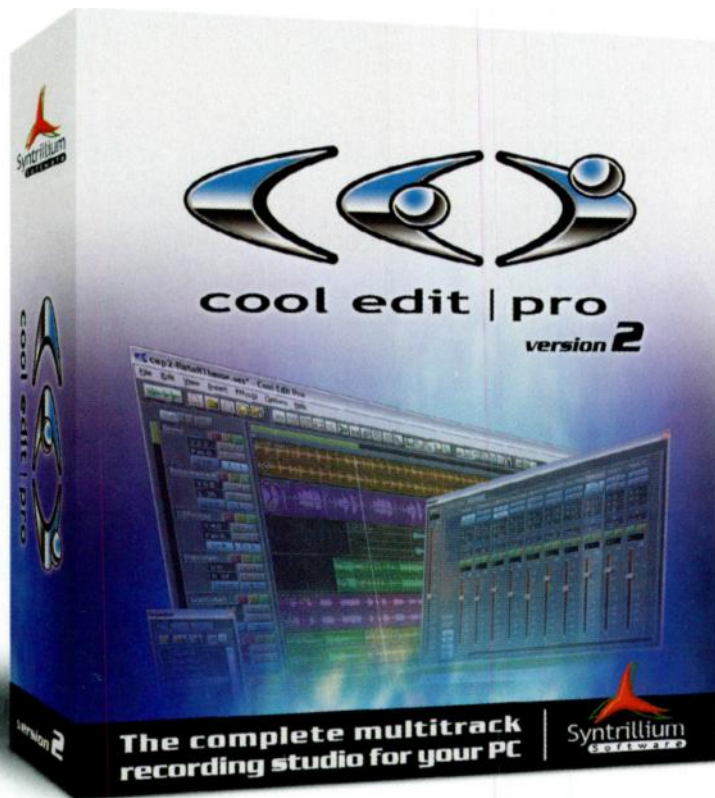


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COVER

Photo: Noah Greenberg
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Location: Suite 16, NYC



DJ SHADOW



GOMEZ



OTEP



THE MOVIELIFE

DJ SHADOW 32

Josh Davis, a.k.a. DJ Shadow, is fighting fame from all sides, from overeager record execs to soul-stealing corporate music mags. Everyone wants the man to be famous, all the man wants to do is make records. Bill Werde watches him fire up *The Private Press*.

RYE COALITION 22

Like the bastard child of Led Zeppelin and the Jesus Lizard, Rye Coalition delivers rough post-punk that looks back deep into the pre-punk '70s. Mikael Wood kicks out the jam.

BLACKALICIOUS 24

For *Blazing Arrow*, Blackalicious pulled out the *Who's Who* directory of think-hop: Everyone from Jurassic-5 to Zach de la Rocha to Gil Scott-Heron adds fuel to the fire. "We want to really take people on a journey," says Gift of Gab. Christopher R. Weingarten packs his bags.

GOMEZ 26

Take your movements and shove 'em. Gomez is neither a jam band nor the new saviors of acoustic rock; they're more interested in sounds than songs and they just want to free you from all the "joyless, sanitized bullshit" out there. Steve Ciabattone brings the dirt.

HOME RECORDING SPECIAL 28

We're all brilliant people here, we know; our musical ideas burst forth like a mighty river. Well, dam the river, bottle it up and sell it, Poland Spring-style: This introduction gives you the skinny on how to start working on your masterpiece from the comfort of your bedroom. No, not *that* masterpiece, you've worked on that enough. Tom Mallon gives you the tools. (No, not *those*... oh, never mind.)

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Shut up when they're talking to you: My Morning Jacket, Otap, Earshot, Fischerspooner.

ON THE CD 35

Doves, Haven, the Breeders, Ed Harcourt, Solomon Burke, David Johansen, the Step Kings, Vex Red, Otap, J-Live, Dirty Vegas, Tuatara, David Sylvian, My Morning Jacket, the Trouble With Sweeney, Bats & Mice, John Vanderslice, With Every Idle Hour, Blake Hazard.

QUICK FIX 13

Elvis Costello ain't mad atcha, go inside the jungle fever of Imperial Teen's Roddy Bottum, Eidos' *Blood Omen 2* really sucks (blood, that is), KMFDM's Bill Riefflin helps make a mess of your love life, and Trans Am spends a lot of time thinking about AC/DC. (Then again, who doesn't?)

LOCALZINE 40

Need something to blame for emo? Try Long Island.

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Terence Trent D'Arby signs his name across Sam Grobart's heart.

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DJ SHADOW: NOAH GREENBERG; GOMEZ: SCARLET PAGE; OTEP: PAUL BROWN; THE MOVIELIFE: MICHAEL DUBIN.

Carl's Jr.

First, congratulations on making it to your 100th issue. I probably have about 85 of those issues myself, having been a subscriber since 1995. Regarding the Geek Love article on the Beach Boys in Issue 100, it was much appreciated by me. In addition to the songs and albums mentioned in the article, I also enjoy some of their overlooked post-Pet Sounds albums, particularly *Friends and Sunflower*. I have a small issue with the illustration, though. The figure holding the guitar at the far left of the illustration appears to be Bruce Johnston, who was not in the group at the time "Fun, Fun, Fun," "Little Deuce Coupe" and "I Get Around" were recorded (which is the timeframe discussed in the article). The lead guitarist on those tracks (and who should be shown) is Carl Wilson, who was in the group all through their creative years.

Terry
TMoore952@aol.com

The image is of Carl Wilson, but you are correct in noting that the hair is not parted from the right, as is the Wilson style, but from the left, as favored by Bruce Johnston. It's a way of covering our bases. This is not to diminish Carl's role with the Beach Boys, but rather to celebrate Johnston's early adoption of the comb-over. There is some subtle subtext in our eliding of these garçons de la plage, however. The soul-bearing postscript to that particular Geek Love piece tells of how I was once beaten with outsized Lincoln Logs while Carl And The Passions' So Tough was piped through the knotty pine-paneled walls of a basement rumpus room, the skin abrasions left by the broad collar of my polyester shirt accounting for my continued inability to grow an efficient beard. —ed.

No, it's snot

I'm an old geezer (forty-fucking-five!) who loves rock and all its variations. Your magazine and CDs have hooked me up with lots of great music—and haven't had to go hang out with a bunch of snot-nosed kids in order to find out what's out there. For that, I am eternally grateful. You provide a terrific service. Thanks.

Norm Meyer
Aliso Viejo, Calif.

Norm, I'm happy to take one for the team vis-a-vis the snot-nosed kids, even though I have

now reached the age of eligibility for the Presidency of the United States. Yeah, you heard me, GW. You thought it was rain! —ed.

By the Dashboard write

I always look forward to your magazine, but this month I looked forward to throwing it in the trash. I never thought *CMJ* would do such a lame, cliché thing like give Dashboard Confessional his own love tips column. Seriously, what the shit is that all about? Sure, he writes sappy pop numbers about heartbreak and all that jazz that goes along with relationships—but truthfully, it's just senseless pining about the girl he lost his virginity to. His songs are played out, and he's on his way to being the acousti-pop poster-boy for the *TRL* masses—and that would be anyone but the person heartbroken people ask for advice from. The real question I want to know is why him? What makes him qualified to be the Ask Abby of *CMJ*. I could name many songs with depressing, lovey content by other artists. "Heaven" and "I Saw Red" by Warrant are a few that come to mind—why not give Jani Lane the spot? Or Vince Neil? "Home Sweet Home" is a real tearjerker too. Giving Dashboard Confessional his own advice column is truly the sign that the end is nigh. Especially since he's cashing in on songs that are almost two years old. I'm sure he's really sad about the masses of 16-year-old girls who want to give him their phone numbers after his shows.

Dan Doelker
Livonia, Mich.
dokedogg@aol.com

Actually, a sign that the end is nigh is when we run the cover story "Paradise By The Dashboard Light," simultaneously alienating those of you who find Dashboard to be tripe (mmmm... tripe) and the kids who like Dashboard by referencing a Meat Loaf song redolent of minivan tape decks. So yeah, he was an obvious choice, but with two different founding members of Bauhaus blowing off our entreaties to write the column, we went for an obvious choice. We think his super-serious approach speaks for itself. Plus, with Spin biting that column like an exposed arm on a Minnesota summer evening, we thought we'd lend them a hand by getting all literal-like. Which is not to say that I wouldn't let Vince Neil take a stab at the column; we almost got Ike Turner, too. —ed.

Certainly... thanks for taking the time to

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read my letters. At first I didn't think anyone would reply. Right on, poke fun at Dashboard.

Dan Doelker

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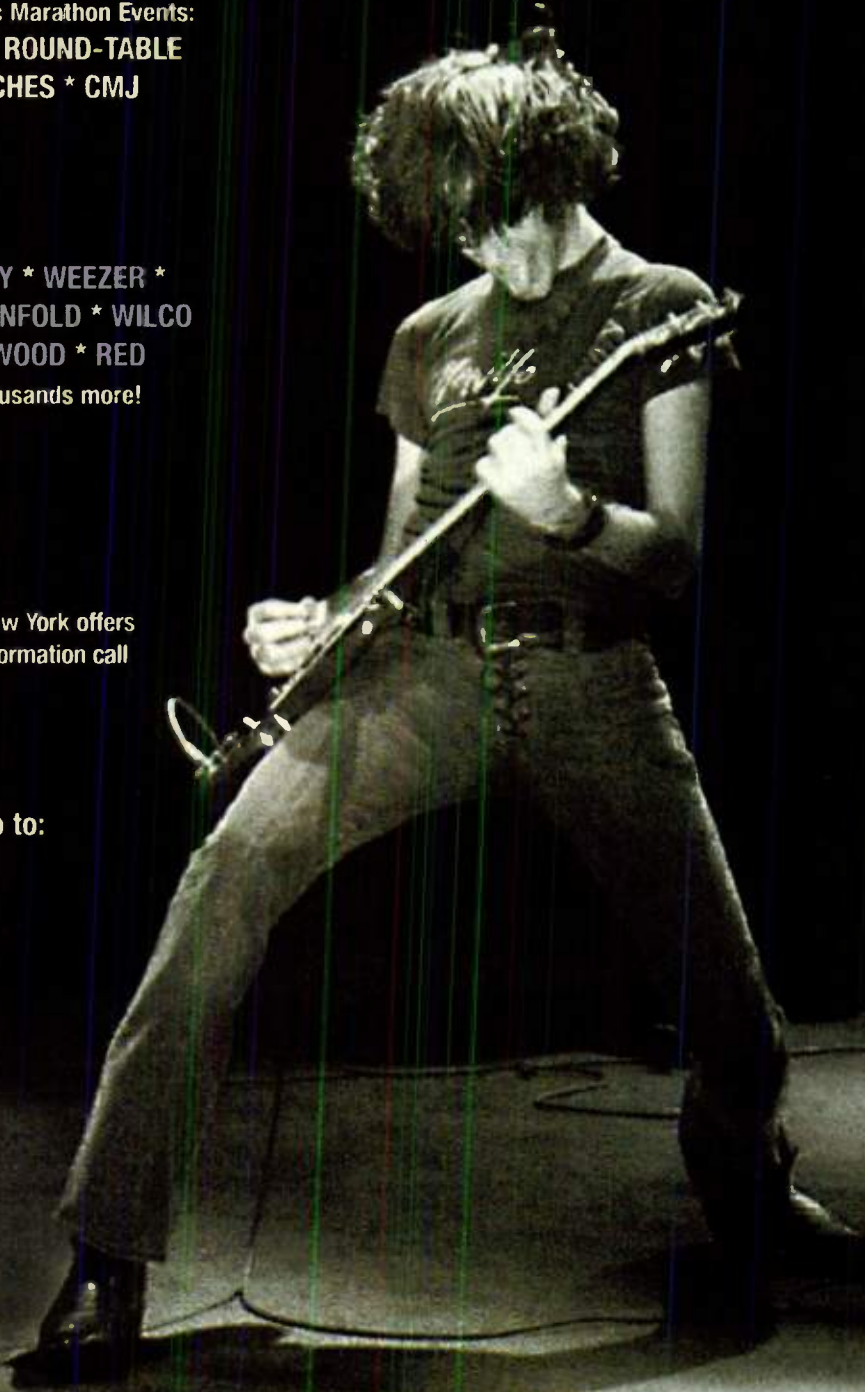
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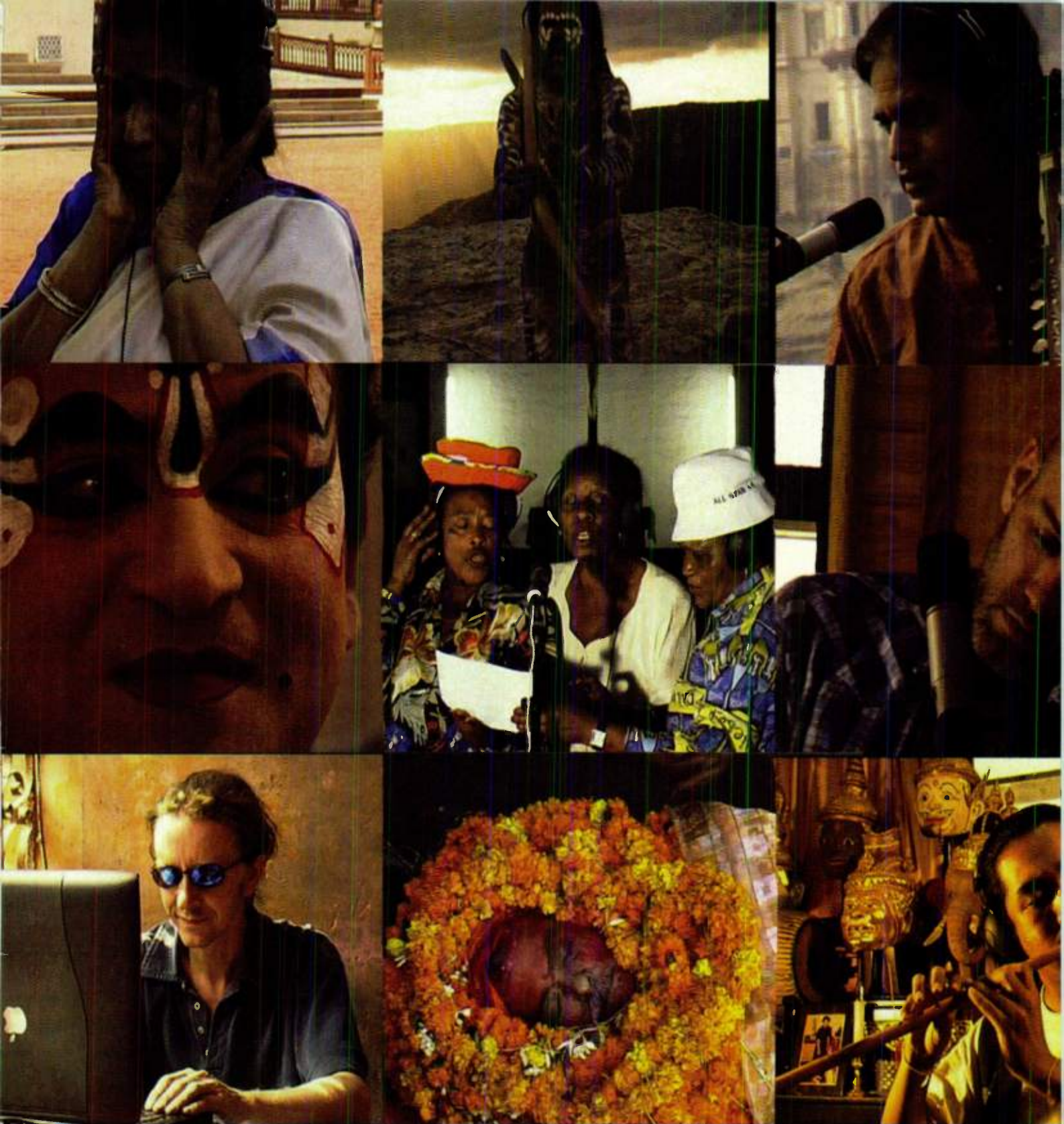
: Ash's *Free All Angels* was released more than a year ago
: in the U.K. The reaction to the live dates heralding the
: coming of the disc to U.S. shores (via Kinetic)? Irish eyes,
: smiling. American asses, rocking.

: **Photo: Brendan Moran**





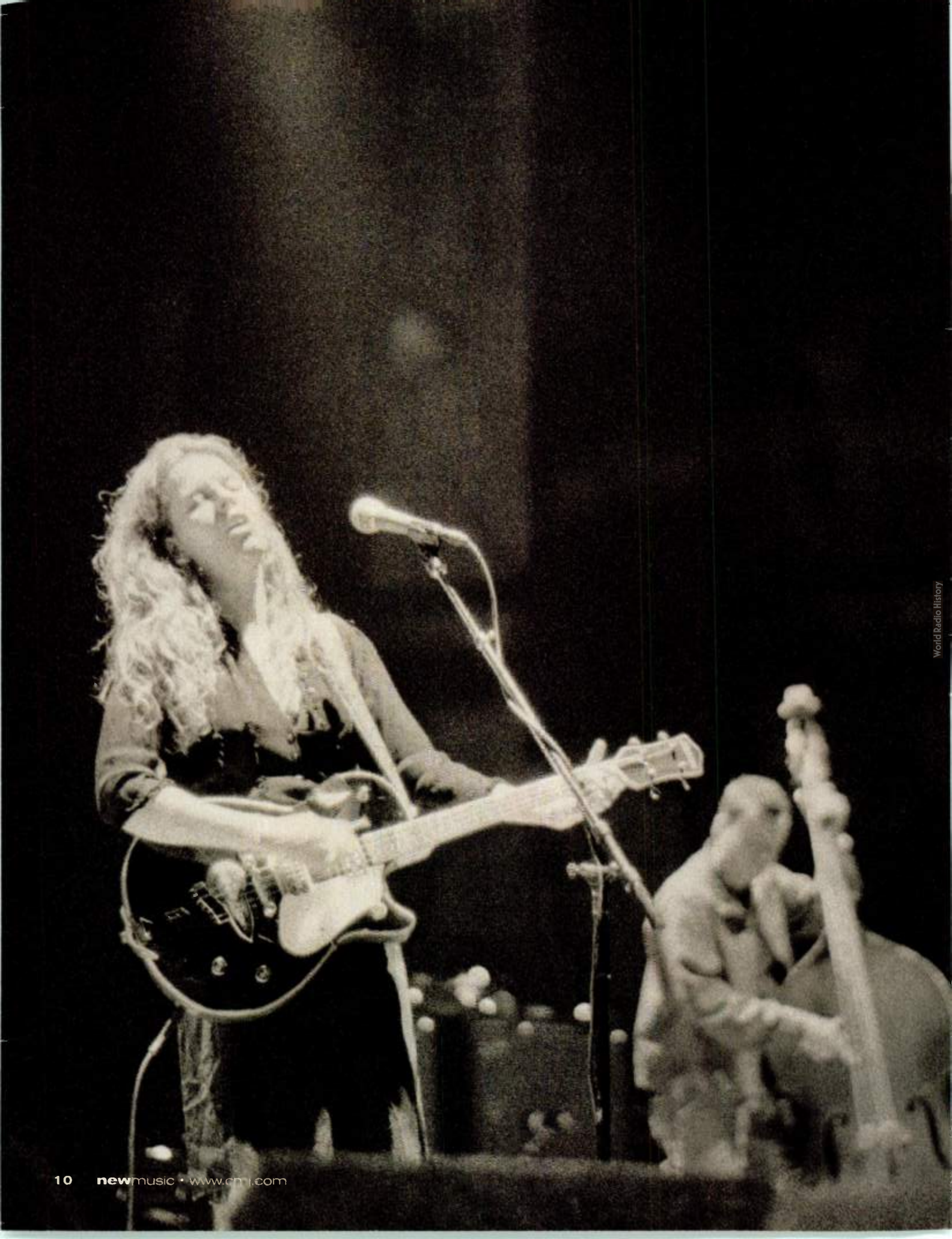
World Radio History



1 Giant Leap

Hey, vacation photos that don't suck! For the CD/DVD *1 Giant Leap* (Palm), Jamie Catto and Duncan Bridgeman took their PowerBook and more to record/film everyone from Michael Stipe to reclusive mystics on the streets of Calcutta. Kinda puts your trip to the Jersey Shore in perspective, eh?

Photo Collage: 1 Giant Leap crew



Neko Case

• Know what's fun? Singing "Neko" to the tune of Peter
• Gabriel's "Biko," and having it run through your head for
• about a day and a half. More fun: Neko Case opening for
• Nick Cave, playing songs from her outstanding *Blacklisted*
• (*Bloodshot*), due out in August.

• **Photo: Noah Greenberg**

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World Radio History

Answer Me

Altar boy turned rock star **Elvis Costello** makes a kick-ass new record he can't stop talking about.



JILL FURMANOVSKY

Ask Elvis Costello a question and be prepared for a thorough answer—the dude can talk. Which is why we really only had room for one answer here. Plus, he's not exactly a guy you want to cut off mid-sentence. His new record, *When I Was Cruel* (Island), rocks a helluva lot more than what we've heard from him in the last five or so years, including that, um, refined collaboration with Burt Bacharach and an album with Swedish opera singer Anne Sophie Van Otter. Everyday Elvis fans will consider this new album's rowdy tone a welcome return to form, but be prepared for a few sampler-and-drum-machine adventures as well. So we wanted to know a little bit about this so-called "rebirth of the cruel." >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

When you worked with Paul McCartney, you encouraged him not to be bashful about making music that sounded like his signature sound. Given the more raucous sound of this new album, was there a bit of you giving yourself your own advice?

I think there are certain ways my voice sounds when I sing in a certain tempo and when I don't linger on notes and the melody is not so tender in its intention. You see, I've got like a solemn face. As a child I used to get the job of being an altar boy at funerals because of that. It's a solemn, but not miserable face. It's the same thing with my voice. If I sing in certain way I sound furious. And as I get older and I get more aware of things outside of myself, I've noticed that I can make people jump with just speaking. So there must be something to do with the pitch in my voice that I sound angry when I'm not. That's been something that I've had to temper in my singing because otherwise you mislead the listener as to what your intentions are. But you can't change things about your throat and even your teeth [laughs] and the way you create sounds. Of course it's a blessing to have access to some of these sounds, and in another way you have to be certain that your not overstating the emotion, but there's a lot of over-singing on records today. You can have over-singing in rock 'n' roll just as you can in ballads. There's a lot of over-sung power ballads on the end of blockbuster movies and we all reel back in horror from some of those. So you can go too far with the emotion of a song. I suppose you can't disguise certain things in your singing, is what I'm saying.

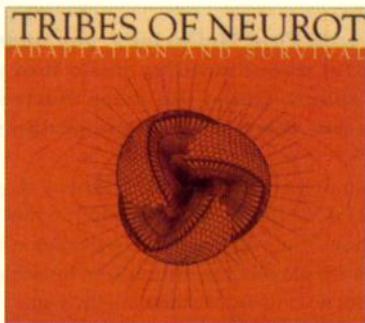
Find the full interview at www.cmj.com by searching for Elvis Costello.

NEWSFEED: **Ryan Adams** enters studio *again*, with R.E.M. producer Scott Litt • **Blink-182's** Travis Barker starts "drum 'n' bass punk rock" >>>>

Blood Sport

BLOOD OMEN 2
(EIDOS FOR PC, PS2, XBOX)

Good luck finding the "messily drain blood of hapless townsfolk" button in your other games; only Eidos' *Legacy Of Kain* series gives you that, encouraging the slaughter of everyone that gets in your way, from the biggest enemies to defenseless bystanders. *Blood Omen 2* (confusingly, the fourth installment in the series, but never mind) revels in evil, delivering the perfect antihero in Kain, an unspeakably cruel yet witty vampire who dispatches his victims with a little extra savoir-faire. There's a storyline—a campaign for vampire supremacy or something—but you'll be too busy mercilessly reaping souls to notice. >>>TOM MALLON



WEIRD RECORD

A Bug's Life

As you smite countless insect universes with your clumsy human feet, have you ever taken a moment to put yourself in an insect's shoes? It's OK, we haven't either. Luckily, Tribes Of Neurot (the entire lineup of Neurosis, plus guests) have. The result is *Adaptation And Survival* (Neurot), a multi-disc "active listening" experiment designed to "align the listener with insect consciousness." All of the sounds here are supposedly derived straight from insects. If so, insect consciousness is one noisy place, and could be approximated by sticking your head inside a lawnmower, an airplane hanger, a combine engine, or any one of a thousand head-unfriendly places. "The intensity of the experience will be equal to the amount of effort and attention applied," promise the liner notes. Should we try again? >>>IAN SIMS

5 SPOT

FIVE CLASSICS THAT
REV UP TRANS AM'S NATHAN MEANS



guess, a raging alcoholic. He's given the best years of his life for us, now we have to deal with recordings of what has to be the worst.

3. The Police, *Outlandos D'Amour*
They were lean and hungry. The songs are mostly built around repetitive grooves that are so catchy you don't realize the songs aren't really going anywhere.

4. Kraftwerk, *Computerworld*
Sounds like AC/DC. Really minimalist. Except they were from Dusseldorf. This record is also really funny. I fell on the floor the first three times I heard it.

5. Van Halen, *Fair Warning*
Van Halen's artiest foray. Eddie was getting into keyboards, but this isn't the fluffier stuff like "Jump," but really heavy and dark. I love all of their albums with David Lee Roth, but this is a really exciting mix of hard-rock drums and keyboards.

The synth-pop of Trans Am's TA (Thrill Jockey) is decidedly un Flipperesque

1. AC/DC, *Powerage*

The last record before Mutt Lange polished them up. The whole band is one machine. Other bands, like Helmet, have also done this sort of thing well, but you're a total idiot if you put Helmet on at a party.

2. Flipper, *Album - Generic Flipper*

This music sucks. It's a total train-wreck. The guitar actually sounds like Glenn Branca or Sonic Youth, but somehow has no artistic credibility. The guitarist was a Vietnam Vet and, I

band with **Rancid's** Tim Armstrong and Matt Freeman • Richard Ashcroft records with Brian Wilson • Courtney Love finds new svengali in **4 Non Blondes** singer/Pink pro-

“Their thing is: Don't look at us. Don't photo us. **Don't interview us.** In fact, don't listen to our music. Where does it end? It ends with Thom Yorke saying, 'I've written the most fantastic piece of classical music ever but the only way you can hear it is by **jamming a jack plug into my ear.**'”

—Noel Gallagher tells *Q* why he's not a Radiohead fan.



GRAHAM BRICE

IN MY ROOM

Who: Roddy Bottum of Imperial Teen

Where: His home in Los Angeles

Why: With Faith No More, Roddy Bottum was part of the only truly great “nü-metal” band—before there even was such a thing. These days, he treads the poppier waters of Imperial Teen's *On (Merge)*.

A zoo of stuffed animals...

I've got a brass pig, and on my dining room table is a stuffed deer—his name is Arnie. It's a stuffed animal but it has hooves; it's kind of freaky and it scares my dog. In the corner I have a leather pig that's missing an ear. [The two pigs] are separate, they don't get along. On the mantle there's two stuffed tigers who are like brothers. Above them are framed pictures of French bulldogs. There's two stuffed polar bears on the piano, and a little wooden elephant I got on eBay. There's a leather moose, and two bulls and another bulldog. I'm thinking as I'm telling you this, “How did I get so animal?” I don't know how it happened. God, there's a lot of animals.

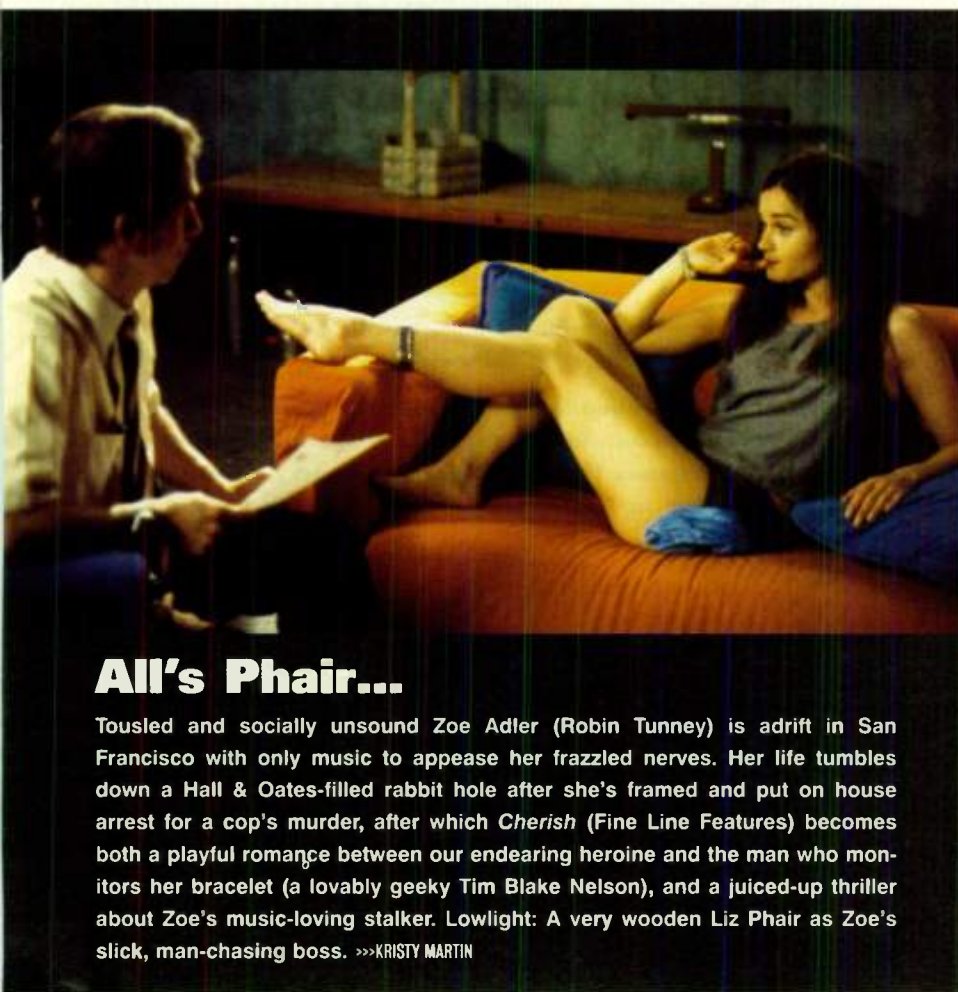
...and when they bark they shoot bees at you

I have a big painting of Bee Hive Man. It's a man in a suit of armor with a beehive on his head, and bees are coming out of his mouth and out of his eyes.

How now organ cow

I just got an organ for \$30 from a yard sale up the street. I rolled it over on a skateboard. They covered it in black and white contact paper for some reason, so it looks like a cow. It looks really ridiculous.

INTERVIEW BY TOM MALLON.

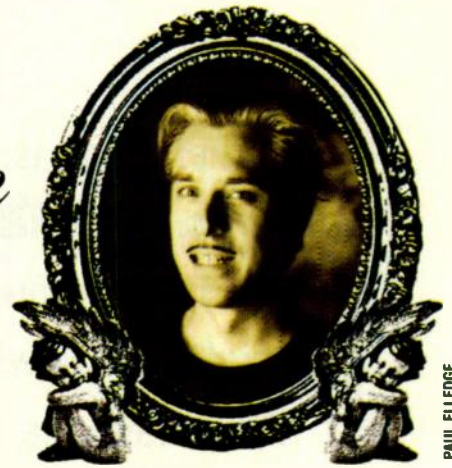


All's Phair...

Tousled and socially unsound Zoe Adler (Robin Tunney) is adrift in San Francisco with only music to appease her frazzled nerves. Her life tumbles down a Hall & Oates-filled rabbit hole after she's framed and put on house arrest for a cop's murder, after which *Cherish* (Fine Line Features) becomes both a playful romance between our endearing heroine and the man who monitors her bracelet (a lovably geeky Tim Blake Nelson), and a juiced-up thriller about Zoe's music-loving stalker. Lowlight: A very wooden Liz Phair as Zoe's slick, man-chasing boss. >>>KRISTY MARTIN

ducer Linda Perry, while claiming to have unearthed 100 tapes of unreleased Kurt Cobain demos • **Jane's Addiction** close to finishing their first all-new album in >>>>

Tough Love



PAUL ELLEDGE

BILL RIEFLIN The fact that he spent years in the company of folks like Al Jourgensen demonstrates that Bill Rieflin must know a lot about complex and disastrous interpersonal relationships. Now he's in the more well-adjusted confines of KMFD (whose latest, *Attak*, is out now on Metropolis), and he wants you to be more well-adjusted too. Well, "want" might be a strong word. *Your parents will lie to you, but rock stars don't care about your feelings: lovelorn@cmj.com.*



WORD OF MOUSE PUNK-ROCK SLAP FIGHT!

Within the comely but difficult-to-navigate confines of www.bornbackwards.com lies some fascinating rock drama. Once in its attitude-laden news section, Pure Hearsay, scroll past the photo of a teenage Eminem in a pink Alf T-shirt (now we know why relations with his mother are so strained) and you'll find the 4/20/02 entry concerning an interview with Midtown where the band talks epic smack about the label that originally signed them, Drive Thru. The interview initially appeared on—and was then pulled from—absolutepunk.net, and features bandmembers Gabe Saporta and Tyler Rann launching all manner of allegations and insults against the label's owners, Richard and Stephanie Reines. Also appearing is the rambling, 7,000-word, point-by-point response issued by the Reines refuting those allegations and citing Saporta's failings as a bandmate, boyfriend and Hot Topic employee. Quoth bornbackwards: "This is like when a slapfight breaks out between the two retarded kids that everyone else in the class makes fun of." Owie.

Recently I indulged my rock-star fantasies and picked up a girl after my band's show. It was so easy, I couldn't resist. (I was also drunk.) I felt pretty gross about it the next day, and I thought it was pretty clear we were just having fun, but now she's hanging around our website's message board and e-stalking me. What should I do to get rid of this girl? (I figure professional musicians must have had this problem at some point.) —Mike, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mike: Welcome to the big time. First off, don't be a pussy. Just tell this girl that you were only fulfilling your "rock-star fantasies" all over her and that's all it was. Make sure you look deeply in her eyes when you do it. If she continues hanging around and bugging you, she's undoubtedly mental (after all, she likes you). Then, remind yourself every day upon awakening that rock stars are assholes and creeps. Next, get a real job.

So, I don't like sex. I don't hate it, but I don't like it either. But you can't tell the guy you're dating this without them running away as fast as they can. I don't know what to do. Should I just become a nun? —Joy, Flanders, N.J.

Joy: Perhaps. I hear those nuns "really know what they're doing." Also, you might consider changing your name to reflect your less-than-enthusiastic attitude.

My girlfriend likes that goddamn Dashboard Confessional song. It's making me think she's an idiot. I'm actually considering breaking up with her just because her liking that song must represent some serious malfunction in her brain. Am I being too judgmental? —Tommy, Athens, Ga.

Tommy: You've obviously thought long and hard about this very serious problem. I recommend flipping a coin.

I pulled a Fleetwood Mac with the bassist in my band. Now things are weird; what seemed like a friends-with-privileges situation has turned into a staring-longingly-at-me-during-practice situation. We play out a lot too and she's been getting huffy when I talk to girls at shows. Do I need to find a new bassist? —Jerry, Doylestown, Penn.

Jerry: You should quit your band and start a new one with Mike from question #1. With you two at the helm, the possibilities are mindbending.

Love,
Bill

a decade • **The Sex Pistols** squeeze more blood from a stone with June's three-CD, 61-track *Box Set* • **Primal Scream** are wrapping the follow-up to 2000's *XTRMNR* •



"Take some large sage leaves and spread caper and garlic paste on half of them, then cover with other sage. Dip them in batter made from flour, egg and water. Let the excess drain off and fry them in oil. Put them on dish covered with absorbent paper and serve hot. Pair with martini."

—"Giancarlo Giannetti's *Appetitosi Di Salvia*" as submitted by From Bubblegum To Sky on Cookbook CD: *Libro De Cucina y Musica* (Eenie Meenie). The music's good, too.



Henry Diltz has been responsible for a bushel of classic rock images, from eerily demonic live Nirvana photos to the cover of the Doors' *Morrison Hotel* and shots with titles like "Joni Mitchell, David Crosby and Eric Clapton at Mama Cass's backyard gathering in 1968." After gallery shows this spring in New York and Chicago, many of those shots are available in limited editions at www.henrysgallery.com. His secret? "I just try to do it very quietly so I don't disturb what's going on."

Thom Yorke says next Radiohead record "more focused, less neurotic" * * * * *

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MY MORNING JACKET

There was a this weird old bar next to the arts building at the University of Lexington that burnt down while I was there," My Morning Jacket frontman Jim James drawls. His then-unnamed band wandered into that charred bar's basement, where a shady exotic dancing operation had once been. They found a stripper's robe, mysteriously spared by the flames and monogrammed with the initials MMJ. "I like to think that somebody's name was My Morning Jacket," he muses. This is the sort of imagination that fuels the innovative rock and storyteller lyrics of the band's new *Chocolate And Ice* EP (Badman) and their recent split

CD with Songs:Ohia (Jade Tree). *Chocolate* comes with a 24-minute epic that rings of Hendrix-tinged astral rock and Shuggie Otis's psychedelic soul; their live show evokes Granddaddy and Skynyrd at the same time. The Louisville five-piece is building a following in the States, but their most fervent fanbase is, oddly enough, in the Netherlands, thanks to a Dutch novelist fan who brought an MMJ album to his friends in the Benelux press. "They treat us nice over there," James grins as he speaks of their series of sold-out Euro-tours. "And we always like to crank it up a couple of notches. We like to blow the doors off a little bit when we play live." >>>KARA ZUARO

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 



OTEP

How many Licks...

 does it take to get
 to the Tootsie Roll center
 of a Tootsie Pop?

Art for me is that cathartic release that allows me to purge those demons that were given to me, that were forced upon me," says Otep Shamaya, titular heroine of the L.A.-based rage-metal band Otep, in a voice that doesn't hint at the embattled Cookie Monster roar she produces onstage. Yes, that's her and only her darting from an intimate whisper to a Cannibal Corpse growl on the band's new *Sevas Tra* (Capitol) and on the main stage of this summer's Ozzfest. "You can't hurt me anymore," she howls on tracks like "Blood Pigs," the band grinding out a sound that's somewhere between '80s Metallica and the current nü-metal menace. It's a heady mix that, when coupled with the band's penchant for Ancient Egyptian symbolism ("Otep" is an Egyptian suffix meaning "creative offerings," as well as an anagram for "poet") and cryptic, knowledge-is-power messages, invite a fanatical following. Quoth Otep: "What I'm finding is that there's this silent populace that needs a voice. There's this holocaust of abuse and violence and neglect that I think we overlook because it's comfortable and convenient to do that. If I'm able to give, to develop this atmosphere that allows people to feel connected to absolute strangers who know nothing, but understand everything, then I think I'm being successful as an artist." >>>SCOTT FRAMPTON

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



EARSHOT

By now Earshot's Wil Martin has heard it all, from his band sounding like a Tool knock-off, thanks to the single "Get Away," to him looking like a Calvin Klein model. He's slightly defensive on the first point. "In the last six years, when you hear a band's single on the radio, the whole record is pretty much what that one song is," he states. "So, I think maybe what's happening is when they hear that [song] they think, 'Oh, this band went out and made a Tool record.' It's really not, there's really a lot of different things on there." "Get Away" does borrow from the Tool palette, but much of the rest of *Letting Go* (Warner

Bros.) shows a more metal-melodic side. Perched in the disheveled back lounge of the Earshot tour bus, the otherwise bullhorn-throated singer is surprisingly soft-spoken. "I remember when I first played the record for people who had never heard me sing before, they'd say, 'That's not you,'" he remembers with a bit of a smile. "I swear, it is." What about that model thing? "I've never thought of myself that way," he blushes. "When you dig underneath it all I'm always very self-conscious. Those are high-class problems to have, I guess. Maybe I'll work through it one day. I'm trying." >>>DAVID JOHN FARINELLA



FISCHERSPOONER

Performances packed with pyrotechnics, costumes that bespeak Dead Or Alive way beyond Thunderdome, glitzy-pop that owes as much to new wave as it does Giorgio Moroder—every facet of New York's Fischerspooner clearly yearns for mediocrity. "Hypermediocrity," actually. "It's about wanting to embrace popular structure," says singer/performer Casey Spooner, who coined the group's guiding paradox in the song "Emergency," from their debut LP, #1 (FS Studios-Ministry Of Sound). "There's this notion that if you have artistic integrity, you're supposed to fight those things. We are about saying that it's OK to speak to people through a form they can relate to." After attending the Art Institute

of Chicago, musician Warren Fischer and performer Casey Spooner reconvened in New York, where they debuted their electro pop-cum-interpretive-dance act at a Starbucks in 1998. What began with a whimper and a mocha is now closer to a corporation that counts dancers, designers and DJs among its 20-plus members. Along the way, Fischerspooner has found itself implicated in New York's hipper-than-now electroclash scene—an association they're less than enthused about. Still, Fischerspooner may be the act to propel that '80s-inspired dance music back to the mainstream. Says Fischer, "At this point, I'm past making music just for New York's hipsters." >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

ROE ETHRIDGE

On top of the world?

Kids these days, they seem to like the classic rock again, and that just might help **Rye Coalition** come out *On Top*.

STORY: MIKAEL WOOD • PORTRAIT: KERI-ANN LAURITO • LIVE: DREW GOREN

Ralph Cuseglio's got a hunch that the time may finally be right for his long-running band Rye Coalition. "I think we've started to feel it a little bit," the frontman admits. More than seven years after Rye's beginnings, there's finally a resurgence of interest in classically bent rock 'n' roll. It's already propelled the Strokes and the White Stripes—could Rye Coalition be on deck? "Perhaps there are opportunities that will change, or maybe there'll be people who will be looking to grab a piece of us in some way," Cuseglio offers, "but what's really important is that we keep writing music that sounds good to us."

The rough-hewn riff-rock on *On Top*, the quintet's third full-length (their first for new label Tiger Style) sounds good to more than just Cuseglio and his bandmates: Like a (more) hirsute fusion of the Jesus Lizard's tightly coiled post-punk crunch and Led Zeppelin's blues-based bombast, Rye make music that's frenzied enough for wayward At The Drive-In fans, yet with the poise too-cool scenesters can dig without breaking a sweat (which, when you're wearing a leather jacket in July, is actually pretty important). More than on the band's previous two albums, Rye Coalition allow their affections for '70s rock customs to inflate the sound of *On Top*.

"Our parents are all pretty young, and I think growing up we all heard a lot of '70s rock around the house," recalls Cuseglio. "By high school and the beginning of college, most of us were listening to punk rock or hardcore, and that's when we started making music together. But in the course of the last five years or so, we've started moving away from that and started listening to more and more of what our parents were listening to."

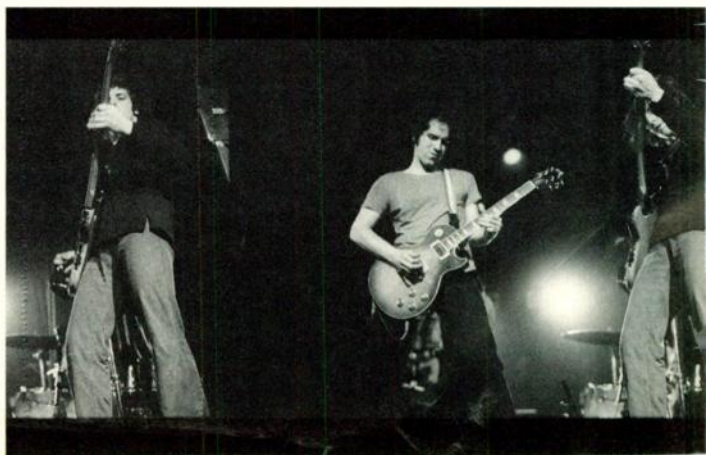
The nod comes with a degree of smirking self-

consciousness about hoary *Almost Famous* nostalgia. *On Top* boasts titles like "One Daughter Hotter Than One Thousand Suns" and "Stairway To The Free Bird On The Way To The Smokey Water," and the album's cover features the quintet flying Superman-style over the smoke-spewing factories of their home state of New Jersey. "Freshly Frankness" even takes on those old dazed-and-confused power ballads, with Cuseglio doing a hilarious Robert Palmer over a slo-mo piano-laced groove.

"We've always said that playing music for us is always about being fun," the singer intones. "We're damn serious about our music, and we're completely sincere, but if you're not having a good time playing and the people listening aren't having a good time, for us it kind of defeats the purpose."

Consider the levity another sign of Rye's fine sense of timing.

"A lot of bands that we play with, they really lack the ability to let go and have a good time. But there's a lot of other things in the world or in people's lives that are miserable enough right now; if you can go to a show and make them forget about what sucks in their lives or in the world, then that's a really good thing." **NMM**





Blaze Of Glory

The new album by indie-hop visionaries **Blackalicious** has more guests than a Best Western. But it's not some mainstream rap "featuring" record; it's a *Blazing Arrow*.

STORY: CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN • PHOTO: B+

When we make records, we want to really take people on a journey," says Blackalicious vocalist Gift of Gab, relaxing in the puffy green seats of his tour bus. "We want to try to make 'em feel all of the emotions. We want to make 'em think introspective. We want to make 'em laugh. We want to make 'em think, 'Oh shit, maybe the sky is falling.'"

This unwavering devotion to a diverse emotional spectrum gives the Bay Area hip-hop metaphysicists more flavors than Baskin Robbins. On *Blazing Arrow* (MCA), the duo's second full-length, Blackalicious (also founding members of the influential SoleSides and Quannum collectives with Cali cohorts Latyrx and DJ Shadow) takes a faith- and hope-based directive and splinters it through a musical prism. Inspired by complicated-yet-cohesive golden-era hip-hop opuses by De La Soul, the Jungle Brothers and Public Enemy, Blackalicious injected *Arrow* with every color of their tangled minds: introspective neo-soul, ravenous battle-rap braggadocio, conceptual verbal pyrotechnics and consciousness-elevating meditations. To add to the disparate stew, they enlisted an extensive list of guests: Members of Dilated Peoples and Jurassic-5, Keke Wyatt, Jaguar Wright, Zach de la Rocha, Ben Harper and Saul Williams all sidle up to Gab's slippery humanistic verbosity and producer Chief Xcel's luxuriant funk.

One of the first tracks recorded for *Arrow*,

the sky-gazing "First In Flight," features revered proto-rap pioneer Gil-Scott Heron and set the tone for the record's faith-based objective. "After the hook was written, X was like, 'You know who would sound dope singing that hook? Gil-Scott Heron,'" gushes Gab, leaning forward and setting down his copy of *XXL*. "That's like a lifetime thing. Who would you like to work with before you die? I would say 'Gil-Scott Heron.'"

"It was the right starter," adds Chief Xcel, slumped at a table in a purple Lifesavas tee. "It set it off on the right foot. From there everything just took off in terms of our creative momentum." Gab and Xcel played "First In Flight"—a song about freedom from society's behavior-programming messages—over and over again for Heron on a drive from Harlem to Manhattan for the roughly two hours of recording. "He was like, 'Louder!'" Xcel says. "Let the whole neighborhood hear it!"

For the confessional "Nowhere Fast," Blackalicious hooked up with ubiquitous Roots drummer Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson after meeting him in Europe, on tour with Ben Harper. Xcel called Thompson with the hopes of making a record that sounded like "what would happen if David Axelrod circa 1972 was in a room with Rick Rubin circa 1986," and flew to Philly with about 500 records under his arm.

Despite the abundance of guest stars on *Blazing Arrow*, its undeviating vision and focused energy make it impossible to confuse with all those guest MC-laden "featuring" records mainstream rap artists produce in droves.

"I think with everything that we do, we put the body of work first," said Xcel. "It was more a matter of whose energy could best complement it. And the approach was more like as if we were welcoming people into our house, so that they always remained Blackalicious songs." **MM**



FULLY



LOADED

Gomez takes a holiday in the countryside and comes back with a *Gun* blazing.

STORY: STEVE CIABATTONI • PHOTO: SCARLET PAGE

Ball can't keep a straight face. "We're the godfathers of the new acoustic rock movement!" the Gomez guitarist says in a mock earnestness that fizzles into out and out laughter. "You didn't know that?"

Of course, the joke is on the press, which has been trying to throw one ill-fitting cloak after another on the British five-piece ever since its 1998 Mercury Prize-winning debut *Bring It On* oozed the essence of the Band and Neil Young. Yes, Gomez's third studio album, *In Our Gun*, has a few strummy moments, and yes, the band recorded the tracks in a manse in the English countryside, but it wasn't *Music From Big Pink* or *Harvest* on the stereo when the band was lounging about. Instead it was long, deep hits from the *Trojan Records Dub Box* that wafted through the halls. You can hear its overt influence and feel the sway of other non-rock techniques at work on *In Our Gun* as beats get twisted, bass gets overblown and twiddles of reverb and noise run amok amid the band's solid jams.

Oh, but don't call them a jam band either. "Maybe people call us [that] because we used to go on too long onstage," says Ball. "We've got the set down to about 35 minutes now, so there's no problem there," he jokes.

"I think we have just as much in common with dance bands as we do rock bands," offers Tom Gray, one of three Gomez frontmen, along with Ball and Ben Ottewell, whose craggy voice is the band's most identifiable instrument. "We're very much about the 'sound' of the

record, even more so than the actual songs," Gray argues as he and Ball detail the method of popping in and out of multiple recording rooms, mucking about with different machines to deconstruct the original framework of the tracks. "There's a lot of stuff on the record where the sound is doing more than just going side to side," he explains, wide-eyed, swirling his hands to simulate stereo panning. "We've got it going up and down as well so the bass can be shaking the floor, but it's also hitting you right here," he says pointing to his head.

It's a sound and an approach that doesn't make it any easier to explain Gomez, which suits them fine. "I remember, early on, reading things about us," says Gray. "They used to say we should make our record sound more like this, or we should develop our own sound, so it should just all be like one sound throughout the record," he says. "How far off the mark can you be? The only reason we exist is because people are bored of all that shit. They need something else in a world where people are putting out records that are just joyless, sanitized bullshit."

Luckily, Gray has the solution for those longing for new ideas in music. "We want to do the total antithesis of those Spring Break tours and call it Break Spring!" says Gray. "It'd be for everyone who doesn't get on with the jocks," Ball agrees, grinning. "No one with a baseball cap or a Limp Bizkit T-shirt is allowed." **NMM**

Additional reporting by Doug Levy.

HOME INVASION

Show the world your genius without breaking (or robbing) the bank.

Oh, favored artist. We know how it is: The world would recognize your talent if only you could put a quality recording in their hands. Well, pony up: You'd be surprised how many records that make noise on the *CMJ* charts were recorded, start to finish, in someone's bedroom or basement, from indies

like Her Space Holiday all the way to major label artists like Björk. This introduction—and it's only the tip of the iceberg; whole magazines are devoted to this subject—will show you a few ways that a computer and a couple hundred dollars can start documenting your brilliance for all to hear.

HARDWARE

Digi 001 (www.digidesign.com)
Mac/Windows
List price: \$995
Street price: \$799



Digidesign's Pro Tools system has become the industry standard for recording; you can find it cleaning up shitty musicianship in nearly every major recording studio in America. With the Digi 001, they bring that power to your bedroom: It wins out over similarly priced systems by including Pro Tools LE, a reduced but still very powerful version of the software that runs studio Pro Tools systems. PTLE gives you 24 tracks of audio and 128 tracks of MIDI, fed by the 001's 18 inputs (eight analog, eight ADAT, two SP/DIF), and almost endless sound processing (or mangling) options through plug-ins. It's also equipped with a footswitch jack so you can punch in to correct your horrifying mistakes. Its Digistudio file-swapping software allows you to collaborate with other users over the Internet, and when you get so good you've outgrown it, you can trade it in and receive a discount on higher-end Pro Tools systems. Now for the downsides: First, it's expensive; both the hardware and any plug-ins you might add will put a serious dent in your wallet. It also eats your computer's RAM resources—to make full use of the effects features, you'll need a lot of it. Finally, the 001 isn't compatible with all PC processor models, check Digidesign's website to see if it will work with yours.

Mark of the Unicorn 828 (www.motu.com)
Mac/Windows
List price: \$795
Street price: \$729

MOTU's 828 is a great option for laptop users: It connects via a FireWire port, making installation a snap (no cards to install; thusly, less chance of you breaking your computer) and increasing its portability (once you disconnect the mess of cables in the back). It offers the same inputs as the Digi 001 (eight analog, eight ADAT, two SP/DIF) and one-ups the 001 by putting level monitors on the front panel, a nice feature that the 001's missing. Unfortunately, the 001 counter-acts it by offering a MIDI input and output, which the 828 lacks. Also, in what is a disappointingly common slight in audio hardware, MOTU favors the Mac by bundling its Audiodesk software with the 828 and disses Windows users by not including any software (save system drivers) for Windows—and Windows users pay the same price.



Mbox (www.digidesign.com)
Mac only, Windows expected later this year
List price: \$495
Street price: \$449

For those who want Pro Tools power but are put off by the Digi 001's price tag and terrified by the notion of cracking open their computer to install it, Digidesign offers the Mbox. Like the 828, the laptop-friendly Mbox uses a no-card interface (USB instead of FireWire); combined with the fact that it only has two inputs, this makes the Mbox one of the most portable audio systems available. Each input (XLR or 1/4-inch) contains a Focusrite preamp, getting warm sound without an outside mixer, and each channel has an effects insert for use with outboard equipment. The inclusion of Pro Tools LE gives you the same software power (if not the same amount of inputs) as the Digi 001. You'll have to do your MIDI-ing somewhere else, though: The Mbox lacks any MIDI inputs. And unless you're a one-man band or just need something for sketching ideas, you'll probably outgrow those two inputs pretty quickly.

HONORABLE MENTION:

Echo Audio (www.echoaudio.com)

Echo's line of female-named sound-cards (Mia, Gina, Mona and Layla) can go a long way if the prices above are still too steep for you. Their multitrack cards (\$199-\$799) have a variety of different input combos, work with both PC and Mac and are compatible with just about every piece of software you can find.



SOFTWARE

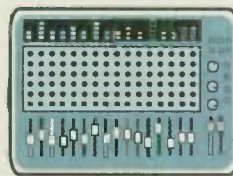
Cool Edit Pro 2.0 (www.cooledit.com)

Windows only

Download: \$249

Boxed: \$279 (25% discount to students and educational institutions)

After starting as a simple audio editor, Syntrillium's Cool Edit is quickly becoming one of the best (and cheapest) multitrack recording/editing programs available, offering a whopping 128 stereo tracks. (Many programs split stereo audio into two mono tracks; compared to them, CEP basically offers you 356 mono tracks—consult professional help if you manage to fill them.) To chop up those tracks, there's 45 different effects/editing tools, including 3D echo chamber, chorus, delay, distortion, reverb, phaser and even a vocoder. This new version of the software allows you to use many effects and EQs in a non-destructive, real-time mix, a drastic improvement over version 1.0, which made you save files with the effect already on them. (Meaning you're no longer screwed when you come to your senses on that Al Jourgensen vocal processing.) For those working with a basic soundcard or just getting started, there's hardly a better value for your money.



HONORABLE MENTION:

Fruityloops (www.fruityloops.com)

After all of the above leaves you too broke to buy a sampler, get Fruityloops. Stupid name notwithstanding, it's one of the best cheap software drum machines out there (\$49 for the basic downloadable version). Import your own stereo sounds, have control over each individual hit, and even program in ridiculously odd time signatures, you prog-rock so 'n' so.

Cubase VST 5.1 (www.steinberg.net)

Mac/Windows

List price: \$449

Street price: \$329

If you can handle the slightly higher price and a manual that rivals *War And Peace*, get Steinberg's Cubase VST—the number of features packed into this program is staggering. Cubase drubs most other programs by supporting "virtual instruments": software synthesizers that you play via MIDI and then render as audio. There's a nearly endless list of these available, and many have deadly accurate reproductions of vintage instruments, from Hammond B3s (complete with drawbars) to Mellotrons and even the Commodore 64 sound chip. After rendering them as one of Cubase's 72 audio tracks (the pricier VST/32 offers 128), use its powerful mixing capabilities to tweak your sounds, with four EQs per channel, automated faders and hundreds more effects options from VST plugins. Cubase will even print out scores of MIDI performance for all you string-arranging Jonny Greenwood disciples. The high cost of the plug-ins and virtual instruments is a definite downside; most VST instruments are in the \$50-100 range, but some of the best (like Native Instruments' Hammond simulator) run closer to \$300. Suck it up—you can't keep using that Casio organ preset forever.



CUBASE'S BITCRUSHER PLUG-IN

Sonic Foundry's Acid Music

(www.sonicfoundry.com)

Become a Beck-defying cut 'n' paste artist yourself with Acid Music (\$59.97), which lets you cut your music into loops and then paint out arrangements in its edit window. You can use as many tracks as your computer can handle, and Acid automatically stretches your loops to fit the song's tempo—you'll never do musical math again.





HER SPACE HOLIDAY

Platform: Windows/Echo Audio Layla soundcard

Software: Sonic Foundry's Acid and Sound Forge, Cubase, various freeware

To create the symphonic robo-pop of *Manic Expressive* (Tiger Style), Her Space Holiday's Marc Bianchi used a surprisingly basic setup: He recorded to a Tascam 1/2-inch 8-track, cut the tracks into loops with Sonic Foundry's Sound Forge editing software, and then painted out his arrangements in SF's Acid. "I know that to a lot of people in the industry it's a really low-end program, but it's really simple to use," Bianchi says. "That's what I started with so I pretty much stick with it." *Manic's* sweeping string arrangements sound like they were done by a string quartet—or at least an expensive sampler. Not so: All the string tracks were made, piece by piece, in Acid. "I used a sample CD that just had individual notes of real instruments," Bianchi says. "I'd open [a string sample] in Acid, use its pitch change and make a little melody. It was made like a DJ Shadow record, where there were a lot of samples that...I manipulated. That's the toughest thing, I think, when you're working with strings, to get a realistic feeling of an actual player making the sound and not make it sound like a Moby song, where you can tell the pitch is just shifting erratically."





THE SHINS

Platform: Windows/Echo Audio Gina soundcard
Software: Cool Edit Pro 1.0

Most music that makes appearances in McDonald's commercials began life in an expensive studio; the Shins' runaway psychedelic indie-pop hit *Oh, Inverted World* (Sub Pop) took shape on guitarist/singer James Mercer's computer using Cool Edit Pro and Roland's VS-840 digital recorder. "I lived in an apartment building, so I couldn't have a drumkit or the guitars with the amps," Mercer says. "I would take [the 840] to my friend's basement; we recorded the drums and the loud guitar stuff there, with a few [Shure] SM-57s for mics and junky thrift store mics for the kick drum and stuff. Really cheap setup." Mercer then dumped all the tracks—one by one—into Cool Edit Pro and lined them up by hand. He then did the rest of the record's vocals and softer acoustic songs in CEP. "I love it, it's great," he says, "I just got Pro Tools [LE] and all I'm trying to do is make it look more like Cool Edit Pro." As for *Inverted's* psychedelic, reverb-laden mix, believe it or not, that's also 100 percent Cool Edit. "I still don't own any effects, all of the reverbs are the Cool Edit reverbs. I sat there forever messing with the reverbs. That was really fun. I don't know anything about recording, you know? And Cool Edit really helped quite a bit."



AMERICAN ANALOG SET

Platform: Windows/Lexicon Core2 system
Software: Cool Edit Pro

Hypnotic rockers American Analog Set like to keep things simple; they used Cool Edit Pro in the recording of *Know By Heart* (Tiger Style), but they resisted using a single one of its effects. They recorded basic tracks on an 8-track and then transferred them via ADAT to CEP, where they only performed small tweaks. "We used it like a mixer, a really finely controlled mixer," says singer/guitarist Andrew Kenny. "The biggest benefit was being able to tinker a little bit. If you want to make changes you don't make changes from zero [like analog], you make changes from however you had it before, which is probably 95% of the way you wanted it. You know how it is mixing with an analog mixer. I love it, that's how everyone's brought up, but it's a hassle. Sometimes you just get lucky, you get a really great mix and you want to change one thing but you can't." While Kenny appreciates the mix convenience, AmAnSet's not ready to go full digital just yet. "Some really special things happen whenever you put drums onto tape," he says. "I still wouldn't trust the computer, I wouldn't plug a microphone straight into a computer. There's just something weird about it."

GLOSSARY FOR PEOPLE WHO AREN'T TECH GEEKS LIKE US

1/4-inch: Also called TRS (Tip-Ring-Sleeve) this is the type of input/output used by guitars and other musical instruments.

ADAT: Alesis Digital Audio Tape; a digital recorder that records eight tracks on a SVHS tape. Widely used for transferring digital audio.

FireWire/USB: Different ports for connecting devices to your computer. Your mouse is most likely connected via USB; something faster like a CD burner will probably connect via FireWire.

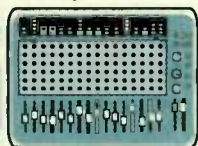
RAM: Random Access Memory; it's what gives your computer the necessary power to chew on all that audio processing. If you want to do computer audio, buy lots.

S/PDIF: The Sony/Philips Digital Interface, an I/O that lets you transfer digital signals from one device to another without converting to analog. For you, it means zero signal degradation.

XLR: Higher definition audio inputs; most pro stage and studio microphones connect via XLR.

Other useful resources:

www.tapeop.com
www.dbmasters.net/hrc
www.homerecording.com



The shadow knows

DJ Shadow—Josh Davis on his passport—knows. He knows hip-hop's history and future. He knows the vastness of music. And he knows how the business runs music into the ground.

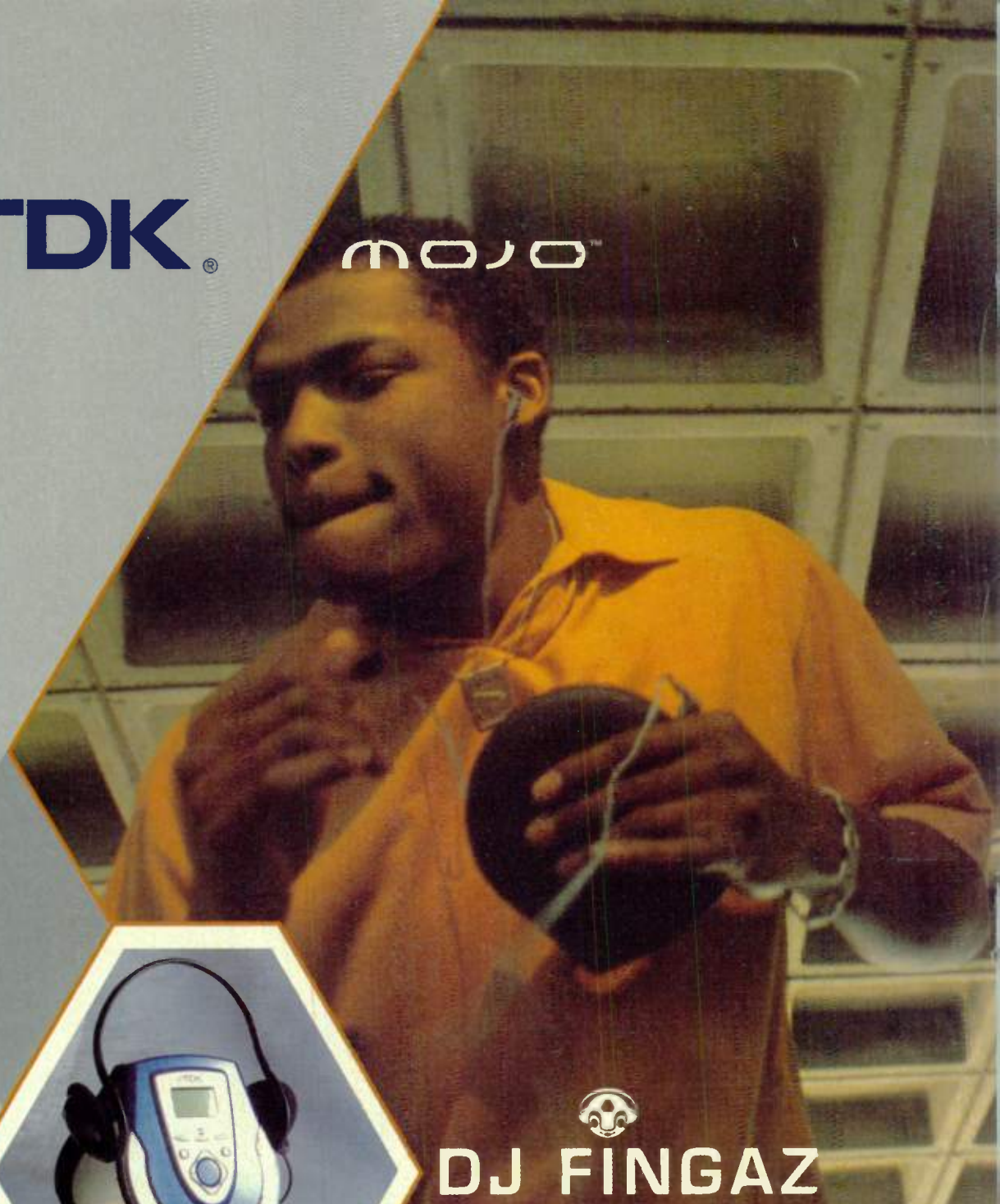
STORY: BILL WERDE • PHOTO: NOAH GREENBERG

Josh Davis, 30, decked out in blue jeans, a baseball cap pulled down low, a Latyrx T-shirt and some new-school Converse, is squashed. The man known to most as DJ Shadow looks indistinguishable from any of the 40-odd students crammed into one of the notorious five-foot boxes that pass for elevators in New York University's Tisch building. Shadow ducks someone's rolled-up canvas and disembarks on the seventh floor, where he will be interviewed for "The New Afternoon Show" on WNYU radio. Shadow is here, ostensibly, to promote the twisted, abstract beats of "Monosylabik," the first single from his new album, *The Private Press*, and to re-introduce himself as a solo act to the college audience that most supports him. As students pile in and out of the elevator, there are no double takes, no flickers of recognition; no one recognizes this champion of underground hip-hop.



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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

doves

THE BREEDERS

Ed Harcourt
J-Live
Tuatara • Solomon Burke

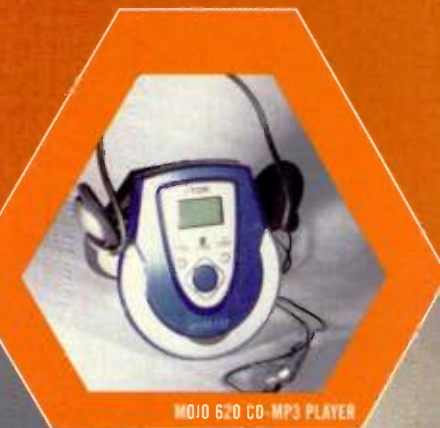
JUNE 2002 • ISSUE 102

14. **MY MORNING JACKET** "Sooner" *Chocolate And Ice* (Badman)
The only valid descriptor for Kentucky's My Morning Jacket is "weird"—but that's good weird, not, er, Big Dumb Face weird. Imagine, if you will, a hybrid of lo-fi psychedelia and Southern-fried bombast. (See *On The Verge*, p. 18.)
15. **THE TROUBLE WITH SWEENEY** "Karen" *Play Karen And Others* (Basement Life)
Someone called this "a better Westerberg record than the new Westerberg record," and it just might be. It's also as poppy as Hall & Oates, only not nearly as mulleted. (See *Review*, p. 59.)
16. **BATS & MICE** "Worst Comes To Worst" *Believe It Mammals* (Lovitt)
Sure, this Richmond outfit is made up of members of Sleepytime Trio and Milemarker, but they're less post-hardcore, more lush indie rock—like Death Cab For Cutie, with occasional aggression. (See *Review*, p. 46.)
17. **JOHN VANDERSLICE** "The Mansion" *Life And Death Of An American Fourtracker* (Barsuk)
Message to ex-MK Ultra frontman Vanderslice's indie-popper enthusiasts: This is his best work to date. To those annoyed by his tendency to supplant every "S" sound with "Sh": Seriously, this is his best work. (See *Review*, p. 61.)
18. **WITH EVERY IDLE HOUR** "Moxie" *The Distance Between* (Space Base 106)
Long Island upstarts With Every Idle Hour craft pop-rock that's heavy on the pop, equally heavy on the rock. The legions of flustered Jimmy Eat World fans have new underdogs to champion. (See *Localzine* p. 40.)
19. **BLAKE HAZARD** "Waiting" *Little Airplane* (Kimchee)
This touring member of Jack Drag strikes out on her own, armed with plenty of pop hooks and a gauzy voice that sounds like a less-Lite FM Shawn Colvin. (See *Review*, p. 49)

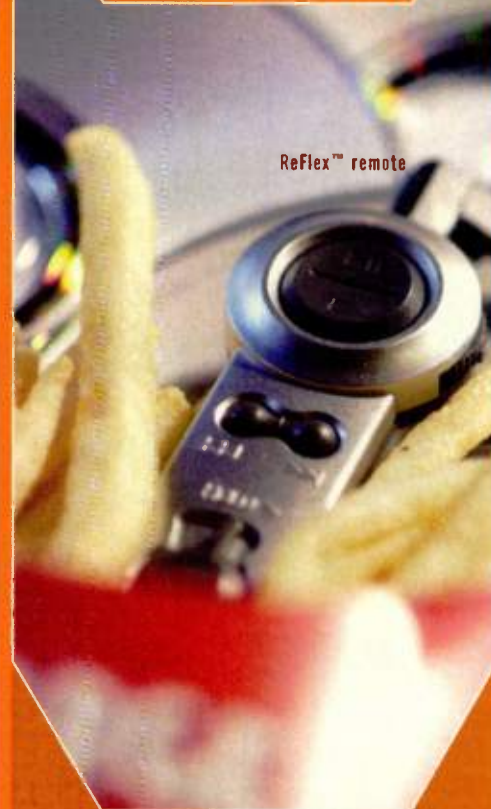
cut along dotted lines, fold and insert into jewel case



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1. **DOVES** "There Goes The Fear" *The Last Broadcast* (Capitol)
The U.K.'s premiere sad-sack trio turns over a new leaf and lets the fun shine in on their new single. The sun bursting through the clouds on the album cover ain't for nothing, folks. (See Best New Music, p. 43)

2. **HAVEN** "Let it Live" *Between The Senses* (Virgin)
Manchester's Haven borrow from the same Britrock template as bands like Starsailor, yes. But unlike some of their peers, every song on their debut features those little things called "hooks." (See Reviews p. 48.)

3. **THE BREEDERS** "Huffer" *Title TK* (Elektra)
Though it's with an entirely different lineup since that "Cannonball" of attention hounded the Breeders in '93, the sisters Deal tread comfortably familiar territory on their near-decade-awaited third LP.

4. **ED HARCOURT** "She Fell Into My Arms" *Here Be Monsters* (Capitol)
This U.K. newcomer takes the left-of-center pop torch from Badly Drawn Boy and runs with it; hear for yourself with the bursting horns and pulsing pianos of "She Fell Into My Arms."

5. **SOLOMON BURKE** "Flesh And Blood" *Don't Give Up On Me* (Fat Possum)
With songs written for him by Elvis Costello, Brian Wilson, Van Morrison, Tom Waits and the disc's producer Joe Henry, Solomon Burke restakes his claim as "the world's greatest soul singer." (see Best New Music p. 34.)

6. **DAVID JOHANSEN AND THE HARRY SMITHS** "Furry's Blues" *Shaker* (Chesky Records)
Consider it penance for his time spent as Buster Poindexter. Here, the ex-New York Doll assembles a raw band to cover songs from Harry Smith's iconic *Anthology Of American Folk Music*.

7. **THE STEP KINGS** "Zeroes And Ones" *3 The Hard Way (We Put Out)*
Pummeling NYC alterna-metal that spices up the nü-metal recipe with a dash of hardcore.

8. **VEX RED** "Itch" *Start With A Strong And Persistent Desire* (Virgin)
After proclaiming his boredom with American bands, super-producer Ross Robinson signed this U.K. band and their mix of pained, sensitive longing and guitar heaviness to his Virgin imprint, I Am.

9. **Otep** "Blood Pigs" *Sevas Tra* (Capitol)
The band may cloak itself in Egyptian mysticism, but nothing can hide the raw emotion and rawer vocals of its namesake singer. Yes, she does all the vocals. (See On The Verge, p. 19.)

10. **J-LIVE** "How Real It Is" *All Of The Above* (Coup d'Etat)
The English-teaching Brooklyn MC emerges from beneath the weight of record-label trauma to deliver another set of thought-provoking hip-hop that would do Chuck D proud. (See Best New Music, p. 35.)

11. **DIRTY VEGAS** "Days Go By (7-inch Mix)" *Dirty Vegas* (Capitol)
You've heard Dirty Vegas as the soundtrack to the Mitsubishi commercial with the pop-locking girl in the passenger seat. Now hear more from this U.K. DJ/singer/guitarist trio, from their self-titled debut. (See Review, p. 47.)

12. **TUATARA** "The Melting Sun" *Cinemathique* (Fast Horse)
This all-rock supergroup (members of R.E.M., Luna, Screaming Trees) comes together to craft a record of pseudo-soundtracks, running the gamut from ethereal ambient pieces to cop-show rockers. (See Review, p. 60)

13. **DAVID SYLVIAN/ROBERT FRIPP** "Jean The Birdman" *Damage* (Virgin)
David Sylvian and Robert Fripp's eclectic, daring careers crossed paths more than once. Here, they're heard in a live recording from 1993 from the newly released *Damage*.

Did you purchase or receive *CMJ New Music Monthly* with a broken cd? Here's what to do: Within two months of the cover date on the issue with the damaged cd, please return the damaged CD to: CMJ, Attention: "CD Replacement," 151 West 25th Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10001. A new CD will be sent out to you upon receipt of your returned CD. Thanks for your continued support!

In part, the scenario reflects a DJ who, despite all of his underground cred and accomplishments, is inconspicuous and prefers to keep it that way. Davis has long shunned the spotlight, granting few interviews and rarely taking publicity photos. And in part, DJ Shadow has been a bit below the radar since he debuted in '96 with *Endtroducing* (1998's *Preemptive Strike* was a singles compilation). That album boasted 13 tracks that, if they didn't invent trip-hop, certainly brought the genre into focus. While he hasn't been super high-profile, he has been busy: When Shadow signed on to produce the U.N.K.L.E. project, *Psyence Fiction*, in '98, he laid down tracks for the likes of Thom Yorke and Richard Ashcroft, and almost singlehandedly launched the career of Badly Drawn Boy Damon Gough into relevancy. And his ensuing Brain Freeze and Product Placement tours with Cut Chemist (DJ of Jurassic-5 and Ozomatli) were the stuff of legend, the two DJs spinning funk 45s and releasing a pair of 7-inches that each routinely eBay for \$80.

Still, when Shadow finally gets situated in the cramped NYU studio, one of the first questions he is asked is the one that most drives him nuts: "What took you so long to make the new album?" Earlier, at his hotel, Davis explained that after a couple of months of interviews, this is the one question that makes his eyes roll back in his head. "I always just go, 'You know U.N.K.L.E.?' " he says. "And they say 'Yeah.' You know Product Placement? Brainfreeze? Quannum? The tour I did in '99? 'Yeah, yeah, yeah.' So why are you asking me that!?"

Back at the station, Davis sucks in a little breath, and responds, as he does to seemingly all questions, with unfailing politeness.

Flash back to the summer of '98 and picture Davis, bummed out and breaking down, sitting on a curb in the Bay Area and wondering what the fuck to do. The roots of *The Private Press* lay here, in one of Shadow's first major lessons in the ways of the music industry.

Davis was promoting U.N.K.L.E. at the time, relieved that it was even being released from the tangle of Seagram's purchase of Polygram, who owned London, who owned *Psyence Fiction*. Then the label told U.N.K.L.E. co-conspirator James Lavelle and Shadow that "a major music magazine that shall go unnamed" was planning a four-page spread for them. "They were like, 'That's amazing! What a coup!'" Davis recalls. "And we're sitting there like, 'Great. Good.' And then the next thing you know they are saying, 'Tomorrow is the photo shoot for this magazine and we'll show up there and there will be a stylist and all these really cool clothes! Isn't this lucky? Don't you feel great?'"

"I said, 'Well, that's great, but I just sort of wear the clothes my friends make. I don't really want to wear somebody else's corporate clothing.' They said, 'Oh, really? Well blah blah blah.' And I said, 'No. No, thanks. If that's the case I'd rather just not do it 'cause I don't want to look like a sucker.' So they said OK."

"So the next day, it was, 'Where are we going now?'" "Oh, blah blah blah, going to get some food or some-

thing,' and they sort of steer us into this lot and suddenly it's, 'Oh, here we are at this photo shoot! Isn't this great?' I said, 'You know what? No.' Then they try to pull, 'We flew 10 people from New York and rented this trailer and rented this lot.' I just sat down on the curb and I said, 'What do I do? Is this how you get to be big? Is this how you sell lots of records?' I finally just said, 'I'm sorry, but I'm not going to do it.' Anyway, we got moved from the lead review to the back of the magazine, with a star and a half taken off."

A few weeks later, after a tour of in-store promotions leading up to the release of *Psyence Fiction*, Shadow finally had two weeks off. "I was on a ferry from Galveston, Texas," says Davis, "just sitting and feeling

**"Is this how you get big?
Is this how you sell lots of
records? I'm sorry, but I'm
not going to do it."**

the wind. The record had been out for three days and I was totally away, didn't have a cell phone, nothing. I was thinking, 'I did everything I could do.' I didn't shirk on promoting or anything. And I had these fantasies—I wonder if things were just going crazy right now?' I broke my own rule, and four days before the end of the trip, I called this woman at London and she says, 'Oh yeah, things are great! You're number one on [Billboard chart] Heatseekers.' And I go, 'What does that mean?' She says, 'That's when you're not in the top 100, but you're almost there.' I just thought to myself, 'This album didn't even crack the top 100?' I think I had a small little breakdown at that point. I mean, hey, many people do records that don't break the top 100. But I just thought, of anything I'll ever do, this would be it."

The shame of the U.N.K.L.E. project wasn't its lack of chart success, but the fact that some of the best work Shadow has done went under-recognized as his. He produced virtually everything on that album, yet critics discussed his partnership with Lavelle as if it was Lavelle's music on the record (in fairness, Lavelle did cough into the microphone on the interlude "Breather," after Shadow had him run laps around the studio). "If I do another 20 years of music, a couple of those songs will always be my favorite. The Badly Drawn Boy track, for instance, was an incredible victory for me. But the other side of U.N.K.L.E. was these heartbreaking circumstances."

Shadow has spent the time between U.N.K.L.E. and *The Private Press* getting back to his musical and personal roots and touring incessantly. His first move was to tour with Quannum—his friends since they all met at UC Davis in the early '90s. They hit the road on a tour booked by Lyrics Born, a much better MC than a road manager. "It was a miserable tour," laughs Davis. "The way it was promoted, we'd go from one show rammed



with a huge line down the street, to the next town, with 10 people wondering who we were. We'd do a show, go in the van, sleep against a wall... it was a nightmare. But I was happy to do it. I felt fortunate to be able to blow off steam in that way. I needed to be grounded again, and that was perfect."

Of course, Davis, now on the major label MCA after more industry takeovers, took some valuable lessons with him from the U.N.K.L.E. experience. "Everyone wants me to be like Moby," says Davis, "and sell, sell, sell! When I meet with these guys now, I am able to articulate myself in such a way that they know that I don't secretly want to be something I'm not. That's the assumption in record labels: 'Oh go on. You know you want to be a star. You know you want to wear these funny clothes and do these funny MTV events. You know you want to snarl for the camera.' There have been so many times when I'll sit down with someone whose job it is to market me, and they try to get you to do things they know you're not going to want to do. 'Do you want to do the theme to *Mortal Kombat*?' 'No. And here's why, before it even goes further.'"

Davis, who collects hip-hop memorabilia ("Not an eBay sort of hobby," he says, "but if I see stuff, I'll grab it.") is fond of referring to a George Clinton quote he came across in a series of tapes of a video music magazine called *Slammin'* from the early '90s. "He said, 'You can survive in this business if you don't get mad or go crazy. But that's why no one survives.' What he means is, you get bitter or you lose your mind." Davis references the quote three times in a two-day span. It is his mantra.

After almost two years on the road, touring in various incarnations, Shadow was free from industry angst and ready to hit the studio. He spent 15 months working on *The Private Press*. "By the time I sat down to make this record, I felt very calibrated," says Davis. "It was as if I was just sitting down to make the first record of my life. I didn't feel any pressure that people thought I would feel. I'd had a chance to get all that out." Davis's primary concern was to advance his sound. "I didn't want to kick off *Private Press* like, 'Here I am, six years later, still going through records looking for hooks.'"

The Private Press sounds fresh, but it won't leave fans behind. The album is classic Shadow, which is to say it's all over the stylistic map, equal measures abstract hip-hop and experimental, very grooving electronic music. "Monosylabik," created entirely from one two-bar sample pulled and prodded in every direction, has perhaps only one groove too many to be considered full-fledged IDM, à la Squarepusher or cranky Aphex Twin. There is a vintage psychedelic track called "The Six Day War" that any James Bond film would do well to call its theme. Lateef contributes the only unsampled element on the album, in the form of a hilarious rap for "Mashin' On the Motorway." The track opens with a comically perplexing sample (movie buffs, start your GM engines)—"He just wanted us to call him Captain Da/ He said, 'You can call me Da Da'"—before launching into a

bounding surf riff looped into hip-hop utility. Meanwhile, the first radio single, "You Can't Go Home Again" is one of the perkier, bounce-along dance numbers you'll hear this year, an infectious bass groove positively overflowing with new wave keyboard nods. "I don't want people to put me in any one category," says Davis. "I hate that record stores have all these categories. You should be able to go in and just find artists alphabetically. You're able to just say Björk or Radiohead, and people know what you mean: ever-expanding, multi-genre, good new music. Maybe the same way you'd say David Lynch and not just think action/adventure or offbeat comedy. You just think, 'interesting new film.'"

In his desire to seek new influences, Shadow turned to no wave. Village Music, a record store 10 minutes north of the Golden Gate Bridge and close to

"The only thing I can say I stand for 100 percent—I even put it in my liner notes—is an appreciation for the vastness of music."

Davis's home, had picked up the discarded library of a modern-rock radio station around the time Davis got to thinking about his album. In those bins lay some new sounds—and an album title. "There were all these privately pressed records from like '78 to '82," says Davis. "Anything that wasn't punk, ska or disco, really."

But as a sample artist wary of greedy lawyers, Davis is vague about the records he listened to while creating *The Private Press*. On Shadow's first production work, a mix he did for a group of incarcerated rappers called Lifer's Group in early '91, his label, Hollywood Basic, wanted a full list of samples to clear. "This was back when labels didn't understand sampling and they wanted to do it 'right,'" recalls the DJ. Davis sent them a list of 70 samples to clear and the label promptly dropped the issue. *Endroducing* used more than 1000 samples, and Davis says he used more samples on *The Private Press* than any album he's made. "When I'm making demos, I'm just playing through records, finding things, saying, 'Let me try this or hook this up,'" says Davis. "At the end of the day there are records strewn all over my floor, not even in their sleeves."

It's Shadow's love of sound, particularly found sound, that sustains him in an industry that all too often bares out that George Clinton quote that he keeps repeating. "The only thing I can say I stand for 100 percent—I even put it in my liner notes—is an appreciation for the vastness of music," says Davis. "In the process of doing this record I learned so much about music. I know it may sound corny, but it had that much of an impact. I had days when I realized, 'Damn, I really can do this my whole life.' And it felt great." **MMM**



THE MOVIELIFE



GLASSJAW AT THE MANHASSET UNITARIAN CHURCH



THIS YEAR'S MODEL VIDEO SHOOT FOR HILOFILMS

LONG ISLAND, New York

STORY: RENEE FALK

If you're looking to place blame for the ubiquity of emo, you can add the sandbar to the east of New York City to your list—Long Island was emo long before Dashboard Confessional was a glint in the mallrat nation's eye. But, to be fair, you might more call Long Island post-hardcore's saving grace, as it's exported much more of that crowd's quality than its tripe.

Name a band on the emo A-list, and any Long Island scenester could list a homegrown version doing their steez better a decade ago. Your kid sister like Thursday? Mind Over Matter and Silent Majority took that sound light years further and never saw the recognition. Saw Saves The Day opening for Weezer? Clockwise was as irresistibly poppy, minus the cheese. Wooded by Dashboard? Inside had equally lovelorn sentiments but avoided the melodrama. This is less a sore spot with the locals, however, as it is a source of pride.

The most noteworthy thing about the local scene is that it follows the most basic—but increasingly rare—tenets of a scene: unity, support and pride. If the L.I. indie kids aren't supporting friends at a show, they've arranged a mammoth kickball game or a mass diner takeover. Scenesters bicker with each other for days on the LongIslandZoo.com messageboards, but any outsider disparaging their scene will receive a flaming that will make Dresden look like a backyard bar-b-que. It can be unfortunately insular—touring bands with large city draws will sometimes play for just their roadies—but their diehard support for local acts has helped launch an impressive crop to national attention.

Nassau county's **Glassjaw** will release their second full-length on Warner Bros. this summer, a mix of the Deftones' aggression and Incubus's approachability. Amityville's **Taking Back Sunday** have, in the few months since their trad emocore debut's release on

Victory, broken Thursday's sales records at that point. Old-school hardcore quintet **Kill Your Idols** will issue six different releases, including a new full-length on Side One Dummy, before the end of the year. Pop-punkers **the Movielife** recently released an EP for Drive Thru-MCA; L.I. screamo staples **On The Might Of Princes** are working on a full-length for Revelation; emo-pop heartthrobs **Broad New's** debut came out on Triple Crown earlier this year, and rumors are circulating that they've just jumped to a major; post-hardcore chieftains **From Autumn To Ashes** have been converting obsessives since the release of their Ferret debut last year; **Blood Red** releases their debut on Initial this summer. Labels have snatched up quite a few non-postcore bands, too, with power-pop act **One True Thing** recording for Kinetic and the more shoegazey **My Favorite** rounding out Double Agent's roster. And some of the Island's best are still free agents—Suffolk's **With Every Idle Hour** make Jimmy Eat World's catchiest seem forgettable and **This Year's Model** have all the attitude of AC/DC with the indie scruffiness of Rye Coalition. Great new bands continually pop up like wildflowers, and the scene's already so teeming you'll have to choose between 10 different shows any given weekend.

Despite the signing spree, the local scene is largely D.I.Y.-dominated. There are a few large venues—like the monstrous **Vanderbilt** (1600 Round Swamp Rd., Plainview, 516-694-6200), which has hosted the Strokes and the Psychedelic Furs recently, and **the Downtown** (190 Main St., Farmingdale, 516-293-7700) which books marquee acts like Gilby Clarke and local Top 40-pop bands like **Diffuser**, **Stage** or **Forward**—but most shows are housed at makeshift venues, bar-and-grills or houses, which makes for an unfortunately high venue-turnover rate. The ultra-tiny **Union Square Lounge** (1848 Merrick Rd., Merrick, 516-377-2874) crams local bands in several times a week,



and though there's barely room for a drumkit, they do have a raised dancing cage.. On a normal night, any indie kid worth his Sauconys wouldn't set foot in **Backstreet Blues** (60 Front St., Rockville Centre, 516-766-MOJO) for their cover-band hoedowns, but most weekends, hardcore marathons (the D.I.Y. sect has never been known for brevity) take over. **The Ethical Humanist Building** (38 Old Country Rd., Garden City, 516-741-7304) opens its doors for local shows, as does the **Christian City Church** (270 Pulaski Rd., Greenlawn), and rentable VFW and Knights Of Columbus halls dot the Island like leopard spots.

Most Long Island show-booking tends to be done by committee, through collectives like **Feet First** (www.feetfirstpresents.com, who arrange shows for larger touring and local bands) and **No Dice** (www.geocities.com/nodicebooking), with smaller, diverse bills arranged by **Quirky Promotions** (www.quirkypromotions.com) and scores of individual bands. Where Long Island's seen a steady decline, however, is in home-bred record labels. With so many bands attracting attention, you'd think there'd be a glut of L.I.-based album-pushers capitalizing, but only politico-punk label **Traffic Violation** (www.trafficviolation.com), the more eclectic **Rok Lok** (roklak.ex-punk.com) and **One Day Savior** (www.onedaysavior.com) regularly issue new Island-born music.

Sure, you can find local music not rooted in the D.I.Y. scene on Long Island—it did breed De La Soul, after all (let's not discuss Debbie Gibson or Mariah Carey)—but nothing else quite manages to avoid being upstaged by metropolitan New York. And the accomplishment of forging a unique identity in the shadow of the biggest city in the world certainly justifies that clique's pride.

LOCAL LOGIC: LONG ISLAND'S BEST

Place to experience the big-haired and tight-panted locals of legend: Someplace Else (1005 Route 109, Farmingdale, 631-531-8604), a deliciously terrifying timewarp into the '80s.

Way to be disappointed by local folklore: the Amityville Horror House (108 Ocean Ave., Amityville), which is not only missing the demon-piglet with the glowing eyes, but doesn't even have the creepy windows anymore.

Spot to legitimately scare the shit out of yourself: Camp Hero (end of Route 27, Montauk), site of the purported "Montauk Project"—you may not run into the Montauk Beast™, but you'll freak nonetheless (and for chrissakes don't get caught sneaking in).

Venue to ride out an afternoon trip: the Vanderbilt Planetarium (180 Little Neck Rd., Centerport, 631-854-5555), located on an estate with a marine museum, mansion and every other manner of regal splendor imaginable, is like taking your very own stroll through Wonderland.

Place to have a rock star ink you: Lotus Tattoo Studio (291 West Main St., Sayville, 631-244-8288), owned by Anthony Civarelli—or Civ, if you're nasty.

Tiny jazz lounge that feels like an East Village hide-away: Velvet Lounge (766 North Country Rd., East Setauket, 631-751-7575).

Treasure trove of used CDs: Empire Discs (680 Stewart Ave., Garden City, 516-222-4999).

OUT WITH THE IN CROWD

Gary Bennett of **KILL YOUR IDOLS**

"Da Vinci Tattoos (3253 Sunrise Highway, Wantagh, 516-781-5030) is the place most often frequented for Kill Your Idols' skull tattoos."

Andrea Vaughn of **MY FAVORITE**

"The docks at Port Jefferson are good for a stroll day or night. Watch the ferrys to Connecticut come in and out. Down the block, **Salsa Salsa** (142 Main St., Port Jefferson, 631-473-9700) has kickass tex-mex. Their white-bean chili makes me swoon every time. In summer you must hit the antique carousel out in Greenport (Carpenter St.) and grab some brass rings on your way around."

Chris Enriquez of **ON THE MIGHT OF PRINCES**

"**Witches Brew Incorporated** (311 Hempstead Turnpike, West Hempstead, 516-489-9482) is an amazing coffee shop owned by two lovely sisters that also serves desserts and snacks. They stay open until people stop coming in, which can be pretty late on weekends. They have a rocking jukebox that has the best in punk, hardcore, indie, emo, goth, industrial, metal, rockabilly, etc. It's a great place for all the 'alternative' kids to congregate." Bennett agrees ("It's a good place to go late at night to get fatter than we are"), as does Vaughan ("It's a big old house decorated like a vampire's rec room, run by a bunch of punks"). "Also check out **None Of The Above Records** (2530 Middle Country Rd., Centereach, 631-737-9359). They have [every kind of music], T-shirts, stickers, fanzines and what-not. The biggest reason I go there is to find old Long Island punk and hardcore records that I lost or never got the chance to get; it's the only place to find that kind of stuff."

Karen Ciaffone of **THIS YEAR'S MODEL**

"If you live on Long Island, you know there are diners every two miles. Our favorite place to go after practice or a show is the **Pantry Diner** (525 Merrick Rd., Rockville Centre, 516-766-8848). They make the best homemade veggie burgers anywhere. It's kind of like our equivalent to the South's Waffle House. We've had plenty of laughs in those booths and some major band decisions have been made there."

Sean Hanney of **WITH EVERY IDLE HOUR** 

"On any given day in the summer, the line for **All American Burger** (4286 Merrick Rd., Massapequa, 516-798-9574) spills out the door. It's an old-time burger stand that's truly one of a kind. **Papa Mia's Ice House** (Montauk Highway, Oakdale) has the best Italian ices on the planet. They're open for the summer only, so you really try to take advantage of it while it's open. It's literally a tiny shack on the side of a road that runs through town."



SOLOMON BURKE 

Don't Give Up On Me

Anti-Fat Possum



Solomon Burke has long been known to his fans as the Bishop, or the King of Rock & Soul, but it also wouldn't be wrong to describe him as Mr. Unappreciated. Burke is one of the great soul singers, an artist who's been cutting prime tracks since 1962, but somehow he's remained a singer whose gift was always overshadowed by Sam Cooke, Otis Redding and the like. *Don't Give Up On Me* will give R&B and soul music fans a vital update on Burke. Some of those fans include Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Dan Penn, Tom Waits, Elvis Costello and the disc's producer Joe Henry, all of whom contributed songs. Burke's performance is hardcore traditional soul—exactly what he's been doing for 40 years, in other words. One can drop in anywhere amidst the 11 tracks and get a serious dose of soul sanctification, but there are major thrills worth noting. Burke's emotionally loaded, world-weary rendition of Pick Purnell's "Sit This One Out" is an instant classic. The Henry tune "Flesh And Blood" is a perfect singer-to-song match, and Burke turns it into one of the most dramatic moments on the CD. The Blind Boys Of Alabama join Burke in sounding the spiritual depth of "None Of Us Are Free." *Don't Give Up On Me* is more than a CD title; it's Burke's career mantra. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

www.solomonburke.com

File Under

The King of Rock & Soul

R.I.Y.L.

Otis Redding, Percy Sledge,

Bea E. King

CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA

Everyday

Ninja Tune

Cinematic Orchestra debuted in 1999 with *Motion*, a typical Ninja Tune release consisting of nu-jazz derived from cut 'n' paste sample sequencing. The primary difference between the laconic *Motion* and more uptempo Ninja releases that year, like Dynamic Syncopation's *Dynamism* or the Herbaliser's *Very Mercenary*, was the fact that CO main man J. Swinscoe played the samples for studio musicians, recorded their improvisation, and used that as a sample source. This made *Motion* a translucent listening experience, moody yet seamless, like a live jazz album in its swings through drum riffs and sizzling horn solos. *Everyday* expands that quality exponentially; it feels as though you're listening to a dark studio jam without any electronic or DJ elements present. It's a fantastic achievement most clearly perceived on "Evolution," originally commissioned as film festival accompaniment for Dziga Vertov's *Man With A Movie Camera*. The track swings down with a deft double-bass ride and early fusion organ work before '60s soul legend Fontella Bass belts out a warm velvet "Evolution!" through her caramel throat. Although it's not a live jazz album, the somber swing beat and simmering sax/horn chorus of "Burnout" bespeaks formative Coltrane, while the lumbering bass stumbling throughout the title track smells of Mingus. As such, *Everyday* is an album you can listen to everyday and not be bored to death by repetitive beats and loops. >>>HEATH K. HIGNIGHT



Link

www.ninjatune.com

File Under

Nu-jazz, neither live nor Memorex

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Food, Thievery Corporation,

early Coltrane

DOVES 
The Last Broadcast
Capitol

What is it exactly about Manchester that breeds such musical miserabilists? Doves don't seem to be sure themselves anymore, as their latest, *The Last Broadcast*, finds the trio in a decidedly more "glass half-full" mood than on their gloriously melancholy debut *Lost Souls*. Hailing from the same scene that brought the world Joy Division, the Smiths and the thuggery of Oasis, Doves step out of the shadows and into the light with such dreamy songs as the hypnotic title track and the happy-go-lucky epic "There Goes The Fear." "Fear," a seven-minute swell, with its chiming guitar and psychedelic beats, resurrects the finest hours of the Stone Roses or Ride, and by its end, you want to grab your nearest mate round the shoulders, hoist a pint and do it all over again. The U.K.'s fascination with New York City continues in the sincere swagger of "N.Y.," singer/bassist Jimi Goodwin declaring "We're all better off in New York"; "Pounding" lives up to its name, with chugging beats and driving, Northern soul harmonies. With shimmering strings arranged by Stereolab's Sean O'Hagan alongside the production team of Steve Osbourne (Happy Mondays) and Max Heyes (Primal Scream), *The Last Broadcast* reinvents the visceral soundscapes and hypnotic pull that birthed the Madchester scene over a decade ago. Bursting with hope and an understated strength, *The Last Broadcast* is a liberating album that reaches up through the clouds and manages to pull down a bit of sunshine. >>>RYAN RAYHILL



Link
www.doves.net
File Under
Not Mad-anymore-chester
R.I.Y.L.
Stone Roses, the Verve,
the Smiths, Spiritualized, Oasis

J-LIVE 
All Of The Above
Coup d'Etat



J-Live claims this as his very first album, even if it's his second. The distinction is valid considering that his 2000 debut, *The Best Part*, was much-bootlegged, under-promoted (due to label drama) and admittedly average. Fans and critics have been fiending for the intelligent MC to drop the underground classic they know he's capable of after recognizing his lyrical brilliance on 1995's "Braggin' Writes." Finally, there's *All Of The Above*, one of the most consistent CDs of the year. Usef Dinero crafts the perfect funky bass-fueled beat on "How Real It Is," over which J-Live rhymes about living your life responsibly. He revisits the days when he was a grade-school teacher on "Satisfied?" with witty and poignant one-liners, like "Anthrax got my whole Earth wearing a mask" and "The grass isn't greener on the other genocide." On "MCee," he subtly reveals that he writes "poetry out of a deep-seated need to be loved." He plays the role of big brother to all women on "Like This Anna," asking them to respect themselves in a way that's caring, not preachy. And on the standout track, "One For The Griot," Live switches up the same story with three different endings. With production by DJ Spinna, DJ Jazzy Jeff's Touch Of Jazz and Live himself, *All Of The Above* embodies the best of beats, rhymes and life. >>>JESSICA KOSLOW

Link
www.j-live.net
File Under
True school-ish
R.I.Y.L.
Mos Def, Talib Kweli, De La Soul



TIFT MERRITT

Bramble Rose

Lost Highway



Singer/songwriter Tift Merritt has been biding her time in the Raleigh-Durham/Chapel Hill music scene for the past few years, writing superb songs, winning the country category of the 2000 MerleFest's Chris Austin Songwriting Contest, putting together a strong band and generally waiting for the right record deal. Nashville-based Lost Highway Records had the right deal, and Tift's portion of the bargain has been delivered. *Bramble Rose*, featuring nothing but original tunes, is a brilliant debut record and a release that will be remembered as the first step in a memorable career. Traditional country music is a major influence in her songwriting, and she can put a torch to any country ballad, as we hear on "Are You Still In Love With Me," the title track, "I Know Him Too" and the gracefully phrased "Supposed To Make You Happy." The power and tonal purity of her voice give Merritt an instrument that knows few limitations. She can sing rock as well as write it ("Neighborhood"), and she's hip enough to spiritual music to have written "When I Cross Over," a moving, beautifully sung lyric that obliquely references the sentiment of Southern gospel. The incantation "make it real" is the operative phrase in the arts nowadays. *Bramble Rose* is that thought in practice. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

www.losthighwayrecords.com

File Under

Country of special Merritt

R.I.Y.L.

Lucinda Williams, Iris Dement,
Kelly Willis

MULL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Loss

XL-Beggars Group

With a willfully obscure name like Mull Historical Society, an eponymous theme song that is an invitation to "join us with your point of view," and another song about "Watching Xanadu" (the ridiculous 1980 movie that featured Olivia Newton-John rollerskating in heaven), *Loss* could be a cheesy, ironic mess. Instead, it's a glorious mass of pop euphoria in the vein of the New Pornographers' *Mass Romantic*. Where the Pornographers gorged themselves on the '70s pop of ELO and Sparks, MHS go for something sweeter but no less elaborate; the inventive arrangements of the Zombies' *Odessey And Oracle* and the irresistibly infectious melodies of ABBA come to mind, even though MHS never seems to pay homage to anyone directly. Although MHS is essentially one guy, Colin McIntyre (from the Scottish isle of Mull, by way of Glasgow), *Loss* has a huge, orchestrated sound, layered with chimes and glockenspiels, woo-woo backing vocals and boys' choirs, flutes and trumpets and cellos, strummy acoustic guitars and wah-wah electrics. The rolling "This Is Not Who We Were" and the stately "Only I" build to grand climaxes, and "Animal Cannabus" has more hooks in its 4:44 than are found on most hour-long albums. Forget Paul McCartney's "Mull Of Kintyre"; join Mull of McIntyre. >>>STEVE KUNGE



Link

www.mullhistoricalsociety.co.uk

File Under

Giddy pop thrills

R.I.Y.L.

The New Pornographers, Pulp,
Elephant 6 bands, Badly Drawn Boy

**“Not what jazz was
but a vision of what it could be”**

— THE NEW YORK TIMES

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World Radio History

REVIEWS

AZURE RAY
 BATS & MICE
 THE CLARKS
 CURL UP AND DIE
 DIRTY VEGAS
 STEVE EARLE
 ENON
 FATBOY SLIM
 DAVID GRUBBS
 HAVEN
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 THE HELLAOPTERS
 HIGH ON FIRE
 CHRIS HILLMAN AND HERB PEDERSEN
 JIM AND JENNIE AND THE PINETOPS
 KILLSWITCH ENGAGE
 LOS LOBOS
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 SMITH & MIGHTY
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 SPEEDY J
 SUPERJOINT RITUAL
 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
 TRANS AM
 THE TROUBLE WITH SWEENEY
 TUATARA
 JEFF TWEDDY
 UGLY CASANOVA
 JOHN VANDERSLICE
 TOM WAITS



AZURE RAY

Burn And Shiver Warm

The soft-voiced sirens of Azure Ray, Maria Taylor and Orenda Fink, seem resigned to dreary days and overcast skies. Their whispered lyrics seethe and drone, as if they were the misplaced daughters of Leonard Cohen, but their straightforward delivery of lines like, "So it's grey, well so are my favorite cities," seem more wrought with sleepiness than despair. Their sophomore effort spins like a collection of slumber party confessions, though you won't find any wild games of Truth Or Dare here. With the help of producer/Crooked Fingers frontman/former Archer Of Loaf Eric Bachmann, the pair captures the

[Link
www.thewarmsupercomputer.com/
AZURERAY.html](http://www.thewarmsupercomputer.com/AZURERAY.html)
[File Under
Dream-pop lullabies
R.I.Y.L.](#)
**Bright Eyes, Crooked Fingers,
Leonard Cohen**

drowsy intimacy between two voices drifting out of consciousness. *Burn And Shiver's* delicate and meandering instrumentation, complete with strings, Taylor's piano and Fink's muted trumpet, replaces the pop structure and subtle hooks of their first release on Warm Records. After touring with Bright Eyes in support of their debut LP and putting out an EP on Saddle Creek, the duo recently collaborated with advertising's favorite techno-pop star, Moby, on a song called "The Great Escape." It's hard to imagine the gals of Azure Ray rocking out on MTV like Moby's prior femme sidekick, Gwen Stefani, but Fink and Taylor have something else to offer. Like good wine, Azure Ray's serene melodies intensify with age, and their rainy day music gets better with every storm. >>>KARA ZUARO



BATS & MICE

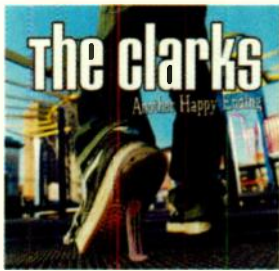
Believe It Mammals Lovitt

On *Believe It Mammals*, it's rare that one of Bats & Mice's three lead singers punches out a verse without it being buoyed by at least two backing vocals. But Ben Davis (ex-Sleepytime Trio, Milemarker), Daron Hollowell (ex-Four Hundred Years) and David Nesmith (ex-Sleepytime Trio, Maximillian Colby, Milemarker) have made a pact to do everything together. Their theory of string playing is part of that accord here on their first full-length offering, the lush follow-up to their gorgeously sparse three-song EP. Hollowell and Nesmith's immaculately plucked and strummed

[Link
www.batsandmice.com](http://www.batsandmice.com)
[File Under
Beautiful creatures
R.I.Y.L.](#)
**Later Sunny Day Real Estate, the
Promise Ring, the Detachment Kit**

guitar notes deftly fall over (and around) Davis's sometimes droning, sometimes pulsing bass thumps. But whatever the mood this Richmond, Va. outfit creates—melancholic anger ("Worst Comes To Worst") or bouncy euphoria ("Hallway")—nothing is done without a thorough understanding of how each note was written and how it's consistent with the theme of its respective song. Like how Hollowell's pseudo-sassy vocal approach in "I'm Not Surprised" mirrors the song's jagged guitar play and the accusatory tone of its scathing lyrics ("There's nothing left for you to hide behind/ There's no one left to impress this time") while at the same time he's smooth enough to ride to the song's inherent mope-rock destination. But Bats & Mice far surpass just mope rock. This is intelligent rock—dark and beautiful, hyper emotional yet so cerebral. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO



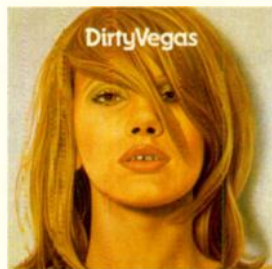


THE CLARKS

Another Happy Ending *Razor & Tie*

With all of the trends going on in rock these days, there aren't a lot of bands making the plain old-fashioned variety, though there's obviously an audience for it—note the amount of face-time bands like the Goo Goo Dolls, Train and Remy Zero get on VH1. As much of a Pittsburgh institution as artery-clogging food, the Clarks have been making precisely this kind of straightforward, barroom-friendly rock 'n' roll for nearly 15 years. On their fifth release, *Another Happy Ending*, the band backburners its usual influences (the Replacements, Tom Petty And The

Heartbreakers) in favor of a more rootsy Dave Matthews approach. It works for the most part, resulting in a dozen hook-laden, guitar-driven pop songs about love, loss and the shifting priorities that maturity brings. There are a few choices that beg questioning: The painfully truthful and catchy breakup song "On Saturday" needs to lose the cheesy intro where the instruments are introduced one by one. And "Boys Lie" is a solid, funky, three-and-a-half minutes of fun until it reverts into an unfortunate rap-rock, fratboy chest-pumping exercise at the end. But overall, *Another Happy Ending* should result in just that for this hard-working band. If Train can win Grammys for its retooled classic-rock riffs, a band like the Clarks should be filling arenas, too. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

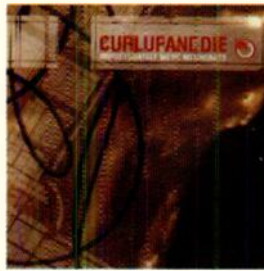


DIRTY VEGAS

Dirty Vegas *Capitol*

It's a bit of a laugh, certainly, but British dance music has wound through a 15-year cycle that seems to be landing it right back where it all bloody started. Now, producers and DJs are suddenly doing the unthinkable: hooking up with live musicians and vocalists. Soul Hooligan and Kosheen are among the keenest examples, certainly. The latest to emerge is Dirty Vegas (from London, not Nevada), the mating of star DJ Paul Harris—veteran of such notable clubs as Ministry Of Sound, Cream and Milk Bar—with guitarist Ben Harris and guitarist-percussionist-vocalist Steve

Smith. They took Britain by storm in 2001 with the nouveau house anthem "Days Go By," which is now worming its way into American consciousness with the help of that pop-locking-girl Mitsubishi commercial. Now they've got a full record ("Days Go By" included) that at times sounds suspiciously 1990. Not that it's a problem; throughout, house music is a foundation, but they deftly shoot off in all directions from there. "Ghosts" sounds a bit like the Pet Shop Boys, "Throwing Shapes" riffs on early synth-pop, and "All Or Nothing" does, indeed, have a certain retro-Madchester quality about it. It's all held together as much by the hooks as the grooves—they've got quite a way with a melody—and the smooth vocal stylings of Smith, who brings to mind Glenn Tilbrook of Squeeze. The perfect summer record. >>>KEN SCRUDATO



CURL UP AND DIE

Unfortunately We're Not Robots *Revelation*

For their first full-length release, Las Vegas metalcore tonsil-shredders Curl Up And Die shortened the tunes and amped the virtuosity. Translated: They have copping Converge-isms down to a science—from razor-sharp cut 'n' paste rhythms, to screechy vocals as subtle as a mouthful of Drano, to savage guitar chug-gery, to a *Jane Doe*-biting CD spine. Getting Converge guitar mutilator Kurt Ballou to assume knob-twiddling duties compounds the matter, but Curl Up And Die distance themselves through sonic detours. Snaky Zappa prog-rhythms infect the Inordinately Verbose Metalcore Song Title Contest winner "Doctor Doom,

A Man Of Science, Doesn't Believe In Jesus, Why The Fuck Do You." The aptly titled "Total Pandemonium" features vocalist Mike Minnick shrieking as if clawing to escape from an iron maiden; while wacky guitar sprints, cavernous drums and electronic sputter punctuate the Biff Tannen-esque "Make Like A Computer And Get With The Program." Other tracks echo the rhythmic trickery of Botch and the ethereal squall of Neurosis warped into blistering two-minute workouts or complex eight-minute dirges. Although *Unfortunately We're Not Robots* is loaded with sandpaper riffs, razorblade-gargling vocals and dementia-inducing rhythms, it works just as well as a collection of witty song titles. Let's just hope "Rich Hall (Runner Up In A Carson Daly Lookalike Contest)" isn't a dig at the creator of the sniglet. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

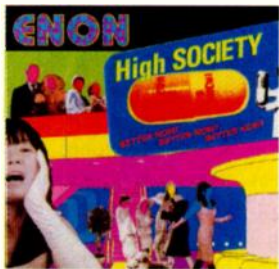


STEVE EARLE

Sidetracks *E-Squared-Artemis*

Whether or not Steve Earle spearheaded the entire alt.country movement is something for pundits to debate long into retirement. Beyond argument is the simple fact that he is one of the genre's most recognizable practitioners. The sandpaper growl, the old-timey nasal whine, the economic acoustic finger-picking, the lyrical romance of outlaws and independents marching with destiny—all define what it means to play that brand of country music that exists outside the Nashville Network's music box. *Sidetracks* is a collection of songs that

never made it to proper Earle albums. It's not the best place for the casual fan to start, but those with a taste for roads less traveled will find plenty to fascinate. Covers are plentiful: Nirvana's "Breed" sounds like Cobain and Earle might be estranged cousins; Gram Parsons' "My Uncle" is a no-brainer; Dylan's "My Back Pages" is gorgeously slowed and given an alternate melody line since Earle recorded it a key too high. Tracks from various movie soundtracks pop up, including Earle's recent contribution to *The Rookie*, "Some Dreams." Heck, there's even a reggae tune here (The Slickers' "Me And The Eagle") to confuse the faithful. Earle's got a reputation for being an existential dude struggling with inner demons. Well, sometimes existentialists just want to have fun. >>>BOB O'CONNOR



ENON

High Society Touch & Go

Writing quirky pop music is a lot harder than it looks—there are so many ways to blow it. First, it has to seem effortlessly quirky; there's nothing more obnoxious than bands trying desperately to be off-kilter. (Hello, No Doubt.) Second, the quirk can't overcome the songs themselves. (Hello, Bis.) These are lessons that Enon has obviously learned since 2000's *¡Believo!* Their second full-length, *High Society*, spills over with the new-wave beeps, bleeps and sonic detritus that give people like Beck wet dreams, but they always make sure that the song comes first,

establishing rock-solid melodies before laying on the ear candy. Check "Natural Disasters," where John Schmersal's jerky guitar gives way to his infectious vocal melodies, and only after a perfect chorus does the song introduce a bizarre keyboard break, lasting just long enough to cleanse the palette before the next hook. New bassist/singer Toko Yasuda's gauzy voice calls to the Cardigans' Nina Persson and lets Enon explore similar (albeit a little darker) territory. She's used to best effect on "In Your City," where ringing keys weave around her disaffected vocal, creating a sound that manages to be catchy and unsettling at the same time. Kudos to Enon for being one of the few bands whose style doesn't overtake their substance. >>>TOM MALLON

[Link](#)

www.enon.tv

[File Under](#)

Style-and-substance indie pop

R.I.Y.L.

Les Savy Fav, Elastica, Devo, Laptop, Beck



FATBOY SLIM

Live On Brighton Beach

Southern Fried-Ministry Of Sound

Like a Phish bootleg, *Live On Brighton Beach* is a slice of Norman Cook doing what he does best from one of a thousand different live DJ performances, albeit with significantly less verve than a Trey Anastasio riff or Jon Fishman drum break. Which begs the question: Has the cult of DJ outlined its usefulness as an art form? If *Live* is the harbinger of superstar DJ live recordings, then yes, because *Live* feels like just another mix CD. To his credit, Cook goes back to Underworld's exquisite 1996 cut "Born Slippy (Nuxx)" for an opening volley, and he drops in choice new cuts like last year's flaming house anthem "Where's

Your Head At" by Basement Jaxx. Nevertheless, Cook (or any DJ) can mix old and new party choons until the cows come home and it's not all that inventive out of context. On a mass culture exposure level, the times of DJ-mix-CD-as-art have more or less come and gone, and now we need more in a live release than crowd noise mixed into a big-beat redux. If *Live* were an actual bootleg, it might take on a more legendary status in the context of nights where Norman flubbed on the decks or the needle skipped in the middle of his own "Star 69." But as is, *Live* feels ordinary. >>>HEATH K. HIGNIGHT

[Link](#)

www.ministryofsound.com

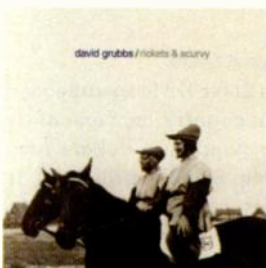
[File Under](#)

Fatboy's Reduced Spice

Beach Party Mix

R.I.Y.L.

Chemical Brothers, Fatboy's Halfway Between The Gutter And The Stars, Timo Maas



DAVID GRUBBS

Rickets & Scurvy Drag City

Which came first, David Grubbs's affinity for breezy folk-pop melodies, or his need to subvert them with splashes of noise and texture? If the sound of the former Gastr Del Sol guitarist's third Drag City album is any indication the answer may be neither. *Rickets & Scurvy* presents a remarkably holistic view of underground rock music, one that offers plenty of room within the pop song for the careful sonic detailing the Chicago post-rock crowd has made an end unto itself. It makes for a pretty fascinating sound world, where the placid acoustic-guitar fingerpicking of "The

Nearer By And By" eventually gives way to a billowing cloud of ambient hum and processed field recordings, and "Aloft"'s drowsy, Cowboy Junkies-like groove fractures into a ripple of dissonant piano chords. Grubbs reflects that gentle formal tension in his lyrics, too, some of which he co-wrote here with *The Ice Storm* author Rick Moody, another artist with a firm grasp on submerged complexities. "Big fish eat the plankton, snapper takes the bait," he sings on the luminous "A Dream To Help Me Sleep." "Bluefish eat their pharaoh, whaler stays out late." Yet for all its claims on difficulty—fast-forward to the clanging "Precipice" especially for that—*Rickets & Scurvy* remains a lovely listen, its intricacies providing its immediate charms considerable staying power. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

[Link](#)

www.dragcity.com

[File Under](#)

Folk-pop for the future

R.I.Y.L.

Jim O'Rourke, Leo Kottke, Arto Lindsay



HAVEN 

Between The Senses Virgin

The inhabitants of the sensitive Britpop resurgence walk a fine line: Can we use a bounding falsetto without aping Jeff Buckley too hard, or warm our guitars with syrupy effects but keep raw enough to avoid Goo Goo Dolls comparisons? Manchester upstarts Haven lump comfortably with those fence-straddlers, like Starsailor or Toploader, but do have a few secret weapons: The Smiths' Johnny Marr handled production on the quartet's debut full-length, *Between The Senses*, and frontman Gary Briggs has a falsetto that could fracture glass. Their inaugural long-

player shows they've got a knack for hooks, as evidenced by the gorgeous "Let It Live" (far and away the record's best track) and the instantly hummable "I Need Someone." But then there's the Goo factor—will Haven teeter into the Lite FM briar patch? Unfortunately, the answer's yes in a lot of instances: *Senses* is Ivory clean, every snare hit synching mechanically, every guitar notching cleanly with the vocals, every chorus perfectly radio-ready. But while Haven do fall prey to the same derivative pitfalls Starsailor does, there's a bit more depth inherent in what they're doing, and the shining moments on the record do hint that they could leap past the over-sanitization that's scrubbed their charm a bit thin. After all, *Pablo Honey* didn't nail it, either. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

[Link](#)

www.haven-online.com

[File Under](#)

I hear a little falsetto of a man

R.I.Y.L.

Starsailor, Travis, Remy Zero, Sense Field



BLAKE HAZARD

Little Airplane *Kimchee*

Although her name may be unfamiliar, Blake Hazard arrives with a pedigree: While attending Harvard, she did time in Jason Hatfield's *Star Hustler* and then in Jack Dragonetti's *Jack Drag*, and she's the great-granddaughter of F. Scott Fitzgerald. While that last fact is useful for little more than a game of six degrees of separation, Hazard's charming, girlish voice can at times resemble that of Jason's sister Juliana, and Jack Dragonetti played most of the instruments on and produced the album. *Little Airplane* mixes understated electronics—some uncomplicated

beats, some slightly psychedelic keyboards—with washes of guitars that swirl and swoon; it's a lo-fi pop sound that nicely undercuts some of Hazard's sweeping melodies. On the title track, Hazard sings in a fragile soprano, "I can't stop/ I can't slow down/ There's so much love to figure out," and while the chorus leads with a dramatic drum roll that's nearly a modern rock cliché, it's followed with a simple, soft keyboard bed that saves the song from melodrama. Hazard's at her best when she's less reserved, such as on the cheery, poppy "Waiting" and on the halting, heartbreaking "Reservoir," which features a lovely descending counterpoint vocal. The *Great Gatsby's* Daisy Buchanan had a voice "full of money"; Hazard's voice may be small change, but it suits her songs perfectly. >>>STEVE KLINGE

Link
www.kimcheerecords.com

File Under
Bedroom pop, with beats
R.I.Y.L.

Tanya Donelly, Heather Nova,
Jack Drag



THE HELLAOPTERS

High Visibility *Gearhead*

By initial design, *High Visibility* is an apt title. Most likely intended as a widely available breakthrough disc (it was released elsewhere in the world via Universal), it has been scarcely available even as an import in America until now, well over a year later. This has been an interesting band to watch; gestating from a distorted, barely-on-the-rails freight train of noise-rock and jacked-up garage punk, the Hellacopters trimmed back the grit and honed the melody over the past few years, and it's worked—quite well, in fact. 1999's *Grande Rock*, while a bit

thin on the production end, was otherwise a push forward into a more dynamic, more musical approach—a touch of Blue Öyster Cult, MC5, and obvious nods to Lynyrd Skynyrd and the entire Stax-Volt catalog. *High Visibility* quarries similar rock, and with each listen, it's increasingly apparent how much Radio Birdman this Swedish quintet has been listening to, what with such similar razor-sharp, wiry guitar tones and plinking piano work. Nick Royale's leads are superb and tasteful, and overall it's the type of production the Hellacopters deserve, which is why it's a shame the songs aren't as fully fleshed-out as they should be. Tough call, especially when *High Visibility* is still leaps and bounds above the staid and predictable rock trenches below. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY

Link
www.hellacopters.com

File Under
R-O-C-K, all caps
R.I.Y.L.

Radio Birdman, the Stooges,
the Hives

MOTH



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Management
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www.motheconomics.com
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PROVISIONS, FICTION AND GEAR

The debut album featuring *I SEE SOUND*

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HIGH ON FIRE

Surrounded By Thieves Relapse

One imagines this album getting the pre-dawn nod from Visigoth troops encircling Rome, battle-ready, the scent of blood already in the air. *Surrounded By Thieves* is a relentless, punishing affair, a monolith of Laney and Orange amplifiers, outsized drums and guts to spare. And it's not surprising, considering that Matt Pike (vocals/guitar) helped draft the architecture for *Jerusalem*, his previous outfit Sleep's single-track, 52-minute lurching lava-crawl. Ice that iron-age cake with Billy Anderson's (Neurosis, Melvins) low-end production depth, with all instrumentation pushed well

into the red, and, *Surrounded By Thieves* earns an early vote for heaviest album of the year on sheer sonic bombast alone. Rhythmically centered around galloping, thundering toms, there's a repetitive quality to the music which in other circumstances would be tiresome, but is natural—perhaps essential—in this context, and makes the eight tracks seem of one continuous piece. Though this California trio owes a debt to predecessors like Pentagram, St. Vitus, the Obsessed and Sabbath, Pike has sense enough to stay away from aping the originals and clear-cuts his own swath on the hard riff-road himself. His guitar is either off or it's cranked up to 10, and when he lays it down, you'll swear you're hearing the hooves of Genghis Khan's horse against the floors of hell. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY

[Link](#)

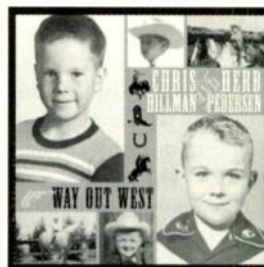
www.relapse.com

[File Under](#)

War-steed rock, heavier than thou

R.I.Y.L.

Spirit Caravan, Black Sabbath, Celtic Frost, Eyehategod, Frank Frazetta artwork



CHRIS HILLMAN AND HERB PEDERSEN

Way Out West Back Porch

Chris Hillman and Herb Pedersen have recorded more fine country sounds than most anyone west of Opryland, so there's no doubt they bring steady hands to the job. Fortunately, they also bring some strong vocals, great picking and a choice selection of tunes that covers the horizon—classic honky tonk and hillbilly music, to originals that rock or sometimes just folk around. Hillman, who was a Byrd and a Burrito Brother, and Pedersen, who has an equally impressive roots history as sideman, were playing together back in the early '60s, before California's

[Link](#)

www.backporchrecords.com

[File Under](#)

Byrds of a feather

R.I.Y.L.

Nickel Creek, Desert Rose Band, Seldom Scene

country-rock scene went national (a movement back to which alt-country can trace its disputed parentage). But their golden years are not yet upon them, and joined by other former members of the Desert Rose band, both are in the excellent form they showed on their 1996 outing, *Bakersfield Bound*. They split the vocals, and their comfortable voices never go astray—though Hillman may be too gentle a soul for Ray Price's raw heartbreaker, "You Done Me Wrong." Sometimes things feel a little too grown-up or smooth around the edges, as on the original "Better Man Than That." But nobody's going to pick this stuff cleaner or put the harmonies together better than these old hands. >>>BILL KISLUK



JIM AND JENNIE AND THE PINETOPS

One More In The Cabin Overcoat

Despite the success of the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack, hardcore bluegrass still isn't music of mass popularity. Not that it seems to worry Jim And Jennie And The Pinetops. The Pennsylvania-based band have carved out a niche that plants them firmly in the footsteps of Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley and Appalachian great Hazel Dickens, to whom singer/mandolinist Jennie Benford bares a strong vocal resemblance. And with Jim Krewson, Benford shares one of the great bluegrass singing partnerships; their voices weave around and complement each

other with rare perfection on songs like "My Grey And Fading Dreams" and the slow, aching "Mourning Dove." Not that the rest of the band are slouches; Emma O'Donnell's fiddle playing is beautifully economical while being fiercely expressive, and Bradford Hutchison's banjo is often the melodic driving force. But Benford and Krewson are the pivots, not only for their voices, but also their remarkable writing skills, which seem to crank back time a good 60 years. And in "Elmore Mountain Road" and "Firetower" they've produced a pair of true bluegrass classics, with the kind of raw edge that the Alison Krausses of this world have long since smoothed out. It's as rough and direct as any punk record, and with the same power to transform listeners. The old grass is the new grass. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

[Link](#)

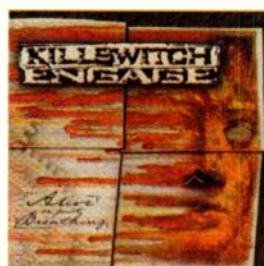
www.jimandjennie.com

[File Under](#)

Hardcore bluegrass

R.I.Y.L.

Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley, Hazel Dickens



KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

Alive Or Just Breathing Roadrunner

Alive Or Just Breathing is a pretty ironic title, because, for the most part, Killswitch Engage is just breathing—operating at a stridently generic level. Strip-mining the better portion of its hammering guitar-work from mid-period Slayer albums (actually, mid-period Slayer albums as filtered through Hatebreed), Killswitch Engage spot-welds chugging metal riffery to the steely posture of tough-guy hardcore, even if that tough-guy stance has been leavened with a vague (at best) spiritual message. As far as working within the basic constructs of the crossover idiom,

Alive Or Just Breathing is on target; it stays the course, doesn't deviate, and the production couldn't be any cleaner with 100 gallons of Windex. The musicianship is flawless, whether it's been Pro-Tooled or not. But where a band like Coalesce, Converge or Kiss It Goodbye (a few outfits Killswitch bears some resemblance to) expand on the basic heavy-duty framework and add their own flourishes, Killswitch Engage, other than layering a melodic second vocal to function against the guttural screaming, plies a given set of aesthetics and riffs, and fails to plant its own flag in hardcore's knotty, worn soil. But *Alive Or Just Breathing* provides exactly what it should for most of the kids—it's heavy, and it inspires fits of indignant, self-righteous rage and plenty of balcony-diving at shows. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY

[Link](#)

www.killswitchengage.com

[File Under](#)

Crossover self-help metal-core

R.I.Y.L.

Hatebreed, Stretch Armstrong, Converge



LOS LOBOS

Good Morning Aztlan Mammoth-Hollywood

Legend maps Aztlan as the mythical birthplace of the Aztecs, but in this case, it's an imaginary corner of East L.A. where Los Lobos gives birth to a restless mutt of blues, soul and Mexican roots music named Rock Y Roll. The album blasts off with "Done Gone Blue," where frontman David Hidalgo channels Stevie Ray Vaughan as backed by a Muscle Shoals horn section. Follow that with "Hearts Of Stone," which feels like a lost Otis Redding track with Hidalgo proving that in the right hands, a guitar solo can be a beautiful thing. Like the best of Los Lobos' efforts, *Good Morning*

Aztlan is just as much a musical time capsule as it is a family album where characters from past albums reappear to find their hopes and dreams have changed, but not their love (the pensive "Tony & Maria"). While the songs Hidalgo co-writes with percussionist Louie Perez range from soulful to mystical to raucous, guitarist Cesar Rosas (who moonlights in Los Super Seven) prefers the space where electric blues meets Mexican spice, as on "Luz De Mi Vida," which rocks as much as it slinks to its Latin rhythm. Wake up residents of Aztlan! You won't find another working rock 'n' roll band as versatile or visceral than these veterans. >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

Link

www.loslobos.org

File Under

The corazón of rock 'n' roll is still beating
R.I.Y.L.

The Mavericks, Alejandro Escovedo, Richard Thompson



L'RONEOUS

Imaginarium 6months

He rhymes "increment" with "rudiment," samples voices from *The X-Files* and tags titles on his songs like "Doctrines Of The Lip Swift" and "L'chemy." Is L'roneous too smart for hip-hop? His lengthy lyrics may be too intricate for the materialistic mainstream, but underground-loving heads who think beyond cash, cuties and cars will appreciate the poetry and philosophies of this West Coast veteran. After its limited release in 1998, *Imaginarium* is experiencing a rebirth. On the title track, L'ron's prolific storytelling style intrigues as he weaves his words into a

path leading inside his mind. The beat's reminiscent of a funky parade, and then fades away until there's only L'ron and his mic, as he professes, "This memoir of madness is actually the psychosis of dope." L'ron amazes with his broad scope of topics and the force of his nonstop flow—he could be a top contender at Def Poetry Jam. Occasionally, his best quality is also his biggest detraction: At times, his words bump into the beat instead of ride it. Though most of his tracks aren't ready-made club jams, they do make you nod your head, and most likely while you're at it you'll shake some thoughts and ideas loose—thoughts that may have become stuck from listening to less heady hip-hop selections. >>>JESSICA KOSLOW

Link

N/A

File Under

Fortified brain food

R.I.Y.L.

Mystik Journeymen, Freestyle Fellowship, Rass Kass, Paris

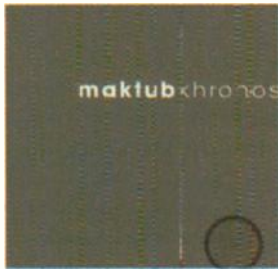
Gomez In Our Gun

the new album featuring "Shot Shot"



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MAKTUB

Khronos Ossia

Macy Gray and Alicia Keys may have new soul in the news, but it's artists like Seattle's Maktub, fronted by the supple, expressive voice of Reggie Watts, who prove there's a lot more to the genre. There are retro references aplenty on the group's second effort, like the Chi Lites-meets-Al Green melody of "Say You Will," whose sly Zapp Vocoder touches and vintage Stevie Wonder-style keys make it sound more 1972 than 2002. They're touchstones of style, however—the substance is strictly Maktub's. It finds its most sublime expression with "See

Clearly": In a better world, this track, which grafts a house beat to irresistible Family Stone funk and then adds a sing-along chorus, would be playing on radios across America this summer. But they're definitely not afraid to color outside the lines—"Just Like Murder" bumps over raw guitar that takes them into rock territory, and their cover of Led Zeppelin's "No Quarter" works a thick groove into the song's Arab feel to create something epic and fresh. Not everything works; both "Motherfucker" and "Then We'll Know" are quite dispensable. However, for most of *Khronos* they hit it nigh on perfectly, and once the analog synths of "Baby Can't Wait" kick in and Watts soars into his falsetto, you'll be beaming, too. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

Link

www.maktub.com

File Under

New soul demigods

R.I.Y.L.

Sly & The Family Stone,

Al Green, Macy Gray



MELLOW

CQ – Motion Picture Soundtrack

Emperor Norton

Forgive Mellow for coming off as the poor man's Air on their debut, *Another Mellow Spring*. The group's potential, buried on that record beneath the debt owed their countrymen, has been thankfully realized on their score to Roman Coppola's debut flick, *CQ*. Parceling the film's music into 25 blasts of class, the French band has created the most listenable movie score since Kronos Quartet's *Requiem For A Dream*. Mellow approach their Franco lounge with a rock swagger; by allowing guitars as much space as Moogs,

Link

www.emperornorton.com

File Under

Musique magnifique de film

R.I.Y.L.

Air, *The Virgin Suicides* score,

Stereolab

they revitalize a sound whose days of hipness have only recently expired. The horn-filled samba "I Love You" showcases yet another of Mellow's invigorating tactics: the use of breathy vocal ad libs throughout the mostly instrumental LP. "Take Me Higher," as cooed by Alison David, is an all out pop song—think a three-quarter speed "Love To Love You Baby." A few vintage French pop gems turn up, most notably Claude Francois's flamboyant "Ce Soir Je Vais Boire," which sounds like a precursor to the *Three's Company* theme. Tracks from Antonello Paliotti and Jaques Dutronc also integrate impressively with Mellow's tunes. It's doubtful that a lackluster score could ruin Coppola's hoot of a movie. That the music compels all by itself, though, can only make its source that much better. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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MY VITRIOL

Finelines Epic

Arriving from the U.K. with the sort of relentless, exhilarating rock that been absent since Fred Durst somehow managed to stoopify millions of American teens into mall-infesting mooks, My Vitriol attempt to stake their own claim on the youth of the nation. But is it too late? Several tracks on *Finelines* draw a heavy comparison to the soaring arena pop of Foo Fighters or MV's countrymen, Feeder, which doesn't always work in their favor. But when coupled with bursts of dreamy guitars akin to My Bloody Valentine, Slowdive or more accurately, Swervedriver, standout tracks like "Ode To The Red Queen" or

"Tongue Tied" create a captivating mix that many in the States have yet to acquire a taste for. This band's strength lies in smart, heart-wrenching melodies matched against spacey riffs and Som Wardners' fragile, almost-emo wail, as on the Placebo-tinged shoegaze of "Infantile" or "Cemented Shoes." Impeding *Finelines*—aside from inexperience, as this is the band's first album—are tunes like the grunge-lite "Losing Touch" and "C.O.R. (Critic Oriented Rock)," a short Slipknot-does-"Scentless Apprentice" track possibly intended to counterweigh any nancy-boy leanings, or maybe just a piss-taker illustrating the kind of schlock that sells these days. Despite a few holes, My Vitriol's influences run together like smeared make-up the morning after, creating an impressive and refreshing debut. >>>RYAN RAYHILL

Link

www.myvitriol.com

File Under

My Bloody Vitriol

R.I.Y.L.

Foo Fighters, Swervedriver, Placebo, My Bloody Valentine, A Perfect Circle



PAUL OAKENFOLD

Bunkka Maverick

Well, what did you expect? Of course it's a brilliantly programmed record. Paul Oakenfold has been in the business longer than some of us have been alive. He's one of the most popular DJs, remixers and producers on the planet. To some, the man is a god. So, the fact that he's decided the time is right to release his artist debut now, over two decades since his DJ days began, means he's more than prepared to keep things interesting. Sure, there's a ready-made Ibiza anthem in the soaring "Southern Sun," but there's also

ing "Southern Sun," but there's also his track with Ice Cube from the *Blade II* soundtrack ("Get 'Em Up") and balls-out big-beat rock ("Ready Steady Rock"), with vocals by So Solid Crew's Asher D, the U.K.'s bad boy of the moment. Obviously, the trend is towards guest vocalists, and the list goes on to include Perry Farrell (sounding uncannily like Richard Ashcroft throughout the soulful cascade of "Time Of Your Life"), Nelly Furtado and Tricky (seductively recalling the latter's glory days), a typically ranting Hunter S. Thompson and, erm, Crazy Town vocalist Shifty Shellshock. For all that, the best track is still an instrumental, a transcendent string-soaked head-spinner called "Zoo York." Ultimately, just about every move made on *Bunkka* is perfectly planned, every disparate element placed with precision by the man who so tellingly named his own record label Perfecto. >>>DOUG LEVY

Link

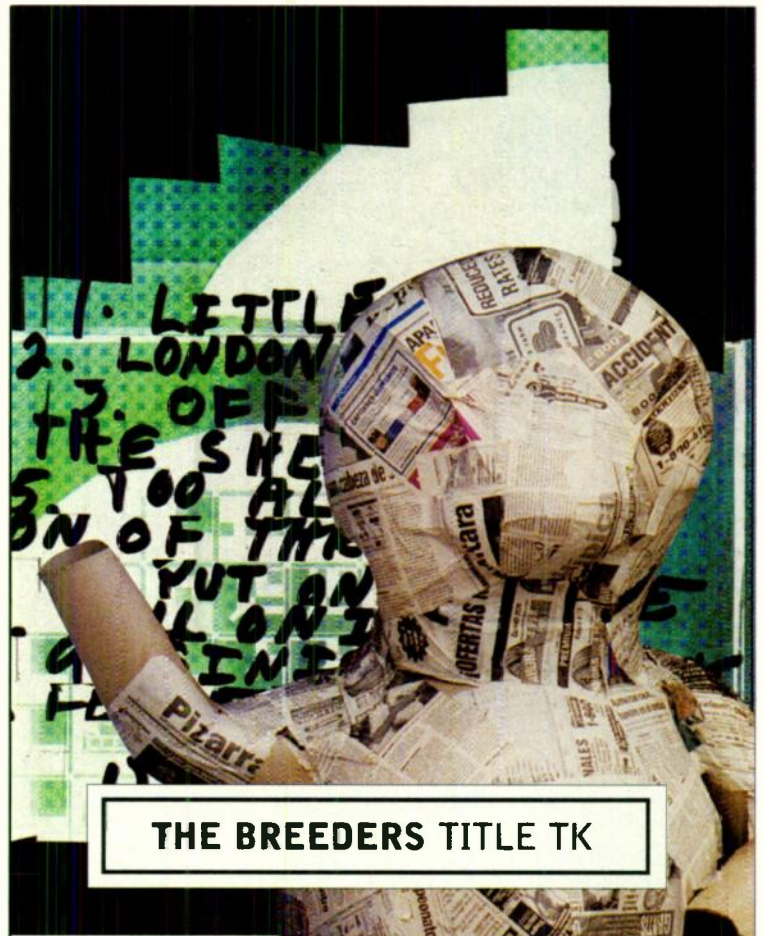
www.pauloakenfold.com

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R.I.Y.L.

The Chemical Brothers, Pete Tong, Perfecto remixes



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Ed Harcourt



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THE OPUS

0.0.0. *Ozone*

Known mainly for the punishing production work on Rubberroom's dark abstractionist hip-hop odyssey *Architechnology*, Chicago beat-forgers the Opus construct an austere universe of punchy beats and disjointed ambience on *0.0.0.*, the duo's first EP as featured artists. The airy minimalism of the Opus sets itself apart from the blustering bombast of most space-hop due to emphasis on instinctual rhythms—keyboards float on their own free will and extraterrestrial ambience drifts meticulously out of sync. The disconnected keyboards and slurpy hi-hats of "Where Thawght Is Worshipped 3.0"

Link
www.ozonemusic.com
File Under
Blustery beats from the Windy City
R.I.Y.L.
Rubberroom, RJD2, Company
Flow, Mike Ladd

engulf the track's guest MCs (Atmosphere's Slug, Rob Sonic, Mike Ladd and Chicago's Thawfor), causing their conceptual rhymes to sound like they're trapped near the aimless steam vents of the *Nostromo* spaceship from *Alien*. The Windy City's Earatik Statik swims in Opus's free-form keys and cymbal shuffle, drawn earthward only by a dissected Audio Two sample. Unfortunately, the Opus loses its direction and becomes severely lost in its own constructed world—tracks lumber over the six-minute mark, instrumentals become painfully redundant and dated world-music chants reek like something Moby would have deleted off his desktop years ago. Although the album's many curiosities (like I Self Devine of Micronots and Murs rapping over the break from "I Walk On Guided Splinters" and evil space-shuttle noise) are absorbing, they do not an opus make. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



OUR LADY PEACE

Gravity *Columbia*

They've referenced the theories of futurist Ray Kurzweil, adopted their moniker from a Mark Van Doren poem and name-drop Kerouac, Lennon and Cobain, but as far as the States are concerned, Toronto's Our Lady Peace remains a post-grunge, jock-friendly throwaway, just another Creed or Nickelback to pollute the airwaves. While *Gravity* won't demand a windfall of respect, it's another in a series of well-crafted, likable, intellectual offerings. Vocalist Raine Maida has one of the most recognizable hoots in rock, a nasal croon that sometimes cartwheels into a schizophrenic falsetto.

Link
www.ourladypeace.com
File Under
Billboard grunge with
heart, smarts
R.I.Y.L.
Smashing Pumpkins, Incubus,
Collective Soul

He empathizes well with his belly-shirt legions, particularly in the reassuring narratives of "Sorry" and "Innocent"; in the latter, he plays big brother, singing, "I remember losing hope/ I remember all the feelings... and the day they stopped." Unfortunately, the absence of founding guitarist Mike Turner and soul-deadening overproduction of Bob Rock (recently party to assisted career suicide with Nina Gordon) lure some good ideas into Goo Goo Dolls purgatory. OLP has largely steered clear of rock-radio posturing, but the corny orchestral undertones in otherwise decent power ballad "Somewhere Out There" are indicative of a contrived lunge towards accessibility. Such inconsistency has plagued past releases. Maida has praised *Buffalo 66* and Mr. Bungle in past interviews; an infusion of the eccentricity he champions would serve his band well. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI



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PET SHOP BOYS

Release *Sanctuary*

The disco and the irony may be gone forever, but that's an entirely appropriate development for a man who has been in love as many times as Neil Tennant has since 1993's *Very*. Now when he wants you to stay the night (if not forever), he just says so. What's so miraculous about *Release*, then, is that Tennant has retained enough of his gift for melody to make such modest demands sound this devastating. With autumnal new-wave synths sidling next to Johnny Marr's ever-accommodating guitar, every single one of these songs has a warm

little chorus that could roast a chestnut. In short, he's achieved the near impossible—a direct expression of the joys and not insurmountable disappointments of gay romance untarnished by arch self-righteousness. If you accept Lucinda Williams' heterosexual desire for passionate kisses, then you should have no problem stomaching Tennant's plea for an e-mail that says, "I love you." And if you swallow Eminem's homophobia along with his non-pareil rage, then "The Night I Fell In Love" should break your heart. Simultaneously outrageous and touching, it recounts a young man's bittersweet one-night love affair with the real Slim Shady after a concert and, for once, the rhetoric of "keeping it real" gets jammed with sweet, queer frequencies. >>>KEVIN JOHN

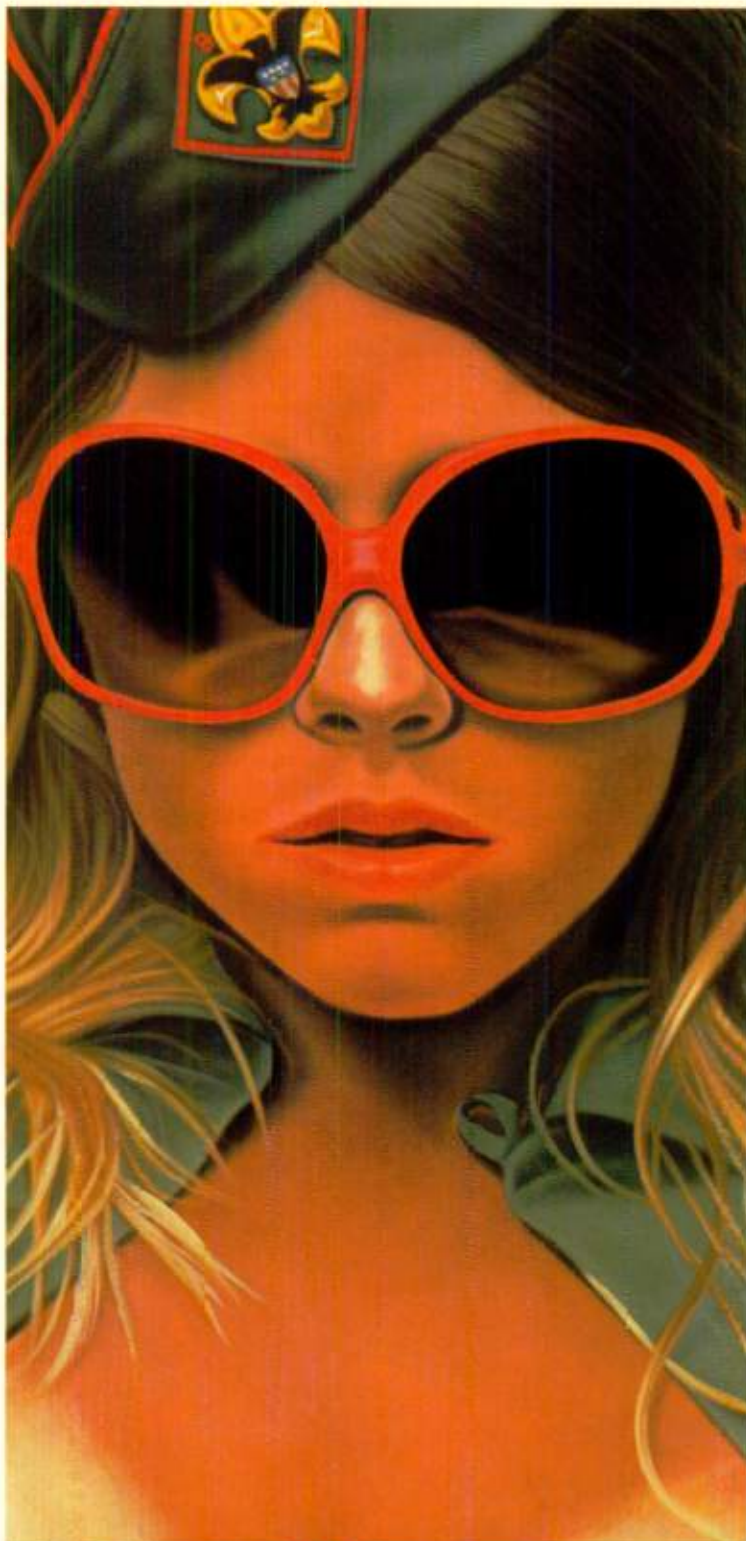


PITCHSHIFTER

PSI *Sanctuary*

MTV's *Fashionably Loud* has committed countless crimes against humanity, none more egregious than abetting Limp Bizkit's theft of the national zeitgeist. In a rare display of taste, the 1998 edition gave Nottingham, U.K. beat-shredders Pitchshifter a very literal 15 minutes in the spotlight. The lads have been ghosts ever since, releasing the disappointing *Deviant* in 2000 and factoring into approximately zero conversations about the shape of punk to come. Their muscular comeback *PSI*, a study in delayed gratification (imagine Andrew W.K. in *A Clockwork Orange*-style

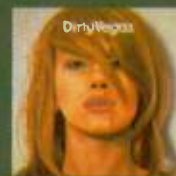
restraints), could change that. The title is an acronym for Pitchshifter Industries, not pounds per square inch, by the way; sigh if you must—their best album thus far was www.pitchshifter.com. Their self-absorption is occasionally justified. In "Screenshot" and "Stop Talking (So Loud)" frontman J.S. Clayden coats his gutter snarl in pure hip-hop silk, a fine counterpoint to the drum 'n' bass and monster guitar orgies that follow, largely courtesy of guitarist Jim Davies. The triumphant collages of harmonics and breakneck sampling that were so prevalent on www.pitchshifter.com show up only on "Shen-an-doah," although Pitchshifter directly quotes that record's "Subject To Status" on *PSI*'s bleak "Super-clean." Maybe Atari Teenage Riot and KMFDM have covered this ground already, but Pitchshifter's developing the land into a suitably dangerous and exciting slum. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

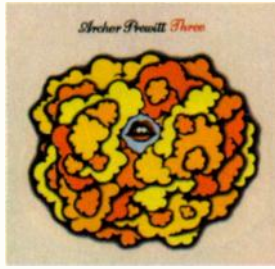


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ARCHER PREWITT

Three *Thrill Jockey*

As can be said of a number of Thrill Jockey artists, Archer Prewitt gets more respect than recognition. From his stellar work throughout much of the '90s with the lounge-pop band the Coctails to his current gig as the Sea And Cake's guitarist, Prewitt has consistently displayed a keen ear for subtle melodies that drip with the kind of laid-back appeal found in the best '70s pop music—not the sort of thing necessarily confined to the underground. His third solo record maintains that remarkably unblemished track record, with his clean-toned guitar and a smattering of keys,

strings and horns, kindly provided by over a dozen supporting musicians, laying the groundwork for Prewitt's sublime vocals. Lines like, "And you can't help thinking that the world has got you beat/ Well we might just make it if I hold on to you and you to me/ Na na na na!" combine with upbeat, airy instrumentation to make *Three* the kind of pop album that implores you to sway gently from side to side with your eyes closed and the slightest smile on your face. Sure, it's still early, but *Three* just might be the feel good record of the year. >>>MIKE CONKLIN

Link

www.thrilljockey.com

File Under

Feel good pop for the morning after

R.I.Y.L.

The Coctails, the Shins, Ted Leo



RAE & CHRISTIAN

Nocturnal Activity *k7*

Talent brokers as much as crate diggers, the Manchester, U.K. duo of Mark Rae and Steve Christian have a knack for bringing people together. Their 2001 album *Sleepwalking*—the follow up to their carboot funk classic *Northern Sulphuric Soul* (1998)—featured the Pharcyde, Bobby Womack and even reggae vocal group the Congos. Now they've offered *Sleepwalking* itself up to a diverse group of remixers, who all get a shot at remaking a track in their own image. Just about everyone works the mid-tempo groove and the duo's crisp, funky drum breaks. But each

track sounds distinctly hybrid, with the remixer's genetic signature evident in the rhythmic DNA. Atjazz's take on "Not Just Anybody" retrofits his own productions' stutter-step snares and rubberband basslines for the tune's midtempo designs. Latin house duo Tom And Joyce work a little import/export magic and bring Brazil to the disco. Groove Armada's "Country House" remix of the Pharcyde-fronted "Let It Go" breaks it all down to scruffy snares and a ragged Rhodes line, with a little acoustic guitar to add porch-swingin' country flavor. And U.K. heads the Nextmen turn "It Ain't Nothin' Like"—another Pharcyde track—into the party jam it always wanted to be. Overall, it's a strong ensemble performance: *Nocturnal Activity* redeems itself from the fate of most remix albums by virtue of great casting. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE

Link

www.k7.com

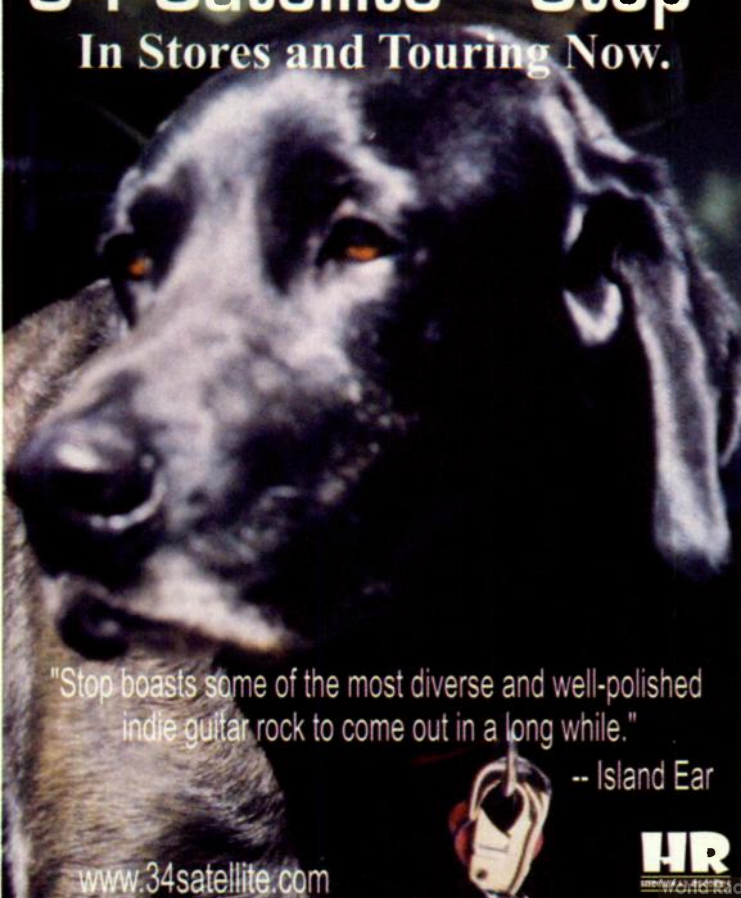
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Funk by committee

R.I.Y.L.

Nightmares On Wax, Zero 7, Kruder & Dorfmeister

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RUSH

Vapor Trails *Atlantic*

Link
www.rushvaportrails.com
File Under
Rush never sleeps
R.I.Y.L.

Soundgarden, Tool, pumping your fist in the air at concerts

One gets the sense that in the year 2112, if Rush were still alive, they'd be going strong. Think of the three Canadians what you will (greatest power trio of all time? prog-schlockers past their prime?): Their tenacity, cache of classic-rock staples, instrumental mastery and influence on numerous bands, alternative and nü metal alike, is undeniable. *Vapor Trails*, Rush's first studio album since 1997's disappointing *Test For Echo*, and first since the death of drummer Neil Peart's wife and daughter, isn't so much a return to form (if that form is "Tom Sawyer" or "Xanadu") as it is a return to the muscular, more accessible style the band started exploring on 1993's *Counterparts*. In fact, much of *Vapor Trails* chugs along with a heaviness that's closer to Soundgarden than the can-you-see-me-counting complexity of Dream Theater. But where Rush really shines is towards the end of *Vapor Trails*, on the pair of songs "Nocturne" and "Freeze." Both songs find the members stretching out in unexpected ways: singer/bassist Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson getting downright discordant, and Peart playing pretty damn near in-the-pocket. Both songs are also flat-out kickass. *Vapor Trails* is the sound of three friends who, after nearly 30 years and 17 albums, still love and are energized by playing music together. >>>DANA BUONICONTI

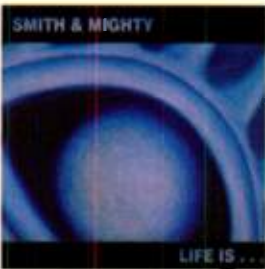


SILKWORM

Italian Platinum Touch And Go

Twelve years and eight full-length studio releases into their career, Silkworm have once again resurfaced—this time with precisely the kind of record that's missing from today's indie-rock scene. *Italian Platinum* harkens back to a time when the Archers Of Loaf, Sebadoh and Superchunk were on top, when guitars were heavy, production was a little rough, and instrumentation was generally held to a minimum. Andy Cohen's overdriven guitar parts steal much of the show here, shifting nicely between the heavily syncopated, crunchy chords that make up many of the songs' verses and the squealing

solos that tend to enter the mix a little later on. Drummer Michael Dahlquist and bassist Tim Midgett join forces to provide just enough rumbling low end to hold everything together, leaving ample room for the band's newest member, Matt Kadane (ex-Bedhead, the New Year), to chime in with scattered bits of piano, clavinet and organ work. Alt-country songstress Kelly Hogan steps in to contribute vocals on what is perhaps the record's best track, "Young," which offers a glimpse of what the Cowboy Junkies might sound like if they were a little tougher. Recorded by Steve Albini, *Italian Platinum* is far from the most polished recording you'll hear this year, but it's sufficiently carried by the band's obvious passion for playing with one another. >>>MIKE CONKLIN



SMITH & MIGHTY

Life Is... K7

The Bristol production duo of Rob Smith and Ray Mighty may have been one of the chief architects of trip-hop with their sluggish covers of Bacharach/David's "Walk On By" and "Anyone Who Had A Heart" in the late '80s. But Tricky, Portishead and even Morcheeba have long since twisted the sound to more engaging ends. Sadly, *Life Is...* does little to restore Smith & Mighty's legacy. They succeed mainly at distilling drum 'n' bass, dub and hip-hop usages down to smooth, vaguely edgy consumer-friendly goods perfect for jaded urbanites. The super-attenuated production,

however, allows for only one or two sonic elements to grab your attention. All that the jungle-lite skitter scatter, trip-hop trudge and hip-hop boom-bap can do within such a spare structure is slither around aimlessly, begging a DJ to mix them into a more emphatic track. Brutally anonymous soul sisters and toasters like Hazel and Nigi 40 offer no assistance, failing to lift the music out of a certain tired sophistication. And the lyrics are flat-out lazy, banal even by dancefloor standards: "Life is so eventful"; "Life has its way of showing you a day"; "In this lesson called life/ To conquer fear we all have to try." That ellipsis in the title was clearly meant to signify a deeply cynical collective yawn. >>>KEVIN JOHN

Link

www.silkworm.net

File Under

Straightforward, guitar-driven

indie rock

R.I.Y.L.

Dinosaur Jr., Archers Of Loaf,

the Wedding Present

Link

www.k7.com

File Under

Trip-hop trips up

R.I.Y.L.

Massive Attack, Rockers Hi-Fi,

Soul II Soul

doves the last broadcast



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www.doves.net hollywoodandvine.com



SOMETHING CORPORATE
Leaving Through The Window

Drive-Thru-MCA

A high-school battle of the bands usually involves Junior belting out an off-key cover of "Freebird" while Mommy and Daddy proudly applaud from the bleachers. But for Orange County natives Something Corporate, it was their *raison d'être*, and one listen to the band's full-length debut, *Leaving Through The Window*, should have A&R guys buzzing around small-town talent shows for years to come. The band sounds like Elton John fronting Blink-182, thanks to 19-year-old piano-playing lead singer/songwriter Andrew McMahon. But while McMahon's music wistfully looks back to a gentler era in

rock, his sensibility is hardly irony-free. The first single, the high energy, Weezer-ish "If U C Jordan," plays like *Revenge Of The Nerds*; telling the story of a misguided bully who just can't let go of his schoolyard glory days, it's as smart and smirky as early Ben Folds Five. That Something Corporate can also write a touching piano ballad is every bit as impressive. "Globes & Maps," a heartbreaker about the emotional and physical distance between lovers, is the work of a mature songwriter. And it's McMahon's mastery of those 88 keys that sets the band apart from emo-punk peers like Saves The Day and makes *Leaving Through The Window* such an elegant and confident debut. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

Link

www.somethingcorporate.com

File Under

Piano-punk for Generation Y that's smart enough to appeal to Gen X R.I.Y.L.

Weezer, Ben Folds, Saves The Day



SPEEDY J

Loudboxer Novamute

Jochem Paap earned the moniker Speedy J ages ago for pulling off the fastest mixes while DJing in Rotterdam; the name stuck as he went on to release some of techno's formative, hard-hitting singles on Richie Hawtin's Plus 8 label. Yet almost as soon as he impacted techno, Paap joined Warp's Artificial Intelligence series with the glistening ambient-techno album *Ginger*, showing the world that he wasn't sticking to one style. Now on his fifth album, *Loudboxer*, Speedy J again confounds with a sharp turn away from the industrial-noise-cum-mood-music of 2000's *A Shocking*

Link

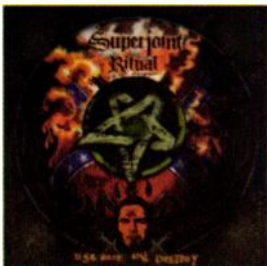
www.speedyj.com

File Under

Lushly spartan techno R.I.Y.L.

Richie Hawtin, Sven Vath, Thomas Heckmann

Hobby with fundamentalist techno that's spartan of design but lush in execution—and purely meant for dancing. *Loudboxer's* 15 tracks are, in reality, two long, frenzied dance cuts that bear a striking resemblance to Hawtin's groundbreaking mix album, *DE909: Closer To The Edit*. "Sono!" takes an angular house rhythm with wood blocks a-clatter and turns it into the metallic, oscillated, punching beats and gratuitous cymbal crashes of "Freq"; "Bihum" streamlines "Freq"'s intense metallic qualities into a bass-focused variant. Upon reaching the switch point, "Inter Zil," *Loudboxer* shifts into an acid-fuelled overdrive, soaring into "Krekc" and not letting up until the closing remix of 1998's pile-driving "Pannik." Yet unlike Hawtin, Paap's source sounds are his own creations, making him the ever-changing artiste analog to Hawtin's pioneering DJ producer. >>>HEATH K. HIGHT



SUPERJOINT RITUAL

Use Once And Destroy Sanctuary

The Southern-fried sounds of Down might not gel with all of Phil Anselmo's Pantera-bred legions. Luckily for them, on his second side-project release this year, Anselmo foregoes Down's I-drink-swamp-water singing for old-fashioned, *Vulgar Display Of Power*-style screaming. Just like *Down II*, Superjoint Ritual's *Use Once And Destroy* should make the other members of Pantera nervous; it's a much harder boot to the head than anything they've delivered lately. It doesn't help Pantera's cause that the members of Superjoint sport their best attributes while stripping out the excess: Jimmy Bower (also of Down) and Anselmo himself deliver as much guitar fire as Dimebag Darrell (without his tuneless solos), and drummer Joe Fazzio holds his own against Vinnie Paul without the constant tom rolls and kick-drum bluster. Superjoint does follow Pantera's formula though, careening back and forth between breakneck 180-bpm freakouts and trash-compactor slowness. The explosive "4 Songs" demonstrates it best, crashing out of the gate at punk-rock speed before collapsing into a creeping stomp. Aside from his scream, the raging music also brings out some of Anselmo's most furious lyrics ever. The existential wallowings of *Down II* have given way to ruthless violence, as he wrenches the heads off of "dickless wonders," "chickenshits" and even God himself. If this is what we get during Pantera's hiatuses, let's hope that Vinnie and Darrell's strip club keeps them busy for a while. >>>TOM MALLON

Link

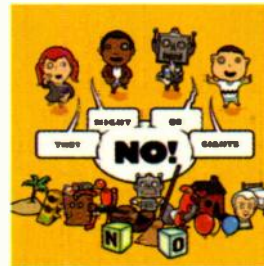
www.superjointritual.com

File Under

Kicking and screaming R.I.Y.L.

Pantera's *Vulgar Display Of Power*, Eyehategod, Voivod

while stripping out the excess: Jimmy Bower (also of Down) and Anselmo himself deliver as much guitar fire as Dimebag Darrell (without his tuneless solos), and drummer Joe Fazzio holds his own against Vinnie Paul without the constant tom rolls and kick-drum bluster. Superjoint does follow Pantera's formula though, careening back and forth between breakneck 180-bpm freakouts and trash-compactor slowness. The explosive "4 Songs" demonstrates it best, crashing out of the gate at punk-rock speed before collapsing into a creeping stomp. Aside from his scream, the raging music also brings out some of Anselmo's most furious lyrics ever. The existential wallowings of *Down II* have given way to ruthless violence, as he wrenches the heads off of "dickless wonders," "chickenshits" and even God himself. If this is what we get during Pantera's hiatuses, let's hope that Vinnie and Darrell's strip club keeps them busy for a while. >>>TOM MALLON



THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

No! Idlewild-Rounder

Following in the unenviable footsteps of Little Richard and Sugarhill Gang, hopelessly bent quirk-rock duo They Might Be Giants present their first album of children's songs. Not that this is a stretch for the invariably irreverent Brooklynites, whose 16 years of "adult" output have produced an ample number of offbeat sing-a-longs about cow towns, drumming worms, particle men and educational numbers about president James K. Polk. Since *No!* offers rock lollipops for an audience of crumb-snatchers and booger-eaters, TMBG has the advantage of turning the quirk knob to 11, resulting

Link

www.tmbg.com

File Under

Music to eat paste to R.I.Y.L.

Mark Mothersbaugh, Robyn Hitchcock, *Schoolhouse Rock*

in their most engaging and whimsical pop in ages. *No!* mirrors the gnat-like attention spans of most duck-duck-goose players, offering concise songs and bold melodies—sounding like Robyn Hitchcock's deformed pop eccentricisms subverted through Mark Mothersbaugh's *Rugrats* soundtrack. "Where Do They Make Balloons?" is an Apples-In-Stereo-esque pop gem that introduces tykes to the Zen koan of the ages while "John Lee Supertaster" sounds like rocked-out Jean Knight funk (if it were about a guy who could *really, really* taste things). Elsewhere, TMBG strum rubber guitars and don bicycle hats on "Fibber Island," visit the inexplicably haunted halls of "The Edison Museum" and quarrel with a belligerent broom. Just keep your kids away from "Robot Parade"—paranoid androids crooning about negative technocracies is enough to freak the fuck out of most adults. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



TRANS AM

TA Thrill Jockey

Between new-wave revivalists and electroclash disco punks, an unsuspecting young hipster might, depending on where you get your club on, confuse 2002 for 1980. Not helping matters is D.C.'s Trans Am, who have completed their mutation from post-rock instrumentalists to Krautrock funk scientists with *TA*. A self-admitted "party album," *TA* is a collection of ironic, tongue-in-cheek nods to skinny-tie posturing. From a band once associated with indie-rock snobbery, tracks like "Party Station," with its laser-zap effects and background choruses of "Par-tay!," may leave many record store clerks pushing up their horn-rims in dismay. While the bulk of the album recalls past synth soldiers, from the Kraftwerk dancing machine "Feed On Me," to the near NIN-ism of "You Will Be There," the band is not afraid to throw out several "this is Trans Am?" tunes. The aqua-boogie of "Different Kind Of Love," with its sexed-up male/female duet, sounds lifted from an episode of *Miami Vice*, while the barrio-crunk of "Basta" (Trans Am's attempt at funk carioca, a Latin mix of techno and dirty (way, way) South hip-hop), will make you say "que?" as your ass inexplicably shakes. By the end, the spiraling guitar ambience of "Afternight," followed promptly by the unsettling creep of "C Sick," certifies *TA* as somewhat schizophrenic. But like rediscovering an old high-school mix-tape, Trans Am leave you dying to hear what's coming next. >>>RYAN RAYHILL

Link

www.brainwashed.com/transam

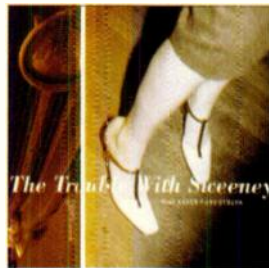
File Under

Fun, fun, fun on the discobahn

R.I.Y.L.

Kraftwerk, the Faint, Stereolab,

Daft Punk, Can



THE TROUBLE WITH SWEENEY

Play Karen And Others Basement-Life

The Trouble With Sweeney—that is to say, singer and songwriter Joey Sweeney, since his band was never really the point—is changing. The details of the metamorphosis are scattered about his new album discom-fortingly, less visceral than a molted snake skin, but not unlike the boyish décor of a post-pubescent's bedroom, the discarded morsels of identity still so present you want to look away. Beginning with the irresistible, glockenspiel-laden "Karen," much of Sweeney's new work has unique, mature trappings that his past stabs at regular old indie rock—while successful—never did. There's still some of that competent, homely stuff here (in the not-quite-there vocals and lumbering boppy sections), but there's also a confident, Elvis Costello element that tends to illustrate the former in relief. At 26 minutes, *Play Karen* is technically an EP, and it retains the format's unencumbered air (see the Andre Gide quotes spoken in French over an instrumental and the uninspired cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "The Only Living Boy In New York"). But it's also an ideal forum for Sweeney to throw off lines like "Birds flying south for the winter/ But do birds really do that anymore?" (from "Lovers Get Results"), showing that he's beginning to intuit the right moments to revert to indie rock's charms. >>>DYLAN SIEGLER

Link

www.thetroublewithsweeney.com

File Under

The trouble with indie

R.I.Y.L.

Karl Hendricks Trio,

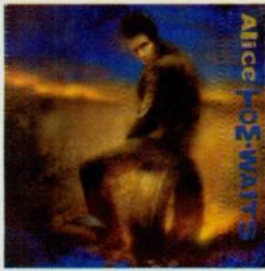
the Mendoza Line, Bright Eyes,

the Replacements

ful—never did. There's still some of that competent, homely stuff here (in the not-quite-there vocals and lumbering boppy sections), but there's also a confident, Elvis Costello element that tends to illustrate the former in relief. At 26 minutes, *Play Karen* is technically an EP, and it retains the format's unencumbered air (see the Andre Gide quotes spoken in French over an instrumental and the uninspired cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "The Only Living Boy In New York"). But it's also an ideal forum for Sweeney to throw off lines like "Birds flying south for the winter/ But do birds really do that anymore?" (from "Lovers Get Results"), showing that he's beginning to intuit the right moments to revert to indie rock's charms. >>>DYLAN SIEGLER

THE COMP PILE (OUR GUIDE TO COMPILATION CDS) BY CAM'RON DAVIS

					
TITLE	Fields & Streams (Kill Rock Stars)	Ultra.Chilled 02 (Ultra)	Babies Making Babies (BBE-Urban Theory)	A Tribute To Lenny Kravitz (Snake Machine)	Paris Lounge 2 (Wagram)
CONCEPT	Forty-five unreleased tracks from a wonderfully broad cross-section of indie rock	Sit back and relax	The Roots' ?uestlove compiles rare cuts to, well, make babies to.	Session musicians pay tribute to Kravitz's "timeless masterpieces"	French house, minus the shtick and plus more groove
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	Want to hear something new?	Your stress ball has gone missing	Lovers, not fighters	Those who don't know what "masterpiece" means	You want the best and don't have time for crate-digging
NAMES TO DROP	Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Meko Case, the Mooney Suzuki	Coldplay, Goldfrapp, Radiohead	Smokey Robinson, Earth Wind & Fire, Rufus & Chaka Khan	Um, none. It's a session band.	Etienne De Crecy, Bertrand Burgalat, Readymade
SUMS IT UP	"For The Win" (The Reputation)	"Slip Into Something More Comfortable" (Kinobe)	"Sensuality" (Isley Brothers)	"It Ain't Over 'Til It's Over"	"Gloss" (Box Ohm)
VERDICT	Current favorites and unheard newcomers combine to make a great, far-reaching listen.	These 27 smooth tracks might briefly make you forget how painful your life is. Even the Groove Armada track is good!	Warm grooves to help you start a warm groove of your own, if you know what I'm saying, and I think you do.	It's got more soul than Lenny, but so do our pinkies. The fluffy keyboard version of "Fly Away" is a real rib-tickler, though.	French house often gets a bad name; these 18 tracks are enough to redeem it.



TOM WAITS

Alice Anti-Epithaph
Blood Money Anti-Epithaph



Surveying Tom Waits's two new albums, one has the itchy suspicion that some elements are missing from the landscape. After all, the multimedia curmudgeon and his wife, Kathleen Brennan, developed each set of songs to complement a theatrical performance. The 15 stark sketches composed for the avant-garde opera *Alice* were inspired by Lewis Carroll's obsession with Alice Liddell, the little girl who eventually tumbled into the author's Wonderland. Although the drama premiered in 1992, Waits only committed its melodies to tape last year while simultaneously recording the score for *Blood Money*. The couple composed that ominous collection of Weimar cabaret numbers to accompany a re-staging of Georg Buchner's

1837 play *Woyzeck*, a historical fiction based on the true story of a German soldier driven to murderous insanity by army medical experiments. The albums are sold separately and don't appear to be making a unified statement, except that every tune latches easily into Waits's larger epic, a vista of wheezy longing and rambunctious discordance where outcasts punch through their squelched rage or stumble upon maudlin solace.

Waits may sound like the Big Bad Wolf trying to free himself from a pit of molasses on "Misery Is The River Of The World," but his cartoonish delivery endears the lyrics: "There's nothing kind about man/ You can drive out nature with a pitchfork/ But it always comes roaring back again." Like much of *Blood Money*, this tune boasts a vaudevillian swagger colored by the carnival instrumentation of pneumatic calliope, marimba, chamberlain and the seedpod of a Botang tree. Waits and Brennan avoided using guitar to fill out the arrangements and the result is a bone-rattling fantasia that builds upon the clunky brilliance of his '99 release *Mule Variations*. The ballads of *Alice* owe a greater debt to Kurt Weill's ether: They are a woozy New Year's Day full of epiphanies and regret, where oboes and saxophones snake around like aspiration and conscience. The drowsy saunter of "No One Knows I'm Gone" scratches the phrase, "The rain makes such a lovely sound/ To those who are six feet underground" over gentle string swells and plunky bass. While knowing even the bare design of each narrative adds layers to these noirish slivers, several moments on each album shine poetically, regardless of context. Deciding between the better of the two albums isn't easy: The texture of *Blood Money* is a little more riveting, the crooning of *Alice* more soothing. And the larger question of whether or not these musical monologues thrive apart from the dramatic world where actors haunt a stage full of angst and regret may only be answered when *Woyzeck* makes its American premiere in the fall. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

Link

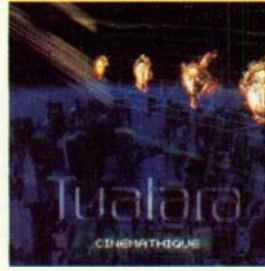
www.officialtomwaits.com

File Under

Misery loves ballads

R.I.Y.L.

Kurt Weill, Nick Cave, Firewater



TUATARA

Cinemathique *Fast Horse*

At the time of their 1997 debut, Tuatara—a supergroup side project that includes R.E.M.'s Peter Buck and Screaming Trees drummer Barrett Martin—expressed a desire to make soundtrack music. With *Cinemathique*, that's exactly what they've done: The 13 pieces here could easily slot into the background of any Hollywood movie (or in the case of "A Thin Gray Pickpocket" and "Action Thriller," any John Barry score or episode of a '70s cop show). But that doesn't mean they can be easily dismissed. With musicians like Martin, Buck, Scott McCaughey (Minus 5,

R.E.M.), Skerik (Crittters Buggin') and Luna's Justin Harwood, there's some serious playing here; it's just so smoothly executed that it glides by. Dig a little and there are plenty of treasures, like the jazz of "Love Is A Calculated Risk," reminiscent of Third-era Soft Machine, or the soft explorations of "Falling Pianos," which belies its title with a journey into more ambient music, conjuring up Nino Rota. Not everything works—"Pimpin' For The Muse," for example, seems to aim for a much funkier target than it reaches, and while "The Hangover" isn't painful, it does seem to stretch out too long. But considering this bunch is essentially doing this for the pleasure of making some different music, it's a success on its own terms. Probably coming soon to a theater near you. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

Link

www.tuatara.com

File Under

Dream theater

R.I.Y.L.

Tortoise, John Barry, Soft Machine



JEFF TWEEDY

Chelsea Walls Ryko

As if the experimental underpinnings of Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* weren't enough to serve notice that Jeff Tweedy wants to be more than alt-country's poster boy, *Chelsea Walls*, the Tweedy-helmed soundtrack to the Ethan Hawke-directed film, is full of eerie guitarscapes and moody set pieces, all a far cry from no-depression twang. Hawke's film tells the tales of residents of New York's famed Chelsea Hotel, that haven for artists and folks of artistic pretension, and Tweedy focuses on setting moods through spacious, atmospheric instrumentals.

Link

www.chelseawallsthefilm.com

File Under

Guitars, through Chelsea walls

R.I.Y.L.

Ry Cooder, John Fahey, Brian Eno

Collaborating with new Wilco drummer Glenn Kotche, Tweedy moves from the seven feedback-drenched minutes of "Opening Titles," through the chugging, screaming blues of "Red Elevator," to the hesitant, drunk-at-the-piano "Frank's Dream," to one track with a bit of acoustic twang to it, "End Credits." The other instrumentals, including the 11-minute "Finale," build on simple, hypnotic repetitions. The set includes a few Wilco extras—the lovely, acoustic "Promising," the *Mermaid Avenue* outtake "When The Roses Bloom Again"—plus actor Robert Sean Leonard covering Wilco's "The Lonely 1" in a wasted, after-hours rasp that sounds eerily like Tweedy himself. Best of all, jazz legend Jimmy Scott (backed by a band including ex-Wilco guys Jay Bennett and Ken Coomer, and current Wilco bassist John Stirratt) covers John Lennon's paranoid masterpiece, "Jealous Guy." It seems right at home amidst *Chelsea Walls'* impressionistic tones. >>>STEVE KLINGE



UGLY CASANOVA

Sharpen Your Teeth Sub Pop

Modest Mouse frontman Isaac Brock might be the most insincere guy in indie rock...or maybe not. In this solo project of sorts, the words delivered by his quaking, affected voice are alternately impenetrable and stoic; he has yet to record anything that showcases his eccentricity as proudly as *Sharpen Your Teeth*. Although Brock mostly employs acoustic arpeggios as his main accompaniment, Ugly Casanova is far from a mild-mannered singer/songwriter guise, he eschews any shred of folkiness in the record's fractured production

(masterminded by Brock and Modest Mouse collaborator Brian Deck). The woozy "Diamonds On The Face Of Evil" is equally punctuated by Brock's refrain of "They shaw! They shaw!" and the shuffling broken glass that is the song's percussion. On "Parasites," sharply strummed guitars, a pitter-pattering drum machine and triumphant horns that sound proud to be synthesized merge as Brock proclaims, "The parasites are excited when you're dead/ Eyes bulging, entering your head," sounding just as thrilled as the bugs. "Cat Faces" is truly masterful, with Brock singing two separate sets of lyrics and melodies that converge on the lines, "I lay down with a Southern rage." It's unlikely that Brock himself knows what it all means, which is only appropriate for a record that plays like Modest Mouse on Robitussin. *Sharpen Your Teeth* is Brock's schizoid way of finding dissociated peace. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

Link

www.uglycasanova.com

File Under

A damn unpretty pastiche

R.I.Y.L.

Modest Mouse, Frank Black,

Red Stars Theory



JOHN VANDERSLICE CD

Life And Death Of An American Fourtracker

Barsuk

While John Vanderslice's new full-length does contain the track "Me And My 424," an infectious ode to Tascam's everyman cassette recorder, *Life And Death Of An American Fourtracker* is a far cry from the lo-fi fare routinely served up by artists with a taste for home recording. In fact, the San Francisco songwriter's new full-length is further proof that today's digital technology is still no match for masterful analog recording. Tracked by Vanderslice at his own Tiny Telephone Studios, *Life And Death's* most important musical relationship exists between an

unlikely combination of instruments—acoustic guitar and bottom-heavy drums that feature tight snare/bass interplay. Beyond those key components is another world entirely, occupied by weird electronic sounds, strings and what's described on the album's insert as "unknowable percussion." Just about every instrument put to use—most notably Vanderslice's vocals and the occasional programmed drums—sounds like it's been pushed to the point where it's just a hair away from breaking up and becoming distorted. It's on songs like "Underneath The Leaves," where that line is just barely crossed, that *Life And Death* really shines. The most impressive thing about John Vanderslice, though, is that even with so much going on, he shows constant restraint, allowing his songs the perfect amount of room to breath without cutting back on intensity. >>>MIKE CONKLIN

Link

www.johnvanderslice.com

File Under

Four-track mind

R.I.Y.L.

Neutral Milk Hotel, Jeremy

Enigk, Now It's Overhead

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TOP 75



WILCO
YANKEE HOTEL FOXTROT
NONESUCH

#1

5 YEARS AGO

SLEATER-KINNEY
Dig Me Out (Kill Rock Stars)

CHEMICAL BROTHERS
Dig Your Own Hole (Asfalwerks-Caroline)

POLARA
C'est La Vie (Interscope)

BLUR
Blur (Virgin)

FOLK IMPLOSION
Dare To Be Surprised (Communion)

10 YEARS AGO

BEASTIE BOYS
Check Your Head (Capitol)

JESUS AND MARY CHAIN
(Def American-Warner Bros.)

THE CURE
Wish (Fiction-Elektra)

CRACKER
Cracker (Virgin)

CHARLATANS UK
Between 10th And 11th (Beggars Banquet-RCA)

ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1 WILCO	Yankee Hotel Foxtrot	Nonesuch
2 ELVIS COSTELLO	When I Was Cruel	Island
3 THE PROMISE RING	Wood/Water	Anti-Epithaph
4 PEDRO THE LION	Control	Jade Tree
5 BADLY DRAWN BOY	About A Boy	XL-ArtistDirect
6 THE WHITE STRIPES	White Blood Cells	V2
7 TOM WAITS	Blood Money	Anti
8 LUNA	Romantica	Jetset
9 AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD	Source Tags And Codes	Interscope
10 GOMEZ	In Our Gun	Virgin
11 TOM WAITS	Alice	Anti
12 JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Plastic Fang	Matador
13 CORNERSHOP	Handcream For A Generation	Wiiiija-Beggars Group-V2
14 THE MOONEE SUZUKI	Electric Sweat	Gammon
15 IMPERIAL TEEN	On	Merge
16 MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD	Uninvited	Blue Note
17 ED HARCOURT	Here Be Monsters	Heavenly
18 AZURE RAY	Burn And Shiver	Warm
19 PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES	Good Health	Lookout!
20 PAUL WESTERBERG	Stared	Vagrant
21 DJ SHADOW	You Can't Go Home Again (EP)	MCA
22 BLACKALICIOUS	Blazing Arrow	MCA
23 MASTERS OF THE HEMISPHERE	Protest A Dark Anniversary	Kindercore
24 BEN KWELLER	Sha Sha	ATO
25 DENALI	Denali	Jade Tree
26 MOTH	Provisions, Fiction And Gear	Virgin
27 MIDTOWN	Living Well Is The Best Revenge	Drive Thru-MCA
28 FACE TO FACE	How To Run Everything	Vagrant
29 BRATMOBILE	Gids Get Busy	Lookout!
30 THE GLORIA RECORD	Start Here	Arena Rock
31 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Verve Revisited	Verve
32 SUPER FURRY ANIMALS	Rings Around The World	XLBeggars Group
33 HOT HOT HEAT	Knock Knock Knock	Sub Pop
34 SOUNDTRACK	Blade II	Virgin
35 ANTIPOPO CONSORTIUM	Arrhythmia	Warp
36 EELS	Souljacker	DreamWorks
37 TREY ANASTASIO	Trey Anastasio	Elektra
38 MATTHEW	Everybody Down	Rykodisc
39 JOHN VANDERSLICE	The Life And Death Of An American Four Tracker	Barsuk
40 THE BREEDERS	Breeders EP	Elektra
41 RASPUTINA	Cabinet Fever	Instinct
42 MIRAH	Advisory Committee	K
43 TRANS AM	TA	Thrill Jockey
44 SCHATZI	Fifty Reasons To Explode	Mammoth
45 MELVINS	Hostile Ambient Takeover	Ipecac
46 764-HERO	Nobody Knows This Is Everywhere	Tiger Style
47 STRUNG OUT	An American Paradox	Fat Wreck Chords
48 SPARTA	Austere (EP)	DreamWorks
49 TRAM	A Kind Of Closure	Jetset
50 SEAFOOD	When Do We Start Fighting	Nettwerk
51 ALFIE	A Word In Your Ear	XL
52 ULTIMATE FAKEBOOK	Open Up And Say Awesome	Initial
53 FLOGGING MOLLY	Drunken Lullabies	Side One Dummy
54 ANDREW W.K.	I Get Wet	Island
55 ASH	Free All Angels	Kinetic
56 BALDWIN BROTHERS	Cooking With Lasers	TVT
57 CROOKED FINGERS	Reservoir Songs EP	Good
58 TAKING BACK SUNDAY	Tell All Your Friends	Victory
59 VARIOUS ARTISTS	This Is Where I Belong: The Songs Of Roy Davies And The Kooks	Rykodisc
60 BOARDS OF CANADA	Gumpado	Warp
61 FINCH	What It Is To Burn	Drive-Thru
62 WEEZER	Maladroit Sampler	Weezer
63 RUSTED ROOT	Welcome To My Party	Island
64 CASSANDRA WILSON	Belly Of The Sun	Blue Note
65 ELENI MANDELL	Snakebite	Space Baby
66 NEIL YOUNG	Are You Passionate?	Reprise
67 PETER MURPHY	Dust	Metropolis
68 REVEREND HORTON HEAT	Lucky 7	Artemis
69 30 SECONDS TO MARS	30 Seconds To Mars	Immortal-Virgin
70 RADIO 4	Gutham!	Gern Blandsten
71 SLICK SHOES	Slick Shoes	Tooth And Nail
72 RICHARD HELL	Tone	Matador
73 URSULA 1000	Kinda Kinky	Eighteenth Street Lounge
74 GARY WILSON	You Think You Really Know Me	Motel
75 27	Animal Life	Kimchee

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.

LOUD ROCK TOP 25



1	SOILWORK Natural Born Chaos	Nuclear Blast
2	THE CROWN Crowned In Terror	Metal Blade
3	KILLSWITCH ENGAGE Alive Or Just Breathing	Roadrunner
4	ARCH ENEMY Wages Of Sin	Century Media
5	COAL CHAMBER Dark Days	Roadrunner
6	DOWN Down II	Elektra
7	HATEBREED Perseverance	Universal
8	MOTORHEAD Hammered	Sanctuary
9	CURL UP AND DIE Unfortunately We're Not Robots	Revelation
10	RED CHORD Fused Together In Revolving Doors	Robotic Empire
11	CENTINEX Diabolical Desolation	Candlelight
12	SUPERJOINT RITUAL Use Once And Destroy	Housecore-Sanctuary
13	BLIND GUARDIAN A Night At The Opera	Timo Tolkki-CenturyMedia
14	REMEMBERING NEVER She Looks So Good In Red	Ferret
15	CANNIBAL CORPSE Gore Obsessed	Metal Blade
16	O7EP Sevas Tra Sampler	Capitol
17	BLACK LABEL SOCIETY 1919 Eternal	Spitfire
18	DIO Killing The Dragon	Spitfire
19	THIS DAY FORWARD Kairos	Eulogy
20	SOUNDTRACK Scorpion King	Universal
21	STEP KINGS 3 The Hard Way	We Put Out
22	POISON THE WELL Tear From The Red	Trustkill
23	ALABAMA THUNDERPUSSY Staring At The Divine	Relapse
24	VARIOUS ARTISTS Victory Style 5	Victory
25	HYPOCRISY Catch 22	Nuclear Blast

RPM TOP 10



1	DJ SHADOW You Can't Go Home Again (EP)	MCA
2	VARIOUS ARTISTS Verve Remixed	Verve
3	TIMO MAAS Loud	Kinetic
4	VARIOUS ARTISTS Soma 10 Anthology	Soma
5	BOARDS OF CANADA Geogadai	Warp
6	URSULA 1000 Kinda Kinky	Eighteenth Street Lounge
7	LUKE SLATER Alright on Top	Mute
8	CHRIS FORTIER Compiled And Mixed	Bedrock
9	TRANCENDEN Peace Love Bears	Aniligital
10	BALDWIN BROTHERS Cooking With Lasers	TVT



JAZZ TOP 10

1	MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD Uninvisible	Blue Note
2	CASSANDRA WILSON Belly Of The Sun	Blue Note
3	CHICAGO UNDERGROUND DUO Axis...	Thrill Jockey
4	SOULIVE Next	Blue Note
5	NORAH JONES Come Away With Me	Blue Note
6	DAVE DOUGLAS Infinite	RCA
7	MINGUS BIG BAND Tonight At Noon...	Dreyfus
8	ERIK TRUFFAZ Mantis	Blue Note
9	RAY VEGA LATIN JAZZ SEXTET Pa Lante	Palmetto
10	STANTON MOORE Flyin' The Koop	Blue Thumb

HIP-HOP TOP 25



1	BLACKALICIOUS Blazing Arrow	MCA
2	ANTIPOP CONSORTIUM Arrhythmia	Warp
3	DJ SHADOW You Can't Go Home Again (EP)	MCA
4	J-LIVE All Of The Above	Coup d'Etat
5	HERBALISER Something Wicked This Way Comes	Ninja Tune
6	CEE-LO Cee Lo Green And His Perfect Imperfections	Arista
7	X-ECUTIONERS Built From Scratch	Loud
8	NAS Stillmatic	Columbia
9	NAPPY ROOTS Watermelon, Chicken & Grits	Atlantic
10	DARKLEAF Fuck The People	Ubiquity
11	SOULIVE Next	Blue Note
12	NON PHIXION The Future Is Now	Landspeed
13	SAGE FRANCIS Personal Journals	Anticon
14	FLOETRY The Songstress And The Floacist	DreamWorks
15	ONRY OZZBORN Alone	BSI
16	SOUNDTRACK Blade 2	Virgin
17	N.E.R.D. In Search Of N.E.R.D.	Virgin
18	BEATNUTS Classic Nuts Vol. 1	Loud
19	BUSTA RHYMES Genesis	J
20	LUDACRIS Word Of Mouf	Def Jam
21	DEMIGODZ The Godz Must Be Crazy	Ill Boogie
22	DILATED PEOPLES Expansion Team	ABB-Capitol
23	AESOP ROCK Daylight EP	Def Jux
24	DAN THE AUTOMATOR Wanna Buy A Monkey?	Sequence
25	NEW BREED Stop The Music	Uprok

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

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

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

JUNE 4

27 Animal Life *Kimchee*
NORMAN BLAKE *Old Ties Rounder*
CURT BOETTCHER *There's An Innocent Face Sundazed*
CHAD & JEREMY *Before And After Sundazed*
CHAD & JEREMY *Of Cabbages And Kings Sundazed*
CELLS *We Can Replace You Orange*
CORDELIA'S DAD *What It Is Kimchee*
DANZIG *Danzig 777: I Luciferi Spitfire*
DEAD POETIC *Four Wall Blackmail Solid State*
DEERHOOF *Reveille Kill Rock Stars-SRC*
DILLINGER FOUR *Situationist Comedy Fat Wreck Chords*
DOLEFUL LIONS *Out Like A Lamb Parasol*
DOVES *The Last Broadcast Capitol*
DURALUXE *The Suitcase Parasol*
FLOETRY *Floetic DreamWorks*
CHRIS HILLMAN & HERB PETERSON *Way Out West Back Porch*
DOTTI HOLMBERG *Sometimes Happy Times Sundazed*
IN EXTREMO *Sunder Ohne Zuegel Metal Blade*
WILLIE KENNEDY *Cape Breton Violin Rounder*
KING OF WOOLWORTHS *Ming Star Mantra*
SHERRY GOFFIN KONDOR *Mellow My Baby: Soothing Songs And Lullabies Sugar Beats*
LOVE GENERATION *Love And Sunshine: Best Of Sundazed*
LPG *It's Still Me & My Cuzzin Uprok*
NATALIE MACMASTER *Live Rounder*
MANOWAR *Warriors Of The World Metal Blade*
MAPS *Model American Sessions*
FREDDIE MCGREGOR *Anything For You VP*
COCO MONTOYA *Can't Look Back Alligator*
NEBULA *Dos Eps Meteor City*
BILLY NOVICK *A Rose In The Desert Daring*
POSSIBILITIES *Way Out! Parasol*
ARCHER PREWITT *Three Thrill Jockey*
QUIX*O*TIC *Mortal Mirror Kill Rock Stars*
RED DELICIOUS *Extasy*
SIDE WALK SLAM *Give Back Tooth And Nail*
SMITH & MIGHTY *Life Is... !K7*
SPACEHEADS *Low Pressure Merge*
SPEEDY J *Loudboxer Mute*
SPOON *Series Of Sneaks (reissue) Merge*
JEANIE STAHL *Just Fooling Myself Daring*
VADER *Revelations Metal Blade*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Full Cycle Records Live Full Cycle*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Hi-Fever Mute*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *The Singer-Songwriter Collection Rounder*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Songs And Ballads Of The Bituminous Miners Rounder*
WEATHER REPORT *The Best Of Weather Report Columbia-Legacy*
WEATHER REPORT *Black Market; Mysterious Traveller; Tale Spinnin' (reissues) Columbia-Legacy*
WOLF EYES *Dread Bulb*
YAYA3 *Yaya3 Loma*

JUNE 11

AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED *Frozen Corpse Stuffed With Dope Relapse*
GREGG ALLMAN *No Stranger To The Dark: The Best Of Gregg Allman Epic-Legacy*
ARCH ENEMY *Black Earth Century Media*
LOUIS ARMSTRONG *Butter & Eggman: C'est Si Bon (reissues) Tomato*
ASWAD *Not Satisfied Columbia-Legacy*
ASWAD *New Chapter Columbia-Legacy*
BALLYGOMINGO *Beneath The Surface RCA Victor*
BYRDS *Byrds Sing Dylan Columbia-Legacy*
CHRIS CACAVAS *Bumbling Home From The Star Normal*
CIRRUS *Counterfeit Moonshine*
JIMMY CLIFF *We All Are One: The Best Of Jimmy Cliff Columbia-Legacy*
DANA CUNNINGHAM *Dancing At The Gate RockingEchoMusic*
DABRYE *One-Three Ghostly International*
DARLING KANDIE *People Next Door Underground Inc.*
DECLAIME PRESENTS MADMEN *Macmen On Arrival Hum Drums-Groove Attack*
DEFRAGMENTATION *Self Construct Underground Inc.*
EARTHRIIDE *Taming Of The Demons Southern Lord*
ELECTRIC BIRDS *Graduations Mille Plateau-EFA*
FRIEND/ENEMY *10 Songs Perishable*
G-MAN *Avanti Force Inc.-EFA*
HEM *Rabbit Songs Bar/None*
HERBERT *Around The House Studio Distribution*
KEEPSAKE *Black Dress In A B Movie Fearless*
LOVE JOYS *Reggae Vibes Wackies-EFA*
MAMMOTH YOLUIME *Early Years The Music Cartel*
MARS ILL *Blue Collar Sessions Ill Boogie*
MUTABARUKA *Life Squared Heartbeat*
NO RETURN *Machinery Nuclear Blast*
OPIUM JUKEBOX *Sex Pistols Tribute Underground Inc.*
ORIGIN *Informis, Infnitas, Inhumanitas Relapse*
RIVER *River Shell Life*
DON MIGUEL RUIZ & BRIAN SCOTT BENNETT *Whispers Of Love Relaxation Company*
SOUL PARLOR *Way We Talk E:Motion-EFA*
STARECASE *First Floor Kinetic*
STRYDER *Jungle City Twitch EVR*
SWISS BEATZ *Ghetto Stories DreamWorks*
THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS *No! Rounder*
ECKHART TOLLE & BRIAN SCOTT BENNETT *Whispers Of Now Relaxation Company*
UK GOLD *Returned Prime*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Body & Soul Vol. 4 Wave Music*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Constant Elevation Astralwerks*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *definingTECH Orbisonic-Manifesto*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *The Difference Official Jointz*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Globus Mix Vol. 6 Tresor-EFA*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Mundial Muzique Vol. 2 Guidance*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Punk Rock Is Your Friend Kung Fu*

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Teleportation Spirit Zone-Wah-EFA*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Twisted Sessions Tristan One Twisted-EFA*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Woman Wisdom New World Music*
FRED WEINBERG *Weinberg Method Of QDK Media*

JUNE 18

ACE TROUBLESHOOTER *The Madness Of The Crowds Tooth And Nail*
AMERICAN DEATH RAY *Smash Radio Hits Sympathy For The Record Industry*
ATOM & HIS PACKAGE *Hamburgers EP File 13*
GEORGE BENSON *Bad Benson Epic-Legacy*
KENNY BURRELL *God Bless The Child Epic-Legacy*
CAVE 76 *Arizona Sonic Boom*
CHARLATANS UK *Songs From The Other Side Beggars Group*
WARD CHURCHILL *In A Pig's Eye (2CD) Alternative Tentacles*
HANK CRAWFORD *Wildflower Epic-Legacy*
CRIPPLES *Dirty Head Dirtnap*
DEODATA *Deodata 2 Epic-Legacy*
DROPEAD/TOTALITAR *Split Prank*
FAIRLANES *Monumento Asian Man*
THE FARTZ *Injustice: 15 Working Class Songs Alternative Tentacles*
FLESHIES *Game Of Futbol Adeline*
JULIA FORDHAM *Concrete Love Vanguard*
FURY *Resurrection Jade Tree*
GOGOGO AIRHEART *Exitheuxa GSL*
GRANT GREEN *The Main Attraction Epic-Legacy*
GHOTI HOOK *Retrospective Tooth And Nail*
HOT SNAKES *Suicide Invoice Swami*
FREDDIE HUBBARD *Red Clay Epic-Legacy*
JOY ELECTRIC *Art & Craft Of Popular Music BEC*
LOOPER *The Snare Mute*
ME WITHOUT YOU [A—>B] *Life Tooth And Nail*
MUSHROOM RIVER BAND *Simsalabim Meteor City*
NEW RACE *First And The Last Total Energy*
NO USE FOR A NAME *Hard Rock Bottom Fat Wreck Chords*
NY REL-X *Paranoia/She's Got A Gun TKO*
OOBERMAN *Running Girl March*
OTEP *Sevas Tra Capitol*
ESTHER PHILLIPS *What A Diff'rence A Day Makes Epic-Legacy*
PITCHSHIFTER *Ununited Kingdom Alternative Tentacles*
REIGNING SOUND *Time Bomb High School In The Red*
REVERSE *The Jersey Switch Curve Of The Earth*
DAVID SANCHEZ *The Departure Columbia-Legacy Jazz*
DAVID SANCHEZ *Sketches Of Dreams Columbia-Legacy Jazz*
SCIENTISTS *Human Jukebox Sympathy For The Record Industry*
SPEEDBALL BABY *Blackout In The Red*

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Engine VP*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Exposure III 4 Foot 11*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Tabla VP*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *White Liva VP*

JUNE 25

ASH *Free All Angels Kinetic*
TONY BENNETT *The Essential Tony Bennett Columbia-Legacy*
BOTTLES AND SKULLS *Amped The Fuck Up Sick Room*
BOY GEORGE *Night Out Moonshine*
BUGSKULL AND BIG WHITE CLOUD *Bugskull And Big White Cloud Scratch*
JULIANA HATFIELD *Gold Stars 1992-2002: The Juliana Hatfield Collection Zoé*
ARTO LINDSAY *Invoke Righteous Babe*
HEATHER MYLES *Sweet Talk & Good Lies Rounder*
YOUSOUU N'DOOR *Seven Seconds: The Best Of Yousouu N'Door Columbia-Legacy*
NOVA CAIN *Diplomatic Immunity Phat Groove*
LAURA NYRO *Eli And The Thirteenth Confession; New York Tendaberry; Gonna Take A Miracle (reissues) Columbia-Legacy*
OLATUNJI *Drums Of Passion Columbia-Legacy*
OZMA *The Double Donkey Disc Kung Fu*
PAPA ROACH *Lovehatatragedy DreamWorks*
PROFESSOR LONGHAIR *Big Chief; Rum & Coke (reissues) Tomato*
SILLIES *America's Most Wanted Scooch Pooch*
SOUNDTRACK *Sunshine State Daring*
SWEEP THE LEG JOHNNY *Going Down Swingin' Southern*

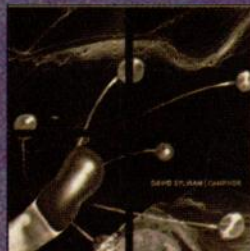
JULY 2

CHEZIDECK *Harvest Time VP*
CHRISTIANSEN *Forensics Brothers And Sisters EP Revelation*
CRISPUS ATTACKS *Yo Peho Six Weeks*
EUGE GROOVE *Play Data Warner Bros.*
FLIP TOPS *All Worked Up Rip Off*
STAN GETZ *Captain Marvel Columbia Legacy Jazz*
GLORYHOLES *Knock Yo' Up Empty*
JAN HAMMER *The First Seven Days Columbia Legacy Jazz*
BLAKE HAZARD *Little Airplane Kimchee*
JAHAIM *Warner Bros.*
KANSAS *The Ultimate Kansas Epic-Legacy*
MISSING 23RD *The Powers That Be Sessions*
PITCH BLACK *Pitch Black Revelation*
LEE RITENOUR *The Best Of Lee Ritenour Epic Legacy Jazz*
TONY SCHERR *Come Around Smells Like*
THE THE *Dusk; Infected; Mind Bomb; Soul Mining (reissues) Epic-Legacy*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Blind Fold VP*
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Every Dog Will Have Its Day Adeline*

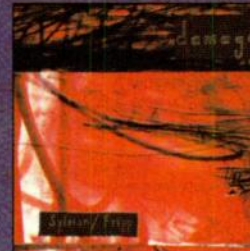
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<input type="checkbox"/> Jun '97	Grand Royal SOLD OUT	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug '00	Slipknot
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May '02 WILCO



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Nov/Dec '01 SEVENDUST

Terence Trent D'Arby

STORY: SAM GROBART • ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA

I, like the rest of America, was introduced to the hardline according to Terence Trent D'Arby in 1988. And then, like the rest of America, I promptly forgot about it.

Sure, "Wishing Well" caught my interest, and there were some other tracks on the album that caught my attention, but it was otherwise relegated to the bottom of my cassette collection, which included such refugees as Deon Estus, the Kane Gang and In Tua Nua.

In the meantime, because I wasn't a moron, I was cultivating a deep and long-lasting love of Prince. Years went by while I reveled in *Sign O' The Times*, *Parade*, even *Lovesexy* and the *Batman* soundtrack. Then, one day, I was reading a review of the latest TTD release, *Symphony Or Damn*, and saw the name Prince mentioned in it something like 58 times. Curious, I went out and bought the album, and that's when it all started.

Symphony Or Damn turned out not to be Prince-like, but Prince-better. While His Purpleness was coming to the end of his last great creative cycle, TTD picked up the baton, ran backwards a little bit (to an era where sequencers weren't very popular), and then sped the hell up. He was clearly the heir to the throne (you know, the super-sexy-funk-you-all-night-long-oh-but-wait-there's-Jesus throne) that Prince had been occupying. Like his debut, *Symphony* wasn't devoid of self-indulgent crap, but there were certain undeniable gems along the lines of "Do You Love Me Like You Say?" and "Neon Messiah."

I went back and checked out *Hardline* again. More of the same, in both the good and the bad sense. Sure, "If You All Get To Heaven" and "Seven More Days" have all the depth of a ninth-grade love poem, but "Let's Go Forward With Our Love" was a roundabout introduction to the Quiet Storm for me (for which I am forever thankful) and "If You Let Me Stay" is a neo-Otis Redding classic. Unfortunately, TTD's sophomore effort, *Neither Fish Nor Flesh*, fell victim to classic second-album clichés (which won't be repeated here), but throughout all of his work thus far, there was a common theme that captured my attention:

Failure.

This is what makes D'Arby a more compelling musical figure



to me than, say, Michael Jackson. Every D'Arby release is a little bit overreaching, a little bit too big for his britches. Sometimes songs get away from him, but you can hear what the good idea was that started it before his ego got in the way. There's clearly some genuine talent there, but he has no critical voice in that clearly very busy head of his. I've always maintained that with the right producer—the right Quincy Jones—TTD would have garnered far greater success than he has. In fact, we have an example, of sorts: He's clearly less talented, but he's certainly more savvy about what his audience wants to hear and see. Bluntly put, if Terence had someone to guide him, there would be no Lenny Kravitz.

D'Arby's like a walking unfinished symphony. He's clearly too arrogant to not indulge himself, but he's arrogant because he has the chops. Being a fan is frustrating, because he's prone by definition to letting us down, somewhat—but that's also what makes it fun. Listening to his music lets you act as producer; you can hear where it's working and where it goes off the tracks. And when it's working, it's *really* working. There's drama there, in the scattered moments when something fantastic percolates. There are glorious threads of Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Bobby Womack, among others, in some of his best work, and shattered bits of Beat poetry and harpsichord bullshit in his worst. He has, unintentionally, what I like to call an Italian sense of drama. It's like saying you're not sure you can make it to something (when you know full well that you can) and showing up at the last minute, just to make things more interesting.

Unfortunately, TTD sometimes can't control when he's showing up, and when he's missing the party entirely. When he does make it on time, though, it's so much better than if you were expecting it all along.

New York-based freelance writer Sam Grobart can often be found kissing like a bandit, stealing time, underneath a sycamore tree.



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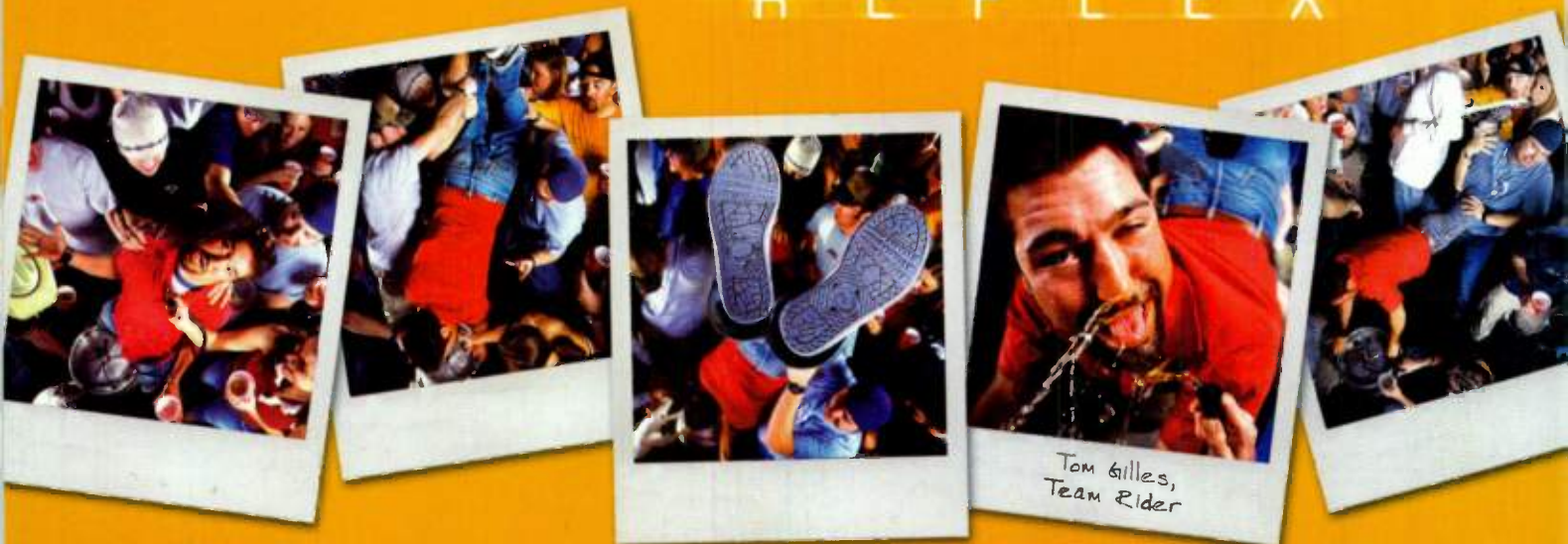
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