Music Room** Double shot in all regular beverages for Dhs20 all night. Daily 8pm-3am. Until August 31. Majestic Hotel Tower, Bur Dubai (04 359 8888).

**Waterfront** All house drinks for Dhs25. Daily 7.30pm-8.30pm. Ongoing. Jumeirah Beach Hotel (04 406 8999).

### Ladies' nights

**Après** Free bubbly for ladies for two hours. Sun 8pm-10pm. Ongoing. Mall of the Emirates, Barsha (04 341 2575).

**Blends** Complimentary drinks for ladies before midnight. Tue 8pm-midnight. Ongoing. The Address, Dubai Marina (04 436 7777).

**Blue Bar** Three glasses of bubbly for ladies. Mon 8pm-11pm. Ongoing. Novotel World Trade Centre Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road (04 332 0000).

**Carters** Free mixed drinks for ladies, and snacks served 9pm until 10pm. Tue 8pm-11pm. Wafi (04 324 4100).

**Horizon Lounge** Three free glasses of bubbly or three mixed drinks for ladies. Tue 8pm-midnight. Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa (04 399 5000).

**Rosso** Ladies can enjoy two glasses of grape or two short drinks on week nights from 9pm. Sat-Wed 9pm-midnight. Ongoing. Amwaj Rotana, Jumeirah Beach Residence (04 428 3088).

**Summer Place** Three free glasses of bubbly or three mixed drinks for ladies. 8pm-midnight. Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa (04 399 5000).

**The Gramercy** Four mixed drinks for ladies, plus a bottle of fizz on your fourth visit, and Dhs40 food dishes. Tue 7pm-11pm. Ongoing. DIFC (04 437 7511).

**The Music Room** There are unlimited free drinks for ladies for two hours on Tuesdays, while on Thursdays every group of four ladies gets a free fishbowl of beverage for the night. Tue, Thu 8pm-10pm. Majestic Hotel Tower, Bur Dubai (04 355 8888).

**Z:ONE** Four free drinks for ladies on Tuesdays. Tue 7pm-10pm. Ongoing. Media One Hotel, Dubai Media City (04 427 1000).