

# NO DEPRESSION

September-October 2005

**COLE GUERRA**, *Scarves & Knives* (Cleave).

On his second release, Cole Guerra sounds like the third member of a pop triangle with Aimee Mann and Michael Penn. There's the art-form moodiness of the former, the solid if occasionally stealthy hookcraft of the latter, and the moonlit symphonic sweep of both. As for the writing, instead of depicting slices of life, Guerra's pen reveals slices of emotions; call it stream-of-subconsciousness. Even a song titled "Gina" turns out to me more psychological profile than character sketch, perhaps reflecting Guerra's clinical psychology background. J.D. Foster co-produced *Scarves & Knives* and plays bass, and there are contributions from Dave Schramm and drummer Steve Goulding, but it's clearly Guerra's show. He displays impressive confidence, even courage, whether engaging in flights of falsetto (or thereabouts) on "Left Coast Hopes" or letting the bottom drop out of the grabby "Hocus Pocus" for an oddly compelling moment of over-the-top vocalizing.

— RICK CORNELL

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