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MONTHLY

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THE 6THS



FAITH NO MORE

MUDHONEY

ARCHERS OF LOAF

MONSTER MAGNET

ZUMPANO • 43 REVIEWS



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World Radio History

"LOST IN CACOPHONY
BORN IN MONOTONY
CLOSE TO DEPRAVITY
SEARCHING
FOR HARMONY"



ONCE UPON A TIME

THE SELF TITLED DEBUT
ALBUM FEATURING THE
SONG "GOD"

TRAUMA
RECORDS



The
Atlantic
Group

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What do you think about MTV and its effect on making and/or breaking bands? Has the channel turned you on to your favorite artists or is it just another blight on the pop culture landscape? Tell us what you think, and why, by mail, fax (516-466-7159) or email (cmj@cmjmusic.com).

- As a regular Letters To The Editor feature, the CMJ editors pose questions to you, our esteemed readers—this is the “Q” part—as well as answering some of your questions directly.

Love Letters (Sort Of)

In the February issue, we asked what new music/alternative rock figure you thought most needs to be taken down a notch or two. Oddly enough, all the responses named Courtney Love. Here's what you said:

I think there are a lot of alternative rockers that could stand to be knocked down a notch or two, but none more so than Courtney Love. Seriously, how many magazines is this woman going to hit? *Rolling Stone* and *Spin* inside of three months. Christ, she even did *Entertainment Weekly*. And that interview with Kurt Loder was, in a word, disgusting.

Don't get me wrong. I love Hole and think *Live Through This* is super, but it's high time Ms. Love stops becoming the type of person she claims to hate.

By the way... you guys run a killer mag and the February CD is great. Even the Subway song.

Jason Sauls Perry
via e-mail

I usually don't bother to write letters to the editor, but since you have dangled such a delicious question in front of me, I felt the need to rant about one person in particular that drives me nuts: Courtney Love!

Who is this foul excuse for a semi-star and where did she come from? Was she anything before she married Kurt Cobain and forced herself into the spotlight? Does she deserve all the attention she has received since her husband decided to kill himself? I think NOT! In fact, I would be willing to bet that Hole and Courtney would not be enjoying anything close to the success they are now if that event hadn't occurred. The band is okay, but Courtney sure has spared no time since her husband's death in going out and grabbing as much publicity as possible for herself in her usual sleazy way. Now every time I turn on the radio I have to hear her talking about palling around with big alternative stars (she's a name dropper, that's for sure) and how much they adore her. I have a hard time believing that she commands so much respect from these people. And what about her kid? What is she going to say when she grows up and asks where Courtney was the day Dad killed himself?

My final thought to the media (and radio in particular): Quit giving this spoiled, mediocre singer so much attention and focus more on some alternative female singers (and bands) who deserve your attention because they are actually good and have earned the right to hear it from you.

Eden Carlson
Los Angeles, CA

Siouxsie Rapture

I recently discovered your wonderful CD & 'zine and found them enthralling. You guys have at least got a sense of humor, something other American music mags don't have over the British weeklies. Keep up the excellent work.

I do have one gripe, though. In your review of Siouxsie and the Banshees' new album *The Rapture*, you state that it took the Banshees five years to put out their first hits collection but 12 more to put out the second. What you forget is that "Twice Upon A Time" has 18 tracks and is 76 minutes long, while "Once Upon A Time" has 10 tracks and is only 33 minutes. In my book, this works out to be about even. Siouxsie herself has said that they didn't want to put out another one until they could fill up a CD.

What I would like to see from the Banshees is for them to gather up ALL of those wonderfully delicious B-sides for a compilation. Tracks like "Tattoo," "Cannibal Roses" and "Something Blue" should not be forever lost on crackly vinyl. Please do it for the die-hards if for no one else. It would also stop second-hand dealers from charging outrageous prices for deleted singles.

Craig Peacock
Tokyo, Japan

I Never Write To Magazines, But...

I never write to magazines, but Christopher of New York, NY's letter [February] cries out for a response. Lyrics don't matter? Bob Dylan should be writing books? Bob Dylan has no melodies? Wasn't it Bob Dylan who wrote "Knockin' On Heaven's Door," "I Shall Be Released," "This Wheel's On Fire" and on and on? Yes, the Beatles were responsible for "unforgettable melodies," but you seem to forget that when John Lennon wrote "Across The Universe," it was a conscious effort on his part to write a "Dylan lyric." While some of the Beatles early songs contained "cutesy" lyrics written on demand, Lennon also wrote some of the most brutal, painfully honest lyrics ever. And yet I would rather hear John singing "God is a concept by which we measure our pain" than read it in a book. Music should be a total experience... lyrics, melodies, instrumentation and feeling play an equal role in the musical experience.

Mark
Fairmount, IN

r e s p o n s e

“...nothing can touch us here,
nothing, not even time...”



Under the Wishing tree

A LIFE IN 12 SONGS
FROM THE AUSTIN SINGER/SONGWRITER
AND HIS NEW BAND

FEATURING

“EVERYONE WILL CRAWL”

“SUNDAY CLOTHES”

“NEIGHBORHOOD”

“DARK”

MCA

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Grant McLennan Cleans House

Explaining the large-spirited sprawl of his new double-album-length CD, Grant McLennan says, "I had 30 songs, and I wanted to, for the first time in my life, record everything and not have anything left over, and put myself in the position of having to start again. It was a clean-the-house kind of thing... a kind of personal revolution. And I think I'm the better for it." Down from those 30 to a still-generous 19 (the 2-CD import version has 25), *Horsebreaker Star* (Beggars Banquet) finds room for both the cryptic Dylan-derived portentousness of "What Went Wrong" and the banjo-based instrumental "Race Day Rag," as well as more than a baker's dozen of the tantalizing, not-quite-narrative songs McLennan patented as a co-founder of the Go-Betweens, one of Australian rock's greatest (and most underappreciated) exports.

Horsebreaker Star was recorded in Athens, Georgia by John Keane (Indigo Girls, Nanci Griffith). "I wanted to record in America. I had to come up with an idea... to do a double album in a non-urban setting, play with local musicians, record it quickly and get out before the sheriff came," says McLennan. "When the Go-Betweens did a tour with R.E.M., Peter [Buck] had told me about John's studio. I don't like to do demos, and [Keane] didn't want to hear any, so he said, 'Let's do it.'" Among the featured local talent is ex-Golden Palomino Syd Straw, whose full-bodied contributions raise "All Her Songs" and others to near-duet status.

Keane's production alternates between slick, thick pop and gentler acoustic treatments, reflecting the songs' variety of settings and their tension between the pastoral and the urban, a tension also present in McLennan's native Brisbane. "It's about a million people, but it's very spread out. Most people have a swimming pool. Per capita, it's one of the largest cities in the world, but it's very suburban, most people don't live in the city, they commute into it. I guess Los Angeles is a little like that."

The City of Angels makes its *noir*-ish presence known in several songs, with references to "fires on Sunset Strip" and Hollywood Hills serial killers standing in for a monstrous America that seems to threaten the rural lives led by other of the album's characters. Despite these dystopian tinges, the album culminates in what McLennan calls "acceptance...It's about finding a place that's yours and no one else's." At the end, he asks, "This road that we're on, it travels so far/Do you feel the heat of the Horsebreaker Star?" Of the title image, McLennan says, "Horsebreaker Star is a constellation that I kind of imagined and invented looking up at the night sky. That's hopefully where all the people on the record, all the different characters end up—on that road, I see it as a dirt road, with beautiful gum trees."

Caught up in the evocation of his home country, he continues, "There's trees in Australia called ghost gums, and they're this kind of white, so when the moonlight hits them, they just sort of shimmer. It's just a very still, ancient thing."

Not surprisingly, the cinematic sweep of McLennan's ambitions has a long precedent, extending back to the bohemian milieu of Australian punk that produced The Saints and The Birthday Party. "When Robert [Go-Betweens founder Forster] and I talked about starting the band... we wanted to do an Andy Warhol, Factory sort of thing. We were teenagers, so it was very ambitious, and it was very tropical as well; wearing wigs and silver clothes would have been hard there. We tried to do a magazine, called *Torn Curtain*, after the Television song, or the Hitchcock film. And we started writing a script about a kind of drunken American detective who ends up on the Gold Coast, which is like a far less violent Miami... a very sleazy white shoe kind of place. We wanted James Garner to do it, but of course we didn't have any introduction, so it never eventuated."

A recent acoustic tour with Lloyd Cole by McLennan and Forster rekindled their auteur impulses. "We were flying somewhere, I think it was Tibet, and we started talking about film ideas. It's a comedy-thriller... no sex, no violence, there's no people who work out in the film—that doesn't mean they're slob. It's urban, it's contemporary, and it's a cross between Preston Sturges and Truffaut, and it's set on a pineapple farm... Is that a pitch?"

—Franklin Bruno

Thanks to Tricia Halloran and KCRW-FM, Santa Monica, for interview assistance.



COOL THING



Ginger beer, a non-alcoholic soft drink with a kick like Van Damme. The secret is *lots and lots* of ginger. Our favorites (and this is something we actually argue about) are Reed's Original Ginger Brew, sweetened with pineapple juice, and DG Jamarcan Ginger Beer, which makes the perfect Dark 'N Stormy with a shot of dark rum.

TAKING THE
CORPORATE
WORLD FOR
ALL IT'S WORTH

face to face

BIG CHOICE

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AND THE BONUS
TRACK "DISCONNECTED"

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CO-PRODUCED BY: FACE TO FACE



Tours We'd Like To See

OPEN MOTORCADE '95:

The Jack Rubies/The Grassy Knoll/Single Gun Theory/
The Lee Harvey Oswald Band/The Zapruders/Dead Kennedys



PHOTO BY JOHN FALLS

Ms. Husik's Wild Ride

Lida Husik's got the gift of always having more than one thing going on in her head. Following a handful of singer-songwriter records, she reappeared last year with a lovely EP, *Evening At The Grange* (Astralwerks-Caroline), a collaboration with techno wizard Beaumont Hannant. ("He had been interviewed, and said he wanted to work with either Lida Husik or Liz Phair. So I beat her to it.") Her new *Joyride* album (Caroline) retains the electronic accent to complement Husik's dreamy, involved lyrics. She explains the genesis of "Mickey Minnie":

"I heard from my cousin that my mother, in Philadelphia, used to go to these jazz clubs in the '50s. She used to take my cousin, who was about 13 but looked 18. I assembled all this lore about my mother, whom I never knew but I'm always hearing things about. It started out being about her—'blue satin sleeveless,' I imagined her out—and then it turned into being also about my friend Richard, who died of AIDS a few months ago, who I had a very rocky relationship with. He's been popping up in songs lately. So the line 'so dark, so tall, so skinny, a regular Mickey Minnie'—of *dubious gender*—and then at the end, 'boys on boys, it's such a joy'—it was so liberating to me to be around gay men in clubs, dancing, and just being really comfortable. I love gay men, I sort of feel an affinity with them... Most of my songs start out one thing and end up another."

So do most of the things she says. A discussion of her cover of the Dentists' "Strawberries Are Growing In My Garden (And It's Wintertime)," within three sentences, touches on Shonen Knife's bass player, then on Husik's newly-purchased "365 Kittens A Year" calendar ("It's like the big dog-cat controversy. A lot of people are getting in touch with their feminine side—they accept the cat in them"). Mostly, though, the transformative power of her thoughts works in her favor. It's that kind of ability to reconcile the seemingly disparate that led to her combining her songs and lush, wine-dark voice with Hannant's electronics. The two are collaborating ever more closely, though they've still never "worked together, starting fresh, in the same studio." Nonetheless, they're hoping to tour together later this year.

"Beaumont is really into doing a tour," Husik says. "He wants to have some kind of fuckin' circus, some traveling minstrel show with 40 weird—poets and things... the atmosphere of a rave. I've never been to a rave, but... well, I've been to clubs where I guess it was a rave. There were freaky people freaking out on Ecstasy and dancing by themselves with their eyes closed, so I guess it was a rave. I actually went to Stonehenge, for Solstice, when the sun came through the stones, even though there was a big police thing. It was ridiculous. Nobody ever did anything to the stones... I love the English so much. I'm an Anglophile. I read old English tea dramas, Lytton-Strachey, Bloomsbury stuff—I'm obsessed with all that stuff. I'm sure Virginia Woolf would be the first one out there, raving her skinny ass off."

—Douglas Walk



U2's Liberal Propaganda

U2's collective ego may be inflated to the point where the band could cover sporting events from the air, but the band has never distanced itself from its fans. *Propaganda*, the glossy quarterly U2 fan club magazine, allows its readers to get closer to the band than your average journalist. It's not your typical fluff fan club 'zine: there's updates from Amnesty International and Greenpeace as well as intimate coverage of the band at work. The fan club also works hard at getting concert tickets into fans hands before scalpers. The latest issue of *Propaganda* comes with a nine-track CD of remixes called *Melon*. The disk is only available through the fan club (four issues will run you about 20 bucks). For info: *Propaganda*, 20 Church St., Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 6BP, England. —Steve Ciabattoni

“PERSINTHIA LAWDRO & JOHN” BY LIDA HUSIK APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

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-NME

Sample "DELICIOUS" on last month's sampler



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QUICK FIX

ARTISTS' **in my**
PERSONAL PICKS **R.V.**

MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD

What they listened
to on tour:

Doudou Ndiaye Rose
Djabote

Sly & The Family Stone
There's A Riot Goin' On

The Pharcyde
Bizarre Ride II

Jimi Hendrix
anything!

Mahalia Jackson
Best Loved Spirituals



MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD: Space Is The Place

The secret to Medeski, Martin & Wood's cosmic, freewheeling take on jazz, soul and art-rock, may lie where the trio spends its downtime, a rarely mapped town called Puna, Hawaii. "We rent a little shack in the jungle that's not in the realm of the grid [of New York]," says keyboardist John Medeski. "We have a solar power thing and we play out here and rehearse. It's a really good way to recharge our batteries and find the magic again." MM&W recently released a new LP, *Friday Afternoon In The Universe*, after a self-sufficient tour of the U.S., in which they giggled about in an RV. "It's the best way to tour," relates drummer Billy Martin. "We get to take our home with us. We can do our own cooking, park anywhere, sleep anywhere. We don't have to deal with the extra energy of getting on a plane or booking a hotel."

The tour strengthened the trio's playing, and also netted them a fan base. "We're finding that it's a lot of the same people that are fans of the Grateful Dead," says bassist Chris Wood. "The hippie-jam-band scene. We're into that because those people are very loyal and very open concert-goers. It means that they'll always come, and we can do what we do and be uncompromising about our music and they'll be into it. We didn't expect that when we started out touring the U.S., we didn't know what we were going to appeal to."

"We're not writing pop songs, so we need to have that extra element of good playing," says Medeski. "It's got to be stronger. We've got to try to speak through our notes." And what exactly are Medeski, Martin & Wood saying through their notes? Medeski takes a stab at an answer, then turns back to Martin and Wood to ask: "Hey, guys. What are we trying to say with our music? You know, since we don't use lyrics."

Even if the trio couldn't comprise an a concrete answer to the abstract question, the audiences seem to get it. There's soul, blues, swing and rock hidden throughout their work, skating about the perimeters of jazz. On any given night, the crowd can be equal parts jazz-heads, Deadheads, intellectuals and hip-hoppers.

Yet even within the experimental ambience of the New York scene things can be limited, so the trio throws a wrench into that as well. "Some of the main people are very intellectual," says Chris Wood. "They think a lot about music and sometimes try to do something different in that way, as opposed to the way we do it, which is more about simple jamming and being really sincere and trying to be fearless about it."

The trio wants to set some things straight before anyone calls them a jazz band, however. "It's hard," Medeski says, "when jazz becomes this term that's used to define a certain style of music. Jazz is kind of a historic term now, and for people who love the music it's this vital force, and for us that's what it's about: the force and the spirit behind it." Medeski hides nothing when Wynton Marsalis' designs on the genre comes up. "It's killing jazz," he says flatly. "What we're doing is much closer to what Art Blakey's band was doing when they were on the road, being part of a vital scene, evolving out of experiences and touring, not just sitting in a room listening to records and copying them."

—Steve Ciabattoni

Discography: *Notes From The Underground* (Hap Jones) 1992; *It's A Jungle In Here* (Gramavision) 1993; *Friday Afternoon In The Universe* (Gramavision-Rykodisc) 1995

JOHN MEDESKI'S

Favorite Keyboardists:

- Stevie Wonder
- Bernie Worrell (*P-Funk*)
- Jimmy McGriff
- Baby Face Willette
- Oliver Messiaen

BILLY MARTIN'S

Favorite Drummers:

- Max Roach
(*favorite drum solo tool*)
- Alhaji Timmy Olaitan
(*King Sunny Ade*)
- Zigaboo Modeliste
(*Meters*)
- Elvin Jones
- John Bonham
(*Led Zeppelin*)

CHRIS WOOD'S

Favorite Bassists:

- Charles Mingus, hands down!
- Michael Henderson
(*Miles Davis*)

MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD'S "THE LOVER" APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

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crazy

dirty
hair

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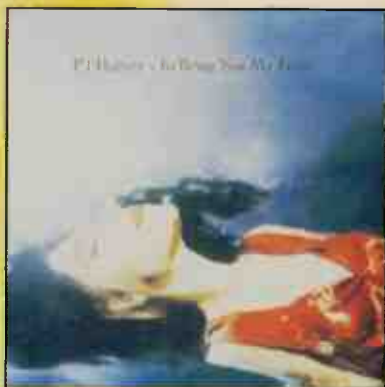
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World Radio History

 
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BEST NEW MUSIC

PJ HARVEY
To Bring You My Love
Island



The caustic, monochromatic scrape of *Rid Of Me* and the forbidding *Four-Trock Demos* suggested that PJ Harvey's sound was heading for a dead end. Actually, she was just clearing the table for the next course. With her third "real" album, *Polly Jean* has recruited an entirely new supporting cast and made the proverbial quantum leap into greatness. She's still unmistakably herself—maudlin, melodic, abrasive and confrontational—but the means she uses to reach those ends have become much more varied. Over her omnipresent soaring voice and serrated guitar, the album's wild production sends instruments swooping into the mix at unexpected angles, and almost sounds like a mid-'60s "stereophonic" album (play with the balance knob a bit and you'll hear what I mean.) Likewise, there are many stylistic changes as well; tactfully arranged keyboards, a string section on "C'mon Billy," and, at scattered moments, even (probably unintentional) glimpses of the Blues Explosion and Portishead. Yet the expanded sonic palette is only half the story, because Harvey has grown immensely as a songwriter; "Meet Ze Monsta" and "Working For The Man" take her swamp-groove fetish to new heights, and the aching "The Dancer" may be the best song she's released yet. A mature but totally uncompromising album, *To Bring You My Love* launches PJ Harvey into an entirely new phase of her career, and will doubtless be rated as one of the best albums of this year, as well. —Jem Aswad

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 28. First single and video "Down By The Water."
FILE UNDER: Very electric blues.

R.I.Y.L.: Recent U2, Portishead, Sinead O'Connor.

CHRIS WHITLEY
Din Of Ecstasy
Columbia



There's something missing on Chris Whitley's second LP, *Din Of Ecstasy*, and luckily, it's what's not there that makes this record a godsend, and perhaps even a notch above his terrific debut *Living With The Law*. Gone are the U2-like atmospheric keyboards which tacked on electronic ambience to Whitley's spacious blues rockers. Stripped of those webs of keyboards, we find Whitley's songs providing their own atmosphere: The record is twice as rich with half the sounds and personnel. Working now in a trio (with bassist Alan Gevaert and drummer Dougie Bowne), Whitley has found a setup that pushes him a bit as a player, forcing him to fill the space with riffs, leads and rhythm the way Hendrix did in his trio. On "Know" you hear each breath and holler of Whitley's amp as well as each slip and squeak of his bony fingers and slide scraping the strings. There's a hint of studio polish added to Whitley's sweet-and-sour voice, but aside from that, *Din Of Ecstasy* has the rumble and raw edge of a five-bucks-a-head live show. The nice thing is, after you listen to it, you don't have smoke in your hair and beer on your shoes, just the sense that you heard some heady mojo rock. —Steve Ciabottoni

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 7. A cover of Jesus & Mary Chain's "Some Candy Talking" was added to the album at the last minute.

FILE UNDER: Raw-nerve blues.

R.I.Y.L.: Jimi Hendrix, Neil Young & Crazy Horse, Stevie Ray Vaughn.

ELASTICA

Elastica

DGC



There were a few years when "New Wave" didn't mean synthesizers and haircuts yet—it just meant abrasive, coolly witty guitar-pop that jammed a tune into your head and shut up as quickly as it reasonably could. It was a breath of cool spring air at the time, and it's about time somebody revived the idea, 'cause it's a great one now too. The British quartet Elastica, three women and a male drummer, pillages freely from the first New Wave. Several songs can trace their lineage directly to Wire's *Chairs Missing*, for example (as on that record, every song stops on a dime the instant the important stuff is over), and the closing "Vaseline" is essentially the bridge from Blondie's "Sunday Girls" with a little bit of new stuff at the beginning and end. But they always turn their borrowed materials into something terse, tough and thrilling. "Hold Me Now" lifts a hook from New Order's "Thieves Like Us," beefs it up, adds a marvelously deadpan vocal line, and brings it in—like all but four of these 16 songs—well under three minutes (four are less than 1:45). And you can always tell that Elastica's having a great time playing this stuff. British hit "Line Up," a bare-fanged sneer at a groupie, links two sets of stop-start guitar-noise blasts with a bass part of Zen simplicity, as guitarist Justine Frischmann vamps, growls and fights back giggles. Surprisingly, Elastica's best moments are all its own, especially the astonishing single "Stutter," which takes on most of its idols and beats them at their own game. —Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 14. New single "Connection."

FILE UNDER: New wave redux.

R.I.Y.L.: Blondie, Wire, Veruca Salt.

MORPHINE

Yes

Rykodisc



Darkly atmospheric, confidently sensual, self-consciously cool and just a touch shady—Morphine's elements of style seem drawn from a noir phrase book. Indeed, this unique trio (two-string electric bass played with a slide, baritone sax, minimal drum kit) wallows in its own undeniable dime-novel groove, spinning soundtracks for Mark Sandman's well-drink narratives of afternoon adultery and other human frailties. And you can't beat it with a stick. Yes stretches some from the foundation laid by *Good and Cure For Pain*, but not so far as to test the limits of the band's obvious strengths: The gumshoe sax moans, the resonant rumble of the bass, Sandman's smoky whisper undoing the backs of bras and clasps of garters. Yes does rock more, though, and the band plays more as an ensemble than as a cast of character actors. It's in no way a back-handed compliment to say that Morphine's biggest accomplishment here is in keeping an admittedly limited sound from getting tired; why New-Coke a formula this rich? Highlights include the upbeat sax squalls of "Honey White," Sandman's taxi dispatcher's mic on "Super Sex" and the deliciously dirge-like "Free Love." With lounge music becoming more and more associated with nattily-attired hipsters sipping top-shelf cocktails, it's good to know that Morphine still knows what a dive looks like at midday. —Scott Frampton

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 21. First single "Honey White."

FILE UNDER: Sensual blues rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Raymond Chandler, Tom Waits, Lounge Lizards.

**THE 6THS
Wasps' Nests**

London

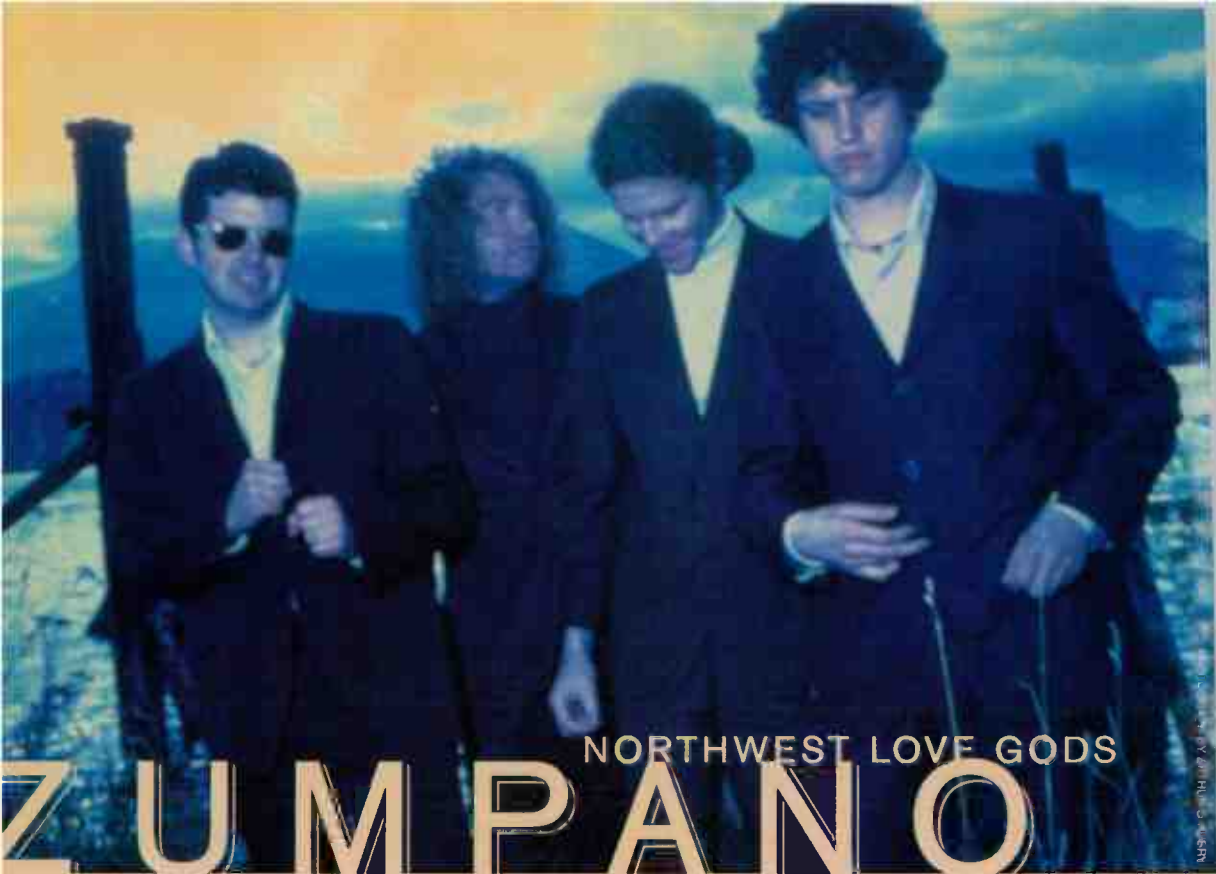


The 6ths is Stephin Merritt's vanity fair, in which the songwriter/electronic wizard teams up with various singers he admires, who sing for him on songs of his making. It's an all-star indie-rock roster—Lou Barlow and Barbara Manning, Chris Knox and Georgia Hubley, Mark Robinson and Amelia Fletcher—singing songs of love and lust and loneliness, the languid ramblings of a drowsy, dejected romantic. As always, the songs are wry, literate and effortless: Merritt's flair is everywhere on display, as when Helium's Mary Timony breathes, "I was happy/which is not like me at all/for an hour." His songwriting genius has never been clearer, in part because the tracks here are drastically reduced, shorter (many clock in under 2:30) and simpler (verse-chorus-verse-bridge-end). Almost all the songs stick in your head afterwards; even some of indie-rock's weaker voices sound confident, thanks to Stephin's Phil Spectorly arrangements. Still, there are standouts: "Puerto Rico Way" (with Air Miami's Mark Robinson) is weirdly engaging, with a brilliant Brill Building pop melody that owes nothing to rock music, indie- or otherwise, while "Pillow Fight," featuring Mitch Easter, just might revive that flagging '80s hipster's long-dormant career. Merritt saves the best song for himself, however: "Aging Spinners," which deploys Depeche Mode synth-effects and showcases his own voice, a croon somewhere between Ian Curtis and Lou Barlow. There's more straightforward joy on *Wasps' Nests* than Mr. Merritt might care to admit. Droll, literate and amazing. —Michael Vazquez

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 21. First single video "San Diego Zoo."

FILE UNDER: Pop-song genius.

R.I.Y.L.: The Magnetic Fields, Cole Porter, Erasure.



In the kingdom of Zumpano, love reigns supreme. "Every woman in Vancouver is beautiful," says guitarist/keyboardist/arranger Mike Ledwidge, "and our music celebrates that fact." And if the view of romance on the band's fine debut *Look What The Rookie Did* (Sub Pop) isn't as cloudless as that statement suggests, it only goes to show what a vulnerable bunch of ladykillers North America's latest troubadours are.

BY FRANKLIN BRUNO

The late '80s found singer/guitarist Carl Newman throwing down the noise with the likes of the eight-man Superconductor and a Stooges cover band, Scumhouse. But behind the punk facade was a pop vision: "I wanted to start a band with someone who was separate from that scene... From my perspective, this is the music I truly like the most, and if I want to be in a band, this is the sort of stuff I want to do," says Newman of the baroque, post-psychedelic sound that filled the air circa '74, the not-quite-rock, not-quite-soul bombast of the Fifth Dimension, Dionne Warwick and the pre-disco Bee Gees.

Enter Mike Ledwidge and drummer Jason Zumpano, who honed their craft together in the ranks of the St. Thomas More High School "Pep Band," playing at rallies and games in "matching shirts and berets," and later in the accordion-driven Glee. When the three joined forces, they knew they had something, but they weren't sure what. Ledwidge says, "I remember the first practice we had, where Carl wanted to play Burt Bacharach songs, and we knew them." Original material in the manner of their many songwriting heroes (Jimmy Webb, Bacharach and David, Ray Davies) quickly followed. "We thought, no one's going to like this if we just say 'this is our band,' but if we put it in the right package..." Still unsure of their footing, the three put down four songs in May of 1991, and, joined by bassist Stefan Niemann, began playing live and, as their T-shirts put it, "making girls cry." (Newman, by the way, still plays in Superconductor under various pseudonyms.)

Of these self-produced early recordings (all of which are on *Rookie*, Newman says, "I can't believe these songs are out, because for a long time I wouldn't play them for everybody." Though not exactly standard '90s fare, these songs are nothing to sneeze at. "Temptation Summary" is a sprightly, Brubeck-based 5/4 that finds the singer doubting his own sincerity (a common Zumpano theme). "Is there anyone anywhere I could feel guilty about lying to? Is there anyone anywhere I could love without trying to?" "Jeez Louise" is supercharged Pep Band swagger, shot through with starts and stops worthy of a Vegas floor show as Jason's show-bizzy drumming cuts through the elaborate arrangement with panache. All four feature an excellent horn section. "Some of it sounds like a game show to me now," says Ledwidge, though he adds, "Our songwriting is okay, but it's our arranging that will really slay people." (Live, Ledwidge switches between guitar and keyboard, calmly leading the band from a barstool like a young Mancini.)

The rest of the record, recorded with Neimann and produced by Kevin Kane in the fall of '93, sounds more like a rock band without sounding any less like a pop group, with Ledwidge's clean leads and Newman's endearing lisp prominent in the mix. "Rosecrans Blvd." (a Jimmy Webb tune originally recorded by the Fifth Dimension) is a majestic mini-opera whose protagonist becomes progressively more

unhinged as he helplessly gets off the freeway at his stewardess ex-girlfriend's exit. "Wraparound Shades," in which a city slicker finds love in a hick town, bravely features both the dreaded "ba-ba-ba" chorus (*à la* The Association) and a Billy Joel-cum-Bob Newhart Show electric piano hook. Strangely, this was the song Sub Pop and the band chose as a pre-album 7". "We were hoping for some mainstream appeal," Newman deadpans. "There's always people at college radio stations that don't like Pavement." (Stranger still, it's a great single.)

Newman and Ledwidge disavow ironic intentions in their unabashed plundering of disreputable eras of popular music. "It's not like these songs were terrible and we're expressing that through our own terrible songs." Unlike the lounge-revival crowd that they're likely to get lumped in with (on account of their dapper on-stage attire and Sub Pop's promotional machine), Zumpano is simply writing the songs it wants to hear as best it knows how. Ledwidge sums up the group's musical aims: "In one word, I'd have to say, 'drama.'"

Current plans include the recording of the follow-up to *Rookie*, tentatively entitled, in fine self-help-book fashion, *Goin' Through Changes*. Two songs with a string section (the next logical step) have already been completed. "We want to spend a fortune on the next one... At least one song will have a full orchestra." When Newman expresses his wish to take "a violinist and a trumpet player" on the road, Ledwidge complains, "We have enough trouble making people pay attention to us, and you're not the one who has to make sure their mikes are in the right place." A brief fall tour down the West Coast supporting the Fastbacks proved that Zumpano needn't worry about holding attention. Live, the pronounced dynamics of covers like "Orange Air" (another Webb tune) and the Kinks' "Shangri-La" are spectacle enough, with the confounding sight of young men in '50s suits playing '70s songs with '90s energy as an added bonus. On tour, Ledwidge explains, "No one had ever heard of us, and we found out that there were two kinds of people who liked us: The record-collecting geeks, because they recognized the covers, and women." So is Zumpano just a bunch of "...but the little girls understand" heartthrobs, in the manner of the Knack? "No, nothing like that. Older women like us... They miss the pop."

Lida Husik



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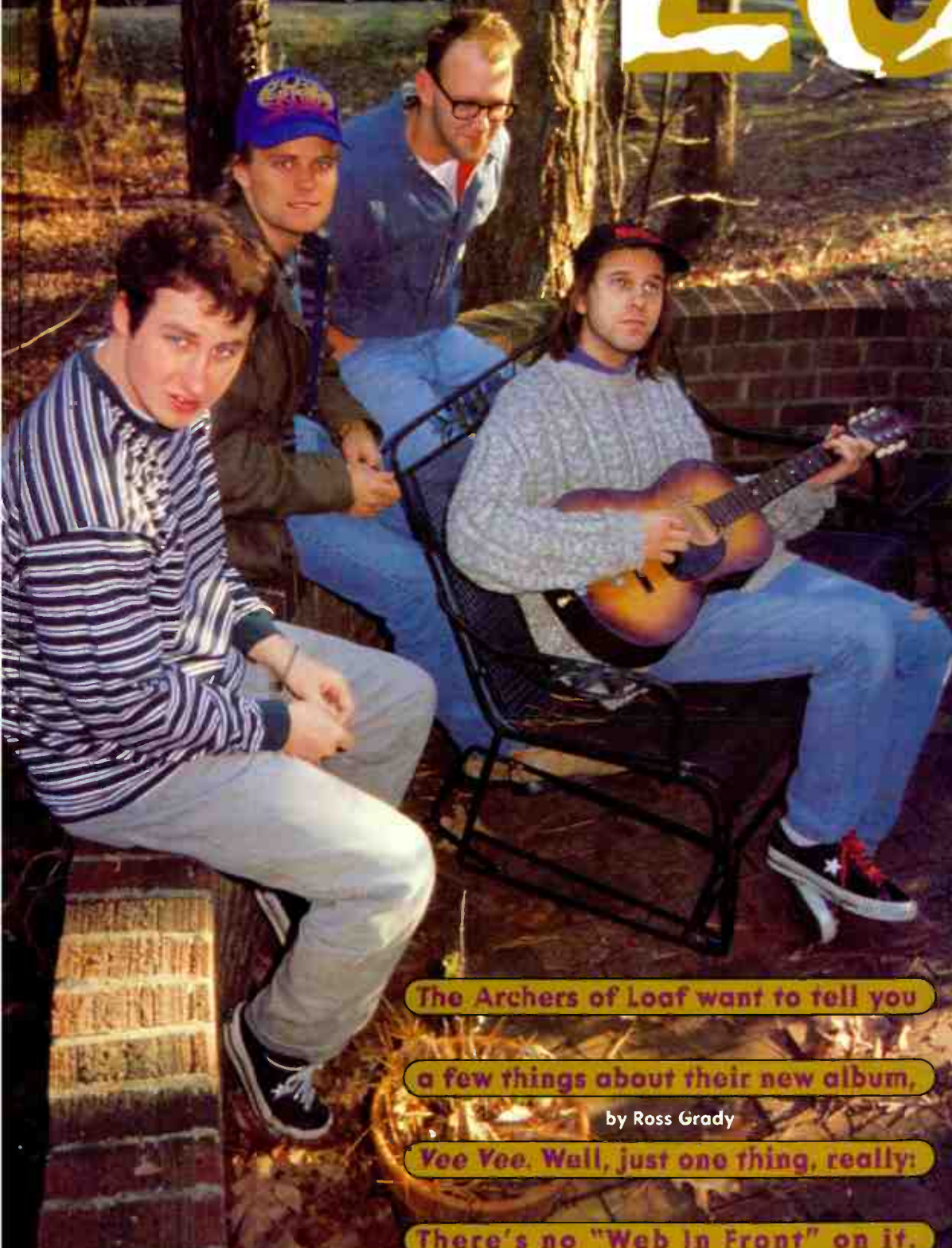


"Norfolk, Va."



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ARCHERS OF LOAF



The Archers of Loaf want to tell you

a few things about their new album,

by Ross Grady

Yee Yee, Well, just one thing, really:

There's no "Web In Front" on it.



"Everybody wants another 'Web In Front,' and there's not one, not on this record." Archers guitarist Eric Johnson is curled up on singer Eric Bachmann's couch, flipping back and forth between different *Power Rangers* ripoff shows on TV. The tone in his voice makes it sound as if the song, with its grotesquely catchy "All I ever wanted was to be your spine" chorus, doesn't seem like such a good idea now as it did when the band wrote it, two years and hundreds of shows ago.

Never mind the fact that "Web In Front" is the song that launched the Archers' first album, 1993's *Icky Mettle*, into the upper reaches of the college charts [#18 on the *CMJ New Music Report* Top 150, staying on the chart for 21 weeks—ed.]. Never mind the fact that its video, complete with copulating pigs, recently received the coveted *Beavis and Butt-Head* seal of approval. Never mind the simple fact that "Web In Front" is the most contagious two-minute-for-seconds of pop music since Archers' Chapel Hill neighbors Superchunk wrote "Slack Motherfucker" back at the dawn of the '90s. The Archers are having none of it. Bass player Matt Gentling, crouched like a buzzard above Johnson on the back of the sofa, cackles and begins chanting "Never another 'Web In Front!' Never!"

They're both lying, of course. Vee Vee is a little bit slower and a whole lot darker than *Icky Mettle*, and it probably doesn't contain anything to match the sugary, tooth-rotting power of "Web In Front." But that doesn't mean Vee Vee isn't loaded with hit singles, or what passes for hits in the post-Nirvana free-for-all of rock.

Surefire nominees include "Nevermind The Enemy," with its chorus sung and recorded backwards, like the annoying Black Lodge sequences in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, for maximum addictiveness. And then there's "Fabricoh," the only genuine rock anthem ever to contain the line "it's the selling out of the crowd that's gathering, rocking out, rocking out."

That subject matter—rocking out, and the selling thereof—permeates this new album, seemingly half the songs on Vee Vee mention rock and roll in some context or another. According to Gentling, it's only logical. "You tend to write about your experiences—it has to come from your own perspective. You can't think from somebody else's brain, and what we were doing for the past two years is mainly driving around playing music. So I can't see how we could help but have that as a factor in the songs."

He thinks for a minute, and continues. "It doesn't seem like an end in itself in the songs, a thematic end—it's sort of an environmental factor." In other words, when you're 23 years old, stuck for months at a time inside a Ford Econoline with three guys whose butt-smells are more familiar than the smell of your girlfriend's hair, there's nothing much to write home about but rock and roll.

And loneliness, and trying to live on five bucks a day, and... Gentling finishes the list: "And people saying 'you guys are getting really big, man. Bet you're making a lot of money. I hope you don't sell out.'" After spending two years on tour, breaking even when they were lucky, always hoping their apartments and jobs would still be there when they got back to Chapel Hill, the term "sellout" is obviously a sore point with the band.

They've got a favorite character, in fact, and they take great glee in acting out typical scenarios for me.

Drummer Marc Price: "Dude, can you give me a t-shirt?"

Gentling: "Dude, man, come on, you guys are making plenty of money—give me a CD."

Johnson: "Dude, man, I love you guys. 'You guys are my favorite band. If you give me a T-shirt I'll wear it all the time.'"

Gentling reverts back to his normal voice. "We'd say, 'Sorry, we can't afford it,' and they'd be like 'Oh yeah, sure.' So it was weird. We just beat the shit out of a lot of people, all the time."

Johnson scratches his head, feigning deep thought. "We'd probably be a lot bigger if it weren't for all the people we beat the hell out of."

Gentling: "Yeah. For some reason they get all uptight. They don't listen to your music any more."

Johnson: "Just 'cause you beat the shit out of 'em."

Gentling: "Took a tire iron to their skulls—"

Johnson: "There's just too much sensitivity in indie rock today."

Which is another lie, of course. But it's not a surprising one, coming from a band whose first album contained "Fat," which consisted almost entirely of the immortal lines, now

shouted back with glee by a crowd of young men at every Archers show: "I'm not as happy as I once was to see you/You're fatter around the sides/No no no no you're not as thin as you used to be/You've gotten fatter around the thighs."

Marc Price shakes his head in disgust when I mention the song. "Somebody actually asked me if we've got something against fat people because of that song."

Gentling says "A lot of people have asked me about 'Fat,' and most of 'em totally got it. They were like 'I got dumped one time, and I know exactly what you mean in that song—you're just pissed off, and you're gonna find something to complain about, no matter if it's true or not.'"

Says Johnson, "You're just looking for an excuse to make you feel better. It's not really what you say at all—it's how you say it."

Eric Bachmann, who staggered out of his bedroom at the start of the interview and is only now, after most of a pot of coffee, beginning to wake up, adds his fractured, ragged voice to the mix. "When you make a record, you're just trying to create a feel with it, you know, and so you say certain things to add to that feel, whether they're lies or not. I think people sometimes take the feel you try to make with it and turn it into some kind of message—like 'Fat' means we're sexist, or whatever—when we're like 'I just wanted to make a hangover record.'"

I ask Bachmann if the angry tone that permeates so much of the Archers' music is just more of the same—more lies told to create a certain feel. When he says "yes," I quote him a review of the Archers' last EP *Archers Of Loaf Vs. The Greatest Of All Time*, in which critic Robert Christgau said, "They sound like a live band ready to service a living audience, their gleeful anger felt rather than assumed."

I ask Bachmann if that means they've fooled Christgau, too. He laughs. "Yeah," he says, "it probably just means we're good at it."

The fact is, the Archers of Loaf know exactly what business they're in—the entertainment business. They seem more than willing to push any buttons necessary to entertain, but balk at making any deeper statements about anything.

Bachmann says, "It's like that Cranberries video, where they're doin' Northern Ireland. I mean, that sucks—anybody will agree that situation sucks—but why are you makin' a buck off of it? That's why we don't really ever have a message. It's just fun, you know?"

Throughout the afternoon, Eric Johnson's been steadily grazing the sixty-odd cable channels available to suburban Chapel Hillians, and he now pauses for a moment to catch the headlines from the early news. The stories, as always, are all mad gunmen and thirteen-year-old rapists, and as he watches the anchors grinning their way through tragedy after tragedy, Gentling mutters "Man, the world sucks."

Johnson sits back against the cushions. "That's our agenda," he announces. "Our agenda is 'Everything Sucks.'"

Gentling, too caught up in the news to catch this declaration, keeps right on muttering. "This kinda thing's just gonna keep happening. There's too many people in the world."

Johnson perks up. "Look on the bright side, though," he says, "If there's so many people in the world, it's easier to sell a million copies of an album."

Gentling's face lights up; instantly he's back to his standard spastic self. "Hell yeah, buddy," he crows. "That's all I really care about anyway."

He's lying again. But would it be so bad, in this era of inflated causes, if he wasn't?

DISCOGRAPHY

"Wrong" (Stay Free)

"Web In Front" (Alias)

Icky Mettle (Alias)

"Powerwalker" on *A Day In The Park* compilation (The New Sound)

Archers Of Loaf Vs. The Greatest Of All Time (EP) (Alias)

Vee Vee (Alias)

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

BY JAMES LIEN

There are few places that know how to throw a good time better than New Orleans, so you would naturally expect that a ten-day outdoor music festival held in the cradle of jazz would be spectacular—and it is, it is. Spread over two weekends in late April and early May, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival is world-renowned as one of the best music events ever, with loads of music, delectable food, crafts and sunshine crowded onto numerous stages and tents, all crammed into the infield of an antique horse racing track known as the Louisiana Fairgrounds. The headlining music runs the gamut from Bob Dylan and the Allman Brothers to Tito Puente, the Neville Brothers, Wynton Marsalis and Aretha Franklin, but we think the best part is the Fest's emphasis on Louisiana's regional musical heritage, with Cajun, zydeco, jazz, soul, R&B, and Afro-Caribbean styles sharing center stage with top-name acts. It's worth the trip, and we thought we'd give you a few tips on how to have a good time.

Aside from the music, the biggest attraction that Jazz Fest has to offer is the food.

The folks who put it together don't let just anybody hawking burgers or hot dogs into the Fairgrounds—every one of the concessions is operated by a proud Louisiana company, allowing some of the finest restaurants in town to strut their stuff, from gourmet shrimp bisque to down-home red beans and rice from St. Mark's Community Center. In past years, hit culinary triumphs offered for sale have included po-boy sandwiches, boiled crawfish, crawfish monica, chicken and tasso, crawfish bread (a gooey concoction of jalapeno cheese and crawfish stuffed into some chewy bread), shrimp tacos and African peanut soup. If you find yourself unable to decide what on earth to eat next, one good idea is to loiter in the food concession area and wait for somebody to walk past eating something that looks good.

Another key attraction to the Fest is hearing the links between the world's musics first-hand—things like hearing John Lee Hooker on one stage and walking across the fairgrounds to hear Malian griot Ali Farke Toure playing African music that sounds uncannily similar, or watching a Bahamian dance troupe get it on to the exact same drumbeat you heard 20 minutes earlier from a New Orleans brass band. At the center of this creative exchange and cross-cultural lines is the Congo Square Stage, a place that spotlights everything from African drumming to Mardi Gras Indians to silky R&B to the latest hip-hop beats.

Remember to bring sunglasses and suntan lotion—those are the only two items on the Fairgrounds on which merchants are allowed to price-gouge. And you'll be out there for a good five or six hours, so a straw hat is not a bad idea. If you're in a large group of people, you might want to stake claim to some turf in front of the stage of your choice; that said, you'd better be prepared for a long, hot day and some pretty boring set changes, and even worse, maybe sitting through somebody you don't want to see. The best way to do the Fest is in smaller groups of two, three or four; you can bop from one set to another, squeeze into a tent, or taste each other's food without too much planning or organizational hassles.

Don't be afraid to skip over the big-name stars in favor of sampling some lesser-known talent—for every Rickie Lee Jones, Bob Dylan or Jimmy Buffett who turns in a decent set, there are always dozens of show-stopping performances from musical treasures like Beau Jocque, R.L. Burnside, the Creole Zydeco Farmers and the ReBirth Brass Band tearing it up on a smaller stage next door. And definitely check out the jazz tent, the gospel tent (a whole circus big top with nothing but non-stop gospel choirs) and the fabled tribes of Mardi Gras Indians parading in their wild sequined costumes, a part of New Orleans Carnival culture for at least 100 years. Especially recommended among the Indians are the Wild Magnolias, who for the last few years have appeared with a wild-maned Jimi Hendrix look-alike on lead electric guitar! Funky brass bands, jazz bands, traditional Dixieland, rock, swamp-pop, Cajun, zydeco, and loads more all have their place on the Jazz Fest infield. Finding the unexpected and seeing and hearing something you've never seen before are all a big part of the Fest's magic.

While no one knows for sure how the state's burgeoning gambling industry will affect the ambience and attitude of this year's Festival, we're pretty confident that the Fest will retain its native charm, although hotel accommodations might get a little more crowded than usual, so book now if you want to go. See you there!



PHOTO BY ELEANOR SUJITA

Information: Jazz & Heritage Festival, P.O. Box 53407, New Orleans, LA 70153-3407.

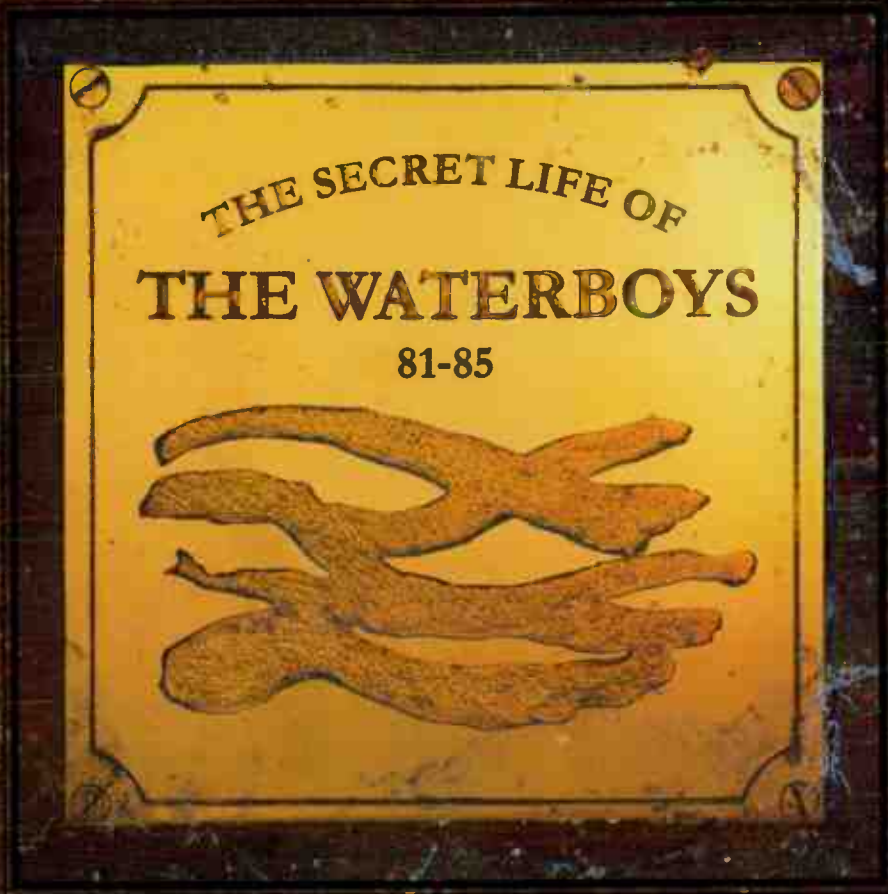
This year's dates: April 28-30 and May 4-7, 1995.

Mardi Gras Indian from the Creole Wild West.



PHOTO BY ELEANOR SUJITA

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"Irony, sarcasm and cynicism are the three things that are nearest and dearest to my heart."

Mudhoney frontman Mark Arm is waxing philosophical—or as philosophical as one is allowed to be when playing the role of anti-spokesman for a generation—on the eve of the release of his band's fourth album, *My Brother The Cow*. With the good ship grunge having run aground, torpedoed by missiles both internal and external, its builders would have every right to straddle its deck and crow like Robert Shaw in *Jaws* about the one(s) that got away.

Instead, Mudhoney has finally delivered on the promise of "Touch Me I'm Sick," made so many years ago and hedged on in recent years. The court-jester stance is all but gone, in its place, a smirking-but-reproachful indictment of a world gone wrong, a landscape mottled with death and near-death. When Arm intones "it's 1995, my friend, and we're closing in on the end," over the opening riffs of "1995"—a careful rewrite of the Stooges' apocalyptic "1969"—you get the feeling he's talking about a lot more than the conclusion of the album.

"I'm just glad we really made it to 1995, and I didn't end up dying in '94 and end up looking like an idiot," Arm says with a laugh. "Lines like 'I'm lucky to be alive' would have people talking about my presumptuousness and... schmuckness."

Arm may joke about death's ugly head, but the shadow that darkens many of *My Brother The Cow*'s songs is unmistakable. It's hardly a new subject for the band—each of their previous releases has ventured a few paces into similarly bleak territory—but the ante has been upped in light of last year's events, including, of course, the suicide of Kurt Cobain. Entwined by more than just geography and Sub Pop's umbilical cords, Mudhoney and Nirvana maintained a close bond over the years, which might account for the monumentally bilious tone of the new album's "Into Your Shtick."

That song—which buffets an unnamed "just plain dull" antagonist with accusations about abuses of "the scum-sucking leeches who shovel your shit," giving particular attention to a dope-score-facilitating management operative—leaves little doubt as to its target, particularly given Arm's, shall we say, point-blank conclusion: "Why don't you blow your brains out too?"

"The names weren't changed to protect the guilty, just to include more people," the singer says. While he declines to fill in the story's, er, holes for those who can't put two and two together, he advises, "If it makes you squirm, you probably deserve to squirm. Sometimes I squirm if I hear it at the wrong time."

Arm has been bent on making people squirm since his high school days. An embryonic band, self-described as "unintentionally arty," that boasted Steel Pole Bath tub's current skinsman on drums was his first effort. His influences then, as now, were spread across the spuzz-rock spectrum, from the Stooges to Pere Ubu (to whom he still pledges an undying allegiance.) Things have changed considerably since then—most notably the infusion of humor that appeared around the time of Mudhoney's 1989 debut.

"There's fine line between wacky and clever, and I try to avoid wackiness like the plague," Arm says. "It's like the difference between someone nudging you in the ribs and hitting you in the head with a hammer, the difference between Lenny Bruce and Shekky Greene."

The quartet has never shied away from high concept. Guitarist Steve Turner points out that the new album's title "fits with our food theme, although it kind of spoils the dessert trilogy"; songs included therein likewise riff off Simon and Garfunkel ("Judgement, Rage, Retribution and Thyme") and Captain Beefheart ("Orange Ball-Peen Hammer"). But while all their Sub Pop releases were imbued with an endearing looseness, the group's 1992 move to Warner Brothers seemed to draw taut the perennial grin, leaving a tight-lipped expression.

"We felt quite a bit of pressure being on a major label with *Piece of Cake*, or at least some of us did," admits Turner. "At this point we feel none at all: The Seattle revolution is over."

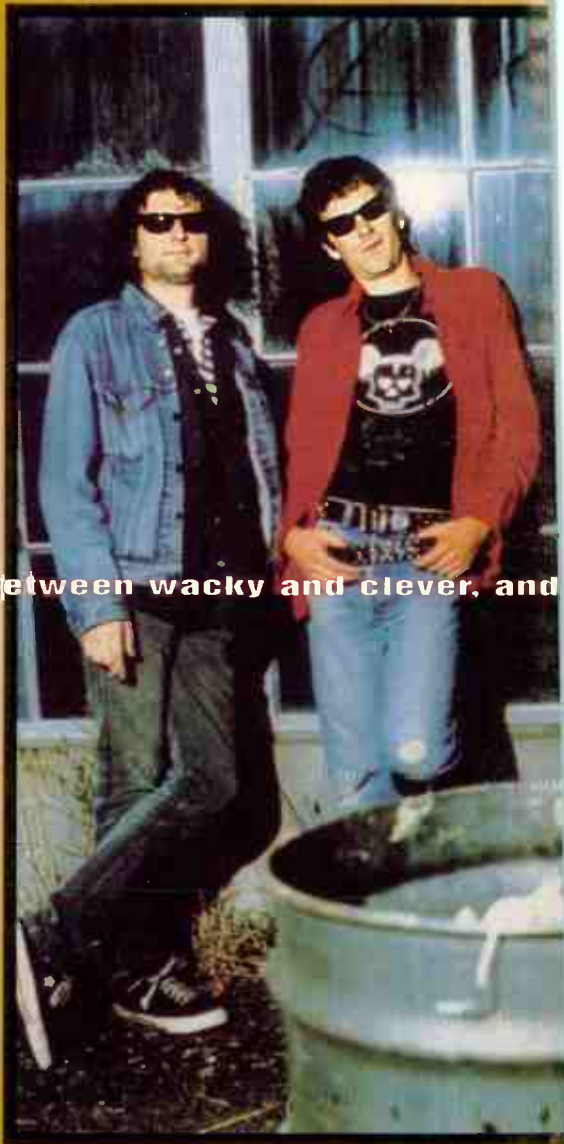
And who won?

"I think we did," he muses. "We weren't forced to be rock stars."

True enough, although no one who surfed the waves of press that formed in the wake of the band's launch would have guessed that Mudhoney's climb to stardom would be quite this gradual. With the brainier (read: less Bad Company-influenced) half of Green River (Arm and Turner) pumped up by the brawn of ex-Melvin Matt Lukin, the nascent band laid the foundation for the sound formerly known as grunge. But after several runs at the Next Big Thing brass ring, the group remains ensconced in a cult niche, garnering more kudos from fellow musicians than from the marketplace.

MH

And The Sound For



“There’s a fine line between wacky and clever, and

MUDHONEY

My Known As Grunge

"We never believed any of that, because we knew we weren't a pop band," says Turner. "From the moment Nirvana hit, it made sense. We always thought they'd be huge, because it was their natural inclination. We're a grunge band; we're the only one left."

He's only half-joking: while the "g" word has become a groan-inducer in certain camps, remember that "punk" elicited much the same response from many circles just a couple of years ago.

Keeping that in mind, *My Brother The Cow* pulls no punches in its full-frontal assault of *Vincebus Eruptum*-derived fuzz and grind.

"We've always been pretty naked about our influences," says Turner. "It's fine to rip things off; that's pretty much what rock 'n' roll is. Some people just don't admit it."

So are they the guys who love rock 'n' roll, or guys who think it's the world's biggest joke?

"Can I be both?" Turner asks. "Obviously I love rock 'n' roll, even though there's a lot of ridiculous things about it, like solos. I've always had to stop myself from bad soloing. Sometimes, I have to stop myself from living out those Spinal Tap fantasies."

None of the band's members seems particularly prone to such silliness. Acknowledging the benefits of an occasional side trip—

including Turner's helming of the Super-Electro label, Arm's

dalliance with the skronkier Bloodloss and drummer Dan

Peters' recent gigging with L7—

the quartet spent most of the past year-and-a-half in closer quarters than

it's occupied in quite some time. A quick

recording session produced the *Five Dollar*

Bob's Mock Cooter Stew EP, about which Arm

says "someone at the record company told us it would be a good idea to do an EP to tide people over, but they neglected to mention that no one promotes EPs."

Still, the disc was a success, if only for its efforts to make band manager Bob Whitaker famous in even wider circles. On the heels of that release, Mudhoney reunited with

producer Jack Endino, whose long-gone Reciprocal studio spawned much of the original Seattle "sound," for an L.A. based

blowout. It was at the tail end of the four-week session that the band's new album picked up its name.

"Ren, who plays in Bloodloss with Mark, and plays saxophone on our album, was nursing a bottle of bourbon most of the time we were recording," recalls Turner. "At one point, we were going through a fast-food drive-through, and he woke up just long enough to say 'I will not eat of my brother the cow' before passing out again."

Past indulgences aside, passing out doesn't seem to be at the top of Mudhoney's "things to do" list for 1995. As evidenced by the bright-eyed manner in which they attend to early morning conversations undertaken without the benefit of so much as a single cup of joe, Arm and Turner look revitalized for a touring schedule that's already taken them to the Far East, opening for Pearl Jam in spots like Malaysia and Singapore. And despite the darker hues that mottle *My Brother The Cow*, it looks to be a year cleaved by plenty of typically goofy times.

"You can be angry with a smile on your face," agrees Arm. "You don't always have to be obvious about what you're doing."

Turner chuckles quietly when asked to slip into soothsaying mode: "We'll just keep limping along with diminishing returns," he posits. "That could be the prediction for Mudhoney or for the world, take your pick."

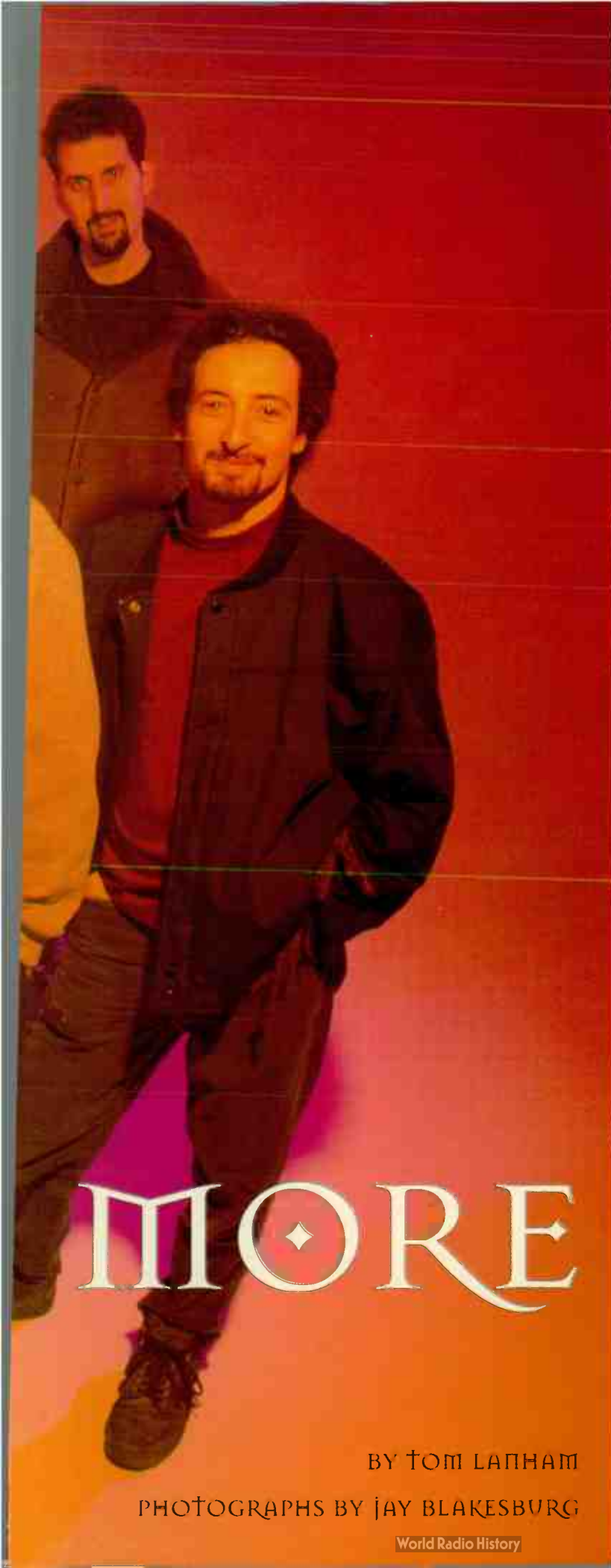
by David Stryker + Photo by Charles Peterson



L-R: Matt Lukin, Steve Turner, Dan Peters and Mark Arm.



FAITH NO MORE



MORE

BY TOM LAPHAM

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAY BLAKESBURG

LOOKING DISGRUNTLED AND GRUNGY AFTER A FULL DAY OF INTERVIEWS AND PHOTO SESSIONS, THE FIVE MEMBERS OF FAITH NO MORE TROMP WEARILY INTO A SAN FRANCISCO HOTEL LOBBY JUST AS THE SUN IS SETTING. KEYBOARDIST RODDY BOTTUM WANTS TO GO HOME AND CHANGE OUT OF HIS FUZZY PINK SWEATER. DRUMMER MIKE BORDIN WANTS TO PHONE HIS WIFE, BASSIST BILLY GOULD IS ALSO THINKING ABOUT HEADING HOME, AND SPARKING-NEW GUITARIST DEAN MENTA JUST SORT OF STANDS THERE, LOOKING CONFUSED. GROUP MOUTHPIECE MIKE PATTON, HOWEVER, IS ALREADY OFF IN A CORNER, HIS BROW KNITTING WITH CONCERN AS HIS MANAGER DELIVERS A BLUE-STREAK BULLETIN: BEFORE DOING ANYTHING THIS PARTICULAR EVENING, FAITH NO MORE MUST CONVENE FOR A TOP-SECRET MEETING UPSTAIRS. PERIOD.

"IF YOU KICK SOMEONE IN THE TEETH FOR FOLLOWING YOU LIKE A STUPID COW, ARE YOU AN ASSHOLE FOR DOING THAT?"

Like little kids at the end of recess, they scowl, grumble to themselves, then dutifully form a line behind big cheeses Warren Entner and John Vassilou. After nearly an hour, Bordin and Patton emerge, visibly shaken, and sit down to discuss their genuinely disturbed new Slash-Reprise disc, *King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime*. "We were just hearing what our life was gonna be like until Christmas," says Bordin, taking a deep why-me breath. He runs down the itinerary while Patton shakes his head dejectedly: "We're gonna have about six days off between now

demanding tour schedule. Along the path, of course, there's always Patton, a charismatic 24-year-old performer whose onstage antics have reportedly included a) unleashing the aftereffects of an enema onto the front row of a New Year's Eve concert crowd; b) peeing into a shoe at the same show, then drinking from it; and c) seeking out the darkest recesses of a theatre during soundcheck, and surreptitiously defecating there. What, fans may wonder, can Faith No More possibly do for an encore?

As Geena Davis warns in *The Fly*, be afraid. Be very afraid. *King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime* is not for the squeamish. There are certainly moments of tenderness that temper its dogged brutality—"Just A Man" dabbles in reggae, "Evidence" functions on an Isaac Hayes/'70s soul riff, and "Take This Bottle" sports a twangy country motif and the deliberate Tex Ritter-ish crooning of Patton, who's usually a cartoonish grab-bag of nasal or grunting voices. But these feel like the brief caress of a dominatrix before she really starts flogging your helpless hide. [If you say so, Tom—ed.]

Better bolt the furniture down for "Cuckoo For Caca," a grindcore shaker with Patton growling like a grizzly just awakened from hibernation. Then there's "What A Day" (a manic bass/drums ballbuster), "The Gentle Art Of Making Enemies" (fueled by pure punk adrenaline), and the leadoff single, "Digging The Grave" (which recycles AC/DC through the FNM combine and offers hooks lurking deep within the miasma). But, as "Epic" hinted, the group's greatest calling cards are its labored marches (on this disc, "King For A Day," "Ugly In The Morning" and "The Last To Know"), which are indeed epic, and parade through your speakers like a legion of flesh-hungry army ants. Once you've finished the record, it's wise to not jump up from the armchair too quickly—it takes a while for the dizzy vertigo to dissipate.

Despite the aural onslaught, *King* is not an assault, says Patton. "I think it's us being us, more than anything. I think we finally had the resources to be us on this record." And he's definitely his own man—wiry in his White Castle T-shirt, ragged jeans and worn sneakers, with a scraggly moustache and greasy brown bangs, he eerily resembles some rough-trade *Midnight Cowboy*-type hustler. The bearded Bordin, 32, who has dreadlocks snaking all the way down his back, looks more like Ma Alien on a rather bad hair day. "This is not a martyr-y record," he chimes in. "I don't think it's pointing at anybody in particular. To me, it was just us getting through the shit we've gone through and feeling really glad and uplifted that we got through it. It was totally necessary as a process to go through *Angel Dust* and learn from that, so we could come back to a more natural place and do this."

Lyricaly, however, you could still give *King* a "V" for Vendetta. In "Cuckoo," Patton woofs "They have no legs but chase us anyway/Wipe the shadow of your best friend/Gave birth to something we don't

L-R: Mike Patton, Mike Bordin, Roddy Bottum, Dean Mentá, Billy Gould.



and then. First we make a video next week, then we'll be practicing, breaking in our new guitar player, then we go to Europe for six weeks starting in March. Then it's five weeks in the States, off to Australia for festival shows, then festivals in Europe, then a summer tour of the States." And that's it? "Nope," Bordin sighs. "We've got a fall tour of Europe, then it's down to the Southern Hemisphere where it's warmer—South America, Australia again, even Japan. Then we start all over again."

"And at that point," Patton interjects, "you stop and kind of evaluate what's been happening."

Which is a pretty good question to ask right now. What *has* been happening with the Bay Area's jolting juggernaut of a rock combo? Sure, there's the obvious stuff—1991's hit single "Epic" pushed its parent *The Real Thing* album to platinum-plus. The '92 followup, *Angel Dust*, took off on skewed new sonic tangents, challenging listeners to keep up with the ever-shifting strata. After a monolithic world tour, one leg of which was spent opening for Guns N' Roses and Metallica, bespectacled axeman Jim Martin himself got the axe. Trey Spruance was recruited from Patton's side group Mr. Bungle for the *King* sessions, but quit after spying that

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"If *King* is angry in any way, it's angry in a random, chaotic, healthy way. Like the guy who goes into a building, shoots a bunch of holes in the wall and then leaves. He didn't kill anybody."

want to be... We'll retire with a turd on our lips." In "What A Day," he sees a "row of teeth and an encouraging word," then chastises himself: "I should've noticed it, I should've noticed it before." "Get Out"—a song demoed by Patton which the band later adopted note-for-note—ponders "What if there's no more fun to have/And all I've got is what I had?," while "The Gentle Art" gets down to bare-knuckled basics: "Don't look so surprised/Happy birthday, fucker/Blow that candle out—we're gonna kick you." Is it the music biz under fire here? Ex-guitarist Martin, maybe?

Patton swears that "the words are the very last thing I put in, an obligation." But both he and Bordin admit that Martin's performance on *Angel Dust* gradually got them sharpening the old FNM guillotine. "The guitar was a battle, a war, it was real difficult," Bordin recalls. "In a nutshell, what happened was [Martin] wanted to work on his own outside of us, and what we'd heard him doing at watershed points—three months before the album, two months before, one month before—made us very, very nervous. We felt we weren't getting what we needed from him into the songs, but every month as recording got closer, he said 'Don't worry—you guys are fucking with me, don't worry.'"

Now Patton's getting angry. He doesn't look very nice when he's angry. "We came into the studio [for *Angel Dust*] and there were parts that weren't written," he snarls. "So we had to fuckin' scramble, really think on our feet. It's like, you've gotta leave town on Wednesday, and Saturday you're sitting around the house going 'I'll do it tomorrow, I'll do it tomorrow,' until you've finally got one day to do it all—pack, rent a car. There's no way you're gonna get it all done. You just can't do an album that way."

Remember, this is the vocalist who once mixed lpecac syrup, castor oil, and a football-sized burrito in his gullet, just so he could spew its contents on the glass counter of a certain San Francisco business that wronged him. He's not above a little righteous retribution. "Revenge is good," he says with a foxlike smirk. "I think revenge is healthy too, and if you can use music in that way, a sort of therapeutic way for yourself, it can't do any harm. So if *King* is angry in any way, it's angry in a random, chaotic, healthy way. Like the guy who goes into a building, shoots a bunch of holes in the wall and then leaves. He didn't kill anybody."

Patton starts cackling—a high, weird Tex Avery laugh more animated than his surreal singing personas—and the effect is more unsettling than seeing him mad. Perhaps he is mad, and Faith No More fans are mere visitors to a sort of traveling asylum. After all, why would a rational human being leave a trail of droppings across U.S. stages for hapless cleanup crews to discover? And is that what this "scat" singer is celebrating alongside Bottum's soothing-but-funkified keys on "Evidence"? "Step beside the piece of circumstance/Got to wash away the taste of evidence," he groans, painting a visceral but nonetheless stomach-churning picture.

"I, uh, don't remember. I claim ignorance," Patton weasels when quizzed about the track. "I wrote the song and that's enough—you have fun with it. I don't have to tell you *shit*." The point, exactly. Oddly enough, he doesn't shy away from those purloined-doodle rumors. "You do what you gotta do to get you through," he explains. It sounds quite logical. "It's like, you're a musician, right? You wake up at 2:00 in the afternoon, you don't have any responsibilities, you don't have any certainties in your life, other than the fact that you're gonna play that night. So you may as well throw a couple of others in there, something to look forward to."

Bordin seems to understand his teammate's curious credo. "But we don't like living in the past," he chortles. "We've gotta find some new habits to do this time around."

"I'm gonna leave part of my colon behind this time," Patton declares. "Yeah!" Bordin responds. "It'll look like little pieces of sausage casing!" Then the duo breaks into happy hysterics, infatuated with its own morbid sense of humor. But Bordin—a founding father of Faith No More, along with Bottum and Gould (Patton clambered aboard on *Real Thing*, the band's third release)—suddenly stops laughing, turns poker-faced serious about the telltale "Evidence" cut. "That's the one I'm most proud of," he says. "All the loud songs turned out really great on this album, really aggressive, and we've always done that really well. But the smoother songs I've never felt we've gotten exactly right. And this one is pretty damn close to being *exactly* right."

It all comes down to creative control. The group switched co-producers (from Matt Wallace to Andy Wallace), hired artist Eric Drooker to design the oppressive snarling-dog cover art, and worked piecemeal but steadily on the project until all concerned parties were satisfied. Timekeeper Bordin confesses that Faith No More *does* wield a signature marching beat. "But we've tried to break out of that with this record and do different tempos."

As a sign things are changing, both musicians point to the lonesome, subtly-brushed tearjerker "Take This Bottle." "It's like a Guns N' Roses song!" purrs Patton. "Maybe Hank Williams lyrics, but definitely GN'R music." Bordin strokes his fuzzy chin and suggests that

"it's more Bob Dylan, I think. And we wouldn't have done that on the last record because it just wouldn't have fit. Billy—the guy who was largely responsible for that song—said he initially didn't even know if he should play it for us."

Patton continues the thought: "It's like when a certain member has an idea, and he's a little embarrassed over it, you know there's gotta be something good about it, it's gotta be worth doing!" Bordin agrees. "We're just not the kind of band to say 'never.' I would say we wouldn't ever do something, because we'd do it just to fuck each other up. Like if we're writing songs and I mention 'I'm really glad you didn't write a song like *this* because it'd really piss me off, guaranteed, the next song through the door would be a song like that."

Patton is snickering again. A bad sign. "We try to fuck each other in the ass as much as anyone would," he says cheerfully.

Bordin believes that the future for Faith No More—indeed, for humanity itself—lies beyond physical ties like pleasure and pain. Talk shows,



the OJ trial, an information superhighway, constant input without ever leaving home. "We're headed toward nobody having a physical body because it'll be unnecessary," he says. "We'll all be little brains in tanks. So what do you do to fight that? You encourage people to think for themselves, you don't tell people everything. But then you get a hard time from the press who say 'They're a bunch of dicks because they don't tell us everything.'"

Patton sees where his partner is going with this and picks up the thread. "Or if you don't tell someone what they wanna know, if you're shitting onstage or whatever, then you get hassled for *that*—you're a little fuckin' baby if you're just trying to provoke some thought. If you kick someone in the teeth for following you like a stupid cow, are you an asshole for doing that?"

Hmmm. That's a good one. Bordin looks puzzled. Patton himself looks puzzled. And the question just hangs there in midair for a few uncomfortable moments. Time for a helpful *non sequitur*, and Bordin obliges: "To lead people by the hand is wrong, so we just keep doing what we're doing while trying to not be too disgusted with ourselves."

Or, as the always-highbrow Patton so aptly puts it in closing, "We just wanna be the happy bums that we are. That's all."

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“We’ve gone through so much crazy stuff in Europe, tribal stuff, naked people eating hash, out of their minds, taking us back to bonfires in the German woods. It’s like a *Rock ‘N’ Roll Babylon*/Charles Bukowski thing that goes back and forth. Stuff that in one second can make you laugh and say ‘I love life!’ and then say ‘This is so pitiful I could shoot myself.’”

by Eric Gladstone
photos by Michael Lavigne

Yes, folks, everything you’ve feared about Monster Magnet is true. They are the Pied Pipers of a new drug-addled generation. They are the priests of a dangerous cult. They are the boyfriends your parents warned you about. They are the thugs who knocked over your mailbox. And Magnet leader Dave Wyndorf is here to tell you about it.

“I’ve lived a lot of crazy shit. I’m in a world where every night is Saturday, every night is New Year’s Eve.” Wyndorf boasts of how fans will hand the band huge amounts of drugs—fists of hash, pills, tabs—which they inevitably give to the next night’s crowd, or throw out before border-crossing. Okay, maybe he’s not boasting. Maybe he’s just explaining how he came to write the new and fairly different album *Dopes To Infinity* (A&M).

“It’s kind of dumb. I’ve screamed my head off and danced with freaks and done mushrooms and we slogged our way across Europe and America dozens of times, and it’s always been this total psych-out aggro-thing. And it’s a lot of fun, it’s really good. But I think to remain sane, a part of your brain says ‘I wanna hear something pretty.’ And that’s the part I listened to.”

As producer of the group (in addition to writing the songs, singing lead and playing guitar), Wyndorf took this album more seriously than the previous *Superjudge*, which was recorded in three weeks. “I wanted to do something that was a little shinier, a different texture, and you have to experiment.” Using 48 tracks (as opposed to *Superjudge*’s 24, or 4 to 16 tracks previously), the band expanded its palette. “There’s a lot of options that I didn’t use, a lot more mellotron, bells and chimes, that when I got to mixing, it was just like ‘this is way too much.’ Save it for the B-sides: ‘lousy remix,’ ‘not good enough mix.’”

They Call It "Dopes"?

Though all of MM's recordings are sonically linked as tight as a chopper's chain drive, the disc that *Dopes* most closely recalls is, surprisingly, 1992's four-song album *Tab* (Caroline), full of both ultra-loud freak-outs and ethnic-inflected acoustic sentiment. "Of course it sounds like *Tab*," Dave reacts by thinking out loud, "because you like this stuff, Dave, and you've been avoiding it for a few years." What I wanted to get was that kind of sound—this woolly, tape saturation thing—plus melody. It seems really simple, but to get that was a weird trick."

Monster Magnet should be used to such balancing acts—the group cruises a territory between genres that defies easy description. "There's only so many outlets for music out there," says Wyndorf, "and most of them are pigeonholes carved out by people who have been around longer than I have." MM prefers the old-fashioned "hard rock" tag to "metal," name-checking Mudhoney ("a big inspiration to us") and Soundgarden as brethren. "I have to go inside my head and pull what I feel and put that with the images of stuff that I love," says Dave. "If there wasn't that it would just be an 'amazing recreation.'

"I usually like to do stuff that has enough double meanings for me that I can have a lot more fun singing it and re-hearing it for a long time," Wyndorf continues, explaining his "mountain of pills"-style lyrics. "Like, how I'd describe a conversation that I had. Would I say 'I remember I talked to you on the corner'? No, 'I fucked you on Jupiter.' I like to put things that way so I can remember emotionally how I felt without having to write it out. But you have to start from a base of reality."

The reality Wyndorf starts from is a subcultural melange of pulp fiction, exploitation films and comic books. "I spent a lot of time as a kid reading comics, watching movies, being a total consumer of stuff," says Dave, who compares the new album cover to the '50s sci-fi illustrations of Harry Harrison. "And the descriptions of all these things really rang my bell. I tend to think that way, I tend to use these kinds of metaphors. Nothing is ever big enough."

And no stone goes unturned. Even the band's press releases, which relatively few people see, add to the *oeuvre*, quoting Hell's Angels leader Sonny Barger and surrealist film director Alejandro Jodorowsky, and inserting tributes to cartoonist Jack Kirby and actor Warren Oates (*Two Lane Blacktop*).

"I hate to get into the thing of kitsch," Dave cautions, "appreciating bad stuff as being good. I'm appreciating bad stuff because it's just plain bad. You don't want to glorify shit too much—like the movie *Ed Wood*—because *Ed Wood* really was the worst."

Likewise, Monster Magnet, which began in Red Bank, New Jersey "as a total indulgence in stuff that we thought was a rippin' good time," has always been aware of rock's potential for pratfalls. In fact, Monster Magnet (named either after a Frank Zappa song or an episode of *Gigantor*, and who cares anyway?) just happened to be the name on the particular copy of the demo that aroused interest. In an alternative universe, A&M could be promoting the new album by Dog of Mystery, Grinning Gibbon, or Airport '75—some of their alternate identities.

Monster Magnet's shows have changed refreshingly little from their earliest incarnations. Sure, mountain-man Tim Cronin is generally restricted to handling the oil lights now (he used to sing), and they may stick to the set list instead of pulling out the 20-minute freak-jam most nights. But with bassist Joe Calandra and drummer John Kleiman keeping the juggernaut on course, they're still as megalomaniacal, over-the-top and willfully absurd as ever. And they still have their offshoots—Cronin pursues the muse in Daisy Cutter, and Kleiman got to play front man in the aptly named Dime Bag (using the appellation of pulp novelist Sax Rohmer). Both projects reflect the loud, obnoxious origins of Monster Magnet's indie years.

Dopes To Infinity, by the way, is actually Monster Magnet's fifth major release, Dave reminds me, preceded by *Spine Of God*, *Tab*, *Superjudge* and a self-titled mini-LP on the

German Glitterhouse label. Should we also mention the two cassettes (*Forget About Life, I'm High On Dope* and *I'm High, What Are You Gonna Do About It?*) released on the band's own Cool Beans label?

"I wanted this one to be kind of 'huggy,' kind of comfortable for me," Dave continues, getting back to *Dopes*. "Most of it's a bumper, to tell you the truth." Like the unusually simple, raw "Blow 'Em Off?" "That's as close to me being completely out of adjectives as possible," Dave explains. "I went to the hotel in the middle of the recording, wrote the song, wrote these words, didn't even check them, and the next day just got in there and sang the fucking thing. And it was pretty naked, more naked than I prefer to be."

Still, plenty of the album reflects Monster Magnet's traditional vibe—like "Negasonic Teenage Warhead" (which appeared in demo form on the soundtrack to *S.F.W.*), "King Of Mars" and "Masterburner." Others, like the instantly memorable "All Friends & Kingdom Come" or "Dead Christmas" dwell in that unexplainable netherworld between Strawberry Alarm Clock and Lynyrd Skynyrd (two bands that actually shared members!). Considering how conservative bands can get once signed to a major label, the Magnet's freaky experimentation should be taken as an encouraging sign. "That's what I really miss, experimenting with stuff," says Dave, who has his eye on producing other bands, as well as bringing back MM25 (the guise under which *Tab* was originally created) or even the droning Dog Of Mystery. "If I could, in this land of major-label rock-for-a-living craziness, get a space in time where we didn't have to plug it, there would probably be three side projects going write now."

Did he ever expect that even this project would last this long? "Are you kidding? No way. This was a stroke, a knowing wink to myself. The fact that people actually got into it—at first I thought 'people are a lot stupider than I thought.' Then I realized, there is something about it that people connect with. It's been great that it happened that way, because the madness of this thing *should* go this far, you know? Every time it looks like 'this is ridiculous, this is like a cosmic joke!'... Well, I'm going to reserve the punchline. Because, well, what's anybody's intention? To be a poet? To help people? I'm way too cynical to accept that stuff at face value. Get a life!"



ARCHERS OF LOAF *Vee Vee Alias*

The North Carolina music scene is conventionally divided between two poles. To the left, you have the robust pop of Superchunk; to the right, the Polvo-led "art rock" genre, which basically means rock that's not easily hummed. With their 1993 debut album *Icky Mettle*, Archers of Loaf fit neatly into the Superchunk camp, every song a tight mini-anthem with distorted guitar and croaking vocals. It's surprising, then, that the follow-up *Vee Vee* strays so far to the other side. The opening "Step Into The Light" is built on dissonance and wavy slo-mo sound. Although a few of the songs that follow are hummable entirety, most tracks throw off your timing with stop-start tempos. Complexity reigns, with all instruments straying off on their own; while one guitarist fiercely powers through a couple of mistuned non-chords, the other roams up and down the scale. Archers Of Loaf's music is less accessible this time around, but also a better forum for singer Eric Bachmann's I've-smoked-my-last-cigarette-and-cried-my-last-tear hoarseness. Though *Vee Vee* is a dawning of sorts in terms of musical maturity, the band is still under-developed lyrically (typical phrases include "It's always the same people pissing the same people off" and "You can spend your cash/You can smoke your stash"). Nonetheless, it's thumbs up to the Archers for shooting down attempts to mass-label an entire state's worth of excellent music. —Megan McCarthy

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 7. First single "Harnessed In Slums."

FILE UNDER: Quirky North Carolina punk.

R.I.Y.L.: Polvo, Dinosaur Jr., Grifters.

THE AUGUST SONS *Plants, Planets And Insects El Recordo*

Mississippi isn't most people's idea of a hotbed of cutting-edge music, but hell, anything can happen. *Plants, Planets and Insects* is the peculiar sound of three creative souls—Steve Noto, Marc Lofland and Jerry Scruggs—left to their own backwoods devices. Part Pere Ubu, part early Talking Heads, part middle-period Wire, it is as befuddling and unpredictable a racket as you're likely to hear. And not because it's crazy and silly and goofy and noisy, but because it works within a proficient, almost traditional framework of bass, drums, and guitar. *Plants, Planets And Insects*, the band's third release, makes it clear that the Sons haven't heard much of what's happening on the indie scene these days, and that's a good thing. Without exposure to current modern rock, they don't run the risk of lapsing into mindless derivation. The band's combination of banjos, Eno-ish noise collages, and effect-heavy electric guitars creates an inscrutable, though strangely seamless, mix. Occasionally, the frenetic, fuzzed-out pace calls to mind *Up On The Sun*-era Meat Puppets, especially when a precise drum/bass break rings out amid the clatter. The August Sons have come up with something way down in Saucier, Mississippi, likely quite by accident, that happens to resemble nothing at this moment. Wow. —Bob Gulla

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 6.

FILE UNDER: Inscrutably cool swamp-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Early Meat Puppets, Pere Ubu.

AUTECHRE *Amber TVT*

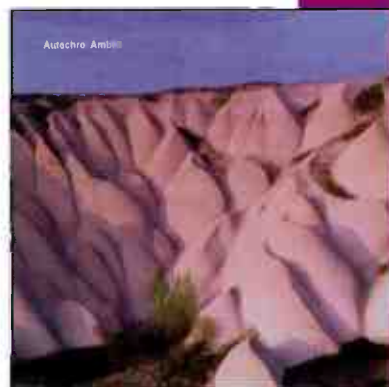
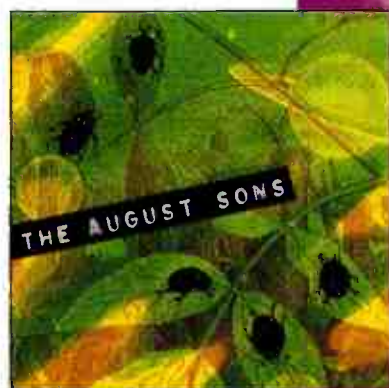
If you grooved out on the electronic sounds in the background of *Forbidden Planet*, you'll like Autechre's second album, *Amber*. Autechre is composed of two young Englishmen, Rob Booth and Sean Brown, and they really know their way around a tape loop. Save for a few random and highly processed yelps scattered about the sonic veldt, the music is entirely electronic and entirely instrumental. The very first song, "Foil," is gripping, plunging the listener into an austere, pristine world of white noise drum drops and ominous, hesitant melodies. Think of it as U2's "Numb" hypercubed. When Autechre sticks with more rhythmic music, as it does on "Glitch" and "Piero," it's almost hypnotically listenable. But when they slow things down, they veer dangerously close to New Age, sort of like what Robbie the Robot might have come up with if he had sat down and smoked a big fatty. At its best, however, Autechre manages to sound truly futuristic. If Dick Dale is the music for cruising down the PCH in a cherry red '57 Chevy, and Motorhead is perfect for crossing the desert in a van, then I guess it's time for soundtrack music for surfing the 'Net, and *Amber* fits the bill very nicely. —Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 14.

FILE UNDER: Ambient techno.

R.I.Y.L.: Brian Eno's instrumental records, The Orb, Tomita.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



BAND OF SUSANS *Here Comes Success Restless*

Here's the received wisdom about Band Of Susans: only one Susan in the band these days; underrecognized NYC veterans; Page Hamilton used to be in the band but they don't sound like Helmet; guitars and lots of them; ties to the Glenn Branca/Rhys Chatham weird-tuning/guitar-orchestra thing; did we mention that there are guitars and lots of them? There—now that's out of the way. BoS frontman Robert Poss's peculiar genius is for writing three-guitar arrangements with distinct parts that sound great when they're played together for a really long time. Live, the band can keep going on a single song for ten minutes or so easily—not exactly jamming, more just intensely working through the permutations of the guitar arrangement. Earlier records haven't really given the band a chance to do that. *Here Comes Success* does, fortunately. Its eight actual songs (there's also a brief audio doodle) average just over eight minutes apiece. The original "Pardon My French" indulges BoS's Stones obsession in a much more interesting way than its earlier Stones covers, by inventing a Keith Richards-style riff, splitting it into three parts and then letting each part grow and expand on its own into a sort of mutant *Aspect Of Keith*. "Hell Bent," the album's best song, actually hits a groove, and drives it as long as you would want it to, which is rather a while. And kudos for the superb engineering, which makes the three guitars distinct enough that you can always tell who's playing what—appropriate for the loud rock equivalent of fine chamber music. —Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 28. Coming later this year: *Wired For Sound*, a Band Of Susans double-CD greatest-hits collection.

FILE UNDER: Triple-guitar barrage.

R.I.Y.L.: Sonic Youth, Eddie Van Halen, Gang Of Four.

BIM SKALA BIM *Eyes & Ears BiB*

The words "infectious" and "ska" are seen in each other's company just as often as "angry" and "Trent Reznor." It's a world where even a broken heart is expressed by a jaunty tune. Organs chirp, guitars jangle, and the horn section tells it like it is. Though the great ska bands of the early '80s (Specials, Selector) often explored the dark side of society, contemporary skanksters definitely lean towards the chipper side of the spectrum. So it is with *Eyes & Ears*, the latest from Boston's Bim Skala Bim, who have mellowed out considerably since their more frantic early days. Bim is now downright sunny. When they croon "Come On Over," it's a sentiment as timeless as the Four Freshman, and probably even more irresistible. This spring-like mood continues on such songs as "Pretty Flowers" and "8 Track Mind," aided by singer Dan Vitale's smooth vocal style. Bim also upholds ska's songwriting tradition with the well-crafted gems "Crazy" and "No More Forever." Although the last song strikes a somewhat more elegiac mood, it doesn't last long. This is light-hearted music for people who still know how to be chipper and aren't ashamed to show it. —Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 2.

FILE UNDER: Soulful, poppy ska.

R.I.Y.L.: Madness, *Skarmageddon* compilation, Toasters.

SIMON BONNEY *Everyman Multi*

Back in the deepest recesses of the '70s, there flourished a romantic vision of the singer-songwriter as a modern-day troubadour traveling about the land with an acoustic guitar on his back and moralistic story-songs in his heart. One would think that the self-conscious sincerity and aesthetic sensibilities of Harry Chapin and Cat Stevens would be miles and several genres away from Simon Bonney, whose past credits include *Crime And The City Solution*, a band founded by Birthday Party alumni Roland S. Howard and Mick Harvey. But with *Everyman*, named for a pre-Shakespeare morality play, Simon Bonney resurrects this romantic ideal of the gypsy songman—if not the cloying style—with rousing results. These songs are very close in spirit to the unplugged, unamplified and unmiked shows that Bonney performs in poetry rooms and coffee houses. *Everyman's* instrumentation is spare but formidable—banjo here, slide guitar there, plunking piano scattered around—and gives Bonney's heart-felt lyrics, gaspy voice and sullen covers of "Goodtime Charley's Got The Blues" and "Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain" gritty substance without a hint of country schmaltz. Neither tenor (Bonney's nor *Everyman's*) may be strong enough to win many new fans, but this is an often rich and involving record. —Scott Frampton

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 14.

FILE UNDER: Peripatetic country-folk.

R.I.Y.L.: Nick Cave, James Taylor, Triffids.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



"Being the Breeders and Pod. I thought 'Let's portray the seed, and why not use peeled eels rather than my little winkle?'" —AD artist Vaughn Oliver describing his concept and pore for the cover of the Breeder's Pod.

BOOMERS YYZ *What We Do* Wildcat

With a voice echoing somewhere between late-period Sting, Paul Simon, and Pete Townshend, Ian Thomas is the creative soul of Canada's Boomers YYZ. His smooth croon, laid atop minimally orchestrated, smoky blues riffs and simple, bass-driven pop tunes, comes out sounding mature, restrained, and classy. Having a way with nifty lyrical hooks helps, too. "I could tell you you look stupid when you're trying to act cool, but I love you too much," he sings on the *noir-ish* "Love You Too Much." Whether or not you do flips over sanitized, radio-ready rock, you can't deny the surprising depth with which Thomas presents his material. Had he not chosen to smooth virtually every edge on the record (except for brief stomp interludes on "Rise Above It"), *What We Do* would be an outstanding achievement. As it stands, Thomas and the Boomers present a well-packaged, distinctive sound that has already been discovered and rewarded north of the border, where Thomas has won several songwriting awards from SOCAN, the Canadian performance society. You could easily hear a song off *What We Do* over the PA system at your local Giganto Food Mart, but with sentiments like "Some call a man a fool who lives inside a dream, whose only prized possession is what is yet to be" ("Never Going To Let It Go"), this is one band I wouldn't mind squeezing tomatoes to.

—Bob Gulla

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 28.

FILE UNDER: Smart, *noir-ish* radio pop.

R.I.Y.L.: New Sting, *Royal Scam*-era Steely Dan, early Paul Simon.



CLAWHAMMER *Thank The Holder Uppers* Interscope

Almost every song on this record is too long, and that's a problem. I have to get out of bed and make the long trip across my room to the hi-fi to hit skip or fade about every three minutes—no way for a man to live. What's really frustrating is that much of *Thank The Holder Uppers* is good, but the songs could be better if the Clawhammer boys practiced a little restraint. There's no denying their crack playing and their knack for pillaging rock's past. Problem is, these guys seem a little too proficient on their instruments, enamored of severe (and frequent) tempo changes for the sake of keeping themselves interested. Then there's John Wahl's singing, which can drive a sane, sensitive person to tears. Wahl comes off like the wise-ass you knew in school who never took his Ritalin and farted on purpose in homeroom, his voice an affected combination of Axl Rose, Bobcat Goldthwaite and a cackling hag from *Scooby-Doo*. Sounds great on paper—in this day of boring non-personalities we could use more obnoxiousness—but his singing is almost totally tuneless. "Five Fifths Dead," the strongest moment on the record, bears out all gripes by what it does right. At 7:51, it's *Holder Uppers'* longest song, but after a couple of changes that actually work, it's last three minutes are a cool wig-out based on one, just one, fierce groove not unlike MC5's "Skunk" or the Stooges' "1970," with some great drumming and noisy sax skronk. The fact that Wahl only sings for about two minutes doesn't hurt either. Clawhammer has some great ideas and killer riffs, and incidental vocals wouldn't be a problem so long as they didn't distract from what the band is doing, but Wahl's schtick is so relentless he just can't be ignored.

—Steve McGuirl

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 28.

FILE UNDER: Garage punk goes prog.

R.I.Y.L.: MC5 circa *High Time*, Blue Cheer, Flaming Lips.



ROKY ERICKSON *All That May Do My Rhyme* Trance

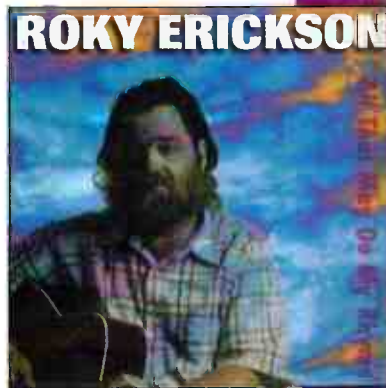
Roky Erickson's famously tangled legal and mental history places him second only to Daniel Johnston in the fucked-up-but-more interesting-than-you sweepstakes, and while anything new from him is always welcome, it's hard to figure what Erickson's first studio record in ten years is, exactly. *Do My Rhyme* features several new Erickson compositions and a smattering of old ones done over (but "this is no... crummy reissue," the liner notes explain. "This is the real thing, brothers and sisters!"). Included are ostensible retoolings of Roky standards like "Clear Night For Love," "You Don't Love Me Yet," and "Starry Eyes," which Erickson redoes twice here (who knows why). Most of Erickson's remakes are to-the-note faithful to the old versions, and the need to resurrect them is puzzling, since the devoted don't have to be reminded why they love Erickson, and it's probably too late for everyone else. That said, Erickson's new material—most of it six-string folk, as usual—is as strange and as graceful as ever. The ghost of Buddy Holly, for whom Roky has a legendary jones, hovers over *Do My Rhyme* the same way it has over every record he's ever done (check out his "Peggy Sue" hiccup on "Starry Eyes"). Erickson's spent years perfecting his Holly impersonation, and he's finally gotten good at it. He plies "You Don't Love Me Yet" with the same sense of desperation and awe as his idol, making it a wonder to behold.

—Alison Stewart

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 13. First single "We Are Never Talking."

FILE UNDER: Weird, graceful, slightly reheated folk.

R.I.Y.L.: Daniel Johnston, Palace Brothers, Doug Sahm.



she's
the girl next door –



if
you're
from
that
neighborhood

Gill Sobule

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from the singer of the same name

featuring such
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and
"karen by night"



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World Radio History

FLOWERHEAD *The People's Fuzz* Zoo

Flowerhead's obvious affection for every '70s cliché in the rock 'n' roll playbook—Phil Lynott vocals, woozy psychedelia, BTO pot rock—is all over *The People's Fuzz*, the Austin band's second release. Even more significantly, Flowerhead has a love for fuzz that would embarrass Hendrix. The band seems to think that covering Blind Melon-like hippie funk 'n' roll in layers of distortion attitude will make '90s rockers out of '70s refugees, and it almost does. While the '70s hang over Flowerhead like a dark cloud, they serve it all up with enthusiasm and authority and not a trace of self-consciousness. They know enough to let *Fuzz* play to their strengths, which include arena-ready guitars, dopey love lyrics, and distortion above all. Singer Eric Faust has a gloriously technicolor voice with a range that puts Shannon Hoon to shame, and in a decade of bedroom 4-tracks, Flowerhead is loud, dumb, and defiantly hi-fi. The band (which now includes ex-Rev. Horton Heat drummer Kyle Thomas) plays '70s blues-metal without the accompanying arena-rock sprawl, and most of *Fuzz* is compact and surprisingly disciplined. The freeform jam that ends "Happy" is Flowerhead's only concession to dino-rock excess. —Allison Stewart



DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 28.

FILE UNDER: Ripping, distortion-dense arena rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Blind Melon, Smashing Pumpkins, Cheap Trick.

FOETUS *Gash* Columbia

If chaos theory had a soundtrack, it would be composed by Jim "Foetus" Thirlwell. Even the man's name, a series of aliases including You've Got Foetus On Your Breath, Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel and the more matter-of-factly menacing Clint Ruin, is a mutable instrument of confusion and art terrorism. And this is to say nothing of his music, which creates orchestral bombast out of layers (and layers and layers) of sheer cacophony. The predominant argument for Foetus' genius is that such strenuous listening has consistently been, with a few exceptions, extraordinarily rewarding even for those without a pronounced masochistic bent, but he may be due for even more respect with *Gash*. To say *Gash* is more "accessible" than past Foetus extravaganzas is akin to saying that guided tours of meat processing plants are cleaner than in years past, but curiosity seekers and fans of this sort of savage amusement alike are bound to find this somewhat more penetrable. The best songs here, save for the pure industrial rave-up of "Verklemmt," wrap carbine percussion around horn flourishes and big band swing rhythms. Every track is in its own way a brutal collage, but these ("Slung," "Steal Your Life Away") particularly inspired integrations of wildly different—and neatly similar—musics are what the best of Foetus is all about. —Scott Frampton



DATALOG: Release date: Apr. 11. *Null EP*, featuring remixes of "Verklemmt" and three new songs, also available. Foetus does title music for MTV Sports.

FILE UNDER: Uneasy listening.

R.I.Y.L.: Nine Inch Nails, Test Dept., KMFDM.

GUIDED BY VOICES *Alien Lanes* Matador

If you'd never heard Guided By Voices before, and somebody brought you *Alien Lanes* and told you they'd found it in a stack of Czech instruction language records in a junk store and they had no idea what it was, you'd think it was the greatest thing you'd ever heard. But for an awful lot of records now, they've been doing the same thing—super-lo-fi first-take recordings of wonderful pop songs that sometimes get through a couple of verses and sometimes almost get as far as the hook—and it's starting to wear *really* thin. The advantage of recording a song the first time it's ever played is that sometimes you capture the spark of creation on tape; the disadvantage is that it usually sounds like shit. That's the problem with a lot of these 28 songs (yes, 28; yes, it's a 40-minute album). The better ones cry out for decent production. The marvelous "Here, There And Everywhere"-style backing vocals of "Chicken Blows" hint that a little professional studio time wouldn't hurt GBV a bit. And the worse songs are actively annoying: They fade out just as they're starting to get interesting, or collapse after 30 seconds of Robert Pollard babbling his *terrible* lyrics. Five or six times, we get complete, worked-out compositions, and they're great—like, up there with the Beatles, the Who and the Creation, who are the main competition on this particular playing field. Too often, though, these songs sound like they were recorded before they were finished. What you hear is not a sketch, but a fragment of a sketch, demonstrating mastery but far from a masterpiece. —Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 31.

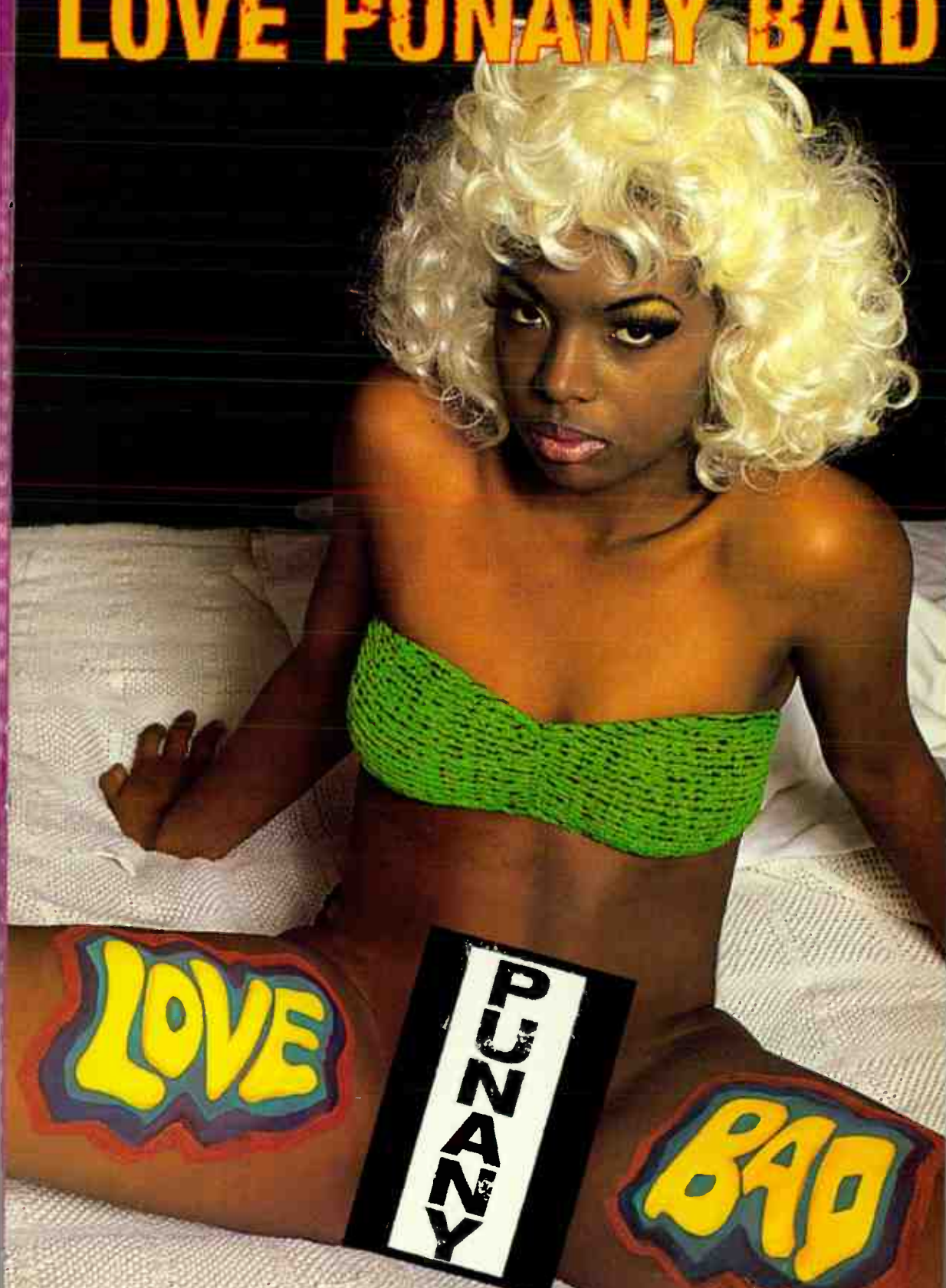
FILE UNDER: Lo-fi roulette.

R.I.Y.L.: Beatles bootlegs, AM radio, early Kinks.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD

LOVE PUNANY BAD



SLACKNESS IN THE DANCEHALL



Featuring the Johnny Osbourne
Hit-Single: "Body Bye"
(Reggae & Hip-Hop Re-mixes)

World Radio History

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JULIANA HATFIELD *Only Everything* *Mammoth-Atlantic*

Juliana Hatfield's third solo record, *Only Everything*, reveals her growing competence with a guitar; its 14 songs feature guitar as prominently as her distinctively plaintive voice, and sometimes more. For a singer, she's an okay guitarist, but her strengths lie in her lyrics and melodies, not in her playing. Her change of focus is no doubt due to her extremely sensitive nature—she's been criticized for not being very good on the guitar, as well as making the unfortunate remark that women can never play guitar as well as men. In trying to prove the critics (and herself) wrong, Hatfield has diminished a little of her brilliance. That said, *Only Everything* is still a terrific pop record that showcases low self-esteem within super-catchy melodies. The most poignant of the songs, "Live On Tomorrow," goes through a litany of the things to which the speaker has been subjected—"Dump me in the ocean/Tied to a piano"—but she refuses to give up, responding "A heartbeat says you haven't died/You gotta try to stay alive." "OK, OK"'s fierce, rocking melody contradicts Hatfield's doormat lyrics, where she asserts that she "did it/but I didn't" just to settle an argument. "Congratulations" is a haunting portrayal of a person's battle with food addiction, a problem the admitted anorexic Hatfield has in real life. While *Only Everything* isn't all the title suggests, Hatfield's endearing, sometimes coy persona and hum-along melodies make it more than just one person's statement of loneliness. Hatfield's talent lies in writing catchy cries for help, and until that's the only everything she concentrates on, her records won't be as compelling as they could be. But *Only Everything* is definitely something pretty great.

—Megan McLaughlin

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28. First single "Universal Heartbeat."

FILE UNDER: Plaintive pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Velocity Girl, Veruca Salt, Aimee Mann.

HELIUM *The Dirt Of Luck* *Matador*

Where 1994's lengthy mini-LP *Pirate Prude* was memorable for singer-leader Mary Timony's paint-gun guitar and meandering song-forms, dotted with pop choruses for guideposts, *The Dirt Of Luck* is both more carefully arranged and, as the rockers say, "heavier." Timony, drummer Shawn Devlin (ex-Dumptruck) and new bass player Ash Bowie (also of Polvo) favor an instrumental interlock fairly rare for current indie-rock. Throughout, Timony's guitar is less gestural, better integrated, than ever before. The trade-off for this newfound musicianliness is the slight cooling of the gender-political fire that powered earlier releases. (Actually, there's no earthly reason to associate the two.) "Medusa" is another reclaimed image of feminine power and "Honeycomb" takes on woman-woman conflict ("She did it to me and changed my point of view/She'll tie you up so that you can't move"), but the agit-prop here is mostly subordinate to the characters and moods Timony constructs in individual songs. "Silver Angel" is based around vivid, creepy metaphors ("It feels like a slideshow... It's more like a freakshow... Make it fit like a wet glove") and "Pat's Trick" is a regretful look back at the tedium and romance of adolescence: "Plant a seed there to remember you... with your long-ass curly hair/We had a pirate band." *The Dirt Of Luck* isn't about Timony finding a voice—she's always had one—but about finding many voices.

—Franklin Bruno

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 14.

FILE UNDER: Post-riot grll (but not post-feminist) rock with artful pop touches.

R.I.Y.L.: PJ Harvey, Salem 66, Pavement, Hole's *Live Through This*.

JOHN LEE HOOKER *Chill Out* *Virgin*

There's no such thing as fringe blues, or free blues, or avant-blues. In the history of red-blooded popular music, the minute anyone messes with the blues, the result sells a ton of records and is promptly given a baser name, like rock 'n' roll. Seemingly realizing that the blues has become everything, John Lee Hooker reverses the equation, expounding for an album's length the theory that everything is the blues. "Annie Mae" says it with its smoldering vocals (torch songs are really theatricalized blues); "Too Young" with its country resonances (the Cowboy Junkies? They're just twanging out the blues). Nor does Hooker ignore pop literature in his argument. "Serve You Right To Suffer" is all dark-side poetics, with free verse like "doctor put you on milk, cream and alcohol/your nerves are so bad/just can't sleep at night" (the animating spirit behind the spoken-word scene? Take a guess)—while "Tupelo" serves up a mild, reflective panorama of a country town (Garrison Keillor: the Midwestern Lutheran as bluesman). But the epic scene in this imaginary history is the opening track, in which Hooker and band revisit the scene of the Last Temptation of the Blues: the era, late '70s; the culprit, Steely Dan. The song, "Chill Out," may shoot straight for the post-MOR VH-1 crowd, but it fails to undercut the high-mindedness of Hooker's credo: "I'll sing it for the people who feel the way I feel."

—Andrea Moed

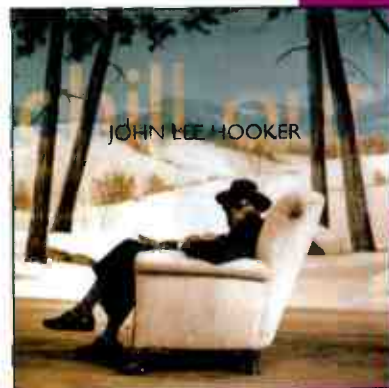
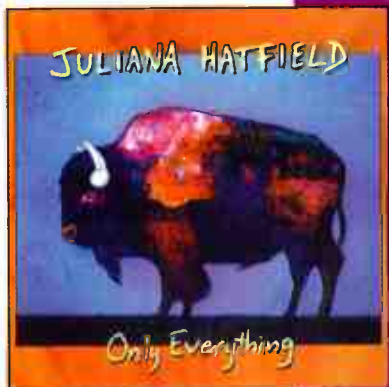
DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 21.

FILE UNDER: Comfort blues.

R.I.Y.L.: Lightnin' Hopkins, Lyle Lovett.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD




LIDA HUSIK *Joyride* Caroline

Lida Husik (pronounced "Lee-da Hue-sick") is a Washington, DC singer/songwriter who has released three albums on Shimmy-Disc, as well as last year's ambient/electronic EP, *Evening At The Grange*, on new home Caroline's techno imprint Astralwerks. While all of those were intriguing and occasionally mesmerizing outings, none approach the consistency, coherence and quality of *Joyride*. An extremely gifted singer, Husik veers between an airy high register and a wry, somewhat blasé alto, and that contrast between sweetness and atonality—particularly on her shimmering multi-tracked harmonies—is at the core of what makes her music so special. Generally accompanied by delicately-treated guitars and unobtrusive instrumentation (almost entirely played by Husik herself), the songs waft out of the speakers like gentle but heady incense, or an incisive comment from a soft-spoken friend. The music has almost no sharp edges—so few that the softly loping drum machine on "Persinthia Landro & John" is almost jarring—but Husik never stoops to the fluffy-cloud new-age-isms that usually loft music this gentle into opiated limbo. A remarkably fluid song-cycle of subtlety, *Joyride* won't tear your head off, but it just might give the word ethereal a good name.

—Jem Aswad

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 14.

FILE UNDER: Songwriting meets technology.

R.I.Y.L.: Alison Moyet, Kendra Smith, Cocteau Twins.


KATE JACOBS (*What About Regret*) Bar/None

(*What About Regret*)—and yes, the parentheses are part of the title—is Kate Jacobs' second full-length record. It displays a great deal of growth in the Hoboken, NJ native's talent for composing intricate little story-songs that stick in your head long after the CD has stopped spinning. Her subject matter continues to cover a broad and unlikely range of topics, including marijuana farming in Nebraska in the '70s, the author of *The Story Of O*, surviving war, a little girl who has too many brothers and heartbreaking love. Each is presented in an intriguing way that avoids cliché with enchanting melodies that encourage repeated listening. In a world where most singer/songwriters have blurred into a large, undistinguished mass, Jacobs' stands apart from them with songs that possess an unusually literate quality, as well as a clear, pixie-ish voice. Up-and-coming guitar god Dave Schramm (of the Schramms) adds his remarkable touch to each song while also contributing keyboards, lap steel, dobro, harmonica and accordion.

—Jim Caligiuri

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 15.

FILE UNDER: Country and Eastern.

R.I.Y.L.: Iris Dement, Nanci Griffith, the Schramms.

JAMIROQUAI *The Return Of The Space Cowboy* Sony Soho Square

Jay Kaye is back, following up his much lauded 1993 debut *Emergency On Planet Earth*. This time he's left the earthly for the lunar, but the results are still the same. Once again, Jay sings with the appealing urgency that evokes a reaction from the pit of your stomach. It seems he's spent the two-year break in between albums studying his patron saint, Stevie Wonder, because the classic live funk sound that he touched upon last time is further refined here. In an age where many of his contemporaries rely on digital sounds, Jamiroquai still benefits from the authenticity of the live horns, drums, and guitars (both bass and wah-wah) that are the backbone of the tracks. That said, there's a smattering of modern technology in the vinyl scratching and synthesizer noodlings that occasionally pop up. Though *The Return Of The Space Cowboy* has some shining moments that claim its individuality—the didgeridoo-laden groove of "Journey to Arnhemland" and Jay's belting vocal on "Light Years" come to mind—it seems almost like an unnecessary afterthought to the completeness of *Emergency On Planet Earth*.

—Tamara Palmer

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28.

FILE UNDER: Updated retro-funk.

R.I.Y.L.: Stevie Wonder, acid jazz, Brand New Heavies.

"Yo! You and I both know that
Jesus Christ is on the loose like
never before for the nine-five!"

—DJ Rubadub, Editor-in-Chief
of Heaven's Hip-Hop Magazine.

KILLDOZER *God Hears Pleas Of The Innocent* Touch And Go

Ah, the Midwest—land of leveled aspirations, economic sluggishness, and rusted-out dreams... or so one might infer from listening to Killdozer, whose albums are invariably filled with a parade of losers, shot down not by their own hubris, but by the facelessness of capitalism and cruel twists of fate. The heroes of Killdozer's songs suffer such indignities as getting blown up in grain elevators, getting shot while stealing from a convenience store, losing the hardware store after Wal-Mart comes to town, or, in the case of the title character of "Porky's Dad," on Killdozer's newest effort, getting thrown off the farm in order to make way for more office parks. Michael Gerald's gravelly narration, backed by an appropriately grim backdrop of sludgy, leaden punk, is one of the slickest and most off-kilter in all rock. The gallows humor isn't as over-the-top on *God Hears Pleas...* as on some previous Killdozer releases—certainly nothing here matches the obsessiveness of "Man Vs. Nature" or the anti-social behavior of "Hi There"—and the album does suffer for it. However, Killdozer's ability to write anthems of blue-collar indignation (and also to joyously bash the hell out of any cover tune that strikes their fancy) remains enjoyably true to form. Besides, who could possibly say no to an album featuring songs called "Spork" and "Cannonball Run II '95?" —David Jarman



DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 13.

FILE UNDER: Witty, proletarian rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Tad, that photo of Johnny Cash flipping the bird, Melvins.

KING TEE *King Tee IV Life* MCA

King Tee is a bona fide O.G. of the Los Angeles rap set. Still, he'd much rather pack a cold 40-oz. of malt liquor than a cold piece of steel, not that he's above droppin' the occasional smokin' gun lyric. Yes, King Tee is the lyrical master of the West Coast drunken style, tippin' the bottle back and takin' a big swig before delivering a rhyme. He's consistently maintained his blurred vision, refusing to buy into the gun-toting, blunt-smoking rhetoric of his peers. *King Tee IV Life* marks the fourth time that Tee has shaken off a hangover and crawled into the studio, and his strongest offering to date. The beats are everything that tight-ass So-Cal rap should be. Gritty chunks of meaty funk are surrounded by throbbing bass grooves and tight, pounding rhythms. Tee flips plenty of clever wordplay along with a healthy dose of braggadocio. "Super Nigga" rolls along like some hip-hop equivalent of the infamous Richard Pryor comedy bit, and "Down Ass Loc" is that kind of slinky, low 'n' slow fifth of funk that's perfect for a late night stroll down Crenshaw Boulevard. And no rap album would be complete without a few guest shots. Tee's longtime cohort, DJ E-Swift, joins in on "Duck," while "Free Style Ghetto" features the lushed-out skills of his drunken disciples The Alkaholiks, with the lot of them getting tipsy on the mic over a nice, subdued beat. *King Tee IV Life* goes down smooth and leaves you with a nice buzz. —Spence Dookey



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28.

FILE UNDER: Drunken, funk-fortified rap.

R.I.Y.L.: The Alkaholiks, Ice Cube, Coolio.

ALISON KRAUSS *Now That I've Found You: A Collection* Rounder

Modern bluegrass star Alison Krauss made her first record when she was 16. She's 23 now, and she's amassed a sizeable body of work; it makes sense that it'd be time for her first greatest-hits collection. So it's surprising and kind of charming that that's not what *Now That I've Found You* is. Instead, it's a selection of her personal favorite performances: three new songs, plus tracks from her solo albums, her albums with her group Union Station, and lead vocal appearances she's made with other bluegrass and country-gospel types (it's a close-knit community, where everybody shows up on everybody else's records). Krauss is sort of a bluegrass analogue to Aretha Franklin or Ray Charles. Her taste in songs is sometimes dubious (it leans toward prefab Nashville sentimentality), but her voice is so extraordinary that you don't really mind. She's an incredible singer, technically, with a tone as clear and limpid as a glass bell; she pulls heartfelt sentiment out of lines like "love has gone away and put these tears in my eyes," and finds new depth in the Beatles' "I Will." And she's a first-rate bluegrass fiddler, though she never solos for more than a few seconds at a time (that would be at odds with her legendary humility). The best moment on *Now That I've Found You* is "When God Dips His Pen Of Love In My Heart," a loose, casual gospel tune on which she's joined by the Cox Family—when Suzanne Cox leaps in with the first "hallelujah" of the chorus, it sounds like she's been inspired by Krauss's voice as much as by faith. —Douglas Wolk



DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 7.

FILE UNDER: Contemporary bluegrass.

R.I.Y.L.: Bill Monroe, Roberta Flack, Emmylou Harris.



"With bassist Michael Lutz and drummer Michael Cartellone behind him, Ted rang in the new year in Detroit by tossing venison jerky into the crowd, amidst a shower of fireworks and balloons. The performance also found young Ted swinging across the stage from a rope and climbing up a tree stand to fire two arrows into the heart of a 3-D caribou target. 'Are we having fun or what?' roared the rocker."
 —Ted Nugent's *New Year's Eve* concert in Detroit, from a press release.



KUSTOMIZED *The Battle For Space* Matador

In the hopes that most *CMJ New Music Monthly* readers are still at an age where injustice can inspire horror, I would like to draw their attention to the fact that Peter Prescott is not a millionaire. This poverty-stricken genius once drummed for the immortal Mission of Burma and the brilliant, tragically neglected Volcano Suns; in this capacity, he single-handedly penned the sexiest lyric in the history of rock: "My body's on a hanger in a closet nice and warm/I just got back from another life, and boy are my arms tired!" A unique sing-songy bounciness makes Prescott tunes instantly recognizable to the faithful, while lyrical vignettes sketch a cast of characters as rich as any Norton Anthology. Why, you might ask, have I never heard of this guy? I suspect a marketing oversight on Prescott's part: It's all too melodious and friendly for butch punks who think a good rock lyric is "Feel my fist!" [*Big Black's "Fists Of Love"—ed.*] but the guitars are way too loud for their wimp-rocker cohorts. So he's stuck in the middle, with a tiny cult of cheerful, friendly people who like big guitars. With *Kustomized*, Prescott pulls hesitantly into the fast lane. It's a punk move and he knows it. (To emphasize the point, they cover '77 Wire and Saints songs.) The melodies soar a little less, the guitars are reined in just a bit—it's tight, subdued sound, as if intense pressure had been applied to poor Peter. He emerges in front, playing guitar, punk as could be (he plays about as well as your mom, *i.e.* with brilliant minimalism.) Will he be caught up in the wave of *Dookie*-inspired punk-worship? Will this converted drummer make the cover of *Guitar Player*? Will he make rent off his royalties? The saga continues.
 —Nell Zink

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 14. First single: "The Day I Had Some Fun."
FILE UNDER: '77 punk revitalization.
R.I.Y.L.: Volcano Suns, Wire, Ramones.

VARIOUS ARTISTS *The Marley Family Album* Heartbeat

There are probably more posthumous tributes, anthologies and "legacy" albums inspired by Bob Marley than there are actual Marley albums recorded during his lifetime. *The Marley Family Album* is yet another, a tribute to Bob in celebration of his 50th birthday that features his widow Rita Marley and a number of his children, friends, and fellow musicians. The album is a pop-oriented collection that draws on different reggae styles, and though crammed with meaningless filler and clichéd "happy Caribbean" songs, it does contain a few moments live up to Marley's legacy. "I Know," an easy-listening declaration of faith in Jah, is a rare Marley track that until now was only released in Jamaica as a 12" single, and it shines with typical elegance. On "Lion In The Jungle," Julian Marley wails and warbles over a Bob-style roots track to sound frighteningly like his late father. "Many Are Called" features the I-Threes, Marley's trio of backup singers that included his wife Rita, singing in melodic unison to dispense a series of Biblical warnings, and a new generation of Melody Makers, sounding like a grade school chorus, chime enthusiastically on "Trodding" and "Sugar Pie." The rest of the album fares rather poorly; on "Look Through The Window," Rita and reggae legend Freddie McGregor trade love song clichés over an infectious dancehall rhythm, and "True Love" by Maccabee and "(Looking For) New Ways Of Loving" by Dhaima are sickening and redundant lovers' rock ballads. Some of the album's songs aren't even reggae: "Spend The Night" is a repetitive and uninspired house-oriented dance jam by Richie B that couldn't even be rescued by Steven Marley's adept chatting late in the song, and "One Draw (1990's Style)" almost ruins Rita's classic ode to ganja by putting it to an awkward hip-hop beat. Even though some songs on *The Marley Family Album* show glimmers of inspiration, I think I'll celebrate Bob's birthday by listening to *Survival*.
 —Philippe Wamba

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 6 (Marley's birthday).
FILE UNDER: Unhappy birthday, Bob.
R.I.Y.L.: Wailing Souls, Rita Marley, Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers.

MUDHONEY *My Brother The Cow* Reprise

Growing older—let alone gracefully—probably never occurred to Mudhoney. In fact, they're undoubtedly more surprised than anyone (except maybe their parents) that after seven years, they're still together, recording for a major label and selling enviable amounts of records. There's no drastic change in the Mudhoney formula here (what were you expecting? ambient house?), but the band's sixth long-player is a bit swampier, a bit less manic, and frankly better than anything they've done in some years. The band's almost completely laid off the fuzzed-out overdrive of their early days (Steve Turner doesn't even step on his wah-wah pedal until the last song), and Mark Arm generally keeps to his lower register rather than the adenoidal shriek that virtually defined the "Sub Pop Sound." That said, the closing track is an awesome tribute/pastiche of the Stooges' "1969" and "LA Blues." The band sounds refreshed rather than refried, and seldom resorts to the knee-jerk rote dreck that filled up their last couple of platters. Considering the fact that most of their heroes—Sonics, Stooges, Poison 13, etc.—had careers measured in months rather than years, Mudhoney's doing just fine.

—Jem Aswad

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28.

FILE UNDER: Grandfathers of grunge.

R.I.Y.L.: Melvins, Stooges, Mott The Hoople.

NITZER EBB *Big Hit* Geffen

It takes a certain amount of chutzpah to title an album *Big Hit*, but Nitzer Ebb might have actually had the right idea here. With the quasi-industrial angst of Nine Inch Nails now a regular attraction on MTV, and a long history of intense live performances behind Nitzer Ebb, the band seems poised for some degree of commercial success, and *Big Hit* is catchy, sinister and subversive enough to push the English duo in that direction. The album has its share of danceable tracks, especially the single "Kick It," with a sweaty and sly sex-groove reminiscent of some of NIN's more lascivious tunes. But parts of the album actually rock, such as the towering riff on "In Decline" (which does seem a bit muted, though, when played on analog synths), and "Floodwater," which is more Zeppinesque march than synth-pop. Even more startlingly, there are moments of genuine subtlety, such as the caressing synths on "Living Out Of A Bag" and the hunger lurking in the whispery lyrics of "Boy." It's a far cry from the band's proto-fascist poundings in the mid-'80s, and a definite improvement over its last effort, 1991's uninspired *Ebbhead*. It's an "industrial" album that plays through a whole range of emotions and textures instead of just high-tech rage.

—David Jarman

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28.

FILE UNDER: Industro-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Nine Inch Nails, recent Einstürzende Neubauten, Wolfgang Press.

OVERPASS *Manhattan (Beach)* Smells Like

Overpass aren't just smart, experienced, awkward indie-rockers; they're smart, experienced, awkward indie-rockers who can *play*. Their contrapuntal lurches and dispirited singing could belong to Pavement's troubled older brothers—"older" not just because they're more individual and weirder, but because the Overpassers have been in good bands since 1985, when their five-piece alter ego Slovenly started. As you'd expect from adventurous people who've been playing together for 10 years, Tom Watson, Scott Ziegler and Rob Holzman can easily follow one another on multifarious excursions into the odd: Their jazz bass leaps and multi-bar rhythms always resolve recognizably into "rock" but would give any music student headaches to notate. The long riffs on *Manhattan (Beach)* generally straddle the line between elaborate elegance and falling-off-balance-beams ambitious clumsiness. What saves Overpass from prog-rock pretension is partly the sheer surprise of the tunes; partly the fact that they can get simple, sad and lonely when they try ("Apologize"); and partly the what-the-hell charm of Watson's singing. His anything-goes writing style can make for arresting insights; imagine singing (not mumbling) "It's about time we take a good look at what we want in life—is it a relationship, or are we just taught to think that's all we need to make us happy?" Then imagine what a melody line would have to do to be a match for that. Also included are dollops of sheer goofiness: "Shave the cat/Make a coat or a hat/Or a welcome mat" are some words from this album's closest-to-a-pop-song song. This new album (on a new label) should put them on a map; it's a feather in their cap. It's a veritable trap.

—Stephen Burt

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 28.

Also recommended: Slovenly's *We Shoot For The Moon* and *Riposte*.

FILE UNDER: Polyphonic, bent-out-of-shape rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Red Krayola, Gang Of Four, Blue Orchids.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE




RAILROAD JERK *One Track Mind* *Matador*

Taking the "less is more" principle almost as far as its logical extreme, Railroad Jerk offers the biggest shot in the arm possible to its relatively young three-album career: Raw production and bare-bones instrumentation are the crux of *One Track Mind's* appeal: The bass and drums, though tracing fascinating rhythmic structures that are as lopsided as they are natural, are minimized in the mix to a warm, low rumble, leaving nothing but off-the-cuff guitar meanderings, the skilled wails of a harp and the Dylanesque moan and chatter of Marcellus Hall to tell the tales of these mythic songs. The rollicking "Home = Hang" rolls by not on complex song structure or polished performance but on its bluesy, on-the-road gut feeling of the chorus's insistence that "home is anywhere you hang." In the course of these 13 songs, Railroad Jerk wails about guns, booze, last wishes of the dying, women, loneliness and hopelessness with the voice of experience. Lazy, drunk and hip, but with full lucidity, *One Track Mind* is far more complex and mysterious than its title suggests. —Cheryl Botchick

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 14.

FILE UNDER: Indie-rock folk blues.

R.I.Y.L.: Beck, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, early Kinks.


VARIOUS ARTISTS *Ranking & Skanking: The Best Of Punky Reggae* *Rhino*

In '70s London, Jamaican and Anglo-American youth culture collided to form a common music of the dispossessed that sent sonic vibrations all over the world, a cross-pollination of reggae and punk rock that spawned some of the period's most exciting bands. *Ranking & Skanking: The Best Of Punky Reggae*, a new compilation by Rhino Records, documents this fascinating era in music by sampling some of the best songs the scene had to offer. Dr. Alimantado's "Born For A Purpose" is an ancestral roots reggae track that profoundly influenced many of the early British punk bands, and is one of the few straight reggae songs on the album. On *Ranking & Skanking*, pulsing rock-edged ska is served up by The Specials, Madness and The Selecter, while Graham Parker, The Plugz and Pere Ubu maintain a much looser link to the reggae foundation, offering original rock and pop songs with just a hint of the reggae vibe. The smooth rolling bass of British-style roots rock comes through on UB40's "Burden Of Shame," a searing condemnation of the UK's imperial adventures, and on Steel Pulse's "Ku Klux Klan," the 1978 song that established the band as England's foremost reggae ambassadors. Other artists push the limits of the reggae universe still further: Keith Levene creates an original mix of ska and acid jazz on "Taang! Ting" and Linton Kwesi Johnson waxes poetic on "Five Nights Of Bleeding," a chilling chronicle of five violent nights in the life of London dancehalls that helped to make him the first internationally known dub poet. —Philippe Wamba

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 14.

FILE UNDER: Punky reggae, duh.

R.I.Y.L.: The Clash, The Specials, Bim Skala Bim.


ST. JOHNNY *Let It Come Down* *DGC*

Fame and fortune have at long last visited the Flaming Lips, and in our post-"She Don't Use Jelly" world, every noisy-guitar-rock dog is eligible to have its day. This bodes well for the underappreciated St. Johnny. Kicking off with the sketchy, melodic guitar plucking of the enormously catchy "Scuba Diving" (whose self-explanatory chorus of "moneymoneymoney" was clearly the product of a completely different moment than that which inspired the song title), *Let It Come Down* is stuffed with frontman Bill Whitten's odd lyrical observations and lazy croak of a voice. St. Johnny never regresses to plain silliness, though, thanks to the band's frequent and easy shuffle between angular, head-bobbing riffs and lazy chord progressions that keep tempo but crawl at a snail's pace. "Bluebird"'s guitar work is even vaguely funky at the start before the song turns into a kitschfest, full of synthesized disco string parts, replete with Whitten's hapless croon, asking the rhetorical question "is a bluebird really blue?" Listen closely to *Let It Come Down* for whistled choruses, idle chatter, ironic handclapping and lots of guitar noodling. If you drift off, you're sure to miss a searing quip aimed directly at you. —Cheryl Botchick

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28.

FILE UNDER: Pointed, cunning slacker rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Flaming Lips, King Missile, Dinosaur Jr., Pavement.

"The new metal [guitar players] are mostly horseshit. They've got no original voice, which is much more important than the chops thing."—Former *MCS* guitarist and current *Epitaph* solo artist Wayne Kramer, from an interview in *Guitar Player*.

CHARLIE SEXTON SEXTET *Under The Wishing Tree* MCA

Charlie Sexton doesn't fit the suit. In the same way Greg Brady couldn't picture himself in the spangly teen-idol waistcoat his management tried to squeeze him into, Sexton doesn't fit that tried and (occasionally) true singer/songwriter mode so prevalent in pop and folk music today. He's a rebel-with-a-cause troubador who threw the rulebook out the window a decade ago when he began performing at the age of 16. Since then, the Austin native has cribbed his own set of rules, and only he knows the guidelines. *Under The Wishing Tree* is an iconoclastic work that combines elements of Irish folk, spooky acoustic blues, shimmering pop and country, sometimes within the same song. Almost without exception, these songs stretch out beautifully, in a comfortable sort of way, running on for six minutes or more (the epic "Plain Bad Luck And Innocent" clocks in at over 12 minutes), oblivious to the three-minutes-and-out tenet followed by so many. Because of this relaxed orchestration, the recording has a lush ensemble feel. Backed by veterans of the Bodeans and Joe "King" Carrasco's band the Crowns (the band is actually a quartet), Sexton's eagerness to break convention and forge a distinctive style makes *Under The Wishing Tree* a considerable challenge, one many might find daunting. Patience will surely be rewarded. —Bob Gulla

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28.

FILE UNDER: Troubadors with Irish/Texan roots.

R.I.Y.L.: The Waterboys, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty.



SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS *The Inevitable Squirrel Nut Zippers* Mammoth

Like "lounge acts," who get inexplicably lumped together for your consuming convenience, Squirrel Nut Zippers sport snappy vintage garb, are bored with rock, and explore bygone musical genres, but they ain't lounge, baby. Harder to pigeonhole, this Chapel Hill area septet plays a nutty jazz-blues-swing hybrid, with banjos and horns and standup bass, that conjures up images of both zoot suits and flappers. The Zippers' most valuable treasure is Katherine Whalen, who sings exactly like Billie Holiday, and *The Inevitable's* highlights are indeed the songs she sings; the lushly flawless "Anything But Love," previously released on a Merge 7", was rerecorded for the debut LP. The sad, jazzy "Wished For You" demands repeated listens as tears fall into your gimlet. "Driving Me Crazy" starts out lackadaisically, then busts open with Whalen singing the Betty Boop/Ruby Keeler lead—it's easy to imagine Busby Berkeley babes encircling her amidst feathered headdresses and glittering gowns. The songs sung by guitarist James Mathus and guitarist-percussionist Tom Maxwell are less fabulous, but still good fun, ranging in style from poor Tom Waits impressions ("La Grippe") to cool Cab Calloway struts ("Wash Jones"), but the guys' voices are just okay, and make me swoon for a Whalen solo LP. —Gail O'Hara

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 21.

FILE UNDER: Cuttin' a rug.

R.I.Y.L.: 78s, American Movie Classics, F. Scott Fitzgerald.



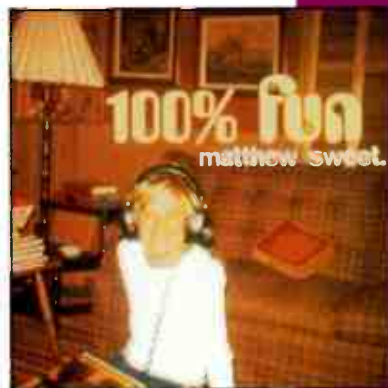
MATTHEW SWEET *100% Fun* Zoo

Matthew Sweet has always been grievously underrated—especially as a songwriter—in part because his fondness for '70s bubblegum can have the eerie ring of kitsch. Sweet delivers high-gloss, cheery love songs with such earnestness that it's easy to think he's kidding. He isn't. Sweet has long been one of rock's consistently reliable (if not necessarily innovative) singer-songwriters, and if *100% Fun*, his fifth full solo record, doesn't sound much different from the other four, no matter. Sweet may have only three different melodies—if you thought "Devil With Green Eyes" was "I've Been Waiting" Part II, that's because it was—but he plays the hell out of each of them. As is his custom, Sweet enlists players with solid rock 'n' roll credentials (in this case, producer Brendan O'Brien and longtime collaborator/television guitarist Richard Lloyd) to give his otherwise impossibly pretty AM-friendly numbers some muscle. O'Brien manages to tame Sweet's impulses towards the overly broad, almost cartoonish riffs that made half of *Altered Beast* sound like outtakes from a Japanese surfer flick. There may not be anything here as immediately immortal as, say, "Girlfriend," or *Beast's* "Someone To Pull The Trigger" (though "Sick Of Myself" comes close), and if Sweet were any more earnest, he would be in Shonen Knife, but the record's shiny, irony-free agreeability is a welcome contrast to all that pesky college rock angst, to say the least. —Allison Stewart

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 14.

FILE UNDER: Guitar pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Freedy Johnston, anything from Athens, GA circa '85 (dB's, Let's Active, et al.), Weezer.



TELEVISION PERSONALITIES *Yes Darling, But Is It Art?* Fire-Seed

A compilation of singles, compilation tracks and oddities spanning the first 11 years of the Television Personalities' career, *Yes Darling* is probably not the best place to start. On the other hand, they're a great band, there probably isn't a particular best place to start, and you might as well start somewhere. The TVPs can be tough going for initiates: Only midway through the decade documented here did the band figure out that tuning its instruments was probably a good idea, and frontman Dan Treacy's fey, dotty lower-class-British singing voice could be described, charitably, as "hopeless." But give them time. Treacy is an astonishing songwriter, capable of coming up with '60s-ish hooks that will stay with you forever ("Three Wishes" still sends chills up the spine, 12 years later). He's also one of the most hate-filled lyricists ever, for all his songs' twee trappings—his hatred is the bitter, sarcastic loathing of somebody who's been stepped on his whole life by cooler people, knowing all the while that he'll probably die in a war that has nothing to do with him. When he turns his venom on the music scene, it can be hilarious ("I Know Where Syd Barrett Lives") or baffling (the *Part-Time Punks* EP, included in its entirety, will probably only make sense to scholars of the '77 London scene, though you shouldn't miss the way he sings "Siouxsie and the Bain-shays"). And when he gets political, especially on "A Sense Of Belonging" and "How I Learned To Love The Bomb," his quietly furious passion is awfully persuasive.

—Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 14.

FILE UNDER: Twee, bitter psych-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Elvis Costello, Beat Happening, Epic Soundtracks.

TRAGICALLY HIP *Day For Night* Atlantic

As a live act, The Tragically Hip are one of those bands that once in a while—not every night, but pretty reliably once in a while—can deliver a straight-up, full-barrel, inspired rock set that's as good as any band out there slugging it out in clubs and halls. Sure, they're from Canada, but only in a Neil Young sense, in that the wintry frontierlands to the north are just an extension of the American West, and the same individualism and intelligent lyrics that fuel Neil Young's music and rock 'n' roll in general spark their fire as well. In short, it's rock 'n' roll with its boots on, dusty boots, and the fact that this is the band's fourth U.S. album and the Tragically Hip have never received any kind of attention it's due has only added further back-to-the-wall conviction to its songwriting and fire to its delivery. Parts of *Day For Night* sound a lot like R.E.M.'s *Monster*, but hey, it also sounds like the Tragically Hip's 1989 debut album. There isn't anything in the music of the Gin Blossoms or R.E.M. that isn't in the music of the Tragically Hip—"Nautical Disaster" or "Greasy Jungle" could be equally at home on *Vitalogy* or just about any other mega-rock album—but what's theirs is theirs alone, namely in Gordon Downie's vocals and the band's fiery, twin guitar attack.

—James Lien

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 14.

FILE UNDER: Intelligent rock 'n' roll.

R.I.Y.L.: R.E.M.'s *Monster*, Pearl Jam, Neil Young & Crazy Horse.

URBAN DANCE SQUAD *Persona Non Grata* Virgin

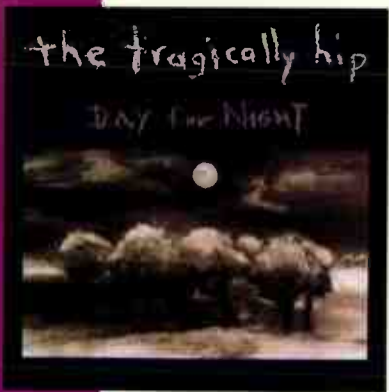
The only thing that might have kept the masses from forgetting this Amsterdam-based funk 'n' roll bunch was the inclusion of their soulful pool-party anthem "A Deeper Shade Of Soul" on an episode of MTV's *Melrose*-verité drama *The Real World*. (For the record, the episode concerned—natch—a pool party.) A presumed casualty of the major labels' dalliance with funk-punk in the early '90s—in which the Chili Peppers emerged superstars and Fishbone all but disappeared—Urban Dance Squad is somehow back, on a new label, hoping to piggyback onto the groundswell of attention being enjoyed by G. Love and the retooled Beastie Boys. On *Persona Non Grata*, Urban Dance Squad has forgotten the "Dance" in its name, falling back on guitar squalls and monotonous chants. Well, maybe not the whole band: The rhythm section turns in some tight grooves, as on the leadoff "Demagogue" and the pogoing "Good Grief!" Like its debut, *Mental Floss For The Globe*, which spawned the aforementioned hit, *Persona* finds UDS honing its hip-hop sensibilities; there's nothing wrong with rapping over a riff, and when they have something to say and a good guitar hook, as on the crunching diatribe "Alienated," you get the idea that UDS is on its way to a comeback. But the filler-laden second half of the album, featuring the headache-inducing "Hangout" and the aptly titled ten-minute "Downer," promptly torpedoes that notion.

—Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 7. First single "Demagogue."

FILE UNDER: Funk-punk.

R.I.Y.L.: Fishbone, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Rage Against The Machine.



VÄRTTINÄ *Aitara* Green Linnet

The Finnish quasi-folk ensemble Värttinä has been attracting attention for a few years in world-music circles for its delightful, instantly memorable melodies—both traditional Finnish folk songs and originals that sound like they could just as well be traditional—and for its utterly distinctive sound. The peculiar but nifty voices of four women, led by the uncannily jolly Sari Kaasinen, fly along in unison like military jets, occasionally peeling off for a few moments of daredevil harmonies; the six-piece band behind them relies primarily on bouzouki, fiddle, kantele and other folk instruments, but isn't afraid to throw in a little guitar or Hammond organ where it seems appropriate. *Aitara* is Värttinä's big pop crossover move, and unlike almost any other case where world-music artists have reached out for the mainstream, it doesn't dilute the source material much to speak of. There are actual rock drums, and even synth-drums on a few songs, but Värttinä's rhythms have always been intense and tricky; underscoring them doesn't hurt. The arrangements are still impeccable and unique, and driven mostly by the strings and reeds that suggest rusticity. And the main attraction is still the amazing formation-singing—"Katariina," in particular, is great, with a rapid-fire series of dips and leaps followed by a kicky little shriek. —*Douglas Wolk*



DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 7. Touring the U.S. in the spring.

FILE UNDER: Vocal exotica.

R.I.Y.L.: *Le Mystère Des Voix Bulgares*, Paul Simon's *Graceland*, Zap Mama.

WILCO *A.M.* Sire Reprise

Missouri's late, great Uncle Tupelo split after four records, once it became apparent its main songwriters Jeff Tweedy and Jay Farrar were writing on different channels. Wilco, Tweedy's new band, is a bit of a surprise, and perhaps cause for slight disappointment for those who savored the moments on Uncle Tupelo records where Jeff's beaten-dog voice found a perfect home in equally ruffled electric or acoustic settings. *A.M.* broadens his scope on rock a bit, but at some expense. The majority of the songs on *A.M.* are great, but they occasionally neighbor some embarrassing, pedestrian rockers that may have you checking your CD player to see how much time is left. Tweedy and his crew are best when they stick to rough and casual country settings and add some Midwest punk fire to the mix. Pristine songs like "Blue Eyed Soul" and the languid acoustic number "Dash 7" absolve most of the sins Tweedy commits earlier in the disc, regaining the trust of those who know him to be one of the best country punks around. —*Steve Ciabattini*

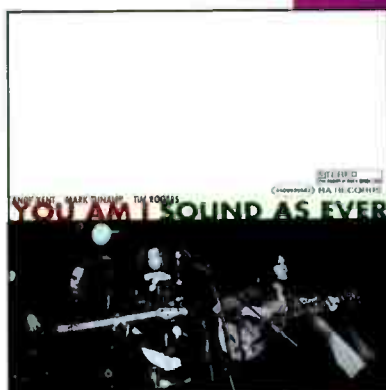
DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 28.

FILE UNDER: Midwest rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Paul Westerberg, Lemonheads, Cracker.

YOU AM I *Sound As Ever* rooArt-Restless

Australia has produced plenty of successful music in the Rock Era, but "rock," the hard kind, hasn't always been recognized as its strong suit. For every Midnight Oil, there are a slew of polished Crowded Houses and INXS's, suggesting that pop is more the Aussies' speed. The Down Under underground, however, is almost universally obsessed with proto-punk hard rock like the Stooges. You Am I could help change the U.S. perception of Australia as hard rock-deficient. The group has made a considerable splash in its home territory and is poised to attack the U.S. with *Sound As Ever*. You Am I could hardly be called distinctive; its sound is an amalgam of rock styles that have taken the American charts by storm in the last three years. But *Sound As Ever* makes up for what it lacks in originality with energy and commendable songwriting that makes the band a contender in the grunge sweepstakes. Many songs lean too heavily on riffs that recall the *Singles* soundtrack: The opening "Coprolalia" and the closing title track mine a Soundgarden vein, while "Everyone's To Blame" recalls Screaming Trees. But like Pearl Jam downshifting into "Elderly Woman In A Small Town," You Am I has a firm grasp of the dynamics of the Urgent Midtempo Rock Ballad. Witness the standout "Jaimme's Got A Gal," which sports melodies that recall Uncle Tupelo, and the stately, graceful "Who's Leaving You," which would sound fine on a Buffalo Tom record. This versatility keeps *Sound As Ever* entertaining and ingratiating. With a little luck, You Am I might one day convince an arenaful of Yanks that they're listening to one of their own. —*Chris Molanphy*



"To lead a western band
Is his after school wish
And of course to marry
A beautiful dish."
—from Roy Orbison's high
school yearbook.

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 14.

FILE UNDER: Reasonable facsimiles.

R.I.Y.L.: Uncle Tupelo, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

FLASHBACK

ROOTS • REISSUES • RETRO

by James Lien

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Complete Stax/Volt Soul Singles 1972-75

Fantasy

Fantasy continues to tell the soulful saga of Stax, the world famous yellow record label with the snapping fingers. The first volume (1962-68, through Atlantic) remains the greatest box set ever made, absolutely and unequivocally recommended despite its mammoth price. The second volume (1968-71) continued the story, and now the third and final installment rounds out the tale. True, there's a certain amount of diminishing returns at work—very little here is as sublime as the great soul singles of the label's '60s heyday, but Fantasy rightly knows that they've got some good stuff and the best way to do it is to do it up in a big way. We like the whole-hog ten-CD approach, even though it's expensive, because by giving you all the singles, they're letting you decide your favorites rather than have someone else choose them for you. While everyone knows the Staple Singers, Rufus Thomas and Isaac Hayes, you don't hear too many people singing the praises of Ernie Hines, the Sons Of Slum, Sir Mack Rice or Roy Lee Johnson & The Villagers, but they all released singles that were wonderful moments in a magical era of soul and funk. Listen to this box and you'll feel like you're hearing Memphis radio circa 1975, and your friends will crown you King of the Mix Tapes when you throw Sir Mack Rice's "Bump Meat" or Rufus Thomas' "Itch And Scratch" or Black Nasty's "Gettin' Funky Round Here" on your next C 90. Consult the handy chart at right for further details as to this big orange box's contents.



GREASY FUNK INGREDIENTS <i>Songs with chunky wah-wah, fatback basslines, killer clavinet</i>	19
INSTANT SAMPLES <i>Things that either have been sampled, sound way too familiar or are just really obvious hit rap records waiting to be made</i>	16
SWEET SOUL MOMENTS <i>Slow songs for romantic liaisons with your squeeze</i>	18
TO DIE FOR <i>Absolutely great songs that make life worth living just by being there</i>	16
SONGS THAT SOUND LIKE "THEME FROM SHAFT"	7
SPECIFIC LYRICAL REFERENCES TO '70S CULTURE <i>Includes high meat prices, gasoline lines, terrorism in the Middle East and name-checking the Ohio Players and Sly Stone</i>	7
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DOMESTIC TROUBLES/INFIDELITY <i>Themes based on he/she is leaving, he/she won't come home, he/she is involved with another woman/man, he/she is married to someone else</i>	27
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IN THE BINS

It's a little tiny release that will probably get overlooked, but Verve has released Willie Bobo's *Spanish Grease*. Recorded in '65, the title track sounds like something Uma Thurman would dance around to, while other parts of it sound like the music in the party scenes of *Breakfast At Tiffany's*... Impulse has rolled out John Coltrane's *Live In Seattle*, a two-CD live set recorded between *A Love Supreme* and the gargantuan *Live In Japan*. While it's not the first or even fourth Coltrane disc we'd recommend, it has some bold moments. If you like your Coltrane heavier, stretched out, but not so far gone over the horizon, then this is a fine disc.



METAL

by vlad

monster magnet

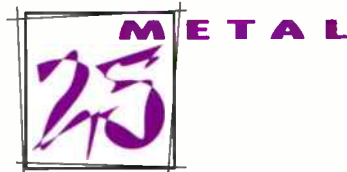
dopes to infinity

A&M

Misguided souls may try to tell you that Monster Magnet has "grown up," but don't be fooled: The game's just gotten a lot more interesting. In a nutshell, *Dopes To Infinity* is MM frontal lobe Dave Wyndorf's version of *Physical Graffiti*. It's over an hour long (with an average song time of five and a half minutes), and includes mellotrons, sitars, a theremin, weird Eastern tunings, an instrumental, a song whose entire vocal content consists of wordless screaming, and a song called "Ego, The Living Planet"... in short, such a classic double album that it sounds like it's had marijuana cleaned on its gatefold sleeve, and I'm surprised it's not a concept album. Yet despite how all of that might sound on paper, *Dopes* is by far MM's most sophisticated album, featuring drastically improved production and a more refined take on the group's trademark psychedelic-tinged riff rock. The band veers off into uncharted territory as well, with "Blow 'Em Off" (a raga-tinged acoustic track) and "Dead Christmas" (which sounds kinda like Shocking Blue's "Venus"). Anyone looking for another *Spine Of God* or *Tab* might lamely say that they've "gone prog," but *Dopes To Infinity* catapults Monster Magnet into the next dimension.

RIFFS

A lot's happened in the three years since *La Sexorcisto: Devil Music Vol. 1*: **WHITE ZOMBIE**'s become famous, yes, but so many bands have ripped off its digitized primal-sludge vibe that the sound is in danger of being beaten to death. Well, fear not, because with the ridiculously-titled *Astro-Creep: 2000 Songs Of Love, Destruction And Other Synthetic Delusions Of The Electric Head* (Geffen), the band has seriously upgraded its software and grown hideous new mutations onto the toxic beast that first drew breath on Manhattan's Lower East Side almost ten years ago. Although the word "maturity" will hopefully never apply to White Zombie, *Astro* is unquestionably its most sonically sophisticated record: Terry Date's production is a barrage of densely layered riffs, crushing rhythms and ricocheting samples, and the band has sharpened its songwriting style. Yet despite the state-of-the-art sound, White Zombie seldom strays from the Neanderthal Sabbath/Kiss/Cramps vibe that's always been its, er, soul. *Astro* starts off a bit shaky ("Super Charger Heaven" is a shameless lift of Ministry's "Jesus Built My Hotrod"), but by the time you're ten minutes in, there's no escape... A lot has also happened in the three years since **FAITH NO MORE** released *Angel Dust*. Shortly after its opening slot on the disastrous Metallica/Guns N' Roses tour, guitarist Jim Martin left the band in a stream of nasty words, and his replacement, Trey Spruance, left shortly after the new *King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime* (Slash) was recorded. Needless to say, all of this angst has found its way onto this album, thankfully in a positive way. The band's trademark sound is even wilder than ever, careening between manic metal crunch, bruising funk and jokey diversions into country and brass-splattered pseudo-soul ballads; Spruance's Zappa-esque jazzisma add an even weirder element to this already weird band. Likewise, vocalist Mike Patton hits new peaks in his patented psychotic style, going from drooling axe-murderer to cooing baby to Elvis impersonator within seconds.

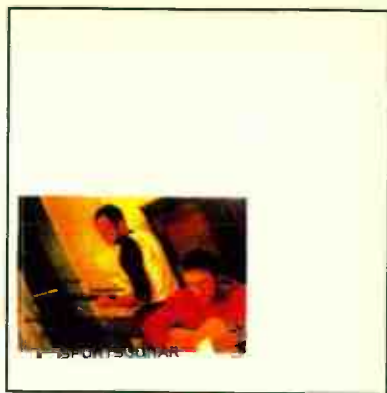


- 1 KORN • Korn (Immortal-Epic)
- 2 SLAYER • Divine Intervention (American)
- 3 MEGADETH • Youthanasia (Capitol)
- 4 CORROSION OF CONFORMITY • Deliverance (Columbia)
- 5 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Nativity In Black: A Tribute To Black Sabbath (Columbia)
- 6 SICK OF IT ALL • Scratch The Surface (EastWest America)
- 7 TREE • Plant A Tree Or Die (CherryDisc)
- 8 SOUNDTRACK • Tales From The Crypt Presents: Demon Knight (Atlantic)
- 9 OVERDOSE • Progress Of Decadence (Futurist)
- 10 MACHINE HEAD • Burn My Eyes (Roadrunner)
- 11 MERCYFUL FATE • Time (Metal Blade-Priority)
- 12 MONSTER YOODOO MACHINE • Suffersystem (D-Tribe-RCA)
- 13 TESTAMENT • Low (Atlantic)
- 14 GODFLESH • Selfless (Earache-Columbia)
- 15 BRUTAL TRUTH • Need To Control (Earache)
- 16 FUDGE TUNNEL • The Complicated Futility Of Ignorance (Earache)
- 17 MARY BEATS JANE • Mary Beats Jane (Geffen)
- 18 WIDOWMAKER • Stand By For Pain (CMC International)
- 19 DANZIG • 4 (American)
- 20 REIGN • Embrace (Mausoleum)
- 21 MELVINS • Stoner Witch (Atlantic)
- 22 BOLT THROWER • ...For Victory (Earache)
- 23 SEX, LOVE & MONEY • Era (EP) (Rockworld-Sony)
- 24 MESHUGGAH • None (Nuclear Blast)
- 25 TAD • Live Alien Broadcasts (Futurist)

Compiled from the CMJ New Music Report's weekly Loud Rock charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters

SINGLES

by douglas wolk



"g o n g g o n g"
Sub Pop

sportsguitar

About a year ago, the ingenious Swiss duo Sportsguitar self-released an album, *fade/cliché*, which sounded like a great pop compilation with 14 different bands on it. Through word of mouth, it has gradually spread around the world. A copy made its way to Sub Pop, which is now releasing a single with two tracks from the album. "Gong Gong" starts off with guileless acoustic strumming, then throws in a killer melody and an uncontrollable acid-burn of a lead guitar line that scythes through the whole song, slightly off-key and a little louder than you'd think. "Tits," on the other side, is a laid-back new-wave number with a breathy vocal line and some instrument that sounds like it's been wrapped in aluminum foil, chilled, and agitated back to life. The Swiss government has given Sportsguitar a grant to tour in the U.S. and Europe, so watch for them in the next month or so.

The Canadian quintet **PEST 5000** is carrying on the tradition of the Raincoats, and it's not just the violin that does it, though that doesn't hurt. It has more to do with the way that four of them sing and write songs (and they're all good songwriters!); with their meticulous arrangements that give each song a distinct and detailed sonic texture; with the way they can draw on the languages of childhood and adulthood without coming off as dorky or jaded; with the sense that they usually have a lot more instrumental firepower held in reserve than being used; and with the way that their songs can be as simple as a jumprope rhyme, then suddenly do something harmonically unexpected and perfect. The *Toast EP* (No Life) has three great little songs that show off how much range Pest 5000 has, and how much fun it sounds like it's having no matter what it's playing.

For years, there've been rumors of a Germs tribute album, *A Small Circle Of Friends*. Two songs from it have finally surfaced, in the form of a split single by **THE HOLEZ** and **THE MONKEYWRENCH** (Gasatanka). The Holez are Hole with Pat Smear of the Germs (and Nirvana's last tour) playing extra guitar; unfortunately, their take on "Circle 1" is tossed off and unconvincing. Mudhoney side-project the Monkeywrench fares a little better with "Shut Down" (nice slide guitar, nicer random piano), but both bands palely reflect the Germs' glory instead of doing anything really new with the songs.

Most good bands start out being promising, and eventually fulfill that promise. Portland's **SONE** keeps getting better with each new record, but it also keeps getting more promising. "747 (Apogee, Perigee And Dramamine)" (High Mast) has two good songs and dozens of great ideas. The A-side is a fragmentary, distorted anthem with the holes filled in by low-frequency, low-tech power electronics; "Down At The Expo," on the flip, has a long, pretty intro before the Suicide-ish keyboard force-field takes over.

Debut of the month belongs to **CHA-CHA COHEN**, whose "Sparky's Note" single (Hemiola) is that rarity, a cerebral headbanger. Actually, it's not quite a first record (the band features veterans of the Wedding Present and the Dustdevils), but they've come up with something fresh and wonderful. It's as if somebody had described to them the things that made the Fall great—the snarling, vivid guitar-and-bass hooks, the off-kilter rhythms, the smart, rambling, half-spoken/half-sung lyrics—without actually letting them hear it, then challenged them to approximate it. The B-side's "The Snares Of Urgoil Urma" builds from unpretentious pop to a tsunami surge, overwhelming you before you know what's happening.

Pennsylvania's **CATERPILLAR** was profiled in *On The Verge* a few months ago. The new "Swim Away" (Deadbeat) is another winner, with two lead guitars carving up the world between them while a big fat bass drone makes the song as bulky as it is short—they bring it in under three minutes. The two tracks on the other side show off the band's knack for high-speed precision weirdness and for playing with the two-guitar dynamic. There's always some kind of neat contrast going on, and the more you listen to it, the neater it gets.

It's a good rule of thumb that covers of early-'80s hits by bands you've never heard of indicate lousy singles. That's not always true, though. **THE ELEVATOR DROPS'** cover of "Video Killed The Radio Star" (Curve Of The Earth) is almost as pointless as you'd think. Turn the record over, though, and you get "Twitch," a frantic guitars 'n' keyboards tune that would have been revelatory 12 years ago and still sounds pretty great now—especially a bit where a fast, choppy guitar part reminds one of the singers of the Jackson 5's "I Want You Back," which he promptly starts chirping.

And an even bigger exception to that rule is **CHARLES BROWN SUPERSTAR's** *Summertime 12"* EP (Mighty), which actually came out a while ago but is only getting decent distribution now that a handful of radio stations have picked up on how amazing it is. A straightforward version of Gary Numan's "Cars" is the only less-than-wonderful track on the record. "Blockhead," though, is fast, ravenous and creepy, and "Beestung Remix" is astonishing—a six-and-a-half-minute dance track that starts off all chirpy and singalong, and then fucks with your head so badly that by the end you're not sure where the beat is, where the song is, and maybe even what you're listening to.

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD



DANCE

by tim haslett

various artists

Turntable Tastemakers Vol. 1: Cleveland City Recordings

Moonshine Music

It has been about two years since the now familiar nighttime city skyline logo of the Cleveland City label first appeared on North American shores. The label's inaugural single, "Testament I" by Chubby Chunks, was a massive dancefloor success, fueled by a tickling, neo-disco guitar loop and clean sequencer basslines. As the British "progressive" house movement has reached its nadir over the last year, this stable has continued to release tracks that have more energy than a supernova. Sure, the tunes on this splendid compilation all sound the same, but, frankly, you won't care. In other words, it's very difficult to dislike the Cleveland City sound. The distinct feature characterizing all the music on the label is the succession of dramatic changes throughout a track. The intro to "Swing Man" by Rhyme Time Productions is a quotidian drum-and-bassline sequence, but at the break, the track erupts into a hook-laden stormer that just won't quit. The production here is so crisp and clean you can practically see your reflection in it. The label, like many other British and European labels, has its origins in a dance store—in this case the Ruby Red shop in Wolverhampton, smack in the middle of the English post-industrial Midlands. And don't be fooled by the plethora of odd group names: All the music here represents the work of five producers based at Ruby Red. If you really want to hear some of the most expertly produced dancefloor calisthenics in the British Isles, you could do worse than to investigate Cleveland City's compilation.

ELSEWHERE

The music of DJ DEEON and his PLAYGROUND PRODUCTIONZ crew represents the flowering of a dance music without basslines. The minimalist trax sound of Chicago is where the propulsive sound of the Roland 909 drum machine is pushed to the breaking point, asked to provide a waterfall of drum sounds. Elsewhere, drum machines are relied upon to provide the percussive backbone for a track; Deeon radically rethinks the role of the instrument, leaving its crisp analog attack shorn of any accompaniment save a subtle keyboard sequence. There is no better example of this sound than the two new EPs by Playground Productionz, *Low End Theory* and *Quad* (Dance Mania), which have a rhythmic inventiveness that impacts the head and body like a cold shock of mountain air. This is the real manifestation of intelligent dance music... The arrival of a new collection of music by the eccentric London producer μ -Ziq (pronounced "myu-zik") represents a turning point for the electronic underground. A sometime collaborator of Richard James (a.k.a. Aphex Twin), μ -Ziq first appeared with the stunning *Tango n' Vectif* LP last year. He has returned with the strangely compelling μ -Ziq vs. *The Auteurs*, which represents a soundclash of the analog vs. the acoustic, played out on the terrain of Caroline's Astralwerks imprint. Apparently, μ -Ziq will only bring his re-interpretations to bear on music he dislikes, so I can only guess that he takes a rather dim-view of the campy *faux*-Bowieisms of the Auteurs' chief raconteur Luke Haines. Taking hold of tracks from the Auteurs' second album *Now I'm A Cowboy*, μ -Ziq feeds their minor-key melodramas through the customized Roland filters to a bizarre and quite beautiful effect.



- 1 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Law Of The Jungle (Moonshine)
- 2 PLASTIKMAN • Musik (NovaMute)
- 3 GRID • Evolver (deConstruction)
- 4 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Ibiza Afterhours (Moonshine)
- 5 LORDS OF ACIO • Voodoo-U (WHITE LBLs/Antler Subway-American)
- 6 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Secret Life Of Trance 2: The Next Frontier (Planet Earth)
- 7 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Trance Europe Express 3 (Volume (UK))
- 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Recycle Or Die (Planet Earth)
- 9 HUMAN MESH DANCE • Mindflower (Instinct)
- 10 HEAVENLY MUSIC CORPORATION • Lunar Phase (Silent)
- 11 MASSIVE ATTACK • Protection (Circa-Virgin)
- 12 N-JOI • Earthquake (EP) (deConstruction)
- 13 DANNY TENAGLIA • Bottom Heavy (Tribal)
- 14 VARIOUS ARTISTS • A Mission Into Drums (Eye Q-Planet Earth)
- 15 GLOBAL COMMUNICATION • 76.14 (Dedicated)
- 16 AXIOM AMBIENT • Lost In The Translation (Axiom-Island)
- 17 MOBY • "Everytime You Touch Me" (5") (Elektra)
- 18 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Lost Legion (Silent)
- 19 PORTSHEAD • Dummy (Go! Discs-London)
- 20 WAY OUT WEST • Ajare (deConstruction)
- 21 AIR LIQUIDE • The Increased Difficulty Of Concentration (sm:je)
- 22 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Concept In Oance (XL-Moonshine)
- 23 DIE WARZAU • Engine (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 24 OPIK • Concrete (deConstruction)
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Synoptics (Reflective)

Compiled from the CMJ New Music Report's weekly RPM charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

HIP-HOP

by glen sansone



lifestyles ov da poor • dangerous

Columbia

big L

There is a small number of MCs who can keep you hanging on every syllable; Big L may soon be among them.

L's lyrical wit, clarity and lethal one-liners have more lasting value than gold ingots on his debut,

Lifestyles Ov Da Poor + Dangerous. He gives his mentor Lord Finesse the first shout-out on the

album's opening cut, "Put It On," before delivering a tireless parade of hardcore punch lines

that rock like a left hook to the grill. As an MC, Big L clearly casts himself in the rhyme-

savvy old-school; the callous, often brutal tone of his first-person raps is cleverly offset

by imaginative lyrical hooks ("I got a crime record longer than Manute Bol") on nearly

every cut, transforming outrageous rhetoric into artistic gems. While he can drop

your jaw like a Paul Mooney outburst on "No Endz, No Skinz," Big L will also

astound you with his fluid hardcore flow on "MVP," "Danger Zone" and "I Don't

Understand It," along with the posse-cut "8 Iz Enuff."

BONUS BEATS

The debut album by Brooklyn's **Smif-N-Wessun** is rawer than a skinned carcass. *Dah Shinin'* (Wreck-Nervous) puts on a good face for the alive-and-kicking East Coast hip-hop scene. Packing trunkloads of funk and skunk, this record is for those starving for boastful hip-hop hyperbole, with enough street slang to confuse the heck out of the casual rap fan. With production by the Beatminerz, the beats are pulled tight and especially highlight "Timz N Hood Chek," "Bucktown" and "Hellucination"... Established hip-hop supermixer and host of one of the biggest radio shows in the universe on New York's Hot 97, **Funkmaster Flex** has become a sort of Kid Capri of the '90s. Although he takes top billing on his single "Nuttin But Flavor" (Wreck-Nervous), Flex invited Leaders Of The New School's Charlie Brown, hip-hop teddy bear Biz Markie and Wu-Tang-er Old Dirty Bastard—collectively the Ghetto Celebs—to carry the load in this explosive roundtable session of street science, while Flex sticks to crafting the beats... The stateside debut (the LP *Organix* was released overseas a few years back) by Philadelphia's **Roots**, *Do You Want More?!!!!!?* (DGC), approaches both street-wise hip-hop and live jazz as if they were a birthright—and they do it all without the aid of a DJ or samples. MCs Black Thought and Malik B. are backed by live drums, live bass, live keys, and even Rufus Harvey blowing bagpipes on the title track! Check out "Proceed," "Distortion To Static," "Essaywhuman?!!!!!?" (featuring scat vocals) and "The Unlocking"... A former Ice Cube protegé, **Kam** returns from the Los Angeles street on his second album, *Made In America* (EastWest America). It may feature a production cache of Warren G., DJ Quik, Cold 187 (Above The Law), and Battlecat, but the lucid G-Funk grooves merely straddle a hazy line between Roger Troutman-esque electro-thump and softcore R&B. The outcome is flat and uninspiring placed next to Kam's Nation Of Islam-influenced tirades—it's the same problem that infected Paris' latest... The overused G-Funk sound will not be found on the sophomore release from Los Angeles' **Tha Alkaholiks**. Following their 100 proof debut, *21 & Over*, E-Swift, J-Ro and Tash's second serving of freestyle, *Coast // Coast*, will find fans of every variety. A well-layered wall of head-nodding rhythms and effective sampling adds depth to the chilled rhymes... **Funkdoobiest** was considered the poor man's Das EFX, or maybe Cypress Hill, after its debut album, *Which Doobie U B?*, showcased staggered, blunted speech that sounded more like a bad impediment. On *Brothas Doobie*, the group's sound and attitude is a bit more humbled (except on tracks like the laughably pathetic "Pussy Ain't Shit"), while the group shows genuine concern for the decaying inner cities and brothers either dead or in jail on the passive "Dedicated." The syrupy, DJ Muggs-produced beats are still there—you just have to dig a bit deeper to find them. Word out.



- 1 **ROOTS** • Do You Want More?!!!!!? (DGC)
- 2 **METHOD MAN** • Tical (Def Jam/RAL-Island)
- 3 **DIGABLE PLANETS** • Blowout Comb (Pendulum-EMI)
- 4 **CRAIG MACK** • Project: Funk Da World (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 5 **PETE ROCK & C.L. SMOOTH** • The Main Ingredient (Elektra)
- 6 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Loud 95: Nudder Budders (EP) (Loud-RCA)
- 7 **GROUP HOME** • "Supa Star" (12") (Payday/ffrr-Island)
- 8 **BLACK SHEEP** • Non-Fiction (Mercury)
- 9 **ICE CUBE** • Bootlegs & B-Sides (Priority)
- 10 **REDMAN** • Dare Iz A Darkside (RAL-Island)
- 11 **BOOGIEMONSTERS** • Riders Of The Storm: The Underwater Album (Pendulum-EMI)
- 12 **KEITH MURRAY** • The Most Beautifullest Thing In This World (Jive)
- 13 **NOTORIOUS B.I.G.** • Ready To Die (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 14 **SOUNDTRACK** • Street Fighter (Priority)
- 15 **CHANNEL LIVE** • "Mad Izm" (12") (Capitol)
- 16 **LORDS OF THE UNDERGROUND** • Keepers Of The Funk (Pendulum-EMI)
- 17 **SCARFACE** • The Diary (Noo Trybe/Rap-A-Lot-Virgin)
- 18 **BRAND NUBIAN** • Everything Is Everything (Elektra)
- 19 **SOUNDTRACK** • Higher Learning (550-Epic Soundtrax)
- 20 **TLC** • CrazySexyCool (LaFace-Arista)
- 21 **FUNKMASTER FLEX & THE GHETTO CELEBS** • "Nuttin But Flavor" (12") (Wreck-Nervous)
- 22 **COMMON SENSE** • Resurrection (Relativity)
- 23 **MARY J. BLIGE** • My Life (Uptown-MCA)
- 24 **ARTIFACTS** • Between A Rock And A Hard Place (Big Beat)
- 25 **THA ALKAHOLIKS** • "Daaam!" (12") (Loud-RCA)

Compiled from the CMJ New Music Report's weekly Beat Box charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

on the verge

UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS

compiled by lydia anderson

tarnation

Where would you find Tarnation's debut album *I'll Give You Something To Cry About* (Nuf Sed) in a record store? "I don't know what would be the perfect thing to call us," says chief vocalist and songwriter Paula Frazer. "We like country, but we also really like a lot of rockabilly and '50s-type stuff... we like all kinds of music, from L7 to Roy Orbison and beyond." Frazer's early years were spent in Sautee Nacoochee, Georgia, where her father was a preacher, and a true sense of the spiritual floods lonesome ballads from the album, like "They Took You Away Once Again" and the heartbreaking "Game Of Broken Hearts."

Frazer and the band's other three members, who switch off on a variety of instruments, including banjo and steel guitar, formed the band in San Francisco just under two years ago, but the rest of the country is sure to hear about them soon enough. (LA)



formula—at its best, Further sounds like two records being played at the same time and jibing perfectly.

—Douglas Wolk



henry's dress

The three members of Henry's Dress met in their hometown of Albuquerque, New Mexico, before relocating to San Francisco, a town offering both higher education opportunities and the potential for more interest in their band. "Definitely Nothing," the first song on the trio's debut mini-LP (*Slumberland*), reveals a lot about where Henry's Dress is coming from: peals of feedback bookend the crisp, two-minute tune, whose buried vocals and bulldozing bass lines set an impressive standard and whose brevity leaves you with a longing pang that squeezes the heart like unrequited love. Throughout the eight songs, the vocals of drummer Amy Linton and guitarist Matt Hartman take turns swimming through the floods of cranked-up guitars and riding over the turbulent rhythms, which together recall the fuzzy, stripped-down sound of My Bloody Valentine's *Isn't Anything* in the best of ways. (LA)



papas fritas

The driving force behind this Boston trio's passion-filled power pop is guitarist/frontman Tony Goddess's buzzing songs, whose hooks tend toward the anthemic without sounding forced. While the ragged yearning of Goddess's voice recalls Jonathan Richman, especially on the recent single "Passion Play" (Minty Fresh), his tunes careen around melodic hooks like kids weaving through traffic doing 65 in their parents' car. Live, the band splices chunks of Beatles songs into their own and covers the Prince/Cyndi Lauper hit "When U Were Mine" in all its early-MTV glory, but it's the Replacements' ragged, sugar-coated rock which Papas Fritas most recall. Filled in with Keith Gendel's pogoing bass lines and drummer Shivika Asthana's simple but constant beats and sweet vocals, Papas Fritas's songs and hooks are likely to be ringing in your ears by late summer, when the band's debut LP is scheduled for release on Minty Fresh (original home to Veruca Salt). (LA)

'ZINES ON THE NET

by Misha Glouberman

'Zines fit into the net so well that they can be almost invisible—super-cheap self-published stuff for intimate audiences is as much the rule of the Internet as it is the exception of the print magazine world.

Here are some things you need to know:

The **alt.zines** newsgroup is the net's main forum for all things zine-related. Not just e-zines, but the old-fashioned paper kind. You'll find everything here: discussions among zine publishers about where to put the staples, zine reviews, call for submissions, and, of course, lots of actual text-only zines.

John Labovitz's e-zine list is by far the most comprehensive guide to e-zines on the net. He started it a couple of years ago when he started publishing an electronic version of his own zine, *Crash*, and found that there wasn't any permanently archived list of online zines. The list is at <http://www.ora.com:8080/johnl/e-zine-list/>. *Crash* is still there, and so are about three hundred other e-zines. Check out the *Crash Disaster O' The Day* to find out what horrible mishap occurred on today's date. It's at <http://www.ora.com:8080/cgi-bin/crash-cal>.

Factsheet Five Electric is the digital version of the now-it-exists-now-it-doesn't zine guide, *Factsheet Five*. This is where you can find terrifyingly compendious lists of (mostly paper) zines. It's at <http://kzsu.stanford.edu/uwi/f5e/f5e.html>.

Actually finding zines on the net can be a rough business. Like everything else on the net, there's too much about computers (I'm thinking of CYBERBOARDER, "devoted to providing a public forum for alternative voices in the cross junction of cyberspace and snowboard culture") and too much that's really bad. Weirdly, while paper zines are usually good sources for finding out about other zines, very few e-zines use the hypertext features of the World Wide Web to point to other recommended e-zines. And while Labovitz's list is comprehensive, he doesn't review the zines he lists. Neither, it seems, does anyone else.

Here, then, are a few e-zines that aren't about computers and don't suck:

Chip's Closet Cleaner is an electronic version of a pretty high-end personal zine published by Chip Rowe. It's on the web at <http://www.interaccess.com/users/chip/>. It's pretty funny, engaging stuff. The latest issue includes tips on how to cheat on the SAT, and excerpts from a conversation Chip had with Ann Landers in 1991.

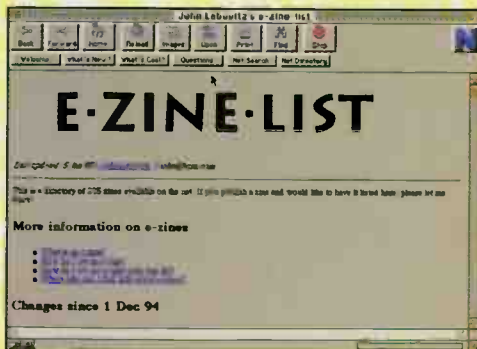
This-Just-In is a weekly compilation of goofy news items. Good if you like stories about criminals getting caught by doing really stupid things, politicians making really stupid excuses, and stupidity in general. TJI isn't archived anywhere—you have to get it by e-mail. Write to listserv@netcom.com with "Subscribe This-Just-In" in the body of your message.

Purists may claim that the **alt.fan.mike-jittlov** newsgroup isn't really a zine. They're probably right. But it's very cool, anyhow. Mike Jittlov is better known, although only slightly, as the Wizard of Speed and Time, a fictional character of his own creation who appears in a live-action animated short movie and a feature film that's never been officially released. The movies, I recall from a brief childhood stint as a super-8 animation geek, are pretty cool. And he's all over the newsgroup, starting or joining just about every thread. There's no real topic here—just stuff he finds interesting—comic books, movies, 3D ASCII art you have to cross your eyes to look at... On the Web, there's a Mike home page (with links to everything Jittlov-related) at <http://www.shore.net/~rdl/jittlov/jittlov.html>. You're probably saying "sure, there's a home page, but does it have a file I can print out with instructions for making a Wizard of Speed and Time origami model?" The answer is yes.

Stay Free is another pretty good paper zine gone net. This one comes out of Chapel Hill. The address is <http://sunsite.oit.unc.edu/pub/electronic-publications/stay-free/home.html>. It's basic zine fare—culture and music, plenty of reviews and interviews. Most of it's well-written, and the web presentation is nice.

dreamboy! has a pretty straightforward premise—Christopher Romano decided, "after reading a semi-insipid book by Carl Jung," that he'd write down every dream he had and make them available on the net. The URL is <http://www.etext.org/Zines/UnitCircle/dreamboy.html>. Better still, you can subscribe by email just by writing Christopher at cdromano@delphi.com. That way, you'll get a stranger's dreams in your mailbox regularly.

tech





THE BIOLOGIC SHOW

by Al Columbia (Fantagraphics)

Writer/artist Al Columbia started out as Bill Sienkiewicz's assistant on the legendary, ill-fated *Big Numbers* mini-series. His subsequent solo one-shot, *Doghead*, owed a lot to Sienkiewicz's deranged *Stray Toasters* project. With *The Biologic Show*, he's broken away completely from his mentor's style, and come up with an endlessly disturbing series. The main characters

are a sister and brother, Francie and Pim (shades of Beckett), of indeterminate age, who are pursued by a two-headed woman with a knife. Beyond that, nothing's at all certain: landscape, characters, bodies, language. Everything is mutable; everything is soft and sickening; everything wants to draw blood. Characters are killed horribly, only to pop up on the next page like nothing has happened. Columbia mostly uses the visual and narrative shorthand of European comics here (there are up to 16 panels per page, and everybody is drawn as a grotesque caricature), so it takes a little bit of getting used to. And once you've acclimated yourself to *The Biologic Show's* universe of decay, you may want to get out of it as fast as you can. —Douglas Wolk

mixed media

compiled by dawn sutter

'zines

POPWATCH

P.O. Box 440215 Somerville, MA 02144

Run by Boston denizen Leslie Gaffney, *Popwatch* is a twice-annual pop 'zine, brimming with information. This particular issue features illustrations by New Zealand pop star Chris Knox, as well as contributions from Yo La Tengo's James McNew and Sebadoh's Bob Fay. There's a first-hand account of what it's like to be on tour with the Grifters, and interviews with *Crawling With Tarts* and *Rasputina*. One of the best things about *Popwatch* is its coverage of the more obscure New Zealand and Australian popstars like Alastair Galbraith and Bill Direen (in the new issue #6), Randall Lee (#5) and Peter Jefferies (#4). *Popwatch* can be ordered for \$14 for four issues. (DS)



EXOTICA

(Miramax)

Filmmaker Atom Egoyan's *The Adjuster* and *Calendar* earned him worldwide acclaim that was all but ignored Stateside. His five feature films have garnered more than 20 award nominations and eight film festival awards all over the Northern Hemisphere. In his new film, *Exotica*, Bruce Greenwood (*St. Elsewhere*) plays Francis, a tax auditor involved with a lap dancer named Christina (Mia Kirshner). When the dancer's jealous ex-boyfriend suddenly bounces him from the club, Francis blackmails a pet-shop owner he's auditing to infiltrate the club and find out Christina's side of the story.

Egoyan's directorial style is reminiscent of David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*. Here, he has created a dark and sexy world that's visually stylish and hard to ignore. He's a master of sleight-of-hand—every time the characters seem to become clear, a plot twist shows their seemingly shady behavior to have humane motivations. The production design of *Exotica* is overwhelming; the club and the shows it presents are breathtaking. Don McKellar's performance as the not-so-innocent pet shop owner is truly exceptional. The film provides a predictable ending, but the route it takes to get there is a real ride. —Leslie Smith



flicks

FUN

(independently distributed)

Russian director Rafal Zelinsky's *Fun* was lauded last year at many a film festival, coming away with several awards, including two Special Jury Awards for Best Acting at the Sundance Film Festival. The film stars Renee Humphrey (Hillary) and Alicia Witt (Bonnie) as two young girls who meet one afternoon at the bus stop, and by day's end have become best friends and killed an old woman. The story unfolds through interviews conducted in the juvenile detention center, where Bonnie and Hillary confess tales of abuse and frustration, and continually insist that their heinous crime was committed purely for fun.

Unfortunately, this *Heavenly Creatures* plot with a dash of *Crime And Punishment* overlooks many of the important background details for brevity's sake. The viewer is left wondering just how these two girls could have killed this woman and not feel remorse. At one point Bonnie does say, "Just because it was fun doesn't mean I didn't know it was wrong." Though you get the idea that these girls didn't really understand what they were doing, you want the movie to explain why, what would have driven them to this. Instead, it's like an *Afterschool Special*—you know, the one shown the week after *Dinky Hocker Shoots Smock*—rather than a film that makes any real statement. (DS)



ONCE WERE WARRIORS

(Fine Line)

It isn't pretty to look at, like *The Piano*. In fact, it's downright brutal in its depiction of domestic violence. But Lee Tamahori's independent New Zealand debut, *Once Were Warriors*, has become the highest-grossing film in his native land, surpassing both *The Piano* and *Jurassic Park*. Obviously, the plight of abused Maori housewife Beth Heke (Rena Owen) has struck a nerve, perhaps because—beneath its jagged surface—it's a heartwarming tale of renewal, a rediscovery of long-lost faith.

When we first meet Jake (Temuera Morrison), Beth's hulking, tattooed thug of a husband, he's drinking with his wacky mates in the local pub. An even nastier-looking roughneck has been hassling customers, so it's up to Jake to pummel him senseless. Trouble is, a few hours later he's using the same punches on his wife at home, injuring her so badly she fails to make the next day's court appearance on behalf of her truant teenage son. The kid's carted off to reform school; Beth's anger builds. She's given up the spiritual ways of her Maori people for this heel, and realization finally dawns: It's all been a waste of time.

But how to escape? Beth's quiet daughter has found refuge in poetry writing; an older son joins a Maori gang and tattoos his face with tribal markings. Both kids amble about the post-fight warzone of a house each morning, righting the overturned furniture and picking up the broken glass like it's nothing out of the ordinary. Watching Owen steep inside this pressure cooker is unnerving, a performance you rarely get in politely PC American films. As her situation plunges headlong towards tragedy, there's only one thing she can do to fix herself and her shattered family. That's when you discover that Tamahori has told *Once Were Warriors* like an Aesop fable, with an uplifting moral packed inside its busy, bloody fist. —Tom Lanham



TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY

THROWING MUSES



ARTIST	ALBUM TITLE	LABEL	
1	THROWING MUSES	University	Sire-Reprise
2	STONE ROSES	Second Coming	Geffen
3	BUSH	Sixteen Stone	Trauma-Interscope
4	ASS PONYS	Electric Rock Music	A&M
5	PORTISHEAD	Dummy	Go! Discs-London
6	VERUCA SALT	American Thighs	Minty Fresh-DGC
7	BETTIE SERVEERT	Lamprey	Matador-Atlantic
8	CATHERINE	Sorry	TVT
9	PEARL JAM	Vitalogy	Epic
10	R.E.M.	Monster	Warner Bros.
11	POND	The Practice Of Joy Before Death	Sub Pop
12	LOW POP SUICIDE	The Death Of Excellence	World Domination
13	WOLFGANG PRESS	Funky Little Demons	4AD-WB
14	LIZ PHAIR	Whip-Smart	Matador-Atlantic
15	DINK	Dink	Capitol
16	18TH DYE	Done	Matador
17	KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION	Cowboys And Aliens	One Little Indian-A&M
18	BRAINIAC	Bonsai Superstar	Grass-Dutch East India
19	FOSSIL	Fossil	hifi/Sire-WB
20	DEAD CAN DANCE	Toward The Within	4AD-WB
21	NIRVANA	MTV Unplugged In New York	DGC
22	CRANES	Loved	Dedicated-Arista
23	JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Orange	Matador
24	TREEPEOPLE	Actual Re-enactment	C/Z
25	LOIS	Bet The Sky	K
26	MASSIVE ATTACK	Protection	Circa-Virgin
27	SOUNDTRACK	Higher Learning	550-Epic Soundtrax
28	EVERCLEAR	World Of Noise/Fire Maple Song (EP)	Tim Kerr-Capitol
29	ZUMPANO	Look What The Rookie Did	Sub Pop
30	CHRIS CONNELLY	"Shipwreck"	Wax Trax!-TVT
31	MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES	Question The Answers	Mercury
32	CERTAIN DISTANT SUNS	Happy On The Inside	Giant-WB
33	SOUNDTRACK	Jerky Boys	Select-Atlantic
34	BAD RELIGION	Stranger Than Fiction	Atlantic
35	SOUL COUGHING	Ruby Vroom	Slash-WB
36	VARIOUS ARTISTS	This Is Fort Apache	Fort Apache-MCA
37	DAVE MATTHEWS BAND	Under The Table And Dreaming	RCA
38	ECHOBELLY	Everyone's Got One	Faue-Rhythm King
39	SMASHING PUMPKINS	Pisces Iscariot	Virgin
40	SPEARHEAD	Home	Capitol
41	OASIS	Definitely Maybe	Epic
42	SUGAR	File Under: Easy Listening	Rykodisc
43	CRASH WORSHIP	Triple Mania II	Charnel House
44	CRANBERRIES	No Need To Argue	Island
45	LORDS OF ACID	Voodoo-U	WHITE LABEL/Antler Subway-American
46	BETTER THAN EZRA	Deluxe	Swell-Elektra
47	EDSEL	Detroit Folly	Gross-Dutch East India
48	THE THE	I Saw The Light (EP)	550-Epic
49	MELVINS	Stoner Witch	Atlantic
50	LAURIE ANDERSON	Bright Red	Warner Bros.
51	TUSCADERO	The Pink Album	Teen Beat
52	GREEN DAY	Dookie	Reprise
53	SONS OF ELVIS	Glodean	Priority
54	WEDDING PRESENT	Watusi	Island
55	GOLDEN PALOMINOS	Pure	Restless
56	NEW RADIANT STORM KING	August Revital	Gross-Dutch East India
57	LATIMER	World's Portable (EP)	World Domination
58	WEEN	Chocolate And Cheese	Elektra
59	NEW BOMB TURKS	Information Highway Revisited	Crypt
60	CHIEFTAINS	The Long Black Veil	RCA
61	WALLY PLEASANT	Houses Of The Holy Moly	Miranda
62	BOUNCING SOULS	The Good, The Bad, And The Argyle	Chunksoah-BYO
63	SIMPLE MINDS	Good News From The Next World	Virgin
64	PRICK	Prick	Nothing-Interscope
65	JENNIFER TRYNIN	Cockamamie	Squint-No Life
66	BIM SKALA BIM	Eyes & Ears	BIB
67	PIZZICATO FIVE	Made In USA	Matador
68	NICK LOWE	The Impossible Bird	Upstart-Rounder
69	TOM PETTY	Wildflowers	Warner Bros.
70	LOVE 666	American Revolution	Amphetamine Reptile
71	LAUGHING HYENAS	Hard Times	Touch And Go
72	TECHNICAL JED	Southern States	spinART
73	VARIOUS ARTISTS	My So-Called Life	Atlantic
74	BUILT TO SPILL	There's Nothing Wrong With Love	Up
75	SOUNDTRACK	Pulp Fiction	MCA

Chart data culled from *CMJ New Music Report's* weekly Top 150 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 35 most played releases that week.

World Radio History



WEEZER/ARCHERS OF LOAF

- April
 1 Atlanta, GA
 3 Austin, TX
 4 Dallax, TX
 6 Phoenix, CO
 7 San Diego, CA
 8 Irvine, LA



TRAGICALLY HIP

- April
 2 Chicago, IL
 4 Grand Rapids, MI
 5 Detroit, MI
 8 Cleveland, OH

These bands should be on the road late March-April (tour dates were not available at press time):

- Laurie Anderson
- Bad Religion
- Traci Lords
- Jewel
- R.E.M.
- Adam Ant
- Hole
- Victoria Williams
- Polara
- Band Of Susans
- Urban Dance Squad
- Simple Minds
- Royal Trux
- Geraldine Fibbers

All dates are subject to change.



NEW RELEASES MARCH - APRIL 1995

MARCH 28

- ELEVATOR TO HELL** Elevator To Hell (Sub Pop)
- SMOG** Wild Love (Drag City)
- THE SEA AND CAKE** Nassau (Thrill Jockey)
- JULIANA HATFIELD** Only Everything (Mammoth-Atlantic)
- SHANE MacGOWAN** (Warner Bros.)
- WILCO** (Sire-Reprise)
- SPIRITUALIZED** Pure Phase (Arista)
- BUTTHOLE SURFERS** The Hole Truth... and Nothing Butt (Trance)
- CHANNEL LIVE** Station Identification (Capitol)
- FOETUS** Gash (Columbia)
- FOETUS** Null (EP) (Columbia)
- SEASON TO RISK** TBA (Columbia)
- CHARLES & EDDIE** Chocolate Milk (Capitol)
- DURAN DURAN** Thank You (Capitol)
- DAVID JOHANSEN** David Johanssen Story (Rhino)
- ROBYN HITCHCOCK** Rare & Unreleased; Eye; Invisible Hitchcock (reissues) (Rhino)
- KING TEE** King Tee IV Life (MCA)
- MUDHONEY** My Brother The Cow (Reprise)
- NITZER EBB** Big Hit (DGC)
- CHARLIE SEXTON SEXTET** Under The Wishing Tree (MCA)

APRIL 1

- NIGHTMARES ON WAX** Smokers Delight (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- EVOLUTION** Evolution (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- WILDLIFE SOCIETY** Wildlife Society (Blunt-TVT)
- SPOOKEY RUBENS** TBA (TVT)
- FLEDGLING** TBA (TVT)

APRIL 4

- JESSE** Never Let You Go (Capitol)
- YOKO ONO** New York Rock (soundtrack) (Capitol)
- RADIOHEAD** The Bends (Capitol)
- INNOCENCE MISSION** Glow (A&M)
- SENER** Stacked Up (Atlas-A&M)
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Live At Threadwaxing Space: The Presidential Compilation (Zero Hour)
- DIRT MERCHANTS** Scarified (Zero Hour)
- FLOP** TBA (Frontier)
- KNAPSACK** Silver Sweepstakes (Alias)
- OUR LADY PEACE** Naveed (Relativity)
- EXIT-13** ...Just A Few More Hits (Relapse)
- DISMEMBER** Casket Garden (Nuclear Blast)
- ABYSS** Abyss (Nuclear Blast)
- DECEASED** The Blueprints For Madness (Relapse)

APRIL 11

- FLOTSAM & JETSAM** Drift (MCA)
- WELLS** Love, Life And Struggle (MCA)
- PETER MURPHY** Cascade (Beggars Banquet-Atlantic)
- JENNY MAE** There's A Bar Around The Corner... Assholes (Anyway)
- WHITE ZOMBIE** Astro Creep: 2000 Songs Of Love, Destruction And Other Synthetic Delusions Of The Electric Head (Geffen)
- HARDVARK** Memory Barge (Geffen)

APRIL 18

- GEORGE JONES** George Jones Sings The Hits Of His Country Cousins (Razor & Tie)
- GEORGE JONES** Homecoming In Heaven (Razor & Tie)
- HOME** IX (Relativity)

APRIL 25

- THESE ANIMAL MEN** (Come On, Join) The High Society (Vernon Yard)
- THURSTON MOORE** Feminist Religious (DGC)
- DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM** Industrial Breakdown (EP) (K)

All dates subject to change

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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

APRIL 1995

VOLUME 20

Let's get this straight: We have no idea why there's a lower-case "h" beginning the name of this band, but **hHEAD** it is. Native to Toronto, Canada, where we assume capitalization rules are still observed, this trio was fortunate enough to win the \$100,000 CFNY "Discovery To Disk" contest. With that money, the band recorded "**Answers**" and the rest of *jerk* (I.R.S.). These veterans of several tours of Canada will be barnstorming into your area soon. Drop by and say "hi"; they think that "that would be really neat."

Another Canadian band, **PEST 5000** has things going for it on a lot of fronts: love-rock charm backed up by super-sharp musicianship, a rock lineup that includes a violinist, and smart, witty lyrics. The deceptively sweet-sounding "**Fault**" comes from the quintet's recent *patti christ superstar double-7*" on its own Derivative label, on which each of its four songwriting members gets his or her own side.

If you didn't take our word in January's "On The Verge" and dig up **CATERPILLAR**'s debut album *A Thousand Million Micronauts* ("Compulsiv), then here's your chance to check out their latest slab of wax. Drawing from the same gnarled, kinetic guitar leads and casually delivered harmonies that make the Philadelphia band's noisy pop so compelling, "**Swim Away**" (Deadbeat) adds another layer to the band's output of 7" singles, which includes a split single with Superchunk.

TARNATION's Michelle Cernuto explains of her band that "We like country and we play country but that's not what we do." Even a cursory listen to "**It's Not Easy**," off the San Francisco group's debut album *I'll Give You Something To Cry About* (Nuf Sed), reveals this to be no contradiction, however, as Matt Wendell Sullivan's rich baritone intertwines with Paula Frazer's corn-fed soprano over lapping waves of strummy guitars in this soaring and memorable song.

The amps are distorting like they're about to blow, the singers are stretching for the notes, the tape hiss sounds like a nor'easter blowing through a window and the irony-meter is pinned all the way to the right, but "**Quiet Riot Grrrr!**" still manages to be an adorable love song. How does **FURTHER** pull it off? In the last year, the prolific Californian quartet has released a double album, several singles and side projects, and an EP—*Crimes Golden* (Fingerpaint), from which this is taken.

The chaotic snarls of sound blurring out of "**A' Is For Cribbage**," from San Francisco trio **HENRY'S DRESS**, are like an electric shock whose magnetism just won't let go. Once firmly sucked into the song's groove, you'll be wooed for two short minutes by drummer Amy Linton's even-keeled coo, then by the song's craggy rhythm, and finally you'll find yourself numbed by the jittery sparks flying every which way. When it's over, search out the other seven songs on the band's self-titled CD (Slumberland), and watch the mystery of friction and fire repeat itself again and again.

The British quartet **ELASTICA** is at the spearhead of the New Wave Of New Wave, and songs like "**Car Song**" are the reason—you'll practically expect to hear J.J. Jackson's voice at the end. After three hit British singles and an American EP, *Stutter*, Elastica's self-titled debut album is newly out in the U.S. on DGC, and it's stuffed wall-to-wall with amazing power-pop songs like this one. And "Car Song" is less than two and a half minutes long. Beat that.

JULIANA HATFIELD has added new members to her group—and dropped the Three from the band name—for *Only Everything* (Mammoth-Atlantic). "**Universal Heartbeat**" is indicative of the changes that have been made in Hatfield's sound: The more subtle, light-hearted pop has been replaced with three-chord power strokes. It's still the same catchy, hum-along pop, however.

The complete revamping of **PJ HARVEY**'s style should come as no surprise to Polly's fans, as she has never let the grass grow under her feet. Her group has a new lineup, a new producer (Flood, who's worked with Depeche Mode and U2) and a new, electrifying sound. "**Down By the Water**" rumbles along, slithering behind Polly's eerie and shadowy narrative. It's taken from *To Bring You My Love* (Island), her fourth album.

After his lush, stellar debut *Living With The Law*, guitarist **CHRIS WHITLEY** is back with a more stripped-down sound on *Din Of Ecstasy* (Work). "**Oh God My Heart Is Ready**," the first single from *Din*, shows off that mean-and-lean swamp blues that has critics praising the soul and feel of Whitley's lyrical six-string work. Spin through the whole disc and you'll be praising his stirring songs and expressive voice as well.



Face To Face



Medeski, Martin & Wood



hHead



Elastica



Juliana Hatfield



PJ Harvey

THE ID

HOW TO USE THIS PAGE

1. Cut along dotted line.
2. Fold in half.
3. Slip into our CD holder or a jewel box.
4. Enjoy.



Morphine

Boston-based **MORPHINE** has made a career out of writing music that would sound great as a soundtrack. (The group actually did supply five songs for the recent underground film *Spanking The Monkey*.) On “**Honey White**,” the first single from its third album, *Yes* (Rykodisc), Morphine hones in on what makes it distinct: unusual instrumentation (low-tuned bass, sax, drums and no guitar), Mark Sandman’s caressing drawl and world-weary lyrics.

A sought-after guitar player since his early teens, Charlie Sexton’s real education was in Texas clubs and roadhouses playing with the likes of Joe Ely, which may explain the slight mathematical error he made in naming his new band the **CHARLIE SEXTON SEXTET**—there’s only four of them. Anyway, Sexton was too busy combining his Texas roots with his Irish ancestry to make riveting *Under The Wishing Tree* (MCA), from which we cull “**Dark**.”



Charlie Sexton Sextet

Back a few years ago, **ROYAL TRUX**’s Neil Hagerty played in the gutter-blues terror team Pussy Galore with Jon Spencer (now of the Blues Explosion). Hagerty was the one responsible for that band’s Rolling Stones fixation; in his subsequent records with Royal Trux, his fascination with the famous rock deconstructors of the blues has been surfacing more and more. “**You’re Gonna Lose**,” from *Thank You* (Virgin), is driven by Jennifer Herrema’s gritty vocals and a Hagerty riff that could have come straight from *Exile On Main Street*.

“Music is the main thing, but I always try to make the show theatrical; I always wear strange costumes and try to make things interesting.” So says Elia Bel, of the Australian group **ONCE UPON A TIME**. Bel began her collaboration with guitarist Jim Reece at the suggestion of Marshall Cullen, who eventually produced the group’s self-titled debut (Trauma-Interscope). The two started out by twisting standards by Patsy Cline, Marlene Dietrich and Doris Day out of shape, and soon went on to creating adventurous originals like “**God**.”



Once Upon A Time

You usually don’t think of “singer-songwriter” and “techno beats” in the same sentence, but **LIDA HUSIK** doesn’t bother with “usually.” A few months ago, the Washington, DC-based Husik released a collaboration with techno star Beaumont Hannant; her new *Joyride* (Caroline) continues her hybrid of delicate songs and lithe, funky beats. Check out her trademark fragile, multi-tracked vocals on “**Persinthia Lawdro & John**.”

The **WATERBOYS** run the music of the British Isles through a heavy-duty rock filter. *The Best Of The Waterboys ’81-’90* (Chrysalis-EMI), newly reissued, chronicles the first chapter in the history of singer/pianist/guitarist Mike Scott’s rollicking group. “**Medicine Bow**” is a highlight of the early days of the band, with a huge cast of instruments driving the song to a continuous peak.

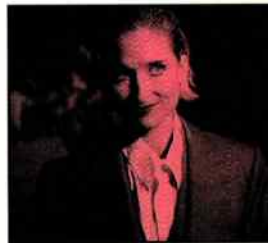
JILL SOBULE’s songwriting is an eavesdropper’s delight. Listening to the plain-as-day stories in her songs is just like overhearing friends commiserating over a few rounds of drinks, except that Sobule’s stories, unlike those of the faintly inebriated populace, are beguiling, ironic and witty. “**I Kissed A Girl**,” from her new self-titled debut (Atlantic), is a sweet tale of what really happens when women get together for those instant international coffees.



Lida Husik

How Ted Horowitz, son of a Bronx candy store owner, became monster blues-rock guitarist **POPA CHUBBY** is something of a mystery, but most experts agree that it has something to do with playing 300 sweaty, exuberant shows a year in blues clubs across America. His furious cover of Freddie King’s “**Palace Of The King**” comes from *Booty And The Beast* (OKeh-Epic), his major-label debut after two well-received records on his own Laughing Bear label.

On its climb to the top of the punk rock pile, **FACE TO FACE** has a considerable advantage: It hails from the current epicenter of punk media hype—Southern California. The quartet has already made a name for itself, however, with a couple of indie releases. “**Debt**,” like the other high-energy tunes on *Big Choice* (A&M), is sure to be a crowd-pleaser among members of the ’90s punk brigade.



Jill Sobule

Over the past decade and a half, J.G. Thirlwell (a k a **FOETUS**) has not only recorded over 15 releases mainly as a one-man band, but he’s also been a producer and remixer for bands including Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pantera, Nine Inch Nails and White Zombie. “**Verklemmt**,” from *Gash* (Columbia), leans toward the darker side of the musical spectrum, with distorted bursts of crushing chaos layered within an explosive mix of gruff, evil vocals and hard techno beats.

With a sharply honed lyrical sense of humor and a gift for hook-work, **ST. JOHNNY**’s frontman Bill Whitten has come into his own on the band’s new *Let It Come Down* (DGC). “It’s all obvious if you’re in a rock band,” he’s said, so this time he’s given himself some ironic distance and come up with an enormously catchy, acerbic commentary. Let’s see: a title of “**Scuba Diving**” and a chorus of “money money money.” Underwater plus dollar bill. What does that remind you of?



Popa Chubby

Deadheads like ’em, intellectuals with beards like ’em, and anyone who digs the deep grooves of Booker T. & The MGs likes ’em too. The New York combo **MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD** plays a spirited stew of avant garde, jazz, soul and swing that floats over categories and straight into the heart of the listener. The trio’s third album together, *Friday Afternoon In The Universe* (Rykco), from which comes “**The Lover**,” marks it as one of the hippest instrumental groups working today.

PAX ME

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Localzine

by Neil Gladstone
photographs by Rob Giglio

PHILADELPHIA, PA

"Why does the Philadelphia music scene suck so bad?" Although no one has ever done a study on the top ten icebreakers in the City Of Brotherly Love, this line would no doubt come in just behind "Aren't you a model?" and "You know why the Sixers/Eagles/Phillies suck so bad..." In reality, the music scene here is doing just fine; however, it doesn't take Dr. Joyce Brothers to realize the natives have a problem with low self-esteem and built-up angst.



There are many great reasons to live in Philadelphia. Rent is dirt cheap (it's not unusual to pay \$175 a month). Squatters aren't readily evicted (authorities have lightened up since the whole MOVE incident). Most of the nightlife is contained within walking distance of a cheesesteak/hoagie shop, and, finally, several times a year you get to watch macho guys dress up like Liberace in sequins, makeup and boots—we call them Mummers.

Local bands don't have a unified sound, but the best maintain a sense of wry humility. Strapping Fieldhands' psychedelic strangeness, Caterpillar's off-kilter pop, and Latimer's retro, melodic pop are the mustard on our musical soft pretzel.

ZIPPERHEAD

SHOWS

On average, there's about one good show any given night in Philadelphia—unfortunately, this breaks down to some nights when there are two or more cool bands playing and other nights when you're left to drink your Yuengling (PA beer of choice) and gripe. However, many great bands come to town on school nights and play under-attended shows. This means more breathing space for you.

Silk City (5th and Spring Garden) changes its vibe every night of the week, but that groove always ends up complementing the early '60s decor nicely. "Back to Basics" nights feature funk of all ages along with acid jazz—both live and recorded—while local bands play on other nights. Members of Urge Overkill and Big Chief are known to pop their heads in here when recording with the Butcher Brothers at Studio 4 (located just outside Philly in Conshohocken).

The Trocadero (10th and Arch Streets) is host to some of the best bands that travel through town—Redd Kross, Girls Against Boys, Pavement. Unfortunately, everyone who works at the club won't let you forget it. A former burlesque theater that's been turned into a concert hall. You can bring your little brother and leave him downstairs while you drink in the lobby.

The Firenze Cafe (11th and Cherry Streets) is the best place for newer bands to drop their tape. The interior decoration won't be profiled in *Architectural Digest* anytime soon, but there is an old-school punk spirit that can't be beat. Some Homestead artists have taken to playing there lately, and rockabilly still spurs interest.

The Khyber Pass Pub (56 S. 2nd St.) offers national, up-and-coming indie bands as well as many fine local combos. This club is the AAA ball to the Trocadero's major league. A good place to open for a larger band, but not an easy place to get a gig.

Other choices include J.C. Dobbs (mainstream rock & blues), Ortlieb's Jazzhaus (local jazz), Zanzibar Blue (upscale jazz), Bob and Barbara's Cocktail Lounge (crowd-pleasing jazz), the R.U.B.A. Club (favorite D.I.Y. venue), Theater Of Living Arts (mixed bag) and Tower Theater (metal, classic rock). Delaware Avenue offers dance clubs aplenty, and in an unexpected turn of events, most of them have made mousse/hairspray optional. God bless 'em!

RADIO

Upon entering city limits, tune in to Drexel University's **WKDU (91.7 FM)**. The signal isn't always the strongest, but they are the local patron saints of college radio. DJs still play singles and plenty of worthwhile local and independent bands.



If you want to destroy your sweater, **WDRE (102.7 FM)** will gladly lend a hand with lots of Weezer and other current alterna-rock faves. This commercial alternative station (simulcasting the New York station of the same call letters) cuts the Cranberries and Sugar with Elvis Costello and vintage Joe Jackson.

Temple University's **WXTU (90.1 FM)** organizes its playlist with plenty of classic jazz—Coltrane, Miles Davis, Thelonius Monk—and is perfect for that Sunday morning feeling.

HANGOUTS

McGlinchey's Bar & Grill (259 S. 15th St.) packs in students from the nearby University of the Arts—philosophical theory and the cigarette smoke are equally dense here.

Dirty Frank's Bar (13th & Pine) is the low-key alternative to McGlinchey's. Favorite dive for Philly's Jack Daniels-rockers Go To Blazes.

Sabra Restaurant (1240 Pine); just across the street from Dirty Frank's—Middle Eastern sandwiches that are very cheap and surprisingly tasty.

Sugar Mom's (225 Church St.) A new club that just opened up with a great jukebox—the Clash, Sly Stone, Elvis—and has bumper cars to sit and relax in while you enjoy your alcoholic beverage.



Reading Terminal Market (12th & Market St.); an old train shed that's been converted into a high-quality food court—everything from sushi to hoagies (that's subway sandwiches to you foreigners). Great place to get an edible souvenir or see a few of the Amish who don't mind selling cheese puffs for a living. Don't go around noon—it's packed—but go before evening—it's closed.

Makam's Kitchen (2401 Lombard) The one coffeehouse in town with some street credibility to it.

Vegetarians: **Essene Natural Food Market** (719 S. 4th St.) Along with the macrobiotic junk, it also has food.

You've got to leave some time for your body to absorb each cheesesteak, so get your mind off your newfound menu staple and into something quasi-intellectual.

The Mutter Museum (19 S. 22nd St.) If there's anything of a 13-year-old left in you, you owe it to yourself to check out this collection of skulls, fetuses, and medical oddities. Bring your Goth friends, they'll love it!

The Franklin Institute (20th & Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.) To some, it's a fascinating journey into the world of science; to others, a place that will keep your stoner friends occupied for days.

LOVE Park (Broad St. & Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.) The closest thing we've got to a government-sanctioned skate-rat playground.

Art lovers can peruse the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, **Institute of Contemporary Art** and several galleries located just north of 2nd and Market Sts.

SHOPPING

Philadelphia Record Exchange (30 S. 2nd St.) has plenty of new vinyl, especially 7", and a nice selection of used CDs, tapes, and vinyl at reasonable prices.

3rd Street Jazz & Rock (20 N. 3rd St.) Probably the best selection in town of new indie CDs, imports and jazz in all formats. Prices are average.

Digital Underground (526 S. 5th St.) Good selection of new and used CDs. Specializing in industrial dance.

611 (4th St. between South & Bainbridge) Rave style—industrial dance, techno and ambient.

Wooden Shoe Books (112 S. 20th St.) Never quite sure where to take your anarchist friends? Bring 'em by the Wooden Shoe. They'll find something of interest.

South Street (east of 9th) is considered the boutique mecca of Philly, but don't get your hopes up. If you're looking for some of that punk gear to scare Mom and Dad, take a look at **Time Zone**, **Zipperhead** and **Trash & Vaudeville** (all on South Street). Stop by Jim's Steaks at 4th and South for a cheesesteak—they're supposedly a favorite of Bon Jovi. Of course, there is no better souvenir than a tattoo from Philadelphia Eddie's Tattoo. Uh... Rock on!

Neil Gladstone is rumored to be a member of Mothra.





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