

Album reviews

Slow Moving Millie

Renditions

★★★★★

Slow Moving Millie is the (awful) alias of 29-year-old singer and pianist Amelia Warner, who has thus far earned her keep soundtracking TV commercials and UK dramas *Waking the Dead*, *Casualty* and *Kavanagh QC*. It's not exactly a highly credible CV, but this would be irrelevant if her album were to offer anything other than crushingly anodyne pop.

She calls her covers 'renditions', presumably in the belief that this bestows upon them an arty and interpretive cool. However, what SMM thinks is an exposure of the sombre heart of songs by '80s acts such as Black, Thompson Twins and Tears For Fears is actually a bald rayograph. Rather than giving 'Hold Me Now' and 'The Power of Love' a transfusion of fresh blood, SMM's soulless voice drains them of all life.

Vocal double-tracking and orchestration skew Fiction Factory's one-hit-wonder 'Feels Like Heaven'

quite nicely. And of the two original songs here, 'Hart with a Crown and Chain' makes a fair stab at pagan romanticism. But overall, SMM runs the whole range of emotional tones from beige to putty. She's no Cat Power or Susanna Wallumrød and her 'renditions' are no more anguished than a puppy with a sore paw. Those ad execs sure found their blank canvas. *Sharon O'Connell*



Various Artists

Lord of the Mics 3

★★★★★

Chances are that you're not one of the 1.3 million YouTube viewers of a youthful Wiley and Kano illuminating a dingy basement with a blinding rhyme battle. In which case, Google beckons. This CD series, which accompanies a series of DVDs of live MC battles, has always been revered as a state-of-grime milestone, and in the five years since the last instalment, grime and pop have intermingled their fortunes to the point where questions have been raised about the health of the underground side of the genre.

So what's this going to tell us? Erm, not a lot, frankly. The cast list of emerging MCs somehow omits the scene's major talents. No Maxsta. No Scru Fizzer. No Griminal. But given that the CD is also bulked out by a number of previously released tracks – JME's 'It's Not a Long Ting'; Jammin's 'OMG' – it's nonetheless a decent grime compilation. Curiously, it's not the MCs that are the real stars here, but the crème de la crème roster of stellar grime beatmakers, including atmospheric, slow-jam master SX, the *Sonic 2*-ish synth jams of Swindle and the symphonico-16-bit workouts of Preditah. *Alexi Duggins*



This week's new bar review

Mahiki



In London, its the infamous haunt of royalty, with heirs to the throne Wills and Harry regularly spotted enjoying a late-night relaxant. In Dubai, it's the latest high-end UK nightspot to transplant its brand here in a bid to recreate the same exclusivity among the Middle East's most moneyed; other recent arrivals include Cirque du Soir, Embassy and Movida.

Mahiki's unique selling point is a Polynesian theme and notorious mixed drinks, the latter a theatrical affair of flaming glasses and juggled bottles. But for all the flash, we've heard murmurs from many that they'd rather a simpler, speedier service to combat queues (as well as prices demanding less than a king's ransom).

The bar's geographical theme is manifested in the most beguiling way: a totem-style wooden figure holds a vigil over the (decent) dancefloor and fake straw lines the ceiling. On one wall a window-shaped hole has actually been painted with the view of a tropical sunset. It's not immediately clear if the décor is misjudged, or an impressive stab at irony. The music policy, however, gives it away – lurching from '80s soft rock to trance in a matter of moments, Mahiki simply can't be taking itself too seriously. We've overheard the phrase 'a rich man's Rock Bottom', and it seems to be sticking. **Open daily 6pm-3am, reservations recommended. Jumeirah Beach Hotel (05 516 0181).**

Two more to try

Horizon Lounge

A fantastic vista, sleek décor and convenient location combine to make this one of the buzzier nightspots at the Marina end of town. Horizon offers great sea views, before the dancefloor livens up later on (check out the glammed-up ladies night on a Tuesday). The circular bar feels like it's been lifted straight from 360°, but why not learn from the best? **Open daily 12.30pm-2am. The Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa, Dubai Marina (04 399 5000).**



Dubliners



A substantially smaller affair than The Irish Village or McGettigan's, there's a quaint homeliness to Dubliners that (we like to think) is a tiny bit more authentic than its fellow Irish competitors. On match days it's transformed with a thrilling, thronging mass of footie fanatics, the home of Dublin's expat Celtic supporters. **Open daily noon-2.45am. Le Méridien Dubai, Garhoud (04 282 4040).**