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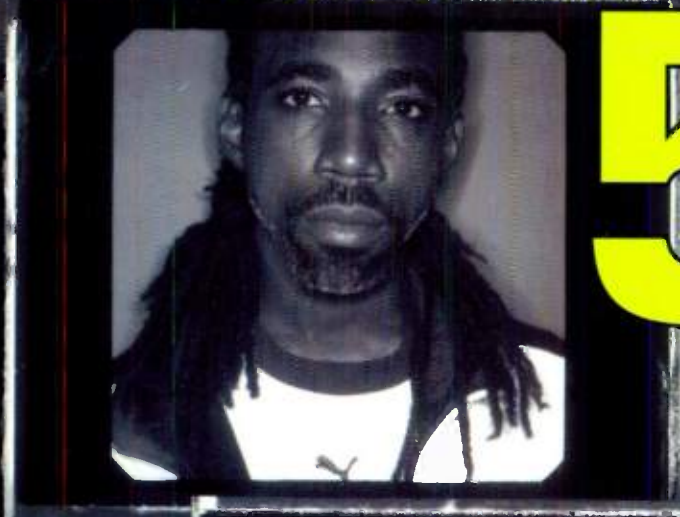
MONTHLY



JURASSIC

5

"We're comin'. You don't have to respect us, but you're gonna know about us."



Neko Case. Ladytron.
Low. Superdrag.

Rhett Miller.
47 REVIEWS

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COVER

Photo: Max S. Gerber
Location: Santa Monica, California



JURASSIC 5



LADYTRON



NEKO CASE



LAYO & BUSHWACKA!

JURASSIC 5 30

Jurassic 5's *Quality Control* was a love letter to old-school skills in the face of bling culture. Now, with the consciousness-elevating rhymes of *Power In Numbers*, they're dropping fire over all of hip-hop's ice, and the old school is ready to teach the new school a thing or two. Bill Werde takes the test.

RHETT MILLER 24

Rhett Miller moved to New York City on September 9th, 2001. Three blocks from the World Trade Center. The rest of that week isn't something he sings about on his new solo record, though—think about *that*, Springsteen. Tom Lanham listens up.

LADYTRON 26

Spawn a scene, reject the scene; it's a timeless process. After the success of last year's *604*, Ladytron have been saddled with the responsibility of having given birth to electro-clash. Well, now they're going to eat their young. Doug Levy brings condiments.

LOW 28

"Slow and steady wins the race" carried Low through eight years of drowsy slowcore glory; with *Trust*, they're embracing change and trading slow for soul. Mikael Wood speeds things up.

NEKO CASE 38

She can break your heart or bust you in the eye, sometimes in the course of the same conversation, and Neko Case's big voice works the same way on her sweeping *Blacklisted*. Nicole Kaiper braces for impact.

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It's gettin' hot in here, so take off all your clothes: Rilo Kiley, Layo & Bushwacka!, RockFour, the Pattern.

ON THE CD 35

Riddlin' Kids, Nonpoint, PJ Olsson, Ron Sexsmith, Wes Cunningham, Alice Peacock, Llana, Parker & Lily, the Gufs, RockFour, Apples In Stereo, Neko Case, Carolyn Mark And The Room-Mates, the Forty-Fives, Low, Tahiti BO, Rilo Kiley, Bangs, Violent Femmes.

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Superdrag supports Skskryd, the Prodigy cries bunk on their own single, Clinic shows you around their operating room, we savor some imported Lamb, the Locust pays tribute to Queen, Nightmares On Wax likes the digital soul, and the Vandals endorse phone sex, crabs and weight gain.

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Our shocking exposé reveals the presence of alcohol in Dublin.

GEEK LOVE 74

INXS brings out the devil inside Christopher R. Weingarten.

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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY (ISSN 1074-6878) is published monthly by The CMJ Network with offices at 151 W. 25th St., 12th Fl., New York, NY 10001. Subscription rates are \$39.95 per year. Subscription offices: P.O. Box 57414, Boulder, CO 80322-7414 / Phone (800) 414-4CMJ. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Ride Along Enclosed. Postmaster: Send address changes to CMJ New Music Monthly, Membership Office, P.O. Box 57414, Boulder, CO 80328-7414. CMJ New Music Monthly is copyright 2001 by College Media Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reproduced without consent of publisher. Unless indicated otherwise, all letters sent to CMJ are eligible for publication and copyright purposes, and are subject to CMJ's right to edit and comment editorially. Does anybody remember laughter? (And not the bitter kind!)

LADYTRON: MARK MCNUITY; NEKO CASE: SUSAN ANDERSON; LAYO & BUSHWACKA!: DREW COREN

Bio debatable

Larry Pierce, with his bellicose comments in your July issue's Letters column, put me to thinking. "Ocean-free fish": Well, there are at least 8,400 species of freshwater fish on earth (many of which used to be edible) that science has named, many more that we haven't yet—but don't worry, paper mills are helping us diminish that burdensome number every day. Since European settlement, 21 out of 822 American fish species have gone extinct, and nearly 40 percent of those American species still kicking are at risk of extinction. "Cow-free leather": We who have suffered through so many Geek Love-worthy bands should be very familiar with pleather, or at least über-expensive hand-tooled alligator skin, fresh from the Floridian farms. There are a score of alternatives, not that they're that great either.

And—ah yes—"treeless paper": Well, we forget our roots so swiftly. In terms of human history, paper that uses wood pulp is very much a newcomer. As we all learned in elementary school, the first recognizable "paper" was made from the papyrus reed (now endangered) in Egypt... about 6,000 years ago! It wasn't until the mid-1800s that we learned how to digest wood pulp using noxious chemicals, including bleaches, sulfites and sulfates, and thus build the timber and chemical industries simultaneously. God, this is starting to sound so fucking self-righteous. That's not my intent. All I'm saying is that there are, and have been, alternatives to the status quo. Our collective cultural inertia, however, makes me not expect to see much improvement.

Here's some alternatives from which paper could easily be made: discarded fabrics, agricultural wastes, sugar cane, wheat straw, barley straw, rice straw, oat straw, corn stalks, sorghum stalks, flax straw, HEMP, manila hemp, bamboo, cotton stalks, various grasses and other plants... So. Big fucking deal. There are options, it's just that most of us neither know nor care about them. Go now, my friends, get in your SUV, drive down the block to Wal-Mart, listening to whatever it is you are being told to listen to, breeding limitlessly. Be fruitful, and multiply—after all the trees are gone, maybe we'll learn how to make paper from cockroaches and dandelions.

Colin Peden
Center for Ecology and
Evolutionary Biology
University of Oregon

P.S. If anyone's looking for a jaded yet

minorly competent bassist, drop me a line.

Ah, what does he know? —ed.

Corporate avenger

I have been a subscriber of your magazine over the past year. Although I have found it interesting and informative I have found that the views posted in your publication can be quite hypocritical at times. It is quite obvious that your target demographic is the 20- to 40-year-olds who think that they are too cool and sophisticated for the mainstream. These people flock to what is new so that they can lord it over others later. And they seem to be proud of it. They pride themselves on being independent-minded and, above all, non-fascists. Yet it is quite obvious to me that in your magazine one month you tell them that emo (or something else) is in, then once it becomes mainstream it is no longer cool. They are faced with an opinion from you (a magazine that they value and trust) and feel compelled to believe it. So now to them emo is for teenage angst-ridden losers along with all the other genres and people you have banished to the music netherworld, and the latest mildly depressed idiot with a guitar is who should be worshipped. Now I know that you are a magazine and that is your job, to tell people what is cool. Because you are a corporation and corporations make money off of telling people what they should be doing. You are catering to a legion of hypocrites, and I find that particularly amusing. Especially since most of them probably don't realize what the hell is going on. The only sign of a true non-fascist is one that knows when they're being instructed to conform. Everyone else is just a hypocrite. And I laugh at all the ones who've been had. In your efforts to label yourselves as a well-rounded publication, remember that there are other music societies out there that you don't feature. The likes of great unsigned bands like Monx and Loco never grace your pages, whereas people are gonna get damn sick of Wilco very soon. Keep it fresh and new guys.

Sexy Solly
succubimidnight@hotmail.com

Even if these days we're a corporation in the same way that the guy on 7th Avenue with the Fashion Beef Hot Dogs cart is a corporation, our mission remains to disseminate information on new and interesting music, the definition of which is bounded by what we think will engage the attention of our audience. Are they hypocrites slavishly following our monthly prescripts? Not hardly if the message boards at cmj.com are any indi-

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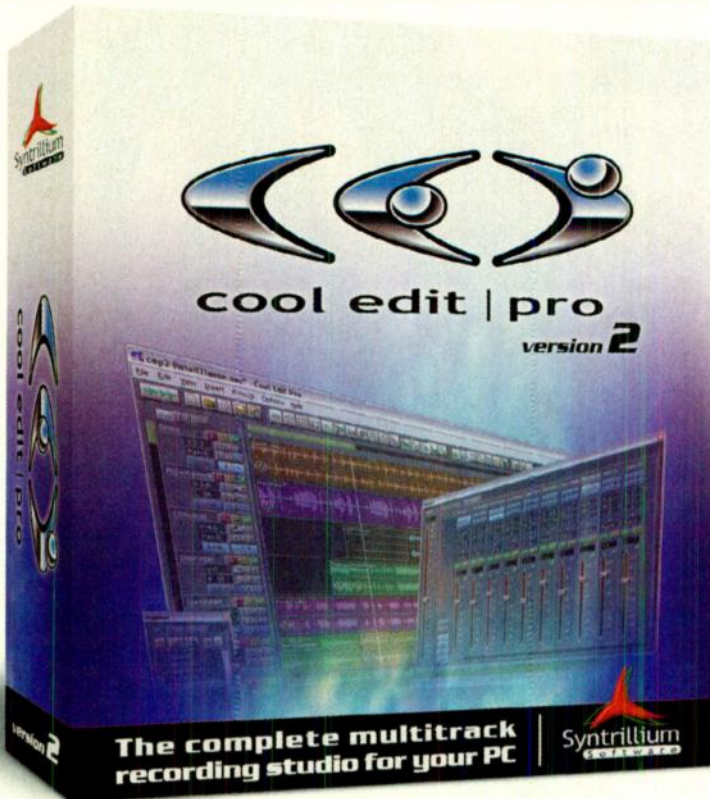
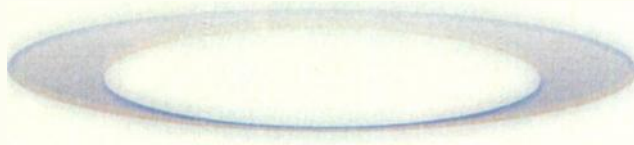
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cation. The only real hypocrites in my fading, dog-eared book, are the ones who think they're above it all. —ed.

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THE SIREN FEST

A few thousand indie rockers crammed into a corner of the Coney Island boardwalk on a blazingly hot summer's day? And they say all the good freak shows have been shut down. Behold these artifacts from the *Village Voice* Siren Festival. Clockwise from top left: Pretty Girls Make Graves, the Mooney Suzuki, Rye Coalition, Les Savy Fav, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, broiling hipster throngs.

Photos: Justin Scurti



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One From The Road: Superdrag

Frontman John Davis checks in from the seemingly endless U.S. tour supporting *Last Call For Vitriol* (Arena Rock Recording Co.).

Where are you right now?

We're at the Super 8 in Eureka, Calif. We played at Club West here in Eureka with the Deathray Davies earlier tonight.

What were last night's accommodations?

Long story short? We had a room reserved at the Motel 6 in Red Bluff, Calif. We drove three-plus hours through the mountains to get there after our show in Reno. We showed up at 5:00 in the morning only to learn they'd sold our room hours before. Typical. So, we wound up at the luxurious Crystal Motel (think *Wild At Heart*) instead.

How are you traveling?

We're in a 15-passenger '95 Ford Econoline Club Wagon. No trailer. It belongs to Mike [Harrison, guitar]. His old band the V-Roys used to tour in it. The van that we normally travel in ("Big Blue") is a '97 Dodge Ram 3500, also 15-passenger. It's been sick lately. The Dodge has about 175,000 miles on it. The Ford's done about 211,000.

Who in the band has the most annoying sleeping habits?

Well, all of us snore like bastards. So I guess whoever falls asleep first. Sam [Powers, bass] usually falls asleep first.

What's currently being played on the tour vehicle soundsystem?

Replacements: *Pleased To Meet Me*, Hüsker Dü: *Zen Arcade*, Bash & Pop: *Friday Night Is Killing Me*, Cheap Trick: *In Color*. Those are the ones we heard yesterday.

What rituals do you have that are part of every tour?

Trip to Wal-Mart for soap, shampoo, shaving cream, all that

stuff, making a string order, picking up T-shirts. Sometimes we actually rehearse a little bit. Doing laundry. Packing. There are tons of little things you do in preparation for tour. After eight years, we've pretty much got it down to a science.

What's been the best show of the tour thus far?

Either the Bottom Of The Hill in San Francisco or the Chain Reaction in Anaheim. Actually, we've had a really good time playing every night on this trip. Having the Deathray Davies out on tour with us has been a blast. They're an excellent band, and you couldn't ask for a nicer bunch of guys to hang around with.

What do you miss most about being away from home?

That's easy—our gals. Three of us are married.

What do you do during the day to occupy your time?

I read a lot. Mike and I both sleep a lot. Don [Coffey Jr., drums] does the majority of the driving during the day, and I usually drive at night after the shows if we need to make miles. I guess I'm the "designated" post-show driver these days since I've sworn off the sauce. Sam's usually advancing shows on the cell phone. He's our bassplayer/tour manager.

What song request are you most tired of hearing?

It doesn't really make a difference to me which song it is, the thing that bugs me the most is that one guy who keeps yelling out the same song over and over again, after every song. That's even worse than "Free Bird." We actually played "Free Bird" one night—some guy kept yelling for it. Lynyrd Skynyrd kicks ass. Why do people think that yelling out "Free Bird" is funny? It isn't.

Tough Love



THE VANDALS The rules of punk are strikingly similar to the rules of love: keep it honest, real, and do it your goddamn self (no one likes a significant other who's not willing to work at it). Which, coupled with the fact that his band's new record is called *Internet Dating Super-Studs (Kung Fu)*, makes the Vandals' David Quackenbush well-equipped to ponder your love woes. *If you stop playing with it, it'll grow:* lovelorn@cmj.com.

Okay, this isn't about my love life but it's about something I love. I do a zine that I'm really proud of, I've been working really hard doing it myself, photocopying and binding it myself, for a few years now. A lot of people seem to like it. Recently this other kid started a zine, and every one of his issues steals more ideas from mine. His rich parents pay to have it printed, four-color, the whole deal. It's making me crazy, is there anything I can do to stop this spoiled asshole from stealing all my ideas?

—Victoria, Teaneck, N.J.

I've played in a punk band for a few years now. I'm really proud of it, we've been working really hard doing it ourselves. Recently some other kids started a band and stole some ideas of ours, and because they have tons of money behind them or have more talent or are better looking they sell millions of CDs—but they thanked us on their "thank you" list right on the CD package! So, maybe wait about 15 years and someone will thank you. Or kill him.

I was hanging out with this guy for about a month, we both just left for college. Nothing serious. I called his dorm today to say hi and his roommate answered, so I asked for him, and his roommate goes, "Oh this is his girlfriend right?" I'm freaked out. I'm not saying I wouldn't ever be his girlfriend, just not yet. I've only known him for a month! How should I handle this?

—Jennifer, Richmond, Va.

Have phone sex with his roommate—this will make the situation very awkward for all parties. Tell the roomie you're coming to see him and will fulfill all his fantasies, then tell your "boyfriend" that his friend is acting very inappropriately and he should do something about it if he really loves you. Now while at your college, gain 15 or 20 pounds, drink a lot and don't learn anything, then eventually drop out and move back home. Then—here's the closer—beg the guy you were dating to please talk to you again, when he doesn't go to the local bar and sleep with all his old friends that didn't go to college.

I met a girl at a friend's party and we hooked up a few times. The last time, things got a little more serious but she stopped it and was weird and left. She just e-mailed me, I guess a year or so ago she hooked up with someone and got an STD and she didn't know how to tell me. I don't want to be heartless, but that's not something I really feel comfortable with. Am I an asshole?

—Robbie, Denton, Tx.

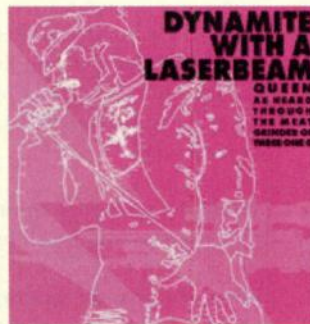
Well, I would need to know the STD. Herpes: not an asshole. Crabs: asshole.

Love, David

WEIRD RECORD

A Nightmare At The Opera

There's Wayne and Garth. There's fans chanting "We Will Rock You" at major sporting events. There are even some stray gay Anglophiles who count themselves among Queen's enduring fanbase. But skronking noise-band scenesters? Apparently so. Witness, if you dare,



Dynamite With A Laserbeam: Queen As Heard Through The Meat Grinder Of Three One G, a compilation of the most fucked-up Queen covers you've ever heard. Three One G is the record label run by one of the scary masked dudes in the Locust, and they've rounded up 16 of the most out-there bands in America (and Sweden and Japan) to, um, pay fealty to Queen. The Blood Brothers and the Oath turn "Under Pressure" and "We Are The Champions," respectively, into screamy spazz anthems, Get Hustle does an off-key piano-ballad version of "Another One Bites The Dust," and Asterisk* renders "Ogre Battle" as a grindcore sludgestef—and that's just the first half of Side One. It's all quite refreshing, and at times even thrilling. How long before hipsters trade their shaggy hair and child-size jeans in for chestless spandex unitards? >>>AMY PHILLIPS

New Pornographers are finishing up their sophomore release, for Matador • **Mercury Rev** already set to start follow-up to last year's *All Is Dream* • **Sebastian Bach** takes lead in year-long national *Jesus Christ Superstar*

“Are there any Nickelback fans in Portugal?”

—Nickelback frontman Chad Kroeger, seconds before being pelted with a rock after their second song at the Ilha do Ermal festival in Portugal. Guess not!



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IN MY ROOM

Who: Brian Campbell of Clinic

Where: Their rehearsal room and tour bus (in Liverpool and Anytown, USA, respectively)

Why: Clinic's bringing *Walking With Thee*'s special brand of weirdness to America this fall; prepare now with the weirdness below.

Sound & vision

In our rehearsal room, we have about 10 oscilloscopes linked to various instruments so the sound waves given off show up on the screen as patterns or pulses. They look a little like heart monitors so it gives the rehearsal room a kind of operating theatre effect (Clinic—get it?).

What's in the box?

The psychedelic box! [This] is Clinic's most secret weapon and accompanies us everywhere. It conjures up sounds and a whole lot more. That, I'm afraid, is as far as I can go in explaining what it is. It's more than my job's worth!

Bag of tricks

This is an old blue bag that we have had since day one to store leads, guitar strings, drumsticks and



just about anything else. We now have flight cases. The blue bag was discarded for the first time on one early tour and lots of weird, unexplainable things started to happen. Being superstitious, we sent for the blue bag and the strange incidents stopped. We now have a flight case especially built for the blue bag and it comes with us everywhere we go.

Like a surgeon

We have four sets of [surgeon outfits] now (one for each season), and the tour bus is littered with 12 individual sets of them, usually stinkin'. It's always hard to try and explain away the nurse's outfits and surgical masks to border patrols and customs officers when they search the bus. They usually think something more kinky/suspicious is going on onboard, which tends to lead to a more rigorous search and interrogation.



FIVE SPOT

FIVE RECORDS THAT ELEVATE THE MIND OF NIGHTMARES ON WAX'S GEORGE EVELYN

1. Charles Webster, *Born On The 24th Of July*

There's not one bum tune on there. It's very sobby... it's the kind of record you should buy your woman. It's very soulful, almost like digital soul.

2. N.O.R.E., "Nothin"

It's featuring the Neptunes. The rhymes are OK, they're not blinding or anything. But the actual track, it's so dancefloor. But the way that it loops the flute; it goes forwards and then backwards. I first experienced it when I came to New York, I went to a party and it got dropped. I managed to pick it up on the way to the airport, and then promptly dropped it back in England. That's the good thing about hip-hop right now, there's a lot of tracks that are quite dancefloor.

3. 4th Avenue Jones, "What U Want"

It's like Philly soul, with acoustic guitar over it and a fat hip-hop break. It's pretty awesome... That's a really fun track to drop.

4. Bud Nubac, *Eight*

This is a white label I've been playing by a friend of mine. It's almost house tempo, but kind of downtempo, a sort of Cuban, Latin dance track. But it's got this trumpet solo in the middle of the track, which is awesome; the end of the solo is picked up and looped, and it filters back into the track. It's such a sunshine record.

5. Mr. Scruff, "Shrimp"

He's got an album out called *Trouser Jazz*. But "Shrimp," it's almost like a jazz/funk record. Mad slamming funky break groove, with some moog on it—jazz/funk with a hip-hop beat behind it. It's Scruff in his own right.

OF GREAT IMPORT

Get it from over there, 'cause you can't buy it here.

LAMB
What Sound
Mercury (U.K.)



What it is: Album number three from the Manchester duo that first spun heads by mixing drum 'n' bass, jazz and vocal soul on its genre-defying self-titled 1997 debut.

Why you want it: Arriving in the wake of Portishead's success, DJ/Producer Andy Barlow and vocalist Louise Rhodes tempted some to write them off as yet another copycat act, but their strikingly original debut album and its successor, 1999's *Fear Of Fours*, blew all attempts at comparison out of the water. *What Sound* finds the pair exploring yet more new territory, drafting help from Doves' Jimi Goodwin, Arto Lindsay, Spearhead's Michael Franti and Meshell Ndegeocello. The songs remain beat-

driven, but the added live instrumentation on tracks like "Sweet" and "I Cry" gives them an inviting new texture, while standout track "Gabriel" is so heartbreakingly uplifting, you'll forget where the ground is. The spookily optimistic "Heaven" has already brought Lamb renewed attention through its use in the promos for HBO's *Six Feet Under*, but in the aftermath of Mercury Records' disappearance in the U.S., the group seems to be without a deal over here. That's almost as criminal as not owning this spectacular release. >>>DOUG LEVY

Link: www.lambstar.net
R.I.Y.L: Portishead, Kosheen, Moloko

bit part in Anthony Minghella's (*The English Patient*) Civil War drama *Cold Mountain* • **Coldplay** has turned down a whopping \$85 million for the use of their music in TV ads • **Sigur Ros's** new album to have no >>>>

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ON THE VERGE



RILO KILEY

I'm on a mission with my best friend to find a ghetto mansion. All the furniture will be stuff we find out on the street," Rilo Kiley singer/keyboardist Jenny Lewis explains excitedly, planning how she'll make ends meet until her band's next tour. She's selling her car, then looking for the biggest, cheapest homebase in Los Angeles—this isn't a complaint, it's an adventure. The broke-yet-undefeated tone of her words is right in tune with her band's Saddle Creek debut, *The Execution Of All Things*. Although the lyrics tell of muddling through tough times, they're backed by horns and strings as triumphant as the Thanksgiving Day Parade, and anchored by a voice that shifts effortlessly from fragile to ferocious. With a child stardom-studded West Coast

upbringing (Lewis played opposite Fred Savage in the Nintendo-flick *The Wizard* and guitarist/vocalist Blake Sennett starred in *Boy Meets World* and Nickelodeon camper series *Salute Your Shorts*), it makes sense this pop foursome's most disenchanting songs are caught up in sunshiny beats and catchy carnival music. Rilo Kiley transports the disillusionment of labelmate Bright Eyes from the stark Nebraskan landscape and double-parks it next to some palm trees at an L.A. juice bar. Speaking of parking, once that car money's run out, how will the fresh-from-tour Lewis afford that mansion? "You can always find some obscure job, some non-defined, fucked-up job," she grins, "like watching someone's ferrets." >>>KARA ZUARO

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LAYO & BUSHWACKA!

Imagine: You've been dancing all night at a packed club, everyone in the room bursting with energy, when at about 3 a.m. everyone stops and reverentially sits down in a circle, right in the middle of the dancefloor. This happens—repeatedly—at clubs in Argentina, where dancers put their flailing to a halt out of respect for the simple piano chord- and Nina Simone sample-laden beauty that is "Love Story," the first single from Layo & Bushwacka's new *Nightworks* (Beggars Banquet). "When we first saw [the Argentinean clubbers] do it we were floored," Bushwacka notes, oblivious to the pun. "Later we learned that the chorus to the song had spread to the football stadium. There were over 100,000 fans humming the chorus." The track's been so hot overseas that it was played more than 15 times by some of the world's most renowned DJs at a recent U.K. dance festival. "It's great when people you look up to start playing your records. It's as if you've done something with your life," admits Layo. A pretty impressive accomplishment for two humble guys who, as Layo puts it, "exist only to make music that is just really, really good to listen to whether it be fast, slow or midtempo." >>>JUSTIN KLEINFELD

DREW GOREN

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World Radio History





ROCKFOUR

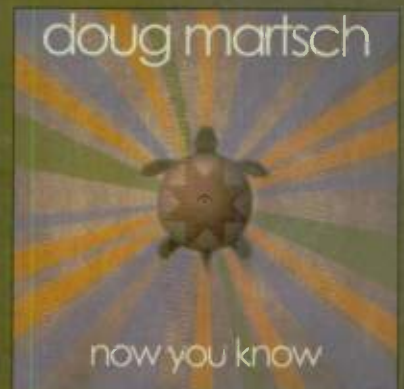
It's hard enough for your average rock band to break into the American music scene. Try hailing from the other side of the planet and peddling a decidedly untrendy blend of Byrds jangle and Beatles psychedelia—then you'll know how tough it is being Israel's RockFour. After a decade together at home, this quartet is charming American shores thanks to a pair of unlikely allies: New York's tiny Rainbow Quartz label (who've issued their fifth record, *Another Beginning*), and corporate megabeheemoth Clear Channel Entertainment. "They're letting us prove ourselves," drummer Issar Tennenbaum says of the radio/live entertainment tycoons, who started booking RockFour last year after discovering them on their fifth tour of America. "Hooking

up with Clear Channel doesn't mean we're making it. It's just that they're plugging us into bigger venues. But they're also letting us do a lot of road trips and lot of hard work to prove ourselves to labels by ourselves, without opening the doors too much." "A lot of road trips" is an understatement: By early next year, RockFour will have spent almost six months touring North America, a feat made all the more difficult by the unstable situation back home. "We have a laptop with us, we read the news from Israel and we speak to our families. Of course we worry, we want things to be easier back home so that it's easier for us to be on the road. But we shouldn't forget that it's our job in a way," Tennenbaum says. "And we love doing our job." >>>TOM MALLON

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THE PATTERN

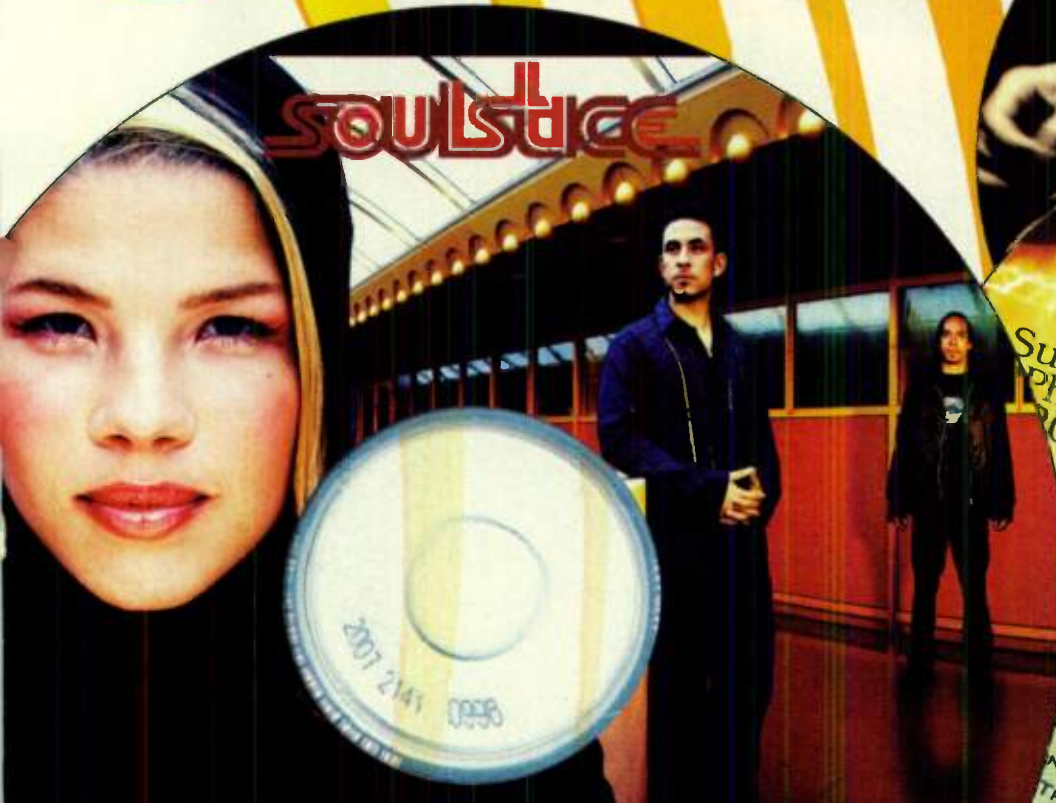
If ignorance is bliss, then it would follow that knowledge can sometimes be a real pain in the ass. As one of the head honchos at Lookout! Records, the Pattern's Christopher Applegren knows the business of punk rock all too well. "The curse of having spent so much of my life running a label is that I know what a warehouse of unsold records looks like," reports the vocalist/businessman. "It's the opposite of that Kevin Costner movie," he continues, "just because you make 500 records doesn't mean 500 people care." But the Pattern is more than a field of dreams; a Motor City-minded crew of British Invasion mod punks, the Bay Area five-piece is made up of veteran rockers who use their col-

lective experience to blanket the globe with shimmy-shimmy-shake freakouts and raucous live sets. Across Europe and the States, the Pattern—with their not-so-strictly-business frontman—have made a fine reputation for themselves as showmen; Applegren bumps and grinds the mike stand while his bandmates make like the MC5. Despite their ballsy performances, the Pattern are actually quite modest. "I just hope people who are into music and rock 'n' roll dig us a little," says Applegren. On the heels of their successful EP *Immediately*, the band's debut full-length *Real Feelness* (both on Lookout!, naturally) oughta be one that rock 'n' roll fans dig, more than just a little. >>>LAURA CASSIDY



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Miller Time

On leave from his Old 97's—only temporarily—singer/songwriter Rhett Miller is exploring a little me-time with *The Instigator*.

STORY: TOM LANHAM • PHOTO: MARK SELIGER

There's nothing better, as far as Texas twangsmith Rhett Miller is concerned, than a ripping good yarn. And he's just the guy to tell 'em. Over lunch in his new hometown of Hollywood, the Old 97's frontman races through so many colorful vignettes, you need a playbill to keep track of all the characters. Like the wacky Hawaiian lady who just married Miller and his longtime girlfriend Erica ("She did the whole 'I'm calling to the spirit gods' thing, then blew into her conch shell at the end of the ceremony—it was deafening"), or the friends who regaled him with a not-so-wild bachelor party beforehand ("We had Mexican food, went bowling, then smoked pot in the parking lot"). He even relates the short story he recently submitted to Dave Eggers' *McSweeney's*: "It starts with a woman saying, 'I'll smash his fucking head in with a rolling pin,' but she doesn't bake and doesn't really know what a rolling pin is, so she takes up baking." The only time the gift of gab fails him is when he scampers outside to try and talk a traffic officer out of a parking ticket.

But there's one thing Miller won't be discussing on his new solo disc, *The Instigator* (Elektra). At the end of last summer, he recalls, everything was going well. The Old 97's had just given him the go-ahead to go his own way, temporarily; his label had said the same. Tired of doing the bi-coastal-relationship shuffle with the New York-based Erica, he left L.A. and moved in with her. On September 9th. Three short blocks from the World Trade Center. Miller spent the afternoon of the 10th in the Center gardens, starting an uplifting new ditty called "Lovebird." He took it back home to finish it, fell asleep around 3:00 a.m., "and woke up to the phone ringing and ringing.

"Erica and I went up on our roof after the second plane hit and saw people jumping out of windows," he continues, his perky demeanor suddenly clouding over, "and as we went back down to get our stuff together and leave, the first tower collapsed and our whole building shook. Then we ran down to our lobby, and all the bloody people started pouring into it from the streets, where they were getting hit by the shrapnel. I

mean, three blocks away, 100 yards—if it had fallen sideways, to the south, floor 20 would've been on top of us." Miller pauses, blinking at the enormity of it all. "And I would be dead."

The couple was homeless for more than two months, and so Miller took the opportunity to relocate to California, honeymoon with Erica on Lanai and pen the 12 sunny, punk-pop-ish tracks for the Jon Brion-produced *The Instigator*—none of which mention what happened that day. Unlike Neil Young or Bruce Springsteen, Miller says, "I just didn't want to write about the tragedy. There was no way I could've. The closest that I got was a third verse in 'Lovebird,' which didn't make the record, that I wrote later: 'The skyline is lifelike/ Downstairs like a white cell/ Living proof of the turnpike/ From a vein to an inkwell.' And one of the images from that day that I can't shake is running down a staircase with people in front of us, all the way down, like blood cells. I kept imagining that we were in a vein."

Instead, Miller tapped into literary sources, such as Sylvia Plath poems (the buoyant "Point Shirley," with Robyn Hitchcock on guitar and backing vocals) and old love letters penned by Richard Wagner and Franz Kafka to their respective lovers (the 97's-styled "Our Love"). The whispery, synth-latticed "World Inside The World" was rooted in Don DeLillo's "Underworld," one of his personal favorites. And it makes sense that a last-minute addition to the disc—tacked on just before release at Miller's insistence—should be the galloping, celebratory "I Want To Live." Is there a story in there somewhere?

Miller shrugs, switching back into the impish mode that's built such a following for his five-album-old Old 97's. "Well, there are things on the record that I alone know, that make me think of that day, that horrible event. But I didn't openly try and deal with it; I didn't wanna make any big statements about it. I mean, what the fuck am I gonna say?" It's good common-sense stuff that everyone should already know, he sighs: "We're lucky to be alive, treat the people that you love well, don't listen to shitty music and don't spend your time being an idiot. You've got one life—don't waste it." **NMM**



SCENE STEALERS

With their second album, *Ladytron* are set to flood your world with *Light & Magic*. But for chrissakes, don't call them electroclash.

When Ladytron released its debut album *604* last year, there was no such thing as electroclash. Or, there was, but no one had thought to name it yet. Now, just one year later, the familiar fusion of European electronica and new-wave synth sounds with modern pop sensibilities has not only spawned a scene of its own, it's already suffered from backlash amongst the hipsters of the world.

"It's kind of weird," says Daniel Hunt, the musical mastermind behind the group's genesis. "We've been lumped in with electroclash, at least in England. I don't know about here, but we've been written off as being part of it, which we don't really feel that we are. I mean, everyone's going to say that—every interview I read with anyone else, they say they're not a part of it. But I think it's unfortunate."

Sitting beside Hunt is bandmate Helen Marnie, the woman responsible for the unforgettable sing-song vocals on Ladytron's groundbreaking, oft-remixed single "Playgirl," and one half of the Liverpool quartet's female contingent. "It's always going to happen though," she sighs, "with any kind of bands that are similar."

Hunt looks up, shaking his head. "I didn't anticipate it though, that everything was

going to be grouped together. It didn't feel like that, even a year ago."

"A lot of it's fashion, as well," adds Marnie.

"Yeah, the fashion industry thing," Hunt agrees. "That's what I hate about it."

Surprising words, perhaps, from a group known for designing their own uniforms to wear for stage shows and photo shoots—a group that also delights in the fact that all of its members have similar hair.

"The whole idea of that is it's supposed to be anti-fashion," explains Hunt. "It's supposed to just remove us from all that kind of... asymmetric '80s mullets and all that stuff. But then the band was interpreted as like, dressing up as Gary Numan or something. I don't remember dressing like that."

"In a way, I don't really care, because I suppose we're out there," he decides, finally. "It's funny, because 'Playgirl' has become like a seminal track in a movement that we've nothing to do with."

That, however, is the past. The recent past, maybe, but now Ladytron, which also includes keyboard king Reuben Wu and vocalist Mira Aroyo, are focusing on their new album, *Light & Magic* (Emperor Norton).

"What we tried to do on this record... some of the things that have become sort of common currency, we just tried to stay away from completely," Hunt reveals. "I don't think that there's anything on the record that could be described as electroclash."

However you describe it, the album offers up a wealth of material to be explored and enjoyed, ranging from the hip-hop/electronic pop fusion of "Blue Jeans" and the minimal thump of "True Mathematics," to the booming cosmic sweep of "Startup

Chime." It is, without question, an extremely diverse work.

"Yeah, a lot more diverse than the first one," says Hunt. "Because the first one was more like... about half of it or more was attempts at a similar thing. And then they're thrown together as a record. It was more like a compilation, in a way. But this was all written for the purpose of making an album, so there was a conscious decision to make every track different."

"The frustration of the last record was that all people ever spoke to us about was the '80s, and we only saw that as just a fragment of the sound. So it wasn't necessarily a reaction against that, but I suppose it was an issue."

Hunt leans back in his chair, reflecting once again on the current scene. "It would have been easy for us to make some kind of a dark high-energy record," he admits, "and it would have come out now, and we would have been able to cash in, in theory. But, we didn't want to do that. There are tracks on *Light & Magic* that are just so far away from that thing—'Blue Jeans,' especially. It couldn't be described as '80s-influenced in any way."

Marnie perks up, grinning. "Definitely not electroclash." **MMM**

REUBEN WU, MIRA AROYO, DANIEL HUNT, HELEN MARNIE



World Radio History

ALAN SPARHAWK, ZAK SALLY, MIMI PARKER

SLOWRIDE

Low's always been synonymous with slowcore serenity. But with *Trust* in the hands of Tchad Blake, their inner demons have surfaced.

STORY: MIKAEL WOOD • PHOTO: DAN CORRIGAN

In the beginning, it was all about how slow Low could go.

"The first few records, we forced ourselves more into the thing that we were doing," singer/guitarist Alan Sparhawk explains, his hushed, even voice practically a reflection of what he's describing. "We told ourselves, 'Let's play slow and quiet,' and that's what we did. Then after a while we didn't have to tell ourselves that anymore—it was just kind of natural, and I think from that point, we were able to allow for some natural change."

Sparhawk and wife/singer/drummer Mimi Parker, along with bassist Zak Sally, have steadily inched away from the drowsy, stripped-down Galaxie 500/Slint pastiche. It was a sound they embodied gracefully and assuredly on their debut, 1994's *I Could Live In Hope*—one that put them at the center of the then-burgeoning "slowcore" scene, along with Ida, Red House Painters and Codeine. Each album since has gently introduced a new set of sonic elements—strings, horns, electric distortion, digital burbling—to the band's sound, and like flecks of color on a white canvas, each addition adds depth and perspective to the whole.

For *Trust*, Low's sixth full-length, the band recorded at a makeshift studio in an old church at home in Duluth, Minn. "We almost were going to do it in our house," Sparhawk says, "but we didn't have room for all the machines." The band recorded the tracks themselves, but took the tapes to veteran engineer Tchad Blake (Pearl Jam, Los Lobos, Sheryl Crow) in England to mix the album. The result is a graceful blend of Low's intimate recording and Blake's adventurous approach to sound.

"I've always been into things [Blake] has done as far as messing with texture in surreal ways," Sparhawk says, "which we've always kind of tried to do, but didn't have the know-how or the time to really develop. Also rhythms, kind of creating a different-sounding percussion texture than just the normal run-of-the-mill sounds that you get in most records." *Trust* maintains Low's trademark quietude, but Blake teases out the band's inner Black Sabbath, so that on opener "(That's How You Sing) Amazing Grace," they sound like three evil angels ready to pounce.

Still, the album suggests that Low's progress springs largely from Sparhawk's songwriting growth, his strengthening ability to tell a musical story that

seems to predate the idea of telling a musical story. Album highlights "Diamond," "Tonight" and "La La La Song" don't even really qualify as indie rock: In their plain beauty, they come off more like vintage soul or R&B tunes, slowed down and rebuilt for a couple of guitars and voices.

"I think the best compliment I ever got on any song was right after I wrote 'La La La Song,'" says Sparhawk. "I played it for Zak, and he said, 'That song's great. It sounds like nobody wrote it.' I thought, 'Wow, you're right.' Songwriters always talk about how with the best songs, the vocal melody comes first, and I think when songs start coming from that angle, they start sounding a little more like R&B or classic oldies," he laughs. "In the past you lean a little more toward, 'Oh, I got some fancy chords, but how do I fit them together?' That's kind of the classic indie-rock songwriting formula." With the songs on *Trust*, Sparhawk concentrated on building from "a real clear vocal melody and words."

Just as the band's unadorned instrumental framework is perfect for demonstrating new dabs of detail, Sparhawk's writing is giving new heft to his and Parker's life as parents to a two-year-old daughter, Hollis. *Things We Lost's* "In Metal" painted a haunting picture of a mother grappling with her quickly growing infant, and much of *Trust* thrums with a similar tenderness.

"I think we were a little more bold on this record, a little more on our sleeves as far as whatever it is that we're trying to deliver," Sparhawk says. "It's kind of realizing the cycle of life and how very small and short-lived your voice is—like saying, 'Okay, you've got five minutes to give this young person advice, to tell them what you know and what to watch out for.' You're not gonna sit there with haiku; you're gonna try to find a very condensed, clear directive.

"Subliminally, I'm probably actually speaking to Hollis on this record," he admits. "That sort of creeps me out, but I think that's kind of what happens when you have a child. If anything you kind of realize that there's only so much space for me to accomplish anything in life, so why screw around?" **NMM**

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 

HURRICANE

STORY: NICOLE KEIPER • PHOTO: SUSAN ANDERSON

INTELKO

Neko Case's storm needed an eye to churn around; now there's the haunting stillness of *Blacklisted*.

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 

Neko Case's voice makes your chest hurt the first time you hear it—the woman sings like she was born with a bullhorn for vocal cords. But it's powerfully gentle, like how a storm can thunder the whole town but still make the softest splashes on leaves outside your window. It commands, and it aches.

It's also near impossible to contain. You can see this when she performs, in how she arches back from the microphone in an effort to modulate what she otherwise can't rein in. But that she's captured a tornado in a mason jar is what makes Case's third full-length, *Blacklisted* (Bloodshot), so remarkable.

Case's start as a punk-rock drummer is well-documented—understandable, considering that it's not every day you find the second coming of Loretta Lynn laying beats behind barre chords in Vancouver. Drumming and singing backup in punk trio Maow, Neko found three things: a voice, a desire to hear more female voices that she could relate to, and a label that gave her a chance to explore those things. She went to Maow's label, Canadian indie Mint Records, once she got it into her head to try singing; they half-jokingly asked if she wanted to make a solo record, or something.

Singers tend to be spotlight-hunters. Then, there's the kind of woman who'll take up the drums, someone not afraid to be "unfeminine," more taken by the challenge of proving that a pretty lady could be a lumberjack if she damn well pleased. Case approached singing like a drummer: with intensity, abandon, passion—she didn't bid for attention, she just got it.

The Virginian was a half-steady first step for Case, a mix of covers (Loretta Lynn, the Everly Brothers) and originals, with a little roughness around the edges. *Furnace Room Lullaby*, made up entirely of her own songs, was more assured, with tracks like "Twist The Knife" proving her knack for crafting fuck-you love songs that stick. She sang country, rockabilly, bluegrass—cliqueless, timeless music that spoke to both her toughness and vulnerability. On those records, though, her voice was like a sunflower set in a vase full of tulips—gorgeous, flanked by beauty, but dominating.

"I think I just understand it better, now that I'm very in control of the phrasing and the cadence," Case says of the changes that led to *Blacklisted*.



"It feels good to know you worked for something. It feels a lot more permanent."

"I know the song better when it comes time to sing it. It sounds more like me, I guess..."

On those first records, she'd made up her originals in her head, humming vocal patterns and relying on Her Boyfriends, the rotating troupe of musicians that back her, including members of the Sadies and Zumpano, to work out the chord structures and accompaniment. But for *Blacklisted*, she taught herself guitar and laid the music's structure down herself. Her current Boyfriends (Calexico, Howe Gelb and Kelly Hogan among them) provided ornamentation.

Neko's small hands made learning guitar troublesome, but a tenor guitar—a smaller four-string guitar with a bright, shimmery tone and a slimmer neck—was laying around at the Toronto studio where *Furnace Room* was recorded; Case has since become a "freaky gear-dork" about them. A chord book and a few lessons from friends to help with style and fingerpicking, and you can't even tell she's green at it. The tenor guitar came more from being physically suited to Case, but it's also perfectly suited for her music—its tone is bright but moaning, melodic but spooky. And the songs Case wrote on it give off a mood that, in a lot of ways, is like her persona: confident and natural in its beauty, flooded with emotion.

"I guess in a way I'm kind of a control freak, I want to know everything... *Knowledge is power*," she smirks, all afterschool special-like.

Case works with small labels Mint and Bloodshot, so that she's afforded complete freedom. She handles the simple day-to-day activities of touring—which tends to take up all but a month or two out of every year—herself. She keeps a tight rein on her career, nipping extraneous details, watching anyone who works with her to learn what they do, overseeing every sound and every decision; she always has. This is purposeful: Neko is a career artist, and she's engineered a slow, steady build.

"I'm not on a major label, I'm not playing arenas, I don't have to wear a dress if I don't want to," Case says. "I don't sell an uncomfortable amount of records for me; we make our money back, we go on tour, and a lot of it is because we work our ass off. It feels good to know you worked for something; it feels a lot more permanent. People can still afford to hear me play in an intimate setting, if that's what they want to do. Local smaller shows like that make people feel special about the place they live in, it gives them a sense that their community is unique—because everything around them is turning into Home Depot and McDonald's and Starbucks."

She's been approached with situations that might afford her more glamour than the 1988 diesel van her band currently tours in. "But I just thought about it," she says, "and I realized I'm working with people who don't make me compromise what I do."

Neko's not the type you worry about being sucked into the big bad music industry. She can and will go directly from the stage to haggling with promoters. She'll announce onstage at the Beacon Theatre in New York City, on a recent tour with Nick Cave, that

she's refused to sell merchandise because of the venue's laughably high cut-in.

"Being on tour and playing in clubs, you find out how much money you make as opposed to how much money is brought in," Case explains. "One of the reasons the music business is so fucked is because people lay back and take it, they're too afraid... Musicians have just had stars in their eyes for so long. If you've driven for seven fucking hours to play in a town, nobody has the right to tell you you're lucky to be there. You hauled your ass and altered your life to be there. Not that I'm not grateful—I'm totally grateful. But I'm not going to take any shit from some fucking asshole because they want \$17 from me."

It's an interesting dichotomy, watching the determined control Neko has over her career pinned up against a hot-blooded nature for which that voice is nearly a metaphor. It's like she has to be that tough, to keep that passion in order. Case can certainly be volatile, should you be reckless enough to piss her off. But she'll also be very tender, talking about her grandmother, her time in Canada, home.

"[Writing this record] I was feeling very confused, kinda lost and very homesick, but I didn't know where I was homesick for," Case explains. "I'm still looking for my home. I don't know where I'm supposed to live, really. I live in Chicago, but economically it's not something I'll be able to do forever. Of course my home, my physical actual home is Washington state, and I have so much affection and am so in love with it in so many ways—a lot of the songs are kind of love songs for Washington in this weird way. Which sounds corny, but a lot of it was just thinking about being a kid, and there're weird snapshots, weird memories or smells or images. I was a pretty lonely little kid, I wasn't a popular kid, I didn't have a lot of friends, but I definitely noticed everything around me all the time. There's a lot of birds on the record, a lot of weather and scenery, which is very much what Washington State is to me. All my favorite songs have a lot of really haunting visual imagery, just triggered by the words and the way they go, even if they don't make sense."

Blacklisted backs that imagery with elegant tenor guitar strums, sparse percussion, an occasional saw waver or string hum, washed in deep, open reverb. It's a delicate underdressing, with Case's voice finally given the space it's been fighting for all along.

Like her music, Case is serious, about her life, her career. A pre-show dinner is soft tofu, no sauce, plain rice, edamame, with green tea—gotta take care of the voice. But she's also a goof. Onstage—especially with the New Pornographers, the brilliant pop band she spends part of her time with—she's all one-liners and self-deprecating humor. Compliment her voice and she counters that it sounds like a "honking goose," just like if you tell her she takes a beautiful photo, her waterfall of crimson hair framing ice-green eyes and pouty lips, she'll claim she looks like "some kind of donkey in a dress."

"I think the reason that I have a sense of humor is because I have an outlet," Case says. Which, regardless of how bleak it actually sounds, is pretty much the intention in her music, especially with *Blacklisted*: to give the dark emotions a voice so you can release them, and move forward.

"I hope that people get some sense of hope out of the record too," she offers. "I think there's an underlying hopefulness there. The hopefulness that comes from just being able to say what it is that bothers you. You know, it's like a magic spell," she says, that country singer romance in her speaking voice, which hints enough at the singing voice to humble you.

"When you say what it is, it doesn't scare you anymore." **NMM**

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Jurassic 5

Dino Might

Tight bros from way back when, **J5** are poised to grab the mic for a generation ready to wean off the bling.

STORY: BILL WERDE • PHOTOS: MAX S. GERBER

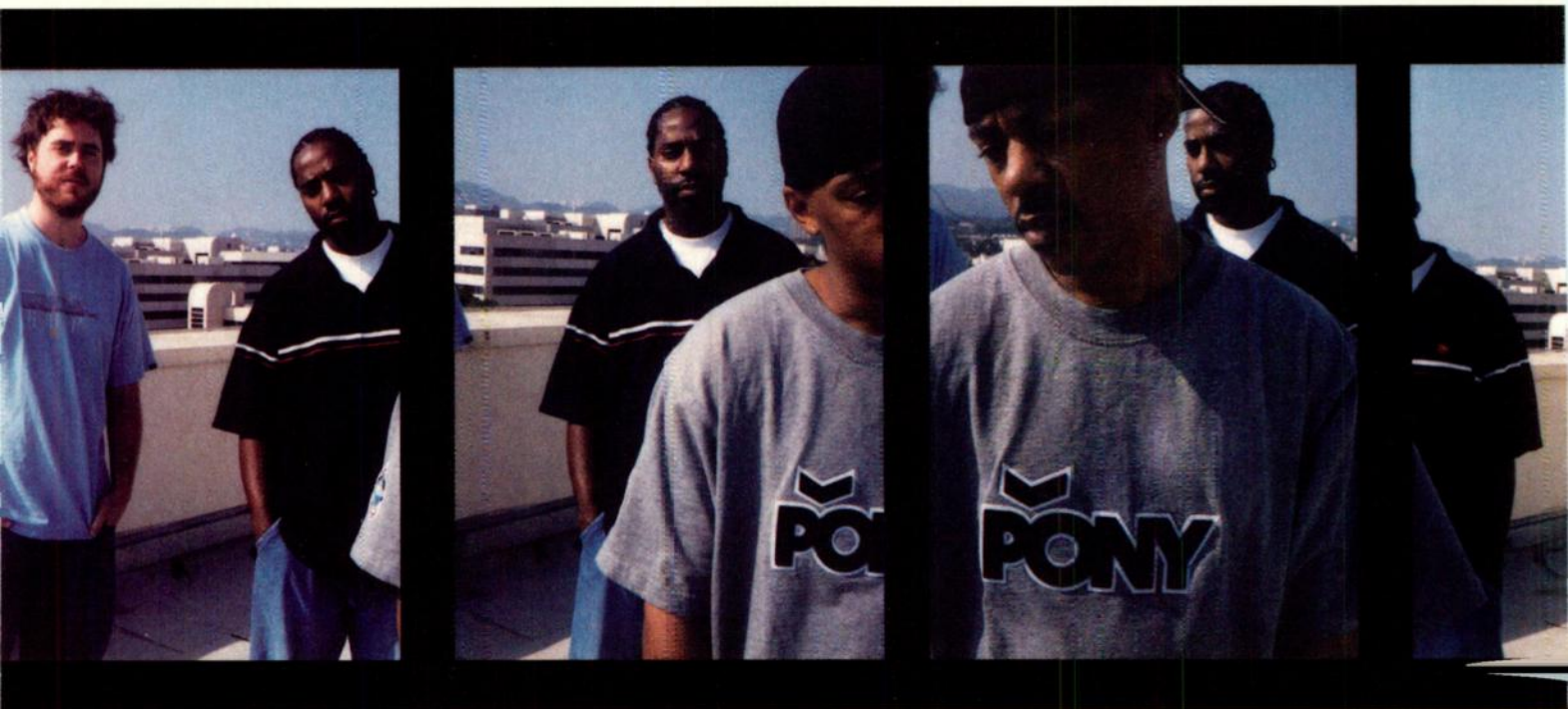


Jurassic 5 are kickin' it by their tour bus after a show in New York. A few basketballs bounce around (Akil has a nice crossover dribble) and friends come back to this secluded area of parking lot alongside the Jones Beach Amphitheater stage to say hello. Brooklyn rapper Supernatural—a friend of the group and a former tour compatriot—is hanging out, his nine- or 10-year-old son dropping comically credible rhymes while dad beatboxes, much to the delight of Zaakir and Marc 7even. Spirits are high. For lack of a better description, J5 just rocked the house at the last night of the Smokin' Grooves tour, treating fans to one of their typical performances. Of course, "typical" for Jurassic 5 isn't what's typical for most in today's pantheon of hip-hop relevancy.

The four MCs—Akil, Marc 7even, Zaakir (a.k.a. Soup) and Chali 2na—riff with each other in perfect harmonies, 2na's deep baritone playing off Marc 7even's rasp, with Zaakir and Akil filling in the middle range with fluid rhymes. The set is mostly about the old school, with references to New York's hip-hop grandfathers the Cold Crush Brothers mixed in with tales of backyard barbeques and admonishments to rappers who think the game is all about looking fly. DJs Cut Chemist and Nu-Mark layer bass-heavy beats in furious succession, dropping in samples with such frequency, it's almost as if they're extra MCs; certainly, the pair almost steal the show during a mid-set DJ intermission in which Nu-Mark plays the drums and Cut uses his turntable mastery to pay homage to some of the great hip-hop loops of the past 25 years. The importance of the DJ in the J5 act is obvious, and made all the more so by their logo: four MCs hovering above the stage on a 40-foot turntable.



CUT CHEMIST, MARC ZEVEN, ZAAKIR, NU-MARK, AKIL, CHALI 2NA



When their set wraps, the crowd roars its approval. Jurassic 5 may be sharing the stage with such luminaries as Lauryn Hill, the Roots and Outkast but—sorry Miss Jackson—J5 just stole the show.

It's an important moment for the group. Through word-of-mouth and by touring the globe, they managed to sell a couple hundred thousand copies of their self-titled debut EP in '97, with no major-label backing. And when they signed to Interscope to put out their debut album, 2000's critically-acclaimed *Quality Control*, they garnered plenty of play on MTV2 and almost earned a Gold record. But the group has never played to amphitheater-sized, mainstream hip-hop crowds, and commercial hip-hop stations never fully warmed to their jams. Now, with their sophomore effort *Power In Numbers* dropping in October, and with the group more than holding their own on a line-up full of hip-pop superstars, Jurassic 5 seems poised to take off.

There will be other times, though, to discuss J5's future and the politics of rap. Right now, their attentions have turned to the stage. Beatboxer extraordinaire Rahzel of the Roots is mimicking a Jedi light saber battle with only his otherworldly vocal cords as sonic accompaniment—swooshes and bleeps materializing from his lips as if from warmed-up analog gear—and the guys are gathered, hooting their approval. It's the last night of the tour, and the other performers whose night's work is finished have cleared out, headed for hotel rooms and evening plans in New York City. But J5 aren't about to walk away from a transcendent moment in hip-hop. "How does he do that?" asks Supernatural's boy. "Practice," laughs his dad. Chali 2na, his face glowing from the stage lights, is clearly blown away. "Oh shit!" he says, again and again, laughing. Akil even stops dribbling for a bit.

Jurassic 5 came together in the early '90s at an L.A. spot called the Good Life. Today, the once open-mic joint is shuttered and infested, but once it was the place to be if

you were an aspiring MC, with groups like Freestyle Fellowship and the Pharcyde expanding the definition of hip-hop. It was here that the Rebels Of Rhythm (Akil and Zaakir) and Unity Committee (2na, Marc 7even and Cut Chemist) formed a mutual admiration society. It wasn't long before the crews got together, pulled in Cut's friend Nu-Mark, and cut "Unified Rebelution," a track that made some serious waves in the underground.

Their style hasn't changed much since then. The MCs are disciples of Run-DMC and their rhymes followed suit: both their EP and *Quality Control* were tour de forces of the old school, all fluid rhymes and clever samples, raps mostly about how skilled they were on the mic, and the phoniness of superstar rappers. With *Power In Numbers*, the group has taken a quantum leap forward.

The new album simply sounds better, heavier, thicker and deeper, and it's no accident. "We definitely went for that," says Cut, sequestered in Interscope's cushy Santa Monica offices. Cut and Nu-Mark made all but three of the album's tracks. "We took our time with our drums and used a bigger frequency range. With *Quality Control* it was based around loops and the drums just kind of reinforced it. Here, we started with the drums." Cut and Nu-Mark mixed some songs as many as four times, and the whole album has been remastered "four or five times" according to Nu-Mark.

"It seems like a lot of the cats that are into breakbeats are more into midrange stuff," says Nu-Mark, "and a lot of cats into jiggy stuff or commercial music are much more into the way the bass feels against your chest when you're at the club. So my thing is, I needed to have a bigger sound without having to use stock sounds. I wanted the grit of the sample and the punch of commercial music, urban music, whatever you want to call it."

That punch is evident from beginning to end, as even frivolous moments are grounded in jeep-shaking beats. "What's Golden" is a particular basstrosity. Lyrically, it's a bit rote—



clever in spots, but more of the same “we keep it more old-school than you” bit. But Nu-Mark made the track the night of 9/11 as an outlet for his frustrations, and it’s heavy as a sack of rocks.

There’s some great radio jams on *Power In Numbers* as well. Soup proves himself a fine singer on the chorus of “Hey.” “If there’s a party that’s about to be,” he sings above gentle keyboard pulses and snare whispers, “then let me start EQing up the frequency.” And on “Thin Line,” a track featuring Nelly Furtado (and thus destined to be released as a single) J5 create a sure hit by, of all things, minimizing Nelly. The song is about friends crossing into dangerous relationship territory, but Furtado doesn’t check in until halfway through—and then only on a chorus with the four MCs. A little Nelly goes a long way. “We didn’t want to be like, ‘This is the Nelly Furtado track,’” explains Marc 7even. “That’s why we’re on the hook with her. We had to be really careful about that, ‘cause it can get cheesy.”

What takes J5 to the next level are the rhymes that compliment their fuller sound. By now, anyone who’s heard them gets the point: They are old-school. Another album of boasts and brags would have worn precariously thin, no matter how clever, no matter the crunk in the trunk. But this time around, the MCs turn their tongues toward bigger issues than what’s wrong with hip-hop—they tackle race and socioeconomics. In doing so, they deliver some of the most impassioned and melodic screeds since Flavor Flav grabbed the glass dick.

“Somethin’ means nothin’ if your people still wantin,’” raps Marc 7even on “If You Only Knew,” flutes and drums mixing it up below. “Freedom” is the kind of song that only comes along once every so often, that mythical meeting of a sickly addictive melody and a message that runs as deep as the bass. Cut and Nu-Mark float an old soul sample (“Hold on to this feeling... freedom”) throughout the track, and the four MCs weave their rhymes in and around it with deft precision. “My forefathers hung in trees to be free,” raps Akil. “Got rid of slavery but still kept the penitentiary/ And now freedom got a shotgun and shells with your name.” And from 2na: “Got people

“Hip-hop is supposed to be the world’s newspaper. We’ve been spoonfed this materialism shit to where we are content with what is given us.”

screaming free Mumia Jamal/ But two out of three of yall’ll probably be at the mall.”

“I was just tryin’ to raise the awareness level of what’s goin’ on with brother Mumia,” says 2na. “And not just Mumia, but that there are more important issues goin’ on in this world than what is being spoon fed to us on a day-to-day basis with our music, our outlet. We are allowing cats to make it so that the next generation isn’t worried about what happened before us. Hip-hop is supposed to be the world’s newspaper. We’ve been spoonfed this materialism shit to where we are content with what is given us. That’s the metaphor I was trying to get across. Something that is as important as what is happening to Mumia Abu-Jamal is happening right under our noses, and two out of three of us will probably be at the mall chasin’ some bling or some nice clothes. My mom used to tell me, ‘The clothes don’t make the man, what makes the man is his game plan.’ I really see that now.”

It’s been a maturation process for a hip-hop group that seems to be hitting its stride. “Unity Committee and Rebels Of Rhythm—at the start of the group, these were issues we always spoke about,” says Akil. “[Old School] is what we got known for. We made *Quality Control* as a concept album,

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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

Neko Case

LOW

Saint Etienne

THE APPLES IN STEREO

RockFour • Bangs

OCTOBER 2002 • ISSUE 106

15. **THE FORTY-FIVES** "Trying To Get Next To You" *Fight Dirty* (Yep Roc)
Georgian trash-rock quartet the Forty-Fives keep their feet on the gas with this new set of sneering revivalist rockers.

16. **LOW** "Canada" *Trust* (Kranky)
Over eight years and almost as many albums, Low helped define the brooding slowcore sound. Their latest LP mirrors the run-down Minnesota church it was recorded in, sounding sparse and open, but still majestic.

17. **TAHITI 80** "Get Yourself Together" *Wallpaper For The Soul* (Minty Fresh)
This French quartet put away the guitars, scrapped their mid-'60s Kinks obsession and prepared to sex you up with some synth-pop straight from the Parisian streets.

18. **RILO KILEY** "Paint's Peeling" *The Execution Of All Things* (Saddle Creek)
The cherubic Jenny Lewis leads this group of former child TV-stars through a forest of beaming resonance and slide-guitar sensibility. Lest you think they're prissy, though: Check out that dirty fuzztone.

19. **BANGS** "I Want More" *Call And Response* (Kill Rock Stars)
Following in the footsteps of the Runaways and the Muffs, this West Coast trio is gonna punk you in the face with their third re'ease.

20. **VIOLENT FEMMES** "Gone Daddy Gone (Live)" *Violent Femmes* [Deluxe Edition] (Slash-Rhino)
Teen angst never sounded as brilliant as it did on the Femmes' 1983 debut. Except perhaps on the two-disc reissue that features this song, and 26 bonus tracks.

cut along dotted lines, fold and insert into Jewel case



1. RIDDLIN' KIDS "See The Light" *Hurry Up And Wait* (Aware)
Austin, Tx. is getting a pop-punk makeover these days, and the Riddlin' Kids are at the front of the stampede, kicking down the mainstream door with a hybrid of rock hooks and punk power.

2. NONPOINT "Development" *Development* (MCA)
Fresh off supporting slots with the likes of Sevendust, Linkin Park and Staind, Nonpoint return with another set of Latin-influenced, razor-sharp rap-metal.

3. PJ OLSSON "Three Light Years And A Day" *Beautifully Insane* (Columbia)
Michigan-born, Germany-bred Olsson was a Eurotechno-scene staple before he started strumming whimsy trip-hop soul. Then came 2000's *Words For Living*, and well-deserved Beck comparisons. *Beautifully Insane* finds him confidently ambling down his own path.

4. RON SEXSMITH "These Days" *Cobblestone Runway* (Nettwerk)
Ron Sexsmith can't help writing amazing pop songs: He's just that good. Here's some sunny-weather melody, complete with Lou Reed's colored girls do-do-doing on a much happier day.

5. WES CUNNINGHAM "Good Good Feeling" *Pollyana* (Pentavari)
Don't worry, this Texas-bred troubadour hasn't lost his sense of humor. But he has returned more introspective, less peculiar, and still just as crafty.

6. ALICE PEACOCK "Into The Light" *Alice Peacock* (Aware)
App'eton, Wis. native Peacock stirs blues, country, folk-pop and classic jazz in with a sultry voice on her self-titled debut.

7. SAINT ETIENNE "Action" *Finisterre* (Beggars Group)
With the tuneful post-acid house of Finisterre, England's most underestimated indie-dance trio drag more guitars and disco balls out of their closet.

8. LLAMA "Fly To You" *The World From Here* (MCA)
Last year, Llama recorded their first album while finishing high school. Now they've done all their homework, and are back with a more developed take on 21st-century folk-rock.

9. PARKER & LILY "Hello Halo" *Here Comes Winter* (Manifesto)
This NYC duo called their record *Here Comes Winter* for a reason: They could freeze your heart solid with slow, gorgeous, unassuming angst-folk.

10. THE GUFs "Give Back Yourself" *Aware's Greatest Hits* (Aware)
Matchbox Twenty's Rob Thomas joins Midwestern college-rockers the Gufs on this contemplative tune. Think, well, Matchbox Twenty.

11. ROCKFOUR "Everyone" *Another Beginning* (Rainbow Quartz)
Israeli quartet Rockfour blend pop, prog and post-punk better than most Westerners on their third album in as many years.

12. THE APPLES IN STEREO "Please" *Velocity Of Sound* (SpinArt)
The Apples have moved the operation from the garden to the garage, and they've never sounded better. Now you can hum and thrash at the same time.

13. NEKO CASE "Pretty Girls" *Blacklisted* (Bloodshot)
The dusty, aching, she-devilish country music that Neko Case crafts reminds you that in the right hands, pain and loneliness can be remarkably beautiful.

14. CAROLYN MARK AND THE ROOM-MATES "Dirty Little Secret" *Terrible Hostess* (Mint)
Neko Case's Corn Sister-companion breaks out her own set of sweet, twangy melodies and sharp lyrics. Here she maligns her pesky roommates' "saving fishes and leaving dishes."



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attacking a particular age in hip-hop that was exploiting an era and letting people know where we're coming from. *Power In Numbers* is more in-depth to what we do. We still got that flavor from the first album, but now you're getting to really know our personal views."

Akil is still smiling and the conversation still flows and *TRL* still blares in the antiseptic background of Interscope's office, but the topics have gotten a little heavier. "After 9/11 everyone was patriotic," says Akil. "Oh yeah yeah! We are Americans! We're going to fight the enemy together! But I still didn't see none of these people in my neighborhood. And white women still clench their purses when I walk past them. As though I'm the terrorist. It's like, yo, no matter what, for a black man in America, we're the lowest on the totem pole."

"I still can't get that cab in New York," says Soup.

"I still can't walk in your neighborhood," says Akil in my direction (to be fair, I'm as white as Gilbert Gottfried). "I'm more scared to go to a white neighborhood than they are to come to my neighborhood. Or it might be about equal. 'Cause I think something might happen to me."

"For me," says Soup, "it's usually if you go into a white neighborhood and something do happen, the brother outcome is never good. If a white person walks through a brother neighborhood, you rarely hear them say... OK, perfect example! Cut and Nu in Chicago. Record shopping. Going to a neighborhood in Chicago, they don't even know they's not supposed to be there. So they do their shoppin'. The store's closin' or whatever. And the black people in there are like"—and with this, he laughs—"Look, we gonna get y'all this car, cause it ain't cool for y'all to be around here.' But they get the car. And they drive them to wherever they need to go for 20 bucks."

"It was a friend of a friend who had this red Cadillac," explains Nu-Mark. "But he didn't have any legs. The car had these controls. I sat next to the wheelchair in the backseat. I don't know how he drove, but we got some phat records, bro."

The laughter settles and Soup continues. "I've been helped by a lot of white people. I'm not tryin' to be racist or nothing. It's just, you get tired of it. What was it? About two weeks ago when we came back for the video shoot? That's the flip-side."

Akil picks up the story. "We were on a big white tour bus in Hollywood, in this gated-off area. We had a code to get inside the gate. We're waiting and stuff and I see a police car pass by and I'm like, 'They kinda lookin' at me kinda crazy.' So we're standin' around, dribblin' a ball or something and all of a sudden about 10 cops just start hitting each other over the fence. I'm seein' a helicopter come. They're yellin, like, 'Hey, you! Get down!'"

"Akil was lookin at Chali," says Soup. "Did they see 2na smokin' weed? They pointed and I was like 'Me?' and they was like 'You' and I was like 'Really!?' They called me 'the suspect!'"

"[Soup] got mistaken for a car thief in the area that looks nothing like him," says Akil. "I can kinda understand. Because me, havin' a lot of white fans and stuff, it seems like I meet the same person every show. So I can understand how they look at black people and stuff. But only in that respect. The other part, there be a lot of degrading shit that goes on with it. I'm like

"We're comin'. You don't have to respect us, but you're gonna know about us."

man, we got into music to escape this bullshit. And here we are, handcuffs, down on the ground.

"The cop's like, 'Yo, you need to stop,' and I'm like, this gets tiring when you go through this all your life. You don't have to go through this. Police don't just harass you every day. We get harassed, man, just walking down the street. Growin' up, just getting harassed, 'Oh, you don't gangbang!?' There was a point, man, we woulda fought them police. If it came down to it, because of the frustration..."

Soup finishes Akil's sentence. "They would have killed me that day."

Up on the roof for picture time, the six guys in J5 are like a bag of puppies let loose. The photographer has his hands full trying to get them to stand still, and picture after picture needs to be retaken when one of them opens his mouth to bust on another. Talk ranges from Fox's *Celebrity Boxing* ("Screech whooped on Horshack!" bellows 2na) to a pop star one of them recently saw on a talk show, sniffing suspiciously. ("It was like when your mom used to come around at the barbeques!" cracks Soup to no one in particular.) Just when they get settled, Akil karate chops Marc 7even in the back of his leg and he buckles to the ground. Nu-Mark takes the opportunity to bust out with a falsetto rendition of Michael Jackson's "Off The Wall" and the five other guys lose it in laughter.

"We might have our little problems," says Soup. "But that's expected. That's family. You ain't always agreeing with what your mother said, but you don't sit over there and disown them. We been through a lot—not just through the group, but then before when we was different groups. Ain't nothing nobody gonna say gonna change my attitude towards that."

It's good, because with the ride ahead of these guys—their first proper album tour, countless promotional gigs and a new album for the ages—they'll be seeing quite a bit of each other. And we'll likely be seeing quite a bit of them.

"That Smokin' Grooves tour was hot," says Marc 7even. "Everyone of those people was platinum groups except for us. So it's just like, 'We're comin'.' You don't have to respect us, but you're gonna know about us."

"I trip on people like Queen, Run-DMC," says Soup. "People who are legendary. If I say 'James Brown,' you know he's a legend. I'm like, 'Dude, when you made "Funky Drummer"...' That's what I want to ask him. When Run-DMC rocked Madison Square Garden, how did they feel? That's the part of it I want to do. Maybe people will be inquiring about our inspirations. Like, 'When you guys made "Freedom," what were you thinking about?' I'm into that. I want to do J5. I want to be J5. And when people say tight hip-hop groups, they'll say 'Run-DMC, Cold Crush... J5 was tight.' You know what I'm sayin?'" **NMM**



Dublin, IRELAND

STORY AND PHOTOS: PÁDRAIG COLLINS

While much of the rest of the world has contributed its cuisine to other countries, Irish people (and a hell of a lot of people with no Irish connections whatsoever) have concentrated on setting up Irish theme bars throughout the known world. Sorry about that.

That's not to say that centuries of Irish literature have lied to you and we don't actually have a drinking culture—we do. And if you thought we drank a lot when we were poor as shit and all dying from the potato blight, you should see us drink after 10 years of "Celtic Tiger" economic expansion. So no apologies for the amount of bars appearing here—when in Rome you eat pizza, when in Dublin you drink.

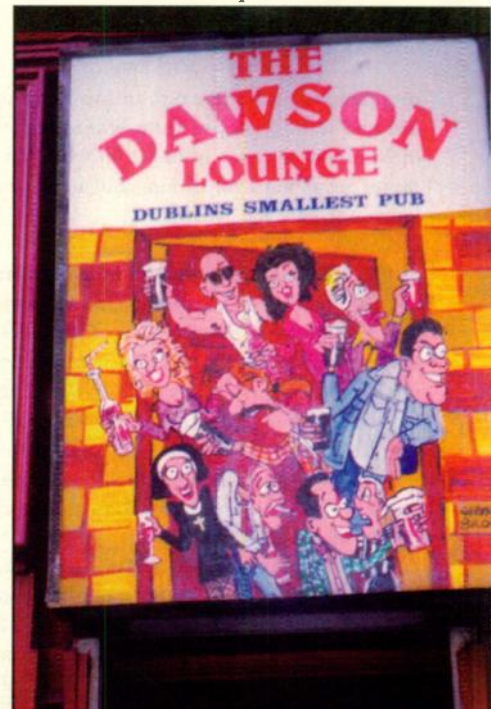
The easiest way to find your way around the capital is to remember that there are two sides to the city, north and south of the River Liffey, and they are very different beasts. All Dublin addresses end with a number (Dublin 2, Dublin 19, etc.), with all even numbers on the southside and odd numbers on the north. The one exception is **Phoenix Park**, which is on the northside, but has a Dublin 8 address. Seeing as the only human residents of Phoenix Park are the Irish President and the U.S. Ambassador, the theory is that the planners didn't want to insult them with a northside (and, therefore, rougher) appendage. Well, it's my theory anyway.

Dublin's music scene in the '80s was dominated by international conglomerates looking for "the next U2." The joke (and often truth) back then was that any half-decent band could get signed to a major label, but they'd be dropped and back in Dublin as soon as the first album flopped. The early to mid-'90s was dominated by a lot of Dublin bands seeking to emulate the Waterboys' success in mixing rock with traditional Irish instrumentation and sounds. Raggle Taggle, we called it, when we could stop laughing.

But something strange rose in tandem with economic prosperity: an independent music culture and esthetic. Suddenly the kids were doing it for themselves and didn't care what The Man wanted. Labels such as **Catchy Go Go** (www.catchyogogo.com) and **Independent** (www.independentrecs.com) began releasing records by Dublin bands and cannily licensing U.S. bands such as the Pernice Brothers and the Handsome Family.

The Frames made what the band (and most others) considers its best album when freed of the need to repay big advances. **Doctor Millar** (think Hammel On Trial, but with a full band) has shown that you can be a 30-something daddy with a day job and still make awesome music. **Gemma Hayes** (from County Tipperary, but based in Dublin) has shown that you can start as a quiet country girl in folk clubs and make an incredible debut album that fuses Joni Mitchell and local heroes My Bloody Valentine.

Dublin's best venue, **Whelan's** (25 Wexford St., Dublin 2, 478-0766), used to be a wooly-sweater-and-woollier-beards, folk-purist sit-down venue. But for the past seven years or so it has been the place to see all-ages afternoon shows, with Dublin's indie fraternity



and touring U.S. alt-country bands. The venue's Mexican bordello-style decor is cherished, but the music and atmosphere are what you need to be there for.

The second best venue, **Vicar Street** (58-59 Thomas St., Dublin 8, 454-6656), is a converted warehouse that's played host to the likes of Television, the Go-Betweens and many Irish bands on the journey from acclaim to sales. Its much-smaller sister venue, **the Shelter**, is right beside it. Here you can see Doctor Millar and other local favorites, as well as the big-in-America, not-yet-here likes of Pete Yorn.

There's no point making cool music if there's no outlet for it, and **Road Records** (16B Fade St., Dublin 2, 671-7340) has provided a perfect home to left-of-center music for about five years now. They have an unmatched selection of Irish indie releases, and also have their own very cool 7-inch-only label.



OUT WITH THE IN-CROWD

David Hingerty of THE FRAMES

"Dublin prided itself on its 900 pubs and bars in olden times, but be careful of re-imported export 'Irish bars' that amazingly clutter up our bohemian center, Temple Bar. Instead of these big, expensive 'fake old' Irish bars, either go to the NYC-influenced and trendy **Globe** (11 S. Gate Georges St., 671-1220) or **Sosome** (64th Great Georges St., 478-1590), or **the Dice Bar** (Queen St., off Arran Quay, Smithfield, 872-8622). If you're a bit more old-fashioned, try a real old spit-on-the-floor bar, like **Houricans** (7 Lower Leeson St., 676-2634), **the Long Hall** (51 S. Georges St., 475-1590) or the **Lord Edward** (23 Christchurch Pl., 454-2420). Don't forget: the worse the toilets, the better the pint!"

Mark Hamilton of ASH

"If you want a great night out in Dublin there's nowhere better than Temple Bar; our favorite pub there is **Eamon Dorans** (3A Crown Alley, Temple Bar D2, 679-9144). It's got a great dark and dingy club/live music venue downstairs (which we've played many an impromptu after-show party at in extremely intoxicated states). Upstairs you have a more flashy (though still cozy) restaurant serving traditional Irish dishes—get there on a Sunday for an amazing roast to counter the hangovers you'll have if your 'doing' Dublin the way it's supposed to be."

Mark McClelland of SNOW PATROL

"We always gravitate toward **the Voodoo Lounge** (39/40 Arran Quay, Smithfield, Dublin 7; 873-6013), a pub/club on the north bank of the Liffey. But do not be tempted by the bright neon lights of Temple Bar's **AbraKadabra** (various locations). It's the last place open late at night, but there's a reason: That's the only time they manage to sell any food at all. I get shivers just thinking about the place."

THE STALK MARKET

Hunting for celebrities in Dublin made simple

The bandmembers of NPB (who also run Catchy Go Go) reckon that the economy boost directly led to increased indie productivity in Dublin—the musicians got jobs to finance singles. But bands (and everyone else) still like to eat cheap, and eat good. Lunchtime at **The Alpha** restaurant (corner of Wicklow and Clarendon Streets, Dublin 2, 677-0213) brings the best fried food in town, and at dinner it boasts very good Moroccan food.

U2-spotting in the city center? The band owns **the Clarence Hotel** (6-8 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2, 407-0820) and are seen around the premises every so often. The hotel's **Octagon Bar** is surprisingly un-pretentious, but the nightclub beneath it, **the Kitchen**, is generally for serious techno/jungle/dance enthusiasts only.

Many local bands (and the occasional visiting star such as David Bowie) end a night of drinking at **Ri-Ra** nightclub (Dame Court, Dublin 2, 677-4835). Depending on the night, you'll hear hip-hop, house, indie and other good-time music. No egos, always good fun.

LOCAL LOGIC: DUBLIN'S BEST

Free pint of Guinness: GUINNESS BREWERY TOUR (St James's Gate, Dublin 8, 408-4800).

Paid-for pint of Guinness: THE FLOWING TIDE (9 Abbey St., Dublin 1, 874-0842), in north inner city—there really is a vast disparity from pub to pub. Also a great place to meet actors who've just come offstage at the Abbey Theatre.

Pub without Guinness: THE PORTERHOUSE MICROBREWERY (16 Parliament St., Dublin 2, 679-8847). It's also the only pub without Guinness.

Pub-let: THE DAWSON LOUNGE (25 Dawson St., Dublin 2, 677-5909). Anything over 20 people and it's packed.

Saturday afternoon hangover food: YAMAMORI NOODLES (71 Georges St., Dublin 2, 475 5001).

Home for wild deer in the city: PHOENIX PARK, Dublin 8. Dublin Zoo (474-8900), which is superb, is also in the park.

Glimpse of history: See one of the world's oldest books, *The Book Of Kells* (800 AD), at TRINITY COLLEGE (Dublin 2, 677-2941).

All phone numbers are in the 01 area code. The international code for Ireland is +353.

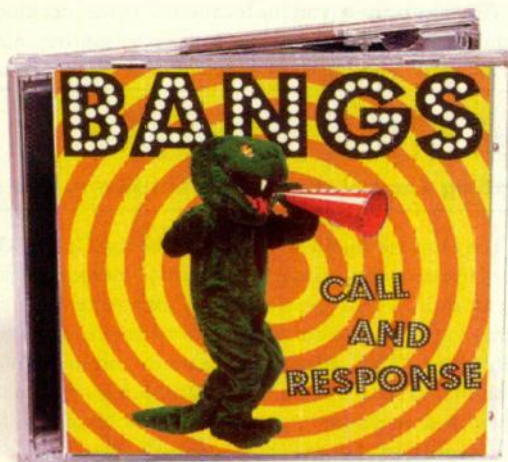
Pádraig Collins offers Dublin entertainment ideas weekly at The Irish Times, in his Thursday section The Ticket.



BANGS

Call And Response

Kill Rock Stars



Joan Jett and Belinda Carlisle co-front AC/DC? Too elementary. Riot ladies and riot boy run for office on a platform of broken hearts? Not quite. Here's the thing: Olympia's Bangs invoke countless classic-rock descriptors, yet can't be broken down into that familiar, awful adjective soup that "grrrrl" contemporaries often endure. Everything Bangs did well on previous albums *Tiger Beat* and *Sweet Revenge* they do exceptionally on this barely 16-minute EP, and diversification is key to the leap forward. While *Revenge* was a driven, albeit monochromatic, indictment of a bad breakup, *Call And Response* simmers with artfully detailed personal politics. Examine the title track: Guitarist Sarah Utter shrieks justifiable grievances about leering, sexist cretins in perfect sync with drummer Peter David Connelly's vicious cymbal crashes, before the chorus unfolds into conscientious pop candy, as bassist Maggie Vail chimes, "Do you know just how it feels to always get called out?" Bangs' vocal trade-offs have never been executed this well; strange, since Vail's coo and Utter's growl are such naturally appealing complements. Small, inventive flourishes—the melancholy electric piano in "Kinda Good," Utter's sporadic cock-rock hammer-ons, the empowering harmony in "Dirty Knives"—boost the remainder to something damn near greatness. The title of Utter's spending-spree rant says it all: "I Want More." >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

Link

www.killrockstars.com

File Under

The future—and history—of women in punk

R.I.Y.L.

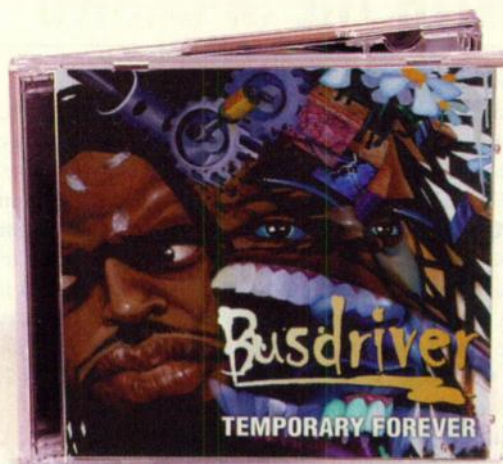
Runaways, Tight Bro's From Way Back When, Cheap Trick

BUSDRIVER

Temporary Forever

Temporary Whatever

Busdriver raps fast—blink-or-you-miss-it fast. A member of the Project Blowed crew that spawned the equally conceptual Freestyle Fellowship, the free-form MC intricately blurs words into streaks of light on the highway, forcing volumes into jagged bebop-influenced patterns. He's a Saul Williams-esque slam poet with comic timing, a one-man Pharcyde painstakingly rapping alongside erratic flutes and psychotic sax skronk, a jumbler of words like Aesop Rock but with stadium-sized charismaaaaa. Over chunky breakbeats courtesy of Cali abstractionists Daddy Kev and Paris Zax (among others), Busdriver mirrors ragged horn patterns, his flow too wrapped up in rhythm to always hit the right notes or get enough air. Due to his urgency and theatrical overemphasis, lines like "the city's full of robocops who bleed soda pop" find some anger-with-a-grin middle ground between didacticism and smirking nihilism. This tragic poet is the type to pull up to the fast-food drive-thru, freestyle his order and tell the cashier he's a "tall, lonely teddy bear who occupies empty air." Like L.A. cohort Aceyalone (who guests on the almost free-jazz clamor of "Jazz Fingers"), the verbose Busdriver goes wherever his mind takes him, deconstructing a woman's ego over beats that speed up on a whim, or just shutting up to soak in some scratching fireworks from Invisibl Skratch Pikl D-Styles. This bus never slows down. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



Link

N/A

File Under

Free-bop hip-hop

R.I.Y.L.

Aceyalone, Pharcyde, Aesop Rock, Busta Rhymes

STEVE EARLE

Jerusalem

Artemis/E-Squared

One of these years, Steve Earle will release a mediocre album. His Texas drawl will sound bored instead of weary, his country-rock songs will feel forced instead of forceful, the duet with a female guest that each of his post-imprisonment "comeback" albums has included will seem like an obligation instead of a welcome dose of sweetener. *Jerusalem*, however, is not that album. It's Earle's political opus, with a dark, caustic streak through its questioning heart as he challenges America's tendency toward blind patriotism. "John Walker's Blues" imagines an alienated "American boy, raised on MTV" who finds "the first thing... that made sense was the word/ Of Mohammed," giving a voice to the so-called American Taliban without judging him. The talking-blues "Amerika v. 6.0 (The Best We Can Do)" rants about baby-boomers who think "letters to the editor and cheatin' on our taxes is the best that we can do," and "Conspiracy Theory," "The Truth" and "Ashes To Ashes" each examine the world at large, often with coruscating bitterness. The drum loops anchoring many tracks make sense, as *Jerusalem* is Earle's most contemporary album in sound and sensibility. Even with the Tex-Mex hop of "What's A Simple Man To Do?," plenty of twangy guitars and, yes, a great Emmylou Harris duet, *Jerusalem* is alt-country only in that Steve Earle, like all classic protest singers, sees alternatives for our country. >>>STEVE KLINGE



Link

www.steveearle.com

File Under

A rabble-rouser questions authority

R.I.Y.L.

Chuck Prophet, Bruce

Springsteen's *Born In The USA*,

Abbie Hoffman

GOGOL BORDELLO

Multi Kontra Culti Vs. Irony

Rubric



Link

www.gogolbordello.com

File Under

Radical gypsy wedding music

R.I.Y.L.

The Klezmatics, 3 Mustaphas 3,

Frank Zappa, Manu Chao

The most exciting rock music coming out of New York City right now isn't being made by art-damaged '80s revivalists—it's being made by Ukrainian-born singer/guitarist/DJ/activist/writer Eugene Hütz and his crew of Russian, Israeli and American noisemakers, known collectively as Gogol Bordello. Since 1998, the band has been channeling the rowdy rebelliousness shared by traditional gypsy music and punk rock into a cross-cultural dance party against oppression, crafting genre-bending freakouts that simultaneously celebrate and question globalization. *Multi Kontra Culti Vs. Irony*, Gogol Bordello's second full-length, sounds like a raging Eastern European-American wedding celebration teetering on the brink of chaos—somebody has spiked the punch and the neighbors have called the cops. Hütz is the crazy drunken uncle shouting over the din, slipping back and forth between English and his native tongue as he pontificates on politics, revolution and the power of music. Luckily, Hütz's hammy delivery prevents him from sounding pedantic, as does the joyful din heating up around him: The rhythm section pounds out bouncy grooves worthy of a line dance, only to break down into noise-fests that could inspire a mosh pit. Even dorky instruments like the accordion sound cool in Gogol Bordello's heady mix. When Hütz declares "Let's Get Radical," on the song of the same title, he's got just the band to back it up. >>>AMY PHILLIPS



LEMON JELLY

Lost Horizons

XL-Beggars Group



While many acts might be content with accepting and exploring reality as it stands, Lemon Jelly's Nick Franglen and Fred Deakin have an entirely different approach. Cultivating an esthetic that allows an almost seamless flow between art and music, they offer an alternative look at the world through swirling lenses, courtesy of both their sonic constructions and the accompanying graphic art. *Lost Horizons*, the duo's debut album proper (following the EP collection named after their website, *Lemonjelly.ky*), combines nursery rhyme-like spoken-word overdubs with psychedelic pop, sun-drenched electronica and an aural candy coating that could easily make it the long-lost alternate soundtrack to *Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory*. In fact, tracks like "Ramblin' Man," with its ecstatically delivered list of globe-spanning locales, and the spritely, horn-driven "Nice Weather For Ducks" evoke a sense of childlike fascination and possibility you're unlikely to hear in most contemporary music. There are darker moments, such as the more sinister "Experiment No. 6," while the airy "Closer" sounds a lot like, well, Air. But for the most part, *Lost Horizons* is exactly the journey through Wonderland its title insinuates. As Willy Wonka himself so knowingly said, "We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams." There's no more fitting way to describe the visionaries behind this collection of delights. >>>DOUG LEVY

Link

www.lemonjelly.ky

File Under

Return to Innocence

R.I.Y.L.

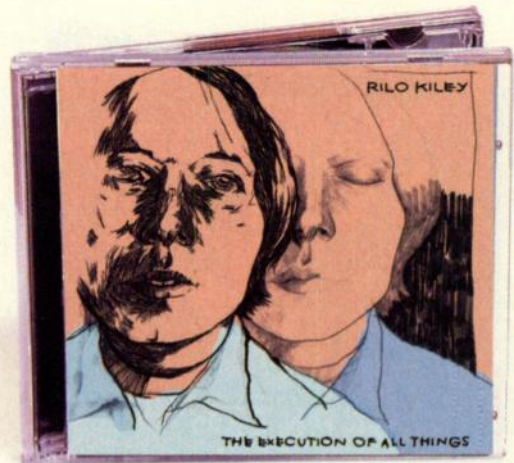
Air, Nightmares On Wax, Dusted

RILO KILEY

The Execution Of All Things

Saddle Creek

Los Angeles' Rilo Kiley come off, at first blush, as irrepressibly girlish, with frontwoman Jenny Lewis breathily musing like Liz Phair after a helium hit. But listen closer to *The Execution Of All Things*, and the music makes a convincing case for Rilo Kiley as post-gender rock in the style of the Breeders or Throwing Muses. Lewis's lyrics are refreshingly disengaged from issues either feminine or feminist, allowing her to explore emotional territory that is usually the exclusive province of male rock groups—you know, everything else. *Execution*, the band's second record, burns with intense weltchmerz, its existential crises cloaked in buoyant instrumental hooks and shimmery arrangements. The lead track, "The Good That Won't Come Out," sets the tone: A subdued, clockwork drumbeat ticks the time down, while interludes of plangent pedal steel echo the ache in Lewis's near-monotone lament. Like much of the best stuff on the album, the song accumulates power verse upon verse, cracking open briefly before bursting apart. What makes these songs moving rather than maudlin is the way Lewis's lyrics and the music work together to hotwire melancholic thoughts with a sense of hope. The yearning for a path out of despair is palpable, and—hey!—catchy, to boot. >>>MAYA SINGER



Link

www.rilokiley.com

File Under

Bittersweet indie pop

R.I.Y.L.

Quasi, Liz Phair, Belly,

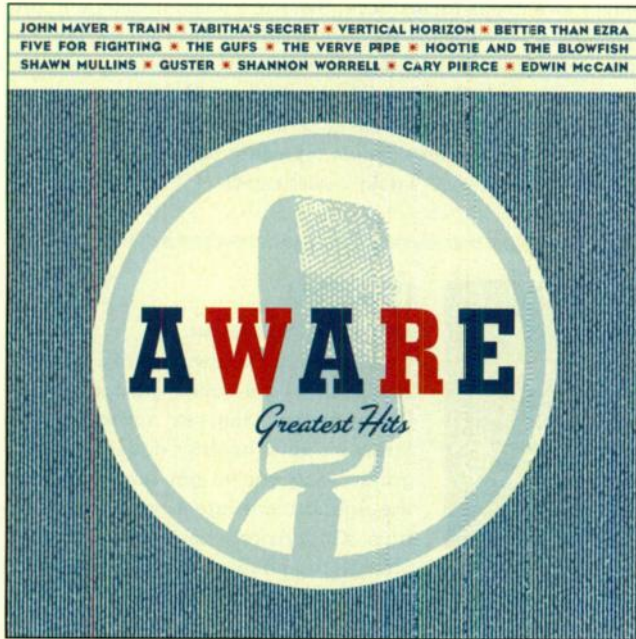
Death Cab For Cutie

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7. Train — *Meet Virginia (Acoustic)*
8. The Gufs — *Give Back Yourself*
9. The Verve Pipe — *Spoonful Of Sugar*
10. Shawn Mullins — *Lullaby*
11. Guster — *Window*
12. Hootie And The Blowfish — *Old Man And Me*
13. Cary Pierce — *Vineyard*
14. Edwin McCain — *Solitude*

"Like a 'Good Housekeeping' seal of approval" — Billboard

Album In Stores October 29, 2002

REVIEWS

RYAN ADAMS
 THE AGENDA
 THE APPLES IN STEREO
 ARKESTRA ONE
 RICHARD ASHCROFT
 ERIC BACHMANN
 CORY BRANAN
 RICHARD BUCKNER
 CAROLYN MARK AND THE ROOM-MATES
 DREDG
 EYES ADRIFF
 T-MODEL FORD
 THE FORTY-FIVES
 GORDON GANO
 GENE
 TRE HARDSON
 CATHERINE IRWIN
 JETS TO BRAZIL
 THE JULIANA THEORY
 KARATE
 SALIF KEITA
 LES SANS CULOTTES
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 WAUVENFOLD



Link

www.ryan-adams.com

File Under

Adams collage

R.I.Y.L.

Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*,
 the Replacements, John Denver

A bunch of distinctly different personalities. There's some of *Heartbreaker's* miserabilist ("Desire" and "Dear Chicago"), a little bit of Whiskeytown's alt-country troublemaker ("Gimme A Sign"), but then there are some new faces—some weird crooner who leans uncomfortably near Aaron Neville, and even a sappy folkie with a John Denver sweetness factor. Sure, there are some missteps in all those *Sybil*-isms, but as is his way, when Adams gets things right he gets them *goddamn right*. (If "Cry On Demand" doesn't tug on your tearducts there ain't a show on Lifetime that could save your stone heart.) As an album, *Demolition* is a little inconsistent, a little schizophrenic—but as a time capsule representing a period in a brilliant, still-growing career, it's gold. >>>NICOLE KEIPER



Link

www.fashionandvolume.com

File Under

Lust-crazed party punk

R.I.Y.L.

The Hives, the Strokes, the
 Sex Pistols

but Switchblade Stevie, J.R. Suicide and the rest of the Agenda's code-named gang surpass Mr. W.K.'s made-for-a-beer-commercial sound. Their raucous, catchy ode to a high-school gal, "Shake! Shake! Scream!" plays like the Beatles' "I Saw Her Standing There," except that the 17-year-old of their affections is "only good at one thing, I think you know what I mean." This black-clad five-piece rocks with a one-track mind, but lest their message go misunderstood, a declaration on the exterior of their CD case states, "We combat the boredom the only way we know how, with the power of young lust and rock and roll!" Why fight a good thing? Let the revolution begin. >>>KARA ZUARO

RYAN ADAMS

Demolition *Last Highway*

The third solo release from attention-magnet Ryan Adams could've been a bunch of things: a double-album of tracks he recorded over two days called *48 Hours*, a barrel of his weepies as an aural depressant called *Suicide Handbook*, a parade of snotty rock from his side project the Pinkhearts. So what is *Demolition*, actually? All of those things, sort of. The 13 tracks are a mix of songs culled from the many different recording sessions Adams got himself mixed up in since his solo career hit with 1999's *Heartbreaker*. And, as you might assume, the record's full of a

THE AGENDA

Start The Panic *Kindercore*

Combine the showmanship of the Hives, the bare-bones garage of the White Stripes, the sex appeal of the Strokes and a healthy dose of propaganda, and you've got the recipe for the Agenda, the latest band to spring from Kindercore's new rock division. Though their debut comes to a screeching, howling halt in less than 27 minutes, it's so packed with kinetic energy that it feels like an all-night bender. Appropriately, every track's title ends in an exclamation point. "Last Chance For Action!" and "Hot Pants!" capture the raging party vibe of Andrew W.K.,

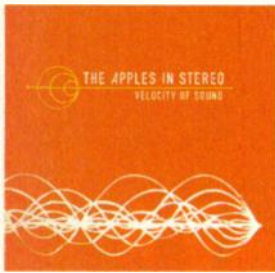
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THE APPLES IN STEREO 

Velocity Of Sound SpinArt

The Apples In Stereo make a habit of altering their sound from one album to the next, and *Velocity Of Sound*, the noisiest entry in their entire tone soul evolution, is no exception. Having completed the retro-pop magical mystery tour of 2000's *The Discovery Of A World Inside The Moone*, the group now seems to be taking its inspiration less from the playground and more from the garage. Trading in the swing set for a souped-up GTO suits the Apples well: They can still concoct a masterful melody reminiscent of Brian Wilson or Ray Davies, but there

is a rougher edge to this batch of buoyant pop songs. This new-found urgency comes across best on "Rainfall," the first of two tracks sung by drummer Hilarie Sidney, whose tough-kitten, Go-Go's-inspired vocals give the fun-filled rave-up just the right injection of sass. And it's nice to see that even though the Apples are getting older (Sidney and leader Robert Schneider are now married and have a young son), youthful angst still rules: "Yore Days" is a reflection on post-yearbook stagnation, and the bonus track "She's Telling Lies" is a tale of a teenage Dairy Queen harlot. An apple a day must keep aging at bay. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

Link

www.applesinstereo.com

File Under

Indie-pop, louder and looser

R.I.Y.L.

Neutral Milk Hotel, the Olivia

Tremor Control, EN Power



ARKESTRA ONE

Arkestra One esL

Londoner-by-way-of-Finland Matthew Timoney (a.k.a. Arkestra One) traffics in the same lush soundscapes and lounge grooves that inform acts like Stereolab and Air. His advantage is Brazilian-born vocalist Nina Miranda, who collaborates with Timoney on most of the tracks, contributing airy, melodic vocals that bring to mind the ethereal style of Astrid Gilberto. Timoney's masterful lounge-tronica doesn't feature a great deal of sampling—at least, not to the point of obnoxiousness—but he does fancy peculiar samples: "Man From The Audience," for instance, opens with a

weirder-than-usual evangelist introducing his flock to a young man who wants to get "stoned on Jesus." The track then proceeds to unfold into a mini-drama underpinned by a dreamy ambient soundtrack. In the main, Timoney crafts broad melodic statements that have a cinematic sweep. A tune like "The Sirens" shows his primitive trance tendencies, though he seems to prefer more romantic settings, such as "How Could I Love You More," "I Really Want You" and "Seu Pariso," all of which were co-written with Miranda. Her improvised vocals don't simply feed off Timoney's compositions, they complete his musical visions. Arkestra One's debut is an auspicious one, as Timoney's take on both lounge and ambient is distinctive and very appealing. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

www.eslmusic.com

File Under

A very inviting lounge

R.I.Y.L.

Supreme Beings of Leisure,

Air, Stereolab



RICHARD ASHCROFT

Human Conditions Virgin

Richard Ashcroft's always been bombastic—between his manic/messianic stage presence, the deluge of vocal reverbs and delays and aurora-borealis light shows, Verve tours felt somewhere between performance art, tent revival and meteor shower. In a good way, of course. But since their final split, Ashcroft's courted a different kind of bombast; every step since the early psychedelic headswims has been a little more orchestral, almost anthemic. *Urban Hymns* scared off some psych-rock purists, and his first solo jaunt, *Alone With Everybody*, shooed away

more. What then of *Human Conditions*, Ashcroft's second, now that he's settled into solo territory completely? Well, it's not *Alone* redux, or a return to form, but a deeper trip down that road he's been striding. *Conditions* is huge, sound-wise, scope-wise—drowning in syrupy harmonies, strings, horns, piano. It's not as pop as *Alone*, but still less heady, somehow. The tracks breathe, but the mood is less psychedelic, almost prog—sort of *Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*-mood, minus the time-sig switching. There are some bullseyes (the eight-plus minute "Check The Meaning"), like *Alone*, and quite a few misfires where he aimed for the big chorus and landed in a pool of cheese. He seems to be searching for a medium between the breadth of psychedelia and the pop he's unarguably grown damn good at crafting. He's not there yet with *Human*, but he's getting closer. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

Link

www.richardashcroft.com

File Under

Land of confusion

R.I.Y.L.

The Verve, proggy Genesis,

the Carpenters' harmonies,

Spiritualized

GRITS

THE ART OF TRANSLATION

A photograph of two men sitting at a diner table. The man on the left is wearing a black jacket and a black beanie. The man on the right is wearing a red jacket. They are looking at each other. In the background, there is a menu board and a red tiled wall.

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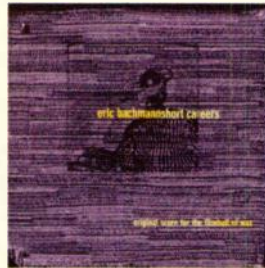
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World Radio History



Link

www.ballofwaxmovie.com

File Under

Instrumental music without context

R.I.Y.L.

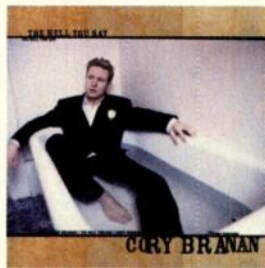
Barry Black, Crooked Fingers,
 Mark Mothersbaugh's
 Rushmore score

ERIC BACHMANN

Short Careers: Original Score For The Film
Ball Of Wax Merge

Anyone who's been closely following Eric Bachmann's career since his days fronting the North Carolina-based indie-punk outfit Archers Of Loaf knows that there's always been more than one side to this raw-throated frontman's musical personality. Back when he was leading the Archers through the minefield that was major-label indie-rock in the '90s, he was also indulging in some rather avant instrumental experiments as Barry Black, a project that released two full-lengths and, at various times, featured everything from banjo and upright bass to cello, violin and Ben

Folds on drums. If Crooked Fingers, Bachmann's alias for what might best be described as an indie-rock variation on rootsy mountain music, is Bachmann's continuation of the Archers' sing-along melodies, then *Short Careers*, his original score for the indie film *Ball Of Wax*, is a reincarnation of Barry Black. The all-instrumental disc does feature Bachmann on guitar, but the songs are dominated by a mixture of tinkling pianos, stark violin and cello arrangements, odd percussion and acoustic bass. There are moments of beauty, chaos, and eeriness, all of which probably have some useful context in the film. But like most instrumental soundtracks by rock guys, this disc, even more so than the Barry Black albums, is for only the most committed Bachmann fans. >>>MATT ASHARE



Link

www.corybranan.com

File Under

Young diamond in the rough

R.I.Y.L.

John Prine, Lucero,
 Todd Snider

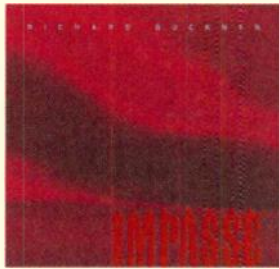
CORY BRANAN

The Hell You Say Madjack

Cory Branan has a lot of grit in his songwriting wit, his sharp eyes and tongue trained on girls, Memphis, and then more girls. Surprisingly, Branan (who's occasionally supported by the likes of Memphis's Pawtucket and various folks from the Madjack roster) has only been writing tunes for a couple of years. He acknowledges John Prine as a key inspiration, which makes perfect sense, since Prine's shadow is detectable in Branan's unvarnished mumbles and shouts, the lo-fi musical setting and most importantly, the lyrical diamonds buried in most every track. Jangly album opener "Miss Ferguson" is an amusing jolt of libido, but is a dead ringer for a Counting Crows track. While the electric energy there and on the smarter "Jolene" inoculates the disc from soft-focus folkism, Branan generally does better when quieting down to shine light on a woman "by the vending machine talking to a Marine" (on the beautiful "Troublesome Girl") or the gal with "the fake tattoos that say 'Forever Yours'" on "Crackerjack Heart." Whether he's lost in some adolescent dating fantasy or borrowing a gospel feel for the existentially bleak and believable "Wayward And Down," Branan's passion is always plain. He makes a striking lyricist, even if he is occasionally too clever by half. >>>BILL KISLUK



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RICHARD BUCKNER

Impasse *Overcoat*

Richard Buckner is the quintessential rootless soul. The California native recorded his first four albums with a series of collaborators linked to various regional scenes, most notably Joey Burns and John Convertino of Tucson's Calexico on 2000's stunning *The Hill*. Buckner stopped the revolving door for outing number five by sequestering himself in an Edmonton, Alberta home studio (another temporary dwelling from which he's since pulled up stakes), enlisting only the help of a drummer. Surprisingly, the result is a more densely arranged, full-band

Link

www.richardbuckner.com

File Under

Bumming out and plugging in
R.I.Y.L.

Will Oldham, Tom Waits, early
Wilco, Jimmie Dale Gilmore,
Alejandro Escovedo

sounding effort than *The Hill*. *Impasse* pursues the electric sound broached on 1998's *Since*, favoring tuneful slow burns over fuzzed-out rock excesses. Even the more sparse, acoustic-based songs, once Buckner's stock-in-trade, are bolstered with an organ, dobro or second guitar. His low, raspy voice falls somewhere between Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen, its Appalachian folk-inflected waver wrapping a remarkable number of notes around a single syllable. There's still enough twang to link *Impasse* to the Americana contingent, but like Waits, Buckner crafts a uniquely personal—and quite melancholy—vision. His trademark desolate lyrics haven't exactly lightened, but the livelier musical backdrop knocks them back more smoothly. *Impasse* doesn't blaze many new trails for Richard Buckner, but he's on such an excellent run, that's hardly a gripe. >>>GLEN SARVADY



CAROLYN MARK AND THE ROOM-MATES

Terrible Hostess *Mint*

Some voices are so loaded with easy power and nuance that you'd get the idea even if you didn't understand their language. Canada's Carolyn Mark, occasional partner of alt-country heroine Neko Case in the Corn Sisters, has one of those voices: a natural force sometimes eerily similar to that of Natalie Merchant. But Mark and her Room-Mates have a much better sense of humor than Merchant or her Maniacs, and her second disc is loaded with fancy wordplay. Mark, backed by her actual roommates Tolan McNeil (bass and guitar) and Garth Johnson (drums),

Link

www.mintrecs.com

File Under

Country cabaret
R.I.Y.L.

k.d. lang, Neko Case,
Rosie Flores

spins tales about parties, life on the Canadian road, and on "Dirty Little Secret," slovenly enviros who are "saving trees and saving fishes, saving water but leaving dishes." The cleverness of the often self-referential lyrics spill from stanza to stanza and tune to tune, even on more serious numbers like "Gopherville." While most of *Terrible Hostess's* 10 tracks have a country feel, Mark's nearly operatic power surges lift the album well above the routine. So do the stop-time rhythms and trumpet break on the flapperesque "Chumpville," and the canned laughter on the title track, perhaps the saddest tune on the set. >>>BILL KISLUK

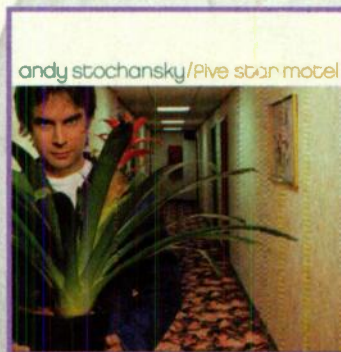
can you say stochansky?

Five star motel

the new album from
Andy Stochansky (sto-chan-skee)
featuring "Wonderful (It's Superman),"
"Stutter," and "Here Nor There"
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Driven by ringing guitars and
Stochansky's distinctive vocals,
Five Star Motel is lush, rich, and
irresistibly melodic.

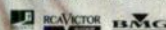
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World Radio History



DREDG

El Cielo Interscope

Small town visionaries adept at sonic exploration, Cali's Dredg have created a mind-bending work of tremendous scope and depth in *El Cielo*, maybe the most breathtaking record of the year. Recorded at George Lucas's paradisaical Skywalker Ranch, the disc is a cinematic voyage to the dark side of Dredg's moon. With 16 oddly named tracks like "Dcbtfoabaaposba" and "An Elephant In The Delta Waves" effortlessly bleeding into each other, Dredg cover everything from prog-metal guitar to warped piano minuets to sax-y jazz to drum 'n' bass breakdowns (featuring actual

drums and basses) without creating a disastrous cacophony. Holding it all together are the choirboy vocals of Gavin Hayes, whose enigmatic lyrics mine complex meaning out of sincere simplicity and endearing absurdity. "Same Ol' Road" imagines a suburban utopia with lines like "All you need is a modest house/ In a modest neighborhood," imploring, in what could be taken as a little post-9/11 commentary, that "we must be strong," a theme that runs throughout *El Cielo*. While Dredg don't employ many of the traditional dark devices of their modern-rock brethren, they still remain heavy. Not heavy like their closest kin, Tool, but heavy like your philosophy professor convincing you that you don't actually exist. Truly a landmark recording for this band. >>>RYAN RAYHILL



EYES ADRIFT

Eyes Adrift SpinART

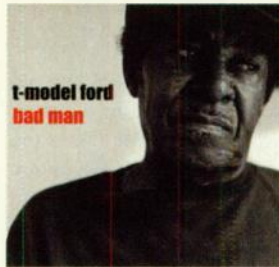
Eyes Adrift is an exceptional album, and it's not surprising, given the outfit's solid pedigree. Guitarist Curt Kirkwood co-founded the Meat Puppets, the Arizona trio who poured ambling, Grateful Dead-like country folk into American punk's frothing mouth, and his languorous psychedelic colors are painted in broad strokes across this disc. Krist Novoselic, who many remember only as Nirvana's lanky, slightly awkward bass player, hints at why that band reached such peaks, revealing—again—his innate value as a tendon between guitar and drums, as well as his gift for tuneful arrangement. Threads of Nirvana's bare-boned, scruffy melodies are sewn throughout this debut. Beneath Novoselic's lean bass and Kirkwood's spidery guitar, drummer Bud Gaugh's (Sublime) polished, intricate chops explore rhythmic patterns neither of the men up front visited with previous outfits. *Eyes Adrift* leans heavily toward the Meat Puppets, with Kirkwood's subdued vocals accompanying his soaring Crazy Horse leads on the lion's share of the album. Novoselic's clear and earnest desire to make music again shines through, especially on the sad and creepy "Inquiring Minds," whose repeated chorus, "They put flowers on your grave/ Jon Benet," provides a heavyweight metaphor for roads seen and taken by the band in previous band lives. They've all been there, and *Eyes Adrift*, a stunning, haunting, collection of eclectic rock songs, is all the more beautiful because of it. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY

Link
www.spinartrecords.com
File Under
Psychedelic country roots rock
R.I.Y.L.

Nirvana, Meat Puppets,
Sublime, J. Mascis and the Fog



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



T-MODEL FORD

Bad Man Fat Possum

No less honest and un-self-conscious than a man banging pots and pans on a front porch without an audience, T-Model Ford's *Bad Man* is a raw-boned, joyous 40-minute blues stomp. But even though 78-year-old Ford (who first picked up guitar at the tender age of 58) now has an audience, the song remains the same. *Bad Man* echoes John Lee Hooker's amped-up, reverb-soaked rambles, with a generous portion of atonal dementia (check the detuned strumming of the title track) chucked in for the hell of it. There's no flashy urban blues slickness here, no

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www.fatpossum.com

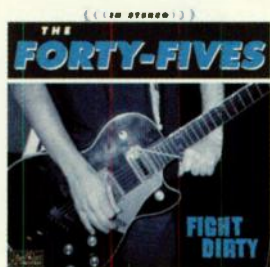
File Under

Raw-boned blues

R.I.Y.L.

John Lee Hooker, R.L. Buraside,
Hasil Adkins, Howlin' Wolf

blip and bleep electronic trickery. Memphis vet Jim Dickinson's live recording of T-Model and longtime drummer Spam (whose lockdown grooves follow T-Model's guitar as though it were a bass, shuffling and whomping behind the beat) captures the bare basics, but Dickinson still tweaks enough to vary the tone and ambience, moving drums to the forefront or knocking them back, trimming T-Model's guitar down or fattening it up. This transports *Bad Man* out of the rough, documentarian style associated with simple roots music, which homogenizes the experience out of either necessity (Alan Lomax's field recordings, for instance), or as a deliberate lo-fi angle. On this album, Dickinson uses the studio space as an instrument, and T-Model follows along, hypnotically churning out a skeletal blues-bake. >>>PATRICK KENNEDY



THE FORTY-FIVES

Fight Dirty Yep Roc

With a name like the Forty-Fives, what were you expecting, electroclash? *Fight Dirty* finds the Atlanta band ripping through the rapid-fire guitar-and-Hammond sound it's been honing since well before garage-rock started getting, uh, stroked on a large scale. The disc is most reminiscent of the often-incongruous musical interludes in '60s movies, where the action would suddenly shift to a scene of a band onstage and fringe flying on shimmying corn-fed hips. (Think the Mosquitoes washing ashore on *Gilligan's Island*, but with chops.) And the reason that a crowd could

Link

www.thefortyfives.com

File Under

Singles rockin' steady

R.I.Y.L.

Delta 72, The Who's *Live At Leeds*, *Nuggets*

dance to a band like the Forty-Fives is that these songs are essentially rocked-out R&B, with raw guitar and energy standing in for soul. The lead track, "Trying To Get Next To You," sounds like both Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and the Spencer Davis Group; "What A Way To Go" is a near replica of The Who's *Live At Leeds* cover of Johnny Kidd's "Shakin' All Over," until the lyrics hit. Bryan Malone's guitar and vocal tones are a perfect *Pebbles*-era match, and keyboardist Trey Tidwell is the secret weapon, pouring that B3 goodness over the able rhythm section's grooves. The shame of *Fight Dirty* is that it's just a record. You really want to be seeing this, not just hearing it, preferably in a low-ceilinged club crowded with people working up a sweat. Let the fringe fly. >>>FRANK MANSFIELD

let me go on...



violent femmes

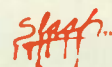


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GORDON GANO Hitting The Ground *Instinct*

All-star, multi-singer albums are an old rock trope, but it's unusual for a singer to write one, and even rarer when the album is a group member's solo debut. On *Hitting The Ground*, the coming-out of Violent Femmes frontman Gordon Gano, there's little singing by the titular artist but a wealth of his songwriting, voiced by one of the best gatherings of alternative rock artists ever collected on one album—Lou Reed, John Cale, PJ Harvey, Frank Black, Mary Lou Lord, They Might Be Giants. The list may be impressive, but what makes the project truly special is the diversity of the

songs by Gano, who has spent two decades trying to equal the dada-folk-punk of the Femmes' seminal 1982 debut. Wisely, his solo record (originally conceived as a film soundtrack) is instead a kind of post-punk cabaret, wandering from the quirky waltz "Darlin' Allison" (voiced by TMBG) to the sweet folk of "Oh Wonder" (Lord) and "Merry Christmas Brother" (Cynthia Gayneau, Gano's sister) to the howling "Run" (Black) and the punchy "Catch 'Em In The Act" (Reed). What connects the disparate material is the herky-jerky melodicism for which he is known. In true revue fashion, the album begins and ends with its catchiest song, the title track—first hiccupped by Harvey, then reprised by Gano himself, reclaiming his first gift after laying claim to a second. >>>CHRIS MOLANPHY

Link

www.instinctrecords.com

File Under

Post-punk cabaret

R.I.Y.L.

Violent Femmes, Lou Reed,

Randy Newman



GENE Libertine *Contra-iMusic*

Gene's career has always been marred by Smiths comparisons. Vocalist Martin Rossiter shares Morrissey's penchant for woe-is-me lyrics and histrionic vocals that could make a Shakespearean actor blush, and guitarist Steve Mason likes to cleanly pick his way Johnny Marr-style through some of the London quartet's sing-alongs for the hopelessly depressed. But every effort since their 1995 debut *Olympian* proves these lads to be above mere reinterpretations of an obvious influence. *Libertine*, Gene's fourth studio album (and sixth overall)

continues the trend with mixed results. The domestic version includes four bonus tracks, bolstering and undermining a solid import with some of their best and worst work to date. "Let Me Move On" is a stunning plea for freedom that could be a sonic cousin to Coldplay's "Shiver", while "Who Said This Was The End," the heart-breaking unlisted closer, reverses the sentiment atop a shuffling beat, crying guitars and swelling strings. However, "From Georgia To Osaka" is a plodding, unmelodic bore unworthy of even B-side status. Tracks left over from the import version—particularly "Yours For The Taking" and "Spy In The Clubs"—tend to be inspired rather than insipid, but still, at 70-plus minutes, *Libertine* is in dire need of some serious editing. What could be a brilliant EP is an unwieldy and meandering full-length. >>>NORM ELROD

Link

www.genemusic.com

File Under

Anglophiles of the world unite

R.I.Y.L.

The Smiths, Coldplay, Travis

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



TRE HARDSON

Liberation Flying Baboon-iMusic

Beware the aging b-boys! Along with new albums from legendary producer Large Professor and class-clown Biz Markie, the new disc from former Pharcyde member Tre Hardson is making the winter of '02 seem like '92 all over again. Those expecting the same goofy tone and freewheeling attitude of the Pharcyde's acclaimed debut, *Bizarre Ride II The Pharcyde*, however, might be disappointed. Instead, Hardson's *Liberation* is a velvet-coated entry into the neo-soul sweepstakes, complete with the requisite R&B

Link

www.flyingbaboon.com

File Under

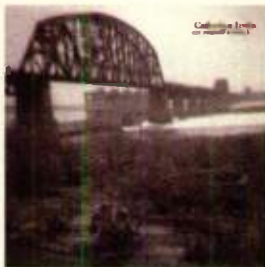
Earthy-crunchy hip-hop soul

R.I.Y.L.

Slum Village, Jill Scott,

Common

hooks, crackling rim shots and plush keyboards. Hardson's rubbery, sing-song flow hasn't declined, but he spends half the disc crooning choruses in a decent, if inconsistent tenor—you're advised to skip the missed notes of "Just 2 Bring It." But, for the incense-and-candles crowd, *Liberation* does the trick just fine. Party-starting cuts like "Ay, Yo My Man" and "Roots, Love & Culture" (with MC Lyte) would bring the local coffeehouse to their feet, while "Life Is Love" is perfect for a midnight snuggle session. Digging deeper into *Liberation's* 17 tracks, however, Hardson's one-track lyrics begin to distract from the pleasing production. The legal and personal drama that marked the end of the Pharcyde's career is no secret, but Hardson swaddles his anger in a blanket of vague psycho-babble and self-help aphorisms. Next time around, let's hope for less Oprah and more Ol' Dirty Bastard. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN



CATHERINE IRWIN

Cut Yourself A Switch Thrill Jockey

If performing covers serves as a kind of graduate school for bluegrass, *Cut Yourself A Switch* is a compelling dissertation on the continuing power and beauty of the genre. As one-half of Freakwater (alongside Emmylou manqué Janet Bean), Catherine Irwin has put in plenty of time singing the songs of her ol' Kentucky forbearers, gradually writing more original material. On her first solo album, she steps back from the elaborate arrangements heard on Freakwater's recent *Endtime*, instead favoring stripped-down finger-picking augmented sparingly by bass and very

Link

www.thrilljockey.com

File Under

Old school Americana

R.I.Y.L.

Lucinda Williams, the Handsome

Family, Hank Williams Sr.

occasional fiddle or accordion. As a result, most of *Switch* sounds like it was carried over a mountain by Rip Van Winkle, awakened after 70 years' sleep. Irwin-penned standouts like "Swan Dive" and "Hex" reek of moonshine and heartache, and more than hold their own against covers of early Elvis and Carter Family tunes. Bean's sweetening harmonies are missing but not missed; singing solo, Irwin's interpretive abilities prove astonishing. Pre-Prozac throw-downs such as "Cry Our Little Hearts Out" and "My Old Unlucky Home Far Away" find her in Lucinda Williams mode: tough and raspy, with Williams's hinting vulnerability traded for the aplomb of the already defeated. Elsewhere, as on "Paint The River Red," Irwin edges into Pasty Cline territory, bearing her heart on her sleeve in mournful top-notes. Just goes to show, a little education goes a long way. >>>MAYA SINGER

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JETS TO BRAZIL

Perfecting Loneliness *Jade Tree*

In Blake Schwarzenbach's hands, emo, that poorly defined umbrella for earnest, melodic, hopelessly romantic indie rock, has always been about finding a way to grow up responsibly without losing any of punk's inherent passion. Even when leading Jawbreaker in the era of big-budget alterna-rock, Schwarzenbach strove to find new and better ways to dig deeper into his own psyche for a certain clarity that's as hard to define as "emo" itself. And, as a pure product of the Clinton era, his talent is in making sure you can feel his pain. With *Jets To Brazil*,

Schwarzenbach hasn't deviated from that path—if anything, the band has become a foundation for more concentrated doses of his soul searching, especially as he's added more keyboards and acoustic guitar to the tuneful, if stark, mix of guitars, bass and drums. The title of JTB's latest, *Perfecting Loneliness*, may indeed be a reflection of Schwarzenbach's sense of humor about his mission, but that's just window dressing for a disc that takes itself pretty seriously. "We're fighting for our lives," he sings in the opening track, "The Frequency," without the slightest touch of irony; later, he salutes his parents in similar fashion ("Wish List"). Still, there's no denying that Schwarzenbach has achieved what he set out to do without eschewing the melodic gifts that make even his strongest medicine easy to swallow. >>>MATT ASHARE

Link

www.jetstobrazil.com

File Under

Emo for adults

R.I.Y.L.

Weezer, Jawbreaker,
Burning Airlines



THE JULIANA THEORY

Love *Epic*

In today's musical climate, swaggering rock is usually relegated to the garage stylings of the White Stripes, the Strokes, the Hives—insert your favorite plural noun here. But there's nothing retro or stylish about the Juliana Theory, unless rocking your fucking face off sans sonic gimmicks can somehow be considered old-fashioned. Singer/guitarist Brett Detar fronts this Pennsylvania quintet with his anti-whisper of a voice, an instrument that yields sounds rich and powerful. He doesn't purr; he doesn't scream without purpose. He's got class and rock attitude yet never suffers from Buckcherry cock rock-isms. And he's got just enough phlegm rattling around in his throat to prove he's not some neo-emo pantywaist. That his leadership is contagious is obvious on "DTM" and "Congratulations," both leaden Life Of Agony-esque guitar attacks. But when the big JT aren't rocking furiously, they're spinning contemplative, heartsick songs with booming beats ("The Hardest Things" and the piano-adorned "Shell Of A Man") that are just as satisfying as their hard-rocking counterparts. *Love* is a polished piece of glorious rock 'n' roll. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

Link

www.thejulianatheory.com

File Under

Rock without the retro

R.I.Y.L.

Sparta, Life Of Agony,
Candlebox

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KARATE

Some Boots Southern

If it wasn't so cerebral or so perfectly recorded, you might mistake *Some Boots* for a 1974 release. After wading through a number of styles over their past four longplayers, Karate have finally meshed their recent fixation on brilliantly played (if slightly outdated) light funk fusion with their jazzy influences and rock leanings of yore. Geoff Farina is again the centerpiece of this record, which showcases his sharp lyrics, restrained but never faltering voice, and guitar chops that will leave most listeners scratching their heads. Some might argue that an average

song length of seven minutes constitutes overkill, but with the vast lexicon of chords and tempos that this Boston act has on hand, there is never a moment that fails to progress towards a stronger and more baffling musical climax. From the drowned-out balladry of "Corduoy" or "Remain Relaxed," to the funky rhythm section work-out of "First Release," Karate retain their crown as one of the most technically efficient, yet still compelling, acts in the indie scene. *Some Boots* also benefits from a crystalline recording that tosses aside production tricks and allows the musical interplay to take center stage throughout. This is one of the band's strongest records to date; by mixing all of their sounds together, Karate may have finally made the album that will win you over. >>>PETE D'ANGELO

Link

www.secretstars.com

File Under

Virtuosos with catchy verses

R.I.Y.L.

The Van Pelt, John McLaughlin,

Guitar Player magazine



SALIF KEITA

Moffou Universal

Salif Keita is forever reinventing himself. After *Papa*, his 1999 rock-inspired outing with Vernon Reid, this spare, mostly acoustic set makes a satisfying contrast. From the top, "Yamore," a languid, lovely, Latin-tinged number, pairs Keita's clear, cool, world-weary voice with Cape Verdean diva Cesaria Evora, and the resulting communion is deep. Keita follows with an aching rendition of an older song, "Iniagibe," only now with just tripping acoustic guitar riffs to accompany his high, fraying voice. This is one of three solo performances here (the best being "Ananaming"), and

these deeply spacious tracks define the album. The ensemble tracks move assuredly in a variety of directions, the hottest being "Madan," a cranking, acoustic string-driven take on Mali's bluesy Wassoulou sound. "Koukou" shines as a subtle, pendulous 12/8 groove with inspired guitar arrangements, and "Katolon" offers a lush unfolding of a griot song that borders on too pretty. That feeling can't last long, though, with Keita's haunted voice looming. Even when singing at a near whisper he can muster a ragged edge of pain. These 10 tracks can stand up to a lot of listening, only getting better each run through. Keita reveals so much of himself that one can imagine looking back on this as *the* Salif Keita album. >>>BANNING EYRE

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www.salifkeita.net

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World, weary vocals

R.I.Y.L.

Yousou N'Dour, Baaba Maal

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LES SANS CULOTTES

Faux Realism Aeronaut

Les Sans Culottes are a band that delights in a good bad pun—with stage names like Jean Luc Retard and Celine Dijon, they make a musical mélange of garage, cabaret and '60s ye-ye pop that lends itself to descriptions like "Roquefort & Roll." This ersatz French-by-way-of-Brooklyn septet write songs in the Franglais of a high school student who's used his French-English dictionary to look up all the dirty words. To the inattentive listener, the crooning chorus girls and psychedelic organs of songs like "Sa Sabine" are sexy and fun, with the

Link

www.lessansculottes.com

File Under

Faux Escargo-go

R.I.Y.L.

B-52s, Serge Gainsbourg,

Pepe Le Pew

campy, danceable appeal of the B-52s. Those who've spent some quality time with French language tapes are rewarded with wry and raunchy translations, and even some playful social commentary ("I do not wish for a McFoie Gras/ Do not Supersize me/ It is completely crazy/ The Anglo-Saxon global system of cultural imperialism"). With their self-released previous albums of cover songs, Les Sans Culottes proved they could ape the "classics" of the genre by the likes of Françoise Hardy and Serge Gainsbourg—material already ripe for satire. Yet somewhere amid the artifice—the day-glo colors and Pepe Le Pew accents—Les Sans Culottes show themselves to be more than just a high-kitsch send-up, and deliver something real. >>>KERRY MILLER



LLORCA

New Comer PIAS America-F Communications

Though he's been producing for years and is not exactly the neophyte the title of his record suggests, Ludovic Llorca seems to know that he has a lot to prove on his full-length debut, *New Comer*. Instead of risking evaporation into the jazz/chill-house atmosphere, the Paris-based producer turns out a few compelling gems that will help establish a place for him within the scene. "Lalo Caught Me Dancing," with its cut-and-paste riffs interlocking over a pillow of hi-hats and a teetering, uneven beat, is noticeably forward-thinking and alive in a genre all too willing to groove on

Link

www.briqueroouge.com/llorca.html

File Under

House appeals

R.I.Y.L.

St. Germain, Jazzanova,

Chateau Flight, Deep Dish

the same idea for an entire song. "Indigo Blues," featuring decadent vocals by Nicole Graham, is not a house track, per se—it's fine in the bpm department, though missing the insistent heavy bottom—but what's exceptional is that this doesn't matter. Elsewhere, unfortunately, Llorca is too eager to adhere to his m.o. of combining jazz and house. "Any How" radiates high energy until tacked-on horns arrive to weigh the track down, and "True To Me" has a retro blaxploitation vibe that's as dull as it is convincing. Llorca is clearly unwilling to truly let go and forget about boundaries and/or crossing them. Disappointing as his music is occasionally, when he's at his best, the man's got a point. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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LO-HI

Say It More Tiger Style

With all the attention being lavished on "garage rock," you'd forget there are other ways to play the ol' economical 4/4. Actually, we used to find it within the confines of another bastard-genre—post-punk, the sophisticated-yet-spare rock codified by Wire, refined by Burma, perfected by the Pixies. It's not quite dead yet; this second album from Boss Hog spinoff Lo-Hi, all hook-laden riffage, is an able, if not first-rate, example. Led by erstwhile Hog drummer Hollis Queens, who sings in a sneer-shout that aspires to the art-damaged howl of PJ Harvey

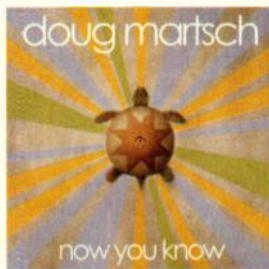
Link

www.tigerstylerrecords.com

File Under
Crunch and attitude
R.I.Y.L.

PJ Harvey, Brassy, Elastica,
Pixies

or Patti Smith, Lo-Hi churns out bashing songs with a stylistic consistency that Queens's meandering former group never achieved. The sound is spare; even with two new members added (guitarist Jens Jurgensen, also ex-Hog, and bassist Justin Holub join co-founder Martin Owens) these songs still sound like someone's basement solo project. Often that simplicity serves the tunes best, as on the Wire-esque rumba "Three Fish," the whisper-to-scream "White All Around" and the skeletal "Leopard Skin." Then again, sometimes Lo-Hi's tunes aren't simple, just simplistic (the cloying Lucille Ball homage "Lucy," the sub-Breeders lullaby "Little Plant"). Frankly, Lo-Hi's music is more fun than sophisticated, and Ms. Queens is more charming than talented; but even as second-rate post-punk, *Say It More* is more than easy to enjoy. >>>CHRIS MOLANPHY



DOUG MARTSCH

Now You Know Warner Bros.

Built To Spill frontman Doug Martsch fell in love with Mississippi Fred McDowell, mid-century master of the slide guitar, and spent a year woodshedding with finger-picks, glass slides and open tunings. The result, *Now You Know*, is a collection of warped country blues that may surprise fans of Martsch's main gig. Recorded mostly in the fall of 1999, pre-*Ancient Melodies Of The Future*, this largely acoustic disc further explores the hints of trad blues that appeared on *Ancient*, and finds Martsch mixing circular picking ("Dream," "Window") and moody, rumi-

Link

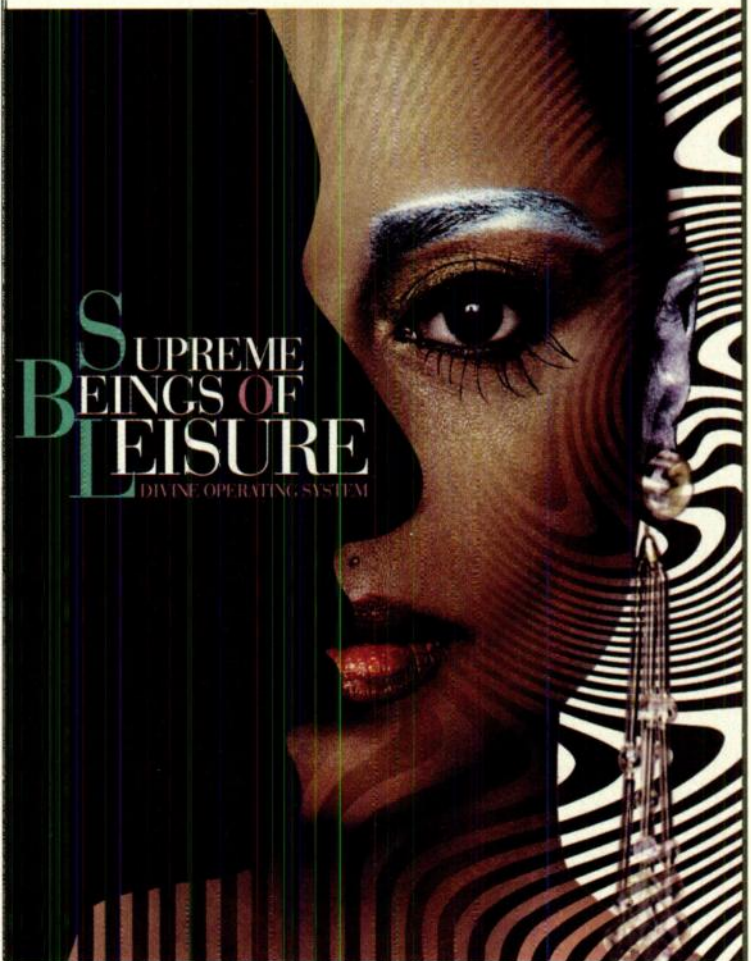
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File Under
Blues to spill
R.I.Y.L.

Mississippi Fred McDowell,
Hot Tuna, Chris Whitley

native slide grooves ("Instrumental," McDowell's "Jesus") with the occasional blues-based electric turn ("Lift"). A few tracks take off on BTS-like elliptical journeys, especially when bassist Travis Ward, drummer Darren Adair and cellist John McMahon join in for "Impossible," which at six and a half minutes qualifies as the album's one epic. Martsch's lyrics are, as usual, simultaneously heartfelt and cryptic ("Is your heart too big for your sleeve?," he sings on "Sleeve"), and he often follows McDowell's method of doubling the vocal melody with the slide guitar lines. Martsch claims that he's obsessed with reggae now; if the results are as absorbing and provocative as *Now You Know*, we'll be in for another surprising treat a few years down the line. >>>STEVE KLINGE

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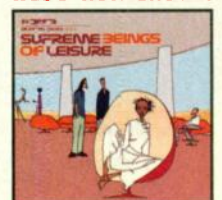
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Palindromes, holmes!

R.I.Y.L.

Princess Superstar, They
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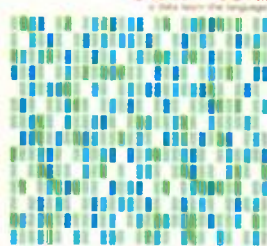
Sure, Eminem blurs that line between smart and smart-ass, but curly-haired, bespectacled, Ivy League-endorsed Jewish art-rapper MC Paul Barman pisses all over it—and then tops it off with a post-ironic quip. Barman's first full-length, *Paulelujah!*, continues where the high-concept polysyllabics and offbeat/off-beat flows of his *It's Very Stimulating* EP left off. His zeal for lightning-quick high-brow/low-brow sexcursions get esoteric pop-culture references tangled in concealed trigonometry jokes ("PEMDAS EFX," get it?) and crass barbs ("tzuck my Tzadik"). Barman molests words like a snarky lexicologist on a crystal meth binge, rhyming "the Rubaiyat" with "all the pube I got," speaking in analogies (pronouncing the colons out loud, no less) and referencing everything from Jeff Koons to John Cage to Fibonacci to, um, burping and farting. "Cock Mobster" is an arty fuckfest where Barman shows off both his nimble tongue and pottymouth to a De La-esque track produced by Handsome Boy Modeling School comrade MikeTheMusicGuy. "Bleeding Brain Grow," a Prince Paul-produced piece that inexplicably flips the "Reading Rainbow" theme, features a lengthy passage of MC names that is undoubtedly the first (and probably last) hip-hop palindrome. Artsy-fartsy They Might Be Giants crap like that gets him blasted by rap purists, but whether you think Paul is brilliantly spastic or a wack dick, his iconoclastic shtick makes for some fantastic plastic. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

MC PAUL BARMAN

Paulelujah! Coup d'Etat

Sure, Eminem blurs that line between smart and smart-ass, but curly-haired, bespectacled, Ivy League-endorsed Jewish art-rapper MC Paul Barman pisses all over it—and then tops it off with a post-ironic quip. Barman's first full-length, *Paulelujah!*, continues where the high-concept polysyllabics and offbeat/off-beat flows of his *It's Very Stimulating* EP left off. His zeal for lightning-quick high-brow/low-brow sexcursions get esoteric pop-culture references tangled in concealed trigonometry jokes ("PEMDAS EFX," get it?) and crass barbs ("tzuck my Tzadik"). Barman molests words like a snarky lexicologist on a crystal meth binge, rhyming "the Rubaiyat" with "all the pube I got," speaking in analogies (pronouncing the colons out loud, no less) and referencing everything from Jeff Koons to John Cage to Fibonacci to, um, burping and farting. "Cock Mobster" is an arty fuckfest where Barman shows off both his nimble tongue and pottymouth to a De La-esque track produced by Handsome Boy Modeling School comrade MikeTheMusicGuy. "Bleeding Brain Grow," a Prince Paul-produced piece that inexplicably flips the "Reading Rainbow" theme, features a lengthy passage of MC names that is undoubtedly the first (and probably last) hip-hop palindrome. Artsy-fartsy They Might Be Giants crap like that gets him blasted by rap purists, but whether you think Paul is brilliantly spastic or a wack dick, his iconoclastic shtick makes for some fantastic plastic. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

THE MERCURY PROGRAM



Link

www.mercuryprogram.com

File Under

Yawn...but in a good way!

R.I.Y.L.

Tortoise, Jim O'Rourke, Don
Caballero, sedatives

THE MERCURY PROGRAM

A Data Learn The Language Tiger Style

Way down in the landlocked swamps of Gainesville, Fla., the Mercury Program may not have heard the Chicago sound perfected by the likes of Tortoise and Gastr del Sol growing increasingly quiet since the end of the '90s. But these holdouts of the postmodern-rock-math-jazz scene take the stark, electronic dabbings of their mentors and faithfully fight the good fight on their fourth LP, *A Data Learn The Language*. Sounding as if they were recorded in a cave of ice, Tom Reno's dreamy guitar loops swirl around the jazz-inspired rhythm section of drum-

mer Dave Lebleu and bassist Sander Travisano, while the crystalline vibe/keys work of Whitney Travisano adds a welcome anesthesia. It's a nice exercise in lush minimalism, but much of the material on *Data* sounds like much of the other material on *Data*. With the exception of the tick-tock rhythms of "To/From Iceland" and the more upbeat "You Yourself Are Too Serious," there isn't a whole lot of diversity. Still, it's more about the overall mood than which song would make a good single, a quality that marks this genre. What makes the Mercury Program atypical, however, is how the band eschews the robotic, almost dispassionate approach of many of their peers. The band is complicated and precise, but they're also human—a quality too often overlooked. >>>RYAN RAYHILL



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



METRO AREA

Metro Area *Environ*

Brooklyn's Metro Area is here to save us from the mechanical iciness that seems intrinsic to electroclash. After a series of 12-inch singles, Morgan Geist and Darshan Jesrani arrive on CD with a smoothed-out, soulful sound that owes more to Zapp & Roger than Giorgio Moroder. And it's about time: The scene has been in desperate need of a record that's as effortlessly hip as Metro Area. Like electroclash frontrunners DMX Krew and Felix Da Housecat, Metro Area leap past the bandwagon-jumping to make music that romances the scenesters without being derivative of their scene. Relying on steadily

stomping beats rather than the click-chicka of straight electro, Metro Area craft jaw-dropping urban club tracks. "Dance Reaction" is a sparse and shiny ode to Minneapolis; strings swoop into the impossibly smooth "Miura" for miniscule interludes that leave you both wanting more and impressed at the restraint. Tastefulness proves to be the duo's most commendable quality; by keeping things minimal, they give themselves a wide-open space in which to craft lean, vocal-free funk. Some may complain that Metro Area filled their debut with already released tracks (only four are new), and sure, they are sort of cheating. But if a larger audience is getting to sample material of this quality, then let Metro Area cheat. Just pray they don't start playing hooky. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

Link

www.environrecords.com

File Under

Electroclass

R.I.Y.L.

Morgan Geist, Ural 13

Diktators, the *Tangent 2002*:

Disco Nouveau comp, Arpanet



MOUNT SIMS

Ultra Sex *Emperor Norton*

In an attempt to cash in on the modest success of the electroclash movement, L.A. model-cum-stage performer Matt Sims has positioned himself and his "group," Mount Sims, as a sexually charged dance act that would like very much to Lambada on your Pradas. The performance on *Ultra Sex*, however, will leave most looking for hardcore XXX action elsewhere. While cold canned beats are often enough to get that ass moving, there is, as is the problem with most electro music, very little depth or passion apparent on the record. Producer Mickey Petralia (Beck,

Ladytron) utilizes all the usual ersatz tricks of filtered synth-bass and vocoders to give a boost to Sims' underwhelming (even for electroclash) vocal delivery, but it never seems to come together as it's intended. Occasionally Sims shows promise as he recalls Prince's fuck-funk with high-pitched wails and throbbing grooves ("Come And Get It," "Rational Behavior"). But with the exception of the playful first single, "How We Do," the majority of these runway theme songs about hookers, French-kissing strangers and smeared mascara fall flat on their high cheekbones. When compared to more talented peers like Fischerspooner or Felix Da Housecat, Sims doesn't quite have the savvy yet to deliver anything more than bandwagon shtick. >>>RYAN RAYHILL

Link

www.emperornorton.com

File Under

Flash-in-the-pan dance

R.I.Y.L.

Fischerspooner, Felix Da

Housecat, skinny ties, cocaine

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OF MONTREAL

Aldhills Arboretum Kindercore

In a time of anthrax scares, dirty bombs and man-eating snakehead fish, there's a definite need for bands like Of Montreal. Who among us couldn't use a dose of effervescent pop songs about puppy dogs, kisses and idyllic country houses right about now? Well, it depends on how large a dose we're talking about. The Athens, Ga.-based band's new album is so sugary sweet, listening to the whole thing in one sitting brings about the same sickening feeling induced by a *Saved By The Bell* marathon. Less arty and concept-driven than previous releases, *Aldhills*

Arboretum is a collection of trite, straightforward ditties lacking the delicious weirdness that songwriter/frontman Kevin Barnes is known for. The melodies may be catchy, the harmonies sometimes irresistible and the Beatles/Beach Boys-influenced psychedelic trimmings appropriately trippy, but the album's peppiness quickly becomes as cloying as Broadway showtunes. Even on the rare occasions when songs broach unpleasant topics (a failed marriage on "The Blank Husband Epidemic," imminent death on "Old People In The Cemetery"), the music remains steadfastly cheerful. Barnes wrote on the Kindercore website that Of Montreal's intention was "to make an album of singles." They've been all too successful, as each track would be more palatable if listened to on its own (or after some death metal). Like ice cream, too much Of Montreal might give you a bellyache. >>>AMY PHILLIPS

Link

www.ofmontreal.net

File Under

Sickeningly sweet psych-pop

R.I.Y.L.

Apples In Stereo, Elf Power, silly, happy Beatles songs like "Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da"



PARKER AND LILY

Here Comes Winter Manifesto

When NYC's Parker Noon and Lily Wolfe shucked their Valentine Six bandmates, they traded bohemian (pre)tension for after-hours dissolution. Smart move: Often the aftermath of the party is more interesting than the party itself. *Here Comes Winter*, the follow-up to last year's *Hello Halo*, is whispery and understated; it's slow to the point of stasis, like someone's mind struggling to come to terms with an emotional trauma. In this case, the problems are marital, with Lily singing, "Your kiss is as cold as Iceland and twice as far away" in

"Snow Day," and Parker replying, "Your eyes shift the wrong way in lobbies" in "Planes In Clouds." Nearly half of *Here Comes Winter*'s 15 tracks are instrumentals, most of which feature Lily's moody noodlings on vintage Rhodes, Acetone or Farfisa keyboards, often juxtaposed with wavering surf guitar or simple Casio beats. When Lily sings, her vulnerable soprano disguises her lyrical barbs, and she even gets downright chipper on the lounge-y "My Apartment Complex." But Parker takes most of the vocals, talk-singing in the manner of Tindersticks' Stuart Staples or Lambchop's Kurt Wagner, although with even more detachment—his "Motel Lights" is so fragile that one false breath could make the whole thing disappear. *Here Comes Winter* is cold and dark enough to chill the warmest heart. >>>STEVE KLINGE

Link

www.parkerandlily.com

File Under

Something slowly this way creeps

R.I.Y.L.

Tindersticks, Young Marble Giants, Julee Cruise, Low

THE COMP PILE (OUR GUIDE TO COMPILATION CDS) BY KERRY MILLER

TITLE	BYO Presents Sample This, Too! (BYO)	Sónar 2002 (SonarMusic)	The Difference Vol. 1 (Official Jointz)	The Best Of Bond... James Bond (Capitol)	The Angels Are Singing (Rouner)
CONCEPT	Punk's not dead, we swear	Cutting-edge electronic culled from Barcelona's Sonar Festival	Producer Domingo's underground all-stars and up-and-comers	Die-hard 007 fans will buy anything. (A-ha and Sheryl Crow on the same CD?)	Leading ladies of bluegrass sing His praises
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	"I am too punk! I even have an 'up the punx' tattoo!"	You like your music with candid pictures of Diego Maradona.	You've been eagerly following the whole Nelly/KRS-ONE spat	You feel slighted by the omission of k.d. lang's "Surrender."	Phrases like "spirit-lifting" don't weird you out.
NAMES TO DROP	Anti-Flag, NOFX, Youth Brigade	Jeff Mills, Cex, Carl Cox	Dilated Peoples, Cocoa Brovaz, Craig Mack	Carly Simon, Tom Jones, Tina Turner	Alison Krauss + Union Station, Hazel Dickens
SUMS IT UP	"No Security" (The Bouncing Souls)	"A Good One" (Soul Center)	"Clear 'Em Out" (KRS-ONE feat. Tonedeff)	"Goldfinger" (Shirley Bassey)	"Keep Your Feet On The Ground" (Rhonda Vincent)
VERDICT	BYO is still raging, but seems to have misplaced the machine. Just three bucks, but still not worth it.	80,000 festival-goers can't be wrong. <i>Viva Sonar!</i>	"Sales don't make you the authority/ It only means you sold out to the white majority."	Forty years of Bond makes for one stiff—and uneven—nostalgia cocktail.	Say what you will about J.C., but he inspired some gosh-darn beautiful (and yes, soulful) music.



KIM RICHEY

Rise *Lost Highway*

Kim Richey has her work cut out for her. Her 1999 album *Glimmer* is a lot to live up to, a slice of tuneful, poppy country that spawned critical and fan adoration alike. While *Glimmer* certainly facilitated her move to new label Lost Highway, it also remains an album to be bested or, at least, matched. Richey's Mercury-Nashville days may be behind her, but she hasn't forgotten how to put a country tweak on a tune when it feels right. "This Love," co-written with Chuck Prophet, is the sort of enlightened country song at which she still excels. "Electric

Green," a song she wrote with Pete Droge, makes a surprising pass at art rock, but this vibe doesn't dominate the proceedings any more than country does, as most of the material on *Rise* travels between modern folk and roots rock. Richey's considerable songwriting chops invest each song with something to demand the listener's attention. "Hard To Say Goodbye," "Girl In A Car," "Reel Me In" and "A Place Called Home" deliver particularly dramatic lyrics, while "Cowards In A Brave New World" and "Me And You" boast very appealing arrangements thanks to producer Bill Bottrell. With *Rise*, Richey has shown that *Glimmer* was not an anomaly, but, rather, the shape of things to come. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

www.kimrichey.com

File Under

Richey rises to the occasion

R.I.Y.L.

Caitlin Cary, Allison Moorer,
Shawn Colvin

ROMAN CANDLE

Says Pop *Outlook*

Says Pop screams pop, actually, but the two Chapel Hill, N.C. brothers who make up Roman Candle are also fluent in the tongues of folk maturity and home-brewed Southern rock. Skip and Logan Metheny kicked out *Pop*, their first full-length effort, from the recesses of their basement, over-laying each cut with fuzzy drones and a lo-fi, makeshift-studio feel. Production sheen may be laid on a bit thick at times (overcompensating for the humble setup?), but the brothers Metheny smartly flex their engineering arms on sensible head-bobbers ("You Don't Belong To This World,"

"Something Left To Say"), and navigate through the hollow cranies of more reserved tracks ("Baby's Got It In The Genes" and "Merciful Man"). But the real meat of *Says Pop* lies in powerful guitar melodies and narrative-driven vocals that could easily woo alt-country addicts. Each song tackles a new topic, and Skip Metheny tells stories with a vocal appeal torn from the pages of Ryan Adams or Elliott Smith. Some cuts are laden with lightheartedness, others with pallid cynicism, but each is played with instrumental optimism. This inaugural output for Roman Candle may not defy the normal laws of pop, but it does boast a healthy perception of exactly what that sound is supposed to say. >>>KATIE HASTY

Link

www.romancandlemusic.com

File Under

Just watch the fireworks

R.I.Y.L.

Whiskeytown, Michael Penn,
the Webb Brothers,
Neutral Milk Hotel



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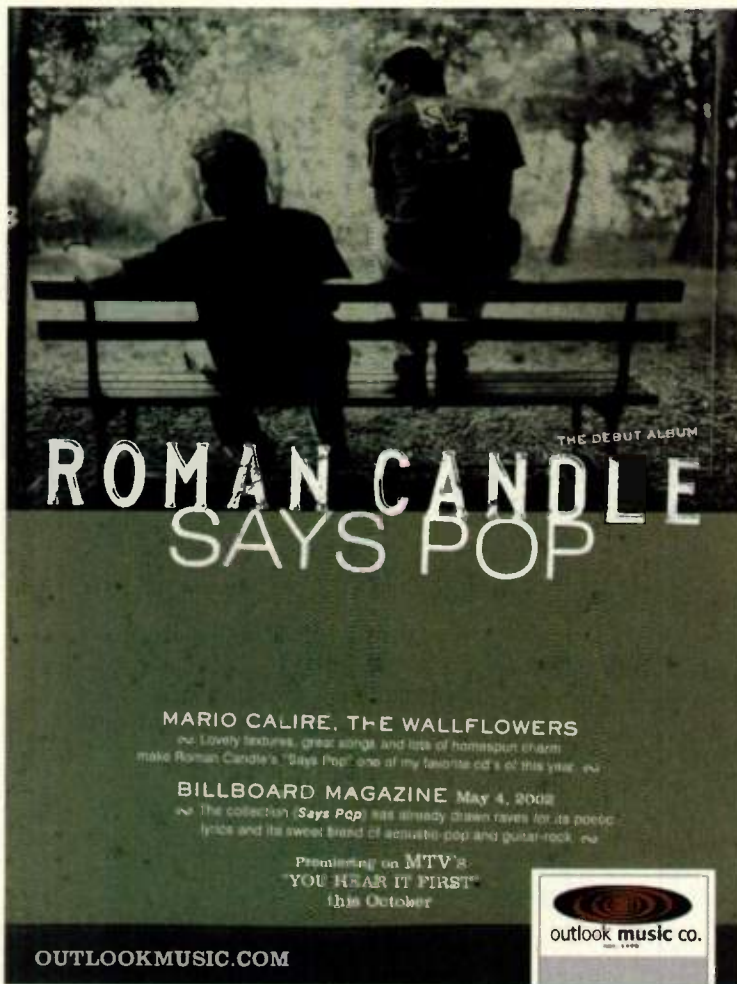
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BILLBOARD MAGAZINE May 4, 2002
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Röyksopp
Melody A.M.

RÖYKSOPP

Melody A.M. Astralwerks

The debut full-length from Röyksopp has been turning heads for a while over in the U.K., to the point where some mad wags called the Sickmen have even wedded the infectious chirps of the Norwegian duo's single "Eple" to the gravelly a capella of Busta Rhymes' "Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See." Licensing the album from U.K. big beat label Wall Of Sound, Astralwerks adds it to their collection of Scandinavian signings, right next to Kings Of Convenience. But Röyksopp has little to do with the Kings' pacific folk, even if the latter's

Erlend Øye does sing on both the blissed-out track "Poor Leno" and the even more tranquil break-bleep tune "Remind Me." Like Zero 7 or Air, Röyksopp tread the line between dance music and pop, preferring the beats of the former (check the stomping house backing of "Leno") and the soul-splashed melodies of the latter. Favoring untethered breakbeats and lush, acoustic sources like the harps and bells of "In Space," the pair keep their music as airy as the backlit, feathered hairdos of '70s Swedish softcore. Even on the deep blue "Sparks," midnight longing is rendered in the overexposed hues of *The Virgin Suicides*. But "Eple" is the hands-down standout here, looping a nitrous-filled piano riff over and over, as rolling drums and green strings flash by beneath like so much scenery glimpsed from on high. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE

Link

www.royksopp.com

File Under

Norway or the high way

R.I.Y.L.

Zero 7, Air, Fila Brazillia

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RON SEXSMITH

Cobblestone Runway Nettwerk

Tender-rock balladeer Ron Sexsmith has no doubt grown weary of reading quotes from past reviews where he's referred to as a "songwriter's songwriter." Such categorization and adulation from critics can often be a curse (plus, have you met some of these critics?). Last year's excellent *Blue Boy* showed him doing some envelope-pushing with a gutsier, Memphis-style production courtesy of Steve Earle and Ray Kennedy. However, a more overt sonic restlessness emerges on *Cobblestone Runway*, with mixed results. Not that there isn't expert songcraft afoot throughout as

always, it's just that in employing Swedish producer Martin Terefe (Leona Naess), Sexsmith announces an eagerness to win over more than critics. Songs like "Former Glory" are acceptably lush (who doesn't enjoy a nice harpsichord flourish?), but the studio excess on "Dragonfly On Bay Street" glops on so much Eurodisco syrup that you can hardly taste the song. Other ambitious adventures like "The Least That I Can Do," which is lifted by a soul/gospel chorus, are a bit more fitting despite the irksome digital flutter in the background. Still, it's hard to shake the solid foundation of Sexsmith's songs. The beatbox-aided reprise of "Gold In Them Hills," a duet with Coldplay's Chris Martin, highlights the simple, quiet beauty that has marked Sexsmith's best tunes. >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

Link

www.ronsexsmith.com

File Under

Great guy, wrong suit?

R.I.Y.L.

Joe Henry, Neil Finn,
Elliott Smith



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



SLIPPER

Zoon Sandwich Elsewhen

Bizarre and mellow, this second disc from members of Loop Guru tames scraps of sound from all around with gently pulsing basslines, insistent but not invasive drumbeats and sampled voices, including controversial guru Avatar Adi Da Samraj and '50s Chicago bluesman J.B. Lenoir. Opening track "Zoon 1" comes on with a sleepy beat from the Damned's drummer Rat Scabies, adding a puff of horn before the jazzy phrases from vocalists Jacqueline Clemons and the sultry Linda Finger chase each other like birds around a bush. Elsewhere,

knob-tweaker and Elsewhen label founder Sam Dodson samples liberally from the teachings of the avatar, blips of conversation and other found-sound weirdness. "Tooth," for example, is a soundtrack for a creepy walk through a haunted house, replete with alarming piano chords and the occasional wail from a baby. "Da Force" veers into dance territory as surely as anything else here, grabbing onto a snippet of old-timey gospel call-and-response vocals and tethering it to a funky techno beat. Although it's said that all the members of Slipper have never once gathered in the same room at the same time, *Zoon Sandwich* is a coherent soundscape, soothing and weird at the same time. >>>BILL KISLIUK

Link

elsewhen.org.uk

File Under

Outer Limits electronic

R.I.Y.L.

Loop Guru, Jon Hassell, Portishead



SLOBBERBONE

Slippage Now West

When Slobberbone released 1996's *Crow Pot Pie* and 1997's *Barrel Chested*, they were quickly slapped with the alt-country tag. Lead singer/songwriter Brent Best didn't particularly fancy that label, but there sure was a lot of native Texas twang in his tunes, not to mention general rural sentiment. *Slippage* may well be Best's best yet, and it may also be his strongest assertion that Slobberbone's sound is anchored as firmly in rock as it is in Texas country music. Certainly, "Write Me Off," "Sweetness, That's Your Cue" and "Springfield, IL" put the lie to the notion

that this band is solely spinning in alt-country mode. Best continues to excel at writing songs that convey a world-weariness that feels like it weighs a ton. "Sister Beams," "Live On In The Dark" and "Down Town Again" are Best at the top of his game, writing songs that throw an unnerving light on some of life's more dismal moments. The last track on the record, "Back," is a somber acoustic interlude with a gentle, hopeful lyric, reminiscent of a Depression-era folk tune. Add to all this the salvage job the band does on the Bee Gee's "To Love Somebody": Best's vocal actually makes the song mean something. The album's title couldn't be less apropos: *Slippage* amounts to a major Slobberbone triumph. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

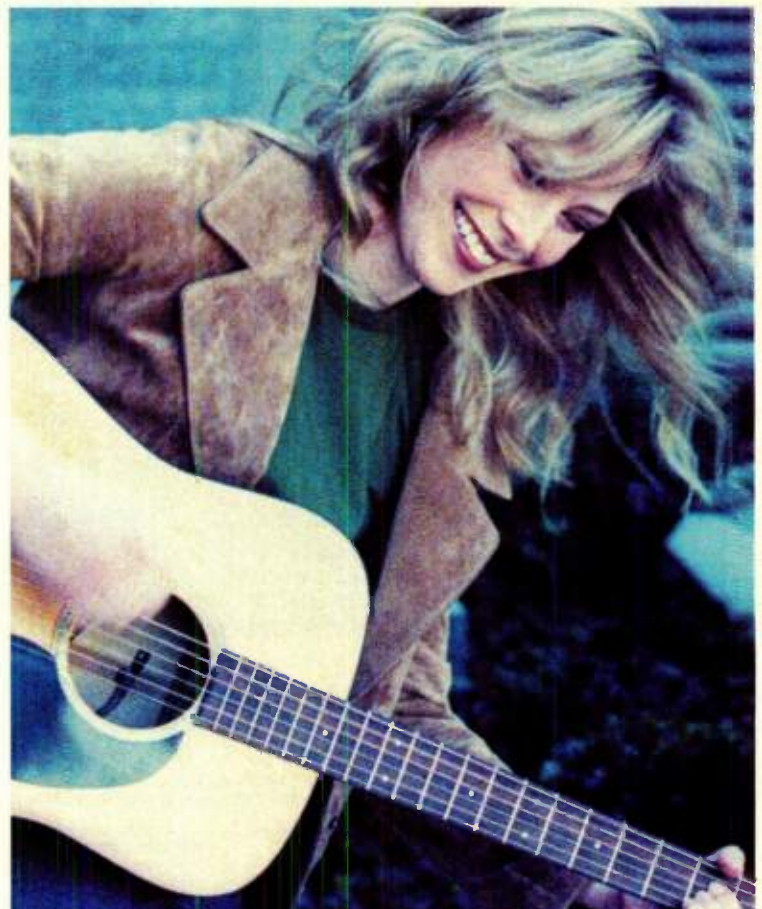
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SQUAREPUSHER

Do You Know Squarepusher **Warp**

For his sixth Squarepusher album (among countless EPs, comps and singles), drum 'n' bass pioneer Tom Jenkinson did two things of note: He wrote a quasi-manifesto explicating his quixotic back catalog, and he covered Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart." On the first, laborious grammatical constructions wander before reaching Jenkinson's meaty point that, "in order to prevent myself from being fully incorporated into any musical ghetto, I have to incorporate every musical ghetto into myself." Way to go, Lao Tsu. On the second, however, he can go to hell. For no reason on God's green earth should a glorious 23-year-old post-punk anthem be subjected to the rigors of breakneck programmed drums, flawless synths and perfect guitar strumming. The remainder of *Do You Know Squarepusher*, ironically enough, is some of his most arresting music in years. The title track recaptures the magical melodic touch he abandoned after 1996's *Port Rhombus EP*, where streams of diamond-cut electro chords flash-flood through eroding cakes of crisp drum breaks. "Kill Robok" merges the frantic jazz impulses of 1998's *Music Is Rotted One Note* with the superior rhythmic sequencing of '97's *Hard Normal Daddy*, masterfully embellishing the speed- and noise-filled "drill 'n' bass" sound Jenkinson helped craft. Limited to those endeavors (there's a second, abominable live disc), *Do You Know Squarepusher* might've come closer to the enlightened esthetic of Jenkinson's manifesto. >>>HEATH K. HIGNIGHT

Link

www.warprecords.com

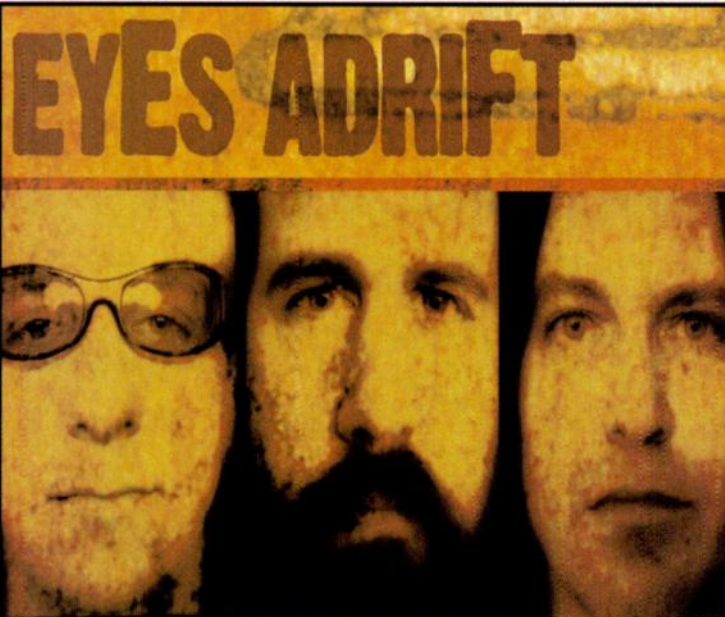
File Under

Drill 'n' breaks 'n' bad covers

R.I.Y.L.

Venetian Snares, Dryft,

Hard Normal Daddy



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10/17	St. Louis, MO	10/26	Boulder, CO	11/04	Santa Anna, CA
10/18	Chicago, IL	10/27	Salt Lake City, UT	11/05	Los Angeles, CA
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TAHITI 80 **CD**

Wallpaper For The Soul **Minty Fresh**

The French boys in Tahiti 80 wowed listeners with their engagingly twee 2000 debut, *Puzzle*, establishing themselves as another band with a bottomless trove of tasteful influences (everything from Serge Gainsbourg to the Zombies) and references. They penned odes to both British Invasion figureheads ("Mr. Davies") and obscurities (an homage to little-known '60s Irish singer Joe Dolan, "Hey Joe"). *Wallpaper For The Soul*, the band's first full-length since *Puzzle*, leaves behind the yé-yé-meets-the-Kinks vibe for a mid-'70s, easy-listening groove, which means a lot less acoustic guitar balladry and a lot more synthesizer-driven melodies. While nothing here will pack the dancefloor with *les jeunes filles* the way *Puzzle*'s sexy single "Heartbeat" did, there are still plenty of effortlessly catchy and sophisticated tracks to groove to. The *carpe diem* sentiments of "1,000 Times" are kissed by a disco beat that's hard to resist, and the infectious "Soul Deep," the band's fine take on—you guessed it—soul, sounds vaguely reminiscent of the Style Council's "My Ever Changing Moods." Singer Xavier Boyer, whose English is much better this time around, has a way with a fey vocal, and his wide-eyed, downy delivery proves he can still play the ingénue well. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

Link

www.mintyfresh.com

File Under

Soundtrack to an Indian

summer dinner party

R.I.Y.L.

Stereolab, Soulwax, Air



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



THE WALKABOUTS

Ended Up A Stranger *Innerstate*

While their hometown contemporaries were defining grunge, Seattle's Walkabouts followed their own path, finding cult fame in Europe with literate music influenced by folk and Americana. Their sound's gone through plenty of changes during their 18-year career, but *Ended Up A Stranger* is more than another stop on the way—it's their most ambitious statement to date. The songs are deep and rich, dressed up with some impressive string arrangements. Guitarist/singer Chris Eckman has become a subtle tunesmith, and his

Link

www.thewalkabouts.com

File Under

Dark melodic dreams

R.I.Y.L.

Tindersticks, Nick Cave,
Mark Eitzel

lyrics have moved away from Raymond Carver-esque storytelling to more abstract images, while Carla Torgerson's voice has developed a greater sensual urgency, all too evident on "Lazarus Heart" and "Radiant." Interestingly for a band that's long plowed its own furrow, a couple of songs seem to pay tribute to old heroes: "Life: The Movie" has more than a few touches of vintage Pink Floyd, while "See It In The Dark" could easily be mid-'70s Bowie. Mostly, though, this is unmistakably Walkabouts, from the midnight ache of "Lest We Forget" to the slowburn intensity of the claustrophobic "Cul-De-Sac." As with much of their work, this album's a dark journey, but one well worth taking; there's no band quite like them in America, able to mix head and heart so perfectly. >>>CHRIS NICKSON



WAUVENFOLD

3Fold *Tiger Style*

Latter-day "intelligent dance music" purveyors have long been engaged in a tug-of-war with the inventors of the form, as featured on Warp Records' groundbreaking *Artificial Intelligence* compilations. Those artists—Autechre, Speedy J, Aphex Twin—reconfigured the 808 drum patterns and looped breakbeats of club culture into something subtler and slipperier than mainstream dance tracks, aping cold, robotic movements in the pursuit of often warmly humanistic music. Nottingham, England's Wauvenfold exemplify the conundrum facing IDM's latest generation.

Link

www.wauvenfold.com


File Under

System upgrade

R.I.Y.L.

Plaid, Autechre, B12

The fried-circuit effects that once sounded so radical have become their own standard operating language, but there's very little being conveyed by the commands. At their best, the duo folds static and clicks into punchy electro patterns, but they're hamstrung by the genre's requisite plangent chord changes and twee melodies. "Fumble Fibre" twists up trebly strands of keyboard to engaging effect, but elsewhere they rely on the four-bar loop that's been a part of pop music since it was born of the blues. For all the disjuncture suggested by the skipping beats, it's hardly a surprise when you know exactly what chord is coming next. Like Boards Of Canada, Wauvenfold are fond of melancholic melodies, but it's unclear what they have to be so sad about, except perhaps computer culture's relentless cycle of obsolescence. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE



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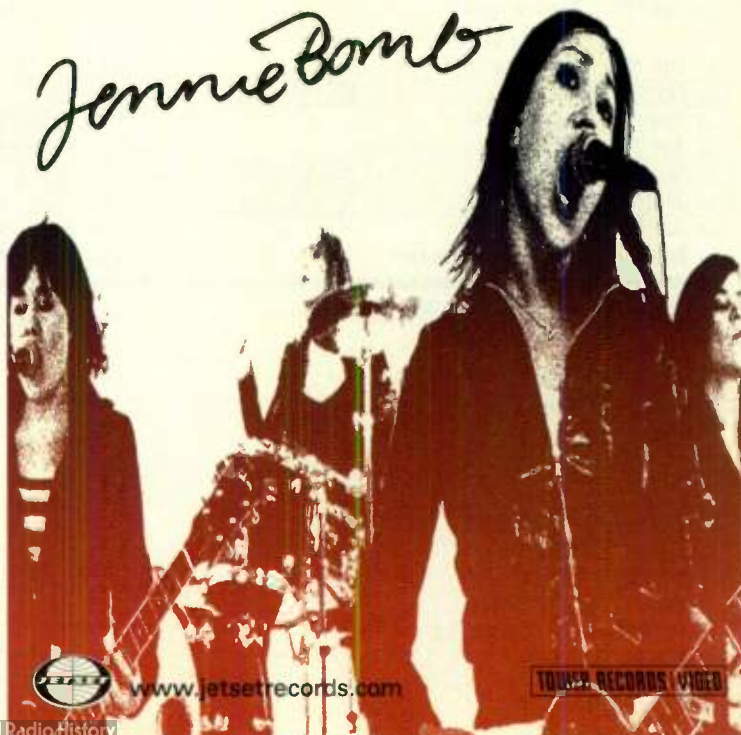
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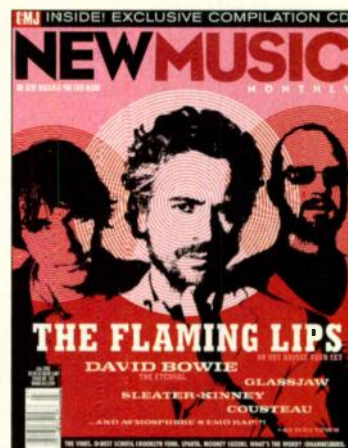
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September '02 QOTSA



August '02 THE HIVES



July '02 THE FLAMING LIPS



June '02 DJ SHADOW

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CMJ

NEW MUSIC REPORT

TOP 75

#1
SPOON
KILL THE MOONLIGHT
MERGE



1 SPOON <i>Kill The Moonlight Merge</i>	21 SIXTEEN HORSEPOWER <i>Folklore Jetset</i>	51 KARL DENSON'S TINY UNIVERSE <i>The Bridge Relaxed</i>
2 SLEATER-KINNEY <i>One Beat Kill Rock Stars</i>	27 LIARS <i>They Show Us All In A Touch And Stick A Moment On Top Mute</i>	52 SUPREME BEINGS OF LEISURE <i>Drive Operating System Palm</i>
3 THE FLAMING LIPS <i>Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots Warner Bros.</i>	28 THE USED <i>The Used Reprise</i>	53 MUM <i>Finally We Are No One Fat Cat Records</i>
4 SONIC YOUTH <i>Murray Street DGC-Interscope</i>	29 GLASSJAW <i>Worship And Tribute Warner Bros.</i>	54 LOW <i>Trust: Kranky</i>
5 INTERPOL <i>Turn On The Bright Lights Matador</i>	30 GORDON GAND <i>Hitting The Ground Instinct</i>	55 SOLOMON BURKE <i>Don't Give Up On Me Fat Possum</i>
6 QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE <i>Songs For The Deaf Interscope</i>	31 NERF HERDER <i>American Cheese Honest Dons</i>	56 SLUM VILLAGE <i>Trinity (Past, Present And Future) Barak-Capitol</i>
7 BETH ORTON <i>Daybreaker Astralwerks-Heavenly</i>	32 KIND OF LIKE SPITTING <i>Bridges Worth Burning Barsuk</i>	57 GOLDENBOY <i>Blue Swan Orchestra B-Girl</i>
8 I AM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER <i>The Tight Connection Kindercore</i>	33 KOOP <i>Waltz For Koop Quango-Palm Pictures</i>	58 WEEZER <i>Matador: Geffen</i>
9 SPARTA <i>Wiretap Scars DreamWorks</i>	34 ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT <i>Hot Charity/Cut And Play Swami</i>	59 FAIRWEATHER <i>Alaska Equal Vision</i>
10 BRIGHT EYES <i>Lead On The Storm In The Soil, Keep Your Eye To The Ground Saddle Creek</i>	35 THE MERCURY PROGRAM <i>A Data Learn The Language Tiger Style</i>	60 SUPERDRAG <i>Last Call For Vitrol Arena Rock</i>
11 COLDPLAY <i>A Rush Of Blood To The Head Capitol</i>	36 DAG NASTY <i>Minority Of One Revelation</i>	61 LES SANS CULOTTES <i>Faux Realism Aer-O-Naut</i>
12 THE VINES <i>Highly Evolved Capitol</i>	37 MARIANNE FAITHFULL <i>Kissin Time Virgin</i>	62 MASERATI <i>The Language Of Cakes Kindercore</i>
13 RHETT MILLER <i>The Instigator Elektra</i>	38 FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON <i>Isness Hypnotic</i>	63 VICTORY AT SEA <i>The Good Night Kimchee</i>
14 MORCHEEBA <i>Charango Reprise</i>	39 BECK <i>Sea Change Sampler DGC-Interscope</i>	64 TSUNAMI BOMB <i>The Ultimate Escape Kung Fu</i>
15 PULP <i>We Love Life Rough Trade-Sanctuary</i>	40 CINERAMA <i>Turino Manifesto</i>	65 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN <i>The Rising Columbia</i>
16 FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS <i>Black Letter Days spinART</i>	41 YEAH YEAH YEAHS <i>Yeah Yeah Yeahs Touch And Go</i>	66 TURN-ONS <i>Low Burned Us Bop Tart</i>
17 FUTURE BIBLE HEROES <i>Eternal Youth Instinct</i>	42 MEKONS <i>Oooh! Quarterstick</i>	67 VEX RED <i>Start With A Strong And Persistent Desire Virgin</i>
18 THE REINDEER SECTION <i>Son Of Evil Reindeer PIAS America</i>	43 JAZZANOVA <i>In Between JCR-Ropeadope</i>	68 THE WALKMEN/CALLA <i>Split CD Troubleman</i>
19 RJD2 <i>Dead Ringer Def Jux</i>	44 GUIDED BY VOICES <i>Universal Truths And Cycles Matador</i>	69 STANDARD <i>August Touch And Go</i>
20 PIXIES <i>Pixies spinART</i>	45 MCLUSKY <i>Mclusky Do Dallas Beggars Group-Too Pure</i>	70 BOWLING FOR SOUP <i>Drunk Enough To Dance Silvertone</i>
21 HOT SNAKES <i>Suicide Invoice Swami</i>	46 REEL BIG FISH <i>Cheer Up Jive-Mojo</i>	71 MECCA NORMAL <i>The Family Swan Kill Rock Stars</i>
22 AIMEE MANN <i>Lost In Space Superego</i>	47 CLINIC <i>Walking With Thee Domino</i>	72 COUNTERFIT <i>Super Animate Machine For The Love Of The Negative Progression</i>
23 FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS <i>Devil's Workshop spinART</i>	48 SOUNDTRACK <i>24 Hour Party People FFRR</i>	73 HAVEN <i>Between The Senses Virgin</i>
24 NEKO CASE <i>Blacklisted Bloodshot</i>	49 OASIS <i>Heathen Chemistry Epic Sony Music</i>	74 THE TELESCOPES <i>Third Wave Double Agent</i>
25 MUDHONEY <i>Since We've Become Translucent Sub Pop</i>	50 DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS <i>Southern Rock Opera Lost Highway</i>	75 RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS <i>By The Way Warner Bros.</i>

5 YEARS AGO

TEENAGE FANCLUB *Songs From Northern Britain* (Creation-Columbia)
RADIOHEAD *OK Computer* (Capitol)
LUNA *Pup Tent* (Elektra)
NEGATIVLAND *Dispepsi* (Seeland)
GERALDINE FIBBERS *Butch* (Virgin)

10 YEARS AGO

SONIC YOUTH *Dirty* (DGC)
SUGAR *Copper Blue* (Rykodisc)
MINISTRY *Psalm 69: The Way To Succeed And The Way To Suck Eggs* (Sire-WB)
HELMET *Meantime* (Interscope-Atlantic)
SOUNDTRACK *Singles* (Epic Soundtrax)

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1	MESHUGGAH Nothing Nuclear Blast
2	IN FLAMES Reroute To Remain Nuclear Blast
3	CATTLE DECAPITATION To Serve Man Metal Blade
4	STONE SOUR Stone Sour Roadrunner
5	GLASSJAW Worship And Tribute Warner Bros.
6	SHADOWS FALL The Art Of Balance 2-Song Sampler Century Media
7	CEPHALIC CARNAGE Lucid Interval Relapse
8	DARK TRANQUILLITY Damage Done Century Media
9	MURDERDOLLS Beyond The Valley Of... Roadrunner
10	BLINDSIDE Silence 3 Points-Elektra

JAZZ TOP 10

1	BRAD MEHLDAU Largo Warner Bros.
2	ANDREW HILL A Beautiful Day Palmetto
3	LARRY GOLDINGS TRIO Sweet Science Palmetto
4	KARRIN ALLYSON In Blue Concord
5	KARL DENSON'S TINY UNIVERSE The Bridge Relaxed
6	GREG OSBY Inner Circle Blue Note
7	BRANFORD MARSALIS Footsteps Of Our Fathers Marsalis Music
8	DJ SPOOKY Blue Series: Optometry Thirsty Ear
9	WILLIAM PARKER QUARTET Raining... Thirsty Ear
10	JEFF "TAIN" WATTS Bar Talk Columbia-Sony



#1 **LOUD ROCK**
MESHUGGAH
NOTHING NUCLEAR BLAST



#1 **JAZZ**
BRAD MEHLDAU
LARGO WARNER BROS.



#1 **RETAIL**
COLDPLAY
A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD CAPITOL

RPM TOP 10

1	SASHA Airdrawndagger Kinetic
2	VARIOUS ARTISTS Fluid Ounce: Unmeasured Ubiquity
3	LAYD AND BUSHWACKA! Night Works XL-Beggars Group
4	KOOP Waltz For Koop Quango-Palm Pictures
5	X-PRESS 2 Muzikizum Columbia
6	JAZZANOVA In Between JCR-Ropeadope
7	FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON Isness Hypnotic
8	ORBITAL Work 89-02 frrr-WSM
9	SATOSHI TOMIIE Nu Breed 6 Global Underground
10	SWAYZAK Dirty Dancing !K7

RETAIL TOP 10

1	COLDPLAY A Rush Of Blood To The Head Capitol
2	THE DIXIE CHICKS Home Open Wide-Sony
3	QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE Songs For The Deaf Interscope
4	EMINEM The Eminem Show Shady-Aftermath-Interscope
5	AIMEE MANN Lost In Space Superego
6	NORAH JONES Come Away With Me Blue Note
7	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN The Rising Columbia
8	NELLY Nellyville Universal
9	EVE Eve-Olution Interscope
10	JAMES TAYLOR October Road Columbia

JUST OUT

OCTOBER 1

ANTIPOP CONSORTIUM Ghostlains *Warp*
ANVIL BITCH Rise To Offend *New Renaissance*
CASSIUS Au Reve *Astralwerks*
MILES DAVIS Complete Miles Davis At Montreux 1973-1991 *Columbia-Legacy Jazz*
EE For 100 We Try Harder *Asian Man*
FLAMING STARS Sunset And Void *Alternative Tentacles*
FLOETRY Floetic *DreamWorks*
GLOBAL THREAT What The Fuck Will Change? *Punkcore*
I AM SPOONBENDER Shown Actual Size *Gold Standard Lab*
JAZZ JUNE Better Off Without Air *Initial*
KARATE Some Boots *Southern*
RILO KILEY The Execution Of All Things *Saddle Creek*
LESS THAN JAKE Pezcore *Fueled By Ramen*
MIGUEL MIGS Colorful You *Astralwerks*
JIM NABORS Christmas *Columbia-Legacy*
BILL RICCHINI Ordinary Time *Megalforce-Transdreamer*
HEROINE SHEIKS Siamese Pipe *Rubric*
SMALL BROWN BIKE/CASKET LOTTERY Split *Second Nature*
SQUAREPUSHER Do You Know Squarepusher *Warp*
THIEVERY CORPORATION The Richest Man In Babylon *ESL*
JENNY TOOMEY Tempting *Misra*
UNSEEN Complete Singles Collection 1994-2000 *Punkcore*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Black Flag Tribute-Black On Black *Initial*
VARIOUS ARTISTS History Of Garage And Frat Bands In Memphis, Vol. 2 *Shangri-La*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Six Weeks Omnibus Vol. 2 *Six Weeks*
VOIDS Kill A Generation *A-F*
WAXWING Nobody Can Take What Everybody Owns *Second Nature*
WE ACEDIASIS Pre Acediasts *Troubleman Unlimited*
WEATHER REPORT Live And Unreleased *Columbia Legacy Jazz*

OCTOBER 8

THE AGENDA Start The Panic *Kindercore*
BJÖRK Björk's Greatest Hits *Elektra*
BJÖRK Family Tree *Elektra*
BON VOYAGE The Right Amount *Tooth And Nail*
BOY GEORGE A Night In With Boy George *Moonshine*
SOLOMON BURKE Soul Alive! *Rounder*
CEX Tall, Dark And Handcuffed *Tigerbeat6-Revolver*
COVENANT Northern Lights *Metropolis*
DE/VISION Remixed *Metropolis*
DESTROYER This Night *Merge*
DISCO D. FEAT. PRINCESS SUPERSTAR F@%k Me On The Dancefloor EP *IK7*
DJ JAZZY JEFF Rock Wit U EP *IK7*
FIELDS OF NEPHILIM Fallen *Metropolis*
HAUJOBB Vertical Theory *Metropolis*
GREGORY ISAACS I Found Love *Rounder*
KID 606 VS. DALEK Ruin It *Tigerbeat6-Revolver*
LOUDERMILK The Red Record *DreamWorks*
LEMON JELLY Lost Horizons *XL-Beggars Group*
SINEAD O'CONNOR Sean-Nos Nua *Vanguard*
OPEN ROAD Cold Wind *Rounder*
PIG Genuine American Monster *Metropolis*
PLUS ONE New School Presents: Plus One *DMC*
URSULA RUCKER Seven EP *IK7*
SLOW GHERKIN Run Screaming *Asian Man*
ST 37 Down On Us *Emperor Jones*
STARFLYER 59 Can't Stop Eating EP *Tooth And Nail*
RUBIN STEINER Wunderbar 3 *BMG-Bluebird*
TAHITI 80 Wallpaper For The Soul *Minty Fresh*
TERRANOVA Hitchhiking Non-Stop With No Particular Destination *IK7*
TWO THIRTY EIGHT You Should Be Living *Tooth And Nail*

UBERZONE The Digital Mix *Moonshine*

OCTOBER 15

A HAWK AND A HAWKSAW A Hawk And A Hawksaw *Cloud*
AM/FM Sky Is The New Ground *Polyvinyl*
ANTISEEN Southern Hostility *TKO*
ARTICLES OF FAITH Complete Vol. 1 1981-1984 *Alternative Tentacles*
ARTICLES OF FAITH Complete Vol. 2 1983-1985 *Alternative Tentacles*
MC PAUL BARMAN Paulelujah! *Coup D'Etat*
JELLO BIAFRA Machine Gun In The Clown's Hand *Alternative Tentacles*
BRIAN BRONBERG Jaco *A440 Musicgroup*
CANYON Empty Rooms *Gern Blandsten*
ALEXANDER COCKBURN Beating The Devil-Incendiary Rants Of... *Alternative Tentacles*
DISCONTENT Discontent *Disaster*
ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN Listen Up, Baby *TKO*
FEEDERZ Vandalism: Beautiful As A Rock In A Cop's Face *Broken Rekids*
FLAMING LIPS The Day They Shot A Hole In The Jesus Egg *Restless-Rykodisc*
DANA GLOVER Testimony *DreamWorks*
GOOD CLEAN FUN Positively Positive 1998-2002 *Equal Vision*
HEROS SEVERUM Wonderful Educated Bear *Two Sheds*
IMPOSSIBLE SHAPES Bless The Headless *Luna-Recordhead*
JETS TO BRAZIL Perfecting Loneliness *Jade Tree*
MATT POND PA Nature Of Maps *Polyvinyl*
MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT Rodeo Beat Tandem *Specter Alive!*
MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES/MADCAP Split *Chunksaah*
RAFFI Raffi's Christmas Album *Rounder*
ROTTERS Wrench To The Nuts *Dionysus*
JOHN SERRIE Flightpath *New World Music*
JOHN SERRIE Spirit Keepers *New World Music*
JOHN SERRIE Century Seasons *New World Music*
SOUTH FILTHY South Filthy *Sympathy For The Record Industry*
STUCK UPS Human Doll Express *Sympathy For The Record Industry*
SUBINCISION Berkeley's Newest Hitmakers *Substandard-New Red Archives*
SUBINCISION Subincision *Substandard-New Red Archives*
SUPERCHARGER Singles Party *Rip Off*
SWAYZAK I Dance Alone EP *IK7*
THEORETICAL GIRLS Theoretical Record *Acute*
TINO Tino's Breaks, Vol. 6: Halloween Breaks *Tino Corp.*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Fuzz, Flaykes, And Shakes Volume 6 *Bacchus Archives*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Fuzz, Flaykes, And Shakes Volume 7 *Bacchus Archives*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Harlem Song: Original Cast Recording *Columbia-Legacy*

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STEVE ALMAAS AND ALI SMITH Steve Almaas And Ali Smith *Parasol*
RICHARD ASHCROFT Human Conditions *Virgo*
ASSEMBLAGE 23 Defiance *Metropolis*
JESSICA BAILIFF Jessica Bailiff *Kranky*
BLACKSTREET Level II *DreamWorks*
LEONARD COHEN Essential Leonard Cohen *Columbia-Legacy*
CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS Model 91 *Kranky*
DEMON HUNTER Demon Hunter *Solid State*
FUNKER VOGT Survivor *Metropolis*
ALAN LOMAX COLLECTION Land Where The Blues Began *Rounder*
GRAIG MARKEL The Gospel Project *Pattern 25*

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INXS

STORY: CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN • ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA

My chubby eight-year-old frame sat on the cold floor of the Kash n' Karry as I waited for Mom to finish her grocery shopping. With the clinical fluorescent lights of the magazine rack humming and the dulcet tones of Johnny Hates Jazz quietly bleating through the store PA, I thumbed through some teenybopper rag until I found the puff-piece on Aussie-rock sextet INXS I was searching for. Without enough time to read it, I asked Mom to purchase it for me.

After it was plopped onto the conveyor belt in the checkout line, the discomfort was almost immediate. On the cover of the periodical was lead singer Michael Hutchence—all mussy hair and come-hither stare—glaring back at my mother, the hapless cashier and myself... with his damn nipple hanging out. Although I had absolutely no concept of what sex was, I knew that this dude was practically oozing it out of every pore. He sported a gold charm in the "Need You Tonight" video that had said it fairly straightforwardly: "SEX." And here he was, all dolled up for some tweenie mag, one of his bare nipples exposed to the world thanks to a carelessly open jacket. Mom and the cashier quickly exchanged glances. Please God, I thought, just let this blow over.

Unfortunately, Mom couldn't resist. She looked at the cashier, looked at the glossy magazine, rubbed the denuded areola with her finger and snickered! Aw geez, Mom, I like these guys for their glossy videos and their impenetrable grooves and their Jim Morrison-in-the-synth-era attitude! Shucks Ma, they mix Depeche freshness, Jagger swagger and Roxy Music chug—obscuring the lines between college-rock cool and sugary pop pap! These guys are the inevitable cultural apex! I don't want to gawk at pictures of some dude's Australian tit!

Here I was, barely past the "cooties vaccination" stage, and my dear mother was questioning my sexuality. I didn't even have a single pube to my name, and I was being emasculated in front of some shopping-center register jockey.

Whatever. INXS was everything rock meant to me in 1988. Their lyrics were brooding and quasi-political (imagine how deep "Guns In The Sky" sounded to a third-grader), their videos were shiny and imaginative ("Need You Tonight" was computer-generated film noir or some shit) and they talked about the Dark Lord

(every single one of us, the devil inside).

My best buddy Brian and I would meet on the weekend, snatch a handful of index cards and painstakingly transcribe the lyrics to "Mediate" on them one at a time. We'd blast the song on my tinny Magnavox and reenact the video's back-alley card-tossing scenario over and over again. Right down to the behind-the-back flip for "We aaaaaalllll ro-tate." We kept a question mark on the card that was supposed to read "sex ornate" because these were the days before we knew what that meant. And also well before we knew the whole thing was shamelessly bit from Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues." Too bad Dad never explained that one to us, 'cause we thought they were friggin' visionaries!

Almost a decade later, Michael Hutchence was found dead in a posh Sydney hotel room in 1997. Despite rumors of autoerotic asphyxiation, the Aussie authorities insist it was a suicide. If it were a suicide I wouldn't really blame the guy. My personal "Things To Do Before I Die" list has only one thing on it, and it reads as follows: "Fuck Kylie Minogue Repeatedly."

It was my last year of high school when Hutchence passed away and I was working at a dingy record store in the dingy retirement community that I grew up in. His death was symbolic: I figured that if Hutchence died, then so there did my childhood.

I strolled into work that weekend wearing all black (well, I always did anyway). For a makeshift memorial service, I yanked all the INXS records from the used bin—*The Swing*, *Listen Like Thieves*, *Kick*, *X*, *Live Baby Live* and *Welcome To Wherever You Are* (*Full Moon*, *Dirty Hearts* mercifully stayed on the rack)—and played them all day long. Over and over again, much to the dismay of a humid Saturday afternoon's worth of customers entering the store to escape the Florida heat. The boss's wife Carla walked in and heard me blasting the infectious, effects-laden "What You Need." She heard the tune, looked at my mopey face and snickered at me. Just like Mom did all those years ago. Mike's words never sounded truer, "Sometimes you kick, sometimes you get kicked."

New York-based writer/musician Christopher R. Weingarten still doesn't exactly know what "sex ornate" means. Whatever it is, he hopes to share it with Kylie Minogue.



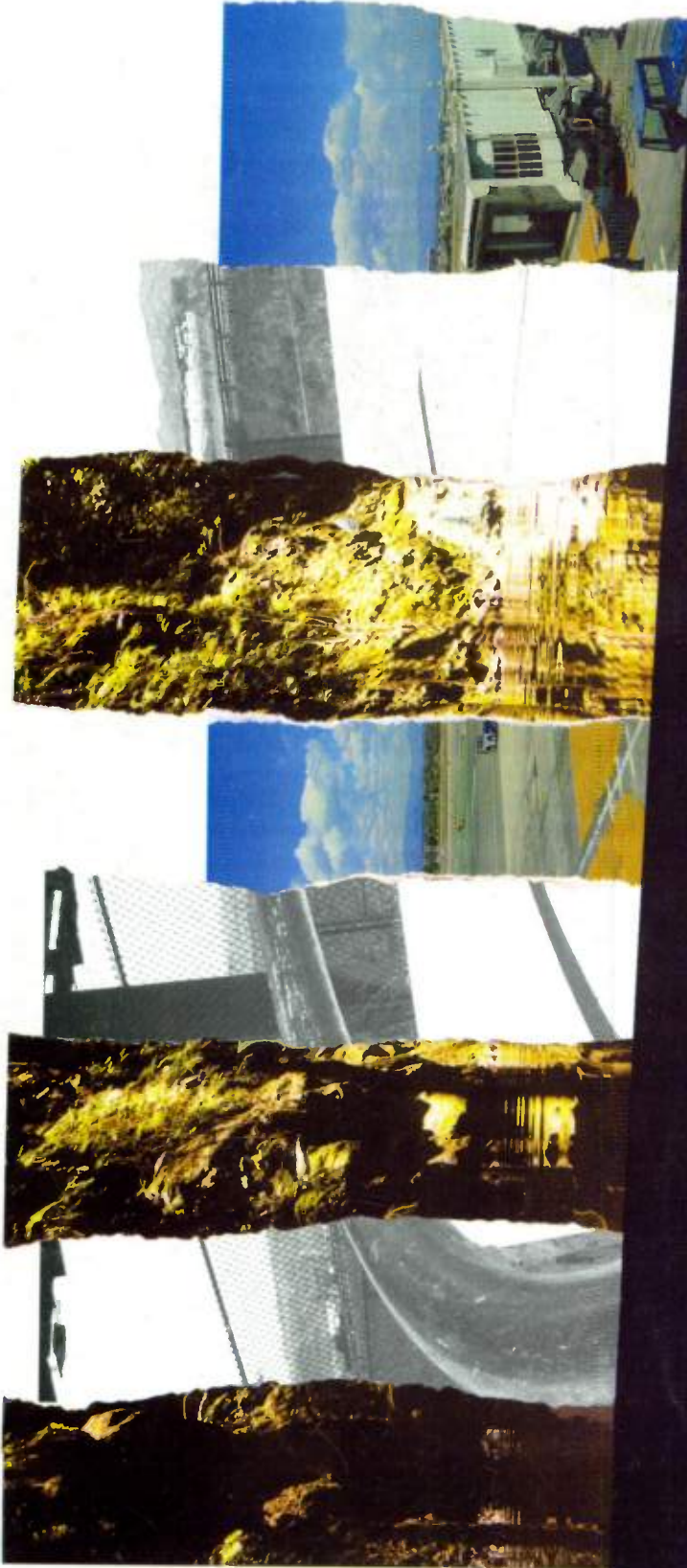
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