New releases from XTC, Robyn Hitchcock aim to please

By DEBBY LEVINSON

ORANGES & LEMONS

XTC

Geffen Records

Early recordings like XTC’s ORANGES & LEMONS have been hailed for their punk fervor and conscientious copy of the Beatles. Their latest release is the double album ORANGES & LEMONS — the best songs are all on the first two sides. XTC had already created the world’s most perfect double album in 1982’s English Settlement, and ORANGES & LEMONS seems stuffed with filler by comparison. Peel away a few extraneous songs, and this could become a highly enjoyable Beatles tribute album.

QUEEN ELVIS

Robyn Hitchcock ‘n’ the Egyptians

A & M Records

There is no way to adequately describe the warped sensibilities that pervade the average Robyn Hitchcock album. No one else seems to be able to write about death, flesh, and amphibians in Hitchcock’s consistently baffling style. Somehow he makes it all bearable, bouncy music to the most outrageous topics, as in “Ponta de Lanca Africano Atoll,” a song from his I Often Wear a Crown album.

Three more albums that may require some diligent rooting around to find but are definitely worth it are Reba’s Tropical (Fly/Sire Records) — various artists, trying to satisfy his itch for newer and more exotic rhythms, the head Talking Head flies to Brazil and returns with sambas and folk music galore. The collection is heavy on Caetano Veloso and Milton Nascimento (they perform six of the fourteen tracks), but when the music is this glorious, it doesn’t matter. It begins with the utterly infectious “Ponta de Lanca Africano Atoll.”

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Interviewing on Campus

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