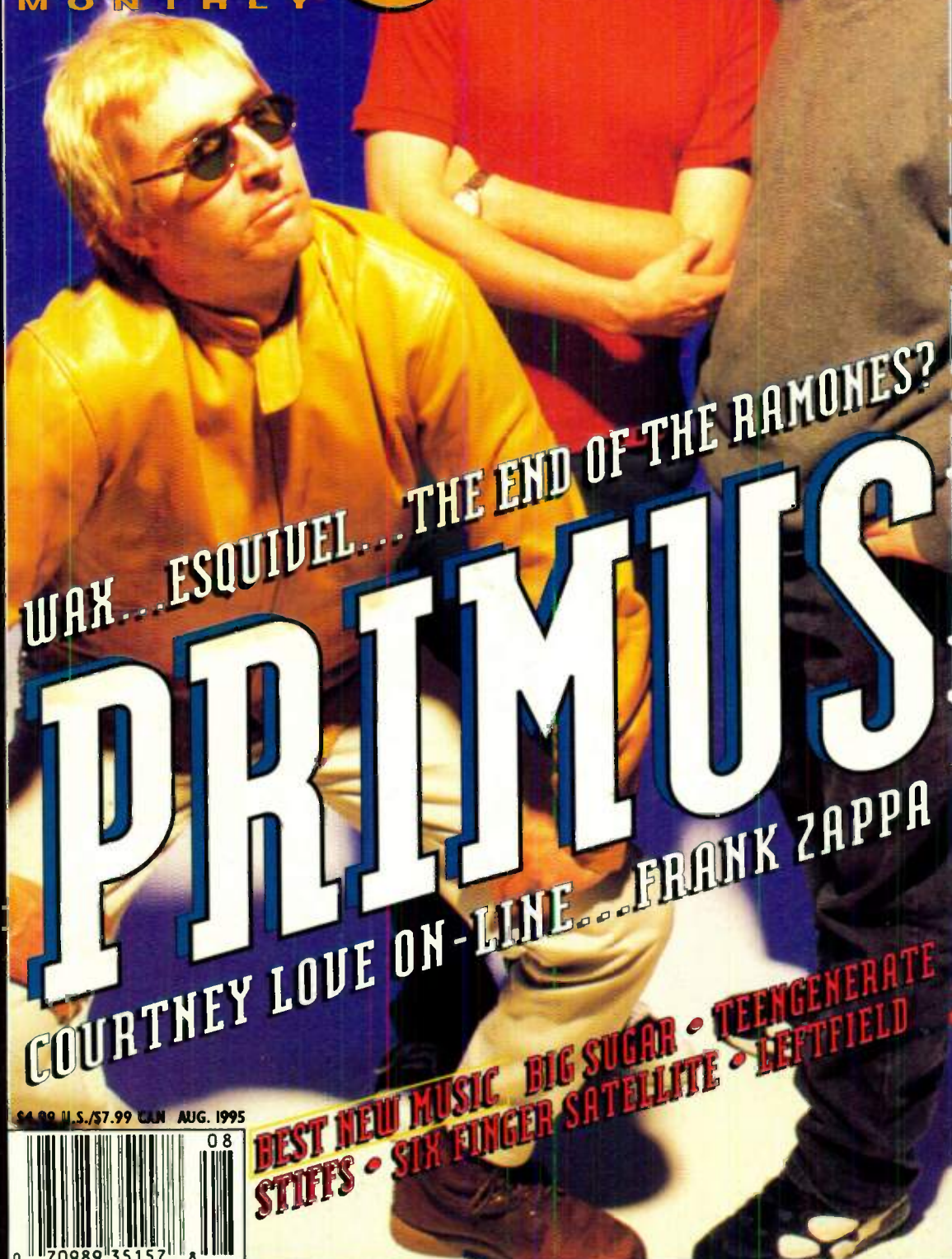


World Radio History

CMJ

NEW MUSIC MONTHLY



WAX... ESQUIVEL... THE END OF THE RAMONES?

PRIMUS

COURTNEY LOVE ON-LINE... FRANK ZAPPA

BEST NEW MUSIC • BIG SUGAR • TEENGENERATE
STIFFS • SIX FINGER SATELLITE • LEFTFIELD

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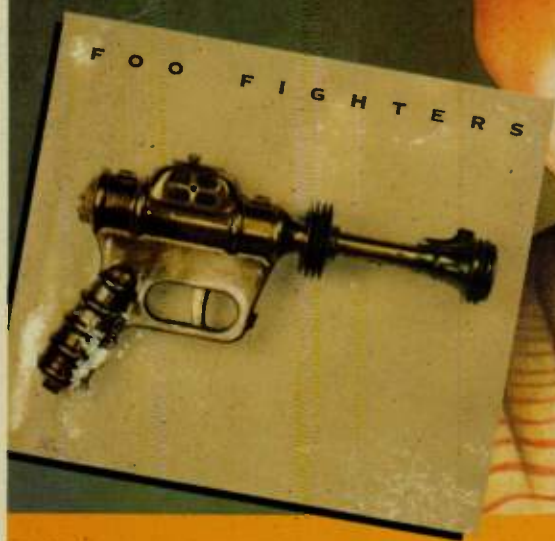


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Nº1

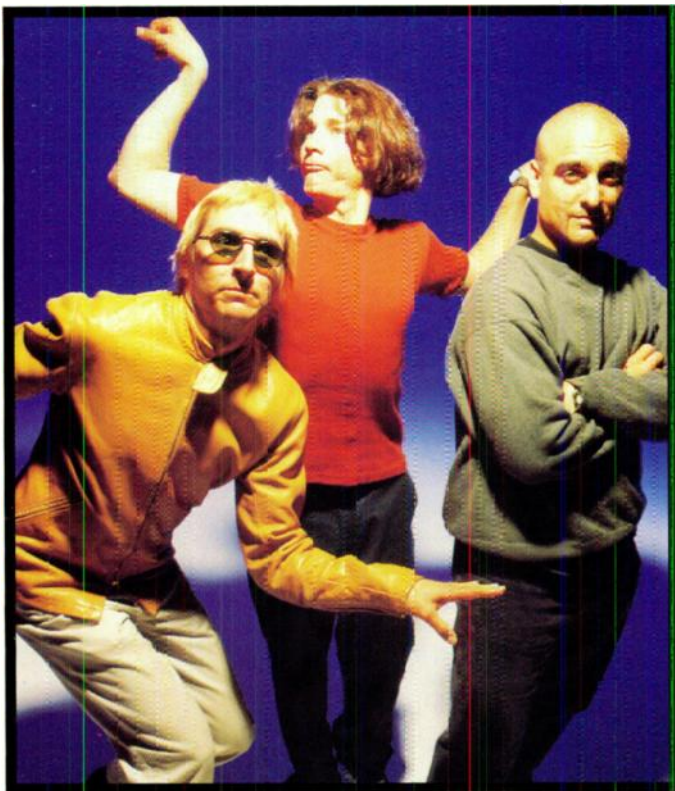
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CMJ

NEW MUSIC
MONTHLY

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Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments' Ron House finds something special in "America's most ordinary city."



Q: At press time, Green Day has sold over seven million copies of *Dookie*. Is this really the hallmark of a punk revival, or just one hugely successful record? Is *Dookie* punk at all?

Tell us what you think, by mail, fax (516-466-7159) or e-mail (cmj@cmjmusic.com).

Oh, Canada

Unfortunately, our June question asking if Eazy-E's death from AIDS would alter anyone's perceptions of the disease or actions in preventing it was answered with a resounding "no," if only by omission: what few responses we received were ambivalent at best.

To our editorial surprise, however, a tempest blew up in the teapot of our very own reviews section. The following are some of the reactions to our April issue's review of the Tragically Hip's *Day For Night*.

I picked up the April edition of your fine magazine today and was pleasantly surprised to find references to two (!) Canadian bands. My enthusiasm soon ebbed, however, when I realized that one of the featured bands was hHead, a group I have seen live twice and which failed to impress me either time. The other, the Tragically Hip, were featured in a review. One particular line in this review really got to me: "...The wintry frontierlands to the north are just an extension of the American West." Nothing, I'm afraid, could be further from the truth. First of all, the Tragically Hip hail from Kingston, Ontario (hardly "frontierland"), which is only about 20 or 30 minutes' drive from Ottawa (the nation's capital). They hail from an area of Ontario that is the most densely populated and industrially developed area in Canada. I'm not a flag waver and I don't usually write to magazines, but the comment deserves some kind of rebuttal. Continued ignorance of the rich diversity (musical and social) that is Canada is what keeps Canadian musicians from getting their due recognition outside of their borders.

In a related vein, I would like to take this opportunity to mention that Ottawa possesses one of the best-kept secrets in the global music community. The depth and breadth of the independent music scene in Ottawa is unmatched in any city that I have been privileged to visit. It is a true puzzle to me that bands like FurnaceFace, Illegal Jazz Poets and the wonderfully original The Age Of Faith have yet to break the bounds of the independent underground community.

Also, I have never seen or built an igloo, I don't ski in July, and the only Eskimo I know works as an accountant.

Shawn G. Nystrand
via e-mail

This letter is being written on behalf of a new organization. The WOLFPACK organization was created in order to right wrongful accusations or statements made by Americans toward Canadian artists. The Tragically Hip have been battling critics and audiences since the mid-80s. They have produced four solid albums and an EP. Americans have shunned them all. Now with *Day For Night*, Americans are beginning to wake up and recognize true talent. The main reason this letter is being written is to express our disgust with your magazine concerning statements that the Tragically Hip were more American than Canadian. How dare you claim the Tragically Hip as one of you...

Hopefully we have set you straight regarding Canadian artists. If not, you will be hearing from us again shortly.

THE WOLFPACK
Ottawa, CANADA

The sentence in question was not meant to imply that Western Canada is really part of America, that the Tragically Hip are more American than they are Canadian or that a band can't be good unless it's American (this last point being the most absurd), but that one could view the "Western Frontierlands" that run through both countries as a region with a particular cultural identity (e.g. Calgary and Cheyenne have more in common with each other than either do with Toronto or Boston). The idea was not to sell the band's Canadian identity short or devalue the music as "not American," but to conjure an image that suited the music and would resonate with readers unfamiliar with the band. —ed.

Radio Free Madison

I love your magazine! In your [June] issue's Localzine story on Madison, WI, it was stated by Paul Zagoras of Killozzer that "the University Of Wisconsin does not have a radio station..." Oops! Well, we do, and here we are, broadcasting since 1952. Please correct the error in the next issue.

Scooter Pegram
Station Manager, WLHA

In Paul's defense, it should be said that broadcasting at only 10 watts, it is quite likely that WLHA does not reach radios too far from campus. But, Scooter, consider the item corrected. —ed.

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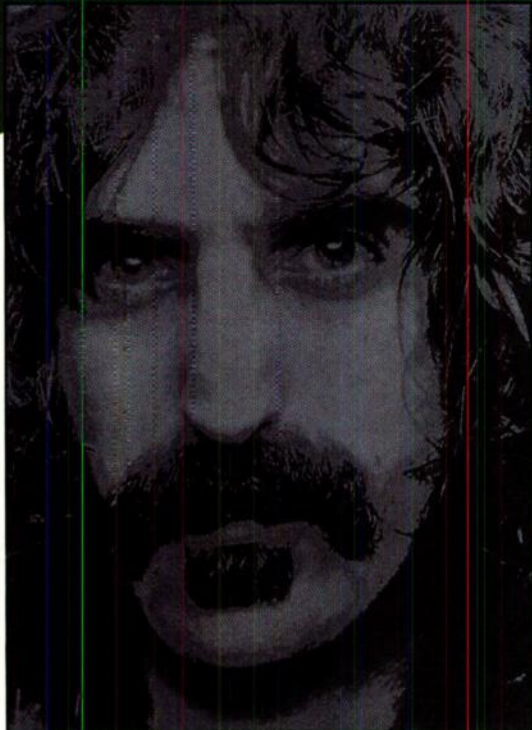


Some people hanging' around rinsing mud from their teeth.**

*That moment in time between the last thing you did and what you're about to do next; it's only icitering if there's a sign.

**Zima is no substitute for brushing regularly, but it is refreshing when served cold. Oh yeah, and it comes in cans.

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Frank Zappa: Wowie Zowie

This summer, Rykodisc announced the rerelease of over fifty albums by Frank Zappa. Even though this is technically the second time they've been "reissued" on CD, it's still cause for a pause for thought, and for a salute to one of the great icons of alternative music.

Frank Zappa could well have written a textbook for young musicians on the labyrinthian corruption, greed, bastardly politics and idiocy of the music industry. As an entrepreneur, he retained creative control over his work by forming his own record and distribution networks, and pioneered such then-unusual concepts as selling his work by phone- and mail-order. By the time he'd been a rebellious force in music for twenty or so years, he was testifying at House Committee hearings on censorship and wielded an influence that extended far beyond his original cult audience of stoned hippies and loners at home with the headphones on. He very nearly ran for president.

His "underground oratorios" on the early Mothers Of Invention albums were basically strings of song-snippets stuck together; to someone who grew up in the '80s or '90s, who heard Guided By Voices or the skits between songs on De La Soul albums first, they won't seem so revolutionary, but they were. Even Pavement's latest album title was preceded 20 years ago by a Mothers song, "Wowie Zowie."

For all his rep as an anti-authoritarian, half the time he was screaming at his own fans. "Take a day and walk around/Watch the Nazis run your town/Then go home and check yourself/You think we're singing about someone else," the Mothers cackled on *Absolutely Free*. While every major artist from the Beatles on down bought into the hippie myth, Zappa saw through it right away and parodied it mercilessly on albums like *Freak Out* and *We're Only In It For The Money*. Later in his career, on *Apostrophe*, Zappa introduced one song with a comment that can only be taken as a sneer at his burgeoning cult audience of fans, who often seemed to take his records more seriously than even he did.

Throughout his 65 albums, again and again Frank Zappa satirized whatever was happening around him, each trend and wave mirrored in his music with frightening accuracy. There's the infamous parody of the cover art of *Sgt. Pepper's* on *We're Only In It For The Money*, or "Directly From My Heart To You" (from 1970's *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*), a hilarious send-up of the bombastic blues-rock popularized by Janis and Led Zeppelin. And it rocks, too—in other words, it was parody so brilliant that it totally went over the heads of the people it was designed to parody.

By 1969, Zappa emerged with a new persona, that of guitar-god, itself a move that was, again, probably a reaction against the adulatory fervor audiences felt for the Claptons and Becks of the late '60s. He released *Hot Rats*, probably his most accessible jazz-fusion effort, meaning that it's the one that even people who don't really like Frank Zappa tend to enjoy.

Later, he took aim at the heavy fusion-rock of the '70s with *Zoot Allures* (1976), satirized disco and eventually, even himself. Even with his classical outings, one couldn't be really sure he wasn't sending up modern avant-garde classical music at the same time that he joined the ranks of influential modern composers.

It's clear that Frank Zappa spoke to those who, for whatever reason, felt like they didn't fit in. But what's perhaps most important about Zappa is that although he clearly stood for certain things and against others, there was surprisingly little anger in his music. Angry at the system maybe, angry about ennui and bad politics, but there was never anything in Zappa's music that was inherently angry. Zappa never once said "hey, fate gave me a big nose and a weird personality, so I'm going to take it out on everyone and lash back at the universe with my music." In its odd way, his music was constructive, even positive. And by pointing to the world's foibles and shortcomings, he was trying to prod it into finding solutions, or at least demand something better. For 52 years his humor and his music were formidable weapons for positive things. And for that, and these 53 reissues, we should be thankful.

—James Lien

ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS in my room

SASCHA KONIETZKO

KMFDM

D.A.F.

Alles Ist Gut

Chemlab

Magnetic Field EP

Ashra Tempel

Schwüngen

Mark Stewart

As The Veneer Of Democracy Starts To Fade

Mozart

Symphonies No. 40 and 41



Tours We'd Like To See

Remedial Math '95

Charlie Sexton Sextet (four members), Raymond Scott Quintette (six), Elvis Costello and the Rude 5 (four), Ben Folds Five (three), Denison-Kimball Trio (two), Thompson Twins (three) and Hafler Trio (one).

ARTISTS' **in my room** PERSONAL PICKS

STEPHIN MERRITT

MAGNETIC FIELDS/
THE 6THS

Eartha Kitt
Earthquake (box set)

Cole Porter
From This Moment On
(box set)

Godzilla Vs. Mothra
soundtrack

ABBA
Thank You For The Music
(box set)

John Foxx
Metamatic

Esquivel: Beyond Imagination

As is the case with most true visionaries, Juan Esquivel's strong suit isn't explaining the source of that vision. But then just how are you supposed to answer a question like "In 'Who's Sorry Now,' where'd you get the idea for that chorus going 'boink boink?'"

Long beloved of obscure vinyl collectors and pop-culture authorities from John Zorn to Matt Groening, Mexican bandleader Juan Esquivel is right up there on the Mount Rushmore of Exotic Lounge Music alongside Les Baxter and Martin Denny. Last year, his wacky wall-of-sound recordings gained a whole new generation of fans when Bar/None released *Space Age Bachelor Pad Music*, a compilation of choice cuts from his out-of-print RCA albums. A follow-up, *Music From A Sparkling Planet*, just hit the shelves, and another on Reprise may follow soon.

Esquivel's music career began at the age of 11, when he got a gig playing piano on a Mexico City radio station. By age 17, he was conducting a 24-piece orchestra, and after becoming enormously popular in Mexico, RCA signed him up and released a series of his albums throughout the late '50s and '60s. Now 77 and recuperating from a broken hip at his brother's house in Mexico, Esquivel compares himself to a painter when asked about the inspiration for his sound. "Just imagine an artist creating a painting with all the colors at his disposal. For me, music has colors. The strong notes are bright red, and so on. And of course, I have to make things different."

"Different" is certainly the right word for his palette. While some will point to the "zu-zu-boink" choruses or his oddball instrumentation, the true genius of an Esquivel arrangement is the extreme dynamics—a single plucked guitar veering into a powerful burst from the brass, interrupted by a tinkle from the harpsichord.

It's all in the plan, Esquivel explains. "I believe that to charm an audience, you have to hit it first. And you hit it with a *pow! pow!*—something loud. I'll do anything to attract the attention of an audience."

That meant always being on the lookout for new sounds. He recalls showing up at a recording studio back in 1959 and making a rather bizarre find. "There was a set of bongos, all dusty. What attracted my attention was that there were so many. I was used to seeing two or three bongos, but this was a set of 24! I immediately started playing them and discovered that they were tuned in the scale of F, so I wrote an arrangement for them." The results can be heard pounding out the melody of "My Blue Heaven" on *Sparkling Planet*. The same studio happened to have a strange French instrument called the Ondioline sitting around, and another signature sound was born.

Talking to Esquivel, it soon becomes clear that his demanding and perfectionist vision doesn't just extend to the sound of a record, but to spectacle, as well. In the '60s, he played Vegas with a revue known as "The Sights And Sounds Of Esquivel," which featured six musicians and four female singers. The singers were all of different nationalities, and painstakingly chosen and groomed by Esquivel. Just as his arrangements presented a spectrum of sound, the live show had to present a spectrum, as well.

"One of the girls was Japanese, with a very delicate, fragile appearance, but she had a tremendous voice, almost a bass, very powerful. Then a soprano would sing Broadway standards, and a beautiful American would sing the current hits. Finally, I had a Swiss girl. She would sing a pretty ballad, and then she would start yodeling. That was a showstopper! The audience wouldn't believe it!" What record collector wouldn't love to own a live recording of this?

These days, Esquivel's recuperation prevents him from sitting up for long, but he's still full of ideas and opinions. Recently, Combustible Edison's Brother Cleve paid a visit to the master. "I gave him some hints about sounds and ideas. He brought his keyboard with him and he was very enthused about the arrangements. I was just having fun. I dictated some music to him, trying to find out how good he was, because some of the things I told him were very difficult to write. But he did very well."

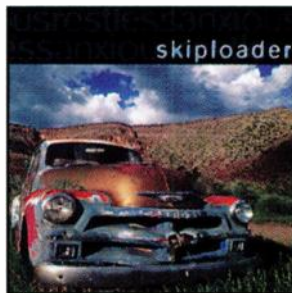
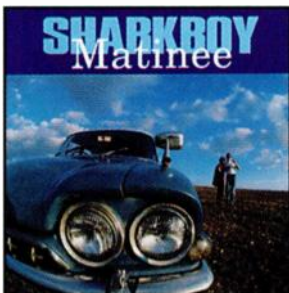
Given his penchant for unusual instrumentation, electronic synthesizers hold a continuing fascination for Esquivel, and once his rehabilitation is complete, he's itching to start working with them. "If I were going to write today, I'd use synthesizers, because you can get any sound you want, even the ones that don't exist. Today's musicians really don't take advantage of the instrument. They could do unimaginable things!"

—Heidi MacDonald



Separated At Birth?

Different photographers, different art directors, different bands. What are the odds?



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BEST NEW MUSIC

LEFTFIELD

Leftism
Columbia

Leftfield is essentially the British Clivillés and Cole: a team of two outstanding remixers (Neil Barnes and Paul Daley, who've worked tracks for David Bowie, Inner City, Stereo MC's, Yothu Yindi and Renegade Soundwave) and club DJs who, now that they've gotten around to releasing their own music, have translated the underground club scene into the year's definitive crossover dance record. This is not to say that *Leftism* sounds anything like C + C Music Factory's urban swing. The British press, tripping over itself to bow to the group's inventive, converging beats and sensuous rhythms, tagged Leftfield as "progressive house." While there's a certain intellectual muster behind these songs, that description is altogether too dry, too concerned with what's going on behind the turntables and not enough with the dancing going on in front. And that's the thing; this record is as smart as anything, but from sumptuous dub to overdriven breakbeats, everything about it connotes midnight dancefloor bliss. The hit here is "Open Up," which crashed the Brit singles chart back in '93 with John Lydon keening "bum Hollywood burn" over an infectious, rumbling bassline, but the deconstructed dub and thumping house beats of "Release The Pressure," featuring prodigal reggae vocalist Earl Sixteen, are the thing. *Leftism* is fun, ecstatic and almost giddy, and unless people have forgotten entirely how to dance, there's almost nothing to stop it.

—Scott Frampton



DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 15.

Daley drummed on Brand New Heavies' first U.S. tour.

FILE UNDER: British house.

R.I.Y.L.: 808 State, *Transmissions From The Planet Dog*, Deee-Lite.

TEENGENERATE

Get Action
Crypt

Listen, kids, this is the best straight punk rock record of the year. Aw, hell, let's get reckless and really toss around the superlatives: Best Record Of The Year. (Yeah, I'll probably regret that in a few weeks, but right now it just feels *right*.) A bold statement, yes, but just dig an earful of *Get Action*'s noise and you'll hear the fiercest, crudest, most relentless record in recent memory. Nothing new here, of course—Ramones, Sonics, the late Devil Dogs (let's all genuflect towards Brooklyn in a moment of silence, please) are the obvious influences—but this is timeless stuff when placed in the hands of a combo that knows what it's doing. If you've ever wondered what it meant to feel the ol' backbone slip, just cue up any of *Get Action*'s 17 tracks and you'll find out right quick, as Teengenerate's racket finds a pressure point that'll turn you to jelly faster than Blackjack Mulligan. As an added bonus, Fifi's Japanese accent provides a limitless source of guffaws. Screamed over the lo-fi din, the lyrics are pretty much an indecipherable, hideous, guttural howl. (The first couple spins, I thought Fifi was screaming "Make me lunch!" in the chorus of "Mess Me Up.") Buy this record, play it loud, and watch the Offspring fans run screaming back to the teen center.


—Steve McGuirl



DATALOG: Released Jun. 13.

FILE UNDER: Punk rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Sonics, Ramones, New Bomb Turks, Devil Dogs.

STIFFS, INC. 
Nix, Nought, Nothing
Onion-American



After two face-shredding 45s as The Stiffs that pogoed like freshly unearthed Dangerhouse label singles (including the positively dangerous "Destroy All Art"), Stiffs, Inc. delivers what may be the most artful and intelligent record to emerge from the NYC punk renaissance of groups like D-Generation, Trick Babies and New York Loose. Possessing all the old school power-drive, rawness, pop sense and ferocious attitude of any of those bands, Stiffs, Inc. may nonetheless get branded the art band of the bunch. Tracks like "250624" display all the minimalism, foreshortened song structures and reliance on repetition only a lifetime of listening to Wire could bring, adding an intelligence and varied palette of flavors to what might otherwise have been a standard punk rock LP. Which it (thankfully) isn't: How could it be, with tunes about Sherlock Holmes' drug problems ("Quick, Watson!") and undying lust for a silent film actress ("Mary Pickford, Marry Me")? Despite having an identity totally its own, Stiffs, Inc.'s fast and loose artpunk places it in some interesting company: The Weirdos, 100 Flowers, maybe even the Pagans if they'd gone to art school. That none of that company presently exists says a lot about the lack of imagination and personality inherent in modern day punk—something Stiffs, Inc. should have no worries about. —*Tim Stegall*

DATALOG: Release date: Jul. 11.

FILE UNDER: Vicious arthouse punk rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Pink Flag-era Wire, Pagans, Frontier's Dangerhouse compilations, Adverts.

SIX FINGER SATELLITE
Severe Exposure
Sub Pop



A year or so ago, Six Finger Satellite went through some big changes. It had previously been a decent hard-rock band with a few weird ideas up its sleeve, like the ambient interludes on its first full-length album *The Pigeon Is The Most Popular Bird*; suddenly, it went into a "transitional phase," and what emerged was a deeply disturbed 10" EP, *Machine Cuisine*, that followed in Kraftwerk's electronic footsteps. SFS emerged with the Moogs and synths intact, but reclaimed its rock instruments for a bunch of electrifying, Stygian new songs and a series of live shows that blew away audiences from coast to coast. *Severe Exposure* gets those songs on tape—it doesn't need to do anything more. The secret is drummer Rick Pelletier, who plays like a death-machine out of control, whether he's making mincemeat of his snare ("Pulling A Train") or breaking chips off his hi-hat ("Simian Fever"). John McLean's guitar sound is more static than notes and more pure evil than either; he also knows how to stir a disintegrating little synth line into noise-rock chaos to make everything sound as horribly abrasive and fucked-up as you can get. And vocalist J. Ryan is always either screaming in horror—practically choking on the mic—or gearing himself up to. Throw in some actual good songwriting, and you've got a record so hot and raw that it could leave a brand. —*Douglas Wolk*

DATALOG: Release date: Jul. 25. First single "Rabies (Baby's Got The)."

FILE UNDER: Demon cyborg rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Big Black, Steel Pole Bath Tub, Ministry, Chrome.

BIG SUGAR 
500 Pounds
Silvertone



Suppose you've got to drive an insane amount of distance in an unreasonably short amount of time. Memphis to California, say, and you've got to get there by Monday morning, do or die. Somewhere out in the badlands, 18 hours out, you reach that 80 MPH moment of road-fueled desperation, exhilaration and sleeplessness, and that's when you throw in the Big Sugar tape. Toronto, Canada's Big Sugar is making the best power-trio soundtrack for a heavy blues-rock driving experience since *Tres Hombres* on 8-track. But these guys aren't about re-creating their record collection—they're no Rick Rubin proteges—they're about updating and recasting the blues into high-octane rock and roll, and more. "Deliver Me" nods to Curtis Mayfield and "It's All Over Now" (not the Bobby Womack/Rolling Stones song) veers into a reggae break, influences that most other retro bands wouldn't dare touch. It's more like what the Stones did around *Sticky Fingers* or ZZ Top's first two or three kickass albums than any of today's punk bluesmen. Gordie Johnson's sturdy voice can be fragile, vulnerable next to his blaring, roaring guitar: when he sings, "Sometimes I wonder/Will I ever get back home?" he sounds tired and desperate, like he means it all the way. Most of the people to whom Big Sugar are compared—Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughn—aren't around any more making music, which is why you should listen up now. 'Nuff said. —*James Lien*

DATALOG: Released Jun. 27. Soon to be touring everywhere almost all the time.

FILE UNDER: Inspired, ride-like-hell power trios.

R.I.Y.L.: Cream, Steppenwolf, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.



A few years back, Berdie Cutlass—not his real name—was traveling down La Brea Avenue in Hollywood toward Santa Monica Blvd. when he smacked his Coronet into a fairly young lad on a bicycle. Now, Cutlass is a compassionate guy. He pulled the car over to the side of the road, scooped the injured cyclist up and brought him home. The victim, Joe Sib, didn't have a lot of dough so Cutlass told him he could stay with him for a while till he got back on his feet.

WAX

"That's the real story of how Wax was born," explains Loomis, the LA-based foursome's drummer. Both Loomis and Cutlass had already teamed up with Soda, a fellow Chicagoan who played guitar, before moving out to Los Angeles to become rock stars. The only missing ingredient was a frontman, and Sib just happened to be a singer.

"At the time, we'd all had these skater friends from San Jose," says Loomis. "They'd always tell us about this cool guy, Joe, from San Jose, who we'd really like. Then one day Berdie ran into him. There's actually some early pictures of Joe with his arm in a sling. We had to hurt him to get him in the band."

Only that's probably not at all how it happened. According to a three-year-old article, they met Sib the same way most band guys meet: through the want ads. But the particulars really don't matter. The reality is that with Wax, it's always a good time. Whether they're playing Vegas, a local Del Taco or the Wax Museum on Hollywood Blvd., Wax's sound is an antidote for cynicism.

Possibly the only punk rock band in Los Angeles that still has a sense of innocence about it, Wax simply never lets the little things get it down. The four-year-old band has gone through the peaks and valleys of the music industry and emerged with its integrity intact. After releasing 1992's infectious *What Else Can We Do?* on Caroline, Wax was signed by a major (Virgin), dropped by a major (Virgin), released *13 Unlucky Numbers* on Sib's own Side One label (through Cargo), and toured the country relentlessly before Interscope Records got smart and signed a lucrative deal with the boys.

"I just don't think Virgin got it," says Loomis. "They had to wait for someone else to get it before they could see what we had."

To be sure, getting dropped before the punk rock explosion of '94 nearly melted Wax. At the time, the band knew it was at the forefront of a scene that was gaining momentum, but without a label, the possibility of toiling in obscurity loomed ahead.

"We learned whether a record company is behind you or not, you gotta decide for yourself what it's gonna take to keep you going," says Loomis. "I'd already gone through sleeping in a van and sleeping outside. But when we were on stage, it made it all worth it."

The tide began to turn in Wax's favor when KROQ, a powerful local radio station, began playing a buoyant *Unlucky* track, "California," alongside Weezer, Nine Inch Nails and Hole. Director extraordinaire Spike Jonze shot the band's "California" video—a slow-mo coda to the trials of moving to Southern California—with a stunt man engulfed in flames. (The irony of a human fireball running for a bus wasn't lost on Wax's fans, who knew that most of Wax's members remain carless to this day, no small feat in L.A.) Jonze, whose very first video was for Wax's "Hush" off the *What Else Can We Do?* album, also used the band's music for a recent Nike ad he directed with Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi.

Although the record deal with Interscope was the result of a hefty bidding war, the group started off like most punk bands—flat broke. "We used to practice near the dumpsters behind this club called Circus or Exposure on Santa Monica Blvd.," says Loomis. "We boarded this kitchen and made it into a self-contained practice spot. The



PHOTOS BY MARINA CHAVEZ

area was all beaten down—it was kinda like a bat cave. Sometimes we'd get a keg of beer and perform for people. We just tried to play as much as we could."

At one point, the group went door-to-door like a band of Jehovah's Witnesses to try to get a gig. It wasn't that Wax didn't have an audience—it was the result of a fight with an aggressive local promoter. The promoter advertised a concert, which included Wax on the bill, without consulting the band.

"She was using our name and charging \$15 for the show, and when we told her we weren't going to be playing there, she told us we'd never play this town again," says Loomis. "So we knocked on every door near the club to find a place we could play at on the same night. We ended up at a Del Taco on Highland Blvd., right by the show. They even hired extra security." Loomis, who says the security guards all wore the Del Taco uniform, still pines for his own D.T. hat and suit.

To know Wax is to love them. To witness Joe Sib floundering in San Diego in front of a Sick Of It All crowd—working every angle to draw the tough little bastards in—is to want to kick the shit out of any stone-faced 15-year-olds in the room who don't understand that Wax can offer their lives a tiny burst of light. Not until Rancid gets on stage to join Wax for a rousing rendition of "United" do the kids finally find their feet.

Sib doesn't apologize for the unbridled enthusiasm he displays when he hits the stage. He's not a miserable guy, nor is this a

this month's
model

miserable band. In fact, there's nothing dreary about Wax, musically or physically. For his part, Sib looks more like a leader of a high school pep rally than your typical speeded-out punk. Soda (ne Tom Gardocki) resembles the Artful Dodger in *Oliver Twist*—a sly grin barely visible under his ever-present knit cap, an argyle vest and floods completing the picture. Cutlass (a k a Dave Georgeff) is also a smooth piece of work, part used-car dealer, part teen idol. As for Loomis, no one knows exactly what he looks like—it's been years since his face wasn't obscured by a dingy cowboy hat and a three or four-pronged, beaded goatee.

"We're all from kinda different worlds," says Loomis. "That's why I think it's useless when people ask us how old we are or where we're from, like that's supposed to sum up some sort of experience we went through.

"There are kids who have gone through so much in one year that I haven't gone through in five years," he says, "and I think that goes back to all our different experiences, our different pains and hates. We just kind of explode when the four of us are together."

arning at both ends

BY HEIDI SIEGMUND



L-R: Loomis, Sib, Cutlass, Soda

RAMONES

by Tim Stegall



"Adios Amigos is most likely our last album."

If you're a dyed-to-the-black-leather, cretin-hoppin' Ramones fan, those words chill. Especially when they're delivered by the chainsaw downstroke king, Johnny Ramone himself.

"We've been doing it for 21 years," says the guitarist with the low-slung Mosrite and Peter Turk shag. "It's been a long time, and it's still fun. I probably enjoy it more than ever, except I just don't wanna become what I see other bands get, like, say, the Rolling Stones or something. I don't wanna become irrelevant or overdo it. I wanna be remembered for the same intense show. I'd rather go out while we're still good."

"We're definitely considering retiring." Now it's the turn of 29-year-old C.J., the Ramones bassist who filled Dee Dee Ramone's vacant and considerable high tops six years back. "I'm sure everybody's really tired. That's what it comes down to: Everybody's just tired of being on the road for 21 years."

Despite Johnny's bleak pronouncements, C.J.—still every inch the Ramones everyfan who made the leap from our side of the stage to live out the dream and become a Ramone—remains optimistic: "Nothing is written in stone yet. We've talked about it, but there ain't nothin' definite."

Which echoes the guarded, conciliatory nature of the other Ramones' statements on the breakup rumors. In the press packet accompanying advance tapes of *Adios Amigos* (released, in vintage Ramones fashion, July 4th), drummer Marky smiles: "We love playing, we love the audiences, we love making albums. And we'll continue as long as we're enjoying it." In the next paragraph, even Johnny adds cautiously, "We're gonna get this out, see how it does, then re-evaluate our plans." Which displays a lot more hope than he offers over the phone from NYC.

"There are a lotta mixed feelings," he states, getting uncharacteristically emotional as he speaks. "I don't wanna stop

this, because it's a lotta fun. But I just wanna go out when I'm still good and not become what I see other people become. I mean, in rock 'n' roll, no one gets out of this business. Y'know, if they had a mandatory retirement age of 40, you'd have a lotta rock 'n' roll suicides the next couple of years! I don't think these people know what to do with their lives after they stop. So, they go on and on and on and on."

And what would you do, Johnny?

"I hope nothing!" he laughs. "I've never really wanted to do anything! It's always been my goal in life. I just fell into this."

He's not joking. Anyone who's read Jim Bessman's authorized bio of a few years back, *Ramones: An American Barky* (St. Martin's Press) can recite chapter and verse on the lark nature of their origins: How Johnny, laid off from his last construction job, got together with pal Dee Dee to start a rock band for laughs, figuring they'd maybe get as far as issuing an album before he'd be back at the construction sites. Little did he realize that their lark would end up the inspiration for and defining band of an entire culture and musical movement, going on to issue 17 albums—four of 'em becoming hands-down classics, and at least six others arguable. Nor could he have foreseen the innumerable imitators the Ramones have sired.

And to think: The Ramones have never even earned a gold record for their troubles!

"*Ramonesmania* went gold," says C.J. "But that don't really count, 'cuz it's a greatest-hits record. I don't give a shit about gold records. To me, that's industry bullshit that don't mean too much. But to the band, I'm sure it means something. I guess it's at least an accomplishment to take into retirement with you. But they've never released an album"—at least an original studio recording—"and had it go gold."

Strange, then, that for all the blood these guys have shed for punk rock and Ramonekind alike, that their last chance to earn that gold record falls just at the moment the Ramones feel themselves ready for the presentation of a gold watch, eh? "Ohmigod!" exclaims the ever-ebullient C.J. "Is that like the ultimate fuckin' ironic circumstance or what?! We'd owe it all to

continued on page 16



a house

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the strong
and
the silent



radioactive

bands that were influenced by us! Bands that were born out of a scene that was started by the Ramones years ago are all of a sudden responsible for bringing the same scene into the mainstream and making it possible for them to get a gold record! That would be pretty ironic."

Johnny, for one, approaches the New Punk with characteristic caution, seeming bemused and amused at once.

"It's strange, because you had so many bands, say, in the '77-'78 period—Dead Boys, Buzzcocks, just piles of them—that were great bands, that got nowhere. They sold 5000 to 10,000 records, and probably had these bands beat as far as live shows go. And now these bands pop outta nowhere and sell a lotta records.

"Still, it's good for rock 'n' roll, because it keeps rock 'n' roll going, and I sometimes feel that rock 'n' roll is on its deathbed."

Nevertheless, Johnny hears in *The Year That Punk Broke* "a mosh of very similar styles."

"If you put on an alternative station that's playing these bands, after you listen to it an hour, you find that everything sounds the same! They all play at the same speed! It's almost like they're playing in the same key! But at the same time, it's fine and good. We still have some rock 'n' roll out there."

C.J.'s more enthusiastic, pointing out that at least the bands at the forefront of the New Punk (Green Day, the Offspring, Rancid) have individual and distinguishable identities. "The common thread is the punk feel and the punk attitude, but it's definitely different styles of punk. And they are really good songwriters and you can't take that away from them. That is why they all have platinum albums and stuff."

Well, the Ramones' own songwriting talents are equally undeniable, although it's been hard to tell for a number of years. From maybe '87 onwards, it wasn't easy to be a Ramones fan, as they continually released increasingly grim albums like *Halfway To Sanity* and *Brain Drain*. Suddenly, the Kings of 1-2-3-4 Chainsaw Pop and authors of wiseguy couplets like "Now I guess I'll have to tell 'em/That I got no cerebellum" grew serious. They obviously weren't having fun, and the music sounded like it. It also sounded increasingly ambitious, and needlessly so. It was as if the years of honing the snickering grind that rewarded them little beyond endless imitation made them desperate to be taken as more than a joke, and desperate to collect those deserved rewards.

Don't think Johnny or C.J. don't know this. "I'm disappointed often in the albums," admits Johnny. "Looking back over the '80s, I think I liked the *Too Tough To Die* album and *Animal Boy*. *Brain Drain* is one of my least favorite ones, and *Halfway To Sanity*, and probably *Pleasant Dreams*, which is a good album, but it's a little light for me."

C.J., for one, would rather last year's '60s cover LP, *Acid Eaters*, had been cut to an EP ("Nobody wants to hear 12 cover songs on a record!") Just as quickly, he'll tear into his own Ramones studio debut: "You know what the problem with *Mondo Bizarro* was? It wasn't the songs, 'cuz I really believe that some of the songs on that album were really strong. It was the production. The production was too slick. It made everything sound lighter than it actually was. If it had been produced more open, more raw, it would have been a whole 'nother thing."

So, guys, whaddaya say? Too ambitious? Too serious?

"Oh, yeah!" blurts everyfan C.J. "The humor was gone! Gone in a big way! But all that's because there was a lotta internal conflict and a lotta frustration within the band that nothing really big was happening for them and stuff. Plus Dee Dee was the main songwriter, and Dee Dee was going through all kindsa shit. So, naturally, the humor leaves the songs, because things don't seem so funny any more as you're getting older and nothing changes."

"Yeah, I see that, too," says Johnny. "At times, I think different people in the band might've felt the pressure to get away from the comedy thing, to be taken a little bit more seriously. Because even though the funny stuff is us and is a very important part, at the same time, later on, you start getting criticized for it. We really should ignore criticism as much as possible and just do what we do best, not worry about this kinda stuff.

"But it can't help having an effect on ya. The comedy things have always been very important, and rock 'n' roll's supposed to be fun and entertaining. We don't need to give any sorta messages. People can interpret whatever messages they want from any of the songs. So, yeah, I felt that, too. I was aware of it. But you have different people writing different songs, and there's nothing really that one person can do.

"Y'know, you also have pressure from above to keep changing

producers, to a producer that can maybe get you some radio play. I try to compromise as little as possible, and basically 99% of our career has been no compromise. But sometimes you have to meet the record company and management a little bit of the way to be able to continue doing what you do. In an ideal situation, you can do exactly what you want and don't worry about nothing. But then, doing an interview is a compromise. Doing anything is a compromise. Going to a radio station and saying 'hi' is a compromise. I mean, you can look at it that way. You can start thinking, 'Well, am I looking bad to the fans by talking to the radio or something?' You always wonder."

So what do you do when you've obviously grown and matured, but you've just issued three straight albums of overproduced, humorless tunes that have possibly alienated half the band and much of your audience, plus you've lost your best songwriter along the way? Do just as the Ramones have done with *Adios Amigos*: Go in with ex-Shrapnel guitarist and longtime Ramones fan Daniel Rey and cut 13 potential future Ramones classics in the same live, basic, quick-and-dirty fashion as the first four albums.

"He's a big, big fan," Johnny says of Rey, "and all he's ever wanted to do was produce the Ramones and make the Ramones sound like the Ramones, that's all."

In the process, you make some attempt to balance the old wiseass Ramones with the mature band that admittedly created later standards like *Too Tough To Die* and "Bonzo Goes To Bitburg" (which C.J. likes in spite of its anti-Reagan lyrical bias: "Leave the politics to the English and the Dead Kennedys!"). You eliminate the superfluous session additions (like keyboards and guest lead guitarists). And—possibly most important of all—you increase the involvement of prodigal Ramone Dee Dee.

"Daniel went over to Europe and co-wrote some songs with Dee Dee," says Johnny, "about six of 'em. C.J. sings four songs, and C.J. got to write two songs. Dee Dee sang a little piece on a song called 'Born To Die In Berlin.' We had used him over the telephone to sing the part from Europe, but when he was in New York, he came down and sang it again with a similar effect."

"I wish there was a way Dee Dee and I could both be in the band!" C.J. enthuses over his hero, with whom he finally worked during the "Born To Die In Berlin" sessions. "My favorite songs were always Dee Dee's: 'Eat That Rat,' 'Endless Vacation,' 'Warthog,' 'Love Kills.' Now, that's punk rock!" he laughs.

"From when I started listening to the Ramones, Dee Dee was always my total favorite. I used to walk around preaching the word of Dee Dee. Dee Dee and Johnny, I just thought they were the fucking coolest guys on the planet. They were everything I could aspire to be."

During the time he spent with Dee Dee, however, C.J. claims he heard of the man's own retirement plans. "He told us that he's just going to write. And to me, that's a shame, because the guy deserves to be remembered. But most of the Ramones fans that come to shows now never even saw the Ramones with Dee Dee! But Dee Dee also has his moments, and when he was telling me that, it might've just been one of his moments. But from what he told me, he wants to get into being a writer. He wants to write a book, he wants to cover the rock 'n' roll scene."

More shameful than a Ramones audience unaware of Dee Dee is a world without the Ramones. Though if they must bow out, they couldn't have found a more positive note to exit on than *Adios Amigos*. From the surprising opening cover of Tom Waits' "I Don't Want To Grow Up" (a suggestion from Rey favored by C.J. to atone for his lack of enthusiasm for *Acid Eaters*) to vintage throwbacks like "Makin' Monsters For My Friends" and "Cretin Family" to Joey's psychedelic ballad "She Talks To Rainbows" ("my first metaphysical song," he boasts), it's the best Ramones LP since *Animal Boy*, though Johnny thinks it might be the best since *Road To Ruin*.

"There's no songs I dislike on it," he offers, "and usually, there's a few. That's a good sign."

Meanwhile, Johnny sees the Ramones touring behind *Adios Amigos*, then embarking on a farewell trek sometime next year, to culminate in a series of final dates in New York City. Ever the baseball fan, he remarks, "It's not fair, but I was sad to see Mickey Mantle retire, and I was sad to see Nolan Ryan quit last year, too. And wouldn't you like to see George Foreman quit right now and still be the champ, instead of getting beaten? It's gonna happen."

"The towel has not been thrown in," C.J. offers, optimistically. "We might be thinking about it, but it's not a definite thing yet. I think there'll be another record. I could be wrong, but I think there will."

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whiz and
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by Tom Lanham

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sep	16	highlands	nc
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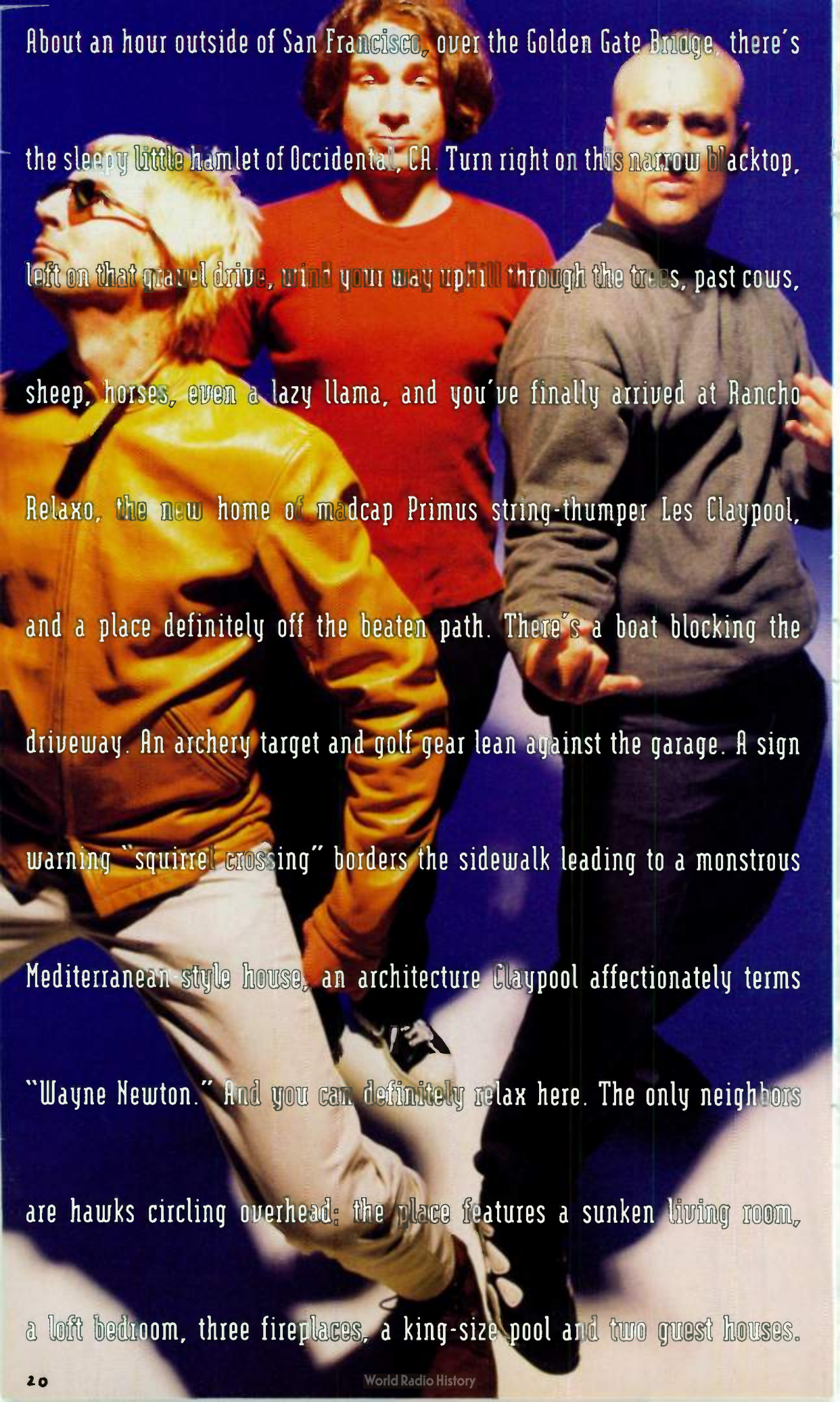
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MARKSBERG

TS



by Tom Lanham



About an hour outside of San Francisco, over the Golden Gate Bridge, there's the sleepy little hamlet of Occidental, CA. Turn right on this narrow blacktop, left on that gravel drive, wind your way uphill through the trees, past cows, sheep, horses, even a lazy llama, and you've finally arrived at Rancho Relaxo, the new home of madcap Primus string-thumper Les Claypool, and a place definitely off the beaten path. There's a boat blocking the driveway. An archery target and golf gear lean against the garage. A sign warning "squirrel crossing" borders the sidewalk leading to a monstrous Mediterranean style house, an architecture Claypool affectionately terms "Wayne Newton." And you can definitely relax here. The only neighbors are hawks circling overhead; the place features a sunken living room, a loft bedroom, three fireplaces, a king-size pool and two guest houses.

But don't plan on bunking in those guest houses out back. First of all, Claypool's two lumbering behemoths of yellow labradors—Corn and Capone—are eagerly awaiting you on the back porch. With the strength of Cerberus, they will leap upon any unsuspecting visitors and knock them into the dirt. Nothing will keep them from achieving this secret canine mission. Second, and more importantly, there are no beds out there—one hut houses a rec room with pool table; the other is known as The Corn, the 24-track home studio where Primus recorded its latest psychotic episode for Interscope, *Tales From The Punch Bowl*. After wolfing down a microwave enchilada in his Dekalb-paraphernalia-decorated kitchen, Claypool diverts his dogs' attention with a couple of large sticks while guitarist Larry "Ler" Lalonde makes a run for the studio. Thump! Thud! Corn and Capone come very close to capturing a new chew toy, but they slam headlong into a just-closed sliding glass door instead.

There are other animals in the room already, however. Past the mixing board, past stacks of amps and a ready-to-go drum kit, a series of Macintosh computers occupy most of a large work desk. On one screen is, well, a big, brown beaver—a buck-toothed little varmint that looks like a retarded hillbilly cousin to the Snuggle Fabric Softener bear. He's being pushed in a stroller by a skinny, big-nosed girl with pointy hair braids. It's a scanned cartoon by Claypool, and the artist—who sings most of his songs in cartoon voices—is busy coloring it in, using a computer-wand "airbrush." When completed, and added to a series of 25 or 30 other similar slices of goofy animation, the drawing will be plugged into the latest Primus video, a Claypool-directed clip for "Wynona's Big Brown Beaver." The song, a surreal funk-rap-country melange rife with double-entendres, will be *Punch Bowl's* first single.

Country living hasn't changed Claypool much. "You know, it's just a... big... brown... beaver!" he cackles, pointing at the screen. "And Wynona is whoever you want it to be, purely fiction." His laugh—a high-pitched "A-heh-heh"—always sounds fresh from the asylum and slightly dangerous. Is it possible for him to get serious? "This was one of those things that just popped into my head one day, and it became a song," he explains, a tad more straight-faced. "And I just couldn't resist the pun! Obviously, we're playing up the more mammalian aspect of the beaver."

Claypool pulls out his notepad and starts sketching. This time it's two beavers, squashed into the same pram. His artwork is surprisingly good, and it makes perfect sense when he reveals that he's been doodling ever since grade school. But why two of the pesky rodents? "Because she 'stuck him up in the air/said 'I sure do love this big brown beaver/I wish I did have a pair,'"" he shoots back, reciting his own lyrics. "That's the pair." He slaps it into the scanner and starts coloring all over again, clicking it onto the screen with a Grateful Dead mouse pad. "I have not mastered the computer—the computer has mastered me," he quips during the detailed procedure. "I've been avoiding the whole computer thing, mainly because I knew it would absorb my life. But a lot of this stuff—like the airbrushing I'm doing right now—is easy for me, because I've airbrushed all the Primus album covers, all the pips and sculptures. I've been airbrushing for a long time.

"Alvin Petty taught me how to airbrush—he's a local artist who's done a lot of heavy metal album covers, and he was my roommate years ago. We used to get stoned and play with the airbrush. So in doing all this cover art stuff, me and Ler had three computers like this set up, and we were just sitting here 'til three in the morning, ten hours a day, just burning away. It was kind of like a crash course in computers. And now we're working on a CD-ROM."

"Which means more computers," Lalonde points out, helpfully. "Yep, more computers," sighs Claypool. The bulk of his video

library is animation as well, and includes Mighty Mouse cartoons, vintage Tex Avery, even Don Bluth's *The Secret Of NIMH*. Avery, yes. *NIMH*, sorta icky. Its owner is suddenly incensed. "Whaddaya talkin' about! What are you saying about *The Secret Of NIMH*? When me and my good friend Travis started hanging out years ago, that was the first thing we did together—we went and saw *The Secret Of NIMH*. So it has a sentimental value to me."

And that's the way Primus works. Things that initially seem unimportant—even oddball or downright strange—to other folks will probably take on greater significance to Claypool and company. *Tales From The Punch Bowl*, the trio's fifth record, is a perfect example. How else to explain a twangy Zep-ish track like "Del Davis Tree Farm," which was inspired by the old gent down the road who sold Claypool his Christmas tree last year? Or the rumbling "Southbound Pachyderm," brought on by an image he couldn't shake of an "elephant's ass heading away from you"? Then there's the bass vs. banjo hoedown "De Anza Jig" (only 2 1/2 minutes—unnaturally short by Primus standards), which celebrates the members' pre-San Francisco, small-town California lifestyle. Taco Bell is mentioned prominently in the chorus. The opening 7-minute salvo, "Professor Nuttbuter's House Of Treats," puts Claypool in a carnival barker's

outfit and should stand as a firm caveat emptor to any newcomers—if you don't get this maniacal, riff-crazy headspinner, go no further. Primus is not your cup of, in their own words, "pork soda."

Beneath the comical front stalks some serious musicianship. Claypool has mastered every bass known to man, even a bass banjo, which he used on *Punch Bowl*. He also oversees the small but thriving Prawn Song Records empire, and—when not producing Primus or working with his spinoff combo Sausage—he's spun knobs for Bay Area peers like MIRV and Charlie Hunter. Lalonde says he joined Primus because he liked the idea of a group so left-field improvisational it would never get famous. But his Frank Zappa-spawned playing style led the band all the way to a Lollapalooza headlining slot. "Somehow, over the years it's kinda snowballed," he sighs. "Some people actually know who we are now."

True. *Pork Soda* and *Sailing The Seas Of Cheese* are nearly platinum. But *Punch Bowl* triggered the DIY ethic in Claypool. He swore to complete the record at home or bust, which—thanks to freakish spring floods that repeatedly

shorted out the power on his desolate stretch of land—became increasingly difficult. Why did he leave his last house in Berkeley for such a way-station? "I was actually looking for some sort of vacation property," he explains, playing with his silver fishing-reel necklace and looking out the window at his own private lake. "I stumbled across this place and was just totally blown away, and I decided that I had to live here. So I talked the girlfriend into moving up here, we got a coupla dogs, and here we are. I've been up here for about six months now, and I don't miss it down there at all."

But beavers? How did beavers enter into the picture? Claypool shrugs, cackles again. "I really don't know—maybe it's the Gary Larson syndrome." He holds up his just-completed drawing. "I'm taking over for Gary Larson!" Possibly. There doesn't seem to be anything this jack-of-all-trades can't accomplish. Isn't there one thing out there that truly frightens him? Something he'd dare not attempt, not in a million years?

"I got a new chainsaw that's a little intimidating," he answers, snickering. "But I finally did some choppin' with it just the other day!"

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DISCOGRAPHY

- Suck On This* (Prawn Song, reissued on Caroline)
- Fritz Fry* (Caroline)
- Sailing The Seas Of Cheese* (Interscope)
- Miscellaneous Debris* (EP) (Interscope)
- Pork Soda* (Interscope)
- Tales From The Punch Bowl* (Interscope)

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aug	6	newport	ri
aug	7	martha's vinyard	ma
aug	11	edmonton	al
aug	17	salt lake city	ut
aug	18-20	lyons	co
sep	4	seattle	wa
sep	15	washington	dc
sep	16	high school	ny
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BALTER SPACE Wammo Matador

At first listen, the latest from Balter Space sounds like surprisingly straightforward rock, at least for a New Zealand-originated (and now New York-based) band known for elaborate guitar tectonics. But beneath their big chords and monosyllables, Wammo's songs have a strange neurotic quality. Obsessive repetition and circularity seem to be the major themes of the album. "Colors fade and come back again," Balter Space sings over and over in a sunspotted tone more commonly associated with poppier Kiwi bands. The more typically crunchy "Voltage" consists entirely of the word "outside" repeated over a steady guitar-and-drum attack. Wammo's best track, "At Five We Drive," is a snarling feedback fit haunted by the warning to "stay on the dotted line." And then there are all of those songs about time. Minimal as it is, Wammo works as a canvas for subtle variations in fuzz and tempo, with each track gradually mutating even as it stays the same. It's a tense, fidgety record that inverts the spacious New Zealand hum and jangle into a knot of concentrated energy. —Andrea Moed

DATALOG: Release date: May 23. First single "Splat."

FILE UNDER: Fuzz-toned guitar pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Straitjacket Fits, This Kind Of Punishment, Mad Scene.



BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE F-Punk Radioactive

Somewhere between the catchy samples and Mick Jones' nasal voice lies the secret of Big Audio Dynamite. But after ten years and seven albums, is that a secret worth learning? Once Big Audio Dynamite was crisp and cracking, whipping out samples and dance riffs with the ease of masters, yet now the same gestures sound past their prime. So it serves well that they've changed labels, returned the bang to their name (after stints as B.A.D. II and Big Audio), and gone more straightforward rock 'n' roll, but really, what is the point? Songs like "Got To Set Her Free" plod along in a pleasant country-rock vein, "Psycho Wing" is mindlessly catchy, with slick samples and electronically enhanced vocals, but mostly B.A.D. is just dull and lifeless. All of the band's old gimmicks have been stolen by other artists—the channel flipping of "Get It All From My TV" has been done better by Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy, and the drab cover of "Suffragette City" turns the cathartic "Wham bam thank you ma'am!" into a bland mockery. Worse, when the group attempts its old dancefloor trickery with "It's A Jungle Out There," it ends up in a stuttering, repetitive mess. B.A.D. has simply forgotten to draw the line between creative mixing and pure sludge. —Ranee Dawn Cohen

DATALOG: Released Jun. 20. First single "I Turned Out A Punk."

FILE UNDER: Sample-heavy dance rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Carter U.S.M., Sisters Of Mercy.



BJORK Post Elektra

Considering all that time she spent with Madonna, it's not surprising that Bjork's new album *Post* is just too post-everything. In an obvious bid for today's postmodern audience, it not only includes a track called "Hyperballad," but also a post-industrial take on Nine Inch Nails ("Enjoy"), a post-Vegas Hot Box Girl number ("Blow A Fuse"), and the postpunk fantasy "Modern Things," in which she surreally declaims, "All them modern things like cars and such/Have always existed/They've just been waiting in a mountain for the right moment/To come out and multiply and take over." Which is not to say that *Post* is irredeemably random: The mix of disparate digital textures and Bjork's wacky post-diva-ism gives the album an odd coherence, and occasionally produces songs worth lip-synching to. But all too often, she transgresses the boundaries of acceptable coyness. Cruising breathily through the Bjork-harp duet "Cover Me," she intones, "This is really daaaaaangerous!" That may be so, but there's no sense pretending it's sexy. —Andrea Moed

DATALOG: Released Jun. 13.

FILE UNDER: Cosmopolitan dance-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Alison Moyet, Sandra Bernhard, Morrissey.

BLUE MOUNTAIN *Dog Days* *Roadrunner*

Oxford, Mississippi, often thought to be in the middle of the Delta country that spawned the blues, is actually up north, near Memphis, and was home to William Faulkner. It's also the home for Blue Mountain, a countrified trio that displays an obvious deep appreciation for all kinds of American music on its debut, *Dog Days*. Producer Eric "Roscoe" Ambel was a perfect choice for this young band: The guitars are recorded with just the right amount of crunch, and the mandolin bits spring up in all the right places, exactly as he's recently done on other releases for the Bottle Rockets and Blood Oranges. What is especially gripping about Blue Mountain is how easily the band slips from back-porch ballads like "Mountain Girl" to breezy country rockers like "Blue Canoe" to all-out stompers like "Bud" to down-and-dirty swamp blues like "Hippy Hotel." As you can tell from the song titles, Cary Hudson (guitar, vocals) and Laurie Stirrat (bass, vocals) write songs about things that are close to their little corner of the world. "ZZQ" is about a now-defunct radio station, WZZQ, that had a profound impact on the people who grew up in Jackson, MS, while "Jimmy Carter" is a tribute to the man of good will, without at all getting political.

—Jim Caligiuri

DATALOG: Release date: Jul. 25.

FILE UNDER: American music.

R.I.Y.L.: Wilco, Bottle Rockets, Southern Culture On The Skids.

GLENN BRANCA *Symphony No. 9 (L'ève future)* *Point Music*

A classical composer is an unlikely idol for New York's thrash guitar brigades, but Glenn Branca holds a hallowed spot in the pantheon of six-string dudes from Thurston Moore to Page Hamilton. Best known for his intensely noisy symphonies written for batteries of microtuned electric guitars, Branca has had a protean influence on New York's downtown noise scene. Fortunately, his music is finally starting to become available in the United States. *Symphony No. 9* was composed between the guitar-based Nos. 8 and 10, but it's written for a conventional orchestra, plus chorus. The single 47-minute movement explores a descending motif, with shifting, chromatic harmonies creating a mysterious suspension. Make no mistake, the sonic terrain is gloomy, although the abrupt ending is surprisingly upbeat. Though lacking the novelty of Branca's guitar symphonies, this is still a thoughtful, complex piece. Be forewarned: listeners who aren't already into contemporary symphonic music will probably get fidgety towards the end, although they may like the extra piece on the disc, the short, vigorous "Free Form." Helmet fans who want to explore Branca's noisy side are better off picking up the recent recordings of *Symphonies No. 8 and 10*.

—Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Released Jun. 13.

FILE UNDER: Late 20th century symphonic music.

R.I.Y.L.: Gorecki, Messaien, late Stravinsky.

FRANKLIN BRUNO *A Bedroom Community* *Simple Machines*

Franklin Bruno is not "wordy." As much as his songwriting has been pigeonholed as such by critics, "wordy" implies that Bruno is an overbaked intellectual, stockpiling unnecessary ten-cent words to spin his tales and impress the commonfolk. Ironically, that's precisely the opposite of what he does so brilliantly: Bruno has the ability to capture an emotion or revelation in the most profound and conversational way, easily sifting out pointless emotional goo to pinpoint the essence of the moment in the simplest and most elucidating terms. When Franklin sings "Like an Easter egg dyed from the inside," or "Out on this frozen lake/I'll fish for compliments and clues," or "Words are so easy to string together/Not much harder to mean," or "The table scraps you left me/aren't worth refrigerating," you know exactly what he means, and that's simply the sign of a great lyricist, not an insufferable egghead. *A Bedroom Community* is the first readily available collection of Bruno's solo recordings, and with these spare, guitar-and-vocal (with occasional piano or bass) arrangements, their intimate delivery matches the personal nature of his themes. And though his revealing stories have, in the past, been clouded by the rock-ness of his usual medium (his band Nothing Painted Blue), *A Bedroom Community* lays them bare for the spectating, and the more you look, the more you'll see.

—Cheryl Botchick

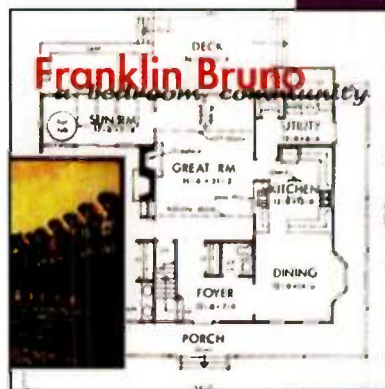
DATALOG: Release date: Jun. 1. Two earlier solo cassettes, *Suggestion Box* and *Etudes For Voice And Snackmaster*, available on Shrimper.

FILE UNDER: Singer-songwriter, hold the clichés.

R.I.Y.L.: Bob Dylan's *Blood On The Tracks*, Verlaines, Elvis Costello.

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

"You meet a lot of artists who get jaded very early—they don't fit the mold, they like playing but they hate the business, they hate touring, they hate all that stuff—it seems so miserable to them. Well, stay home then!" —*Simple Minds' Jim Kerr, from an interview in Musician*



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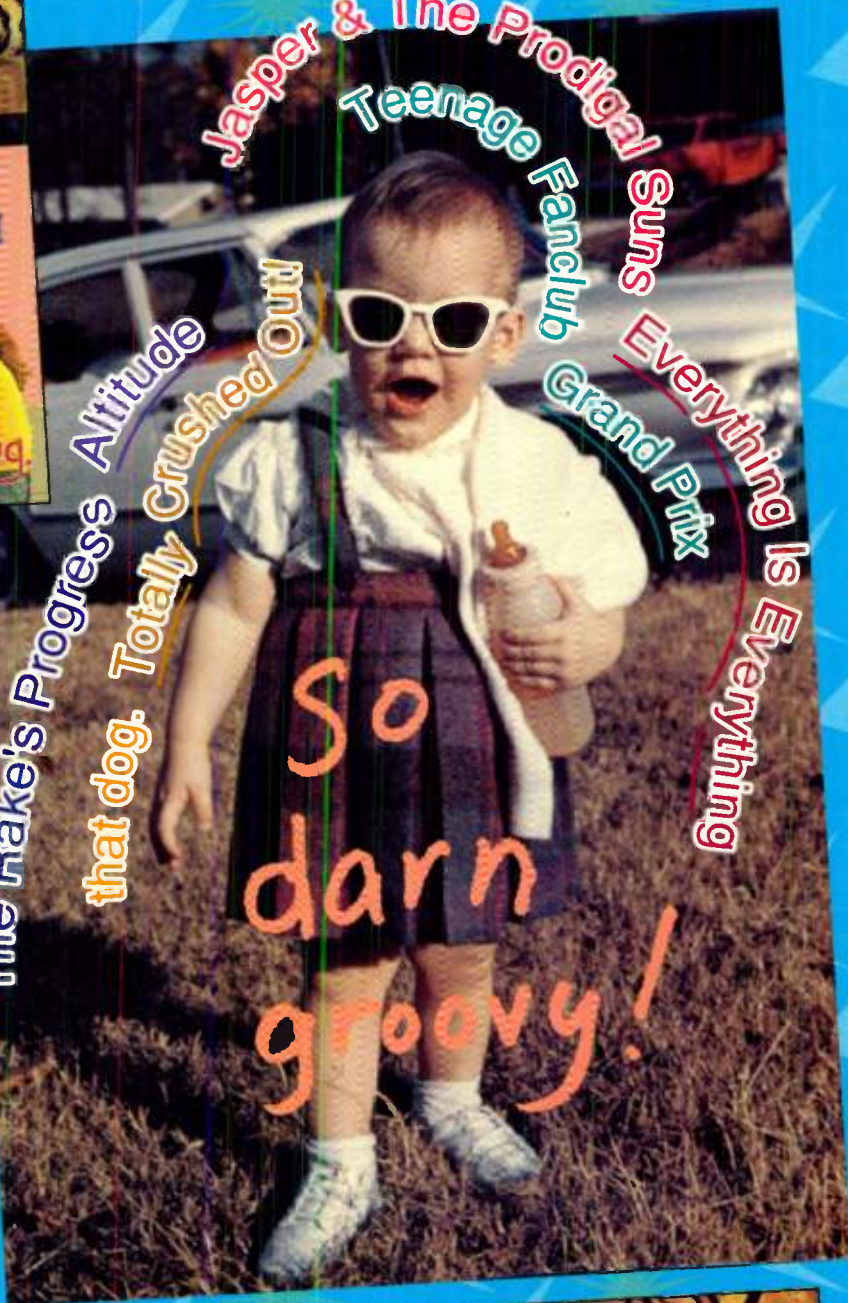


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CATHERINE WHEEL *Happy Days* Mercury

While so-called metal is, for now, a relic of the past (they say they found some Gulf War vets lost on a desert island who were still listening to it), goth and industrial linger to fill the void of dark, aggro fantasies. Just where the English quartet Catherine Wheel fits in the scheme of things isn't clear, as it's simply too tasteful to go to either extreme. On *Happy Days*, singer Rob Dickinson (cousin to Iron Maiden's Bruce) has the yearning, tortured vocal thing down, and guitarist Brian Futter hits the whammy bar and the flange pedal with conviction. Dickinson's expressive vocal range is showcased on "God Inside My Head" and "Heal," and he holds his own with Tanya Donnelly on the duet "Judy Staring At The Sun." The very un-Goth "Eat My Dust, You Insensitive Fuck" has a funny title and an ironically quiet vocal, but the maundering harmonica solos here make a convincing case that no one who is not a tortured blues artist from Mississippi should ever be allowed near one again. Still, *Happy Days'* melodramatic guitar solos may satisfy an itch that anything else in the new guitar world order just can't scratch.

—Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Released Jun. 6. First single "Waydown."**FILE UNDER:** Sensitive gloom.**R.I.Y.L.:** The Cult, Sisters Of Mercy.**CHAVEZ** *Gone Glimmering* Matador

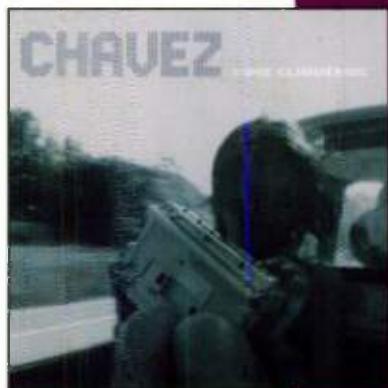
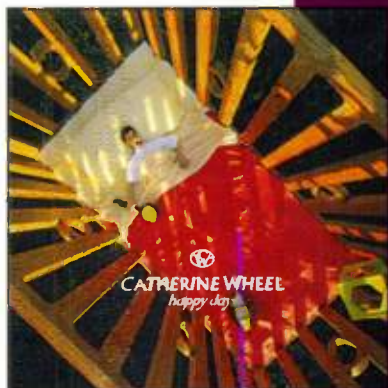
The fact that Chavez's debut album boasts the imprint of one of the most closely scrutinized and revered indie-rock labels of recent memory on its sleeve is somewhat of an anomaly: while collectively owning up to former membership in bands like Bullet LaVolta, Skunk and Live Skull, the New York City foursome takes as many cues from Cheap Trick or early Van Halen (conceptually more than musically) as it does the annals of underground guitar rawk. Granted, the band knows a thing or two about putting a cerebral twist on its dual guitar clash, and its drummer is way too much of an inventive powerhouse to be reigned in by standard 4/4 signatures, but considering the amount of climatic, grandiose powerchords, staggering tug o' war dynamics and overall muscular chops thrown around *Gone Glimmering*, an arena-rock aesthetic doesn't seem far around the corner. Frontman Matt Sweeney also ekes out some serious vocal hooks, wailing even-keeled choruses over the band's windswept rock landscape. *Gone Glimmering* benefits from its brevity as well, churning out nine standard-issue length tunes over its action-packed expanse like a perfect live set.

—Colin Helms

DATALOG: Released May 23.**FILE UNDER:** Brainy guitar punch.**R.I.Y.L.:** Shudder To Think, Come.**TAV FALCO'S PANTHER BURNS** *Shadow Dancer* Upstart

With Tav Falco you get music from a man who knows what he likes, and that's rockabilly, bluesy soul, and lounge music presented with an amateurish gusto. *Shadow Dancer*, his eighth album since he first emerged with his band in the early '80s, lovingly explores his lounge lizard muse. The opener, "Incantation Of The Shadow Dancer," sets the neon-illuminated scene: "The Shadow Dancer's on the move tonight/He lives by night and not by day/He's on the prowl and he's gonna have his way." A few originals are intermixed with corrupted covers culled from the likes of Dion ("Born To Cry"), Dean Martin ("Sway"), and, most strikingly, r&b shouter Jimmy Witherspoon, whose "Lotus Blossom" is given a striking Cabaret-by-way-of-Memphis treatment. The Panther Burns (featuring Alex Chilton on one number and another founding member, producer/keyboardist Jim Dickinson, on a couple of tracks) match Falco's flat but enthusiastic crooning with sympathetic, unpolished aplomb. Lounge culture is getting a big boost these days, mostly from kitsch devotees, but when you've been doing it with the steadfast panache that Tav Falco has shown, it's not something you put on and take off like a rented tuxedo. Falco sleeps in this suit.

—Steve Solder

DATALOG: Released May 16.**FILE UNDER:** Rockabilly cabaret.**R.I.Y.L.:** Alex Chilton, Mink DeVille, *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack.



#5

The Pancake Battfish



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ED KUEPPER *Honey Steel's Gold* *Hot-Restless*

Australian rock institution Ed Kuepper has the type of fertile musical imagination that refuses to be hemmed in by genre restrictions or fashion. When not even the horn charts and R&B influences with which he attempted to leaven The Saints' alternate-universe Ramones-isms could sate his hunger, he jumped ship to the Laughing Clowns and attempted to bring lessons learned from Archie Shepp to a rock context. When the danger and noncommerciality of that project grew thin, Kuepper struck out on his own, exploring the resonances and subtle tonalities an acoustic guitar could afford. Released virtually every place but America in 1991, *Honey Steel's Gold* ended up the most successful Australian indie-rock record ever. It's hard not to see why: Kuepper has a sharp and deadly songwriting voice, as well as a keen ear for orchestration. His eccentric hooks and instrumentation (from sleighbells to sitars to whatever holds his fancy) could almost brand him one of Phil Spector's heirs, if it weren't for the fact that Kuepper milks all the melodic juice possible from the title track's one-chord drone. For those who like it dynamic, inventive, and tasty. —*Tim Stegall*

DATALOG: Released Jun. 13.

FILE UNDER: Gritty singer-songwriters.

R.I.Y.L.: Alejandro Escovedo, Morphine, American Music Club, Nick Cave.

KYUSS *...And The Circus Leaves Town* *Elektra*

Much has been already said about Kyuss and its sun-parched roots in the high desert region of Palm Springs, California; how the band got a kick out of throwing parties in the remotest reaches of it, fueled only by a generator and a powerful thirst. Now, we all know the sun makes cancerous toast of your skin, but do you ever wonder what it does to a brain? The answer might lie in Kyuss' fourth record, *...And The Circus Leaves Town*. Led by Josh Homme on guitar and Jon Garcia on vocals, and supported by new drummer Algreto Hernandez and bassist Scott Reeder, Kyuss explodes like a bottle of warm champagne, but instead of vacuous fizz, we get a confetti blast of colorful riffs and dazzling, heavy rock configurations. Compared to his usual work, guitarist Homme branches out impressively, though his heroes remain lommi ("One Inch Man"), Hendrix ("Jumbo Blimp Jumbo") and Page ("The Old Boozerooey"). His ultra-distorted chording, underscored by Reeder's equally distorted bass, makes for a plate-shifting fuzzy-core sound, the likes of which could easily move a big mountain. But *Circus* is not all *sturm und drang*. An unusual Spanish shuffle with a hard-rock boogie tempo marks "El Rodeo," and "Size Queen" starts out with a cheeky new wave hook before it bursts into a dizzy flurry of edgy guitar. The sun has baked this band to a crisp, but somehow it manages to come up with a literate and startlingly creative sound. There's great stuff here. Let's hope they don't discover sun block. —*Bob Gulla*

DATALOG: Released Jul. 11.

FILE UNDER: Psychedelic metal visionaries.

R.I.Y.L.: Sabbath, Zeppelin, Hendrix, Trouble, Blue Cheer.

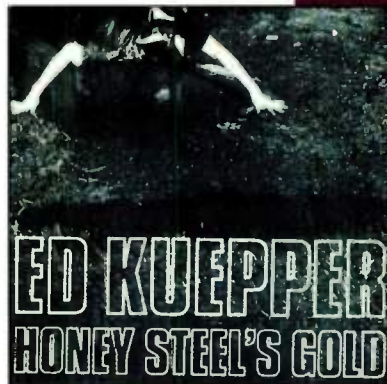
LABRADFORD *A Stable Reference* *Kranky*

In the Labradford aesthetic, the purpose of making a sound is to manipulate its decay. The band as much as reveals its process in the cover art of this second album, which features a swirling cloud of musical notation with the added instruction, "Press hand tightly against strings (near pins). Tone should be completely muffled." Fittingly, *A Stable Reference* presents Labradford's lo-fi vision at its most refined. The music verges on trance but never quite gets there, as each track retains the bare bones of a bass or keyboard line. Songs like "El Lago" move in slo-core waves that crest in Mark Nelson's whispered and barely discernible vocals. Most characteristic (and a staple of the band's live show) is "Banco," in which Robert Donne leads with slow-handed bass, while other, less distinct tones quiver in the background. "Star City, Russia" is similarly hypnotic, but harsher, and strangely, the only hummable song on the album. At the other end of the spectrum, "Eero" is loose and soundscape-y, its structure receding into the seemingly accidental. Labradford's stable mix of instrumental elements becomes a little tedious by the halfway point. Fortunately, it's then that keyboardist Carter Brown resuscitates the mix with a burst of chirpy space tones on "Comfort," proving that a little Stereolab influence can go a long way. —*Andrea Moed*

DATALOG: Released May 23.

FILE UNDER: Lo-fi trance inducers.

R.I.Y.L.: Bugskull, Stereolab, Low.



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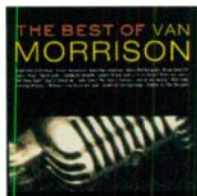
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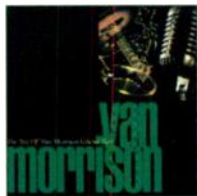
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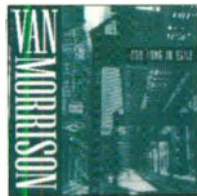
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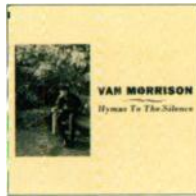
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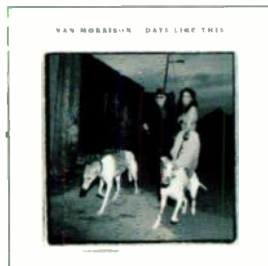


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World Radio History

THE LEGENDARY JIM RUIZ GROUP *Oh Brother Where Art Thou?* Minty Fresh

The catchword of the moment might be "loungue" (are suavely dressed kids really sitting around sippin' martinis while listening to Combustible Edison, the latest Esquivel reissue or their parents' scratchy Dean Martin records?), and the Legendary Jim Ruiz Group may or may not have pretensions to joining its ranks. The Minneapolis sextet's toe-tapping tunes, measured use of billowy horns and organs, and generous use of stylized guitar playing clearly make the Group eligible for this dubious category, but more importantly, its approach makes *Oh Brother Where Art Thou?* a broad-scoped and fully realized debut. The album's beauty, shined to a gloss by Ruiz's graceful croon and his wife Stephanie's wispy harmonies and occasional lead vocals (especially on the Tracey Thorn-like pace of "Spain"), is strengthened by the songs' fortitude: Any of the dozen could survive a spare acoustic interpretation (as "Every Other Sunday" does here) and emerge with a brilliant rainbow trailing behind it. Ruiz & Co.'s cardigan-sweater finesse and well-conceived lyrics, which often harbor dark storylines beneath the songs' jaunty rhythms, place them alongside such unsung heroes as the Jazz Butcher, Biff Bang Pow! and Felt, and there's certainly much less talented and polite company a new group could keep. —Lydia Anderson

DATALOG: Release date: Jul. 11. A 7" of "Mij Amsterdam" was released earlier this year.

FILE UNDER: Breezy, stylized, decade-blurring pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Jazz Butcher, Combustible Edison, Everything But The Girl.

MDID *For Richer, For Poorer* Emperor Jones-Trance Syndicate

"I can count my friends on the fingers of one hand/Need a calculator to count up all my problems," sang Mark Edwards once, summing up the project of basement bitterness that was My Dad Is Dead. More recently he's muted the name down to MDID, and his trademark nihilism has taken on a more measured tone. *For Richer, For Poorer* is a robust mix of hard-driving malice and tentative searching for an excuse to be hopeful. "Surrounded by a heaven on earth, you may find it wanting," he sings on "Something More," as if to point up the absurdity of his former posture. His singular voice is as reverberant and deliberate as ever, but sometimes, as on "I Had A Dream," he allows a little harmony to soften his attack. At other times, he toughens up again, adapting the angular new-wave mannerisms of David Byrne or Devo. *For Richer* is more uptempo than usual, and successfully so, thanks to a new band consisting of Prisonshake's Matt Swanson and Scott Pickering. Aside from contributing memorable rave-ups to "Play The Game" and "Nasty Little Habit," they do the essential work of wedding Edwards' declarations to strong guitar hooks, so when his quotable gems come up in your head, they have songs attached to them. This version of MDID is more deeply resonant with '80s college pop than ever before, and catchy in spite of itself. As this album makes clear, Edwards may be a holdover, but he's one with an abundance of reasons to keep at it. —Andrea Moed

DATALOG: Released May 23.

FILE UNDER: Persistent post-punk.

R.I.Y.L.: American Music Club, early R.E.M., Sebadoh.

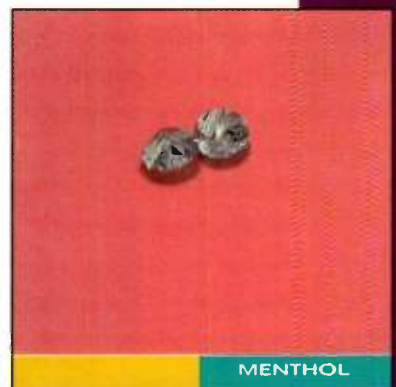
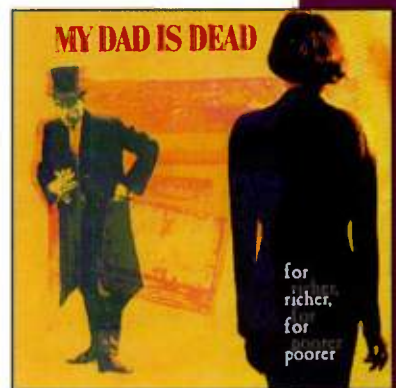
MENTHOL *Menthol* Capitol

A "power" trio of sorts from Champaign, Illinois, Menthol has discovered some exceptionally cool byways to explore in the often tired three-man format. Balthazar de Ley and Joel Spencer combine their very different vocal styles—one screechy, one deep—and double up their singing most of the time, resulting in a manic feel that carries the band through its second full-length at a brisk pace. The set's opener, "USA Capable," kicks off with a fine, fuzzy hook and some great drumming by Colin Kiteles, and though Menthol never really recaptures that initial high, the rest of the record rarely lags. The band's formula is fresh to begin with, which helps prevent potentially trite songs like "Francis Scott Key" and "Dry Heaves" from falling into the deep tar pits of clichéd sonics. A healthy dose of R&B on *Menthol*, albeit in a very rock vein, and a tinge of southern doodling showcase the band's abilities; all three excel instrumentally, elevating songs like "USA Capable," "Perfect Spirals," and "Briefcase Full of Cash" into sublime territory. And lest it get complacent, the band shows us it isn't afraid to try its hand at cockeyed pop, as evidenced by the slightly bizarre "Reverent Eyes Heavenward." With brash, earthy vibes, a handful of surreal story-songs, and a knack for adventurous instrumentation, Menthol has laid the perfect cornerstone for a successful pop junket. They may not end up writing the perfect pop song, but they may not even want to. —Bob Gulla

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 1. Produced by famous Illinoian Brad Wood (Liz Phair, Ben Lee).

FILE UNDER: Fuzzy power-trio pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Recent Flaming Lips, Shrimp Boat, Everclear.



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OMAR For Pleasure RCA

A mellow soul affair with one foot deep in the keyboard-saturated '70s, *For Pleasure* has an undeniable warmth. The studio artillery and repetition that drowns efforts by other British soul outfits is present but held in check by Omar's appealing, distinct baritone, loosegroove melodies, and restraint during key moments. Omar has an obvious jones for Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye, but—much as *For Pleasure* is practically a tribute album—there are signs that he'll transcend their tutelage (indeed, it's reported that Wonder said he'd like to collaborate with Omar after hearing his British releases). He's implied in interviews that he's trying to keep soul music from stagnation—*For Pleasure* reaffirms R&B's ability to carry a message. Omar's lyrics are socially conscious—about maintaining self-esteem while on the dole, or the environment. "I don't care for this pollution I am breathing/Gonna let go of this sexist baggage I am carrying," he sings. Here's hoping Omar lets go of some more retro baggage while he's at it.

—Danny Housman

DATALOG: Released May 23.

FILE UNDER: Retro soul.

R.I.Y.L.: *Music Of My Mind*-era Stevie Wonder, *Brand New Heavies*, late Marvin Gaye.**PENNYWISE About Time Epitaph**

Pennywise boasts of its origins in Hermosa Beach, home to Black Flag, Descendents and Circle Jerks, as if its regional identification puts it in the same league. Even though the lyrics claim it's "not cut from the same mold," the quartet relies too heavily on tired hardcore structures (think rapid-fire vocals matched by rapid-fire rhythms), and the result is cookie-cutter punk—soft-boiled hardcore. The tempos charge but never pick up enough speed. The one perk to this slower pace is that it's easier to hear Jim Lindberg's less-than-dazzling sing-speak, which alternates between extolling self-reliance ("Hey, it's my time/To change my direction in life just by reading the signs") and wallowing in self-pity ("We're not much to look at/Too short, dumb and so fat/Never gonna win a beauty pageant.") Despite its energetic delivery, *About Time*'s formulaic hardcore lacks the ingredient that made its region-mates great: originality.

—Jenny Eliscu

DATALOG: Released May 23.

FILE UNDER: Half-baked hardcore.

R.I.Y.L.: *Bad Religion*, *All*, *Offspring*.

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

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VARIOUS ARTISTS *Postcards From America* London

Even in the totally degraded genre of film soundtracks, *Postcards From America* is a complete freak ticket. True soundtracking is largely a lost art—there was a time when that meant an actual movie score, but it's come to mean cash-in LPs either of existing "hits" or throwaway songs commissioned by known artists especially for the soundtrack. *Postcards From America*, while not straying far from that premise, still turns the concept on its head. Meant as the musical backdrop for a film based on the writings of NYC artist David Wojnarowicz, the *Postcards* soundtrack, on paper, reads like the track listing from the mixed tape sent by your Venetian pen pal: Who else would combine three New York Dolls classics, two from Connie Francis, and songs by everyone else from Jimmy Somerville ("So Long Babe") to Morphine ("Providence") to the Fatima Mansions ("Only Losers Take The Bus")? Somewhere in that mess, he even drops in Stonewall Jackson's bizarre Nashville take on "Me And You And A Dog Named Boo" (which was an improbable AM radio country hit at a time when Nashville artists were successfully essaying Top 40 dreck like "Knock Three Times" and "Joy To The World"). More improbable than the yee-haw Lobo cover, however, is that *Postcards* works! A mood is set, there's an actual ebb and flow, and the pieces seem of a whole. Which promises a great future for film soundtracks compiled via dice rolls.

—Tim Stegall

DATALOG: Release date: Jul. 18.**FILE UNDER:** Left-field film soundtracks.**R.I.Y.L.:** The above-named artists, Re/Search's *Incredibly Strange Music* compilations.**PRIMUS** *Tales From The Punch Bowl* Interscope

Although it doesn't have any songs about fishing on it, the only way to describe Primus's fifth album is to say that it sounds just like a Primus album: a Zappa-goes-to-Disneyland funky, punky, jazzy, thrashy mix of songs with titles like "Wynona's Big Brown Beaver." Careful listeners will detect a few signs of maturity, however. Despite the presence of funny animal songs and country jigs, musically speaking, *Punch Bowl* is the darkest album the trio has yet produced. Les Claypool's nasal vocals are nearly inaudible against an ominous wall of weird harmonies, but, as always, his amazing bass playing could start a new religion. The spirits of Geddy Lee and Bugs Bunny have somehow joined in him. Maybe it's time to simply admit that Primus isn't a rock band, but a jazz-rock act—"Frizzle Bob" does for "Kashmir" what Charlie Parker did for "Cherokee." But don't worry, Beavis and Butthead will still get it. There are moments here, like the first 45 seconds or so of "Professor Nuttbutter," that are enough to make a dead man mosh. Like Zappa, Beefheart and the Residents, Primus is on its own planet of musical inspiration—everyone who wants to go along for the ride has already bought a ticket.

—Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Released May 23. First single "Wynona's Big Brown Beaver."**FILE UNDER:** Jazz thrash.**R.I.Y.L.:** Late Led Zep, the Residents, Mr. Bungle.**JOHN PRINE** *Lost Dogs And Mixed Blessings* Oh Boy

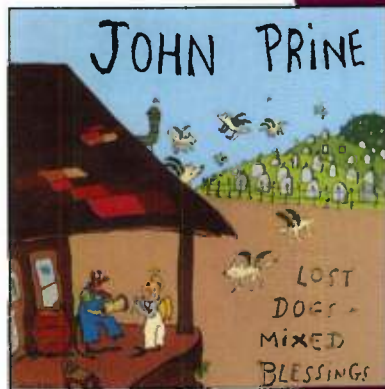
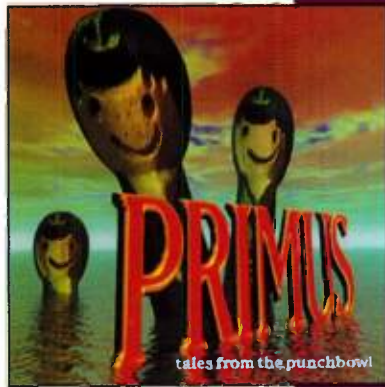
John Prine is a refreshing oddity whose 30 years of songwriting may have mellowed him a bit, but haven't turned him to mush. *Lost Dogs And Mixed Blessings* goes his usual odd path, telling strange stories about everyday people, throwing out clichés and peculiar metaphors like so much soap at the laundromat. Prine has lived through weird times, and his songs reflect the weirdness more than the times. His tales are of normality gone over the deep end and returning looking more normal than ever. He sings about chickens, trains and snowmen in lines that only make sense after the song's over, backed up by a basic rock/rockabilly band of guitars, bass and drums with the occasional fiddle, accordion and banjo. They rock, they roll and they cry a few tears on some love ballads that are as bizarre as the other tunes. Prine is still the master of the overstated understatement; every time you think he's lightening up, he throws in a lyric that compares love to blood in a black-and-white video, or something similar. In his own words: "Perfectly crafted popular hit songs never use the wrong rhyme/You think the waitress would get my order right the first time." If you're looking for angst, you've come to the wrong place. Prine's waiting for a murder and a cup of coffee.

—Cliff Farnald

DATALOG: Released Apr. 4.**FILE UNDER:** Country folk.**R.I.Y.L.:** Jesse Winchester, Steve Forbert, Iris Dement, Vic Chesnut.

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

"I can play any instrument, any style and make it sound like I've been playing for 20 years. I don't know the first thing about being a professional musician. Bands open for me, like headbanger-type bands, and guitar players are always saying 'fuck, man, those scales you play, where did you learn that?' I'm not playing any scales. I don't even know what I'm playing. All I know is that I'm creating a sound of Mother Earth, of pain, her animals, thunder and lightning, the oceans, lions and tigers, me going through a solid object with my hand... that's what I'm screaming about, that's what's coming out of my instrument."

—Dick Dale, from an interview in *Wind-Up Industrial Burnoff*

HUM

YOU'D PREFER AN ASTRONAUT



RAMONES *Adios Amigos* *Radioactive*

The Ramones' numbing 20-year career as America's instigators of punk is a case study in the pitfalls of *not* selling out successfully. They weren't even trying to be idealistic; they've gotten major-label promotion, appeared in movies and videos, even recorded the dreaded covers album. And the masses have caught on—but to the sound, not to the Ramones. By now you've heard the rumors: that *Adios Amigos* is the sarcastically titled last album; that after getting bypassed by everyone from the Clash to Green Day on the charts, Joey and company have had enough. With all due respect to our heroes, we might have kept humoring them no matter how long they plodded on, but they had to pack it in sometime. As for this would-be farewell, it offers no indication that musically, the Ramones need to throw in the towel; they're as capable as ever of knocking out two-minute gems. When listening to a new Ramones album, it's difficult to determine which songs qualify as clever-stupid and which are just plain stupid. A few listens to *Adios Amigos* reveal that "Born To Die In Berlin," "I Love You" and their version of Tom Waits' "I Don't Want To Grow Up" are all worthy additions to their canon, while "The Crusher" (yes, an ode to professional wrestling) and "Cretin Family" are the throwaways. But in an era where hundreds of Sheenas have moved to the big city to become punk rockers and an entire cartoon series on MTV is dedicated to boys who "wanna sniff some glue," is there anything left for the Ramones to say? Don't weep too hard for Joey, Johnny and Dee Dee: In another six years, they'll be eligible to enter into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, where they'll get to tell Jann Wenner to piss off. If that's not a punk's dream, what is? —Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Released Jul. 4.

FILE UNDER: Cantankerous old cartoon punks, still got the spunk.

R.I.Y.L.: Green Day, Offspring, Ramones.



ROSA MOTA *Wishful Sinking* *Mute*

Breaking a fever at night always yields some frightening dreams—twisted images diverge and coalesce rapidly, all wrapped up in a package of sweat and ill listlessness. Rosa Mota's debut album lurches around like a fever dream, often switching course between angry fuzz, sweet breathlessness, and narcotic wooziness within the confines of one song. Clots and fragments of justified ancients like the Pixies, Mercury Rev, Sonic Youth, or Unrest float by and recombine too quickly for the listener to pin down but long enough to stick in his or her head and lodge there, rubbing insistently. It's clear, amidst all the meanderings, that Rosa Mota is a band still in the process of finding its voice. A few shrill attempts at, assumedly, punk-rock irony ("Unrequited Love Song," "Got Nuffin") threaten to hijack and derail the tone of the album. Towards the end, however, everything starts to pull together beautifully. The spare, melancholy setting of tracks like "Deepness" and "Stripped and Bleeding" shows off the charming interplay of the voices of Ian Bishop (ex-Ultra Vivid Scene) and Julie Rumsey, which are fleshed out with flute, bouzouki and occasional guitar blasts. Again, Rosa Mota is a band still in the discovery process, but these tracks indicate a great album from them probably isn't too far down the line. —David Jarman

DATALOG: Released Apr. 26.

FILE UNDER: Fuzzy, sweet, narcotic guitar-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Mercury Rev, Come, Th' Faith Healers, Pixies.



RUN ON *On/Off* *Matador*

Does anyone remember Fish & Roses? In the late '80s they released a great self-titled EP and two LPs of jazzy art-pop. They made use—both liberal and minimal—of keyboards before most bands had fully recovered from their new wave keyboard allergies. Ex-Fish & Roses bassist/vocalist Sue Garner and drummer Rick Brown have now teamed up with organist/percussionist David Newgarden and guitarist Alan Licht, late of Love Child, for a nod towards Krautrock and a dip into an eclectic indie palette. Since the members switch around on instruments, this five-song EP contains a couple of different approaches. Garner's got a lovely, bittersweet voice when she's not making it comfortably numb. "Water" is a scorching, dissonant folk tune with a tribal beat. Putting a sonic drone tune, "Switch On," fun though it is, as song number two is a questionable move, but it works as a declaration of principles. On *On/Off*, you can hear the beginnings of a fruitful, friction-filled relationship. —Danny Housman

DATALOG: Released Jun. 6. An album will follow in early '96.

FILE UNDER: Spacy, fuzzy art-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Yo La Tengo, Eleventh Dream Day, Laika.

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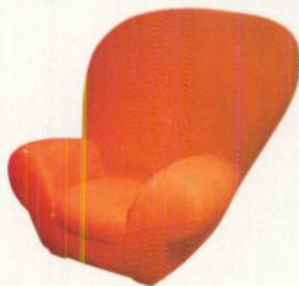
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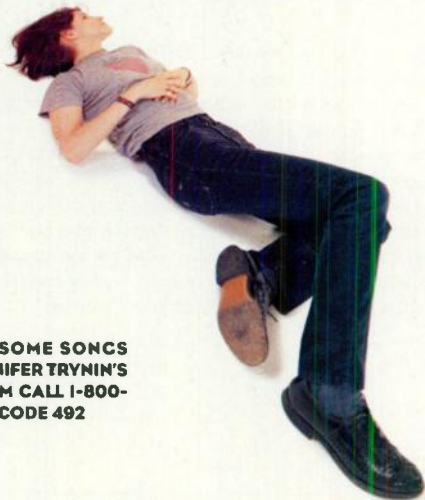
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SCARCE *Dead Sexy* A&M

Scarce is a fiercely melodic trio from Providence whose main mouthpiece, Chick Graning, was formerly the leader of the little-known (but promising) Anastasia Screamed. Scarce has been touring steadily for the past two years, and has released a six-song EP and a couple of singles, the best songs from which are included here on its debut album proper. Chick's powerful melodies remain rooted in the mid-'80s R.E.M./Replacements songs with which he came up; while they're not radically different from his earlier work, here bassist Joyce Raskin's harmonies add the proverbial X-factor that makes many of them unforgettable. While on the surface, many of the songs seem like fairly straightforward melodic rock, there's an undercurrent of hysteria to virtually every track (in a live setting, Graning's unsettling skull-stare and Raskin's hyperactive athletics make this element a bit more obvious). "Days Like This," "All Sideways" and "Obviously Midnight" are staggering tracks, but much of the album contains more great moments than great songs—at times, it feels like the band is playing around the ideas rather than nailing them head-on. That quite minor complaint aside, *Dead Sexy* is a very promising, and at times great, debut.

—Jem Aswad

DATALOG: Release date: Jul. 25.

FILE UNDER: Pop with unsettling undercurrents.

R.I.Y.L.: Nirvana, R.E.M., Soul Asylum.

SLANT 6 *Inzombia* Dischord

If you like one Slant 6 song, there's a good chance you'll like them all. The same angular chords and thin, plaintive melodies appear throughout *Inzombia*—sounds which already may be familiar from its 1993 debut, *Soda Pop * Rip Off*. Its songs are at once metallic and sensual: Christina Billotte's clear, piercing guitar lines ring out like a Thompson machine gun, while Myra Power's bass cleaves to Christina's melodies like a Sapphic lover. The effect is martial and spooky and sexy at the same time: the B-52's meets the Cramps on the Crass Records label. *Inzombia* is slightly less conceptual than its packaging suggests: Some of its best songs have little or nothing to do with the graveyard. "Baby Doll" and "Partner In Crime" are distended relationship songs, while "Click Click," the album's best track, is an allegory (or a parody?) of being in a band. The only miscarriage is the seven-minute song which closes the LP, the soundtrack to an (imaginary?) film short, "Inzombia." Featuring organ, piano, monotone drumming and the sound of gnarling women eating human flesh, it pretty much avoids rock altogether. (Weirdly, it's nowhere near as ghoulish as the band's regular songs.) On the whole, though, *Inzombia* the record is short, sharp, smart and fun. Highly recommended.

—Michael Vazquez

DATALOG: Released May 20.

FILE UNDER: Urban gothic.

R.I.Y.L.: Autoclave (Billotte's previous band), Wire, Th' Faith Healers, PJ Harvey.

SMILE *Maquee* Cargo-Atlantic

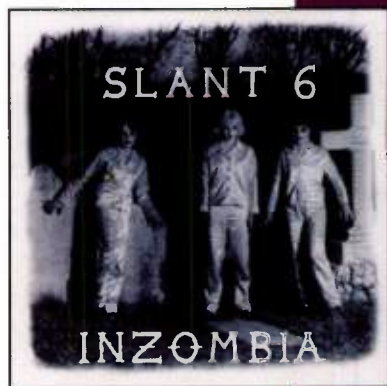
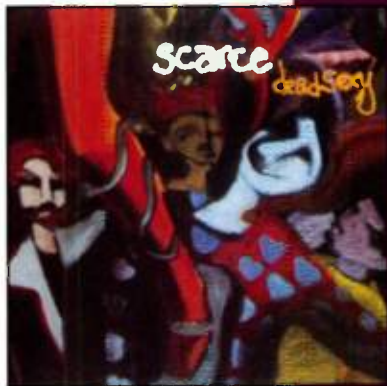
The Californian trio Smile revels in the reverberating sound of its own instruments. The cymbals crash; the guitars and basses vibrate like massive tuning forks. Rather than worry too much about what it's saying, Smile is more concerned with how it's saying it. How's the guitar sound? Cool? Good. How about the bass and drums? Distorted enough? Wild. From the thunderous first cut, the cynically titled "Rock Anthem For The Retarded Teenage Hipster Population," Smile storms out of the gate with unbridled enthusiasm and nary a worry about melody, arrangements, or structure. Not since the early days of the Seattle sound has a hard rock groove sounded so, well, *heavy*. "Lemonade" and "She" bite down hard and have "rock out, dude," written all over them; nods to Kiss, Black Sabbath, and post-punk grunge abound. At times, when the band tries to do too much, the ideas wear thin. "Until?" noodles around but goes nowhere fast, and so do the relatively stale riffs in "Jack Shrimp" and "Moosh." Without a doubt, Smile makes the most impact when it just flails away, when Scott Reeder and Mike Rosas and Aaron Sonnenberg treat their instruments like the bucking hindquarters of a nasty mare. With a pile of decent songs, this team could do some serious damage.

—Bob Gulla

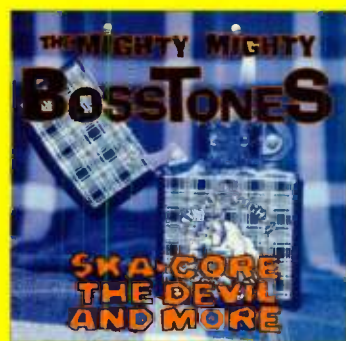
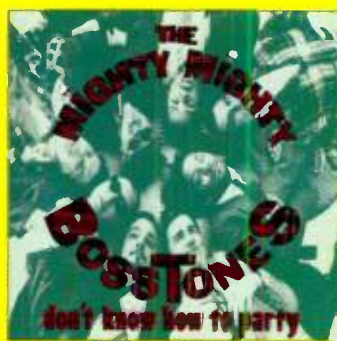
DATALOG: Released Jul. 11. Originally released by Cargo proper in 1994.

FILE UNDER: Latecomers to the early Seattle sound.

R.I.Y.L.: Mudhoney, Tad, the Fluid.



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that dog. TOTALLY CRUSHED OUT! DGC

that dog. is an easy target. Anyone who listens to records for a living will be able to spot the group's handful of influences (Liz Phair on the quieter stuff, Pavement and the Breeders on the louder stuff), and the music biz lineage of three of its four members and cutesy lower-case name with the period at the end practically invite disdain from indie-hipster types. (For the record, Anna Waronker is the daughter of former Warner Bros. honcho Lenny, and Petra and Rachel Haden's dad is jazz great Charlie.) What this neglects, however, is that that dog. is an amazingly adept pop band. *TOTALLY CRUSHED OUT!* mixes crunchy guitars with creamy vocal harmonies, plaintive acoustic guitar and whispery harmonies with blaring, overdriven rock. 10 of the record's 13 songs come in at under three minutes, but there isn't an unformed or incomplete idea, or a bad one, in the bunch. It's hard to imagine "Ms. Wrong," "One Summer Night" and especially "He's Kissing Christian" (with the lyric "He's kissing Christian, and it's making my back hurt") getting any better. Although the predominantly hushed tones of the latter half of the disc can be something of a letdown, *TOTALLY CRUSHED OUT!* has the same assured, can't-miss quality of Belly's stunning debut; a few listens, and it can strike you in the same way. —Scott Frampton

DATALOG: Release date: Jul. 18.

FILE UNDER: Guitar pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Liz Phair, Breeders, Veruca Salt, Belly.



UNWOUND The Future Of What Kill Rock Stars

Northwestern wonder Unwound is an explosive live band (I once saw vocalist Justin Trosper spit into the air and catch it in his mouth, and that wasn't even the high point of the set), but its albums have been scattershot, stumbling between gloriously nasty noise and generic Mascis-meets-Malkmus mumbling. This third outing is much like the first two, and again the better songs are the harder ones, particularly the opening blast (and apparent ideological centerpiece) "New Energy." The inconsistency was understandable on Unwound's beautifully jarring debut, but now it's getting tiresome. The band has even taken the incredibly innovative step of following the last song with five-odd minutes of feedback—fuckin' radical or what? Admittedly, that's followed by a queasy ten-minute tape-loop of easy-listening music, a slightly more striking move. There's a core of brilliance in Unwound, but it shows with frustrating infrequency here. —Jem Aswad

DATALOG: Released Apr. 25.

FILE UNDER: Noisy post-punk.

R.I.Y.L.: Fugazi, Drive Like Jehu, Lync.



SVEN VATH The Harlequin- The Robot And The Ballet-Dancer Eye Q-WB

SVEN VATH Touch Themes Of Harlequin * Robot * Ballet-Dancer Eye Q-WB

Oh, no, you say, looking at the track listing for Sven Vath's ponderously titled new album—he's created techno's first rock opera. But thankfully, his song cycle isn't filled with unwieldy organ solos and screechy verse about swordfights or free will. Rather, Vath's all-instrumental album is a lovely and contemplative soundscape, a bit cold in its artificiality, but certainly a relaxing electronic listening experience. It's a seamless wash of recurring themes and long ambient passages. Many of the tracks have a danceable, propulsive beat, but even they take on a meditative vibe, through the somnolent repetition of their phrases and otherworldly sampling choices ("Harlequin Plays Bells" sounds as if it's underpinned by Tuvan throat singers.) Vath, however, built his reputation on driving, minimal trance, so it's refreshing to see him broadening his palette with quieter passages as well. The companion disc, *Touch Themes...*, is a collection of remixes of Vath's tracks by German techno colleagues such as Speedy J and Harthouse labelmate Hardfloor. While the mixes don't really do much to expand Vath's sonic vocabulary the way that, say, an Aphex Twin mix might, they do succeed in making his explorations more dancefloor-ready. —David Jarman

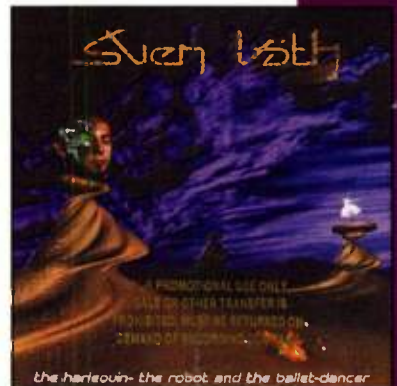
DATALOG: Release dates: Jun. 6 (*Harlequin*), Aug. 8 (*Touch Themes*).

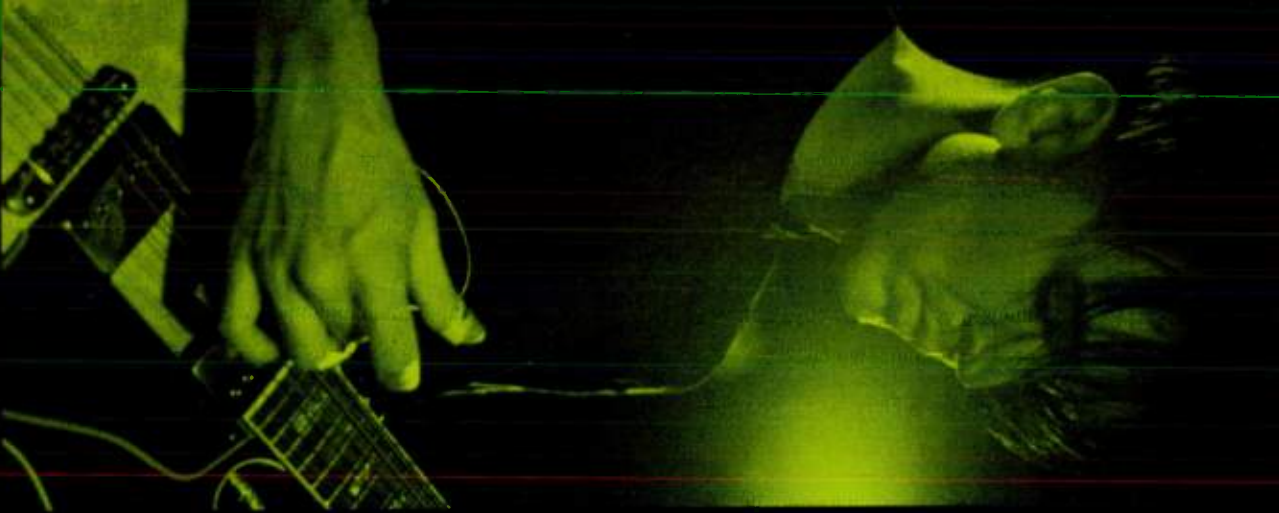
FILE UNDER: Techno exploration.

R.I.Y.L.: Orbital, Brian Eno, the Harthouse label.

"A few weeks following the formation of [Slimy Penis Breath], John The Baker was arrested for singing a song and was taken to jail. The town of Woodstock has now rallied to end police corruption (for many reasons not solely for JTB's arrest), to legalize hemp, to stop violence against women and to take back our town."

—from a press release for... well, we really don't know what that press release was supposed to be for.





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PAUL WELLER *Stanley Road* *London*

Punk, sophisticate, neohippie—whatever role he chooses, Paul Weller wants more than anything to be a soul man. As he's passed through the Jam, the Style Council and his solo work, Weller has come increasingly to rely on white-boy soul, as his voice has aged into a husky tenor. His latest work has been as much about studio ethics as songwriting: On last year's excellent *Wild Wood* and now *Stanley Road*, Weller proudly eschews modern production, borrowing the polished but uncomplicated sound of late '60s rock (not for nothing is the new album's title similar to *Abbey Road*). What held *Wild Wood* together and made the '60s influences appropriate was Weller's musings on growing older and feeling young, a well-worn subject that he somehow gave new life. *Stanley Road* has no new theme and isn't as coherent, but it finds him playing with the emerging formula, trying on a Gamble-Huff sound on "Broken Stones" and ersatz Stax on "Changingman." At the risk of sounding apologetic, it's hard not to like Weller, if only because he isn't trafficking in nostalgia so much as appropriating a style and adapting it, a proven talent of his. But the challenge of this recent, no-bull approach to music is the songs—if they're too experimental or at all half-baked, Weller falls hopelessly flat. "I Walk On Gilded Splinters" offers bits of melodies that don't coalesce, and "Wings Of Speed" is a churchy spiritual nearly as hokey as something from Prince's *Around The World In A Day*. Ultimately, *Stanley Road* feels like a transitional album. But with its new sonic textures and the intimacy Weller conveys, it indicates that he still has a career ahead of him, for as long as he's willing to keep plumbing the soul. —Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Released Jun. 6.

FILE UNDER: Rubber soul man.

R.I.Y.L.: Freedy Johnston, Jack Logan, Van Morrison.

SPEEDY WEST & JIMMY BRYANT *Stratosphere Boogie: The Flaming Guitars Of Speedy West & Jimmy Bryant* *Razor & Tie*

Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant were two of the most sought-after session musicians during the 1950s and '60s salad days of country music, and *Stratosphere Boogie* rescues from obscurity the recordings the well-groomed and dapper West and Bryant did together between 1952 and 1956. When Bryant (lead guitar) and West (pedal steel) got together in a studio genuinely weird things happened. Freed from the stifling Nashville and Hollywood studio grind, and bursting with ideas that wouldn't fit on any records but their own, the pair produced an unholy country-based hybrid of jazz, swing, and country boogie (e.g. later Delmore Brothers and Merle Travis) that took Bob Wills' western swing innovations into, well, the stratosphere. Nobody before or since has taken the pedal steel to the places Speedy West did. West's style was extremely aggressive and playful, and he favored long, swooping runs and banging the slide against the strings to make goofy, spacey sounds that have more in common with space-age bachelor pad music than traditional country. Bryant's jazz-based picking style was complex, clean and busy, his lines weaving dizzying circles around the rhythm section. If the idea of Merle Travis, Bob Wills and Esquivel in a studio on Mars sounds intriguing to you, check out *Stratosphere Boogie*. —Steve McGuire

DATALOG: Released May 22.

FILE UNDER: Western Swing meets the final frontier.

R.I.Y.L.: Les Paul, Merle Travis, Spade Cooley, Bob Wills.

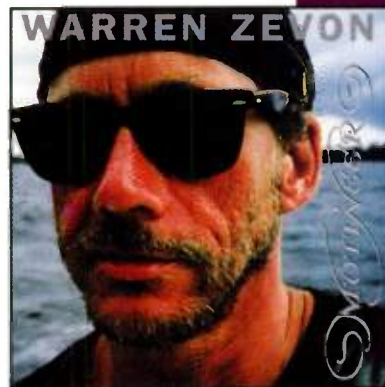
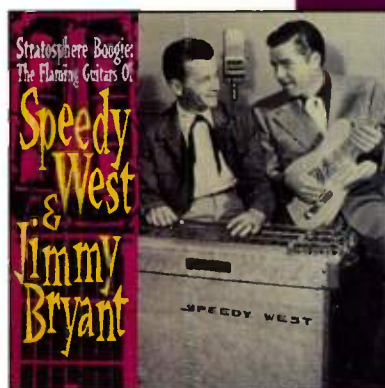
WARREN ZEVON *The Mutineer* *Giant*

The guy most likely to write "The Ballad Of Timothy McVeigh," Warren Zevon has long since fallen from the commercial heights he scaled briefly in the mid-'70s, but *The Mutineer* shows he's as iconoclastic and engrossing as ever. Zevon has been juxtaposing tender and malevolent sentiments for more than two full decades now, and while this collection skews slightly more toward his compassionate side, our Southern California anti-hero continues to explore twisted psyches with dark humor and rough poetry. "Rottweiler Blues" (cowritten with novelist Carl Hiassen) posits slackers, gangbangers, and skinheads as potential dog food. The picaresque "Piano Fighter" mythologizes Zevon's adventures as a keyboardist with the same kind of outlaw imagery he's summoned for past tales of mercenaries and rogue agents. "Seminole Bingo"'s dubious desperado is a junk bond trader. Zevon goes soft without getting sticky on the love-lorn "Similar To Rain" and the album's one cover, long-forgotten '70s singer-songwriter Judee Sill's "Jesus Was A Cross Maker." He produced this album and plays most of the instruments himself (guests include Bruce Hornsby and David Lindley), and the spare surroundings opted for here suit the songs just fine. —Steve Stolder

DATALOG: Released May 23.

FILE UNDER: Thinking-person's rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Randy Newman, Elvis Costello, Graham Parker.



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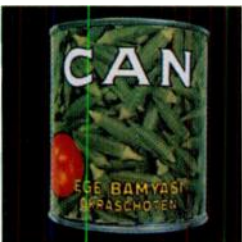
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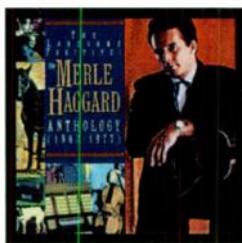
by James Lien

IN THE BINS

German progressive rock, the limbo and what America is all about: what's in stores this month.

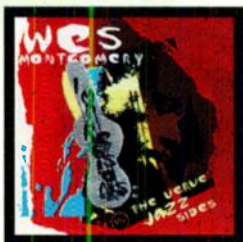


It's a rare occurrence, but true: While most progressive rock has aged miserably, the music of German art-rock band **CAN** probably actually sounds cooler than it did when it was first released. Back in the '70s and '80s, owning Can albums was a mark of distinction, and the people who pulled them out and played them for friends were generally hipper than your average Jane or Joe. Much like the Velvet Underground, their dozen or so records went on to influence scores of forward-thinking musicians and bands in all genres of music. Building its pieces from trancey, droney rhythmic grooves and jagged shards of fractured guitars and keyboards, Can possessed a radical conception of what could and couldn't be done with music, resulting in a sound that was distinctly original and transcended time, place and language. Vocalist extraordinaire Damo Suzuki was the kind of person who could sing a line like "You, you are losing your Vitamin C" and make it sound positively frightening. The impact of Can's music resonates in Public Image, the Fall, Bill Laswell's productions, even Soundgarden, and countless other artists in virtually every category of music. Mute has reissued nine titles, including two compilations, *Cannibalism 1* and *2* (a good place to start). Among the original albums, we'd unequivocally recommend *Ege Bamyasi*, *Soundtracks*, and *Tago Mago*, but once you buy one, they're kind of addictive, and they're all well worth owning.



Fans of lavishly expensive, insanely comprehensive box sets should keep an eye out for Germany's Bear Family box set of country legend **MERLE HAGGARD's** recordings, but for the rest of us, Razor & Tie has released a thrill-filled two-CD set, *The Lonesome Fugitive*, that quite literally puts all his good stuff in one place with no fat or baloney. As an artist, Merle's music embodied this writer's conception of what America is all about: on the outside, he looked pretty regular, heck, even normal, but inside he was as weird, twisted, vulnerable and emotionally gnarly as you could get.

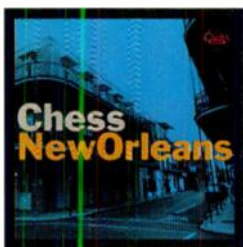
On a similar vibe, **MARVIN GAYE** is compiled on a somewhat plusher four-CD retrospective, *The Master*. It's not quite as awe-inspiring as the hefty box that Motown released earlier in tribute to Gaye's genius, but it's still awfully amazing. It's the sort of situation where you can always hope that someone will give you the big box as a gift, but if a couple of birthdays and Christmases pass and no one seems to be picking up on your hints, then *The Master* is a worthy overview of this important artist's work.



WES MONTGOMERY was a god of the jazz guitar. He was a badass on the strings and, by all accounts, a wonderfully warm and gentle person; his jazz guitar stylings influenced everybody from obvious picks like George Benson and Ronny Jordan all the way to soul and funk players like Leo Nocentelli and Charlie Hunter. Verve has just released a two-CD retrospective entitled *The Verve Jazz Sides*. This is suave stuff from the swinging 1960s—the first disc spotlights everything from organ boogaloo (Jimmy Smith guests on a few cuts) to snazzy West Coast swing to Latin-tinged numbers to schmaltzy-but-classy ballads. The second disc collects together for the first time all the live 1965 recordings revolving around Wes' *Smokin' At The Half Note*.

Everybody's got some embarrassing moments in their history that they have to live down; not everybody has the guts to put theirs out on CD. A new import CD, *Behind The Curtain*, from EMI UK does just that for Brit pop-punkers **WIRE**. It compiles early—like really, really early—demos, and it inadvertently spotlights some pretty funny moments from their formative days, when the young band was a bit more uninhibited and giddy; fun listening, especially if you're a really big fan of their more well-known stuff.

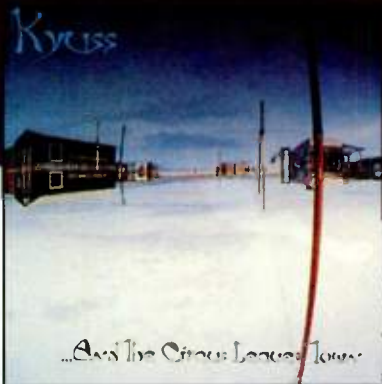
Seals And Crofts' *Summer Breeze* is finally out on CD through Warner Archives. Just thought we'd let you know.



Chess-MCA has put out a neat two-CD compilation called *Chess New Orleans*. Like the title implies, it spotlights some of the New Orleans musicians recorded by the legendary blues label during the '50s. Chicago-based Chess didn't record much in New Orleans, but what they did was pretty on-the-ball: *Chess New Orleans* includes the Carnival-time staple "Mardi Gras Mambo" as well as the original version of "Iko Iko," later made famous by the Dixie Cups and Dr. John.



Another left-field record from out of the Crescent City is *New Orleans Twist Party on Night Train-Tuff City*—to insure the proper party mood, the CD is actually mastered from scratchy old 45s. (New Orleans is the kind of place where people use master tapes to insulate their attics or to prop up uneven table legs). It features various Nawlins local-label R&B singles of the '60s, including several rare Professor Longhair cuts, but the real reason to buy it is "Let's Limbo," a bizarre nugget from another New Orleans piano legend, Eddie Bo. It's basically an inspired one-off attempt to create or cash in on a dance trend; the only trouble is, the musicians sound like they have no idea what limbo music is supposed to sound like, so they pretty much make it up as they go along. There's a cha-cha rhythm, the horn section imitates mariachi horns like something out of a Mexican restaurant, and Eddie screams and scats into the microphone. It's truly bizarre. The creator of this madness, Eddie Bo, still lives and plays in New Orleans.



KYUSS

...And The Circus Leaves Town

Elektra

Kyuss hates being called a metal band, and it's never really been one, but damned if it doesn't satisfy just about everything I need from loud rock. For the uninitiated, this Palm Desert, California quartet specializes in droning power rock, driven hyper-fuzzed guitars, showering crash cymbals and John Garcia's Danzig-esque (but in a good way!) vocals. You won't read an article about the band that doesn't dwell on its desert origins, but its sweltering riffs, cracked-earth rhythms and parched vocals really are evocative of blinding desert sun and bleak, sandy expanses. Where Kyuss's last album *Welcome To Sky Valley* found it expanding its sound into longer and more involved (and, one suspects, deliberately pretentious) songs, here it's branching into new territory without sacrificing that adrenalin power drive that it does better than any other band today. Now on his third album as the band's producer, Master Of Reality Chris Goss helps to steer Kyuss into new sounds and styles, stripping down to leaner grooves and more melodic song structures on "Catamaran" and "Tangy Sizzle." Perhaps most of all, this album is more *silly* than the others, suggesting that the band is, er, "growing up," at least a little. *Circus* isn't as skull-crushing as either of Kyuss's last two albums (novices are pointed in the direction of *Blues For The Red Sun* before diving into this more ambitious LP), but the band couldn't have taken that style much farther without repeating itself, and this album's scope and promise suggest that Kyuss is nowhere near its peak.



RIFFS

Luckily for me, I listened to **FEAR FACTORY's** *Demanufacture* (Roadrunner) all the way through before realizing that it's a completely over-the-top concept album! While the record's stated ideological goal ("a soundtrack to spearhead the resistance and forge a new society," of all things) is admirable but really kind of ridiculous, Fear Factory manages to succeed musically where it overshoots lyrically. Sepultura, Slayer and NYC HC are the biggest precedents, but there are also weird gothic overtones (haunting synths and doomy effects) that will segue suddenly into hardcore refrains or stuttering riffs. What's most impressive is that the band is able to transcend a tried-true-nothing-new genre by doing it very well, and by breaking up the piledriving assault with a couple of completely out-there songs: an ace cover of Head Of David's "Dog Day Sunrise" and the closing "Therapy For Pain," a ludicrously pretentious plunge into the depths of prog-rock that sounds like it was plucked straight from an early Genesis album (I'm fairly confident that it's a joke). While the biggest problem is that the band's vocals sometimes aren't quite up to its ambitions, *Demanufacture* establishes Fear Factory as a band to be reckoned with... **SMILE** is a young Orange County combo that's cool enough to name-drop the Melvins, Kinks, early Pink Floyd and the Seeds as influences. While not all of those are really in evidence on the band's debut *Maquee* (Cargo-Atlantic), it alternates between punk and raunchy riff-rock with style and melodic ease, although it often wanders off into meandering jams that bear a distinctly psychedelic tinge but don't really go much of anywhere. That aside, this is a strong and energetic debut from a band that sounds like it's onto something good... Also from behind the Orange Curtain, **SUGAR RAY's** *Lemonade & Brownies* (Atlantic) jumps hyperactively between rap, hardcore, arena rock and funk with a lot more skill and strength than you might expect (although, like so many white boys, they sound like they're trying a bit too hard to be funk-ay). The Beastie Boys (there's even a "Cookie Puss"-style prank-phone track), Bad Brains and Van Halen loom large here, and although its Beasties/Peppers personality sometimes overpowers the music, Sugar Ray manages to pull it off throughout most of this LP.



- 1 **WHITE ZOMBIE**
Astro-Creep: 2000...
Geffen
- 2 **FAITH NO MORE**
King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime
Slash-Reprise
- 3 **GRIP INC.**
Power Of Inner Strength
Metal Blade
- 4 **MONSTER MAGNET**
Dopes To Infinity
A&M
- 5 **FLOTSAM & JETSAM**
Drift
MCA
- 6 **DEICIDE**
Once Upon The Cross
Roadrunner
- 7 **FIGHT**
A Small Deadly Space
Epic
- 8 **MORBID ANGEL**
Domination
Giant-WB
- 9 **DEATH**
Symbolic
Roadrunner
- 10 **ORANGE 9MM**
Driver Not Included
EastWest-EEG
- 11 **CLUTCH**
Clutch
EastWest-EEG
- 12 **SOULS AT ZERO**
A Taste For The Perverse
Energy
- 13 **KORN**
Korn
Immortal-Epic
- 14 **KMFDM**
Nihil
Wax Trax!-TVT
- 15 **ANAL CUNT**
Top 40 Hits
Earache
- 16 **FILTER**
Short Bus
Reprise
- 17 **QUICKSAND**
Manic Compression
Island
- 18 **BROKEN HOPE**
Repulsive Conception
Metal Blade
- 19 **FOETUS**
Gash
Columbia
- 20 **FEAR FACTORY**
Demanufacture
Roadrunner
- 21 **MISERY LOVES CO.**
Misery Loves Co.
Earache
- 22 **TAD**
Infared Riding Hood
Elektra-EEG
- 23 **X-COPS**
You Have The Right To Remain Silent...
Metal Blade
- 24 **GOREFEST**
Erase
Nuclear Blast
- 25 **SUFFOCATION**
Pierced From Within
Roadrunner

Compiled from the CMJ New Music Report's
year-by-year loud rock charts, selected from CMJ's
panel of progressive radio reporters

dump



DUMP

"You And I"

Eighteen Wheeler

James McNew, Yo La Tengo bass player and occasional *CMJ* contributor, really loves music. Besides his "day band," he records songs—his own and other people's—at home, under the name Dump. The last month has seen a new Dump double-CD (on Brinkman), a 10" EP (on Smells Like), and this superb four-song single. (And he offers to tape more stuff for anyone who sends him a blank tape and return postage!) The single contains covers of four of McNew's favorite not-very-well-known songs: early-'70s electronic weirdos Silver Apples' "You And I," Barbara Manning's exquisite "Haze Is Free (Mounting A Broken Ladder)" (here renamed "Flames"), cracked bluesbeing Jandek's "License To Kill" and Hypnolovewheel's "Living On The Moon." The craft that's gone into these recordings is extraordinary; you can hear the hours spent bent over a four-track making them perfect. "Flames," especially, is arrestingly good, with a gorgeous electronic instrumental part (that actually owes something to the Silver Apples) whose lo-fi recording makes it blurry and enigmatic.

Speaking of Mission Of Burma, that legendary Boston band's two main songwriters, Roger Miller and Clint Conley, have reunited under the name of **WRONG PIPE** for an excellent 2-song 7" called *Ten* (Remora). This one, too, is a home recording (that seems to be the trend for singles right now, probably for economic rather than aesthetic reasons). The pleasant surprise is that the lo-fi format is perfect for the old Burma habit of concealing barely audible noises between layers of arty, slightly alien rock. Conley's "One/Blue Story"—the first song he's recorded in over 10 years—is haunting like a muffled gasp, and Miller's "Kuchkah Tay Zod" is heady and headstrong, barreling through its own dream-language lyrics.

The **JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION**'s "Bellbottoms" (Matador) has just been released as a single in three formats: a limited-edition 7" (with an otherwise unavailable B-side—don't worry, you're not missing anything), a 12" remixed by U.N.K.L.E., and a CD EP officially called *Experimental Remixes*. That last is the one to get (if you liked *Orange*—if you haven't heard it yet, get that first). It's got both sides of the 12", plus a bunch more remixes of various JSBX songs. The big-name knob-tweakers include Beck, Mike D. of the Beastie Boys, Moby, Genius from Wu-Tang Clan, and Dub Narcotic—which basically makes "Soul Typecast" into a Dub Narcotic song. It's not a great record, but it's a nice addendum to *Orange*.

The Canadian label Trackshun has released the second volume of its *Optional Ingredients From A Vile Recipe 7"* series, a peculiar six-track combination of hideous noise and gently radiant beauty. The noise tracks illustrate nicely the variety of things that the ear hears as noise instead of music, how easy it is to switch to thinking of them as music, and the way that their overtones can be heard as notes. And their contrast with the pretty stuff is effective—especially at the end, when Total's vacuum-cleaner-of-the-pit "Austrian Shade" cuts off and makes way for Paula Frazer's ironically gorgeous, retro country lament "Is She Lonesome Now."

SINGLES

BY DOUGLAS WOLK

In a more left-field division of the covers department is **MOONSHAKE**'s new, non-album 7" (Clawfist (UK)), with the British sample-dub terrorists doing two songs originally popularized by Eartha Kitt. "Always True To You In My Fashion" is especially great, with big-band loops cartwheeling out of control and crashing into each other under new singer Melissa's delightfully blasé murmuring of Cole Porter's lyrics. The arrangement demonstrates that instruments of kitsch can be used as instruments of torture, too; you just have to use them the right way. The other side's "Lola, Lola" sidles along spookily, with Moonshake mastermind Dave Callahan getting in on the vocal action too.

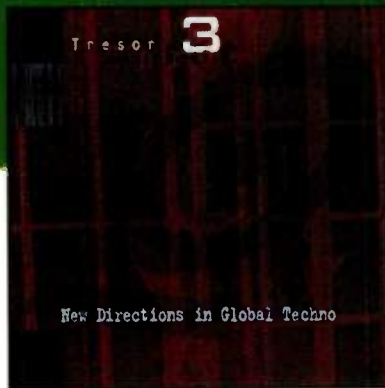
60 years ago, **MARCELLUS HALL** would have been an itinerant bluesman. Right now, he's a New York-based rock guy (he fronts Railroad Jerk), but every so often he records a bit of his amazing blues-rooted acoustic stuff. 4-Track Recordings (Walt) has four striking home recordings with primitive but sharp sound ("I Wanted To Sleep With You" could be a transcription of a field recording). Hall has a way of making a pick on an acoustic guitar sound like a chisel on stone, and of making his voice sound much older than he is without being affected about it. Best of the bunch is "Another Day Passes," where he breaks his chords up and scatters them like dry straw, then pulls it all together with a vaguely psychedelic, stream-of-consciousness melody.

Also taking the plunge into home recording (although on an 8-track—ooh!) is **HAZEL**, whose "Blank Florida" single (Pacific Wonderland) is one of its career highlights to date. Jody Bleyte may be better known for Team Dresch at this point, but Hazel (in which she plays drums) has some great songwriting and distinctive male/female harmony vocals. "Blank Florida" has an enormous Seattle riff, mysterious lyrics (the hook goes "as long as I forget to die I'm fortunate") and a personal touch that doesn't often go with the other two. The flip's "Motor Sport Daredevils" slaloms through a series of unfamiliar chords, in the spirit of Mission Of Burma.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Tresor 3: New Directions In Global Techno

NovaMute



If you're among the countless techno enthusiasts who find the present state of techno perplexing, this exemplary collection of tracks from Berlin and Detroit demonstrates with stentorian force that the genre's avant-garde periphery is providing the most exciting moments it's seen in a long time. NovaMute's latest in the Tresor series (named after the influential German club/label) encapsulates virtually all that is good in techno right now. Opening with the subdued grandeur of "Domina" by Domina, this collection of eleven tracks never lets go of the mind or the solar plexus. The contributions from Robert Hood, "The Rhythm Of Vision" and "The Protector," are prescient, heart-stopping moments of kinetic melodies brought to the brink and back to the accompaniment of mammoth rhythms. The Detroit trick-nologist Jeff Mills unleashes two heavily kick-drummed raids on the dancefloor's pre-dawn occupants, "Solid Sleep" and his frightening rendition of DJ Hell's "Allerseelen," shot through with hi-hat and snare bolts. The Joey Beltram revival is here in full swing with the inclusion of the physically demanding "Ten Four." And the contributions of Sun Electric and Dan Bell are no joke either. Splendid stuff.



CINEMATIC ELECTRONICS

The name **CARL CRAIG** has appeared in this space numerous times. Why? Quite simply, because he is techno's most imaginative and progressive practitioner. Craig's first full-length opus, *Landcruising* (Blanco Y Negro (UK)), is a rare treat, a record with the bold, imaginative sweep of Philip Glass or Steve Reich and the thunderous rhythmic drive of Kevin Saunderson or Robert Hood. Craig organically refigures the dense codes of electronic instruments, essentially remaking them in his own image. The opening "Mind Of A Machine" is a perfect example of Craig's febrile creativity, his ability to wring the most beautiful sounds from the simplest of electronic boxes. *Landcruising* is techno's most significant "concept album," with its feet on the dance floor and its head in the stratosphere... The highly regarded **FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON** (a.k.a. Dougans and Cockbain) has been pushing the envelope of electronic dance since its 1987 releases under the name Humanoid. The group's latest spatial and psychic journey is *Far Out Son Of A Lung And The Ramblings Of A Madman* (Astralwerks-Caroline). Originally released last year as an elusive white-label, this wildly eclectic four-track EP sees the pair turning trip hop and acid jazz on their head, constructing a dense melange of slowed breakbeats and unearthly, filtered vocal samples with the scope of the cinematic. The fascinating sonic eccentricities here demonstrate just how expansive FSOL's vision really is... The nascent Oxygen Music Works label is fast becoming the site where New York's most experimental electronic dance voices are to be heard. The previous releases on the label, including the ethereal *Elements Of Life* EPs, negotiated the space between house and dancefloor jazz with remarkable dexterity. Now, the label's roster has expanded a bit to include the truly deranged aural textures of the **RAW OXYGEN** crew, whose *Blue Nipple* EP certainly wasn't created with commercial radio play in mind. The opening "Miss Tina's Revenge" is expertly produced, with a haunting keyboard sequence drifting through the mix, while winding down sax blasts play across the surface. The flip's "Church" is a downtempo, jazzier affair. The label's latest signing is **SMALL FISH WITH SPINE**, known to her friends as Riz Maslen, an English producer whose first release, the *Stickleback* EP, is a smorgasbord of breakbeat-fueled inner journeys. The rubbery flanging of "Siolim" opens the A-side, as darting piccolos fuse with the sluggish bassline. "I Hate You" is immersed in tickling funk guitar work and disembodied chants disappearing into canyons of reverb. The flip side's "Anjuna Fleamarket Goa," her paean to the Indian island now home to British ex-pats, is reminiscent of the more contemplative moments of the KLF's pathbreaking *Chill Out* album. This is a very promising debut indeed.

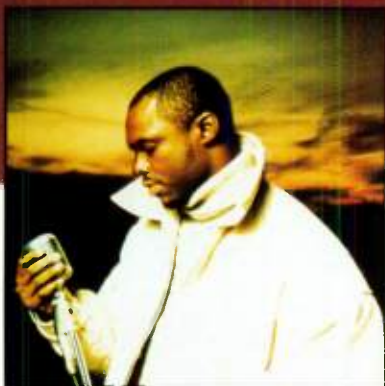


- 1 APHEX TWIN
I Care Because You Do
Sire-EEG
- 2 ORB
Orbus Terrarvm
Island
- 3 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Two A.D.
Waveform
- 4 FREAKY CHAKRA
Lowdown Motivator
Astralwerks-Caroline
- 5 PROTOTYPE 909
Transistor Rhythm
Instinct
- 6 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Tresor 3: New Directions In Global Techno
Novamute-Mute
- 7 MOBY
Everything Is Wrong
Elektra-EEG
- 8 BLACK DOG
Spanners
EastWest-EEG
- 9 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Transmissions From The Planet
Planet Dog-Mammoth
- 10 PRODIGY
Music For The Jilted Generation
XL-Mute
- 11 TOWA TEI
Future Listening
Elektra-EEG
- 12 KMFDM
Nihil
Wax Trax!-TVT
- 13 BARRAMUNDI
Dreamtime Planet
Logic
- 14 VARIOUS ARTISTS
King Of The Jungle
Instinct
- 15 TUU
All Our Ancestors
Waveform
- 16 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Jungle Warfare
Moonshine
- 17 BROUN FELLINIS
AphroKubist Improvisations Vol. 9
Moonshine
- 18 DRAX
Tales From the Mental Plane
Tropo (Germany)
- 19 DEEP FOREST
Deep Forest
Epic
- 20 TRICKY
Maxinquaye
Island
- 21 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Fax Compilation II
Fax-Instinct
- 22 VAMPIRE RODENTS
Clockseed
Re-Construction-Cargo
- 23 PAPERCLIP PEOPLE
"The Climax" (12")
Ministry Of Sound (UK)
- 24 PRAGA KHAN
"Gun Buck" (12")
Logic
- 25 MIKE INK
Dadajack (EP)
Profan (Germany)

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

25

- 1 **MOBB DEEP**
The Infamous
Loud-RCA
- 2 **MASTA ACE INCORPORATED**
Sittin' On Chrome
Delicious Vinyl-Capitol
- 3 **OL' DIRTY BASTARD**
Return To The 36 Chambers:
The Dirty Version
Elektra-EEG
- 4 **GRAND PUBA**
"I Like It (I Wanna Be Where
You Are)" (12")
Elektra-EEG
- 5 **SOUNDTRACK**
Friday
Priority
- 6 **COMMON SENSE**
Resurrection
Relativity
- 7 **SOUNDTRACK**
New Jersey Drive Vol. 1
Tommy Boy
- 8 **ROOTS**
Do You Want More!!!!!!!
DGC
- 9 **CHANNEL LIVE**
Station Identification
Capitol
- 10 **BIG L**
Lifestylez Ov Da Poor & Dangerous
Columbia
- 11 **MIC GERONIMO**
"Masta IC" (12")
Blunt-TYT
- 12 **THA ALKAHOLIKS**
Coast II Coast
Loud-RCA
- 13 **METHOD MAN**
Tical
Def Jam/RAL-Island
- 14 **MAD LION**
Real Ting
Weeded-Nervous
- 15 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Pump Ya Fist: Hip-Hop Inspired
By The Black Panthers
Avatar-Polygram
- 16 **JEMINI THE GIFTED ONE**
Scars And Pain
Mercury
- 17 **SMIF-N-WESSON**
Dah Shinin'
Wreck-Nervous
- 18 **THE NONCE**
World Ultimate
Wild West-American
- 19 **2PAC**
Me Against The World
Interscope
- 20 **FUNKDOOBIE**
"Dedicated" (12")
Immortal-Epic
- 21 **LAST POETS**
Holy Terror
Rykodisc
- 22 **SHOW & AG**
"Next Level" (12")
Payday/frrr-London
- 23 **NAUGHTY BY NATURE**
Poverty's Paradise
Tommy Boy
- 24 **B.U.M.S**
Lyfe 'N' Tyme
Priority
- 25 **HEATHER B**
"Ah Glucks Down" (12")
Pendulum-EMI



HIP-HOP

BY GLEN SANSONE

JEMINI THE GIFTED ONE

Scars And Pain

Mercury

There's no disputing the fact that New York's Jemini The Gifted One is everything his tag asserts, and then some. His steel-strong microphone skill is a reminder that the spirit of fun, old-school simplicity can still have an impact in today's ragged sex- and violence-filled climate. But very few MCs today will pass on the opportunity to let the listener in on a few of the troubles they have faced as wild-eyed youngsters growing up. Jemini flawlessly waxes poetic about his world over varied, body-rockin' funk/soul beds. The fatback bass line found on "Can't Stop Rockin' (Tribute)" ("We used to say funky fresh and now we say phat") highlights the finest tribute since Common Sense's "I Used To Love H.E.R." to the days when hip-hop could only be found in parks and clubs. Only seven songs adorn *Scars And Pain*, but Jemini doesn't waste a beat; he packs more righteous lyrical wisdom into these cuts than many rappers do on far lengthier efforts. "Brooklyn Kids" offers messages based on past experiences, while the first single, "Funk Soul Sensation," is perfect accompaniment for kicking back and coolin' out—something the album's heavy funk feel and jaunty loops make very easy to do. But don't turn your back: Jemini definitely demands your full attention.

BONUS BEATS



The cast of new voices featured on the *D&D Project* (Arista) is a lucky group indeed. Imagine being a new artist in an over-crowded genre of music trying to get noticed. Sound impossible? Well, what this handful of talent has over every other new artist out there is the services of hip-hop's premier producers (Dres, Diamond D, DJ Premier, KRS-One and Funkmaster Flex, just to name a few). Coordinated by the owners of D&D Studios (a New York hip-hop mecca), the results here are not perfect—some of the rapping is a bit too predictable—but the record does exude a genuine aesthetic. Tracks like "Da Good Die Young" and "Blowin' Up The Spot" sound dirty and nasty, the way real hip-hop should, and on the Premier-produced "I, 2 Pass It," D&D clients like KRS-One, Mad Lion, Fat Joe, Smif-N-Wesson, Doug E. Fresh and Jeru The Damaja provide an electrifying freestyle rap session... Geto Boy **BUSHWICK BILL** is one of the most misunderstood and unpredictable MCs around—Ol' Dirty Bastard boasts about being shot, but it was Bushwick who put a gun in his girlfriend's hand and asked her to kill him (he only lost an eye). His solo album, *Phantom Of The Rapra* (Noo-Trybe-Virgin) (so called because Bill's a huge Mozart fan), is more ambitious in theory than in actual execution. Firing at point-blank rage, Bill releases his subliminal terrorism ("Wha Cha Gonna Do?") and leaves the set with his hands full of blood. The cuts "Already Dead" and "Bushwicken" prove that this release is not too unlike a B-grade gore film; this "sick shit" will appeal mostly to those who like their hip-hop with a few blood stains on it... The soundtrack for the film *Bad Boys* features a fresh, young voice for fans of stylish R&B: Jamaica-born **DIANA KING**'s infectious "Shy Guy," also on her debut album *Tougher Than Love* (Work). Diana effortlessly marries her reggae roots with energetic contemporary pop stylings. Her cover of Chaka Khan's "Ain't Nobody" is superb... The once-stormy relationship between hip-hop and R&B is now the ticket for crossover popularity—just ask Warren G. **G.A.T. GANGSTAS & THUGS** is made up of four talented G's from South Central. Their strapping appearance is deceiving, because these guys sing like songbirds (they sang on Coolio's "Fantastic Voyage") on *Just Another Day* (MCA). Unlike the limited vocal talents of someone like Montell Jordan, G.A.T. recalls the problems of the world, and more specifically, the ghetto. Apart from a cover of "Thin Line Between Love And Hate," the quartet sticks to its strengths—inviting Coolio to rap on "Doin' My Time"—and provides sincere commentary on urban decay with heavenly voices... Word out.

on the verge

UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS

compiled by lydia anderson

Rebecca Moore

Although she's at the beginning of her recording career, Rebecca Moore sings as if she's at the end of her rope. Perhaps what gives Moore's songs their twisted and hard-to-find edges is her experience in independent theater and performance art (yes, you guessed it, she's from New York, where her artist parents were at the center of many "happenings" in the '60s). Her dark, dramatic and inventive songs are comprised of tangled guitar chords that claw to find semi-sweet melodies inside. Those looking for Downtown beatnik coffee-house folk will be disappointed: Moore's songs are never verse/chorus/verse—they're more like tangent/verse/tangent. A full album on Knitting Factory Works is due in August, but don't be surprised if you see a one-act play, short film, book of poems or 7" before that.

—Steve Ciabattoni



PHOTO BY LAURE A. LEBER

Gaunt

Columbus, Ohio's student-infested rock scene is teeming with activity (see this month's Localzine for details), but at the end of the day, it's the acerbic, searing punk of Gaunt that will put this Midwestern town on the map. *I Can See Your Mom From Here* (Thrill Jockey) is the band's first full-length release after an endless string of introductory singles and EPs, and with its 14 songs clocking at 34 minutes, Gaunt proves to be everything its name implies: wiry, tough and mean. Tail-chasing riffs and cantankerous vocals pushed deep into the red race through Gaunt songs with a rare and genuine ferocity. There's no pop to be found here; this is the punk of beer, piss and vinegar.

—Cheryl Botchick



PHOTO BY LEE ANN MCCURRE



Roy Montgomery

Chasm-voiced Roy Montgomery is one of the founding fathers of New Zealand alternative music—his band the Pin Group released the first record on the top Kiwi label Flying Nun, almost 15 years ago. He's mostly laid low since then, but the last year has seen a flurry of new releases featuring his spidery, dreamy guitar work and *basso profundo* vocals. The Pin Group released a posthumous 7" on Siltbreeze, Montgomery's recently defunct band Dadamah's complete works were collected on *This Is Not A Dream* (Kranky), and his new guitar duo Dissolve debuted with *That That Is... Is (Not)* (Kranky). Recently, he's recorded more than an album's worth of material with Bardo Pond (to be released this fall), as well as an instrumental album, *Temple IV*, and seven home-recorded singles, which will hopefully be appearing on seven different labels over the next few months.

—Douglas Wolk



PHOTO BY LIZ CLAYTON

Capsize 7

Like many of its neighbors in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Capsize 7 dabbles in post-punk guitar rock. What distinguishes the band from more standard indie-rock fare is its intricate song construction; well-placed breaks and time changes are the focus rather than overused power chords, a mind-set similar to that of scenemates Polvo. Following two 7"s, Capsize 7's next effort is a 10" called *Recline And Go* for the new Hep Cat label. "Pong" and "Green Hornet," bristle with a ferocious intensity, first lurching out, then recoiling for an instant before blazing forward again. Even when the band turns melodic, as on "Alias," an internal tension provides an edge that plays foil to the surface beauty. A full-length is also in the works for later this year.

—Bryan McNamara

by Douglas Walk

Teach

Miss World Wide Web

Courtney Love uses the Internet to go beyond celebrity

"Im sorry if ive upset your concept of celebrity by actually participating in this, but HEY! your concept of celebrity was just boomer handed to you anyways...see, just like Thurston...IM ACCESSIBLE!! LIVE IN A HOUSE!! HAVE A CHILD!! AM HUMAN!THE LIVINGHEIROPHANT! THE COVER OF MS.AND ESQUIRE THE SAME MONTH!AND IT ISNNT A CONTRADICTION! I MUST BE..... WAIT FORIT....A FEMMENIST (Thanx Noam) okay fuckoff peace love empathy and kiss my ass..."

That's Courtney Love, jumping with both feet into the ongoing Internet conversation about her (we've preserved her unique orthography). Over the last year, discussion of Hole and Courtney has outpaced the amount of writing about nearly any other musician on the Net, and having her around has kept the discussion lively.

Courtney Love made her first electronic appearances on America Online in the spring of last year, with a series of wild, acid-fingered postings that were alternately hilarious, incomprehensible and mercilessly pointed. They were propagated around the Net instantly, and provoked discussion, speculation and controversy wherever they went. AOL's Hole folder still sees around a hundred new messages every day; in April, a year to the day after Kurt Cobain's body was found, discussion grew so heated that the folder was briefly removed. "A member was posting disruptive messages," Margaret Ryan of AOL explains. "It's not a common practice to remove folders, but it's not unheard of either." (*The New York Times* implied that it was removed permanently; in fact, it returned within a few days, with the offending messages absent.)

The center stage of Courtney's electronic appearances these days, though, is the Internet newsgroup alt.fan.courtney-love, created by her friend Carol Mariconda in August of last year. Mariconda collects pretty much everything written about Courtney that appears on the Net, sends it to her, and posts Courtney's responses. (She convinced Courtney to switch from posting on AOL to the unmonitored and larger Internet.) Mariconda also maintains the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) file for the list, a gigantic document that contains all of Courtney's net posts, as well as a complete Hole discography, lyrics, tablature, live reviews and more. (The FAQ is posted regularly to the group; you can also find it on the World Wide Web at <http://www.mordor.com/rcmaric/clfaq.html>.)

Alt.fan.courtney-love is even more hyperactive than its AOL counterpart. Any discussion can turn into a flamewar (despite the group's name, not all participants are Courtney's admirers). And fanning the flames is the presence of Courtney herself, with her digressive, gossipy, gutter-academic, stream-of-consciousness style—"slapping the keyboard around," Mariconda calls it. "Of course she just blamed it on her sticky, funky keyboard with a practically non-functional 'y' key, as well as poor typing skills."

In any given post, Courtney may set the record straight about Nirvana or Hole lyrics, argue literature ("Re; Plath,Dumbass sit down with 'Ariel' tell me.? If your not FUCKED when your done you have rotten taste..."),

squelch rumors, make fun of linear thinkers (she calls them "math boys"), end a discussion about the way she dresses—

I feel bad that Im not that ironic about the whole thing , obviously now that its some big fucking deal id like to change dress more adult more classy-wear black rubber and boots and stuff or even just a nice dress , but theres some semantic sickness pushing me now [...] i DONT want to encourage young women to dress like they are 9....after boarding school, and then Hillcrest(State reform school in Oregon) where we had to wear uniforms, i find the aesthetic almost utilitarian,believe it or not, basic schooly dress collar cuffs- it was anti Madonna-besides being what I actually wear. Fuck i just spent 5 minutes explaining my clothes. Christ. Hey whats up with Eddie and that brown T-shirt?

—and barbecue anyone dumb enough to rub her the wrong way ("Qoute Reznor in the same sentence as my husband and I'll find you at your fucking community college and hack your grades to F. Ok?").

And sometimes her posts are just a star's-eye perspective on life—not the perspective that famous people are supposed to feed their public, but as brutally frank and personal as a letter to a friend from someone who's got millions of eyes on her, and many of them hostile. "oh the gerbils that crawl from the sphincters of night under anonymous garb they weasel around planting little tabloid tidbits," she writes in one post, "usually known as [...] the nin publicist her latest is that some non existant dept. in LA is coming after my daughter cos I have a NANNY. yeah uh huh.....lousylaylousylaylouseylaye what I have paid in blood and dishonour for that lousy lay..."

It's sometimes uncomfortably personal stuff, but that's part of why it's so interesting. As she says, she's not interested in normal ideas of celebrity; she's continually bringing home the point that she's a person, not a symbol. No other famous person has ever been so openly part of the public body—going out without sunglasses on and hanging out with people, as it were. "In a sense," Mariconda says, "artist and fan get to communicate on an even level... the fans get more of a feel for who she is, without all the filters of the regular media." A few other well-known music types (including Michael Stipe and Krist Novoselic) have followed her lead by posting on the Net, but she's the only one who's regularly plunging into the fray (her infamous stage-dives express the same thing in a way that's both more physical and more metaphorical). In that sense, she's one of the first real signs of one of the great promises of the Net: a worldwide, democratic forum, where everyone has their say—even the rich and famous.

ROCK AND THE POP NARCOTIC

— Revised Edition —



JOE CARDUCCI

ROCK AND THE POP NARCOTIC

by Joe Carducci (2.13.61)

Joe Carducci has spent a hell of a long time in the music business—playing, distributing, and working at record labels (notably SST). He's thought a lot about what rock is, and what rock ought to be and ought not to be. And in *Rock And The Pop Narcotic*—originally published five years ago, and now newly revised and nearly doubled in length—it all comes spewing out. The central axiom of Carducci's argument is that the "transubstantiation" of bass, drums and guitar that happens in red-blooded rock music is the most important thing in the world, and everything else in the book follows from that. The result is sort of like non-Euclidean geometry: It's well thought-out, it's internally consistent, it has lots of applications in the real world, but it's simply not true in the real world either. Carducci is a vivid and original thinker, who refuses to accept unexamined any dogmas he hasn't come up with himself, and he's more than done his homework—he knows, inside and out, the complete history of thousands of bands and virtually everything ever published about them. Unfortunately, rigorous thinking is not the same as good writing, and Carducci is a dreadful writer, belligerent, babbling, self-indulgent, sometimes completely incoherent, and lapsing at every opportunity into lazy slurs ("pseud-limey-fag-wave") against whatever doesn't fall into line with his ideals. (This is also one of the worst copy-edited music books ever, with embarrassing mispunctuations and typos on almost every page.) Although Carducci's points are sometimes devastating, he consistently undermines them by badgering his audience instead of convincing it. *Rock And The Pop Narcotic* ends up being one of the most important American books on rock, but also one of the hardest to take. —Douglas Wolk

mixed media

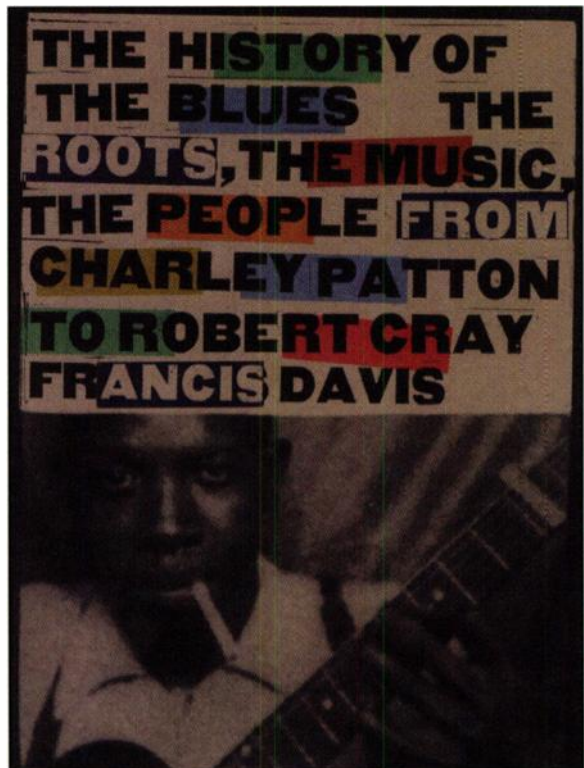
compiled by dawn sutter

THE HISTORY OF THE BLUES

by Francis Davis (Hyperion)

reads

Much of the written information on the blues has tended to build on myths of the past, rather than break them down, creating a serpentine path from Robert Johnson to Muddy Waters to Stevie Ray Vaughn and back. So Francis Davis' new *History* is an unexpected joy. Davis discusses facts, rumors, musical styles and recording techniques with humor, authority and most importantly, perspective. Starting from germinations within the folk musics of African griots, slave field hollers, minstrels and "songsters," *History* points out who deserves real credit for classic guitar, mouth harp, piano and drum styles, and covers the chronology of particular, oft-rewritten blues classics, incorporating the observations of many critics and performers on a wide-ranging social context from lyrics and sexual roles to racial issues and migration. Some of Davis' more interesting theories include the argument that the blues, though its chief practitioners have always been African-American, is, like most any other music, an inter-cultural form, nurtured as much by appreciation from whites as from blacks. He even hypothesizes that original bluesmen didn't actually call their songs "_____ blues," but that the word was added to record labels as a racial/cultural descriptive. Davis regrettably falls short in covering more recent years—though he hits most of the major points of the '60s revival, we learn little new about that era, and he virtually glosses over the massive effect of English/European reappreciation. Nevertheless, with a select discography, bibliography and timeline, *History* is an essential read for those curious about the blues. —Eric Gladstone



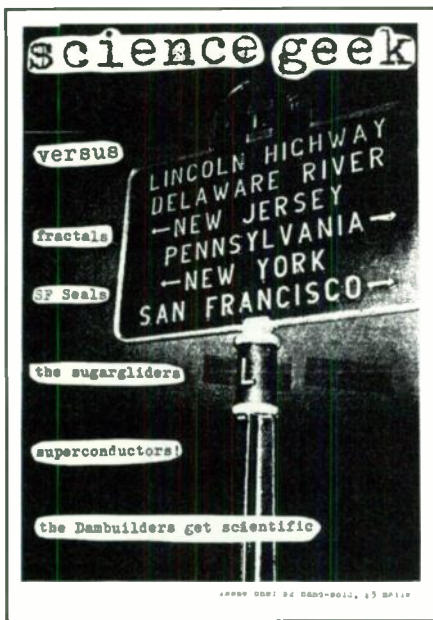
LOVE AND HUMAN REMAINS

(Sony Classics)

How to best describe *Love And Human Remains*? A psychosexual thriller with comic overtones? A black comedy about relationships and identity? Either one is a good introduction to this new character-filled drama from French Canadian director Denis Arcand (*Jesus Of Montreal*). David (Daniel Day-Lewis lookalike Thomas Gibson, from *Barcelona*) is a retired child actor who lives with his former lover Candy (Ruth Marshall from *Delores Claiborne*), a book critic frustrated both professionally and romantically. The two explore sexuality (gay, straight, other) and emotional commitment with a circle of acquaintances including a lesbian schoolteacher (Joanne Vannicola), a dominatrix/psychic (Mia Kirshner from *Exotica*), a philandering bartender (Rick Roberts), a conflict-ridden teen busboy (Matthew Ferguson) and David's yuppie best friend Bernie (Cameron Bancroft). They entangle in a bitter-edged comedy of errors (enlivened by David's acerbic wit), seemingly unaffected by a mysterious trail of serial killings plaguing their city, until the two plots inevitably come together. While the murder mystery isn't the most seat-gripping stuff you've ever seen, it functions reasonably as a balance for the more heady story that surrounds it. Both funny and intriguing, *Love And Human Remains* is probably the perfect break-up movie. But don't say we told you so.

—Eric Gladstone

flicks



SCIENCE GEEK

P.O. Box 8641, Trenton, NJ 08650 (\$3)

'zines

I like indie-pop just fine, but reading about it can get pretty tedious, which makes me appreciate such publications as *Animal Review*, *Panophobia*, and *Science Geek*—all of which mix indie-pop with other fun subjects. In *Science Geek*, one can read interviews with such pop geniuses as SF Seals leading lady Barbara Manning, the charmingly loquacious members of Versus (plus drummer Ed Baluyut's "Band Popularity Graph"), Australia's sadly defunct Sugargliders, and other science-geeky (or just plain geeky) artists, as well as a New Zealand-centric record review section. But there are also smart scientific features on fractals and chaos, superconductors, "A Tour of the Electromagnetic Spectrum," and "Why I Hate Mercury." *Science Geek* editor Doug Larkin is an actual high school science teacher, and he publishes this mag to help you understand the world around you, so listen up, pal: science is fun. The wonderful illustrations by someone called Spatucci—quite obviously indie-pop's Hirschfeld—make *Science Geek* well worth the three bucks alone.

—Gail O'Hara

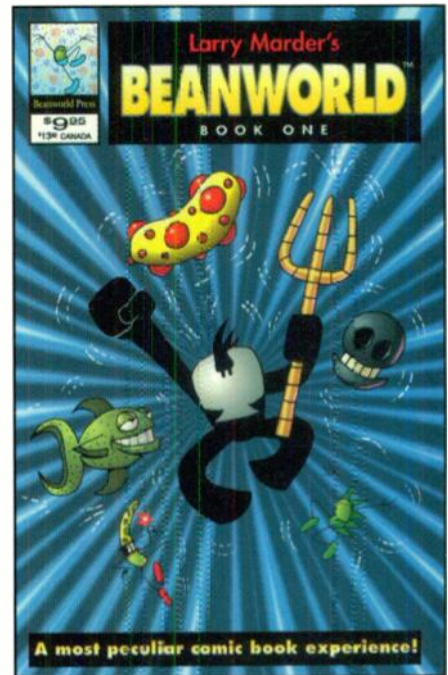
BEANWORLD

by Larry Marder (Beanworld Press)

funnies

These days, Larry Marder is probably best known within the comics world as an desk jockey—the Executive Director of Image Comics. That's a shame, because his own 12-year-old series *Tales Of The Beanworld*, which he's promised he'll continue to work on as long as he lives, is an extraordinary, unique piece of work. Marder has just self-published a compilation of the first four issues of the series; it only took him about 20 pages to find his stride, and he's maintained it ever since. *Beanworld* is a little hard to explain, since the entire series is itself a mythological explanation of a fictional ecosystem loosely modeled on Marcel Duchamp's "La mariee mise a nue" and Native American legends. If that sounds dense, it's worth mentioning that it's done in the form of a funny-animal (okay, funny-vegetable) adventure comic, with big, simple drawings—the Beanworld is two-dimensional, so the design of everything is deliberately flat—and consistently witty dialogue. The plots generally consist of the Beans that populate the surface level of their world trying to fix the most recent threat to their ecosystem (which is usually the result of the previous fix). "Beanworld isn't a place, it's a process," Marder says; the stories that come out of that process have less to do with the small changes of fiction than with the sweep, absurdity and revelation of history.

—Douglas Wolk



TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY



PAVEMENT

ARTIST	ALBUM TITLE	LABEL
1 PAVEMENT	Wovee Zowie	Matador
2 TO LA TENGO	Electr O Pura	Matador
3 ALL	Pummel	Interscope
4 MUFFS	Blonder And Blonder	Reprise
5 PRIMUS	Tales From The Punchbowl	Interscope
6 MORPHINE	Yes	Rykodisc
7 EVERCLEAR	Sparkle And Fade	Tim Kerr-Capitol
8 RADIOHEAD	The Bends	Capitol
9 THURSTON MOORE	Psychic Hearts	DGC
10 JULIANA HATFIELD	Only Everything	Mammoth-Atlantic
11 MATTHEW SWEET	100% Fun	Zoo
12 GUIDED BY VOICES	Alien Lanes	Matador
13 HELIUM	The Dirt Of Luck	Matador
14 KMFDM	Nihil	Wax Trax!-TVT
15 PJ HARVEY	To Bring You My Love	Island
16 TRICKY	Maxinquaye	Island
17 WILCO	A.M.	Sire-Reprise
18 BABES IN TOYLAND	Nemesisters	Reprise
19 6THS	Wasps' Nests	London
20 APHEX TWIN	I Care Because You Do	Sire-EEG
21 PETER MURPHY	Cascade	Beggars Banquet-Atlantic
22 HUM	You'd Prefer An Astronaut	RCA
23 THE FALL	Cerebral Caustic	Cog Sinister-Permanent (UK)
24 BAD BRAINS	God Of Love	Maverick-WB
25 GWEN MARS	Magnosheen	Hollywood
26 BOREDOMS	Chocolate Synthesizer	Reprise
27 STEEL POLE BATH TUB	Scars From Falling Down	Slash-London
28 FILTER	Short Bus	Reprise
29 SUDDENLY, TAMMY!	(We Get There When We Do.)	Warner Bros.
30 GOO GOO DOLLS	A Boy Named Goo	Metal Blade-WB
31 SOUNDTRACK	Tank Girl	Elektra-EEG
32 ELASTICA	Elastica	DGC
33 NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN	Brainbloodvolume	Furtive-WORK
34 ARCHERS OF LOAF	Vee Vee	Alias
35 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Oil/Skampilation Vol. #1	Radical
36 CLOUDS	Thunderhead	Elektra-EEG
37 PELL MELL	Interstate	DGC
38 APPLES IN STEREO	Fun Trick Noisemaker	spinART
39 MOONPOOLS & CATERPILLARS	Lucky Dumping	EastWest-EEG
40 UNWOUND	The Future Of What	Kill Rock Stars
41 ELVIS COSTELLO	Kojak Variety	Warner Bros.
42 WHITE ZOMBIE	Astro-Creep: 2000...	Geffen
43 TILT	'Til It Kills	Fat Wreck Chords
44 JOHN PRINE	Lost Dogs And Mixed Blessings	Oh Boy
45 KING CRIMSON	Thrak	Virgin
46 SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS	The Inevitable Squirrel Nut Zippers	Mammoth
47 POOH STICKS	Optimistic Fool	Seed
48 AMINIATURE	Murk Time Cruiser	Restless
49 BEN LEE	Grandpaw Would	Grand Royal
50 RED HOUSE PAINTERS	Ocean Beach	4AD
51 CLUTCH	Clutch	EastWest-EEG
52 MIKE WATT	Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?	Columbia
53 MUDHONEY	My Brother The Cow	Reprise
54 18TH DYE	Tribute To A Bus	Matador
55 SPIRITUALIZED	Pure Phase	Dedicated-Arista
56 DENTISTS	Deep Six	EastWest-EEG
57 RAILROAD JERK	One Track Mind	Matador
58 FOETUS	Gash	Columbia
59 ORB	Orbvs Terrarvm	Island
60 SLEEPER	Smart	Arista
61 FAITH NO MORE	King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime	Slash-Reprise
62 EAST RIVER PIPE	Poor Fricky	Hell Gate-Merge
63 LAIKA	Silver Apples Of The Moon	Too Pure-American
64 LAST POETS	Holy Terror	Rykodisc
65 RED AUNTS	#1 Chicken	Epitaph
66 A HOUSE	Wide Eyed And Ignorant	Radioactive
67 KNAPSACK	Silver Sweepstakes	Alias
68 ROSA MOTA	Wishful Sinking	13th Hour-Mute
69 HECTOR ZAZOU	Songs From The Cold Seas	Columbia
70 DRUGSTORE	Drugstore	Honey/Gol-London
71 HALF JAPANESE	Greatest Hits	Safe House
72 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Teenage Zit Rock Angst	Nardwar The Human Serviette (Canada)
73 GRIFTERS	Eureka E.P. (EP)	Shangri-La
74 BRUCE MCCULLOCH	Shame-Based Man	Atlantic
75 TRUCK STOP LOVE	How I Spent My Summer Vacation	Scotti Bros.

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.

DIRECTORY

A LISTING OF LABELS WHOSE ARTISTS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

18 Wheeler
PO Box 4256
Dunellen, NJ 08812

A&M
1416 N. La Brea Ave.
Hollywood, CA 90028

American
3500 W. Olive Ave. #1550
Burbank, CA 91505

Arista
6 W. 57th St.
New York, NY 10019

Atlantic
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10019

Bar/None
PO Box 1704
Hoboken, NJ 07030

Capitol
1750 N. Vine St.
Hollywood, CA 90028

Cargo
3058 N. Clybourn Ave.
Chicago, IL 60618

Caroline
114 W. 26th St., 11th Fl.
New York, NY 10001

Clawfist
231 Portobello Rd.
London W11 1LT

Columbia
550 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Crypt
PO Box 140528
State Island, NY 10314

DGC
9130 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90069

Dischorde
3819 Beecher St. NW
Washington, DC 20007

Discovery
2052 Broadway
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Drunken Fish
8600 W. Olympic Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035

Elektra Entertainment Group
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10019

Epic
550 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Epitaph
6201 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 1
Hollywood, CA 90028

Giant
8900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 20C
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Hep Cat
PO Box 17022
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Interscope
10900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1230
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Island
400 Lafayette St., 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10003

Kill Rock Stars
120 NE State #418
Olympia, WA 98501

Knitting Factory Works
74 Leonard St.
New York, NY 10013

Kranky
PO Box 578743
Chicago, IL 60657

London
825 8th Ave., 24th Fl.
New York, NY 10019

Matador
676 Broadway, 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10012

MCA
70 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608

Mercury
825 Eighth Ave.
New York, NY 10019

Minty Fresh
1251 W. Newport #2
Chicago, IL 60657

Motown
6255 Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90028

Mute
140 W. 22 St., Ste. 10A
New York, NY 10011

Oh Boy
33 Music Square W.
Nashville, TN 37203

Pacific Wonderland
221 NE Thompson
Portland, OR 97232

POINT Music
632 Broadway, 9th Fl.
New York, NY 10012

Priority
6430 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 900
Hollywood, CA 90028

Radioactive
1775 Broadway, 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10019

Razor & Tie
214 Sullivan St., Ste. 5A
New York, NY 10012

RCA
Bartelsmann Bldg.
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

Relativity
187-07 Henderson Ave.
Hollis, NY 11403

Remora
272 E. 3rd St., #1
New York, NY 10009

Restless
1616 Vista Del Mar
Hollywood, CA 90028

Righteous Babe
PO Box 95, Ellicott Stn.
Buffalo, NY 14205

Roadrunner
225 Lafayette St., Ste. 407
New York, NY 10012

Rykodisc
Shetland Park
27 Congress St.
Salem, MA 01970

Siltbreeze
PO Box 15757
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Silvertone
157-139 W. 25th St.
New York, NY 10001

Simple Machines
PO Box 10293
Arlington, VA 22210

Slash
PO Box 48888
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Sub Pop
1932 First Ave.
Seattle, WA 98101

Thrill Jockey
PO Box 47679
Chicago, IL 60647

Touch And Go
PO Box 25520
Chicago, IL 60625

Trackshun
317A Cambie St.
Vancouver, BC V6B 2N4

Trance Syndicate
PO Box 49771
Austin, TX 78765

Tuff City
220 W. 72nd St., Ste. 56
New York, NY 10023

Upstart
PO Box 44-1418
W. Somerville, MA 02144

Verve
825 8th Ave.
New York, NY 10019

Virgin
338 N. Foothill Rd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Void Ware
3023 N. Clark St.
Box 719
Chicago, IL 60637

Walt
89 Fairview Ave.
Fort Washington, NY 11050

WORK
550 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Warner Bros.
3300 Warner Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91505



NEW RELEASES JULY - AUGUST 1995

JULY 18

that dog. TOTALLY CRUSHED OUT! (DGC)
CHARLATANS TBA (Beggars Banquet-Atlantic)
JUSTER What I See What I Think (TVT)
AFTER 7 TBA (Virgin)
TEDDY TBA (Virgin)
SHAGGY Boombastic (Virgin)
MARK COLLIE Tennessee Plates (Warner Bros.)
ESQUIVEL More Of Other Worlds, Other Sounds (re-issue) (Warner Bros.)
JANE SIBERRY (Warner Bros.)
MENTHOL Menthol (Capitol)
SHED SEVEN Change Giver (A&M)

JULY 25

TENDERLOIN 7" (Sub Pop)
EMPIRE Soundtrack (A&M)
SEYMORES Piedmont (Vernon Yard)
BUTTERGLORY Downed (Merge)
GROTUS Mass (London)
DIRTY THREE Dirty Three (Touch And Go)
YONA-KIT Yona-Kit (Skin Graft)

AUGUST 1

GOD LIVES UNDERWATER Empty (American)
URGE OVERKILL Exit The Dragon (Geffen)
MORRISSEY Southpaw Grammer (Reprise)
BLIND MELON Soup (Capitol)
MENTHOL Menthol (Capitol)
RASPBERRIES Best Of... (Capitol)

AUGUST 8

SUPERSUCKERS Sacrilicious (Sub Pop)
DAN BAIRD (American)
LONG FIN KILLIE (American)
FIGDISH That's What Love Songs Often Do (A&M)
JANE SIBERRY Caravan (Reprise)

AUGUST 15

SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS Dirt Track Date (DGC)
REMY ZERO TBA (DGC)
JAWBREAKER Dear You (DGC)
CHARLES & EDDIE Chocolate Milk (Capitol)
SMITHEREENS Attack Of The Smithereens (Capitol)
LENNY BRUCE Carnegie Hall Concert (Blue Note) (two cd set)
KENNY DORHAM Round Midnight At Cafe Bohemia (Blue Note)

AUGUST 22

FRIENDS OF DEAN MARTIN TBA (Sub Pop)
SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS 7" (Sub Pop)
MEDICINE Her Highness (American)
MOTHER HIPS Part Timer Goes Full (American)
PAW Death To Traitors (A&M)
ANGUS OMPST (Reprise)

AUGUST 29

KEPONE Skin (1/4 Stick)
LAUGHING HYENAS Merry-Go-Round (reissue) (Touch And Go)
LICK Breech (Invisible)
SUPERCHUNK TBA (Merge)
SONIC YOUTH TBA (DGC)
DRIVIN' N' CRYIN' Rapped In Sky (DGC)
SPARKLEHORSE Vivadixiesubmarinetranmissionplot (Capitol)
JOHN LEE HOOKER Alternative Boogie (Capitol) (three-CD set)
SNOOKS EAGLIN Complete Imperial Recordings (Capitol)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Texas Guitar Killers (Capitol) (two-CD set)
P [featuring Johnny Depp, Dave Grohl, Gibby Haynes] (Capitol)

All dates subject to change

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Denver to Tuktoyaktuk 3,324 Miles

Honolulu to Tuktoyaktuk 6,265 Miles

Boston to Tuktoyaktuk 4,594 Miles

Atlanta to

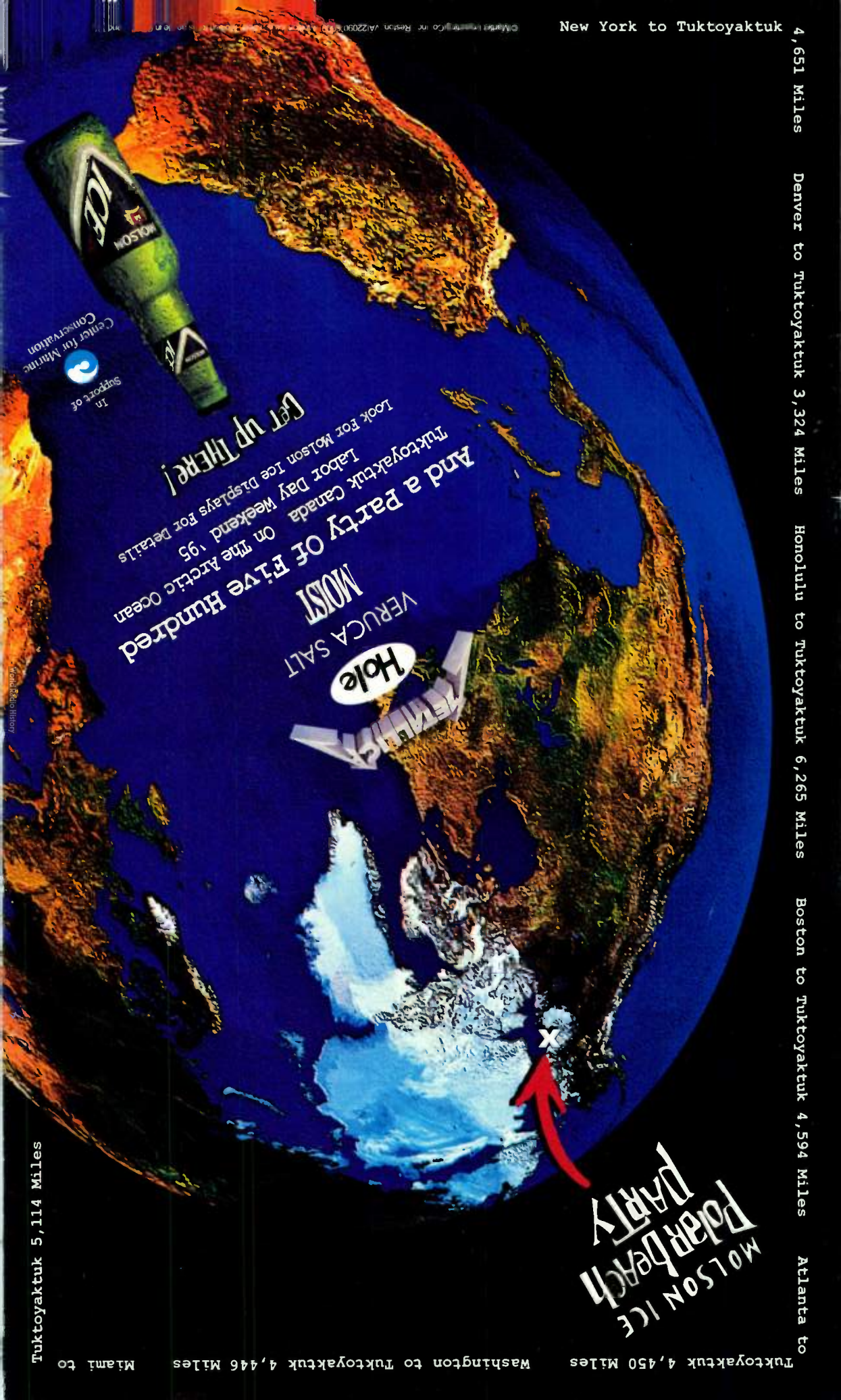
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<input type="checkbox"/>	3. THAT DOG.	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. CATCHERS	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. A HOUSE	5	4	3	2	1
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<input type="checkbox"/>	8. STIFFS, INC.	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. STEEL POLE BATH TUB	5	4	3	2	1
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<input type="checkbox"/>	12. BIG SUGAR	5	4	3	2	1
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Classified section

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Localzine

BY RON HOUSE

COLUMBUS, OHIO

Columbus is an easy town to get around in—almost everything is on High Street near the Ohio State campus. It's also an easy town to attain some kind of subsistence level—rent's cheap and shit jobs are plentiful. What's always been hard about Columbus is figuring out why you would want to live here.



PHOTOS BY LEE ANN MCGUIRE

The Jesus Lizard at Staches

MUSIC

With the worldwide recognition of New Bomb Turks and Gaunt, and the general acceptance of indie-rock, more and more people inside Columbus and out are finding something special in America's most ordinary city. Ten years ago, the scene basically was Royal Crescent Mob, Gibson Brothers, Great Plains and Scrawl (the only one still going strong). Now there's bands all over the place. Crowds pack hotspots like **Staches** (2404 N. High), the **Distillery** (1896 N. High) and **Barley's Underground** (467 N. High) to see music running the gamut from Prince-like funk-rock (like soon-to-be-signees Howlin' Maggie) to post-Riot Grrrl (the instant successes Miss May 66).

Many of my favorite bands recently played a series of shows at a studio space called **Magnet Planet**, located in a part of town some call the Prostitute District, between the Short North and Campus. Bassholes (Jon Spencer's role models), Moviola (lo-fi mood warpers) and the Yips (eccentric girl detective rock) created events that seemed more than gigs. Maybe it was just everybody gritting their teeth and holding their breath. Lack of decent plumbing closed the place down.

The depth of the current scene is reflected in a ton of recently released recordings. That eloquent veteran of the alienated margins, Jim Shepard, recently pulled a Springsteen and issued two albums in the same month. My band Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments and Jim's rock outfit V3 will be labelmates on Onion-American shortly. New local favorite My White Bread Mom's seven-inchers perpetuate the rapid-fire punk sound the town is most famous for. Pet UFO's punky poetess Souci sounds like she's chasing a cat up a tree on the group's new Caroline CD. Earwig will be a force if it develops further from its debut. Columbus insiders perceive Sam Esh the same way music bizzers perceive some Columbus insiders. He's old, primitive, original, and a drunk. Is he any good? I dare you to check out his *Hard Black Thing* album, produced by Mike Rep, the legend who's previously tweaked Guided By Voices, Strapping Field Hands and the Slave Apts.

Negotiating the rocky waters of music explosion and vinyl glut has so far been a successful proposition for local labels Anyway, Lizard Family and Burnt Sienna. Philadelphia's Siltbreeze and Chicago's Thrill Jockey have also scraped musical gems out of the grime of our practice spaces and beer halls. I'm sure there's still some untapped talent out there, just waiting for the fool who's willing to wait until two in the morning to hear the final slot on a six-band bill.



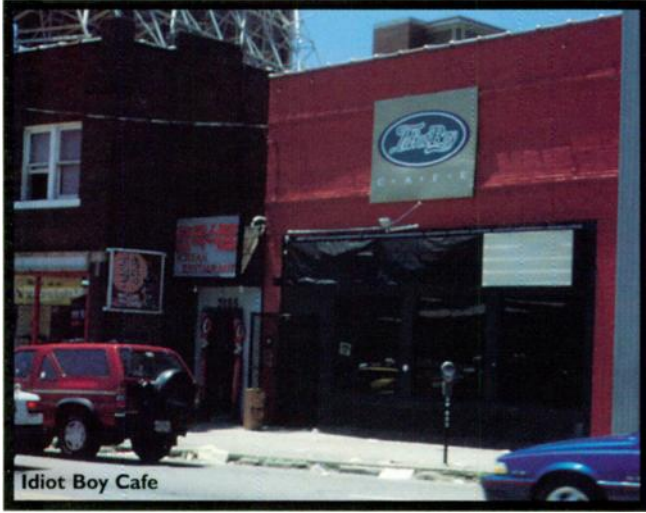
FOOD AND DRINK

Just imagine you're hosting, say, Yo La Tengo, and you have to take them to breakfast. Where do you go? Off campus to standard retro diners like **Nancy's** (3133 N. High) or **Tommy's** (915 W. Broad) seem like solid options. OKra Records country singer Ricky Barnes runs a great Cuban Mex-American joint called the

Galaxy Cafe far north of town in Powell. With dishes ranging from huevos rancheros and fried plantains to home fries and hamburgers, the place is worth the trip. King Avenue Coffeehouse is a safe vegetarian option for people who like vegetables.

In this post-Bob Stinson era, it's apparent that some of today's youth would rather drink coffee than beer in the morning. **Insomnia Cafe** (1728 N. High) is one of campus's great caffeinated hangouts, a place to parade new tattoos or find that elusive serious bass player for your alternative band. **Idiot Boy** (2153 N. High) is the rave coffeeshouse.

When there's only white-boy funk at the live music clubs, indie-rockers gather at **Larry's Bar (and Seminar)** (2040 N. High) to drink and complain. A counterculture stronghold since before the '60s, the place is also host to a Monday night poetry forum. If you don't mind bumping into overgrown yuppies like Columbus's mayor, **Barley's** (above the Underground at 467 N. High St.) serves great home brews. The amazing round bar at the **Clarmont Hotel** (650 S. High) is where Jodie Foster shot part of *Little Man Tate*.



RETAIL

I prefer buying my clothes new and just making them look used in a day or two. Bargain hunters swear by the two **Village Thrift Stores** (on Cleveland and Parson Avenues). For two dollars you can buy a shirt that'll make you a part of the Sebadoh Army.

CD stores on OSU campus tend to be cheap and competitive. Chain stores arrive confidently only to leave in a year or so when they learn how entrenched the independents are. **Singing Dog**, **Magnolias**, **Johnny Go's**, **Used Kids** (where I work) and **World Record** are all fine stores, each offering used and new CDs and catering to the various niches of a campus metropolis. Columbus is not a good town for vinyl shoppers. Only the Used Kids Annex and **Goldmine** cater to the collector.

Ron House sings in Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments, whose new album is *Bait And Switch* (American).



MEDIA

Ohio State has got to be one of the nation's largest universities without a student-run radio station. It's a crime, but in a way it makes the scene all the more remarkable; there's less shameless pandering to college-rock trends. Public station **WCBE** (90.5) is AAA—adult alternative style—you know, they played Sheryl Crow before everybody else did.

Columbus Alive, *The Other Paper* and *The Guardian* are the weekly freebie "alternative" newspapers. If they merged, you might get one decent periodical. (I've written for two of them.) *Moo* is a monthly music-only paper based in Columbus but focusing on all of Ohio. Its only sin (I like it a lot) is its eternal rosy outlook. Kind of like this article, I guess.

Perhaps the true atmosphere of the Columbus scene can be caught on the Guided By Voices bootleg album, *Crying My Knife Away*, recorded last summer at Stache's. Caught on tape is a night full of incestuous backpatting and drunken mayhem, where it seems everyone still standing ends up on stage and on mike. And along the way our Dayton neighbors make some great music. That's what makes it worthwhile.





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