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31 REVIEWS INCLUDING: SUPERGRASS/ANI DIFRANCO
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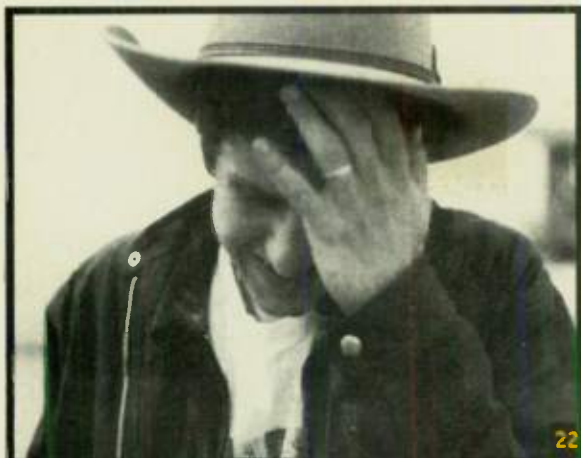


SUPERGRASS

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LETTERS

The pleasure category

Did you ever realize that most of the photos of whatever artists (whether it be a promo shot or custom-made for your mag) all have this "serious" lack of enthusiasm? I mean, whether it be the Chemical Brothers, Aphex Twin, Space, Elliott Smith, Blur or the London Suede, they all have this fake "Life is a pain!" look. Call me crazy, but music has always been something that I file in the "pleasure category." Whatever these artists have clogged up their asses should be removed.

Pierre Dumont

Call you crazy? Freud has plenty of words for someone who juxtaposes a sentence about things filed in "the 'pleasure category'" and another about "clogged up their asses," so let's not get stuck on something as mundane as "crazy." But Pierre's right, this magazine needs more enthusiasm! Hey kids, let's put on a theme! —ed.

Secrets inside

It's time to share my secret with the world! When I buy a new CD, I pry the plastic insert (the thingy with the little teeth) that holds the actual CD, out of the jewel case and slip receipts, clippings, recipes, letters and etc. into the little space. Why, you ask? 1) If your CD starts skipping, you know exactly where the receipt is! (Last defective CD released in 1990, but you can never be too sure.) 2) You can, years later, refer to the clippings you stashed in there and, with the insight afforded by the passing of time, smugly declare "Well, I never believed that the Silos would be huge! What a wanker." 3) Years later, your original CD, complete with original receipt and ratpacked junk will be worth even more money. "Give me an example," you say. Okay, in 1989, I paid \$18.99 (plus tax) for the Wonder Stuff's *Eight Legged Groove Machine*, and the reviewer in our local paper said, "they could be huge." (They weren't.)

*Sean Lewkiw
Sapporo, Japan*

Wow, and I thought that last letter was stuck in the anal phase! Great! —ed.

The continuing bitch

I wish to continue the Canadian reader's bitch: how about covering more Canadian bands? You expose the genius of artists spanning the entire globe—except those directly to your north. The problem? Americans think that Canadian bands suck because you are exposed to them via publications such as yours, radio, MTV, etc., only after they've been bastardized (i.e. Americanized) to fit the slack American standards of musical talent.

Certainly, you personally have picked up on bands like Sloan, Pure and Blinker The Star, and American culture has embraced travesties like Alanis (gag—we don't really admit she's a Canadian citizen up here), Celine Dion, and Bryan Adams, etc. But believe me, there's soooooo much talent up here that needs to be witnessed. Canadian bands aren't as much about image and all that stuff that you American suckers adore... although being a CMJ reader, I'm giving your publication and readers some credit that you may appreciate some pure, talented, fucking great music from north of the border.

*Anna Keaschuk
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada*

Riddle me this: Americans don't like Canadian bands because the Canadian bands are changed to suit American tastes... Holy tautology, Batman! It's a Canuck conundrum! —Boy Wonder ed.

For For Against Against CMJ

I was surprised to see you single out a great band as "fourth-rate" just because one of their fans didn't like the January CMJ CD. (March '97 Letters) I have to wonder if the guy had loved your January CD and given his name, whether you would have been so negative towards his appreciation of For Against. I just had to defend this tight three-piece band that quietly puts out unique music that doesn't sound like all the heavy-metal-posing-as-alternative-music you guys seem to love so much. Go ahead, be a real journalist and not a filter, and publish this.

*Eric Peterson
Chicago, IL*

We only really meant to be negative toward the March letter's know-it-all attitude, like when a reader accuses us of "loving" something they think is wrong with music even if it has little to do with this magazine, and it came at the expense of a band we just aren't all that jazzed about. Filters, woo-hoo! —ed.

Signs of the apocryphal

I am convinced. The end is nigh. Ani Difranco is using her breasts to sell records [Mar. 1997]. That has to be one of the signs of the apocalypse...

Jacob Coombs, BC Canada

Of all the crazy mix-ups! Ani isn't using her breasts to sell records, we're using them to sell magazines! But from the female perspective, fearless traffic coordinator Jenny would like to enthusiastically add the following: "Maybe if you had tits, you'd be better qualified to comment on their usage." (!!) —ed.

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THAT DOG!!

PULSARS!!!

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DR. OCTAGON!!!



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QUICK FIX



cat power

community and communication

Chan Marshall was about 15 minutes late to meet me. "I'm sorry. Are you mad at me? I'm sorry. I'm really really so sorry. Don't hate me. I'm sorry."

Coming from a woman who frequently plays with her back to the audience out of nervousness, it's impossible to think of these apologies as an affectation. Self-effacement isn't normally charming, but Cat Power's most successful paradox is Marshall's congenital shyness paired with her compulsion to perform. And the sound of a shy rock star is pretty interesting.

On her albums, like the recent *What Would The Community Think* (Matador), Marshall is joined by guitarist Tim Foljahn and Sonic Youth drummer Steve Shelley, but retains a hollow, small sound. Her voice can be dreamily lyrical and rich or, sometimes, rougher, thinner and more plaintive. The songs have an unexpected, hangover-morning kind of slowness. The records emphasize pause, hesitation, almost-missed notes, and winding down. It's not that they lack energy; it's more that they feel full with the possibility of emptiness, failure, interruption and slow halts.

Live, Cat Power is sometimes a one-woman show, and in her solo performance the night after we talked, Marshall must have been having one of what she calls "those two or three times a year when I don't get really nervous and freak out. Those are the best shows." She mostly played songs that aren't on her records, including a few that seemed to be made up on the spot. In a crowded room of East Village hipsters, you could hear an almost total absence of chatting, coughing, even shuffling—anything but her searching voice and guitar.

Marshall grew up all over the South, and you can hear it a bit in her speaking voice. If you've spent much time in the South, you're familiar with the complicated regional tradition of making it seem like white women are fragile and demure and need protection. Marshall makes a strange and welcome variation on that heritage, without failing to be fragile, demure and polite. She talks about feminism, music, and how if she were 15 right now she'd probably be buying a lot of Hole records, even though that's not her style: "I wouldn't crave to be so powerful. I'm not an aggressive person anyway, but if that's what I needed, that's what I'd take if I were that age again."

In a quieter way, Marshall is still interested in a kind of musical expressionism. She talks about a love for "emotional" jazz, or an emotive bottom that might have fallen out of punk. She is obsessed with mental patients' artwork she saw in Europe. She is preoccupied with pain she saw among black South Africans on a recent trip, from explosive rioting down to the nuts-and-bolts level of access to water and electricity. She gives the impression that her knowledge of these pains and of other, personal emotions compels her to bear witness, to maintain her effort "to communicate." It seemed that everyone in the next night's audience was listening hard in response. *LIZA JOHNSON*

Elk Mating Rituals



A Wildlife Recording

weird record of the month

In rutting season, mature bull elk produce a high, gorgeously strange sound called "bugling," to let cow elk know that they're big, healthy and available. *Elk Mating Rituals* (Moon Trailway Music, P.O. Box 844, Estes Park, CO 80517) includes a lot of their bugling noises, as well as a lot of other noises associated with, uh, elk mating rituals (no, not those noises).



in my room

artists' personal picks

DOWN BY LAW

Dave Smalley

Dancehall Crashers
Lockjaw

Marshes
Fledgling

Various Artists
Jazz Max II

"A jazz comp. on Sony with Miles Davis, Thelonius Monk, Billie Holiday, etc."

Big Audio Dynamite
This Is: Big Audio Dynamite

Herman Melville
(Book) Moby Dick

< QUOTE >

"My goal was to reach 100,000. Now I'll be bummed if we sell less than that in a week." —No Doubt's Adrian Young, on the sales of the band's *Tragic Kingdom*.

< /QUOTE >

tours we'd like to see

The Spice Rack

Veruca Salt, Salt-N-Pepa, Salt, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Verbena, Saffron, Greg Sage, Sweet Basil, Liquorice, Minty, the Herbalizer and the Spice Girls.

random fact

To strengthen his voice for his *No More Mr. Nice Guy* collection of heavy metal covers, Pat Boone hired Aw! Rose's vocal coach Nate Lam, who also works a day job as a cantor.



Photo: Maarten Vanden Abeele

dEUS

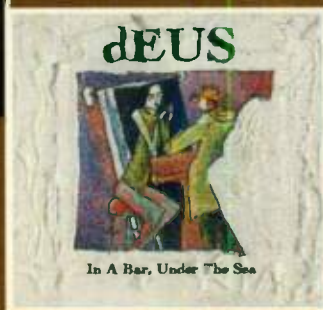
In A Bar, Under The Sea

A swirling blend of avant-garde rock, dEUS mix Jon Spencer and Tom Waits against a Smashing Pumpkins backbeat - totally infectious.

Produced by Eric Drew Feldman

Features

"Fell Off The Floor, Man" & "Little Arithmetics"



Amy Berg Management in the U.S. & Canada - A Division of Steve Stewart Entertainment

BANG!



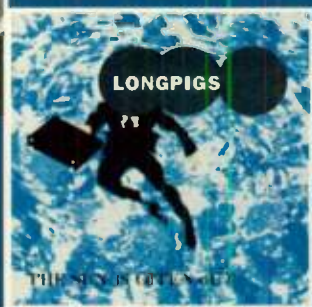
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Photo: Michael Alcott

LONGPIGS

Their debut album
THE SUN IS OFTEN OUT
featuring
"She Said" &
"Jesus Christ"



HAG Management
 Produced by Kevin Bacon and
 Jonathan Quarmby for Manilla Productions



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QUICK FIX

in my room
artists' personal picks



richard buckner

hotel room vampire

Every couple of years, Richard Buckner picks up and moves. "I get bored with a place after a while. I keep a lot of stuff in boxes. I really like moving to new places, starting all over again, having to make new friends." He's gone from Northern California to New Orleans ("I was supposed to meet someone... when I got out there, the guy wasn't there") to Atlanta ("A friend of mine opened a bookstore there. I thought I'd stay for a few months... It ended up being a lot longer"), to Bellingham, Washington ("It just seemed like a cool little town") to his current home, San Francisco. It's not great for putting down roots, but it certainly makes touring easy.

After two shows opening up for Doc Watson—a low-paying gig booked in order to see Watson play—Buckner and producer/bassist J.D. Forster are sitting in a 24-hour coffee shop in New York City's

East Village. Buckner is tired, but talkative. Still, there's a natural reserve about him that can come off as solipsistic in performance. One gets the feeling that Buckner is most comfortable in his own company.

The music on his new album *Devotion & Doubt* confirms that impression. Simultaneously intimate and distant, it's best heard alone, in the middle of the night. Buckner finds the late nights inspirational; many of the songs on the album were written in the wake of a show. "I'm a vampire, and I write really well in hotel rooms... it's quiet and I can just sit there with my guitar." He constantly writes in his diary. "It doesn't matter if it's good or if it's crap," he says, because something in it might someday be useful. "Home" was one song that was fertilized by the crap. "I wrote five pages, read it the next day and condensed it down... it was way too long." After thinking for a second, he smiles and adds, "I'm a really tough editor."

Once the song is edited down to usable form, Buckner brings it to Forster, and they pass it around to whoever's in the studio and see how the song takes shape. "It's a very instinctual thing," he says. "You never know what you'll end up with." Buckner does have a craftsman-like side, though. A voracious reader, he favors Henry Miller and commends Raymond Carver for his ability to write conversational prose, while dismissing Charles Bukowski—with whom he would seem to have a natural affinity—as "sloppy" and "repetitive." And the latter is one quality Buckner strives to avoid in his own work. "You have to keep finding new ways to express yourself," he says, hitting his most emphatic note of the night. "Even down to the sounds of the words you use. Otherwise, you end up like that guy from Counting Crows." STEVEN MIRKIN

LILYS

Kurt Heasley

Steve Gibson & The Red Caps
Blueberry Hill

Antonio Vivaldi
Concertos

Joy Division
Still

Queen
Sheer Heart Attack

Edwin A. Abbott
(Book) Flatland

< QUOTE >

"It's a big part of my life and that's all, plain and simple. No dudes have ever complained about that."
—The Lunachicks' Theo, on using menstruation as a songwriting theme.

< /QUOTE >

inspirational verse

"I'll slit you where the good Lord split you, double twice and three times more!" —Soul Providers, "Switchblade"

random fact

Bush's Gavin Rossdale has reportedly insured his dog, Winston, with Lloyd's of London for \$4,800,000.



apocalyptic

he's bowin' the strings

Eicca Toppinen, leader of the four-cello ensemble Apocalyptica, has played with the Helsinki Philharmonic; he met the other three members of the group at the Sibelius Academy. He is also a confirmed metalhead, and Apocalyptica's debut, *Plays Metallica By Four Cellos*, is exactly that: eight Metallica classics, arranged for their classical instruments. Amazingly enough, it totally rocks.

"It came from the tradition of cello bands in Finland," Toppinen says. "Why shouldn't it work also in heavy metal?" Apocalyptica's grinding, intense renditions of the likes of "Creeping Death" and "Master Of Puppets" are augmented only by distortion on its cellos ("it's difficult to find effects that work with stringed instruments"). Toppinen is also working on arrangements of songs by Sepultura and Pantera, as well as a head-banging version of "The Little Drummer Boy" that the band plays live. DOUGLAS WOLK

STEVE DOBBIE



spring heel jack

a little fantasy world of sound

British drum 'n' bass duo Spring Heel Jack's more talkative half, John Coxon, is complaining of a hangover. "I think it's really important when you're making music that it sounds great when you're straight," comments Coxon's teammate, Ashley Wales, somewhat ironically. "[Then.] when you're at a rave or something and you're 'doing what you're doing,' you know it's going to absolutely knock your socks off. You're going to be standing there thinking, 'I've died and gone to heaven!' It's great."

Spring Heel Jack's sampler symphonies, most recently captured on the duo's Stateside debut, *68 Million Shades...* (Island), and their production work on *Everything But The Girl's Walking Wounded*, incorporate elements of classical composition, '70s funk and dub, '90s dance-floor pyrotechnics and jazzy improvisation in a rich, cinematic framework of beat-based sound that succeeds in being hallucinogenic on its own. Rhythmically, it's dense, complex, dizzying stuff, but take away the sampled snare hits and oozing bass lines, and you've got melodic and textural elements that are equally as sublime and imaginative. Fragile, elegant piano riffs are triple-timed and draped over skittering rimshots, violins are recontextualized as beautiful, alien counter-percussion, and guitar notes are bent and warped into reflective siren calls.

"Playing in a band, you've got one sound which you kind of have to expand... a guitar makes a particular sound, and you can add to it with pedals and the way you play it," says Coxon, who worked as a guitarist in psychedelic drone band Spiritualized. "With samplers, it's an empty piece of tape, basically, it's blank. You fill it with your own little fantasies. Each track is sort of like a little fantasy world of sound, where you kind of make the aural collages from crashing sounds together across space and time... I think making music is all about expressing yourself, and if it's easier to express yourself by bashing bananas on a table, well, that's the technology you should use. If you express yourself by using a sampler, then that's the technology you should use." COLIN HELMS

The Maxell Mix Tape

We all **MAKE UP TAPES** of our favorite songs. They're driving companions, records of ill-spent summers, letters to girlfriends or boyfriends, whatever. What's your favorite mix? **Tell Us.** And if we pick your entry, the kind folks at Maxell will send you a **bunch of goodies.**

This Month's Winner is

Josh Krauter !!

SIDE-1

Amps
Full On Idle
Patsy Cline
Back in Baby's Arms
Neil Young
Don't Stop Believin'
BR5-49
Be F' Up
Breeders
Silver Lining
Statler Brothers
Flowers on the Wall
Uncle Tupelo
Sittin' on the Dock of a Bay
Mudhoney
Academy
Johnny Cash
Folsom Prison
Beck
Loser
Dinosaur Jr.
I Don't Think So
Pavement
Fashion Is a Matter of Degree
Steve Earle
Bills, Bottles and Bitch
Flaming Lips
Song From Cool Hard Like...
Plastic Jesus

SIDE-2

Blue Mountain
Jimmy Carter
Lynyrd Skynyrd
Swamp Thing
Geraldine Fibbers
Honey Is Making
Lucinda Williams
Which Will
Rolling Stones
Dead Flowers
Jayhawks
Gettin' Down Like Hair
Ween
You Are The Fuel
Freddy Johnston
Dare Like The Water
Tom Waits
Whistle Down The Wind
Lemonheads
Big Day Heart
Meat Puppets
Goin' Down

Just send your mix (track listings only) to: CMJ New Music Monthly, 11 Middle Neck Rd., STE. 400, Great Neck, NY 11021; also fax us at 516.466.7159 or email at cmjmonthly@cmjmusic.com.

Mix it up!



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NEW MUSIC
maxell

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QUICK FIX



DAFT PUNK

daft punk

parlez-vous da funk?

Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel De Honem Christo of Daft Punk aren't daft at all; in fact, they're pretty sharp. Not many people could sum up the last ten years of electronic dance music the way they have on *Homework* (Virgin). And they've even got a sense of humor—they named themselves after a phrase used in a review of their first release. But it's a partnership that's been brewing for a long time.

"We've been friends for 10 years, since we were 12," says Bangalter, "so we've discovered a lot of things together musically, and we have a lot of tastes in common. We were friends first, and making music came later. We split things 50/50. I tend to take care of more of the technical aspects; we share the ideas, and the writing. I think we're making serious music, but not taking ourselves seriously. It's quite spontaneous, really. The *Homework* title relates to the fact that we made the record at home, very cheaply, very quickly and spontaneously, trying to

do cool stuff."

If the Parliament crew is a massive V8-powered Detroit turnpike cruiser, set to twitch the booties of America, then Daft Punk is a sleeker machine, cruising along the Infobahn with its speakers blaring. But they both have the funk: huge beats, bass lines big enough to eat, and melodies that stick like flypaper. "Da Funk" is what Daft Punk's got. The song of that name has already sold 250,000 copies and cracked the singles charts in Europe, and now it's whomping clubgoers in America.

"It was a breakthrough underground single," Bangalter explains. "It was our decision to release it in England and the U.S. as a way of introducing ourselves." And a great video by Spike Jonze bangs it all the way home. You know the one, with the guy dressed as a dog, his leg in a cast, carrying a tiny old boom box around New York. "We didn't want to appear. We wanted it to be like a movie, not computer generated. We'd seen Spike's videos and liked them, and we told him to come up with an idea. He did, and we loved it."

Daft Punk seems to be spearheading a bit of a music renaissance in France. Right now there's plenty of slammin' dance stuff pouring out of Paris, and new labels are springing up every day. Have we finally made the French Connection?

"The good thing about underground house music is that it's become an international network," is Bangalter's assessment. "These days people are more concerned if a track is good rather than where it's from—Chicago, New York, Paris, wherever. So people have become more open. France might have had a bad musical reputation in the past, but that's all forgotten now. There are no lyrics, it's very physical, people can feel it, and the stereotypes are just old. They just listen to music. So French producers are thinking they can do it." CHRIS NICKSON



label profile

ovum recordings

"Ovum is an egg, which is the basis of life," says Philadelphia artist/DJ/producer Josh Wink, discussing the name of his dance label, Ovum Recordings. "What we have is what we call 'life music.' It encompasses everything that's a part of our lives." Conceived in October 1994, Ovum has recently aligned itself with the Ruffhouse-Columbia hip-hop empire. Wink and his partner King Britt—themselves the first two artists on the label—retain complete control over all artistic aspects, from signings to singles.

"This is basically an artist-run label for artists," Wink says. "We're label execs [now], if you want to go there. But we're also DJs, and producers, and A&R people who have their ears to the ground and constantly know what's going on." M. TYE COMER



CHARLES PETERSON

in my room

artists' personal picks

DAMIEN JURADO

Danielson Family
Tell Another Joke At The Ol' Choppin' Block

Glenn Campbell
Hey, Little One

Glen Campbell
Galveston

Legendary Folk Songs
Self Titled

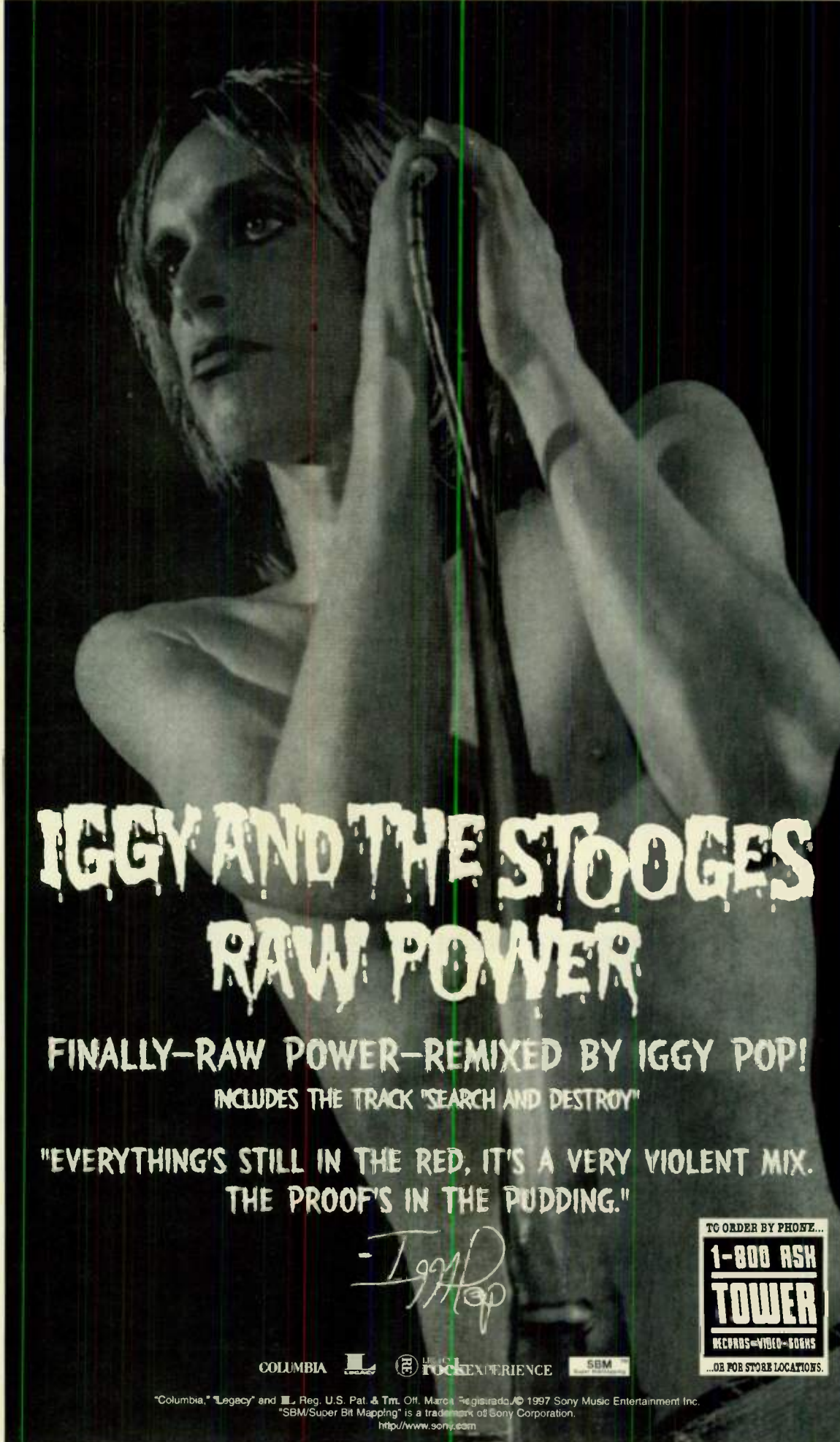
Pigeonhed
The Full Sentence

THE BIZ

music industry parlance, explained

"junket"

The increasingly rare practice where members of the media are flown by a label to some far-off land (from Sydney, Australia, to St. Louis, Missouri) to see or interview an artist. These trips are sometimes necessitated by artists being unavailable for local in-person interviews until after the record's release, but are commonly also used as inducements for editorial coverage or radio adds from "junket whores."



IGGY AND THE STOOGES RAW POWER

FINALLY-RAW POWER-REMIXED BY IGGY POP!

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"EVERYTHING'S STILL IN THE RED, IT'S A VERY VIOLENT MIX.
THE PROOF'S IN THE PUDDING."

- Iggy Pop

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best new music

[the five best releases this month]



SLEATER-KINNEY / *Dig Me Out* / Kill Rock Stars

There's nothing all that innovative or complex about *Dig Me Out*: no funny guitar tunings or complicated structures that'll change the face of anything. It's all been done before, the punk rock that Sleater-Kinney plays. So it's a mystery as to how the hell the band creates something so *alive* from guitar chords that in 1997 seem stale. There's a pearl of electricity that's buried deep inside of Sleater-Kinney's music. It furiously drives every rhythm, shout, and chord; it controls the layers of melody that work around each other and the wonderful structures that seem so simple but meander just enough to make each song a stunning journey. Above it all is the remarkable presence of Corin Tucker's voice. Just as Johnny Rotten's sneer was so alive it was bone-chilling, Tucker's throat is a powerhouse, loaded with an energy that defies description. Underneath *Dig Me Out* is a hum of life wholly transcending gender and genre, filled with the kind of excitement and singular voice that made

DATALOG: Released Apr. 8.

FILE UNDER: Punk.

R.I.Y.L.: Buzzcocks, early Raincoats, Nirvana, Bikini Kill.

punk rock glorious in its infancy, and with Sleater-Kinney's strong shoulders, will ultimately carry it into the next century. *Dig Me Out* is a monster. Every listen sprouts something new—a guitar line, a melody, a series of joyous handclaps, a stunning bridge—that previously lay dormant. You'll listen to it over and over again. Wow. RANDALL ROBERTS



ATARI TEENAGE RIOT / *Burn, Berlin, Burn!* / Digital Hardcore-Grand Royal

Atari Teenage Riot's mastermind Alec Empire likes to go on about the theoretical underpinnings of his work. That's pretty funny, considering that it sets new standards for recorded immediacy. Nothing in the world short of Mike Tyson's fist is as unremittingly in-your-face as *Burn, Berlin, Burn!*, a singles compilation that's basically one huge exclamation point. Atari Teenage Riot's formula is such a natural that it's amazing nobody's thought of it before: classic hardcore and speed-metal riffs in an exoskeleton of brain-pulverizing drum 'n' bass-bombs, with a bunch of hyperactive Germans shrieking inducements to riot, and every remaining micrometer of tape-space occupied by samples, sirens and videogame noises. Everything is cranked up to be as fast and loud as possible, and if a breakbeat or a guitar part isn't fast enough, they just speed it up to double-time. Sometimes it's pretty obvious what they're ripping off—"Fuck All" is just Bad Brains' "Pay To Cum!" in battle-armor—but that's sort of

DATALOG: Released Mar. 25.

FILE UNDER: Rabble-rousing chaos.

R.I.Y.L.: Gabber, Slayer, Run-DMC, Minor Threat.

the point: The target here is your reptile brain, the kill/fuck/riot/dance part of your consciousness. (Song titles, meaning bellowed slogans, include "Delete Yourself," "Destroy 2000 Years Of Culture" and "Into The Death.") And, since adrenaline surges can only go on for so long, *Burn!* is hard to take in its entirety—after a while, it can get bludgeoning. A track or two at a time, though, could wake the dead. DOUGLAS WOLK



MARK EITZEL / West / Warner Bros.

Mark Eitzel and Peter Buck aren't the likeliest songwriting duo ("I've Been A Mess" meets "Shiny Happy People"?), but the former American Music Club frontman and the R.E.M. guitarist cranked out nearly a dozen songs in a brisk and successful week of collaboration for Eitzel's third solo release. While Eitzel's shadowy lyrical bent hasn't shifted much, there are some decidedly upbeat strum-alongs like "Free From Harm," with choruses that repeat and everything. In the past, up-tempo rockers have never suited Eitzel well, but on *West* he seems a bit looser, fronting a band that isn't just pretending to rock (guitars from Buck, drums and cool vibes from Screaming Tree Barrett Martin, and bass and keys from Young Fresh Fellow

Scott McCaughey). On "Move Myself Ahead," Eitzel's biting wit is matched by an equally toothy backbeat. Still, the pensive down-tempo song remains Eitzel's trademark, and *West* has some of his best. The opener "If You Have To Ask" resurrects AMC's lush sound, and the jazzy, desolate closer "Live Or Die" shows Eitzel still has a lot to say about the time between now and the hours of our deaths. *STEVE CIABATTONI*

DATALOG: Released May 6. A small tour under the moniker "The Magnificent Seven Versus The United States" begins in May.
FILE UNDER: Shiny bummed-out people.
R.I.Y.L.: Mark Lanegan, R.E.M.'s *Automatic For The People*, Jimmy Webb.



POLARA / C'est La Vie / Interscope

It's self-conscious but appropriate that the first single off *C'est La Vie* is called "Transformation," for the album represents a big leap for little Polara, repositioning the band from low-key and charming indie-popsters into a power-pop juggernaut. The change doesn't come so much on the songwriting front—main man Ed Ackerson has always had a knack for hummable hooks, intricately crafted arrangements, and the occasional lyrical heartstring-tug. Ackerson, however, seems to have a much bigger production budget to work with this time, and he uses it to transform *C'est La Vie* into a Todd Rundgrenesque flight of fancy, crammed with textural details like keyboard washes, massive guitar overdubs, and well-placed harmony vocals. Flashy shimmer and the odd experimental moment (a few jungle-ish beats pop up here and there) can only take a pop band so far, though, and Polara is consistently good at what really matters: stringing together evocative melodies, and polishing them for display instead of burying them under flourishes of noise. And even in the moments where the band is making no sense, as with the giddy "Quebecois," it's clearly having so much fun that it's hard for you not to, as well. *DAVID JARMAN*

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22
FILE UNDER: Meticulous power-pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Matthew Sweet, Teenage Fanclub, Badfinger.



SON VOLT / Straightaways / Warner Bros.

Country rock should feel like a great release. It should come on the car radio after hours of the schmaltziest Nashville fare and get you yelling along to its macho vocals and banging the dashboard to its 4/4 beat. It should resound with big, solid chords, without hiding its subtler melodic underpinnings. That is, it should sound like "Caryatid Easy," the lead track on Son Volt's new album. Frontman Jay Farrar was once the country conscience of the roots band Uncle Tupelo. While his former bandmates crafted a careful blues-rock revival in Wilco, Farrar has mined a different vein, closer to the middle of the road. He proves as competent a rock frontman as he is a folkie, with a richly colored voice, dead-on phrasing, and a punchy way with a hook that's reminiscent of late-'80s R.E.M. Unsurprisingly, he sounds equally seasoned on the ballads, his inflections embellishing fairly tepid material. "Creosote" (named for a desert plant of the Southwest) comes the closest to a straight-ahead country song. "Been Set Free" is the nearest to a folk song. No matter what style the band is playing in, the harmonies kick in at the usual intervals, the guitars sound utterly conventional, but somehow, it all sounds fresh. *ANDREA MOED*

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22.
FILE UNDER: Eclectic country.
R.I.Y.L.: R.E.M., Uncle Tupelo, Flying Burrito Brothers.

KEROSENE 454

Live, Kerosene 454 was always fairly energetic, but its gusto didn't translate well into the explosive wall of sound that it was attempting to erect. Fueled by a surplus of stamina, however, the Washington D.C. band has toured relentlessly during the past few

years and, by last fall's tour with Bluetip, it had clearly paid off. On the band's second long-player, *Came By To Kill Me* (Slow Dime-Dischord), K454 seems to consciously avoid working into a groove. The tempos are often very complicated, and the dissonant guitar lines elude conventional punk hooks, while Erik Denno spits out vocals that sting like grain alcohol on a canker sore. By layering these intricate parts together, the band (with the help of producer J. Robbins of Jawbox) creates a huge tangle of noise and melody whose individual strands are difficult to separate. The band plans on recording over the summer and will head to Europe (with Bluetip) in the fall. *JENNY ELISCU*



TIPSY

"Easy listening was where I really began to understand melody, where pop finally made sense to me," relates David Gardner, one of Tipsy's two main collaborators, and a swingin' cocktail vine is definitely pervasive throughout "Trip Tease"—*The Seductive Sounds Of Tipsy*, the San Francisco collective's debut CD (Asphodel). But add to that both Gardner and co-conspirator Tim Digulla's fondness and acumen for ambient electronica, a backing band numbering a dozen (including Flugelhorn and accordion), and the additional support of Tipsy's Executive Producer, lifetime record collector Naut Humon (pronounce that "not human"), and you've got quite a different concoction than your run-of-the-mill Manhattan or Gin Fizz. Tipsy can be wistful, playful, celebratory or just plain relaxing, creating music for both the Pine-Sol-fresh bachelor pad and the smoky after-hours speak-easy. The group plans to take its aural circus to the road this year under the name Tipsylandia, a lineup that will include the three main contributors plus a bevy of DJs and live musicians. *(LA)*



PHOTOGRAPH BY BETH ORTON

BETH ORTON

If Joni Mitchell were 26 in the late '90s and got mixed up with London's club scene, she might've recorded a debut album like Beth Orton's *Trailer Park* (Heavenly-Dedicated). Orton's acoustic-based songs and sumptuously airy vocals suggest an emerging folkie, but her arrangements take in ambient electronic sounds and slithery trip-hop beats, pinpointing her



with a fresh end-of-the-millennium sound. Rather than forging her career in London's folk club circuit, Orton fell in with electronic innovators such as William Orbit, Red Snapper and the Chemical Brothers, to whose records she's contributed vocals; her songs on the Chem

Bros.' two albums are standouts, especially *Dig Your Own Hole's* moving chill-out number "Where Do I Begin?" Although Orton possesses one of those beautifully bittersweet voices that'll sing in your head long after the record's stopped spinning, she bypasses the saccharine goo that sometimes drenches songs by chart-busting chanteuses. Watch for Orton to make her first U.S. tour this year. *(LA)*

TAKAKO MINEKAWA ☺

There's a Japanese pop tradition called *idoru*, where very young women are turned into pop idols by older, male producers who define their image and prepare all their music for them. Takako Minekawa is a fascinating twist on that tradition. First of all,



her producers on *Roomie Cube* (March) are the women of Buffalo Daughter—who come from the very opposite end of the Japanese music world than *idoru*—and while they write some of her songs, so does she. A few of the songs on the album (she's had a few earlier records in Japan) are adorable, chirpy tunes that play off her little-girl persona, but there are also some wild

Moog synthesizer showcases and flipped-out arrangements, as well as a handful of instrumentals where Buffalo Daughter gets to show off the psychedelic range of its imagination. March Records will be releasing a Minekawa remix EP, with tracks from the album reworked by a handful of luminaries, this spring or summer. *DOUGLAS WOLK*

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NICK CAVE

THE DEVIL AND HIS SPAWN



ANTHONY MONTANO

BY TOM LANHAM

"I wanna drink! I wanna drink! I wanna drink!" / The five-year-old boy is insistent: He wants a drink, dammit, and he wants it now. Grumbling a little, Dad gets up from his seat, shuffles to the fridge, procures a sweet, fruity concoction and hands it to Junior, who merrily skips and slurps his way upstairs. Nick Cave shrugs and sinks back into the blood-red couch in the center of his London living room.

A few telling fixtures in Cave's Spartan digs: A grand piano (adorned with a bust of Jesus) and a small Casio organ, both of which he put to somber hymnal use on *The Boatman's Call* (Mute-Reprise); countless toys scattered across the hardwood floor; a stack of promotional copies of *King Ink 2*, Cave's second prose/poetry anthology; a video library that's roughly 50% Disney; and a PC game featuring Donald Duck as, of all things, a sword-wielding ninja. It makes perfect sense that *Boatman*, in metaphors straight out of the New Testament, documents the slow, painful dissolution of Cave's marriage to Viviane Carneiro, as well as an ill-fated affair with a woman with "hair of deepest black" that many suppose to be Polly Jean Harvey. All that's left in Cave's world, it seems, are his songs and the unconditional love of a son. And, although this tall, bone-thin figure is dressed in his trademark undertaker black, he appears content with the deal.

Many things in his long, often drug-addled career have required a great deal of effort, Cave says.

Especially viewing his existence under *Boatman's* microscope and clinically casebooking the results: "Some of the songs are about Viv, who's the mother of my kid, and yeah, I live on my own. Then there are a few songs about another relationship I was in which also fell..." Cave catches himself before he says too much. "Um... didn't go exactly as I'd liked. And my primary intent with this record was just to document the facts of the matter and what was actually going on, and not to hide behind language, not to use language as a way to protect myself." In one gorgeous dirge, "Brompton Oratory," the heartbroken hero wanders into a London church, looking for solace. Instead, he finds still more suffering: "No God up in the sky, no devil beneath the sea/ Could do the job that you did, baby, of bringing me to my knees."

Smiling, Cave feels a need to explain that "at the time, what I was trying to say was, there are wounds you can receive that seem to be unhealable. And there's nothing you can really do about it—they just have to mend themselves."

Junior bursts onto the scene again, abuzz with Romper Room adrenaline. Cave immediately brightens. "Having Luke was done without any effort," he chuckles, after he's solved another Riddle Of The Missing Toy. He wants a drink, you get it for him. "It's as simple as that. And you hear a lot about how it's tough raising kids and all, but I just don't find it that way. From a very early age, it became apparent to me that, if you have a kid, you can't do anything else while you're with your kid. You just have to surrender to the kid. I have him three, four days a week, and the rest of the time he's not in the house, so I do whatever I like. And generally, I don't work when I've got Luke—I just look after him. And as long as you don't try and do anything else, it's really easy."

Hard to believe that this is the same Cave who, only a year ago, unearthed a whole hearseful of *Murder Ballads*. Gothic? Sinister? Cave, 39, flashes a scarlet ring, inlaid with a metal serpent. "Well, maybe I am! Heh, heh, heh. Then again, I don't know what a 'normal' person is. But I do know that I have a definite, almost cyclical pattern of behavior, where I do shut down, I do lock myself away, I do stop contacting people. And I have to kind of wrench myself out of that and open up and become available in some ways." His baritone voice tunnels even deeper, into more laughter that's probably meant to be reassuring. "But when I'm on my own, I'm not burning black candles or biting off chicken heads or anything like that. I'm just on my own." *

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AMERICA'S LATEST INDIE-POP SENSATIONS

CHEAP TRICK!

BY TIM STEGALL • PHOTO BY MICHAEL LAVINE

"People ask me, 'How does Cheap Trick fit into the scenario of things?'" remarks a clearly amused Robin Zander, taking a break from recording vocals. "I used to always say, 'We're probably the fifth album down in your record stack.' We're in a lot of people's households, but we're not the first record in the stack. But we're there. And I think that's still true."

For four weeks, the band has holed up in Pie Studios, a comfortable 48-track facility in Glen Cove, New York, with co-producer Ian Taylor; the past day or so has seen Taylor's place behind the console usurped by Steve

"At one point, we were thinking of packing it in. We lost complete control of ourselves."

Albini, as Cheap Trick lays down three tracks for a Sub Pop single. Although the band's gear is being packed off to its Madison, Wisconsin, home base (where both poker-faced drummer Bun E. Carlos and wise-guy guitar anti-hero Rick Nielsen still reside), the work hasn't abated. Cheap Trick is determined to correct years of damage its good name has suffered.

"We had a lot of problems in the '80s," Zander muses, remembering the long darkside following Cheap Trick's late-'70s heyday. "I think we wrote a lot of good material at that time, but as a band, we were really disoriented. We made some good records, and some of 'em weren't so good." As Carlos puts it, referring to the producer of the dire "The Flame," ironically the band's sole #1 hit, "Hey, Richie Zito happens."

"At one point, we were thinking of packing it in, because it got too much to bear," Zander continues. "We lost complete control of ourselves. You lose your identity, and it shows in all aspects of what you do... All of a sudden, record companies were saying, 'Well, there's not a hit single here. We're gonna have to bring in an outside songwriter for you guys. Here's the song. If you don't do the song, we're not gonna release the album. If you don't do the song on tour, there's not gonna be any tour support for you. Do you wanna have a career?'"

After leaving Epic, Cheap Trick withstood an abortive Warner Bros. deal, continued the punishing tour schedule it's worked since even before its first record, and watched itself become an influence on young bands from Big Black to Smashing Pumpkins to Green Day. Finally, the band shook itself free of longtime manager Ken Adamany, and decided to "just get back to being ourselves," in Zander's words. Carlos notes that the band spent six months last year working on new material ("The most time we've ever taken on that!") as he, in his capacity as band historian/archivist, oversaw the completion of the boxed set. (Carlos will also supervise a planned remastering of the band's back catalog, bolstered with more rarities.) They also signed with the independent Red Ant Records, a move Zander finds refreshing. "When we fired the manager, we decided that we wanted to take control of every aspect of what we do." Which is easier to do, bassist Tom Petersson notes, when you only have to talk to a handful of people at your label.

The downsizing/woodshedding regimen has paid off. No Cheap Trick album has been this roaringly direct since that self-titled Epic debut in '76. "We did this the same way," Zander grins. "The first album, we made in four weeks. This album is only four weeks old, and it's 90% of the way there. That's the way to do a record, I think." It also helps to have strong material, and the new *Cheap Trick* contains more tunes with steel spines than any Cheap Trick LP has in a while: the punky raver "Wrong All Along," the trademark Who and Beatles pastiches, and more twisted fare like "Yeah Yeah," with its sick Rick Nielsen guitar punctuations. As Albini remarks with obvious relish, "Rick's not afraid of using the ugliest guitar tones."

Ultimately, the artistic success of the 1997-model Cheap Trick rests in its having stripped away what Carlos dubs "all that goofy shit." "We're a guitar-based rock 'n' roll band," states Petersson. "What do we need keyboard players for? We just wanna make good records again. That's what I like best. Touring is how you pay the bills. A record lasts longer. It will outlive your band." ★

Pollen

"Pollen is one of my favorite bands."
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Check out *Tiny Shoes* on this month's **CMJ Sampler**.



Wind-up

FOLK IMPLI

HOMESPUN, WIDESPREAD



Lou Barlow remembers when he started hearing "Natural One" on infomercials. "Just the beginning of that song became this total fashion thing. It was—'wow, we made a dent on this horrible monster that we sit around saying we'll never be a part of.'" He beatboxes "Natural One"'s strange little snare-and-bass riff. "Now, suddenly, we've created this signature for ourselves."

Neither Barlow nor his Folk Implosion collaborator John Davis has much experience as a packaged pop commodity. They are admired—Barlow for his work with Sebadoh and on his own, and Davis as a solo singer-songwriter—for being unstable quantities, shifting the emotional resonances of their songs with each new performance. But when the two of them hooked up, it was out of a mutual desire to escape the way they usually made music. "When I play with Sebadoh, we go on tour all the time, it's a real live band thing," says Barlow. "With John, I guess it's kind of similar to the earlier four-track stuff that I did, but with a sense of humor."

"It's easier to have a sense of humor when you're not staring down your personality," adds Davis.

Rather than a live band, the Folk Implosion is almost exclusively a studio project. Where each of them usually takes sole writing credit for his songs, in Folk Implosion they write and compose everything together, mostly while sitting in the same room. The idea was to "experiment with pop music," and to let anything happen. Their early efforts were pretty goofy—the early tape *Walk Through This World With The Folk Implosion*, later abridged to a 7" on Drunken Fish, is a mix of folkish songs and noise-fests. Over a

few more records, they developed a regular mode of collaboration, and a sound that you wouldn't have expected from either one of them. Barlow's loping bass and percussion is melded to coolly-sung strings of pure wordplay, while Davis's twangy guitar tweaks the ear every measure or so. Their new album, *Dare To Be Surprised* (Communion), is full of the strange juxtapositions of melody lines, harmony lines, and renegade choruses crossing paths over a steady beat.

"There's a difference in that we write the music first and pay a lot of attention to the rhythm," says Davis. "We don't write lyrics until the songs are finished. We try and trace the lyrics out of the music, almost." They refined this method on the new album: After layering guitar and drum machine beats into the songs, they raided each other's notebooks for themes and "little poetry shards" to put together. The result is Lou chanting things like "Row/The boat around the moat/The moat around the rock/The moat around the rock around the castle" over an oompah bass beat, or the line "I fought for days for that pole position" running improbably into "circle the wagons and we'll burn them to the ground."

Much of the album was made in the shadow of the growing buzz around their contributions to the soundtrack for the movie *Kids*, and around its single "Natural One," which went Top 30 on the Billboard charts. "We've always thought we were really accessible, that out of any five songs we write, like two of them could definitely be hits if we were to pursue them in that way," says Barlow. Even so, they were caught off guard by the gratification of hit-making. It's so addictive, they

SSION

THAT IF SONGS MATCH THE
WALK, THAT'S REALLY IT."

BY ANDREA MOED

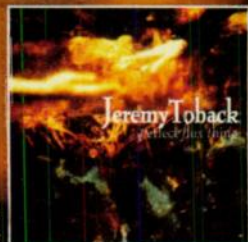
admit, that they can't resist handicapping their chances with their newest collection of songs, wondering if the single "Insinuation" will "resonate."

After years of deep emotional investment in music, it intrigues them that, without soul-searching, they can write songs that stay in people's minds. "It was frustrating in a way," Davis recalls, "because people didn't really know who we were, but there was something kind of cool about it. It isn't about us, the way we dress, it's just this song people like, it has nothing to do with us." According to Barlow, that's part of why they started the Folk Implosion. "We've always embraced the throwaway, I think. We would get together and sing these totally goofy songs, and find ourselves really loving [one], and playing it to our mothers." Mostly, they believe that popcraft is about matching the rhythm of a song to one from real life. "Bob Fay, the drummer of Sebadoh, defines pop songs or really good songs as songs that people can rock babies to," says Barlow. "And I always think that if songs match the way that you walk, that's really it."

None of which means they work any less hard on the "throwaways" than they do on their other songwriting. Asked if they're interested in doing remixes of the new album, Lou protests, "I just want to be home, hang out with John, like, every day, or every other day, and sit around for four or five hours with a sampler and drum machine and figure things out. I think it's a fine record and I'm really proud of it, but I know for a fact that it's only hinting at what we're actually capable of." Put another way, there's no telling what they'll do when they're free. ★

Jeremy Toback

perfect flux thing
The debut album



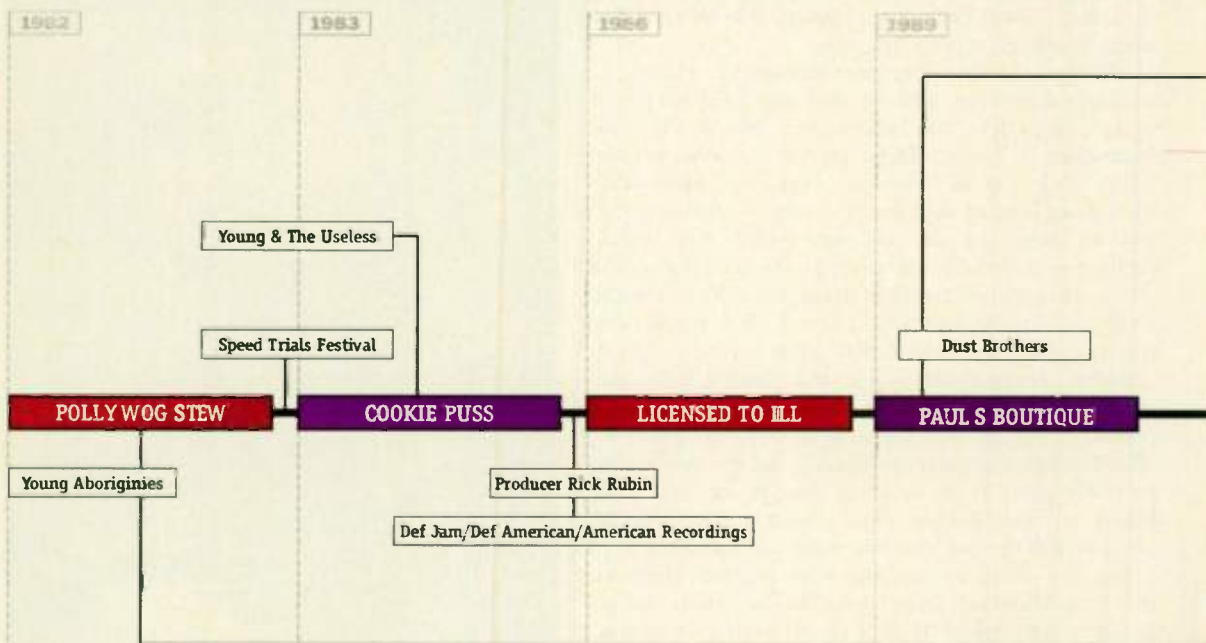
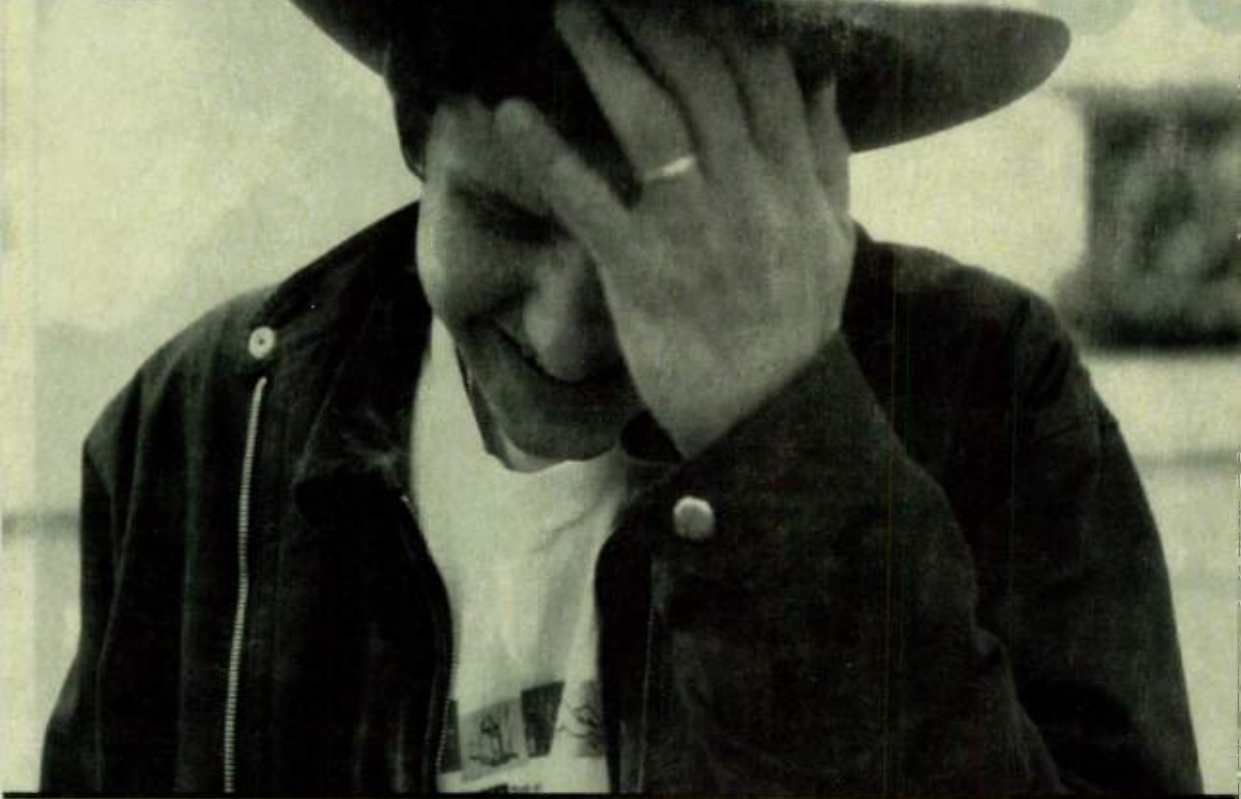
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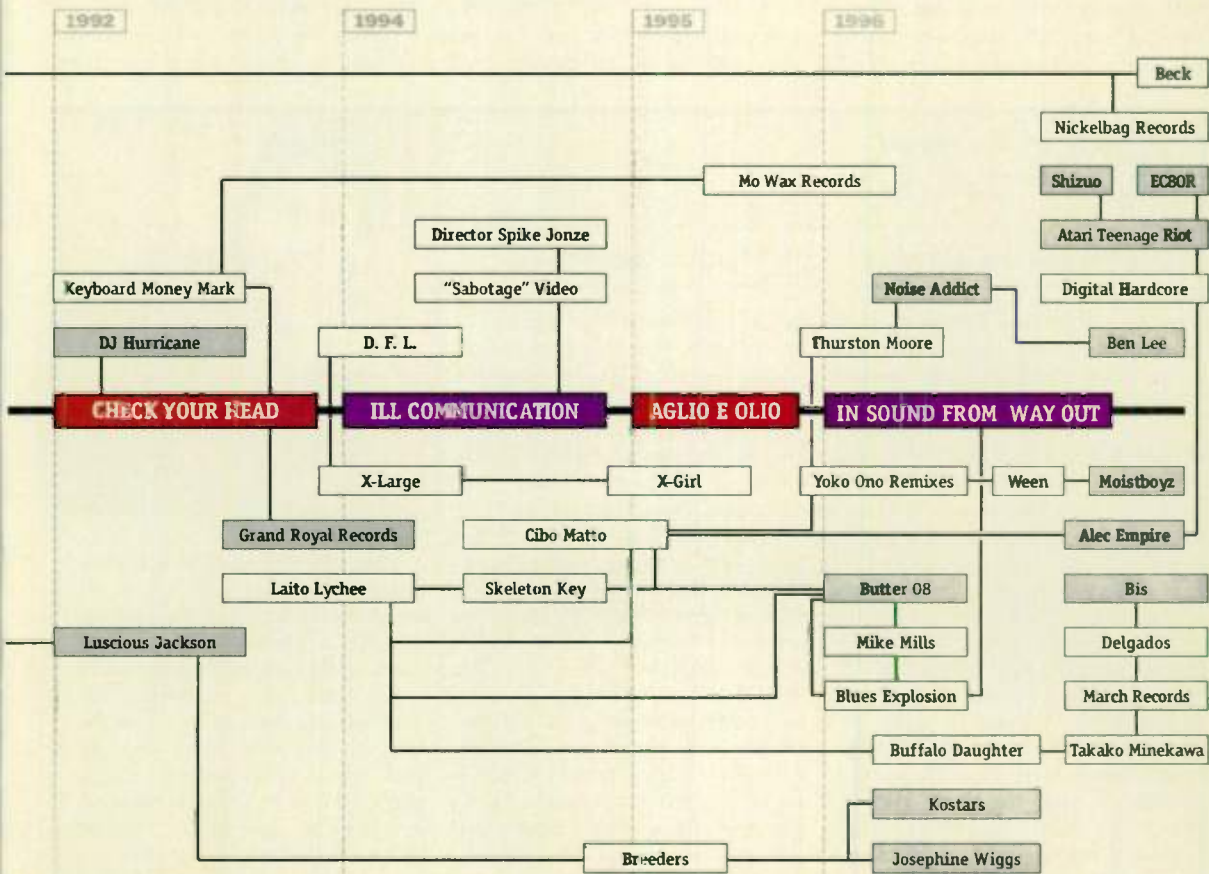
BY KURT B. REIGHLEY

The Rise Of The Beastie Empire

Grand Royal. The name conjures up images of untold riches, a bounty to put Ali Baba, King Midas and Imelda Marcos to shame. In just five years, the Beastie Boys' vanity label has become one of the most reliable bets in an uncertain marketplace, and their dedication to nurturing superb artists of all stripes has hastened their ascension from the obnoxious party boys of Licensed To Ill to pop-culture icons. But as power broker Mike D reveals, the label's success is equally indebted to intuition and the luck of the draw...

◀ MIKE D PHOTOGRAPHED BY SPIKE JONZE

It all began in 1992, when the Beastie Boys—Mike D (a.k.a. Michael Diamond), King Ad-Rock (Adam Horowitz) and MCA (Adam Yauch)—were criss-crossing the U.S. of A. to promote their third LP, *Check Your Head*. At one gig, Gabby Glaser and Jill Cunniff slipped the trio a demo of their new outfit Luscious Jackson. All they really wanted from the boys was tips on who they might pass on their music to in pursuit of a label deal, but they got a whole lot more. "After listening to it for a while on the bus, we thought 'hey, maybe we should just put this out,'" recalls Mike. ▶▶▶



"We're the only record label I know that has its own basketball court."

LUSCIOUS JACKSON



"They were giving the demo tape around to different people, and the fact that Mike wanted to put it out made them sort of hold off, and wait 'till he got his shit together," recalls Luscious Jackson's drummer Kate Schellenbach (also the skin-pounder for an early incarnation of the Beasties), who wouldn't join the group till a little later. "Because they knew that he would understand what they were doing. Everyone else was like 'You're going to have to re-record this,' while he went 'It's perfect the way it is.'"

The Beastie Boys themselves had already worked with three record companies in less than a decade: indie Rat Cage (the *Polly Wog Stew* EP, 1982); Def Jam (before and during its Columbia Records affiliation, with 1984's

"Rock Hard" and *Licensed To Ill* in 1986); and Capitol (*Paul's Boutique*, 1989). But did they really have an inkling of what starting a label entails? "None whatsoever," laughs Mike, although they'd bandied about the idea since watching Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons launch Def Jam. "We really had no idea, at all, of the mechanics involved." And it turned out to be "infinitely more difficult" than they ever imagined.

Mike and the Beasties' mailing list coordinator Max Burgos started making phone calls, learning how to get records pressed and artwork designed. Fortunately, the concept of cracking the nut of distribution dawned on them shortly before they placed their initial orders for Luscious Jackson's *In Search Of Manny* EP. Then press started to pick up on the platter, "because it was the first thing we'd put out, and it was really unlike anything else that anyone had heard. All of the sudden we realized we really had no idea of how to get the records into the stores."

But like sharks drawn to freshly strewn chum, the various majors soon came calling to offer assistance. "We learned right away about the financial realities of having a record out there, when you get paid and all those other things," Mike recounts. "And we realized that we basically had to hire someone to help us get the records into stores, which was gonna cost us money, and that we weren't gonna get any money back from those stores for a while." Fortunately, label honcho Gary Gersh was in transition from Geffen to Capitol, and, recognizing the potential appeal of a relationship with the Beasties' imprint, offered to subsidize the venture.

"In the end, we were actually able to work something out that we're pretty comfortable with. We just pick the one or two things that make sense to put out through Capitol, but most of what we do is still completely independent. We do whatever we want, and don't have

BEN LEE

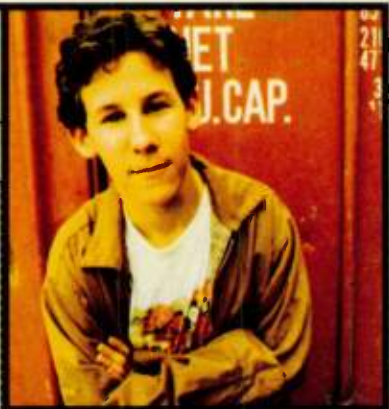
"I never felt like I could do anything that innovative."

"A lot of the time, I think 'What am I doing?'" confesses Australia's Ben Lee. As the young singer addresses on "Career Choice" from his second solo album, *Something To Remember Me By*, making a living in pop music often feels like building a house on sand. "It's so trivial," he concurs. "It's such a weird thing that I do... but I'm really grateful."

As its title suggests, the album is a moment of Ben's waning teenage years, infused with the limitless promise of life after high school. The vivid emotions of youth are tempered with the wisdom of travel and experience, yielding songs that feel more mature (duh) than his previous work. "I never felt like I could do anything that innovative about music," says Ben modestly. While the

Sydney native harbors no desire to be The Next [fill in the blank], he's sagely learned lessons of form and function from others. "People like Loudon Wainwright and Dylan really affected me, because those people did amazing, innovative things that I could never do." But he's learning... quickly.

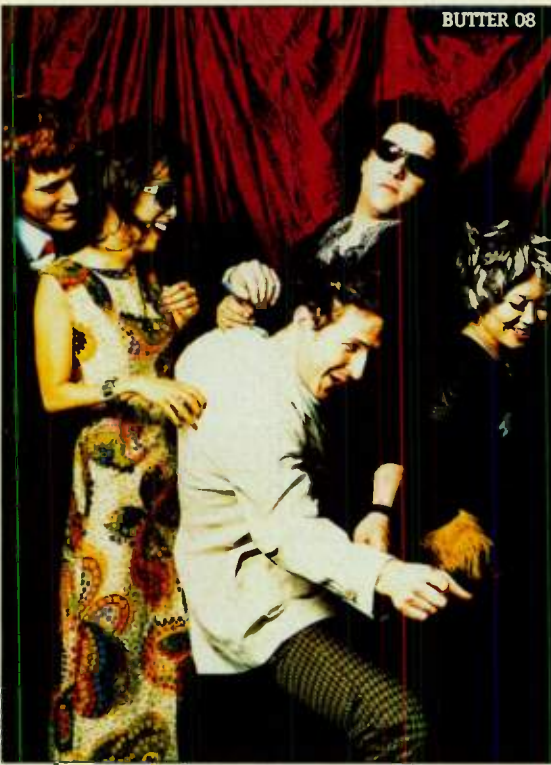
Themes of infatuation and romance gone awry crop up repeatedly on *Something To Remember Me By*. "Less than on the other records, though," he counters, confessing that he doesn't wear his heart on his sleeve 24-7. This latest batch of songs also reveals a deeper understanding of the equation Comedy = Tragedy + Timing. "Household Name" rattles through a roster of ruined sitcom teens, and our hero admits that dismissal as a flash in the pan is among his personal



bugbears.

"I was really conscious of that while I was making this record." When his band Noise Addict's *Meet The Real You* came out in 1996, some people were scrawling Ben's epitaph even before he'd attended commencement exercises. "The Honeymoon's Over For Ben Lee," he read in one rag. Bad call, guys. "There's more excitement about this record and the live shows," announces Ben confidently, "because I'm better now." (KR)

BUTTER 08



to ask anyone's approval."

Five years later, Grand Royal is not only home to the Beastie Boys and Luscious Jackson, but also to a diverse international roster, including the didactic hardcore techno of Germany's Atari Teenage Riot, the subdued elegance of the Josephine Wiggs Experience, Japanese avant-pop trio Buffalo Daughter, Cibo Matto/Blues Explosion/Skeleton Key side project Butter 08, teen titans Bis (from Scotland) and Ben Lee (Australia), plus assorted Beastie and Luscious satellites like DJ Hurricane and Kostars.

Yet when it comes to courting artists to join the Grand Royal stable, Mike swears that madness is part of the method. "I have yet to figure out our A&R agenda," he says through fitful giggles. "If anyone has any suggestions, they should write them down and send them in." Mike admits he doesn't wade through the majority of unsolicited demos he gets. "Those would probably be the ones I should sign, that would make us the most money, but I never listen to them. We probably would make the most money if we signed a lot of bad Beastie Boys-type bands, but we haven't found the right fake Beastie Boys yet... we're leaving that to the major labels, who seem to be a lot better at that."

As for the appeal to bands of the prospect of joining the Grand Royal family, the incentives are many and varied. "We throw better parties," Mike begins. "We have better record collections, cooler-looking offices. We're the only record label I know that has its own basketball court, we have closets full of drugs..."

But seriously, folks. "We're really involved with all the bands we work with." Literally: witnesses report that Mr. Diamond helmed the merchandise table for Luscious Jackson's L.A. show, and helped Atari Teenage Riot load in their gear at an Austin gig. "I really am very involved, and will suggest a lot of things about sequence and artwork, but that comes out of all of us here wanting everything to be as good as it possibly can." They're not bucking for sainthood, but you won't find the Grand Royal posse barking "show me the money" either—they don't try to fit records into pre-fabricated marketing niches. "I can't ever imagine working with a band that we weren't fans of

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BIS

"We're saving the radio."



Want a challenge? Try to get the pogo-mad members of Scottish punk-pop trio Bis to stand still onstage. Just for one second. Diminutive powerhouse Manda Rin bounces up and down at her keyboard/microphone setup at stage right; to her left is orange-haired guitarist/co-vocalist Sci-Fi Steven, also bouncing up and down; and to his right, lanky John Disco mans both drum machine and six-string electric... while perpetually bouncing up and down.

Bis borrows liberally from punk rock's past, then plugs it into a youthful energy source the band has dubbed "Teen-C power." After two D.I.Y. years in Glasgow, the group walked away from a major-label bidding war, straight into the arms of Grand Royal. Both Manda and Steven publish their own fanzines (*Funky Spunk* and *Paper Bullets*, respectively) and have often snubbed big-time rock rags by granting interviews exclusive to the U.K. fanzine circuit. It isn't that they frown on oldsters, they swear. They simply want to think and act young for as long as humanly possible.

"We're challenging the conventional running of people's lives, how you're meant to act after you get to a certain

age," says John, who today turned 21. Steven chips in: "It's not like you're only allowed to do one thing in life! You're supposed to go and work for 40, 50 years, and then you'll finally get rewarded for having done so well. Fuck that. We're not hoping for any gold watch after 40 years of Bis!" Why the name Bis? Rin starts snickering. "So we could be filed after Bikini Kill and before Björk in the record shops. And we called our album *New Transistor Heroes* 'cause we're saving the radio. We don't listen to the radio during the day—most of it's shite, just the same old thing. So we're gonna save British shite radio. Actually get something good on it for once!" **TOM LANHAM**

I just can't fathom that. And I think there's a lot of labels where that's not even a consideration."

"In the end, it works out for everybody," he continues. "We're probably a lot more sensitive to what [our bands] want, and who they are as people, as fans or artists, and we're able to promote what they do. It's not like we have cookie-cutter patterns that we try to fit all these bands into. I certainly don't think you could approach Ben Lee the same way you would Bis or Atari Teenage Riot. That would be a little bit of a *faux pas*."

Ben Lee concurs. "They have no interest in just putting people out there to have one hit and disappear," says the Sydney songwriter. "Why would you want to be on any

other label? And they're not just cool; they actually do their job well. And as you get bigger, they work with that."

"It helps to have a label run by somebody who's in a working band, and understands what it's like to tour and do press and travel and play shows, all those aspects of the business that you don't necessarily know about if you haven't done it, and how tiring that can be," adds Schellenbach. "Often [Mike is] fighting in our corner when Capitol wants us to do too many different things. He's on our side going 'Hey, they're only human, they can only do so much,' and he's talking from experience."

And the prospect of being able to drift off to sleep knowing you're on the Beastie Boys' label does hold a

ATARI TEENAGE RIOT

"[Troublemakers] didn't show up... because they got beaten up."

Based on the temperament of Atari Teenage Riot's *Burn, Berlin, Burn!*, one would expect ATR mastermind Alec Empire to answer interviewers in shouted monosyllables. A brutal aural assault that fuses blinding hardcore techno with ferocious verbal attacks on racism, hypocrisy, complacency, and the media, the white-hot platter reduces escapist dance tracks to mincemeat faster than Godzilla's tango with Bambi. Fortunately, Empire—who formed the German trio with Hanin Elias and Carl Crack back in 1992—still manages to laugh while speaking seriously about his music.

Considering the emotional immediacy of techno, it seems odd that electronic music has rarely been utilized as a platform for protest prior to ATR. "Perhaps [that's because] it was connected to dance music for a long

time, and was just about dancing, and not real politics," suggests Empire. "A lot of DJs come from a disco background, [making] Hi-NRG and house music, and no one really thinks about using statements in tracks."

Despite the band's extremely aggressive sound, the skinhead violence sometimes associated with such confrontational bands in Europe is absent from ATR gigs. Its devoted fans embrace its anti-fascist sentiment, and keep any potential right-wing troublemakers firmly in check. "We had stuff happen in the beginning," confesses Empire, "but as the shows got bigger those people didn't show up... because they got beaten up."

Grand Royal also serves as the conduit for his Digital Hardcore Recordings label, home to the equally



arresting EC80R and Shizuo, as well as ATR and Empire's solo efforts. Other labels (including Wax Trax!) courted DHR, but Empire was nonplussed; ATR had already had a bad experience with Phonogram overseas, where their clear-cut agenda was gutted by attempts to market them as a straightforward rave act. "Some [American] majors even wanted to sign Atari Teenage Riot," he recalls. "But that doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. And when you start talking to them, you got the impression they don't know what's going on." (KR)

KOSTARS



certain undeniable appeal. "We're all about the cachet," agrees Mike before qualifying his answer: "'97 is all about the cachet. '98 is gonna be all about the cash." With Luscious Jackson currently enjoying a bona fide radio hit ("Naked Eye"), and most of the label's bands either in the studio or on the road, his instincts might prove right again.

Yet just how involved are the Beasties in the nuts-and-bolts of Grand Royal? "It changes from day to day," admits Mike. "It depends on who's got the best or worst idea on that particular day." Don't expect to visit Grand Royal's Los Angeles HQ and find a door bearing "Mike D" on a brass placque. "I had a formal office, but I gave it up... because it's the '90s, and my office is the world." Now that space is their entertainment center. "We don't have enough money yet to get a big TV, but we've got the boomin' stereo system!" These days, the label employs about a dozen staffers full-time, with a few more devoted to pumping out its delirious house organ, the *Grand Royal* zine (which, like other GR endeavors, "sprang from necessity" and became an extended learning exercise).

Considering the music industry's recent doldrums, one also can't help but ponder how successful financially the label's largely intuitive approach has proven. Are the Grand Royal accounting ledgers scrawled in red ink or black? "Which one's good and which is bad? Every time we run into the black, I run us back into the red," admits Mike. "All of us are much more excited and focused on ideas and music and bands than we are on actually figuring out how to make the most amount of money. But at the same time, we've been fortunate enough that every time we've gotten excited about something, and spent too much money doing this or that, something else has come along that's bailed us out."

"Overall, we've been extremely fortunate. It's not like we started the record label... or the band or the magazine to make money, but all of these things have worked out to make us money along the way. But that definitely is not the motivating force. If it were—and that were the standard by which we were judging ourselves—we'd be pretty miserable." ★

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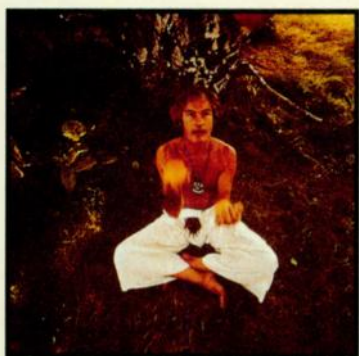
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reviews

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

"If a government starts arresting its citizens because of the kind of music they enjoy, that government is either a step away from ending democracy or democracy is already dead." —from a letter signed by members of Sonic Youth and Soundgarden, among others, in protest of the arrest in Egypt of 40 teenage heavy metal fans for "contempt of religion," which under Islamic law can be punishable by death.

VARIOUS ARTISTS / Beyond Life With Timothy Leary / Mercury
BRAINIAC / Electro-Shock For President (EP) / Touch And Go
CASH MONEY / Black Hearts And Broken Wills / Touch And Go
CLAW HAMMER / Hold Your Tongue (And Say Apple) / Interscope
DEAD FUCKING LAST / Grateful... / Epitaph
DELIRIUM / Karma / Nettwerk
DEMOLITION DOLL RODS / Tasty / In The Red
ANI DIFRANCO / Living In Clip / Righteous Babe
CESARIA EVORA / Cabo Verde / Nonesuch
EDITH FROST / Calling Over Time / Drag City
THE HYDROGEN TERRORS / Terror, Diplomacy & Public Relations / Load
ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION / So Long So Wrong / Rounder
MARBLES / Pyramid Landing / spinArt
THE NILS / Green Fields In Daylight / Mag Wheel
PAPAS FRITAS / Helioself / Minty Fresh
POSTER CHILDREN / RTFM / Reprise
ARCHER PREWITT / In The Sun / Carrot Top
THE SEA AND CAKE / The Fawn / Thrill Jockey
SILKWORM / Developer / Matador
VARIOUS ARTISTS / Silencio = Muerte: Red Hot + Latin / RedHot/H.O.L.A.
SOUL PROVIDERS / Soul Tequila / CES-Pure
SUPERGRASS / In It For The Money / Capitol
SUPERSUCKERS / Must've Been High / Sub Pop
THIRD EYE FOUNDATION / Ghost / Merge
JEREMY TOBACK / Perfect Flux Thirg / RCA
UGLY BEAUTY / The Sweetness / Atlantic



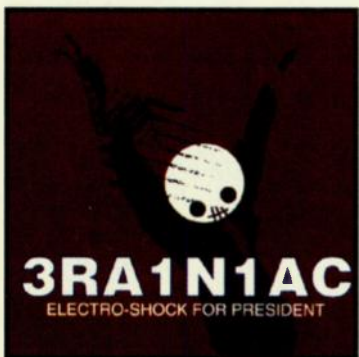
DATALOG: Released May 20.

FILE UNDER: Tune in, turn on, drop the beat.

R.I.Y.L.: Expanded consciousness, *Myth: Dreams Of The World*, Allen Ginsberg.

VARIOUS ARTISTS / Beyond Life With Timothy Leary / Mercury

During his life, Timothy Leary was all about transcendence, so it's no wonder he's speaking from the grave with this new release. "I'm Timothy Leary and I'm 75 years old, and... I believe that I just now have died—it was a wonderful experience, awesome," Leary is manipulated into saying at the onset of "Afterlife," the first track on this cut-and-paste collection of the acid prophet's words. Co-producer David Silver cuts up Leary's language, and Jim Wilson—who has produced ambient records for the Triloka label—floats those thoughts in trancey electronic textures. On "While Birds Sing" and "Fifty Million Years," Leary follows his favorite topic, the human link to the beginning of time. Leary's lyrics about neurons on "Star Light" are juxtaposed with astrophysicist Dr. Fiorella Terenzi's musings about galaxies. It's a hopeful record: "Goodbye, Goodbye," the most death-obsessed track here, is just as upbeat as the opening cut-up. The record closes with a trio of outsiders: First the Moody Blues dredge up a horrible new version of their "Legend Of A Mind (Timothy Leary Lives)," then poet Allen Ginsberg has more luck reading "A Tale Of The Tribe," the preface from his 1967 poem "Jail Notes." The album closes on a more raucous note, as Ministry's Al Jourgensen, Paul Barker and Rey Washam mix it up with Leary's words. *TOM ROE*



DATALOG: Released Apr. 1.

FILE UNDER: American industry gone crazy.

R.I.Y.L.: Suicide, Devo, Throbbing Gristle.

BRAINIAC / Electro-Shock For President (EP) / Touch And Go

On its earlier records, the handsomely-clothed Brainiac was an equally handsome junction point between the organic and the technological, ramming power electronics deep into a fissure at the heart of art-damaged punk rock. With this abbreviated six-track sortie, the organic gets tossed out the window as Brainiac plunges whole-hog into the deep vat of their power electronics side. Hard, cold, mechanical, at times sounding like fax machine and Xerox unit noises set to boom-crash beats, *Electro-Shock For President* is the sound of early '80s Moog pop having its melodic heart violently ripped out of its chest. It's the Static Age being given a voice, and that voice is screaming for help. Shocking, violent, and sinister, this record is not for anyone on heart medicine, anti-depressants or even Alka-Seltzer Cold Formula. Still, since the noises it makes so closely resemble the shrieks and pulses of scrambled cable TV signals, *Electro-Shock* might be a soothing balm should you ever enter in a dispute with Time-Warner. This is good stuff, and an interesting detour for an already fine band. *TIM STEGALL*

various artists

For the 50th release on Superchunk's label Merge, they invited Mark Robinson (of TeenBeat and Air Miami) to remix their song "Precision Auto" for a single. Fifty more releases later, *Merge 100* is a CD comprised of Robinson's wild reconstructions of songs by six bands on the label's roster. Superchunk's "Eastern Terminal" has nearly all



the guitar stripped out of it and gets its remaining parts re-channeled into a dry, almost gothic sound—about as far from the band's familiar style as the song could go. Even

better is the Magnetic Fields' "Smoke And Mirrors," re-cast from a gloomy ballad into a gloomy Hi-NRG disco track... The soundtrack to *Grosse Pointe Blank* (London) mostly looks like a mix tape made for a freshman-year girlfriend, circa 1987: reggae from The Clash, 2-Tone classics from the Specials and the English Beat, Faith No More's "We Care A Lot," etc. The ringers are a techno'd up remix of Pete Townshend's "Let My Love Open The Door" and Violent Femmes' bizarre re-recording of their signature tune "Blister In The Sun" (the original appears too); the only really bad idea is Guns N' Roses' "Live & Let Die."... The third volume of the *Las Vegas Grind* series has just come out on CD (Strip/Crypt), with 30 scuzzily recorded, cheap-cigarette-scented, nipple-tassel-twirling instrumentals from the dark side of the Eisenhower era. None of the bands on it ever made the slightest hint of an impact, but every one of them is fabulously sleazephonnic... *Volume 17* (Volume) marks the fifth anniversary of the perennial British compilation series with a double-disc set, mostly surveying the U.K. scene with a few glances at America (like new tracks from Throwing Muses and Morphine). Highlights include Elastica's first new recording in a couple of years, the Stereolab/High Llamas collaboration Turn-On doing a burbly instrumental, and Elvis Costello covering (and salvaging) Sleeper's "What Do I Do Now?"... *Songs In The Key Of Springfield* (Rhino) is a collection of original music from *The Simpsons*, most of it models of compact silliness—almost none of these tracks break the two-minute mark. If you've ever wanted to spice up a mix tape with the "Stop This Planet Of The Apes"/"Rock Me Dr. Zaius" medley, "The Monorail Song" or the *Schoolhouse Rock!* parody "The Amendment Song," here you go. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

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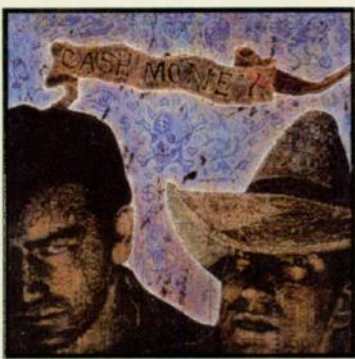
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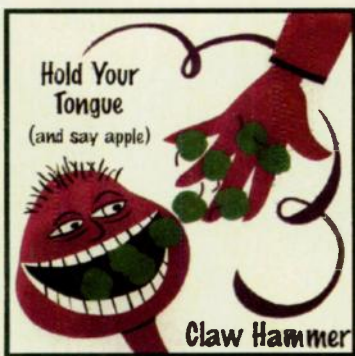
CASH MONEY / Black Hearts And Broken Wills / Touch And Go

Cash Money, a two-piece guitar/drums band with a surprisingly dynamic, textured sound, plays a kind of fuzzy country blues. Not some fancy postmodern variety or half-assed replication, but country blues as filtered through forty-odd years of rock 'n' roll, until it's not some rip-off but a distant relative that's obviously also kin to the ferocious Chicago rock scene it sprang out of. A concentrated rhythm kicks in from the first moment of *Black Hearts*, rolling along throughout with an energy that lies between the instruments—locked together so seamlessly, it's as though they were a singular entity with a very low center of gravity. The drive comes in the form of a push and pull between the instruments: a little tease, a little restraint, then a big release. *Black Hearts And Broken Wills* isn't a stunning revelation; it doesn't make a case for itself as a next-big-thing, nor does its momentum sustain itself at a constant pace throughout; there are definite peaks and valleys. But it's rock-solid and sturdy as hell. **RANDALL ROBERTS**

DATALOG: Released Apr. 1.

FILE UNDER: Knuckle-draggin', drunk-ass, rocked-up blues.

R.I.Y.L.: Mule, Doo Rag, Bassholes.



CLAW HAMMER / Hold Your Tongue (And Say Apple) / Interscope

After six albums spent under a well-lit, high-fidelity roof, Claw Hammer's relocation to the dustier, dimly-illuminated abode of Memphis legend Jim Dickinson is a bold one. Dickinson, who's sprinkled his down-home gris-gris through epochal recordings ranging from *Sticky Fingers* to *Pleased To Meet Me*, has similarly led Claw Hammer down a rockier, more treacherous recording path, but refrained from dicking around with the band's essence. As ever, the sound of Claw Hammer is the sound of *Trout Mask Replica* on a collision course with the Voidoids, with chief Hammer Jon Wahl still shrieking like a post-castration-and-shock-therapy Richard Hell. This time, though, Dickinson has smeared liberal amounts of rib grease, chicken fat, BBQ sauce and extra-chunky Mississippi mud across the band's once-pristine surfaces. The results are still as spiky, rocking, sick and dope-damaged as any other Claw Hammer record, but there's something warmer, dirtier and heavier about what's lying in the grooves. The Howling Wolf always inherent in the band's heavy Beefheart influence howls even louder now, without the grad-school condescension usually prevalent when alternarockers decide it'd be hip and funny to play the blues. It's unbelievably cool, without even trying. **TIM STEGALL**

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22.

FILE UNDER: Punk-damaged avant blues-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Captain Beefheart's *Trout Mask Replica*, Richard Hell, Speedball Baby, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.



DEAD FUCKING LAST / Grateful... / Epitaph

Nearly everyone has heard a band that sounds like Dead Fucking Last, probably in the form of a quartet of sullen local boys at a punk rock matinee. Most people have a band like DFL living somewhere on their block, their drum thumps and guitar squawks occasionally audible from behind the garage door. A good percentage of *CMJ*'s readership, and probably a solid majority of its writers, have even played in bands that sound just like DFL (I'm not exempt). After all, it doesn't take a lot of effort to round up a few individuals with guitars and 15-watt practice amps who can also keep a beat, a vocalist who can shout loudly and rhythmically, a take-no-shit attitude, a couple dozen two-minute songs consisting of power chords and adrenaline, and a single microphone with which to record the proceedings. I don't mean to sound dismissive—it's an important rite of passage for teenaged rockers—it's just that the results usually don't wind up getting released on CD. So why has Epitaph chosen to privilege DFL over this nation's thousands of other basement thrashers? Evidently because long, long ago the Beastie Boys' Ad-Rock used to front DFL, and he still vouches for the remnants. Cool, but that doesn't mean you should shell out money for it. **DAVID JARMAN**

DATALOG: Released Apr. 1.

FILE UNDER: Hardcore underachievers.

R.I.Y.L.: Proto-Beastie Boys, Meatmen covers, local hardcore matinees.

mixed signals

It's odd to find the face of British chanteuse **Nicolette** on the latest edition of *DJ-Kicks* (!K7), a series that has highlighted the skills of international deck wizards such as C.J. Bolland, Stacey Pullen and Claude Young.



Sure, she's a stirring vocalist who's made a name for herself through recordings with Massive Attack and various solo releases, but c'mon... she ain't no DJ. Then again, this double-disc effort doesn't really attempt to place her among the great names DJ-Kicks has touted in the past. This is an experiment. Can a non-DJ pick some tracks, get some help on the technical stuff (Ed Handley and Andy Turner from Plaid lend a hand), and pull it off? How well she succeeds depends on your standards. This is a straight-up compilation at best: a smattering of Nicolette's favorite soft house, hard techno, drum 'n' bass, trip-hop and ambient tunes, blended into a "set" of sorts with little more than a

spoken-word segue between tracks. But as far as compilations go, it's pretty wacky. The styles fly from all angles with no noticeable rhyme or reason (nowhere else will you find Nicolette's own laid-back grooves followed by the bombastic attacks of Digital Hardcore artists Alec Empire and Shizuo). It doesn't even attempt to mimic the flow of the typical DJ experience—it's a disc that either challenges the rules, or just plain cheats, depending on how you want to look at it... If the sounds from your favorite jungle clubs have started to resemble a *Hellraiser* soundtrack, then you have felt the touch of U.K. techstep producers **Ed Rush**, **DJ Trace**, and **Nico**. Matching brisk breakbeats with haunting samples, deep, devious basslines, and a hard, technofied, wall-bleeding backdrop of noise and melodies, this team was the first to breathe life into the dark side of drum 'n' bass. *Torque* (No U-Turn) is a compilation featuring original compositions by the infamous, influential trio. Disc one presents the tracks untouched, but disc two drops the live Ed Rush mix: more than 70 minutes of intense, eerie, evil jungle vibes that will tear your mind to shreds as soon as you drop your guard. Proceed with caution. *M. TYE COMER*



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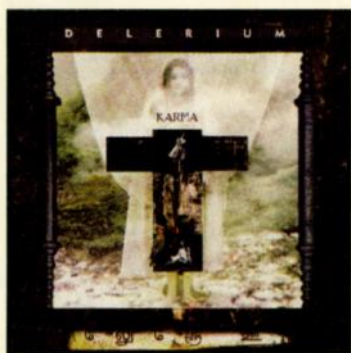


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World Radio History

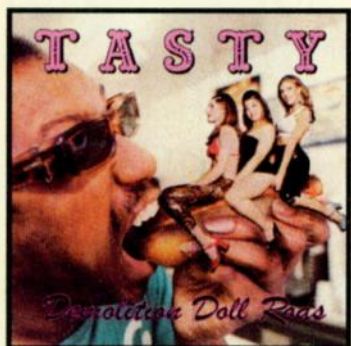


DELERIUM / Karma / Nettwerk ●

While much has been made of the encroaching electronica revolution, little has been said about how some of its principles have quietly integrated themselves in the pop world. Take Delerium, the long running electro-ambient side project from Bill Leeb and Rhys Fulber of Front Line Assembly, which folds copious samples and machine beats into a lulling pop concoction of strong female vocals (from Sarah McLachlan, Single Gun Theory's Jacqui Hunt and Rose Chronicles' Kristy Thirsk) and pygmy chants that suddenly seems very hip right now. This ground has been trodden before, but that doesn't diminish *Karma's* most pleasing attributes. The pygmy samples are tastefully integrated, as are the handful of samples

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22.
FILE UNDER: Ethno-ambient dance pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Enigma, Everything But The Girl, Sarah McLachlan, Björk.

of Dead Can Dance; in fact, an electro-pop version of Dead Can Dance is what *Karma* most closely resembles, blending a variety of influences into something original. On "Silence," a sexy undercurrent of flamenco guitar tugs at McLachlan's plainly sensual performance, with Gregorian chants wafting overhead. And Hunt's "Euphoria (Firefly)" combines pygmy chants with stabs of Soul II Soul-like synthesized strings and pop vocal phrasings that wouldn't seem out of place on the next Madonna album. Yes, this is pop, circa: now. **SCOTT FRAMPTON**



DEMOLITION DOLL RODS / Tasty / In The Red

Tinny off-key vocals, cigar box drumming, primitive hoodoo rhythms, fuzzy feedback guitar straight out of the most cluttered '60s garage—so what's not to like about Detroit's trashy minimalist trio, the Demolition Doll Rods? They rehash that quasi-rockabilly Cramps schematic almost to the point of plagiarism, but they do it *well*, which is half the creative battle. (Of course, having Jon Spencer as co-producer didn't do their case any harm, either.) The reference points are all Russ Meyer kitschy—stock cars, drag races, cheap sex—delivered with distorted, slutty panache by shrieking vocalist Margaret. She yowls her ooh-ah-ing way through a little dominatrix yarn called "Maverick Girl" until you can almost hear the crack of the cat o' nine tails right overhead, while the cheap-chorded "Wild Child" celebrates a "lovmaking, heartbreaking, soulshaking" trumpy existence that'd do Cherie Currie herself proud. That's the one key ingredient here: believability. The Rods (including drag-queen guitarist Danny and blind, metronomic skin-slapper Christine) sound like they mean every nasty, atavistic note. They also sound like they'd be a hell of a lot of fun to invite to your next triple-kegger. **TOM LANHAM**

DATALOG: Released Apr. 1.
FILE UNDER: Houserockin' shockabilly.
R.I.Y.L.: Cramps, Gories, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, '68 Comeback.



ANI DIFRANCO / Living In Clip / Righteous Babe

Ani DiFranco has recorded herself live over two years and 300 dates, and the resulting two-CD set displays her impressive acoustic chops, her poetic, caustic, and witty lyrics, and her irrepressible spontaneity. A catchy new song, "Gravel," starts the record with a tale of both "abhorring" and "adoring" a scoundrel; DiFranco is, familiarly, fighting with herself, with insight, humor, and most important, drop-dead honesty. "Shy" is a hot, explosive number with evocative details in all the places where a thousand lesser songwriters (hello, Melissa Etheridge) would fill in clichés. Elsewhere, her capacity for reinvention suggests promising new avenues: "Every State Line," a Springsteen-esque road tale, becomes haunting and melodically new; a full-orchestra version of "Amazing Grace" is simply stunning. She amply displays both the reasons for the adulation in which her audience holds her, and with her healthy sense of humor, a lack of pretension about it. Her partnership with drummer Andy Stochansky has been fleshed out to include a bassist; Sara Lee (Gang Of Four, B-52's) plays on much of this set, adding propulsive drive. While DiFranco's lyrics can be vengefully serious, the songs themselves are rarely labored, and flow from a deep inner well where self-worth is balanced by self-irony. Is it any wonder men *and* women find her so sexy? **DANNY HOUSMAN**

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22.
FILE UNDER: Alt.Folk.Mod.
R.I.Y.L.: Mid-'60s Dylan, Ben Harper, Indigo Girls.

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CESARIA EVORA / Cabo Verde / Nonesuch

The *morna*, Cape Verde's signature song style, is ripe with emotion, but that emotion is not always the languid mournfulness its name suggests. In the hands of Cape Verde's barefoot diva Cesaria Evora, the *morna* has room for melancholy, joy and all the other hangers-on of love and longing. On her second domestic release (following a handful of European discs and her Grammy-nominated U.S. debut), the mood is often somber, but there is always a bright rhythm or a honeyed melody lifting the songs. Even if Portuguese Creole isn't your native tongue, it's unlikely that one could feel disconnected from Evora's delivery. Reviews that have likened her voice to a cross between Billie Holiday's sweetness and Sarah Vaughn's infinite warmth aren't overstatements, but the way that voice wraps around *Cabo Verde's* simple, Continental arrangements (breezy high-string guitars and piano) reveals such comparisons to be flimsy reference points at best. This is a singer who neither shouts nor whispers to convey the depth

of her emotion, yet whose graceful prowess manages to unload a lifetime of sorrows and successes. *STEVE CIABATTONI*

DATALOG: Released Mar. 18.

FILE UNDER: Cape Verdean cabaret.

R.I.Y.L.: Antonio Carlos Jobim, Nina Simone, the *Telling Stories To The Sea* compilation.



EDITH FROST / Calling Over Time / Drag City

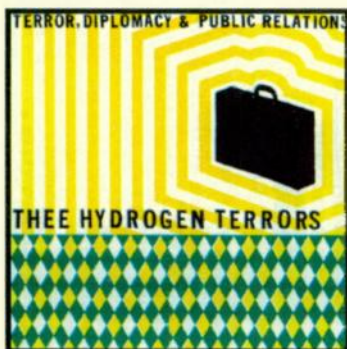
There's a single, oppressive tone to Edith Frost's *Calling Over Time*, one that murmurs in the background of every song, creeps into the scant instrumentation and drenches the music with sorrow. Mostly, this resignation is in Frost's voice, the centerpiece of *Calling Over Time*. It creates the melodies and provides the hooks. It whispers, hums and warbles as it permeates the room, filling every dusty corner with its alluring tone. Underneath lies an occasional piano, organ, bass, pedal steel, high hat, or violin to accompany her acoustic guitar. But the music never overshadows Frost; it just sits in the background adding exclamations and question marks, underlining phrases and subtly shifting the mood of her voice.

Calling Over Time takes patience. Unlike her more digestible four-song EP of last year, it's a bit overwhelming to consume all at once because the tone is relentlessly consistent: There's little anger in her voice, so all the drama comes from the words she's singing: "I started to twine a line around you/It's cut with every goodbye/With every time I've felt the wash of water/Hotter and hotter." But *that voice* is so enticing that the listener is left with little choice but to listen again; it's then that *Calling Over Time* reveals itself. *RANDALL ROBERTS*

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22.

FILE UNDER: Melancholy acoustic mellowness.

R.I.Y.L.: Mazzy Star, Kendra Smith, Palace, Tarnation.



THEE HYDROGEN TERRORS / Terror, Diplomacy & Public Relations / Load

Less a psychotic pastiche of Chicago punk rock than the band's previous output, *Terror...* finds Providence, Rhode Island's Thee Hydrogen Terrors leaning into a consistent groove, borrowing less from their record collections and more from their own inner demons. With an almost staggering buoyancy and bounce in its riff-based rock bombardment, Thee Terrors' songwriting vacillates between endless distorted vocal tirades and brief dramatic flickers. (The latter is demonstrated well by the 24-second "Iced Coffee," which screeches the title a few times under tweetering and cymbal crashes and then gracefully ducks out.) It's funny and simple, but not silly or trite—it's more that the band's using similar tools to greater success than most others that have gone before it in recent days. This kind of rock runs the risk of becoming buried under a gimmick or getting lost in a "camp," which Thee Terrors are too good to fall prey to, even at their drollest. (The album's thank-yous, for instance, and pretty much everything you'd

want to know, are included in an almost four-minute long narrated "bonus track" near the end.) Lyrical themes here include art, politics, and Mexicans, or at least that's what it sounds like under all the sonic wreckage. *LIZ CLAYTON*

DATALOG: Released Mar. 11.

FILE UNDER: Snappy, sardonic rock 'n' roll.

R.I.Y.L.: Pere Ubu, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Six Finger Satellite.

Quelle heure est-il?



Atari Teenage Riot



CD/DLP Available April 22

Burn, Berlin, Burn!



Ben Lee

Something To Remember Me By

CD/DLP Available May 20

bis



CD/Cass/LP+7" Available May 6

the new transistor heroes



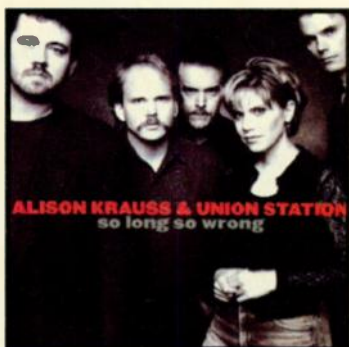
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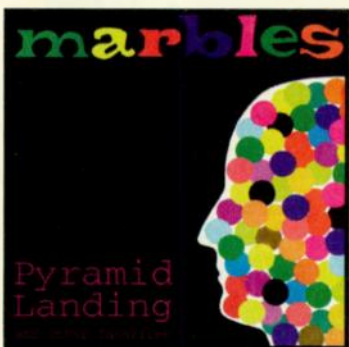


ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION / So Long So Wrong / Rounder

Alison Krauss's stars aligned in 1995, when she and her pop-savvy bluegrass band Union Station were thrust into the spotlight with *Now That I've Found You*. That best-of sampler introduced the world to a fiddler and singer of rare talent, and with wide-ranging taste in material: from the Beatles to Bad Company, Krauss gave the songs a gentle Appalachian swing. With an album cover that's an homage to AC/DC's *Highway To Hell*, *So Long So Wrong* assures Krauss's fans that her success was no fluke, while showing off the band's versatility. Krauss, who has refused repeated entreaties to go solo, struggles to prove that Union Station is integral to her sound by allowing banjoist Ron Block and guitarist Dan Tyminski to take lead vocals on a few cuts. They sing respectably, but the collective's best asset is her exquisite voice, which only improves with age. On "Looking In The Eyes Of Love," Krauss moves from an intimate whisper to a heart-rending croon at just the right moments. The band's skilled playing,

DATALOG: Released Mar. 18.
FILE UNDER: Modern bluegrass.
R.I.Y.L.: Keith Whitley, Vic Chesnutt, Bill Monroe.

the memorable production (somehow they always sound like they're playing in a church) and Krauss's unerring ear for songs that work as bluegrass make *So Long So Wrong*—happily—almost indistinguishable from its predecessor. **CHRIS MOLANPHY**

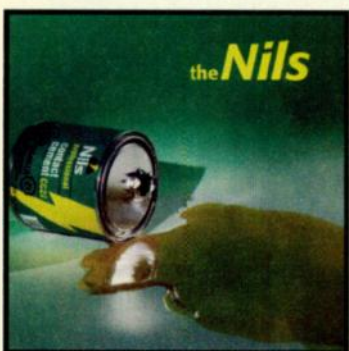


MARBLES / Pyramid Landing / spinArt

Maybe it's not cool to have volume on your records anymore. But after six spins through this solo album by Apples In Stereo frontguy Robert Schneider, I still can't hear half the record, and I set the EQ on my boom-box to "Rock" and everything. That's too bad, because some of these songs are totally great. "Sun To Shine" recalls the classic stompers of Bricks; "Death To My Bride" is a stone improvement of the Police's "Invisible Sun." Schneider is a master of the four-track recorder, a tape-compression pro who's figured out how to squeeze every shade of treble from magnetic media. That's good news to those of us without tinnitus, though anyone from the "I like to hear the drums" school might be a bit put off by a record that makes Guided By

DATALOG: Released Feb. 25.
FILE UNDER: Home-recorded teenage symphonies.
R.I.Y.L.: Apples In Stereo, Todd Rundgren, Beach Boys Party.

Voices sound like U2. *Pyramid Landing* exhibits the sharp, sunny songwriting that made the Apples a cult item. It's just so deliberately low-key that its best song, "Go Marilee" (an absolute pop smash waiting to happen for some alternative rocker with a bad cred rating), is buried toward the end of the album. Bright-eyed and boppy, *Pyramid Landing* isn't for everyone, but for Apples fans, it's an appealing peek behind the "Genius At Work" sign on Schneider's laboratory. **ANDREW BEAUJON**



THE NILS / Green Fields In Daylight / Mag Wheel

The history of punk rock is a tale of parallel development. Pockets of misfits everywhere grew tired of being sneered at, grew sick of the depressing state of mainstream music, and decided that they wanted to be anarchy—not to cause it, but to embody it. And underage Montreal suburbanite Alex Soria couldn't help it that when he heard the Sex Pistols and Dills in '78 and decided he was gonna seek out the mid-point between strumming and power-chording in the Nils, similar minds were at work in Minneapolis (Husker Du) and the California beach communities (the Last). When the Nils' sole American album came out in '87, it sounded like they were merely aping the folky-hearted pogo-pop then prevalent in Minneapolis. As anyone can hear from this distillation of early singles, EPs, live tapes, compilation tracks, and demos from across the band's history, it was more like punk rock synchronicity. Soria and the band never fully digested the anthemic punk they pilfered from Mott The

DATALOG: Released Mar. 25.
FILE UNDER: Great lost moments in punk history.
R.I.Y.L.: Dream Syndicate, Superchunk, The Last.

Hoople and pill-and-scooters-era Who, so tracks like "Scratches And Needles" and "Fountains" bear more fist-in-the-air power than their flannel-shirted contemporaries or even their offspring could muster. This is an excellent window into a lost fragment of punk history, and a fitting testimony to the Nils' strength and glory. **TIM STEGALL**

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PAPAS FRITAS / HelioSELF / Minty Fresh

Papas Fritas has aged quite a bit in the past two years. While the band's eponymous debut sounded like a basement tape sendup of mid-'60s bubblegum pop, *HelioSELF* has a lushness more reminiscent of early '70s AM radio hits. Part of the difference in sound quality can be attributed to guitarist Tony Goddess' new home studio, located in a former Montessori school in Gloucester, MA. The rich overtones created by its high ceilings make the songs on *HelioSELF* come off more saccharine sweet than cardboard cute. The surfy guitar and falsetto harmonies of "We've Got All Night" and "Live By The Water" show the influence of *Pet Sounds*-era Beach Boys; "Hey Hey You Say" suggests a bouncy Paul McCartney number from his early solo years.

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22.
FILE UNDER: Reconstituted '70s bubblegum pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Paul McCartney, Badfinger.

The members of Papas Fritas have also improved as instrumentalists. Goddess is now proficient at piano, and accentuates a Hammond organ or Rhodes keyboard in many of these arrangements. Shivka Asthana's drumming is more assured and less stiff. Even bassist Keith Gendel locks into

the beat better. It's hardly surprising that on the last number, "Starting To Be It," Goddess takes a subtle pot shot at sloppy and raucous grunge bands—"Losing my hearing by listening to last year"—because Papas Fritas' pop is getting more refined all the time. *NEIL GLADSTONE*



POSTER CHILDREN / RTFM / Reprise

After honing their manifesto-driven guitar attack for the better part of a decade to a somewhat underwhelmed public response, it's a wonder the Poster Children still have their heart in it. But it's also a blessing: *RTFM* is their best album of the past few years. Not as puzzlingly dancey as 1995's *Junior Citizen* (that's saved for their new techno side project, Salaryman), *RTFM* delivers on all of the Poster Children's finer points: momentum, intricate composition, and the ability to write fantastically *droning* pop songs. They balance a knack for suspense with an unfettered desire to completely rock out. The band's great songs are the ones whose anthemic qualities really cohere with the bones of the song itself, rather than the few that instead seem overwhelmed by their ideological content. "21st Century" manages both to sound very '80s at times (maybe because it's condemning "modernity") and to come across both as philosophy and as rock. While continuing in the more bouncy vein of screaming guitar

DATALOG: Released Apr. 22. RTFM = "read the fucking manual."
FILE UNDER: Geek-bred guitar rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Six Finger Satellite, Television, Dylan's Before The Flood.

scorch that the Kids have headed towards in recent years, *RTFM* marries it nicely to their drawn-out droney side, paying equal attention to what they've learned to do best in both courts. *LIZ CLAYTON*



ARCHER PREWITT / In The Sun / Carrot Top

The first solo album by Archer Prewitt, formerly one of the Coctails' masterminds, suggests jazz or even poetry as much as it does the Coctails' pop—it's experimental and ambitious in the purest sense, and strikingly successful. Even in the context of Prewitt's other current musical project, the Sea And Cake, jazzy, boogie-ish numbers like "Rush Hour" and "Work" are wildly long strides from what one might expect. They seem to come from another era, another school of thought entirely; they seem almost "adult." But Prewitt is also down with the groove, and these songs work on a melodic level as well as an intellectual one. The threads between sad, sad, slow songs like "I'm All You Know" and gloriously light,

DATALOG: Released Apr. 28.
FILE UNDER: Low-key pop art.
R.I.Y.L.: Burt Bacharach & Hal David, late Coctails, Cardinal.

stirring pieces like the fantastic instrumental "You Walk By," between the strong and somewhat familiar and the really bold steps, are hard to reconcile, but that's the true beauty of this record. It's all over the map, but not at all scattered. Incredibly intricate, thoughtful but not

academic composition, and a lightness that flows throughout the album are what carry it to its subtly stunning success. *LIZ CLAYTON*

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Chug's closest sonic kin are the 3d's which is not surprising since 3d's guitarist Dave Mitchell is a member of this New Zealand quartet. Bittersweet melodies and spooky male/female vocals interplay with a heaving, unrelenting rhythm section, setting the tempo for a band who has been called New Wave — in all the good ways.

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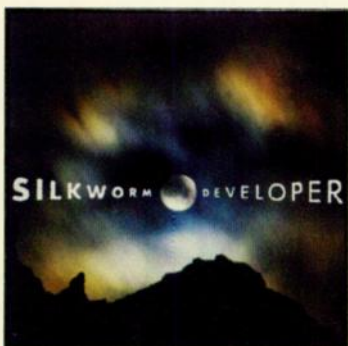
THE SEA AND CAKE / *The Fawn* / Thrill Jockey



DATALOG: Released Mar. 25.
FILE UNDER: Soulful drone.
R.I.Y.L.: Yo La Tengo, Ui, Tortoise.

After three albums as sweet as cake and as gentle as a calm sea, pop-rock-soul combo the Sea And Cake had arguably exhausted the potential for innovation within its circumscribed musical territory. As of last year's *The Biz*, they could easily set the hips to swaying with their breezy guitar riffs and Sam Prekop's carefree drawl, but seemed incapable of putting over a real tune. Their groove hasn't changed much this time around, but it has become a sort of canvas for the rhythmic and textural experiments of S&C drummer and producer (and Tortoise mastermind) John McEntire. Skirting the melody issue, McEntire weaves a network of complex, jungle-ish drumbeats around the almost nothing of "The Argument." Even Prekop's mid-song vocal interlude is nudged along by a steady electric handclap. The beat gets more insistent on the title track, where an organ-driven 4/4 drone and a "do do do" chorus add up to what you might as well call disco. Fans of the earlier records will find *The Fawn* surprisingly dense-sounding, with its base layer of drum and keyboard filling the rests where silence used to be and Prekop's slight, sly voice gone downright swoony. To be sure, the Sea And Cake haven't lost their cool, but they've certainly redefined it. **ANDREA MOED**

SILKWORM / *Developer* / Matador



DATALOG: Released Apr. 8.
FILE UNDER: Highbrow rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Slint, Neil Young, Big Dipper.

Though its stripped-down guitar sound and sharp, clean drumming easily set it apart from the mid-tempo rock crowd, Silkworm's most distinctive feature has always been the interplay between its songwriters. The songs on *Developer*, the second album by the current lineup, seem to have been sequenced to maximize the contrast between bassist Tim Midgett's tersely emotional lyrics and guitarist Andy Cohen's sardonic, anecdotal style. "Give Me Some Skin" opens the record with bare drumbeats, heavy on the reverb, then Midgett, sounding like a less grizzled Neil Young, builds a plea for affection on a somber bassline and the slightest guitar riff. From there, they jolt into "Never Met A Man I Didn't Like," one of Cohen's more explosive and funnier songs, featuring a line in which he asks "my friend Gerard" (label head Gerard Cosloy?) to lend him \$200 for "a good fuck." That in turn, is followed by "The City Glows," a simple ballad that's easily one of Midgett's best. There are a few misses mixed in with the hits, but

Developer is better edited than last year's *Firewater*, and contains some of the band's most memorable output since the three-songwriter days of *Libertine*. **ANDREA MOED**

VARIOUS ARTISTS / *Silencio = Muerte: Red Hot + Latin* / RedHot/H.O.L.A.



DATALOG: Released Apr. 27.
FILE UNDER: Latino metal, folk, punk and funk.
R.I.Y.L.: Red Hot + Rio, Los Lobos, Caifanes, Plugz.

The tenth Red Hot Organization AIDS-awareness compilation comes by way of DJ Jellybean Benitez's new H.O.L.A. (Home of Latino Artists) label. But the music on it is neither as disco nor as purely Latino-oriented as you might expect. *Red Hot + Latin* is about fusions and crossovers, like Beastie Boys pal Money Mark joining Los Lobos for the free-form Tijuana lounge dub of "Pepe & Irene," Argentina's Fabulosos Cadillacs and Fishbone turning "What's New Pussycat" into a lascivious ska rocker, and Youth Brigade helping Cuca graft a little Oi!-boy punk onto the folkish "El Son Del Dolor." Not every track (there are 18 of them) is a winner: Melissa Etheridge putting her high-school Spanish to use on the otherwise MOR "Sin Tener A Donde Ir" is nothing special, and neither is Geggy Tah teaming up with King Chango for a translation of their alternative radio hit "Whoever You Are," which still comes across sounding like a Men At Work update. But there are some real pleasant surprises, like Cibo Matto's groovy acoustic rendition of "Aguas De Marco," the discofied metal of Victimias Del Dr. Cerebro's "Venus," and the rapping posse of Sen Dog, Mellow Man Ace, MC Skeye, Mr. Rico, and DJ Rif, whose hard-hitting "Quien Es Ese Negro" argues for a new gangsta Esperanto with lines like "I get you fucking open like a fucking sambria." **MATT ASHARE**



SOUL PROVIDERS / Soul Tequila / C&S-Pure

In the late '60s and early '70s, James Brown's tour ensemble was a hit factory, cranking out super-tight, superb soul and funk singles by the dozens every month, not just by the Godfather but by shouters and old-timers like Bobby Byrd and Hank Ballard, divas like Marva Whitney, and the crack instrumentalists themselves, as the JB's. Collectors pay ridiculous prices for those records, just so they can have another taste of that sound. Here's a feast of it. The Soul Providers' *raison d'être* is to replicate the Brown sound *exactly*—same guitar and drum and trombone sounds, same kinds of arrangements, same family of chord changes. They do it so gloriously that their first album, last year's *The Return Of Mister Mopoji*, was successfully passed off as a bootleg of a lost JB's blaxploitation/kung fu soundtrack. *Soul Tequila* could easily be a third volume of *James Brown's Funky People*, and it's a kick to imagine it as that: "Steam Train" as Bobby Byrd's follow-up to "Hot Pants... I'm Coming, Coming, I'm

DATALOG: Released Mar. 18. Vinyl version has different tracks.
 FILE UNDER: Time-machine funk.
 R.I.Y.L.: The JB's.

Coming"; "Soul Tequila" as a tossed-off, funk-up cover in the vein of Fred Wesley's "Watermelon Man"; "Switchblade" as a berserkoid one-off funk novelty (with a soul sister teasing "I'll cut you so bad your *mama* won't know you!"). Besides, it's not like the world has enough records that sound like this. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

"People in Bosnia know Grand Funk. They haven't heard any new music of the last six years because there's been a war there." —*New York concert promoter David Fishof, on Grand Funk teaming with the Sarajevo Symphony for concerts in Detroit, Los Angeles, New York and Sarajevo.*

Claw Hammer

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SUPERGRASS / In It For The Money / Capitol ●

On their second album, Supergrass has tempered the unbridled fervor of its punchy, melodic punk with a heavy dose of the Beatles' *Magical Mystery*-era psychedelia. On the title track of *In It For The Money*, a minor melodic guitar riff gives way to a chorus of angelic horns; Gaz Coombes' lilting croon waffles between melancholy and dry disinterest. Three minutes in, the band abruptly cuts things off in mid-chorus, as if it's suddenly realized that the arena-rock sing-a-long has turned into a giant snore. What kicks in, "Richard III," is a fine return to the Supergrass of old, replete with gritty guitar, thuddy bass and a whistling analog synthesizer. The song never really goes anywhere, but its energy is enough to make the track entrancing.

DATALOG: Released May 6.
FILE UNDER: Brassy, Beatles-y pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Squeeze, The Jam, less oblique XTC.

On "Tonight," the trio backs its raw sound with a ballsy brass section to great effect, one of the several occasions on the album where the big sound enhances the band's dynamics. The chipper organ-and-horns arrangement of "Going Out," on the other hand, seems forced and

suffocating. Several of the tracks unfortunately end up in a similar boat—the melodies are plenty promising, but not strong enough to survive the instrumental layering. The pieces of a great album are all there; it's just a matter of putting the puzzle together properly. *NEIL GLADSTONE*



SUPERSUCKERS / Must've Been High / Sub Pop

Arizona snot-punk emigres the Supersuckers have *always* been the jokers in the pack, the delinquents at the back of study hall sneaking copies of *Hustler* and *Mad* between the covers of their remedial reading texts and firing up fatties behind the bleachers. This is both their strength and their weakness, and with this final installment on their Sub Pop contract, it might be working against them. *Must've Been High* is a "country" album, the sound of the 'Suckers finally owning up to their goat-roper wardrobe and high-profile doing-the-hang with Willie and Waylon. And it's impeccably done: There's no doubting the sincerity of their love for country music, nor their ability to take this stylistic detour from their usual nitro-burning

DATALOG: Released Mar. 25.
FILE UNDER: Stoner punk country.
R.I.Y.L.: Bocephus, Steve Earle, Ween's *Twelve Golden Country Greats*.

punkisms with finesse and grace. Still, what gives country music much of its strength and power is its sincerity: Country songs are real-life tales from the lives of its performers and their audience, and if you're not genuine in your delivery, you're an utter failure. Every lyric on *Must've*

Been High is as hilarious as any other Supersuckers lyric, but this band's sense of humor has always been wiseguy-brutal. It's that smirk in the Supersuckers' delivery that holds the album back from being the artistic success it could have been. *TIM STEGALL*

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THIRD EYE FOUNDATION / Ghost / Merge

Jungle massive, as they say. Noise is massive too, and ex-Flying Saucer Attack member Matt Elliott's group Third Eye Foundation broke ground on its first few records by combining his old band's abstract, radiant guitar noise with drum 'n' bass beats and sound effects that gave the raw sound direction and power. The ghost on Third Eye Foundation's third album (and American debut)—the absent thing that makes itself felt—is the guitar, which Elliott reportedly set aside altogether for this record. Instead, his instrumental rhythms are augmented by a host of other hovering drones and squealing and buzzing noises. Some are identifiable, like a snatch of oboe and a stretched-orchestral attack that recur through the gently wobbling "Ghosts..." Most aren't, though "The Star's Gone Out" (a guest track performed by Foehn) seems to be built on the creak of a metal gate. *Ghost* isn't really a break from the earlier 3EF aesthetic, especially since Elliott treats his new sound-sources as if they were the guitars of

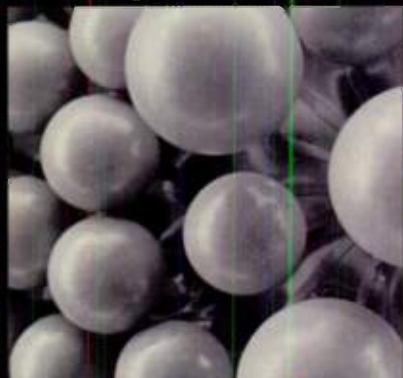
DATALOG: Released Apr. 22.
FILE UNDER: Hyperactive drone.
R.I.Y.L.: *The Breakbeat Science* compilation, Flying Saucer Attack, Underworld.

his first few records, and reuses elements he's put into the mix before ("I've Seen The Light And It's Dark," in particular, has a kinship to the earlier single "Semtex"). Still, it sounds less like he's repeating himself than like he's further developing a vocabulary of sounds and rhythms. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

"They consider the Mexican Transvestite Wrestlers show 'simulating a sex act.' It's certainly like no sex act I've ever seen." —Jim Rose, on his arrest, and that of performers from the Jim Rose Circus, following a performance in Lubbock, Texas.

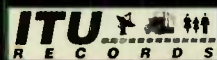
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JEREMY TOBACK / Perfect Flux Thing / RCA

Forget whatever recollections you may have of Jeremy Toback from his days as the bassist in Stone Gossard's Pearl Jam side-project, Brad. On his solo debut, Toback has returned to playing the kind of dramatic guitar ballads that dominated his early, pre-Brad career. When you read Toback's list of his influences—"The Byrds and Thelonious Monk, T.S. Eliot and nursery rhyme, Norman Rockwell and Jackson Pollock"—it's clear that he's got something specific in mind. He wants his songs to be immediately appealing, moving, hummable. You can hear it in the familiar shift from gentle strumming to all-out rocking, the forceful rhythmic thrust that supports the more aggressive chord-work and the soulful, twangy vocals. At the same time, Toback strives to be interesting and unconventional like Monk, Eliot or Pollock. To that end, he has some small successes: His songs are lush and sweeping and, occasionally, he consciously evades ordinary lyrical patterns. Still, the stream-of-consciousness never flows too far from the run-of-the-mill, and you can't help but to imagine that the Ivy League-educated Toback is smarter than his songs let on. But his attempt to write songs that combine the accessible and the complex is artistically ambitious, and even though he succeeds in the former more often than the latter, that's still quite an accomplishment. *JENNY ELISCU*

DATALOG: Released Apr. 15.
FILE UNDER: Rock music for grown-ups.
R.I.Y.L.: Dave Matthews Band, Hayden.

UGLY BEAUTY / The Sweetness / Atlantic

Remember Cell? It's probably just as well if you don't, but it was a Sonic Youth-sanctioned NYC noise-guitar outfit that released two ill-fated albums in the early '90s. The experience apparently scared Cell guitarist Jerry DiRienzo straight back to the Rock 101 basics with Ugly Beauty, in the company of a fine-voiced songwriting partner, singer/guitarist Christy Schnabel. Ugly Beauty eschews the feedback freakouts and wah-wah-thickened textural excursions that defined Cell's messy approach in favor of straightforward, largely unadorned verse-chorus-verse arrangements and tastefully stripped-down production. So it's up to Schnabel to make the trip worthwhile, and she delivers with an alluring voice rich in blues-inflected attitude. In theory, the result could have sounded an awful lot like Concrete Blonde. But Schnabel's vocals resonate with an artless warmth that Johnette Napolitano's never managed to find. She's tough enough to stand her ground on a punky rocker like "LaLaLa," but it's on the gentler ballads like "Way Down" and "Forgotten" that Schnabel really shines or, rather, smolders. After the final beautiful verse of the disc's closing number, the acoustic "Forgotten Too," the very idea of Cell should be a distant memory. *MATT ASHARE*



DATALOG: Released May 6.
FILE UNDER: Moody post-post-punk rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Patti Smith Group, Concrete Blonde, early Blondie.

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MOG STUNT TEAM Amphetamine *Reptile*
SERVOTRON Moog Cookbook Remixes *Amphetamine Reptile*
LOWERCASE Kill The Lights *Amphetamine Reptile*
GINGER Suddenly I Came To My Senses *Nettwerk*
CHARLES GAYLE Delivered **2.13.61-Thirsty Ear**
MARKY RAMONE AND THE INTRUDERS
Marky Ramone And The Intruders *Thirsty Ear*
MATTHEW SHIPP Flow Of X **2.13.61-Thirsty Ear**
BOOGIEMONSTERS God Sound *EMI*
MIKE SCOTT *Chrysalis-EMI*
STAVESACRE Absolutes *Tooth & Nail*
LEO KOTTKE The Leo Kottke Anthology *Rhino*
TOM LEHRER Songs & More Songs By Tom Lehrer *Rhino*
BLOODSTONE The Very Best Of Bloodstone *Rhino*
BUSH TETRAS Beauty Lies *Tim/Kerr*
MAN RAY Casual Thinking *Tim/Kerr*
MISS RED FLOWERS Miss Red Flowers *Tim/Kerr*
BIS The New Transistor Heroes *Grand Royal-Capitol*
SUPERGRASS In It For The Money *Capitol*
SOUNDTRACK Kissed *Unforseen-Nettwerk*
DJ SNEAK Buggin Da Breaks *Moonshine*
CARL COX F.A.C.T. II *Moonshine*
BENNET Supernatural *Roadrunner*
LEFT HAND SOLUTION Fevered *Nuclear Blast*
EMPIRION Advanced Technology *Beggars Banquet*
GUIDED BY VOICES "Bulldog Skin" (7") *Matador*
MAGNET Don't Be A Penguin *PC Music*

MAY 13

MOD#ST MOUSE The Fruit That Ate Itself *K*
SOME VELVET SIDEWALK Generate! *K*
GO NUTS Robert Earl Hughes *Lookout!*
BLATZ AND FILTH Shit Split And More (reissue) *Lookout!*
COTTON CLUB "Nu Jack" (12") *Adrenalin*

MAY 20

EDDIE MURPHY Eddie Murphy's Greatest Comedy Hits *Columbia*
TOAD THE WET SPROCKET Coil *Columbia*
COWARD Coward *Elektra-EEG*
THE CUNNINGHAMS *Revolution*
HAZEL Ariana *Candy Ass*
SMOG Red Apple Falls *Drag City*
SKUNK ANANSI Stoosh *Epic*
FOO FIGHTERS The Color And The Shape *Roswell-Capitol*
PAUL MCCARTNEY Flaming Pie *Capitol*
THERION A'arab Zaraq Lucid Dreaming *Nuclear Blast*
LUNAR DRIVE Here At Black Mesa, Arizona *Beggars Banquet*
STERLING MOSS Monster Lingo *Beggars Banquet*
GUIDED BY VOICES Mag Earwhig! *Matador*
DANDY WARHOLS Come Down *Tim/Kerr*
MICHAEL STIRLING *Tim/Kerr*

MAY 27

CHANTAL KREVIAZUK Under These Rocks And Stones *Columbia*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Ovum Sampler *Ovum-Ruffhouse/Columbia*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Poptopia! The '70s, '80s & '90s *Rhino*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Murder Is My Beat: Classic Film Noir Themes
Turner-Rhino
VARIOUS ARTISTS Cha Cha Cabaret *K*
DIMMU BORGIR Enthroned Darkness Triumphant *Nuclear Blast*
GROOVIE GHOULIES Running With Bigfoot *Lookout!*
MR. T EXPERIENCE (reissues) *Lookout!*
AUNTIE CHRIST Life Could Be A Dream *Lookout!*

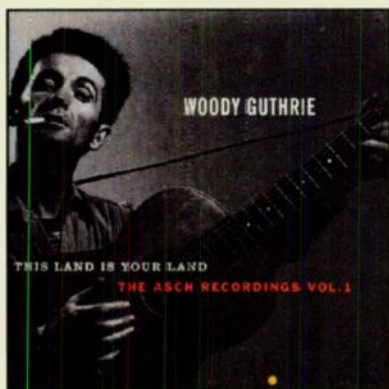
TOP 75

| Alternative Radio Airplay |



ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	SAVIMENT	Brighten The Corners Matador-Capitol
2	MORPHINE	Lake Swimming Rykodisc-DreamWorks
3	BLUR	Blur Virgin
4	HELMET	Aftertaste Interscope
5	SOUNDTRACK	Lost Highway Nothing-Interscope
6	MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES	Let's Face It Mercury
7	BLONDI REDHEAD	Fake Can Be Just As Good Touch And Go
8	BEN FOLDS FIVE	Whatever And Ever Amen Caroline-550
9	NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS	The Boatman's Call Reprise
10	BIS	This Is Teen-C Power! (EP) Grand Royal
11	DAVID BOWIE	Earthling Virgin
12	ELLIOTT SMITH	Either/Or Kill Rock Stars
13	SHUDDER TO THINK	50,000 B.C. Epic
14	JAMES	Whiplash Fontana-Mercury
15	BUILT TO SPILL	Perfect From Now On Warner Bros.
16	L7	The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum Slash-Reprise
17	SNEAKER PIMPS	Becoming X Clean Up-Virgin
18	VERUCA SALT	Eight Arms To Hold You Minty Fresh-Outpost
19	MOBY	Animal Rights Elektra-EEG
20	LIVE	Secret Samadhi Radioactive
21	TIPSY	Trip Tease: The Seductive Sounds Of Topsy Asphodel
22	FOLK IMPLOSION	"Pole Position" (5") Communion
23	ATARI TEENAGE RIOT	Burn, Berlin, Burn! Digital Hardcore-Grand Royal
24	PORTASTATIC	The Nature Of Sap Merge
25	BJORK	Telegram Elektra-EEG
26	POLARA	C'est La Vie Interscope
27	CIBO MATTO	Super Relax (EP) Warner Bros.
28	RED RED MEAT	There's A Star Above The Manger Tonight Sub Pop
29	U2	Pop Island
30	TAKAKO MINEKAWA	Roomie Cube March
31	PANASONIC	Kulma Blast First-Mute
32	HOVERCRAFT	Akathisia Blast First-Mute
33	ORB	Orblivion Island
34	HANDSOME	Handsome Epic
35	NUMBER ONE CUP	Wrecked By Lions Flydaddy
36	R.L. BURNSIDE	Mr. Wizard Fat Possum-Epithaph
37	UNDERWORLD	Pearl's Girl (EP) Wax Trax!-TVT
38	BEN VAUGHN	Rambler 65 Rhino
39	KNAPSACK	Day Three Of My New Life Alias
40	SPEARHEAD	Chocolate Supa Highway Capitol
41	SOUNDTRACK	Suburbia DGC
42	CRANIS	Population Four Dedicated
43	FREEDY JOHNSTON	Never Home Elektra-EEG
44	FLUF	Waikiki Way Cool-MCA
45	VARIOUS ARTISTS	KCRW Rare On Air, Volume 3 Mammoth
46	VARIOUS ARTISTS	A Tribute To The Misfits: Violent World Caroline
47	SHONEN KNIFE	Brand New Knife Big Deal
48	SICK OF IT ALL	Built To Last EastWest-EEG
49	BIRDBRAIN	Let's Be Nice TVT
50	SKELETON KEY	Fantastic Spikes Through Balloon Capitol
51	LADYBUG TRANSISTOR	Beverly Atonale Merge
52	APHEX TWIN	Richard D. James Album Warp/Sire-EEG
53	MAKE-UP	Sound Verite K
54	PROMISE RING	The Horse Latitudes (EP) Jade Tree
55	JAMIROQUAI	Traveling Without Moving WORK
56	SQUIRTGUN	Another Sunny Afternoon Lookout!
57	JOHN LEE HOOKER	Don't Look Back Pointblank-Virgin
58	LONG HIND LEGS	Long Hind Legs Kill Rock Stars
59	TRANS AM	Surrender To The Night Thrill Jockey
60	VAN MORRISON	The Healing Game Polydor-A&M
61	HUMPERS	Plastique Valentine Epithaph
62	MARY LOU LORD	Martian Saints (EP) Kill Rock Stars
63	SATISFACT	Satisfact K
64	DJ SHADOW	Endtroducing Mo Wax/Jfr-London
65	MOJO NIXON	Gadzooks!!! Needletime-Unity
66	SPRING HEEL JACK	68 Million Shades Island Independent
67	CHRIS WHITLEY	Terra Incognita Work
68	LUNACHICKS	Pretty Ugly Go Kart
69	GREAT UNRAVELING	The Great Unraveling Kill Rock Stars
70	SPOON	Soft Effects EP Matador
71	BETHI SERVIERT	Dust Bunnies Matador-Capitol
72	PUSH KINGS	Push Kings Sealed Fate
73	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Something Cool: A Cher Doll Collection Cher Doll-Darla
74	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Hardhop & Trypno V2 Moonshine
75	OP8 FEATURING LISA GERMANO	Slush Thirsty Ear

Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 30 most-played releases that week.



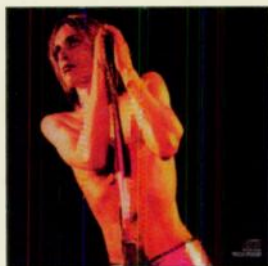
WOODY GUTHRIE

This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings Vol. 1

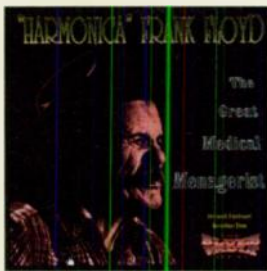
Smithsonian Folkways

This is the first of a four-part series of recordings by American folk songster Woody Guthrie. Rather than just noting how great he was, I thought this space would be better used by pointing out that a lot of the concerns that Guthrie sang about are just as relevant today, and that many of the bad things have gotten even worse. Woody Guthrie was a realist, not a conspiracy theorist, but it'd be interesting to find out what he'd think of today's world, and its climate of political scandals, big business interests and mega-media influence. The important thing is, once you understand him, you can almost do just that, simply by looking at the world with his sense of skepticism, common sense and humor; and these days, thinking a little bit like Woody Guthrie can be a very healthy thing. Interestingly, the liner notes and one of the bonus tracks here show that his most famous song, "This Land Is Your Land," originally contained at least two more verses, one which rails against abuses of private property ownership, and another which directly addresses the contradictions of poverty and plenty in this country, and how the haves often seem to have little concern for the have-nots. Smithsonian Folkways has also just released volume two in its similar series on Leadbelly.

In 1973, at the start of a legendary collaboration, David Bowie produced Iggy Pop's *Raw Power* (Legacy), and people have always talked about how the album's mix sounds tinny, trebly and manic. Some like the sound of it and some don't, but I've always had two theories about *Raw Power*'s trebly mix: that it was deliberately made to sound that way because Iggy and Bowie knew that their intended audience was going to be speedfreaks who like things edgy and shrill; and that they were mixing after both had spent years playing loud music, so their ears could well have been deadened by exposure to high volumes. Unfortunately, I've never had an audiologist or a psychologist handy when I was sitting around the house listening to *Raw Power*, so I've never been able to test my theories out with an expert. For this reissue, Iggy recently remixed the album and honestly, it sounds really great. I'm usually incredibly skeptical of this sort of years-later tinkering, especially since Z.Z. Top were allowed to ruin all of their own early albums, but in this case it really works. I just hope you haven't already bought the crummy version.



Before they were smooth soul balladeers, **Earth Wind & Fire** were a jazz-funk band with a twist. For one thing, they came out of Chicago scene that included the AACM (American Association of Creative Music, an out-there jazz ensemble with scores of recorded material) and a number of experimental jazz players (including the Pharoahs, whose album was recently reissued by San Francisco jazz-funk label Luv 'N' Haight). The first two Earth Wind & Fire albums are now released again by Warner Archives. "Bad Tune," from the debut, could be something you'd hear an acid jazz group cutting today. Jazz in the late '60s was exploring African and Egyptian concepts—see the work of Pharoah Sanders, or John Coltrane albums with titles like *Om*. Take that idea, and EWF's jazzier roots, and it's easy to explain the group's later lavish gold-lame costumes, Egyptian- and pyramid-oriented graphics, and synchronized dance moves. After all, that description sounds exactly like a Sun Ra show from ten years earlier.



Sometimes I like to end this column with a little record that might not be the first thing folks pick up in the store, but nonetheless doesn't deserve to be overlooked. This time it's *The Great Medical Menagerist* by "Harmonica" Frank Floyd on Gene's Blues Vault series. Floyd was one of the many country bumpkins who kicked around Sun Studios in Memphis in the '50s, releasing a few singles on Sun right before Sam Philips became preoccupied with rock 'n' roll and Elvis Presley. These "rediscovered" recordings from 1972 are like finding a living specimen of an extinct animal, as Floyd plays what must have been the state of white country blues before Elvis Presley. A lot of what Floyd plays sounds like rockabilly, but it isn't; if you added a thumping upright bass, slap-back echo and a ducktail, then you'd have a rockabilly record. What Floyd plays is more like white blues and sped-up country, with lots of neat things you don't hear so often—yodelling, comical falsetto imitations of women, and a very funny song where he imitates a lisp, deliberately spitting every time he says an exaggerated "p" or an "f" syllable, to the point where you wouldn't want to be sitting in the front row if he were performing onstage.

RIFTS

Not that metal doesn't have enough internal weird motors to keep the cause afloat. Following up on 1995's astonishing *Battles In The North*, the Norwegian brothers of **Immortal** let loose *Blizzard Beasts* (Osmose). Compared to the seamless assault of its predecessor, *BB* is a more earthy struggle against nature to maintain maximum velocity and odd intentions. This is gleefully perverse and extreme music, like early Morbid Angel in its bizarre time changes and evil intention. It's somewhat melodic, but beset by an awkward pressure that feels like a suffocating face pressed up against a glass window. There are no grooves on tracks like "Nebular Ravens Winter" and "Frostdemonstorm," just



mega-arrangements of hastily-sputtered vocal croaks, militaristic drum blasts and thin-sounding blur guitar. There are patches of greatness everywhere, cursed by a horribly cheap mix. *Blizzard Beasts* is simply bewildering—it's not a great album, ultimately, but certainly bizarre enough to cuddle up with and enjoy... If you like your nihilism more obvious, there's always another new **Gwar** album around the corner. The band's sixth, *Carnival Of Chaos* (Metal Blade), is pretty much what you'd expect from the performance punkers, an 18-song excursion into mindless violence and easy vulgarity. Perhaps, at some point, Gwar should try releasing an older record with new song titles and see if anyone notices... By the way, the double-CD sampler *Blackened* (Blackened) is an excellent introduction to black metal, including Emperor, Impaled Nazarene, Immortal, Marduk, Mayhem, Samael, Enslaved, Sigh and eleven others. Black metal's enhanced emotional power, fanatical speeds, and experimental edge are all well cataloged here, and curiosity-seekers of all breeds would do well to track down this elegant obscurity.

METAL TOP 25

- 1 SICK OF IT ALL *Bulk To Last* LastWest-EEG
- 2 GRIP INC. *Nemesis* Metal Blade
- 3 HELMET *Abertastic* Interscope
- 4 MACHINE HEAD *The More Things Change...* Roadrunner
- 5 HANDSOME *Handsome* Epic
- 6 ROLLINS BAND *Come In And Burn* DreamWorks
- 7 COAL CHAMBER *Coal Chamber* Roadrunner
- 8 STILLSUIT *At The Speed Of Light* Building-IVT
- 9 CRADLE OF FILTH *Dusk And Her Embrace* Mayhem-Fierce
- 10 KORN *Life Is Peachy* Immortal-Epic
- 11 BODY COUNT *Violent Demise: The Last Days* Virgin
- 12 MY DYING BRIDE *Like Gods Of The Sun* Fierce
- 13 BROKEN HOPE *Loathing* Metal Blade
- 14 GWAR *Carnival Of Chaos* Metal Blade
- 15 POWERMAN 5000 *Mega!! Kung Fu Radio* DreamWorks
- 16 ANAL CUNT *I Like It When You Die* Earache
- 17 GLENN TIPTON *Baptism Of Fire* Atlantic
- 18 TOOL *Animus* Zoo
- 19 EL DOPA *United In States Of Narcoplepsy* Conscience-Never
- 20 ACID BATH *Pagan Terrorism Tactics* Rotten
- 21 DOGMA *Feeding The Future* King-Mercury
- 22 VARIOUS ARTISTS *A Tribute To The Most Violent World* Caroline
- 23 KARMA TO BURN *Karma To Burn* Roadrunner
- 24 OPPRESSOR *Agony* Olympic-MIA
- 25 NAPALM DEATH *COALESCE In Tongues We Speak (EP)* Earache

Compiled from the CMJ New Music Report's weekly *Last Back* charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio stations.



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Torque

No U-Turn

Once again, the heaviest record of the month comes from outside the realms of leather and spikes. While death metal has already easily crossed over with the hyperspeed aggression of Dutch gabba and German hatecore, their one-dimensional pounding pales in comparison with the twisting, elephantine bass riffs and shifty breakbeats of *Torque*, a compilation of apocalyptic, distortion-heavy monster tracks by English DJs Trace, Ed Rush, Fierce, and Nico. Call it "darkside" or "tech-step," the acidic No U-Turn tracks are simply a genre unto themselves. Like early Death and Voivod, they are simple and monomaniacal dirges, propelled by frenetic and awkward rhythms and tinged with ugly, post-nuclear ambiance. For metal fans who have already embraced noise and Einstürzende Neubauten, this genre-bending will come as an exciting new infusion of energy into the underground—Justin Broadrick of Godflesh has taken to leaning heavily on Trace and Ed Rush in his new incarnation as jungle DJ. Ultimately, what makes metal vital is its ability to accept new influences while communicating dense, iconoclastic ideals and resisting commercial pressures. Jungle is much the same way, and now open-minded members of both cultures have a common meeting place.

HISS & CRACKLE



M/MONADE split 7"

All City

Dave Pajo and Laetitia Sadier are best known for their work with other bands — Slint and, currently, Tortoise in Pajo's case, and Stereolab in Sadier's — but this split single finds them assuming solo identities. M's side, "Vol De Nuit" (named after an Antoine de Saint-Exupéry novel), is actually Pajo's collaboration with drummer Ray Rizzo: a regal instrumental, painted in a few bold strokes, as simple and profound as breathing. Sadier, as Monade (a name that, as she explains in her liner notes, is an unusual word connoting inseparability), begins her side with an organ chord whose sound will be familiar to Stereolab fans, but the glockenspiel that takes over the song after a little while will be less so. Her two songs are surprisingly shy, with her voice receding into the mix of "Witchazel" and absent altogether from "Ode To A Keyring." Where her band's work is ambitious and broad-ranging, here Sadier investigates how small in scope a song can be, and how pretty it can be made. The fledgling All City label is worth watching for the variety and quality of its singles, not to mention its beautiful packaging; watch for an upcoming single of Tortoise producer Casey Rice remixing songs by the Make-Up.

The San Francisco label Darla has launched *The Bliss Out*, a planned 18-part series of monthly ambient CDs and 12" EPs, mostly by artists known for their more song-based work. The second installment (a third, featuring Orange Cake Mix, is also newly released) is by **Windy & Carl**, a Michigan duo whose earlier records have been heading in this direction. With the three-track, 40-minute *Antarctica*, though, they untether themselves from structure altogether, and embrace ambient music's original, beatless ideal: to be something that subtly changes its environment when it's played at very, very low volumes. The disc's shimmering spaciousness recalls Cluster's late-'70s albums, with their long, dreamy instrumentals.

Faxed Head is such an unremittingly high-concept band that everything on its records just seems to fall into place. The idea is that it's a "desk-metal" band from Coalinga, California, whose members were all crippled in horrible accidents... you get the idea. A snatch of "Their Hearts Were Full Of Spring" introduces their new single, "The Four Freshman" (Japan Overseas), a guttural death-metal reminiscence of the famed close-harmony group ("When I tried to give up sniffing glue/Their music soothed my swollen brain"); the B-side is the conceptually headbanging "Heavy Metal Cookie Cutter" ("Metal can cut the dough/Into pentagram shapes/Flatten it out first/Use your fucking fist"). The Faxed Head sound is unlike anything else: murky and bassy, with guitar that sounds like it's struggling against silence and mostly failing. Weird.



There's a Jamaican tradition of using a single rhythm track, or "riddim," for lots of artists' songs. A twist on this idea is the impetus for a new split single by **Red Red Meat** and **Number One Cup** (Flydaddy). Both bands were given a copy of a recording of a distorted cowbell, and constructed songs around it. Number One Cup's "The Tongue Of 2 A.M." uses the cowbell as the rhythmic foundation of the song, surrounding it with equally distorted vocals, a tiny, woozy guitar part and some keyboards. Red Red Meat treats it as texture rather than rhythm, but builds "Milk For The Mechanics" on repeated tones of the same kind, especially a persistent piano chord. The sleeve challenges other bands to use the cowbell recording for songs of their own.

A few quick drops of the needle: **The Three Peeps** are both members of the Softies with Peter Green—not the Fleetwood Mac guitarist, but the member of Class, on whose label Double Agent the band's "My Heaven, My Sky" appears. The B-side is an almost-acoustic cover of the Byrds' "Mr. Spaceman"; Rose Melberg, singing the first verse, finds wistfully romantic sentiment in the middle of a song about alienation and the need for escape. Then again, she can find wistfully romantic sentiment anywhere... On first listen, the "Incubate" 12" by **Eardrum** (Soul Static Sound) sounds like a rather minimal electronic dance record. Listen more carefully, though, and you'll hear that the drums and percussion are real, played by a duo including Laika's Lou Ciccotelli, and that there are all sorts of percussive and sound-effect details hidden in the mix... "I Am Where You Were," the first single by New Jersey's **All Natural Lemon & Lime Flavors** (Gern Blandsten), cops heavily from the Stereolab/My Bloody Valentine drone-swell approach. The band's songwriting is pretty self-indulgent (both sides are unnecessarily long), but it's sure got its sound down. One to watch.

IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE...

Like Kurtis Mantronik, Londoner Tony Thorpe is an overlooked but highly influential figure in the dance underground. In the mid-'80s, prior to the emergence of the acid warehouse phenomenon, Thorpe recorded with crypto-industrialists 400 Blows (named after the Truffaut film) before forming a pioneering outfit called the Moody Boys. His two-year-old imprint, Language, has already won praise from the British press.

Miscellaneous London England (Language-Never) brings together 12 tracks from the label, demonstrating that eclecticism is the name of the game. The opener, "Asthma" by Phosphorous, is a dense, claustrophobic piece with juddering synths and a sinuous, lithe bassline. "Sine God" by Bio-Muse has a Kurtis Blow-like bouncing drum pattern, angular, metallic spikes and a bassline that supplies a false sense of security. One of the standouts here is Endemic Void's "Lost Souls," a deceptively

simple jazzy drum-and-bass tune that turns some unexpected corners... Speaking of which, Danny Coffey, a.k.a. **Endemic Void**, has just released his first long-player, *Equations*, which is as serene and unsettling as "Lost Souls." Coffey's penchant for using extra-terrestrial synth swirls over rattling 140+ BPM breakbeats is satisfying and unnerving, like Alex Reece crossed with Cabaret Voltaire. "Inflectious" uses the familiar break from the J.B.'s "Soul Power '74," setting it down amongst slowed dub effects, pensive string arrangements and off-key electric piano figures. The splattered drums on "Evolution" make the track trip over itself trying to reach a conclusion, and you'll be carried along in its violent wake. The field of "electronic music" has become so amorphous that the term can be used to refer to virtually anything you like, but instead of finding in this a cause to mourn the passing of so-called pure techno, it might be an opportunity to consider the persistent flexibility and inventiveness of dance producers working with influences drawn from every imaginable corner. Endemic Void is one such reason for celebration.



KURTIS MANTRONIK "Bass Machine Re-Tuned" (12")

(Oxygenn)

FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON "We Have Explosive (Mantronik Plastic Formula)" (12")

(Astralwerks-Caroline)

The king of the beats has returned. In the yet-to-be-written histories of electronic dance music, the figure of Kurtis Mantronik will loom large. Moving from Vancouver, British Columbia, to New York in the mid-'80s, Mantronik turned his hand away from his hard rock roots and towards the then-burgeoning electro-funk movement. Working with Just Ice, the Latin Rascals, Omar Santana, and MC Tee, he reconstructed analog hip-hop from the ground up, making records that still exert a profound influence on electronic musicians of every stripe. (Future Sound Of London is obviously not unaware of Mantronik's extraordinary body of work, and the result is the electro-charged, roaring "We Have Explosive," a masterpiece of jump-up electronics by any standard.) Mantronik's return to the fold must be greeted with enthusiasm of the most excessive sort. "Bass Machine Re-Tuned" will have you doubled over with bass fatigue. Its runaway bassline is anchored by analog synth spikes and samples that can barely contain the frenzy of the track.

DANCE TOP 25

- 1 UNDERWORLD Pearl's Girl (EP) Wax Trax!-TVT
- 2 VARIOUS ARTISTS Hardhop & Trypno V2 Moonshine
- 3 APHEX TWIN Richard D. James Album Warp Sire-EEG
- 4 ORB Oblivion Island
- 5 µ-ZIQ Urmur Bile Trax Volume 1/Volume 2 Astralwerks-Caroline
- 6 PANASONIC Kulma Blast First-Mute
- 7 DAFT PUNK Homework Virgin
- 8 ART OF NOISE The Drum And Bass Collection China-Discovery
- 9 VARIOUS ARTISTS Metalheadz Presents Platinum Breakz Jfrr-London
- 10 VARIOUS ARTISTS Dope On Plastic 4 React America
- 11 SPRING HEEL JACK 68 Million Shades Island Independent
- 12 TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND Psychic Karaoke Nation-MCA
- 13 SHEEP ON DRUGS One For The Money Invisible
- 14 CIRRUS Drop The Break Moonshine
- 15 VARIOUS ARTISTS Diva X Machina COP International
- 16 DJ SHADOW Endroducing Mo Wax Jfrr-London
- 17 FREDDY FRESH Accidentally Classic Harthouse-Eye-Q
- 18 VARIOUS ARTISTS Feed Your Head Volume 2 Planet Dog-Mammoth
- 19 VARIOUS ARTISTS Tranced Out And Dreaming Planet Dog-Mammoth
- 20 FULL FREQUENTCY Adrenaline (EP) Gonzo!
- 21 VARIOUS ARTISTS DJ Mark Farina - Mushroom Jazz OM
- 22 ATARI TEENAGE RIOT Burn, Berlin, Burn! Digital Hardcore-Grand Royal
- 23 DELTA 9 Disco Inferno Industrial Strength-Parache
- 24 2 DIRECT "Ready, Set, Go" (12") Logic
- 25 TIPSYP Trip Tease: The Seductive Sounds Of Topsy Asphodel

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



CRU Dirty 30

Violator-Def Jam

Hip-hop crews come a dime a dozen. Thankfully, Bronx-bred newcomers Cru are part of the solution and not the problem. Owing much to innovative and lengthy albums like De La Soul's *Three Feet High And Rising*, *Dirty 30* is a springtime album that just oozes creativity. Ecstatic as rambunctious kids throwing a party while the parents are away, Yogi, Chadio and The Mighty Ha's raunchy musical theatrics are giving the status quo a much-needed kick in the ass. Beginning their album with a posse cut called "Bluntz & Bakakeemi's," highlighted by the appearance of forgotten female rapper Antoinette, only proves that these guys don't care about obeying conventional rules. When they're not receiving oral sex in the middle of a track ("It's Going Down"), the Cru are riding an old System sample ("Pay Attention"), combining Stevie Wonder's Coolio-abused "Poverty's Paradise" with the bass line from Kool G. Rap's "Rikers Island" (the invigorating "Up North"), or creating radio-accessible gems like "Pronto," "Eye Lyke" and "Bubblin'" for less adventurous rap fans. As you can imagine with an album this length, there's a fair amount of junk found in the *Dirty 30*, but don't ignore the buried treasures on this ground breaking debut.

[by Elliott Wilson]

hip-hop

BONUS BEATS

Five years in the rap game and Chicago's **Twista** is still waiting to blow up. The former Tung Twista is best known to hip-hop aficionados for entering the *Guinness Book Of World Records* as the world's fastest rapper. After the success of Das EFX, however, quick-tongued lyrical excursions went out like Veruca Salt. In recent years, though, speedy rhyme flows have been revitalized, and Twista is back to cash in on the rap industry's newfound interest. After pairing with his Houston homies Do Or Die on the hit "Po Pimp," the suddenly in-demand Twista was the subject of a bidding war. Twista flipped the script and established his own independent label, Creator's Way. As always, his verbal calisthenics are on display on *Adrenalin Rush* (Creator's Way-Big Beat). Unfortunately, except for his tantalizing tracks about the opposite sex (including "Emotions" and "Get It Wet"), Twista's new sound is about as appealing as his earlier material... Also back in the spotlight are the **Jungle Brothers** with the long-awaited, no longer anticipated *Raw Deluxe* (Gee Street). Released almost a full year after the regrouping of the Native Tongues (the acclaimed early '90s collective that also included De La Soul and A Tribe Called Quest), the JB's fourth album is a failed attempt to recapture the group's classic beginnings. Tracks like "Toe To Toe," "Black Man On Track," and "Handle My Business" sound obviously dated; these days, the JB's old-school flavors are as appealing as a five-day-old liverwurst sandwich... A little more geared **For The People** is the compilation of the same name (Priority), by the Brooklyn-bred Boot Camp Clik. Led by Buckshot, this album features all the BCC soldiers, including Heltah Skeltah, OGC, Cocoa Brovaz, and a host of newcomers. With some Southern-style production that appears to be clearly targeted to reach a wider audience, this disc may alienate some of the crew's devoted East Coast audience. But don't miss the rumbling "Ohkeedoke" and the sinister "Soundz III," featuring new voice Illa Noyz.



HIP-HOP TOP 25

- 1 KRS ONE "Step Into A World" 12" *Jive*
- 2 REDMAN Muddy Waters *Def Jam/RAL-Mercury*
- 3 SOUNDTRACK *Rhyme And Reason Priority*
- 4 BUCKSHOT "Follow Me" 12" *RCA*
- 5 NOTORIOUS B.I.G. Life After Death *Bad Boy-Arista*
- 6 SOUL ASSASSINS DJ Muggs Presents The Soul Assassins *Columbia-CBG*
- 7 CAMP LO "Luchon (This Is It)" 12" *Profile*
- 8 ARTIFACTS "Art Of Facts" 12" *Big Beat-Atlantic*
- 9 CAPONE N' NORLAGA "Illegal Life" 12" *Penalty*
- 10 RAMPAGE THE LAST BOY SCOUT "Wild For Da Night" 12" *Elektra-EEG*
- 11 LIL' KIM Hard Core *Big Beat-Atlantic*
- 12 FRANKIE CUTLASS *Primes & Bullshit Relativity*
- 13 PUFF DADDY & MASE "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down" 12" *Bad Boy-Arista*
- 14 GHOSTFACE KILLAH Ironman *Razor Sharp-Epic Street*
- 15 MAKAVELI The Don Killuminati/The 7 Day Theory *Death Row-Interscope*
- 16 SOUNDTRACK *Gridlock'd Death Row-Interscope*
- 17 SOUNDTRACK *Dangerous Ground Jive*
- 18 TOXY BROWN Ill Na Na *Def Jam/RAL-Mercury*
- 19 SOUNDTRACK *Booty Call Jive*
- 20 JERU THE DAMAJA Wrath Of The Math *Payday Jjrr-London*
- 21 T-MAX "Relax Your Mind" *Damage*
- 22 SHAMUS "Tight Teems" 12" *Raw Track*
- 23 SNOOP DOGGY DOGG The Dogfather *Death Row-Interscope*
- 24 CORMEGA "Dead Man Walking" 12" *Def Jam-Polygram*
- 25 DARC MIND "Outside Looking In" 12" *Loud RCA*

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



FLICKS

RIPE

(Trimark)

Ripe shows the coming of age of nubile twin sisters, an eroticized (though not actualized) butch-femme partnership brilliantly played by teenage actresses Monica Keena and Daisy Eagan. After the girls' parents are killed in a car crash, they decide to run away to Kentucky and set up house. Instead, they wind up on an army base, where they're harbored by a long-haired handyman. On the base, writer/director Mo Ogrodnik stages a range of confrontations between the girls' emerging sexualities and a world that's deeply male. Violet loves testing the power of her sexuality on this community of men, while Rosie tries to learn "men's" skills from a drill sergeant who teaches her to shoot guns. The onset of Violet's menstruation is beautifully depicted in all its awkwardness, after which she is taught about puberty by the handyman, whom she badly desires and actively seduces. Rosie's voyeuristic witnessing of military male-bonding rituals is also strong, showing her necessary exclusion. The film is less successful, however, in its melodramatic ending. When a man comes between the sisters, Rosie's revenge seems surprising, crazy and pathetic without being entirely sympathetic. It's not just that Rosie's transformation from young butch to killer freak seems anti-lesbian, although it does. The dramatic build-up is not just about the girls' relationship to each other, but about puberty and the world of men. *LIZA JOHNSON*

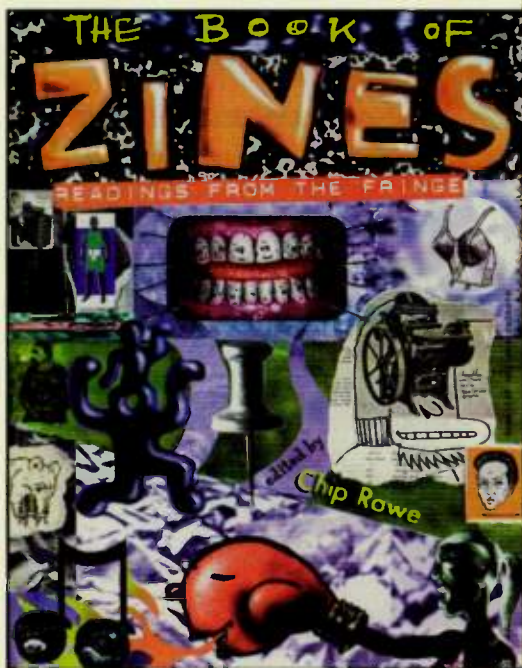
READS

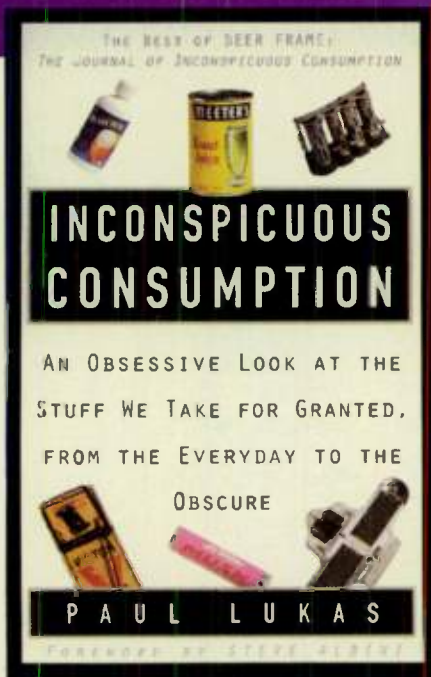
THE BOOK OF ZINES

Edited by Chip Rowe (Owl)

Ever feel like the world of 'zines is just too expansive to ever get a grasp on the best of what's out there? In *The Book Of Zines*, editor Chip Rowe gives you excerpts from 100 or so of his favorite underground publications, including *Ben Is Dead*, *TV Grind*, *Bust* and *Crank*. Rowe, the creator of *Chip's Closet Cleaner* and *This Is The Spinal Tap Zine*, divides the articles into alphabetically arranged categories—from "angst" to "work." Standouts include "The Truth about Fonzie and Mrs. C," which proves Happy Days' favorite greaser and mom were getting it on, and "Don'ts for Boys," featuring edicts like "Don't ask me to swallow anything you wouldn't swallow yourself." Sure, you get clichéd references to the Brady Bunch and conspiracy theories, but you also get intriguing instructions: Jeff Koyen gives a trepanation how-to in "Like A Hole In Your Head," and Cliff Thurber explains the best way to make a great fashion accessory out of bananas and sugar in "Fruit Leather Underwear." Apart from the title, *The Book Of Zines* doesn't pretend to offer an exhaustive overview of America's 'zine scene; in fact, coming in under 150 pages, it's frustratingly short. But if you want to start getting into the world of underground publications, it's an excellent primer with plenty of yucks.

NEIL GLADSTONE



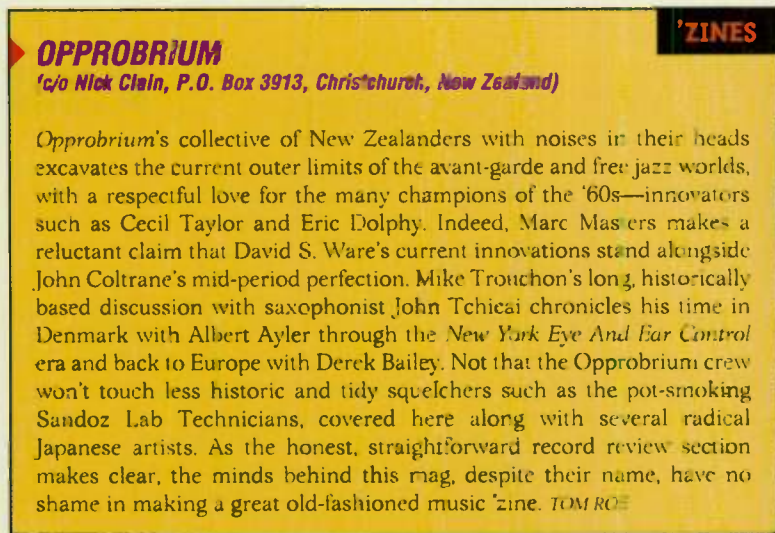


INCONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION

READS

by Paul Lukas (Crown)

The free market is the ultimate embodiment of capitalism's chaos, and *Inconspicuous Consumption* revels in it. Cherry-picking its best examples, *Inconspicuous Consumption* examines consumer culture and its products from a completely different angle than *Consumer Reports*. Author Paul Lukas highlights the underappreciated, overlooked, and curious—kraut juice, Body Glue, Hydrox (I think Hydrox just taste better than Oreos—they're less cloyingly sweet, their flavor less synthetic"). He investigates packages and packaging changes, such as Band-Aid's ditching of its signature red string. He also tackles gadgets, highlighting stealth objects such as a toothpick dispenser ("God appeared to me in the form of a stainless steel gizmo sitting next to the cash register"). The majority of this writing appeared first in Lukas's zine *Beer Frame*, and if there's a fault here, it lies in the contextual shift—the redesigned packaging of the same product. But *Inconspicuous Consumption* is a blast because of the writing; Lukas has a unique fascination with small, unrecognized oddities, and writes with a personable but extremely insightful tone. Visiting the grocery store will never be the same. **RANDALL ROBERTS**



'ZINES



SUPREME

COMICS

(Maximum Press)

For its first 40 issues, *Supreme* was just another faceless hero-guy, one of hormone-overdose comics king Rob Liefeld's latest creations. Then Alan Moore (*Watchmen*, *From Hell*) started writing the series late last year, and turned it into a jewel. Moore's basically using *Supreme* as an excuse to critically examine the mythos that developed around Superman in the '50s and '60s—the superhero archetypes of bodily transformations, super-powered pets, kid sidekicks, life-threatening radioactive rocks—but his stories also work as innocent adventure, on the level of the C.C. Beck *Captain Marvel* stories he loves, and as cutting, witty commentaries on the history of the comics industry. Besides fairly run-of-the-mill artwork by members of Liefeld's studio, each issue has hysterical "flashback sequences" drawn in the style of comics past by *Rare Bit Fiends* artist Rick Veitch, sometimes in collaboration with the creators of the styles he's paying tribute to (like '60s *Supergirl* artist Jim Mooney for "Suprema, Sister Of Supreme"). Moore originally planned to write *Supreme* for only a year, but he's reportedly having so much fun he plans to continue for the foreseeable future. That's very good news. **DOUGLAS WOLF**

MULTI-MEDIA

SIXDEGREES

(www.sixdegrees.com)

WEB SITE

No, it's not another one of those Kevin Bacon sites. The concept behind sixdegrees.com is as ambitious as anything, and kind of insane, but certainly fascinating and potentially useful. You tell it about yourself and give it a list of who you know, and it networks you. If everybody knows everybody else through a chain of at most six people, it follows that a database of everyone's friends, relatives and business contacts on the Net would be able to act as a sort of grand cocktail-party introducer. Meeting a bigwig with whom you want to establish rapport? Sixdegrees can theoretically figure out that her brother's housemate's co-worker is your niece's old teacher. And so on. Of course, sixdegrees' success is contingent on getting millions of people to fill out a lengthy survey and turn over their annotated electronic address books, which is its potentially fatal flaw in a medium where a six-second wait to load a page can drive users to distraction, but it is a really neat idea. (DW)



THE GUIDED BY VOICES WEB SITE

(www.gbv.com)

WEB SITE



Few fan-constructed band sites are as comprehensive and nicely designed as Guided By Voices'; fewer still find the band returning the compliment. The GBV site, besides the usual accouterments (news, discography, press clippings, tour dates, tablature), has extensive contributions from the band's members, from artwork by Tobin Sprout to logos Robert Pollard designed for the band in the mid-'80s. There's also a newspaper clipping from the first time GBV were rumored to be breaking up (in 1986), and a large selection of the band's 30-to-40-song set lists. And, as a payoff for the fans who seek out the site, there's a section devoted to Rockathon Records, the band's old label, which has released a few items only available there—including a live video or two, a recent single, and a full-length album (now sold out), *Tonics And Twisted Chasers*. There's also a link to the (rather high-traffic) GBV e-mail list, inevitably titled "Postal Blowfish." (DW)

THE USELESS PAGES

(www.go2net.com/Internet/useless/)

WEB SITE

Pages of links to interesting sites abound on the Web, and pages of links to those pages, and to those pages. Naturally, there's also a handful of pages devoted to the utterly pointless sites that people set up. The ultimate collection of lame links is The Useless Pages: hundreds of specific atrocious links, types of content cul-de-sacs, and catty disses. Ever wanted to see a page devoted to (framed, titled) "Lens Cap Photography"? A site that can make your browser dial your telephone for you (conclusion: it's a hell of a lot easier just to dial yourself)? A list of every scene in every episode of *The Simpsons* in which somebody's smoking? TUP is near-clinching proof of the common conception that the Net is the domain of people with too much time on their hands. But they can be redeemed: The creator of the "Steve's List Of All His T-Shirts" page eventually became one of the managers of this one. (DW)



FEEDBACK

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► MILWAUKEE, WI

[by Rab Sieracki]

Milwaukee's slogan, "a great place on a great lake," is corny but true enough. Not only is the lakefront home for the festival grounds where Summerfest and countless annual ethnic festivals take place, it's also scenic for walking or biking. However, what I think makes Milwaukee great are the several distinct neighborhoods it's comprised of. Each one could probably take days to explore, but here's a guide for those traveling through.

Let's begin on the south side, where I grew up. It's a humble, safe, sleepy, working-class neighborhood that takes a nod from Laverne and Shirley when it comes to style. Its adorable behind-the-times mentality makes the south side a wellspring for neighborhood old-man bars. Pretty much every block on any major street will have one, but my favorite is **Gene And Marcy's Holler House** (2042 W. Lincoln Ave.), where my parents met. Downstairs is an ancient two-lane bowling alley that still requires a human "pin monkey."

Down the street you'll find **Rockhaus Guitars** (4300 W. Forest Home), easily the coolest guitar store I know. Owner Greg Kurczewski has made quite a name for himself by being a square-deal, no-fast-talk kind of salesman. He specializes in Travis Bean and Velino metal necked guitars, Gibson Les Pauls and British tube amps like Marshall, Hiwatt and Orange, and he lists Poster Children, the Jesus Lizard, Guided By Voices and Helmet among his many satisfied customers. Even if you're not in the market, it's cool to stop by and see Greg's display of homemade radios and amps made from classic car parts, sea shells,



vanity mirrors and other junk by his repair guy Charlie Collins.

Just up Oklahoma Avenue from Rockhaus is **American Science And Surplus** (7205 W. Oklahoma), where you can buy everything from telescopes and test tubes to bungee cords and bingo balls. And down Forest Home Avenue there are a couple of great places to eat: Sample **Dino's Pizza's** (4544 W. Forest Home) amazing thin crust pizza pies or the huge burgers at **Kopp's** (7631 W. Layton), and you'll know what my weekend diet was like in high school. Kopp's also boasts the best dessert in town, frozen custard, which takes ice cream to a new level of richness.

Head east from the south side and you'll be in the up-and-coming community Bay View. Stop by **Wagner's** (2532 E. Oklahoma) coffee shop for their satisfying house blend or a chocolate espresso shake and pick through their weird greeting cards—in Japanese or with a quote from Oscar Wilde—to let someone at home know you care. If you're up for some romantic dining, **Three Brothers** (2414 S. St. Clair) is a beautiful Serbian restaurant set up in a fully-restored turn-of-the-century tavern. What's Serbian food like? Um... meat with greens, meat with potatoes, or meat rolled in grape leaves, so you might want to pass if your honey is a vegetarian. There are two great drinking spots in Bay View, too. The **Cactus Club** (2496 S. Wentworth) gets my vote for striking the delicate somewhat-hip-but-not-too-pretentious balance for twentysomethings. Kitty-corner from the Cactus Club is **At Random** (2501 S. Delaware), which has the most extensive menu of sweet specialty drinks I've ever seen.

North of downtown, between the lake and the Milwaukee River, is the East Side, which roughly serves as the heart of Milwaukee's artistic and musical communities as well as the



PHOTOS BY TRACY LANGE; CACTUS CAFE PHOTO BY GREG KURCZEWSKI



hub for weekend nightlife. What's a trip to a town without hitting the cool record stores? Well, the East Side has got them. The just-opened **Farwell Records** (2218 N. Farwell) took the place of Earwaves, and has a good selection of '70s and '80s punk and new wave vinyl. **Second Hand Tunes** (2400 N. Murray) is worth combing through, too, though it's not as well stocked as its namesake in Chicago. **Atomic Records** (1813 E. Locust) has Milwaukee's best selection of new independent records, and the friendly staff can clue you in if there are any decent shows happening.

When they're not pining for a new Low, Bedhead or Archers Of Loaf release, Josh and Jim from Atomic put out *Milk Magazine*, a free glossy-cover music magazine worth picking up. They also help promote a few select shows each month at different venues, and it's worth checking the listings in the weekly *Shepherd Express* to see if there are any shows with a *Milk* seal of approval, since the local scene is pretty dry these days, and the two major clubs (the Unicorn and Shank Hall) can be bummers.

There are a few notable local bands, though. Compound Red blends the Champaign sound that made Hum famous with a Dischord feel. The Promise Ring are true entertainers who've studied themselves up on Sunny Day Real Estate. Get out your copy of *Forced Exposure* and read up on Couch Flambeau, because they're still the hardest rocking (and wittiest) band Milwaukee has to offer, though the Frogs take a close second, being Milwaukee's only self-proclaimed "gay rights folk artists" who've put out a split single with Pearl Jam. You might catch these bands at bars that don't usually attract national acts, like the east side's **Globe** (2028 E. North) or the Cactus Club.

Next door to Farwell Records is the **Oriental Theater** (2230 N. Farwell), where most cool foreign films run in Milwaukee, and across the street from the Oriental is **Von Trier's** (2235 N. Farwell), a German-themed bar that's well-stocked with imported beers. Both Von Trier's and the Oriental are beautifully decorated on the inside and worth taking a peep at, and both offer hot buttered popcorn, though it's free at Von Trier's. Down the street from Von Trier's is a fabulous Irish bar, the **Black Shamrock** (2311 N. Murray), which has a particularly friendly atmosphere and sometimes particularly adept Irish musicians huffing it up in the background as well. Though I've never witnessed a bad set at the Black Shamrock, the one band you're a fool to miss is the Ghillies, an Irish folk group that delivers fiddle playing and banjo picking at the Black Shamrock a couple of times a month for a modest cover.

There's good eating in the neighborhood as well. Sprout-loving vegetarians should check out **Beans And Barley** (1845 E. Kennilworth) or hit the **Outpost Natural Foods** (100 E. Capitol) deli. **Pizza Man** (1800 E. North) serves up fine pan pizzas and huge portions of pasta, my favorite being the baked king crab à la

Darryl over linguine. **Grecian Delight** (known affectionately to locals as "Greasy Delight," 1810 E. North) is open past bar-time and has great fast food, burgers and gyros, as well as more delicate Greek dishes like moussaka. The coffeeshop **Comet** (1947 N. Farwell) won me over with its hot sandwiches and chocolate peanut butter cheesecake, which goes great with its hot chocolate. If you plan on sitting at Comet for awhile, you might want to check the **Constant Reader** (1627 E. Irving) book shop next door, which deals exclusively in used hardcovers at affordable prices.

Just across the river from the east side is a slightly seedier neighborhood, Riverwest. In its center is **Fuel Café** (818 E. Center), the first punk rock coffee shop in Milwaukee. Its food is of the same caliber as Comet's (probably because they have the same owner), but it usually features great paintings/photography/flyer art on its walls, and past exhibits include a showing of photos by Cynthia from Dischord.

The other major attraction Riverwest offers is the **Lakefront Microbrewery** (818A E. Chambers). Set up in what they lovingly refer to as "a big old house," the amiable, beer-loving owners have tours every couple of hours on Saturdays, where you can learn how to make successful pale ale or stout while sampling their wares to your heart's delight. When you leave, they even give you a ticket redeemable for one more draft of their brew at the corner bar, which is within stumbling distance.

Obviously, this is a pretty thin sketch of what Milwaukee has to offer, but hitting up a few of these establishments will insure a good time in a great mid-sized Midwestern city.

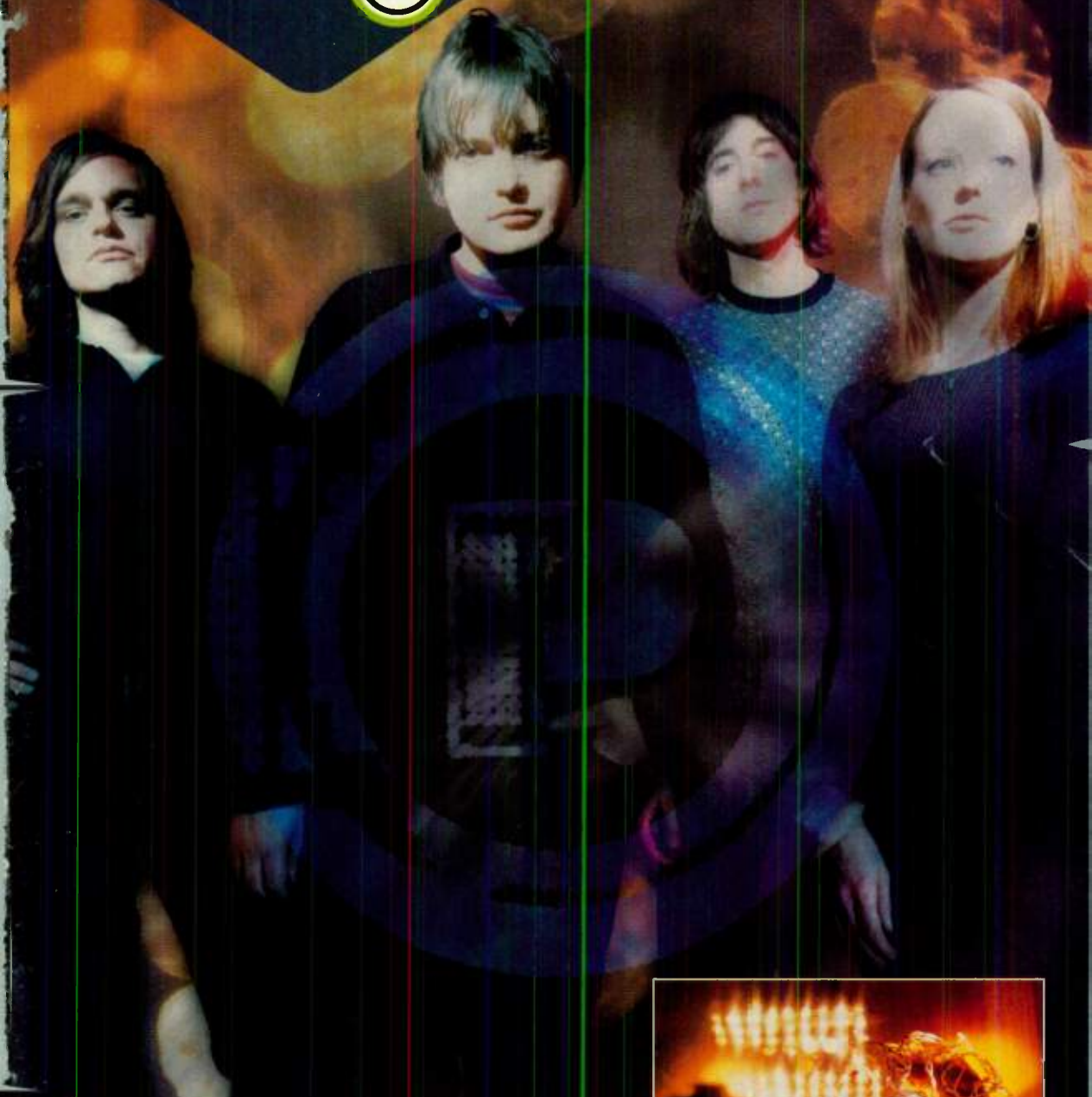
Rob Sieracki moved from Milwaukee to Chicago a year and a half ago, but makes the return jaunt up I-94 frequently. He's presently the tour publicist at Touch And Go Records and plays bass in the band Ex-Chiute with fellow ex-Milwaukeean, Greg Betzwieser.



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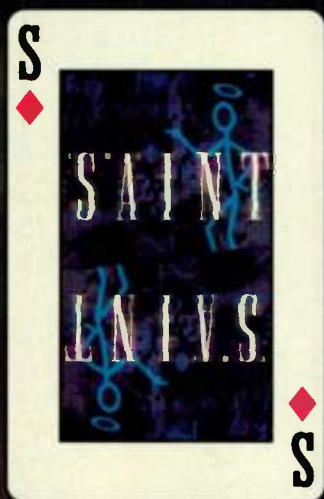


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False Openers. (a) If it is ascertained at any time that a "Player" opened without private openers, or that his hand contains too many cards, his hand is foul and all cards he has but are forfeited to the pot.

(b) If false openers are discovered before the draw, any other "Player" in turn to the offender's left (excluding those who played in their first turns) may open and play continues, but any "Player" except the offender may withdraw from the pot any chips he put in after the pot was lawfully opened. If no one can open, the remainder of the pot remains for the next deal.

(c) If false openers are discovered after every "Player" but the offender has dropped, each other "Player" may withdraw from the pot any chips he put in after the pot was lawfully opened.

(d) If false openers are discovered after the draw, and when any active "Player" remains, play continues and the pot goes to the highest hand at the showdown, whether or not any "Player" had openers. If there is no hand at the showdown that is not foul, the pot remains and goes to the winner of the next pot. Regardless of other circumstances, a hand that has dropped can never win a pot and should seek a new distribution deal. **to be continued**

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