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MONTHLY

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## Death Cab For Cutie

## Charlatans UK • Jenny Toomey

Nov./Dec. 2001  
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ISSUE NO. 98  
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EXPLICIT CONTENT





## SEVENDUST 58

They've had two gold records, a big hit in last year's "Angel's Son" and tours with the likes of Metallica, Slayer and Slipknot, but when they came off the road, Sevendust found out they were as broke as a joke. With new management and the roaring *Animosity*, it's time for nü-metal's respectable sons to get paid.

Jason Bracelin examines their books.



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It seemed like punk icon Jenny Toomey gave up rock for the even seedier world of politics, but on her solo debut, she's stepped off the pulpit and found herself in a place that owes more to Joni Mitchell than Johnny Rotten. Mac Randall hits the campaign trail.

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## TENACIOUS D 46

Jack Black rose to power as the obnoxious record clerk in *High Fidelity*; with partner Kyle Gass in tow, he's taking obnoxiousness to new levels with the mock rock of Tenacious D. Tom Mallon finds out that when it comes to Gass, grass and spanking Black's ass, no one rides for free.

## DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE 50

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Jason Verlinde hails them down.



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The Beatles said they were bigger than Jesus. Oasis said they were bigger than the Beatles. Now, Charlatans UK are doing their best to show America why they deserve to be bigger than Oasis.

Jason Cohen makes the case.

# HOLIDAY



**34**

It's the night before Christmas and all through the house, you forgot to buy everyone presents, you cheap-assed louse. Don't fret; we'll show you the best ways to blow all your cash.

SEVENDUST: MICHAEL SCHREIBER • JENNY TOOMEY: CHARLES STECK • TINDERSTICKS: BOB GREEN • TENACIOUS D: SEAN MURPHY • DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE: ROBIN LAANANEN • CHARLATANS UK: BOB GREEN

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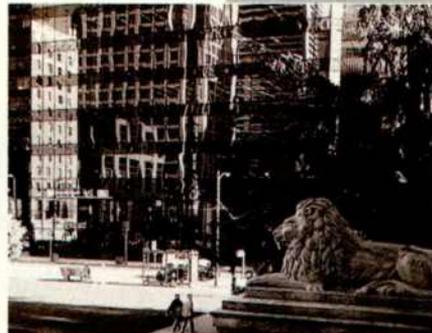
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# DAMIAN MARLEY JR. GONG



## HALFWAY TREE

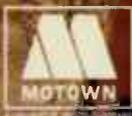
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## A message to our readers:

You're holding the November/December issue, the second double issue of *CMJ New Music Monthly* in the past year. You're completely welcome to start calling the magazine *CMJ New Music Occasionally*, which is how the office gallows humor pool currently has it, as we understand your discontent at the uneven service we've provided. And the news isn't going to get much better: The next issue you see will be February 2002. After that, we should be resuming a normal monthly schedule with the March issue. You should be aware that none of this affects the length of your subscriptions; all subscriptions will be updated so that you will receive the full complement of issues due you.

Much has happened to CMJ in 2001 that has negatively impacted our ability to get the magazine to you. The year started with our former corporate parent's dot-com dollars drying up. In an act of defiance, we survived, but it's been far from business as usual. Throughout a difficult summer, we had a light at the end of the tunnel in our yearly music industry event, the CMJ Music Marathon. That event represented both a chance to show the world how, and how well, we were starting over and a shot of what the financial professionals call positive cash flow. That event, as some of you know, was scheduled to begin September 12th. In the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, it's felt just flat wrong to complain about how those tragedies wrecked things around here, but there's no getting around it. We had to postpone the CMJ Music Marathon, redoing the whole thing in about four weeks. That the CMJ Events staff pulled it off was a remarkable achievement, but that didn't mean that people were anxious to fly to New York to go see bands and talk about the music business for four days. And so we took a beating, which made getting out the most recent issues of the magazine a struggle.

Starting with the March issue, we'll be back on a monthly schedule that should get the magazine to your mailboxes and favorite retailers in a timely manner. It's been rough, and we apologize for the delays and interruptions. We can never fully make it up to you, but we hope to at least make your patience with us worthwhile.

**- The NMM Staff**



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**Sounds of silence**

I have just finished listening to some of the CD that was included in the August 2001 edition of *CMJ New Music Monthly*. I say some of the disc, because apparently the songs that are included on this disc are censored. Silent breaks where words should have been. I have never known *CMJ* to censor the music, so why start now? The only song that I could fully enjoy was the Brian Eno & J Peter Schwalm, since there was nothing deemed offensive to be censored. Now if this is not the fault of the editors, but is the result of the music that was submitted to the magazine for inclusion, then I would hope you would reject any censored tracks.

I am returning the magazine, and CD to my retailer for a refund, and will not purchase the magazine again until I know that the music is not censored. I suggest you change the subtitle of your magazine from "The Best Magazine You Ever Heard" to "THE ONE MAGAZINE YOU NEVER HEAR"!!

Les B. Labbauf  
Harrisburg, PA  
leslabba@ptd.net

*I tell you, Travis are some filthy-mouthed motherfuckers... The silent breaks intruding on the music in the August '01 issue are not the work of censors, but of gremlins: The discs are defective. There was an error in the manufacturing process that wasn't caught until newsstand copies had already been shipped. Fortunately for subscribers, we were able to reprint the discs, and so they received two copies of the CD with their August issue, should they care to compare and contrast. (Unfortunately, this produced untold production problems that further delayed the issue's arrival in mailboxes.) For you loyal readers who have picked up this issue even after receiving an August disc with more dropouts than a party in the 7-Eleven parking lot, you can get a replacement by e-mailing customerservice@cmj.com or writing to the following address. —ed.*

**CMJ**  
August CD Replacement  
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**Live from the Middle East**

Hi! My name is Shaul and I am from Israel. Few days ago I saw your magazine in one of my friends' house and I really think he is great. Really like what I saw. Next week I am joining the army and I already planed to subscribe to one of the music magazines there are in the market, so I could read it

while I'm in the base! My question is: Can you send me a copy of your magazine so I could really understand what kind of magazine I am signing for? That way I will be sure this is the right one for me (didn't find the magazine in Israel). It will be really great if you could send it to me. Thanks again.

Shaul Sivan  
Kibutz Negba, ISREAL

*Do we even need to say "all your base are belong to us"? —ed.*

**Live from the Middle East, part 2**

Thank you for your service. Last week I received name and address of your magazine from an educational institute in my country. Now I want to become more familiar with The *CMJ New Music Monthly* magazine, so I hereby kindly ask you to freely supply me with a complimentary sample of the *CMJ New Music Monthly* magazine for familiarity and details with full information on your yearly subscription expenses. Thank you again and I am waiting for my copy.

Keyvan Saeidy  
Kermanshah, IRAN

*Previously, the closest we've come to addressing the Middle East conflict was eating at Bedouin Tent and Second Avenue Deli in the same day, but we're all taking this as a sign that united by rock, we all can get along. —ed.*

**Moralistic + inarticulate = laughs**

I recently received a letter from your RollingStone.com mailing list and there was a quote at the top of the letter from a guy named "Redman" that officially stated: "I don't get big-headed. This is who I am. I'm about smokin' weed, talkin' s— and reppin' the bricks." I've gotten past letters from your Rollingstone.com mailing list about "niggas" & rappers talking about doing drugs, raping women & shooting people, and I find this offensive to me & maybe the other younger readers of your letter. We are trying to prevent a DRUG-Tabacco [sic] & Alcohol Free America. But with people like that guy, it's kinda hard to get our kids interested in not smoking all the stuff rappers do. So would you please quit posting rappers quotes or anything like that? I think they are the reason why our kids are doing so poorly in school, drugs, school shootings, and women raping and the violence across

**Correction:** Contrary to a scandalously inaccurate mention in the August 2001 issue, Michaelangelo Matos is a New York-based freelance writer. We regret linking him to a certain passé city in the Pacific Northwest—that was so 1992 of us.

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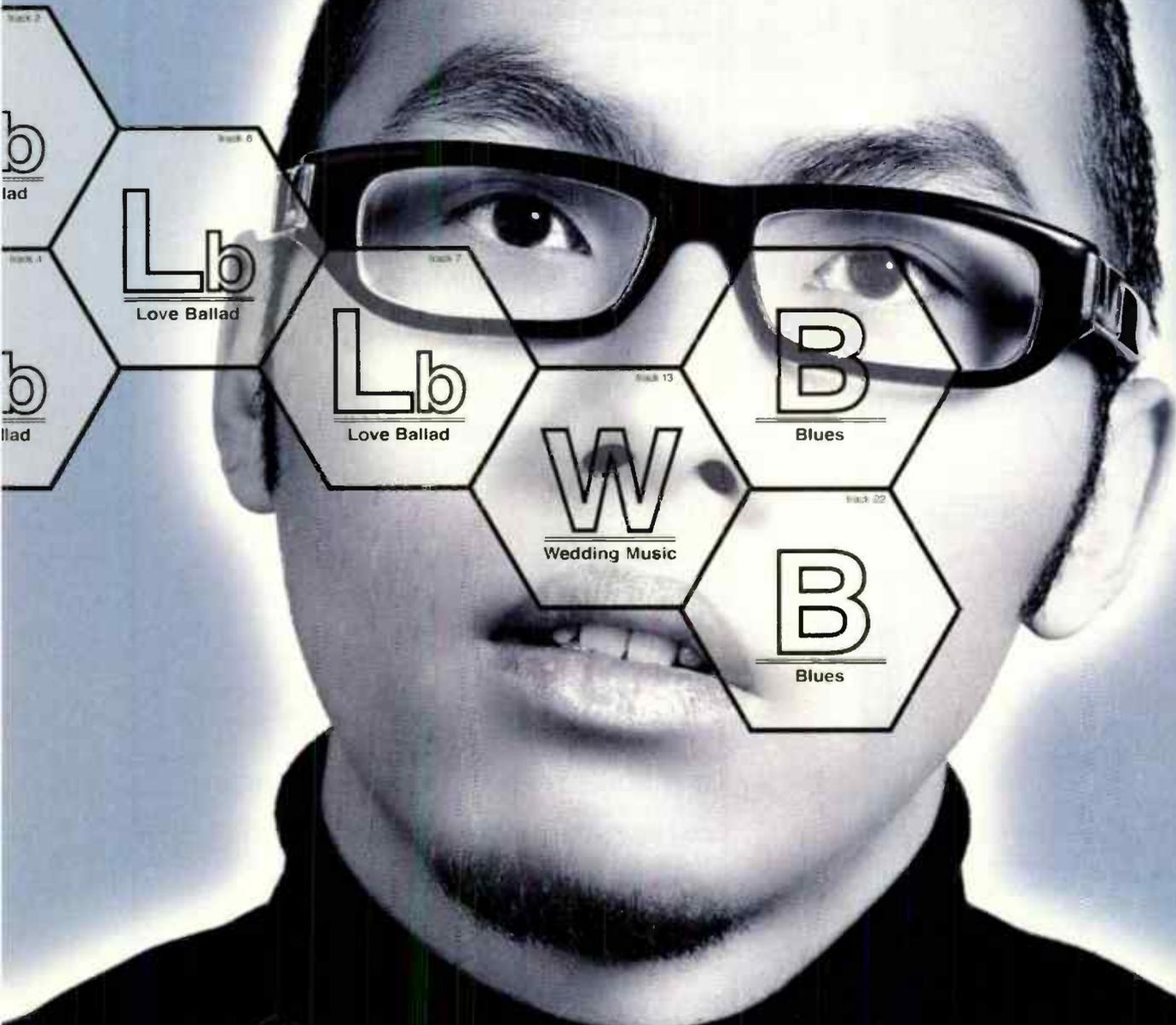
America. So please stop putting quotes of drug-esque quotes or anything like that in any letters. It'll just help out a little bit to all the younger readers. So please for the sake of the kids and the future of drug-tabacco & alcohol free America and keep kids off of drugs. Please keep the letters nice & clean with the rock 'n' roll musicians!

Lindsey Matters  
Drug/Tabacco-Alcohol Free America  
Ultrafag@hotmail.com

*No, we didn't make this one up; I only wish we were capable of this genius. —ed.*



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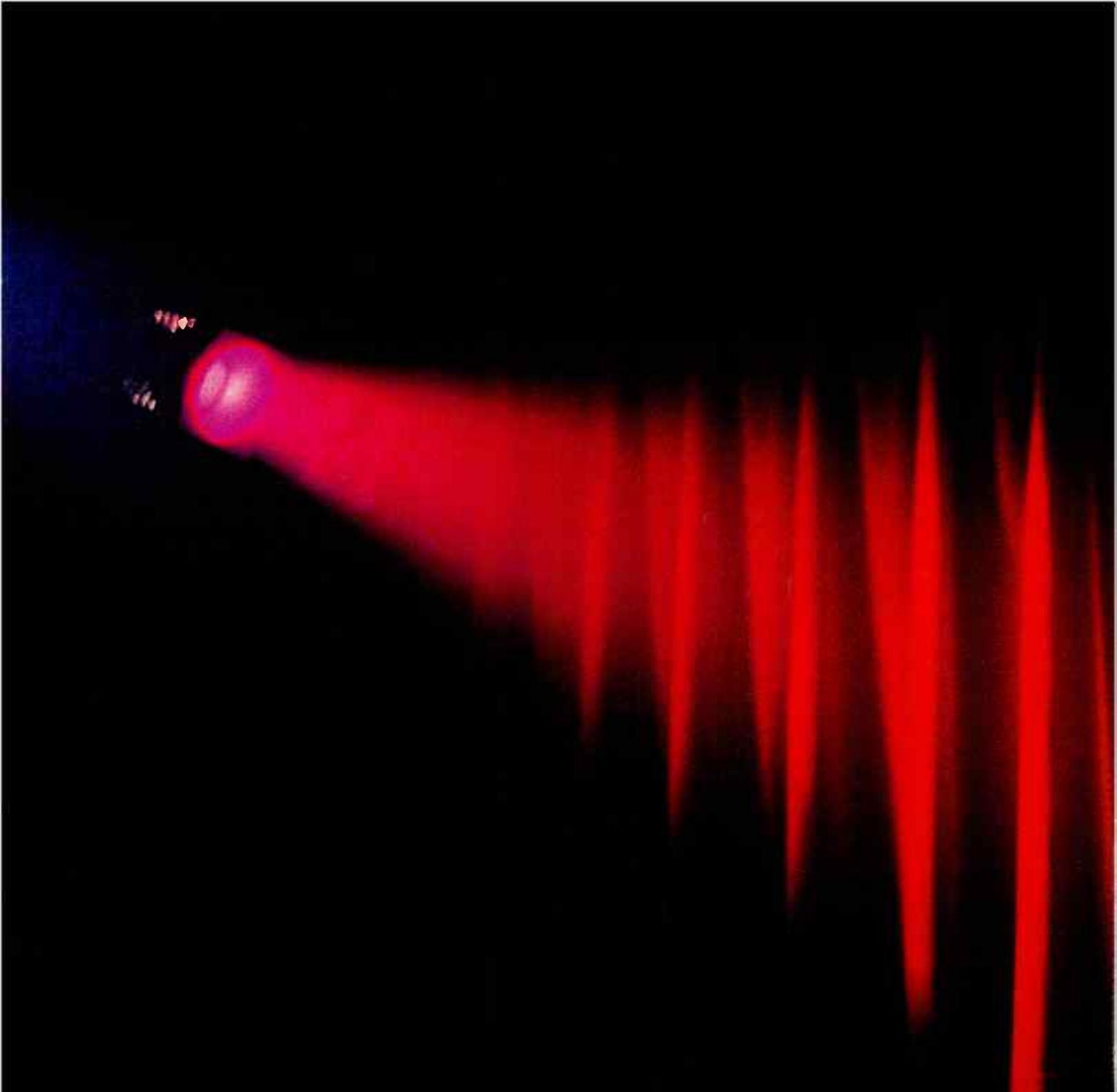
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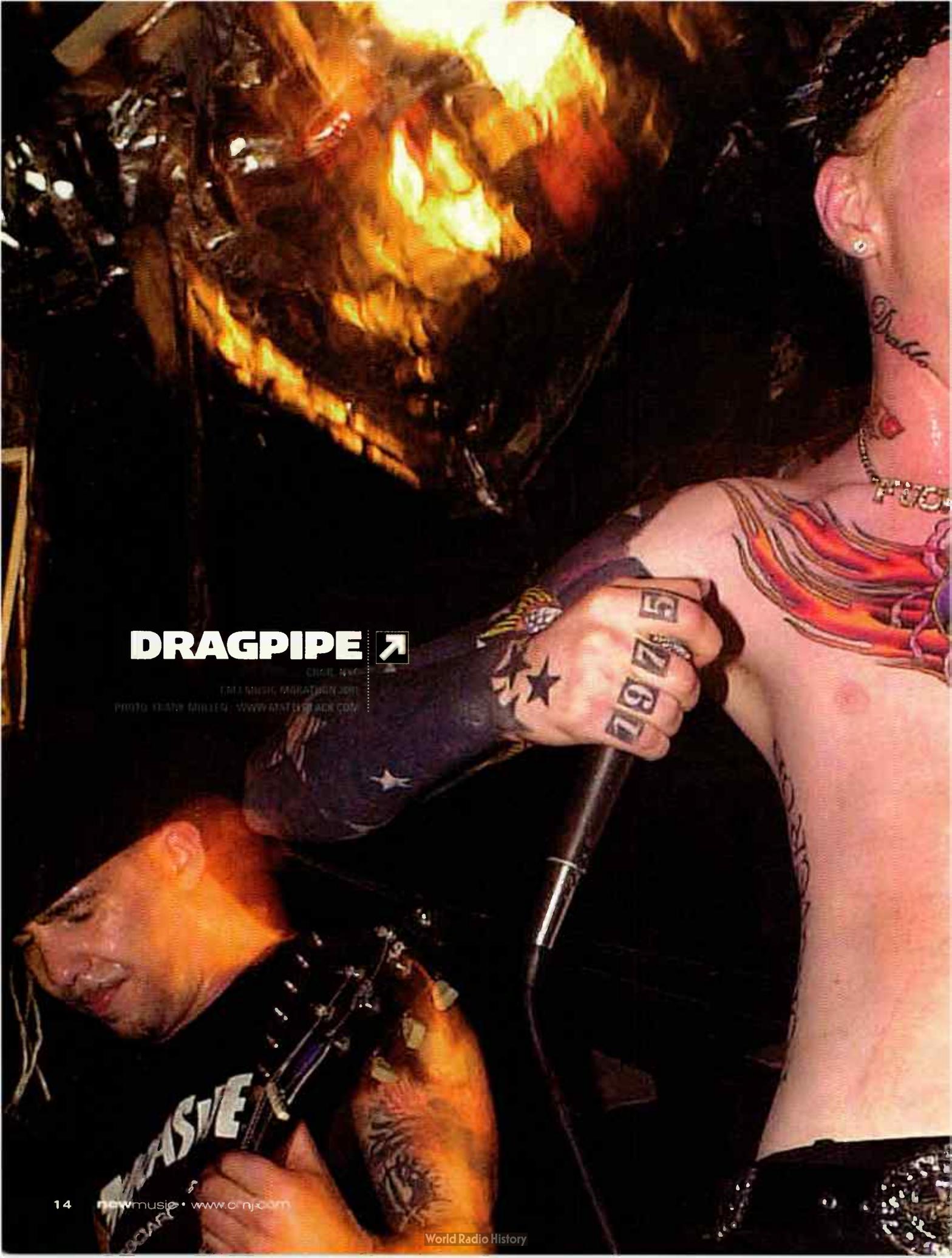


# MINK LUNGS



JENNIFER HODGES AT SOBIESKA IN BROOKLYN, NY  
CMJ MUSIC MARKET 2006  
PHOTO: BRIAN GOLDEN



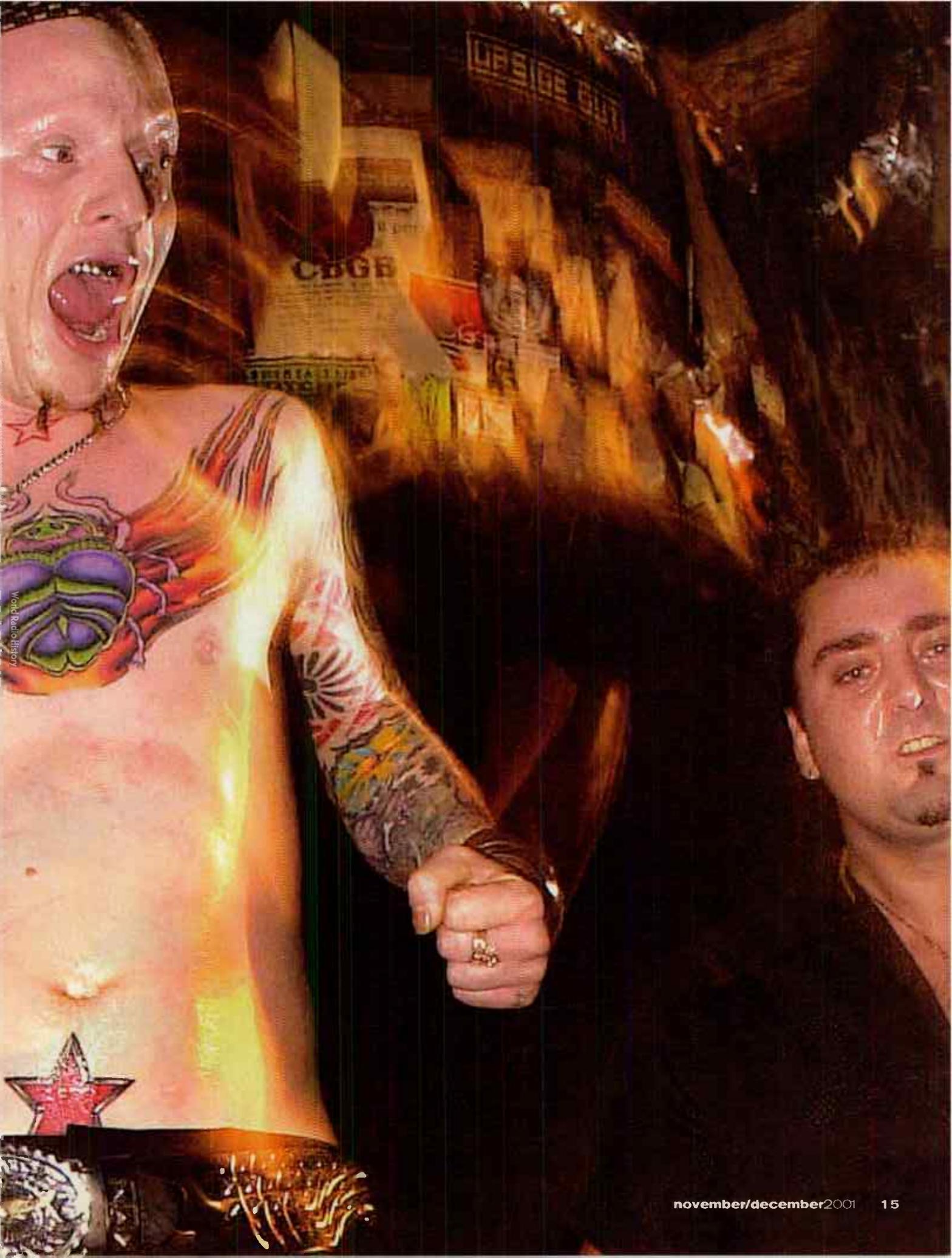


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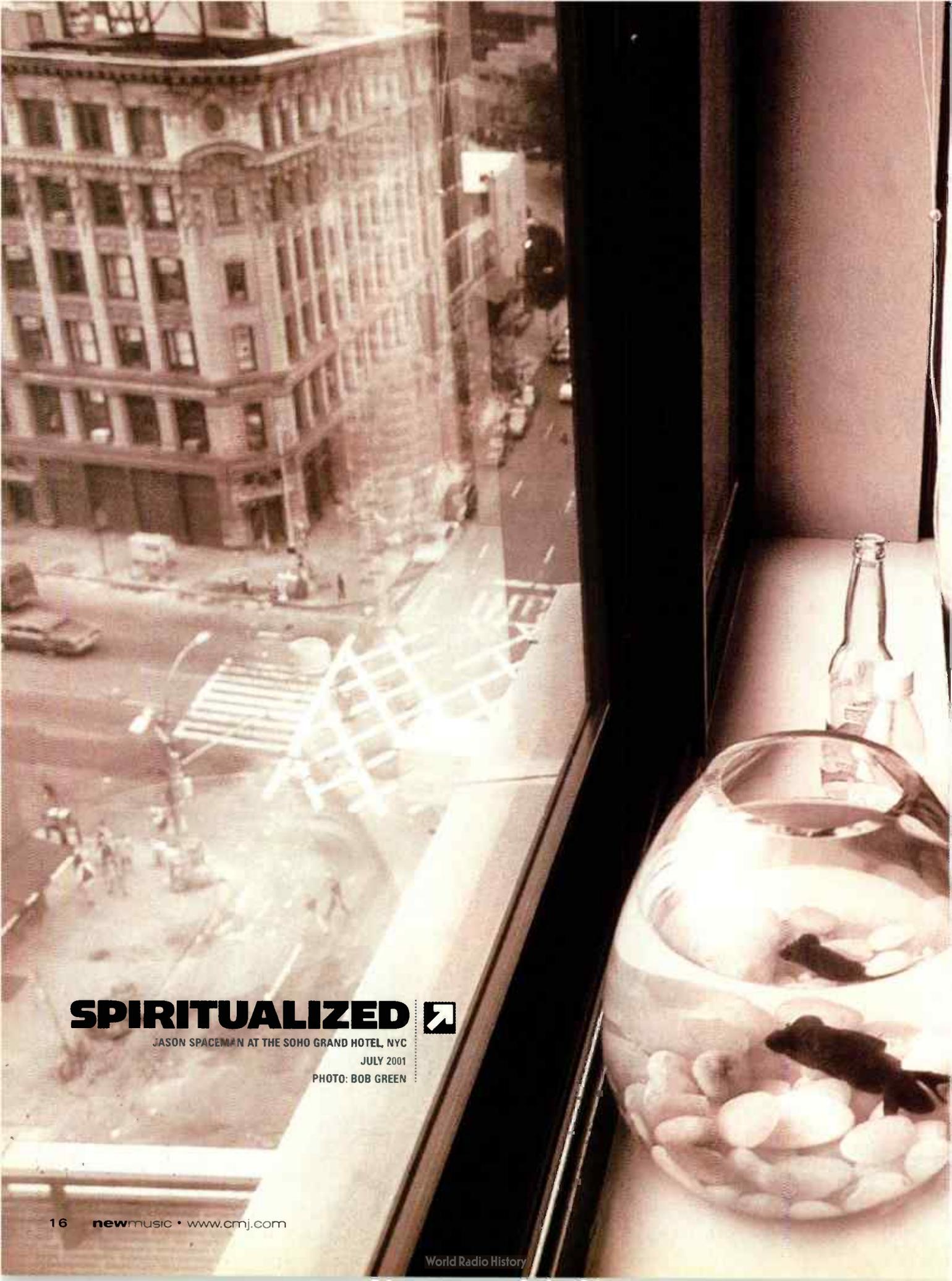
CHRIS NAO

TIME MUSIC, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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World Radio History

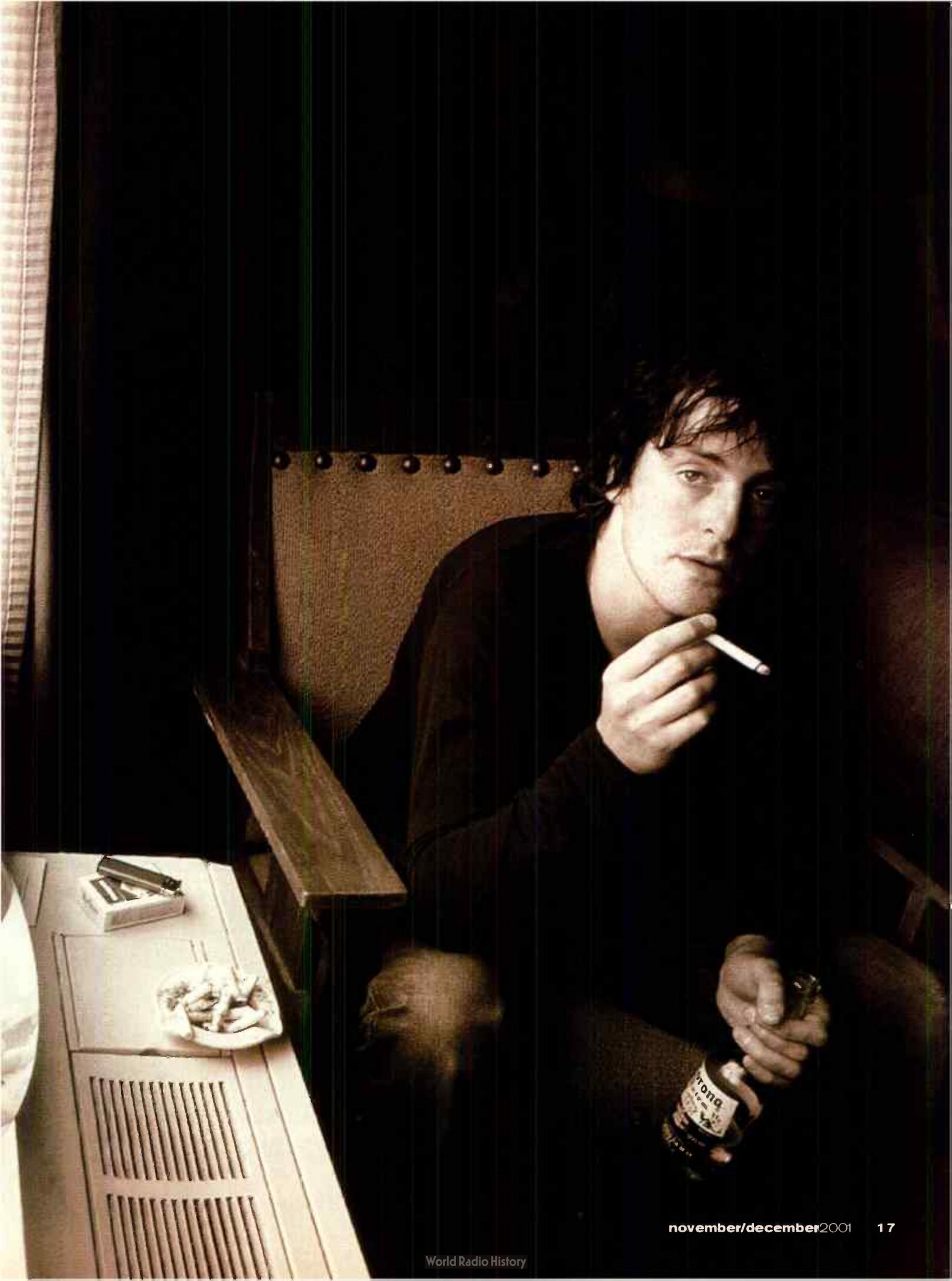


# SPIRITUALIZED

JASON SPACEMAN AT THE SOHO GRAND HOTEL, NYC

JULY 2001

PHOTO: BOB GREEN





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## ▣ You Gotta Have Art

Money Mark lets his keyboard do the talking, but that doesn't stop him from writing the occasional haiku.

**D**o you recall the last few hours of normalcy before the catastrophic events of September 11? Mark Ramos-Nishita—alias multi-instrumentalist Money Mark—does. Around 2:15 a.m., the sometimes Beastie Boys keyboardist was wrapping up a performance at the Knitting Factory in lower Manhattan. Contrary to reports, that set didn't end on an ironic note with "Tomorrow Will Be Like Today" from his 1998 album *Push The Button*.

"Actually, the last song was even more moving," says Mark (whose Hawaiian father witnessed Pearl Harbor, just as his son would watch the fall of the World Trade Center). "I don't play it much, but I've been playing 'Sometimes You Gotta Make It Alone' [from *Mark's Keyboard Repair*, 1995]. And at the end of every show, I always say 'Take care of yourself, take care of each other.'" A few hours later, New Yorkers

would be called on to do just that.

With his gear trapped at the club and the nation in shock, Mark and his band elected to cancel their next eight shows to promote *Change Is Coming* (Emperor Norton). But after a 10-day break, they decided to resume, in Boulder, Colo. "Artists are so important right now," the keyboard whiz observes. "We can't lose everything."

Despite relying on borrowed equipment, shortly before the Boulder gig Mark sounds hopeful. "We decided we're going to do more with less," he says, promising to showcase previously unheard compositions, with no between-song banter. "I'm just going to hold up a big sign, before we start, that says, 'The music will speak for itself.' And I won't say a word."

Doing more with less and eschewing language are central to *Change Is Coming*, too. The all-instrumental set (which features Sean Lennon, fellow Beastie Boys alum Mario Caldato Jr., and members of Los Lobos) is Money Mark's catchiest yet. From the space-age dance sensation "Chocochip" to the midnight jazz of "Rain (NYC)," each number boasts a distinct identity—particularly "Soul Drive Sixth Avenue," which recalls Quincy Jones's *Sanford And Son* theme—yet they also complement each other. Mark likens that relationship to a big family: "You can see all the different characters, but also how they have a little thread [running] through them."

With a modest running time of 39 minutes, the 12-track disc is also his most concise, distinguished by its economy of ideas and instrumentation. "Of the things that affect me, and that maybe influence what I create, I'd say the simplest are the most profound," he explains. "The haiku is the most relevant thing right now."

Putting pen to paper—not listening to, or playing, music—has been his source of solace of late. "I'm just getting it all down: Things I heard on the streets in New York, things I saw." The therapeutic powers of writing, he insists, can help everyone. "Children should write, and housewives and husbands, and gays and lesbians, and people of every color."

"If anyone reads this, and says, 'Maybe I should start keeping a journal,' then that's good," Mark proclaims. "I'd be happy for that." —ALBERT D. BRUNSOLE

MARINA CHAVEZ

CD ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



## IN MY ROOM

**Who:** John Flansburgh of They Might Be Giants  
**Where:** His studio in Williamsburg, Brooklyn  
**Why:** TMBG have been the kings of quirk-pop for almost 20 years; Flansburgh's studio contains everything they've collected in the past 15.

### Dial-A-Song, (718) 387-6962

This is the original home of Dial-A-Song. I just installed a new Record-A-Call 675 machine, circa 1985, that was found on eBay by a fan. This is probably our 30th phone machine. You can't even get them repaired anymore; there's no one to repair them. You can't access it remotely, so people can't hack it. We are freak magnets, man. There are all sorts of people who project all sorts of crazy things on us, and they want to get their insane message through.

### They might've been Dumtruck

I've got a copy of our very first poster. I made two versions of it; one said "Dumtruck," because we were considering calling ourselves Dumtruck. A band came out about a year later called Dumtruck—I think they were from Boston. I'm just grateful that we didn't have to call ourselves, like, NYC or Junior. But Brooklyn Dumtruck might actually be an improvement on Dumtruck.

### A vortex where nothing is ever thrown away

I've got an Apple II computer, I've got an auto-harp, I've got a toy piano, I've got a leather duster, I've got a worn-out Rand McNally atlas from the road. I've got Febreze. I've got a little DJ setup with a turntable, I've got a couple of unsuccessful lottery tickets—"Win For Life" is my preferred brand. I've got a pair of glasses from 1992 that no longer make me see well enough.

### Don't forget the Febreze

You got the Febreze, right? I'm a big fan of Febreze. I love it in all its different modes. It's really good on fabric.

*Inhale the fragrance of They Might Be Giants' seventh full-length, Mink Car (Restless).*

INTERVIEW BY TOM MALLON.



## My Favorite Gear

Fancy-guitar fan Stone Gossard isn't above a five-and-dime six-string.

**S**tone Gossard is the guy you see up there with Pearl Jam, hammering out rhythms on one of his buff, mostly vintage guitars. "Generally I play the (1953) Goldtop Les Paul, a (1959) Telecaster and a Strat acoustic/electric which is sort of a 'DuoTone,'" he says. "It has these new pickups that have two outputs, and one is a direct output that sounds like an acoustic and one sounds like an electric, so you can go back and forth between the two sounds." Gossard got tipped to the Stratocaster electric/acoustic after Eddie Vedder came back from a Pete Townshend show raving about it. Lately, though, Gossard's been practicing with the piano-pop project Brad, and he admits with a laugh that he's dusted off an old guitar from his collection—a black Gibson Flying V. "This guitar is just perfect for Brad because it doesn't have this ton of bottom end, and it's all kind of controlled in the middle, so it doesn't get in the way of the piano." It's hardly an ironic statement; Gossard merely reveres the sound of any guitar. "I like cool guitars, and will ooh and ah about somebody who's got one, but in the grand scheme of gear-heads I'm definitely not," he admits. "For me, the most important thing is that you can go to a cabin and there can be an old six-string ratty guitar and you can write a song that will be around forever. You can have a memorable experience or an emotional release. Sometimes the shittiest old guitars can sound great." >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN

Stone Gossard's *Bayleaf* (Epic) is the first solo disc from any member of Pearl Jam.



## The Sample Life

Solex reveals the secrets of the cut-out bin.

**A**sk Dutch beatmistress Solex (a.k.a. Elisabeth Esselink) why she mostly sampled vintage-sounding jazz and pop on her third album, *Low Kick And Hard Bop* (Matador), and she answers, "Cause most of them are dead." To further evade the copyright police, she samples self-made live bootlegs and gleans soundbites from the cheapo rack at the Amsterdam record store she owns. But don't ask exactly who she sampled for that honking blues harp or Count Basie-esque piano clink—she'll return with a polite but firm, "I can't talk about it." Here, we bug her to fess up. >>>LEE GARDNER

### I'd like to solve the puzzle

"You've got that show *Wheel Of Fortune* in America, right?" Esselink asks. She sampled the burbling voices underlying "Ololo" from the Dutch version: "The contestants are always very emotional when they have the correct answer, so I taped their voices and sampled from that."

### Son of a "Peter Gunn"

"Comely Row" winds around a lowdown rockabilly guitar riff that sounds like '50s twang-wrangler Duane Eddy. "It's definitely not him," she corrects. "[I sampled] a lot of cover records—a lot of unknown, shitty bands that cover jazz or '60s classics."

### Mambo No. 7/8

For the boisterous, big-band-infused blast of "You Say Potato, I Say Aardappel," Esselink says she started with a "very peculiar" drum loop. "And I just kept bumping into these big-band

trumpet things and these very jazzy percussion things, and it all fit in this peculiar loop. That's one of my favorites because it's so weird, and it's impossible to play live—if you're a very well-schooled jazz musician it's a piece of cake maybe, but for me it's very hard."

### Forget-me-nows

"I don't really write down where a sample comes from. When [a track] is all done, if I can't trace down the sample in my collection of tapes and records, then I think it's okay. I keep [the tapes and records though], so when someone pulls up from the dead I know who it could be."

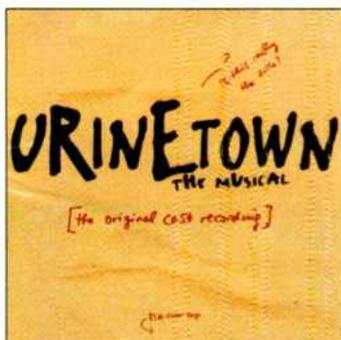
### I hear dead people

Her favorite sample on *Hard Kick*? The very first thing you hear—an old woman crying "Elisabeth, Elisabeth": "It sounds like my grandmother calling from the dead—it's kind of spooky."



NEWSFEED

**LOVE IS IN THE AIR** • In between suing everyone who gets in her way and posting sloppy, disturbed rants to music-industry Web board the Velvet Rope, Courtney Love reportedly found time to stage an hour-long disaster in the guise of an opening set for Jane's Addiction at the Hollywood Bowl. After a rambling five songs—during which she danced in the audience and warned them, "If any of you are eating, I'll stick your wine and cheese up your ass"—the staff put up the house lights, prompting Love to refuse to leave the stage until stagehands physically removed her while the audience cheered. ∴∴ **HOORAY FOR BJÖÖBIES** • After briefly losing the title of "Biggest Weirdo" to Courtney Love, Björk has come back strong with the video for her new single, "Pagan Poetry." Banned before 9 p.m. in Britain, the video shows a topless Björk cavorting around whilst pearls are sewn into her skin. "She approached me with the idea," said director Nick Knight. "Her original idea in Iceland was to sew pearls into her nipples."



## Weird Record: *Urinetown: The Musical*

Water Everywhere, But Not A Drop To Drink

Anyone who's sat through a Broadway musical knows it's the pits, but what if it was the pits and the shits? That's the question posed by *Urinetown: The Musical*, a Broadway monstrosity that's awful by design (for once). A water shortage has crippled a bustling metropolis, and in order to conserve precious fluids, the Urine Good Company has stepped in and made all toilets a pay-per-use service; those found unloading outside the law are shipped off to Urinetown, a whole different kind of badlands. Actually

performed on Broadway, *Urinetown* made quite a splash with songs like "It's A Privilege To Pee" and characters belting out lines like "If the people pee for free they'll push the system to the brink/ If today there's spillage, tell us how tomorrow will not stink!" Writer Greg Kotis's muse struck when he was stuck short-changed outside a Paris pay toilet: "Corruption, oppression, class warfare, all these things seemed possible in a show where desperately having to go to the bathroom was a principal motivating factor," he writes in *Urinetown's* liner notes. "Furthermore, the profound badness of the notion demanded it be a musical, the one form capable of delivering a bad idea with ultimate gusto." >>>CAM'RDN DAVIS



GOLDEN CHYLD



INFAMOUS



DJ LORD

## Essentials

Ever since Bomb Hip Hop Records' definitive *Return Of The DJ Volume I* launched the scratch revolution back in '95, the art form has accelerated at a ferocious pace. In addition to the "battle break" records—containing vocal samples, tones and beats—used in competition, "scratch music" encompasses everything from mixtape-derived pastiche to next-level drum 'n' bass and electro to highly conceptual compositions. A recent example: QBert's "Scroll Of The Wrist Beam" from *Return Of The DJ Volume IV*, which resembles nothing so much as an aural sci-fi film. Below, the bare essentials.

### The Bomb DJs, *Return Of The DJ, Volumes I-IV*

(Bomb Hip Hop)

Various Artists, *Deep Concentration; Deeper Concentration; Deep Concentration 3* (Om)

DJ QBert, *Wave Twisters* (Galactic Butt Hair)

Mix Master Mike, *Eye Of The Cyklops* (Asphodel)

X-Ecutioners, *X-pressions* (Asphodel)

Rob Swift, *The Ablist* (Asphodel)

DJ Craze, *Craze Music* (Bomb Hip Hop)

PhonopsychographDISK, *Ancient Termites* (Bomb Hip Hop)

Bullet Proof Space Travelers, *Built To Last* (Stray)

DJ Quest, *Questside* (*Untold Tales*) (Hip Hop Slam)

DJ Zeph, *DJ Zeph* (Wide Hive)

Various Artists, *Turntables By The Bay* (Hip Hop Slam)

## Skratch This: Battle Break Albums

*Hamster Breaks* (BPSH)

*Battle Breaks* (Dirt Style)

*Bionic Booger Breaks* (Dirt Style)

*Super Duck Breaks* (Stones Throw)

## Starting From Skratch

QBert and Mix Master Mike rode their DMC National and World championships into the spotlight. Will Atlanta's DJ Klever be next?

STORY ERIC K. ARNOLD • PHOTOS: JOHN CRIFFIN

If he had been born 20 years earlier, Josh Winkler, a.k.a. DJ Klever, might have learned Thin Lizzy riffs on a Strat in his Atlanta bedroom. Instead, this 24-year-old self-professed "cracker" became an undisputed turntable master—and on August 24 in San Francisco, he outlasted 16 other wax-slingers (including Infamous, Golden Chyld and Presyce) in the final stage of the DMC/Technics "American Battleground 2001" series.

Judged by X-ecutioners' Roc Raida and Total Eclipse, Triple Threat's Shortcut and Supernatural Turntable Artists' Swift Rock, the San Francisco event, which also featured showcases by former DMC champs Raida, Swamp, Craze and A-Trak, brought to a close the regional battles staged by the DMC (which stands for Dance Music Community) across the country this year. Once a European-dominated exhibition of disco mixers, the DMC became associated with hip-hop turntablists after QBert, Mix Master Mike and Apollo (a.k.a. the Invisibl Skratch Piklz, then known as West Coast Rocksteady DJs) won two consecutive world titles in 1993 and 1994.

But what does a 2001 DMC title

mean for Klever's career? By winning the battle and defending his title, Klever (who also won last year's U.S. Finals) earned the right to compete at the World Finals (at press time, set to take place in London this fall) against 29 other DJs. Whether he wins the Worlds or not, being a two-time U.S. Champ places Klever among the turntablist elite; former titleholders like QBert and Mix Master Mike, as well as Craze and A-Trak, have gone from winning DMC World titles to putting out their own albums.

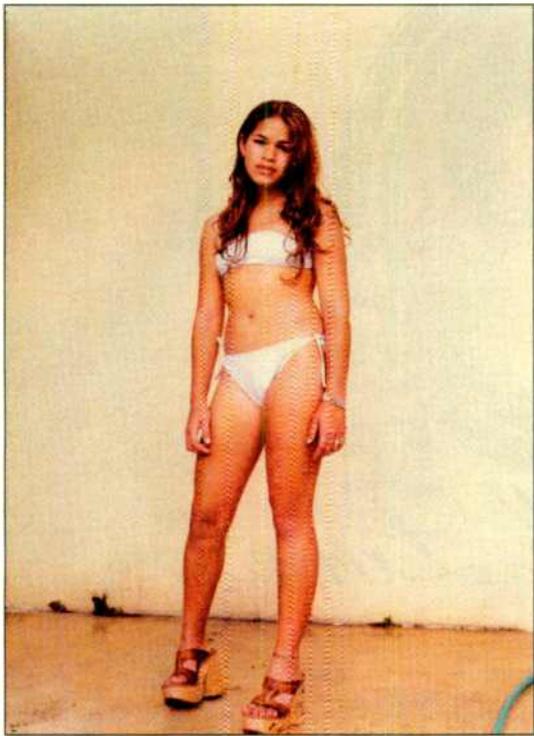
Of course, winning at DMC isn't the only way to succeed as a recording DJ. Kid Koala has released two acclaimed albums, and he doesn't compete. But famed former DMC champions like DJ Swamp and Roc Raida, who showed off their crab-scratches and beat-juggles between battle segments, underlined the DMC's relevance: Having a title under your belt can't hurt. As Tony Prince, the DMC's founder, relates, "At the end of the day, all we care about is the welfare of the DJ society. We're delighted that people like Craze and QBert and these great legends are making a living out of something that was once a hobby."



DJ LORD



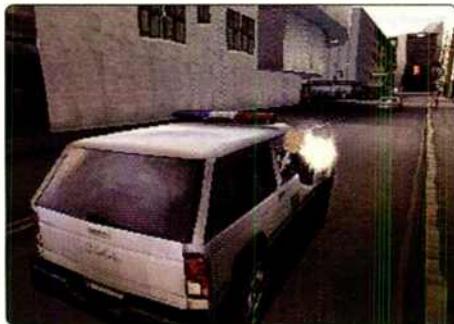
ICE-T &amp; KLEVER



## Harsh Light Of The U.S.A.

PRINT

Like a bathroom mirror that's a little too well-lit, the portraits in Dana Lixenberg's new *United States* (D.A.P.) offer gritty, unforgiving clarity. This brief but powerful collection lines up icons like James Caan and Donald Trump against enigmatic characters such as Miss Housing Project USA. In one intriguing juxtaposition, a stubble-faced Elliott Smith stares out towards the spindly, wintry landscape in an article on obsessive-compulsive disorder. These whisper-still images often find the beauty and beast in the same face. >>>NEIL GLAOSTONE



## Trivial Pursuit

GAME

**World's Scariest Police Chases** (Activision for PSX)

One of life's great guilty pleasures is watching retired Sheriff John Bunnell lambast the doomed perps of Fox's *World's Scariest Police Chases*. ("You can run from the law, but when it catches up it will break your femur in three places!") Here, the action heads out of the trailer park and into your PlayStation, and armchair pursuit has never been so surreal. T-bone, powerslide and empty clip after clip of ammunition into hapless suspects, paralyze their vehicles and force them to surrender, while Bunnell spits his trademark one-liners. As he says early on, "For a police officer in pursuit, danger lurks around every corner." >>>JOE FORTUNATO

## 5 SPOT



Music that warms the cold, synthetic heart of the Faint's Todd Baechle

**1. Astor Piazzolla, avant-garde tango composer**  
I got into him about two years ago when he had a reissue out; in English it's called *Tango At Zero Hour*. He's a bandoneon composer, kind of a tango and classical fusion.

**2. Cradle Of Filth, ghoulish, frightening black metal**  
It's one of those bands that I never thought I'd like, based on working in a record store and seeing who buys it. It didn't seem like I had anything in common with these people, but they're really a good metal band.

**3. The Good Life, Cursive's Tim Kasher gone soul-renderingly solo**

The new album is being mixed, and it's so awesome. It's much better than the last one; it's more modern, more orchestrated. The last one, he had the songs and recorded them at home, but they didn't come out right. There were a few standout tracks, but as an album, it's nothing compared to this new one.

**4. Klaus Nomi, outlandish new-wave opera singer**  
He died of AIDS in the early '80s. He would dress up in these outfits with points all over them and a bowtie. He had this new-wave-ish band that backed him up on the more rocking tracks. I found out about him from this punk and new-wave movie called *Urgh! A Music War*. When he shows up on the screen you're like, "What the fuck is this?"

**5. Donovan, optimistic British folk god**  
I really like his voice. At first I liked him because of the tropical-style music; it was just kind of refreshing. It felt good, but it wasn't happy—I don't really like smiley-type music. It has a lot of character and uses a lot of vivid imagery. I'm kind of a folk fan in general; I'm into lyrics.

*All these collide in the icy synth-pop of the Faint's **Danse Macabre** (Saddle Creek).*

INTERVIEW BY ALEX NAIDUS.

# VOICE of the PEOPLE

On the message boards at [www.cmj.com](http://www.cmj.com), it's OK to admit you bought Hammer albums.

## Re: Really \*AWFUL\* albums

**echos myron:** Over the past dozen years or so, I've purchased about 200 or 300 bad CDs. That's probably a few thousand dollars worth of useless plastic. I TRY to sell what I can at the local used record stores. Sometimes nobody will buy what I offer to sell. The albums are that bad. What CDs/records have you bought that you find absolutely vile and want to unload? (Don't ask me what I've bought. It's like flushing money down the toilet. It hurts thinking about it...)

**Shiverhead:** Hammer... *The Funky Headhunter*. definitely not funky.

**BigJake:** Easy... I picked up a used copy of *The Iron Man*, the musical by Pete Townshend. No one I knew could listen to more than a minute without laughing to the brink of tears. Then I told a guy at work about who asked to borrow it, not believing it could be that bad. Once he had it in hand, his girlfriend (and mother of his child) left him, cut off all his hair and smashed one of his guitars. We both blamed the CD, but he wouldn't destroy it and I wouldn't take it back. Last I heard he was still trying to pawn it off on people.

**Harnk the River Rat:** Echos Myron, if you bought 2 or 300 bad cds then I would like to suggest that you have really bad taste in music, and that you are an asshole who buys things for reasons other than that you actually like it. May I suggest giving me all of your wasted money so I can go see the Charlatans at the Supper Club and Spiritualized at Carnegie Hall...?

**"Chris is an *incredible* writer and lyricist. I first found out about Chris from his band SAVES THE DAY and I love the lyrics in the songs. Then one day my friend told me Chris had a book out so I went to the bookstore and picked it up. It's even better than his music..."**

>>> Amazon.com customer review of former Ministry member Chris Counsell's 1998 book, *Confessions Of The Highest Fiddler: Poems And Songwords, 1882-1896*. Saves The Day's Chris Canley was three years old in 1882.



When it comes to imploding relationships, Clem Snide's Eef Barzalay is a master engineer: Lyrics like "I don't want to leave/ Unless of course/ You ask me to stay," from the band's latest pop-country explication of the romantic inferno, *The Ghost Of Fashion* (spinART), prove it. Learn from the poor guy's mistakes, why don't you? *When only a rock star's love advice will do:* [lovelorn@cmj.com](mailto:lovelorn@cmj.com).

I just found out that my boyfriend's been lying about his college degree—he never really finished school, but his employer thinks he did. I don't want to be dating a fraud. Should I break up with him? —Sharon, Louisville, Ky.

**Frauds make very good lovers and very bad boyfriends. You choose. (I personally pretend I used to play with the Doobie Brothers.)**

My girlfriend is moving to another city, eight hours' drive away, to take a job she can't refuse. I can't leave my own job here. We're going to try and stay together, but I feel like we're doomed. Are we? —Joe, Trenton, N.J.

**Yes, you are doomed. You might want to examine why you are so gung-ho to stay in New Jersey; long distance relationships are the slowest, ugliest of deaths.**

I want to break up with this guy I've been dating, but I don't want to hurt him. Can't I just tell him I'm gay? —Kristen, Cambridge, Mass.

**Tell him he's gay.**

Love, Eef



I N M Y L I F E

## ➤ Man At Arms

Skeleton Key's Erik Sanko has some extra shoulders for you to cry on.

**E**rik Sanko's apartment is part living space, part twisted medical museum. Every square inch is packed with odd memorabilia—ancient dental tools, taxidermied crows, warped homemade puppets—but the trump card is his collection of vintage prosthetic limbs, some dating as far back as the Civil War. "Modern ones don't interest me because of the lack of history and wear, which I find really kind of touching in a way, not to make a bad pun," he says. "There's something really

poignant about them, kind of sad and tragic and heroic at the same time." Sanko stresses that he's not going for shock value, but sometimes worries how people are going to take it: "My wife's grandparents came over the other day and we were worried. But they see that we're not doing it just to be morbid. There's a baby's skull in the other room and I worry about how people are going to react to that, but it's because we think these things are really beautiful. And they are a little macabre too." >>>TOM MALLON

Sanko's apartment makes perfect sense when you hear the fractured, baroque *Past Imperfect, Present Tense* (Jetset).

# TOP 7.5

Life is a highway. Please slow down.



## 1. Strokes backlash:

The greatest thing since sliced bread meets the no-carb diet.

## 2. Company holiday party:

Remember, the job market is too tight for you to get drunk and tease the boss about his man breasties.

**3. Simpsons® cereal:** *Homer's Cinnamon Donut* and *Bart's Peanut Butter Chocolate Crunch* are as tasty as the show. We here at CMJ are eagerly awaiting the unveiling of *Barney's Duff Beer Puffs*. \*Burp.\*

**4. Limp Bizkit without Wes Borland:** With the guitarist off doing his own thing, now absolutely no road-blocks on the superhighway to Sucktown.

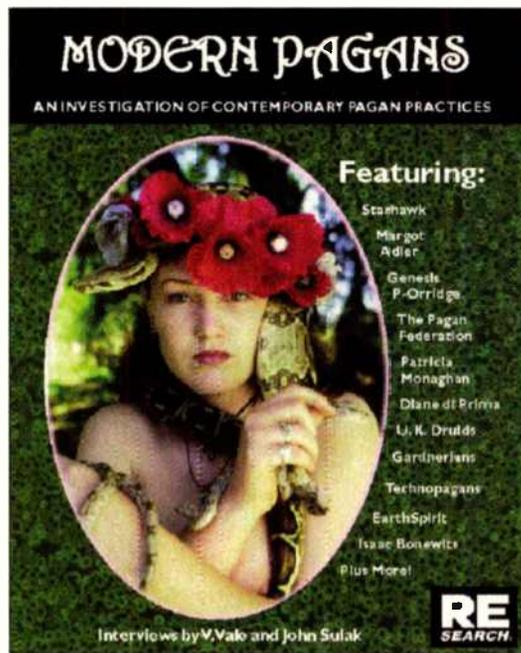
**5. Being Harry Potter:** Making it fashionable for kids to look like rock critics.

**6. Double-crossed!** P.O.D. breaks a year after CMJ puts them on the cover. Thanks a lot, Jesus.

**7. Hip-hop without borders:** Underground stuff from Detroit. Smooth flow from San Francisco. Bubba Sparxxx. Dungeon Family. Looks like New York and L.A. gotta open up those gilded gates.

## 7.5 2001, the year in review:

Can't wait for those namby-pamby news wrap-ups of a totally shitty year. Look for layoff trackers, terror recaps and Britney, Britney, Britney.



# Pagan Pages

PRINT

Madison Avenue ad execs and backwoods pagans have more in common than you might assume: Both use elements of old-world magic to manipulate visual symbols and persuade effectively. That's just one of the tidbits found in *Modern Pagans* (RE/Search), an extensive collection of interviews with current practitioners. Now if those pagans would just stop cranking Enya and wearing those earth-mother outfits, they might start controlling the American mindset instead of those hucksters in Armani suits. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



## Mr. Lynch's Wild Drive

FILM

In his latest epic, *Mulholland Drive* (Universal Focus), *Twin Peaks/Blue Velvet* mastermind David Lynch weaves a—surprise—moody, atmospheric tale, including a woman with amnesia, a movie director with mob problems and a man who dreams about a moss-covered monster who lives behind the dumpster of his favorite diner. Originally intended as a pilot for ABC (what were they thinking?), *Mulholland* leads you through several hanging plotlines that are confusing, disturbing and absolutely fascinating. Just another day in Lynchville, of course. >>>JOHN ELSASSE

"THE {HANDFUL OF DUST} MESSAGE, A SORT OF GRIM COMMENTARY ACTUALLY, IS THAT AS HUMANS, WE ARE ALL ESSENTIALLY CURSED BY OUR OWN INSTINCT TO BE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE ON ALL LEVELS - AT INTERPERSONAL LEVELS, AND TO THE POINT WHERE WE COMMIT GLOBAL ATROCITIES LIKE GENOCIDE, AND THE OBLITERATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH WE LIVE IN. HOD TAKES THEIR MESSAGE TO EXTREMES." - Jim Milton, audiosurge.com

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DAVID HARARI

## ELY GUERRA

**E**ly Guerra was feeling confident when she delivered her new record, recorded in New York with the help of downtown luminaries like guitarist Marc Ribot, drummer Larry Mullins and singer/guitarist Chris Whitley, to her big Mexico City label. The feeling didn't last long. "When the label people listened to it, they said it was shit!" she says. *Lotofire*, with drum 'n' bass rhythms, trip-hop and samba coursing underneath Guerra's hovering, seductive coos and impassioned wails to lonely nights, was not the pop-oriented album they were hoping for. "They were hoping they could capitalize on my looks," says Guerra, the

daughter of a soccer star and former model. "They're still not used to the idea that a woman can sing her own songs." Undaunted, Guerra undertook promoting and distributing the album on her own. Tracks have appeared on several compilations, including the critically successful *Amores Perros* soundtrack, and she was also invited to accompany Chilean rock stars La Ley on their forthcoming MTV Unplugged album. *Lotofire* was named for the transformative power of the flame and lotus, and with the album on the cusp of wider distribution by Higher Octave, U.S. audiences can finally experience its melding of passion and beauty. >>>ENRIQUE LAVIN



## HEY MERCEDES

**F**or the four regular guys in Midwestern post-emo outfit Hey Mercedes, keeping punk rock real means telling your fans about that gnarly dream you had last night. Log on to the band's website, [www.heymercedes.com](http://www.heymercedes.com), and you'll find amidst the tour dates and blurry black-and-white photos one of the Net's most revealing weblogs, a virtual diary into which the bandmembers routinely gush. "We've all been real personal with the audience," drummer Damon Atkinson says. "We do the log so people won't say, 'Oh yeah, I went to a Hey Mercedes show and the singer totally ignored me.' We can explain that, you know, we were sick." Atkinson, singer/guitarist Bob Nanna and bassist Todd Bell are no strangers to

band-to-fan intimacy: The three bared their souls in Illinois underground titans Braid, a band that broke up in late 1999 just after releasing *Frame And Canvas*—one of second-gen emo's defining documents and the record that took them from basements to stages. Hey Mercedes's debut full-length, *Everynight Fire Works (Vagrant)*, doesn't stray far from Braid's shotgun wedding of post-punk angularity and achy-breaky pop, though new guitarist Mark Dawursk helps the band channel their youthful exuberance into matured songwriting. "There's a lot of thought put into the songs," Nanna says of their new process. "We're taking our time with each of them, as opposed to ripping out two or three a practice." >>>MIKAEL WOOD

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

november/december 2001 31



## OK GO

**S**igning to a major label isn't always glamorous. Chicago glam-pop outfit OK Go may be recording their yet-untitled debut LP in sunny Los Angeles, but Capitol hasn't put them up at the Crowne Plaza; the band calls a temporary corporate apartment complex home. "It's a really strange population," says frontman Damian Kulash, "because it's not a particularly nice place...it's the sort of place you send your aspiring star before they've made a cent." That means the band's in the company of lots of child actors, but it also means they're part of the next wave of notoriety: OK Go threatened to steal shows from They Might Be Giants last summer with their Prince-meets-Pixies blast of

winking, self-deprecating rock, and early next year, the band will release the record they're slaving over in L.A.—possibly with a version of their touted indie-EP gem "It's Tough To Have A Crush When The Boy Doesn't Feel The Same Way You Do." The song is, perhaps, not the most commercial tune in the world, but OK Go has a theory about why their record will affect people anyway. "We're rock and we're fun," Kulash says. "And we try to have fun without being silly or pandering. The trouble sometimes is that rock either gets pushed into being serious and self-righteous and self-important, or silly and piss-taking and childish. I think it can be fun without being stupid." —NICK SPADY

BETH HERZHAFT

# THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY

I'm a materialistic person," admits Dennis Lyxzén, bullhorn of Sweden's foremost anti-capitalist rock juggernaut the (International) Noise Conspiracy. "I like to buy records and books and so on, but a lot of times we get these desires that are totally constructed. My sister's 11 years old and she told me the other day, 'Dennis, I really need a mobile phone.' And I'm like 'You're 11! When I was 11, I didn't even use the regular phone!'" The only weapons (INC can wield against the world's dominant economic system are biting metaphors wrapped inside simmering R&B grenades, and they do that prodigiously on *A New Morning*, *Changing*

*Weather* (Epitaph). And Lyxzén is content to abduct one listener at a time. Aching anthems like "Capitalism Stole My Virginity" and "A Body Treatise" address consumerism and gender politics, but sway the hips before the head. "Now more than ever is a time where people should talk about politics and not fall victim to blind nationalism and unfocused rage," Lyxzén says. "Too many times, bands have done it the easy way and talked about oppression and repression. I think we already know most of the time how horrible things are. We just wanted to flip it and let people know that under the surface, there's hope." >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

STEFAN MALZHORN



# HOLIDAY

## → 01 GIFT GUIDE



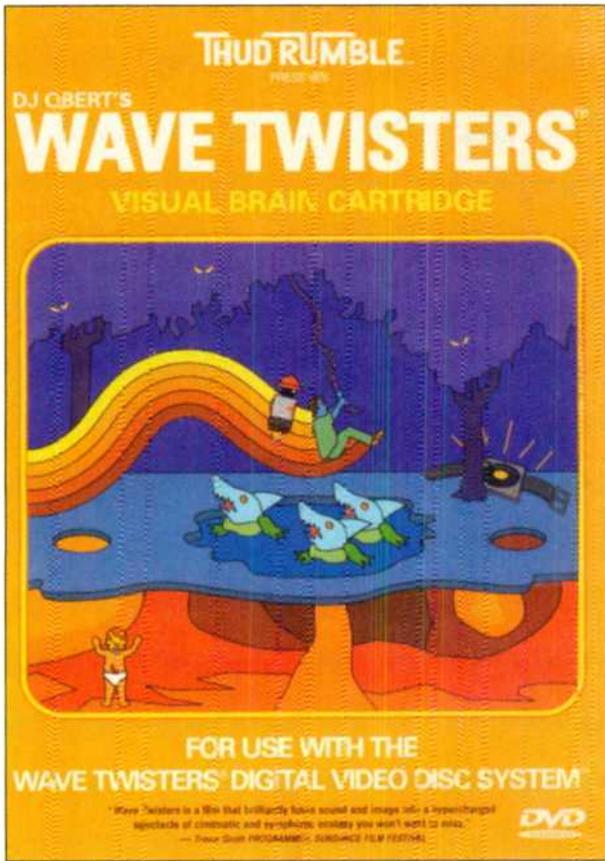
### Digital Kingdom

Apple's **iPod** finally liberates your goldbrickin', no-payin'-for-music ass from the confines of your computer. This gleaming deck-of-cards-sized box sports a whopping 5GB hard drive capable of storing approximately 1,000 songs (or 100 CDs), which is far more than you'll ever be able to listen to in one sitting with its rechargeable 10-hour battery. The iPod also allows you to create custom playlists, sorts all your jams by artist and offers 20 minutes of skip protection—your digital copy of "My Awesome Mix Tape Volume #6" will never be interrupted again. (\$399, [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com))



### Talk About Bumcakes

You should've seen the underwear they wanted to do... While there's no matching men's undergarment—still experimenting with packaging materials—these **Spinal Tap undies** are just the thing for the big bottom in your life. (\$12, [www.artistdirect.com](http://www.artistdirect.com))



## Skratch Gordon

Crossfade *Akira* with *Wild Style* and you get **Wave Twisters**, an animated turntablist sci-fi demi-epic synched to DJ Qbert's scratching. The plot follows efforts to restore the Lost Arts (breaking, rapping, graffiti and scratching), all the time rocking the *Fantasia* concept with images of '63 Impala low-rider spaceships and a Kangol-sporting medical droid. (DVD, \$26.98, [www.djqbert.com](http://www.djqbert.com))



## Europe: Not Just For Sissies Anymore

Finally, a game full of wanton violence without any of that noble saving-the-universe crap. **Hooligans: Storm Over Europe** targets the real reason Americans watch European soccer: roving, mysteriously organized gangs of thugs who spill onto the field

and tear up the place. Drink, fight, screw and kill your way to the top of the hooligan heap, using drugs and alcohol to keep your troops in check. If only you could beat up the guy who yells, "Gooooooooooooo!" (For PC, \$27, [www.hooligans-thegame.com](http://www.hooligans-thegame.com))





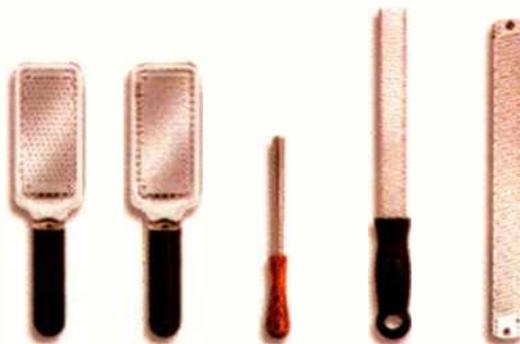
## Effects Channels

The otherworldly guitar textures of atmospherock bands like Spiritualized and Sigur Rós don't come from divine influence—they come from effects pedals, and lots of 'em. **Boss's Twin Pedal series**—including the GP-20 Amp Factory, RC-20 Loop Station and the new WP-20G Wave Processor and OC-20G Poly Octave pedals—cram loads of noodly sounds into easy-to-manipulate units. Tease 22 different amp tones out of the GP-20, loop up to five-and-a-half minutes of music with the RC-20 or spin synth-type waves out of the WP-20G. (Prices vary, [www.bossus.com](http://www.bossus.com))



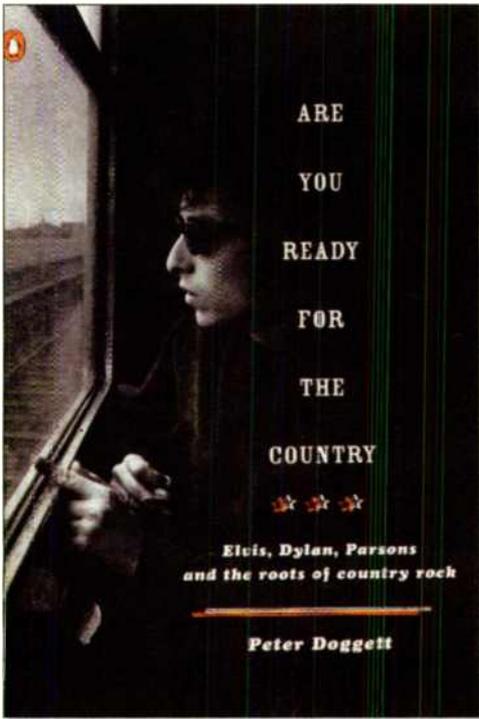
## The Microplane Flies High

Put the spirit of Chairman Kaga under the tree with the **Microplane Zester**, a repurposed woodworking tool that's the utter shit for ripping the zest off of citrus. And citrus zest = instant flavor. Trust us. (\$10, [www.microplane.com](http://www.microplane.com))



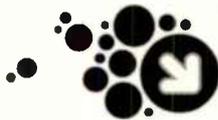
## You're Surrounded!

Surround Sound may seem like a luxury item, available only to millionaires with tricked-out audio-video rooms in their hilltop villas. No more. The **Aperion Audio 5.1 channel Home Theater System** retails for under \$1000 and features an 8-inch subwoofer and four satellite speakers, bringing crisp, theater-quality Surround Sound to your living room. Similar systems can cost more than three times the Aperion, and yet you sacrifice none of the quality. Amazing. So sit back, crank it up and lose yourself in sound. (\$999 plus shipping, [www.aperionaudio.com](http://www.aperionaudio.com))



## Rollicking Reads

With **Are You Ready For The Country?** (Penguin), Peter Doggett chronicles the crossroads between country and rock, from Jerry Lee Lewis's hell-raisin' honky tonk to Gram Parsons's lost-soul lullabies and the Eagles' soulless slickness. Countryphiles with a shorter attention span and greater reverence for the unadulterated form can peruse **Snapshots From The Lost Highway** (Da Capo), which collects many never-before published photos and lyrics of the balladeer whose lonesome heart helped start it all, Mr. Hank Williams. (\$16, [www.penguinputnam.com](http://www.penguinputnam.com); \$35, [www.dacapopress.com](http://www.dacapopress.com))



## This Beetle's Made For Blastin'

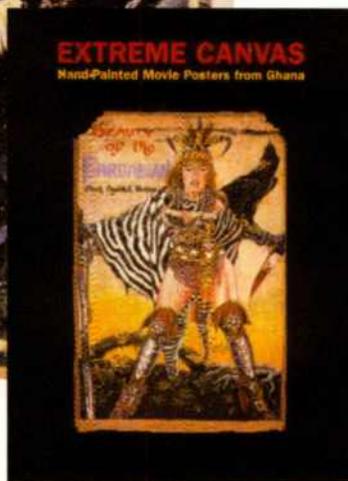
It may look like a cute little model car, but this Beetle's wired for sound. The **New Beetle CD Stereo with FM Tuner** features four speakers, working headlights and tail lights, and a front bumper that slides out to reveal a CD tray. Even if you can't afford an actual Bug, at least you can help give new meaning to the term "car stereo." (\$99.95, [www.sharperimage.com](http://www.sharperimage.com))



## Hit Me With Your Best Shot

In light of the NYPD's recent tragedy-induced makeover, a renegade-NY-cop-takes-the-law-into-his-own-hands vehicle might seem a little tacky. But that doesn't change the fact that **Max Payne** is one of the most engaging shooters ever. Its gritty look, sweeping, John Woo-esque gun battles and a *Matrix*-inspired feature called "Bullet Time" (in which time slows down and each bullet hits its target with agonizing detail) help it stand above the rest. Plus, it finally gives the player something he's always wanted: the ability to shoot *everything*, from the largest bad guy to a can of soda. Happy hunting. (For PC, PS2 and Xbox, \$49.99, [www.maxpayne.com](http://www.maxpayne.com))





## The Bright Lights Of Ghana

Africa's Gold Coast adapts Tinseltown's cultural imperialism in **Extreme Canvas: Hand-Painted Movie Posters From Ghana** (Dilettante Press). In the 1980s, when local entrepreneurs first set up a "mobile cinema industry" with videos imported from the United States, they needed advertisements, but had no official promo materials. Ghana's showmen employed local artists to paint neon-bright canvases, eye-catching enough to stop everyone on the street. The result slathers over-the-top imagery with an eerie backwoods surrealism, making those familiar stills from *Hellraiser* and *The Terminator* just a little more unnerving. (\$45-\$75, [www.dilettantepress.com](http://www.dilettantepress.com))



## Stretching The Form

Has anyone pitched Jim Carrey about starring in a live-action movie about Plastic Man—that rubbery and randy comic book superhero who can transform into a ticker tape or a tight-fitting lady's coat as duty calls? **Jack Cole And Plastic Man** (Chronicle) collects several of the most manically surreal episodes of that post-modern pile of goo and features Art Spiegelman's profiles of "Plas" creator Cole, a man whose psyche was almost as unstable as the skin on his favorite creation. (\$19.95, [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com))





## Groove Is In The Box

Little brother wants to add some electronica to his nu-metal band? Best friend's a bedroom DJ? Your sensitive mope-rock band currently writing *Kid B*? With 600 sounds, 30 drum kits and easy touch-pad interface, Roland's **D2 Groovebox** makes all these things possible. The D2 includes touchpad effects like turntable scratching and special lo-fi "vinyl" mode as well as all the latest two-step drum patterns—you'll be the next Craig David/Thom Yorke/Mudvayne in no time. (\$95, [www.rolandus.com](http://www.rolandus.com))



## Box-er Briefs

The latest batch of multi-disc sets cater to completists and newbies alike, resurrecting Joy Division, revisiting the Velvet Underground and going global with another *Nuggets*. >>>PIOTR ORLOV

2001 may go down as the year that box sets broke. Well, at least they broke out of the canonical boomer taste ghetto, toward more global and open-armed musical preferences. Now there are packages out there that will satisfy the holiday cravings of the pierced-nose types, as surely as there are boxes for your arts-professor uncle and your VH1-addicted older siblings.

Joy Division's *Heart And Soul* (Warner Archives-Rhino), a four-disc set from '97 that's

finally making its way Stateside, contains pretty much every note that the Manchester quartet recorded, as well as some previously unreleased live sides. The emo-before-emo band that would mutate into New Order after singer Ian Curtis's 1980 suicide defined post-punk doom 'n' gloom, and its murky sound struck equal notes of industrial dread and minimalist art-pop clarity. The closing live CD will excite only completists, but any collection that includes 1979's *Unknown Pleasures* and the greatest 7-inch of all time, "Love Will Tear Us Apart," has the world going for it.

Any *Echo & The Bunnymen* collection must inevitably be more choosy than complete: the four Liverpoolians prolifically transcended the sound that birthed them, and two original members (singer Ian McCulloch and guitarist Will Sergeant) are still sloshing on under that moniker, shaming their post-punk psychedelic pop legacy. Lucky then that the four-disc *Crystal Days 1979-1999* (Warner Archives-Rhino), concentrates on Echo's initial decade, a time when everyone from the Doors' Ray Manzarek to budding acid-house DJs to future Flaming Lips and Pavement members saw them as rock's future. A healthy helping of their classic

*Crocodiles*, *Porcupine* and *Ocean Rain* LPs sit next to singles, B-sides, compilation-only tracks and live covers galore (Wilson Pickett's "In The Midnight Hour" among them). It does what any good box should: It ensures the happiness of the hardcore fans, and helps turn the passing fans hardcore.

After 17 years, Lisa Gerrard and Brendan Perry, the duo at the core of *Dead Can Dance*, finally went their separate ways. But not before helping define the 4AD sound, making the world safe for dreamy ethno-fusion shoegazers, and (quite unfortunately) paving the way for Enigma and Enya. Which might mean that in-need-of-soothing adults will covet the three-CD-plus-DVD set *1981-1998*, as they do DCD's mystically minded offspring. The DVD includes a half-dozen videos and a rarely shown 1994 concert film.

Of course, not everyone wants to find evolution in his or her stocking; some folks are pureblooded, red, white and blue traditionalists. And in the wake of the *Anthology Of American Folk Music* and *Ken Burns's Jazz* sets, there's now a cottage industry serving such fans. Sharing the folk-box-of-the-year honors are *American Roots Music* (Palm Pictures) and *Roots Music: An American Journey* (Rounder). The former is a four-disc set accompanying the PBS mini-series and the Library of Congress's coffee-table book of the same name. Split into Country, Blues, Gospel/Folk and Cajun/Tejano/Native American chapters, it documents 20th-century American folk styles with snapshots of all the right touchstones (Carter Family, Muddy Waters, Bob Dylan, Mahalia Jackson, among a star-studded cast). It's not deep, but it's not meant to be—it's a great primer. The Rounder set is prepared from that label's considerable regional catalog, and doesn't carry the same sort of name recognition—but it does explore New Orleans funk (Wild Magnolias), modern bluegrass (Alison Krauss), folk-blues (Mississippi Fred McDowell) and Texas troubadour (Jimmie Dale Gilmore) styles that are worlds

unto themselves. For old-school jazz heads, the three-disc *Complete In A Silent Way Sessions* (Columbia Legacy), the fifth box in the vaulted Miles Davis reissue series, captures the moment when the trumpeter left the sharp suits of tonal post-bop for the free-flowing designs of electric jazz.

Miles's is not the only approach toward the kaleidoscopic esthetic of the late '60s currently documented in box form. Besides the obvious—the Grateful Dead's monstrous for-the-faithful-or-the-wannabes *Golden Road 1965-72* (Rhino)—are two completely new sets, spotlighting previously unseen psychedelic bags.

*Nuggets II* (Rhino) is a follow-up to last year's set dedicated to the '60s phenomenon of garage rock one-hit wonders. Where the original *Nuggets* presented this as an American movement, the sequel leaves the continent and finds longhairs banging out three-chord mysteries from Dublin to Tokyo to Berlin to Wellington, New Zealand, trippy imagery intact. Yet the most interesting box-set offering of the year, which may in fact unite the young alt-types, traditionalists and aging hippies under a single flag, is the Velvet Underground's *Bootleg Series Vol. 1: The Quine Tapes* (Polydor). Foolishly never considered psychedelic due to its NYC zip code, VU could drone on as well as anyone in its day, and these three live 1969 CDs, amateurishly (but lovingly) recorded by soon-to-be punk guitar god Robert Quine (of Richard Hell & The Voidoids), prove it. Neither your music nor the music of your elders, it's the perfect way to share the holidays.





## X-files

For a while it seemed as if Microsoft's Takeovers and Monopolies department had gone soft, allowing Sony's PlayStation and PlayStation 2 to dominate the console-based game market. That's about to change with the release of MS's purported PlayStation killer, the Xbox. The Xbox wins where other consoles lose by using four separate processors, dedicating one each solely to graphics and sound, ensuring that there's no tradeoff in quality—kickass graphics no longer mean Speak & Spell sound, and full 5.1 surround sound still leaves room for amazingly detailed textures. And, in what is probably the best idea ever for a console, it features a nine-gigabyte hard drive that allows you to use your own music for soundtracks: Stack the Xbox with death metal for the action sequences, dump in some Sigur Rós for the quiet bits, and it will pull them at random, eliminating deadly boredom with a game's music. Now, instead of suffering through Sugar Ray during a firefight, you can blast bad guys to Slayer or Napalm Death, the way things were meant to be. (\$299, [www.xbox.com](http://www.xbox.com)) >>>TOM MALLON



## How To Be A Playa

Microsoft gave us a peek behind the curtain at the Xbox's first games; here's what we remember after the debriefing.



### Halo

**The Gist:** You're part of a military special ops unit and you're accidentally teleported into hostile alien territory. Mayhem ensues and you proceed to singlehandedly whoop an entire race's collective ass. Yes, it's that predictable. **Best Bit:** Sophisticated alien AI makes outgunned aliens haul ass away from you like the punk bitches they are, and then swarm you when they come back with reinforcements.



### Project Gotham Racing

**The Gist:** Burn rubber around a blissfully deserted New York City in cars much nicer than the beater you pilot. **Best Bit:** The developers painstakingly recreated the NYC landscape, even duplicating actual rinky-dink electronics stores, scaffolding and advertisements. A perfect vision of NYC (especially the no tourists part).



### Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding

**The Gist:** Freeform snowboarding, using real-life mountains without the traditional annoying set racing trails—feel free to wander wherever you like. **Best Bit:** *Amped* boasts a fully interactive environment. (Plainspeak: Yes, you can hit random passersby upside the head with your snowboard. In fact, it's encouraged.)



### Dead Or Alive 3

**The Gist:** Tekken-esque fighting game with beautiful, breakable scenery: There's snow to piledrive through, ancient stalagmites to smash with semiconscious bodies, fine art to scrutinize after an ostentatious victory dance and more. **Best Bit:** On the top floor of a glass skyscraper, a well-placed kick sends your opponent crashing through the window and down to the pavement below, making stops at neon signs, awnings and other obstacles on the way. We shed a tear.

(\$49.99, [www.microsoft.com/games/halo](http://www.microsoft.com/games/halo))

(\$49.99, [www.microsoft.com/games/projectgotham](http://www.microsoft.com/games/projectgotham))

(\$49.99, [www.xbox.com/games/amped](http://www.xbox.com/games/amped))

(\$49.99, [www.tecmoinc.com](http://www.tecmoinc.com))



## Take That, Clapper

It's much easier to keep track of household gadgets if you can strap them to your person. With that in mind, Casio created the **CMD40B-1**. It looks a lot like the calculator watch you had in 1985, only you can control the TV and cable box while you're checking to see just how many hours you've been couch-bound today. (\$116.99, [www.casio.com/watches](http://www.casio.com/watches))



## Let It Glow

Fashion can be so impractical—unless you're talking about cargo pants. Rather than stuff your pockets with useless junk, why not strap on a necklace that looks cool and can help if you ever get locked in a dark room? **GloGear light-up necklaces**, made famous by celebrities from Tony Hawk to Shaggy, are now available to you. Choose from a variety of designs and colors—the glowing blue Backstreet Boys pendant is our fave—then hit the town. Whether you're at an intimate gathering or a full-blown rave, you'll light up the room. (\$8.95-\$10.95, [www.glogear.com](http://www.glogear.com))



## Presto Fly Daddy

Shoes as a gift: great. But what about the size? There's no consistency between brands, and running shoes almost always run smaller than street shoes. A solution is Nike's Air Presto, which is made of stretchy stuff and follows XXS-XL sizing, giving you, and your loved ones' toes, a couple of traditional U.S. numeric sizes of wiggle room. Even better, go to [nike.com](http://nike.com) and build your own pair with colors, patterns and words of your choosing. (\$95, [www.nike.com](http://www.nike.com))





# TOWN

# HEY Or Not Toomey?

**Tsunami and Simple Machines icon Jenny Toomey steps off the bully pulpit and delivers a double-disc tale of two cities.**

STORY: MAC RANDALL • PHOTO: CHARLES STECK

To most observers, it looked like Jenny Toomey had given up music for political activism. Tsunami, the punk-pop band that the D.C.-based singer/songwriter helmed through most of the '90s, dissolved near the decade's end, as did Simple Machines, the record label she ran simultaneously. Since then, she's devoted most of her energies toward establishing an independent musicians' advocacy group called the Future of Music Coalition. Or at least that's what we thought. The arrival of Toomey's debut solo release, *Antidote* (Misra), alters the picture considerably: A weighty double-disc set, it reveals that over the past couple of years, Toomey and her guitar haven't been strangers after all.

"I've been trying to make this record for quite a while," Toomey says. "I wanted to do something more arranged, something I had a little more control over. Some of the songs have been recorded four or five times now. Some of them are at least 10 years old." The finished product—recorded in Chicago (disc one) and Nashville (disc two) over more than a year, with guests including Ida guitarist Dan Littleton, Aluminum Group singer John Navin, violinist Andrew Bird and various members of Lambchop—was completely financed by Toomey herself, thanks in part to the late, lamented New Economy. "I got a great job writing for one of the dot-coms at the ascension period, when they were paying stupid amounts of money," she explains. "I knew it wasn't going to last, but in about three months I'd built up a real nest pile. And then I didn't have to ask anybody any questions. If I wanted to fly a trumpeter to Chicago to record with me, I could just do it."

Tsunami fans, take note: *Antidote* sounds nothing like Jenny's old band. Moments of outright rocking are rare; Toomey's introspective lyrics usually receive quiet small-combo backing, enhanced by subtle string and horn arrangements. At times ("Word Traffic," "Unclaimed," "Artful Dodger"), the merger of jazzy, complex chords with wordy, witty relationship dissections recalls no one so much as Joni Mitchell. The sophisticated surroundings help lend a soulful edge to Toomey's smoky alto. On the slow-burning "Useless Excuses" and a note-perfect cover of Curtis Mayfield's "Fool For You," she engages in the sort of testifying that has nothing to do with Congressional subcommittee hearings.

"I've always loved complicated music," Toomey asserts. "I came to the punk-rock community because of its activism, but I never listened to Black Flag. I just wasn't interested. I cared more about Cole Porter and Burt Bacharach, and I think that's come out more with age. Also, when you get older, you stop feeling like a cheater, and that allows you to take more chances. It was interesting being in the studio for this record and realizing, 'Oh, OK, I'm good at this, this is something I can actually do.'"

Now that *Antidote* is ready to go, Toomey's preparing to mix business with business, scheduling a six-week U.S. tour during which she'll both play gigs and make university speaking engagements on the Future of Music Coalition's behalf. "It's going to be crazy," she admits, "but I've always had these two heads—music and politics—and being able to combine them is really exciting." **MM**

# LOVE ME TINDER

STORY: MAYA SINGER • PHOTO: BOB GREEN

## Gloomy moods yield to soulful swoons as *Tindersticks* enter their second decade as scribes in the court of romance.

There's a turning point midway through "Chilitetime," the last track on *Tindersticks' Can Our Love...*, when frontman Stuart Staples's velvet baritone begins to burst in despair: "It's that fear again/ It's coming like a train/ Every time I believe it starts bearing down," he sings, the words jamming closer and closer together as Dickon Hinchliffe's atonal violin claws against him. "There's nothing to tell that I don't know/ The hurt and the fear of loving/ And I don't know what to say/ You took it all away."

Nottingham, England's *Tindersticks* spend the best part of *Can Our Love...* (Mantra-Beggars Banquet) trying to climb out of a morass of messy emotions, cutting their trademark noirish opulence off at the knees and proffering a more uplifting version of love in the shape of evanescent blue-eyed soul. But "Chilitetime" proves that, in *Tindersticks'* world, love still casts long shadows.

It is a world captured vividly on their first three albums: Emotionally fraught and stylish epics, *Tindersticks*, *Tindersticks (II)* and 1997's *Curtains* wrenched heartache from seething chamber punk and Latin rhythms, from swelling, baroque ballads, from atmospheric, felicitously unsettled post-rock numbers, and more.

Cumulatively, the band's musical promiscuity and obsession with, as Staples puts it, "the hurt and pain of loving," asserted that human feeling is too rich and complex to be rendered in just one sound, the scope of our moods—even those generically lumped under the rubric of sadness—illimitable. *Tindersticks* plumbed heartache's depths, and couldn't sound bottom.

But as Staples, Hinchliffe and band co-founder and keyboardist Dave Boulter all attest, speaking between sets at the recent four-night stand at Brussels' Botanique celebrating *Tindersticks'* first decade together, they had to come up for air eventually.

"After *Curtains*, we all felt we'd gone as far as we could with that...decadence," Hinchliffe says, explaining why their fourth album, 1999's *Simple Pleasures*, emerged as a terse, Hammond-drenched collection of R&B tunes, almost sprightly in mood and shockingly straight-ahead. "We wanted to make a completely different kind of record.

In retrospect, maybe we went too far—backlash, you know," he continues, a smile curling around the edges of his lips.

"On the other hand," offers Boulter, summing up the lean sound of *Can Our Love...* as a compromise between the freewheeling *Tindersticks* of old and the chastened musicians of today, "it did remind us that we liked being a band that had different kinds of songs on our albums, and used lots of different instruments. We just didn't need to use every one on every song."

But if Hinchliffe sees *Can Our Love...* as the backlash against the backlash, the album echoing the textural shifts of the earlier records, and Boulter calls it an educational experience, Staples considers *Can Our Love...* a natural continuation of its predecessor, yet more lyrically direct and, in terms of song structure, another step away from, in his phrase, "obvious trajectories."

"For such a long time I was writing songs about the sensation of longing for something that couldn't be grasped. But I think songs like 'Can Our Love...' express that musically, instead—the music keeps pushing toward something, but it's elusive. I mean, that's the wonderful thing about music, isn't it—that it's out there," Staples continues, gesturing into the air, "and passes into you and out again. It's a feeling, just by itself."

And maybe it's the feeling, in "Chilitetime," that leads Staples, Hinchliffe and Boulter all to cite the track as a personal favorite. It also happens to be true that, more than any other song on *Can Our Love...*, "Chilitetime" bolsters each of their arguments about what the album means for *Tindersticks*. But it's preferable, somehow, to believe instead that there, right at the album's finish, with hope resuming its never-ending pas de deux with crushing self-awareness, *Tindersticks* have at last made peace with their own contradictions. **NHH**



# INSIDE THE ACTORS' STUDIO

Stars of stage and screen, major-label recording artists, farting champions—  
is there any medium left for Tenacious D to conquer?

STORY TOM MALLON • PHOTOS SEAN MURPHY

**T**wo minutes into our interview, Jack Black is irate and his pants are around his knees. Two minutes and he's already taken his ass out and is waddling angrily around one of the most expensive hotels in New York.

"My ass is throbbing," he howls. It's a formidable sight: His left cheek has been marked with five even, livid welts; the man looks like he's been caned.

"That's Shaq O'Neal's hand-fucking-print. It was all in a fun mood—who's got a camera? What the fuck?"

Black and his partner in Tenacious D, Kyle Gass, are fresh from MTV Studios, where ass antics with Shaquille O'Neal went drastically wrong. Black broke out the gluteus; Shaq went for it.

"I never said, 'Slap my ass as hard as you can, Shaq,'" he says. "I could sue. Good thing he wasn't wearing a ring."

"He was wearing a ring," his publicist says. "His NBA Championship ring."

"I should have called foul."

Finally, Black's angry ass is sheathed and his publicist makes to leave. "Have a good interview," she says.

"I won't," Black deadpans, fixing me with a preposterously raised eyebrow.

After spending a few minutes debating the merits of film vs. music (Black: "Actors are just fuckin' meat puppets"), Danzig's S&M tour bus and the special nature of the D's relationship (Black: "Are we packin' the fudge? The answer is yes"), it's time to dig into the past. Black's rise to power as Barry, the obnoxious record-clerk-turned-soul-crooner in *High Fidelity*, has been well documented, and it's best not to mention the trainwreck that was *Saving Silverman*, so let's skip the film talk—let's hear about the early days; let's hear about the suffering.

"[I lived] in a very, very bad part of town, the Miracle Mile district, very dangerous," Gass says in his best serious tone while Black giggles. "Don't try to go down there now, you'll probably get run over by a dog walker. I can't tell you how many parking tickets I got there."

Black stands up and heads for the bathroom with authority. "I'm gonna take a donkey crap," he announces. "When I come back, I'll have something to say about the early days."

The history of the D is shrouded in mystery, a mystery as misty as the mythic shores they sing about in their bombastic folk-metal songs. Consult the song helpfully titled "History" and you'll get a rather unhelpful tale with lines like, "We ride with kings on mighty steeds across the Devil's plain/ We've walked with Jesus and his cross, he did not die in vain, no!" The official story is that Black and Gass met in the Actor's Gang, the Los Angeles theater troupe founded by Tim Robbins. After Black's lady kicked him to the curb, they started writing songs as consolation, and the D was born. (There's no official story today; Gass's version starts with a matter-of-fact, "We were gay.")

After gigging around L.A., they were discovered by David Cross, co-creator and star of the sketch-comedy freakout *Mr. Show*, who brought them to HBO. Their television alter egos were perfect parodies of every wannabe rock star you've ever known: Treating each open-mic gig like a sold-out night at Red Rocks, believing songs with titles like "Kielbasa" to be high art, opening their shows with intros like, "Attention: If you're ovulating, move away from the stage—this band is so potent, just sitting near them might get you pregnant." They only made three episodes, but those were enough to plant the seeds: After revamping the songs for the stage, they scored gigs with Beck, Tool and Pearl Jam and immediately began winning over their fans. Rumor has it that HBO began demanding creative control of all its shows, and, with its live show already

developing, the D skipped town.

"But we'd like to say thank you for everything," Gass offers. "There was no censorship. There was only one bit, I think it was like fucking a goat or something..."

"I don't remember," Black says, fresh from the can and conveniently forgetting our earlier topic of conversation. "Was there a goatfucking?"

Um, OK. Next question. I ask about fan favorites "Rocketsauce" and "Tribute," which contained swatches of the Beatles' "Blackbird" and Led Zeppelin's "Stairway To Heaven," respectively. The infringing parts are mysteriously absent from the record; were they shut down by the Zeppelin and Beatles machines?

"Rocketsauce" is not on the record," Black says curtly. He raises his nose. "Did some of my crap seep into here? The smell of it?"

"For sure on that," opines J.R., the D's friend and the actor who plays their long-suffering roadie/psycho fan/webmaster, Lee.

"Dude, is there matches?"

Gass ominously lifts his leg. Black looks panic-stricken. "Oh, no."

"I'm not going to, I'm not going to—" Gass gasps.

"If he farts, I have to blow weed," J.R. says.

Gass screws up his face—"Oh, shit... Dude..."—and lets fly with a long, bassy blast that actually registers on my tape recorder.

"Oh my God, that's foul," Black protests.

"Dude, get the weed going, for God's sake—" Gass says, mock struggling for air.

"Dude, I already caught wind of it," J.R. whines. Black jumps to his feet. "Come with me," he says. "We'll go get some matches. You don't wanna smell that."

This noxious pair isn't all that different from the mock-rock deities who have been delighting cult audiences everywhere with their distinctive aroma. Since their stint on TV ended, the D's live shows have become things of legend: Two short, pudgy guys with acoustic guitars filling a room with unbridled rock power, singing songs of demons, sasquatches, fucking (hard, soft, discreet, backdoor and backstage) and, mostly, pompous songs about how incomprehensibly talented they are. Their lyrics are so bad they're good (from "Explosivo": "We are fueled by Satan, yes, we're schooled by Satan/ Fueled by Satan/ Writin' those tasty riffs just as fast as we can/ Schooled by Satan!") and their send-ups of rock excess are so dead-on they actually become oddly charming (from "The Road": "The road is fuckin' hard, the road is fuckin' tough/ There's no question that it don't take no guff"). Their gigs are bootlegged on the Internet almost immediately after they leave the stage; they've never released an album, yet everyone in the crowd knows the words. So how do you make an album stand out when your fans already know all the songs?

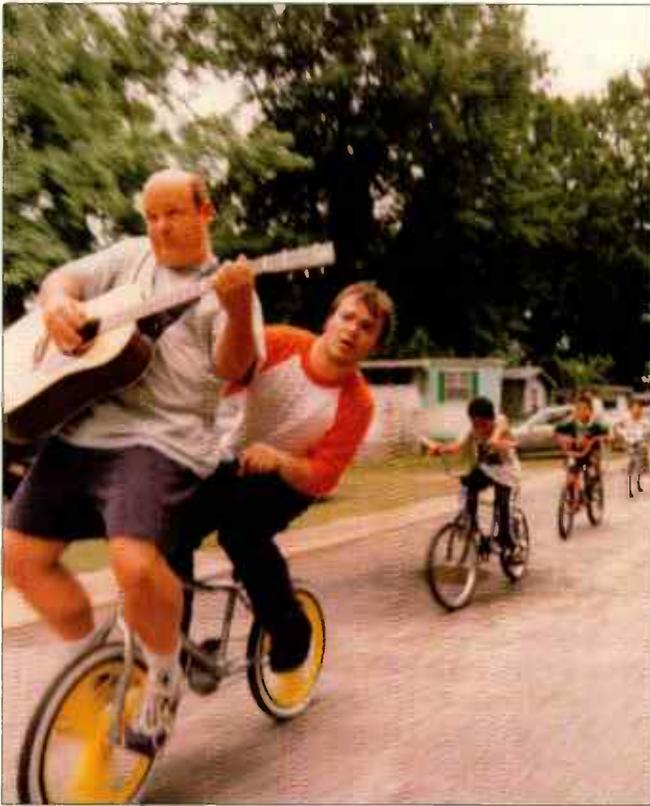
The answer: For their self-titled Epic debut, the D's gone electric, beefing up their sound with drums and guitar by superfan Dave Grohl and keys by Page McConnell of Phish. "We had to offer something that you couldn't get on Napster," Black says. "A fuckin' full band experience. And it's not just any band. I don't mean to toot our own horn, but it's kind of a fuckin' supergroup. Name a band—any band that comes into your head."

Metallica.

"Er, we don't have any of those guys."

Luckily, the songs work in a full-band setting. "The Road" is reinvented as a roadhouse shuffle; crowd favorite "Fuck Her Gently" gets a syrupy string section; McConnell's keys give the ménage-à-trois tale "Double Team" a funk makeover. But will their fans, like Dylan's, turn on them when they go electric?

"I'm glad you asked that question," Gass says, pointing out



that the live show will remain acoustic. "We've wrestled with it. Wrestled! Wait a minute, I saw them, and they didn't have a band, now I have the CD and they have a band..." Different medium! Don't expect a live band! But! Dave Grohl's drums will be set up at every show.

"I guess the real worry is for me, because [Jack's] voice won't have changed. It'll be like, 'Boooo! Is that it? Kage strummin' away? Where's the band?' And then I'll just blow farts and walk off, and there'll be a recorded track ready to go."

"I got a waft of some asparagus fart," Black notes.

"Oh my God," Gass says. "There's asparagus in the fart?"

"I don't know, I just caught some sewage. A waft of some sewage."

To combat the problem, Gass breaks out more weed. "What are you, smoking a J there?" Black asks. "Oh my God. A fuckin' fatty for the interview?" Gass takes a big hit and stammers, "No, dude, it's indigestion... Uh, I'm losing my appetite... The doctor prescribed it. I'm getting glaucoma, and my indigestion, and you remember the leg cancer, and the chemo..."

Gass exhales and makes a beeline for—surprise—the bathroom. As all pretense of an organized interview collapses, it's time to wrap it up with a deep, existential, what-does-it-all-mean kind of question.

"Good," Black says. "Hit me with a hard one."

Well, it's not really a hard one, it's more of a soft—

Black casts a suspicious glance at the bathroom door and it's all over. "Rage, are you taking a donkey crap in there?" **NMM**

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE D

If you're letting your children listen to Tenacious D, you're already a bad parent: The duo's debut is brimming with nefarious influences, from Dio's demon wings to Satan himself. With this song-by-song guide, at least you'll know what the little bastards are getting into.

### 1. KIELBASA



The D's signature tune and an ode to the powers of the johnson.

### 2. TRIBUTE



A demon is rocked by the impromptu Greatest Song In The World, which the D forgets immediately afterward.

### 3. WONDERBOY



The adventures of mythic heroes Wonderboy and Young Nastyman, who bear suspicious resemblance to modern-day heroes Jack and Kyle.

### 4. FUCK HER GENTLY



Love advice from Dr. Black helps you please your lady in the sack.

### 5. EXPLOSIVO



Ruminations on big-assed steeds, weed and Satan, and then Jack is possessed by an entity known as the Angel Crusher. Actually, we have no idea what this song is about, but neither does the D.

### 6. Dio



A plea to rock's dark lord to pass the torch of evil.

### 7. KYLE QUIT



Kyle's heated resignation and exultant return.

### 8. THE ROAD



In the tradition of "Wherever I May Roam," a tale of the trials and tribulations of the rock life.

### 9. LEE

A surprisingly inoffensive tribute to the D's psycho fan, webmaster and all-around lapdog.

### 10. FRIENDSHIP



The D sings the praises of their non-sexual man-love.

### 11. KARATE



Jack opens a rare can of whoop-ass on a double-crossing Kyle.

### 12. ROCK YOUR SOCKS



One of the D's most profound mottos is delivered to the people: "It doesn't matter if it is good; it only matters if it rocks!"

### 13. DOUBLE TEAM



A seductive tale of ménage-à-D love.

### 14. CITY HALL



The D's triumphant mini-rock opera, in which they lead a downtrodden people to revolution.

#### KEY:



Demons and assorted otherworldly beings



Jack makes the beast with two backs



Unconventional uses of bodily fluids



Jack unleashes Little Jack



Ass-play



The seductive powers of Sweet Lady Rock



Funny cigarettes



Antisocial ass-kickery



Lofty claims of immeasurable talent



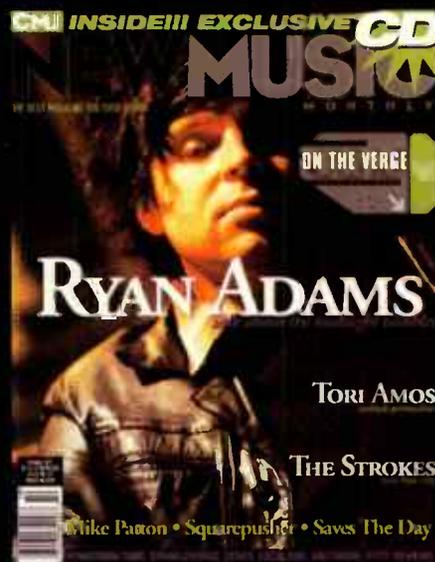
Short & curlies

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# PHOTO



BEN GIBBARD

**Death Cab For Cutie may have mastered the art of not selling out, but will *The Photo Album* allow this unassuming band to cash in?**

STORY: JASON VERLINDE • PHOTOS: ROBIN LAANANEN

**D**eath Cab For Cutie is taking a day off before hitting the road for five weeks. As Ben Gibbard and his bandmates do laundry, eat pizza and drink beer, the cadence of their conversation rises only when they begin to dread their decision to sell hooded sweatshirts at their merch table. (Fellow bands, take note: They take up too much space in the van.) Ben's place is surprisingly neat. It could be any music lover's pad, really, but you can't help but feel like an outsider, intruding on a band that desperately needs its downtime. While the group does its last-minute chores for its tour to promote *The Photo Album*, Barsuk Records owner Josh Rosenfeld frantically tries to get more copies of the damn thing pressed, as the first 20,000 copies have all been spoken for.

Death Cab For Cutie has that kind of fame where, among a small group of people, everyone knows who they are. Perhaps it was the critical acclaim of last year's 12,000-selling *Forbidden Love* EP, or maybe it was the ever-green tunes on *We Have The Facts And We're Voting Yes*, a moody album that 32,000 lonely people (according to Soundscan) found themselves curling up to. Or maybe it's the band's cult status in emo circles, the byproduct of Gibbard's lovesick lyrics and his band's indie roots. Regardless, *The Photo Album* will rewrite the band's history once again. Some elements are constant—the stark beauty of Gibbard's guitar as it plucks through single notes, the confessional songwriting and Christopher Walla's adornments, be they splashes of guitar or buzzing electronics or subtle, enveloping tape loops. *The Photo Album* frames it all better, however, making the whole package sound more coherent, louder and more consistent than it ever has before.

Death Cab For Cutie is at the end of a busy week, some of which I've witnessed. On Saturday, a pair of hometown shows at the Crocodile Cafe are lengthened when opening act the Prom breaks its piano early in its set. Death Cab takes the stage 40 minutes before schedule, plays a set twice as long as usual for the all-ages crowd, and then repeats the music marathon at the 21-and-over show a couple hours later. Even with the impromptu set extensions, the guys sound tireless, playing with more raw energy than they have in recent memory and replacing some of their shoegazer ballads with nostalgic covers

# OPPORTUNITY

("Here Comes The Rain Again" and "Thriller"). The next day, in Portland, Ore., they cover Björk's "All Is Full Of Love" as an encore.

Death Cab For Cutie started playing in late 1997 in Bellingham, Wash., a college town known as much for deadly pipeline explosions—including a 1999 accident that killed two children who were playing in the woods—as for its musical output, which mainly revolved around the garage-rock Estrus label before Death Cab came along. "There was never really like a scene; it was a group of friends—just like any transient college town," says Death Cab bassist Nicholas Harmer. "The scene in Bellingham is equal parts jam-funk bands and bar bands, but it's a cool place for people trying to get stuff started. A small town like Bellingham was really a great place for us, because it was really affordable to live there and it was super easy to practice in our house... It's a great place to be from."

By the time they graduated from college, Death Cab was nearly a full-time job for Harmer, Gibbard, Walla and former drummer Nathan Good. 1999's *Something About Airplanes* (Barsuk-Elsinor) was an impressive debut full of catchy, inventive indie-pop tunes that earned significant major-label interest—all refused—and pricked up ears throughout the Northwest. But the primitive 8-track recording on *Airplanes* didn't convey the lyrical craft of Gibbard's songwriting the way the band's live shows did. On record, "President Of What?" is a decent pop tune; live, it's a ramshackle, organ-driven anthem that sounds like the Zombies on speed.

Death Cab's 2000 follow-up, *We Have The Facts And We're Voting Yes*, did convey that live energy, with songs that were even better written. "405" and "No Joy In Mudville" are pure narratives, some of the best pop storytelling since the glory days of Jawbreaker and Silkworm. But the pacing on a few songs slowed down, and it suddenly became easier to pigeonhole Death Cab as "emo." Predictably, the band refutes this label.

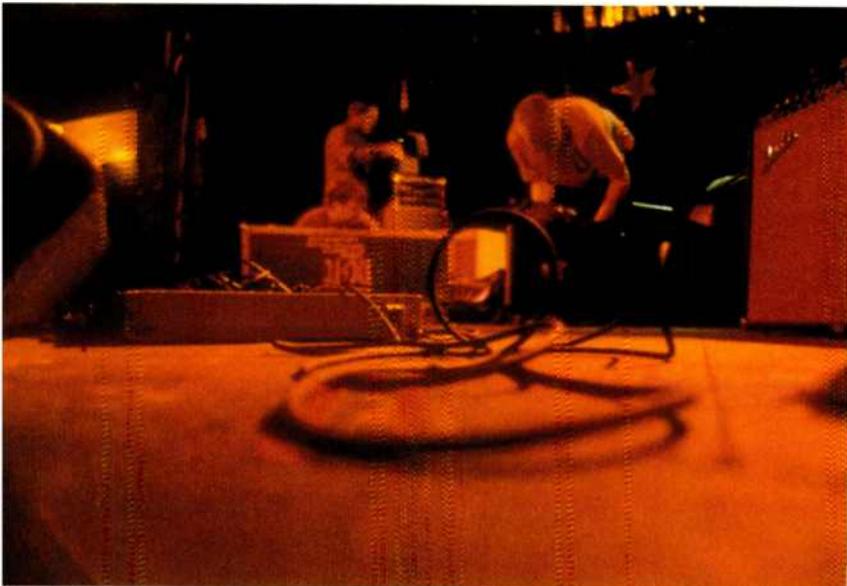
"I think that there are bands like ourselves and Pedro The Lion that are dealing with relatively emotional themes in their music. The word 'emo' is the first go-to term," Gibbard says. "But I don't see us as part of that."

After college, the group wisely moved to Seattle, a city in



NICK HARMER, CHRIS WALLA

**"I'm starting to see the records as almost like if you have kids... you love all of them. You can see pluses and minuses of each of them."**



NICK HARMER, MICHAEL SCHORR

desperate need of a new set of indie poster boys. In just a couple of years, Death Cab filled that role. They're young and clean-cut, they have their local side-projects (Walla has played with the Prom, in addition to releasing a CD as Martin Youth Auxiliary, while Gibbard has his own solo alter-ego as All-Time Quarterback), they make incredibly great music and they're still as approachable as they were three years ago.

"For me, the only way it's really changed a lot is that when the band initially started it was 'Ben had these songs, here, play them verbatim,'" Harmer says of the band's evolution. "As we've gone on, picked up [new drummer] Michael Schorr, and have been playing together longer and the trust between us musically grows more and more, it's definitely more collaborative. While we were recording this record, there seemed to be more discussion about the band, the directions that things could happen. Even if the ideas weren't implemented, we all sat around and talked about stuff that I thought was really cool."

The discussions proved productive. *The Photo Album* sounds sonically richer and more complex, with a firmer grasp on the intended mood. Gibbard's voice is still loud-and-clear, but Walla's solid production doesn't let it steal the show. Though he's been compared to Built To Spill's Doug Martsch, Gibbard's singing on the new album sounds more nuanced—vulnerable, a little desperate, but still rock-fueled. Schorr and Harmer strive for a rhythmic diversity on tunes like "Blacking Out The Friction" and "A Movie Script Ending." "I Was A Kaleidoscope" and "Why You'd Want To Live Here" pulse with nervous energy and dumb, infectious lyrics that sound ready for radio. At live shows, they've taken to playing with an awkward long pause in the middle of "Company Calls" before simultaneously jumping into the full-blown chorus—they still seem giddy that they're tight enough to pull it off, but it never fails.

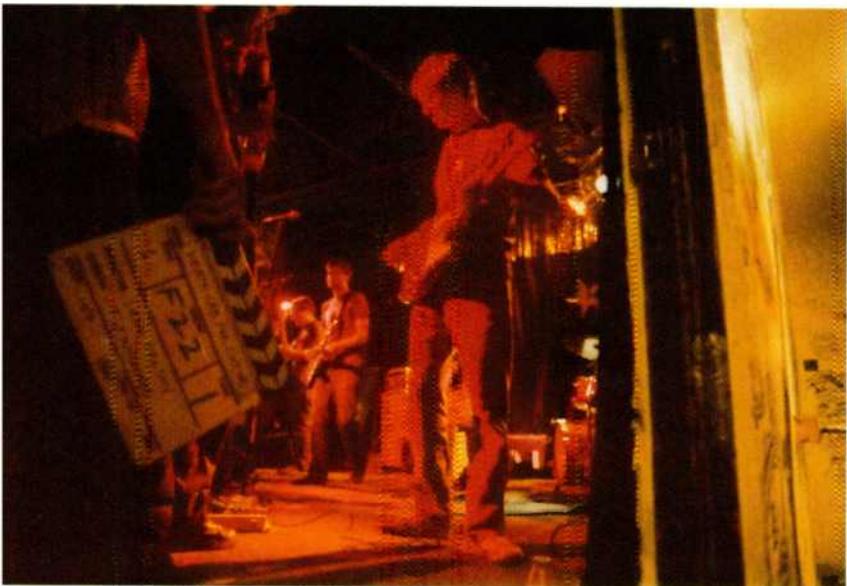
And Walla's production skills can't be underestimated. He's recorded every Death Cab project, but none have sounded quite so detailed. "[We recorded] at the new Hall Of Justice studio. It's the studio that used to be John and Stu's Place," Walla says, referring to the hallowed Seattle landmark once known as Reciprocal Studios, where Nirvana recorded *Bleach*, Green River recorded *Dry As A Bone*, and Screaming Trees did *Buzz Factory*.

"We recorded at the birthplace of grunge!" Harmer says excitedly.

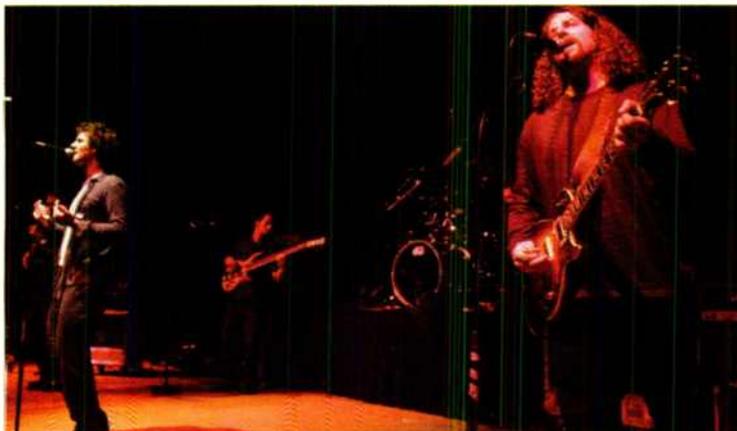
"Every record, there have been improvements to the sound quality and hopefully to the songwriting and arranging, but at the same time I like all the records a whole bunch," Gibbard says, bringing the conversation back down to earth. "I'm starting to see the records as almost like if you have kids... you love all of them. You can see pluses and minuses of each of them."

"That one's ugly, but he's really smart," Walla asserts.

"And this one is a little slow," Gibbard adds, "but boy could he rock." **NMM**



# TOP THREE FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR "THE AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS® PRESENTS THE COCA-COLA NEW MUSIC AWARD"



Barry Privett, Jordan Medas and Terry Clark of CARBON LEAF by David Bergeland/WireImage.com



Shelly Bhushan of LIVE HONEY by David Bergeland/WireImage.com



Douglas Lipford and Neil McIntyre of YO! FLACO by David Bergeland/WireImage.com



The most serious battle of the bands is on! After two weeks of playing on a cross country college tour, New York City's **LIVE HONEY**, Denver, Colorado's **YO, FLACO!** and Richmond, Virginia's **CARBON LEAF** were chosen as the three Finalists for "The American Music Awards® Presents The Coca-Cola New Music Award" on October 28th at Texas A&M's Reed Arena. The bands are now headed for the final play-of event in Los Angeles on January 7, 2002 at the El Rey Theater where a judging panel will select the winner of the first ever Coca-Cola New Music Award. The winning band will perform live on the ABC-TV telecast of the 29th Annual American Music Awards, January 9, 2002, 8 p.m. ET/PT.

"Narrowing down the competition to three bands from such an extraordinarily diverse group of artists was a difficult task," said Bobby Haber, CEO, CMJ Network. "This exciting opportunity extended to these Finalists will take them from unknown to the national spotlight."

For audio samples and more about the bands, check out [www.newmusicaward.com](http://www.newmusicaward.com)

# NEXT STOP,



World Radio History

# WONDERLAND

Dodging tragedies and crossing oceans, the **Charlatans** are finally poised to shake off the "UK" tag and vie to become the World's Greatest Rock Band.

STORY: JASON COHEN • PHOTOS: BOB GREEN



MARK COLLINS, JON BROOKES, TIM BURGESS, TONY ROGERS, MARTIN BLUNT

november/december 2001 55



CD ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

CLINT LOWERY, JOHN CONNOLLY, LAJON WITHERSPOON, MORGAN ROSE, VINNIE HORNBY

# THIRD TIME'S THE HARM

**Sevendust went gold twice and came home broke. Now, Atlanta's hard-workin' hopefuls bound into an obstacle course armed with *Animosity* and a mission to kill.**

STORY: JASON BRACELIN • PHOTOS: MICHAEL SCHREIBER

**T**his is what happens when you take off too long," announces Sevendust drummer Morgan Rose as he offers up his welt-speckled palms for inspection at Franco's, a pseudo-swanky Italian eatery on the outskirts of Atlanta. "I've never had a blister on my hand in my life. I've played two shows, and I can't even hold my pecker."

Rose mentioning his genitalia at the dinner table is only fitting in this part of town. Across the street is Erections, a porn megastore that's a veritable Wal-Mart for woodies, while dodgy gentlemen's clubs dot the street. Indeed, the entire strip is dedicated to removing the slack from the trousers of horny Atlantans.

"You got all the strip clubs right here," grins singer Lajon Witherspoon. "I love this part of town. You got video booths over there."

Any talk of wagging dollars at G-stringed Georgia peaches is soon dashed though, when Rose brings up his disapproving wife, Coal Chamber bassist Rayna Foss, who's dropped him off for lunch in the family sedan.

"She'd have my balls on a plate," Rose announces, mentally dumping ice down his drawers in a psychic aping of De Niro in *Raging Bull*.

But there's another, more practical reason why it might not be wise for these dyed-in-the-wool Southern boys to be stuffing their disposable income into the panties of strangers.

"We definitely don't have any money. Let's get that right out front," Rose sighs.

Now, a rocker pleading poverty is normally about as shocking as a member of Poison complaining about a burning sensation when using the john, but Sevendust is a band that's sold over a million records, one that's helped spark the nü-metal boom currently lining the pockets of every other tattooed (un)love(d) boy with a pants size larger than his IQ, one that has toured so much in so little time with the likes of such hard-hitting heavyweights as Metallica, Creed and Slipknot that their drummer somehow thinks their current eight-month hiatus from truck stops and tollbooths is prolonged—not to mention the source of unsightly blisters.

And yet after spending 39 of the 43 months following the release of their debut on the road, the bandmembers returned home only to find themselves dead broke, eyeball-to-eyeball with bankruptcy, and close to the point of having to seek out career-damning day jobs.

"Think about that," Witherspoon says. "Think about being on the road and doing all the things you've done as a musician, then getting off the road after being away from your fucking home and family for that long and almost having to work jobs. It's like, 'What are we doing? Who do we trust?' We love each

other and we love the music, but god dang, who's looking out for us after we go out on the road for a year, kick everybody's ass, then come back and you gotta fucking get a job? What the fuck is that?"

It's a wake-up call, one that the band has most certainly heeded. Since last fall, Sevendust has parted ways with former manager and Twisted Sister member J.J. French and recorded their strongest effort yet in their vigorous, accessible third record *Animosity*—which could very well enable the bandmembers to turn the corner on their career and trade their Toyotas for Bentleys, or, on the flipside, blow up in their faces. Most importantly, they've spared themselves the indignity of having to fill out applications at Jiffy Lube.

It's a good thing too, because Witherspoon could never pass the company urine test. Chilling after lunch in the band's rehearsal room, which is so stuffed with gear the roadies can't even open the door at first, Lajon lights up a bowl. This is after passing around a joint minutes earlier outside the cramped room, which is an orgy of cables and crates, the kind of rock detritus that mounts from being in a band better acquainted with tour bus bunks than their own beds.

It's this very AAA-abetted lifestyle that has both made and nearly decimated Sevendust. After releasing their combustible self-titled debut in 1997, which mated the powerful, Stevie Wonder-weened timbre of Witherspoon with guitars as crunchy as a glass sandwich (as played by Clint Lowery and John Connolly), the band immediately hit the road and maintained a grueling work schedule that saw them play two shows a day in some instances, and perform for 16 straight nights at a clip. The touring paid off; *Sevendust* slowly and steadily went gold. To capitalize on its momentum, the band quickly returned to the studio with virtually no time off to lay down its sophomore effort, the longingly titled *Home*, a rushed album that suffered from the band's impetuosity, yet still netted another gold record.

"We were more concerned with staying in the public eye than writing the best record we could write," Rose says. "We were just starting to make a name for ourselves when it was time to stop touring, so we were like, 'Let's hurry up and get back out there.' So we wrote 11 songs and those 11 songs went on the record. We got lucky that we didn't get busted on that. We were still pretty much road-worn and beat, and really didn't have enough drive to sit there and think over and over about what we were doing. We were just kind of like, 'Write something down, boom, OK, that's good.' We got a few really good songs out of it, and there's some songs on there that'll never get played again. Never."

# VANCOUVER, British Columbia



WRECK BEACH

STORY: MICHAEL WHITE • PHOTOS: UNA KNOX

**V**ancouverites love to emphasize their remove from the rest of Canada. Secluded by the Coast, Columbia and Rocky mountains, we're free to ignore—and be ignored by—the culturally imperialistic East (read: Toronto).

That means that musically, Vancouver maintains a stronger connection to its nearest American neighbors: Washington, Oregon and Northern California. We share the American Northwest's sense of loneliness, using our isolation to go about experimenting and improving without the self-conscious glare of the world spotlight. Sure, that meant that we spent the first half of the '90s as Seattle's self-pitying bridesmaid—and it's partly why Vancouver hasn't spawned any superstar acts in a long time. But arguably, Vancouver is so damned pleasant, musicians don't feel the urgency to get out.

Temperate and green, Vancouver consistently rates as one of the most livable cities in the world. The poor and funky live in the southeast, favoring the multi-ethnic Commercial Drive neighborhood; that's mainly because rents in the downtown West End are ridiculous. It's bad enough that formerly vital rock and music-shopping spots downtown are in a bit of a crisis; local alternative weekly *The Georgia Straight* called the situation out on their cover this past June, also citing archaic licensing laws.

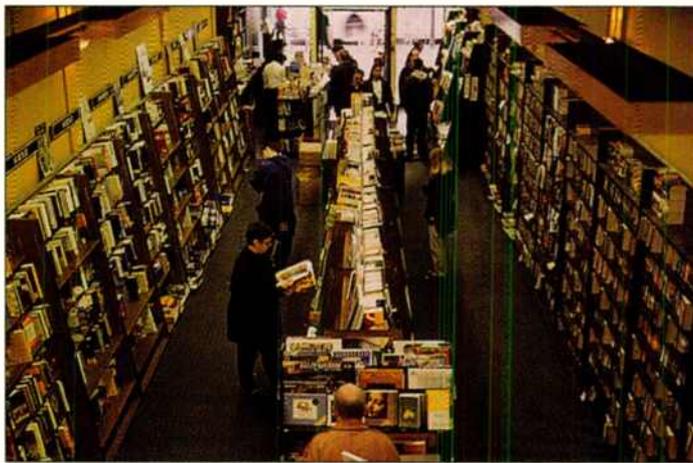
Rumored to be next on the chopping block, but hanging in there anyway, **The Starfish Room** (1055 Homer St., 682-4171) is a tour stop for many international indie acts (everyone from Of Montreal to the Strokes play there). **The Pic** (620 West Pender St., 682-3221) is the pick of Vancouver's substantial punk and glam-rock scenes (the Black Halos, the Nasty On), while the immaculate

**Richard's On Richards** (1036 Richards St., 687-6794) brings in bigger names (it's a second home to Neko Case, who attended art school in Vancouver; the first leg of *Moby's Play* tour stopped here). Best of all is the **Commodore Ballroom** (868 Granville St., 739-4550), a fully restored, 1000-capacity '30s venue where you can sit and enjoy a meal while taking in Stereolab or Elliott Smith.

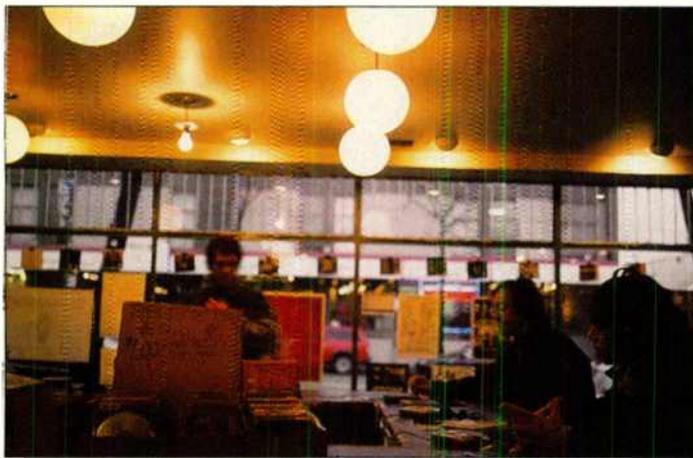
A few doors down from the Commodore is evidence of Vancouver's altogether healthier dance scene. Long after the live music venues and licensed dance palaces have declared last call at 2 a.m., **The World** (824 Granville St., unlisted) is just getting going. The mix of over-eager suburbanites and half-clothed gay men is a matter of taste, but they keep the house tracks pumping until sunup.



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(NW corner of West Georgia and Howe, across from Hotel Vancouver)  
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CHEAP HIGH CULTURE: Pay-What-You-Can Thursday evenings (5-9 pm) at **The Vancouver Art Gallery** (750 Hornby St., 682-4719)

PLACE TO GET NAKED IN PUBLIC WITHOUT FEAR OF PROSECUTION: **Wreck Beach** (endowment lands behind UBC campus)

All phone numbers are in the 604 area code.

## OUT WITH THE IN CROWD

That's pronounced "oot."



THE SUGAR REFINERY

Carl Newman of **THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS** and **ZUMPANO**

**The Blinding Light!!** cinema and café (36 Powell St., 878-3366) offers programming "as underground as you can get. A few times a month, on BYO8 night, they let people show their own Super 8 movies. This place is such a great idea that I'm surprised it's still around after three years. At **Szechuan Chongqing** (2808 Commercial Drive, 254-7434), order the Dai Ching bean curd, deluxe bean sprout chow mein, dry hot green beans (Szechuan style), General Tso's chicken (optional) and some rice. All will be made clear to you. Heed my words."

Terry Miles of **ASHLEY PARK**

"If you know where to look, the West Side is home to some splendid—and certainly affordable—dining and shopping experiences." **The Excellent Eatery** (3431 West Broadway, 738-5298) offers "Japanese/hippie fusion cuisine; pictures of Vancouver's finest artists, musicians and just about anyone good-looking who eats there, cover the walls. Two doors down we have **Carson Books & Records** (3425 West Broadway, 739-4041). I recently picked up a used copy of Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* for a very reasonable price, along with a few Byrds LPs. Good times."

Hamish Thomson (a.k.a. **THE HERMIT**)

"Two of my favorite places to go are the **H.R. MacMillan Planetarium** (1100 Chestnut St, 738-7827), the best spot to recline and watch the galaxy go by, and **Deep Cove Park** (at the end of Dollarton Hwy. in North Vancouver), the perfect place to float around in a row boat."

**BILL BAKER**, co-owner of Mint Records

Catch a double bill at the '50s-era art deco **Ridge Theatre** (3131 Arbutus St., 738-6311). "My favorite place in town to see a film, hands-down. **Tio Pepe's** (1134 Commercial Dr., 254-8999), hidden on hippie-dippy Commercial Drive, is an amazing restaurant that serves up traditional Yucatecan food and the best salsa the city has to offer."

Billy Hopeless and Rich Jones of **THE BLACK HALOS**

Rich: "When friends' bands come through town, we take them to the gay karaoke bar at **The Dufferin Hotel** (900 Seymour St., 683-4251). Karaoke every night and a disco on the other side of the bar. We've had some really awesome karaoke nights there with Pansy Division and the Murder City Devils and the Smugglers." Billy: "I work in a store called **Cheap Thrills** (852 Granville St., 682-7250), the only place you can find a Johnny Thunders or Dead Boys T-shirt in Vancouver, and at the same time pick up a giant Tiki, straight from Hawaii. I still walk around going, 'Where did you find the Mogwai? This is the perfect gift!'"

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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

# SEVENDUST

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

HEY MERCEDES

JENNY TOOMEY

PINBACK

November/December 2001 • Issue 98

12. JENNY TOOMEY "Patsy Cline" *Antidote* (Misra)  
The former Tsunami singer/songwriter/guitarist finally ventures out on her own with a double album of beautifully understated indie pop. (See Feature, p. 42.)
13. JASON MORPHEW "You Pay For The Atmosphere" *Not For The Faint Of Heart!* (Ba Da Bing!)  
An Arkansas native who now picks and strums in L.A., Morphew's a more lively stylistic cousin to Ron Sexsmith, full of wry commentaries. (See Review, p. 83.)
14. PINBACK "Concrete Seconds" *Blue Screen Life* (Ace Fu)  
Already prominent members of the San Diego rock community, Rob Crow (Heavy Vegetable, Thingy) and Armistead Burwell "Zach" Smith IV (3 Mile Pilot) play a more meditative, soothing brand of songs as Pinback. (See Best New Music, p. 69.)
15. AMERICAN ANALOG SET "Aaron & Maria" *Know By Heart* (Tiger Style)  
Breathy lo-fi indie pop with more warmth and textures than a book of carpet samples. (See Review, p. 70.)
16. VENDETTA RED "Shatterday" *White Knuckled Substance* (Loveless)  
Tightly wound Seattle emo-punk that's blistering enough to knock that star tattoo right off your arm.
17. CHROME YELLOW "Right Now" *Itswatsnext* (Larger Than Life)  
Southern-fried groove-rock bitten by the sampling and scratching bug. Clearly a product of the central Florida heat.

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World Radio History

1. SEVENDUST "Praise" *Animosity* (TVT)

With a brutal metal esthetic and an ear for melody, this Atlanta quintet will leave you in a heap on the ground, bruised, broken and humming along. (See Cover Story, p. 58.)

2. HEY MERCEDES "Every Turn" *Everynight Fire Works* (Vagrant)

On their full-length debut, this Chicago foursome delivers all the angular, emo-rock goodness you'd expect from a band produced by Burning Airlines' J. Robbins and featuring three-quarters of Braid. (See On The Verge, p. 31.)

3. DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE "I Was A Kaleidoscope" *The Photo Album* (Barsuk)

Northwestern quartet that pitches beautifully between gentle sentiments and indie-pop bounce. (See Feature, p. 50.)

4. MONEY MARK "Information Contraband" *Change Is Coming* (Emperor Norton)

Experimental dub groove-robber and Beastie Boys keyboardist Mark returns with his hero status in the indie underground intact. (See Quick Fix, p. 19.)

5. KINGS OF CONVENIENCE "Weight Of My Words (Four Tet Remix)" *Versus* (Astralwerks)

Tender Norwegian soft-poppers Kings Of Convenience undergo the Four Tet treatment, and get their groove on in the process.

6. FOUR TET "No More Mosquitos" *Pause* (Domino)

Whether making perplexing post-rock in Fridge or trippy electronic racket as Four Tet, it's safe to say Kieran Hebden is one curious dude. (See Best New Music, p. 67.)

7. DAMIAN "JR. GONG" MARLEY "It Was Written (with Stephen Marley and Capleton)" *Halfway Tree* (Ghetto Youth-Motown)

The youngest Marley offspring welds his reggae heritage into contemporary hip-hop and dancehall frameworks.

8. YESTERDAYS NEW QUINTET "Keeper Of My Soul" *Angles Without Edges* (Stones Throw)

Visionary hip-hop mad scientist Madlib plays every instrument in the "quintet" represented on this cut 'n' paste masterpiece. (See Review p. 91.)

9. BUTTERFLY JONES "Anywhere But Now" *Napalm Springs* (Vanguard)

Crisp 'n' catchy power pop by two-thirds of Dada (the hooky '90s alt-rock band, not the early 20th century art movement).

10. RAUL MALO "Every Little Thing About You" *Today* (OmTown-Higher Octave)

The frontman for acclaimed country assemblage the Mavericks digs up his Cuban roots for a romp hotter than a café con leche.

11. SAM PHILLIPS "Taking Pictures" *Fan Dance* (Nonesuch)

Super-sincere singer/songwriter Sam is especially sparse and stripped-down.

TDK



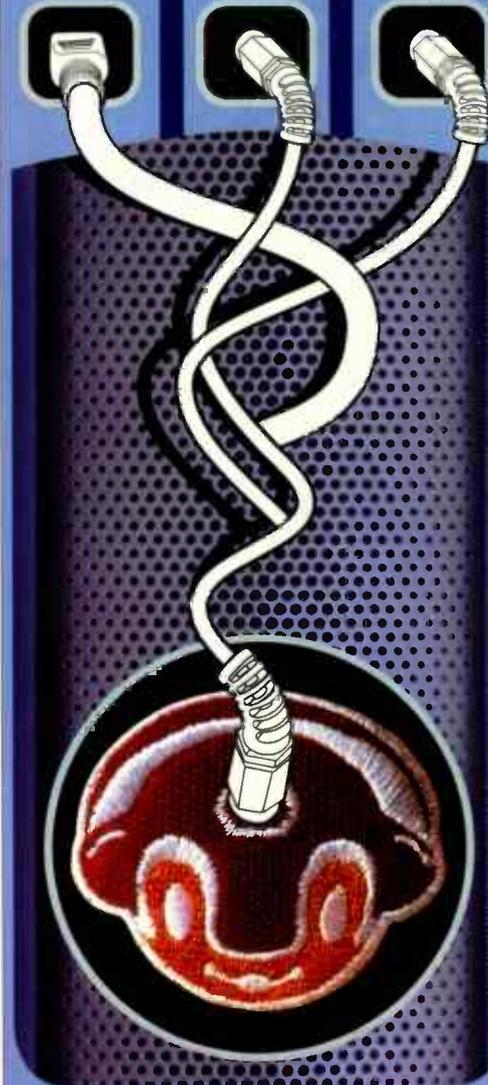
veloCD



MOJO



tremor



love  
connection

www.tdk.com

## RYAN ADAMS

Gold

Lost Highway



**H**is momentum unbroken by incessant critical hype, former Whiskeytown frontman Ryan Adams's sophomore solo outing is actually his strongest work to date. Bidding adieu to the Big Apple with a pair of pop gems boasting radio-ready choruses that belie their captivating candor ("New York, New York," "Somehow, Someday"), *Gold* finds the North Carolina native heading west, relocating to L.A. ("Goodnight, Hollywood Blvd." elicits favorable comparisons to "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road") without morphing into the vapid Scientologist his affiliations with Winona, Alanis and Counting Crows' Adam Duritz (the latter makes a cameo here) seemed to presage. From the unabashed but fleeting joy of "Firecracker," to the frank, touching "Harder Now That It's Over," *Gold* covers a wider spectrum, emotionally and musically, than did the dour *Heartbreaker*, sabotaging any convenient alt-country tags in the process. "Touch, Feel & Lose" is a convincing foray into Muscle Shoals-style soul, "Tina Toledo's Street Walkin' Blues" would slot perfectly between Lynyrd Skynyrd and Molly Hatchet on those as-seen-on-TV Southern Rock comps, and "Sylvia Plath" turns out to be a romantic fantasy instead of the expected razor-on-the-wrist confessional. Despite a running time of 70 minutes, there's nary a weak number among these 16 tracks. Polish up the Blurb-o-mat, boys and girls—this time the cocky little son of a bitch earns every shining accolade. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY

Link

[www.ryan-adams.com](http://www.ryan-adams.com)

File Under

Worth its weight in...

R.I.Y.L.

Bob Dylan, Neil Young, the Band

## FOUR TET ★

Pause

Domino

**K**ieran Hebden, the 23-year-old one-man band who overdubs (and dubs over) a load of instruments and samples into Four Tet records, is in pursuit of a unique sonic ideal only a diverse minority is completely convinced exists. Also a member of Fridge, a trio of English instrumentalists whose brew of jazzy, electronic rock is a haven from the third-gen Radiohead clones currently holding U.K. guitar music hostage, he's spent four years establishing musical parameters of enormous breadth. With Four Tet, the corner of the universe Hebden's interest revolves around is a nebula of amorphous ambient dub jazz. Thus *Pause*, Four Tet's heavenly sophomore effort and U.S. debut, is 43 minutes of floating melodic exploration, stacked with the simple pleasures of melody and the difficult epiphanies of rhythm. Acoustic guitars and keyboards pluck out ephemeral lines, trap kits mix with percolating electro cross-rhythms, the mixing board smoothes over the whole wordless contraption and the world turns to a better place. Or so the hope goes. If such blowhard descriptions frighten you, don't let them. The ideal that Hebden's pursuing is full of warm abstract soul grooves adventurous listeners could have heard inside, say, a Sea & Cake song or some left-field hip-hop, or a *Kid A* B-side. It is a sign of musical life moving forward—don't let it get away unnoticed. >>>PIOTR ORLOV



Link

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

File Under

The sound of electro-acoustic peace

R.I.Y.L.

Brian Eno, Tortoise, Aphex Twin, Madlib

## FREESTYLE FELLOWSHIP

### Temptations

Nu Gruv-Ground Control



Underground Cali rap has always been about lyrics. Not one-upping, materialistic rhymes or foot-in-the-grave doomsday rants, but book smarts mixed with street sensibility and next-level shiznit, blending poetry, prophecy, pop-culture and common prose. Fellowship member Aceyalone made it clear that his crew was at the top of the word pyramid when he rocked NYC's Knitting Factory last spring, barking that he could "outlast every one of you" at a crowd of die-hard backpackers, still slinging syllables at the slack-jawed audience three hours in. Freestyle Fellowship surely deserve awe, having pioneered the lyrically obsessed underground style now scanning record sales for groups like Jurassic 5 and Dilated Peoples, and setting the standard for all serious West Coast MCs. *Temptations*, their first full-length in seven years, re-ignites their intense passion and aggressively cultivated skills. The four MCs' blatant disregard for commercial rap culture is both funny and courageous, best spotlighted on "No Hooks No Chorus." Acey, Mikah-9, Jupiter and P.E.A.C.E. continually change their deliveries and flows, never boring, always entertaining. The beats (courtesy of P.E.A.C.E. and Madkap's Josef Leimberg) are funky and head-knockin', but their true purpose is to serve as the background for the mic fiends. The underground soul controllers are fighting the good fight, bringing an old-school feel to a bigger audience and sonic salvation to a grammatically challenged rap game. >>>JESSICA KOSLOW

Link

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

File Under

Brainfood served over  
pipin' hot beats

R.I.Y.L.

Cali Agents, Dilated Peoples,  
Jurassic 5

## GREEN VELVET

### Whatever

Relief

Curtis Jones knows that something's wrong in the raver universe, and he's ready to tell you about it. Or at least the voices inside his head are, and as Green Velvet, Jones is guided by them. *Whatever*, GV's second consecutive techno-rap masterpiece, follows the idea set up by his groundbreaking "Flash" single, presenting an op-ed-style description of the fucked-up shit going on in the grimy corners of clubbing, soundtracked by an acidic, minimalist pulse that will free the asses of listeners long before they realize their minds are also being addressed. And, most of the time, critiqued. Each of pop culture's thoughtful champions—from the Beatles to De La Soul—has found a need to re-evaluate the state of their niche movements, and Jones, who as Cajmere and the alien-sounding Green Velvet has created some of the hardest and brainiest techno and house music of the past six years, seems to have grown as tired of hollow hedonism as the environment that created it. So everything from the drugs club kids use ("La La Land," "Dank") and the self-created alienation they feel ("Stranj"), to the force-fed culture that sent them running hither ("GAT (The Great American Tragedy)") is distilled and deconstructed, amidst slamming, funky beats that never forget this is underground dance music first. It's the rave generation's own *Let It Bleed*. >>>PIOTR ORLOV



Link

[www.green-velvet.com](http://www.green-velvet.com)

File Under

The post-rave CNN

R.I.Y.L.

Chemical Brothers, LFO, Cajmere



## THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY

A New Morning, Changing Weather

Burning Heart-Epithaph



**Y**ou gotta have a killer "Yeah!" to front a rock 'n' roll band. (International) Noise Conspiracy mouthpiece Dennis Lyxzén's "Yeah!" sounds like "Day!"—or even "Dead!"—as though it's hissing out of a cobra. He qualifies. (I)NC's routine—manipulating a familiar, feel-good rock vocabulary to advance anti-capitalism ideals—is way more fun than it looks on paper, which means they're halfway there. *A New Morning, Changing Weather* brings more swinging sonic conceits to the revolution than its predecessor, *Survival Sickness*, but is not necessarily a better record. Society's essential building blocks (globalization, Marxism, consumer culture and their ilk) are mashed up like soggy cereal; the chorus of "Up For Sale" is simply "Everything that we know is up for sale." But the young Swedish quintet is too bright to believe they're anything but planks to greater discourse. In the meantime, their music shimmies like a shit-faced Mod in a too-tight cardigan. Although Sara Almgren's organ is less vociferous this time, guitar and bass grease "A Northwest Passage" and "Breakout 2001" into overdrive. The latter thrives on a clanging, made-to-pogo riff, offset by dissonant keyboard peals. Few bands bring as much hip-bucking sex to the political landscape, even in a head-turning, bizarre context like "Capitalism Stole My Virginity." >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

Link

[www.thefunkateers.com/tinc](http://www.thefunkateers.com/tinc)

File Under

Energetic, unpretentious

Swedish protest rock

R.I.Y.L.

The Who, Refused, the Clash

## PINBACK

Blue Screen Life

Ace Fu

**H**alfway through its second album, San Diego desktop-pop duo Pinback reclines into the most realized five minutes of its career with "Penelope," an exquisite yo-yo of a song that Rob Crow (who used to front cult faves Heavy Vegetable) and Armistead Burwell Smith IV (who plays bass in desert rockers Three Mile Pilot) recorded at home on a personal computer. Bouncy, whimsical and catchy as an e-mail-transmitted virus, the tune is Pinback at its best, distilling a couple decades' worth of pop effluvia down to a D.I.Y. home brew. Of course, they didn't invent this kind of stuff, but what lifts these songs above similarly minded domestic ditties by lesser-at-home esthetes is the breezy finesse with which Crow and Smith trace the cozy contours of small-time post-collegiate experience. On "Concrete Seconds," Crow sings about waiting for the city bus with the relaxed joie de vivre of a guy whose bike seat's been missing since junior year. And it's not just a lyrical habit: The lazy loops and chopstick guitars that populate *Blue Screen Life* are never in a hurry to get anywhere, even when the crystal-clear melodies seem to demand more from their sonic surroundings. But such commitment isn't Pinback's course of study—better to just hit the snooze button and soak in the good vibrations. >>>MIKAEL WOOD



Link

[www.acefu.com/bands/pinback.shtml](http://www.acefu.com/bands/pinback.shtml)

File Under

Postcards from post-grads

R.I.Y.L.

Folk Implosion, Busy Signals,  
the ProTools manual

# REVIEWS



## AMERICAN ANALOG SET



**Know By Heart** Tiger Style

Towards the end of American Analog Set's fourth full-length release, *Know By Heart*, there's a song called "Aaron And Maria" about two overeducated trust-fund kids living the artistic life in Brooklyn Heights. If Aaron and Maria really existed, *Know By Heart* is precisely the kind of album they'd play on their balcony, sipping Bloody Marys and gazing at the Manhattan skyline in self-hating privilege. These dozen day-dreamy songs showcase the Texas quintet's penchant for quiet, experimental indie/Stereolab grooves that possess an almost cinematic aura.

Lovely lullabies are sung in hushed tones that could send you off to sleep, but never do ("Know By Heart"), and instrumentals that seem to drone endlessly at first sound urgent without either getting to the point or becoming annoying ("The Only One," "Like Foxes Through Fences"). With a fondness for tightly woven guitar sprawl, underpinned by minimalist drums, arching melodies and lyrics perpetually in search of a chorus, these songs don't travel in a straight line, choosing instead to meander and check out the sights along the way. Like the Sea And Cake's Sam Prekop, AmAnSet singer Andrew Kenny drifts in and out of phrases with the breeziness of an easy Sunday morning. No wonder he can convey the slacker artist's life so well. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK



## APHEX TWIN

**Drukqs** Warp

One man's genius is another man's crackpot, a truism embodied by electronics wunderkind Richard "Aphex Twin" James. A high-profile techno brat playing life-long creator (his first track was recorded at 14), Aphex has composed beats of many guises, occupying a musical space betwixt Spike Jones, Philip Glass and the Prodigy, simultaneously enamored of blinding arm-chair classicists and frightening the beejesus out of acid-happy dance tent occupants. Uninterested in the typical "career" path after scoring an underground semi-hit with '99's drill'n'bass-maddening

"Windowlicker," Aphex claimed retirement, though few are surprised that he's returned. Or has he? The two-CD, 30-track *Drukqs* seems at least as much a scraping of the Aphex vault as it does a new collection. Ranging from half-minute-long snippets to fully developed pieces and nearly uniform in its unintelligible titles ("Omgjyja-switch7," "Petiatil Cx Htdui"), *Drukqs* touches upon all of James's sonic pursuits. The ambient-techno compositions that made him an early rave hero, the gorgeous piano-based bits of melodic stillness, the musique concrète collisions with gabba-style head-thrashing beats, sound experiments with James-built machines—all are here to welcome you into the Aphex Twin universe. And make no mistake, it's plentiful enough to be its own world. One just wonders if the genius atmosphere isn't so thick that wayward travelers will only recognize the world of a crackpot. >>>PIOTR ORLOV

Link

[www.tigerstylerecords.com/amanset.html](http://www.tigerstylerecords.com/amanset.html)

File Under

Daydream achievers

R.I.Y.L.

The Sea And Cake,

Galaxie 500, Low

Link

[www.drukqs.net](http://www.drukqs.net)

File Under

The miseducation of

a techno genius

R.I.Y.L.

Squarepusher, Brian Eno,

Kid 606





**THE AVALANCHES**

**Since I Left You** Modular-Sire

Simply reading the credits on the inside cover of *Since I Left You*, the debut album by Australia's Avalanches, it's hard not to be impressed. Just compare the Everest-ian list of samples used with the relatively short paragraph of participating musicians—holy copyright clearances! Not since Biz Markie got the vapors sued out of him in the early '90s has anyone dared to create this immense a mosaic of pre-recorded snippets, and gotten away with it. On a musical architectural tip, this mountain of 600-plus samples is worthy of a Pritzker; every open nook and cranny is fitted with a lounge hook or spoken

Link

[www.geocities.com/avalancheshomebase](http://www.geocities.com/avalancheshomebase)

File Under

This is a journey into sound

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Shadow, Cornershop,

Dust Brothers productions

word bit perfect for it and more ear-candy grooves than most sonic diets can digest. But as can be the case with over-accumulations of detail, much of *Left You* is super-cutesy, perfect for bopping along to at parties, but not something you'd remember the next morning. This does not bode well for an album best categorized as pop. Luckily, the most fully realized "songs" here—the shimmering, supernova house of "Live At Dominoes," the Prince Paul collage of "Frontier Psychiatrist," the Fatboy-like flute-loops of "Close To You"—justify the amount of work Modular's lawyers must have spent clearing this set for release, and enabling the Avalanches' headphone nirvana to live in the commercial daylight. >>>PIOTR ORLOV



**SYD BARRETT**

**Wouldn't You Miss Me?** Capitol

Pink Floyd founder Syd Barrett's life is the stuff of rock legend—from the LSD trip he took on-camera at a TV variety show taping (not bothering to lip-synch the song the group was scheduled to perform), to secretly dropping in on his former bandmates in the studio during the recording of *Wish You Were Here* (he's the album's celebrated "crazy diamond"). Many know the stories, but what's gotten lost in the myth surrounding Syd Barrett these past 30 years is his music. *Wouldn't You Miss Me?* aims to restore the reputation of a distinctive singer, imaginative guitarist and often astonishing songwriter

Link

[www.hollywoodandvine.com/sydbarrett](http://www.hollywoodandvine.com/sydbarrett)

File Under

Missing in action

R.I.Y.L.

Early Pink Floyd, Julian Cope,

Robyn Hitchcock, pre-Ziggy Bowie

who is best known as one of the rock era's greatest acid casualties. Gleaned mostly from Barrett's two solo albums, *The Madcap Laughs* and *Barrett*, and the rarities disc, *Opel*, this first-ever anthology does a terrific job of focusing on the most illuminating moments from Barrett's strange, sporadic, short-lived solo career. Lysergic daydreams ("Terrapin"), baroque delicacies ("Golden Hair"), deranged nursery rhyme nocturnes ("Late Night") and cheeky humor ("Here I Go") abound. With a fragile disposition and a skewed sense of purpose, Barrett both revels and reins in his personal demons just long enough to get these songs to tape. What we're left with is a collection of tracks that, after all these years, still shine like crazy diamonds. >>>JONATHAN PERRY



**BEACHWOOD SPARKS**

**Once We Were Trees** Sub Pop

Those who expected Beachwood Sparks to have "outgrown" their cosmic country-rock affectations will be disappointed to find the band's psychedelic hoedown tendencies have become an even greater raison d'être on *Once We Were Trees*. This sophomore outing proves that the quartet's adoption of the sound West Coast hippie cowpokes like the Flying Burrito Brothers, Buffalo Springfield and Poco made popular in the late '60s is no passing fancy. The fact that the Sparks are a bunch of young men raised on indie rock, professing not to have listened to the

Link

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

File Under

Digging up the bones of

cosmic Americana

R.I.Y.L.

Wilco, Buffalo Springfield,

the Flying Burrito Brothers

aforementioned artists ought to bring about cries of slacker dilettantism from purist alt-country types. However, a closer look at this music's forebears will serve to remind that the dope-smoking, draft-dodgers of New Riders Of The Purple Sage make these boys look like Coffee Achievers, and that the sometimes-callow vocals and anti-establishment smugness of cosmic cowboy saints the Burritos bespoke an ironic distance merely hinted at by Beachwood Sparks. In a post-Pavement world, there's a lot more excuse/reason for singing in a wan, pinched voice than there was in Neil Young's time. Although they take the psychedelic aspect of their sound just as seriously—occasionally veering off into spacey soundscapes—Beachwood Sparks ultimately wind up closer than Whiskeytown to the maverick spirit of first-generation country rock simply by avoiding rote revivalism. >>>JIM ALLEN



**BENT**

**Programmed To Love** Ministry of Sound

Has anyone seen Air and Bent in the same room together? Because the similarities between *Moon Safari* and *Programmed To Love* are distracting. The debut full-length from U.K. producers Simon Mills and Nail Tolliday features 10 mostly mid-tempo grooves, graced with the requisite soggy Moog riffs ("Invisible Pedestrian"), that damned "singing computer" effect and the occasional husky-voiced chanteuse. What distinguishes Bent from its Gallic counterpart is a sense of humor (the French, humorless? *Mais non...*), most obvious in the blatant sampling of Katie Lee's

Link

[www.bent-world.com](http://www.bent-world.com)

File Under

Air apparent

R.I.Y.L.

Air, early St. Etienne,

Lemon Jelly

psychotherapy ditty "Will To Fail" (from the oddball *Songs Of Couch And Consultation* LP) for "Cylons In Love," but also reflected in the duo's fondness for pizzicato strings and the jaunty tempos of "I Remember Johnny." Mills and Tolliday's creative origins lie in the purchase of a bargain-priced lot of 2,000 used records, and the they've gotten their money's worth; recycled Nana Mouskouri provides the hook for "Always In My Heart," and sparkling EZ-listening arrangements in the tradition of Esquivel and Enoch Light abound. What Bent has yet to master is a knack for enduring melodies, so *Programmed To Love* vanishes in a puff of perfumed, candy-colored smoke when the CD concludes. But for 67 minutes, it offers many pleasant *divertissements*. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY



## DA BEATMINERZ

Brace 4 Impak *Rawkus*

The Brooklyn brothers at the core of Da Beatminerz crew have plenty of experience behind the scenes (productions for Black Moon and Smif-N-Wessun, remixes for Eminem, D'Angelo, Mark Morrison, etc.). So it's not surprising that DJ Evil Dee and Mr. Walt have commanded an impressive array of vocalists for their debut album, Talib Kweli, Pete Rock and Busta Rhymes' Flipmode Squad among them. Unfortunately, the variety implicit in that short list is compromised by a pervasive over-concentration on the low end. Sure, it sounds pretty good while it's on, but except for the measured electronic texture of the Last Emperor's "Hustler's

Theme" and the roiling hook of Billy Flames' "Hell Yeah, Oh Yeah," the overall lack of musical detail makes it extraordinarily difficult to remember once it's off. And any intimations of good will or open-mindedness suggested by the appearances of Soul II Soul's Caron Wheeler or Total's Keisha are sucked back into the appalling sexual politics of Jayo Felony and Ras Kass's "Bentleys & Bitches." Ras Kass is particularly repulsive because he somehow believes that evoking Buju Banton's hateful "Boom Bye Bye" and using the phrase "sicker than your average Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome infected faggot" makes him "spiritually elevate so high." Somewhere, deep in the dustbins of history, Jazzie B sheds a tear. >>>KEVIN JOHN

Link

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

File Under

The return of the return  
of the boom bap

R.I.Y.L.

KRS-One, Gang Starr,

D&D Studios



LIBBIVILLE

## LIBBI BOSWORTH

Libbiville *Raybula*

Texans are occasionally characterized as living in their own little country and, well, they are. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, especially when it comes to the take on country music in the immediate vicinity of Libbiville, Tex. Libbi Bosworth is the latest example of what's very right about Lone Star twangcore. Libbi could be the girl next door—if you live next door to a juke joint in Austin—and she might also be the best female songwriter to come out of Texas since Tish Hinojosa. She has a great voice and an even better interpretive knack, but it's the songs, 10 of

which she wrote or co-wrote, that truly place this album in the "awesome" category. Libbi has no lack of wit, knowing how to say adios to a dead, formerly footloose husband ("Pine Box") and how to dispense advice to the lovelorn ("Man Overboard"). There's also room in Libbiville for the cynicism of "Ha Ha Ha," if it's set to a Texas swing beat, and the sexy romanticism of "Straight To My Heart." When she needs help, she gets the best that the Austin roots mafia has to offer. Don Walser, Lloyd Maines, Gary Primich, Toni Price, Gurf Morlix, Bruce Robison and legendary fiddle-man Johnny Gimble help make Bosworth's cozy little country album one of the best releases of the year. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

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

File Under

A town with country roots

R.I.Y.L.

Neko Case, Rosie Flores,

Charlie Robison

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visionaries

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**THE CAPITOL YEARS**

Meet Yr Acres *Full Frame-Poor Poor*

If Beck had infiltrated the Beatles' camp during the *Abbey Road* sessions, the result might have sounded like this worthy, low-key product of Philadelphia's minor indie-rock resurgence. Capitol Years main man Shai Halperin, who handles all the instruments on *Meet Yr Acres* and co-produced this debut with ex-Lilys bassist Thom Monahan (Pernice Brothers, Beachwood Sparks), happily flaunts his obsession with one or more of guitar-pop's three classic B's (the Beatles, Big Star, Badfinger), but it's what he doesn't do that makes his period-nostalgic

approach special. Halperin's "why use four chords when three suffice" formula affords his simple, derivative melodies a hushed majesty amid the jarring loops and lolling instrumental interludes strewn about the album. The back-handed blues opener "Roller's Row" chugs along like "Why Don't We Do It In The Road?" in a Quaalude-induced stupor; the compact epic "Rolling Hills" and the jammy "Supper" pay their debts to David Bowie and Jerry Garcia, respectively, with eyes averted and tongue snugly in cheek; and the cozy, pastoral cover of the Velvet Underground's "All Tomorrow's Parties" sounds less like a quirky late-inning interloper than a fitting finale. *Meet Yr Acres'* shiftless grace may not register instantly, but it'll have you in its crosshairs in no time. >>>HOBART ROWLAND

Link

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

File Under

If Beck was a Beattle

R.I.Y.L.

Late-period Beatles, less-slanted Pavement, the Glands



**JOHN COLTRANE**

The Olatunji Concert: The Last Live Recording *Impulse!*

John Coltrane was always at his best in a live setting, as his many extraordinary live recordings attest, and the 1967 recording that makes up *The Olatunji Concert* is no different. Although Coltrane died three months later from liver cancer, the great one has enough strength and will to lead his final quintet through an extremely demanding two-song set. Rodgers & Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things" and his own "Ogunde" are lengthy, half-hour exercises where Trane repeatedly attacks the melodies from different angles, working

Link

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

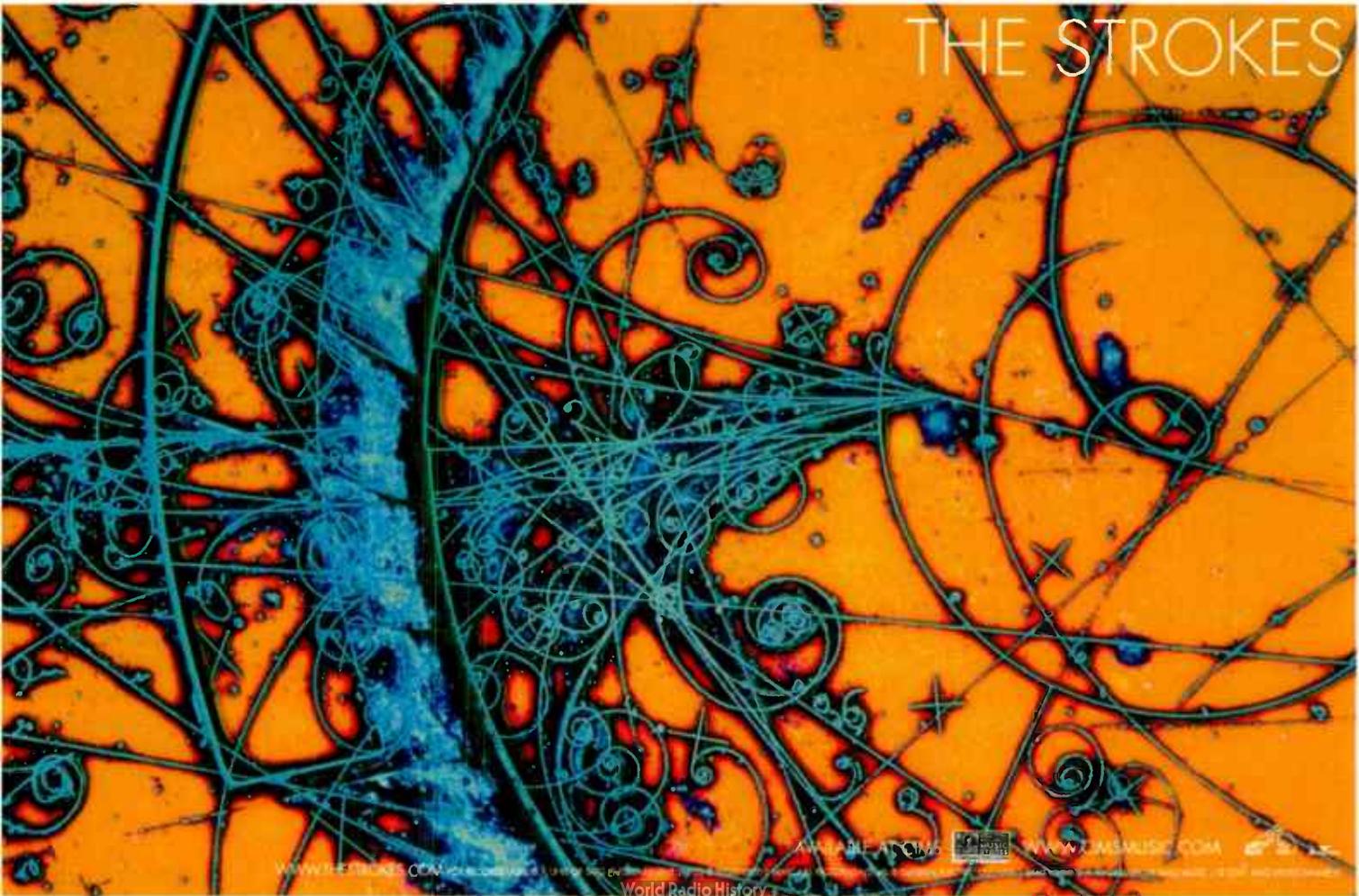
File Under

Coltrane's last will testament

R.I.Y.L.

Pharoah Sanders, David S. Ware, Cecil Taylor

through scales with his patented willingness to squeeze every last ounce of inspiration from an idea before moving on to the next. True to his own late-'60s form, the steely-toned Pharoah Sanders sounds terrifying whenever he puts his horn to his lips, with his solo 20 minutes into "Things" birthing some of the most violent sounds to come out of a saxophone, ever. The two can easily be heard over Rashied Ali's muscular free-time tribalism, which is augmented by the extra drummers, but due to the amateur quality of the recording (bad Dead bootlegs have better sound than this), pianist Alice Coltrane and bassist Jimmy Garrison are lost in the more uproarious moments. Nonetheless, the music is a revelation. Hardly the gasping words of dying man, these sounds emphatically prove that John Coltrane's artistic vision burned brightly until the end. >>>TAD HENDRICKSON





## CURVE

**Gift** Universal

Handcuffed by label turmoil from 1998 to, like, yesterday, Curve thwarted atrophy by compiling the splendidly titled, Web-only MP3 collection, *Open Day At The Hate Fest*. It's such an unsettling, lethargic curiosity that the new "real" full-length is wholly worthy of its title. With *Gift*, Curve has birthed a scabrous bitch of a little sister for 1998's jewel *Come Clean*. A tad less voracious, *Gift* teems with sinister dirges for smart tarts to strip by. For a band that made its name conjoining wall-of-guitars excess, hip-hop break-beats and spooky synthesizer whines,

Curve's deadliest asset is the bass. Songwriter Dean Garcia deploys the low end best on "Perish," giving an hourglass exoticism to Toni Halliday's mantra, "staying together for the sake of our memories." Halliday's angelic seething has grown increasingly assured over the last decade—although her narratives could stand to be less vague, she always finds the right phrase to intensify the mood. Garcia never pushes a beat or riff to its extreme, smartly bowing to his propensity for indelible, ice-thick choruses ("Want More Need Less"). "My stained white dress tells a story," Halliday coos in the throbbing "My Tiled White Floor." It's vintage Curve, leaving the listener rapturous without a climax. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

Link

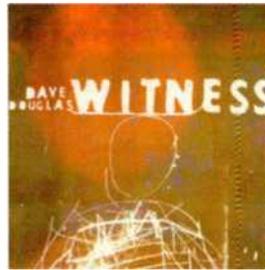
[www.curve.co.uk](http://www.curve.co.uk)

File Under

Sultry Brit electro-goth pop

R.I.Y.L.

Garbage, Lords Of Acid,  
Republica



Link

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

File Under

Anti-G8 jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Miles Davis, Charles Mingus's  
*The Black Saint And The  
Sinner Lady*, Howard Zinn

## DAVE DOUGLAS

**Witness** Bluebird

Not content to be among the most potent players, eclectic composers and prolific bandleaders of his generation, jazz trumpeter Dave Douglas now adds musical activist to his repertoire with his latest grouping, an unconventional nonet called *Witness*. Fueled by outrage over globalization, war profiteering and dissident repression in countries such as Nigeria, Douglas packs the album's liner notes with commentary on the politicized inspirations for the compositions, URLs for pertinent websites, and suggested reading—but he sounds his passion loudest in the music. The uneasy opener, "Ruckus," builds to a roil, filled with tur-

bulent statements from Douglas and saxophonist Chris Speed. Thereafter, the album settles into a brooding cast highlighted by the leader's dark and burnished musings over Mark Feldman and Erik Friedlander's moody strings on the title track. "Kidnapping Kissinger" breaks up the dolorous mood with three minutes of John Zorn-like jump cuts and absurdity, but the 24-minute "Mahfouz" is a patience-gobbling chore, in large part thanks to an appearance by Tom Waits, who grumbles a lengthy sotto voce commentary/reading in honor of Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz. Despite its flawed centerpiece, *Witness* stands as a powerful testament amid the current crop of unengaged and unengaging jazz albums and contains some of Douglas's very finest work to date—high recommendation indeed. >>>LEE GARDNER

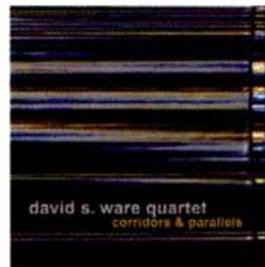
The Soundtrack Of Our Lives • The Green Pajamas • Fonda Club 8 • Jeff Kelly • The Orange Alabaster Mushroom Adam Schmitt • The Witch Hazel Sound • The Melody Unit Bettie Serveert • June & the Exit Wounds • Neilson Hubbard The Beauty Shop • Sarge • Jenifer Jackson • Doleful Lions Starlet • White Town • The Gerbils • National Skyline Elk City • Wolfie • Chitlin' Fooks • Ken Stringfellow Jack Logan & Bob Kimbell • Absinthe Blind • Braid

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File Under

The jazz lion in full roar

R.I.Y.L.

John Coltrane, Sun Ra,  
Herbie Hancock's *Mwandishi*

## DAVID S. WARE QUARTET

**Corridors & Parallels** AUM Fidelity

Saxophonist David S. Ware's sound is big and brash, fueled with the quest to reach out to the cosmos, or at least to anyone within a two-block radius. Not fighting his inner nature, Ware's approach is attack, attack and attack, savagely tearing a tune apart before stitching it back together during his lengthy solos. *Corridors & Parallels*, Ware's 13th album overall and the first since his amicable parting from Columbia, finds him again among his regular quartet, with bassist William Parker, drummer Guillermo E. Brown and keyboardist Matthew Shipp. The

group has been called one of the finest in jazz, but there are changes afoot. Setting aside his grand piano, Matthew Shipp makes his recording debut on synthesizer, using cheesy synthetic tones, celestial swooshes and organ-like sounds that allow him to push the sonic envelope with sound rather than his thunderous chops. Shipp provides a carnival of electric percussion on "Superimposed," static ambient backdrops for several other pieces. The disjointed "Jazz Fi-Sci" is the album's sole rough spot, where Shipp and his acoustic counterparts alternate playing the same song in what sounds like an exercise. On the whole though, Ware's new direction is a good one. After a dozen discs that pushed acoustic free jazz to its very limits, lucky 13 heralds a new beginning. >>>TAD HENDRICKSON



ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD • R.I.Y.L. - RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



**DE FACTO**

**Megaton Shotblast** Gold Standard Laboratories

The alter ego of former At The Drive-In singer Cedric Bixler and guitarist Omar Rodriguez, De Facto appropriates the snap and scratch of Afro-Caribbean percussion, then rubs them up against the jagged echoes of dub bass and warped guitar riffs for a hemp-rich, lo-fi groove. The instrumental Latin-hinted dub jams of *Megaton Shotblast* come off like Tortoise doing covers of dub pioneer Augustus Pablo, with salsa king Hector Lavoe as a sideman. Save for some reverberated mumblings during the electro-funk-drumming duel "El Professor Contra De Facto," and the hyper-percussive salsa-dub finale "Rodche Defects" where

Link  
[www.threoneg.com/GSL](http://www.threoneg.com/GSL)  
 File Under  
 Post-punk dub version  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 At The Drive-In, instrumental  
 Latin Playboys, Medeski  
 Martin And Wood's  
*Combustication*

a guest vocalist repeats one verse, the album snubs lyrical content, favoring uninhibited instrumentation. On a couple of tunes, Cedric and Omar hook up with keyboardists Isaiah Owens (ex-Long Beach Dub Allstars) and Jeremy Ward, the latter's wrangling melodic tones further contorting the twisted dub meanderings. The piano-led "Descarga De Facto" and the bass-booming and melodic honking "Thick Vinyl Plate" were recorded live in Europe, the clubgoers' background chatter mixing with crackling foreground production, giving a sneak peek at what the band's capable of without the trappings of studio trickery. *Megaton Shotblast* upholds the ideal of getting stoned soul brothers together to rip through some grooves in one take, without giving a fuck whether one or a million are going to care for it. >>>ENRIQUE LAVIN



**THE DISMEMBERMENT PLAN**

**Change** DeSoto

The Dismemberment Plan has evolved from a Subwoofer Band to a Headphone Band; can't wait to see if their audience unbuckles and strolls along with them. The closest the D.C. noisemakers ever came to any quantifiable routine (and even this is a stretch) was the heavier tunes. Eric Axelson's bass catapulted frontman Travis Morrison's duck call square into the heart of guitar vs. keyboard melees. Such zaniness prowls around *Change's* many introspective tension studies—especially "Come Home" and "Time Bomb"—but never tears through. Indeed, the album title is

Link  
[www.dismembermentplan.com](http://www.dismembermentplan.com)  
 File Under  
 Confounding and compelling  
 punk melancholia  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Q And Not U,  
 Talking Heads, Fugazi

an understatement. The breathtaking call-and-response fervor of old favorite "What Do You Want Me To Say?" has been razed and reshaped into the subdued, opening waltz of "Sentimental Man." Thankfully, restraint reveals a wealth of the Plan's less obvious assets. Morrison has always been an astute, endearing lyricist, but the revelations in "Superpowers" ("I have seen the world's most beautiful women undress in ordinary solitude" precedes "I have cried so hard for hours and not known why") have a scary, bipolar candor that rarely surfaces in his lingual gymnastics. Guitarist Jason Caddell's decorative acoustic touch gives the song the sexy reserve of a top 40 gem, circa 1983. Here's an album for which "it'll grow on me" won't be a jaded shrug, but a whisper of breathless anticipation. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI



**JAY FARRAR**

**Sebastopol** Fellow Guard-Artemis

Jay Farrar's relentless pessimism would be laughable if he weren't such a damn fine songwriter. "The world is gonna burn up four billion years from now if it doesn't happen anytime soon," he sings on *Sebastopol's* opening track, "Feel Free." But the song's rolling rhythm, droning keyboards (both courtesy of Flaming Lips' Steven Drozd) and ringing, spare guitar figure run counter to Farrar's cynicism. Throughout *Sebastopol*, sweet melodies trump bitter lyrics. For his first solo album outside of Uncle Tupelo or the on-hiatus Son Volt, Farrar wisely avoids the litany of mid-tempo

Link  
[www.artemisrecords.com](http://www.artemisrecords.com)  
 File Under  
 Bittersweet bummers  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Wilco, Gillian Welch,  
 Ryan Adams

bummers that often mired Son Volt albums in despair. From the slow, sad waltz "Barstow," with help from Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, and the nostalgic "Outside The Door," which features brilliant slide-guitar work by Kelly Joe Phelps, to the meditative ruminations of "Damaged Son" and "Drain," and the rockers "Damn Shame" and "Voodoo Candle," Farrar varies the contexts for his distinctive foggy baritone. And not all is dark 'round here: The jangly "Different Eyes," sung at the top of his range, is one of the catchiest songs Farrar has written. "Really not mad at anyone, you're just mad at the world," he sings on *Sebastopol's* last track, "Vitamins." Farrar may still be unable to receive any satisfaction, but he's created a textured, subtle and satisfying album. >>>STEVE KLINGE



**FUGAZI**

**The Argument** Dischord

If you don't count the all-ages shows and the low CD prices, the best part of being a Fugazi fan for the past decade and a half has been watching how far the Washington, D.C. band has strayed from its puritanical hardcore roots. Since beginning as a side-project by members of emo fountainheads Embrace and Rites Of Spring, the quartet has interpolated elements of dub, reggae and funk into its wiry, white-heat punk fury, and increasingly convincingly. 1998's *End Hits* was practically a treatise on how to avoid the stagnation that comes with flaying guitars for a living,

Link  
[www.dischord.com](http://www.dischord.com)  
 File Under  
 Another one rides the cusp  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Wire, Dismemberment Plan,  
 Shudder To Think

as was the soundtrack to filmmaker Jem Cohen's arresting portrait of the band, *Instrument*. Now we get *The Argument*, a return to the (relatively) subdued furor that marked '95's jammy, textural *Red Medicine*. This time out, guitarists/singers Ian MacKaye and Guy Picciotto seem less interested in proving they can draw from a wide range of sources than in gracefully investing their sturdy, angular rock with unorthodox touches. They're still full of those: "Full Disclosure" careens from an arpeggio-spiked verse into a chorus of full-on pop falsettos; "Strangelight" features some cracked jazz piano buried beneath its sinewy guitar; "The Kill" wobbles like late-period Sonic Youth (perhaps the only active American guitar band to share Fugazi's taste for reinvention). Call *The Argument* routine radicalism, from a band of veteran shaker-uppers. >>>MIKAEL WOOD



## MERLE HAGGARD

Roots Volume 1 *Anti*

## ROBBIE FULKS

13 Hillbilly Giants *Bloodshot*

These days, country music pretty much breaks down into S.E. Hinton greasers-vs.-preps conflicts. The preps are obvious: They're the Music Row mannequins you see on the dozen-odd award shows plugging holes in the network schedules. On the greasers' side are artists as different as Merle Haggard and Robbie Fulks, songwriters whose respective covers records offer distinctly different ideas about what classic country is, but wind up at the same place in their quest for purity.

The songs on Haggard's *Roots Volume 1* are bedrock stuff, tunes that even those with only a passing affection for twang would recognize, by godfathers like Hank Thompson, Lefty Frizzell and Hank Williams Sr. The inspiration for the disc lies in Haggard's accidental rediscovery of Frizzell's long-retired guitarist Norman Stephens—improbably, through a newspaper classified ad. Stephens happened to live close by, so Haggard invited him over, set up a band in his living room and pressed the "record" button, with *Roots* as the result. Haggard's voice is thinning, but still

carries that weird resonance lingering an extra half beat at the end of his phrases. Stephen's runs are bright and tasty, an animated kick in this low-key set. The disc also includes three Haggard originals that fit seamlessly with classics like "The Wild Side Of Life" and "Honky Tonkin," on which the bend in Haggard's voice sounds like a cross between George Jones and a Canadian goose.

Haggard is one of the idols "left undisturbed" by Robbie Fulks on his own tribute to country's past, *13 Hillbilly Giants*. Rather than pillaging the Hall Of Fame, Fulks focuses on artists with a skewed sensibility, who've "remained unapologetically true to their strange selves." Not all are utter obscurities. He covers a Dolly Parton song from her duet days with Porter Wagoner ("Jeannie's Afraid Of The Dark") and Jean Shepard's "Act Like A Married Man," but those without their own Nudie suits will be hard-pressed to recognize many of the names or tunes here. Where Haggard exudes a consistent shade-tree tone, Fulks flits between sprightly bluegrass (Jimmy Murphy's "We Live A Long Time To Get Old"), rockabilly ramble (Gordon Terry's "Lotta Lotta Women") and elbow-in-the-ribs compone (The Carlisles' "Knot Hole"). What does hold Fulks's disc together is the intensity of each song's vision. "Cocktails" is a boilerplate tale of honky-tonk woe—drink causes a guy to loses his house, wife, kids, etc.—that's told with an uncommon raw-nerve clarity. Through it all, Fulks comes off like Lyle Lovett with fewer cuddly idiosyncrasies.

As different as they are, both discs are filled with music that still seems vital and contemporary, even in a time when such a whole-hearted embrace of the immutability of country amounts to a political statement. >>>SCOTT FRAMPTON

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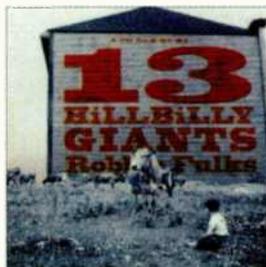
[www.merlehaggard.com](http://www.merlehaggard.com)

File Under

Tonkin' resolution

R.I.Y.L.

Hank Sr., Dwight Yoakam,  
Lefty Frizzell



Link

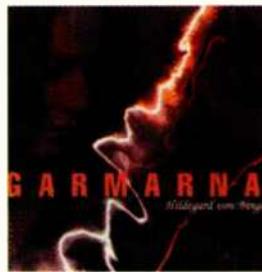
[www.robbiefulks.com](http://www.robbiefulks.com)

File Under

The hi-lo country

R.I.Y.L.

Lyle Lovett, Buck Owens,  
the Pine Valley Cosmonauts



## GARMARNA

Hildegard Von Bingen *Northside*

A few years ago, New Ager types were falling over themselves to celebrate the 900th birthday of Hildegard von Bingen, the medieval nun who was one of the first acknowledged female composers. But you won't find any rustling wind chimes or echoing flutes in the interpretation of her music by Swedish new-folk quintet Garmarna. As on its four previous albums, the group approaches its country's folk tradition from a 21st century angle, juxtaposing the creaking tones of fiddle and hurdy-gurdy with plenty of eclectic programming to transform von Bingen into a thoroughly contemporary

figure. "Paso," for example, echoes Portishead's cinematic sweeps and repeated melodic licks, while "Salvatoris" is basically a folk drum 'n' bass track. Perhaps because Garmarna is not working in the blood and gore of traditional Nordic ballads, there's more warmth and fewer shadows on this record, while its inherent earthy flavor remains. Emma Hårdelin again proves she's one of the best Nordic singers around, making sacred Latin texts sound like cool, seductive murmurs, floating above the music on "O Vis Aeternitatis," and uniting modern and ancient elements to create a perfect liturgy of the new electric church on "Virga Ac Diadema." After shuddering at the fumbles of the crystal brigade, Hildegard is probably relaxed and smiling in her grave now. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

Link

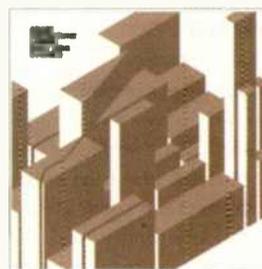
[www.cabal.se/massproduktion/garmarna/index.html](http://www.cabal.se/massproduktion/garmarna/index.html)

File Under

Liturgic for the chill-out room

R.I.Y.L.

Portishead, Hedningarna,  
Chant remixed



Link

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

File Under

Gutter fabulous

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Spinna, Strange Games  
And Things, Floppy Sounds,  
Romanthony

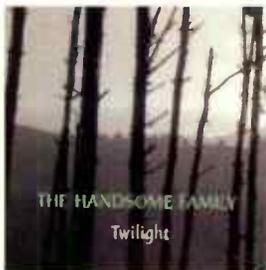
## ADAM GOLDSTONE

Lower East Side Stories *Nuphonic*

For an album named after a square mile of real estate, Adam Goldstone's *Lower East Side Stories* covers a lot of ground. Perhaps that's only because he reaches so far back into its past. The retro take on one of New York's most storied (and notorious) neighborhoods isn't exactly new—the Strokes have garnered ample press out of retrofitting Television's Tompkins Square slouch. But Goldstone avoids mannerism in favor of the macro view, jumping from disco to no-wave to house with less effort than the run from St. Marks Place to CBGB would take. The opening "In The Garden" harkens back to

a prelapsarian age when spangles sparkled, tops were tubed and disco was king (or queen, as it were). But instead of falling into a nostalgic stupor over Studio 54, Goldstone sidesteps to a salsa beat and pays tribute to the *barrio* of "Loisaida." A rarity for dance music, Goldstone fleshes out his sketches with solid politics: "Jacktalk" offers an anti-corporate polemic courtesy of man-about-downtown Micky Hohl. Further surveying previous decades' terrain, Goldstone moves from the Slits-inspired "NYC Dub" to the no-wave-meets-new-wave dirge of "Earthblow." But Goldstone's backwards glances don't come at the expense of the present day: "Stardance" combines elements of all the aforementioned into pure, chugging tech-house—not so much a final destination as just another snapshot of the neighborhood's ever-changing form. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE





## THE HANDSOME FAMILY

*Twilight* Carrot Top

It's the end of the world as we know it, and the Handsome Family seems to feel fine. True, Brett Sparks's boyish baritone is as mournful as ever and wife Rennie Sparks's literate lyrics are still as lugubrious as anything *Huckleberry Finn's* depressive teenage poetess Emmeline Grangerford ever put to paper. But the Sparks's somber songs flash wry wit and disarming poignance, even as the ersatz Appalachian duo goes global with its trademark beautiful-loser themes for an album of meditations on the waning days of our overburdened planet. The protagonist of "Passenger Pigeons"

grapples with the death of a billion birds and the demise of a love affair that once filled his skies—both equally unfathomable to him. Other compositions, such as "All The TVs In Town" and "No One Fell Asleep Alone," limn portraits of a crumbling world caught in a mid-entropic slide. Yet by "So Long," the Sparks are singing a fond see-ya-soon to all their dead pets, and on the closing "Peace In The Valley Once Again," they look forward to a post-human era of weed-choked ATMs and deserted escalators littered with mourning dove nests. As Brent coos the words over Rennie's soothing autoharp chords, it doesn't sound like such a bad future at all. >>>LEE GARONER

Link

[handsomfamily.home.mindspring.com](http://handsomfamily.home.mindspring.com)

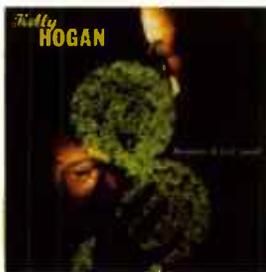
File Under

Global death songs

R.I.Y.L.

Carter Family, Momus,

Scud Mountain Boys



## KELLY HOGAN

*Because It Feel Good* Bloodshot

Kelly Hogan has covered a good bit of musical terrain since her days with the Jody Grind in Atlanta in the late '80s. Upon moving to Chicago near the end of the '90s, Hogan slipped effortlessly into the alt-country groove, and her third solo outing, *Because It Feel Good*, continues in that mode, colored at times by a Southern Gothic feel. The aim of this collection is to evoke the demons of 1970s AM radio via exotic string arrangements and covers as obsessive as the Statler Brothers' "I'll Go To My Grave Loving You," as emotionally garish as King Floyd's "Please Don't Leave

Me Lonely" and as out-of-context as Smog's "Strayed." Add some period reverb, well-placed whistling and a production mentality reminiscent of Gene Pitney, and the result is Hogan singing along with the car radio, circa 1969, parked at the Sonic Drive-In waiting for her fries and vanilla Coke. It's country/pop nostalgia and she's dead serious about it. "Sugarbowl," one of the songs Hogan co-wrote, meshes perfectly with the album's ruling vibe. Measured on the basis of what it accomplishes, *Because It Feel Good* is a musically successful rendering of a naiveté that is all but extinct in today's music. It's passionately eccentric, and it's not a sure bet that Hogan's audience will be as fervent in their response. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

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

File Under

Because it feel risky

R.I.Y.L.

Sally Timms, Skeeter Davis,

Charlie Rich

"If you combined Gram Parsons' soul, Keith Richards' spirit, Steve Earle's growl and Paul Westerberg's heart, you'd probably wind up with someone like singer-songwriter **Ryan Adams...**

Whatever he does next, expect it to be touched with genius..."

- **UNCUT,**  
Nick Johnstone

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**CHARLIE HUNTER**

**Songs From The Analog Playground** Blue Note

The sound Charlie Hunter gleans from his eight-string bass/guitar, his grounding in jazz, his rock-like approach to the jam, and his willingness to grow in all directions at once make him a worthwhile force in musical fusion. Though he's opened for Nirvana, U2 and Public Enemy (as bassist for Michael Franti's abstract Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy), his experiences as a street musician, jazz student and funk fan tend to dominate his outlook. That Hunter works words and singers into over half the tracks on *Songs* is both a new twist and a culmination; he's comfortable in his place, yet stretching further.

Mos Def comes in from the hip-hop cold, chanting over the all-percussive opening "Street Sounds" and vocalizing on the "So What"-like "Creole." Norah Jones provides syrupy soul on covers of Roxy Music's "More Than This" and Nick Drake's "Day is Done." Kurt Elling sings on the brief, batucada-happy "Close Your Eyes." And Theryl de'Clouet, singer for New Orleans funkies Galactic, is "Mighty Mighty," adding gravelly R&B blasts on covers of songs by Earth Wind & Fire and Willie Dixon. Five instrumentals spotlight the musical space Hunter's chops call home, adorned by rhythmic grooves and funky, flavorfully sax-ed up percussive trips. As soul-jammers go, Hunter remains both head of the class and ahead of it. >>>ROBIN A. ROTHMAN

Link

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

File Under

Jam-lovin' soul jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Medeski Martin And Wood, John Scofield, Galactic



**INCUBUS**

**Morning View** Epic

Incubus frontman Brandon Boyd has said that he doesn't mind his crew being categorically lumped into the not-too-new genre of nü-metal bands, which says something about his modesty. The quintet dropped their major-label debut, *S.C.I.E.N.C.E.*, the same year as some nü-metal founders—1997 also saw the releases of Limp Bizkit's *Three Dollar Bill\$ Y'all* and Sevendust's eponymous disc—yet Incubus's music is generally more inspired and layered than the efforts of their brooding counterparts. On *Morning View*, the group's third major-label album, Boyd and company continue their journey into the metal mystic, guided by familiar cascading chord progressions and ethereal-to-plump dynamic sensibilities. There are aggressive rockers like "Under My Umbrella" here, but lush-yet-harsh metal tunes like "Blood On The Ground" are more indicative of the album's sound. In fact, the wild success of last year's stand-out single, "Drive," has prompted the Calabasas, Calif.-bred outfit to stack *Morning View* with slow acoustic numbers ("Just A Phase," "11 A.M." and "Mexico") and mellow radio-readys ("Warning" and the spaced-out "Echo"). The album even includes a ballad with Middle Eastern textures. *Morning View* shows a softer Incubus, yet it also affirms the group as visionary among today's hard rockers. But will Boyd accept being lumped in with the rest of the Top 40 radio crop? >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

Link

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

File Under

Not your little brother's

nü-metal

R.I.Y.L.

Faith No More, Linkin Park, Fuel

Incubus frontman Brandon Boyd has said that he doesn't mind his crew being categorically lumped into the not-too-new genre of nü-metal bands, which says something about his modesty. The quintet dropped their major-label debut, *S.C.I.E.N.C.E.*, the same year as some nü-metal founders—1997 also saw the releases of Limp Bizkit's *Three Dollar Bill\$ Y'all* and Sevendust's eponymous disc—yet Incubus's music is generally more inspired and layered than the efforts of their brooding counterparts. On *Morning View*, the group's third major-label album, Boyd and company continue their journey into the metal mystic, guided by familiar cascading chord progressions and ethereal-to-plump dynamic sensibilities. There are aggressive rockers like "Under My Umbrella" here, but lush-yet-harsh metal tunes like "Blood On The Ground" are more indicative of the album's sound. In fact, the wild success of last year's stand-out single, "Drive," has prompted the Calabasas, Calif.-bred outfit to stack *Morning View* with slow acoustic numbers ("Just A Phase," "11 A.M." and "Mexico") and mellow radio-readys ("Warning" and the spaced-out "Echo"). The album even includes a ballad with Middle Eastern textures. *Morning View* shows a softer Incubus, yet it also affirms the group as visionary among today's hard rockers. But will Boyd accept being lumped in with the rest of the Top 40 radio crop? >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

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JJ72 Lakota-Columbia

JJ72

Link

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File Under

Mope rock with a side of cheese

R.I.Y.L.

pre-Kid A Radiohead, Muse, dog whistles

JJ72, the latest in a long line of heavily hyped U.K. bands to be saddled with the "new Radiohead" label, is the Everclear of mope rock. That is to say, it's a capable band that makes perfectly serviceable music; the only problem is it makes the same song over and over. With a couple of exceptions, vocalist/guitarist Mark Greaney has found one style and is determined to stick to it. The format goes like this: Start with just guitar and a vocal so reedy it makes Thom Yorke sound like a baritone, hang on a three-note vocal melody, cue drums and maybe some strings, play the chorus until tired, then rock out at the end if feeling sassy. All of which is nice enough, but it doesn't exactly distinguish one song from another. When JJ72 does break out of this mold, it's able to fashion a catchy tune—especially the anthemic opener "October Swimmer"—but the trio still doesn't sound original. The drum machine-driven "Long Way South" does angst-rock right but seems grabbed directly from the Placebo B-side bin. JJ72's main downfall, however, comes in the form of the album's heavy helpings of cheese, appearing most often when they coat grandiose power balladry with maudlin string arrangements, leaving songs like "Undercover Angel" sounding less like Mr. Yorke than Mr. Big. >>>TOM MALLON



Link

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

File Under

Plaintive and angular

pop loveliness

R.I.Y.L.

Yo La Tengo, Ida, Retsin

## K.

### New Problems Tiger Style

What if music is your plasma, your cup runneth over with preternatural gifts, but throughout your entire career you had collaborated rather than allowed your talents to bask in the spotlight? Chances are, once that well-fed muse finally emerges, she's gonna be something spectacular to behold. *New Problems* unleashes Karla Schickele's warm, sonorous voice and far-ranging musicianship as she mediates the chasm between idealized romance and its much heavier reality. The play-by-play is etched in achingly beautiful detail on forlorn songs like "Not Here,"

"Play By The Book" and "Telegram," where Schickele's rich vocals soar high above melancholic piano vamps and trilling strings. Elsewhere, she eschews traditional song structure for an angular and wholly original pop sound. On "Reminder," a marching drum dances with a spasmodic walking bassline; on "Always So Good," two basses play a spirited game of harmonic tag; and on "Knoxville," a foghorn traipses through the recording studio. Karla also plays in the band Ida and cavorts with various members of Babe The Blue Ox, Retsin, Rodan, Ruby Falls, Beekeeper and other vastly under-appreciated indie bands (many of whom appear here). While she deliberates over a host of "new problems" on her solo debut, listening has seldom been such a sweet resolution. >>>ANDY GENSLER



Link

[www.kittie.net](http://www.kittie.net)

File Under

Pissed-off metal chicks

R.I.Y.L.

Biohazard, Arch Enemy,

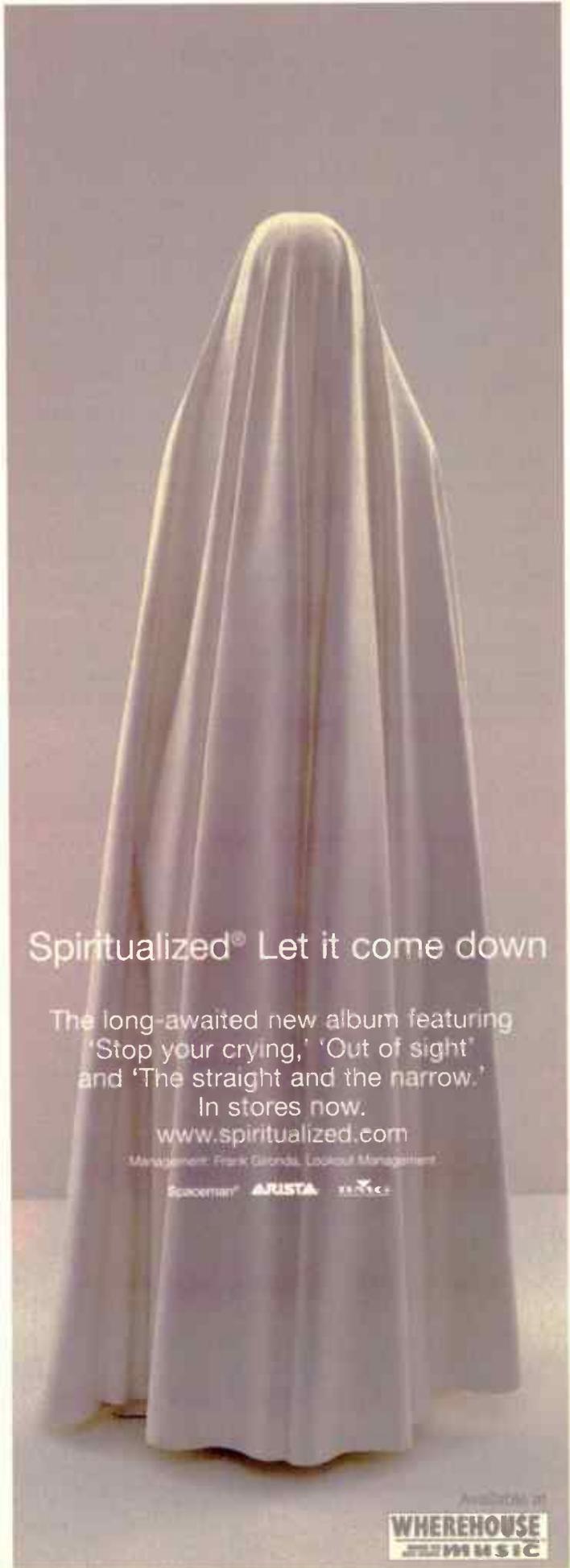
Hatebreed

## KITTIE

### Oracle Artemis

Kittie is the band you love to hate, either because you're jealous you're not onstage with them, or because you're a music snob scoffing at their amateurishness. But four teenage girls with guitars venting adolescent rage is an undeniable recipe for healthy SoundScan numbers, and few riot grrrls rock with as much metal abandon as Kittie. For their sophomore effort, *Oracle*, the girls parted ways with guitarist Fallon Bowman, recruiting a male guitar tech in his late 20s as her temporary replacement and thus blowing the age-gender dynamic.

Regardless, these Canadian cats seemingly took the melodic moments of their debut, promptly said "to hell with that" and reached into the pits of their blackened hearts, turning the anger-meter up a hundred notches. *Oracle* is a sloppy, bitter mess that snarls like a starving boar hovering over fresh kill, kicking notions of form and posture to the curb in favor of a steady stream of sonic groin-kicks. The high blood pressure of "Mouthful Of Poison" is reared on Hatebreed-esque stop-smash-and-mosh riffs. Songs like "What I Always Wanted" do give Morgan Lander's lungs a break and showcase her pretty melodic voice, but not since Crisis has a chick consistently let loose such festering, death metal vocal pitches. *Oracle* and its riffs keep it simple, stupid. >>>AMY SCIARRETTO



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## DJ KRUSH

Zen Columbia

On *Zen*, his sixth proper full-length, Japanese DJ Krush again attempts to build a bridge between cultures, and again achieves mixed results. Hideaki Ishii has always been a master at laying down tracks that tend to be gauzy, ambient and lush, but he hasn't always found the right vocal complement. For *Zen*, he draws on a global talent pool of collaborators: multi-ethnic female vocal quintet Zap Mama, Nigerian percussionist Tunde Ayanyemi, the Roots' Black Thought and Ahmir uestlove Thompson, former Brand New Heavies soulstress N'Dea Davenport and Japan's

Boss The MC and trumpeter Kazufumi Kodama. While engagingly multicultural and ambitious, there's no underlying logic to these choices, and thus, little coherence. On the best cut, "Danger Of Love," Krush sets a bed of vibes and percussion for the ladies of Zap Mama to swirl and sway above like specters. "See you in my dream tonight," intones lead vocalist Marie Daulne with an air of sly seduction that's underlined with nerve-prickling menace. But most cuts are not fully realized, especially "With Grace," Krush's work with Davenport. He leaves her robust R&B vocals stranded atop chilly, unimaginative beats and a minimal melody. There's enough substance in *Zen*'s highlights to compensate for such hollow experiments, but it nevertheless leaves one wanting. >>>KEN CAPOBIANCO

Link

[www.mmjp.or.jp/sus/krush](http://www.mmjp.or.jp/sus/krush)

File Under

Ambient hip-hop haiku

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Cam, Kruder & Dorfmeister,  
the Mo' Wax label



## FEMI KUTI

Fight To Win MCA

Nigerian activist/bandleader Fela Anikulapo Kuti created Afro-beat under a decidedly American spell, combining elements of traditional highlife and polyrhythms with the jazz and funk learned from James Brown and Pharoah Sanders. His son, London-born Femi, literally bookend his new album *Fight To Win* with Americanisms: collaborations with hip-hop artists Mos Def and Common. Mos Def's cameo kicks it all off in a delightful way—"Do Your Best" is a taut, explosive track which pits Femi's melodious shout-speak against Mos's smooth, ragga-styled delivery.

Link

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

File Under

Rhythm 'n' Afro-hop

R.I.Y.L.

Fela Kuti, Tony Allen, Common

You can sense Fela nodding in approbation from somewhere beyond the grave. Unfortunately, the middle tends to get bogged down in a more pedestrian negotiation between East and West, between the smooth R&B stylings of R. Kelly and the bristling energy of Fela's Africa '70 sessions. Femi seems to have lost the vigor of his previous work, grooves spiraling from their axis and getting lost in the warbly space-jazz vortex, leaving the bulk of the work for the remixers surely hovering in the wings. His message of political awareness and social responsibility does come through loud and clear on tracks like "Stop AIDS" and "One Day Someday," and one feels guilty for not appreciating his efforts more. It's not that the music is hard to like, just that you might not want to "get on the good foot" for this *Fight*, or even get up off the sofa. >>>ADRIENNE DAY

## Butterfly Jones

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



## LENNON

5:30 Saturday Morning Arista

Underneath the gaudy facade of Ozzfest angst lies what might be a still-budding talent, 19-year-old singer/songwriter/keyboardist Lennon Murphy. But you only need a passing acquaintance with the "Lennon" package to see what a shameless creation it is—a fizzy, dark teen with a lyrical bent that's spiteful and sensual, innocent and jaded, and a touch for penning blood-shot ballads and sludgy rock. You can almost hear the marketing brainstorm: "Hmm, how about a songwriting Britney Spears with a nü-metal backing band?" It's a product that blatant—

Link

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

File Under

Angry post-adolescent diva

R.I.Y.L.

Alanis Morissette, Fiona Apple,  
Y Kant Tori Read

a bid to hit both lucrative markets. The opener, "Property Of Goatfucker," is so generic you'll find yourself anticipating "My Name is K-I-D R-O-C-K" as if it was a "Bawitdaba" remix with that Eminem/Dido collaboration in mind. And "Those Days" is "You Oughta Know" with Korn-fed production. Still, a minute into "Couldn't Breathe," after the "tornado" effect (swirling electronica and chugging metal guitars) has passed, what seems like the "real" Lennon stands up to sing an elegantly elegiac melody over a fragile piano accompaniment. And the closing title track is a larger window into this artistic intimacy, revealing a hazy southern soul who knows how to write a tender and weary tune. So, does anyone still remember Tori Amos's metal record? >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD • R.I.Y.L. - RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



## LE TIGRE

**Feminist Sweepstakes** Mr. Lady

God bless Kathleen Hanna for never growing up or selling out. While many of us zipped through the '90s with a course or two in feminist studies or women's lit and subsequently ditched Gertrude Stein for *The Wall Street Journal*, Hanna is still punking it out in the garage with bandmates Johanna Fateman and JD Samson, swapping instruments and downing Pabst's. Le Tigre is as much of a grrrl group as they ever were—all r's duly growled with a knowing wink. The post-riot, sample-friendly dance-pop trio spends *Feminist Sweepstakes*, Le Tigre's second full-length, figuring out the importance of keeping one's art as

relevant as possible. Hanna tackles issues like gender study and racism with an attitude that embraces Atari Centipede samples and Detroit electro-soundscapes ("Dyke March 2001"), singing "go tell your friends I'm still a feminist" with a simple sincerity on the Casio-and-fuzz "Much Finer." And in case you want to sing along, the funny, savvy lyrics—as well as the basics of the band's message—are included in the CD booklet, refuting the notion that less content for the head leaves more to fuel the hips. It's not the first time Le Tigre has explored dance-music strictures, but now they seem more comfortable with the technology, sampling intended as homage rather than mockery. >>>ADRIENNE DAY

[Link](#)

[student.bard.edu/~ba935/  
front.html](http://student.bard.edu/~ba935/front.html)

[File Under](#)

Garage beats for a post-feminist dialectic

[R.I.Y.L.](#)

Bikini Kill, Chicks On Speed, the Slits



## GALT MACDERMOT

**Shapes Of Rhythm/Woman Is Sweeter**

Kilmarnock-MacDermot Music

If one judged Galt MacDermot's recently re-released *Shapes Of Rhythm* and *Woman Is Sweeter* by the same merits as aged vino, these albums would be '60s-vintage Chardonnay-funk, a couple of light yet groovy numbers with a crisp nose and a swaggering, buttery finish. Chances are you've whiffed MacDermot's bouquet without knowing it: On the soundtrack for the musical *Hair*, he blended Motown's pristine R&B with high-kicking refrains and evangelic melodies. As the son of a Canadian diplomat who served in South Africa, he learned of

African poly-rhythms from the family cook and continued his studies with down-home gospel and Ellington's pressed-collar jazz. Those overtones ripple through these albums (now on one CD), not in same way they do in *Hair*'s fringe-wriggling romps, but in gentle instrumental numbers that frolic and prance, often pausing to stroll reflectively. MacDermot's cool piano lines wander down alleys supported by now-legendary drummer Bernard Purdie's tight hits and bassist Jimmy Lewis' barrelhouse thump. If any of these passages sound familiar, it's because MacDermot's rare works have been sampled and looped by Prince Paul, Pete Rock and Run-DMC, among others. On a few tracks (most notably "Fragments"), the shimmying piano chords almost cry out for a good vocal refrain, but accepted on their own, *Shapes* and *Woman* both hold up nicely after all those years in the cellar. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

[Link](#)

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

[File Under](#)

Downright upright

[R.I.Y.L.](#)

Stan Getz, Jimmy Smith, Money Mark

"Pop music as drawn from some alternate universe...the tracks subtly nod to British psychedelia and traditional Americana without sounding like either...a testament to her strengths as a songwriter and a reason to celebrate her return." *Washington Post*

"A stunning work of intimacy and emotional range... Is there a more distinctive female vocalist in pop music these days?" *Boston Globe*

# sam PHILLIPS Fan Dance

Her first new album in five years reimagines her music as stark, noir-tinged chamber-pop with a literate edge and a mysterious beauty. "No hi-gloss, no big splash intended...it's a little salon meant to seduce people one at a time." says its creator.

Produced by T Bone Burnett



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## MELOCHROME

**Stay A Little Longer** Loose Thread

The best parts of Melochrome's self-released second album are like the diverse tastes of long-simmered stew, richer and more complex than the simple ingredients lead one to expect. The brushed drums and stately chords that open "Seasonlong" are positively Low-esque; yet six minutes on, they're a bed for heaps of sliding, Kevin Shields-style textures coaxed from lap-steel guitars, and a sax-and-trumpet climax that beats most Elephant 6ers at their own game. (Lambchop's Deanna Varagona plays and arranges horns on several tracks.) The closing "Boyfriend"

is almost as strong—especially the back half, a pleading waltz ("your boyfriend is aching for another chance") that dissolves into a brief, atonal violin coda. As you may have guessed, this Chicago-based five-piece is most at home with dreamy indie pop, but they also manage a wintry love song fortified by tough tom-tom-heavy drumming ("Holly"), and a credible Tortoise-lab tribute ("Aqueduct") that's better for being the disc's sole instrumental. Not all secondary flavors work, however: A few attempts to rock out lack a convincing bottom end, and Darlene Poole's nasal chirp is a distraction whenever it pokes out in front of Pramod Tummala's mild but unobjectionable voice. *Stay A Little Longer* isn't the top-to-bottom knockout it could be—still, Melochrome is more than the sum of its influences, a rare enough thing in current indiedom. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

Link

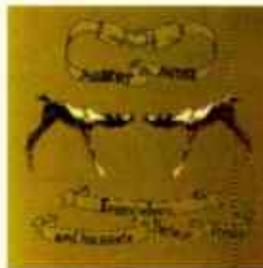
[www.loosethread.com](http://www.loosethread.com)

File Under

Resourceful shoegazers

R.I.Y.L.

My Bloody Valentine,  
American Analog Set, Bedhead



## MODEST MOUSE

**Everywhere And His Nasty Parlor Tricks** Epic

Fascinated by the world around him, Isaac Brock nevertheless laments human behavior. It's a paradox that's made Modest Mouse's songs play out as, by turn, hopeful and dispirited narratives, and Brock's partners have backed him with rhythms that veer from pole to pole. On the veteran indie trio's major-label debut, *The Moon & Antarctica*, this emotional tug-of-war manifested itself in tightly wound songs marked by squealing, bent guitar notes and Brock's moving, concentrated performance. This mini-LP collects some rare tracks, outtakes

Link

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

File Under

Indie rock gets loopy!

R.I.Y.L.

Built To Spill, Joan Of Arc,  
Red Stars Theory

and a few of the most notable additions to this band's ever-inflating, awe-inspiring catalog. "You're The Good Things" spotlights Brock's tender lyrical capabilities as well as drummer Jeremiah Green's diverse mastery; the track begins as an organic pop song and ends in a rush of driving rhythm. Califone's Brian Deck guests as a remixer, splicing together a few of Modest Mouse's past songs and adding electronic splashes in the overture-like "The Air"—a technique that spreads to the pithy synth-and-loop cut "So Much Beauty In Dirt." And the seven-and-a-half-minute "Night On The Sun" perfectly frames the band's quest to strike a balance between good and evil, cruising through strange passages with Brock imploring, "Freeze your blood and then stab it into me," as the trio settles into an airy, seemingly contradictory groove. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



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## JASON MORPHEW Not For The Faint Of Heart! Ba Da Bing!

The title of Jason Morphew's sophomore disc is somewhat misleading, given that most of its 20 tracks feel like an autobiographical suite of songs made by, and for, sensitive souls with easily scarred hearts and quietly searching eyes. What the material does make clear, cast as it is against a spare backdrop of voice, acoustic guitar and the occasional helping hand from a few friends, is that Morphew's got the soul—and, more specifically, the lyrics—of a poet. While his melodies may have a familiar, folk troubadour's ring, Morphew's

Link  
[www.jasonmorphe.com](http://www.jasonmorphe.com)  
File Under  
First-person singular  
R.I.Y.L.  
Bright Eyes, Smog,  
Elliott Smith, Jack Logan

fluttering, quietly tumultuous verses are anything but ordinary. Nearly every couplet here contains a confluence of ideas and impulses, public intentions offset by private retreats. Morphew's an Arkansas native who lit out for Los Angeles to make the big time and, chagrined by all the fake plastic trees, eventually packed his bags for San Francisco. "Hippies Of California," "Why Isn't Anybody Dancing?" and the smoggy pastels of "Caller ID" are mordant barstool sketches depicting what it's like to live and die in L.A., or any other place where artifice beats art. Like any good songwriter, Morphew has managed to turn grimaces into grist for his storytelling mill. >>>JONATHAN PERRY



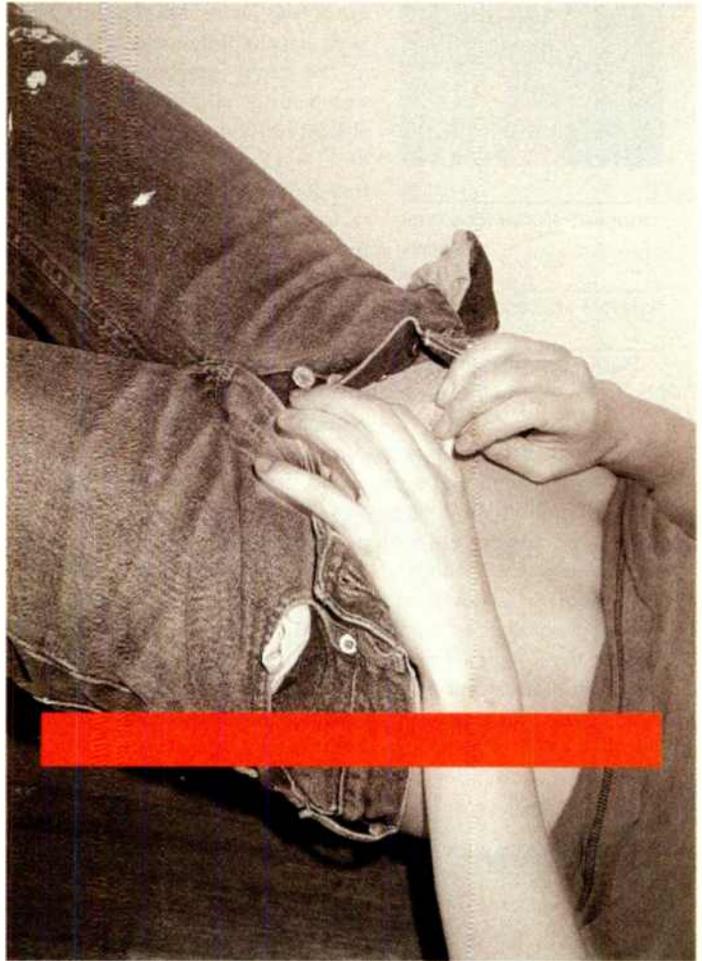
## FERMIN MUGURUZA

**FM 99.00 Dub Manifest** Piranha-Harmonia Mundi  
*Men With Guns*—John Sayles's 1997 film about humanitarian workers caught in the crossfire of a bloody Latin American civil war—gets recast in Iberian techno-punk Fermin Muguruza's song of the same name, from his U.S. debut *FM 99.00 Dub Manifest*. The warped cumbia breakbeat is the musical backdrop to Colombia's escalating inner conflict, with a Basque human rights activist as the song's fallen hero, ironically killed by a U.S.-backed paramilitary group. A salsa piano makes figure eights in the distant shadows, a lazy horn section heckles in the corner at every break, and as a thick bassline gets chopped

Link  
[www.esan-ozenki.com](http://www.esan-ozenki.com)  
File Under  
Rebel beats against a  
McDonald's-ized world  
R.I.Y.L.  
Mano Negra, King Chango, Joe  
Strummer & The Mescaleros

up by machete beats, Muguruza's urgent nasal squall sings in Euskadi (the Basque language). He switches to Spanish only once, to pronounce "The Earth will tremble." The song makes a perfect axis for this multilingual album to spin on, a beat-driven pastiche for dancing revolutionaries. Muguruza is the Basque's most visible musical export—his radical Latin-tinged groups Kortatu, Negu Gorriak and Dut (all unabashedly tied to the Basque separatist movement) continue to influence younger generations of ethnic punk fusionists. On his monumental solo debut, *Brigadistak Sound System*, an Afro-Latin, globe-sampled, beat-heavy, dub-hop sound became his latest weapon of choice. With *FM 99.00 Dub Manifest* it's revolution, dub or death! >>>ENRIQUE LAVIN

# NEW ORDER GET READY



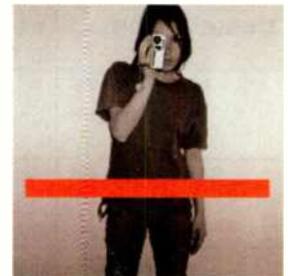
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**MUSHROOM**

Foxy Music innerSPACE

Space jams are the forte of the San Francisco octet Mushroom, and the jazzy psychedelic rockers duly indulge in the trippy good stuff on its retinted third effort *Foxy Music*. The steadily evolving collective, headed by drummer Patrick O'Hearn, hardly stays true to any strict interpretation of just what a jamming band might be, throwing all things freeform and far-out into the mix. Thus "Grooving With Herbie," the slow-percolating opener, is spiced with flute and trombone figures, and owes a thing or two to Hancock's *Headhunters* and electric Miles, while vintage keyboards (Fender Rhodes,

Link  
[www.innerspacerecords.com/mushroom](http://www.innerspacerecords.com/mushroom)  
 File Under  
**Jazz-rock psychedelic freakout**  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Phish, Faust, electric-period Miles Davis

Oberheim) and laser-beam guitar lines dominate "I Got Blisters On My Fingers," a sprawling freakout that might well have been born on the Fillmore West stage sometime during the late '60s. Electric bass, tuba, skanky six-strings and sound effects mesh together on the pulsing "Joe Namath"; "I Had Some Dreams, They Were Clouds In My Coffee" is one long impressionistic layering of sitar-abetted textures; sonic skronk coagulates into a metallic drone on "Don't Blame Me, I Voted For McGovern"; and beat-up acid-rock abuts synth squiggles and bleeps on the brief "Super Goody Bags." Art rock, krautrock, experimental music and the avant-garde all lurk within these grooves. Yet contrary to the traditions it serves, Mushroom is anything but musty. >>>PHILIP BOOTH



**mu-ZIQ**

Tango N' Vectif Replex

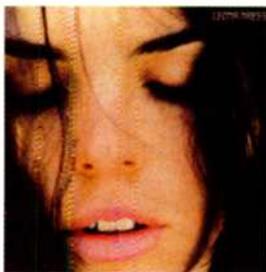
A darling of Belgium's influential R&S Records by the early '90s, Richard "Aphex Twin" James paired up with pal Grant Wilson-Claridge to form Replex Records in 1991, in order to pursue "innovation in the dynamics of acid (house) music." Under his AFX moniker, James utilized the label to release harder visions of his material, but it wasn't until Mike Paradinas's mu-ziq project in 1993 that Replex's mission found its first defining album. *Tango N' Vectif*, re-released here with an additional 11 period tracks, is angular if not formulaic synthesizer music, matched up with

Link  
[www.replex.com](http://www.replex.com)  
 File Under  
**Post-bleep R.I.Y.L.**  
 AFX, Braintance, Warp 10+1

basic Roland drum patterns, showing a direct kinship with 808 State's bleepy, electro anthems and Chicago innovators Phuture and Farley Jackmaster Funk's acid house. Its gem-cut tunes speak quietly to those traditions with singular, unfiltered tones, found in the longing melody of "Whale Soup" and the romantic rondo leitmotif of "Iesope." The album's real innovation took place in its exorcism of early jungle breaks from the London underground, turning out razor-sharp machine anthems like the title track and "Swan Vesta," compounding layers of staticky beats and metal drum loops that evoke Kraftwerk's darker moments. As the '90s continued, Paradinas progressed toward less mercurial electronic music, but *Tango N' Vectif* retains a quality of stylistic defiance that characterized the whole stated goal of Replex. >>>HEATH K. HIGNIGHT

**THE COMP PILE** (Our guide to compilation CDs) BY CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

<b>TITLE</b>	Listen To What The Man Said (Oglio)	Plea For Peace Take Action (Sub City)	Turntables By The Bay (Hip Hop Slam)	LunaticWorks Vol. 1 & 2 (LunaticWorks-Beyond)	Tuff Girl (Foil-Slackboy)
<b>CONCEPT</b>	Totally Pauly! Big shot McCartneyites say maybe they're amazed.	A who's who of punk and hardcore noise conspirators join forces to benefit the National Hopeline Network.	Over a half-decade of legendary wax-shattering cut chemistry from a legion of Frisco kids.	A handful of unsigned bedroom DJs get major-label distribution for their underground tracks	A genre-hopping assemblage of female artists claw for exposure by hocking Tuff Girl clothing
<b>TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC</b>	Those not pissed that Paul made the Rock 'n' Roll Hall Of Fame before Sabbath	Anyone with a tattoo they'll regret having in 20 years	Anyone interested in hearing dudes transform quicker than Optimus Prime	"No, you guys go to the party, I'm making it a ProTools night."	Um, tough girls. And not-so-tough girls, too!
<b>NAMES TO DROP</b>	Robyn Hitchcock, Matthew Sweet, Semisonic	Hot Water Music, At The Drive-In, Alkaline Trio	Mixmaster Mike, Invisibl Skratch Piklz, Eddie Def	XXX Filer, Marna Spinoza & The Union City Triplets, Chooch	Betty Blowtorch, Halo Friendlies, Relish
<b>SUMS IT UP</b>	"Junk" (Steven Page, Kevin Hearn and Stephen Duffy)	"Heroes Of The Corner Bar" (Swingin' Utters)	"Turntable Circumcision" (D-Styles and DJ Flare)	"Who's That" (Tingler)	"They Can't Dis' Miss" (Addverse)
<b>VERDICT</b>	This heartfelt (but ham-handed) tribute still doesn't justify many of these artists building entire careers off McCartney's riffs.	At \$6, this comp is pricier than calling a self-help hotline, but it's good therapy nonetheless.	So what if turntablism is just prog-rock for hip-hop kids? This represents SanFran better than any damn box of Rice-A-Roni ever could.	Wacky funk sidles up next to screechy drum 'n' bass and lounge-a-rific down-tempo. Shit, anyone can do this!	Tuff Girl offers track after track of impressive, infectious girl-sonics... and truly idiotic-looking clothing.



## LEONA NAESS

**I Tried To Rock You But You Only Roll** MCA

It would be easy to write off Leona Naess as just another silver-spooned celebu-tot dallying with the notion of a music career. But Naess, the daughter of a Norwegian gazillionaire and former stepdaughter of original diva Diana Ross, is the real deal. Her knack for writing effortlessly pretty pop made the folk-inspired *Comatized* one of last year's most overlooked debuts, and if there were any justice in the *TRL* universe, her relentlessly hooky single "Charm Attack" would have bewitched the money right out of the wallets of the youth of America. Her highly produced, aggressively upbeat sophomore disc, *I*

*Tried To Rock You But You Only Roll*, plays like a smorgasbord of styles: "Boys Like You" and "All The Stars" have the feel of classic '80s synth-pop, the title track flirts with country the way Sheryl Crow does, and "Blue Eyed Baby" is pure radio-ready pop as imagined by a new wave singer-songwriter. There's also no shortage of gorgeous ballads, from the husky-voiced "Serenade" to the roots turn "Promise To Try." But it's Naess's seductive, world-weary voice and confessional lyrics that are the real draws. Against a lazy, electronic beat, her drowsy, vulnerable delivery on "Panic-Stricken" conveys a fear of abandonment that little girls never really lose, no matter how privileged their upbringing. In the end, it's this universality that exemplifies Naess, not her pedigree. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

Link

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

File Under

Singer-songwriter with a  
bronski beat

R.I.Y.L.

Beth Orton, Sheryl Crow,  
rocked-up Roxette



## THE NEW DEAL

**The New Deal** Jive Electro

Terms like "techno," "house" and "breakbeat" have always existed in the context of electronic music, but rarely in regard to a live band. Well, not until a trio of Canadians came together and pronounced themselves the New Deal. Bassist Dan Kurtz, drummer Darren Shearer and keyboardist Jamie Shields have a novel idea: to play deep house music with instruments rather than on turntables or samplers. Their devotion to this idea is evident in their spirited live shows—where the New Deal packs in fresh-faced crowds and keeps 'em dancing all night long—and on the band's first studio album. The trio's particularly enamored of instrument-generated breakbeats. "Receiver," one of the Deal's signature songs, involves a taut four-bar groove built on high-pitched disco synth and a series of abrupt shifts in key and tempo. Breaks are also used effectively in the reverie of "Deep Sun," which otherwise drifts along on a hypnotic rhythm for seven bliss-filled minutes. In a deft show of chops and a telling bit of homage, the New Deal even salutes "Ghostbusters" craftsman Ray Parker Jr. with a subtle, funky two-part suite. The live-instrumentation angle would seem like a gimmick, but these boys diffuse such thoughts with sharp-edged tunes that sound like they were pulled from the crates of the dancefloor's hottest DJ. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN

Link

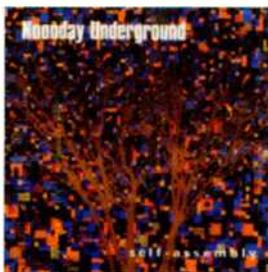
[www.thenewdeal.ca](http://www.thenewdeal.ca)

File Under

No turntables and some  
microphones

R.I.Y.L.

FatNess, Groove Armada,  
EBN-OZN



## NOONDAY UNDERGROUND

**Self-Assembly** Bar/None

Simon Dine was a founding member of Adventures In Stereo, the London troupe that ushered northern soul and girl-group pop into the cut-and-paste era (unfortunately, its landmark early work was so strewn with uncleared samples that a U.S. release was out of the question). As AIS began incorporating live instruments and a full band format, Dine splintered off to form Noonday Underground and pursue his original sound-collage vision. *Self-Assembly* isn't far removed from early AIS, though it swaps some of the cotton-candy melodies for Stax influences and edgier retro grooves. It's easy to imagine this as the soundtrack at an ultracool London club frequented by Austin Powers, without a trace of the associated kitsch. Noonday soars on tracks featuring the sultry vocals of Daisy Martey. Her soulful warmth provides a welcome human element, particularly on "When You Leave," where she comes across as a hot-and-bothered Dusty Springfield. Dine occasionally succeeds without Martey (as on the urgently upbeat "The Hooded Claw"), but many of his slower-paced instrumentals take on an eerie, science-project feel, and his use of a ghostly choir evokes images of a seedy corner of the Space Age Bachelor Pad. This domestic release adds the excellent Martey-driven single "The Light Brigade" and two non-essential instrumentals to the year-old import version. >>>GLEN SARVADY

Link

[www.noonday-underground.com](http://www.noonday-underground.com)

File Under

Swingin' '60s, cut-and-paste style

R.I.Y.L.

Adventures In Stereo,  
Esquivel, His Name Is Alive

and edgier retro grooves. It's easy to imagine this as the soundtrack at an ultracool London club frequented by Austin Powers, without a trace of the associated kitsch. Noonday soars on tracks featuring the sultry vocals of Daisy Martey. Her soulful warmth provides a welcome human element, particularly on "When You Leave," where she comes across as a hot-and-bothered Dusty Springfield. Dine occasionally succeeds without Martey (as on the urgently upbeat "The Hooded Claw"), but many of his slower-paced instrumentals take on an eerie, science-project feel, and his use of a ghostly choir evokes images of a seedy corner of the Space Age Bachelor Pad. This domestic release adds the excellent Martey-driven single "The Light Brigade" and two non-essential instrumentals to the year-old import version. >>>GLEN SARVADY



## NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS

**51 Phantom** Tone-Cool

By loading their debut, *Shake Hands With Shorty*, with covers of delta blues mainstays such as R.L. Burnside and Mississippi Fred McDowell, the North Mississippi Allstars made it easy to peg their mission: to update blues classics in a power-trio context (à la the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion minus the shtick and the irony). On their second proper album (not including *The Word*, their recent collaboration with Robert Randolph and John Medeski), the Allstars emerge as songwriters and begin to forge their own identity. It turns out that the Dickinson brothers—Luther

Link

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

File Under

Boogie down tonight,  
Southern blues style

R.I.Y.L.

R.L. Burnside,  
Tarbox Ramblers, ZZ Top

on guitar, Cody on drums—and bassist Chris Chew can not only interpret the masters, they've learned from them, too. Songs lock into powerfully repetitive slide guitar patterns, the lyrics dwelling on archetypal blues themes of sin, sex and salvation, and the crisp production from John Hampton and Dickinson dad Jim (known for his work with Big Star and the Replacements, among others) adds few modern geegaws. At this point, the Allstars' songs fall into easy categories: the Kimbrough/Burnside jukejoint dark drones, the Allmans/Dead jams, the fife-and-drum parade rhythms, the ZZ Top boogies. The next step would be to blend styles seamlessly, but that's for the future; the present, caked in the fertile Mississippi mud, is bright as it is. >>>STEVE KLINGE



**NOW IT'S OVERHEAD**

**Now It's Overhead** Saddle Creek

Plotting the course of any relationship is a task for skilled cartographers and astute pop musicians. An adept example of the latter, Andy LeMaster's Athens, Ga.-based band employs a mapmaker's tool case packed with evocative, echoing keyboards and guitars, marching drumbeats, hushed vocals and prog-pop production lessons from the late '80s. These tricks of the trade provide a lush landscape for nine song-stories that serve as the map's central figures. Each of the confession-booth tales is its own island; together they're an aerial view, a diagram delineating the lifespan of a love

affair. As the songs unfurl their dark melodies and baroque arrangements, you can all but feel the bumps and bruises of a relationship relief map. Where the brief crescendo of both the romance and the record resounds with a bouncing, handclap-aided reverie, the downward spiral that leads to the bitter end teems and twitches with neo new-wave keyboards, sharp punctuation, opaque pedal steel and pained vocals. In tethering the tracks with a strong narrative and consistent, driving rhythms, LeMaster, an accomplished engineer and studio owner who has worked with Bright Eyes, Japancakes and the Glands, graphs a chart of heartbreak worthy of comparisons to Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, Hüsker Dü's *Candy Apple Grey* and Yo La Tengo's *Painful*. >>>LAURA CASSIDY LEARMONTH

Link

[www.saddle-creek.com](http://www.saddle-creek.com)

File Under

Compass points for the recently un-coupled

R.I.Y.L.

R.E.M., the Shins,

Crooked Fingers



**OYSTERHEAD**

**The Grand Pecking Order** Elektra

Forming a supergroup is easy. Forming a superband, however, is an accomplishment. The difference? Ask Cream, not Damn Yankees. Only time will tell whether or not bassist Les Claypool (Primus), guitarist Trey Anastasio (Phish) and drummer Stewart Copeland (the Police) will defy supergroup odds and leave a lasting mark. Based on *The Grand Pecking Order*, gambling types would be wise to stack their chips on "Yes." These boys click, and you need not dig all three P's to appreciate the results. Copeland contributes a pop sensibility and distinct hi-hat-heavy

Link

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

File Under

New oyster cult

R.I.Y.L.

Primus, Phish, the Police

rhythms (most notably on the Doors-y "Rubberneck Lions," and the Reggatta groove of "Oz Is Ever Floating"). Anastasio offers loop fetishes and "stratospheric solos," leading two acoustic tunes reminiscent of his recent solo stuff ("Radon Balloon," "Birthday Boys"), and clocking in more vocal time than he did at Oysterhead's live inception. Overall though, Claypool's chunky basslines and quirky vocal deliveries are first among equals. Yet, some of the best moments come when the three distinct personalities overlap ("Little Faces"), morph into something new (the trippy trance of "Wield The Spade") or simply get hard ("Pseudo Suicide" recalls Black Sabbath). Inevitably, Phish-heads will cry "More Trey," Primus fans won't expect Claypool's singing, and Police fans may be confused. But those who overcome their preconceptions will hear a super band. >>>ROBIN A. ROTHMAN

[www.come-down.net](http://www.come-down.net)

**COME DOWN**

"This Gotham quartet uses its varied palette of rock textures like Frank Gehry uses curves. The post-rock influences provide an organic quality that successfully houses a smart, melodic core." -CMJ

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**PARKER AND LILY**

**Hello Halo** Orange

Best described as bad-mood music, this debut is like a soundtrack to a hypothetical film about desolation, alienation and ennui. Parker Noon and Lily Wolf were key members of considerably peppier Austin-in-New York cult band Valentine Six. Separated from the pack, the pair finds bliss in reduction, crafting a dark, minimalist vibe that's consistently evocative of film music—everything from spaghetti-Western guitar to ominous spy-movie riffs and horror-film ambience crops up here. This ultra-noir sensibility is mated to a super-still dynamic that, by comparison, makes

Link

[www.geocities.com/parkerandlily](http://www.geocities.com/parkerandlily)

File Under

Quiet music for sad people

R.I.Y.L.

Low, Pram, Lambchop

Low sound like Rage Against The Machine. Parker's vocal murmur is pitched somewhere between Lambchop's Kurt Wagner and the bitterly muttering hipster at your local café. Lily's spooky organ and angular vibraphone/marimba work create a quiet tension, bringing to mind British creep-rockers Pram in a New York state of mind. *Hello Halo* contains several instrumental cuts on which Parker's reverb-and-tremolo guitars mesh with Lily's keyboards for a kind of mutant-surf feel; imagine the Ventures jamming with Spacemen 3. Ultimately, these are more about texture than tunes—the torchy "Only Heartbreak For Me" is as heavy as the songcraft gets—but the elegant melodies and simple settings suggest that Parker And Lily's pop sensibilities are nevertheless at work, no matter how thick the emotional fog surrounding the songs. >>>JIM ALLEN



## P.O.D.

**Satellite** Atlantic

In response to the commonly asked Christian question "what would Jesus do?" the mighty P.O.D. (that's Payable On Death) would plug the amps into your gut and soul, and answer with a throaty roar, "Jesus would rock the party." Sonny, Wuv, Marcos and Traa may look like a band of burly, tattooed street thugs who could beat your ass with a flick of their collective wrist, but P.O.D. rocks righteously (in a good way). On *Satellite*, the proud Christians and *TRL* darlings don't use their songs as vehicles to blandly praise the Lamb of God or verbally accost sinners,

Link

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

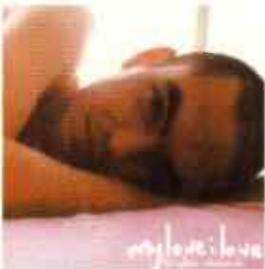
File Under

Righteous rock (literally)

R.I.Y.L.

Deftones, Bad Brains,  
Rage Against The Machine

gypsies and heathens. Rather, P.O.D. blasts ear cavities with a Deftones-meets-Bad Brains method of groove, effectively encoding a positive spiritual attitude often favored by Rastafarians, in a reggae-tinted, balls-out package of well-crafted metal and rhymes. "The Messenjah" and "Without Jah, Nothin'" are perfectly balanced, recommended daily allowances of faith and bang-your-head beats. Rock 'n' rollers have riffed for Krishna, Mohammed, Jah and even the big JC throughout history, but *Satellite's* bevy of instant hits, "Set It Off," "Alive" and "Boom," serve multiple masters—never alienating the hungry metal kids uninterested in dogmatic ideologies, while at the same time providing a kickin' refuge for members of any youth ministry. >>>AMY SCIARRETTO



## BOGDAN RACZYNSKI

**myloveilove** Rephlex

Polish-born Raczynski's name is probably most familiar to stateside IDM enthusiasts from his Autechre remix on Warp's 10-year anniversary collection. The several albums he's released on Rephlex have been of the drill-'n'-bass-as-fractured-fairytale variety. His latest, *myloveilove*, comprises 17 considerably more mellow vignettes, all entitled "myloveilove," unfolding in 42 minutes. Their playful, haiku-like snap recalls Eno's *Another Green World*. But where Eno was aiming for a tangential listening experience of uncanny juxtapositions and unspecific emotional

Link

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

File Under

Laptop diary techno

R.I.Y.L.

Aphex Twin, Plaid,  
Bochum Welt

states. Raczynski's album is more deeply expressive. In keeping with his label's trademarked motto ("Purveyors Of The Finest Braindance"), each cut sounds as if it's turning a page in Raczynski's diary. And like any diary, *myloveilove* is a hit-or-miss affair for anyone not dancing in the author's brain—uniquely warped one moment, dreadfully impenetrable the next. When Raczynski lets his laptop wheeze with the stutters of an accordion or augments his lo-fi electro beats and metronomic clicks with shards of child-like melody, the result is as warmly inviting as a lullaby. When he disfigures the tone, usually with his occasional in-the-shower falsetto, it's as indifferent to conveying any sort of listening experience as the infamous Jandek, but without that Texas recluse's fine sense of pomo selfless promotion. >>>KEVIN JOHN



RemyZero

TheGoldenHum

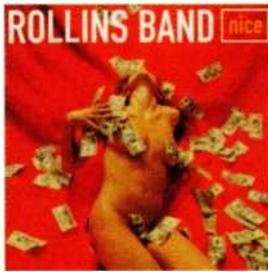
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On Elektra compact discs  
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## ROLLINS BAND

**Nice** Sanctuary

At 40, one-time hardcore visionary Henry Rollins is a movie actor, host of Fox's anthology series *Night Visions*, an established spoken-word artist, an author and a poet. In the midst of all this multimedia action, he has continued to pump out Rollins Band discs, mostly with limited success. *Nice* is yet another mediocre Rollins album in a string of them. A collection of blues-metal songs adorned with Hank's "subtle" reflections on government and societal conformity, it lacks the grooves and power to properly engage. But it also avoids aging punk clichés and nü-metal conceits, and there are highlights. The former Black Flag frontman barks, talks and jives over the stripped-down buzz of his now-steady lineup—guitarist Jim Wilson, bassist Marcus Blake and drummer Jason Mackenroth—delving into the funk early on with "Up For It," where clinical drumming gives way to burning wah-wah guitar solos and soulful five-piece female backing vocals. "Going Out Strange" has Rollins pondering death in the company of downtempo snare battering and fuzzed-out Sabbath guitars. Meanwhile, "Gone Inside The Zero" and lead single "Your Number Is One" are classic Rollins, amped-out rock tunes with just a splash of punk. It may not be a full return to relevance, but *Nice* does serve notice that Hank still, somehow, rules. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

Link

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

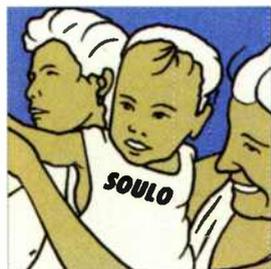
File Under

Tenured non-conformist rock

R.I.Y.L.

Thin Lizzy, Clutch,  
Black Sabbath reunions

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## SOULO

**Soulo** Plug Research

L.A.'s Plug Research label has built itself a reputation for releasing electronic music so far past left field that its discs don't just sail over the wall, they zoom straight through windshields in stadium parking lots. Thus, longtime listeners may be stunned to hear first-time callers Soulo—former Chicago art-schoolers Shawn King and Nate Flannigan—pick up the drums and guitars and wax nostalgic over a snapshot of post-rock, circa 1995. At least, that's what it sounds like at first; their twining guitars and keyboards weave wistful tributes to early Tortoise and the Moog-y shimmer of

Link

[www.soulo.net](http://www.soulo.net)

File Under

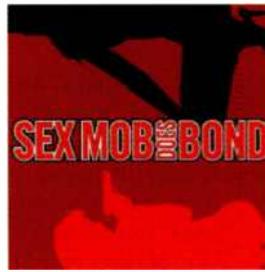
Retro-proto-post-rock-

electropop

R.I.Y.L.

Lackluster, Languis, Plone

mid-period Stereolab, and their songwriting is deft and economical. But listen closer and you'll hear another impulse: the attention to detail that colors the miniaturist pop of post-techno projects like Belgium's Zeal and England's deFocus. This hybrid is borne out in the plaintive, bending high note at the heart of the opener, "This Is The Same As It Always Was"; slightly off-key and then looped over and over, it seems to blush, almost as if aware of its misstep, caught achingly between the human and the programmed. And so it goes throughout, as Soulo takes the sparkle of electronic music and applies it to brightly painted baubles meant to be carried in your pocket and astonish friends, a kind of "naïve" music that belies serious sophistication. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE



## SEX MOB

**Sex Mob Does Bond** Ropeadope

Title tells all: Bond meets Mob, Sex Mob. The ultra-suave Brit secret agent—or more accurately, composer John Barry's scores for the 007 series of films—receive the Steven Bernstein treatment with this LP. The New York slide-trumpet player reworked "Goldfinger" and "Live And Let Die" for the Mob's 1998 debut, and this time constructs a virtual soundtrack album. It's a fascinating, jagged symphony of acoustic instruments and electro-funk, courtesy of Bernstein's alternately delicate and overblown horn, Briggan Krauss's shrieking alto and baritone saxes, Tony Scherr's slamming

Link

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

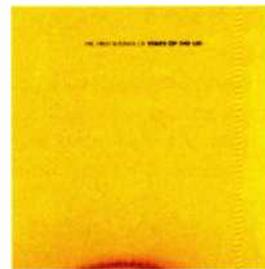
File Under

Earthy electric funk jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Medeski Martin And Wood,  
DJ Logic, Lounge Lizards

string bass, Kenny Wollesen's backbeat-hungry drums, John Medeski's juicy organ and Scotty Hard's crunchy production effects. Two versions of the leader's own "Dr. Yes" bookend the disc with pouncing unison accents and a lilting melody that opens up into a soulful, over-the-top vocal chorus. The Barry material is shaken, not stirred, with arty call-and-response games breaking up the themes: Check out the dialogue between jamming organ and thrashing horns, punctuated by rolling and tumbling percussion, on "This Never Happened To The Other Feller." "You Only Live Twice" has Bernstein slicing through air-hanging, dub-tinted keyboard textures before the big finish, and Scherr leads the way into a handful of 007 themes on "Bond With Bongos." Marvin Hamlisch's "Nobody Does It Better" is moody, melodramatic and a bit metallic. Screw the martini. Dose me. >>>PHILIP BOOTH



## STARS OF THE LID

**The Tired Sounds Of...** Kranky

Stars Of The Lid principal Brian McBride once noted that there's no need for vocals when trying to pay homage to the sounds of your refrigerator. As applicable as that comment may be to SOTL's ambient tone-designs, McBride and partner Adam Wiltzie are probably not as enamored with appliance hum as they'd have you think. Unlike many similarly minded sound abstractionists, the Austin-based duo works almost exclusively with warm analog sounds—the afterglow of a resonating guitar chord, the drone of a closely mic-ed cello string, the patter of pouring rain—and then removes their

Link

[www.brainwashed.com/sotl](http://www.brainwashed.com/sotl)

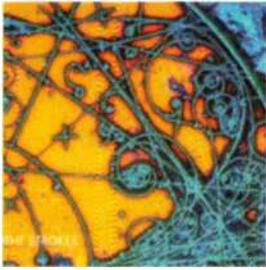
File Under

Kitchen-appliance ambience

R.I.Y.L.

Gavin Bryars, Sigur Rós,  
Aphex Twin's *Selected  
Ambient Works Volume II*

recognizable outlines, re-contextualizing them into almost choral, orchestral pieces, complete with subtle movements and themes. *The Tired Sounds Of...* is, in fact, centered on five multi-segmented "suites," stretching from the ethereal ache of "Requiem For Dying Mothers," to the stark, listless drones of "Austin Texas Mental Hospital" to the gorgeous, slo-mo pulsations (is that a piano? a flute?) of "A Love Song (For Cubs)." At two-plus hours, spaced out over two discs (or six sides of vinyl), *The Tired Sounds Of...* flirts a little too confidently with its own title, but this kind of beauty doesn't come without its sacrifices on the part of the listener. If you're looking for instant gratification, go listen to your Frigidaire. >>>COLIN HELMS



**THE STROKES**

**Is This It** RCA

Yeah yeah, the Strokes all wear greasy \$200 haircuts, and singer Julian Casablancas's dad is a famous modeling agency guy, but as an old friend once said, "What about the songs?" The songs. Hmm. Well, simply put, the songs on this much-hyped New York City quintet's debut are fantastic, oozing youthful energy and post-slacker cool. Casablancas wrote these bite-size anthems, all of which employ words only to give his disaffected Lower East Side growl something to latch on to. They're not totally unpoetic though, and quibbling about them becomes com-

pletely irrelevant when the slithering bass ratchets up, the staccato guitars start to dance and the drums go rat-tat-tat. Other criticisms? Well, the Strokes' ultra-composed sound (and looks) seem a little too scripted for a fictionalized account of CBGB and the golden age of New York art-punk, and *Is This It* isn't recorded particularly well—then again, neither were early Patti Smith, Television or Ramones milestones. One last gripe: Guitarists Albert Hammond Jr. and Nick Valensi never smooth out the razorblade riffs and revel in the sound of 12 strings interacting, as each song's confined to a three-minute vessel. Still, when the guitarists and Casablancas push, songs like "Alone, Together" and "Trying Your Luck" transform rock from something that's become oh-so-fresh-and-clean into the gloriously dirty pleasure it's meant to be. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN

Link

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

File Under

Handsome boy modeling band

R.I.Y.L.

Spoon, Elastica, Television, Billy Squier



**SUPERCHUNK**

**Here's To Shutting Up** Merge

Superchunk's 1989 anti-establishment classic "Slack Motherfucker" is eerily foretelling of the Chapel Hill band's current baby-soft sound. "I'm working/ But I'm not working for you," singer-guitarist Mac McCaughan spews in that punk-pop nugget. Fast-forward 12 years to *Here's To Shutting Up*, and it's sort of like shopping for a new bed at Ethan Allen as opposed to getting one for free on the curb. A lovely cascade of gently aged pop replete with flaxen strings, horns and Mac's ultra-wispy emoting (his signature falsetto now frequently dips into a hushed tenor that's affable yet frightfully free of quirks) rules *Shutting Up*, continuing where '99's

Link

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

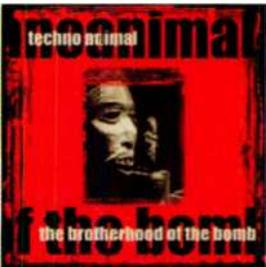
File Under

Here's where the strings (and horns and keyboards) come in

R.I.Y.L.

Clem Snide, Guided By Voices, Portastatic, Humidifier

*Come Pick Me Up* left off. This may alarm the purists, but remember, they're not working for you. There are still plenty of barbs buried in the pillows of Air-y keyboard bleeps and cello arrangements—the pretty, groomed "Act Surprised" gets frisky and namechecks Michael Jackson, while "Rainy Streets" and "Art Class (Song For Yayoi Kusama)" snap into place with the buzzing guitars and rubberband-tight rhythm section that previously over-populated their albums. Pedal steel courtesy of the Rock\*A\*Teens' Chris Lopez morphs "Phone Sex" into a country charmer, perhaps signaling the next chapter of Superchunk's long, enviable ride through the annals of the American underground. "All the music I like is out of date," Mac muses in "Out On The Wing." Superchunk's longtime fans may not agree. >>>KRISTY MARTIN



**TECHNO ANIMAL**

**The Brotherhood Of The Bomb** Matador

Kevin Martin and Justin Broadrick's careers may have begun in grindcore and industrial music's more experimental fringes, but Techno Animal's *The Brotherhood Of The Bomb* incorporates a wide array of styles the duo has long been integrating to produce their unholy sonic mix. Dub, hip-hop, techno and even house music all get their moment in the shadow of the *Bomb*. *Brotherhood* began to take shape during sessions for the '98 album, *Bad Blood* (from Martin and Broadrick's Ice project), on which the menacing guitar and deep bass of metal masters Godflesh clashed violently with

rhymes by underground rappers El-P (of Company Flow), Toastie Taylor (of New Flesh For Old) and Priest (of Anti-Pop Consortium). On *Brotherhood*, Techno Animal further realizes a deeper groove in the synthesis of scraping metal hip-hop beats and subterranean walking basslines, the visceral power of Sonic Sum's ghoulish harmonized lyrics on "DC-10" bristling over blazing walls of guitar distortion. The mood is sinister and mysterious thanks to Anti-Pop Consortium's psychedelic spiels on "Glass Prism Enclosure," and reaches an abstract terror-dub with Toastie Taylor's contributions on "Piranha." Those relishing Broadrick and Martin's instrumental prowess will find the hell they seek on five lyric-less tracks, with the piercing whine and cavernous howl of "Hypertension" casting a particularly evil tone over the album. Crank this up on Halloween. >>>HEATH K. HIGHNIGHT

Link

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

techno\_animal

File Under

Tech-horror

R.I.Y.L.

Porter Ricks, Scorn, New Kingdom



**TELEFON TEL AVIV**

**Fahrenheit Fair Enough** Hefty

Echoing underground beat-savvy producer Scott Herren's Savath + Savalas guise, Telefon Tel Aviv's debut *Fahrenheit Fair Enough* connects the seemingly disparate worlds of post-rock and intelligent dance music. Where the two diverge is in this New Orleans-based duo's stronger emphasis on rhythm and the occasionally more prominent references to jazz and classical music. Telefon Tel Aviv's Joshua Eustis and Charles Cooper indicate a fondness for alliteration that extends well past its nominal usage. They're also guided by a mellifluous intermingling of acoustic instrumen-

Link

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

File Under

Math rock via computer science

R.I.Y.L.

Tortoise, To Rococo Rot, Tied + Tickled Trio

tation and electronic production techniques. On "What's The Use Of Feet If You Haven't Got Legs?," a swarm of sweeping keyboard vamps, percussion twitches and shards of dubbed-out electro beats are galvanized by an elegant piano melody and fretless bass contractions. The emergent Fender Rhodes shimmer of the title track unfolds to reveal an emotive yet playful scenario of syncopated chirpings, hypnotic guitar clusters and whooshing sonic textures. Alternately, found-sound flippancy registers throughout the album's rhythmic tracks, becoming periodically overbearing. Yet when restrained, as on the Spartan piano-and-acoustic-guitar piece "Life Is All About Taking Things In And Putting Things Out," the results are as effective as the beat-driven material, giving *Fahrenheit Fair Enough* a fragile ambience few other recent releases can muster. >>>KURI KONDRAK

# MIXED SIGNALS

BY RASPBERRY JONES

## ANDREW JERVIS

### Love From the Sun: The Modern Music of Ubiquity

Ubiquity

**What it is:** A feast of rare pan-global grooves from the vaults of the Bay Area's seasoned dance eclecticists.

**Why you want it:** The Ubiquity stable has always included the dancefloor's great unifiers, mixing Afro-Cuban and Brazilian percussive jolts, acid jazz's instrumental attack and the luxurious nature of lounge beats, even when dealing in trip-hop and techno. Label head Andrew Jervis's mix stays true to form, marrying organic sounds to beats in open-armed, come-one-come-all fashion. From the batucada soul-techno that pioneer Kirk Degiorgio fashions as *As One* to Bay Area percussionist E.W. Wainwright's Afro jammy to Reclouse's Detroit-minded remix of Loqate jazzy house, this is groove music that lives up to the name of the label's weekly San Francisco party, *No Categories*.

R.I.Y.L.: Gilles Peterson, Greyboy, Norman Jay

## MIXMASTER MIKE

### Spin Psyche Moonshine

**What it is:** Former Invisibl Skratch Pikl kicks up a hip-hop mix-tape full of old-skool bravado, new-skool lyricism and ill-skool cuts.

**Why you want it:** Now that his full-time gig is Fourth Beastie rather than Fifth Pikl, Mixmaster Mike has decided to devote his cutting and mixing skills to the good of the party. So *Psyche* is a block-rockin' mix, integrating the indie West Coast vibe that has long been the Pikl's stomping ground (Deltron 3030, Cali Agents, Fat Lip) and East Coast-flavored classicism (KRS-One, Gang Starr, Large Professor), all transformed into a classic set using Mike's tension-building musicality and beat-matching prowess.

R.I.Y.L.: Cut Chemist, the Beat Junkies, DJ Premiere

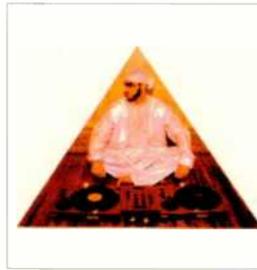
## DJ SNEAK

### Sneak's Juju Beats Magnetic

**What it is:** Bumpin' and booty-ful beats from second-wave Chicago House master.

**Why you want it:** For his first mix collection in four years, one of the world's premier house DJs gets at once traditional and futuristic. Inspired by Southern California's annual Jujubeats rave, these are big, modernist beat-tremors to shake a crowd with. Like much of Chicago's '90s guard, Sneak works the common ground between the Windy City's futuristic disco and the harder dance music unleashed in the wake of Detroit techno uprising, and *Juju Beats* is full of steely-edged moments where genre categories are thoroughly useless (Sneak's "U Betta Know," Blue Muse Vs. Studio Nova's "Guerilla Tactics"). Pledge allegiance to one nation under a new mothership-type funk.

R.I.Y.L.: Daft Punk, Green Velvet, Derrick Carter



Link

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

File Under

The hip-house hero strikes back

R.I.Y.L.

Chemical Brothers, Masters At Work, Groove Armada

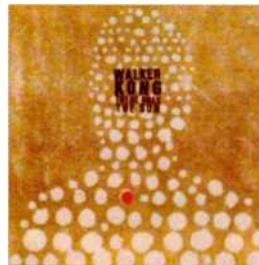
Chemical Brothers, Masters At Work, Groove Armada

But where "U" had a certain melodious pleading, his latest is less of a protest than an insult-fest. The title track kicks off *Khan* with the same words as the hit, but ends the couplet on a whole new tack—this time, "You don't even know me" nestles up next to "You can blow me." Van Helden's always enjoyed his bit of high-ego hip-hop bluster, and even as he takes back the fun with samples from the Kinks' "You Really Got Me" and Foreigner's "Urgent," on "(Girl) You Got Me" and "The Robots Are Cumming," respectively, his need to boast and roast his perceived enemies on the scene continually takes over. The frantic beats fans have come to expect haven't gone away on *Gandhi Khan*, but they're stripped down, tweaked and EQ-ed until they cry for mercy. By the time the outro fades, there's blood on the dancefloor—and Armand ain't exactly bringing out the mop. >>>LEAH GREENBLATT

## WALKER KONG

### There Goes The Sun Magic Marker

Not sure what these Minneapolis chaps are up to, but they've got Kong in their name and sing giddily about a monster climbing the Empire State Building. Then there's the horns, harmonies, and reverb—and the Fab Four-related twist in the album title. OK, so Walker Kong fail the modernity test, but what Jeremy Ackerman and his merry band of Minnesotans lack in timely pop culture references and slick sounds, they make up with expertly played, finely detailed songs. Acoustic and electric guitars squiggle and swirl, edging toward sloppy psychedelia but usually erring on the side of cleanliness, all the



Link

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

File Under

Post-tee, neo-retro, non-ironic indie pop

R.I.Y.L.

Belle & Sebastian, the Aislors Set, Cinerama

better to accompany Ackerman and drummer Emily Cahill's sweet, slightly chilled vocals. Old-timey keyboards (farfisa, Hammond), string arrangements and horn charts enliven much of *There Goes The Sun*, propelling melodic romps like "Pulitzer Prize" and "Vivian Girls" and propping up woozier moments like "Devotion" and "Kissing Booth." It's not all a happy magic carpet ride over a Bacharach landscape, however. "New Fallout Fashions" works up a white-soul groove that treads a little too closely to ABC's "Look Of Love," and Ackerman's lyrical attempts to stray from romantic reverie often lapse into cloying non sequitur. Still, it'll win over the hipsters at your next cocktail party. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



## WILLIAM

**Lost Change** BBE

*Lost Change*, the third installment in BBE's excellent *Beat Generation* series, sees Black Eyed Peas producer Will.I.Am picking up where Jay Dee and Pete Rock left off, crafting a collection of bottom-heavy hip-hop grooves thick with jazz and soul. Where his predecessors kept it sparse, chilled and, for the most part, instrumental, Will.I.Am favors driving cuts splashed with unexpected color, recruiting gifted underground MCs to contribute lyrical muscle. "Ev Rebahdee" opens the album Trojan Horse-style with a laid-back funk groove; just when you think

it's gonna be all handclaps and wah-wah, Planet Asia punches through with a blistering delivery. Abruptly changing the pace, "Lay Me Down" (fronted by Terry Dexter) is a slow soul jam done up D'Angelo style, but the next two tracks are uptempo, guitar-heavy selections, barely minute-plus sketches (wisely replacing the usual hip-hop skit format) that could easily run longer. Will.I.Am takes the *Beat Generation* format and runs with it, coming up not only with a solid album, but more than one killer single in the process. Medusa's "Hooda Hella Yew," fusing Asian strings with rock rhythm, could easily keep pace with Outkast or Miss E. And the mournful "Money" boasts not only a brilliant horn section, but some of the most stirring harmonizing to come out of a hip-hop album in years. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE

Link

[www.bbemusic.co.uk](http://www.bbemusic.co.uk)

File Under

Not just a beat generation

R.I.Y.L.

Black Eyed Peas, Pete Rock,  
DJ Spinna



## YESTERDAYS NEW QUINTET

**Angles Without Edges** Stones Throw

Combine the swing of jazz and the bounce of hip-hop, and you've got the natural rhythmic hybrid woven together by Yesterdays New Quintet, the one-man band L.A. producer Madlib (Quasimoto, Lootpack) created to reinvent "fusion" for a new generation of headz. *Angles Without Edges* explores the middle ground between rigid beats and psychedelic jazz via digital drum kits, sampling and real-time improvisation. The execution is so precise that at times it's impossible to distinguish what's being played and what's being

looped. None of the album's 19 tracks of stick-and-move jazz is longer than four minutes, running together like a patchwork of unified ideas. Whereas hip-hop is at times derived from jazz's standardized practices (sampling its textures, employing vocal freestyles as solos), Madlib applies a jazz blueprint to hip-hop, totally removing song structure, replacing it with moving themes, textures and melodies, giving the songs life without use of an emcee. If you thought Quasimoto was a little too left-of-center before, you may want to take a seat with this one. Yesterday's New Quintet won't be too distant a headtrip for many hardcore underground hip-hop lovers, but it most definitely takes a few steps in the direction of expanding the music's unlimited potential. >>>OAMANI HARRISON

Link

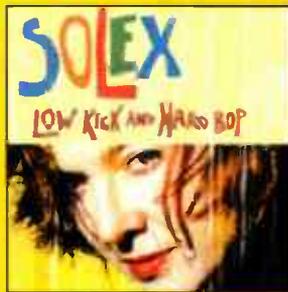
[www.stonesthrow.com/ynq](http://www.stonesthrow.com/ynq)

File Under

Jazz-hop

R.I.Y.L.

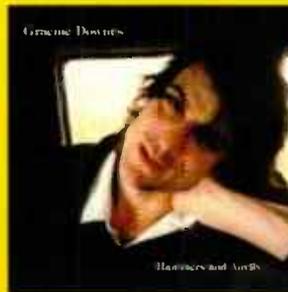
Quasimoto, Sun Ra,  
Poets Of Rhythm



**Solex Low Kick and Hard Bop**  
Ole-499 CD



**Mr. Len Pity The Fool: Experiments...**  
Ole-392 DBL LP • CD



**Graeme Downes Hammers and Anvils**  
Ole-506 CD



**Aereogramme A Story in White**  
Ole-533 CD



Free MP3's at  
[www.motodorrrecords.com](http://www.motodorrrecords.com)

# Quiet Riot

A new generation of women wrap their political and cultural messages in music, as Ladyfests bloom on both sides of the Atlantic.

STORY: CHRIS NELSON • PHOTOS: BETH SHANDLES AND DAN LOCKE

**T**wo songs. That's all it takes. Two songs into the final gig of Ladyfest Scotland's three-day arts and activism blowout, and voluptuous Gossip singer Beth Ditto is slipping off her safety-pinned miniskirt, dropping her already drenched T-shirt to the stage floor.

"I know there was no workshop on body issues or fat-positive stuff, so I planned this for tonight," says the bouffanted belle, whose ample curves are covered now by just a silky black bra and underwear. "We got the granny panties!" the sassy garage-rock singer announces. "You're gonna see the crack sweat!"

The Scotland bash, staged in August, is just one of several recent, independently organized events operating under the Ladyfest moniker. Others took place in Chicago (August), New York (September) and Bloomington, Ind. (back in April). Plans are afoot to stage 2002 events in Atlanta, London and Nice, France.

Inspired by both the summer 2000 maiden conference in Olympia, Wash., and the '90s riot grrrl punk movement, Ladyfests across the U.S. and abroad are hosting these do-it-yourself gatherings with renewed vigor.

Familiar faces such as Bratmobile and Sleater-Kinney, newer acts like the Gossip and Tami Hart, and even folks from outside of punk and indie-rock circles (such as country singer Neko Case and minimalist funk godmothers ESG) are confabbing with scores of other bands and fans. Not just for shows, but how-to workshops, debates, skateboard jams and other activities where women can feel safe and supported in the company of other women.

In the process, Ladyfests are raising myriad questions: Are female artists really still ignored by the mainstream? Is banding together the best way to right the inequity? How does an event change when grrrls are not only onstage, but also behind the scenes as promoters, engineers, budget-minders and roadies?

Riot grrrls kicked open the '90s with anyone-can-mount-a-revolution feminist righteousness, but several developments had sidelined the movement by the middle of the decade. Concerned that mainstream reporters were both uninformed and exploitative, members of influential bands like Bikini Kill and Bratmobile urged their allies to ignore traditional media altogether. Those bands broke up, as did Heavens To Betsy. Eventually, the riot grrrl movement's focus on political empowerment was co-opted into the Spice Girls' toothless sales slogan, "girl power." Meanwhile, avenues that had opened to women in the alternative explosion were closing: By 2000, even

platinum artists like Alanis Morissette were being squeezed out of radio by Limp Bizkit and Eminem.

Ladyfest organizers aim to fill that vacuum, not just by supporting female artists, but by encouraging more women and

grrrls to take up the do-it-yourself mantle again. So is Ladyfest a movement?

"I don't think that movements are expressed by an event," says singer/songwriter and Cadallaca organist Sarah Dougher, 33. Dougher, an organizer and performer at the Olympia and Scotland Ladyfests, says that movements come from developing infrastructure—record labels, battered women's shelters, political groups—out of the events.

Movement or no, Ladyfest participants have been swimming in an air of achievement. "It's a total political feat that

we've been able to thrive," says singer and guitarist Tami Hart, 19. Clad in a seen-better-days tank top, she's still giddy two days after playing Chicago's Ladyfest.

That ebullience is the look of Ladyfest. Sure, plenty of Ladyfesters sport a tattoo or two. They carry bags polka-dotted by buttons hyping bands like Le Tigre and the Butchies. But Ladyfesters also look like college professors and librarians. What ties them together is a glow of invigoration. In Glasgow, women walk from this workshop to that, their intently delighted faces seeming to reveal the gears cranking inside their heads. All over, grrrls mosh, some topless, without fear of being ogled or manhandled.

This isn't just riot grrrl redux; these are ladies, not girls. That is, they see themselves not as a singular youth movement, but as part of the feminist tradition that stretches beyond Bikini Kill, to Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and the Suffragettes. Groundbreaking and still-active female musicians such as Black Flag bassist Kira Roessler and Raincoats bassist/singer Gina Birch loomed large at Ladyfest Olympia. While Ladyfesters haven't sought out the media by bucking for attention on *TRL*, they've also not

shunned reporters, as their protective riot grrrl predecessors did. Still, some question whether the feat of gathering women actually ghettoizes them.

"The 'women in music' thing has been pushed to me so hard for so long," says Mekons singer Sally Timms, 41, who nevertheless expressed her support with a solo set at Chicago's Ladyfest. "I like the idea of being considered a musician first."

Elverum, Norway's Fake worry about shows that focus on their gender before their ability to rock. Huddled around a tiny table upstairs at Glasgow's 13th Note Club, they spend hours



STOLIE



CHRISTY NOONE OF YVONNE DOLL AND THE LOCALS

tossing back vodka and beer, talking with dozens of Ladyfesters. The band would appear to be a mainstream marketer's dream: They're esthetic kin to Judas Priest but fronted by quintessentially Scandinavian (tall, blonde) identical twins Guri and Mari Langmyr.

"We don't really need a Ladyfest to play," says lead guitarist Guri, 27—though she adds that they love the event, which they also played in Olympia.

Men aren't excluded from Ladyfest, though some organizers have designated particular workshops—such as those dealing with sexually sensitive topics or how-tos on traditionally male-dominated areas like home recording—as female-only. In Glasgow, a handful of men complained that they should have been offered reduced-price tickets when they discovered they were shut out from a guitar workshop.

But the mood at Ladyfest is hardly confrontational. Organizers, bands and fans in Olympia, Glasgow and Chicago were happy to talk about the events with this male writer.

The overriding message is one of inspiration. Some might catch it seeing Brighton, England's Electrelane careen through a set of organ-based car-chase music, or hearing Glasgow's up-and-

coming Kirby recast "Ray Of Light" as garage rock. Others thrill to witness women working the soundboard or handling security.

"People definitely want it, there's a need for it—which compels you," says Nicole Artingstall, 19, outside the Glasgow event.

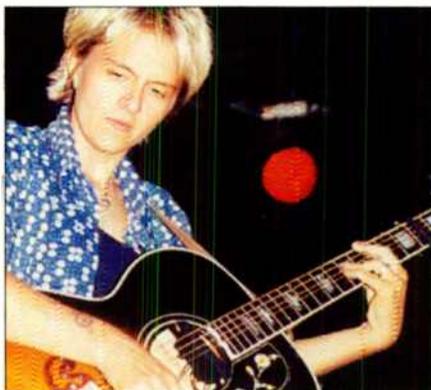
To wit: Ladyfest begets more Ladyfests. In the end, more people hop onstage, more voices join conversations about art and politics.

It's important, Dougher says, to recognize the



KIM

Ladyfests' limited impact on the larger view of how women see themselves in the world. Most of the bands involved are underground acts, which means they primarily engage a culturally and financially elite group of people.



YVONNE DOLL

The same, of course, was true for riot grrrl. And yet, even given its narrow scope, riot grrrl made a lasting impression on people from Sleater-Kinney's Corin Tucker to Nirvana's Kurt Cobain to untold numbers engrossed in a variety of D.I.Y. pursuits.

The Ladyfests have already made that impression. Dougher knows well how inspirational it can be. She saw fans at last year's event with "Ladyfest" tattooed on their asses before the shows had even finished.

"I thought, 'Wow—this has really touched you.'" **NMM**

**THE WEBSITE:** The original Ladyfest 2000 site, [www.ladyfest.org](http://www.ladyfest.org). It's all here from the pioneering event—not just what happened, but all the planning notes to help guide future ladies. Links to subsequent 'fests are here as well.

**THE LABEL:** Mr. Lady Records, [www.mrlady.com](http://www.mrlady.com). Home to Ladyfest alumni Le Tigre, the Butchies, Sarah Dougher and Tami Hart.

**THE ALBUM:** Sleater-Kinney, *All Hands On The Bad One* (Kill Rock Stars, 2000). The album that best sizes up riot grrrl's influence a decade down the line while pointing the way toward tomorrow.

**THE UP-AND-COMERS:** Three alumni of Ladyfests in 2001 to watch out for: Electrelane ([www.electrelane.com](http://www.electrelane.com)), organ-fueled frenzy; Loraxx ([www.loraxx.com](http://www.loraxx.com)), punishing bursts of metal; Kirby ([www.kirby-band.co.uk](http://www.kirby-band.co.uk)), the new new wave.

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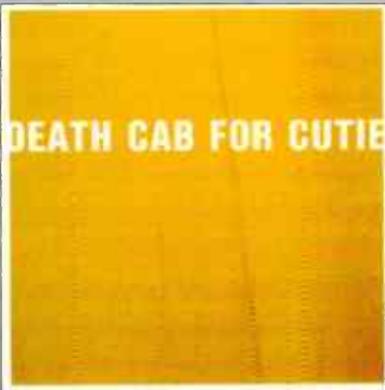
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# TOP 75



**DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE**  
THE PHOTO ALBUM  
(Barsuk)

**#1**

## 5 YEARS AGO

**JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION**  
Now I Got Worry  
(Matador-Capitol)

**LUSCIOUS JACKSON**  
Fever In, Fever Out  
(Grand Royal-Capitol)

**TOOL**  
Aenima  
(Zero)

**KULA SHAKER**  
K  
(Columbia)

**JOHNNY CASH**  
Unchained  
(American)

## 10 YEARS AGO

**NIRVANA**  
Nevermind  
(DGC)

**PIXIES**  
Trompe Le Monde  
(4AD-Elektra)

**RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS**  
Blood Sugar Sex Magik  
(Warner Bros.)

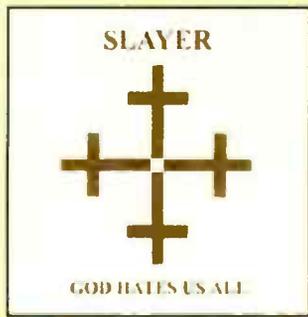
**SOUNDGARDEN**  
Badmotorfinger  
(A&M)

**PUBLIC ENEMY**  
Apocalypse 91  
(Do! Jam-Columbia)

ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1 DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE	The Photo Album	Barsuk
2 THE STROKES	Is This It	RCA
3 SPIRITUALIZED	Let It Come Down	Arista
4 APHEX TWIN	Drukqs	Warp-London-Sire
5 MODEST MOUSE	Everywhere And His Nasty Parlor Tricks	Epic
6 NEW ORDER	Get Ready	Reprise
7 THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE...	A New Morning, Changing Weather	Burning Heart-Epitaph
8 TENACIOUS D	Tenacious D	Epic
9 THE DISMEMBERMENT PLAN	Change	DeSoto
10 RYAN ADAMS	Gold	Lost Highway
11 FUGAZI	The Argument	Dischord
12 LE TIGRE	Feminist Sweepstakes	Mr. Lady
13 LES SAVY FAV	Go Forth	French Kiss
14 HOPE SANDOVAL AND THE WARM...	Bavarian Fruit Bread	Sanctuary
15 BEN FOLDS	Rockin' The Suburbs	Epic
16 OYSTERHEAD	The Grand Pecking Order	Elektra
17 PINBACK	Blue Screen Life	Ace Fu
18 BJÖRK	Vespertine	Elektra
19 MERCURY REV	All Is Dream	V2
20 SEAWORTHY	The Ride	Jetset
21 STRATFORD 4	The Revolt Against Tired Noises	Jetset
22 JONATHAN RICHMAN	Her Mystery Not Of High Heels And Eye Shadow	Vapor
23 OZOMATLI	Embrace The Chaos	Interscope
24 BEACHWOOD SPARKS	Once We Were Trees	Sub Pop
25 TREMBLING BLUE STARS	Alive To Every Smile	Sub Pop
26 NEW END ORIGINAL	Thriller	Jade Tree
27 BOB DYLAN	Love And Theft	Columbia
28 OZMA	Rock And Roll Part Three	Kung Fu
29 B. R. M. C.	Screaming Gun (EP)	Virgin
30 KINGS OF CONVENIENCE	Versus	Astralwerks
31 STARSAILOR	Love Is Here	Capitol
32 TORI AMOS	Strange Little Girls	Atlantic
33 HEY MERCEDES	Everynight Fire Works	Vagrant
34 DILATED PEOPLES	Expansion Team	ABB-Capitol
35 DJ KRUSH	Zen	Red Ink
36 R. L. BURNSIDE	Burnside On Burnside	Fat Possum-Epitaph
37 SCHATZI	Death Of The Alphabet EP	Mammoth
38 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS	Mink Car	Restless
39 SUPERCHUNK	Here's To Shutting Up	Merge
40 LENNY KRAVITZ	Lenny	Virgin
41 NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS	Phantom 51	Tone Cool
42 SENSE FIELD	Tonight And Forever	Nettwerk America
43 DR. JOHN	Creole Moon	Blue Note
44 EMILIANA TORRINI	Rarities	Virgin
45 GARBAGE	Beautiful Garbage	Almo-Interscope
46 HER SPACE HOLIDAY	Manic Expressive	Tiger Style
47 JAY FARRAR	Sebastopol	Artemis
48 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Hank Williams: Timeless	Lost Highway
49 GROOVE ARMADA	Goodbye Country (Hello Nightclub)	Jive Electro
50 BIS	Return To Central	spinART
51 KINGSBURY MANX	Let You Down	Overcoat
52 MAD CAPSULE MARKETS	OSC-DIS (Oscillator In Distortion)	Palm
53 JETTINGHAM	Jettingham	Republic-Universal
54 MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT	Reincarnation Of Luna	Invisible
55 DANIEL JOHNSTON	Rejected Unknown	Gammon
56 PEDRO THE LION	It's Hard To Find A Friend	Jade Tree
57 STEREO LAB	Sound-Dust	Elektra
58 SOLEX	Low Kick And Hard Bop	Matador
59 SYSTEM OF A DOWN	Toxicity	American-Columbia
60 CHARLATANS UK	Wonderland	MCA
61 CHRIS WHITLEY	Rocket House	ATO
62 DREDD	Leitmotif	Interscope
63 ALL	Live Plus One	Epitaph
64 KID LOCO	Kill Your Darlings	Atlantic
65 SORRY ABOUT DRESDEN	Convenience Of Indecision	Saddle Creek
66 JAH WOBBLE AND BILL LASWELL	Radioaxiom: A Dub Transmission	Axiom-Palm
67 WOVEN	EPrime	Interscope
68 P. O. D.	Satellite	Atlantic
69 MILEMARKER	Anaesthetic	Jade Tree
70 TOM WAITS	Used Songs: 1973-1980	Rhino
71 SPARKLEHORSE	It's A Wonderful Life	Capitol
72 BUDDY AND JULIE MILLER	Buddy And Julie Miller	HighTone-Rhino
73 HELIO SEQUENCE	Young Effectuals	Cavity Search
74 BEBEL GILBERTO	Tanto Tempo Remixes	Six Degrees
75 INCUBUS	Morning View	Epic

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. Money can buy a fine dog but it is kindness that makes him wag his tail.

# METAL TOP 25



1	SLAYER God Hates Us All	AMERICAN
2	CONVERGE Jane Doe	EQUAL VISION
3	SYSTEM OF A DOWN Toxicity	AMERICAN-COLUMBIA
4	KITTIE Oracle	ARTEMIS
5	EMPEROR Prometheus: The Discipline Of...	CANDLELIGHT
6	SOILENT GREEN A Deleted Symphony...	RELAPSE
7	SCAR CULTURE Inscribe	CENTURY MEDIA
8	CHIMAIRA Pass Out Of Existence	ROADRUNNER
9	OZZY OSBOURNE Down To Earth	EPIC
10	WITCHERY Symphony For The Devil	NECROPOLIS
11	SLIPKNOT Iowa	ROADRUNNER
12	FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES Too Bad You're Beautiful	FERRET
13	WILL HAVEN Carpe Diem	REVELATION
14	40 BELOW SUMMER Invitation To The Dance	LONDON
15	MACHINE HEAD Supercharger	ROADRUNNER
16	KREATOR Violent Revolution	SPV
17	P.O.D. Satellite	ATLANTIC
18	TESTAMENT First Strike, Still Deadly	SPIFFIRE
19	BANE Give Blood	EQUAL VISION
20	GWAR Violence Has Arrived	METAL BLADE
21	AGNOSTIC FRONT Dead Yuppies	EPITAPH
22	GODFLESH Hymns	KOCH ENTERTAINMENT
23	AMERICAN HEAD CHARGE The War Of Art	AMERICAN
24	THERION Secret Of The Runes	CENTURY MEDIA
25	SEVENDUST Animosity 2 Song Sampler	TVT

Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Loud Rock charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters. Slayer's No. 1 and all is right with the world.

# RPM TOP 25



1	APEX TWIN Drukqs	WARP-LONDON-SIRE
2	GROOVE ARMADA Goodbye Country (Hello Nightclub)	JIVE ELECTRO
3	BT Rare And Remixed	NETTWERK
4	L TJ BUKEM FEAT. MC CONRAD Progression Sessions	GOOD LOOKING
5	WAY OUT WEST Intensify	NETTWERK AMERICA
6	RICHIE HAWTIN DE9: Closer To The Edit	MUTE
7	DJ KRUSH Zen	RED INK
8	GREEN VELVET Whatever	CAJUAL ENTERTAINMENT-RELIEF
9	VARIOUS ARTISTS Granite	BEDROCK-PIONEER
10	ADAM FREELAND On Tour	KINETIC-REPRISE
11	YMC Essentials	YOSHITOSHI
12	DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID Under The Influence	SIX DEGREES
13	THE AVALANCHES Since I Left You	LONDON-SIRE
14	JODY Way Out There	BLISS
15	RAE AND CHRISTIAN Anotherlatenight	GRAND CENTRAL-STUDIO K7
16	INTERFEARENCE Take That Train	UBIQUITY
17	BEBEL GILBERTO Tanto Tempo Remixes	SIX DEGREES
18	THE NEW DEAL The New Deal	SILVERTONE-JIVE
19	THUNDERBALL Scorpio Rising	EIGHTEENTH STREET LOUNGE
20	FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY Epitaph	METROPOLIS
21	TIM FIELDING Ley Lines	JOURNEYS BY OJ
22	HERBIE HANCOCK Future 2 Future	TRANSPARENT
23	FOUR TET Pause	DOMINO
24	DANNY HOWELLS Nocturnal Frequencies 3	LOGIC
25	KIRK DEGIORGIO PRESENTS: AS ONE 21st Century Soul	UBIQUITY

Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly RPM charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters. Next issue 100% goaltucker free!

# HIP-HOP TOP 25



1	DILATED PEOPLES Expansion Team	ABB-CAPITOL
2	JAY-Z The Blueprint	ROC-A-FELLA
3	SAUL WILLIAMS Amethyst Rock Star	AMERICAN
4	ARSONISTS Date Of Birth	MATADOR
5	PHIL DA AGONY "Watch Out"	GOODVIBE
6	AESOP ROCK Labor Days	DEF JUX
7	SOUNDTRACK Training Day	PRIORITY
8	CANNIBAL OX The Cold Vein	DEF JUX
9	EYEDEA AND ABILITIES "Blindly Firing"	RHYME SAYERS
10	VARIOUS ARTISTS Eastern Conference All Stars II	LANDSPEED
11	DE LA SOUL "Baby Phat"	TOMMY BOY
12	PHOENIX ORION AND TEAM ELOHEEM Secret Wars	ATOMCANDY
13	LIVING LEGENDS "Got A Question For Ya"	RAWKUS
14	DMX The Great Depression	DEF JAM
15	CUT CHEMIST/MADLIB Bunky's Pick/6 V. Of In The Rain	STONES THROW
16	MR. LEN Pity The Fool	MATADOR
17	SAGE FRANCIS "Climb Trees"	ANTICON
18	YESTERDAYS NEW QUINTET Angles Without Edges	STONES THROW
19	VARIOUS ARTISTS Urban Revolutions	FUTURE PRIMITIVE
20	JA RULE Pain Is Love	DEF JAM
21	DJ KRUSH Zen	RED INK
22	ROOTS MANUVA Run Come Save Me	BIG DADA
23	RAW PRODUCE F/ MR. LEN "I Am Myself"	LANDSPEED
24	MOS DEF "Jam On It"	RAWKUS
25	FREESTYLE FELLOWSHIP Temptations	PROJECT BLOWED-NU GRUV

Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Hip-Hop charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters. The nebula in the brook secretly thinks itself a precious stone.

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**NOAM CHOMSKY** An American Addiction: Drugs, Guerrillas, And Counterinsurgency In US Intervention In Colombia *Alternative Tentacles*  
 —*Shit, That's what I was going to name my new record.*  
**DJ COLETTE** Our Day *Netwerk*  
**COME DOWN** Sender (EP) *Igapon Recordings*  
**HE DEADLINES** Fashion Over Function *Tooth And Nail*  
**DEEPSPACE 5** The Night We Called It A Day *Uprok*  
**DELERIUM** Odyssey - The Remix *Netwerk*  
**ESO CHARIS** Eso Charis *Solid State*  
**MARVIN GAYE & TAMMI TERRELL** The Complete Duets *Universal*  
**GOOD RIDDANCE/KILL YOUR IDOLS** Split (EP) *Jade Tree*  
**JOSH GROBAN** Josh Groban *143-Warner Bros.*  
**BUDDY GUY** Millennium *Universal*  
**BEN HARPER** Pleasure & Pain *Virgin*  
**KEVIN HEARN AND THIN BUCKLE** H-Wing *Netwerk*  
**MICK JAGGER** Goddess In The Doorway *Virgin*  
**BOB JAMES** Restoration: The Best Of Bob James (2CD) *Warner Bros.*  
**KICKED IN THE HEAD** Thick As Thieves *Resurrection A.D.*  
**KID ROCK** Cocky *Atlantic*  
**KIDNEYTHIEVES** Phi In The Sky *Extasy*  
**KORN** Korn (reissue) *Epic-Immortal*  
**MIRZA** Last Cousins *Ba Da Bing*  
**ONESIDEZERO** Is This Room Getting Smaller *Maverick*  
**OUTKAST** Greatest Hits *LaFace-Arista*  
**SMASHING PUMPKINS** Greatest Hits *Virgin*  
**SOUNDTRACK** New Guy *Epic*  
**SOUNDTRACK** The Lord Of The Rings—The Fellowship Of The Ring *Warner Bros.*  
**THIS YEAR'S MODEL** 3 Songs *TYM*  
**TIMBALAND & MAGOO** Indecent Proposal *Virgin*  
**TLC** Greatest Hits *LaFace-Arista*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** 4 Rebels *VP*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** D'Soca Zone (2nd Wine) *VP*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Monkeywrenching The New World Order (2CD) *Alternative Tentacles*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Music For Dreams *Netwerk*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Now That's What I Call Music 8 *Virgin*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Strictly The Best v.27 *VP*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Strictly The Best v.28 *VP*  
**EARMONN VITT** Old Wave New Ride (EP) *Self-Starters Foundation*  
**GENE WATSON** Ultimate Collection *Hip-0*

**NOVEMBER 27**

**ASTRALASIA** Somehow, Somewhere *Transient*  
**AUTOCHE** Chaistic Slide (reissue) *Warp*  
**BLODDM 05** Stills & Honey *Starfish*  
**BROTOMSTATES** Qtio (EP) *Warp*  
**CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE** La Manchan *Sit-n-Spin*  
**COPERNICUS** Immediate Eternity *Nevermore*  
**THE MELODY UNIT** Choose Your Own Adventure *Hidden Agenda-Parasol*  
**CHRIS MORRIS** Blue Jam, Burning'n Tree; Hard Normal Daddy (reissues) *Warp*  
**SQUAREPUSHER** Selection Sixteen (reissue) *Warp*  
**TEMPRESS** White Christmas *Tempress*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Cinemaphonic: Soul Punch *Motel*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Ozark Folksongs *Rounder*

**DECEMBER 4**

**CYPRESS HILL** Stoned Raiders *Columbia*  
**BIBI FARBEN** Does It Have To Be Christmas This Year? *Glow Time*  
**FREESTYLE FELLOWSHIP** Temptations Instrumentals (2LP) *Ground Control-Nu Gruv*  
**GUIDED BY VOICES/AIRPDRT 5** Selective Service *Luna-Recordhead*  
**LOSTPROPHETS** The Fake Sounds Of Progress *Columbia*  
**MOTH** Double (EP) *Virgin*  
**NATE DOGG** Music & Me *Elektra*  
 —*When I was 16, my friend and I used to roll to the tune of Warren G & Nate Dogg's "Regulate.". The friend and I no longer speak, but my love for Nate Dogg, sporting the finesse and style of a natural born hustla, stands strong.*  
**NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS** 51 Phantom *Tone-Cool*  
**OUTKAST** LaFace-Arista  
**SOUNDTRACK** Not Another Teen Movie *Warner Bros.*  
**SOUNDTRACK** Ocean's 11 *Warner Bros.*  
**DUSTY SPRINGFIELD** Ultimate Collection *Hip-0*

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Buy Out *VP*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Nine Night *VP*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Pure 90s *UTV*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Spin This *Virgin*

**DECEMBER 11**

**CHEROKEE** RCA  
**DSP FEAT. APATHY** Trife-a-saurus Rex (12-inch) *DSP*  
**MARK KOZELEK** If You Want Blood (2LP) *Badman*  
**LATRELLE** Dirty Girl, Wrong Girl, Bad Girl *Arista*  
**MADONNA** GHV2 (Ltd. Ed.) *Maverick*  
**PEST** Slap On Tap (7-inch) *Ninja Tune*  
**RODEO BOY** The Pine And Promise *Sit-n-Spin*  
**DIANA ROSS & THE SUPREMES** Anthology (2CD) *Universal*  
**SOUNDTRACK** Vanilla Sky *Warner Bros.*  
**SUPERTRAMP** Very Best Of *Universal*

**DECEMBER 18**

**BELTONES** Cheap Trinkets *TKO*  
**EVIL BEAVER** Still Smells Like Christmas Spirit *Johanns Face*  
**GHOST OF ROCK** (7-inch) *Sit-n-Spin*  
**PAM HALL** Time For Love *VP*  
**SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS** Beware Of... *TKO*  
**STROBE TALBOT** 20 Pop Songs *Alternative Tentacles*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Caribbean Gospel (Book 1) *VP*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Engine 54/Humanity *VP*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Mr. Brown/No. 1 *VP*

**JANUARY 2**

**LINDSAY PAGANO** Love&Faith&Inspiration *Warner Bros.*

**JANUARY 8**

**RORY BLOCK** I'm Every Woman *Rounder*  
**CRDSBY/NASH** Best Of *Universal*  
**DEEPSPACE 5** Deepspace 5 *Uprok*  
**SOUL EMBRACED** This Is My Blood *Solid State*  
**SOUNDTRACK** Brotherhood Of The Wolf *Virgin*  
**TUNNEL RATS** Tunnel Vision *Uprok*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Farmclub *UTV*  
**ZAP MAMA** Push It To The Max *Luaka Bop*

**JANUARY 15**

**BDLT THROWER** Honour-Valor-Pride *Metal Blade*  
**BRUCE COCKBURN** Anything Anytime Anywhere (Singles 1979-2002) *Rounder*  
**THE DETACHMENT KIT** They Raging. Quiet Army *Self-Starters Foundation*  
**FLESHCRAWL** Soulskinner *Metal Blade*  
**MARVIN GAYE** Bedroom Ballads *Universal*  
**DJ PRODUCER** Drum Reclamation *Replicant-Nu Gruv*  
**READY FOR THE WORLD** Millennium *Universal*  
**SIZZLA** Black Woman & Child *VP*  
**SOLUNA** Soluna *DreamWorks*  
**TEENAGE FANCLUB AND JAD FAIR** Words Of Wisdom And Hope *Alternative Tentacles*

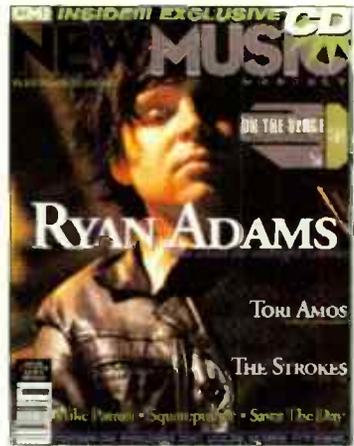
**JANUARY 18**

**COBRAMAN** Cobraman (EP) *Scooch Pooch*  
**DIRTY SWEETS** Bubblegum Damaged *Rip Off*  
**ELECTRELANE** Rock It To The Moon *Mr. Lady*  
**EVIL BEAVER** Lick It *Johanns Face*  
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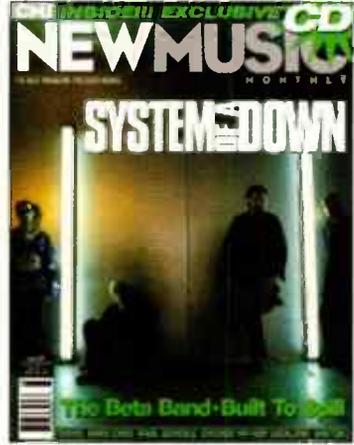
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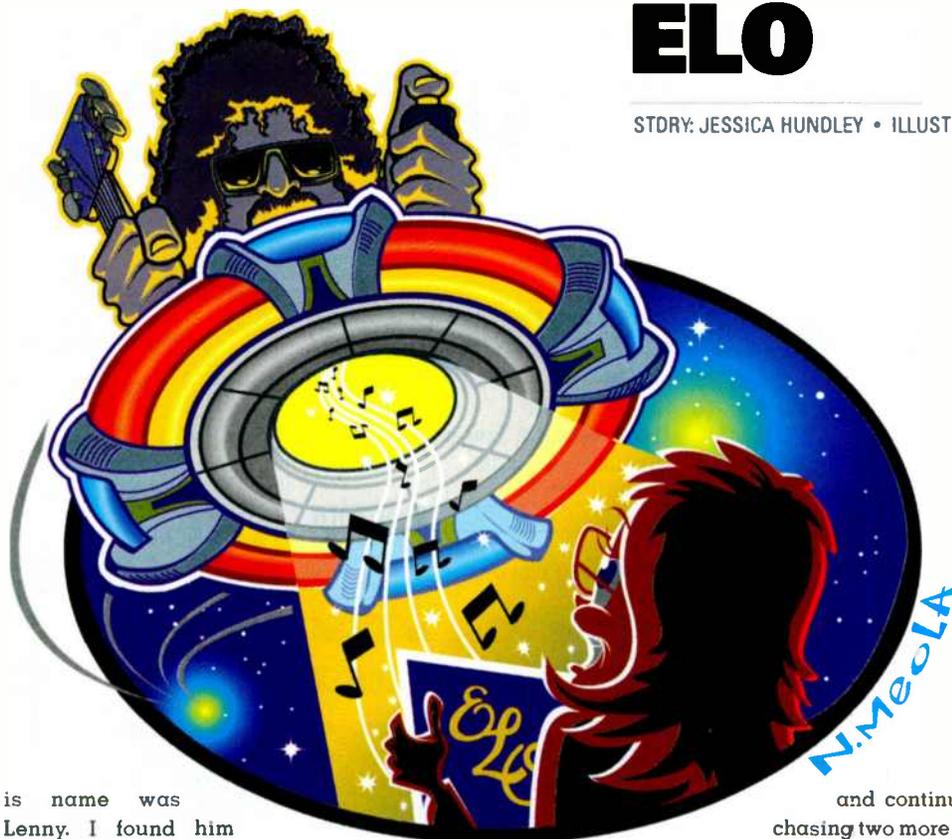
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# ELO

STORY: JESSICA HUNDLEY • ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA



**H**is name was Lenny. I found him smack dab at the center of the midway, enveloped in the smell of stale beer and spun sugar, waiting in line for the bobsleds. We shared furtive glances as the ride slowed to let us board, and then I bowed my head, made my way to a swaying sled and sat, waiting. A few moments later I felt the cart tilt with his weight.

Later, as we lay in the matted grass behind the funhouse, lips pressed, tongues searching, I unzipped Lenny's leather jacket and ran my hand gently across the soft, screen-printed surface of his cotton T-shirt. In the glinting light of the Ferris wheel I could just make out a familiar shape pressed onto the worn fabric, the faded remnants of a something like a spaceship, emblazoned with initials almost illegible: ELO. It was no real surprise to find those three familiar letters on Lenny's skinny chest. The beam of the Electric Light Orchestra had, after all, been shining on me since I was nine, providing the sweeping score to my murky adolescent evolution.

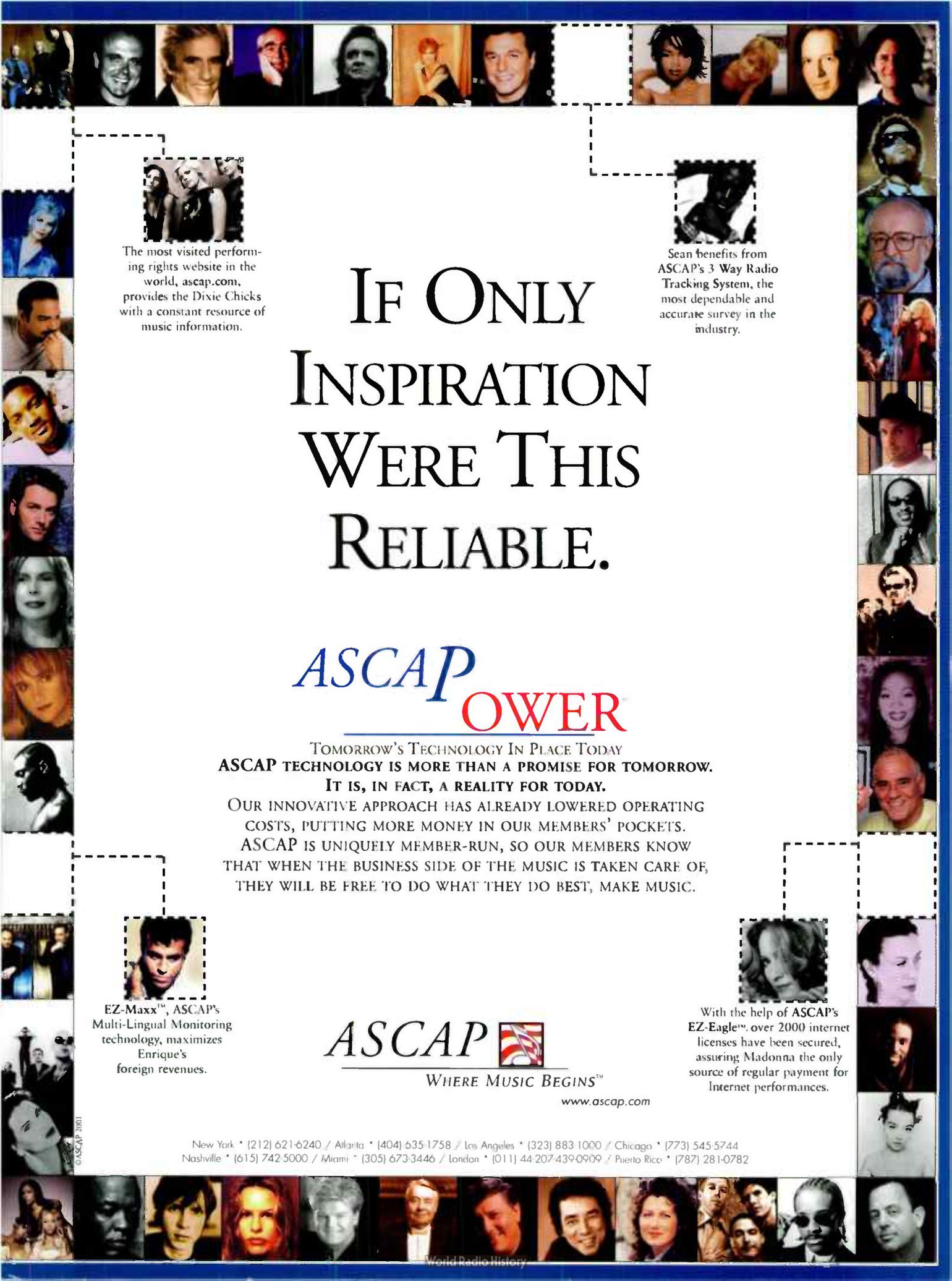
Whether through parental hand-me-down or act of God (I don't remember), ELO's *Out Of The Blue* was the first album I ever owned. The cover, a rocket ship resembling the body of a Simon game floating in some forgotten void of deep space, fascinated me; Jeff Lynne's voice made the space below my ribcage ache. Although I couldn't say why Electric Light's sweep of strings pressed at the hollow in my heart, at fifth grade show 'n' tell, I carefully laid the needle down and confessed that ELO was my favorite band. I was immediately mocked. In 1979, *Out Of The Blue* was two years past its prime and the girls with matching rainbow legwarmer/shoelace sets were far, far ahead, deep in Human League territory, belting out "Don't You Want Me?" with a coyness beyond their years. None of the other 10-year-olds had heard of ELO and no one, in fact, cared. I was undaunted.

During the next year I saved up the pittance that was my allowance

and continued to nourish my obsession, purchasing two more ELO classics, *Face The Music* and *A New World Record*. The fact that I was alone in my adoration only encouraged my enthusiasm. I was smugly superior in the knowledge that I was perhaps the only person to truly comprehend their particular magic.

Then, at a crowded Saturday matinee, I witnessed a cinematic spectacle called *Xanadu*—and although I didn't quite get the story (something about an artist, a muse, an aging Gene Kelly and a magical nightclub), I recognized the tone of the sprawling soundtrack, a warm wave of strings and smoothly loping melodies. Later, while studying the back of the newly purchased soundtrack album, I discovered that Jeff Lynne had helped pen the poetry that Olivia Newton-John sang in a voice like liquid gold: "A place where nobody dared to go/ The love that we came to know/ They call it Xanadu..." I loved the entire soundtrack, but these were the particular words I'd sing to myself whenever I needed a boost, letting the soft symphonic warmth rush over me.

That night on the midway, two years later, I was still whispering those words to myself, despite the fact that I had expanded the range of my obsessions to include the likes of Iron Maiden, Quiet Riot, Black Sabbath and Bon Jovi. A whole lot had changed since fifth grade show 'n' tell (for instance, I had abandoned all attempts to be accepted by the shoelace/legwarmer set, choosing instead to smoke dollar joints, hang around the roller rink and dress in worn blue jeans, yellow construction boots and concert T-shirts from shows I'd never attended), but certainly not my love for ELO. I continued to listen to them with the same deep pleasure, realizing, on some level, that they were one of the few remaining links to my quickly vanishing innocence. And while I never saw Lenny again, his memory would remain lucid, intrinsically linked somehow to my last heady days of pre-adolescence, to the brief period in which experience did not yet mean cynicism, to that sweet, sweet time when ELO meant everything.



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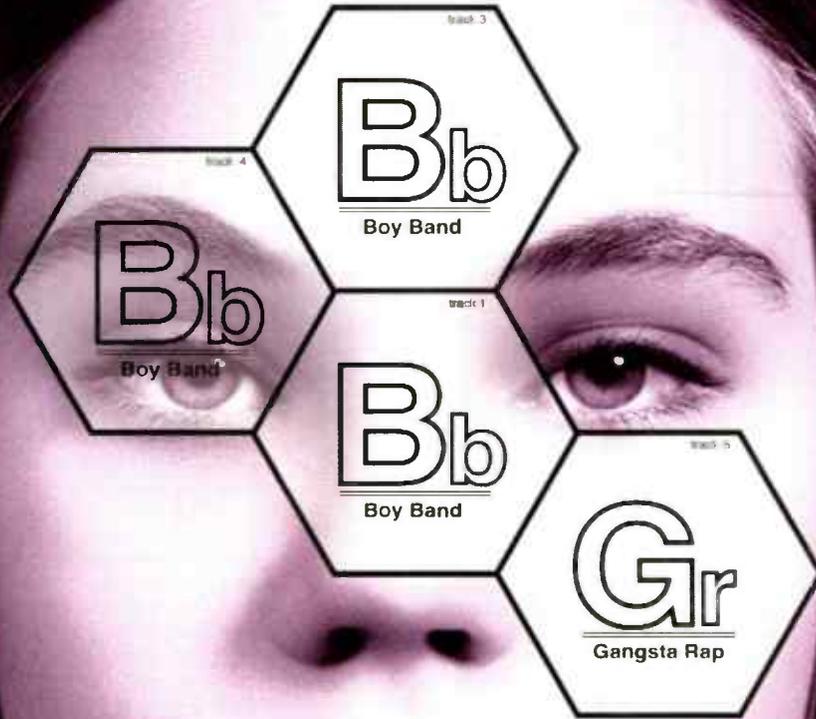
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