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MONTHLY



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THE ETERNAL

GLASSJAW

SLEATER-KINNEY

COUSTEAU

HERE'S EMO RAP!?!

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ISSUE NO. 103
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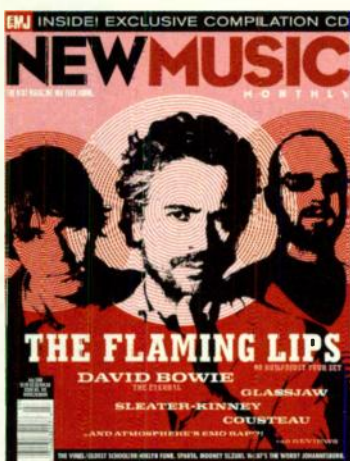
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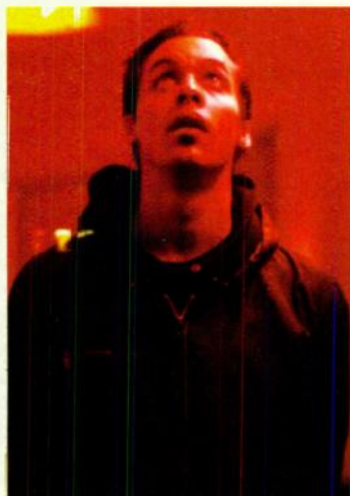
Original design by badass poster duo Aesthetic Apparatus. (See page 12)



GLASSJAW



DAVID BOWIE



ATMOSPHERE

THE FLAMING LIPS 32

Wayne Coyne writes songs about the hardships of life (couched in robot metaphors), effortlessly spits out titles like "Psychiatric Explorations Of The Fetus With Needle" and recognizes the fact that his job is to entertain you, Britney Spears style. Jason Cohen stands by and waits for the butt shot. (Trust us.)

COUSTEAU 22

Sinatra could tell a broad how he felt about her and still turn around and lay you out with a broken chair. Someone needs to fill the Chairman's tough-yet-sensitive shoes, and Cousteau's Liam McKahey is just the man for the job. Scott Frampton helps him fill out his application.

ATMOSPHERE 24

MC Slug's self-conscious, girl-obsessed rhymes earned indie-hop duo Atmosphere a big fat Scarlet E: emo-rap. *God Loves Ugly*, a rare hip-hop tribute to self-doubt, isn't going to help matters any. Slug pours out his heart; Christopher R. Weingarten holds the bucket.

GLASSJAW 26

Glassjaw's in bad shape. Their singer has a weird intestinal disease, they've been accused of misogyny, they almost broke up after a label legal war, and now they're being called nu metal. They're pretty bent about the whole thing. Amy Sciarretto gives them a shoulder to cry on.

DAVID BOWIE 28

One of the most successful and most influential men in pop culture has had it with the music business. After 35 years and 22 records, David Bowie's starting his own label and getting back to his musical basics with *Heathen*. Tom Mallon watches him rebuild.

ON THE VERGE 18

We found some strange growths: Tift Merritt, Sparta, the Vines, Pretty Girls Make Graves.

ON THE CD 35

Cousteau, the Flaming Lips, the Tragically Hip, Tiara, Jucifer, Puffy Amiyumi, King Of Woolworths, Atmosphere, Sharon Jones And The Dap-Kings, 20 Miles, Rachael Sage, Hem, Cinerama, the Waxwings, Pretty Girls Makes Graves, Swearing At Motorists, Saloon, Steroid Maximus, Tulipomania, Amplify, Lung Cookie.

QUICK FIX 12

Get the time from Sleater-Kinney, secretly taped by 764-Hero, kissed by Piebald, visually stimulated by Arii DiFranco, rocked by the Mooney Suzuki's once-bar guitar, and shaken by Sharon Jones And The Dap-Kings.

LOCALZINE 40

Tour a blissfully Bono-free Johannesburg, South Africa.

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Bill Werde calls Paul Simon "Al."

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GLASSJAW: STEPHEN STICKLER; BOWIE: MARKUS KLINKO/INDRANI; ATMOSPHERE: VALERIE PHILLIPS.

You're darned tootin'!

Your article on Fargo, N.D. music needs a bit (unberstatement) [sic] improvement. Whoever participated, especially the info digger, needs a good kick in the ass. Try doing your history a little better 'cause if you don't know what kinda of [sic] music that has come out of Fargo, and music connected with Fargo (and I mean before shit-hole lang) then you can stick it up your ass. I see Fugazi on your covers why don't ya ask him about Fargo once and see what he says. Man gimme a break.

bewildered
ctrlrd@go.com

"Excuse me, Mr. Fugazi, I have some questions for you about Fargo...Hello? Hello?" We're bewildered, too, since we last covered Fargo in Localzine about two years ago. While we're always open to nonsensical abuse, we're not sure, as when perusing the wares in the many fine video/novelty shops in the area, what it is we're to stick up our ass. —ed.

My morning jacket wood

I am writing to you again to get down on my hands and knees to beg, plead, bargain and otherwise ask very kindly if you would please do an article on my favorite band, My Morning Jacket of Louisville, Ky., the most amazing, awesome fucking rock band in the world. They are currently on tour right now with Guided By Voices, fer chrissakes. Jim James and company offer the world their musical souls for all of us to enjoy. It would be a crying shame not to make them bigger than Elvis, or at least bigger than the godawful pablum that some call music these days (such as Nickelback or Staind or any other of those godawful, interchangeable ass fart whistles that call themselves musicians). I'm not one of the guys' girlfriends, by the way. Just a fan from the beginning who feels very strongly that My Morning Jacket deserves huge success here in America, and some coverage in *CMJ New Music Monthly* would surely help these boys from Kentucky. Thanks for being the best damn music magazine out there. I love your coverage and see myself as a lifetime subscriber, despite what tasteless assholes might say about you in your editorial column.

John Conaway
johnconaway2@yahoo.com

We got this after the June issue with our On The Verge piece on My Morning Jacket had already gone to the printer, but we told John that we did it just for him, just to toy with his emotions. But again with the ass references. "Interchangeable ass fart whistles?" That can't be sanitary. —ed.

Paper write backer

I love *CMJ New Music Monthly* and especially the whining letters from readers. If I hear one cut on the CD that I like and introduces me to a performer that I was unaware of, then I am satisfied. This month (May) has 4 cuts that I am really enjoying. Can't ask for more than that. Although you feature music from genres that I don't care much for, it's still good to hear what is being produced out there. Don't let your complaining readers sway you from keeping your mix so varied. "Musicologists" are a bunch of elitists who don't play an instrument and write you letters and tell you what they listen to hoping that you will publish it so other readers will know how cool they are because their taste is so developed. God, they are so lame.

I must register extreme objection to the R.E.M. propaganda on the CD, however. I could argue point by point the complete inaccuracy of everything they claim but there isn't enough space. I do wonder how *CMJ New Music Monthly* will be published on "treeless paper"? Perhaps soon R.E.M. will be telling us to eat "ocean-free fish" and to wear "cow-free leather" while listening to their smug, oh-so-hip and effected preaching on "oil-free CDs." When will rock stars just shut up and entertain us? If I hear one more social or political opinion from these numbskulls, I'm gonna go postal!

Larry Pierce

I have to admit that the irony of a magazine running a public service announcement on wasting paper is pretty choice, and we were waiting for someone to call us on it. I mean, you're considered to be doing well if you sell half the issues you put on the newsstand, something you can't help but feel guilty about. Turns out that Larry is a printer, and he has this counterpoint to R.E.M.'s position on the issue:

"At the risk of boring you, there is no legislation as to what 'recycled paper' really is so if you see something that says 'printed on recycled paper,' it is likely bullshit. True post-consumer waste recycled paper looks

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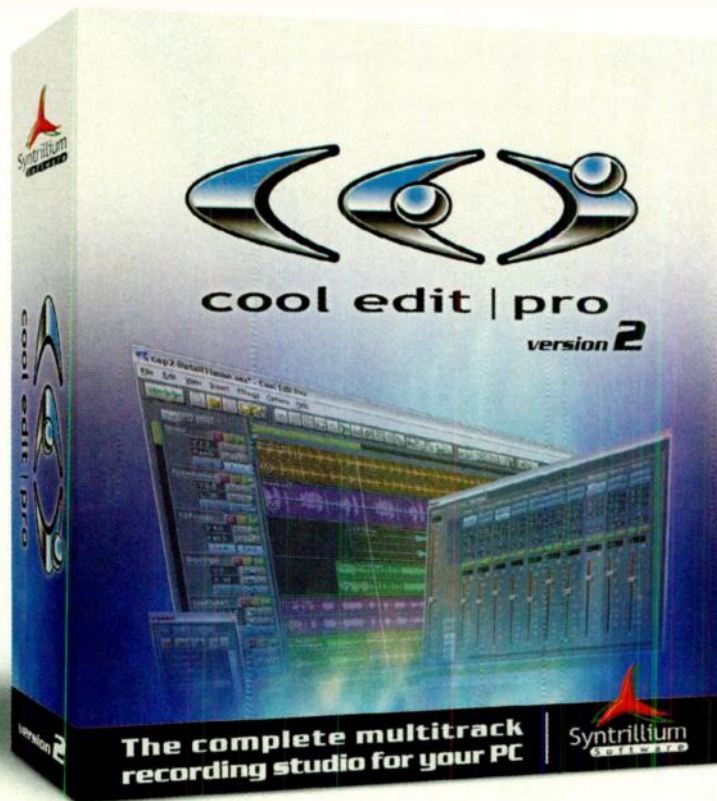
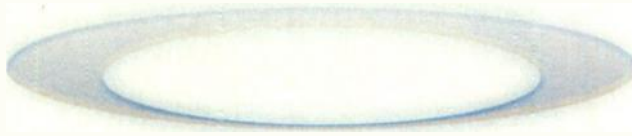
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like shopping bags, and the amount of chlorine it takes to de-ink paper is much more than what's required to bleach new paper, and all that goes into the waste stream. So what's worse?" —ed.

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QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

: Yes, that's Dave Grohl on drums with Queens Of The Stone Age, rocking the Coachella festival with songs from their forthcoming *Songs For The Deaf* (Interscope). And this just in: That new record is pretty damn kickass.

: **Photo: Kristopher Christensen**



DJ Shadow

• He's a bad, bad motherfuckin' DJ, that's why he... Sorry, we're
• still a little caught up in the mania for DJ Shadow's *The*
• *Private Press* (MCA). (Hence quoting "An Autre Introduction,"
• above. We generally don't work blue, honest.) Here, Shadow
• cuts up live at the Bowery Ballroom in NYC.

• **Photo: Christopher Diiorio**



Nick Cave

: After having to cancel their tour last year due to Sept. 11, Nick
: Cave & The Bad Seeds finally made their way back to the U.S.
: this spring. Here, at the Beacon Theatre in NYC, Cave delivers
: a sermon to a diverse crowd that included David Byrne, James
: Iha, a lot of angry Germans, NYC's entire Eurogoth contingent
: and, most likely, the Devil himself.

: **Photo: Noah Greenberg**





Answer Me

Sleater-Kinney's Corin Tucker on *Time*, time off and time in the rock game.

I am pleased to announce that Sleater-Kinney is taking some time off," Sleater-Kinney lead guitarist Carrie Brownstein posted in October 2000 on Kill Rock Stars' website, "...I don't think we'll have another record out until Fall 2002." Brownstein's word is bond—their sixth LP, *One Beat* (Kill Rock Stars), is dropping in August. Banshee-voiced (if only behind the mic) rhythm guitarist Corin Tucker talks about the past two years and the band's most complex, shape-shifting record to date, as her 15-month-old son cries in the background. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

Two years isn't that long of a time for a band to take between albums. It's funny that Sleater-Kinney is so prolific that you felt the need to announce that you wouldn't be around for that period of time.

[Laughs] We're kind of control freaks that way. We always set the highest expectations for ourselves. I think it was probably most shocking for us that it would take that long to be back on the stage and to make an album.

***One Beat* took longer to write than *All Hands On The Bad One*?**

Definitely. The songs are more intricate and they required a lot more arranging and tweaking. Our creativity really channeled us to that place. *All Hands* was a record that we really just wanted to

have fun with, so that was written and recorded pretty quickly. So we were like, "Well, we've done that, for this record let's try to do something we haven't done before."

I think *One Beat* is the first Sleater-Kinney album to do drugs to.

[Laughing] Oh god. I don't necessarily agree with you on that. It's definitely our most experimental. It's the complicated side of Sleater-Kinney, I think.

Is it weird to perform "I Wanna Be Your Joey Ramone" now that he's gone?

It's sad. Now that Dee Dee's dead too, it's really sad. It's a tragedy that these people we really looked up to are gone. I think of him, all the great things he did and how cool he was, whenever I sing that song. It's become sort of a tribute, especially in New York.

What do you have to say to the fact that some men (and women) claim to be scared by Sleater-Kinney?

I think it's interesting that we're still seen as somewhat threatening. Maybe it's kind of a good thing that we are sort of threatening and that we are willing to say whatever comes out of our mouths. In a world of Britney Spears and the most common denominator for women of making everyone else happy by not wearing very many clothes and singing pop music, I'm glad that we're around. I'm really glad. Not all the women in the world want to be like Britney Spears. It gets kinda old.

How did it feel when *Time* called you the best band?

I thought it was pretty funny. I'm sure tons of people were like, "Who?" It's great that we have so much critical success. I really appreciate that people respect our band and think that we do good work. But you have to take the huge amount of press with a grain of salt because it doesn't necessarily translate into being a more popular band or changing your daily life at all.

What's the stupidest thing that's been said about Sleater-Kinney?

Carrie did an interview the other day with some guy who called us "elder statesmen." We were all pretty insulted by that.

Audio Visuals

Rock posters are cool. At least they were, before computers and Kinkos. The hand-screened posters from design duo Aesthetic Apparatus, for shows by Spoon, Femi Kuti, Pedro The Lion, Richard Buckner, Quasi and Mooney Suzuki, to name a few, have become the coolest thing to hit a lamppost since Frank Kozik. "We started in 1999 when our boss wanted us to do a poster for his band, P'elvis," says Michael Byzewski, one-half of the AA team. "So, the first poster was a one-color poster on drawing paper for U.S. Maple, P'elvis and Creign. We didn't have the faintest idea what we were doing. Still don't." "We're both graphic designers so we have to sit in front of a computer all day," fellow Aesthetician Dan Ibarra adds. "The posters are a way to balance that out with some dirty, hands on production."

Limited edition Posters are available for \$20 through their website, www.aestheticapparatus.com, or a mere \$5 at the show they're advertising.

NEWSFEED: Sigur Ros promise "less polished" new record for Fall 2002 • Surviving members of Morphine regroup as **Twinemen**, debut

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Tough Love



BRYAN SHEFFIELD

PIEBALD When it comes to lovin', everyone knows the most valuable traits are a good sense of humor and a sweet ass, in that order. The boys of Boston emocore quartet Piebald conveniently have both, as evidenced by the saucy track titles on the new *We're The Only Friends We Have* (Big Wheel Recreation), like "Sex Sells And (Unfortunately) I'm Buying." (The ass thing you'll just have to take our word for.) Frontman Travis Shettel was glad to wax philosophical about life and love. *Your grandma will tell you that good boys and girls wait until marriage, but rock personalities give in to their filthy urges: lovelorn@cmj.com.*

My best friend is a girl. I'm a guy. Pretty much all the shows we go to and places we go in general, we're together. I'm single, she's not, but her boyfriend is at school in Virginia. I notice that girls don't talk to me much when we're out, and I think I'm a pretty good-looking guy. I'm afraid it's because I look like I'm taken. How do I fix this without being a dick to my best friend?
—Ryan, Wallingford, Conn.

Ryan, I think that the problem here is that you think that the ladies are going to come to you. Sometimes, especially during the dry periods, you have to make the move. Just because you have a girl as a best friend doesn't take away from your chances with females. Usually, they really like guys who have female friends because it means that they're sensitive. You need to go after the ladies. Remember, you are an attractive, intelligent, strapping young man. Just use your charm.

My boyfriend dumped me almost five months ago, and I'm still thinking of him, listening to heartbroken records, lying in bed at night and just wishing I was lying in his. Basically, I dwell on the sex and affection we had and I miss that intimacy. I can't stop lusting for my ex. He e-mails me every now and then, but I don't know how to cut it off forever. I just keep taking it. I'm not needy, just lonely. How can I get back out there and get over this dude? —Christine A., Boise, Id.

Christine: a) your ex-boyfriend is obviously a schmuck, b) I'm sure your mother has already told you this, but she's right and I'll back her up: There are plenty of fish in the sea. Guys are a dime a dozen (good guys, however, are a different story altogether). Just get yourself back in the dating game and kick some ass.

I've been seeing this guy for about two months, and he's pretty cool. But he's 25 and still living with his mom. He doesn't seem to want to leave anytime soon, either. It's annoying because we get no alone time unless we're at my place, and I have roommates who hang out a lot in our apartment. Am I dating a loser? —Jessie, Huntington, N.Y.

Jessie, if your momma's boy significant other is really bothering you, make a change for the better. You're not necessarily doomed to dating loserdom, though. I don't suggest trying to change your boyfriend, but maybe dropping a few hints would help. If you've already dropped hints and you're still unsatisfied, then it's probably time to move on. It seems that you're both not really on the same page in terms of your lives and your brains.

Love,

Travis



WORD OF MOUSE

THIS SITE IS SOOOOOOOO SWEET THAT I WANT TO CRAP MY PANTS.

Some things get better with age—*The Warriors*, your finer cheeses, Rene Russo—but never one-joke websites. But damn if **The Official Ninja Webpage** (www.realultimatepower.net) doesn't continue to reduce the hardbitten and jaded to giggles months after the URL first made the e-mail rounds. It's akin to the Andrew W.K. of websites. There's the genius movie scripts of the Official Pump Up Part ("Then we see that the ninja was playing the guitar. Then all these babes start coming out of nowhere and the ninja starts wailing ever harder (if that's even possible)"). But really, the site is less timeless than ageless—it's always 11 years old.

memorabilia museum in Los Angeles • Trent Reznor, Maynard Keenan and others to finally complete **Tapeworm** project by the end of the year (Reznor is also talk-

“Again, I have to thank Eminem for introducing me to his fans. It’s been fun. Sincerely yours, Moby the ape-fucking cockface.”

—MOBY, APPRECIATING ALL THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK HE’S BEEN GETTING FROM EMINEM FANS AT MOBY.COM



5 SPOT

FIVE TUNES THAT SUM UP THE REID SPEED D’N’B MANIFESTO



WEIRD RECORD

Dragonriders Of Perm

Modern-day metal is for sissies, an overblown therapy session where every dreadlocked kid with a shitty childhood starts a band to whine about his pain. Rhapsody is taking metal’s focus back to where it should be: dragons, fire, sick masturbatory chops and, most, importantly, swords. Lots of ‘em! *Power Of The Dragonflame* is classical metal at its best (or worst, depending on who you ask), marrying Wagner-defying orchestral arrangements with guitar wheedling that makes Yngwie Malmsteen look like Kurt Cobain. Add song titles like “Steelgods Of The Last Apocalypse” and “The Pride Of The Tyrant,” lyrics like “The heart of the dragon is screaming awaiting!” and their “We shop at Sword Emporium” band photos, and you’ve got the perfect recipe for fiery folklore fun. “Agony Is My Name” sums it up best: “The rage of the heroes is in my hands/ The fury will rise, and soon they will taste my silver blade/ And they will face the prophecy, ‘cause agony is my name!” Think about that, Korn! >>>CAM’RON DAVIS

1. Markey & XRS Land feat. Stamina, “LK” Essential summer vibes, the kind that warm you from the inside out and leave you feeling funky. Spreads love over the dancefloor like butter.

2. John B, “Up All Night (Remix)” This is a minor-key take on the original, darker and a little more cinematic. A longer intro leads up to a deep, dark bassline rinse-out to keep you reminded that it’s really late, but you’re having such a good time dancing you’re still going strong.

3. Ming & FS, “The Most Dangerous Drip” Are you ready for some hip-hop drum ‘n’ bass? Are you ready for B-boys in Adidas getting down to business at 180 bpm? Can you handle the secret weapon?

4. Deee-Lite, *Pussycat Meow* I found this old-skool EP while digging through crates at UrbanWax in Gainesville, Fla. The first time I put it on, my cat looked everywhere frantically trying to find another pussy in her midst.

5. Angel Zero, “Satellite’s End” A beautiful segue to the dream state. I like this one to bring the crowd down from Cloud Dark and return them to sweeter, happier places. The piano breakdown gives me chills every time... and gives me a good note to end on.

Reid Speed’s debut mix, *Resonance*, is out now on *Breakbeat Science*.

ing up a new NIN record by year’s end, we’ll believe it when we see it) • **The White Stripes** are recording their next record, tentatively titled *Elephant*, for an >>>>

Go, Speed Racer

TEST DRIVE (INFOGRAMES FOR PS2, XBOX)

After taking racing to all manner of preposterous locations (Hawaiian volcanoes, Egyptian deserts, etc.), the *Test Drive* series has returned to the street. *Test Drive* plays like *The Fast And The Furious* with

Vin Diesel mercifully subtracted: Your character tears through the underground racing circuit, winning rivals' beautifully rendered rides, jumping off of everything that gets in your way with physics-defying leaps, and causing spectacular crashes.

(From which you always escape miraculously unharmed; great for winning, but cheats you of the death you'll wish for when you hear the Saliva-bearing soundtrack. Bring headphones.) >>>TOM MALLON

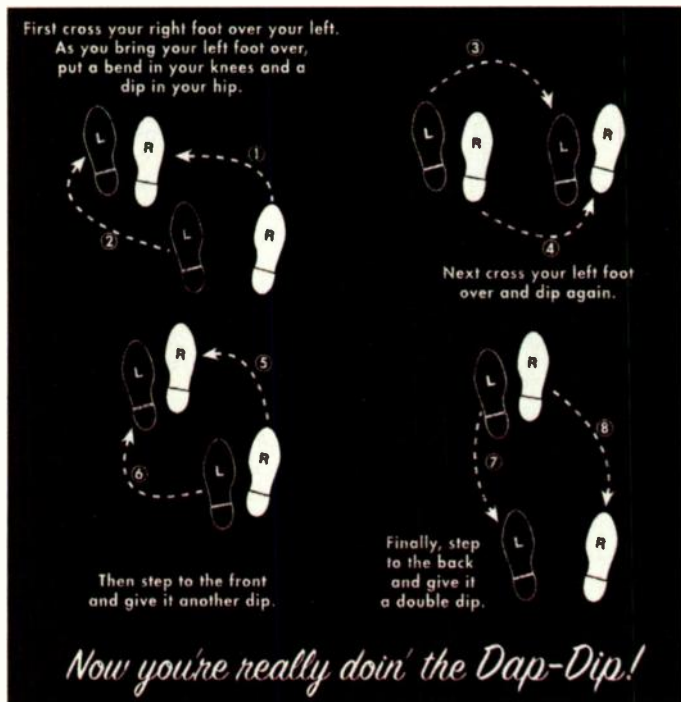



Soul Providers

Showbiz ain't what it used to be. Unless you're at a Sharon Jones And The Dap-Kings show, that is, where every night is a night at the Apollo. These Brooklynites are single-handedly restoring the funk to a garage-ravaged New York with a soul revue as authentic as you can get: an eight-piece band (in matching suits), a powerhouse singer and plenty of classic JB-descended grooves. "The

idea is to remind people what a show used to be like," says bassist/bandleader Bosco Mann (bearing suspicious resemblance to Antibalas bassist Gabriel Roth). "The clothes are really a small detail, but it helps people understand that we're all up there really working together; it's not just a bunch of guys in ripped jeans, doing their own thing and trying to get girls." Their mission is two-fold: First, to combat ironic hipster aloofness—"In '69, you were supposed to be smiling; it wasn't cool to be bored with the music"—and second, to get stiff crowds moving. (They even have their own dance, the "Dap Dip.") "That's one of our little crusades, to get people dancing again. There's a lot of head-bobbing going on in Manhattan. In Brooklyn, once you get a few songs in they go nuts on it, you see the Boogaloo and the Mashed Potato and everything," Mann says. "It's a flashback to 1969." >>>TOM MALLON

Do the Shy Tuna to Dap-Dippin' With Sharon Jones And The Dap-Kings (*Daptone*).



ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 

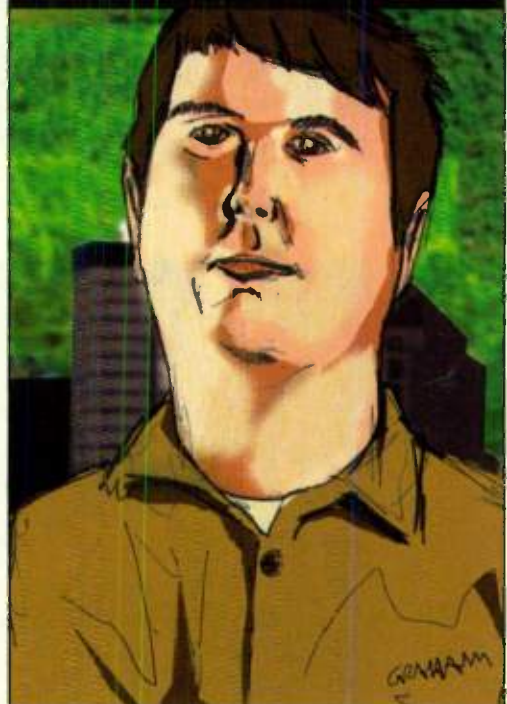
DREW GOREN

early 2003 release • **Marilyn Manson** replaces longtime bassist Twiggy Ramirez with former KMFDM-er Tim Skold • **Beck** to release seventh album Sept. 24th •

For the voyeur in all of us...



Ever wish you could've been a fly on the wall during the Def Leppard *Hysteria* tour? All that savory debauchery, that decadent lifestyle! Well, the new DVD diaries from both Ani DiFranco (*Render*) and the Poster Children (*Zero Stars*) are... absolutely nothing like that. The life of a D.I.Y. touring act—at DiFranco's level or the Children's—is thus: playing, chilling, playing, chilling, repeat until the van/bus breaks down. But these documentaries have the same Irresistible draw of the Discovery Channel; watching a noble species interact with their own habitat—savoring triumphs, fighting through adversity (interspersed with the aforementioned chilling)—is sometimes thrilling, sometimes boring, but always enlightening.



GRAHAM BRICE

MY FAVORITE GEAR: The Mooney Suzuki

Graham Tyler's custom guitar has seen more booze than Barney Gumble

Ask Mooney Suzuki guitarist Graham Tyler what the most important aspect of his band's energetic, maximum R&B sound is, and he'll point straight to his one-of-a-kind custom guitar. "It's absolutely crucial, as vital as my hands," he explains. The guitar's body was crafted from the top of the Old Absinthe Bar in New Orleans; it came to be when his father found that the bar was being torn down, and saw the landmark drinking surface carelessly tossed into the garbage. "My father, being a vintage/custom guitar freak was convinced that the wood possessed magical properties and needed to be sculpted into guitar form immediately." The fact that the same bartop once resided in a historic watering hole (The Old Absinthe House) that hosted such luminaries as the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, WC Fields and Mark Twain only enhanced the legend, and with the help of guitar guru Ed Roman, the mahogany slab was given a voice. Modeled after a 1964 Epiphone Crestwood Deluxe—"the finest looking, playing and sounding guitar in world...ever"—it features what Tyler calls a "flawless" neck profile and custom wound Seymour Duncan pickups. Which adds up to one word, according to the frenetic guitarist: "Awesome." >>>PETER D'ANGELO



IN MY ROOM

Who: John Atkins of 764-Hero
Where: His apartment in Seattle
Why: 764-Hero's *Nobody Knows This Is Everywhere* (Tiger Style) is a vision of guitar indie-pop utopia. John Atkins holds the guitar.

Someone's listening in
 I half-assedly collect reel-to-reel tape decks. I really like those early-'70s paranoia movies that always show someone being taped or bugged. They're always using these reel-to-reel tape decks. I probably have like 15 or 20 of those. I have a couple of the big home-stereo kinds, but mostly they're personal reel-to-reel, the early Walkman.

Balls to you
 We have a couple of gumball machines, mostly from eBay. One is full of those toys that you get in the capsule. It's a dime; it's called a "Toy Enjoy," so you can get a little knick-knack if you have a dime.

Sour sauce
 In the kitchen is a washcloth that my friend brought back from Japan. It's an advertisement for Mayo-Ketcha, which is a combination of mayonnaise and ketchup. It has a cartoon, where soy sauce is kind of irked by the arrival of a new condiment on the scene.

Founding member Isobell Campbell leaves Belle & Sebastian mid-tour, saying that "Belle & Sebastian was not the life for her anymore" * * * * *



SPARTA

Back in 2000, the rock cognoscenti were anointing At The Drive-In as music's next "it" band. Two years later, Sparta frontman Jim Ward has a different pronoun for his now-departed post-hardcore outfit: "that," as in "that band." "Everyday we woke up and did that band and then it was done, and you don't know what to do with yourself anymore," Ward says. Instead of looking back in anger at the best-of honors and planned arena gigs that band had collected before its collapse last year, Ward and fellow ATDI alums Tony Hajjar (drums) and Paul Hinojos

(guitar/vocals) decided that they still had music to discover. They added bassist Matt Miller, and the just-as-intense Sparta was born. The El Paso friends dropped the *Austere* EP in March, and a full-length boasting ATDI's signature tranquil-to-torturous dynamics is due this summer on DreamWorks. Is Ward worried that his new band could become "that" band? "We decided we'd be way more patient if somebody needs a break," he says, trembling at the possibilities. "But you think, if you're blessed with this life, why would you want to stop it?" >>>CHAD SWIATECKI



TIFT MERRITT

North Carolina native Tift Merritt chills on the patio of a wine bar in Raleigh's warehouse district, sporting a sunny smile. "People have been saying to me, 'When are you going to do a record? We've been waiting so long for a CD.' I'm like, 'I'm sorry. We're trying our best.' I feel like saying, 'Well, how do you think I feel? This has taken forever!'" Forever finally arrived when Lost Highway Records cut her a deal and set her up in L.A.'s Sound Factory studio with producer Ethan Johns (Ryan Adams's *Gold*). "I wrote every song on the album," Merritt notes of her debut, *Bramble Rose*, released in June. Onstage she's a wicked blend of sex appeal, emotional punch and Southern charm—a guitar-toting diva with a voice made to sing real country music. She also has a gift for writing literate, memorable songs, and a rock-solid band behind her. "We've been waiting at the gate to take these songs on the road," Merritt says. "Just get us in the van." >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK



THE VINES

Get Free," the first U.S. single from Australia's latest great rock 'n' roll export, might present the Vines simply as Kurt Cobain acolytes with an enviable gift for songwriting. But while the song's snarled, often screamed vocals and driving, dissonant guitars recall Nirvana at its finest, it shares space on the band's debut album with everything from loping psychedelia to harmony-drenched pop wonders. "I was like, flipping out before we made the album, because I had so many ideas in my head," says frontman Craig Nicholls, "and I needed to get it out, because I was going kind

of crazy." *Highly Evolved* was recorded with former Beck producer Rob Schnapf in L.A., where the group was discovered in the studio and quickly signed by Capitol Records president Andy Slater. "I wanted to make a work of art," says the ever-ambitious Nicholls. "That's what I wanted to do with this album." Some ideas, however, were simply too lofty. "I actually suggested us making a double album, for the first one," he happily admits. Instead, says Nicholls, "I've got all the songs for the next album. They're already done, and maybe a few are even left over for more." >>>DOUG LEVY



PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES

We just drove by The Thing? That's in here," Pretty Girls Make Graves drummer Nick DeWitt says, excitedly flipping through a list of 200-300 strange and bizarre destinations in an offbeat travel magazine ("The Thing," which swears viewers to secrecy, may or may not be a mummified baby). His band's tour van burns through the Southwestern desert in the middle of their biggest tour yet, one that kicked off in their hometown of Seattle with 764-HERO. PGMG have seen their share of mysterious roadside attractions since their urgent, neo post-punk release *Good Health* (Lookout) catapulted them out of their sleepy little seaside town and into the arms of America and beyond; their current tour of duty takes them across the States with Saves The

Day and Your Enemies' Friends before they head to Europe for the Reading and Leeds festivals. The members of this female-fronted five-piece, comprised of former Murder City Devils, Kill Sadie and Sharks Keep Moving conspirators, are no newcomers—and as with their built-up-then-broken-down hardcore rants, tearing down the anxiety and creating an equally cacophonous resolution is the way of the road. For every charged, rhythmic progression that spirals down to a quiet moment, frontwoman Andrea Zollo is there to incite a fresh, riotous riff, making their live shows—and, one can only assume, their lives—fairly tumultuous affairs. "Our new solution for easing the tension," reports DeWitt, "is water parks." >>>LAURA CASSIDY LEARMONTH

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 



Cousteau's
"five blokes
in suits" return
with *Sirena*,
another dose
of romantic
dissolution.



DEEPER INTO THE WATER

STORY: SCOTT FRAMPTON • PHOTO: MICHEL TEMTEME

That thing that makes you go a little soft—the warm scent at the nape of her neck, the look she gave when you fucked it all up? Cousteau has a song for that.

“The music is fairly emotional and candid, and that’s kind of a rare thing in the male world,” says the band’s songwriter and lyricist Davey Ray Moor, working a gift for understatement.

Men are famously bad with their emotions, stumbling through them like dads dancing tipsily at a wedding. That’s part of Sinatra’s genius; he could be a broken-hearted wreck and still not a pussy. To have a guy like Frank singing from the end of the bar about how he’s just able to keep it all together makes things better whether you’re a suburban barcalounger jockey or someone who never eats with his back to the door. For that, Moor has singer Liam McKahey.

McKahey’s wee-small-hours baritone weights lyrics like, “I wish I were you/ Then I wish I were dead,” (“She Don’t Hear Your Prayer,” from 2000’s *Cousteau*). And his rough look—“kind of a ‘man’s man,’ if you like”—sells to audiences of both sexes what Moor calls “the slightly ambivalent, the suspended nature of relationships and love and love lost and laughter and sorrow” explored on the bands slinkier, more soulful new *Sirena* (Palm).

“I think that’s what people like, because usually the men you find singing these days are just going to shout—shout about getting laid or beating someone up,” McKahey says, his chuckle suggesting that the shouting is for those who haven’t experienced enough of either. “I think it’s just kind of fortunate that people relate to the way I look and the way I’m portraying the songs, because the way I look is just the way I look. I’m covered in tattoos, but I’d be covered in tattoos whether I was doing this music or not, and I would be wearing a suit because that’s the way I looked before I met Davey,

and the first time I met Davey he was wearing a suit as well. It’s just the kind of people we are.”

And in that is the secret of this band, because Cousteau is something that in theory shouldn’t work, like a bumblebee not being aerodynamic enough to fly. Late in the Age Of Irony, building a band on piano, dramatic swells and hearts worn on bespoke sleeves—of course it’s going to come off as mannered. But between Moor and McKahey, the staginess of candlelit passion is transmuted into what Moor casually mentions as “the euphoria and the torment of relationships.”

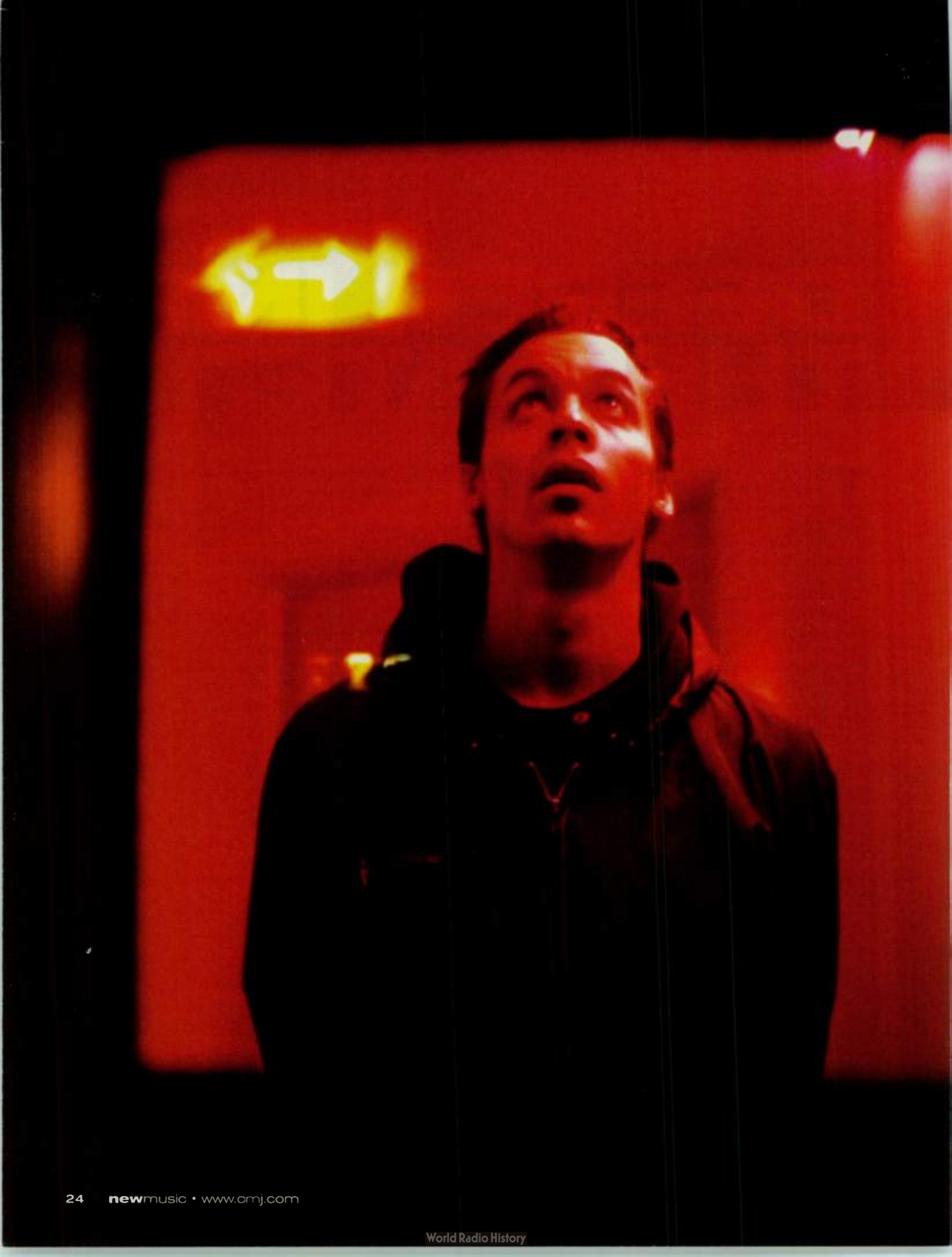
“I’m very lucky to have Liam as a lead singer, because he’s a very authentic character,” he continues. “He’s been method-acting these songs long before the songs turned up.”

“I think what he means is that I’ve led a particularly wild life,” McKahey responds later, “I’ve kind of cleaned my act up, but I’ve been living life to the fullest, let’s put it that way, and I’ve had many kind of dealings with people and many love affairs in my life. I think my life has qualified me to tell these stories with authority.”

“Basically, people long to hear in music something that they feel is close to their own emotional experience,” Moor says. “Nothing you long for more when you break up is a song that can partly describe it, make you feel less alone. Not just relationships, but trying to find your place in the world, or try to work out how you might fit into it, or deal with all the horrors that are in every newspaper. All human beings try to make some sense of it. That’s why we look to writers and musicians and stuff to try get the essence or the spirit of this experience in some sort of form that can move between people and make people less alone.”

“You don’t have to buy into it, you know,” McKahey concludes, “you either like it or you don’t. At the end of the day it’s just five guys with instruments playing good songs, and there’s not enough of that.” **NMM**

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 



modest ← mouth

You think emo kids have a complex? Atmosphere fights for rap's right to self-loathe.

STORY: CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN • PHOTO: DAN MONICK

"Don't call me emo, asshole!"

This not-uncommon underground sentiment isn't shouted, spoken or whispered—it's crooned. To the unmistakable tune of Sly And The Family Stone's "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey," no less.

Slug—the hyper-confessional, late-20-something Minnesotan indie hip-hop sensation born Sean Daley—is addressing his audience with the same self-deprecating humor and cross-pollinating cool that punctuates his conversational and lovelorn lyrics. As a member of Atmosphere (with reclusive producer Ant), he earned the acclaim of critics, garnered the adoration of maladjusted suburbanites and, thanks to 2001's girl-obsessed *Lucy Ford*, was scarlet-lettered with the dubious new subgenre signifier "emo-rap."

"[Women] took up a lot of my music because I grew into a phase where the revolution became more personal," Slug says. "Instead of trying to make the world a better place, I was just trying to make the square mile around me a better place."

Slug does little to shake his femme-fascinations on the latest Atmosphere release, *God Loves Ugly* (RSE-Fat Beats), a rap album that's more emo than ego, a self-doubting reaction to hip-hop's decades-long tradition of grandstanding and braggadocio. A devout fan of the denuded lyrics of Sunny Day Real Estate and Modest Mouse, Slug spits lines like, "I fell out of my stream of self-consciousness/ And I got welts on my mind to signify all my accomplishments"—lyrics that would seem more at home over indie-rock jangle than atop Ant's crusty DJ Muggs-meets-Ennio Morricone beats.

"[This] record wasn't supposed to have four girl songs on it. I intended for there to be none on that fucking record," says Slug, despite the fact that confrontations with the fairer sex inspired plenty of *God Loves Ugly*. "You got a girlfriend? Did your dog love the girl? You ever sit on opposite sides of the room and both call the dog at the same time and watch the dog go nuts trying to figure out which one of you he was gonna go to?"

I had two owners going, 'Come here, come here,' just to see what the fuck I was gonna do."

Slug finds the emo-rap tag annoying (despite the fact that he claims to have jokingly invented it himself while working on the emotionally charged Anticon-curated project *Deep Puddle Dynamics*), but his preoccupation with women certainly won't help him shake it. Nor will his confessional lyrics, van-based touring schedule or the white suburban kids that crowd his shows and scream back his every word. Accordingly, he's using a punk ethos to break down rap's longstanding fourth wall between spectator and performer.

"I go to shows and nobody has a hard time approaching me. Some little white kid with dreads sits me down and tells me how his uncle used to rape him, and this is all based on the fact that he feels I'm personable enough to approach," Slug says. "And that gets hard. Guru has people coming up to him giving him handshakes and pounds. I got kids that come up to me and tell me these tragic things. That's why I'm not a successful rapper," he adds. "I'm a successful indie-rock band."

God Loves Ugly is a beautiful and articulate testament to Slug's self-doubt. Slug says the album is tracked so that one of its six vinyl sides never has to be played, since "all three of the songs that suck are stuck together." The album cover is an absolutely hideous picture of Slug, who usually has the refined looks of a biracial soap star, taken after he was up for three days straight out of his gourd on ecstasy. And—have mercy on us all—one of the songs is even named "Saves The Day."

"That stuff is more fun to do to me than anything else. Let's name a song after a band just to fuck with the kids," Slug says. "And next thing you know, Saves The Day will be in an interview going, 'Yeah, we've been listening to a lot of Van Halen and Atmosphere.'"

"That's my way of going, 'You want me to be emo? Here!' My next record's called *The Get Up Kids!*" **NMM**

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

Worship And Tribute is the sound of **Glassjaw** living through the shit that makes them stronger.

STORY: AMY SCIARRETTO • PHOTO: STEPHEN STICKLER

Mom, I'm on the phone, doing an interview with someone very important and you're being very disrespectful by calling my name and picking up the phone every five minutes!" Glassjaw frontman Daryl Palumbo mock-whines through a thick New York accent. He covers the receiver briefly and returns, chuckling, "I love my mom. She's so cute."

The chatty, affable singer is home today and a bit under the weather. Palumbo has his daily battles with the intestinal illness Crohn's Disease, but he's also recovering from an off-the-hook, sold-out show the night before in his band's home base of Long Island. Glassjaw's notorious live energy and Palumbo's manic, flamboyant performances can leave him pretty banged up, and he's clearly cherishing this day of rest. Because rest is not something that appears on his calendar very often.

Glassjaw is about to leave for the first of several summer tours, including stints on both the punk rock-leaning Warped Tour and the metal extravaganza Ozzfest, all in support of their second album, the passionate and sonically dense *Worship And Tribute* (Warner Bros.), which will come



equipped with *Malva*, a limited edition art zine crafted by Palumbo and graphic design pal Matt Owens.

Worship And Tribute marks a broad change for Glassjaw. Two years ago, the quintet released their debut LP, *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Silence*, on producer Ross Robinson's imprint I Am, then through Roadrunner. Energized by Robinson's enthusiasm and a tour supporting the Deftones, the band experienced its first taste of security in their near-10 years together. A few months later, however, Robinson is taking his label to Virgin, and Glassjaw is wrangling out of its original deal, nearly breaking up in the process.

The new album is result of that tumult, with a strong sense of evolution and growth. It's confrontational and cathartic—like standing naked in a crowd and screaming excerpts from your journal.

Musically, Palumbo calls *Worship* "a plethora of music that stems from the whitest music with no dance capability, like the Smiths. There are parts with no fin-

ger snapping or booty thumping. Then, there are parts influenced by straight up soul." Guitarist and founding member Justin Beck is a neo-jazz freak, and that influence has reared its head alongside Palumbo's new wave and Elvis Costello fanaticism. Palumbo's deep hardcore and metal roots manifest themselves in the band's harmonically distorted, post-hardcore energy; the singer cites Anthrax's *Among The Living* as life-altering, and he sports "PMA" and "Quickness" logo tats, both nods to Bad Brains.

But Glassjaw refuses to be lumped in with Adidas rock or nü emo. "Those labels don't exist to us," offers Palumbo. "Glassjaw as an entity tries its hardest to not play to this scene. If that slows down my career, so be it. I'd rather be taking illustration classes than to be acquainted with these bands."

The music isn't the only thing that has progressed and matured for Glassjaw. On *Everything*, Palumbo was a teenager, and his youth and immaturity showed. He focused on a relationship gone sour, and didn't hold back in sharing the full extent of his emotions. Reactions to this were mixed: While many were touched by his

honesty and intimacy, others read his anger as misogyny—something Palumbo vehemently denies.

"Whether you do things that are wrong or make a conscious effort to change, you are going to change, whether you like it or not," he offers. "You don't know life when you're 18, no matter what you've been through. This album is me commenting on me, it's me realizing that women aren't the problem. They are a problem, as much as I am a problem. People are miserable things. We're destined to not click with the opposite sex and we tried so hard.

"*Worship And Tribute* is me looking back at the first record and saying, 'I said a lot things that were really risqué, and no matter what you feel, you can hurt people.' Then, my attitude was that if someone hits you, you hit them back, to defend yourself. I called someone a whore and I meant it because I was angry. Now, it's time for me to apologize and to grow. This [record] is the Daryl story." **NMM**



LABRY GORMAN, DARYL PALUMBO, DAVE ALEEN, TODD WEINSTOCK, JUSTIN BECK

wishful beginnings

STORY: TOM MALLON • PHOTOS: MARKUS KLINKO/INDRANI

David Bowie is rich. *Really* rich: He could buy your whole house with the change in his couch. Depending on who you ask for the estimate, his fortune ranges somewhere between 250 and a staggering 900 million dollars. In 1997, he released a drum 'n' bass record and still pulled down \$57 million (thanks to some savvy investing). This could lead you to call David Bowie a few things: a Midas, a Daddy Warbucks, a captain of industry. But what he really is, in 2002? An indie rocker.

Though he's been a major-label flagship artist for the past three decades, his latest business venture is his own record label, ISO. Ask him to talk about the events leading to this decision and you'll find out that in addition to being rich, David Bowie is also a diplomat. After spending nearly 20 years inside its walls, he watched the EMI empire begin to crack. When it became clear that the record he had just finished, *Toy* (mostly re-recordings of pre-*Space Oddity* tunes), was never going to come out, he quietly slipped out of his contract and became a free agent—no \$50 million payouts, no name-calling, no press-conferenced finger-pointing. In fact, save for a pair of press releases announcing his new label, ISO, and its subsequent distro deal with

Columbia Records, he did it with no fanfare whatsoever. When pressed for details, he gazes out the window as if the answer was written in the sky and offers answers that would do Kofi Annan proud.

"I should be careful about going into this stuff," he says measuredly. "*Toy* was never even heard by Virgin at any point. Before then, for a very long time, it had been slowly starting to disintegrate. I don't know if there was any real thought put into how marketing an album should be done... No focus whatsoever. The enthusiasm of [Virgin executive] Nancy Berry was really applaudable; she had enthusiasm for the right things. I mean, she fucking signed Photek for God's sake. But enthusiasm on its own, if it's not harnessed to some practicalities, it's not good enough. It was a chicken without a head."

So Bowie decided to make his own chicken, as it were: As the seeds of

David Bowie liked his music so much, he bought the company.





ISO grew, he shelved *Toy* and went to work on *Heathen*, his first collaboration with producer Tony Visconti since 1980's landmark *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)*. *Monsters*, his last album before wandering off into an '80s-corrupted creative desert, summed up all of the styles he explored in the '70s and was so perfect that it became his albatross—every good album he's put out since 1993's quasi-return-to-form *Black Tie White Noise* has been called "the best thing he's recorded since *Scary Monsters*." At its mention, Bowie lets out a groan.

"Oh! I get so tired of that! There's got to be a good three albums—even in the '90s," he laughs, throwing his hands up in mock despair. "I wanna hear, 'Best album since *Earthling*!'"

Bowie might get his wish; everything from now on might be referred to as "the best thing he's recorded since *Heathen*." For his 23rd record, rock's most famous "chameleon" has shed the genre-as-new-pair-of-pants approach of his late-'90s output and delivered his most "Bowie" record since, well, *Scary Monsters*: a brooding, genreless, post-millennium tension set that mixes the existential questioning and sonic experimentation of classics like *Low* and "*Heroes*" with *Monsters*' pop structures. There's no Ziggy Stardust here, no Thin White Duke, just David Bowie, 55, confused about life and writing songs about it.

"There was a concerted effort to be exactly that," Bowie says of the "genreless" tag. "I took away all my safety nets. I didn't use my stage band; I worked with entirely new people because I wanted Tony and I to go in and not repeat anything that we'd done before."

To give *Heathen* a personal feel, Bowie took a D.I.Y. approach, playing more instruments on it than he has on anything since 1974's *Diamond Dogs*. He handled keyboards, guitars, sax and even drums (on an oddball cover of the Pixies' "Cactus"), and only brought in other musicians (including heavyweights like Pete Townshend and Dave Grohl) after the basics had been laid down. The new hands-on policy was due in part to the spirit of the experiment and in part to necessity via professional incompetence. "I played stuff that I guess wasn't terribly musicianly, but it just felt right. Then a professional musician would come in, and I'd say, 'Play that.' And he'd play that, and I'd say, 'That sucks. That sounds so professional. Thank you very much, here's your money, go away,'" he laughs. "I'd say to Tony, 'Let's just keep my part, that was awful.' I'm not going to mention any names."

When it came time to record vocals, Bowie found himself in what's-it-all-mean mode, a mode that received an even bigger question mark when, as he was wrapping up vocal takes, the World Trade Center was destroyed mere blocks from the apartment where his wife and baby daughter were. "There were certain lines that would come up [afterwards], and we'd go, 'Oh God, what do we do?' There was actually one where I said, 'Do I change this lyric?' It was, 'There's fear overhead, there's fear

overground... There's fear in the skies... I was just like 'Tony, I can't do it. It sounds so crass!' But what it did pinpoint was that sense of anxiety, that low-level tension, was there and has been there for a very long time. Because I was writing exactly about that thing, it's just that it manifested itself so brutally a month or so afterwards. On the other hand, they are universal anxieties. You could take virtually any Dylan album and play it after Sept 11th and say, 'Fuck, he was spot on, wasn't he?' Well yeah, he was, 30 years ago, it's just how it's juxtaposed. It's just one of those things."

After its official launch with the release of *Heathen*, ISO will be on the backburner while he tours (on his own and on Moby's *Area:Two* fest)—"I can't stop making music to set the record company up, so I've got to do a little

"I'm a born manager. I see other acts and know what they're doing wrong. I wanna kick them, I wanna say, 'Oh God, you've got so much talent, don't you know you're pissing it all away?'"

plate-spinning to get everything moving at the same time," he says—but afterwards Bowie plans to dedicate himself more fully to ISO, which will see him signing new talent and revealing his hidden passion: artist management. "There's no oldies, I'm not resurrecting Goldie, as much as I'd love to," he says, visibly perking up at thinking about how to fix someone else's career. "I'd love to take Goldie in the studio, he needs supervising. I'm a born manager. I see other acts and I know what they're doing wrong. I wanna kick them, I wanna say, 'Oh God, you've got so much talent, don't you know that you're pissing it away?' All these stupid stars."

Though he's approaching 60, Bowie has no intention of retiring or going into management. "Because of the personalities involved," he snickers. "Ha! I like the creative side of it, but you get a lot of bitching afterwards." In fact, he's found that getting his hands dirty, career-wise, has given his writing the jump-start it needed.

"There are these activated periods where you suddenly get enobled again, where you suddenly have an epiphany, 'This is it.' It happened on this album. I knew already by four or five pieces in that it was really good stuff, that I was working in a very reignited way. I found it so satisfying to have done this album and have it turn out successfully, that it really made me think that possibly I've got a good few years of maybe some of my best writing ahead," he says. "I haven't felt like that in quite some time." **MMM**



STEVEN DROZD, WAYNE COYNE, MICHAEL IVINS

More weirdness
with minor chords
talking about death
and confusion

THE FLAMING LIPS

What if the
Flaming Lips have
a new record
about life's battles
and a movie
about Christmas
on Mars? Wouldn't
that be great?

Wayne Coyne's creative mission for the evening is to get the pants off his manager's young intern.

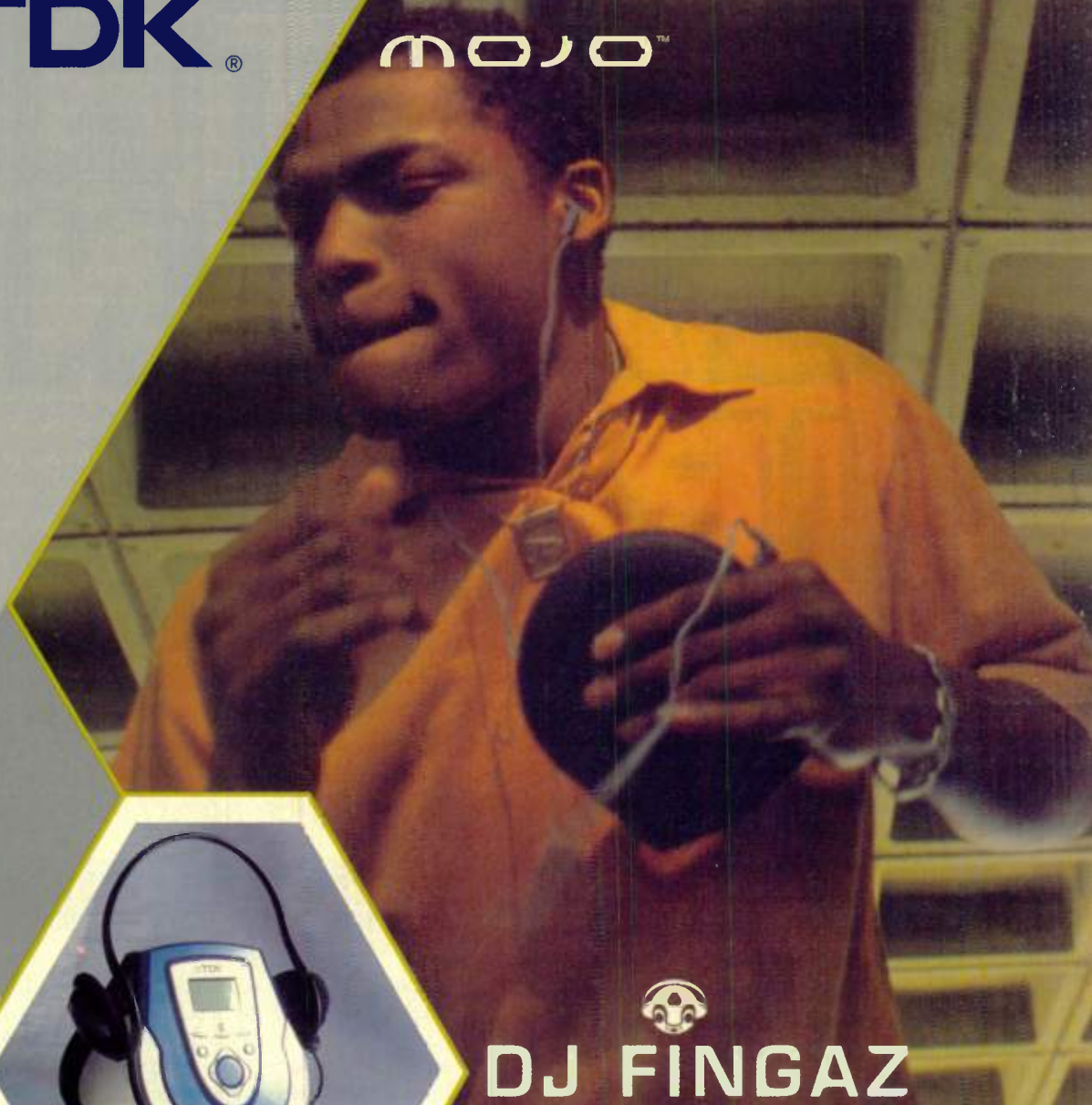
It's a chilly January night in an almost-gutted building a few miles south of Oklahoma City. The intern, a husky, bespectacled fellow named Jason, plays a small but memorable role in *Christmas On Mars*, Coyne's feature-film-in-progress. The Flaming Lips frontman has made Jason the centerpiece of what is officially the "cosmic reality" scene, but is more commonly referred to as "the butt shot."

Like Bart Simpson, Coyne has his own factory. The owner of this former cement plant didn't exactly hand over the key, but he told Coyne where there was a break in the barbed wire, big enough to get through the generator, lights and cameras. If the first "trespassers will be shot" sign doesn't bother you, the

second one won't either. Trudge over the dirt and cinder blocks and metal panels covering various holes in the ground and you reach the space tunnel, which Coyne built out of a concrete drying well: a 40-foot-long rectangle refinished with several hundred Dura-vent baffles as well as pipes, insulation, air conditioning conduits and fluorescent tubes. On one wall is a palmprint-activated control panel—in reality a *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius* toy with its audio chip removed, combined with a fire-alarm keypad and some little orange bulbs. Coyne was here building the set well into last night, and again this morning. Now it's 10 p.m., and the crew is working on take nine. No clothes are coming off just yet. Coyne and cinematographer Bradley Beesley (director of the Lips-soundtracked documentary *Okie Noodling*, about catching catfish with your hands) are blocking

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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

the flaming lips

COUSTEAU

Pretty Girls Make Graves

ATMOSPHERE

Jucifer • Tiara

JULY 2002 • ISSUE 103

15. PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES "Speakers Push The Air" *Good Health (Lookout)*
Seattle's Pretty Girls play saucy, trashy rock with a feminine tinge that recalls riot grrrl icons Bikini Kill and Sleater-Kinney, but claim inspiration from the Smiths (not Kerouac) in both the band's name and lyrical approach. (See On The Verge p. 19.)

16. SWEARING AT MOTORISTS "This Flag Signals Goodbye" *This Flag Signals Goodbye (Secretly Canadian)*
This Dayton, Ohio duo boasts an ex-Guided By Voices tagline (drummer Don Thrasher was a *Bee Thousand* ~~CBV~~-er) and a similarly graceful pop sensibility. (See Review p. 58.)

17. SALOON "Le Weekend" *This Is What We Call Progress (Darla)*
Amanda Gomez's gauzy vocals float happily amid the glockenspiels and melodicas of Saloon, coasting through Stereolab territory, just a few feet above the more twee fields of Belle & Sebastian. (See Review p. 56.)

18. STEROID MAXIMUS "Chain Reaction" *Ectopia (Ipecac)*
As Foetus, Jim Thirlwell has always laid down industrial tracks with a hint of cinematic menace; on the instrumental *Ectopia*, he brings his directorial tendencies to the forefront. (See Review p. 57.)

19. TULIPOMANIA "I Swear" *Tulipomania (Tulipomania.com)*
Taking its name from the wild, Internet economy-like speculation in the tulip bulb market of the 1600s, this Bristol, PA four-piece girds trilling falsetto with shimmering new wave guitars.

20. AMPLIFY "Shine" *Amplify (amplifymusic.com)*
Billing themselves as "a Madison Square Garden show on a Brooklyn budget," this New York-area band overlays pop hooks with the heavy muscularity.

21. LUNG COOKIE "In The News" *Super Mediocrity (Naked Jaim)*
Their previous release, *Zymurgy*, celebrated all things beer, but it's the musician-ship that's tight for for this Palm Springs/Big Bear, Calif. band on their driving second release.

cut along dotted lines, fold and insert into jewel case



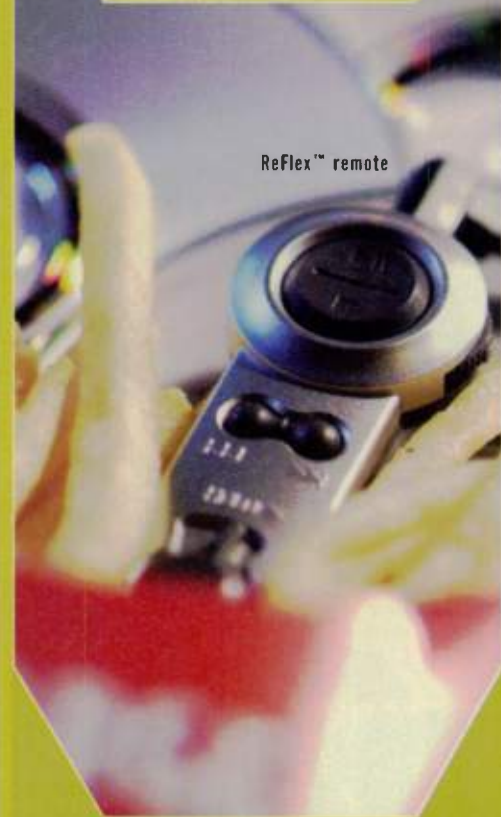
1. **COUSTEAU** "Talking To Myself" *Sirena* (Palm)
"We're fairly open about the vicissitudes of that heart," says Cousteau songwriter Davey Ray Moor of his band's lush approach to pop. (See Feature p. 22.)
2. **THE FLAMING LIPS** "Do You Realize?" *Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots* (Warner Bros.)
One thing the Flaming Lips' 19-year lifespan should've taught you: The Oklahoma City trio is not to be underestimated. The band may have actually one-upped the ingenuity of *The Soft Bulletin* with their new LP. (See Cover Story p. 32.)
3. **THE TRAGICALLY HIP** "It's A Good Life If You Don't Weaken" *In Violet Light* (Zoë-Rounder)
Popular acclaim may remain ever-elusive south of the Canadian border, but the Tragically Hip return yet again with their ninth studio album of melodic alt-rock. (See Review p. 60)
4. **TIARA** "Wish You Away" *Titletron* (Grand Theft Autumn)
Languid and layered, Tiara's fuzzed-out melodies were sown of the same seeds as fellow Midwesterners Built To Spill and Guided by Voices. And look Ma, no phony British accents! (See Review p. 59.)
5. **JUCIFER** "Vulture Story" *I Name You Destroyer* (Velocette)
This Athens, Ga. pair do their best to make a whole lotta noise; the more dirge-like turns are only the eye of a wreckage-inducing rock hurricane.
6. **PUFFY AMIYUMI** "Puffy's Rule" *An Illustrated History* (Bar/None)
Two things made Puffy (Ami and Yumi) into pop sensations in their native Japan: a Hello Kitty-rivaling merchandising arm, and surprisingly long-lasting bubblegum melodies. Check "Puffy's Rule" and judge if that formula might work Stateside.
7. **KING OF WOOLWORTHS** "Colcannon" *Ming Star* (Mantra-Beggars Group)
This alter-ego of Mancunian Jon Brooks is cinematic—in that *Hammer House Of Horror* sense—electronic loopiness realized with downtempo grooves and trippy samples. (See Best New Music p. 42.)
8. **ATMOSPHERE** "Modern Man's Hustle" *God Loves Ugly* (RSE-Fat Beats)
Minneapolis backpack hip-hopper Slug teams up with Producer Ant for another stab at deconstructing the mysteries of the opposite sex. (See Feature p. 24.)
9. **SHARON JONES AND THE DAP-KINGS** "Pick It Up, Lay It In The Cut" *Dap-Dippin' With Sharon Jones And The Dap-Kings* (Daptone)
On her first full-length, Sharon Jones works it like its 1967, her smoky voice backed by the rock-solid Kings. The result is lively funk with a whole lotta soul. (See Quick Fix p. 16.)
10. **20 MILES** "Silver String" *Keep It Coming* (Fat Possum-Epithaph)
A side project of Jon Spencer Blues Explosion guitarist Judah Bauer (with brother Donovan on drums), 20 Miles gets the post-punk take on bluesy rock right. (See Review p. 46.)
11. **RACHAEL SAGE** "Trouble" *Illusion's Carnival* (MPress)
This NYC singer-songwriter fuses art with popcraft that's won her both the ASCAP Pop Songwriting Contest (twice) and the John Lennon Songwriting Contest.
12. **HEM** "Half Acre" *Rabbit Songs* (Waveland)
The soothing and subtly melancholic voice of Hem's Sally Ellyson pulls you into this collection of richly orchestrated, earthy and atmospheric folk lullabies. (See Best New Music p. 42.)
13. **CINERAMA** "Starry Eyed" *Torino* (Manifesto)
David Gedge euthanized the Wedding Present 1997 to turn his attentions to the classic pop and film score affinities of this appropriately named project, the perfect venue for his musings on love, lust and romance. (See Review p. 48.)
14. **THE WAXWINGS** "Clouded Over" *Shadows Of The Waxwings* (Bobsled)
From Detroit, with bright pop guitars and wandering harmonies—think Matthew Sweet with some Beach Boys-esque good vibrations. (See Review p. 61.)

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a medium shot. They're careful not to film Jason from the waist down, since he's covered up. They also promise that when the time comes, his crotch won't be on camera.

"Someone give me a dollar!" Jason says. "I want to be able to say I sold my ass for a dollar."

He's a trooper, and not just 'cause he's willing to drop trou. It may sound like fun, being in a movie with and by the Flaming Lips, but mostly it's about enduring hour after hour of hot lights on-camera and wintry air off it, with no indoor plumbing and only Taco Bell, Dum Dums and Sam's Club cookies for sustenance.

"I'm like *Fight Club*, where they tell the guys on the porch to come back in three days," Coyne says. "I only work with people who really want to be in the movie."

It almost feels like the second record.

The Flaming Lips are peers of Sonic Youth and the Butthole Surfers. Ten years ago, they were swept onto a major label in the wake of Nirvana, just like everybody else. With the release of *Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots*, they've made 11 records. But 1999's *The Soft Bulletin* was a complete rebirth, as Coyne, Steven Drozd and Michael Ivins left behind the dissonant guitars and some (but not all) of the cartoon surrealism to make a brilliant, deeply affecting rock 'n' roll masterpiece swimming in ideas, emotion and sound.

They also became the first band to give a credible rock 'n' roll performance without really playing instruments. Onstage, Drozd, who used to be the drummer but is now the band's primary all-around musical force, handled keyboards and guitar. Ivins played his bass. But more music than not was computerized or pre-recorded. The band had no idea if it would work.

"People were either gonna love that we were doing something different or they were gonna say, 'These fucking poseurs, they think they're Depeche Mode,'" Coyne says.

So do you guys even have defined roles within the band at this point?

Coyne: It's mostly like, I sing, Steven plays everything and Michael, he's more an assistant to [co-producer Dave Fridmann]. So much of it now is just technical junk. We sort out what to play and Michael and Dave sort out how it works. People are drawn to stuff like the Strokes or the White Stripes, the idea of, there's the drummer who plays drums, and the guitarist who plays guitar. People still see it in us, but that's so restricting. If it was up to me to play guitar, there would be nothing to do. I can hold a guitar. I can stand there and do something interesting, but it won't be playing the guitar. Thank God we moved away from our ability versus our imagination. Now we can actually think of things and go do them. None of it felt brave. A lot of people were trying to get away from the plain old guitar attack that was left over from Dinosaur Jr. and My Bloody Valentine.

Like Radiohead?

Radiohead has a choice. Radiohead goes and does crazy music and is more popular because of it, and I say awesome. They could play into the commercial Radiohead mold, but they choose not to. That's the difference between them and us. We're doing all we can here. It isn't like we're going, "Oh, let's be weird for a while, Steven." "Well, Wayne, we could do the post-grunge classic rock or we could do the Aphex Twin Eno soundscapes." I don't think we have that choice. This is the only music we can do. It's not like we were having all kinds of success the other way.

In fact, the Lips were all but done as a commercial proposition in 1994.

"Oh yeah, we were on the short list [to get dropped from Warner Bros.]," Coyne says. "Then 'She Don't Use Jelly' started to happen and they were like, 'Oh the Lips, they're selling 8,000 copies a week.' It looked as though we might sell a million records, so they said, 'Fuck, we should hold onto these guys.' Little did they know it was going to dry up at 250,000. So then they said, 'Fuck, you guys sold 250,000 records—you might sell a million next time. And we made *Clouds Taste Metallic*."

Which sold less than 50,000.

"We got lucky. We were already contracted to do *The Soft Bulletin*."

Even that could have been like *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, brilliant or otherwise—a "difficult" release with no platinum potential. But its international success and critical acclaim bought the band further life, even after America Online took over Warner.

Still, Coyne wouldn't blink an eye if the Lips ever got the Wilco treatment. "I know if we're not making money they should drop us," he says. "I always know that."

Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots gets its title from a guest appearance by Yoshimi (of Japanese legends the Boredoms and OOIOO), though much of her work (including trumpet playing) is actually on the *Christmas On Mars* score. What's not clear is what the inspiration was ("Yeah!" Drozd chimes in when this question is brought up).

"We had [what became] 'Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots Part II,' the instrumental," Coyne says. "We had put a title to it, but didn't want it to stick—sometimes you get a dumb title and before you know it the song is called that." Long story short, Yoshimi's screaming on the instrumental suggested the title. Then the title inspired a whole other song, which Coyne describes as light relief from a record full of "death and existentialism left over from *The Soft Bulletin*."

"This was just a little bit more playful," he says. "You can sing along to it, it doesn't mean anything."

Not so. The track is a perfect thematic fit. Yoshimi is us. The Pink Robots are life's battles. As Coyne sings on the opening track, "Fight Test," "I'm a man not a boy/ And there are things you can't avoid/ You have to face them/ When you're not prepared to face them." Coyne never shies away from meaning or emotion; it's just that if the subject is, for example, death, he'd sooner write a song called "It's Summertime (Throbbing Orange Pallbearers)" than a

LOCALZINE



SEETHER



THE DOORS NIGHTCLUB

Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA

Let's dispel a few myths about South Africa, shall we? There are no wild animals running freely in the streets of Johannesburg, no one rides an elephant to work and you won't contract unpronounceable diseases upon setting foot on the sunny country (a small detail Michael Jackson was apparently not informed of). In fact, Johannesburg is, in many ways similar to Los Angeles—without the silicon and bleach—and it has as vibrant a music scene.

Curious about the ins and outs of Johannesburg's rock community? Local loud-rockers Seether will be glad to take you on a guided tour of their hometown.

If you're looking to be entertained in Johannesburg, the best place to head is the suburb of **Melville**, which is situated on the northern outskirts of this bustling metropolis we like to call home. Numerous restaurants offering anything from sushi to nachos and everything in between—including some kickass burgers—are scattered throughout. (Of course if you're homesick or just plain unadventurous, you'll also find the best **Kentucky Fried Chicken** and **McDonald's** in the whole damn city.) And it's cheap, to boot: If you consider the current exchange rate sitting at about 10 rand to one dollar, you'll get some serious mileage out of your hard-earned buck. With Starbucks sucking your wallet dry like an industrial-strength Electrolux, you'll appreciate the ability to pick up a cup of really mean coffee for the equivalent of \$.50 American.

Nestled in between all the fine eateries of Melville, you may stumble (beer, \$.75; glass of wine, \$.65—you're going to stumble) across the best nightclubs in town. If you're looking to take in some of the local bands in action you won't have to look any further. **The Bassline** (7 Seventh St., 011-482-6915) plays host to the cream of South African jazz and the occasional rock band playing an unplugged set. (Seether played our first live unplugged show there.) It has a really chilled-out atmosphere, and some really eccentric patrons.

If rock music is your thang, then check out **Roxy's Rhythm Bar** (20 Main Road, 011-726-6019). This is the club to play at, as it's seen the greatest names in South African rock and hip-hop pass through its fine steel doors. It's also a great place to see many of the local musicians just hanging out on the armchairs upstairs or taking in a leisurely game of pool or pinball. Another cool rock hangout is situated at the **Randburg Waterfront** (Corner of Republic Rd. and Randburg Waterfront Rd., 011-789-5052) in adjacent suburb Randburg (strange, that). It's where Seether got our first break, at a place called **Morgan's Cat** (Shop 137, Randburg Waterfront, 011-886-4408). The best time to visit is on a Sunday afternoon, when you'll be able to watch the sunset as local bands compete inside. If you like, ponder to your inner child and partake in some arcade games; blowing the crap out of zombies is great stress relief, trust us. The flea market at the waterfront is open seven days a week, and it's a good place to find some interesting items. (Yeah, you've got your sex shop, but we're talking about art and trinkets and things.) Stalls offer anything from leather clothing to African art, body jewelry, Playstation games, travel bags, CDs, cell phones, Bonsai trees, pets, comic books, underwear, toys—you think of it, it's there. If you want some good jerky—the real kind made from thick strips of beef—this is the place for you. They've got jerky (or biltong as we call it) in all shapes and sizes; you could even get yourself a jerky kebab with samples of all the varieties on offer. For the jerky connoisseur in you, there's no better place. Its only drawback is how easy it is to get lost in there.

"So how do I get to Johannesburg?" I hear you ask, a hint of desperation in your slightly quivery voice. Well my friends, you can have all the jerky you can eat in no time. Buy yourself a round-trip ticket from the good people at **South African Airways** (www.flysaa.com) or **Delta Air Lines** (www.delta.com), for the measly sum of \$1500 or so. Then, book a five-star hotel at rates starting at \$100 per night, and if you're thinking of hiring a car, you should be able to get a nice BMW for about \$25 to \$30 a day. You've got to love that exchange rate. Just remember, we drive on the left side of the road.



MONTECASINO

LOCAL LOGIC: JOHANNESBURG'S BEST

TRIBAL TATTOO HEAVEN: Millennium Tattoo at the Rock Cottage Shopping Center for the coolest atmosphere and great artists. Ask for Grant or John if you're looking for the best shading; these guys really take pride in their work.

SUNDAY EVENING CHILL SPOT: Buggy's Beat Bar (Randburg) serves the best sangria in the Southern Hemisphere.

A SLICE OF ITALY IN THE HEART OF THE CITY: Montecasino (Fourways) is a combination of arcades, clothing stores, restaurants, cinemas and a casino, recreated by artists who went to Italy to reproduce absolute authenticity. The ceiling's painted to look like the sky, and the lighting creates a late-afternoon setting 24 hours a day. The floor's even painted to look like cobblestones.

NON-BRITNEYish CLUB: The Doors (Edenvale) is a converted old movie theatre which has become the coolest club around. All manner of loud rock blares out of the speakers until the early hours of the morning. Also has four bars for quick service and no lengthy queues!

THE SCARIEST PLACE ON EARTH: If adrenaline is your thing, try Gold Reef City (Glen Vista) and charge your pace-maker batteries. A museum cunningly disguised as an amusement park that's a good place to learn about the initial gold rush in South Africa and general background info on Johannesburg itself, it also has a casino and hotel for those with larger wallets.



SEETHER BIG-UPS THE (WAX) POPE



THE BASSLINE



BLASTING ZOMBIES AT MORGAN'S CAT



GOLD REEF CITY



HEM 
Rabbit Songs
 Waveland-Bar/None



Rabbit Songs doesn't sound like a product of Brooklyn; it doesn't have a single ounce of the noise, attitude or retro-throwback irony that has once again made a musical hipster mecca. In fact, this is probably the warmest, saddest little roots record the borough's ever produced. It's taken two years for *Rabbit Songs* to get released in the band's own backyard—it came out overseas in 2000, and is only now seeing Stateside release by Bar/None—but each track still feels fresh out of the oven. Bear in mind, though, that your head will be in the oven along with them; these songs are absolutely beautiful, but are absolutely depressing, to boot. Main songwriter and pianist Dan Messé makes each song a regret-soaked cryfest, where delicate pianos, lightly plucked guitars and mandolins and syrupy strings coat lyrics like, "So we carry every sadness with us/ Every hour our hearts were broken/ Every night the fear and darkness lay down with us." Hem's secret weapon is the strikingly beautiful voice of Sally Ellyson, whose gauzy vocals have never graced a recording before (save the homemade demo that got her into the band). Ellyson injects Messé's already melancholy Americana with the final heartbreaking touch, coming across something like Hope Sandoval on downers. Crippling sadness never sounded so sweet. >>>TOM MALLON

Link
www.rabbitsongs.com
 File Under
 Glad for sadness
 R.I.Y.L.
 The Kingsbury Manx,
 Cowboy Junkies, Hope Sandoval

KING OF WOOLWORTHS



Ming Star
 Mantra-Beggars

It's hard not to wince at the thought of yet another downtempo (a candidate for the year's most over-milked trend) record making our lives blander than ever with its low-key beats. But *Ming Star*, the debut album by King Of Woolworths (a.k.a. the U.K.-based Jon Brooks), stands out in a phalanx of "neo" inspired losers. It doesn't try to be something it's not—no bossa nova retreats, no Norteño timpani flourishes, no adulterated jazz missteps. Brooks's frequent use of the vibraphone (notably "Bakerloo") comes off as a subtle homage to the Latin jazz great Cal Tjader as opposed to a sample-laden rip-off. On the best tracks, like "Kentish Town," "To The Devil In A Donut" and "Theydon," which border on superb, Brooks unfolds gentle swaths of sound: Guitar hooks ebb and flow with burbling sound effects, space-rock synths throb in the background, wispy snares lick the edges of gorgeous melodic sweeps faintly underpinned by shuffling beats à la Air's *Moon Safari*. One weakness pops up around the middle of the album ("Stalker Song"), when Chemical Brothers-inspired acid loops ring too shrill for the delicate compositions they're paired with. But this is a minor blemish; *Ming Star* plays as delightfully as a galaxy full of twinklers. >>>ADRIENNE DAY



Link
www.kingofwoolworths.co.uk
 File Under
 Up with the down stroke
 R.I.Y.L.
 Barry Adamson, Tosca,
 High Llamas

ALEX LLOYD

Watching Angels Mend

Nettwerk America

There's this thing, hard to put your finger on just what it is, but it makes you feel somewhat ill when listening to, say, David Gray. Sure, there's quality there, but something makes you feel like it's made more for the Dave Matthews fandom than you. That's the funny thing about Alex Lloyd—he has that MOR meticulous polish, sure, and had they not cancelled *Felicity* you can be sure that tracks from *Watching Angels Mend*, his second LP, would be soundtracking every damn episode. But then, there's more to the Aussie singer/songwriter than a showroom sheen: There's that undeniable pop skill, that inherent gift that seems so natural and unforced that you can't even hate him for it—standout tracks "Green" and "Bus Ride" are pure mope-ish modern-pop gifts. Lloyd's just a born pop guy, one of those people lucky enough to have been blessed with both an engaging voice and The Secret to pop songwriting that just can't be taught or learned. Still, you can read his studies: Lloyd clearly took copious notes from his Beatles records on chorus hooks, with verse crib sheets from current bands like Travis. Scoff if you will, lo-fi purists, but *Angels* creates what one might call the "Tiny Dancer" Effect: No scene points awarded for admitting it aloud, but you know damn well it kicks your ass. >>>NICOLE KEIPER



Link

www.alexlloyd.com

File Under

Hold me closer, Alex Lloyd

R.I.Y.L.

Ed Harcourt, David Gray,
Paul McCartney, Travis

MASERATI

The Language Of Cities

Kindercore



Link

www.kindercore.com/maserati.html

File Under

Gritty-yet-melodic instrumental rock

R.I.Y.L.

Tristeza, Slint,
the Mercury Program

Kindercore ain't what it used to be. When the Athens, Ga.-based label signed *Road Warrior*-tough local four-piece Maserati, they incorporated a skull in their logo to mark their departure from the slaphappy world of bands like the Sunshine Fix. Unlike many of their indie-pop labelmates, the members of Maserati prefer Hot Wheels to hopscotch, and the weighty instrumental musings of bands like Tristeza to sticky '60s-inspired bubblegum tunes. A couple of them even cut their teeth in a Slint cover band, dubbed, in true rock-nerd fashion, Splint. As a follow-up to their self-released debut, 39:29:24, Maserati initiate their hometown label's new rock division with *The Language Of Cities*. Sprawling and spiraling guitars dominate slow-rockers like "Ambassador Of Cinema," and store up energy to fuel explosive numbers like "The Language." "Keep It Gold" captures the band's hard-hitting and heavy, drummer-in-front stage show, as well as the band's in-unison split-second shriek, the only vocal track on the record. The beautiful, brief piano ballad "A Common Interest In Silence" embodies all the delicate nuances that can get lost amid the driving rock onstage. It was a bold move for Kindercore to venture outside the Dressy Bessy shtick, but well worth the risk. Fresh with the sheen and speed of a new Italian roadster, Maserati has a ton of potential. *The Language Of Cities* is a rich beginning. >>>KARA ZBARO



RJD2 Dead Ringer

Def Jux



Much has been made of Moby's fusion of gospel/soul samples with electronic beats. Forget about it. Here's the record you might have if Moby's *18* were actually good: a mix of gritty, lo-fi beats, melancholy gospel and soul, devoid of slickness and brimming with off-kilter sound juxtapositions. On *Dead Ringer*, RJD2's first full-length solo outing, he makes an impressive argument for the cult of producer-as-artist. Rather than cobbling together an hour's worth of backing tracks, RJ (who's worked with MF Doom, Souls Of Mischief and Mos Def) approaches his instrumentals with a songwriter's touch, giving them verses, choruses and hooks and never repeating himself to the point of boredom. For a full picture of his abilities, check the perfect trifecta of "Smoke & Mirrors," "Good Times Roll Part 2" and "Final Frontier." In the space of three tracks, RJ moves from atmosphere-laden rainy-day soul to pumping sampled Stax horns to a banging track that props up Blueprint's rhymes with swatches of acoustic guitar, vibraphone and piano. His attention to sonic detail separates him from his lo-fi peers, especially on tracks like "Smoke & Mirrors," which delicately stacks swirling strings, weeping horns and crackling beats on top of a pair of woe-is-me vocal samples that would have the bald one running for his checkbook. RJ's delivered one of the best debuts since *Endtroducing*, and what stands to be the best instrumental hip-hop record of the year. >>>TOM MALLON

Link

www.definitivejux.net

File Under

Beats that don't need rhymes

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Shadow, Coldcut, Cut Chemist

THE VINES Highly Evolved

Capitol

So far, 2002 has been a good year for Beatles-esque bands, what with Super Furry Animals' masterful *Rings Around The World* and now this debut by Australia's the Vines. The difference is that SFA took from the Fab Four their polish while the Vines have borrowed their thrift: *Highly Evolved* is a fast-moving, restless album informed by punk, new wave and Britpop but admirably indebted to no one. Fronted by vocalists Craig Nicholls (guitar) and Patrick Mathews (bass), the four-piece is equally comfortable churning out two-minute bash-and-pop ("Get Free," "Outtathaway!") and six-minute epics ("Mary Jane," "1969"). But it's the consistently strong songcraft that impresses—the throbbing "Sunshinin'" feels as carefully constructed as the ruminative, piano-based "Homesick" or the ska-bouncy "The Factory." The British press have already dubbed the Vines as "Beatles playing punk," which prompts the question: Didn't Kurt Cobain already try that? You bet, and the fact that the Vines even come close to that blend—it helps that Nicholls's voice is a dead ringer for Cobain's—is an achievement, after a decade of bands aping the dopey, quiet-loud half of Nirvana's sound and totally missing their economical crunch. With its punchy songs, *Highly Evolved* shows that being both punky and poppy shouldn't feel like hard work. >>>CHRIS MOLANPHY



Link

www.the-vines.net

File Under

Fab punks

R.I.Y.L.

Nirvana, Super Furry Animals, the Verve

Puffy AmiYumi



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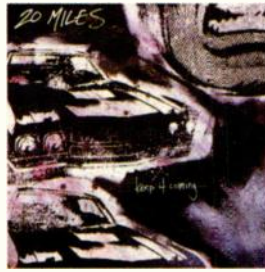
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July 16 Minneapolis
July 17 Chicago

July 19 Washington D.C.
July 20 NYC
July 21 Boston
July 23 Toronto

www.puffyamiyumi.com

REVIEWS

20 MILES
ADEN
ALABAMA THUNDERPUSSY
ALIEN CRIME SYNDICATE
ALOHA
APHRODITE
THE BROTHERS CREEGGAN
CATO SALSA EXPERIENCE
CHUMBAWAMBA
CINERAMA
DIVISION OF LAURA LEE
D.S.P
THE FUCKING CHAMPS
VINCENT GALLO
GUIDED BY VOICES
I AM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER
JRCORDUROY
ARTO LINDSAY
LITTLE AXE
LONE PIGEON
MARAHA
THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES
MR. LIF
NUSPIRIT HELSINKI
OASIS
ORIGINAL SINNERS
PEACE ORCHESTRA
DAVID POE
SALOON
SONIC YOUTH
SOULFLY
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SWEARING AT MOTORISTS
SWEEP THE LEG JOHNNY
TABLA BEAT SCIENCE
TIARA
TRACK STAR
THE TRAGICALLY HIP
TRAM
BUTCH WALKER
THE WAXWINGS
PAUL WELLER

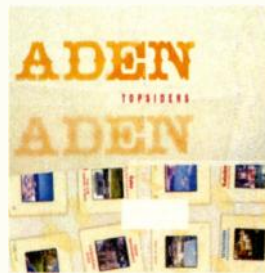


20 MILES

Keep It Coming... Fat Possum

Like his best work with the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, 20 Miles frontman Judah Bauer's greatest skill lies in harnessing and focusing the dirtball tone of vintage amps and ratty Telecasters, adding chicken-scratch counterpoints to Spencer's ad-hoc hucksterism. With 20 Miles, and especially with this album, Bauer showcases his more reserved, deferential side. He's deferring, of course, to the masters—the blues masters, the roots masters, the late-'60s garage rockers, the gritty old men with the cheap guitars, whether in the ghetto or up in the hills—treating his influences in an essentially more reverential manner than Spencer's various James Brown and Elvis impersonations.

While it's one hell of a shindig he throws onstage, Spencer's stylings often smack of irony and well-oiled hipster shimmy and shake. Bauer, on the other hand, sidles up earnestly next to the lean guitar work of Keith Richards and Lou Reed and politely nods, keeping a relaxed, loose meter, his demeanor suggesting nothing but un-self-conscious love for the old school. The Reed and Richards comparisons are the gold standard here, as *Keep It Coming* weighs in somewhere between the Stones darker country blues and the Velvet Underground's masterpiece, *Loaded*. With the assistance of some good friends and a cheap New York studio, Bauer has churned out a fine, unassuming record in *Keep It Coming*. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY



ADEN

Topsiders Teenbeat

Who decided pop music has to be all about predictable chord progressions and pretty faces? Who knows—maybe it was Lou Pearlman. But there's one thing you can be sure of: It certainly wasn't Aden. In keeping with the rich Teenbeat Records tradition, Aden play the kind of pleasant, jangly pop songs you'll have a hard time forgetting. The vocal melodies are as sweet as Buddy Holly's, and the endless harmonizing between singers/guitarists Jeff Gramm and Kevin Parker is dead-on. What puts the Brooklyn band far ahead of the indie-pop crowd, though, is their truly remarkable technical proficiency.

Thanks in no small part to the recent acquisition of a Fender B-Bender Telecaster (a relatively rare guitar used most notably by the Byrds in the late '60s), the dizzyingly complex guitar parts on *Topsiders* are infused with enough twang to impress the alt-country set, but not so much that they'll alienate those looking for pure pop. To the contrary, *Topsiders* should be the record that wins Aden the kind of widespread notoriety they've had coming to them these past few years. It may not be the notoriety of Mr. Pearlman's products, but that doesn't mean this isn't how pop music is supposed to sound. >>>MIKE CONKLIN

Link

www.fatpossum.com

File Under

Bo-na-fide gritty roots music made in, uh, New York City

R.I.Y.L.

Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, R.L. Burnside, Velvet Underground, old Stones

Link

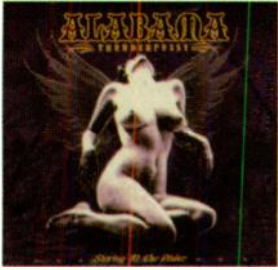
www.hot-licks.org

File Under

Country-tinged indie pop

R.I.Y.L.

Unrest, early Versus, the Byrds



ALABAMA THUNDERPUSSY

Staring At The Divine *Relapse*

Given the lusty cover art, Alabama Thunderpussy's divinity is right here, right now, on earth, filed between Busch beer and gut-stomping rock 'n' roll. Thickened by the production touch of Billy Anderson (Neurosis, Melvins), *Staring At The Divine* is as dense as a century-old Sequoia, and it's the Richmond quintet's finest, loudest, biggest, baddest album to date. Initially recorded in early 2001, these 10 songs languished in defunct-label limbo for over a year, as Frank Kozik's Man's Ruin imprint fizzled and sent a good many master tapes to the shelf. Metal community anchor

Relapse Records wisely added ATP to its roster, and the band touched up the album before submitting the final cut. In tone and delivery, ATP churn out the twangy metallic rock favored by supergroup Down and the fuzz-bake of Kyuss. With two guitars harmonizing note-for-note on just about every song, ATP's lineage also includes the twin-axe attack inaugurated by Uriah Heep and handed down through Lizzy, Priest and an entire generation of Southern rockers. "Amounts That Count," the album's closer, finds ATP showcasing its acoustic skills in a dobro- and banjo-threaded Appalachian workup. And though the album doesn't really stack any new bricks on the great wall of rock, *Staring At The Divine* weighs in heavily, thunderously. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY

Link

www.relapse.com

File Under

Between Budweiser and Busch at your local liquor store

R.I.Y.L.

Down, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Kyuss



ALOHA

Sugar *Polyvinyl*

In the wake of *That's Your Fire*, Aloha's breathtaking and complex collection of jazz-based, vibraphone-enhanced lullabies, the band's sophomore release hits like a hurricane. *Sugar* opens with dreamy atmospheric reverb and a synth chirping like a cricket; Aloha's trademark vibraphone shows up disguised as a wind-chime signaling an oncoming storm. The percussion builds up from a drizzle to a downpour, and by the third track, "Let Your Head Hang Low," the tribal-sounding backbeat shifts from raindance to dance party. Impressively, the record captures the energy of the Cleveland-based quartet's heavily improvisational stage show, and rocks much harder than anything they've done before. Aloha offers head-bobbing rhythm without ever getting tied up in a set song structure or tired chorus. On *Sugar*, you'll have to listen closely to hear tinges of emo in the lyrics, as Tony Cavallario's vocals take the tone of a muted horn to hug Matthew Gengler's understated basslines. Vibraphone virtuoso Eric Koltnow takes center stage, but since the soothing beauty of his instrument is paired with Cale Parks's rabid percussion, you won't be lulled to sleep. Aloha has stirred up their pretty melodies into sprawling jazz-rock symphonies, and this time around, the technically ambitious band has created a spiritually inspiring and arguably danceable post-rock opus. >>>KARA ZUARO

Link

www.insomniaville.com/aloha

File Under

Vibraphone-rich jazz rock for indie kids

R.I.Y.L.

Pele, Tortoise, Paris, Texas



ALIEN CRIME SYNDICATE

XL From Coast To Coast *v2*

Be it the infamous grunge years or the current golden era of meditative indie rock, Seattle has always fostered perky pop anomalies oblivious to the day's hot sound. Presidents Of The United States Of America and Harvey Danger pinned a giant smiley face on the flannel flag in the '90s, and today Alien Crime Syndicate has dropped out of Emonics 101 in search of crossover domination. They've certainly got timing on their side. Leadoff single "Ozzy," a throbbing, un-ironic, devil-horns anthem, flaunts a stadium-ready chorus, "Please just lift up your hands if

Link

www.theacs.com

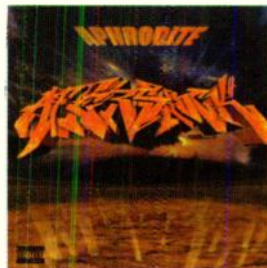
File Under

Seattle wants the airwaves back

R.I.Y.L.

Blink-182, Def Leppard, air guitar

you like Ozzy or the Mötley Crüe." If the national voyeur fascination with the Osbournes persists, "Ozzy" could propel ACS into novelty-hit heaven. What of the dreaded second single? Fear not; *Coast To Coast* is practically crowning with warm melodies, hooks and guitar-gro heroics. Is that a talkbox turning Joe Reineke's snotty vocals into Richie Sambora in "Break The Record" and "Stronger"? Does the melancholy reverb ballad "Figure It Out" demand its own slowdance at the next teen-flick prom? These boys love excess, and couldn't care less about the bitching and posturing that plagues 21st-century hard rock. This ain't art, but so what? ACS clearly just wants to make a kickass soundtrack to your next road trip. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI



APHRODITE

Aftershock *v2*

Anyone attracted to drum 'n' bass by its jazzy or post-rockin' proclivities is liable to find the second full-length from U.K. jump-up master Aphrodite (a.k.a. Gavin King) a bit too utilitarian in its dancefloor friendliness. But anyone who sees drum 'n' bass as a continuation of the disco or rock 'n' roll verities will find their asscheeks in a cast by the end of this hyperactive party disc. Like the Chemical Brothers' *Dig Your Own Hole* and Roni Size & Reprazent's *In The Mode*, *Aftershock* is hellbent on forward-motion funk with every element in the mix twisted to

Link

www.djaphrodite.com

File Under

Jump-up-and-down jungle

R.I.Y.L.

Adam F, DJ Hype, Josh Wink

that end. Several tracks vault off from cheap but effective sound effects like the tabla daubs of "Calcutta" or the moody ambient swirls of "Chinois." Even the guest star rappers and toasters (an impressive roster including Big Daddy Kane, Schoolly D, Barrington Levy and most impressive of all, Rah Digga) sound more like instrumental cogs than actual vocal talent. Whatever the specifics of their respective performances, they ultimately serve to enhance the nervous, itchy energy of the rhythms. Of course, as with most electronic albums, this piledriving mode of attack can get a bit wearying approaching the 60-minute mark, something a few desultory remixes and cameos towards the end do nothing to mitigate. But in a genre where stamina is crucial, perhaps the wind-down is inevitable. >>>KEVIN JOHN



THE BROTHERS CREEGGAN

Sleepyhead Nettwerk America

Studio craftsmanship is like finger-style guitar picking or jazz singing: It's an art within an art, the kind of thing that some bands largely ignore and others obsess over. Such pop craftsmanship is, along with the honeyed vocals of Jim and Andy Creeggan (current and former Barenaked Ladies, respectively), at the heart of this fourth Creeggan Brothers disc. Much of the music floats past, tethered gently by Ian McLauchlan's percussion but otherwise adrift on the soft pulses of Andy's keyboard and steel pan work, the child-safe lyrics

and the brothers' harmonious voices. Jim's voice in particular has enviable grace and power—not unlike Queen's Freddie Mercury—which works to excellent effect on the lullaby "Anna On The Moon," a tune that also features cameos by Barenaked Lady Ed Robertson on guitar and Sarah Harmer on backing vocals. The brothers' songwriting is accessible and a bit complex, showing signs of all that compositional study Andy's been doing since he left the Ladies, as well as some affinity for jazz bassist Jaco Pastorius. While a couple of tunes are pure pop ("Rocking Chair" and "Ali Baba's"), the dominant sound is softer and things never even approach rowdy on this pillow-party of a record. >>>BILL KISLUK

Link

www.brotherscreeggan.com

File Under

Barenaked as folk

R.I.Y.L.

Recent Joe Jackson, 10cc, Crash Test Dummies



CATO SALSA EXPERIENCE

A Good Tip For A Good Time Emperor Norton

For a band with one of the goofier monikers around, Oslo's Cato Salsa Experience (ziiing!) really know how to lay it down. On their U.S. debut, *A Good Tip For A Good Time*, CSE have produced an exhilarating mix of updated, unabashed garage-rock freak-outs that never let up and never slow down. The disc evokes Hendrix's psychedelic blues and Stooges-style stompers, adding bits of quirky Jon Spencer charm and Sonic Youth dissonance, with theremin, mellotron and horns (courtesy of Jazza Jagist) playfully teasing the guitar riffs and heavy drums into a delightfully organized chaos. Lyrically,

Link

www.emperornorton.com

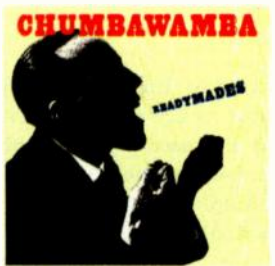
File Under

Chunky! Spicy! Norwegian!

R.I.Y.L.

The Hives, the Hellacopters, the White Stripes, the (International) Noise Conspiracy

moon-faced lead singer Cato Thomassen rarely takes things seriously and isn't concerned with political agendas or tales of tortured love as much as he is about circus clowns and high-heeled boots. When Thomassen wails lines like "I like to dress up in drag/I like the feeling of being bad" over the pounding fuzz of "So, The Circus Is Back In Town," it's hard to sit still and not strike your best Jagger pose. With a sound that's rooted in music's past, it's Cato Salsa Experience's ability to draw from so many influences seamlessly and their devotion to rock that makes *A Good Tip For A Good Time* just that. >>>RYAN RAYHILL



CHUMBAWAMBA

Readymades Republic-Universal

Yes, they're best known for *that* hit, but Chumbawamba have been making satisfying albums for many years now, packed with more politics than Dubya could understand (perhaps that's something of an understatement). *Readymades* (the title comes from Marcel Duchamp's theory of art) keeps the political quotient high, pulling from the familiar to create a lush velvet glove of sound. And so there are plenty of breezy '80s electro beats to draw in the ear, adding in some sampled folk singers before hitting you with the studded-steel lyrical fist, as on "Sewing Up

Link

www.chumba.com

File Under

Anarchy for dancers

R.I.Y.L.

Kate Rusby, Human League, Marcel Duchamp

Crap," which derides the way the Gap use cheap Asian child labor in pursuit of quick fashion profits. The result puts all the elements together in a brand new context, with a playful, gleeful sense of disorientation. So there's not a hit on the album—they don't care, actually, never have. What they've created here has nothing to do with the charts; it's art, a touch of the avant-garde with a smiley face and plenty of puns. They make their points well, with large dollops of humor, while never forgetting the serious message beneath, and they keep it short—a one-two blow, the big chorus, and then move on. All you have to do is listen. Who says pop and politics can't mix? >>>CHRIS NICKSON



CINERAMA

Torino Manifesto

Remember Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess"? You surely encountered the Victorian poem in a high school English class: A Renaissance-era duke describes his outgoing, charming ex-duchess, whom he saw as an unbearable flirt, and in so doing reveals his possessive, jealous anger. David Gedge has made a career of penning similar dramatic monologues of resentful suspicions and flirtatious deceptions, first with the classic C86 guitar riffing of the *Wedding Present* and recently with the string-soaked '60s-style pop of *Cinerama*. On *Torino*, the saucy, sexy, third Cinerama album, Gedge adopts the voice of the

Link

www.cinerama.co.uk

File Under

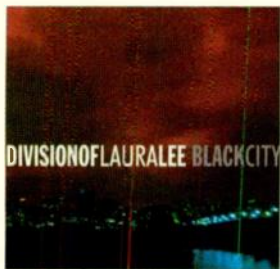
Jealous monologues, with

strings attached

R.I.Y.L.

The Wedding Present, Ballboy, the Delgados

cheating cad as often as he does the jealous lover. The album brims with erotic details: "If he's only an old buddy/ Why does he stare at your breasts?" ("And When She Was Bad"); "You said, 'I don't wear underwear because it leaves a stripe'" ("Quick, Before It Melts"—a highlight); virtually every line of the bondage tale "Tie Me Up." Although producer Steve Albini adds some extra bite this time (check the Watusi-like "Careless" and "Two Girls"), *Torino* differs little from Cinerama's formula. Most songs start with quiet guitars before exploding into buzzing riffs and/or lush string crescendos with female harmonies, and a few, "Health And Efficiency" especially, reach epic epiphanies. Browning would applaud Gedge's insights into the psychology of jealousy, although the eroticisms would make the Victorian blush. >>>STEVE KLINGE



DIVISION OF LAURA LEE

Black City Burning Heart

First they gave us the (International) Noise Conspiracy. Then the Hives. Before that, they gave us IKEA. Okay, that's beside the point; Sweden, you're too goddamn generous. In our already inundated, dilated, ready-to-burst-with-gallons-of-crap-and-puke domestic punk scene, what we really need is another Swedish garage band. Thanks. Then again, Division of Laura Lee don't sound like contrived mod, they don't flop around in coordinated costumes; they thrive on dark, fatalistic ballads. Don't get me wrong, they have the same working-stiff appeal

and cartoonish "we will rock you" egotism as their contemporaries, but Laura Lee sometimes transcends their niche to generate pure, rich rock nuggets. The slow jams, as aforementioned, are often incredible. Frontman Per Stalberg has the same hard-headed atonal grunt as Ian MacKaye, but dials down for "I Guess I'm Healed," which—no shit—plays like a No Code-era Pearl Jam dirge. The playful sass he later hurls at the FBI and CIA has already been done by Butthole Surfers, among many others, which is not to say that *Black City's* sweaty numbers aren't legit. "Access Identity" bobs and weaves over a backdrop of traffic noise, and "We've Been Planning This For Years" has abandon and honesty to burn. Sweden, baby, I take it back! Don't stop now! >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

[Link](#)

www.divisionoflauralee.com

[File Under](#)

Leaner, meaner Nordic tracks

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

Refused, Rocket From The

Crypt, the Stooges



D.S.P

In The Red Ninja Tune

Straight outta South London, D.S.P (production duo Jonny Cuba and the Loop Professor, formerly known as Dynamic Syncopation) craft meticulous breakbeat science, copping the same skeletal DJ Premier skip-funk and luxuriant Pete Rock embellishments that were the predominate influences on recent releases by Dilated Peoples and High And Mighty. Accordingly, *In The Red* isn't the most innovative, exciting or interesting producer-based hip-hop record to come along in recent months, but it is an impressive collection of up-and-coming MC talent from both sides of the pond.

Apathy proves to be a formidable force in creating high-velocity one-liners; U.K. group Phi-Life Cypher engage in lightning-fast ultraviolent battle raps (against each other, no less) and island-inflected femcee EV.ON snakes around between D.S.P's decidedly Ninja Tune atmospherics. While all deft, the rappers of *In The Red* spend most of their allotted space calculating battle raps directed at non-existent MCs (or as special guest legend and album highlight Chill Rob G says, trying to "outshine the cat spitting back in the mirror"). The sole exceptions have mixed results: Fluid Brit-hopper Def Tex inventively deconstructs the joys of staying in bed on "Way Past Noon" while unsigned hype Dell Wells gets downright browbeating on "No Regrets." Although not creating a distinctively international flavor, D.S.P's musical bridge over the Atlantic is a funky and uncomplicated ride. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

[Link](#)

www.ninjatune.net

[File Under](#)

New school rules Britannia

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

Dilated Peoples, Roots

Manuva, High And Mighty

PAUL WESTERBERG

STEREO

"Mono and Stereo represent the most promising and satisfying work Westerberg has committed to tape since the Replacements disbanded."

- Boston Phoenix

"Both albums capture the emotional volatility and musical lawlessness that made the 'Mats so irreplaceable"

- USA Today

"It's [Stereo] his best collection of songs since the Eighties. Stellar."

- Rolling Stone

"Drenched in the same profane attitude that made Westerberg the most important post-punker to pick up a guitar."

- Austin Chronicle

"His best record in a decade."

- Chicago Tribune

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THE FUCKING CHAMPS

V Drag City

On *V* (the follow-up to the equally gladiator-friendly *IV*), the Fucking Champs continue to immerse themselves in their ferocious brand of hesher intellectualisms. The Champs motor their bitchin' Camaro down to the shore, blazin' Thin Lizzy dual-guitar riffery until the cassette implodes and they have to erratically Scotch-tape it back together by hand. The end result is hypnotic, self-aware post-rawk with angular rhythms and 9-string guitar neck-runs—like Iron Maiden interpreting the collected works of Slint. The Fucking Champs are '80s fetishists, transforming the flowery virtuosity of power metal into a sprawling cerebral flatland, equal parts

Trans-Siberian Orchestra and Trans Am. The baroque chug of *V* reproduces the turn-on-a-dime rhythms and neo-classical metallics of *IV* right down to its Windham Hill-lookin' cover art, but the Fucking Champs aren't opposed to occasional detours despite steadfast immobility. "I Am The Album Cover" borders on hyper-distorted thrash until introducing some space-rock soloing. "Aliens Of Gold" has Anthrax's groove and the Melvins' calculated haphazardness, and "Children Perceive The Hoax Cluster" replicates the freaky shit that opens Yes songs. They even get their Yngwie on by doing a little rock block of Bach on "Air On A G-String." The mathy and metal *V* is the perfect record for both bespectacled calculus majors and the stoners who used to laugh at them in high school. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

Link
www.thefuckingchamps.com
File Under
Protractors are made of metal, too
R.I.Y.L.
Trans Am, Don Caballero,
Thin Lizzy



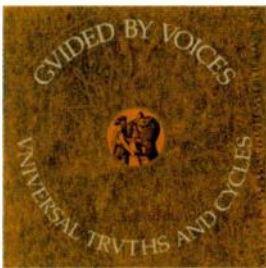
VINCENT GALLO

Recordings Of Music For Film Warp

Our very own hipster Renaissance Man, Vincent Gallo's success as an actor/director on the indie circuit can be attributed to the way his uniquely manic charisma plays against his air of untouchable cool. *When*, the debut record he released last year, on the other hand, was neither manic nor cool, but something else entirely, something hinted at—maybe—by the hurt burning under Gallo's laserbeam gaze. The album sounded as vulnerable as it did fastidious. *Recordings Of Music For Film* is similarly alluring, but the allure

Link
www.vincentgallo.com
File Under
Post-rock meanderings
R.I.Y.L.
Slint, U.S. Maple, Can

doesn't lead you anywhere in particular. Featuring music not only from *Buffalo '66*, Gallo's magnum opus, but also from the recently released documentary *Downtown '81* and some obscurities called *The Way It Is* and *If You Feel Froggy, Jump*, what's actually most impressive about *Recordings* is how modern it sounds. The *Froggy* music was recorded as far back as 1979, and the most contemporary pieces, from *Buffalo '66*, date from 1988; it's amazing to realize that Gallo was working in advance of post-rock standard bearers such as Slint, since the best tracks on the album anticipate their darkening, textural compositions. As a time capsule, *Recordings* is intriguing, but it's overlong, and like many recordings of film scores, the music can't hold its own in a vacuum. The moments of dreamlike, threadbare beauty are many, however. >>>MAYA SINGER



GUIDED BY VOICES

Universal Truths And Cycles Matador

Robert Pollard may have parted company with the original group of Dayton drinking pals who constituted the Guided By Voices that conquered the indie world almost a decade ago. He may have left Matador for the highest bidder (TVT) and, with the help of his buddies in Cobra Verde, taken a genuine shot at making a fairly "normal" sounding pair of studio albums (1999's *Do The Collapse* and 2001's *Isolation Drills*). But, while he didn't quite miss the mark—GBV came off just fine as hard-rocking melody-mongers with short song titles and

long, verse/chorus/verse songs—he did, like many a successful Britpop band has over the past decade, discover that there just isn't much room in the American mainstream for Beatles-esque popcraft. Fortunately, Pollard didn't burn his bridge back to indie land, or even to Matador, which is where he returns for *Universal Truths And Cycles*. The disc opens with the all-too-brief "Wire Greyhounds," which, at 32 seconds, has enough hooks to fill 32 minutes. Over the course of 18 more tunes in 46 minutes, Pollard goes on to neatly split the difference between the muscular-yet-tuneful guitar anthems of his hi-fi days, and the cryptic four-tracking quirks that got GBV off the ground in the first place. >>>MATT ASHARE

Link
www.gbv.com
File Under
Britpop, American style
R.I.Y.L.
The Beatles, Oasis,
Badly Drawn Boy



I AM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

The Tight Connection Kindercore

Perhaps afraid of being slapped with the almost obsolete label of "dance pop," members of I Am The World Trade Center adopt a lo-fi esthetic for their boogie. The NYC band's sophomore LP, *The Tight Connection*, is what Saint Etienne's debut would sound like if it were recorded solely on a laptop. Thankfully, I Am The WTC has no pretense of sophistication (which took Saint Etienne almost a decade to actually earn). While always down-to-earth, though, their cut-and-paste compositions sometimes feel tossed off. "Big Star" is a keyboard-based bounce

Link
www.kindercore.com/
worldtrade.html
File Under
Pastiche ice cream
R.I.Y.L.
Saint Etienne, Stars, Kittycraft

that stumbles over random electronic bleeps. Vocalist Amy Dykes sings like Debbie Harry with Sarah Cracknell's range, so their electro cover of Blondie's "Call Me," comes off as far too obvious. More daring and successful is a giddy remake of the Stone Roses' "Shoot You Down," bolstered by rolling Manchester beats and synthesized cutesiness. Throughout *The Tight Connection* is the feeling that there's entirely too much going on. This is, in turn, impressive (the band is just a duo), and frustrating (because it often just sounds sloppy). Still, "Believe In Me" is the group's exhilarating best, weaving together stomping house beats, hip-hop bling and electro breakdowns. Uniting myriad styles under a single groove is a discovery of the very spirit of the duo's hometown. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK



JRCORDUROY

I Don't Want To Be Around When You're Gone Forever Sealed Fate

Jrcorduroy, a trio of sad boys from Boston, sustain a smoky, vaguely rootsy mood on *I Don't Want To Be Around When You're Gone Forever*, their first album for Eric Masunaga's (Dambuilders) Sealed Fate label. Much like their well-named debut, *Slo-Fi*, *I Don't Want To Be Around* features one leisurely paced track seeping into the next as vocalist Mark Kraus mourns irretrievable losses and Andy Santospago's occasional slide guitar cries out like a lone coyote in the desert. It's like *Born In The USA* recast as nothing but variations of "I'm On Fire"; the band is so successful at conceiving and sustaining this mood that one is left to wonder whether the two or three songs that stand out are really that necessary. "Under The Color," for instance, makes its presence known immediately with a modest bed of strings and pointillist guitar flurries, and "All You Do" provides an unexpected burst of bitter energy with a (perhaps counterintuitive) chorus of "Everyone everywhere, same old song/ Everyone everywhere, completely wrong." But those moments clash a bit too much with the finely honed ambience. Together, the two songs would make an ace single, though one not very representative of the band's mood-making strengths. Which is the one problem with *I Don't Want To Be Around*: In the end, a suitably vague lack of commitment seems to plague the album, diminishing replay potential. >>>KEVIN JOHN

Link

www.sealedfate.com/jrCorduroy.html

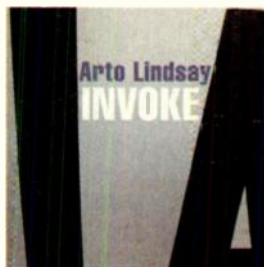
File Under

Adventures in slo-fidelity

R.I.Y.L.

Clem Snide, Crooked Fingers,

My Morning Jacket



ARTO LINDSAY

Invoke Righteous Babe

"I've always been interested in things rubbing up against each other," Arto Lindsay once said. Of late, Lindsay's music has been sparking fires from a brainy friction between bossa nova, electronica, skronky New York avant-garde and more. But a record like *Invoke*, his second for Ani DiFranco's Righteous Babe, suggests other possibilities of what might be rubbing together as the bulk of these new tunes emit a languid, erotic glow. "Your ultra privileged pajamas/ Got me scratchin' at every door," he sings in a frail purr on "Ultra Privileged," a rhythmic come-on

Link

www.artolindsay.com

File Under

Seductive avant-garde

R.I.Y.L.

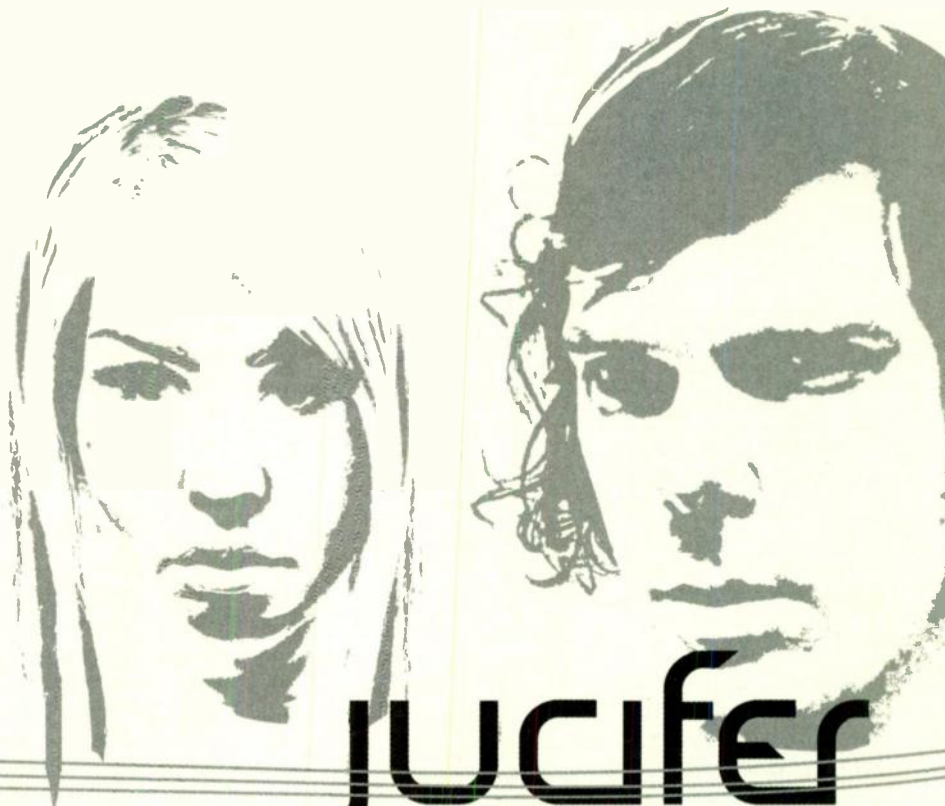
Vinicius Cantuarria, DJ Spooky,

Laurie Anderson

of a track that creates a contented vibe somewhere between napping and fucking. In some ways, Lindsay's made this record before, but he's been in a good groove, not a rut, since 1996's *Hyper Civilizado*. That remix CD found the likes of DJ Spooky and We exploiting the rhythms and textures of his tunes, and *Invoke* often takes cues from that aesthetic. "You Decide," with its blips and bleeps of sampled beats mixed with hand percussion, makes it sound like Arto went straight to the remix version. That approach allows his voice to float over a mix that's fresh, surprising and daring. What better adjectives could you hope for when you're rubbing things together? >>>STEVE CIABATTONI



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JUCIFER

I NAME YOU DESTROYER

"As thick and murky as the tainted sludge left trailing behind Black Sabbath and the Melvins, but with shafts of Portishead moonlight cleaving through the darkness, Jucifer defies aural dynamics." - S.F. WEEKLY



LITTLE AXE

Hard Grind Fat Possum

Reggae/dub producer extraordinaire Adrian Sherwood and famed Sugar Hill (the label) session guitarist Skip McDonald got together to create this unusual project, with McDonald as Little Axe, abetted by bassist Keith LeBlanc, drummer Doug Wimbish and Sherwood's mixing console. Be advised that *Hard Grind* is not any sort of typical blues album (Fat Possum is characterizing this as dub blues); the dual inspirations at work here are Jamaican dub and McDonald's recollection of the blues his father taught him. The groove created by this alchem-

Link
www.fatpossum.com/littleaxe.html
 File Under
 Grind your own blues
 R.I.Y.L.
 Popa Chubby, Dub Syndicate,
 Otis Taylor's "Black Witch"

my may well annoy the hell out of blues purists, while dub fans can probably dig it. The tracks have a shadowy spiritualism that's more than a little bit uncanny, with densely layered arrangements that not only evoke dub reggae and the blues, but gospel and electronic music as well. Spoken-word passages ("Blues Story II") and spoken-word samples (as we hear on "Tight Like That") are more suggestive of the world in which the blues happens than actual blues music. Still, it's hard to deny the moody appeal of tunes such as "Dark As The Night, Cold As The Ground," "Run Here Boy" and "All Night Party." One man's blues is another man's Jamaican dub nightmare, but the recommendation is to give this disc a spin. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK



LONE PIGEON

Concubine Rice Domino

In 1996, Gordon Anderson, a.k.a. the Lone Pigeon, co-founded the Scottish electronic-pop group the Beta Band. A few EPs later, on the cusp of signing to London's Regal Records, he left the group due to ill mental health. But his influence on the Betas is unmistakable: *Concubine Rice's* equally lovely and eerie songs—many of which were composed at his lowest point of depression—have the same emotional resonance as early Beta tracks, while displaying an ego stripped to the bone, pain translating as musical genius. Stark and poignant, few of the songs on

Link
www.dominorecordco.com
 File Under
 Friends of Syd Barrett
 R.I.Y.L.
 Beta Band, Syd Barrett,
 Nick Drake's *Pink Moon*

Concubine Rice are fully realized—many tracks end abruptly, as if Anderson had walked away from them mid-bar—but the overall effect is a sensation of dynamic fluidity, searching for perfection that is just out of reach. "King Creosote's Wineglass Symphony," a track he originally wrote for the Betas, lays a solemn guitar over tinkling glasses, complementing a voice that gently breaks on devastatingly sad numbers like "Waterfall," much like Nick Drake on his paean to pain, *Pink Moon*. Other songs like "The Road To Harlow Square" and "Heaven Come Down" are upbeat acoustic numbers with an unmistakable John Lennon influence. Opening a window to his soul, Anderson lets his emotions pour out—and the effect is at once achingly sad, brilliantly honest and irresistible. >>>ADRIENNE DAY



MARAH

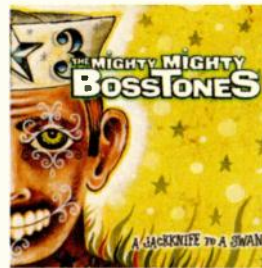
Float Away With The Friday Night Gods

Artemis

Marah evidently got bored with themselves before we did. The band's last album, *Kids From Philly*, was brilliant, visceral rock 'n' roll that drew a flock of enthusiastic reviews and a fervent fan response. When it came time to cut their next album, however, Marah decided to head for the U.K. to work with producer Owen Morris, known for his work with Oasis and the Verve. The band felt it was time for a change. The notion that change is always positive is deceptive, however. Sometimes change is just change, and that's pretty much what Marah got for their time

Link
www.marah-usa.com
 File Under
 Kids from Philly go to London
 R.I.Y.L.
 Blur, Creeper Lagoon, the idea
 of Bruce Springsteen working
 with Oasis

with Morris. *Float Away* isn't the garage-rock ethos that characterized Marah's previous work. That's not to say this album doesn't rock, because it does. There are good tunes here—"People Of The Underground," the title track (featuring Bruce Springsteen), "Leaving," and "What 2 Bring" definitely rock, and the Bielanko/Bielanko songwriting knack has not failed. Marah hasn't exactly gone pop, but they've gone someplace that doesn't sound much like inner-city Philadelphia. There isn't anything on *Float Away* that resembles the fury and breath-taking punch of tunes like "It's Only Money, Tyrone," and "My Heart Is The Bums In The Street"—songs that characterized the overall vibe of *Kids From Philly*. Marah's faithful may not embrace change so readily. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK



THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES

A Jackknife To A Swan SideOneDummy

If we're to believe Charles Darwin, organisms that don't evolve disappear. Apparently, the Mighty Mighty Bosstones didn't get the memo, since their latest, *A Jackknife To A Swan* sounds just like the release before it, which sounds just like the release before it, ad infinitum. Darwin be damned they say—this is our sound and we're sticking to it. Of course, it will be a fan favorite (and critically panned) because the band retains their signature ska-punk-reggae sound. Take "Mr. Moran," the story of Sammy "The Bull" Gravano's step into the witness protection

Link
www.bosstones.com
 File Under
 "Mighty" ain't the only repetition
 R.I.Y.L.
 Goldfinger, Suicide Machines,
 Lucky Boys Confusion

program as a prime example. The lads mine the ska sound for all it's worth, complete with a zippy drumbeat, Dicky Barrett's gritty vocals and that now clichéd ska horn sound. Even the self-help sounding "You Gotta Go," with the chorus of "To be king you don't need a castle" has a saccharine, unnecessarily slick feel that's set to the standard Bosstones soundtrack. Granted, the band does have a certain penchant for coming up with Velcro-like choruses, but there's just got to be more that a band with this much talent can do. Then again, perhaps the Bosstones are practicing what they sing about on "Luck": "It's more fun when you don't give a fuck." >>>DAVID JOHN FARINELLA



MR. LIF

Emergency Rations Def Jux

Mr. Lif's new eight-song EP opens with reports that he has been missing for months, apparently because his latest music's provocations have made him a dangerous mouthpiece of dissent; luckily, the tapes he had been working on have been found. Anytime an artist sets up this kind of premise, he'd better deliver. And Lif does throughout *Emergency Rations*. The cut that will attract the most attention is "Home Of The Brave," one of the first post-9/11 tracks to directly indict American policy for the tragic happenings. Lif excoriates his country for arming the Taliban, distracting us with an anthrax scare and a New World

Order that keeps third world countries oppressed—"They killed us because we've been killing them for years." "Let's Roll" this is not. Elsewhere, on tracks like "Jugular Vein" and "Heavy Artillery," the Boston MC fires poison darts at the Bush administration with his rapid-fire flow and intricate wordplay. The latter track is given a dense production by Edan, its martial drumbeat perfect for Lif's artillery. The disc closes with "Phantom"; with hallucinatory, swirling production by El-P, it's Lif's callout for the dispossessed and disenfranchised, who've been turned into ghosts by a society that has no room for them. At a time where most hip-hop artists seem comfortable flipping bling-bling rhymes, Lif's blistering material couldn't be more urgent and necessary. >>>KEN CAPOBIANCO

Link

www.mrlif.com

File Under

Air Force One radio;
uneasy listening

R.I.Y.L.

J-Live, Paris, Ghostface Killah,
Public Enemy



NUSPIRIT HELSINKI

Nuspirit Helsinki Guidance

One of the glaring weaknesses of DJ culture is that it omits the concept of the band-as-gang. The members of the Clash and even U2 always seemed inseparable, bound together forever at a young age by both music and ideology. Of course, there's also not a hell of a lot of ideology in the world of house music—please, "garage" is not an ideology—but at least the successes of Jazzanova, the Nortec Collective and So Solid Crew have infused dance music with a bit of that "cultural rebel collective" attitude. Next up is Nuspirit Helsinki, an assembly of Finnish DJs,

producers and musicians, trying to overcome all the dreadful associations of Scandinavian pop music (current flavor-of-the-month garage rock from land of gravlox and lutefisk notwithstanding). Contrasting the sometimes bleak character of their native city (Helsinki Harbor can be quite dismal on a stormy day, and Finland has the world's highest suicide rate), Nuspirit whips up a sexy, exuberant cocktail of house, jazz and Afro-Cuban rhythms. The results are not earth shatteringly original, but songs like "Circular Motion" and "Trying" are astoundingly soulful, and the record is brimming with irresistible grooves and inviting melodies. But the absolute highlights are the sensual vocal performances by in-house chanteuse Ona Kamu and guest soul diva Nicole Willis. Soothing enough to drop the suicide rate. >>>KEN SCRUDATO

Link

www.nuspirithelsinki.com

File Under

Future sound of Finland

R.I.Y.L.

Jazzanova, Zero 7,
Brand New Heavies

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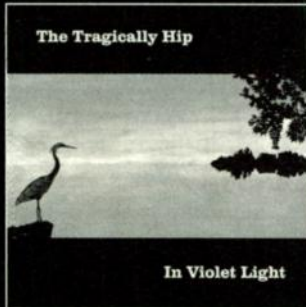


www.cowboyjunkies.com

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OASIS

Heathen Chemistry Epic

Heathen Chemistry, in a sense, was a do-or-die challenge. With Noel Gallagher finally letting the Oasis reins slip enough to give the other bandmembers a chance to show off their songwriting, it could either see the group rise from mediocrity to reclaim its former glory, or become a bit of a disjointed mess. In fact, it manages both. Happily, Noel himself has finally found whatever it was he lost, and turned in two of the greatest songs of his career: the epic sing-along/hit-single-in-waiting "Stop Crying Your Heart Out" and the soaring, so-good-it-hurts "Little By Little."

Link

www.oasisinet.com

File Under

The road to recovery

R.I.Y.L.

Classic rock 'n' effin' roll, solo John Lennon, waving your lighter in the air

Meanwhile, Liam pulls a bit of a shocker with the three tracks he penned, revealing that his previous poor attempt at songwriting ("Little James") was really just a misfire before he actually started shooting. Unfortunately, despite the obvious skill he's developed, the blatant parroting of John Lennon on "Born On A Different Cloud" is a bit unnerving, good song or not. Guitarist Gem Archer turns in the slickest track, "Hung In A Bad Place," which, along with opener "The Hindu Times," echoes the rawest moments of the band's early days, but bassist Andy Bell remains under-appreciated, seeing only a brief instrumental contribution make the grade. All things considered, it's not quite the kind of classic album Oasis once made, but a definite sign they just may get back there again. >>>DOUG LEVY



ORIGINAL SINNERS

Original Sinners Nitro

John Doe is missing. But all the other signature elements that put X atop the punk-rock pile are present and accounted for in Exene Cervenka's new band, the Original Sinners: Exene's plain if slightly feral vocals, the band's churning intensity and the comic, manic, desperate edge. Here, that groove, its power undiminished since L.A.'s punk scene first exploded, is built on the fine work of two ex-Distillers, drummer Mat Young and bassist Kim Chi. Guitarists Jason Edge and Sam Soto (and occasionally Exene) whirl and bounce off each other in discordant harmony, as do Exene and her vocal foils, sometimes Chi and

Link

[www.nitrorecords.com/](http://www.nitrorecords.com/originalsinners.html)

originalsinners.html

File Under

X Post Facto

R.I.Y.L.

Distillers, Throwing Muses, Auntie Christ

and sometimes Edge. Young's thumping intro signals fury to come on set-opener "Birds & Bees," and the disc ends a dozen tracks later with a pounding surf instrumental, "Tick Tock." Exene's original "Woke Up This Mornin'" lopes along like a honky-tonk jalopy and other songs offer a country tinge, incorporating some of that Knitters charm. Exene's street poetry is at turns witty, abstract and poignant as she looks for "a little bartenderness" on "Whiskey For Supper" or X-rays a love affair on the fierce "Who's Crying Now." All in all, an excellent new taste of the rapid-fire rhythms and raw, jolting power that has long marked the spot. >>>BILL KISLUK

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



PEACE ORCHESTRA

Reset G-Stone-1K7

Peter Kruder's original 1999 release, *Peace Orchestra*, was something of a high watermark for trip-hop, a masterful amalgam of jazz chords, Latin percussion and languid beats that the current high-tide of downtempo discs it beget is still by and large rising to reach. *Reset*, then, is a show of strength; it says something of Kruder's confidence in his own work that three years later he's commissioned a track-by-track reworking of that record and is releasing it on the G-Stone label he formed with partner Richard Dorfmeister. It also says something

about the source material that its recombinant material works as real music—as opposed to just samples and appropriations—that can be reworked and reassembled into fresh tracks that don't seem like electro-nerd exercises. Producer Meitz coaxes the Herbie Hancock out of "Marakesh"; DJ DSL pumps up the gritty hip-hop beats of "Double Drums"; and Trüby Trio shuffles the swing of "Shining," breaking down then building up its minimalist fusionaire samba. What's best, you don't need to know the *Peace Orchestra* source material to get a real kick out of *Reset*, or be part of the electronic cognescenti—these tracks work just as well over cocktails and conversation. Verifiably kickass. >>>SCOTT FRAMPTON

Link

www.g-stoned.com/acts/po

File Under

Voodoo chill (slight return)

R.I.Y.L.

Thievery Corporation, Kruder & Dorfmeister, Up, Bøstle & Out



DAVID POE

The Late Album Epic

David Poe's *The Late Album* has been a long time coming—it's been a good five years between his eponymous debut and this aptly title disc. He composed this self-described "night" album in at least 10 cities, and recorded it in between tours of North America, Europe and Japan; the result of all this travel is a disc unsure of where it's headed next. The haunting starkness of songs like "The Late Song (Je Ne Suis Pas Mort)" and "Never I Will" mixed with the barefaced pop of opening track "Ringer" and the near-Bond film jazz balladry of "You're The Bomb"

Link

www.davidpoe.com

File Under

Peripatetic pop

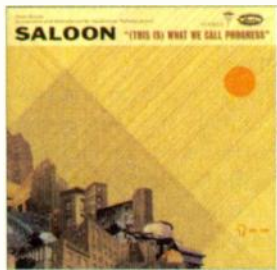
R.I.Y.L.

Chris Whitley, Dan Bern, David Gray

never really establish a sense of what Poe is reaching for. Clouding matters even further is the addition of a country-road ballad, "Deathwatch For A Living Legend" and two different versions of the catchy "The Drifter." Often, just when you think business is about to pick up, Poe slows down the pace, or vice versa, leaving *The Late Album* a little uneven. Anchoring Poe is a gallery of backing musicians, including the sure-handed drumming of Rollins Band vet and longtime Poe collaborator Sim Cain, who effortlessly adapts to Poe's varying soundscapes. Individually, the songs are masterfully crafted with Poe's acoustic strum and breathy croon standing out on their own. But taken as a whole, *The Late Album* can be a frustrating listen. >>>RYAN RAYHILL

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

					
TITLE	When Pigs Fly (Xemu)	The Bottle Let Me Down (Bloodshot)	Lynne Me Your Ears (Not Lame)	Punk-O-Rama 7 (Epitaph)	Constant Elevation (Astralwerks)
CONCEPT	People covering songs they have no business covering	Children's music as rendered by Bloodshot's "insurgent country" roster	Paying tribute to the original king of classical thunder, Jeff Lynne	Another noise-packed installment of Epitaph's flagship comp	Hip-hop producers step out with beyond-backing tracks
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	You sure do like irony	Infidelity, murder and betrayal are a little much for your toddler	You'll admit that ELO rules, consequences be damned	Pop punk, no whining, please	You're sick of the same old breaks
NAMES TO DROP	Ani DiFranco & Jackie Chan (no, really), Devo, Don Ho	Kelly Hogan, Robbie Fulks, the Handsome Family	Sixpence None The Richer, Earl Slick, Todd Rundgren	Hot Water Music, NOFX, Bad Religion, Rancid	El-P, Anti-Pop Consortium, Chief Xcel
SUMS IT UP	"Insane In The Brain" (The Connells)	"Don't Wipe Your Face On Your Shirt" (The Cornell Hurd Band)	"Rockaria!" (Pat Buchanan) (no, not <i>that</i> Pat Buchanan)	"Love To Be Hated" (Agnostic Front)	"Rawcore" (Peanut Butter Wolf & Madlib)
VERDICT	The Connells can't rap (duh), but there's no denying that Don Ho's "Shock The Monkey" is kind of kickass.	Best version of "It's Not Easy Being Green" ever.	Unlike most tributes, this isn't a crime against humanity. But why mess with success, groos?	Most of these tracks are available elsewhere, but this comp is blissfully emo-free, and that makes it all right by us.	<i>Constant Elevation</i> beats most turntable comps by focusing on real songs and diverse sounds over turntable masturbation.



SALOON

(This Is) What We Call Progress *Darla*

Saloon may not be the most groundbreaking band on the block, but the Reading, England quintet favors source material that was discarded by its original owners before it became shopworn. These art-schoolers recognize the power of sustained Moog chords supported by a choppy strummed guitar, the formula that propelled Stereolab to dizzying heights a decade ago. A sweet-voiced chanteuse furthers the 'Lab parallels, except in the case of Saloon's Amanda Gomez, the French accent and Marxist rhetoric is supplanted by a casual

tone reminiscent of the Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan. Saloon distances itself from its role models a bit by adding viola, cello and melodica to the mix, creating a sense of organic warmth amid the keyboard gurgles. Although the chugging drones make the strongest impression, half of this debut full-length (following a series of well-received British singles) is comprised of more pastoral tracks encroaching on Sundays turf (to whose vocalist, Harriet Wheeler, Gomez also owes a debt). While short on memorable tunes, *(This Is) What We Call Progress* succeeds at weaving a pleasing dream-pop mood, as Saloon's ability to sound quiet and restrained even when churning out neo-Krautrock grooves deftly meshes the band's two styles. >>>GLEN SARVADY

Link

www.saloon.co.uk

File Under

Quiet is indeed the new loud

R.I.Y.L.

Early Stereolab, the Sundays, the Cranberries



SONIC YOUTH

Murray Street *DGC*

Named for the location, not so far from Ground Zero, of their Echo Canyon Studio, you'd expect Sonic Youth's first post-Sept. 11 release to be an elegy for the Lower East Side bohemianism of which the fivesome are the post-punk era's embodiment. (Fivesome? Yes—Chicago transplant and recent live help-mate Jim O'Rourke is now credited as a full-time member.) Problem is, they already did that, rather presciently, on 2000's underrated NYC *Ghosts & Flowers*. *Murray Street*, in contrast to that Beat-haunted, overtly "difficult" album, announces a return to rock-band textures

and live-performance dynamics. Even the grimmest noise passages here have the structural function of guitar solos, as on "Disconnection Notice," where ensemble-playing frames nasty jack-and-pickup feedback. Rock references abound: thick organ here, creamy (or Cream-y) fuzztone there, a direct reference to Television's "Marquee Moon" in the staggering build-up of "Rain On Tin." It's heavy and heady, but rarely violent, so it's a relief when Kim Gordon grabs the mic for the catty "Plastic Sun" ("I hate you and your bitchy friends"), a sawtoothed blast of no-wave angles and edges. But even the disc's most corrosive moments—such as the extended guest shot by sax annihilation duo Borbetomagus (Jim Sauter and Don Deitrich)—are evidence of a band that's simply grateful to be alive and playing with friends in their "dusty, but otherwise okay" workspace. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

Link

www.sonicyouth.com

File Under

Hello 21st Century

R.I.Y.L.

Television, Velvet Underground, Vanilla Fudge

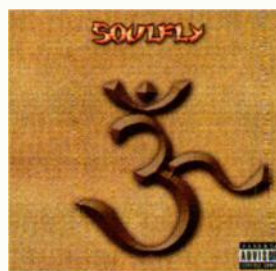
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World Radio History



SOULFLY

3 *Roadrunner*

With 3, Max Cavalera is heading back to his Roots, literally. Sepultura's 1996 album *Roots* was a real milestone, laying volcanic waste to anything approximating heavy-duty expressiveness within a couple-thousand miles. It was a beast, for sure, rife with chugging riffs, aggressive vocals and Brazilian traditional music, all quilted deftly together—nothing shy of spectacular. Then Cavalera left Sepultura and formed Soulfly. At least for the first two discs, Soulfly failed to capture the savage dynamism of *Roots*, the maturing blast of power that was *Chaos A.D.*, or

Arise's sheer brutality. Furthermore, Soulfly's forays into rap-metal were, at best, disheartening, and at worst, pure pandering (Fred Durst as a guest vocalist?). At least now Cavalera's trying to regain his footing—even if that footing is a bit tenuous. In places, he succeeds, but there are enough lifeless passages on the disc to suggest that the road back may not be in sight. Dedicated to God (right there on the back cover), 3 is ostensibly a dark spiritual passage, and the disc booklet and case is lavishly decorated with religious symbolism, but if the spirit life is this tepid, then I'd suggest getting back on the highway to hell immediately. In the past half-decade, Cavalera's political voice has grown stronger, to the detriment of the rock: Simply put, it's not as good as it once was. As the old proverb warns, one cannot serve two masters. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY

Link

www.soulfly.com

File Under

Brutal metal made in the name

of the Lord

R.I.Y.L.

Hatebreed, Korn, Sepultura

SPACEHEADS



LOW PRESSURE

Link

www.mergerecords.com

File Under

Just don't call it trip-hop

R.I.Y.L.

Red Snapper, Boards Of
Canada, Massive Attack

SPACEHEADS

Low Pressure Merge

Trip-hop died a painful death somewhere around the end of the millennium—next to grunge, it ranks as the early '90s' most widely and stupidly appropriated sound—but, man, back in the beginning it was chock-full of good ideas. First among these was its balls-out sexiness, setting the warmth of human vocals against the narcotic throb of dub beats and loops of ever-living, ever-loving groove. Alas, the genre's brilliant simplicity was its undoing; even in the hands of Bristol's finest, trip-hop just sounded formulaic after a while. In the meantime, Manchester, England's Spaceheads have

managed to outlast their onetime contemporaries to the South, thanks to their more eclectic, jazzy sound. On *Low Pressure*, the official follow-up to 1999's *Angel Station*, the duo carry forward trip-hop's sensual pleasures but edge ever-nearer toward the dreamscapes of ambient techno. Spaceheads are more indebted to funk than dub, but that's a distinction without a difference when the stuff's this spliffy: Super-clipped beats give way to drifting skronk, with Andy Diagram's horn more than taking the place of vocals. Indeed, much as the band's avant-garde arrangements help it skirt the trip-hop curse, so Spaceheads' dedication to organic instrumentation (rather than relying completely on synths or samples) allows their music to avert the chilliness of most ambient techno. As a result, *Low Pressure* thrills of danger, sending out just the kind of adrenaline rush trip-hop did, once upon a time. >>>MAYA SINGER



Link

www.foetus.org

File Under

Scraping *Eraserhead* off

the wheel

R.I.Y.L.

Fantomas, Ennio Morricone,
John Zorn

STEROID MAXIMUS

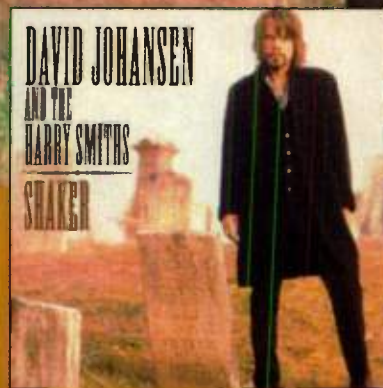
Ectopia Ipecac

Cagey, Mephistophelean Jim Thirlwell—like a butterfly on speed—simply cannot be pinned down. Otherwise known as Jim Foetus, Clint Ruin, DJ OTEFSU, and a number of other names, the carrot-topped master of disaster racks up another disc in an already bountiful year with *Ectopia*, Steroid Maximus's third installment. The disc unfurls like the soundtrack to a bizarre, not-yet-scripted David Lynch joint. Building slowly from the cautious, reserved "The Trembler" through the otherworldly pulsing psychedelica of "Aclectasis," *Ectopia* is as soaked in celluloid tradition as Martin Scorsese's screening

room. Purely instrumental and, save a bit of guitar, trumpet and sound effects, crafted entirely by Thirlwell in his Brooklyn, New York hideaway, the album weighs in with thumping drum 'n' bass, nasty big-band pastiche, afro-soul bass runs, scuzzy noir touches, and haunting Middle Eastern passages, all stitched together with Thirlwell's chaotic guidance. One moment, it sounds as if you're in San Francisco's Tenderloin district watching a bust go down, the next you're skirting the coast in a two-seater plane heading to Algeria, and later you're scoping out locations for the next Guy Ritchie flick. A hodge-podge for sure, but it works. And it works very damn well. One of Thirlwell's finest. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY

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SWEARING AT MOTORISTS 

This Flag Signals Goodbye *Secretly Canadian*
Swearing At Motorists' Dave Doughman is fast becoming one of the more interesting characters in the tragically overacted play that is the indie-rock world. He's earned the reputation as a kind of mysterious hippie philosopher with a seeming penchant for drug and drink, and has a comical tendency to toy with journalists—he recently convinced a writer he had been detained in Philadelphia because of an involvement in a federal racketeering case. His band is deserving of the added attention, too, because *This Flag Signals Goodbye* is an outstanding record. Accompanied

by little more than his own acoustic and electric guitars and Joseph Siwinki's (ex-Trouble With Sweeney) drumming, Doughman has written 14 songs that alternate between quiet, almost haunting passages and periods of loud, boisterous rock that actually aren't too far removed from those of the White Stripes. Lyrically, the Ohio-born former Guided By Voices soundman focuses most of his attention on an ex-girlfriend. Coming clean with lines like "Didn't realize that I was so affected/ And now I don't know what to do/ And I am hoping that you're feeling the same way/ Because all I want for Christmas is you," it's clear that, despite the air of mystery surrounding him, Doughman is just like the rest of us—only he writes better songs than most. >>>MIKE CONKLIN

Link

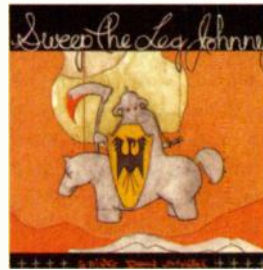
www.secretlycanadian.com

File Under

Stripped-down rock for the brokenhearted

R.I.Y.L.

The White Stripes, Hayden, Sebadoh



SWEEP THE LEG JOHNNY

Going Down Swinging *Southern*

Link

www.southern.com

File Under

Post-rock, emphasis on rock

R.I.Y.L.

June Of '44, Fugazi's *Red Medicine*, Elliott Sharp, Shellac

a straight face, but the majority of its 14 minutes are spent at crushing intensity levels. Sostak shows an uncanny ability to furiously bleat away on sax and quickly shift to vocals without sounding winded, yet he's skilled enough at his instrument to make it resonate like a viola during quieter sections. The intense, heady lead track crams in enough ideas to render the rest of the disc almost superfluous, something *Going Down Swinging* nearly does on its own, wearing thin after 50 minutes. A second lengthy epic, the 15-minute "Rest Stop," meanders restlessly for awhile, but eventually builds to another somewhat more boilerplate crescendo. Still, it's impressive that a five-piece can make such a precise racket. >>>GLEN SARVADY

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TABLA BEAT SCIENCE

Live In San Francisco At Stern Grove

RealWorld

This double CD grew from the collaboration between producer/bassist/mixmaster Bill Laswell and percussionist Zakir Hussain. Their initial project, *Tala Matrix*, was released in 2000 and served as the inspiration for this concert performance. The Tabla Beat Science sound, a fusion of electronic and Indian rhythms, has been referred to as "tablatronics"; the 10 songs featured here go beyond that, incorporating African rhythms, breakbeats and two songs by Ethiopian singer/songwriter Gigi sung in her native Amharic tongue. Other artists involved in the performance

Link

www.tablabeatscience.com

File Under

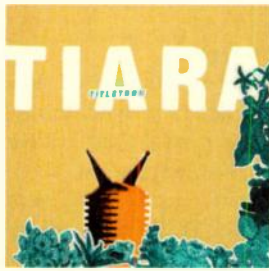
World clique

R.I.Y.L.

Talvin Singh, Transglobal Underground, Trilok Gurtu

included Karsh Kale (drums, tabla), DJ Disk (turntables), Ustad Sultan Khan (sarangi, vocals), Midival Punditz (electronics) and Fabian Alsultany (synthesizers). The groove is heavily percussive and wildly inventive, ranging from the tabla madness of "Magnetic Dub," to the ethereal beauty of Gigi and Khan sahib's vocals on her original tune "Nafekeñ," to DJ Disk's turntable tour-de-force "Tala Matrix" and the rock-like energy of "Devotional Dub." Tabla Beat Science isn't quite in the same arena with Asian underground acts like Joi, though they do share interest in carnatic music. Laswell's preoccupation in ambient and trance styles meshes conveniently with Hussain's yen for raga and polyrhythms. They create exhilarating music that's really on the leading edge of world fusion, and this live set thoroughly captures the sheer musicality of the Tabla Beat Science collaboration. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

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



TIARA

Titletron Grand Theft Autumn-Parasol

Nuance is a tough gig. You can quiet things down to a hush, so that cavernous chords and whispered vocals speak the volumes that power chords used to. But that's a trap as well, and stillness isn't about to speak to your pop yearnings. In striking a balance between don't-wake-the-baby tones and rocking out, Tiara is selective about when less is actually more on Titletron. Vocals, for example, could be front-and-center or emanating from a hall closet. Guitar tones range from gentle acoustic strums to fat electric distortion ("Grandpa (Turns To

Link

www.cringe.com/tiara

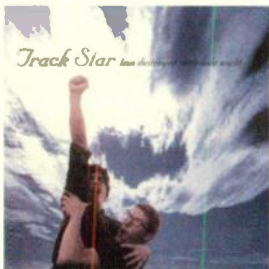
File Under

Crowning achievement

R.I.Y.L.

Death Cab For Cutie, Built To Spill, Teenage Fanclub

Trains"), or the echoing slide guitar that flashes across the disc like heat lightning. Even when the sounds get dirty, there's an interesting soft-rock vibe that either lies in the leisurely pace of the songs, the focus on atmosphere or maybe just that the signature riff from Seals And Croft's "Summer Breeze" shows up at the beginning of "The New Hero." Tasty sounds abound, like the mournful trumpet line in the distance of "The Living," which gives the song the air of one of those films noir where there's always a jazz player practicing in the tenement across the air shaft. Titletron is a record done in letterbox, where the nuances are as interesting as the action at center stage. >>>FRANK MANSFIELD



TRACK STAR

Lion Destroyed The Whole World

Better Looking

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who rooted for My So-Called Life's über-alooof Jordan Catalano, and those who championed the pathological nice-guy, Brian Krakow. It's hard to think of a band more perfect than San Francisco's Track Star for music fans in the latter category; Track Star sounds exactly like the band Krakow would form when he grew up. Not a minute into the band's second LP proper, *Lion Destroyed The Whole World*, the perpetually hushed Wyatt Cusick utters,

Link

www.trackstarmusic.com

File Under

Personal best

R.I.Y.L.

Pedro The Lion, Sebadoh, the Breeders

"I don't need you, I can break my own heart." Since just about every lyric on *Lion* is about love, Cusick's claim of independence is a boldfaced lie—but he's so unabashedly sincere, you can't help but want to believe him. Accompanying the record's 11 odes is a bare-bones rock ethic, similar in concept to the Breeders' *Title TK*, but more tangible. Track Star's strength is their frenetic genre huddling—too pop-minded to be emo, and too ballsy and straightforward in its rocking to be twee, even though lyrics often verge on preciousness. *Lion Destroyed The Whole World* sits dead center on this musical crossroads, too lovelorn to be concerned about oncoming traffic. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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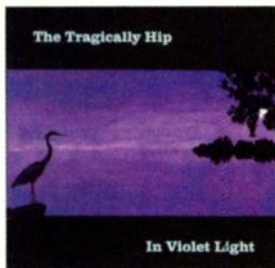
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THE TRAGICALLY HIP 

In Violet Light *Zôe-Rounder*

Whether or not they've ever made much noise here in the States, what has always set Canada's the Tragically Hip apart in 15 years together is their fraternal sense of band and the poetic, metaphysical lyrics of singer Gord Downie. It's no wonder the Hip and Downie get compared to R.E.M. and Stipe so often. You don't need to know that violet light boasts the shortest wavelength in the electromagnetic spectrum (or pick up on the album title's play on words—*Inviolate Light?*) to appreciate this album's *leitmotif* of the precious, fleeting

beauty of life. Unfussy production by Hugh Padgham (XTC, Sting), along with the band's solid rocking and Downie's rippling, emotional delivery ensures the album is more stirring than sentimental. Downie creates pensive, if not profound, moments with juxtapositions of the simplest of words as on "It's A Good Life If You Don't Weaken," a moody road song that seeks to "find somewhere to grow...grow somewhere we're needed." Taking its cue from a quote from prose master Raymond Carver, "Use It Up" begs you not to "Use it all up/ Don't save a thing for later." Good advice for fronting a rock band—or anything else for that matter. >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

[Link](#)

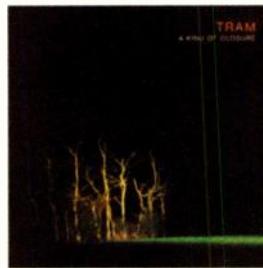
www.thehip.com

File Under

(Great White) Northern lights

R.I.Y.L.

R.E.M.'s *Monster*, *Soul Asylum*, *Midnight Oil*



TRAM

A Kind Of Closure *Jetsat*

Just as Joey Ramone described his music as "long songs played really fast," Tram's music might be called "heavy songs played really slow." Over three quiet albums, moody Brits Paul Anderson and Nick Avery have taken the laconic drone of Low and Smog to its most refined extreme, building dreamy songs of self-doubt and hurt. Following the home-studio intimacy of 2001's *Frequently Asked Questions*, their latest adds fuller orchestrations and studio polish, but it's a subtle update—the duo keeps its slower-than-slowcore ruminative and gloomy. While

this stylistic certitude is admirable, there's a danger that after perfecting their sound on two acclaimed albums, Anderson and Avery are digging themselves into a deep, dark hole. Indeed, *A Kind Of Closure* is best when it subtly tweaks Tram's formula: The graceful, string-laden "Forlorn Labour" builds into a Lambchop-like waltz; "Fools" has a jazzy warmth; and the Palace-esque "A Painful Education" has the stately grace of Americana. That's not to say that Tram's signature style can't still be moving—the weepy "Three Years" is a heartbreak magnum opus on a par with Nick Drake's flourishy tone poems. But the sameness of the rest of the album should serve as a warning to Tram, that their well-worn groove might start to feel like a rut. >>>CHRIS MOLANPHY

[Link](#)

www.tram.org.uk

File Under

Slower-than-slowcore

R.I.Y.L.

Low, Smog, Lambchop, Palace

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BUTCH WALKER

Left Of Self-Centered *Arista*

Breaking away from his mildly successful power-pop trio, *Marvelous 3*, Butch Walker has a not-so-hidden agenda on his solo debut, *Left Of Self-Centered*. From the album's opening "infomercial" taking pot shots at Creed, Korn and Kid Rock, to the final "secret" track that mocks booty slappin' R&B, Walker doesn't hesitate in letting his feelings about current trends be known. But despite his misgivings about the way the radio game is being played, Walker makes sure his bases are covered with airwave-friendly riffing, verse-chorus-verse songwriting and even some

wicky-wicky scratching. Walker's love for glam-metal seeps through the entire record, but his undeniable penchant for catchy hooks (as with the single, "My Way"), creates an acerbic pop tone that's like Cheap Trick if had they grown up on Guns N' Roses and Mötley Crüe. (Walker even went so far as to enlist Nikki Sixx for bass duties for the anthemic "Into The Black.") While Walker often appears to be trying too hard to paint himself as every bit the sleazy, jaded rocker, it's obvious on *Left Of Self-Centered* that he's just a good ol' Georgia boy genuinely having fun. A gifted songwriter torn between being Johnny Thunders and Justin Timberlake, Walker needs to figure out what he wants to be when he grows up before he can really enjoy just being Butch. >>>RYAN RAYHILL

[Link](#)

www.butchwalker.com

File Under

Playa hatin' on the Sunset Strip

R.I.Y.L.

Marvelous 3, Lit, Buckcherry



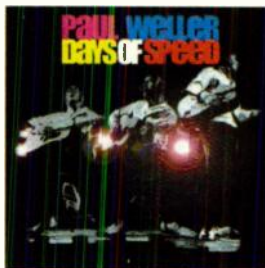
THE WAXWINGS

Shadows Of The Waxwings Bobsled

On their second full-length, the Waxwings seem intent on forging ties to harder-rocking Detroit brethren like the White Stripes. The sunny '60s-inflected power-pop of 2000's debut *Low To The Ground* now shares airtime with rough-hewn but no less painstakingly crafted nuggets. The opening chords of "While You Spiral" ape the Who's "The Seeker," announcing that the band has added some amped-up icons to its catalog of muses. The Waxwings will never be mistaken for cock-rockers—they're too fond of tam-

Link
www.thewaxwings.com
File Under
Emergency third rail power trips
R.I.Y.L.
Velvet Crush, the Hollies, Sloan,
Matthew Sweet

bourines and well-crafted harmonies—but their newfound swagger pays off. The irresistible "Blur To Me" recalls Richard Lloyd's gonzo guitar work backing Matthew Sweet, and the coda to opener "Wired Than Way" is the sort that lodges in the subconscious. Still, the disc's highest points emerge on gentler tracks like the shimmering "Look Down Darkly," with its gorgeous string section, or the Badfinger-esque melancholy elegance of "Almost All Day." *Shadows Of The Waxwings* has a few failed experiments: The attempt for an unhinged vibe on "Crystallized" instead sounds like a mispressing, and finale "What's Needed Now" doesn't reach the intended epic peaks. Even if those missteps represent a sophomore slump, the Waxwings' batting average remains plenty high, thanks to the quartet's underlying melodicism and the harmonies of Dominic Romano and Dean Fertita. >>>GLEN SARVADY



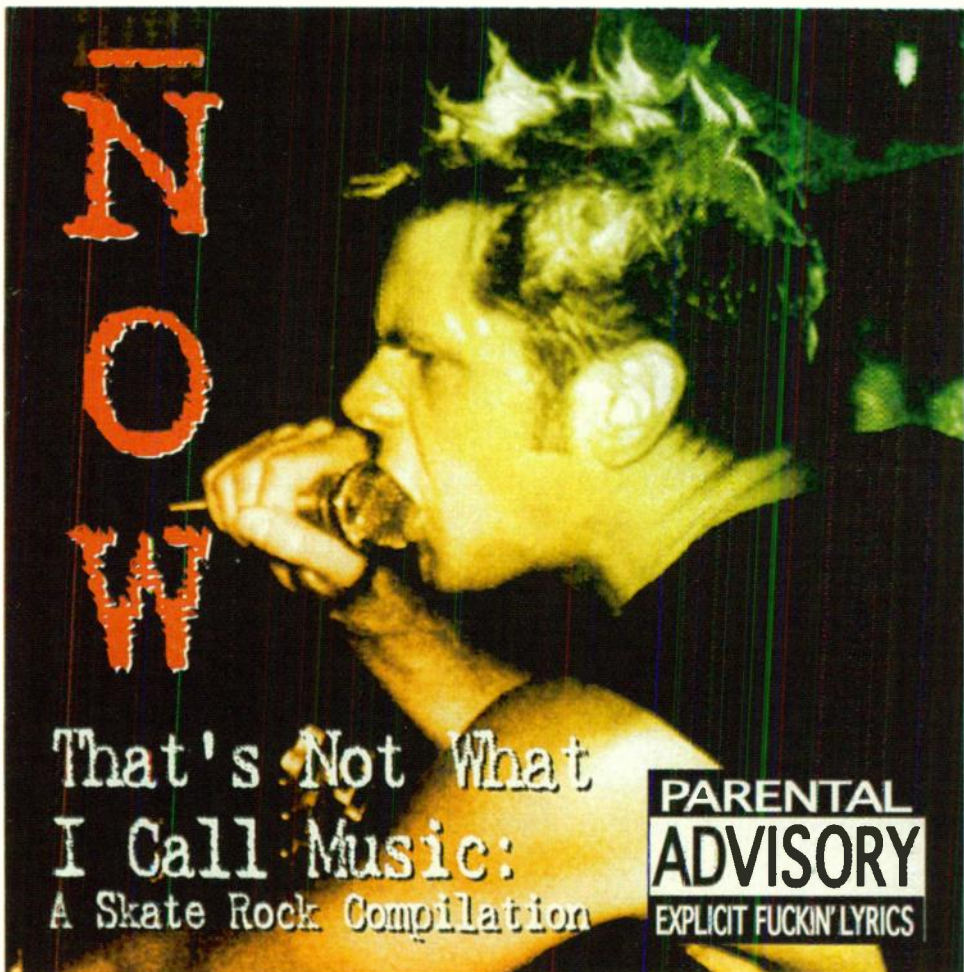
PAUL WELLER

Days Of Speed Epic

Paul Weller said recently, "Rock is a young man's game." No one contradicts that statement more keenly than himself, of course. Still, it must be somewhat troubling to be Paul Weller: For all his successes and critical acclaim with the Jam, Style Council and in his solo career (as well as still having excellent hair), his "heavy soul," as he refers to it, seems to leave him often unable to reckon the great wrongness of life. And on this live recording of his 2001 acoustic tour, he still sounds like a man wrestling with uncertainties, perhaps now those of middle age. The album does open with the optimistic "Brand

Link
www.paulweller.com
File Under
All the not-so-young punks
R.I.Y.L.
Aztec Camera, Billy Bragg,
middle-aged angst and
introspection

New Start," and odes to love like "English Rose" and "Amongst Butterflies" are deeply sentimental. But others, like "Everything Has A Price To Pay" and "Back In The Fire," drip with a profound cynicism. What makes this record essential—as opposed to most live recordings—is how fresh the songs sound without all the studio production sheen. Weller sings with a conviction that's powerful and palpable, as there's little to interfere. His guitar playing is crisp, and the sound is remarkably airy. And he finally gets over his grouchiness about playing pre-solo material, offering rousing versions of "That's Entertainment," "Headstart For Happiness," and "Town Called Malice." >>>KEN SCRUDATO



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TOP 75



WILCO
YANKEE HOTEL FOXTROT
NONESUCH

#1

5 YEARS AGO

YO LA TENGO

I Can Hear The Heart Beating As One (Matador)

SLEATER-KINNEY

Dig Me Out (Kill Rock Stars)

PRIMUS

Brown Album (Interscope)

FOLK IMPLOSION

Dare To Be Surprised (Communion)

CHEMICAL BROTHERS

Dig Your Own Hole (Astralwerks-Caroline)

10 YEARS AGO

BEASTIE BOYS

Check Your Head (Capitol)

L7

Bricks Are Heavy (Slash)

JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

(Def American-Warner Bros.)

THE CURE

Wish (Fiction-Elektra)

XTC

Nonesuch (Geffen)

ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1 WILCO	Yankee Hotel Foxtrot	Nonesuch
2 ELVIS COSTELLO	When I Was Cruel	Island
3 TOM WAITS	Blood Money	Anti
4 THE BREEDERS	Title TK	Elektra
5 WEEZER	Melankton	Geffen
6 LUNA	Romantica	Jetset
7 DOVES	Last Broadcast	Capitol
8 MOBY	18	V2
9 GIRLS AGAINST BOYS	You Can't Fight What You Can't See	Jade Tree
10 ELF POWER	Creatures	spinART
11 BLACKALICIOUS	Blazing Arrow	MCA
12 UGLY CASANOVA	Sharpen Your Teeth	Sub Pop
13 BADLY DRAWN BOY	About A Boy	XL-Artist Direct
14 THE WHITE STRIPES	White Blood Cells	V2
15 GET UP KIDS	On A Wire	Vagrant
16 ASH	Free All Angels	Kinetic
17 TOM WAITS	Alice	Anti
18 NOFX	45 Or 46 Songs That Weren't Good Enough	Fat Wreck Chords
19 DJ SHADOW	Private Press	MCA
20 THE PROMISE RING	Wood/Water	Epitaph-Anti
21 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Wave Remixed	Verve
22 PEDRO THE LION	Control	Jade Tree
23 CORNERSHOP	Handcream For A Generation	Wiiiija-Beggars Group-V2
24 GOLDFINGER	Open Your Eyes	Mojo-Jive
25 MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD	Uninvitable	Blue Note
26 TREY ANASTASIO	Trey Anastasio	Elektra
27 THE GOSSIP	Arkansas Heat (EP)	Kill Rock Stars
28 JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Plastic Fang	Matador
29 MULL HISTORICAL SOCIETY	Loss	Rough Trade
30 ENON	High Society	Touch And Go
31 MARY TIMONY	The Golden Dove	Matador
32 BRATMOBILE	Girls Get Busy	Lookout!
33 PAUL WESTERBERG	Stereo	Vagrant
34 BRYAN FERRY	Francis	Virgin
35 ANTIPOP CONSORTIUM	Arhythmia	Warp
36 CAPITOL K	Island Row	XL-Beggars Group
37 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Fields And Streams	Kill Rock Stars
38 TRANS AM	TA	Thrill Jockey
39 JOHN VANDERSLICE	The Life And Death Of An American Four Tracker	Barsuk
40 FRENCH KICKS	One Time Bells	Star Time
41 ONELINEDRAWING	Visitor	Jade Tree
42 IMPERIAL TEEN	On	Merge
43 GOMEZ	In Our Gue	Virgin
44 CROOKED FINGERS	Reservoir Songs EP	Merge
45 A	Hi-Fi Serious	Mammoth-Hollywood
46 DILLINGER FOUR	Situationalist Comedy	Fat Wreck Chords
47 PATTY GRIFFIN	1000 Kisses	ATO
48 MOTH	Provisions: Fiction And Guit	Virgin
49 MATTHEW	Everybody Down	Rykodisc
50 K'S CHOICE	Almost Happy	Sony Music International
51 30 SECONDS TO MARS	30 Seconds To Mars	Immortal-Virgin
52 URSULA 1000	Kinda Kinky	Eighteenth Street Lounge
53 SOUNDTRACK	CG	Emperor Norton
54 VAN MORRISON	Down The Road	Universal
55 WAYNE	Music On Plastic	TVT
56 ...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD	Source Tags And Codes	Interscope
57 ALOHA	Sugar	Polyvinyl
58 POLYPHONIC SPREE	The Beginning Stages	Good
59 JUCIFER	I Name You Destroyer	Velocette
60 SILKWORM	Italian Platinum	Touch And Go
61 THE MOONEY SUZUKI	Electric Sweet	Gammon
62 BRIGHT EYES	There Is No Beginning To The Story (EP)	Saddle Creek
63 PUFFY AMIYUMI	An Illustrated History	Bar/None
64 PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES	Good Health	Lookout!
65 EL GATO	We're Birds	Motherload
66 CURSIVE/EASTERN YOUTH	8 Teeth To Eat You	Better Looking
67 BONNIE RAITT	Silver Lining	Capitol
68 STEP KINGS	3 The Hard Way	We Put Out
69 1 GIANT LEAP	1 Giant Leap	Palm
70 ALFIE	A Word In Your Ear	XL
71 CATO SALSA EXPERIENCE	A Good Tip For A Good Time	Garralda
72 WORK OF SAWS	The Pious Flats	No Alternative-Thick Furniture
73 ADEN	Topiders	Teen Beat
74 HOT HOT HEAT	Knock Knock Knock	Sub Pop
75 RUSTED ROOT	Welcome To My Party	Island

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. The word "Yingwie" is said twice in this issue. Collect them all!

LOUD ROCK TOP 25



1	KILLSWITCH ENGAGE Alive Or Just Breathing	Roadrunner
2	SUPERJOINT RITUAL Use Once And Destroy	Housecore-Sanctuary
3	SKINLAB ReVolting Room	Century Media
4	THE CROWN Crowned In Terror	Metal Blade
5	BRAND NEW SIN Brand New Sin	Now Or Never
6	MASTODON Remission	Relapse
7	SOILWORK Natural Born Chaos	Nuclear Blast
8	DANZIG Danzig 777: I Luciferi	Spitfire
9	LOLLIPOP LUST KILL My So Called Knife	Artemis
10	DIO Killing The Dragon	Spitfire
11	ATREYU Suicide Notes And Butterfly Kisses	Victory
12	VOMITORY Blood Rapture	Metal Blade
13	HATEBREED Perseverance	Universal
14	ARCH ENEMY Wages Of Sin	Century Media
15	COAL CHAMBER Dark Days	Roadrunner
16	MOTORHEAD Hammered	Sanctuary
17	DOWN Down II: A Bustle In Your Hedgerow	Elektra
18	PRIMAL FEAR Black Sun	Nuclear Blast
19	RED CHORD Fused Together In Revolving Doors	Robotic Empire
20	DIMENSION ZERO Silent Night Fever	Century Media
21	BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME Between...	Lifeforce
22	KNUT Challenger	Hydra Head
23	BEYOND THE EMBRACE Against The Elements	Metal Blade
24	RHAPSODY Power Of The Dragonflame	SPV
25	OTEP Sevas Tra	Capitol

RPM TOP 10



1	VARIOUS ARTISTS Verve Remixed	Verve
2	LTJ BUKEM Producer #15	Good Looking
3	DAVE SEAMAN Global ...	Global Underground
4	MOBY 18	V2
5	DJ SHADOW The Private Press	MCA
6	COLDCUT 70 Minutes Of Madness	Journeys By DJ
7	CHRIS FORTIER Compiled And Mixed	Bedrock
8	SMITH AND MIGHTY Life Is...	IK7
9	JOESKI AND ONIONZ Nu-York Nite: Life	NRK Sound Division
10	DANNY TENAGLIA Back To Basics	React (UK)



JAZZ TOP 10

1	MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD Uninvisible	Blue Note
2	CASSANDRA WILSON Belly Of The Sun	Blue Note
3	WAYNE SHORTER Footprints Live!	Verve
4	TRIO 3 Open Ideas	Blue Note
5	SCOTT COLLEY Initial Wisdom	Palmetto
6	DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND Medicated Magic	Ropeadope
7	RAY VEGA LATIN JAZZ SEXTET Pa Lante	Palmetto
8	NORAH JONES Come Away With Me	Blue Note
9	ERIK TRUFFAZ Mantis	Blue Note
10	MINGUS BIG BAND Tonight At Noon...	Dreyfus

HIP-HOP TOP 25



1	ATMOSPHERE Modern Man's Hustle	Rhyme Sayers
2	EMANON Emcees Like Me b/w Andyson'tstop	Dirty Science
3	SLUM VILLAGE Tainted	Capitol
4	RICHY PITCH The Lyricist	7 Heads
5	AFU-R Stick Up b/w Hip-Hop	Koch Entertainment
6	ODDJOB Blue Collar Holler	Third Earth
7	EL-P Deep Space 9mm	Def Jux
8	LEXICON Makin' Music	Spy Tech-Landspeed
9	DJ SHADOW You Can't Go Home Again b/w Treach Battle Beat	MCA
10	BABU THE DILATED JUNKIE Duck... (The Beans...)	Sequence
11	MR. LIF Home Of The Brave b/w The Unorthodox	Def Jux
12	BLACKALICIOUS Paragraph President	Quannum-MCA
13	J-LIVE Satisfied	Coup d'Etat
14	EMINEM Without Me	Interscope
15	YUKONN MC Sweet Baby b/w The Underrated River	Emerge
16	N.C.R.E. Nothin'	Def Jam
17	DEMIGODZ Don't Even Go There	Ill Boogie
18	SLEEP Man In A Box	Under The Needle
19	NON PHIXION Rock Stars	Landspeed
20	STYLES P F/ PHAROAAHE MONCH The Life	Rawkus
21	SCARFACE, JAY-Z, BEANIE SIGEL Guess Who's Back	Def Jam
22	INSIGHT That Shit Ain't Hot b/w Ghetto Biaster	BRICK
23	DJ JAZZY JEFF Love Of Da Game	BBE
24	ALMYGHTY MYGHTY PYTHONS Amp	Hieroglyphics Imperium
25	STRICT FLOW Genuine Article	Authentic

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JUNE 25

AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE Shashamane Land (In Pursuit Of...) *On-U Sound-EFA*
ASH Free All Angels *Kinetic*
BOTTLES AND SKULLS Amped The Fuck Up *Sick Room*
BROKEN BONES Bonecrusher *Relapse*
BROOKLYN BOUNCE Restart *Radikal*
BUGSKULL AND BIG WHITE CLOUD Bugskull And Big White Cloud *Scratch*
BUTTHOLE SURFERS Humpty Dumpty LSD *Latino Bugger Veil*
CIRRUS Counterfeit *Moonshine*
CLENCHED FIST Welcome To Memphis *Thorp-Relapse*
COSMIC GATE Exploration Of Space *Radikal*
COUNTERFIT Super Amusement Machine For Your Exciting Heart *Negative Progression*
CRAW Bodies For Strontium 90 *Hydrahead*
D.S.P. In The Red *Ninja Tune*
DAMN PERSONALS Standing Still In The USA *Big Wheel Recreation*
DEADLY VENOMS Still Standing *Rocks The World*
DESTROYER 666 Cold Steel For An Iron Age *Season Of Mist-Relapse*
DIEHARD YOUTH Without The Kids We Would Be Dead *Thorp-Relapse*
DREAM EVIL Dragonslayer *Century Media*
ENTWINE Time Of Despair *Century Media*
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LAURA NYRO Gonna Take A+C112 Miracle *Columbia-Legacy*
ORANGE GOBLIN Coup De Grace *Music Cartel*
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REEL BIG FISH Cheer Up *Mojo-Jive*
ANTHONY ROTHER Hacker *PSI49 Net-EFA*
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VARIOUS ARTISTS Spiritual Life Music *Spiritual Life Music*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Ultra Dance 2 *Ultra*
WEIRD WAR Weird War *Drag City*
XTC Black Sea *Caroline*
XTC English Settlement *Caroline*
XTC Go 2 *Caroline*

JULY 2

CHEZIDECK Harvest Time *VP*
CHRISTIANSEN Forensics Brothers And Sisters EP *Revelation*
CRESTFALLEN Streaks of Terror *Magic Bullet*
CRISPUS ATTUCKS Yo Pehó *Six Weeks*
BENOIT DELBECQ 5 Pursuit *Songlines*
DAVE DOUGLAS Tiny Bell Trio *Songlines*
EUGE GROOVE Play Date *Warner Bros.*
FLIP TOPS All Worked Up *Rip Off*
FRODUS Radio-Activity *Magic Bullet*
GLORYHOLES Knock You Up *Empty*
JERRY GRANELLI AND BADLANDS Crowd Theory *Songlines*
BLAKE HAZARD Little Airplane *Kimschee*
FRANCOIS HOULE/BENOIT DELBECQ Nancali *Songlines*
IMPALED Mondo Mediale *Deathvomit Records*
BANDA IONICA Matri Mia *Dunya*
JAHEIM Warner Bros.
JAZZANOVA In Between *Ropeadope*
KANSAS The Ultimate Kansas *Epic-Legacy*
KILLING TREE Romance of Helen Trent *One Day Savior*
AMIR KOUSHKANI Quest *Songlines*
JIM MCCARTY BLUES BAND Outside Woman *Silica*
MISSING 23RD The Powers That Be *Sessions*
MUFFINS, THE <185> *Cuneiform Records*
NEUROTICFISH Les Chansons Neurotiques *Dancing Ferret Discs*
MARK NODWELL Incidents *Songlines*
PITCH BLACK Pitch Black *Revelation*
POCKET ROCKET Love Or Perish *Teenbeat*
TONY SCHERR Come Around *Smells Like*
RAS SHILOH From Rasta To You *VP*
CHRIS SPEED Emit *Songlines*
SPITVALVES Movin On *Resurrection A.D.*
STEELE AND CLEVIE Old To The New: Steele And Clevie Tribute Joe Gibbs Classics *VP*
RICHIE STEPHENS The Man Upstairs *ERC Records*
SUICIDE NOTE You're Not Looking So Good *Ferret*
THE THE Soul Mining *Epic-Legacy*
THE THE Infected *Epic-Legacy*
THE THE Mind Bomb *Epic-Legacy*
THE THE Dusk *Epic-Legacy*
UNSUNG ZEROS Moments From Mourning *Eulogy*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Blind Fold *VP*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Engine *VP*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Eulogy And Averno Sampler-Transcend *Eulogy*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Every Dog Will Have Its Day *Adeline*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Old To The New *VP*
VEHEMENCE God Was Created *Metal Blade*
WIRE Read And Burn 01 *Pink Flag-Revolver*
PATRICK ZIMMERLI ENSEMBLE Explosion *Songlines*

JULY 9

AMERICAN ANALOG SET Updates EP *Tiger Style*
ANTIPOP CONSORTIUM Ghoststaws *Warp*
APHRODITE Aftershock *V2*
AROVANE Icol Diston *Arovane-Chain Reaction-EFA*
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BEEF WELLINGTON Feel Fantabulous *Eighth Dimension*
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VARIOUS ARTISTS Your Scene Sucks *Go Kart*
VOODOO AND SERRANO Cold Blood *Radikal*
WACKIES African Roots, Act 2 *Wackies-EFA*
WARHAMMER Curse Of The Absolute Eclipse *Nuclear Blast*
DELROY WASHINGTON I-Sus *Frontline*
X-103 (UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE) Atlantis *Tresor-EFA*

JULY 16

ANTS Sparking Disaster Strategies *Sick Room*
TONY BENNETT The Essential Tony Bennett *Columbia-Legacy*
CATAHOULA HOUNDS Catahoula Hounds EP *Dirtnap*
COOL JERKS Cleaned A Lot Of Plates In Memphis *Sympathy For The Record Industry*
DRUNK INJUNS From Where The Sun Now Stands I Will Fight No More *Alternative Tentacles*
SEB FONTAINE Horizons *Thrive*
FREE BEER Only Beer That Matters *Alternative Tentacles*
NIK FREITAS Here's Laughing At You *Future Farmer*
KIRBY GRIPS Rotations *Sympathy For The Record Industry*
LOS DUDADOS Listen To This *Alternative Tentacles*
MUMMYDOGS Mummydogs *Frontier-Mordam*
RAPHI Cali Quake *Uprok*
ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT Hot Charity-Cut And Play *Swami*
SIMON AND GARFUNKEL Live From New York City 1967 *Columbia-Legacy*
THE SLIP Angels Come On Time *Rykodisc*
SOUNDTRACK Me Without You *Epic-Sony*
Soundtrax-Legacy
SPACE MONKEYZ VS. GORILLAZ Laika Come Home *Astralwerks*
SWIZZ BEATZ Swizz Beatz Presents G.H.E.T.T.O. Stories *DreamWorks*
UNDER A DYING SUN Under A Dying Sun *Substandard*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Blind Fold *VP*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Busted At The Lit Club: Shielded By Death Vol.1 *Bacchus Archives*

VARIOUS ARTISTS Can't Stop Us Now: Linval Thompson Productions *Easy Star Records*
VEX RED Start With A Strong And Persistent Desire *Virgin*
VINES Highly Evolved *Capitol*
JOE ZAWINUL Dialects *Columbia Legacy Jazz*
JULY 23

LOUIS ARMSTRONG The Best Of The Hot Five And Hot Seven Recordings *Columbia Legacy Jazz*
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MICRO Music Through Me *Moonshine*
MIDWEST PRODUCT Specifics *Ghostly*
STRYDER Jungle City Twitch *Equal Vision*
TRENDROID Transport 6 *Kinetic*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Plastic, Vol. 6 *Netzwerk*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Ritmo De La Noche: The Very Best Of Latin Jazz *Columbia-Legacy*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Survive And Advance, Vol. 1 *Merge*
TOM WATSON Country And Watson *Theologian*

JULY 30

AMERICAN FOXES Cotton Candy *Sympathy For The Record Industry*
CATTLE DECAPITATION To Serve Man *Metal Blade*
DIES IRAE The Sin War *Metal Blade*
KJ-52 Collaborations *Uprok*
MINUS 8 Minut *Compost*
OLATUNJI Drums Of Passion *Columbia-Legacy*
ORTHRELM/TOUCHDOWN Split *Troubleman Unlimited*
RETARDOS Keep Winning *Scooch Pooch*
SUBMACHINE Live Fast, Die Stupid *Six Weeks*
DJ TIESTO In Search Of Sunrise 3 *Blackhole Recordings*
VARIOUS ARTISTS The Rough Guide To The Music Of The Alps *World Music Network*
VARIOUS ARTISTS The Rough Guide To The Music Of The Appalachians *World Music Network*
VARIOUS ARTISTS The Rough Guide To The Music Of The Himalayas *World Music Network*

AUGUST 6

BOWLING FOR SOUP Drunk Enough To Dance *Silvertone-Jive*
BIFFY CLYRO Blackened Sky *Beggars Group*
CRUXSHADOWS Wishfire *Dancing Ferret Records*
D.H.S. Attention Earth People *Tino Corp.*
D'MILTANTE Am I Lying? *Uproar*
DIARY OF DREAMS Freak Perfume *Metropolis*
FINGATHING Superhero Music *Grand Central*
GOOD CLEAN FUN Positively Positive 1998-2002 *Equal Vision*
KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS Utter A Sound *Sonic Umyon*
MACK AND JAMIE Extreme Channel Surfing *Uproar*
MASTRETTA Mastretta *Minty Fresh*
DALE MORNINGSTAR I Grew Up On Sodom Road *Sonic Umyon*
PENANCE Proving Ground *Martyr Music*
SOUNDTRACK 24 Hour Party People *Essential-FRR*
PETER STUART Propeller *Vanguard*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Critical Mass 3 *Metropolis*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Total Lee: The Songs Of Lee Hazelwood *Astralwerks*

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Paul Simon's *Graceland*

STORY: BILL WERDE • ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA



This summer, the film adaptation of Nick Hornby's *About A Boy* revolved around the universally accepted truth that performing a song one has no business performing in an environment where one has no business being is a bad idea. (The film also revolved around the universally accepted truth that the public has an unending thirst for the Roguish Charm™ of Hugh Grant, but that's another column, entirely.) The movie's pinnacle scene featured the supposedly geeky, 12-year-old Marcus—maligned by his peers, bullied and robbed of his trainers for being such a dweeb—performing to an auditorium crammed with fellow students who want to eviscerate him, as much for his sheer audacity as for his awful pipes.

This being Hollywood, Grant shows up with a guitar (and the RC™) and saves the day. But as audience members filed from the theater, I was left flush with retrospect and regret. Once upon a time, I was that dweeb. Not the cute, witty Marcus, but a real dweeb, with crooked plastic glasses that were too large, bad hair and a penchant for acting like a know-it-all. And more than anything, I wanted to be in the talent show.

Like Marcus, I had no musical talent to speak of—just the love of a song and the need to perform. My Roberta Flack was Paul Simon. And not the singer-songwriter Paul Simon, who epitomized a sort of hip, folksy urban poet, but the self-effacing Paul Simon who showed up in whimsical videos, telling us to call him Al and marveling at the comedic antics of Chevy Chase (this was '86, a few years before Chase would have his funny card revoked).

It was Mrs. Reese, my eighth grade English teacher, who turned me on to the "You Can Call Me Al" video. She brought in a taped copy to prove some point or another about communication and the mass media. Simon and Chase lip-synch, mock-play instruments and do silly synchronized dance steps to Simon's hit about the depressing realities of aging. The video embodied the two favorite things of my young life: slapstick and cynicism. I loved the way Chase mistook an empty drum frame for a table, dropping his beverage straight through it to the floor. I loved his playful bumbings and Simon's deadpan delivery. I loved the seeming absurdity of the chorus: "I can call you Betty, and Betty when you call me, you can call me Al." What did it mean? How strange! How delightful!

I have no idea what made me want to perform the song in the talent show. But I went home that night and asked my mother to buy the album. She did, happily—this was only two years removed from her taking my first album, Def Leppard's *Pyromania*, away from me, having seen a talk show segment about the band's lyrics

inciting aggression in children. *Graceland* was no *Pyromania*. Simon's album was culturally enlightening. It was smart. You could dance to it.

What *Graceland* really was—an album of new (to me) African grooves and songs about accepting the hardships and inevitabilities of life—made perfect sense to a hardcore nerd. I got punched on the school bus and laughed at in the cafeteria. My 12-year-old self was awkward and still wore the clothes my parents bought for me at discount stores. I was too fond of having the right answers in class. And none of this had anything to do with Hollywood. I understood what Simon tapped into and what the African voices knew all too well: Life wasn't always fair, but it always went on.

I memorized "You Can Call Me Al," and every other song on the album. I performed them with great care and emphasis on dance steps. When he came to my front door and caught me serenading the couch cushions and gesticulating wildly, the mailman couldn't see the audience of hundreds of won-over adolescents. But I sure could. With my eyes closed, I could see their respect and—finally!—their understanding. When the last bit of the last song on the album floated into silence—"It was the myth of the fingerprints," I would sing, "that's why we must learn to live alone"—I could hear the applause of 1,000 hands. Then I'd pick up the needle and plunk it back at the beginning of "The Boy In The Bubble" and start again. I was on a mission. I was going to perform "You Can Call Me Al" in the talent show.

Of course, the date to sign up came and went and I never did put my name on the list. I don't remember the reason for that, either, though I'm sure it was a mixture of common sense and old-fashioned chickening out. Eventually, my Paul Simon concerts ended, replaced by the call-and-response of King Ad Rock, MCA, Mike D and me, Bill-E. I got contacts and a haircut. I still act like a know-it-all sometimes. And I find myself wondering what might have been. Guess that's why Hollywood stays in business.

New York-based freelance writer Bill Werde (Ol' Werde Bastard to the CMJ editors) still performs frequent concerts for furniture. Sing along at www.billwerde.net.

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H A L D Y N



Dave Hupp

Nose slide to big spin

Photography: Joe Hachimeky

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