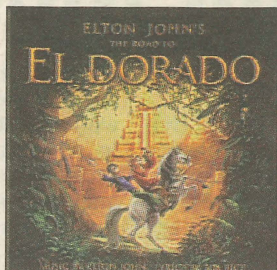


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Road stival
★★

based song-grass s and Stern not but if early onto ey or some- l Rail ere is nadi- ting ight oned the cold East- ough- nger each s an tion nou- and ent dio, e.

ELTON JOHN: The Road to El Dorado (Dream-Works) ★

A 10-year-old listener, upon hearing this collection of songs from the new animated kids movie, suggested we give the album to her grandmother. Not a good sign for Sir Elton. These undistinguished, over-produced pop ballads are hobbled by clunky lyrics from Tim Rice. (Sample: "Just because we are Hispanic/Doesn't mean we're oceanic./Quite frankly we've had water up to here.") There's no hint of adventure or myth in the lyrics or John's reading of them. Whatever visual charms the movie holds, the kids aren't going to be humming the tunes as they exit the theatres. But John's one-size-fits-all piano noodlings could have a second life in ads for Cadillac's two-door boulevard cruiser.

— Glen Schaefer

Quick spins

Country

CAROLYN MARK: Party Girl (Mint Records) ★★★

This is Victoria's Carolyn Mark and The Room-Mates' (which they actually are) aural diary of a recent cross-Canada recording odyssey that includes sit-ins such as Ray Condo, Greg Keelor and Oh Susanna. It's smart, shabby, proud, funny, bleary-eyed and wonderful. Mark opens for Neko Case this Friday at Richard's on Richards.

— J.P.M.

ERNEST TUBB: The 20th Century Millennium Collection Best of Ernest Tubb (MCA) ★★★

There was a time the Texas Troubadour, Ernest Tubb, was the hippest thing in American country music and this record tells you why. It includes his biggest hit, Walking the Floor Over You (featuring the first electric guitar in country) Tubb proves he was the original honky-tonk man.

— J.P.M.

Pop

TREMBLING BLUE STARS: Broken in Whispers (Sub Pop) ★★½

As a member of The Field Mice and Northern Picture Library, Bob Wratten penned plenty of melancholic music and with his new band nothing has changed. This disc is loaded with lush melodies and sad lyrics sung in a detached, spoken style.

— S.D.

Jazz

NOW Orchestra: Wow Wow (Spool) ★★★½

Under the musical direction of Coat Cooke and Ron Samworth, who contribute strong compositions to Wow Wow, Vancouver's New Orchestra Workshop plays noisy new music with verve. Trombonist George Lewis, reedsman Vinny Golia and clarinetist/tenor saxophonist Paul Cram all appear on the CD. For info on this Saturday's NOW fundraiser, call 254-5016.

— S.D.

