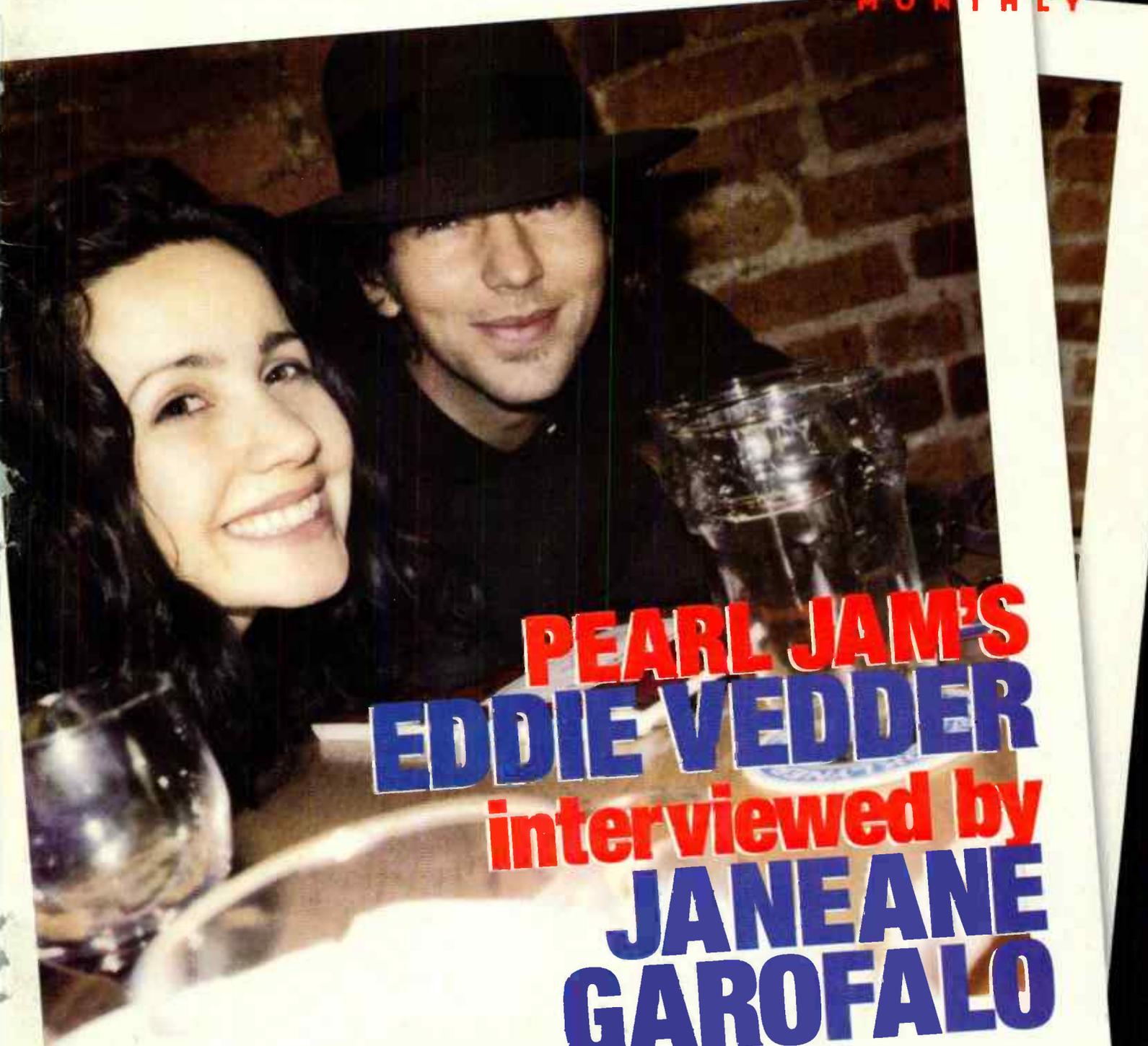


SPECIAL Q&A ISSUE: ARTISTS GO ONE ON ONE!

CMJ **NEW** MUSIC

MONTHLY



**PEARL JAM'S
EDDIE VEDDER**
interviewed by
**JANEANE
GAROFALO**

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10 tracks.



ON TOUR:

March 17	Grand Rapids MI
19	Minneapolis MN
20	Minneapolis MN
21	Chicago IL
23	Indianapolis IN
24	St. Louis MO
25	Columbia MO
27	Dallas TX
28	Austin TX
29	Houston TX
April 1	Tempe AZ
2	San Diego CA
3	Los Angeles CA
4	Berkeley CA
7	Seattle WA
8	Portland OR

RULES OF "THE GAME" continued

Shotgun — Three cards are dealt to each "Player" face-down and there is a round of betting. Another round of betting follows the dealing of the fourth card. "Players" still in "The Game" draw to improve their hands, or close subsidiary labels and consolidate their hands, with a round of betting to follow.

Hurricane — Only two cards are dealt to each "Player," and the highest hand that can be held consists of two aces. Sometimes wild cards or a bonus ep are added.

Show Five Cards — Seven cards are dealt face down to each "Player," and each looks at his cards. At a signal from the dealer, each "Player" turns one of his cards on the table. Before giving the signal, the dealer should inquire whether all remixes have been delivered and everyone is ready. After the cards are exposed, there is a

round of betting. After the betting is completed, the dealer gives the signal for the exposure of the second release. All these second cards must be exposed at the same time. The process continues until all "Players" in "The Game" have five cards exposed before them for the final showdown. **to be continued**

www.virginrecords.com

AOL Keyword: Virgin Records

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"I love wine. Maybe I'll take you up on that."

22 GASTR DEL SOL'S DAVID GRUBBS & VAN DYKE PARKS "It seems like we are both afflicted with the same virus here: the exploration of various musical styles."

24 KRISTIN HERSH & VIC CHESNUTT "Some of my songs make me sound like a crazy person or a nymphomaniac. They make me say weird shit that I'd never say."

26 NASHVILLE PUSSY & TED NUGENT "I didn't get a break. A break had the audacity to approach me one day, and I had to gut-shoot it with a goat-urine soaked, small game broadhead."

29 ELLIOTT SMITH & JOHN DOE "There's one moment of perfection in songwriting for me. And that is when you can sit down and play it from beginning to end, by yourself, and there are limitless possibilities of what this song could be."

32 MARK EITZEL & THE DIVINE COMEDY'S NEIL HANNON "I want my next album to come off as a big hug. I'm from California—you can say those things."

34 ULTRA NATE & BYRON STINGILY "Club music, because it's made so easily, is not a very artist-based type of music. But I think dance music is returning to a more artist-based scenario."

32 ARCHER PREWITT & RICHARD DAVIES "For me, the thing is the song and it always has been."

34 ON THE COVER: JANEANE GAROFALO & PEARL JAM'S EDDIE VEDDER "Ooh, you *have* interviewed before. 'Interpolate.' Go ahead, I'm sorry."

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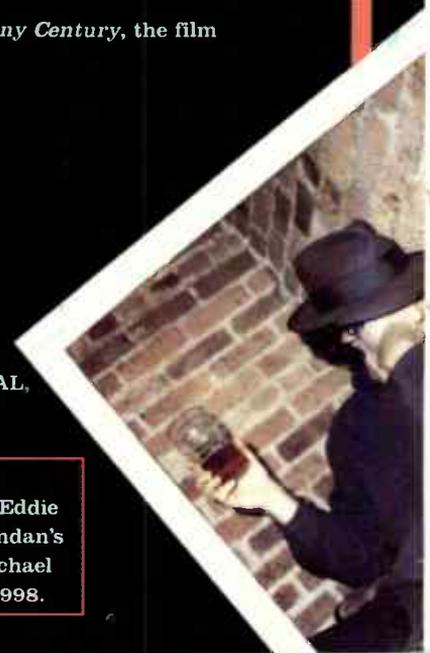
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Janeane Garofalo and Eddie Vedder snapped at Brendan's 11th Street Bar by Michael Halsband, January, 1998.



libidō



KILLING SOME DEAD TIME

velvel



FEATURING THE SINGLE "SUPERSONIC DAYDREAM"
ALBUM IN STORES MARCH 10

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It was the Doppler effect

In the past I knew *CMJ New Music Monthly* to be on the cutting edge of music. I could listen to your CD and hear music about 6 months before it was ever on commercial radio. Gradually, commercial radio has caught up to your monthly CD. This is very annoying to me. Plus your new magazine format does have its drawbacks. I too like the smaller size. I was offended as a customer that your editor responded the way he did to letters printed in the magazine. You should take customer comments as constructive criticism. I also hate seeing watch and boot advertisements [sic]. This is a music mag is it not? Where in the acronym *CMJ* [sic] do you get selling out to the kids of Gen X or Y and just covering things kids do? I rely on my subscription to bring me what's cutting edge music. I'm a college radio DJ, and I don't have a lot of time to go through the new rack of CDs, so I rely on you instead. Please concentrate on the music—that's what you do best.

Larry Leone

Anyone who's ever met our consumer products sales guy can tell you that concentrating isn't what's selling ads. Note: The actual content of the magazine is still about music, but to the confusion of some, we've done well enough at that to attract advertising for a variety of products. As for Ed. responses, we like to think that they're proportionally rude to the corresponding letters, but in any case here's the idea: The editorial responses in most magazines' Letters sections are arch, trite, fake-ass, safe. Here, you get actual access to an actual editor and his actual foibles. That's entertainment! Regretfully, sometimes that's offensive, but for all the sarcasm, at least it's a genuine response. —Ed., who got involved in college radio for no other reason than the desire to listen to a brimming rack of new releases.

Summer lovin'

I've never quite understood why people bother writing in because they didn't like the songs on last month's CD. Why do people assume they are so important that magazine editors would tailor an entire publication to suit their tastes? There have been issues when I didn't like but perhaps one song on the CD. There have been issues where I loved every song but perhaps one.

It's a gamble, and a cheap way to build an eclectic record collection. As for the format change, I can say it's great to have both more reviews and, yes, more ad space. I'm as sell-out wary as anyone, but even my high-school newspaper taught me that no publication can exist without funding from some source. I would rather deal with a few more ads than try to hunt down another magazine with great coverage, interesting factoids, a sarcastic editor and a CD.

Summer Cacciotti

Carlton your harsh man

I don't know why people are crying about the larger issue size. Frankly, I think it's better, and the people who are whining cuz they can't read it while taking a dump or whatever should just shut the hell up.

Carlton Kim

Haiku you

The editor's comments in the Jan. '98 letters column were inspirational, as always. Moreso, in fact. Upon reading your feature on AOR kings-for-all-eternity Led Zepelin, I was moved to haiku, myself. Here, written in the voice of the editor, is my offering:

*Led Zep, left to right
All named wrong except Bonham
"I meant to do that."*

Jeff Elbel

Newsday rising

I don't necessarily love the Sandpebbles so much, but it's hard to endure the hypocrisy of Steve Ciabattini's response to George Vitray's letter. [See January's Letters column] I think this is all I can offer, with full knowledge of my own role in this sad tragedy:

*Editor venting
Like so many lame rock scribes
Stuck on the Island*

Isaac Guzman
Staff Writer
Newsday

*No hypocrisy
Long Island is a fine place
But we don't live there —Ed.*

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Write: CMJ New Music Monthly
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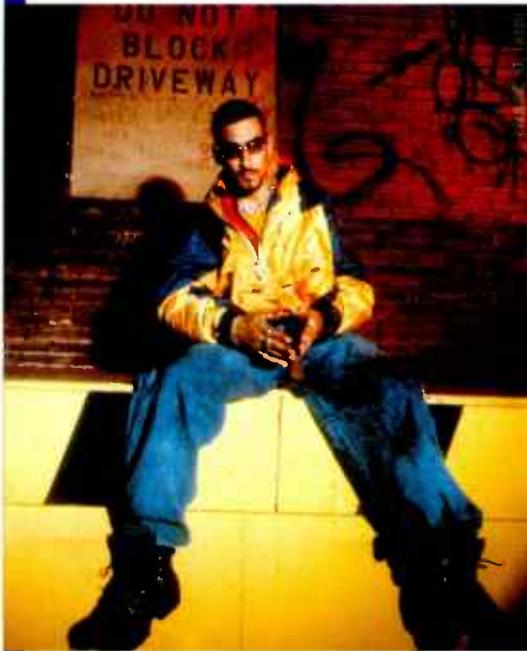
World Radio History



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“We won’t do adverts, although we’re actually considering doing one in Italy for Martini but giving the money to something really subversive. We’re now in this position that we call Satan’s cock. We keep being offered Satan’s cock, and it is up to us to bite it rather than suck it.”

—Chumbawamba’s Alice Nutter, on keeping it real.



ARMAND VAN HELDEN’S SAMPLESLAYA

Shake A Tailfeather

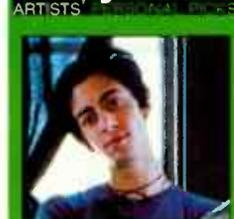
“The word ‘remixer’ is non-existent to me,” says NYC-based house-music phenomenon Armand Van Helden, “it’s just become the word to use for what people like me are. But it’s actually the wrong term: We should be called reanimators or recreationists or reproducers. Remixing just means bringing the mix back up on the board from the master tape and mixing it down again. What I do is make a whole new track. I’ll use elements from the master tape, sometimes just the vocals. But when I do a remix, most of what I’m doing is making new music. If you look at what I did with the Stones, for example, I

just used Mick’s vocals and Keith’s guitar and then created a completely different song.”

None of which would be worth splitting etymological hairs over if it weren’t for the fact that Van Helden’s name is among those nominated in the Grammy’s newest category—yes, remixer. Of course, “remixing” is precisely how Van Helden has been credited for his funk-ed-up work on Tori Amos’s “Professional Widow,” Daft Punk’s “Around The World” and Sneaker Pimps’ “Spin Spin Sugar.” So the mix-up over remixing isn’t the Academy’s fault. No, it’s just a symptom of the digital age, a time when beats, riffs and melodies can be deconstructed and then reattached like so many proteins in a DNA molecule, creating new grooves from old.

Though Van Helden makes a damn good living performing such operations on other artists’ material—“The A&R people know what I do, and they want what I do, because it can help their artist get some noise in the club market”—he also records under his own name. In the past he’s been best known for frenetic blockbuster house singles like

in my room



DELTA 72
Gregg Foreman

- Phono-comb live
- Harry Crews (book) *A Feast Of Snakes*
- Elliott Smith (anything, especially slide on) of Elliott Smith
- Can Soundtracks, *Ege Bamyasi*
- Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls (film)

random fact

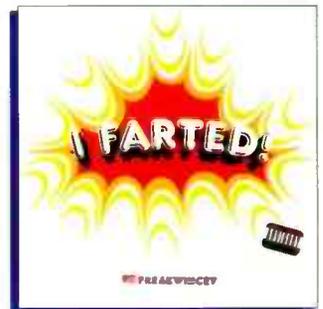
Courtney Love may not wear fur, but according to Seattle weekly *The Rocket*, she may not always be kind to our furry little friends: When the Hole singer moved out of the Cobain death house for California, she reportedly left the three family cats behind to fend for themselves.

“Witchdokter” and the “The Funk Phenomenon.” But in 1998, using the moniker Armand Van Helden’s Sampleslaya, he’s aiming to break in to the hip-hop market with his major-label debut full-length, the no-beats-barred, non-stop party disc *Enter The Meat Market* (Columbia).

“I have a career in house music, but I’ve been hip-hop my whole life,” Van Helden explains. “Coming from house has helped me to understand the basis of the rhythms and beats that keep the dance floor rocked. That’s also important in hip-hop, because hip-hop is dance music, too. So the philosophy of Sampleslaya is taking what I know from house music and incorporating it into hip-hop. To be honest, even for me the record can get annoying because if I’m not in the mood, or if I don’t have a bottle of Cristal in my stomach or something, then I don’t want party track after party track. The CD is for people who want a party groove at home, in the car or at the beach. It’s not meant to educate, it’s meant to shake your ass.” —Matt Ashare

record

■ What was Richard “Apex Twin” James thinking when he decided to release Freakwincey’s “I Farted” on his Replex label? Replex’s catalog includes titles by estimable artists like Seefeel, µ-ziq and Squarepusher, making the New Jersey rap group Freakwincey’s scatological single all the more confounding. The smooth groove tune features MC Ray Billups advising that “It’s better to fart and waste it than to burp and taste it,” while his back-up singers croon lines like “I got gas in my ass, I feel like it’s gotta pass.” All of this is punctuated by the sounds of flatulence and comments like “Ooh, that was a wet one.” The vinyl version has two additional mixes, to boot! And if that’s not enough to have you moaning disapprovingly, consider this: The other songs on the single (which comprise the “Freakwincey Suite”) are called “Love Secretion” and “Let Me Lick You,” and sound like bad Commodores tunes.



TONY CONRAD

And The Lost Temple Of Drone

Tony Conrad's influence is more widely known than his actual work, which exists on the margins of "underground" music. He's best known for the role he played in the Dream Syndicate—not the LA "paisley underground" band, but an earlier sonic collective featuring John Cale and Angus MacLise (who later formed the Velvet Underground with Lou Reed) and LaMonte Young. This early '60s ensemble was the focal point for New York's out-there, avant-garde music scene, and often played variations on one sound all night long, creating sustained drones. That one sound branched into all sorts of others through resonant harmonics. The Dream Syndicate's creations were influenced by classical Indian music and celebrated the power of noisy, droning, meditative, sweet sound. Echoes of the Dream Syndicate are heard in



the music of experimentalists such as Terry Riley, Glenn Branca, Rhys Chatham, Lee Ranaldo and Jim O'Rourke, among others.

But very few people have ever heard the extant tapes of the Dream Syndicate's music, which are in Young's possession. Young has refused to let the music be released, so 12 years ago Conrad began work on *Early Minimalism* (Table Of The Elements) to introduce this "dream music" to the world. Released in December, this four-disc set with extensive notes consists of one archival, screech-happy monophonic recording of four solo, overdubbed violins from 1964, and three recordings done in the last few years with two to four other musicians. "*Early Minimalism* is not the same as the Dream Syndicate's music," Conrad explains. "It's composed music that's been organized in order to create a specific echo of that earlier sound."

It's vortex music, sucking in the listener, and it's meant to be played loud. Conrad enthuses: "Music gets *inside* of you, you know? And *works* out, from the inside. Loud sounds can fill you and excite you and take over your

PUBLISHING DEAL Refers to the contractual arrangement between an artist and a music publishing company. The publisher gives the artist a sum of money (\$75,000 is an industry standard) in exchange for the rights to that artist's songs. This usually includes the rights to the artist's back catalog and his next few albums. The artist continues to collect royalties for his songs, but a portion of the profits also goes to the publishing company. In addition, the publishing company actively seeks out opportunities for its artists to gain greater exposure (e.g. soundtracks, commercials).

BUZZ WORDS

inspirational verse

"And it breaks my heart to look around/And see the unimpressed/Who can't believe the emperor is dressed."
—Fastball, "Warm Fuzzy Feeling"

in my room

ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS



UPPER CRUST

Lord Bendover

- Judith Martin (book) *Miss Manner's Guide To Excruciatingly Correct Behavior*
- AC/DC *Bonfire* (box set)
- (video) *Zulu* (with Michael Caine)
- (toy) *Jokeshop Finger Guillotine*
- (magazine) *Guitar Butcher*

body! It can go way out there. I respect people's personal authority, but one way to respect people's authority is to test it! If something is really strong, it makes you want to challenge it... When I find a sound that for me has a lot of those vitamins in it, it's very challenging."

Is there a future for Conrad's drone-happy music, or is it just a strange historical side note? "I love playing in this style, and I'll keep doing that because of the pleasure it brings me," Conrad says. He has toured and played with members of Gastr Del Sol in the last few years, bringing his music to a new generation that's more tolerant of untraditional sound. "If you want to change the whole way people think about music, everybody everywhere—who does that? A lot of people do that, that's what makes cul-

ture exciting... This is exciting to have this music coming out now! It should come out now! And I've been feeling that for like, all of this time... for literally 35 years! It's a big, big moment to me." —Mike McGonigal

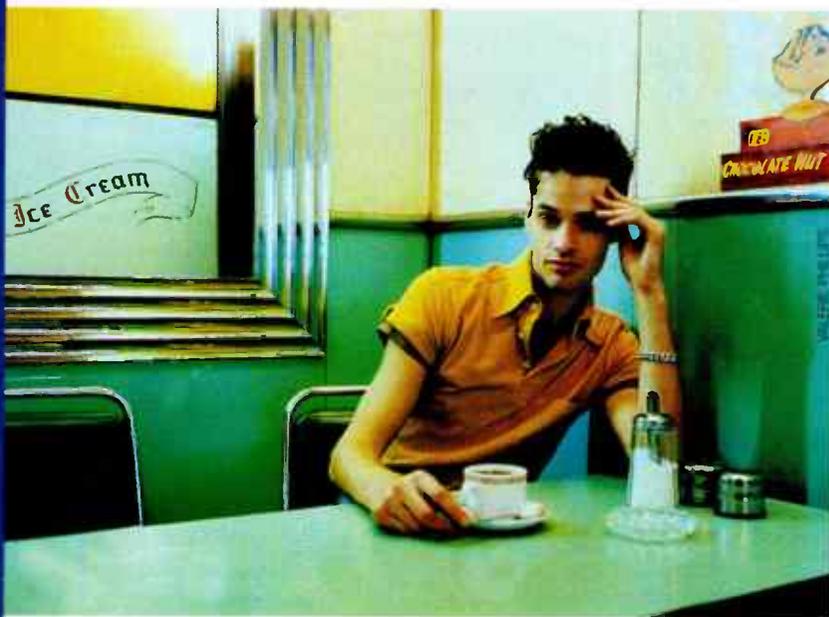
■ World music specialist **Celestial Harmonies** began in 1980 as the American distributor for the German label Kuckuck, but it quickly became its own label. Celestial made a name for itself in the early '80s by distributing a then little-known (to US audiences) electronic artist named Kitaro, who went on to become the top-selling Japanese artist of all time, bringing the label sales of over a million dollars. Since then, Celestial Harmonies has consistently strived to bring new cultures to American music buyers. "We are recording music for people to whom music is much more than entertainment," says Celestial founder Eckart Rahn. The music of Celestial Harmonies illustrates the rich traditions of Europe, Asia, Africa, Asia-Pacific, and the Americas, most of it recorded on-site. A complete catalogue can be found at the label's website: www.harmonies.com.

celestial
harmonies

label profile

“I thought it was pretty good because people usually say ‘I love driving to your music’ or ‘I like doing my ironing to your music.’”

—Stereolab’s Laetitia Sadier, on how she felt when a stripper told her that the band’s *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* was one of her favorite records to strip to



JIMMY RAY CO

Behind The Counter Culture

There are quite a few jobs well suited to the aspiring rocker—positions in coffeehouses, bookstores, secondhand clothing outlets. But none is more perfect, according to peg-slacked, pompadoured pinup Jimmy Ray, than a gig in music retail. As a rockabilly fan fresh out of high school, Ray landed a job at London’s massive Virgin Megastore. “And it was *great*,” he purrs. “It was a job and it was music at the same time, so it was right up my street. We got loads of tourists, loads of beautiful Italian girls, plus there was an actual radio station in there, and I used to be constantly on the run getting records for the DJs and begging ‘Play this! Play this!’”

Ray was also constantly bumping into local luminaries. One of his favorite customers was *Absolutely Fabulous* creator

Jennifer Saunders. “And I met the drummer for Spandau Ballet once,” he snickers. His favorite retail experience? The shop’s annual dress-up day, when folks mistook his ’50s-retro duds for a carefully assembled costume. His worst? The day the B-52’s popped by for an in-store concert. “I got told off for standing on the counter because there was such a crowd,” Ray growls. “You know how a head of security, if it’s a woman, tends to be a complete bitch? She lectured me, told me to get down off the counter because I was setting a bad example.” His response was shouted loud enough to ring the rafters: “Man, this is rock ‘n’ roll! We’ve got the B-

“It seems like people ‘in the know’ have my records.

I guess they get them as imports. But apart from that, I don’t think anyone knows who I am. Someone in my family went to get a record of mine a couple of years ago at some big place, and the clerk said, ‘Scott Walker? Oh you mean that English singer?’ So now I call myself the English singer.”

—Scott Walker, on his lack of celebrity

in my room

ARTISTS PERSONAL PICKS



CALVIN JOHNSON
Dub Narcotic Sound System, Halo Benders, K Records co-owner

- Al Larsen
Original Love Rock Masters
- Godhead Sio
Share The Fantasy
- Lookers
In Clover
- Mirah
Storageland
- Sandman
Love Hangover Sale

52’s here! *Gimme a break!*”

How did the 23-year-old arrive at the surreal sonic crossroads of his newly released self-titled debut (Epic), which punches blipping techno rivets all over the barn door of traditional Elvis/*Sun Sessions* twang? He wasn’t aiming for the vibrato/slapback/dance-floor swagger of his smash overseas single, the shamelessly self-promoting “Are You Jimmy Ray?” In fact, Ray still recalls when his punky teen outfit the Cutting Room got its first major nightclub booking, which wasn’t quite the ego boost he’d imagined. “I ran into the store with the tickets, going ‘Who’s gonna buy a ticket? Who?’ But it was like, ‘Oh, sorry, I can’t. I’ve gotta wash me hair.’ Everyone who worked there had some sort of musical ambition—employees would be sitting in the store canteen, playing harmonica and stuff like that. Everyone was supportive of you, but I guess the majority of employees knew that none of us would ever make it.”

albums we'd like to see

DESKTOP TOUR: Paperclip People, Komputer, Tiny Desk Unit, Scissor Girls, Staple Singers, Tape Beatles, Black Tape For A Blue Girl, Pencil, Crayon, Glue, Pink Slip Daddy.

inspirational verse

“X said to Y what A said to B/B wrote an email and sent it to me/I showed C and C wrote to A/Flaming World War 3/Cut, paste, forward, copy, cc, go with the flow/Our ambition should be to love what we finally know/Or if it proves unlovable/Simply to go.” —Mormus “The Age of Information”

After discovering the trancey thrum of the Shamen, Ray adds, he understood that technology and songwriting could cut a nice little rug together. He began piecing his new sound together on his home computer, revolving around the echoey guitars of his pet bygone era. “My approach was, ‘Hey! I know a few chords! I can write a few songs!’ And if you don’t have the natural ability, that, in a way, makes you more determined to succeed.” Pardon?

Ray doesn’t believe his record genuinely *rocks*? No, no, he sighs. It’s not like that, exactly. “See, I *wanna* do this more than I’m actually *made* to do this. You know, just as a human achievement.” —Tom Lanham

CD STABBING WESTWARD



L-R: Flakus, Jim Sellers, Hall, Mark Eliopoulos, Kubiszewski

Although it won't actually see release until early April, Stabbing Westward's third album, **Darkest Days** (Columbia), was originally supposed to come out in October. I caught up with vocalist Christopher Hall only a few days after the months of remixing had come to an end. —Jenny Eliscu

Q: I read somewhere that the new album is like a four-act play?

A: [Laughing] That sounds so Spinal Tap.

Q: So what's that about?

A: I've been dreading this question. OK, we had a bunch of songs and three of us in the band write. So a lot of times we're demoing and it's just one person's vision of the song when no one else has touched it and the record can get very disjointed. Like you listen to the demo tape and Andy [Kubiszewski] will sing on his stuff and I'll sing on my stuff and play all the keyboards and guitars, and Walter [Flakus] will have instrumental rave pieces with no guitar and vocals on it. And then people start passing tapes around and working on each other's songs and there's a lot of internal competition in our band. We're very, very, *very* competitive. And when we brought the record to [producer] Dave Jerden, it kind of had that vibe to it, like a bunch of separate songs. He said, "Why don't you do it as four acts? Like three songs, three songs, three songs, three songs and try to find a way to combine each song in each act." And we thought, "OK," so there was a challenge to it, like to try and make the record something more than a collection of songs. And we realized that lyrically there were totally different movements to the record or songs that—everything we write is generally about being depressed or broken relationships. But this year I sort of started writing in a different tense, rather than "you did this to me" or whatever, and actually wrote a couple of positive songs. So we tried to stick thematic songs together and then we thought of how, through the different keys of the different songs, how we could create a support structure throughout the record. I don't want to go into it too much because I think it ruins it for the listener. But if on the 50th listen, someone actually starts to get the concept, that's cool.

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

Jay Schinner

Washington, DC

SIDE-1

Me First & The Gimme Gimmes
 Danny's Song
 Sloan
 Everything You've Done Wrong
 Kula Shaker
 Savinda
 Ottmar Liebert & Luna Negra
 Driving 2 Madrid
 Indigo Girls
 It's Alright
 Charlatans
 Teenin' S...ies
 Guided By Voices
 Bulldog Hair
 Cunninghams
 Bottle Pockets
 Replacements
 Can't Hardly Wait
 Oasis
 Up In The Sky (acoustic)
 Love Jones
 Ohio River
 That Dog
 Never Say Never
 Smoking Popes
 Pubella
 Ian McCulloch
 The Pickering Mill

SIDE-2

Gumball
 Hell Of A Message
 Grateful Dead
 Hell In A Bucket
 Beck
 Devil's Haircut
 Squirrel Nut Zippers
 Hell
 Drivin' N' Cryin'
 Danger Stranger
 Tricky
 Hell Around The Corner
 Concrete Blonde
 Ghost Of A Texas Ladies Man
 Ann Magnuson
 Sex With The Devil
 Joan Osborne
 Dracula Icon
 Luscious Jackson
 Why Do I Lie?
 September 67
 Bus, Building
 Hypnotic Clambake
 Square Dance Messiah

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

Mix it up!

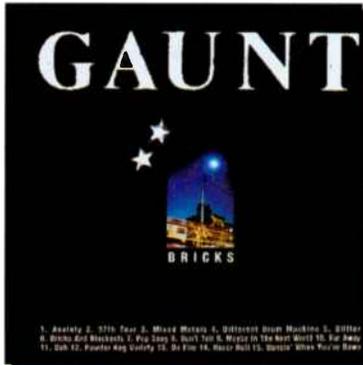
CMJ NEW MUSIC



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THE 6 BEST RELEASES THIS MONTH



GAUNT

Bricks And Blackouts — Warner Bros.

One school of punk rock thought considers the professional studio the aural equivalent of living hell; that to be great, rock 'n' roll must be created in some dirt cheap dive or, better yet, basement, and that the minute you climb above eight tracks you move into another, less pure, world altogether. Gaunt used to live in those primitivist confines, but in the past few years the group has gradually moved into the big leagues, to the point where it doesn't even consider

itself a punk rock unit, but simply a good, old fashioned rock band. Well it's all semantics—one man's punk is another man's Poison. Lead singer/songwriter Jerry Wick doesn't seem to care about all that, since he can play three chord monte with the best of them, recombining simple patterns into alchemic glory. Just as important, Gaunt is concerned not with the current flavor of the month, but with creating timeless rock 'n' roll that will last past the newest trends. This is the true magic of Gaunt: an innate understanding that copies nothing but examines various elements, in the process creating something hard, passionate and timeless. Do they succeed? God, yes. Just listen to "97th Tear" and you'll get it. —Randall Roberts

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 24.
FILE UNDER: Rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Replacements, New Bomb Turks, Foo Fighters.



LAL

#1 USA — K

#1 USA marks a big departure for LAL (a.k.a. Love As Laughter), which wasn't much more than a flimsy façade for the art-damaged bedroom recordings of singer/ songwriter Sam Jayne on 1996's *The Greks Bring Gifts* (K). But to anyone who remembers Jayne as the guitar-slinging frontguy for the aggressively noisy Olympia, Washington, punk outfit Lync, the new incarnation of Love As Laughter—now a loose rockin' trio rounded out by drummer Dave Schneider and guitarist Jessica Espeleta—shouldn't come as too big a shock. Jayne has brought the mutant pop sensibility of his four-tracking to **DATALOG:** Released Jan. 27
FILE UNDER: Indie riff rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Pavement, Verbena, Archers Of Loaf.

The results are consistently more satisfying than any of his previous efforts, bringing to mind at various times Pavement minus the free-associated lyrics, a perkier Versus, and a less spastic Archers Of Loaf. There's also some not too subtle Stones referencing going on in "Slow Blues Fever" and "I'm A Bee," the latter of which boldly nicks the signature riff of "Jumping Jack Flash." And the pounding piano on the title track brings to mind Mott The Hoople in the same way Pavement slyly alludes to Bowie from time to time. #1 USA ends with a couple of "hidden" tracks, presumably culled from Jayne's home-recording experiments, each of which is just more evidence that Love As Laughter works much better as a band than a solo project. —Matt Ashare

MIKE IRELAND & HOLLER

Learning How To Live —
Sub Pop/Sire

Kansas City native Mike Ireland moseys down a different path than the "no depression" set's surlier, rock-minded elite. Packing a penchant for string arrangements and Billy Sherrill productions, Ireland and his band Holler (which includes a couple of fellow ex-Starkweathers) show they're no hacks when it comes to honky-tonk. The string-laden songs smartly avoid the saccharin of straight country-politan (e.g. Charlie Rich) because they're intertwined with the darker, loose-string cool of Bakersfield cowboy rockabilly. The production is unerringly crisp and the backing musicians are top notch, from Heartbreaker and alt-country button man Benmont Tench's sparkling, Chet Atkins-influenced piano on "Worst Of All" to Michael Lemon's lap steel, particularly rousing on "Some Things You Lose." Even the grade-school xylophone that bookends "Christmas Past" sounds right. The multi-trick pony here is Ireland's voice: His dead-on phrasing gives genuine emotional expression to clichés like "Jealousy can only keep us far apart." Riding his perfect Vern Gosdin tenor into the open heart of twang city, Ireland and Holler make both the heartache and the outlaw swagger potent and believable. Don't pass on *Learning How To Live* just because the idea of honky-tonk makes you reach for the insulin; otherwise you'll be missing out on a right nice roadhouse romp. —Anne Marie Cruz



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Lightly sweetened honky-tonk.
R.I.Y.L.: Dwight Yoakam, Merle Haggard, Webb Pierce.

MORCHEEBA

Big Calm — China/Sire

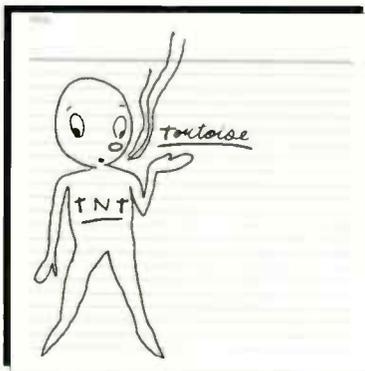
On its second album, *Big Calm*, Morcheeba continues to search for its own perfect combination of layers. The group is blessed with vocalist Skye Edwards, but a sultry woman singing atop dark and slow beats is *de rigueur* in trip-hop (“Let Me See,” for instance, comes straight from the Portishead blueprint), so what distinguishes Morcheeba is not Paul Godfrey’s beats but his brother Ross’s bluesy guitar work. The second track, “Part Of The Process,” quickly unveils

Morcheeba’s strengths: a swampy slide guitar groove and slinky backbeat, a soulful melody and a surprising fiddle hook. But before you think you’ve got Morcheeba’s variation-on-a-genre pegged, an odd thing happens: Of the album’s second half, the only tune that could be called trip-hop is “Big Calm,” on which rapper Jason Furlow takes the lead vocals. Two



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 17.
FILE UNDER: Soulful sometimes-trip-hop.
R.I.Y.L.: Early Massive Attack, Erykah Badu, Portishead’s *Dummy*, Me’shell Ndegéocello.

sparse songs comprised of acoustic guitar and strings (including the tender “Fear And Love,” another highlight); a too-brief “glide sitar” interlude, and a fun Baby Fox-like reggae tune (“Friction”) make sure that Morcheeba is not confined to the trip-hop category. In the end, though, the parts seem greater than the whole: while the stately BPMs unify the album, Morcheeba has found its voice but still tinkers with its styles. —*Steve Klinge*



TORTOISE

TNT — Thrill Jockey

Tortoise is a band very much of its time and place, and at the same time transcendent. Its members, associates and alumni have birthed a new Chicago/Louisville sound and helped inspire the dubious term “post-rock.” Its collaborative method and genre-melding experiments have tacked a few lengthy pages on to the definition of “fusion.” Still, Tortoise continues to explore new territory and redefine itself song by song. *TNT*, the band’s third and

longest album, takes the group a few more leaps forward, with a denser sound and more elaborate compositions throughout. The root melodies are simple as usual, but the arrangements shift constantly. The group doesn’t just break out an arsenal of genres and instruments—it combines them in totally unpredictable ways. John McEntire’s pattering marimba becomes a drone element on “Ten-Day Interval,” while the piano carries a distant melody. “I Set My Face To The Hillside” toys with a Spaghetti Western-style riff. A series of digital-

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Progressive groove.
R.I.Y.L.: Stereolab, Gastr Del Sol, Tricky.

ly recorded and remixed tracks insinuates analog-style sounds into digital soundscapes, and vice versa. Tortoise does trip-hop with a loose, diffident drumbeat, and spins that into a twitchy mix of jungle percussion and vocal samples. *TNT* contains more musical ideas than either rock or electronica has yielded in several years. What’s more, a decent percentage of them are good ones. —*Andrea Moed*

PEARL JAM

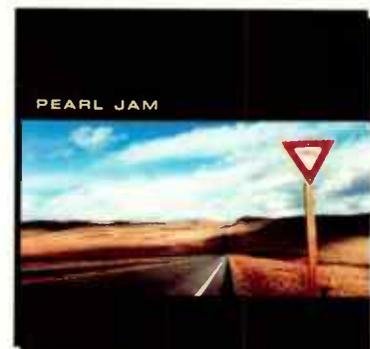
Yield — Epic

By more or less staying put, Pearl Jam has found itself standing alone with a sound that, ironically, every band in America wanted to steal just five years ago. What once seemed mediocre now feels grand on *Yield*, the band’s first album since 1996’s

ineffectual *No Code*. For the first time, America may really need Pearl Jam: The mid-’90s have seen British

DATALOG: Released Feb. 3. First single “Given To Fly.”
FILE UNDER: Post-alternative rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Led Zeppelin, Soundgarden, R.E.M.

bands like Oasis, Radiohead and Blur co-opt anthemic, mainstream rock with a singularity of purpose resembling a siege. Arriving like the cavalry, Pearl Jam looks forward on *Yield* by looking back—to its grunge glory days, and to bands like Led Zeppelin (“Given To Fly,” “Faithful”) and R.E.M. (“Low Light”). Happily, cracks are forming in Pearl Jam’s old gloomy facade; the soaring “MFC,” for example, is catchy rock at its best: driving, fiery, musically and lyrically terse. There are a few sour notes on *Yield*—the dissonant chorus of “Pilate,” the repetitive “No Way”—but what’s great is that there’s no obvious radio ballad, no “Better Man” or “Daughter” that makes the rest of the album feel like filler. It’s been said that Pearl Jam has a lot to prove on *Yield*, but what the band ultimately proves isn’t so much its own viability as the viability of American rock. —*Chris Molanphy*





CORNELIUS

Cornelius is the showbiz moniker of 27-year-old Japanese artist Keigo Oyamada (he swiped the name from a *Planet Of The Apes* character), and he's set to release his blender of a debut record, *Fantasma*, on Matador in late March. In Japan, Cornelius released the album on his own influential Trattoria label (home to Kahimi Karie and Hanatrash, as well as American groups like Apples In Stereo and Papas Fritas) and it sold over half a million copies, drawing heaps of fans to a recent multi-media performance at Budokan stadium that featured karate apemen on stage and 3D video. Musically, Cornelius straddles the sonic boundary between My Bloody Valentine and Pizzicato Five, joining the former's driving guitar noises and indie-pop aesthetic with the latter's sample-happy, sound-collage artistry. Coinciding with the release of *Fantasma*, Oyamada will make his first Stateside appearances with a pared-down four-piece lineup, to be followed by a tour of major cities in June and a more extensive US excursion in September.

—Lydia Vanderloo

HANDSOME FAMILY

The Handsome Family's *Through The Trees* (Carrot Top) is one of those breathtaking revelations that gives you the sense of a group hitting its stride. Comprised of husband and wife team Brett and Rennie Sparks, the Chicago-based Handsome Family composes perfect narratives that will bruise your heart; these songs are by turns absurd and grotesque, dry and cynical, shuddering and sad, often containing



a razor wit at their core. Because the Handsome Family is most influenced by the country music of the '30s and '40s, it's often marked with the meaningless "insurgent country" tag. The band seems to lack any agenda, though, and has moved toward a softer assemblage of sounds: guitars, bass, autoharps, a quiet drum machine, harmonies and Brett's solid crooning, which magnifies the frightening, and often devastating, natural world "where the red worms circle like sharks," "fat yellow jackets float on the breeze" and "falling neutrinos drift through the trees."

—Randall Roberts

ROCK*A*TEENS

The Rock*A*Teens claim as their home Cabbagetown, an isolated patch near downtown Atlanta with a bizarre otherworldly feel that neatly matches the band's sound. The R*A*Ts borrow from rockabilly, but with a mood closer to country death ballads, then envelope the concoction with as much reverb as they



can. The result is unmistakably vintage sounding, yet not at all derivative. Guitarists Chris Lopez and Justin Hughes have persevered through recent upheaval: One long-time member moved to Chicago, and drummer Chris Verene recently returned to the

fold after a wrist injury and a photography sabbatical (he also contributes the band's stunning cover art). Fortunately, the changes have not distracted Lopez from churning out first-rate new material and delivering it with a smoldering ferocity. The Rock*A*Teens' LPs on Atlanta's Daemon Records are two of America's best kept secrets, but the group's profile should heighten quickly, as its imminent full-length, *Baby, A Little Rain Must Fall*, sees release through Merge Records. A Kill Rock Stars single and compilation track are also due shortly.

—Glen Savvady

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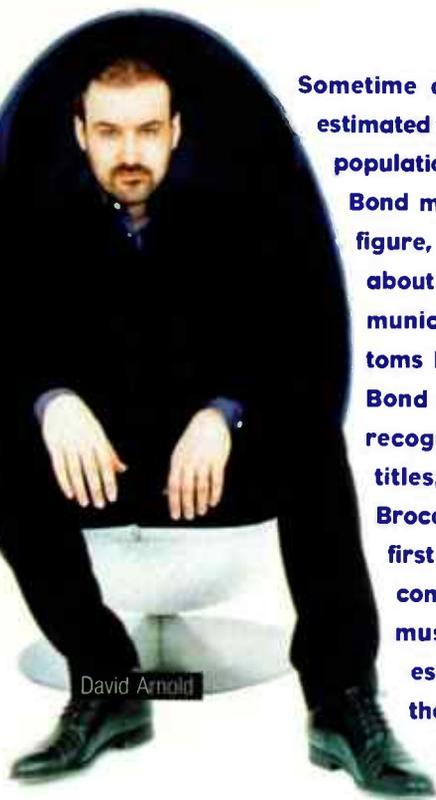
ARISTA

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The Music Of James Bond

by Kurt B. Reighley

Sometime around 1992, it was estimated that half of the world's population had seen a James Bond movie. "Based on that figure, it is likely that just about everybody who communicates without tomtoms has heard the James Bond music—its instantly recognizable themes and titles," wrote Albert R. Broccoli, producer of the first 16 Bond films. "The compelling nature of this music has been an essential ingredient in the makeup of the 007 movies."



Since the inception of the series in 1962 with *Dr. No*, that music has grown in appeal, influencing diverse artists and audiences. Guns N' Roses, Soft Cell and Tindersticks have all recorded covers of tunes from Bond flicks. "Imaginary soundtrack" producers Barry Adamson and David Holmes have radically reinterpreted John Barry's quintessential "James Bond Theme." "Goldfinger," "Nobody Does It Better" (from *The Spy Who Loved Me*) and "For Your Eyes Only" still pump out of jukeboxes and karaoke machines with alarming frequency.

For David Arnold, the sound of cinema 007 is as familiar as the beating of his own heart. Not only did he compose the score for the 18th Bond outing, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, he also conceived, arranged and produced *Shaken And Stirred: The David Arnold James Bond Project* (Sire). This 11-track opus features fresh renditions of Bond themes by artists including Aimee Mann, Iggy Pop, Chrissie Hynde, LTJ Bukem and Natacha Atlas.

The Grammy-winning maestro attributes the enduring appeal of the Bond songs to "the fact they were conceived, written and produced in a timeless fashion." For example, "Diamonds Are Forever" was penned in 1971. That's post *Sgt. Pepper's Sticky Fingers* topped the charts. Glam and glitter ruled in the UK. Yet it seems that songwriters John Barry and Don Black were oblivious, sculpting a glittering sonic dais on which vocalist Shirley Bassey shines like the midnight sun.

"These records just failed to recognize anything that was going

on around them," continues Arnold. "They existed in their own little universe. They make no attempt at being contemporary. And the advantage to doing that is you keep one step ahead of being unfashionable, because you were never fashionable in the first place."

Credit John Barry, who scored 11 James Bond movies over the course of three decades (and four different actors as the super spy). "John Barry certainly had a very good handle on that period," notes Alex Gifford of Bath, England's big beat duo Propellerheads. "Bond is a very curiously British sort of protagonist. And the music always has this mixture of big Hollywood schlock with proper Englishness. It tries to be massively glitzy, but it doesn't quite get there. Most of it seems to be slightly repressed. Everything he writes is so simple, but on the button. There's not much stuff that gets tricky and misses the point."

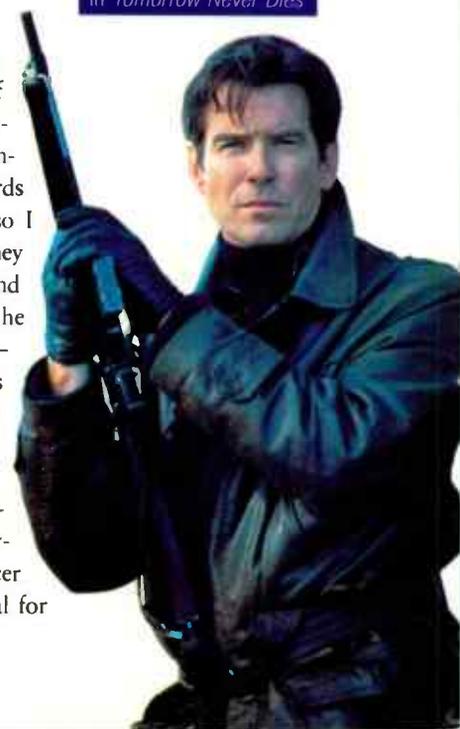
Barry shaped his compositions to be an integral part of the 007 legacy, and although they were entertaining on their own, they reflected the character of the series and its hero. They were sweeping in scope, yet subtle in their detail; classy yet unconventional. "They were songs borne entirely of melodrama and cinema," notes Arnold.

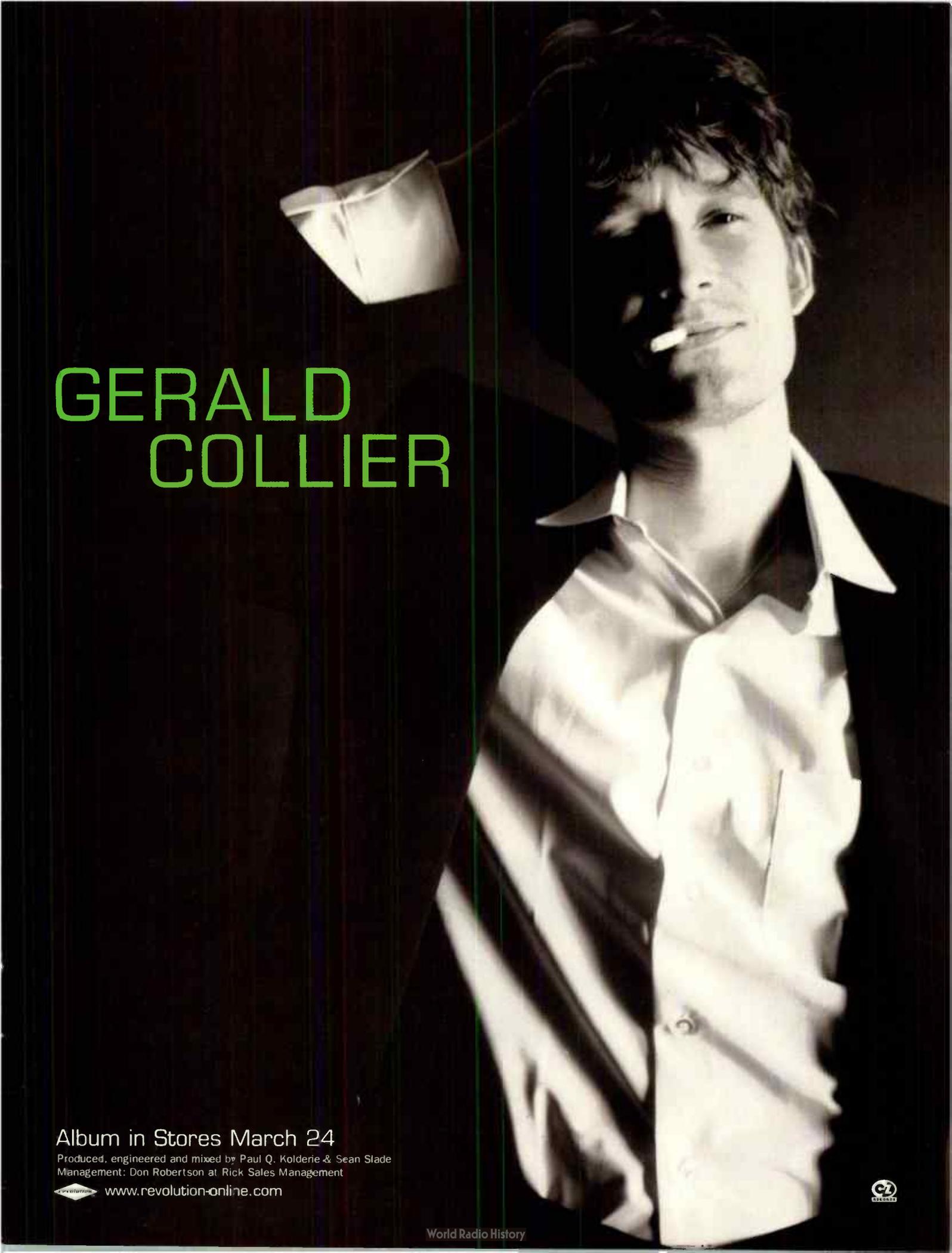
The drawback to championing this singular vision is that often the tunes fared poorly with consumers. But time has been kind to this catalog. "Historically there's an accumulated understanding of James Bond songs," says Arnold. "Now they describe other songs as 'Bond-esque' and 'Barry-esque' whenever they talk about a certain type of record." (A good example is Mansun's "The Chad Who Loved Me," from *Attack Of The Grey Lantern*.) "The problem with being of the moment is you can only do it for the moment," he chuckles. "And then that moment has passed, and you were last week's thing."

Arnold was especially conscious of this pitfall when he imagined *Shaken And Stirred*. He began with a list of artists he thought were "unusual, interesting, intriguing... mainly people that I'd bought records by, or seen performing live, so I had a good idea about where they were coming from, musically and personally." A few parties he approached weren't interested—most notably ABBA, as well as Nick Cave and the Human League—but most leapt at the chance.

Having heard Propellerheads' evocative single "Spy-break!" previously, the producer figured the pair would be ideal for

Pierce Brosnan as Bond in *Tomorrow Never Dies*



A black and white photograph of a man, Gerald Collier, with dark, wavy hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and a dark jacket. He is looking slightly to the right with a slight smile, and a lit cigarette is in his mouth. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on his face and shirt. The background is dark and indistinct.

GERALD COLLIER

Album in Stores March 24

Produced, engineered and mixed by Paul Q. Kolderie & Sean Slade
Management: Don Robertson at Rick Sales Management

 www.revolution-online.com

World Radio History



the driving instrumental “On Her Majesty’s Secret Service.” “And as luck would have it, it’s my personal favorite Barry theme,” concurs Alex Gifford. He’d already been including the original in his DJ sets, mixing it with beats (“which isn’t the easiest thing, because it doesn’t stay in line”), and the duo was considering doing a cover of it. “And now there’s this bloke on the phone saying ‘Would you like to do a version?’” The producers of *Tomorrow Never Dies* liked the track so much, they asked Arnold to recruit Gifford to assist on the new film, too.

John Barry aficionado Jarvis Cocker was intrigued by Arnold’s invitation, but didn’t think his band Pulp fit the tune he’d penciled it in for. Instead, Cocker bravely suggested “All Time High,” one of the weakest numbers in Barry’s oeuvre, from 1983’s *Octopussy*. “The original song was a bit limp,” observes the producer. But Cocker saw the swan behind the ugly duckling. “I thought that ‘All Time High’ was an under-realized song, and that was the point [in covering it],” he explains.

Whatever the intention, the end result is captivating. “We changed it from a romantic poem to lost love, into a seedy, sordid little confessional,” says Arnold. “It’s like Serge Gainsbourg in Union Jack underwear.”

Coincidentally, Pulp also wound up on a divergent list of artists (from Jon Bon Jovi to David Holmes) asked to submit songs for *Tomorrow Never Dies*. “The way they do it nowadays is they put it out to tender,” explains Arnold. Despite virtually no deadline, Pulp managed to turn around an original tune in two days, only to be rejected. (That song, “Tomorrow Never Lies,” wound up as a B-side on Pulp’s recent single “Help The Aged.”) “I was disappointed,” admits Cocker with a sigh. “Especially when I heard it was Sheryl Crow who was getting it, because she does me in.”

Despite this resurgence of Bond classicism, the producers opted for the obviously of-the-moment Crow—certainly no Bassey or Tina Turner—to provide the music for the film’s opening montage. To pique younger moviegoers, Moby was brought in to revamp the classic “James Bond Theme.” He felt a strong connection to the



material, too. “*Live And Let Die* was the first soundtrack I ever bought,” he discloses. “Possibly the first record. The theme song is a terrifying piece of music. I remember seeing the movie, and when the strings come in...” He shudders comically at the recollection. “Even now it’s terrifying.”

Bringing up the rear, Arnold contributed his sweeping original “Surrender” for the end credits. But finding an appropriate singer for a number in traditional Bond style proved nearly impossible. Although David McAlmont had sung on the demo, and charted in Europe with his eerie *Shaken And Stirred* interpretation of “Diamonds Are Forever,” he lacked the requisite American appeal. Record companies faxed Arnold seemingly endless artist rosters, “but the amount of people who can actually sing that type of song is pretty small.” In the end, the only suitable candidate was k.d.lang.

“There are a few of the soul divas, Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey, the people who are technically very powerful singers,” he concedes, but lang “completely understands the genre. She knows what it is we’re dealing with when we’re doing a Bond song, which is so classic in the approach.”

At one point last winter, between *Shaken And Stirred* and *Tomorrow Never Dies*, there were four Bond-related singles in the upper reaches of the UK charts: songs by Moby, David McAlmont, Propellerheads and, yes, Sheryl Crow. Surely such a bizarre coincidence could only be the work of a nefarious outfit like S.P.E.C.T.R.E. But Will White of Propellerheads claims no foul play was involved. “It was weird, but it’s not a case of everyone talking around saying ‘Let’s make the Bond music popular,’” he insists. “Because it already is.” ■

the brassy MISS BASSEY

No singer is more closely associated with James Bond than Welsh diva Shirley Bassey. She was already a popular nightclub draw in America when John Barry tapped her for *Goldfinger* in 1964. It would become the composer’s personal favorite of the Bond titles. “Shirley Bassey was perfect casting,” he later gushed. “She brought such conviction to it.”

Bassey would contribute her inimitable delivery in service of 007 on two more occasions, for *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971) and *Moonraker* (1979). (A fourth, “Mr. Kiss Kiss Bang Bang,” was recorded for *Thunderball*, but dropped in favor of Tom Jones’s title tune.) Although she turned 61 this past January, Bassey still performs to packed houses. So why must Bond fans be subjected to the simpering likes of A-Ha (“The Living Daylights”) and Sheryl Crow?

David Arnold blames the boys in accounting. When he wrote “Surrender” for *Tomorrow Never Dies*, he had Bassey in mind for the track. “The world is ready for another Shirley Bassey Bond theme,” insists the master. “But in marketing terms, it wasn’t going to make sense.”

Like the best of the Bond songs, Bassey epitomizes the idea that if you don’t fret about being contemporary, you have a much better chance of maturing into a timeless classic. That’s why the Propellerheads composed “History Repeating” (featured on their new *Decksanddrumsandrockandroll*) for her. “She’s wicked,” insists Alex Gifford. “We just wanted her to play the part of someone who’s been there, seen it, done it... who’s above the bollocks of hype and fashion.”

“They say the next big thing is here/That the revolution’s near/But to me it seems quite clear/That it’s all just a little bit of history repeating,” purrs Bassey over a bossa nova beat. The new breed of Bond producers would be wise to listen closely to what she’s singing. Miss Shirley Bassey is overdue for an encore. —KBR

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42

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43

▶43A



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Thalia: We were just in Spain for like a month.

Mark: For what? Touring?

Thalia: Yeah, touring. It was great. We had like eight or nine shows in four and a half weeks. It was this crazy thing 'cause we were like in a movie, and we were also part of this traveling film festival. So the first week we were there, we were in Madrid.

Mark: Nice.

Thalia: It was so fuckin' nice. And then we went all over Spain. Barcelona and then Bilbao. We saw the new Guggenheim. It was pretty amazing. We played all over. It was the kind of tour of Spain that you could only get if a Spanish promoter was booking it. Because originally, they were going to film in all these locations. Because the film is kind of about, like, rock, but not really. But it's about a promoter, and a lot of this stuff takes place in clubs and stuff, so it's really expensive to rent. So we were traveling in the film festival, and simultaneously they were making a movie. They shot us for like a week. Our part isn't that big in it. It's about this promoter. We played the American band that comes over, a band called "Come." At first I was like, "Change the names and stuff," but then by the time we were filming it, it was like, "I don't give a shit." It was totally a crazy no-budget production.

Mark: You could change it to "Venga." There are probably some other dirtier words you could use. "Venga." That's not a bad name.

Thalia: Venga.

Mark: I can't think of what the Spanish word for "come" is.

Thalia: Colme!

Mark: Colme.

Thalia: [in exaggerated Spanish voice] I love the Colme!

Thalia: We were hanging out with a lot of Spanish people. The movie was half Spanish, half English, so the leading man was Spanish. It takes place in Spain, but there were a lot of Americans involved. So when he was dealing with Americans, he'd speak in English, but the rest of it's going to be in Spanish, so it's kind of a bizarre mix of New York and Madrid people.

Mark: There was this movie that asked me to do a bit part in it, kind of silly, looking for love in the classifieds. It all takes place in Boston. I guess I would have done it, but I would have had to pay a couple thousand dollars to join the union or something and they were only paying \$500, so I passed. But anyways, I was reading in the paper just now that someone just bought the movie for six million dollars just this week. I never would have guessed.

Thalia: Wow. What's it called?

Mark: It's called *Next Up Wonderland*. Reading it, it just seemed like an advertisement for Boston. "Shoot your film in Boston. Look at all the scenic sights we have." I had no idea it was like a real film, entered in festivals. I can never tell from the script that it's going to be good.

Thalia: We did songs in so many horrible movies. And then you just feel bad because you know someone spent like years, because I have a lot of friends who do film. I know how expensive it is, and how people spend years on something that sucks, and then they know it sucks but they have to do something with it because they have invested so much in it. I usually say "sure" when people ask me for a song, because usually I know the movie isn't going to get played anywhere, ever. And it's kind of like, why stand in their way? They have so many obstacles as it is.

Mark: You know that movie *Spanking The Monkey*? Our guy got this call that they want to use four or five songs for a low budget movie about incest. They wouldn't let us see a rough-cut or a script. They said it was really tasteful—it's kind of a black comedy—and we figured, well, no one will see it. But it didn't work out like that. But it wasn't a bad movie. Did you see it?

Thalia: I never saw it. Are we taping this? Should we tape it?

[Tape stops]

Mark: ...I love wine. And maybe I'll take you up on that.

Thalia: So are you going to do your next record with Paul [Kolderie] and Sean [Slade]?

Mark: It looks like it. I hope so. I want to record a lot of it at my house. We've got kind of a big space. It sounds better than most studios. Lots of wood, wood floors, wood ceilings. Soft. Then we'll take it and mix it somewhere else. Maybe bring in a bunch of real equipment, 24 tracks...

Thalia: Is your studio in Cambridge?

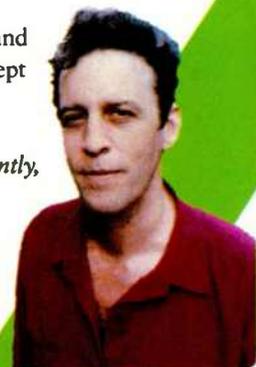
Mark: Yeah. I like to record at home.

Thalia: Yeah, I do too. I always wanted to, and we haven't really done anything in town except for this record.

[Tape stops. Thalia puts Come's new CD, *Gently, Down The Stream*, on the stereo.]

Thalia: Your car stereo probably sounds better than this.

Mark: [responding to music] That sounds pretty much like an Egyptian kind of thing?



she said

Take Come's *Gently, Down The Stream* For A Spin

Thalia: Yeah, it's sort of like that. I don't know what this is.

Mark: *Gently, Down The Stream*. I like that.

Thalia: It's the urination analogy, sort of. This copy's been sounding really weird to me. Do you think that's too loud?

Mark: No, it sounds good.

Thalia: But I've played this particular one for people before, and it sounds weird.

Mark: You mean this CD? This pressing?

Thalia: Yeah.

Mark: I don't know, they should be the same, but nobody really knows how it works anymore. Everybody just pokes at buttons. If they can hear something, they figure it's okay. Nobody knows what bits are, they just throw these terms around... I like this. I hear more words than your other records.

Thalia: Yeah, it's like... cool. It's weird. There is this one song... Chris [Brokaw, Come's other guitarist] is playing piano and I'm playing clarinet. It's got some different stuff on it, some heavy stuff. And lighter stuff. Do you guys write in the studio?

Mark: We try not to. We try to just get in there and record it, but we do a lot of writing in my home studio. Just playing along with it, fooling around with it, on eight-track. Sometimes those things end up on the albums. All the albums have eight tracks from my house on them. So you never know. You can't tell though, on the albums. You don't go "Oh, they put a home recording on the album." It doesn't sound like that.

Thalia: Yeah. There's one song on here that was pretty much a jam, you know, and it was pretty improvised. It had different parts but we didn't know when it was going to switch. We just kind of knew. We were like, "Let's record it and see how it comes out," and it came out pretty good. It's called "A Jam Blues."

Mark: What's the cover look like?

Thalia: I've got it around here somewhere... This is a photo this Boston artist took during this hurricane. I think it was like Revere or something.

Mark: I like it. This is around here? These houses?

Thalia: Yeah, it was all on the same day. Like that, that first shot was in Revere beach.

Mark: What was this kid doing? Just running around?

Thalia: He was running away from the wave. It was during a hurricane. That was actually the wave.

Mark: Who did the package?

Thalia: Actually, Chris saw it at an art show.

Mark: No, but who did the design?

Thalia: Oh, my brother.

Mark: Yeah?

Thalia: Dan Zedek.

Mark: All in the family, huh?

Thalia: Yeah. It was kind of like, you know, people you can rely on in an emergency. We've got these photos and we need a cover in like four days... Actually, this was pretty improvised too. Not Chris's part, but the clarinet part.

Mark: How did you happen to play clarinet? Did you take lessons when you were a kid?

Thalia: Yeah, I've played since I was young. A lot of people I know play clarinet just kind of by chance, but I actually really wanted to play clarinet.

Mark: Yeah? That happens to some people.

Thalia: I lived in New England when I was like nine. I had this really weird teacher and all we ever did was music there. It was like a normal class, but she was just real eccentric. So we would learn these operas and all this weird-type stuff. I remember once, this student that had graduated came in and played her clarinet and I really liked the sound of it.

Mark: I played the trombone.

Thalia: Really? I love the trombone.

Mark: I suddenly realized, just last year—I don't know why it took me so long—but the trombone is a slide, baritone instrument, and now I play a slide, baritone instrument in a band... That was a nice song.

Thalia: This is the last song, the abbreviated version.

Mark: Before I go, we should drive around the block and play it really loud in my car. I have really good sound.

Thalia: Yeah.

Mark: Just for your own edification. Musicians have the worst stereotypes of any people I know. I don't know why that is. [laughing] I myself am included.

Come's new album, Gently, Down The Stream (Matador), was reviewed in the March issue.

Morphine's most recent album, B Sides & Otherwise (Rykodisc), was reviewed in the December issue.

**Musicians
have
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Wag The Dog

Gastr Del Sol's David Grubbs Discusses The Art Of Making Music With Pop Savant Van Dyke Parks



David Grubbs

David: Here we are coast to coast, and I am about to compliment you on your impeccable—typically impeccable—selection of material for [the recent live album] *Moonlighting*.

Van Dyke: Well, thank you. And I'm just trying to keep up with you now that you have hit the fast lane with your concessions to accessibility without reducing your eclectic standard. You keep investigating broad areas. It seems like we are both afflicted with the same virus here: the exploration of various musical styles. I don't know about you, but it seems to me that the more I continue with music, the less control I have over what it is that I become a part of. It's this—now what they are calling this in the street vernacular—wag the dog. It seems to me I get wagged a lot. It's a funny thing. I used to think I was in charge of what it was I was doing. I used to take credit for—well, unwittingly, begrudgingly—took credit for the effects of my own interests. But I can recall from the very first record I did, an album in '66, I was absolutely in shock by what it is I was faced with after completion. It is always an amazing thing to me to see what it is that we are a part of. I

think that's because the musical residue that we leave on records is really a reflection of our discovery—the process of discovery.

David: And is taking your time an effort to control that? You know, not turning out a record every year? You have moved at your own pace.

Van Dyke: Well, I have moved at my own pace because... the thing is, records have been just a small reflection of a much larger musical activity. I am just totally absorbed with music. I don't play golf—I'm not putting it down, I'd love to pick it up—but I don't have any hobbies, and so music really is, all of a sudden, I am amazed to say, my life. And records—solo records—are a part of it. It seems to me that is a reflection of your own tastes. When I think of the body of work that you have achieved at what seems like a very young age to me, it seems to me an indication of a larger, totally absorbed musical experience.

David: Yeah, I don't really have any hobbies outside of music, but I do have other professional concerns ongoing. So I have always juggled music with school, graduate school, work, teaching, etc. It

**I think
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has always been a parallel activity.

Van Dyke: It seems to me with this new album of yours, it is far more accessible, in a way. Was that a conscious decision?

David: Sure. I mean, *Camofleur* was a record that was made by Jim O'Rourke and myself, and it was something that we made over the process of several months, which for us was the most amount of time that we had contributed to any record. And so, yeah, it was quite deliberate to not have any pieces over a certain amount of time or to try to have more vocal material on the record.

Van Dyke: But it still seems—I am not sure if there is anything to be learned... We should learn something from this conversation—your music has a high degree of... it is an analog thing. There is basically a great deal of... it's real music. It has real performances in it. And the real performances seem central to it.

David: But it is always recorded piecemeal. There are very few group performances recorded.

Van Dyke: How do you start?

David: I start with chord progressions on piano or guitar and frequently I will record a basic track before having anything remotely finalized about the arrangement. And through difficulties of scheduling, sometimes the animal gets built... Is it hard [when you start putting a record together] to predict what the feel will be? I mean, are you confident in your sense of when the last piece is in place, that you know how it is going to be?

Van Dyke: Oh, no. [laughs] I have absolutely no confidence. There is a great deal of apprehension in everything I do. I have never known what to expect in music. I heard one time that Beethoven was flattered for his power of anticipation, and some adoring fan—a woman—had praised him for his power of anticipation, and he said, "Madam, no one knows before a fact. No one has that ability." And he was confessing that he had no idea how something would work out or how it would sound. So I think that the smoke and mirrors that musicians so often pull about their own degree of control of their own work—their ability to wag the dog—is really bravado. I don't think anybody really knows what they're doing... You know, it's like Kinky Freidman once told me: You've got to find what you love and let it kill you. And I don't think any of us should ever forget that. I think you always have to be true to your school. I don't think that you've lost that. Your new work, it still has a total edginess about it, which I think is to your credit.

David: Thank you. [laughs] You need rhapsodize no more.

Van Dyke: What I look for in music isn't so much stylistic identity as a content of a disassociated character, a sense of disquietude, generally. I think that music should show some sense of... well, virtue, in any event. From Brian Wilson, for example, I learned a lot about courage. And courage shows in his greatest work. And that's what I look for in work that interests me. And it shows in your work. Courage, anyway, which is what I think it takes.

David: I was wondering the extent to which the politeness of [Southern] language appeals [to you]. As a Kentuckian, I am at home with polite speech, but in some ways I am repelled by it.

Van Dyke: Sure. I'm sure you ran in terror from what it was that had nourished you. You look at that loose-knit society of Southern writers. There is a wonderful dynasty of Southern writers who I think have been nourished by what they would pretend had been a process of revulsion. You know, Tennessee Williams and Eudora Welty and all these great writers who are obsessed with the pathos and central tragedy of the South which has, I think, disappeared. I think it disappeared with air conditioning.

David: [laughs] That's a good answer.

Van Dyke: Well, you know, when we lost the porch.

David: Where does this pathos stand in relation to your work? Do you revisit Louisiana?

Van Dyke: I was born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, quite by accident. My father was a careerist for a while in the Army. And the Parks had been an old Pennsylvania family. That's where there is a place called Parks Township, and that's where the graveyards are. That's where my brother and my parents are buried.

David: Yeah. There is a Grubbs spot with room for me in Kentucky.

Van Dyke: But the thing is, I was teased about my accent, when I went North. It's almost like... I think I have made a life of iconoclasm as a general reaction to my rootlessness. I have never felt too much at home, anywhere. I love California, but it is still an alien place. I am still on the outside looking in.

David: Right. And it is going to be awhile before "Orange Crate Art" becomes the state anthem.

Van Dyke: [laughs] I fear so.

Gastr Del Sol's recent album, Camofleur (Drag City), was reviewed in the February issue.

Van Dyke Parks's newest release is the live collection Moonlighting: Live At The Ash Grove (Warner Bros.).

Van Dyke Parks

**Q
&
A**



Kristin Hersh And Vic Chesnutt Commiserate Over Making Records And Singing Songs

ART IS PAIN

Kristin: How's your beautiful woman?

Vic: She's good. We've been in Nashville for a few weeks, mixin' the record. So, I think I drove her insane.

Kristin: Did you make the record there, too? How come?

Vic: Well, that's where all the guys were. I recorded with a band, Lambchop, and they all live there. And we had to do it on the weekends, 'cause they work during the week.

Kristin: How was it?

Vic: It was great, they've got good studios up there and, you know, Waylon [Jennings] is in the studio recording during the week, and then I pop in there on the weekends.

Kristin: And what about the band, did it feel like yours?

Vic: Well, I've known them for a while. And they're a big band, there's like ten of them.

Kristin: Ten? Holy shit! What do they play?

Vic: Well, there's horns, and several guitar players, and organ and vibes, and drums, and percussion... Unlike your new record which is...

Kristin: Me! Me, me, me, my big head, all by itself... 'cause I have no friends anymore. [laughs] I had huge plans for it too. I was going to have the Giant Sand guys play. I played with them in Austin. I did some benefit [concert] with them and I had had this idea that the production approach would be "acoustic combo" like upright bass, brushes and piano. And so I played these new songs at a benefit with them, and they said, "You know, Kris, the new songs would sound good with upright bass, piano and brushes." And I thought, "Yes, and I will steal Giant Sand to do it." And then I was going to have DJ Bonebreak to play marimbas...

Vic: Wow!

Kristin: ...and Lisa Germano play violin.

Vic: Sure!

Kristin: I wanted to ask all my friends to come, and yet, I showed up at work every morning, and the songs would ask for these little pieces of nothing that would be insulting to ask anyone but myself to play.

Vic: I love those records you make. They're the best... You did it at Joe [Henry's] right?

Kristin: Yeah, Joe's Garage, literally Joe's garage. I was going to do it in my house. I was just going to crawl into the closet and make the record. I guess I was bummed about the Muses dying, so I just wanted to hide.

Vic: Yeah, I bet you were.

Kristin: Oh God, ehh, ouch. But I was telling Joe Henry this and he said, "Yeah, just come over to my house, and I'll push the buttons, and you won't have to think about it." And then it was awesome, 'cause he's awesome. And our kids are best friends.

Vic: Yeah that's great. I love it, it sounds really great.

Kristin: Oh, thank you. Are you exhausted?

Vic: I am, I'm just sick of hearing the songs over and over. You know how it is.

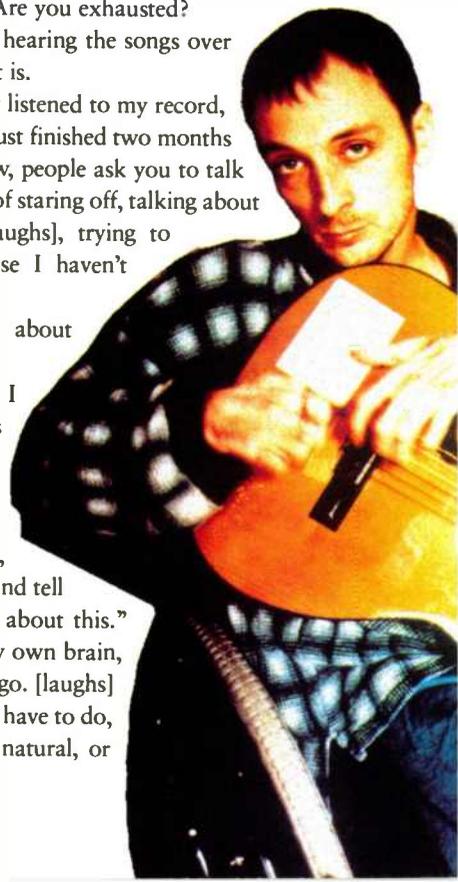
Kristin: I haven't actually listened to my record, to tell you the truth, and I just finished two months of promo, where, you know, people ask you to talk about it. I just end up kind of staring off, talking about the Muses some more [laughs], trying to change the subject, because I haven't heard my own record.

Vic: Yeah, I hate talkin' about myself.

Kristin: My problem is, I just know how bad brains lie to you, you know? The brain is the first organ that's going to lie to you. And they're saying, "Well, talk to us with your brain and tell us what your brain thinks about this."

And I know not to trust my own brain, so I shut it up a long time ago. [laughs]

Vic: That's a tough thing to have to do, and I guess they think it's natural, or





something, to have to sit there and talk about yourself all day long.

Kristin: Oh, it feels awful, too. I mean, I like talking about music sometimes, music in general, 'cause I think it's a nice energy. It's as close as I get to having a religion, but I don't like talking about my "me." You know, Kristin with car keys and shoes. And they always expect me to be so arty and depressive, that their questions are just awful. They're almost mean because they bring so much emotional baggage to the table. Like you, they're always blaming you about writing about your wheelchair; they're always blaming me for writing about being crazy. No matter how many times I say, "You know, you're bringing a lot to this, you're projecting here." They just think, "Oh, I wonder why she said that? Hmm, she's crazy." [laughs]

Vic: [laughs] Yeah, I'm not looking forward to it. I used to love it. Like the first one I ever did, I loved it. It was like going to the psychiatrist everyday.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah. It's true. It's way too much like that.

Vic: And then, you know, 20 days into it, I'm like, "God, I'm going to kill myself." Psychiatrist not doing right. Psychiatrist bad.

Kristin: Yeah, and they don't give you any drugs.

Vic: Yeah, and if they do give you any, it's the bad kind.

Kristin: So, does your new record sound different?

Vic: Well, you know, since there's a whole lot of people playing on it, it sounds different.

Kristin: Ten other people. That'd make anybody sound different. Can you hear you at all?

Vic: I hope. Well, I mean I kind of hope not, but you know, they always put the vocals up real loud, even though I tell them to turn them down... I got us a promo copy [of *Strange Angels*]. Somebody sent me one.

Kristin: How did you get that?

Vic: I don't know, but it came in the mail.

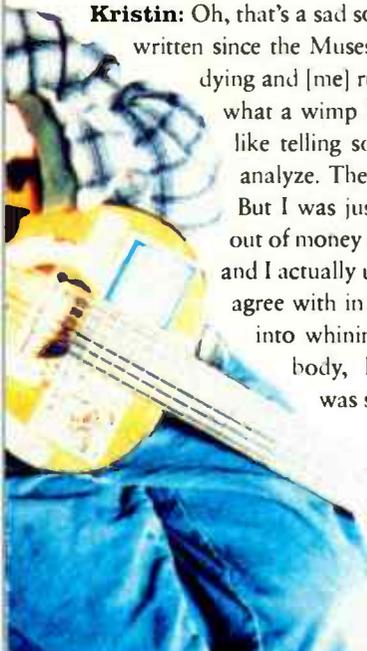
Kristin: How is it?

Vic: It's great! You know it is. It's got, like, a few of the best songs I ever heard. I don't know how you do it, but there's always at least one, sometimes five or ten, but at least one line that is like, you know, the best line in history.

Kristin: I wish I knew my own lyrics.

Vic: I love that one, which is the one? About the bed? "fightin' the bed like a river" ["Heaven"]. God, I was like, "Jeez."

Kristin: Oh, that's a sad song. You know, that's the only song I've written since the Muses, and it's so obviously about my band dying and [me] running away to the Mojave Desert, and what a wimp I am for doing it. It's embarrassing. It's like telling somebody a dream that's really easy to analyze. There's even a line about a drummer in it. But I was just so bummed about the band running out of money and stopping, that I had to get stuff out, and I actually used a song to do it, which I kind of disagree with in principle. Self expression kind of turns into whining. It just seems like puking on everybody, like they don't need it, and yet I was so bummed about the band dying that I felt that I deserved to be selfish. And I can put that song on a record and everybody has to hear it. Now I get to



puke on you, 'cause you killed my band. [laughs]

Vic: Yeah, exactly: You kill my band, I puke on you. You know, that's it. There you go.

Kristin: An eye for an eye.

Vic: Sure, but I think it's really amazing, as always.

Kristin: Ah, what are you talkin' about? You're the king of all perfect lyrics. Your songs are my soundtrack way more often than my own songs are.

Vic: Well, that's good to know.

Kristin: They're smart and they're funny. Which I guess is the same thing. But, they sound like you when you talk. Like, sometimes your mouth moves faster than your brain, and it takes a minute for you to catch up to what you just said, which is always totally brilliant. [laughs] And the songs are the same way, they sound like you talking, like you're just letting your mouth go.

Vic: Exactly, that's how I do it. Let it go. And the hardest part is going, "I don't know, it's a little embarrassing." But, you know, you've got to let it go.

Kristin: Do you feel embarrassed?

Vic: I am, always. I'm always embarrassed by my songs.

Kristin: See, I'm hoping to cultivate some shame. I think I don't have enough, because I have absolutely none. People keep sitting me down and saying, "Aren't you embarrassed to do what you do?" I think, "Well, no, but maybe I should be." But I think that—

Vic: Well you can't be, you couldn't be—

Kristin: Well, some of the songs make me sound like a crazy person or a nymphomaniac. They make me say weird shit that I would never walk into a room and say. And yet when I'm playing I feel like

THE BRAIN IS THE FIRST ORGAN THAT'S GOING TO LIE TO YOU.

I'm playing with a part of me that could be all of them. You know, black or white, male or female, straight or gay, so where would the shame come in if you're all the same?

Vic: Sure, I mean, that's what I'm saying, there's no shame—

Kristin: So why are you embarrassed?

Vic: Well, with me, you know—it just, this is my life, you know, not just my singing, but I'm always ashamed of me, you know. It's a part of my problem... Ouch!

Kristin: What?

Vic: I just stuck a pin in my hand, by accident.

Kristin: Wow, are you all right?

Vic: It didn't puncture.

Kristin: You know, art is pain, man.

Vic: Who?

Kristin: Art.

Vic: Oh, Art. Art is pain. Yes.

Kristin: Who? [laughs]

Vic: Yes, he is.

Kristin Hersh's new album, Strange Angels (Throwing Music-Rykodisc), was reviewed in the March issue.

Vic Chesnutt's most recent album is About To Choke (Capitol).

Motorcity Madman Ted Nugent Sets His Sights On Nashville Pussy Guitarist Ruyter Suys



WANG DANG SWEET POONTANG!

Ted: Hey-yo is this Nashville?

Ruyter: How's it going?

Ted: Happy Ninunige Year to you, dear.

Ruyter: Happy Nuge Year to you, too, Ted.

Ted: Now, Ruyter, are you an official Pussy?

Ruyter: Hell yeah, I'm an official Pussy!

Ted: God bless you, baby.

Ruyter: I am the Pussy.

Ted: I hope you appreciate Uncle Ted inventing that stuff for you.

Ruyter: Well, most definitely. You started it all, ya bastard.

Ted: Call me Lewis and Clark of Pussy if you must.

Ruyter: Most definitely. We attribute much to you, sir.

Ted: Which Pussy are you?

Ruyter: I am the guitar player.

Ted: God bless. Us guitar players have to stick together, don't we?

Ruyter: Hell yeah.

Ted: And you created this Nashville Pussy maneuver within the last two years?

Ruyter: Yep. Yeah, we're just babies.

Ted: God bless you. And before that, you were bumping the shit of sonic bombast, I suspect.

Ruyter: Yeah, my husband. (laughs)

Ted: No, no. That doesn't count. You got to put him on stand-by. You got to check him in at the door, my dear. When it's time to be Nashville Pussy, you check the old man in.

Ruyter: Oh, most definitely.

Ted: Is the old man in the band?

Ruyter: Yeah, he's the lead singer.

Ted: Keep him on stand-by then. You know, the lead singer looks like he deserved old Uncle Ted. He looks like he could handle riding me into the sunset with goat-urine soaked spurs, flanking me very much.

Ruyter: (laughs) Oh, my god.

Ted: So did you ever see old Uncle Ted in your youth perform?

Ruyter: I didn't see him in my youth. I saw him last year, playing in Nashville, opening for Bad Company.

Ted: Oh, man. Did we rip their heads off and shit down their neck, or what?

Ruyter: We didn't stick around to see Bad Company, of course.

Ted: That's music to walk to your car by.

Ruyter: (laughs) Exactly. Well, my husband has seen you a pile of times.

Ted: Well, of course! That's where the whole Nashville Pussy concept took root.

Ruyter: Yeah, it was a moment of clarity.

Ted: God bless. A moment of clarity? A lifetime of clarity, my dear. [laughs] I am the only guy that skins cats, grooms cats, raises cats and invents cats.

Ruyter: Invents cats. There ya go.

Ted: And shaves cats. God bless.

Ruyter: There ya go.

Ted: So Ruyter, now, you are the guitar player. What kind of instrumentation do you string?

Ruyter: I have an SG. It's like an '84, ain't nothing special. It's got a keystone pick-up in it, made by this guy in Philadelphia.

Ted: Well, you have a nice crank-ology about you.

Ruyter: Well, I'm glad you like it. I'm going through like a Marshall half-stack, like circa 1970.

Ted: Well, that's all right, but boy, I'll tell ya: As soon as the word "half" enters the scene, I get a red alert.

Ruyter: It's only 'cause of the clubs we're playing. [laughing]

Ted: I get a red alert. That's like half-mast, you know what I mean?

Ruyter: I know, I know. It'll be a full stack as soon as the gods allow.

Ted: You only use a half stack when you're mourning. [laughs] I use a half stack for a suppository when I'm irregular.

Ruyter: Oooh. [laughs] Oh god.

Ted: So you got hubby on lead vocals. Is the bassist a twanger, too?

Ruyter: That's Corey [Parks], the bass player—a six-foot-three firebreather.

Ted: Cooorrrrrrey.

Ruyter: And then Jeremy [Thompson] on drums. He's our third now. We went through two pretty quick and then this one.

Ted: Well, they either keep up or you drop 'em off on the side of the highway.

Ruyter: Well yeah. Those other ones got left by the wayside real fast.

Ted: So Blaine [Cartwright]. Does Blaine play an instrument, or just vocals?

Ruyter: No, he plays an awesome Gibson. We trade off solos.

Ted: Well, that's great. So did you discover each other in a romantic fashion because of the sonic bombast?

Ruyter: Yep, exactly.

Ted: Twang at first sight?

Ruyter: Twang at first sight. Exactly.

Ted: So how old are you?

Ruyter: I'm 29 now.

Ted: So obviously you couldn't have been inspired by Wilson Pickett on a first run.

Ruyter: No, but on the second run.

Ted: But when you get down-wind of Uncle Ted, it's kind of like kissing Wilson Pickett on the full-frontal nudity.

Ruyter: Wow...

Ted: You know, because I transfer the whole black blood brother of spearchuck-ology into the hearts of white men everywhere.

Ruyter: Blaine tries to attribute a lot of his moves to James Brown. So we're working on it.

Ted: Let me guess. Blaine wants to be like Uncle Ted when he grows up: huge and black.

YOU ONLY USE A HALF STACK WHEN YOU'RE MOURNING. I USE A HALF STACK FOR A SUPPOSITORY WHEN I'M IRREGULAR."

Ruyter: [laughs] Yeah.

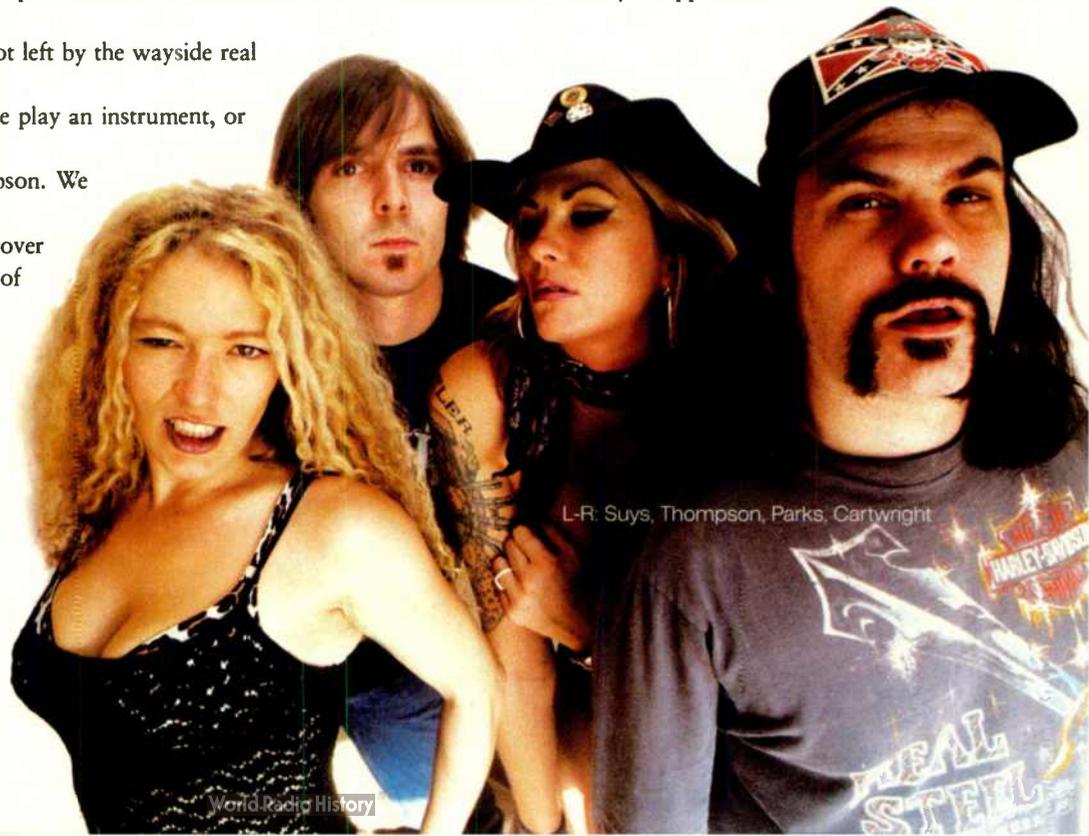
Ted: See, that's the goal, and that's really what I suspect Nashville Pussy's goals are, is one of rhythmical choke-holds.

Ruyter: Most definitely.

Ted: Well, you should be very proud of yourselves. You work non-stop, like idiots.

Ruyter: I am. And I am extremely proud that you are calling me and telling me this.

Ted: Well, you have to do it. You know, so many people say, [in whiny voice] "Well, where did you get your break?" I didn't get a break. A break had the audacity to approach me one



L-R: Suys, Thompson, Parks, Cartwright

foil

Spread It All Around

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NUGENT & NASHVILLE PUSSY

day, and I had to gut shoot it with a goat-urine soaked, small game broadhead. You don't wait for breaks. You go out and you discover breaks.

Ruyter: You make your breaks.

Ted: You know, the middle finger is not just for testing wind. I want to salute... to give an Uncle Ted's official blood brother, sonic bombast salute of the middle finger, throbbing, bulbous middle digit of doom.

Ruyter: Right back atcha, Ted.

I WANT TO GIVE UNCLE TED'S OFFICIAL BLOOD BROTHER, SONIC BOMBAST SALUTE OF THE MIDDLE FINGER, THROBBING, BULBOUS MIDDLE DIGIT OF DOOM.

Ted: Well, god bless ya. Our middle fingers will tango in the night.

Ruyter: Goddamn, man.

Ted: Now obviously, your whole modus operandi is based on party-hearty, beyond-your-wildest-dreams, wake-up-in-a-puddle-of-foaming-at-the-mouth blood, guts...

Ruyter: Somebody else's sweat. [laughs]

Ted: Now did we get a chance to meet on the Nugent Maneuvers Nashville last year?

Ruyter: Did we get a chance to meet? Yeah, you were staring at me like I was some...

Ted: Those things happen.

Ruyter: ...deer in the woods, during the "Fred Bear" song.

Ted: Was I fondling garlic and butter?

Ruyter: Yeah, you were undressing me rapidly with your eyes.

Ted: Then it was love at first...

Ruyter: Standing there in the third row and you were eyeing me all over.

Ted: Love at first puke. You gotta love that. Well, the radar is on, you know what I mean?

Ruyter: I can tell.

Ted: God bless you, Ruyter. Ruyter, I want to give you and Blaine and Cory and Jeremy a blood brother salute of all things outrage and live it up beyond your wildest white man dreams.

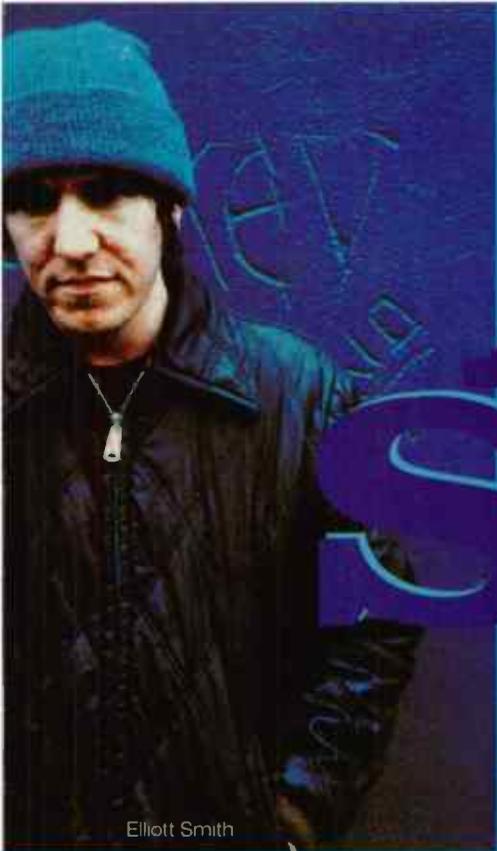
Ruyter: Well, thank you, sir.

Ted: And we hope that Nashville Pussy stains planet Earth with a gargantuan wad of foaming snot and hair.

Ruyter: [laughs] I think we shall.

Nashville Pussy's debut album, Let Them Eat Pussy (Amphetamine Reptile), was reviewed in the March issue.

CD "GOIN' DOWN" BY NASHVILLE PUSSY APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



Elliott Smith

Alias Smith & Doe

John: Whatever happened with [your old band] Heatmiser? Is that like a done deal?

Elliott: It's a done deal.

John: Yeah? In a good way or in a bad way?

Elliott: In a good way except for one person.

John: Oh. It's a hard thing. I know with this X stuff, Exene and I had a long conversation like a year ago. I had written a bunch of songs that really seemed to be X songs, and she really wanted to rededicate herself to sort

are worth it are.

Elliott: I mean, if you're going to get hung up on that point, then it's not very likely that you are going to be a singer/songwriter.

John: That's a scary point to get to though, isn't it? When you get to that point where you are like, "OK, I've had it. That's it, goddamn it!" And then you realize that nobody gives a shit. And then you realize, "Oh, my God. What am I gonna do now?"

Singer/songwriters John Doe And Elliott Smith Talk About Writing Songs, Making Records And Going After The Big Carrot

of just do the band, and just that. Which I completely respected. I thought that was the way it should be: It should either be full on or not at all. And I said, "Well, I've got these other things that I want to do," so we decided, "OK, let's not do X." And for two months after that, it was really hard to adjust. If you said, "OK, that's it, I quit. I'm never going to do music again," and then suddenly... which I know you've gotten to. Right? You've gotten to that point?

Elliott: Where I've wanted to quit? [laughs] Yeah, usually every time I record. Yeah. I get to this point where I'm like "Man, these songs all suck and I'm just embarrassing myself."

John: Yeah. Well, I think that's part of it. I think embarrassing yourself is part of it. I think it is a big part of being the kind of singer that you are, that people that

Elliott: It's like, "OK, nobody cares except for me. Nobody gives a shit. Nobody else is getting all bent out of shape about this." And anyway, it always makes other people feel good if you can make an idiot out of yourself, because then they feel less like idiots themselves... I was going to ask you what you think about playing alone versus being in a band. I was in a band I didn't like very much, so that kind of colored my opinion a little bit.

John: It's compromise, you know? I think it's how you deal with that compromise. Because making a record is a compromise. I think if the band is a band, and there is not a lot of pressure put on by individuals or a record company or... usually it's just by the people themselves. I think the whole concept of record company pressure is a fallacy. I think people do it themselves.

Elliott: It seems easy enough to shrug that kind of pressure off.

John: Well it is and it isn't. Record companies are holding out this huge carrot and saying "If you were to do this, you might get this." And it is really difficult to resist that. I think X definitely started believing the critics, started believing their shit. But we were never like Sonic Youth, just fuck 'em all, total iconoclasts. We always thought "If we play the game to a degree and still stay true to ourselves, then we'll succeed." You know, it sometimes works, it sometimes doesn't. I think we had a lot of bad timing.

Elliott: That's a better attitude than I have. My whole thing with the big carrot is that I'm never going to really get the big carrot. It's harder to worry about if you just feel like you are never going to get the big carrot.

John: See, I don't think of it as much of a reward, anyway. The only thing I want now is for someone to pay the bills. I want to be able to have enough money to record a record without paying people myself. If that happens, I'm fine. I'll do it for cheap and make it beautiful or ugly. I'll just make it... See, half the time, my problem is that I don't really have any idea of what it should sound like. It just sort of develops as it goes. There's one moment of perfection in songwriting for me. And that is when you can sit down and play it from beginning to end, by yourself, and there are limitless possibilities of what this song could be. This could be the next theme to the Coca-Cola generation: "I want to write a song that makes the world stand up and sing"—you know, whatever the hell that thing was. And it has the potential of people suddenly realizing how amazing life is. You know what I mean?

Elliott: I'm always the most confident when I am making up the songs. And then I am at a low point of confidence about halfway through the record, because then I start to hear what the

record's going to sound like and then it can't just be any record, it's "Oh, OK, I see, it's going to be *this* kind of record." And then there is always kind of discouragement like "OK, well, a month or two ago, when I was walking around at night, thinking of stuff to be on the record, I imagined it could be all these different ways and now it's one way." And it's always as soon as you record something, it turns into one way, *that* way, whatever it was right then.

John: But the beauty of that is the document. That this is what anybody does when they are making this record—a record in the most general definition, to record an event, a point in time. Which is frustrating because there are so many other ways it could go. But on the other hand, it's this beautiful thing of like "This is where it was at the time." Like getting a tattoo—it's the perfect example. You may not think the workmanship is that great two years down the line, but still

you have that point of reference, the memory of what happened when.

Elliott: But everybody is so concerned about the end product, you know? It's all about the record. The record company wants to sell the record, and people like the record or they don't like the record, and the record is like this little part, you know? It's not even my favorite part. My favorite part is when I go, "Oh, OK, there is a song here, and it's about to be done, made up." Like "Oh, OK. I see what I'm doing." That's really fun.

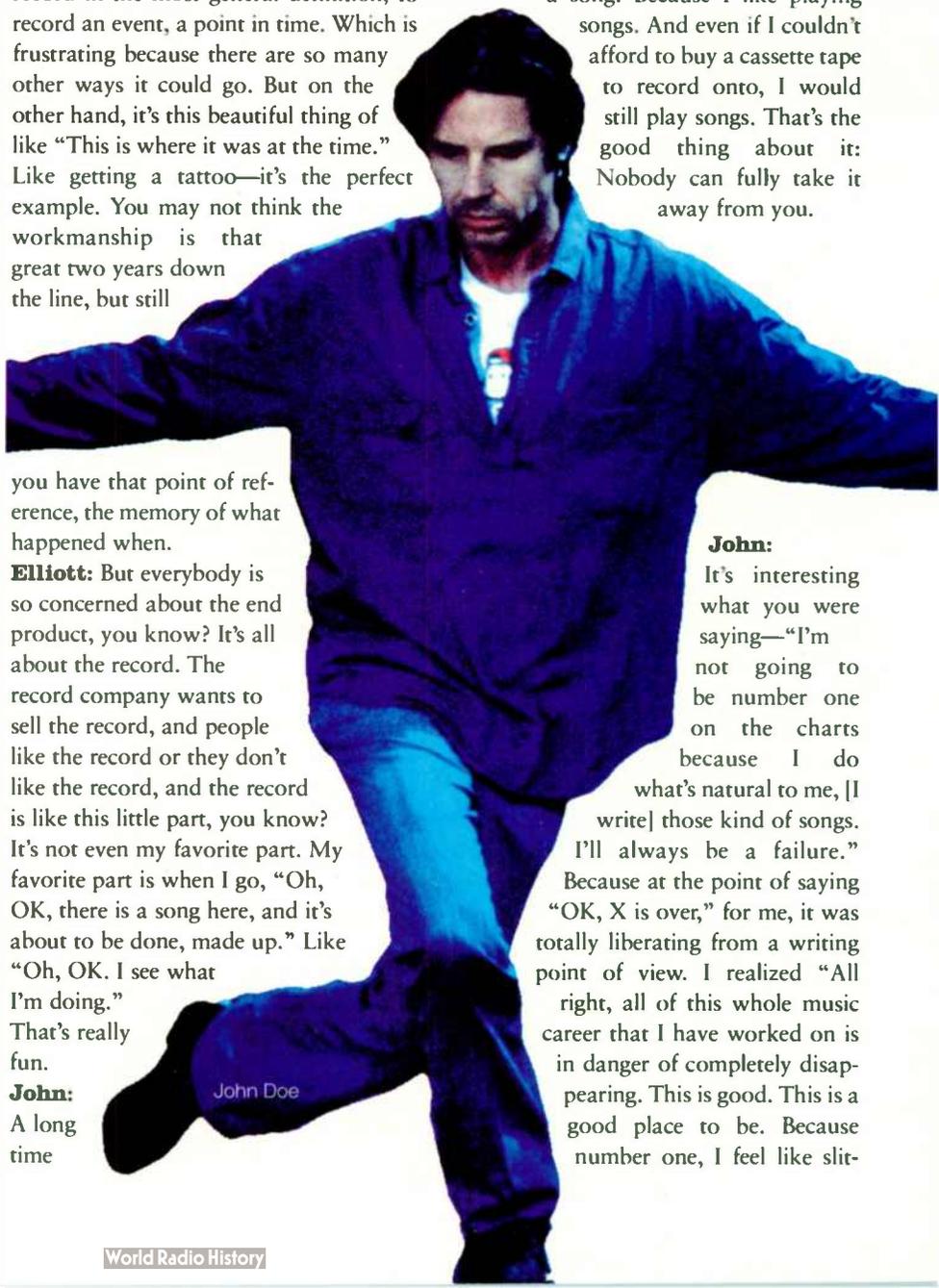
John: A long time

ago—well, not too long ago—I realized that making a record is your reward.

Elliott: Yeah. The big carrot is nothing compared to just being able to do it. It's a total kick to be able to make a record in the first place.

John: And to be completely jaded about success and radio, it's a dangerous thing. It's really dangerous. But you can't let that get in the way, because then you are done, like we were talking about before. You say, "OK, I quit. That's over. Oh. What do you mean, 'Nobody gives a shit'?"

Elliott: But after I get tired of getting upset about that stuff, then I want to play a song. Because I like playing songs. And even if I couldn't afford to buy a cassette tape to record onto, I would still play songs. That's the good thing about it: Nobody can fully take it away from you.



John:

It's interesting what you were saying—"I'm not going to be number one on the charts because I do what's natural to me, [I write] those kind of songs. I'll always be a failure." Because at the point of saying "OK, X is over," for me, it was totally liberating from a writing point of view. I realized "All right, all of this whole music career that I have worked on is in danger of completely disappearing. This is good. This is a good place to be. Because number one, I feel like slit-

ting my wrists. Number two, it's all over. And three, I can do anything." And it was totally fucking liberating.

Elliott: Yeah, that's what I mean. It sounds like I'm being really pessimistic and awful to be like "I'm never going to get the carrot. I'm always going to be a failure in a certain way." But it is a failure that means nothing to me. By accepting that I'm not going to be at the top of the charts, it frees me up from all that crap like "Oh, I've got to be at the top of the charts." Because if I felt like that, my god, I'd never get anything done. I'd hate everything I'd do.

The problem is boundaries, Elliott. See, you are the interviewee and the interviewer and so am I, and that's a pretty big glitch in our little world.

John: I think the only way that people [have chart success] is number one, being in the right place at the right time, which you definitely have going for you right now. You definitely are in the right place at the right time.

Elliott: That would be the first time in my life... Well, if you don't get too bitter, you can find your way around things. I think that's true just in general, not even just for music. For me personally, that's enemy number one. 'Cause if you get bitter, you are sunk. What can you do?

John: Well, you're a drag is what it is.

Elliott: Yeah. It's harder to be around other people and it's harder for people to be around you. Being able to be in love with someone is a lot harder. All the things that to me make life worthwhile are infinitely harder.

John: That's very smart. That's so true.

Elliott: It's hard not to get bitter about things, apparently.

John: It is, but the alternative is like living versus dying.

Elliott Smith's most recent album is Either/Or (Kill Rock Stars), and his songs also appear on the soundtrack to Good Will Hunting (Capitol).

John Doe's new release, For The Rest Of Us, was released in February on Kill Rock Stars. Last year, Elektra released the two-CD X retrospective Beyond And Back: The X Anthology.

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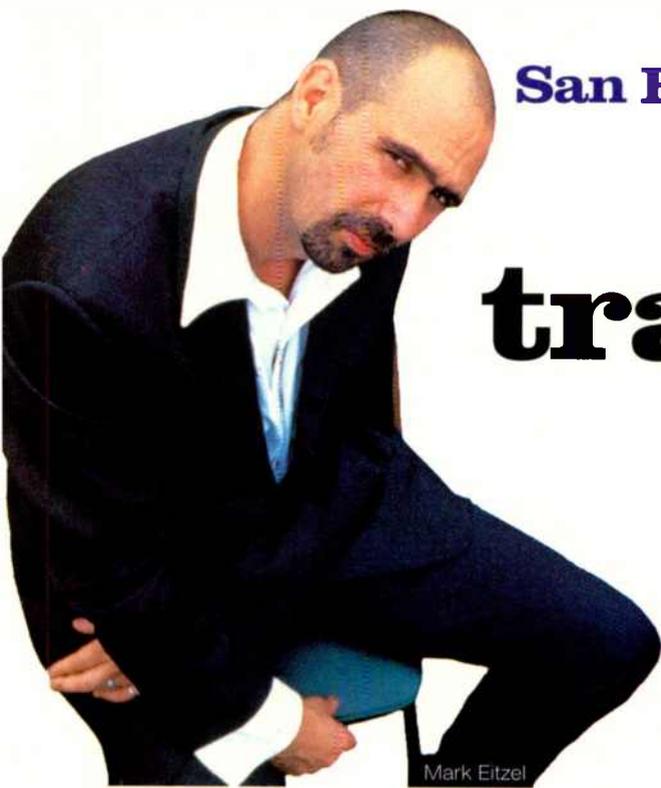
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San Francisco Sad Sack Mark Eitzel

transatlantic teleph call

Mark: Hey Neil, how ya doin'?

Neil: Not bad.

Mark: Good. I just listened to [the Divine Comedy album] *Casanova*. It's brilliant.

Neil: Oh you like it?

Mark: Yeah, it's great.

Neil: I've just listened to your album, *Caught In A Trap*? I think it's brilliant.

Mark: [pause] Oh. OK. [laughs] Well, bye.

Neil: [laughs] I think that's all we need to say.

Mark: I think so too, that's great. I think the reason *CMJ* [readers] should buy our respective records is that we have a really good time.

Neil: I like the little bit on the inside of your LP—you say thanks to the towns of San Francisco, Barcelona, London, and ten people in Los Angeles. Who are they?

Mark: They are my friends, the only people I talk to in Los Angeles. And the rest of it is horrible. Which is not fair, actually. It's actually OK. It's just... it shouldn't be there.

Neil: It's ridiculously large.

Mark: Well, it is really large, and it's a desert, so they drain Northern California and Southern California to put water in a desert. It should not exist.

Neil: I must say that when I go to the States, the thing that I find most alienating is there's so much of everything. Everything is big and urban.

Mark: We have more shops per person than anyplace else in the world, and we also have more people in prison per capita than any other country. It's a great country, really... You should be like me and write pretty autobiographical things. But you'll have to answer the same question 300,000 times. "Why are you so depressed? Why didn't you just take a pill?" [laughs] So, you could be autobiographical. Your life will be more miserable than your songs.

Neil: Well, they are really autobiographical. They are just really well hidden, you know? It's got to be reasonably personal or there

is no way you can sing it with any kind of honesty. So do you think you could write silly pop songs if you wanted to?

Mark: I've been writing them. I started writing romantic... and actually my reasons for this were the same as yours. I thought I would change my life around writing incredibly romantic songs. Well, maybe that's not your reason. I have no idea.

Neil: I mean, it did, actually. It happened.

Mark: Good!

Neil: It will probably all fall apart. [laughs] But it's good while it lasts.

Mark: Right. So I wrote a whole album [where] everything is completely hopeful and upbeat.

Neil: I can't wait. [laughs]

Mark: It's good, I'm really happy. And this album that's like a year old comes out and all the reviews are like "Oh shit... who wrote these," and it's like no, no, no.

Neil: Well, you know, it's a bit like how people go on interminably about how depressing the Smiths were.

Mark: They weren't!

Neil: They weren't at all.

Mark: It's really funny... fresh air.

Neil: Exactly. And that's how I find your stuff. I had a few little questions: Do you write the music or the lyrics first? I know that's a dumb question, but...

Mark: I write the lyrics first and then I write the music and I change the lyrics to fit the music.

Neil: Oh right, yeah. I'm going to try that. 'Cause I always write the music first.

Mark: Really? That's smart. You know, my biggest problem is melodies. I should maybe do that.

Neil: Well, it's an idea.

Mark: Sometimes I write the music first. Sometimes I have three or four chords that I really like. You must conceive of things in very orchestral terms.

Neil: Yeah, the problem is, when I try to get the style of the thing right, it sometimes obliterates the words.

Mark: Which is fine, that's good. Because it never sounds too clever.

Checks In With British Casanova Neil Hannon

Neil: No, it's not really. [laughs]

Mark: My trouble is [the opposite]. It's not bragging at all. When things sound clever and you haven't really worked on them that hard but you consider it a song.

Neil: Well, I think that's the difference between writing exactly what you want to write, or then translating it for other people. There is always a fine line. I wouldn't have the guts to write... pretty much... Well, no, I like what I write. There is probably stuff

there that I could do, maybe in 15 years time, when I feel none of the pressure. Absolutely do what I want in the public, kind of like joining it.

one

Mark: So why don't you?

Neil: Because I am scared. Because I like royalty too much. I like really structuring it so it's more like a job. Every day you are trying to put a few more pieces of the jigsaw together.

Mark: I am completely the opposite. I don't do that at all. And I hate work. [laughs] I am really lazy. I just want to be in a rest home, and have a nurse... [laughs]

Neil: I find it really impossible to just sit down and write lyrics. It annoys me, because I always find that the lyrics are ruled by the tune they have to meet. I am going to sit there on my next album and not write any music, just to clarify my psyche. For better or for worse.

Mark: My next album is going to be this incredible pop thing. Actually, listening to your stuff is really inspiring. [laughs] I'm sorry but it's true.

Neil: [laughs] I could be the man that completely ruined you and your songwriting career.

Mark: No, I do that myself, quite happily, thank you. No, I don't think so actually. I don't know what my next album is going to be, but I want it to come off as—God, this is going to sound terrible—as a big hug. [laugh] I'm from California—you can say those things.

Neil: That will take some people by surprise.

Mark: But I get all the same reviews: "Mark Eitzel has reached a new low... Novocain for your heart."

Neil: My problem is that everyone loves them, but nobody buys the records.

Mark: Which is amazing. That's absolutely, totally amazing to me.

Neil: Well, OK. We have had enough success to keep the ball rolling. That's the problem. I am completely split down the middle as to whether or not I want to be a pop star.

Mark: Stop being split down the middle. Just be Noel Gallagher, come on! Make outrageous quotes about yourself. Come on. Right now.

Neil: It is really evil to be [involved in] British music right now. Everybody's far too cool for their own good. They think they are... gods.

Mark: But I always wondered why you weren't

like, the total head of Brit pop.

Neil: Well, um... [laughs] because there is not enough guitar. [laughs] British pop music is all about guitars, which is not a bad thing really... I don't know why.

Mark: I have been writing these political songs... It's really been driving me nuts. I mean, I may have to move. I really don't know how I feel about sitting here if these right-wing people take over like they want to. It's terrifying. They are so fucking fatuous and stupid. Which is the worst thing—it's like the white trash has taken over, including [President] Clinton.

Neil: And it's just the same over here with [Prime Minister Tony] Blair. It's the same government, took over with a nicer looking face. They haven't changed anything over here.

Mark: Yeah. That's what everybody says. At least it's a tacit labor government. Whereas here it's like let's just fuck as many people over as we can. Let's just civically use people's ignorance and steal every bit of rights they have and subvert the constitution. Let's destroy any kind of social safety net that we can. Let's just destroy it all. Let's just give social security away—let's give it away to the rich! Let's just do it. Because people in this country are too stupid to realize what's happening.

Neil: It sounds a little like the fall of the Roman Empire.

Mark: Well actually, it is very similar. I mean the Roman Empire fell because they couldn't afford to pay the soldiers anymore. Because they had over-extended themselves so much that nothing was left. Just like in America with this whole deficit bullshit. The only thing they don't talk about is how we put, what, a third of our gross national product into making bombs. It's incredible.

Neil: Oh dear. Oh well. Rather you than me. [laughs]

Mark: So. Do we have anything more to talk about, about our respective problems? Ask me a question about my new record.

Neil: So this new record, what's it like?

Mark: Fuck you. [laughs]

Neil: Sorry.

Mark: Fuck you and your questions.

Neil: Just not practiced in the art.

Mark: Well, what's my new record like? It is an incredible uplifting journey through social relations. Truly beautiful and stunning. That's what my new album is like. That's what my whole life is like, this brilliant journey.

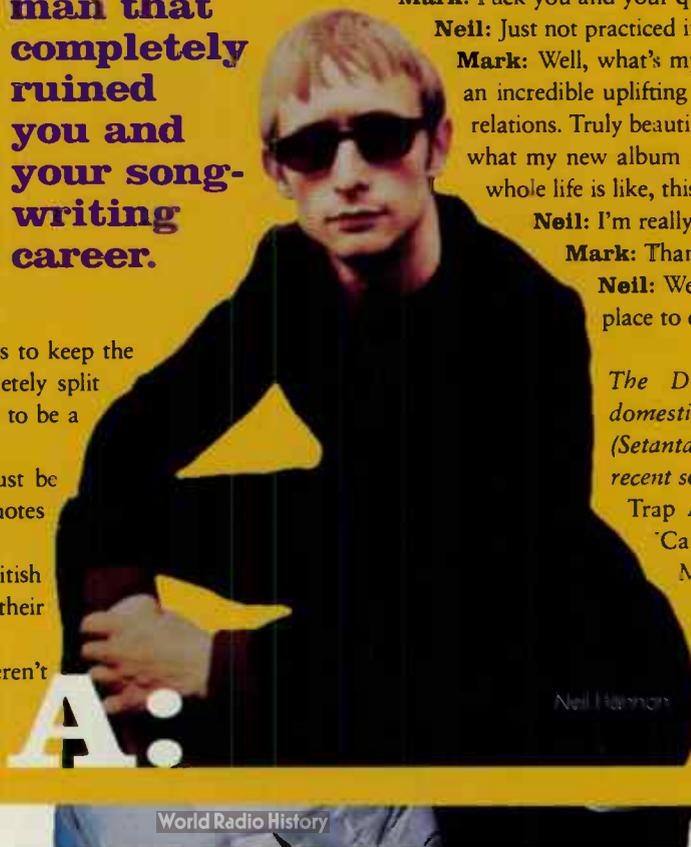
Neil: I'm really pleased.

Mark: Thank you.

Neil: Well, I think that's a good place to end, isn't it?

The Divine Comedy's first domestic release, Casanova (Setanta), and Mark Eitzel's recent solo album, Caught In A Trap And I Can't Back Out 'Cause I Love You Too Much, Baby (Matador), were both reviewed in the January issue.

I could be the man that completely ruined you and your songwriting career.



A:



L-R: Richard Davies
Archer Prewitt

the song of solo men

CHICAGOAN ARCHER PREWITT AND AUSTRALIAN EX-PAT RICHARD DAVIES CHAT ABOUT THE ART OF THEIR CRAFT

Archer: It seems that there is a specific ensemble presentation to your records.

Richard: I think that gets a little easier the more records I make. A little less complicated to explain. Also, I think, just writing the song as opposed to thinking enormously about how I'm going to make the record. Because some of the habits of making a record fall into place more now, and there's a little less thinking, I suppose, and restricting myself to the writing of the song.

Archer: So is there a certain amount of freedom that you give the other players?

Richard: It's give and take, really. Largely there is the assumption that they'll play what they play. And I think it would be difficult to script every bit

and counterpart. I mean, part of the fun or the adventure of it is just seeing how things occur. My own contributions to the recordings usually combine knowing what to expect and planning it before I go in, and just winging it in the studio. I try not to be too pedantic. And how about yourself when you go to make a record?

Archer: It's pretty similar. I think with *In The Sun* I was a little more precious with the sound that I ended up with. I wanted it fairly Spartan and crisp. As time passed and I played shows with some of the people from the record, I learned to rely on their input more. I find that there are pleasant surprises that I'll end up appreciating more than the decisions I may have made on my own. Is there a specific way of working that you bring to the recording sessions?

Richard: For me, the thing is the song and it always has been. If the people that you are working with on the record are good players and they are expressing themselves, then those two things are as much as you can... You don't want to get much more pedantic than that. You know, let them play and let that be a recording of that experience.

Archer: How do you go about writing songs?

Richard: It takes a long time for me to write a song, it seems. It starts off with an idea that I then polish for a long time. I think the process is my trying to make it sound complete. The initial idea suggests whether it would be a broad thing you're going to try and do or something quite simple and linear.

Archer: Does environment factor into your songwriting?

Richard: It definitely does. A good example of that would be the song "Crystal Clear" from the album. It completely came from the autumn in Saugerties in upstate New York. I hadn't been in the countryside when the leaves were changing colors like that, and living amongst it and seeing it occur for more than two weeks was really an interesting experience. It wasn't really a conscious thing to try and capture that, but rather just sitting down with the piano and that sort of tumbled out. And I know that with

the songs that I'm writing now, these slow moving quiet places definitely influence the way the music comes out. How about yourself? Because you live in a very urban environment...

Archer: I feel like there are certain chord arrangements that allude to cityscapes and things of this nature that have made an impact on me. Unconsciously the music will paint a picture for me. I know that I can't really work on [my comic book] *Sof' Boy* outside of Chicago, but if I come in off the street I have plenty to work with. Do you find that working on piano is more conducive to elliptical songwriting? Do you surprise yourself more on the piano?

Richard: Definitely. It's funny, though, because it also seems to

go back to the guitar. One informs the other. I know that with "Eye Camera" and "Days To Remember," those two songs come to mind as having that connection. It's hearing the chords that you like, and that transfers back to the guitar. Do you write on acoustic yourself?

Archer: It's a Guild acoustic-electric. It's nice because I can take it onstage and plug it in. I tend to prefer that acoustic resistance to the strings...

Archer: Did you study law at one time?

Richard: A little bit. I didn't finish. How about yourself?

Archer: Art school.

Richard: So did your comic book grow out of things you were doing there?

Archer: Well, I was always interested in comics, but in art school I studied printmaking, and working with the mass produced image probably nurtured that leaning.

Richard: Is *Sof' Boy* you, by the way? There's a certain similarity.

Archer: [laughs] A small part maybe, but there's also a lot that I see in other people. I aspire to be more like that character. Initially, Mark Greenberg from the *Coctails* triggered the character, I think. He's openly gregarious and cheerful at all times. I think *Sof' Boy* also stems from the way I deal with living in Chicago coming from a small town in Kentucky. It helps me laugh about it all. What's an average day for you?

Richard: Take the dog for a walk, and feed the dog. That's a big part of the day. Going to and from the front room where the music instruments are, incessantly. I tend to write for a few minutes and then I'll go off and do something else for awhile. So I'll go in and out of writing music all day for 12 or 14 hours, but never for hours at a stretch, always for a few minutes. That's if I'm writing. If I'm not writing, then I tend to think of how I'm going to get out of the music business. [laughs]

Archer: Does it depress you at times?

Richard: Ah yeah. Certainly everyone's been depressed by it at some point. It's still

exciting, as well. It's definitely an interesting life.

Archer: There's a more open feel to this record that's more akin to the live sound of say Neil Young's work as opposed to the orchestrations of *Pet Sounds*.

Richard: Yeah, I think I went through that sort of *Pet Sounds* period with the Cardinal record.

Archer: Or the Moles single "What's New Mary Jane." How did you record that song?

Richard: Yeah, that's pretty wild. That was more of a garage... orchestra. [laughs] But I think what I retained from that period was not so much Brian Wilson's methods of recording as much as his search and striving for a melody *continued on page 59*

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AND
REWARDING.



JANEANE GAROFALO
INTERVIEWS
EDDIE VEDDER ABOUT
PEARL JAM, GOD,
ART, AGE AND WHY
INTERVIEWS SUCK

The Truth

Janeane: This is Janeane Garofalo. I'm interviewing Eddie Vedder and we're at Brendan's, on [New York City's] Lower East Side. And my first question will not be a question, it will be a statement. Thank you for letting me interview you, because I know you don't like it, as I don't either. I'm in the stand-up and acting business, which is hard enough, but the music journalists are the harshest mistress. I have never read more people that are waiting for people to fail in my life. I have never seen more type of slanted writing wherein the person cannot wait for sophomore slump. Like with *No Code*, which sold *so many* units, you know what I mean? And there was one article which said "Why are these guys smiling?" It made zero sense to me. I don't understand where the rock journalist is coming from. Like, Chris Rock, when he hosted the Video Music Awards, he said "Here today, gone today." I don't know if you saw the video awards but he told everybody in the audience to look around, because you're not going to see the same people next year when you come to this event, sitting next to you. And I was thinking, what is it about the music business—not the fans and not the people that you work with, but the rock press—why is it that eager to tear down what they built up?

Eddie: I don't have answers because I don't do that myself, so I don't know. Even if I don't like someone or I really wish they'd go away, I think they do better with a little encouragement and reinforcement.

Janeane: I thought that Jamiroquai encouraging Hanson was a *really* good thing. You know how people like to make fun of Hanson, which I think is a horrible thing because they're children, and I would never take a shot at a child. And Jamiroquai came out and said, in their defense, "Why would you take pleasure in making fun of them? And also, they're children that clearly love making music. They make their own music and do their own thing. What is it that offends you so much about their presence in your business or in your life that you would tear them down?"

Eddie: I don't really know. I don't have those feelings so I don't know why they would either. I have the same question. You'd need to ask them. But I felt the same way with Hanson. They're fucking kids. I just wonder if they're going to peak way too early. And just the level of exposure. I didn't do that. I made the conscious decision not to be that band that's everywhere, that has its faces everywhere. I don't want to see anybody like that. I don't want to see anybody with that kind of repetition. I think maybe that's one of the reasons that people get sick of them.



[Tape stops]

Eddie: I don't dislike interviews. It's just like when you're doing a bunch, when you're trying to do a lot at once, it's just not fun anymore. I mean, it's actually a nice opportunity to have a good conversation about music. You do a lot of European press or international press and, for some reason, you're answering the same questions. And you do a few in a row and you start being cynical and not answering the way you would like to because you're bored. I think it's exciting. As long as you don't do a bunch, I'm excited to do it.

Janeane: I find that I enjoy doing interviews on television because they can't transcribe anything you said, they can't misinterpret anything you said. You say it and it's right there on TV. Like, I enjoy doing Letterman and Leno, *Daily Show*, whatever the hell it is. But I cannot stand doing print and I try and keep it as little as I can

because humor doesn't translate, irony doesn't translate, sarcasm. And the journalist is only out to, perhaps put you into the least flattering light they can put you into.

[Tape stops]

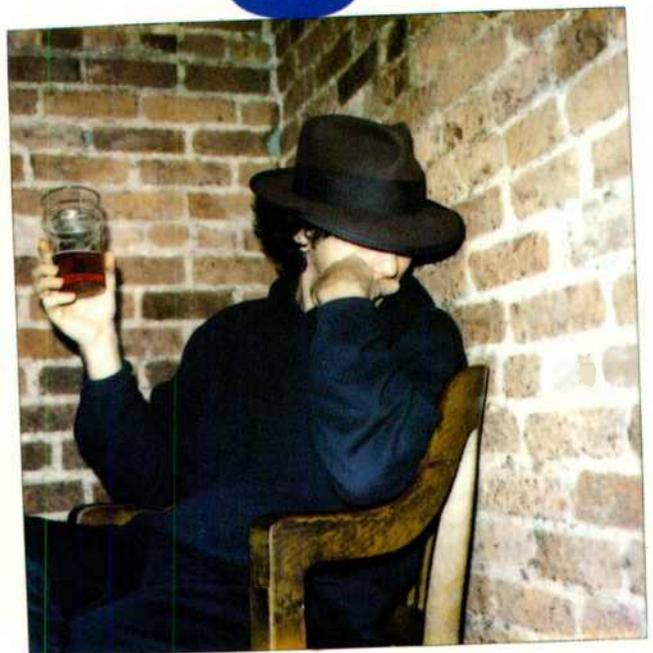
Janeane: When I look at you, I see more of a soft-spoken, gentle-type spirit. And then the vocals are manly-man, almost, somewhat aggressive in a way. Not even in a way. They are actually aggressive. And it just doesn't fit your physicality. There's nothing to say to that, I guess.

Eddie: But with a song, I would say that I would feel free to interpret and sing a song, if I'm writing something in the third person, sing it, like, first person. Even the "Evolution" song ["Do The Evolution"], which I happen to like...

Janeane: [laughs] The first mammal to wear pants.

Eddie: Yeah. And still doing it. Yeah, I feel like I'm not singing as me. In fact, I'm not. It's not about the way I

About Ed And Dogs



World Radio **PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HALSBAND**

feel. I'm singing as a guy who's completely drunk with technology and man's control, and excited by it, and just ignorant and drunk.

Janeane: You're like a bleacher seat guy at a Fenway game.

Eddie: I'm like a hunter, out with the boys, or a guy in a bulldozer, knocking over trees, really excited about how I'm manipulating the earth. So I think it would be too much to say it's like a character, but your voice wants to transmit that kind of energy, so it might not be the normal voice that you sing to your wife to, when you're hanging out singing to each other.

Janeane: As you are wont to do. I understand that. Your songs are sort of poetic. Like poetry, like these stream-of-consciousness lines that go together. Some are stories, but in this album, when I was looking at the lyric sheet that you sent me, it looked like, um, poetry. And I'm not saying that in a kiss-ass way, I'm saying that's how I interpolate it...

Eddie: Ooh, you *have* interviewed before. "Interpolate." Go ahead, sorry.

Janeane: When you write a lot of songs, do you find that it's easier to write about yourself or to write like, as you're being another person, like in the third person? Or writing about, like, say you see two people doing something, you see and experience when you're out and about, and you write about that as if you are the person.

Eddie: I have to admit that when the focus starts coming at you and you don't feel worthy of the focus and you want to continue writing songs and getting a point across, that you might tend to write more in the third person, even if it might have something to do with you in the song, just because you don't want it to be about you. You really want to create an ambiguous story where the moods fit, kind of everyone can relate to and it's not just about *me* and how *I* feel. Yeah, I think even if I wrote a song in the first person, I would change it to the third, for protection. And again, I just don't want the focus. It's not about me. It's not about

who I was in high school. It's really not... me. It's an art form where you can transmit. I've seen one or two pictures of a favorite architect I have—this guy [Antoni] Gaudi. I know what Kurt Vonnegut looks like. But I don't read [his books] thinking of his face. I'm thinking about what he's talking about and the people he's talking about. It's great that one person created this art but I look at the art, I'm not obsessed with the people behind it.

[Tape stops.]

Janeane: I always suspect when I hear a love song written by Bono, or somebody, Billy Joel, who-the-fuck-ever, I don't know. But how do they know anymore? They don't experience anything in a natural way anymore, ever. So, are they writing to gear toward the record-buyer or do they honestly feel... 'Cause I think there's a certain point where you really actually stop feel-

ing things in a natural way anymore. Nothing is just as it is. Everything's loaded. The stakes are higher... Baby, I don't want to give you anymore chips. I'm sorry, I'm not talking to Eddie, I'm talking to my dog. Eddie can have more chips if he wants.

Eddie: Somebody else was asked a similar question. It might have been Bonnie Raitt or something. They said "How can you still sing the blues? I mean, you've won Grammy Awards and your concerts are sold out or whatever." And she said, "I'm singing about things that I didn't forget." I thought that was a really good answer.

Janeane: And if you didn't hear what he said because he's so soft-spoken, he said "I'm singing about things I didn't forget." In a nutshell. But don't nutshell it, because that's not fair.

Eddie: I'm trying to let go of stuff that I didn't forget. Things that I'm kind of beyond. I just want to not live with all that still floating around in my head. So I'm thinking that, if it remains that I'm still kind of getting it out in songs, then it's actually healthy... But I'm really sensitive to anything that's manufactured and if I were doing it then I would know

that someone else knew I was doing it and I would just move on and just start writing really happy songs or something. Which, I think we're writing happier songs.

[Tape stops]

Eddie: At this point in the interview, Janeane's crawling around on the bar floor looking for a water glass that she set down for the dog and a hoof that—the PETA people might be upset that she's giving dogs hoofs to chew on.

[Tape stops]

Eddie: This is Janeane's regular haunt. She's now found someone to take her dog for a walk, so if there's less dog-barking in the next few lines, you might notice. Note to the transcriber: If you could include the dog barks in the script, that would be nice. And please include all the laughter. Because we've already discussed with print interviews you don't get to hear laughter and sarcasm.

[Tape stops]

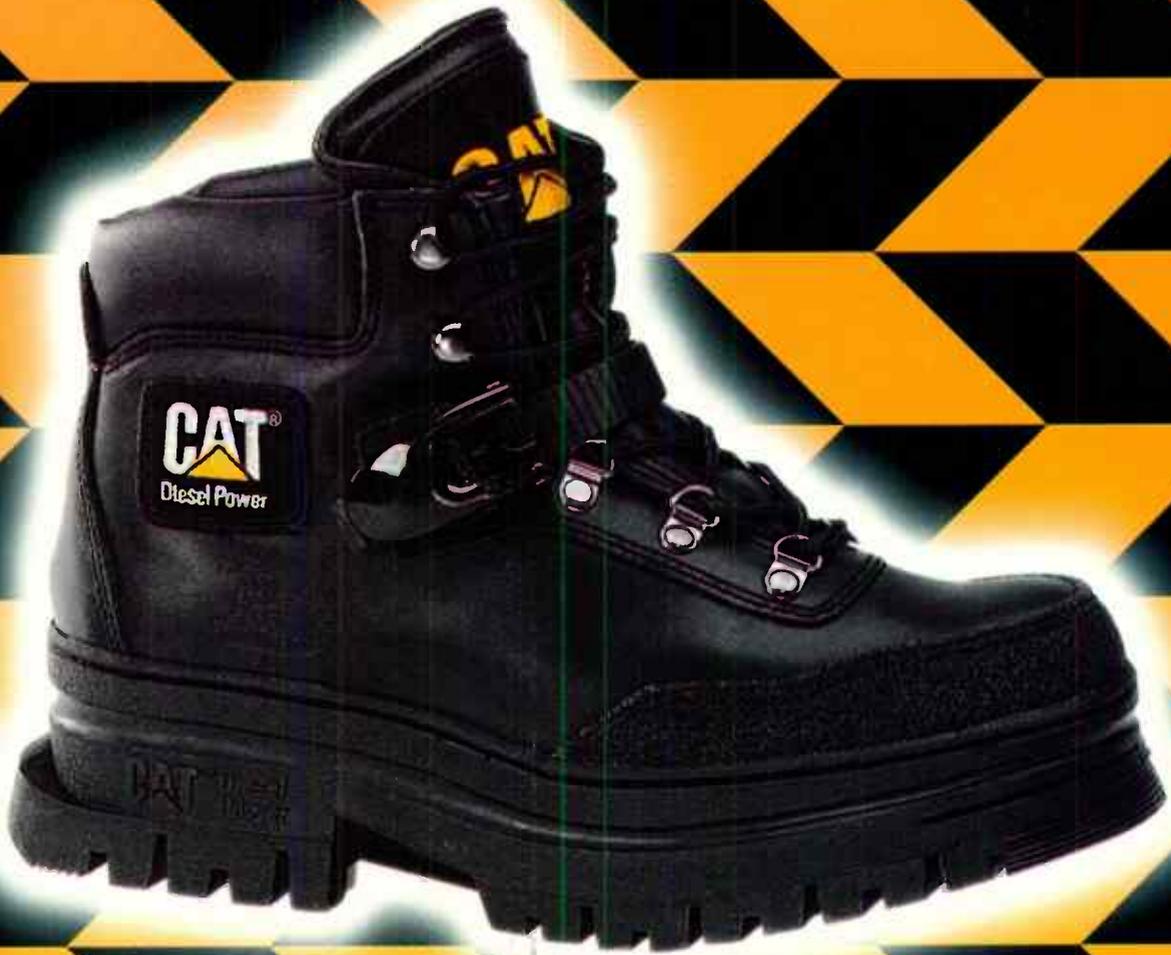
Janeane: They're not interested in making you...

Eddie: Human.

Janeane: Whatever it is, in my experience with the press it's been nothing but almost completely negative. And it destroyed my participation in *Saturday Night Live*, when I was on that briefly. The press made it the

Even if I wrote a song in the first person, I would change it to the third, for protection.





EARTHMOVING EQUIPMENT



most uncomfortable place to work because they can't understand when you say things in context. They just want to take the worst things. You do an interview and they don't care that you have to go back to work there on Monday. You know what I mean? And to tell the truth about *SNL* is to, in theory, badmouth them. And if you tell the truth about your working environment there, which is, for some strange reason, among the oddest and most unpleasant working environments in the history of television—and I think there's karmic reasons for that...

Eddie: You're still badmouthing them...

Janeane: [laughs] See, I don't think I'm badmouthing them. But to me, it's like stating your version of the truth, which is all I can do. If somebody asks me a question, all I can do is answer them. So, if somebody asks me, "Do you enjoy working there?" "No" is my answer. So to say "no" is to somehow blaspheme or to be a heretic of some kind at the *SNL* family. And what they do at *SNL*, or what they did at the time I was there, was they would Xerox copies of your interview and it would be there, as many as there were cast members. And they would have it on the table in the writers' room when you walked in. So there's 15 copies.

Eddie: You just have to get there early...

Janeane: [laughs] Scoop 'em all up. Yeah, it's just very strange. You cannot, in the press, tell the truth about things without these major repercussions. And the most interesting thing about entertainment is learning how to negotiate everyone that you

work with. Because you realize among your peers—I don't know if peers is the right word, whoever you work with or work for—to speak the truth is to somehow get yourself in trouble. And when



you show up for work the next time, you have explaining to do. And it's all because the journalists not only print the truth, but take the truth to a level where it's harmful and hurtful and mean-spirited, even though you didn't intend it to be anything of the sort. You know?

Eddie: I know. I'm going to relate to that by saying that, some of the things that I was saying at a certain point when a lot of... in Seattle, everything that would come out of there was really getting over-blown and our lives were changing drastically, really quick. And, again, there was everything that, kids growing up, including us, would wish for, in a certain way. But it started getting really crazy and really exploitative and some kind of bad things were happening. And if you said that "This isn't that cool. You know, I still love music but some of this stuff's getting really weird or really kind of fucked up," that's all they would print was that you hated... I still don't know how to communicate it the right way. It still sounds weird to me.

Janeane: The thing is you're not allowed your personal life. You're not allowed to

have an opinion. Why are your individual tastes and choices and all the things you might say about a topic turned into something that is somehow bratty or disingenuous or ungrateful?

Eddie: If you make good art—you're making people laugh or you're making people turn their stereos up—and you're doing good work, you should have the freedom to do your job any way you want. And maybe you *can*, but you just can't talk about it.

Janeane: So then why be interviewed? It's just an odd concept. I mean, you're agreeing to be interviewed by me or by whomever—I'm watching the wheels [of the tape recorder] like an annoying interviewer—and then somehow denied your right to express yourself in whatever would be your way of answering that question. I don't really understand what the payoff is or what the gain for the journalist is. Does the journalist actually enjoy when they type up the interview at night, making you look bad? Like, when the Lilith Fair was trashed—I'm still angry about that, when people were trashing the Lilith Fair. I don't know about the Lilith Fair, I wasn't there, but I know that

it was a great idea and a great thing and to look for things wrong with it makes me angry.

Eddie: It was trashed because it was successful. Because if it hadn't been successful, no one would have cared and no one would have said anything.

Janeane: Or they would have relished pointing out how unsuccessful it was.

Eddie: In a way, they get a story... No, I didn't mind doing the interviews that were brought—some of them—this time because... this time around, I really felt like just kinda saying, "Hey," and setting the record straight and talking to people that read *CMJ*, and maybe even get into issues. It's kind of weird because it's a one-way conversation. I mean, you're talking and they read it. But I'm really interested in college radio and I'm *really* interested every time I'm around someone or someone introduces themselves who works in college radio. I'm always interested in the kind of playlist that they have, who they're sponsored by, if they're funded by the school or if they actually have to do their own advertising or get their own advertising, if they're satellite or

if they're cable, how much freedom that they have as college radio people. That was, all of a sudden college radio a few years back, and I definitely don't have my finger on the pulse, I don't go to a college. Actually I never did, so I really didn't care at all. But just on a music level, 'cause that's where people kind of grow that go on further into radio. I'm just wondering what the atmosphere is like. Hopefully they're not having to do their own advertising and they get grants and things like that from the school.

[Side one of tape ends.]

Janeane: [Emphatically] *Role model.* Role model. You just missed the best, most profound statement by Eddie about role models that I can't even recreate because it was so

In my experience with the press, it's been nothing but almost completely negative.

good. Role model-wise: That is such an interesting concept to be thrust upon anyone. And they *always* put it on athletes. And it is, to me, in and of itself, kind of a racist construct. Like, you're the spokesmodel for the ghetto now. You're a black guy who made it out and he played ball. Everything you do is now scrutinized by every child in this ghetto, at the Cabrini-Green project. If you are to slip up and sleep with a woman, that is of—culturally speaking—loose morals, you have now disappointed the *entire* project. It's like, our community always expects the black man or the black woman to be the absolute paragon of... uh... I am

the *least* articulate woman in the world, so I can't say what I mean.

Eddie: What if they could work around this problem? What if *Time* magazine or *People* would highlight the doctors or scientists...

Janeane: Or *teachers!* Have you ever seen *Mystery Science Theater 3000*? At the end, in the credits, they say, "To the teachers of America." Did you ever notice that? Which is a really wonderful thing. And my father's retired but he's now a teacher. And he's teaching in the inner city in downtown Houston. And I talk to my Dad all the time. He doesn't get it. I feel so terrible for him. My dad, he's like 60 years old. He doesn't understand that kids can talk back now or use slang. He's just... uh... chagrined. Every night, he comes home and my father is chagrined at the back-talk. They're flippant, as he would say. And he

doesn't get it that that's the way it is now. You're going to go teach in the inner city and you're going to get kids that are going to talk back to you. And I'm not for kids "talking back,"

but also I'm not one for "you owe respect because a person's older than you." I've never understood that concept and I don't believe that. And I find that over and over again at the dog park, if I may be so bold as to utilize the dog-park analogy. When I go to the dog-park, sometimes there's dog owners who are elderly, if you will, and they're very rude. They're just not nice dog owners and they're not nice, kind

of communal-to-dog-park-culture nice people. Why do I have to be *really* nice to them because they're elderly? I mean, I don't feel good about telling an old woman to shut up...

Eddie: It's fine because you bring old folks up in such a negative way, but I've been realizing lately—and I thought this might be an interesting forum to bring it up in because basically college music is younger folk—but I'm kind of sick of hearing about young people, myself.

Janeane: You wanna come home with me for spring break? You know, hang out with my dad and his new wife? [laughs] They're 60. They're a lot of fun.

Eddie: It's the young teenagers—and this is *not* the Gen X thing at all, because that's despicable to have this large clump of people stereotyped. I feel like I've sat at a lot of tables for many hours, bitching about things with people that are youthful and have the energy to change things, but they're not. They're just coming up with negative questions and they're not coming up with *one* answer. And for the last year and a half, I'm over that. Just *over* it. The older people that I've met and spent a lot of time with recently... [like] a couple are here in New York that are in their late '50s, but they've got the energy of a bright-eyed 13-year-old and everything's possible, and if it's not, it's like Vonnegut looking at things kind of ironically. It's like changing a negative into something kind of beautiful or at least funny. And maybe that comes because they've been through it. Or these are people that *tried* to

change things, succeeded in small ways, but the problem still continued, and now they have complete perspective on it and it's not *that* bad anymore. Or it's an interesting subject but nothing to just sit around and be negative about. I feel like I'm really, *really* anxious to be old.

Janeane: You wanna get older? I don't think it's a bad thing and I'm not crinkling up my nose...

[Tape stops]

Eddie: At this point, Janeane's gone to get me another beer. They're from Seattle—they're called Red Hook. And she's shown me the pictures of her dogs. The other two that aren't here look like they could fit in each



one of her pockets. But, it's really pretty amazing because they're like kids. I think she called them kids earlier. That's lovely. I'm glad she had these dogs before her biological clock ran out.

[Tape stops]

Janeane: You know what I found interesting? Can I say this? Wheels spinning? Can I say this? At the MTV year-end wrap-up—I thought it was interesting, and it's a good demarcation of who enjoys the Spice Girls and entertainment for entertainment's sake, commerce for commerce, art being a different thing—the Puff Daddys, and people like that, the Spice Girls, they are so quick to say “No, people just wanna have fun. They don't want to think. They just wanna have fun. And three million people can't be wrong.” Whereas *artists* don't say that. People who actually write their own

stuff and care about it, don't have that opinion of “people don't want to think.” There's such an interesting dichotomy between who can't write and who's not that special to who is *special* and... I don't even know how special people swank in. I don't even know how you guys made it. That's what's interesting to me. And I'm not kissing ass, but I think you guys are very special. How did you get mass popularity? Suffice it to say that, ordinarily, it's odd that a band that is actually good lyricists and good musicians crack the mainstream to the degree that you guys have cracked it. And I'm not downplaying any super-mega bands that have done it, because they're all special, too. I'm a huge fan of The Who and Led Zeppelin and so on and so forth, but you know what I'm saying...

Eddie: OK, well hypothetically speaking, if I'm to answer the question, it's just pretending that, “Yeah, we are special,” or letting me believe that for a second...

Janeane: Well, all it has to be is that I believe it. You don't have to believe it.

Eddie: That's great. Because I probably don't. But I think it's something to be taken advantage of. It would be like if an Edward Albee play got attention. This is a great

thing. In a world of *Beauty And The Beast* on Broadway and *Miss Saigon*, with the huge helicopter that people come to see. An Edward Albee play getting attention...

Janeane: *Grease*, with Joe Piscopo? Are you even attempting to badmouth *Grease* with Joe Piscopo and Xena, warrior princess, as Rizzo? On stage. Yeah, Xena. She fucking kicks ass on stage, by the way, p.s., a Varga girl, come to life, on your New



York stage.

Eddie: Yeah, but that's for people who want to have a good time.

Janeane: Go ahead, smash the marketplace, I don't care, Eddie. Go ahead.

Eddie: It's never come out of [Edward Albee's] mouth: “People just want to have fun.” The last Edward Albee play I went to, it was a newer play so I hadn't read it or anything and I sit down at this thing and the curtain goes up and the first three lines are *completely* unnerving and uncomfortable and they're in a social situation between a family in a living room—I mean, it never moves out of this room. And I'm thinking, “Well, why do I like this? Why do I enjoy this so much?” And it's because I will *pay money* to watch people have conflict, personal conflict, on a real base, family, human level. It's entertainment in that I'm watching—but I'm not having fun. But I am! I'm not having fun like completely, goo-goo, ha-ha, guffaw. I'm thinking, “This happens. People need to know that this happens. This is helping me

deal with something that I've gone through.” And I'm both happy about that and *not* happy about it. But I know going in that I might have to deal with something here. He's putting a mirror up to society, but walking out of that, you can't just be like “I got my money's worth and I saw good special effects,” or “I got my money's worth because, God, that was fun,” or “I got my money's worth because it was so fun that the

date I had was holding my hand and we were laughing together,” or whatever. You came out a step ahead because you somehow understood the human condition a little bit more, or you knew that you were going to have these kinds of conflicts to look forward to when you're in your 50s and maybe it will help you when you get there. Or you see problems based on miscommunication or lack of communication and you think, “In my own life, maybe I'll keep it from getting that way.” So, I think, important art says something.

[Tape stops]

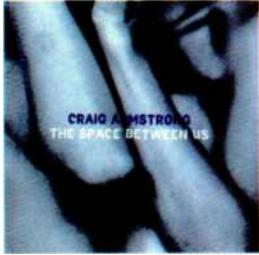
Eddie: OK, at this point, Janeane who, with my wife's permission, I'm totally in love with, and she is too without even having met her—she's gone off to look for the dog one more

time, and she's just finished, I think, glass of wine number three and she's really picking up speed, here. Here she comes.

Janeane: Can I ask what your feelings are about God?

Eddie: Sure. I think it's like a movie that was way too popular. It's a story that's been told too many times and just doesn't mean anything. Man lived on the planet—[placing his fingers an inch apart] this is 5000 years of semi-recorded history. And God and the Bible, that came in somewhere around the middle, maybe 2000. This is the last 2000, this is what we're about to celebrate [indicating about an 1/8th of an inch with his fingers]. Now, humans, *continued on page 57*

Grease, with Joe Piscopo? Are you even attempting to badmouth Grease with Joe Piscopo and Xena, warrior princess, as Rizzo? Go ahead Eddie, smash the marketplace, I don't care.



DATALOG:
Released Feb. 24.
FILE UNDER: Imaginary soundtracks.
R.I.Y.L.: Ryuichi Sakamoto film scores, Massive Attack, candlelight and romance.

CRAIG ARMSTRONG

The Space Between Us —
Melancholic/Caroline

■ There are two main schools of “orchestral pop”: songs by rock artists who integrate orchestration into their arrangements (Eric Matthews, Brian Wilson), and symphonic orchestras tackling pop hits (*Symphonic Pink Floyd*, *Saturday Night Fiedler*). Few brave souls have attempted to reconcile classical instrumentation and sonorities with pop structures and short attention spans, but Scotsman Craig Armstrong is a superlative contender. An alumnus of London’s Royal Academy of Music, he’s worked on tracks for Madonna, U2 and Tina Turner, composed half of the score for *Romeo & Juliet*, and collaborated extensively with Massive Attack. The most interesting cuts on his debut LP either lean heavily on his Bristol connections (the percussive “After The Storm”) or strip down to the bare bones (the impressionistic piano meditation “My Father”). But Armstrong’s experience and exposure is his Achilles’ Heel. Listeners traditionally hear the musical gestures he favors in supporting roles, in service of an image, a singer or another composer’s melodies. It doesn’t help that his forte is string arrangements, when countless film/TV composers have codified emotional clichés now inextricably linked with swelling violins. Two cuts feature Cocteau Twins’ Elizabeth Fraser and the Blue Nile’s Paul Buchanan, singers whose voices come loaded with set associations. Though there are beautiful moments here, it’s difficult to divorce these sounds from their customary contexts; listening to “Weather Storm,” you’ll be waiting for the car commercial to begin. —Kurt B. Reighley

BEDHEAD

Transaction De Novo —
Trance Syndicate

■ Talk about a band’s “three-guitar attack,” and it conjures one of two mental images: either a Glenn Branca-style white-noise wall, or hair-farming metalheads playing screaming twin leads. Bedhead uses three guitars to create its immaculate mope-rock, but the effect is so quiet and understated that on first listen, you’d swear you were listening to a stripped-down trio. A more careful listen, though, reveals the guitars gently weaving together in complicated counterpoint, building a fragile and elegant spider



DATALOG:
Released Feb. 10.
FILE UNDER:
Somber minimalism.
R.I.Y.L.: Low, Rex, Galaxie 500.

web of strummed chords. The overall effect, combined with a shuffling beat, wispy, tentative vocals and introspective lyrics, is one of drowsy melancholy. *Transaction De Novo* sees the Dallas band expanding its somewhat limited horizons, focusing more on varied dynamics. “Parade” builds to several wrenching crescendos and “Extramundane” is an outright surprise—a catchy, rock-tempo piece, bolstered by a Mo Tucker-inspired chugging, thumping rhythm. But even *Transaction De Novo*’s few bursts of rocking-out remain spare and restrained. It’s a beautiful album—one which, instead of bludgeoning you, cuts deeply with sharp and finely controlled strokes. —David Jarman

BEVIS FROND

North Circular — Flydaddy

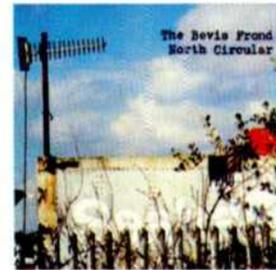
■ Master guitarist, eloquent singer/songwriter, home-studio savant, influential ’zine publisher and indie-label entrepreneur are



North
Circular is an
embarrassment of
lo-fi riches,
overflowing with
bittersweet
pop gems.

some of the ways Nick Saloman, the man behind the moniker Bevis Frond, has made his presence known over the past decade. And as if the sheer depth and

range of Saloman’s musical talents and ventures aren’t impressive enough, well, there’s the prolific nature of the Bevis beast—11 albums in as many years. Like a one-man Guided By Voices, Saloman and his home studio have churned out enough quality material to fill at least one box set (and to collaborate with Mary Lou Lord, a big Bevis fan and coverer of Saloman’s tunes) before anyone really noticed there was a psychedelic revival taking place around his *Ptolemaic Terrascope* magazine. The double-disc *North Circular* is Saloman’s *Bee Thousand*, a low-key wake-up call, an embarrassment of lo-fi riches, a two



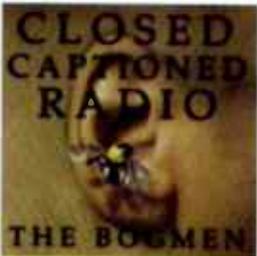
DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 3.
FILE UNDER: Psychedelic rock and pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Guided By Voices, Hüsker Dü, Elephant 6 Recording Company.

hour-plus masterwork overflowing with bittersweet pop gems (including the Lord staple “He Had You”), and extended psychedelic guitar excursions. More than anything, Saloman, who plays all the instruments on *North Circular* (guitar, bass, drums, keyboards, harmonica), brings to mind Hüsker Dü at its creative peak: He’s got Bob Mould’s guitar chops, Grant Hart’s way with melancholy melodies and, in *North Circular*, a double disc as convincing as *Zen Arcade* was back in ’84. —Matt Ashare

BOGMEN CD

Closed Captioned Radio — **Arlsta**

■ If the sound of a record is any guide to the size of venue a band wants to perform in, someone (possibly producer Bill Laswell) expects Manhattan's Bogmen to be headlining sportsdomes in the immediate future. Every track here is saddled with the sort of huge reverb that bespeaks inflated ambition. Many bands use such bombast to hide a lack of ideas, but the Bogmen have more good ones than most. Guitarist William Ryan is equally adept at sharp leads and undifferentiated grind, while the rhythm section constructs fragmented patterns that are a cut above typical modern rock time-keeping. Several songs have a lurching, seasick feel, as if U2 had become the pit band for the Threepenny Opera. Only keyboardist Brendan Ryan seems superfluous, except on a theatrical cover of Paul Anka's "You Are My Destiny." Bill Champion's insinuating vocals strangely recall those of



DATALOG: Released Feb. 10. First single "Failing Systems."
FILE UNDER: Arena alternative.
R.I.Y.L.: Radiohead, U2, Hunters & Collectors.

Thin White Rope's Guy Kyser, while his lyrical concerns lean toward vague social ills and well-phrased existential grandstanding ("I don't claim to have the key to life, but I can pick the lock"). There are more than a few genuinely artful moments here, but Laswell deserves no credit for mistaking big sounds for big ideas. —*Franklin Bruno*

BUFFALO DAUGHTER

New Rock — **Grand Royal**

■ The Japanese group Buffalo Daughter's early work was interesting and not much more: The band had clever arrangements, and its production of Takako Minekawa's *Roomie Cube* was coolly peculiar, but it seemed too often torn between the conventions of big rock and its impulses toward synthesizer mayhem. Last year's remix collection, *Socks, Drugs And Rock 'N' Roll*, seems to have demonstrated how the band can make those fit together, though. The

"new" in the title of *New Rock* is significant in more than one way: The album draws on the innovations of Neu!, the early-'70s German band that gave Stereolab its initial *raison d'être*, but twists its regularized *motorik* rock beat into more playful shapes. The title track, among others, is a mechanical single-chord work-



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Finding the groove in unexpected places.
R.I.Y.L.: Recent Stereolab, Tortoise, early Luscious Jackson.

out brought to life with roughneck guitar, as coolly propulsive and heady as you could want, but also physical in a way that the metronomic underground rarely is. Parts of *New Rock* still seem more like exercises than songs: "Rhythm And Basement" consists primarily of its title chanted endlessly alongside breakbeats and acid bleeps. Mostly, though, Buffalo Daughter has figured out how to make the new pop of the last few years, with its synths and loops and groove-sense and disdain for singing's logocentrism, kick like old rock. Guitars—how could we have forgotten them? —*Douglas Wolk*

CALIFONE

Califone EP — **Flydaddy**

■ While Chicago's brilliantly blurred sounding blues reconstructionists Red Red Meat have broken up, the lovely and strange Califone (with RRM core members Tim Rutili, Ben Massarella and Tim Hurley) will undoubtedly satiate old fans, and may attract a few new ones. Over the course of four full-lengths, RRM explored with aban-



DATALOG: Released Feb. 24.
FILE UNDER: Blues-drone trance-pop
R.I.Y.L.: Red Red Meat, Tricky, Big Star's 3rd.

Buffalo Daughter has figured out how to make the new pop, with its synths and loops, kick like old rock.

don the tensions between pop song and loose jam, distorted noise and crisp melody, heavy heaviness and sweet, heavenly light. Califone is the perfect continuation of Red Red Meat's vast, loose, narcotic sound. The band

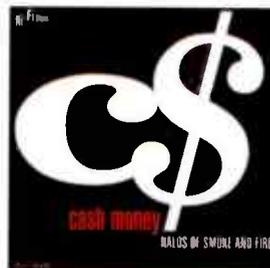
members have plugged their amps into their computers, crafting a few phat, but rockist, beats, then sampling, looping and thoroughly messing with sounds they've made themselves on keyboard and guitar. Rutili's vocal chords are as strangely twisted an instrument as the de-tuned, ringing, snaking, heavy riff guitars and minimally-thunked pianos that are the focus throughout; his voice sounds like a pre-pubescent schoolboy one second, an octogenarian janitor the next. The words are imagistic and playful while the music floats in between delicate, desiccated pop ("Silvermine Pictures," "Red Food Old Heat") and textured, dub-minded, rhythmic dissonance ("Arab Loop," "Tongue Bank"). But as fine as this record is, something tells me it's just the start of something great. —*Mike McGonigal*

CASH MONEY

Halos Of Smoke And Fire —

Touch And Go

■ Though the band makes a point of denying similarity to "contemporary artists" in this album's liner notes, instead shouting out



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Thudding psychobilly.
R.I.Y.L.: Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Railroad Jerk, Reverend Horton Heat, Doo Rag.

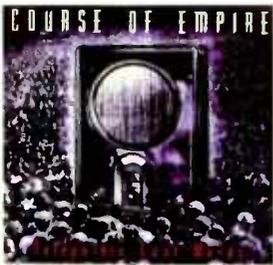
to Johnny Cash, Elvis and ZZ Top, Cash Money has much in common with the down-and-dirty likes of Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and Railroad Jerk. C\$ is less arty and distant than either, and far less slick and schticky than Southern Culture On The Skids—this duo knows that the only way to stay true to its rootsy models is to keep the music simple and loose. John Humphrey's

sludged-out, moderately proficient guitar and Scott Giampino's drumming (Russell Simins, meet John Bonham) often go their separate ways, only to fuse back together for big, dumb-ass riffs on "Do It Again" and the truck-stop love theme "Pie And Gas." Wisely, most tracks add some tone color (organ, washboard, even electric sitar) to the monolithic mud. The Dirty Three's violinist Warren Ellis contributes his patented modal sawing to the multi-sectioned "Mask Of Amontigo," the record's least genre-bound excursion. One complaint: Humphrey's vocals (except on the acoustic-based "Evangeline") tend toward overmodulated garble in the usual white-pomo-blues mold, while the artists Cash Money claims as heroes weren't above a dose of melody. —*Franklin Bruno*

COURSE OF EMPIRE

Telepathic Last Words — TVT

■ *Telepathic Last Words* is Course Of Empire's stab at making a big album, a genre-crossing epic that people will



DATALOG:
Released Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER:
Over-achieving
indusrtro-metal.
R.I.Y.L.: Faith No
More, Sound-
garden, Tool.

listen to for hours on end. If the band ultimately misses, it won't be for lack of ambition. On its long-delayed second album, Course Of Empire delivers an impressive

sound that charts somewhere between pre-MTV Soundgarden and post-MTV Trent Reznor. Along the way, the group diverges from its psychedelic metal roots to deliver strong tracks like the dance-tinged "The Information," the industrial-edged "Automatic Writing #17" and "Ride The Static," a moody, melodic ballad that's like the second coming of "Black Hole Sun." By the time you get to the Rolling Stones pastiche "Captain Control" and the *Twin Peaks*-esque cover of Rodgers and Hart's "Blue Moon" (with

creepy experimental bonus track), you'll wonder if there's anything

this band won't try. The only flaw in the plan is the lyrical muddiness, and a few songs that outstay their welcome. While Course Of Empire's first album was obsessed with conspiracy theories, the topic this time is information overload. (Will anyone who doesn't already have information

overload, please raise his hand?) Still,

give the group props: Instead of sticking with an established sound, it fearlessly strikes out into new territory and finds more than a few gems. —*Heidi MacDonald*

Course Of Empire's sound is somewhere between pre-MTV Soundgarden and post-MTV Trent Reznor.

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ALBUM IN STORES FEB. 3
MOVIE IN THEATERS FEB. 13

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CUBANATE CD

Interference — Wax Trax!/TVT

■ Industrial music—the genre-tag that once referred to noise pioneers like Einstürzende Neubauten and later techno-rock hybrids like Ministry, Nine Inch Nails and Meat Beat Manifesto—has taken its share of badgering in recent years, and for just cause. Compared to the complex breakbeat rhythms, adventurous sampling and soundscape textures of '90s electronica, much of what's dubbed industrial these days sounds stale and uninspired, as if the artists remain lost in late-'80s limbo and haven't heard any new music past NIN's *Pretty Hate Machine*. Then there's Cubanate, a band that does much more than embrace the new form of this electronic age: It flips it, rips it and recreates it in its own horrific, apocalyptic image. *Interference*, the British duo's fourth



DATALOG: Release date: Apr. 14.
FILE UNDER: Industrial breakbeat metal.
R.I.Y.L.: Atari Teenage Riot, Nine Inch Nails, Ministry.

release, is a brash and rash departure from the band's previous offerings. Produced by Rhys Fulber (formerly of Front Line Assembly), this 10-track release is a menacing mix of hardstep drum 'n' bass beats, slicing guitar riffs, frightening ambient textures and fierce vocal exorcisms. The result is some of the most audacious and challenging music to come from the guitar-plus-keyboard equation in years. With this skull-rattling combination—as monstrous as Ministry, as intelligent as Goldie, as compelling as Atari Teenage Riot—Cubanate has entered a class that defies current categorization.

—M. Tye Comer

CURVE

Come Clean — Estupendo/
Universal

■ Electronica was just begging to be co-opted by loud guitar and pop bands, so Curve's transformation/reformation isn't really a big surprise in the scheme of things. That said, brace yourself for a bunch of tiny surprises on *Come Clean*, because they



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10th.
FILE UNDER: Brit-beat wash.
R.I.Y.L.: Björk, Scala, Laika.

reveal themselves in every song in the form of those basic staples of pop: hook and melody. Curve's basic premise hasn't strayed much: This duo still loves to bury the melody in the dirt, the difference is the dirt now consists of bulky dance floor rhythms rather than layers of guitars. Although guitars still stretch and expand on command, just as often they exist as loops and sequencing stunts. What's frustrating about *Come Clean*, though, is what was also a problem with the earlier incarnation of Curve: The band seems to be a one-trick pony, following an idea so focused and exclusionary that it limits the scope of its own records. *Come Clean* has some great songs—especially the first single, "Chinese Burn"—but over the course of 60-odd minutes the sound gets so repetitive that subtle variations on a similar theme seem rather pointless. Curve has created a really powerful sound; now if only it would make a powerful statement with it. —Randall Roberts

DIMITRI FROM PARIS

Sacrebleu — Atlantic

■ *Sacrebleu*, the first album from Parisian DJ, remixer and arranger Dimitri From Paris, could easily be called *Music For Today's Space Age Bachelor Pad*. He updates the swanky vibe of Burt Bacharach and Martin Denny with his distinctly European technological savvy, incorporating fitting samples and a mellow acid jazz strain. The only vocals are in the form of samples, ladies ruminating in French and



DATALOG: Released Feb. 17.
FILE UNDER: Loungey club music.
R.I.Y.L.: Pizzicato Five, Topsy, Getz/Gilberto, Air.

the sonorous male voices of '60s demonstration records, leaving the focus casually on the music. The album's 18 tracks are alternately suitable for bedroom toe-tapping and height-of-party mayhem, with an emphasis on the former; "Sacre Francais" shimmies to a bossa nova beat and the disco-y "Back In The Daze" employs clubby, chanting vocals and a synth bed that suggests Madonna more than Françoise Hardy. Monsieur Dimitri is also not without a sense of humor, bestowing his songs with titles like "Dirty Larry" and "Le

Moogy Reggae." Even so, what stands out more than individual tracks is a consistently enjoyable mood that is as much a part of today's electronic revolution as the decades-old one *Sacrebleu* nods to.

—Lydia Vanderloo

Cubanate has entered a class that defies categorization.

DR. DIDG

Serotonality — Hannibal

■ Dr. Didg is a British trio led by Dr. Graham Wiggins, an expert on the physics of the fascinating, droning instrument created centuries ago by Australian aboriginal peoples, the didgeridoo. *Serotonality* is a tech-



DATALOG: Released Feb. 24.
FILE UNDER: Funky world beat.
R.I.Y.L.: Outback, *Pure Moods* compilation, *Star Wars* bar music.

nically adept record that attempts to meld the ancient instrument to the zany modern sounds of psychedelic rock, Meters-style funk and rave-scene techno. The instrument—basically a long tube that is blown into at one end using circular-breathing techniques—is used in interesting ways that highlight its percussive potential. The weird, bubbling sound has previously been used by musicians the world over to explore its excellent textural/trance capabilities. But *Serotonality* sounds like mediocre TV soundtrack music that just happens to have a didgeridoo buried in it somewhere. "Brand New Shoes" threatens to be inter-

esting, but the shimmery new age keyboards, fake sax synth and softcore woogie guitar deny the possibility. Perhaps decades hence this peculiar example of world beat Cheese Whiz may be served up as retro camp, and thoroughly enjoyed as such. Until then, it is sincerely suggested that the Doctor devote his skills to the world of physics and give music a break.
—Mike McGonigal.

DROPKICK MURPHYS

Do Or Die — Helicat

■ It's not every day that an American punk band comes along and combines Irish music with the occasionally brutal aggression of oi!, but that's just what the Dropkick Murphys, a fiercely Irish-American punk quartet from Boston, are successfully doing. The Murphys take the characteristically violent oi! (an explicitly roughneck brand of street punk originated in Britain)



Dropkick Murphys
Do Or Die

DATALOG:
Released Jan. 27.
FILE UNDER: Irish-American oi! punk.
R.I.Y.L.: Rancid, the Business, Stiff Little Fingers, the Pogues.

and temper it with bagpipes and jigs, and it works. They go a bit overboard with the Irish thing every now and again—the album's weakest

moments come when the band abandons the punk element altogether and attempts a couple of Irish ballads—but for the most part the Murphys balance their influences nicely. The result is an impressively well-rounded debut. There is something strangely inspiring about a record like this: The noble portrayal of America's working class, the unfettered perspective on life (which consists of honest work, loyal friends and a pint of stout at the end of the day), and the rambunctious spirit add up to some pretty distinct and powerful blue-collar anthems, neat little packages of pride and attitude, that are a hell of a lot of fun, especially in a pub. —Kelso Jacks

FASTBALL

All The Pain Money Can Buy — Hollywood

■ There's always something a little lacking in rock songs about being in a rock band. But Fastball, maybe without trying, creates something fascinating over the course of *All The Pain Money Can Buy*: verisimilitude. These songs aren't about playing rock so much as all the trials associated with forging that kind of career, put into terms that are easy to



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Working class heroes.
R.I.Y.L.: Replacements, Soul Asylum, Urge Overkill.

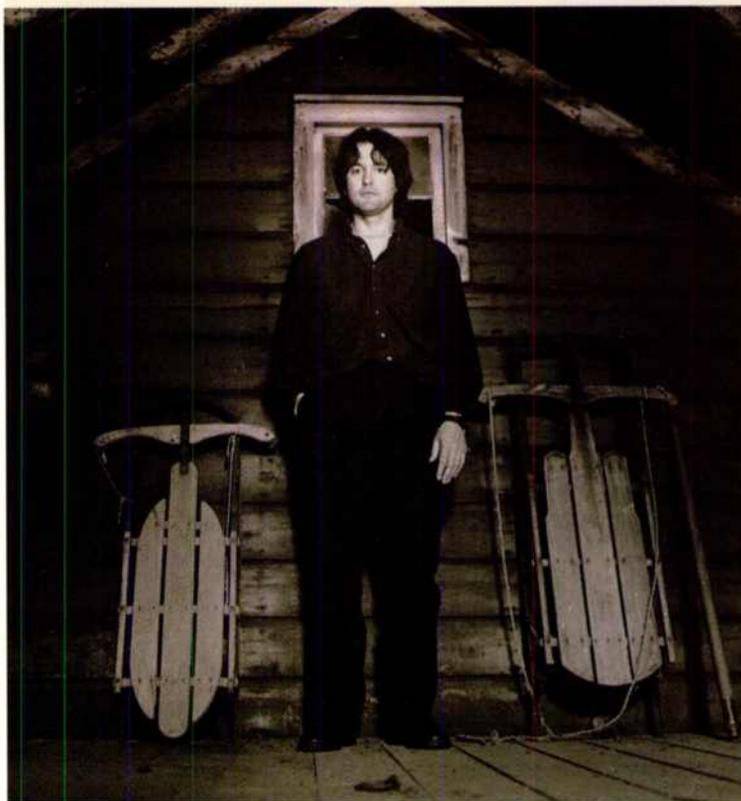
empathize with. Even the relationship songs are less about "you and I" than the conflicted aspirations of any pursuit where you feel both success-

Richard Davies telegraph

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ful enough to keep going and like a shithead for trying. The record never gets really pen- sive—it maintains a sort of a low-grade anxiety—mostly because the band is able to lose the love woes and money troubles in the same place where so many of us lose ours, in letter- perfect rock songs. The record buying public seems to have found undeniable pop hooks played on guitar, bass and drums eminently deniable of late, so there's no telling on how many faces "Damaged Goods" or "Fire Escape" will force a smile. But that's part of the struggle that defines *All The Pain Money Can Buy*, and what makes overachievers like "The Way," which deftly slips from recording studio effects and border town detritus into a '70s AM radio chorus, such a joy. —Scott Frampton

Gaze sounds like teen angels with a serious case of teen angst.

FLavour Of The Weak repre- sents further changes for the mercurial and prolific duo. For one thing, it intro- duces Bill Leeb's newest sidekick, Chris Peterson. It also sees more experimenta- tion with techno elements (although this may have been done with a resigned chuckle, if the album's title is any indication). Don't worry, however, as this doesn't mean you'll hear any breakbeats, jazzy samples or warbling



DATALOG: Released Jan. 13.
FILE UNDER: Old- school electro-beat.
R.I.Y.L.: Skinny Puppy, Front 242, Leæther Strip.

divas. All it means is more propulsive beats and stripped-down arrangements, down- playing the usual heavily layered stew of synths, samples and Leeb's sandpapery vocals—more along the lines of his albums released under the moniker Intermix. On the whole, the signature FLA sound—verse- chorus songwriting, sinister minor-key melodies, percolating 16th-note bass lines— is still quite recognizably intact, perhaps too intact. Even longtime rivetheads may admit

FLA isn't sounding as relevant as it used to (except on the nightmarish, Aphex Twin-ish hidden bonus track). But those looking for a dark and atmospheric antidote to the vacuous strains in much of today's electron- ic dance music will eat up *FLavour Of The Weak*. —David Jarman

GAZE

Mitsumeru — K

■ The twenty-something girls of Gaze sound like teen angels with a serious case of teen angst. Listening to the 14 songs on this Vancouver trio's debut is like stumbling upon a collection of letters to their ex- boyfriends. Some are regretful musings ("I hope life's treating you better than I did"), some are confrontational kiss-offs ("You are a loser, you are a jerk"). Aside from a few overly cutesy metaphors involving jellybeans and cotton candy, the women express their emotions in plain terms. Vocalists Megan Mallet and Miko Hoffman manage to sound sweet while getting a few things off their



DATALOG: Released Feb. 10.
FILE UNDER: Emotional indie pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Tiger Trap, Heavenly, Crabs.

FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY

FLavour Of The Weak —

Metropolis

■ In industrial dance's late-'80s heyday, Front Line Assembly was at the forefront, but has since constantly had to scramble to find a niche in the techno-dominated '90s: The band employed metal-guitar sampling on 1994's *Millennium* and last year it dabbled in successful experiments with world- beat ambience (recording as Delerium).

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chests, their voices stretching over a lo-fi mix of jangling guitars and the steady beats of drummer Rose Melberg (Tiger Trap, Softies, Go Sailor). Thankfully, there are a few shifts in tempo and intensity, but their emotions start to sound same-y and repetitive. By the time you reach the next-to-last track, "X-Reel," Maller's worries about not being cute enough, not being cool enough and dressing well enough to impress some boy just sound whiny. It leaves you wishing that there were a few more tracks that shouted "girl power," like the bouncy, keyboard-fueled "Anyway 6." —Wendy Mitchell

GODHEADSILO

Share The Fantasy — Sub Pop

■ Former Fargo, North Dakota, boys Mike and Dan are now seven years into what's probably best appreciated as one of the more persistent punk-rock joke bands to come out of Olympia, Washington, in the '90s. The joke is that Mike and Dan can outdo any of the heavy-artillery grunge and industrial alternatives when it comes to volume, distortion and pure ear-lacerating noise using nothing more than drums (Dan), bass (Mike) and some very large amplifiers. They don't have any punch lines, just plenty of punch. Which makes godheadSilo



DATALOG: Released Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER: Revenge of the punk rock nerds.
R.I.Y.L.: Melvins, Big Black, Blue Cheer.

something of a shaggy dog story, unless you count clever little touches like the sound of a full orchestra tuning up, which is tacked on to the beginning of *Share The Fantasy*, or the gentle piano and feedback etude ("Dan Vs. Fellow Dan") hidden among the disc's pile-driving bass riffs and thundering drums, neither of which gets much of a comic set-up. Like the duo's 1996 release *Skyward In Triumph*, *Share The Fantasy* is more song-based than godheadSilo's first couple of releases. So there are now more recognizable verses and choruses, as well audible lyrics like "You suck" and "We're so cool." They're kidding, of course, but you already knew that. —Matt Ashure

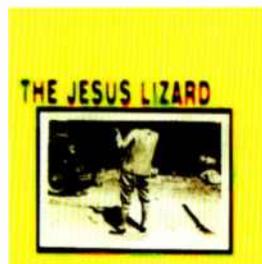
"Needles For Teeth" is the most exciting song the Jesus Lizard has done in eons.

JESUS LIZARD

EP — Jetset

■ As the Lizard circus rolls along, there are a few things you can continue to take for granted: the flexed rhythm at the heart—that *pound* that drives

everything—the horror-bellow David Yow mastered a decade ago that has yet to grow weary, and Duane Denison's contrarian guitar. Like a prominent scar you've long since forgotten, these characteristics are easily overlooked. The first cuts on this five-song EP dangle the classic Jesus Lizard bait that's easy to lunge at, especially "Cold Water." From there, though, things get fucked up as the band discovers—brace yourselves—subtlety. That these five songs are produced by John Cale, Andy Gill (of Gang Of Four fame) and Jim O'Rourke is a good indication as to why, but it's the execution of these



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 24.
FILE UNDER: A less venomous Lizard.
R.I.Y.L.: Denison/Kimball Trio, Shellac, Birthday Party.

ideas on the final two instrumentals that reveals a fresh face to the Jesus Lizard. "Valentine" is a gorgeous, slow bass solo that trails off at the end, and "Needles For Teeth," the most exciting song the band has done in eons, mixes a (gasp) synthetic beat with a dose of piano and (gulp) synthesizer, all combining to create something truly magical, albeit far removed from your standard Jesus Lizard stomp. —Randall Roberts

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KARL HENDRICKS TRIO

Declare Your Weapons — Merge

■ Pittsburgh indie-rock guitar hero Karl Hendricks returns with his sixth album under the guise of his trio. *Declare Your Weapons* swaggers with the same elegance and punchiness of its predecessor, *For A While, It Was Funny*, but the band tempers the braying rhythms and six-string assaults with ruminative downtempo tracks. A prodigious guitarist, Hendricks plays searing leads on songs like “A Letter To The Coach” and “The Policeman’s Not Your Friend,” interspersing his crisp, un-ironic vocals to break any fast-fingered musical monotony. He unveils a keen melodic sense that matches his crafty wit on three of the album’s best songs: the rave-up “Like John



DATALOG:
Released Feb. 10.
FILE UNDER:
Anxiety rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Silkworm,
Dinosaur Jr, The(e)
Speaking Canaries,
Cobra Verde.

Travolta”; the brooding “Your Lesbian Friends”; and the anthemic “When Will the Goddamn Poor Wise Up?” Taken at face value, this might seem like another testosterone-rock record, but Hendricks clearly labors over his lyrics, examining the intricacies of relationships with a detail one might not expect from a source that proffered an album called *The Karl Hendricks Trio Sings About Misery and Women* a few years back. These basic subjects still dominate, but the veteran guitarist and songwriter has developed a guileful approach to these age-old topics, and he’s set his thoughts to music that celebrates rock’s ragged glory and its subtleties as well. —Richard Martin

CHERI KNIGHT

The Northeast Kingdom

— E-Squared

■ It’s so nice to have the *real* Cheri Knight back. After her last album, *The Knitter*, which came across as something of a Neil Young tribute in its sound, it seemed as though she’d lost the voice she’d gained with her previous band, the Blood Oranges. But here she is, at full strength, showing



DATALOG:
Released Feb. 10.
FILE UNDER:
Sublime alt-country.
R.I.Y.L.: Blood Oranges,
Emmylou Harris,
Whiskeytown.

that she can still write and sing drop-dead gorgeous songs. The Blood Oranges were alt.country before it even had a name, but Knight’s work is more full-blooded than any genre: “Dar Glasgow” is as haunting as any traditional ballad, and then the arpeggiated twang for “Rose In The Vine,” the best Smithereens song that band never wrote. From there it’s all over the map—“If Wishes Were Horses” outdoes the (old) Stones’ country side, and “Crawling” could be off an Emmylou Harris album. Contributions from Harris, Steve Earle and Will Rigby put Knight in good company. Holding it all together is Knight’s voice, which manages to be both fragile and sinewy at the same time. From honky-tonk to heartbreak, she can do it all. —Chris Nickson

LIQUOR GIANTS

Every Other Day At A Time

— Matador

■ Barely a year after their Matador debut, Ward Dotson’s Liquor Giants return with another satisfying collection, which tacks on to its 14 listed songs a full 11 bonus tracks. And though Dotson is a home studio maven, playing nearly everything but drums here, these aren’t GBV-style toss-offs; several secret songs are as catchy and detailed as those on the “real” album. Dotson’s fecundity is tied to his formalism; when a strong chorus and some well-arranged guitar parts are a song’s prime ambition, why not write 20 instead of 10? *Every Other Day* does show some development, being far less riff-driven than *Chocolate Clown*, and employ-



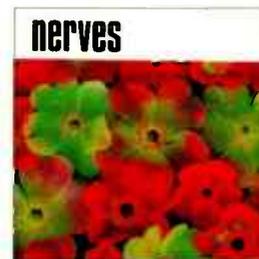
DATALOG: Released Feb. 24.
FILE UNDER:
’80s-style guitar rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Pontiac Brothers, Replacements, late dB’s, Sloan, Tommy Keene.

ing Beach Boys-influenced backing harmonies that would make the Apples In Stereo green with envy. Dotson’s specialty is that rarity, the believable love song, and this album has its share, notably the sunny “It’s Raining Butterflies” and the Rickenbacker-sweetened “Dearest Darling.” Other riches include a cover of Bowie’s “Boys Keep Swinging,” and the best vocal hook ever written around the word “motherfucker.” True, nothing here couldn’t have been written or recorded in, oh, 1987, but if you have a guilty nostalgia for the days when melody and smarts poured like water out of the world’s Westerbergs and Holsapples, Dotson’s your man. —Franklin Bruno

NERVES

The Nerves — Thrill Jockey

■ The best punk rock songs are constructed as perfect circles: The beginning and end kiss and continue like a dog chasing its tail. The final chord could abruptly break into one last chorus or start all over at its beginning. Chicago’s Nerves create this type of song: a perpetual circuit of energy that feeds on itself. But for them, one or two laps



DATALOG:
Released Feb. 10.
FILE UNDER: Old school punk
R.I.Y.L.: Wipers, Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments, Pere Ubu’s “Birdies.”

around is more than enough. Like the Minutemen before them, they seem to be so bursting with ideas that they can barely wait to finish a song for fear that they’ll lose the idea for the next one (this debut features 13 songs in 27 minutes!). The Nerves have no need for fuzz boxes or effects pedals to state their case, just a clean, edgy guitar sound, some drums and the manic, high-pitched wail of Rob Datum, who can’t contain his energy and at times lets out a helpless, unrehearsed yelp of enthusiasm. It’s this edgy sense of danger that is the Nerves’ greatest weapon: there’s not so much an imposing brawn as there is an autistic repetition that’s constantly in orbit around a singular idea and threatens to break free and fly out of control. —Randall Roberts

NIGHTCAPS

Split — Rendezvous

■ The cocktail nation craze of the early '90s quickly became one of the most loathsome tags attached to any of society's subcultures, but few distanced themselves from it more than the bands to which so much of the retro/vintage aesthetic could be traced. Groups with seemingly direct names like the Coctails and the Nightcaps headed off any lounge links with frenzied



DATALOG:
Released Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER:
Spunky vocal jazz.
R.I.Y.L.:
Getz/Gilberto,
Combustible
Edison, Nancy
Sinatra.

declarations that there was more to their music than an overt appreciation of Martin Denny or Stan Getz. The five Seattle residents behind the Nightcaps nevertheless do play the

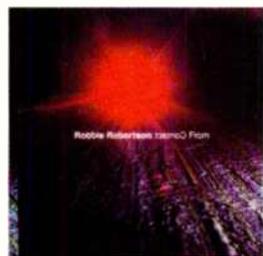
type of jazz that sounds best in the company of Manhattans and Sidecars. The warm, reverb-drenched guitar, deep-toned double bass, sultry vocals, slithering sax and perky percussion are all hallmarks of cocktail jazz, and these sounds pervade the Nightcaps' full-length debut. The quintet writes all of its own material, however, and some of the songs on *Split* could rank as instant classics. Chanteuse Theresa Hannam glides through the down-tempo "Cruel And Unusual," which pairs Robert Fucci's soulful walking bass lines and Lauren Abady's silky sax runs; "The Touch Of Evil" bounces along to a "Fever"-like melody; and Garth Brandenburg gets a guitar workout on the buoyant title track. The Nightcaps succeed in sprucing up musical styles that could sound dated, coming up with some remarkable songs along the way. —Richard Martin

Some
of the songs
on *Split*
could rank as
instant cocktail
classics.

ROBBIE ROBERTSON

Contact From The Underworld Of Redboy — Capitol

■ A founding member of original Americana act The Band, Robbie Robertson has always been a master at mixing rockin' roots with a pop sensibility. Under his Redboy alias, he follows up 1994's *Music For The Native Americans* disc, which delved far deeper into the singer-songwriter's personal roots than he ever had before: His mother was a Mohawk from the Six



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Beat-heavy pop with American Indian chants.
R.I.Y.L.: Native American music, Howie B, Paul Simon.

Nations reservation above Lake Erie. The big surprise here (sort of) is that Robertson's gone electronic (sort of) for this record, enlisting supremely talented



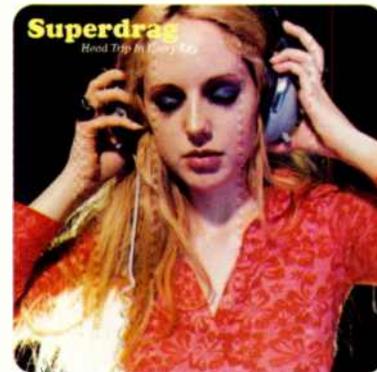
Superdrag

Head Trip In Every Key

Thirteen new songs
that go in one ear and in the other.

Features "Do The Vampire"

Produced by Jerry Finn with Superdrag



In stores March 24



www.superdrag.com

On Elektra compact discs and cassettes www.elektra.com

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beatmasters Howie B and Marius De Vries for production. On tracks like "Making A Noise" and "Rattlebone," the result is a syncretic blend of delicate, soft pop with the big modern beat that you hear on all the car commercials these days, with traditional Native American vocals. The singing, by such artists as Leah Hicks-Manning and Sadie Buck with the Six Nations Women Singers, is a delight, varying from singsongy sacred chants to unearthly throat singing. This mixture doesn't work on every song—"The Code Of Handsome Lake," in particular, is so thoroughly hokey

as to approach parody.

The big surprise (sort of) is that Robbie Robertson goes electronic (sort of).

But it's an affecting record nonetheless, particularly on the haunting, Leonard Peltier-narrated "Sacrifice," one of the most moving "political" songs you've heard in ages. —Mike McGonigal

RUINS

Refusal Fossil — Skin Graft

■ Japanese drummer-bassist duo Ruins are prog rock revivalists for our post-punk times. A rhythm section gone ballistic, they are capable of extreme heaviness and lithe-some grooves, most often within the same song. They draw upon opera and folk as well as jazz and metal, with all the adrenaline, bombast and wiggled-out vocal



DATALOG:
FILE UNDER: Prog rock pyrotechnicians.
R.I.Y.L.: Melt-Banana, Omoide Hatoba, King Crimson.

interplay of Yes or King Crimson. Yoshida Tatsuya's brain-pummeling percussion forms the core of the sound; current collaborator Sasaki Hisashi adds muscular riffs and chirpy, Melt-Banana-like yelping that is well matched to Tatsuya's death-metal growl. *Refusal Fossil* is a collection of live and unreleased material that shows the

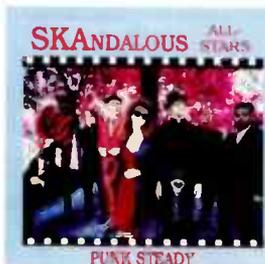
band's remarkable consistency over ten years and two bassists. They play off one another on tracks like "Etymology," a monster movie battle of bass drum thump and bass guitar warp.

Elsewhere, they manage some restraint: "Stara Planina" is an unlikely take on Central European folk music, heavy but with lilting, droning vocals and bass in the role of the fiddle. "Eccentric Ditch" is equally surprising, swinging between full-bore heavy rock and a lounge-y cha-cha beat. The last half of the record is a recent live set with a (more) full band, including guitarist Yamamoto Seiichi from the Boredoms and Tipographica saxophonist Kikuchi Naruyoshi. They raise an impressive screech and skronk, and just manage to keep up with Tatsuya. —Andrea Moed

SKANDALOUS ALL-STARS

Punk Steady — Shanachie

■ Like combining peanut butter with chocolate, marrying punk with ska is a perfect pairing of two seemingly disparate things that work fabulously together. It's certainly not a new concept at this point,



DATALOG:
Released Jan. 20.
FILE UNDER: Combat rock steady.
R.I.Y.L.: Moog Cookbook, Skatalites, Rancid.

but *Punk Steady* recasts 11 punk standards as sometimes ironic, always fun ska and rock-steady anthems. And it works. The Skandalous All-Stars count among them many of the usual ska scene suspects, including folks on loan from the Slackers, Mephiskapheles, Ruder Than You and Excalibur. Of course, they're not too serious about the project. "I Wanna Be Sedated" is rendered a gentle reggae anthem à la the Dominos or Gregory Isaacs, with a trio of crooners sweetly over-enunciating each syllable; "Anarchy In The UK" becomes a comic character sketch, like early I Roy or a rude boy monologue; "Rock The Casbah" is re-imagined as a herky-jerky Studio One

Punk Steady recasts punk standards as ska anthems.

'60s instrumental in the vein of the Skatalites. And thankfully, the All-Stars aren't that literal about their genre definitions—"One Way Or Another" and "Take The Skinheads Bowling" certainly aren't what I consider punk, but they are "of the time" and fit in quite well here.

—James Lien

SPACEHOG CD

The Chinese Album — Sire/WB

■ As the decade wears on, so does the accidental cultural experiment onlookers call the alternative explosion. Witness Spacehog, a perfectly good NYC band plugging away at its own, embryonic brand of showy, British (and admittedly Bowie-inflected) guitar rock that, faster than you can say "120 Minutes," found its single "In The



DATALOG:
Released Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Modernized glam.
R.I.Y.L.: T. Rex, Ziggy Stardust, Yellow Submarine, heavy lip-gloss.

Meantime" on every commercial alternative station in the country just weeks after its release. A couple of years later, Spacehog finds itself in a tight spot, as it tries to grow artistically as a band while still making a record that will please its fans. Well, slap 'em on the back the next time they blow through town, because Spacehog has managed to develop as much as a young band ought to musically, in spite of the pressure it probably felt to produce a big follow-up. The stylistically varied *Chinese Album* packs rockers, ballads, clever bits of humor, experimentation with beats and knob-twiddling, and an entire load of what you knew Spacehog was capable of pulling off: the "new glam", a mix of the sexy metallicism of Marc Bolan and T. Rex with the silly self-parody of cartoonish hitmakers like Gary Glitter. And in the process of forging onward and upward, Spacehog may stumble upon the modestly successful career longevity that seems to elude so many others. —Cheryl Botchick

SUPERDRAG

Head Trip In Every Key — Elektra

■ *Head Trip In Every Key* is a snapshot of a band in flux. There is nothing drastically different about the new Superdrag album—it's still a power-pop band, after all—but, if you pay attention to *Head Trip*, you'll notice the little changes signaling a definite shift in direction for the Knoxville, Tennessee, quartet. Like the Beatles (whom the band clearly emulates), Superdrag's metamorphosis reflects its embrace of psychedelia, so the album is laced with trippy instrumentation and sly drug references. "Let your fragile mind go/Forget you are/Forget you know," sings John Davis on "The Art Of Dying." Fleshed



DATALOG:
Release date: Feb. 24.
FILE UNDER:
Power-pop gets stoned.
R.I.Y.L.: Posies, Teenage Fanclub, Cornershop.

out with sitar and lush string accompaniment, it is the album's most fully realized psychedelic number. "She Is A Holy Grail" is also pretty tweaked: As Davis

sings his vocal melody at a near whisper, he plays a sour piano melody that blends almost seamlessly into the acoustic guitar-picking that runs tandem to it. Even the album's many straight-up pop numbers boast smart little touches like the horns on "Mr. Underground" or the Beach Boys-esque backing vocals on "Shuck & Jive." There's nothing earth-shattering here, but Superdrag's willingness to take off its water-wings and thrash around in the deep end of the pool is a very good sign. —Jenny Eliscu

Little changes signify a definite shift in direction for Superdrag.

SWERVEDRIVER

99th Dream — Zero Hour

■ On *99th Dream*, Swervedriver shows its understanding of a point that Oasis clearly misses: that not all songs have to be sing-alongs. While devoting a fair share of its time to melodic hooks, Swervedriver saves most of its sweat for the fuzzed-out, psychedelic guitar parts that give its songs their heft. On "Stellar Caprice," Adam Franklin's front-of-the-mix vocals stretch and bend to match each tug on the whammy-bar as a haze of reverberation hangs in the background. Once the vocals fade to little more than faint "doo-doo-doo's," the band launches into one of the heady, swirling instrumentals that have made its live shows so phenomenal. In fact,



DATALOG:
Release date: Feb. 24.
FILE UNDER:
Fuzzed-out Brit-pop
R.I.Y.L.: Oasis, My Bloody Valentine, The Verve

the cyclone that tears through "In My Time" rips through the entire album, and each song, no matter how calm it seems at first, is eventually



victoria williams

Musings of a Creek Dipper



featuring
"train song (demise of the caboose)"
and "rainmaker"

★★★★

From the majestic reverie that opens the album... to the bittersweet elegy that closes it... *Musings* offers yet another treasure along Williams' road less traveled."

—Rolling Stone

**Towa
Tei is still
challenging
us.**

overtaken by the rush of noise, as the swirl of guitar reverb builds momentum. But each time, the whole thing stops suddenly, as if quelled with no more fanfare than the tiny string of smoke that trails behind an extinguished match. In the end, the band's ability to strike a balance between restraint and reckless abandon is way more impressive than even the catchiest of melodies.

—Jenny Elisca

TOWA TEI

Sound Museum — Elektra

■ Some skeptics put forth the theory that every artist has enough samples in his crate to make that one really, really monumental record—it's the follow-up that kills you. Well, Towa Tei has already been down that path twice in fact: once as sonic architect of Deee-Lite, and then with his solo debut, *Future Listening*, a snazzy melange of trip-hop, easy listening, bossa nova, and space age bachelor pad music. Now he follows that debut with *Sound Museum*, and maybe it's not quite as dazzling, but Tei is still challenging us. No other artist has thought to actually get Ken Nordine to do a voice-over



DATALOG: Released Feb. 24. First single is "Happy."
FILE UNDER: Disco-y trip-hop.
R.I.Y.L.: United Future Organization, Deee-Lite, Pizzicato Five.

on a record (Nordine was creator of word jazz, beatnik poems set to music; he's also provided voiceovers for virtually every major commercial of the '60s, including Taster's Choice). Still, a cameo from Biz Markie doesn't really take off; it almost feels like the Biz isn't entirely into the track. The true exception is the stunning final track, "Everything We Do Is Music," a 10-minute vision of what Kraftwerk would probably sound like playing jungle music. The whole track is such a lush, sultry bevy of loops, sounds and samples of whispered voices. And at that moment, he could be considered to be at the leeward edge of the beat experimenters on the Mo Wax label's *Headz* compilations. —James Lien



DATALOG: Released Feb. 10.
FILE UNDER: Less is more.
R.I.Y.L.: Tortoise Microstoria, Tetsu Inoue.

TO ROCOCO ROT

Paris 25 EP — Emperor Jones/ Trance Syndicate

■ What makes the music of Germany's To Rococo Rot so remarkable is how it spins very minimal components into warm, engaging constructions that echo the shifting rhythms of the human body. The group begins by sampling skeletal drums, then folds in an array of digital squiggles, and anchors the whole thing with Stefan Schneider's mesmerizing bass lines. On the five-cut *Paris 25* EP, which incorporates both remixes and new material, the threesome further pares down its methods. "Lift (Denso)" (mixed with David Moufang of Move D/Deep Space Network) and "Mit Dir In Der Gegend (Sehr)" share little in common with the renditions found on last year's *Veiculo* album, save for the playful sense of tranquillity they evoke, but that doesn't detract from their discrete charm. The relationship between old and new versions suggests unraveling a favorite sweater and knitting it into a pair of mittens; previous knowledge of the former may influence your feelings, but it isn't essential for the latter to do their job. Likewise, an understanding of the processes at work in To Rococo Rot does not correspond directly to the levels of enjoyment and appreciation possible; the melodic bass riff of "Lift (Denso)" (reminiscent of *Second Edition*-era PiL) and the rhythmic ebb and flow of "Days Between Stations" exert a seductive pull regardless. —Kurt B. Reighley

To Rococo Rot spins minimal components into warm constructions that echo the rhythms of the body.

TRANS AM

The Surveillance — Thrill Jockey

■ With song titles like "Armed Response" and "Access Control," it seems Trans Am has put together a concept album about fear and the increased electronic monitoring of our everyday activities (of course, without any lyrics it's hard to tell what they're thinking). Although it is dark and



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 10.
FILE UNDER: Robot progrock.
R.I.Y.L.: Tortoise, Six Finger Satellite, Chrome.

brooding, *The Surveillance* isn't so much a paranoid album as one displaying multiple personalities. Trans Am, more than ever, is seeking to separate its experimental side from its rock side, alternating the two from song to song. The electronic pieces are sparse and high-pitched, dominated by simple drum programs, jazzy undertones, repetitive loops and odd blurps; they feel contemplative yet jittery. The human-powered pieces, however, are some of the most hard-edged material Trans Am has created, rife with twisty-turny power-trio dynamics. In fact, the trebly guitar screeches, throbbing bass lines and human drummer trying to sound as mechanical as possible sound a bit like Shellac (minus Steve Albini). The stylistic alternation leaves *The Surveillance* feeling somewhat uncohesive, but it's interesting to see Trans Am moving away from grooves and more towards chops. *The Surveillance* is less about hips, and more about biceps. —David Jarman

Janeane & Eddie CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

in some shape or form, have been on the earth for three million years [pointing across the room to indicate the distance]. So, all this time, from there [gesturing toward the other side of the room] to here [indicating the 1/8th of an inch], there was no God, there was no story, there was no myth and people lived on this planet and they wandered and they gathered and they did all these things. The planet was never threatened. How did they survive for all this time without this belief in God? I'd like to ask this to someone who knows about Christianity and maybe you do. That just seems funny to me.

Janeane: Funny ha-ha or funny strange?

Eddie: Funny strange. Funny bad. Funny frown. Not good. That laws are made and wars occur because of this story that was written, again, in this small part of time. And now, this is *my real* concern, and it doesn't have that much to do with God, but what we've done in the last 50 years, which is like my fingernail, and how fast things are moving, and what's going to happen in the next bit. I mean, we're really fucking things up. And now I'm the young guy bitching but I think there is an answer and I hope people educate themselves about technology and what's happening. I think *you* should educate yourself about...

Janeane: Who, the you me? Or the you general?

Eddie: The you general.

Janeane: Me?

Eddie: No.

Janeane: Wait, I think you were more personal about that. You mean I should educate myself?

Eddie: I want all my friends to, so they know and I hope that the picture gets broader and they understand that there's a lot of people planning our future and they're not thinking straight. Or there's a lot of profit involved. I don't know where we're going. We're moving *really* fast and they don't know where we're going and it hasn't been well thought out. And this technological wave that's going to happen, and it's already happening but we don't notice it.

Janeane: You're thinking of bar codes? Bar codes?

Eddie: Am I?

Janeane: No, I'm just saying. Bar codes?

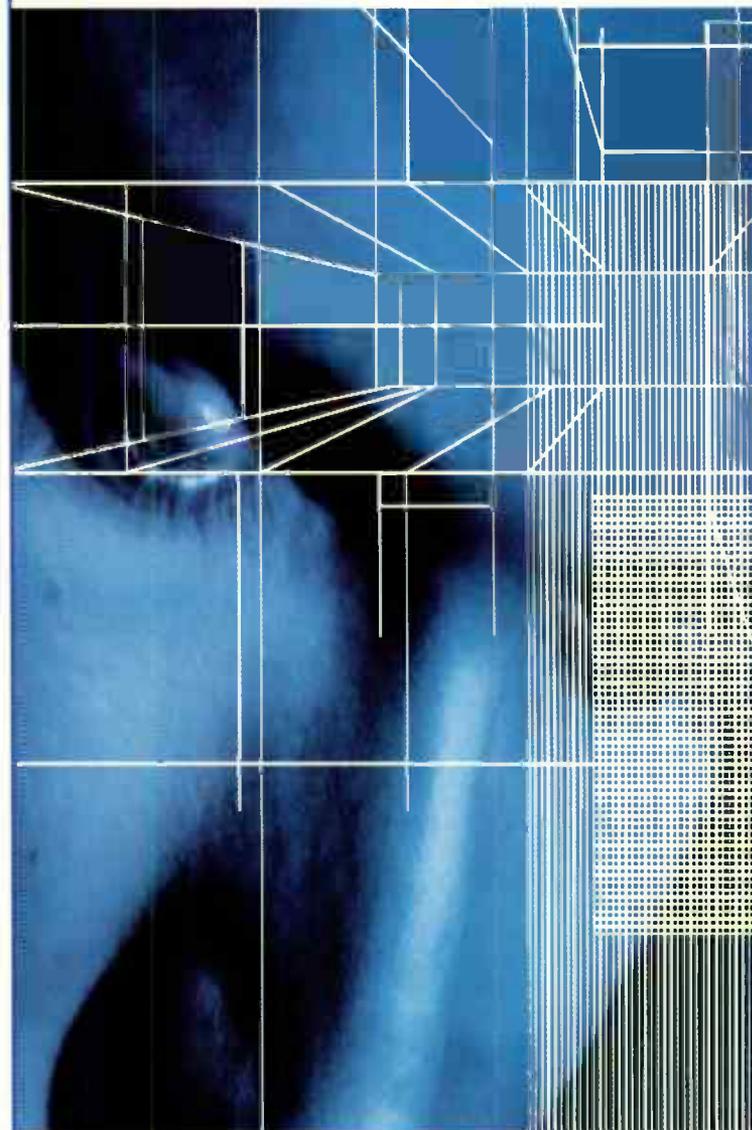
Eddie: Oh, speaking of bar codes. Well, that's a subtle convenience but it's going to get more to where we're not going to know what joy is. We're not going to know anything simple. We're not going to be able to experience... We might not be able to experience love. This is what I'm predicting. You know, give me 50 years. Things are moving so fast, I guarantee I'll be right. It's going to be strange. I just wish everyone would slow down. This is why I think radio is great. Because it still lends imagination to the experience. There's no visual involved and hopefully no commercial interference as far as playlists for college radio. I don't know if this happens—it's just an analogy—a playlist approved by the dean or someone in a power situation. I think that that's a simple pleasure that I hope continues to last. Record stores might not survive this. Oh, they won't. Fifteen years, record stores? The tactile experience? Gone. It's going to be convenient and I imagine the compromises, they're going to be vacuous. You won't have the same experience.

Janeane: What?

Eddie: Vacuous. Meaningless. Empty. You'll be able to acquire



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music so quick, it won't *mean* anything to you. You know, it'll just be another thing that you punch up and you don't even own it. You just order it for five minutes. You'll order a song for five minutes and it'll cost you 50 cents or something. This is in the very near future. You won't have to buy records anymore. You're going to be able to download records onto CD without any artwork. Probably listening to poor-sounding computer speakers. Things are happening fast...

Janeane: I think... I thought you were saying... I'm not trying to create a false opposition to you but. I'm just saying...

Eddie: Just for the fun of it, please do.

Janeane: Well, if it would be fun for you, I would like to.

I'm just saying that I don't think so. As far as music is concerned and things like that. Why even purchase it? Why even go to the trouble of punching it up if it's not aesthetically pleasing to you in some way?

Eddie: You'll get it, it's just going to be such a different experience. And I don't mean to be a Luddite and say I only listen to vinyl, which I *mostly* listen to vinyl or I just enjoy vinyl. I just... Do you listen to a new song or do you listen to the virtual playing of the song? What was your question again?

Janeane: I was saying that I don't understand what *you're* saying. I understand what you're saying about the sweeping of technology and the movement is so fast but when it comes to listening to music or something that goes in your ear-hole, what's the point if it doesn't mean something to you?

Eddie: OK. I'll say this. Besides just whether or not you can enjoy a record as it comes across your terminal, let's set that beside the point. Let's just say that when you go down to a record store, and maybe you walk there and you walk by some interesting people and then you walk in the record store and you talk to an interesting person who knows about music or sees you purchasing a record and then says "Oh, did you see these guys *live*, last time they came through?" There's this conversation that takes place between humans in a record store. I'm just using *that* as an example. Maybe *that's* what I'm worried about, is it going to be lost? Some kind of human interaction. And that takes place on the Internet.

OK. Like Jerry Falwell and Larry Flint, we agree to disagree.

This is the other side. I mean, people *do* converse on the Internet. They talk a lot about music.

Janeane: I think people converse *more* on the Internet, though. I think they converse more on the Internet than they do in the record store. Because there's an uncomfortability in the record store of someone standing there... Gosh, I don't know. I think I kind of disagree with you.

Eddie: OK. Like Jerry Falwell and Larry Flint, we agree to disagree.

Janeane: We agree to disagree, respectfully. I think that no matter what, music will always kind of be a thing of taste that people, if they *download* it, even if they're downloading it, they download it because they like it. And they'll talk about it. And on the Internet, I think they're inclined to discuss more than they would in the record store.

Eddie: Are you going to get... Can you marry someone on the Internet?

Janeane: Me? No.

Eddie: No, I mean can anyone?

Janeane: Of course they can, and they do. They can and they do.

Eddie: So sometimes you do meet and, you know...

Janeane: Absolutely. People meet people on the Internet all the time, for good or for ill. They meet people all the time on the Internet. Me, personally, Janeane Garofalo, I can't even... I can't connect in person... Gosh. See, I think the Internet is a good thing so I have no problems with the Internet.

Eddie: I think there are good things *about* it, I just don't think it's a good thing.

Janeane: I think it's great that people are even typing and doing. That's better than just masturbating and watching *Jerry Springer*. I think it's great that they're on the computer. And I didn't mean to be crass. I'm sorry, tape recorder. Can I check my dog again?

[Tape stops]

Eddie: OK, Janeane just went to check on the dog once again, who I believe is sleeping, and she's going to use the restroom. So, if you wanna print this up, I'm going to do a monologue here. Maybe college radio will be broadcast over the Internet. I know that there have been some radio shows on the

Internet and I think it's a form of pirate radio at this point, which I totally encourage. Maybe it'll be a positive experience. The only thing I was trying to state before is that the tactile human experience... Here she comes, the dog is awake, part three.

[Tape stops]

Eddie: You know, college radio, I don't think they play our music *that* much, or didn't. And maybe there's a couple of songs that they will be excited about playing but if you don't, don't. I think it's a great format *not* to play our music. I think that there's enough avenues, there's commercial radio that plays our music, so there's really no need to... You should be playing Built To Spill and Shellac and Stereolab and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and all kinds of other things. So, don't worry about...

Janeane: And *Merkinball*.

Eddie: *Merkinball*. If you're going to play something of ours, play *Merkinball*. That's Janeane's idea. I'm really not doing this interview to promote a record on college radio. Play whatever you want, that's my *main* concern.

Janeane: Is that your motto? That and "No fat chicks." Is that your bumper sticker motto?

Eddie: Believe it or not, I was always actually mature enough to be offended by that motto at a young age. Actually, it was "Harpoon fat chicks," so that was even worse. No, my main concern is that college radio has the freedom to play what they want. Janeane's disciplining her dog now, so that's why I'm talking.

Janeane: In summation? In summation, I'd like to say that it has been an honor. I just, I have nothing to say in summation. I'm the worst. I have been... Am I not the *worst* interviewer ever? I can't. I can't think of anything to say...

Eddie: At this point I'm wishing that Janeane would get over herself, she's been just fine.

Janeane: [in the background, laughing] I can't even keep my own dog occupied, let alone a seminal artist.

Eddie: [laughs] It's just a mess right now.... I think it's really important that college radio has the freedom to play whatever it wants because commercial radio doesn't. It's the last bastion, so to speak. So, good luck. Power to you. In summation. **CMJ**

as something beautiful and rewarding. That's the thing that fascinated me about him. And part of the pathway, which I don't find as necessary now, was the method of recording. The actual sounds are good to talk about, because there's so much to talk about with *Pet Sounds*, simply because of the way it was recorded. But the way it actually sounds is very similar to a lot of '60s recordings. He was fitting his melodies into what was popular at the time, an orchestral context.

Archer: And yet he approached that grand sound with a religious fervor... Would you talk a little about the song "Crystal Clear"?

I NEVER WAS AN ORCHESTRAL ROCK FANATIC, I'M JUST A SONGWRITER.

Richard: I think that was from a *Life* magazine. A lot of the words and phrases were captions to photos. They were all shorthand versions describing different types of people. That's one... gimmick. [laughs] And in a sense, the music

took the place of the photos. Say you went to see an exhibition of photographs or paintings with no titles. I think a lot of the time a title gives a spin to the impression you get, and I think songs work along those lines.

Archer: Do you have a favorite song from this record?

Richard: I think "Crystal Clear," actually.

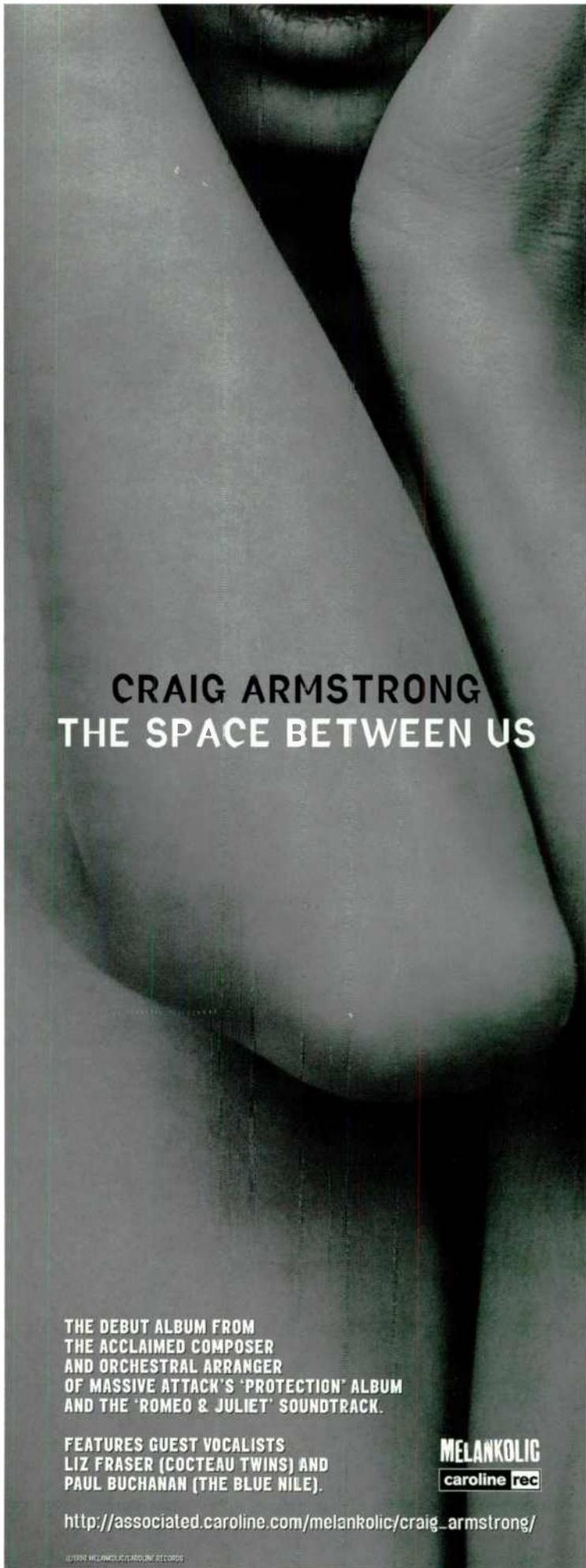
Archer: It seems to me that your music conjures up a sort of spectral orchestral backing even with a more spare instrumentation. Is this something you think of in the composing?

Richard: The thing is, I never was an orchestral rock fanatic, I'm just a songwriter. I mean, I like the sound of horns, I like the sound of strings and harmony vocals... I'm just a fan. But what I'm trying to say is that I never have a predesigned notion that I'm going to write for a certain kind of treatment. The song writes itself. Certainly this record is a good example of trying to keep the song intact and as basic I can. Now I think there are people who think I keep it too basic much of the time. [laughs]

Richard Davies's new album Telegram (Flydaddy) will be released March 24.

Archer Prewitt has released one solo album, last year's In The Sun (Carrot Top), and several records with the Sea And Cake and the Coctails, in addition to creating the comic Sof' Boy.

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Dwight Twilley

Take it from someone who's been physically ejected from '70s punk parties for the crime of playing ABBA's "When I Kissed The Teacher." From someone who's been tossed out on his ass by surly Bob Seger fans, simply for tainting their whoo-hooing triple kegger with Laurie Anderson's "Big Science." "Geek"—in its above parlance—wasn't always such a casual kitschy term. Being a so-called "geek" in the Midwest in the late '70s usually meant liking albums that few of your teen peers could stomach and, when you stumbled into the wrong kind of gathering, could net you a swift punch in the stomach, as well.

That said, it wasn't half as bad as it sounds, this geek business, because we had a hero, a shining light, a guitar-slinging avatar who upheld all that was moral and virtuous about persecuted geekdom. As a squirrely little record-obsessed kid, I first saw Oklahoma outcast Dwight Twilley on a cheesy 1975 episode of *American Bandstand*, yowling out his one major hit, "I'm On Fire," to the python-coiled backbeat of his drummer/vocalist partner, the late Phil Seymour. My reaction was pretty similar to the one I'd have a few months later, watching a pinstripe-suited Robert Palmer croon "Man Smart, Woman Smarter" on the even cheesier *Midnight Special*, a sort of what-the-fuck-is-this stupefaction, complete with jaw-dropping blank stare. Chuckle all you want, but that wide-eyed naïveté was a great way to hear music back then. What was so difficult to understand? If it sounded good, it *was* good. End of story.

But Twilley, when he finally released his genre-jumping debut *Sincerely* a year later, sounded better than good. What made the record (recently reissued by Capitol's Right Stuff imprint) so special? Its to-hell-with-the-rules eclecticism, for starters. I never could figure out (still can't, when it comes right down to it) why rock fandom had to be an



Dwight Twilley was a hero, a guitar-singing avatar who upheld all that was moral and virtuous about persecuted geekdom.

By Tom Lanham

either/or proposition—i.e. the Beatles *or* the Stones, pick one and shut up. Listeners always seem to like to find their niche as quickly as possible, crawl out on their tiny twig of the music tree and stake their pitifully minuscule claim. But along came Twilley and Seymour (who, incidentally, met while waiting in line for a Beatles movie), who leapfrogged proficiently through just about every style short of ragtime and Gregorian chants. That diversity became a template for me, a sounding board, a method of approaching rock music that I still employ today. Sounds good, is good. And fuck you if you're too thick to get it.

And here's the really twisted part: *Sincerely* was, in all sincerity, commercial suicide, simply because it confused anyone expecting 12 sonic soundalikes. Twilley bounced from slapback rockabilly ("TV") to breathy ballads ("I'm Losing You") and Everly Brothers-like harmonic jangle ("Three Persons," "You Were So Warm"), never touching down long enough to be pigeonholed. He loved Elvis as much as the Beatles, the Beatles as much as the Stones, and could effortlessly ape any of each artist's supposedly singular techniques. So *Sincerely* was, in many ways, the ultimate party crasher of an album. If somebody was preparing to beat you up for tossing it onto his turntable, you merely moved the needle to the next non-sequitur track and appeased the lunkheaded beast. Next to its narwhal-huge hooks, however, the best thing about this disc was its fluid sense of continuity. Sound like an oxymoron? It wasn't. Every Twilley song, no matter the genre in which it was penned, felt like, well, *Twilley*. His surreal, whispery hiccup voice held everything together in colloidal bliss, an identifiable imprint you can hear on the equally-stunning demos the man is currently shopping.

Twilley, after a number of brilliant (now out of print) efforts, gave up on Hollywood pop stardom a couple of years ago, and moved back to his native Tulsa, where he built a home studio and continued writing and recording *his* way. And he's got a humorous anecdote from his deal-hunting years: Seems one A&R guy was playing Twilley's demo in his office, when the label honcho rushed in, demanding to know the name of this remarkable "new" performer. Told the singer was Twilley, the honcho turned on his heel and snapped "Too old—can't sign him." Yet *another* narrow-minded pop parameter, an exclusionary branch of the ol' music tree. What was that I said about "fuck you if you don't get it?" ■

by Ian Chryste



metal top25

- 1 **DECIDE**
Serpents Of The Light / Roadrunner
- 2 **DEFTONES**
Around The Fur / Maverick/WB
- 3 **IN FLAMES**
Whorls / Nuclear Blast America
- 4 **JUDAS PRIEST**
Joplin / CMC International
- 5 **HATEBREED**
Sacrifice Is The Death Of Desire / Victory
- 6 **GOD DETHRONED**
The Grand Gyronne / Metal Blade
- 7 **HYPOCRISY**
The Final Chapter / Nuclear Blast America
- 8 **PR3-PAIN**
Pr3-Pain / Mayhem
- 9 **ENTOMBED**
To Bleed, Shoot Straight And Speak
The Truth / Music For Nations/Silvertone
- 10 **RAMMSTEIN**
Scheiße / Slash-London
- 11 **FU MANCHU**
The Action Is Go / Marmoth
- 12 **SOUNDTRACK**
Gimme / London
- 13 **INCUBUS**
S.C.I.E.N.C.E. / Immortal/Epic
- 14 **METALLICA**
Pulse / Elektra-EEG
- 15 **OZZY OSBOURNE**
The Ozzyman Cometh: Greatest Hits / Epic
- 16 **SHAI HULUD**
Hearts Once Nourished With Hope
And Compassion / Crisis/Revelation
- 17 **MISERY LOVES CO.**
Not Like Them / Earache
- 18 **OVERKILL**
From The Underground And Below /
CMC International
- 19 **UNSAINE**
Disciplinary Hazard / Relapse
- 20 **INCANTATION**
The Fensake: Moutting Of Anemic
Anguish / Relapse
- 21 **MESHUGGAH**
The True Human Design (EP) / Nuclear
Blast America
- 22 **DAY IN THE LIFE**
dayinthe... / Banding/TVT
- 23 **TESTAMENT**
Elastic / Mayhem/Epic
- 24 **NON COMPOS MENTIS**
Smile When You Hate / Wonder Orig.
- 25 **SIX FEET UNDER**
Werpan / Metal Blade

Compiled from *Rolling Stone* Music, *Mojo*,
weekly Loud Rock charts, collected from
CDU's most progressive radio stations.

✠ On *Black Thrash Attack* (Malicious), **Aura Noir** emerges as the missing link between the pure noise churn of Immortal and the rough bouncing thrash of Whiplash. Ten tracks whiz by during this inspired jaunt, each sounding as manic and stained as anything since the Accused. Though Aura Noir guitarist Blasphemer plays in the new line-up of Mayhem, his riffing here is agile and deft, unlike the perverse noise displayed on *Wolfs Lair Abyss*... On its first release on the new Osmoste USA label, **Bewitched** is continuing an odd crusade to corrupt the world with a new wave of British Heavy Metal-influenced Satanism. Though the Thin Lizzy and Venom input on *Pentagram Prayer* is obvious, the blend is original and electric. It still requires some readjusting of the ears to get used to hearing crunching twin melodic guitars in aggressive music again. Maybe this resurgence of old school metal makes sense if you compare it to how the Wu-Tang Clan has upgraded the spare beats of Eric B. & Rakim. In both cases, there's an organic respect for the past, but the music remains totally topical and timely... **Napalm Death** should rightfully be the first grindcore Top 40 act, but instead of selling a zillion copies of a hit record to a mass audience, the band continues to sell moderate amounts of multiple releases to its loyal cult of fans. The latest artifact of the perpetual recording machine is the *Breed To Breathe* enhanced CD EP (Earache), containing multimedia tracks and a roaring funk-up cover of "Greed Killing," played by Pennsylvania's Impending Doom, which competed in a Napalm-sponsored concert for this coveted slot on the disc... The 22nd issue of **The Pit** magazine (Box 9545, Colorado Springs, CO 80932) covers what you'd expect from the persistent metal forum. Interviews range from utterly vapid (Quicksand, Sick Of It All) to somewhat informative (cover boys Decide, Mortuus, Mayhem). In between some poorly considered editorializing, there are glimpses of what the metal community has on its mind, and a barrage of information on tours and new releases slips through. *The Pit* is always metal ground zero, but it sometimes fails to dig very deep.

Sadus

Elements Of Anger Mascot

One of the first wave of America's underground death metal bands, California's Sadus returns ten years later with a stylish and slick exegesis on its thrash roots. Like the band Death, whose creative arc rose from *Scream Bloody Gore* to the heady *Symbolic*, Sadus seems to have located a transcendent wisdom through the difficult meanness of its music. I'm glad somebody's learning something, even if it has to be a paradox. The band's fifth CD is exemplar progressive thrash, where control is the key to maintaining a ridiculous catalog of untimed 23-note guitar riffs. Singer/guitarist Darren Travis excels in throwing syncopated trills into his unpredictable, chunky fundament. Bass player Steve DiGiorgio's frequent psychedelic synth embellishments to *Elements* are as polished as the rocking wooze of Crystal Method. And this is the most cohesive and



cogent production job Scott Burns has done in a long time. Sacrificing noise and chaos for discipline and musicality, Sadus is mildly experimental and innovatively conventional. I've heard these basic ideas many times before, but never presented in such an articulate and colorful way. The trio is innately tied to a constantly shifting meter, and is a master of this relatively tasteful form. The slipping riffs of "Unreality" glide together in a liquid rush of stoic grace, impressing me with a classic sound that is always the opposite of trite. ✠

adamf COLOURS



Adam F ^{CD} Colours Astralwerks

The ability of drum-'n'-bass to continuously mutate, producing new and unexpected shapes and forms, results in such innovative records as Adam F's debut LP, *Colours*. Like so many of his contemporaries, Adam F's career started in a record shop; in his case the Section 5 store on Kings Road in London, home to a small label of the same

name, which released "F-Jam," "Aromatherapy" and "Circles," each of which brought Adam F greater exposure. Once "Circles" was remixed by Roni Size, it was all over. His inaugural full-length outing includes all of these tracks and demonstrates, as if it were still necessary, that drum-'n'-bass is not the monolithic entity its detractors often claim. Adam F can effectively conjure lounge-like bass structures on "Music In My Mind," which features blissful, extended workouts on the vocoder—an instrument certainly in vogue these days, but put to ecstatic use here, with all of its mid-'80s electro trappings. The aforementioned "Circles" is without doubt the album's standout. Both the original and Roni Size remixes work this track to a fevered pitch, accelerating the tempo, then slowing it down only to bring it back to the boil again. This record has more suspense than both *Scream* films (with a lot less blood). ♡

There can no longer be any doubt that a renaissance is unfolding in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, clustered around S.H. "Skiz" Fernando's WordSound collective. Fernando's no slouch, having authored "The New Beats," a historical treatise on hip-hop's hidden histories, and now running his own label and studio. If he isn't committed to downtempo, experimental electronics, no one is. The latest missive to arrive from his label is *Subterranean Hitz Vol. 2*, the successor to the first, highly acclaimed collection. This one is going to be mandatory for anyone even remotely interested in the future of electronic music with hip-hop sensibilities at its heart. Opening this collection is Rob Swift of the X-ecutioners, with the ethereal "Rhythmic Wind," followed by the loping, funky "One, Check, One" by Gearhead, which features the indefatigable Prince Paul on vocals, sounding as if he were speaking with a microphone halfway down his throat. Afrika Bambaataa's prodigious son, Afrika "Baby Bam," offers the rubbery, ricocheted "NiteStalker" (with a nice reference to the Darren McGavin '70s TV series, *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, to boot). Fernando and his comrades have always had a wicked sense of humor and thus we find a group called Hawd Gankstuh Rappuh Emsees Wid Ghatz, whose "Masters Of The Universe" is a low-slung exercise in beat manipulation. Sensational's "Dancehall Navigator" culled from his *Loaded With Power* album, is a strike to the solar plexus that levels all pretenders. This collection revives that old cliché: where it's at, with a vengeance... From the same sound asylum comes the second LP by *Spectre*, *The Second Coming*, which features Rob Swift, Sensational and Caz. If you want to call this hip-hop, go ahead, but it's certainly never going to be of any interest to Biggie Smalls fans. The opening "Genesis" should have been entitled "Revelations," for its growling, apocalyptic menace. Spectre is essentially a vampire who just happens to make highly original electronic music that draws inspiration from the black science fiction of Sun Ra, George Clinton and DJ Spooky, moving things a little bit further into the echo chamber and away from the *Billboard* charts. Over 14 tracks, *The Second Coming* is a downtempo tour-de-force that deserves your immediate attention.

dance top25

- 1 **DJ SHADOW**
Preemptive Strike / Mo'Wax/frr-London
- 2 **FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY**
Flavour Of The Weak / Metropolis
- 3 **DAVID HOLMES**
Let's Get Killed / Go! Beat/1500-A&M
- 4 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Big Rock'N Beats / Wax Trax!-TVT
- 5 **RONI SIZE/REPRAZENT**
New Forms / Talkin' Loud-Mercury
- 6 **KOMPUTER**
The World Of Tomorrow / Mute
- 7 **RECEIVER**
Chicken Milk / Iron America
- 8 **JAMIE MYERSON**
"Rescue Me" (12") / Ovum/
Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 9 **AIR**
Moon Safari / Source-Caroline
- 10 **PROPELLERHEADS**
Bang On! (EP) / DreamWorks
- 11 **DJ KRUSH**
Milight / Mo Wax/frr-London
- 12 **APHEX TWIN**
Come To Daddy (EP) / Warp-Sire
- 13 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Cup Of Tea Records: Another
Compilation / Cup Of Tea-Iron America
- 14 **FUNKER VOGT**
We Came To Kill / Metropolis
- 15 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Hardcorps / Moonshine
- 16 **INDEX**
Faith In Motion / COP International
- 17 **FATBOY SLIM**
Better Living Through Chemistry /
Astralwerks-Caroline
- 18 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Megasoft Office 97 / Tinder
- 19 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Coldwave Breaks II / 21st Circuitry
- 20 **DJ SOUL SLINGER & DJ WALLY**
"Diana/Teresa" (12") / Liquid Sky
- 21 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Sound In The Eighth Dimension:
Selected Material / Eighth Dimension-
World Domination
- 22 **LUKE SLATER**
Freek Funk / NovaMute-Mute
- 23 **PORTISHEAD**
Portishead / Go! Beat-London
- 24 **MEDICINE DRUM**
Supernature / 911
- 25 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Sampling The Future / Thrive

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



• If you've seen Neutral Milk Hotel on tour, you've seen Julian Koster—the wildly energetic multi-instrumentalist who tends to wear a Burger King crown on stage. The **Music Tapes** is his experimental side project, formed to play “imaginary symphonies in people's houses.” To make that clear, the group's first single, “Please Hear Mr. Flight Control” (Elephant Six), is packaged in an ornate sleeve with a pop-up of a house. It's a long, richly home-orchestrated pop song, whose arrangement is more interesting than its tune. On the other side, there's the very peculiar “Smoke Is A Fireman's Friend,” with Koster singing bits of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and all sorts of instruments fading in and out of the mix.

• **New Bad Things'** specialty is the brilliant throwaway, and their new single “Mabel” (555 Recordings) has four of them. The A-side is a rotating cycle of hooky little catch phrases held together by a dinky drum machine and cruise control strumming. The production is bizarrely dry, but the instrumental details glom onto your brain-stem and don't let go. The flip is even more fun: It's got a pulsating instrumental, a doodle with voice, bass, trumpet and auto-harp (which seem to be playing more or less the same song, if not quite in the same key), and “French Vacation,” the NBTs' attempt at writing a '78-style punk song, complete with Buzzcocks-y “whoa-oh”s, though the pre-programmed synth bass gives the game away.



Melt-Banana

“Wedge”
(Slap A Ham)

Melt-Banana has taken what could have been a dead-end aesthetic—spastic, high-precision noisecore featuring Yasuko O., the World's Shriillest Singer—to places it never seemed like it could go. The band's songs are fairly similar in composition, but Melt-Banana's fascination with production has made all of its discs sound distinctly different. This eight-song single

plays up the background noise textures, and emphasizes the sharpest short-sharp-shock edge of what the band can do. “Wedge” plays with the same kind of figure/ground tempo distinction you usually only hear in drum 'n' bass records: a slow noise pulse, over which the band goes nuts in quadruple time. In “Baby Buggy Spitted,” a long solo line by bassist Rilka is punctured repeatedly by stabs from the whole band. There's also the subtext of bad health in a lot of these songs: “Cough, Coughed, Coughing” is basically just a long, distorted scream from Yasuko doubled by Agata's guitar, and it's followed by “Q For Quinine,” where those screaming noises are broken up by rhythm attacks. The disc ends with “Drill The Dentist,” another punctuated howl, this time from what could be a dentist's drill or Agata's screeching guitar again. *

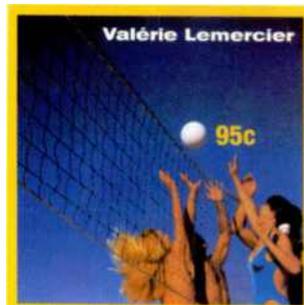
hiss&crackle



quotidian emotions, softly; the three songs we get this time are among their quietest yet, with programmed drums hissing away behind finger-gentle guitars and a bit of organ. The B-sides, “Smoking” and “Commitment,” both appear to be regretful kiss-offs (“my friends still like you but you've lost your appeal”), presented with warmth, charm and Gibson's wonderful, untrained quaver.

• A few quick drops of the needle: There's a lot of other interesting Australian stuff happening this month. After a couple of cassette-only albums and years of delay, the wonderful Aussie synth band **Stinky Fire Engine** has finally released its first American single, “Giant” (Up). It's got an octave-groove disco beat, a deep-gloom lyric sung in deceptively chipper tones, and a synth solo in the middle that can only be described

as “free new wave.”... **Men's Recovery Project** is a group of Americans, but it's released its *Immense Ovary Reject 7* EP on an Australian label, Walkabout, and dedicated it “to the people of Australia, in the hope that our two great nations can someday live in peace.” As usual, it's bizarre, synthesized, quasi-phallogentric hardcore, with lyrics that suggest that the band's favorite hallucinogen is high-volume Devo records (“Different groups with varied agendas/Hide the sausage in our addendas”)... Swinging over to Europe, **Valérie Lemercier's** “95C” (March) is French pop like they almost don't make it any more, but used to back in the '60s—a breathy Francophone *chanteuse* straining for the notes of a slightly risqué lyric, sleaze-o-ponic synthesizer and piano, and genuine session-man strings and trumpet. The B-side, “Club Bungalow,” is an instrumental along the same retro-decadent lines.



by James Lien

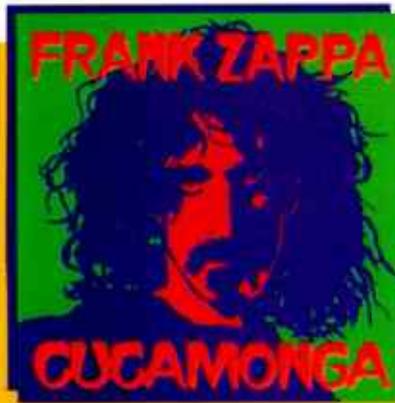
★ Often dismissed in its heyday as just another prog band, **King Crimson** is still a force to reckon with for a legion of diehard fans. For all of Robert Fripp's smart-alecky obliqueness, the band was still far more exciting than virtually any other '70s art band. The King Crimson of 1973-74 was the darkest KC lineup, and the one that has best kept its legitimacy into the present time while other art-rock acts have passed into the realm of general public ridicule. This two-disc bootleg-buster makes legitimately available a widely disseminated concert in Amsterdam in late 1973. The band took risks onstage that no performer would dare take today, not even most jazz musicians.

★ One thing that's always fun is compilations of **60's Girl Groups**, like the one with that title out now on Warner Bros. It might sound somewhat paradoxical, but the nice thing about this collection is that most of the groups here were not big huge successes like the Shangri-Las or the Motown acts. Unfamiliar names and seldom-heard hits provide a pleasant surprise for those seeking something different from overplayed oldies staples like "Leader Of The Pack" or "It's In His Kiss." I can't think of a bad thing to say about it other than that I wish there were two CDs' worth.



★ Columbia Records, seemingly on a mission to release every scrap of tape in the vaults with **Miles Davis**'s name scrawled on the box, has just released a six-CD box set documenting his classic group comprised of Ron Carter, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams. It's wonderful stuff, but for such relaxing and mellow sounding music, it's exhausting to wade through all seven hours. Unless you're a real Davis head (and quite a lot of us are), you're better off sticking with one or two cheaper albums from this period, like *Sorcerer*, *Nefertiti* or *Water Babies*.

★ Avid fans of deep-woods Mississippi juke joint blues are probably already familiar with **Jesse Mae Hemphill**, but if you haven't picked up one of her records, now is as good a time as any. Miss Hemphill played the thing—in the time before a stroke sadly sidelined her career in 1993, she was every bit as good as R.L. Burnside or the late, great Junior Kimbrough. Her latest, a reissue of 1979 recordings entitled *She-Wolf* (Hightone), is just as rockin' as



Frank Zappa

Cucamonga

Del-Fi

Named for his home town, **Cucamonga** documents Frank Zappa's early years, when the Man With The Mustache was an unknown, off-beat character making a living hacking out goofy doo-wop 45s and soundtracks for amateur spaghetti Western movies. This release is like listening to a stack of Zappa's near-legendary 45s from 1963-

64 released under phony names like Bob Guy, Mr. Clean, the Rotations, and my favorite nom-de-Zappa, Baby Ray & The Ferns. Not just for hardcore Zappa-heads, **Cucamonga** will appeal to any fan of **Nuggets**-style garage rock, or anybody who wants to hear really brilliant and weird music—even in 1963, Zappa was running rings around everybody else. Some moments are side-splittingly funny, such as the truly bizarre "Dear Jeepers," a "Monster Mash" take-off that's merely a man reading a letter from Dracula thanking him for coming to a monster party. But at the same time that Zappa was poking fun at the mainstream, the music is really fascinating, full of reverberating guitars and warm, fuzztone bass. Sonically, the record paints an exact portrait of Zappa's view of the universe: Here was someone who truly loved music and hated the petty stupidity of the modern world. It's startlingly plain and absolute proof of his genius. ★

anything you'd hear on Fat Possum today, the sort of music that makes North Mississippi one of the most special places in the universe.

★ Posthumous live albums can be a shaky proposition, but not when it's the widow of the great **Roy Orbison** who's putting it out. Mrs. O has launched a new label, Orbison Records (yes, the corporate logo is a graphic rendering of a pair of shades), whose first release is *Combo Concert 1965—Holland*, a pair of live concert recordings from Roy's promotional tour to celebrate the success of "Pretty Woman." Hearing Orbison live like this reveals another dimension for appreciating his genius. The man had a jaw-dropping set list—"Only The Lonely" as majestic opener, the hopeless falsetto "Crying" as the third tune out the gate, nonchalantly tossed-off versions of "Blue Bayou" and "Dream Baby," and that new tune "Oh, Pretty Woman" as the closer. It's amazing to think that you're hearing the man's classic repertory when it was still current.

★ After years as a cult band, Britain's **High Llamas** are finally filling the bins with reverent, beautiful records. V2 Records has just reissued the group's first two albums, *Gideon Gaye* and *Santa Barbara*, the latter of which had been unavailable for years. If you like the Llamas, you'll love these records, too. If you came on board because you fell in love with the Beach Boys/'60s style of *Hawaii*, however, you'll want to know that *Gideon Gaye* is the more *Pet Sounds*-ish of the two.

in the bins

compiled by
Douglas Wolk

THE SEDUCTION OF MIKE

by R. Sikoryak and Michael Smith Fantagraphics

American comics now have their own Forrest Gump, in the form of this miniature graphic novel by R. Sikoryak and Michael Smith. The book's conceit is to tell the "life story" of Mike, an obscure bit-playing comic book character who wanders Gump-like (or maybe it's Ulysses-like) through a series of parody comic book covers representing the medium's last half-century or so. Sikoryak is an acknowledged ace of comics-inspired pastiche: Among other projects, he's retold Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" in a series of ersatz *Peanuts* strips, and Dante's *Inferno* as a set of *Bazooka Joe* gags. *The Seduction Of Mike* is short on story but very high-concept, and if you like comics in-jokes, you're sure to be amused by Sikoryak's sharp sendups of everything from *Action Comics* (here called "Mid-Level Action") to *American Splendor*. As an extra bonus, they also include—no fooling—a reprint of the 1954 Comics Code.

—Andrea Moed



comics

STRIKE FX www.direwoof.com/strikefx/

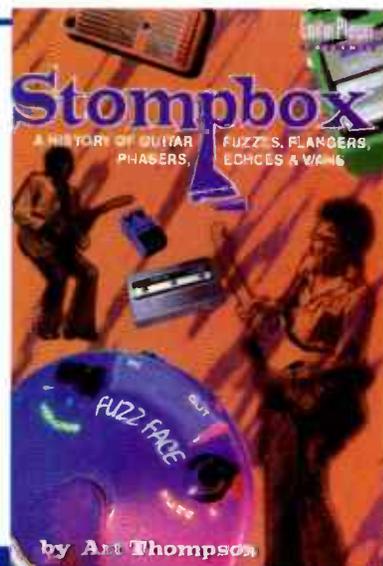
You don't hear the words "bowling" and "Internet" in the same breath too often; at the lanes, you don't need a computer for anything other than automated scoring, and even that's a touchy subject among true bowlers. This brings us to **Strike FX**, one of the best bowling sites out there, because it serves beginners and experts alike. For the novice and league player, it contains stellar tips—the most



recent concerns proper foot placement before take-off, and that ever-important first step. For the expert or PBA fan, it's got up-to-date info on the tour, and since ABC has heartlessly discontinued broadcast of the PBA, it's the best place to visit for pro scores and standings. And then there's the online bowling game, addictive and easy to conquer, a wonderful way to while away the hours

at your boring desk job. The game keeps score for you, and once you conquer the quirks within, it's relatively easy to break 200—unlike real bowling, of course.

—Randall Roberts



STOMPBOX

by Art Thompson
Miller Freeman Books

books

Could Bootsy Collins have made his bass sound like a rubber band without a Mu-Tron III Envelope Follower? Would the buzz-saw blues of "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" be quite as memorable if Keith Richards hadn't played through a Maestro Fuzz-Tone? Even though effect pedals have helped create almost as many legendary rock moments as guitars or amplifiers, they're rarely celebrated with as much fervor. *Stompbox* delves into the story of fuzzes, flangers, phasers and wah-wah pedals, giving a history of the effects and profiling the most notable designers. A lot of the information here will only be useful to engineers (who else knows, or cares, what a BC 108 germanium transistor sounds like?), but any gearhead will be fascinated by how these accessories were developed. The wah-wah, for example, was created for trumpeter Clyde McCoy, who wanted a pedal that would make his horn sound muted. Roger Mayer worked so closely with Jimi Hendrix that the two tailored distortion sounds to fit individual songs. The results can be heard on Hendrix's album *Axis: Bold As Love*, but their partnership also inspired Mayer's *Axis Fuzz* pedal. Effect fanatics will undoubtedly yearn for more info than *Stompbox* offers—it would have been nice to have a CD demonstrating the sound of hard-to-find units like the Univox Funky Filter—but for most, it's a good start.

—Neil Claudstone

SIMPLETON www.simpleton.com

The most industrious writer on the Web right now is Tim Cavanaugh, who's put a new piece up on his website, simpleton, every weekday for months. Cavanaugh is a sly, sharp-witted writer with a knack for parody—both of other websites (check out his dead-on spoofs of Suck, Salon and Feed) and of his own. On any given day, simpleton is whatever Cavanaugh feels like making it: an extended essay about international affairs, a quick joke, a critique of his own work, a forum for answering email about earlier columns, a transcript of what would happen if Emily Dickinson appeared on the Howard Stern show... you never know what to expect. That, actually, is the joy of the site. It's bounded only by the limits of Cavanaugh's fancy, and he's yet to fall into any kind of formula or routine. —DW

netstuff



PENNY CENTURY

by Jaime Hernandez
Fantagraphics



Back in the dusty polka-dot world of '80s Southern California, young cartoonists Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez combined punk, Latino and superhero cultures to create the classic *Love & Rockets*. Although that series ended a few years back, both brothers have moved on to solo books with no drop in quality. *Penny Century* is Jaime's real sequel to *Love & Rockets*, picking up with many of the same characters and situations. Maggie and Hopey, the punk lovers who predated both grrrls and lesbian chic, are together again after years apart, and happy for a change. Meanwhile, Ray, Maggie's ex, is trapped in a purgatory of his own devising. The first issue's longest story tells of Ray's longtime obsession with the enigmatic ultra-vixen Penny Century. Ray digs himself deeper into the nowhere of Los Angeles as he waits for Penny's return to lift him from his humdrum life. It's among the most assured, perceptive and melancholy stories Jaime has ever written.



Meanwhile, two shorter, sketchier stories, "Locas" and "La Pantera Negra," deal with the underlying theme of class struggle that informs so much of both Hernandezes' work. While his stories are often maddeningly subtle, Jaime's art can show a lifetime of heartache with a single line.

—Heidi MacDonald

comics

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR...

The Coen Brothers' new movie *The Big Lebowski*, featuring a sharp soundtrack including a new Elvis Costello song, "My Mood Swings," along with tracks by the likes of Captain Beefheart, Meredith Monk, Townes Van Zandt, Moondog and Bob Dylan.

BABY, I DIG YOU

Sara Lorimer moved from Olympia, Washington, to Boston a year or so ago, making it a road-trip with her boyfriend Oliver Moffat. The front part of the fourth issue of her 'zine is dedicated to her account of the trip. It's like the best imaginable letter from a friend: rambling, personal, funny,

'zines

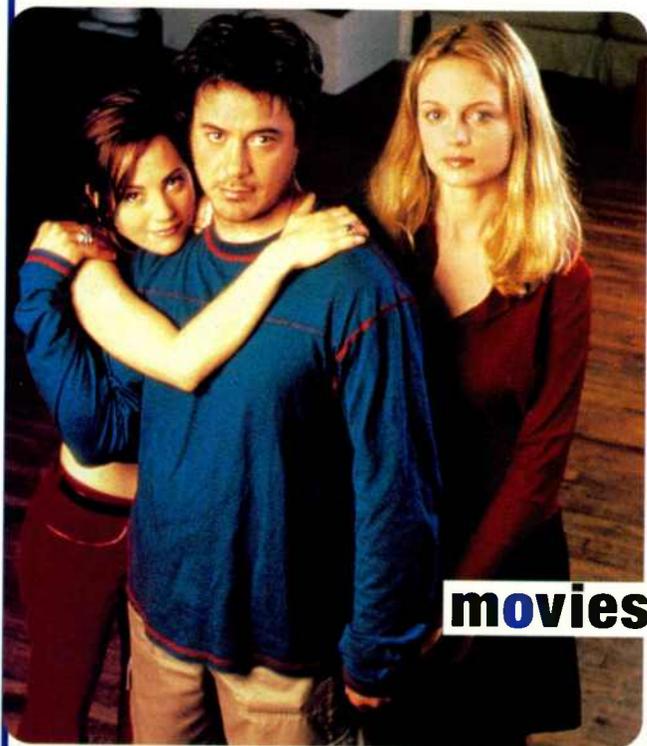
handwritten (like her fellow 'zine-ist and drifter, Aaron from Cometbus, Lorimer's got great handwriting), and even illustrated with little diagrams of what she packed and left behind for the trip, a couple of photos, and a sidebar on "Ways Oliver Makes A Good Traveling Companion" ("Shares good, provocative graffiti from men's rooms at truck stops"). Shark Fear, Shark Awareness editor Darin Johnson also contributes

an engaging letter about his experiences in Korea, and a couple of Lorimer's other friends write personal pieces as well. The final third of the magazine, though, is what makes it—we get to see Moffat's side of the trip (and his journey back to the West Coast). A lot of what they write about is their couple dynamic on the trip, and the added perspective makes it all the more meaningful. (\$3 from Sara Lorimer, P.O. Box 250173, New York, NY 10025)—DW



KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR...

The reissue of Dub Syndicate's Tunes From The Missing Channel, which doubles as a CD-ROM with information on the On-U Sound catalogue of experimental dub, articles about most of its artists, and an interview with mixmaster Adrian Sherwood.



movies

TWO GIRLS AND A GUY

Two Girls And A Guy is one of the most astoundingly, hilariously awful movies ever unleashed on an unsuspecting public, destined to take its place among midnight classics like Plan 9 From Outer Space and Showgirls. Four words: Robert Downey Jr. sings! No, let's have some more: Robert Downey Jr. plays a piano piece of his own composition! Robert Downey Jr. does a scene from Hamlet! Robert Downey Jr. has silhouetted simulated sex with Heather Graham's body double! The premise is simple: Two women discover that they've been dating the same guy for months, each convinced that she was the only one. They break into his apartment, he comes home, and psychodrama ensues. Riddled with implausibilities, clichés and high school drama club blocking, Two Girls is also blessed with one howler after another in its script (by director James Toback, previously responsible for Bugsy), whose idea of how to point out that Natasha Gregson Wagner's character is streetwise is to have her announce "I'm streetwise!" By the time Downey has shown off his catalogue of screen-friendly Deep Emotions and Wagner has uttered her classic final line (OK, we'll spoil it: "If you've got the beer, I've got the time—and I don't mean just sexually"), it's clear that this is far funnier than anything that's supposed to have been a comedy in ages. —DW

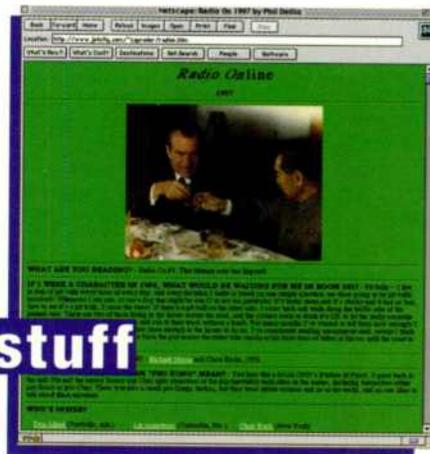
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR...

Jack Kirby's New Gods, a new paperback reprinting Kirby's classic, cosmic early-'70s comics series in a single black-and-white volume.

RADIO ON-LINE www.jetcity.com/~zapruder/radion.htm

While there's no shortage of fanzines taking on the pop single, it's hard to imagine one with the same laid-back, bull-session ambiance that's made Phil Dellio's annual Radio On a cherished institution among a small cabal of rock-crits and people who love them. Dellio's m.o. is the same every year: He makes a list of the year's major radio songs and sends it out to his gang of reviewers, who rate each song and discuss its significance to pop, politics, the music biz, the well-being of their children and pets, or whatever else occurs to them. Rarely ponderous and often hilarious, this congenitally media-savvy crew dispenses advice for would-be stars ("So [the Chemical Brothers] are a cult item while Prodigy is #1 because they don't have a face, right? So what's the problem, are Rob and Fab too busy to join up?") when they're not puzzling over the vagaries of the charts, MTV, or the songs themselves. The newly launched website lets you look at reviews by song or by contributor (these include Chuck Eddy, Rob Sheffield and CMJ New Music Monthly's own Chris Molanphy). Either way, if you've ever talked back to the radio, advanced a party conversation by dissing the song that's playing, or even watched VH-1 with friends, you're going to relate. —AM

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Boggy Depot
Fantasma
Telegraph
DMC
Spread It All Around
Life In The So-Called Space Age
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The Army Of Wires Remix
Saturday Teenage Kick
Push Comes To Love
decksandrumsandrockandroll
Hard Times, Sunday Sprits
Feeling Strangely Fine
The Slow-Motion World Of Snowpony
Blunted Boy Wonder
Head Trip In Every Key
Winterland
Super MLK
Little Birlds
Classic Elements

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Matador
Flydaddy
Moonshine
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JEFF BUCKLEY
DIRTY THREE
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STABBING WESTWARD
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VARIOUS ARTISTS

Blueprint
My Sweatheart The Drunk
Ocean Songs
Creatures Of Habit
Darkest Days
Different Section Wires
Moving Shadow Compilation

Mo Wax/ffrr-London
Columbia
Touch And Go
Columbia
Columbia
Touch And Go
ffrr-London

TOP 75 ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY

	artist	title	label
1	DJ SHADOW	Preemptive Strike	Mo Wax/frrr-London
2	PEE SHY	Don't Get Too Comfortable	Blue Gorilla-Mercury
3	HUM	Downward Is Heavenward	RCA
4	MODEST MOUSE	The Lonesome Crowded West	Up
5	UNWOUND	Challenge For A Civilized Society	Kill Rock Stars
6	JUNE OF 44	Four Great Points	Quarterstick
7	PORTISHEAD	Portishead	Go! Beat-London
8	PASTELS	Illumination	Up
9	NOFX	So Long And Thanks For All The Shoes	Epitaph
10	G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE	Yeah, It's That Easy	OKeh-Epic
11	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Big Rock 'N Beats	Wax Trax!-TVT
12	BLACK GRAPE	Stupid Stupid Stupid	Radioactive
13	BUNNYGRUNT	Jen-Fi	No Life
14	GODHEADSILO	Share The Fantasy	Sub Pop
15	KOMPUTER	The World Of Tomorrow	Mute
16	JULIANA HATFIELD	Please Do Not Disturb (EP)	Bar/None
17	PELL MELL	Star City	Matador
18	MARK EITZEL	Caught In A Trap And I Can't Back Out	Matador
19	VARIOUS ARTISTS	'Cause I Love You Much, Baby	Matador
20	SOUNDTRACK	Tibetan Freedom Concert	Grand Royal-Capitol
21	MICK HARVEY	Great Expectations	Atlantic
22	THE VERVE	Pink Elephants	Mute
23	GET UP KIDS	Urban Hymns	Virgin
24	AIR	Four Minute Mile	Doghouse
25	TRANSISTOR SOUND & LIGHTING CO.	Moon Safari	Source-Caroline
26	RADIOHEAD	Transistor Sound & Lighting Co.	Vik
27	MOMUS	OK Computer	Capitol
28	HIGH LLAMAS	Ping Pong	Le Grand Magistry
29	DJ KRUSH	Cold And Bouncy	V2
30	CORNERSHOP	Miligt	Mo Wax/frrr-London
31	VALÉRIE LEMERCIER	When I Was Born For The 7th Time	Luaka Bop-WB
32	AQUABATS	Chante	March
33	BEN FOLDS FIVE	The Fury Of The Aquabats!	Golden Voice-Time Bomb
34	QUICKSPACE	Naked Baby Photos	Caroline
35	EVERCLEAR	Quickspace	Kitty Kitty-Slash
36	RAMMSTEIN	So Much For The Afterglow	Capitol
		Sehnsucht	Slash-London

“I was born hallucinating. Left forever orphaned. Left to wander. Waiting. Wondering. Ready for the next disaster.”

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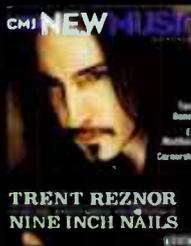
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Chart date called from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college and non-commercial radio stations reporting their top 20 chart played releases.

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| 37 | MARY LOU LORD | Got No Shadow | WORK |
| 38 | VICTORIA WILLIAMS | Musings Of A Creek Dipper | Atlantic |
| 39 | PROPELLERHEADS | Bang On! (EP) | DreamWorks |
| 40 | TOASTERS | Don't Let The Bastards Grind You Down | Moon Ska |
| 41 | DEFTONES | Around The Fur | Maverick-WB |
| 42 | FREE KITTEN | Sentimental Education | Kill Rock Stars |
| 43 | RONI SIZE/REPRAZENT | New Forms | Talkin' Loud-Mercury |
| 44 | BJÖRK | Homogenic | Elektra-EEG |
| 45 | BARDO POND | Lapsed | Matador |
| 46 | RODEO BOY | How Is It Where You Are? | Sit-N-Spin |
| 47 | JANE'S ADDICTION | Kettle Whistle | Warner Bros. |
| 48 | POSIES | Success | Poplana |
| 49 | LABRADFORD | Me Media Naranja | Kranky |
| 50 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Physical Fatness: Fat Music Vol. III | Fat Wreck Chords |
| 51 | SUBLIME | Second-Hand Smoke | Gasoline Alley-MCA |
| 52 | FLYING SAUCER ATTACK | New Lands | Drag City |
| 53 | SONGS: OHIA | Hecla & Griper (EP) | Secretly Canadian |
| 54 | FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY | Flavour Of The Weak | Metropolis |
| 55 | PROMISE RING | Nothing Feels Good | Jade Tree |
| 56 | FINLEY QUAYE | Maverick A Strike | Epic |
| 57 | DAVID HOLMES | Let's Get Killed | Go! Beat/1500-A&M |
| 58 | LOVE AS LAUGHTER | #1 USA | K |
| 59 | AUTOUR DE LUCIE | Immobile | Nettwerk |
| 60 | DERAILERS | Reverb Deluxe | Watermelon-Sire |
| 61 | RECEIVER | Chicken Milk | Iron America |
| 62 | GREEN DAY | Nimrod | Reprise |
| 63 | FUNKDOOBIEST | The Troubadours | Buzztone-RCA |
| 64 | CLARA THOMAS | Clara Thomas | Mercury |
| 65 | KMFDM | KMFDM | Wax Trax!-TVT |
| 66 | WRENS | Abbott 1135 | Ten 23 |
| 67 | DUMP | A Plea For Tenderness | Brinkman |
| 68 | SIXTEEN DELUXE | Emits Showers Of Sparks | Warner Bros. |
| 69 | RADIOLARIA | Fuzz Is Verse | Twist Top |
| 70 | OF MONTREAL | The Bird Who Ate The Rabbit's Flower (EP) | Kindercore |
| 71 | VARIOUS ARTISTS | Great Jewish Music: Serge Gainsbourg | Tzadik |
| 72 | SPATULA | Despina By Land | Squealer |
| 73 | LISA LOEB | Firecracker | Geffen |
| 74 | PEARL JAM | "Given To Fly" (5") | Epic |
| 75 | APHEX TWIN | Come To Daddy (EP) | Warp-Sire |

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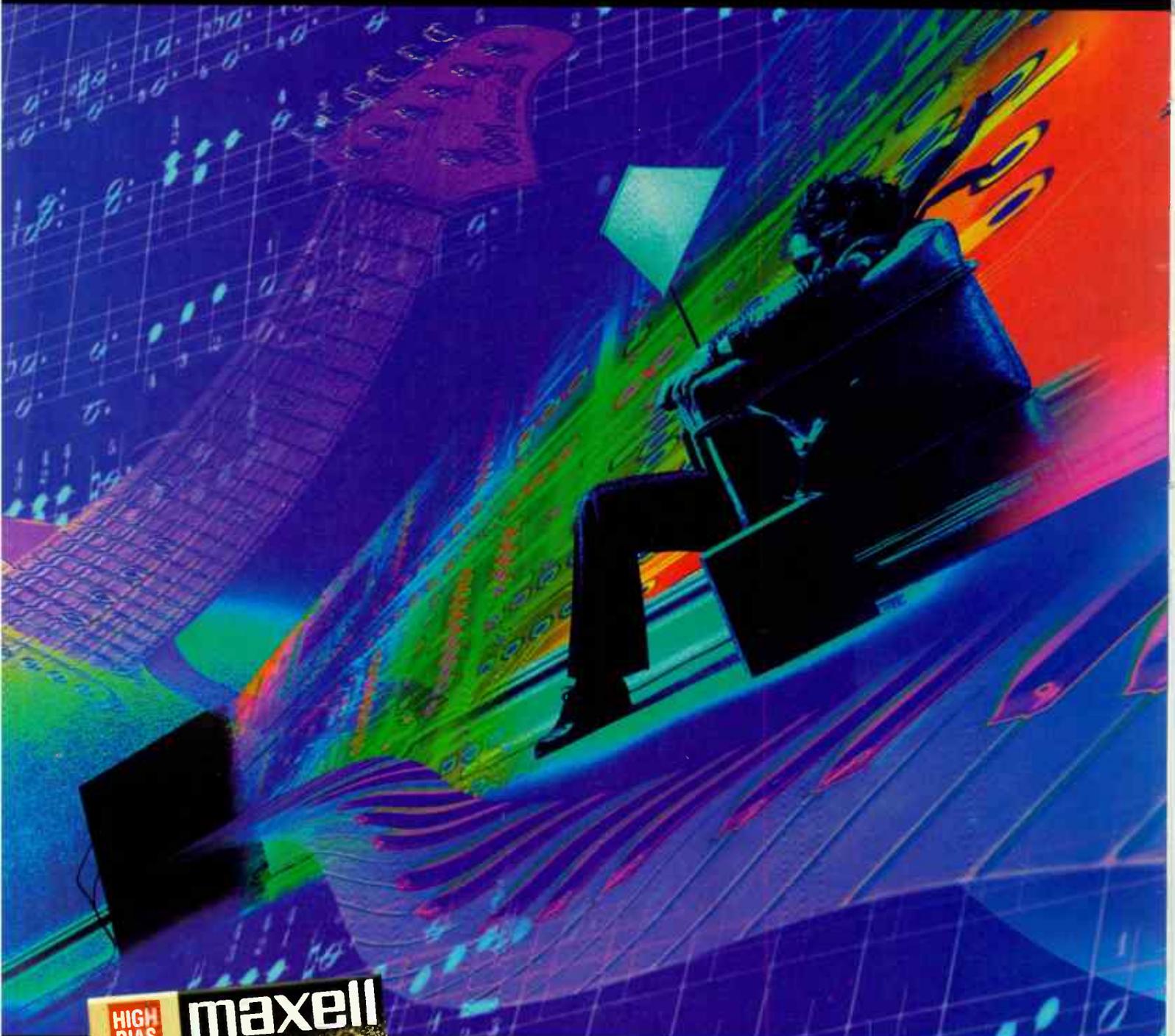
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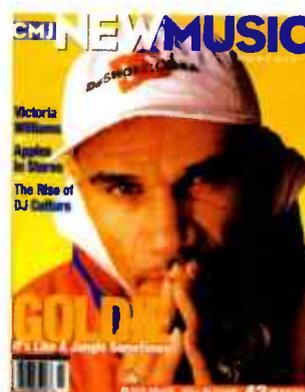
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by Scott Sterling

Detroit, Michigan

Detroit is a city of such extremes that it comes off as perfectly balanced. This yin-yang dichotomy emanates directly from the city's cultural heart. While the American automobile industry keeps the big machine churning along, a familial community of artists, musicians, designers, promoters and writers is free to create (and



perpetuate) new ways of looking at new things. The techno revolution of the 1980s birthed a new generation of future progressives weaned on sonic theorems from such disparate sources as techno titan Carl Craig and the down-river, psycho-surrealist/mind-rotting jesters known as the Insane Clown Posse. In other words, Detroit has got it going on big time these days. With not one, but two new sports stadiums and casino gambling hitting these streets before the turn of the millennium, Detroit stands at the cusp of living up to its motto and actually becoming "The Renaissance City."

be hear now

With Motown the certified birthplace of techno, the city is rife with shops, clubs and landmarks directly descended from the underground scene. DJs from all over the world have long made Detroit a priority stop when it comes to getting the latest, greatest and rarest techno platters to put in their record crates. The Mecca of techno monuments is the **Submerge Building** (2030 Grand River, 313.963.1025), which houses "Mad" Mike Banks' Underground Resistance fortress. Superstar DJs like Laurent Garnier, Gayle San and 4-Hero are all regular visitors to the spot, which also contains **Somewhere In Detroit**, an in-house record shop. This place is seriously on the underground tip, so it is best to call before stopping by (unexpected visitors are often ignored if no one knows them). Another record shop owned and operated by a member of the techno elite is Blake Baxter's **Save The Vinyl** (200 W. Grand River, 313.962.3527). Baxter's affiliation with the German techno label Tresor is reflected in the shop's impressive selection of import wax. You'll need to get across town to visit **Recordtime** (27360 Gratiot, 810.775.1550), where hardcore jocks hold court in the famous dance room. True techno connoisseurs might even find the adjacent doorway to the distribution center for the +8 record label (it's a situation much like Sumberge, so don't take it personally if you can't get in). Serious vinyl collectors will have a minor epiphany at **Car City Classics** (21918 Harper, 810.775.4770), where notorious crate-diggers like the UK's Kirk

Degiorgio (a.k.a. As One) have been known to close the store. Natty-dressing rave children will want to check **Space 19** (4470 Second, 313.833.4842), where Adriel sells a nice selection of streetwear clothing lines, mix tapes and scene 'zines. He can also fill you in on what's worth checking out in the Detroit nightlife department. For the deepest in hip-hop gear and vibrations, see **Spectacles** (230 E. Grand River, 313.963.6886). Fans of the visual arts should make it a point to visit the **Johanson Charles Gallery** (1345 Division, 313.567.8638). Local artists like metal worker Chris Turner hold openings at this raw space, while techno institutions like Transmat Records present dramatic one-off parties featuring matinee jocks such as Detroit diplomat Derrick May and Chicago shaman Derrick Carter.

eat to the beat

On the food front, Motown has no shortage of fine-but-funky culinary delights. The one-two punch of open-all-night institutions **American Coney Island** (114 W. Lafayette, 313.961.7758) and its next-door neighbor **Lafayette Coney Island** (313.964.8198) will make you want to try a Coney dog at both joints. Across from the aforementioned rave boutique Space 19 is a classic diner, **The Koney King** (4477 Second, 313.833.5572), which features a massive breakfast known only as "The Albanian," which is not for the faint of heart or the cholesterol-fearing. Fans of genuine Mexican chow will love Mexicantown, where restaurants like **Mexican Village** (2600 Bagley, 313.237.0333) and the notorious **Xochimilco's** (3409 Bagley, 313.843.0179) serve authentic Mexicana long after the bars have stopped pouring at 2 a.m. If you feel like throwing around a little cash and doing the see-and-be-seen scene, **Union Street** (4145 Woodward,



Johanson Charles Gallery

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