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MONTHLY

COLDPLAY

We Are Curious (Yellow)



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breathe out

PLACEBO
"What kind of cartoon character
have we become?"

MOGWAI "Paul McCartney's a wank."
V.O.D. Back from hell
(and day jobs)

July 2001
\$5.99 US \$8.98 CAN
ISSUE NO. 94
WWW.CMJ.COM



PETE ROCK. JOE HENRY. UNWOUND. BASEMENT JAXX. BUDDY GUY. 45 REVIEWS.

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Killah Priest
King Just
Leatha Face
Masta Killa
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World Radio History

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62 • COLDPLAY

"Yellow" has put the unassuming lads of Coldplay in the limelight, leading to the eventual Big Questions common to new pop stars. Questions like, "Why are we here?" and "Is Kirsten Dunst available?" Smith Galtney zooms in for the close-up.



42 • MOGWAI

These Glaswegians hate the Stones, love Joy Division and figure everyone who considers their moody post-rock "art" can just sod off. Stuart Behrman tries not to feed them after midnight.

44 • UNWOUND

Could Unwound produce another full-length of off-kilter, indie-rock magic? Guitarist Justin Trosper thought so, and he pulled the band back into the basement only to wind up with a double album. Richard Martin follows the spiral.

46 • BUDDY GUY

In Fat Possum's studio in the Mississippi hill country, this Chicago blues legend rediscovered the sound of old gear and the soul of Delta blues.

Scott Frampton meets him at the crossroads.

48 • AIR

The duo from Versailles loves and hates pop radio. They make music that is light and commercial, yet arty and dark. Ooh, how very French. Piotr Orlov lives la différence.

50 • JOE HENRY

Madonna made a top-10 hit out of his song "Don't Tell Me" and jazz legend Ornette Coleman graced his tune "Richard Pryor Addresses A Tearful Nation," but Joe Henry is his own man, drawing wayward characters with a single line and a singular sound. Scott Frampton connects the dots.

55 • VISION OF DISORDER

This pack of Long Island hardcore kids sold 100,000 records when they were still practicing in a garage. Then, the whole thing blew up on tour in Australia and the members walked away broke. Four years later, they're back for one reason: the music. Lorne Behrman makes up for lost time.

58 • PLACEBO

After fucking his way through England (shooting up speed and crack along the way), Placebo's Brian Molko has learned to appreciate the simpler things in life—politics, ping-pong and writing a nice 'n' dour glam-punk song. Tom Mallon volleys.

11 • ON THE CD

Coldplay, Air, Placebo, Mogwai, Buddy Guy, Joe Henry, Sigur Rós, Shea Seger, Seven Mary Three, Echo And The Bunnymen, the Incredible Moses Leroy, Turin Brakes, Whiskeytown, Cowboy Junkies, Cash Brothers, Puffy Amiyumi, Manic Street Preachers, Professional Murder Music, Stabbing Westward.



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SAUL WILLIAMS

QUICK FIX 18

Basement Jaxx burns, baby, burns, disco inferno, Windy & Carl vie to be the next Sonny & Cher, Saul Williams tells the president where to go, Hi-Tek name-checks his platters du jour, Deadheads relive the end of that long, strange trip. Plus, Elvis returns to the building.

ON THE VERGE 37

Where have you been? Convoy, Mystic, Floppy Sounds, Laptop.

THE SCENE IS NOW 70

The rich and spicy flavors of Colombian drum 'n' bass, ska, rapcore and punk all come together at Rock Al Parque.

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Lite FM makes Dana Buoniconti feel fine.

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ATERCIOPELADOS

COLDPLAY: CHRIS BUCK • SAUL WILLIAMS: B+ • ATERCIOPELADOS: EVA SWIRKO

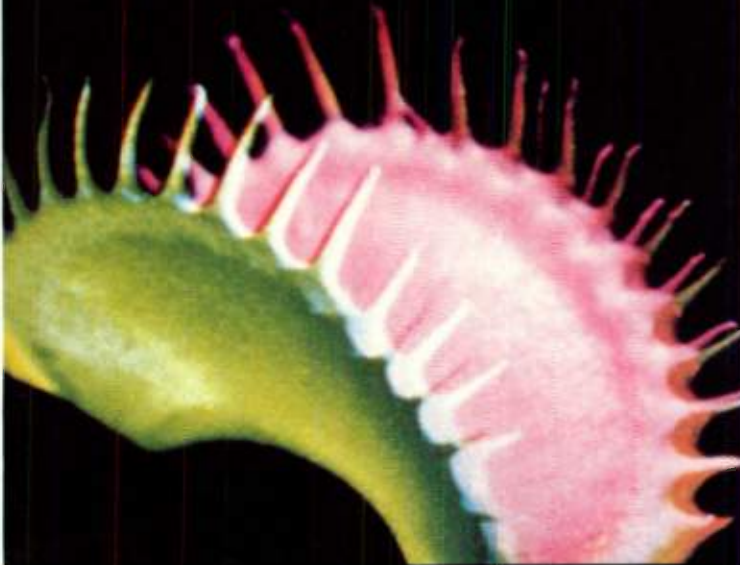


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The Cash Brothers How Was Tomorrow



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"...magnificent record."
– *Bucketful of Brains* magazine (UK)

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World Radio History

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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

On the CD

COLDPLAY

AIR

SIGUR RÓS

MOGWAI

BUDDY GUY

WHISKEYTOWN

July 2001 • Issue 94

- 14. COWBOY JUNKIES "I'm So Open" *Open* (Zoë-Rounder)**
Lonesome, moody sentiments swirling with sweet harmonies, smoldering feedback and fluttering keyboards. (See Review p. 83)
- 15. CASH BROTHERS "Night Shift Guru" *How Was Tomorrow* (Zoë-Rounder)**
Country-tinged rock packed with loping melodies, mid-tempo ballads and gorgeous harmonies. (See Review p. 82)
- 16. PUFFY AMYUMI "Boogie Woogie No. 5" *Spike* (Epic-Sony Music Japan)**
Gazillion-selling Japanese girl-pop duo counting Sick Of It All and the Beach Boys as influences.
- 17. MANIC STREET PREACHERS "Found That Soul" *Know Your Enemy* (Virgin)**
Issue-oriented superstar pre-Verve Brit arena-punksters. Ahem.
- 18. PROFESSIONAL MURDER MUSIC "Slow" *Professional Murder Music* (Geffen)**
Badass industrial metal that, disappointingly, is not about serial killers.
- 19. STABBING WESTWARD "Wasted" *Stabbing Westward* (Koch)**
Overhauled NIN-influenced electronic-rock quintet moving toward distinctly more melodic territory.

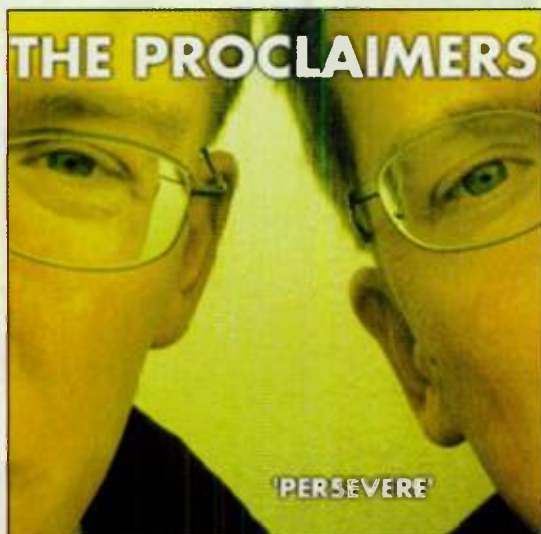
cut along dotted lines, fold and insert into jewel case

TDK

- 1. COLDPLAY “Shiver” *Parachutes* (Nettwerk America-Capitol)**
Downtrodden Britrock washed in celestial guitar melodies and aching Buckley-esque falsetto. (See Cover Story p. 62)
- 2. AIR “Radio #1” *10,000 Hz. Legend* (Astralwerks)**
Helium-textured digital pop infused with more melancholy than fans of the French duo have seen yet. (See Feature p. 48)
- 3. PLACEBO “Special K” *Black Market Music* (Virgin)**
British bad boys returning with another slice of decidedly twisted neo-punk pop. (See Feature p. 58)
- 4. MOGWAI “Sine Wave” *Rock Action* (Matador)**
Explosive, atmospheric Scottish post-rock; not for those with an attention deficit. (See Feature p. 42)
- 5. BUDDY GUY “Baby Please Don’t Leave Me (Edit)” *Sweet Tea* (Silverstone)**
Quintessential Delta blues from a legend with a 40-plus-year-strong career. (See Feature p. 46)
- 6. JOE HENRY “Stop” *Scar* (Mammoth)**
Jazz-inflected folk with a moody, cinematic feel and R&B undertones. (See Feature p. 50)
- 7. SIGUR RÓS “Starálfur” *Ágætis Byrjun* (See-Thru Broadcasting)**
Dark, symphonic lullabies and exotic dream-pop esthetics crystallized in Iceland.
- 8. SHEA SEGER “Last Time” *The May Street Project* (RCA)**
Husky, corn-fed R&B-meets-trip-hop confessionals born in Texas but at home in London. (See May/June issue On The Verge p. 38.)
- 9. SEVEN MARY THREE “Wait” *The Economy Of Sound* (Mammoth)**
Virginia natives searching for angsty post-grunge’s next incarnation.
- 10. ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN “Everybody Knows” *Flowers* (Cooking Vinyl-SpinART)**
Cult favorite ’80s post-punk psych-popsters back to claim their crown. (See Review p. 83.)
- 11. THE INCREDIBLE MOSES LEROY “Fuzzy” *Electric Pocket Radio* (Ultimatum-Artemis)**
Californian “pop music archivist” dabbling in rock, new wave, drum ’n’ bass, folk—even cha cha.
- 12. TURIN BRAKES “Underdog (Save Me)” *The Optimist* (Source-Astralwerks)**
Mostly acoustic duo updating British folk-pop with soaring, intricate harmonies.
- 13. WHISKEYTOWN “Don’t Be Sad” *Pneumonia* (Lost Highway)**
Alt-country troublemakers growing up to make delectable, polished alt-pop. (See Best New Music p. 76)

THE PROCLAIMERS

'Persevere'



The Proclaimers return from a self-imposed seven year hiatus with their most endearing album yet, Persevere.

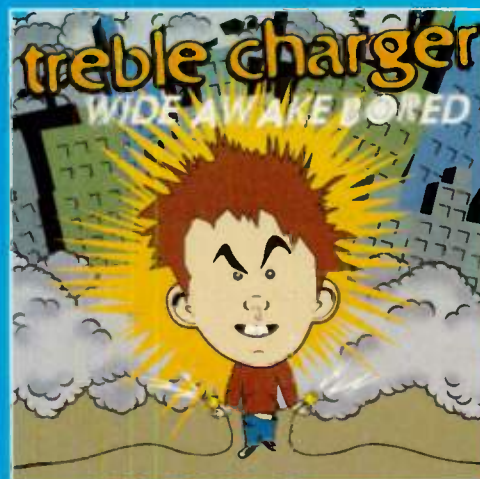
Featuring the single "There's A Touch"



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Treble Charger

Wide Awake Bored

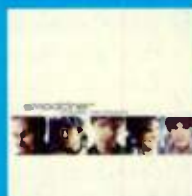
- Catchy guitar pop that is chock-full of massive hooks & splendid harmonies.
- Features the single "American Psycho"



Jet Set Satellite

Blueprint

- JSS rock out with ambient urgency, haunting piano arrangements and tasty guitar diversions.
- Features the explosive single "Best Way To Die"



Smoother

Chasing The Dragon

- Melodic pop songs that contain elements of both electronic & alternative influences. The result is a sound that defies categorization.
- Features the single "Blue"



Emb

World According To Gob

- "The World According To Gob polishes and reinvigorates punk's clichés for remarkable results"
- Alternative Press

Guns and buttah

Loved the celebrity gun match-up, very funny! You rule!

Jeff Winkelhake
Milwaukee

Note to potential celebrity gun consumers and high-school misfits bent on revenge: We don't actually advocate carrying or using firearms. As Jeff correctly sussed, the piece was meant in jest. Ha, ha. —ed.

Zum day their prince will come

Hi, let me just start by saying that even though I don't know of a way I could purchase your magazine, because I live in the United States, I really haven't had much of a reason to. But I feel that if you included Zim Zum and/or his band Pleistocene in it, I would deffinatly [sic] try to figure out a way, even subscribe to it/order it over the Internet. I can guarantee you that I will try to figure out a way to purchase it, if you start including Zim Zum and/or his band Pleistocene. Yeah, I know they aren't really that well known, but I know you have at least heard of Zim Zum, so why not include him—even an interview and a picture would be great, just so people know that he is coming back with a new band and he is going to kick some ass! Please help Zim Zum and his band Pleistocene out by including them in upcoming issues of your magazine. We, as the fans of Zim Zum and Pleistocene would be grateful if you would do so. Just try it and see if your sales rise.

Cassie
silent_angel_wings@yahoo.com

Zim Zum has him some fans. And these fans have very active e-mail accounts, as e-mails requesting coverage of his new band tend to arrive on our desktops in clumps. We chose to print this one because it's most obviously a form letter and a little dim-witted, which makes us laugh. Ha, ha. —ed.

Cutting out the cut-out

If you changed the On The CD format to a full page because it's cool, it's not. If you did it to make it more convenient, it's only slightly so. If you did it to plug your TDK advertiser, it's a sellout. If you did it at the request of your readers, you didn't ask me. Change it

back. It's great when it fits into a jewelcase.

zonkerboy@yahoo.com

We didn't ask Zonkerboy, or apparently any of the other dozen-odd longtime readers who have requested that we return to a jewelcase-friendly On The CD page. We did do some research that indicated, percentage-wise, there are comparatively few readers who cut out the page, so a change was encouraged. What this neglected was that the readers who do cut out and save anything are our best customers (i.e. ones who've put up with our minor distribution disasters, a grumpy ed-in-chief and that Everclear cover). So we've devised a new system that we hope will please everyone. Ha, ha (see page 12). —ed.

Radio ass-ness

I've been a faithful consumer of the CMJ subscription since its lowly inception. For all my years of hard-earned (sort of) payments to you, here's my two cents: First, thank you very much for supplying me with such a wealth of excellent and diversified music over the years! Every single CD has contained at least 3-4 songs that I really enjoy. Second, I have a question: Why hasn't much of the wonderful music I've heard received airplay on the FM dial? You guys must get frustrated at "alternative radio" for not playing the gems that you find and subsequently getting recognition to some truly brilliant artists.

You know, over the years I've noticed a pattern in which no matter what city and what "alternative" station I am listening to, they play the same few songs over and over. Kind of like if McDonald's bought every restaurant in every city and your only choice is either a Big Mac or a McChicken! I'm assuming this is not a new problem. I just have never really listened to the radio much. Do you think it is too late to save the FM radio? With all of your clout in the biz, is there anything you guys can do? Is there anything we, the unwashed masses, can do? (Please don't say write my congressmen because they suck too. And unfortunately LPFM, Internet radio and college stations are not practical for most people.)

James Barkwin
jbarkwin@yahoo.com

In fact, McDonald's has bought every restaurant in town: The top three broadcasters own 60% of the stations in the top 100 markets in the U.S. And guess what? Payola is legal!

CMJ
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ISSUE 94 JULY 2001

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Ha, ha. Salon.com ran a very good story on why commercial radio is such a wasteland—go to salon.com/ent/feature/2001/03/14/payola/index.html or to www.cmj.com for the link.

The queer man and the sea

Regarding April 2001, page 98 [In My Life with Queers frontman/commercial fisherman Joe Queer]: Say it again Joe, say it again. "I get a kick from these kids doing working-class 'oi' stuff when most of them are supported by their girlfriends." Yah, there was a time that those punk girlfriends would have beat the shit out of their boyfriends if they didn't get up and work. It is a shame, but Joe, you're a great example to musicians of all ages—to big kids that work between gigs in reality-land and to the new kids, too, that need to face reality and need to live what they cry about. Thanks for printing that.

Karow Brillo
brillosbox@yahoo.com

Aging punk rockers covered in fish guts... mmmmm, sex-ay. Still, it's nice to get back in touch with that working-class anger (it pairs so well with tannic Tuscan wines, ha, ha) as our little ship heads toward its own Perfect Storm wave. Though, when it comes to the fish trades, I prefer mongering. —ed.

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On what movie soundtrack does the Echo and the Bunnymen song “Bring on the Dancing Horses” appear?

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bassist Britta Phillips
Bowery Ballroom, NYC
March 30, 2001
PHOTO BOB GREEN



 **QuickFIX**

- ▶^{....} 20** **Pete Rock**
Video funkcd the hip-hop star
- ▶^{....} 21** **Basement Jaxx**
Disco deconstructionists
- ▶^{....} 22** **Pirate-core**
The Scurvy Pirates rock the plank
- ▶^{....} 24** **Dead and Loving It**
The End Of The Road's patchouli post mortem
- ▶^{....} 30** **Chris Connelly**
Cock, Pig, troubadour
- ▶^{....} 35** **Amy Correia**
Gets high on pottery

The Ol' School and the TV

Pete Rock grooves on great funk and *The Incredible Hulk*.

It's a rainy evening outside of Soho's Greene Street Studios and DJ/producer Pete Rock can hardly keep his eyes open. Perhaps that's because he's been confining himself to the basement studio for the past three days, either in recording sessions or in front of the TV. For him, the two worlds have begun to meld.

"I'm into TV score music," says the DJ/producer (born Peter Phillips), fresh from a hotly contested game of *NBA2K* on Sega Dreamcast. "I find dope samples off the old TV shows and movies—*The Bionic Woman*, *The Incredible Hulk*—stuff like that." It's not just kitsch that fascinates him. He also digs action soundtracks. Ever heard of jazz artist Oliver Nelson? "He composed a lot of the music that you heard on the *Six Million Dollar Man*," Rock explains.

On the heels of *Funk Spectrum III* (BBE), a compilation of forgotten funk and soul nuggets from the vaults of both Pete Rock and DJ Keb's record collection, Rock recently completed his second full-length studio album, *Petestrumentals* (BBE), a compendium of soundtrack-influenced, jazzy, melodic downtempo

beats he's been stockpiling over the past decade.

"Pete's Jazz" may just sound like Native Tongues-era hip-hop to you, but for Rock it's a bookmark in his personal history. "That song takes me back to like '92... It reminds me of Mount Vernon [New York] back in the day—on the street chillin', out on the block chillin'. Nowadays it's rougher."

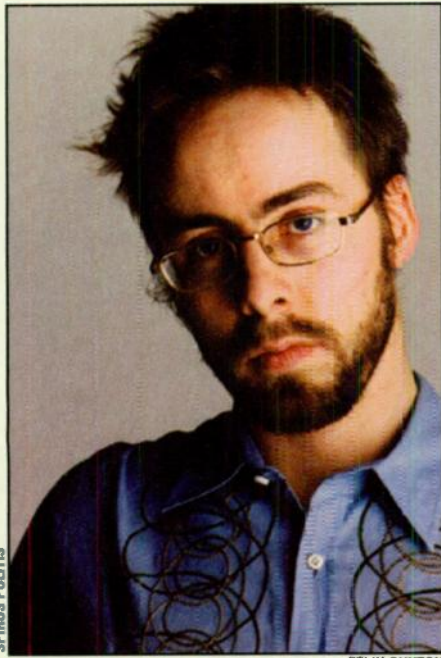
In addition to crafting tracks for GZA and Inspectah Deck and launching his label, Soul Brothers Records (a nod to Mecca & The Soul Brother, Rock's 1992 hit record with partner C.L. Smooth), Rock's also considering making TV even more integral to his life—he's arranging an audition to act on the television show *Oz*.

"I didn't want to," admits Rock. "It just comes with the territory. All the things I've done. I've done movie soundtracks, I've acted in *Who's The Man?*, I'm gonna try out for *Oz* and stuff like that. My management is saying I should get into it. A lot of people getting into it. It's a longevity type of thing, cause you can do it 'til you old." —ANDREW SIMON



The Sample Life

Deconstructing Disco with Basement Jaxx



SPIROS POLITIS

FELIX BUXTON

The good ol' days weren't actually that great for U.K. producers Basement Jaxx, when getting played meant pandering to the bland tastes of club DJs who'd only spin classic tunes set a-chug with a generic house beat. "In the past we have taken straight samples, looped a nice melody and that's been it," explains Simon Ratcliffe, half of the dynamic Brixton-based duo. After giving house a funky Latin facelift with 1999's *Remedy*, they gave said DJs the musical middle finger. Hence the wildly eclectic sophomore release *Rooty* (Astralwerks), which takes cues from the nascent U.K. two-step scene and then tosses in everything from cosmic funk to old Spanish holiday records. Here, the Jaxx share some of their best-kept sample secrets. >>>ADRIENNE DAY

Earth, Wind & Sun

"'Breakaway' has a sample from 'Lady Sun,' by Earth, Wind & Fire," explains Felix Buxton. "But the sample itself is not really important, it just gives it a bit of *gruuungh*, *gruuungh* in the background. Without it, it just didn't feel quite as banging." Adds Ratcliffe: "If we sample, the sample is just the basis of the music. We play everything else—keyboards, guitars, noises—ourselves."

Numan's Head

"The guitar sample on 'Where's Your Head At' is Gary Numan," confides Ratcliffe. "That track we did for [a set in] Ibiza in one day, since we needed some stuff that was pumping. Then we went back home and developed it and made it more of a song." (And got permission from Numan's office, one assumes.)

Kissing Chic

"'Jus 1 Kiss' has a sample on it—Chic. It's the guitar thing in the background," explains Buxton. "But, uh, it's me singing on it." [Suddenly, he looks nervous]. "What, did you think it was a girl? Ah, god, no! Everyone thinks I'm a girl."

Dreams of Spain

About the Spanish holiday record snippet on "Broken Dreams," Buxton explains, "That sample is from a charity shop—secondhand ladies coats and things. I bought an old ladies coat and a Spanish holiday record. I buy loads of old rubbish records in the hopes of finding something."

It's O.K. to shop at HMV

"With all the old classic disco being reissued, you can get most of it now," says Buxton. "All the records I used to try to find for years and years... you can go in HMV in London and they're like, 'Here it is, £5.'"



SIMON RATCLIFFE

GLOSSARY of Terms



Crouching Tiger, Hidden Jargon Note our initiative to transform Oscar-winning films into music-journalism metaphors. Next month, watch us try to use *Erin Brockovich*. (p. 42, 46)

Mewling Not, in fact, a sexual fetish involving beasts of burden. (p. 81, 92)

Rump-shaking The derriere is everywhere—if you've got "dumps like a truck," this issue is for you. So's next issue, when we break out our six-page Wreckx-N-Effect comeback special. (p. 77, 88)

Seitan Vegetarians the world over love this gluten-y "meat made from wheat." Makes a tasty, cruelty-free sacrifice to the evil firelord of the same name, as well. (p. 78)

Southern Gothic Formerly the macabre literary genre perfected by American southerners Flannery O'Connor and Carson McCullers, the term now refers to Memphis- and Tallahassee-based e-commerce sites selling white face powder, candelabra and capes. (p. 86, 91)

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band The Beatles' barrier-busting, border-blurring genre free-for-all is the simile of choice when referring to any other band's attempt to break all their own rules and fashion a modern-day masterpiece. (p. 42, 72)

Vibes "Hello, is this Charles Schwab? Get me 450 shares of Vibraphone." (p. 77, 80, 84, 87, 90)



The Graveyard: Where Overused Words Find Eternal Rest

Soundscape Sound... auditory material. Scape... a picture of a scene. Oh! Now we get it! (p. 87, 92)



BOJACK THE RED

☠ You Can't Spell Rock Without "Argh!"

In a sea of pirate-core purveyors, the Scurvy Pirates do it for the booty.

Centuries ago, a pirate's chief concern was who'd be next to walk the plank. But ask the Scurvy Pirates, and they'll tell you that 2001 is not so straightforward—this trio of Brooklynite brigands is forced to live the D.I.Y. punk life to survive, sleeping not in the hold of a seafaring vessel but on a futon, not robbing and burying treasure, but eking out a living regaling New York clubs with their sea chanteys.

Other pirate-core bands—like Captain Bogg & Salty and the Pyrates Royale—have raised the Jolly Roger in Portland, Oregon and Washington, D.C. in the past few years, and descend upon Florida annually for some essential pirate networking at Tampa's Gasparilla Piratefest and the Key West Pirate Fest, where pirate freaks go to carouse in three-pointed hats and drink corporate-sponsored beer.

But only the Scurvy Pirates claim to be actual pirates. Percussionist/plastic bucket-beater Commodore LXIV, guitarist Mad Dog Madison and accordionist/lead vocalist Captain Tom Bucket say they were accidentally frozen some three centuries ago, and only thawed and washed up on the shores of New York City last year. The Pirates took up residence with 20-something

Syracuse art-school graduates Michael Lockwood, Jason Madison and Devin Quin, who bear a striking resemblance—minus the eye patches, puffy shirts and bandannas—to Commodore, Mad Dog and Captain Tom respectively, though they insist that they are completely separate individuals. "Argh! We can't find a ship these days," says Commodore LXIV. "So seein'g's how we can't plunder or pillage, the next best thing was to play music."

During the Pirates' shows, the group's cultish regulars sing along and shout the punchlines to their pirate jokes and limericks, and some even eat the cabbage and limes the band hurls into the crowd—to protect them from the scurvies, of course. Earlier this year, the Pirates released their self-titled debut on their own Roger Records. Their chanteys "Porn Buoy" and "Fight For Your Right To Plunder" fall somewhere between the Pogues and a Monty Python sketch.

Unfortunately, rock-star antics can't seem to break the Scurvy Pirates' dry spell with the ladies. "None of my pick-up lines work in this modern age," says Captain Tom. "I walk up and say, 'Argh, wench! Y'r lookin' fine thar, my lass.' But nothing. And that's my best stuff." >>>MIKE BRUNO

Time to Rock

GEAR



Most alarm clocks shake you out of slumber with an annoying beep, a maddening buzz or an exasperating honk. Thanks to the **MP3 O'Clock**, you can now have as many options as that nifty Interweb will offer. The speakers may sound tinny, but you can download 50 seconds of anything you like onto the clock's internal memory, and wake up to the soothing sounds of rainfall on a rooftop, the calming "D'oh!" of Homer Simpson or *CMJ* staffers' MP3 of choice: the maniacal fucking metal attack of Slayer. (www.artistdirect.com, \$44.99) >>>NICOLE KEIPER



VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Hot off the message boards at www.cmj.com, with our sincere apologies to the lovely Misses Phair and Manson...

D.Z. Nuttz: who's the hottest gurl in rock, yo? i say that liz phair chick. i dont know if she can play but i'd take her over my knee anyway!!

alley cat: Dude, it is ALL about Shirley Manson. Still the hottest thing since fire.

D.Z. Nuttz: Shirley's da bomb! I'd like two all-Shirley patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun!!

alley cat: Yea Nuttz man, break me off a piece of that Manson action before you eat it all yourself. If you know what I mean..... slurp.

beautymyth23: This is just stupid. Is the hotness factor really an issue? Or is it the cultural constructs of gender? As long as under-sexed, ignorant assholes like you objectify strong, intelligent, talented women like Liz Phair, society is going to stagnate.

D.Z. Nuttz: beautymyth—oh no you didn't! maybe i'm a have to take YOU over the knee, baybee—spank all that "constructs of gender" shiznit outta you. And i'm not undersexed, i'm tappin' madd ass!!

Huevos: D.Z. Nuttz. I'd appreciate a glossary at the end of your posts. What the hell are you talking about. One thing is to say some female artists are good looking, another is to pretend your part of the hott boys and talk about smackin that ass up. if you haven't noticed this board attempts to be serious, let's keep it that way.

D.Z. Nuttz: Huevos—I appreciate where you're comin from. Fools like us need to stick together tho. Your name can be translated as "Nuttz" in Spanish you know. We're nut brothers!! So, in short, pull the stick out of that ass before you hurt yourself. Oh yeah, the chick from Hooverphonic rocks my lame ass.

True Colors

PRINT



The bastard children of Cyndi Lauper are alive and well and having fun in Japan. Every day, suburban teens turn the sidewalks of Tokyo's Shibuya and Shinjuku sections into runways, displaying neon-bright combinations of tinsel, plaid, polka dots, fur and wool that are a little bit country, a little bit punk, rave, goth and rock

'n' roll. Over the last five years, Japanese photographer Shoichi Aoki documented these fashion mavens, who combine haute pieces with homemade accessories, and printed them in his zine, *Fruits*. Phaidon Press's new book of the same name splashes 300 of those outrageously cute shots over one volume. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



Grateful Death **FILMS**

The End Of The Road
(Slow Loris)

You might think Deadheads are Birkenstock-wearing, patchouli-smelling, cucumber-sandwich-eating loons (and they are), but damn, they give some great soundbites. Filmmaker Brent Meeske takes us inside the communal lifestyle that Deadheads enjoyed for 30 years with the documentary *The End Of The Road*, which follows Jerry's kids in 1995 during the Grateful Dead's final tour. While much of this has already been covered elsewhere, Meeske makes a passionate examination of the Deadhead experience, wrapping up his narrative by interviewing Deadheads at Garcia's memorial service in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. "It's been such a way of life for me for so long, I don't know what to do. I'm lost," says one elderly follower. Bummer, dude. >>>JOHN ELSASSER



DUNCAN BLAKE

In My Room: the Butchies

Keep your laws out of Kaia Wilson's bedroom.

STOLEN GOODS

I've got two acoustic guitars and a mid-'80s Yamaha PSR-150 keyboard—the cheapy kind you can buy at Wal-Mart. One of the guitars was my mom's since I was a kid, and I stole it from her. Isn't that awful? She asks how it's doing sometimes.

EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE

There's a halfway-unpacked green duffle bag lying on my floor. I just got back, but I'm going on tour next Thursday, so I've left some things in there. I always pack a lot of underwear and socks and sports bras, and black terrycloth wristbands—I find them exciting.

BOND... JUSTIN BOND

Hanging up, there's a huge, five-foot by three-foot print of Justin Bond [best known as Kiki from the drag cabaret duo Kiki & Herb] in front of a purple backdrop, taken by our photographer friend Kathy Opi.

STELLAR BOOK

There's a book: *The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need*. That's true as far as I can tell. It's by Joanna Martine Woolfolk, who's also the author of *Sexual Astrology*, a book which has really gross stuff in it about things Pisces like to do with their feet.

When Butchies singer/guitarist Kaia Wilson leaves Durham, North Carolina next week to tour in support of the band's new 3, her girlfriend, Tammy Rae Carland, will stay behind with their two cats, two dogs and their record label, Mr. Lady. What room of their three-bedroom house will Wilson miss most? Perhaps their shared bedroom overlooking the backyard—"It's painted a pale lavender color called Cool Lilac"—whose contents she describes here. >>>BYLAN STEELE

Advance Warning

GAMES



Shoppers cleaned Nintendo's **Game Boy Advance** off store shelves when it was released in Japan last March, so salivating freaks may want to put in an order for the console's summer Stateside debut. With a 32-bit processor under the hood, the pocket-size "GBA" churns out visuals that would make the Super Nintendo jealous. The Advance also introduces a level of gameplay that's comparable to some of today's TV-dependent consoles, with new versions of old faves like *Super Mario*, *F-Zero* and *Castlevania*. And at just under \$100, it's the cheapest low-maintenance relationship you can get into legally. >>>JOHN DUDLAK



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5 SPOT



TYLER BORICH

What Makes Hi-Tek Tick?

1 Zapp & Bootsy Collins

"I'm inspired by Zapp and Bootsy because they're from my way. Zapp is from Dayton, Ohio, which is like 20 minutes away, and Bootsy helped them produce some of their best records. Bootsy still lives in Cincinnati—I see Bootsy all the time. I'm trying to understand the people who make the music that makes me want to make music. I like effects and the sounds Bootsy used, from the wahs to the effects they used on their voices."

2 Slum Village

"It's energetic, creative, melodic and funky all at the same time. The sound and the slang they use is similar to mine, it's an inspiration for me because they're from Detroit. The Midwest has a certain mentality and perspective on the hip-hop world."

3 James Brown

"I'm not sampling him, but listening to the way he puts music together."

4 Snoop Dogg

"As far as the West Coast, they're down. He's keeping the funk alive, it's real authentic. He's not trying to make commercial songs. They might sound commercial because it's good music, but it's the real funk, not bullshit put-together stuff."

5 Jonell

"She's my new project and the first signed to my label. I met her a couple of years ago and I knew she sang, but she didn't sound as good as she does now. One day recently she came up to me in a club and told me she had a joint she wanted me to hear. She sang it in my ear and it was dope. I haven't heard nobody dope on the street in a long time. She kinda blew me away and I was like, 'O.K., let's record that shit tomorrow.'" *Jonell appears on Hi-Tek's new Hi-Teknology (Rawkus) and her album is due this fall.*

INTERVIEW BY NEIL GLADSTONE



JOSH ROTHSTEIN

SEAN DONOVAN, WAYNE B. MAGRUDER, AURELIO VALLE

Calla For Your Dreamin'

Calla's avant take on old-fashioned slowcore makes former Swans leader Michael Gira swoon.

Three transplanted Texans—Aurelio Valle, Wayne Magruder and Sean Donovan—are settling into a Brooklyn bar's sofa when a local hipster shuffles over and blurts: "Hey! Are you Calla?"

Valle nods shyly. Magruder and Donovan trade embarrassed glances. "Whoa!" enthuses the drunken fan. "You guys just made this place so much cooler!"

Although the trio shrinks from the compliment, much of New York's music scene has acquired the same energetic affection for Calla's well-hewn, if plainly decelerated, post-rock.

"I thought they were superb musicians," recalls former Swans field marshal Michael Gira, who now heads Young God, the label that released Calla's new album, *Scavengers*. "Their concentration of dynamics and restrained emotional intensity amazed me—understatement coupled with unexpected bursts of noise, and rock sections."

Calla took root shortly after Valle and Magruder moved to New York from Dallas in the late '90s with their band the Factory Press. They found themselves chafing at its "straight-up" sound and recruited Magruder's old friend Donovan, a classically trained composer and avant-sound maven who hadn't played

rock in years.

"I made it clear that whatever we did, we would have to integrate lots of different elements into it," recalls Donovan. "And Aurelio and Wayne were on the same page completely."

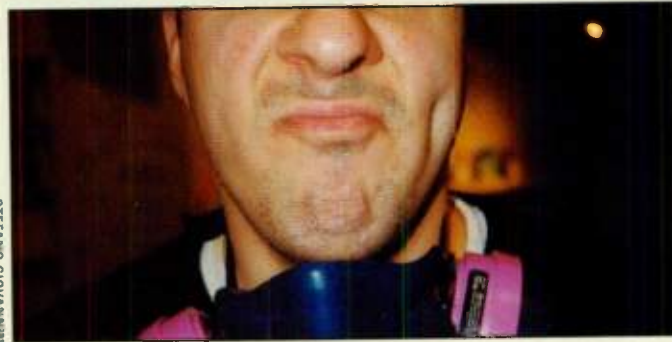
Their open-ended mission to integrate rootsy guitar, layers of gauzy dissonance and industrial noise (think *Einstürzende Neubauten*), and make it "sound good" complemented Gira's vision for his Young God roster, which has been growing notably in the past couple of years.

"Everything [on Young God] is interesting—at least to me—or pushes some limits sonically or in terms of songwriting," explains Gira, who also produced *Scavengers*. Certainly, there's not much else that unites Calla with fellow Young God acts like the aggressive Flux Information Sciences or tone poet David Coulter.

Donovan says having Gira in the studio not only helped Calla get all of the sounds they wanted, but served to curb the bandmembers' perfectionist tendencies. "We would keep working and working and working on songs," recalls Donovan, "whereas Michael would step in after a certain point and say, 'Hey—this is it.'" >>>MAYA SINGER



Sign O' The Times: Billboards for B-boys



STEFANO GIOVANNINI

ESPO

Is the hip-hop purist in you outraged at the snake-oil salesmen of Madison Avenue appropriating graffiti to sell sneakers, lipstick, soda and more? Graffiti artist and cultural vigilante Espo (born Steve Powers) has decided to steal something back: advertising sign design. For much of the '90s, the former publisher of the graffiti zine *On The Go* scrawled his moniker on buildings and back alleys across Philadelphia and New York. Then he began to appreciate the other graphic design in the streets—billboard ads. So he put down the spray can and picked up brushes, rollers and enamel paint (which has much more permanence than Rust-Oleum). Now, Espo creates works on tin he scavenges from sign shops and fashions autobi-

ographical products with names like "Braggadocio" and "Guilt" (which distill aspects of his personality into a box) and mini-billboards with phrases like "Good Lookin Out" (silly slang inherited from his youth). That pop-art approach has garnered Espo shows at Philly's I.C.A., New York's Deitch Gallery and, soon, the Venice Biennale. This piece, "Autograph," interprets the experience of an autograph-seeker asking Espo for his John Hancock on the street in Tokyo. "I spent the better part of 15 years building up a brand that I write," says Espo, thrilled that his signature has come to mean something internationally. "The autograph is everything I am, it's the sum total of what I have to offer to the public." >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



WEIRD RECORD Gwar, undressed

Giant latex and papier-mâché costumes apparently get a little heavy after 15 years: The Dave Brockie Experience's *Diarrhea Of A Madman* (Metal Blade) finds Gwar alumni Brockie (Oderus Urungus), Mike Derks (Balsac The Jaws Of Death) and Brad Roberts (Jizmak The Gusher) ditching their gross-out thrash

personas for a virtually unadorned garage-y pop-punk ideal—and the results are surprisingly palpable. The visuals and sound go down a bit easier than the boys' previous output, but fear not—the lyrics (about hobbits and masturbation, among other things) are every bit as barbarously abrasive. Brockie even gives Princess Di a tongue-lashing on the solo acoustic track "Lady Died" ("Her death has no meaning, it just doesn't matter/ I'd like

to see her fucking head on a platter"). Of course, all the lyrics are delivered with Brockie's tongue proudly poking out from his decomposing cheek. Although many of the tracks on *Madman* are exercises in grueling endurance, when DBX rocks, it's nothing short of tasteless mayhem, calculated to not only piss off the most lax of the politically correct, but to make a whole new generation of 16-year-old boys throw up the horn hands. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

Answer Me

Saul Williams for President

Hip-hop MCs have made a business out of being macho bigmouths. Why can't they just be vulnerable and listen? That's the question Saul Williams's debut album, *Amethyst Rock Star* (American-Sony), attempts to answer. Although he made a name for himself as a champion slam poet and star of the movie *Slam*, he's been rapping since age 10. His music shows the sensitive lyricism he developed at poetry readings as well as a passion for consciousness-raising rap, drum 'n' bass, space rock—even musicals. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

Does being an NYU-trained actor and the son of a preacher man transform your songs into soliloquies and sermons?

The whole type of excitement that comes from my involvement in plays is totally connected—you have a simple build and then the denouement at the end. That's how I've looked at building songs. I'm also very inspired by soundtracks. One of my favorite songs that didn't make it to the album, "One," included a sample from *Jesus Christ Superstar*, but Andrew Lloyd Webber didn't want his music sampled. I love the power of musicals, where you sing to people and try to get them involved. I'm trying to get people involved in music that's socially aware.

If you could go back in time before you made this album and advise yourself, what would you say?

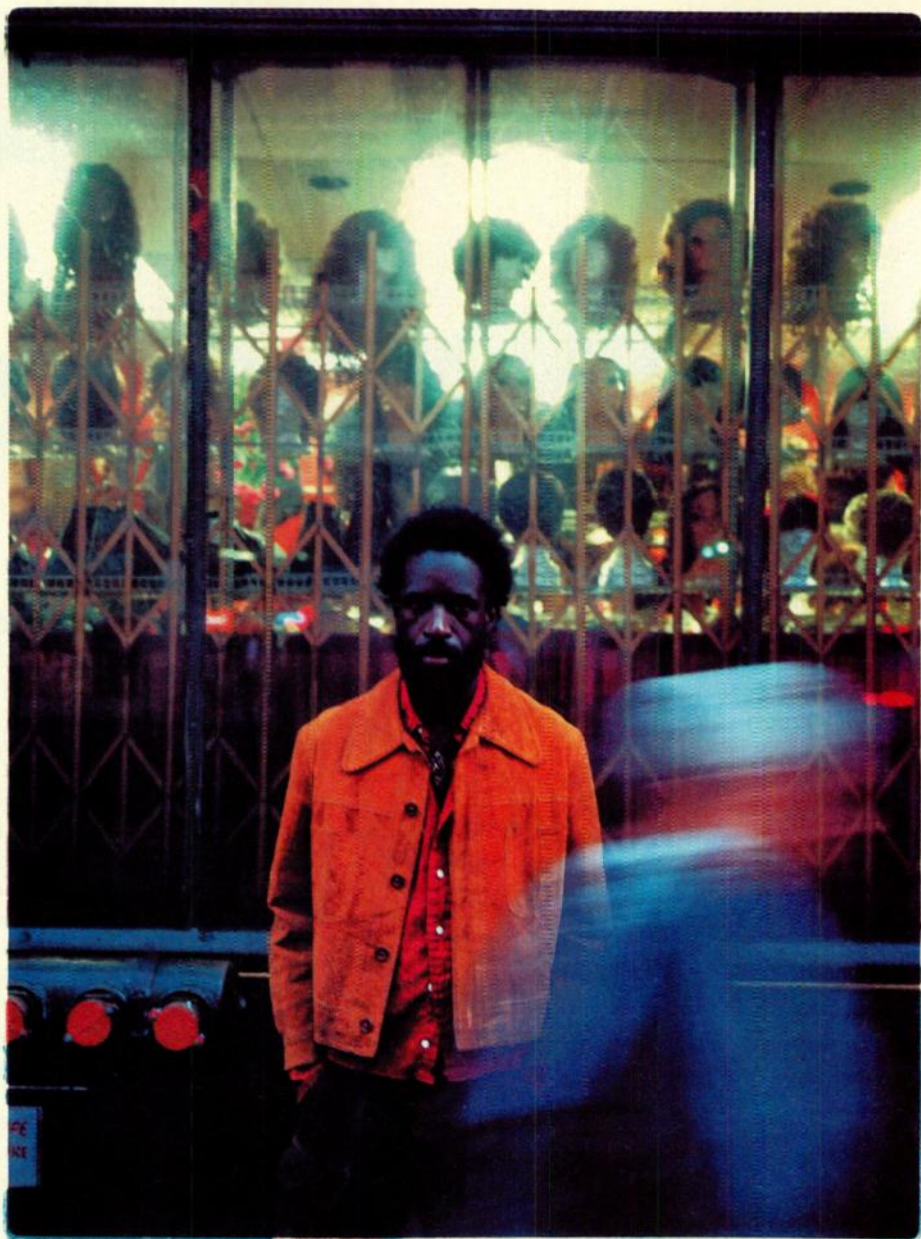
I would listen to outside opinions less. For instance, [executive producer] Rick Rubin was very important at the conception of hip-hop, but at the same time he's never listened to a Gang Starr album, a Tribe Called Quest album, a De La Soul album, a KRS-ONE album. It sounded like Rick was only listening to the stuff he was producing. And coming from the poetry world, I was forced into a situation where I had to constantly explain and defend what I was doing. These days I find hip-hop listeners and producers to be some of the most conservative people I know. Sometimes I had to say, "If it's just me, viola and cello, that's hip-hop to me." It's not all in the hardcore-ness of the beat. The reason I found excitement in stuff like Tricky, Portishead and Goldie—mid-'90s drum 'n' bass and electronic stuff—is because they were unafraid to push the barriers.

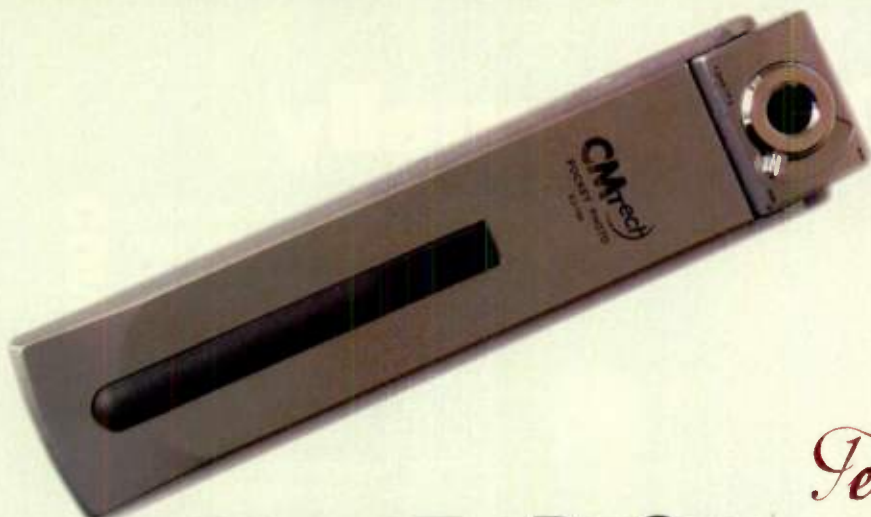
On "Penny For A Thought," you exclaim: "My people, let Pharoah go." Would that make you Black Moses?

I think with the whole materialistic hip-hop—where artists take pictures with Donald Trump and brag that they "got platinum chains"—I think they bought into the materialism that bought us initially. So, that line says, "Let go of those ideas and values."

If you were president, what would you do (other than kick W.'s ass)?

I would stay up very late at night and listen to radio stations to connect with youth culture. I'd be out at poetry readings and concerts and listen to what young people were saying. I worked on Capitol Hill for one summer [with Arkansas Senator David Pryor] and it's a very closed-off world. Their legislation is going to affect whether or not Bill Gates can own a bunch of shit or not. As for me, the shit I'm trying to own is my own thoughts and ideas as opposed to being altered by some major company that's telling me what to think, what to do, what to wear. I feel like when we look to the White House for legislation that's like looking up to God rather than looking within. As far as legislation, all the stuff I'm doing right now is my presidential campaign.





Tell it to my Heart

The Pit And The PenCam

GEAR

How many times have bouncers thwarted your attempts to photograph rock shows? Stop hiding that 35mm in your pants and try the **PenCam** mini digital camera, camcorder and PC camera; it's tiny enough to stow in any crevice on your person (be creative!), but can take still photos and video that'll rival many full-sized digital cams. If you can sneak your laptop into the show, the PenCam's PC mode will let you broadcast live footage over the Web, too. It conveniently comes with a wee camera stand in case you want to get a shot of yourself in the bloody Slipknot pit. (www.gadgetuniverse.com, \$139.95) >>>NICOLE KEIPER



Indiscreet Proposal

The Center Of The World **FILMS**

(Artisan)

He's a doofy, nice-guy computer programmer with millions in the bank. She's a cool rock chick-cum-upscale stripper with a wardrobe that would make Toni Braxton blush. *The Center Of The World* (Artisan), a sexy and stylish, heavy-breathing *Indecent Proposal*, follows what unfolds after the geek persuades the sextop to accompany him to Vegas for three nights of, well, you know. Director Wayne Wang worked with his *Smoke* collaborator Paul Auster on this insightful tale of love and human behavior. >>>JOHN ELSASSER

Black Box Recorder's John Moore sifts through the wreckage of your love life.

Black Box Recorder doesn't mince words—the English trio first made news when they were banned from U.K. radio for the lyric, "Life is unfair/ Kill yourself or get over it." The band applies that harsh worldview to everyone's favorite topic: sex. on *The Facts Of Life* (Jetset), which coats litting synth-pop in acid wit. Who better, then, to dispense this month's dose of love advice than BBR songwriter John Moore? In need of a rock star's love advice? Send your questions to lovelorn@cmj.com.

The drummer in my friend's band is pretty hot, but he's dumb as a box of rocks. I hear he likes me, and I definitely don't want to date him—but is his stupidity any reason not to simply have sex with him?

—Carla, Brooklyn, New York

O.K., let's analyze the facts here. Your description of the stocky stickman is rather telling: "Dumb as a box of rocks." Perhaps you're referring to his trouser area? Do you really mean "lung like a box of rocks with a member the size of a Detroit tenement?" Your desires are perfectly natural. You want a meaningless, no-holds-barred, utterly sordid sweat session with a monster, the nearest legal alternative to bestiality. You come from Brooklyn, the home of brainless beautiful drummers, so my advice to you would be to satisfy your hunger. If stupidity was any reason not to have sex, you'd have no president and we'd have no royal family.

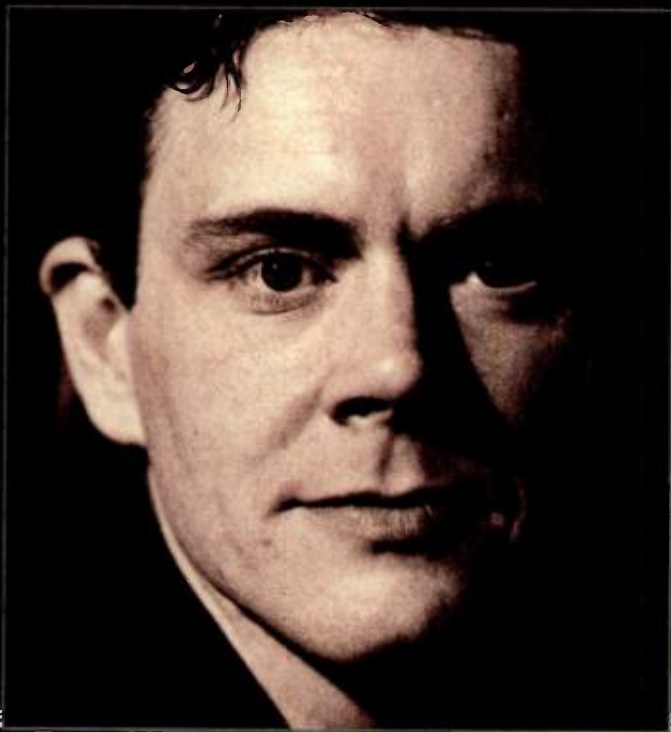
God help me, my friend Josh won't stop mixing me up in his love life. It all started when he got a crush on this girl I work with at a record store, and started "visiting me" (also known as seeing her) there all the time. Now that they've gone out once or twice, he forwards me all her e-mails wanting my opinion on his next step, and I don't give a fuck! He's still an alright dude otherwise. What do I do?

—Kevin, Reno, Nevada

Would it be presumptuous of me to assume that there might be an ulterior motive at play here? It couldn't be possible that you harbor feelings for the young lady in question yourself, but are too much of a gentleman or conniving, scheming, Machiavellian, give-'em-enough-rope sort to let the cat out of the bag? If this is the case, you are doing well, but the time to act is now. Let her know by some roundabout way that you are privy to her innermost feelings, that you are tortured by indecision over your indiscreet friend, and that loyalties have finally persuaded you to side with her. Laughing boys will be out of the shop in a second and you'll be hanging the "Closed For Lunch" sign up all afternoon, if you get my meaning.

Love, John

Changes One Connelly



PAUL TELLEGE

CONNELLY FOR DUMMIES

A guide to some of Connelly's most significant projects, with recommendations from the man himself.

MINISTRY



Synopsis: The first stars of industrial rock and Connelly's breakthrough in America.

Chris's favorite: *The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste* (Sire, 1989).

The record that proved electronic music wasn't for sissies. Check out Connelly flaying his vocal chords on "Never Believe," "Cannibal Song" and "So What" for proof.

PIGFACE



Synopsis: A hit-and-miss industrial supergroup helmed by Invisible Records kingpin Martin Atkins.

Chris's favorite: *Fook* (Invisible, 1992). What Connelly calls Pigface's most "focused" effort. He particularly

likes the cello-driven "Ten Ground And Down," which also appears on the new *The Best Of Pigface* (Invisible).

REVOLTING COCKS



Synopsis: Ministry's main side project and sleazy, debauched alter-ego.

Chris's favorite: *Linger Ficken' Good* (Sire, 1993). Good ol' electro-barnyard fun. Chris is at his best searching for a score on "Crackin' Up" and getting his freak on in a scandalous cover of Rod Stewart's "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy."

THE DAMAGE MANUAL



Synopsis: A noise-filled reunion with Atkins, Jah Wobble and Killing Joke's Geordie Walker.

Chris's favorite: *The Damage Manual* (Invisible, 2000). Along with

a group of vets, Connelly puts out the best industrial record in years. His fans get the best of both worlds, from the atmospheres of "King Mob" to the crashing noise of "Age Of Urges."

Is there redemption after leaving the Ministry? Yes, says Chris Connelly.

When you've made your name howling about crack, murder and "anal fuckfests," your longtime listeners may be shocked when you start singing passionately about romance and heartbreak—just ask Chris Connelly. Over the past decade, the former Ministry/Revolting Cocks vocalist has released a string of critically acclaimed solo records that exercised the subtle side of his personality, the side that relates more to David Bowie than Al Jourgensen. His new direction, however, didn't always sit well with his fans.

"I learned what it was like to watch capacity audiences in clubs up and down the land leaving *really* quickly," Connelly laughs, remembering his early tours. "It was like a chemistry experiment, evaporating the hydrogen and oxygen to leave what solid was left, and these were your true hardcore fans. All three of 'em."

That exercise culminates on *Blonde Exodus* (Invisible), a disc that pits Connelly's now-cultured croon against a backdrop of lush strings, rolling pianos and reverb-swamped guitars—a cinematic mix that couldn't be farther from Ministry's industrial crunch.

Even though old fans might not get it, Connelly feels that his more mature solo work can exist comfortably alongside the noise of his past. "It's like literature or movies," he says. "One night you might really need to see *There's Something About Mary*, but the other night you might want to watch *Decalogue*." >>>TOM MALLON

Who's The Next Sonny & Cher?

The explosion of boy/girl duos in the last year can only mean one thing—Sonny & Cher fans are finally coming out of the closet to emulate their heroes. Here's how the latest twosomes stand up to the greatest. >>> DYLAN SIEGLES



Boy/girl duo in question

Have they got each other, babe?

Their Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour-style TV variety show would be:

Phase of Cher's career their music recalls:

Would State Rep Sonny (R-Cal) approve of their politics?



HANDSOME FAMILY

Yup, Brett and Rennie Sparks done got hitched.

Imagine Minnie Pearl in Deliverance.

The dusty, countrified *In The Air* (Carrot Top) brings to mind Cher's mid-'70s hit "A Cowboy's Work Is Never Done."

As a pro-death penalty Republican, Sonny would have appreciated their embrace of the murder ballad.



WINDY & CARL

Guitarist Carl Hultgren hearts bassist Windy Weber, true love always.

A weed-addled trip through the Detroit suburbs, for the whole family!

Her highly underrated post-Mask space-rock period.

Consciousness (Kranky) pegs them as pro-drug legalization liberals. Republican? No.



WHITE STRIPES

Meg and Jack White are brother and sister, and this ain't *Flowers In The Attic*.

Full of wacky skits about De Stijl, the Dutch modern design movement their album is named after. Feelyat!

Their poppy garage-blues resembles Cher's rollicking "Half Breed"—and if they have kids, they could remake the tune as "Inbreed."

Meg's economically short bangs would appeal to Sonny's small-government frugality.



LOW

"Send In The Clowns" was their wedding song.

A gameshow in which contestants share a bottle of Valium and whisper a lot. Best viewed with the sound off.

Her introspective new Web-only album *Not Commercial* (that no one really heard)

Probably not. *Things We Lost In The Fire* (Kranky) sounds like Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker are pleading for government aid.



PEACHES AND GONZALES

Their onstage personas suggest continual sex; it would follow that they have it with each other.

Shown only on *those* premium channels.

Her deep, throaty cover of "Blowin' In The Wind."

Peaches and Gonzales always take their madcap vaudevillian antics one step too far—wasn't that what Sonny's political career was all about?

Word Of Mouse The Bad, The Bad And The Ugly

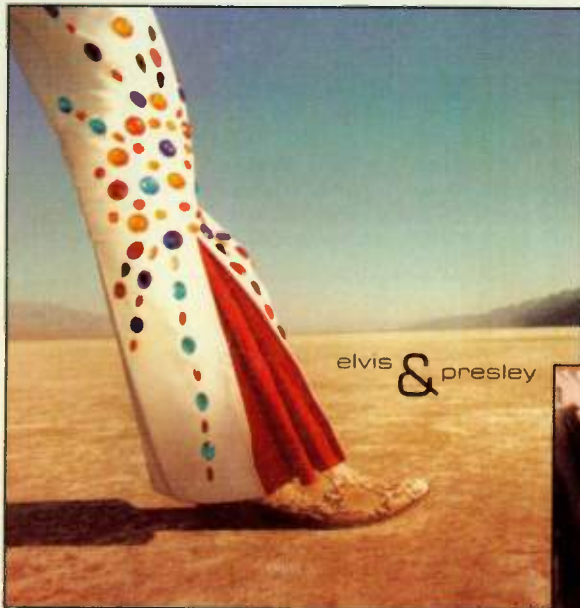
Everybody's got a bunny-boiler in their past, that ex who takes the disgruntled postal worker approach to your breakup—just ask Mark from Psychoexgirlfriend.com. He's archived the more than 50 voicemail messages—some only minutes apart—his former squeeze left over the course of 22 days. A sample: "I hope you fuck that fucking asshole girlfriend who follows you around like a puppet. Who the fuck was she?"

And here's your Internet revolution, you venture-capital fucks: Pixyland.org/peterpan is a never-never land of photos of a 47-year-old Florida man in Peter Pan costumes. Randy Constan loves him some Pan, and he's not alone: Enthuses site visitor George Radford, "I love Peter Pan so much I go through the supermarket aisles and rip off the fresh lids on all cans of Jiffy!"



RANDY CONSTAN LOVES HIM SOME PAN.

Viva Fake Elvis

[PRINT](#)


The King's visage has inspired black velvet paintings, porcelain lamps, potholders, salt shakers and even that horrid Kevin Costner movie. Will the blasphemy ever end? German photographers Stephan Vanfleteren and Robert Huber say they came to America dressed in white polyester jumpsuits and black pompadour wigs to praise Elvis, not bury him. The Hound Dog duo sweated across America, taking their pictures on New York's subway, in front of Graceland's gates, and on the dancefloor of a Mexican restaurant in Tucumcari. In the coffeetable book *Elvis & Presley* (Kruse Verlag), you get to see grocery-shopping Elvis, suntanning Elvis and even desert-crawling Elvis. What's it all mean? He's still in the building. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



top 7.5

topics around our water cooler - if we still had one

E M U



1 Kitty Fun Barbie:

Complete with imbibing pet cat (and handy litter box), Mattel heralds the triumphant return of urinating toys.

2 Resurrecting the lost tradition of throwing rotten fruit at subpar performers:

Never underestimate fear, or decaying produce, as a motivator.

3 James Brown Live At The Apollo double-disc reissue: JB and his Famous Flames tearing it up—not a dry seat in the house. You could argue that this record isn't great, but you'd lose, badly, and be mocked.

4 Doves: Anyone who thought doves were a symbol of peace hasn't witnessed the civil war this band has started between CMJ's art and editorial departments.

5 Teenage Applesauce Wrestling:

A Colorado bar-owner's moment of genius: It works for pork chops, why not writhing underage loins?

6 Glammy Old Men: Poison, Warrant, Quiet Riot and Enuff Z'nuff come together for the Glam Slam Metal Jam tour. Tremble, world.

7 Franken-Doodles: It's alive! Frankenberries reanimated as Japanese cheese doodle-like snack.

7.5 Mogwai's "encore": Ending an hour of perfectly good art-rock with 25 minutes of masturbatory feedback isn't "a treat for the fans." Unless you're the Melvins.

↘ The Ranch and the Raunch

The new country chic is less urban cowboy and more hillbilly whore. Grab a slice of cherry pie, because now trashy belongs on a tractor. >>>JESSICA DAVIES



A Roll In The Hay

You don't need a barn to look like you've had a really good time in one. Short zip-up nectar leather jacket with suede details, \$358, and cropped jean jacket, \$138, both by BCBG Max Azria.

Midwest Farmer's Daughter

If you want to achieve that sought-after I'm-not-as-innocent-as-I-look style, go for gingham, ruffles and roses. Then drink a Shirley Temple with a big ol' cherry in it and tie the stem in a knot with your tongue. Or just buy this: Denim ruffle skirt by Amanda Uprichard, \$82.



Heavy Metal Heartland

These denim separates belong on the intersection where John Mellencamp meets Warrant. Come on, boys—you know you love it. Orange jeans by Diesel, \$113, and bleached beaten hat by Levi's, \$24.

My Pretty Pony

Okay, you have to admit there was always something lame about My Pretty Pony, but that pony looks pretty cool on the A-Line horse skirt by Bulldog for Urban Outfitters, \$46.



Los Studio 54

Calle 54 (Miramax) **FILMS**

Filmmaker Fernando Trueba pays tribute to Latin jazz in *Calle 54*, a musical documentary capturing a dozen rousing performances of varying beats and styles featuring notables like the late Tito Puente, barefoot Brazilian pianist Eliane Elias and Argentine tenor-sax great Gato Barbieri. Serving as the narrator, Trueba, the Spanish director who won an Oscar for best foreign film with '92's *Belle Epoque*, gushes about Latin jazz—and the enthusiasm is infectious. >>>JOHN ELSASSER



Key Exchange

Magic-I Mini Data Bank **GEAR**

Palm organizers are so handy, but, oh, the yuppie stigma that comes with them. The Magic-I may be just what you need. The key-chain-sized gadget holds 120 names, phone numbers and birthdays, tells the time, date and language in 100 different cities, has a convenient little alarm clock and even features a slot-machine game (it ain't *Dope Wars*, but it'll keep you occupied on the bus). And you can beam info from your computer (like a real Palm Pilot!) at www.mymagic-i.com. Getting a Magic-I is kinda like drawing a tattoo on your arm in pen to see if you want the real thing. Baby steps, people. (www.gadgetuniverse.com, \$29.95) >>>NICOLE KEIPER

Sam Kicks Can

GAMES



Serious Sam (Gathering of Developers for PC)

"Shoot first, ask questions later" isn't the new NRA catchphrase, but it could be *Serious Sam's*. When an alien called Tah-Um faces off against a time traveling, trigger-happy Duke Nukem wannabe in ancient Egypt, deadly mayhem ensues. Although the game costs a measly 20 bucks, you'll get a full-price title's worth of slobbering freaks to slay. No, not Metallica groupies, but literally hundreds of mutant frogs, headless humanoids and one-eyed wonders must be beaten back with shotguns, rocket launchers and other classic weaponry. Talk about *Doom* déjà vu. While *Serious Sam* isn't especially deep, the game still packs more firepower than a sawed-off sidearm. >>>SCOTT STERNBERG



In My Life

Getting dirty with Amy Correia

Always in search of the ideal off-tour stress-reliever, L.A. singer/song-writer Amy Correia has teetered on a surfboard and stomped Savion Glover-style in a tap-dance class. But when she threw her first lump of clay on the pottery wheel a few months ago, Correia found true love. "It's meditative in the sense that everything goes through your mind and back out, but it's almost impossible to worry," she says. Plus, you're expected to get dirty: "It goes back to making mud pies as a kid." So far, mud pies are what Correia's pottery creations most resemble: "It's like, oh, I made a really heavy plate! This is really...heavy!" she laughs. Unexpectedly, she's discovered that working at the pottery wheel "isn't relaxing—it's about focusing. That helps with performance too. It's about staying in the present and not looking out in the audience and saying, 'I wonder if they like this. Did they like that last song? What if they don't like the next one?'" With an easy poetry that recalls the lyrics on her album, *Carnival Love* (Capitol), Correia insists that like music, pottery is both sensual and utilitarian. "I like the aesthetic of making something that you can fill with yourself. Songs are like that, you pour yourself into them." —DYLAN SIEGEL



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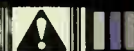
PHOTO: KEVIN KEITH



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DAVID GREEN

CONVOY

With its sun-stroked harmonies and lived-in retro feel, Convoy's new album, *Black Licorice* (Hybrid), distills a twangy California experience far from encroaching strip-mall sensibilities—picture the Rolling Stones and the Beach Boys whooping it up at a back-country pig roast circa '72. Frontman Jason Hill sets the tone with his personable Mike Love-meets-Jeff Tweedy vocals, Joe Cocker-ish onstage contortions and obsessive studio savvy. The album's warm feel is no accident: Hill tussled with producer Dave Bianco (Teenage Fanclub, Red Hot Chili Peppers) to preserve the spirit of the

band's lo-fi 1999 self-release, *Pineapple Recording Sessions*. "He wasn't used to dealing with a guy like me, and I wasn't used to dealing with anybody," Hill says. "It was a battle constantly." Recorded at a former high roller's ranch/estate—"like what you'd imagine Hugh Hefner's place looked like in 1967," says Hill—*Pineapple* conveyed a weird mix of rustic and palatial. "It was a pure record; there was nothing fake about it." While Convoy's updated sound is beefier and more polished, a homey immediacy still manages to peek through on *Black Licorice*. "At the end of the day," says Hill, "we had an album we all liked." >>> HOBART ROWLAND

MYSTIC

Asked about the origins of the stage name Mystic, the young female MC remembers coming across the word in a dictionary: "I knew it fit right away because the definition said, 'Not quite known; not quite understood.'" Born on a commune, the rapper/singer/poet spent her childhood days wandering naked in the meadows of rural California one moment and roaming the Bay Area's concrete jungles the next. "My mom was a free spirit. We moved a lot, so I got to experience many different lifestyles," says Mystic, whose broad perspective and early experience working with Digital Underground were poured into her free-flowing solo debut, *Cuts For Luck And Scars For Freedom* (Good Vibe). The tracks

draw power from hard-knock tales of fathers who die of heroin overdoses and girls whose introduction to sex comes through abuse ("Fatherless Child"). "That song gave me closure about my relationship with my father—would I have been abused if he had been there? Would my life be different? I felt 5000 pounds lighter when I finished the song." The rough-necks-in-love story "Ghetto Birds" has a dual meaning: "Ghetto birds are the helicopters as well as the people who live in the 'hood. So the song's for those who rise up and elevate beyond what happens day to day." Such life lessons are reflected throughout the album, right down to the title: "We all go through experiences that cut us, but we heal." >>>ANN BROWN



FLOPPY SOUNDS

With the economy sagging and dot-coms as cool as day-old glowsticks, it only makes sense that the feel-good dancefloor themes of PLURality and community have soured. Floppy Sounds, a.k.a. 32-year-old Brooklyn-based house music producer Rob Rives, says there's an explanation for the edgier, more "dislocated" sound that's been filling clubs lately. "For me, personally, this esthetic dovetailed with the introduction of [the drug] Ketamine to the scene," he says, explaining the mood of much recent techno music and his sophomore release, *Short Term Memories* (Wave

Music). "Instead of the old ecstasy, hands-in-the-air moments, you have records that are tcking you down a path." Influenced by the intangibly morbid esthetic of the German "heroin house" Chain Reaction records, Rives brings a darker, dubbier feel to his own music. The wailing diva of yesteryear still makes an appearance, but she sounds terribly distraught, oppressed by a punchy, spaced-out beat and more than a pinch of psychedelics. "Forget about hooks and club cliché platitudes—there's a level of scariness I'm trying to pursue," he exclaims, adding, "I still listen to Throbbing Gristle!" **ADRIENNE DAY**



DOB GREEN



LAPTOP

Eddie Murphy albums and Madonna movies prove that the worlds of music and film should never cross-pollinate. Yet former Sammy lynchpin Jesse Hartman merges the two almost seamlessly on his debut album as Laptop, *Opening Credits* (Trust Me). "I'd always tried to make movies and music," says the native New Yorker, who's also a filmmaker and actor. "A lot of the songs have dialogue created for the song, and I'll literally cast it. If the song is about two people in a bar, I'll find two actors who are friends of mine, and we'll perform a little scene." Hartman casts himself as the protagonist in *Opening Credits*, a 12-part tragicomedy about failed relationships (romantic

and professional) and their resonating emotional damage. Set against a musical backdrop that updates new wave's synthesized, romantic sweep (the Human League's *Dare!* springs to mind), its well-oiled irony stings and tickles. "I'm So Happy You Failed" sticks pins in a rival musician's already deflating career ("Word on the street says/ Your second record's dead"), while "End Credits" tells a soon-to-be-ex-lover's answering machine to "Stop this teenage movie we've been in." "They're not hate songs," Hartman chuckles. "They're always meant to be ironic and funny. It's almost a concept album: *A User's Guide To Your 20s*—maybe what not to do." >>>MICHAEL WHITE



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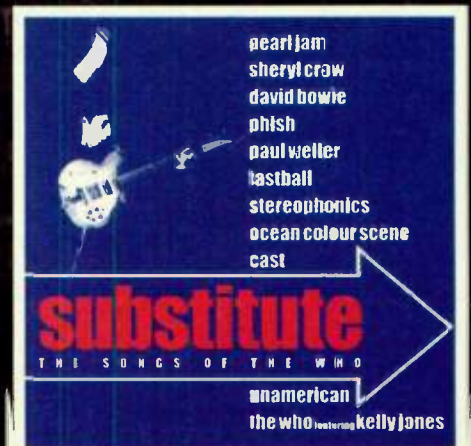
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➤ Rattle, Hum and Giggle

Mogwai proves great art rock and Glaswegian goofballs aren't mutually exclusive.

STORY: STUART BERMAN PHOTOS: BOB GREEN

Mogwai's bittersweet cinematic symphonies inspire grand comparisons. If 1999's *Come On Die Young* was their *Blair Witch Project*—an evening of prolonged, understated dread when you expected gratuitous shock tactics—their new album, *Rock Action (Matador)*, is their *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a stirring sonic ballet where even the fiercest moves are pulled off with mesmerizing grace. Still, for all their art-rock renown, the members of Mogwai may just be a bunch of jokesters whose greatest prank has been convincing the world that they're pretentious art-rockers.

When you're sitting down for some pre-show Jamaican chow with the band, for instance, don't make the mistake of asserting that the immaculate *Rock Action* constitutes some sort of post-rock *Sgt. Pepper's*—it will be treated as an insult of the highest order.

"Wot!" guitarist John Cummings exclaims. "Fuck that shit! Paul McCartney's a wank."

"I'd love to be Paul McCartney," says keyboardist Barry Burns. "I'd love a fucking barrage of frogs around me singing happy tunes while my wife's corpse rots. Sorry..."

"If I was Paul McCartney I'd fucking kill myself," bassist Dominic Aitchison chimes in.

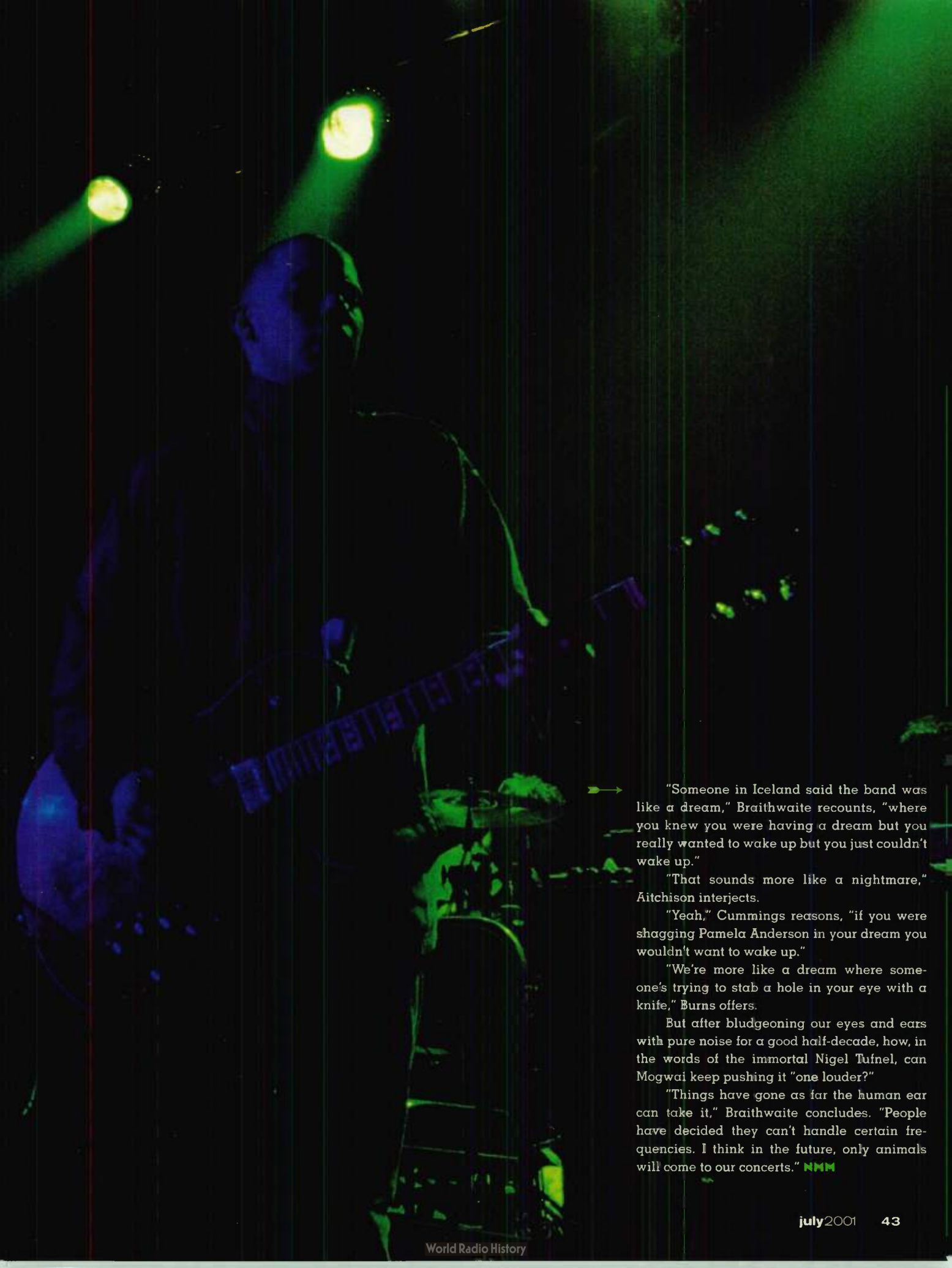
Adds guitarist/vocalist Stuart Braithwaite: "But I'd take his sales!"

The band claims instead that the difference between their own albums is merely a matter of budget, but there's some definite maturation going on. Well, on the record, at least.

Each of the 'gwais were born around the same time that Joe Strummer roared "No Elvis, Beatles or the Rolling Stones in 1977!" and they most certainly internalized that shit-disturbin' sentiment in the womb.

When the band first emerged from the Glasgow underground in 1996, some people figured them for a Scottish Slint. Musically, the band has moved beyond the soft/loud schematics that Slint set for American indie rock, but they still see the world strictly in dichotomous terms—things are either "pish" or "fuckin' ace." Things that are pish: Coldplay, all Rolling Stones songs except "Gimme Shelter," all Pink Floyd albums except *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* and pretty much all American alterna-rock (except the Deftones, whose Chino Moreno will be lending vocals to a new Mogwai track). Things that are fuckin' ace: Joy Division, the Cure, Syd Barrett and, of late, Jewish spirituals—the band's ominous reconstruction of the Hebrew hymn "Avinu Malkeynu" has replaced 1997's "Like Herod" as their sinus-clearing, jaw-dropping, eardrum-exploding, show-stopping set closer.

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



“Someone in Iceland said the band was like a dream,” Braithwaite recounts, “where you knew you were having a dream but you really wanted to wake up but you just couldn’t wake up.”

“That sounds more like a nightmare,” Aitchison interjects.

“Yeah,” Cummings reasons, “if you were shagging Pamela Anderson in your dream you wouldn’t want to wake up.”

“We’re more like a dream where someone’s trying to stab a hole in your eye with a knife,” Burns offers.

But after bludgeoning our eyes and ears with pure noise for a good half-decade, how, in the words of the immortal Nigel Tufnel, can Mogwai keep pushing it “one louder?”

“Things have gone as far the human ear can take it,” Braithwaite concludes. “People have decided they can’t handle certain frequencies. I think in the future, only animals will come to our concerts.” **NMM**



Lost and Unwound

After nearly unraveling, celebrated indie-rock trio Unwound found a double album in their basement.

STORY: RICHARD A. MARTIN PHOTO: STEFANO GIOVANNINI

A year ago, Unwound singer/guitarist Justin Trosper wasn't sure how his trio could make a sixth album. Over the previous decade, the Olympia, Washington band consistently released new material, an average of one full-length every two years. But while recording the band's '98 release, *Challenge For A Civilized Society*, the group members fell into a creative rut, having recorded so many albums the same way with producer Steve Fisk (Nirvana, Soundgarden). "A lot of people get this idea of isolating yourself for recording. We wanted to do that for the last record, to get isolated and focused, and it just didn't happen," recalls Trosper.

The only answer was shattering Unwound's routine. Trosper decided to corral the band in his rustic basement studio, which he likens to a construction site. "For this one we had an exclusionary feeling, like, 'No one's allowed in here—we're doing this,'" says Trosper. "In a real studio situation, you're always looking at the clock. It's hard to be creative." The result is *Leaves Turn Inside You (Kill Rock Stars)*, Unwound's first double album and the first to extensively feature long-departed founding member Brandt Sandeno, who occasionally tours with the band but isn't signed on full-time.

Changing the routine didn't make recording easy, though. Not all of Unwound's members reside in the same town—drummer Sara Lund lives in Portland, while bassist Vern Rumsey and Trosper still live in Olympia. "It was really hard to get it together and actually get anything done," admits Trosper. Over the course of a year, however, Trosper coaxed his bandmates into recording enough material for two discs—something they'd always hoped to accomplish. And even though Fisk wasn't working on the album, he was still consigliere: "They called a few times, sounding panicked."

The home studio and self-production helped focus the band and retool their approach, giving birth to songs that are a bit of a departure for a band once mercilessly compared to Sonic Youth. A keyboard surge opens *Leaves* and what follows are psychedelictinged pop tracks ("Terminus," "One Lick Less"); krautrock diversions ("Radio Gra," with former drummer Sandeno leaning on the mellotron); and a few reminders of the sludgy, angular rock band that Unwound once was.

It's evident that Trosper has grown into a versatile songwriter. Asked if he ever considered going solo, he responds: "I can't do that. I really like interacting with other people. I'm more of a conversationalist and not a monologist when it comes to music... We're pretty lucky because we've lasted this long and allowed that kind of chemistry to evolve."

However, it's when he looks back on his accomplishments that he often feels most inspired to make more music—a whole lot more music. "I aspire to be one of those 70-year-old people that has 300 albums out. Yeah, he has a beard and he lives in a hole. He has 300 records out and he doesn't talk to anybody anymore." **NMM**





VERN RUMSEY, JUSTIN TROSPER, SARA LUND



Marlboro

Delta Force

Buddy Guy didn't want to record in the Mississippi hill country. But in feasting on some Fat Possum, he found a taste he'd been missing.

STORY: SCOTT FRAMPTON PHOTO: JEFF SCIORTINO

Buddy Guy is getting ready for one of the hundred-odd gigs he's scheduled to play this year, but he won't be road-testing any of the songs from his upcoming disc, *Sweet Tea*.

"No, I'm superstitious. I won't even listen to it. I don't even have a sample of it here with me," the 65-year-old says, his voice worn and smooth as a river stone. "Being from Louisiana, the only part I got in the voodoo and shit like that is I'm kind of superstitious. I can play, but if I knew how to make hit records, I'd have done had three or four."

Sweet Tea (Silvertone) was recorded in Oxford, Mississippi, in the studio of the same name, made famous as the place where Fat Possum got the juke-joint blues of R.L. Burnside, T-Model Ford and the late Junior Kimbrough, among others, on tape. Guy, whose recent records have been slick renderings of the 12-bar big-city blues sound that brings in the two-drink minimum crowds, wasn't sure about the idea of recording there.

"I almost told them I didn't want to go down and do that record. But you know, I got cheated out of 14, 15 years of recording" due to label problems in the '70s and '80s, he explains, "so I think I'd take a trip to the moon to record. Because I missed all of that. So when I went down, I said, 'I'm not going to like this, but I'll just go check it out.' And man, I got down there and started playing and listening to that stuff with them guys and said, 'This is the shit that I started with! What the hell do you mean you don't like this?' I just went crazy down there."

All it took was one listen to the guitar tone coming out of the studio's vintage gear: "I got an Edsel car, 1958, with the real metal

bumper and everything. All the new cars you see, I can push 'em, but I tear them up. An Edsel won't get hurt. And that's the kind of amplifiers and guitars and [mixing] board this guy [producer Dennis Herring] got down there in Mississippi."

Guy's one of the last surviving Chicago blues legends ("Otis Rush, he's not playing much, but he's still there, and you wouldn't believe it, man, but Pinetop Perkins, the keyboardist for Muddy Waters, is still living") and is rightly still revered as a player and showman. But it's been nearly 40 years since he sounded this intense on record, when songs like "Leave My Girl Alone" bore threat, desire and desperation. When Guy cuts loose on Junior Kimbrough's "Baby Please Don't Leave Me," Green Destiny guitar slicing through martial snare and godforsaken bass rumble, it's a reminder of how deliriously potent the real shit is.

"I've been missing this," he says, voice soft and reflective. "This is all I know how to do, is play. I didn't go around and say, 'I'm playing something different, I'm playing something new' or nothin'. This the Buddy Guy that's been Buddy Guy ever since I got off the train September 25th, 1957, in Chicago. But it took the Delta music to bring it out of me, because that's original Buddy Guy."

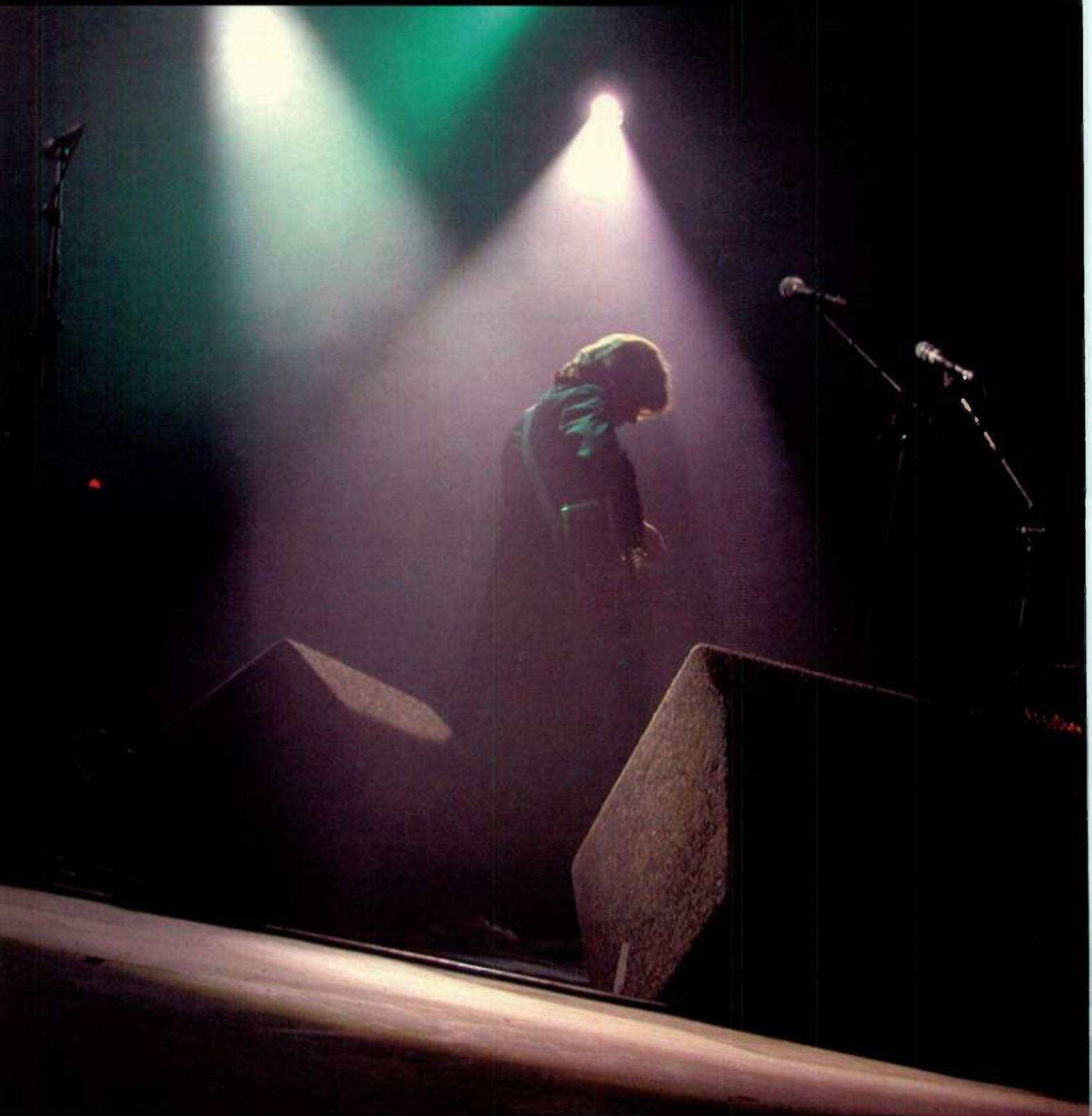
One thing is different: He's not 21 anymore. *Sweet Tea* even starts off with an acoustic version of Kimbrough's "Done Got Old," which suits Guy, if not everyone in his life. "I have some girlfriends that's been following me around for awhile, who looked at me and said, 'Buddy, you not old.' I say, 'Shit, when do you get old?'" **MMM**

 **ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD**

Think Different! Think Sexy!

Air wants artistic adventure, commercial success and your love. C'est possible, no?

STORY: PIOTR ORLOV PHOTOS: PETE BEDDOW



Air's new single, "Radio #1," has come both to praise commercial radio and to bury it. At a mid-tempo stroll, Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoit Dunckel celebrate the FM band's glory in vocoder-digitized English ("If you need some fun—Radio #1") as loudly as they denounce its limitations ("When your kids reject musical trash—Radio #1"), in a mixed message that makes a lot of sense coming from this French duo. Few musicians today better understand the chains of the commercial market and the need to break them for artistic purposes.

Discussing the track while sitting in Manhattan's SoHo Grand hotel, Godin winds into a discourse about the repetitiveness of commercial radio. "They want the people to take their thoughts, buy the record, not necessarily like it—that's the problem. So nowadays songs are commercials. Sometimes [people] do commercial things [that] are very good. OutKast, Eminem, Timbaland do some interesting things." However, Godin looks to another age for inspiration: "The era of *Purple Rain*, the time [when] people were being creative in an artistic way, but used in a commercial way."

This paradoxical focus has become Godin and Dunckel's *raison d'être*. Their retro-futuristic mixture of plastic Philly soul, interstellar Floydian spacescapes and saccharine Bacharach melodies expanded the language of global pop and brought forth critical hosannas. It also found a comfortable home in make-up ads and Hollywood films, and enough of a budding audience to whet its record company's appetite for a mainstream hit.

Godin, however, remains dedicated to the more creative side of commercialism. "We have the talent to compose maybe more mainstream music, [but] we don't do it because we believe it is not the right choice."

In many ways, these are the worlds Air was always meant to bridge, ever since Godin and Dunckel grew up in the "artistic but bourgeois" environment of the Parisian suburb Versailles, affected by pop stars (the Beatles, David Bowie, the Cure) with capital "A" Art aspirations. After stints in architecture school (Godin), music conservatory (Dunckel) and divergent careers, they reconvened in their hometown to try their hand at music. Source



JEAN-BENOIT DUNCKEL

Records' Marc Teissier du Cros, a friend in the midst of Paris's mid-'90s dance uprising, suggested they submit the sun-splashed ambient-soul head-nodder "Modular Mix" to the label's (now) highly influential first *SourceLab* comp, and *voilà!*

From that moment on, Air's metaphorical star has had little time to wane: A handful of 12-inch singles swept global lounges, 1998's *Moon Safari* LP went top-10 in numerous countries and sold more than 100,000 copies in the U.S. Remixes by Beck, DJ Cam and Cassius soon followed, cementing Godin and Dunckel as made men in the art-pop mafia. Later, Sofia Coppola beckoned them to do a score for her film, *The Virgin Suicides*.

The darkness and complexity of Air's sophomore effort, *10,000 Hz. Legend* (Source-Astralwerks), weighs the band's helium textures with more melancholy than ever before. A brooding dust-bowl vocal by the aforementioned Mr. Hansen on "The Vagabond" (think Air producing a *Mutations* track), creepily hushed electro ("Lucky & Unhappy") and the album's aptly titled motorik-beat roadrunner "Don't Be Light" all illustrate that this isn't *musique du soleil*. The album is diversity as a forced artistic march, where the rhythm reflects, in Dunckel's words, "the mood of the song" and that "the range of emotion is a way to life."

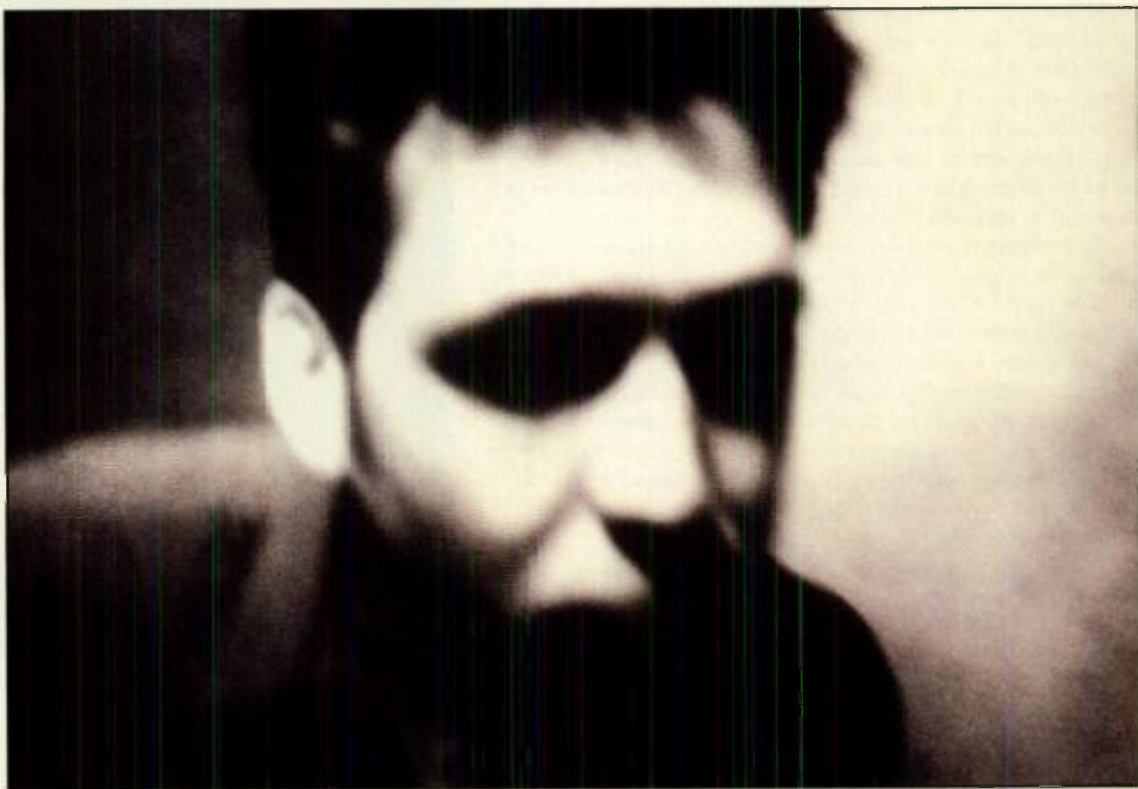
Such reinvention should probably not be a surprise coming from musicians with such disparate affinities as hip-hop and surf music. One of Air's most obvious predecessors, Brian Wilson, faced much commercial consternation when he tried to turn the Beach Boys' pop into art: "Wilson made some genius things and people used to say, 'Oh, it's a boy band,'" cries Godin. "I am sad for him, because he deserved more."

Yet, today, as in the '60s, sales do the talking. One age's surf-pop pretentiousness is another's celebrated sound. When asked what effect Air's commercial success might have on an industry bent on conveyor-belt hit-making, Dunckel offers a bit of hopeful pride: "We do our own thing, we just show the way, and we can say to people, 'Hey, do it yourself.' It sounds very sensitive, like an Apple ad. 'Think Different!' 'Think Sexy!'"

And what will they do with the money they make? "We will create an organization, the Fight Against International Karaoke." **NMM**







Regarding Henry

Joe Henry's top-10 hit for Madonna means more to his dental plan than to his art.

STORY: SCOTT FRAMPTON PHOTOS: MELANIE NISSENS

Whe did pretty well, and I congratulate you," Joe Henry deadpans, referring to the fact that one whole side of a 90-minute tape has been exhausted before I ask about Madonna. "It's a 12-step program for people like you, I can imagine."

His aforementioned sister-in-law made a top-10 hit of his tune "Don't Tell Me," which provides an easy hook for the story of Henry's new record, *Scar* (Mammoth). Never mind that the record features jazz legend Ornette Coleman. Never mind that it shows Henry is developing into one of the truly original voices in American music.

"Believe me, it's not something I'm unaware of," he says. "When I found myself recording that song," which appears on *Scar* under the title "Stop," "I was already aware that there was an angle that somebody at some point, in my own camp, would be playing. I decided that I was still allowed to record a song that I had written and that people would hear it a different way because of that, because that's part of the world I live in. It's all been good for me.

"I hear her on the radio, and to me, it's just the sound of my children's teeth straightening."



ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

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Scar is an interesting record, both for its moody, cinematic feel and for Henry's way of drawing wayward characters with a single line, and because there's no easy way to describe it. Hence, "interesting." Henry's music has evolved, not steadily, but in leaps, from the rock 'n' roll of *Shuffletown* through two spare, country-influenced albums, *Short Man's Room* and *Kindness Of The World*, to his more rhythmic recent works, *Trampoline* and *Fuse*, where genres are macerated by an album's particular vision. It's as much about setting as sound, and the results seldom come with a simple explanation.

"When people who don't know what I do ask me what I do, I'm at a loss as to what to tell them, not because I'm being overly sly. I just don't know what to call it," he says in a voice that's direct and girded with politeness, belying his quick wit.

"My theory has always been that people growing up when I grew up, we have had the opportunity to hear all kinds of music. If you grew up in the Delta, that's what a guitar sounded like. But we've grown up hearing everything, and it becomes a part of your own stew that you can't get out of, even if you wanted to. The influences are so varied, they're so subversive that they come up when you least expect them."

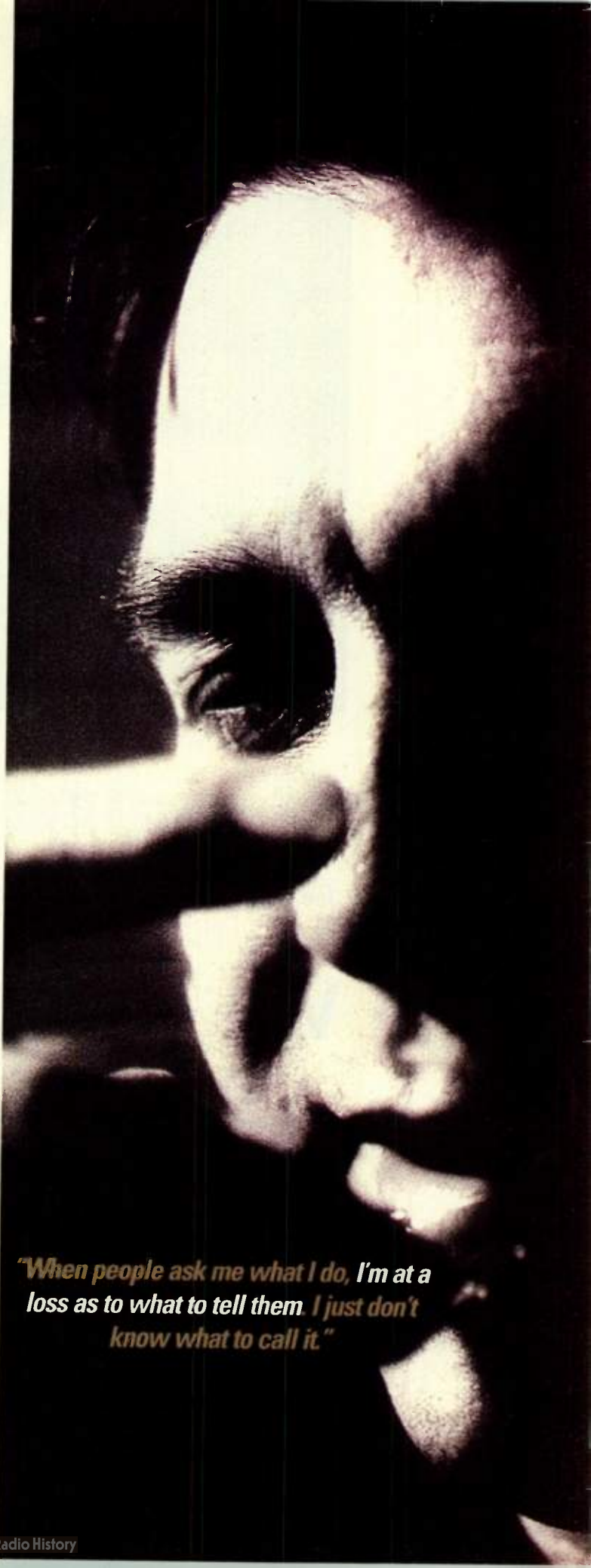
For Scar, the influences manifest themselves in a sort of think-tank lounge music, with long chalkboard equations rendered as downtempo pop. "Richard Pryor Addresses A Tearful Nation" rolls in like a fog, Henry's voice naked amid what, until three minutes into the song, seems more like instruments resonating than someone actually playing them. It sets the tone for the record, where the scratch and whisper of Henry's voice bobs and weaves through cool jazz, film-score strings and pensive R&B rhythms. Hence, "interesting."

Henry usually arrives at this kind of mix through home-studio experimentation, building demos that sometimes develop into release-worthy tracks and often inviting in players such as former Helmet frontman Page Hamilton to round out the sound. After working on some "very serious demos" for Scar in the guest house behind his South Pasadena, California, home, however, the record was largely tracked live in the studio, for which Henry recruited "the best musicians I've ever been in a room with: Marc Ribot [guitar], Brian Blade [drums] and Brad Mehldau [piano], and Dave Pilch [bass], Abe Laborial Jr. [drums]..." And then, essentially, he turned them loose.

"I have no interest in trying to get them to play what I've already played," he explains. "I already know what that is. I want them to understand the form and tone of the song and then ignore what I've done as much as possible. A recording session is 'This is how this group of people played this song on this particular day.' If we'd done them in a different order, they'd have been completely different."

It's in this way that Henry isn't just making records, he's chasing down a mystery. He's enraptured with the recording ("I enjoy making records more than any other part of my job") and gushes about engineer Husky Hoskulds's use of room noise in crafting the record's sound. And yet, he's willing to let go in the name of discovery. At any point, what he's creating is inseparable from how and why he's creating it.

"The more you work, the more you find out about it. At the same time, the more mysterious The Process becomes. I didn't make that up. Flannery O'Connor said that a long time ago. She said, 'The longer I write, the more mysterious the whole process is to me.' And I think there's a certain part of that that's really true for me. The more I understand about it, the more I realize there's something mysterious at play that you can either embrace or reject. I have a great respect for the mystery involved."



"When people ask me what I do, I'm at a loss as to what to tell them. I just don't know what to call it."

There's mystery in *The Process*, and then there's the mystery of Ornette Coleman, who revolutionized jazz (the battle's still waging) in the late '50s and early '60s by improvising freely, more concerned with mood and emotion than chords and harmony, and later with his harmolodic music in the early '70s. Coleman's not exactly a recluse, but he isn't on Ken Burns's AOL Buddy List, either, and how he arrived on the scene with a plastic saxophone to rethink jazz is anybody's guess.

"At first he said no," says Henry of getting Coleman to play on the record. "I got a very polite response from a third party saying, 'Thanks, but no thank you. He understands that you're a very earnest and sincere musician but he just doesn't do that sort of thing.' Fair enough, that's pretty much the response I expected. A short time later I heard back that he'd listened to my work and felt a kinship to it and was delighted to be involved. It was that easy."

Plenty of rock musicians have coaxed jazz or blues legends to play on their records, usually by waving cash in front of them, but the collaboration seldom results in more than an incongruous solo played in between the second and third verses. Henry sent Coleman a nearly finished version of "Richard Pryor Addresses A Tearful Nation," and Coleman "sat at home and played to it for a couple of weeks, trying to get inside the song."

Henry, who's all about *The Process*, then "spent a number of hours in his apartment the day before our session, where we kind of talked about everything under the sun—not only music and not only the music we were about to work on. We spent an hour where I just sang and he played. He didn't want his part to

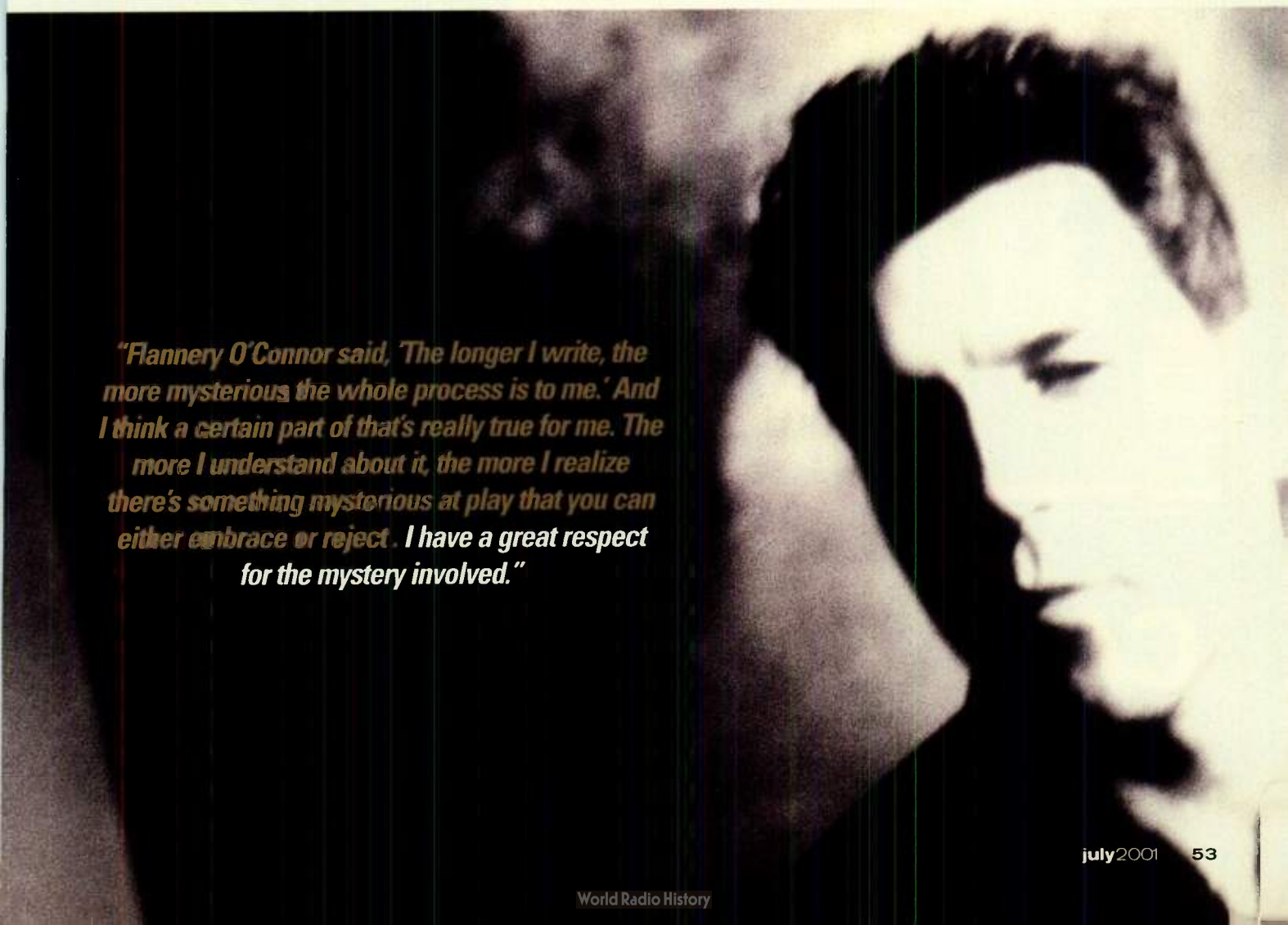
feel like, 'OK, you sing and then someone takes a solo.' He was trying to understand my phrasing. He wanted it to feel like an extension of my breath."

"The song doesn't exist without him anymore," he says, revealing more about what drives Joe Henry to make music than about how the song came together. "What he plays is the purest, most emotional blues I've ever heard played, on mine—on anybody's record. It absolutely strikes me as, profoundly, an essence of just exactly what the song is. The emotional content of the song is every bit in what he plays. My lyric could disappear, almost. It's completely there for me."

The song could take on a life of its own, living it up in a French disco as conceived by Madonna, or maybe a willing public will wrap its head around something this beautifully elegiac and it will become an anthem of the dispossessed. Neither of which matters as much as, "It's completely there for me."

Henry was "legally encouraged" to contact Richard Pryor's people about the song. He felt it was his First Amendment right to write a song about someone, and fought it. But *The Process* moves in mysterious ways, and his efforts to get clearances led to a copy of the song reaching Pryor, who heard it and responded as Henry relates, "Not, 'Who are you to speak for me?' But 'I understood.'"

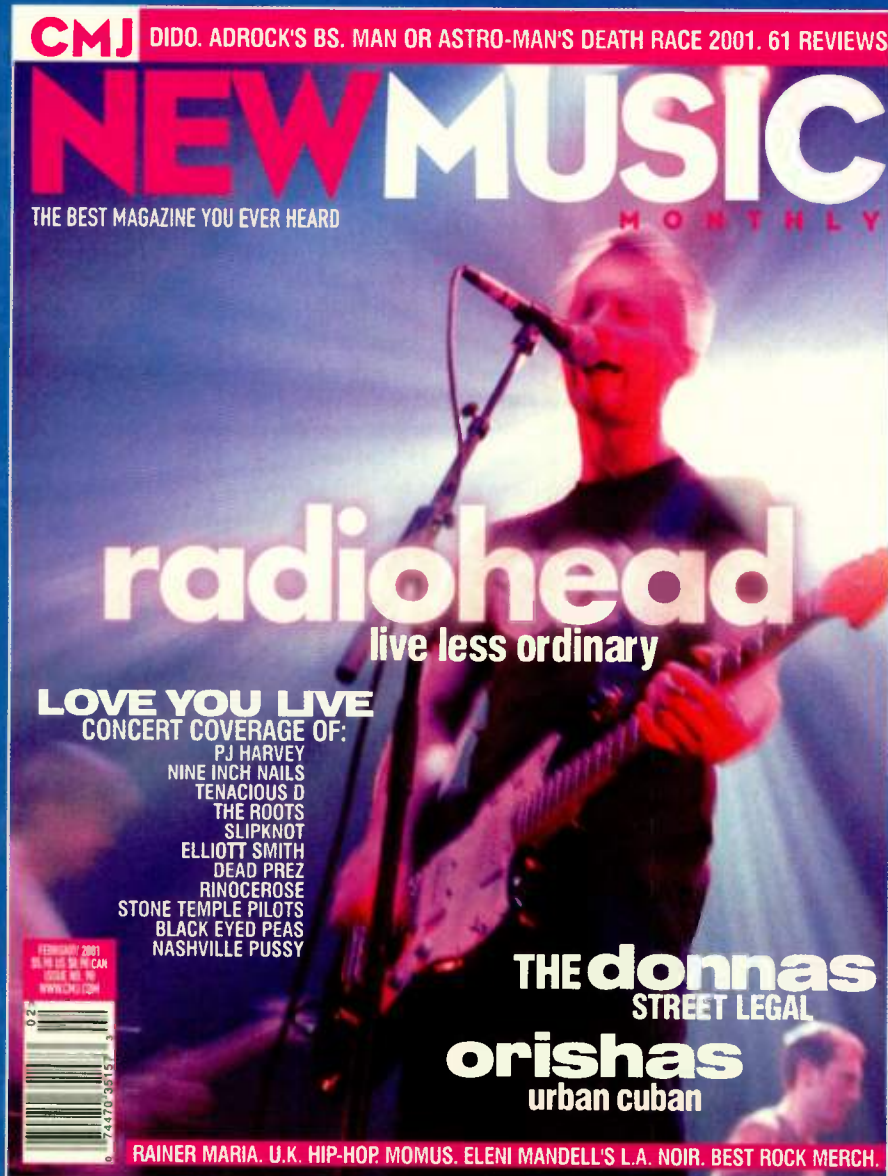
"You can't imagine how significant I found that," he says, less wryly this time, of the providence of fame landing another glancing blow. "It resonated very deeply within me and it made me feel that things had come very full circle in *The Process* when I knew that he had heard it and had been very moved by it." **NMM**



"Flannery O'Connor said, 'The longer I write, the more mysterious the whole process is to me.' And I think a certain part of that's really true for me. The more I understand about it, the more I realize there's something mysterious at play that you can either embrace or reject. I have a great respect for the mystery involved."

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Disorderly Conduct

Vision Of Disorder bailed on being hardcore heroes. But after three years of working shitty day jobs, they're back for one thing: the music.



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STORY: LORNE BEHRMAN PHOTOS: BOB GREEN



Like most hardcore bands, Long Island's Vision Of Disorder began in a suburban garage. Unlike most, the band of five 16-year-olds actually made a rumble outside of that garage.

By the time the guys in V.O.D. were in their early 20s, they had sold 100,000 records, played with Korn, Sepultura, Pantera and Anthrax, toured with *Ozzfest '97*, and influenced a subgenre of metal-loving hardcore bands. In 1998, they walked away from it all for three years: no tours, not even local shows, and no new music. The band had become frustrated with everything—their label (Roadrunner), their music, their success and themselves. They decided it was time to start over.

"You had years of being on a label and touring and it's back to square one," says bassist Mike Fleischmann. "Playing every day with the bad band in the studio next door to you and you're just like them, just like the 15-year-olds playing bad songs next door."

The implosion occurred when V.O.D. was on tour in Australia. "Emotionally, we were completely distraught. We were going to break up," guitarist Mike Kennedy remembers. "We had no money, two records in and a decent amount sold and nothing to our name, all I had was \$6 in my pocket and no place to live."

It's 6 p.m. on a chilly spring Tuesday, and all five guys are sitting around what looks like a big wooden picnic table in an East Village Irish pub across the street from the offices of their new label,TVT Records. Like typical hardcore heads, they wear flannels, loose-fitting pants, and T-shirts or sweatshirts. There's a strange mix of ball-busting in-crowd jocularly and distrust of the writer guy in the air. Vision Of Disorder's new album, *From Bliss To Devastation*, is the first the band has conceived without much concern for staying true to its hardcore roots, and that's something the band is a little nervous about.

"I'm not going to dis hardcore. We did well and it was our younger years—we'd still play for them if they wanted. But I

don't think they want us to play for them anymore," vocalist Tim Williams defends ruefully. Fleischmann opens up: "By being part of the whole hardcore scene and trying to fit in, we were afraid to experiment. Now that we got off [Roadrunner], we realized we're full-grown men who know how to play our instruments... Let's write music we really like, that reflects what we really listen to, rather than trying to fit ourselves in somewhere and please other people."

The disc sounds a little like stoner-metal gods Kyuss; it's spacious with warm psychedelic ambience and a sludgy, throbbing pulse. There are traces of the V.O.D. of yore, especially in the guitars. The trademark jarring noise figures and spiraling metal riffage remain, but the rhythm section has traded in its blast beats for deep, hulking grooves. Williams sings in an accomplished rich, resounding baritone. It's a sound that could easily fit on hard-rock radio between Godsmack and Creed, which is a far cry from the Vision Of Disorder that began in the garage.

Guitarists Kennedy and Matt Baumbach were introduced by a mutual friend who knew they both loved Metallica. Kennedy had known Williams since they were

five, and they were best friends until a falling out around 10th grade. Baumbach heard Williams was a singer and convinced Kennedy to get over the past.

"And it took me three tryouts to get into their fuckin' garage band. I had to come back three times. I got in with [Iron Maiden's] 'The Trooper,'" Williams says with good-natured resentment. Kennedy affirms proudly: "We were cheesy and young, and we grew together. We became this unit from 'The Trooper.'"

In 1996, V.O.D. issued its self-titled debut, a lacquered collection of Sunday-matinee fist-pumpers its creators dismissed almost as soon as it came out. "The thing you always hear us being unhappy about is the actual recording itself. We wrote good songs but the energy is not there," Baumbach explains.

"We had no money, two records in and a decent amount sold and nothing to our name, all I had was \$6 in my pocket and no place to live."



Ray Cappo, vocalist with hardcore mainstays Shelter, first heard V.O.D. when they were just an opening act. At the time, Shelter was on Roadrunner and the label had given Cappo his own imprint, Supersoul Records, which later released V.O.D.'s debut. "With that record, they impressed a lot of people, whether they think so [or not]... I thought it was groundbreaking. They were big on Long Island, but they weren't big [elsewhere]," Cappo explains. "Bands like Earth Crisis and Snapcase had been playing for years, hard, slow, metal-ish hardcore. And to an outsider, V.O.D. came along and in one record were either co-headlining or headlining over those bands. They made a lot of progress quick."

But they were artistically frustrated. When they returned from Ozzfest four years ago, they vented with producer Dave Sardy, known for his blood-raw work with Slayer. In 19 days, they cut *Imprint*, a jagged, rusty razorblade of an album. Mike Gitter, longtime hardcore scene vet and V.O.D. A&R man at the time, says, "Could *Imprint* take it to another level? No, it was too ballistic a record. It was the most out-of-control Jesus-Lizard-meets-Black-Flag-meets-Pantera-on-fire fucking record. People always describe the two records as follows: The first record had the anthems, the songs that really got the kids going, and the second was much more introspective, both lyrically and musically. I think they needed to combine those two records."

From Bliss To Devastation isn't a combination so much as a document of a band finding itself. Since the beginning, Vision Of Disorder never adhered to hardcore purism. Early on, vocalist Tim Williams employed delay and other vocal effects to achieve a shivery sing/scream style unheard of at the time. The guys sported Iron Maiden and Metallica T-shirts while metal and hardcore were still mutually exclusive. And they espoused a Doors-influenced mind-altering diet of intoxicants when beer and Coke were the fuel of skins and straightedgers, respectively.

In 1998, the band vanished. They asked Roadrunner to free them from their contract, fired their manager and spent time regrouping. "No one was emotionally or mentally ready for any level of success back then—there



"We were in the studio, listening to the vocals. Mike looked at his arms and the hairs on his arms were standing up."

wasn't enough experience, and the music wasn't up to par or we would have made it anyway."

Williams got a job building houses on Long Island and began taking voice lessons. The day job "gave me a taste of reality, what could happen if you don't play good music. Not to dis anybody who has a real job, but I'm here to make music. That's why I took all my vocal lessons, that's why I went all out on the vocals for this record," he says with conviction. Those swallow-my-pride feelings surface on "Southbound," about getting up at 6:15 in the morning and going to work in the freezing cold.

With matured songwriting and much-improved vocals, V.O.D. cut a demo. "The demo we did gave everybody a little jump in the ass," Williams says. "We were in the studio, listening to my vocals. Mike [Kennedy] looked at his arms and the hairs on his arms were standing up."

The band posted the tune "On The Table" on Farmclub.com and won "Featured Unsigned Band" status.

"Everyone was like, 'Whoa, they're back,' and out of nowhere these votes started coming in. It was a long time, it was three years and seeing that actually people did still care..." Baumbach trails off. In 18 hours (Baumbach timed it), "On The Table" was on Napster, and soon after, New Jersey metal station WSOU had downloaded the track and put it in rotation, where it quickly became the station's third most requested song, behind Nothingface and Soulfly.

Then TVT got the band's demos and signed V.O.D. Mark II. Baumbach reflects: "Even though we had to go through the hardships of actually getting jobs, for music, it opened up our band to do whatever the hell we wanted to do. Nothing mattered anymore; you reach that point in your career—'Why am I here?' It's the same reason why you joined the band on day one: to play music." **NMM**



MATT BAUMBACH, MIKE KENNEDY, MIKE FLEISCHMANN, TIM WILLIAMS, BRENDON COHEN


The Devil



and Mr. Molko

For Placebo, what's left after leaving a trail of blood and spunk all over England? Ping-pong.

STORY: TOM MALLON PHOTOS: BOB GREEN

 ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



“Look into my eyes. I’m not Satan.”

Admittedly, curled up on a couch at New York’s Soho Grand Hotel, legs drawn up to his slight frame and bleary with a mild hangover, Placebo frontman Brian Molko does not look much like Satan. The only red in his eyes comes from their being bloodshot, and the only fire issuing from his mouth comes from a never-ending stream of Marlboro Lights. But once upon a time, he says, a reporter from England’s *NME* wrote that when she was alone with him, she was looking into the eyes of the devil.

Back then, Molko described Placebo tours as “a trail of blood and spunk all over the country.” He openly admitted to doing every drug that came his way. He shot up speed and crack. (“It was dangerously nice,” he told *NME* of the latter.) He engaged in frequent and questionable sex. A year and a half later, he told *Select* that he “fucked himself empty.”

Today, it’s a whole different story: There’s been very little in the way of satanic rock ‘n’ roll debauchery. No substances have been abused. Placebo has not only failed to be actively rude, they’re quite polite. Nice, even. The famously ornery Molko hasn’t talked an ounce of shit. To top it all off, they spent last night carousing with Boy George and are only *mildly* hung over. This band is not known for doing anything—much less drinking—mildly.

Shortly after they settle in, bassist Stefan Olsdal produces a vial of pills and offers some to Molko, who eagerly pops a few—now we're getting somewhere.

"Fantastic vitamins," Molko says. Oh.

Today, any hopes for scandal will be thwarted. There will be no sex, no drugs, and the rock 'n' roll will have a message. The evolution of England's most disreputable band has taken an interesting turn—meet Placebo Mark II.

It wasn't always this way. In 1997, Placebo's breakthrough single, "Nancy Boy," was a mascara-smearing kick in the nuts to the Britpop status quo, rife with tales of sordid sex and drug abuse. It stuck out like a sore middle finger at No. 4 on the U.K. charts, with lyrics like "Different partner every night/ So narcotic outta sight/ What a gas, what a beautiful ass" standing in stark contrast to the bouncy melodies of Blur and the grandiose rock of the Verve.

However, it was Molko's offstage antics that made the biggest splash. He dressed like a girl (and a cute one at that) and made no secret of his bisexuality and wild extracurricular activities. The British press ate it up: *Kerrang* championed him as an "immoral, drug-loving slut." *Select* dubbed him a "drug-crazed sex dwarf." Brian Molko's dirty laundry became the stuff of rock legend.

Meanwhile, Placebo set about blowing up, receiving their American introduction through an appearance in Todd Haynes' glam tribute *Velvet Goldmine* and the success of the infectious single "Pure Morning" (whose opening lyric, "A friend in need's a friend indeed/ A friend with weed is better," only added to their reputation). Around the release of their second record, the noisy, despondent *Without You I'm Nothing*, Brian Molko found he was a little tired of being Brian Molko.

"What kind of cartoon character have we become?" Molko

remembers in mock angst. "It was like that. Opening up a music magazine and going, 'That's not me.'" Shortly after that, the sex dwarf packed up shop and the life of Brian became off-limits.

"You have to have a healthy distance, you have to have a personal life, you have to keep it private," he says of his decision to shut his mouth. "Otherwise you go nuts. You go absolutely nuts. I was just young and naïve. I wasn't really aware of the effect that type of honesty was going to have."

This morning, the Brian Molko slouched on the sofa doesn't have much in common with the pale-faced demon in the British press. He's lopped off his girlish bob and looks very much like a man; the cocktails that once held permanent residency in his hand have been replaced by a glass of Evian. He is animated and friendly, but cautious—you can tell he's thinking before he speaks. Several questions about his drug heyday are met with a diplomatic, "I think it's best not to go into details." As for what kept him from becoming a rock 'n' roll suicide, he's cryptic: "Thankfully, there were people that were very close to me who grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and went, 'Listen, you're my buddy, I love you and I don't want you to disappear. You keep going the way you've been going, you're not going to be around much longer.'"

This newfound maturity spilled over into their third record, *Black Market Music* (Virgin). It updates their sound by bathing their signature mix of Nirvana-esque rockers and fractured, doom-laden ballads in a wash of Sonic Youth-style noise and subtle electronics, but the lyrics show the most development: For the first time, Molko is looking outside himself, tackling subjects like politics and racism. In a move indicative of his desire for privacy, he's started using characters in his songs—*Black Market Music* should not be read as "Brian's Diary."



**"What kind of
cartoon character
have we
become?"**

STEVE HEWITT

"It's autobiography tempered with fiction," Molko says. "It's more interesting to tell a story than to just lay yourself completely bare. I think you can listen to it for longer because it's not like, 'Oh it's not his head again!' It needs to walk that fine line between telling a story and washing your dirty laundry in public."

In the oddest twist of all, the man who once wrote the lyric "Alcoholic kind of mood, lose my clothes, lose my lube" is now promoting moderation. Over the nursery-rhyme music of "Commercial For Levi," Molko pleads with an out-of-control friend, saying, "If you don't change your situation/ Then you'll die... don't die." Later, on the sparse "Narcoleptic," he urges, "You'd better keep it in check or you'll end up a wreck/ And you'll never wake up." If *Without You I'm Nothing* was, as he describes it, the "post-coital depression record," the crash after the high, does that make *Black Market Music* "Placebo Goes To Rehab?"

"No, this is like when the hangover ceases," Molko says, stubbing out a cigarette. "The comedown is over, and you wake up and you're a bit more sober. You start to look around and go, 'What's going on here? What the fuck is going on on this planet? Wait a minute, there's loads of shit and injustice and violence and racism and horrible things around me, and I've just been getting caned—getting wasted—for five years.' This is the angry record."

That awakening fostered Placebo's new political focus. The band speaks excitedly about their latest rock-star fixation—charity gigs. In one of the few times he speaks, Olsdal mentions taking part in a recent protest in favor of registered partnerships for gays in Spain, and Molko rattles off a list of causes they've joined lately, including Jubilee 2000 and Drop The Debt. "We'd like to get involved with Tibet," drummer Steve Hewitt chimes in. When it's suggested that this sudden interest in social responsibility

could be perceived as image manufacture, Molko bristles.

"Don't care. Could not give a fuck," he spits. "We've developed a really thick skin. We have a strong identity, we are comfortable with who we are. We believe, and we care, and if you think we're calculated and careerist about it, then fuck you."

Molko credits the band's priority shift to being older and wiser. "[It's] just a learning curve. The workload got bigger and the responsibility got bigger. You don't want to let your fans down by being the same dickhead who gets fucked up before a gig and doesn't deliver a hundred percent. Being a very tight unit and professional as possible is a priority. It doesn't mean we don't have fun anymore—"

"That's just never going to happen," Hewitt interrupts, laughing.

"—it's just tempered with a bit more moderation," Molko concludes.

"We've got a new sport," Hewitt chuckles mischievously. Led Zeppelin-esque images fill the mind. Pleasuring groupies with fish? Throwing baloney at tied-up fans?

"Ping-pong," he deadpans.

"After five years of being on tour you learn what you can do to keep yourself out of trouble," Molko says. "Hence the ping-pong."

Hewitt and Olsdal make their way off to makeup, and I'm finally alone with Molko. Before we part, I ask if he's having more fun since shifting the focus away from himself. He nods. "Maybe it's because I'm becoming less of an egotist," he laughs. "Because I was a bit of one, for a while."

He pauses and assumes a confidential tone, barely concealing a smile.

"I was a bit of a dick." **NMM**



"When you're a bit more sober, you start to look around and go, 'Wait a minute, there's loads of shit and injustice and violence and racism and horrible things around me, and I've just been getting wasted for five years.'"

STEFAN OLSDAL



YELLOW

STORY: SMITH GALTNEY

PHOTOS: CHRIS BUCK


A smash single and a soaring falsetto have focused the lime-light on the everyguy lads in



Coldplay. Will pop stardom ruin what's become the band's most endearing and annoying offstage quality: niceness?



FEVER

 ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

To snap a photo of where Coldplay is right now, you might focus on their first U.S. television performance on *Saturday Night Live* last April, where the band played their sleeper pop smash, "Yellow," and drew a bigger round of applause than the evening's host, Alec Baldwin. Or you might wait until the end of the show, when the bandmembers were receiving on-air embraces from not-ready-for-prime-time players like Ana Gasteyer and Jimmy Fallon, when the lads' faces reflected something between starstruck and bored to tears.

Then again, you could sneak a camera into the show's invite-only after party, where Coldplay didn't turn a single head as they were whisked to a V.I.P. area; fans who were screaming their heads off a few hours earlier didn't even glance over. Once beyond the velvet rope, it seemed like the four guys—who are all in their early- to mid-20s and who met in a residence hall in London's University College four years ago—would have preferred to grab a beer and hang by the bar.

Or you might train the lens on Coldplay's frontman, Chris Martin, who's been working so hard that throat problems forced the band to cancel a spring tour of Europe. They halted a New York gig in February after a song and a half, as Meg Ryan and Melissa Etheridge watched from the balcony, eager to catch an early glimpse of Britain's next, next big thing. (On doctor's orders, the eagerly chatty Martin didn't speak or sing for six weeks after that show, participating in band meetings by writing his contributions down on paper.)

"I can sing," declared Martin at the make-up show two months later, before breaking out a song called "Don't Panic" and blowing the hell out of his harmonica. The beautiful people were out for this night, too, as evidenced by *Rolling Stone* cover chick Julia Stiles nodding along to "Yellow" and other anthems from *Parachutes* (Nettwerk-Capitol).

Instead, we'll begin with a close-up confession of sorts, granted by Martin while enjoying an orange smoothie in the lobby of the Parker Meridian hotel in Manhattan. "You've caught me at a really confusing time, man," he says, referring to that moment after a singer/songwriter sells enough records to be considered a pop star—to be famous to the famous.



"My head is... trying to figure out what my priorities are. Like whether you should feel bad about spending so much time on whether or not the bass is too loud on that song—and there's people who don't have enough to eat." He stops himself. "I know this is coming across as really earnest and a bit Live Aid, but I'm trying to work out what's important. I'm just obsessed with doing something of worth. I'm obsessed with making our next record the best record ever... ever."

That and making it a foolproof cure for global crises: "Like if George W. Bush and China put on some Coldplay and went, 'Let's be friends.' That would be nice." Hold on, he's not quite done yet. "Sometimes I sit down, and I think, 'Wicked! I'm doing what I set out to do when I was 13. And I'm going to keep doing it and get better and better.'" He rubs his palm over the bristles of his freshly buzzed brown hair. "And I'm going to marry a supermodel. Or somebody like Kirsten Dunst."

So, Martin's agenda is to (a) create meaningful music, (b) cure the world's problems and (c) get hitched to the big screen's latest teen queen? Not entirely out of the realm of possibility, considering this young man's got a great way with pop hooks, eyes that are blue and wide and adorably skewed, and endearingly Austin Powers-like teeth.

"Between you and me and your readers, I had this experience the other day, which just made my life. I can't tell you what it is, but I remember when I was 16 and thinking, 'That would be cool to do.'" This tease is clearly relishing the moment. "Well, I did it the other day. And it was good."

With that, Martin returns to his smoothie. So was it a romantic experience? Slurp, slurp. Okay, did you get to jam with one of your heroes? More slurping. "It just made me think that anything is possible," he says, patting his pouty lips with a napkin. "Anything is possible."

Of course, Coldplay's meteoric rise might have already let him know that anything is possible. Only three years after playing their first gig in London, the band has managed to accomplish what no British rock band has done in America since Oasis released "Wonderwall" six years ago: make a pop hit. Sure, Radiohead ruled on the Billboard album chart, but Coldplay's got the buzz single. Thanks to heavy rotation of the video on MTV and VH-1, "Yellow" is omnipresent enough to earn a slot on *Now That's What I Call Music! 6*—the K-Tel-style hits bonanza that debuted at No. 1 and features all the usual pop suspects, from Britney to Destiny to Shaggy. Even weirder, the tune was pimped in a prime-time campaign for ABC's winter lineup. (The network's color is yellow, after all, and hearing Martin croon, "Look at the stars/ Look how they shine for you" does make for an uncanny tagline.)

Conducting one of his first interviews since he started speaking again several days ago, Chris Martin seems equally excited and paranoid, talkative and tentative. His voice is just above a whisper, and every time he opens his mouth, he's careful to lean into the tape recorder. "I now realize why people like Bono talk so quietly all the time," he says. "Otherwise, they'll be fucked." It seems he's taken a line from "Yellow" to heart—the one that goes, "For you I'd bleed myself dry." Since last October, Martin and the band have been working overtime to please both their newfound fans in the States and their growing legions of devotees back home, the ones who made *Parachutes* debut at No. 1 on the British charts. Martin was unknowingly putting his instrument through the ringer, singing straight through Christmas out on the road and in the studio.

Explains Martin, "We're just learning to survive in the position that we're in because we didn't realize we were in it. I still think of us as a band that should be playing in that corner," he says, pointing

to an art-deco cubbyhole inside the hotel that looks more suitable for loungecore has-beens. "At the same time, it's like we're trying to become U2 about 10 records too early."

The comparison to Dublin's reigning pride and joy might confuse those who haven't heard Coldplay. Anybody who listens to *Parachutes* is likely to tell you one of two things: That Jon Buckland's celestial axe-picking reminds them of Radiohead, and that Martin's voice, which rises from an open-hearted whisper to a soaring falsetto and back again, invokes the ghost of Jeff Buckley. But if all goes according to plan, Coldplay might be the new U2 in a few years, provided the moon and stars continue to align in the band's favor and the Supreme Being isn't in the mood for practical jokes.

Even though their songs are primarily concerned with matters of the heart, the band admits they've become more sensitive to social and political issues in the past several months. "Until recently, none of us really understood the extent to which our music affects people," says drummer Will Champion, who's got a half-grown beard and a mouth that gives one the impression he's perpetually sucking in his bottom lip. "Like when you start getting letters saying how much your album helped me through this and that. And bands who are popular do have a certain amount of responsibility—they're in a position to change things for the better. And bizarre as it is, we're in that position."

"It's weird," adds Buckland with a nervous chuckle, as if he can't quite picture himself and his college mates signing peace proclamations at the UN. "It's slightly wrong." He lets out another laugh before correcting himself. "Actually, it's very wrong."

As the conversation continues on this cold, rainy Friday afternoon in Manhattan, I imply that the *Now That's What I Call Music!* series is American, when, in fact, it was born in Britain back in the mid-'80s.

"That's ours," jokes bassist Guy Berryman.

"I remember getting *Now 3* when I was a kid," recalls Buckland. "It had Ray Parker, Jr. on it, I think."

"Yeah, 'Ghostbusters!'" erupts Champion.

"But it also had a weird song by the Jesus And Mary Chain," Buckland continues. "It didn't fit in at all, but it was really good."

Obviously warm to the idea of being pop diamonds in the rough, the guys in Coldplay aren't immune to fostering their own fantasies of turning unsuspecting kids on to whole new worlds, of inspiring that proverbial teen in Idaho to seek out albums like the Flaming Lips' *Soft Bulletin*, Neil Young's *Harvest*, Tom Waits's *Blue Valentine*, the Beatles' *Revolver* and Dylan's *Blood On The Tracks*—all of which the band kept close by while recording *Parachutes*. But there's nothing about this well-mannered group that screams of rock-star ego-tripping—a circumstance that has led the British music press to label them as "nice guys" (i.e. "boring"). One former manager of Oasis even went so far as to declare Coldplay as "bed-wetters' music... the band you're supposed to like if you're a student."

"There's lots of misconceptions about us," insists Champion. "Like none of us smoke, drink or swear." Or how all of them come from stuffy, upper-class burghs like Oxford and Cambridge. (Of course authentic English rock bands are supposed to have working-class roots.) Then there's the fact that Coldplay's frontman doesn't do drugs or make salacious comments that beg to be taken out of context.

"We get slagged off because there's nothing to write about us," says Buckland. "Most of the bad reviews I read aren't even about our music. Chris takes it to heart a lot because a lot of it's leveled at him. Because he's the frontman, and he's come to stand for what we are."

A small, private vindication came in early January, though,



when Coldplay were playing the U.K.'s Big Day Out festival with bands like Rammstein and PJ Harvey, and they came face-to-face with (the pre-hiatus) At The Drive-In, a group the Brit press painted as Coldplay's polar opposite—the ultimate rock 'n' roll party machine. Much to everyone's surprise, the two camps got along swimmingly and became "really great friends," according to Berryman. And exactly what sort of antics emerged from this summit of naughty and nice? "All I'll say is they're not evil... and we're not nice."

Dressed in a simple T-shirt and jeans, Martin emits such a sweet, boyish demeanor that it's easy to see why young Americans have Coldplay sharing chart space with primed-up boy bands and midriff-baring girl groups. He's being modest when he jokes that he's got a face for radio, as his pinup-caliber features get star billing in the video for "Yellow," which spotlights Martin and Martin alone—it turns out Champion's mother passed away just before filming started and the band thought it'd be best to let Martin go solo rather than have three out of the four members. The last-minute punt awarded Coldplay with one of the most striking video images in years: Martin strolling on the beach in languid slow-mo as the stars fade into dawn, heart proudly on sleeve as he belts out lyrics reminiscent of Elton John's "Your Song" ("I wrote a song for you/ And it was called 'Yellow'").

"I was trying to rip off the Verve," Martin admits, somewhat facetiously. "A seaside version of 'Bittersweet Symphony.' The

"I had this experience the other day which just made my life. I can't tell you what it is, but I remember when I was 16 and thinking, 'That would be cool to do.'"



version you could play for your parents. By a nice boy."

Growing up in Exeter, a small town in southwestern Britain, Martin caught the singing bug as a child after hearing Freddie Mercury croon "I Want To Break Free." When he was 13, his parents bought him a guitar while in Venice. It wasn't long before he started writing his own songs, a talent that came in handy once he befriended his future bandmates in college.

"But the songs are written by all of us, even though they start with me," Martin says. "I think the Beatles should have been credited on all of their songs, not just Lennon and McCartney. In the end, I think the drumbeat is as important to a song as the melody."

When asked what inspired him to pursue a life in rock 'n' roll, Martin says it was the music's pure feeling of completion—not its rebellious nature—that sucked him in. "It's like mining or something," he offers. "You spend hours and hours writing shit. Then occasionally, there's this bare face of gray and you see a little glint. Then I take that to everybody else, and there's more shit, shit, shit before Jonny comes up with a great riff that makes what I did 10 times better."

His whisper turns up a notch. "That gives me the best rush in the world. It's what I get up for. I don't get up to go put on my

leather pants and smoke drugs with people."

But don't let such self-effacing platitudes fool you, as Martin owns up to another burning desire: to be recognized. At the end of the day, all singer/songwriters are showoffs. Nobody pours their heart and soul into a melody and set of lyrics if they don't want to be heard. (Even a reclusive icon like Nick Drake

was arguably undone by a failure to connect with the public at large.) Martin wants to sing his songs for the world and, in the process, make a difference in people's lives. That's why he seems so perplexed these days: As his band prepares to headline its first American tour, Martin can't help wondering, where does it all go from here?

"I'm obsessed with the big questions at the moment, like, 'Why are we here? What's the point?'" Martin assures. "But not in a pessimistic way. I know we're here first and foremost to provide entertainment above anything else—to make songs that people enjoy. But if we can do anything useful with the money we get, that would

be good. The truth is, we've still got a way to go. We've made just one record, and that's nothing." He finishes off his orange smoothie. "I can see how things could be. But I can also see how they *couldn't* be if I fuck up." One final slurp. "And I don't want to fuck up." **NMM**

"I can see how things could be. But I can also see how they couldn't be if I fuck up. And I don't want to fuck up."



Free My MP3s

Now that the courts have come down on Napster, who's picking up the free-MP3 slack?

STORY: SUE CUMMINGS ILLUSTRATIONS: PAT MORIARTY

Suppose it had to happen, sooner or later. After installing Napster for the first time on a new computer, I logged in with a username I hadn't used in over a year. Before I could even get into the system, I got a message saying that I'd been banned, "denied access by Jeff Buckley."

Sometime, somewhere, I must have used this account to download one of his songs. Last December, the estate of the singer/songwriter, who died in 1997, demanded that Napster block users who were trading his unreleased music.

By the time you read this, Napster may be shut down

completely, or so choked by legal restrictions as to render it useless. However, the computing revolution it spawned, known as peer-to-peer ("P2P") for the way it allows users to swap files among themselves, has irrevocably changed the way we get music. Witness the number of major labels forming alliances to establish paid subscription services on the Napster model. While they fight it out in the courts and boardrooms, the downloading goes on. So I was not going to be stopped in my quest to find White Stripes MP3s, even by the ghostly hand of Jeff Buckley, reaching out from beyond the grave.

Thus began my tour of free Napster alternatives. It started with the best-known substitute, Gnutella. Like Napster, Gnutella is a P2P network for trading files. The big difference is that every computer logged onto Gnutella acts as a server; there is no central engine. Nor is there an official website for Gnutella—or, heh heh, a corporation called Gnutella that can be sued for enabling copyright infringement. Which is not to say you won't be breaking the law if you try this at home.

Any number of interface programs, or "servents," as they're known, can be used to search the Gnutella network. I tested Newtella and BearShare; you can find these and others at www.gnutelliums.com. Unlike Napster, Gnutella can exchange any type of file, like a movie or a software program, for instance, as well as MP3s. Newtella is designed specifically for music swaps. BearShare is touted as the easiest-to-use Gnutella servent. But compared to Napster, Gnutella searches are slow (sometimes taking twice as long). And although its user base is growing, for now you're less likely to find your music here if your tastes extend beyond the mainstream. Multiple searches via BearShare and Newtella didn't turn up a single hit for the White Stripes.

I moved on to Aimster. This utility works with a number of different systems, including Gnutella, Napster and AOL Instant Messenger. Its interface is slick and customizable with several different skins, but so what? I couldn't find the White Stripes here, either. Finally, I located one user with a couple of MP3s, but was unable to download them because, Aimster said, he wasn't configured properly. I dashed off a quick IM to try to resolve the problem, but right after I clicked "send," my White Stripes buddy went offline.

Next, I tried WinMP3Locator. Something of a throwback to the pre-Napster era, WinMP3Locator provides meta-search results of FTP (file transfer protocol) sites, indexing hits from multiple

search engines. It's harder to use than Napster, since you have to run an FTP utility like ReGet to transfer your files once you locate a server that has what you want. Searching this way, I found a site listing White Stripes songs, but the owner wasn't having any free-loading. The message it returned: "Requests get you, leech... If you see anything you want and have anything I might need, e-mail me." If I had the time, I might have contacted him—or for that matter, just gone to my local record store.

Freenet was another possibility, a project with considerable buzz built by volunteers in the open-source programmer community. Founded by Ian Clarke, the nephew of sci-fi author Arthur C. Clarke, Freenet takes Gnutella's decentralized model one step further, creating a distributed network of linked computers, essentially beyond the Internet, that is designed to be censorship-proof through encryption. What this means to an MP3 fan is that no one can stop you from uploading or downloading files here, because your identity is completely private and untraceable.

But getting on Freenet requires an even higher degree of technical savvy than using FTP. First you have to install a Java Runtime Environment such as Sun Microsystems' JRE. Then you must install Freenet itself. To find a music file, you must know its "key."

Or you can use Espra, a file-sharing client that runs on Freenet. But the artists I found on Espra didn't have a CD release to their name, which eliminates White Stripes. If you just want to check out unsigned bands, you're better off at MP3.com.

Finally, there was Rapigator. This new software looks and runs a lot like Napster, and does file searches on a number of different networks, including Napster, Swaptor and Music City. In setting up Rapigator, it asked me to pick a username and password. I made up new ones, and voila, I was back on Napster, where there were a dozen people sharing White Stripes MP3s. So much for the long arm of the law. **NMM**



➔ Burn, Baby, Burn: Taking MP3s to CD



After you've downloaded some MP3s to play at your desk, you might want to burn them to CD to play on a regular stereo. To do this, you'll need a recordable CD-ROM (CD-R) drive, plus the software to run it. Most CD-Rs come with a basic driver package that can be upgraded for less than \$100 to a fuller-featured program like Roxio's Easy CD Creator (for Windows) or its Macintosh equivalent, Toast. Many of the top jukebox programs designed to organize and play music on your computer

also enable CD burning.

Using Roxio's Easy CD Creator 5, we were able to burn a 28-minute CD in about 10 minutes. The free version of MusicMatch Jukebox took twice that amount of time, although a \$19.99 upgrade promises better performance. J. River, Inc.'s Media Jukebox 6.0 had a hard-to-use interface, and burned CDs at a similar rate. Go with MusicMatch Jukebox if you're new to the game, and Roxio if you're serious about making a lot of CDs. >>>S.C.

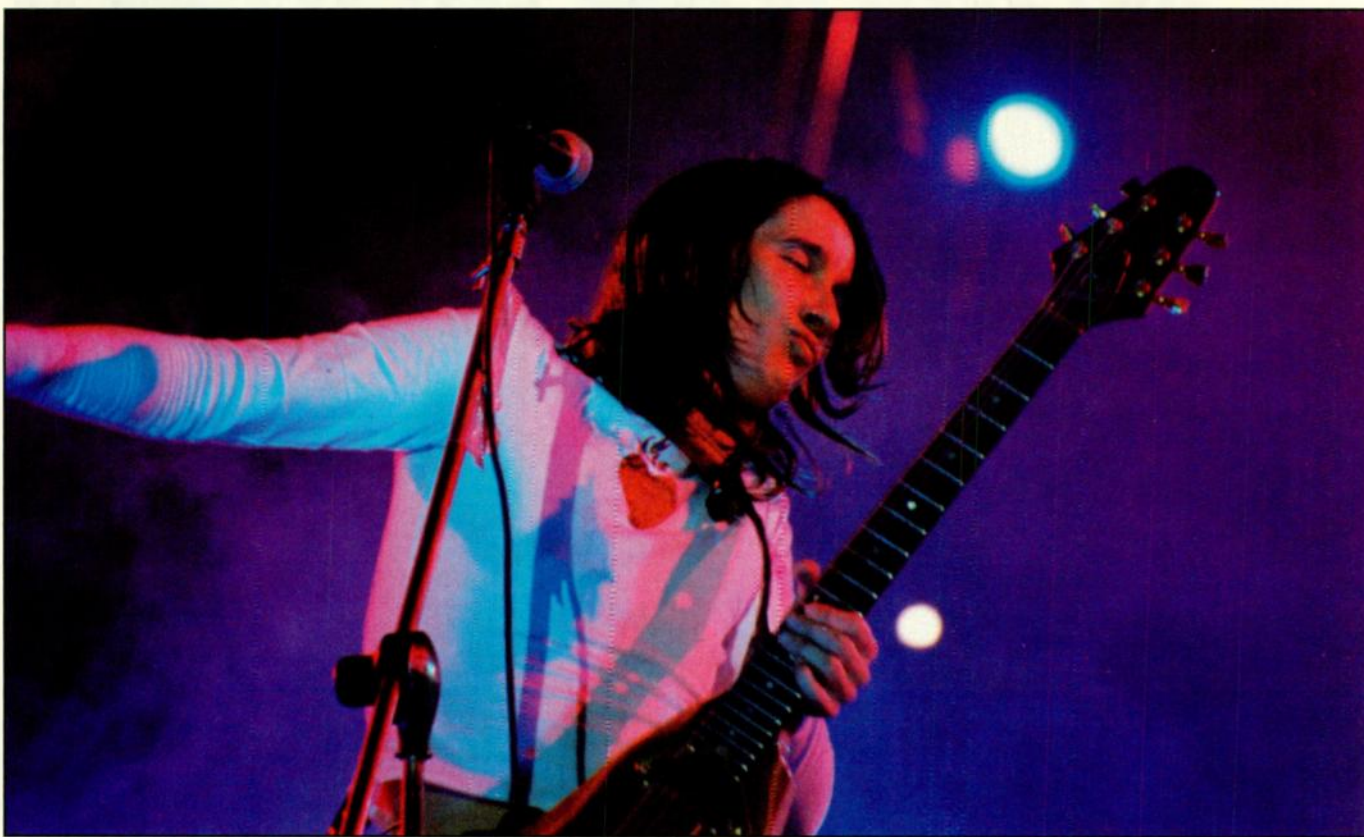


WHEN NAPSTER NAPS

▶ Name	▶ Works Using	▶ Pros	▶ Cons	▶ Rating (out of 5)
Rapigator (www.rapigator.com)	OpenNap	Compiles searches of 14 servers including Napster and MusicCity	Annoying ad banner	
Aimster (www.aimster.com)	Instant messaging, Napster, Gnutella	Slick interface; versatile	Ad banner; slower than Napster	
WinMP3Locator (www.winmp3locator.com)	FTP	Compiles results of 24 MP3 search engines	Requires FTP client to get files	
Bearshare (www.bearshare.net)	Gnutella	Anonymous; easy setup	Slow; fewer music files than Napster	
Newtella (www.newtella.com)	Gnutella	Anonymous	Slow; few files	
Espra (www.espra.net)	Freenet	Cool concept; high degree of encryption	Hard setup; still in testing; few files available	

All utilities tested using Windows 98.

Colombia's Peace of the Rock



EWA SWIRKO

ATERCIOPELADOS' ANDREA ECHEVERRI

With machine-gun blasts in the background, Rock Al Parque gathers 200,000 young people looking for rock and hope.

STORY: ENRIQUE LAVIN

The sweet smoke of barbecued *carne en palito* and sausage wafts through Media Torta, a half-circle amphitheatre that overlooks the red-tiled roofs of Bogota. A banner stretched across the rafters directs attendees to Colombia's yearly Woodstock-style alternative rock festival, Rock Al Parque; loosely translated, it says, "It depends on everyone for the music not to stop." Before the event is over, nearly 200,000 people will converge to hear some 40 national bands and a dozen pan-Latin acts at what's promoted as three days of peace, harmony and tolerance in a country gnarled by guerrilla warfare.

Much about the festival recalls the Woodstock or Lollapalooza setup, except you're not bombarded by commercial sponsorship everywhere you go. Instead, the Rock Al Parque brand reminds you of the overriding sentiment with catch phrases like "Don't You Think We Can Give This Country A Lesson?" Musical styles heard at the show vary greatly, representing the widespread influences that have snaked through Colombia: rapcore, industrial, grunge, ska, reggae, metal and punk bands all share the same stage.

The pro-music motto printed on most of the festival's material (which reads easier in Spanish: "De todos depende que la música no pare"), embodies the subtle politics of rock in a country rapidly spiraling out of control: U.S.-backed death squads to the right,

cocaine-funded guerillas to the left, a paralyzed government in the center. The festival gives musicians on the fringes of the country's (and Latin America's) mainstream a powerful platform to voice an appeal to live in art, not die in war.

Many Colombian artists announce the urgency of their country's situation—inching closer to the brink of civil war—in one way or another. The Afrobeat-meets-*vallenato* rock group Bloque (signed by Luaka Bop) originally called themselves Bloque De Búsqueda (Search Party), referring to the organizations that hunted down drug lords. The group's twisted *vallenato* hit single, "Daño En El Baño," metaphorically described Colombia as a broken-down bathroom.

Medellin tropi-rocker Juanes addresses the plight of Colombians on his album *Fijate Bien* (Surco-Universal). "*Fijate Bien* asks you to look at what is going on in my country right now, at the people who are dislodged by the conflict. You walk down the street, and you could be there dying and no one cares," says the singer/songwriter, who played Rock Al Parque two years ago. "No one cares anymore about anything. It's true that it's hard to live under these circumstances."

Rodolfo Blanco, one of Rock Al Parque's organizers, searches for hope in the music: "Many people here live the punk sentiment, *no futuro*, but we believe rock is the answer."

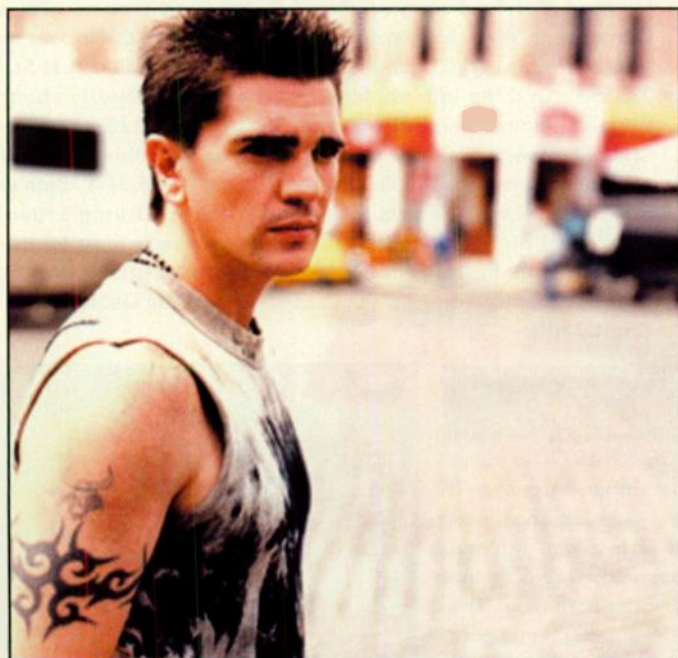
The largest stage at the festival is set up in the city's main park, Parque Simón Bolívar, named after one of the continent's most important freedom fighters. An expansive, rippling ocean of people presses up against Red Cross barriers, breaking into several large whirlpools of bodies that spin into each other at the sound of bands like Bogota's proggy Ultrágeno and Chile's nü-metalicos Dracma. Relief workers spray water into the crowd to cool showgoers down.

Over the past six years, Rock Al Parque has exploded into the largest international Latin rock festival in the world, helping to elevate alternative music's standing in this salsa- and cumbia-driven country, and it even helped spark the creation of other festivals for jazz and hip-hop. The foundation of Colombia's alternative music scene was built in small bars, before any big clubs would feature American-influenced rock. Charismatic singer Andrea Echeverri and bassist/programmer Héctor Buitrago, now in the band Aterciopelados, opened a bar more than a decade ago that grew into the local rock en español hangout in the city's artsy colonial district.

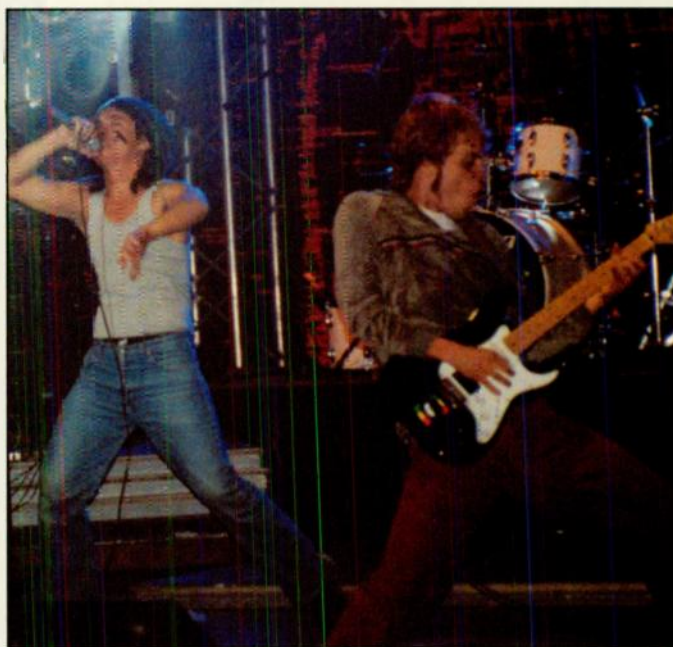
It's only fitting that Echeverri and Buitrago's band headlines Rock Al Parque; playing to 70,000 fans this autumn night is just one of the fruits of their efforts to make rock appreciated in Colombia. Aterciopelados's fifth BMG U.S. Latin release, *Gozo Poderoso* (Powerful Joy), injects good vibes into an otherwise dour situation with cumbia- and Latin ballad-steeped trip-hop and clubby dance grooves.

Rock Al Parque performers like Aterciopelados, Bloque and Juanes fuse elements of indigenous Colombian dance music, such as the accordion and cane flute-dominated *vallenato*, with modern techniques and Andean indigenous mythology. Most Colombian rock listeners were brought up listening to salsa and Latin ballads, but once bitten by rock's teeth quickly succumbed to its power. Still, local artists have continued to struggle with major labels more interested in pop and tropical dance genres. Rock Al Parque's visibility and the organic community formed by those interested in developing the rock scene are helping to build a supportive industry around the annual event. The seventh festival is scheduled for October this year.

Not all artists integrate Colombia's African rhythms, Spanish



JUANES



EWASWIRKO

SUPERLÍTICO

instruments and Andean musical forms into their sound, however. La Pestilencia (the Pestilence) helms the metal scene, and Ultrágeno and tropi-rock outfit Sha-I are both springboarding into crossover territory.

One of the event's big buzz bands, Superlítico, stepped on the Media Torta stage on the final day of the event. Hailing from the southwestern Colombian city of Cali, the five-man squadron wields a menacing mix of hardcore rock and poetic raps that forges a tight link to both Rage Against The Machine and Mexico's Resorte. A ceaseless barrage of guitar riffage and pro-peace-and-unity rants brings the audience to its feet, punching at the sky with every beat. Barranquilla-based trad-rock quintet Los De Adentro (the Insiders), who released one record on Sony Discos in the U.S., ground out a performance that should position them as South America's answer to Pearl Jam. Medellín-based orchestra Electrolíquidos, dressed in space-age hip-hop garb with the lead singer sporting purple braids, countered the body-slaming hard rock crowd with its hyperactive funk-rap.

As the infrastructure in Bogota and Colombia continues to coalesce around club shows, small festivals and limited radio and press, the Colombian alternative music scene promises to rival Argentina and Mexico's *rock nacional*. The only stumbling block may be the country's political conflicts.

While gun-toting military police remain stationed at banks and hotels, and the occasional crackle of gunfire resounds in the distance, Rock Al Parque stands as a yearly oasis within the madness unfolding all around. The event is a microcosm of hope and possibility in a seemingly endless labyrinth of gloom. No serious injuries have ever been reported at these concerts. In fact, organizers boast that a baby was born at the 1996 event, nicknamed *niño rockero*. The staid optimism handed down by Simón Bolívar prevails, promising that the music will never stop.

"Amid the country's madness, Rock Al Parque is a gathering place of all the urban tribes," says fest organizer Blanco. "Thousands of young people from various musical scenes demonstrate that there can be community, tolerance and peace. It's the youth of this country that will rebuild it." **NMM**

Washington, D.C.

STORY: GLENN DIXON PHOTOS: CHARLES STECK



METROPOLITAN AT THE BLACK CAT

In the '90s, D.C. was Indieville, U.S.A.—home to Dischord, Teenbeat and Simple Machines, and the Eastern pole of the Washington, D.C.-Olympia, Washington axis. Scenesters logged Ian sightings (MacKaye at the Fresh Fields on Wisconsin Ave.) and smellings (the Make-Up's Svenonius, badly in need of a bath, at the Dupont Circle Second Story Books), and you knew who the post-collegiate hipsters were by their ubiquitous Salvation Army gas-station jackets.

So when Unrest's Mark Robinson and Simple Machine mavens Kristin Thomson and Jenny Toomey all waved goodbye, and filmmaker Jem Cohen released the 10-year-spanning Fugazi documentary *Instrument* (a valedictory address for the scene's graduating class), some pronounced D.C. dead. Hell, even the Delta 72 left town.

But the District is still showing vital signs. Check out Faraquet, (ex-Smart Went Crazy) who are upholding Dischord's earnest, angular esthetic, and Q And Not U, the label's young blood, at venues like the **Black Cat**. Metal has long lurked in the nearby Virginia and Maryland suburbs: Pig Destroyer's latest disc collects the easy-listening sounds you'd expect from former members of Anal Cunt and Enemy Soil, and legendary Obsessed frontman Scott "Wino"

Weinrich helms Spirit Caravan. There's been some hand-wringing over the state of D.C. hip-hop, especially among undergrounders who aren't looking to become the next DJ Kool or Nonchalant, but **State Of The Union** (1357 U St. NW, 588-8810) has resumed its "Where Hip-Hop Lives" open-mic and MC-battle night; judges are drawn from the crowd, so get there early. A short distance down the U Street Corridor, **Kaffa House** (1212 U St. NW, 462-1212) schedules reggae and hip-hop shows.

The dance scene is also in the house. BT may have abandoned his rural Maryland compound for L.A., but Deep Dish and Thievery Corporation keep the District as their home base, the former maintaining their vinyl/CD/clothing outlet, **Yoshitoshi** (3209 M St. NW, 338-5638), and the latter holding court at the sartorially strict and largely unadvertised **18th Street Lounge** (1212 18th St. NW, 466-3922). (Thievery has even expanded its brand to the more relaxed college set with **Red**, 1802 Jefferson Place NW, 466-3475.) Both clubs are around the block from the so-called Herpes Triangle: the 1800 block of M St. NW is chock full of conventioner strip joints and meat markets for frat boys, interns and other button-down types, who apparently can't be persuaded to stay in Georgetown and Capitol Hill.

BUZZ BIN: Where The Wild Things Spin

The District's biggest DJ night is **Buzz**, Fridays at Nation (1015 Half St. SE, 554-1500). It's about as underground as any party that takes out full-page ads in the local alternative rag, but you'll find some choice names behind the wheels, from bigwigs like Laurent Garnier, Keoki and Paul Oakenfold to resident DJs like Buzz co-chief Scott Henry, drum 'n' basser John Tab and tech-leaning progressive house duo Saeed + Palash. Though signs explicitly forbid break-dancing, the better headspinners face off to the edgier sounds in the smaller front room. The Metro, D.C.'s subway system, has been boasting later hours, but 2 a.m. is nothing if you plan to hear the later sets, so it's better to drive; the sidewalks are mosaics of mud and broken glass in the wasteland down by the Navy Yard. Also, media heat has made Buzz squirrely about drugs, so here's a tip: That Altoids tin isn't going to make it past the pat-down.



SAMPLING THE WARES AT YOSHITOSHI



IN-STORE ROCK AT NOW! MUSIC AND FASHION

OUT WITH THE IN CROWD

JR Hayes of **PIG DESTROYER**

"**Kramerbooks** in Dupont Circle (1517 Connecticut Ave. NW, 387-1400) is this quirky little bookstore that stocks a lot of cool, hard-to-find stuff. I got a killer edition of *120 Days Of Sodom* there. It's also got this café connected to the back of it called **Afterwords**, which has a really classy atmosphere and some killer vegetarian chili. The place holds a lot of memories for me, as I've had many a disastrous dating experience there..."

GEORGE P. PELECANOS, author of *King Suckerman* and *Right As Rain*

"I like hotel bars, and the **Henley Park** (926 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 638-5200) is a sleeper: quiet, with a jazz combo on weekends, perfect for a discreet evening. The **Skylark Lounge** (1943 New York Ave. NE, 832-7490) is the rawest, least controlled and coolest skin bar in town: great hip-hop music and the most talented dancers. It's working-class and black, so phobics should proceed at their own risk."

Michael Ivey of **AMOS JONES** and **BASEHEAD**

"**Mocha Hut** (4706 14th St. NW, 829-6200) has live music on Fridays. I like that it's more intimate, not a traditional performing space." **Velvet Lounge** (915 U St. NW, 462-3213) also makes Ivey's cut by hosting local acts of all stripes.

Mathieu Bourlique of **Q AND NOT U**

Now! Music And Fashion (3100 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA, 703-528-9059) is "the D.C. area's finest record store, with 'Avant-Garde' and 'Influential' racks among the standard indie-pop fare. And if you're too jaded for the band playing at the **Black Cat's** main/side stage (1831 14th St. NW, 667-7960), try hobnobbing with the so-called D.C. elite at the [adjoining] **Red Room** bar, home of D.C.'s best pinball and the infamous Red Room Ale."

Jennifer Carr of **BARCELONA**

At "**Lite N' Fair** in Old Town Alexandria (1018 King St., Alexandria, VA, 703-549-3717), they have a mix of gourmet French food with Asian influences. It's a divey spot near a Metro stop, and it's super cheap—like \$6 for dinner. Very indie rock. To hang out, **Galaxy Hut** (2711 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA, 703-525-8646) is the only place to go. Not only is it a stopping-off point for most touring indie bands, they also have guest DJ nights where local scenesters spin. Chances of running into someone are pretty high."

Local Logic: D.C.'S BEST

LIVE GO-GO CASSETTES: Nico's Tapes (table at corner of 12th and F Sts. NW, 888-615-8220)

FRIED TROUT, COLLARDS, AND PRO-AM JAZZ JAMS: HR-57 Center For The Preservation Of Jazz & Blues (1610 14th St. NW, 667-3700)

FRUITY IMPORT ON TAP: Lindemans Framboise at 9:30 Club (815 V St. NW, 393-0930)

PHONOGRAPH NEEDLES: Sound Images by High Tech (7700 Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda, MD, 301-718-2824)

78 RPM PLATTERS: Rose And Gracey's Antiques, Savage Mill (8600 Foundry St., Savage, MD, 800-788-6455)

R&B OLDIES RECORD STORE: Roadhouse Oldies (958 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD, 301-587-1858)

CARIBBEAN RECORD STORE: West Indian Record Mart (7505 New Hampshire Ave., Hyattsville, MD, 301-422-1728)

CARIBBEAN RECORD STORE THAT MAINLY SERVES GOAT: Caribbean Food And Records, Inc. (11238 Georgia Ave., Wheaton, MD, 301-946-8100)

RARE VIDEOS: CD Cellar (709-B West Broad St., Falls Church, VA, 703-534-6318)

SMITHSONIAN RECORDINGS CUTOUTS: Main Bookstore at National Museum Of American History (14th St. and Constitution Ave. NW, 357-1527)

SPOT FOR UNDISTURBED READING: 18th Century British and French Galleries, National Gallery Of Art (6th St. and Constitution Ave. NW, 737-4215)

SEGUE OF ZOVJET FRANCE INTO DIANE REHM: 88.1 FM, driving north out of College Park, MD, on Rt. 1, as 10-watt freeform stalwart WMUC loses out to 10,000-watt NPR pump WJHU

DEAD-METAL BAR (No, not death-metal bar, we're talking Zebra, Savatage, Glenn Hughes of Deep Purple): Jaxx (6355 Rolling Rd., Springfield, VA, 703-569-5940)

PINUP GALLERY: National Glamour Archives (private home open by appointment, 703-836-3462)

MEDICAL CURIOSITIES: National Museum Of Health And Medicine (6900 Georgia Ave. NW, 782-2200)

PLACE TO PRETEND DUBYA'S YOUR GOVERNOR AND NOT YOUR PRESIDENT: The Shocker electric chair simulator at Dave And Buster's, White Flint Mall (11301 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD, 301-230-5151)

Phone numbers are in the 202 area code unless otherwise noted.

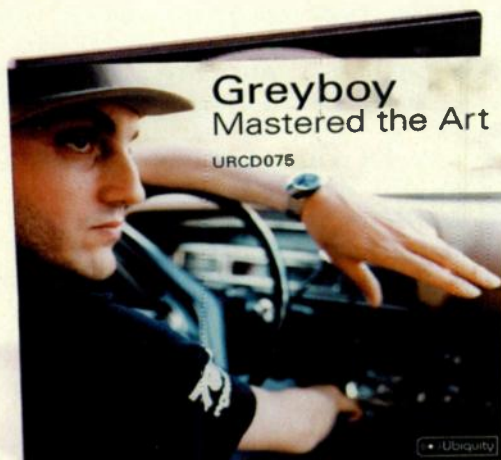


ELITE HOBNOBBING AT THE RED ROOM

GREYBOY

Mastered The Art

Ubiquity



There's never been any doubt that Andreas "Greyboy" Stevens has a big set of ears. The first artist signed to San Francisco groove label Ubiquity and the *raison d'être* for acid-jazz icons Greyboy Allstars, Stevens could always spot fat funk grooves and chillin' jazzy moves. *Mastering The Art*, G-boy's third album, distances him from his vamp-riding heritage, surrounding him instead with abstract hip-hop, exotic Indian soundtracks, Italian folk sounds and odd instrumentals. It's all taken from crates of warm-sounding vinyl, mixed with the wit and reverence of someone who loves the old even as he searches for the new. While Greyboy brings Italian producer Nicola Conte, Big Apple rapper AG, legendary soul-jazz vibraphonist Dave Pike, Greyboy Allstar Elgin Park and others into the studio to help create the new sound, he's making big moves on his own as well, scratching more now than he ever has. The resulting album varies radically from track to track: The lounge-y groove of the title track (featuring Pike) gives way to the Latin-influenced hip-hop of "Hold It Down"; "Polyphonix" is a jazz guitar-driven mix of easy listening beats; "Dealin' With The Archives" is a Greyboy/A.G. showcase; and so on to the closer, Conte's manic bossa nova remix of the title track. *Mastered The Art* proves Greyboy a master of his domain, even as acid jazz's go-to DJ broadens his horizons. >>>TAD HENRICKSON

Link

www.djgreyboy.com

File Under

Acid jazz's next trip

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Smash, the Automator, DJ Cam

SIMON JOYNER

Hotel Lives

Truckstop-Atavistic

Over the last decade, Omaha resident troubadour Simon Joyner has been quietly refining his craft to a razor-sharp edge. *Hotel Lives* continues his progression, as his moody ruminations reach a lofty peak. Joyner's no stranger to lo-fi recording techniques, so when the dark, driving album opener ends in a swirl of backward tapes and a submerged vocal mantra, it's clear he's decided to expand his production style. The widened sonic palette is further exemplified by such touches as the tremolo- and reverber-soaked electric guitars that provide moody counterpoint to Joyner's laconic vocals on "She Without Shelter," and the *Astral Weeks*-ish arrangement of the uncharacteristically jaunty "My Life Is Sweet." Joyner's singing is at a high point too—what was once a Will Oldham-like wail is now a relaxed near-croon. Singing in a lower range and with greater ease, he allows his carefully wrought lyrics to dominate the songs. Despite concessions to musical beauty, Joyner's lyrical vision remains largely a dark one. The lives he inhabits in "Hotel Suite" and "Your Old Haunts" are full of artistically rendered despair, but Joyner never turns maudlin. With its air of ominous, wintry bleakness, the spare "The House" could be an outtake from *The Shining's* soundtrack. *Hotel Lives* makes a strong case for Joyner as the Leonard Cohen of the 21st century. >>>JIM ALLEN



Link

www.truckstoprecords.com/simonjoynerhome.html

File Under

A palace of folky thorns in tornado country

R.I.Y.L.

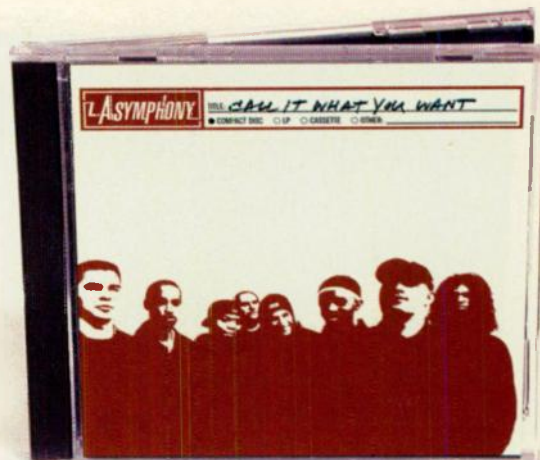
Leonard Cohen, Will Oldham, Townes Van Zandt, Mark Eitzel

L.A. SYMPHONY

Call It What You Want

Squint

Forget the soul—the more ponderous question is, “Who stole hip-hop’s funny bone?” Doesn’t anyone remember when the Pharcyde rapped about “Ya Mama” and 3rd Bass gave us the “Gas Face”? Like Missy Elliott, L.A. Symphony wants to hit the masses with da hee, and it does. *Call It What You Want* embodies the best of the West Coast’s underground scene: playful, spirited music with lyrically creative rhymes, sans the cussing and obsessions with money, hoez and guns. The group boasts eight equally boisterous lyricists spitting conscious, witty wordplay (guest verse provided by Pharcyde’s Fatlip and Black Eyed Peas), and catchy hooks over uptempo, diverse beats produced by Prince Paul, Will.I.A.m (Black Eyed Peas) and Mario C (Beastie Boys). While their funniest songs do revolve around troubles with women and money, they couldn’t be any further from typical baby-mama dramas and profiles in flossin’. Instead, the Symphony ponders harsh realities with humor and optimism. “Broken Now” typifies their attitude, with one member yelling, “Yo, there’s way too many people in this group. We’re not gonna make any money. Do you know anyone hiring? I need a job.” Following the path trod by the Freestyle Fellowship through L.A.’s underground in the early ‘90s, the Symphony’s charismatic collective personality gives listeners something to smile about again. >>>JESSICA KOSLOW



Link

www.miccheckers.com

File Under

Hip-hop laugh tracks

R.I.Y.L.

Freestyle Fellowship,
the Pharcyde, Jurassic-5



Album cover not available at presstime.

RES

How I Do

MCA

These days, R&B can practically be categorized like lipstick. There’s the take-no-shit, street-savvy Metallic Vamp, the Softlit Ruby sentimental storm, the Raisin Awareness politically minded bohemian ballads, and all that Princess Pink teenybopper gunk. However, suburban Philly girl Res (pronounced Reese) will leave you at the cosmetic counter searching for tidy classification. Raised on a diet of early-’70s soul-funk, her music aspires to the sophisticated compositions of that era—hooks planted like crop circles rather than the typical rows, and then interwoven with elements of hip-hop, reggae and drum ‘n’ bass. Pucker up and imagine the open-minded earthiness of Rhubarb Poppy blended with the rich sweetness of Crème Caramel. Producer Doc (half of the Canadian drum ‘n’ torch duo Esthero) colors the tunes with a Cool Crimson hue using aquatic synthesizer gurgles, crisp sheets of violin and bouncy electric piano. He drops a depth-charge dub bass and skittering hi-hat in the opener “Golden Boy,” but refrains from stepping on the relaxed swagger of Res’s alto. The lyrics lean towards social commentary about topics like overblown Madison Avenue imagery, apathetic acceptance and, well, love (with drug dealers and other strangers). That Res has made guest appearances on tracks by GZA and Talib Kweli almost seems like a minor point compared with the accomplishment of *How I Do*. On a playing field littered by too many Faded Roses, Res is an Iced Amethyst. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

Link

www.resmusic.com

File Under

Classic soul for the new school

R.I.Y.L.

D’Angelo, Erykah Badu,
Stevie Wonder

TOOL

Lateralus

Volcano



Tool takes an impressive amount of time between records: three years after *Undertow* and a whopping five after *Ænima*. So what has the group been doing? Practicing, apparently. *Lateralus* is absolutely sick, clocking in at a CD-busting 79 minutes and showing Maynard & Co. delivering musicianship dazzling enough to make King Crimson weep. Former one-trick guitarist Adam Jones adds intricate, rapid picking and a masterful command of atmospheric textures to his stable of riffs. And drummer Danny Carey steals the show, weighing in with the most demented drumming this side of Neil Peart. His polyrhythmic beats defy you to count the time signature, while his tabla and tribal styles add a mystic, Eastern flavor to the proceedings. Tool's songs have also moved toward the epic, their sheer scope making *Kid A* look like Dr. Seuss—they don't have verses or choruses so much as movements, ebbing and flowing from quiet, ethereal sections to raging crescendos and rarely repeating portions. This new approach to songwriting means a less prominent role for Maynard James Keenan, but when he does sing he utilizes the newfound melodic sensibility he showcased with *A Perfect Circle*. The new approach also means a dense, hard-to-swallow record that may alienate some of Tool's fans. The band's attitude toward that might be summed up on "Ticks And Leeches," which features one of *Lateralus*'s few choruses: "Hope this is what you wanted/ Hope this is what you had in mind/ 'Cause this is what you're getting." >>>TOM MALLON

Link

www.toolband.com

File Under

Demonic, symphonic prog-metal
R.I.Y.L.

King Crimson, Opeth,
Dream Theater minus the wankery

WHISKEYTOWN ★

Pneumonia

Lost Highway-Universal

Whiskeytown suck and are basically a drunken hype machine and it works because I am sexy," frontman Ryan Adams enthuses on the Bloodshot Records website. More than a few people agree—at least with the first half. Will *Pneumonia*, the infamous alt-country band's long-awaited swan song, sway those dissenters? Over the two years its release has been delayed due to label mergers, Adams has called *Pneumonia* both *It's Never Gonna Fuckin' Come Out* and his band's *Sgt. Pepper's*, so it was hard to tell if it'd fade into oblivion or explode their profile. Brilliant solo debuts from both of Whiskeytown's voices (Adams's *Heartbreaker* and Caitlin Cary's *Waltzie*) hinted toward the latter. Dissidents be damned: *Pneumonia* actually does deliver. Tracks like "Don't Wanna Know Why" and "Crazy About You" showcase Adams's perfect pop choruses and Cary's flawless harmonies; "Reason To Lie" and "Under Your Breath" explore the roots of *Heartbreaker*'s painfully earnest acoustic laments; and "My Hometown" brings in the twang they built their reputation on. But *Pneumonia* actually sticks closer to "alt" than it does to "country"; where the band started out nodding to Gram Parsons, their end shows them leaning more towards Evan Dando. An Americana *Sgt. Pepper's* it's not, but *Pneumonia* shows a graceful, all-grown-up Whiskeytown, and undeniably backs up the hype thrown in their direction over the years. >>>NICOLE KEIPER



Link

go.to/losing

File Under

A little less country, a little more
rock 'n' roll
R.I.Y.L.

The Lemonheads, Ryan Adams,
Fleetwood Mac, Old 97's

REVIEWS



ACTION FIGURE PARTY

Action Figure Party *Blue Thumb*

Action Figure Party's Greg Kurstin made a name for himself in Geggy Tah, a band known for its eclectic mix of rock, jazz, funk, world and experimental music. This self-titled debut finds Kurstin hiding behind a group name, fully in charge and moving in a jazzy new direction. Amid a large cast of characters, Kurstin focuses his considerable keyboard skills on giving this nu-groove thang its identity and unifying sound. Ironically, as his alt-rock tendencies have been put on hiatus, Kurstin approaches this new direction surrounded by a bevy of alt-

rockers: Flea, Buckcherry's Yogi, Sean Lennon, Soul Coughing's Yuval Gabay, as well as sidemen for Air, Gil Scott-Heron, Garbage and Beck are among his musical compadres here. Together they create a tight, jazz-inflected set of 12 tunes that sound like they could work on the turntables of Thievery Corporation's swank Eighteenth Street Lounge as comfortably as in an opening slot for godfather of groove John Scofield. In an album of wall-to-wall rump-shakers, songs like "Everybody Ready," which sounds like an organic outtake from Moby's *Play*, and blaxploitation soundtrack throwdown "Gettem" keep the funk fresh and smart. Action Figure Party certainly feels like a new career chapter for a musician already known to many—and those who don't know by now should definitely learn. >>>TAD HENDRICKSON



ADNY

Selections '97-2000 *Turbo*

Alexi Delano (a.k.a. ADNY) may have taken a roundabout path to New York City (from Chile via Sweden) but his take on deep house seems well-suited to the spiritual home of house music. At first glance, that similarity might earn him comparisons to such luminaries as François K. or Masters At Work. Yet taken out of geographical context, Delano's music doesn't sound derivative. Gathered from a myriad of 12-inch releases spanning from 1997 through last year, *Selections* presents a collection of Delano's singles and remixes while managing to retain a cohesive mood. The minor chords of "I'm Still Here"

capture the jazzy textures of house pioneer Larry Heard; feathery keyboard lines and warm vibraphone melodies adorn one of the few instrumental tracks. Delano's work with vocalists comprises the majority of the remaining songs, which feature no fewer than six different singers. He invokes the ghost of classic ska on "What If I Love," where the usually propulsive saxophone is pared down to complement John Smith's somber vocal delivery, while the opening "Shiver Me" stretches Sara Rabdau's elegant voice into a glacial serenade. Delano's lone deviation is on "Desierto De Atacama," a perplexing blend of south-of-the-border electro replete with Andean panpipes, which may simply be his idea of keeping it real. >>>KUMI KONDRAK

Link

www.turborecords.ca/estore/mar_cd_008.html

File Under

Chiasmic house yearnings

R.I.Y.L.

Jori Mulkkonen, Glenn Underground, François K.

Link



new
album

out
now

BEST
BUY

HOW I SPENT MY
SUMMER VACATION



www.bouncingsouls.com
www.epitaph.com



VARIOUS ARTISTS

All I Have Is Love: A Tribute To Studio One
Easy Star

Coxsone Dodd's Studio One was among the finest labels in the early history of reggae, releasing some of the greatest early ska and rocksteady recordings and serving as the first home for the likes of Bob Marley's Wailers, Lee Perry and Burning Spear. So why not pay tribute to the label? Performing this classic material gives some of today's most talented roots artists a much-needed chance to be heard—the performers gathered here aren't newcomers, they're sadly forgotten superstars. Compiled and produced

by Sister Carol (who also contributes two songs), *All I Have Is Love* is a respectful project that never fails to do what it promises: pay homage. The musical focus assures quality control; none of the songs are unnecessarily jacked up to dancehall tempos, or regrettably dumbed-down with a dose of rock. Instead, the album begins with Freddie McGregor's exceptionally soulful version of the Heptones' "My Baby Is Gone," never straying from its original vision or simmering sexiness. Sugar Minott performs his own "Give A Hand," and his rallying cry for peace and understanding sounds as sweet as ever. Other artists offer new songs inspired by legendary Studio One riddims, with the cool harmonies of Glen Washington's "Jah New Love" as the standout. Like the label it salutes, *All I Have Is Love* offers the best by the best. >>>KELSO JACKS



ALL NATURAL

Second Nature Thrill Jockey

The underground beats-and-rhymes resurgence on both coasts meets a Midwest contender in Chicago's All Natural, a duo helping to put the Windy City's backpacker (i.e. indie hip-hop) scene on the map with a bare-bones esthetic and a healthy work ethic. Building on the classic formula of DJ and MC, Tone B. Nimble and Capital D flip flows and breaks with old-school purity, dismissing the flossy lifestyles of their more (monetarily) successful rap brethren. Unlike the metaphysical essays of neighbor Common, though, the duo keeps its cuts simple. They don't

stress elevating the hip-hop game, content to be a part of its history; on the thug-in-cheek "The Stick Up," for instance, they revisit the familiar "Throw your hands in the air" chant. One track that does stand out in theme is the odd "Vegetarian," where they praise the benefits of natural living. The cut helps sum up the crew's own whole-grain moniker; simple, clean and able to provide sustenance, it does the body of hip-hop good by supplying an alternative to all the diamond-encrusted, Cristal-drenched playa anthems. But when was anything all natural any fun? Sure it's healthy, but there's a reason hip-hop has always been more about silicone and sugar than soy and seitan. >>>KYLE ALLEN

Link
www.easystar.com

File Under
Roots reggae done right
R.I.Y.L.

Recent Burning Spear,
Easy Star Volume One,
Sister Carol

Link
www.allnaturalhiphop.com

File Under
Organic rhymes blowing
in the wind
R.I.Y.L.

DITC, Common, Arsonists



THE ANGEL

No Gravity Supra Crucial

The Angel has maintained a low profile for the better part of her career, but that hasn't prevented the Los Angeles-based producer from amassing an eclectic array of credits. Her résumé is dotted with projects ranging from mundane to highbrow, including remixes (the Pharcyde, Fantastic Plastic Machine), film scores (*Gridlock'd*, *Boiler Room*) and her own collaborative projects (60 Channels). *No Gravity* is the Angel's first solo endeavor since her early-'90s turn in L.A.'s jazz-influenced hip-hop scene, and it brandishes her signature open-minded, everything-

Link
www.theangelsoundclash.com
File Under
Estrogen soundclash
R.I.Y.L.

DJ Krush, Dignable Planets,
the *Mo' Wax Headz* compilation

but-the-sink sensibility. The Angel looks at hip-hop as if through a funhouse mirror—melodies are stretched, beats are muted, and vocalists (like Pharcyde's Slim Kid Tre, Freestylers' Navigator) assist on verses submerged under many layers, dub-style. The songs become warped facsimiles of what is typically perceived as hip-hop, which for some counts as a dubious achievement. On the cover of Randy Newman's "Baltimore," the Angel coaxes a sweet serenade out of Bay Area rapper Mystic; and on "Act As If," rapper Divine Styler has enough rhyming dexterity to match her choppy drum programming. At times, though, the tracks plod along with downbeat spunk but little direction. Much of *No Gravity* may prove too esoteric for even background listening, even though that's where it's best suited. >>>JOSEPH PATEL



BLACK CROWES

Lions v2

The Black Crowes' intention to rock is clearly stated by the half-minute blast of feedback guitar that unfurls at the opening of "Midnight From The Inside Out." It calls you out: If a band playing a style that it—and pretty much it alone—does well, without looking to advance beyond something that was essentially perfected in the '70s raises philosophical questions, this isn't your party. But if you want to rock, to unashamedly raise forth a lighter and luxuriate in the line "No use lyin', 'cause I've heard all your bullshit before," you'll be rewarded. Tracked in

Link
www.blackcrowes.com
File Under
For those about to rock
R.I.Y.L.

Live Stones, Oasis,
Jeff Beck's *Truth*

an old Lower East Side Yiddish theater with Producer Don Was, *Lions* is a beautifully recorded rock record. Rich Robinson and Audley Freed's gorgeous guitar tones, both distorted and clean, complement the sandpaper edges of Chris Robinson's whippy tenor. Lingering effects of touring with Jimmy Page are found in the "Thank You"-like, semi-acoustic sentiments of "Losing My Mind" and "Miracle To Me." Another nice moment comes with the disc's closer, "Lay It All On Me," which feels like *Tumbleweed Connection*-era Elton John (i.e. when he was good). But the measure of *Lions* is in barnburners like "Midnight" and "Come On," where the band's live muscle finally translates to tape. All that's missing is the smell of sweat and butane. >>>SCOTT FRAMPTON

sheā seger

the may street project

the debut US release featuring the tracks:

"Last Time" and "Clutch"

★★★★ Q / December 2000

"The May Street Project swaggers with a faint Deep South ease, even showing a surprisingly sweet tooth for trippy beats. Sounding like she just crawled out of bed after a rigorous night between the sheets, her star turn includes a gorgeous duet with Ron Sexsmith (*Always*) a string-laden *Last Time, Isn't It Good?* country soulfulness and loose-limbed *I Can't Lie.*"



ON TOUR with David Gray

hear it now - www.sheaseger.com

Produced by Martin Terefe for Pax Producers
Mixed by Commissioner Gordon and Martin Terefe

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The Cash Brothers How Was Tomorrow



Link

www.cashbrothers.com

File Under

Vintage, dogged country rock—hold the irony

R.I.Y.L.

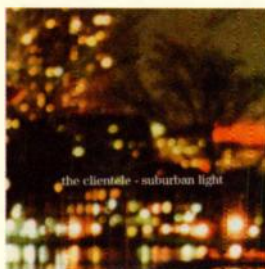
The Pernice Brothers, the Bodeans, the Jayhawks

CASH BROTHERS ★

How Was Tomorrow Zōe-Rounder

The sophomore offering from brothers Andrew and Peter Cash recollects the mid-'80s glory days of post-punk country rock, when bands like the Del Fuegos and the Bodeans roamed the earth. *How Was Tomorrow* comes from a more genteel place than most post-Uncle Tupelo releases, bearing not the slightest trace of No Depression alt-country. Instead, the Cash Brothers have made a lovely and mild little record packed with loping melodies, lots of mid-tempo ballads and some of the more gorgeous harmonies in recent memory. The best tracks on *Tomorrow* feel like they could have easily been written in

1983, with protagonists working blue collar jobs ("Night Shift Guru"), coming from the "hurting side of town" ("Nerve") and taking comfort in listening to morose Springsteen albums ("Nebraska"). But there's a dogged optimism to even nominal downers like "Nerve," which, with its ringing guitars and rare brisk tempo, is the album's finest number. *How Was Tomorrow* feels like a gentle throwback to the days when country rockers were singing about Republicans in the White House and economic upturns that left them behind. It may be more timely than ever. >>>ALLISON STEWART



Link

www.theclientele.co.uk

File Under

Twee-free lo-fi retro pop

R.I.Y.L.

Galaxie 500,

Belle & Sebastian, the Velvet Underground

THE CLIENTELE

Suburban Light Merge

If Belle & Sebastian's recent output has broken the hearts of indie-pop fans by veering toward the prog side of musical life, consider the Clientele sonic cardiologists. *Suburban Light* gathers tracks from a handful of U.K.-only singles and a few new recordings, but has the focus of a cohesive album. Though the Clientele is decidedly less precious than Stuart Murdoch's troop, both bands share a penchant for production work that would have made their songs staples of AM radio in the early '70s. The vocals are glossed with ample reverb, recalling the effect of Galaxie 500's *Today*. Of

course, when a record is this unabashedly retro, this heavily bathed in a period's influence, proof of the band's worth can be found in the songwriting. Luckily, the Clientele is a group of masterful tunesmiths. On tracks like the sunshine-y "I Had To Say This" and the slinky "Five Day Morning," the trio lets gorgeous melodies float through gentle guitar strumming and lightly miked drums. On one of the album's masterpieces, "(I Want You) More Than Ever," vocalist Alasdair MacLean offers a typically wistful couplet: "And the night has come so softly/ To this afternoon of memory/ Listen to my words just turn to rain." *Suburban Light* is so sublime that MacLean's words could make even the Wicked Witch Of The West never want to see an umbrella again. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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File Under

Proto-alternative

Traveling Wilburys

R.I.Y.L.

Old 97's, Van Morrison,

Lucinda Williams

CONTINENTAL DRIFTERS

Better Day Razor & Tie

The Continental Drifters are the super-group of bar-band dreams. Mark Walton (formerly of the Dream Syndicate), Peter Holsapple (the dB's), Susan Cowsill (the Cowsills) and Vicki Peterson (the Bangles) have all cashed in their legacies for ersatz pop rock, the kind of inoffensive music a fine reissue label like Razor & Tie would have no anxiety bankrolling. Their winningly normal sound is the Dream Syndicate without the feedback, the dB's without the shakes, the Cowsills without the top 40 and the Bangles without Beatlemania. Their last outing, 1999's *Vermillion*, got over on ebullient esprit de corps. *Better*

Day, the band's third release, is a bit more calculated in its effects, which on some tracks only adds to the cheer (the amazing church organ-banjo break in "Live On Love," for example). The occasional horn arrangements walk on sunshine instead of blaring through with a simulation of soul, and the democratic approach to vocals provides variety throughout. And in their message to the world, hard-time verses give way to chirpy, positive-thought choruses, as in the title cut's "Tomorrow's gonna be an even better day." After all, what else could they harmonize about, and get us to believe, after several decades in the business? >>>KEVIN JOHN



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



COWBOY JUNKIES ★

Open *Latent-Zoo/Rounder*

Through eight studio albums and 15 years on the road, the Cowboy Junkies have both refined and expanded their sound, without ever straying too far from their lonesome, moody hitching post. Following an artistically apt move back to an independent label, *Open* emerges as one of the band's truest recordings. True in the way that it was made only after its 10 songs were road-tested, heightening the album's live and lived-in feel. Although they're best known for their languid out-in-the-open-plains style, past recordings rarely found the band breaking the five-minute mark even on

Link

www.cowboyjunkies.com

File Under

Sweet hangovers

R.I.Y.L.

Yo La Tengo,

Townes Van Zandt,

Neil Young And Crazy Horse

the most deliberate pieces. But on *Open*, "Dragging Hooks" burns slowly for three ragged, glorious minutes before Margo Timmins unloads her weighty whisper, the track ending just shy of eight minutes. It seems this is the exact space and time the Junkies need for menacingly beautiful songs like this one to come alive. But the more compact rockers and ballads breathe just as comfortably, swirling with sweet harmonies, smoldering feedback and fluttering keyboards. For some, the band will always feel like Neil Young And Crazy Horse after too many brandy Alexanders, but for fans that lost touch with the Junkies a few albums back, *Open* is their best come-hither in years. >>>STEVE CIABATTONI



ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN ★

Flowers *spinART*

Only two members remain from the Echo And The Bunnymen lineup that left an indelible early-'80s footprint—luckily, they're the ones who largely defined the band's classic post-punk sound. Ian McCulloch's distinctive baritone and Will Sergeant's effects-laden guitar still deliver their proven ornate psychedelia-lite. And the third full-length since the duo reclaimed the Bunnymen moniker in the late '90s (morphing from their Electrafixion project upon the return of original bassist Les Pattinson, since re-departed)

Link

www.bunnymen.com

File Under

Echo of past glory

R.I.Y.L.

The Church, Simple Minds, Live

is unmistakably Echo, actively courting Britpop nostalgia. *Flowers* is mostly inhabited by stately midtempo tracks like "Supermellow Man," recalling 1984's commercial apex *Ocean Rain*, and occasional bursts of raw energy like "An Eternity Turns," which harkens back to their 1980 debut, *Crocodiles*. Problem is, these tunes are largely second-shelf facsimiles of the band's trademarks. The single "Make Me Shine," which would fit seamlessly alongside Modern English in a retro hits set, is one of several occasions where McCulloch and Sergeant assemble the requisite components for a cathartic breakthrough. The crescendos, however, are undermined by the pedestrian execution of the band's three hired hands, who tackle the material with all the passion of a local cover band. *Flowers* may offer enough glimmers of past glory to resonate with longtime Bunnymen devotees, but casual listeners might as well reach for their far superior back catalog. >>>GLEN SARVADY

THE COMP PILE (Our guide to compilation CDs) BY CAM'RON DAVIS AND BRANDE-JOE GREEN

TITLE	Comin From Tha D: <i>Blueprint</i> (Intuit-Solar)	Have You Had Your Vitamin B-3 Today? (Label M)	World Wrestling Federation: <i>The Music, Volume 5</i> (Koch)	Too Legit For The Pit (Radical)	Hangin' From The Devil's Tree (Your Flesh)
CONCEPT	Ghettotech, electro and booty straight from the Motor City	Organ jazz from back in the day	Theme music for the thick-necked bruisers in the WWF	Punk and hardcore kids rehash nip-hop classics	Indie rock collected to bail out financially strapped indie mag <i>Your Flesh</i>
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	People who can answer the question, "Detroit, what!?"	People who don't giggle when they hear the word "organ"	The thick-waisted donut-pillagers of the WWF's fandom	Anyone who bought the <i>Judgment Night</i> soundtrack in '93	Record-store clerks and college-radio snobs
NAMES TO DROP	Japanese Telecom, Detroit Grand Pubahs, DJ Assault	Ike Quebec, Gene Ammons, Willis Jackson	Mötörhead, Slick Rick	Candiria taking on Dre and Snoop, E-Town Concrete revisiting Nas	The Bellrays, Thurston Moore, New Bomb Turks
SUMS IT UP	"Breakout" (Ectomorph)	"Jumpin' The Blues" (Jimmy Smith)	"The Game" (Triple H's theme, by Mötörhead)	Public Enemy's "Can't Do Nuttin' For Ya Man" (The MovieLife)	"Math Is Money" (Lifter Puller)
VERDICT	While Assault's "Hoes" isn't as deep as his classic "Ass-N-Titties," we'll take him any way we can get him. Er, his songs anyway.	This should help you get your swing on. And if not, there's a smokin' girl on the back cover. (We're easy to please.)	This chugga-rock/unhip-hop comp is a soundtrack for piledriving your brother or masturbating to pictures of Chyna—not much else.	Despite some dull, trad rapcore moments, <i>Legit</i> does have some game; who wouldn't enjoy a metalcore "Baby Got Back"?	Remember back when indie-rock comps used to be like really good mix tapes? The kids at <i>Your Flesh</i> do.



FOR STARS

We Are All Beautiful People Future Farmer

Poor, sweet Carlos Forster. Try as he might to look at the world as a quiet, hopeful place, it just keeps letting him down. Luckily, that hasn't stopped the For Stars songwriter from titling his band's third album *We Are All Beautiful People* (and really meaning it), or from imbuing his paeans to romantic decay with melodies so lovely they make even his self-doubt seem aglow. "I take love too seriously," Forster chirps in cracked falsetto over the pinging harmonics and soothing coos of "In Open Plains," but his admission communicates more self-realized glee than real regret. Even

on the sweet-dreamy "Only Star" ("You are the only star/ You are the place that spaceships merely dream of"), his graceful romantic worship comes off as both tender and drenched with melancholy. Of course, none of Forster's delicate, slightly smirking tales of the heart would shimmer quite so beautifully if his bandmates didn't dress them in gorgeously sequined pop forms. Marching snares, softly rippling guitars, ambient vibraphone whirs and colorful noises all twirl and tumble around one another like carefully choreographed performers under a circus tent. So if *Beautiful People* is any indication, the ache in Foster's chest is the muse causing the music in his head to soar. >>>COLIN HELMS

Link

www.forstarmusic.com

File Under

Baroque pop heartbreak

R.I.Y.L.

Neutral Milk Hotel, Coldplay,

American Music Club



Link

www.dragonstreet.com

File Under

Cowgirls on parade

R.I.Y.L.

Neko Case, Sally Timms,

Wanda Jackson

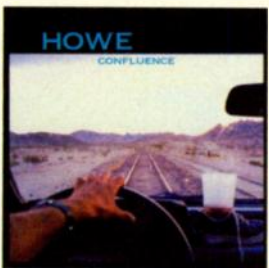
VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Gals Of The Big "D" Jamboree

Dragon Street

Male domination of honky-tonk and rockabilly is yet another puritanical, discriminating myth within the American cultural canon. Anyone believing that Hank Sr., Elvis, Gene Vincent and their rowdy ilk didn't have female counterparts equally insistent on breaking society's borders has bought into a sinister bit of pop McCarthyism and needs to listen to Hayden Smith's "Rockabilly Gal" or Kitty Wells's "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." *Gals Of The Big "D" Jamboree* tries to reestablish the balance, focusing on female performers originally

featured on Dallas's weekly radio show, broadcast throughout the South in the '50s. You want a sequined shoulder to rest your weary, sweat-soaked head on, or some raw short-skirt bop to get your hips moving? Well then bring your longneck 'round here. The likes of sweet honky-tonk crooner Helen Hall, little miss dynamite Charlene Arthur, legendary rockabilly queen Wanda Jackson and a handful of blunt lesser-knowns are represented by live Jamboree tracks, both sides of original singles and vault rarities from later in their careers. At their most sedate, the ladies exhibited a lonesome calling every bit as intense as the men (check Hall's "Honky Tonk Husband"). But when they turned primal, as Pat Smith does when she sets her sights on "Elvis, Elvis," the leather-jacket boys must not have known what hit 'em. This one's for the history books. >>>PIOTR ORLOV



HOWE GELB

Confluence Thrill Jockey

The music of Giant Sand frontman Howe Gelb weaves a grand vision from twitchy, mundane details. Gelb accomplishes this by consistently maintaining a somewhat grubby, lo-fi musical approach and trusting it to lend weight to his commonplace, yet often deep observations. Rolling on gentle waves of acoustic guitar and laid-back clip-clop drums, he uses the musical arrangements on *Confluence* to subtly build a home for his introspective ruminations. Striking a much lighter note than 1998's downbeat

Hisser, *Confluence* meanders through the singer's offhand opinions on human connection. "3 Sisters" lovingly details the mythical attributes that provide the title characters with their commonplace heroism. "Pontiac Slipstream" follows a feverish dream in which bluegrass pioneer Bill Monroe begets speed metal and John F. Kennedy determines the fate of Jimi Hendrix ("Can the path of 'Hey Joe' be paved by a grassy knoll?" he wonders in one characteristically cryptic verse). A gray reading of Elvis's "Can't Help Falling In Love" drives openhearted sentiment into the shadows. After a lifetime of non-mainstream music-making, the most welcome aspect of Gelb's solo work remains its gravity. And although friends from Calexico, Grandaddy and Candy Prune assist him on *Confluence*, it's Gelb's own creative imagination that remains the heartbeat of this provocative album. >>>LOIS MAFFEO

Link

www.giantsand.com

File Under

Visionary acoustic meanderings

R.I.Y.L.

Giant Sand, Calexico, Neil Young



Link

www.wordsound.com

File Under

Gangsta rap gone terribly wrong

R.I.Y.L.

Geto Boys, the Meatmen,

Blanche Knott's *Truly Tasteless*

Jokes

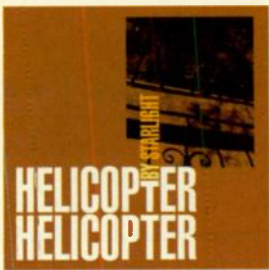
HAWD GANKSTUH RAPPUHS

MC'S WID GHATZ

2 Hype 2 Wype WordSound

One look at the scatological and inbred-littered cover-art send-up of A Tribe Called Quest's *Midnight Marauders* and you know that Hawd Gankstuh Rappuhs MC's Wid Ghatz (rap miscreants Guy Albino, Duke Crapmore and Fly-Bot VanDamn) are not the most serious of groups. Seemingly weaned on equal portions of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, NWA and shock-punk GG Allin, these twisted, lead-paint-damaged MCs are more offensive than Eminem and the Insane Clown Posse combined. They dare you to listen to them, and

hope you can't make it through. On their demented, perversely compelling debut full-length, the Gankstuhhs prove they can sustain a litany of low-budget bedroom beats and tantalizingly quotable one-liners for a full album, one that's provocative almost to a fault. They are a violent-talking bunch, to say the least ("Patty cake, patty cake, naked man/ Choppin' off heads with a ceiling fan" go the opening lines of "Hummin' Mad Coney") and they're representing the streets. Or, more specifically, the gutters. They're also shining a light on the legitimacy of being "hard" and "real" in the rap game, reaching a crescendo on "Three Wrongs," where the members attack each other instead of spreading big-ups all around. Dis their toilet-talk all you want, but you won't hear a more unusual hip-hop record this year. >>>BRIAN COLEMAN



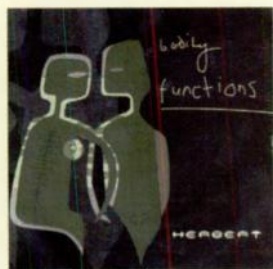
HELICOPTER HELICOPTER

By Starlight Lunch

Here's a shiny wad of alt-pop bubblegum. Helicopter Helicopter's third album, *By Starlight*, is cheeky and cheery, full of chirping melodies and chiming guitars, cutesy off-harmony singing, rise-and-fall chord progressions that growl on leashes and lyrics that allude to the great mysteries of the heart and postmodern ironies. It's exactly what you'd expect from a modernist pop band from Boston, where so much of the club-rock scene remains arrested in musical and emotional adolescence—still exploring the

Link
www.helicopterhelicopter.com
File Under
Beantown alt-pop 101
R.I.Y.L.
Orbit, Fuzzy, Letters To Cleo

territory torn open by the Pixies. Curmudgeonly grumbling aside, Helicopter Helicopter does provide a nice little burst of flavor. The band is among the best of its lot, especially when singer/guitarist Julie Chadwick provides a commanding and sultry counterpoint to co-conspirator Chris Zerby's hurt indie-boy whine. She takes control of numbers like "Trembling God" and cranks up the rock factor; adds meat to Zerby's precious voice while trading lyrics on the likes of "Passing Car"; and harmonizes to lovely result on the chorus of "Slow Dying Flashlight." The arrangements hew to the usual bones, pushing up the choruses with loud/soft dynamics, taking more breath for the ballads and huffing it out for the rockers, leaving space for tight guitar solos. The surprises are in those solos: bleats and roars that pop out of the mix like angry moray eels, commit their delightful sonic damage and disappear. >>>TED DROZDOWSKI



HERBERT

Bodily Functions Soundlike-Studio K7

Plenty of "uncategorizeable" records are also unfocused, unlistenable and unmemorable. A blessed few break boundaries and become classics, and the latest from English crown jewel Matthew Herbert is among them. *Bodily Functions* is stocked with grooves both unconventional (oddball rhythms of stuttering hi-hats and liquid basslines that make you wanna dance like Devo) and downright elusive. Partially constructed from samples of human-made noises—laser eye-surgery, a friend's bloodflow—*Bodily Functions* is ultimately, and unabashedly, a jazz album, in both tone and composition. But don't turn

Link
www.matthewherbert.com
File Under
Cabaret of the tweaked
R.I.Y.L.
Matmos, Thomas Brinkmann,
Everything But The Girl,
Archie Shepp

that page! When it fully embraces its jazziness, the album is positively sublime. Herbert-played upright bass and piano add grace to the sullen instrumental "About This Time Each Day," while "The Last Beat," complete with honeyed, breathy vocals from Dana Siciliano, is as pretty and sweet as a Cole Porter ballad. Elsewhere, the organic un-house that has distinguished Herbert's productions as Doctor Rockit, Wishmountain and Radio Boy takes the form of a swing that boogie-woogies through the giggly grooves of "It's Only" and "You Saw It All," as well as a heavy, thumping funk that drives "I Know." It's jazz, it's house, but God help us, it's not jazzy house. Using his own materials, Matthew Herbert has once again built his own house. >>>ERIC DEMBY

Mark Eitzel The Invisible Man



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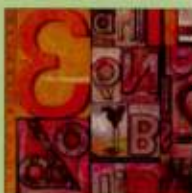
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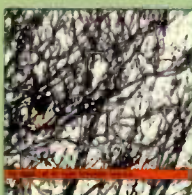
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West Coast underground rap
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Blackalicious

KUBIQ

Kuboniqs Heratik

From the always burgeoning and bustling Left Coast underground comes KubiQ, a young MC with an old soul. Representing the central Cali town of Fresno alongside talented neighborhood peer Planet Asia, KubiQ raps in a style that's an interesting middle ground between laid-back Bay Area twang and quick-fire Southern rat-a-tat. Lyrically, he's abstract—sometimes too abstract—tending to touch on a meaty topic only to bounce to another unrelated and less interesting one. All throughout *Kuboniqs* he's supported by one of the country's best and inexplicably ignored producers,

Fanatik, whose puree of old-style soul samples and modern technology gives KubiQ standout tracks over which to flow. Prime examples: The laid-back funk of "2K," with fellow Fresno-ite Kemet eclipsing even KubiQ's lyrical pace with Dirty South-derived runs, and both MCs mixing wisdom and doubt in their rhyme schemes; the mellower "Live That Life," with lyricist Azeem bringing a spoken-word style to the table, stating that "Both the club and the penitentiary's crowded/ They take your only everything/ Turn around and make you rap about it"; and the moody "Fans Of Rhyme" where KubiQ fires more learned lightning, rolling off phonetically twisted lines like, "From single cells/ To hominids/ My single sells/ Yellin' where your logic is" with ease and grace. A hot debut. >>>BRIAN COLEMAN



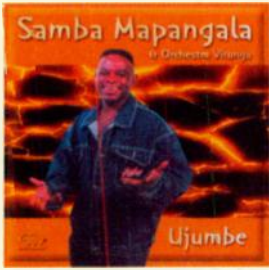
Link
www.onewhiskey.com
File Under
Modern electric whiskey blues
R.I.Y.L.
Nick Cave, Leonard Cohen,
Blind Willie Johnson

MARK LANEGAN

Field Songs Sub Pop

Mark Lanegan is like a preacher delivering last rites, his voice as dark and strong as oak, as earnest and burning as a shot of bourbon. Slow and mournful as it may be, the joy of his music is contained in its calming seriousness. On *Field Songs*, co-conspirators Mike Johnson (Dinosaur Jr.) and Ben Shepherd (Soundgarden) back that sound up with funereal organ, plaintive, sparsely picked acoustic guitars and the random piano accent. If a drummer visits, it's only to slightly energize the tempo ("Don't Forget Me") to a workmanlike trudge. Mild psych-

edelia recalling Lanegan's old band, Screaming Trees, still occasionally pokes through ("One Way Street"). But forget the grunge—Lanegan's five-album-strong solo career has been a tightening of the screws. Just like Jim Morrison without the quasi-poetic kitsch or Nick Cave without the Southern Gothic pretensions, Lanegan has found his niche in reflecting the blues's dour tone and resilient spirit, not its traditional chords and licks. Thus the old spirits haunt these *Songs*—some in theme ("Resurrection Song"), others as a result of collaboration ("Kimiko's Dream House" was written with late-Gun Club songwriter and spiritual brother Jeffrey Lee Pierce). Having forged a career as a master craftsman, Lanegan continues to build albums for duration and with a shuddering sense for detail. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



SAMBA MAPANGALA & ORCHESTRA VIRUNGA

Ujumbe Stern's-Earthworks

Since the mid-'70s, Samba Mapangala has stood out from the pack of *soukous* acts for his superior songcraft, gorgeous voice and loyalty to a classy lineup that favors electric guitars and alto saxophone. A technological frenzy has all but ruined *soukous*, a Zairean dance music that's been one of Afropop's most inherently appealing styles. Just avoiding the quagmire counts for a lot. But Mapangala and the current incarnation of his band, Virunga, deliver more. This music is naturally pretty and upbeat, so Mapangala's use of minor keys and his willingness to address serious themes—

such as the commemoration of fellow musicians who have died of AIDS—adds needed depth to a style easy to dismiss as frivolous. That track, "Dunia Tuna Pita," ("We Are Merely Passing Through This World") is the best song on *Ujumbe*, appearing in two different versions. Mapangala's robust, angelic tenor soars over chunking and chiming guitars that heat up into the standard *soukous* *seben* section, where the guitars go wild over a snare drum pumping out a Cuban-derived rhythm. Overall, there's little new ground broken on *Ujumbe*, but that's just fine: Mapangala's long-developed international perspective has kept him in touch with the things that made this music so widely beloved in the first place. Although so many other *soukous* artists have lost their way, Mapangala has held true. >>>BANNING EYRE

Link

members.aol.com/
dpaterson/mapangala.htm

File Under

Guitar Afropop *soukous*

R.I.Y.L.

Zaiko Langa Langa,

Kanda Bongo Man



MICE PARADE

Mokoondi Bubble Core

Adam Pierce's muse is enveloped in the world of sound, weaving dark-continent exoticism and jazzy improvisational twists into every little, subtly magical thing he inspires. Whether as a member of the knee-deep-in-gamelan Dylan Group, or as the auteur behind previously one-man studio project Mice Parade, Pierce opens his arms to the global soundscape and builds layers on top. And unlike Tortoise, his closest compatriots in this expedition, he keeps things technology-free and organic—in fact, *Mokoondi*, Mice Parade's third album, could be some outward-bound indie rocker's overdubbed, Indonesian sound

Out

www.bubblecore.com/artists/
mparade.html

File Under

The global village and the

psychedelic twist

R.I.Y.L.

Sea & Cake, Macha, Dylan Group

diary. *Mice Parade* is still pretty much a solo endeavor, with Pierce playing the lion's share of instruments, from guitars, keyboard and drums to vibes, Chinese harp and random percussion. In his hands, these are sewn together into proto-Buddhist trance-adelic epics: The three-part "Open Air Dance" moves from sedate, strummed acoustic guitar clusters to a lightly propulsive keyboard- and vibe-led fantasia, and Afrobeat reinterpretations like the title track inspire lite Fela funk to grasp at heaven's clouds. No tradition, it seems, is beyond consideration or inclusion. That *Mokoondi* ends with a real-life field recording (a tape of a Rio coconut-stand owner singing unaccompanied) is the most beautiful example of Pierce using the global village as his canvas, reveling in its unspoken gospel. >>>PIOTR ORLOV



MODEST MOUSE

Sad Sappy Sucker K

Instead of a strained attempt to turn a dusty archive find into quick cash, K Records' release of Modest Mouse's "lost" debut, *Sad Sappy Sucker*, offers a fascinating fragment of musical adolescence in all its beautifully blemished innocence. Mouse maestro Isaac Brock is still cheerfully explorative here, yet within the resulting rawness, one can clearly hear what became his distinctive brand of lush, lyrically poignant indie rock. Recorded in 1994, K's release contains not just the debut (originally scrapped due to delays), but

also tracks from two forgotten 7-inches (1995's "Blue Cadet-3, Do You Connect?" and 1998's "Birds Vs. Worms"), as well as several cuts from Brock's Dial-A-Song project. Recorded each day on his answering machine, these pleasantly messy experiments are the perfect example of an artist still free enough to make art simply for his own pleasure. On *Sad Sappy Sucker*, current drummer Jeremiah Green's loose-limbed backbeats deftly frame Brock's strangely moving guitar twang and plaintive vocals, a match that has thankfully remained in place despite the vagaries of time and lineup changes. While the album provides a refreshing roughness, tracks such as "Dukes Up," "Red Hand Case" and "Think Long" offer glimpses of a Modest Mouse nearly fully formed. Even then, the sprawling redwoods, deserted parking lots and diesel fumes of the Pacific Northwest were already their muse. >>>JESSICA HUNDLEY

Link

www.modestmousemusic.com

File Under

From the indie-rock vault

R.I.Y.L.

Pavement, Pixies, Built To Spill



NATIONAL SKYLINE

This=Everything File 13

Looking at National Skyline's lineup, you might assume the band is just a post-hardcore supergroup: The trio was formed in 1996 by ex-Hum bassist Jeff Dimpsey and ex-Castor guitarist/vocalist Jeff Garber, and ex-Compound Red guitarist James Minor joined soon after the band's first tour. However, on their debut full-length, *This=Everything*, the wailing and gnashing of the members' former projects has been set aside. From the opening soft xylophone plinks and crisp programmed beats of "Some Will Say," it's clear that these boys have exorcised their angst. The album's soft textures and atmospheres aren't far

Out

www.file-13.com

File Under

Post-electronicore

R.I.Y.L.

Sigur Ros, Antarcctica,

Radiohead's Kid A,

Freight Elevator Quartet

from dreamier electronic fare (like LTJ Bukem) or gentler sample-based post-rock (like Mogwai's reserved side), and uniquely, National Skyline escapes the dour fate of most rockers who make the electronic crossover; the band sounds confident and mature backed by processed beats, not like a My First Casio session gone awry. National Skyline still maintains enough of the verse-chorus-verse construct to keep hold of their old bands' rock constituency, too—even if Garber's voice never hovers above a soothing whisper and the plaintive guitar melodies rarely rise or distort. It's not remarkable to find rock musicians enraptured by programming anymore, but it's certainly refreshing to come across ones who remembered to craft successful songs. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

MIXED SIGNALS

BY M. TYE COMER



ERICK MORILLO

Subliminal Session: One *Subliminal*

What It Is: A spicy concoction of soul-soaked garage, spacey progressive and thunderous tribal house.

Why You Want It: Morillo gives a high-energy overview of house music's current inflections, including anthems like Kings Of Tomorrow's "Finally," Medway's "Release" and Sono's "Keep Control," as well as several prime cuts from the Subliminal catalog.

R.I.Y.L.: Danny Tenaglia, John Digweed, Satoshi Tomiie



SCOTT HARDKISS

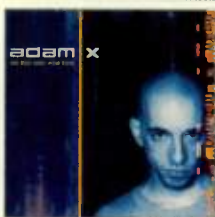
United DJs Of America Presents Scott Hardkiss

Mixer-DMC

What It Is: New York club frontrunner whips your ass with an eclectic mix of the San Fran sound moving from trippy, surrealist house to funky, kinetic hip-hop.

Why You Want It: Hardkiss's boogie wonderland hasn't been documented on disc since 1996, but this makes a case for pardon on disc with peak tunes by Electric Skychurch, Armand Van Helden and Tom Chasteen.

R.I.Y.L.: Electric Skychurch, DJ Garth, DJ Dan



ADAM X

On The One And Two *Infect*

What It Is: Brooklyn party rocker delivers soulless techno and moody electro classics with ominous edges and new-wave nuances.

Why You Want It: Adam's distinctive style and track selection—including tunes by Frankie Bones, Cristian Vogel, and (gasp!) Front 242—results in a rigidly underground sonic groove for the truly hardcore.

R.I.Y.L.: Frankie Bones, Meat Beat Manifesto



MAX GRAHAM

Transport 4 *Kinetic*

What It Is: Canadian "dance ambassador" trances out with deep, interstellar sounds and rapturous refrains.

Why You Want It: Trance may be a four-letter word in the underground, but Graham's almost saintly because he avoids overplayed club anthems in favor of the melodic, menacing textures of artists like Timo Maas and Hybrid.

R.I.Y.L.: Sasha, Sandra Collins, Timo Maas



EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL

Back To Mine *Ultra*

What It Is: Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt dust off their old favorites for a sultry, downtempo mix of soul, hip-hop and house.

Why You Want It: EBTG seduces the ears by drawing stylistic connections DJ Cam, Model 500, Ananda Project, Slick Rick and Beth Orton without missing a beat. The perfect soundtrack for summer sunsets.

R.I.Y.L.: Groove Armada, Dubtribe, Mark Farina



NULLSET

Better Days *Grand Royal*

Nullset originally went by the cartoonish moniker Gangsta Bitch Barbie, but after a little Mattel Toys cease-and-desist order, the Massachusetts quintet wisely switched to Nullset. While *Better Days*, their lava-hot debut, is undeniably rapcore—hip-hop rhythms and flared-nostril raps on a crash course with bottom-heavy, cuticle-shredding riffs—these blue-collar bombers deliver the sound with the fury, forgoing the style's recent mediocrity and testosterone-driven tomfoolery. There's no chest-beating, boasting or "give me something to break" anger here. Rather, the album

[Link](#)

www.nullset.tv

[File Under](#)

The raw metallic grooves

R.I.Y.L.

Rage Against The Machine, Nonpoint, Deftones' *Adrenaline*

plays out like the collaboration of kids raised on equal parts *Headbanger's Ball* and *Yo! MTV Raps*, who worshipped Run-DMC as passionately as they did Faith No More and Pantera. The rhythm section (bassist Jim Shippey and drummer Mick Palmesano) rocks a fierce pocket, while Jim Foster and Chris Fitzgerald's dual guitars crank out quirky mosh parts that will rattle your teeth loose from your jaw. Tracks like "This Ain't California," "Smokewood" and "Kingpin" bridge the gap between believable aggro and rump-shaking groove, vocalist Ken Smith coming on strong like a bull staring down a red flag. If a single blows up, watch the Woodstock frat-rockers come out in droves, but anyone with even a passing fancy for quality heavy grooves will consider sticking around for the entire album. It's 42 minutes well spent. >>>AMY SCIARRETTO



ORGANIC AUDIO

Last One Home *Network America*

One wonders why the epic fun exhibited by Andy "Organic Audio" Spence throughout his sophomore full-length, *Last One Home*, is not the standard in house-music dens the world over. To be sure, the house explosion of the latter half of the '90s has expanded this most populist post-disco style's parameters—with deep house, garage, tech-house etc. wowing a diverse dancefloor clientele and attracting thoughtful artists to the form. But this music was always meant to be about sweat-inducing "throw your hands in the air and shake your rump" hedonism, not strictness of hi-hat—and what the trainspot-

[Link](#)

www.organicaudio.co.uk

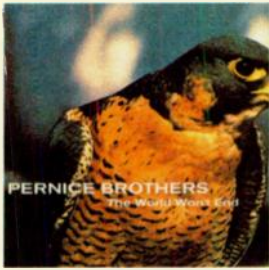
[File Under](#)

Return of the good-time beats

R.I.Y.L.

Groove Armada, Ashley Beedle, Fatboy Slim's DJ sets

ter cognoscenti sometimes forget, Spence is more than happy to remind them. Full of funk grooves, flurries of Brazilian batucada beats and glorious melodies, *Last One Home* is a party explosion in your CD player, with warm chill-out respites strategically interspersed for the overheated. There's something for everybody here. Into acidic drug-dub markers? Try "Into Something." Craving filtered, post-Daft rave-ups? Go ahead and explode over the ragga-toasted "Good To Go." Missing the crazed sounds of Carnaval (minus the cheesy Brazilian electronica stylings)? Feast your ears on the polyrhythmic funk of "Florettas Horns." To re-phrase the album's opening track (and a current U.K. club staple), this is music to play to. Sourpusses need not apply! >>>PIOTR ORLOV



PERNICE BROTHERS

The World Won't End Ashmont

After scuttling the weepy twang of the Scud Mountain Boys, Joe Pernice created a masterful set of airy, orchestral pop songs for the Pernice Brothers' debut, 1998's *Overcome By Happiness*. Although he continued to use many of the same bandmembers, including bassist/producer Thom Monahan and guitarist Peyton Pinkerton, Pernice's next two projects, *Chappaquiddick Skyline* (by the band of the same name) and the solo *Big Tobacco*, avoided the lush arrangements that made *Overcome By Happiness* exceptional. Strong as they were, those two releases

now seem like worthy detours on the path to the second Pernice Brothers collection. *The World Won't End* is a brilliantly orchestrated pop album, awash with strings, layered acoustic guitars and bouncing piano chords, one that pays subtle homage to the songwriting craft of '60s icons like Jimmy Webb (in the chorus crescendo of "Our Time Has Passed") and Brian Wilson (in the lonely desperation of "Shaken Baby"). In his whispery, intimate tenor, Pernice still sings fractured narratives of heartbreak and regret, but even a line like "There's nothing there, just bitterness" (from "7:30") leads to bright, soaring AM-pop harmonies that bring to mind '60s studio sensations like the Association. When Pernice begins "Endless Supply" by murmuring "I tried to kill that feeling with a song," his method's clear: There's sweet salvation in the beauty of *The World Won't End*. >>>STEVE KLINGE

Link

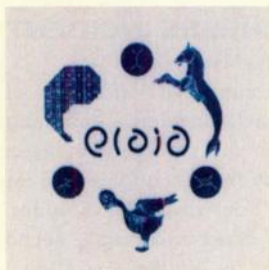
pernice.sanadoire.com

File Under

Lush, bittersweet pop

R.I.Y.L.

Chamber Strings, Love,
Elliott Smith



PLAID

Double Figure Warp

Somewhere in the prehistory of post-techno, Warp's *Artificial Intelligence* collections showcased obscure artists like Autechre and the Black Dog, whose complex polyrhythms, quirky melodies and whimsical wankery sounded like the handiwork of sentient machines. Those compilations wound up spawning a genre: IDM ("intelligent dance music"). Eight years later, while artists like Autechre have carried IDM ever inward toward fractal implosion, Black Dog spinoff Plaid—Andy Turner and Ed Handley—has remained dedicated to the melodicism that defined its first

generation. *Double Figure*, the duo's fourth album since 1995, adheres to the sterling tones and bubbly rhythms of *Not For Threes* and *Rest Proof Clockwork*. Shorn of the vocal tracks that proved central to their previous recordings, several of the tracks suffer a lack of focus. The formula hasn't changed—jittery junglisms underpin harpsichord cadences and webs of sparkling sound—but many of their arrangements are less memorable this time out, evaporating as soon as the closing echoes fade. Every once in a while they pull out a surprise like the modal jazz of "Ti Born," an example of the very best kind of machine soul. And the closing "Manyme," a bizarre sample of futuristic R&B, suggests a fantastic world dangled just out of earshot. Plaid proves a bit maddening, sketching a promising outline and then coloring it in with preset tones. Is it too much to ask for a little intuitive dance music? >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE

Link

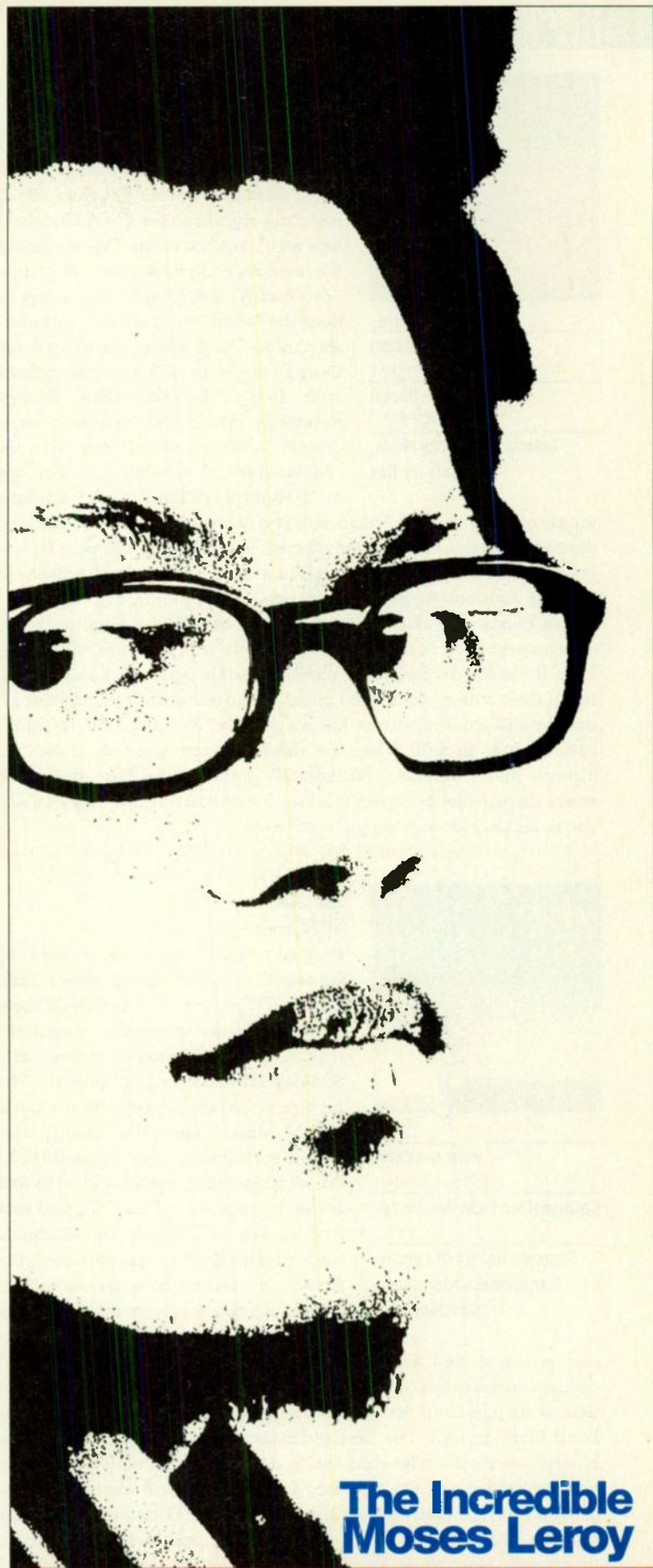
www.plaid.co.uk

File Under

Thinking man's bleeps

R.I.Y.L.

Lackluster, Autechre,
Boards Of Canada



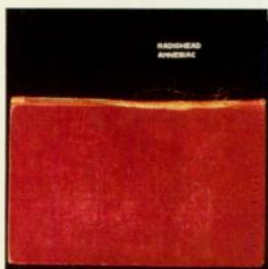
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RADIOHEAD

Amnesiac Capitol

The sublime, snugly electro-synth groove of *Amnesiac*'s opener, "Packt Like Sardines In A Crushed Box," instantly signifies that *Kid A* chicanery was no blip on the radar. This is, simply, the evolution of Radiohead. Not until "You And Whose Army?," four songs in, does the "band" come out of the studio's shadows—Thom Yorke warbling longingly from inside a 78 rpm gramophone with Jonny G. channeling Django Reinhardt into a "No Surprises"-style crescendo. Balanced as it may be by the "Personal Jesus"-ish slide-guitar boogie of "I Might Be Wrong" and the jingle-

jangle of "Knives Out," *Amnesiac*'s peaks are, again, more intelligent dance music than album oriented rock. The rumbling, abstract-techno textures of "Pulk/Pull Revolving Doors" tear a page out of Autechre's book on garbage-disposal harmonies and rhythms, and the backwards bends of "Like Spinning Plates" beautifully beguile. Yorke opens up more on *Amnesiac*, though rarely with his "true" voice, and he still sounds as though he needs a shrink. Lyrically, he's jumping into a river with a black-eyed angel on the majestic "Pyramid Song," and on a peppier reprise of *Kid A*'s ghostly "Morning Bell" he again cuts the kids in half. When the shared modus operandi of the two albums melts together, Radiohead's implicit message begins to sneak through the synapse: Trust us, for we can do no wrong—unless you're looking for rock songs. >>>ERIC DEMBY

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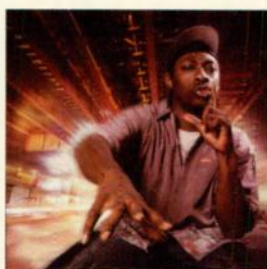
www.radiohead.com

File Under

More of the different

R.I.Y.L.

Autechre, Depeche Mode, Mercury Rev



PETE ROCK

Petestrumentals BBE

Pete Rock exists in that rarefied company of hip-hop producers whose beats are so tight and evocative, the vocals sometimes get in the way of their spare beauty. Although CL Smooth spun ponderous yarns of rhyme on the duo's two classic early-'90s albums, you could practically hear the whole story by focusing on Pete's majestic beats. After tapping an all-star MC for every track on his 1998 solo debut, *Soul Survivor*, Pete truly goes it alone on his latest endeavor, and *Petestrumentals* proves he's as qualified as any to bake cakes of strictly rhythm,

Link

www.bbemusic.com/home_page/beatgeneration/peterock.htm

File Under

The relentless head nod

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Premier, DJ Krush, DJ Cam

glazed-over bass and a sprinkling of melodic sugar. "Pete's Jazz," for example, puts all its cards on the table immediately. Driven by a deep booty bass, a neck-snapping beat kicks it straight away and doesn't quit; this is plenty for hardcore head-nodders, but Pete embellishes the flavor with a spacey vibes loop and a trademark horn stab, even mixing in a jazz-guitar "chorus" and a sax breakdown, which only sweetens the return of the luscious groove. "The Boss" cultivates a lazy Sunday afternoon feel with nothing but a cascading trumpet, a reassembled piano snippet (which he also flips backward) and a loping snare. Pete does trot out his new UN rhyme crew for a couple of cuts, but they end up confirming what we already knew: He don't need no stinkin' vocals, man. >>>ERIC DEMBY



SI*SE

*Si*Se* Luaka Bop

Formed nearly three years ago by vocalist/drum 'n' bass programmer Carol C and NYC programmer and DJ U.F. Low, Si*Se elegantly combines downtown rhythms and underground grooves with Spanish Harlem's magical realism. The group's name should provide a clue to the bicultural knot that neatly ties Si*Se's sound. Pronounced "see-SAY" ("I know" in Spanish), it also spells the first letters of chanteuse Carol C's first and last names in English and Spanish, respectively. The duo appropriates Latin America's musical heritage, extracting elements (consciously or not) as distant as Moorish Spain and Caribbean Africa,

Link

www.si-se.com

File Under

Cosmopolitan Latin downtempo

R.I.Y.L.

Supreme Beings Of Leisure, Transglobal Underground, Aterciopelados

and as near as New York's barrios. The group employs both traditional acoustic instruments (including two violas) and electronic gadgetry to deliver its pan-Latin fusion, but it's in Carol C's sultry voice that the band finds its soul. The Dominican-born bilingual singer whispers bluesy laments of lost love and desire, as easily as she releases cathartic wails of redemption. On "Sonrisa," Carol C taps her Arabic ancestry to come off like a Spanish-speaking Ofra Haza, making her undulating soprano soar over rai-inflected percussion and snappy electronic breakbeats. Meanwhile, the autumnal, trip-hoppy "Rain" is Portishead with a double shot of adrenaline. And for "Steppin' Out," Carol C coos and scats to jazzed-up instrumentation. So, do you know? The answer is Si*Se. >>>ENRIQUE LAVIN



STRING CHEESE INCIDENT

Outside Inside SCI Fidelity

It takes every mind-bending minute of the String Cheese Incident's hour-long *Outside Inside* for the band to even begin to satisfy their insatiable zeal for the eclectic. But while the Boulder, Colorado jam band is certainly set to impress with its wildly ambitious, improvisational take on bluegrass, blues, funk and classic rock, inspiring its cult fanbase is priority number one. To that end, the quintet's fifth album is full of meticulous movements that meander enough to soothe cerebral tendencies and grooves so hard one can't help but throw those hippie hips

Link

www.stringcheeseincident.com

File Under

Soul jams

R.I.Y.L.

Allman Brothers Band, Phish, Juggling Suns

around. When keys-and-accordion master Kyle Hollingsworth suggests, "Open your mind/ And take the time to learn from the soul" on "Close Your Eyes," it could be taken as an SCI manifesto, not simply a swaggering working class tale just begging for sing-alongs. And that's where the group's hippie boogie tends to go: The horn-soaked funky soul of "Black And White" jumps and flows with Michael Kang's juiced mandolin; "Latinissimo" exhibits a deft interpretation of salsa; and Paul Simon-esque verses yield to a reggae-inspired chorus in the 11-minute "Rollover." Their first studio disc in three years, *Outside Inside* marks the first time SCI worked with Steve Berlin (Los Lobos, Tragically Hip)—or any other producer. The marriage has only made the String Cheese Incident more tightly woven and their presence warmer. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO



TO ROCOCO ROT & I-SOUND

Music Is A Hungry Ghost City Slang-Mute

On 1999's *The Amateur View*, German instrumental trio To Rococo Rot (brothers Robert and Ronald Lippok and Stefan Schneider, bassist with nouveau Krautrock act Kreidler) fashioned a vast electronic field of insect-like flutters and toes-in-the-sand gushiness. Apparently, though, the group was so impressed with the single contribution to that record by New York DJ I-Sound that they have enlisted him to clutter up the previous album's wide-open spaces with an urban, musique concrete din. Every cut on *Music Is A Hungry Ghost* exploits the tension between lush, moody synths

Link
www.cityslang.com/bandseiten/torococorot/trrframe.html
File Under
Post-millennium groove thang
R.I.Y.L.
Pan Sonic, Kreidler,
Saint Etienne

and the abrasive sounds of industry. The well-named "Mazda In The Mist," for instance, begins with what sounds like a speaker not merely dying out but burbling the last drop of life-juice from its cones, but then that gets immediately tempered with slight Eno-like synth waves. The neatest trick is how these two worlds, pulsing inexorably side-by-side, both start to appear simultaneously soothing and menacing. That's why the cuts where the beat approaches danceability or on which violinist Alexander Balanescu chimes in are the least effective. The uses and sounds they reference are too blandly earthbound and manipulative to sustain the air of unspecific creepiness that, at its best, *Music Is A Hungry Ghost* conjures up. >>>KEVIN JOHN



TOADIES

Hell Below/Stars Above Interscope

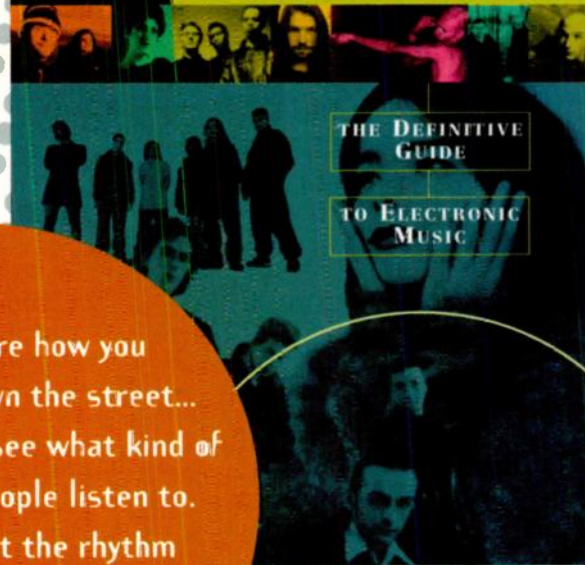
Sitting out the late '90s may be the smartest thing the Toadies could have done. A bit browner than its grunge-era peers, the Dallas/Fort Worth band waited long enough after its 1994 breakthrough, *Rubberneck*, for the rawk to return. A pulverizing comeback, *Hell Below/Stars Above* doesn't sound like six years of work, but does restore the Toadies' distinct sound: driving post-grunge with the versatility and wit of post-punk. What puts the Toadies over isn't the players' chops so much as their range—few bands successfully mix turgid and terse as they do, disdaining

Link
www.thetoadies.com
File Under
Meathead rock, indie smarts
R.I.Y.L.
Soundgarden, Jawbreaker,
Collective Soul

solos and remaining heavy. With his adenoidal, Lou-Gramm-in-heat voice, singer-guitarist Todd Lewis is a tuneful, almost bluesy shrieker; paired with the uncomplicated guitar of Clark Vogeler and slightly funky bass of Lisa Umbarger, his wail loses its metal edge and takes on a Southern Gothic quality, as on the slacker burn "Pressed Against The Sky." The band's unadorned approach suits the material, but it can be too straightforward—the chugging, anti-anthem "What We Have We Steal," for example, and the bashing title track are all bar-band crunch, getting by on hooks and Buds. The risk is that the Toadies' approach could underwhelm both metalheads and indie-rockers. As it stands, their second album achieves a détente between both camps that we hope won't be followed by another long hibernation. >>>CHRIS MOLANPHY

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TOULOUSE: NEW POINTS NEW LINES



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www.grimsey.com/toulouse.html

File Under

Retro-new-wave-proto-punk-pop

R.I.Y.L.

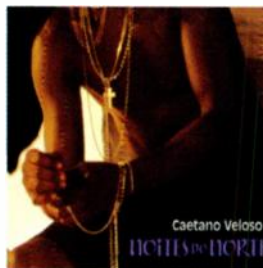
Unrest, Versus,
Gang Of Four, !!!

District," while Sarah Rentz (the sole female member) barks "North! South! East! West!"; in "Schematic For New Situations," someone sings about "Changing all the signs! So they read! 'C'mon let's get together!" Hearing these melodic squawks alongside the Gang Of Four/Television guitars, joyful farfisa and interminable hi-hat, it's hard not to do a jerky little dance, despite the nagging feeling that you've heard this all before on an Unrest B-side. And Toulouse keeps up the energy for most of the disc's half hour, trading their angularity occasionally for a syncopated, Stereolabbish Eurodisco groove ("Into L'avventura"). By the time the vigor runs out (toward the end of the disc, they simply slow everything down to a plod for "Rhetoric Of Romance" and "Obrigado"), everyone's ready for a little less spaz anyway. >>>DYLAN SIEGLER

TOULOUSE

New Points New Lines Grimsey

In the mouths of early post-punk blurters like Fred Schneider and David Byrne, syllables were inflated and then popped; phrases not sung but hurled, with the emphasis in unusual places. That Boston-via-Chicago quartet Toulouse (with ties to twee songwriter act Aden) hinges its verbs on the Byrne-Schneider principle is hands down the band's best quality. Almost any lyric, sung by any member, is endowed with that tick—"It drives up their city's revenues!" someone proclaims (it's hard to tell whom, since all four contribute) in "Green Light



Link

caetanoveloso.globo.com

File Under

Tropicalia's New World Order

R.I.Y.L.

Vinicius Cantuária,
Gilberto Gil, David Byrne

an homage to Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni and a poem by Waly Salomão set to music—not exactly typical pop conceits. But Veloso doesn't just challenge lyrically. Musically, he remains an adventurer, using the bossa and samba of his youth as springboards into more experimental waters. On "Ia," electric guitar and drums create a slightly disorienting, swirling soundscape behind his voice; and on "13 De Maio," son Moreno helps out with additional instrumentation and engineering, offering an approach that veers well left of center. Nothing here is by the numbers: Even Veloso's cover of Jorge Ben's classic "Zumbi" is taken with plenty of thought, unfolding a cinematic landscape of the homeland Veloso continues to explore in song. Still vital after all these years, Veloso gives lessons many of his American counterparts could well heed. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

CAETANO VELOSO

Noites do Noche Nonesuch

Brazil's preeminent singer/songwriter, Caetano Veloso, has been releasing teasingly provocative music for more than 30 years now. Best remembered as one of the founders of the Tropicalia movement, his politics found him exiled from his native land in the late '60s. Such youthful quests have remained with him—if anything, his recent albums attempt to explore even greater artistic depths than his earlier work did. For instance, the title track on *Noites Do Noche* comes directly from the writings of Joaquim Nabuco, a 19th century Brazilian abolitionist. Elsewhere, there's



Link

www.bluerose-records.com[/e/artists/volebeat.html](http://e/artists/volebeat.html)

File Under

Gardening at night, in Detroit,

while eight miles high

R.I.Y.L.

The Byrds, Big Star,
Gear Daddies

VOLEBEATS

Mosquito Spiral Third Gear

For more than a decade, Detroit's Volebeats have been nonchalantly building a career out of modern music's finest country-pollinated pop songs. Seemingly seeking no reward other than the beauty of harmony—and lovingly embellishing the echoey, heart-crushing sound favored by early R.E.M. and the Turtles—the Volebeats have done little to push their perfection front and center. *Mosquito Spiral*, their fourth offering, drives listeners to a forgotten fishing hole, where a half case of beer cans with manly elk logos and an endless supply of time awaits. From the shimmering kick of opener "Radio Flyer" to the mewling steel on "Come

Over," these are songs invested with care and courtesy. The gently plodding "Not Here Not Gone" will inevitably cause a passerby to ask "Who is this?" with a hint of recognition in their eyes, while "I Just Want Someone To Love [For The Summer]" pairs the euphoria of a big, dumb puppy crush with the spiritual richness of Chris Bell's proposition, "You And Your Sister." *Mosquito Spiral* is 10 heartaches away from the quintet's last effort, 1999's morose *Solitude*, but that doesn't mean the pain—or the twang—is any less real. It's just been buffered by the glow of a happier time, which may or may not have been experienced, but at least witnessed through the Volebeats' nostalgic lens. >>>KRISTY MARTIN



Link

www.lucindawilliams.net

File Under

Between roots rock

and quiet grace

R.I.Y.L.

Caitlin Cary, Gillian Welch,
Iris DeMent, Ryan Adams

LUCINDA WILLIAMS

Essence Lost Highway-Universal

Reportedly inspired by a breakup with Lucinda Williams's live-in boyfriend/bassist Richard Price, *Essence's* ballads slowly and deliberately unravel the shattered pieces of the songwriter's soul, framing them in a delicate lattice-work of mournful guitars. It's a fragile chronicle of romantic despair that comes in nearly direct opposition to the rumble and chug of 1998's *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road*. Leave it to an artist as mercurial as Williams to follow up the biggest album of her career with a disc that makes Mark Eitzel sound like Elton John. "Lonely Girls" sets the tone as Williams paints a vivid portrait of

title characters, waiting 'til the end to count herself among their ranks. From there it's one melancholy lament after another. The vulnerable beauty of "Blue" makes heartache seem almost inviting, at least if you're able to evoke it as transcendently as Williams does here. During this paean to the restorative powers of sadness, Williams declares her fealty to said emotion: "You can count your blessings, I'll just count on blue." When the lone stomper, "Get Right With God," arrives, its bluesy, gutbucket feel is almost shocking in its mood-altering extremity. Despite all the emotional carnage, *Essence* offers a soundscape whose ambling, hazy feel makes it a perfect soundtrack for a lazy summer. >>>JIM ALLEN

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 THE BRIEFS Squash Me Like A Bug (7-inch) *Sub Pop*
 PETER BROTZMANN Fuck De Boere *Atavistic-UIMS*
 CAPTAIN & TENNILLE Complete Hits *Hip-O*
 CALEXICO Even My Sure Things Fall Through (EP) *Touch And Go*
 CANELA Canela *DreamWorks*
 THE CHERRY VALENCE The Cherry Valence *Estrus*
 ANDREW COLEMAN Everything Was Beautiful And Nothing Hurt *Thrill Jockey*
 COO COO CAL My Projects (12-inch) *Tammy Boy*
 COOPER, ALICIA SVIGALS *Mikveh Traditional Crossroads*
 FERRY CORSTEN Global Transmission *Moonshine*
 BILL COSBY Millennium *Universal*
 NIKKA COSTA Everybody Got Their Something *Virgin*
 DIRTY THREE/LOW In The Fishtank Part Seven *Fishtank*
 ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN Flowers *spinART*
 ENTRAIN All One *Dolphin Safe*
 FAITH AND THE MUSE Anwynn, Beneath The Waves; Elyria; Evidence Of Heaven *Metropolis*
 FREAKY FLOW World Domination *Moonshine*
 GEGGY TAH Into The Oh *Virgin*
 GRAND PUBA Project Heat *Rising Sun-Koch*
 HALFCOCKED The Last Star *DreamWorks*
 JET SET SATELLITE Blueprint *Netwerk*
 JOE JACKSON Anthology (2CD) *Universal*
 KANSAS Leftovture; Masque *Epic Legacy*
 —*Reissues.*
 LADYBUG TRANSISTOR Argyle Heir *Merge*
 LAPTOP The Old Me Vs The New You *Trust Me*
 LEFT OVER CRACK Shoot The Kids At School *Helicat*
 —*This band named themselves after the contents of Piotr's fridge.*
 LIL JON & THE EASTSIDE BOYZ Put Yo Hood Up *TVT*
 LONG BEACH DUB ALL STARS *DreamWorks*
 NICKY LOVE Honeyvision *DreamWorks*
 BOB MARLEY One Love: The Very Best Of Bob Marley & The Wailers *UTV*
 BILLY MARTIN Groove, Bang And Jive Around *Armuet*
 —*Vinyl-only breakbeat record from Medeski Martin & Wood's drummer.*
 MOOCHIE MACK Broke Pimpin' In The Paint-Koch
 —*Kinda like us, except without the pimpin' part.*
 WILLIE NELSON Rainbow Connection *Island*
 NO INNOCENT VICTIM Tipping The Scales *Victory*
 OC Bon Appetit *JCR*
 OURS Distorted Lullaby *DreamWorks*
 OVAL Commers *Thrill Jockey*
 PISS ANT Piss Off *GenXtasy*
 POPE FACTORY Hibernation Generation *Buffalo Fire*
 PORTASTATIC Looking For Leonard Soundtrack *Merge*
 THE PROCLAIMERS Persevere *Netwerk America*
 PROJECT PITCHFORK Daimonon *Metropolis*
 THE RAPTURE Out Of The Races And Onto The Tracks (EP) *Sub Pop*
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 —*Reissues.*
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 STEVEN R. SMITH Tableland *Emperor Jones*
 SMOOTHER Chasing The Dragon *Netwerk*
 SNYPAS *Virgin*
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 SOUNDTRACK Berry Gordy's The Last Dragon *Universal*
 SPOOKY TOOTH Live On The BBC *Blue Storm-Spittire*
 STABBING WESTWARD Stabbing Westward *Koch*

STARSHIP BEER Nut Music *Atavistic-UIMS*
 STATIC-X Machine *Warner Bros.*
 THIRD EYE FOUNDATION I Poopoo On Your Juju *Merge*
 TYRESE 2000 Watts *Beats*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Rca, Rhythms & Battles Vol. 1 *Loud*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Race To Erase MS *Epic*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Spirit Of The Streets *Burning Heart*
 VP215 Vocal Pointe *DreamWorks*
 WARN DEFEVER Someday My Blues Will Cover The Earth 4AD
 —*They're going to have to compete with my blues, which already blanket most of North America.*
 THE WEDNESDAYS (7-inch) *Estrus*
 THE WELLWATER CONSPIRACY The Scroll And Its Combinations *TVT*
 WHISKEYTOWN Pneumonia *Last Highway*

MAY 29

AIR 10,000 Hz Legend *Source-Astrahwerks*
 BLISS Trip To The 13th *Epic*
 CHRIS BOWDEN Beautiful Nasty (12-inch) *Ninja Tune*
 CYRENA *Epic*
 SCOTT HENRY *Ultra*
 DAN HICKS & HIS HOT LICKS The Most Of Dan Hicks & His Hot Licks *Epic Legacy*
 MEGASHIRA At Last *Infracom*
 MUMIA ABU JAMAL 175 Progress Avenue *Alternative Tentacles*
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 LETHAL AGGRESSION From The Curt Of The Fucking Whore *Relapse*
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 PLAID Double Figure *Warp*
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JUNE 5

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 HEIDI BERRY Pomagranate 4AD
 MANU CHAO Proxima Estacion Esperanza *Virgin*
 CITY HIGH City High *Interscope-Geffen-A&M*
 DANTE Inferno *RCA*
 DARK LEAF Dark Leaf (F*ck The People) *Ubiquity*
 FOREST FOR THE TREES Jellyfish *DreamWorks*
 JOHNNY FRIGO Collected Works (Luv N'Haight) *Ubiquity*
 DICK HECKSTALL-SMITH *Blue Storm-Spittire*
 HOODS Tim: The Destroyer *Resurrection A.D.*
 HOT WATER MUSIC A Flight And A Crash *Epitaph*
 ILL NINO *Roadrunner*
 JET SET PRODUCTIONS Bitter (12-inch) *Infracom*
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 —*Reissues. Nicole's going to marry the aforementioned Jimmy someday. You'll see.*
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 KOOL KEITH Spankmaster *Overcore*
 LONDON XPRESS *Nuphonic*
 LUSH CIAO! 1989-1996 4AD
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 MAYOR MCCA Me Is He *Sonic Unyon*
 NEOTROPIC La Prochaine Fois *Ntone*

OSKER Idle Will Kill *Epitaph*
 PLEASURE FOREVER Pleasure Forever *Sub Pop*
 P'TAAH (12-inch) *Ubiquity*
 RAMSQUAD Random Access Money *JCR*
 MIRANDA LEE RICHARDS Compilations From Herethereafter *Virgin*
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 SHEA SEGER The May Street Project *RCA*
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 SUPLECS Sad Songs, Better Days *Man's Ruin*

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 —*Have you been reading my diary?*
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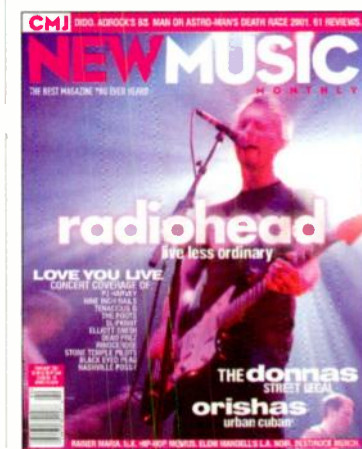
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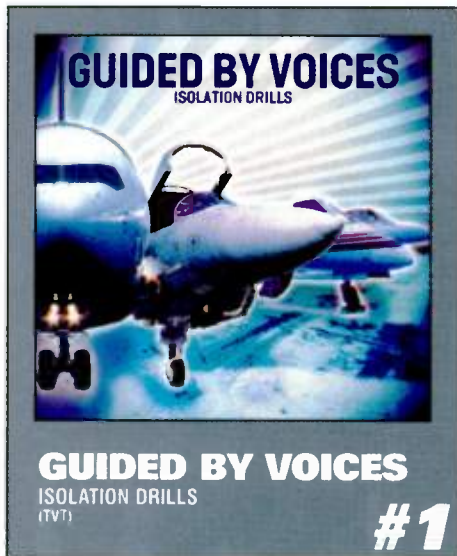
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TOP 75



5 YEARS AGO

STEREOLAB
EMPEROR TOMATO KETCHUP (ELEKTRA)

LUSH
LOVELIFE (4AD REPRISE)

LIFTER
MELINDA (EVERYTHING WAS...) (INTERSCOPE)

JESUS LIZARD
SHOT (CAPITOL)

SUPERDRAG
REGRETFULLY YOURS (ELEKTRA)

10 YEARS AGO

R.E.M.
OUT OF TIME (WARNER BROS. RECORDS)

FEELIES
TIME FOR A WITNESS (A&M)

KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION
STRANGE FREE WORLD (A&M)

DINOSAUR JR.
GREEN MIND (GIRL)

THROWING MUSES
THE REAL RAMONA (SIRE)

	ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1	GUIDED BY VOICES	Isolation Drills	TVT
2	DAFT PUNK	Discovery	Virgin
3	RED HOUSE PAINTERS	Old Ramon	Sub Pop
4	ANI DIFRANCO	Revelling/Reckoning	Righteous Babe
5	OLD 97'S	Satellite Rides	Elektra
6	CREEPER LAGOON	Take Back The Universe And Give...	DreamWorks
7	NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS	No More Shall We Part	Mute-Reprise
8	IDLEWILD	100 Broken Windows	Food-Odeon/Capitol
9	BEN HARPER AND THE INNOCENT...	Live From Mars	Virgin
10	BLACK BOX RECORDER	The Facts Of Life	Jetset
11	SHUGGIE OTIS	Inspiration Information	Luaka Bop
12	ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT	Group Sounds	Vagrant
13	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Sounds Eclectic	Palm
14	TOADIES	Hell Below/Stars Above	Interscope
15	ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES	Blow In The Wind	Fat Wreck Chords
16	PETE YORN	Music For The Morning After	Columbia
17	B.R.M.C.	Black Rebel Motorcycle Club	Virgin
18	SHEILA DIVINE	Where Have My Countrymen Gone	Co-Op
19	ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE	Redefining Music	Hopeless
20	STEPHEN MALKMUS	Stephen Malkmus	Matador
21	HEFNER	We Love The City	Too Pure-Beggars Group
22	GORILLAZ	Tomorrow Comes Today (EP)	Virgin
23	DASHBOARD CONFSSIONAL	The Places You Have Come To Fear...	Vagrant
24	NIKKA COSTA	Everybody Got Their Something	Cheeba Sound-Virgin
25	LEMON JELLY	Lemonjelly.ky	XL-Beggars Group
26	ARAB STRAP	The Red Thread	Matador
27	MOUSE ON MARS	Idiology	Thrill Jockey
28	THURSDAY	Full Collapse	Victory
29	CLUTCH	Pure Rock Fury	Atlantic
30	OF MONTREAL	Coquelicot Asleep In The Poppies...	Kindercore
31	MANIC STREET PREACHERS	Know Your Enemy	Virgin
32	ALKALINE TRIO	From Here To Infirmary	Vagrant
33	TORTOISE	Standards	Thrill Jockey
34	LUCKY BOYS CONFUSION	Throwing The Game	Elektra
35	THE SOFT BOYS	Underwater Moonlight	Matador
36	BURNING AIRLINES	Identikit	DeSoto
37	MATMOS	A Chance To Cut Is A Chance To Cure	Matador
38	DAVE MATTHEWS BAND	Everyday	RCA
39	BREAKESTRA	The Live Mix Part 2	Stones Throw
40	RAMMSTEIN	Mutter	Universal
41	INDIA.ARIE	Acoustic Soul	Motown
42	THE BLAKE BABIES	God Bless The Blake Babies	Zoë-Rounder
43	STEREOPHONICS	Just Enough Education To Perform	V2
44	THE INCREDIBLE MOSES LEROY	Electric Pocket Radio	Ultimatum-Artemis
45	ANDREW BIRD'S BOWL OF FIRE	The Swimming Hour	Rykodisc
46	THOU	Put Us In Tune	See Thru Broadcasting
47	JOHN HAMMOND	Wicked Grin	Point Blank-Virgin
48	OLEANDER	Unwind	Republic-Universal
49	ANTI-FLAG	Underground Network	Fat Wreck Chords
50	CINERAMA	John Peel Sessions	Manifesto
51	TIPSY	Uh-Oh!	Asphodel
52	SKINDIVE	Skindive	Palm
53	KINGS OF CONVENIENCE	Quiet Is The New Loud	Source-Astralwerks
54	MICE PARADE	Mokoondi	Bubble Core
55	LES CLAYPOOL'S FROG BRIGADE	Live Frogs Set 1	Prawn Song
56	CROPDUSTER	Drunk Uncle	We Put Out
57	COUCH	Profane	Matador
58	LUCKSMITHS	Why That Doesn't Surprise Me	Candle-Drive-In
59	H2O	Go	MCA
60	MOMUS	Folktronic	Le Grand Magistry
61	MARK KOZELEK	What's Next To The Moon	Badman
62	STRING CHEESE INCIDENT	Outside Inside	Sci Fidelity
63	THE BLACK HALOS	The Violent Years	Sub Pop
64	MONSTER MAGNET	God Says No	A & M
65	TSAR	King Of The School EP	Hollywood
66	KRISTIN HERSH	Sunny Border Blue	4AD-Beggars Group
67	LADYTRON	604	Emperor Norton
68	SPOON	Girls Can Tell	Merge
69	WEEZER	Hash Pipe (CD5)	Geffen-Interscope
70	DELBERT MCCLINTON	Nothing Personal	New West
71	THE CLIENTELE	Suburban Light	Merge
72	WAGON CHRIST	Musipal	Ninja Tune
73	SPACEHOG	The Hogyssey	Artemis
74	HELICOPTER HELICOPTER	By Starlight	Lunch
75	DEPECHE MODE	Dream On (CD5)	Mute-Reprise

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. Two-listed NesQuik multibuckers!

METAL TOP25

1	SEPULTURA Nation	ROADRUNNER
2	RAMMSTEIN Mutter	UNIVERSAL
3	FEAR FACTORY Digimortal	ROADRUNNER
		
4	CLUTCH Pure Rock Fury	ATLANTIC
5	MONSTER MAGNET God Says No	A&M
6	STEREO MUD Perfect Self	LOUD-COLUMBIA
7	DOG FASHION DISCO Anarchists Of Good Taste	SPITFIRE
8	OPETH Blackwater Park	MUSIC FOR NATIONS-KOCH
9	HASTE When Reason Sleeps	CENTURY MEDIA
10	HALFORD Live Insurrection	METAL-IS-SANCTUARY
11	DIECAST Day Of Reckoning	NOW OR NEVER
12	DIMMU BORGIR Puritanical Euphoric...	NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
13	MEGADETH The World Needs A Hero (CD5)	SANCTUARY
14	AMORPHIS Am Universum	RELAPSE
15	SALIVA Every Six Seconds	ISLAND
16	VARIOUS ARTISTS Ozzfest Second Stage Live	DIVINE
17	UNLOCO Healing	HAVERICK
18	STATIC-X Machine EP	WARNER BROS.
19	GOD FORBID Determination	CENTURY MEDIA
20	SKRAPE New Killer America	HCA
21	SYSTEMATIC Somewhere In Between	TMC-ELEKTRA
22	ENDO Evolve	DVB-COLUMBIA-PANACEA
23	THURSDAY Full Collapse	VICTORY
24	ZAO (Self-Titled)	SOLID STATE-TOOTH & NAIL
25	SAVATAGE Poets & Madmen	NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA

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

RPM TOP25

1	DAFT PUNK Discovery	VIRGIN
2	HYBRID Wider Angle	DISTINCTIVE BREAKS-STUDIO K7
3	MJ COLE Sincere	TALKIN' TOUND-ISLAND
4	WAGON CHRIST Musipal	NINJA TUNE
5	DZIHAN & KAMIEN Refreaked	SIX DEGREES
6	KEOKI Jealousy	MOONSHINE
7	DJ MARK FARINA Mushroom Jazz 3	DM RECORDS
8	TROUBLEMAKERS Doubts & Convictions	GUIDANCE
9	BOARDS OF CANADA In A Beautiful Place In The Country (EP)	WARP
10	LEMON JELLY Lemonjelly.ky	XL-BEGGARS GROUP
11	SANDER KLEINENBERG Nu Breed	BOXED
12	MATMOS A Chance To Cut Is A Chance To Cure	MATADOR
13	EAT STATIC Crash And Burn!	CYBEROCTAVE
14	OHGR Welt	SPITFIRE
		
15	THE ORB Cydonia	MCA
16	CHIASM Disorder	COP INTERNATIONAL
17	MOUSE ON MARS Idiology	THRILL JOCKEY
18	VARIOUS ARTISTS Warp:routine	WARP
19	LTJ BUKEM Producer 01	GOOD LOOKING
20	SCANNERFUNK Wave Of Light By Wave Of...	SULPHUR-BEGGARS GROUP
21	MANDALAY Solace	V2
22	VARIOUS ARTISTS Compost Community	COMPOST
23	DJ SMASH Phonography	BLUE NOTE
24	SHIRLEY BASSEY The Remix Album...Diamonds Are Forever	NETTWERK
25	DIVERJE On Skin	DSBP

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

HIP-HOP TOP25

1	BREAKESTRA The Live Mix Part 2	STONES THROW
2	JURASSIC-5 Quality Control (album)/W.O.E. Is Me (EP)	INTERSCOPE
3	VARIOUS ARTISTS Solesides Greatest Bumps	QUANNUM
4	JADAKISS "Put Your Hands Up"	INTERSCOPE
5	KREATORS "Home"	BOMB HIP-HOP
6	KARDINAL OFFISHAL "Bakardi Slang"	MCA
7	EDO.G The Truth Hurts	GROUND CONTROL-NU GRUV
8	GORILLAZ Tomorrow Comes Today (EP)	VIRGIN
9	J ZONE "Live From Pimp Palace East"	RAWKUS
		
10	OUTKAST StanKonia	LAFACE-ARISTA
11	JAY-Z The Dynasty Roc La Familia	ROC-A-FELLA-DEF JAM
12	REDMAN "Let's Get Dirty"	DEF JAM
13	CAPPADONNA "Supermodel"	RAZOR SHARP
14	LA SYMPHONY "Broken Tape Decks"	SQUINT ENTERTAINMENT
15	AZ "Problems"	VIRGIN
16	BEATNUTS "No Escapin' This"	LOUD
17	JAHEIM "Could It Be"	WARNER BROS.
18	LUCKY DICE "Imagine That"	BRICK
19	KOOL G. RAP "First Nigga"	RAWKUS
20	EVE "Who's That Girl?"	RUFF RYDERS-INTERSCOPE
21	13 "Slow Burnin'"	ABB
22	SNOOP DOGG The Last Meal	NO LIMIT-PRIORITY
23	RAE & CHRISTIAN Sleepwalking	GRAND CENTRAL-STUDIO K7
24	R. KELLY TP-2.com/Fiesta (Remix)a	JIVE
25	SAUL WILLIAMS "Penny For A Thought"	OZONE

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

LITE FM

STORY: DANA BUONICONTI
ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA



As I watched the sun-tortured bananas on the back ledge of my dad's Toyota Tercel turn into blackened mush over the course of two hours, I was sure my six-year-old sister and I, cramped in the backseat, would suffer a similar fate. Even the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches had withered, the feeble air conditioning unable to resuscitate them. My mom's constant distribution of wet wipes offered temporary relief, if only to keep things from getting too sticky, but there was still an hour and a half to go until we reached South Yarmouth.

Before leaving Springfield, Mom had asked if I wanted to pick out a few tapes to play on the car stereo. Not yet having my own (and, at 10, perhaps too young to know better), I happily chose Barry Manilow's *Greatest Hits* and the Beatles *1962-1966* from her scant collection. By the time we exited the Mass Pike toward Cape Cod, Barry had sung "Looks Like We Made It" twice—ironic, considering my chances for weathering the oppressive heat seemed to be dwindling by the mile. In the interest of self-preservation, my sister and I called a truce to our stay-on-your-side-of-the-seat argument, agreeing to relegate ourselves to the tiny non-scalding portion. Just short of combustion, I told my parents it was time to give Barry a rest and turn on the radio. And that summer of 1983, Lite FM saved my life. Hearing Michael Martin Murphey's "Wildfire" segue into Christopher Cross's calm, cool "Sailing" gave me a second wind, and as we crossed the causeway onto the Cape, Seals And Crofts's much-needed "Summer Breeze" really did make me feel fine.

Growing up, Lite FM was the only music my parents would allow on the radio. At the dinner table, softly insinuating its catchy hooks underneath a recap of the day's events at school, emanating from the piece-of-furniture stereo in the living room as my mom cleaned the house, and during every car ride, Lite FM was omnipresent. Soon, songs like "Laughter In The Rain" by Neil Sedaka, "How Much I Feel" by Ambrosia and "Feels So Good" by Chuck Mangione (always the musical bed for snow cancellations),

If heavy metal is the devil's music, surely Lite FM must be music from heaven.

had become the soundtrack to my formative years. When my classmate Michael told me stories about KISS (it stands for Knights In Satan's Service) and Ozzy Osbourne (he bit the head off a live bat in concert), I thought, if Michael's right, and heavy metal is the devil's music, surely Lite FM must be music from heaven. I asked him if he dug "Sister Golden Hair" by America.

By the time I got to junior high, I knew every song and every artist on Lite FM: "I'd Really Love To See You Tonight" by England Dan & John Ford Coley, "Baby Come Back" by Player, "We're All Alone" by Rita Coolidge, "It Might Be You" by Stephen Bishop, "Never Gonna Let You Go" by Sergio Mendes, "All By Myself" by Eric Carmen. In high school, when it came time to nominate theme songs for my senior prom and ballads by Skid Row and Simple

Minds were bandied about, I proudly gave the nod to "How Deep Is Your Love" by the Bee Gees. And when it lost to "As We Were," a lame-o song co-written by two class musicians, I knew that I was living in a world of fools, breaking us down.

When I headed off to college in New York, though, things changed. Away from the constant exposure, I lost touch with Lite FM in favor of the burgeoning alter-

native scene—Pearl Jam, Helmet, My Bloody Valentine, Curve. It wasn't until recently, while comparing brands of mayonnaise at a supermarket in Brooklyn, that I remembered how the magic of Lite FM made that inferno of a car ride bearable nearly 17 years ago. Hearing Peabo Bryson's "If Ever You're In My Arms Again" over the store speakers was like getting a surprise phone call from an old friend. When the Peabster sang "Now I'm seeing clearly/ How I still need you near me/ I still love you so," well, he was referring to how I feel about Lite FM.

Brooklyn-based freelance writer Dana Buoniconti now vacations in Key Largo.

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