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M O N T H L Y

A close-up, high-angle portrait of the musician Beck. He has light brown, wavy hair and is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. The lighting is soft, highlighting his facial features.

beck

what's new, what's next

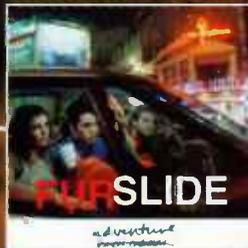
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ISSUE NUMBER 67 WWW.CMJ.COM

World Radio History

Furslide
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 7 Columbus OH 9 Detroit MI

10 Bloomington IN 11 Cleveland OH
 13 Cincinnati OH 14 Pittsburgh PA
 17 Lewinston ME 20 Toronto ONT
 22 Philadelphia PA 24 New York NY
 25 Washington DC 26 Boston MA

the debut album
 featuring

"Skinny Girl"

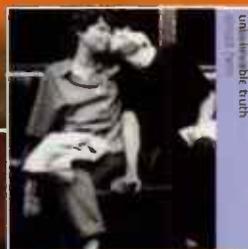
UB40
"Labour Of Love III"



the new album
 featuring

**"Come Back
 Darling"**

The Unbelievable Truth
"Almost Here"



the debut album
 featuring

**"Higher Than
 Reason"**

Whale
**"All Disco Dance Must
 End In Broken Bones"**



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 14 New York NY 15 Providence RI
 16 Cambridge MA 17 Montreal QUE

19 Ottawa ONT 20 Toronto ONT
 22 Cleveland OH 23 Detroit MI
 24 Chicago IL 25 Minneapolis MN
 27 Lawrence KS 28 Denver CO
 29 Salt Lake City UT 31 Seattle WA

NOVEMBER
 1 Vancouver BC 2 Portland OR
 4 San Francisco CA 5 Los Angeles CA
 6 San Diego CA 7 Phoenix AZ

the new album
 featuring

**"Four Big
 Speakers"**



November's exclusive disc includes scruffy cover boy **BECK**; emo-kings **SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE**; Brit-pop from **UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH**; the hard stuff from **FEAR FACTORY**, **INCUBUS** and **ORGY**; country-tinged rock from **GOLDEN SMOG**, **FLAT DUO JETS** and **PINETOP SEVEN**; electronica from **PAUL VAN DYK**, **U.N.K.L.E.** and **SILICON ATTIC**; and new songs from **BUFFALO TOM**, **ARCHERS OF LOAF** and **MERCURY REV.**



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PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHARLIE GROSS

ON THE COVER

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"I've tried to do this three or four times before: rent some time out in a nice studio and go in and just cut a record. I tried to do it before *Odelay*, I tried to do it before *Mellow Gold*, and it just came out too stiff. So in a way, this is a small victory." Natalie Nichols talks with the master sonic collagist/pop icon about his new album, which may or may not be the follow-up to *Odelay*.

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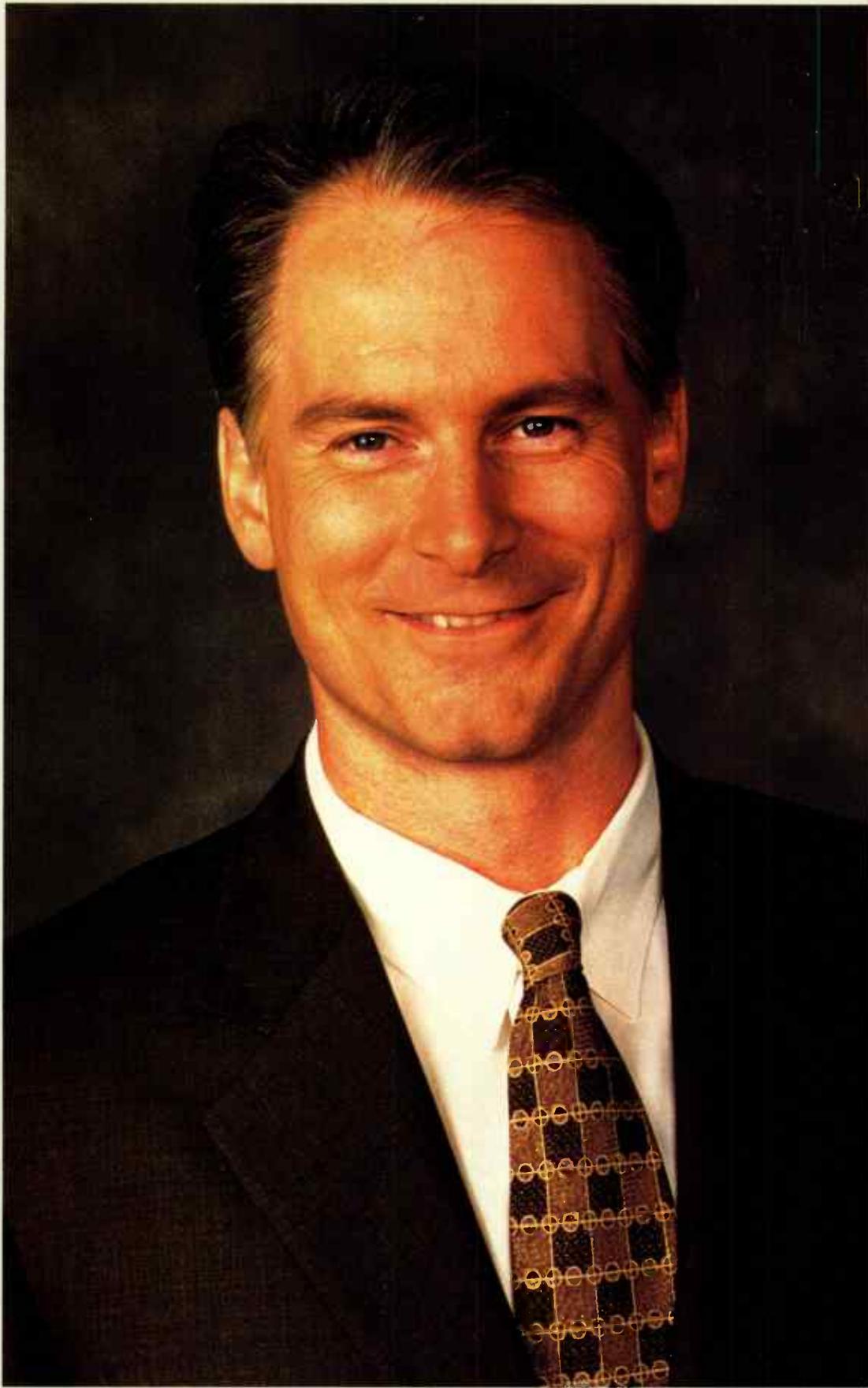
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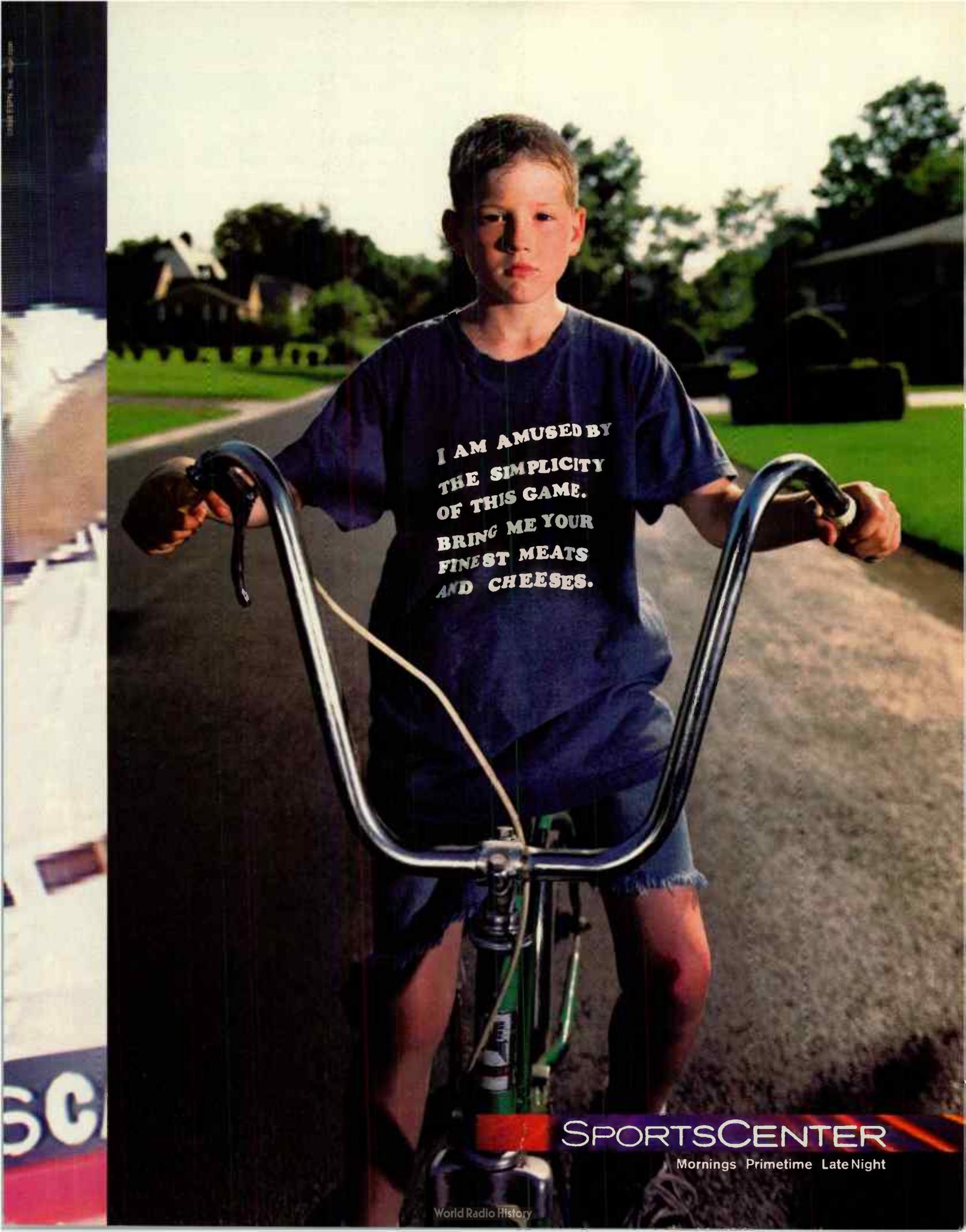
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KENNY MAYNE
SPORTSCENTER ANCHOR



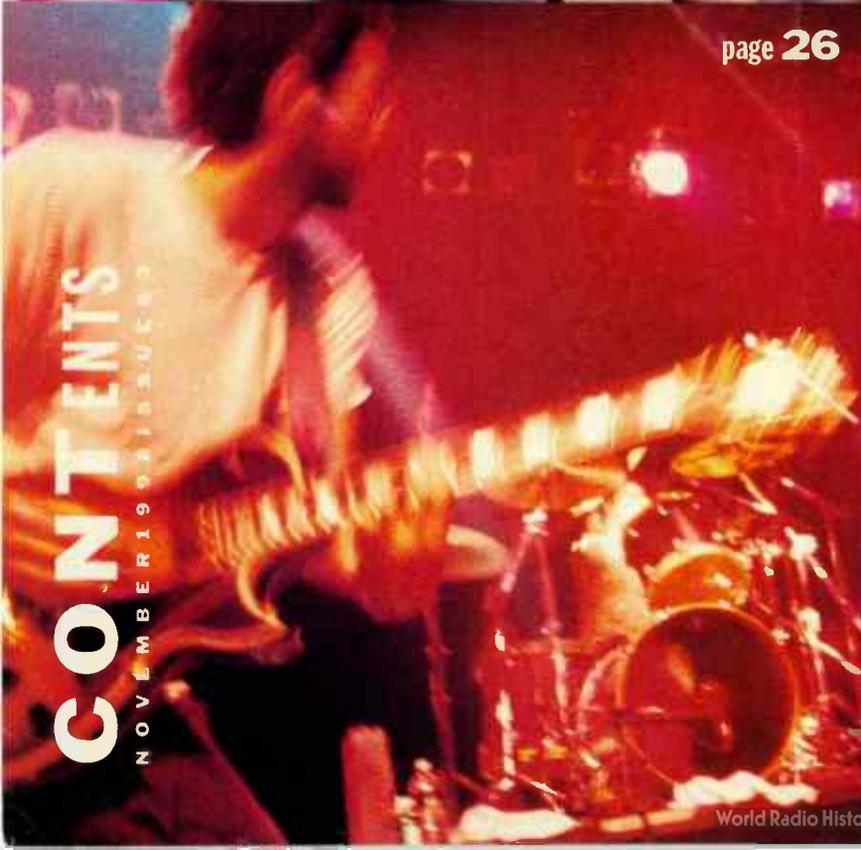
I AM AMUSED BY
THE SIMPLICITY
OF THIS GAME.
BRING ME YOUR
FINEST MEATS
AND CHEESES.

SPORTSCENTER

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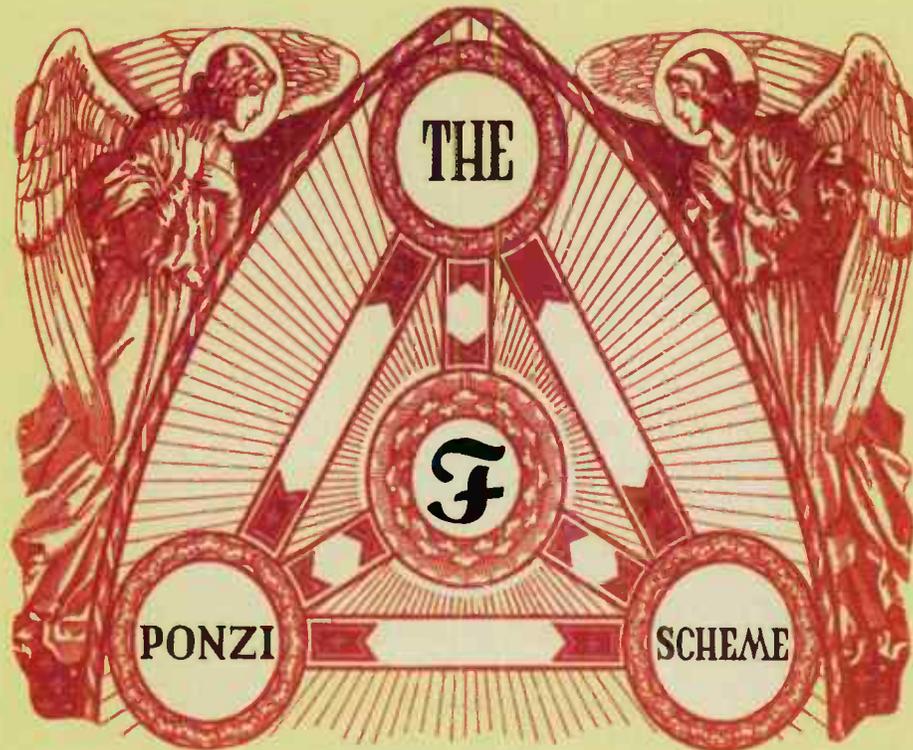
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THE PONZI SCHEME



"...equal parts broken hearts and broken noses."

-ALTERNATIVE PRESS

"Will knock your ass on the floor, but you'll be crawling
back over broken glass to hit the 'repeat'."

-CMJ MONTHLY

"Praise the lord and pass the amyl nitrate!"

-HIGH TIMES

"...utterly original."

- SECONDS



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Feels like the first time

I'm sure you'll receive a lengthy string of letters complaining about your redesign, how it might be graphically snappy but approaching illegibility (even if not at quite the gleeful speed Raygun did), and how having a section called "Life/Style" makes one expect articles about running shoes, cell phones, and the new "smooth jazz" format radio station in town... well, here's another one.

Jeffrey Norman
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Department of English

Just because your girlfriend cheated on you doesn't mean that all women are evil. Which is a metaphorical way of saying even though other magazines may not have fared so well on this score, we'd like to think we can expand our coverage just slightly beyond music without embodying all things lame. (And at this writing, this is the first and only letter we've gotten on the subject. I understand Jeffrey's trepidation. I mean, no one ever thinks about how hard it is to get that puke smell out of a car when they have that first drink, but I like scotch and plan to enjoy both it and this new facet to the magazine responsibly.

>>> Ed.

Buzz killer

I am the Director Of Sales of a major record label based in New York. I am writing to bring to your attention an error in the "Buzz Word" section of your September issue. In the "Shipped" definition, you cite that "The number of copies of an album shipped is not actually the figure used to officially designate an album's status as gold or platinum—that's determined by actual sales..." That statement is false. RIAA Certifications are, in fact, based solely on SHIPMENTS, NOT SALES. The term you state, "shipped gold" is in fact used by labels, but solely to state that an album is shipping with a Gold Certification before the actual street date. Hence, when we say, "Shipped Gold," it really does mean the album has already achieved Gold status, before it even hits the stores. SoundScan is in no way involved with RIAA Certifications and never has been.

Anon.

But what do you say when the Bee Gees' Spirits Having Flown ships gold and returns platinum? You'd probably say that I'm just trying to distract everyone from an embarrassing mistake. And you'd be oh, so right.

>>> Ed.

Another satisfied customer

Why does your mag piss me off so much? I don't even know why I still get it. I wish you would just say on the cover "we don't know what the hell we're doing—we started this magazine to make a couple bucks, get free stuff from record companies and maybe get laid." I can't stand reading about music, and I'm so disappointed in the crap you put on the CD. Goddamn, what was the last one I listened to more than once? April 1995? Forget it. I'll probably subscribe until I die just for those 1 or 2 songs on each CD that sound good. Fuck.

The Comedian

Actually, when we started this we were already getting free stuff from record companies, and writing about rock music wasn't getting anybody on the planet laid, so that leaves only the money thing. And so, yeah, we started a business to make money. We may not always do things in ways that seem like that's the case, but that was the idea at the time, anyway.

>>> Ed.

No do-overs

Sorry about yesterday's message: I thought you were someone else.

The Comedian

That's okay. The pissy tone in my response above was just misdirected anger at my father.

>>> Ed.

Like, and dislike

Hi. I wrote this, like, a long time ago? But I think it's still kind of true today because the people who write to you from Canadia [sic] haven't seemed to have changed too much. Okay, now, I was looking way back in the March '97 issue, and I was wondering if you could, maybe, like stop printing letters from Canadian people. It's not like I'm bigoted or anything; I have relatives from Canadia [sic], and I'm sure all Canadianese [sic] are fine folks. But their letters are very long... and boring. They seem to think that we, like, suck, which may be true, but they pretty much suck too. And maybe, instead of constantly complaining that Americans ignore Canadian artists, they can just move to America and ignore them with us. Thanks.

Joe

To completely avoid answering the above directly, let me quote Dave Foley from an old Kids In The Hall sketch: "I'm Canadian. That's like American, but without a gun."

>>> Ed.

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World Radio History



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--UPI

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All The Way Live

BY MATT ASHARE

MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES TAKE IT TO THE STAGE WITH *LIVE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST*

"In the great tradition of the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Dicky Barrett will always eat his words," jokes the dapper frontman of Boston's ska-punk kings. Well, in this case he's not really joking. Just over two years ago Barrett told me that the Bosstones would "never" release a live album, simply because it would be impossible to capture the feel of one of their shows on tape. Indeed, some of the success of the Bosstones' platinum-certified fifth album, *Let's Face It*, probably stems from the fact that it was the first recording for which they abandoned all hope of capturing the energy of their live show on record. Instead they set out to make a great studio album. And now, as summer in Boston winds down, Barrett and the Bosstones are gearing up for the fall release of *Live From The Middle East* (Big Rig-Mercury). Yes, it's a live Bosstones album.

"I always say 'never' and 'never say never,'" offers Barrett over iced coffee at the Middle East, the Cambridge restaurant/club where the album was recorded last December. "Mercury wouldn't be psyched to hear me say this, but I hate to think this album truly captures the Bosstones live because I really believe it's something you have to be in the middle of. It requires all five senses. Is this the closest we can come? Yeah, probably. It's good."

It's also not your typical live album in that it wasn't recorded at a typical Bosstones show. "It's not like we listened to a board tape from Toledo, Ohio, and it impressed us so we're releasing it live," Barrett explains. "The album is not one show. It's individual live songs edited together from five nights of the Hometown Throwdown."

'Hometown Throwdown' is Bosstone-speak for a series of shows the band has been performing every December for the past four years. You see, the Bosstones began their career a decade ago, slugging it out in Boston's punk rock clubs. But about five years ago they reached the point where they had to start playing larger venues, which they do for 360 days of the year. But for five days every December they come home to the 600-capacity room at the Middle East.

"I like that the album has Middle East in the title," comments Barrett. "We owe a lot to this place, to [owners] Joseph and Nabil [Sater], and to the fans that come to see us

here. Here, there's so much more going on with our history, the history of this club, and the history of our annual get together."

The Middle East appears to have reached a critical point in its own history now that the once depressed Central Square area of Cambridge is in the midst of a full economic upswing. Earlier this year, when Rancid played a semi-secret show at the club, the Cambridge police took exception to the punk rock types hanging out in front of the club and brought the Middle East up on charges before the city's licensing board. That event, along with the obvious changes taking place in

one team claims that the fact that I was there at one of the games cost him some runs because the short stop was staring at me while I was cheering on my team."

Barrett has also been talking to the Westwood One radio network about doing a weekly hour-long syndicated show. And, of course, there's always Bosstones business to attend to, including the recent departure of long-time Bosstones sax player Kevin Lenear.

"Kevin has other things he wants to do," Barrett explains. "I wish him the best. There are no hard feelings. He was with us for six or seven years. It's a long time for something like



Central Square, has helped fuel rumors that the Middle East may not be long for this part of town.

"Do they need my help?" Dicky asks. "I've got some good lawyers. I'm not saying they're the most above-board guys, but when you need them in there, they're great."

Barrett has been keeping himself out of trouble since the Bosstones returned from this summer's Warped Tour by assisting a Boston little league baseball team sponsored by the band. "We've been helping out with donations and fund-raisers, and now that I have some time off from the band I've started going to all the games and meeting the kids. The coach of

this. This isn't a 40-hour a week job. You finish the day at 2 a.m. and you're up the next day at 8 a.m. to catch the bus. I don't know if we're going to replace him, but the two tenor saxes and a trombone horn section is a signature part of the Bosstone sound so it's something we have to think about."

In the meantime, Barrett is looking forward to some time off. "After ten years on the road it's nice to take a breather, take inventory, think about where we want to go next. It's tough to say what we're going to do. We haven't scheduled the next record yet. Actually, the next thing we do as a band will probably be another Hometown Throwdown."

Accidental Tourists

SLOWLY REALIZING THAT THEY'RE A REAL BAND, PRESS-SHY SCOTTISH GROUP BELLE & SEBASTIAN IS FINALLY HITTING THE ROAD.

"Cavalier" isn't the word for it. Things looked ridiculously promising for the Scottish octet Belle & Sebastian last year: Its two New York City shows were the must-see gigs of the CMJ MusicFest; its second album, *If You're Feeling Sinister*, was near the top of even mainstream critics' top-ten lists; singer Stuart Murdoch even had his picture in *Entertainment Weekly*, for crying out loud. So it's a bit of a surprise, then, that *The Boy With The Arab Strap*, the group's first record for Matador, is considerably less immediate than its predecessor. "This record has been the most

successful or be us," and that until recently didn't have promotional photos that featured anyone who was actually in the group. Even odder, Jackson says that the response of the British music press, which has treated the band with palsy hostility in the past ("It would be quite interesting to know why a 29-year-old man [Murdoch] is writing in the style of a disaffected teenager," the *NME* sniffed last year), "has been really positive."

These reactions are a natural result of the mainstreaming of a band that's willfully maintained obscurity in the past (indeed,

very much Belle & Sebastian's prerogative to move in mysterious ways.

As in the new album's title, for instance. Jackson is quick to point out that he doesn't really know anyone in the group Arab Strap, which is also Scottish, and says that "the album is titled that because it seemed to go best with the cover photo," which is of a Scottish man with some sort of pole stuck up against his chest. (The song of the same name, he says, "is a whole different thing.") Or in that the band is about to go on its first tour, five years after it formed. While previous Belle & Sebastian shows have been craphoots—sublime in New York; a complete mess a couple months later in Manchester, England—the band has been practicing nearly every day now. "A year ago, we'd go six weeks without seeing the other members," says Jackson. "For a long time it's just not been like being in a band at all."

On the band's first two records, Murdoch wrote and sang all the songs. This time, though, Jackson and cellist Isobel Campbell both contributed songs (Jackson wrote and sang "Chickfactor" and "Seymour Stein"; Campbell's entry is the lovely "Is It Wicked Not To Care?"). Most likely, the group's attempt to become an ongoing concern is why *The Boy With The Arab Strap* feels a bit disconnected the first time you hear it. It's a portrait of a band growing into its acclaim; three or four listens in, its quality begins to reveal itself.

This fall, Belle & Sebastian will play a month's worth of shows in Europe and seven or eight in America, a prospect that thrills Jackson, who says that New York is "just my most favorite place I've ever been. Growing up, you're kind of brought up in Americana here—going to New York was such a spiritual thing. Just the mundane things: the yellow cabs, you know, bagel and coffee for a dollar."

"Personally, I'd love to go and tour for six months," he continues. "But there's eight people in the band. The last couple years have been people finishing their studies at university. We've just kind of been part-time. This period that we're going into now, it's the first time I've ever really... felt full-time about it."

>>> Andrew Beaujon



L-R: JACKSON, CAMPBELL

difficult," says Stevie Jackson, the group's lead guitarist, speaking on the phone from his home in Glasgow. "I just wasn't sure that the songs were as good or something. But to be honest with you," he adds, "whenever we make a record, I kind of get depressed about it. Because I just think it could be a lot better."

Some of the Belle & Sebastian's fans agree. Internet lists devoted to the band are ablaze with claims that for some reason it left its best songs off the record, that it's selling out, that the title of the set's first song, "It Could Have Been A Brilliant Career," is some sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. This is the band, after all, that sang, "You could either be

Murdoch still refuses to do interviews). On one hand, you have the suited villains chanting "one of us, one of us," on the other, the slighted fans who feel that something as precious as Belle & Sebastian's music belongs only to them. Jackson, for his part, could really care less what anyone thinks. "If people like it, they like it. If they don't, they don't. We try and do what we want to do and try not to listen too much to negative stuff, as well as to praise and flattery. I don't think any of it gets you anywhere." Not listening to outside opinions has already brought the combo a following that treats it with a fervor usually reserved for emerging religions. It is

LABEL PROFILE

"Now Is The Time," the 1994 first single for both the Crystal Method and its then-fledgling label City Of Angels, couldn't have been more appropriately titled. The track launched the Crystal Method on its way to crossover success, and sent notice that there was now a domestic label producing American electronic artists amidst the onslaught of imports. "We didn't want to run it like a rave or techno label," says Steven Melrose, who founded the company four years ago with fellow Brit Justin King. "We develop bands, put them on stage, on the road. So when the record comes out, people have heard of our bands. A licensed record? There's no support. The people that put it out are in some other country." Much of the label's still mostly American roster—acts such as Überzone, Simply Jeff and newly signed BT—can be heard on its latest release, *White Noise Vol. 2*.

WEIRD RECORD

Thomas Edison originally conceived of the phonograph as a way for people to record their voices for others to hear—music was only incidental to its intended purpose. For a long time, machines that could cut records to send as presents were commercially available—most notably the Recordio player, whose discs can still



sometimes be found at flea markets and estate sales. *One Of One: Snapshots In Sound* (Dish Recordings) collects 23 Recordio discs: messages to boys in the Army, a fellow named Bill Long playing a folk-blues version of vespers on his guitar, somebody telling a story about a bear, a baby being encouraged to make some noise, an inarticulate audio love letter from a man somewhere far away from his girlfriend. They're strangely personal moments to hear preserved, as compelling as reading an old, handwritten letter.

>>> Douglas Wolk

BUZZ WORD

PRODUCT MANAGER Refers to the person at a label who, for his or her designated artists, coordinates all of the label's activities surrounding that artist. Unlike the A&R person, the product manager doesn't get involved in the recording process or creative decisions surrounding the music itself. Instead, the product manager is like the artist's manager within the label. Whether making sure the album artwork gets done or suggesting and facilitating possible press opportunities or marketing ideas for the artist, the product manager communicates with all of the departments at the label to make sure that the artist's best interests are being represented.

Hi-Fi Killers

JACK DRAG'S FOUR-TRACK MIND 

J. P. DRAGONETTI, SUTTER, KLOMPUS

SCOTT SCHAEFER

Some of the people who have heard our new album have said, 'Oh my god, what did this major label do to you guys?'" admits John Dragonetti, the singer/guitarist of the Boston trio Jack Drag. That reaction probably has something to do with the fact that after releasing several pop-savvy indie albums, including a 1995 collection of Dragonetti's solo four-track recordings, Jack Drag (Dragonetti, bassist Joe Klompus and drummer Jason Sutter) has taken the expected big-budget studio plunge on its major label debut, *Dopebox* (A&M), with some rather unexpected results. For starters there are the, well, rather Bush-like abraded guitar and vocal textures on the disc's first couple of tunes. And then there's the DJ scratching on the album's first single, "Seem So Tired," credited to Dan "The Automator" Nakamura and Master Cylinder.

"All those songs were going to be that way anyway," explains Dragonetti, who adds that he's got the demo tapes to prove it. "I've always been into more produced records, by which I mean more interestingly produced records. The four-track was something that I used because that's what I was able to afford. If I'd had a big old 16-track machine then that's what I would have been using all along."

Indeed, even for the *Dopebox* sessions, which he co-produced with Chris Shaw, Dragonetti found himself using his trusty four-track. As he explains, "In order to get certain drum sounds that I wanted, I ended up setting up my little four-track in the corner of the studio because there were just certain sounds I knew I could get with the four-track. And then we'd just channel that through to the 24-track."

Which is not to imply that a fair amount of high-tech studio twiddling didn't also go into creating *Dopebox*, especially the nearly six-minute track "Kung Fu Dub" tacked on at the end of the disc. And ultimately, it's in the realm of recording that Dragonetti feels most comfortable creatively. "The live thing is okay, and we try to make it as exciting as we can—especially now that we're breaking in all this new sampling gear. But mainly I'm interested in making interesting recordings."

>>> Matt Ashare



"SEEM SO TIRED" BY JACK DRAG APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

Don't Shoot The Player Piano

FIREWATER'S MECHANICAL ANIMALS ★

ASHLEY, FRONT AND CENTER



"I have two pathological fears," confesses Firewater's Tod Ashley. "One is repeating myself, and the other is boring people." Since staggering forth with the ferocious band Cop Shoot Cop ten years ago, he's sidestepped both. But since he's launched Firewater, a musical head-on collision between Eastern Europe, the Weimar Republic, New Orleans and NYC's Lower East Side, Ashley's lyrical style has noticeably evolved beyond the didactic, "semi-automatic" writing his previous band favored.

"So Long, Superman," from the group's sophomore LP *The Ponzi Scheme* (recently re-released via Universal), offers a prime example of his fascination with "hard luck stories" and "small acts of heroism." "That was inspired by a newspaper article I read, right after Christopher Reeves had his accident. It was directed at parents of young children, telling them how they should explain why Superman is in a wheelchair." Ashley ruminated on how the tragedy would impact other, less-glamorous lives. "It's the story of Superman's stunt double leaving Hollywood, because he's unemployed."

When Firewater concludes its current nationwide tour, the band will begin work on a new LP. Ashley's considering using primitive mechanical instruments, such as player piano, as a leitmotiv throughout. He's even purchased a restored calliope on which to hammer out his demented carousel waltzes. "Now I have to figure out how to get it into the studio."

Composing ditties that have to be transposed to paper punch-rolls to be realized poses a significant challenge, but Ashley is undaunted. "I've never understood the idea of doing something that's been done before. To consciously go out and say 'We're going to be a ska band' just seems completely and utterly pointless to me."

Well, it does sell records. Save Ferris could probably afford multiple calliopes right about now. "Fuck the lowest common denominator," concludes Ashley. "We're not interested in that at all."

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



"SO LONG, SUPERMAN" BY FIREWATER APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

IN MY ROOM

JULIE RUIN

a.k.a. Kathleen Hanna

- Mr. Lady record label and video distribution
- Sadie Benning (Video) *Flat Is Beautiful*
- Sarah Lucia Hoagland (Book) *Lesbian Ethics*
- Riot Girl Press (the all new version)
- Laura Cottingham (Video) *Not For Sale*, with music by Yoko Ono



CRYSTAL METHOD

Ken Jordan

- Stevie Wonder "Livin' For The City"
- Silicone/Saline
- Massive Attack *Mezzanine*
- Jerry Springer
- Jose Cuervo



from the freezer with lime and salt

RANDOM QUOTE

"We go on tour and sit around and say, 'I'm gonna miss my asta maria,' or 'I'm gonna miss my lilies.' They're fixin' to bloom, and you leave town and you come back and they're about done. I talk to my wife about it—how's this or that doing? She'll say, 'Oh, you should see the hollyhock, it's going great guns!'"

>>> **TOM MAXWELL** of *Squirrel Nut Zippers*, on the band's horticultural pursuits

"I used to think 'brise' was pronounced 'brie.' Like it was French or something. I auditioned for this play when I was 14 years old and the script had the word 'brise' in it, which I kept pronouncing 'brie.' At the end the guy said to me, 'Look, it's pronounced Brisssssss.'"

>>> **BEN STILLER**, on *circumcision and other rude awakenings*

TOURS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

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Q&A HENRY ROLLINS

HENRY ROLLINS'S LATEST RELEASE IS *THINK TANK* (DREAMWORKS), A DOUBLE-CD PAIRING TWO OF HIS TALKING SHOWS. ONE HIGHLIGHT IS "THE GAY THING," A 14-MINUTE MONOLOGUE IN WHICH ROLLINS ADDRESSES PERSISTENT RUMORS OF HIS HOMOSEXUALITY. MARKED WITH HIS CHARACTERISTIC BLEND OF BLUSTERY HUMOR AND TEMPERED OUTRAGE, THE PIECE OFFERS A DISARMING EXAMINATION OF HOMOPHOBIA IN AMERICA.

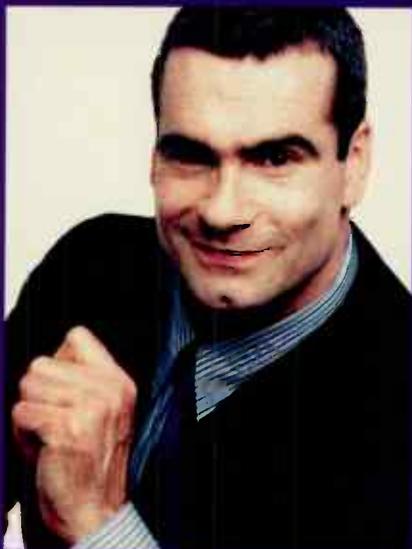
>>> Kurt B. Reighley

Q: Have you gotten a lot of positive feedback from gay men and lesbians about "The Gay Thing"?

A: Yes. Sexual orientation is all laundry to me. As long as what you're into isn't a dog or a kid, get it over with. I don't care. If you hit on me, and you're not my bolt of cloth, I just say, "No thank you." I get hit on by gay guys all the time. It's a compliment. They don't hit on you because you look dumpy. They're going, "Wcw, that guy is hot!" So I just smile and make the guy know I'm not pissed off. But I notice a lot of homophobia in America, so I address it, especially at universities. Someone young people respect, or they're at least going to sit with for an evening, should say something about it.

Q: Do people have trouble grasping the fact that you can be misanthropic and optimistic at the same time?

A: To be misanthropic, on at least a certain level, is to be aware of the fact that things aren't all that great all the time, and there's a job to be done. All is not well. If all were well, there wouldn't be guys shooting each other in high school. There are issues to be addressed. When you say, "Oh, everything's all right," then you sound like one of *The Stepford Wives*. That's being part of the problem. It depends on where you come from. If you're a rich kid brought up in Beverly Hills, and you don't venture out of that neighborhood, life is pretty nice. But at this point in this country, it's a privilege to be cultured and somewhat civilized, and not enraged and potentially dangerous. That's why when I do university gigs, I beat up these students about it: "There are kids living in really shitty parts of America who will never get a chance to sit where you are, and they really want to. But their reality is going to be working at Burger King or getting shot in the face." So take advantage of this time to educate yourself, for your own sake, and to ensure we don't release another dummy into the world. Because America releases so many dangerous, dumb motherfuckers.



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Fatboy Slim
The Pockhammer Skank
DJ Shadow
The Number Song
Pizzicato Five
Twiggy Twiggy
De La Soul
Jenifa Taught Me
(Berwin's Revenge)

SIDE TWO:

Tricky
Hell Is Around The
Corner
Massive Attack
Teardrop
Foo Fighters
I'm On Your Back
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PJ HARVEY

Is This Desire?

Island

Back in '95 Polly Jean Harvey put aside the guitar that she'd been hiding her small frame behind and reinvented herself as a larger than life frontwoman in a blood-red dress for her third studio album *Rid Of Me* and the subsequent tour. She also abandoned the punkish blues and woman-on-the-verge-of-a-nervous-breakdown intensity of her first two albums for a more refined sort of psychodrama and the dark techno textures of producers Flood and John Parish. Flood is back on *Is This Desire?*—you can hear his influence in the disc's *Achtung Baby*-style abraded bass and drum tones—but so is Harvey's guitar and the sense of impending hysteria that fueled her first two albums. More than ever she brings to mind Nick Cave on the disc's opening cut "Angeline," a disjointed picture of a woman who's "the prettiest mess you ever seen" set against a bluesy backdrop. But it's always been much harder with Harvey than with Cave to tell where the character acting ends and the soul bearing begins. So it's just plain chilling to hear Harvey ranting like the lovechild of Patti Smith and Iggy Pop over Flood's rushing techno beats on "The Sky Lit Up," sketching a fractured portrait of suicide in the harsh and noisy "My Beautiful Leah," and repeating a line like "I damn to hell every second you breathe" on an otherwise subdued tune like "Catherine."

>>> *Matt Ashare*



OUT: September 29.

FILE UNDER:

Woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

R.I.Y.L.:

Nick Cave, Patti Smith, Iggy Pop.

764-HERO

Get Here And Stay

Up

People used to stand around the Velvet Elvis Theater in Seattle and wonder what to call the young vegan bands that played pretty, pretty, loud, loud music. Somebody settled on emo and unfortunately it stuck. Though it hasn't garnered the national attention that Sub Pop's grunge dynasty did, Seattle's emo scene has produced the city's most interesting current music (Modest Mouse) and labels (Up and Rx Remedy). Emo veteran John Atkins's 764-Hero overturns the loud/soft schema and weaves a subtler cloth of glittering guitars, wending vocals and psychedelic interludes. Where old school emo relied upon well-placed screams to heighten the effect, 764-Hero dispenses with the bombast and spices these sophisticated songs with shivering, anesthetic intervals. Clues left behind suggest Atkins has been listening to the Beatles' melodies and the Cocteau Twins' guitars, but lets his own drifting, romantic style take the lead. His world-weary voice is nestled deep into this clear-headed recording, which captures the crispness of Polly Johnson's snap-tight drumming and James Bertram's melodic bass playing. An intriguing blend of pure pop and complex arrangements, this is what I'd venture a Nirvana record would have sounded like in 1998.

>>> *Lois Maffeo*



OUT: October 20.

FILE UNDER:

The sounds of young Seattle.

R.I.Y.L.:

Modest Mouse, Built To Spill, Red Stars Theory.

AFGHAN WHIGS

1965

Columbia

Afghan Whigs frontman Greg Dulli has always walked a very thin line between pointed self-loathing and swaggering sexual pomp. He's the infatuating, sneering asshole whom all the girls are tempted by despite themselves, as well as the literate, forlorn victim, a duality that supplies his tortured crooning with unequal dashes of desperation and arrogance. *1965*, the Whigs' sixth album, finds Dulli's physical voice at its most soulful and ragged, and his lyrical one at probably its most blunt, with lustful come-ons being the album's stock-in-trade. It's the Dulli Whigs' fans have come to know and love in all his self-involved glory. But despite the undeniable charisma driving his posturing, it would all turn into a cartoonish shtick if it weren't for the band's astounding chops. Once a boozy hurricane of '70s rock and post-punk influences, the Whigs' sound on *1965* finally makes good on the classic soul and R&B influences that have been flavoring the band's work for years now, resulting in a nearly flawless marriage of rump-shakin' rock 'n' roll and raw, soulful heartache. There are plenty of gooey, "Ooh, baby, baby" moments here, but the Whigs are one of the few rock bands with the distinct mix of style, brains and cajones to pull off that kind of thing and still sound like they mean it.

>>> *Colin Helms*



OUT: October 20.

FILE UNDER:

Lothario garage-soul.

R.I.Y.L.:

Early Prince, the Stones' *Some Girls*, Pearl Jam's *Vs.*



NEOTROPIC

Mr. Brubaker's Strawberry Alarm Clock

N Tone-Ninja Tune

Quick! Name a female DJ or electronic artist. Not easy, is it? In all the hubbub about "women in rock," the testosterone-infused beat world has remained squarely in guyville. Neotropic, though, is the creation of one Ms. Riz Maslen, who also records under the guise Small Fish With Spine. Granted, it would be tough to identify the creator of this largely instrumental music as female, but there is *something* different about Neotropic, some unidentifiable characteristic separating it from the avalanche of electronic releases. The tracks on the inspired *Mr. Brubaker's Strawberry Alarm Clock*, Maslen's first full-length as Neotropic, are creatively varied enough that the album never runs out of energy, a success itself given its 75-minute length. The record is filled with perfect, unique beats, a thick pulse, and so much texture that it nearly gags on itself from time to time. On the surface the recipe sounds familiar—beats, samples galore and a personality—but Neotropic's got something else, too: an obvious attention to the minutiae, the patience to examine them, and the desire to communicate the unspeakable with pinpoint accuracy, all of which combine to create one of the most interesting, and beautiful, beat-based records of the year.

>>> Randall Roberts

OUT: October 20.

FILE UNDER:

Magical beatbox.

R.I.Y.L.:

Coldcut, Drain, Amon Tobin.



PINETOP SEVEN



Rigging The Toplights

Truckstop

The intermingling of rural and urban American music has spawned some of the most intriguing art of the 20th century; the constant push and pull of nature-smarts and book-smarts tugs at a uniquely American heartstring, and in the process opens a world of tense variation. Toss in all the regional variations—from the foothills to the desert to the plains to the pavement—and it seems a mystery that any two bands sound the same. Chicago (via Nashville) country band Pinetop Seven struggles with this urban/rural tension, mixing strange rhythms into its dense country music; marimbas mess with loops and snares for supremacy, while acoustic guitars, accordions, banjos and bass clarinets add glorious pull to the songs, pounding melody inside the floorboards while propelling the songs forward. The result is strangely cinematic—perhaps because Pinetop Seven owes a debt to the soundtrack excursions of Spaghetti Western-era Ennio Morricone—and fills the room with sound. There's so much texture and rhythm on *Rigging The Toplights* that it's a wonder the Seven can get a word or melody in edge-wise, but they do, and the whole is remarkable and highly recommended.

>>> Randall Roberts

OUT: September 29.

FILE UNDER:

Best Western.

R.I.Y.L.:

Lambchop, Ennio Morricone, Calexico, Latin Playboys.



JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION

Acme

Matador-Capitol

Jon Spencer drives his Blues Explosion like it's a vehicle he's not afraid to wreck, and the result is an admirable sort of recklessness—admirable, that is, if you don't have a particular reverence for the territory the JSBX careens through. *Acme*, the group's fifth record, is blues-y, Stones-y and funky, and is even successfully soulful. Still, Spencer plays fast and loose with traditions and clichés alike, exploiting them for their rhythm and sex appeal in a way that makes you wonder if he's trying to get his tongue in his cheek or yours. For all that, a record had better rock outrageously hard, and thankfully, *Acme* does. The twin-guitar-no-bass attack is in fine form, with Spencer and Judah Bauer tangling blues riffs into a funky knot of pure rhythm, the mattress-rocking effect of which is nicely augmented by Russell Simins's spare skin pounding. There's the usual messiness (bursts of noise, misplaced hip-hop samples), but things are generally less fractious than on 1996's *Now I Got Worry*. Spencer's vocals, too, seem relatively refined, adding an impressive cocked-eyebrow croon to his usual reverbed exhortations about the prowess of his band. And on "Talk About The Blues," he leaves no doubt as to what that prowess is: "The blues is #1/I don't play no blues/I play... rock 'n' roll."

>>> Scott Frampton

OUT: October 20.

FILE UNDER:

Amped-up mutant blues.

R.I.Y.L.:

R.L. Burnside, Griffers, Lowell Fulson.





Becky Never Got to Vote on the Law that Killed Her

Since June 1990, the Supreme Court has clamped down on a young women's right to legal abortion. More than 39 states have passed parental consent and notification laws requiring women under 18 to tell their parents before having an abortion.

Becky Bell was a victim Indiana's parental consent law. Unwilling to disappoint her parents, Becky sought a back alley abortion and died at age 17 from a massive infection.

Congress is now debating the so-called "Child Custody Protection" Act. This law prohibits anyone from taking a young woman across state lines for an abortion if she lives in a state that requires parental consent. Help stop this deadly law.

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World Radio History



baxter

Swedish trio Baxter is the next great entry in the electronica songstress category. The sensuality of its slithery programmed beats and Nina Ramsby's breathy jadedness on Baxter's self-titled debut (*Maverick*) was accidental. "We just had an open, nice calm emotion in the studio," says Carl Herlofsson, who along with Ricky Tillblad (also an award-winning graphic designer) are the minds behind the beats. The opening song, "Television," is an exercise in slick detachment, both vocally and musically. "Just tell me once again if you have dreams of me becoming you," Ramsby sings flatly on "I Can't See Why," the subtly twisted single for which the band recently shot a video. Ramsby, formerly of Salt, brings a harder, less slippery approach to song structure than Baxter's British counterparts/influences, Portishead and Massive Attack. For its upcoming US tour, Baxter will be working with a live drum and bass section, including bassist Desmond Foster (of David Byrne's band). "We don't want to lose that cold, trancey feel of the loops and programmed beats," says Herlofsson. "But we also want to keep open the possibility of improvisation, with the whole audience there." >>> Anne Marie Cruz

granddaddy

If it weren't for Jason Lytle's bum knee, Granddaddy might have never formed. Eleven years ago, Lytle was a promising young skateboarder who had a corporate sponsorship funding his jaunts to half-pipes around the country. A couple of years later, he sustained a knee injury that forced him to quit the sport; songwriting—a considerably less perilous hobby—soon took the place of 'boarding and, in 1991, Lytle and some friends from Modesto, California, began playing together as Granddaddy. Taking its most noticeable cues from Pavement, the quintet writes quirky indie-pop songs whose hooks poke their way through a thick, fuzzy blanket of twangy guitar parts. Lytle, meanwhile, has a delicate, high-pitched voice that, at its best moments, recalls Neil Young's. The group's second album, *Under The Western Freeway* (originally released on Seattle indie Will, but recently re-released by the band's new label, V2), saw its biggest successes in England, where it recently performed as a Reading Festival main-stage act. Granddaddy will be touring the States this fall and will release a new album next year.



>>> Jenny Eliscu

cirrus

With the release of its second album, *Back On A Mission* (Moonshine), LA-based techno-cum-rock group Cirrus follows in the footsteps of other electronic artists who have discovered popular success among rock fans with the energetic hybrid, "rocktronica." Unlike many electronic artists, Cirrus boasts an exhilarating live act, setting a three-man front (including a guitarist/synthesist, a bassist/keyboardist and a drummer/lead singer) against rousing pre-programmed loops. The group toured heavily this past summer, with Thrill Kill Kult and on the Moonshine Over America tour, rocking crowds and receiving critical acclaim from the likes of the *LA Times*. Cirrus's sound is high-energy breaks and breakneck vocals, landing somewhere between the Beastie Boys and the Crystal Method. With a live show that gives alt-rockers something to sink their teeth into, and riffs that can groove ravers and electrophiles alike, look for Cirrus to continue to influence—and enhance—the shifting definitions of "electronic music."

>>> William Werde



ALL NEW TRACKS BY:

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Natalie Merchant
Finley Quaye
Sinead O'Connor
Spearhead
Davina
Hubert Laws
The Roots

REDHOT *Rhapsody*

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Bobby Womack
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ANTILLES

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JOE'S



on again

SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE

Sunny Day Real Estate could have been the band to save alternative rock's post-Nirvana soul, but decided to save its own instead.

People started lining up outside Seattle's Moore Theatre as early as 4:30 in the afternoon on the day of Sunny Day Real Estate's first performance since its break-up four years ago. They all had tickets; they just wanted to make sure they'd be front and center for the show. Some had traveled from San Francisco or Los Angeles, but most were Seattle-ites, eager to see their hometown boys together again. When the Theatre opened its doors at 7 p.m., the line was snaking all the way around the building, down to the next block. A couple of hours later, as the band took the stage, the crowd thundered with floor-rumbling applause.

Despite the sense of anticipation that made this more than just a rock show, but an event—the return of a band whose dramatic, emotional take on punk rock drew comparisons to Nirvana and spawned a slew of young copycat bands—Sunny Day didn't play any of its old songs until the encore. Instead the quartet played its new album, *How It Feels To Be Something On* (Sub Pop), almost in its entirety.

"I wasn't so worried that people wouldn't like the songs as much as that people would be disappointed that we didn't come out with all the old hits, not that we had many," says guitarist Dan Hoerner, reflecting on the show two days later. "It was kind of scary to throw down our whole record in front of them." *How It Feels* is markedly different from the group's other two records; it's more moody and intricate, less explosive. But nodding from its reverent silence between songs, the crowd didn't mind a bit.

"They're different," drummer William Goldsmith offers of the new songs, "but they have to be different, because a lot of strange shit happened over a few years there."

Strange shit, indeed. Sunny Day Real Estate formed back in '91 as a three-piece with Hoerner on vocals and guitar, Goldsmith on drums and Nate Mendel on bass, but rose to notoriety with a young, captivating vocalist named Jeremy Enigk. The band broke up in 1994, shortly after releasing its brilliant debut album, *Diary*, when Enigk's religious awakening prompted him to quit the band and go into seclusion. Amid a flurry of rumors, he posted to the Sunny Day Real Estate email newsgroup: "Jesus isn't anything that I want to compromise with for he is far more important than [sic] this music, financial security or popularity could ever be."

"Sunny Day probably would have broken up even if Jeremy didn't quit," says Hoerner, who moved out to a farm with his wife after the band split. "He quit. He was in a really intense time in his life and just quit. But I needed Sunny Day to break up, more than anything in the world, because I needed to find my thing. Which I found. My path. And William and Nate did amazing things, for the better or for the worse, but it was still intense," he continues, referring to Goldsmith and Mendel's joining the Foo Fighters, with whom Mendel still plays. (For the current Sunny Day line-up, he's been replaced by former Mommyheads bassist Jeff Palmer.) "Everybody needed to get away from Sunny

(Continued on page 57)



"PILLARS" BY SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

World Radio History

STORY: LYDIA VANDERLOO

PHOTOS: KIM APLEY

KAHIMI KARIE

big in japan

Albums by Cornelius and Pizzicato Five have made a name for Japanese pop in the US. Now it's time to make way for the style's First Lady.

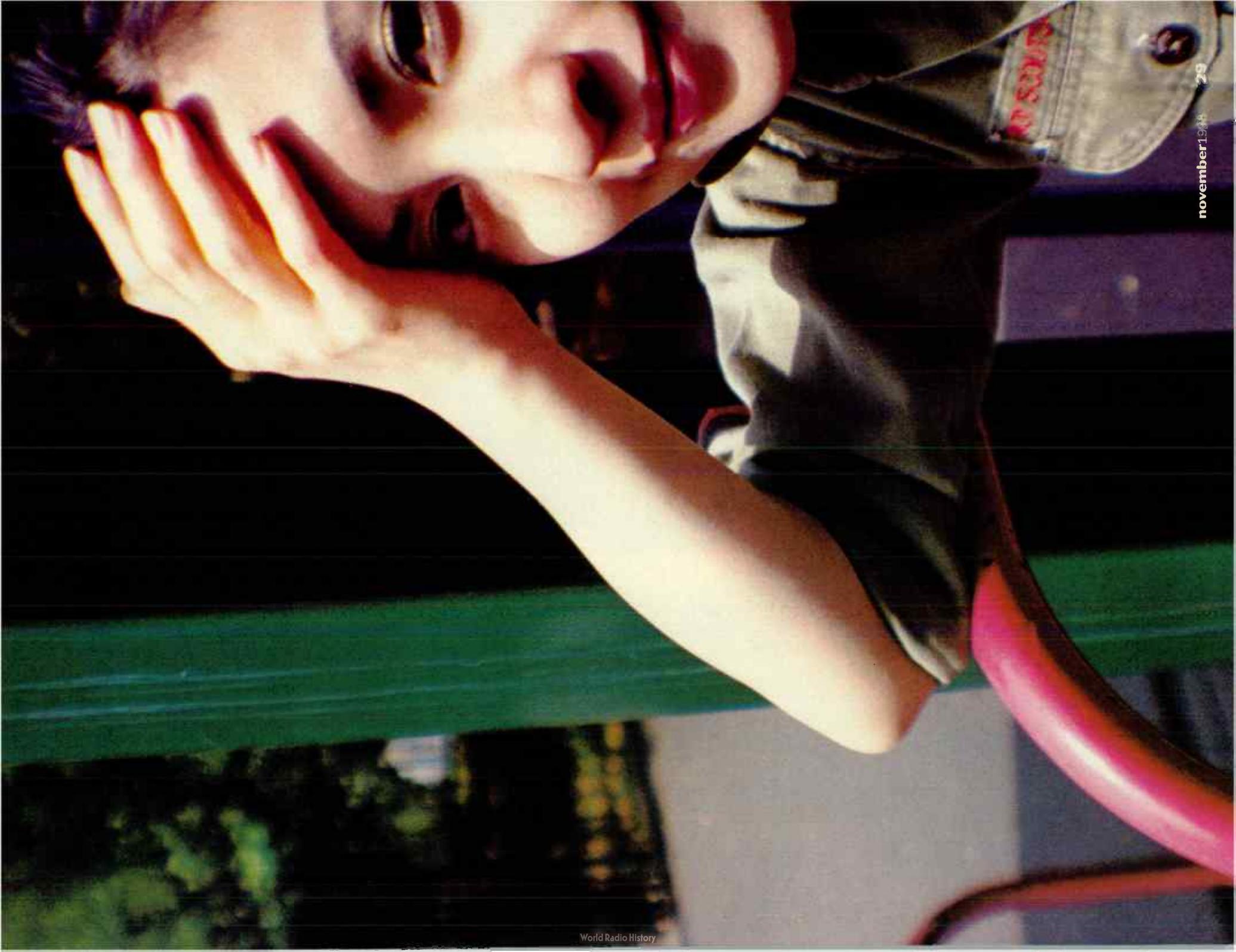
"Put some makeup on your face/Make this world a better place," sings Japanese pop starlet Kahimi Karie on "Good Morning World," a chart-topping hit that was later used in a cosmetics commercial in her native country. Given Karie's stylishly campy, yet very modern sounding pop, you could hardly blame gaggles of fresh-scrubbed Japanese girls for dashing out to the shops, hoping to improve their surroundings by donning eye shadow and blush. You'd have to dig pretty deep to find a core of irony beneath the tiny frame of this well-groomed singer, but it's also easy enough to tell there's more to Kahimi Karie's cutesy persona than meets the eye.

"I never think I would be a pop singer, not at all," admits Kahimi, taking in some lovely August sunshine outside a café in New York, where she's come to speak with writers about her first US collection, simply titled *Kahimi Karie* (Minty Fresh). Finishing the thought through her translator, she says, "I am still not sure if I'm a professional or an amateur. I just make whatever I feel, whatever I imagine." In conversation, Kahimi is pleasant and forthcoming, speaking English in a somewhat strained, careful manner, becoming especially exuberant if the topic is her bands of choice—"My favorite is Belle & Sebastian. I like [singer Stuart Murdoch] as an artist, not only as a musician." But as soon as the tape deck and sheetful of questions emerge, she looks anxiously to her translator, who also struggles a bit with English. Kahimi's ideas come through best, however, when she tries her own at the language, which she does often, until she gets muddled by word choices and switches to Japanese.

On record, however, Karie doesn't sing in Japanese. Most of her songs are in English, and a few are in French. Many of her early songs were products of collaborations with Keigo Oyamada, a.k.a. Cornelius. "It was really great [working with him]," she recalls in English, "because he has big talents and I'm a big fan of Cornelius. But sometimes it was difficult because I was a girlfriend of Keigo, so it's easy to fight!" Whether or not tensions ran high in the studio, the two produced some of her best songs, including "Candyman," "Elastic Girl" and "Mike Always's Diary," a fan-oriented song about the owner of British indie El Records.

Cornelius's *Fantasma*, released in the US earlier this year, introduced many Americans to Japan's distinctive take on indie-pop, combining samples with buzzing guitars reminiscent of My Bloody Valentine and chiming, Beach Boys-inflected harmonies. He emerges almost as an indie kid brother to the more sophisticated sounds of another of his country's musical exports, Pizzicato Five. Karie's aural melange relies more heavily on classic European traditions, notably French chanteuses such as Françoise Hardy and France Gall, and "especially Serge Gainsbourg," Kahimi gushes of the French mastermind behind many such singers. His jazz- and Latin-inspired, sexually charged songs emerge as a keen influence on Karie; she even included a cover of his song "Sérieux Comme Le Plaisir" on her American album.

(Continued on page 35)





distant rumblings

SON VOLT

What do you do for an encore when your first band unwittingly kicked off an entire country rock movement? Jay Farrar's Son Volt just puts out records, and hopes they speak for themselves

An army tank greets you as you enter Millstadt, Illinois. It's right there on the side of the road, just past a tiny peach and tomato stand and fields of up-to-your-eyes corn. The tank is a bit jarring, not the friendliest welcome mat to out-of-towners.

Although Millstadt is only 25 minutes from St. Louis, the drive seems farther. The view flip-flops dramatically in that time: From the industrial urbanity of St. Louis you cross the Mississippi right by the Arch, exit at East St. Louis, drive south past a strip club or two, a few vacant strip malls and some factories with mazes of pipes winding around themselves. Within moments you're out of the urban and in the rural. It happens immediately, without the usual suburbs to signal the change.

Son Volt recorded its new album, *Wide Swing Tremolo* (Warner Bros.), at its practice space in Millstadt. "It's a large warehouse owned by the guy who runs the hardware store in town," says Jay Farrar, sitting in a booth at Uncle Bill's diner in South City, the working class part of St. Louis, where he lives. It's the first time Farrar has recorded so close to home, either with Son Volt or with his first band, Uncle Tupelo, which sprang from Belleville, Illinois, 15 minutes west of here.

Farrar, who writes and sings Son Volt's songs, is notoriously soft spoken. When asked a question, he looks down at the table and there's silence, as though he's engineering his response brick by brick. His eyes then lock onto yours, where they stay until he's finished with the thought—usually no more than a solid sentence or two. Then they move away from you. But his demeanor is kind and thoughtful. He'll break into a little grin as he's answering a question, as if to acknowledge the absurdity of being tape-recorded in a diner. But he rarely rambles, even with other members of Son Volt.

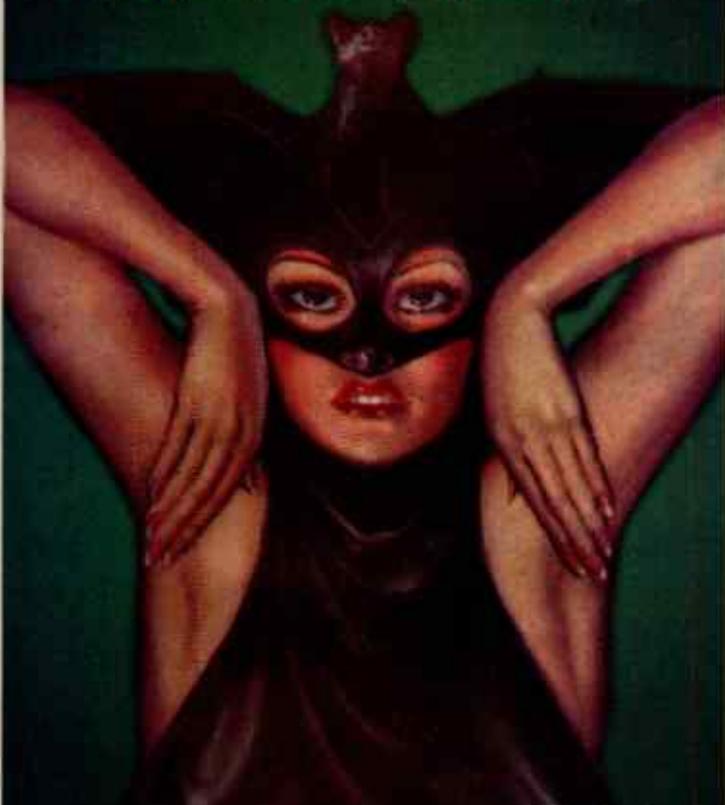
"We don't talk that much," says guitarist/multi-instrumentalist Dave Boquist, calling from his home in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he and his brother, Son Volt bassist Jim, live. "And I've had mixed feelings about that because sometimes I wish we would [talk] more. And then when things work out I think, 'Hey, maybe we shouldn't.' I guess, as things have gone along, I think you grow to trust somebody's m.o., you come to trust that when you see that it ultimately works. As long as respect is maintained between members, that's the most important thing, that you respect the way people operate. I can't say that I always like the distance that we have. That's difficult sometimes. Being up here in St. Paul and he and Mike [Hiedorn, Son Volt's drummer] being in St. Louis. Physical distance—I feel that. Fortunately, when we get together I think we all enjoy each other's musical tastes so much that when we actually get down to work, there's not a lot that has to be said at that point."

This physical distance obviously makes rehearsing more of a task than if all four members lived in the same city. To compensate Farrar sends missives to St. Paul from St. Louis. "Generally the way it has worked for the last three recordings," says Farrar, "is that I come up with the songs and work them out on demo tape. And I send a tape to the guys in Minneapolis. And then when we convene in the studio it's a fairly interactive situation." *Wide Swing Tremolo* was made over the course of nearly a year, with the band recording for a week or two at a time, usually prior to a tour.

Unlike Son Volt's previous records, *Trace* and *Straightaways*, which were recorded in professional studios on professional time, *Wide Swing Tremolo* reflects the mood and pace of Millstadt, as well as Farrar's quiet tone. Recording in

(Continued on page 57)

Weird Tales



The New Album
from

Fall
Tour!

Golden Smog

Golden Smog are

Kraig Johnson (Run Westy Run),
Gary Louris (The Jayhawks),
Dan Murphy (Soul Asylum),
Marc Perlman (The Jayhawks),
Jody Stephens (Big Star)
and **Jeff Tweedy** (Wilco).

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soul coughing

(Continued from page 32)

"It's '\$300,'" offers Doughty. "There's a part on his record where he goes, 'This is a joke I wrote in 1987' and it plays the joke backward, so I sampled it and reversed it. Mr. Rock has heard it and he approves. He loves it."

"The other ones are pretty hidden," De Gli Antoni says confidently. "There's no questionable infringement. To Daryl Hall I'd say, 'You find it, I'll gladly play you all the money you are owed.' To Tori Amos I would say, 'Go to the first record, you're on two songs. If you find it, it's all yours. Baby, go for it.' She won't find it..."

Perhaps the most startling track on *El Oso* is the chillingly lovely "Pensacola." Doughty transcends his trademark vocal delivery of adding "-uh" at the end of every word and, well, really sings. "That has everything to do with the voice," De Gli Antoni says. "It's the performance [Irresistible Bliss co-producer] David Kahne was trying to beat the crap out of him to get. He was drunk one night. We had some drinks in the studio and he was singing to tape. We were running a DAT and said, 'Just for the fuck of it, please do that voice.'"

The last track on *El Oso*, the sharp, unsettling "The Incumbent," is an experiment with Grooverider's engineer, Optical. "That was the first time we were truly 'produced,' where we had nothing to do with it," De Gli Antoni explains. "A jungle guy sampled us and it was fun because we'd needed to have that experience at least once."

Although the band has refined its recording process over time, it remains a challenge. The quartet nearly broke up during the *Irresistible Bliss* sessions, but internal tension may be what fuels the machine. "It used to be a lot more beating the shit out of each other, but we've played together so long..." De Gli Antoni murmurs.

"Oh, that's a lie," Doughty jumps in. "People still beat the shit out of each other. It's absolutely the same."

De Gli Antoni pauses before trying to explain the band's particular balance. "The four of us know what Soul Coughing is and when it's a Soul Coughing moment. It's an unspoken understanding. Usually we're all playing over it, but nonetheless, I think we knew early on. That's why the first record sounds the way it does."

"I think we're still trying to get over everyone's expectations of when we're going to turn in *that* record again because I'm just not interested," Doughty says exasperated. "The healthiest way of being in a band is to treat it like your job. There are great days when you can come in and do whatever you want to do and it's really satisfying. I learned how to be a musician basically by watching people at [New York club] the Knitting Factory... and it just sucks being pigeonholed in one band. It absolutely blows that you have to focus everything into one record that you make every two years."

As for side projects, Gabay appeared on Firewater's first album, and De Gli Antoni just did a remix for Herbie Hancock. Doughty has recorded a solo pop album with Kramer and self-published a chapbook of his writing. "I've been working on this long piece, but it keeps changing into other things," he laughs. "I keep saying, 'You're a house,' and it says, 'I'm not a house, I'm a bird.' So I say, 'All right, you're a bird, that's fine, you're a bird,' and it says, 'I've become a dinette set', and I say 'All right, why don't I just leave you be for a couple months, I'll come back. If you're still a dinette set, we can work something out.'"

In the years since *Ruby Vroom* broke through, a slew of bands has popped up with their interpretation of the Soul Coughing "sound," watering down the weirdness just enough for commercial radio.

"I don't think Cake sounded anything like us," Doughty challenges. "The very simple act of saying, 'I'm gonna rap, but I'm gonna totally de-blackify my voice and just do it as deadpan white as I can.' You don't need to be a prize-winning Nobel physicist to figure that one out. To me, the stuff that can be broadly simplified and caricatured is always the best stuff."

end

kahimi karie

(Continued from page 28)

Kahimi's admiration for all things French culminated in her move from Tokyo to Paris two years ago. "When I decided to move to Paris, that was exactly the time that my music was accepted by many people," she relates through the translator. "But I thought it was a good opportunity for me to see many different things, and that it would help me grow." Picking up in English herself, she continues: "So if I grow, maybe I can make a song more interesting than before. So I decide to move to Paris."

Since early on in her career, Karie has worked with British songwriter Momus, a.k.a. Nick Currie. Kahimi's style seems to coalesce very easily with Momus's, and their meeting came about in an equally natural way. "When he came to Japan to play for the first time, he found my record in the record store and he became my fan," she explains through the translator. "I had been a fan of Momus since I was in high school, but I didn't know he was my fan. We didn't know we were each other's fans for about six months. Eventually we found out through other fans. So the second time Momus came to Japan, he visited my home. He said he was going to write lyrics for me, and when he got home he wrote lyrics to seven songs in maybe two days," she says excitedly, switching into English. "He sent them to me in Japan, and I was really surprised! It was so fast. And it was perfect for me—the lyrics, the music. I remember I was too much excited when I found the demo tape in my postbox. 'Ah, it's perfect!'" she recalls of the moment. "It was really great [working with him]. I love his lyrics. He's a great poet."

Like Gainsbourg, Momus is also known for sexually provocative songs, so when songs like "Good Morning World"—"Good morning world/It's so nice to be a beautiful girl"—and "Lolipop Dollhouse" are brought to life by Karie's breathy, high-pitched vocals, it's clear the songs are working on more than one level. But Karie, who turned 30 this year and used to have a career as a fashion photographer, isn't oblivious to the songs' meanings. It might seem as though she's playing the roll of a teenaged Lolita when she sings, "Candyman/Everybody say you're too old for me/Candyman/But, sweetest, charming, perfect for me/Let's go" ("Candyman"), but she insists it's not so calculated. "I feel like it's part of myself. I wrote 'Candyman' myself. It's about six or seven years old, but I think I haven't changed since then."

Momus assisted Kahimi with her Japanese single "Lolipop Dollhouse," on which she sings much more strident lines like, "I'm sick of being Alice in Wonderland/Sick of living in Victorian England/I'm sick of being a porcelain girl/In a porcelain world/Is that all you ever wanted me to be?" "It's not only for women," Karie explains of the lyrics through the translator. "It's for old people and of both sexes. It's not so much a rejection of something as a desire to go beyond the accepted standard, the typical image of both sexes." Finishing in her own English, she adds, "To be free."

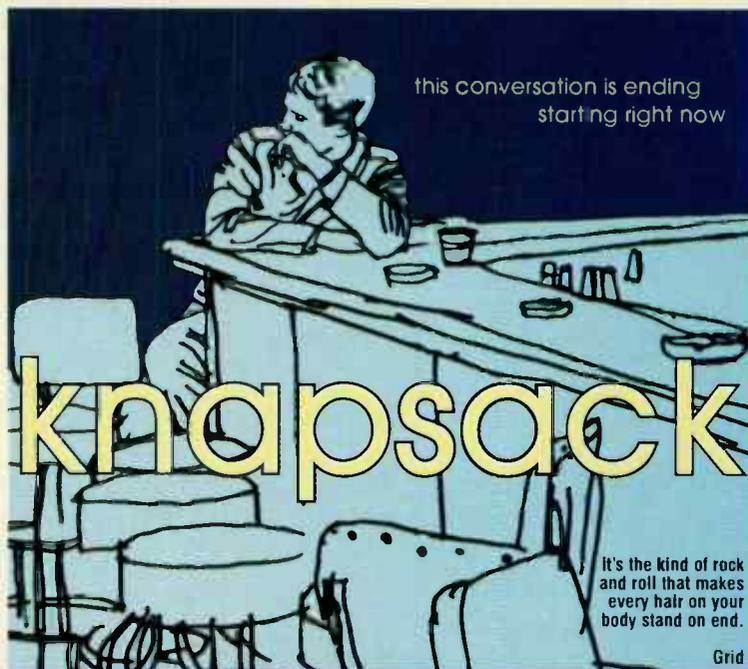
This fall marks Kahimi's first tour of the US, on which she will be supported by Momus and his French touring partner Gilles Weinzaepflen. "I seldom toured before, so I'm really looking forward to it," she says. "I don't feel very nervous. It's exciting to tour with Japanese, British and French—it's like a movie!"

Her other plans for the future are less certain. She doesn't know whether her new Japanese album, *K.K.K.K.K.* (which features collaborations with Momus, French songwriter/arranger Phillippe Katerine and German band Stereo Total), will come out in the US, or who else she'll collaborate with. "I think I'm not the kind of person who would ask someone else to make music with me. The way that it's happened in the past has been very natural. That's what happened with Momus. It's very similar to the way it is with love," she states, confusing even her translator, so she picks up the thread in English: "I'm shy, I'm really afraid. It's like when I fall in love, I can't say, 'I love you,' you know?"

But if he says it first it's okay?

"Yes, exactly."

end



this conversation is ending
starting right now

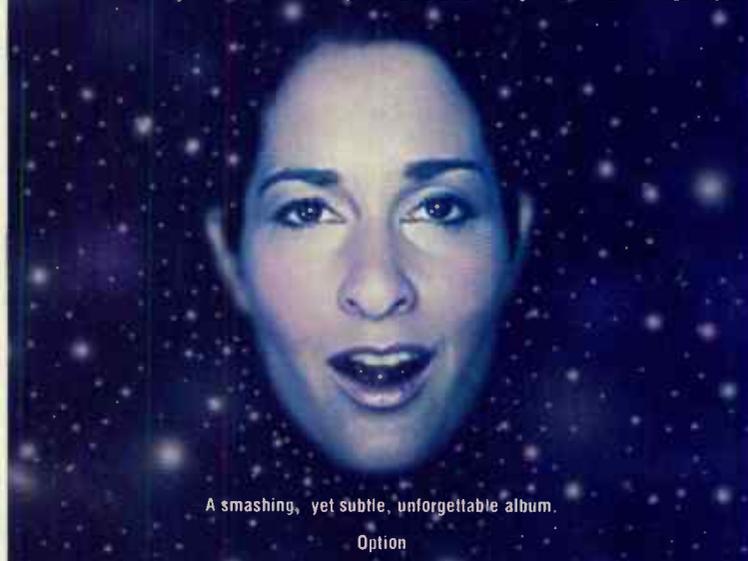
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and roll that makes
every hair on your
body stand on end.

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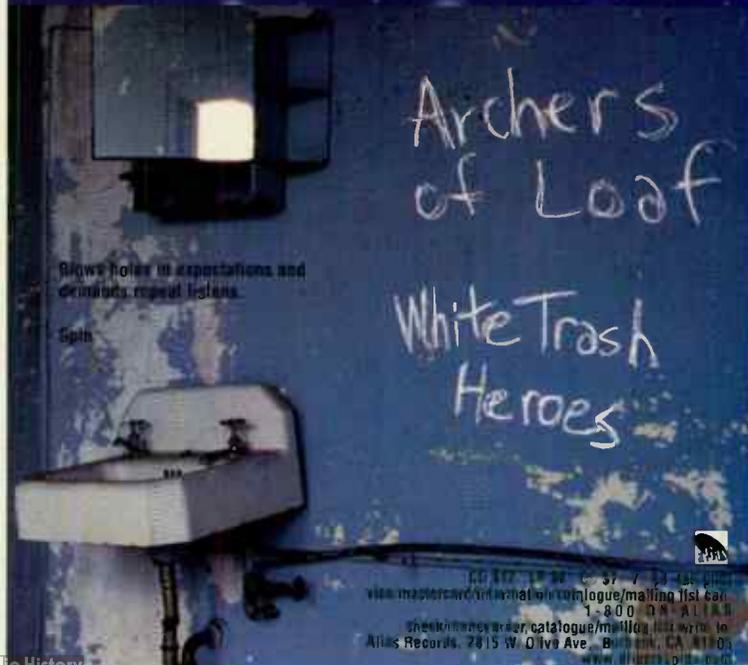
lida husik

with beaumont hannant



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Option



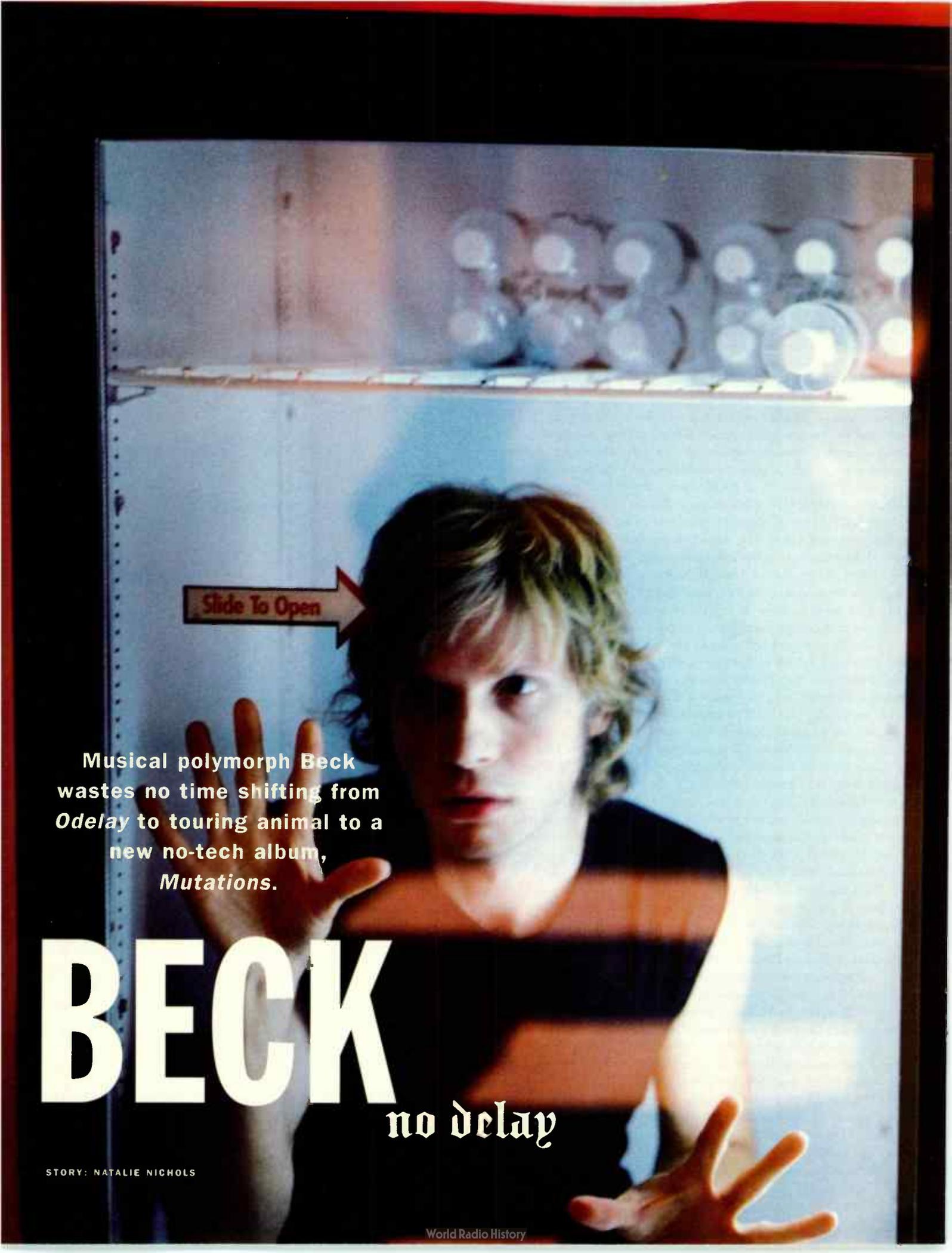
Requires holes in expectations and
demands repeat listens.

5pm

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Musical polymorph Beck wastes no time shifting from *Odelay* to touring animal to a new no-tech album, *Mutations*.

BECK

no delay

STORY: NATALIE NICHOLS



Slide To Open

PHOTOS: CHARLIE GROSS

creativity runs in the family: His mother, Bibbe Hansen, ran seminal LA punk clubs and has worked in film, photography and music; his father, David Campbell, is a studio musician and arranger; and younger brother Channing is an artist.

"I don't really think of Al as a teacher, any more than anybody else in my life," Beck says. "We all have relationships, friendships, that will eventually become pieces of who we are. It's hard for me to dissect what part of me is Al and what part of me is my friends from junior high. My other grandfather was a Presbyterian minister, so where that fits in, I don't know."

The elder Hansen more likely provided a compelling example of a satisfying itinerant artistic lifestyle. "It's not like Al ever sat down and said, 'Here's how to make art.' He had a bottomless stream of plans and hustles and dreams, and he always had a lot of young people around him," Beck recalls. "He was always giving young artists advice, but I was a musician."

sing it again

As swiftly as *Mutations* was recorded and mixed, the album's release ended up languishing for months, which put a damper on the original idea of having it be a "stealth" production of sorts. "It was supposed to come out on Bong Load really quick, in June, before anybody knew about it," Beck says. "Which I thought would be kinda fun."

The delay occurred when Geffen became interested in releasing *Mutations* itself. Discussions ensued, and without much public explanation, it was disclosed in mid-August that the major label would release the CD and cassette, while the indie would put out the vinyl edition. Both companies are reportedly pleased with the arrangement.

Beck puts this situation squarely in the realm of record-company machinations, which are apparently of little concern to him. He doesn't even seem frustrated by the delay.

"I'm glad that I've had some time to let it sit around," he says. "I generally like to let albums sit around for [a while]. Sometimes when recording, there can be some scarification and some bruises immediately after. You gotta let 'em heal a little bit. [The songs] need to age, somehow. They need to solidify. The music can be kind of vaporous, especially when you put it down and it's fresh."

Even as DGC laid claim to *Mutations*, the label was well aware that it was a departure from *Odelay*. Indeed, the official word painstakingly insists that *Mutations* is not the follow-up to *Odelay*—a hair-splitting distinction that refers more to stylistic matters than material ones, since, strictly speaking, it is. Perhaps to underscore this point, DGC won't be releasing any singles or videos in conjunction with *Mutations*.

"I don't think it's that kind of record," says Beck. "I think that of all my other records, it has this continuity of tone to it," but it's a tone that wouldn't necessarily work on the radio, where the songs "have to be as pumped up as the commercials, you know what I mean?" He laughs. "The commercials get more over the top, then the music tends to get like that. And I think that might be true for MTV. You know, the commercial production value gets crazier, and the actual art has to compete with that. Otherwise, it'll just look tepid and old hat."

By this point in his career, it's arguable that people expect Beck to be an intractable pop gadfly. In other words, to be himself. "I love my fans now, because they're pretty warm, and they'll go different places with me," he confirms. "They're willing to hear

something different. They kind of come [to shows] expecting that. And I don't know if that was always true. After 'Loser,' there was a period when people would come and get confused, and that was fairly alienating. I felt bad; I didn't want to alienate anybody. But what they were into wasn't me. But I think at this point it's really pretty healthy."

So why should DGC even bother to take such pains in separating the lineage of *Mutations* and the next album? Well, the faithful might be prepared for anything, but maybe there are concerns that fans who picked up on Beck with *Odelay* would be more easily confused by an assortment of strangely poignant compositions that doesn't remotely resemble the knowing postmodern R&B/Beatfest they fell in love with.

Or perhaps compartmentalizing these projects helps to alleviate the pressure that comes in a world where even massively successful pop artists face the prevailing attitude: You're only as good as your next album.

"I don't feel a lot of pressure," Beck says. "I think I've got to balance it out with what I feel like I should do." Plus, when it comes to anticipating the public's desires, he wouldn't know where to start.

"I'm really bad at guessing what people are gonna like. With the last record, everybody thought that if any song would do really well, it was going to be 'Devils Haircut.' That song didn't do well, but 'Where It's At,' which nobody ever thought about, did the best."

The experience has taught him not to dwell on the unfathomable. "I'm not very good at saying what people want," he admits. "I don't know what it is that I'm doing that people like, and I don't want to second-guess it."

end

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Mary Jane Lamond

Mary Jane Lamond

Suas e!

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The Supreme Being of sub-frequencies steps out from behind the turntables to push the style he helped create.

"We're the new wave of funkateers," proclaims Grooverider from his London studio, speaking of himself and his growing army of drum 'n' bass protégés. "Funk is a word that can mean so many different things. For me, funk is just about getting down. It means movement, and that's what my album is about: movement."

Grooverider was behind the decks as underground dance music made the transformation from acid house to techno, then to hardcore and now to drum 'n' bass. He's credited with discovering Goldie, as well as producers such as Boymerang, Lemon D, Optical and Matrix, all signed to his label, Prototype Records. But this godfather of drum 'n' bass is duly now releasing his debut album, *Mysteries Of Funk* (Higher Ground-Columbia), after artists from Madonna to David Bowie have used his sound to update their own.

Mysteries Of Funk is a collection of rolling bass lines, tripping hi-hats and flailing orchestrations. The dark and brooding "techstep" frequencies—short choppy breaks with extended bass lines—Grooverider has championed for years remain intact, but are leavened by crooning female vocalists and suave jazz textures on several tracks, revealing a more serene and musical sensibility.

"The whole point about doing an album is that you're supposed to show sides that you wouldn't normally see on a 12," he explains. "Albums are [made to] play in your car or listen to at home. But that's the way I've always worked. Everything I do has to have a musical vein or else it doesn't make any sense to me. Even if it's hard, it's still got to be musical. And that's something that is missing from a lot of music nowadays. It's not all about making dancefloor tunes."

Even so, the dancefloor is where Grooverider got his start and made his most lasting impact. Two years after Britain's acid house explosion in 1988, he and partner Fabio got a gig at the London club called Rage. ("That's probably the most nostalgic club for me," he says of Rage. "That's where I got my name.") Working their way from the club's upstairs room to its main floor, the two were among the first DJs ever to play drum 'n' bass music. While Grooverider's celebrity status has grown immensely since those days, he maintains the same sentiment he's felt since the beginning—that it's the records, not necessarily the technical ability, that separates one DJ from the next.

"A lot of people just focus on playing new tracks, and that's not what it's all about either," he says. "It's about the flow of the music and the

(Continued on page 57)

rider on the storm GROOVERIDER

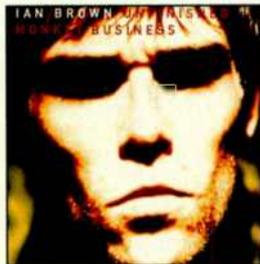
STORY: M. TYE COMER

PHOTOS: PHIL KNOTT

IAN BROWN

Unfinished Monkey Business
The Enclave-Mercury

Stone Roses fans have long been waiting for the Manchester lads to recreate the magic of their 1989 debut album; their second and final studio album, 1995's *Second Coming*, didn't quite do it and neither did the 1997 debut from guitarist John Squire's new band, the Seahorses. With his promising first solo outing, vocalist Ian Brown doesn't attempt to recreate the Roses' sound, but this interesting collection certainly proves that Squire wasn't the group's only creative force. Brown taught himself several instruments for the project, and he seems eager to show off his versatility on cuts like the psychedelic, radio-ready "My Star" (with backing vocals from Oasis's Noel Gallagher), the rattly acoustic folk of "Sunshine" and the rough synth pop of "Lions," Brown's annoying-but-catchy duet with Denise Johnson (Electronic, Primal Scream). He comes closest to the early Stone Roses sound on "Can't See Me," a reunion of sorts that includes bassist Gary "Mani" Mounfield and drummer Alan "Reni" Wren. Squire doesn't play on the album, but he pops up in other ways. Brown, obviously bitter about the Roses breakup, assails Squire with biting lyrics like "All you ever wanted was a sixty dollar bag/And a cheap limousine for your deep pile dream." Although Brown's debut sounds purposefully unfocused, even its shaky moments exude a quirky charm. >>> Wendy Mitchell

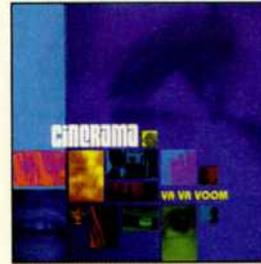


OUT: October 6.
FILE UNDER:
Experiments in psychedelic pop.
R.I.Y.L.:
Stone Roses, Black Grape,
Cornershop.

CINERAMA

Va Va Voom!
spinART

For his first dalliance away from the hiatusing Wedding Present, David Gedge recruits housemate Sally Murrell to form Cinerama for a sidestep in musical style if not lyrical content. The music draws on lilting acoustic '60s pop of the Bacharach and Gainsbourg mold and uses such un-Wedding Present-like instrumentation as flute, strings and organ; only "You Turn Me On" approaches a typical Wed Prez riff-fest. Yes, this retro-styling has been heard elsewhere from the likes of the Cardigans and Edwyn Collins (and on the Wedding Present's own "Gazebo," from 1994's *Watusi*), but rarely with this sense of humor. *Va Va Voom!* opens with a woman declaring, "I did get your message/I can't believe you're doing this/What is wrong with you?/I told you, it's over... Can't you get that into your head?" and then proceeds with a man apologizing for sounding like a "Maniac" when he threatened to "pay someone to kill you both." In song after song, Gedge relishes in his obsessive lover persona—obsessive hopeful lovers, obsessive current lovers, obsessive jealous ex-boyfriends, love slaves all—call it the diary of a serial monogamist. At its best, as on "Dance, Girl, Dance," "Kerry, Kerry" and "Au Pair," Cinerama produces comic and catchy postmodern pop about love's pathetic desperation.



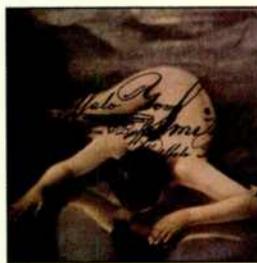
OUT: October 7.
FILE UNDER:
'60s-inflected "love" songs.
R.I.Y.L.:
Wedding Present, Edwyn Collins,
Ivy.

>>> Steve Klinge

BUFFALO TOM ★

Smitten
Beggars Banquet/Polydor/A&M

You might have thought that Buffalo Tom had quietly slipped from the radar screen while you looked away for a second somewhere back in 1994. The band had faded nicely into the MTV rerun fold, forever providing a little *My So-Called Life* background music for Angela Chase to fall all over Jordan Catalano. *Smitten* is a sneakily surprising reminder of the reason Buffalo Tom was around in the first place: the band's great, wistful songs and solid 4/4 guitar rock. The hit song ought to be "Postcard," as Bill Janowitz's raspy-voiced, low-key musings play to the Wallflower-friendly lobes of your brain. Carol Van Dyk of Bettie Serveert sings back-up to Chris Colbourn's lead on the cozy folk of "Under Milkwood," and the match is casually perfect. This is the first time that Colbourn has taken lead singer duties, and his songs are among the best on the album, particularly the plaintive "The Bible." A few tunes, such as "Knot In It" and "Scottish Windows," could stand some trimming; their overlong samey-ness dilutes the impact of their solid cores. That said, Buffalo Tom is back. Pay closer attention this time.



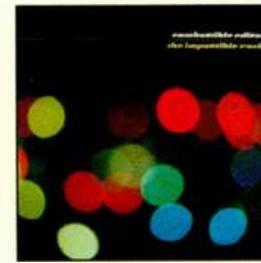
OUT: September 29.
FILE UNDER:
High harmony rock.
R.I.Y.L.:
Wallflowers, Goo Goo Dolls.

>>> Anne Marie Cruz

COMBUSTIBLE EDISON

The Impossible World
Sub Pop

Combustible Edison is the musical equivalent of playing dress-up, so why isn't this more fun? On the Rhode Island combo's third full-length release, co-producer Scanner adds a touch of modern day electronica to the retro lounge sound of picked guitars and ultra-refined piano noodling. The whole album alternates exotica instrumentals with spy noir songs, featuring such lyrics as "Kiss me till I die." As amusing as that sounds, much of *The Impossible World* shows that when a band is nothing but a pastiche to begin with, ending up derivative is all too possible. You couldn't get a more slavish mix of riffs from vintage Martin Denny, Nino Rota and Burt Bacharach if you had a special space-age robot to do it for you. "Laura's Aura," an icy smooth vocal by Miss Lily Banquette against a laid-back techno rhythm section, shows that the mix of old and new can work, but the rest of the album brings only faint smiles as the kick from the martini wears off and the headache sets in. Sure, it's fun to be Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant for a day. But to get in the mood, you're better off sticking with Henry Mancini.



OUT: October 6.
FILE UNDER:
Space age pop.
R.I.Y.L.:
Martin Denny, Esquivel, Burt
Bacharach.

>>> Heidi MacDonald

ELVIS COSTELLO WITH BURT BACHARACH

Painted From Memory
Mercury

Although they're a generation apart in the history books, Elvis Costello never concealed his fondness for Burt Bacharach, covering "I Just Don't Know What To Do With Myself" early in his career. Perhaps if they'd collaborated then, *Painted From Memory* might deliver on the formidable promise of "God Give Me Strength," their first joint effort (from the movie *Grace Of My Heart*). But the specter of that girl group period exercise looms too large over this full-length. Many of these tunes feel like hasty refurbishments of Bacharach's best with Dionne Warwick and lyricist Hal David; the new "This House Is Empty Now" and the old "A House Is Not A Home" are very close neighbors. Compounding frustration, distinctive nuances are consistently swamped by syrupy orchestral swells. Unconventional harmonies and time changes seem in short supply; when they do come, Costello doesn't pack the requisite subtlety of a Dionne or Dusty to navigate them effortlessly. Only on "Toledo," which mates a wry lyric with a complicated melody that only seems carefree, does the duo truly rise to the occasion. Like its creators, *Painted From Memory* boasts familiar charms packaged in something a little too soft around the middle.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



OUT: September 29.
FILE UNDER: Make it E-Z on yourself.
R.I.Y.L.: *The Juliet Letters*, Bacharach solo LPs, Mike Flowers Pops.

FLAT DUO JETS ★

Lucky Eye
Outpost

Like Keith Richards or Eddie Cochran, Dexter Romweber is one of those people who somehow looks incomplete unless he's holding a guitar in his hands. With his partner Crow, Romweber first burst on the scene as part of the hell-raising Flat Duo Jets, flailing away at a battered Silvertone guitar in pursuit of the spirit of early rock 'n' roll, obsessively idolizing Eddie, Gene, Buddy and Elvis to the exclusion of all else in the universe. Through seven albums in twice as many years together, the group never quite had the right-place/right-time thing together enough to really get off the ground—until now. Of all the Duo Jets' records, *Lucky Eye* most fully shows how exciting the combo of Crow and Dexter can be. Squirrel Nut Zippers Tom Maxwell and Ken Mosher appear on horns, also pointing out the Duo Jets' role as true predecessors to the Zippers' conceptual/retro period chic, the only real difference being that the Duo Jets inhabit the '50s while the Zippers inhabit the '20s. The spirit that moved the original rock 'n' rollers and drove them to such ecstatic, crazed heights surges through the veins of the Flat Duo Jets, and makes it clear why this music struck such fear in the hearts of fire 'n' brimstone fundamentalists back in the old days.

>>> James Lien



OUT: October 6.
FILE UNDER: Let's bop!
R.I.Y.L.: Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, Cramps.

FAITHLESS

Sunday 8PM
Arista

The story of Rollo and Sister Bliss's popularity in the UK is markedly different than the pair's reception in the US. Their American debut as Faithless, last year's *Reverence*, was an overlooked gem of a pop record, alternating between spare acoustic pop and grandiose, string-laden disco anthems. This isn't generally the sort of thing that gets American audiences very excited, so it's no surprise that Faithless has remained a cult DJ favorite in the States, where the group's consistent string of singles has been met with glee on the dancefloor. The new single, "God Is A DJ," is included here, and it's a giant, sprawling operatic beast with an unforgettable pop hook. But jump across to "The Hem Of His Garment" and you'd think you were listening to a great Blur outtake. In other words, Faithless's fondness for massive disco excess and acoustic pop makes the group a rather odd bird. The diversity of the group's skill is made even more apparent on this record, which includes raps from Maxi Jazz, Saint Etienne-esque kitsch-on sink pop ("Postcards") and breathy vocal tracks like "The Garden." Really, this ought to be huge with commercial alternative radio listeners and UK disco fans alike. It certainly deserves the attention.

>>> Tim Haslett



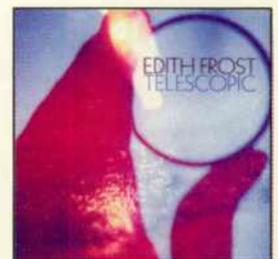
OUT: October 29.
FILE UNDER: Schizophrenic pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Pet Shop Boys, Tricky, Blur.

EDITH FROST

Telescopic
Drag City

When did Edith Frost discover the power of fuzz? On her last record, *Calling Over Time*, Frost was just another sweetheart at the indie-folk rodeo; a girl from Texas living in Chicago, collecting cowgirl figurines and singing campfire ballads about loneliness and heartache. The first track on *Telescopic* has a lead guitar that's buzzing like crazy and her wispy vocal is effected out the wazoo. Did Suzanne Vega track Frost down and tell her to get a makeover? *Calling Over Time* was one of those soothing albums you could put on when you wanted to be gently lulled to sleep. *Telescopic* has its soothing moments, but there's plenty more going on in the arrangements than just Frost and her acoustic guitar. She adds extra spice with violin, accordion, slack-key guitar and singing saw. It's not exactly hardcore punk or drum 'n' bass, but in most cases, the tasteful accompaniment adds depth and nuance. Frost shows that she can write songs with tempo changes and turnarounds and use a studio to give her sound epic overtones. The melodies, like the lyrics, are as gentle and haunting as they ever were. Her themes are still plenty woeful. Lines like, "You'll never fall in love again," crop up regularly. Still, sigh, it seems like that little girl from the rodeo is starting to grow up.

>>> Neil Gladstone

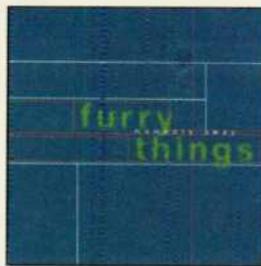


OUT: October 20.
FILE UNDER: Wistful indie folk.
R.I.Y.L.: Tarnation, Kendra Smith, Lida Husik.



FURRY THINGS

Moments Away
Trance Syndicate



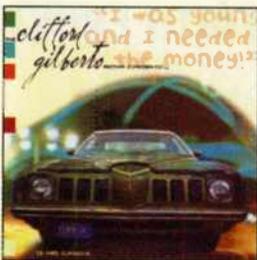
OUT: September 29.
FILE UNDER:
Trip-hop with a side of dub.
R.I.Y.L.:
Portishead, Land Of The Loops,
Olive.

>>> Richard Martin

To play guitar or not to play guitar? That is the question Furry Things wrestled with after releasing a My Bloody Valentine-inspired debut of feedback rock in 1993. The Austin, Texas, band answered decisively with a pair of follow-up EPs awash in electronic swirls and increasingly devoid of strings. Resettled in the bustling urban center of Los Angeles, the quartet mastered its machines and sculpted the compositions on *Moments Away*, a languid, atmospheric full-length that accentuates the low end and provides charged, buzzing backdrops for Cathy Shive's sultry, Euro-sounding vocals. She coos along with winding, whimsical trip-hop compositions like "That Machine" and "Overload," which match laid-back beats, layered synthesizer figures and loops in an expert display of both melodic songwriting and *au courant* sensibilities (helped out on a few tracks by Medicine/Electric Company head Brad Laner). Furry Things separate themselves from the modern legion of female-fronted electronica outfits by making pop only a part of their foundation, with dub and drum 'n' bass garnering equal emphasis. Even if the band hadn't undergone such a dramatic shift since its inception, *Moments Away* would still stand out as one of America's strongest entries in the European-dominated electronic genre.

CLIFFORD GILBERTO

I Was Young And I Needed the Money
Ninja Tune



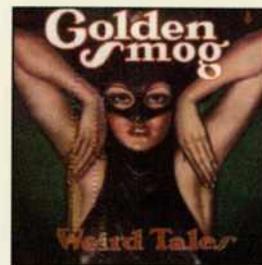
OUT: October 6.
FILE UNDER:
Electronic esoteric.
R.I.Y.L.:
Amon Tobin, Squarepusher,
Phitek.

>>> Andrea Moed

You know there's been a sea change in the culture of electronic music when a new scion like Clifford Gilberto lets it be known in his bio that he's "classically trained." In rock contexts, that phrase denotes the technical skill to go beyond the usual demands of the genre: Any guitarist who could play Wagner must have serious chops, man. In the tricky, cerebral school of post-drum 'n' bass that Gilberto aligns with, it means not instrumental prowess, obviously, but a reverence and a keen ear for a well-loved body of tradition—in this case, post-bop jazz. Working with a mix of samples and drum programming, he reinterprets the improv quartet aesthetic for a one-man, automated band. His is a rich, noodly mix, as little about drums and bass lines as drum 'n' bass has yet ventured to be. This record bumps and swings, uses sampled trumpets like real ones, or separates them out as muted sounds in empty space. The drum machine sometimes acts like a riddened cymbal, and sometimes wails all over a track like a renegade percussion solo. At moments you might even forget that you're not listening to a combo, at least until some rapid cross-cut reminds you of the artifice, jolting you like a free saxophonist's burst of skree. Heard of dancing about architecture? Welcome to mixing about jamming.

GOLDEN SMOG

Weird Tales
Rykodisc



OUT: October 13.
FILE UNDER:
Alt-country supergroup.
R.I.Y.L.:
Byrds, Wilco, Jayhawks.

>>> Mark Woodlief

Like Spinal Tap, Golden Smog runs through drummers at a remarkably speedy rate. New member (and Big Star alum) Jody Stephens may be the third guy behind the kit in as many recordings, but this all-star "y'all-ternative" ensemble is certainly no joke. For *Weird Tales*, Golden Smog mainstays—Jayhawks Gary Louris and Marc Perlman, Soul Asylum's Dan Murphy, Wilco's Jeff Tweedy and Run Westy Run's Kraig Johnson—gathered at the new dude's digs (Stephens manages Memphis's Ardent Studios) to record 15 original tracks. Maybe because Louris and Tweedy have the most recognizable and distinctive voices, their songs tend to dominate the proceedings, but *Weird Tales* works so well because everybody's material stands up. Mixing poignancy (Tweedy's "Please Tell My Brother," Johnson's wrenching "Making Waves") with power pop (Murphy's "To Call My Own"), Tulsa boogie ("Keys"), garage-psych ("White Shell Road") and expected country-rock (Louris's Byrds-y "Until You Came Along"), *Weird Tales* fails only when its experimental production attempts aren't executed as well as they should've been. "All The Same To Me"'s woozy Western lounge vibe is interesting enough, but "Jennifer Save Me"'s ambient feedback swells are grating and distracting. The rest of the time, though, these *Weird Tales* ring warmly true.

HOVERCRAFT

Experiment Below
Blast First-Mute



OUT: September 22.
FILE UNDER:
Atmospheric, detuned-guitar
art-rock.
R.I.Y.L.:
Live Skull, Throbbing Gristle,
Hawkwind, Glenn Branca.

>>> Mike McGonigal

Experiment Below is the second full-length from this noise loving, sometimes mesmerizing, Seattle-based group. A dynamics-savvy bunch, Hovercraft formed eight years ago, and has effectively revived the mid-'80s post-Branca alt-tuned guitar-based experimental tradition with bristling, static-saturated bravado. With no discernible song structure and an absence of much continuing theme or melody, songs tend to plod in parts. The slowly modulating, antique analogue-effect crescendos, and bursts of wavy, feedback-heavy sound are all the more exciting and unexpected as a result. There are elements to each of the seven tunes on this 45-minute record that are heart-stoppingly cool, especially on "Anthropod" and "Endoradiosonde." But the music tends to lose a bit without the projected video montages that are the major focus of the band's awe-inspiring live gigs. Hovercraft is a pretty great, uncompromising band that brings improvisation to rock in a way that's refreshing, stimulating, even nifty. For now at least, Hovercraft's records pale in comparison to the group's psychedelic, white noise worshipping, visually engrossing performances.

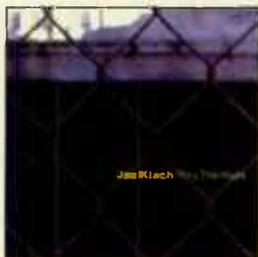
JAZ KLASH

Thru The Haze

World Domination

Has anyone else been bothered by the way that women are almost entirely excluded from any creative positions within the electronic dance music community—DJing, producing, promoting, anything? There's nothing innate about spinning vinyl or twiddling knobs that requires a Y chromosome, no more so than playing a guitar or drums. But that wall seems poised to fall—LA-based remixer The Angel appears destined to become the genre's first female star (her credits include mixes for Spearhead and Pharcyde). And Jaz Klash, her newest project (a collaboration with Bristol drum 'n' bass mavens More Rockers), may push her over the edge. *Thru The Haze* is a smoky, spacey exploration, throbbing and bottom-heavy but also languid and contemplative. It's a nice balance between Angel's hip-hop leanings—old-school jazz flourishes abound, many of them provided by live musicians on sax, flute or vibes—and her Brit colleagues' junglist instincts. The breakbeats are scattered and jumpy without sounding agitated, and the bass calmly plumbs foundation-rattling lows. Ultimately, though, this album may well be remembered more as a gender breakthrough than a genre breakthrough. After all, bringing the noise isn't just for boys.

>>> David Jarman



OUT: September 8.
FILE UNDER:
Jazzy drum 'n' bass.
R.I.Y.L.:
Amon Tobin, Alex Reece, Goldie.

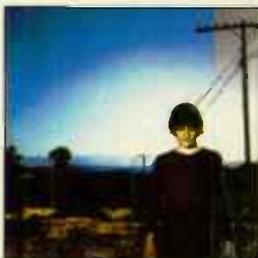
TIM KEEGAN AND THE HOMER LOUNGE

Long Distance Information

Flydaddy

It's easy to see why Robyn Hitchcock enlisted Tim Keegan as a sideman, since the two are cut from similar cloth. Fans of the Hooded One will find comfort in a familiar accent, phrasing, and low-to-middle register. Keegan's lyrics, however, tend toward the romantic rather than surreal, and the wistful tone of his compositions also recalls Grant McLennan's contributions to the Go-Betweens. *Long Distance Information* collects eight tracks released on various UK EPs earlier this year, showcasing a mature brand of articulate mid-tempo pop. Interestingly, even when the five-piece is fully engaged (variously employing trumpet, recorder, violin and concertina), Keegan's singer/songwriter vibe is in full effect. His "man with an acoustic guitar" moments are nearly somnambulistic, but fortunately seven of the songs feature the Homer Lounge in some form. *Long Distance Information* has an undeniable charm and is the kind of small wonder that's likely to be treasured in a select few dorm rooms and apartments. This all-too-brief compilation is padded by three B-sides from Keegan's previous band, Homer, that lean more toward guitar rock and, with one exception, lack the deft touch of the newer material.

>>> Glen Sarvady



OUT: October 20.
FILE UNDER:
New twisty minstrels.
R.I.Y.L.:
Robyn Hitchcock, Go-Betweens,
Vic Chesnutt.

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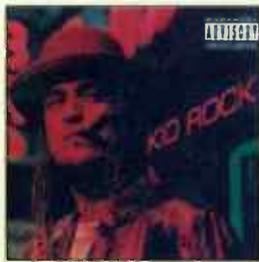
M.F.S.

MUTE

KID ROCK ★

Devil Without A Cause
Atlantic

Sexin' up tha bitches and gettin' paid, shootin' and partyin', Kid Rock is patently offensive to the moral high-ground (and probably the mid- and maybe even low-ground) and doubtless a hero to throngs of rebellious teenagers. Bob Ritchie grew up in Detroit, hanging out in the projects, breakdancing and taking inspiration from early urban pioneers like Run-DMC and Whodini. It's those sorts of early hip-hop beats and raw, self-praising lyrical stylings that power *Devil Without A Cause*. In places, the results are credible. The first single, "I Am The Bullgod," keeps the self-indulgence to a minimum and produces a high-energy maelstrom of rap and heavy metal choruses, and some tracks—notably "Cowboy" and "Wasting Time"—utilize guitar and keyboards to soften the sound a bit. The undeniably infectious "I Got One For Ya" rolls like a bluesy funk song. Unfortunately, most of the album's strengths are camouflaged beneath a deluge of obnoxious, masturbatory profanities that even Lenny Bruce would have choked on. And if that's not enough, meet Joe C., a 23-year-old midget who introduces himself on the album's title track like this: "I'm a freako, call me sick/Three-foot nine with a ten-foot dick." >>> *William Werde*

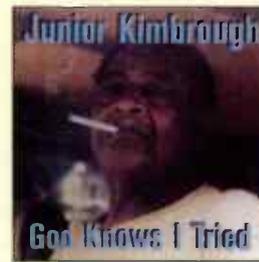


OUT: October 10.
FILE UNDER:
Hip-Hop à la Andrew Dice Clay.
R.I.Y.L.:
Faith No More, Beastie Boys,
Insane Clown Posse.

JUNIOR KIMBROUGH

God Knows I Tried
Fat Possum-Epitaph

It's no secret that Mississippian Junior Kimbrough, who died earlier this year of a heart attack, was among the greatest living bluesmen and a true, original artist. Famed for having given guitar lessons to roots/rockabilly great Charlie Feathers, Kimbrough was a woefully undocumented musician—having recorded only a handful of tunes—when scribe/producer Robert Palmer got him in the studio for his first full-length in 1992, *All Night Long*. He was 62 then, and went on to record three more records, including *God Knows I Tried*. The disc highlights Kimbrough's bristling, vibrant guitar playing, which thrived on improvisation. His fluid, jamming lines and warm, mildly distorted tone sound so perfect alongside the understated, subtle drumming from Kenny Malone, groove-heavy bass-playing by Gary Burnside and Kimbrough's always affable, no-nonsense voice. In fact, Kimbrough's thick, swampy licks are the star of all of his songs: They're launching pads for his hypnotizing, nighttime butt-shakers, terraplane exercises that rival Can and Canned Heat for levitation boogie magic. On *God Knows* it's not just the way he sings "I want you nude girl/Just like you came into the world, baby," in his sexy-cool voice; it's how his bent strings sing it that really matters. >>> *Mike McGonigal*



OUT: August 25.
FILE UNDER:
Modern Mississippi blues.
R.I.Y.L.:
Mississippi Fred McDowell, John Lee Hooker, R.L. Burnside.

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Deep Fried Clams

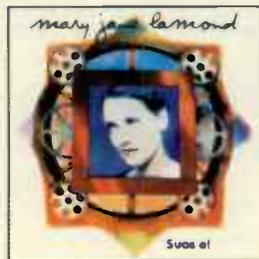
Hiding Behind A Smile

Twisted electronic beats and pieces from the clammy dark realms of Long Island sound

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MARY JANE LAMOND ★

Suas E!
Wicklow



OUT: June 16.
FILE UNDER:
Celtic music's future.
R.I.Y.L.:
Ashley MacIsaac, Talitha MacKenzie.

She might be best known as the voice on alt-rock fiddler Ashley MacIsaac's *Hi, How Are You Today?* album, but Mary Jane Lamond is hardly an ancillary to anybody. This album (which first appeared in Canada last year) is a glorious dig into the Cape Breton tradition, achieving the almost impossible task of reconciling past and future. Looms and spinning wheels provide the rhythm on a couple of tracks, while elsewhere it's dancing feet that offer percussion. If you're looking for MacIsaac and his band, they appear on "Bog a' Lochain," but they're the backing musicians, not the stars. They couldn't be. This is Mary Jane's album, imprinted with her personality and gorgeous voice. Whether offering a ballad or a strathspey (a Scottish dance akin to a reel), her voice rings out in lovely Gaelic. She may have pipes and electric guitars gathering steam behind her, or she may be singing a cappella—either way Lamond manages to give the tradition a very contemporary feel, making it alive and vibrant. The East Coast of Canada has produced some remarkable performers in this field, but *Suas E!* sends Mary Jane Lamond right to the head of the class. Celtic music has rarely sounded this good. >>> *Chris Nickson*

LO-FIDELITY ALLSTARS

How To Operate With A Blown Mind
Skint-Columbia

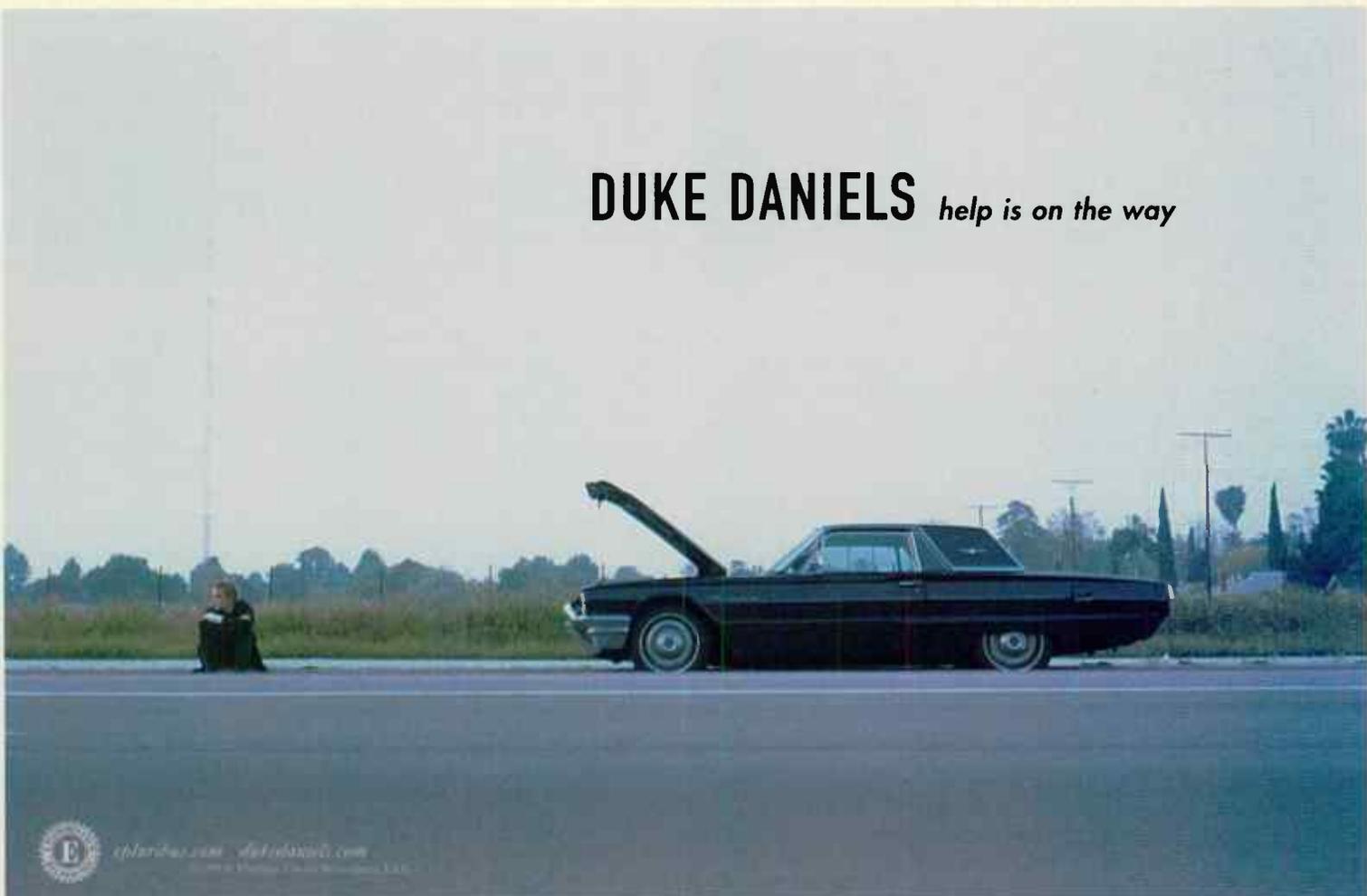


OUT: October 20.
FILE UNDER:
Beery big beat.
R.I.Y.L.:
Prodigy, Bentley Rhythm Ace, Pop Will Eat Itself.

Of all the strains of beat-based electronic music, big beat is the closest to full-on rock, and the genre from which personalities are currently popping off the decks and into mass consciousness. And the Lo-Fidelity Allstars are shooting for the big time by taking a tip from the Spice Girls and assuming cartoony identities: Wrecked Train on vocals, The Albino Priest on decks, A One Man Crowd Called Gentile on bass—you get the picture. A musical mess of contained chaos, *Blown Mind* shoots for the brain and groin simultaneously. Wrecked Train's lager-soaked voice is a ringer for First Issue-era PiL, with that droll, passive anger narrating the chaos, while synthetic asteroids fly at you from every direction: screaming television samples, machine gun rhythms, sirens, scratching, funky bass lines. In fact, the contrived hype and stupid pseudonyms may sound your bullshit detector, threatening to overshadow the music. You may be inclined to file this next to Sique Sique Sputnik, but you shouldn't, because *Blown Mind* has a monstrous depth and a vision, and is truly engaging.

>>> *Randall Roberts*

DUKE DANIELS *help is on the way*



LOVE AND ROCKETS

Lift
Red Ant

In an erratic career, Love And Rockets have somehow gotten the jump on a few trends. The band followed up '89's "So Alive," America's first goth-pop hit, five years later with *Hot Trip To Heaven*, which reimagined L&R as an electronica collective before that term had been coined; then L&R veered back toward rock with 1996's *Sweet F.A.* Now former Bauhausers Daniel Ash, David J and Kevin Haskins offer their third and most varied album of the '90s. Except for its disinterest with conventional rock, *Lift* follows no single stylistic tack, and it's the better for it, as L&R play to their strengths: symphonic technopop ("Bad For You"), raving psychedelia ("My Drug"), sexy jams ("Pink Flamingo," "Party's Not Over"), endless headtrip instrumentals (the title track) and electro-dance beats of all stripes. At times on *Lift*, the trio sounds innately cognizant of current club rhythms—big beat, drum 'n' bass, a little jungle—while at other moments, the album sounds like it could have been produced by Pet Shop Boys in 1988. On the uptempo techno tracks, Ash sounds overpowered, his whispery-cool voice weak amid the clatter; he regains his footing on the slinky pop numbers that recall L&R's earlier sound. No longer trying to be ahead of their time, Love And Rockets are satisfied to be digital dilettantes, and that's not a bad ambition.

>>> Chris Molanphy



OUT: October 13.
FILE UNDER:
Poptronica.

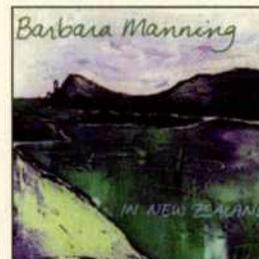
R.I.Y.L.:
Primal Scream, Portishead,
Fatboy Slim.

BARBARA MANNING

In New Zealand
Communion

Ever since San Francisco singer Barbara Manning recorded "B4 We Go Under," written for her by Robert Scott of New Zealand pop combo the Bats, it's been clear that her musical kinship with that small faraway island was probably written in her DNA. Mining that link, she recorded *In New Zealand* last year when she toured her dream land with her easy-going backup band, Calexico's Joey Burns and John Convertino, and she's unearthed seven lovely gems. Featuring locals such as David Kilgour (of The Clean), Graeme Downes (of the Verlaines), Chris Knox (of Tall Dwarfs), and Denise Roughan and David Mitchell (both of the 3D's), the resulting 30-minute album plays like a series of warmly regarded snapshots, each capturing the essence of its individual creators, filtered through Manning's self-taught, beautifully emotional expression. The piano-based "Everything Happens By Itself," for example, has the slow lope and moodiness of Kilgour's solo work, while the choppy, but melodic "Your Pies," built around home-quality electronic instruments, bears Knox's firm, greasy fingerprints. Manning threads together the songs' various moods with her warm, intimate vocals and her evident love for the material. I only wish that Manning had stayed in New Zealand a little longer so she could've recorded a few more songs.

>>> Lydia Vanderloo



OUT: October 6.
FILE UNDER:
Underground queen goes down under.

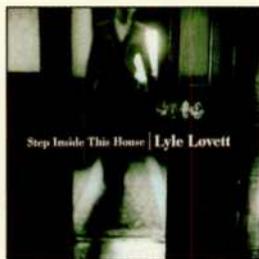
R.I.Y.L.:
Spinanes, Calexico, Lois.

LYLE LOVETT

Step Inside This House
MCA

Texans are a breed apart, god bless 'em. What seems quirky to you and me just seems part of *la vida* to them. Accordingly, Texas songs are a good bit stranger than songs made in the other 49 states. On his new, two-album CD, Lyle Lovett dives into a cache of songs from his home state by such noted songwriters as Townes Van Zandt, Walter Hyatt and Guy Clark. Trouble is, now that Lovett is a Hollywood cowboy, he seems unable to find the musical heart of these amazing songs. His singing is as tender and true as ever, but the production makes these tunes sound like they never lived outdoors, let alone grew up on the West Texas plains. A couple of spry fiddle tunes stand out, but the lifeless guitar and pedal steel playing makes cool songs like David Rodriguez's "Ballad Of The Snow Leopard And The Tanqueray Cowboy" sound wan. These songs need barroom pianos and tear-stained sheet music rather than the tepid lounge stylings that Lovett applies. I understand the state's unofficial slogan is "Don't Mess With Texas." I think I'd give the same advice to Lyle Lovett.

>>> Lois Maffeo



OUT: September 22.
FILE UNDER:
A Hollywood cowboy at the airport lounge.

R.I.Y.L.:
John Prine, Townes Van Zandt.

MERCURY REV

Deserter's Songs
V2

Among record executives in the early '70s, it was considered proper to let your recording artists go crazy on your dime. Artists like Van Dyke Parks and the Beach Boys made some of the worst selling albums of their careers looking through a prism of mind-boggling chemical experiments and orchestral arrangements. This lysergic Las Vegas aesthetic died off as the '70s ended, but Mercury Rev must have caught a whiff of the corpse. Four years after its original singer, David Baker, quit, the band has made an expansive, hazy record that now seems the logical end to its earlier distorted freak-out work. Composed mostly of pop songs (with the odd organ-and-bowed saw instrumental and fake 20th-century classical piece thrown in), *Deserter's Songs* is rich with piano, woodwinds, Mellotron and, um, flügelhorn. "Hudson Line" is probably the most radio-friendly of the bunch, though "Tonight It Shows" and "Delta Sun Bottleneck Stomp" are toe-tappers as well. Plus, Jonathan Donahue's vocals are more appropriate for the new Rev—they wear white pants and sip mint juleps where Baker presided like a stoned ringmaster over barely contained chaos. And with guest musicians like Levon Helms and Garth Hudson from The Band, the only thing this record is missing is a Lenny Waronker production credit.

>>> Andrew Beaujon



OUT: September 29.
FILE UNDER:
Orch-pop for people who hate orch-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:
Spiritualized, Flaming Lips,
mellow Pink Floyd.

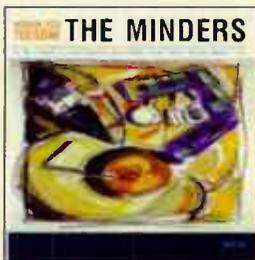
MINDERS

Hooray For Tuesday

spinArt

The Minders might have aptly called this debut *Hooray For The Beatles*, such is the album's debt to the Fab Four. It's crammed with obvious Beatles trademarks: poppy guitar riffs peppered with jangly tambourines, trippy songs written for girls ("Pauline" and "Frida" are in the tradition of "Michelle"), pretty vocal harmonies, and a Sgt. Pepper's-style marching band sample on the stunning psychedelic title track. Moreover, the vocals of Brit-born frontman Martyn Leaper are an uncanny dead ringer for the warblings of young McCartney, especially when he sings about wheeling through packed English high streets on a "red old bus." *Hooray* was produced by Apples In Stereo's Robert Schneider, so it's hardly surprising that when this Denver quartet does slip out of '60s pop mode, it lapses into a Pavement-y mood. Tracks such as "I've Been Wondering" hit a lo-fi groove that connects the Minders' quirky sound to that of Elephant Six labelmates Olivia Tremor Control and Neutral Milk Hotel. While much of the album offers bite-size morsels, a few tracks, such as "Yeah Yeah Yeah" (a "She Loves You" for the '90s), are more derivative than inventive. But if you're tired of the latest disco revival, this catchy throwback to the pre-Studio 54 era should give you something to cheer about.

>>> Sarah Pratt



OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER:

Elephant Six collective meets the Beatles.

R.I.Y.L.:

Apples In Stereo, Pavement, Olivia Tremor Control.

MOE.

Tin Cans & Car Tires

550

Moe. disdains the comparisons: Allman Brothers, Phish and, of course, the Grateful Dead. But when you play extended guitar sets to throngs of tied-died, loyal-bordering-on-cultlike fans (Deadheads, meet the moe.rons) and the first single from your debut album (1996's *No Doy*) is 45 minutes of winding, sliding fretwork, is that really such bad company? Moe. keeps its extended family happy with a hybrid of bluesy rock chords and jazz experimentation, seasoned to taste with dashes of funk, country and reggae. On its sophomore effort, *Tin Cans & Car Tires*, moe. effortlessly sidesteps the hurdle placed before all improvisational jammers: condensing the songs—typically 20 to 40 minutes played live—into five-minute studio tracks without losing their personality. "Stranger Than Fiction," the album's opening romp, mixes slide guitar with power chords for a decidedly Allman-like sound. "Spaz Medicine," with its Mariachi intro giving way to a quick power jam, and "Nebraska," with lyrics like, "They say it's nice this time of year/On Jupiter/Except for the meteors," reveal the band's lighter side. And, though the airways haven't been friendly to bands of this genre (i.e. Further fare), don't be surprised if the lazy but lovable "Letter Home," comfortable as worn denim and warmer than a sunny day, finds its way onto the radio.

>>> William Werde



OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Post-Dead stalwarts.

R.I.Y.L.:

Phish, Allman Brothers, Grateful Dead.



SOUL COUGHING
EL OJO

CD, cassette, and double vinyl LP
Featuring circles



ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

PERMANENT MIDNIGHT

FEATURING NEW MUSIC BY

GIRLS AGAINST BOYS • BLACK LAB

BT • MOBY • SPRING HEEL JACK

ART ALEXAKIS

PLUS TRACKS BY

THE CRYSTAL METHOD • GOMEZ

FREE RADICAL featuring PAUL HEPKER

LAEL ALDERMAN • PRODIGY

SPIRITUALIZED • MORCHEEBA

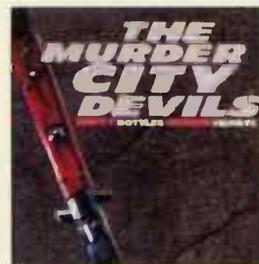
EMBRACE



MURDER CITY DEVILS

Empty Bottles, Broken Hearts

Sub Pop



Grunge is back, low, mean and hedonistic as ever. You can stop wondering what Sub Pop's A&R folk have been thinking these past few years, 'cause the label's tired of your petty bitching, moaning, and sorry-ass second-guessing—you want your goddamned rock 'n' roll music, they'll give it to you. Meet the Murder City Devils, brought up from Sub Pop's Triple-A team (the Die Young Stay Pretty imprint, which released the quintet's self-titled 1996 debut) to sling dual-guitar dirt and sleazy rhythms. This young bunch's well-heeled desperation signals a return to Seattle tradition with a garage-y, Farfisa-fueled twist, not to mention OG (Original Grungesta) Jack Endino's faithful turn behind the boards. After paying homage to Captain Iggy ("Broken Glass"), the Devils eponymously salute Johnny Thunders here, and fully revel in the rock 'n' roll lifestyle ("Ready For More," "Cradle To The Grave," "Another Round On You," and the snarling winner, "Dancin' Shoes"). Who knows if the Devils really walk it like they talk it, but Spencer Woody sounds convincing enough on "Dear Hearts." In a Lux-urious growl, he vows: "I gotta preacher's mouth and a rock 'n' roll heart." Can I get a witness?

>>> Mark Woodlief

OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER: Grunge renaissance.

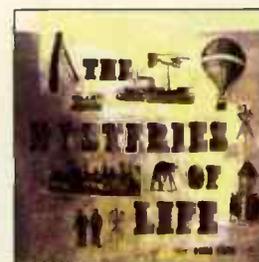
R.I.Y.L.:

Mudhoney, *The Modern Lovers*, Cramps.

MYSTERIES OF LIFE

Come Clean

RCA



Sometimes simplicity is enough. Songs on the Mysteries Of Life's second album, *Come Clean*, rarely use more than three chords to support two verses and a chorus, but, really, who needs more than that? Small, casual truths are as meaningful as, and often more accurate than, big statements, and the Mysteries Of Life finds those nooks and crannies of melody and guitar that creep quickly into one's memory. For this album—which was due for spring release but was then doctored by Brad Wood with some new songs—fellow Bloomington, Indiana, resident and Vulgar Boatmen member Dale Lawrence joins the band, and either his influence or his compatibility is obvious. As with the Boatmen or cohorts the Silos, each song quickly limits the focus to essentials: the chorus or title often repeats *ad infinitum* at the end, and the guitars fix on one- or two-chord patterns, which are strummed incessantly. What's left coalesces perfectly. For songs like "Downhill," on which it's easy to imagine a Dean Wareham or Richard Lloyd solo extending its 3:45 to five minutes, or "A Year Ago Today," the moment crystallizes, as moments did on early R.E.M. albums (only in this case Jake Smith's vocals are clear and comprehensible). Look elsewhere for major revelations; look here for small, precise perfections.

OUT: September 15.

FILE UNDER: Understated guitar jangle.

R.I.Y.L.:

Vulgar Boatmen, Spinanes, Luna.

>>> Steve Klinge



ARTISAN

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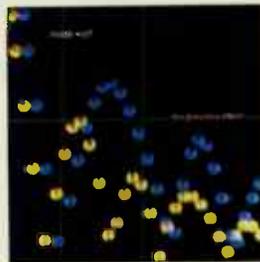
NADA SURF

The Proximity Effect

Elektra

Once you get past the runaway success of its single "Popular," the prognosis for a band like Nada Surf seems pretty grim, especially given the failure of other one-hit wonders to follow up with well-received releases (e.g. Spin Doctors, Better Than Ezra, Deadeye Dick, Candlebox). *The Proximity Effect*, however, proves that there's more to Nada Surf than a single hit and a brief moment in the alterna-rock spotlight. Given the strength and breadth of this album, the group isn't necessarily bound for the elephant's graveyard of last year's alterna-rock playlists. "Hyperspace" combines Beach Boys falsetto harmony with a chugging Jonathan Richman-esque riff, while "Why Are You So Mean To Me" has a nagging, insinuating hook that's funny and smart and certainly more than just a novelty. Of course, there's no predicting the whims of the mainstream, but even if Nada Surf falls victim to the Bermuda Triangle of the commercial music industry, the band has still made a second record that will hold up in ten years' time, proving just how far alternapop can go in the hands of a smart band with something good to say.

>>> James Lien



OUT: October 27.

FILE UNDER:

Smart alterna-rock.

R.I.Y.L.:

Weezer, Modern Lovers, Cars.

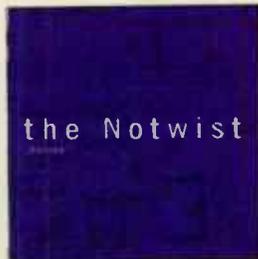
NOTWIST

Shrink

Zero Hour

Melody for the Notwist is like the armature of a parade float: a plain, durable structure that holds up the most extravagant confections. On its first album, the group's catchy little songs came draped in metal-ish riffs and naked, grim verses like those of the strangely winning single "Torture Day." On this year's model, *Shrink*, an expanded Notwist lineup sets off in search of new sonic textures. With new member Martin Gretschmann (apparently known as "Sound-o-naut") manning the samplers, the group has gotten heavily into hiss and crackle. The arrangement of the pop ditty "Chemicals" seems jointly influenced by Aphex Twin and the Dust Brothers. It's full of moist, popping drum machine beats, softened by stutters and hi-hats; play it on headphones and it actually tickles your ears. Even vocalist Marcus Acher, with his dead-weight German vowels, seems to be skipping to the beat. Just as striking are several songs with arrangements built around a horn section, like the cool instrumental "Moron" and "Your Sighs," in which a maudlin, '60s style horn-and-vibe arrangement gives way to a sax solo. It's then that you notice the difference between Notwist and Tortoise: five minutes into the track, you can still hum along.

>>> Andrea Moed



OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Creatively orchestrated pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Folk Implosion, Stereolab, Tortoise, Isotope 217.

YATSURA
YATSURA
YATSURA
YATSURA
YATSURA

Slain By

YATSURA

てっさ
星が輝く
ハロー・バイ・グー
戦後基地の柱
ナツメ・カワ・チーフ
スリム・パイ
ノー・ガール
顔が赤く燃える
狂った地獄の心
あひま王
エグザクト
愛物の毛皮
スカル・イン・アラン
琥珀巻

THE NEW ALBUM FEATURING
"SLAIN BY ELF"

S ché

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SEAM

The Pace Is Glacial

Touch And Go

If you ask the guys in Seam, they'll tell you that they think of their songs as regular rock songs. Listen to *The Pace Is Glacial*, or any of the band's previous three albums, and you may beg to differ. Like that of its Chicago brethren Tortoise and June Of 44, Seam's interest in shifting dynamics is its music's shaping force, and so its songs have always been more complex—in both structure and mood—than the average rock ditty. You can hear it in the way the band builds tension by repeating a progression for minutes on end, or gets quieter just when you expect it to get louder, or even just the way that you can never predict when the vocal melody will start or stop. "Aloha Spirit" fades in, for chrissakes! But while in the past Seam's songs were like dark, swollen clouds looming ominously in the sky, threatening to burst with rain, but rarely erupting into storm, *The Pace* has its share of downpours—tunes like "Get Higher" or "The Prizefighters," where the band explodes into a hailstorm of noise. Sooyoung Park (the band's founding and only original member), who customarily whispers his vocals, actually shouts on more than one track here—Seam again toying with your expectations. >>> *Jenny Eliscu*



OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER:

Doctoral candidate rock.

R.I.Y.L.:

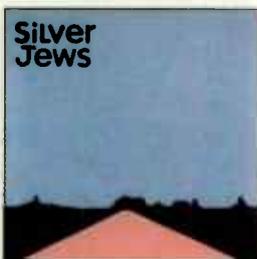
Versus, Codeine, Slint, Sebadoh.

SILVER JEWS

American Water

Drag City

When David Berman sings, "I am the trick my mother played on the world" on the Silver Jews' third full-length, he's only half joking. The poet/songwriter from Charlottesville, Virginia, teams with old chum Steve Malkmus (of Pavement) and others to paint an absurdist landscape where songs grow more obtuse in proportion to their tunefulness. With a straight face and his usual deadpan drawl, Berman sings of lonely humans and animated animals as he and his American Water Band—apparently a subsidiary of Silver Jews Inc.—strum off-kilter melodies that take on a range of their own. Having established himself as indie-rock's vicar of verbosity, he ignores traditional song frameworks to let his twisted vocabulary roam free. This can have its downside, as the trickster evokes wincing when he rhymes "Dakota" with "coda" and ends the song "Federal Dust" with a Pavement-coated flourish. But this predilection also helps the Silver Jews fill their niche as a weirdly pastoral wellspring, as when he tosses off the line "And day after day up on this beautiful stage/We've been playing tambourine for minimum wage" in "We Are Real." Berman's a likable huckster even when he stretches, and like the previous Silver Jews' albums, *American Water* offers more than a few treats. >>> *Richard Martin*



OUT: October 20.

FILE UNDER:

Post-grad swamp rock.

R.I.Y.L.:

Lambchop, Vic Chesnutt, Pavement's twangier material.

SOUL COUGHING

El Oso

Slash-Warner Bros.

A master of modern groove-rock, Soul Coughing has achieved something increasingly rare for bands: an unmistakable sound. Just as a Michael Stipe vocal immediately stamps a song as R.E.M.'s, much credit for Soul Coughing's trademark belongs to singer-lyricist M. Doughty. His pinched nasality is so oddly funky, and his endlessly repeating mantras ("Pull the rudder down pull the rudder down," "I'm rolling I'm rolling I'm rolling-ah") complement and even overpower the band's sinewy groove. Coming back from 1996's near-breakthrough *Irresistible Bliss*, *El Oso* (Spanish for "the bear") may be the most mainstream album Soul Coughing has released—and yet somehow the most experimental. Once characterized as funky grunge, that sound has been adjusted on *El Oso* for a post-Chemical era, taking on the rhythms of drum 'n' bass ("Blame") and ambient technopop ("Houston") without sounding desperate. The band's best hooks continue to be the repetitive choruses, whether clever phrases spewed dizzily by Doughty or sampled lines, like "\$300's filthy utterance, presumably from a Times Square john. More troubling is the jangly single "Circles," a pleasant entree to Soul Coughing that's a bit too Dave Matthews. Still, if it brings this band the mass audience it's long deserved, it may be worth it. >>> *Chris Molanphy*



OUT: September 29.

FILE UNDER:

Down in the groove.

R.I.Y.L.:

Girls Against Boys, Morphine, Medeski Martin & Wood.

STATUESQUE

Arbiter's Anonymous

Cassiel

After raking in blue ribbons for the heady Britpop perfection of last year's EP *Angleterre*, Statuesque has made its full-length debut, the very sound of perfection stepping off its pedestal. It turns out that singer/songwriter Stephen Manning is looking to be more than just an artful hookman—he's got a world of inner baggage and serious things to say. To give them voice, he's dropped the sweet ironic distance, added a bassist, and started rocking out. The hooks aren't gone, thank goodness—they're just recast within an adrenalized framework of power chords and big drums. "We will be waging the wars of neuroses/Your neighbor is a traitor and he covets your things," goes the chorus of the title track, channeling both the acerbity and the two-part harmony of the Beautiful South. Some songs sound downright bare-bones by Statuesque standards, such as the one-groove "Born Against" or the breezy, falsetto-sweetened strains of "Bad Egg." There are a few questionable moves: the John Lydon sneer Manning tries on for "Already Seen" doesn't quite fit that wordy, confessional song, and there's a trough of indifferent melodies in the album's second half. But overall, Statuesque serves up its bitters no less winningly than its bubbly. >>> *Andrea Moed*



OUT: October 13.

FILE UNDER:

Dry, British power pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Smiths, Beautiful South, Oasis.



STEREO TOTAL

Stereo Total

Bobsled



You're going to hear a lot about Stereo Total in the next couple months, mostly because a bunch of like-minded artists—Cornelius, Kahimi Karie, Buffalo Daughter and Fantastic Plastic Machine—have released or will have new records coming out. The members of Berlin's Stereo Total, too, are bricoleurs, pasting together garage rock, sample-spiced dance music and goofy covers. Oh, and they sing in English, German, French, Japanese and Italian. Primary singer Françoise Cactus is a marvel of ironic detachment and untoward enthusiasm, attacking Salt-N-Pepa's "Push It" with the same joy as "C'est La Mort," which coolly lists everything most people can name about France: "Françoise Hardy et Jacques Dutronc/Josephine et Napoleon." There are times, as in "LA, CA, USA," when she hits the beat barely, if at all, but this comes across as more charming than calculated—like Stereo Total, she's just trying to squeeze as much information as possible into a two-and-a-half-minute pop song. Sometimes the results of this approach are a little lightweight (e.g., the sung-in-Japanese "Ushilo Sugata Ga Kilei" or the cover of "Get Down Tonight," a bit twee even for connoisseurs of the genre), but mostly, *Stereo Total* is as fun as reading fractured English on foreign T-shirts. >>> Andrew Beaujon

OUT: October 6.

FILE UNDER:

Ersatz jet set and proud!

R.I.Y.L.:

Ween, Takako Minekawa, Serge Gainsbourg, *Viva Variety*.

UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH

Almost Here

Virgin



The members of Unbelievable Truth could potentially make a very big deal out of the fact that Andy Yorke, their vocalist and guitarist, just happens to be the little brother of Thom Yorke of Radiohead. *Almost Here* reveals a promising band that doesn't need to ride on anyone's coattails; Unbelievable Truth has the skills in songwriting and dynamics to establish its own unique identity. Yorke shares some vocal ties with his brother—a lilting tenor, a fondness for quivering and hurt phrasing. But on the whole, Unbelievable Truth takes a lower and more downbeat road than its ambitious brethren. The band writes songs with a folksy simplicity instead of an ear for the easy anthem, and forgoes a complicated three-guitar web in favor of clean and eloquent bass-and-acoustic-guitar arrangements. It's a Brit-pop album even a Red House Painters fan might enjoy without any lingering guilt. Some of the songs are a bit humdrum, passing by uneventfully—the best cuts, especially "Building," tend to be the ones that struggle to rise to a crescendo, adding a little extra flair with strings or mellotron. Still, it's a confident debut from a band that (like Radiohead did) can only get better as it finds its feet.

>>> David Jarman

OUT: October 20.

FILE UNDER:

Introspective and quiet Britpop.

R.I.Y.L.:

The Verve, Acetone, Radiohead.

CLUB OFF CHAOS

FEATURING

JAKI LIEBEZEIT

OF

CAN

"CAN'S DRUMMER, JAKI LIEBEZEIT,
PLAYED LIKE A HUMAN BREAKBEAT."

- SYSTEM 7

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ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

Mississippi Juke Joints

Down in Mississippi near Holly Springs, you realize you're in blues country when you're driving over a winding clay road, and suddenly you round a bend and find yourself in a burning field. Literally, a burning field, a Hades-like expanse of blackened, charred earth, flames engulfing trees and vines, thin wisps of black smoke curling from broken branches and issuing from cracks in the ground. Someone has been clearing his field the lazy way—by torching it.

You head past a fork in the road by the Mount Leeds Baptist Church, and over a wooden bridge that looks like it couldn't support the weight of a mule, let alone a Buick. The Biblical nature of deep Mississippi is underscored by the number of mounts around—they're not hills, they're mounts, and almost every one has a little Baptist church on top, accessible only by winding two-lane roads built in the '40s and '50s by prisoners from Parchman Farm. Driving along turn after turn, the landscape gets more and more desolate, and the omnipresent kudzu vines cover the trees completely, making ghostly

listening, dancing and drinking to the beat of Mississippi juke joint music.

Junior's Place was, and still is, the undisputed mecca of the Mississippi juke scene. Without benefit of a phone or a sign or even a liquor license, Junior Kimbrough for years ran frolics in his house by the side of the highway just outside Holly Springs. At one time, R.L. Burnside, Junior's friend and fellow bluesman, lived in the house next door. Eventually, things got so wild that Junior had to rent a separate apartment just to have a place to get away from it all. But he didn't seem to mind. When he passed away last January at age 64, it was certainly the end of an era.

While you may not exactly see Legba on the side of the road waiting to tune your guitar, you'll certainly know you've been in blues country when you head back into Oxford, Mississippi, the sleepy Southern college town that's also home to the indie label Fat Possum. Fat Possum is a genre of one, the flagship label for rowdy post-punk juke joint blues, with records by R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, Paul "Wine" Jones, Hezekiah Early & Elmo Williams, and Cedell Davis.

Matthew Johnson has been running Fat Possum since one of his original partners quit the company and cashed in his IRA ("He didn't think he'd live long enough for it to do him any good," Johnson explains). Fat Possum is no ordinary blues label. "We would hear these guys play in these juke joints and bars, and we couldn't believe that no one was recording them," he says of the label's early

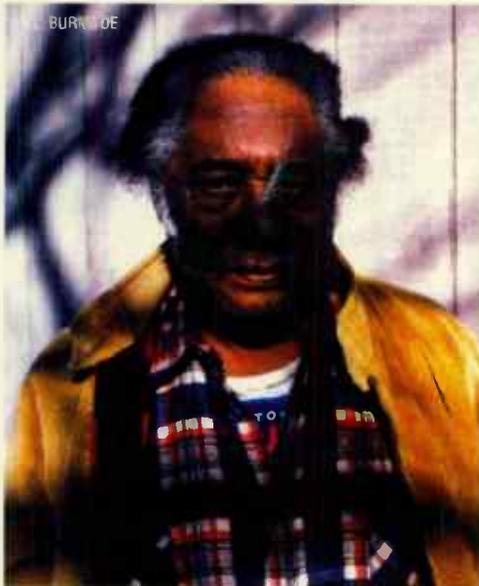
days. The music the label seeks to document is not the same tired three-chord progressions and hackneyed lyrical clichés that make up most folks' conception of the blues. It's more like music to headbang to, based on one- or two-chord riffs that repeat, building in intensity. "It's music to get out of your mind to," says one Fat Possum artist, Paul "Wine" Jones, with a toothy grin.

The music of the North Mississippi jukes is different from Delta blues, for which it's often mistaken. Delta blues is more like your typical blues: three-chords and guitar solos. North Mississippi blues, which comes from the red clay hill country north of the deltas of the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, is more down-home. Songs tend to be



shapes. One tree looks uncannily like a running man frozen in time, covered by the vines.

Looming around a curve is Junior Kimbrough's Place, a shack on the highway with yellow boards on its sides. There isn't a sign outside—everything is written on the walls in Magic Marker. "No Dope Smoking Here—Thank You" is scrawled on the wall out front. The two sides to the door are labeled "In" and "Out." For years, the juke joint was run by Junior Kimbrough, Holly Springs' most important and famous blues musician. Inside, there are murals and Christmas lights. The decor is kind of psychedelic. On a typical hot Sunday night it will be packed with revelers, young and old, black and white,



BURNSIDE



ELMO WILLIAMS



JUNIOR KIMBROUGH

riff-driven, repetitive (sometimes only one note), hypnotic and more muscular. It's the difference between, say, "I Can't Quit You, Baby" and "Whole Lotta Love."

The duo of Elmo Williams and Hezekiah Early, one of Fat Possum's recent signings, plays a kind of raucous, barnstorming music that seldom gets heard outside of 200 yards from the bar or party they're playing at. Elmo's Houserockers gigged around Laws Hill, Ferriday, Tallula and Monroe, and at the Two Mile Inn in Wilsner. A fact-checkers nightmare, Early also names gigs he's played in a bunch of towns that turn out not to be on any map. "We used to play wild like that," Williams says, comparing the old days to the squall of distorted sound that makes up the pair's new album, *Takes One To Know One*. "I like that old way of playing. We had tried some other drummers, but I needed a drummer who could play old-fashioned, so I got Hezekiah, 'cause he played that *old way*, you know."

In fact, people like Iggy Pop and Jon Spencer have been attracted to the "old way" of the label's music. The Blues Explosion has arranged for R.L. Burnside to open for the band on tour, while Iggy raved about the label in *Rolling Stone* and invited Junior Kimbrough along on one of his recent tours. A host of celebrities have made the pilgrimage to Junior's Place. There's also an apocryphal, but probably true, story that in Fat Possum's early days, Keith Richards gave them his credit card number and instructions that whenever they put a record out, they should automatically run it through and mail him a copy, whatever it was.

Back on the road, Johnson, acting as my guide, is taking us to buy some moonshine. Suddenly, he swerves the car off the asphalt road and into a ditch. Only it's not a ditch, it's a long winding dirt drive, leading up to a house obscured from the road by a tangle of trees. Refrigerators and appliances litter the yard. An old wooden Coke sign leans against a tree. Eventually, a woman brings us out a paper bag. Inside are three pint bottles. Mine says Gordon's Gin, my friend's is Cutty Sark, the third, Jim Beam. All are filled with a toxic-smelling clear substance that costs \$3 for a half-pint—not a bad price at all.

These days Junior's juke is run by his grandson, Kenny Malone. Fat Possum recently staged its "Eye Scratchers, Ball-Kickers" tour, a package featuring Hasil Adkins, T-Model Ford, Elmo Williams & Hezekiah Early, and Robert Cage. New records just out include a solo album by Doo Rag frontman Bob Log, Junior Kimbrough's last recordings, and R.L. Burnside's controversial new album, which finds the bluesman's voice mingled with beats and samples from the crate of producer Tom Rothrock (Beck's "Loser"). The next record slated for Fat Possum will be the debut of Johnny Farmer, entitled *Wrongdoers Respect Me*.

The '90s have definitely encroached on Junior's Place: The cover charge has been raised from \$2 to \$4, and Fridays and Saturdays the shack now throbs to the beat of a hip-hop DJ. But Sunday nights the juke still runs like it did in the old days, with some of Junior's friends on the bandstand. Burnside might play, or David Malone (Junior's son), or Kenny Brown (Burnside's longtime guitar player), or others.

As if it were further proof that juke joint blues is experiencing a surge of newfound interest, the Oakland, California-based label HighTone Records has also been reissuing albums originally recorded for the tiny Memphis-based High Water label in the 1980s. These records, which were previously available only regionally in the Memphis area on vinyl or occasionally from a mail-order catalog as terribly expensive CD imports, feature raw and raucous recordings by the likes of Jessie Mae Hemphill, Burnside, and Hezekiah & The Houserockers.

Driving with Matthew Johnson down a winding, spooky two-lane road at night, with Big Jack Johnson's version of "Baby Please Don't Go" blasting from the speakers, I get the distinct impression that he runs the label and makes the albums simply so he can hear the music he wants to during moments like this. He's put 10,000 miles on his car driving Mississippi backroads looking for blues players, neighbors and juke joints. And unlike other blues aficionados who drive these clay and asphalt roads, he's not looking for the past, not interested in archival documents of something that is now gone. He's looking for what's there now. Funky, bad, sassy, loud. "Mississippi rates 50th out of 50 states for poverty," he notes. "Back in the '40s and '50s, people like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf went north to get away from it. I want to find out who's still here."

en d



T-MODEL FORD

Spin The Black Circle: The 7" 45

My music addiction started through television, but a decade and a half before MTV. *The Monkees*—the television show, in its first evening broadcast version—hooked me, and from then to now what some bookkeepers would call my “disposable” income and I would call indispensable ends up in the music industry, spent on shows and magazines and books and, especially, albums and singles.

“Income” at age seven was synonymous with “allowance,” and since I depended on a finite weekly figure or on the kindness of parents, I had to choose carefully. The answer: 45s. I still have, boxed away, “I’m A Believer” and “Stepping Stone,” both with my name awkwardly penned on their labels. Singles were perfect for a seven-year-old, for many of the same reasons seven-inchers are perfect as a medium: They didn’t cost much, even for a kid, and I could choose whatever hit caught my fancy that week. I miss them.

For much of high school, prog-rock bands releasing album side-long suites distracted me, but then punk rock happened, and I returned to 45s as a full-time obsession. Economics, aesthetics, and entertainment converged perfectly in the punk rock single. The 45s were cheap to produce and cheap to purchase, which fulfilled the punk DIY dictum. They were singular, creating their own context in three minutes; a desire for “Anarchy In The UK” or a declaration of membership in a “Blank Generation” was best heard as an isolated statement, because the purest punk songs voided everything in the day-glo world around them.

Playing 45s also required effort. Choose the single. Remove its sleeve. Place the (usually, but not always) black plastic on the turntable, and set it spinning. Pump up the volume. While the song blares, examine the sleeve, or bounce around the room (gently enough to avoid skipping the needle), or choose the next single. But listen to that one song, that independent creation, that solo entity. Repeat as necessary. For that moment, one song dominated the environment, and listening to it was the sole purpose of the brief experience. The single had to rest on its own merits; even more than an album could do, it created its own world. The tactile care provided part of the pleasure.

And then there were the B-sides, which could be unexpected treasures or absolute crap, and either was fine by me. To discover something like Patti Smith’s apocalyptic live version of “My Generation” (cover versions always made prime B-sides) or The Clash’s uncharacteristically poppy “1-2 Crush On You” became a treat, but shameless throwaways (Smith’s “Fire Of Unknown Origin” for instance) were acceptable: I was buying the A-side, anyway.

Singles had a few other virtues. Until ‘85 or so (when vinyl began to die), a new single could be an event, a way to chart an artist’s development. A Smiths or Prince single became news for fans (“Have you heard ‘How Soon Is Now?’ yet?”), and the song could become ubiquitous for a few weeks, until a new sensation supplanted it.

The last time a band seemed to try to create an ongoing story through singles occurred when the Wedding Present launched its Hit Parade of 45s each month of 1992, and that seemed nostalgic even then.

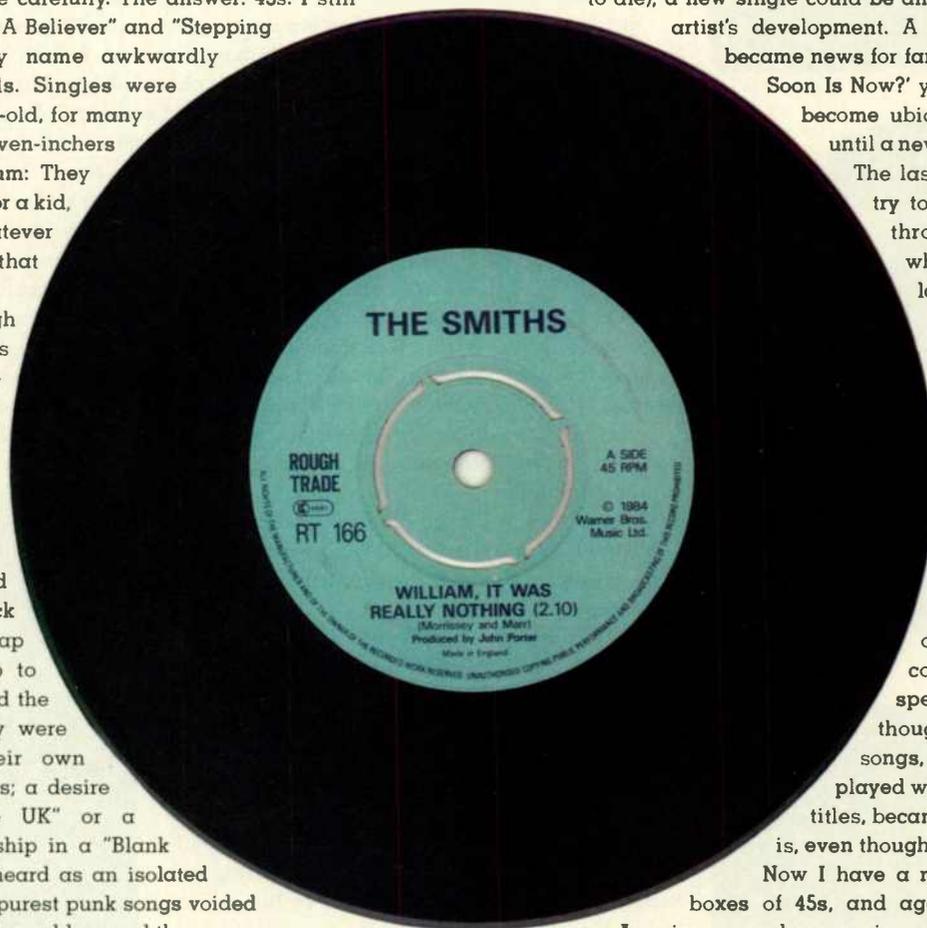
Originally 45s had another raison d’être, and when my best man gave me as a wedding present an old jukebox (a childhood dream of mine that he recalled), I discovered the joy of hearing songs compressed through tinny speakers. Finding what I thought of as great jukebox songs, ones that cried out to be played when someone scanned the titles, became another thrill. And still is, even though I’m single myself again.

Now I have a room partially filled with boxes of 45s, and again they’re languishing.

American record companies release 45s erratically and, in these days of 70-minute CDs, I’m not sure who buys them. And even I am not so desperate—or geek-like—that I’ll spring for British import singles just to get an album track for the jukebox. Kill Rock Stars and Sub Pop have both recently begun “Singles Clubs,” but I don’t want season tickets to a label. Still, I’m happy to have “Mmmbop” and Apples In Stereo’s “Man You Gotta Get Up” for the jukebox (the place they sound best), even though I’d also like to have Sleater-Kinney’s “Little Babies,” which would make a perfect 45.

Although few are the opportunities to experience the immediate joys of a new single, I’m still a believer.

end



BY IAN CHRISTE

OXIPEGATZ

Sidereal Journey

Season Of Mist

Oxiplegatz's third album isn't even that good; it's just too damn weird to ignore. The labor of love of At The Gates founder Alf Svensson, Oxiplegatz is an ambitious reach for obscure originality. Most metal is extremely focused, but it can be so



rewarding when it is at its most fractured. Impossible to predict from one second to the next, this epic concept CD about space travel is all glorious and pompous post-grind confusion. Though 33 sections of story line are labeled inside the disc, this release is meant to be absorbed in a single, bewildering 40-minute sitting. At this one sustained breath, black metal and brutally '70s prog rock meet in chaotic arrangements of hundreds of drum and guitar riffs. Though the liner notes state, "Oxiplegatz is more than ever a solo project," the nun-like woman's voice that permeates *Sidereal Journey* is attached to the thorax of Sara Svensson, not Alf. The weird precedents to this music include Voivod's 1985 sci-fi classic *Dimension Hatross*, and L. Ron Hubbard's cornball vanity project Space Jazz. Svensson has a ludicrous metal opera on his hands—glory to his isolated Northern European self. This release begs to be considered avant-garde, but is too safe to be considered a threat. In terms of curious metal logic, however, it ranks as an instant classic.

>>> **ABSU** knows more than a few things about difficult cortical processes, as the mystical-minded Dallas trio has shown with a slew of innovative titles. The four-song *In The Eyes Of Ioldánach* EP (Osmose America) is a marked step forward for the troupe, taking the intricately detailed songwriting about six notches up the speed scale. Drummer Proscriptor seems to have labored mightily over his devotions, so that Absu can properly bridge the classic imagination rock of Iron Maiden with the blasting blur of black metal. Great production highlights each hand-crafted detail of the evocative music, without defeating its essentially gritty quality. It's the antithesis of the new Suckdog compilation CD, and therefore a perfect companion piece... Tokyo death-grind quartet **DEFILED** recently made a whirlwind tour of the States. At Milwaukee Metalfest in July, the band's set immediately following Mayhem was precise and punishing, rolling old school crunch into a jagged blur of hoarse-throated vocals and chukka-chukka-chukka rhythms. Though the group's instrumentation is crisply in synch, it has an unbridled jerky quality that, for all practical purposes, exploits wormholes in time and space. Evidence of this can be heard on *Erupted Wrath*, a three-song tape mixed at Morrisound Studios, available direct from the band (See Directory, pg. 77)... Metal's stupidest one-note joker, **A.C.**, has taken the inevitable step of releasing a full-length CD of sensitive acoustic folk songs. I'm surprised it took this long. *Picnic Of Love* (Off The Records) brings out Josh Martin's most insincere six-string strum capacity, while "Big" Seth Putnam sings in a warbled falsetto about loving flowers and being afraid of pre-marital sex. In short, this is one of Boston's most offensive and violent cabaret acts making a goof of rebelling against itself. The big question is whether the Prodigy or Matthew Sweet will be the first to make a legitimate pop hit out of "I Couldn't Afford To Buy You A Present (So I Wrote You This Song)."

metal top 25

- 1 **FEAR FACTORY**
Obsolete Roadrunner
- 2 **SYSTEM OF A DOWN**
System Of A Down American/Columbia-CRG
- 3 **ANTHRAX**
Volume 8: The Threat Is Real Ignition
- 4 **KORN**
Follow The Leader Immortal-Epic
- 5 **VISION OF DISORDER**
Imprint Roadrunner
- 6 **SLAYER**
Diabolus In Musica American/Columbia-CRG
- 7 **ROB ZOMBIE**
Hellbilly Deluxe Geffen
- 8 **MONSTER MAGNET**
Powertrip A&M
- 9 **DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN**
Under The Running Board (EP) Relapse
- 10 **NILE**
Amongst The Catacombs Of Nephren-Ka Relapse
- 11 **CROWBAR**
Odd Fellows Rest Mayhem
- 12 **ICED EARTH**
Days Of Purgatory Century Media
- 13 **KILGORE**
A Search For Reason Unsound-Revolution
- 14 **OPETH**
Morningrise Century Media
- 15 **AGNOSTIC FRONT**
Something's Gotta Give Epitaph
- 16 **SOULFLY**
Soufly Roadrunner
- 17 **INCANTATION**
Diabolical Conquest Relapse
- 18 **OPPRESSOR**
Elements Of Corrosion Slipdisc-Mercury
- 19 **DARK FUNERAL**
Vobiscum Satanas Metal Blade
- 20 **CODESEVEN**
A Sense Of Coalition TMC
- 21 **MONSTER VOODOO MACHINE**
Direct Reaction Now Dr. Dream
- 22 **DROWN**
Product Of A Two Faced World Slipdisc-Mercury
- 23 **HAUNTED**
The Haunted Earache
- 24 **KID ROCK**
Devil Without A Cause Lava-Atlantic
- 25 **LABYRINTH**
Return To Heaven Denied Metal Blade

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

FROM BEYOND

Various Artists

Interdimensional Transmissions

From the first seconds of i-f's electro-charged "Space Invaders Are Smoking Grass," this collection of boundary-pushing electronics enjoins the listener to take a journey into uncharted territory, and go into a deep head nod in the process. While mainstream electronica moves closer to commercial alternative radio, an entire underground is rapidly moving in the opposite direction, not towards deliberate obscurity and sterility but into realms of funkiness as yet undreamed. The Interdimensional Transmissions label has been central to that progressive movement, having released a series of vinyl EPs over the past two years that have earned the imprint global respect. *From Beyond* gathers together 16 of those tracks, and the resulting record represents the state-of-the-art in progressive techno. DJ Godfather's menacing "Future Shock" was created to test the mettle of Geiger counters, while Phoenecia's "Roba" is some highly futuristic electro from Miami. Mike Paradinas (a.k.a. μ -Ziq) turns up with "Hi-Q," a delicate, string-based track stripped of all sentimentality. *From Beyond* should silence anyone thinking that minimal techno has lost its ability to move the mind and the body.



>>> Luke Vibert has been quietly (and sometimes noisily) testing the limits of electronic experimentation for some time now, always keeping his eye on the groove. Recording under aliases such as Plug and **WAGON CHRIST**, Vibert has earned a loyal following with his uncanny sense of melody amidst confusing, disjointed yet funky electronics. *Tally Ho!* (Astralwerks), his latest album as Wagon Christ, is another step forward into analog strangeness. Unlike previous Wagon Christ outings, here Vibert dons velvet slippers and a smoking jacket on the album's first single "Lovely," which sounds more like Esquivel than Autechre. "Pretty Crap" is another self-effacing loungey number that slowly turns darker, adding a thin bass line and some ghostly, rattling percussion atop the more kitschy keyboard flourishes. Vibert has always been a chameleon-like figure, but his work remains consistent in one important respect: It always challenges and grooves... **PUSHBUTTON OBJECT**, known to his friends as Edgar Farinas, takes the analog tools-of-the-trade and turns them inside out. His most recent outing, the *Unauthorized* EP (Chocolate Industries), is the most distinctive electronic record I've heard in a very long time. If you imagine the thread of crystalline melody that runs through the jarring music of Squarepusher and μ -Ziq wedded to early Miami woofer massacres like MC A.D.E.'s "Bass Mechanic" or Marley Marl's early work, you'll have an inkling of what Pushbutton Object is all about. The power and beauty of this record lies in its combination of restraint and four-on-the-floor funk—a rare feat indeed... Despite the continuing growth of what the Brits call "digital roots"—roots reggae inflected by contemporary electronic influences—the style has failed to make any impact Stateside. Perhaps with the release of the fourth volume in the highly consistent **DUBHEAD** series (Southern) and the increasing acceptance of dub structures in the techno world (thanks to artists such as Maurizio, Pole, and Thomas Brinkmann), that will change. Over 14 tracks, artists including the Dub Specialists, the Dub Organiser and The Truth reveal a lineage that runs deep into the echo chamber but also comes under the sway of Bristol-style drum-'n'-bass, deep house and the Berlin sinewave sound.

dance top 25

- 1 **FRONT 242**
Re-Boot (Live '98) Metropolis
- 2 **MIX MASTER MIKE**
Anti-Theft Device Asphodel
- 3 **MASSIVE ATTACK**
Mezzanite Circa-Virgin
- 4 **WINK**
HereHezr Ovum/Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 5 **VAINIO/VAISANEN/VEGA**
Endless Blast First-Mute
- 6 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Untouchable Outcaste Beats Vol. 1 Outcaste-Tommy Boy
- 7 **CIRRUS**
Bea On A Mission Moonshine
- 8 **LOW**
Owl Remix Low Vernon Yard-Astralwerks
- 9 **EIGHTY MILE BEACH**
Inclement Weather OM
- 10 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Konkrete Jungle Maximum Drum "M" Bass
Konkrete Jungle-Ultra
- 11 **DJ ICEY**
Generate frrr-London
- 12 **MARINER**
Amphibian Intersound
- 13 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Electropolis Vol. 1 Metropolis
- 14 **BOMB20**
Field Manual Digital Hardcore
- 15 **MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO**
"Acid Again" (5") Nothing-Interscope
- 16 **UNKLE**
Psyence Fiction Mo Wax-London
- 17 **TWELVETREES**
Boy On A Cloud Dubbly-Mercury
- 18 **COVENANT**
Europa 21st Circuitry
- 19 **TRICKY**
Angels With Dirty Faces Island
- 20 **BEN NEILL**
Callin' Antilles-Verve
- 21 **HOOVERPHONIC**
Blue Wonder Power Milk Epic
- 22 **AMON TOBIN**
Permutation Ninja Tune (Canada)
- 23 **RINGTAILED SNORTER**
Look Back In The Mirror COP International
- 24 **LUKE SLATER**
Freek Funk/"Love" (5") Novamute-Mute
- 25 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Positively Positiva Positiva-Priority

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

IT WILL COLEMAN

hip-hop top 25

- 1 RAS KASS
"B20 Proof" Patchwork-Priority
- 2 BLACK EYED PEAS
"Joins & Jams" Interscope
- 3 XZIBIT
"What U See Is What U Get" Loud-RCA
- 4 A TRIBE CALLED QUEST
"Find A Way" Jive
- 5 FLIPMODE SQUAD
"Cha Cha Cha" Elektra-EEG
- 6 BEASTIE BOYS
"Intergalactic" Grand Royal-Capitol
- 7 CAM'RON
"Horse & Carriage" Entertainment-Epic
- 8 FAT JOE FEATURING PUFF DADDY
"Don Cartagena" Mystic/Big Beat-Atlantic
- 9 SPORTY THEIVZ
"Cheapskate" Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 10 SNOOP DOGG
"Still A G Thang" No Limit-Priority
- 11 CANIBUS
"Get Retarded" Universal
- 12 DON SCAVONE
"The Force" Maikn'
- 13 FUNKMASTER FLEX
"Wu-Tang Cream Team Line Up" Loud-RCA
- 14 SHAQUILLE O'NEAL
"The Way It's Going Down" A&M
- 15 NOREAGA
"Sepurthug" Penalty-Tommy Boy
- 16 MOOD SWINGAZ
"The Blessin'" Raw Shack
- 17 LAURYN HILL
"Doo Wop" Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 18 BLACK STAR
"Definition" Rawkus
- 19 GOODIE MOB
"Beautiful Skin" LaFace-Arista
- 20 NOREAGA
"N.O.R.E." Penalty-Tommy Boy
- 21 LAURYN HILL
"Lost Ones" Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 22 MIX MASTER MIKE
Anti-Theft Device Asphodel
- 23 JOHN FORTE
"Ninety Nine (Flash The Message)"
Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 24 FAT JOE
"John Blaze" Mystic/Big Beat-Priority
- 25 MONICA
"The First Night" Arista

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

DEEPER CONCENTRATION

Various Artists

OM

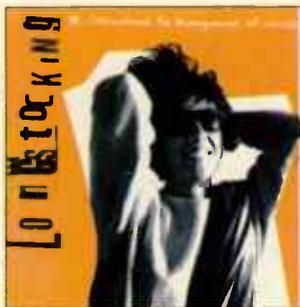
Last year was a big one in the development of—and in the popular attention paid to—instrumental hip-hop, not least because of OM Records's acclaimed *Deep Concentration* compilation, which explored all shades of the turntablist axis. With



Deeper Concentration, the label steps up to the plate again, and comes through with a doozy of a follow-up. In fact, *Deeper Concentration* is one of the most well-done, wide-ranging and impressive compilations that the rap and electronic worlds have ever seen. Dropping most of the first volume's dub/trip-hop trappings, the tracks here are mostly instrumental excursions, all of which—consciously or not—pay tribute to cut-'n'-paste masters such as Grandmaster Flash, Grandmixer D. St, Steinski, and Vintertainment's three-volume *Hip Hop On Wax* series from the early '80s. (Siah & Yeshua

DapoED's "The Cure For Stagnation," DJ Spooky and Organized Konfusion's "Murder By Syntax," Task Force's "Liquidized Language" and Mass Influence's "Demo Type Shit" are the vocal exceptions.) But it's not about nostalgia—cuts like the Beat Junkies' "They Don't Understand," Rob Swift's "The Age Of Television," Mix Master Mike's "Schwartz Via Agharta" and the Scratch Perverts' live "Course Of Action" all take the game to the next level, as all true turntablism should. Definitely one of hip-hop's shining moments for 1998.

➤➤➤ If you didn't already know that rappers **MOS DEF & TALIB KWELI** were just young bucks, their new *Black Star* (Rawkus) certainly wouldn't give it away. In fact, these two sage and serene Brooklynites carry themselves so well that it doesn't really matter that they're really only just starting their careers in the rap game. Their debut is chock full of smooth-grooving beats by the likes of DJ Hi Tek, Shawn J. Period and the Beatminerz's Mr. Walt. But it's the lyrics that are paramount. Even on musically derivative tracks like "Definition" (based on BDP's "The P Is Free") and "Children's Story" (which takes off on the Slick Rick classic), these two very talented MCs bring more than enough new vocals and styles to make the tracks fully their own. And other, more musically original work, such as "Astronomy," "Hater Players," "Respiration" (featuring Common) and "Twice Inna Lifetime," shows that this super-solid debut is just the beginning... Lord knows why, but **FUNKMASTER FLEX** is apparently calling it quits in the "legit mix tape" game. This is especially curious because his new *Funkmaster Flex: The Mix Tape Volume III, The Final Chapter* (Loud) is at least as good as his first two volumes and maybe even better. As usual, the parade of superstar MC freestyles almost never ends (with shots by KRS-One, Gang Starr, Mobb Deep, Slick Rick, Busy Bee, and Ice Cube with Mack 10, to name but a few) and the party-pumping flow keeps on 'til the break of dawn, jumping between cuts and mixes of hardcore hip-hop and groovalicious R&B... Brooklyn's **ALL CITY** (consisting of rappers J. Mega and Greg) is a potentially good thing waiting to happen. As the duo proves on its debut, *Metropolis Gold* (MCA), it can rock underground styles with skill and ease, as on "The Actual" (produced by the infallible DJ Premier), "Metro Theme," "Priceless" (produced by a newly-raw Pete Rock) and "Timez Hard." But when the two venture into more pop-oriented styles (usually patterned after the played-out, lackluster Puffy/Mase rhyme formula), things take a more mediocre turn. Not a bad debut, but let's hope they stay truer to their own style in the future.

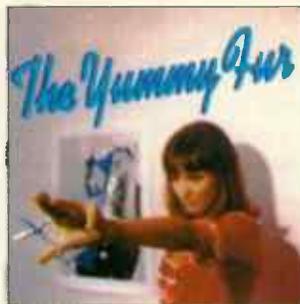


>>> The new single by Olympia, Washington's **LONGSTOCKING** is the 88th release in the International Pop Underground series on K Records (where singer/guitarist Tamala Poljak works in the stockroom). "Will You Stay?" is a bittersweet rocker with a great ching-chang vs. buzz-buzz dual-guitar dynamic that's matched by the lyrics'

emotional push-pull. Poljak's voice isn't a great instrument, but she makes the most of it, singing the hell out of what notes she's got, and the shifting harmonies from the rest of the band give it extra punch. The other side's "Something Else I Can Never Change" is longer and somewhat more subdued, with a low-hanging tune and guitar/drum stabs that bring to mind early Spinanes.

>>> Those who, like your faithful Singles columnist, appreciate the **PEECHEES'** indomitable energy, but wish they had something a little more tuneful than their own stuff to sing, may want to check out their new single. "Sing Like Me" (Damaged Goods) is a cover of an Elliott Smith song, and though singer Chris Appelgren still isn't too hot at carrying a tune, the flow of Smith's melodies is all but impossible to derail, and the song holds up beautifully under the band's raw punkification. Unfortunately, their own "Other Ice Age," on the B-side, is more of the usual hunting for the lost pitch, though it works up some good momentum by the end.

>>> The **YUMMY FUR** has undergone some drastic lineup changes lately, and main songwriter John McKeown has (like so many others) found his attention drifting away from guitars and toward machines. In his case, though, they aren't new machines. For those accustomed to the band's jagged, fleeting abrasion-rock, "Shoot The Ridiculant" (Guided Missile) may come as a shock: It's a very long two-part song (spread over both sides of a 7") recorded entirely with ancient Roland and Akai synths, plus a Vocoder for the singing. The effect is entirely un-rock, and very much like Kraftwerk and cheap European disco of the '70s. Still, McKeown's melodic and rhythmic gift comes through—you can hear how the song might have been written on guitar.



>>> A few quick drops of the needle: **CHUMBWAMBA's** "Top Of The World (Olé, Olé, Olé)" (EMI) was a hit single basically everywhere in the world during this year's World Cup... except for the US, where it wasn't released. It's making it over here on import, though, and if it ain't quite "Tubthumping," it's still fun, with a typically enormous chorus... The

Jeepster label has released a half-dozen terrific records over the last few years, all of which have been by Belle & Sebastian. The

THE BETA BAND

"Push It Out"

Regal

The Beta Band has only made a couple of singles, but it's already getting an awful lot of attention from the British press, and this EP is odd and luscious enough that the band deserves it. As a recording,



"Push It Out" is beautiful: It's exquisitely arranged, a gently bobbing rhythm that gradually assimilates lush piano, pingy guitar and Beach Boys-style kettle-drums. As a song, it's very word-essentially a five-minute intro to a song that never quite

arrives. The band, in a rough harmony that calls to mind early-'70s Fairport Convention, sings "Push it out/Push it all out" over and over and over. Four minutes into the song, a counter-melody with a few other words arrives; a bit later, a chord change happens. And then, very shortly thereafter, it's over. It's almost a statement against the idea of the structured song. The other three tracks on the CD single (labeled on the outside as "Los Amigos Del Beta Banditos"—what?) have a similar attention to texture and sonic detail (including warm, personable singing) and a similar disregard for the niceties of lyrical meaning and structural variation. They're not quite as striking as "Push It Out," but they've all got some fascinating ideas, especially "Dr. Baker," which warps into a flurry of tape montage towards its end, then breaks down again into a simple arrangement of voice and tuned metal.

company's second signing, **SALAKO**, has released its debut single, "Growing Up In The Night," and it's a grower: an asymmetrical little melody hooked by close-miked acoustic guitars, fake handclaps, and a drum fill that shows up every few seconds like a rocket's afterburner... The **MAGNETIC FIELDS** preview their forthcoming album *69 Love Songs* with a single, "I Don't Believe You" (Merge). It's got a hilariously morose lyric (first line: "So you quote love unquote me"), paired with Stephin Merritt's increasingly idiosyncratic synth manipulations. And just try not to hum it... **THE NEED** is stretching out from its jerky, squint-eyed new-wave-isms—for the band's new 10" single "Vaselina" (Up), it's teamed up with Northwest heavy-rock guy Joe Preston and DJ Zena, who adds some scratching. It works especially well on "Talk Potty," where the mannered singing and organ (in impossible time signatures) float like oil over the weighty low end.

BY JAMES LIEN



Columbia has also rolled out a series of titles highlighting '70s jazz fusion. While not every fusion album was a good thing—by 1975 nearly all of them weren't good things—there are a few visionary exceptions. Among them is **HERBIE HANCOCK's** *Sextant*. No doubt inspired in part by Miles Davis, Hancock and his band all adopted African names and began playing rhythmically dense, freeform

music that pretty much blew away everyone who heard it. Portions of *Sextant* completely break free of the rules of normal music, exploring it as sound itself, and in that way drawing some kinship to the ambient music that would follow. Like Miles, Hancock and his band had a vision of futuristic electronic alterations of African-inspired musical concepts that was years ahead of its time—in some ways, people are only just recently starting to figure it out.

There's been a host of great reissues of classic albums of every musical variety coming out recently. One of the essential documents of the early '80s hardcore scene is ROIR's **NEW YORK THRASH** compilation, which when originally released on cassette in 1982, became a staple item in the boombox of many a mohawked, flannel-shirted '80s punk. There are also two tracks from one particularly bratty group known as the Beastie Boys, who in 1982 were pegged in the liner notes as "brief stars...nutty, fun, and a bit bizarre, unfortunately dissolving before they could reach their full promise."... Hightone has just re-released an eponymous album by **HEZEKIAH AND THE HOUSEROCKERS**, led by the blaring juke-joint guitar of Hezekiah Early, who's lately recorded for Fat Possum. This album also features the unlikely contribution of blues trombonist Peewee Whittaker... He's been called the godfather of salsa, and Cuban bandleader, arranger and singer **BENY MORÉ** was one hell of an entertainer in the '40s and '50s. Music Club has released *La Coleccion Cubana*, a sizzling set of some of his best sides. You gotta love a CD that has a photo on the cover of a canary yellow Cadillac convertible with Cuban license plates!

In his heyday, there wasn't a live entertainer black, white or purple who could top **JAMES BROWN**. Given a time machine and an all-access laminate to any one live show in history, I'd probably pick a JB gig over Woodstock, the Beatles at the Cavern, Sunday morning church with J.S. Bach at the organ, Grand Funk at Flushing Tennis Stadium or any other gig for that matter. Polydor-Chronicles' *Say It Live And Loud: Live In Dallas 08.26.68* is almost just such a ticket, showing JB's crack band whipping through a typical 1968 set, an hour-long whirlwind medley of non-stop funk and soul that is pretty much invincible.

And in the last-but-not-least category, Orleans Records has released a live CD from jazz singer **BLUE LU BARKER**, with the pleasingly long title of *Blue Lu Barker Live At The New Orleans Jazz Festival Featuring The Legendary Danny Barker & His Jazz Hounds*. Like the JB CD above, it's not strictly a reissue, but an unreleased live recording from 1989 that's almost enough to bring tears to the eyes of a jazz fan. In 1938 Blue Lu Barker recorded the original "Don't You Feel My Leg," a funny, risqué tune made popular in the '70s by Maria

Muldaur. Danny Barker, her husband of 60-odd years, was a giant of early jazz. He was born in New Orleans, his uncle was the great jazz bandleader Paul Barbarin, and Danny played guitar and banjo with Jelly Roll Morton, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong and later even Charlie Parker. At the time of this 1989 live recording, one of their last appearances together, Lu was 75 and husband Danny was a spry 80, and hearing the two of them together onstage, dressed to the nines and trotting out the old chestnuts and classic jazz standards, is something else. And when Blue Lu rolls her eyes and trots out her raunchy blues lines (antique gems like "Now Nellie's dead from doing the Georgia Grind," or "If you feed me rye/You're going to get me high/So don't you feel my thigh"), the crowd goes nuts! Howls of pandemonium erupt! Don'tcha feel my leg! Ooh! Don't stop!



MILES DAVIS

Bitches Brew Sessions

Columbia Legacy

It's no exaggeration to say that Miles Davis ushered in a whole new era of music with his 1970 album *Bitches Brew*, on which the renowned trumpet sorcerer began mixing funk and rock sensibilities with jazz improvisation. Significantly, the secret of the music on *Bitches Brew* was that it was "out" but also accessible; it sounded fresh to late '60s rock ears that had grown up in the Fillmore, but to bop ears it made no sense at all. As part of its series of Miles Davis box sets Columbia has just released *The Complete Bitches Brew Sessions*, a lavish four-CD box set comprising every inch of tape that rolled while Miles cut this epochal album. It's beautiful stuff, over a third of it previously unreleased. Although it's not quite as wild and far-out as his later funk-oriented jams of the '70s, it's still rich with sonic textures and gently shifting moods. In a sense, while his '70s music was darker, more African and funkier, this is more sublime, beautiful and swooning. This music invented its own categories and *Bitches Brew* is one tremendous mood album.



1	BEASTIE BOYS	Hello Nasty	Grand Royal-Capitol
2	LIZ PHAIR	Whitechocolatespaceegg	Matador-Capitol
3	SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS	Perennial Favorites	Mammoth
4	BOB MOULD	The Last Dog And Pony Show.	GM-Rykodisc
5	RASPUTINA	How We Quit The Forest	Columbia-CRG
6	THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS	Severe Tire Damage	Restless
7	ELLIOTT SMITH	XO	DreamWorks
8	LUCINDA WILLIAMS	Car Wheels On A Gravel Road	Mercury
9	MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD	Combustication	Blue Note
10	12 ROUNDS	My Big Hero	Nothing-Interscope
11	RICHARD BUCKNER	Since	MCA
12	BIS	Intendo	Grand Royal
13	BRIAN SETZER ORCHESTRA	The Dirty Boogie	Interscope
14	BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE	Strung Out In Heaven	TVT
15	POSSUM DIXON	New Sheets	Interscope
16	MIX MASTER MIKE	Anti-Theft Device	Asphodel
17	BLACK EYED PEAS	Behind The Front	Interscope
18	BILLY BRAGG/WILCO	Mermaid Avenue	Elektra-EEG
19	PIXIES	At The BBC	4AD/Elektra-EEG
20	CHOCOLATE GENIUS	Black Music	V2
21	HOOVERPHONIC	Blue Wonder Power Mlk	Epic
22	SNOWPONY	The Slow Motion World Of Snowpony	Radioactive
23	PRIMUS	Rhinoplasty	Interscope
24	DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM	Out Of Your Mind	K
25	SIX FINGER SATELLITE	Law Of Ruins	Sub Pop
26	TAKAKO MINEKAWA	Recubed EP	Emperor Norton
27	VAINIO/VAISANEN/VEGA	Endless	Blast First-Mute
28	LOW	Owl Remix Low	Vernon Yard-Astralwerks
29	OF MONTREAL	The Bedside Drama A Petite Tragedy	Elephant 6-Kindercore
30	GILLIAN WELCH	Hell Among The Yearlings	Almo Sounds
31	EMBRACE	The Good Will Out	DGC
32	BARENAKED LADIES	Stunt	Reprise
33	UNKLE	Psyence Fiction	Mo Wax-London
34	CIRRUS	Back On A Mission	Moonshine
35	MARK LANEGAN	Scraps At Midnight	Sub Pop
36	SPINANES	Arches And Aisles	Sub Pop
37	TRAGICALLY HIP	Phantom Power	Sire
38	PLASTILINA MOSH	Aquamosh	Capitol
39	MIDGET	Jukebox	Sire
40	BOMB20	Field Manual	Digital Hardcore
41	BAILTER SPACE	Photon	Turnbuckle
42	SOUNDTRACK	Chicago Cab	Loosegroove
43	OZOMATLI	Ozomatli	Almo Sounds
44	7% SOLUTION	All About Satellites And Spaceships	X-Ray
45	ULTRABABYFAT	Silver Tones Smile	Velvet
46	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Happy Meals Volume 2: The Perfect Marriage	My
47	SPRING HEeled JACK USA	Songs From Suburbia	Ignition
48	SHONEN KNIFE	Happy Hour	Big Deal
49	BABE THE BLUE OX	The Way We Were	RCA
50	MXPX	Slowly Going The Way Of The Buffalo	A&M
51	UNINVITED	Uninvited	Atlantic
52	GRANT LEE BUFFALO	Jubilee	Slash-WB
53	A MINOR FOREST	Inindependence	Thrill Jockey
54	DR. JOHN	Anutha Zone	Pointblank-Virgin
55	KORN	Follow The Leader	Immortal-Epic
56	TRICKY	Angels With Dirty Faces	Island
57	EAGLE-EYE CHERRY	Desireless	WORK
58	SATURINE	Mid The Green Fields	VictoriaLand
59	JULIANA HATFIELD	Bed	Zoe-Mercury
60	AMNESIA	Lingus	Supreme-Island
61	SINEAD LOHAN	No Mermaid	Interscope
62	MASSIVE ATTACK	Mezzanine	Circa-Virgin
63	VARIOUS ARTISTS	The Best Of Hootenanny	Foil
64	WARM JETS	Future Signs	Island
65	KID ROCK	Devil Without A Cause	Lava-Atlantic
66	WORLD STANDARD	Country Gazette	Asphodel
67	SOUNDTRACK	The Avengers	Atlantic
68	DEADBOLT	Zulu Death Mask	Headhunter-Cargo
69	MAKERS	Psychopathia Sexualis	Estrus
70	LISA GERMANO	Slide	4AD
71	NANCI GRIFFITH	Other Voices, Too	Elektra-EEG
72	BRS-49	Big Backyard Beat Show	Arista
73	VIOLENT GREEN	Hangovers In The Ancient World	Up
74	JESSAMINE	Another Fictionalized History	Histrionic
75	PULLMAN	Turnstyles & Junkpiles	Thrill Jockey



#1 Beastie Boys
Hello Nasty

FIVE YEARS AGO

1 SMASHING PUMPKINS

SIAMESE DREAM VIRGIN

2 JULIANA HATFIELD THREE

BECOME WHAT YOU ARE MAMMOTH

3 THE BREEDERS

LAST SPLASH ELEKTRA

4 URGE OVERKILL

SATURATION GEFEN

5 MATTHEW SWEET

ALTERED BEAST ZOO

TEN YEARS AGO

1 BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE

TIGHTEN UP VOL. 88 COLUMBIA

2 SUGARCUBES

LIFE'S TOO GOOD ELEKTRA

3 JOY DIVISION

SUBSTANCE QWEST-WB

4 PRIMITIVES

LOVELY RCA

5 MICHELLE SHOCKED

SHORT SHARP SHOCKED MERCURY-PG

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.

L I F E / S T Y L E

VAIN MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Sometimes we get bored. So we dye our hair," joked Brian Setzer of the Stray Cats in the early '30s. But back then, you couldn't just pop into the drug store for Manic Panic. Purks on a budget had little recourse but to use household products like Jell-O for color, and bar soap in lieu of pomade.

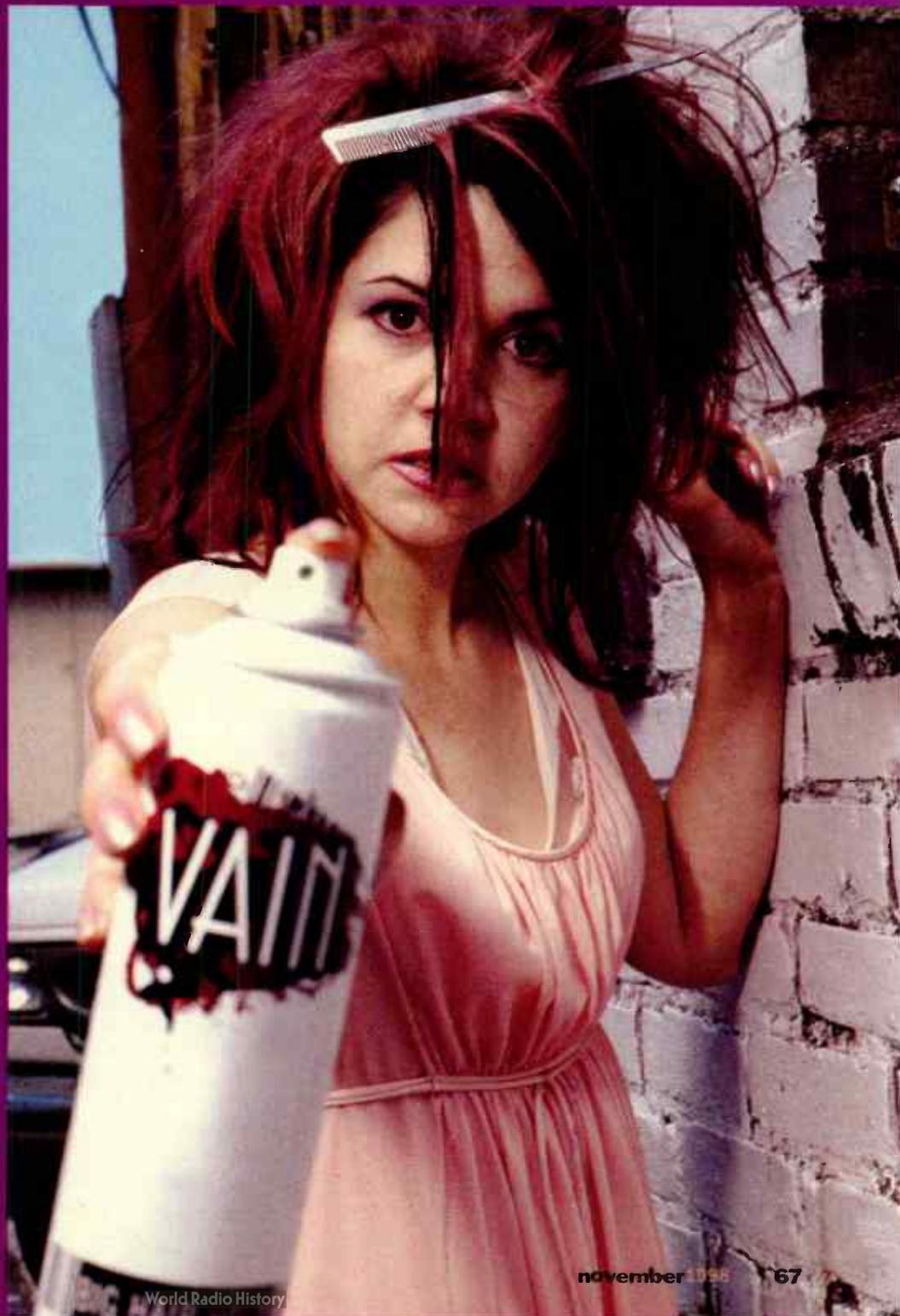
Victoria Gentry of Vain hair care products remembers that era clearly. "I started cutting school and going into Manhattan and hanging out in the West and East Village, when I was around 14. I was into the whole rock and drag queen night life scene," she recalls. "Doing hair was a means to an end, to affect different looks and piss people off in Northern New Jersey."

Gentry eventually became a fixture in the rock underground, making appointments in smoky clubs, cutting hair in dressing rooms. But attaining innovative looks at affordable prices was still ridiculously difficult. Hairdressers weren't about to compromise income by letting clients in on how simple some procedures could be. And they maintained tight control over the requisite tools, too. After years of watching salons and suppliers fail to keep up with her customers' unique needs, Gentry took matters into her own hands.

"That was the whole inspiration for doing Vain in the first place," she insists, "my clients telling me what they wanted, and nobody listening to that in the industry."

Weary of exorbitant New York rents, she relocated to Seattle. D.I.Y. to the roots, Gentry

(Continued on page 72)



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CHICAGO CAB

(Castle Hill Productions)

Stage plays are stage plays. You can throw them on the big screen, hire big-name actors, and back it all up with a powerhouse soundtrack, but in the end you're left to rely on the same two things: writing and acting. Fortunately, *Chicago Cab* scores well in both departments. Which is probably why the celluloid version of Will Kern's award-winning play *Hellcab* doesn't attempt to toy with the stage version's original formula. For the film, Second City veteran Paul Dillon (*Austin Powers*, TV's *The Pretender*) reprises his stage role as the cabbie who cared too much. The story follows Dillon's character (almost everyone in this movie, including the protagonist, is unnamed) on his cab route, and documents his encounters with an array of customers—religious zealots, coke fiends, a pregnant woman, a rape victim. The big-name actors who occupy the back seat (Laurie Metcalf, Gillian Anderson, Julianne Moore, Reggie Hayes, John Cusack) never upstage the lonely, empathetic driver up front. Where similar attempts to bring a play to the big screen have been bogged down by slow pacing and self-conscious dialogue, *Chicago Cab* succeeds thanks to stirring performances and a darkly comic script.

>>> Sam Cannon

GODS AND MONSTERS

(Lions Gate)

On May 29, 1957, the body of director James Whale was found in his Pacific Palisades swimming pool. It was a tabloid ending to the tabloid life of the openly gay (in a then-closeted Hollywood) mastermind behind the *Frankenstein* films. *Gods And Monsters*, based on a novel by Christopher Bram, recounts what might have happened in the days leading up to Whale's suicide. Juxtaposing flashbacks, recreated on-the-set footage, and movie clips, writer/director Bill Condon paints a picture of a proud man (Ian McKellen) who can't accept that he's dying and is slowly losing his ability to function. He befriends his gardener (Brendan Fraser), who is drawn to Whale's stories of Tinseltown, yet repelled by his forthright homosexuality, much to the discontent of Whale's Hungarian caretaker Hannah (Lynn Redgrave). As days pass, it is evident that Whale has darker, ulterior motives for befriendng this block-headed, lurching, dimwitted, and aggressive

MARY JANE'S NOT A VIRGIN ANYMORE

(Station Wagon Productions)

Mary Jane's Not A Virgin Anymore opens with one girl's loss of her virginity. It's a staple topic for coming-of-age tales, but this heroine's deflowering isn't the sort of blissful, sappy moment that we've come to expect from Hollywood. This funny, charming film opens with a shot of Jane (played by Lisa Gerstein of *My Life's In Turnaround*) being de-virginized in a cemetery by a tattoo-covered punk who barely notices she's there. Afterwards, an exasperated Jane turns to the hipsters and slackers at the movie theater where she works, and soon her coworkers spill about their own awkward first times and give Jane masturbation advice. Although there are a few clichéd and predictable plot turns in the film, that doesn't impede producer/director/writer Sarah Jacobson's development of sassy, believable characters. The film provides a refreshingly honest look at not only Jane's sexual awakening, but also her emotional passage from adolescence to adulthood, complete with unrequited crushes and anxiety about going away to college. Musical selections from Babes In Toyland, Mudhoney and the Red Aunts only add to the film's edginess. Although it doesn't yet have major distribution, Jacobson premiered *Mary Jane's Not A Virgin Anymore* at Sundance in 1997, and since then she's been showing it at festivals and art houses. For the screening schedule, visit www.sirius.com/~lenny/maryj2.html.



>>> Wendy Mitchell

stranger with a great set of abs (coincidence? We think not!). Once you've seen this quasi-documentary, you will never look at those campy monster flicks the same way again.

>>> Carrie Bell

SIX-STRING SAMURAI

(Palm Pictures)

In the mythical landscape of *Six-String Samurai*, the death of Elvis (who had been crowned the US's literal king after nuclear war with Russia ravaged the country in 1957) sends all the guitar wielding, weapon-toting rockers to "Lost Vegas" to claim the throne. Buddy (Jeffrey Falcon), accomplished at both picking and puncturing, is making the pilgrimage when he reluctantly adopts an orphan kid (Justin McGuire). Pursued by skinhead bowlers, grungy mutants, the

remnants of the Russian army and even Death himself (who, with long curly hair and top hat, looks like Slash of Guns N' Roses), the pair must forge its way to the Oz-like Vegas. With *Six-String Samurai*, director/co-writer Lance Mungia has created a highly energetic, visually lush feature debut. The sheer number of archetypes his project straddles (Hong Kong action pics, Sergio Leone westerns, beach movies) is matched only by the volume of film-geek reference points (*The Road Warrior*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *El Topo*, *Crossroads*). The film is occasionally bogged down by its kitchen-sink approach, and though the bloodless battle sequences are shot with an intoxicating kineticism, they often outstay their welcome. Still, this is an unpretentious, entertaining indie flick that will certainly find a rabid cult following.

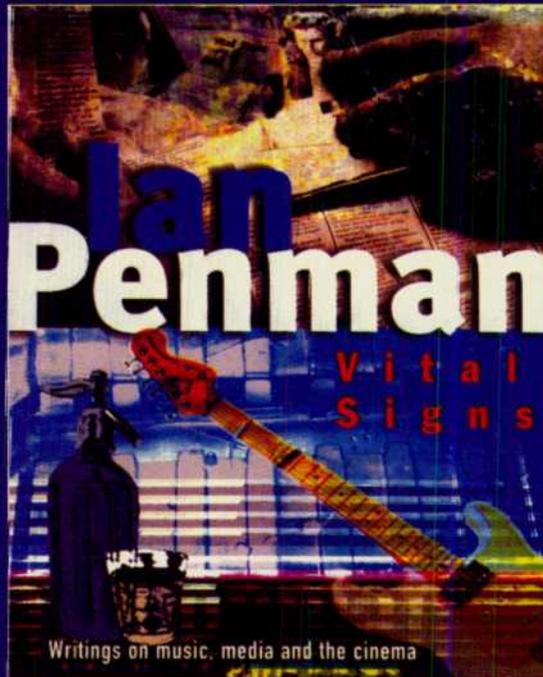
>>> Jon Niccum

VITAL SIGNS

By Ian Penman

(Serpent's Tail)

What makes a cultural critic great? Any number of things, really. Access to upper echelon stars. Open-minded editors. Being in the right place at the right time. Britain's Ian Penman has all this, but he's also a stylist, a cantankerous commentator, and a writer with a daredevil's flair for leaping into the unknown. *Vital Signs* collects his interviews,



essays and rants on subjects ranging from rock stars to Indian food to classic films, displaying his wondrous talents and rightfully placing him in a league with gifted peers like Lester Bangs and Greil Marcus. But Penman, who started out with *New Musical Express* in the punk heyday of the late '70s and has gone on to scribble for a cavalcade of international publications, is brilliantly focused, and thankfully obsessed with the people and ideas crawling around society's fringes. That's why his most impassioned pieces center around outcasts and weirdoes like John Fahey, Jim Thompson and Harry Dean Stanton. ("His three-ring name a singsong (n)omen that seems already limned with the rime of American

quest and distance," Penman writes). As is also the case with the more famous characters in the book, Penman brings them to life more vividly than any camera could—the sign of a masterful critic.

>>> Richard Martin

every record he mentions. Eshun has been writing for *The Wire*, *The Face*, *i-D*, *Spin* and *Melody Maker* for the past six years, yet this is not a collection of previously published pieces. He's not averse to coining neologisms on practically every page, from "sampladelia" to "rhythmforest" and "breakflowing," but this technique is never gratuitous. Instead it brings the reader one step closer to hearing the music he describes. Devoting entire chapters to Mantronix and Chep Nunez, Goldie and 4 Hero, Alice Coltrane and Sun Ra, he explores the twilight world of black secret technology (to borrow a phrase from *A Guy Called Gerald*). More *Brilliant Than The Sun* is both an important text and a great read.

>>> Tim Haslett

THE JOHN COLTRANE COMPANION: FIVE DECADES OF COMMENTARY

By Carl Woideck
(Schirmer Books)

This ambitious entry in a series that also includes volumes on Charlie Parker and Ella Fitzgerald compiles John Coltrane essays, interviews and reviews. If it weren't for some serious digging and thoughtful research, Woideck's collage of the jazz titan could have read like overstuffed liner notes, but there's 250 pages of solid info here, including complete transcripts of previously-edited reviews. Jazz essays can be ponderous, but the healthy section of actual interviews with Coltrane (a rare and illuminating treat) adds a bit more life and context to the writing. Coltrane's answers are sincere, thoughtful and incredibly knowledgeable. Even when he and Eric Dolphy are asked to respond to criticism that their lengthy solo explorations were foolishly dubbed "anti-jazz" in *Down Beat*, Coltrane *speaks* coolly and confidently about his art. The best moments come when noted jazz archivist Leonard Feather gives "Trane the famous blindfold and John nails down nearly every one, guessing sidemen, soloists and even arrangers on jazz tracks he's never heard. Like the collection, it's an insight to Coltrane's vast musical knowledge and appetite.

>>> Steve Ciabattini

JUST MY SOUL RESPONDING

By Brian Ward
(University of California Press)

This voluminous work addresses a sorely neglected link in the US's existing social history: the complex ways in which R&B informed black structures of feeling and undergirded the nascent "black consciousness" movement. Moving from the early R&B indies of the mid-'40s to disco and "corporate soul," *Just My Soul Responding* traces the rise and fall of black-owned independent labels. Among other crucial points Ward makes in this highly readable and compelling volume is that R&B both sustained and made possible black political activity. Ward's work here is meticulous. Not only does he possess a thorough knowledge

of black music, but he also understands that finally, pop culture is the space where battles are fought over identity, belonging and sense of self. By refusing to separate music and politics, Ward asserts that the two are inextricably woven together in an African-American historical context.

>>> Tim Haslett

MORE BRILLIANT THAN THE SUN: ADVENTURES IN SONIC FICTION

By Kodwo Eshun
(Quartet Books)

Kodwo Eshun is a treasure, a music journalist who is not only passionate about his subjects, but is also a clear-eyed, intelligent and wonderfully humorous writer who can inspire readers to acquire



VAIN MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

(Continued from page 67)

landed a choice downtown location—using a mock brochure for an imaginary product line—before her plans had solidified. When Vain opened in the autumn of '96, the venture was strictly retail. To facilitate selling products deemed For Professional Use Only to the public, as well as to realize looks beyond the time or ability of some patrons, a salon was soon added.

Most importantly, she launched her own line of high quality, affordable supplies for the upkeep of "alternative visions of beauty." Dirty Boy, Dirty Girl (\$6.50, 4 oz.)—"hair goo for the ruffled masses"—is a viscous purple gel (with a plastic pig at the bottom) for that freshly bedded look. Another product, 2nd Day Hair (\$6.50, 8 oz.)—"shampoo for marginally clean hair"—leaves behind a faint residue, to counteract dry flyaway locks. Both fly off the shelves.

Nowadays, these goods are available nationally at outlets including Urban Outfitters and Hot Topics. Just like an independent record label, Vain constantly balances on a tightrope between supply and demand. "The trickiest thing is getting money back in time," concedes Gentry. "[Distributors] all want the longest terms possible, but the manufacturer wants their money right away."

But Vain's mission isn't merely skin deep. If you don't want conservatives dictating your personal appearance, you can't let them hold sway in other arenas either. Being proud of individual appearance is just the beginning. Hence the brand name. "Because [how you look] is not the end all, it's not ultimately what's important in life. People need to keep that in perspective."

Still, Gentry and company make consciousness-raising fun. Their 1997 Barbie Restyling Pageant, with more than a hundred entries (including a bulimic Barbie passed out by the porcelain bus) landed a blow for folks who despise the ludicrous feminine physique promoted by the doll.

This September, Vain sponsored Hero Sisters, a job fair-cum-trade show engineered to pass along advice to nine-to-20 year-old girls. "Women want to mentor someone. They learned things the hard way and want to share that [knowledge] with their younger sisters, so they don't make all the same mistakes."

Meanwhile, the restless entrepreneur is ironing out the kinks for a product geared at working both on and beneath your scalp. "It's a color seal, with a super-low pH," designed to safely extend the life of dye jobs. Having been introduced to the idea by "this wacky inventor guy" who was already marketing a prototype, Gentry plans to launch an improved version as Lock Down, complete with a plastic key suspended within.

"I want to put on the back 'Not Produced By Prison Labor.'" The name and slogan are intended to make consumers think about our nation's overcrowded incarceration facilities. "That's America's new slave labor force. They make something like 13 cents an hour in prison [shops]. Prison Blues [jeans] are actually produced by prisoners, and they're called that. That's disgusting."

Gentry talks of developing new pomades and brighter, longer lasting colors. She wants to sponsor "a convention for home hairdressers and beauty school dropouts" who are snubbed by the licensed industry. There's only one pressing hair problem she has no intention of addressing: How to stop your roots from growing back in.

"That would put us out of business!"

end



For additional information, or to place an order, call Vain at 206.441.3441.

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 Hollywood, CA 90028
www.amrecords.com

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 New York, NY 10001
www.astralwerks.com

Atlantic
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 New York, NY 10104
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Bobsled
 P.O. Box 6407
 Aurora, IL 60598

Cassier
 P.O. Box 1638
 Cambridge, MA 02238

Chocolate Industries
 c/o Fcroad Exposure
 226 Lowell St.
 Somerville, MA 02143

City Of Angels
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 Hollywood, CA 90028

Columbia
 550 Madison Ave.
 New York, NY 10022
www.sonymusic.com/Music/WireTap/7/columbia

Communion
 290C Napoleon St.
 San Francisco, CA 94124
www.mklheaven.com/communion/

Damaged Goods
 P.O. Box 671
 London E17 6NF, UK

Defiled
 3-17-18, Hon-Ananuma
 Sugimami, Tokyo
 167 0031 Japan

DGC
 915 Broadway, Ste. 1005
 New York, NY 10010

Drag City
 P.O. Box 476867
 Chicago, IL 60647
www.dragcity.com

Elektra
 75 Rockefeller Plaza
 New York, NY 10019
www.elektra.com

EMI
 5750 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 300
 Los Angeles, CA 90036
www.emi100.com

Fat Possum
 P.O. Box 1923
 Oxford, MS 38655
www.fatpossum.com

First Love
 150 Fifth Ave. #3
 Brooklyn, NY 11217

Flydaddy
 P.O. Box 545
 Newport, RI 02840
www.flydaddy.com

Geffen/DGC
 9130 Sunset Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90069
www.geffen.com

Guided Missile
 P.O. Box 11413
 London N14 4AH, UK

HighTone
 220 4th St., #101
 Oakland, CA 94607
www.hightone.com

Interdimensional Transmissions
 2108 Winewood

Ann Arbor, MI 48103
 Island
 825 Eighth Ave.
 New York, NY 10019
www.island40th.com

Jepster
 217 Canalot
 222 Kensal Road
 London W10 5BN, UK
www.jepster.co.uk

Jetset
 740(Broadway, 2nd Fl.
 New York, NY 10003
www.interactive.net/~wsimon/main.html

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

London
 825 Eighth Ave., 24th Fl.
 New York, NY 10019
www.londonrecords.com

Loud
 205 Lexington Ave., 4th Fl.
 New York, NY 10016
www.loud.com

Made In Mexico
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 Seattle, WA 98104

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OCTOBER 13

GOODNESS Anthem *Epic*
 HI FIVES Get Down *Lookout!*
 HIGH LLAMAS Lollo Rosso *V2*
 —Remix EP featuring Cornelius, Mouse On Mars, Jim O'Rourke
 ICU-CHOTTO Matte A Moment! *K*
 PSYCORE Your Problem *V2*
 SATISFACT The Third Meeting At The Third Counter *K*
 SCOTT 4 Recorded In State *V2*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Halloween Hootenanny *DGC*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Respect Is Burning Vol. 2 *Astralwerks*
 YOUNG PIONEERS Free The (Young) Pioneers Now *Lookout!*
 ZEBRAHEAD Waste Of Mind *Columbia*

OCTOBER 20

AEROSMITH A Little South Of Sanity *Geffen*
 —Live double-CD
 TINA ARENA In Deep *Epic*
 BECK Mutations *DGC*
 BEDHEAD Lepidoptera (10") *Trance Syndicate*
 —The band's final release
 BLACK SABBATH Reunion *Epic*
 BOUNTY KILLER Next Millennium *TVT*
 CHOKING VICTIM No Gods/No Messengers *Epitaph*
 COLLOSSAMITE Economy Of Motion *Skin Graft*
 LINDA DAVIS I'm Yours *DreamWorks*
 DUB PISTOLS Point Blank *A&M*
 EELS Electro Shock Blues *DreamWorks*
 EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN Eude Neu *Nothing*
 EKSTASIS Wake Up And Dream *CyberOctave*
 —Featuring Nicky Skopelitis, Bill Laswell, Jah Wobble, Jaki Liebezeit (Can)
 THE EX Starters Alternators *Touch And Go*
 JAD FAIR & YO LA TENGO Strange But True *Matador*
 FAITH NO MORE Greatest Hits *Reprise*
 FATBOY SLIM You've Come A Long Way, Baby *Astralwerks*
 EDITH FROST Telescopic *Drag City*
 GLORIA RECORD The Gloria Record (EP) *Epitaph*
 GROOVERIDER Mysteries Of Funk *Higher Ground-Columbia*
 JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION Acme *Matador-Capitol*
 JOHNNY LANG Wander This World *A&M*
 CYNDI LAUPER Merry Christmas... Have A Nice Life *Epic*
 LO-FIDELITY ALLSTARS How To Operate With A Blown Mind *Skint-Columbia*
 GEORGE MARTIN In My Life *MCA*
 NEOTROPIC Mr. Brubaker's Strawberry Alarm Clock *N Tone-Ninja Tune*

NEW RADICALS Maybe You've Been Brainwashed Too *MCA*
 PHISH The Story Of The Ghost *Elektra*
 RAHSUN Rahsun *550*
 REACT React *Columbia*
 REEL BIG FISH Why Do They Rock So Hard? *Mojo-Universal*
 REFUSED The Shape Of Punk To Come *Burning Heart*
 SALT N PEPA Greatest Hits *London*
 FRANK SINATRA The Complete Reprise Studio Recordings *Reprise*
 SILVER JEWS American Water *Drag City*
 SOAK Flywatt *Sire*
 RINGO STARR Storytellers *Mercury*
 STEREO LAB Aluminum Tunes—Singles *Drag City*
 THIRD EYE FOUNDATION You Guys Kill Me *Merge*
 UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH Almost Here *Virgin*
 —Debut from band fronted by Andy Yorke, brother of Radiohead's Thom Yorke
 UNION 13 Why Are We Destroying Ourselves? *Epitaph*
 PAUL VAN DYK Seven Ways *Mute*
 PAUL VAN DYK 45 RPM *Mute*
 —Reissue of first two albums from award winning Berlin DJ and producer
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Real: The Tom T. Hall Project *Watermelon-Sire*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS So So Def C-Mas *Columbia*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS South Park *Columbia*
 PETER WOLF Fool's Parade *Mercury*

OCTOBER 21

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND DUO 12 Degrees Of Freedom *Thrill Jockey*
 TORTOISE/AUTECHRE Remix (12") *Thrill Jockey*

OCTOBER 27

AFGHAN WHIGS Neglected *Columbia*
 ANOUK Together Alone *Columbia*
 ASH Nu-Clear Sounds *Reprise*
 JELLO BIAFRA If Evolution Is Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Evolve *Alternative Tentacles*
 BURLAP TO CASHMERE Anybody Out There? *A&M*
 SHAWN COLVIN Holiday Songs And Lullabies *Columbia*
 DJ NABS In The Lab With DJ Nabs: The Live Album *Columbia*
 DREAM THEATER Once In A Lifetime *Elektra*
 ROBYN HITCHCOCK Storefront Hitchcock: Music From The Jonathan Demme Picture *Warner Bros.*
 HIVE Devious Methods *Phase 4-London*
 HOFFMAN ESTATES Hoffman Estates *Drag City*
 LINTON KWESI JOHNSON Independent Intavenshan: The Island Anthology *Chronicles-Island*
 JUNG Jung *Atlantic*

TIM KEEGAN & THE HOMER LOUNGE Long Distance Information *Flydaddy*
 KID CAPRI Soundtrack For The Streets *Columbia*
 MEATLOAF Greatest Hits *Epic*
 NADA SURF The Proximity Effect *Elektra*
 NUMBER ONE CUP People, People Why Are We Fighting? *Flydaddy*
 PRAS Ghetto Superstar *Columbia*
 R.E.M. Up *Warner Bros.*
 GLEN SCOTT Glen Scott *550*
 SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS Christmas Caravan *Mammoth*
 TQ They Never Saw Me Coming *Epic*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Merry Axemas, Vol. 2 *Epic*

NOVEMBER 3

ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION Rafi's Revenge *London*
 CHARLIE BALTIMORE Ice *Epic*
 DEVIL IN A WOODPILE Devil In A Woodpile *Bloodshot*
 FIFTY TONS OF BLACK TERROR Fifty Tons Of Black Terror *Beggars Banquet*
 HEFNER Breaking God's Heart *Beggars Banquet*
 JOE JACKSON Jumpin' Jive *A&M*
 CLIFF JONES Living *Atlantic*
 ALANIS MORISSETTE Supposed Former Infatuation *Junkie Maverick-Reprise*
 OASIS The Masterplan *Epic*
 —Compilation of B-sides
 PLASTIKMAN Artifakts *NovaMute*
 PORTISHEAD Live *Go!Beat-London*
 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE *Epic*
 RZA The RZA Greatest Hits *Epic*
 TALVIN SINGH O.K. *Island*
 —Debut album from producer of Anoka: *Soundz Of The Asian Underground*
 SOUNDTRACK Velvet Goldmine *Innerstate-London*
 SUBLIME Brad Nowell Acoustic *MCA*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Sounds Like Paper *frr-London*

NOVEMBER 10

BOUNCING SOULS 1999 *Epitaph*
 NOAM CHOMSKY Propaganda And Control Of The Public Mind *Alternative Tentacles*
 NOAM CHOMSKY The Clinton Vision: Old Wine, New Battles *Epitaph*
 NOAM CHOMSKY Prospects For Democracy *Epitaph*
 NOAM CHOMSKY Class War *Epitaph*
 DEADLY VENOMS Deadly Venoms *A&M*
 LONE JUSTICE The Best Of *Geffen*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Epidrome 2 *Epic*
 PAUL WELLER Best Of *Island*

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Vancouver, British Columbia



(Continued from page 82)

affordable, with rooms starting at \$65 per night (facing downtown) and peaking at \$130 for one of the most beautiful views in all of Vancouver. If that's out of your price range, try the **Jerico Beach Hostel** (1515 Discovery, 224-3208) right near the ocean, for only \$21.50 per night.

treats

Vancouver has become known for its growing number of hemp- and herb-related shops. When it opened its doors in 1995, the **Cannabis Café** (307 West Hastings, 801-5656) pushed the envelope even further by publicly declaring itself a pro-weed zone. The Café's staff encourages—and often participates in—the smoking of BC homegrown within its walls. Surprisingly, although the shop has been busted twice for “promoting vaporizers” (combustion-free bong), no charges have ever been made against its patrons.

Like any fair city, Vancouver has its share of worthwhile annual events. The **Vancouver Film Festival** (685-0260) runs through September and October and features a slew of premieres each year. **Music Waste**, a local underground music festival (688-9972), hosts a more D.I.Y. event each September. **Under The Volcano**—described as “a festival of art and social change”—raises its anarchistic roof each August (669-5625). And under the heading of “shameless self-promotion,” I encourage you to check out **Rock For Choice**, organized by Meegan Maultsайд (see Beats) and me, which raises funds for local women's clinics. It usually occurs in midwinter and has

in the past featured groups such as NoMeansNo, SNFU, DOA, Team Dresch and Mecca Normal.

feets

As is the case with residents of many cities, Vancouverites suck at supporting live venues. In order to keep afloat, most clubs have narrowed their focus to one particular scene. The **Starfish Room** (1055 Homer, 682-4171) brings small-to-midsize out-of-town bands into its intimate, 300-capacity room. Alanis Morissette, Everclear and the Offspring have all stopped by to sing for their supper. As far as local music is concerned, the most dedicated room around is **The Brickyard** (315 Carrall, 685-3978), which features BC fare seven days a week. Be forewarned: The club is smack dab in the middle of heroin row, so grab a cab to and fro.

If you want a place to chill on a cushy sofa and listen to the sweet sounds of funk, soul or Latin jazz, then saunter over to the **Chameleon Urban Lounge** (801 West Georgia, 683-6527). If you're seeking high-energy house, break beats or hip-hop, you'll want to visit **Sonar** (66 Water St., 683-6695). The club's crew isn't just a part of the scene; these folks also run their own fine label, Mo Funk Records.

beats

Vancouver has earned a reputation for being a laid-back kind of town, and that definitely affects the music that comes out of it. Our most famous musical residents venture on the folkie side (Sarah McLachlan, kd lang), but there are also bright and feisty performers amidst all the mellow. If rage is your thing, then you'll want to hear Che Chapter 127, a chunky, crunchy band fronted by Meegan Maultsайд. Politically unapologetic, Che often performs benefit gigs, such as annual events Under The Volcano and Rock For Choice (see Treats). If lounge is more your scene, then Velvet is the group for you. A smooth hybrid of jazz, funk and house, this band features a rotating lineup, usually comprised of three DJs along with keyboards, congas, brass and plenty of rhythm, and fronted by the smooth and stylin' Ohani Kuba. Velvet's show is one long, improvised set, landing musically somewhere between US3 and Jamiroquai. To get a deeper taste of local fare, head to the town's most regionally supportive 'zine, Drop D, at www.dropd.com.

As far as record stores are concerned, Vancouver consistently wins the award for cheapest CDs in North America. To get those low prices, however, you'll have to shop the chain-store zone. If staying indie-positive is more your thing, then head to **Scratch Records** (109 West Cordova, 687-6355), owned and operated by a real live member of Superconductor. For a buck or two more per disc, you can have the satisfaction of supporting the little guy. There's also **Zulu Records** (1869 West 4th, 738-3232), another indie-supportive haven, free from all things Celine. Vancouver is also home to **Nettwerk Records**, the label that puts out music by Skinny Puppy, Delerium, Mystery Machine and the aforementioned Ms. Sarah “Lilith” McLachlan. You can buy all of Nettwerk's releases in-house at its swanky new offices (1650 West 2nd, 654-2929).

end

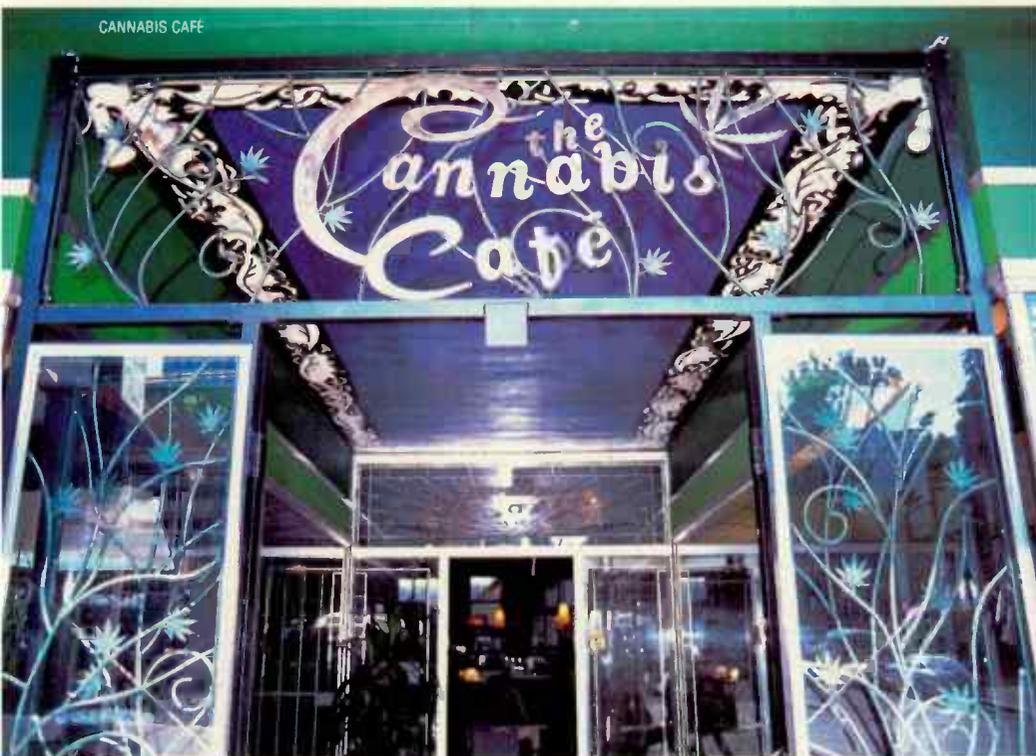
ALL PHONE NUMBERS ARE IN AREA CODE 604. DENISE SHEPPARD IS A VANCOUVER-BASED FREELANCE MUSIC WRITER AND PROUD CO-PROMOTER OF THE CITY'S ANNUAL ROCK FOR CHOICE.

PHOTO KEVIN WILLIS

BY DENISE SHEPPARD

Vancouver, British Columbia

CANNABIS CAFE



Ah, Vancouver, a city of contradictions. Beautiful views loom past the city's most ugly realities, a red light district bustles mere blocks away from our major tourist attractions, and the city's popular "Vansterdam" pro-pot reputation is a mere puff of smoke compared to the city's abject heroin problem. But alas, ye tourists, if you know where to go (and where to avoid), you'll remember the city with a sparkle in your eye and quite possibly some money left in your wallet. (Remember, the American dollar nets a whopping \$1.50 up here these days.) ¶ The heart of the city is divided both regionally and economically into two parts, the East and West Side. The West is where you'll find uptown cafes, beautiful views and high rents. East Van—particularly its artistic heart, Commercial Drive—is naturally more lively. It's all good; it's just a matter of where you like to spend your time. If you are the kind of person who likes high-priced fun, call the tourist board (683-2000); if you are a traveler on a budget, then consider this your guide to the cheap and easy.

eats

The **Vicious Cycle Laundromat & Leisurama** (2062 Commercial Dr., 255-SOAX) is the next best thing to having a washer/dryer in your own living room. The hottest lesbian pick-up joint in town, this Laundromat/restaurant also lays out fun cheap eats. Where else in town can you find the White Trash Breakfast Special—that's two pop tarts and a glass of Tang—for only \$1.95?

From its shiny steel surroundings to its famous investors (Gillian Anderson, Tom Skerit, Jason Priestley) to its very name, the **Alibi Room** (157 Alexander St., 623-3383) is a fab-u-lous place to be. And although those very qualities could make it the most pretentious joint in town, it absolutely isn't. The restaurant has a couple of mandates: 1) to create flavorful fare at affordable rates, and 2) to provide a hangout for the city's diverse crop of independent filmmakers. Tables are placed cafeteria-style to encourage a communal atmosphere, and besides, the layout makes it that much easier to nibble on your neighbor's steamed spinach with peanut sauce (\$4!)

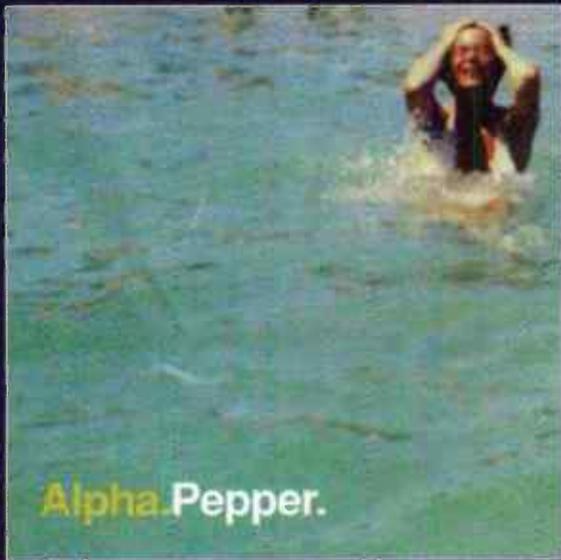
Ever wanted to lose yourself in an edible item? Well, for me, there's no food I'd rather be submerged in than the Nutmeg Mashed Potatoes (\$2.95) at **Templeton Restaurant** (1087 Granville, 685-4612). The recently reopened restaurant has earned awards for its restoration, is staffed with performance art '50s waitresses and boasts one hell of a philosophy. "I don't care if you've got barely enough for a cup of coffee or wads of hundred dollar bills," explains owner Tamara Good. "Everyone is treated the same." Her motivation? Empathy: The owner herself used to be a street kid, living in the vestibule of a bank machine just a few blocks away.

sheets

The **Sylvia Hotel** (1154 Gilford, 681-9321) is a little piece of heaven situated right in the center of tourist hell. Right where Davie and Denman Streets meet, you'll find a long stretch of sand, beautiful ocean sunsets and—if you look carefully—an old, unobtrusive brick building covered in vines. Despite its prime location, the family-owned Sylvia is not only charming but also totally

(Continued on page 81)

ALPHA



Alpha Pepper.

Pepper

Eight new tracks from Massive Attack's Melankolic label. Following the acclaim of their debut album "Come From Heaven", Alpha asked some of the U.K.'s craftiest remixers to give five of their songs a complete makeover. Features mixes from Underdog, Tim Simenon (Bomb The Bass), Receiver and More Rockers in addition to three original Alpha tracks never before released in the USA.

Also Available

Lewis Parker
Masquerades and
Silhouettes



Lewis Parker is a Jedi Knight of the Hip-Hop Rebel Alliance, his imagination taking him to galaxies far, far away. His debut album from Massive Attack's Melankolic label is a feast of homegrown British Hip-Hop, mixing tasty beats and sabre-sharp rhymes with a trans-Atlantic flavor.

Horace Andy
Skylarking



From his Studio One hits to the present day, *Skylarking* brings together 14 reggae classics from a Jamaican legend. Includes *Spying Glass* (with Massive Attack), *One Love and Money*, *Money*.

Craig Armstrong
The Space Between Us



Contemporary orchestral music full of subtle beats and stirring strings from the man who scored Massive Attack's *Protection* album, Madonna's *Ray Of Light* and the *Romeo & Juliet* soundtrack. Features guest vocals from Elizabeth Fraser (Cocteau Twins).

Alpha
Come From Heaven



Seriously mellow and lushly arranged, Alpha create ethereal downtempo dream music for the modern era. Features the singles *Sometime Later* and *Slim*.

"Liquid torch songs... a bittersweet collage of smoky atmospheres, warm strings and cool vibes" THE FACE

MELANKOLIC

<http://melankolic.astralwerks.com>

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ASTRALWERKS

"One of America's Top 22 electronic dance music producers." -Spin Magazine



q-burns
abstract
message



feng
shui



The debut album, featuring the singles "He's A Skull" and "Jennifer" (featuring vocals by Daniel Agust of GusGus).



ASTRALWERKS

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

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WAGON CHRIST

TALLY HO!

"TALLY HO! updates Wagon Christ's humorous recipe, exulting in great burping beats, whimsical easy-listening, animal farts, and plundered orchestral delusions." -GERR

The new album from Wagon Christ (a.k.a. Luke Vibert, Plug).
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