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World Radio History

FEBRUARY 2001 ISSUE CONTENTS

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Yorke & Co.'s *Kid A* has made kids of us all, staring into a mysterious factory where the confections boast musical medicine for rock's merchandized soul. Listen carefully to Radiohead's riddles as they unfurl onstage and on the Web and you might find the golden ticket. Douglas Wolk takes a ride in the glass elevator.

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COVER: RADIOHEAD PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANNY CLINCH
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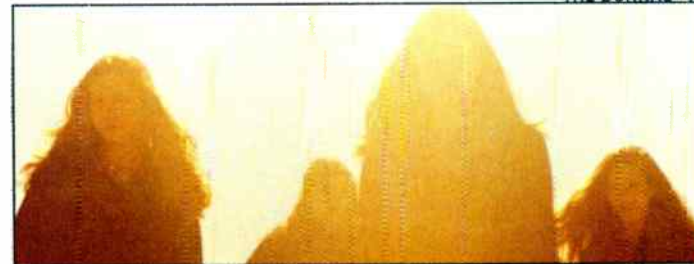
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DRAFT PUNK ONE MORE TIME

IN STORES NOW



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Letters

JOE C., WE HARDLY KNEW YE

A day after we put the January issue to bed (that's publishing jargon for when we send the magazine to the printer; although the term may connote a baby toddling off with a bottle of warm milk, it actually involves screaming, crying and soiling diapers), we found out that Kid Rock sidekick Joe C. had died. Yes, this was the issue where we impishly poked fun at Kid Rock's artistic collaborations with his diminutive chum in our "Covers Of The Future" bit (see the "Do Midgets Matter Anymore?" headline). Of course we feel terrible about this and wouldn't want anyone to think we were seizing on Joe C.'s untimely passing for a cheap laugh—his height, yes, but not his death. So, our hearts, or what's left of them, go out to Joe C.'s friends and family, and please God, don't strike us down—we just moved into a new office with fancy chairs and that would suck.—ed.

BEAUTY, BRAINS AND A BADASS BOOKLET

Just finished the December issue and wanted to say "hey" to y'all for continuing to exceed my expectations. Over the two years I've been reading, you've made the magazine much more handsome and stylish, while the level of writing seems to have simultaneously improved. And you've maintained an admirably goofball sense of righteousness (notably in the CD booklet notes). I still skip half the articles, but jeez you should have seen me last year. Also, employing snazzy artists like Franklin Bruno and Lois Maffeo for the reviews is, um, cool.

Aaron Ambrose
sandwichlad@earthlink.net

PITY THE FUEL

A few days ago, I was bored at work, and decided to read your November issue, just to pass some time, and I must say your review of Fuel is just ridiculous. I myself have been a fan of theirs for quite a few years now, and granted I don't really dig this album as much as the first major release by them, but still, these guys have worked their asses off just to get a little recognition, and the songs are good. The comments about Brett's vocals are so ridiculous, I mean he "doesn't have much to say" ...you guys should go check out a show live, and actually talk to the boys before pretty much telling all your readers that the album sucks, because it really doesn't.

Wheats715@aol.com

Here's the deal: Nice people work hard to achieve a small measure of success, less nice people get everything handed to them and still achieve the same level of mediocrity, and geniuses often toil away in obscurity until death. We only review records, not karma. Which is good, because that way we can go on writing about our favorite musicians, who are often quite odious people. Besides, who do you think has worse karma than music critics? Not that I wouldn't feel myself aging if I had to listen to the new Fuel record again.—ed.

THE OLD MAN AND THE C.O.D.

I'm a long-time subscriber, but I believe that will have to change soon. Probably, I've simply gotten too old to be part of your "target audience." Very few of the artists you give space to in the mag and on the CD are artists I'd give two seconds attention to. "Gangstas," wannabe Antichrists, talentless, creepy frauds like Eminem, etc. I'm ashamed to have this garbage showing up in my mailbox. The mailman must think I'm nuts if he looks at the lurid and idiotic covers. Your "letters" section is usually very funny. Mr. Frampton's wise-guy humor is a treat. The sections on film, comix and books are often well worth reading. But that's about it. Frampton, you might consider a new career as a literary humorist. You could probably write a very funny book—maybe a whole string of them. That's about it. The mag, in general, is an infuriating waste of paper, ink, etc.

Dennis Rivard
Dfrsbr@aol.com

Your mailman has seen much weirder shit, as anyone who ever ordered the Totally Nude Golf! video (for a friend) can tell you. (What makes marketers think I'd be interested in videos of people who got into animal husbandry for all the wrong reasons?) And in truth, I'm not very funny, just bitter in an amusingly pathetic way, while the magazine is actually quite good, trying hard to balance its appreciation for various types of music that undoubtedly appeal to startlingly different demographics. For the record, we tend to make fun of Eminem because we could use the publicity of him starting a feud with us, as he has with his mother, the Teletubby that looks gay, and that goddamn roadworker who let that bitch cross the road so he had to fucking wait when he had to get to fucking Walgreens' to buy a new goddamn notebook to replace the one he lost on that bitch-ass Delta flight.—ed.

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"DEAR GOD, WHAT THE EFF AM I DOING HERE!?!?"

Correction: Ladytron's debut LP, 604 (Emperor Norton), was incorrectly identified in the January issue. We regret the error.



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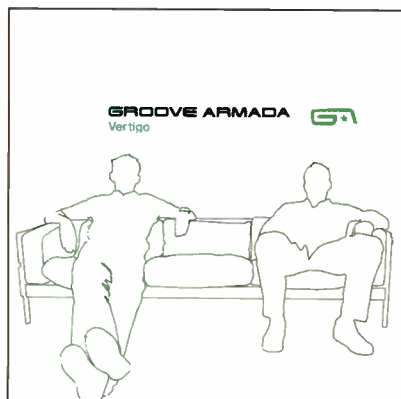
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slim shady's lilitth lady

Drum 'n' folk singer **Dido** went platinum with a little help from Gwyneth, Roswell and Eminem.

STORY JON REGARDIE
PHOTOS SIMON EMMET

On a planet of six billion people, Dido may be the only person with this opinion: Eminem is sweet.

The bad-boy rapper with a dearth of melanin is called many things, but sweet is never one of them. Still Dido, the classically trained British musician whose debut, *No Angel* (Arista), received

(continued on next page)

a noticeable bounce when Eminem sampled her tender love song "Thankyou" in the chorus of his chilling stalker track "Stan," thinks he is a fine guy indeed. Her opinion stems in part from performing alongside Slim Shady during concert renditions of "Stan."

"He welcomes me onstage and says, 'Hey, we brought her over here from London.' Then I come on and everyone sings along at the top of their voices. It's such a great feeling hearing 25,000 people sing your lyrics. It's also something a bit different: It's nice to go from Lilith Fair to the Anger Management Tour."

It's been a genre-busting 18 months for Dido Armstrong. *No Angel* received largely positive reviews following its release in June of 1999, and her non-stop U.S. touring (including a stint on the Lilith femme-fest) helped it percolate. But a few fortunate twists, one being Marshall Mathers's help, made *No Angel* huge: "Thankyou" appeared on the soundtrack to the Gwyneth Paltrow vehicle *Sliding Doors*, and Dido's romantic "Here With Me" became the theme song for the WB's youthful alien show *Roswell*.

Born on Christmas in 1971, Dido entered London's Guildhall School Of Music And Drama at age six, learned to play violin and piano and spent her early teens making classical music. Family connections led to her big break—Dido's brother Rollo masterminded the English trip-hop act Faithless, and he let his kid sister guest-sing on the group's languid albums, *Reverence* and *Sunday 8 PM*. That garnered an audition with legendary Arista honcho Clive Davis; Dido claims she didn't know at the time he was the man who broke Whitney Houston.

"He seemed incredibly on it and musically in-the-know, and that was enough for me to be excited about," Dido recalls. "Afterwards, my brother took me out to tea at a posh hotel in London, so I thought, 'Hang on a second. This guy is obviously important.'"

The resulting deal allowed Dido to make *No Angel*, a pillowy collection of slightly dancey electronic folk that is regularly and reasonably compared to Beth Orton and the Cranberries. Lyrically, Dido addresses the jagged dimensions of human relationships, often exploring the pleasurable, painful and yearning aspects of romance.



"I just write about what I know," she declares. "I tend to think about small things that seem to have somewhat more importance to my life than anything else. I think using the backdrop of a relationship is a pretty good way to get your point across."

It's been an effective way of getting Dido's music across, anyway, and *No Angel* has just reached platinum. For bizarre record industry reasons, the disc only recently hit the streets in England, but with Dido's talent—and luck—the delayed release will probably prove beneficial.

"My whole career has been like that," Dido shrugs. "*Sliding Doors*—luck, [because] someone heard it. Clive Davis—I don't know how he heard my stuff. I'm a huge believer in the idea that you create your own luck, and I'm a huge believer in karma and doing the right thing as much as you can. But I feel very lucky... Every day I get a call and I'm like, 'How is this happening?'" **NMM**



WEIRD RECORD Smooth, shiny, Finnish

When most of us think of Nordic peoples, we think pasty white skin, snow, and, er, forestry. But deep tans, tight suits, Gucci loafers, signet rings and thick clouds of Gaulois cigarette smoke—these are the things that Eurotrash suaveness is made of, baby, and Finnish quintet Cosmo Jones Beat Machine

are here to show the swank side of the otherwise timid Finns. Just check out the jokey, pseudo-continental fashion sense of singer/guitarist Pekka Pirttikangas, who graces the cover of the

band's gutter-chic debut, *My Style Is Eurostyle* (Bad Vugum). On this revved-up hunk of sleaze, the band stuffs its uniquely crass class into a tonic-fueled Nordic reinterpretation of Yank-inspired party R&B and garage punk. Razor guitars, caveman vocals, grainy organ and a freako edge that puts Jon Spencer to shame infest such un-PC anthems as "\$2000 On Your Head" and "Fat Black Ladyfriends." If for no other reason, these gents deserve kudos for having a percussionist named El Bubbles and for penning "Time Can Destroy A Woman's Face," a surefire wedding hit for the ages. >>>JORDAN N. MAMONE

adrock's boutique

The Beastie Boy sets up shop with a goofy side project.



BRENDAN MORAN

I guess weirdos will probably get it, or people that are going through an identity crisis," says Beastie Boy Adam "Adrock" Horowitz of the potential fanbase for BS2000, his collaboration with Beasties' tour drummer Amery "AWOL" Smith. *Simply Mortified* (Grand Royal), the duo's follow-up to '97's self-titled, vinyl-only debut, delves into the sillydelic world of my-first-keyboard experimentation. Unlike their all-out sampled debut, *Simply Mortified* lays down Farfisa organ tones as a base and zig-zags through a playful world of battery-operated Casio and Yamaha keyboards. The effect is a drunken jog through the cosmic hop of Afrika Bambaataa, the retro-freak-rock sensibility of the B-52's and the percussive surf beats of '60s drummer Sandy Nelson.

"It's all live playing," boasts Horowitz, who freely admits that neither he nor Smith knew anything about playing keyboard until they embarked on the project. "It was fun learning and teaching each other." Fun might be an understatement, as *Simply*

Mortified skips and jumps through an amusement park of morphed go-go. The spocky voices and multi-layered organ licks of "It Feels Like ?!@#?!" offer up peculiar campiness. The irresistibly accessible groove of the instrumental "No Matter What Shape (Your Stomach Is In)" offers up a jovial keyboard conversation; "Wait A Minute" bounces with surf-rock cool, opening with the lyrics, "It's fun here on the rollercoaster/ I saved you a place/ But when I tried to talk to you/ A bird flew in my face." Tracks like "The Side To Side," "The Scrappy" and "Dansk Party" espouse a one-nation-under-a-groove philosophy and summon all heads to the dancefloor.

Horowitz and Smith ultimately hope the integrated sound of the record will draw fans of all musical genres into a kinder, gentler world. "Hopefully," deadpans Horowitz, "people will reach out with us for a new buddy culture that's not based on hatred of other people, or sexism, or racism or homophobia. We're trying to be the new buddy culture." >>>ANDREW SIMON



SAFIA FATIMI

now entering daydream nation

Sonic Youth helps **Christina Rosenvinge** escape the Spanish hit parade.

Like all transplants to New York, Christina Rosenvinge has been forced to readjust herself to the metropolis that mixes glitter and grit in equal proportions. "It can be a tough city," the Madrid-born singer/guitarist affirms. "Every night they turn it upside down and shake it, and if you're not grabbing onto something solid, you can fall down."

But unlike the hordes of artists who trek to Manhattan with sparkles in their eyes, Rosenvinge isn't seeking fame—she's left it behind. Throughout the '90s she was a genuine pop star in Spain and Latin America (as half of the duo Alex Y Christina), performing radio-ready hits for clamoring crowds. Yet the lifelong fan of Leonard Cohen and the Velvet Underground yearned to make music with a more complex and personal touch. When her 10-year Warner Bros. contract expired, she packed up her infant son and novelist husband and flew to America to record her English-language debut, *Frozen Pool*, for Sonic Youth drummer Steve Shelley's Smells Like Records

label. And she has no regrets.

"I'm closer than ever to the music I want to make," she says. For *Pool*, Rosenvinge enlisted Two Dollar Guitar's Tim Foljahn, label boss Shelley and his Sonic Youth cohort Lee Ranaldo. The result is a lilting, shadow-streaked concoction of bossa nova rhythms, Francophilic pop melodies, jangly guitars and beguilingly ambiguous lyrics, which Rosenvinge delivers in a sweet voice often reminiscent of Georgia Hubley or Chrissie Hynde. The artist now prefers writing in her adopted language of English: "It's more mellow than Spanish; you can do more long notes."

Although her early hits were fluffed up for commercial Latin radio, Rosenvinge has found solace in spacious grooves. "An important part of music is silence. You can get to people by doing something so thin it is like a razorblade." She smiles as she gazes at her new city. "That is what I tried to do. Instead of making your point with strength, do it with sharpness." >>>LISA GIDLEY

TOYS IN THE ATTIC

IN THE STUDIO WITH SPLATTERCELL'S DAVID TORN

David Torn's upstate New York studio, studioCELL, is all about simplicity. In fact, it used to be his garage. "I'm not a hi-fi guy," says Torn, whose guitar has graced more than 35 films, including *Book Of Shadows: Blair Witch II*. "Everything I produce has always had this funky, dirty... unacceptable-by-normal-engineering-standards sound. I think the only place I spent any real money here was putting heat in." In addition to his session and solo work—including the ambitious atmospheres of *OAH* (CellDivision), his first record as Splattercell—Torn has made a name for himself with a series of sample discs; his first, *Tonal Textures*, has appeared in everything from films to car commercials to pop songs. Collaborators call Torn "the most sampled guy on the planet," he says, "next to James Brown." >>>TOM MALLON

1. SOUND MANGLERS

The nerve center of Torn's studio is a Macintosh G3 300 running Emagic's Logic Audio recording suite. But lately, he has the most fun with Pluggo, a set of audio-maiming plug-in effects. "For \$74, you get 74 plug-ins, and they're just the weirdest-ass shit you could ever imagine," he says.

2. OUD

The oud creates many of the Arabic textures in Torn's music; he owns an acoustic for studio work and an electric for live play. "It's very hard to play the acoustic instrument live—the neck is hollow, the top is paper-thin wood, it's impossible to play as loud as I like to play, which is fairly loud," he says.

3. KIKUYAE

The kikuyae (pronounced *kee-koo-yay*) sounds similar to a sitar, but is played with piano-like keys. Torn has outfitted his with a motorized bow, and he used to enlist drummers to bow it with sticks while he played the keys. "That irritates drummers," he notes.



BRENDAN MORAN

4. HEADLESS GUITARS

Despite Splattercell's synthetic sound, almost everything Torn records begins with guitar. "I like the idea of... starting out with organic materials that become something else," he says. "It's amazing what you can do with a guitar. You can feel it, it's not the same as [playing keys]." On the left is his main guitar, a headless Klein, and on the right is an incredibly dusty Steinberger—the first ever made.



TINO

LABEL PROFILE

TinoCorp's soul man(nequin) brings the musique plastique.

Meat Beat Manifesto's Jack Dangers gets around. In the last 10 years he's parked his experimental industrial recordings at almost as many labels—including Wax Trax!, Mute and Nothing. But he's finally settled down and built a home of his own: TinoCorp, formed in 1998 with partners Ben Stokes and Mike Powell, and a life-size plastic "master drummer" from Cuba named Tino. The

label launched with *Tino's Breaks*, a series of DJ tools (five records so far) disguised as instructional drum sessions given by Tino. These aren't just sample discs, though—each contains full-length songs for enterprising DJs to pillage. "There's a break in each song somewhere," Dangers says. "That's our little trap—you have to listen to Tino's music if you want to sample it." TinoCorp recently released a limited-edition Meat Beat 12-inch, *Eccentric Objects*, and will soon deliver new music from Powell's *Bo Square*. While the label looks future-ward, Dangers looks to the past, reissuing the vinyl-only TinoCorp catalog on CD, constructing the next *Breaks* and re-reading *Tape Music*, an album of musique concrète. "There's techniques that people have forgotten about, things you can't emulate with a computer," Dangers says. "I'm going to try to bring that back into modern music." >>>TOM MALLON

ELECTROMEDIA



DARTH GATES

There's never been a medium as ripe for parody as the Web—not just because its culture takes itself so seriously, but because all you have to do is steal the source code of whatever page you want to spoof, tinker with it a tiny bit, and you've got a perfectly effective put-on. The front page of Yahoo! alone has spawned dozens of parodies—Hatchoo!, Wahoo! and even Net'n'Yahoo! (www.reshet.com/atar/netnyahu), “the favorite site of the Israeli Prime Minister”—but none better than Yankovic! (www.yankovic.org). (It's devoted to “Weird AI,” of course, not Frankie.)

Amazon.com's cluttered “library card” design, panoply of user-over-friendly features and burly hype cry out for parody, and nobody's yet done it better than Brains4Zombies.com, which translates every aspect of its design to be about the finer points of brain-eating. (“Hello, Undead Zombie. If you're not an Undead Zombie, [click here](#).”) Meanwhile, two inevitable memes among Web users come together at Microsith.com, featuring host Darth Paperclip and his latest upgrade, Planet Exploder 5.0 (“Download it free!”).

But the most brilliant clone site of all is a response to one of the most loathsome pages to be found on the Net: Godhatesfags.com, the self-explanatory site of professional bigot Fred Phelps. It's been parodied before—someone even hijacked its Web traffic a few years ago—but Charles Anders's brilliant move was to clone its look, feel and self-righteous parade of Biblical quotations, and launch Godhatesfigs.com. It's got information on the “plague” (of nematodes) that God has visited upon fig trees, printable tracts and more. We'd forgotten all about the anti-fig propaganda in the Gospels, but we checked, and it's there, all right. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



5 things you should know about

david sylvian

Even though David Sylvian's first band, Japan, only had one proper hit, “Ghosts,” its legacy of quirky electronic pop constructions influenced much of the synth-pop that followed. The London-based group disbanded in 1982, and as a solo artist, Sylvian delved deeper into a ruminating path laid out by “Ghosts” that's been patchy, esoteric and often brilliant. The new collection *Everything And Nothing* (Virgin) provides a map to Sylvian's career. >>>B. WERDE

He's a modest innovator.

“I'm the last person to recognize my influence,” says Sylvian, wearing black silk in a New York City hotel. “There was a technological esthetic toward the latter stages of Japan—we'd sit for hours on end, programming. Certainly, in the '80s when we broke up, it was obvious that other acts took up where we left off. Duran Duran, Tears For Fears, Depeche Mode. I could hear something of us in those bands. Recently Radiohead name checked us, so I guess that spelled it out a bit.”



When Sylvian is stuck for a lyric, he doesn't ask his wife, Prince protégé Ingrid Chavez, for help.

“That hasn't happened yet [laughs]. When we first started living together, I wrote material for her to respond to as a lyricist and vocalist, trying to second-guess what kind of material might excite her. We completed a number of pieces in our home studio, before the birth of our first daughter, after which Ingrid's attentions were taken away from the projects that we were doing together. When it became time for me to focus on my own album, I started with some of the pieces I'd originally written for her. And that introduced a slight R&B element into my work.”

Sylvian works with talented people whose names are difficult to pronounce.

He's worked with Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, Brit-Asian producer Talvin Singh and Can's Holger Czukay, among others. “When I'm arranging a piece, the competition tends to cry out for a particular voice. That started in 1983 with the *Brilliant Trees* (Blue Plate) album. I made a connection between the title track and Jon Hassell's trumpet, and wondered if he would make a similar connection. Jon came in and after a few listens got to grips with [it] and gave this wonderful performance. I've worked that way since; session players are never fully committed.”

David didn't release any solo material for 12 years before 1999's *Dead Bees On A Cake* (Virgin).

Today, Sylvian studies a mix of Hindu and Buddhist traditions. “I went through a very difficult stage of my life, the deterioration of a long-term relationship. And there was what you might call a spiritual crisis. My focus on spirituality got to such an intensity that I asked a number of people if I should leave music and just focus on spiritual work. I was told that singing, performing and writing was my way of learning. That pushed me back out into the world. I worked on *Bees On A Cake* for four years. It carries the spirit of perhaps the most eventful period of my life.”

Everything And Nothing is not a greatest hits album.

“It indicates my different avenues taken,” he explains. “It's ludicrous to term it ‘greatest hits.’ There hasn't been that many in my case. It's an overview. A lot of the work I've done hasn't been under my own name, so the collection shows continuity. I suppose it was cathartic. It was a bittersweet experience, that's for sure. I mean, looking back on 20 years of your life? Does it justify it? And of course, it doesn't! [laughs.]”

?&A: MOMUS Big On Japan

Eccentric Scotsman Nick Currie, a.k.a. Momus, has been style-hopping with gleeful finesse for 20 years. On his last album, 1999's *Stars Forever*, and on his latest, *Folktronic* (Le Grand Magistry), he cultivates the hybrid style "analog baroque," for which he spins synth-based yarns that weave the traditional—such as Celtic folk or old-time blues—with bouncy electronic sounds. >>>LYDIA VANDERLOO

Folktronic continues your tradition of juxtaposing traditional sounds with very new ones.

It forces a jarring incongruity into your face, but it seems that those incongruities are increasingly part of the world we live in, so it sounds quite natural in a weird way. For me it all comes from having gone to Japan, where the far-distant past and the near future seem to meet up, and you get temples next to these weird bleepy electronic places. And I guess it's also the way a Japanese artist like Cornelius would work—he'd mix together some bizarre drum 'n' bass editing techniques with Bach or something. The Japanese put [familiar sounds] in fresh contexts partly because... they don't seem to lay the same stress on authenticity. They feel themselves to be outsiders on the world scene. And that's one reason I identify so much with Japan, that I feel it's actually a tribute to our capacity to recreate and reinvent ourselves, to come in and misunderstand someone else's scene and just pick the best things. [With *Folktronic*.] I'm doing my take on the traditional American folk scene, but I don't actually know very much about traditional roots music. I'm sure folk purists would absolutely despise me. But, I think in a sense that we've all been cut off from our roots. It's very hard for anyone to assert a real connection with, say, Appalachian fiddle music. I think the really healthy thing for me is to say, let's just do it in a really fake way and emphasize how plastic it is. I'm throwing in these synthesizer riffs from '80s pop in the middle of a thing that sounds like a Mexican-American Indian wedding dance.

You've lived all over the globe, and you seem to move every few years. Are you restless?

Yeah. I think moving frequently keeps you young. I think it's very important to be trendy. I'm relentlessly trendy. I mean, here I am living on Orchard Street [in Manhattan's Lower East Side], and I've just been reading a Japanese magazine which says only two streets in New York

IN MY ROOM The Aluminum Group

Chicago's Aluminum Group sweat the small stuff, from the impeccably tasteful design of brothers Frank and John Navin's album art to the tasty art-pop within. *Pelo* (Hefty), the band's new album, may be their most detail-oriented yet, but it's also a minimalist step back from the baroque whimsy of last year's *Pedals*—making the small stuff all the more visible. Here, John describes the band's rehearsal space, minutiae and all. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Cubism

Frank and I constructed an eight-foot-by-eight-foot cube out of PVC pipe. We hung a vintage Marimekko banner on the upper pole. I would like to think it brings out the mathematician [in everyone], even those of us who are learning disabled.

Take a load off

I recently purchased a Lunar sofa, an Italian design. It's awesome. If someone wants to crash or stretch out during rehearsal, the sofa unfolds to a full-size bed. It's simple and functional.



are interesting for trendy Japanese people: Ludlow Street and Orchard Street. So I'm thinking, from a Japanese perspective anyway, I'm totally where it's at. The risk is that you become superficial and trendy, and you just jump on bandwagons, which I could be accused of doing.

So how do you keep it real when you're a trend-hopper?

Well, I don't believe there is such a thing as real. Keeping it fake is much more important for me. As long as the fake is interesting. I guess keeping it fake is my equivalent of keeping it real. I think fake is real. I'm just a confused, mixed-up person.

What's that smell?

Scent is perhaps the most important in a space. It's so important for the spirit. Lately, I've been burning a jacinthe candle from Diptyque of Paris. When you enter the space you catch a faint light burning, then your nose is full of flowers. Since I'm so busy and forget to buy flowers, the candle does the trick.



JOHN NAVIN, LEFT

Corporate-chic table

It's the workhorse of the space, an Eames design manufactured by Herman Miller. I found it in a used office supply warehouse in Chicago. It has a black base with shiny silver legs—very cheap and, of course, beautiful.



ILL. JASON JOHNSON
COLOR: BARRY'S

Speech Impediments

The world's great rockers address England's great debaters.

Oxford University's prestigious debating club, the Oxford Union, made heads spin—and possibly Jarvis Cocker's pants drop—by inviting self-appointed King Of Pop Michael Jackson to address the society on the subject of "What parents can learn from their children." We're confident it's a subject Jackson knows a great deal about. In fact, we have no doubts about the qualifications of any of the other speakers appearing in the rest of the day's *shhh*edule, either. >>>DAVE ITZKOFF



Oxford Union Programme of Day's Events

Mr. Liam Gallagher

"Come Together: How Rock Made Me A Family Man"

Mr. Marilyn Manson

"Stroked By An Angel: Welcoming God Into Your Everyday Life"

Mr. Tommy Lee and Mrs. Pamela Anderson-Lee-Anderson-Lee (née Anderson)

"Bells Are Schwinging: The Sanctimony Of Marriage"

Mr. Gary Glitter

"Ooh, Child: The Iconography Of May To December Romance In Nabokov"

Mr. Ike Turner

"You've Come A Long Way, Baby: The Continuing Struggle For Women's Equality"

Select members of the Wu-Tang Clan
(depending on availability)

"Promptness And Punctuality: The Glue Binding Together Our Civil Society"

The address due to be delivered by Messrs. Stephen Malkmus and Scott Kannberg, "Terror Twilight: Maintaining A Relationship Through Adversity," has unfortunately been cancelled

RANDOM QUOTE

Talib Kweli: "There's a lot of white kids who are into hip-hop that I'll speak to who are like, 'Oh, Jay-Z's wack.' To me, you can't be into hip-hop and say Jay-Z's wack. You don't know what the fuck you're talking about."

IN MY ROOM CHILLIN' WITH EDO.G.



Ed O.G. & Da Bulldogs' "I Got To Have It" blew up on *YO! MTV Raps* almost 10 years ago, but the rapper/producer (now going by EDO.G) laid low in the '90s, producing local Boston acts

and making scattered cameos. 2001 sees the release of his third full-length, *The Truth Hurts* (Ground Control), which features luminaries DJ Premier, Guru, Black Thought and Pete Rock. "The last album we put out was like, '94," he says. "When you're that age—20, 22, 23—your whole mindstate is different. When you get a little older, you have different things to talk about." EDO.G describes his crib in Roxbury, Massachusetts. >>>ANDREW SIMON

The Rhyming Room

That's where I write, that's where the equipment is, that's where I can really gather my thoughts. It all starts right there—at night, when the fam's asleep. When I was doing my album, I was just there focusing on the rhymes.

What's yours is mine

I'm not a record collector. I just bum-rush my family and take whatever they have. And if I hear something that's hot, I'll loop it. I don't really get too deep into it, where I'm like, "I gotta get this record." I listen to a lotta smoothed-out shit. I've been listening to Bilal's "Soul Sista" and the Lucy Pearl album. I'm kinda on that soulful vibe. I've been killin' the Prodigy album. That joint's real hot.

The heat is on

My girl, she doesn't like [the house] that hot. She's pregnant right now, so she's already hot as it is [laughs]. I would blast the shit, to be honest with you—I like to have it steamin', like project heat.

Time-killers

The PlayStation? That is *it*. We actually got a big *Madden NFL 2001* tournament going on... We're playing for like 1200 bucks. We might do the *NBA Live 2001* one somewhere further down the line. But it's still football season, so that's where we're at right now.

RACE FOR THE TOWA

MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?'S CROSS-COUNTRY BLOWOUT

START!!

Ol' Dirty Bastard slaps starting line official—go to rehab (again).

Stereolab is severely weighed down by overwhelming purchases of irrelevant free-jazz and New Zealand pop albums. Lose a turn.



Guided By Voices blows off alcohol-free all ages show in Olympia, Washington. Stay at T.G.I. Friday's for 3 turns.

Slipknot's #7 loses his gas mask—must forfeit.



Man Or Astro-Man? mistaken for cast of *Star Trek Voyager* in Los Angeles, held up by Trekkies. Lose eight turns.



Low falls asleep at wheel listening to some of their own new rough mixes. Forget reason to go on.

Air illegally hitches themselves onto Beck's car. Move ahead one space.



Modest Mouse sidetracked in Knoxville, Tennessee under-estimating downloading time for a 650Mb porn file. Lose six turns.

In these times of homogenized package tours, road rock on Earth has become severely endangered. Taking a cue from *Death Race 2000*, intergalactic rockers Man Or Astro-Man? plan to assemble a gaggle of bands and then race them cross-country to various tour dates. With one show planned each day, the first band to arrive at each venue will headline and the other bands will score points and positions according to arrival. Nothing like a little spin-the-wheel Darwinism to keep things interesting. Bandmember Brian Teasley proposed the following board game as a fictional account of the tour.





Medeski Martin And Wood lose a turn due to over-extended "jamming" at a college gig in Burlington, Vermont.

Atghan Whigs' Greg Bulli uses game-board to cut lines. Move forward 12 spaces (really quickly).

Joan Of Arc has a near miss with road-crossing squirrel. Take time to write squirrel poem and whimper. Lose two turns.

Ween mistakes in-van pot smoke for zero visibility fog. Skip a turn.

Evan Dando is unable to remember how the Martha's Vineyard ferry system works. Wait five turns to begin.



Platinum Card
933875202472 2230242
Mister Dando
EVAN'S FAVORITE

Fugazi incessantly argues over which D.C. charity will receive their winning proceeds. Miss two turns for being annoying.

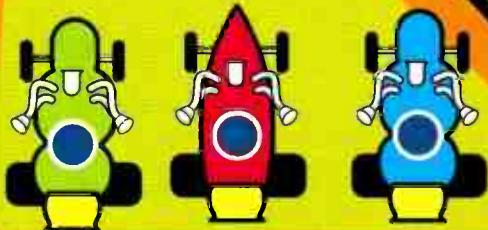
Members of "impartial" rock press carry Radiohead on their backs. Move ahead three spaces.

Rocket From The Crypt getting into indulgent conversation with gas-station mechanic with Rocket From The Crypt tattoo. Lose four turns.

The victory goes to the ghost of Nick Drake due to amazing gas mileage of his new Volkswagen beetle.



choose some wheels



SPINNER (cut-out)





TRANSMISSION OK

THE SKY, THE STARS, AND THE GREAT BEYOND...

TRANSMISSION OK

THE SKY, THE STARS,
AND THE GREAT
BEYOND...

featuring tracks:
"That Kind of Girl"
"Rocketship"
"Fiberglass"

Irresistible. Melodic.

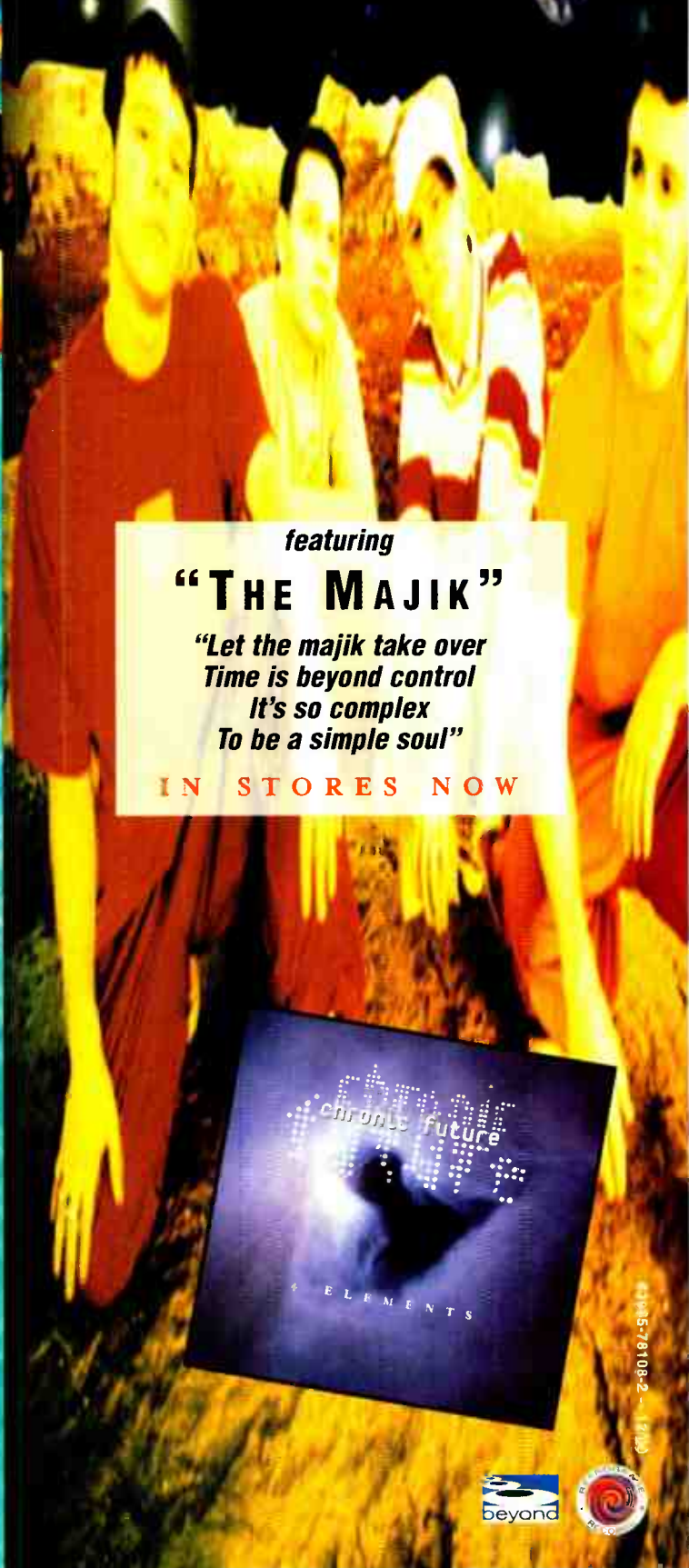
63985-78106-2 ... 12/00



IN STORES NOW

CHRONIC FUTURE

4 ELEMENTS



featuring

"THE MAJIK"

*"Let the majik take over
Time is beyond control
It's so complex
To be a simple soul"*

IN STORES NOW



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BLUE STATES

Nothing Changes Under The Sun

Eighteenth Street Lounge



Out

January 9

File Under

Imaginary soundtracks

R.I.Y.L.

Air, John Barry,
Thievery Corporation

Ever since Andy "Blue States" Dragazis teased fans of cinematic techno with a series of 12-inch releases in 1998 and 1999, expectations have been high for his debut longplayer, which has finally surfaced domestically on Thievery Corporation's label. It's a fitting home, seeing as the Corp. themselves deal in similar imaginary soundtracks. While the sound may be in vogue, Dragazis strives for a sense of timelessness, and he's pulled it off with remarkable aplomb. The influence of '60s spy-film soundtracks is clear, but there's also much that is harder to pin down. The echoing guitars on "Spit And Soar," the weeping strings on "Heroes' Elegy," the bubbling bass on "Golden Touch"—this is sample-based music that sounds as "real" and wide-screen as anything by John Barry, Ennio Morricone or Henry Mancini. *Nothing Changes Under The Sun* is a car chase under the moonlight on the French Riviera in a drop-top Jag. It's early morning café lattes with double agents in downtown Rome. It's the evening fog rolling in over Checkpoint Charlie in Communist Berlin. In short, it's the soundtrack to the film that plays in your head and the orchestra that plays in your heart. Sublime. >>>KIERAN WYATT

TIM EASTON

The Truth About Us

New West



Out

January 23

File Under

Pure pop for now folkies

R.I.Y.L.

American Music Club, Freedy
Johnston, Grant-Lee Phillips

It would be pretty tough for an Americana-leaning singer/songwriter to go wrong with a roots band as reliable as Wilco lending its support—and sure enough, Tim Easton's heartland melodies and easy-going insights find a good match in the rock-solid, soulful backing of the band Jeff Tweedy built. Easton, a wayfaring songster from L.A. via Ohio via upstate New York, has a keen eye for the rough spots in modern-day romance, reminiscent of John Prine. This is especially apparent on the shambling "Don't Walk Alone," where Victoria Williams and ex-Jayhawk Mark Olson pitch in on background vocals. But Easton's voice is made of a finer grade of sandpaper than Prine's, and "Happy Now" rides on a jangling twin guitar riff that draws on British pop-rock sources. Elsewhere, Easton favors a seemingly superficial upbeat outlook and radio-friendly sound, especially on the playful "Soup Can Telephone Game Conversation" and the power-poppy "Downtown Lights." Producer Joe Chiccarelli, whose credits include work with Beck and U2, effectively embellishes Easton's acoustic guitar-based songs with pedal steel, Mellotron, and even some tape loops. Easton could easily have gone the way of the folk iconoclast, reaching for emotional depths beyond the grasp of most mortals; instead, *The Truth About Us* finds him using Wilco and a broad palate of pop textures to come across as personal and accessible. >>>BILL KISLIUK

LADYTRON

604

Emperor Norton



Out

February 13

File Under

Sexy robots

R.I.Y.L.

Kraftwerk, Elastica,
Propaganda

It's such a great and obvious idea, it's amazing that nobody's thought of it before: doing the same thing for Kraftwerk that Elastica did for Wire. After a year's worth of snappy singles and EPs from three continents, the trans-European quartet has finally rolled out its first full-length album, and it's a killer. Daniel Hunt and Reuben Wu are the groove guys, making their old analog synths and Roland beat boxes do the robot dance; Helen Marnie (English, angelic) and Mira Aroyo (Bulgarian, devilish) are the singers, intimate and guarded, crooning like a come-on or speaking precisely and coldly, letting hooks slip out like secrets. The results work the flesh/steel barrier between the all-too-human and the funkily mechanical the way new wave was always supposed to do. And they're ingeniously sequenced to keep the pace up for 53 minutes—the deadpan department-store travelogue "Paco!" segues into a funky Pong game called "Commodore Rock," and it sounds like a kickass bridge. The worst that can be said of Ladytron is that they're zealously faithful to Kraftwerk. Their polymorphously perverse single "He Took Her To A Movie," in particular, owes rather a lot to "The Model." But even then, like the best derivative bands, they pay back the debt with interest, racheting up the groove a few notches and making it cryptic and sexy in a way that their Krautrock forebears could only mock. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK

JOHN LEWIS

Evolution II

Atlantic



Out

January 16

File Under

Less-is-more modern jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Modern Jazz Quartet,

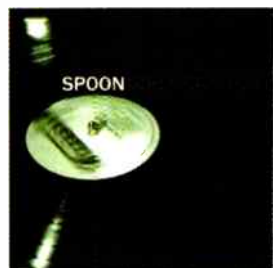
Thelonious Monk, Sonny Clark

During his 34 years as pianist with the Modern Jazz Quartet, John Lewis was indispensable in establishing that group's unique identity, both as its musical director, with his classical leanings and penchant for elegant counterpoint, and as a soloist whose spare, pointillistic style was the perfect compliment to vibraphonist Milt Jackson's multi-noted fluidity. Now 80 years old, he has every right to rest on his laurels—but the great thing about this disc is that you don't have to make allowances. *Evolution I* was a solo album and this one's a trio date (with alternating guitarists and bassists and drummer Lewis Nash) consisting of a couple of standards and a brace of originals, new and old. One of the new ones, "December, Remember," is as beautiful as anything he's ever written, while another two, "That! Afternoon In Paris" and "Cain And Abel," show that his grasp of the dramatic potential of the extended composition is undiminished, his blues feel intact and his sense of swing as sharply subtle as ever. He even manages to make his most famous contribution to the jazz canon, "Django," sound fresh, teasing out a gracefully minimalist improv before turning the song into a sad and stately tango. With Lewis, as with Monk, what seems less often turns out to be more, and this disc is a tribute to the enduring inventiveness of a style both deceptively light and emphatically delicate. >>>RICHARD C. WALLS

SPOON

Girls Can Tell

Merge



Out

February 20

File Under

Punk pop takes a classic-rock chill pill

R.I.Y.L.

Gritters, Guided By Voices,
the Pixies

Spoon frontman Britt Daniel knows something about the blues. His angular yet tuneful trio was afforded a mere four months to prove its major-label mettle before being flung to the shoulder like one of the possum patties that litter highways just outside the band's hometown of Austin. Daniel took the departure so personally that he devoted 1999's *The Agony Of Lafitte* EP to the band's former A&R flack, Ron Lafitte. But even with the wounds still fresh, he sounded more like a spurned lover than a sore loser. On *Girls Can Tell*, Spoon shrugs off any lingering bitterness, summing it up on "Take The Fifth"; Daniel sounds like a hybrid of Paul Westerberg and Mick Jagger as the manic pounding of a piano drives the tune's dueling, spare ingredients to a near-funky resolution. Like much of the album, "The Fitted Shirt," with its chugging *Led Zeppelin III* guitar signature and fluttering harpsichord, never quite abandons Spoon's Pixies fixation while delving further into the classic rock canon. And when Daniel does dredge up his major-label past, he hones in on the ludicrous details. "I walk a straight line when the man comes around," he snips on "Lines In The Suit," his skinned sarcasm salvaged by one of a surplus of sly hooks. Sure sounds like fresh start. >>>HOBART ROWLAND

MORENO VELOSO ★

Máquina De Escrever Música

Hannibal



Out

February 20

File Under

Iconoclastic Brazilian pop

R.I.Y.L.

Caetano Veloso,
Bebel Gilberto, Tom Zé

Moreno Veloso carries a heavy weight on his shoulders. His father, Caetano Veloso, has been one of Brazil's leading singer/songwriters for more than three decades, and was a founder of Brazil's influential tropicalia movement in the '60s. He was even revolutionary enough to be forced into exile for a few years by the country's former dictatorship. But the younger Veloso never tries to be a carbon copy of his dad. Instead, like Bebel Gilberto, another descendent of a famed Brazilian musician, he takes the best ideas of Brazil's musical past and grafts them onto his own quite idiosyncratic and modern vision on his debut, *Máquina De Escrever Música*, (which translates as "music typewriter"). With sparse backing, Veloso proves to be a creative and accomplished guitarist who can be either gentle, as in the lilting "Para Xó," or just plain bizarre, as in "Das Partes," where a whispery barrage of electronics deliberately intrudes on a tortuous ascending chord sequence. From the mild funk of "Arrivederci" to an unlikely and utterly charming cover of "I'm Wishing" (from Disney's *Snow White*), Veloso establishes himself as a strong personality in his own right, and a force to be reckoned with in MPB (Brazilian popular music). Not always smooth, and certainly not always easy, *Máquina De Escrever Música* is a remarkable album, full of wit and slyness. >>>CHRIS NICKSON



BRYCE DUFFY/SABA

THE FUCKING CHAMPS

We wanted people to know just how serious we are," says Josh Smith, guitarist in the Fucking Champs, about his bandname's incendiary prefix. Although it's a nice touch, Smith doesn't really need the recently affixed adjective to get his point across—his music does that quite well on its own. The San Francisco trio's second, mostly instrumental full-length, *IV* (Drag City), is a blistering platter of melodic, technical-as-hell heavy metal—think Judas Priest officiating the marriage of Thin Lizzy and Mezzadeta. Smith and fellow Champs Tim Soete and Tim Green call it "pure music"—a sobriquet that hints at the band's decidedly un-ironic appropriation of music with a considerable snark factor. "I think what people are calling irony these days is nothing more than bet-hedging," Smith figures. "Our esthetic, existing squarely outside the current wuss hegemony, has led to some confusion about our intentions, but I assure you that they're the best." Still, nü metal's fusion of teenage angst and Iron Maiden's bite into billboard-sized bathos makes Smith cringe. "We feel a kind of ceaseless, pungent loathing, as well as a morbid sense of the ever-diminishing brain-cell count of today's youth," he says. So we won't be seeing the Fucking Champs on a *Return Of The Rock* bill any time soon, then? "No, no, no, no, no, no." >>>MIKAEL WOOD

NILE

The death metallers of Nile have hit on a novel way to stand out from their growling, chugging peers. The seven-year-old South Carolina band complements its genre's blood-soaked, lyrical script with more intellectual subject matter—like ancient Egypt. “Never underestimate your audience,” warns vocalist/guitarist Karl Sanders. “When I look at the other popular music in the metal world I say, ‘How on earth can these people stand this moronic crap?’” The band’s sophomore release, *Black Seeds Of Vengeance* (Relapse), follows that line of thought, right down to the hulking liner notes, designed to help fans follow along with the

pharaohs’ exploits. Add in the band’s Middle Eastern-tinged tones, highly technical arrangements using synths and samples, and three roaring lead vocalists taking turns at the mic, and it’s no mystery that thousands of fans have turned out to see the band on their first U.S. and European headlining tour. Sanders is hesitant to expound on his band’s unique success: “Perhaps it’s not necessary for me to speculate, lest I invoke the wrath of the metal gods,” he half-jokes. Cannibal Corpse fiends shouldn’t despair—if Nile’s History Channel-esque themes aren’t your style, *Black Seeds* still has plenty of references to death and hacked testicles. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

DALE MAY



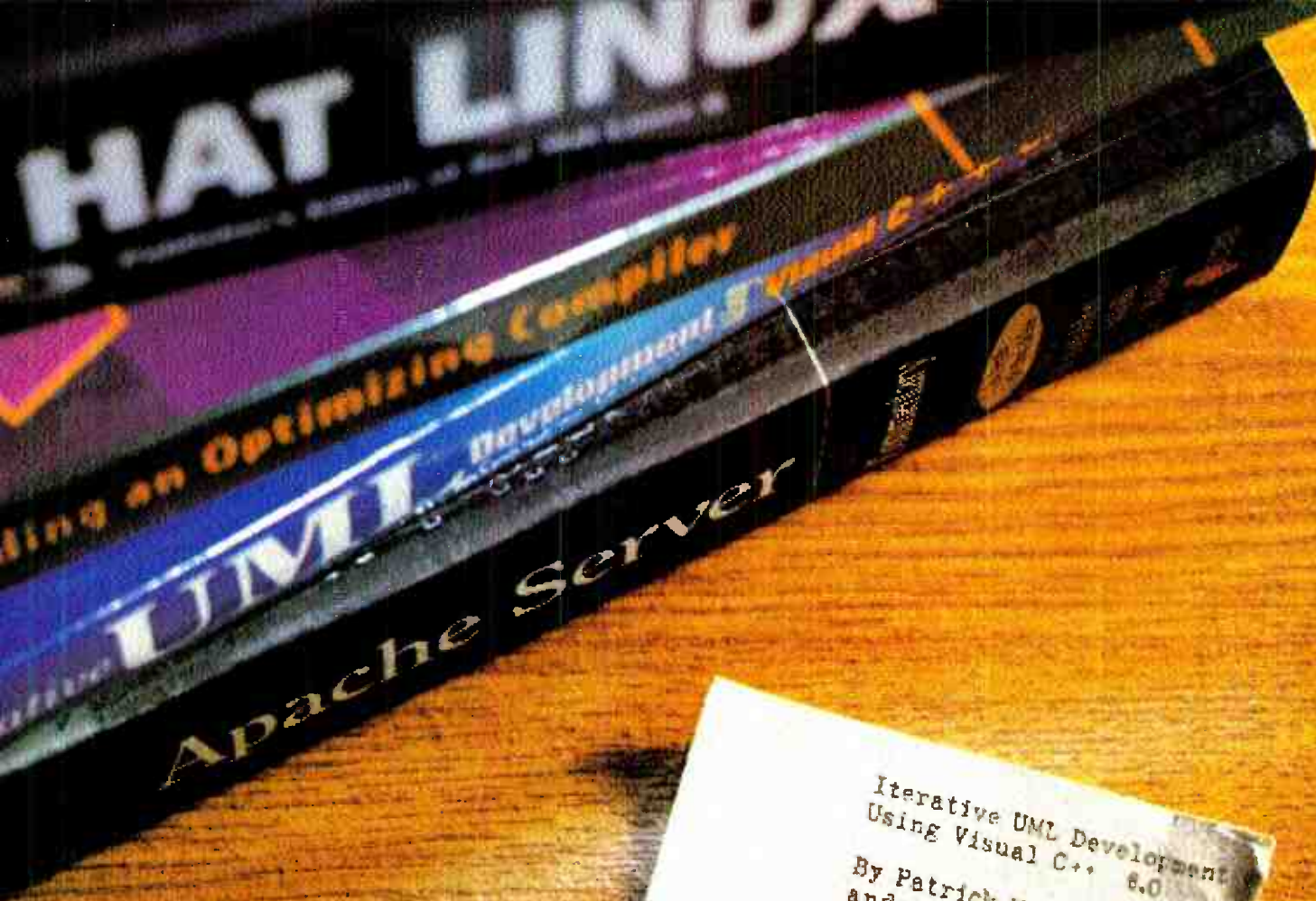
THE BELLRAYS

Our music encapsulates a 'free your mind and your ass will follow' kind of thing," says BellRays bassist Bob Venum, 38, nodding to Funkadelic's 1971 musical masterpiece. Dr. Booty-shake himself, George Clinton, would probably be proud of the alien rumble this Los Angeles quartet works up on its 13-song sophomore effort, *Grand Fury* (Uppercut), a furious blend of free jazz, grinding R&B, bar rock and weirdo blues. Those not in tune with these outer-space frequencies usually associate the BellRays' music with the MC5, and liken 33-year-

old Lisa Kekaula's sandpapery soul vocals with those of Tina Turner. Although the band has been around for almost a decade, the BellRays just released their debut in '99. A subsequent showcase at Austin's South By Southwest festival served as the turning point for the BellRays, and now they're certified indie pros, touring regularly. Fan e-mails are rolling in: "They say something like, 'I've given up on rock 'n' roll—thank you for reinvesting my faith,'" Venum says. Joey Ramone recently paid his respects, saying, "I like the band, something real simple like that. It was great," says Kekaula, cracking up. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN

ATMOSPHERE

I don't care who digs the album, but I know this one person that's going to get super pissed off," laughs Atmosphere MC Slug about the target of *Lucy Ford* (Rhymesayers), an ex he has "issues" with. "And that's really all that matters, isn't it? Touching that soul." Although the prolific 28-year-old Minneapolis rapper has been performing since the late '80s, he didn't get serious and start recording until '93. He and beat-making partner ANT are about to drop their eighth (or so, Slug loses count) full-length CD, a bitter narrative that Slug assures is "absolutely not" fictional. The MC's style has evolved from battle rhymes into a hyper-personal poetry that he describes as "cynical, minimalist emo rap," an approach that has made him one of the biggest draws in the Twin Cities and created a significant underground rep. But is there a mainstream market for jaded musings? Slug is confident that such an audience exists, albeit outside of urban radio. "I think I could keep doing what I have been doing and still make a lot of kids happy around the world," he says, "or make a lot of kids depressed." And that's what *really* matters. >>>NEIL DRUMMING



Iterative UML Development
Using Visual C++ 6.0
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World Radio History



Use your allusion

Rainer Maria: One foot in the classroom, the other in the all-ages mosh pit.

STORY: FRANKLIN BRUNO PHOTO: JASON TODD

Rainer Maria is more articulate than your average post-hardcore band. Hanging a bright melodic arc over the opening track of the band's third record, *A Better Version Of Me* (Polyvinyl), bassist Caithlin De Marrais sings, "Why is this technology an anathema to me?"—not exactly the register of language usually served up alongside grinding guitars. "When we wrote that, we said, 'This is great. We're going to be the first rock band to use the word 'anathema,'" admits guitarist Kyle Fischer after their soundcheck at Hollywood's recently opened Knitting Factory.

"It was the perfect word there, though," underscores De Marrais, who, surprise, surprise, met Fischer in a University of Wisconsin poetry workshop. Fischer was already in what he calls "a band of no consequence" with drummer (and fellow Madison grad) William Kuehn. He convinced erstwhile non-musician De Marrais to strap on the bass, and the trio christened themselves after Rainer Maria Rilke, the 19th-century poet and mystic once described by W. H. Auden as "the Santa Claus of loneliness."

On early songs, says De Marrais, "We were just mining the poems we were working on for lyrics. We would literally go through them word by word, punching it out. This time, we wanted to see where the other person could go." Some of the new album's tracks still bear traces of their old method: On "The Contents Of Lincoln's Pockets," Fischer lists relics of American history ("This is Walt Whitman's pen"), while behind him, De Marrais wonders "How can you deal with that kind of information?"

But Fischer (increasingly

famous for his balletic, all-over-the-stage live antics) credits most of the album's themes to his partner, whose strong, unfettered vocals—soaring to some, nagging to others—are pushed closer to the fore than on 1999's *Look Now Look Again* (Polyvinyl). The odd "anathema" moment aside, De Marrais uses simple language to frame complex questions about identity and internal conflict. In "Hell And High Water" she constructs a shadowy female rival who's better at being her than she is at being herself: "I've seen the girl who'll pick up where I leave off/ I've seen her sorting through my memories/ What's sweet? What's bitter?" "Thought I Was" is even more blunt: "I've got to fight/ Just not in the way I once thought right."

All this verbal skill wouldn't count for much, except that Rainer Maria delivers musically as well, from the free-form guitar squalls and arena-scaled drum breaks of "The Seven Sisters" to the swaying, elegiac "Atropine" to "Ceremony" and "Spit And Fire," which boast majestic choruses that convey emotion via melody rather than standard-issue post-punk rage. That's earned them the dreaded emo label often enough to elicit complaints, with De Marrais—who claims to have read women authors "almost exclusively" in college—citing that scene's shortage of female musicians as reason enough to reject the tag. With one foot in the classroom and the other in the all-ages mosh pit, Rainer Maria isn't about to be pigeonholed. Says Fischer: "We're shooting for simplicity, but our poetic education makes us fail—in a good way." **NMM**



RU
re

mm, rap y evolución

Orishas: Representin' for Cuba.

STORY: ENRIQUE LAVIN PHOTO: CHARLIE LANGELLA

When kidnapped slaves traveled from West Africa to Cuba, they carried *orishas*, or spiritual patrons that oversee destiny, travel and love for adherents of the Yoruba religion (now known as Santería). For a group of Cuban expats living in Paris, Orishas is the name of their hip-hop crew, a reminder of home and a banner they wear with pride.

"Spiritually, the *orishas* are a part of Cuba that we carry inside of our hearts," says Roldán Rivero, Orishas' silky-voiced crooner. "It's our religion, and it's with us everywhere we go."

After graduating with a degree in classical guitar from the University of Havana, Rivero joined a traditional band akin to the Buena Vista Social Club. The group was his ticket out of Cuba, and with a work contract in hand, Rivero relocated to the City Of Lights to perform regularly.

"Whatever I had, I left behind. I arrived in Paris with only the shirt on my back," says Rivero through his thick mustache and goatee. "I was playing my guitar and singing at restaurants and bars for a while." Soon, he met rappers Ruzzo and Guerrero of Cuba's most high-profile hip-hop outfit, Amenaza (The Threat), who drew inspiration from old-school rap groups like Run-DMC and N.W.A. "We started experimenting with each other's influences," he says of the '97 genesis of Orishas, who went on to spearhead a vibrant Paris-meets-Havana sound along with P-18 and Sergeant García.

"Our sound is *cubano*," says Guerrero, the group's second MC. "People won't be able to say, 'Hmm, this sounds like Snoop Doggy Dogg, or DMX.' What we want is, 'Damn, this sounds like Orishas.' If we wanted a West Coast sound, we would hire a West Coast producer. You could borrow the style and the flow, but copy, no."

As an old Cuban adage goes: "The one who copies, fails." One of the reasons Orishas' approach to hip-hop doesn't easily fall into a category is that the Cuban influence is still very new to pop music. Clickety minimalist percussion borrowed from Santería rituals (*rumbas*), for instance, often crops up in between the more familiar hip-hop beats.

Certainly not everything about Orishas' tunes will seem unfamiliar. On their debut album, *A Lo Cubano* (Surco-Universal Latino), the group lifts the signature melody and chorus off the *Buena Vista Social Club* album's opening track, "Chan Chan," and reconstructs it with thick bass and MCs dueling about old and new Cuba. Dripping in nostalgia, the title of "537 C.U.B.A." refers to the Havana city telephone code. In the lyrics, Ruzzo shouts out just about every Havana barrio.

"Atrevido" (meaning "impudent") fuses the island's cha-cha-cha style with a marked Euro-inflection. The storyline falls in the hip-hop tradition of set-up scenarios where the bad guy gets duped. On this song, the bad guy is a foreigner who goes to Cuba to exploit the sexual tourism trade and finds himself stripped of all possessions by the would-be prostitute, her boyfriend and their neighbors.

As for the political situation in Cuba, the members of Orishas would rather not talk about it. If there were more opportunities there, they would move back home, but as it is, it would be difficult for them to make a living as entertainers in Cuba.

At press time, however, the group was set to perform in their native country's largest hip-hop show yet. "The biggest dream that we've had since we started was going to play in Cuba," says Rivero. In particular, he wants traditional Cuban musicians and hip-hop heads to see Orishas: "So they know that we are always representing Cuba wherever we go." **MMH**

troublegirl

When **Eleni Mandell** swoons, the drama starts.

STORY: MEREDITH OCHS PHOTO: ERIN O'BRIEN

With her dark hair, pale skin and lipstick pout, singer/songwriter Eleni Mandell appears more like a '20s film star than a San Fernando Valley native. "Geographically, I am a Valley girl," she laughs, but that youth-worshipping bubblehead stereotype is far from Mandell's persona. Not only is she proud of her age—31—she walks in L.A., works as a diner waitress and spent her teenage years worshipping at the feet of local punk legends X, not at the mall. "Growing up here, I always felt like an outsider and an observer," she says.

On her new album, *Thrill* (Space Baby), Mandell rolls together her keen observations with the drama of PJ Harvey and the brooding eclecticism of Tom Waits. Her stark, emotional landscapes are supported by producer Brian Kehew (Moog Cookbook), drummer/percussionist Danny Frankel, and X's D.J. Bonebrake on marimba. ("When I met D.J., I told him X was the reason I wanted to play music," she says. "He told me, 'Should I apologize?'"

Although the guest musicians create an atmospheric backdrop for Mandell's twisted tales, her sultry voice carries the show. This hash-slinger doesn't just sing, she emotes, from a powerful, smoky whisper to a soaring trill. Her sense of performance is so intense, you begin to wonder if she's a drama queen offstage as well. "I'm sure there's an ex-boyfriend or two who'd say so," she laughs. "I'm a little volatile and emotional, and I have bad taste in men, so drama just seems to happen. But I think you can have a happy life and still find inspiration for songs. Life has so many bizarre moments; if you observe them, you'll always have something to sing about."

There's plenty of drama to go around in these tunes. On "Pauline," Mandell croons about seducing another woman's man—to the other woman. As the sinister guitar riff creeps along, she sets the scene: "I wore black/ I wore heels/ I wore an oxblood T-shirt." But more often, it's Mandell who's hurt in the end. "Closer To Him" paints a portrait of a diabolically perfect boyfriend in dreamy 6/8 time, conjuring Jean-Paul Belmondo airborne through a Marc Chagall painting. Her reward for suffering these people? "I get the gem at the end—a song."

The instruments, used only sparingly, embellish the ballads to great effect. Sheldon Gomberg's upright bass makes ghostly noises on the Waits-influenced "Nightmare Song," a chilling dream in which an intruder breaks into Mandell's house specifically to kill her, overlooking her jewelry and color TV ("Heavily I slept while/ Stealthily he crept/ And moved from room to room").

Don't think Mandell's life is just one noir scene after another: "I feel a lot less dramatic than I did when I was 21. Situations with dramatic boyfriends don't last as long." She recalls a recent momentary crush on a man who stood before her in line at the bank. "Then later, he came into the place I work and I spilled stuff all over him." Such moments are musical for her. Still, she can't help reasoning, "I hope I get more easygoing by the time I'm 50." **NMM**



LOCATION: COURTESY OF LUNETTES ET CHOCOLAT







Granddaddy

Granddaddy's fake plastic trees can't obscure how good they are.

STORY: RICHARD A. MARTIN
PHOTOS: KATRINA DICKSON

Pink Floyd once built a wall during a live concert to create a tangible metaphor for the alienation of big stadium rock shows—but why would any band plant a forest in a medium-sized club? A few years ago at a show in Portland, Oregon, the little-known Granddaddy erected a barrier between themselves and a baffled audience of several hundred people, using six-foot high plastic trees placed strategically along a 40-foot stage.

Such shenanigans might be fine when you're nobody (or Radiohead), but what if you're expected to be the next Radiohead? The members of Granddaddy are never going to be a glamorous bunch (several of them favor scruffy beards and flannel shirts), yet on the precipice of their big break, they remain skittish about adulation—even shy to a fault.

Imagine these laconic lumberjacks only a few months ago, returning to the dressing room after a recent show at New York's Bowery Ballroom to find glam god David Bowie ready to profess his admiration, reeling off all five members' names as if they'd been old pals from down at the pub. At a subsequent New York gig, Bowie

appeared yet again, groupie-like—this time vying with Kate Moss and Liv Tyler for Granddaddy's attentions.

In a tiny concrete dressing room below the stage at Seattle's Moore Theater, guitarist Jim Fairchild and frontman Jason Lytle squirm at the mention of the New York celebrity encounters. "Oh God," moans Fairchild. "The word's getting out."

The band is preparing to play with Elliott Smith, who hand-picked Granddaddy to open his national tour. Lytle, hunched over in a metal folding chair and peering sideways from under a thrift-store baseball cap, spins the situation in his distinctive down-home style. "You have to create some sort of separation, to not allow yourself to let respect penetrate you. All this other stuff, these new friends, it's all just bugs on the windshield on this long trip."

Granddaddy's trip started in Modesto, California, 75 miles east of San Francisco, when Lytle, bassist Kevin Garcia, Dryden and drummer Aaron Burtch began jamming together. With few clubs around, they accepted gigs at skateboard competitions, taking their first tentative steps into the live arena to play for kids who paid more attention to their kickflips than to the entertainment. "You're just the background clatter," muses Lytle.

By 1995, the trio expanded to include Fairchild and Dryden, and a debut EP, *A Pretty Mess By This One Band* followed. The record was aptly titled; it featured a few meandering instrumentals and a couple of promising rock songs. At the time, the band's Northern California brethren busied themselves with pop punk, and Green Day had started to take off. *A Pretty Mess*, meanwhile, attracted a little notice, but not the positive kind—a post to the industry-heavy Velvet Rope chat room dismissed Granddaddy as just another Pavement knock-off.

Then came 1998's ambitious *Under The Western Freeway*, an eccentric psych-pop collection that established Lytle as the rural West's answer to the Flaming Lips' Wayne Coyne. The full-length yielded tracks that have become fan favorites, such as the surging "Everything Beautiful Is Far Away" and the vibrant, punky outburst "Summer Here Kids." Few Americans heard the release initially—the band says they had a bum deal with original label Will—but *Freeway* started Granddaddy's buzz in Europe. Soon, V2 took notice and reissued the album in the U.S.

With the ball rolling on both sides of the Atlantic, Granddaddy sent shivers through the V2 offices by initially turning in scattered outtakes under the guise of a finished album, then fessed up and surrendered the real deal, *The Sophtware Slump*, with a cheeky title inspired by Lytle's trip to a computer-strewn secondhand store. The songs betray the singer's new infatuation with technology, expertly juxtaposed with his almost spiritual connection to the West's wide-open spaces and bird-filled skies. The nine-minute opener, "He's Simple, He's Dumb, He's The Pilot," begins with Lytle warbling an

observation, "Adrift again, 2000 man/ You lost your maps you lost your plans," amid distorted banjo and sampled bird chirps.

Lytle expresses sympathy for the lost souls and machines of the high-tech dot-com landscape throughout the album, on the lament for a computer man, "Jed The Humanoid," and in an ode to a graveyard for discarded washers, dryers and refrigerators, "Broken Household Appliance National Forest."

"I have a growing appreciation for that which is simple and natural," Lytle says in a near-whisper. "I get that out of the outdoors, and seeing the accumulation of clutter and waste and not being too happy about it. So I create these little stories and scenarios" which then often get turned into snappy, offbeat pop lyrics, aglow beneath a blanket of layered guitars and echoing synthesizer chords.

"I read an article about us this morning that said something interesting," adds Fairchild: "Same old fucking subject, like everybody's freaking out about the way the world's going, but fortunately Jason has the ability to put a different slant on it," he says.

Onstage in front of a sold-out, 1500-strong crowd in Seattle, Granddaddy confidently parades through songs that span its catalog. The trees are long gone, but strands of plastic fall foliage hang from the keyboards and amps; they look like a rock band playing in a wooded enclave, but subdued, as if they don't want to disturb a thing. Fairchild strums almost entirely in the darkness, and others seem oblivious of the audience. Behind them, a screen flashes a semi-static image of 14 steel windmills, with a cartoon deer or rabbit occasionally scurrying across a foreground field. "The obvious reason [for the projections] is to encourage people not to look at us too much," kids Lytle.

He allows a brief burst of laughter, but he knows that people are scrutinizing Granddaddy ever more closely. With *The Sophtware Slump* passing the 20,000 sales mark in the U.S. and approaching 80,000 worldwide, and a big headlining tour due for late winter, the band seems to have successfully made it through the indie-to-major gauntlet. V2, the label that turned Moby's slow-burning *Play* into platinum, is probably more willing than most to show patience with this modest band. Granddaddy has obliged, if reluctantly, agreeing to stay on the road into 2001, partly to satisfy their own curiosity about whether they can become truly successful without having to compromise or act the part of rock stars.

"The twist to it is that we spent so many years promoting ourselves and trying to make up for the inadequacies in people that we worked with," Lytle says, jabbing at their former label. "Now we finally have all these really capable people behind us, and I'm interested to see what it would be like for our efforts to be helped along. I don't want to cut it short. But then again, you do have to establish some boundaries."

Looks like they'll be needing those trees again after all. **MMM**

“All these new friends, it’s all just bugs on the windshield on this long trip.”



LOCATION HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT HOTEL





the 21 club

The Donnas, legal and loving it.

STORY: LORNE BEHRMAN
PHOTOS: ANGIE WYANT

Remember the end of *Grease*, when prissy Olivia Newton-John arrives at the high school carnival decked out in leather, looking like a badass dominatrix? That's a Donnas show, only it rocks harder. These four Donnas are the nice girls from algebra who raided their older brothers' stoner-rock record collection and took night classes in AC/DC's big riffs, Mötley Crüe's over-the-top attitude and the Ramones' simple oomph. Singer Donna A. is endearingly awkward, somewhere between your high school valedictorian and an overzealous karaoke performer, and drummer Donna C. sports pigtails and a matching goofy grin, cracking the snare with enough caveman vigor to cause spastic eye blinking. Guitarist Donna R. pouts a lot and hides under curtains of caramel-colored hair as she strangles Chuck Berry leads and muscle-car riffs from her strings.

These four savvy hip-shakers give the critics in the audience—this is New York, after all—a Donnas show: enthusiastic if a little self-aware. Before the Donnas standard "Well Done," bassist Donna F. gives the crowd a little Paul Stanley-circa-*Alive!* shtick, yelling, "Do any of you like your meat well done?" The crowd at New York City's Westbeth Theater is much less swagger 'n' Spandex, though. Lots of old-school Sauconys in the house tonight, and not much dancing, either. No beer-bottle tossing or crude come-ons, and people actually clap after the band finishes a song.

The band strategically inserts new material from *The Donnas Turn 21* (Lookout!), their fourth and latest full-length, between a heavy padding of favorites, mostly off of their breakthrough 1998 sophomore record *American Teenage Rock 'N' Roll Machine* (Lookout!). While the

title of the new record refers to the band finally officially being old enough to get into all the clubs they play, at the end of the evening, it's hard not to wonder if these girls really are 21, and if so, if they've technically been on the scene long enough to shout, "Anyone want to hear an old song?" and then play one of their own.

In an elegantly down-home hotel lobby a couple of days later, Donnas A. and R. are the first to pass through the revolving doors, Donnas F. and C. following a minute or so behind. The one thing so striking about seeing the Donnas offstage is that they look so *offstage*: pretty and Gap-gal simple—boot-cut jeans, knitted sweaters (though Donna F. sports a T-shirt that says something like, "Nurses do it better"), and minimal makeup. In this age of fabricated boy bands and bubblegum girls, one wonders, at least momentarily, if the tough-girl sneers and loud guitars were all manufactured in some manager's mind.

Like good girlfriends, Donna A. and Donna C. stall the interview to allow Donna R. and Donna F. to race upstairs to tidy up their room; after a safe 10 minutes pass, we follow. Donna R. and Donna C. comfy themselves on a cushy green couch and Donna A. pulls up a wooden chair. There couldn't have been much to clean up: The only sign that these are the same people who made that onstage ruckus the previous Thursday is the few hard-shell guitar cases in a corner—no overflowing ashtrays, empty booze bottles or signs of on-tour promiscuity. So this is a band whose latest single is "40 Boys In 40 Nights"?

"Why can't a girl be, 'Yeah, I'm going to go get some tonight?'" responds Donna R. (Allison Robertson). "I remember we'd go see riot grrrl bands," says Donna A. (Brett Anderson) picking up the thread, "And they would be very supportive: 'All the girls come up to the front and all the guys go to the back.' If we said that, all the girls would get beat up and it would be our fault, and then we'd get sued." Everyone cracks up.

As ridiculous as that scenario seems, there are plenty of rowdy meathead fans who grab the band while they're playing, assholes who try to get up onstage, and out-and-out stalkers. "I wanted to design a song so Brett could [say], 'Well, this show sucks, but at least I have a song about how much you all suck,'" says Donna R. "Not that all of our fans suck," corrects Donna C.

Along with the obsessed, testosterone-flooded fans, there are detractors who feel the whole onstage persona comes off as annoying and fake—and they tell the band so. "We'll do photo shoots and when we get there people will be, 'So do you guys, like, play your own instruments and write your own songs?' It's like, 'Thanks,'" Donna A. says sarcastically.

These preconceptions are fueled, at least in part, by the mysterious role of Darin Raffaelli, an East Bay, California songwriter and former member of the garage-y pop-punk outfit Supercharger. Raffaelli helped shape the Donnas early on, writing and releasing the band's self-titled debut and playing an uncredited collaborative role on *American Teenage Rock 'N' Roll Machine*.

In explaining Raffaelli's role with the band, they tell their entire story. Donna R. does most of the talking, exuding a bratty charm, using "like" liberally and peppering her sentences with "lame" and

"retarded." Donna C. (Torry Castellano) is cheery but quiet, agreeing with her bandmate via emphatic facial expressions and head nods. Donna A. is playful, illustrating points with witty anecdotes. And bassist Donna F. (Maya Ford) maintains her distance, contributing a wry quip here and there. "I remember Torry wanted to be a drummer from, like, fourth grade," Donna R. says; she also recalls first hearing Donna A. singing in social studies class.

The Donnas began as a band called Raggedy Ann in eighth grade, before becoming the Electrocutes, an act Donna F. describes as "super fast with a lot of bridges." Raffaelli was penning basement hits for local garage, punk and surf bands, and he approached the girls about recording some of his songs. "The original vision for the side project was to be our alter egos who were all-American teenage girls who liked the Ramones," starts Donna R. "We said we'd do it, but we were kind of making fun of it all the time: 'God, this really is just a Ramones song. It's just so dumb, nobody is going to buy this.'" But then several of their

"We don't aim for critics. Our songs are bubblegum and pop on purpose."
—Donna R.

early releases sold out.

Ever since they were junior high "dweebs," the fledgling foursome holed up in Donna C.'s garage learning their instruments and pissing off neighbors (they only stopped practicing there last year). They released their first record on Lookout! (former label to Green Day and Operation Ivy) their senior year, ditching high school and messing up their final grades to rock Japan for a week.

For their sophomore effort, Raffaelli became a creative catalyst, helping the band write instead of handing them songs. "The five of us could have gone on that way forever, but we had to start thinking about how it looked," Donna A. explains.

It looked like the Runaways—'70s jailbait rock featuring young Joan Jett and Lita Ford—as conceived by Kim Fowley. The Donnas didn't want to be the pre-fab four, and Raffaelli wanted to get back to his own music and life, so the parties amicably split, leaving the Donnas to write 1999's *Get Skintight* (Lookout!) on their own. "We were worried that if the record sucked, it would prove Darin controlled the band," Donna R. remembers. Lucky for her, their worries were unfounded. Not only was it their best seller at 50,000 copies, it's generally viewed as the high point of their first three albums.

If the new album's AC/DC-meets-Ramones formula doesn't exactly show any major progression in the band's songwriting skills, it does prove that they've got enough juice to continue writing good tunes. "What Darin taught us is that a good song sounds like another good song," figures Donna A.

Surprisingly, the four young women don't have much to say about the rite of passage mentioned in *The Donnas Turn 21*. "The title is just sort of a joke because people are like 'What are you going to do when you're not teenagers?'" Donna R. says. "It's just sort of a statement that we don't care that we're not in high school anymore."

So now that the critically acclaimed Donnas are no longer a novelty, is it time to take them seriously? "We didn't set out to be media darlings," underscores Donna R. "We don't aim for critics. Our songs are bubblegum and pop on purpose." In other words, if someone is pre-packaging the Donnas, it's the Donnas themselves. **MM**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DONNA F. (MAYA FORD), DONNA R. (ALLISON ROBERTSON), DONNA C. (TORRY CASTELLANO), DONNA A. (BRETT ANDERSON)

MOTHER, SHOULD

Now that **Radiohead** has taken rock to new planes, they face a bigger challenge: taking it to the stage.

STORY: DOUGLAS WOLK
PHOTOS: DANNY CLINCH

In The Flesh

The audience at Radiohead's Roseland Ballroom show looks like the only 3,000 people in New York who've found the golden tickets to paradise. They're crying in anticipation, screaming with joy and bathing in a warm, ecstatic glow, even if scalpers charged them hundreds of dollars for the privilege.

They've paid to be in the presence of Radiohead's aura as much as to see the performance. And why shouldn't they? Radiohead is arguably the most exciting rock band in the world right now, the group whose next move matters more than their last one. And part of the thrill is that their show, one of only three in the U.S. last year, is *not* a rote greatest-hits set: A lot of what the band will play isn't even on their new album, *Kid A* (Capitol). The bandmembers skip most of their best-known songs, they don't indulge in stage gimmickry, and they don't ask anyone to sing along (though the "rain down" bit of "Paranoid Android"

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CO

Will I build a wall?



turns into a roar from the audience anyway). We're gratified, because they're not trying too hard to please us.

Still, you can see a change come over the whole band's body language as they switch between new material and old, between more traditionally structured rock songs and the songs that haunt rock's abandoned house. When the group members reach back for old nuggets like "Just" or "The Bends," they're incandescent and physical, lunging into every chord, looking as if they're remembering a skill they'd put aside; when they try "Everything In Its Right Place" or the brand new, groove-based encore "I Might Be Wrong," they barely move, and seem to be concentrating very hard on losing themselves inside the song. Yorke recently said in an interview that he's contemplated changing Radiohead's name, and at the Roseland show, that choice suddenly made sense. But if it's tough to be the most exciting band in the world, imagine being the two most exciting bands in the world.

You Gotta Be Crazy, You Gotta Have A Real Need

If you want to shield your eyes from the Radiohead halo and actually interview the mystical wizards behind the curtain, keep in mind that there are plenty of guards at the gate. These days, here's what you do: First, apply for a username and a password from one of their publicists. If you're approved, you go to a special Web site (www.spinwithagrין.co.uk), log in with the password, and type your question in. Your query is forwarded to the publicist, who determines if it's interesting enough for the band to answer; if it passes *that* test, it's re-forwarded to Radiohead, who respond to it (if they feel like it, maybe, eventually), and post both the question and answer on the site, whereupon every Radiohead fan site on the planet links to it.

Transmitting a question is like an act of supplication to the Oracle at Delphi: Sacrifice the calf wrong, and you'll get a curt, sarcastic comeback. Sometimes a bandmember writes something meaningful, and signs it ("JG" is guitarist Jonny Greenwood, "Dr. Tchock" and its variants are singer/guitarist Thom Yorke); sometimes you just get an uncredited torrent of sub-Joycean misspellings and self-contradicting thoughts. But no one gets to see the Wizard—not directly, at any rate.

Don't Leave Me Now

Is it weird for Radiohead to perform old songs from when their creative process was very different and their heads were in a very different place—and have they ever wanted to ditch them altogether? We asked the Oracle, and the answer came:

"I think it's basically unhealthy to disown music that you've done in the past. So long as you're not attached to it and realize it comes from where you were, then it's okay. And that now you have moved on elsewhere, playing a song in a concert in front of people is a way of reclaiming it back. If we could not play any of our old stuff, I don't think we would, simply, it fucks with the flow of writing and making music to try too hard to distance yourself from certain things you do. But then crowd-pleasing doesn't exactly come natural to us so, sometimes when you play it doesn't mean anything, sometimes you remember something in it that you thought you forgot, which is great. In a way it's whatever the audience gives back to you."

"Crowd-pleasing" is a central problem of Radiohead's career—they've never, ever been comfortable with it. At this point, if people expect Radiohead to do something, that makes them pretty much incapable of doing it; *Kid A* and what comes after it are Radiohead inventing workarounds to avoid rock normalcy.

The two-year record/tour cycle is unfathomably depressing to them, so we can expect album number five shortly; the original plan was that it would be more of the dozens of songs from the epic *Kid A* sessions, but the latest word is that at least some of it will be newer. The interview process bugs them, so we get *Spin With A Grin*. They had one fairly straightforward old-style Radiohead song going into *Kid A*—"Knives Out," a recent live staple—and they spent more than a year, off and on, trying to get the recording right (and haven't released it yet).

And then there's the matter of touring the way rock bands are "supposed" to, and what's supposed to happen when they're onstage, which may be why their 2001 tour is rumored to be up in the air. It's part of their appeal that they never do the obvious thing. And when not doing the obvious thing becomes what they're expected to do—well, that's where they hit a wall of their own devising.

Waiting For The Worms

That's not to say that Radiohead is afflicted with creative stagnation. Just the opposite, actually; snap open the CD tray of *Kid A*, and you'll find an extra, hidden booklet, with fragments of lyrics from material they left off the album. Nonetheless, *Kid A*'s tune "How To Disappear Completely" could be about their songs—especially songs that have been eagerly anticipated but haven't yet shown up on record. "Lift," "Follow Me Around" and "True Love Waits," among others, have surfaced in the band's live repertoire, been tossed around as possible album tracks or singles, and then vanished before a recording ever appeared. There's a song called "Cuttooth" that guitarist Ed O'Brien's online diaries suggested was a highlight of the *Kid A* sessions, an extended three-chord juggernaut. One of the best Radiohead fan sites is named after it. Nobody beyond Radiohead's inner circle has ever even heard it.

So what's the story with the disappearing material? Is it that certain songs, even some of their best, resist recording? We asked the Oracle:

"If you got to the unofficial sites, you'll see there are lists of songs that have never made it right to tape. We're trying to work from the basis that it doesn't matter how it is done technically in the studio, that is one workspace, and playing it in front of people is another. It's a case of rewriting things. Some of it works, some of it doesn't. The most important thing is not feeling in any way restricted. Sometimes what sounds good live cannot be translated like that. It sounds dull and lifeless. But so what? It's in a different place. We try hard not to have a problem with it. Missing songs find their way back eventually.—Tchocky (Keen aren't I?)"

Welcome To The Machine

Oh, yes, the unofficial sites—ground zero for Radiohead's fanbase, and for the PR coups that helped drive *Kid A* to No. 1. In the old way of thinking, if you're a fan of a band, its direct involvement with your life stops at discrete, "official" activities: buying the album, going to see them play, maybe getting a T-shirt. But we are not in that world anymore; we are in a world with unstoppable information flow, and the old paradigm no longer pertains.

Radiohead's brilliant move is blurring the "official"/"unofficial" line, so that they can draw their listeners more deeply into their world. Instead of updates on current band news, Radiohead.com points to fans' volunteer sites like the excellent Greenplastic.com and Ateaseweb.com; Radiohead.com itself is mostly a deep, dense, marvelously complicated piece of art designed by Stanley Donwood, who plays *Hipgnosis* to their *Pink Floyd*. (Earlier versions of it have been archived by fans; there are links at www.radiohead.com/waitingroom.html.)



The band's marketers programmed an "iBlip"—a mini-site with links to multimedia goodies—for *Kid A*, available to anyone who wanted to stick a link to it on the Web; they streamed the entire album over the Web weeks before its release. The band has even been making noise about considering an electronic subscription model for their new music, so it could come out as they finish it in a way that hasn't been possible since the fall of the non-album single.

The band knows that any song they perform in public will immediately circulate to all of their serious fans. They *depend* on that. *Kid A* proper is so carefully engineered, so rich in sonic detail, that a pirated MP3 is simply not an adequate substitute, and the fan sites are windows to their work in progress. At Roseland, Yorke dedicated the new "Pyramid Song" to "everyone who's already heard it on Napster." But how do they feel about the fact that when they change a song before they release it officially, the previous draft is already documented?

Speak, great Oracle: "It doesn't matter at all. I always get worried when a song gets set in a certain way. Because to me that can just end up being habit forming, you loose [sic] where it's coming from and you get bored, so much so that we used to tape everything we played and listen to it and analyze it to make sure we hadn't missed anything. Then [we] remembered, actually, the good stuff sticks."

A Lead Role In A Cage

The dilemma that the members of Radiohead are facing as musicians right now is another facet of the crowd-pleasing problem: how to express their new music, constructed out of sound manipulations in the

gravity-free world of ProTools, in the language of the stage. Radiohead's first couple of albums essentially documented material from live performances, very often road-tested before it was recorded—the demi-hit "My Iron Lung" (1994) was mostly a live recording, in fact.

OK Computer (1997) split the difference, a studio creation that doubled as arena-rock; if "Climbing Up The Walls" sounded half-obliterated by a malicious subroutine, "Lucky" spawned a hundred thousand air-guitarists, and "Paranoid Android" became the junior axeman's math-rock drill of choice.

Kid A's songs, though, sound like they were devised in the studio; their essence is far from the muscle and riffage that earned Radiohead their live rep. In order to perform the new songs (and they've played them all onstage, aside from the ineffable textural doodle "Treefingers"), the band can either translate them into the fingers-and-instruments idiom, and risk losing the compositions' power and meaning, or be faithful to the recordings, and risk becoming slaves to a tape.

What Shall We Do To Fill The Empty Spaces?

At their Roseland show, the band has a few solutions worked out for translating the new material. During "The National Anthem," it brings on a massive horn section that stokes the recording's gluey free Dixieland into a four-alarm blaze; "Optimistic"'s loop becomes a continuous rumbling tattoo from drummer Phil Selway, finally

exploding from the cymbals in its final minute. On the other hand, "Idioteque," which relies very heavily on a pre-programmed, Autechre-inspired beat on the album, springs out of the same can onstage. And as charismatic as Yorke is, contorting himself around his mic stand and chattering "ice age coming, ice age coming," the performance is obviously borrowed from the record's vernacular. Ditto for "Motion Picture Soundtrack," whose live incarnation was once a perfectly heartbreaking acoustic piece; the recording's faux-celestial strings and harps trickle out of the speakers at the Roseland, though they're nowhere to be seen on stage.

How does Radiohead decide when to paraphrase their records with their instruments and when to resort to prerecorded sounds? Can I get an Oracle to testify?

"We never use anything prerecorded. It's off a sequencer. It's pre-programmed but then Jonny pulls the wires out and flicks switches. How do we decide? I don't know it's all new at the moment to us. —Tchcok [sic]"

Which explains nothing at all, except that they're as confused as we are.

By The Way, Which One's Pink?

The punch line is that, despite Radiohead's all-permeating abhorrence of the ultimate rock-band banality, the consumerist machine—it turns up in everything from their packaging to their advocacy of Naomi Klein's anti-branding book, *No Logo*, to the "non-branded environment" of their European tour last summer—they've got a more finely honed brand identity than any other band of the moment. The collection of *The Bends* and *OK Computer* videos is called *Seven Television Commercials*, which is a good joke, but the short "blips" they made in lieu of videos for *Kid A* genuinely are commercials: They promise an esthetic experience, where a video delivers one. The design collective that makes Radiohead T-shirts, W.A.S.T.E., is every bit as much a clothing imprint as, say, Triple 5 Soul. Radiohead even has its own icon: the little "binkybear," the critter that resembles a cross between the Ween logo and the Grateful Dead logo. Is it a coincidence that both of those bands also empower their fans to do their marketing work for them?

Still, this kind of questioning only comes up because there's a stratospheric standard for Radiohead right now. The *Kid A* backlash started appearing a couple of weeks after its initial, rhapsodic reception. How great is the album, really? The answer is that it's so great there's a *backlash*. You can love Radiohead or you can hate them, but if you care enough to have heard their new incarnation, you care enough to have staked out a strong opinion on it; that's always a good sign.

And look where the strongest opinions are coming from: the members of Radiohead are fighting hard to not be like anybody else, which is the mark of real artists and innovators. They're refusing the obligation we in the press pin on them to be fascinating individuals on cue, which is fair (much as we hate to admit it). But they're also fighting to be unlike what they used to be. They're struggling so hard that they're building the inveterate rebel's wall around themselves—of perfectionism, isolation, self-doubt, suspicion of anything that seems like compromise. The only backlash they have to worry about is the one from themselves. **NMM**



LOVE YOU LIVE

Nashville Pussy
madison, WI - headliners 10.14.99

Why do we construct a visual valentine to great performances every February? Like Timbaland told us: "Entertainment. Entertain me. I want to see some entertainment, you know what I'm saying? If I don't see some entertainment, then it ain't a live show." Timbaland, we know what you're saying, and so do the artists here, who offered odes to their favorite live shows—experienced either from the audience or the stage.

Jhe most outstanding show I ever saw was the Butthole Surfers in late 1989 or early '90, in this club just north of Albany, New York called Saratoga Winners—this roadhouse place that reminded me of the scene in *The Blues Brothers* with the chicken wire. In fact, the sign on the front said "Butthole Suffers." The show was just these full sensory overloads. They had two movie projectors set up, showing movies on either side of the stage. One side, they were showing World War I newsreels, on the other side they were showing medical films: there was a sex-change operation, another was a close-up of a delivery. When the baby was halfway out, they played the film backwards, then forwards again, so it looked like the doctor was taking the baby and ramming it in and out of the woman. Then, there were cages on either side of the stage with naked women dancing in them, and on top of that there was a wall of strobe lights along the back. I just couldn't stop laughing—it was the most outrageous thing I'd ever seen. It really lived up to all that I thought was demented about their albums. (The latest record from moe. is *L*, on Red Ink.)

—AL SCHNIER, MOE.

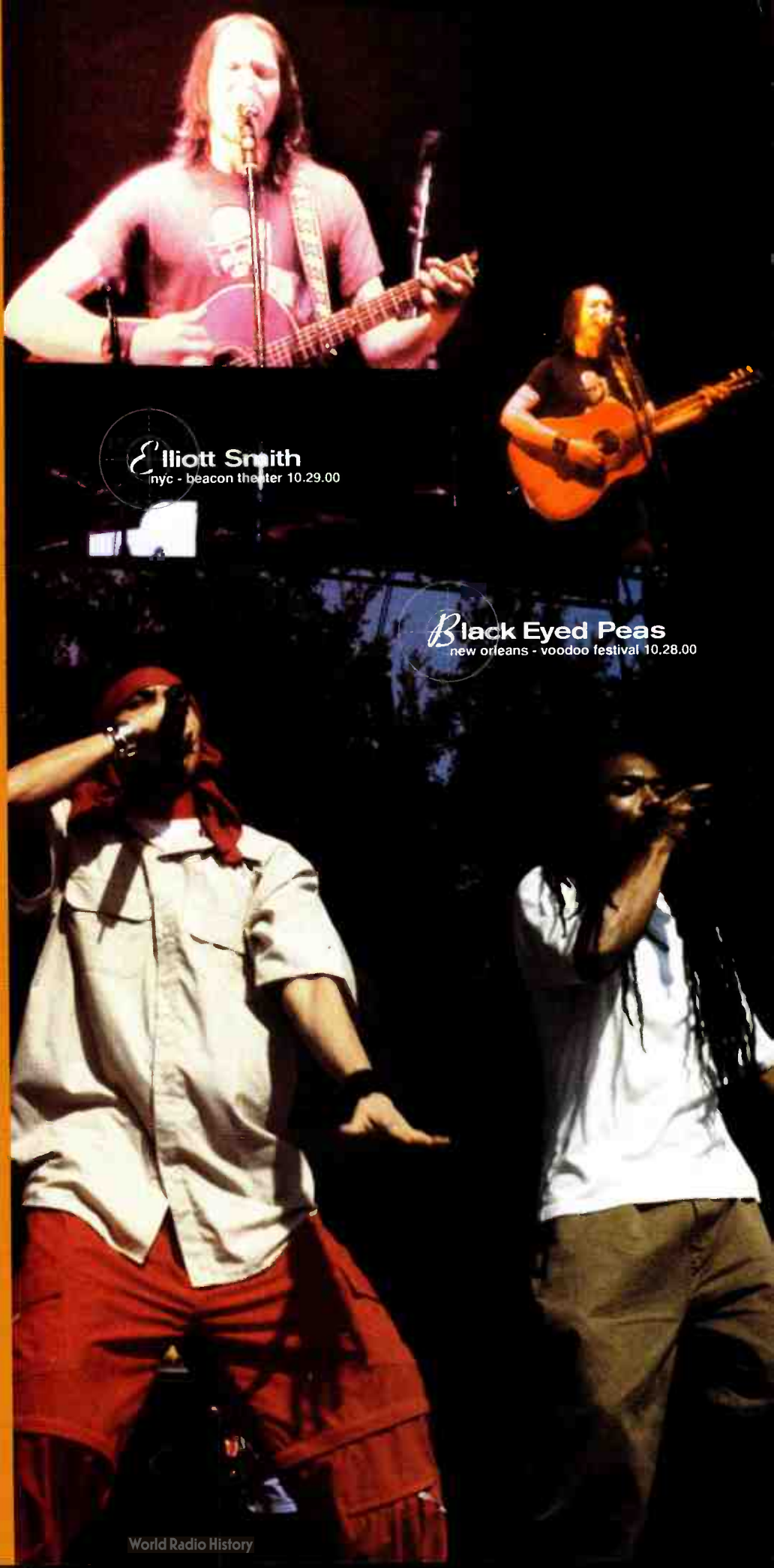
Jhe Birthday Party played this place called the Moonlight Club in London in 1981.

There must have been 20 people there. And when I walked in I thought, "Uh-oh, it isn't going to be any good, there isn't anybody here." But it turned into one of those evenings that kind of change the rest of your life. I remember my mouth was pretty much on the floor for 45 minutes; this assault of music and imagery was flying at you at this shithole in the middle of London. We'd had punk in London and I was well into that sort of thing, so I was used to aggressive and powerful gigs. But this was something different—it was really, really extreme. They were kind of my dream group. Twenty years later, I can still feel that gig. And I remember there being nobody there, but when you've seen something seminal like that, and then you talk about it to other people, they go, "I was there too!" And I'm thinking, "If all the people I've spoken to who said they were at that gig [were there], there would've been a thousand people there!" (The Cocteau Twins' latest is *Stars And Topsoil*, a greatest-hits collection on 4AD.)

—SIMON RAYMONDE, THE COCTEAU TWINS

I was a huge Mötley Crüe fan. I have a lot of older brothers and sisters that were into KISS and Aerosmith, and as much as I liked those as a little kid, when Mötley Crüe came out, it was like my KISS and Aerosmith wrapped up in one. For the intro of their *Dr. Feelgood* tour, they

(continued on p. 53)



Elliott Smith

nyc - beacon theater 10.29.00

Black Eyed Peas

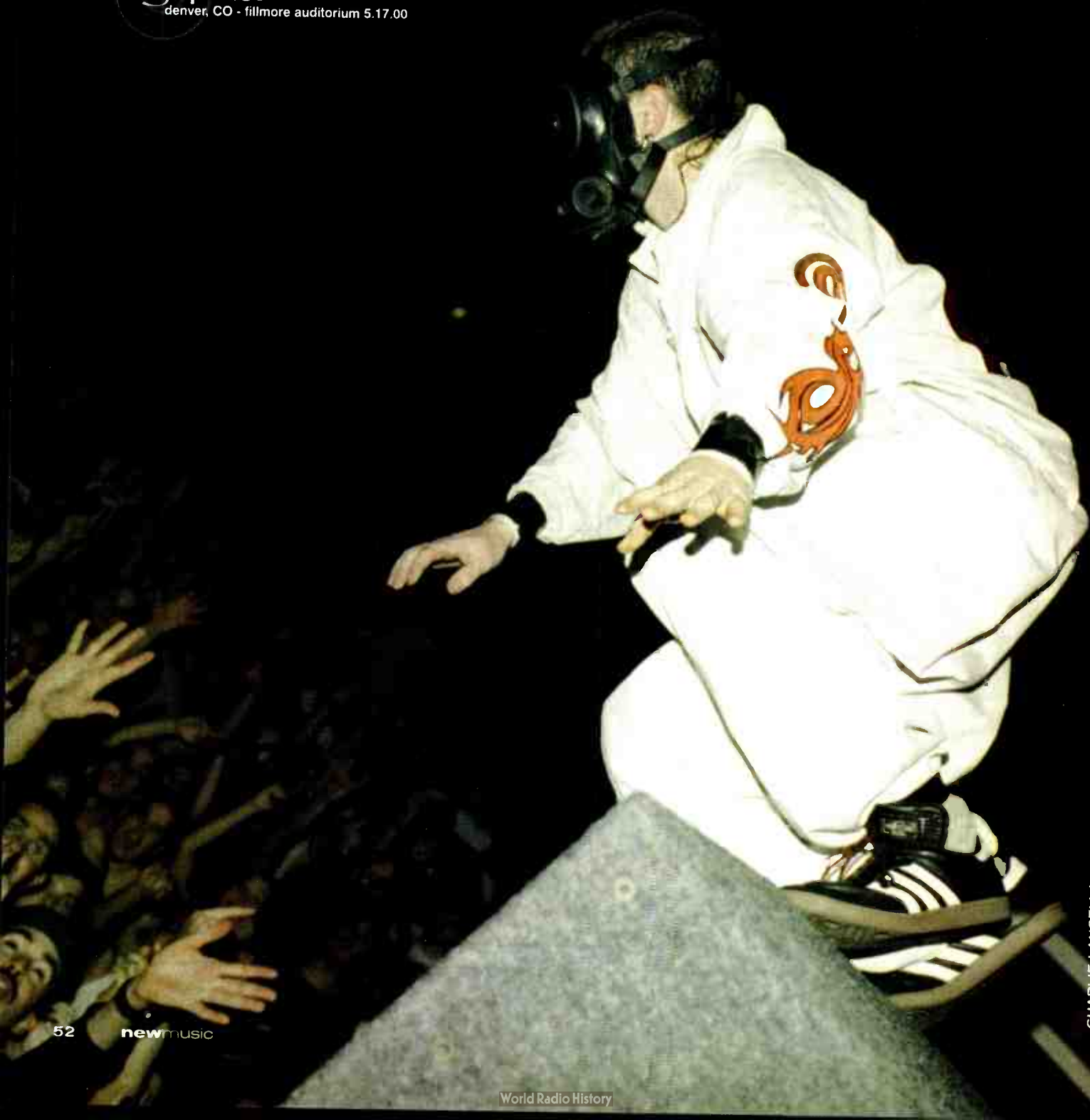
new orleans - voodoo festival 10.28.00

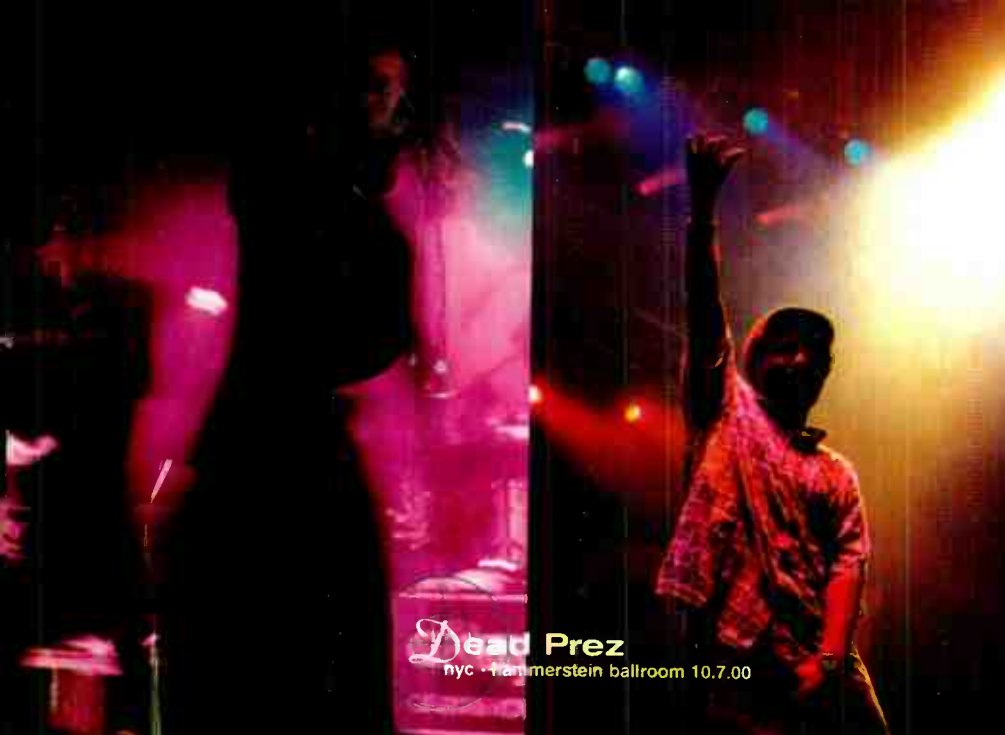
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DANIEL BOWMAN SIMON, EBET ROBERTS, KERI-ANN LAURITO



Harvey
nyc - the knitting factory 10.20.00

Slipknot
denver, CO - fillmore auditorium 5.17.00





Dead Prez
nyc - Hammerstein ballroom 10.7.00



Godhead
nyc - downtime 10.21.00



Rinocerose
nyc - irving plaza 10.21.00

L

had a character called Alister Field on a video screen, and then they came out and played "Kickstart My Heart," and I had goosebumps for like, a week. It was so cool. They took elements of what KISS did, and they worked it into their show, and it was funny how natural it worked for them. For Tommy Lee's drum solo, he went out over the audience and Mick Mars blew up a bunch of speaker cabinets. And no disrespect to KISS, but at that time I feel like Mötley Crüe's songs were perfect and awesome at the same time. It wasn't like, a couple of hits and then a bunch of songs you didn't care about. It was hit after hit. And I knew the words to every single song they played. (Union Underground's latest is *An Education in Rebellion*, on Sony.)

—PATRICK KENNISON,
UNION UNDERGROUND

One time we were on tour with Downset about a million years ago, playing somewhere like Secaucus, New Jersey. It was kinda scary—I was wearing a tube top and my shirt totally fell off. Nobody noticed because I have really long hair, but I had to wait for the song to end to pull my shirt up. After that, the show went fine. (Kittie's latest release is the *Paperdoll* EP on Artemis.)

—MERCEDES LANDER, KITTIE

I saw Led Zeppelin at Madison Square Garden. It must have been 1976, although it might have been '77, definitely after *Physical Graffiti*. I actually went with someone I didn't like because we had fabulous tickets on the first row above the floor. So, I guess it was my first sell-out to see the sell-out show. They were like gods on stage. I knew it's a cliché. But they were so gigantic. They were wearing the classic stuff: Plant in white, Page in black, Bonham you couldn't see behind the drums. Nobody looked at John Paul Jones [laughs]. The thing I really remember about it was how much they were just playing music with each other. As I recall, they set up very close together on the stage. And it was not a huge stage... Everyone went to the bathrooms during Bonham's drum solo—it was 20 minutes long. I had been told [by my parents] to stay away from the bathrooms, because there was drug dealing going on there, so I stayed while everyone else I was with went to the bathrooms. Needless to say, [the drama] were the instrument I picked up later... I do remember that I was instructed by my parents that if there was a riot, to go under my seat: "Don't run in the stampede, go under your seat." (Damon And Naomi's latest is *Damon And Naomi With Ghost from Sub Pop*.)

—DAMON KRUKOWSKI,
DAMON AND NAOMI

Without digging back into the classic past—because it's hard to top stuff like KISS back in the day—I'd have to say that Nine Inch Nails on the *Downward Spiral* tour was just phenomenal. The lights were fantastic, the sound was awesome. I've been good friends with Trent and the guys for a long time, and it was very impressive, very together. It was probably the best show I've ever been to... saw them four or five times on that tour and every night was very consistent, right on the money. It's like a full-on Hollywood production, like going to see a movie or something." (Pantera's latest is *Reinventing The Steel* on Elektra.)

—VINNIE PAUL, PANTERA

Me and my man went to the suburbs for our two-year anniversary celebration, which included third-row center seats to a Lou Rawls show in Elgin, Illinois. His schmoky band comes out and plays a sort of sputtery Rawls overture and a lot of tickling of those god-awful chime things. But then out comes the Man in a pinstripe suit and diamond rings. His voice is on—still powerful, deep and wide. I am sniffling and crying real tears from the joy of actually, finally beholding one of my singing idols. He's telling stories about "the street" and doing all the hits, "Tobacco Road," the synthesizers are going wild, the bass player is making awful Scatfield noises. All the hits just keep on coming—"Natural Man" actually rocks—we even survived his rendition of "Send In The Clowns" and a 12-minute version of "Wind Beneath My Wings." Lou saved the day by closing the show with a seemingly endless—but happening—version of "You're Gonna Miss My Lovin'." Standing ovations were happening. When it was over we asked a policeman where to get food in Elgin after 10 p.m. The only option? Bennigan's. So we're chewing our terrible fried food and drinking our overpriced beers, when we look up and Lou Rawls walks into this tacky-ass Bennigan's! I tried to vainly maintain. Lou was holding court at a corner table, having changed into a light brown three-piece suit, surrounded by three well-maintained, fenguarded older Joan Collins-looking ladies with lots of make-up on. He's laughing in that low, Barry White, huh-huh-huh way that I can feel across the room. As we're walking out, we say excuse me to Lou Rawls and talk about being huge fans and Lou is smiling really big and puts down his Buffalo chicken wing that he had been daintily eating with his pinky up, and shakes our hands and says thanks. (Kelly Hogan & The Pine Valley Cosmetics recently released *Reach The Country* [Interlog on Bloodshot].)

—KELLY HOGAN

Powerman 5000
providence, RI - lupu's 8.26.99



System Of A Down
providence, RI - lupu's 11.23.99



Jenacious D
nyc - irving plaza 10.20.00



LEWIS & CLARK

VIP
IRVING PLAZA
NYC



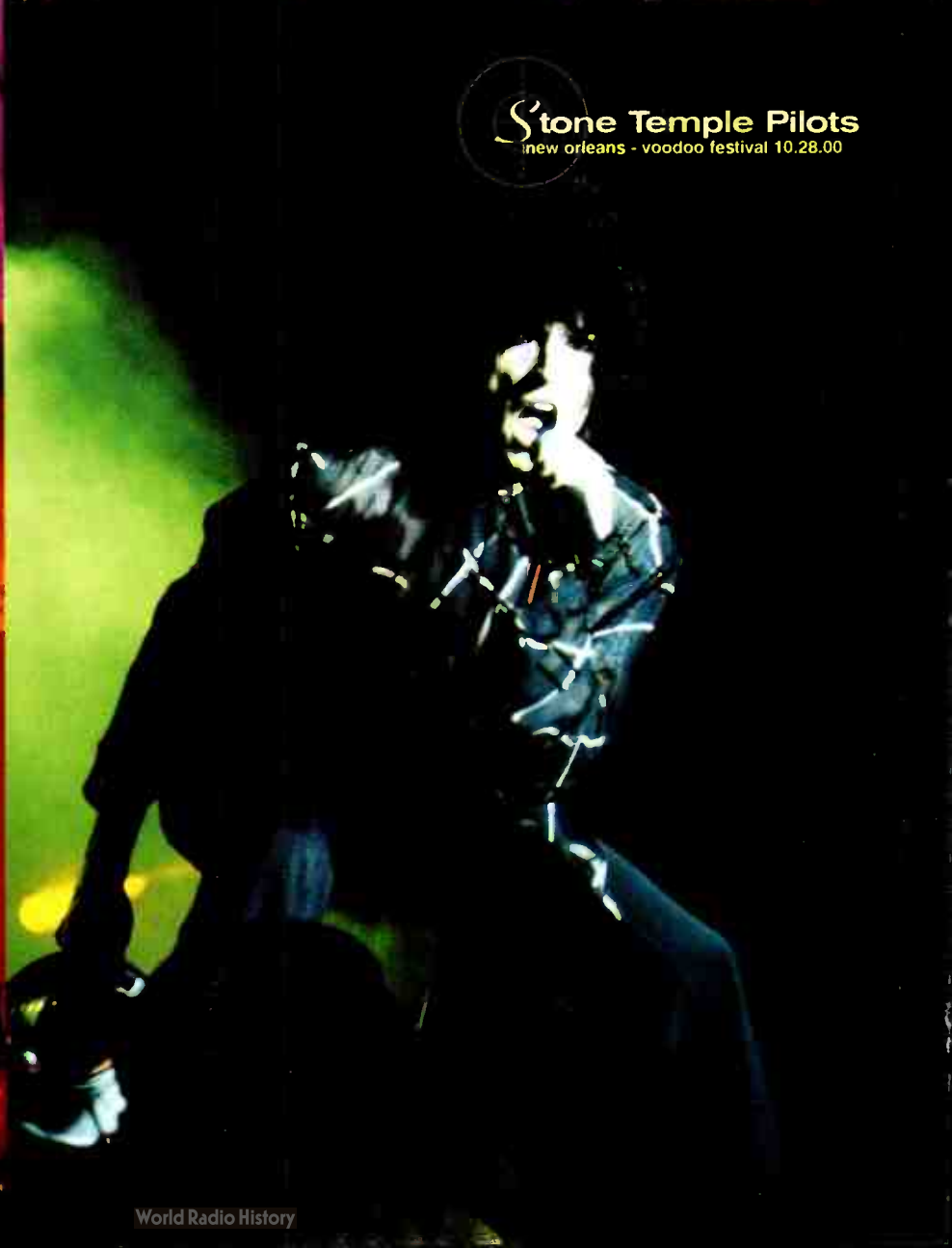
Bahamadia
nyc - hammerstein ballroom 10.07.00



Grandaddy
nyc - irving plaza 10.20.00



Le Tigre
nyc - threadwaxing space 10.21.00



Stone Temple Pilots
new orleans - voodoo festival 10.28.00

BT
nyc - roxy 10.20.00

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RAHAV COSI ALFASI/PHOTOPASS, EBET ROBERTS, RAHAV COSI ALFASI/PHOTOPASS, KERI-ANN LAURITO, RAHAV COSI ALFASI/PHOTOPASS



The strangest show I played last year was with the Knitters, X's country alter ego, at the pool of Las Vegas's Hard Rock Hotel for the (customized car festival) Rock 'N' Rod. The audience—in creepers and high heels—was standing in sand, because all pools in Las Vegas apparently have to have sand. In front of us are new customized cars and the audience is in a big litter box, then behind us is the Hard Rock Hotel lit up purple, and we're playing music from 1930. It was as if we were playing some really rich guy's pool party. Three or four of the Wallflowers came to see us, but they stood by the bar, not in the sand. (The Jobs Do Thing's most recent release is *Freedom N... on spinART*.)

—JOHN DOE OF X, THE KNITTERS AND THE JOHN DOE THING

One show in the early '90s that really gave me a completely different take on music was Lisa Sockdog. It was like a mixture of Chinese opera and '60s Playboy meets punk rock. There was a plot, but it was hard to follow; a lot of things got broken and there was a milk-squirting dōge. Basically Lisa and Dame Darcy and Lisa's boyfriend Costas (his Italian guy that as far as I could tell didn't really speak English) just sang along to this crazy tape of Chinese opera music. It was like these two little girls singing, dressed in lingerie, and they'd keep doing costume changes in the middle of the songs. One of my favorite parts of the show was "The Dollar Contest"—Dame Darcy and Lisa went out into the crowd to see who could get the most dollars from the audience. The crowd was kinda loaded and Lisa came out in this little nightie with her panties sticking out, and all the guys were just like *awshh*—jaws dropped. She starts singing this little song, and then this tape music comes in and this Italian guy's hopping all over the stage talking about how big his dick is. But it wasn't just a show—it was musically the most bizarre shit I'd ever heard. It was amazing. It was chaotic, it was one of the most inventive things I've ever seen. I'll never forget, I walked out of the show and there were two people in front of me, and the girl turns to the guy and says, "That was the best show I've ever seen in my entire life," and the guy was like "That was the best show I've ever seen!" And I thought, "That's a sign of genius." (Creepier Lagoon's latest release is the *Watering Ghost Garden EP on spinART*.)

—SHARKY LAGUANA OF CREEPER LAGOON

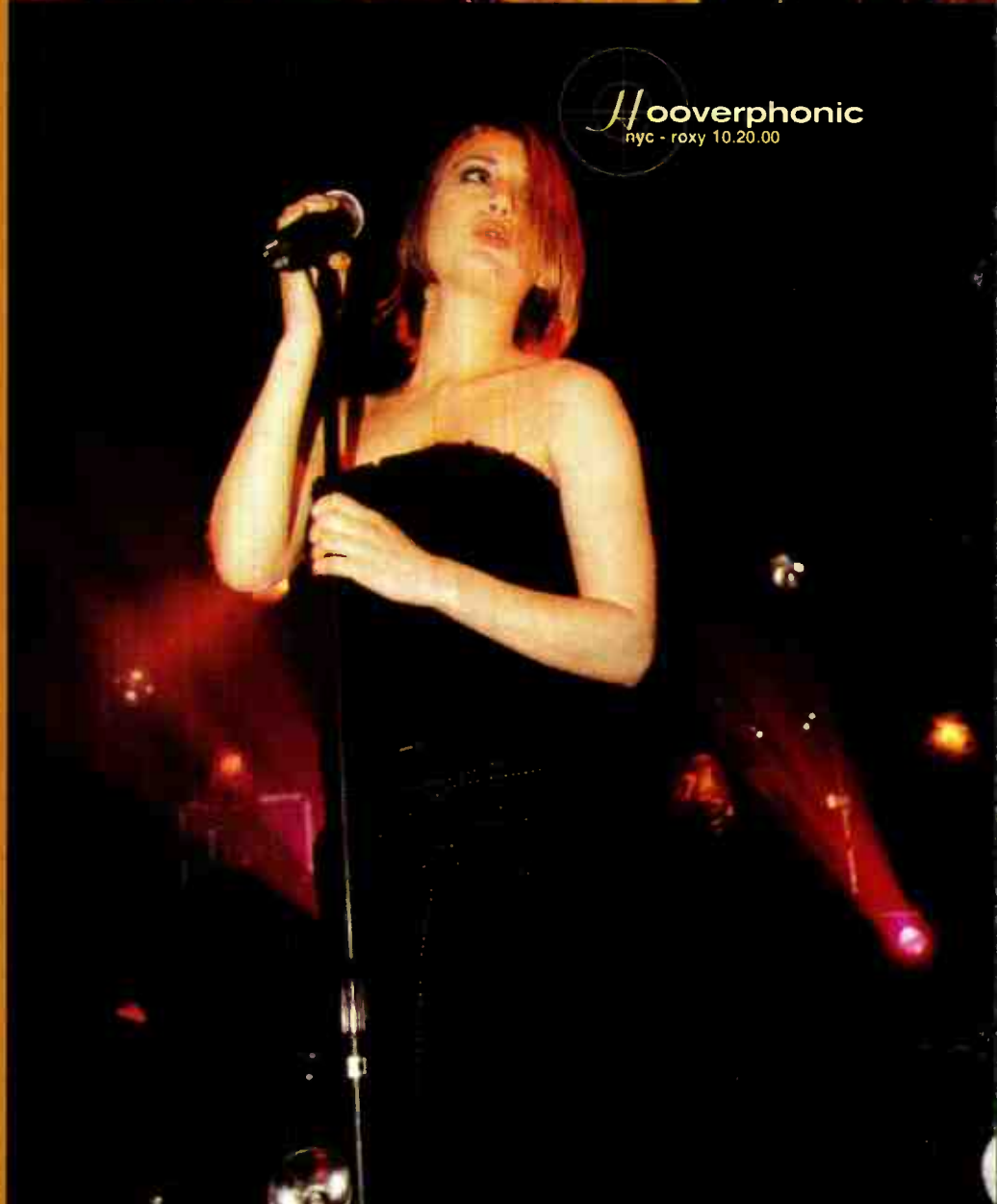
In the spring of 1984, my uncle took me to see Van Halen, who were playing three nights at the Cow Palace, this huge convention center in San Francisco. I went on the last night and there weren't as many people so I could walk right up to the side of the stage. They all had whiskey bottles next to them and Eddie looked totally wasted. It was that whole bad Van Halen fashion era—the crowd had bandannas around the ankles and torn jeans. Eddie had one of those yellow blazers with black zebra stripes on it and David Lee was decked out in sequins and doing all of these sword routines. He came out at the opening of one song with two giant scimitars. Here I am, a 14-year-old kid who's into D&B, watching this guy wave blades around while Eddie Van Halen plays guitar—it was pretty amazing!" (Oranger's latest release is *The Quiet Vibration Land*, on *Amazing Grease*.)
—MATT HARRIS, ORANGER



Deltron 3030
nyc - irving plaza 11.6.00

The best show I've seen in my life was the night after Bruce [Springsteen] turned 50 and he played at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. He came out and played this face somebody had eat his mom, this birthday song. Then he laughed and just kicked into "Growin' Up." You knew it was going to be a special show—he played stuff he hadn't played in 25 years... That band is the greatest live music to ever hit a stage."
—SERGE BIELANKO, MARAH

I think Queens Of The Stone Age are brilliant. I saw them in St. Louis when we were doing a gig. Their sound is just fucking monstrous, and so good harmonically and melodically. They're great musicians and really, really strong songwriters. It's very impressive that size sound can come out of that many people. The show was great. It was a really tiny venue, a sweatbox in there. But they were real pros. [Singer/guitarist Josh] Homme broke his guitar strings like four times, tuned his guitar up, and kept playing, and they fuckin' rocked." (BT's latest is *Movement In Slow Life*, out on Nettwerk.)
—BT



Hooverphonic
nyc - roxy 10.20.00



Ryan Adams

carrboro, NC - cal's cradle 12.31.99

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MATT ELLER, DANNY U. WOOD, FAITH COUSTALPAIN, PHOTOGRAPH



Nine Inch Nails

providence, RI - providence civic center 5.3.00

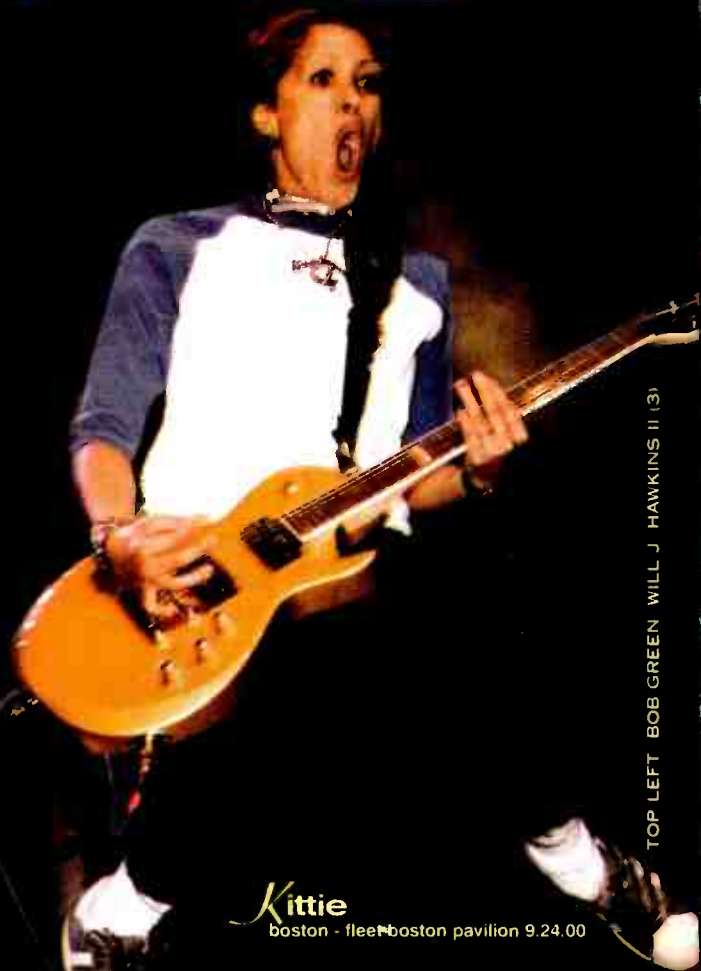
Darren Emerson

nyc - hammerstein ballroom 11.23.00



p.o.d.

boston - tweeter center 7.29.00



Kittie

boston - fleet**h**oston pavilion 9.24.00

TOP LEFT BOB GREEN WILL J HAWKINS II (3)



Marilyn Manson
nyc - hammerstein ballroom 11.24.00



KERI ANN LAURITO

ACETONE

York Blvd. Vapor

Listening to the caffeinated chug of "Wonderful World," the second track on *York Blvd.*, Acetone's fourth full-length (its second for Neil Young's Vapor imprint), one can't help but wonder whether somebody slipped these L.A. slowcore sleepyheads a round of double espressos instead of their usual decaf lattes. Of course, it's back to bed on the next number, a dreamy nocturne called "19" that spills gently into the equally soft-focus "Vibrato." But even if nobody's ever going to mistake these guys for Sleater-Kinney, *York Blvd.* finds the trio reining in the patience-stretching caterpillar crawl (repeat notes, stir slowwwly) that made earlier works, like 1996's *If You Only Knew*, intermittently lovely and maddeningly monochromatic. Here, the varied tempos and textures and more forceful, fleshed-out arrangements (Mark Lightcap's nastier guitars; the simmer and bubble of Richie Lee's bass; Steve Hadley's beefier percussion) add depth and color to tracks like the slide-stung "Like I Told You" and the Hammond-tinted, Traffic-y jam "Vaccination." Lee still infuses his lyrics with the drowsy indolence of a guy who prefers indoor sports, but the approach works because, more than ever, those activities sound as if they involve more than just counting sheep. >>>JONATHAN PERRY



Out
January 16
File Under
Slowcore for caffeine freaks
R.I.Y.L.
Luna, Red House Painters,
Idaho

THE ACTION TIME

Versus The World Southern

There's no message, no hype, no plot, no scolding with the Action Time, a band that exists simply for its listeners' pleasure. A six-member outfit from London, the Action Time features three flash lads and three gum-chewing molls who dress sharp and kick up a dancefloor ruckus with every riff-happy tune. Hiding behind aliases like Miss Spent Youth and Black September, these mod rockers blend Northern soul and girl-group pop with flashes of aggro punk grit. Equal opportunity borrowers, the Action Time nick their sound from several reliable sources: Thee Headcoats' three-chord stomping, Velvet Underground's narcotic blur and a healthy dose of the Ronettes' multi-part sing-alongs. The yelping vocals of a singer who goes by the name of Jack Duvall ride roughshod over the songs' heavenly girl-group singing. His voice cracks more than Peter Brady's, but he's the kind of charming gate-crasher who earns the right to stay at the party. As for their lyrics, there isn't much poetry in "Come home from work, feel under the thumb/ But the needle hits the record and I don't care none/ I dance around my room in solitary fun," But there's a solid truth in it underscored by a beat that invites you to do the same. >>>LOIS MAFFEO

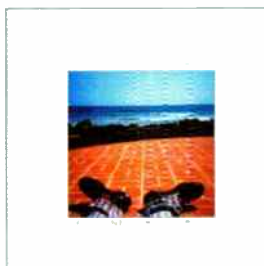


Out
January 22
File Under
Bedsit dance party
R.I.Y.L.
Adventures In Stereo,
Comet Gain, the Frumpies

ACTIONSLACKS

The Scene's Out Of Sight Self-Starter Foundation

It's a traditional enough formula, combining intelligent, thoughtful lyrics with dynamic, hard-hitting rock. And Tim Scanlin, founder/leader of Berkeley's Actionslacks, tinkers with it to solid effect once again on his band's third album. Although it's superficially less sonically wistful than Actionslacks' 1998 album, *One Word*, a disc colored by string arrangements and rainy-day tales, this CD nonetheless employs piano and acoustic guitar ("Tad Loves Kimberly Jones," "Shining Jewels," "Bury Me In The Blue Sea") for mood and nuance amidst angular rock songs ("Joan Of Arc," "I Hope This Makes It Easier For You," the title track). The sparse, tender "Last Night I Dreamed (That You Were Losing Sleep Over Me)" is the album's big heart-on-the-sleeve ballad, and its piano and acoustic guitar add a nice tonic to the band's edgier extremes (ably produced by Burning Airlines' J. Robbins). Maintaining and repositioning that balance is just one of Actionslacks' strengths, as Scanlin's vivid, evocative lyrics depict romance, existential dilemmas, poverty and fantasy ("The Sun In St. Tropez"). His voice, reedy and dry, might once have sounded wrong on these ballads. But this brave step into slightly darker, riskier material pushes the vocalist, and the band, into new territory. Now a quartet after reforming as a three-piece, Actionslacks are hitting their stride. >>>MARK WOODLIEF

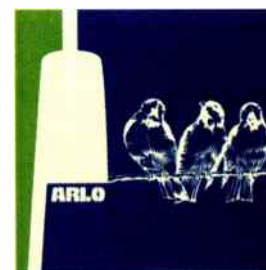


Out
January 28
File Under
Moody indie pop
R.I.Y.L.
Spoon, the Chills, the Jam

ARLO

Up High In The Night Sub Pop

It sounds as if the boys in Arlo have been living in something of a creative cocoon since 1992, keeping themselves safely isolated from the chain reaction leading up to nü metal (beginning with grunge), and instead fixating on the scruffy fuzz of indie rock and the sugar rush of early alternative. The debut from this Los Angeles foursome, *Up High In The Night*, is refreshingly out of touch, the work of a collective mind obsessed with the quickest way to the catchiest chorus. It takes 10 seconds for you to be able to sing along with "Kenji"—Arlo gives up the bubblegum instantly, with the silly refrain "Kenji got run over" affixed to a ditzzy Evan Dando-esque hook. "Forgotten" opens with sweet anticipation, an ascending riff packed with feel-good overtones that gleefully crash right into the chorus, a tight bundle of crunchy chords and soaring harmonies. On "Shutterbug," they cop the Pixies' trick of using a surf-rock guitar melody to make a mid-tempo pop shimmy positively sublime. "Elena," "Lucid" and "Botched" are like those nowhere ballads that Pavement used to subject us to: clanky guitars, a slow stumbling pulse and nothing to offer a patient listener but slacker mush in the end. Overall, it's a "little bit of us, little bit of them" approach to songcraft, but that's just the way all great pop evolves—just ask Alex Chilton. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



Out
January 16
File Under
Back-in-the-day alternative
R.I.Y.L.
The Pixies, Pavement,
the Lemonheads

FRANK BLACK & THE CATHOLICS

Dog In The Sand What Are Records?

After two raunchy, garage-rocking albums with the Catholics, Frank Black's latest is a surprising change of pace. It's likely the closest he'll ever get to an unplugged album: There's still plenty of electricity, but the focus is on acoustic instrumentation. Returning keyboardist Eric Drew Feldman sticks mainly with piano, while guitar ace Rich Gilbert branches out to mandolin, banjo and steel guitar. Forgoing his trademark screams, Black often sings at the very bottom of his range, so his voice is barely recognizable from his Pixies days. If you really need a Pixies fix, he delivers one great throwback with "Hermaphroditus," a wild rocker that would have fit comfortably on *Trompe Le Monde*. But Black is sounding more like a reborn classic-rock guy these days. He does a hilariously accurate Neil Young impersonation on "Stupid Me," and the album's ragged, country-blues feel isn't far from *Sticky Fingers*-era Rolling Stones. The Catholics could still use a good harmony singer—the main thing Black's been lacking since Kim Deal took off—but he's been getting steadily more resourceful as a songwriter without losing the old attitude, and that's the stuff that long-term careers are made of. >>>BRETT MILANO



Out
January 30
File Under
Alt-rock godfather goes classic
R.I.Y.L.

The Pixies, Neil Young,
Bob Mould

CALEB

Fear Of Success Universal

Raised in a musical family and trained at a performing-arts school, New York singer/songwriter Caleb grew up around classical music, but was, by the sound of his debut, seemingly more influenced by the totems of his '80s adolescence: polished new-wave rockers like Sting, Howard Jones and Peter Gabriel. Produced by Kevin Killen (Gabriel, Elvis Costello), *Fear Of Success* reflects these influences but is even more mannered—keyboards burble like incidental music in a John Hughes movie; guitars are feedback-free. Worse still, the songs here aren't strong enough to forgive their slickness. Counterintuitively, Caleb uses his best melodies on his verses and offers almost atonal choruses, with repetitive lyrics that are somehow both dumb and overthought—repeating "Gotta pick yourself up off the ground" 10 times consecutively doesn't make great confessional pop. There are two standouts, and they offer a couple of directions Caleb could go. "Sally Doesn't Call Me Anymore" is a tone poem with ruminative lyrics and an off-kilter rhythm that's riskier than anything else here. And "Blue" is risk-free modern pop that's just done right: assertive instrumentation (piano, sitar), a slew of hooks and yearning, romantic lyrics. Obviously tuneful, possibly gifted, Caleb may just need a collaborator before he can usher in a revival of thinking-man's pop. >>>CHRIS MOLANPHY



Out
February 6
File Under
Slick singer/songwriter pop
R.I.Y.L.

Duncan Sheik, Shawn Mullins,
David Gray

BS2000

Simply Mortified Grand Royal

Hmm, what could the BS in BS2000 stand for? Big Shots? Breakbeat Stylings? Buncha Songs? Let's be charitable and say it's Beastie Solo. Adam Horovitz takes the occasional break from helping his fellow Beasties make Tibet safe for postmodern hip-hop and hangs out with pal Amery "AWOL" Smith to play with their new toys. For the duo's self-titled debut a couple of years ago, it was samplers and drum machines. For *Simply Mortified*, it's keyboards, with sounds that range from the very old-school Farfisa organ—which gives them license to cop the riff from ? And The Mysterians' "96 Tears" on "It Feels Like ?!@#?!"—to the gloriously crappy Casio synth-toy chirps on "The Scrappy." With such novelty dance tunes as "The Side To Side," Horovitz and Smith are aiming for territory somewhere between mid-'70s James Brown, Archie Bell And The Drells and German primitivists Trio. (BS2000 calls its new subgenre "Au Go Go Swing Organ-Core.") Recorded lo-fi, with the distortion turned up to 11 (making Horovitz's notoriously nasal rasp even harsher than usual), *Mortified* has the relaxed air of a couple of 13-year-olds goofing in the basement with instruments their aunts bought them for their bar mitzvahs. Of course, most 13-year-olds don't have record deals. >>>GARY SUSMAN



Out
February 6
File Under
Solo Beastie Boy with toys
R.I.Y.L.

Beastie Eoys, Trio, Cibo Matto

CHICO & COOLWADDA

Wild N Da West MCA

On *Wild N Da West*, this long-struggling duo attempts to come off as fresh talent bringing us "gangsta tales culled straight from the underground." But the real underground stands as a reaction to the cheap thrills and easy sales of prefab gangsta, while these men-to-boyz are so eager to please, they go so far as to promise that "If it's pimping that what you want, we gonna give it to you/ If it's gangsta that you want, we can give it to you." And they deliver with every West Coast cliché in the book—Chico's absurdly exaggerated Snoop Dogg drawl, the high synth wails that Dr. Dre took from Bernie Worrell, the abused women ("bitches"), the music that dies down so you can hear the hysterical pleading of a brother before they off him. For all that, it's remarkable how much Dr. Dre associate Chris "The Glove" Taylor actually manages to revive the West Coast gangsta form with touches like the Spanish guitar on the perfectly odious "Pass It Around," or the neatly mixed disco sample on the very likable "Godzilla-Like." But he falls totally flat two-thirds of the way through, letting down his charges and letting us off the hook. >>>FRANKLIN SOULTS



Out
January 30
File Under
Gangsta revival
R.I.Y.L.

Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre, MC Eiht

CYPRESS HILL

Live At The Fillmore Columbia

When it was first released on 1993's *Judgment Night* soundtrack, the Cypress Hill/Sonic Youth collaboration "I Love You Mary Jane" seemed little more than a novelty track. But it's proven prophetic for Cypress Hill, who dove into the rock-rap fray on last April's *Skull & Bones*, and who now follow up with a live disc on which the eternally nasal B-Real and stentorian Sen Dog are backed equally by DJ Muggs's stalking G-funk and a live band. The set starts out strong, as the group tears through a handful of their early-'90s classics ("Insane In The Brain," "Pigs") with a ferocity that has long disappeared from their studio albums. But when Sen Dog's metal outfit, SX-10, joins the L.A. trio onstage, the ride gets bumpy. Sen Dog and B-Real bring serious rhyme skills to the proceedings—something that separates them from wannabe MCs like Fred Durst—but SX-10 has a tendency to turn everything into a monotonous two-chord vamp, rendering one track indistinguishable from the next. While the minor-key anthem "Can't Get The Best Of Me" and the hardcore-friendly remake of "Lick A Shot" surge and swell into giant tsunamis of sound, most of the rockers languish in a generic thrash. By the time DJ Muggs returns to the stage for a greatest-hits medley, the buzz is long gone. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN



Out
December 12
File Under
Red-eyed rap-rock
R.I.Y.L.
Limp Bizkit, Sevendust,
Judgment Night soundtrack

DELERIUM

Poem Nettwerk

From the first gentle sounds of rainforest percussion through Chris Peterson's fat, programmed bass, this disc—the third full-length from the Vancouver project masterminded by Bill Leeb of Frontline Assembly—aims for sensory exploration, stirring ambient electronica with heady ethno-pop elements. Sampled Gregorian chants (on "Terra Firma" and "Temptation") echo like vespers in a stone abbey, while the swooping cello sounds of "Underwater" ride the speakers like air currents. The effect, at its best, is of flow and texture, rather than discrete songs; this is atmosphere with a beat. When Leeb recruits waiflike guest vocalists Leigh Nash of Sixpence None The Richer (on "Innocente") and Joanna Stevens of Solar Twins (on "Poems Of Byzantium") he's clearly trying to recreate the club alchemy of "Silence," from 1997's *Karma*, which strung Sarah McLachlan's silvery vocals along a techno dreamscape. However, both Nash's and Stevens's distinctive, front-and-center vocals demand much more in the way of melody and structure than they get here. When Delerium breaks form, using its first male vocalist—Matthew Sweet—in the smoky "Daylight," he's given a heartier hook to hang his gentle voice on. Far better, however, is the swooning breathlessness of "Fallen Icons," which uses Jenifer McLaren's dreamy voice as just one more sonic element in a rhythmic collage. >>>CLEA SIMON



Out
November 21
File Under
Atmospheric ethno-techno
R.I.Y.L.
Dead Can Dance, the Drb,
Enigma

OLU DARA

Neighborhoods Atlantic

Olu Dara was a respected avant-jazz horn player for decades before he transformed his career with his 1998 solo debut *In The World: From Natchez To New York*, a psychic map of Dara's life's journey that masterfully blended jazz, pop, Afrobeat, blues and Caribbean music with an intimate, lazy-lipped vocal style. *Neighborhoods* is a clear-cut sequel, setting most of its songs in New York, where Dara's lived since 1963. In the Fela-inspired "Massamba" and the funky breakdown "Herbman" he breathes life into characters from the City's streets—one a relocated African, the other a vendor catering to the stomach and head. But you can hear plenty of Mississippi, too, in Dara's sticky-fingered guitar, and in his singing and wit. The last two share air in "Strange Things Happen Everyday," where his voice has the elemental depth of the Delta's red clay—or the tart pleasure of the "Alabama cornbead dipped in Georgia buttermilk" he evokes in its chorus between verses about "three girls lined up for a date with Iron Mike" and other peculiarities. "Red Ant" mulls the impotence of racial conflict in the face of mankind's shared struggles, and it's one of four tunes to which Dr. John adds keys. The album's sweetest cut is "Used To Be," a tender Afropop duet with jazz singer Cassandra Wilson sharing Dara's lyrics about aging lovers. >>>TED DROZDOWSKI



Out
February 16
File Under
Real world music
R.I.Y.L.
David Murray, Miles Davis,
R.L. Burnside

DROPKICK MURPHYS

Sing Loud, Sing Proud! Epitaph

Like the Clash with reggae and fellow Boston-bred crossover kings the Mighty Mighty Bosstones with ska, the Dropkick Murphys—rowdy patron saints of blue-collar Celt-punk—repeatedly manage to find the right balance of tradition, invention and irreverence. Which is to say that while they take their Irish pride seriously enough to offer a pastoral ode to the great Herculean hero of Highland myth (on "The Legend Of Fin MacCumhail"), they also don't mind employing a bagpipe blower named Spicey McHaggis, whose sexual misadventures are detailed in the album-closing jig that bears his name. On their third disc for Epitaph, the Murphys have fleshed out their hardcore seissium with a full-time tin-whistle and mandolin multi-instrumentalist, and damned if these leprechauns didn't find the pot o' gold at the end of the rainbow. Once tried-and-true oil blockheads, the Murphys here deliver as many jigs and reels as straight-up soccer-chant rockers, though the best tunes benefit from both traditions. When Shane MacGowan shows up to add a slurry, perfectly incomprehensible verse to "Good Rats," the affected brogue of Murphys belter Al Barr suffers by comparison, but certainly no worse than the innumerable faux-Brit sneers American punks have adopted since Johnny Rotten. And new guitarist Marc Orrell adds the kind of slashing Mick Jones-style firepower that the Pogues never quite delivered. Magically delicious. >>>CARLY CARIOLI

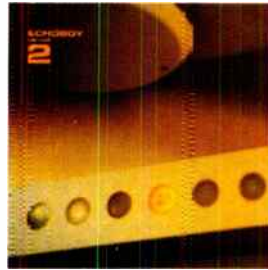


Out
February 6
File Under
Shamrock 'n' roll
R.I.Y.L.
The Pogues, Flogging Molly,
the Clash

ECHOBOY

Volume 2 *Mute*

Despite the name, it's still rather surprising to learn that Echoboy is a person rather than a band, primarily because his songs are so fleshed-out and diverse. The boy in question, Richard Warren of Nottingham, England, is an alarmingly prolific musician who was formerly the frontal lobe of the Hybirds, a group who released one album before disbanding in '98. In the two years since, he's released three albums (*Volume 2* is the third) and nine singles. He made and played most of the album all by himself, but perhaps most impressive is his ability to create such wide-ranging material using so little: Buzzing analog synths and low-rent studio effects are the tools of Echoboy's trade, and although there isn't much variety in the sounds that he uses, the variety of moods he's able to conjure far exceeds the tonal palette of musicians with much more gear at their disposal. Despite being dominated by keyboards, the album does manage to rock—the piledriving single "Telstar Recovery" is particularly hard-hitting, and "Kelly's Truck" is powered by a pulsating rhythm track and a child's vocal sample. The songs are evenly divided between instrumental tracks and those with vocals, and although it feels like Warren's losing focus toward the end of the disc, for the most part, allowing his mind to wander is something Echoboy uses to his advantage. >>>JEM ASWAD



Out

November 21

File Under

Analog keyboard-driven rock

R.I.Y.L.

Clinic, Chemical Brothers,

Kraftwerk

GEOFF FARINA

Reverse Eclipse *Southern*

Within severe self-imposed limits (two overdubbed electric guitars, one understated vocal), Geoff Farina's solo debut stakes out territory far removed from his other bands. *Reverse Eclipse* has little in common with the power-trio dynamics of Karate (who haven't broken up); its minimalism is closer to the resolutely lo-fi Secret Stars (who have), though Jodi Buonanno's contrasting voice and theory-driven lyrics are notably absent. Both projects repressed the Berklee-trained Farina's considerable guitar chops, but here, he pours them on, topping complex cool-jazz progressions with agile fretboard noodling straight out of Joe Pass and Barney Kessel. This style doesn't always serve Farina's songwriting, as a wealth of dense, personal lyrics ("A candy-escape, Pacific-excuse, where brides and cellos rule") are set to less-than-memorable melodies. (Exception: The sweeping "Fire.") "Soon In Tents" is the most jarring experiment: It's political sentiments ("America, surrender") are chapter-and-verse hardcore, but when the wah-wah pedal kicks in halfway through, the whiff of fusion is unmistakable. In the same song, Farina sings "Sometimes a simple voice can douse the hottest fires," a plausible motto for this intensely subtle album. Still, it remains to be seen how the audience for Farina's louder projects will receive what often sounds like a collection of Steely Dan demos. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



Out

February 12

File Under

4-track fusion

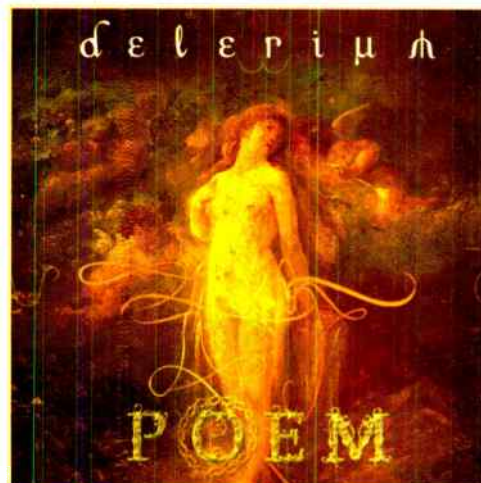
R.I.Y.L.

Sam Prekop, early Everything

But The Girl, Donald Fagen



In Stores
Now!



Poem

The highly anticipated
new album
from Delerium

Features "Daylight" with vocals by Matthew Sweet
and "Innocent" with vocals by Leigh Nash.

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Reviews

FIELD MOB

613: Ashy To Classy MCA

Despite our ever-homogenizing popular culture, hip-hop retains distinct regional flavors, and the Southern style enjoys a prominence not afforded Dixie since Ronnie Van Zandt's plane went down. On their debut, *613: Ashy To Classy*, rap twosome Field Mob even manages to stand apart from the N.O. soldiers and ATL players populating the dirty South's urban core. Hailing from Albany, Georgia, Boondox Blax and Kalage make music that drips with the sweat of being thoroughly and unapologetically country boys. It comes across in their heavy slang and twang, in their blues-like fascination with cheating women and hard times, in their provincial lack of self-consciousness or cynicism and in the muddy gothic rumble of their minimal backing tracks. While there's enough verbal pornography and juvenility to suggest Field Mob simply retrace their hardcore city cousins, there's also enough sly wit to buck any cliché about country folk. The storytelling and cultural referencing of "Channel 613, Pt. 1" would make Eminem proud, while "My Main Roni" rolls with the self-assured delivery of OutKast. Most impressive, however, is *613's* single, "Project Dreamz," which flouts hip-hop's bling-bling norm for a frankly optimistic assessment of being dirt poor and rising—"Put your hands up if you feel my hurt/ Have you ever bathed with soap the size of a Cert?" >>>RONI SARIG



Out

December 12
File Under
Rural dirty South
R.I.Y.L.

OutKast, Cash Money, Nelly

BILL FRISELL

Blues Dream Nonesuch

Guitarist/composer Bill Frisell's instrumental music long ago left the realm of jazz and entered an Americana that's all his own. *Blues Dream* continues his melding of country themes, Appalachia and hymn tunes with jazz accents and orchestration. Working with bass, drums, trombone, trumpet, alto saxophone and an arsenal of guitars belonging to himself and Greg Leisz, Frisell twists ideas this way and that. On the hymnal "Pretty Flowers Were Made For Blooming," pedal steel and electric guitars give way to gentle drum rolls and ghostly loops before taking off into airy brass harmonies and alto sax obligatos. When the melody returns as "Pretty Stars Were Made To Shine" it's a light 2/4 country stomp. "Where Do We Go?" starts out as a slow country waltz before taking a left turn with a funky bass riff and accompanying horns. Sometimes on *Blues Dream* you might think Bubber Miley had run into the Hank Williams band, and the loping song form of a tune like "Outlaws" cries out for lyrics. But the overall effect of this meeting of six-strings and horns is like Gil Evans arranging for Ry Cooder instead of Miles: those cloud-formations of brass and reeds hanging in a flat-prairie sky. >>>JON GARELICK



Out

January 23
File Under
Miles at the Opry
R.I.Y.L.

Marc Ribot, Oon Byron,
John Scofield

FLYBANGER

Headtrip To Nowhere Columbia

While Flybanger's not breaking the boundaries of present-day metal, they seem concerned with keeping it real. And that doesn't mean singer Garth can drop mad rhymes or put sucker MCs in the dirt. Nor does it mean that the rhythm section flows naturally with well-placed samples and deft DJing. Nope. The Vancouver-based quartet puts the wah-wah, the melody and most importantly, the metal back into heavy metal. Clearly, no attempt was made here to create a sloppy orgy of genres à la Mudvayne or Limp Bizkit. Instead, imagine the offspring of old and new Clutch, a more melodic Fu Manchu or a mild Corrosion Of Conformity, and you've got *Headtrip To Nowhere*, a respectable major-label debut. It's a place where hard rock is still subtle and is refreshingly easy on the ears. With assistance from producer Matt Wallace (Faith No More, Deftones), Bryan Fratessi's acid guitar riffs are just as prevalent as the melodic choruses Garth musters, most notably on "Evelyn," "Blind World" and "Radical." In addition, former Faith No More guitarist Jim Martin adds depth to "Cavalry" and "When Are You? (Gonna Die)." *Headtrip* might not prompt you to throw fists or break stuff, but it just might have you singing along again. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO



Out

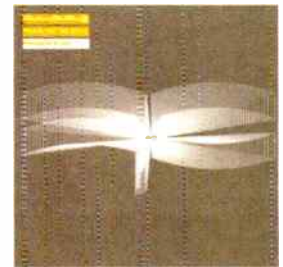
February 20
File Under
Nu metal
R.I.Y.L.

Clutch, Fu Manchu, Mindfunk

DJ DIE

Through The Eyes Studio K7

Although Roni Size's Reprazent helped drag drum 'n' bass nearly into the mainstream, the group has defiantly held onto its underground roots. That militant stance is most evident on a succession of releases on their no-compromise Full Cycle label. With a string of DJ-friendly vinyl-only tracks, Full Cycle has helped shape the darkened-out jungle frontline, one characterized by razor-sharp basslines, subsonic beats and eerie industrial sampling. This retrospective is compiled by Die, the man oft credited as the Reprazent studio wizard (and a superb DJ in his own right). The first (unmixed) CD is a useful showcase for the imprint's sound, although listening to seven-minute beat odysseys in their entirety can be a one-dimensional experience. The second (mixed) CD undoubtedly works best, capturing the sweat and thrills of the hardcore drum 'n' bass dancefloor. Tracks are mixed with a ruthless perfection, beats and basslines stitched together with a vascular surgeon's precision. And just when you think it might all be a little too much, when energy levels might dip, in comes another blast of armageddon bass. Naming tracks is fairly pointless—underground jungle is resolutely faceless—but rest assured that this is drum 'n' bass at its most real. >>>KIERAN WYATT



Out

February 13
File Under
Uncompromising drum 'n' bass
R.I.Y.L.

Roni Size & Reprazent,
Ed Rush & Optical,
Ram Trilogy

GARAGELAND

Do What You Want Foodchain

In New Zealand, it's still the '60s, with Brian Wilson and Paul McCartney continuing to wrestle for control of pop's soul. So it seems, anyway, listening to classic NZ bands like Crowded House or the Chills. Three years ago, though, Garageland debuted with *Last Exit To Garageland*, whose dynamic use of feedback and deep irony suggested that the kiwis had discovered slightly more modern influences, like the Pixies and Pavement. *Do What You Want* polishes the quartet's pop-post-punk sound to an even more crystalline sparkle. Recording at the home of Crowded House's Neil Finn, Garageland flaunts its NZ pop pedigree, only with sharper edges, given Andrew Claridge's guitar snarl and singer Jeremy Eade's pointed lyrics. Eade took songwriting inspiration from experiences during Garageland's tour of the U.S. a couple years ago; songs like "Not Empty" and "What You Gonna Do?" must be among the most rousing anthems about tedium and inertia ever written. (Others here are just tedious and inert.) At times, Eade's keening voice recalls Dave Faulkner from neighboring Aussie throwbacks the Hoodoo Gurus, but he's still an up-to-date guy—album closer "End Of The Night" almost makes you think he's been listening to Radiohead. Onward to the '90s. >>>GARY SUSMAN



Do What You Want

Out
January 30
File Under
Kiwi pop gets modern
R.I.Y.L.
The Pixies, Hoodoo Gurus,
the Chills

GODHEAD

2000 Years Of Human Error Posthuman-Priority

In the beginning, Trent Reznor created Marilyn Manson in his own image. Now Manson is doing the same with the D.C. industrial machine Godhead, the first signing to his Posthuman label. Manson's definitely barking up the right tree: Though far from a household name, Godhead already has three indie releases to its credit and a burgeoning underground rep thanks to high-profile touring slots with GWAR, among others. The antichrist superstar himself takes a vocal turn on "Break You Down," though Godhead singer Jason Miller sounds so much like him that the collaboration seems redundant. Bowie guitarist Reeves Gabrels makes a more meaningful cameo on the poignant "Tired Old Man," backing Miller's decrepit vocal with an iridescent stream of quiet melodies. Miller is more of a brooder than a screamer, and his band values gurgling house beats as much as it does mean guitars—all of which makes for a more nuanced sound than your average post-NIN industrial warhorse. Godhead has a sense of humor, too—check out the group's pulsing cover of "Eleanor Rigby," which first appeared on its '98 album *Power Tool Stigmata*. No violins, but the funeral where nobody came never sounded so morbid. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON



Out
January 23
File Under
Goth-industrial mechanical animals
R.I.Y.L.
KMFDM, Nine Inch Nails,
the Cure

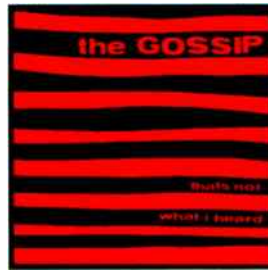
THE COMP FILE (Our guide to compilation CDs)

					
TITLE	NOW 5 (Sony)	Blockbuster: A Glitter Glam Rock Experience (Conspiracy)	Free Activation Series Vol. 2 (Sweet Mother)	Lyricist Lounge 2 (Rawkus)	TV Sucks (Wolverine)
CONCEPT	Pop tarts.	No-name "all-stars" yawn their way through glam favorites, compiled by '70s DJ Rodney Bingeheimer.	A mix of mellow electronica and drum 'n' bass by DJ Nasir.	Hip-hop comp featuring friends of The Lounge.	Punk and ska bands ruthlessly destroy your favorite TV themes.
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	Your kid sister	People who <i>still</i> haven't gotten over <i>Velvet Goldmine</i>	Bassheads (drum 'n', that is.)	Hip-hop heads who <i>know</i> that shit like Jay-Z ain't got no flow.	You've been moved to skank by the <i>Flintstones</i> theme.
NAMES TO DROP	'N SYNC, Destiny's Child, Backstreet Boys	Cyclefly, the Fizzy Bangers, Pillbox	Plastiq Phantom, Beanfield, Bahamadia	Mos Def & Ghostface Killah, Talib Kweli & Dead Prez	No Use For A Name, Dontcares, Big Wig
SUMS IT UP	"Lucky" (Britney Spears)	"Rock 'N' Roll Part 2" (Tube Tops 2000)	"Space Disco" (Only Child)	"Right & Exact" (Dilated Peoples)	"Beverly Hills 90210" (Feverdream)
VERDICT	This will leave the bad-taste-havin' nine-year-old in you screaming for more, but the exclusion of "The Thong Song" is just criminal. <i>Criminal!</i>	Despite the presence of the delectable Melissa Auf Der Maur, this is the most embarrassing thing to happen to glam since Gary Glitter's hard drive.	This mix is too low-key to get the party started right, but it'll have you chillin' in no time.	Big names like Biggie and up-and-comers like Royce The 5'9" shake your ass with tight beats and smart rhymes.	The <i>Duck Tales</i> theme is hilariously interpreted by Die Optimale Härte, but otherwise, this disc is pure pain.

THE GOSSIP

That's Not What I Heard Kill Rock Stars

It may be a coed party, but the girls are in charge on this punchy debut full-length from Olympia, Washington émigrés the Gossip. The lone boy in the trio, guitarist Nathan, is overwhelmed by singer Beth's snarling, bluesy wail, which powers the Gossip like the monster diesel under the hood of a road-raging 18-wheeler. The songs on the band's brief, energetic *That's Not What I Heard* (their lone recording save for a self-titled 7-inch released on K in 1999) race down a well-traveled road—large patches of the foundation come from the raw, guitar-and-drums garage rock of bands like Sleater-Kinney (who the Gossip opened for on a recent tour) and classic indie punks like Beat Happening and Bratmobile. On these 14 to-the-point tracks, Nathan bashes his guitar and drummer Kathi pounds her kit relentlessly, and there's never a tom-smack or twangy riff wasted. When Beth works her way through barely two-minute bursts like "Got Body If You Want It," "Catfight" and "Southern Comfort"—"Honey, ain't no woman like a Southern girl," declares the former Arkansan—it's clear she's learned tricks from the girls who inhabited the garage before her, lending her both the eyelash-batting charm of '60s girl groups and the sweaty determination of her riot grrrl forebears. >>>LYDIA VANDERLOO



Out
January 23
File Under
Grrrrs in the garage
R.I.Y.L.
Sleater-Kinney, Beat Happening,
Bratmobile, Bikini Kill

HOT WATER MUSIC

Never Ender No Idea

After driving their fanbase to tears when they temporarily broke up a few years ago, Gainesville, Florida's sensitive sons regrouped in '99 to record *No Division*, their most successful album to date, for the New York indie label Some. The band's latest release is a collection of out-of-print and hard-to-find singles on No Idea, the signature imprint of Hot Water Music's thriving hometown scene. Arranged in reverse chronological order, it kicks off with two tunes from the group's '98 comeback 7-inch and works all the way back to one of its earliest releases, '95's *Push For Coin*. Considering the breadth of the material, the disc is a surprisingly consistent representation of the band's jagged post-hardcore sound. Its calling card is bearded singer Chuck Ragan's gruff voice, a passionate howl that sounds more like Rancid's Tim Armstrong than any emo crooner. He has a tendency to cram so many words into a song that they fail to connect, however, and the group sometimes errs on the side of pointless prog riffing. The tender "Loft," for example, impresses with its bruised melodicism but eventually meanders off into a soft, showy bass solo. Still, Hot Water Music has carved a unique niche in the often conformist world of emo, and it's easy to see why the band has risen to the top of the underground. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON

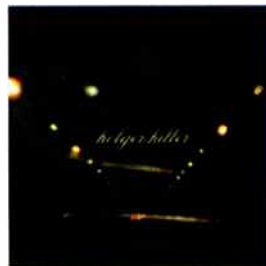


Out
January 16
File Under
Emo to the core
R.I.Y.L.
Boy Sets Fire, Grade,
the Get-Up Kids

HOLGER HILLER

Holger Hiller Mute

With the average age of today's dance-music enthusiast constantly plummeting, it's inspiring to see oldsters like Holger Hiller making of a go of it. The crafty producer has been experimenting with electronic music since most candy ravers were sucking on pacifiers—the first time. Coming of age in late-'70s Germany, Hiller led the hugely influential post-punk outfit Palais Schaumburg before moving to electric avenues in the mid-'80s. Darting schizophrenically from "classical" drum 'n' bass to downbeat, this eponymous release continues the hybridization project of his first four records. The catchy "Curmbox" starts things off with a funky breakbeat, a hiccup and an errant string-pluck. His numerous hacks at drum 'n' bass are always interesting: While the ethereal "Come" seems almost harmless and tentative, "Falsches Fullsel" is draped in thick coats of noisy industrial grit. On "Pulver," Hiller mischievously hijacks a German soap commercial and twists it into a choral echo of ghostly voices. The album ends with "L'amour Fou," a come-hither anthem without the emotional baby-mama drama. As a voice coolly beckons, "Hello, let's fuck, don't tell me your name," Hiller stretches out with a smoky lounge rhythm track. He may be old, but he can still work them machines. >>>HUA HSU



Out
December 5
File Under
Your father's drum 'n' bass
R.I.Y.L.
Mo Wax, Barry Adamson,
Amon Tobin

JOI

We Are Three Real World

"This is not the sound of the Asian underground... This is music" exhorts a voice on "Tacadin," the penultimate track of Joi's sophomore album, *We Are Three*. The truth is that it's both—and more. Because while Joi continues to be one of the more important outfits to emerge from Britain's Asian underground, the massive, hammering riffs that recur on *We Are Three* owe a significant debt to the accessible rocktronica of the Chemical Brothers. The album is also both a celebration of Farook Shamsheer's Indian roots and a memorial for his brother Haroon, who died in 1999 at the age of 33 shortly after he'd made field recordings in the pair's ancestral village in Bangladesh. The voices and sounds he taped are an integral part of this album, as are tablas and ululating Eastern melodies. But Farook manages to masterfully balance the delicacy of tracks like "The Holy Side," with its sensuous vocal and dreamily bubbling synths, and the bhangra bombardment of "Tacadin," seamlessly blending sounds from the East with Western pop arrangements. Whatever label you give it, *We Are Three* is music of fierce intelligence, proud roots, heart-break, and ultimately, joy. And it embodies one of the most satisfying and compelling East-West fusions to come out of the Asian underground so far. >>>CHRIS NICKSON



Out
January 23
File Under
Asian overground
R.I.Y.L.
Talvin Singh,
Chemical Brothers,
State Of Bengal

MIKE LEVY

Fireflies Parasol

For a solid decade with his band the Sneetches, Mike Levy liberally borrowed from the harmony and hook-filled magic of mid-'60s pop. A casual listen to the San Francisco band's extensive catalog yields an impressive array of influences from the Zombies to the Left Banke to the Beatles (natch) and beyond. For five years, Levy's worked on his first solo album, *Fireflies*—enough to send up the warning flag for an overworked baroque pop experience for sure. But such is not the case here: 10 official tracks (a minor instrumental hides as track 11), 33 minutes, economical to the last note. His former bandmates help out here and there, with Matt Carges providing drums on all tracks. For the most part, Levy, as the back cover illustrates, sits at the piano and churns out catchy tunes that flash with remnants of Eric Carmen, John Lennon, Robyn Hitchcock and the Beach Boys while still maintaining a contemporary feel. "Away From My Head" would've fit perfectly on Lennon's *Double Fantasy*. The addition of a string section for several tunes switches the focus closer to chamber pop, climaxing with the somber instrumental, "Serenade For A Peach" and the forlorn title track. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



Out
December 5
File Under
Piano pop
R.I.Y.L.

Eric Carmen, Brian Wilson,
Ben Folds Five

RICHARD LLOYD

The Cover Doesn't Matter Upsetter

Since his days as guitarist in the legendary arty punk band Television, Richard Lloyd has lent his instantly recognizable licks—fluid, lyrical and burning—to the likes of Matthew Sweet (*Girlfriend*), Health And Happiness Show and John Doe. But over the course of a two-decade career, Lloyd has only released four solo albums, most recently *The Cover Doesn't Matter*, with definitive versions of songs that have floated around on demos and have been heard at his periodic New York live shows for years. Heavier than his early solo work but just as melodic, the disc is a vehicle for his extraordinary mastery of the guitar. Lloyd doesn't just play, he channels lightning through the fretboard, recalling electric blues showmen such as Buddy Guy and Otis Rush, and classic rockers like Jimmy Page and Joe Perry. Through 10 tracks of incendiary licks, noodley turn-arounds and a variety of other noises he coaxes out of the instrument, Lloyd never sacrifices melody, to the point where he veers into pleasing power pop ("I Thought"). Though Lloyd's singing voice is an acquired taste, it has an appealing vulnerability on the slow, sweet ballad "Cortege," and a pleasing quaver on midtempo rocker "Ain't It Time." >>>MEREDITH OCHS



Out
January 30
File Under
The axeman cometh
R.I.Y.L.

Matthew Sweet, Velvet Crush,
Joe Perry

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OASIS

Familiar To Millions Epic

ALICE IN CHAINS

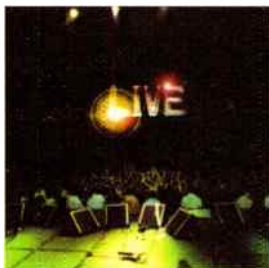
Live Columbia

Oasis may not be the most exciting live band in the world. In fact, the kings of '90s Brit-pop have tended to rank right up there with the '80s Cars both for hooks per measure and refusing to work a crowd. But Oasis does sound great, both in the studio and, as the double-live set *Familiar To Millions* proves, onstage. With the exception of a reasonably ripping version of the Fab Four's "Helter Skelter" culled from a Milwaukee gig, *Familiar To Millions* is a document of the band's July 21, 2000 performance in front of a sold-out (and very vocal) crowd at London's Wembley Stadium. Since even Noel Gallagher's B-sides have that catchy sense of familiarity to them, it's hard to conceive of an Oasis set that wouldn't sound like a collection of greatest hits. But for all their surliness, Noel and Liam gave the people at Wembley what they wanted—big, bold, and bristling renditions of "Go Let It Out," "Supersonic," "Roll With It," "Wonderwall," "Don't Look Back In Anger" and "Champagne Supernova," as well as a churning cover of Neil Young's "Hey Hey, My My (Into The Black)," which is perfectly suited to the band's edge-of-feedback wall of guitars. There are no revelations here because, well, that's just not the point: *Familiar To Millions* is simply a stopgap to keep Oasis in the public eye while Noel and Liam get ready for album No. 5. And given their rocky history, anything that buys a little extra time probably isn't a bad idea.

If Oasis are indeed the kings of '90s Brit-pop, then it's fair to credit Alice In Chains with having done more than any other group of Seattlites to earn the '90s grunge-metal throne. Next to hip-hopology, which will likely be the legacy of metallurgy in the '00s, Layne Staley's deep growl of a voice and Jerry Cantrell's mudrock guitars were two of that decade's most crucial contributions to heavy metal. Unfortunately, Alice In Chains wasn't around to accept any credit by the end of the '90s, and, barring any new developments, it doesn't look like the band will be returning to active duty any time soon. If *Familiar To Millions* is a stopgap, then *Live* is the last delay tactic Columbia can reasonably foist upon Alice In Chains fans until the band completes its next studio album, having exhausted all the other options, including an *MTV Unplugged* disc, the *Music Bank* box set, and a pseudo-greatest-hits disc (*Nothing Safe: The Best Of The Box*), since the last Alice In Chains studio recording, 1994's *Jar Of Flies* EP. But like *Familiar To Millions*, Alice In Chains' *Live* gets its job done by giving fans the hits they want with a minimum of fuss and a maximum of big, ballsy guitars. >>>MATT ASHARE



Out
November 21
File Under
Dictionary-definition Britpop
R.I.Y.L.
The Beatles, Blur, the Verve

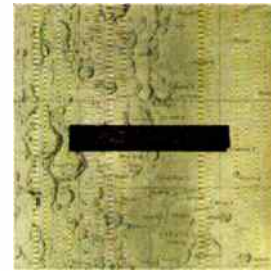


Out
December 5
File Under
Dictionary-definition
grunge metal
R.I.Y.L.
Stone Temple Pilots, Tool,
Soundgarden

LOW

Things We Lost In The Fire Kranky

On first listen, *Things We Lost In The Fire* seems like yet another slow, moody and intensely quiet slice of frigid indie pop, with the softly pitching melodies and patience-testing grooves that have basically been trademarked by this Duluth, Minnesota band (whose version of "Little Drummer Boy" recently appeared in a Gap ad). But when you're dealing with a group whose entire esthetic is built on subtlety, you have to listen closely for signs of change, and they're here on *Things We Lost In The Fire* if you pay careful attention. Building on a simple framework of guitar, bass and snare, the band adds musical gestures that bring further intensity to their spare set up. Singer/guitarist Alan Sparhawk brings the same elemental wisdom to his string arrangements that he has developed in his bare-bones songwriting. Mimi Parker, whose clarity of voice is unmatched in indie rock, widens the expression of her style, deepening her hold on solemnity, yet easing up to flirt with the higher reaches of her range. In a perfect world, Steve Albini's production would steer away from the smacking snare sound and return Zak Sally's delicate and limber basslines closer to the center of the mix. But even the Chicago bully can't thwart what is at the heart of this stellar LP, the graceful sense of a band moving from understated greatness to grandeur. >>>LOIS MAFFEO



Out
February 6
File Under
Majestic slowcore
R.I.Y.L.
Godspeed You Black Emperor!,
Black Heart Procession, Ida

LUNA

Luna Live! Arena Rock

Over five full-length discs and an EP, Luna has teased out every gorgeous implication of the Velvet Underground's third album. Along the way, crab-voiced frontman Dean Wareham has mastered the barbiturate lullaby, the kinky lyrical innuendo and a stylized brand of guitar pop that's simultaneously lush and spare. All of which makes one wonder whether a live album is necessary; good concert discs usually 1) present peculiar revisions of songs, or 2) bear witness to incendiary live bands that can't bring their A-game to the studio, and this impeccably tasteful Luna live disc doesn't do either. It's all elegance and note-perfect restraint: minimal patter, no onstage bombast, no drunken requests for "Radar Love." It does, however, present moonlit metropolitan dreamscapes like "Chinatown" and the pulsating, breathtaking "Tiger Lily" in a club setting so intimate you can almost smell the cigarette smoke. The emphasis here is mostly on songs from 1995's *Penthouse*, including a spring-wound rendition of "Sideshow By The Seashore" and the shamelessly velveteen fuzzfest, "23 Minutes In Brussels." There are a couple of surprises, too: a flat-footed rereading of Galaxie 500's "Fourth Of July," which mostly shows how much Wareham has improved since his old band broke up, and a cover of the kitschy, late-'60s French pop chestnut "Bonnie And Clyde." So what did you expect? A 30-minute version of "Whipping Post"? >>>JEFF OUSBORNE



Out
February 14
File Under
Velvets-y pop, live
R.I.Y.L.
Yo La Tengo, Galaxie 500
Velvet Underground

MAD PROFESSOR**Trix In The Mix** Ariwa

Working out of his London studio in the '80s and '90s, the reggae producer Mad Professor (a.k.a. Neil Fraser) remixed electronic acts like Massive Attack and the Orb, post-rave artists discovering the roots of DJ culture in dub's visionary mix of extreme signal-processing, rhythm track recycling and soundboard trickery. Fraser's profile has decreased quite a bit since '95, when the producer deconstructed Massive Attack's entire *Protection*, but he continues to put out music at an astonishing rate, releasing two or three albums a year. Working in Britain may distance him from the latest developments in Jamaican dancehall, but it keeps the Prof hip to the latest trends from clubland: Fraser's late-'90s output includes plenty of junglized ragga and *Trix In The Mix* finds him venturing into two-step garage. Crystalline frequency rolls, sparkling percussion shots and digital manipulations of tone and timbre add to the disc's contemporary mood, but Fraser keeps the exploratory and improvisational impulses of Jamaican dub intact. King Tubby's hand-me-downs—twisted vocal cries, bizarre musique concrète mutations, sub-sonic bass booms—and rubbery manipulations of roots reggae rhythms form the heart of Fraser's sound. And "Garvey's Plan" upholds the black nationalism of the '70s, asking pointedly over a backdrop of human screams and police sirens, "What became of Garvey's plan? What became of the strong black man?" >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN



Out

February 20

File Under

Digitized dub

R.I.Y.L.

Lee "Scratch" Perry,
Massive Attack, King Tubby**MIRO****Subtidal** Varunee

Chicago's post-rock scene continues to generate waves, as progressive ideas about musical fusion lap at our country's coasts and filter into the minds of the next generation of music-makers. The Boston area's Miro, comprised of vocalist Joon Hong and programmer Chokdee Rutirasiri, who both play myriad electronic instruments and keyboards, is a perfect example. On the duo's debut album, *Subtidal*, they offer lazy grooves, tasteful blips and bleeps, and mellow vocals that worm their way through the sophisticated rhythms. The album was produced by Matthew Lux of Chicago's jazzy post-rock outfit Isotope 217, who gives it both a badge of authenticity and a warmly woven, patchwork-quilt feel. Beneath this warm layer, Miro artfully weaves a consistent mood, as the burbling music anchors Hong's contemplative vocal ruminations. It's not surprising that no single track stands out stylistically or steals the show—the vibe is far too even for that. Fragments such as the keyboard refrain in "MSC" or the acoustic guitar line in "Truck South" may linger in your head after *Subtidal*'s 50 minutes have passed, but what you'll remember most is the disc's laid-back feel. Miro may not be the epicenter of the next underground musical revolution, but the duo's doing its best to carry the post-rock ideology forward. >>>LYDIA VANDERLOO



Out

February 13

File Under

Downtempo post-rock

R.I.Y.L.

Mouse On Mars, Tortoise,
Tied + Tickled Trio**STEPHEN MALKMUS****Stephen Malkmus** Matador

With his usual outfit officially kaput, the first solo release by dissatisfied frontman Stephen Malkmus is a crack in the Pavement: It's an altogether more coherent collection than 1998's wildly uneven *Terror Twilight*. Recorded in Portland with ex-Spinanes rhythm section Joanna Bolme and John Moen, the disc's cross-fertilization of post-punk and classic rock, with touches of intersong recorder grot, isn't a major stylistic shift. "Church On White" and "Vague Space" are semi-acoustic ballads à la "Spit On A Stranger," with seemingly sincere vocals to match, while the clipped delivery and annoying samples of "Phantasies" show that Malkmus hasn't gone soft (or straight). But riff-plus-absurdity numbers are rarer here than fully developed—even on-topic—songs. Several are character-driven: much of "Jo Jo's Jacket" is sung from Yul Brenner's P.O.V. ("I acted like a robotic cowboy"), while "The Hook" traces a pirate's progress from kidnapped youth to captain. The highlight is "Jenny And The Ess-Dog," a close observation of an intergenerational romance ("They kiss when they listen to *Brothers In Arms*") set to a melodic variation of fellow Portlander Elliott Smith's "Say Yes." Indie exegetes hunting for self-referential clues to Pavement's demise may be disappointed; no one else will be. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



Out

February 13

File Under

Emancipation proclamation

R.I.Y.L.

Pavement, early David Bowie,
Silkworm

rainer maria
a better version of me.

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TADD MULLINIX

Winking Makes A Face Ghostly International

On his solo debut, Detroit's Tadd Mullinix eschews his city's staple genres of house and techno in favor of another one of the area's electronic scene hallmarks: innovation. The first track, "Minajor," begins with some Digital Hardcore-type bleeps and scratches, and this aggression is quickly augmented by a grandiose, albeit somewhat muted, trancescape. This odd union predicts what follows, a fusion of styles ranging from trance to jungle to ambient that are mixed into a surprisingly unique and cohesive vision. "Enfant Dans La Chambre Respirant" and "The Letter" emerge as the rapturous culminations of this ambitious formula. On tracks like "Twice Triumph," jungle beats are woven into an atmospheric fabric reminiscent of Aphex Twin, but lacking the minimalist, organic abstraction. Jettisoning the high-rpm beats for a moment, "Mother, Child, And Modern Life" is a beautiful, succinct ambient piece that sounds entirely composed of voices permeating through windswept ventilation ducts. The stylistic departure of this track three-quarters of the way into the album is a strategic and welcome eddy that keeps the album's otherwise relentless current from overwhelming. While most artists attempting to meld these disparate genres have produced only sporadic successes, *Winking Makes A Face* is focused and consistently inspired throughout. >>>TANNER CUSICK



Out
January 23
File Under
Ambient jungles
R.I.Y.L.
Autechre, LTJ Bukem,
Squarepusher, Atari Teenage Riot

THE NEW YEAR

Newness Ends Touch And Go

Matt and Bubba Kadane, sibling leaders of the pioneering Texas slow-core outfit Bedhead, have found the energy to reunite as the New Year. In the two years since the band's collapse they've also found a new sense of urgency and drive that inspires frenzied bursts of outright rocking. So songs like the irrepressibly catchy "Gasoline" churn into a frenzy of guitars and propulsive snare drum (provided by Come and Pullman guitarist Chris Brokaw, here returning to drums, which he played years ago with Codeine) at their peaks. The bad news is that Bedhead enthusiasts may miss the sense of sleepy melancholy conjured by that band's depressive pacing. The good news is that fans of the Kadanes' songwriting and vocals who had trouble getting over Bedhead's somnambulant pace won't need caffeine to get through these songs. Although "The Block That Doesn't Exist" and "Came Laverne" bash merrily along, the spirit of what the Kadanes do is essentially unchanged. Numbers like "Simple Life" and "Newness Ends"—really, the whole disc—sound introspective as hell, with lyrics that run from contemplative to vaguely self-loathing, deliberate melodies, and careful placement of each note. The band (which also includes Saturnine bassist Mike Donofrio) swells with the tides of emotion, completing the sense that *Newness Ends* is a soundtrack for the examined life. >>>TED DROZDOWSKI

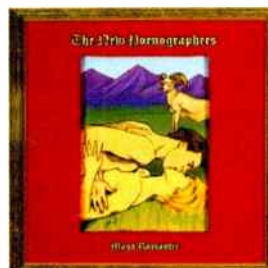


Out
February 20
File Under
Slowcore wake-up call
R.I.Y.L.
Bedhead, Galaxie 500,
Codeine

THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS

Mass Romantic Mint

A long-simmering side project of Zumpano's Carl Newman, Canadian indie scoundrel Dan Bejar (of Destroyer), and rising alt-country star Neko Case, the New Pornographers boil up a bizarre blend of pop sensibilities on their debut. Anything goes, really. You want Age-Of-Aquarius harmonies crossed with space-age synthesizers? Got 'em. Barroom piano vamps playing tug-of-war with fuzzed-out guitars? Yup. *Mass Romantic* bounds around like this, struggling for some sort of identity, but ultimately decides it doesn't need one. "The Fake Headlines" pushes off with Newman singing accompanied only by his acoustic guitar, then takes on a singsong melody punched out on a retro organ before zooming off into a *Nuggets*-style garage rock tune—all in under three minutes. Case throws off the shackles of twang and belts out a barroom-ready stomper one minute ("The Slow Descent Into Alcoholism") and a jaunty pop rave-up the next ("Letter From An Occupant"). Meanwhile Bejar, a whimsical craftsman who could be the Canadian cousin of Neutral Milk Hotel's Jeff Mangum, sings his heart out on the woozy and weird "Jackie," and sneaks a potshot at his southerly neighbors: "The United States used to be lots of fun." The New Pornographers, however, are a lot of fun, twisting genres into unrecognizable shapes and spitting out a futuristic pop confection that's as enjoyable as it is unexpected. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



Out
November 21
File Under
New-wave art pop with a foot
in the '60s garage
R.I.Y.L.
Sloan, the Lilys, Mocket

JEB LOY NICHOLS

Just What Time It Is Rykodisc

Think reggae and country music make strange bedfellows? Think again—there's a reason that Johnny Cash has lived in Jamaica on and off for decades. Jeb Loy Nichols, a Wyoming-born, Missouri-raised, London-dwelling singer/songwriter gets the connection; how many other musicians can say they've worked with both Adrian Sherwood and Dave Schramm? On his major-label debut, *Lover's Knot*, Nichols practically became the reggae-country poster boy. But on his second album, the songwriter is more of a soul crooner than a cosmic cowboy. House DJ Ewan "Maas" Pearson and Tricky cohort Wayne Nunes (bass) join Nichols as both bandmates and co-producers on this effort, recorded between Kent, England and Jamaica. Blending pop and soul with reggae and dub, *Just What Time It Is* is a sophisticated set that bears the stamp of Nichols's "citizen of the world" status. His voice has the gentle bedroom timbre of an R&B crooner with the slightest hint of twang, but only the folksy undertone of "Hold Me Till I Fall" and steel string picking on the soulful "Midnight (All Night Long)" hint at his Midwestern roots. "Heavy Changes" is more indicative of the album's sound: a pure '70s smooth R&B, complete with bells, organ, gentle horns and clean, funky guitar thwack, it even has a reprise where Nichols gives props to his peeps. >>>MEREDITH OCHS



Out
January 30
File Under
Caribbean & Western
R.I.Y.L.
Al Green, Bobby Womack,
k.d. lang

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TORTOISE

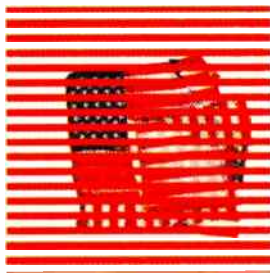
Standards Thrill Jockey

BROKEBACK

Morse Code In The Modern Age: Across The Americas Thrill Jockey

It's hard work to carry an entire wave of bands, but Tortoise has that particular burden right now—somewhere over the last few years, they became the standard-bearers for that antiformalist, catholic, studio-centered instrumental genre that usually gets described by what it isn't, or isn't anymore. So the splendid *Standards'* title is appropriate: This is the flag everyone's going to be following for a while. Their fourth actual album (not counting two remix compilations), it's precise and sure-footed, making up for the vagaries of 1998's disappointing *TNT*. It's not like they're playing "My Favorite Things" or anything, but there are vivid themes here, sometimes even hooks, and Dan Bitney's vibes and marimba serve melody more than atmosphere. "Monica" even comes as close to Zapp-style synth-funk as they're ever likely to get. The real development, though, is that drummer/producer John McEntire, formerly the most fastidious timbre-doctor around, has embraced noise and distortion in his hyper-controlled way—mostly in what he does to the drums, which hiss, squirt, clip, choke or crunch rather than boom or bap. (And nearly every other instrument gets the big ProTools squish, too.) Tortoise still relies on prog-rock tricks like grooving in 9/8 or 15/8 time, but for the first time in a while they're not just impressive but *fun*—their post-genre splatter has the what-the-hell spirit rarely found outside of Indian film music.

Tortoise is also the central station for pretty much the entire Chicago scene—Isotope 217, the Chicago Underground Duo/Trio, Eleventh Dream Day, Pullman and Brokeback all have personnel ties to the group. The last of these is bassist Douglas McCombs's former solo project, now a duo with another bassist, Noel Kupersmith. *Morse Code In The Modern Age* is a three-song, half-hour-long EP (doubling as a CD-ROM that includes two short films by director Braden King, scored by McCombs). The bulk of it is two long, static, essentially beatless improvisations that shift textures by degrees, recorded in collaboration with a few other musicians and heavily edited after the fact. They're not ambient, exactly, since they've got too much melodic material and unpretty low end to treat as furniture—"non-goal-oriented" is probably a better way of putting it. For all their exploratory groping around, though, there's very little slack here; there's always something happening in the mix that wasn't happening a moment before. And the disc ends with an improbable treat: a straightforward instrumental cover of Roy Orbison's "Running Scared" that's the equivalent of an abstract artist doing a little portrait, just for kicks. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



Out
February 20
File Under
Highbrow groove fun
R.I.Y.L.
Kid A, Tom Zé,
the Sea And Cake



Out
January 30
File Under
Hanging out with the big bass
R.I.Y.L.
Calexico, Tortoise,
Gastr Del Sol

PEPE DELUXÉ

Super Sound Emperor Norton

The three media-savvy Finns in Pepe Deluxé, fresh from scoring slow jams for a phone sex company and a Lee Jeans ad, perform the minor miracle of translating two of the past decade's electronica masterworks—DJ Shadow's *Endtroducing...* and Moby's *Play*—into bite-size party jams and head-nodders. The album's vocals are pilfered from spoken-word obscurities and old blues records, the beats from flea market finds or occasionally something more obvious, like the disco hit "Love Hangover." But where Shadow and Moby juice their source material for all its spirit/flesh or pre-millennium tension, Pepe Deluxé are merely after a sound hip enough to stay afloat in the international marketplace. The trio does have a tendency to overestimate its strengths; a modest mood piece like "Thru The Motion," for instance, is more original and inspired than the hyper scratchfest "Tour De Force." But because the myriad textures shift so seamlessly into one another, the disc rarely smacks of the archly eclectic. In fact, heard in the background (where this music will most likely end up), the short attention span structures sound like the natural fits and starts of one blissed-out flesh-and-blood band. >>>KEVIN JOHN



Out
January 9
File Under
Club night pu-pu platter
R.I.Y.L.
Kid Koala, Lopy Octopus,
Handsome Boy Modeling School

PHUNK JUNKEEZ


Sex, Drugs And Rap 'N' Roll Uncle Scam

By all rights, the Phunk Junkeez should be the first thing people think of when the term rap-rock comes up. Instead, the veteran outfit remains one of Arizona's best kept secrets. "It's a cutthroat business," they claim amid the mellow Kid Rock-ish blues groove of "Strugglin'": "Labels talking major shit because they can't have me/ Wine me and dine me and then they try to sign me/ Next thing I know they come sneakin' up behind me." The alternative? Build a studio and start a label to release your own fourth album, which is what these guys did. "What's Next" shows the Junkeez have been keeping their eyes on the scene: "What the hell happened?/ Everybody and their mother/ Even Tommy Lee's rappin'." The tune features Cypress Hill's Sen-Dog and a funky flavor that Limp lacks, yet it's got a Bizkit-ly fuck-you violent vibe: "I'll wrap metal around your neck and choke your ass out for a royalty check." But it's wit that rules the sci-fi-inspired "The Quest" (the tale of a weed war against alien dope fiends) with its intro narrated by a James Earl Jones sound-alike. A hip-hop-stylized, faux country rewrite of Jerry Reed's "When You're Hot, You're Hot" includes industry-critical lyrics, clap-alongs, and over-the-top girlie la-la-las. Armed with rock, rap, funk and humor, the Phunk Junkeez prove that there is intelligent life in the realm of rap-rock. >>>ROBIN A. ROTHMAN



Out
January 23
File Under
Jurassic rap-rock
R.I.Y.L.
Limp Bizkit, Cypress Hill,
2 Skinnee J's

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PLASTIQ PHANTOM

Enjoy The Art Of Lying Down *Sweet Molher*

PlastiQ Phantom's version of chill-out music doesn't owe nearly as much to his European counterparts as you might think. While he's cited influence from notable IDM (Intelligent Dance Music) artists like Aphex Twin, Luke Vibert and µ-Ziq, he pulls from less obvious sources on his debut album. In fact, for a callow 21-year-old Seattle-born DJ, PlastiQ Phantom (a.k.a. Darrin Wiener) possesses a remarkably unique and unconventional style. Over the 17 tracks on *Enjoy The Art Of Lying Down*, it's apparent that he isn't so much interested in relaxing his audience as luring them in with pleasant melodies and then messing with their heads. But that's also part of Wiener's charm. On tracks like "Kicking Mister Bubbles," he updates Mike Oldfield's new-age anthem "Tubular Bells" before kicking his drum machine into hyper-syncope mode. Shades of symphonic grandeur sprout up more than once, most notably on the piano- and string-driven "Falling Through Windows" and the short Stravinsky tribute "The Fifth Season." By album's end, Wiener's sense is in full force on "Cultivated Oscillations," a collage of steel drum loops, Public Enemy samples, and snippets from a children's sex-education record that turns booty bass on its head. >>>KURI KONDRAK



Out
January 30
File Under
Kitchen sink electronica
R.I.Y.L.
Plaid, Kid Spatula,
Wagon Christ

CHRISTINA ROSEVINGE

Frozen Pool *Smells Like*

She cut her teeth as half of hugely commercial (in Mexico, at least) duo Alex Y Christina, but Spanish-born Christina Rosenvinge's recent output couldn't be farther from slick Latin pop. Her North American debut is quiet, but hardly soothing: Opening with a "Hunter's Lullaby" that mentions "a gun in the closet" and "bats in the forest" is no way to inspire pleasant dreams. Between gloom-laden lyrics and fragile, heavily accented vocals, comparisons to Nico are unavoidable, with New York mopers Two Dollar Guitar (plus Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo) serving as her Velvets. (Holland's Julia P. Herscheimer is a more obscure but even closer match.) Two Dollar Guitar's influence extends to two songs reprised from its 1999 album *Weak Beats And Lame-Ass Rhymes*, plus a duet with leader Tim Foljahn on the closing cover of Leonard Cohen's "Seems So Long Ago, Nancy." The brand-new songs, though, run more to melancholia than despair, and even this lifts to admit the jangle of "Expensive Shoes" and "Taking Off." As a singer, Rosenvinge sometimes overdoes the understatement; perhaps she's still living down her diva past. Even so, *Frozen Pool* contains music more personal and potent than her current American counterparts (including that other Christina) may ever dare. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



Out
January 30
File Under
Songs from a room
R.I.Y.L.
Nico, Barbara Manning,
Cat Power

PROPAGANDHI

Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes

Fat Wreck Chords

Winnipeg, Manitoba's Propagandhi is an enigma, even for an underground punk band. On the surface, the group dishes out the exact kind of hyper-speed pop-metal its NOFX-run label has become known for, but closer inspection reveals more: a loopier way of arranging songs, lyrics devoted more to activist causes than beer or girls. On its first proper disc since 1996's *Less Talk, More Rock*, Propagandhi takes its political bent a step further by including an interactive CD-ROM full of anti-government commentary. The band wisely injects a little humor into its outrage on "With Friends Like These (Who The Fuck Needs CoIntelPro?)" by adopting the chorus of Judas Priest's "You've Got Another Thing Comin'" as its mantra. As impossible as Propagandhi's politics are to ignore, they're bound to go over the average pop-punk fan's head. But the kids will undoubtedly understand the band's mastery of the fat beat, as well as singer/guitarist Chris's Bob Mould-ian knack for melody and rage. Though most of the songs clock in around the two-minute mark, the group frames the album with a couple of disjointed narratives that aren't afraid to slow down and stretch things out a bit. The disc climaxes with "Purina Hall Of Fame," which bursts into a blitzkrieg guitar solo before fading away to the sound of a heartbeat. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON



Out
February 6
File Under
Pop-punk protest songs
R.I.Y.L.
NOFX, Blink-182, Anti-Flag

THE SHIPPING NEWS

Very Soon, And In Pleasant Company *Quarterstick*

The Louisville-based Shipping News took their name from a long, querulous E. Annie Proulx novel, and their guitarist, Jeff Mueller, from the now-defunct June Of '44. The band's second release (which follows a 1997 debut, *Save Everything*, and an split EP with Metroschifter) matches the complexity of math-rock to indie's familiar lo-fi drone, with amiable and occasionally vivid results. With vocals buried so far back in the mix they're virtually inaudible and a love of ambient guitar noise evident throughout, the Shipping News effectively zeroes in on the sound and vision of *Spiderland*-era Slint, progressive indie rock's Rosetta Stone. The band shouldn't be dismissed as guitar-happy post-rock mumbblers, even though they sort of are, and even though the presence of Mueller and bassist Jason Noble (a sometime member of Rachel's and, like Mueller, the like-minded Rodan) suggests that very thing. The disc, with its violas and vibes and (exceedingly unobtrusive) samples, has a definite nostalgic feel. Save for "Quiet Victories," which, with its slow-build-then-fast-then-slow tempo is reminiscent of Slint, nothing terribly dramatic happens; songs with such slow tempos, which is to say most of them, tend to stay that way. The gorgeous, intricate "The March Song" is an absolute marvel, though, and at a comparatively spare five minutes, one of the few songs compact enough to gain any traction. >>>ALLISON STEWART



Out
January 16
File Under
Sepia-toned indie rock
R.I.Y.L.
Rodan, Rachel's,
June Of '44, Slint

JOHN SCOFIELD ★**Works For Me** Verve

Every now and then, guitarist John Scofield jumps down from his funk/groove perch and tries his hand at the kind of straight-ahead jazz that bought him renown in the first place. For him, it's a roots move. Not that *Works For Me* is in any sense by-the-numbers. Surrounding himself with some of the best and the brightest—Kenny Garrett, alto sax; Brad Mehldau, piano; Christian McBride, bass—as well as one genuine living legend in drummer Billy Higgins, the set has its share of hard bop familiarities but isn't afraid to lean leftward without caution. Ten of the 11 cuts are Scofield originals, and they range from such polite efforts as the lilting "Mrs. Scofield's Waltz" and the gentle "Love You Long Time" to the jolly disruptions of "Hive" and "Do I Crazy," the latter sounding like the musical equivalent of a tongue-twister. Extreme hipness is achieved on the extended coda of "Big J," a reel finger popper, while Ornette Coleman's "Ramblin'" is channeled on the wry "Loose Canon" (that's a pun, not a typo). In between the extremes of mellow and raving, the tendency is to "cook," as the hipsters say, with Scofield's tart attack and Mehldau's post-impressionistic weavings being the satisfying highlights. Solid. >>>RICHARD C. WALLS



Out

January 30

File Under

Real jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Pat Metheny, Pat Martino,
Jim Hall**JIMMY SMITH****Dot Com Blues** Blue Thumb-Verve

Jimmy Smith goes for an all-star approach on the umpteenth disc he's released since making his New York debut in 1956. Still second to none when it comes to ripping out astonishing solos on the Hammond B3 organ, he connects the dots between himself and higher-profile artists. It's a late-career bid for a wider audience, and younger listeners indeed may be attracted to the palpable old-school buzz. Dr. John adds his greasy gumbo to the shuffling good-time feel of his "Only In It For the Money," singing and playing piano boogie on that track and contributing keyboards to two others. Three guitarist/vocalists join the party, too, their own tunes in tow: Taj Mahal does his folksy thing on "Strut," Keb' Mo' goes silky smooth on the slow-grinding "Over & Over," and B.B. King growls and pokes sweet six-string stabs into "Three O'Clock Blues." Etta James invades the boys' club on Willie Dixon's "I Just Wanna Make Love To You," trading saucy lines with former Was (Not Was) soul crooners "Sweet Pea" Atkins and Sir Harry Bowens. Smith, out front on "Mood Indigo" and four other pieces, may come off merely as a super-talented sideman on his album. But who's complaining? >>>PHILIP BOOTH



Out

January 9

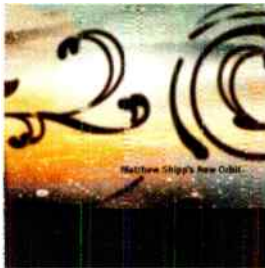
File Under

Hammond B3 jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Jimmy McGriff, Jack McDuff,
Joey DeFrancesco**MATTHEW SHIPP****Matthew Shipp's New Orbit** Thirsty Ear

Pianist Matthew Shipp has participated in his share of full-tilt collective improvisation, both as a leader and as saxophonist David S. Ware's key sideman. But with each release, "free jazz" becomes an increasingly inadequate, even meaningless, label for his music. *New Orbit* uses a classic quartet line-up, with AACM trumpet bigwig Leo Smith joining Shipp's usual rhythm section. But the all-original program references jazz tradition even less frequently than last year's *Pastoral Composure*, where Ellington's "Prelude To A Kiss" formed a recognizable launch pad for Shipp's explorations. Here, he compensates by presenting his composed material with unusual clarity: On the title track and three subsequent variations ("Orbit 2," "3" and "4"), a distinctive pentatonic theme passes from piano to trumpet to bass. (Music theory novices can read "pentatonic" as "kinda like Chinese folk music.") Smith shines on the spiky "U Feature" (on which Shipp varies the texture by laying out entirely) and "Paradox Y," a brief duet with bassist William Parker's patented bowing. Drummer Gerald Cleaver seems underused; if anything, the brushed solo that ends "Syntax" could go on longer. Shipp's integrity and restraint in developing his private musical logic make this a worthy addition to his catalog; for the same reason, it may not be the best introduction for new listeners. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



Out

January 16

File Under

Rigorous post-jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Anthony Braxton,
Roscoe Mitchell,
Mal Maneri

UP HIGH IN THE NIGHT

ARLO

SPCD 514 Available January 16. www.subpop.com

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SMUT PEDDLERS

Porn Again Rawkus

On 1999's *Home Field Advantage*, the Smut Peddlers' the High & Mighty came off as cantankerous B-boys influenced equally by ESPN's *SportsCenter* and street-corner shit talk. They also displayed an affinity for X-rated narratives and ill masturbation rhymes, a trend stretched to its breaking point on *Porn Again*, a collaboration between the High & Mighty (Mr. Eon and DJ Mighty Mi) and fellow aggro white-dude Cage. Like Eminem, these MCs just don't give a fuck, and they aim to shock with scatological boasts ("We'll drop the illest shit any latrine has seen"), jaw-dropping disses ("you're out of work like JFK Jr.'s flight instructor"), and lots of sex talk ("Shot your milk, she didn't swallow it?/ That's 'cuz the girl was lactose intolerant"). DJ Mighty Mi cooks up thick, viscous beats that are stickier than a used copy of *Hustler*, intensifying the lowbrow mood of this uncensored cipher session. Mr. Eon is the pop-culture freak, dropping references to indie-film queens (Parker Posey) and obscure basketball rumors ("I wipe my ass and shove it in your face like Bobby Knight") into his rumbling baritone flow. And Cage spends his time barking out unhinged and self-destructive vitriol that threatens to screw anything that moves, commit bloody suicide and "stick needles in your third eye." Added bonus: A cameo appearance by Beetlejuice, the foul-mouthed black dwarf from *The Howard Stern Show*. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN



Out
February 13
File Under
X-rated rap
R.I.Y.L.
Kool Keith's *Sex Styles*,
Eminem, High & Mighty

OTTO VON SCHIRACH

8000 B.C. Schematic

Its hard to believe that Miami electronic auteur Otto Von Schirach was once an up-and-coming hip-hop producer, because making heads nod and hands wave seem to be the last things *8000 B.C.* is designed to do. The production is bold and uncompromising, almost to the point of unbearable harshness. His abrasive, alien electronics blend familiar textures with freakbeat rhythms. At times, song fragments resemble the "boing" of a taut spring, the clicking of a metal clasp, or the swoosh of a flushing toilet. Piecing these shards together around funky backbones, *8000 B.C.* brings to mind some of the classic experimental pathways previously charted by Warp Records and Otto's Schematic labelmates. On "C21 H39 N7 O12" he puts all the standard motifs of electronic music in a blender: Dastardly bass zaps and metallic clangs trip over hazy ambient codas at breakneck speed. It bubbles beautifully into "Triangle Exit." Goopy crackles and wet pops blanket the track until a human voice tries piercing the din halfway through. No luck. A screech of feedback halts the voice and kicks the lowly human to the back of the line. Though *8000 B.C.* mellows considerably halfway through, Otto's short-attention-span theater never loses steam. >>>HUA HSU



Out
March 6
File Under
Contemporary metal machine music
R.I.Y.L.
Warp Records, Kid606,
Phoenecia

STARS

Nightsongs Le Grand Magistery

Dylan grew up wanting to be Woody Guthrie, John Lennon wanted to be Elvis, and 10,000 alt-rockers have divided their votes between Lou Reed and David Bowie. Torquil Campbell and Chris Seligman, two childhood chums who are the nuclear essence of Stars, have their star-time daydreams too: They want to be the Smiths, at least in spirit. Their soft-focused, genteel Le Grand Magistery debut, *Nightsongs*, evokes other sensitive soulmates, as well. They've got the sweetness of the Pet Shop Boys without the cynical edge, which is what's missing on a tribute to author Truman Capote ("Tru"), who never left home without his literary license to kill with sarcasm. Amy Millan and Evan Cranley help out Campbell (a former child actor who still performs in the theater), who sings and writes the words, and Seligman, a former French horn blower with the technique and training to provide the musical muscle. If only they'd flex that muscle—fine tunes like "Going, Going, Gone" meander out of the gate and don't get very far at all. And instead of aiming high and blowing their idols out of the sky, Stars' version of the Smiths' "This Charming Man" sounds tongue-tied and awestruck. There's none of Morrissey's neurotic passion, nor of the Smiths' writhing musical drive. Stars have the singer, the songs and the melodies. But they lack the rock-star salesmanship to close the deal. >>>WAYNE ROBINS



Out
February 13
File Under
D.I.Y. romanticism
R.I.Y.L.
The Smiths, Pet Shop Boys,
Saint Etienne

WILLARD GRANT CONSPIRACY

Everything's Fine Slow River-Rykodisc

A Boston-based collective centered around lead singer/poet Robert Fisher, Willard Grant Conspiracy has released a series of folkie alt-country recordings, each more baroque than the last. That trend continues on *Everything's Fine*, another spare, meditative gem that mixes the group's obvious affection for the darker side of traditional Americana with an introverted shoegazing sensibility that seems oddly British, and probably accounts in part for the group's acute popularity abroad. Informed by a love of the blues and Fisher's gift for tart, expressive lyrics, *Everything's Fine* is spindly and understated throughout. The disc's final cut, a piano ballad titled "Massachusetts," is a vivid example of less-is-more at work, while the addition of backing vocals and muted horns qualifies "Southend Of A Northbound Train" as a virtual rave-up for the usually more somnolent WGC. Fisher has a Nick Cave-like baritone and a poet's predictable (and in this case, occasionally overstated) preoccupation with drinking, death and trains. In fact, it's fair to say that Willard Grant Conspiracy was one of the more obvious choices for inclusion on the recent American Music Club tribute, *Come On Beautiful*—if Fisher hasn't studied the similarly styled collective that gave Mark Eitzel his start, then he probably should, as those two have a lot to talk about. >>>ALLISON STEWART



Out
February 20
File Under
Americana gothic
R.I.Y.L.
Pinetop Seven,
Handsome Family,
American Music Club

JOHN WOLFINGTON

John Wolfington *Smells Like*

Give this Brooklyn-based singer/songwriter some credit. With his painstakingly dreary debut disk, Wolfington has fashioned an instant party-killer classic. And that's not a bad thing. "Race The Sun" is an intoxicating slow-drip of lo-fi noir, reminiscent of Morphine at their creepiest: stark, echoey guitar, the clack of a drum machine, some busy background noise and Wolfington whispering "Darkness will forgive/ This ugly place has never looked so fine." If this ugly place happens to look familiar, that's because it's the same terrain worked by moody shoegazers like East River Pipe or even early Elliott Smith. All of them make insular, claustrophobic music, redolent of ramshackle home studios and a washed-out urban dystopia. But where someone like F.M. Cornog inflates his agoraphobia into big, puffy pop melodies, Wolfington, a Steve Shelley protégé, keeps things jagged and unnerving. Witness the edgy jangle of "Maybe I'll Go": The production mix borders on overbearing, the lyrics are desperate, but you can't bring yourself to turn away. It's telling that the most fully realized song here is "Coney Island," a haunting techno lament about the promise of escape and connection: Those are exactly the two things Wolfington must achieve if he wants to go from being a promising lo-fi shut-in to a songwriter worthy of broader love. >>>JEFF OUSBORNE



Out

January 30

File Under

Lo-fi shut-in rock

R.I.Y.L.

Smog, Cat Power,
East River Pipe

XZIBIT

Restless *Loud*

For most of his career, Xzibit seemed destined for an enduring, if not particularly lucrative stint as a cult favorite. A protégé of the underground Los Angeles group the Alkaholiks, the battle rapper blessed with a loud voice and modest wit released two well-received albums but never seemed destined to be a budding anything. Then Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg and Dr. Dre put him on the brilliantly catchy hit single "Bitch Please," and all of a sudden Xzibit is the West Coast's newest rap star. Now he's ready to cash in. Xzibit's third album, *Restless*, layers furious insults and occasional bursts of introspection over simple, catchy beats (planned out in part by executive producer Dr. Dre). It doesn't always work: Snoop Dogg lends vocals to a surprisingly colorless song called "D.N.A." Xzibit's dedication to his son, "Sorry I'm Away So Much," is almost as awkward as its title. But when Xzibit isn't bogged down by flat beats or weak concepts, he sounds better than ever. On the back-to-basics bragfest "X," Dr. Dre and company lay down a sturdy beat, so Xzibit can expound on his roughneck philosophy: "It's funny how things change overnight/ When you're thinking right/ I beat the odds like Ike beat on his first wife." >>>KELEFA SANNEH



Out

December 12

File Under

Diss 'em and kiss 'em

R.I.Y.L.

Kool G Rap, Beanie Siegel,
Eminem

NEIL YOUNG

Road Rock Volume 1 *Reprise*

Neil Young's summer 2000 tour captured the godfather of grunge in an expansive, all-encompassing mode. With female back-up singers (his wife Pegi and sister Astrid), lap- and pedal-steel guitar specialist Ben Keith, Muscle Shoals legend Spooner Oldham on piano, Stax bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn and drummer-for-all-seasons Jim Keltner, the tour emphasized the depth and breadth of Young's catalog, from grungified guitar epics to the elegiac acoustic folk rock of his recent studio CD, *Silver & Gold*. But the new *Road Rock Volume 1*, culled from that tour and credited to Young and "friends and relatives," favors Young's patented electronic sprawl over ensemble details. So "Cowgirl In The Sand," a 10-minute monster when it first appeared on 1969's *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, gets stretched to 18 here. Yes, Keith contributes some slashing slide guitar work on a couple of tracks, and yes, the female vocalists contribute variety (especially Pegi Young trading soulful verses with Neil on "Motorcycle Mama"). But *Road Rock Volume 1* is mainly for completists who want to hear Young's previously unreleased soul boogie "Fool For Your Love" (and it is a good 'un) or his eight-minute turn with tourmate Chrissie Hynde on "All Along The Watchtower." >>>JON GARELICK



Out

December 5

File Under

You had to be there

R.I.Y.L.

Silver & Gold,
Sleeps With Angels, Weld



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MATINEE**

**WINTER TOUR
2001**

**Death Cab
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L.A. Transcendental

DJ JOHN DIGWEED SPINS THE CITY OF ANGELS INTO THE GLOBAL UNDERGROUND.

It's two on an early Tuesday morning and almost every venue in downtown Los Angeles has hastily ushered lingering patrons out onto the deserted streets. But inside the Mayan Theater, a crowd of 1500 or so diehard clubbers are breaking their curfews for a special performance by British DJ John Digweed, who has ventured to the City Of Angels to record an upcoming installment of the *Global Underground* CD series. The gig will be the first L.A.-based *GU* mix, and neither the fans nor the club staff is watching the clock.

Melodic textures cascade over the crowd's outstretched arms as Digweed fiddles with the fader and allows the beat to tear through the system, and the audience shrieks and pogos with primal, unified intensity. It's an awesome scene Digweed will recreate several times before retiring his records at 3:30 a.m. It's also one he'll have to recapture when *Los Angeles* is mixed from the controlled environment of his recording studio.

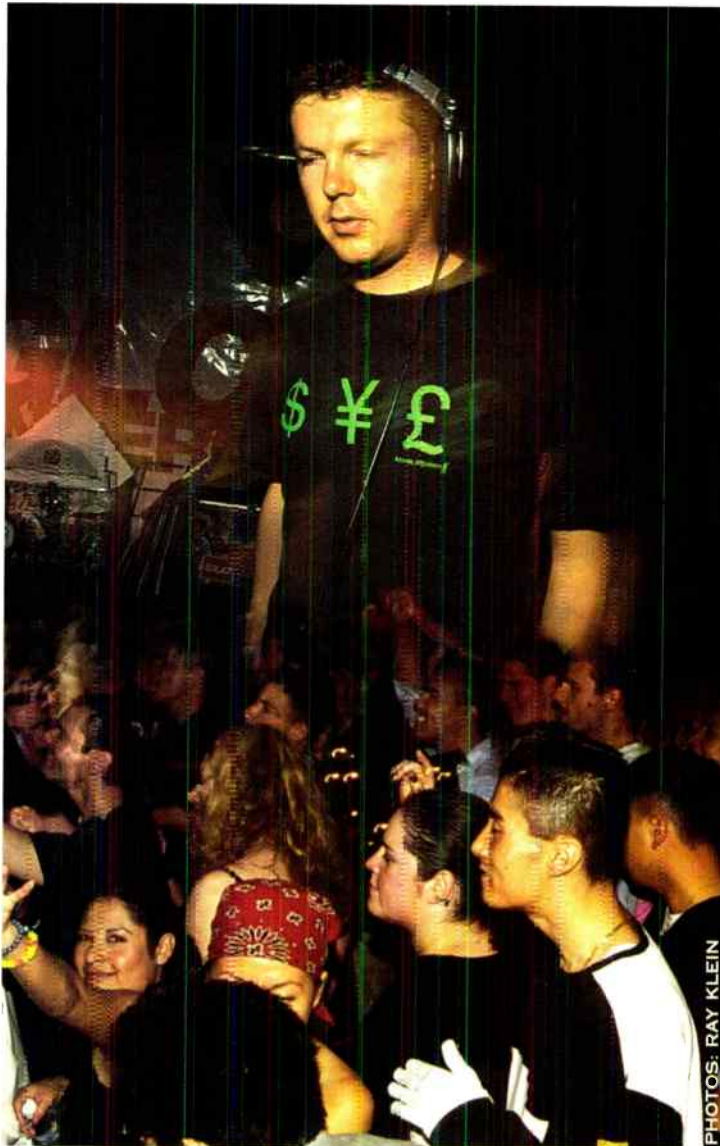
Why doesn't he simply hit "record" on his DAT machine and press the best two hours of the set onto a CD? Most fans present at the theater assume that's happening anyway, and his performance is flawless; recording the gig seems the obvious way to document its vibe (which, after all, is what the *Global Underground* concept is all about). But Andy Horsefield, who created the series with partner James Todd, explains that making a mix suitable for mass distribution is more complicated than most realize.

"The first couple of CDs in the series were recorded live, but that turned into an absolute nightmare," explains Horsefield, whose 18 previous *Global* volumes have included mixes by Digweed, Sasha, Paul Oakenfold and Danny Tenaglia. "On top of

records jumping and things like that, some DJs would give us a list of records which we would clear for licensing, then they'd turn up in the clubs... and play completely different songs in their sets."

Serious DJs would rather not sacrifice spontaneity during live performances. ("If I had to stick to a set I had worked out beforehand, I

would be uninspired as soon as I walked in the club," says Digweed), but there are issues beyond the legal red tape and shoddy turntable needles that come into play when making a mix CD. Fans demand a superior body of music that's as polished and pristine as a Madonna or Radiohead LP—so many DJs use studio technology to create albums that would be technically impossible to duplicate using two decks and a mixer alone.



PHOTOS: RAY KLEIN

"I don't just throw songs into the computer and let it mix the CD for me," Digweed says. "I choose the records, I work out where and how the songs are going to be mixed, and I do this all on vinyl. I could do the mix straight from vinyl, but... I don't have to prove myself as a DJ and if the technology's there, then why not use it in a way that's being creative? I'm not trying to pull the wool over anyone's eyes; I'm just enhancing what's already there."

Although some DJs just use high-tech tools to ensure that their mixes are devoid of human error (trainwrecking on CD is completely intolerable), DJs like Digweed, who already carry a reputation for spinning five-hour sets without dropping a beat, are using the advancements to more artistic ends. They extend tracks that are too short, change the keys of songs, add audio effects and often create exclusive remixes. Purists who spend days on their decks perfecting sets fit for duplication might see the use of technology as cheating (up-and-coming jockeys often stamp "Mixed Without Computers" on their CDs like a badge of authenticity). Horsefield sees the other side.

"Some people who write in on our chat board prefer it when it's mixed live," he admits. "If it was done by some engineer who

couldn't mix, then yes, it would be cheating. But there is an art to doing these albums. When you have a finished product that's going to be listened to [hundreds] of times in someone's bedroom, it's got to be perfect. Our DJs are all artists, and if they have to use a computer to make an album sound the way they hear in their heads, what do I care?"

THE SCENE IS NOW



THE CREATORS



RICHARD BLACKWOOD

ANDY EARL

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BRITISH HIP-HOP

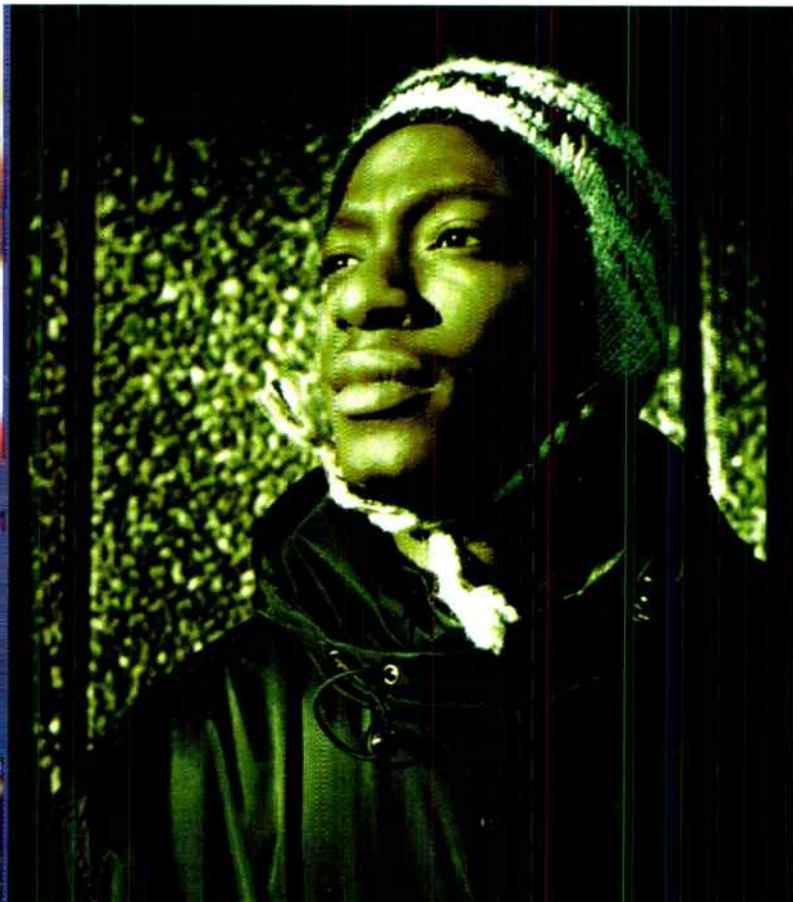
America gave the world country, blues and rock 'n' roll; England came up with skiffle and Merseybeat. Then the Yanks started funk and disco, and the British pushed punk and rave. Once you throw in the Who, the Stones and the Beatles, Britpop and drum 'n' bass, Brits don't even need to claim U2 to argue pretty convincingly that they've done this pop music thing pretty well. But there's one American genre England can't get right—rap.

At least that's the conventional wisdom. But there's been hip-hop in the U.K. since "Rapper's Delight" got Brits buggin' in '79, and there have been times when the British cherished the genre's complex values with a great deal more fervor than the brothers on the other side of the Atlantic.

Hip-hop coasted into London in much the same way it spread across New York: Converts introduced friends to party tapes and radiomix dubs. The metropolitan scene soon spread across the country; breakdancing became a nationwide craze. And for every kid spinning on his head in a shopping mall, there were dozens of English rappers and DJs hidden away in their bedrooms, finding their own voices, liberated by beats and rhymes.

U.K. rap's first flowering came in the late '80s as acts like Derek B, the Cookie Crew and the Wee Papa Girl Rappers signed to majors, the world's first English rap magazine, *Hip-Hop Connection*, came straight outta Cambridge, and London's Cutmaster Swift was crowned world champion DJ. When the rise of house music (and subsequently, confused major labels) sullied many potential breakthroughs, instead of giving up and going home, English hip-hop went underground. Independent labels and a true-to-the-culture ethic flourished, resulting in another uprising in the early '90s.

Since then, things have started to turn around, as Britain has played midwife to the rebirth of the old school. Clubs like the London-based Scratch and the annual Fresh festival, inaugurated in 1997, have kept the faith. The industry has also shaped up, with studio smarts improving recording quality and labels considering U.K. rap a music with untapped potential that needs to be carefully and strategically marketed. And then there's the talent boom, as the extant pool of original Brit-rap pioneers is joined by newcomers who've grown up on hip-hop. This time, we all reckon, it's going to happen.



ROOTS MANUVA

MARK B & BLADE

A new-school crate-digger and a veteran MC, Mark B & Blade created last year's most lauded U.K. hip-hop album, *The Unknown* (Source-Wardplay) by marrying Blade's effortless flow to Mark B's ingenious yet accessible loops and samples. Blade—an Armenian born in Iran and exiled in London as a child—sold his early records out of a bag slung over his shoulder on the streets of his New Cross, London, home turf. And on cuts like “Ya Don't See The Signs,” he and Londoner Mark B seem to be taking on the entire burden of breaking the U.K.'s talent out of its present ghetto. “People jump on the bandwagon when they see it's moving, and try to change it into something it isn't,” Blade says, analyzing the music's slow and dogged path forward. “It's good to see U.K. rappers getting some props at last, but it should have happened years ago. A lot of people have had to dilute what they do just to make a living.”

RICHARD BLACKWOOD

A stand-up comedian who doubles as an MTV host and has his own network TV show, Blackwood is, to many, the unfortunate face of U.K. hip-hop. Responding to accusations that he's betraying the country's emergent scene by ditching cred to win a pop audience, Blackwood was interviewed in last November's edition of *Hip-Hop Connection* under the headline, “Sell Out?” While no one's going to argue for long that singles like “1234

Get With The Wicked” or his *I Know You'll Love To Hate This* album are going to give Jay-Z any sleepless nights, the truth is that Blackwood—who hates the inevitable “U.K. Will Smith” tag—is a hit. “Regardless of what people think about me, because of what I'm doing the door's opening,” he argued in *HHC*. “It's the mainstream that's paying attention to me. All the same, I'm proud of my album... I know it's good enough to go out there. I know I'm not as tight as some, but then, I'm not a rapper.”

THE CREATORS

“I'd rather not discuss *British* hip-hop,” the Creators' Julian Baker argues. “I'd rather people thought that, wherever it comes from, it's just hip-hop.” Baker and partner Simon Gilbert met while DJing and have been making records since the early '90s. But the production duo's full-length debut, *The Weight* (Bad Magic-Wall Of Sound), shows just why the two have become highly sought-after beatmongers on both sides of the pond. Regular visitors to New York's record conventions, Baker and Gilbert have been selling raw beats to the likes of Q-Tip, Dilated Peoples and the Beatnuts for years. They parlayed their contacts into some heavy-duty album hook-ups, enlisting artists of the caliber of Mos Def, Talib Kweli and Craig G, most of whom recorded their vocals in Julian's Kingston-Upon-Thames, West London, home studio. “Two or three years ago it was different,” Julian laments. “But in New York now, unless you've got a hit record, nobody wants to know you. At least England's not like that.”

MSI & ASYLUM

Birmingham's MSI & Asylum, a crew featuring numerous MCs that favor old-school dusty breakbeats, are often dubbed the British Wu-Tang. The similarities don't end with the tracks, though. With solo albums due in 2001, the crew's label, Gran Kru, is attempting to deliver some ninja-like chops to the foundations of the U.K. music industry. Gran Kru is campaigning to align the U.K. with countries like France and Canada, where national airplay quotas ensure adequate radio representation for homegrown acts, and the act has received a sympathetic first listen from Prime Minister Tony Blair. Inadequate airplay is particularly an issue with so-called “urban” music, a genre where the U.K. airwaves are saturated with American artists. “It's David against Goliath,” admits Gran Kru founder Bandit (a.k.a. Barrington Brown). “And Goliath's got a lot of money behind him. But we've got to get out there and give people a chance to support it if they want to.”

ROOTS MANUVA

In the Brit-rap “Most Likely To...” corner stands Rodney Smith, alias Simit, alias Roots Manuva, purveyor of 1999's *Brand New Second Hand* (Big Dada-Ninja Tune), the record that kick-started the current resurgence of interest in the U.K. rap scene. A native of the south London neighborhood of Stockwell, Smith is a walking amalgam of the multiple sounds, cultures and influences your average inner-city dweller can't help but take away from the place. “I just think I make music, not British hip-hop, or even hip-hop necessarily,” asserts Smith. “As much as I'm influenced by hip-hop, I'm also influenced by dancehall reggae.” Addressing the idea that U.K. hip-hoppers ought to stop trying to rehash a peculiarly American music, he's dismissive: “Well, it's actually African,” he laughs. “It goes back to the griots. So if we can't do it, the Americans shouldn't either!” **NMM**

REQUIRED READING

www.ukhb.com

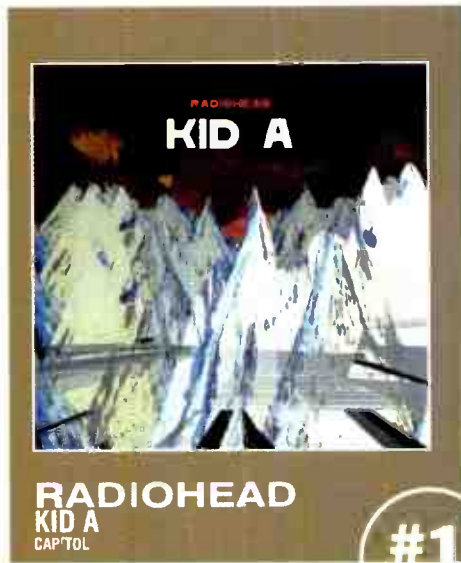
Comprehensive news, reviews, views and features on the U.K. hip-hop scene.

REQUIRED LISTENING

Word Lab (Source-Wordplay)

A 14-track state-of-our-nation address, including cuts from almost every artist featured here.

TOP 75



5 YEARS AGO

SMASHING PUMPKINS
MELLON COLLIE AND THE INFINITE SADNESS (VIRGIN)

BOSS HOG
BOSS HOG (DGC)

SONIC YOUTH
WASHING MACHINE (DGC)

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT
SCREAM, DRACULA, SCREAM! (INTERSCOPE)

AMPS
PACER (4AD-ELEKTRA)

10 YEARS AGO

CHARLATANS UK
SOME FRIENDLY (BEGGARS BANQUET-RCA)

COCTEAU TWINS
HEAVEN OR LAS VEGAS (4AD-CAPITOL)

JANE'S ADDICTION
RITUAL DE LO HABITUAL (WARNER BROS.)

THE CURE
MIXED UP (ELEKTRA)

THE REPLACEMENTS
ALL SHOOK DOWN (SIRE-REPRISE)

	ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1	RADIOHEAD	Kid A	Capitol
2	PJ HARVEY	Stories From The City, Stories From The Sea	Island
3	JOHNNY CASH	American III	American-Columbia
4	U2	All That You Can't Leave Behind	Interscope
5	A NEW FOUND GLORY	A New Found Glory	Drive Thru-MCA
6	BADLY DRAWN BOY	The Hour Of Bewilderbeast	XL-Beggars Banquet
7	DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE	Forbidden Love EP	Barsuk
8	OUTKAST	Stankonia	LaFace-Arista
9	ELYSIAN FIELDS	Queen Of The Meadow	Jetset
10	PALO ALTO	Palo Alto	American-Columbia
11	GOMEZ	Abandoned Shopping Trolley Hotline	Hut-Virgin
12	SUPERDRAG	In The Valley Of Dying Stars	Arena Rock
13	LESS THAN JAKE	Border & Boundaries	Fat Wreck Chords
14	BLACK EYED PEAS	Bridging The Gap	Interscope
15	MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD	The Dropper	Blue Note
16	DELTRON 3030	Deltron 3030	75 Ark
17	WESTON	The Massed Albert Sounds	Mojo
18	RONI SIZE/REPRAZENT	In The Mode	Island
19	ADD N TO (X)	Add Insult To Injury	Mute
20	ELF POWER	The Winter Is Coming	Elephant Six-Sugar Free
21	DOVES	Lost Souls	Astralwerks
22	KARATE	Unsolved	Southern
23	GREEN DAY	Warning	Reprise
24	HOOVERPHONIC	The Magnificent Tree	Epic
25	BJÖRK	Selmasongs	Elektra
26	BRATMOBILE	Ladies, Women And Girls	Lookout!
27	AT THE DRIVE-IN	Relationship Of Command	Grand Royal
28	FATBOY SLIM	Halfway Between The Gutter And The Stars	Astralwerks
29	COLDPLAY	Parachutes	Nettwerk-Capitol
30	GURU'S JAZZMAJAZZ	Vol. 3: Streetsoul	Virgin
31	SEA AND CAKE	Oui	Thrill Jockey
32	IDAHO	Hearts Of Palm	Idaho Music
33	SELF	Gizmodgery	Spongebath
34	TITAN	Elevator	Virgin
35	MAGNETOPHONE	I Guess Sometimes I Need To Be Reminded...	4AD
36	POE	Haunted	Atlantic
37	J MASCIS + THE FOG	More Light	Ultimatium
38	VERSUS	Hurrah	Merge
39	GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR!	Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas To Heaven	Kranky
40	BROADCAST	Extended Play Two	Warp-Tommy Boy
41	R.L. BURNSIDE	Wish I Was In Heaven: Sitting Down	Fat Possum-Epitaph
42	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Badlands: A Tribute To Bruce Springsteen's...	Sub Pop
43	CATCH 22	Alone In A Crowd	Victory
44	THE GO-BETWEENS	The Friends Of Raehel: Worth	Jetset
45	PLASTILINA MOSH	Juan Manuel	Astralwerks
46	THE ALUMINUM GROUP	Pelo	Hefty
47	VARIOUS ARTISTS	We Thank You	Kindercore
48	CINERAMA	Disco Volante	Manifesto
49	SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS	Bedlam Ballroom	Mammoth
50	SWINGIN' UTTERS	'Swingin' Utters	Fat Wreck Chords
51	LINKIN PARK	Hybrid Theory	Warner Bros.
52	SONGS: OHIA	Ghost Tropic	Secretly Canadian
53	DON CABALLERO	American Don	Touch And Go
54	HIGH LLAMAS	Buzzle Bee	Drag City
55	RICHARD BUCKNER	The Hill	Overcoat
56	PELICAN CITY	Rhode Island	December First
57	ELENI MANDELL	Thrill	Space Baby
58	TALIB KWELI AND HI-TEX	Reflection Eternal	Rawkus
59	SUBMARINE	Skin Diving	Kinetic-Reprise
60	ORGY	Vapor Transmission	Elementree-Reprise
61	EUPHONE	Hashin' It Out	Jade Tree
62	SUNDAY'S BEST	Poised To Break	Polyvinyl
63	JEJUNE	R.I.P.	Big Wheel Recreation
64	RUSSELL SIMINS	Public Places	Grand Royal
65	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Take A Bite Outta Rhyme	Republic
66	TWILIGHT SINGERS	Twilight As Played By The Twilight Singers	Columbia
67	LIMP BIZKIT	Chocolate Starfish And The Hot Dog...	Flip-Interscope
68	STATE OF BENGAL	Visual Audio	Six Degrees
69	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Xen Cuts	Ninja Tune
70	WILLIE NELSON	Milk Cow Blues	Island
71	REEVES GABRELS	Ulysses	E-Magine
72	PENNYWISE	Live@The Key Club	Epitaph
73	JOSEPH ARTHUR	Live From The Gypsy Tearoom	Realworld-Virgin
74	MEAT PUPPETS	Golden Lies	Breaking-Atlantic
75	THE COMAS	A Def Needle In Tomorrow	Plastique-Yen Roc

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. I'm extra manly. That's why I'm The Bummy.

- 1 **CRADLE OF FILTH**
Midian KOCH
- 2 **MORBID ANGEL**
Gateways To Annihilation EARACHE
- 3 **DYING FETUS**
Destroy The Oppositor RELAPSE
- 4 **NILE**
Black Seeds Of Vengeance HIRAPSE
- 5 **NEVERMORE**
Dead Heart, In A Dead World CENTURY MEDIA
- 6 **IOMMI**
Iommi DIVINE
- 7 **CORROSION OF CONFORMITY**
America's Volume... SANCTUARY
- 8 **BRUJERIA**
Brujerizmo ROADRUNNER
- 9 **PRO-PAIN**
Round 6 SPITFIRE
- 10 **OVERKILL**
Bloodletting METAL-3-SANCTUARY
- 11 **DOWNSET**
Check Your People EPTIAPH
- 12 **LAMB OF GOD**
New American Gospel METAL BLADE
- 13 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Strait Up IMMORTAL-VIRGIN
- 14 **AMEN**
We Have Come For Your Parents I AM-VIRGIN
- 15 **LINKIN PARK**
Hybrid Theory WARNER BROS.
- 16 **NOTHINGFACE**
ViolenceTVT
- 17 **SOULFLY**
Primitive ROADRUNNER
- 18 **HAMMERFALL**
Renegade NUCLEARBLAST AMERICA
- 19 **IMMOLATION**
Close To A World Below METAL BLADE
- 20 **TYPE O NEGATIVE**
The Least Worst Of ROADRUNNER
- 21 **CRYPTOPSY**
And Then You'll Beg CENTURY MEDIA
- 22 **SIX FEET UNDER**
Graveyard Classics METAL BLADE
- 23 **SLAVES ON DOPPE**
Inches From The Mainline DIVINE
- 24 **ENSLAVED**
Mardraum (Beyond The Within) NECROPOLIS
- 25 **CANNIBAL CORPSE**
Live Cannibalism METAL BLADE



>>>Looking for power metal with a little more chomp? Well, Finland's **Children Of Bodom** invite you down the frosty path that leads to their third album, *Follow The Reaper* (Nuclear Blast), which is an album guaranteed to shake up a genre plagued by opera divas yodeling away to the usual tired Halford, Tate and Deris comparisons. To make sure the recording of *Reaper* evoked the right level of malevolent isolation, the band holed up in Peter Tagtgren's Abyss Studios, tucked into a remote corner of Sweden. "It was the middle of nowhere," says guitarist Alexander Kuoppala. "The nearest town, Ludvika, was like 20 kilometers away. And we went there a couple of times to these illegal motorcycle clubs which had a free jukebox and free pool table. We were there just drinking our heads off and puking and laughing. Myself, I puked and passed out in one of them." Amidst the band's trademark keyboard-laced thrash, Alexi Laiho's semi-black metal vocals cut through like a scythe. "Alexi likes to do vocals at night," offers Kuoppala. "He wanted it totally dark in the studio, but then Peter said, 'Oh, I don't want to talk to someone I can't see!' So we compromised and brought in some candles."

NEWS



AMORPHIS

>>>**Nonpoint** is hoping to be a part of an "MCA Presents" tour the label is assembling to hit all 38 House Of Blues venues. Slated to appear: A New Found Glory, Crushdown, Darwin's Waiting Room and possibly Puya. Elias from Nonpoint has written a song specifically designed as a co-vocal tune with Daryl from Glassjaw as well... On the heels of their recent U.S. tour, Polish death kings **Vader** plan to release an odds 'n' sods EP featuring three new tracks, three live tracks and covers of Judas Priest and Destruction songs... **Brant Bjork**, who is featured on Ché's recent *Sounds Of Liberation* (Man's Ruin), will try to squeeze out his second solo album before resuming drum duties in the spring with Fu Manchu... Finnish prog deathsters **Amorphis** will release a compilation called *Story* before the long-awaited follow-up to their *Tuonela* masterpiece drops in March... **Eyehategod**, after a final album with Century Media (live and demo material), will start their own label, Brown Gravy Records, with their first release a split CD with **Soilent Green**... Ex-Scorpions guitar legend **Ulrich Jon Roth** will soon release *Transcendental Sky Guitar III*, focusing on material from a three-hour orchestral concert where Roth played Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in its entirety...

IN THE BINS

ANNIHILATOR'S *Carnival Diablos* (Metal-Is) finds Canuck riff master Jeff Waters credibly shredding while maintaining his uncanny sense of song.

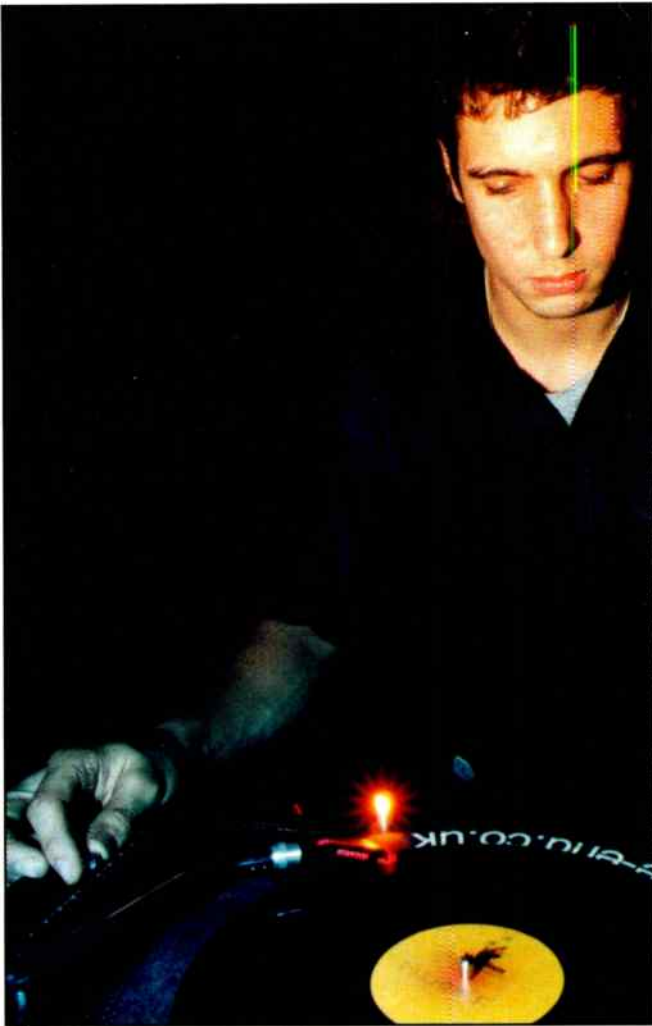
ON SICK OF IT ALL'S *Yours Truly* (Fat Wreck Chords); a Bob Mould-y album cover hides an explosive and musical CD full of unapologetic, highly addictive metal grooves.

BURN IT DOWN'S *Let The Dead Bury The Dead* (Escape Artist); a jagged, artsy look at the new extreme metal with a sense of restraint that pulls the band Helmet-ward.

DANCE

BY B. WERDE

TOP 25



>>>He might not get the cover-boy treatment of Roni Size, but Reprazent's **DJ Die** is known to steal the show when the boys from Bristol—Suv and Krust included—hit the decks. "There's healthy competition," acknowledges Die. "We often play after one another, and you never want to let the energy slip." With that credo in mind, Die presents *Through The Eyes*, a double CD from Reprazent's Full Cycle label, including new work from all four of the Full Cycle producer/DJs. Reprazent's *In The Mode* was a critics' darling, but *Through The Eyes* is the record that many drum 'n' bass fans will prefer. This is serious dancefloor business—no big guest vocals or hip-hop dalliances, just clever melodies, dark, pummeling, jazzy beats and heavy basslines. "Full Cycle is on a mission to bring you something fresh," says Die, who promises he will follow the record with some Stateside DJ gigs. "It's always like the next bassline, the next vibe. What's going to be new? What can we add? The Reprazent thing can be great—it's a buzz to be onstage. But when you get a good DJ gig and a fresh box of tunes, that can be just as exciting."

1 **RONI SIZE/REPRAZENT**
In The Mode ISLAND

2 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Xen Cuts NINJA TUNE

3 **TIMO MAAS**
Music For The Maases KINETIC

4 **FATBOY SLIM**
Halfway Between... ASTRALWERKS



5 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Plastic Volume 4 NETTWERK

6 **PAUL OAKENFOLD**
Perfecto Presents... LONDON-SIRE

7 **MOCEAN WORKER**
Aural & Hearty PALM PICTURES

8 **NIGHTMARES ON WAX**
DJ Kicks STUDIO X7

9 **BANCO DE GAIA**
Igizeh SIX DEGREES

10 **DIESELBOY**
The Sixth Session PALM PICTURES

11 **STATE OF BENGAL**
Visual Audio SIX DEGREES

12 **DJ? ACUCRACK**
Sorted E-IMAGE

13 **DAVE RALPH**
Love Parade: Berlin KINETIC

14 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
XXX'd Generation POSSESSIVE BLINDFOLD

15 **JUNO REACTOR**
Shango/Pistolero EP METROPOLIS

16 **VICTOR DINARE**
Logic Trance 4 LOGIC

17 **DJ MICRO**
DJMixed.com MOONSHINE

18 **PHOTEK**
Solaris ASTRALWERKS

19 **DJ TIESTO**
Summer Breeze NETTWERK

20 **GROOVERIDER**
Essential Rewind RENEGADE HARDWARE

21 **DOWNLOAD**
Effector NETTWERK

22 **BEN WATT/JAY HANNAN**
Lazy Dog ASTRALWERKS

23 **IAN POOLEY**
Since Then v2

24 **ICON OF COIL**
Serenity Is The Devil METROPOLIS

25 **UNDERWORLD**
Everything, Everything v2

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

NEWS



BJÖRK

>>>Ultra Records kicks off the new year with first-time U.S. releases for several mix series from top Canadian label Turbo. Their roster includes DJs **Tiga**, **John Acquaviva** and **Alexi Delano**. The first two offerings, *Stockholm Mix Sessions* (with Sweden's **Jesper Dahlbäck** at the helm) and *Montreal Mix Sessions* (featuring that city's **Laflèche**) are due at the end of January—and they dip smooth and jazzy house chocolate deep into chunky techno peanut butter... **Moby's** no stranger to rumor and gossip. He's supposed to produce the next record by everyone from Axl Rose to Madonna, and recently went on record in Britain's *Q* magazine saying that he leaves his penis out of his pants at celebrity affairs, adding a whole new meaning to "brush with fame." But here's a safer bet: The bald grape is planning a Lollapalooza-type affair this summer, and is looking to secure performances from **PJ Harvey** or **Björk**. Nothing is confirmed, of course, but Moby will likely headline. Because we just haven't had enough of him this past year...

IN THE BINS

The "soundtrack" to the book **LAST NIGHT A DJ SAVED MY LIFE** (Nuphonic) includes classics from DJ Premier, Patti LaBelle, Larry Levan, Holgar Czukay... and Handel.

45 DIP are two Brits with a history in acid jazz; their debut, *The Acid Lounge* (Hed Kandi), is downtempo and funky with an occasional foray into the more dancy.

TERRY LEE BROWN is the most overlooked house DJ in America, and his *From Dub To Dawn* (UCMG) was the most overlooked album of last year.

BY BRIAN COLEMAN

- 1 **OUTKAST**
Stankonia LAFACE-ARISTA
- 2 **DE LA SOUL**
Art Official Intelligence... TOMMY BOY
- 3 **DELTRON 3030**
Deltron 3030 75 ARK
- 4 **GURU'S JAZZMATAZZ**
Vol. 3: Streetsoul VIRGIN
- 5 **TALIB KWELI AND HI-TEK**
Reflection Eternal RAWKUS
- 6 **BLACK EYED PEAS**
Bridging The Gap INTERSCOPE
- 7 **JURASSIC-5**
Quality Control INTERSCOPE
- 8 **JAY-Z**
The Dynasty Roc... ROC-A-FELLA-DEF JAM
- 9 **SOUNDTRACK**
Once In The Life ANTRA-ARTEMIS
- 10 **BAHAMADIA**
BB Queen (EP) GOOD VIBE-ATOMIC POP
- 11 **MR. LIF**
"Front On This" DEF JUX
- 12 **HUSH**
"Knuckle Up/150 MCs" INTUIT-SOLAR
- 13 **WU-TANG CLAN**
"Protect Ya Neck..." LOUD
- 14 **UN Sung HEROES**
Unleashed SCENARIO-75 ARK
- 15 **SOLITAIR**
"No Doubt" FIGURE 4
- 16 **AFU-RA**
Body Of The Life Force D&D-KOCH
- 17 **MYSTIKAL**
Let's Get Ready JIVE
- 18 **EXAMPLE**
"Price You Gotta Pay" BEAT FARM
- 19 **JA RULE**
Rule 3:36 MURDER INC./DEF JAM
- 20 **AUTOMATOR**
A Much Better Tomorrow 75 ARK
- 21 **THE CREATORS**
The Weight BAD MAGIC
- 22 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Battle Axe BATTLE AXE
- 23 **QNC**
"That Real Live" D&D
- 24 **DILATED PEOPLES**
The Platform ABB-CAPITOL
- 25 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
20,000... POCKETS LIMITED-MU GRUV



KUTMASTA KURT (CENTER)

>>> "People know my music, but don't really know who I am," says producer **Kutmasta Kurt**, with only partial lamentation. As Kool Keith's right-hand man, Kurt helped create some incredible music, including Keith's *Sex Styles* and *Dr. Doom*. But the L.A.-based 30-year-old is also making his own name these days, working with Dilated Peoples and remixing tracks for the Beastie Boys and Luscious Jackson. Kurt's latest effort, *Kutmasta Kurt Presents Masters Of Illusion* (Threshold) features the always hilarious and über-skilled Keith, but also, and importantly, Oakland's incredible Motion Man. "The album is based on the idea of multifaceted personalities and identities," Kurt explains. "It's a very visual, lyrical record." Kurt's beats are straightforward and groovy enough for dancefloor and radio play, but are tweaked and chopped enough to satisfy underground needs. Throughout, Motion Man stands toe to toe with Keith, shining on the story-based rhymes of tracks like "We All Over." Of course, no Keith-related album could be without wack-MC disses, and "U Want Freestyle?" and "Time 2 Get Right" fit that bill. Add Kurt's old-school tribute "The Bay-Bronx Bridge" and you've got an airtight album by one of rap's brightest new producers, who isn't so new after all.

NEWS



KRS-ONE

>>> The highest props and congrats must be given to the **Universal Zulu Nation**, celebrating its 27th year of existence, for throwing the annual November weekend celebration in the Bronx, featuring performances by MCs and DJs that built hip-hop's foundation—Afrika Bambaataa, Cold Crush Brothers, Lil' Rodney Cee & KK Rockwell, Kurtis Blow & DJ AJ, Crash Crew and even relative youngster KRS-One. To those out there who have forgotten—or never knew—about the true essence of hip-hop, take special note of one important onstage performance rule: Performers were not allowed to perform with DATs, tapes or CDs—only with a DJ. Check out www.zulunation.com for knowledge and deep old-school merch, including mixtapes and videos... For frustrated West Coast hip-hop fans, www.thegiantpeach.com is the online store of your dreams, with wares from the ABB, Quannum and Hip Hop Slam labels. For the East Coast version, Sandbox Automatic is an incredible underground resource, at www.sandbox.pair.com... The incredible Hip Hop Slam label continues to roll along, with upcoming releases by **Eddie Def**, **DJ Quest**, **Cat 5** and several compilations, including volumes one and two of *Turntables By The Bay* and the *Hip Hop Slam: 15 Years Anniversary* CD and video.

IN THE BINS

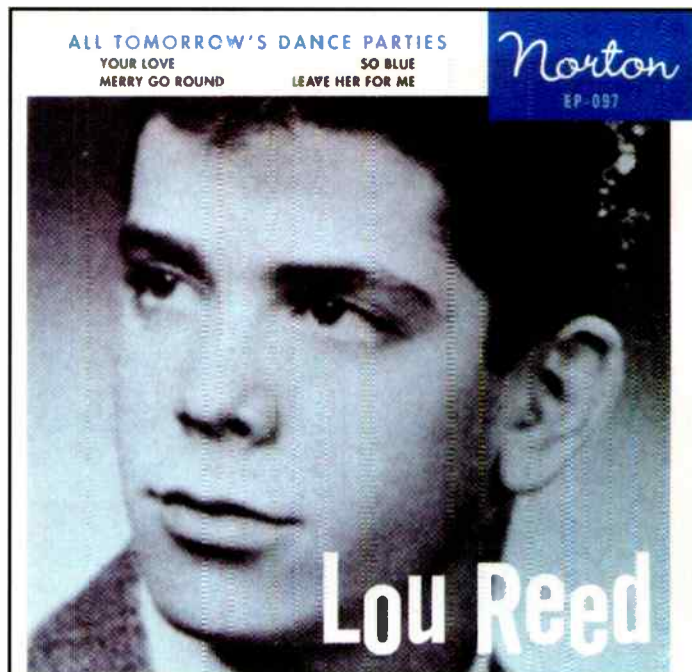
Who needs a DJ when you've got L.A. funk monster **BREAKESTRA's** *Live Mixtape Volume Two* (Stones Throw) to play classic breaks for you?

Boston's dopest MC, **MR. LIF**, continues to shine with the *Enters The Colossus* EP (Def Jux)—his first shot at national fame.

CUT CHEMIST & DJ SHADOW'S *Brainfreeze* (Sixty7) is a vinyl junkie's dream. You can hear the dust and sweat that went into collecting all these rarities.

Compiled from C/MJ New Music Report's weekly Best Box charts, collected from C/MJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

>>>Nobody's born cool. Some achieve coolness, but they have to try for a while first. Back in 1958, 16-year-old **Lou Reed** was growing up in public—putting on sunglasses and a bowtie, playing with a band called the Shades (later the Jades) and palpably reaching for the coolness whose modern form he'd later invent; four years later, Lewis Reed (as he was then called) cut his first solo demos, "Your Love" and "Merry Go Round," both a teensy bit closer to coolness. *All Tomorrow's Dance Parties* (Norton) collects those demos and both sides of the Jades' first single, "So Blue," co-written by Reed (and played on the radio by Murray The K... once). On the face of it, they're nondescript pre-Beatles rock 'n' roll (though there's some nifty organ playing on "Merry Go Round"), but Reed's demos, especially, are distinguished by the unmistakable rasp and Long Island accent of That Voice—a few years before he pounded it into a blunt instrument with the Velvet Underground—singing love-song clichés like he really believed in them. Maybe back then, he did.



>>>Twenty years ago, Nick Blinko of **Rudimentary Peni** was the smartest, most verbose voice in hardcore (track down the one-minute, four-chord dissertation "Cosmetic Plague"). On their terrifying new 7-inch EP, *The Underclass* (Outer Himalayan), their first recording in a few years, he sounds as smart as ever, slower but harder, and even more furious—like a dying man using the last of his strength to lunge at his enemy—but he's gotten a lot more laconic. The title track (one of 12 one-minute songs) hammers in a four-word lyric. "The Internal Censor," in its entirety, goes "I am not in pain/ And I do not fear death/ Yet these words I read/ And strike out nonetheless." On the lyric

sheet, it's crossed out. Yikes... Amazing what a remixer can do nowadays: **Yo La Tengo's** *Danelectro* EP (Matador) is three instrumental doodles from the sessions for their last album, presented in their original form and in remixes from the hip-hop, techno and abstract electronic worlds. Q-Unique of the Arsonists turns the tiny riff of the tinier "Danelectro 1" into a bass-and-keyboard groove, and grounds a drum pattern and some scratches in it; "Danelectro 3" might better have been called "Standard Pretty Yo La Tengo Groove #421," but Kit Clayton distends it with beats staple-gunned into it at irregular intervals until it splits apart, then doubles its frayed fabric back on itself. Best of the lot is "Danelectro 2," which in its original version seems inspired by the intro to "California Girls" and in Nobukazu Takemura's swarming 11-minute remix has its structure and timbre preserved but wildly augmented, as if by a gigantic choir of invisible cherubs lifting it into the air.

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A FEW QUICK DROPS OF THE NEEDLE

>>>There's not much that compares to seeing the Providence, Rhode Island duo **Lightning Bolt** live—for one thing, their bass cabinet is bigger than the towns most of us grew up in, and the main point of their bass-and-drum attack is skull-pulverizing volume. But the three songs on Conan (Load) should give you a clue to the frenetic riffalomania that provides structure for their performances in much the same way that the surface of the Earth provides structure for a thundering herd of elephants... The Chocolate Industries label was formerly the home to Funkstörung and Push Button Objects, and they've come through again with **Sluta Leta's** *...If You Like Champagne On Ice?* EP. Its high point is "You Know What I Mean!," which finds the common ground between cut-and-glitch electronica and Cibo Matto: he-chanted-she-chanted vocals, low-end digital blurts barely held together by a beat, and enough horn stabs and delirious swooshes of keyboard to pin the whole thing together into a free-swinging groove... **Smack Music 7** and the **Polly Shang Kuan**

Band might be the performers on a new split single (Ecstatic Peace!), or they might be the titles of pieces by an unnamed artist; in any case, they're fine, low-key tape collages (one with voices in French, one a cut-up of a little girl's voice saying "Smile!") that seem like they're perpetually on the verge of bursting into coherence instead of just hovering around unsettlingly... The folks at New York City funk powerhouse Soul Fire Records have unleashed the tongue-in-cheek "Educational Series Vol. 1 (Drums)" 7-inch: 11 brief examples of the kind of breakbeats DJs kill for, separated by elementary-school-filmstrip beeps and pauses, and backed by the modestly titled "Fast Tempo Funk Instrumental," which puts those breaks to (sweaty) work... Also on the breakbeat front, some clever person has reissued a ludicrously rare early-'70s single by the **Soul President**. "Get It Right" is the A-side, and hyperkinetic in its own right, but the flip, "Got To Have It," is the jam—a popcorn-bag of raw, shouting funk, kicking off with a world-class break.

>>>It's like 1972 all over again—in the last few months we've had gas shortages, a sluggish economy and guys in bland blue suits talking politics every time you turn on the TV. So it's about time we trotted out the music of the great **Johnny "Guitar" Watson** once again. After years on the R&B and blues circuits, Watson scored a hit in the '70s with "A Real Mother For Ya," an infectious slice of laid-back funk that featured him reciting a litany of complaints and Watergate-era woes over a fat, irresistible synth hook and a diabolically funky guitar line. He quickly vaulted to fame as a straight-talking political and social pundit who dressed like a pimp, and was pictured on his various albums driving everything from a go-cart to a Sherman tank. Answering to nothing but the funk, Watson took a Bootsy-like stance on current events of the day, viewing the world through bug-eyed sunglasses and preferring a hot-tub party over any particular political one. The Collectables label has rolled out a four-CD box set, *The Gangster Of Love Collection*, that showcases his '70s albums. While it's certainly true that Watson scored a hit with "Mother" and glibly continued to repeat that formula over and over throughout the '70s, it's such a great formula that it's easily forgiven. It's no surprise that by the end of that decade, he was working with Frank Zappa and continuing to lampoon everything in sight.



>>>Everybody knows Beach Boy Brian Wilson as a genius record producer, singer and composer, but not as many people know that his wife in the '60s was also a singer and performer in an all-female, sibling-oriented group. Marilyn Wilson (also, incidentally, the mother of Carnie and Wendy of Wilson Phillips) was in a group known as **the Honeys**. Hubby Brian produced and sometimes wrote material for them throughout the '60s, and Collectors' Choice has just released a wonderful CD of their output—*The Complete Honeys*. Some of it is lovely '60s pop stuff that really shows how whiz kid Wilson had his one good ear skillfully trained on the production work of his rival Phil Spector. Is it an interesting vanity project, a curio from the '60s pop world, or a sacred holy relic rescued from

linguishing in dusty used record stores? Actually, the Honeys' records were all of these and more... Legendary blues piano player **Otis Spann** was one of the heaviest of the heavies in the Chicago scene, working with Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Sonny Boy Williamson, Buddy Guy and others. Mr. Cat has just released a fascinating blues CD, *Last Call*, featuring newly discovered live tapes from a 1970 gig at legendary venue the Boston Tea Party. Spann was ailing at the time (a mere three weeks later he would die from liver cancer), making these laconic performances all the more poignant. The CD also features vocals from Spann's wife Lucille, and the inimitable guitar work and vocals of Luther "Snake Boy" Johnson, another Muddy Waters alum.

IN MY CRATES

TOMMY GUERRERO BREAKS DOWN FIVE FLASHBACK ESSENTIALS



JOHN COLTRANE, "OLÉ"

"[I love this track] for the melodies. It's sort of a Latin-y jazz kind of tune—it's one of the greatest songs for driving to, like on a road-trip."

BILL WITHERS

"His early stuff's really influenced me. The honesty in the music—you can hear it. His guitar playing is amazing, his writing ability is amazing, and his voice is beautiful."

BAD BRAINS

"For their rawness and power, around '82, '83. *Rock For Light* and *Eye Against Eye*."

SANTANA

"His earlier works... I like the traditional aspects that he implements into his own stuff, gives it his own twist. If you think about how young he was [around Woodstock] when he was doing that, you think, 'Fuck, I better give it up already.'"

STEVIE WONDER,

"Stevie Wonder is just a mutant. He has too natural of a gift. Even his later stuff, when he gets cheesy, he's still honest with what he does."

Interview by Solvej Schou.

Tommy Guerrero & Gadget's new jazzy electronic LP, *Hoy Yen Ass'n*, is out on Function 8 Records.

JUST OUT

DECEMBER 26

MICHAEL BOLTON Love Songs *Columbia Legacy*.
DUKE ELLINGTON Love Songs *Columbia Legacy*.
ARETHA FRANKLIN Love Songs *Columbia Legacy*.
THE ISLEY BROTHERS Love Songs *Epic Legacy*.
NAS Lost Tapes *Columbia*.
FRANK SINATRA Love Songs *Columbia Legacy*.

JANUARY 9

ACEYALONE Accepted Eclectic/B-Boy Real McCoy *Ground Control-Nu Gruv*.
—Reissue.
JESSICA ANDREWS Who I Am *DreamWorks*.
A-TEAM Who Framed The A-Team *Ground Control-Nu Gruv*.
CARNIVORE Carnivore; Retaliation *Roadrunner*.
—Reissues.
THERYL "HOUSEMAN" O'ECLOUET The Houseman *Cometh Bullseye Funk & Soul*.
DEEPSKY Stargazer *City Of Angels*.
—EP.
OFFUSER Injury Loves Melody *Hollywood*.
I ROY Touting I Self *Heartbeat*.
CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE Temptation *City Of Angels*.
LUNATIC CALM Metropoli *City Of Angels*.
MY LIFE STORY Joined Up Talking *Le Grand Magistry*.
OBITUARY Best Of Obituary *Roadrunner*.
OF MONTREAL The Early Four Track Recordings *Kindercare*.
ORANGER The Quiet Vibration Land *Amazing Grease*.
PEPE OELUXE Super Sound *Emperor Norton*.
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT Don't Hold Back *RCA*.
MICHAEL ROSE Never Give It Up *Heartbeat*.
KURT ROSENWINKEL The Next Step *Verve*.
—Rosenwinkel's triumphant return, featuring guest appearances by Allowishus Bandersnatch and Rutherford Van Cheesewhistle.
ST. CHRISTOPHER Parasol.
JIMMY SMITH Dot Com Blues *Verve*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Bright Spaces *Rounder*.
—Music for children by Ziggy Marley, Ario Guthrie, Ralfi and the questionably named Sweet Honey In The Rock.
VARIOUS ARTISTS From The Vaults Volume 4: Love Letters *Capitol*.
—Tunes to swoon by from Nat King Cole, Dean Martin, Martha Tilton and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS From The Vaults Volume 5: Roots Of Rock 'N' Roll *Capitol*.
—Early rock and R&B from T-Bone Walker, Les Paul and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS From The Vaults Volume 6: The Best Of '56 *Capitol*.
—Hits from Tennessee Ernie Ford, Les Baxter and others.
VARIOUS ARTISTS From The Vaults Volume 7: Capitol Goes To The Movies *Capitol*.
—Early Capitol film music from Mel Tormé, Mel Blanc and non-Mels like Bob Hope.

JANUARY 15

JELLO BIAFRA Become The Media *Alternative Tentacles*.
—Triple CD.
CAUSEY WAY Causey Vs. Everything *Alternative Tentacles*.
HOWARD ZINN Stories Hollywood Never Tells *Alternative Tentacles*.

JANUARY 16

2ND GEN And/Or *NovaMute*.
—12-inch.
100 WATT SMILE *Thirsty Ear*.
ACETONE York Blvd. *Vapor*.
ALICE COOPER Mascara & Monsters: The Best Of Alice Cooper *Rhino*.
ARLO Up High In The Night *Sub Pop*.
AZURE RAY Azure Ray *Warm*.
GEORGE BENSON Breezin' *Rhino*.
—Reissue.
BLACK LABEL SOCIETY Alcohol Fueled Brewtality Live *Spitfire*.
JOHNNY BONO Country & Western *Bloodshot Revival*.
VICTOR CALOERONE <Energy=VC2> Vol. 2 *Tommy Boy Silver*.
COUNTDOWN QUARTET Yep-Roc.

TYRONE DAVIS The Best Of Tyrone Davis *Rhino*.
FAILURE Comfort *Rhino*.
—Reissue.
FOR STARS Airline People *Future Farmer*.
BILL FRISELL Blues Dream *Nonesuch*.
THE GUN CLUB Fire Of Love *Rhino*.
—Reissue.
THE IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS The Essential Fucked Up Blues *Estrus*.
—Nicole had the essential fucked up blues for almost two months. It was pretty rough.
THE JAZZ ON THE LATIN SIDE ALL-STARS Jazz On The Latin Side Vol. 2 *CuBop*.
JONZUN CREW Lost In Space *Tommy Boy*.
LIARS INC. *Columbia*.
MAAS Remix Collection *Soma*.
THE MAKERS Tiger Of The Night/Miss Fay Regrets *Sub Pop*.
—7-inch.
MATTHEW SHIPP'S NEW ORBIT *Thirsty Ear*.
CHARLES MINGUS A Modern Jazz Symposium; Very Best Of Charles Mingus *Rhino*.
MOUNT FLORIDA Arrived Phoenix *Matador*.
PAN SONIC Aaltopiri *Mute-Blast First*.
PHARCYDE The Best Of Pharcyde *Rhino*.
PLANET PATROL Planet Patrol *Tommy Boy*.
RENEGADE SOUNDWAVE RSW 1987-1995 *Mute*.
—Two-CD reissue.
SHIPPING NEWS Very Soon, And In Pleasant Company *Touch And Go*.
SLAM Positive Education *Soma*.
—Limited edition double 12-inch.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Motion: A Six Degrees Dance Collection *Six Degrees*.
—Features club mixes previously only available on vinyl by dZihan & Kamien, DJ Cam, Banco De Gaia and others.
EDDIE VINSON Eddie Vinson Sings (Cleanhead's) Back In Town *Rhino*.
GROVER WASHINGTON Grover Washington Jr. — Love Songs *Rhino*.

JANUARY 22

ACTION TIME Versus The World *Southern*.

JANUARY 23

ACTION SLACKS Self Starter *Foundation*.
JEFF BECK Jeff Beck Group; Rough & Ready *Epic Legacy*.
BLENDERHEAD Figureheads On The Forefront Of Pop Culture *Tooth And Nail*.
BOMBSHELL ROCKS Cityrats & Alleycats *Burning Heart*.
BURNING ROME Whistler's Bombardier *Mad Monkey-Nu Gruv*.
SHEILA CHANDRA Nada Brahma *Narada World*.
—Reissue.
JOHN COLTRANE Coltrane For Lovers *Impulse!*.
—Reissue.
CRYSTAL SIERRA Morena *Virgin*.
DEATH BY STEREO Day Of The Death *Epitaph*.
THE OINGEES The Crucial Conspiracy *Tooth And Nail*.
THE DONNAS The Donnas Turn 21 *Lookout!*.
EARTH CRISIS The Last Of The Same *Victory*.
—Rarities and covers of Slayer, the Dead Kennedys and more.
TIM EASTON The Truth About Us *New West*.
FLYBANGER Headtrip To Nowhere *Columbia*.
DJ FOOD Quadrex *Ninja Tune*.
—12-inch.
PETE FOUNTAIN Pete Fountain Presents The Best Of Dixieland *Verve*.
—Reissue.
GOB The World According To... Gob *Network*.
GODHEAD 2000 Years Of Human Error *Posthuman*.
THE GOSSIP That's Not What I Heard *Kill Rock Stars*.
HIS NAME IS ALIVE 4AD.
JOI We Are Three *Real World*.
KOOL KEITH Sex Styles *Funky Ass-Nu Gruv*.
KOOL KEITH Sex Styles Instrumentals *Funky Ass-Nu Gruv*.
—Double LP.
SLEEPY LABEEL Rockabilly Blues *Bullseye Blues Basics*.
—Sleepy LaBeel? There should be laws against that sort of thing.
O'ONAL LUNNY Journey: The Best Of Dónal Lunny *Rounder*.
—Two-CD set.
MIRO Subtidal *Varunee*.

ENNIO MORRICONE Vatel Soundtrack *Virgin*.
MORTICIAN Domain Of Death *Relapse*.
MOUTHWASH 1000 Dreams *Hellcat*.
MR. SHORT KHOP Da Khop Shop *TVT*.
MICHAEL NYMAN The Claim Soundtrack *Virgin*.
PULLER What's Mine At Twilight *Tooth And Nail*.
RAINER MARIA A Better Version Of Me *Polyvinyl*.
RAM-Z *TVT*.
RED HARVEST Cold Dark Matter *Relapse-Nocturnal Art*.
SPANDAU BALLET Gold: The Best Of Spandau Ballet *Chrysalis-Capitol*.
STARFLYER 59 Easy Come Easy Go *Tooth And Nail*.
—Double CD.
T-LOVE QMS/Witch Bitch *Ninja Tune*.
—12-inch. T-Love is what the ladies call me—and I always put out a 12-inch. Awww yeah, girl.
TTC Leguman/Subway *Big Dada*.
—12-inch.
TY Nonsense *Big Dada*.
—12-inch and CD single.
VARIOUS ARTISTS 15 Minutes 1500.
—Tracks from Prodigy, God Lives Underwater, David Holmes and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Brazilian Assault *Relapse*.
—Metal from Ophiolatriy, Nephasth and other hard-to-pronounce names.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Caribbean Voyage: Martinique *Rounder*.
—From the Alan Lomax Collection, this volume captures the traditional music of Martinique.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Caribbean Voyage: Tombstone Feast *Rounder*.
—Featuring funerary music from the island of Carriacou.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Contaminated 3.0 *Relapse*.
—A double CD to celebrate Relapse's 10th anniversary, with tracks from Nile, Nasum, Neurosis and other family acts like Cephalic Carnage and Pig Destroyer.
VARIOUS ARTISTS ECW: Anarchy Ruiz *V2*.
—A tribute to both wrestling and bad spelling habits, with Static-X, Rob Zombie, Powerman 5000 and countless ghoulish others.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Turbo's Tunes *Kill Rock Stars*.
—KRS sampler with tracks by Sleater-Kinney, Bangs, Bonfire Madigan and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Victory New York City Takeover Volume I *Victory*.
—Hardcore from the likes of All Out War, Reach The Sky and Grey Area.
VOICE OF A GENERATION Obligations To The Odd *Burning Heart*.
JOHN WHELAN Celtic Fire *Narada World*.
PETE YORN Musicforthemorningafter *Columbia*.

JANUARY 29

CLEARLIGHT/ACID KING Man's Ruin.
CANDYSNATCHERS/CHEAP DATES This Is Rock-N-Roll/Sinister *Man's Ruin*.
MELVINS Electrorotard *Man's Ruin*.
—A full-length version of their Interstellar Overdrive EP, featuring covers and reworkings of old songs. Incidentally, the Melvins are the greatest band ever.

JANUARY 30

NAT ADOERLY Introducing *Verve*.
—Reissue.
ADVENTURES IN STEREO Running *Bobsled*.
—7-inch and CD single.
FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS Dog In The Sand *What Are*.
THE CHAMBER STRINGS Make It Through The Summer *Bobsled*.
—7-inch and CD single.
CHICKS ON SPEED/DJ MAUSE Euro Trash Girl *K*.
—12-inch.
CHICO AND COOLWAODA Wild In The West *MCA*.
GENE FARRIS Big Doobie *Soma*.
—12-inch.
GARAGELAND Do What You Want *Flying Nun-Foodchain*.
THE HONEYDOGS Here's Luck *Palm*.
INTERNAL/EXTERNAL Insideout *K*.
—12-inch and CD-EP.
JOI We Are Three *Real World*.
LALEZAR ENSEMBLE Music Of The Sultans, Sufis, & Seraglio Vol. III: Minority Composers; Vol. IV Ottoman Suite *Traditional Crossroads*.
—Ain't no party like an Ottoman party 'cause an Ottoman party don't stop!

LAMBERT, HENDRICKS, AND ROSS Sing A Song Of Basie *Verve*.
—Reissue.
LOUDERMILK *Columbia*.
MAD PROFESSOR Trix Of The Mix *Beatville-Ariwa*.
MEAT LOAF Bat Out Of Hell *Epic Legacy*.
—Reissue, featuring a previously unreleased 15-minute version of the title track. All the masochists in the house say "ho!"
MOMUS Folktronic *Le Grand Magistry*.
JEB LOY NICHOLS Just What Time It Is *Ryk*.
OSCAR PETERSON On The Town *Verve*.
—Reissue.
BUD POWELL Jazz Giant *Verve*.
—Reissue.
PSYCHEDELIC FURS Greatest Hits *Columbia Legacy*.
CHRISTINA ROSENVINCE Frozen Pool *Smells Like*.
JOHN SCOFIELD Works For Me *Verve*.
UNCAN SHEIK Phantom Moon *Nonesuch*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Joe Louis: An American Hero *Rounder*.
—Count Basie, Cab Calloway and others kick out the jams in honor of boxer Joe Louis, including songs like "Joe Louis Is The Man," "Joe Louis Is A Fightin' Man" and "Joe Louis' Wrist And His Fist."
APRIL VERCH Verchusosity *Rounder*.
JOHN WOLFFINGTON John Wolffington *Smells Like*.

FEBRUARY 6

AALIYAH *Virgin*.
BABYFACE The Day; For The Cool In You; Lovers; Tender Lover *Epic Legacy*.
—Remastered, expanded reissues of enough Babyface to make a grown man weep.
BIG PUNISHER Endangered Species *Loud*.
—Unreleased tracks from the late rapper.
BLESSIO UNION OF SOULS The Best Of V2.
BURNT BY THE SUN Burnt By The Sun *Relapse*.
CALEB Fear Of Success *Universal*.
EDDIE COSTA Guys And Dolls Like Vibes *Verve*.
—Reissue. What kind of vibes are we talking about here?
JACK COSTANZO Back From Havana *CuBop*.
BING CROSBY AND BUDDY BRAGMAN Bing Sings Whist Bregman Swings *Verve*.
—Reissue.
ROONEY CROWELL Diamonds And Dirt *Columbia Legacy*.
—Reissue with bonus tracks.
DENGEE *Beyond*.
DJ QIE Through The Eyes *Full Circle*.
—Double CD.
BILL OOGGETT Wow! *Verve*.
—Reissue.
DOWNER *Roadrunner*.
DROPKICK MURPHYS Sing Loud, Sing Proud *Hellcat*.
ELLA FITZGERALD Sings Broadway *Verve*.
—Reissue.
KRISTIN HERSH 4AD.
KRIS KRISTOFFERSON Kristofferson *Columbia Legacy*.
—Reissue with bonus tracks.
LOW Things We Lost In The Fire *Kranky*.
MDO *Columbia*.
JOE MAPHIS Fire On The Strings *Columbia Legacy*.
—Reissue with bonus tracks.
THE ORANGE PEELS So Far *spinART*.
PERCY X Maintain *Soma*.
—12-inch.
PROJECT PAT Mista Don't Play *Loud*.
PROPAGANDHI Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes *Fat Wreck Chords*.
P'TAAH Decompressed *Ubiquity*.
RAISEO FIST Ignoring The Guidelines *Burning Heart*.
CHARLIE RICH Behind Closed Doors *Epic Legacy*.
—Reissue with bonus tracks.
THE SHINS *Sub Pop*.
—7-inch.
TRICKY Mission Accomplished *Anti*.
—EP.
SARAH VAUGHAN Viva Vaughan *Verve*.
—Reissue.
WAGON CHRIST Receiver *Ninja Tune*.
—12-inch and CD single.

MERCH PARTY

Everyone knows there's more to great rock than just music. It's an attitude, a style, a view of life—and if that can be successfully transferred onto a T-shirt or pair of panties, you can bet some unassuming adolescents will be more than willing to plunk down wads of cash to celebrate their newfound faith. It's like Scientology, only cooler. Here's a selection of some of the finest band merchandise available. Some of them can be bought on the Web, the others can be found at shows.



01



02



03



04

FUCK YOU
WE'RE
MÖTLEY
CRÜE

05

- 01. Elwood hat, \$15
- 02. Munkafust van, \$3.50 (www.pinchhit.com)
- 03. Mudvayne hat, \$19.99 (www.bluegrape.com)
- 04. Official Slipknot jumpsuit, \$89 (www.bluegrape.com)
- 05. Mötley Crüe T-shirt, \$30
- 06. Type O Negative panties, \$8.95 (www.bluegrape.com)
- 07. Shuvel bowl (er, "tobacco" pipe), \$10



06



07

PHOTOS: PETER BERSON



08



09



10



11



12



13

- 08. Man Scouts Of America shirt, \$25
- 09. Man Scouts Of America dog tag, \$5
- 10. Amen "Fuck Your Prayers" T-shirt, \$10
- 11. Paul Thorn original "Thunderbolt Brown" print, \$100 (www.paulthorn.com)
- 12. The Gossip leather bracelet, \$10 (www.killrockstars.com)
- 13. Murder City Devils poster (one of seven posters, sold as a set), \$35
- 14. KISS work shirt, \$35 (www.bluegrape.com)
- 15. Lard bumper sticker, \$3 (www.alternativetentacles.com)



14

PRAISE THE LARD

15

GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNIN'

SNAPCASE'S JON SALEMI REVS UP



BRYAN HELM

Snapcase guitarist Jon Salemi has one rock star vice: fast cars. Especially the type that travel a quarter mile in less than six-and-a-half seconds and cost about \$125,000. "I never dreamed about being in a band and doing all I do with Snapcase, but I did always dream about driving a race car," admits the 26-year-old, whose older brother, Jim, got him hooked on cars as a little kid. Along with business partner Mike Stawicki, the brothers build their own track-ready vehicles at their workshop, the Buffalo, New York-based G-Force Race Cars. And while Stawicki is usually behind the wheel when the team races

their replica 1963 split-window Corvette on the drag-racing circuit, Salemi has his eyes on the driver's seat as a post-Snapcase gig. Right now, though, the veteran hardcore-head is content with his roles at the shop and at races, repairing and souping up the car when he's not on tour supporting Snapcase's recent *Designs For Automation* (Victory). Do the rock and racing worlds ever overlap? "I told my brother I'd quit being involved with race cars when somebody walks up to me at the track and knows that I'm in Snapcase," jokes Salemi, "and I'd quit the band if someone recognizes me from G-Force at a hardcore show." >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

AS THE WORLD TURNTABLES

OUT OF THE DJ BOOTH AND ONTO THE STAGE.

BY ADRIENNE DAY

Many DJs have finally realized that watching a guy in a hoodie and shades play records is about as exciting as waiting in line to get inside the club. As dance music cross-pollinates with other genres, forward-thinkers are taking the staid art of playing records further than just turntable tricks. Matthew Herbert deconstructs sounds culled from a bag of potato chips, even a nose job, live onstage; Pluramon's Markus Schmickler reroutes live bass and congas through his laptop. Here are some more samples from the cuttin' n' scratchin' edge.



Colette—The Diva DJ

The setup: Two turntables, a microphone and a splendid, operatic voice. She started DJing at 20, but still really wanted to sing—so she started improvising over the records while she spun them.

Inspired by: Chicago's DJ Colette trained as an opera singer, but then adolescence kicked in. "At 15, I would tell my parents I was going to a friend's house, and then go to these all-night loft parties with DJs like Derrick Carter and Mark Farina."

Why sing and DJ simultaneously? "I always consider myself a singer first. I love DJing, but it's not my main thing."



King Britt—The Band Is The DJ

The Setup: King Britt DJs while 17 performers—including five singers, a keyboardist, a percussionist, drummer and a horn section—help recreate and reinterpret his tracks.

Inspired by: Touring with the Dignable Planets as their DJ in the early '90s. "I was in a jazz band [Dignable Planets] with these great musicians, yet I was bringing something new to the table," says Britt. "I'd scratch the breaks and beats we pressed from their album, and they'd reinterpret what was done on the album."

Why a huge band? "Nothing beats live music, 'cause it's spontaneous. But it's very expensive to take on the road."



COLETTE: MIKE ROSLEY; KING BRITT: JUSTIN PAUL THE NEW DEAL SVEN FRENTZL

**Laurent Garnier—
Building A Land Of Loops**

The setup: The DJ put down his vinyl in favor of 10 or so machines—a sampler, a 303, a computer, etc.—complemented by a saxophone player, keyboardist, several dancers and a “warm-hued” light show.

Inspired by: The audience. “I build the loops live, with the feeling of the people,” Garnier explains. “As a DJ, you are working with the crowd; in a live show, you are *showing* the crowd.”

Why not just DJ? “A lot of people who DJ are not good musicians. The best way for me to be respected as a musician was to go live.”



**The New Deal—Dancing
With The Dead**

The setup: A crums-keyboard-bass trio that jams like Jerry Garcia—if he had a taste for banging French house along with a drummer who can play 180-plus bpm.

Inspired by: “We got hired to play as an acid-jazz trio one night a week at this really shitty bar,” recalls bass player Dan Kurtz. “No one really listened, so we could just keep on playing and playing. Eventually it evolved into uptempo house.”

Why jam on? “It’s draining to play for so long,” admits Dan. “It’s almost like an aerobics class... But we’re much more capable of being responsive to the room on the fly.”



Octave One—Tech Unlimited Orchestra

The Setup: Octave One’s Lawrence, Lenny and Lynell Burden get funky with a throng of sound modules and effects, including a sampling drum machine, QuadraVerb and Roland JP-8000 keyboards.

Inspired by: “We started tinkering with a lot of string sounds, and decided to go for a techno version of the Love Unlimited Orchestra,” says Lawrence.

Why no samples? They hate samples. “That was the creed, that it had to be all original sounds,” Lawrence explains. Also, creating new sounds live gives the audience something extra: “It’s very subtle. But it adds different nuances to what you do.”

Incubus’s DJ Kilmore—Just A Boy In The Band

The Setup: A funk-metal outfit featuring guitar, bass, drums and a DJ who plays original wax. “I press up almost all the records for the shows,” explains DJ Kilmore. “I make sounds by screaming into a guitar, or dropping a bucket onto it. I act like [the turntables] are another instrument—I’m the keyboards, the other percussion.”

Inspired by: Kilmore grew up listening to the likes of Joan Jett and the Eagles, but he doesn’t want his turntable to be a recycling bin.

Why play live? “Instead of using just electronic equipment and drum machines, it’s pretty cool to interact with other individuals and do it live.”



A STICK GLOWS IN BROOKLYN

THE PARTY: **Feel?**

WHERE: Physical Arts Space, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, 10:17pm 'til sunrise

In order to infiltrate this Williamsburg warehouse party, attendees were mysteriously required to bring \$7 in singles. The hosts, Blakkat Collective, certainly blew at least the next month's rent on the evening's experimental beats, cheap beer and blow-up plastic chill-out lounge. The next day, with a big "Fuck You!" directed somewhere in the direction of Alan Greenspan, they irreverently blanketed Herald Square with the proceeds from this all-night dance party. (Never mind the Nasdaq, eh?) Below are some of the partygoers and their offensive capitalistic-fashionista habits.



Name: Clay Crevello, 27
Occupation: Internet sales
Dress code: Look like a badass
Gets down to: Glam rock
If his closet caught on fire, he'd rescue his: Vincent Gallo white leather platforms

Name: Jamie Rosenthal, 23
Occupation: Fashion designer/stylist
Dress code: "Trashic"; anything loud
Gets down to: Rock, hip-hop and anything else with a good beat
If her closet caught on fire, she'd rescue her: Fishnets

Name: Emmal Yea, 34
Occupation: Musician/composer
Dress code: Elves, elves... elves
Gets down to: My own music
If her closet caught on fire, she'd rescue her: Elf gear

Name: Ana Reisman, 19
Occupation: Actress/student
Dress code: Bright and colorful
Gets down to: Hardcore/trancecore
If her closet caught on fire, she'd rescue her: Hot-pink reversible aerodynamic vest

Name: Fay Serafica, 19
Occupation: Fashion designer/student
Dress code: Futurist happy
Gets down to: Hardcore/trancecore
If her closet caught on fire, she'd rescue her: Fay Serafica, original

Name: GY Acosta
Age: 29
Occupation: Writer
Style: Hardcore chica
Gets down to: Eclectic vibes, but always quality
Dress code: Tough girl meets pretty lady
If her closet caught on fire, she'd rescue her: Custom-made turry halter top

Name: Joe Rovner, 20
Occupation: Screenwriter/student
Dress code: Lust for life
Gets down to: Hardcore/trancecore
If his closet caught on fire, he'd rescue his: Two-tone dark green khakis with army fatigue lining

SHOOT TO THRILL

YOU THOUGHT *SURVIVOR* WAS SEVERE? WAIT 'TIL YOU SEE THIS.

One Saturday night, you're clicking through the channels when you stop on Fox for that new reality-based TV show everyone's talking about, *The Contenders*. The opening credits explain things easily enough: Six people are selected via a lottery, and given a gun and free reign to kill each other until a sole champion remains.

The program sounds ready for prime time, doesn't it? Daniel Minahan thinks so: "If you just turned on your TV and knew nothing about this show, you should think it's real. It should be like *War Of The Worlds*."

Writer and director Minahan sends up reality TV in his feature-film debut, *Series 7* (USA Films), one of the few movies made to look like a TV show—in this case, a marathon of *Contenders* episodes. The audience meets the reigning champ, Dawn (eight months pregnant and 10 kills!) and the new contenders, including an asbestos remover and a pacifist dying of testicular cancer. Aside from hilarious to-the-camera testimonials (delivered with straight faces by the no-name cast), *Series 7* boasts that too-good-to-be-true melodrama today's viewers have come to expect. For instance, Dawn learns that one of the other contenders is her high-school sweetheart.

Minahan's resume doesn't obviously lead to *Series 7*: Before working on 1996's *I Shot Andy Warhol* (co-writing the script and serving as second-unit director), the 37-year-old produced documentary segments for PBS, MTV and Fox Network News. But he harbored a darker love: "Fox was producing *Cops* and



America's Most Wanted," says Minahan. "At the time, I wished that I worked on those shows because they seemed edgy and exciting." That "obsession," combined with his memories of childhood favorites like *Rollerball*, spurred him to begin the *Series 7* screenplay in 1997.

Filmed in Minahan's native Connecticut, *Series 7* was well into production in November

of 1999 when the director heard the first whispers of something called *Survivor*, which would start shooting the following spring. "Someone faxed us this clipping about this program where people were sent to this island and became castaways," he says. "And we were like, 'Ha ha ha! Nothing will ever happen with that!'"



Pollock. In **Pollock** (Sony Pictures Classics), Harris transforms himself into the abstract expressionist who became America's first art

Despite a number of fine film roles through the years, Ed Harris's name has been inextricably linked to his role as astronaut John Glenn in *The Right Stuff*. No more, though. From now on he'll be the alcoholic, manic-depressive Jackson

star in the '40s. This solid, assured bio-epic follows Pollock's career from a tormented nobody to a tormented success. (This guy could out-drink a room full of freelance writers at an open bar.) Harris, also making his directorial debut, gained 40 pounds (oh-so De Niro!) to emulate Pollock's tragic final days. Most impressive, though, is that Harris even looks credible holding a paintbrush... The French thriller **Harry, He's Here To Help** (Miramax-Zoe) is the best of the "seemingly normal person who's really a psycho" movies in recent years. In this feverish tingler, the married-with-children Michel bumps into Harry, an old classmate he doesn't remember. Oh, but Harry fondly recalls Michel, and is even able to recite a poem he wrote as a teen. Creepy. From here, things hurtle toward a bloody finale... Steven Soderbergh admirably navigates multiple storylines in **Traffic** (USA Films), a riveting look at the drug trade, starring Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Benicio Del Toro. This you should see.

DRAGON'S LAIR/DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIME WARP/SPACE ACE (Digital Leisure) PS2/DVD/PC



Gary Coleman, Cyndi Lauper and Captain Lou Albano might not have survived the '80s, but Don Bluth's classic laserdisc games—*Dragon's Lair*, *Dragon's Lair II* and *Space Ace*—are still alive and kicking. Whether bounding across time and space or slaying overgrown lizards, the plot's always the same: Rescue the kidnapped girl of the hour. What ensues thereafter is more interactive cartoon than anything else. Players must execute crucially timed moves to advance through the plot, and failure to do so invokes an equally enthralling, though much less thrilling, death sequence. Hands down, these all-new editions of the popular favorites look marvelous, though painfully long load times dampen the fun. Splendid audio-visual quality is the reissued series' claim to fame. What's more, these DVDs also include rare video footage of the game's creators. Longtime fans will also appreciate "watch" mode, which plays the complete sequence sans human input. It's wonderful to see Dirk The Daring and Space Ace riding high again. >>>SCOTT STEINBERG



MONSTER GAME (Monster Cable) PS2



Now that Monster Cable has brought the mainstream to the high-end cable market, it's going after video gamers with its Monster Game line. So why do you need a special cable for your PS2? To make sure no detail is lost in the signal-path from your gaming unit to your home theater components. Really, it's not as silly as it sounds when your gaming console doubles as your DVD player (as PS2 probably will for many). The initial servings of S-Video, optical digital audio and regular RCA audio/video cables are gold-tipped and heavily shielded to protect against electromagnetic interference, and the Powerstation 600 surge suppressor includes two oversized outlets for wall warts. While "Nitrogen-injected dielectric" may not make a noticeable difference in a simple visual test of *Gran Turismo 2000*, one thing's for sure: When it comes to video quality, you can give the nod to a company that's anal about its cable. >>>A.C.

Smuggler's Run (Rockstar Games) PS2



Outrunning cops across wide-open terrain in your dune buggy, SUV or monster truck—aah, the sweet, carefree life of a video-game felon. *Smuggler's Run* is a graphically super-slick spin on the wrong side of the law, pitting you against border patrol officers and fellow smugglers in a wide range of off-road race 'n' chase missions. While the coppers cheat worse than Professor X all drunked up in Vegas (yo, fuzz, where do you get that Crazy Glue?), *Smuggler's Run* is still a white-knuckler of a game that exploits the PS2's sexy visuals to the max. Plus it's got replay value up the wazoo. Speaking of which, the best part of all: No body-cavity searches. >>>S.T.

SHENMUE (Sega) DC



Describing a video game as a masterpiece is sort of like nominating a porn flick for an Oscar. But the Japanese epic *Shenmue* may actually live up to such lofty praise. Part role-playing game, part fighting game and part virtual reality experiment, *Shenmue* puts you in the acid-washed jeans of Ryo Hazuki (it's set in 1986, after all), a martial-arts student on a quest to avenge his father's murder. Houses, shops, city streets and shipyards are all rendered in stunning detail, down to the photorealistic items on store shelves and the retro-cool arcade games Ryo can play (*Space Harrier!*). Intense atmosphere and eye candy aside, *Shenmue*'s only flaw is that it suffers from supermodel syndrome: It looks beautiful, but it gets a tad tedious at times. Plus, there's that disappointing "to be continued" ending. Let the wait for *Shenmue 2* begin. >>>STEVE TILLEY

QUICK BYTES



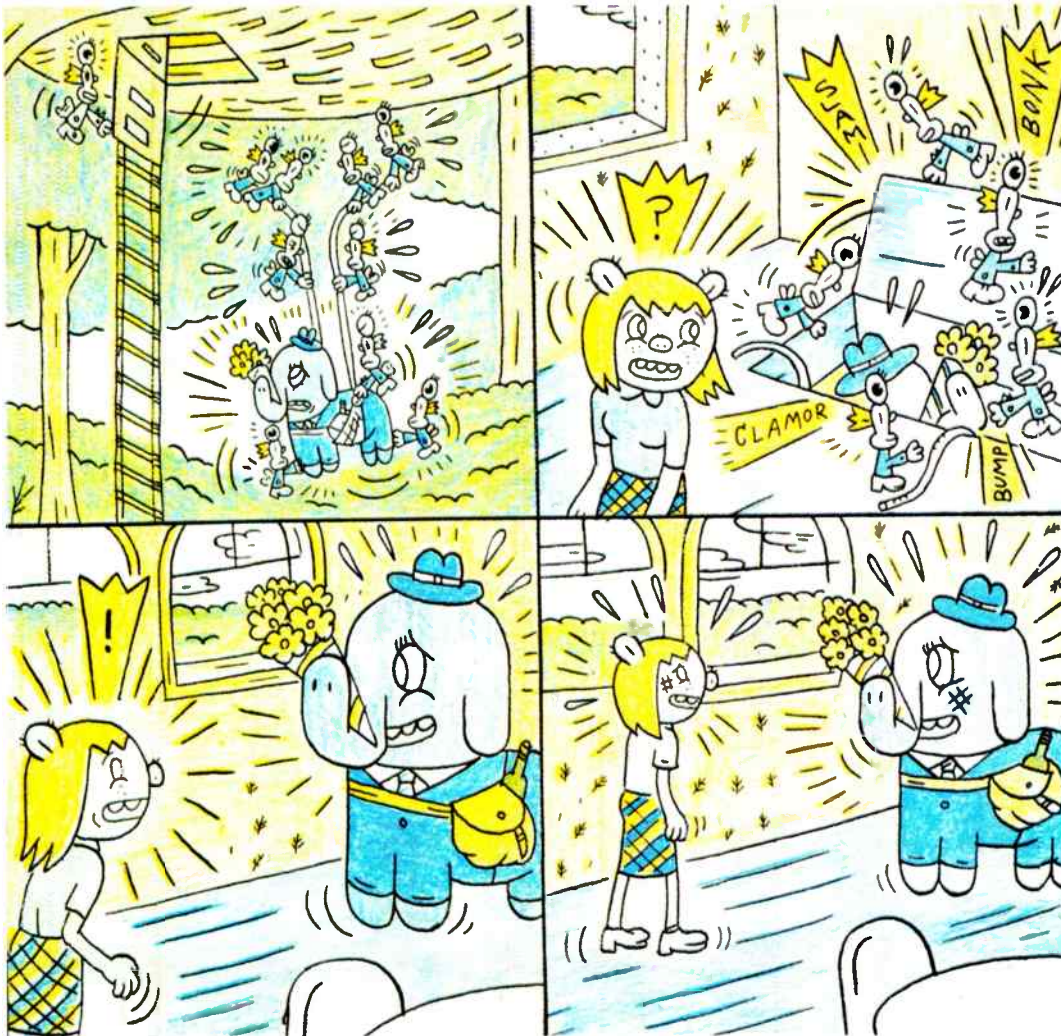
Next up at the plate in the console wars is Nintendo, who recently changed its next-gen console's name from Dolphin to the more descriptive **GameCube**. The system sports an IBM Power PC chip running at 405MHz, straddled by a custom ATI video chip featuring all the latest technological special effects. Most major developers have already announced plans to support the new console, which is scheduled for an October release. Meanwhile, the N64 has been given a few extra months of life support, thanks to phenomenal sales of the latest *Zelda* game, **Majora's Mask**... Elsewhere in Mario Land, the company doesn't seem in any hurry to introduce its latest handheld, the **GameBoy Advance**, due to the great sales of its GameBoy Color. The Advance is not only more powerful and less power-hungry than the Color, but it also bears an uncanny resemblance to the first-generation Atari Lynx handheld, which just proves that great designs never die, they just get borrowed from someone else's recycle bin. >>>A.C.

Keyboard and Mouse (Sega) DC



PETER BERSON

There's nothing at all sexy about this keyboard and mouse combo from Sega. Were it not for the little grey "Dreamcast" stickers on these otherwise chintzy peripherals, you'd be hard-pressed to tell them from bottom-of-the-line PC accessories. So why are they essential purchases for your Dreamcast? Easy. *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament* on SegaNet. The mouse might not have the wonderfully tactile "click" of the Microsoft Intellimouse, nor will the keyboard compare to the solid and super-responsive IBM/Lexmark buckling-spring classic, but they will certainly give you a massive advantage over other SegaNet gamers who feel that the default DC controller is "good enough." >>>A.C.



With his first full-length graphic novel,

Skibber Bee-Bye

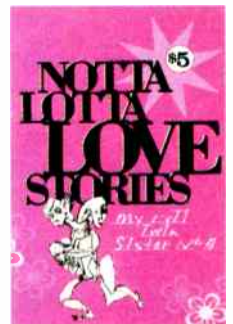
(Highwater Books), Ron Regé Jr. joins the list of artists like Jim Woodring or Henry Darger, who see the world in a way that's fundamentally different from everyone else. It's a remarkable, passionate, totally insane piece of work that makes no sense at all until you accustom yourself to its vision of the world, at which point it starts making creepy amounts of sense. Regé's main characters—a silent girl who isn't quite human, her little brother, the tiny creatures with eye-balls on top of their heads who surround her, and the weeping elephant in a derby hat who loves her—move through the real world (bits of the setting are recognizable as the Boston area), but aren't of it. And his raw but hyper-designed drawings set up the book's lyrical playfulness as much as its terrifying shocks.

LONE WOLF AND CUB



There has probably never been a mini-comic anywhere close to Katie and Sean Åberg's bimonthly **Pipu** series (\$2 from Goblinfo, P.O. Box 3635, Oakland, CA 94609) on the cuteness scale. Pipu is a little chick (as in beak and feathers) who comes either from Easter Isle or the Easter aisle, depending on who you ask; she and her friends Katie and Sean go on all sorts of adventures, mostly in their native Oakland. (The only word Pipu ever speaks is "Peep!," but translations are always provided.) The Åbergs make a virtue out of relying on a photocopier, and it's hard to resist any comic featuring captions like "The lake monster swam up and bit Jerry Brown on the butt"... Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima's **Lone Wolf And Cub (Kozure Okami)** is one of the high-water marks of Japanese comics; the story of a masterless samurai roaming the landscape

of feudal Japan with his three-year-old son in a carriage, it's been a huge influence on Japanese and American cartoonists alike. Bits of it were reprinted in the '80s and early '90s, but it's finally going to be available in its entirety in America: Dark Horse is serializing the entire epic in monthly, digest-sized 300-page volumes, and Frank Miller (whose *Ronin* was a tribute to Kojima) is providing the covers... Every year or so, identical twin sisters Amber Gayle and Stacy Wakefield produce a chapbook of some kind, though it changes its appearance radically with each new incarnation. The latest one is **Notta Lotta Love Stories** (\$5 from Evil Twin Publications, P.O. Box 1318, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276), an extended series of autobiographical meditations on desire realized and frustrated, beautifully designed and organized around quotations from the *I Ching*.





For Neil Finn, who spent quite a bit of time on the road as a member of Split Enz and Crowded House, touring means gaining weight and judging hotels by the willingness of room service to make toast after midnight. Now approaching middle age and having transformed the Finn brood into gypsies for his first solo tour (with his 14-year-old son on guitar), father Finn asked photographer Mark Smith to document the six-month stint and take

care of his youngest. The resulting scrapbook, **Once Removed** (Sanctuary Publishing), is a charmingly honest appraisal of the life of a working musician, one who's no longer anywhere near superstar status, but certainly gets by. The shots of sigh-inducing fields of corn as seen from the bus window, high-fiving fans and tiresome layovers spent on an airport bench leave you thinking it would have been a wonderful trip if it weren't for all of those gigs Finn had to get to.



Those who want to explore the more glamorous side of globetrotting can fly through **Airline: Identity, Design And Culture** (teNeues) a coffee-table book compiling the in-flight history of style from the nautical uniforms of early airship crews to Hugh Hefner's dude-icized DC-9, complete with fur-covered bed made for mile-high club members only... For a more down-to-earth read, there's Nichelle D. Trambelle's **The Dying Ground** (Villard). Don't be misled by its subtitle, "A Hip-Hop Noir Novel"; the Oakland-centered gangsta-murder tale owes more to the pimp pulp of Iceberg Slimm than to Coolio. Hometown baseball hero turned college dropout Maceo Redfield wants to know if his high school buddy turned dealer has

been murdered by a gang, another dealer or his girl (who's always been a little sweet on Maceo). While *Ground* offers more insight into its impoverished setting and desperate characters than most dime-store reads, chances are that Trambelle's book would be better as a movie with a sedan-shakin' soundtrack... Rick Moody, best known as the author of *The Ice Storm*, returns with

Demonology (Little, Brown), an aptly titled story collection that ruminates on the demons of this world, the masks they wear and the way such evil spirits haunt our lives. In "The Mansion On The Hill," Alex, a marriage hall administrator, dons a chicken costume and goes ballistic on a groom who was once engaged to his dead sister. In "The Carnival Tradition," M.J., a bulimic ballet dancer, is doing her best to organize the opening night of her Hoboken art gallery when she's suddenly attacked by a rabid pack of dogs. Although the situations are occasionally far-fetched, Moody's ability to make every character's reasoning completely feasible, along with his encyclopedic range of references (from Smarties to Nijinsky) keeps the synapses popping. And what's not to love about a life story told as the liner notes to a mix-tape collection?

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ACETONE

15 "Language makes things fit into categories," philosophizes **ACETONE** vocalist and bassist Richie Lee, "but art is not about language, it's about using a language to get beyond that." The trio's new *York Blvd.* (their fifth release and second on Vapor) artfully bridges the divide between country and garage, so it's no surprise that Lee and bandmate Mark Lightcap first met at the California Institute Of The Arts. Tracks like "Things Are Gonna Be Alright" explore Lee's genre-busting rationale. "When something's already in a category, and somebody hears it, they think, 'Oh, that's this kind of music.' And it's not an experience anymore." (See Review p. 62.)



CHRISTINA ROSENVIINGE

16 Already splashing in the diva pool in Spain and Latin America, **CHRISTINA ROSENVIINGE** is ready to make waves Stateside with her U.S. debut, *Frozen Pool* (Smells Like), which features "Taking Off." "I always felt like a stranger in Madrid, as I was really Danish, and everything in our house was Danish," says the Madrid-born singer. "But when I went to Denmark I didn't feel Danish. So I guess that's another reason to move to New York—everyone here's an outsider." Rosenvinge also had friends like Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo (who produced her last album) to make the transition into NYC life easier. (See Quick Fix p. 14.)



JOHN SCOFIELD

17 "By the time I was 17, I knew I wanted to be a jazz musician, but I didn't grow up in a jazz bubble," explains guitarist **JOHN SCOFIELD**. "You could have lived in a jazz vacuum in the 1930s and 1940s, but how could you grow up in a jazz bubble in the 1960s and 1970s? I came up in the era when rock 'n' roll and R&B ruled." Still, the diverse tastes of the 49-year-old still came out on his new longplayer, *Works For Me* (Verve)—featuring "I'll Catch You"—as, according to Scofield's own admission, some uncompromising "straight-ahead" jazz. (See Review p. 77.)



RADIOHEAD

1 Some bands might dread the process of bringing an album like the studio-ritic *Kid A* (Capitol) to the stage, but the happy lunatics of **RADIOHEAD** welcome the challenge. "One of the best things about going out and having to learn to play music that was written in the studio using editing and sampling and sequencers is the way it makes you think about how you play differently," head "Head" Thom Yorke recently wrote on the band's www.spinwithagrain.co.uk. "It's really exciting to go back into the studio now feeling confident again having learnt different stuff." Get educated with the exclusive track, "Optimistic (Live In Dublin)." (See Cover Story p. 44.)



DIDO

2 "People have always bugged us to try and capture more of the live energy of the band on CD," says **LUNA**'s Dean Wareham of the impetus behind the new *Luna Live!* (Arena Rock), which includes "Friendly Advice." "It's impossible to do that in the studio. You need the energy of the audience." Personnel makes a difference too: "We're a very different band live. We never bring a mellotron, a cellist and a keyboard player on tour. So, we fall back on the guitar playing and our dynamic rhythm section, which are probably the strengths of the band anyway." (See Review p. 70.)



ELENI MANDELL

3 The path from classical music to Eminem's stalker nightmare "Stan" is less than linear, but it's one that **DIDO** has traveled well. Long before Slim Shady came calling, the British songstress was a classically trained violinist/pianist, and she salvaged the best parts of her training for her breakthrough, *No Angel* (Arista). "I had to forget a lot of stuff, because there are a lot of rules in classical music," she says. "If you use them you will end up writing the same songs as everyone else." Try to spot the influence on the previously unreleased "Worthless." (See Quick Fix p. 11.)

4 Sunny California doesn't turn out a lot of swooning, powder-pale noir singer/songwriters with penchants for effed-up love stories. Lipsticked diner waitress and Tom Waits aficionado **ELENI MANDELL**, however, is all of the above. "Pauline," from her debut, *Thrill* (Space Baby), is "about falling quickly in love with someone who was already taken," explains Mandell. "I triumphed in my own mind; in the end he means nothing to me," she figures—which might have something to do with the album's title: "I meant 'thrill' in the sense of doing something you know you shouldn't, which is usually followed by a crash." (See Feature p. 34.)



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FATBOY SLIM



GARAGELAND



ARLO

10 **FATBOY SLIM**, a.k.a. Norman Cook, might have been a one-man band in a previous life, but he's shutting out the stars now. On his new album, *Halfway Between The Gutter And The Stars* (Astralwerks), "Uncle Norm" solicits vocals from eccentric diva **MACY GRAY** for the gospel-filled "Demons." "It came about from a conversation I had with Tom and Ed [the Chemical Brothers]. They asked why I never worked with vocalists, and I said, because I'm really shy about working with other people... it's like taking your clothes off in front of strangers."

11 Hip-hop duo the High & Mighty (Mr. Eon and DJ Mighty Mi) team up with MC Cage for the **SMUT PEDDLERS'** debut, *Porn Again* (Rawkus). The High & Mighty's debut release, *Home Field Advantage*, didn't garner any Miss Manners awards, and *Porn* aims for the same below-the-belt humor. Born of double entendres and ill wordplay, the Smuts spin lyrics on the track "That Smul" like "Wet dreams and G-13's/ Money shots and porno plots /Politicians in limousines sniffin' /double-D's trapped in baby-T's." Protection is advised. (See Review p. 78.)

12 Beat jugglers united by a common passion for diggin' in the crates, Finland's **PEPE DELUXE** cobbled together an album from fragments of hip-hop, jazz and funk music, refracted through a global pop-culture lens. DJ Slow, the four-time Finnish DMC National Champion solicited his friend Ja-Jazz for a track on San Francisco's Bomb Recordings; James Spectrum was added for his studio smarts. "Woman In Blue" is the first single from *Super Sound*, their cut 'n' paste, sample-friendly debut on Emperor Norton. (See Review p. 74.)

13 "We are called **GARAGELAND** because we used to rehearse in a garage for two years," explains singer/guitarist Jeremy Eade of his punk-fueled indie-pop outfit's moniker. "It reminds us of that naivete of first jamming and the freshness that comes with that. The sad and romantic notion of loser suburbanite kids singing poetry in their parents' garages." The New Zealand band's newest adrenaline rush, *Do What You Want* (Foodchain), takes their spirited yet introspective sound out of the driveway on tracks like "Trashcans." (See Review p. 67.)

14 The Los Angeles rock quintet **ARLO** (formerly known as Otto) has been known to throw pizza pies at frat guys during their concerts. And the leisty fellows include a fair amount of mischief on their debut full-length, *Up High In The Night* (Sub Pop), too. "Sean [Spillane, singer/guitarist] says 'Loosen Up' is about growing up, but I know for a fact that it's about this girl he was dating that wouldn't have sex with him," affirms singer/guitarist Nate Greely. "If you play it backwards, however, it gives you directions on how to build a nail bomb (but please use your nail bomb responsibly)." (See Review p. 62.)

5 Vancouver's **DELERIUM** struck gold three years ago with "Silence," featuring fellow Canuck Sarah McLachlan. Now the one-man operation of Frontline Assembly's Bill Leeb, the band is back with *Poems* (Nettwerk), a collection of smooth, echoey numbers inspired by classical forms like Gregorian chant, incorporating voices such as Sixpence None The Richer's Leigh Nash. But "the big change is that I added a lot of acoustic guitars," says Leeb. "I wanted a bit of a new direction, while still implementing classical music." As another small contrast, Leeb says "Daylight," which features Matthew Sweet, is a "real positive pop song." (See Review p. 64.)

6 Already 27 years old, it seems that Brazilian singer/guitarist and celebrity son **MORENO VELOSO** (his dad is music master Caetano Veloso) has been holding out on us. Though maybe his debut, *Maquina De Escrever Musica* (Hannibal), which translates as "Music Typewriter," was stalled by the doctorate in physics Veloso was finishing up. Either way, the album—which includes "Arrivederci"—builds a space where trad instrumentation meets the subtle tastes of now. Veloso explains: "The unique architecture of the house [where we recorded], with its walls made of stone and glass, its spooky rooms and mirrors, provided us with an environment as peculiar as the sounds we intended to record." (See Best New Music p. 24.)

7 California's **GRANDADDY** were a bit wary at first of the direction their sophomore full-length, *The Software Slump* (V2), was headed in. Guitarist Jim Fairchild explains that the quintet wasn't sure they could translate the swirling layers of mopey indie rock live: "[I said], 'Don't worry about it. There's 10 hands and 10 feet up there and a few capable voices if need be. We can figure out ways to do it. Let's just record it the way it should be recorded.'" The track "Our Dying Brains" wasn't culled from *Slump*—it's a rare B-side from a U.K. single our bad asses tracked down—but it'll give you a taste of it. (See Feature p. 36.)

8 The three indie poppers in New York's **RAINER MARIA** generally stick to the "less is more" policy when it comes to production, yet they manage to wrangle a lush, striking sound anyway. "It's like geometry," guitarist/vocalist Kyle Fischer explains. "When you have three points on a plane, it's a stable structure. Once you have four points, it's like you're sticking a piece of cardboard in there to make the table hold still." Explore the band's poetic and mathematical leanings with "Artificial Light," from the band's new full-length, *A Better Version Of Me* (Polyvinyl). (See Feature p. 30.)

9 Although **BS2000's** Adrock (Adam Horovitz) and Amery "AWOL" Smith certainly amass cool points for bringing the Beastie Boys out live (Horovitz as one of their MCs, Smith as their touring drummer), their friendship began under less rock-star-like circumstances. "[We] met in Minneapolis, at a bowling alley," Adrock admits. "It was rockabilly bowling night." Their collaboration as BS2000 has produced a vinyl-only debut, and now, *Simply Mortified* (Grand Royal), a lo-fi beat-driven disc of slappy rhyming that features the track "Buddy." (See Quick Fix p. 13.)



DELERIUM



GRANDADDY



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When students erected a 12-foot papier mache penis in front of the University of Wisconsin administration building three years ago to protest getting the tuition shaft, Madisonians didn't take it very hard. In the hometown of parody newspaper *The Onion* ("America's Finest News Source"), political satire is as common as Bucky Badger sightings. The Saturday morning Farmer's Market at the Capitol Square hosts as many petition drives as cheese curd vendors (this is Wisconsin, after all). And while Socialists distribute newspapers along State Street, pedestrian-rights activists are busy guarding crosswalks near Camp Randall Stadium. Of course, some Madison residents have a slightly different sense of social conscience: Our 42,000 UW students help Wisconsin proudly rank as the nation's No. 1 state for binge drinking.

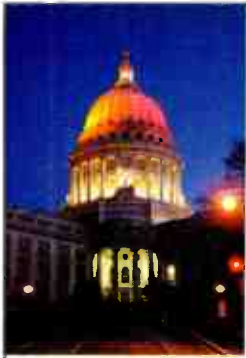
You don't have to be pounding pints and downing flaming shots, however, to enjoy Madison's bar scene. Check out the darts and jukebox at **Genna's** (105 W. Main St., 255-4770) across the street from the Capitol. And the favored watering hole of local up-and-coming musicians is **Mickey's** (1524 Williamson St., 251-9964), the oldest tavern in the city. For the ultimate Wisconsin experience, have your beer with a bratwurst at **State Street Brats** (603 State St., 255-5544), but beware—you too could end up an overweight leftist who roots for the Packers.

Counteract that prospect with a little rock. After all, Madtown local legend Butch Vig's **Smart Studios** (1254 E. Washington Ave., 257-9400), co-owned by Garbage guitarist Steve Marker, affords a glimpse of the place where Vig and Cobain sparked the *Nevermind* revolution. As Madison's

first and only platinum-selling band, Garbage brings the slightest dash of celebrity to cheesehead-land. When they're not at Smart, Shirley Manson and the boys hang at the swank wine-bar **Café Montmartre** (127 E. Mifflin St., 255-5900).

Madison music is moving beyond the long shadow of the '90s, though. Alt-country act Noah John fuses Arlo Guthrie and Pavement with country-side twang, while local Speakeasy labelmates Tormentula (all-girl metal-punkers) prove names like Alice Bludgeon and Dr. Morticia Mangle can scare the shit out of anyone. The pulse of local pop beats to Introversion, small-town boys from nearby Belleville who reach bar age next year, and Paris, Texas brings a heavier touch to the emo corner of town.

Catch some of the above at **O'Cayz Corral** (504 E. Wilson, 256-1348), a 20-year-old bastion of underground music (punk, stoner, math and everything in between) with a famous plastic Indian chief presiding over the dancefloor. Three blocks south of campus, the **Regent Annex** (1206 Regent St., 256-7750) lures your standard indie-rock touring bands. The local DJ scene is Madison's best kept secret; Nick Nice, godfather of the Madison rave scene, now performs as DJ Naughty Nicky at the **Cardinal Bar** (418 E. Wilson St., 251-0080), home to the monthly erotic-fashion roundup known as Fetish Night. But the city's premier music venue is the **Memorial Union Terrace** (800 Langdon St., 262-2215), where the sprawling backyard patio of the main student union building edges out to the shoreline of Lake Mendota. With a few thousand people in front of the stage and a few dozen boats drifting behind it, nothing outshines the Terrace on a summer night.



LOCAL LOGIC MADISON'S BEST

SUMMER JOB:

Lifeguard on the Memorial Union Terrace

PLACE TO PICK UP A FRAT BOY:

Brothers Pub
(704 University Ave., 251-9550)

SAME-SEX GATHERING:

Lesbian Variety Show
(Barrymore Theatre, 2090 Atwood Dr., 241-2345)

COMING-OF-AGE STORE:

Freedom Skateboards/Tobacco Products
(511 State St., 294-8101)

REMNANT OF THE '60S:

Riot shields on the windows of UW-Extension (432 Lake St.)

COFFEEHOUSE WITH LIVE MUSIC:

Mother Fools (1101 Williamson St., 259-1030)

PLACE TO FIND TOURING MUSICIANS EATING DINNER:

Monty's Blue Plate (2089 Atwood Ave., 244-8505)

FREESTYLE RADIO STATION:

WORT, 89.9 FM

FEMINIST EROTICA:

A Woman's Touch (600 Williamson St., 250-1928)

SELECTION OF EARPLUGS AND CONDOMS:

Community Pharmacy (341 State St., 251-3242)

CHEAP, GREASY BREAKFAST:

Cleveland's Diner (410 E. Wilson St., 251-4455)

STORE TO BUY VINYL:

Madcity Music (600 Williamson St., 251-8558)

All phone numbers are in the 608 area code



RUSSELL SIMINS AT THE MEMORIAL UNION TERRACE.



BOOZING AT THE ANNEX.



HEY, NICE BLEACH JOB!

MADTOWN HIP-HOP

Madison's a haven for liberals and social critics, so why expect anything less from its own brand of hip-hop? Enter the Good Life Alliance, a



GOOD LIFE ALLIANCE

loose collective of 30 rappers, breakdancers, DJs and MCs based out of the **New Loft** (112 N. Fairchild St., 246-7606), Madison's ground zero for underage music. "Hip-hop itself is a tool that can either be used for construction or destruction," says Roberto Rivera, 22, who founded the group three years ago after giving up selling drugs. "We're trying to use this tool to fix some things that are broken." Know many female singer/songwriters who are also hip-hop heads? In Madison, it happens. Rya Beilke is a regular at Good Life freestyle sessions, at ease layering percussion and rap rhymes with her delicate vocal harmonies. Good Life also includes Tameless (a teen hip-hop group), Holy Hip-Hop (Good Life's spiritual arm) and a theatre group that's written and performed three hip-hop plays. The collective is now working on its first recording. "Any movement that's going to spark change has to unite different cultures," says Rivera. "That's what we're here to do."

CONCERTING WITH MOM

STORY: JON CARAMANICA
ILLUSTRATION: NICHOLAS MEOLA



My mom's not what you would call a music esthete: There's precious little arrogance in her wholehearted embrace of Lite 1-0-whatever balladry and Kiss 90-something carpet-shagging soul. She came of age in the disco era, working in the same building as Don Cornelius (who once, legend has it, requested her company for dinner and was politely declined). For her, music is about feeling good. If it makes you happy, then it can't be that bad.

That said, back in 1989, during my early double-digit years, my mom was somehow taken with the abstruse, other-side-of-the-planet stylings of Japanese fusion guru Ryuichi Sakamoto. With vigor and enthusiasm that stood in stark contrast to Sakamoto's own mellow moods, my mom dragged me, my grandmother and my 90-year-old (but spunky) great-grandmother to see the don at New York's Beacon Theater, right at the height of his Neo Geo fame.

We had good seats, not too far from the stage, but no extra points were gleaned for early purchase. Sakamoto sat at center stage, perched in front of a koto, practically facing the floor. The show itself was

Mom eyed me warily, one brow raised. Bell Biv DeVoe wasn't your older sister's New Edition. They smacked it up. They flipped it. They rubbed it down.

devotional, bordering on grim, save a few odd energy infusions. It was at those moments that my mom's natural inclination towards ebullience shined through. When the crowd noise bubbled above a murmur, she whooped it up with delight, but more often, she bit her tongue.

As for me, I felt somewhat punished. After all, my own incipient tastes ran more to hip-hop, and whiling away the hours at the Beacon stole me away from precious time scouring the radio. And anyhow, watching this guy snooze through his show wasn't my idea of a hot evening. My great-grandma, ever pleasant, smiled throughout the night, but I'm sure deep down she wished it were Julio Iglesias on stage. Nevertheless, we all grinned gamely when my mom suggested we wait outside for the man to emerge.

It was December. After the house lights came on, we retired to West 74th Street, coats buttoned high. We weren't the only ones with the idea, and when Sakamoto emerged, he appeared genuinely moved, almost flustered. He shook my hand, I'm told, but I was too cold to notice. For my mom, however, it was one step away from baptism (or bris). "You're going to grow up to love music," she said knowingly, without a hint of irony.

She probably regretted her words a couple of years later when I asked to attend the *Club MTV* tour. No more than 15 years old, I was dipping my toes into the live-show waters, and *Club MTV* was hitting Jones Beach, the achingly middle-class performance venue on the Long Island sandbar of the same name. It was Bell Biv DeVoe I was eager to see; they made the type of music my mom questioned me about—cacophonous, sexually charged, grimy. Their hip-hop-smoothed-out-on-the-R&B-tip-with-a-pop-feel-appeal-to-it wasn't straight up rap music, but it was close enough to provoke suspicion, confusion, and just a tad of parental derision.

But mom was a trooper—still is—and besides, I wasn't old enough to drive myself. After a couple of faded-from-memory openers, BBD took to the stage and began to progressively shed items of their clothing. Mom eyed me warily, one brow raised. This wasn't your older sister's New Edition. They smacked it up. They flipped it. They rubbed it down. Teenage girls shrieked in ways I wasn't yet aware of. Other parents, the few who could stand to watch the stage, seemed irked. I remember watching boats docked just outside the arena's marker and thinking to myself how they were missing the entire point of the show. Sure, you could hear "Do Me," but if you didn't have the visual play-by-play, wasn't the essence of the material lost?

It only occurred to me near the end of BBD's set to look back toward my mom. I'd suspected that she'd long ago sat in her seat, whipped out the *Times*, and was counting the minutes until someone threw water on the trio. But much to my surprise, Mom was screaming at the top of her lungs, cajoling Ronnie, Ricky and Mike to even ruder lows. I was embarrassed at first ("Geeeezzzz, Mom!") but soon succumbed. Why fight destiny? Screaming for BBD alongside my mom felt a little transgressive, but it was really far less complex than that. Sometimes you've got to let yourself go, and every now and again, as I stand stone-faced at some brutal hip-hop show, I think back to Jones Beach and can't help but crack a smile.

JON CARAMANICA IS A NEW YORK-BASED FREELANCE WRITER. AND HIS MOM? THAT GIRL IS "POISON."

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