

CMJ **NEW MUSIC** MONTHLY

DC SHOECOUSA

Victoria Williams

Apples In Stereo

The Rise of DJ Culture

GOLDIE

It's Like A Jungle Sometimes

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ISSUE NO 54 | WWW.CMJ.COM

BLACK GRAPE | WILL OLDHAM | 42 REVIEWS

World Radio History

features

16 STUBBORN ALL-STARS

The Stubborn All-Stars will be touring with the Slackers and Skinnerbox under the 'NYC Ska Mob' banner. "Some of the guys are in all three bands, and that's why we did it. We don't have to leave anybody home, sulking."

—Interview by Chris Nickson

18 VICTORIA WILLIAMS

"There's an old gospel song that says, 'make stumbling blocks your stepping stones, since every day is judgment day.' I'd say as far as having a positive attitude, it has to do with my reliance upon God." The subject of the *Sweet Relief* tribute muses on her ongoing battle with multiple sclerosis and her latest album, *Musings Of A Creekdipper*. —Interview by Karen Iris Tucker

20 APPLES IN STEREO

Elephant 6 isn't quite a label itself; it isn't quite a musicians' collective; it's not quite a sub-genre. It's more of a trademark of quality, loosely based around a handful of bands devoted to homemade pop. At the center of the ring of Elephants are the Apples In Stereo. —Interview by Douglas Wolk

2 ON THE COVER: GOLDIE

"My job is to try to open the doors of perception for those people who are narrow-minded. I could just go out and play to the people who love drum 'n' bass. But there's no challenge in that."

—Interview by Matt Ashare

26 CULTURE SHOCK: THE RISE OF THE DJ IN AMERICA

"People didn't really understand Elvis when he came out. But the youth at the time did. And the kids who are going to raves *do* understand DJs as artists in their own right," says Steve Levy of Moonshine Music. Plus an interview with Roni Size. —Article by

M. Tye Comer

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on the cover

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BY NEIL BICKERMAN

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**The last letter
about the new size**

When I saw the new, larger format CMJ in my PO box, I was bummed. No longer would it fit easily into the side pocket of my bookbag, nor would it be convenient to read on the bus. But hey, they could put more record reviews in! However, with the arrival of the October '97 issue, I discovered the truth behind the size increase—more pictures! Specifically of Trent Reznor. Four photos, including full cover. Is that really necessary? One small wallet size would do, or maybe even NONE! It's not like he's an unknown underground artist. That goes for any other "rock star" that future issues will present to us in multi-photo layouts. I subscribed to *CMJ New Music Monthly* because I thought it would continue the tradition of the weekly *CMJ* [*CMJ New Music Report*—ed.] we got at our college radio station: lots of music reviews, less fluff and record industry marketing shlock. What gives?

Daniel Corcoran
Seattle, WA

The tradition of both CMJ New Music Monthly and its predecessor CMJ New Music Report, the weekly college radio tip sheet, is one of eclecticism and a commitment to aggregating the best music. In that spirit, both magazines have always endeavored to write about both underground artists and established stars without prejudice toward either, regardless of where they're from or how popular they wind up being. So we have pretty photos now and the magazine is bigger. We still average the same number of reviews, plus we have more room for features. This may make the magazine more popular, it may not, but if Daniel had gotten to some of the words in the Trent Reznor piece, he might have stumbled across Bono saying something salient: "Don't ever think that what you do is so elite that it's only for certain people." —ed.

Corrections: The live photos of the Foo Fighters in the Dec. issue were taken by Jen Lowry. Also, the correct name of the band listed as Megastatic in January's Salt Lake City Localzine is Magstatic.

James Brynildsen

**For whom the wacky
tabacky tolls**

Unfortunately, by far, most of the songs on the Dec. 97 CD are simply crap. I will appreciate the need for CMJ to cater to the advertising dollar and diversify our grunge and metal tastes with more eclectic sounds, but surely some of the stuff from the Dec. sampler was thrown in there simply to piss off enough of us to write. You guys lonely for mail and want feedback? Or is the 'zine business too good and you think its time to run off a few subscribers? Maybe it was a slow month in the music business, or the staff has started spending the Xmas bonus early and were out sampling the wacky tabacky instead of the latest in music... I would be curious to see the composite metrics of what your readers prefer to listen to on samplers, and if the majority aren't still grungy head-banging, hard rocking, ska and guitar-driven tubthumpers, then I renewed with the wrong outfit for a 3-year deal. C'mon Ed., get with it and go back to your roots. It's the music we're paying for, not politically correctness and eclectictriva. Sorry, but you know as well as I do that the Special Sauce guys suck. So does A3. As I said, there is plenty of new music out there.

BubbaMan

I'm thinking of retiring. First, the bout of sincerity I suffered in the first letter response, and now I just don't have it in me to ponder how G. Love & Special Sauce, political correctness, catering to advertiser dollars and eclecticism being a bad thing all get conflated into one point. Kids, you take this one, I'm off to the woodshed —ed.

This note's for you

Note to all those people who complain to CMJ about the variety of music on their monthly *CMJ New Music Monthly* CDs: get with it! The world of music does not revolve around a small number of genres. Musician or not, great inspirations come from many places and sounds. Respect each artist's perspective and craft even if it's not what you are into or expecting at that specific moment. One man's trash is another man's treasure.

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AIR

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MOON SAFARI

featuring the single "SEXY BOY"



french band

Launch Date: January 27

Available on CD/Limited Vinyl

"The album of '98" - MUZIK

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World Radio History



Top to bottom: D.A. Foster, Derek O'Brien, Brian Grillo

EXTRA FANCY

Over And Out

Los Angeles is famous for many things, and public transportation isn't one of them. Brian Grillo, lead singer of Extra Fancy, is coming to grips with this fact. Because earlier today, his transmission gave out. "I guess I'm going to be Mr. Bus for a while," he tries to laugh. "There's nothing I can do. I don't have the money to get a new car."

Two years ago, such problems seemed to be over for Extra Fancy. The quartet was poised for a national breakthrough. Its explosive independent debut *Sinnerman* had been repackaged for a major label release by Atlantic, which planned to use the band to launch its new gay marketing division (Grillo is openly gay, the other members are straight.) The video for the

title track, featuring Alexis Arquette and a guy-on-guy kiss, was receiving airplay on M2. The band had a thick press pack and a diverse, fanatical following that kept expanding.

Eight weeks after the re-release, the band was dropped in a monumental housecleaning. The label maintained it was strictly a financial matter, although two months hardly seems enough time to accumulate sales and radio momentum.

Musically and lyrically, Extra Fancy had remained unflinching, which Grillo appreciates made the band just as many enemies as fans. "There is something about our band—what we've said, what we've done—that creates an aversion to us," he admits. Many A&R reps had come to regard the band as damaged goods, but Grillo refuses to be painted as a victim, and insists he has no regrets. "It hurts me to even have to answer that," he sighs. "I never did anything wrong, I never did anything bad. If I'd played the game, and acted straight, and not written such straightforward lyrics, we probably would've had a much easier time," he admits. "But I saw a

“How many roads must a man walk down before he becomes a man?”
I answer you: one. There is only one road for man, and it is Christ.”
—Pope John Paul II, during a mass
that featured a performance by Bob Dylan

in my room

ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS



GOLDFINGER
John Feldmann

- **Beats**
Revolver
- **Police**
Ghost In The Machine
- **Elvis Costello**
Greatest Hits
- **Kate's Flowers**
Fourth World
- **Replacements**
Let It Be

random fact

Seventy-eight percent of Japanese men questioned in a survey said they would rather be stranded on an island with US Attorney General Janet Reno than with any other woman. We know that this has nothing to do with music, but damn!

band like that last night, and they bored the shit out of me."

The band's recent self-released EP, *No Mercy* (Butch Ditties), turns out to be its swan song; Extra Fancy announced it was disbanding on December 2. Even before the band split, Grillo admitted that the band's future looked decidedly uncertain. "Right now, we're hanging by a thread," he confessed, even though his management had encouraged him to put forward a brave face for the press. Although bassist D.A. Foster and drummer Derek O'Brien had stuck out on the hard times, guitarist Mike Hateley had already called it a day earlier in '97, and maintaining band morale eventually became an insurmountable task. The split, while amicable, proved inevitable.

Grillo, however, already has a slew of new songs ready to go, and hopes to have new material out in early '98. "I'm going to continue to do music as long as I still love doing it, until I don't want to do it anymore," he insists. "I don't see that being anywhere in the near future. There are too many things I want to do." —Kurt B. Reighley

weird record

weird

■ When the 7" single **Sounds Of The American Fast Food Restaurants** promised future volumes (see "Weird Record," NMM Aug. 1996), including **Sounds Of San**

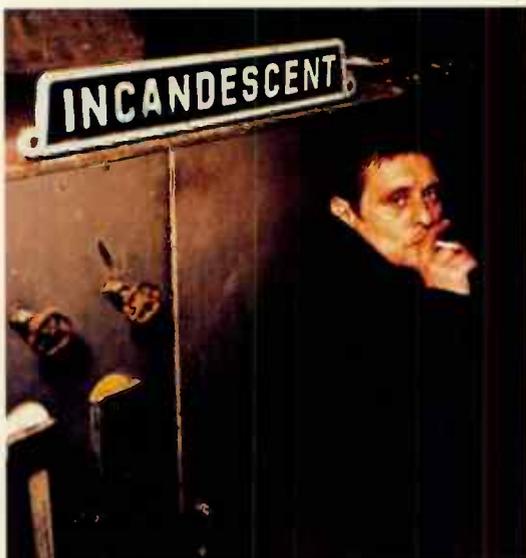
Francisco Adult Book Stores, we thought that the folks at Planet Pimp Records were only kidding. They weren't. "Now you can experience the erotic environment of these palaces of sin and despair," promises narrator Ryan Kerr. This second volume in what looks to be a series is comprised of ambient recordings made at some of San Fran's triple X bookstores; this includes whistling, magazine shuffling, cashier prattling, minor construction, customer complaints, a few moans from an on-screen lady in a "private viewing booth," and even a little Elvis. The platter's contents aren't as graphic as its cover, but a tissue is still included for your, uh, convenience. The Colding Institute, the series' apparent sponsor, is "dedicated to preserving without prejudice the sounds that make up our vast galaxy and form the parameters of our culture." We still eagerly await **Songs Of Hawaiian Car Rental Agencies** and **Sounds Of The American Multi-Plex Theater Chains**.



BLACK GRAPE

Smarter Than You Think

With his surly, heavy-lidded stare, crooked pugilist's nose and stocky, muscular frame, Sean Ryder makes a pretty memorable first impression. The keep-your-distance kind. You figure that, over the hard-partying years with his old outfit Happy Mondays and new funk-punk ensemble Black Grape, he's gotten into more hair-raising scraps than a junkyard dog. For instance, Ryder smirks, "Say a car goes out of control at 120 mph, goes off the highway and goes down an embankment, rolling over and over. What happens when you're *inside* the car—and I've experienced this thing at least three or four times—is that you know you're gonna survive when the action's going fast but you and everything you do inside that car turns into slow motion. You hold on to this, you get in position, and then—boom! It's all over and you've survived. Had it been completely fast—as fast as it *should've* been—I'd have been dead."



■ **Lookout! Records** emerged ten years ago with the goal of putting out records that were more poppy and upbeat than the gritty hardcore that dominated California's East Bay area at the time. Nearly 200 releases later, the label's aesthetic hasn't changed much. "We have a lot of bands that still have those simple pop melodies and rhythms and stuff," says the label's general manager, Molly Neuman (who also plays in the Peechees with husband and Lookout!'s president, Chris Appelgren). "Things are pop-based," Neuman explains, "but the influences are very varied. I don't like the term pop-punk—I just think it sounds stupid—but it really is kind of what fits." Green Day is the label's most successful graduate, but it is equally well known among its fans as the home to Operation Ivy, Screaming Weasel, the Queers and Mr. T Experience. The label celebrated its tenth anniversary in January with a weekend of benefit shows and plans to have similar events around the country throughout the rest of 1998. Check out the band's Website at www.lookoutrecords.com.

CHANTEUSE Derived from "chanson," the French word for "song," this term literally means "female singer." In English it conveys a sophisticated, often theatrical female vocalist, especially a cabaret performer. Edith Piaf's emotional "La Vie En Rose" stands as the chanteuse performance. Julie London's "Cry Me A River" was pure chanteuserie, but less historic singers, such as Françoise Hardy and Astrud Gilberto, fit the bill as well. Contemporary chanteuses include k.d. lang (on *Ingenue* and *Drag*), Tracey Thorn (on *Everything But The Girl*), and trip-hoppers like Portishead's Elizabeth Gibbons.

BUZZ WORDS

Ryder, 35, tosses his head back and laughs, a raucous rasping sound that recalls an adenoidal grackle strangling on its seed. You can glimpse what film producer Jerry Weintraub saw in him, when he stumbled across the singer's photo in a music mag and

decided—on the spot—to cast him as the sinister Bully Boy in a new Ralph Fiennes/Uma Thurman film version of the campy old TV series *The Avengers*. "I don't really do any speaking," Ryder explains. "What I do is, I kill people with an Uzi, I have a knife fight, I have car crashes, and I, um, spy on Uma Thurman." He also got to film a bloody, bullet-riddled death scene that'll have 'em cheering in the aisles. "And it felt great to die!" Ryder impishly notes.

Sometimes it seems that Ryder has stayed alive through the sheer force of his charismatic personality. Few expected him to survive his drug-addled Happy days,

much less return with *It's Great When You're Straight... Yeah*, Black Grape's #1 overseas hit. And with the boisterous new *Stupid, Stupid, Stupid* (Radioactive), he proves this was no fluke.

"I was never surprised at us making good albums," Ryder allows, nursing a poolside beer at his Hollywood hotel, where even passing members of Aerosmith take note of his presence. "But *other* people were surprised—they expected it to be boring, crap, rubbish, expected me to be over. But I was even better than I had been, better than they ever expected." How has the chap defied so many odds? Something about Manchester, he sighs. "We come from a very boring place, not much going on. So if you wanna enjoy your life, you've gotta go and do something about it. Otherwise you're gonna end up in a shitty factory job or in prison." —Tom Lanham

in my room

ARTIST: LEBRONA PICKET



DUBSTAR
Steve Hillier

- Various Artists
L.T.J. Bukem Presents
Logical Progression
- Contact (movie)
- Reg House Painters
Songs For A Blue
Guitar
- Future Sound
Of London
Dead Cities
- Michael Carson
Sucking Sherbet
Lemons (book)

“My whole family talks like this. If you think it sounds strange coming from me, you should hear my mother. In high school I was the guy who called his teachers 'Dollface,' and I got away with it because of my voice.”
—Dickie Barrett of the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, on the value of his deep, gravely voice



label profile



WILL OLDHAM

Weary Palace Brother

"The Palace music finished itself up with the recording of 'Lost Blues' and '(End Of) Travelling,'" says Will Oldham, who, when it comes down to it, *is*—or was—Palace. "These were recorded a few weeks after *Viva Last Blues*, at the end of 199—, whatever year that was a couple of years back." He's speaking of the transition he recently made from being the center of the various Palace incarnations, which have featured as many as five members and as few as one, to being Will Oldham, solo artist.

One would think that since Palace and Oldham are one in the same, and that *Joya* (Drag City), his first full-length under his own Christian name, has a similar feel to his previous records, that the artist is simply

playing with semantics. "Obviously, you are wrong," corrects Oldham. "Over here, the difference is clear; it wasn't a decision. But the name implies it, so follow it."

Whether by design or fate, the music and presence of Will Oldham are both loaded with a mystique. His creations

as the artist formerly known as Palace have a ragged and earthy heft, his voice a delicate lilt that contradicts its weary tone; when you toss in the confessional, veiled words, the result is a dust storm of emotion. That, coupled with the fact that he's been known to wear mirrored sunglasses in dark basement bars and request that people address him as "Push," inevitably lead to a curious presence in an indie world that usually prides itself on its everyman approachability.

Since the release of *There Is No One What Will Take Care Of You* in 1992, which set a sector of the music world on fire with its bare-boned, South-

in my room

ARTISTS PERSONAL LISTS



- SEVENDUST**
—no Cazzaves
- Crystal Method
Las Vegas
 - Alien, Spawn and
Kiss action figures
 - Slayer
Reign In Blood
 - Chemical Brothers
Dig Your Own Hole
 - Trojan condoms—
"No glove, no love!"

four's we'd like to see

- BREAKIN' THE LAW, BREAKIN' THE LAW:** Smugglers, Grifters, Thievery Corporation, Murder City Devils, Scofflaws, Criminals, Vandals, Stranglers, Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott, Plunderers, Dazzling Killmen, Graverobbers, Murder Junkies, Fun Lovin' Criminals, Sex Offenders, Down By Law, Zip Code Rapists, Cop Shoot Cop, Murder Inc.

ern confessional tone and underlying folksy twang, Oldham's willing and forgiving audience has scooped up his mysterious missives from Louisville. His music's sparse packaging and presentation contribute to this mystique. Oldham tries his hardest to keep the creator separate from his creations.

Whether one hears a notable difference between the music of Palace and the music Oldham has created on the wonderful *Joya* is irrelevant. "I think I am listening to music in a different way these days," he says. "Rarely is music put on for pleasure. And *Joya* was not an exploration the way earlier records have been. It worked more like the Palace record *Days In The Wake*, in that I was grasping for recognizable bits of melody and dynamic... Where I get off in listening to a record is when I hear problems solved. I suppose it's how I listen to other records, listening for how they were made and only becoming really involved when I can't figure out how something so good was arrived at, and listening and listening, imagining what it could be." —Randall Roberts

RADIOHEAD VS. RADIOSHACK

"I'm a creep I'm a weirdo."

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Gets its name from a Talking Heads song

"Killer Cars"

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20 items in discography

"You've got questions. We've got answers."

Tandy computer—\$1299

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Average store size: 2,450 sq. ft.

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"Radio-controlled car headquarters!"

Store located on Jericho Turnpike in Garden City Park, NY

3,650 items in inventory



METALLICA



Q & A

Sure, there's a slew of the virulent, blues-tinged stompers that are fast becoming Metallica's stock in trade on the band's new *Reload* (Elektra). But, in keeping with *Load*'s adventurous spirit, the boys hired an unexpected back-up singer for "The Memory Remains": Marianne Faithfull. —Tom Lanham

Q: What was it like working with Faithfull?

A: JAMES HETFIELD: I didn't know much about her, didn't know much about her at all. Bob [Rock, *Reload*'s co-producer] introduced me to her through her CDs, and the stuff that I had heard was the *20th Century Blues* CD, which was really cool—all the old standards. It was a bit avant-garde, and recorded in Paris. But it had that voice we were looking for, that weathered, smellin'-the-cigarettes-on-the-CD kinda voice. And I thought 'Fuck! That's exactly what we need for this part!' I had sung the part myself, and it didn't sound right, me goin' 'La la la,' you know? And that part just stuck, with the whole eeriness of the *Sunset Boulevard*-feel of that song. She was the voice, and she was a *very* intense character.

There was one funny thing, though. Her manager Francois—of course she'd have a French manager, who'd have a cigarette in his mouth *and* one in his hand, he smoked so much. And she was like 'Francois! Light my cigarette!' Or 'Francois! Where's my wine?' It was a little surreal. But anyway, she was out there singing and this Francois guy was sitting in the control room while we were listening to her, and telling her to picture *Sunset Boulevard*. And she starts to sing this thing, but before her part comes up she coughs, 'Ka-hyuh, ka-HYUH.' And Francois goes 'Ah! Ze seegnature cough!' And right there I just fuckin' *lost* it! Like 'What am I *doing* here? This is out there, man!' 'Ze seegnature cough!' And we actually have it on tape! ■

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
Greg L. Teetsell
Utah, CA

SIDE-1

Meat Beat Manifesto
It's The Music
Superchunk
water, Hands
Mono Men
Swamp Land
Plexi
Forest Fanger
Neilson Hubbard
Captain Of the Teenagers
The Boredoms
Suicide Pyramid Subway
Poison Gas Action Satori
Cornelius
Moon Walk
Matthew Sweet
Girlfriend
Morrissey
Reader Meet Author

SIDE-2

Honeycrack
The Genius Is Loose
Glen Branca
Sixth Symphony, 52d Movement
Scud Mountain Boys
Fiery Collin
Bush Tetras
Too Long Creeps
John Cale
Fear Is A Man's Best Friend
Colors
The Poets
Continental Drifters
Get Over It
Brian Jonestown
Massacre
Cold To The Touch
Rasputina
Transylvanian Concubine
Posies
Throwaway
Housemartins
we're Not Deep
Fishbone
Freddie's Dead (Live)

Just send your mix (track listings only) to: **CMJ New Music Monthly**, 11 Middle Neck Rd., NYC 100, Great Neck, NY 11021; also fax us at 516.465.7159 or email at cmjmonthly@cmjmusic.com.

Mix it up!

CMJ NEW MUSIC



maxell



AIR CD

Moon Safari — Source-Caroline

The hero-enters-the-nightclub-in-pursuit scene is a film standby. Usually, the background music intimates that a demimonde exists right below our hero's nose. In 1966's *Blow-Up*, the Yardbirds played to a confused David Hemmings. This year, I guarantee that some leading man is going to enter a nightclub to Air's "Sexy Boy," the coolest Eurosingle since "Ça Plane Pour Moi." It's got a fuzzy, bubbly bass line. It's got vocoders. It's going to be huge. Which is just one

of the reasons that *Moon Safari* is such a pleasant surprise. The French band's second single, "Casanova 70," could have mapped out its sound: spy movie strings over a mellow, percolating humus of electric piano and bass, and almost no drums. So for Air to pursue pop songs instead of half-assed "acid jazz" numbers is like Christmas. Air is less techno than techno-savvy, which is why songs like "Ce Matin Là," an instrumental that evokes Nilsson's "Everybody's Talkin'" and Burt Bacharach's "I Say a Little Prayer," sound fresh and contemporary, and not just like a pastiche. And "Talisman" is a slice of '60s continental cool, an excellent aid to pretending you're skipping over mountain roads in your Aston Martin when you're really just on your way to your boring temp job. Moon Safari never ceases to yield new corridors and new environments. Step inside baby.

—Andrew Beaujon

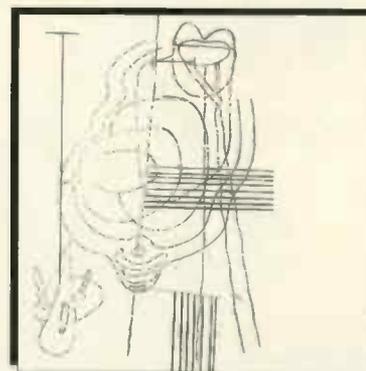
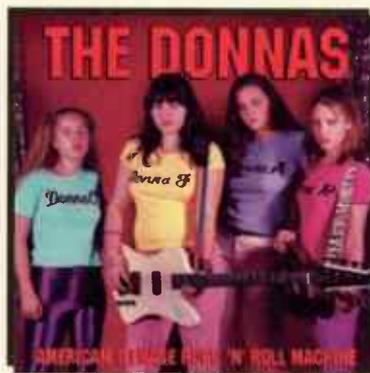
DONNAS CD

American Teenage Rock 'N' Roll Machine — Lookout!

Like the Ramones of '76/'77, the Donnas all share a name—Donna A., C., F. and R.—and a nostalgic fondness for rock 'n' roll's most elemental promise as the sound of noisy teenage rebellion. They pay tribute to Joey and Johnny with "Gimmie My Radio," a basic barre-band anthem with buzzsaw guitar and enough 'gimmies' to last to the end of the century. But unlike the Riverdales, the Queers and a dozen other Ramones-inspired outfits, the underage Donnas are smart enough not to limit themselves to just one rock 'n' roll cartoon. "I know what I want tonight and I see it coming off the street/I'm going over and I'm only seventeen-teen," is just one of the many tasty cherry bombs Donna A. drops in "Checkin' It Out," the kind of trashy rocker that should make the sugardaddy of "Christine Sixteen," Gene Simmons, feel like a proud papa. Which is not to in any way diminish the formative influence

DATALOG: Released date: Jan. 25.
FILE UNDER: Trashy teen glam-punk.
R.I.Y.L.: The Ramones, the Vandals, Runaways, New York Dolls.

of proto-punk's other garbagemen, the New York Dolls, whose glam-sham street strut puts the spring in the step of all four Donnas on "Wanna Get Some Stuff," and the ripple in the rump of "Shake In The Action." Yeah, you could just call the Donnas the DIY Runaways, but that wouldn't be half as entertaining for them, or for you. —Matt Ashare



GASTR DEL SOL

Camoufleur — Drag City

Artful, erudite and unrepentantly arty, Gastr Del Sol is among the most engaging groups of the post-Slint (please don't say "post-rock") progressive indie school. This is a rock band that's crafted orchestral compositions that are listenable, for chrissakes ("The Harp Factory On Lake Street"). *Camoufleur* is Gastr's breakthrough disc, exquisitely highlighting rocket scientists David Grubbs's and Jim O'Rourke's technical mastery of everything: organ; hurdy-gurdy; elliptical, acoustic guitar; total ambient noise. There's a pop sheen to it, as well. In the *Pet Sounds*-y "Each Dream Is An Example," the band transforms its heretofore "difficult" sounds into something breezy and beautiful. And while Grubbs's vocal style is still kind of clipped, it's never been more poppy or radio-ready as on the lush, gorgeous "The Season's Reverse," a dandy-ish, daisy scented after-hours treat. *Camoufleur* is one of those records where all the songs melt into each other. This dense web of sound effectively arrives already remixed, as it's manipulated throughout—both incidentally and blissfully full-on—by Markus Popp (of Oval/Microstoria) with computer-aided, loopy bravado. Popp's trademarked otherworldly tweakings help bring Gastr Del Sol's rich, decadent sound textures firmly to the forefront of contemporary experimental pop-sound. —Mike McGonigal

DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 27.
FILE UNDER: Electronica-dusted pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Stereolab, Tindersticks, Daft Punk.

DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 26.
FILE UNDER: '90s prog-rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Red Crayola, This Heat, Tortoise.

HIGH LLAMAS

Cold And Bouncy — V2

Despite its title, this record is far from cold, and instead of bouncy, it's more like a walk through the clouds. Sean O'Hagan still wears the hearts of Brian Wilson and Van Dyke Parks on his sleeve, but finally his adventurous work with Stereolab shines through; while there's plenty that recalls the vital orchestral pop of 1966 (i.e. challenging, rather than vapid, easy listening), there are enough electronic and rhythmic textures to make it seem perfectly modern.

Hawaii, the Llamas' last outing, was something of a failure, too long, and a bit short on melody. *Cold And Bouncy* has none of those faults. In many ways it's the album this band has been threatening to make: Utterly lacking self-indulgence, it's a thing of layers and swatches, delightful songs and vocals (particularly "Tilting Windmills" and "Showstop Hip Hop"), and instrumentals that juxtapose ideas in wonderful ways. More than anyone else

DATALOG: Release date: Jan 27.
FILE UNDER: Orchestral pop.
R.I.Y.L.: '66-'68 Beach Boys, Stereolab, Van Dyke Parks.

lately, the High Llamas have reinvented a great idea—the use of strings and brass as integral, exciting parts of pop music—that had become so devalued over the last 30 years. But whereas it previously seemed as if Sean O'Hagan was wanting to make the ultimate Beach Boys album, this time out he's really found his own voice and made a superb High Llamas record. —Chris Nickson



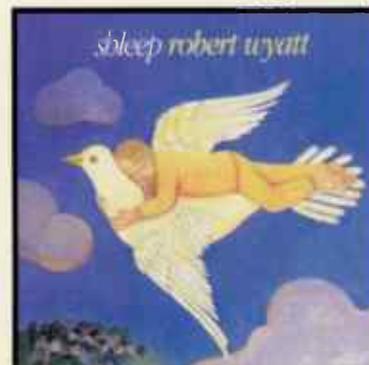
ROBERT WYATT

Shleep — Thirsty Ear

If you felt that Radiohead's *OK Computer* was a breakthrough record, sort of a *Sgt. Pepper* for a new breed of thoughtful, eclectic '90s rock, then *Shleep* could be your *Pet Sounds* for this decade, the contemporaneous record that didn't get nearly the notice it deserved. For more than 20 years Wyatt, the former drummer for Soft Machine, has been quietly and steadily releasing a body of work; *Shleep*, his first new recording in several years, is more of his gentle thinking-person's music, wherein the husky-voiced songwriter casts a cynical eye at the stupidity of nations, the emptiness in people's heads, and the eternal spaces between us all. *Shleep*

DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER: Cerebral, melancholy art music.
R.I.Y.L.: Radiohead, Nick Drake, '70s Pink Floyd.

is a curious blend of Eno-esque new wave, delicate, gentle folkish touches and eerie chanted melodies, with a huge dose of classic post-WWII English art-school gloom and cynicism. This perfect rainy-day record makes Pink Floyd seem like a party, Nick Drake a playboy. Although he seldom addresses the topic directly, Wyatt ends up offering a compelling argument for his lifestyle and world view: It's a rare thing that a reclusive, wheelchair-bound, anti-political, anti-careerist can make a record that convinces a listener to believe gloomily right along with him. Somehow Robert Wyatt is able to transcend the world's ugliness with his thick, weary voice. —James Lien



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 27.
FILE UNDER: Southern Gothic.
R.I.Y.L.: Gun Club, Geraldine Fibbers, Flannery O'Connor.



SIXTEEN HORSEPOWER

Low Estate — A&M

There's something genuinely creepy about Sixteen Horsepower—part spiritual presence, part sonic makeup—that completely transcends all manner of era, musical trend and technology. A Denver-based combo employing almost exclusively antique acoustic instruments and led by the grandson of a fire-and-brimstone Nazarene minister, 16 HP summons the ghosts of 18th-century Appalachian gospel, blues and country, leaning heavily on the

music's spooky atmospherics while presenting its own chilling take on what God really means by sin and redemption. Frontman David Eugene Edwards sounds as if he's perpetually fleeing the Devil's chase, his careening backwoods holler stoked by a dark undercurrent of vintage slide guitar, banjo, fiddle, stand-up bass, accordion and drums. "When will I suffer for the sake of Heaven?" he wails on "For Heaven's Sake," with such incredible wickedness in his voice you have to wonder what kind of suffering he's referring to. He opens "Dead Run" with the line "The Devil's brand is on my bones," as his band kicks up a fierce dust storm of squalling lap steel, violin and forceful rhythms. Between the eerie, twisted scripture of Edwards's rantings and the band's marriage of old-world musical textures with the gloomiest of conceits, 16 HP's back-to-the-future approach makes it one the spookiest things you've heard in the last two centuries. —Colin Helms



HEPCAT CD

Yes, Hepcat's got a horn section, but to call the group's music ska would be a gross over-simplification. The Los Angeles nine-piece ensemble's music is more closely akin to the Jamaican calypso popularized in the '60s by artists like Prince Buster, but for Hepcat, the lines dividing ska, jazz, reggae and R&B dissolve into one rich blend of sounds. And just as its music combines elements of Caribbean, Latin and African-American styles, the band itself collects members with varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The young group is already being recognized as one of the most important acts in today's ska/dub/reggae scene: Hepcat was one of only 15 bands selected to appear on Island Records' *Ska Island* compilation, the band was featured on last summer's Vans Warped Tour, and its vocal trio recently sang with the New York Ska Jazz Ensemble on that group's record. Plus, last year Hepcat signed to Epitaph's new ska imprint, Hellcat, which just released the band's latest album, *Right On Time*. —*Jenny Eliscu*

THIEVERY CORPORATION



With its melting pot of international influences, Washington, DC, seems a natural place for the birth of Thievery Corporation, a duo fusing dub, ambient, bossa nova, hip-hop and acid jazz into an organic melange that's as fresh as a slap of Aqua Velva in the morning. Favoring

three-button mod suits, Thievery's Eric Hilton and Rob Garza started the Eighteenth Street Lounge Music label, named for the club Hilton co-runs, and have thus far released the compilations *Eighteenth Street Lounge: The Soundtrack Volume One* and *Dubbed Out In DC*, as well as Thievery's own *Sounds From The Thievery Hi-Fi*. The future promises a compilation of the group's remixes of David Byrne, Pizzicato Five, Gus Gus and others, and a collaboration with Baltimore dub innovator Scientist. Thievery Corporation's own music leans as heavily on Brazilian and dub as it does on samples and shuffling beats—Hilton and Garza cite both Antonio Carlos Jobim and the Mad Professor as primary influences. —*Lydia Anderson*

DAVID RICE CD

David Rice is one of those guys who seems to collect life experiences as a hobby: He's lived everywhere from the back room of a Dutch macrobiotic restaurant, to a Swiss philosophy commune, to a Wisconsin summer camp for retarded kids where he taught music, to another rented room partitioned from a coffee shop back in his native Houston.

When it came time to record *greenelectric* (Columbia), he went off to the RealWorld studios, in Box, England, where producer David Bottril (Peter Gabriel, Tool) fleshed out the sound of Rice's oddly-tuned 12-string acoustic by bringing in musicians like Page/Plant bassist Charlie Jones and King Crimson's Trey Gunn. He finished the record by himself back in Texas, however, and that seems to fit: You can't fill up these songs any more than Rice does on his own onstage, sweating over his battered Ovation, his voice the rasp of an intimate whisper he wants everyone to hear. —*Scott Frampton*



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Queer Rock

by Lois Maffeo

Two gigantic rock 'n' roll magazines recently did 'tributes to women,' and how much information was there on Queer Rock? Hmm. Let me see. That would be none. Whether this says that the mainstream music media are sadly out of touch for having waited so long to recognize that women could rock or they think queer women haven't paid enough dues to grace their pages, I care not to speculate. Whatever the reason, it is unbelievable that no one seems to be noticing. Since the debut of Team Dresch in 1994, a queer punk scene has been gestating in the Pacific Northwest, and with new releases this year by Kaia, The Need, Longstocking, the Lookers, and the Vegas Beat, it would appear that the baby has been born and it's A Girl!



The Lookers: Sarah Dougher on the left.

Judging whether or not Queer Rock is a qualified genre isn't simple. Most of the women in these bands agree that it is preferable to be categorized as gay performers. "It's your prerogative not to want to be labeled," states Kaia Wilson, "but I think that it is something that defines us. 'That is a refrigerator. This is a dyke.'" Wilson is a stalwart of the lezzy rock scene who started her first band Adickdid as a

teenager and graduated to both a solo career and membership in the groundbreaking Team Dresch. For Tamala Poljak, Longstocking singer and songwriter, it is imperative for people to know what's up with these bands. "There is still so much homophobia that it's important for you to say you're gay until it's no longer an issue. We have to say, 'By the way, I'm gay. And it's okay if you are too.'" Sarah Dougher, solo artist and singer/guitarist from the Lookers, thinks that being part of a committed community was a large factor in the creation of this scene. "It's a secret underground network that is, in its best moments, supportive, generous and kind."

Finding a common thread between the bands isn't quite as easy as digging them all. For instance, music critics, etymologists and people at parties have yet to come up with a way to characterize the music of The Need. The closest I've come is eerie, quasi-Gothic sex metal. Longstocking injects Versus- or Breeders-style power pop with a sense of longing and a bullshit detector. "There's almost too much pop on our record," Poljak admits. "Bam! Bam! There are no gaps between the songs. But that whole 'in your face' thing comes from being from Los Angeles. In the land of mediocrity you have to push things to the extreme." Portland, Oregon's the Lookers join melodious, semi-acoustic strumming with highly literate lyrics served up by recent doctoral recipient Dougher.

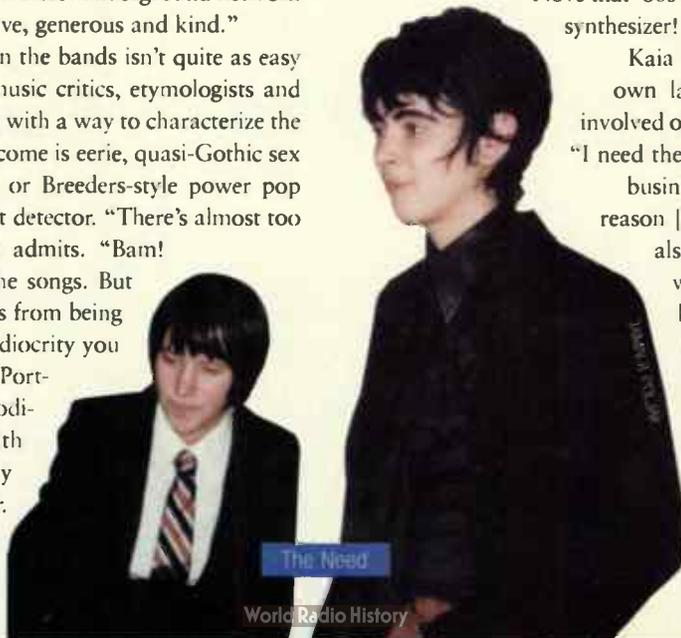
"Our record came out at the same time as my dissertation. It was a massive productive moment in my life," she recalls.

Kaia Wilson, who is releasing her second solo album, *Lady Man*, in February, is more than ready to see Queer Rock flourish. Her record is, like the Queer Rock genre itself, an amalgam of punk, new wave and womyn's music. It is accessible on so many levels that it seems poised to be the record that illustrates that the singer/songwriter as demure acoustic guitarist is a bankrupt notion. *Lady Man* begins with the whispered acoustic cradle song "Risk," but quickly graduates to the insistent rocker, "My Voice." "I write all my songs on acoustic guitar, but some are so obviously written to be rock songs. Melissa York [of Vitapup] plays drums in the band, so I knew it was possible" to rock. The angry, 'fuck all y'all' tune "That's Mr. Baby To You" carries its vituperative message in an unexpectedly mild and elegant casing. Kaia's love of new wave is apparent in the synth dance instrumental "Intermission" and the acoustic replicant of early '80s one-hit sound, "Off." "I'm totally into New Order and I love that '80s sound. The 'strings' sound on the synthesizer! The bird noises!"

Kaia is releasing her album on her own label, Mr. Lady, in order to be involved on a business level with her music. "I need there to be more woman and dyke businesses in the world, so that's one reason [I started the label]. Mr. Lady is also going to distribute videos by women, fags and dykes. I want to bridge the gap between music being cool and accessible and video being elitist. Besides, if I put it out myself, I make more money!" The notion that queer-owned and -operated labels are crucial to the pres-



Tamala Poljak



The Need

ence of these records is borne out by the fact all of these records have been released by them. Sarah Dougher points out that “being committed to a cooperative economic structure allows for a scene like ours to flourish. No one that I know is trying to ‘make it.’ Everyone knows what a fucked path that is and what it does to your friends and to your music.” Poljack concurs that small labels have made a difference. “In Los Angeles only gross labels who misunderstood us were interested in our band. There’s nothing like K, Kill Rock Stars or Chainsaw there. I’m not going to play the game that LA is noted for—you get a lot of money and you lose all your integrity. It’s good to be on a label [Chainsaw] that emphasizes being queer. Being in this community is flattering because I always felt like an outcast.”

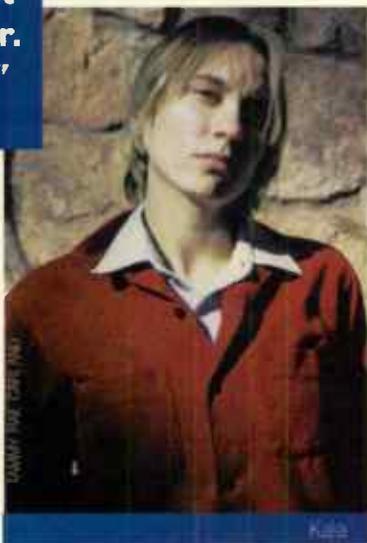
Whether the Queer Rock genre started with riot grrrl drop-outs or women who took Tribe 8 and Two Nice Girls to the next logical step, it’s interesting to see where the fallout lands. Helping women learn self-defense and deal with homophobia has been an added community enhancement by queer artists and labels. Candy-Ass Records, home of Team Dresch and the Lookers, will be releasing the second volume of the *Free To Fight* women’s self-defense project. It is a series of 7” records with contributions by Sleater-Kinney, the Third Sex and The Need, as well as

detailed information on how women can learn more to protect themselves against physical and verbal violence. Dougher, who has toured with the *Free To Fight* self-defense instructors, has simple

**“It’s your prerogative not to want to be labeled, but I think that it is something that defines us. ‘That is a refrigerator. This is a dyke.’”
—Kaia Wilson**

aims for the social good of being in a Queer Rock band. “Playing music fills me with joy and strength,” says Dougher, “and if you are a gay person with joy and strength, then you are fighting homophobia.”

It might not be in heavy rotation next to Melissa Etheridge and k.d. lang any time soon, but Queer Rock is coming soon to a fanzine, mix tape, record shop, radio station, neighbor girl’s garage or stereo near you. It’s here. It’s queer. Get used to it. ■



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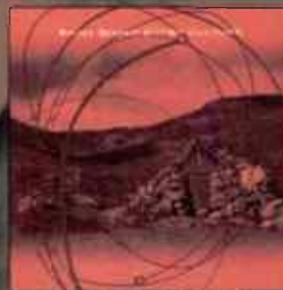
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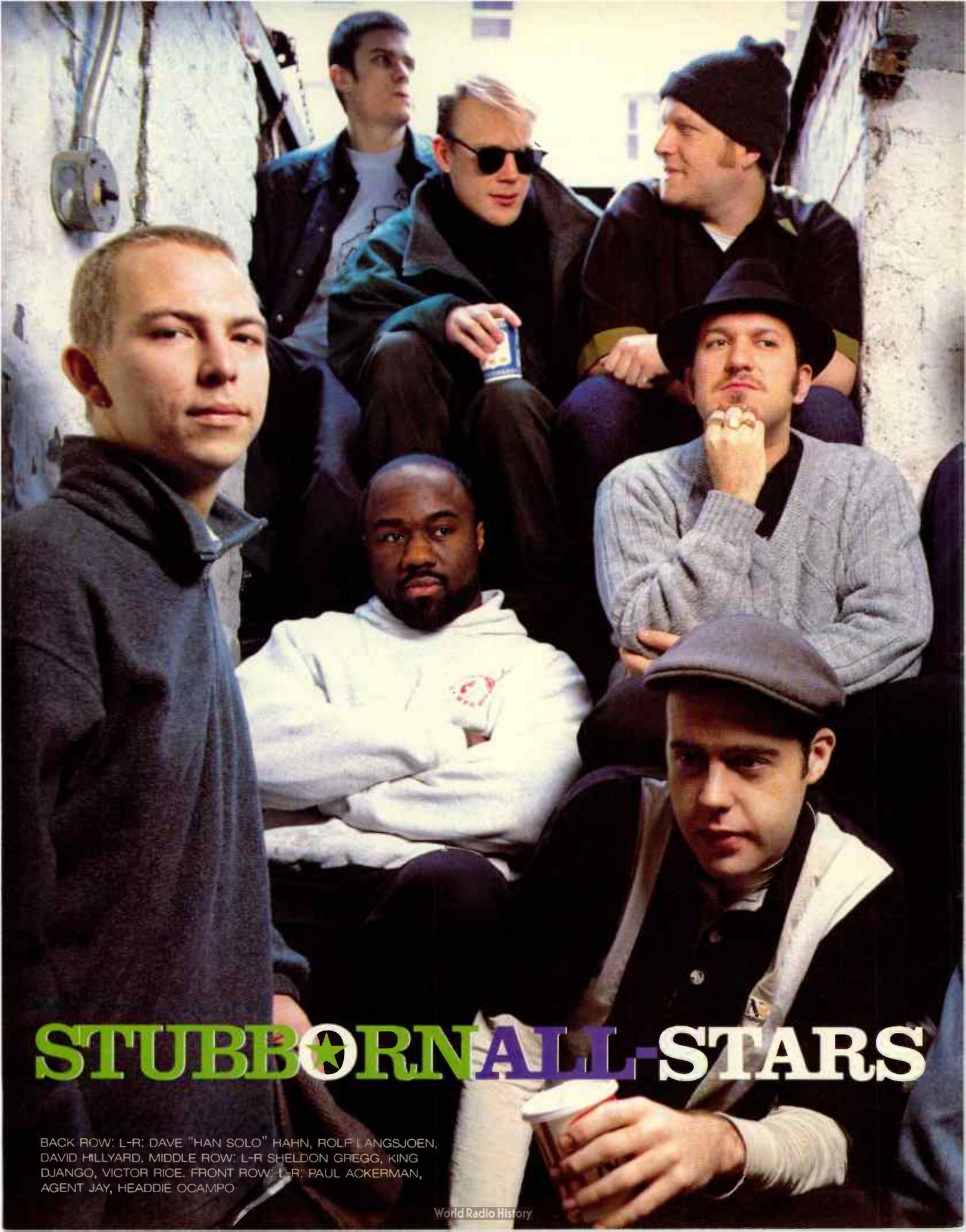


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It's late 1997, and the Stubborn All-Stars have just released the best reggae album of 1971. At a time when anything ska is being seized on, one of America's best traditional ska bands has moved on. *Back With A New Batch* (Triple Crown) is a new batch indeed, a mix of dub toasting, one-drop (including a pair of tunes that could have come out of the Bob Marley songbook), some jump blues and even a '50s-style ballad. Oh yes, and a touch of ska. But only a touch. "I don't think there was any real reason for the change, other than those were the tunes we had written," explains singer and trombonist Jeff 'King Django' Baker. "I've always written a lot more reggae than ska. When it was time to do the record, I had certain things I wanted to use, and there were a couple of things written for the record. But it wasn't any conscious progression."

The All-Stars' personnel—all members are also involved in other ska bands—includes the bulk of the members from 1995's *Open Season*, with Jason Glaser on trumpets, David Hillyard on saxes, and a rhythm section of Victor Ruggiero (piano), Agent Jay (guitar), Victor Rice (bass) and Headdie Ocampo (drums). "We've added Paul Ackerman, formerly of the Pietasters, on keyboards, and Victor is sharing bass duties with Sheldon Gregg, who was in the Scofflaws," Baker adds. "Sheldon's playing electric, and Victor is playing acoustic." Also new to this album's lineup are guitarist David Hahn and saxophonist Eric Singer.

To forge ahead, veering away from the beat that the US is picking up on in droves, is an adventurous move, particularly for a group that's been one of the prime proponents of the traditional sound. "Well, to us, it's not breaking away," Baker says. "We've never thought about the commercial aspect. And there are so many things called ska today. Most of the bands getting attention today as ska bands don't play any more ska—maybe even less related to ska—than what's on this record."

Probably the most daring touch of all is "Struggling Version," which dubs out "Tired Of Struggling," another track off the album, and overlays it with toasting in a very authentic Jamaican DJ style—something generally unfamiliar in this country. "Jack Ruby, Jr. did the toasting. His dad was a big reggae producer in the '70s, and he sings with the Toasters now. I always loved that style, and it's been a big part of what I do. I went on tour with Toasters, and I thought Jack was a really good DJ, and I wanted to get him down on this record."

Now it's time to take it all on the road, and the All-Stars will be touring with the Slackers and Skinnerbox (Baker's other outfit) under the 'NYC Ska Mob' banner, initially on the East Coast, then nationally in February. "Some of the guys are in all three bands, and that's why we did it. We don't have to leave anybody home, sulking," he laughs. "We haven't played any of this material live before. I think people who liked the first album will be into it, because that was so different from most things going on in ska at the time."

It's going to be a busy period for the Stubborn All-Stars, but that's as it should be. After all, in 1971, reggae was getting ready to be internationally huge, which begs the question, is this collection of ska luminaries going retro by hearkening back to Caribbean music's salad days, or pointing the way to a brighter future? The truth is out there, and the Stubborn All-Stars are ready to tell it. **CMJ**

NYC SKA MOB by Chris Nickson

Looking at once fragile and formidable, Victoria Williams is seated at a high-gloss conference room table, scribbling in big, childlike scrawl on a crumpled piece of paper she will later fax to a teen magazine. She is surrounded by boxes of herbal tea and is munching from a plate of doughy chocolate chip cookies.

"The topic is 'love songs,'" she croaks in the same frail voice found on her new album, *Musings Of A Creekdipper* (Atlantic). The only problem with this youth magazine assignment is that Williams, who pens classic rootsy yarns with vibrant, carefully drawn protagonists, doesn't receive any television or radio—save a golden oldies station—at her desert home in Joshua Tree, California. Having lived there for two years with husband Mark Olson and a trio of much-loved mutts, Williams confides that she's "not up to date with the newest acts of music." Lately, she's mostly been listening to standards—Sinatra and the like.

Williams, whose ballads often betray an attachment to '40s-era sounds, had an unexpected brush with Ol' Blue Eyes himself a few years ago. Sinatra, it seems, first heard her music through Soul Asylum, Pearl Jam, Lou Reed and

the others who covered her songs for the 1993 collection, *Sweet Relief: A Benefit For Victoria Williams*. The album raised much needed cash for Williams, who had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and was without health insurance. The Sweet Relief organization was then founded to help defray the costs of medical coverage for performers, who often are uninsured. "I'd never met the man in my life and he sent me a check for \$1,000," she recalls. The 37-year-old Williams, who is also a visual artist, later sent Frank one of her paintings. He never did respond. "I guess it went to some Office Of Frank Sinatra," she says, laughing.

Much has been made of the famous friends—mostly met years ago as she was building a steady following busking on Venice Beach—who have come to Williams's aid. What those associations don't account for is the Shreveport, Louisiana, native's talent for mining real-life fairy tales about persnickety small-town Southerners, loony roadside ramblers and common folk who withstand life's trials by being beautifully simple. On *Musings*' "Grandpa In The Cornpatch," Williams sings in her trademark reedy chirps, "One arm held high/Other steady on a cane," framing a snapshot of a man watching the sun set on his life. "That song's about learning to rest," Williams explains. In the last three years, she explains, she's had three serious—but temporary—bouts with not being able to walk, and at those times she needed to learn the fine art of resting, "because I couldn't do anything but rest."

Williams, who released the acclaimed album *Loose* in 1994 and a live disc, *This Moment In Toronto With The Loose Band*, a year later, took her time recording her newest record. She began laying down tracks at her home studio with Olson, who had just quit his longtime band the Jayhawks. Williams remembers having to halt the recording process because of too many cooks. "Mark likes to be a leader, and he was with the Jayhawks," Williams says with her characteristic wide-eyed intensity. "But it just kind of confused me on my own record." She says the two later arrived at the perfect compromise: If Olson was around when Williams was recording at home

(she also recorded at a studio three-fourths of a mile from her ranch), "he was cooking me these fantastic meals," she says with a grin. Olson wound up providing backing vocals on parts of the record and also co-wrote one of the disc's best songs, the winsome "Hummingbird."

Williams produced *Musings* with Trina Shoemaker (Sheryl Crow, Kristin Hersh), who later remarked that Williams's work "mirrors her viewpoint on life. She knows about plants and their properties, about animals and their hearts, and about the earth and rocks and storms." It's an apt observation, as Williams finds not only joy, but meaning in animals.

"I love animals 'cause you can see God's playfulness in animals," she says, "you can see a type of purity." Williams's fans are familiar with her dog Mollie, whom she has brought onstage in the past. They also know that Williams's music is accentuated by a devout religiosity which has seen her through being "blessed with this cursed disease." Of this unwavering faith, she explains, "Now there's an old gospel song that says, 'make stumbling blocks your stepping stones, since every day is judgment day.' I'd say as far as

having a positive attitude," she concludes, "it has to do with my reliance upon God."

Williams's music often draws on elements of gospel, and she

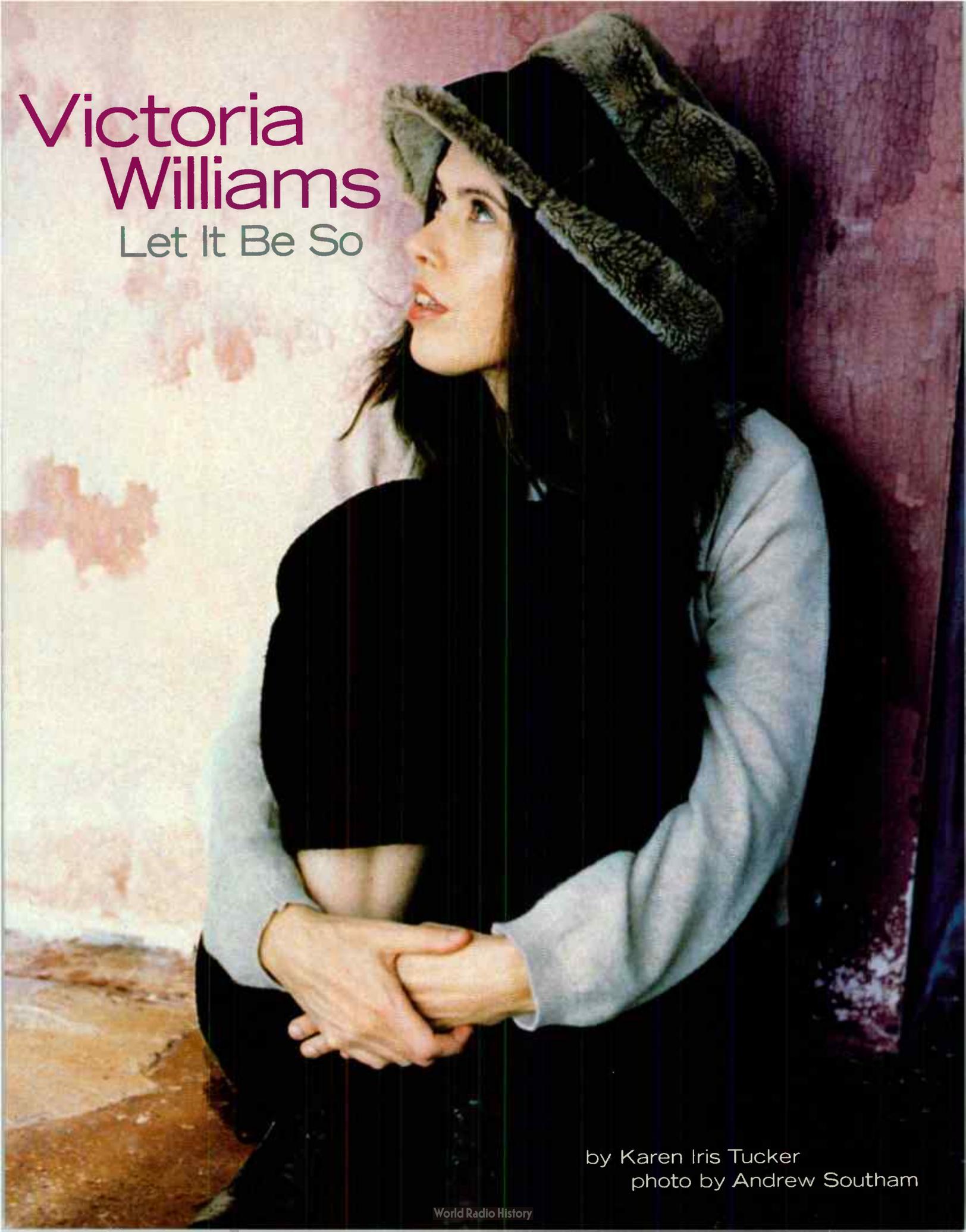
covers the traditional song "Nature Boy" on her new album. She found the sheet music in a thrift store in Joshua Tree and recalls being very taken with the cover image. "It had this Jesus-type looking person and there was peace all over his face," she says. Williams took it home and played it on the piano. "It was haunting," she recalls. "I said, 'My stars, that's a beautiful song.'"

Taking time from working on the record, Williams toured with this past summer's Lilith Fair festival. At one point during the tour, Joan Osborne came up to her and said she wished she had jumped onstage to join Williams on "You R Loved." "I said, Joan, if you ever have that inspiration, you should get up there and sing with me," she recalls. That night, as Williams watched Tracy Chapman perform, with Osborne and Sarah McLachlan on backing vocals, she remembers thinking, "'Oh, they need a soprano in there.' I could feel it in my body, the part and everything. But I thought, 'I shouldn't just get up there.'" Suddenly, she heard herself encouraging Osborne to do just that. "I got out there and sang. It was great."

Up-and-coming neo-folkie Dar Williams (no relation), who also appeared on some Lilith dates, was impressed with Williams's abundant and unwavering sincerity. "There are people who really have a Voice in this world," said Dar, "and I've always thought she has one of the truest." "Described variously as loopy, quirky and eccentric-sounding, this Voice is what separates Williams from other songwriter types and defines her as a brilliantly soulful—and often spontaneous—lyricist.

Williams wrote the lyrics to *Musings Of A Creekdipper*'s "Let It Be So" the day she was scheduled to sing it at her sister's wedding. "I put it on a big pole with a bow on it and started reading from it. The preacher used the song too," she says, nodding. "He said, 'Oh, and let it be so,' which means 'amen.' I thought that God gave me that song," Williams confides a little awed. "I knew it was the obvious right song if the preacher was gonna use it."

**"That song is about learning how to rest,
because I couldn't do anything but rest."**



Victoria Williams

Let It Be So

by Karen Iris Tucker
photo by Andrew Southam

THE APPLES IN STEREO

Over the last few years, a peculiar logo has turned up on a lot of the best new independent pop records. It's peculiar not just because of its design—a '60s-style mock art deco arrangement of the phrase "The Elephant 6 Recording Co."—but because it's been appearing on records that are actually on other labels.

Elephant 6 isn't quite a label (though it *is* that too, sometimes); it isn't quite a musicians' collective (though it's that, too, mostly); it's not quite a sub-genre (though it's sort of that, too). It's more of a trademark of quality, loosely based around a handful of bands devoted to homemade pop that approximates the melodic brilliance and rich production of '60s radio hits with whatever materials are at hand, from big studios down to (more often) home recording equipment. At a time when what's on the radio doesn't do it for them any more, these musicians have built a viable alternative through collaboration, dedication to their aesthetics, and hard work. And at the center of the ring of Elephants are the Apples In Stereo: drummer Hilarie Sidney, guitarist John Hill, bassist Eric Allen, and singer, guitarist and main songwriter Robert Schneider.

Elephants On Parade

The story of the Apples actually starts with former bassist Jim McIntyre, who, Schneider explains in high-speed jitters of enthusiasm, "used to do recordings when he was a little kid, experimenting with tape machines and stuff—he's a scientist. He and his cousin Douglas started a band called Von Hemmling in junior high school—they'd mic up tennis rackets and put them through a reverb unit, and make recordings on reel-to-reels."

A few years later, McIntyre and Sidney started making four-track recordings together, but they still hadn't worked out a few secrets of the AM radio pop they loved, like how to tune instruments to each other. That got taken care of when they moved in with Hill, with whom they turned Von Hemmling into an actual band.

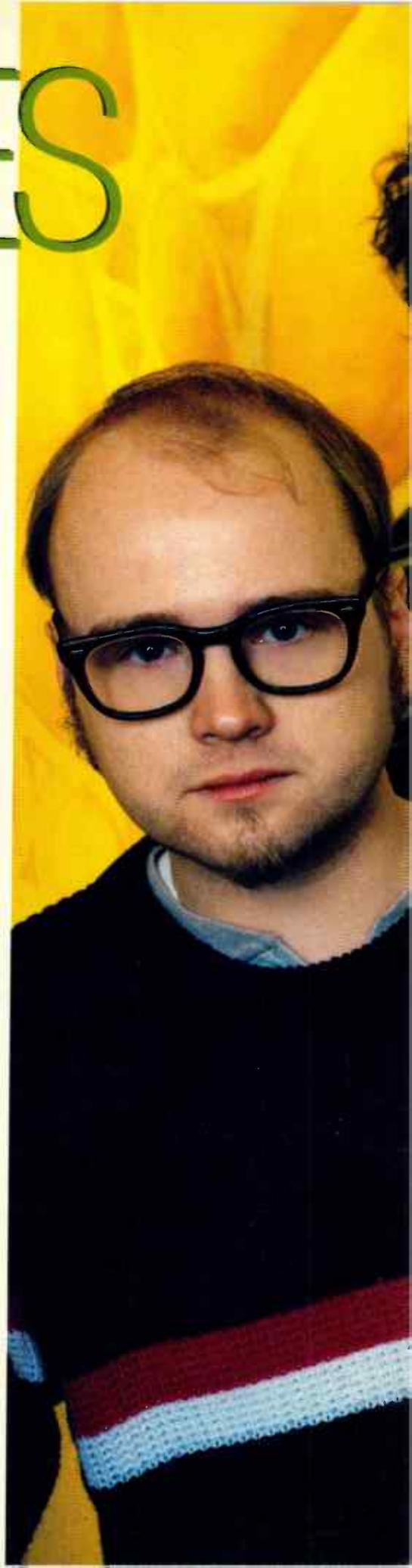
Meanwhile, Schneider had played in bands with various combinations of Jeff Mangum, Will Hart and Bill Doss. Mangum, Hart and Doss moved to Athens, Georgia, and started Synthetic Flying Machine, which eventually turned into Neutral Milk Hotel and Olivia Tremor Control; Schneider moved to Denver, and fell in with the members of Von Hemmling.

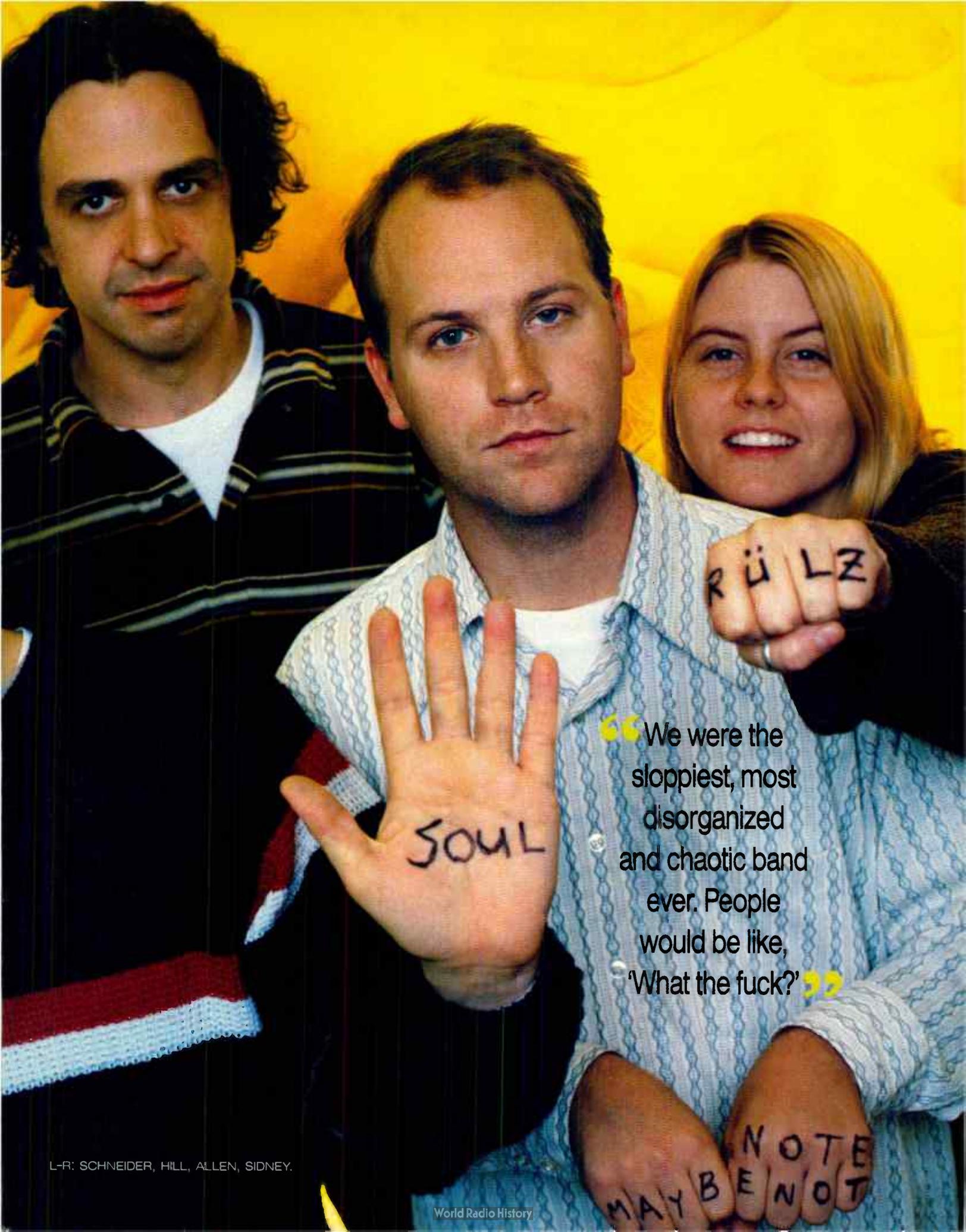
"I met this guy named Chris," he says, "and we started writing together, and then the obvious became more obvious, which was that Jim and Hilarie should play in the band too. And we were the sloppiest, most disorganized and chaotic band ever. People would be like, 'What the fuck?' After a while, we recorded our first EP, and then Chris couldn't keep up with being in a band and having to buy guitar strings. He split and moved back to the East Coast." Hill joined a little later; eventually, McIntyre left, and Allen replaced him.

And somewhere in there, Elephant 6 became established as the identifier that most of those bands and their members' other projects (Sidney's group Secret Square, Olivia Tremor Control's ambient alter ego Black Swan Network) put on their

continued on page 42

by Douglas Wolk photo by Chris Toliver

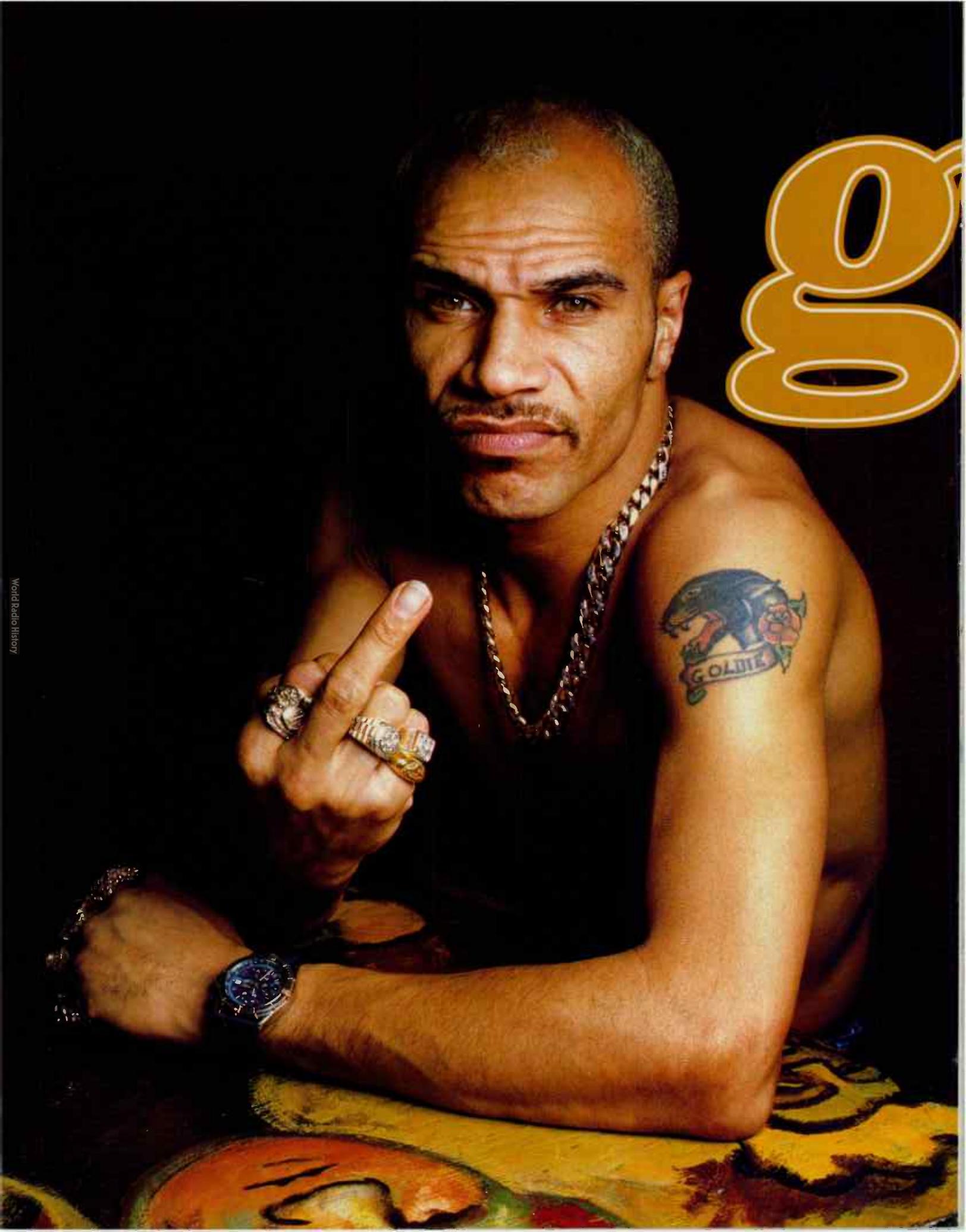




“ We were the sloppiest, most disorganized and chaotic band ever. People would be like, ‘What the fuck?’ ”

L-R: SCHNEIDER, HILL, ALLEN, SIDNEY.

80



Goldie

making his mark

It's been nearly an hour and still England's king of the jungle, or at least one of them—the Stussy-wearing one with gold teeth—hasn't gotten his tea. Actually, this will turn out to be the least of his problems on a dimly cold and rainy Friday evening in November, which will culminate in the anti-climax of Goldie *not* showing up on stage to open for the reunited Jane's Addiction at a Brandeis University gym in Waltham, Massachusetts. (He was apparently stuck in a snarl of Boston's notorious traffic.) This will, arguably, deprive the bill of the tour's real highlight. Because, just as Jane's Addiction was among the elite corps of bands who changed the face of rock a little less than a decade ago by establishing a beachhead for alt-rock on commercial radio, Goldie is one of the few big guns responsible for instigating what may well be the next big revolution in pop: drum 'n' bass. You'd think that would at least entitle him to some prompt room service here at the Burlington Marriott, even if his celebrity hasn't quite yet reached this side of the Atlantic.

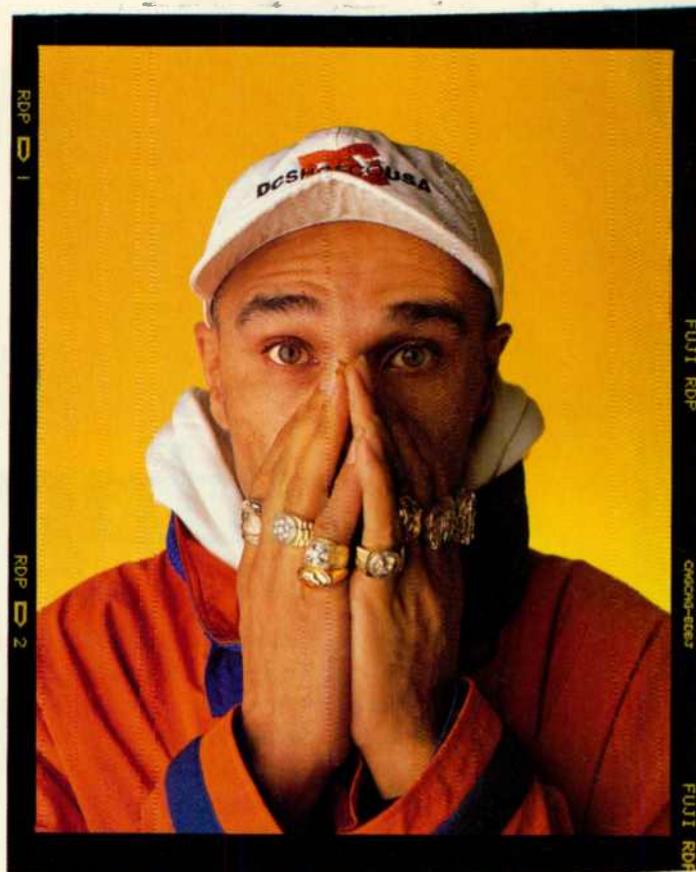
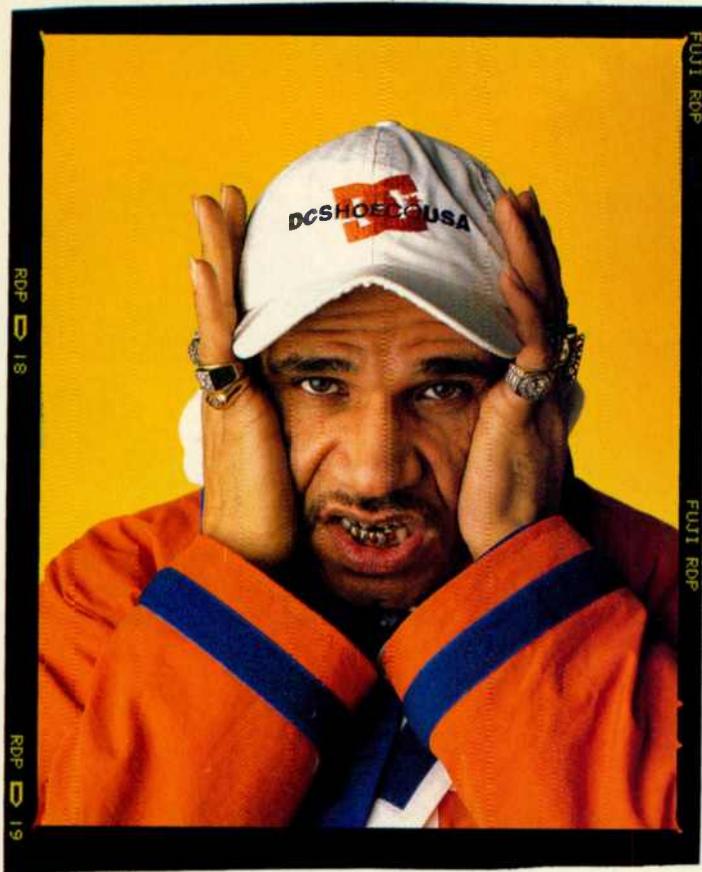
"Sixty minutes, thirteen seconds!" Goldie exclaims as he slips from the sofa to the floor and begins to examine the contents of the pile of Goldie materials I've deposited on the coffee table, including advance tapes of his forthcoming London album *Saturnz Return* and a Bush remix collection featuring Goldie's radical reinterpretation of "Swallowed," as well as CD copies of his 1995 debut *Timeless* and the soundtrack to *The Jackal*, on which he worked on three tracks. "Sixty minutes, thirteen seconds," he repeats more thoughtfully this time, with a soft chuckle and a deeply dimpled smile. "What do you think of that?"

Well, basically I think that means that if we'd started listening to *Saturnz Return* from the beginning back when Goldie ordered his tea, we'd still be on the first track right now. Yes, the new Goldie record, a two-CD techno opus, opens with a track that's longer than most artists' entire albums—an hour and thirteen seconds. Not even "Timeless," the expansive twenty-one-minute opening cut on *Timeless* that had critics reaching for their superlatives, will have prepared anyone for the hour-long aural tour de force of "Mother," a mostly instrumental, surrealistically autobiographical composition that confidently incorporates an impressive array of musical forms—from the Stockhausen/Satie-style musique concrète of its sampled sounds of air, fire and water, to the jingle-jungle groove of its intermittent beat, to the symphonic overtones of the forty-piece orchestra Goldie hired for the job. Even Goldie himself seems awed by the scope of it.

"'Mother' was a bitch to make," he reflects. "It had been in my head for a long time. It was still technologically fucked. I deal with Macintosh Logic Audio. Most people usually work on one screen or monitor. I had to have four screens up for 'Mother,' along with a really powerful computer and big 48-track mixing console. It was like I'd lived with the idea of 'Mother' for a long time, but I had to wait until I had the right technology in order to execute it."

Goldie is back up on the sofa now, fidgeting with a book of matches, lighting one after another just to watch them burn as his mind jumps quickly from subject to subject, unaware, perhaps, that he's setting his own agenda for the interview with a barrage/collage of self-revealing anecdotes,

BY MATT ASHARE ↔ PHOTOS BY NEIL BECKERMAN



technical jargon, astrology, philosophical quips, musical theory and metaphor. “You see this?” he asks pointing to an unlit match. “A musical performance is like this.” He lights it and lets it burn down until the flame almost reaches his fingers. “Now, you can’t light that match again. But what I do is capture that match when it’s burning so that I can use it again.”

Goldie is referring to the tools of his trade, the sounds or “sonics” he’s collected and tweaked electronically over the years, and which form the basis of his music. “I have a case of sonics, some of which have been with me for a very long time. I take them from the world of music and make alchemy with them using technology.

I fuck with old sounds to make new ones.

So, on *Saturnz Return* I may have used some sonics that I created in a studio five years ago and hadn’t found a use for yet.”

It’s like a painter mixing his own colors, I suggest to Goldie, who was a visual artist—a painter and a graffiti artist—before he started making music in the early ‘90s. “Yes,” he concurs. “And one color might be a bit too bright for now. But then, later on, that color may become something very appealing.”

The shadings Goldie employs on *Saturnz Return* tend toward the moody and introspective end of the emotional spectrum—think of it as his blue period. If *Timeless* was, as Goldie puts it,

“I take my sonics from the world of music and make alchemy with them using technology.”

“scratching at the surface of a guy through an exploration of a genre of music” (i.e. drum ‘n’ bass), then *Saturnz Return* is a fleshed out portrait of the artist as a young man, inspired by the unusual circumstances of his formative years and catalyzed by a mid-life crisis of sorts.

“In astrology, Saturn’s Return is an actual point of time, when your planets are aligned with where they were when you were born,” he explains. “It’s like a mid-life crisis.

As an artist it forces you to be very honest. My Saturn’s Return was a very long and painful one. It started about a year ago and ended about four weeks ago. It forced me to take an in depth look at what my life is actually about. It’s like I dreamt *Timeless*, but I lived *Saturnz Return*.”

Goldie goes on to relate each track on *Saturnz Return* to a salient incident or life experience, starting with “Mother,” which traces the psychological contours of the 32-year-old artist’s life, from birth on up through a turbulent childhood that began when he was separated from his mother at the age of two. “It’s about my search for my mother and for myself. My mother couldn’t cope with me and my father went to live in America. So I grew up in group homes with 20 kids, and then I was taken from foster parents to foster parents. So you never actually put your roots down because you don’t know when they’re going to get ripped up.”

The drumless “Letter Of Fate,” with its eerie whispers and synth washes, is based on a suicide note Goldie wrote many years ago, when, as he puts it, “I was doing tons of cocaine, I had my heart broken by this girl, and I was all fucked up.” One of the disc’s hidden tracks, “Dream Within,” uses a backwards recording of the note being read as a foundation. (The other hidden track, “Truth,” features David Bowie on vocals.) Goldie’s immersion in hip-hop culture as a graffiti artist back in the ’80s is symbolized by “Digital,” a jungled-up rap track with KRS-One on the mic; his later love-affair with the dance scene is represented by the soulful disco groove of “Crystal Clear,” with its diva-style vocals by longtime collaborator Diane Charlemagne.

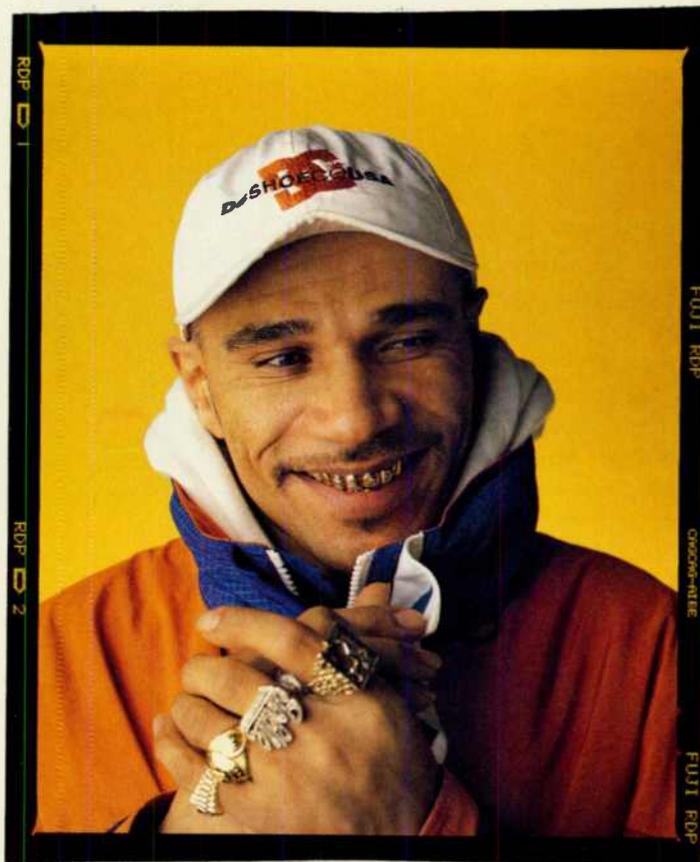
Saturnz Return may be the first extended example of techno autobiography, and it certainly represents the widening of the creative horizons of album-oriented electronica. What it isn’t is a straight drum ‘n’ bass collection, à la L.T.J. Bukem’s *Logical Progression* or anything by Spring Heel Jack. Although even Goldie isn’t quite sure how best to define drum ‘n’ bass.

“Drum ‘n’ bass is a music that has been labeled many things. But it’s not jungle. Jungle is what came out of the commercial thing of it. Drum ‘n’ bass goes deeper. It has to do with the integration of the community involved in it in the UK. It’s an urban music. But it has many different origins. For me there are only four genres of world music: blues and jazz; Detroit techno; Bronx hip-hop, and reggae. Recordable audio has allowed me to look at those four past genres and learn, and that’s where drum ‘n’ bass comes from.”

“Jungle is what came out of the commercial thing of it. Drum ‘n’ bass goes deeper.”

To pinpoint where Goldie’s coming from musically, you also have to include the art-damaged post-punk of the Stranglers and Public Image Ltd., the slick fusion of guitarist Pat Metheny (one of his all-time favorites), and the rave-era club music he encountered upon returning to London from Miami and New York City in the early ’90s. Unlike most artists who are mining techno terrain these days, Goldie didn’t get his start as a DJ—he only picked up the skill later, more or less out of necessity. But it was through club DJs like Grooverider that he was exposed to the music that inspired him to make his own.

“When I heard the breakbeat stuff I knew I had to do that. I was doing artwork for a dance label at the time so I told them I wanted to do an EP, which turned out to be a two-track EP called *Killa Muffin*. My goal was to have Grooverider play my music. The way he tells it, he says ‘This kid with blond hair and gold teeth came to me and told me he had this record that was going to change things.’ I just wanted to change things so badly as an artist, to make my mark.” Challenges like that are what motivate Goldie. Watching him restlessly go to town on yet another book of *continued on page 42*



CULTURE SHOCK

by M. Tye Comer



"Out of New York, Chicago and Detroit [came]...garage, house, and techno: three inter-linked strands with similar premises—the use of technology to heighten per-

ception and pleasure, and the release from mundane, workday existence into fantastic vistas of drama, vitality and joy." —Matthew Collin, *Altered State*

Ever since the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack went platinum, America has regarded "dance music" as the embarrassing bastard child of its music scene, a frivolous genre embraced by those who troll seedy nightclubs snorting recreational powders. How could it be taken seriously when for so many, the very idea of it still conjures images of the Lambada, the Macarena and Tony Manero's hair? But even while the death of disco was being celebrated at baseball parks and on rock radio, a new movement was surfacing in New York City's club underground. There, DJs at legendary venues like the Paradise Garage and Studio 54 broke free from the "fascinat'n' rhythm" of disco and introduced crowds to the new sounds of garage and house. Out of the mainstream spotlight and under the pulse of the strobe, the dance-



floor became a haven from social oppression for the largely black and gay club-goers. A sub-culture developed that looked to dancing as a means of reaching new levels of spirituality, empowerment and unification. House music became the soundtrack to a celebration. The club became a temple — the DJ its messiah.

It was from this environment that the concept of DJ-as-artist emerged. Club DJs like Larry Levan began beat-matching and layering records over one another, fusing individual vinyl 12"s into a continuous, seamless symphony of rhythm. This turntable technique was exported to England in the late-'80s, where the marriage of Detroit's emerging techno sound and the UK's sample-heavy version of its American cousin, acid-house, sparked what is verging on becoming the biggest youth culture Britain has ever known. At all-night parties in warehouses and open fields, young "ravers" lost themselves in a futuristic soundscape of rhythm and melody and, like their NYC forefathers, came to embrace dancing (and DJ culture) not just as a pastime, but as a celebration. Now, as electronic dance music begins finding its way to American airwaves, the DJ has emerged as the spiritual leader of the movement in this country as well, playing the various roles of taste-maker, performer and star attraction in a culture that's continuing to collect converts and

THE RISE OF THE

influence the mainstream.

"DJs are so key because the records go to the DJs first and they get them into everyone's ears," explains Josh Wink, a Philadelphia DJ-turned-producer-turned-label impresario (of Ovum Recordings), who has led the global underground dance scene with anthems like "Higher State Of Consciousness" and "Don't Laugh." "The people go into record shops to get them, there's a huge demand and then there's a buzz. All of a sudden, with this big electronic music explosion, you've got big A&R heads and VPs of record companies going out to clubs to hear one or two songs they can picture licensing and getting on the radio."

Wink, along with artists like Chemical Brothers, Daft Punk and Crystal Method, has helped to pave electronic dance music's path towards mass acceptance in the US. But these artists (DJs themselves) first achieved success because underground DJs saw that their tracks consistently rocked the crowds, and gave them heavy rotation on their decks. "In rock music, there's usually some kind of underground community that is the first to know about and support a band and bring it to the next level," says Andrew Goldstone of Astralwerks Records, the American label for trend-setting electronic artists like Chemical Brothers, Future Sound Of London and Phorek. "In the electronic community, that's the role of the DJs. They're the ones who find the records, and they are the most influential people within the community. It automatically translates into a greater awareness of the artists... because they're being championed by the people who make the most difference in the scene."

But the structure of a typical DJ set means that fame and fortune only find the most distinguishable electronic producers. Most records within a DJ's crate are unrecognizable instrumental tracks composed by artists who will remain as anonymous as their white-label singles. Due to the ambiguity of most underground dance tracks, it is more often the DJ who *plays* them that ends up with the notoriety, since he's the only name and face an appreciative

photos by Chris Toliver

"DJs really are the equivalent of live music in this culture. People go out to hear DJs the same way that they go out to hear rock bands." —Andrew Goldstone, Astralwerks Records

audience has to connect with. "DJs really are the equivalent of live music in this culture," says Goldstone. "People go out to hear DJs the same way that they go out to hear rock bands because there's not enough touring electronic acts to satisfy their need for live music. They have to have it provided in other ways."

That audience connection has provided the DJ with a glamorous, influential and often lucrative position within the electronic music community. For a two-hour US appearance, top-notch American names can pull in between \$800 to \$1,500. The price tag of gigs in Europe can be considerably more. But resident DJs at popular clubs

earn the most clout, often wielding limitless powers within their home venues—perks such as endless guest lists, mountains of drugs, private DJ booths, and the complete adoration of every single person on the dance-floor. "Everybody wants to be a DJ right now," says Wink. "People come up to me and ask what you have to do to become a DJ or to start producing and get to where I am. And I often hear a lot of frustration in their voices. A lot of these [people] want the fame, they want their names to read huge on [rave] flyers. But I know for me and a lot of people in my position, this didn't just happen overnight."

"In the early days when we'd play in the States, the crowd was just going out and taking it all in," says revered UK house DJ



PICTURES: CUSTOMERS AT BREAKBEAT SCIENCE, NY'S ALL DRUM 'N' BASS RECORD SHOP

DJ IN AMERICA

"Everybody wants to be a DJ right now. I know for me and a lot of people in my position, this didn't just happen overnight." —Josh Wink

John Digweed, who along with partner Sasha, holds a monthly residency at the world-famous New York City club Twilo.

"Now the kids are buying records, they've got decks, and they're reading up on the scene. A lot of people have embraced the culture, and that's the way it happened in England. Nine or ten years ago, there were only a few DJs and everyone was just going to the clubs. Now people are buying records and putting on their own nights. The awareness is definitely growing."

But it takes more than two turntables, a mixer and a crate of vinyl for a DJ to gain respect within the community. Obvious technical skill aside, a great DJ is found in



JOSH WINK. PHOTO BY PAUL NATKIN

his ability to create a "vibe": to mix records in ways that somehow transcend the tracks that are played, to take listeners to new levels of dancefloor euphoria, to give his moment on the decks an individual flair—a talent he must prove again and again.

And nowhere are the skills of great DJs more revered than in England, the birthplace of acid-house and raving. Across the sea, many DJs who spin electronic dance sounds have risen beyond being influential tastemakers to become recognizable pop icons.

While the biggest American names, like Wink and Superstar DJ Keoki, are happy to draw a crowd of 2,000 when playing a weekend party, superstar UK DJs

RONI SIZE AND REPRAZENT Spinning New Forms



To some DJs, the revolving vinyl on their Technics deck becomes a metaphor for their short-lived careers. Not for Roni Size. While growing up in Bristol, England, amidst a scene that also begot Massive Attack, Tricky and Soul II Soul's Nellee Hooper, Size used turntables to jump-start his interest in creating a vibrant new music. "They were the essential thing," Size says during a brief stop in New York City. "That was it. They just allowed you to be versatile."

Expelled from school for throwing a chair at a teacher, Size spent his abundance of extracurricular time teaching himself to use a drum machine. Later he collaborated with DJs Die and Krust, releasing albums on the English indie V Recordings in the early '90s before they amassed more equipment and launched their own label, Full Cycle. Adding another DJ, long-

like Sasha and Digweed will pack in 10,000 fans from all over the England to hear them spin a Monday night gig.

"The scenes are very similar in America and the UK," says Sasha, once dubbed "The Son Of God" by England's *Mixmag*, a chronicler of DJ culture. "A good club night is a good club night anywhere you go in the world. But the scene is much more in the mainstream in England. Since 1988, there have been news stories on the front page of papers talking about DJs and warehouse parties. People talk about [going to] clubs on soap operas. It's always in your face. Even my grandmother knows where the popular clubs are."

America's experience with DJ culture is admittedly a decade or so behind the UK's, and the jury is still out on the question of American DJs one day achieving the same widespread acclaim afforded their European counterparts. Even American talents like Detroit's Derrick May, Chicago's Derrick Carter and New York's Roger Sanchez are more revered (and spin more often) in Europe than on their home soil. There are several key factors contributing to the rise of the English DJ scene that simply aren't applicable stateside. "America's such a big country, and I don't think it will ever have the kind of networking that England's got," explains Sasha. "It's not unfeasible for me to do a gig in Scotland one night, London the next night, and Liverpool the next night and have people travel to two or three of those gigs. In America, it's not like if you live in Los Angeles, you can just pop over to New York to hear Junior Vasquez at Twilo."

The sheer size of the US and its lack of a nationwide radio network (like the BBC, which affords DJs like Pete Tong the opportu-



L-R: JOHN DIGWEED, SASHA

nity to play to the entire country at once) means ambitious American DJs have to do more legwork to get their names recognized outside of their local scenes. Enter the rock 'n' roll ethic of touring. "DJs definitely have to travel, without a doubt," says Paul Morris, booking agent for popular American DJs like DJ Dan, Dara, Scott Henry and Simply Jeff. "The way most DJs start is to build up a following within their own cities and then branch out. We're putting DJs out on the road, much like traveling rock acts. Plus if a DJ has a mix tape or CD out, it's really helpful because it gets their name out around the country. They're selling records, which is really just something they've mixed together, not their own produced work."

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time friend Suv, and vocalist Onallee, the collective became Reprazent, eventually signing with Mercury in the US and issuing a stunning double-CD, *New Forms*.

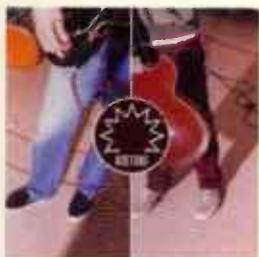
Hailed as a high-water mark of the burgeoning drum 'n' bass genre, the album draws from jazz, funk, R&B and old-school hip-hop, and it recently landed Size and Reprazent England's coveted Mercury Music Prize, which carries a £25,000 award. How did it feel to win? "You're gonna have to pinch me," says the energetic, still unbelieving Size. "Rather than us pushing [our music] in [the public's] faces, it was like being put on a platform to show people who don't normally know anything about this music what's going on." Overnight, Size and Reprazent had become poster children for drum 'n' bass.

The recognition sparked a flurry of activity in the Reprazent camp, with Size and his crew jetting off to European tours, one-off appearances in Manhattan and a gig

remixing U2's "Mofo" single. Size, who is very conscious of his humble Bristol beginnings, is now a recognizable entity worldwide, and his newfound status baffles him. "I went down to HMV in Times Square the other day," he says, "and there was some guy who was 45 or 50, a businessman with a big white beard and a briefcase, who asked me for my autograph. What's that all about?"

Size is now working on developing Reprazent's live show, which incorporates musicians as well as machines, into something as revolutionary as *New Forms*. Though he still spins vinyl on occasion, Size is skeptical of those beat-juggling and scratch DJs who refer to themselves as "turntablists." Size can't stifle his laugh: "Turntablists?! Oh, gosh. What next?"

Still, he's not willing to rule out DJs introducing even more new forms to the music landscape. "From the turntables, from your mind, from hitting a button the wrong way," he says, "I just look forward to whatever it is when it comes. And when it comes, you'll know about it." —Richard Martin



DATALOG: Release date: Jan 21.
FILE UNDER: Late-night dreaminess.
R.I.Y.L.: Early Pink Floyd, Opal, Bedhead, the Velvet Underground.

ACETONE CD

Acetone — Vapor

■ In a world defined by freeways, ATMs, remote controls, McDonalds and Starbucks, it's hard to believe that patience is still considered a virtue. Even more unbelievably, it's the defining characteristic of Acetone's self-titled third LP. Acetone's songs galumph along for five or six minutes without ever repeating themselves, breaking into anthemic choruses, or even raving up or cranking the amps. Sometimes it's Velvet-style droney repetition, more often it's a Gram Parsons-style mix of quiet psychedelia and rootsy country-blues—but it's always bare-bones guitar-versus-bass counterpoint on top of a shuffling beat. It seems a conscious effort to further simplify and strip-down: Acetone's 1993 debut, *Cindy*, while no paragon of overproduction, did see vocalist/guitarist Mark Lightcap constantly smearing feedback and leaning on the wah-wah in an effort to channel the spirit of Hendrix (or at least Neil Young). *Acetone*, however, is one hour of heavy-duty restraint; there are no studio overdubs, there is little 'soloing' in the traditional sense, and only a few songs make tentative moves toward a crescendo. Instead, its drowsy vibe requires a bit of patience on the listener's part as well, in order to appreciate its deceptively simple, but absorbing, complexity. It's an album best appreciated while horizontal, preferably accessorized with a bong, a lava lamp and a paisley pillow. —David Jarman

ANIMALS ON WHEELS

Designs And Mistakes —
 Ninja Tune

■ In the environment of drum 'n' bass, every week a new revelation overshadows previous advancements, so it's sometimes tough to appreciate a record on its singular artistic value rather than in relation to

what's transpired of late. Okay, it's time to take a breath. Step back from the constant melee and *listen* to Animals On Wheels. *Designs And Mistakes*, their debut on the oft-great Ninja Tune label, deserves a steady ear, full volume and the patience to cut through the ramshackle meteor shower of breakneck rhythms in order to appreciate not its speed or "complexity," but the gestalt. For when you flatten all the layers of rhythm, what's left is a crazy world of tempos battling for supremacy. Some are cut from a machine, some are soft sampled pillow breaks; some are quick, some slow, and



DATALOG: Released Nov. 17.
FILE UNDER: Drum 'n' bass.
R.I.Y.L.: Aphex Twin, µ-Ziq, Amon Tobin.

some wind through the middle to even the pace. All of them, though, mesh on one master beat that locks them together. For those who haven't yet embraced the world of drum 'n' bass, *Designs And Mistakes* is a good place to start because it isn't an entire album of bombastic in-ya-face breaks—although there are many. There's some edgy trip-hop buried in here too, as well as some cloudy dub, so there are ample opportunities to take a breath before you're buried once again. —Randall Roberts

BEN FOLDS FIVE

Naked Baby Photos — Caroline

■ The new Billy Joel? Or, as Ben Folds himself has dubbed it, "punk rock for sissies"? No matter what you call it, the music of piano-rockers Ben Folds Five has won a lot of attention and devoted fans. And why not? Folds's almost scary gift for writing ur-Tin Pan Alley melodies makes BFF easy to like; his lyrics—barbed, absurd, often heartfelt—and the band's devotion to their indie-rock peers make BFF easy to respect, too. *Naked Baby Photos* is ex-label Caroline's last waltz with BFF, following the band's departure for a major, and it's the right label to release this fan-oriented collection of live



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 13.
FILE UNDER: Songs in the attic.
R.I.Y.L.: Mid-period Joe Jackson, early Elton John, Presidents Of The USA.

cuts and outtakes. It may seem premature for a band with just two albums to release an odds-and-ends collection, and much of *Naked* is duplicative and far from essential. But Folds's scraps are better than many bands' main courses. Obsessives will salivate at the original 7" version of "Jackson Cannery"; a live cover of Built To Spill's "Twin Falls" (sadly, their great take on the Flaming Lips' "She Don't Use Jelly" isn't here); and "The Ultimate Sacrifice" and "Satan Is My Master," super-silly homages to heavy metal and Satanism, respectively. But the real banquet is the roundup of previously unavailable studio songs, like "Tom And Mary," a ragtimey tale of romantic confusion; the poignant "Eddie Walker," a sort of prequel to Folds's gorgeous should-be classic "Alice Childress," and a toe-tapping "Emaline" that will keep those awkward Billy Joel comparisons coming. —Chris Molanphy

MARTYN BENNETT CD

Bothy Culture — Rykodisc

■ The lure of new technologies is so enticing that you can hardly fault musicians for turning to the occasional drum machine or sampler in search of the next your-peanut-butter's-in-my-chocolate combination of disparate elements. Martyn Bennett's try is at mixing Gaelic traditions with skittering electronic beats. The thing is, it works. The electronic beats are largely unobtrusive, giving the keening field pipes and Gaelic fiddles



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 13.
FILE UNDER: Gaelic electronica.
R.I.Y.L.: Mouth Music, Loop Guru, Dead Can Dance.

plenty of room to run, and the other sounds of modern detritus that take up electronica's ambient spaces—the modem-like squeals, the rushes of microprocessed wind—undercut some of the whiskey-like sharpness that makes bagpipes such a love-them-or-hate-them proposition. “Tongues Of Kali,” however, is an example of how the mix of olde and new cuts both ways, even within the same song. The track begins with a thick vocal gargling, cascading keyboards and percussion that sounds like someone whacking a caber tosser's thigh, which is nice enough until the hissing high-hat of a dated house beat comes in and stomps over everything. The song regains its composure, however, exchanging the gibbering for a sort of Gaelic scat and folding all the elements into a nicely propulsive thump. But it's triumphs like the pensive “Ud The Doudouk,” with its collision of melodies, that makes *Bothy Culture's* filtering of traditional Highland sounds through urban modernity more than equal to the sum of its parts. —*Scott Frampton*

DOCK BOGGS

Country Blues: Complete Early Recordings (1927-29) — Revenant

■ Among the weirdest, rawest old-time Southern musicians ever recorded, Dock Boggs continues to hypnotize with his



DATALOG: Release date: Jan 20.
FILE UNDER: Raw, old-time Southern sound.
R.I.Y.L.: The Carter Family, New Lost City Ramblers, Will Oldham.

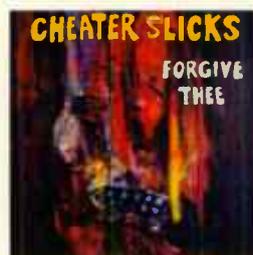
bluesy, “graveyard”-style banjo picking and unadorned singing. Not the least of Boggs's reputation is due to Harry Smith's inclusion of two Boggs tracks on the landmark 1952 *Smithsonian Collection Of American Folk Music*. Hot on the heels of that collection's recent reissue comes Revenant's scholarly (64 pages of notes! newly-unearthed alternate takes!) compilation of all the known sides Boggs cut before being rediscovered by Mike Seeger in the '60s. Boggs's vocals are

haunting and crude. Scholar Robert Cantwell says he sounds “as if singing for him were like paying taxes,” while Greil Marcus writes that he sings “as if his bones were coming through his skin.” Boggs's eerie modalities and deep lonesome vocals—country and blues indeed—are just the half of it. The despairing ballads collected here are unfettered gems: “Got me a cat and a piece of cheese, I placed it on her chin/Wife got frightened in her sleep one night, she took the rat, cat, and cheese all in/Hard luck, hard luck, placed me on the spot/Jim said it wasn't me, my brother Jim got shot.” Seventy years later, this music is frighteningly vital, forever “alternative.” —*Mike McGonigal*

CHEATER SLICKS

Forgive Thee — In The Red

■ Robert Johnson standing at the crossroads making a deal with the devil isn't so much a myth as it is a way to rationally explain the mystery of artistic breakthrough and progression. What is it that transforms mediocre artist into master? Pinpointing the moment is impossible, and has less to do with a single revelation than with the alignment of the stars and the magic of discovery. Take, for example, the past year or so with the Cheater Slicks. After creating a few decent (if somewhat generic) garage records, they've unleashed *Forgive Thee*, a sprawling double-CD of muffled double-guitar rock 'n' roll. The Cheater Slicks have battled the raging testosterone of previous records and come out victorious. Over the course of two CDs they ride the roller-coaster of artistic agitation; there are as many touchy-feely and textured—if still quite messy—ditties as there are flat out rockers, and even the loud and fast ones have at their



DATALOG: Released Oct. 28.
FILE UNDER: Rough first-take rock 'n' roll.
R.I.Y.L.: Gibson Bros, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.

Dock Boggs is among the weirdest, rawest old-time Southern musicians ever recorded.

core that Philosopher's Stone chord progression that can perhaps *only* be explained by visiting the crossroads. In the immortal words of Hank Hill from *King Of The Hill*, “It's all right if you only know three chords, but God, put 'em in the right order!” With *Forgive Thee*, the Cheater Slicks have discovered the right order. —*Randall Roberts*

CHEVY HESTON

Forever Is the Same Thing Again — CherryDisc/Roadrunner

■ The best twisted art-punk album of 1995 that most people never heard was *Destroy*, a convulsing 18-song spasm of scatological



DATALOG: Released Oct. 21.
FILE UNDER: Naked Lunch-box rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Pavement, Jesus Lizard, Butthole Surfers.

and grossly deviant sex talk that impressed both David Yow and Gibby Haynes, but that most resembles a passage from William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, chopped and pasted over nuggets of skewed yet tuneful Pavement pop. Whew! It was the work of Chevy Heston, a fledgling Boston-based studio project whose label, CherryDisc, had poor distribution. Yet word got out about this strange and wonderful artifact, which opened with an industrial strength blast of sewer-guitar noise that gave way to an unsettlingly pretty little piano melody and the indelible line “The cafeteria smelled like young pussy to the new advisor.” Yes, indeed. Well, now that Chevy has settled in as a solid touring five-some and CherryDisc has inked a deal with Roadrunner, all 18 of *Destroy's* flashes of undiluted psychotic brilliance, along with 27 other tracks taken from an equally compelling, if somewhat less disturbing 1996 disc, are back on *Forever Is The Same Thing Again*, a single hour-and-17-minute CD with a lyric sheet, nice graphics and serious distribution. In other words, this time you've got no excuse. —*Matt Ashare*

MUSIC FROM THE MIRAMAX MOTION PICTURE

Jackie Brown

a Quentin Tarantino film



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- Brothers Johnson**
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reviews

CONSOLIDATED

Dropped — Sol 3

■ For the last eight years, Consolidated has had Marshall McLuhan's prophetic statement backwards. For this group the message is the medium. The members of Consolidated have devoted themselves to singing protest songs, using



DATALOG:
FILE UNDER: Left-wing politics, middle-of-the-road rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Later Gang Of Four, Rage Against The Machine, Living Colour.

intelligence and humor to directly attack the oppression and stupidity bred by global capitalism. Unfortunately, the focus on 'message'

has always left them a little short on 'medium'—songwriting, in other words. When in the early '90s Consolidated was an indutro-hip-hop band in the mold of Meat Beat Manifesto, it was easy enough to disguise the so-so songcraft with propulsive beats and terrific samples. Starting with 1994's *Business Of Punishment*, Consolidated gradually became more of an Adam Sherburne solo project, focusing on personal lyrics and using 'real' instruments, and that's to the group's detriment. Except for the ferocious "Schnitzel Boy" (yet another bitter assault on the music biz), the band's old-school fury is vanishing; many of the slower confessional tracks are tepid and wanky funk-rock à la recent Chili Peppers. What hasn't changed is that Sherburne is still an excellent lyricist; even when he isn't railing against The Man but simply bemoaning how sucky his life is, he's articulate, witty, even poetic. Too bad that in order to get the album's lyric sheet, you have to buy the whole thing. —David Jarman

DUMP CD

A Plea For Tenderness — Brinkman

■ Remember "Stockholm Syndrome," a highlight of Yo La Tengo's *I Can Hear The Heart Beating As One*, which was bassist James McNew's lead vocal/songwriting debut with that band? Well, Dump is McNew's long-running solo project (this is his third full-length release), and it's full of the same strummy bittersweetness as that little gem. His self-deprecating nom de four-tracque and liner notes like "mostly recorded in pajamas" convey Dump's unassuming nature, but McNew is no lo-fi slackmeister—



DATALOG:
Release date: Jan. 19.
FILE UNDER: Lovingly made four-track pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Sentridoh, Neutral Milk Hotel, Yo La Tengo.

despite modest means (simple drumming, chord organ, guitars and a few effects-boxes), the songs on *A Plea For Tenderness*, Dump's third

CD ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

album, are detailed, carefully constructed recordings. A cover of Robert King's "Everlasting Love," for instance, tries to reproduce the original's sweeping string hook with what sounds like a Casio and a whistle, and succeeds surprisingly well.

(Jacques Dutronc and Roky Erickson also get covered—

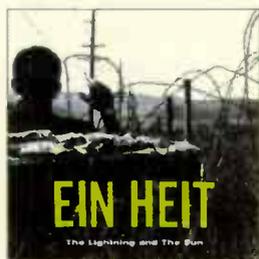
McNew's musical heroes are mostly eccentrics.) Fortunately, *Tenderness* isn't just a set of sonic workshop pieces—McNew builds a rich, Tengo-ish dynamic out of the repetitions of "So Long," while acoustic numbers like "White Worms" and the lovelorn "Clarity," topped by sweet, understated vocals, are crafty pop miniatures possessing a fragility and vulnerability rarely aired by his other band. —*Franklin Bruno*

**Consolidated
has had Marshall
McLuhan's prophetic
statement backwards.
For this group, the
message is the
medium.**

EIN HEIT

The Lightning And The Sun —
Temporary Freedom

Ein Heit is the long-defunct band in which Silkworm cut its musical teeth a decade ago in Montana, fronted by the charismatic J.K. Manlove. These recent recordings are the album the band never got to make back then, with Manlove's grinding post-punk compositions realized by a



DATALOG:
Released Nov.4.
FILE UNDER:
A great rock band
returns to its roots.
R.I.Y.L.: Silkworm,
PIL, Gang Of Four,
early Psychedelic
Furs.

now-seasoned band, including departed Silkworm guitarist Joel Phelps. Anyone wondering about the roots of Tim Midgett's vocal

style or Andy Cohen's fall-of-Europe lyrics need only listen to Manlove's gothic-tinged delivery and anti-anthem political posturing on "No Revolution." But Ein Heit is of more than historical interest: The band sounds terrifically impassioned, documenting a repertoire the players still clearly love. "Housarri" has the intense white-funkiness of a good Joy Division bootleg, with drummer Michael Dahlquist sounding particularly fiery. Manlove's "Lonesome Heart," sung here by Phelps ("Every time they turn your back, they've got a name for you"), speaks volumes about growing up gay in a Montana high school. The album closes with a Midgett-sung cover of the Rolling Stones' "Winter," Silkworm's show-ender for some time. All told, this is a more focused and enjoyable effort than the diffuse *Developer*, the "Worm's last "real" record.

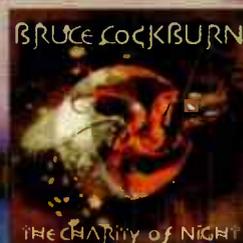
—*Franklin Bruno*

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MARK EITZEL

Caught In A Trap And I Can't
Back Out 'Cause I Love You
Too Much, Baby — *Matador*

■ For an artist who has honed such a fine career out of tracing the lines of hollowness, that the mood of this record is a hollowness even more acute than all those before it is no small feat. But rather than holding on to the sense of bittersweet duality that has propelled his most poignant work—the essence of a man who himself so often walks the tightrope between near stand-up comedy and wretched apology on stage—it's almost



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER: Music for souls too late for salvation.
R.I.Y.L.: Jeff Buckley, Michael Stipe's more dramatic moments.

as if he's let it go. So much of *Caught...* seems like the coldness of the bone with little memory left of the flesh. Handfuls of songs ("Are You The Trash," "Xmas Lights Spin," "If I Had A Gun") veer so closely to the delicate stuffs Eitzel has been so good at in the past, it's frustrating when the songs themselves seem to be slipping away rather than tightening their grip. ("If I Had A Gun," in particular, is saved mostly by the disarming but successful sounds of whatever the heck Kid Congo Powers is doing with his guitar in the background.) There are moments that soar, though, like "Cold Light Of Day," which cement some of the album's genuine pleasures, but it's just too hard to shake the feeling that there's some substantive thing missing here. —Liz Clayton

ELF POWER

When The Red King Comes —
Elephant Six/Arena Rock

■ On its full-length debut, Elf Power sounds like a high school glee club on a psychedelic field trip. Not to be outdone by its Elephant Six cohorts and fellow Athens, Georgia, residents in Olivia Tremor Control (some of whom contribute to *When The Red King Comes*), this quirky quartet puts forth a soundtrack to a script about a utopi-



DATALOG: Released Nov. 20.
FILE UNDER: Fantasy fuzz-pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Yo La Tengo, Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory, Hellum.

an kingdom complete with a "magnificent castle, sprawling villages, dense forests and golden meadows," according to the liner notes. This feel-good spirit translates to the music, a compendium of fuzzed-out guitars, joyful singing and odd instrumentation such as sitar, flute, clarinet and zanzithophone. The whole thing would seem rather silly if Andrew Rieger weren't a first-rate songwriter, but like Neutral Milk Hotel's Jeff Mangum (who also appears in a cameo), Rieger tempers the upbeat facade with carefully placed wistful lyrics and dreamy sonic asides. Highlights include the organ-laced tunes "Icy Hands Will Never Melt Away" and "The Separation Fault," which resound with crunchy rhythms and simple, satisfying melodies. To drive home the point that there's more to Elf Power than a clever shtick, the band nails a cover of Brian Eno's "Needles In The Camels Eyes..." just in time to get back on the bus and return to the real world.

—Richard Martin

DEAN FRASER

Big Up! — *Island Jamaica Jazz*

■ If you're a fan of Jamaican music, you've been listening to saxophonist Dean Fraser, whether you know it or not. He's worked with everyone from Buju Banton to the Mighty Diamonds to Gregory Isaacs, as a



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 27.
FILE UNDER: Jazz roots-reggae.
R.I.Y.L.: Carlos Malcolm, Ernest Ranglin, the Skatalites.

bandleader, producer and player. Fraser's career spans big band rock-steady, sparse dub, spaced-out reggae and hard-driving dancehall. On *Big Up!* he teams up with an old friend, producer/percussionist Sly Dunbar, and the resulting ensemble radically melds roots-reggae rhythms and tunes with heavily stylized, jazzy playing. The album brims with spectacular arrangements of classic cuts, fleshed-out and extended to five and nine minutes. Particularly tasty are the Skatalites' classic "Dick Tracy" and Willie Williams's "Armageddon Time." Unlike, say, King Curtis, Fraser isn't carrying every part of every

cut. The guitar-heavy "African Elevation" stretches out towards African juju, while remaining laid-back and Caribbean. Every cut is flavored with the polyrhythms of mento and calypso, the roots of ska. The thick, upright double bass of Wayne Batchelor lends a heavy groove on top of which everything floats—but this isn't dub, nothing floats away. If you're looking for something beyond the current wave of skacore, this heavy blend, from the very musicians who helped invent these vibrant, varied island sounds, is all you need. —Mike McGonigal

FREAKWATER

Springtime — *Thrill Jockey*

■ One measure of the success of a new Freakwater album is, paradoxically, how old it sounds. Fronted by the harmonies and guitars of Catherine Ann Irwin and Janet Beveridge Bean and supported by David Wayne Gay's bass, Freakwater has spent nearly a decade building a catalog that reaches back to the folk songs of the Kentucky hills, creating narratives of sin, commitment and redemption. On *Springtime*, the group's fifth domestic release, Max Konrad Johnston (formerly of Wilco) adds banjo, mandolin and other textures to the classic Freakwater sparseness; the songs' casual, back-porch pleasures are given a little extra polish and pluck. So how timeless is *Springtime*? Shuffle it with Louvin



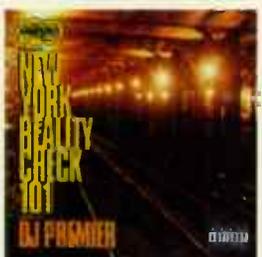
DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER: Timeless country harmonies.
R.I.Y.L.: The Carter Family, Gillian Welch, Richard Buckner.

Brothers or Carter Family discs and the mood and imagery would never change, only the era of the references. When “Louisville Lip” alludes to Muhammad Ali or “Scamp” wittily puns on old Dodge names (“My baby’s a Swinger/And he’s hard to Dodge/My baby’s a Demon”), the effect could be parody or cliché but instead seems personal and intimate. Themes of blood and emotional bondage wind through the songs, finally joining one another in the album’s closing lines: “Blood of my blood flows through your veins/And bound are hearts in crimson chains.” The way Irwin’s cracked alto and Bean’s clear soprano trade leads and slip into harmonies naturally and comfortably anchors the mood and provides the album’s core pleasures. —*Steve Klinge*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Haze Presents New York Reality Check 101 — *Payday/frrr-London*

■ The phrase “underground hip-hop” is becoming less redundant all the time, as mainstream rap cements its status as the Sound Of Young America. Increasingly, underground in rap means old-school, as club denizens revamp the crackling, pared-down sound of the ’80s eruption. At its best, this compilation from New York graffiti artist and designer Eric Haze brings classic hip-hop into the G-funk era; in fact, the less the tracks flirt with modern sounds, the better they come off. Boosting the project’s credentials is DJ Premier, the praised producer and Gang Starr DJ, who hovers over *New*



DATALOG: Release date Dec. 16
FILE UNDER: Pure hip-hop, no sellout.
R.I.Y.L.: Wu-Tang Clan, Gang Starr, DJ Shadow.

York Reality Check like a spiritual guide. His fearless scratching brings life to even the dullest tracks. Several crews showcased here are tainted with the marble-mouthed, studiously spooky sound (Wu-Tang twice removed) that’s weighed down hip-hop of late. But Premier keeps things flowing, juxtaposing catchy loops and slicing one song phase into another or, on Godfather Don’s “Properties Of Steel,” cutting rhyme into rhyme within the same track. One highlight, L The Head Toucha’s “Too Complex,” is a collage of scratches and booming old-school beats that, despite dense lyrical flow, is less a skills-fest than an urban sound collage.

—*Chris Molanphy*

DANIELLE HOWLE ^{CD} AND THE TANTRUMS

Do A Two Sable — *Daemon*

■ Danielle Howle may have a penchant for bitter lyrics, but the songs on her third full-length release are not so hard to swallow. You might even get a voyeuristic thrill listening to Howle open up a nerve on record, and a bit of relief in knowing she’s not singing about you. Perhaps because she’s gotten much support from the Indigo Girls (whose Amy Ray founded *Daemon* Records), Howle often gets compared to them musically, but Howle’s songs are much



DATALOG: Released Oct. 7. Howle started out in the now-defunct Lay Quiet Awhile.
FILE UNDER: Roots rock drama.
R.I.Y.L.: Patti Smith, Liz Phair, Jewel.

odder, her approach much more sprawling. Several songs are built solely on stream-of-consciousness lyrical fragments with imagery that entices you to find the mouth of that stream and get to the bottom of lyrics like “Fire’s like a statue that moves when it wants you” (“Cartoon In The Courtroom”). The grit in her voice, a confident South Carolinian twang, quavers between a fragile rodeo sweetheart and a pissed-off cowgirl. The Tantrums do their best to create a roots rock hybrid to match that dynamic, but it is Howle’s voice that

carries the load, igniting lyrics which are often tiny arguments between herself and an ex, or sometimes just herself. The loping, countrified “If You Wanna Leave” could have been a torch song if it weren’t for the fact that it’s sung to someone who torched Howle and now she’s gladly showing him the door. —*Steve Ciabattoni*

JUNE OF 44

Four Great Points — *Quarterstick*

■ More than *Sonora Pine* or the *For Carnation*—two other direct descendants from the Louisville indie-rock family—the NYC-based foursome *June Of 44* seems to exist in



DATALOG: Release Date: Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER: Abstract post-punk guitar rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Slint, Rodan, Shellac.

order to follow the angular path outlined by Slint and Rodan to its logical conclusion. And on *Four Great Points*, *June Of 44*’s third and most cohesive full-length since Rodan singer/guitarist Jeff Mueller formed the group with ex-Codiene drummer Doug Scharin, ex-Hoover bassist Fred Erskine and guitarist/vocalist Sean Meadows in ’95, that path seems to lead to becoming the post-punk equivalent of a chops-rock outfit—think Rush weaned on Sonic Youth and Big Black instead of Zeppelin and Cream. Hell, Erskine even cuts loose with a couple of quick bass solos, one of which (on “The Dexterity Of Luck”) seems to be his way of informing his audience that he’s been checking out some Mingus lately. The lyrics are cryptic as hell (how’s “Don’t mean to shock ya/But let me tell you about my Chakra/And about the accidental conception of the particle board boy,” for a brain teaser), and just as high-concept arty as Neil Peart’s always were, and the instrumental skills (especially the rhythm section’s) are highly developed, though much less flashy than you usually find with a band like Rush (i.e. no guitar solos). Now all *June Of 44* needs is a song as catchy as “Tom Sawyer.” —*Matt Ashare*

LAZY COWGIRLS

A Little Sex And Death — Crypt

■ The Lazy Cowgirls are often compared to protopunk forebears like the Ramones, the New York Dolls and Stooges, but really, the 14-years-running Cowgirls are reminders of a time when all the best bands came from LA, sold 10,000 records tops, and made music as listenable ten years down the line as the day it was recorded. The comparison stands because like those bands, the Cowgirls treasure honesty and sincerity and harbor precious little (if any) bullshit. And while sounding like none of



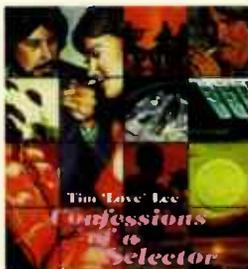
DATALOG: Released Nov. 4.
FILE UNDER: Punk with no apologies.
R.I.Y.L.: The Devil Dogs, the Humpers, X, early Gun Club.

the bands we're speaking of here—X, the Gun Club, the Flesh Eaters or the Blasters—and certainly without breaking as much ground, the Lazy Cowgirls nevertheless manage these bands' most important card trick: flashing a firm sense of rock 'n' roll roots while still sounding switchblades-in-a-dark-alley dangerous. They also write well-crafted songs chronicling hard-living working people's lives, espousing simple, hard truths. Ironically, the Cowgirls, who began as most of the aforementioned bands peaked, have outlived them all, and have only gotten better. This is the sixth Lazy Cowgirls long-player, and possibly their best yet. The disciples will not be disappointed, and the newcomers will be flooded. Because after all, this is like every other Lazy Cowgirls record: explosive punk bursting with humanity and humor. —Tim Stegall

TIM "LOVE" LEE

Confessions Of A Selector — 360

■ There's a Zen lesson where a master points out that, even as his students consciously listen to him speaking, in the background they may also discern chirping birds, distant automobiles, and so on. They automatically catalog those sounds, even though they don't intend to. They are hearing these not with their own ears, but with



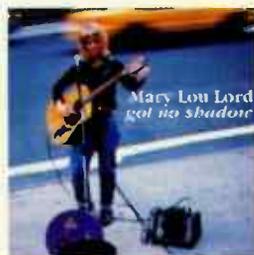
DATALOG: Released Oct. 20.
FILE UNDER: Cut 'n' paste electronica.
R.I.Y.L.: Topsy, Sukla, Coldcut, Instrumental Beastie Boys

their unborn Buddha mind. *Confessions Of A Selector* is best savored via such transcendental receptors. Composed of more loops than a bowl of Cheerios—funky breaks, groovy bass lines, analog synthesizer squiggles—and seemingly little else, the magic of this record eludes close scrutiny. But turn off your critical faculties. Let the dubbed-out soul and house vibes of Lee's sonic collages trickle through your brain, filling up your senses. Should you resist the allure of the first two-thirds of *Confessions*, you're certain to succumb to the final five cuts. This quintet expands on Lee's "Again Son..." single (feted on mix CDs by the Chemical Brothers and Coldcut), wherein a disappointed father curtails his rebellious offspring through some unusual discipline. Syncopated Latin jazz beats and intoxicating disco cut-ups that recall vintage rap platters underscore the whole affair, for a climax that truly merits the accolade "punishing." —Kurt B. Reighley

MARY LOU LORD

Got No Shadow — WORK

■ Boston subway station veteran Mary Lou Lord skips through the easygoing melodies of *Got No Shadow* with her pretty but wispy voice, a healthy dose of guitar twang and a Liz Phair assuredness befitting her major label debut. Much of the album was co-written by Lord's longtime idol, the Bevis Frond's Nick Saloman, who also helps out on guitar. Lord's go at "Lights Are Changing" (an outright Frond song) outshines the already great version on her



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 27.
FILE UNDER: Folk rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Ida, Lisa Loeb, Shawn Colvin, Buffalo Tom.

eponymous EP, where she had Juliana Hatfield's help. The ebullient charmer "Some Jingle Jangle Morning" is a one-way love song that could have been ripped from the Sugar fakebook. With "Lucky One," Lord moves from covering Daniel Johnston to Freedy Jonhston, and though it's a by-the-numbers rendition, it fits the mood of the rest of the songs. "Throng Of Blowtown" is nicely nostalgic, setting the period by neatly lifting melodies from the Cars' "My Best Friend's Girl" and Ashford & Simpson's "Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing." Lord's voice is little too delicate to carry off the nastiness required for "She Had You" with lines like "I had a friend there/She was a waste of space." Lord skirts the fringes of piercing heartache and loss, leaving only a subtle tenor of sadness and keeping her on the light blue side of melancholy.

—Anne Marie Cruz

MOVIETONE

Day And Night — Drag City

■ Rachel Brook used to be in Flying Saucer Attack, but her longtime other band Movietone has less to do with FSA's thunderheads of distortion and noise than with the gentle, liquid structures that supported



DATALOG: Release date: Nov. 10.
FILE UNDER: Late-night minimalism.
R.I.Y.L.: American Analog Set, Cocteau Twins, Joao Gilberto.

them. On this second Movietone album, the group's songs are dark wisps of tone and mood, with instrumentation that's become so light it's almost skeletal. Kate Wright's guitar parts take after the simplest samba arrangements—a plucked note, a barely-touched chord—and the woodwinds and almost-tuned piano that accompany her flow along with a similar austerity, sometimes beatlessly. Movietone exploits tiny imperfections of sound for their innate gorgeousness: "Summer" features a viola bowed so slowly that the sound cracks, and Wright often sings so quietly that her voice cracks much the same way. The band is so quiet, in fact, that it can slip in a lot unex-

pectedly; amid the tapped-out rhythms and gently curving oboe of “Night Of The Aca-cias,” there’s something that sounds like a modem connecting. The single “Useless Landscape” actually works up something like kinesis, with a vigorous guitar part that’s buried in the back of the mix but propels the song forward like a sailboat on a lake. In its restraint, Movietone finds its power: The closer it comes to silence, the more each note suggests. —*Douglas Wolk*

MR. WRIGHT

The Fancy Man — *Le Grand Magistry*

■ Equal parts forlorn and fey, Mr. Wright’s *The Fancy Man* is a feat of subdued extravagance. Thoughtful and subtle, these 12 songs weave a melodramatic, yet effective, sentimental tapestry. Strummy and ethereal (but sometimes incorporating calypso and Casio), Mr. Wright’s reflective anti-pop



DATALOG: Released Sep. 27.
FILE UNDER: Airy odes to the lovelorn.
R.I.Y.L.: Grant McLennan, Silver Jews, Morrissey

melodies are the framework for lyrical motifs that seem almost Morrissey-like in their melancholic self-indulgence. But to what degree Mr. Wright’s lamentations and celebrations are self-conscious (especially on the bizarre, somewhat hard to stomach “Wonderful,” with his too-punchy “fa-bulous!” and its overall insipidness) ultimately proves not too important. The sheer fact that Mr. Wright has managed to be so over the top in such a relaxed and almost sneaky manner ends up being one of his strongest and most charming characteristics. “Hang-over Square” and “The Fancy Man” are standouts, the former in its effusive lightness and the latter with its sleeve-tugging organ and earnest “I can’t explain/Why I feel so undermined.” As an album, *The Fancy Man*’s beauties lie in the softness of its blow, straining gently towards a poignancy that could be so easily buried in oversentimentality and yet emerges intact. —*Liz Clayton*



DATALOG: Released Oct. 14.
FILE UNDER: Post-trip-hop pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Björk, Statik Sound System, the Eurythmics.

MULU

Smiles Like A Shark — *Dedicated*

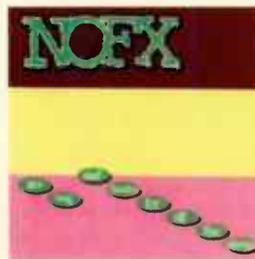
■ Named after a South American tribe, this UK girl/boy electro duo is part of a burgeoning army of post-trip-hop bands that take their cue from paranoia masterminds like Tricky and Portishead. Mulu fuses the now-obligatory entrancing beats and atmospheric samples—ticking clocks and ethereal strings—with Laura Campbell’s sometimes sultry, sometimes girly vocals to haunting effect. Mirroring the album’s title, Mulu’s velvety pop veneer cloaks something far more sinister, as “Trixter” warns with Shakespearean charm “Something wicked this way comes.” Even the irritatingly perfect pop of “Pussycat” refers not to a furry friend—thankfully—but to a sleazy, seductive gold digger. The album’s voyeuristic appeal is enrapturing, conjuring visions of cruising noir-ish streets and after-hours bars. The 45-second opener consists solely of child-like whispers and echoes muffled by an eerie strummed guitar, while the moody closer “Rainy Days” is a sax-tinged, bluesy jewel. These spacey digital soundscapes all ebb and flow from Campbell’s soulful delivery, which glides from delicate folkie to smoky chanteuse to a Tori Amos-style twisted sister on “Bitesize.” Few bands trip-hopping on the Portishead bandwagon will ever achieve *Dummy*-like genius, but Mulu’s slinky debut points to this duo’s abundant potential. —*Sarah Pratt*

NOFX

So Long And Thanks For All The Shoes — *Epitaph*

■ No, this isn’t a farewell album—the title’s just NOFX’s way of poking fun at those idiot kids who throw shoes on stage from the mosh pit. The members of NOFX are equal-opportunity curmudgeons: They hate music business suits only a little more than they hate punk-rock conformists, and are

just as likely to take shots at themselves or their buddies as they are at others. But that’s all part of the appeal of this diehard outfit, which is now something like ten years and eight albums into one of the more consistently entertaining careers in American punk. Singer/bassist Fat Mike is sort of the Bill Maher of Cali punk—a politically incorrect commentator who’s more amused than upset by the near constant beeping of his bullshit detector. On *So Long* he aims his sharpened wit at Rancid’s Tim Armstrong in the short, sweet send-up “I’m Telling



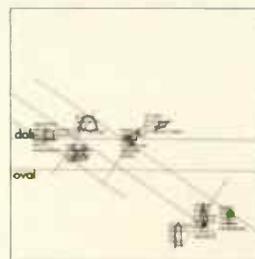
DATALOG: Released Nov. 11.
FILE UNDER: Cali punk-pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Bad Religion, old Circle Jerks, Descendents.

Tim” (as in, “If you fuck up I’m telling Tim”), and at Bikini Kill’s Kathleen Hanna, whom he accuses of “man-hating” in the equally short and sweet “Kill Rock Stars.” His band proves equally adept at both kinds of music: punk and ska, though the latter comes off as a smirking parody of the current ska craze. Which is entirely in keeping with NOFX’s anti-everything world view, perhaps best expressed by Fat Mike’s unapologetic “Apparently I’ve alienated some/It seems my job is half done” (“Punk Rock Elite”). —*Matt Ashare*

OVAL

Dok — *Thrill Jockey*

■ Oval is the updated version of floating, free-form, psychedelic “head” music. Oval’s sounds are savvily futuristic, but they make you want to lie down on the couch with the lights low, delighting in the shadows of your lava lamp. Markus Popp, the brainy Berliner behind Oval, bandies about a dense theo-



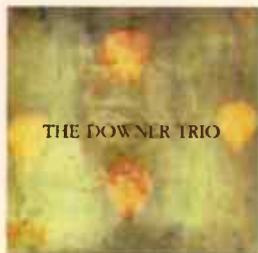
DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER: Lush, ambient, weird electronica.
R.I.Y.L.: Ambient Brian Eno, John Cage, Microstoria.

retical discourse in his press releases. Earlier Oval recordings prompted critical talk of deconstruction, the limitations of sequencing software, the political ramifications of messing up CDs to get cool sounds, and the subconscious. But really, all you need to know is that Oval's music is spooky, slow and blissfully fucked. On *Dok*, as on earlier releases, sounds are looped and repeated, slowly, hypnotizingly. And like very little ambient music aside from Fno's pioneering *On Land*, the disc is enchantingly listenable. The manipulated sounds on *Dok* originate from field recordings collected by Christophe Charles, an equally smart, Tokyo-based French guy with several recordings on the exquisite German label, Mille Plateau. Popp succeeds in rendering Charles's random, chaotic recordings of crowd sounds and bells from around the world into a unified whole. These everyday sounds are organized into a rich, fluid music that just might remind Jacques Cousteau of his "silent" world. —Mike McGonigal

JOEL R.L. PHELPS

The Downer Trio EP — PacifiCo

■ Low-key but forceful, Joel Phelps and the Downer Trio have worked out a pretty great thing together. William Herzog (Citizens' Utilities) and Robert Mercer sound less like sidemen than equal partners in a "real" band, tempering the austerity of a powerfully emotional Phelps with a softness that neither obscures the music's bare-bones



DATALOG: Released Dec. 2.
FILE UNDER: Refined catharsis.
R.I.Y.L.: Mark Eitzel, the Wedding Present's *Seamonsters*, Shudder To Think.

feel nor robs it of its intensity. The dynamic of the trio works exceptionally well almost all of the time, smoothing out the sharp tones and warming the hollows of Phelps's dramatic delivery. On occasion, though, his voice and the piano almost seem in competition, with the piano winning a sort of trampling victory rather than complementing the gauzy atmospheres around it. The songs' bite and momentum are sharpened

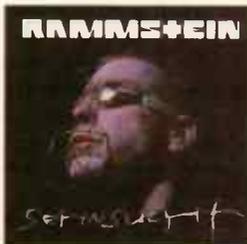
all the more by their internal edges. "Razorback" is the finest—springy but halting, Phelps eerily belting out the lines "Fancy that/I found/My love dissolved in water/ All my friends with fins/Can tell." And who would have thought it'd take Joel Phelps to remind us of Dramarama? Of the two covers on this EP (the other is of The Clash's "Guns Of Brixton"), Dramarama's "Emerald City" is both euphoric and frightening, affording Phelps all the room he needs to make it his own.

—Liz Clayton

RAMMSTEIN

Sehnsucht — Slash/London

■ It isn't clear what Rammstein, the eyebrow-raising unknown group on the *Lost Highway* soundtrack, is up to on *Sehnsucht*.



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 26.
FILE UNDER: Teutonic techno-metal.
R.I.Y.L.: Nine Inch Nails, Ministry, Laibach.

Are these guys playing German caricatures for laughs? Are they merely dutiful, humorless Al Jourgensen followers? Are they actually a new breed of Nazis? Never fear, the only real threat here is posed by the inevitable attack of stomach-cramping monster giggles. This could be the brilliant score to a claymation *Gotterdammerung*, with Till Lindemann's deadpan, overenunciated vocals and Rammstein's ridiculous marching band precision—not to mention translated howlers like "I poured her blood into the fire of my anger" or "I want to ride your tears/Over your chin to Africa/And search between your thighs/For last year's snow." Maybe it's not this funny in the mother tongue. "Sehnsucht" means longing, and Rammstein is getting itself sweaty over the usual industrial niceties (with no national socialist manifestos in tow): reams of sado-masochism, incest and sexual vitriol, harmlessly ladled over a bed of metal and jock-jams techno. On "Engel," guest vocalist

Really, all you need to know is that Oval's music is spooky, slow and blissfully fucked.

Bobo (um, a woman) doesn't sing so much as *oblige* the men of Rammstein with a girlish, pornographic throatiness, a counterpoint which undermines Lindemann's studied growl, making him sound less like Henry Rollins and more like Fabio trying to be a naughty minnesinger. Ach, nein! Eine kleine yuks-musik. —Anne Marie Cruz

ERNEST RANGLIN

Memories Of Barber Mack — Island Jamaica Jazz

■ Reggae has become an international phenomenon and the herky-jerky rhythms of ska are currently all the rage, but few people realize that many of the original progenitors of these Jamaican musical forms are still alive and making great music. One such elder statesman is Ernest Ranglin, a Jamaican journeyman guitarist who has played on literally hundreds of ska and reggae records. (In fact, the first album Island Records ever released featured not Bob Marley, but Ranglin.) Ranglin brings out another previously little-known point: that



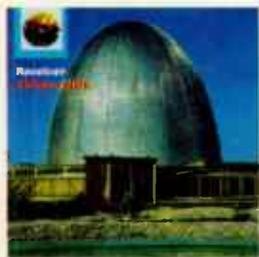
DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 27.
FILE UNDER: Grant Green on ganja.
R.I.Y.L.: Grant Green, Charlie Hunter, Bob Marley.

many of the Jamaican musicians who cut their teeth playing reggae and ska in the studio actually wanted to be jazz cats. Ranglin is one such dude, a nimble-fingered, bubbly-sounding guitarist who's now finally getting the chance to play his wonderful blend of Jamaican jazz. *Memories Of Barber Mack*, the follow-up to Ranglin's 1996 album *Below The Bassline*, is another jubilant exercise in buoyant jazz (piano, upright bass, drums and Ranglin's chicken-picking guitar) with a kicking reggae pulse and percolating funk undercurrents. It's incredibly fun when jazz musicians start playing funky reggae. Personally, I love the idea of a 72-year-old man running rings around today's hot young funk and acid jazzbos. Don't you? —James Lien

RECEIVER

Chicken Milk — Cup Of Tea/
Iron America

■ What do you suppose a typical day in Bristol is like? *Chicken Milk* hints at what the latest Tricky and Portishead albums already suggested: It probably involves getting up in the middle of the afternoon, looking out through rain-streaked windows at gray buildings and grayer skies, having a few belts of whiskey, watching some black-and-white movies on the telly, smoking some dope, going to the club to sit in the corner as sluggish beats throb around you... and then going home to have a cup of tea



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 15.
FILE UNDER: Bad-trip trip-hop.
R.I.Y.L.: Tricky, Alpha, On-U Sound System.

and record some trip-hop as a way of opting out of the monotony. Receiver's first effort is a bad-vibe extravaganza, an eerie, thick soup of chopped-up pop-culture samples and wheezing minor-key synths on top of obsessive dub bass lines and blunted funky-drummer beats. Vocals change speed mid-song, disembodied saxophones honk and background tracks are filled with strange blurps and computer noises. Jazz samples drive many of the cuts, but this is no smiley acid-jazz record; the horns remain submerged in the distance, adding to the rainy-day *noir* creepiness. Four of the songs feature vocals, three of them from Rich Beale of Pregnant, whose hurt and quivering phrasing does nothing to ease the overall claustrophobia. A few more releases like this, and it may be time to start adding Prozac to Bristol's water supply. —David Jarman

ROYAL TRUX

Singles, Live, Unreleased —
Drag City

■ Royal Trux is a perpetual work in progress, and this collection of utterances is the perfect illustration of Trux flux. From early, foggy noodlings to mid-period blues rock "anthems" to recent dabbings in, er, boogie rock, Royal Trux is in steadfast bat-



DATALOG: Released Nov. 10.
FILE UNDER: Rock demagnetized.
R.I.Y.L.: Exile-era Stones, Grifters, Pussy Galore.

tle with disarray and chaos: their style falls apart, gets reconstructed, and once complete begins again to disintegrate—often all in the course of one song. The only constants in this struggle are Neil Hagerty's guitar playing and the glottal moan of vocalist Jennifer Herrema. The latter wears thin after constant exposure, but the former opens up under scrutiny, revealing Hagerty to be one of the most imaginatively curious guitar players around. Like any set of Trux songs, *Singles, Live...* contains as much crap as gold, and depending on your mood when listening, one can turn into the other at a moment's notice. Which is the heart of the Royal Trux magnetism: It's sometimes difficult to determine whether one actually *likes* them or *hates* them, but something's so alluring about this confusion that it's impossible to dismiss them. Unlike most collections of singles and esoterica designed for completists only, *Singles, Live, Unreleased* is by far the best place for the uninitiated to start with Royal Trux, because it views them from nearly every one of their countless angles. —Randall Roberts

SHOESTRINGS

Wishing On Planes — Le Grand Magistry

■ Michigan's Shoestrings are Mario Suau and Rose Uytuico, a couple both in life and music. Their music is classically styled "bed-sit pop," the kind of slightly asexual, holding-hands-on-rainy-day songs that Britain's Sarah label honed to a miniaturist's art. Suau handles most instruments and engineering, the latter quite impressively; the only feature that gives this record away as home-recorded is the stiff drum program-

ming that makes most tracks sound a bit nervous. Some songs are precisely what one would expect from this formula, but others veer interestingly into bossa nova and electro-pop. "Nothing To Hide," despite its Marine Girls-ish guitar and a surprisingly deep rhythm track, is sunk by hooklessness and Suau's merely serviceable vocals. Fortunately, those songs featuring Uytuico's tune-



DATALOG: Released Sep. 27.
FILE UNDER: Skillful twee pop.
R.I.Y.L.: White Town, Softies, Sundays, Sarah Records compilations.

ful, naturally melancholic vocals tend to seem a bit catchier and soar a bit higher. Particularly appealing are the 49-second

"Rollercoaster" and "Naked," where Uytuico effortlessly sounds like a less-labored Harriet Wheeler of Sundays fame. If songs called "1st Grade Love Affair" aren't your thing, this would be a must-to-avoid, but for the fan of pop that generates more warmth than heat, Shoestrings are just the ticket. —Franklin Bruno

It's sometimes difficult to determine if one actually likes Royal Trux or hates them, but it's impossible to dismiss them.

SILVER APPLES

Beacon — Whirlybird

■ It's been 29 years since Simeon Coxe and his Silver Apples last visited Earth. The band's first two LPs—*Silver Apples* ('68) and *Contact* ('69)—blended mad electronic excursions with supple organic textures to create an otherworldly sound without precedent. Though woefully obscure, the original Apples oeuvre augured some of



DATALOG: Released Dec. 29.
FILE UNDER: Don't call it a comeback.
R.I.Y.L.: Jessamine, Stereolab interviews, Martin Rev.

today's most ballyhooed music. Stereolab has raved about them in interviews, the Folk Implosion sampled them on the *Kids* soundtrack, and their cult following reached fever pitch. *Beacon* marks the long-awaited return of the Silver Apples, but friends, the thrill is gone. At its worst, *Beacon* recalls the absurdity of late-'70s Beach Boys when Brian Wilson was recording songs like "Johnny Carson" strictly as a means of therapy. Coxe does muster a few nice synth grooves on tracks like "Hocus Pocus" and "Ancient Path," only to be shot in the foot by his own sophomoric rapping (sample lyric: "Hocus pocus/Your mama wants to stroke us/The IRS done broke us") and new-drummer Michael Lerner's heavy-handed bludgeoning. New renditions of three first-wave Apples classics—"I Have Known Love," "You And I" and "Misty Mountain" are equally ill-conceived. Ultimately *Beacon* proves that the Silver Apples are a tough act for anyone to follow, even themselves. —Matt Hanks

SIXTEEN DELUXE

Emits Showers Of Sparks — Warner Bros.

■ On the follow up to its 1995 debut *Backfeed Magnetabe*, Austin, Texas, quartet Sixteen Deluxe mates simple pop songs with multi-layered arrangements that don't just color outside the lines, but erase them completely. These enveloping tracks are saturated—but not soggy—with syrupy guitars and atmospheric "strange noises." Fortunately, the listener can avoid straying too far into the beckoning morass by following the trail of lyrical bread crumbs sprinkled by vocalists Carrie Clark and Chris Smith. Both singers display remarkable versatility: Clark suggests a wounded European silver screen starlet on "Sniffy Woe," yet else-



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 13.
FILE UNDER: In between sleep and reason.
R.I.Y.L.: Galaxie 500, My Bloody Valentine, Flaming Lips, the Primitives.

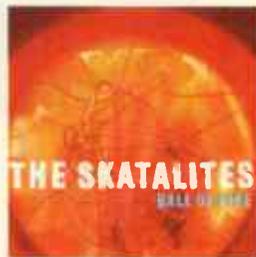
The Silver Apples are a tough act for anyone to follow, even themselves.

where delivers lines like "with hugs and kisses and an occasional lick/Apolgies still on your breath" ("Mexico Train") with an edge of menace. The dense and swirling "Honey" invites the inevitable comparisons to My Bloody Valentine, yet the alignment between melody and feedback-drenched atmosphere in these songs bears more in common with the Jesus And Mary Chain (although Sixteen Deluxe favors the idiosyncratic stylings of Southern indie stalwarts such as Let's Active or R.E.M. over the simplistic '60s skeletons of the Reid brothers). Like all the finest over-the-counter cold remedies, *Emit's Showers Of Sparks* brings on uneasy relief by inducing alternating states of feverish anxiety and narcoleptic bliss. —Kurt B. Reighley

SKATALITES

Ball Of Fire — Island Jamaica Jazz

■ At a certain point, performers who have been around for a long time tend to kick back and rely on repertory. The Skatalites have skipped the period between the initial hits and the repertoire of oldies, and it's



DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 27.
FILE UNDER: Ska the classic way.
R.I.Y.L.: Studio One compilations, the Specials, the Greyboy All-Stars.

done them good. In the '60s, they pretty much invented ska; reunited in the '90s in Brooklyn, they stick almost entirely to the simple, jumpy instrumental vamps they did the first time around. The only major difference is that, no longer confined to singles, they can stretch out the songs for six or eight minutes and play around with the solos a little. What makes it work is that the awesomely sharp original rhythm section of Lloyd Brevitt and Lloyd Knibb is intact, and Knibb gets the same loose, crackling drum sound now that he did more than 30 years ago. The only other original members at this point are the tenor and alto sax players, but

the new guys have the sense not to show off. Jamaican guitar hero Ernest Ranglin joins them on a few tracks, and proves something of a distraction—his spidery, modern jazz-guitar style seems anachronistic against the band's happy bounce. But the Skatalites' delight in this material is infectious, and even without the old Jamaican singles' tight compression of time and sound, it sounds swell. —Douglas Wolk

JEN WOOD ^{CD}

Getting Past The Static — WIN

■ At age 15, while other teenage girls were plastering Joey Lawrence posters in their lockers, Seattle's Jen Wood formed the



DATALOG: Released Oct. 28.
FILE UNDER: Sweetly empowering folk.
R.I.Y.L.: Lois, Julie Doiron, Spinanes, Mary Lou Lord.

acoustic duo Tattle Tale, which released two indie albums and opened for the likes of Morphine. Five years later, Wood is still way ahead of her peers. On her solo debut, her songs are about not fitting in, and not wanting to: "I have been wasting my time trying to put my feet in your shoes," she sings in "Spoken For." These pensive compositions aren't brash enough to incite rebellion. When she's expressing self-doubt, Wood's intricate guitar work can sound distant, her voice breathy and shy. But *Getting Past The Static* is quietly empowering, and when Wood's playing grows bolder, her voice rises to meet it, soaring and confident. This emotional range serves her well: She sounds deceptively sweet throughout the album's dozen cuts—even on "Bullet Box," when she builds up a guy only to tear him down moments later. Her music also benefits from flashes of non-conformity; she extends "Caught Halo" for nine minutes, constantly repeating the final words "close" and "low" over the last three. She repeats this trick to great affect several other times, stripping the lyrics down to a haunting skeleton. With *Getting Past The Static*, Jen Wood proves that she's her own "in crowd." —Wendy Mitchell

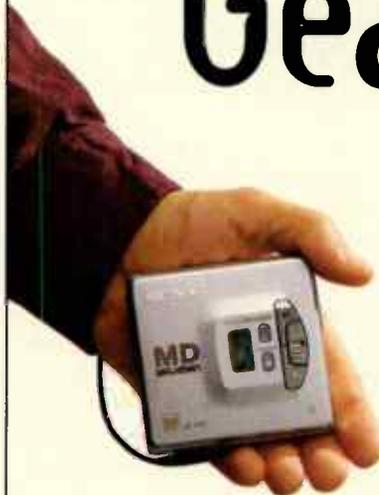
mixedsignals

By the time Chicago native **DERRICK CARTER** was old enough to enter a nightclub, he was already creating his own tracks and engineering in local sound studios; he's since gone on to become one of the most revered and recognizable names in America's dance underground. Carter's turntable reputation is impeccable and unparalleled, as he fuses disco-house with whispers of smooth, minimal techno for a mix that carries off listeners like the current of a rushing stream. **The Cosmic Disco (Mixmag-Moonshine)**



is the perfect title for this 18-track compilation. Spiced with vibrant sax solos, tribal drum rhythms, fierce 909 kicks and subtle 303 melodies, the 68-minute set is both retrospective and futuristic, marrying the disco swirls and garage vocals of yesterday with the raw, techno pulse of tomorrow. The resulting free-for-all mix ignores the boundaries of genre, class and culture. It's a party pressed on plastic, highlighted by Carter's long layering of cuts. The stirring track selection moves effortlessly from the warm, funky stomp of the Republic's "Earthshaker" and DJ Sneak's "You Can't Hide From Your Bud," to the paranoid grooves of the always enthralling Green Velvet ("Answering Machine," "Land Of The Lost")... From the inner-circle of the West Coast's Funky Tekno Tribe (a collective of pioneering turntable technicians like DJ Dan, Jenö and DJ Sneak) comes Seattle's **DONALD CLAUDE**, a deck master who has taken the art of "DJ performance" to bone-rattling levels. He's famous for his energetic, spellbinding sets, which include Claude furiously scratching over breakbeats and stopping records mid-buildup to let out a frenzied scream, proving him to be one of the American house-techno scene's most progressive and entertaining turntablists. While Claude's first CD release, **Sampling The Future (Thrive-Sire)**, conforms to a more conservative mix and doesn't quite capture the energy of his live sets, the collection highlights the hard house and funky break cuts of artists like Rabbit In The Moon, Simply Jeff and Josh Wink, and introduces newer names like Dose, Beatseed and the Arrival. The vibrant selection of cuts and smooth flow of the mix make this a worthy effort, even if it's a bit more restrained than you (or Claude) might have wished. —M. Tye Comer

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matches, it's easy to imagine him eagerly collecting a suitcase of sampled sounds, and excitedly generating dozens upon dozens of musical ideas. It's somewhat harder to picture him mustering the patience to deal with the intricacies of studio work. Indeed, he now says that he thinks his attention span for music will soon be depleted, that his third CD will probably be his last before he moves on to do more work as a visual artist. Still, it was Goldie who first figured out how to lengthen the duration of a sample without changing its pitch, which is a big deal in the realm of techno.

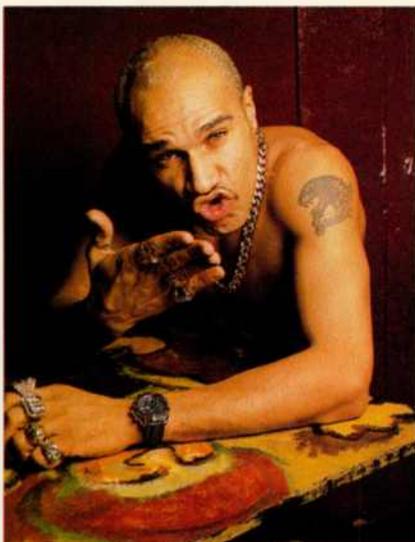
"The equipment for time-stretching had been around, but people had never used it for that," he explains. "You know, old bags have fast cars. They work all their lives and buy fast cars, and then they drive them thirty miles an hour. If I steal one of those cars I'm going to drive it 120 miles an hour. So you push the equipment. That's all we did with time-stretching. Because I was never an engineer, I had the overview and I could tell the engineers what to do."

Goldie's next challenge exists outside the studio, in the realm of American pop, where he's learning, courtesy of the Jane's Addiction tour, that mainstream support for technology-based music isn't nearly as strong as the hype about electronica might suggest.

"It's great when someone like Perry [Farrell] calls you and says, 'Goldie, man, your fucking album blows my mind, it's what I listen to when I'm stoned.' But I don't give a fuck about that because I could go out there tonight and there may be a thousand hecklers. My job is to try to open the doors of perception for those people who are narrow-minded. I could just go out and play to the people who love drum 'n' bass. But there's no challenge in that.

"Like, the other night I did a show and there were these two six-foot big ass leather jacket biker guys saying, 'This sucks man.' So I went off stage, over to the side, and I said to them, 'It really sucks doesn't it. But, hey, when you were a kid, didn't your mother and father tell you that what you listened to sucked?' I think they got the point." **CMJ**

"It's like I dreamt Timeless, but I lived Saturnz Return."



records. Lately, Elephant 6 privileges have been extended to a few other bands with similar ethos, including Elf Power and Beulah. The latter band is a particular favorite of Schneider's, and it's just released the first album on Elephant 6 proper. And Von Hemmling has finally made its first recorded appearance, with an experimental single recorded by McIntyre on his own. "He did handmade collage sleeves for it," Schneider says. "They took him forever... I think now he's addicted to huffing glue."

Elmer's habits aside, the idea of personal craft is important in the Elephant 6 world. Olivia Tremor Control hand-colored 800 sleeves for its second single; the new 7" by Schneider's solo project Marbles isn't just written, performed and recorded entirely by Schneider, he mastered the vinyl by himself as well. And the Apples' album artwork is mostly by Steve Keene, a Brooklyn artist who creates dozens of paintings every day and sells them for five or ten dollars apiece. The cover of the band's current album *Tone Soul Evolution*, a Mondrian-inspired grid, comes from "Steve's short period of modern art," Sidney explains. "It lasted about six hours."

"We have hundreds of his paintings," Schneider says with a glint in his eye. "We have a rotating collection, and we just move them around. We give a lot to our friends."

Among the many bands that have worked with him, Schneider is known as a studio wizard, with an unerring instinct for what effect or instrument to throw into the mix. He's not, however, a Billy Corgan-style control freak, playing everybody's parts. A source who attended some of the recording sessions for *Tone Soul Evolution* reports that though Schneider was constantly in the studio, the rest of the band was also doing overdub after overdub after overdub. After overdub. They did initial sessions for the album in a 24-track studio, then mixed it down, took it back to Denver, fleshed out the arrangements on the eight-track machine, brought it back to the studio and added even more parts. You need to hear *Tone Soul Evolution* through headphones to get even a hint of just how many instruments there are on each track.

"We all play most instruments," Sidney says. "Guitar, bass, drums, keyboards."

On stage, though, the Apples stick to their two-guitar/bass/ drums lineup, and the richly layered productions of their recordings turn into tough, limber renditions of the songs that emphasize just how well-crafted and durable they are. Watching them, it's obvious how much they love to play live—Sidney, in particular, looks like she's about to burst with delight. And they have a lot of touring coming up: The newly revamped Sire Records has just licensed *Tone Soul Evolution* from SpinArt, and will be re-releasing it with wider distribution. In the meantime, the Apples are holing up for the winter, making a video, and recording some more. "I write songs every day," Schneider says—the band claims to have a backlog of over 200.

And in the future? "I'd like to work with Brian Wilson—that's my dream," Schneider says.

"Why?" Sidney says. They've clearly had this argument many times before. "He's washed up..."

"He's not washed up!" Schneider insists, mock-indignantly. "He just hasn't found the right guy to work with!" **CMJ**

10 "SEEMS SO" BY THE APPLES IN STEREO APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

RISE OF THE DJ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

The mix CD, which not only highlights the DJs themselves, but also gives identity to the largely unknown producers who create the songs, grew from a cottage industry to the foundation for companies like Moonshine Music, which takes credit as first American dance label to employ DJs to mix down its CD compilations. "When we first started, there weren't any album artists or personalities, so it was natural for us to promote DJs the same way that other labels were working album artists," says Moonshine's president, Steve Levy. Today, the label expects mixes by its most popular DJs to ship upwards of 75,000 units, impressive numbers for an independent dance label. "It just made sense that if we're putting out music being played in clubs, we should do it in the way it was being presented in clubs."

The tool most important to the advancement of DJ culture in America, however, is still the 12" vinyl record. Despite the record industry's intention to stop manufacturing vinyl records several years back, DJ culture has always embraced the format as a necessity, an adoration that grows as more and more DJ fans begin making the transition to DJ performers. While many big DJs find themselves on mailing lists of labels eager to have their latest tracks heard in clubs and at raves, more and more DJ fans are looking to make the transition to DJ performers, and their needs are being met by an increasing number of dance specialty stores cropping up across the country. "What's really surprising to us is the amount of records we're selling to far flung places," says Morris, who also co-owns New York City's Breakbeat Science, the US's only all-drum 'n' bass record store. "It's always a good sign when

I get a call from a Louisville, Kentucky, or a Nashville, one of these places where you wouldn't expect a scene to be happening. It does seem like everybody and their brother is a DJ now. It's been getting like that over the last few years. Even if they're just bedroom DJs, it's a very big hobby for people these days."

Even as those within the culture step behind the decks and take a more active role in the development of their scenes, the question remains whether the US, with its long tradition of guitar-based music, will

scratching their heads and didn't really didn't understand it. But the youth at the time did. They got it. And the same thing is going on now. The kids who are going to raves do understand the difference between Sasha and Keoki; they understand where the music's coming from and how it's being presented. They understand the DJ as an artist in their own right, that the guy up there is actually creating something and they are hooking onto the personality behind it. And that understanding can only spread to more and more people." **CMJ**

"The scene is much more in the mainstream in England. Even my grandmother knows where the popular clubs are." —Sasha, a DJ once dubbed "The Son Of God"

ever fully embrace 'club' DJ's as legitimate artists and fully respect the culture stemming from them. Levy is optimistic that the message of the music is reaching the right ears. "Forty years ago, when Elvis came out, what was he doing?" he says. "People were



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Prefab Sprout

By Franklin Bruno

Thirteen years after the fact, I'm not sure what possessed me to spend my meager record allowance on an import copy (with its gorgeous silvery gatefold, absent from the later domestic issue) of Prefab Sprout's first album. If I read an enticing review, I don't recall where, and I certainly didn't hear the record on the local college station, which favored New York noise over Dublin pop. It may simply have been the five huge italicized letters *S W O O N* on the cover that practically commanded me to find out what was inside.

But I do recall the circumstances that made *Swoon* a touchstone, a record I return to at least annually. In my sophomore year of high school, I had honors biology, team-taught by the girl's volleyball coach and a curly-haired Napoleon of a man who resembled a stumpy Tom Selleck. Half the grade in this class was for the dreaded "Plant Project," which involved collecting, identifying and mounting 50 specimens of non-cultivated plants indigenous to Southern California.

This meant numerous parent-led trips to the hills and deserts of San Bernardino County, and the laborious construction of a wooden plant press. I spent endless hours at a Ping-Pong table in our converted garage, meticulously gluing dried sprigs of junipers, lupins and Spanish Broom to lab paper. When my mother was out of the room, I could play the Smiths, but when she helped, it was always *Swoon*, genteel and asexual enough not to arouse complaint, while still being 'my' music.

I hated the work, and loved the record. "Don't Sing," with its tinny guitar, incongruous harmonica and Paddy MacAloon's voice straining out of range for "An outlaw stand in a peasant land, in every face see Judas" conjures those hours with absolute clarity. *Swoon* was a vivid escape from that class and all the other familiar elements of a budding misfit's adolescent hell. I was beginning to write songs myself then, and although my

early efforts used *Murmur* and Velvet Underground reissues as models for getting maximum mileage from minimal chords, I sympathized with *Swoon*'s awkwardness—the way MacAloon, not yet the assured craftsman of later records, accents the final syllable of "continUES" for the tune's sake, or jams the unpronounceable "four distinguished A-Level Passes" into too few beats. Even the fact that Sprout utterly failed to "rock" made sense to me, with my tiny Princeton amp and single-coil Fender on extended loan from a cousin.

All this explains the initial appeal of *Swoon*, but not why I still want to hear it, or why I'm tempted to rescue any copy I see in the used bin—I've even bought an extra cassette for the car. What do

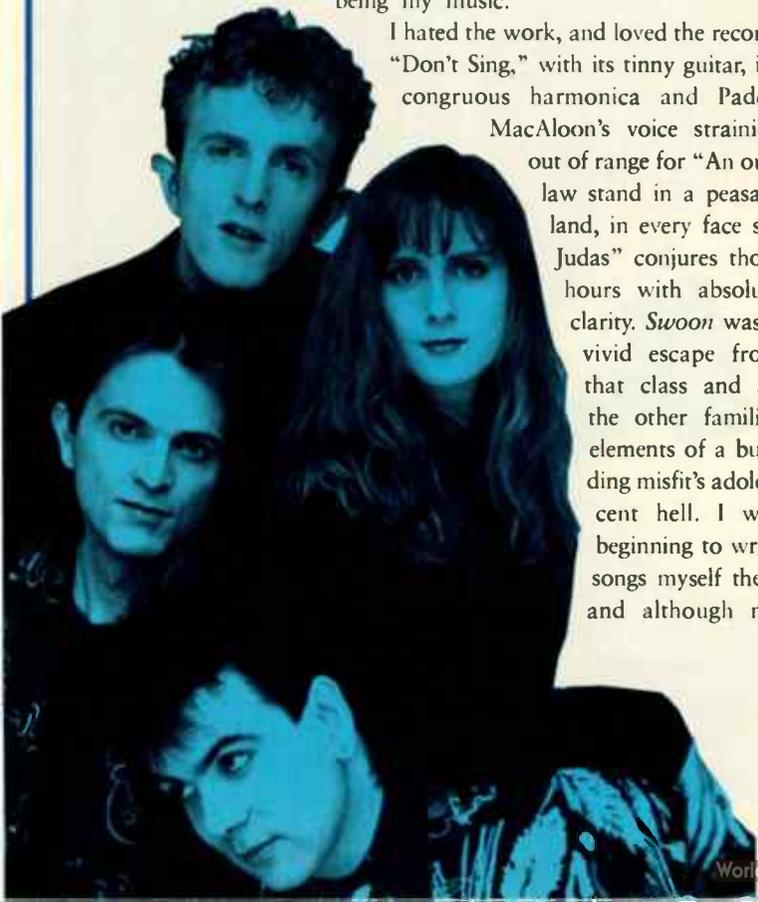
It may simply have been the five huge italicized letters *S W O O N* on the cover that practically commanded me to find out what was inside.

I hear when I listen to it now? First, the bizarre production, which tries and fails to normalize these melodic but deeply skewed songs by mixing Martin MacAloon's fussy bass parts way down and adding layers of string synths. Then there are Paddy's chivalrous attempts to give non-playing singer Wendy

Smith something to do—two words ("Plane Plane") of her affectless soprano in one song, "Ba ba ba"s aplenty in another. And there's the fact that I still can't fathom most of the guitar parts after hundreds of spins.

And of course, there are the words, which veer from recondite, seemingly private references ("Little Green Isaac, I watch you walk backwards through the room") to worldly-wise romantic observation ("The world should be free, but don't you go following suit"), and even the odd bit of politics. In "Couldn't Bear To Be Special," there's a beautiful line barely connected with the rest of the song: "Words are trains for moving past what really has no name," which Paddy can barely sing, and which, I recently realized, expresses an almost identical idea to the final sections of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. How many records can you say that about?

Of course, I've grown some since high-school biology, and so has Prefab Sprout: Thomas Dolby-produced albums, including *Steve McQueen* (probably their "best") made them famous in England and kept them obscure in America (where it was titled *Two Wheels Good*). This year's *Andromeda Heights*, the band's first in seven years, wasn't even released here. I'll buy the expensive, studio-obsessed imports as long as Prefab Sprout exists, but I doubt it'll ever make another record I know every word to. Still, it's only a matter of time until *Swoon*, with its jarring songcraft and Bobby Fischer references, ends up in my car again for three or four plays at a stretch. As they say themselves on "Cue Fanfare": "As this is to me, so to you is something else." ■



by Ian Christe



✠ **Deicide** is such a monstrous band that I want to laugh in disbelief. On its latest deafening opus, *Serpents Of The Light* (Roadrunner), the Floridian foursome gives up some of the cartoon trappings of its devil talk in favor of a straight-ahead agnostic flavor of Christian-bashing. One grievance is Glen Benton's guttural chanting. He gets points for developing a growl that is still harsh, but for some reason he insists on barking almost every line on the CD with the same rhythmic pattern. Incredibly monotonous. Otherwise, these Southern boys are a showroom-quality death metal act... It took almost 20 years for death metal to purge all traces of rock 'n' roll from its genetic system, and **Entombed** is now working towards putting back in the swing. Returning with *To Ride, Shoot Straight And Speak the Truth* (Music For Nations-Sivertone), the band has smoothed out its sound even more, streamlining its danceable death metal so that it will surely alienate the more tight-assed metal fans around the way. Though the group lacks the otherworldly appeal of other bands in this column, Entombed remains one of the few death metal-identified bands whose music has sex appeal. Let's face it, death metal that sounds like rock is still a mighty aberration... Coinciding with his first American concerts, ambient troll rocker **Mortiis** has issued *Crypt Of The Wizard* (Dungeon Music), a 10-track singles compilation. The set's graphic design looks like Tolkien-inspired Art Nouveau, and the shorter pieces provide an excellent point of access for this curious metal experimentalist. His typical 30-minute fugues are fine, but these somber six-minute pieces show Mortiis is perfectly capable of being succinct when the need arises... Whereas the part-gringo concept band Brujeria has garnered mistaken notoriety as a Mexican death metal band, Los Angeles's **Sadistic Intent** has indeed toured Mexico twice, and is a more realistic representative of Latin-descended American death metal. A pair of new CD EPs shows the veteran act's grimy power. *Resurrection* is the band's polished 1993 release, and *Ancient Black Earth* (both on Dark Realm) is a preview of a new full-length release that's a rough combination of old school influences ranging from Possessed to Napalm Death.

metal top 25

1. **DEPTHCHARGE**
Around The Fur / Massack-We
 2. **IGGAS PREST**
Fugates / CMC International
 3. **DEICIDE**
Serpents Of The Light / Roadrunner
 4. **OVERKILL**
From The Underground And Below / CMC International
 5. **KRYPTON**
KRYPTON / Waa Trak TVT
 6. **CRISIS**
The Following / Metal Blade
 7. **ENTOMBED**
To Ride, Shoot Straight And Speak The Truth / Music For Nations-Sivertone
 8. **WILL HAYEN**
El Duque / Crisis-Revolution
 9. **SIX FEET UNDER**
Worship / Metal Blade
 10. **INCUBUS**
S.C.T.N.C.E. / Immortal-Epic
 11. **FE MANCHO**
The Action Is Go / Nemesis
 12. **DAY IN THE LIFE**
dayinthe... / Building TVT
 13. **BRUTAL TRUTH**
Souls Of The Ancestral Kingdom / Relapse
 14. **LIFE OF AGONY**
Soul Searching Sun / Roadrunner
 15. **MADRYT LOVES CO.**
Not Like Them / Exarce
 16. **REMEMBER**
Death Metal / Nuclear Blast America
 17. **HARDLINE**
Fight For Justice / Victory
 18. **TESTAMENT**
Demonic / Mayhem-Pierce
 19. **PANTERA**
Official Live: 101 Proof / EastWest/EED
 20. **SOUNDTRACK**
Mortal Combat: Annihilation /TVT
 21. **SOUNDTRACK**
Concero / Laserion
 22. **WOMAN WASTE PROJECT**
E-Lax / Hellbound
 23. **KISS**
Carnival Of Souls / Mercury
 24. **KREATOR**
Gunsst / F.A.D.
 25. **ZZTY ZZZZZZZZZ**
The Ozzyan Connelly: Greatest Hits / Epic
- Compiled from QM, Decibel, Metal, Revolver, weekly Loud Rock, and other sources. QM's gold of progressive rock releases.

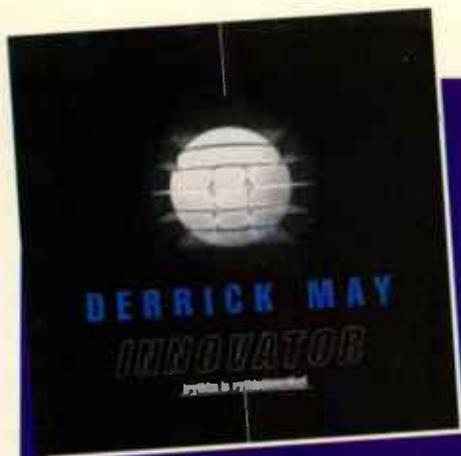


Mayhem

Wolf's Lair Abyss
Misanthropy

After bandleader Euronymous was killed, it looked like the end of the black metal band Mayhem. Now a few of the band's core members have rallied to carry the torch of Norway's first and most influential underground group. More so than the new releases by Emperor and Burzum, this 20-minute taster proves black metal lives in the Norwegian night. Since 1994's excellent *De Mysteriis Dom*

Sathanas, drummer Hellhammer has been rejoined by two long-vanished pillars of the classic late '80s Mayhem lineup: gurgle/chant vocalist Maniac and original bassist Necrobutcher. Newcomer Blasphemer assumes the weight of guitar (former post of Euronymous), and he delivers a humble rendition of the familiar style. The new ensemble is fluent in the arcane art of Mayhem music, and takes the band's intense art to a higher plane of weirdness. Hellhammer really outdoes himself, flutter-pounding his drum kit in quadruple time while the other musicians orchestrate their maze of interlocking, mercurial riffs. Fraught with dangerous changes and seamlessly united incongruities, Mayhem seems to play hyperspeed math rock based on chaos theory. Throughout *Wolf's Lair Abyss*, the group quotes familiar motifs from Mayhem past, then blasts ahead with the most intense animal ferocity and clearly rendered production the outfit has yet seen. It's powerful music, permeated with an eerie aura that seems borne of cheating death. ✠



Derrick May Innovator Transmat/Fragile-Never

One day, an academic slant may be put on the work of artists like Afrika Bambaataa and Grand Master Flash, grouping them and other like-minded artists, including the frequently overlooked Derrick May, together under the name "Afro-futurism." This movement would be worthy of such attention because what these artists have done is to sustain narratives of black technological intervention and future imagin-

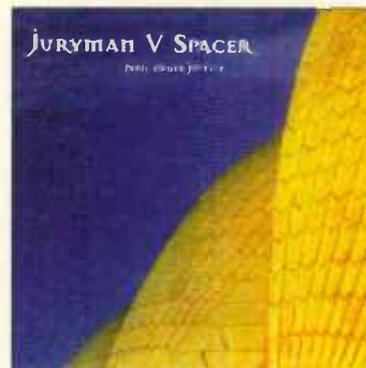
ings, transforming the products of an industrial project founded on the use of their ancestors' forced labor. And it's time that May's work be recognized. Now, after years of relative neglect, May's own label Transmat has released a definitive collection of tracks called *Innovator*. From the epochal "Strings Of The Strings Of Life" and "Beyond The Dance" to "The Beginning" and "Nude Photo," this collection is where May took the stark Teutonic strains of Kraftwerk, the sequencer-disco of Giorgio Moroder, and the metallic gleam of German electronic composer Manuel Gottsching and transformed them into the most ecstatic and contemplative mind and body music ever made, a sound dubbed "techno." "Beyond The Dance" is revolutionary for the complete absence of a kick drum; drumming without drums is what this masterpiece achieves. This collection is indispensable for anyone remotely interested in where electronic music came from and where it is going.

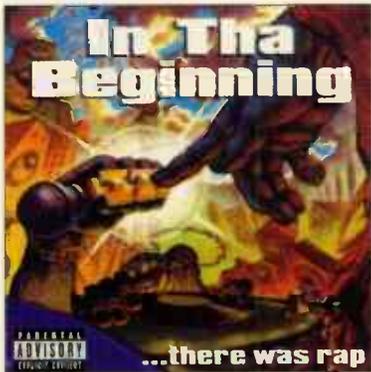
In 1986, a young Philadelphian named Rasheed Miller released an EP decorated with nearly indecipherable handwritten lettering and containing four tracks of the most agile, extreme, lo-fi bedroom hip-hop you're ever likely to hear. I mention this not to be deliberately obscure, but to point out that just when you might have thought such wonderful moments were no longer possible, along comes one of the most inventive records of the year: **Shake The Nations**, released by Brooklyn's Wordsound label. Over the space of 23 tracks, this collection introduces us to the imaginations of some artists whose interest in having a hit is remote at best. "Chicken Walk '97" by Splice, which opens the collection, is just the sort of improvisational genius so lacking in contemporary electronic music. "Rise Of The Fall" by Dubadelic only extends the inspired lunacy that this record represents. Other contributors include Bill Laswell, Style Scott, DJ Vadim and Roots Control. Turn up the volume and set the controls for the heart of Brooklyn... An abstract DJ par excellence, **DJ Wally** has put together two more tracks of manic-depressive drum 'n' bass, confirming his status as one of the most innovative beatmakers around. "Corrupt Cops" is a devastating, panic-ridden piece of music, with snares ricocheting around the mix and a percussive speed that would knock over traffic cones in a four-mile radius. The flip's "NY Undercover" is just as caustic, with a bass line that would probably eat through your chest with the fury of Sigourney Weaver's cinematic nemesis... The age of drum 'n' bass/downtempo collaborations is certainly with us. The latest in these novel experiments is the brilliantly executed *Mail Order Justice* by **Juryman v Spacer** (SSR-Crammed), featuring two of Britain's most eclectic groove merchants. Spacer (a.k.a. Nick Gordon) has already done superb work for Howie B's Pussyfoot label, and here he joins forces with the strange and wonderful Juryman (a.k.a. Ian Simmonds, former member of the Sandals) to create a moody, reflective set of tracks that seem to be a tentative step towards song-based, vocal drum 'n' bass. The title track alone makes this worth acquiring.

dance top25

- 1 **APBEX TWIN**
Dime To Daddy (EP) / Warp/Im
- 2 **FATBOY SLIM**
Better Living Through Chemistry / Astronarks/Caroline
- 3 **COLD CUT**
Let Us Play / Ninja Tune (Canada)
- 4 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Infinite Beat Vol. 1 / DGC
- 5 **RONI SIZE/REPRZENT**
New Forms / Talkin' Loud/Mercury
- 6 **LUKE SLATER**
Fresh Funk / Novaklute/Mute
- 7 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Cultwave Breaks II / 21st Century
- 8 **KMFDM**
KMFDM / Wax Trax!/TVT
- 9 **PORTISHEAD**
Portishead / Gut Beat/London
- 10 **NUMB**
Road Meridian / Metropolis
- 11 **MOBY**
I Like To Spare / Elektra/EEG
- 12 **SPRING HEEL JACK**
Bully Curious Thirsty Island
- 13 **EAT STATIC**
Science Of The Gods / Planet Dog/Memphis
- 14 **DAVID HOLMES**
Lars Got Killed / Gut Beat/1500-AEM
- 15 **HOWIE B**
Turn The Dark Off / Island
- 16 **UNIT PARK**
Telex Park / Plastic City/UMG
- 17 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Cup Of Tea Records Another Compilation / Cup Of Tea/In America
- 18 **BENTLEY RHYTHM ACE**
Bentley Rhythm Ace / Anhalwerks/Caroline
- 19 **LOOP GURU**
Lard Bites Dog / World Domination
- 20 **ALIEN FAKTOR**
Arterial Spray... And Other Mutations / Disibel
- 21 **WUMPS CUT**
Embryodead / Metropolis
- 22 **CRYSTAL METHOD**
Vegas / Outpost-DGC
- 23 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Perseus Continuum / Renegade-Rawkus
- 24 **MEDICINE DRUM**
Supernature / 911
- 25 **1.B.7.**
When Worlds Collide / Jungle Sky/Liquid Sky

Compiled from CMJ Year-End Report, weekly RPM charts, collected from CMJ's book of progressive rock recordings.





❖ As this month's pick suggests, the compilation business is booming these days, and several others also bear mentioning. First up is **Rap Essentials Vol. 2**, a Canadian hip-hop compilation put together by Toronto's impressive Beat Factory label that offers new sounds that are every bit as interesting as their American counterparts, although they may be a bit more obscure. The music here, from 16 talented artists, is of the highest quality, and groups like Asia, Sic Sense, Illegal Justice, Down Ta Erf and M.A.D. will make you wonder why they keep such a tight lid on all that dopeness up there... On a much bigger (but unfortunately not as impressive) note, the new collection **In Tha Beginning...There Was Rap** (Priority) looks great on paper but doesn't quite deliver the goods. This compilation takes some of the biggest names in the rap biz (Wu-Tang Clan, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Coolio, Master P, Puff Daddy, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony) and lets them loose on old-school hip-hop tracks, but the results are depressingly conservative and downright lazy overall. Sure, Cypress Hill doing a cover of BDP's "I'm Still #1" sounds like it would be incredible, but the end result is an almost identical version of the original. The Wu-Tang Clan (which expertly reworks Run-DMC's "Sucker MCs") and the Roots (who win a blue ribbon for their update of Doug E. Fresh's "The Show") are the only artists to escape the banal or commonplace here... And finally, three new underground compilations will make your obscure rap searching a lot easier: Rawkus's **Sound Bombing** is a great view of that label's top-shelf wares, while **Haze Presents New York Reality Check IOI** (Payday/ffrr-London) and **The World Famous Beat Junkies Volume One: DJ Babu** (PR) both present a wide mix of street sounds from many labels, mixed by some A-1 talent.

hip-hop top 25

1. **RAKIM**
The 18th Letter / Universal
2. **BUSTA RHYMES**
When Disaster Strikes / Elektra-EEG
3. **THE FIRM**
The Album / Interscope
4. **GANG STARR**
"You Know Mysses" / Nas/Trabe/Wght
5. **JAY-Z**
In My Lifetime Vol. 1 / Roc-A-Fella
6. **EPMD**
Back in Business / Def Jam/Poligran
7. **GRAVEDOGGAE**
The Pick, The Sickle And The Shovel / Get School-Y2
8. **COMMON**
"Reminding Me (Of Self)" / Relativity
9. **WU-TANG CLAN**
Wu-Tang Forever / Wu-Tang/Loud/RCA
10. **LL COOL J**
Pacemans / Def Jam/RG
11. **MIC GERONIMO**
"Wotta... Now... But The Matter" / Blunt-Tv2
12. **ORGANIZED KONFUSION**
"Numbers" / Priority
13. **WASE**
Harem World / Bad Boy-Arista
14. **PSYCHO REALM**
The Psycho Realm / Bullseye/Columbia-ORG
15. **LORD TARIQ & PETER GUNZ**
"This '98" / Columbia
16. **ZPMC**
"I Wuzer... If Heaven Got A Ghetto" / Arista-Jive
17. **PUFF DADDY & THE FAMILY**
No Way Get / Bad Boy-Arista
18. **WYCLEF JEAN/REFUGEE ALL-STARS**
Presents: The Carnival / Bullseye/Columbia-ORG
19. **PRINCE PAUL**
Psychomolyse (What Is It?) / Tommy Boy
20. **SOUNDTRACK**
Soul In The Hole / Loud/RCA
21. **KOOL KEITH**
See Style / Funky Add
22. **REFLECTION ETERNAL**
"Fortified Line" / Bunkaid
23. **CAPONE N' NOREAGA**
"Dover" / Penalty/Tommy Boy
24. **BIG PUNISHER**
"I'm Not A Player" / Loud/RCA
25. **X-ECUTIONERS**
X-pressions / A&M/Arb

Compiled from **Q** and **Spin** Music Polls
www.wwj.com charts collected from **Q**'s
polling agencies and sources.

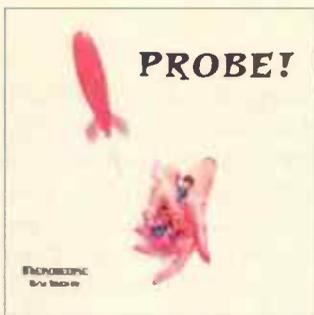
Bomb Worldwide

Various Artists
Bomb

You'd have to be an idiot to dispute the fact that hip-hop in 1998 is a worldwide phenomenon. In our modern global village, the music has spread to every corner of the Earth, from Houston to Hamburg to Hong Kong. But how many times have you heard any rap music from outside the borders of the US? Not often enough, that's for sure. This new compilation from San Francisco's Bomb Records (which also brought us the **Return Of The DJ** series) is tailor-made for those looking to explore the expansive global hip-hop scene. Showing off some of America's best underground talent (including J-Live, the Dilated Peoples and San Diego's 10 Bass T) along with tracks from Germany, England, Australia, Canada and even Japan, the set represents the international scene very well. And while stubborn nativists will close their ears to alien accents, languages



and flows, some of the foreign tracks are the best on the compilation: most notably Japan's Muro and Gore-Tex with "Sansyabontai," the UK's Funky DL (with "20-20-8-8") and Germany's F.A.B., which rocks the mic with "F.A.B. Am Mikrofon." Missing here are artists in France, Africa, Eastern Europe and China, but if response to this compilation is as good as it should be, then several more volumes should be coming down the pike. ❖



Like Long Hind Legs, **Probe!** is also proudly part of the retro-underground. The New Jersey band's debut single "Microscopic" (Trajectory) is so new wave you can all but see the MTV rocket taking off in the background. It's cuter than Martha Quinn, catchier than Haircut One Hundred, and loaded with science references—the band gets extra points for rhyming "it's no fun" with "mitochondrion." The B-side, "Touch Me," is even lighter-weight, though it's got that great breathy singing style that went out with bangle bracelets.

Stereolab's *Dots And Loops* found the band moving away from live performance-based songwriting and towards sample-based pieces, and with its new single "Iron Man" (Duophonic) the group has gone over the edge. It's an instrumental piece built out of a few sound effects from *Dots'* "Parsec," a drum break from somewhere or other, and a couple of sampled chords, and it's gorgeously imaginative. "The Incredible He Woman," on the other side, is a more conventional performance, though it

hiss&crackle

has an unusually silly lyric from Laetitia Sadier—definitely B-side material, though illuminating for Stereolab fans.

The **Make-Up** keeps getting more annoying all the time, and "Free Arthur Lee" (K) is no exception, not only for Ian Svenonius's nails-on-blackboard falsetto but for its subject (the former Love singer isn't exactly a prisoner of conscience). But the flipside is a treat: a Dub Narcotic remix called "Tell It Like A Version," with Calvin Johnson chanting over a few bass notes and a drum part based on the famous break from Al Green's "I'm Glad You're Mine"—it's good to hear something that has to do with actual soul music on a Make-Up record. And Svenonius's squeal? It's way in the background, where it works nicely as texture.



A few quick drops of the needle: **Pizzicato Five** has been releasing a series of 12" singles remixed by luminaries of one

kind or another, and the most interesting to date has two mixes of "Trailer Music" (Matador) done by English pop weirdo Momus; they play intriguingly with the slow/fast dichotomies of drum 'n' bass, and with the way the band makes reference to pop culture... "Men and guitars dominate punk music," **Chickita** writes in the liner notes to the 7" EP *Karen Learns About Our Nation* (100% Breakfast!). "It is time for this to end... The future belongs to women with basses." That would be Chickita, a Boston hardcore band with multiple women bass players and nothing in the high end but two howling vocalists; the new record's rawer and darker than they've been before, often scary and usually surprising... The **Jon Spencer Blues Explosion** is still milking *Now I Got Worry* for singles—the latest is "Rocketship" (Au-Go-Go) backed up on 7" by a one-chord throwaway called "Chocolate Joe" (great drum break!) and on CD single by four smoking live tracks from their ultra-rare *Controversial Negro* LP... Most of **Pest 5000's** superbly tuneful, charming singles are collected on *Palimpsest* (Derivative), along with some canny remixes by experimental types like Christof Migone, and the previously unreleased "I'm A Big Black Messy Cat," a ridiculous medley of two Devo songs: "Pink Pussycat" and "I'm A Mess."

Long Hind Legs

"Return To Me"
Punk In My Vitamins?

There's always an underground that's way ahead of its time and an underground that's way

behind it, and Olympia, Washington's Long Hind Legs are definitely in the second category. "Return To Me" is pretty clearly inspired by early New Order, and more specifically by *Power Corruption And Lies*—its cheap drum

machine, relentless sequencer part, half-uncertain singing, synth drone and final abrasive guitar break all hint at that album's "Your Silent Face." But it's also a terrific song in its own right, with words full of Long Hind Legs' usual erot-

ic loathing and existential dread, and production that reveals countless thoughtful touches—it really is aimed at the radios of 1983. "Charmed, I'm Sure," on the other side, is even creepier, a

Long Hind Legs



Charmed, I'm sure...

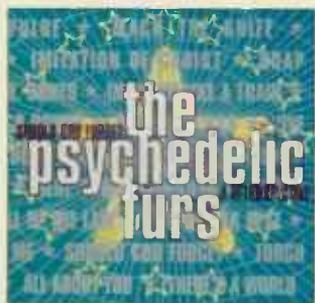
companion to the Normal's recently reissued "Warm Leatherette" on the tiny shelf of car-crash-chic pop. It's a nod to the D.I.Y. side of new wave, with chalky, lurching guitar and drums in place of the synths. And the New Order influence shows up here, too, with the pseudonymous "Wolfgang" putting on his best Bernard Sumner accent to gasp "On Monday in pretty buildings, you were always having sex." •

★ While it's true that we already wrote about the **Beach Boys'** *Pet Sounds Sessions* box set in these pages, that was over a year ago, before the project's release date was mysteriously delayed for almost 11 months. It's finally out now, and they can't take it back. The set consists of the B-Boys' 1966 LP, *Pet Sounds*, one of the greatest albums of all time, augmented with four CDs of outtakes, alternate versions, different vocal and instrumental sessions and arrangements, even commercials plugging the singles—it's really delightful. I personally know at least three musicians who bought it the very evening it came out. These are clearly Brian Wilson's "pet sounds"—namely, his adventures trying to find sounds that make the listener feel loved. The toy-piano sound that opens "You Still Believe In Me," the incredibly deep, wandering bass lines of "God Only Knows" and "Here Today," the infamous "big bongo" sound of "Caroline, No"—these are the strangely affecting sonic moments that make *Pet Sounds* seem like its own little world. One little detail that makes this box set even more

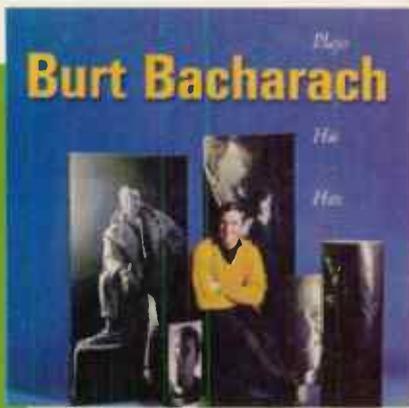
intriguing is Brian Wilson's brief dedication in the booklet—"to the inspiration provided by the Beatles." Is Brian referring to *Rubber Soul*, or to the Beatles' more recent exhumation of outtakes on the *Anthology* series? One never knows, but old rivalries do die hard, you know.

★ The **Yardbirds'** 1966 album *Roger The Engineer* may not be the best Yardbirds album, but it's one of the original super-group's headier ones. It's just been re-released on Warner Archives, along with a set of *BBC Sessions*. Jimmy Page joins up towards the end, although this set doesn't include any of his main tunes with the group. But they're still neat records.

★ With the recent trend towards '80s reissues (Pixies, X, et al.), the one I'm most excited about is the two-CD retrospective of the **Psychedelic Furs**. I met my best friend at a P-Furs concert in 1983, and the two of us still talk about how incredible Richard Butler's smoking jacket was that night. So naturally,



to me, such a set from this essential underground alternative band is not something to take lightly—at least the first disc, which spans the band's output from 1979 to 1982. Prior to providing the signature song to an odious proto-Gen-X film (*Pretty In Pink*), the Furs were a really great band. At



Burt Bacharach

Plays His Greatest Hits

MCA

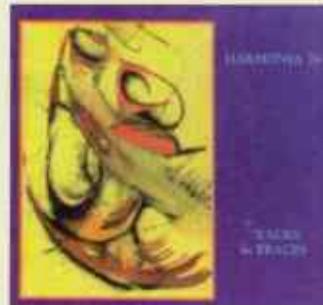
Yeah, Burt's playing his great hits, and baby, he's playing them for you! This reissue is the motherlode of swinging '60s sounds, one of the keys to the space age bachelor pad. It's Burt—author of "What's New Pussycat," "Make It Easy On Yourself" and a

score of others—and here he's personally conducting mostly instrumental, lushly orchestral, almost easy-listening versions of classic hits he wrote with word-man Hal David, a brilliant cash-in album that was originally released on the Kapp Records label in the mid-'60s. It's easy, rolling, laid-back and free—man, not only could Burt write a melody that would get him out of a paper bag, but once out, it'd be so good he'd get the sack to go back to the supermarket and bring home some groceries. Our only quibble is the packaging, which clearly indicates that someone is terminally clueless. It looks like the MCA art department is stuck in the late '80s—they just don't seem to get how empirically cool this music is. But once you put it in the player, you're welcome to just listen and groove. ★

inthebins

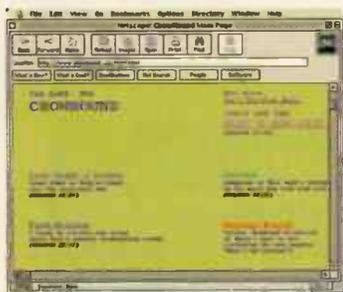
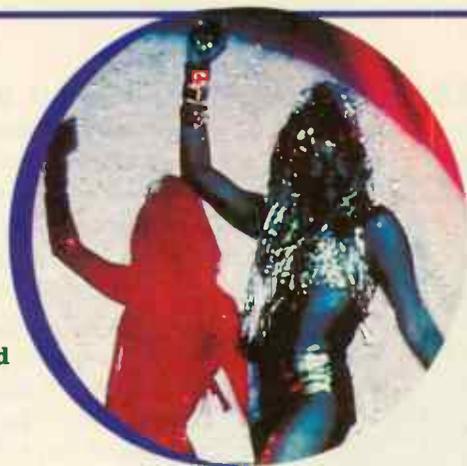
first listen, Butler's lyrics seem silly and surreal, but once you peel away the non-literal meanings, they are hilariously funny. The real star of *Should God Forget: A Retrospective*, however, is the rhythm section. New, previously-unreleased live tracks like "Soap Commercial" or B-sides like "Mack The Knife" show that for all their weirdness, the Furs had a first-rate rhythm section. One of the most important components of an "influential" band is that it makes music you still remember even after the band is gone: Just listen again to the throbbing tom-toms of "Love My Way" and you'll see what I mean.

★ Rykodisc has released a progressive milestone by Hans Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius (both of Cluster) and Michael Rother (of Neu! and Kraftwerk), now released under the name **Harmonia 76**. *Tracks & Traces* consists of previously unreleased recordings that took place when Brian Eno dropped by their German studios and ended up staying 11 days, improvising, recording and experimenting. These previously unheard tracks predated the Eno/Cluster recordings for the EG label later in the '70s. This is the coelacanth fish of German prog, the missing link between '70s German progressive music and today's sounds of Aphex Twin, Sonic Youth, Tortoise, Mouse On Mars and others.



ON THE RACKS...

Dancehall Queen (Island Jamaica Films)—Jamaica's highest-grossing film ever, now out on videotape following a brief tour of U.S. film festivals. It's got a super-hot soundtrack with the likes of Bounty Killer and Beenie Man, a plot that makes *Flashdance* look like *The Usual Suspects*, and lots of dancing; what else do you want? (DW)



CHOWHOUND (www.chowhound.com)

Jim Leff is a chowhound—a heavy-duty food fanatic who delights in seeking out the choicest eats in the least likely locales, and doesn't care how lowbrow it is as long as it's tasty. (That's "chowhound," not the entirely different, nose-in-the-air breed "foodie," he explains: "True chowhounds use their last adrenal reserves to trek crosstown for a slightly better muffin.") As you might guess, he's also a restaurant critic. The Chowhound site is dedicated to his culinary adventures, many in New York but quite a few elsewhere. He frequently details, delightfully, what he had for dinner the night before, and he's also dedicated sections of the site to Quisp (his favorite cereal, now only available in a few cities), to remedies for various food-related ailments, and to formerly great restaurants that have gone downhill. There's also a lively forum for readers to discuss who makes the best tom kha gai or what the best kind of Pepperidge Farm cookie is. (DW)

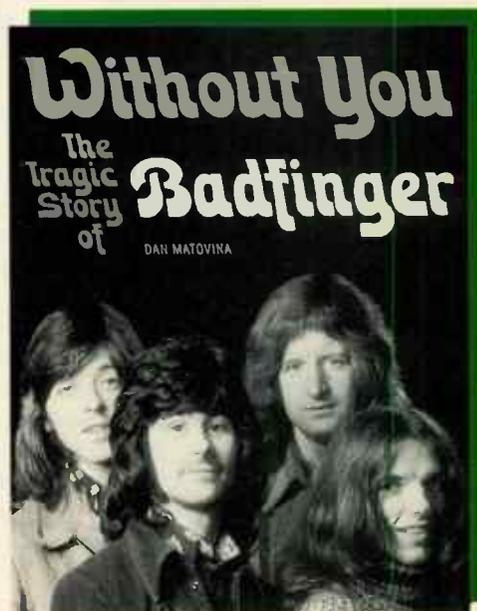
ONE TO AVOID...

There's an old joke: "Did you hear they're doing film adaptations of all of Ayn Rand's books? You have to watch them with special 2-D glasses to get the full depth of the characterizations." Thankfully, nobody's attempted to film the tracts that were co-credited to Alan Greenspan (yes, that one), but the world has now been graced with the documentary **Ayn Rand: A Sense Of Life**. It's probably formally appropriate that it's very, very long, nearly unwatchable, and so one-sided in its valorization of Rand that it looks less like a biography than a Dianetics indoctrination film, but suffice it to say that one interviewee's on-camera appearances repeatedly bill him as "Ayn Rand's intellectual heir and friend for 30 years." Ouch. (DW)

WITHOUT YOU: THE TRAGIC STORY OF BADFINGER

by Dan Matovina Frances Glover Books

A famous association with the Beatles, two band suicides and inspiration for a generation of power poppers—add in four hit singles and you've got Badfinger. But is it enough to warrant a 436-page book? Dan Matovina thinks so, and he's right. There was even more going on behind the scenes than out in front, and it ended up with the members of Badfinger getting royally fucked. A truly evil manager and band politics that translated into money (and the difference between living and dying) are the meat of this story, and at its heart are the musicians who, naive and trusting, just wanted to play music, but basically lost everything. *Without You* is, in fact, a modern tragedy, and sadly true. Exhaustively researched, ably and compassionately told, it's the kind of book every band should read before sitting down to sign a contract. —Chris Nickson



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january 26

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HIGH LLAMAS
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january 27

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DEAN FRASER
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Senseless
100 Year Thing
Musings Of A Creekdipper

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A Plea For Tenderness
Millennium Music
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'Cause I Love You Too Much Baby

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Year 2000 (EP)
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Pink Elephants
Declare Your Weapons
Right On Time
Four Great Points
Skull Orchard
Every Night Fight For Your Life
Let Them Eat Pussy
Dok
Taken In
Refusal Fossil
Even A Blind Chicken Finds A Kernel Of Corn
Now And Then (An Early Years Retrospective)
Real Time (EP)
Swans Are Dead (Live '95-'97)
Shleep

Live In San Francisco
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Before You Knew Better
Camofleur
Raw Hamburger
Cold And Bouncy
The Nig-Heist
Major Label Debut

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Preemptive Strike
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Big Up
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The Rebels Not In
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Santa Barbara (reissue)
Star Rise

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Pulse Demon (reissue)
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Low Estate
Ball Of Fire
Viva Satellite
When The Funk Hits The Fan
Occupational Hazard

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Blue Note
ffrr-London
Slash-London
Blue Note
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Capitol
Gee Street-V2
Bluemoon-Atlantic
Atlantic

Source-Caroline
Matador
SST
Brinkman
Atavistic
Matador

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Thrill Jockey
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Sub Pop
Mute
Merge
Hellcat
Tough And Go
Sugar Free
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Amphetamine Reptile
Thrill Jockey
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Astralwerks-Caroline
Atavistic
Thirsty Ear

Lookout!
Lookout!
Moon Ska
Drag City
Drag City
V2
Drag City
Lookout!

MCA
Columbia Legacy-CRG
Mo Wax/ffrr-London
Hellcat
Island Jamaica Jazz
Hellcat
ffrr-London
K
V2
V2
RealWorld-Caroline

K
WORK
Release
CherryDisc
Island Jamaica Jazz
A&M
Island Jamaica Jazz
MCA
Ovum/Columbia-CRG
Relapse

TOP 75 ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY

	artist	title	label
1	PORTISHEAD	Portishead	Go! Beat-London
2	THE VERVE	Urban Hymns	Virgin
3	BJÖRK	Homogenic	Elektra-EEG
4	KMFDM	KMFDM	Wax Trax!-TVT
5	DEFTONES	Around The Fur	Maverick-WB
6	MOGWAI	Young Team	Jetset
7	STEREOLAB	Dots And Loops	Elektra-EEG
8	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Tibetan Freedom Concert	Grand Royal-Capitol
9	PIXIES	Death To The Pixies	4AD/Elektra-EEG
10	APHEX TWIN	Come To Daddy (EP)	Warp-Sire
11	MOBY	I Like To Score	Elektra-EEG
12	PROMISE RING	Nothing Feels Good	Jade Tree
13	EVERCLEAR	So Much For The Afterglow	Capitol
14	MODEST MOUSE	The Lonesome Crowded West	Up
15	G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE	Yeah, It's That Easy	OKeh-Epic
16	APPLES IN STEREO	Tone Soul Evolution	SpinArt
17	CORNERSHOP	When I Was Born For The 7th Time	Luaka Bop-WB
18	JULIANA HATFIELD	Please Do Not Disturb (EP)	Bar/None
19	FLYING SAUCER ATTACK	New Lands	Drag City
20	SYRUP USA	All Over The Land	Flydaddy
21	MIKE WATT	Contemplating The Engine Room	Columbia-CRG
22	JANE'S ADDICTION	Kettle Whistle	Warner Bros.
23	BABYBIRD	Ugly Beautiful	Atlantic
24	RONI SIZE/REPAZENT	New Forms	Talkin' Loud-Mercury
25	THE CURE	Galore	Fiction/Elektra-EEG
26	HELIUM	The Magic City	Matador
27	IVY	Apartment Life	Atlantic
28	FREE KITTEN	Sentimental Education	Kill Rock Stars
29	DUBSTAR	Goodbye	Polydor-A&M Associated
30	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Lounge-A-Palooza	Hollywood
31	BUTTERGLORY	Rat Tat Tat	Merge
32	JONATHAN FIRE EATER	Wolf Songs For Lambs	DreamWorks
33	GET UP KIDS	Four Minute Mile	Doghouse
34	SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS	Plastic Seat Sweat	DGC
35	SOUNDTRACK	Mortal Kombat: Annihilation	TVT
36	CHUMBAWAMBA	Tubthumper	Republic-Universal

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stations
reporting their
top 20
most played
tunes.

- 37 HOLIDAY
- 38 X
- 39 LETTERS TO CLEO
- 40 SOUNDTRACK
- 41 FATBOY SLIM
- 42 GUITAR WOLF
- 43 CONGO NORVELL
- 44 SEELY
- 45 TRACK STAR
- 46 DAVID BOWIE
- 47 VARIOUS ARTISTS
- 48 SELF
- 49 ISOTOPE 217
- 50 GREEN DAY
- 51 LAIKA
- 52 SHIFT
- 53 SOUNDTRACK
- 54 PATTI SMITH
- 55 DIVINE COMEDY
- 56 SOUNDTRACK
- 57 SUNDAYS
- 58 CRAMPS
- 59 PIZZICATO FIVE
- 60 BUSH
- 61 INTERPRETERS
- 62 TANYA DONELLY
- 63 BEULAH
- 64 MECCA NORMAL
- 65 FU MANCHU
- 66 TOASTERS
- 67 EDWYN COLLINS
- 68 COLDCUT
- 69 BOB DYLAN
- 70 AQUABATS
- 71 WESTON
- 72 VARIOUS ARTISTS
- 73 FLICK
- 74 BOUNCING SOULS
- 75 VARNALINE

- Café Reggio
- Beyond And Back: The X Anthology
- Go!
- A Life Less Ordinary
- Better Living Through Chemistry
- Planet Of The Wolves
- Abnormals Anonymous
- Seconds
- Communication Breaks
- I'm Afraid Of Americans (EP)
- Live From 6A: Conan O'Brien
- The Half-Baked Serenade
- The Unstable Molecule
- Nimrod
- Sounds Of The Satellites
- Get In
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- Static & Silence
- Big Beat From Badsville
- Happy End Of The World
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- Lovesongs For Underdogs
- Handsome Western States
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- The Action Is Go
- Don't Let The Bastards Grind You Down
- I'm Not Following You
- Let Us Play
- Time Out Of Mind
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- Music From The Soundtrack Matinee
- Duran Duran Tribute Album
- Flick (EP)
- The Bouncing Souls
- A Shot And A Beer (EP)

- SpinArt
- Elektra-EEG
- Revolution
- London
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- Jetset
- Too Pure-Beggars Banquet
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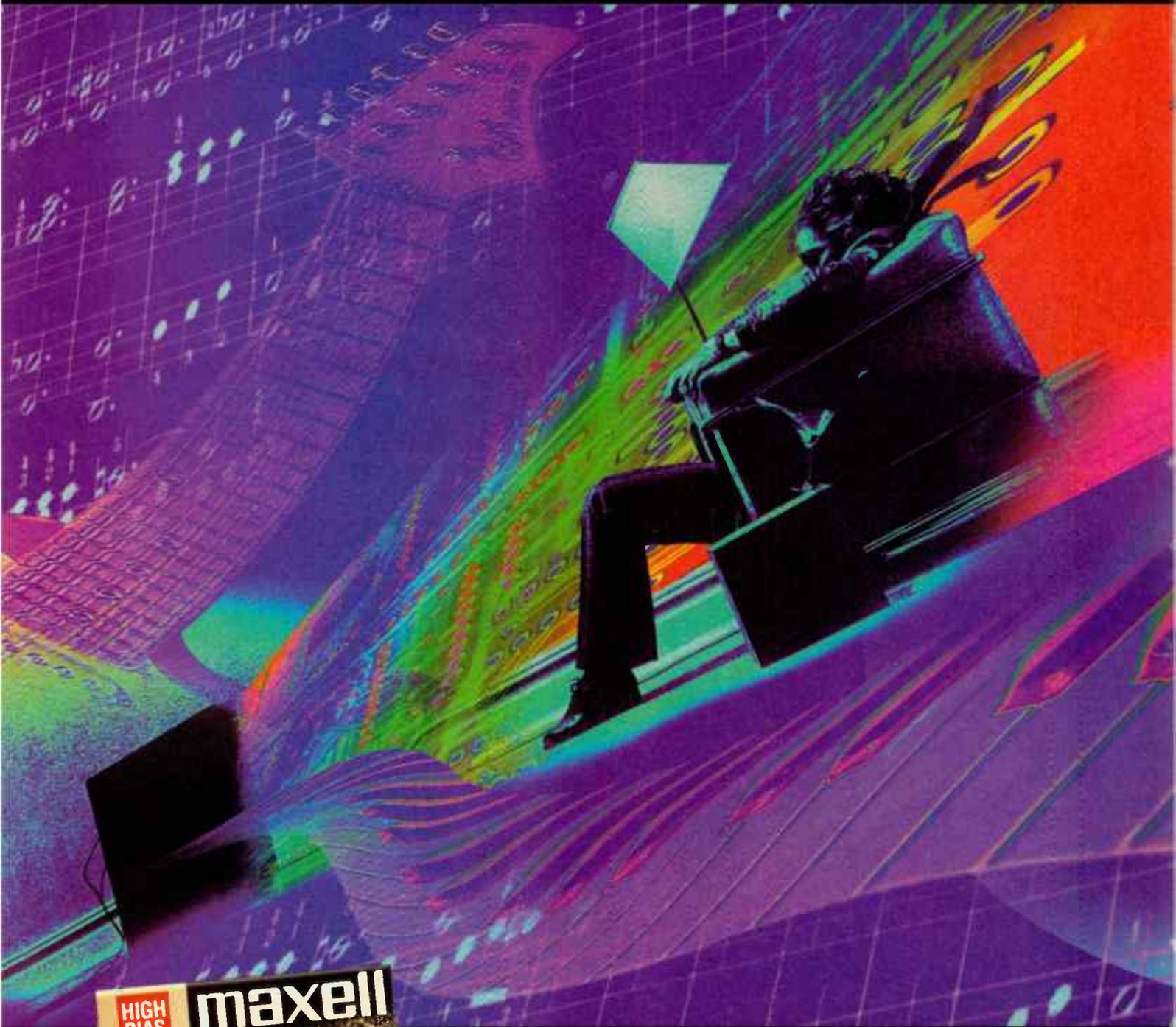
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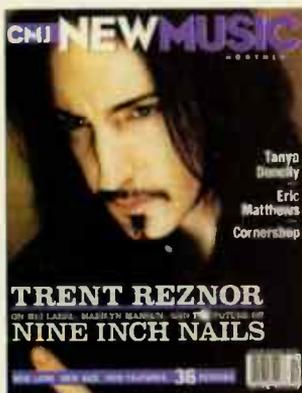
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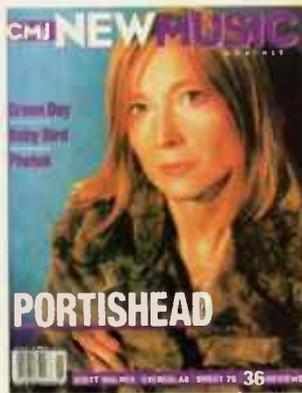
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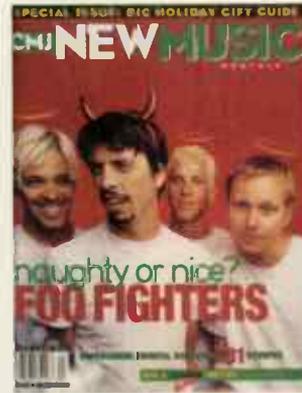
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by Richard Martin

Portland, Oregon

Portland evolved as if part of some diabolical five-year plan. Lumped in with Seattle at the zenith of the grunge era, this city of 700,000 inhabitants is now established as a ready-made scene. And since it rains steadily for eight months out of the year, you don't even need to add water. ➔ Portland bands once wore de rigueur flannel and stomped on distortion pedals, but the past five years have seen a broadening of styles. The late-'80s punk scene that bred the **Wipers**, **Polson Idea** and **Crackerbash** yielded in 1992 to Sub Pop's fab four—**Hazel, Pond**, the **Spinanes** and **Sprinkler**. More recently, the city has unleashed an array of buzz bands including **Everclear**, **Elliott Smith**, the **Dandy Warhols**, **Sleater-Kinney** and **Quasi**, not to mention up-and-comers **Sunset Valley** and **Junior High**, fronted by ex-Crackerbasher **Sean Croghan**. ➔ Music aside, Portland is all about neighborhoods. It's neatly divided north/south by the **Willamette River** and east/west by **Burnside Street**, and each quadrant boasts an almost precise balance of rock clubs, vintage stores, record shops, microbrew pubs, book stores and coffee shops. It's fairly easy to assimilate here, provided you don't mind walking in the rain without an umbrella.



Southeast—Home To The Hip

If you see someone wearing cool vintage clothes and carrying a guitar case, chances are he or she lives in Southeast. Once a collection of quiet neighborhood streets and offbeat shops, the area now houses much of Portland's night life.

Three all-ages venues and some of the best places to find cheap eats and drinks all reside within 10 blocks of the river. The key rock club, **LaLuna** (215 SE 9th Ave., 241.5862), holds about 1,000 and regularly features popular touring bands and local acts. A few blocks away, the **Stage 4 Theater** (527 SE Pine St., 238.9692) hosts punk and harder indie bands like **Olympia**, **Washington's Unwound**.

Among restaurants, the spacious, open-late **Bistro Montage** (301 SE Morrison, 234.1324) gets name-checked regularly onstage by touring bands, while the reasonably priced Italian cafe **Caswell** (533 SE Grand, 232.6512), the authentic Lebanese joint **Nicholas** (318 SE Grand, 235.5123) and the diner/dive bar **My Father's Place** (523 SE Grand, 235.5494) also merit a visit.

One of the most active streets in town, **Hawthorne Blvd.**, and its nearby cousin **Belmont St.**, are lined with a dazzling selection of vintage stores, record and music shops, cafes, restaurants and bars. It's best

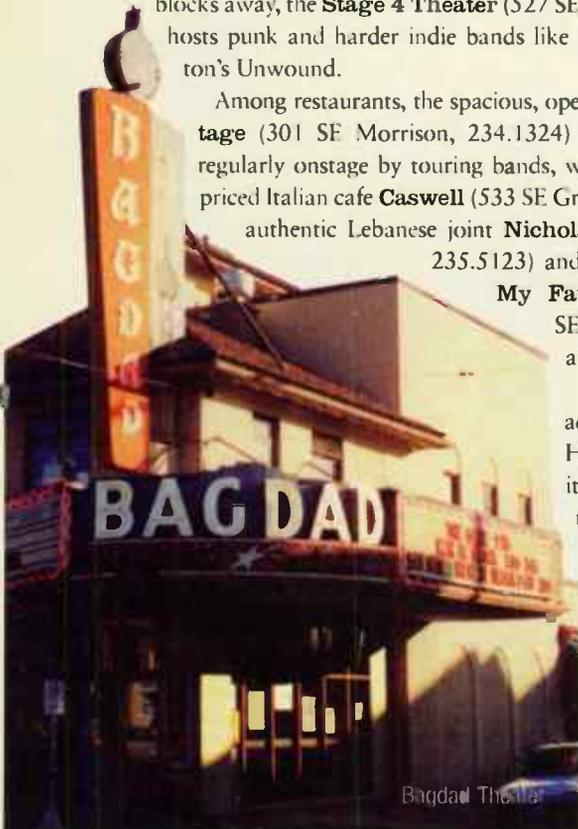
to ask the locals for guidance, but a good place to start is the intersection of SE 39th Ave. and Hawthorne, where the massive **Bagdad Theater** and **McMenamins Brewpub** occupy the Southeast corner (the McMenamins own about 40 pubs in the city, and they've probably served a billion pints).

The true heart of Southeast lies in the quaint Clinton St. neighborhood, anchored by **Dots Cafe** (2452 SE Clinton St., 235.0203), a cozy, dark place with kitsch-lined walls that is the regular watering hole and diner for the city's rock elite.

Southwest—Home To Downtown

For book and record shopping, the zone around SW 10th Ave. and Burnside makes cash disappear like a retail Bermuda triangle. **Powell's City of Books** (1005 W. Burnside, 228.4651) takes up an entire

city block and features about a million titles, both used and new. Across the street is **Ozone Records** (1036 W. Burnside, 227.5000), where you'll never find a Boston album but you'll probably be able to pick up an obscure *Mission Of Burma 7"*. A few puddles away, **Django Records** (1111 SW Stark, 227.4381) is the type of place that could keep DJ Shadow occupied for hours, although used CDs are in abundance here as well. Also close by is the sprawling CD and vinyl emporium **Everyday Music** (1313 W. Burnside, 274.0961), the 'zine Mecca **Reading Frenzy** (921



Bagdad Theater

SW Oak St., 274-1449) and the Portland-centric record store **Locals Only** (916 W. Burnside, 227.5000).

The omnipresent McMenamens spruced up the airy, ancient and majestic **Crystal Ballroom** (1332 W. Burnside, 778.5625) about a year ago, and it features a “floating” dance floor that makes drunken frat guys want to jump up and down to test the springboard action. Deeper downtown, there’s the hard-to-pronounce rock and jazz club **Berbat’s Pan** (231 SW Ankeny, 248.4579), the roots-oriented **Ash Street Saloon** (225 SW Ash, 226.0430), goth hangout the **Paris Theater** (6 SW 3rd, 222.0566) and a plethora of dance clubs, including **Panorama** (341 SW 10th Ave., 221.7262) and **Zoot Suite** (13 NW 13th Ave., 827.4148).



Northwest—Home To Yuppies And Junkies

Guide books often refer to Northwest as the hippest part of Portland, but it’s really a place where gentrification and this city’s rough-hewn port town mentality are locked in a vicious battle. One of the West Coast’s punk havens, **Satyricon** (125 NW 6th, 243.2380), is a striking example of this dichotomy. Once the club of choice for Portland scenesters, including a young Courtney Love, it’s since been refurbished; the stage area looks roughly the same as when Nirvana played there, but an attached restaurant, **Fellini**, has a glossy interior and an impressively upscale menu which would seem absurd if not for the decent prices. You’ll usually find one or more of the Dandy Warhols holding court here, and when he’s not hobnobbing with Hollywood types, local hero Gus Van Sant stops in as well.

The nearby **Roseland** (8 NW 6th Ave., 224.2038) is another of the 1,000-capacity venues, and it’s a stopping-off point for high-profile hard-rock, electronica and hip-hop acts.

Up on the once-hip NW 23rd Ave., two notable scenester joints have withstood the infiltration of boutiques and Gaps: **Escape From New York Pizza** (622 NW 23rd, 227.5423) and **Music Millennium** (801 NW 23rd, 248.0163), an independent record store with a stellar selection of new CDs and vinyl.

Portland’s classiest restaurants, recom-

mended only if you’re in a spending mood, line NW 21st Ave. and dot the burgeoning Pearl District, where rundown warehouses are being converted to lofts and art galleries faster than you can say “I’d like to valet park my Range Rover.”

Northeast—The Little Quadrant That Could

One of my favorite lines from a New Bad Things song is: “Some-one’s playin’ old Camper Van/Here at the Knott Street house.” Like most other streets in Northeast, Knott is part of a residential area where many musicians and scenesters hunker down while reveling in the only section where you can still find a two-bedroom house for under \$700 a month. Since it’s a last refuge of sorts, I’m not at liberty to divulge all of the charms of Northeast, but visitors are welcomed on the pleasantly underdeveloped strip that’s home to the only smoke-free, all-ages punk club I’ve ever heard of, **The Maul** (1534 NE Alberta, 331.1594), and the eye-poppingly inexpensive house of Mexican soul food, **La Sirenita** (2817 NE Alberta, 335.8283), where you can fill up on a burrito for under \$3.



Two of the city’s best clubs are also in Northeast, although closer to Southeast in location and spirit. The one-time strip club **EJ’s** (2140 NE Sandy, 234.3535) holds a few hundred and brings first-rate punk, pop and indie-rock bands to town, and **LaurelThirst** (2958 NE Glisan, 232.1504) is the spot for folk-rock, regularly hosting neo-hillbilly ensembles that feature ex-Hazel frontman Pete Krebs.

Radio, Colleges, Etc.

Portland isn’t known for its radio or its universities, but we do have the bastion of liberal thought, Reed College, and an all-electronica microbroadcast station, **Subterradio 104.1 FM**. In early fall, the highly informative newspaper *Willamette Week*—OK, so I work there—and South By Southwest team up to present the cleverly named North By Northwest, which brings about 350 bands to town for a three-day weekend of music.

There are lots more bars, vintage stores and record shops I’ve neglected to mention, giving you more reason to visit; in the spirit of Lewis and Clark, set out and discover them on your own.

All phone numbers are in the 503 area code.

Richard Martin is the music editor at Willamette Week.





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