

# Rolling Stone

## Our Critics' Top Albums of 2002

*From Beck to Wilco, we loved the unloved*



### POWDER

**"L.A.'s best unsigned band"**

### CHRIS RUBIN

1. **Peter Gabriel**, *Up* (Geffen): *Up* -- ten years in the making -- is a brilliant addition to Gabriel's oeuvre, as well as the basis for the most exciting concert tour of the year.

2. **Joseph Arthur**, *Redemption's Son* (Enjoy/Real World): A singer-songwriter who excels at both ends of the equation, Arthur dwells on the dark side, but writes such irresistible melodies that he draws you in anyway.

3. **Eminem**, *The Eminem Show* (Interscope): Johnny Rotten once screeched "Anger is an energy," and Eminem is living proof. He's pissed off -- seemingly about everything -- and channels it into music that's often menacing and frequently thrilling.

4. **Tunnels**, *Progressivity* (Buckyball): The dreaded "f" word: fusion. Bassist Percy Jones co-founded Brand X, and made major contributions to various Eno projects, but he's never sounded better than he does here.

5. **Dave Holland Big Band**, *What Goes Around* (ECM): The master bassist expands his horizons in a big band context. He penned and arranged all seven songs, which bristle with energy and creativity.

6. **Brad Mehldau**, *Largo* (Warner Bros.): A jazzier with a sensibility accessible by rockers, Mehldau covers Beatles ("Dear Prudence," "Mother Nature's Son") and Radiohead ("Paranoid Android") with the same intelligence you'll find in his original compositions.

7. **David Bowie**, *Heathen* (ISO/Columbia): How many times have we heard Bowie recorded a "comeback" album? This is the only one that's mattered in years.

8. **Tony Levin Band**, *Double Espresso* (Narada): Rock's best bassist (King Crimson, Peter Gabriel, etc.) steps out on his own, and you can hear the pure love of making eclectic music on this live two disc set.

9. **Beck**, *Sea Change* (Geffen): All it took was a little heartbreak to get Beck to drop the smug poses -- and write his best and most powerful CD yet.

10. **Powder**, *Sonic Machine* (Powder): Powder, L.A.'s best unsigned band, kicks up a sonic shitstorm on their self-produced, self-released debut, offering a clever update of Eighties rock, successfully crossbreeding Missing Persons and Led Zeppelin.

Reissue: **John La Porta**, *Theme and Variations* (Fantasy): Composer, arranger and reedman La Porta fuses his classical background with his bebop inclinations in these impressive recordings from the mid- to late Fifties.