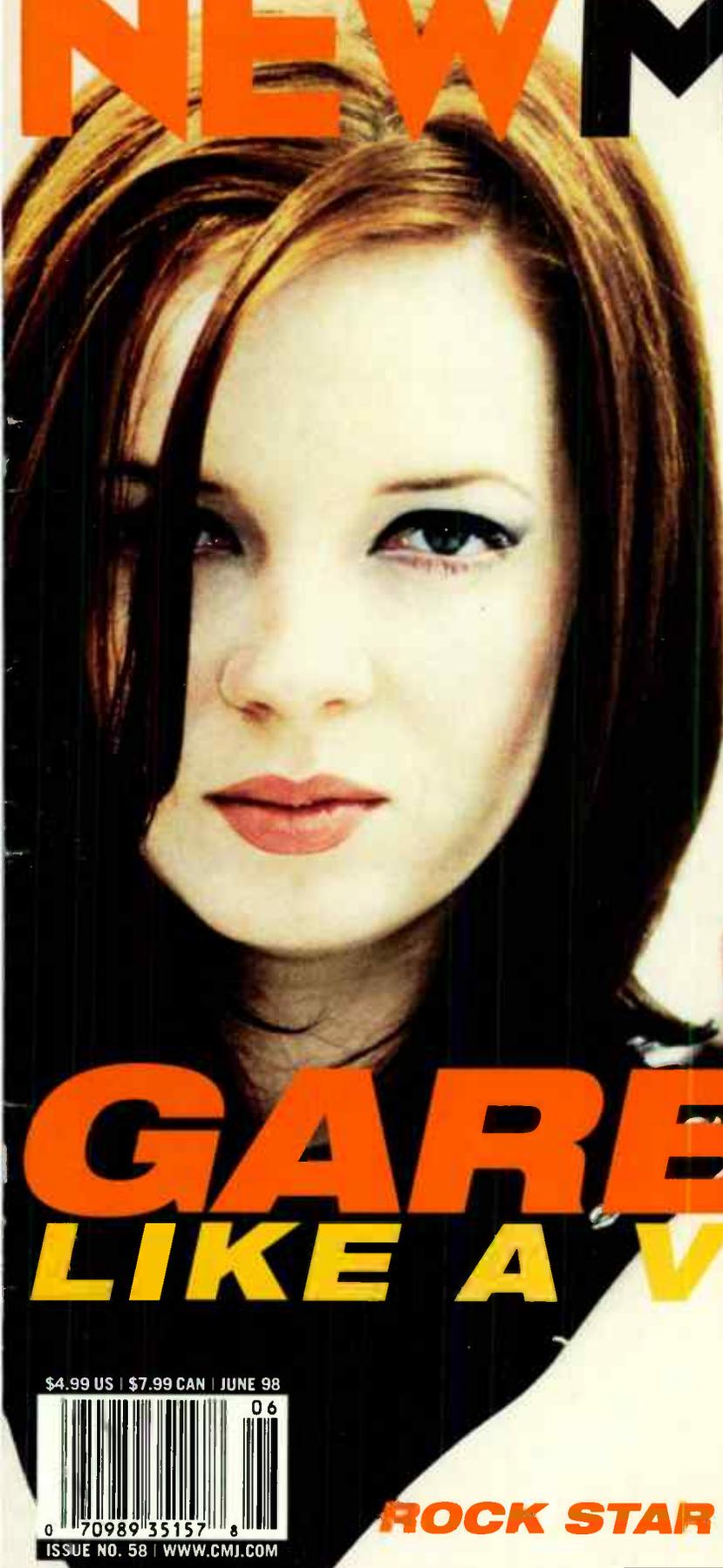


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World Radio History



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World Radio History

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JUNE 1998 ISSUE 58

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Is this multi-platinum band due for a sophomore slump? No, says producer extraordinaire and Garbage man Butch Vig, "We're too old to have a sophomore slump." John Pecorelli gets an update from the band, while Tom Lanham has a solo chat session with Shirley Manson.

## 20 fastball

"An analogy for me is you're pushing a cart full of boulders up a craggy cliff and you're just doing it forever and all of a sudden the cart full of boulders turns into a stretch limo and you climb in the back." Scott Frampton finds how circumstances have changed for the purveyors of the hit "The Way."

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Brown's Stone Roses were once the biggest band in England; Butler's London Suede and Chadwick's House Of Love were each touted as the Next Big Thing. Each songwriter has recently shaken off the rubble of those bands to release a solo record. Tom Lanham puts the story together.

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"The new record is my pop experiment. It's like a new beginning. There's no signature [style] on it anywhere—it's really other persons' signatures that I'm forging," confesses Mark Ramos Nishita about his second solo album. Mark Woodlief finds out what pushes his buttons.



ON THE COVER AND HERE: GARBAGE  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL HALSBAND

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## on the cd

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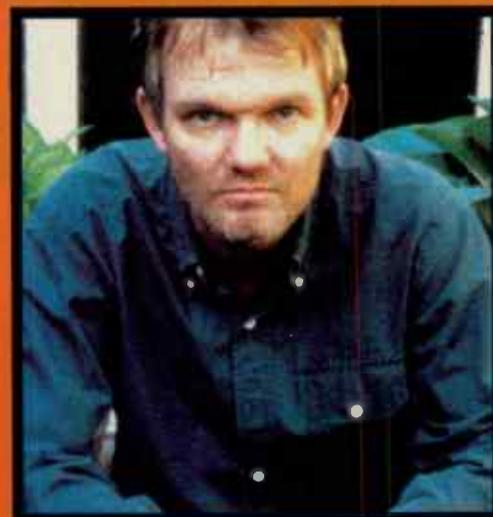
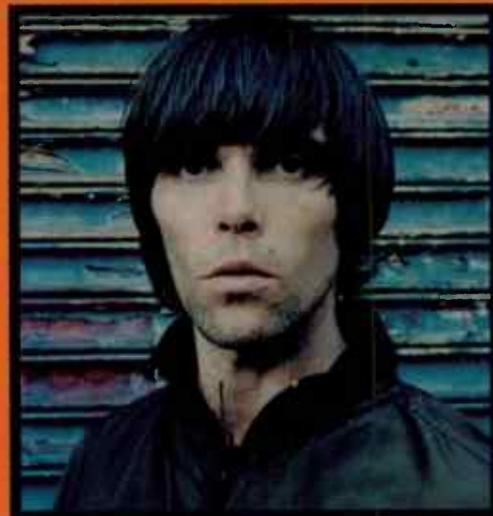
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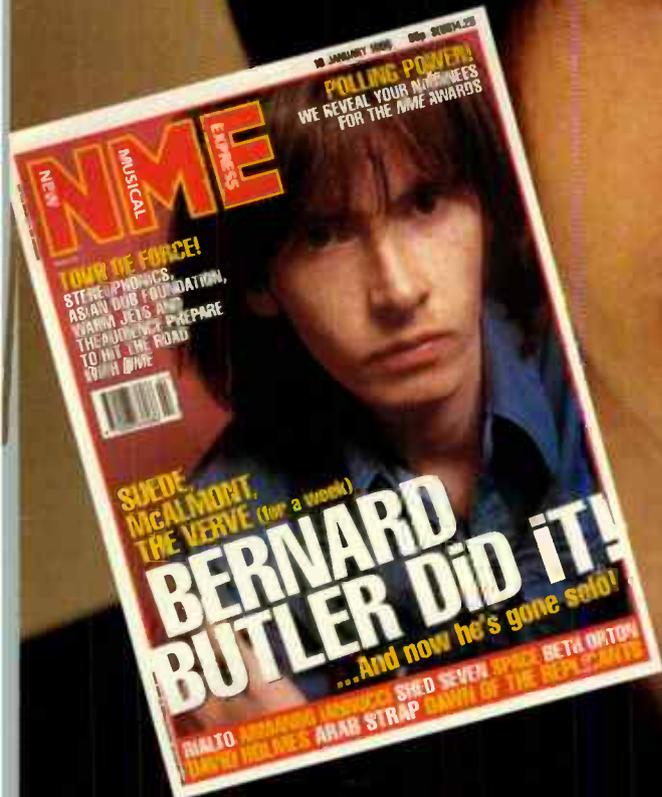
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**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER:** Marianne P. Stone  
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**CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY**

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*Isn't forgiving a movie star for appreciating something you don't agree with, but reprimanding the little schmucks with the magazine for their equal participation, a little like letting a person cut ahead of you in line at the movies simply because they're good looking? Admittedly, it's not Janeane's job to introduce you to new bands: That's our job, and we still think we do it pretty well, no matter who's on the cover. But a big part of the philosophy behind that is that we cover artists because of what they are, not what they aren't. Reactionary backlash against big artists is every bit as odious as when other magazines refuse to cover bands that are "too small."* >>> Ed.

### /// IN THE CONTEXT OF NO CONTEXT

I loved the fresh perspective in Janeane Garofalo's interview with Eddie Vedder, but don't you think it was misleading to pull a quote from Ms. Garofalo ("In my experience with the press...") to draw the reader into an article about Mr. Vedder? Of course, anyone who read the story knows the context, but someone with a passive interest in the subject might have only scanned the quotes and gotten the wrong idea. I guess the only reason I feel compelled to write about this is that on these same pages, Ms. Garofalo criticized the print media for that same sort of misrepresentation. Kudos, however, for including "[Tape Stops]" in your transcription. I think it helped to preserve the context of the interview, while demonstrating the lack of trust the participants hold for the press.

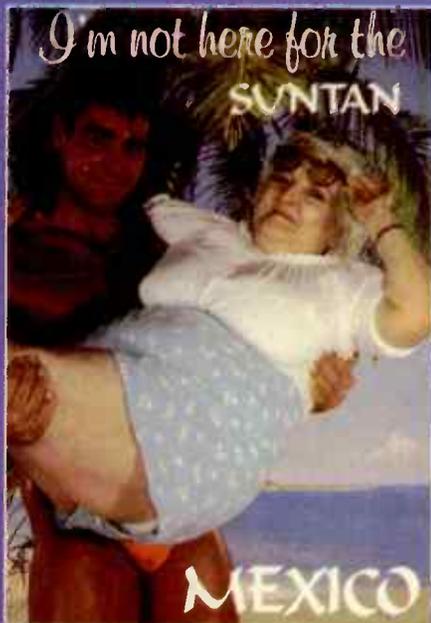
Tom German

*"Don't believe everything you read" is one thing, but "don't believe everything you scan"? It's a little hard to feel responsible for the misapprehensions of those who "read" an article by only glancing at the quotes in big letters. Distrust is fine until it so colors your perspective that you see everything as an intentional manipulation, at which point you're just as gullible as the non-skeptic. Man, am I grumpy today.* >>> Ed.

### /// LIQUORED UP

Just wanted to drop you a quick line regarding CMJ NMM's recent review of the Liquor Giant's *Every Other Day at a Time*. While it certainly is a very fine release, only two of the ten bonus tracks that are found on the advance promo copy are available on the commercial release. Those two and twelve other phenomenal covers can be found on the Liquor Giants' *Something Special for the Kids* out April 7th from Blood Red Vinyl & Discs. Just thought you might like to know.

Dan Holland  
 Blood Red Vinyl & Discs



### /// A TRIP FOR TWO TO LOVELY PUERTA VALLERTA

I'm a "pleasant ambivalence friend" of *New Music Monthly* from Quebec City (Canada) and I'm enjoying the new CD (March) on a beach in Puerta Vallarta. Ten Thousand suns for you.

Michel and Sonny  
 (Musique Chez Sonny)  
 Quebec City, Canada

### /// A TRANSLUCENT FOSSIL RESIN

It almost pains me to criticize Janeane Garofalo, whom I have long regarded as one of the greatest cynics of our time. She is intelligent and sarcastic; she doesn't back down or take any bullshit. So why does she pepper her interview with Eddie Vedder with variations on the phrase, "I'm not just saying this to kiss your ass, but...." By the way, why is Vedder even discussed in your magazine. I have nothing against pop culture, but when I crave it, I'll watch MTV. Garofalo does use one successful interview tactic when she cites Jamiroquai's defense of Hanson. This strategy almost makes me feel guilty, almost makes me refrain from crying out, "Pearl Jam sucks!" Not only are they mainstream, but they suck. What a horrible cover story—just plain bad. I have forgiven Janeane, but I'm afraid you'll have to try a little harder. Next month, please return to exposing me to new and exciting artists I can't find anywhere in the mall's corporate record shops.

Amber Montero  
 Staten Island, NY

**CORRECTIONS: THE PHOTOGRAPHER FOR MARCH'S LOCALZINE WAS EILEEN LAIBINIS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHER FOR APRIL'S ARCHER PREWITT/RICHARD DAVIES INTERVIEW WAS JIM NEWBERRY.**

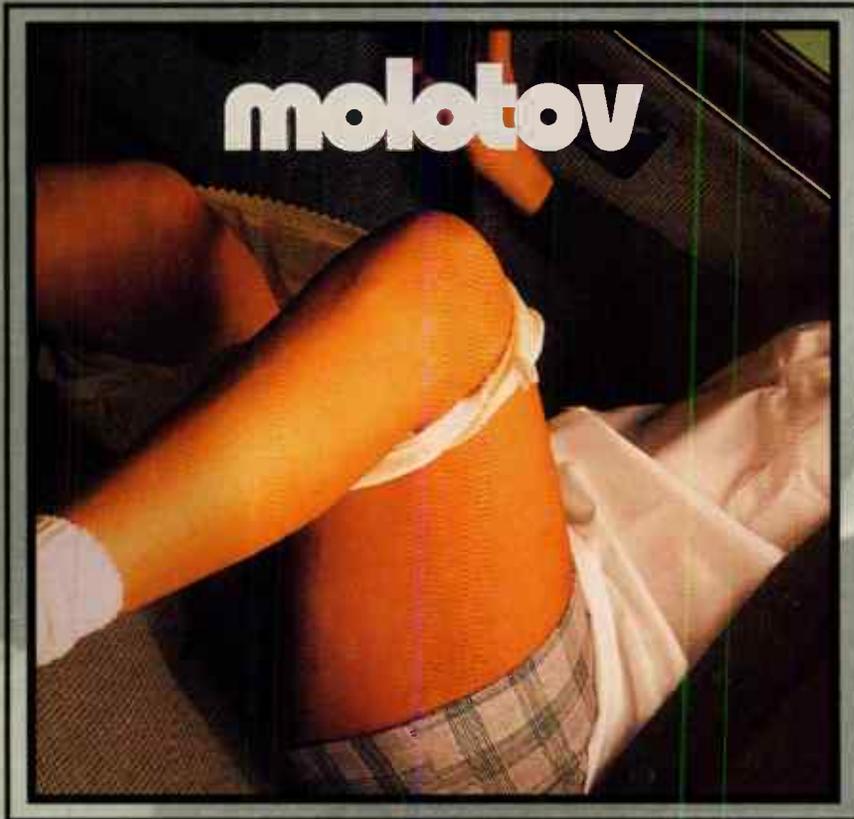


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World Radio History



## peter thomas

### Das Ist Futuremuzik

Like many British bands, Pulp has always had a filmic sensibility to its music. But nowhere is this more clear than on the title track to the band's new album, *This Is Hardcore*. Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker recalls, "On a Friday night, I said 'Right, everybody has to come back in on Monday with an idea for a song.' That was the start of 'This Is Hardcore.' I brought in the CD that has the sample from this German bloke called Peter Thomas. It was from a late '60s kind of sci-fi TV series or something." The sampled song, "Bolero On The Moon Rocks," was written and recorded by the German composer/arranger for a '60s TV series called *Raumpatrouille* (*Space Patrol*), and it's a fetching example of Thomas's swingin' light orchestral vibe, one that in the late '90s sounds both coolly retro and charmingly futuristic.

"Naturally, I heard the [Pulp] song, I saw the video, and I am glad with the result," notes the effervescent Thomas. "An old man—in 28 years I'm 100 years old—meets talented Jarvis. It's a congenial idea to mix my 'Bolero' with the song 'Hardcore.'"

Thomas has just seen the release of his first collection in America, *Futuremuzik* (Scamp), whose tracks surely provided the backdrop to numerous spy chases, seduction scenes, double-crossings and outer-space battles. The disc's reverent liner notes, written by Combustible Edison's the Millionaire, call him Germany's answer to Ennio Morricone, John Barry and



Jean Jacques Perry.

Playing nightclubs throughout Berlin after World War II exposed a young, conservatory-trained Thomas to the tastes of American soldiers. "Also in this time on the radio—AFN, Armed Forces Radio—I heard the orchestras of

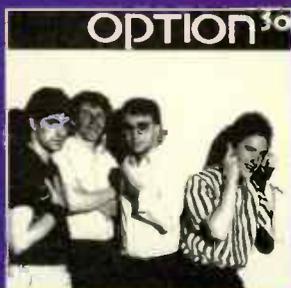
Percy Faith, André Kostalanetz, David Rose, Hollywood Bowl, Leroy Anderson, etc. They built up my taste for orchestral light symphonic music."

Along with his obvious talent and keenly developed dramatic ear, Thomas's sense of humor is also a key to his style-hopping sound. "Most important is to have fun in the recording time. Then the music sounds better," he reveals in *Futuremuzik's* liner notes. Pressed for an example, he recounts, "For a session with a really big sound-orchestra, 85 persons, I ordered a tractor, who came in the studio with his very loud motor sound—*racker-rackerrockeraekckok, chichi rockerajku* was the motor sound. Naturally I informed myself what the sound was like and then included this in the score with this knowledge. Then the Peter Thomas Sound Ork must play, as the tractor drove around the orchestra—giving the beat, the really tractor beat—with this trucker sound. This sounded better than five drums."

He may be in his eighth decade on Earth, but Thomas has no plans for retirement. He's scheduled to record with French electronica group Air and, Thomas says, German indie label Bungalow will release a set of "rare electronic stuff from my early '70s, and there are reworks of this material planned from Stock, Hausen & Walkman, High Llamas, Tortoise, Stereo Total, Air, Mouse On Mars, amongst others." >>> Lydia Vanderloo

### weirdrecord

To look at him now, you'd never know that Trent Reznor was once a dorky-looking goober in a dorky-sounding new wave band. Or would you? Six years before the release of Nine Inch Nails' groundbreaking *Pretty Hate Machine*, Reznor and some of his Pennsylvania buddies recorded some demos as Option 30. Shriek Records recently released an album, simply called *Option 30*, that combines eight demo tracks with several short interview segments. The originals reveal the band's admitted tendency to be "too Police-ish," and covers of Falco's "Der Kommissar," and the Thompson Twins' "Lies" sound just plain silly. But what's priceless are the interview bits, conducted by a local DJ, which reveal where Reznor's head was at before he developed his own cult of personality. "It's not easy being in a band," he admits during one segment. "In fact, it's pretty lonely."



### buzzword

**EPK** The letters stand for Electronic Press Kit, which is a videocassette that labels send to the media to give a more three-dimensional view of a band than the traditional, paper-only press kit. Including things like interviews with the band, live clips and snippets of the latest music video, the EPK is designed to accentuate band's personality and charisma in hopes of making it more appealing to TV bookers (at Letterman, Conan O'Brien, etc.) and editors at taste-making lifestyle magazines.

## labelprofile

**E<sup>2</sup>**  
**SQUARED**

E - S q u a r e d proprietors Jack Emerson and Steve Earle are more like father-figures than label heads: The two-year-old company values the growth and development of its young folk and country artists over profit margins. "When Steve came along," Emerson explains of his artist/partner, "he had people like Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark to kind of tutor him as he came up through the system. I know he really appreciates what they did for him. So part of what we're trying to do here is help people write the best songs that they're capable of writing at any given time." The beneficiaries of this approach include Cheri Knight, 6-String Drag and the Viceroyes—musicians who share Earle's tendency to skirt around the edges of traditional country music. Upcoming releases include an acoustic 6-String Drag EP, a second V-Roy's full-length, and a new album from Earle himself.



## in my room

CHARLIE HUNTER

- HOWARD ZINN  
(book) A People's History Of The United States
- EDDIE HARRIS  
(book) The Intervallistic Concept
- SONY PLAYSTATION  
Tekken II
- DAVE HOLLAND QUARTET  
Dream Of The Elders
- ALBERT KING  
Wednesday Night In San Francisco



L-R: KARCIC, BROWN, WICK, FALCON



SONYA KOSKOV

That death and disenfranchisement have long fueled some of the most vital rock songwriting doesn't make tragedy any easier on the musician going through a series of miserable experiences. For Jerry Wick, Gaunt's lead vocalist, the period leading up to the band's Warner Bros.' debut, *Bricks And Blackouts*, nearly roused him from music altogether.

"It was all personal," the tousle-haired singer groggily recalls, gulping down coffee in a hotel room the morning after a raucous performance at the music industry convention South By Southwest. "People dying and crying and breaking up and not making sense."

Rather than provide fodder for songs on Gaunt's fifth full-length—following three on Thrill Jockey and one on Amphetamine Reptile—the death of four friends, the theft of the band's equipment and the departure of a bassist plagued Wick as he and his three bandmates entered a Chicago studio. They recorded an album, scrapped it, and began anew.

Switching to Minneapolis's Pachyderm Studio, the Columbus, Ohio, quartet came up with *Bricks*, a record filled with two-minute songs that seesaw merrily from reckless rock to melodic punk-pop, pausing in the middle for a wispy ballad that's also the title track. It's not a happy album, though the songwriting and musicianship sound remarkably refined for a band known for its garage-rock approach to aggro punk.

Gaunt co-founder Jovan Karcic, whose guitar riffs are as pointed and thick as his beard, says the band is less concerned with adherence to a genre than with trying to tweak its sound. "If you start from the beginning," he says, "every record that comes after is like a stair step. Maybe not up, but it's different than the previous one."

In the case of *Bricks*, different means better. Along with bassist Brett Falcon and drummer Sam Brown, the longtime friends place a welcome emphasis on the songs rather than style or attitude, from the aptly titled opener "Anxiety" to the jaunty, frenetic closer "Dancing When You're Down."

Wick says he felt more pressure recovering from his personal problems than dealing with those who mumbled "sell-out" when Gaunt left the indie realm. "It's more punk-rock to sign to a major label nowadays than to stay on an indie," he says.

The tribulations behind *Bricks* eventually led to some of the band's catchiest songs to date, including a brilliant blast of pop—harmonies and all—called "97th Tear," a sort of follow-up to the ? And The Mysterians' chestnut "96 Tears."

"It's this huge suicide song that's on the radio all the time," he says of the Farfisa-fueled 1966 hit. "It's my response to that. Is there anything after death? Or after a break-up? What's the aftermath of the 96th tear? It's kind of silly, but it also fit with the year 1997, which was my worst year."

>>> Richard Martin

## Lunatic **calm**

### Before The Storm

"Club culture is obsessed with divisions and tags," says Lunatic Calm guitarist and keyboardist Howie Saunders. "When those tags are applied to music, it can be very stifling for the artists. You're straitjacketed if you try and conform to a certain ideal. We've never been about that. It's always been about crossing boundaries."

Saunders, along with programmer/guitarist Shack, is far too familiar with the constraints of this pigeonholing. In an attempt to describe the mixture of punk/metal-minded rock and breakbeat electronics heard on Lunatic Calm's debut CD, *Metropol* (City Of Angels), inventive



critics and fans have categorized the band's music with a slew of silly catch phrases—"techno-rock" being the most straightforward, "speed big beat" the most absurd. Still, these genre-tags are far more flattering (and fairer) than the most common label the band wears: Prodigy rip-off.

"We have suffered [from the comparisons] to Prodigy," says Saunders. "There's a [single] mechanism by which the rock industry does business that's not the same by which dance artists operate. For us, it's not about creating an album whereby you have four or five singles that can be lifted. It's quite an absurdity to take three minutes out of a body of work and focus *just* on that. There's one track out of the whole album that sounds like anything approaching what they would do [the techno-punk maelstrom, "Leave You Far Behind"]. But it's the single. It's the first thing, and quite possibly the last thing, people will hear, so we're stuck with the tag."

"It's a massive undertaking to have that kind of 'rock' instrumentation and still make music from a club mentality," continues Shack. "Our dance side greatly outweighs our guitar side, but we've grown up on a lot of rock bands. We want to work towards our strengths and use what we've actually got. And not to use those [rock] elements would be wasting quite a big resource."

Barely out of the starting gate, Lunatic Calm has already won accolades not only for its studio creations, but also for its remixes (the band has worked its magic on Bush, Curve and 808 State, to name a few) and mesmerizing live shows. "The album isn't a finished statement," says Shack. "*Metropol*, plus our remixes and live shows—*that's* the finished statement. And until you can draw on all those different things, you can't really see what the band is all about."

>>> M. Tye Comer



### in my room SKY CRIES MARY RODERICK ROMERO

- WILLIE NELSON:  
Starclust
- THE WHO:  
Mentally Beaty Big And Bouncy
- ROLLING STONES:  
Big Hits (High Tides And Green Grass)
- "I don't watch TV. I'm reading about Gaudi and Saint Francis."
- I'm building a nest up in a tree that's 11 feet by 8 feet.

### randomquote

“ I learned from Warren G that the letter 'G' has a special significance to them and to some members of their community, in that it symbolizes kids and young people who have risen above drugs and violence, and who are worthy of respect because of their positive contributions to the world... Now knowing how much the symbol 'G' means to Warren, I will strive to reach the standard that the 'G' represents to him and to his community. ”

—Garth Brooks, after resolving a dispute with Warren G over who would get to use "G" as his logo

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Q&amp;A

# violent femmes

Talking on a cellular phone whilst on a car ride from Brooklyn to Manhattan, Violent Femme Gordon Gano chatted about the band's newest record, *Freak Magnet*, which features a collaboration with French avant-garde composer Pierre Henry. At press time, the band had parted ways with its label and release plans for *Freak Magnet* remained uncertain.

>>> Jenny Eliscu

**Q:** Pierre Henry. Tell me about him.

**A:** He's one of the greatest composers of the 20th century and eventually someday, he'll probably be really known by everybody. He's a French composer who's a pioneer in music and recording technology. He was the first trained composer to work with a recording studio and lots of the inventions—say even tape, recording tape, manipulations of tape in the recording studio—to use it for its own sake rather than instruments. He used sounds and he'd hear sounds and composed using different recorded sounds and, you know, [believed] that the world is music. That there's no sound which is not its own music. He is known in France. But he's not as well known in the Anglo world. When we were in Paris, we looked him up and we went to his studio and met with him and got along well and he came to our concerts we played there two or three years ago and then we talked about collaborating.

**Q:** Has he ever collaborated with other American artists?

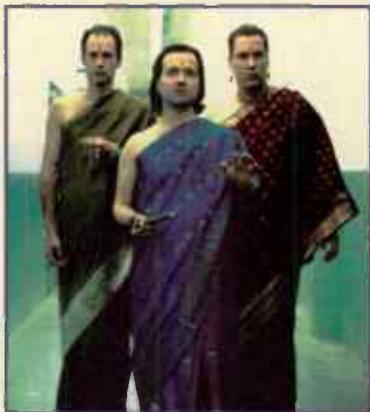
**A:** I don't believe he's collaborated with other American artists before. I don't think so. My experts tell me that, no, in fact we are the first. He did make a record with another rock band. He made a record with Spooky Tooth—that would have been late '60s, early '70s—but it really doesn't compare to the work with us. The things that he did with us were more organic or more involved as opposed to that, where it's like their songs and he's doing some noises or sounds along with it.

**Q:** Is "A Story" [a song on *Freak Magnet* about a couple that is eaten by a monster during their elopement] supposed to be completely ironic?

**A:** "A Story" is completely 100% autobiographical, like everything I write. 100%, right from my diary. It's like totally what happened to me one day. What do you want me to say to that? Yeah, no, it's completely...

**Q:** I don't mean is it factual or fiction. I mean is it allegorical or ironic?

**A:** It's my mother's story. Right? It's all from the viewpoint of the mother. And maybe you'll get a lyric sheet at some point if you actually pick up the record on your own.... But, actually, I started reading some stuff into it where I thought, you know, I just wrote it because I thought it was fun and meaningless. And then, recently, I started thinking, "Well, there's sort of something being said here." It's basically a very strong moral stand. It's like, if you do bad things, you know, like you sin, then you get eaten up by monsters.



# 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

Ryan Larkins !!

Marion, NJ

## SIDE ONE:

Booker T. & The MG's  
Green Onions  
Cypress Hill  
How I Could Just Kill A Man  
Bob Marley  
Stir It Up  
Miles Davis  
Spanish Key  
John Lee Hooker  
Boogie Chillun'  
Rage Against The Machine  
Fist Full O' Steel  
Ohio Players  
Fire  
Luscious Jackson  
City Song

## SIDE TWO:

Sam & Dave  
Soothe Me  
Digital Underground  
Flowin On The D Line  
John Coltrane  
Trane's Blues  
Scratch Perry  
Super Ape Inna Jungle  
Beastie Boys  
Car Thief  
Curtis Mayfield  
Freddie's Dead  
Big Chief  
My Name Is Pimp  
Run-DMC  
Run's House  
Al Green  
Love And Happiness  
Link Wray And The Raymen  
Rumble

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# maxell



**RELEASE DATE:**  
JUNE 2.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
LIBIDINOUS POST-INDUSTRIAL ROCK GROOVES.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
MINISTRY, MORPHINE, NINE INCH NAILS.

## GIRLS AGAINST BOYS

**Freak on a Mica** DGC

Hide the women and children: *Freak on a Mica* deflowers with extreme prejudice anything within hearing distance. Drenched in grinding rhythms, whirring samples and the band's usual seedy swagger, Girls Against Boys' major label debut slithers like a predator that feeds off chaos and downright reptilian depravity. Scott McCloud's gravelly whispers, less loungey here than on previous records, will get some people squawking about Trent Reznor imitations, but as McCloud sings, "This is no apocalypse." GvsB isn't about grandiose and degraded self-torture, instead strutting its collective laser-eyed leering and bleary-eyed cool. The most deliciously prurient song on the album, "Roxy," throbs with the sick, propulsive grooves of the drums and the dual bass of Eli Janney and Johnny Temple, complementing McCloud's ultra-sexy rasp. A master of aggressively hypnotic suggestion, McCloud coils his voice around your gelatinous brain stem, and you quickly go from curious to impressionable to submissive. Heck, McCloud could be stumping for campaign finance reform and he'd still get you all hot and sweaty. When he sings, "My idea of fun/Is out there as anyone," there's absolutely no question. And when he sneers, "So come freak me out" on "Cowboy Orbit," it seems like an impossible, if thoroughly irresistible, proposition.

>>> Anne Marie Cruz



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MARCH 16.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
TRIUMPHANT PUNK GRANDMA.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
RAINCOATS, PJ HARVEY, PATTI SMITH.

## HANGOVERS

**Slow Dirty Tears** Kill Rock Stars

Ex-Raincoat Gina Birch is a truly twisted DIY throwback who, with her new UK outfit the Hangovers, is making some of the most mold-breaking alterna-pop around. No mentors. No role models. Just wonderfully skewed little ditties like "Duck Song," which couples quacking mallard samples with lissome guitar lines, spooky keyboard noises, and Birch's archly sinister, spur-of-the-moment hiss. Or "Sorry," with its grating, distorted riffs, grating, distorted vocals, and grating, distorted wordplay: "There's blood all over the carpet/And there's glass all over the floor/And you said 'sorry doesn't mean a thing anymore.'" Birch is at the top of her game here, displaying more personality in one number than most bands manage to conjure in an entire album. "I like drugs and I like drinking.... I like to get high, really, really, really, *really* fucking high," she notes over a casual drumbeat in "We Had A Really Smashing Time," and you believe it, instantly, even though she delivers the message in a voice as naive and delicate as Victoria Williams's. The disc ends with "Sitting On Top Of The World," all distant guitar drone and Birch's sniffled—actually *sniffled*—near-suicidal lyrics. And when's the last time you heard a performer cry her way through a song?

>>> Tom Lanham



**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 28.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
EXPERIMENTAL ARMCHAIR TECHNO.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
APEX TWIN, AUTECHRE, ULTRAMARINE.

## PLAID

**Not For Threes** Warp-Nothing

Ed Handley and Andy Turner left the pioneering, experimental electronic group Black Dog three years ago to concentrate on their pioneering, experimental side project, Plaid. *Not For Threes*, their second album and first since the split (Ken Downie still records as Black Dog), is experimental techno at its listener-friendly best: innovative in its arrangements and combinations, but entirely accessible. Between the opening discord of "Abla Eedio" and the drifting piano finale, "Milk," are seamlessly woven elements of minimal techno, acid house, drum 'n' bass, and various samples, loops and vocals. This is a tribute to Handley and Turner's musical vision: *Not For Threes* is an emotional journey, traversing the familiar territory between joy and despair in riveting ways. On "Extork," diva Nicolette's voice, used to such sultry effect on Tricky's *Maxinquaye*, is razor sharp and cold as steel, offset by wicked, cutting breakbeats. "Rakimou" could well be a dirge for the millennium, its subdued techno backdrop giving way to ambient jungle, underlying mourning strings and melancholy vocals which paint Munch-like, listless swirls on a dreary soundscape. And "Ladyburst" is a master work; with its jovial opening breakbeat drum kick, a spongy, body-moving bass line riff and melody upon sublime melody, the track, like much of the album, could be a seminar on electronic composition. Just when you think Plaid couldn't possibly add another layer to the mix, it does, and to grand effect.

>>> William Werde

## PULP

### This Is Hardcore Island

Begging to be quoted, Jarvis Cocker drops this line early on Pulp's new album: "I am not Jesus, though I have the same initials." Is this a sly dig at Michael Jackson, whom Cocker made sport of onstage at the 1996 Brit Awards? If this media event doesn't register with you, you are likely a) not British, or b) allergic to cheeky British pop. Good news—Pulp made this album for you, too. *This Is Hardcore* distinguishes itself from Pulp's previous albums only in its willingness to please. Never afraid to be glib, even cheesy in its use of dance beats and glam attitude, Pulp embellishes its sound this time with a little Bowie swagger, some Kinks crunch, and love songs that once would have graced a Molly Ringwald movie. As for that Jesus lyric, in the song "Dishes," it turns out that Cocker (J.C.) just turned 33, like Jesus at his death, but he can't "turn this water into wine" until he washes the dishes. These bourgeois-horror lyrics seem suspect now that Cocker is famous, but his self-effacing wit carries it off. So does the music throughout *Hardcore*, brilliantly sampling two decades of UK pop, from piano pub to all-night rave. At the center is many-faced Cocker: joker, social critic, put-upon star. To quote the very British film *Career Girls*, "I suppose on a sunny day you have a wonderful view of the class struggle."

>>> *Chris Molanphy*



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MARCH 30.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
SWAGGERING BRIT-POP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
DAVID BOWIE, KINKS,  
BRYAN FERRY, LONDON  
SUEDE.

## PURPLE PENGUIN

### De-tuned Cup Of Tea-Iron America

Given his predilection for echo-and-reverb atmospherics, it's slightly uncanny that the Purple Penguin's given surname is Dubuisson. But dub isn't all that's going on here; call it trip-hop or "downtempo," Purple Penguin has long been quietly toiling away in Bristol, producing records that put much of that music to shame. Why precisely? The answer is simple: Purple Penguin writes incandescent songs with fleeting, half-heard lyrics in the form of samples. The mysterious, beautiful "Memphis" has long, distended synth chords that approximate Ry Cooder's slide-guitar work from the *Paris, Texas* soundtrack set to a crunchy, chest-rattling breakbeat. The opening track, "Tombstone," is a melancholic, slowed number with a brittle minor-key threnody running through its dense percussive undergrowth. The reworked "Pressure" has a rotating drum effect that buffets the edges of the bass line, threatening to burst it apart, while the snare hits recede into the distance like repeated hammer strikes. The wistful grandeur of "Mountain," one of the artist's earliest singles, is an expertly constructed piece of mood music with straying drum beats and a bass line that can't quite keep up with the track's tempo, producing the strange sensation of a time-lag that's never resolved. Commitment to difficulty is often regarded as an obstinate characteristic in an artist's work. Not so with Purple Penguin, whose difficult chord changes and off-balance arrangements cohere with a very satisfying imprecision.

>>> *Tim Haslett*



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MARCH 2.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
MELLOW, MELANCHOLIC  
TRIP-HOP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
MASSIVE ATTACK, MAD  
PROFESSOR, EARLY KLF.

## YOU AM I

### #4 Record Warner Bros.

You Am I's *Hourly, Daily* was one of the most criminally overlooked rock albums of 1997. To these ears that record contained three bona fide hits ("Good Mornin'," "Opportunities" and "Baby Clothes") that retroactivists and modern rock radio programmers alike should have embraced. For the most part, they didn't. Undaunted, this huge-at-home Australian trio has returned with another offering for North American ears, *#4 Record*. You Am I's formula is simple, and like most simple things, striking. Take the poignancy and economy of Elvis Costello and add a dose of wanton posturing from The Who/Marc Bolan cool school. You Am I borrowed liberally from all these (formerly) young dudes on *Hourly, Daily*, but this time around the band has honed those influences and made them its own. *#4 Record* forgoes the string-laden gawky-guy histrionics that marred *Hourly's* weaker tracks, replacing them with a steady procession of great hooks. You Am I should be as big as Costello or Bolan, but it will probably end up a fondly referenced footnote band like Big Star. That's a shame, because *#4 Record* is likely as close as You Am I will come to making a classic album on its own terms.

>>> *Matt Hanks*



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 26.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
MEATY, BEATY, BIG AND  
BOUNCY.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
ELVIS COSTELLO, T. REX,  
SLOAN.

MARINA CHAVEZ



## harvey danger

When the Seattle quartet Harvey Danger released its debut, *Where Have All The Merry-makers Gone?*, on a tiny label called The Arena Rock Recording Co. last year, it nearly got lost in the indie-rock shuffle. But the album's highlight, the insanely catchy anthem "Flagpole Sitta," couldn't disappear that easily. It became the most requested song on Seattle's commercial-schmaltz station KNDD, which sparked interest elsewhere; the record has since sold out several pressings of its original edition (with hand-printed cardboard jackets) and been re-mastered and re-released on Slash-London. (Of course, it didn't hurt that Arena Rock label owner Greg Govee's day job is with London.) Scatonic, lyrically cryptic, sometimes funny and very loud, *Merry-makers* keeps up the Pacific Northwest tradition of tongue-in-cheek riff-rock. The band maintains its own website at [www.hlang.net/~hdanger](http://www.hlang.net/~hdanger), with information on its history/rarities dates, discography and merchandise. There will be a new single, "Sad Sweetheart Of The Rodeo," out soon on new Seattle indie label The Great Outdoors, and the band will be touring America extensively in the next few months.

>>> Douglas Wolk



## tuff jam

In England, where musical trends spread like brush fires, you'd need a hefty extinguisher to douse the flames of speed garage. With its house rhythms and drum 'n' bass sensibilities, including extended bass lines and trippy, distorted vocal samples, speed garage proponents claim it has revitalized London dancefloors. In March, Tuff Jam, the DJ duo of Matt "Jam" Lamont and Karl "Tuff Jam" Jarrow, released *Tuff Jam* (Ultra), the first full-length speed garage album in the U.S. It's 15 tracks of what's moving people in London, as selected by Lamont and Jarrow in six days are their own mixes. Last March, Tuff Jam made its American debut at the Winter Music Conference in Miami. With a slew of remixes (of Sneaker Pimps and Brand New Heavies, for example) under the pair's belt, and American house and breaker DJs already mixing in some speed garage, momentum is in its favor. You'll hear more from and about Tuff Jam this summer. The duo has tentatively scheduled a two-week mid-summer tour.

>>> William Wende



## sevendust

By the time the band takes the stage at this summer's Ozfest, Sevendust will have torn its way through the most exciting year of its career. The Atlanta-based quintet was the sleeper hit of 1997; the group released its self-titled debut (TVT) in April, but it wasn't until the crisp fall autumn that the album began to attract notice. By February, Sevendust was playing to packed houses on the "Ladies Night In Cambodia" tour with Limp Bizkit and Clutch. Much of the band's success has been credited to the soulful vocals of its lead singer, Lajor Witherspoon, who has been compared to Living Colour's Corey Glover. But there's more to Sevendust than its dreadlocked frontman: In combining elements of thrash, punk and metal, the band crafts out some of the most catchy nu-metal to grace airwaves since Faith No More's *The Real Thing*. Along with Korn, Limp Bizkit and Incubus, Sevendust has been dubbed a proponent of "The New Metal," a form of hard rock that takes a more up-to-date approach to the classic elements of the genre.

>>> Jimmy Egan

# DANIEL MINK

*Switzerland*



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# burt's back

IT WAS REALLY NO SURPRISE AT ALL TO FIND SWINGING '60S ICON BURT BACHARACH TICKLING THE IVORIES ATOP A LAS VEGAS TOUR BUS AS WELL AS PROVIDING MUSIC FOR THE SOUNDTRACK OF THE AMUSING 1997 SPY-FLICK SPOOF *AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY*. AFTER ALL, WHO BETTER TO COLORFULLY ILLUSTRATE HOW OUT-OF-TOUCH MIKE MYERS'S AMUSING AUSTIN POWERS CARICATURE WAS THAN THE MAN WHOSE MUSIC, NOT TO MENTION WHOSE SUAVE SENSE OF STYLE, REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE TOUCHSTONES OF THE HIP, NOT HIPPIE, '60S? AND WHAT DATED ALBUM OF SCHMALTZY INSTRUMENTALS COULD HAVE BETTER EMPHASIZED AUSTIN'S RETRO TASTE THAN THE FICTIONAL SPY'S FAVE LP, 1965'S MOSTLY INSTRUMENTAL *BURT BACHARACH PLAYS HIS HITS?*

Yes, but what was true a year ago isn't quite as accurate today because, well, let's just say that with each passing day Austin Powers is becoming less and less of an anachronism, at least in terms of his musical inclinations, and that after a decade-long absence from the charts and minds of America, Burt Bacharach is on his way to being as much a man of the '90s as he was of the '60s. The liner notes to last year's MCA reissue of *Burt Bacharach Plays His Hits*

begin with this little observation: "Lately there's been a renewed buzz about the music of Burt Bacharach." But that's already beginning to sound like a grand understatement. "Bacharach," *Time* magazine pointed out last year, "is currently enjoying greater popularity than at any other time since his heyday in the 1960s and early '70s, when, working against the rock grain, he was responsible for dozens of Top 40 hits." Now that's more like it.

Of course, American pop culture has been recycling past fashions with dizzying speed for a good decade now, so maybe it was only a matter of time before Bacharach came back into vogue. But there's something remarkable about how deeply this Bacharach revival seems to have penetrated the increasingly fragmented contemporary pop consciousness. His name has popped up everywhere from Broadway, where a new show based on Bacharach standards is now playing, to the New York avant-rock underground, which got behind John Zorn's two-CD Bacharach tribute *Great Jewish Music: Burt Bacharach* (Tzadik) last year; from British rock charts, where a reissued collection of Bacharach tunes titled *The Look Of Love* hit the top ten a couple of years ago, to the American rock underground, where artists like Eric Matthews and Ivy are embracing the lushly orchestrated sophistication of the Bacharach songbook.

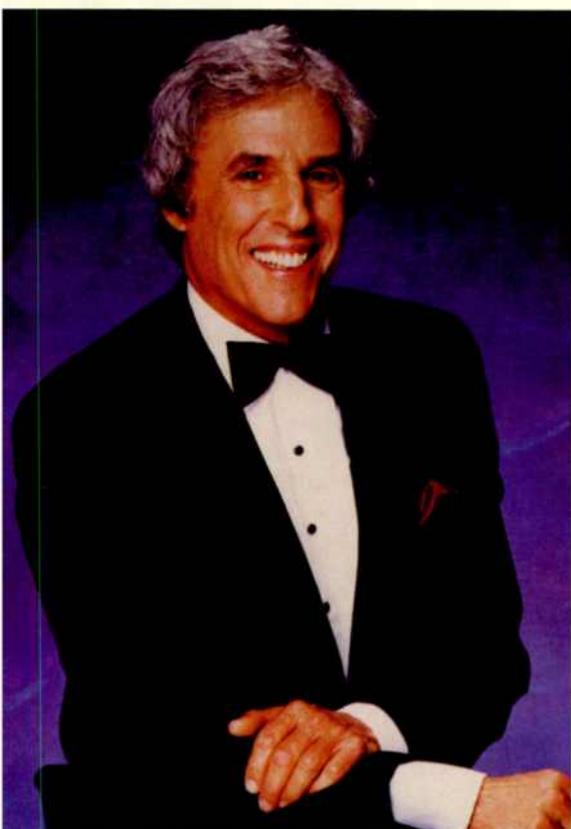
And the list goes on. Outside of *Austin Powers*, which featured Seattle popsters the Posies doing "What The World Needs Now Is Love" with Bacharach, as well as Susanna Hoffs covering Burt's "The Look Of Love," Bacharach tunes have shown up in the films *My Best Friend's Wedding* (where Ani DiFranco covered his "Wishin' And Hopin'"), *First Wives*

*Club* ("Wives And Lovers"), and *One Fine Day*, which featured Harry Connick Jr. doing "This Guy's In Love With You." That particular Bacharach number has been turning up in some odd places itself: The punk-pop band Fastball tears through a version of it on the Hollywood Records compilation *Lounge-a-palooza*; and after Oasis songwriter Noel Gallagher admitted to nicking part of it for his "Half The World Away," Bacharach invited him on stage at Royal Albert Hall two summers ago to perform it with him. At press time, Gallagher was scheduled to perform the song at an April 8 tribute concert titled "Bacharach: One Amazing Night," set to be taped in New York for broadcast on TNT.

Some of the other performers who will take part in "Bacharach: One Amazing Night" are Ben Folds Five, Sheryl Crow, Dionne Warwick, Chrissie Hynde and, of course, Elvis Costello. Costello had the foresight to cover Bacharach's "I Just Don't Know What To Do With Myself" two decades ago on the *Stiffs Live* album, and he's been rewarded by the man himself: Last year Elvis and Burt collaborated on the tune "God Give Me Strength" for the film *Grace Of My Heart* and they're currently working on an album-length effort for release on Mercury later this year.

The award for most popular Bacharach sample goes to "Walk On By"—the Isaac Hayes version of that tune was sampled heavily enough by Hooverphonic for its dubby single "2Wicky" to earn Bacharach a co-writing credit, and it also turns up in the trip-hoppy Mono tune "Silicone." And in the most popular tribute album title category there's *What The World Needs Now*—jazz saxist Stan Getz used

>>> *Continued on page 18*



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>>> Continued from page 16

it in 1967, jazz pianist McCoy Tyner did the same last year, and this year the New York indie-pop label Big Deal celebrated its fifth anniversary with its own *What The World Needs Now*, featuring Shonen Knife doing "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head," the BMX Bandits tackling "It Doesn't Matter Anymore" and Mitchell Rasor's melancholy "I Say A Little Prayer." Oh, and several Bacharach Internet sites have reported the existence of a Danish Bacharach tribute band by the name of the Bacharachs.

To be sure, elements of this Bacharach renaissance can be chalked up to the nostalgia that helps keeps Broadway in business these days. Back when Bacharach and his most famous songwriting partner, lyricist Hal David, co-wrote the musical *Promises, Promises*, their marriage of mainstream pop idioms and Broadway traditions may have been considered innovative, but after countless Sondheim productions the Bacharach/David formula has more or less become the standard—in fact, the label Varese Sarabande just released a tribute to Broadway Bacharach titled *Broadway Sings Burt Bacharach*. Similarly, Bacharach was initially considered a heretic when, in 1958, he broke with the strict verse/chorus/verse conventions of Tin Pan Alley with "The Story Of My Life" (written with David for Marty Robbins), but his countless hits have since been accepted as part of the pop cannon. No less an authority than Ira Gershwin once crowned Bacharach "the fifth 'B': Beethoven, Brahms, Berlin, Bach, and Bacharach."

Of course, in today's unruly pop universe, Bacharach hardly has a rebel's resume. Born May 12, 1928, in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in Forest Hills, New York, he studied theory and composition at the David Mannes School of Music at McGill University, and then under the guidance of composer Darius Milhaud, before taking jobs at the Brill Building and as the touring musical director for Marlene Deitrich. When he and David began working together at Famous Music in 1958, they were simply following the conventional path for songwriters of their day, in stark contrast to two of the bigger 'B's who would emerge in the next decade to break new ground in pop—the Beatles and Brian Wilson's Beach Boys.

Given that Bacharach is a product of the mainstream music establishment, it's not terribly surprising to discover that the advice he gave to young musicians in the December 1996 issue of *Musician* magazine was old school, very old school: "I think it's important to be able to write music down. I try to encourage young people betting in this business to learn solfege, learn the rules. Then you can break the rules down the line. But learn to write it down. I can lead my little boy to a keyboard with three or four 'brains' hooked up and have him play two notes, and it sounds magnificent. That still doesn't make a song."

But that hasn't kept Bacharach from appealing to a younger generation of contemporary pop lovers who may or may not be well versed in solfege—artists like Sean Lennon and Cibo Matto's Yuka Honda, who perform "The Look Of Love" on Zorn's *Great Jewish Music: Burt Bacharach* tribute (which also features Marc Ribot, Fred Frith, Medeski Martin And Wood, and Bill Frisell), and bands like New York's Ivy, which claims Bacharach along with fellow swinging '60s icons Françoise Hardy and Serge Gainsbourg, as formative influences. Bacharach himself has pointed out that it can't really be nostalgia that's driving a new generation of songwriters to his music: "A lot of these kids weren't even born when these songs were around the first time," he told the *Detroit Free Press* last July. "They're not rediscovering them; they're discovering them."

Bacharach would also probably agree with how Big Deal Records co-founder/co-president Dean Brownrout, a longtime Burt fan, characterizes the current Bacharach revival. "I think there were a lot of people the grunge thing just didn't speak to," he notes. "So a logical backlash to that would be melodies, hooks and songs. And that's what Bacharach is all about."

But it was Burt himself who best put his current situation in perspective when he spoke with *USA Today* last year. "I think it's a yearning for music and melody. A couple of key people said one day, 'I really like this man's music.' And people tuned in to that. These songs were written before the alternative rock musicians were even born, but the wheel has come around for the second time."

END



Stegosaurus

# Stegosaurus

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# SCION OF THE TIMES

A recent harvest of releases by children of famous musicians shows that often the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

OFFSPRING	SIRE	CURRENT RELEASE	THE DEAL	TAKES AFTER DAD...
 Chris <b>STILLS</b>	Stephen <b>STILLS</b>	<i>1000 Year Thing</i> (Atlantic)	The family business: folk rock	Musically still in the '60s
 Jeff <b>BUCKLEY</b>	Tim <b>BUCKLEY</b>	<i>Sketches (For My Sweetheart The Drunk)</i> (Columbia)	Soulful rock with soaring vocals	Early tragic death
 Rufus <b>WAINWRIGHT</b>	Loudon <b>WAINWRIGHT III</b> (with Kate McGarrigle)	<i>Rufus Wainwright</i> (DreamWorks)	Cabaret pop, calliope rhythms, telling lyrics	Dabbles with acting
 Sean <b>LENNON</b>	John <b>LENNON</b>	<i>Into The Sun</i> (Grand Royal)	Eclectic, ingenious pop	Unyielding devotion to Yoko
 Jakob <b>DYLAN</b>	Bob <b>DYLAN</b>	Wallflowers' <i>Bringing Down The Horse</i> (Interscope)	Classic rock, redux	1998 Grammy Award Winner
 Adam <b>COHEN</b>	Leonard <b>COHEN</b>	<i>Adam Cohen</i> (Columbia)	Moody, diverse '90s pop	Sings songs of sexual frustration
 Emma <b>TOWNSHEND</b>	Pete <b>TOWNSHEND</b>	<i>Winterland</i> (EastWest-Elektra)	Tori Amos-style piano catharsis	Thinks of herself as a woman



# fastball

# all the way home

b y s c o t t f r a m p t o n

"THIS IS IT," SHE SAID, FORCING AN ARM PAST ME TO TAP EXCITEDLY ON HER BOYFRIEND'S SHOULDER, "THIS IS THAT SONG!" ¶ FASTBALL WAS ABOUT THREE QUARTERS THROUGH ITS 40 MINUTE SET AND HAD JUST SET INTO MOTION THE RHYTHM-BOX BEAT THAT BEGINS "THE WAY," THE SONG THAT THIS YOUNG WOMAN AND ABOUT 400 LIKE-MINDED RADIO LISTENERS HAD PACKED AUSTIN'S LA ZONA ROSA TO HEAR. THE BAND HAD COME HOME, TO A PLACE IT HAD NEVER BEEN BEFORE.



"Once we play that song, everybody just goes crazy—girls in the back bobbing their heads and singing all the words," says bassist and "The Way" author Tony Scalzo. He's attempting to explain the fundamental change in his rock life since the lead single off his band's second LP, *All The Pain Money Can Buy* (Hollywood), found its way onto the radio.

"We used to drive 500 miles and pull up and there'd be maybe 20 people there. And you'd be happy with that. You'd be happy if they gave you free drinks and stuff," guitarist Miles Zuniga then offers, somewhere between bemused and amazed. "Man, it just feels like you hung around and put one more quarter in the slot machine. You've been there all night. You've emptied your pockets and you're just disgusted with yourself and the whole thing and you're just like, 'one more try....'" He shakes his head lightly as another image enters his head: "A better analogy for me is you're pushing a cart full of boulders up a craggy cliff and you're just doing it forever and all of a sudden the cart full of boulders turns into a stretch limo and you climb in the back. Man, it's surreal. But I've got no complaints thus far. I want people to hear our music. I'm delighted."

Delight isn't exactly what one might have expected Fastball to be expressing two years after the band's *Make Your Mama Proud* came and went without much notice. Since that record's release, the band's label, Hollywood, has undergone more restructuring than Courtney Love's cheekbones, making Fastball's choice to cut a follow-up that is measurably more ambitious than the punk-inspired, straightforward pop that had made the trio a local favorite in Austin, seem pretty gutsy.

"When you get to a point where you don't really give a shit anymore, guts are irrelevant," Scalzo says flatly.

"The climate we made the record in was a good climate," Zuniga allows, "because our first record pretty much flopped, and we didn't know if we'd get a second record. And then we got it, and the label's in transition, and there wasn't like a ton of pressure—we were just left alone to create. So we did whatever the hell we wanted to." The

>>> Continued on page 54

BERNARD BUTLER



WICKOYE / JAUHAR/GETTY IMAGES

# DON'T LOOK BACK IN ANGER

BY TOM LANHAM >>> BERNARD BUTLER WALKED AWAY FROM SUEDE, GUY CHADWICK WATCHED THE HOUSE OF LOVE CRUMBLE AND IAN BROWN'S STONE ROSES WITHERED ON THE VINE. NOW EACH HAS A NEW SOLD RECORD, AND A STORY TO TELL.

Here's a scary hypothetical question: What would it be like—musically speaking—to have it all and then lose it? To be the keystone member of a Top Of The Pops supergroup and then tumble from high-profile grace? To know that you've blown it, and that you have to start all over again from square one?

Take it from three coulda-been-a-contender survivors, Bernard Butler, Guy Chadwick and Ian Brown: Starting over may not be half as bad as it sounds. And finding yourself again in the process is more than worth the confidence-shaking hassle. And they should know. Each of these performers has gone on to achieve personal creative highs that were birthed in the lowest of post-breakup lows.

For 27-year-old Londoner Butler, nothing was more fulfilling, at the time, than playing guitar and co-writing with longtime chum Brett Anderson in the critically acclaimed London Suede. They made a perfect yin/yang pair; Butler's swooping, flowery flourishes nicely complimenting Anderson's foppish, Bowie-showy vocals. After a smash UK debut disc, the lineup felt rock-solid. Then, with nary a word to the hungry press, Butler exited the band on the eve of its sophomore release, *Dog Man Star*. He simply walked out. Anderson was furious. Fans were furious. Other projects followed—an ill-fated collaboration with soul singer David McAlmont, as well as a week-long stint in a newly reformed Verve. Today, Butler sits in a deserted hometown café, nursing a strong tea and radiating a hard-won self-assuredness. He's just finished a ballad-heavy solo effort, *People Move On* (Creation-Columbia), that showcases not only his inventive guitar work, but his folksy vocals as well. And he's finally ready to tell *his* side of the story.

During the recording of *Dog Man Star*, things were already going awry for Butler in the Suede camp—fights with Anderson, fights with producer Ed Buller. The final straw came when Butler's father passed away. He needed time to grieve, but the band wanted him to hit the road on its scheduled tour the next week. Butler did what any rational adult would do in the face of such tragedy—he made a snap decision. He bailed. And yes, he admits, "It was the beginning of a downward scale for me, a downward slap 'round the face. A real dose of honesty. But I have a certain type of conscience, a basic morality, and it made me feel insane for having that type of conscience. But when you're with the wrong set, you're with the wrong set. And people don't get it, they just don't get it." Family, says Butler (who's just become a father himself), will always come first.

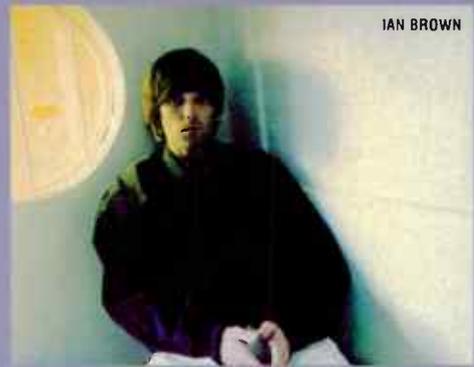
"And particularly a couple of years ago, when I was trying to sort through why things went wrong in my life or why so-and-so was like this, one of the best ways I found of coming to terms with it is kind of an observational thing,

rather than a judgmental thing. Because if you judge somebody, then you're gonna have that same judgment in 20 years' time—it's total karma. Not that I'm Mr. Hippie Loverman," Butler chuckles. "But I *do* believe in that kind of stuff, in very vague terms, in terms of what it means to my own destiny. Every negative is a positive. And every time I've taken a risk and fucked up, I've learned something. And that's humanity, in a nutshell."

Butler had a wife of four years who believed in him and constantly urged him to fly solo. Former House Of Love frontman Guy Chadwick also cites his wife (and current business manager) as a life-saving inspiration. She's the reason he's emerged from a five-year hibernation with *Lazy, Soft & Slow* (Setanta), his ethereal comeback produced by Cocteau Twin Robin Guthrie. And, as he putters around his London kitchen brewing coffee, he confronts his troubled past head-on. When House Of Love disbanded, he sighs, "it was just this horrible resigned admission that we had failed to achieve what we knew we *could* achieve. We had failed. And so we all went our different ways and haven't spoken since. It was *that* bad."

What went wrong? Chadwick, now 41, was the pop-scene poster boy for 1988, and the guitar-mad House Of Love (sonic ancestors to Oasis) seemed to be every critic's favorite newcomer. Again, another snap decision played a major role. Inked to then-struggling Creation, Chadwick chose to up the ante and switch to a major. "And we could've signed to anyone," he recalls. "Everyone wanted to sign us at the time—CBS, EMI, Phonogram, everyone. We decided on Fontana, and it was just a deadly mistake. For a year, pretty much, we had virtually every recording rejected. I lost my confidence, the group became terribly frustrated and bored. And at the point when the group was really hot, really going for it, we should've come to America. But we never came because the record company said 'No, you shouldn't go—you should work on your second album.' So we just lost all impetus."

Like Butler, Chadwick reinvented himself during his time away. His music no longer relies on dramatic layers of guitars, but arrangements so smooth and supple they recall the early work of lauded songwriter Leonard Cohen. But this was no easy transition. When Chadwick called it quits on HOL in '93, Fontana encouraged him to keep recording on his own. "And to be honest, I was on the verge of what was a nervous breakdown, and so shot mentally that when I *did* make the decision to leave the label, I was so tired and unmotivated, I just stayed in bed. Stayed in bed all day, pretty much for two whole years. I basically switched off and became a house junkie." He and his family subsisted on House Of Love royalties for awhile. "But we were running out of money when we got involved with Setanta about 18 months ago," Chadwick allows. Coincidentally, he adds, there's been a "sudden resurgence of interest in the House Of Love—there was a cut used on the *Welcome To Sarajevo*



IAN BROWN

JAMIE BREEDEN



GUY CHADWICK

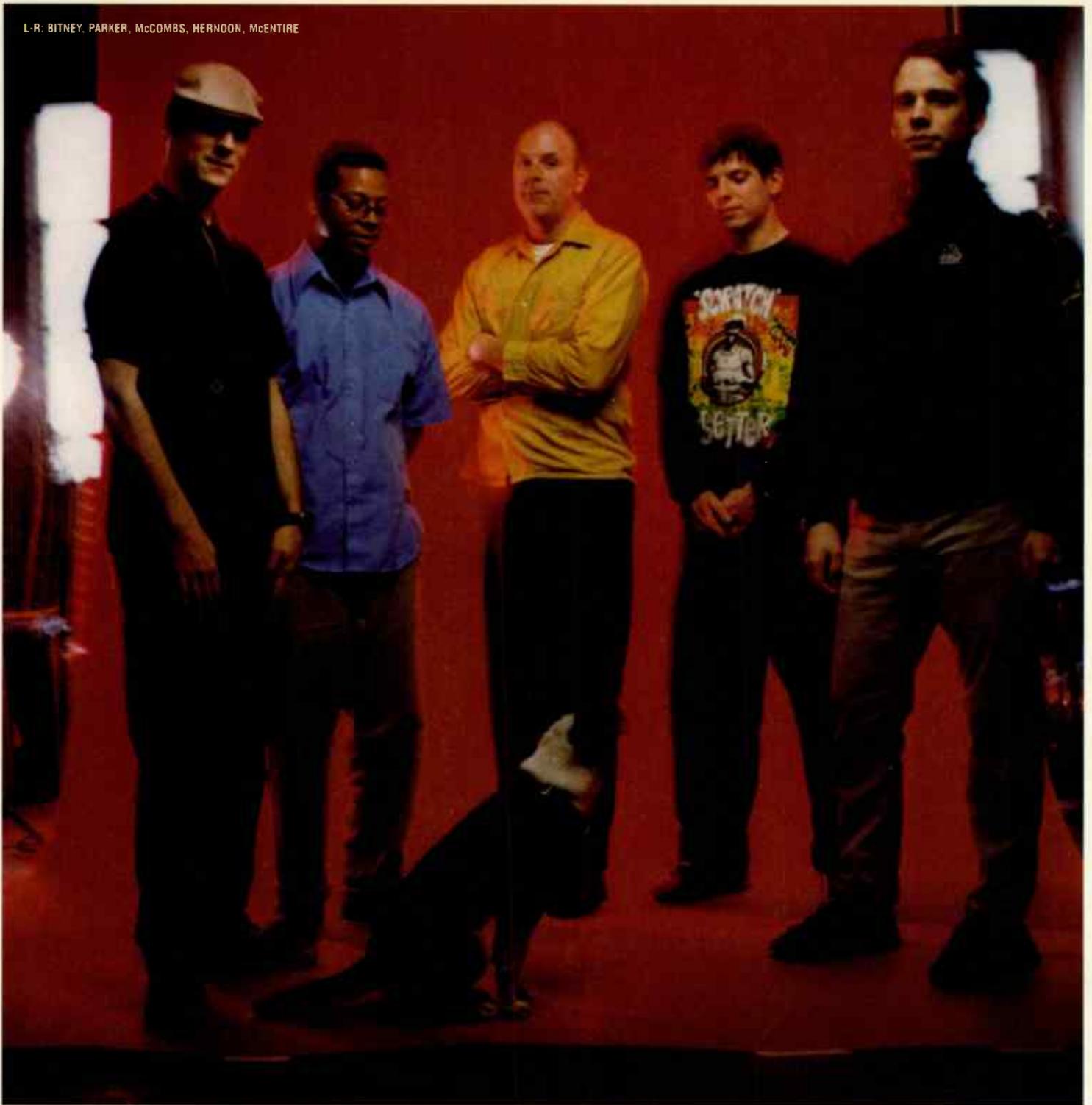
soundtrack, and Mercury Records wants to do a compilation. And I definitely still hear our influence today in many Britpop groups."

The Stone Roses, on the other hand, had achieved the kind of success that Chadwick had been looking for with House Of Love. The Roses, in their three-album existence, inspired legions of imitators and practically all of the British record-buying public. Former vocalist Ian Brown doesn't mince words when discussing the group's overwhelming popularity. "I think we made one of the best LPs that's come out of England," he purrs in a pudding-thick Northern English accent. "And I think, at the time, we were *the* best band. We were an exciting band, and we were a people's band. Our job was to lift people and show them that life was good and that every man does have the ability to overcome his own environment. That's the beautiful thing about pop music—man's ability to rise above his own environment, no matter where he's been put."

Brown hasn't had an easy time of it either. In fact, it's still uncertain whether his funky solo foray for Polydor UK, *Unfinished Monkey Business*, will ever see Stateside release. And again, it's a reinvention of sorts, full of blipping trip-hop rhythms, scrappy guitars and campy

>>> Continued on page 54

L-R: BITNEY, PARKER, McCOMBS, HEARNOON, McENTIRE



# **tortoise**travelsinhyperreality

bychristophcoxphotosbychristoliver

# "It's hard to say where the 'rock' is anymore," says

John McEntire of his band, Tortoise. "In the beginning, it was more obvious that that's where it was coming from. But it's changed so much over the years. And now it's more in between than it's ever been." Over its five-year existence, the Chicago quintet has become *the* exemplar of that dubious critic's category "post-rock," a term coined in 1994 by music journalist

Simon Reynolds to characterize a host of British and American bands from Stereolab, Man and Techno Animal to Labradford, Ul and Trans Am. If "rock" signifies noise and bravado, power chords and catharsis, gritty authenticity and the cult of personality, "post-rock,"

Reynolds suggested, turns away from those gestures and symbols, eschewing guitar, bass and drums to use in the creation of atmospheric soundscapes, subjecting them to the subtle manipulations characteristic of non-rock genres such as musique concrète, dub, reggae, shoegaze, and withdrawing into faceless anonymity.

Of course, in one sense, the history of rock is filled with "post-rock" moments, junctures at which the revealing definition of the genre gives way to something new. "Rock 'n' roll" becomes "hard rock," "progressive rock," "punk rock," "alternative rock," and so on. And "post-rock" they feel both out to be just one more of these moments. It's not hard to imagine a future "post-rock" version of Devo's *Rock-A-Doodle* (of Fame and Misery). But there is



THE TORTOISE'S *Millions of Things* (Capitol)

another sense in which the "post-rock" banner is peculiarly appropriate, since it involves that progenitor of all "posts": "postmodernism."

Postmodernism names the experience of culture in the late 20th century, marked by the collapse of traditional distinctions between high art and popular entertainment, the original and the copy, the past and the present. Emigrating artists, Wu-Tang Clan and Chinese pop songs attempt to cross and/or on radio, film and record store racks and anyone with a radio or CD player can fit through them one after the other. And as technology blurs the boundaries between the "virtual" and "real," digital technology makes it possible to sample, splice and infinitely replicate any sound or image with no loss of quality. And genetics does the same for any strand of DNA.

PHOTO: FRANK O'NEILL

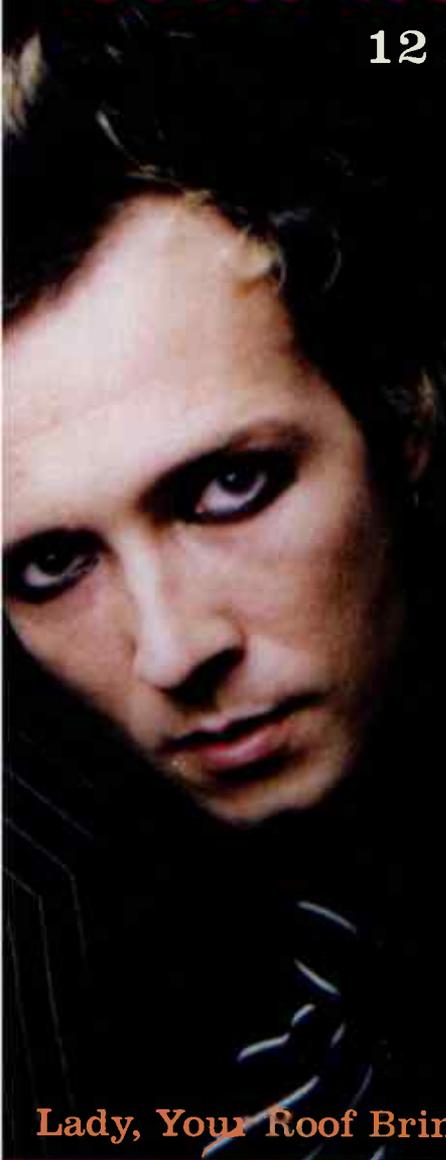
"One of 1998's most eagerly anticipated releases"

— *Alternative Press*



# Scott Weiland

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# tortoise

>>> *Continued from page 25*

If not all of what is called "post rock" expresses this postmodern condition, Tortoise's music certainly does. McEntire describes the group's approach as "just playing it by ear," "picking things out of the air and not even really thinking about it so much"; and, indeed, he and his crew seem to have a remarkably keen, if partly unconscious, attunement to the zeitgeist. "Djed," the extraordinary 20-minute opener to the band's celebrated 1996 release, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, sampled, referenced and fused a portion of Edgard Varèse's 1931 percussion classic, "Ionisation," a throbbing Kraftwerk-style pulse, dub shenanigans, lounge piano noodling, and interlocking mallet figures reminiscent of Balinese gamelan or the '70s minimalism of Steve Reich and Philip Glass. Modernist artists, like the Dadaists, juxtaposed similarly heterogeneous materials in order to shock or to reveal the absurd conjunctions of modern life. But postmodernists like Tortoise gather their fragments more naively or innocently, heedless of the historical or stylistic barriers that might prevent their mixing.

"Djed" is extended to album-length on Tortoise's new disc, *TNT* (Thrill Jockey), where the range of reference is even broader and the blend more fluid. *TNT* calls to mind everything from Derek Bailey's angular improv to lite bossa nova, Pink Floyd-ish space-rock to techno and drum 'n' bass, Herbie Hancock's electro-funk to Astor Piazzolla's *nuevo tango*. Pieces of one track drift subtly through others, and the whole thing moves like a postmodern dreamscape, mixing and remixing scraps of sense, condensing and displacing them to form an eerie and volatile composite.

In fact, *TNT* is an almost entirely virtual entity, constructed from slices of sonic material fed into a hard disk over the course of a year at the apartment/practice space/studio McEntire shares with bandmate John Herndon. "It's pretty much all put together bit by bit," McEntire explains, "due to limitations of the studio, since there's no possible way to isolate sound sources in that crummy little room we play in.... Basically [some band members] would just go in with an idea and put it down," he continues, "and then somebody else would come in and put something else down, and then we'd try to sort out all the pieces after the fact and turn it into something cohesive. It was a very abstract experience."

"The nature of the group is that we have a lot of choices with everything," McEntire says of the grueling process that caused several months' delay in the record's release. "And then when you're working with a non-linear system like [hard-disk recording], your choices multiply ten-fold or hundred-fold and you're faced with this staggering array of things that you could do. In some ways, being locked into something linear, like analog tape, is soothing because you know that you can't change it, or if you can, you can change it in limited ways and you have to make the most of the limitations. Whereas when you're working with this totally open system, I think you can really do your head in after awhile. And that's what we were all feeling because we had all this material, and the forms were open and could have been interpreted in a lot of different ways. It was just this collection of stuff that had no focus or direction or body or anything. It's kind of like, how do you deal with that, you know?"

Now, on the brink of a five-month worldwide tour, Tortoise is in the curious position of having to learn its songs from the record—to "cover" them, as it were—highlighting the postmodern reversal that turns live performance into a simulation of the recorded original, the real into a copy of the virtual. "None of those songs were really played by the group together at one point ever," McEntire reveals, "which is why we're having such a hard time now trying to learn them to play them live. It gets even more confusing because a lot of the stuff that's recorded was just done on a whim and you can't even remember what it is or who played it. It's like, 'What's that part? Who played it? And how do we do that?' And then there are all these technical considerations, like, 'Should we put that on the sampler? Or should we try to play that live?' and it just goes on forever."

It might seem odd, then, that Tortoise has been drawing increasingly closer connections to that most "live" of all musics: avant-garde jazz. When bass player Dave Pajo recently left the band to focus on Aerial-M, Tortoise added guitarist

>>> *Continued on page 55*



**Okay,**  
**there's (insert name**  
**of person you**  
**want to get**  
**with here)**  
**standing alone.**  
**The perfect**  
**opportunity.**  
**You check your**  
**clothes, your**  
**hair, light a**  
**cigarette,**  
**check your hair**  
**again and slowly**  
**walk towards**  
**them. You smile**  
**as they begin**  
**to speak,**  
**"Could you**  
**do me a favor?"**  
**You lean a little closer,**  
**hanging on their words,**  
**"Could you go smoke somewhere else?"**

Smoking isn't as attractive as you think. In a study, 8 out of 10 guys and 7 out of 10 girls said they wouldn't date someone who smokes.  
So if you smoke, you better get used to kissing that cigarette.



After lunch in a Riverside, California, bagelry, Mark Ramos Nishita, a.k.a. Money Mark, reaches into his jacket pocket for a bit of flavor and produces a small tin of candy. "Sweet and tangy!"

the label of St. Claire's Organic Lemon Drops promises. "So's my record," winks Money Mark.

No argument there. If Nishita's solo debut, *Mark's Keyboard Repair*, brought the "fourth Beastie Boy" out of the confines of his funky bedroom studio and reluctantly onto the market, the confectionery nuances of his new *Push The Button* (Mo Wax-London) will surprise a lot of folks. *Keyboard Repair* sometimes sounded like Lou Barlow on a soul-funk jones, but *Button's* got a brand new bag.

"The new record is my pop experiment," Nishita explains. "It's like a new beginning. I never really wrote songs like that before. There's no signature [style] on it anywhere—it's really other persons' signatures that I'm forging." Without spoiling all the fun of the varied, soulful record, he fesses up to some noticeable inspirations like Nick Lowe (the near-perfect "Tomorrow Will Be Like Today"), P-Funk (the title track), and "'60s stuff, [like] the Mamas And The Papas" ("Too Like You").

When it's suggested that *Push The Button's* seductive soul ballad, "All The People," might be the best Al Green song the Memphis preacher never wrote, Nishita stares into the distance and replies, "I'm flattered by that 'cause, you know, Al Green's my man."

Which isn't to say *Push The Button* is merely derivative—everyone has influences, after all. Nishita has developed both his quirky side and his delicate pop interests equally, bringing solid songcraft to the table along with off-the-cuff ideas. And he's got a remarkably smooth, understated vocal style, too. It's a skill he shyly hid behind "little plastic microphones" and the four-track environs of *Keyboard Repair*, which was literally recorded in his bedroom. While he used more expensive equipment to make *Push The Button*, he's not overly concerned about records with good sound—he wants records that sound good. "When you can use new and old [recording] techniques, that's great," he says. "A combination of the two worlds is really beautiful to me."

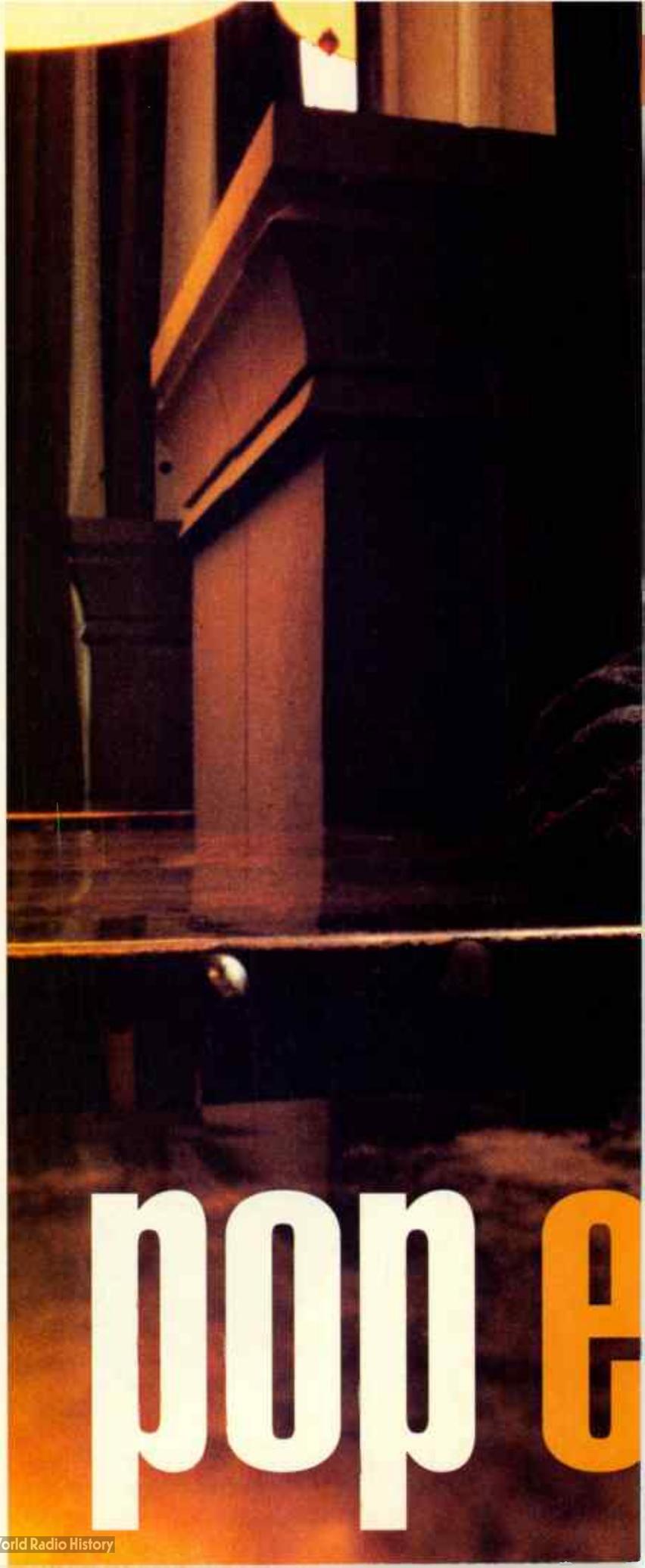
The Los Angeles-bred Nishita also strikes a balance between a confident demeanor and a self-effacing edge he considers a product of his upbringing. "[Growing up] I felt more comfortable just being in my house, in my room, and doing my own thing," he remembers. "I didn't really care about the evolution of the society; I was having my own evolution. Maybe now they've converged and I'm ripe for the times."

Nishita bought his first keyboard—a Fender Rhodes—in the mid-'80s and almost immediately began recording experiments. "I made *Keyboard Repair* maybe a hundred times over before it was released to the masses," he says. By the end of the decade he was collaborating with the Dust Brothers on early Delicious Vinyl recordings when the Beasties came to LA to record the landmark *Paul's Boutique*. When it came time to retool the Beasties' sound for 1992's *Check Your Head*, Nishita was integral to the process.

"We'd listen to records and say, 'Oh, what's that sound?' and I knew all the keyboard sounds," Nishita recalls. "That's a D6

>>> *Continued on page 55*

money mark's



pop e

by mark woodlief photos by patrick haley

World Radio History

# experiment

MARCH 29



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MARKER, ERIKSON, MANSON, VIG

World Radio History

# garbage system upgrade

with version 2.0,  
garbage gives pop  
something to suck  
on by John Pecorelli  
photos by Michael  
Halsband

# In

his rakish black vest, pageboy haircut and goatee, legendary musician/producer Butch Vig looks downright swashbuckling today—but at the moment he's feeling a bit stoic.

"Get the shit done!" Shirley Manson scolds him. "Because, trust me, Butch, tourin' is going to put more of a strain on things than all this masterin'."

"Yeah, we will, we will..." he mumbles dejectedly. Luckily for Butch, the hotel café waiter pops over with coffee refills before things can go any further. Shirley, the curt, tough-talking goddess whose sensual, sweet and occasionally scathing vocal work captured planet Earth's imagination in 1995, was just about to take Butch to task. And those familiar with the sultry Scot's sharply barbed wit know that's an unenviable position.

What's so wrong with a bit of masterin', you ask? Well, aside from several weeks of isolated songwriting in the San Juan Islands (off the Washington state coast), this quartet has been holed up within studio walls for nearly a year. They've been engaged in a seemingly endless session of recording, mixing, re-recording and remixing, all the while cultivating a slight case of cabin fever and a nice "studio tan," band member Steve Marker's term for their somewhat peaked pallor. At the moment, Garbage is here in Los Angeles for a few days shooting a video, but then it's straight back to home base Madison, Wisconsin, to finish the last step, mastering. For Shirley, and probably the rest of the band, the yearlong process of piecing together Garbage's heavily anticipated new album, *Version 2.0* (Almo Sounds), has been laborious, intense and at times ecstatic.

And she's sick to death of it.

programs," she says, "and they caused problems in the end—i.e. you can basically do anything..."

"Like waste a lot of time," chuckles Duke.

"There are so many possibilities," offers Butch, "and we're not really a good 'jamming' band—which sounds ridiculous to say."

"The word itself makes me want to spew!" exclaims Shirley. "Jam. What a ghastly word—it has these nasty, horrible connotations of 16-year-old boys desperately thrashing at their guitars between wanking sessions."

"That's pretty much what we did," Duke adds dryly.

"We probably have five albums' worth of music," continues Butch unaffected, looking up from his bowl of potato and leek soup. "The technology gave us so many possibilities—you find yourself going, 'I can do this. I can try that.' And you can go crazy. In fact, we did. We started out with just one editing hard-drive recorder"—Shirley chuckles at this—"because we still liked using analog tape machines and amps. And we quickly went from 16 to 48 tracks. Then we got a second machine so everyone could edit." Shirley snickers again. I look over at her, but she stubbornly refuses to interrupt Butch this time. "Then we added a third machine so that Shirley could do vocals while these guys did guitars and noise-compiling and loops and whatever else. That was why the mixing process took so long—and we weren't even ready to *start* mixing when Shirley came in and said, 'Enough! Let's just get—'"

"I felt like a schoolmarm!" she blurts, no longer able to withstand the temptation to interrupt. "I was leaving for Scotland for the Christmas holidays and I had to sit them all down and say, 'The noodling must stop!' I



"I'm just dyin' to get out and play!" she blurts through a stout, irresistible Edinburgh accent. "For so long we've all been in bands that nobody wanted to come see. Now we're suddenly in this amazingly privileged position of people actually coming out to our shows—the band is no longer outnumbering the audience—and it's an amazing, fucking brilliant feeling. Let's go!"

Shirley decides to let someone else talk while she focuses on her onion soup. All of the members of Garbage are immersed in their food except wry, thin-faced Duke Erikson, who's nursing a cup of coffee. A year, eh? Just what was going on in that studio? Before Duke can answer, Shirley jumps back in.

"We used a lot of high-tech electronic equipment and digital recording

can remember it still—I was standin' up and they were all on the floor for some reason..."

"You made us sit on the floor," Duke points out with a small grin.

Shirley laughs heartily, something she does often.

"It just seems like nothing ever sounds finished," puts in Butch soberly. "You can keep going, keep recording, keep trying different things, until finally you have to just—"

"We're going to work some more on the record today," Duke interrupts.

"It's not quite finished."

Shirley glares at him, then bursts out laughing again.

Garbage's roots lie back in the days when Butch, Duke and Steve worked together as producers, and would sit around Vig's recording studio late nights

with loads of beer, potato chips and ideas. They had worked together in numerous bands—the most noteworthy probably being Spooner, the least noteworthy probably being Rectal Drip. But it wasn't until Steve saw an Angelfish video, which featured one darkly charismatic Shirley Manson on vocals, that the notion of Garbage as we know it today gelled. The quick of it: Shirley joined, they all made a record, and they quietly awaited the results, not expecting much—and not even planning a tour.

Sure, that record eventually went multi-platinum internationally, and pundits eventually heralded its unique, heavily sequenced mesh of hip-hop, trip-hop, punk, noise and pure melody as the future of pop. Even the Grammy committee, unable to ignore the album's bevy of strong-selling singles, eventually hopped on the bandwagon, lobbying three nominations Garbage's way in 1997, including Best New Artist. But things were not always so rosy.

"We were waiting to be absolutely torn to pieces," says Shirley. "There was this so-called 'three producers and a singer' together in a sort of weird '90s fashion. We're not stupid—we knew that people would be really suspicious of it. We knew that was going to be a mountain we'd have to climb."

Butch's involvement in particular raised eyebrows. His work with Nirvana and Smashing Pumpkins had helped transform mainstream American radio in the early '90s, and cynics automatically presumed "his" new band would be an overtly commercial carbon copy. Once Garbage's unique amalgam hit the airwaves, however, critics sang a different tune. The general listening public, on the other hand, didn't give the band's roots a second thought.



"Totally," agrees Shirley. "I speak from experience here: I never listened to a record and went, 'Hmmm, who produced this? This sounds really good.' You listen to it and go, 'That's awesome! He's awesome! She's awesome! It rocks!' It's only the analysts, i.e. the critics, who give a fuck about the producer—no

disrespect intended to you gentlemen at the table," she chuckles, looking at her bandmates, who sit quietly. "People are moved by music; they're not moved by whether the boys have sat in the studio with somebody famous. That's just not how it goes."

Still, Garbage says that *Version 2.0* was not designed with public expectation in mind. While it contains the band's most straightforward rock song to date ("Wicked Ways"), *2.0* differs markedly from the guitar sample-heavy debut. It's poppier, more densely layered, and far more percussive in nature than its predecessor. The opening track, "Temptation Waits," sets the tone here. Cramming a Donna Summer melody through a high BPM count and a general dancefloor cacophony of electronic blips, buzzes and bubbling synths, it sounds like mindless fun—until you realize that Shirley is singing,

what does  
shirley manson  
think when the  
garbage guys  
aren't looking over  
her shoulder?

longtime shirley sycophant tom  
lanham gets a private audience.

**New Music Monthly:** "I Think I'm Paranoid." Does that song title pretty much sum things up for you right now?

**Shirley Manson:** Yes and no. I think that's how I was feeling during the making of the record. I mean, I was all by myself, I was living by myself in a hotel, and I had no one to really talk to. And I'd go to the studio and we'd work and I'd come back by myself, very late. And I think the whole record is, in a way, very introspective, and very kind of... trying to reassure myself while I'm going crazy.

**NMM:** The companion piece to "Paranoid" would have to be the following track, "When I Grow Up." Because in this business, you probably never will.

**SM:** I don't know if it's peculiar to my role as a musician, or just peculiar to me as a person, but I don't ever feel that I'm going to be this grounded, mature, fully-developed person. But I think that's one of the things about life—you never feel completely sussed, you've never really arrived, and you actually know so little. And that's what the song's about—even though you think you're sussed and you're smart and you've worked it all out, you haven't even got the remotest inkling of what it's all about. And you can never hope to.

**NMM:** Bowie once said that the older an artist gets, the more they're faced with just two questions: "How much time do I have left?" and "What the hell am I supposed to be doing with it, anyway?"

**SM:** I don't know if that's necessarily true. Again, I think it's unique to each individual. For him, he was so young when he achieved success, so he's had decades to sort of ponder over his existence. Whereas for me, I'm, like, 30, and I'm only just *beginning* as a songwriter. Technically, this is only my second album that I've ever made, and it's the *only* record that I've ever made where I've completely written all the lyrics and come in with full songs and played guitar. So it's still very fresh to me, so I still feel that I've got so much to discover and so much to travel through. I'm not like David Bowie, you know. I didn't wake up at the age of 30 and say "Hey! I've arrived!" I'm still fighting to find some kind of voice, and that's what brings a certain excitement to this record. For all of us, for once in our life, we've found people to create with. And that's allowed us to make a good record, because we feel so secure around each other in a way that we didn't on the first record.

**NMM:** Were you truly prepared for stardom? To quote another pop icon, Jarvis Cocker recently said that after spending a lifetime waiting for fame he had to re-examine his motives once he'd reached that goal.

**SM:** It's funny, because I just read a review in the *NME* of his album, and I feel very different from Jarvis Cocker. I never wanted to be a star. I never wanted to be a musician, I never wanted attention, I never dreamt of being something special. *Ever*. I mean, it was the complete opposite for me. I expected to live a totally average, normal lifestyle, and this is something that came absolutely out of the blue for me. So it's not like I had these aspirations and now I've achieved them and now I don't know what to do with myself. I've *never* had these aspirations, and now all of a sudden this incredible adventure has been thrown upon me. Now that it's happened to me, I don't know what to do with it, and I think that's probably been good for us as a band.

»»» Continued on page 35



"I'm not sure what I'm living for." So it goes throughout. While Garbage couples dark, richly textured atmospherics with themes of obsession and damnation, *2.0* is seldom musically confrontational, yet still revels in chaos, blood and mental collapse. The result is more dance-friendly—and possibly more subversive.

"You can't really do anything new," notes Butch gruffly. "So what we did was just take all the influences that we wear, that we love, and throw them all against the wall—and try to write good songs incorporating all those elements. Just strip something down to an acoustic guitar or a piano and a vocal, and if it's a good song, you can

“ for so long we were in bands that nobody wanted to come see, now we're suddenly in this amazingly privileged position—the band is no longer outnumbering the audience—and it's an amazing, brilliant feeling.”

go almost any direction with it. You can pile on tons of guitars, you can make it minimal, you can make it long, make it a two-and-a-half-minute Phil Spector pop epic—but the song has to be able to stand on its own somehow...

"I don't really know that we have any smash hits on this record," he continues. "I think there's a lot of really good songs though. And I hope, like the last record, that people who buy it will be into it as an album as a whole. I think the songwriting is better, I think we sound more like a band, I think there's a lot more confidence in how we approached the production decisions, Shirley's singing is better..."

"But hopefully there's gonna be a few smash hits," she interrupts.

"I don't mean to undermine anything," says Butch carefully, "but there's no Chumbawamba punter's anthem that's gonna be #1 around the world."

"Thank God!" exclaims Shirley. "But the first record was a wee bit, well, there was a real mix of genres that I think caught people quite by surprise. And because there are a lot of people doing that now, we kind of took electronica and started stealin'—errr, paying homage to old bands who built us as human beings—people like Mae West, Bessie Smith, Blondie—and mixed it all together to make something fresh."

There can be a rather fine line between paying homage to and stealing from, but it's one easily drawn for Garbage. For instance, Shirley is appalled by the legal pounding The Verve took at the hands of the Rolling Stones' management for "Bitter Sweet Symphony," but she encourages even more ruthless treatment—specifically, "bootfucking"—of bands swiping both the sound and aesthetic of another, such as the emulation of No Doubt and its singer, Gwen Stefani, by another Orange County, California, ska band, Save Ferris.

To Shirley, it's all a matter of degree and intent.

"Rock 'n' roll's always been about stealin'—the Beatles fucking ripped off Chuck Berry!" she exclaims, "But when it's exactly the same, I think that's scary, it's weird. It's like, 'Gwen Stefani's a great pop star, she's sold millions of records, let's clone her. And then we can sell tens of millions of records every year.'"

Still, Garbage attorneys initially forbade the band to use lyrical snippets from the Pretenders and the Beach Boys on *Version 2.0*. So Shirley and company went directly to the source: For the first single, "Push It," a haunting, aggressive dance-pop number that utilizes Brian Wilson's sweet refrain, "Don't worry, baby," for its subversive edge, the band asked Wilson directly for permission. He was more than willing, even asking to keep a copy of the song. Next up was Chrissie Hynde.

"We phoned her up and explained what we were doing, and Chrissie didn't even ask to hear the song," beams Shirley. "The next day in the studio we get a fax from her saying, 'I, Chrissie Hynde, hereby solemnly swear that the rock band Garbage may sample any of my sounds, voice or indeed my very ass.' She's a total goddess!"

"That's how it should work," adds Steve, who's been nearly invisible heretofore, before relaying a story about a band that demanded a vast sum of publishing royalties for Garbage's intended use of a sampled drum fill.

"They got greedy and we said, 'Fuck it,'" explains Shirley. "Why these people freak out and become so money-oriented—it's horrible."

"Well," counters Duke, "we got lucky with Brian and Chrissie"—he deliberately exaggerates the first-name basis, trying to keep a straight face—"because they control their own publishing. Most artists are pretty cool about it; it's the publishers, lawyers and powers that be—the people on the periphery, most of whom don't really care about the music, just the money—who get in the way."

For the first time this morning, there is a lull in the conversation. It is a solemn moment, the clinking of ice in drinks the only sound.

"Of course," Duke adds, delicately breaking the silence, "just wait 'til somebody tries to use our stuff. We'll mill their ass!"

"Yeah," Shirley laughs, "we'll fuckin' smash 'em!"

"Fuckers," mumbles Butch. "We've already got our feelers out."

Time is of the essence for Garbage, which has a video to shoot, after all, before it can get back to the masterin' at hand in Wisconsin. As the band starts to get fidgety, casting long looks toward the balmy Los Angeles backdrop just outside, one final, exasperating question springs to mind. The pressure for a brilliant follow-up to Garbage's victorious debut album really, honestly had no great effect on the songwriting—and the amount of time in the studio? Butch says no.

"But I will say this: We're too old to have a sophomore slump! It happens all the time in this industry though—the band sells a lot of their first record, then the second one comes out and they disappear."

"We've all made records for so long that have all been ignored, and suddenly we had this record that just flew out of the box, and it's a fuckin' blast, it's amazing, it's a thrill," says Shirley. "For that not to happen with this record, I admit, will be a disappointment to us. But I also feel the chances of lightning striking twice—the odds are not necessarily in our favor. Not necessarily, that is. I'm not saying that it won't happen. But we're not just cruisin' out there thinking, 'Yeah, everything's set up, we're gonna be big fuckin' pop stars.'"

"Shirley," Duke asks earnestly, "what do you think the actual odds are of 'lightning striking twice'?"

She pauses, then laughs again. "You'll notice I'm wringin' my hands, Duke. That means 'Not good, Duke, the odds are not good!'"

"Hopefully that's the wrong analogy," puts in Butch.

"Well, we'll have to rely on the luck of the gods," says Shirley. "We've made as good a record as we possibly can."

"Yeah," Duke agrees. "But it's still hard to let something like this go, definitely. We've been coming up with ideas all along the way and we just have to draw the line somewhere." He pauses. "But we're gonna work on it some more today, right?"

**END**

## shirley manson

>>> Continued from page 33

NMM: And the worst aspects of it?

SM: I would have to say that, for the most part, there *are* no drawbacks. I mean, I've been in bands since I was 15 years old, and I've slaved for at least ten years where nobody gave a fuck about what I was doing, didn't even want to listen to what I was doing. I was treated like shit by the industry, I was treated like shit by the press. And then all of a sudden, the very same people are knockin' at my door, being really sycophantic and saying how much they liked me and how much they loved my previous bands. And it's like, *bullshit*. If you liked my previous bands as much as you say you did, I wouldn't even *be* here today. It's a curious syndrome, and I guess I was onto quite a rant there. But there *are* no worst aspects to what I'm doing right now, because I know how difficult it is as a struggling musician to have nobody give a fuck about what you're doing. To me, that's difficult. And then all of a sudden, to have somebody care about what you do, well, how can you *dare* turn around and say there are drawbacks to that? Of course there are tiny things that are a little impossible, a little hard to deal with. But I've spent my whole life dying for this, even subconsciously, even though I didn't really crave it. So all of a sudden, I understand how great it is to make music and have people care about it.

NMM: In other places on the record, as in the song "Special," you seem to hint that even normal friendships and relationships have changed with success.

SM: It's weird, because everyone has listened to the lyrics on this album and really taken them at face value. But to me, the lyrics are very much working on different levels. And they can be very personal, or they can be about the industry. It depends on how you choose to look at how my life has been lived. When you write songs, lyrics or melodies, I think they start off as one thing and then mutate into so many other things. And then they start to take on a life of their own, by default.

NMM: Sort of like your stage persona. Kids seem to see you as this miniskirted, platform-heeled dominatrix/sex goddess, whereas you've gone on record saying that none of those props mean anything to you.

SM: I dunno. It's so hard for me to be objective about what we do and why people have been attracted to us as a band. It's so difficult to be analytical about why people have been turned on by our band. I'm not totally naive. I'd like to think it was purely the music, but obviously it's a little more than that. It's your music and how you choose to portray yourself. I mean, I always fell in love with bands not only for their music, but for their image, their look, how they portrayed themselves. And it's weird when all of a sudden you turn into, like, this subject. I think we made a good record and that's why people got into it, but I also think we were very honest about our intentions, and we weren't trying to be something we're not. And I think people felt that. People felt that it was *real*.

NMM: On one *Version 2.0* track, you actually talk about walking into a posh party, looking at a handsome guy and instantly knowing...

SM: ...that I was gonna get what I wanted! Ha! And again, that song's kind of a metaphor—it's very much like yes, you can recognize that power. But you should ignore it and leave it behind.

NMM: But you've always been fighting against low self-esteem. Where did that come from?

SM: I have no idea, no idea. And I know that my mother has read some of my interviews and been really upset—devastated, in fact—by my comments. She doesn't understand it, just can't comprehend where it came from. And it has nothing to do with the way I was brought up—I have a very close and loving relationship with my parents. I think that there was something in me chemically, or hormonally, or emotionally that... well, I was a *mess*, I was a horror. I was a very difficult, angry and displaced teenager. And it's kind of infected my whole life. I mean, in

>>> Continued on page 55

## 12 ROUNDS

**Big Hero**  
Nothing

Sci-fi movies often seem to have nightclub scenes where the enterprising director gets to posit what "future music" will sound (and look) like; don't be surprised if 12 Rounds gets cast as the house band in some future high-tech dystopia, for it's making cabaret music for the 23rd century. Frontwoman Claudia Sarne manages to combine a sultry, smoke-scorched voice with a freaky look and even freakier phrasing (imagine Billie Holliday run through a vocoder), while collaborator Atticus Ross dresses their ballads in starkly modernistic fashion, mixing the tremolo-soaked guitars and jazzy bass lines with synth strings, sluggish breakbeats, distorted noise and industrial clanks. Much of the material could fit seamlessly onto a trip-hop mix tape, but *Big Hero* doesn't really share that genre's stoner-noir ambience. Instead, it's patched into a very British reading of the blues, in a way that misses its soulfulness and focuses on its death-train-a-comin' aspects. It has the same swampy Grand Guignol qualities of the most maudlin moments from artists like PJ Harvey or Nick Cave. Between the apocalyptic setting and the torchy balladry, *Big Hero* is an album that can leave nicotine stains on your fingers just from pressing the "play" button.

>>> David Jarman



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 19.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
BLUESY-GOTH TORCH  
SONGS.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
CONGO MORVELL, RECENT  
PJ HARVEY, PORTISHEAD.

## NATACHA ATLAS

**Halim**  
Beggars Banquet

This is the album Natacha Atlas has been threatening to make. As the singer of Transglobal Underground, and a guest with Jah Wobble's *Invaders Of The Heart*, Atlas has explored the far reaches of the ethno-techno spectrum, and plumbed its depths on her solo debut, 1997's *Diaspora*. But now she's reached back into her Middle Eastern heritage and pulled out something that's really a traditional Arabic album, albeit one with a lot of modern instrumentation, creating a sort of Arabic pop with a broad world view. Helped by colleagues from Transglobal Underground, Wobble's band and Jaz Coleman, Atlas gives us an electric Sahara of love songs, yearning songs that suit her strong, sinuous voice more than anything she's ever done. And when she ditches technology to team up with an Egyptian orchestra on "Ya Ah Ehd"—the album's epic and emotional centerpiece—the results are astonishing, as "pure" as anything from the early days of the century, but with a resounding sense of the present. As sensuous as Cleopatra, as slinky as the asp, *Halim* stands like an oasis in a wasteland: lush, green and vitally alive.

>>> Chris Nickson



**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 21.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
MODERN ARABIC MUSIC.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
TRANSGLOBAL  
UNDERGROUND, JAH  
WOBBLE, SHEILA  
CHANDRA, TALVIN SINGH.

## ADD N TO X

**On The Wires Of Our Nerves**  
Mute

In the dark nether regions of a futuristic vision, where man melds with machine and blood flows through circuitry, Add N To X reigns supreme, high atop Moog thrones. From the opening vocoder that introduces the group on its Stateside debut, *On The Wires Of Our Nerves*, London's Add N To X composes a score to the horrific sci-fi film that makes up its consciousness. Combining a multi-faceted synth assault with live percussion (High Llamas drummer Rob Allum worked on the album, and the group utilizes two drummers for live performances), the band creates a maelstrom of electronic sound, ranging from experimental noise-techno to synthetic blues. The group has an uncanny way of making melodies out of the least likely of sounds: "Murmur One" is comprised almost entirely of reverb, until giving way to a vocoder loop. In fact, the band wins "interesting use of vocoder" award of the moment—just as jazz and blues artists use vocals in both traditional and instrumental fashion, Add N To X gets good mileage from its voice synths. In places, they lend a chilly, robotic edge ("Sound Of Accelerating Concrete," "Murmur One") or, as on the electro-blues "King Wasp," play the part of tenor sax to the acid-induced bass. *On The Wires* is dark and heavy; if techno is the way of tomorrow, Add N To X is a grim futurist.

>>> William Werde



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 19.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
THE REAL LOST IN SPACE  
SOUNDTRACK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
APHEX TWIN, THE VIETNAM  
VET FROM SOUTH PARK,  
KRAFTWERK.

## BAD RELIGION <sup>CD</sup>

**No Substance**  
Atlantic

With nearly 20 years of history behind it, Bad Religion still has a lot of nerve. Not only have these punk rock granddads refused to dry up and disappear after 1996's poorly received *The Gray Race*, but they had the balls to title their new release *No Substance*—an open invite for mean-spirited puns and smart-ass comments. Perhaps, however, Greg Graffin and company felt extra confident with this album because they wisely tested the new material with real live fans at several all-ages shows before finalizing tracks for the disc. Their kid-tested-kid-approved mentality worked, forcing the band to return to what it does best. *No Substance* delivers smart and intense Bad Religion songs, glazing the group's muscular hardcore guitar riffs with a thin coat of palatable pogo punk and unusual, ear-catching drum fills. Characteristically, the lyrics are wry and smug, either lambasting America as a thoughtless, closed-minded and culturally devoid entity (though England gets the brunt of this treatment on "All Fantastic Images") or rallying kids together to take a stand against the powers that be. The album is satisfying in that respect, but it's hardly new territory for these veterans, making the album's strength also its primary weakness.

>>> Kelso Jacks



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 5.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
SMIRKING, SOCIO-  
POLITICAL PUNK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
LAGWAGON, DAG NASTY,  
PENNYWISE, NO USE FOR A  
NAME.

## ANDREW BIRD'S BOWL OF FIRE

**Thrills**  
Rykodisc

Funny: Just weeks ago I was listening to some '20s sides by jazz violin pioneer Joe Venuti and thinking, "They don't fiddle like that any more." Along comes Chicago's Andrew Bird to make me eat my words. Uncontaminated by any musical influence post-dating VJ-Day, *Thrills* could be a reissued collection of long-lost jump-blues and hot jazz 78s (with the occasional cabaret song for flavor), tied together by Bird's jaw-dropping violin playing, which moves effortlessly from authentically rough country-blues (Charlie Patton's "Some Of These Days") to flashy but swinging solos that rival Venuti at his peak. The overdub-less production is equally un-modern; this serves the band well, but not Bird's gruff, too-close-to-the-mic vocals, which mar otherwise perfect tracks. Better is "A Woman's Life And Love," where Bird supplies a lovely obbligato to the vocal turns of guest Katherine Whalen, of the Squirrel Nut Zippers. (Given the genre, and that Bird appeared on *Hot*, it's no surprise that two Zippers turn up here.) The evidence that *Thrills* isn't a mere retro trip lies in its sharp Age of Anxiety lyrics: "Eugene" concerns human cloning and the transmission of "malcontent through osmosis." What would Venuti have made of that?

>>> Franklin Bruno



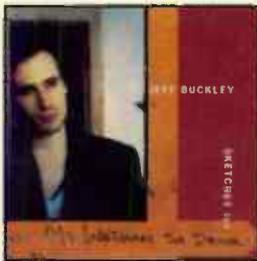
**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 7.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
PRE-ROCK JAZZ/POP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
TOM WAITS, SQUIRREL NUT  
ZIPPERS, LOUIS JORDAN.

## JEFF BUCKLEY

**Sketches (For My  
Sweetheart, The Drunk)**  
Columbia

Jeff Buckley met a fate eerily similar to his father's, dying young under tragic circumstances. But unlike '70s singer-songwriter Tim Buckley, whose stature was well confirmed before his death, son Jeff did not complete enough work by which to fairly measure his gifts. There is that voice—the soaring, howling, undeniably moving instrument Jeff inherited from his dad. His voice resonates throughout *Sketches*, a two-disc collection of songs and demos Jeff was working on (under the title *For My Sweetheart, The Drunk*) before he drowned in Memphis last May. Sadly, though, *Sketches* is accurately titled. As on Buckley's 1994 album *Grace*, *Sketches* shows an artist equally capable of heavenly hymns and ponderous rock, making it hard to pinpoint his musical legacy. In "Yard Of Blonde Girls," Buckley all but impersonates Alice In Chains' Layne Staley, trying to reconcile his misguided love for cock-rock with his quivery voice and his odd sense of humor. Doubly frustrating are the demos, the crudest of which are on disc two. Still, anyone stirred by Buckley's voice will be moved by much of disc one, especially the sexy slow jam "Everybody Here Wants You," which awaits your next boudoir mix tape, and the a cappella "You And I," which sounds like Buckley's cry from beyond.

>>> Chris Molanphy



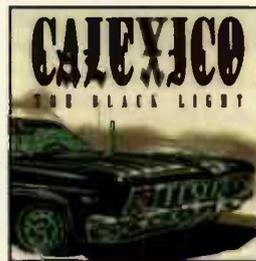
**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 26.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
A PROMISING ROCK VOICE,  
SILENCED.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
TIM BUCKLEY, NICK DRAKE,  
RON SEXSMITH.

## CALEXICO

**The Black Light  
Quarterstick**

Thanks in part to the late *MTV Unplugged*, today's acoustic rock ensembles have a certain undeserved skepticism to contend with, and Calexico is no exception. The band consists of the consummately talented John Convertino and Joey Burns, former members of the Friends Of Dean Martinez and sometime country-rock sidemen who have fleshed out the music of artists like Victoria Williams, Lisa Germano and Barbara Manning. They have chops and great taste to boot, but last year's debut album still lacked that something that would separate Calexico from a Palace or a Low. With its layers of strings and snare, the record was just too pretty, too quintessentially acoustic. Fortunately, the group's new record adds needed definition to its vision. Given a fancy studio and a raft of collaborating instrumentalists, the boys went to town, masterfully updating the spaghetti Western sound often associated with their native Southwest. They draw upon a wide range of regional styles, often a few at a time. While there are desert moments, like Convertino's dry, crackling vocal on "The Black Light," these are mainly setups for the flourish of songs like "Frontera," in which a galloping bass line collides joyously with a posse of mariachis. Rarely can one be so glad that a band chose *not* to keep it simple.

>>> Andrea Moed



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 19.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
INTRICATE, INSTRUMENTAL  
COUNTRY ROCK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
GIANT SAND, LAMBCHOP,  
SEA AND CAKE.

## CONNELLS <sup>CD</sup>

**Still Life**  
TVT

Way back in 1989, the Connells sang about a musician who was "Uninspired," just going through the motions. Fourteen years after they started (which translates to about 88 in band years), the Connells have found new inspiration, albeit in a different form than the jangly folk rock that once made them college radio staples. *Still Life* continues the Raleigh, North Carolina, band's strong appreciation for melody and introspective songwriting, but with a rootsier approach. Each of the six band members wrote songs for this seventh album, so the sound ranges from the rootsy stomp of "Curly's Train" to the quiet instrumental "Pedro Says" to the rowdy rock of "Gonna Take A Lie." With this diversity comes a few forgettable tracks, but nothing horribly out of place (aside from the theremin/pedal steel combination on "Glade"). As the Connells' sound has matured, their lyrics too have become decidedly post-collegiate, with vocalist Doug MacMillan "feeling not so amazed, but doing all right," or finding on the title track that "a still life has its virtues." Nothing here is as instantly memorable as their 1993 breakthroughs "Slackjawed" and "'74-'75" or earlier gems like "Get A Gun" or "Fun & Games," but moments like the quiet, piano-driven "Queen Of Charades" show that the Connells are aging gracefully.

>>> Wendy Mitchell



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 5.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
MELODIC ROOTS ROCK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
WHISKEYTOWN'S "WAITING  
TO DERAIL," WILCO'S *BEING  
THERE*, POSIES, JOLENE.

## DAVÍD GARZA <sup>CD</sup>

**Euphoria**  
Lava-Atlantic

There's something at once vintage and dopey about "Float Away," David Garza's paean to the agreeable effects of his lover's touch. It's the kind of vaguely hippie-romantic songwriterly gesture that—if you're going to pull it off—should be full of signature gusto and embraced goofiness. But Garza pulls back, trying for a wispy, falsetto effect with bursts of electric guitar. His handling of this timeless romantic gesture is entirely competent, but as ephemeral as the title implies. Fortunately, this chameleonic troubadour has better examples of his shape-shifting talents. The next song, "Discoball World," gets everything right—with its manic strumming, galloping beat and plaintive singing, it is the musical equivalent of the lyrics' dizzy young love with a touch of hindsight: "I fell for your coffee eyes/Your half and half/White lies." Similarly, "This Euphoria" evokes such a state through a gorgeous, psychedelic funk and gentle falsetto; the beatnik bongos make this oddly phrased tune irresistible. Elsewhere, Garza falls prey to the bland, as on "I Know" or "Slave," which bizarrely squanders the kinky promise, "Baby, I will be your slave," on an earnest chunk of reggae-fied granola. Vocally, Garza can do such a good Robert Plant that when the production kicks in, like in "Glow In The Dark," it sounds eerily like a lost Led Zeppelin session. >>> *Danny Housman*

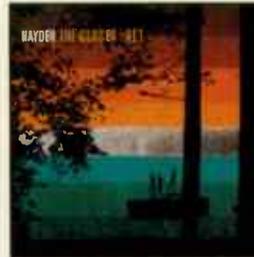


**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 7.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
CHAMELEONIC POP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
HAYDEN, MATTHEW SWEET,  
ROBERT PLANT.

## HAYDEN <sup>CD</sup>

**The Closer I Get**  
Outpost

Any pop savant with just one name who makes a major-label mint off of some bedroom four-track recordings in the '90s faces the unenviable fate of being held up next to Beck, especially when the label's part of the Geffen family. And maybe Toronto's Hayden deserved to be put through the wringer when his 1995 Canadian indie debut was reissued by Outpost in '96. But, you know, the scruffy tunes and blue moods of *Everything I Long For* were deceptively infectious. And so it is with *The Closer I Get*, which eschews the noisy temper tantrums that punctuated *Everything* for a somewhat more subdued mix of unpolished rock nuggets, hazy lo-fi atmospheres, and acoustic-y urban folk. Indeed, it sounds like he's been taking some worthwhile cues from Palace Brother Will Oldham and Sebadoh's Lou Barlow, though the harmonica/acoustic guitar combo on "Buller" is pure Neil Young. "The truth is in the details," he sings on the disc's disquieting opening tune, "The Closer I Get." And he could easily be talking about his own songs, which, when you listen closely enough, yield all kinds of little sonic epiphanies. >>> *Matt Ashare*

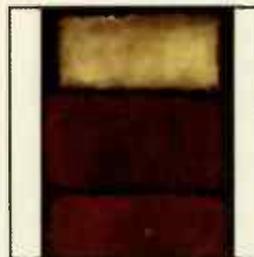


**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 12.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
SCRUFFY URBAN-FOLK  
POP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
ACOUSTIC BECK, WILL  
OLDHAM, SEBADOH.

## GRASSY KNOLL

**III**  
Antilles

As Grassy Knoll's main man, Bob Green's conspiracy theories rock the house, not the tabloids, as his subversive sonic pastiche improves with each release. On the group's drolly titled third album, Green and regular Knoll co-conspirators Chris Grandy (trumpet) and David Revelli (drums) hunker down with a new collection of guests (Thurston Moore, cellist Jane Scarpantino, *Daydream Nation* producer Nick Sansano, among others) to reinvent themselves with darker, more sinister hues. Revelli's hip-hop beats remain intact, sturdy and supple as ever, while Green heightens tension with an unnervingly organic juxtaposition of acoustic instruments and samples and loops. On "Down In The Happy Zone" and other tracks, Grandy's trumpet and Ellery Eskelin's saxophone saunter around taut rhythmic foundations to fill the gaps between bebop and John Zorn's crime jazz. Elsewhere, especially on "Safe," Grassy Knoll's dynamic formalism recalls the postmodern postulates of the underground avant-garde. Strings (electric, sampled and otherwise) give *III* a widened scope. The resulting melange is alternately elegant, funky, technical, soulful, haunting and almost always mesmerizing. Thankfully, Green and co. don't clutter the soundscape with any forced lyrical content; Grassy Knoll's cinematic approach to art-funk speaks volumes on its own. >>> *Mark Woodlief*



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 5.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
SUBVERSIVE TRIP-HOP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
MC 900 FT. JESUS, DJ  
SHADOW, ERASERHEAD.

## THE HORSE WHISPERER

**Soundtrack**  
MCA

The *Dead Man Walking* soundtrack proved the effectiveness of the "songs from and inspired by the motion picture" approach: Showing the film's rough cut to some songwriters and asking them for songs in response can result in a collection that coheres in a way unlike most soundtracks. In the case of *The Horse Whisperer*, the tales of love lost, originals and covers, became either sparse, Western-tinged acoustic ballads and waltzes or boot-stompin' Western-swing hoe-downs. The music supervisors of this Robert Redford film wisely gathered some of the best singers and songwriters in the business, several of whom haven't been heard from recently, and they all turn in performances worthy of their reputations. You get Lucinda Williams's naked emotion (a highlight), Iris DeMent's piercing twang (covering "Whispering Pines") and Gillian Welch's quiet observations; you also get Dwight Yoakam yodeling, solo Raul Malo (disguised as the plural Mavericks) whistling and Don Walser crying "Ahh, Sooeey." You get the sharp storytelling of Steve Earle and the reunion of Joe Ely, Butch Hancock and Jimmie Dale Gilmore as the oxymoronic Hill Country Flatlanders. You get Nashville and Lubbock and Bakersfield. Best of all, you get a coherent sampler of some of the best cross-genre artists working the fringes of corporate country. >>> *Steve Klinge*



**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 7.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
ACOUSTIC AND WESTERN  
BALLADS.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
DWIGHT YOAKAM, LUCINDA  
WILLIAMS, JIMMIE DALE  
GILMORE.

## JESUS AND MARY CHAIN <sup>CD</sup>

**Munki**  
Sub Pop

For a band that started its career with what can only be accurately described as a shockingly bold sonic statement, 1985's white noise-drenched *Psychocandy*, the Jesus And Mary Chain has grown to be a rather conservative bunch, er, pair. Brothers Jim and William Reid, the Chain's only permanent members, have spent the past decade getting their melancholy pop thrills in all the same places, from a couple of simple chord progressions plied with basic vocal melodies, a straight-ahead backbeat and some bad attitude. Not that there's anything wrong with that. As Jim Reid puts it in the press release for *Munki*: "I wanna be like Nick Cave... He does what he wants and you either accept him as he is or you fuck off." To accomplish that lofty goal the Reids have left the high-pressure realm of major labels for the relatively more tolerant semi-indie Sub Pop and delivered a disc that ain't much different from their last supposed return to distortion pedal form, 1994's *Stoned & Dethroned*—it even has another Hope Sandoval cameo for all you Mazzy Star fans. It also reprises the wonderfully thorny rant "I Hate Rock 'n' Roll" (from the '95 *Hate Rock 'n' Roll* EP), and reworks it as "I Love Rock 'n' Roll." I'm sure Nick Cave can relate.

>>> Matt Ashare



RELEASE DATE:

JUNE 9.

FILE UNDER:

GARAGE POP.

R.I.Y.L.:

JESUS AND MARY CHAIN'S

*STONED & DETHRONED*,

*HONEY'S DEAD*,

*AUTOMATIC*.

## JESUS LIZARD <sup>CD</sup>

**Blue**  
Capitol

It's a tried and tested formula for aging rock musicians seeking a transfusion of authenticity and street cred: Bring in an old, famous pioneer to help out. For its sixth record in a decade (second for a major label), the trailblazers of heavy, spazzy punk in the Jesus Lizard revel in their root sounds with producer Andy Gill from British avant-punkers Gang Of Four. While Duane Denison's guitar playing is resolutely American (tainted by jazz, splashed with Delta mud), the group really digs deep into the aggro, Anglo punk rock wellspring. The Lizard sounds more like Public Image Ltd., the Three Johns or the Birthday Party than it ever allowed itself to before. Gang Of Four fans will be happy for once: That propulsive white funk bass, heavy 4-4 drum machine sounding rhythms and discordant high-tension-wire guitar are all here. A few electronic blurps or atmospheric samples clue us in that it's 1998, but otherwise the progression is all internal. The rhythm section sounds like it's been playing together since infancy, and David Yow is actually singing, not just screaming. His lyrical prowess continues to impress, especially on "Cold Water" and "Rain." His trademark disturbing vignettes are more than a tour of life's mean things. Yow reveals a compassion that suits him well. It covers up his propensity for wacky goofiness that's derailed past Jesus Lizard discs.

>>> Mike McGonigal



RELEASE DATE:

MAY 5.

FILE UNDER:

AGGRESSIVE PROG-PUNK.

R.I.Y.L.:

P.I.L., BIG BLACK, EARLY SIX FINGER SATELLITE, TOOL.

## FREAKY CHAKRA BLACKLIGHT FANTASY

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OF THE ULTRAVIOLET KIND.

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acclaimed 'Lunatic Harness'  
album. Eight new tracks and  
unreleased remixes chosen by  
μ-Ziq fans on the internet.



ASTRALWERKS

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ASTRALWERKS

<http://www.astralwerks.com/qburns/>



## JUNIOR VARSITY KM

**Taking Care Of You**  
Darla

Plenty of drum 'n' bass records sound fantastic early in the morning... assuming you've been dancing till the wee small hours. But precious few actually beg to be played first thing as you emerge from slumber. *Taking Care Of You* by San Francisco's Junior Varsity KM (the tenth installment in Darla's Bliss Out series) does just that. What finer fashion to be gently nudged into consciousness than with the dulcet murmurs of the opening "You're Fabulous!" which begins with a hushed, ambient wash before the beats cautiously sputter to life. The burbling gurgle of "Suspension Bridge" provides an unobtrusive accompaniment to the noise of the coffee maker, while the pace of "Regarder" picks up just sufficiently to roll your ass out of bed. On closer examination, all eight cuts seem based on a fairly uniform blueprint, intermingling laid-back keyboard textures and upper-register rhythmic timbres (no jarring bass blasts, thank goodness), punctuated with discrete additional embellishments. The results occasionally recall other mellow Bay Area electronic experimentalists, while "Fourshadowing" also suggests a fondness for shoegazers such as My Bloody Valentine. With music as unpretentious yet inspired as this, 20-year-old Kenric McDowell (the sole force behind Junior Varsity KM) may just be the nicest person you ever wake up with.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MARCH 17.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
DRUM 'N' BASS FOR THE  
DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
TRANQUILITY BASS,  
BOYMERANG, FLOWCHART.

## SCRAWL

nature film

SEVEN NEW SONGS, AND NEW VERSIONS OF SIX OLD FAVORITES YOU JUST CAN'T FIND ANYMORE  
BECAUSE THEY'RE OUT-OF-PRINT, LIKE CHARLES, CLOCK SONG AND STANDING AROUND.

## KILGORE

**A Search For Reason**  
Revolution

They began life as Smudge, morphed into Kilgore Smudge, now they're simply Kilgore. Yet while the name may change, the sound remains the same. The not-so-dulcet tones emitting from this Providence, Rhode Island-based quartet come from a musical melding of styles, all of them heavy and testosterone-driven but not dunderheaded. Touchstones for Kilgore include a predilection for Pantera (musically) and the Misfits (vocally), plus hints of hardcore and progressive rock. Not coincidentally, producer Ed Stasium of Biohazard and Living Colour fame helmed *A Search For Reason*, Kilgore's sophomore outing. With a name nicked from the character Kilgore Trout in several Kurt Vonnegut novels, there's a precedent for literary leanings, and vocalist/one-time English major Jay Berndt pens lyrics that are a cut above. It's also clear from the dour darkness of "Providence" to the fierce passion/aggression of "TK-421" (featuring guest vocalist Burton Bell of Fear Factory) that Kilgore owes a musical debt to the darker side of the Seattle sound (Soundgarden, Alice In Chains). Yet from the barely controlled chaos of "Steamroller" to the tight anger, strong musicality and melodic chorus served up in "Avowal," it's also apparent that Kilgore's darkly evocative tunes ultimately bear the band's own rather impressive fingerprint.

>>> Katherine Turman

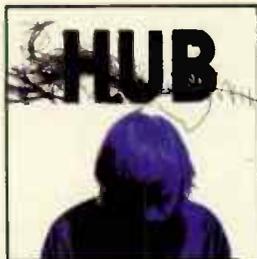


**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 12.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
THOUGHTFUL  
AGGRO-METAL.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
PANTERA, ALICE IN CHAINS,  
MISFITS/DANZIG,  
DEFTONES, BIOHAZARD.

## HUB

Hub  
Slash-London

Years ago, singer/guitarist Hub Moore went about as far as any smart, young, American guitar-pop dude could go with a Boston band called Three Colors (which also featured singer/songwriter Chris Harford, as well as Morphine saxman Dana Colley). Which really wasn't too far in a record industry that didn't have the first idea what to do with bands like the dB's, Dumptruck and the Bongos. And then he just sorta disappeared, only to return as Hub, a smart, somewhat older, American guitar-pop dude with friends like Dean Ween, Rollins Band alumnus Andrew Weiss and Golden Palominos singer Lydia Kavanaugh all helping out on a disarmingly appealing debut CD. Harford, who's kept a somewhat higher profile over the years as a NYC-based pop dude, is back too, helping out with production and various instrumental tasks, sharing in the fun of covering the Replacements' moody gem "Swingin' Party." Like Paul Westerberg these days, Moore is most affecting when his imperfect voice has something sadly beautiful or just plain sad to sing about, which is most of the time here. He gets a bit bluesy on "Evil Twin," turns reflective and falsetto-y on "Sane," but mainly he generates a kind of low-key magnetism from little tragedies like, as one tune puts it, "Two people moving further and further away from each other." >>> *Matt Ashare*



RELEASE DATE:  
MAY 19.

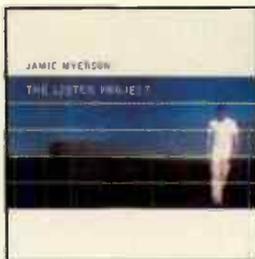
FILE UNDER:  
MOODY-GUY POP.

R.I.Y.L.:  
PAUL WESTERBERG, CHRIS  
HARFORD, KEVIN SALEM.

## JAMIE MYERSON

The Listen Project  
Ovum/Ruffhouse-Columbia

The buzz circling around 23-year-old Jamie Myerson, a hype born from a collection of 12" singles and remix EPs, trumpets this New Jersey producer as electronica's newest breakbeat prodigy. But that's too cramped and shallow a pigeonhole to squeeze Myerson into, for while many of his tracks do possess the familiar staccato hi-hats and rolling bass lines, he deserves more attention for what's going on above his beats. While most drum 'n' bass dabblers make drum sequencing their primary focus, Myerson concentrates more on the music swirling around his backbeat, wisely using the rhythm as merely an anchor to ground his floating ambiance. *The Listen Project*, Myerson's first full-length release, is one of the warmest, most memorable and, at points, oddest electronic records around. Quickly shifting from jazzy, Moog-riddled breakbeat ("Sky Blue") to soulful Alex Reece-meets-Roni Size jams ("Everything Is Gonna Be Alright"), to straight-up house thumpers ("Rescue Me") to claustrophobic, ambient nightmares ("Afraid"), the man has his eggs in enough baskets to defy even general categorization. It's nearly impossible to tell where Myerson's coming from, or where he's going, during the first few listens, but while the individual tracks are as diverse as they come, *Listen* gels with a romantic, sensual atmosphere that distinguishes Myerson from the other electronic artists on the rise. >>> *M. Tye Comer*



RELEASE DATE:  
APRIL 7.

FILE UNDER:  
ATMOSPHERIC,  
ELECTRONIC GROOVES.

R.I.Y.L.:  
RONI SIZE/REPAZENT,  
ALEX REECE, L.T.J. BUKEM.

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# VAST

VISUAL AUDIO SENSORY THEATER  
THE DEBUT ALBUM



FEATURING  
**TOUCHED**

Produced and recorded by Fred Maher  
Mixed by Amy Wallace  
Co-produced by Jon Crosby

# REVIEWS

## JASON & THE SCORCHERS

**Midnight Roads & Stages Seen**

**Mammoth**

Even 17 years into their country-punk career and as the under-recognized forefathers of the alt.country set, Jason & The Scorchers' name couldn't be more appropriate: It's hard to avoid words like "incendiary" and "fiery" when describing the performances on this two-disc live set, as most songs begin at full-throttle and stay there, with an occasional gear-shift into overdrive. The band's punk roots dominate, and guitarist Warren E. Hodges has more than a little of X's Billy Zoom in his speed-rockabilly style; even "Jimmie Rodgers' Last Blue Yodel" doesn't pause for a breath. This career retrospective ranges from their first original song ("Broken Whiskey Glass") through each of their seven releases, plus a new song (the fast and dense "This Town Isn't Keeping You Down"—which proves just how true to its original vision the band remains). *Midnight Roads* is all about the excitement of rock 'n' roll: The performances themselves ring true enough, especially Jason Ringenberg's high tenor, but the end result is that you wish you could have been at the bar to experience the reckless abandon of these Nashville shows. Jason & The Scorchers' studio albums often struggled to convey the energy the band could generate. *Midnight Roads & Stages Seen* has excitement to spare.

>>> Steve Klinge



RELEASE DATE:

MAY 5.

FILE UNDER:

ARCHETYPAL COUNTRY-PUNK, PLAYED LIVE.

R.I.Y.L.I.:

DWIGHT YOAKAM, OLD 97'S, X, JERRY LEE LEWIS.

## JENNY MAE

**Don't Wait For Me Anyway**

One of the few women performers you might just as easily see crooning in a velvet gown as picking a bar fight, Jenny Mae is the torch singer for the real world, where hate and "fuck!" are as vivid as true love and undying sorrow, where ballads can have names like "Ho Bitch." This is not at all ironic posturing: When Jenny Mae places smoke machines at her feet, it makes perfect sense—the world needs more divas like this, exuding as much real feeling as glamour and sarcasm. More solid and lush than her debut, *Don't Wait Up For Me* splits Jenny Mae's time between being an ethereal chanteuse/lovelorn country singer, new wave spitfire and trumpeter soloist (the latter is really rather lovely). The album has a warm feel that comes out in every musical twist she takes. While Jenny Mae's range is dynamic—from hip-hop to piano balladry—the floaty, sensual liltings of her voice keep a tight rein on the album's meanderings; it drifts, but only gently. Her more rocking songs have the same qualities as her slower ones: a spiraling sensation (like on the fantastic "Drapes") that lifts your spirits or calls you further into the abyss, and *Don't Wait Up* sits at just the point of slow realization where those emotions begin to bleed one into the other.

>>> Liz Clayton



RELEASE DATE:

MAY 18.

FILE UNDER:

TORCH SONGS FOR THE BARSTOOL AND THE BOUDOIR.

R.I.Y.L.I.:

LIZ PHAIR, SPINANES.

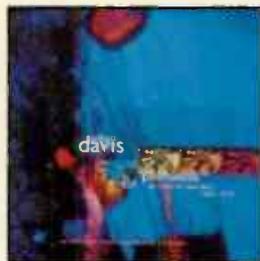
## BILL LASWELL

### Panthalassa: The Music of Miles Davis 1969-1974

Columbia

Before anyone cries “sell-out”—a criticism Miles Davis heard throughout his convoluted career—one point concerning *Panthalassa*, Bill Laswell’s new interpretations of selections from the trumpet player’s 1969-74 catalog, must be clarified. This is *not* some garish exercise in cross-marketing, where snippets of classic jazz are pimped in the service of mediocre dance beats. During Davis’s “electric” period, which encompasses the albums this music is drawn from (*In A Silent Way*, *On The Corner*, *Get Up With It*), his modus operandi favored extended pieces sans formally composed structures. These harmonically improvised jams were then assembled into tracks via meticulous editing. Laswell has simply returned to the larger body of master tapes and reconfigured carefully chosen passages into four flowing suites. As “Black Satin/Pete Cosely/Agharta Prelude Dub” reveals, Davis anticipated the ambitious jazz/funk/rock fusion Laswell would further with Material by several years. Almost 30 years later, these performances still sound exceptionally vital and innovative, and the new configurations function equally well as an introduction to Davis for new listeners, or as an unexpected perspective on the canon for established fans.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



RELEASE DATE:  
APRIL 28.  
FILE UNDER:  
THE REANIMATION OF COOL.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
MATERIAL, HERBIE HANCOCK, “ELECTRIC” MILES DAVIS.

## SEAN LENNON

### Into The Sun Grand Royal

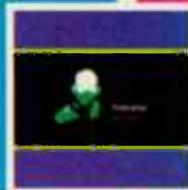
As the American son of English and Japanese parents, and the occasional bass player of the playfully multiculti Cibo Matto, Sean Lennon has learned the value of being cosmopolitan, and he’s eager to prove his stylistic range. *Into The Sun*, his recorded debut, alternates his cool-mannered, sensitive-guy pop songs with stabs at instrumental jazz (the surprisingly swell “Photosynthesis”), Brazilian-lite rhythm and a bit of rather bogus country, among other things, and sampladelic production touches enliven most of these tracks. There’s a deftly executed Beach Boys/Merseybeat homage (“Queue”), a vaguely silly exercise in internal rhyme (“Mystery Juice”), and lots of nice instrumentation, including piano, strings and horns. But too many of these songs seem half-formed or badly edited; Lennon’s rootlessness trips him up more often than it lets him do something surprising. He reaches for melancholic prettiness reflexively—it seems like a way for him to get around having to stretch his tone, or to write lyrics that mean something—and a few of his stabs at genre music are awfully forced, especially “Two Fine Lovers”’s autopilot soul. It’s not difficult to understand how his gentle eclecticism ended up on the Beastie Boys’ label, but he’s underdeveloped as a singer and a songwriter—promising, rather than good.

>>> Douglas Wolk



RELEASE DATE:  
MAY 19.  
FILE UNDER:  
EXCESSIVELY MELLOW VARIETY.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
BEN LEE, ARTO LINDSAY, APPLES IN STEREO.

## Cup of Tea’s Well Brewed Beats!



### THE FEDERATION

#### HEADSPIN

Sassy, sophisticated 21st Century funk courtesy of Roni Size Reprazent bassist Dr. John, and co-host Alex Swift. Dirty beats, bass heavy grooves and drum & bass with a jazz attitude.



### RECEIVER

#### CHICKEN MILK

Just, beautiful and pop-infused. Imagine Tricky with a sense of humour.



### STATIK SOUND SYSTEM

#### REMIX SELECTION

From big beat to BIG bass, Statik Sound System comes exact with eleven brilliant remixes of songs originally featured on their Iron Cup of Tea debut, *Tempesta II*. Deep, dreamy dub meets edgy drum & bass meets funky grooves.



### PURPLE PENGUIN

#### DE-TUNED

Ben Robinson weaves obscure trip hop licks onto smooth sax and trumpet riffs and sweeping classical moves. Devilishly beautiful. — D.



### ANOTHER COMPILATION

#### CUP OF TEA SAMPLER

The follow up to Cup of Tea Records’ ‘A Compilation’ featuring Statik Sound System, The Invisible Pair of Hands (featuring three members of Purlishud), Fruit Loop, Receiver, Monk & Cantrilla, Spaceways, and Purple Penguin.



### STATIK SOUND SYSTEM

#### TEMPESTA II

Featuring vocalist Helen White, the Statik crew have received critical acclaim in magazines such as CMJ, Mixmag, Melody Maker, and NME for their album and countless live performances.

Instant Cup classics.

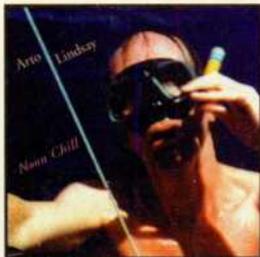


## ARTO LINDSAY

**Noon Chill**  
Bar/None

Like Woody Allen, to whom he bears a passing resemblance, Arto Lindsay practices seduction by deliberation. A Lindsay love song doesn't shower its object with flattery or plead for favor; it pieces together its appeal out of philosophical musings and uncanny observations. "I do love your lack of all expression/Find it not at all distressing," he begins on "Simply Are," a song to a lover whose nature he can't define. He explains why he doesn't need to understand her power over him—only to feel it—as the Latin beat intensifies and the drums kick in, like a light turned down at just the right moment. All of *Noon Chill* is this calculated and personal: the lyrics; the careful mix of club beats, Brazilian percussion and melody, and, most of all, Lindsay's plot to re-engineer the pop song for greater global relevance. Some of his results seem downright conservative, like "Blue Eye Shadow," which mates his icy-cool vocals with an even cooler syncopated rhythm and synth horns. Even the drum 'n' bass-based "Anything" is more circumscribed than usual, with diva, Sussan Deyhim, singing the main vocal while Lindsay lurks in the background. Nonetheless, repeated listening makes it clear that Lindsay doesn't need the usual methods of experimental musicians in order to subvert pop—his alien and rare persona is subversive enough by itself.

>>> Andrea Moed



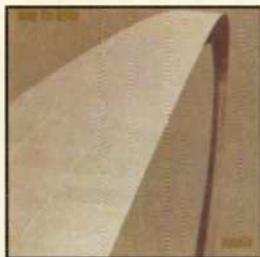
RELEASE DATE:  
MARCH 17.  
FILE UNDER:  
POST-TROPICALIA.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
CAETANO VELOSO, DAVID  
BYRNE, CARLINHOS BROWN.

## LONG FIN KILLIE

**Amelia**  
Beggars Banquet

Was there ever a double-edged sword like the term "art rock"? Evoking both expansive creativity and self-limiting quirks (and groups like the Talking Heads certainly had both), "art rock" seems to be thrown up by critics when impressed but perhaps a tad put-off. With *Amelia*, Scottish quartet Long Fin Killie has given its eclectic, literate music a clenching immediacy that's not merely embraceable, it's inescapable. The group's third dexterous album, *Amelia*, has its tightest arrangements, most seamless sequencing, and most naked desires. Short songs like "Bigger Than England" and "Headlines" burst with manic, poppy freshness but still retain the group's singular intensity. While singer Luke Sutherland juxtaposes direct and oblique (not to mention alliterative) lyrics, the band never fails to create a powerful, seductive mood. Working with their regular producer Jamie Watson, the band's careful attention to textures, and canny deployment of strings, horns, and assorted percussion gives *Amelia* a rich palette. It's not that influences or precedents are undetectable: "Resin" evokes both the Velvet Underground (viola and all), and the Wedding Present. "Chrysler" nods at The Fall with its prowling menace. The sensuous "Lipstick" rides a drum-and-bass motif—used not as trendy padding but as an organic keystone—so that the climax is truly thrilling.

>>> Danny Housman



RELEASE DATE:  
APRIL 7.  
FILE UNDER:  
MODERNIST ART ROCK.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
RAINCOATS, PERE UBU,  
MOONSHAKE.

## MEKONS

**Me**  
Quarterstick

Baffling. That's the word that comes to mind on first listen. After a dozen or so records spanning 21 years, the world's most stubborn punk band throws even us obsessive fans for a loop with *Me*. Sure, the Mekons have always meandered through passions, from punk to country dub to polka and rock, but to land at the end of the century on, uh, porno rock is bewildering. Describing *Me* is tough; just don't listen to it with your mom. It's a deep examination of the sexual self that travels through grocery lists, hospitals, sex toy catalogs, sentimental chambers, whiskey sex shacks and countless settings that will require years to decipher. The Mekons mix in everything they've accumulated over the years—hard guitar riffs ("Entering The Lists" is one of their best rock songs ever), subtle violin moans, Sally Timms's luscious voice, accordion howls, synthetic beats, dub infused bass lines—into a glorious music that's nearly impossible to place in any context but their selfish own. But that's the beauty of the Mekons. Their records may baffle at first, but they open up like flowers as you eye them more closely, and the more they tease, the more you appreciate the subtle nuances and overall thickness. Phew. Who's got a smoke?

>>> Randall Roberts



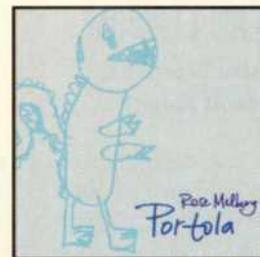
RELEASE DATE:  
MAY 19.  
FILE UNDER:  
BAFFLING PORNO ROCK.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
SALLY TIMMS, WACO  
BROTHERS, THE BAND.

## ROSE MELBERG

**Portola**  
Double Agent

Rose Melberg is best-known as half of the Softies, an understated, sparkling acoustic two-guitar and two-voice group whose two albums bring to mind rose petals, rosy blushes, rock roses, summer afternoons on a crushed-out best friend's roof, watching the roseate sun as it sets without you. Softies songs showcase their dandelion-delicate plucked guitar lines along with Melberg's breathy, one-to-one, I-can-keep-a-secret voice, on which this solo album depends. *Portola* contains some extremely pretty songs—the wryly sad condolences of "Happy Birthday To Me," and the echoey, folksy, back-to-basic-love-song premise of "Devoted To You" ("I'll never give you reason to cry/I'll be unhappy if you are blue"). But often these songs sound like demos, or sketches, for private consumption: Proto-songs, too-simple campfire-folk, rote country numbers, a merely-OK electric closing number (like a demo for Melberg's good rock band, Go Sailor) and a pointless version of "Hey Mr. Spaceman" bring down the average on what's still a very pretty pop record. If you're already in love with Melberg's voice, or with her simply moving lyrics, all you need to know is that this exists. If not, start with the Softies first.

>>> Steve Burt



RELEASE DATE:  
APRIL 28.  
FILE UNDER:  
SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL  
INDIE-POP.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
SOFTIES, LOIS, MICHELLE  
SHOCKED.

**μ-ZIQ** CD

**Brace Yourself**  
Astralwerks

If you can't conceive of a universe in which drum 'n' bass could sound chipper and cheerful, one listen to *Brace Yourself* will convert you. Here, musical imp Michael Paradinas, who also records as Jake Slazenger, Kid Spatula and Tuskin Raiders, creates a friendly world where Muzak and techno collide. He even let his fans pick the tracks on the disc by letting them vote on the Astralwerks website. Imagine electronic sounds without a hint of the industrial menace most techno-geeks can't live without. The basic mix includes cute, chirping Casio tones and melodies blending with rubber ducky sounds over a furious drum 'n' bass beat. It's kind of like the score to *Sesame Street 2010*. If Disney doesn't snatch up the rights to "Loser's March" for its new Tomorrowland, the company is missing a bet, and "Intellitag" would be perfect for the Spinning Tea Cups. Paradinas is still at an age when most people are just starting out (he began recording in his teens), so it's hard to know how serious he is about all this. Since so much electronic music seems to fall under either aggro rave-up or ambient trance-out, it's nice to hear something this light-hearted from a master of the genre.

>>> Heidi MacDonald



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 5.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
MERRY ELECTRONICA.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
APHEX TWIN, RAYMOND SCOTT'S SOOTHING SOUNDS FOR BABY, DISNEYLAND'S ELECTRICAL PARADE.

**JIMMY PAGE/ROBERT PLANT**

**Walking Into Clarksdale**  
Atlantic

One wonders if listening to all those live BBC tapes might have rubbed off on Jimmy Page, who looks dangerously like he's becoming the 10,000-year-old hermit he played in *The Song Remains The Same's* fantasy sequence. Although it rocks, *Walking Into Clarksdale* (recorded in England by Steve Albini) is surprisingly subdued, almost sparse compared to, say, *In Through The Out Door*—there's no radio-ready sheen and relatively little of Page as heroic general leading guitar armies into battle, the stuff that made his legend. Instead, he gets the Led out mostly with just one or two guitar tracks, filled with Page's trademark sloppiness, mistakes and all. "When The World Was Young" is perhaps the most wonderfully dippy song about reincarnation ever written, fueled by a riff strong enough to make the gods themselves look down and weep. Both Page as guitarist and Robert Plant as vocalist really do seem like Old Masters of rock—sometimes, like aged and wizened thespians, they'll use only a sparing gesture, a subtle nod where a younger actor might wave his arms flamboyantly. Still, there is absolutely no doubt that John Paul Jones would have livened up weaker tracks like "Blue Train" or "Sons Of Freedom." It isn't Zep, it's just two old partners working together again trying not to sound too silly—and pleasantly enough, occasionally they do strike up some of the old magic.

>>> James Lien



**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 21.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
PAGE, PLANT AND TWO OTHER GUYS.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
ZEPPELIN, LENNY KRAVITZ, PJ HARVEY'S DRY.

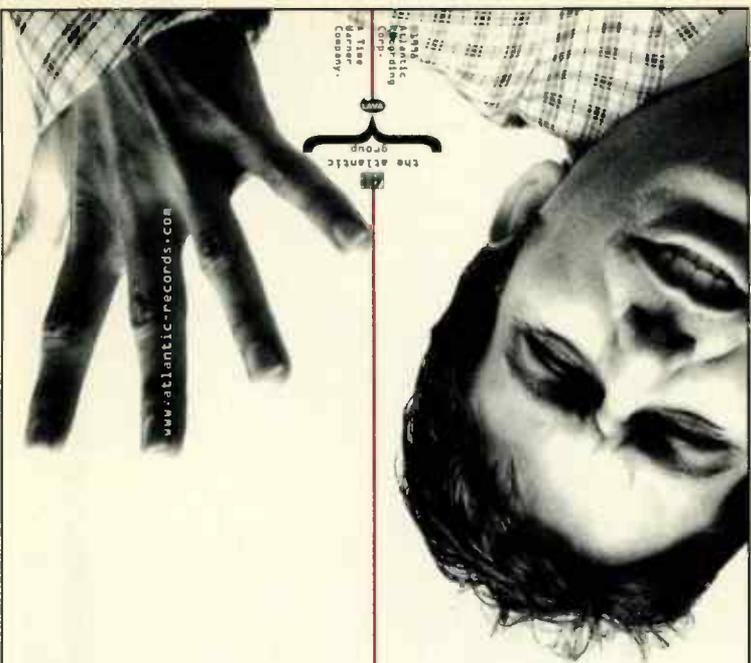
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- CMJ

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- D.G.

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# REVIEWS

## PAN-AMERICAN

**Pan-American**  
**Kranky**

Mark Nelson has spent the last few years as probably the quietest vocalist and guitarist in all music, as the "frontman" for the barely there ambient trio Labradford. During that time, though, he's been busy home-taping his own projects under the moniker Pan-American, and this self-titled release is the first time his solo works have bubbled-up from the tape-trading underworld. On the one hand, longtime Labradford fans will have no trouble recognizing what they're hearing. The music is still mixed at dangerously low levels, is still built on drones, harmonic pings, and endless repetition of a few entrancing melodies, and still features a slow-moving, de-emphasized rhythm. In its meticulous abstraction and its vaporous atonality, it's closer to church bells blowing randomly in the wind than to most standard conceptions of "music." *Pan-American*, however, is quite different in that it's an album for the hips as well as for the brain (or at least one suited for lying around in a club's chill-out space as well as lying around in your bedroom). Most tracks have actual beats (albeit plodding, trebly beats) and subtle dub or bossa nova bass lines. The somnolent repetition and distant-sounding mix won't inspire you to get up and dance, but it's still a breezy injection of pizzazz into Labradford's contemplative, streamlined languor.

>>> David Jarman

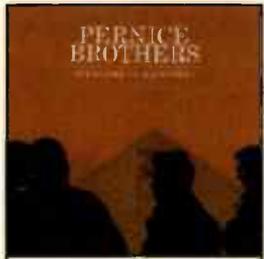
**RELEASE DATE:**  
MARCH 30.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
GHOSTLY ELECTRONIC  
AMBIENCE.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
LABRADFORD, TRANQUILITY  
BASS, QUIET BRIAN ENO.

## PERNICE BROTHERS

**Overcome By Happiness**  
**Sub Pop**

Joe Pernice was a singer/songwriter in the sublimely lazy, hazy, country-influenced, and short-lived Scud Mountain Boys. For his new project, Pernice has assembled some like-minded Massachusetts cohorts: brother Bob, Peyton from New Radiant Storm King, and Thom, Aaron and Mike from the fabulous Lilys. They meld a folky, neo-Nashville sound with syrupy accents that recall the late '60s heyday of sophisticated, cocktail hour pop far more than Hank Williams's hill-country or Gram Parsons's country-rock. While in 1998 every singer/songwriter and his/her dog seems to be motivated by the orchestral pop of that era, few have really *done* much with that influence. The string-heavy arrangements on *Overcome By Happiness* could use a tad more originality, but they're wedded to great songs that are *great songs*, not just excuses for genre experimentation and flat-out pillaging. The tunes are vehicles for Pernice's sexy, breathy-but-powerful voice to soar over rather disturbing lyrical terrain. When he sings "They found her car still running in the garage/She'd come so far to end her life by the rusty motor and chicken wire," it's somehow uplifting. With their deadpan, life-like words, lush vocals and crisply gorgeous sound, the Pernice Brothers are what the Eagles would have sounded like were they half the group they imagined themselves to be.

>>> Mike McGonigal



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 19.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
ORCHESTRAL SINGER-  
SONGWRITER POP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
BELLE AND SEBASTIAN,  
SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS,  
GALAXIE 500, LULLABY FOR  
THE WORKING CLASS.

## RED AUNTS

### Ghetto Blaster Epitaph

The Red Aunts visit a land of giddy punk chaos that's all too sparsely populated these days. *Ghetto Blaster* is a mini-masterpiece of dissonant catharsis in two-minute bursts of renegade attitude, sneering vocals, delirious Farfisa outbursts and ragged, distorted guitars. They're not cutesy pretenders; when they sing "I'm gonna poison you tonight" on "Poison Steak," you know it's for real. These four Los Angeles women have come a long way from their early albums, where they could barely play their instruments. The virtuosity here is all emotional, but when you're this tough, that's all you need. The opening song, "I'm Crying," builds from ominous rumblings to a full-on shriek that's more angry than sad. Other choice cuts include "The Things You See, The Things You Don't," which elevates sloppy playing to a new art form; "Midnight In The Jungle," which could almost pass for a ballad, and "I'm Bored With You," which, fittingly, clocks in at about 36 seconds. The Red Aunts are clearly fully aware of their predecessors (one song is even called "Exene"), but they dive in with a reckless energy that's all their own.

>>> Heidi MacDonald



RELEASE DATE:

APRIL 12.

FILE UNDER:

PUNK GIRLS ON A RAMPAGE.

R.I.Y.L.:

BIKINI KILL, SLITS, X.

## ROCK\*A\*TEENS

### Baby, A Little Rain Must Fall Merge

There are only three band members listed in the liner notes to *Baby, A Little Rain Must Fall*, but Cabbagetown, Georgia's Rock\*A\*Teens sound more like a quartet: Justin Hughes, Chris Lopez, Brandon Smith and an industrial-sized reverb pedal. These songs aren't just flavored by reverb, they're drenched by it, adding even more drama to dark teen ballads and swampy garage rock. From Lopez's sultry pronunciation that "libations are salvation" in the opening "Teen Muscle/Teen Hustle," his yelp grows increasingly crazed, stretching "night" into three syllables on "Don't Destroy This Night," and letting loose with a few manic howls on "Bloodhound." This third album uses the same basic ingredients as 1997's *Cry*, but sounds less like isolated bursts of surf, rockabilly or swooning ballads and more like a cohesive package which modernizes all of the Teens' retro influences. The drama reaches a peak on the Phil Spector-y "I Could've Just Died," as reverb swells, tambourines shake and Lopez wails like a despondent torchsinger. With their dark, spooky vibe and out-of-time sound, the Rock\*A\*Teens would be the perfect house band for a Southern gothic version of *Twin Peaks*.

>>> Wendy Mitchell



RELEASE DATE:

APRIL 21.

FILE UNDER:

SOUTHERN GOTHIC GARAGE ROCK.

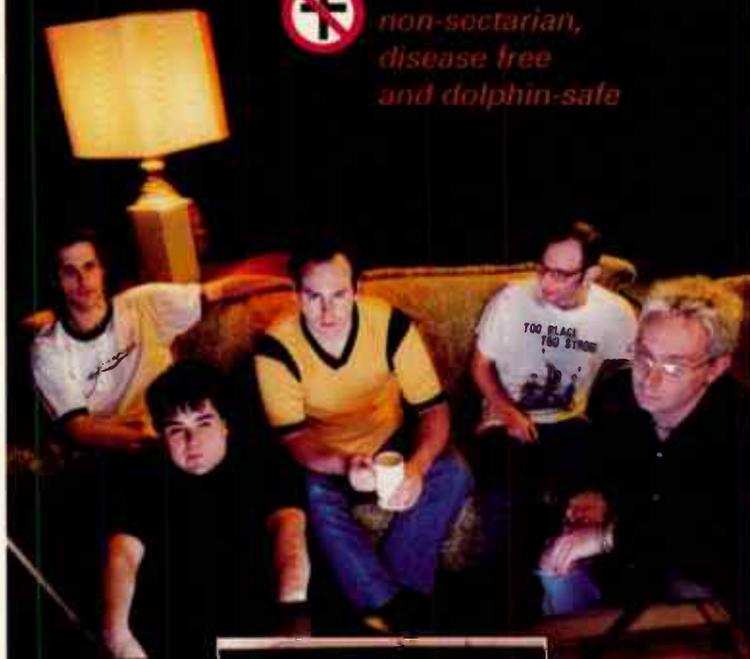
R.I.Y.L.:

GUN CLUB, FLAT DUO JETS, JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION, ROY ORBISON.

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## JOSH ROUSE

**Dressed Up Like Nebraska  
Slow River**

Not too many months ago, an acoustic guitar and a plaintive voice stood out amid a sea of grunge guitars. But suddenly the singer/songwriter turf has gotten mighty crowded, with these devices becoming almost as pervasive as feedback fuzz once was. Nashville-based newcomer Josh Rouse has the goods to make an impression regardless of sensory overload, however. His folk-flavored vignettes are fleshed out with a full band sound, his acoustic strumming providing a percussive backdrop offset nicely by some raw electric fretwork. David Henry's expressive violin and cello work provides a tinge of Americana, and impressively rounds out the combo. The real acid test in this genre is whether the songs could thrive without the extras, and I can picture Rouse pulling off these tunes alone in a coffeehouse without a hitch. Although he grew up in the Cornhusker state, the cynic in me wonders whether the choice of "Dressed Up Like Nebraska" as the title track isn't intended to conjure associations to a better-known *Nebraska* LP. Nonetheless, fans of the mood struck by Springsteen's recent moodier stuff wouldn't be far afield here. Rouse is a songwriter with potential, and much of it is already realized on this debut disc. >>> *Glen Sarvady*

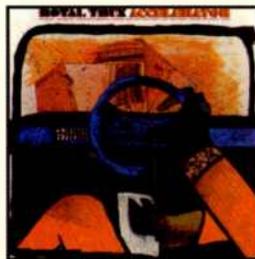


**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 28.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
EMBELLISHED SINGER/  
SONGWRITER FOLK ROCK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
FREEDY JOHNSTON, PAUL  
WESTERBERG'S SENSITIVE  
SIDE, SPRINGSTEEN'S  
GHOST OF TOM JOAD.

## ROYAL TRUX

**Accelerator  
Drag City**

"Now you know I'm ready! Can't you see I'm ready!" blurts Royal Trux vocalist Jennifer Herrema in the first few seconds of *Accelerator*, the band's return to Drag City after two albums for Virgin. What she and her longtime cohort, guitarist/vocalist Neil Hagerty, are ready to do is delve back into the bluesy, happy mess of sound that made them such indie darlings in the first place. The Trux's first major-label disc, *Thank You*, was a passable replication of previous pinnacles such as *Royal Trux* (#2) and *Cats And Dogs*, but last year's *Sweet Sixteen* sent many longtime fans straight to the trade-in desk at the local used record shop. The 35-minute blast of *Accelerator* will likely bring them back. Straightforward stompers like "The Banana Question" and "Juicy Juicy Juice" (deep lyrics were never their forte) are kicked into shape by Herrema's exuberant, spastic spewings, and propelled by chanting backing vocals, clanking percussion, handfuls of synths and, most characteristically, Hagerty's raw, vibrant, twangy guitar lines. Even on ballads like "Yellow Kid" and "Stevie," on which our protagonists harmonize sweetly, there's a renewed vigor that buzzes throughout the album, marking the Royal Trux's rare ability to reclaim the energy that made them so compelling as a young group and maintain their vitality a decade on in their career. >>> *Lydia Vanderloo*



**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 21.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
RIPPED AND TORN  
BELLBOTTOM BLUES.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
RAILROAD JERK, VERY  
SCRATCHY COPIES OF  
EXILE ON MAIN STREET.

## SCHRAMMS

**Dizzy Spell  
Checkered Past**

The Schramms aren't the kind of band that stands poised to break out of the pack and land on commercial radio. Nor is it evident that the praise heaped upon the group since its debut eight or so years ago has increased its visibility much. Perhaps it's because the Schramms ignore the cutting edge of any movement, especially the, uh, "no depression" crowd, a movement they preceded but with which they're often identified. They just roll along, subtly conjuring the ghosts of country music. Like The Band before them, the Schramms infuse *Dizzy Spell* with a quiet, passionate mystery that's hard to place within any school. At its heart lies the guitar work of Dave Schramm, who creates a tone that sounds like a rural Tom Verlaine, and writes melodies with monster undertows that drag everything down with them. The weakest aspect of *Dizzy Spell*, which taints the majority of their work, is Schramm's vocals. While strong and sturdy, they lack the range to allow for much variation, and as a result, perfect songs with vastly differing tunes end up sounding similar in the context of a full-length release. Which is a shame, because melodically and lyrically, *Dizzy Spell* is remarkably crafted and evocative. >>> *Randall Roberts*



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 5.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
SUBTLE COUNTRY ROCK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
THE BAND, YO LA TENGO'S  
FAKEBOOK, TOM PETTY'S  
THE WAITING.

## JOHN SCOFIELD

**A Go Go  
Verve**

John Scofield's collaboration with downtown jazz trio Medeski Martin And Wood is an in-the-tradition move that has roots in gutbucket funk and the chittlin' circuit. Back in the day, folks like the Incredible Jimmy Smith, Lonnie Smith and Jimmy McGriff led organ-powered, groove-oriented quartets through many an album's worth of sanctified jazz instrumentals. Even smooth guitarist George Benson cut his teeth with Brother Jack McDuff in a combo much akin to Scofield's most recent organ-ization. Groups of this ilk thrive on riding the rhythm through a series of funky changes and jazzin' it up on the downstroke. Of course, modern-thinking musicians like Scofield and MMW couldn't be content playing instrumental dance music, could they? Well... yes. Reaching back to the good-time music of New Orleans, James Brown and house parties from long ago, Scofield and company attempt to raise the roof in no uncertain terms. Exhibiting plenty of chops, Scofield and organist John Medeski expertly riff off each other while drummer Billy Martin and bassist Chris Wood hold down a very fluid pulse. With jams like "Hottentot" and "Chicken Dog," these able musicians are workin' and steamin' from start to finish. While some back-to-the-roots endeavors may sound contrived, this record is a heartfelt nod to Wednesday night prayer meetings and good old home cooking. >>> *Mitch Myers*



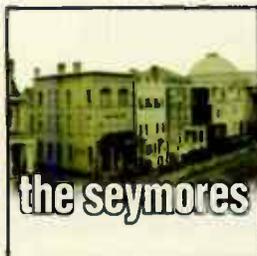
**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 7.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
FUNKY ACID-JAZZ.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
MEDESKI MARTIN AND  
WOOD, CHARLIE HUNTER  
TRIO, T.J. KIRK.

**SCRAWL** CD**Nature Film**  
**Elektra**

**DATALOG:**  
MAY 12.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
ROUGH-EDGED, HARD-RENT  
DISSONANT ROCK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
TSUNAMI, SLEATER-KINNEY,  
RAINCOATS.

Scrawl's second major label album, *Nature Film* is an unlikely collection of six greatest hits, re-recorded for this release and six new songs. In an era where "indie feminism" has come into vogue, Scrawl holds seniority on the hard-edged, tough-lipped woman's musical turf. Long before Olympia, Washington, and its cheery ideologies emerged, Scrawl's three members were lugging their amps around Columbus, Ohio, singing songs about the real world and getting back up a few hours later to go back to work in it. There is an emotional intensity to all of Scrawl's music—a discomfort in its spareness, the determined heft in Sue Harsh's bass, the spit and pity in her and Marcy Mays's vocals, the lullaby that tries to soothe a fitful sleep. The band is wholly sensitive but it is also hard: Proving Scrawl a rock band more than anything else, these fresh takes of Scrawl favorites and biting new tunes come out with fists pumping, even the heartbreaking "11:59 (It's January)" and the album's dejected denouement, "Guess I'll Wait." *Nature Film* includes most of Scrawl's best (including a fabulous cover of PIL's "Public Image"), with only a few inexplicable omissions like "Time To Come Clean" and "Misery." Tender even in the screamingest moments, *Nature Film* documents the breadth of the band's career, and much more.

&gt;&gt;&gt; Liz Clayton

**SEYMORES****Treat Her Like A Showcat**  
**Vernon Yard**

**DATALOG:**  
MAY 5.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
ADENOIDAL POP ROCK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
MOVIOLA, CAMPER VAN  
BEETHOVEN, BUILT TO  
SPILL.

*Treat Her Like A Showcat* was produced by Cracker's David Lowery, and his imprint is clear: Much of the Seymores' second album sounds like a jangler *Key Lime Pie*. Which is to say this is likable stuff. The Seymores ride along on the straightforward pop songs of its two songwriters, guitarists David Fera and Joe Nio. Their songs strike an easy balance, though Fera's songs are the catchier, happier ones (with the exception of "Sublease You," an out-of-place speed number that sticks out like a coarse hair); it helps that Fera's got a smooth voice that often echoes Lowery's. Nio writes songs that are a little wimpier but equally compelling. It's a pleasure to listen to the plucky "Courtin' Days," and softly observant ballads, like "The Buses Are Running," which glides along a lovely piano part and Fera's earnest singing. "X-Ray" nails down that sinking relationship nausea with its simple, affecting chorus ("X-ray vision/I'm still listening/To your bitching/What in the world has/Gone wrong?") and swirly, *Big Express*-era XTC synths. The Seymores have the right idea, and *Treat Her Like A Showcat* would make a congenial member of most any pop rock record collection.

&gt;&gt;&gt; Anne Marie Cruz

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## SONIC YOUTH

**A Thousand Leaves**  
DGC

The Sonic Youth of today is a many-splendored thing. The band that braved the arbiters of high culture at New York's Lincoln Center last winter is also the band that in the past year self-released three roiling EPs of certifiably out-there noise. And lest we forget, it is also the band that regularly cranks out parcels of splendid rock 'n' roll, a flow set apart from all the tangents and side projects, yet fed by them as well. Recent SY albums seem to follow a cycle: A hard-rocking record tends to be followed by a more spacious and introspective one. True to form, after 1995's *Washing Machine* comes *A Thousand Leaves*, the band's most melodic, if not entirely song-oriented, effort since *Daydream Nation*. The dense core of *A Thousand Leaves* is a group of big-idea songs that sow mysticism in their lyrics and spin the mood out into extended jams. The most evocative of these is "Hits Of Sunshine (For Allen Ginsburg)," which channels the poet in stanzas of pastoral bliss. But it's the stellar, concentrated ensemble playing of Lee Ranaldo's "Karen Koltrane" that will likely remind fans why they continue to follow SY through every experiment and personality shift. More consistently than any other current band, Sonic Youth demonstrates that the beauty of pure guitar rock is far from played out. >>> *Andrea Moed*



RELEASE DATE:  
MAY 12.  
FILE UNDER:  
OLD-SCHOOL NEW YORK  
ART ROCK.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
EARLY PATTI SMITH, VELVET  
UNDERGROUND, MAGIC  
HOUR.

## SOUL ASYLUM

**Candy From A Stranger**  
Columbia

Remember Soul Asylum's last album? No, not the one with "Runaway Train," the one after that. *Let Your Dim Light Shine* was so forgettable that news of the band's 11th album may arouse little more than a disinterested grunt from those who would previously have wet their pants at the thought of a new record from their favorite Minneapolis rock group. Hold your grunt for now: *Candy From A Stranger* finds Soul Asylum finally getting comfortable in its older skin and beginning to reconcile its original loud, fast rules with its current taste for mellow, alt-country-tinged fare. Dave Pirner's familiar rasp isn't quite so venomous these days, but there's a new warmth to his voice on songs like "Close" and "Blood Into Wine." On "The Game" he sounds a lot like Paul Westerberg does on his solo material, rhyming "makes me feel like I should, I guess" with "hey, that's a pretty dress." But, alongside the album's more, uh, mature tunes, Pirner and his bandmates assert their vitality with a few really good rock numbers. "I Will Still Be Laughing" is this album's "Somebody To Shove"; its jabs and hooks are landed with the same joyful spirit that made *Hang Time* a winner. The band may no longer be blowing the screens off its stacks but that's all right. A kinder, gentler Soul Asylum is still worth a pants' soiling—metaphorically speaking, of course. >>> *Jenny Eliscu*

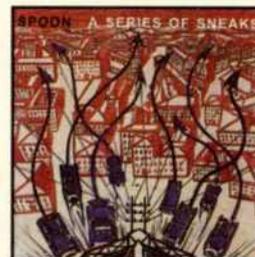


RELEASE DATE:  
MAY 12.  
FILE UNDER:  
TWIN CITIES ROCK, WITH  
WRINKLES.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
REPLACEMENTS' DON'T  
TELL A SOUL, GOO GOO  
DOLLS, SON VOLT.

## SPOON

**A Series Of Sneaks**  
Elektra

As gimmicks go, Spoon's is relatively unimpressive: Brit Daniel strums out his melodic rock mini-masterpieces on an acoustic, rather than an electric, guitar. But you'd never know it. The Texas trio's angular and accessible songs, most of which flash by in three minutes or less, strike with a post-punk vengeance. On *A Series Of Sneaks*, Spoon's major-label follow-up to an album and EP on Matador, Daniel exhibits a remarkable ability to pump out stripped-down anthems that would sound great, as one 90-second song puts it, on a "Car Radio." His predilection for meta-music carries over to two other fine tracks, the searing rave-up "The Guest List/The Execution" and a comparably mellow toe-tapper, "Advance Cassette." Spoon makes scant effort to embellish its sound, maintaining the no-nonsense rhythms and minimalist vocals of its earlier output, save for a low-in-the-mix organ and some canny handclaps. On tracks like "30 Gallon Tank" and "Metal Detektor," the band is so succinct as to operate solely with a basic drumbeat, a fuzzed-out, repetitive guitar riff and Daniel's snarling vocals. With 14 new songs and the kind of disarming talents that would make most bands seethe with jealousy, Spoon is a distinctive master of American punk-pop. >>> *Richard Martin*



RELEASE DATE:  
APRIL 28.  
FILE UNDER:  
URGENT, ANGULAR  
PUNK-POP.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
CHISEL, PIXIES, GUIDED BY  
VOICES.

## STEGOSAURUS

**Stegosaurus**  
Reprise

Stegosaurus brings pop rock and an extra Y chromosome to the "no depression" gene pool. Anchored by the solid singing of Jesse Rhodes (who sounds much like Scott Weiland during his Stone Temple Pilot incarnation), this band of unknowns from Santa Barbara, California (whose guitar licks also sound much like STP's), have put together an interestingly aggressive, though spotty, first album. Having roped in producer Adam Kasper (Soundgarden) and Soundgarden's Matt Cameron to play shakers and tambourines, Stegosaurus is essentially a countrified STP. For the most part, it works. It doesn't work, however, when the band aims solely for post-metal hard rock. "Go Cart Man," for instance, goes nowhere with its pure aggro and its annoying vocal distortions. The limp "Time Is Wine" doesn't work too well, either. On the other hand, winners like "Candy," a power pop number that crackles with warmth and lively guitar strumming, are sprinkled throughout the album. "At The Water" starts out sounding like an introspective Counting Crows ballad—Rhodes even affects a more nasal, Adam Duritz twang for the occasion—before the band rocks out with a guitar-driven power that STP's DeLeo brothers would be proud of. If Stegosaurus figures out that it should stick to its blend of aggression and alt-country, then its post-eponymous work ought to be really good. >>> *Anne Marie Cruz*



RELEASE DATE:  
MAY 12.  
FILE UNDER:  
ALT-COUNTRY, WITH AN  
EXTRA Y CHROMOSOME.  
R.I.Y.L.:  
STONE TEMPLE PILOTS,  
PEARL JAM, EAGLES.

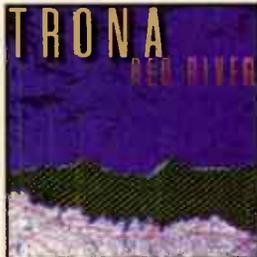
## TRONA

**Red River**

**CherryDisc-Roadrunner**

Depending on your point of view, the music of Boston foursome Trona is either cannily designed to appeal to fans of '80s rock or quaintly out of touch. Picture members of X and the B-52's forming a Blasters cover band circa 1985, and you've got Trona pegged. Sounds appealing, doesn't it? *Red River*, Trona's effortlessly catchy second album, is driving, occasionally country-influenced rock charged with energy and graced with melody. Much of the latter comes from the harmonizing of singer/guitarists Mary Ellen Leahy and Chris Dyas, who clearly want to rock out but are equally motivated to write remarkable songs. The beautiful folk-rock of "Red River," the pounding rockabilly of "Sail Into The Storm," and the lissome lounge pop of "Know Too Well" show more versatility on one album than most bands exhibit in a career. At the same time, Trona's tunes are not overly ambitious. "Driving Record" is about not driving fast to impress someone, while "Johnny Quick" is a reflection on rock 'n' roll mortality inspired by the forgotten drummer of Bill Haley And His Comets. Think of Trona's blend of punchy rock and wary lyrics as a compromise between youthful rebellion and patriarchal wisdom. An ode to TV's famed hawk of oldies mixes, "Time Life" sums up the ethos neatly: "I don't need your nostalgia," protests Leahy, "I've got my own."

>>> *Chris Molanphy*



**RELEASE DATE:**

APRIL 21.

**FILE UNDER:**

SUGARY POP ROCK.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

BLASTERS, B-52'S, X.

## TUATARA

**Trading With The Enemy**

**Epic**

You might as well call R.E.M. a Peter Buck side project now. Tuatara, the instrumental combo he's been noodling in (between collaborating on records by the Minus 5 and Mark Eitzel), has cranked out two records in just over a year. Buck's acoustic strums and minimal electric riffing, however, are way down the list of what makes up Tuatara's deceptive slither. Again, it's drummer Barrett Martin and sax man Skerik way out in front leading the groove. Martin's liberal use of worldly percussion (gongs, marimba, African djembe, etc.) atop a standard drum kit never warps the tracks into hippy-style global jams; rather, he's crafted a fierce percussive orchestra that hearkens back to bad-ass spy themes from the '60s. Skerik, along with Los Lobos horn man Steve Berlin, has no trouble bleating bold beatnik lines all over the exotic rhythms, their taught horn harmonies dodging between post-cool jazz and hot-buttered soul. Before you can get a handle on what the combo may be up to, Tuatara applies an Afro-Caribbean twist midway through on the juju-inspired "Fela The Conqueror." Tuatara does best when the tempos are high and the sound is big; the cooler, loungy tracks just don't have the fire. Still, this is a record worthy of your pre-millennial bachelor pad hi-fi.

>>> *Steve Ciabattini*



**RELEASE DATE:**

MAY 26.

**FILE UNDER:**

EXOTIC NOIR.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

MORPHINE, GASTR DEL SOL, PELL MELL, SPY FLICK MUSIC.



HAYDEN THE CLERK I GET  
THE NEW ALBUM FEATURING  
"THE HAZARDS OF SITTING  
BENEATH PALM TREES"

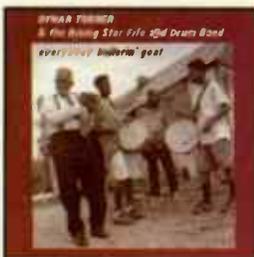
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## OTHAR TURNER & THE RISING STAR FIFE AND DRUM BAND

**Everybody Hollerin' Goat**  
Birdman

The trance blues of Othar Turner, 90-year-old living master of the cane fife, is fine, raw, beautiful and pure. *Everybody Hollerin' Goat* is real, ritual, ecstatic sound. It is heavy and rocking and it will make you shake your ass. Borne of a small, simple wind instrument carved from sugar cane, a flute-like sound pierces the air. Soon the fife's trill melodies take flight, making improvisational dances to tunes centuries old or thought up that day. A booming bass drum and one or two contrapuntal snares keep more than the time—they thump like Miami bass and stir the soul like heavy Burundi drumming. The African connection is real: This is the most African-sounding roots music to have survived the widespread outlaw of drums throughout slavery. *Everybody Hollerin' Goat* is no mere document, it's vital music. A mixture of young and old, black and white, the Rising Star Band has learned a lot from Turner. One of the most accomplished players is an eight-year-old relative who blows the classic "Shimmy She Wobble" like nobody's business. This loving document, recorded over a five-year period, captures the context, the grace and the intensity of this magnificent, nearly lost sound.



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MARCH 17.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
DEEP, RHYTHMIC, COUNTRY BLUES.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
ALAN LOMAX'S SOUTHERN JOURNEY SERIES, FRED MCDOWELL, ALBERT AYLER.

>>> Mike McGonigal

## THE URGE <sup>CD</sup>

**Master Of Styles**  
Epic

A "hyphen" band—a ska-punk-hardcore lineup, for example—runs the risk of musical confusion rather than cohesiveness, a misguided attempt to be all things to all people. That's not the case, however, with St. Louis septet The Urge. On its second Epic album, *The Urge* combines sounds from funk to punk to reggae, and it's successful thanks in large part to the one constant: the mellifluous, adaptable voice of Steve Ewing. "Jump Right In," the album's premiere single, features 311's Nick Hexum on guest vocals, but the song is so memorable and catchy that the cachet of a celeb singer is almost superfluous. Despite a resemblance to 311's "Down," The Urge's "Closer" is a wonderful, soaring song, with a piano interlude and Ewing's almost-sweet voice balanced with a hint of reggae and a dynamic approach. Other winning cuts include "My Apology" and "Straight To Hell," the latter's rap verses and aggressive rock chorus combining for a surprisingly natural, if Rage Against The Machine-like effect. Although *The Urge* succeeds on its more hardcore fare, that's not where the band shines brightest. With two trombones and a sax rounding out the guitar/bass/drums combo, and more styles than Bloomingdale's, *The Urge* could easily turn into a ball of confusion. Fortunately, the LP's moniker proves to be a nicely self-fulfilling prophecy.



**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 21.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
SKA-PUNK-HARDCORE.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
BAD BRAINS, MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES, 311, LIVING COLOUR.

>>> Katherine Tirman

## VAST <sup>CD</sup>

**Visual Audio Sensory Theater**  
Elektra

Rock really doesn't change that much from decade to decade—signifiers like production values, thematic subjects and wardrobes are in constant flux, but the fundamentals remain quite the same. (Don't believe me? Try singing the lyrics from "Smells Like Teen Spirit" on top of "More Than a Feeling.") VAST is a fine example of this: It's a band that sounds exciting and up-to-the-minute, thanks to some fascinating window-dressing applied to fairly standard-issue thud-rock. The selling point to *Visual Audio Sensory Theater* is that it's one of the first places anyone has taken the currently fashionable sampling of ancient/"authentic" musical sources (liturgical chants, Moroccan pipe music, Pygmy vocalists), ripped it from its usual yuppie chill-out-music setting, and used it to provide shading and subtlety to big, riff-heavy rock. It often seems that VAST has learned more from the likes of Deep Forest's bogus multiculturalism than from the original sources, but the samples, combined with acoustic passages and keyboards, still lend a heavily textured, high-gloss feel to the songs. VAST's sole member, 21-year-old John Crosby, already has a strong command of loud/soft dynamics—and an arena-filling voice often reminiscent of Bono's. The songwriting, especially the guilt-filled teen-angst lyrics, isn't quite up to speed yet, but Crosby's potential does seem, well, vast.



**RELEASE DATE:**  
APRIL 28.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
EARNEST, EPIC-SCALE ROCK.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
U2, DEEP FOREST, LED ZEPPELIN'S "KASHMIR."

>>> David Jarman

## VERSUS

**Two Cents Plus Tax**  
Caroline

Versus, which started out as a brainy indie-pop trio five years ago, completes its evolution into a sophisticated rock act with its third full-length, *Two Cents Plus Tax*. Guitarist Richard Baluyut and bassist Fontaine Touns know how to vary tempo without altering mood, and they expand their band's sonic territory to include a country hymn, "Spastic Reaction," and a salsa-informed tune, "Jack 'N' Jill," among the array of glistening melodic songs. A cursory listen suggests that the two songwriters' vocabularies are running dry, as there are more than a few predictable rhyme schemes ("bed/head," "night/right," and so on). Despite this limitation, Baluyut and Touns somehow improve on their already expansive vocal range, both as individuals and as a duet. They also develop naturalistic and romantic themes in their songs, often matching them to the composition. On "Radar Follows You," Versus works an aquatic musical motif as Baluyut sings of a relationship that's lost at sea. He and his brother James are gloriously in-sync as guitarists, able to convey intricate textures in a brisk pop song like "Underground" or conjure a stuttering call-and-response juxtaposition in the brooding and noisy closer "Mouth Of Heaven II." *Two Cents* is Versus's most complex record, and one that rewards both longtime fans and those who seek new music that takes risks.



**RELEASE DATE:**  
MAY 5.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
ROMANTIC POWER-POP.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
CONTAINE, BUTTERGLORY, MELODIC SONIC YOUTH SONGS.

>>> Richard Martin



## fastball

>>> *Continued from page 21*

measure of freedom afforded by the band's not-quite-dire circumstances ultimately gave Zuniga, Scalzo and drummer Joey Shuffield a sense of something few struggling bands ever feel: self-determination. "I just felt so connected to the songs I wrote," he continues. "I felt so like they're such a little personal statement. I just wanted to be sure that they came out the way that I demoed or heard them. That was my main concern. Because I didn't care if we failed. If we failed, I wanted to fail exactly the way I wanted to. I wanted to do the perfect swan dive off the roof onto the concrete. My swan dive. Not yours. Not anyone's."

"I think it's funny that your take on that whole situation was almost exactly opposite to mine," Scalzo counters. "Mine was: 'Give it up.' Give it up and let [producer Julian Raymond] do his thing, let you guys do your thing. Quit stomping my feet and saying it's gotta be like this, it's gotta be like that."

Zuniga pauses just enough to allow Scalzo his interjection and then picks up where he left off. "I was really just trying to nail the way I was feeling. And I wasn't even worried about if the band would want to play it. I hadn't really taken the pulse of the band, but I was spending a lot of time when we weren't touring just sitting around..."

"And it appears we were all on the same page," Scalzo interrupts with a slight sense of satisfaction. "Whatever we were feeling came out, whether we wanted it to or not."

For now, Scalzo and Zuniga appear comfortable with the uncanny way partners can wind up at the same place coming from different directions. (Described by those around the band as the solid one who holds the group together, Shuffield is apparently the strong, silent type—his interview cameo consists of a wave hello followed

by a pantomimed phone-call-to-make gesture.) But then again, everything is a little easier these days, when the cockeyed optimism of "The Way" is probably more in tune with where the band is headed than are lyrics like "It's a nowhere road, and I'm tired" or the album's title.

"I wish I had something to complain about, but I don't," Zuniga says with a slight grin that might or might not be a reaction to his squinting into the warm late afternoon sun. Scalzo is looking ahead to the band's show, expecting it to be filled with the usual industry types in town for this week's South By Southwest conference, and in no way envisioning handfuls of kids furtively ripping posters of the band off the shed-like club's walls and making for the door with an "all right, we got 'em, let's go."

"Now that we got everybody's attention, we can actually perform for them, and it's feeling pretty good lately, too."

END

## don't look back in anger

>>> *Continued from page 23*

space-age keyboards, with Brown himself playing most of the instruments. It is, however, a quantum leap from his days with the Roses.

Why did such beloved sons bite the dust? There's no easy answer, Brown says. "But I think the main reason was, we caught the manager stealing money in '91, and we were in Hollywood with a Hollywood label [Geffen] and we didn't have a manager. So we fell apart and those people were able to get in between us. Afterwards, I felt like shit, because I thought the Roses had achieved a *lot*—we'd come from backstreets and gone 'round the world." The schism—precipitated by guitarist John Squire's unexpected departure three years later—is still something of a mystery to

Brown. "I still don't know the reason why John *did* leave," he murmurs. "He never told me, he just said he was finished, finished in the music business, told me he was a phony."

A week after his departure, Squire announced the formation of his new group, the Seahorses. Brown was stunned. "I thought, 'Wow! I've known this kid for a long time, and he's prepared to be so ruthless and treat me this way. I'd rather wash me hands of the whole thing.' I felt like everything we'd done was a waste of time." Initially, Brown wanted nothing more to do with the industry. But friends spurred him on. "And also, kids kept coming up to me and saying, 'Look, the Seahorses are crap. When are *you* gonna do something? You're Ian Brown—just *do* it!' So I thought, 'Yeah! I'll have a go!' And I developed myself in the winter of '96. I decided, 'I'm going to no bars, no clubs, nowhere—I'm stayin' in until I've got at least 10 or 12 good tunes!'"

Brown bought a Bob Marley songbook and taught himself acoustic chords. From there, he moved to Fender bass. After becoming comfortable with that, he challenged himself with a Jupiter 8 keyboard and a drum machine. Then he committed most of his song ideas to home eight-track, and later expanded them to 24 tracks in a proper studio. "I tried to learn something new every day," he's pleased to report. "And I think what I did was, I kinda went inside myself and there was something there and it just, well, came out."

Brown hasn't spoken to Squire since his departure. Chadwick believes that he and his old Love-mates might one day get together for a drink and admit defeat. *Maybe*. And Butler—after enduring countless Suede-launched barbs in the tabloid press—has no plans of palling around with the vindictive Anderson anytime soon. It's Butler who has the final word on the rags-to-riches-to-rags-again saga: "I don't want to have grudges. No

>>> *Continued on page 55*

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>>> *Continued from page 54*  
 matter what people who've passed through my life may say in their memoirs, I'll be the first to say that if I hadn't met Brett Anderson when I was 19, I would not be here today. That is a fact, and I would never take that away from him.

"And that reflects the whole album, really—the fact that I should be able to admit that I'm disappointed, I've failed, I've fucked it up, but yet these are *great* things. These are important things to get out in the open and be honest about, because if I *don't* fuck up, I'm not going to succeed. And if I *don't* do something badly, I'm never going to learn to do it well!"

END

## tortoise

>>> *Continued from page 25*

Jeff Parker, who plays jazz with the New Horizons Ensemble and the Chicago Underground Orchestra. With Parker, Tortoise multi-instrumentalists Dan Bitney and John Herndon joined with the CUO's horn section, Rob Mazurek and Sarah P. Smith, to form the neo-fusion ensemble, *Isotope 217*; and both Mazurek and Smith contributed to *TNT*. But Tortoise's interest in jazz isn't as strange or dilettantish as it might seem. It's not the tradition of swinging rhythms or hot solos that attracts the band to Chicago's jazz community. Rather, it's the tradition of the Art Ensemble Of Chicago and its compatriots in the Association For The Advancement Of Creative Musicians (of which Parker is a member), who eschewed established jazz song structures and individualism for a more understated collective exploration of texture, timbre, sound and space. And that characterization is as suitable as any for what Tortoise has been up to from the beginning.

But Tortoise's voracious eclecticism won't settle into any one genre. The group has also recently worked with reigning Chicago House DJ

Derrick Carter, who will release a remix of material from *TNT* on Bitney and Herndon's New Beyond imprint. It seems that anything and everything is fair game for this outfit. Post-rock? Post-jazz? Post-dance? In the age of postmodernism, such boundaries become increasingly harder to maintain, and the best music is likely to be all of these. Where does that leave Tortoise? "Confused," McEntire replies, "which, in some ways, is a good way to be."

"People expect everything to be so obvious," Parker adds. "But life isn't like that, so why should music be like that?"

END

## money mark

>>> *Continued from page 29*

clavinet with a wah-wah pedal on it."

The resulting success of *Check Your Head* and its successor, *Ill Communication*, brought a whirlwind of touring opportunities for Nishita, who jumped at the chance but eventually burned out. "I was having a hard time dealing with it," he confesses, and admits he realized, "I would rather be in my room making music than having to tour." Even so, Nishita will tour again later this year, with his own band as well as with the Beastie Boys.

When he's not making music in his room, Nishita is probably prowling pawn shops and flea markets in search of gear, or playing in the studio with the likes of Jon Spencer, Beck, Mary Lou Lord, Mike Watt, the Dust Brothers or Sean Lennon, all of whom he's worked with recently. "He's always in the studio," says Nishita's manager, Robert Bennett. "Asking him to work is like asking a kid to come over and play in the sandbox." In his spare time, Nishita collects transformers—the device that transfers electric energy from one circuit to another, not the popular toy—and has begun to create his own instruments.

"Nobody knows about them yet," he offers

quietly, "but I've been inventing some keyboards and building power amps, converting junk into something electronic."

END

CD "Hand In Your Head" by Money Mark appears on this month's CD

## garbage

>>> *Continued from page 35*

good ways. I'm not necessarily saying that it's all bad. Sometimes the negative things in life can totally propel you forward. So I have no regrets. I'm not sitting here singing "Poor little me," because I have had an *amazing* life. NMM: But beneath all this, it seems like—correct me if I'm wrong—all you've ever wanted was to be loved. How did you finally allow yourself to be loved?

SM: I don't even see it in those terms. I think I was always constantly wondering "Is there somebody out there like me?" And I think that's certainly why I became a musician—you're throwing things out to see if somebody's gonna echo back and say "I feel *exactly* the same!" I think it's to do with loneliness. I think you're looking for an echo—it's about recognition, about reassurance, and about affirmation. I think that's what music's all about.

NMM: What did you find that echo in as a kid?

SM: I *didn't* find it. And that's why I think I woke up as a teenager and felt really angry, because I suddenly realized I didn't feel it. So I looked for it in other things, and that's what drove me to become a member of a band. And actually singing? I think it came from desperation and fear. I just got to the point in my life where I thought, "You know what? If I don't get this together, I'm *outta* here. I'm gonna have to go back and work in a clothes store." And I didn't want to do that, so that's what finally drove me to be able to write in a band and be a participant in music.

END

John Scofield  
guitars

Billy Martin  
drums

John Medeski  
keyboards

Chris Wood  
basses

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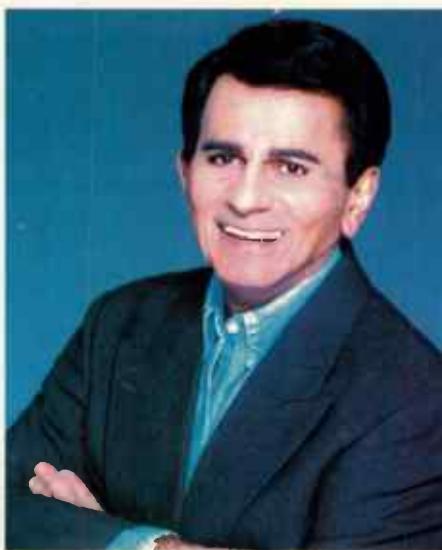
# casey's solid gold top 40

MUSIC CHARTS: IS THERE ANY HOBBY MORE NERDY, SHORT OF STAR TREK? WHAT THE PHRASE "LIVE LONG AND PROSPER" WAS TO MOST SOCIALLY INEPT TEENAGERS, "NUMBER ONE WITH A BULLET" WAS TO ME IN THE '80S. THAT WAS A GREAT TIME FOR POP TRIVIA, AND FOR TRIVIAL POP ¶ I GREW UP IN A TWO-FAMILY HOUSE IN BROOKLYN. MY THREE TEENAGED COUSINS, WHO LIVED WITH MY AUNT AND UNCLE IN THE DOWNSTAIRS APARTMENT, EXPOSED ME IN THE LATE '70S TO KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND, THE *GREASE* SOUNDTRACK, DONNA SUMMER'S ENDLESS COVER OF "MACARTHUR PARK," AND THE ENTIRE BEE GEES OEUVERE; THEY PLAYED RECORDS LOUD ENOUGH TO BE HEARD UPSTAIRS, BECKONING MY LITTLE SISTER AND ME TO COME DOWNSTAIRS AND DANCE.

All that disco and dancing led where such things inevitably did at that time: *Solid Gold*, which debuted on television in 1980. Here were people dressed in gold lamé, cavorting to the same 45s my cousins were purchasing, and looking fairly determined about it. *Solid Gold* became my secret passion: Rare is the show so unhip that even a nine-year-old can't admit to liking it.

The innovation of *Solid Gold*, as far as nine-year-old me was concerned, was that it combined the dancing with a weekly chart. TV's precursors to *Solid Gold*, including *American Bandstand* and *Soul Train*, featured a chart, but didn't make the countdown the focus of the show the way *Solid Gold* did: What would be number one? I have since realized that the "Solid Gold Top 10" was fairly arbitrary, as the producers had to tape the show weeks in advance and project which breaking records would later make the top 10. (They assumed anything Olivia Newton-John recorded was hit material.) Still, at that tender age, *Solid Gold* was my music bible. If a song was writhed to by the dancers at the end of the show, it was an undeniable, red-white-and-blue hit.

I first stumbled across Casey Kasem on television a short while later, catching the half-hour *America's Top 10* between Saturday morning cartoons. On the radio, he hosted "American Top 40," a four-hour smorgasbord of all things hit-related. By late '83, I was glued to my radio every Sunday for all four hours. The radio show also kept you from having to see Kasem's frightening hair-helmet. As Kasem would remind us, in that robotically warm voice, his shows counted down the hits according to the pop authority, *Billboard* magazine, and its Hot



100 chart. Brooklyn lacked cable TV in the early '80s, making MTV an impossibility for me, and the charts a necessity if I wanted to talk the talk in junior high. The quantification of rock songs' popularity gave me a vocabulary for interacting with my peers. They liked Madonna, I liked Madonna; what did it matter if I knew a little too much about the chart moves of "Borderline"?

Nostalgia inspires people of all ages to call their teenage and preteen years the best time for music—baby-boomers being the most vigilant—but I would argue that the early '80s were an especially fun time to be a pop-single fan. From Grandmaster Flash to Dexy's Midnight Runners, great flippy-floppy records were hitting the charts every week.

By the summer of 1984, I was listening to Casey Kasem religiously—I would even take my Walkman on grocery runs so I wouldn't miss a

hit. It was a great summer for hits: Prince's "When Doves Cry" sat atop a top 10 populated by his protégée Sheila E., Tina Turner, Bananarama, John Waite and Bruce Springsteen. This music, however disposable (and in many cases, surprisingly enduring), formed the backbone of my adolescence and explains my ongoing love for preening British pop. I defy anyone my age to claim they were actually listening to *Zen Arcade* in 1984. If you were just approaching high school then, chances are Simple Minds meant more to you than Hüsker Dü.

The early '80s may be the last time the pop-music audience was united, before black and white listeners again diverged, and radio "narrowcasting" meant 25-year-olds and 35-year-olds would never again listen to the same music. Casey Kasem now counts down the top adult-contemporary radio hits because radio stations don't want to play the hip-hop records that now pepper the top 40. The success of the movie *The Wedding Singer* and its hit soundtrack album shows the music of my generation endures, albeit as cheap nostalgia. A list of 222 '80s song lyrics circulating on the Internet (sample: "Dark in the city, night is a wire") has become a party-game obsession among 20-somethings. Maybe current teenagers will reminisce ten years from now about No Doubt and Puff Daddy. Somehow, though, I think everybody's memories of the '90s will be scattershot.

I find it tragic that these young'uns will never know the joy of Casey Kasem uniting them behind the country's Number One song, just before he instructs them to keep their feet on the ground and keep reaching for the stars.

END



BY TIM HASLETT

**The** Detroit bass sound finally seems to be moving beyond Motor City limits to infect new populations not prepared for its overwhelming power. Borrowing generously from its conceptual kissing cousin, Miami bass, the Detroit variation does away with the excessively misogynistic clichés of the Floridian material. The music of **Aux 88**, while still heavily indebted to the sounds of electro, such as Afrika Bambaataa's "Planet Rock," moves beyond the Detroit trinity and old-school electro-funk into a territory more menacing and a lot more funky. Aux 88's *ReProgramming The Machine* EP (Direct Beat) is not created for an audience that spends time debating the finer points of so-called "intelligent dance music" or trading playing cards of the global techno elite. This is made for Jeeps, Pathfinders and sound systems loud enough to cut concrete. "I Need To Freak" reanimates an injunction that goes back as far as landmark tracks like "Dial-A-Freak" by Uncle Jamm's Army and Sexual Harassment's "I Need A Freak," which speak to the general need to rock the body. "Break It Down" relies heavily on the 808 kick-drum, and it's remixed here by Will Web and Octave One, who reorganize the track from the inside out but retain the trunk-of-funk aesthetic that drives this EP. This one is strictly for the bassheads... In a field that remains sadly masculinist in its tone and range of producers, it is always reassuring to find that somebody is interested in releasing a collection of music not made by men, to put it bluntly. Such a creature has arrived in the form of **Songs Of The Siren**, a collection featuring 12 tracks of mid- to down-tempo music sung by, if not produced by, the genre's female constituency. Among the many wonderful moments here are Jhelisa's "Everybody Jump Off," with its sprightly sax licks and nimble breakbeats, and Shantel's "Here She Comes," which comes straight out of the active Parisian underground, brimming with Godard soundtrack touches and plenty of perfectly timed strings.

## BLACK JAZZ CHRONICLES

### Future JuJu

NuPhonic (UK)

A thorough survey of the complex and shifting world of British dance music of the past ten years would reveal the name Ashley Beedle more times than you might expect. Beedle was part of the now infamous X-Press 2—which, it could be argued, set in motion the current big beat phenomenon—and the Ballistic Brothers, as well as half-a-dozen other projects, and his fecund imagination and mixing-deck prowess have become legendary among not only his peers but also those on both sides of the Atlantic who value richly textured electronic music informed by an astonishing array of influences. With his first solo full-length record, Beedle has fashioned an album of extraordinary depth and vision, which moves effortlessly across the contemporary musical terrain, in and out of the interstices and fissures that open up when house, techno, jazz and drum 'n' bass collapse into one another. That *Future JuJu* is dedicated to the recently deceased Nigerian legend Fela Kuti is really no surprise. Beedle's artistic dexterity is comparable to Fela's insofar as he takes music in whatever direction the spirit moves him. Thus, Beedle moves gracefully from "New Orleans," an homage to the Meters, to the '70s Blue Note-inspired "The World Will Rock." "One Bad Morning," which completes the record, is where Sun Ra meets Juan Atkins and Cecil Taylor in Beedle's hyperactive musical imagination. This album is going to make a lot of people very happy.



## dance

## top 25



- 1 AIR  
Moon Safari / Source-Caroline
- 2 DJ SHADOW  
Preemptive Strike / Mo Wax/Hrr-London
- 3 DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID  
Synthetic Fury (EP) / Asphodel
- 4 GOLDIE  
Saturnzreturn / Hrr-London
- 5 LORD RUNNINGCLAM  
Fun For The Whole Family /  
Bottom Heavy-Moonshine
- 6 TERRY LEE BROWN JR.  
Chocolate Chords / Plastic City-UCMG
- 7 PROPELLERHEADS  
Decksandrumsandrokkandroll / DreamWorks
- 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Best Of Kram: Thee Underground Kingdom /  
Kram
- 9 PURPLE PENGUIN  
De-Tuned / Cup Of Tea-Iron America
- 10 RONI SIZE/REPAZENT  
New Forms / Tatkin' Loud-Mercury
- 11 HAWKE  
Namaquadisco / Sunburn
- 12 DIMITRI FROM PARIS  
Sacrebleu / Atlantik
- 13 STEVE STOLL  
The Blunted Boy Wonder / NoveMute-Mute
- 14 DJ? ACUCRACK  
Nation State (EP) / Slipdisc
- 15 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
The Law Of The Land / Thrive-Sire
- 16 BIOPSY  
Cervix State Sequences / DSBP
- 17 VELVET ACID CHRIST  
Church Of Acid / Pendragon
- 18 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Deutscher Funk / Caipirinha
- 19 WUMPS CUT  
Born Again / Metropolis
- 20 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
No Categories: A Ubiquity Compilation /  
Ubiquity
- 21 C-TEC  
Darker / Wax Trax!-TVT
- 22 GARY NUMAN  
Exile / Cleopatra
- 23 CEVIN KEY  
Music For Cats / Metropolis
- 24 ADAM F  
Colours / Astralwerks-Caroline
- 25 TOWA TEI  
Sound Museum / Elektra-EEG

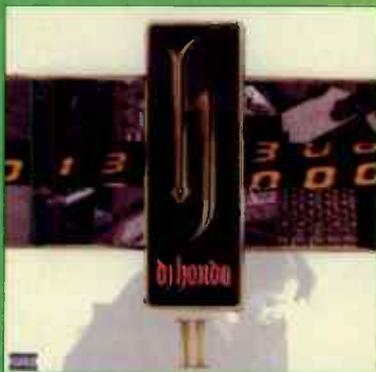
Compiled from **CMJ New Music Release's** weekly RPM charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

BY BRIAN COLEMAN

## hip-hop top 25

- 1 GANG STARR  
"Royally" / Noo Trybe-Virgin
- 2 MOS DEF, Q-TIP & TASH  
"Body Rock" / Rawkus
- 3 SOUNDTRACK  
Bulworth / Interscope
- 4 BUSTA RHYMES  
When Disaster Strikes... / Elektra-EEG
- 5 CAPPADONNA  
"Run" / Epic
- 6 LOX  
Money, Power & Respect / Bad Boy-Arista
- 7 KILLAH PRIEST  
HeavyMental / DGC
- 8 RAKIM  
"Guess Who's Back"/The 18th Letter / Universal
- 8 CANNIBUS  
"Second Round Knockout" / Universal
- 10 SOUNDTRACK  
Caught Up / Noo Trybe-Virgin
- 11 ONYX  
Shut 'Em Down / Def Jam-PG
- 12 LORD TARIQ & PETER GUNZ  
"Deja Vu" / Codeine
- 13 COCOA BROVAZ  
"Black Trump" / Duck Down-Priority
- 14 BLACK EYED PEAS  
Fallin' Up (12" EP) / Interscope
- 15 DMX  
"Get Me A Dog" / Def Jam
- 16 COMMON  
One Day It'll All Make Sense / Relativity
- 17 ZPAC  
Nothing To Lose / Jive
- 18 JAY-Z  
In My Lifetime, Vol. 1 / Roc-A-Fella/  
Def Jam-Priority
- 19 DAS EFX  
Generation EFX / EastWest/Elektra-EEG
- 20 DJ HONDA  
Dn The Mic / Relativity
- 21 LUNZ AND REDMAN  
"Hypnotized" / Noo Trybe-Virgin
- 22 RUFUS BLAQ  
"Dutta Slight" / Tommy Boy
- 23 MASTER P  
"Make U Say Ughh" / No Limit-Priority
- 24 JOHN FORTE  
"Hot" / Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 25 MASE  
Harlem World / Bad Boy-Arista

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



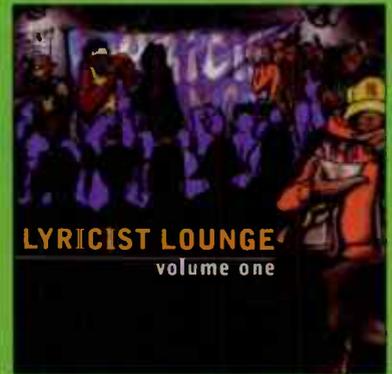
# LYRICIST LOUNGE

## VOLUME ONE

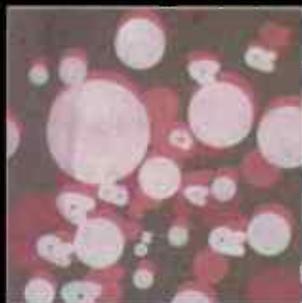
### Various Artists

Open Mic-Rawkus

This new offering is an ambitious outing, to say the least. First off, the people at Open Mic and Rawkus Records have brought together the best underground rappers and poets from New York City that they could find—the less well-known, the better—packing two CDs full of incredible stuff. And on top of that, they have made it a tribute to New York's famed "Lyricist Lounge" nights, the sporadic, nomadic hip-hop free-for-alls that have kept the city's underground scene thriving since 1991. With most other parties this could have turned out a terrible mess, or at least a supreme letdown. But Rawkus is clearly on a do-no-wrong streak right now. *Lyricist Lounge Volume One* is divided into two portions—one "hosted" by De La Soul, the other by Kool Keith and Sir Menelik—and the music here is over two dozen shots of pure, undiluted underground brilliance, with a roster of "next shit" luminaries almost too vast to list. Superfresh standouts: Saul Williams's poetry-drenched "Ohm," Talib Kweli's "The Manifesto," the Indelible MC's brutal "Weight," Sarah Jones's "Blood" and Word A' Mouth's "Famous Last Words." But everything here is really too damn amazing to pass up for anyone even remotely interested in what hip-hop will sound like in the year 2001.



It's been about three years since **DAS EFX** has blessed the world with a new side of lyrical niceness, but *Generation EFX* (EastWest-Elektra) shows that its time off hasn't dulled the group's sharp edges and dope flows. Das EFX's trademark rapid-fire, tongue-twisting styles are still there, but the album is also marked with lyrical methods that place the band more clearly alongside some of today's ruling MCs. The album's great production work by a posse including Parrish "PMD" Smith, Rashad Smith, Angel "8-Off" Aguilar and Solid Scheme is keenly evident on tracks like "Generation EFX" (with an excellent "Eye Of The Tiger" loop), "Rap Scholar" (featuring Redman), the Man Parrish-ified "Set It Off" and "Raw Breed." The EFX boys have made a great record that is solid all the way through, and succeeds as a damn catchy album that isn't "pop" by a long shot... **DJ Honda**'s new sophomore effort, *H II* (Relativity), proves that he is one of the most consistent new track masters on the scene, mixing and matching catchy over- and underground tracks with an impressive list of rappers, both known (KRS-One, De La Soul, Keith Murray, Beatnuts) and up-and-coming (Black Attack, Problemz, Mos Def, Al Tariq, S-On and Doe-V). Although he rarely goes out on a limb with his tracks, instead choosing to stay with solid, catchy, slicker fare, his pop sensibilities and undeniable production skills make the album a definite winner... Hovering in the gap between the East and West Coast scenes stands the group **Militia**. Shaped and produced by Dr. Dre-protégé Emanuel Dean, this new conglomerate—which includes rappers Diz, Devruz, Mr. Tan, Ms. Toi and Lord G—has made a serious effort to play both sides of the fence on its self-titled debut (Red Ant). While songs like "Way Out," "Streetlife," "Eight Million Ways" and "Who's The Next" contain a nice mix of Dre-inspired creep funk with some refreshingly non-West Coast lyrics, more than half of the album comes off as just another G-funked out tract. It's a good debut with some great moments, but maybe they should choose one side or the other next time.



Dept. of songs of which we're glad we can't make out more than the title: **Arab On Radar's** "Swimming With A Hard-On" (Load). It's a great record anyway. AoR is an unbelievably aggressive band from Providence, Rhode Island (I've never seen anyone invade its audience's personal space that doggedly), with a singer who pronounces words like they're poison in his mouth. "Swimming" finds the

rhythm section in full piston mode, banging away for just under two minutes while the guitarists scrape and whine; the other side's slower, nastier "Samurai Fight Song" is an atonal attack like New York's no-wave bands used to make. Arab Strap's full-length album *Queen Hygiene II*, released on the band's own Heparin label, is worth tracking down too.

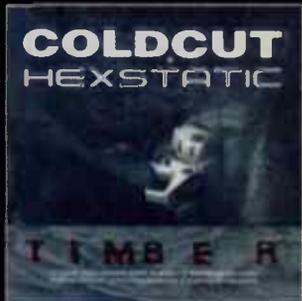
Electronic music with a sense of humor is a good thing, and **icu's** debut



7", the two-song *Despite The Smell Of Colors... Vol. 1* (N.E.W. Recording), is a lot of fun, a clever, nifty, low-tech take on instrumental beat invention. "Do The Twist" approximates a classic Al Green breakbeat, then threads it into weirdly whooping synths and samples; on the flip, "Russian Rhapsody" is a piece of what sounds like gymnastic training, looped and forcibly mated with beats and a little synth riff. Even more charming is **Mr. Scruff's**

"Chipmunk" CD single (Ninja Tune), mostly made out of goofy old samples and lightweight in exactly the right way—"Fish," with its chorus of high-pitched voices chanting "fish, fish, fish, fish, fish," gradually becomes laugh-out-loud funny, and a sample of what sounds like Rakim saying "get 'em out like trout" pushes it over the top.

A few quick drops of the needle: Plans for an album of remixes from **Stereolab's** *Dots And Loops* seem to have been scrapped, but three good ones have appeared on the Japanese CD single of "Miss Modular," including a terrific Autechre remix of "Refractions In The Plastic Pulse" that preserves the melody inside a web of frenetic beat-play. With the addition of a Russell Simins's mix of "Rainbo Conversation," these mixes have also



turned up on a promo-only American 12" (on Elektra); it's worth watching out for... **Coldcut & Hexstatic** conceived of "Timber" as a "video mix," with its audio elements sampled from visual sources that are then combined in a way that

mimics video editing. In addition to audio remixes by half a dozen artists (including Tortoise associate Bundy Brown), the "Timber" single (Ninja Tune) includes CD-ROM-viewable "video remixes" by Emergency Broadcast Network, Protean Vision Quest and a few others... **Pip Proud**, an Australian psychedelic weirdo of the '60s

## P R I M A L S C R E A M

*"If They Move Kill 'Em"*

Creation (UK)

Hoping for a *real* new My Bloody Valentine record is a little like hoping for a new J.D. Salinger story: There may be one someday, but don't hold your breath. MBV sound-sculptor Kevin Shields does, however, see fit to grace us with an occasional remix of somebody else's music, and this time—credited as the "My

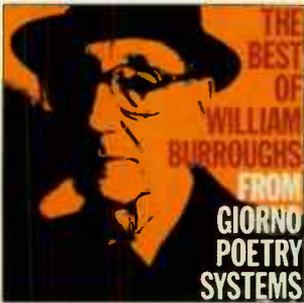


Bloody Valentine *Arkestra*"—he's transfigured Primal Scream's umpteenth "Higher Than The Sun" retread into an extraordinary, haunting piece. Shields's long, dense mix of "If They Move Kill 'Em" incorporates Indian tabla percussion, heavily altered guitar parts,

free-jazz horns that devolve into Steve Reich-style cut-ups, and a beat that comes in halfway through and almost takes your head off. Every few seconds, it seems, he piles on another layer of uncanny noise—murmuring trumpets or a screeching antiphony. By its last minutes, the mix has become just this side of the blare of tinnitus, just this side of the howl of the music of dreams. The CD single also comes with a more normal mix of "If They Move Kill 'Em" and, in a curious but effective gesture, two dreamy, psychedelized covers of "Darklands"—originally done by Primal Scream leader Bobby Gillespie's previous band, the Jesus And Mary Chain.

who's essentially that country's Syd Barrett figure, has recorded "Hey Gus" (Emperor Jones) in collaboration with disciple **Alastair Galbraith**. Proud doesn't sound like he's in the best shape, but Galbraith's eddying guitar parts and backwards drones are a suitably eerie backing for his scary rasp... In additional consumer news, Sub Pop has re-launched its semi-legendary monthly singles club. It's a little on the expensive side—\$70 for a year's subscription—but this time around, singles will be available exclusively to subscribers. The first year's batch will reportedly include otherwise unavailable songs by Luna, Cornershop, Radiohead, Modest Mouse and the Jesus And Mary Chain. To order, call 1-800-SUB POP-1. Kill Rock Stars is also starting a singles club, for \$35 a year; early releases will include singles by the Rock-A-Teens, the Need, Comet Gain and Red Monkey.

BY JAMES LIEN



Berkeley, California-based Fantasy Records, which was pretty darn hip back in the '50s and early '60s, has finally reissued the original recording of **Allen Ginsberg's** epochal poem *Howl!*. This record was hugely influential, and it's worth mentioning that the album also includes a number of Ginsberg's *other* great poems, such as "America," "Kaddish" and "The Sunflower Sutra." Also out on the beat front is a four-CD box set of

**William S. Burroughs's** material entitled *Impersonator! The Best Of William S. Burroughs On Giorno Poetry Systems* (Mouth Almighty-Mercury). These recordings, made for John Giorno's poetry label in the 1980s, feature the creaky-voiced, elder Burroughs that so many people know and love, reading excerpts from *Naked Lunch*, *Junky* and other famous works. It's the motherlode of Burroughs. I can't wait to leave one of these poems in its entirety on someone's answering machine.

## inthebins

Another important poet of our times, **Gil Scott-Heron**  released a string of important albums back in the '70s that melded hard-hitting topical poetry with funk and jazz music, creating music that vividly depicted African-American urban life. For that alone, he's been hailed as a direct precursor to the rap and hip-hop of today—in a sense, Scott-Heron's "Lady Day And John Coltrane," an homage to deceased African-American artists, could be the blueprint for Puffy Combs's recent elegy. TVT has acquired the rights to several of Scott-Heron's '70s albums, including *Winter In America*, *South Africa To South Carolina*, and a host of others, which will be released throughout the next few months. For the casual fan, Gil's introductory best-of is still the way to go, but if you're into the message or you want to learn some real hip-hop history, you'll want to pick up these CDs.

After giving us those great, lavish reissues of the Byrds, the folks at Sony Legacy are now tightening their tie-dyed headbands and turning their sights on **Santana**. These reissues of the classic Latin heavy psychedelic rock quartet's early albums are augmented by live bonus tracks, liner notes and terrific sound quality. One highlight is the first album, which includes as bonus tracks three cuts from Santana's galvanizing performance at Woodstock. If someone made music this challenging today, I'd applaud it, too.



Get that army parka out of the closet: Comprised of scraps from throughout **The Who's** career, *Odds And Sods* (MCA) is one of the more endearing little records in the band's canon. Now it's enhanced with even more rare and unreleased material, including a studio version of the live Who staple "Young Man Blues" and an insightful outtake from *Quadrophenia* that, interestingly enough, sounds more like a song from the *Tommy* era six years earlier.

If the words "folk singer" give you waves of nausea and images of hairy

# JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

**BBC Sessions**

MCA

Now that the Beatles and Led Zeppelin have released collections of their BBC recordings, we're being treated to another real history-maker: Jimi Hendrix made several trips to the Beeb, especially during 1967, his year in England as a happening, shocking pop-art phenomenon. The BBC, legendary for having stuffy policies and engineers in lab coats, dutifully recorded Hendrix in spite of his volume, outrageousness and incense, and the result is this two-CD set. If you dig Hendrix the way-out cat as much as you dig Hendrix the superhuman guitar player, you'll love this record. For one thing, the guy could be hilariously funny, especially on the outrageous version of "Hey Joe," heard here from a TV special hosted by the hapless Lulu.

After her polite introduction, you can clearly hear Hendrix off-mic, cackling "Cover your ears, cover your ears!" before he launches the Experience into an outrageous, unannounced feedback jam with Marshalls cranked to cabinet-cracking volumes. Then he cuts "Hey Joe" off in the middle ("Enough of this rubbish!") and decides to launch into a spontaneous tribute to the band Cream! Needless to say, this six-minute sonic squall wasn't in the script and it sent the entire planned-to-the-second TV show into utter pandemonium. It ended with the Experience being yanked off the air while comically vamping on the riff from "Sunshine Of Your Love." Let's just say that Soy Bomb would be powerless to top this kind of outrageousness. Some posthumous albums are windows into what we lost, and this is one of them.

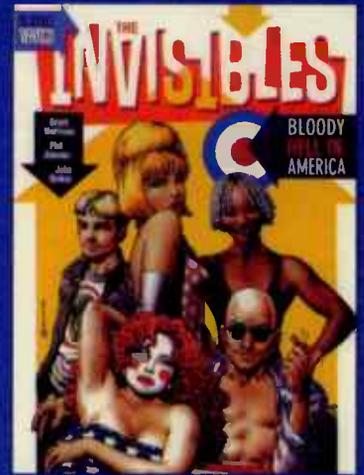


people in ruffled hippie skirts singing old whaling and grape-picking ballads, you probably haven't heard **Michael Hurley**. His 1976 album *Long Journey* has just been re-released by Rounder, and it's a real gem, reminiscent more of acoustic Yo La Tengo than any sort of broadside, Kingston Trio-type thing. His song "Portland Water" is just screaming out to be covered by someone, as are about 30 of his other songs. If you like Ry Cooder, Randy Newman and early Tom Waits, you'll probably get into Hurley's low-key, laid-back singer/songwriter style. And if you buy one record this month that you've never heard of, make it this one.

### THE INVISIBLES:

**Bloody Hell In America** (Vertigo)

Grant Morrison has become one of the hottest writers in comics thanks to his best-selling revitalization of *JLA*, but his heart is in *The Invisibles*, an incandescent, densely written series about revolution, metaphysics and philosophical liberation, cast as fast-paced action-adventure stories. It's not the quick-and-clever read that *JLA* is, though it's got a surface frisson like a Hong Kong action flick. Deeper down, it's a fascinating meditation on what really constitutes freedom, with a heterogeneous cast of characters whose true motivations become more complicated over the course of the series: Are some of them double agents? Triple agents? How many layers of masks do they wear? Over the course of the series, Morrison has touched on conspiracy theory, Tantric sexuality, time travel, post-colonialist history and theories of human consciousness, and there's a new treat for the mind at every turn. With the stories collected in the new *Bloody Hell In America*, Morrison shifted the series' locale and tone from Britain and mod-surrealist to the US and violently paranoid (he promises another shift soon); artists Phil Jimenez and John Stokes complement his writing with clean, attractive lines and vigorous storytelling. >>> DW



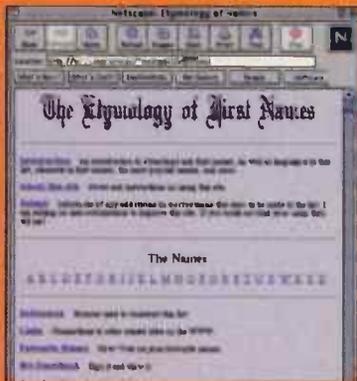
## net stuff

### THE ETYMOLOGY OF FIRST NAMES

[www.engr.uvic.ca/~mcampbel/etym.html](http://www.engr.uvic.ca/~mcampbel/etym.html)

One of the more socially useful sites around is The Etymology Of First Names site, in which you can determine the origin of thousands of first names. Other than a brief glimpse at the origin of your own name, why on earth would you need to access this site? This is where the creativity comes in. Got an important job interview with a man named Gerald? You can jump-start the conversation with the insight that his name is of Teutonic origin and means "firm spear." First date with Beverly? Her name means "beaver stream" in Olde English. The list goes on and on, and nearly every name is represented (although the majority of names, it seems, are derivatives of others); anyone expecting a baby would do well to inquire within. In addition to the simple etymologies, this site also offers a listing of the most popular British and North American names, a "logical names for twins" page ("Melanie and Phoebe: Both names are Greek, but Melanie means 'dark' and Phoebe means 'light'"), and many other curious tidbits.

>>> Randall "Shield Wolf" Roberts



## 'zine

### INFILTRATION

Read *Infiltration* at your own risk. This guide to "urban tourism" is chock-full of trespassing tales that will make you want to sneak into an old warehouse or sewer tunnel as soon as you put it down. The seventh issue features a guided tour of an abandoned missile silo, complete with pictures of rusting launch pads and "No Nukes" graffiti. In "Toronto's Secret Castles," "Throckmorton" foams over the mysterious beauty of broken glass and boarded-up buildings. Older issues of *Infiltration* feature tips on spotting hidden cameras and slinking through subway tunnels. Many articles rate the physical dangers of these illicit adventures and cite the penalties that can be incurred if caught in the act. Though most of the references mentioned in this Toronto-based 'zine are found only in Canada, much of the advice holds true for spots above and below the border. The online version of *Infiltration* ([www.infiltration.org/theory.htm](http://www.infiltration.org/theory.htm)) reprints pieces from past issues, such as "Tunnel Running 101" and "Ignoring Warning Signs." (P.O. Box 66069, Town Centre Post Office, Pickering, ONT, L1V 6P7, Canada)

>>> Neil Gladstone



keep an eye out for . . . *Shooting Fish*, a ridiculous romantic comedy (a major plot point hinges on England taking its 50-pound notes out of circulation on two weeks' notice) w

books

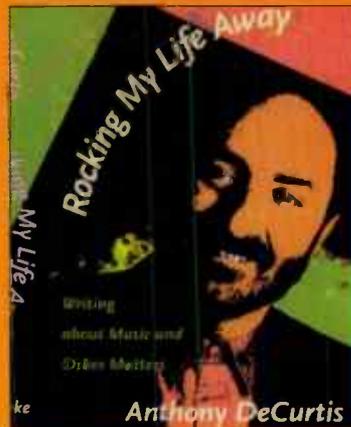
# ROCKING MY LIFE AWAY:

Writing About Music And Other Matters by Anthony DeCurtis

(Duke University Press)

Too often, rock writers assess their subject with the literary equivalent of the punk aesthetic, filling their prose with choppy sentences, made-up words and grandiose proclamations. Anthony DeCurtis, who has written primarily for *Rolling Stone*, isn't in that camp. He's a sober commentator who's apt to spend his energy noting the inventory of an interviewee's apartment, rather than painting a Herculean portrait of the artist. *Rocking My Life Away*, which collects his writings on music and popular culture, is a triumph of substance over style. That's not necessarily to the benefit of the book's readability, however. As a critic, DeCurtis is almost conservative, and the extensive catalog of reviews and obituaries included here varies from insightful to dull. The best segments come when he interacts with rock and hip-hop's major personalities; he hangs backstage with the Stones, infiltrates the Wu-Tang Clan and discusses painting with John Mellencamp. In a 1994 interview conducted for this 330-page book, DeCurtis and R.E.M.'s Peter Buck explore rock criticism from all angles. It's an extremely relevant and enlightening chapter that's unfortunately overshadowed by the book's conclusion, a series of academic pop culture essays that should have been set aside for another project.

>>> Richard Martin



# SOULSVILLE U.S.A.

by Rob Bowman

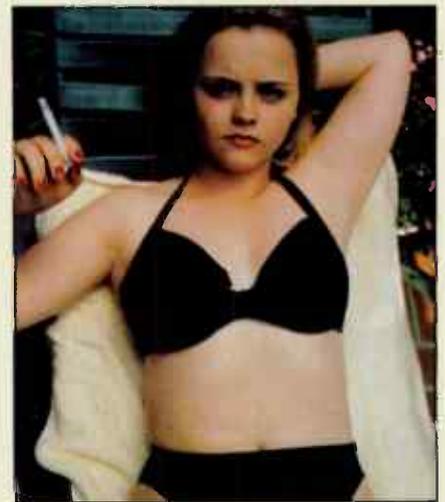
(Simon & Schuster)

From 1959 to 1974, Memphis-based Stax Records was the preeminent label in American soul music, with a talent roster that included Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes, Booker T. & The MGs, Sam & Dave, Wilson Pickett, Rufus and Carla Thomas, and a whole lot more. This chronicle of the label's saga was written by Rob Bowman, who also wrote the liner notes to all three enormous box sets documenting the Stax/Volt family of labels. Bowman does a wonderful job capturing the moods of the company's various phases. In the beginning, his descriptions evoke the fun and naiveté of the label's early days, like the wonderful story of a teenaged Carla Thomas recording a duet with her father in a studio built out of a converted movie theater. But tracing the label's three-year progression from being the #1 soul music label in America to being \$10 million in the hole is in itself a long journey—by the end of the book, as he describes a Stax drowned in litigation, debt and mediocre releases. Bowman sounds just as beleaguered by all the legal wrangling as Stax's principals, Al Bell and Jim Stewart. The real star of the book is the Stax vibe: Every time somebody talks about Otis Redding, you can practically sense his magnificent presence in the room.

>>> James Lien



movie



# THE OPPOSITE OF SEX

(Sony Pictures Classics)

Christina Ricci has played a lot of roles since she was Wednesday Addams, but she was born to be an underage hellspawn, and *The Opposite Of Sex* finds her in her element. As a seriously nasty 16-year-old who steals her half-brother's boyfriend, ruins more than a few lives and generally provides the catalyst for this very dark romantic comedy, Ricci keeps a fiendish smirk glued to her face; her character's a one-dimensional sociopath, and that's just fine. What makes the whole film work, though, is that everybody else's acting is terrific, including surprising turns from Lisa Kudrow, who kicks ass in a dramatic role—who knew?—and Lyle Lovett, who provides the movie's moral center as a sheriff who understands more than he lets on. Director Don Roos's script inverts clichés again and again, with more than a couple of clever fake-outs and a slightly cartoonish self-awareness of narrative conventions (when Ricci's character stashes a gun, her voice-over notes that it will, of course, be important later). It's clear from the beginning of *The Opposite Of Sex* how it's going to end, but it gets there by a charmingly twisty route.

>>> DW

### WALT FLANAGAN'S DOG

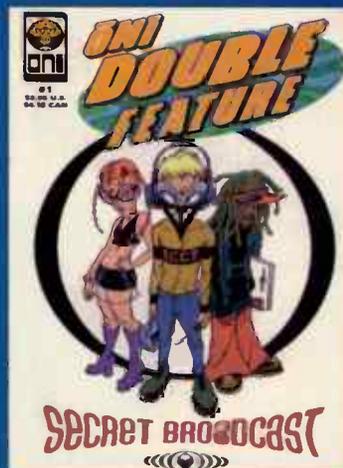
by Kevin Smith and Matt Wagner

### SECRET BROADCAST

by Arnold and Jacob Pander

(Oni Press)

In the comic book equivalent of a split single, Portland, Oregon's upstart Oni Press pairs *Clerks* writer/director Kevin Smith with the Pander Bros., creators of the acclaimed graphic novel *Triple X*, in a double feature. In the first half, two mildly menacing stoners straight out of *Clerks* wander through their suburban hell looking for trouble. They find it in neighbor Walt Flanagan's dog, a yapper they attempt to silence with massive hits off a sizable piece of hash. Artist Matt Wagner (*Mage*) conjures a chase scene in which the baked mutt seeks revenge on the two slackers, who wreak a bit more havoc on their quest for safety. On the flip side, the Panders come up with more righteous characters and a cautionary tale. The trio of postmodern youths in *Secret Broadcast* rebels against the stale airwaves by starting a pirate radio station, but they're soon tracked by the FCC; the to-be-continued story wraps with the Feds closing in. The Panders have produced an accompanying CD compilation of electronica, featuring Oakland, California's ragamuffin MC Jamal-Ski, Miami's Supersoul and others. >>> *Richard Martin*



## net stuff



### THE FRAY

[www.fray.com](http://www.fray.com)

Slice after slice of life: If The Fray were lunch meat, it would be a generous pound, cut thin. And with all its compelling stories, it could be one of the best fiction sites on the Web, but it isn't—a fiction site, that is. All of The Fray's entrées are real-life experiences. Says the site's creator, San Franciscan Derek Powazek: "It's the kind of website I always wanted to visit, but could never find: a place for personal storytelling, design, and artful conversation." The site receives more than one submission a day, and it's updated every two to three weeks. The Fray's gift is finding writers who recognize and meticulously detail those spare moments of life when greater truths of the human condition are revealed: a first glimpse of pornography, a skirmish on a public bus, a friend's abortion. And its interactive format—each offering ends with a question and an opportunity to submit memories of similar experiences—ensures introspection while visiting. These reader contributions are listed on the site and are frequently as interesting, if not as eloquent, as the featured tale. The Fray reminds us of the wondrous opportunity for free, artistic and intelligent expression on the Net. >>> *William Werde*



### FUTURE FARMERS

[www.futurefarmers.com](http://www.futurefarmers.com)

With MTV, Condé Nast and the rest of the glamour industry on the Web, a Netsurfer's hungry eyes need never want for candy. But if you're looking for graphical creations that do more than just prop up a mediocre band or magazine, seek out the sites that the art directors build to promote themselves. One of the nicest is the pastel palace of the Future Farmers, a pair of graphic designers who sling pixels for Levi's and MSNBC, among others. From the minute (OK, more like two or three) the home page loads up on your screen, you're in a trippy toy box of tractors, low-flying spaceships and little pink livestock. Bandwidth permitting, you'll want to check out the Shockwave animated movies in the site's "explore" section; at the moment, you can either play "catch the rabbit" or snoop through a world halfway between the Residents' *Freak Show* and Fisher-Price. The site is impressive not because of its high technology, but because of the weird atmosphere it projects—a bit like a rave poster come to life. >>> *Andrea Moord*

>>> The second annual Rhino Musical Aptitude Test (RMAT), being held May 17 in seven cities and over the Web. To prepare, there's information and practice tests at [www.rhino.com](http://www.rhino.com).

After suffering  
two years of  
indescribable  
torture in a  
Chinese prison,



this Tibetan nun stood up in front of 100,000 people and prayed for one thing . . .

42 ▶ 42A 43 ▶ 43A



# Non-violence

**We're all responsible.**

*The Milarepa Fund*

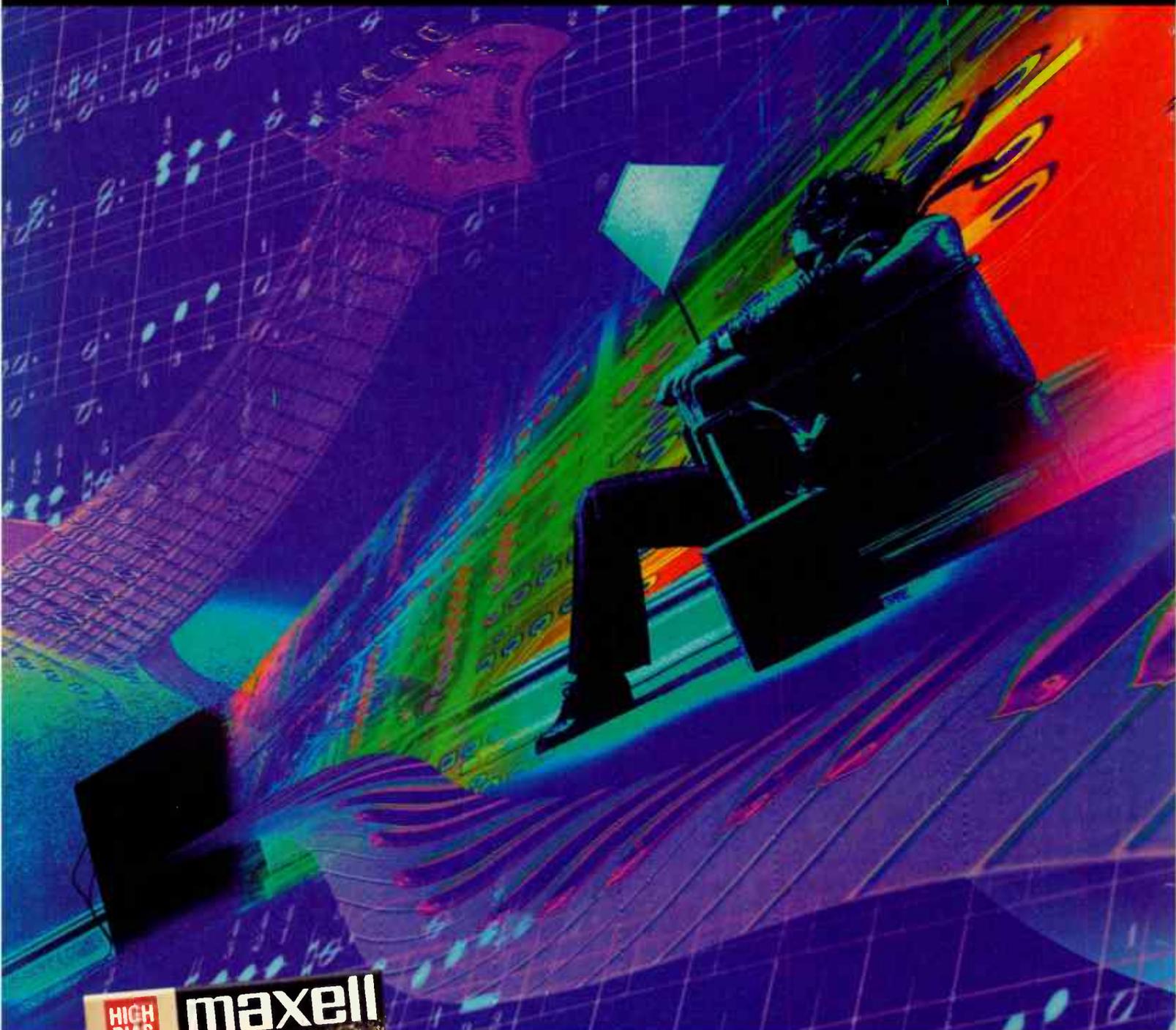


World Radio History

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World Radio History



#1 REVEREND HORTON HEAT  
Space Heater

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

## CMJ

www.cmj.com

artist	title	label
1 REVEREND HORTON HEAT	Space Heater	Interscope
2 ANI DIFRANCO	Little Plastic Castle	Righteous Babe
3 NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL	In The Aeroplane Over The Sea	Merge
4 JESUS LIZARD	The Jesus Lizard (EP)	Jetset
5 SWERVEDRIVER	99th Dream	Zero Hour
6 KRISTIN HERSH	Strange Angels	Rykodisc
7 BUFFALO DAUGHTER	New Rock	Grand Royal
8 GASTR DEL SOL	Camoufleur	Drag City
9 BRAV VAN 3000	Glee	Capitol
10 MARY LOU LORD	Got No Shadow	WORK
11 AIR	Moon Safari	Source-Caroline
12 SPACEHOG	The Chinese Album	Hi Fi-Sire
13 BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY	Big Bad Voodoo Daddy	Coolsville/EMI-Capitol
14 TORTOISE	TNT	Thrill Jockey
15 CURVE	Come Clean	Estupendo-Universal
16 SUPERDRAG	Head Trip In Every Key	Elektra-EEG
17 HUM	Downward Is Heavenward	RCA
18 FASTBALL	All The Pain Money Can Buy	Hollywood
19 TOWA TEI	Sound Museum	Elektra-EEG
20 HEPCAT	Right On Time	Hellcat-Epithaph
21 MONO	Formica Blues	Mercury
22 HALO BENDERS	The Rebels Not In	K
23 SAMIAM	You Are Freaking Me Out	Ignition
24 FEEDER	Polythene	Elektra-EEG
25 OJ SHADOW	Preemptive Strike	Mo Wax/ffrr-London
26 TWO	Voyeurs	Nothing-Interscope
27 DONNAS	American Teenage Rock 'N' Roll Machine	Lookout!
28 SPECIALS	Guilty 'Til Proved Innocent!	Way Cool-MCA
29 DIMITRI FROM PARIS	Sacrebleu	Atlantic
30 UNWOUND	Challenge For A Civilized Society	Kill Rock Stars
31 TRANS AM	The Surveillance	Thrill Jockey
32 FAR	Water & Solutions	Immortal-Epic
33 PEE SHY	Don't Get Too Comfortable	Blue Gorilla-Mercury
34 HIGH LLAMAS	Cold And Bouncy	V2
35 JAMES IHA	Let It Come Down	Virgin
36 TUSCADERO	My Way Or The Highway	Elektra-EEG
37 DUSTER	Stratosphere	Up
38 CAP'N JAZZ	Anaalphabetapolothology	Jade Tree
39 BEDHEAD	Transaction De Novo	Trance Syndicate
40 COME	Gently Down The Stream	Matador
41 BLACK GRAPE	Stupid Stupid Stupid	Radioactive
42 WINDY & CARL	Depths	Kranky
43 PROPELLERHEADS	Decksanddrumsandrockandroll	DreamWorks
44 MORCHEEBA	Big Calm	China-Sire
45 KING BRITT PRESENTS SYLK 130	When The Funk Hits The Fan	Ovum/Ruffhouse-Columbia
46 PEARL JAM	Yield	Epic
47 SIXTEEN HORSEPOWER	Low Estate	A&M
48 AUTOUR DE LUCIE	Immobile	Netwerk
49 SERVOTRON	Entertainment Program For Humans	Lookout!
50 DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID	Synthetic Fury (EP)	Asphodel
51 GOOD RIDDANCE	Ballads From The Revolution	Fat Wreck Chords
52 JUNE OF 44	Four Great Points	Quarterstick
53 COURSE OF EMPIRE	Telepathic Last Words	TVT
54 LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III	Little Ship	Virgin
55 JUNKIE XL	Saturday Teenage Kick	Roadrunner
56 BEN FOLDS FIVE	Naked Baby Photos	Caroline
57 MULDER	The State Of Play	Oedicated
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**CLAY PEOPLE**  
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**MORRISSEY**  
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Nature Film *Elektra*

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Blue *Elektra*

**SOUL ASYLUM**  
Candy From A Stranger *Columbia*

**STEGOSAURUS**  
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**SCOTT THOMAS BAND**  
California *Elektra*

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**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Dub Narcotic Studio Compilation  
Selector Dub Narcotic *K*

MAY 19

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Philophobia *Matador*

**BAO RELIGION**  
No Substance *Atlantic*

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**BOMBORAS**  
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**CIV**  
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**EVE6**  
Eve6 *RCA*

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*Rhino*

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**ROBERT WYATT**  
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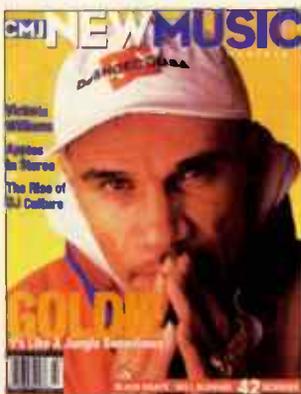
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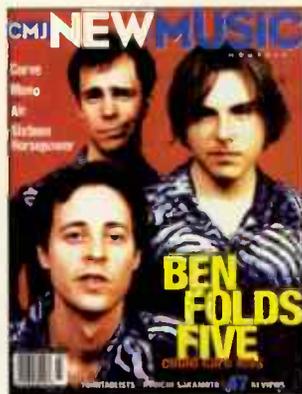
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BY ANNE MARIE CRUZ

# charlottesville, virginia

ABUTTING THE EASTERNMOST PORTION OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, CHARLOTTESVILLE IS A SOMETIMES CONTRADICTIONARY MARRIAGE OF REVISIONIST HISTORICAL GRANDEUR AND A BOOMING ECONOMY, THANKS IN PART TO THE STEADY INFLUX OF OUTSIDERS. THE CITY IS THE SEAT OF SOUTHERN ARISTOCRACY DUE TO THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE JEFFERSON/MADISON/MONROE TRIUMVIRATE, BUT FOR ALL ITS CHERISHED SOUTHERNNESS, CHARLOTTESVILLE IS ALSO STRANGELY YANKEEFIED.

While Monticello overlords and yuppies multiply, the city's got culture growing between its statues, red brick and green trees. The mixed bag includes the annual Virginia Film Festival ((800) UVA-FEST), which brings in Hollywood and Sundance types during the last week of October. Authors Debbie Eisenberg, George Garrett and Charles Wright are reasonably accessible resources. Wallace Shawn, Sam Shepard, Alan Alda, Sissy Spacek, Jessica Lange and Hee-Haw's "That's all!" girl, Kathy Baker, all call the city home. Homegrown hero Dave Matthews and Mississippi expatriate John Grisham could make a viable all-Charlottesville White House ticket in '00.

Some of indie rock's biggest men on campus raised the dust at UVA. David Berman (Silver Jews), James McNew (Yo La Tengo), and Pavement's Steve West, Stephen Malkmus and Bob Nastanovich all toiled around in various permutations like War Comet and Ectoslavia, an industrial noise band with two percussionists. In the summer of '96, Berman and Will Oldham lived in town, working on a Silver Palace project, which unfortunately hasn't seen release yet.

## /// RECORD STORES

Plan 9 (1325 West Main St., 979-9999 and 1675 Seminole Trail, 974-9999) is the reliable (albeit often surly) source for indie, local and electronic music (Main St. store) and country (Seminole Tr. store). They'll crack open any CD, shrink-wrap be damned, so you can test-drive it. Spencer's 206 (206 West Market St., 295-3080) doesn't have as many goods, but the former Pentecostal church is also a veritable museum of album-cover guru Steve Keene's paintings (the one-time resident worked there for a few months). Ask Spencer himself about

the Steve Keene vending machine (R.I.P.).

## /// RADIO STATIONS

WTJU (91.1 FM) hosts an annual week-long jazz marathon and great weekly shows like the indie "Pop Rocks And Soda," the old-time string band show "Leftover Biscuits" and the No Depression-themed "Eclectic Country Show." WNRN (91.9 FM) adequately covers the college rock playlist.

## /// VENUES

It's Friday night: Feel like being confused yet entertained? Tokyo Rose (2171 Ivy Road, 296-3366 or 295-ROSE) is the head-scratcher of Charlottesville, since it's both an upscale sushi bar and an indie rock club, situated in a strip mall. It's owned by Atsushi Miura, a dashing, 40-something Japanese sushi chef with a shy grin who prepares an exquisite yellow tail and smoked salmon. The Rose books the likes of Apples In Stereo, Ween, Cibo Matto, Ida and Tsunami through the efforts of Erin McFarland, the singer/bassist of local band Plush Toy and the rock director at WTJU. Sometimes Atsushi plays his own Beatles-esque solo acoustic guitar sets. Trax (122 11th St. NW, 295-TRAX) lands bigger fish like Son Volt and They Might Be Giants. A key stop on the '60s folk circuit, Prism Coffeehouse (214 Rugby Road, 977-7476) gets bands such as Cordelia's Dad. The omnipresent Dave Matthews used to tend bar at Miller's (109 West Main St., 971-8511), a converted turn-of-the-century pharmacy where Thursday is jazz night with local celebs like John D'Earth (an ex-sideman of Miles Davis).

## /// LOCAL SCENE SETTERS

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Charlottesville, VA 22902, 963-5478), run by the knowledgeable and friendly Darius Van Arman, has stuff out by Sarah White, Fuck, Stigma Rock Unit and locals the Curious Digit and Drunk. Something of a Snuffaluffagus, goth label Something Leather is rumored to have one album that no one's seen. Lauren Hoffman, True Love Always (TeenBeat) and popsters Clare Quilty round out the local rock scene.

## /// RESTAURANTS

Spudnuts (309 Avon St., 296-0590) is a small-town donut shop where the same four old guys

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SPENCER'S 206



SPUONUTS



always occupy the corner table and the help is charmingly low-key. The added twist is that the donuts are made with potato flour. The kids haven't discovered this place, so you can enjoy a peaceful morning repast of black coffee and chewy/crispy cherry-cinnamon honey buns. Yum. Everyone at Michie Tavern (683 Thomas Jefferson Pkwy., 977-1234) is dressed like a Colonial Williamsburg reject, which makes sense, since the building is one of the oldest homesteads in Virginia. Take the half-hour tour for the discomfiting educational-family-vacation nostalgia or, better yet, for the aroma of woodchip smoke and fried chicken emanating from the kitchen. Then dig into the traditional Southern plantation midday spread served at the Ordinary, a 200-year-old log cabin adjacent to the tavern. For a different side of Southern hospitality, get some ribs at Big Jim's (2104 Angus Road, 296-8283), a small, wood-paneled joint with a truck-stop atmosphere. It's the kind of place where 18-wheelers spend their days off watching football games and spinning Dwight Yoakam and Teddy Loveless on the jukebox. The BBQ is cheap and strikes the right balance between sweet and

sour. Mono Loco (Water St., 979-0688) makes you happy to be alive because the Cuban fare is scrumptious and hearty and you're surrounded by amazing human specimens. Be sure to go for the weekend "Monkey Brunch" and order the roast pork-and-black bean burritos or the huevos diablo, made with chorizo sausage, onions, garlic, peppers, avocado and Monterey jack cheese. Bonus: Everything is served with fistfuls of fresh cilantro.

### /// BARS

Orbit (102 14th St., 984-5707) is a hip billiards hangout with a good jukebox and blue lighting. It's also eye-level with the passing trains, so you can catch glances of strangers kissing or slurping soup as they ride the rails. Do your hard drinking at C And O (515 East Water St., 971-7044), whose namesake is the defunct railroad, Chesapeake and Ohio. Don't plan on getting rowdy, though: It's strictly a classy place, more suited for besotted introspection. Monticello Brewing Company (946 Grady Ave., 971.8229) is a pub and microbrewery with fine house concoctions like the piquant Crystal Dome Lager and the sharp-yet-creamy

Triple Belgium. They rotate their on-tap menu, so you can sample the wares before you shell out a reasonable amount for your very own custom-brewed keg.

### /// TOYS AND OTHER FUN THINGS

Copernicus (100 East Main St., 296-6800) overflows with plastic trinkets, wind-up toys and pocket brainteasers (and none of those darn electronic pets!), while Cha-Cha's (201B East Main St., 293-8553) specializes in camp and kitsch. Think lunch boxes, fake fur, sparkly baubles and hot pink inflatable chairs. Aside from the obvious, Magic Tricks (101 14th St. NW, 293-5788) specializes in cheap pranks, e.g. rubber vomit and insect-ridden ice cubes. Plus, you can experience pure shtick action courtesy of Monticup, who's straight from the "Take my wife, please" school of magic. The city is also home to Stelling Banjo Works (7258 Banjo Lane, 295-1917), where the tiny staff handcrafts its instruments. Sneak Reviews (2244 Ivy Road, 979-4420) is one of those rare video stores with a completist approach to its sizable stock of foreign, classic and independent films. The staff is friendly and well informed, and the layout of the store is not intimidating, as such stores tend to be.

### /// BOOKSTORES

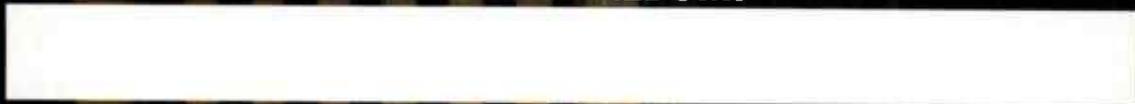
Don't ever let 'em tell you different: Charlottesville has the most bookstores and antiquarian bookstores per capita. A few of the best? Daedalus (121 4th St. NE, 293-7595), a pin-drop quiet labyrinth of used books, is filled with finds like vintage *Playboys* and signed first editions of *Ball Four* by Jim Bouton. Heartwood (5 & 9 Elliewood Road) consists of two stores; the exclusively antiquarian side is simultaneously impressive and daunting, like a house full of professorial clutter. St. Innocent of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Book Mobile and Bookstore (705 Forest Road, 979-7515) is the neatest amalgam of things. The book mobile is itself a marvel: Slightly bigger than an ice-cream truck, it's a white, aqua and gold-trimmed church on wheels, complete with a spire and window panes. Both the store and mobile carry intricate reproductions of Byzantine icons, as well as Slavonic music and pamphlets written by "punx" who are now monks. And the Furry family is always quick with a cup of tea and relaxing conversation.

END

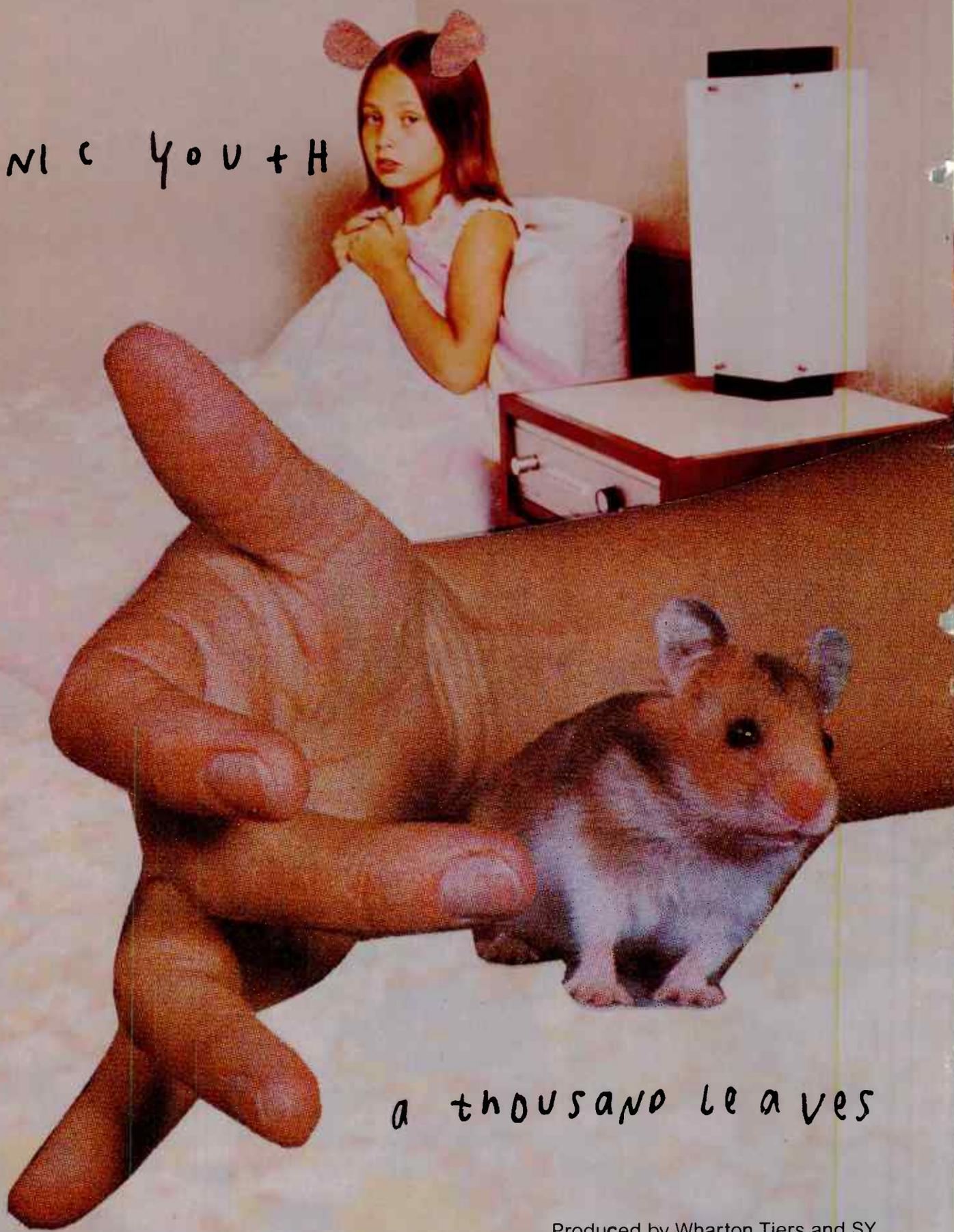
All phone numbers are in area code 804, unless otherwise noted.

>>> *Though her heart's in Charlottesville, Anne Marie Cruz still lives in New Haven and doesn't have a car.*

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