

'Toxic' covers: A taste of a poison paradise

Let me be the first to say that the closest I have ever come to owning a Britney Spears CD was taking Mariah Carey's "Daydream" album for a spin circa 1995. I was 13, impressionable and told by my mother that it would be inappropriate to purchase Green Day's "Dookie" instead. So there. Don't judge me.

In college, when my freshman counterparts donned Catholic-school-girls-gone-wild uniforms on Halloween, I opted to dress as an oversized box of M&M's. Sure, dancing was awkward, but I got to maintain my integrity and avoid jumping on the Britney bandwagon until several years later, when Nickel Creek covered her song "Toxic" at Bonnaroo and turned my world on end. I had been familiar with



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the tune, seen the video back when MTV still played those silly things. But hearing a bluegrass trio pluck the dance-pop ditty with cheap pickup lines for lyrics was like discovering peanut butter and Fluff really do mix. The odd pairing was both ingenious and delicious, and I wanted more. Thankfully, music freaks delivered.

Since its release in 2003, Spears' track has garnered more than just a Grammy — it has secured a following both



Special to the Guide

CAUTION, MAY BE HAZARDOUS: Musician Britney Spears in happier times, when she could drive herself around.

by questionable cover bands and respectable musicians, including Israel's version of an American Idol, a country trash-punk group and a Norwegian band that uses kitchen appliances for instruments.

So if you want to take a mo-

ment to look past the most recent headlines about the fallen star and remember the happier time when she was not a girl, not yet a woman sipping on Pepsi, check out the following "Toxic" covers. You can thank me later.

Toxicology reports: 12 bands who've covered Britney's 'Toxic'

- 1. Nickel Creek:** Where it all began.
- 2. Yael Naim:** The French-Israeli singer's single "New Soul" was selected by Apple for commercials promoting its MacBook Air laptop. Many compare her to Feist, and her piano-driven version of "Toxic" is haunting.
- 3. The BossHoss:** One of Germany's premier country-rock cover bands got its start in 2004 performing versions of Nelly's "Hot in Herre," OutKast's "Hey Ya!" and "Toxic." They wear Stetson hats, tank tops and large sunglasses and refer to themselves as the "Stallion Battalion."

LISTEN FOR YOURSELF

To sample these songs, visit www.islandpacket.com/entertainment

- 4. Monsters from Mars:** Three words: instrumental surf band.
- 5. Hurra Torpedo:** Hurra Torpedo is the world's leading kitchen appliance rock

group. Since 1993, they have played for full houses all over their native Norway with their eclectic mixture of covers and originals. "Toxic" can be found on their album "Kollossus of Makedonia," which also contains a self-proclaimed "heart-breaking version" of Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart."

- 6. Mark Ronson:** Ronson, who this week won the Producer of the Year Grammy for his work with Amy Winehouse and Lily Allen, last year released "Version," an album made up mostly of ... well, cover songs. His hip-hop take on "Toxic" is by far my favorite. What's not to love about a track that features the tragically departed ODB, Tiggers and Nick Catchdubs?
- 7. The Chapin Sisters:** A bare-bones acoustic cover earned these sisters na-

tional recognition when it was featured on PerezHilton.com and became one of Los Angeles radio station KCRW's most-requested songs of 2005.

- 8. Shawn Lee's Ping Pong Orchestra:** Soul meets funk meets psychedelic. You're welcome.
- 9. Hard-Fi:** This English indie-rock band fuses "Toxic" with the Clash's "Brand New Cadillac."
- 10. Metronomy:** Like something out of a "Weird Al" Yankovic polka medley, only not kidding.
- 11. Shiri Maimon:** Ever wondered what "Toxic" sounds like in Hebrew? Maimon rose to fame as the runner-up in the reality show "Kokhav Nolad" ("A Star is Born"), the Israeli version of "American Idol."
- 12. Local H:** This two-man alt-rock group recorded a studio version for their album "Alive '05."

The Buzz

'Jumper' kicks off weekend releases

The heavily advertised action flick "Jumper," starring Hayden Christensen and Rachel Bilson, opens today. Christensen stars as a guy who's able to teleport anywhere in the world. But it turns out he's not alone: His "gift" has been bestowed upon many others throughout the past few centuries, and he finds himself in a battle between his own kind and the government operatives out to control them. This "X-Men"-like movie looks entertaining, but critics aren't generally fans of Christensen, so don't expect reviews to be anything but mediocre.

Savannah goes Irish this weekend

Check out the **2008 Savannah Irish Festival**, which is open today through Sunday at the Savannah Civic Center. It runs from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. today and noon to 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The cost is \$11.50 per day or \$20 for a two-day ticket. For more information, visit www.savannahirish.org.



A double-shot of country love

Plan early to head down to the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena for **Rascal Flatts** and **Kellie Pickler** in concert at 8 p.m. Feb. 22. Tickets are \$49.75-\$65. Call 904-353-3309 or visit ticketmaster.com.