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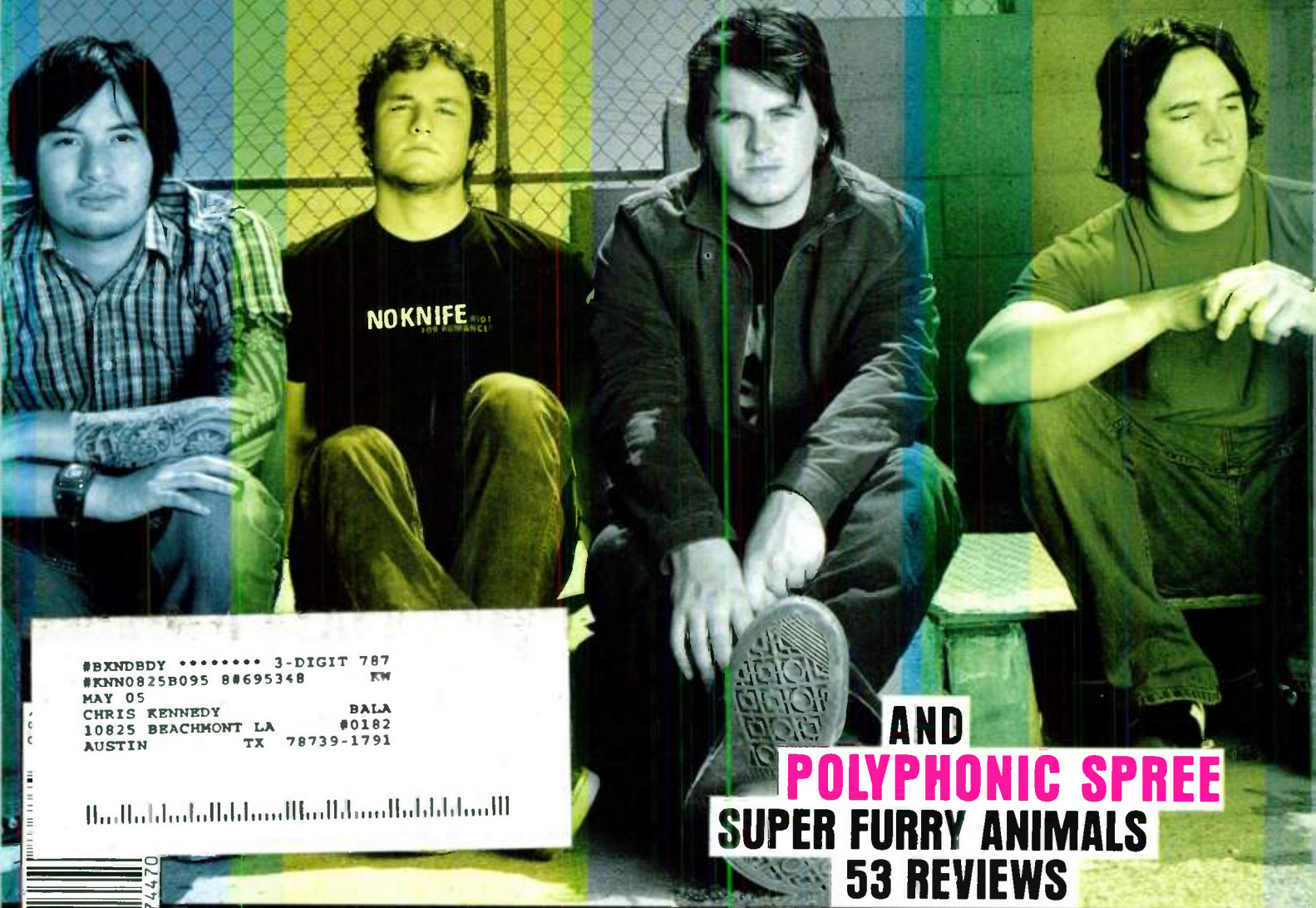
# NEW MUSIC **CD**

MONTHLY

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## **punk** IS THE NEW NORMAL **THRICE**

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**AND**  
**POLYPHONIC SPREE**  
**SUPER FURRY ANIMALS**  
**53 REVIEWS**



**CLEM SNIDE. THE SEA AND CAKE. JUNIOR SENIOR. TRICKY IS, YOU KNOW, KIND OF WEIRD.**



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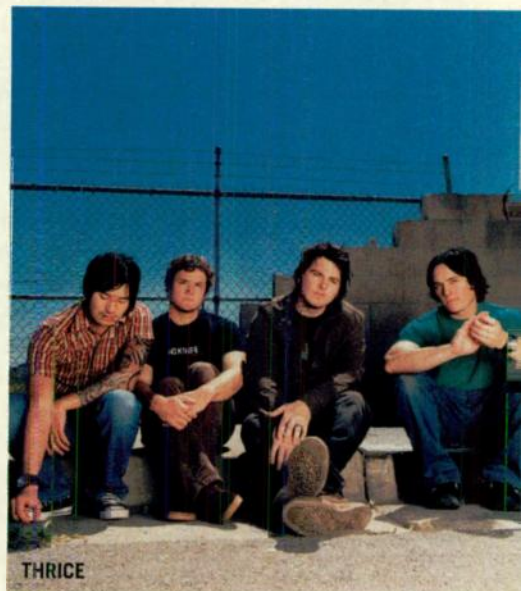
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It all starts write here.™

# NEW MUSIC<sup>®</sup> MONTHLY



THE POLYPHONIC SPREE



THRICE

## THRICE 30 ON THE VERGE 18

The members of Thrice do not have drug problems. They only drink "occasionally" and they do not throw television sets out of windows. Two of them are already married at the age of 22, and they say things like, "You know the boring bass player that nobody really pays attention to? That's like *all of us*." So why are they on the cover of this magazine? Because "emo," "screamo" and "melodic hardcore" are being churned out and sold like Ikea furniture—minimal assembly required—and we found the one you should give a shit about. Christopher R. Weingarten spends a weekend with an entire genre's only hope.

Because you've got to stop living in the early '90s *sometime*: Skating Club, the Jealous Sound, Junior Senior, Broken Social Scene.

## ON THE CD 35

Thrice, Jane's Addiction, Steve Burns, Medicine, Ten Benson, Sense Field, Motion City Soundtrack, Wilshire, Minibar, Feathermerchants, Bitch And Animal, Firewater, MAN, North Of America, the Fever, the Jealous Sound, Film School, Club 8.

## QUICK FIX 10

Tricky shows us his lucky number; Super Furry Animals have you surrounded, Kelli Ali emerges from under the thumb of her Sneaker Pimp, Sense Field thinks you should wreck that shit, Lost Horizon explores the mysteries of the Ethereal Magnanimus, Chimaira's Mark Hunter has more toys than your little brother, and the Locust loooooove Yes.

## THE SEA & CAKE 22

The Sea And Cake is: Four renaissance men (painters, producers, comic book artists and solo artists) coming together in the name of avant-pop. (When their schedules open up, anyway.) Kara Zuaro hacks into their PDAs.

## LOCALZINE 40

Elliott bats you around Louisville, Kentucky.

## CLEM SNIDE 24

Eef Barzelay's become a father, been called the "Jewish David Byrne," and replaced the Foo Fighters on TV, only to have them replace him right back. Somehow, he still has enough time to work Corey Feldman and Bob Crane into his lyrics. Arye Dworken brings him back to the future.

## GEEK LOVE 66

How does Alex Green love Journey? Let him count the "na"s. (Hint: 543.)

## THE POLYPHONIC SPREE 26

Twenty-four immaculate white robes blazed a path across America last year. Now, after the Polyphonic Spree's lauded sets at damn near every festival that matters, leader Tim DeLaughter has taken up with a major label to bring his revival show to a much larger tent. Tim recounts Polyphonic's Old Testament, Doug Levy gets started on the New one.

## REVIEWS, CHARTS, SERVICES

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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY (ISSN 1074-6978) is published monthly (except bi-monthly in January/February) by The CMJ Network with offices at 151 W. 25th St., 12th Fl., New York, NY 10001. U.S. Subscription rates are \$39.95 per year. Subscriptions outside the U.S. are \$59.95 per year. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to CMJ New Music Monthly, Membership Office, P.O. Box 1018 NY NY 10114-0038. CMJ New Music Monthly is copyright 2003 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. Howlin' Perry has gone missing? Get Vegetative Carlebed on the phone... This has Dr. Mike Demarcation written all over it.

THRICE (COVER AND CONTENTS): DAN MONICK; THE POLYPHONIC SPREE: BRIAN FEWELL

## Drug against war

**Dear Editor,** Though it's most noticeable at airports, many people don't see how much our daily lives are affected by the fear of terrorist attacks and acts of senseless violence. Standing in long lines to go through the federally operated airport security checks can now take more than an hour by itself, causing much more anxiety and stress than is necessary when trying to catch a flight for work, vacation or to visit family.

The majority of this fear is created by sensationalizing military conflicts and supposed threats of chemical or biological warfare tactics. It's nearly impossible today to watch a news program without seeing death and violence or what color-coded terrorist threat we're in. It's gone to the point of entire cities running training operations in case of emergency and forcing our military personnel to be injected with a vaccine that itself can cause death.

To look further into this situation, one can find that the increase in societal anxiety leads to huge numbers of our population turning to both legal and illegal drugs to curb the mental anguish, both of which can easily lead to addiction. As just one example, a person only needs to look at the rise in prescription drug use since the horrific September 11, 2001 attack. What is ironic is that chemicals are often used to treat the fear, depression or apathy, which bring more side effects and can lead to more chemicals to "treat" those too.

If one were to look at the scene with an exterior viewpoint, the problem seems to feed itself to a point where the lives of American citizens continue to be degraded. Truthfully, this does not have to happen, as there are healthy solutions available.

For example, the Narconon® Drug Rehabilitation and Education Program achieves outstanding results, not just for a person to become sober, but to be fully rid of addiction and go on to lead a happy and productive life. This drug-free social education model developed by American author and humanitarian L. Ron Hubbard continually restores life on a daily basis in 35 countries around the world and is spreading rapidly to help more.

Luke Catton  
President, Narconon Arrowhead

## Drug down

**Dear Editor,** First of all, thank you for printing letters from crazy people—as in the Letters section of issue 113—that stuff is surreal. Sense of humor, along with kickass articles, is part of what makes you so great. Which is the reason why I keep subscribing, despite you having the worst track record with subscription delivery of all magazines that aren't published by the means of a copy machine.

Seriously, what is up with mailing every other issue and disappearing for months in a row? I realize that as the Editor-in-Chief, you may not have much to do with the business end of the deal, such as subscription delivery, but I was just wondering—maybe if the same people who hire the great writers you've got there would also look into staffing your subscription department, then this would not be such a big problem. You do want to keep your readers, right? Then why do you let those incompetent morons who work the distribution part turn them away? I have friends who've cancelled their subscriptions to *CMJ New Music Monthly*, despite you being their favorite magazine, simply because they got tired of never knowing when they were going to get the next issue, if ever, and ending up having to buy it at Hastings half of the time.

By the way, why do retail stores get the issues your subscribers don't get? It's not like the dog ate the master copy and nothing got printed at all—the stores have it, so it obviously exists. And what is up with your subscription department's phone having no means to leave a message? Could you all at least pretend to care about the people who support you?

Do you guys perhaps need some volunteers to put stickers on your magazines and haul them to the post office once a month? Why is it that you can publish one of the best music magazines in the world, but can't find someone to mail it on time? Besides the fact that taking someone's money and not delivering the product is a mail order fraud charge waiting to happen, it is also simply lame.

Other than that, you guys are great.

Marina Yereshenko  
Stillwater, Oklahoma

*We have a new customer service arrangement. Responsiveness, at least, should be markedly improved. —ed*

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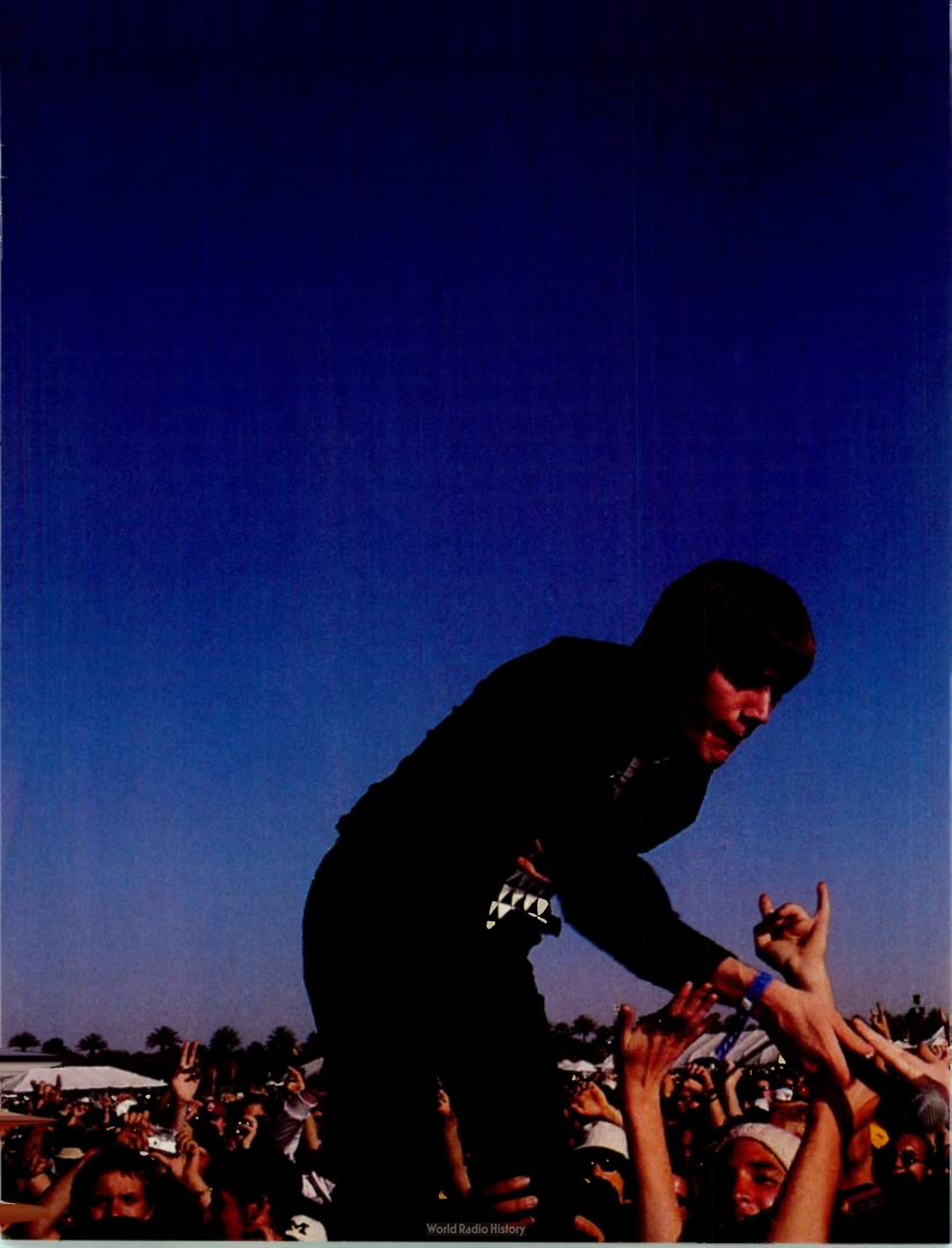
# BLUR

COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS  
FESTIVAL, INDIO, CA 4.26.03

Check out Damon Albarn pumping his fists for the fans in the California desert. In support of the new *Think Tank*, Blur hit the festival circuit, making a stop at Coachella before visiting the East Coast for (cough) Field Day, then heading back overseas for Reading and Leeds.

Graham Coxon: still not in the band.

PHOTO: KRISTOPHER CHRISTENSEN



# THE HIVES

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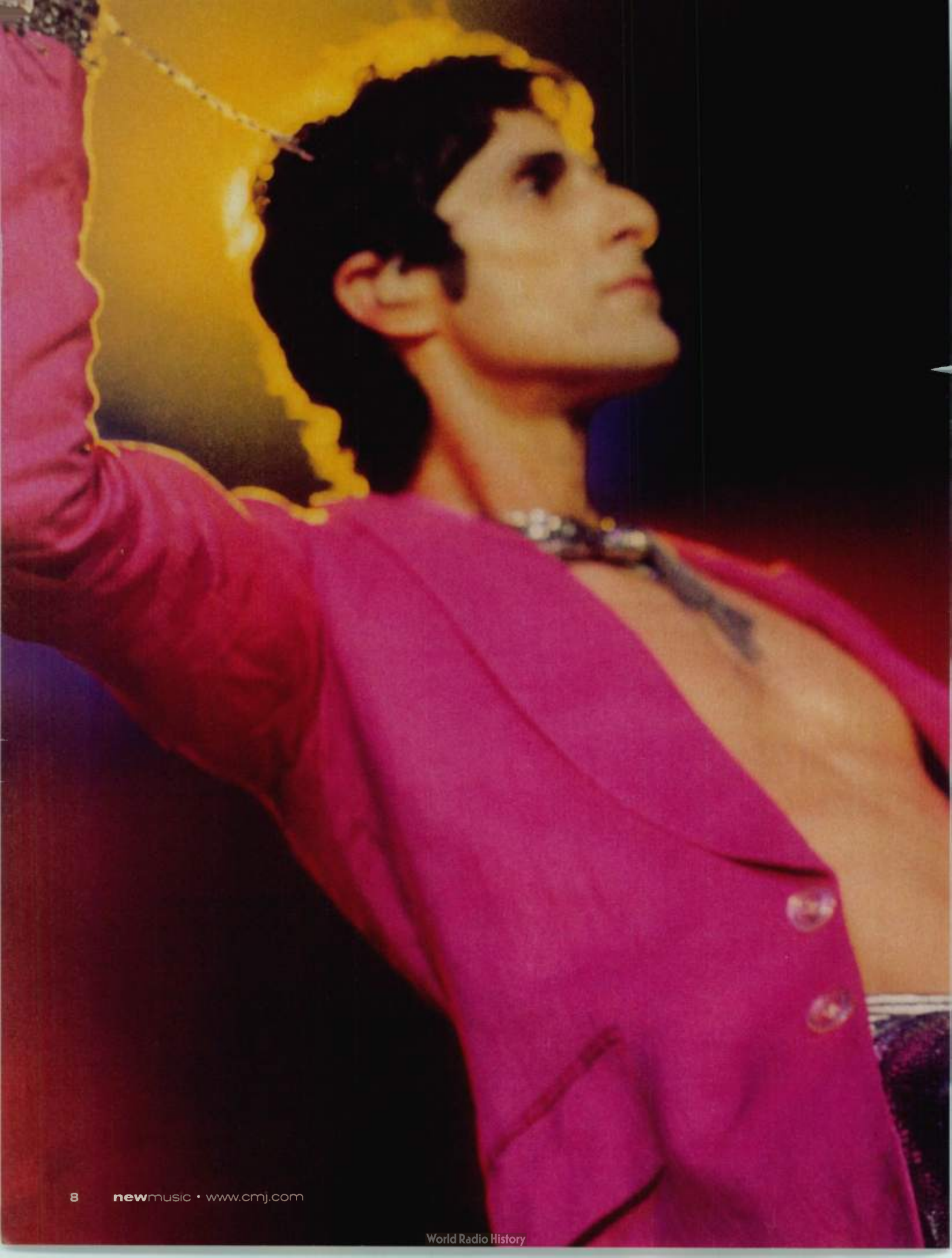
COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS  
FESTIVAL, INDIO, CA 4.26.03

Sure, Howlin' Pelle looks cool wearing all black in the desert, floating seraph-like above the crowd and making a big fish face. But you know Dr. Matt Destruction and Vigilante, the tubby Hives, were sweating like Bobby Brown in all that sun. That accomplished, now the boys will hopefully return to Hives Manor and write a new goddamned record already.

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PHOTO: KRISTOPHER CHRISTENSEN







# JANE'S ADDICTION

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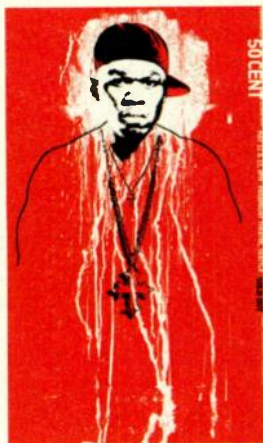
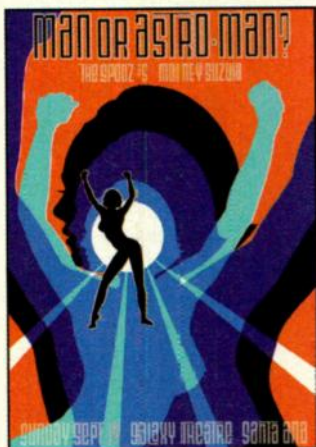
IRVING PLAZA, NYC 6.11.03

Many argue that after their original split, Jane's Addiction lost that unpredictable and brilliant spark. The band's trying to dispel that notion by releasing *Strays* (their first studio album since 1990) and heading up another Lollapalooza tour. We can all agree by looking at this photo from an intimate club date in NYC, though, that Perry *hasn't* lost his Big-Top fashion sense or Jesus-rivaling washboard abs. Which is certainly a relief.

---

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER DIORIO





## Design Of The Times

There really wasn't such a thing as a rock poster expert until Paul Grushkin established himself as one with his stellar 1987 coffee-table book, *The Art Of Rock*. His new book, *The Art Of Modern Rock*, picks up where the first volume left off, focusing on the explosion in high-design posters from the 1980s to present. Co-written with Dennis King and bursting with 1,500 brilliant posters in full color, the nearly 500-page art book will be released October 1. Slightly smaller but equally well stocked with design goodness is Spencer Drate's *Swag: Rock Posters Of The '90s*: More than 250 posters from designers like Aesthetic Apparatus, Kozik and Art Chantry are collected to honor poster artists and musicians of the past decade. >>>CHRIS NIXON

**08.06.1973** **Stevie Wonder** is injured in a car accident in North Carolina, ending up in a coma for four days and losing his sense of smell. (Man, that's a kick in the nuts.) **08.07.1999** Fifty-five people arrested when violence breaks out after a **Dave Fucking Matthews** concert in Hartford, Connecticut. **08.08.1975** **Hank Williams, Jr.** falls 442 feet down the side of a mountain and spends two years in recovery. **08.08.1992** James Hetfield gets blown up at a **Metallica** concert in Montreal. **08.08.2000** The only rock in the house at an **Oasis** concert in Portugal is the one that beans drummer Alan White, causing the band to walk offstage. **08.13.1990** **Curtis Mayfield** is paralyzed when he is hit by a falling lighting rig. **08.13.1995** **Michael Stipe** finds out the true meaning of "Everybody Hurts" when he undergoes surgery for a hernia. **08.17.1995** **Depeche Mode** frontman Dave Gahan attempts suicide by slashing his wrists. **08.25.1995** **Skinny Puppy's** Dwayne Goettel found dead of a heroin overdose. **08.27.1967** **Beatles** manager Brian Epstein found dead of a sleeping-pills overdose.

# FAKEBOOK

Because it's not what you know, it's what people think you know.

## Austin City Limits Festival

Too much rock goodness. A three-day pass for only \$70, and this one will actually happen. Eff you Suffolk county!

## The Flaming Lips

No seriously guys, you're really famous now, you don't have to say yes every time someone asks you to play.

## Elbow, Cast Of Thousands

Hearing thousands of people chanting "Fuck you" has never sounded so sexy.

## Dave Grohl drumming on the new Killing Joke

Dave, we'll give you *twenty dollars* to get back behind the kit full-time. Think about it.

## Metallica fan remixes

[www.chadcrowell.com/metallica](http://www.chadcrowell.com/metallica): Some guy in his bedroom reminds the band who defined thrash what it actually sounds like.

## Radiohead.com fan remixes

Thom Yorke starts his own IDM-geek support group.

## My Morning Jacket, It Still Moves

Like Neil Young, but more attractive and with a nicer attitude.

## www.guimp.com

The world's smallest website. Cute, like those little ketchup bottles they give you in hotels.

## Favoritest Friendster Foibles

"I swear somebody I know has Robert Pollard on their Friendster list! I know it's the same picture from Allmusic, maybe he really likes that one!"

## B.R.M.C., Take Them On Your Own

Jesus And Mary Chain re-imagined as a stomping bar band, which is different than the Raveonettes re-imagining Jesus And Mary Chain as Buddy Holly.

**NEWSFEED:** A Tribe Called Quest in the studio this summer to work on a reunion record • Dismemberment Plan to release their remix

## The newly "vulnerable" **TRICKY** on...

### A rough neck

I'll never have a tattoo on my neck ever again. It's the worst pain I ever felt. It's like giving birth. I was sweatin' like I've never experienced pain like that in my life. I nearly said to him, "Stop. That's alright, I'll just have a line on there. Fuck it."

### Triskaideka-synchronicity

There was 14 tracks on the album. I woke up one day with a 13 in my head. I rung up my manager and said, "Look, there can only be 13 tracks on this album"... I've been trying to contact Polly Harvey. I didn't know we were trying to contact each other. At the airport, two people in the line look like Polly. I shouted "Polly," she looked around, it's not her. So I walk onto the plane, who do I see? Polly Harvey sat there. She goes, "Tricky! Where have you sat?" I look at my ticket, it's 13H... I got a phone call about a week before saying there's this guy in London and labels are interested in him. He comes to my hotel and shows up without even a CD. He takes off his coat and his hat, he's got 13 tattooed in the back of his head.. The other day I'm trying to sign this band. Thirteen people at the table... My manager, there's 13 letters in his full name.

### Tricky Wood

I've been in a "fuck you" mode for a long time. And then I remember things like this guy who was in a coma and his parents played my music to him. There's a burn unit in Philadelphia where they play my music to the kids. And it's like, I still got the punk-rocker attitude, but I think I'm here to be making music for like-minded people. I'm here to touch souls, basically, and you can't do that just being all punk rock. You got to do that by feeling.

*Tricky's latest record, Vulnerable (Brown Punk/ Sanctuary), is sultry enough to touch other things besides your soul. And he has a pretty fucking boss 13 tattooed on the back of his neck.*

*Interview by Christopher R. Weingarten.*

album, *The People's History Of The Dismemberment Plan*, on Sept. 22 • Slayer/Fantomias drummer Dave Lombardo has announced plans to work >>>



# IN MY ROOM

**Who:** Mark Hunter of Chimaira

**Where:** His house in Strongsville, Ohio

**Why:** Chimaira's first two records mined electrometal territory similar to Fear Factory; on *The Impossibility Of Reason* (Roadrunner) they tone down the samples and veer closer to tourmates/idsols Slayer.

## Oh, the horror

I collect DVDs—I have around 400. My favorite genres are horror or really cheesy action stuff, like Schwarzenegger or Stallone films... I'm more into the trendy slasher stuff. My favorites are *The Shining* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, but I love the *Evil Dead* trilogy as well, I have a ton of *Evil Dead* toys and paraphernalia. I'm very anal [with my DVDs]; even if there's a bad movie in the series—like most sequels are—I still have to own them. Like I have *Halloween* through [*Halloween: Resurrection*], I can't not have *III*. I just like to have everything.

## Slaytanic memorabilia

I have a mini shrine to Slayer; I have all their albums on vinyl, from their first one 'til the recent. When we were on tour with them, I had them sign everything, so I hung all the albums all up, in order. [I also have] a day sheet—for the bands, that means the times that you play—and it says "Slayer" and "Chimaira" on it. And, [there's also] drumsticks and guitar picks and everything like that.

## Toy stories

I have an entire room filled with *Star Wars* figures... A lot of the ones I have doubles of I take out of the package and I set them up as if it were the movie scenes. I have a whole Jabba's palace scene [on a shelf]. Han Solo frozen in Carbonite is pinned to the wall, so it looks like he's hanging next to Jabba, with Salacious Crumb sitting at his tail and Princess Leia in the sexy outfit. The whole nine yards.

Interview by Tom Mallon.



## 5 SPOT

FIVE RECORDS THAT MAKE JUSTIN PEARSON OF **THE LOCUST** WANT TO, UM, "BUZZ OFF"

### 1. Sex Pistols, *Never Mind The Bollocks, Here's The Sex Pistols*

When I was about 11, I got a hold of this. Blew my mind. Finally something that could hold my attention and that was as pissed off as I was.

### 2. Public Image Ltd., *Metal Box*

I followed Johnny Rotten's career and figured out that punk came in many different forms. What really got me to check it out was the packaging. The metal can was a great idea and stuck out like a sore thumb.

### 3. Drive Like Jehu, *Drive Like Jehu*

This one obviously influenced me musically. My first real taste of the San Diego sound. Man, this album is worn out from me playing it for the last 14 years.

### 4. Antioch Arrow, *The Lady Is A Cat*

I remember seeing this band play one of their first shows and leaving right after they played to get their first LP. I stood there in front of my record player, couldn't believe my ears. It was so badass. I'm glad that Three One G gets to release their last album. This band was so ahead of its time.

### 5. Yes, *Fragile*

All I have to say is "Heart Of The Sunrise." The sickest shit ever. Whew!

*The Locust's* debilitating 23-songs-in-21-minutes spazz-grind mini-opus *Plague Soundscapes (Anti-)* is about as long as a Yes song.

Interview by Christopher R. Weingarten.

MARK HUNTER; TODD BELL; THE LOCUST; DENNIS HO

live footage • Ex-Limp Bizkit guitarist **Wes Borland** working with ex-NIN/current A Perfect Circle guitarist **Danny Lohner** on the *Underworld* soundtrack \* \* \* \*

# Be 34% cooler!\*

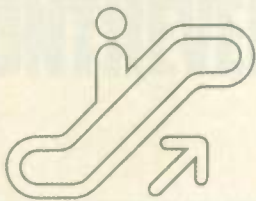
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## JUNIOR SENIOR

**W**ith Scandinavian retro-rock saturating the globe, the new dance/rock funsation known as Junior Senior is recasting Denmark in surprisingly bright Technicolor light. It's a sonic glow, however, that the band never expected anyone to see. "We were too pop for the indie labels and too strange for the major labels," remembers Jesper Mortensen (a.k.a. Junior), the younger, less-imposing half of the Danish duo (hence the moniker). "We didn't really think that anyone wanted to listen to what we were doing." Mortensen and Jeppe Laursen (Senior) would soon be proven wrong, however, as their single, "Move Your Feet," took over the airwaves and dancefloors of nearby Great Britain with alarming speed. "We never thought about it as being a dance hit, but suddenly, in the U.K., it was just all over the place," says Mortensen. "It stayed so long in the charts that it's almost unnatural." The pair originally met up playing Britpop-oriented rock in mid-'90s Danish act Ludo X, but their debut album *D-d-don't Stop The Beat* (Atlantic) serves up a cross-pollination of garage rock, Motown grooves, synth-pop and soul. "We don't care about genres—we just listen to cool music," says Mortensen. "We wanted to have a band where we could blend it all together, and we wanted to introduce that to people, that you can mix everything up. You know, this is your music—you don't have to think it's strange to mix it up. If you like it, then it's good." >>>DOUG LEVY



## BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE

**S**equencing and mastering are among the most important parts of making a record," explains Kevin Drew, speeding via windswept van from his native Toronto to the Lower Forty-eight. "They come at the point when you're fed up with these tunes, and you have to hear them 60 or 70 more times. I knew sequencing was going to be a challenge, but an important one because we made a compilation record." That record, the stunningly diverse yet remarkably cohesive *You Forgot It In People* (Arts & Crafts), took nearly a year to surface Stateside; it's since catapulted Broken Social Scene from best-kept-secret status to major buzz item. The scramble to play the songs on *Feel Good Lost*, the group's largely instrumental debut home-recorded by Drew and Brendan Canning, led to a rapidly expanding Scene: *People* credits 10 full-fledged collaborators. "We tour as a five-piece," Canning clarifies, "but last time we

played in Toronto it was 14, with a horn section." *People* opens with a melodic indie-rock flurry before executing a series of hairpin turns. "I think we fit in with bands like Spoon or Sea And Cake, sensitive to melody but trying to be original in production ideas and developing our own sound," offers Canning. Confusion over BSS's multifaceted sound could be heightened by their inclusion on the soundtrack to cable drama *Queer As Folk*. "My wife loves that show, watching the boys make out," chuckles Drew, who also notes that director Bruce McDonald is a friend of the band. "Although I wrote those lyrics [to "Lovers' Spit"] with her in mind, boys making out to music is never a bad thing." >>>GLEN SARVADY

# TIME AND TIDE

The Sea And Cake make beautiful music together, when they have the time.

STORY: KARA ZUARO • PHOTO: DREW GOREN  
INSTALLATION BY JUSTIN YOCKEL



FROM LEFT:  
ARCHER PREWITT  
SAM PREKOP  
JOHN MCENTIRE  
ERIC CLARIDGE





**S**am Prekop has survived five years without a day job, but should his precarious balance of making music, paintings and rent payments fail, his expression of love for his new iPod hints at a fall-back career in tech sales. "It can play all your tunes back in random order—which is completely and totally entertaining," he raves. "You wouldn't think that would be so fascinating, but somehow it just sort of re-invigorates your entire collection. I put a lot of Billie Holiday stuff on it, which I've always loved, but in context with some reggae tunes it sounded *really* good."

It's fitting that the frontman of Chicago's jazzy avant-pop supergroup, the Sea And Cake, would use his iPod as a pocket-sized palimpsest, where old jazz vocalists bleed through Caribbean beats and the new sounds of the Midwestern underground take on new life beside them. This is a band whose influences are as mixed as their credentials: Tortoise-member John McEntire handles production and percussion; Archer Prewitt, co-founder of eclectic lounge-revivalists the Cocktails, adds stylized guitars and synthesizers; vocalist/guitarist Prekop and bassist Eric Claridge were both members of post-rock pioneers Shrimp Boat. Together, they keep the band hovering between pretty pop and sumptuous experimentation.

"Everyone has their own expertise," Prekop explains, sliding back into the serious and straightforward tone he uses when speaking of his band. "You can rely on Archer for the sort of anglophile folkie reissue types of things. John is much more unpredictable. Usually the stuff that he'll tell me about, I've never heard of before. It's a lot of obscure avant-garde composers." With Prekop's own injection of old jazz, reggae and soul, their mellow fusion floats like a composer's daydream. Elegant melodies are caught in complex time signatures. Prekop's breezy singing, light and dizzying as Alpine air, filters through like an upper-register instrument, never overwhelming the band.

Though the design of the music seems scrupulously tidy and deliberate—more like an architect's blueprint than the loose-limbed jazz and reggae that Prekop enjoys—the three-year gap between their previous disc *Oui* and follow-up *One Bedroom* was not a time of extensive tweaking and tuning. After the *Oui* tour, the band turned to their individual artistic pursuits. Claridge's paintings were featured in Chicago gallery shows and the *Chicago Reader*. McEntire spent some time with Tortoise, built Soma Studios and engineered Stereolab's *Sound-Dust* along with several other records. Prewitt, creator of the *Sof*

Boy comics, focused on his work for Fantagraphics, recorded a second and solo record and went on a solo tour. Prekop also released a soulful solo record of his own, toured and had his paintings showcased at galleries in Chicago and New York.

With so many pursuits outside of the band, the Sea And Cake's recording sessions need to be scheduled months in advance. Because each disc takes so much time and planning, *Glass* (Thrill Jockey), an EP of remixes from the *One Bedroom* sessions, seemed like a relatively easy way to cut time in between releases. Finding appropriate artists to remix the tracks was a complicated process in itself, though, and the band was forced to come up with four new originals alongside the tracks from Stereolab, Broadcast and Carl Craig.

"The one wild card in our opinion was Carl Craig," Prekop says. The Detroit DJ drops the choppy groove in "Hotel Tell," cranks up the vocal track over a thumping dance beat, and draws the song into a nine-minute techno trip. "I didn't know if it's what I was hoping he would do," Prekop says, "but it's really grown on me and I think it may be my favorite."

The originals on the EP presented a challenge of their own. Prekop says, "We were pretty unprepared with material so it was really done on the fly in the studio." Normally, the process begins long before studio time is scheduled. "While I'm painting, I listen to a lot of records. That's when I do most of my music research," he explains. "I start working sooner than anyone else. As soon as I get enough material together that I think will begin to generate a body of work, that's when we all start working on it as a group. But it's in my mind several months before we even get together as a band." **MM**

# DAYS OF FUTURE PASSED

Clem Snide's Eef Barzelay writes timeless-sounding songs rife with contemporary references. Plus, he's named Eef, so he's got that going for him. STORY: ARYE DWORKEN

**E**ef Barzelay, lead singer of indie-folk-country ensemble Clem Snide, can spend an entire subway ride from Brooklyn into Manhattan explaining how Kurt Cobain is more or less a modern-day version of Jesus Christ. It's an intricate, well-thought-out theory, and maybe you had to be there, but it's pretty convincing: Maybe in 15 years someone will claim they saw Kurt rise from the dead and walk on Puget Sound. Which would then make Barzelay, more or less, a prophet.

Later, in a cutesy sandwich place in trendy Brooklyn, Barzelay sips iced tea and fidgets with whatever he can find on the table. His cropped hair and geeky Buddy Holly glasses make him look like an extra from *Back To The Future*. Which is fitting: While Barzelay and Clem Snide have received saint-like critical praise, they are anything but prophets, because their music, spread out over a span of four albums, never looks forward. It's nostalgic in both sound and topic, vintage pop quite literally always looking to the past, each song soothing like a gentle sway in a hammock on a lazy Sunday afternoon.

Barzelay's lyrics speak of the complex conditions of human emotion, wrought with sharp humor, wry delivery and self-conscious honesty. But jarringly,

the words also possess uncharacteristic pop-culture references—references that seem out of place in songs that feel otherwise timeless.

"People always ask me about how I mention such timely things in my lyrics, like Corey Feldman and Eddie Van Halen, Bob Crane and Joan Jett, etc.," he says with shy restraint. "And for some strange reason, they get uncomfortable when I do that. Like it's OK for hip-hop artists, rappers, to be all pop-culturally aware but once we start doing it, it's not OK. But this appreciation of pop culture came from my childhood—I was the first kid I knew who had cable TV. I think it was 1979, like the first year it was available and I would sit there and watch everything and anything. I used to come home from college and go straight to the attic with an acoustic guitar and just soak it in."

*Soft Spot* (spinART), Clem Snide's fourth album, is their most gentle and hushed effort; like a gracious houseguest that "wouldn't want to impose," the record's 11 songs play through your stereo speakers but unassumingly tiptoe around the room. "I wrote all these songs on an acoustic guitar, while my son slept in the next room," Barzelay reveals. "So I had to keep it mellow and quiet." Barzelay's new son didn't just inspire the sound but also the lyrics, which are—at the risk of sound-

ing fey—precious. "There's less cynicism and more of a revealing of emotion," he continues. "I think there may be less winking irony on this one."

When one looks at the history of Clem Snide, however, you can find some cause for cynicism. "The whole process of being courted by a major label was quite surreal," Barzelay admits about the band's brief time on Sire Records, with 2000's *Your Favorite Music*. "And what made it even weirder was that Seymour Stein [Sire label legend] was courting us personally. He told me that I reminded him of David Byrne. I was the Jewish David Byrne." Then there was the matter of their song, "Moment In The Sun," being used as the theme for NBC sitcom *Ed*. "They were using the Foo Fighters for awhile and then one season they used our song," he says. "But as all stories involving the Dave Grohl are concerned, they stopped using our song, went back to [the Foes'] 'Next Year' and Grohl wins another day."

Barzelay, though, in contrast to his music, isn't one to dwell on the past. "I don't know what will happen in the future and everything in the music industry is changing... I hope for the better," he offers. "But I don't try to think about that sort of thing. I just focus on the right now and make the music that will keep me a working musician." **NMM**



World Radio History





# SPREE LOVE

A peek under the robes of the Polyphonic Spree, in the afterglow of Coachella and the enlisting of a major label to help spread the gospel.

STORY: DOUG LEVY • PHOTO: BRIAN FEWELL

**“Rock music and fashion is such a weird thing. People actually think they can sum up people by what they’re wearing, and that’s always frustrated me.”**

It’s an unknowingly appropriate comment at the moment, because if one were to try to sum up Polyphonic Spree leader Tim DeLaughter based on his tattered brown T-shirt and surprisingly small red shorts, there’s no way to arrive at his onstage persona. Even if you haven’t heard the Polyphonic Spree, you know two things: There’s 24 of them, and they’re all in robes. Unwinding in his ensemble’s trailer at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, DeLaughter is explaining the logic behind those long white robes and their brightly colored stripes.

“At rock shows, people seem just as interested in what the performers are wearing—in their fashion sense—as what’s coming out of the amplifiers,” he laments. “And I thought, ‘My god, once they went through all of us, they’d be exhausted and they’d miss the show.’ So I decided we needed to unify the group, and I thought the robes would be a beautiful image to fill that role. They’re white because at the beginning, we used to project images strictly on the robes, and the color at the bottom was just to signify that we’re a colorful band. That was it. And it turned out to be that in some cases the robes became more of a distraction than anything else. So I kind of created a little monster there, but I still think they’re beautiful and there’s nothing like it. I love the image of us wearing our white robes.”

Even out of his performance attire and nursing a leg injury aggravated during the Polyphonic Spree’s fittingly sunny mid-day set on the edge of the desert, one word repeatedly surfaces when attempting to get a hold on the strikingly charismatic singer: *beatific*. Despite the fact that DeLaughter is barely able to walk, he remains smiling and serene, with a literal twinkle in his almost unnaturally bright eyes.

As surprising as the success of a two-dozen-strong modern orchestral pop performance troupe is, it’s almost more surprising how it came about: DeLaughter got his start as the vocalist for ‘90s alterna-rock act Tripping Daisy. The band put out four albums over its 12-year career, scoring a couple of moderate hits with “I Got A Girl” and “Piranha,” from its 1995 release, *I Am An Elastic Firecracker*. The album that followed, though, 1998’s *Jesus Hits Like The Atom Bomb*, saw a sonic breakthrough for the group—although it was, and remains, woefully overlooked. The band worked with innovative producer and former Captain Beefheart keyboardist Eric Drew Feldman on the record, which saw DeLaughter struggling to capture a sound that had been incubating in his mind.

“That’s the whole reason I started doubling my vocals,” he explains. “That used to really annoy people who would come to work with us, because they would say, ‘Can I just get your voice by itself?’ and I’d be like, ‘No, I want to hear it doubled! I can

glide the melody that way. I just like to hear it fuller.’ I got that in my head from singing into a fan as a kid. I liked the way it reverberated. It sounded like there was more.”

Then Tripping Daisy guitarist Wes Berggren died of a drug overdose in 1999, and it seemed that not only would the sound DeLaughter had been searching for never be realized, but also that his consistently jubilant voice would echo from the stage no longer.

“That was devastating, losing Wes,” says DeLaughter. “I had never lost anybody that close to me before. It was a really tragic ending. And I lost Tripping Daisy. I couldn’t do it anymore. I didn’t feel it anymore without him; I couldn’t press on without him. At that time, music was the last thing on my mind. It was a real hard time for me. But we had kids—my wife Julie and I had kids, and they pretty much saved us.”

In time, DeLaughter found himself picking up his guitar again. He found himself writing songs. He found his love for life and his faith in music returning. After that, things happened very quickly; he put the Polyphonic Spree together in two weeks—strings, horns, choir and all. And yet, things didn’t go exactly according to plan.

“What the group is right now was not my intention, at all,” admits DeLaughter. “My intention was completely self-absorbed. I was going for a sound that was going to facilitate my interest, that sound that I’ve been wanting to hear my whole life. And I had finally gotten to the point where I had the confidence to be able to go for something like this—and that was it. In the beginning, I wasn’t even going to be in the group. I just wanted to put it together and watch it happen. But it didn’t happen that way, because in order to convey things to these guys and translate what was going on, I had to become a part of the group. So, now I’m a big part.”

As for the origin of that sound, it’s necessary to go back a lot farther than the Tripping Daisy days—to a young boy spending afternoons singing into the whirring blades of a fan.

“When I was a kid, orchestral pop was kind of a natural thing,” says DeLaughter. “I’m 37 years old and that was common back then. You had the Fifth Dimension, the Association, Burt Bacharach, Percy Faith...” He pauses and closes his eyes, before continuing, passionately, “I mean it was orchestral pop, man. They put so much more in it. There was so much more texture to play with. The first record I ever bought, and I always say this, because it’s a testament to where I’m at right now, was ‘Beach Baby’ by the First Class. And I listen to that song now, and it sounds like the Polyphonic Spree. So, everything’s kind of coming full-circle.”

If there was ever anything to be said for the benefits to be reaped from following your heart, the very existence of the Polyphonic Spree says it. Without following any sort of agenda, the group has seen one success follow another. A collection of songs recorded and mixed in three days for demo purposes became so popular that the band ended up releasing it through DeLaughter’s Texas-based record label, Good Records (named after his record store of the same name), as its debut album, *The Beginning Stages Of The Polyphonic Spree*. Rapidly building a devoted following, the Spree began seeing fans from Austin to England leave its shows smiling, enraptured. And today, with a major-label deal in his pocket, DeLaughter is ready to take the group to the next level.

“It’s much broader; it’s sonically hair-raising. It’s the greatest thing I’ve ever been a part of,” he says of the material that will feature on the band’s Hollywood Records debut, due out in



early 2004. Returning to his roots, DeLaughter again drafted in Eric Drew Feldman to sit in the producer's chair, hoping to give the group the big studio treatment it deserves.

Not that any of this has been achieved without difficulty. DeLaughter describes the expense of being on the road with a group of that size as "financially exhausting." The entire collective travels on a specially designed bus that sleeps two-dozen—which doesn't allow for a lot of privacy. Then there's the interpersonal dynamics at play.

"When you're thinking about a sound, you're not thinking about what happens when you pull 24 people into your group, completely different individuals. It's not like a four-piece when you're garnishing people like yourself—these people are all over the map. I didn't think about that," admits DeLaughter. "But it works, because there are subgroups that have formed within this group. People kind of gravitate towards each other. If you're

not getting along with this guy, you've got 22 other people to go talk to. It's just such a weird experience to be a part of something like that. It's completely fascinating."

As for the future, ask the beaming Tim DeLaughter, and he'll tell you that things can only get even better. "It's going to be an interesting ride," he says, "because I think we're basically evolving into an unorthodox musical—kind of a rock opera, so to speak, a modern kind. And I think that whole transition of the people that are involved in this kind of soundscape we're going through together—there's drama all through it, there's emotion all through it, and the sound is amazing. It just so happens it's been encompassed inside a band called the Polyphonic Spree. It's so weird. I love talking about it, and I get so enthused about it, because I'm a part of it. It's so much more than I had ever dreamed about. I think I'm extremely lucky to be right smack in the middle of it." **NMM**




DUSTIN KENSRUE, TEPPEI TERANISHI, ED BRECKENRIDGE, RILEY BRECKENRIDGE



# THRICE IS ON THE COVER

Because *The Artist In The Ambulance* is a better record than the emo kids it will be marketed to are used to hearing. Because they're a good band, even though they, accurately, describe themselves as boring, normal guys. Because that's what punk is now.

STORY: CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN • PHOTO: DAN MONICK

 ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

## Irvine, CA, 1500 hrs

A skinny, increasingly sweaty Asian girl—hair flattened by the weight of her mortarboard—exhaustedly lurches across the University Of California, Irvine campus with her further-exhausted parents in the stifling, but of course dry, Cali heat. Amid the mottled conversations, the bz-zzzt of cameras and the anthill-erratic movement, there is, somewhere in the center, a graduation ceremony commencing. Not that the ceremony is any less chaotic—when Robert W. Newsom, acting dean of the UCI Division Of Undergraduate Education, advises the departing masses to turn their tassels, beach balls punch the stratosphere and airhorns pierce cochlea like a Peter Fucking Frampton concert.

## Irvine, CA, 1330 hrs

Another graduation ceremony takes place. Handel's "Water Music" replaced by riffs redolent of Hot Water Music—and there may or may not have been beach balls present. Homegrown punkers Thrice, on the cusp of their major-label debut, are playing what is easily the most corporate shindig of their career: opening the KROQ Weenie Roast, a Verizon Wireless Amphitheater swelter-fest starring Godsmack and Staind.

"It was just funny," says vocalist Dustin Kensrue, the next day, so crushingly exhausted that he is practically drowning in his green couch. "We had these 'Artist' wristbands, but you couldn't go anywhere with them."

"Actually, I was backstage," says guitarist Teppei Teranishi, suffering similar upholstery undertow, staring at what appears to be absolutely nothing. "I just went because I heard there was free In-N-Out [Burger] back there."

"Really?"

"Yeah, there was free In-N-Out. It was pretty amazing."

## Irvine, CA, 2030 hrs

An ersatz stage is erected outside the Fox Sports Grill in the bloated Irvine Spectrum Center—the titanic IMAX-addled entertainment complex, the one place Thrice is recognized more than anywhere else. Adam Ho, 14 years old, does a squeaky but stunningly adept version of "Hotel California" to a group of motionless adults. Later, Ho busts out "The Middle" by Jimmy Eat World. Punk rock and Irvine are strange bedfellows indeed. Such a lovely place...

**K**ensrue's hushed tone, polar opposite to his tenor wail and throaty screamo flourishes, is additionally hushed by fatigue. Recorded. Four days home. Toured. Week home. Toured. Early morning Weenie Roast. Interview.

"We definitely have never been the cool band to like... at all," Kensrue says sleepily, each pause dragging, a passing plane obliterating most of his words. "People like us because of the music. So, I think all the kids that are with us are..."

"Dorks," Teranishi sluggishly interjects, leg on pillow, continuing an exhausted stare.

"...there for the right reasons."

"If we were ever the cool band to like, we'd definitely..." Teranishi trails off.

The windchimes plaintively groan their lonely five-note ostinato over and over again. A snuffle. The familiar rustle of a leg relieving some mild discomfort brought upon by weight displacement, simply removed by repositioning itself on couch vinyl... Fuck it. It has to be said.

"We've said it before," Teranishi says. "We're probably, as people, one of the most boring bands."

"I can't imagine anyone picking up a magazine to read about us," Kensrue says. "Dude, that's got to be boring."

"There's no personalities in the band," Teranishi adds. "You know the boring bass player that nobody really pays attention to? That's like *all of us*."

Yep, Thrice is boring. Hunt down their press kit on eBay sometime. Finding an illuminating quote or interesting anecdote is like some sort of futile journalistic *Where's Waldo*. Better yet, look through it with Thrice: "Three high-school friends from Southern California plus one guy's older brother who started a band because they were 'just trying to have fun and play a few shows,'" reads drummer Riley Breckenridge, poring over the one paragraph with a modicum of a quote in their 80-word Spin blurblet. "That's exciting! Do

I want to listen to this band?"

Thrice is decked out in kinda-hard-core-kinda-suburban gear: Kensrue's not-too-tight Reversal Of Man T-shirt, Riley's equally comfy Flogging Molly T, Teranishi doodling on his white socks with a silver pen, stubble and jeans abound. Thrice are the type of guys you would hang with, rocking PlayStation 2 and Radiohead records until 7 a.m., but wouldn't tell any of your other friends where you were last night. They don't hook up with girls on tour (their tour manager once joked that theirs was the first tour on which he didn't get laid), they drink "occasionally" and rarely get out of hand, they don't mischievously change the letters around on restaurant signs, they are "definitely the most low-key band" on every tour they've been on. Kensrue and Teranishi, both 22, are already married ferchrissakes!

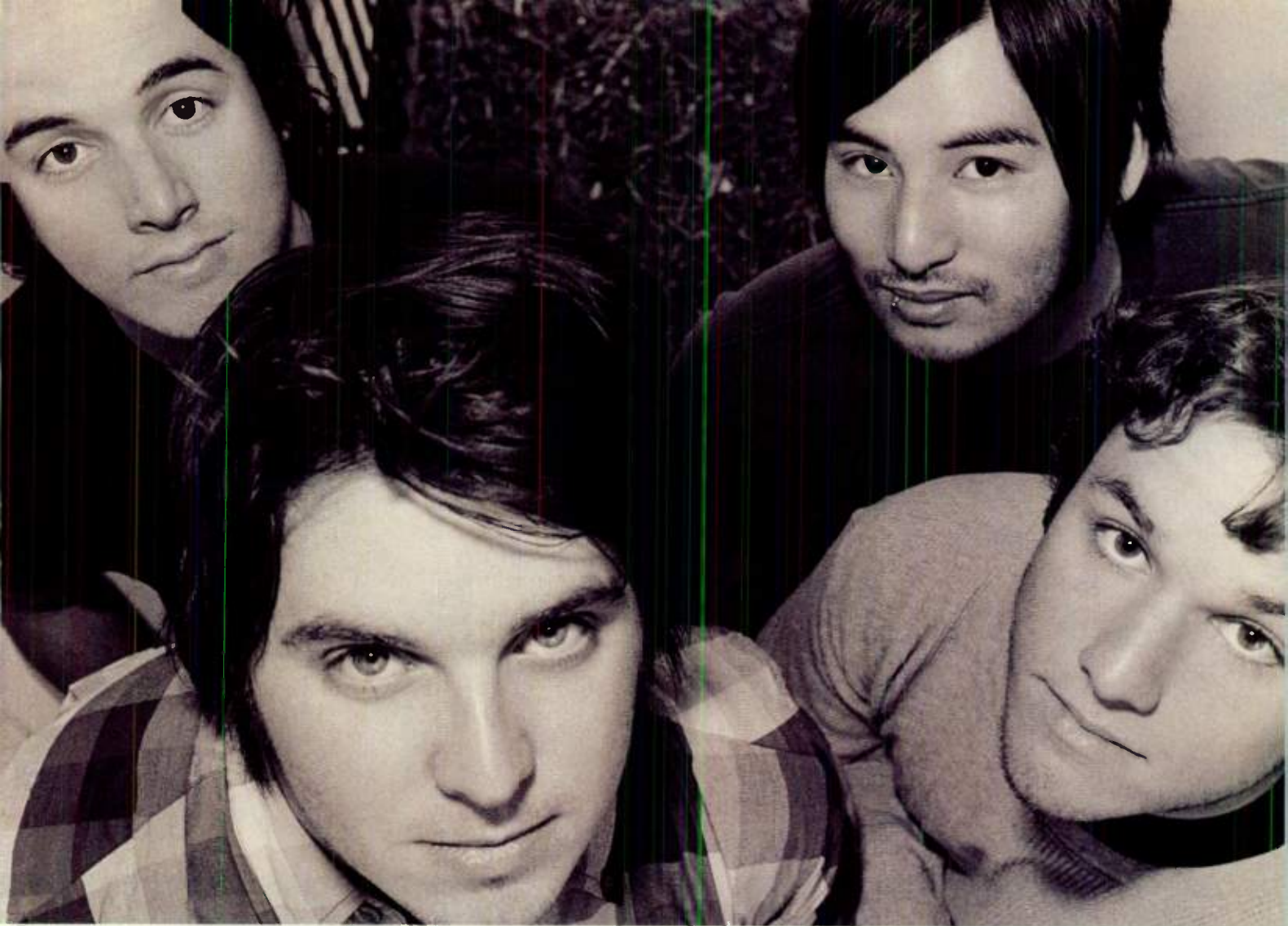
"[We're] just like anyone else," Kensrue says. "Why would you want to read about anyone else? There's no angle."

"We're like mashed potatoes," Riley says from his spot on Kensrue's apartment floor, a place bland as any 22-year-old's pad—from the chintzy entertainment center to the *Cometbus* anthology on the toilet tank. "We're oatmeal."

So why the fuck should you be reading about them? Well, for starters, their latest album *The Artist In The Ambulance* (Island) is a searing, oft-metallic burst of painfully melodic hardcore that distinguishes itself by what appears to be a complete and total indifference to the concept of "scene." The Orange County hardcore scene, en vogue during their inception, never embraced Thrice. The crystalline radio-ready harmonies on songs like "All That's Left" are way too sing-song sunny for windmillin' floor-punchin' betattooed fans of Converge (who they've toured with); the razor-sharp *Ride The Lightning* shredding and 7/8 breakdowns on songs like "Paper Tigers" are far too punishing for satchel-carryin' fans of the *Movielife* (who they've also toured with). Yet somehow they've garnered a huge following and a major-label deal, playing alien anti-scene melodipunk to notoriously closed-minded emos, punkers, hardcore kids and anyone else who would listen.

"We never had any kind of agenda," says Teranishi, tapping his finger with the pen, after decimating his sock. "When we first started, honestly, we never fit into the scene. We played under 'indie,' 'emo,' 'hardcore,' 'pop-punk,' 'skate-punk.'"

"Anything," adds Kensrue. "I think it was good for us and I think we did the



## “YOU KNOW THE BORING BASS PLAYER THAT NOBODY REALLY PAYS ATTENTION TO? THAT’S LIKE ALL OF US.”

same thing nationally.”

Unfortunately for Thrice, their ambiguous sound and multitudinous shows with any band under the sun (including Further Seems Forever, Rufio, Recover, Brand New and the Movielife) have led many to pin them—quite unjustly—with the Scarlet E.

“We never looked at it like, ‘We need to tour with more emo bands!’” says Riley, after leaving Kensrue’s apartment later in the afternoon, baking in the Cali sun, looking aimlessly at a strip mall and nervously peeling the label from a Snapple. “I can definitely say that I’m not super into every band that we’ve ever toured with but we’ve always been about just playing for new people a lot... and not really trying to make it big in one scene.”

Ed Breckenridge, bassist and Riley’s younger brother, sits at a 90-degree angle

and toys with an empty bottle of Cactus Cooler. “I’m always thinking, ‘When are people gonna find out that we’re just a bunch of dudes that just play, like, whatever we want to play and it doesn’t, like...’” His laughter derails the sentence. “I don’t know. It seems like... either we’re doing something right or the people who like us are missing something.” Pause. “I don’t know.” Longer pause. “I don’t know. You just grab a guitar, start playing it, something sounds cool and then you play it with a band.”

After roughly 30 years of punk rock, we’ve come to expect a certain abnormality from our screamers, our van dogs, our provocateurs, our louder-faster proponents, our hirsute anarchists. Even mall-punkers like Good Charlotte have a cutesy suburban brattiness and emos have that gated-community despondence thing going for

them. What is truly shocking about Thrice is that they are so *normal* it’s *abnormal*. As if punk is the new normal and “boring” is the new molotov cocktail.

“A lot of bands are normal and kinda dorky people like we are, but then maybe they feel like they kind of have to be weird to stand out. I don’t wanna be weird to get noticed,” says Ed. “I don’t wanna get noticed,” he adds, with both the Breckenridge boys saying the conclusion in complete and total unison, “other than the music.”

“It’s just four guys that wanna make music and... have fun doing it and... didn’t come from a very exciting town... obviously,” says Ed, face half-masked by a shadow made by a table umbrella, the dull roar of Irvine’s cars behind him.

In their defense, Thrice isn’t *totally* boring. Ed builds guitars in his spare time



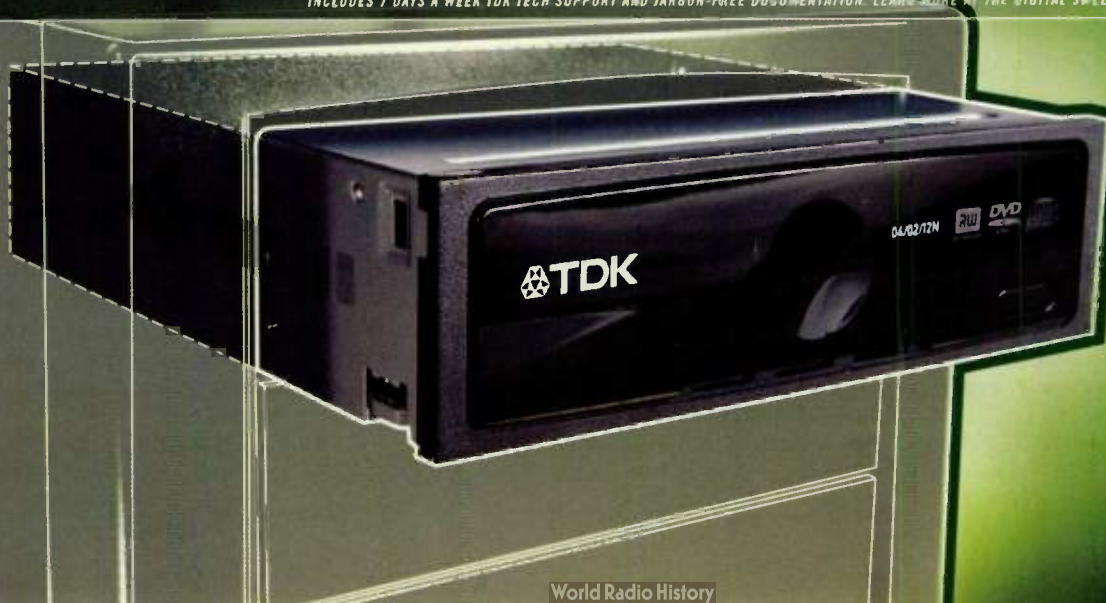
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13. **MAN** "Fired" *Machine*

[www.beerforman.com](http://www.beerforman.com)

Man appears courtesy of Times Beach.

14. **NORTH OF AMERICA** "Keep It On The Download" *Brothers, Sisters*

[www.level-plane.com](http://www.level-plane.com)

North Of America appears courtesy of Level Plane.

See Review p. 56

15. **THE FEVER** "Ladyfingers" *Pink On Pink*

[www.theveronline.com](http://www.theveronline.com)

The Fever appears courtesy of Kemado.

16. **THE JEALOUS SOUND** "Hope For Us" *Kill Them With Kindness*

[www.jealousound.com](http://www.jealousound.com)

The Jealous Sound appears courtesy of Better Looking.

See On The Verge p. 19.

17. **FILM SCHOOL** "P.S." *Always Never*

[www.filmschoolmusic.com](http://www.filmschoolmusic.com)

Film School appear courtesy of Amazing Grease.

See Review p. 50.

18. **CLUB 8** "Cold Hearts" *Strangely Beautiful*

[www.hidden\\_agenda.com](http://www.hidden_agenda.com)

Club 8 appears courtesy of Hidden Agenda.

See Review p. 48.

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World Radio History



1. **THRICE** "All That's Left" *The Artist In The Ambulance*  
www.thrice.net  
Thrice appears courtesy of Island Records.  
See Cover Story p. 30.

2. **JANE'S ADDICTION** "The Riches" *Strays*  
www.janesaddiction.com  
Jane's Addiction appears courtesy of Capitol Records.  
See Quick Fix p. 8.

3. **STEVE BURNS** "What I Do On Saturday" *Songs For Dustmites*  
www.steveswebpage.com  
Steve Burns appears courtesy of [PIAS] America.  
See Review p. 47.

4. **MEDICINE** "I Smile To My Eyes" *The Mechanical Forces Of Love*  
www.bradlaner.com  
Medicine appears courtesy of Astralwerks.  
See Review p. 55.

5. **TEN BENSON** "Tits" *Benson Burner*  
www.tenbenson.com  
Ten Benson appears courtesy of Jetset Records.

6. **SENSE FIELD** "Memory" *Living Outside*  
www.sensefield.com  
Sensefield appears courtesy of Nettwerk America.  
See Tough Love p. 12, Review p. 58.

7. **MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK** "The Future Freaks Me Out" *I Am The Movie*  
www.team-mcs.com  
Motion City Soundtrack appears courtesy of Epitaph.

8. **WILSHIRE** "Special" *New Universe*  
www.wilshiremusic.com  
Wilshire appears courtesy of Columbia.

9. **MINIBAR** "It Is What It Is" *Fly Below the Radar*  
www.minibarmusic.com  
Minibar appears courtesy of Foodchain.

10. **FEATHERMERCHANTS** "Dan" *Unarmed Against The Dark*  
www.feathermerchants.com  
Feathermerchants appear courtesy of Innocent 12th St.  
See Review p. 50.


11. **BITCH AND ANIMAL** "Pac Man" *Sour Juice And Rhyme*  
www.bitchandanimal.com  
Bitch and Animal appear courtesy of Righteous Babe.  
See Review p. 47.

12. **FIREWATER** "Anything At All" *The Man On The Burning Tightrope*  
www.jetsetrecords.com  
Firewater appears courtesy of Jetset.

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# "THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE WE CAN JUST CRASH AND EAT IT. BUT WE'RE GONNA DO IT ANYWAY. WHY NOT TAKE A CHANCE?"

and used to be a sponsored skateboarder, Riley played second base for NCAA baseball power Long Beach State, Teranishi's a recording whiz and Kensrue has designed most of their T-shirts. But Irvine, on the other hand, is in fact boring, a colorless SimCity nightmare of meticulously manicured lawns, golf courses and status-amplifying autos. Even the street signs on campus seem desperate, many named after much more prestigious schools than UCI: Cornell, Harvard, Stanford.

"I heard there was an article in *National Geographic* about Irvine because it was the first totally planned city," Kensrue, who grew up in Irvine but now lives in neighboring Costa Mesa, says, fiddling with his wedding ring. "Before it was built there were areas set aside for commercial zones, residential and industrial... I'm here for the weather, man. On tour, I've seen every weather in this country and none of it's this good."

Ed compares Irvine to Burton's suburban dystopia in *Edward Scissorhands*. Riley mentions the "community rules" to keep the oppressive sameness to every community, where you must paint your house a certain color and you can't have a basketball hoop over the garage. After a long silence and some windchimes, in his same concentrated, throaty whisper, Kensrue perks up, "Shoot. I'm trying to remember a quote from Emerson... He talks about how you shouldn't need to go somewhere else to, like, find 'you' or whatever. Like, if you're moving, it's a sign of something wrong inside, instead of, like, of the place that you're at."

Kensrue leaves the room to grab a thick paperback volume of Ralph Waldo Emerson, returns to his place on the couch and quietly thumbs through it. "You guys all at least need to read the essay on self-reliance," he says. "It's crazy."

"I have the fear that if I moved somewhere to find something else, I'd find it not very different from here. You'd still maybe only find a few people that you actually understood and that understood you and everything else would be just a weird wall of people. That's the cool thing about music, is that, in some cases, it can transcend the barriers of social spheres."

Kensrue hunches over his modest stereo. The entire gang is emitting solid guffaws at the expense of an amazingly shitty local band, some goofy 17-year-old Irvine kids simply *mutilating* Fat Wreck Chords-style punk. The CD liner notes thank Britney Spears, highlighters and blacklights. A hearty "no thanks" is given to diarrhea, Pizza Hut and the video game *Spyro The Dragon*. They have a logo that Kensrue calls "the Laker print" because it looks more apropos for a sports team. The dweebs on the inside have skate shirts, fitted hats, braces and wacky "punk" faces... No wonder the band on the CD, Thrice, makes sure not to keep the *First Impressions* EP in print anymore.

"Most bigger bands," says Kensrue, "by the time they get the band together, they've had other bands and an idea of what they want to do. Our entire learning process is on record. There's 1,000 copies of that somewhere... Dude, the bass on that record was nonexistent, so we re-added on my computer... And then it's still nonexistent."

"We plugged into your four-track, straight into the computer," Ed yells to Kensrue. "Yeah, that sounds good. Turn the bass *all the way up*. Turn all the treble down because it's bass!" A long spate of group laughter follows and Ed adds, "What happened to us?"

"So, people are trying to write about us and make us sound cool. And *that's* where we come from," says Kensrue, referring to the Strung Out-meets-Bon Jovi four-part harmonies and the slick Iron Maiden licks that Riley compares to the theme from *90210*, which promptly causes the entire room to bury their faces in their hands, embarrassed. "At some point, that's where everyone comes from, except other people don't have it on record as *their* band. But I think it's what made us who we are."

"Please don't play too much of it," says Teranishi.

"It sounds like someone's pinching my balls!" yells Kensrue over the overstrained, tense no-NOFX delivery. "I gotta show you the hardcore breakdown..."

*First Impressions* was recorded in 1998. Thrice were *every band in America* a mere five years ago, hopeless high-school doofuses fumbling around, trying to copy

what was popular. Fortunately, their unwavering scenelessness followed them through a quickly evolving crescendo of a career—the abysmal EP, the mediocre hardcore album *Identity Crisis*, the pretty-damn good melodicore of *The Illusion Of Safety*, and now the absolutely stupendous *Ambulance*. Already, they are promising a darker, more eclectic sound on their next release. Teranishi wants violins and cellos and Ed wants to experiment with electronics—things their lack of scene allegiance will allow them to do quite effortlessly. And since their on-tour playlist is as eclectic as an earthquake leveling Amoeba Records—Autechre, Pinback, Aesop Rock, At The Gates, Rufus Wainwright, Miles Davis, Quicksand—Lord knows how great they can become if they can go from *that* to *this* in half-a-decade flat.

They can never betray their cadre, because they don't have one. Punks crying "sellout"? College radio saying "too popular" (as one station did)? Hardcore kids saying "too melodic"? Thrice continues unfazed and will continue looking out for Thrice and Thrice alone. It's worked before.

"The Melting Point Of Wax' is a different take on the Icarus story. That was the response to everyone bitching at us for decisions we've made in the past year. It's basically my answer to people saying, 'Why did you do this?' Basically, we had this amazing opportunity. There's a good chance we can just crash and eat it," Kensrue says, coincidentally, while the planes going overhead are at their loudest. "But we're gonna do it anyway. It's more about the risk than the chances of success. Why not take a chance?"

Well, Dustin, the Icarus legend doesn't end very happily, you know.

"The core of the song says, 'I will touch the sun or I will die trying.' I think that's the cool thing about that story is that you could take it so many ways," Kensrue says, nervously shifting his hat, which finally ends up perched matter-of-factly on his knee. "I think in a situation like a band, the other option is to fly level and play it safe. And you're gonna be a really boring band. If you at least try, you'll have this moment where there's something at least beautiful happening." **NMM**



## Louisville, Kentucky

STORY: CHRIS HIGDON OF ELLIOTT

Bourbon, baseball bats and horse races are probably what you already know about Louisville, Kentucky. The city's long-term love affair with punk/indie/hardcore music, on the other hand, may have eluded your radar. Louisville being the birth place of Squirrel Bait, Slint, Rodan and other indie notables only scratches the surface of its diverse musical history. You need to take a trip into the bluegrass state to appreciate the people and landscape that allow such brooding self-indulgence to take place.

First stop: Bardstown Rd. (between Taylorsville and downtown). If this strip doesn't take you to what you're looking for, go east for about 20 minutes and see why it's our mecca. The strip is home to a variety of locally owned record stores, antique and vintage shops, as well as great restaurants, bars and coffee shops.

While in Louisville, you'll find it's much easier to be a musician than to go see one, but there are still a few spots where you'll have a chance to see something to write home about. **Headliners Music Hall** (1386 Lexington Rd., 584-8088), where the name says it all, is the place to go to see your local reigning heroes and favorite national acts. Want to see My Morning Jacket or VHS Or Beta in Louisville? This is the spot. **The**



ELLIOTT

**Rudyard Kipling** (422 W. Oak St., 636-1311), a bar tucked in between the downtown and Louisville's old Victorian homes, hosts a wide range of bands. If you can, try and catch their acoustic marathon that happens once a year. It brings out the hidden talents of retail clerks, coffee slingers and your occasional local rocker's sensitive side.

Seeing flyers around town and looking in the paper too obvious? Keep your eyes and ears open, and maybe you'll find out about the warehouse party or show that may be happening that week. When they're not busy creating, destroying and reinventing art as we know it, the fine people at the **Lava House** (927 Shelby Parkway, [www.lava-house.com](http://www.lava-house.com)) and **Elliott's** own former

home (953 Clays St.) have the biggest and best Halloween, New Year's and Derby parties in Louisville. The Trans Am show at the Lava House this New Year's Eve still makes the hearts of little girls skip a beat.

Now that your ears are ringing, it's time to slow down: You'll want to check out what's happening at **Aslans How** (1906 Bardstown Rd., 454-5557), a local art gallery that every so often goes out of its way to do small shows. These are usually at decibels that won't make your ears bleed. Looking for music not containing an amplifier? Check out the **Seelbach Hotel** (500 S. 4th Ave., 585-3200) on Saturday night for local jazz or **Gerstle's Place** (3801 Frankfort Ave., 361-3100) on Monday for bluegrass.



Broadway, 582-9123) which is a dark, scarcely attended bar that has stiff, cheap drinks and great conversation with the regulars. Then it would be off to either the **Lava House** or the **953 Gallery**, which are both independently run artists' warehouse spaces that have live, local underground music and art. If the cops break that up early enough, the night would end at **Cahoot's** (1047 Bardstown Rd., 454-6687) with **Starkiller** or **Mötley Crüe** played as loud as humanly possible over the house speakers and a sore throat from trying to talk over it."

**Chris Higdon**, vocals/guitar, **ELLIOTT**

"Finding your favorite spot in Louisville is half the fun, but for me it starts with a ride through the park working my way back through Bardstown Rd. and into downtown. If it's time to treat myself it will be time to stop at **Kim's Asian Grill** (813 E. Market St., 595-7025). Never a wait and the best mock sesame chicken in the country. Kim and family will personally take care of you and you'll be part of Louisville's best-kept secret. In the morning come over to **Lynn's Paradise Cafe** (984 Barret Ave., 583-3447) for the best breakfast in town. If I'm not on tour I'll make sure you're treated well—just ask for my section."

**Craig Pfunder**, guitar, **VHS OR BETA**

"For the cheapest drink in town (\$1.35 for a bourbon on the rocks) and the highest odds of hearing a record you'd actually enjoy, stroll over to **Seidenfaden's** (1134 East Breckinridge). For the best pour for your dollar, **Red Lounge** (2106 Frankfort Ave., 896-6116) is a nice fit—I hear Thursdays and Saturdays are your best bet for a good DJ and drink specials. **The Vietnam Kitchen** (5339 Mitscher Ave., 363-5154) is famous amongst the Louisville veg/vegan population, and for good reason—it's certainly one of my favorite places to eat (try the mock duck!). **WFPK 91.9** is Louisville's only hope right now for a radio station. Great programs, great people. **Ear X-tacy** is where I'd go to get the new **Grandaddy**, **Gillian Welch** and **Metro Area 12-inch**, all in one trip. Oh yeah, and the latest copy of **CMJ New Music Monthly**."

All phone numbers are in the 502 area code.

*Elliott's new LP Song In The Air (Revelation) further explores the space-rock atmospheres introduced on 2000's False Cathedrals. Check [www.elliottintransit.com](http://www.elliottintransit.com) for information.*



a full pipe. A must-see. It's free and open 24 hours. I broke my elbow there in the first two weeks it was open.

**A LITTLE BIT NEW YORK, A WHOLE LOT KENTUCKY:** Louisville's park system and surrounding neighborhoods were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, chief architect of New York City's Central park. The blend of architecture and nature is outstanding.

**PIRATES AND CRUSHED VELVET:** Not only does the Galt House bar, the **Flagship** (140 N. 4th St., 589-5200), have the largest bourbon selection in the world, it's also the only bar I've ever seen with a ship theme. Designed in the '70s, it still has the velvet wallpaper and wood paneling to prove it.

**HOME FOR THE RECORD:** I've never seen an out-of-towner walk out of **Ear X-tacy** (1534 Bardstown Rd., 452-1799) empty-handed. It's one of the best independent music stores. The Foo Fighters in-store will be in my top five shows ever, because of the cover of **Juvenile's** "Back That Ass Up" with a 10-year-old boy taking over vocal duties. Amazing.

## OUT WITH THE IN-CROWD:

**Kevin Ratterman**, drums, **ELLIOTT**

"An ideal night out in Louisville for me would be a Saturday night in the spring. All of the art galleries on **Market St.** have openings with free food and wine. The galleries offer works from a rich range of local artists doing sculpture, painting or installation work. Then it would be off to **Freddie's** (220 W.

While you're driving around listening to **WFPK** (91.9) on all our glorious one-way streets downtown, stop by the newly remodeled **Palace Theater** (625 S. 4th St., 583-4555). A truly gorgeous place to see a show while in Louisville. Imagine if Coldplay played on the movie set of *Romeo And Juliet*. Gold trim, red velvet seats and a faux starry night blinking on the ceiling make this venue stand out.

## LOCAL LOGIC: LOUISVILLE'S BEST

**CONCRETE JUNGLE:** Louisville Extreme Park (Witherspoon and Clay Sts., 456-8100). The city recently built one the best skate parks in North America. The park consists of all concrete bowls, a street course and even



# BEST NEW MUSIC

**THE BLACK EYED PEAS**

**BROADCAST**

**THE CONSTANTINES**

**KINGS OF LEON**

**JUANA MOLINA**

**PALAXY TRACKS**

**TV ON THE RADIO**

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



## THE BLACK EYED PEAS

Elephunk A&M

**O**n 2000's *Bridging The Gap*, the articulate, inoffensively eclectic backspin that caulked the fissures betwixt boho collegiates and ass-centric radioheads, the Black Eyed Peas claimed, quite hyperbolically, "This is for everything that exists." Apparently they missed a few demographics—elementary schoolers, VH1 fans, businessmen, your mother. Amping the Justin Timberlake cameos and revving up Jiggytron 5000, these Peas want to be on Middle America's fickle plate—losing little dread-whippin' imaginativeness in the wizzash. Producer will.i.am fills *Elephunk* with an armada of live instruments, ingenious beat drops and A.D.D.-addled ProTools f-i-fuckery like Pharcyde remixed by BT. Horny highlight "Labor Day (It's A Holiday)" is a dangerously festive summer stomper (well, for anyone who can disassociate its two-note J.B.'s sax bleat from the crack-is-consuming-and-zombifying-the-black-community message of Public Enemy's "Night Of The Living Baseheads") and "Shut Up" is sizzling mama-drama with Neptunes pump, Morricone guitar stabs and new chick Pea Fergie howling like Mary J. Blige. But *Elephunk's* eclecticism is its blessing and curse—riding dancehall (successfully), Latin pop (questionably successfully) and a Papa Roach duet (very, very fucking unsuccessfully). Hopefully BEP know the deadly accuracy of hip-hop is their best gambit (peep the Roots-on-methamphetamines sugar rush of "Let's Get Retarded")... but wait 'til mom sees them breakdance! >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

Link

[www.blackeyedpeas.com](http://www.blackeyedpeas.com)

File Under

Puppetry of the Pea-ness

R.I.Y.L.

The Fugees, Pharcyde, De La Soul

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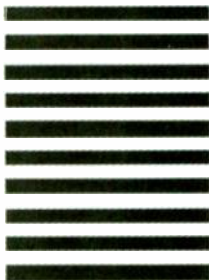


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## BROADCAST

Haha Sound Warp

**H**ave you ever wondered what dreams were like before movies? Did people wake up in the morning meditating on improbable jump cuts from the schoolyard to outer space, or the weird ominousness of a zoom on disembodied lips? Or are films the language of dreams rendered in celluloid—an imperfect reflection of the way synapses leapfrog over conscious logic in our sleep? These questions seem apposite, listening to Broadcast, because the band's songs screen a dream reel in the cinema behind your eyes, aurally induced visions as austere surreal as a Kubrick montage. *Haha Sound*, Broadcast's second LP, is more purely hallucinatory than anything the Birmingham sextet has produced thus far, casting off what little earthiness clung to their music in favor of delicately textural compositions as ethereal as soap bubbles. All this is punctiliously made: Trish Keenan's childlike vocals are woven within squishy analog synths, pastoral melodies and mod-style rhythms, and there's not an accidental gesture to be found. Every kind of ambient music is an influence—Krautrock's spacey beats, Morricone and Barry film scores, Stereolab's lunar jazz, the atmospheric coolness of Boards Of Canada or Autechre—but the reference points are only noticeable retroactively, coming to you like a quick and important revelation late in the day that the place you'd been guided to in your dream—yes, yes—you'd been there before, when you were young. >>>MAYA SINGER

Link

[www.broadcast.uk.net](http://www.broadcast.uk.net)

File Under

Ladies and gentlemen floating in space

R.I.Y.L.

Stereolab, Pram, Movietone



## THE CONSTANTINES

Shine A Light Sub Pop

**T**he Constantines' 2001 debut was cleverly packaged with a single strike-anywhere match. This gesture perfectly sums up the Canadian post-punk quintet's music: easily combustible and oddly compelling. There are no flammable devices found inside *Shine A Light*, but the music is no less incendiary. Complete with angular guitar lines, smart songwriting and singer/guitarist Bry Webb's earthy rasp, the Constantines sound more like they're from D.C. than a small town outside Toronto—the "Springsteen-fronting-Fugazi" tag they're already getting is apt. The band storms effortlessly through their songs with an immediate intensity. Opener "National Hum" bursts out of the gates with huge hooks and intense vocals; it's a little rough, a little raw while still maintaining a slight sense of vulnerability. Webb's Springsteen-esque vocals are particularly noticeable in the album's more downtempo tracks, especially the title track and disc highlight "Young Lions." The humble yet self-assured lyrics found in the album's closer, the toned-down, alt-country-flavored "Sub-Domestic," prove that there is more to these boys than just punk rock. The Constantines have already established themselves as one of best punk bands to come out of Canada recently; the sparks of *Shine A Light* confirm that the hype they'll soon be receiving in the U.S. is warranted. >>>CAROLINE BOROLLA

Link

[www.constantines.ca](http://www.constantines.ca)

File Under

Canuck ruckus

R.I.Y.L.

Fugazi, the Clash,

At The Drive-In, Q And Not U



## KINGS OF LEON

Youth And Young Manhood RCA

**T**his young band's story is so remarkable it seems scripted for maximum media consumption. The sons of a Pentecostal evangelist, the three Followill brothers got their first nibble of respect from parishioners while jamming in church. But the group's somewhat chaotic collision of *Eat A Peach*-era Southern boogie, rural blues and rigorously Stroked garage rock is about as far removed from their redneck revival roots as the Followills' onetime hometown of Mumfordsville, Tennessee, is from Manhattan—and about as bracing as a faceful of holy water. The band's full-length debut, *Youth And Young Manhood*, was produced by Ethan Johns (Ryan Adams, Jayhawks), and his live-to-tape approach works fine when the Kings keep the songs under four minutes, which is most of the time. Brevity allows the solid, simple framework and tight hooks of "Red Morning Light," "Wasted Time" and "California Waiting" to pick up the slack for the Kings' patchy musicianship (excusable when you consider the band's median age is 20). And the dicey subject matter of tracks like "Holy Roller Novocaine" (about a philandering preacher) and "Molly's Chambers" (How's "She's got your pistol" for a sly double entendre?) suggests that either these guys have pretty vivid imaginations or someone in the flock has gone astray. Burn in hell, boys. >>>HOBART ROWLAND

Link

[www.kingsofleon.com](http://www.kingsofleon.com)

File Under

Garage rock with a Southern drawl, y'all

R.I.Y.L.

Marah, early Whiskeytown,

Allman Brothers

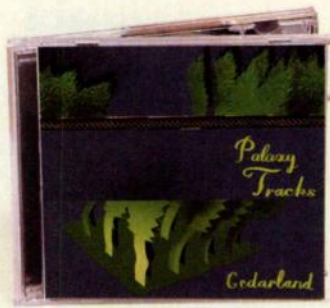


**JUANA MOLINA**

**Segundo** Domino

If you thought the English language had a lock on off-kilter singer/songwriters, then you haven't heard Juana Molina. On her second album, the Argentinean explores electronic and acoustic textures like hidden rooms in a suburban house—quiet, striking and bizarrely delicious. Whether she's working with detuned synths (as on "Medlong") or acoustic guitar ("El Zorzal"), her music keeps taking the left-hand path, using odd but minimal touches to subvert lovely melodies into different dimensions. Perhaps the closest analogy is Lisa Germano, with whom Molina certainly shares some similarities. Both make small, intimate albums, and neither seems to take willful steps into the strange; it's all utterly natural, without any sign of self-consciousness. Molina simply thinks differently from the rest of us, and originality is something to be treasured, especially when it's wrapped in glistening little melodies. At times there's an almost childlike simplicity to the way she plays with the blips and bleeps; at other times a simmering sensuality comes to the surface. Her relatively minimal arrangements might smack more of the bedroom than the big recording studio, but the naïveté works in a way that's more than merely charming—this is who Molina is, warts and all, and we're peeking inside her head and heart. Okay, so it's a weird trip at times, and occasionally disorienting. And that's what makes it special. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

Link  
[www.dominorecordco.com](http://www.dominorecordco.com)  
 File Under  
 Singing the dream  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Lisa Germano, Beth Orton,  
 Goldfrapp



**PALAXY TRACKS**

**Cedarland** Peek-a-boo Industries

Out of the silence, an organ gently swells. Moments later, a ride cymbal washes over the mix, as the rhythm section falls into a pillowy groove. Guitars chime together in bittersweet harmony, and you've arrived. This is Cedarland: It's a quaint and quiet community set underneath permanent cloud cover. Chance of rain: 100 percent. Your tour guide will be Palaxy Tracks' singer/songwriter Brandon Durham, whose perfectly even baritone encompasses the essence of life in this town—calming, largely disaffected and remotely British. Taking a cue or two from classic influences like Joy Division and the Smiths, Durham then applies a post-rock aesthetic and ends up with distinctive aural architecture that places Cedarland, Palaxy Tracks' second LP, somewhere between Chicago and London. The prominent vibe throughout its 11 tracks is one of wistful longing. Song titles like "Posthumous," "The Awful Truth" and "Song About A Ghost" are justified with a moody production that features droning lap steel, singing saws and weeping Wurlitzers among other lush adornments. The vibe is so thick that even its most rocking, distorted moments come dipped in cough syrup. So while it's certainly not the right place for a wild weekend getaway, it's a great place to curl up with a good book, sip your afternoon tea or just take a nap. >>>JASON KUNDRATH

Link  
[www.palaxytracks.com](http://www.palaxytracks.com)  
 File Under  
 The sleepy sounds of silence  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 The Sea And Cake, Galaxie 500,  
 Joy Division



**TV ON THE RADIO**

**Young Liars** Touch And Go

Vocals can get the short end of the stick in the indie sector; too often great ideas are spoiled by bored frontmen warbling out of tune. That's what makes this EP such a revelation: TV On The Radio devotes a level of attention to complex vocal layering that is rarely seen in American bands at all, much less ones from hipster Brooklyn. The closest comparison is the dancing harmonies of the Beta Band's Three EPs, except where Stephen Mason blends into the scenery. Tunde Adebimpe seizes the foreground—this guy can sing his ass off. Musician/producer David Andrew Sitek provides the perfect complement, giving each of Adebimpe's excursions a backdrop of surprisingly organic programming. "Satellite" backs a damn-near-barbershop set of harmonies with a crunching, military drumbeat, while throbbing sine bass threatens to break it all apart; the title track is all shuffling drums and buzzing organs, with Adebimpe calling up ghosts of doo-wop. The EP's centerpiece, though, is the seven-minute "Blind." Adebimpe begins with a defeated moan over a stuttering loop, while Sitek stirs up a maelstrom of far-away drones. The track slowly begins to burn courtesy of drums and slide guitar by Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Brian Chase and Nick Zinner (Sitek produced Machine and Fever To Tell), and climaxes with a wounded, completely un-self-conscious howl. By the time you reach the final track, an a cappella cover of the Pixies' "Mr. Grieves," you wish it were another original. >>>TOM MALLON

Link  
[www.tgrec.com](http://www.tgrec.com)  
 File Under  
 Give the singer some  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 The Beta Band, the Blood Group,  
 Peter Gabriel



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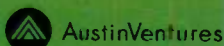
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# REVIEWS

## SI BEGG

BIG SANDY & HIS FLY-RITE BOYS  
BITCH AND ANIMAL  
BLACK LIPSTICK  
BROOKVILLE  
STEVE BURNS  
CHEAP TRICK  
CINERAMA  
THE CLIENTELE  
CLUB 8  
THE DANDY WARHOLS  
DRESSY BESSY  
EASTMOUNTAINSOUTH  
MARK EITZEL  
FEATHERMERCHANTS  
FILM SCHOOL  
MICHAEL FRANTI AND SPEARHEAD  
LISA GERRARD  
BENJAMIN GIBBARD & ANDREW KENNY  
HOLLY GOLIGHTLY  
JESSE HARRIS & THE FERDINANDOS  
THE HIGH STRUNG  
DOUG HOEKSTRA  
THE IMPOSSIBLE SHAPES  
THE INCREDIBLE MOSES LEROY  
KLUTE  
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MEDICINE  
MINUS  
NAYSAYER  
NORTH OF AMERICA  
MARC OLSEN  
PARTY OF ONE  
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WHY?  
WIDE RIGHT  
YEAR OF THE RABBIT  
MICHAEL YONKERS BAND  
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Link

[www.mute.com/sibegg](http://www.mute.com/sibegg)

File Under

Eclectic smash

R.I.Y.L.

Ellen Allien, Miss Kittin's *Radio Caroline, Vol. 1, Der Zyklus*

There's nothing like a mutant sub-genre to destroy electronic music's practice of keeping things separate but equal. Drill 'n' bass and microhouse both combined IDM's occasional brutality and glitches with dance beats, the former aiming to pulverize such ideas of segregation, while the latter sliced it into pieces. This electronic recombination, which gives home-listeners something to nod their head to and club rats something to think about, is invigorated by eclectic smarties like Ellen Allien and Si Begg. Complicating the current '80s synth-happy spirit, these artists push the limits of what some considered a dead-end. Begg is particularly scattered on *Director's Cut*, where his tracks aren't just inwardly varied and mish-mashed, but span a host of sounds like ghettech, R&B and dancehall. "Airports" slams the rapid sequencing from the Giorgio Moroder/Donna Summer epiphany "I Feel Love" over a house beat, then slows the track down to a crawl: When patterned synths reemerge faster than ever, it's so good, it's so good, it's so-oo good. "VIP" and "Thermostat," find Begg at his unpredictable best, while "Inflight" is as triumphant as a lunatic harness. When Begg patronizes his guests' hip-hop and rude-boy posturing, though, he's more dilettante than dabbler. It's not that he's a poseur (the tracks he lays down are typically solid), it's just that he doesn't have very good taste in collaborators. *Cut* is uneven, but that's hardly a surprise—Begg's brave integration is spotty by nature. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK



Link

[www.bigsandy.net](http://www.bigsandy.net)

File Under

Swing-a-billy

R.I.Y.L.

Bob Wills, Hank Williams, Dave Alvin

## BIG SANDY & HIS FLY-RITE BOYS

*It's Time* Yep Roc

Somewhere in America, Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys are hurtling down an interstate in an ancient converted school bus crammed full of vintage gear and threads and plenty of hair pomade. Don't think for a second that their get-up is artifice, though; the Southern California-based group has been churning out a distinct blend of Western Swing and rockabilly for the better part of a decade. *It's Time* is their 10th release (if you count the two albums they made separately), and it leans toward their rockabilly inclinations. Big Sandy (a.k.a. Robert Williams) channels

Johnny Cash on "How Did You Love Someone Like Me?," and drummer Bobby Trimble's sticks dance on the rims over an Eddie Cochran riff on uptempo numbers like "Chalk It Up To The Blues," and atop a walking upright bassline on the title track. But there's still plenty of swing here, thanks to the pedal steel trills of Jimmy Roy and a stop in Cajun country on "Bayou Blue," with guest Chris Gaffney on accordion. Far from being stuck in a retro time warp, Sandy and the Boys forge a sound all their own; they may be the only group making records on which Spade Cooley's influence rubs elbows with East L.A. doo-wop harmonies. >>>MEREDITH OCHS



## BITCH AND ANIMAL

**Sour Juice And Rhyme** Righteous Babe

"Subtle." That'll be the only time that word ever appears in a *Sour Juice And Rhyme* review. The latest release from Ani DiFranco's increasingly diverse Righteous Babe label sees Bitch And Animal flouting its terse wordplay and pro-feminist politics and alternating between lo-fi rock breaks and spare guitar or string backing. The varied instrumentation does its job well enough, but the spotlight here is firmly focused on the New York women and their humorous, but sometimes scathing, yarns about pop culture and post-9/11 America. The hip foolishness

Link

[www.bitchandanimal.com](http://www.bitchandanimal.com)

File Under

Funky girl-on-girl punks

R.I.Y.L.

Luscious Jackson, Ani DiFranco, Northern State, Brassy

of "Croquet" might be a recorded first—a Beastie-worthy rap jam about genteel recreation that declares, "When we bend over to take our putts/ All you punky punks can kiss our butts!" As much fun as that and the countrified satire of "Betty Ford" can be, there's an empowering agenda throughout the album that, thankfully, is less caustic than Bikini Kill's "Suck my left one!" rants. "Feminist Housewives" follows a pair of suburban moms discovering themselves during a road trip to a Gloria Steinem rally in Washington, D.C., while the biting "Secret Candy" casts Eminem leading a Gay Pride parade and objectifies Britney Spears in a whole new light: "Not quite a girl? Not quite a woman? How about a butch dyke ridin' her bike?" As noted above, delicate imagery isn't this pair's forte, but when the results are this provocative, that's more a benefit than a liability. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI



## BLACK LIPSTICK

**Converted Thieves** Peek-A-Boo

The first minutes of *Converted Thieves'* lead track, "Voodoo Economics," plays like Austin's Black Lipstick pulled out a checklist of Velvet Underground traits they wanted to ape before they hit the studio. They're all here, from singer/guitarist Phillip Niemeyer's detached Lou Reed-esque monotone delivery to a droning, snarl of guitars that somehow manage to produce a hummable melody. Throw in a rock-solid female drummer—Elizabeth Nottingham, appearing in the role of Mo Tucker—and Black Lipstick manage to out-VU Pavement, whose sun-baked non sequiturs earned the

Link

[www.peakaboorecords.com](http://www.peakaboorecords.com)

File Under

Velvetea Velvets

R.I.Y.L.

Velvet Underground,

Pavement, Luna, accessible

Sonic Youth

same comparison 12 years ago. But soon after, the band's own character starts peeking around its influences, revealing wry humor and twang that betrays Reed's drug-addled nihilism. The smile Niemeyer provokes on "Voodoo Economics," assuring that, "When the winners of the world have kicked the shit out of you/ We will kick the shit back in," is the first of many as he and guitarist/vocalist Travis Higdon have enough fun to belie the songs' plodding dread. The best moments come when Black Lipstick trades in goofball wit ("Corporate Happy Hour") or drops the irony to paint vivid pictures of disillusionment (as on "Dirges Are Downers"), proving that while the middle ground of VU's influence has been strip-mined, the fringes are still plenty fertile. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI



## BROOKVILLE

**Wonderfully Nothing** Unfiltered/Andomi Music

Andy Chase, one third of New York's pop-smart Ivy, has done his share of hat-swapping over the last few years (he's produced music for film, commercials and worked with Tahiti 80 and the Divine Comedy, among others). Thus it only seems right that his own unadulterated talents have finally taken center stage on his first solo effort, the humbly titled *Wonderfully Nothing*. Recruiting from a gifted and eclectic pool of NYC talent, Chase teams up with sometimes Ivy sideman Eric Matthews and Smashing Pumpkins' James Iha to forge what may be his most ambitious outing

Link

[www.unfilteredrecords.com](http://www.unfilteredrecords.com)

File Under

Modestly brilliant

R.I.Y.L.

Ivy, Kid Loco, High Llamas

yet. Chase sets aside Ivy's slightly *pro forma* pop aesthetic and fully explores his sultry, electronic-tinged side on a disc chock full of melodically rich instrumentals and terrifically catchy low-key tunes, evoking Smile-era Beach Boys and psychedelic Beatles. From the first melancholic notes of the seductive album opener "Fleet" to the catchy melodies on "Walking on Moonlight" and "This Is How It Ends," Chase's flair for melodically infused electronic pulse pop is unmatched. The title of the disc may prove undeservedly prophetic in some ways, as this is music without an edge that doesn't make a scene—but let's hope not, because this indefinably brilliant group of songs certainly deserves more attention than that of the lucky few in the know. >>>KARL WACHTER



## STEVE BURNS

**Songs For Dust Mites** Play It Again Sam

First off, yes, he is *that* Steve, the green rugby sweater-clad former Nickelodeon kids show host for *Blue's Clues* Steve. Secondly, yes, he did record his debut solo album with members of the Flaming Lips, the extraordinary bunny suit-wearing psychedelic pop band from Norman, Oklahoma. Third, well, what more does one need, really; the first two points go an awful long way in explaining the curious nature of this very peculiar, very well-crafted musical project. *Songs For Dust Mites* is an adventurous, inventive psych-pop fandango, with Burns confidently weaving his way through a plentiful cornucopia of his own musical ideas. His playful batch of songs is only made stronger by the additions of Lips-man Steven Drozd and Lips/Mercury Rev producer David Fridmann. The album is steeped in that optimistic sheen the Lips have constructed over their last few albums, yet Burns is making his own brand of space rock, and he's most certainly the pilot of this very strange trip. Songs like "Mighty Little Man," with its fuzzed-out bass and anthemic lyrics, work well. Others, like the orchestral "Troposphere" and the equally grand and propulsive "Maintain," all add their very different, very tasty spices to the mix. And for a guy who once worked with Mr. Salt and Mrs. Pepper, that is by no means a small accomplishment. >>>JEFF BROWN

Link

[www.steveswebpage.com](http://www.steveswebpage.com)

File Under

Rocking your thinking chair

R.I.Y.L.

The Flaming Lips,

Mercury Rev, Using your

handy dandy notebook



**CHEAP TRICK**  
Special One **Big 3**

Cheap Trick have always been cartoonish, with Rick Nielson's school-boy-in-disgrace outfits and pick-slinging guitar antics, Bun E. Carlos' formal attire and impassive time-keeping, and two pretty boys, vocalist Robin Zander and bassist Tom Petersson, on hand to grace covers of classic albums such as *In Color* and *Heaven Tonight*. In recent years, the band has been feted by artists from Smashing Pumpkins to Guided By Voices to Urge Overkill, each of whom brought Cheap Trick on tour. Over a quarter-century into their career, however, Cheap Trick

come awfully close to being cartoons of their former selves. *Special One*, their first studio album since 1997, sounds like Neilson, Peterson and company are trying to complete the circuit of influences by imitating their imitators, and sadly, the album hews closer to the power-ballad hit "The Flame" than the power-pop euphoria of "Surrender" or "I Want You To Want Me." The Pumpkin-flavored title track, with its vaguely Eastern melody, is a sappy, melon collie ballad. "Scent Of A Woman" finds Zander sounding like Bob Pollard trying to sound like Roger Daltrey, and the testosterone-fueled emoting is at odds with the feminist message. Cheap Trick still want you to want them, but they're obviously grasping for a populist hit, throwing power ballads against a wall to see if any stick. Surrender at your own risk. >>>STEVE KLINGE

Link

[www.cheaptrick.com](http://www.cheaptrick.com)

File Under

No surrender

R.I.Y.L.

The Who, Smashing Pumpkins,  
Guided By Voices



**THE CLIENTELE**  
The Violet Hour **Merge**

It's taken an eternity for the Clientele to parlay its almost iconic status in the world of limited-pressing singles into a proper full-length disc. On *The Violet Hour*, the London trio scales that hill admirably, even while exposing the limitations of its frail, wispy sound. The Clientele's gentle, '60s-inflected melodies, ringing guitar tones and liberal use of reverb make them a near dead ringer for late-'80s indie darlings Galaxie 500—they sound like one of the few bands Belle And Sebastian could beat up. The title track kicks things off in fine if familiar form, with Alasdair

MacLean's airy vocals wrapping around a gorgeous, lilting melody. Tracks like "Missing" and "Everybody's Gone" might work well on 7-inches, but after a parade of whispered vocals at unerringly leisurely paces, these gossamer tunes seem in danger of blowing away. Thankfully, the Clientele subtly test their self-imposed boundaries after the disc's halfway point. The surging low-end churn of "Porcelain" offers a hint of adrenaline, and a pair of six-plus-minute tracks stand out by allowing MacLean's melodies to gradually unfold. One of these, "The House Always Wins," builds to a brief shoegazer maelstrom that sounds positively caustic in juxtaposition to the rest of the disc. *The Violet Hour* is an enchanting if monochromatic effort, sprinkled with enough highlights to stave off redundancy. >>>GLEN SARVADY

Link

[www.theclientele.co.uk](http://www.theclientele.co.uk)

File Under

Lighter-than-air indiepop

R.I.Y.L.

Galaxie 500, Felt, Belle And  
Sebastian, Low



**CINERAMA**  
Cinerama Holiday **Manifesto**

Avid fans will drop \$12 or more for an import single containing one track from an album they already own and two more that didn't make it the cut. Such is the existence of the inveterate music geek, especially one with Anglophile tendencies. On *This Is Cinerama*, Cinerama, the poppier but no less love-obsessed incarnation of the Wedding Present's David Gedge, compiled their first four singles and accompanying B-sides; the new *Cinerama Holiday* collects the second four, "Wow," "Lollobrigida," "Your Charms" and "Superman." All previously appeared on the stellar *Disco Volante*, and the B-side "Starry Eyed" made it on to

Link

[www.cinerama.co.uk](http://www.cinerama.co.uk)

File Under

When you've loved and lost  
like David has (revisited)

R.I.Y.L.

The Wedding Present,  
the Go-Betweens, Luna,  
Belle And Sebastian

*Torino*. Everything else here is seeing its first domestic release, and our non-import-single-collecting worlds are a little better for it. Gedge doesn't venture beyond the oft-explored subject of relationships, and tracks like the serene string and piano-inflected "10 Denier," the chamber pop-like "Reel 2, Dialogue 2" and the dreamy "Yesterday Once More" prove he doesn't need to. The Spanish version of "Superman" is as catchy as the original, if ultimately sort of pointless. While most compilations of primary and secondary material only appeal to the indoctrinated, *Cinerama Holiday's* singles and B-sides, remarkably, serve as a good introduction to David Gedge's peculiar genius. >>>NORM ELROD



**CLUB 8**  
Strangely Beautiful **Hidden Agenda**

Guaranteed to knock you off your feet (and tuck you into bed), Club 8 prescribes an over the (record store) counter tranquilizer with their fifth album. The light 'n' airy Swedish duo proffers quiet guitar plucking and an ambiance suited for soul-searching on a rainy day, but behind Karolina Komstedt's I've-got-a-secret breathy voice, which floats like Azure Ray singing a duet with Dido, there is a loss of faith. *Strangely Beautiful* tracks Komstedt's self-doubting search for love. She apologizes to past lovers ("I wasn't much of a fight/ I'm sorry"),

Link

[www.club-8.org](http://www.club-8.org)

File Under

Rockaby lullaby

R.I.Y.L.

Azure Ray, Dido, Air

shames her age ("Thirty-two/ It's not so young here") and reveals her weakest moment on "Stay By My Side," during which she nearly gives up: "You may take what you need when you want to/ And use me up if you wish." Though her journey is longwinded, the album varies enough to maintain interest, especially when guitarist/synth navigator Johan Angergard captures vocal duties on "Saturday Night Engine." The song that could very well dance its way to the Euro club scene, but this is the alien catchy single on a strictly non-pop album. As a whole, *Strangely Beautiful* may cause temporary melancholy and severe drowsiness. Listen well, but when it's time to operate heavy machinery, switch off the CD. >>>MARISA STARR BARDACH



## THE DANDY WARHOLS

Welcome To The Monkey House *Capitol*

The Dandy Warhols are a cautionary tale to any band with delusions of grandeur. At their best, Dandy songs are sharp and punchy, all slithery irresistible guitar hooks, and come off a bit like the meanest post-breakup e-mail you never had the nerve to send. But on each of the band's previous releases, the deliriously nasty pop punctuated druggy, drifting tracks that aimed for Spiritualized-size shambolics but felt like filler. *Welcome To The Monkey House* is even more campy in its trendiness than its predecessors, and yet—weirdly—a more pretentious

amalgam of influences. The psychedelics are cocktailed with hits of glam—nothing new for the Dandy Warhols, except missing the country-rock touch that hinted at something like a heart in the band's glossy tunes. Instead, frontman Courtney Taylor-Taylor sports a big crush on new wave (underscored by Duran Duran's Nick Rhodes' co-producer credit), and though you'd think beat-driven synth-pop would be a perfect vehicle for his sneering songcraft, joke tracks like "I Am A Scientist" are DOA. Likewise, although typically nimble exercises of arrangement, most of the songs fall flat, and even the razored guitar pop of "We Used To Be Friends" plays like a dampened, synthesized retread of old Dandy classics. Taylor-Taylor's songwriting, though chock-full as ever of good ideas, is now so cold-blooded it feels empty, even of spite. >>>MAYA SINGER

Link

[www.dandywarhols.com](http://www.dandywarhols.com)

File Under

Sneer-pop blinded by science

R.I.Y.L.

Blur, Love And Rockets,

Fischerspooner

## DRESSY BESSY

Dressy Bessy *Kindercore*

As Kindercore continues to draft more rock 'n' roll rookies, like indie metal-heads Jet By Day and whiskey-slurping punk rockers Paper Lions, the all-stars of sunshine pop are making sure they stay in the game. Dressy Bessy's self-titled LP was released on the heels of their 1997-2002 retrospective, *Little Music*, a collection of pretty, quick-tempo bubblegum pop that sounds about as much like their live show as Watermelon Wave Bubblicious tastes like a real slice of watermelon. The new album, recorded in a New York City studio rather than the bandmembers'



Link

[www.dressybessy.com](http://www.dressybessy.com)

File Under

Sugar in the raw

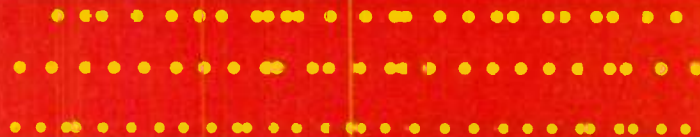
R.I.Y.L.

Palomar, the Apples In Stereo,

the Minders

basements in Denver, captures their performance energy unlike anything they've done before. As usual, Tammy Ealom's sassy melodies team up with the chunky guitars of John Hill (also a member of the Apples In Stereo), but rough-edged vocal distortions create a sound that suggests the Chiffons on a beer run with the Breeders. The meticulous fuzziness of the past melts away when the boycrazy syncopation of "Georgie Blue" unravels into a giggle fit. The sputtering rhythm of "The Things That You Say That You Do" crafts a groovy adieu to a comrade who is leaving town, and the riled up and infectious "This May Hurt (A Little)," pays a shin-kicking farewell to an ex-friend. Melding candyland pop with garage-rock confidence, *Dressy Bessy* knocks one out of the park. >>>KARA ZUARO

# BANNED IN D.C. BAD BRAINS GREATEST RIFFS



*"The Brains were basically the hardest hardcore band ever...the Beastie Boys and the Chili Peppers all revered them. Front-loaded with their filigreed, precision-tooled punk metal, this comp is a solid intro. But be warned: It'll make your current faves sound pretty weak."* - SPIN

*"Bad Brains were the greatest hardcore punk band..."* - TONY KANAL, NO DOUBT

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**EASTMOUNTAINSOUTH**

eastmountainsouth DreamWorks

The surprising thing about this debut by Southern-by-way-of-California duo eastmountainsouth is its label: Somehow, these Americana obsessives aren't on Lost Highway Records. All the hallmarks are there—the diligent rootsiness, the shimmering sonics, the stonewashed casualness. What's missing on the pleasant, instantly familiar *eastmountainsouth* is a bit of the ol' bash-and-roll—roadhouse denizens, look elsewhere. Singer-guitarist Kat Maslich boasts a husky, aching voice suited to heart-sick ballads. Multi-instrumentalist

Peter Adams has an even more interesting, if less trained, voice, which sounds especially warm when he harmonizes with Maslich. But the record's sound is primarily the product of veteran producer Mitchell Froom, who gives *eastmountainsouth* studio purity but leaves out the happy clatter from his more interesting work with Los Lobos and Suzanne Vega. Maybe that explains the record's unfortunate sameness. There are standout songs—Adams's campfire singalong "Show Me The River," the gently funky "You Dance"—but the album suffers in aggregate, as one tasteful tune segues into another. It sounds like a Starbucks. It's been said that most modern albums consist of one great song surrounded by filler, but *eastmountainsouth* is, in a sense, the opposite: an album of uniformly good songs, each of which is better than the whole. >>>CHRIS MOLANPHY

Link

[www.eastmountainsouth.com](http://www.eastmountainsouth.com)

File Under

Not too high, plenty lonesome

R.I.Y.L.

Buddy And Julie Miller, Lucinda Williams, Duncan Sheik



**MARK EITZEL**

The Ugly American Thirsty Ear

Mark Eitzel's career has taken some strange turns since American Music Club disbanded. Each solo album has taken a different tack: jazz, electronica, indie rock. Several past albums have only been available in limited quantities at his live performances. His latest two official releases are collections of cover tunes; this time he covers himself. Working with Greek producer/composer Manolis Famellos and a group of traditional Greek musicians, Eitzel adds an ethnic twinge to his catalog of slowly percolating beautiful loser ballads. Yet, what's most radical aren't the arrange-

Link

[www.markeitzel.com](http://www.markeitzel.com)

File Under

Greek revival style

R.I.Y.L.

Joni Mitchell, Scott Walker, Lee Hazlewood

ments but Eitzel's song selection. Most hardcore Eitzel fans would choose "Western Sky," "Take Courage" or "Last Harbor" for re-interpretation, but "What Good is Love" and "Nightwatchman"? Taking the obvious with the curious, Eitzel delivers tranquil and quite beautiful re-recordings, in some cases sounding like a better-recorded AMC. Much like Joni Mitchell, who in recent years redefined her older material and who also worked her songwriting into an idiosyncratic corner with alternate tunings and private language, Eitzel's lost none of his ability to convey tortured longings. It's a matter of material. Hopefully, this rediscovery of his earlier work will help Eitzel refind his songwriter's muse. Because the only thing better than this collection of old Mark Eitzel songs would be a collection of superb new Mark Eitzel songs. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



**FEATHERMERCHANTS** 

Unarmed Against The Dark Innocent 12th St.

Feathermerchants' 1999 self-titled debut could easily be a homemade CD that some enterprising do-it-yourselfer passed around at a 10,000 Maniacs show. With their follow-up, *Unarmed Against The Dark*, these adult-contemporary aspirants have done little to distinguish themselves from that other Merchant (Natalie, that is). They've even traded out for a vocalist with similar-sounding pipes. Not that there's anything wrong with that: Literate female vocals plus earthy folk-pop stylings plus vague social awareness often equals unobtrusive and agree-

able coffeehouse background music. Variations on the formula sometimes yield brilliance, as fans of the Innocence Mission and early Sundays will attest. But Feathermerchants apply the formula as if it explains the origin of music as we know it. They manage a few choice moments, including the mid-tempo character sketch "9th Ward" and the touching war story "Dan." But many of the new tracks feel like theme songs for another batch of teen coming-of-age shows on the WB. Strangely enough, Feathermerchants is at their least derivative and imitative on the excellent cover of the Psychedelic Furs classic, "Heartbreak Beat." Slowed down to an acoustic crawl, their version captures a warmth and tenderness that the original glosses over. Too bad Feathermerchants usually apply the formula with middling results. >>>NORM ELROD

Link

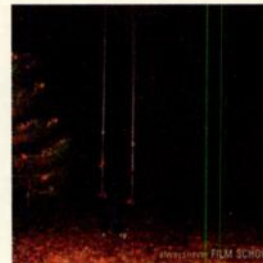
[www.feathermerchants.com](http://www.feathermerchants.com)

File Under

Those were days

R.I.Y.L.

Natalie Merchant, Paula Cole, the Sundays' *Static & Silence*



**FILM SCHOOL** 

Always Never Amazing Grease

As their name implies, Film School creates sounds with a cinematic eye, transforming songs into ambient crawls where the sun breaks slowly over the distant vista. (Not surprisingly, the inside jacket photo is a NASA photo of nearly that.) Yet, even with all the accumulated feedback and overdrawn sustain, they never lose grip of the song. "Ms. Connection" opens things with dramatic organ chords, vocals that are barely audible in the mix and a soothing little melody. "P.S." features a singular catchy organ riff, while "I Just Turned Into A Gas" centers on mournful

Link

[www.filmschoolmusic.com](http://www.filmschoolmusic.com)

File Under

Space-age psychedelia

R.I.Y.L.

Rain Parade, Ride, the Flaming Lips

piano chords and gently sweet vocals that recall both the lazy early '80s Paisley Underground sound of Rain Parade and the early '90s shoegazer tone of Ride. Unintentional company, perhaps, but not a bad place to start. Begun in 1998 by Krayg Burton and a revolving cast of whoever, Film School has since solidified into a steady five-piece who somehow manage to sound far more polished than their home studio credits (unless "Mauri's Livingroom" and "Nyles' Bedroom" are actually legit studios and not what they imply). This four-song EP, following up their 2001 debut *Brilliant Career*, is a compact twenty-three minute trip that proves this San Franciscan quintet have serious dibs on becoming leaders if Haight-Ashbury is ever to rise again. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



## MICHAEL FRANTI AND SPEARHEAD

### Everyone Deserves Music

Boo Boo Wax/MUSIC

Picture yourself at a hip-hop family fun fair where the kids can get Biggie balloons and take a ride on the Supadupa Misdemeanor Rollercoaster. As you're strolling along, your shoulders start unexplainably wiggling to the peppy tunes wafting up from the Jah Love Jamboree Hall. The beats and melodies are almost as frothy as the Shaggy Shake, but the chipper mood served up by Michael Franti and Spearhead gets into your tailbone like that KRS-One carousel. While Franti's work with the Beatnigs and

Link

[www.spearheadvibrations.com](http://www.spearheadvibrations.com)

File Under

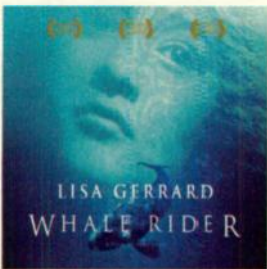
Happy hippie reggae-rap

R.I.Y.L.

Third World, Shaggy,

Eddie Grant

Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy was always heavier intellectually than musically, *Everyone Deserves Music* floats with a feelgood consciousness that makes even anti-war rants seem like giddy numbers to get your caboose shaking. Under the rollicking piano progressions and twitchy reggae guitar lines, you can find nods to Bob Marley, the Clash and John Lennon. But the melodies aren't quite strong enough to stand up to repeated listenings without more impressive wordplay, and phrases like "You can bomb the world into pieces, but you can't bomb the world into peace" look better on a protest sign than a lyric sheet. If Franti were a stronger vocalist, *Everyone Deserves Music* would have a longer shelf life, but his rap-singing leaves the album as an awkward reggae-pop hybrid that's best left back with the family fun park's Rasta Pasta. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



## LISA GERRARD

### Whale Rider Original Soundtrack 4AD

In her own quiet way, former Dead Can Dance stalwart Lisa Gerrard has made quite a name for herself in the soundtrack business; she's done a number of them, including, improbably, *Gladiator*. But this story of Maoris and whales (the second highest grossing film ever in New Zealand) does present its own challenges. After all, the Maoris don't use instruments per se—voice and rhythm are the real components of their music. And as for the whales... Gerrard keeps things agreeably ambient, although it's only on the longer "Biking Home," "Pai's Theme" and "Paikca's

Link

[www.whaleriderthemovie.com](http://www.whaleriderthemovie.com)

File Under

Soundtrack—just soundtrack

R.I.Y.L.

Mark Hollis, Oceania,

Jocelyn Pook

Whale" that she can develop the music. It's also on those longer pieces where she does introduce Maori singing, but it's more as background decoration than an integral element. If you can get past that, there's a spare dignity about her music, restrained and impressionistic—exactly what a soundtrack should be, in fact. At the same time, it's hard to believe this stuff is really taxing her creative energies, however well it might pay. Certainly there's none of the stretch of *The Mirror Pool* or her DCD days here, and it would be good to hear her make a strong artistic statement again. Take this on its own terms, as background music, and you'll be a happy bunny. Otherwise, wait for a real album. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

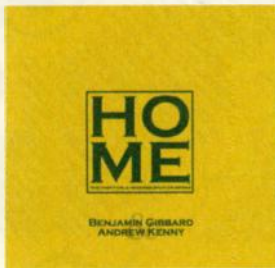
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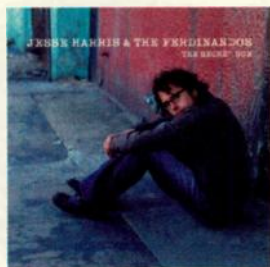


**BENJAMIN GIBBARD & ANDREW KENNY**

**Home: Volume V** Post-Parlo

This fifth installment in Austin label Post-Parlo's split-CD series pairs sleepy-voiced Benjamin Gibbard, frontman of Seattle indie-popsters Death Cab For Cutie, with sleepy-voiced Andrew Kenny, singer/guitarist with Texan dronemeisters American Analog Set, each of whom contribute three stripped-down originals and a cover of a tune by the other songwriter. Not surprisingly, the disc lacks the considerable sparkle and vim each guy brings to his group. Without the deft manipulation of tone and texture guitarist/engineer Chris Walla manages

on Death Cab records, where ringing minor chords and walloping drums seem as deep as Puget Sound, Gibbard's singing and guitar playing isn't that distinguishable from stuff by a host of other sensitive indie bards (though his description of a worn-down heater that emits a "potpourri of dust and gas fumes" in "You Remind Me of Home" evokes some top-shelf indie self-flagellation). And Kenny proves how crucial AmAnSet's earthy hum is to his writing: "Church Mouse In The Church House," a casually whispered vocal atop a string of wispily strummed chords, is way too representative of its title. His "Secrets Of The Heart" stitches nice sub-Pinback doo-doo-doo into its chorus, and Gibbard's "Farmer Chords" boasts a cool half-time kick-and-snare pattern, but *Home's* charms are proudly modest ones. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

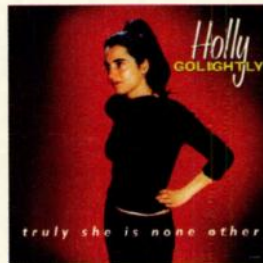


**JESSE HARRIS & THE FERDINANDOS**

**The Secret Sun** Blue Thumb/Verve/Universal

Jesse Harris has a hankering for the good old days of popular music, when hit songs were devoid of angst and packed with well-mannered rhymes. When Harris croons, "You were sweet to care for me, and gently stroke my hair for me," he's not going for irony. Despite the old-fashioned earnest lyrics and the traditional Americana vibe of the Ferdinandos, named for a century-old Italian restaurant in Brooklyn, there's nothing retro or low-fi about *The Secret Sun*, which is as polished as any VH1 darling from Matchbox Twenty to Train. Harris, who has been writing songs in New York

City for about a decade, staked his claim to fame when he passed a few original compositions to sultry chanteuse Norah Jones. The Grammy-winning songstress shows up on "What Makes You," wrapping her rich, drifting vocals around Harris's comparably thin and metronome-timed singing. The duet recalls his mid-'90s band, Once Blue, featuring jazz vocalist Rebecca Martin, and illustrates Harris's talent for molding sweet, malleable melodies that can be stretched into jazz as easily as they are carved into country. It's quite possible that he's got a one-way ticket to those radio stations that feature an easy-listening mix of "the '80s, '90s and today," but whether his work turns out to be timeless or just pleasantly anachronistic, it's honest through and through. >>>KARA ZUARO



**HOLLY GOLIGHTLY**

**Truly She Is None Other** Damaged Goods

English garage-rock doyenne Holly Golightly probably knew she was going to reach more CD buyers than she has in her entire career when she joined Jack and Meg White at London's Toe Rag Studios earlier this year to record "It's True That We Love One Another," the adorable trio number that closes the White Stripes' celebrated *Elephant*. Whether or not this unlikely scrape with widespread commercial success has helped pay her rent for a few months, it certainly hasn't compromised Golightly's dedication to the raw, unadorned blues-garage noise her

underground devotees have supported for years, first during her tenure as a member of British oddball Billy Childish's swaggering girl group Thee Headcoatees and then over a series of likable solo albums. The well timed *Truly She Is None Other*, half of which Golightly recorded at Toe Rag with owner/engineer Liam Watson, is the proof: It's full of crinkly guitar distortion and cardboard-box drumming, and it sounds like it was recorded live to cassette in a pub's W.C. Yet like the Stripes, Golightly files down her frayed edges with a weird sweetness, retaining those girl-group melodies and balancing sly challenges to "walk a mile in my shoes" with the reverbed vulnerability that suffuses "Without You Here." She couldn't do the literary reference of her name more justice. Truly. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Link  
www.jesseharrismusic.com  
File Under  
G-rated torch songs that shine with nostalgia  
R.I.Y.L.

Norah Jones, later James Taylor, open mic night at your local coffee house



**THE HIGH STRUNG**

**These Are Good Times** Tee Pee

Like a bull's eye T-shirt or skinny black pants, the High Strung's *These Are Good Times* will appeal to the retro-loving Anglophile in anyone. With a sound that's as hopped up on nervous, self-conscious energy as their name, the Brooklyn band's British Invasion-flavored rock proudly takes its cues from the Beatles and the Who ("Show A Sign Of Life" has transitions that recall "A Quick One While He's Away"), instead of the usual post-punk influences that all the other "the" bands seem to favor these days. In this way, they're reminiscent of Guided By Voices, but with less cryptic lyrics and

Link  
www.thehighstrung.com  
File Under  
'60s retro pop with a caffeine kick  
R.I.Y.L.

Guided By Voices, the Kinks, Bob Pollard

a more youthful swagger. While there's no shortage of infectious guitar pop on *These Are Good Times*, the band's biggest hook is its bratty vulnerability. They rasp about everyday junk like unemployment and sibling rivalry ("Wretched Boy"); what happens when a relationship reaches the do-or-die point ("It's On"); picking up girls at the Port Authority bus terminal ("Real Nice Boy") and using sarcasm as a coping mechanism ("The World's Smallest Violin"). *These Are Good Times* proves that angst rebellion and sweaty sex appeal never get tired. Any girl should be thrilled to take these "real nice boys" home and give them a spin. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK





## DOUG HOEKSTRA

*Waiting* **Psyche**

This distinctive singer/songwriter with the very Dutch last name enjoys a considerable following in Holland and Germany, but that's more due to Dutch/German hipness than Hoekstra being one of them. (In fact, Hoekstra's a Chicago-area native and a founding member of indie rockers Bucket No. 6; he's been doing his solo thing for nine years, about the same amount of time he's lived in Nashville.) *Waiting* is state-of-the-art Hoekstra. The songs are meticulously crafted, detailed vignettes, filled with moments that could easily be depicted by a cine-

matographer or rendered in miniature by an assemblage artist. "Teresa," for instance, captures a series of increasingly dark moments in the grim life of a street child in Sao Paulo. Hoekstra casts Teresa's world and future in a few words: "Teresa she is 12 years old/ Brown eyes and belly, baby to be sold/ The danger boys measure the market well." On "Dark Side Of A Pearl" Hoekstra voices his memory of a pair of friends and their failed relationship. Where previous discs were augmented with horns and gospel choirs, *Waiting* was recorded without adornment in Hoekstra's home studio, putting further emphasis on his modest and imaginative song arrangements. His tunes are literate gems, rich in imagery, delivered in a voice that's hardly more than a dusky whisper. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

[www.doughoekstra.com](http://www.doughoekstra.com)

File Under

A songwriter's songwriter

R.I.Y.L.

Elliott Smith, Josh Rouse,  
Nick Drake



## THE IMPOSSIBLE SHAPES

*Bless The Headless* **Mr. Whiggs/Luna Music**

For their fourth full-length release, Bloomington, Indiana's Impossible Shapes entered a professional recording studio and employed the help of producers Bill Doss (the Sunshine Fix, Olivia Tremor Control) and Paul Mahern (Superchunk) to bring clarity to their once-home-recorded murk. This new sharpness opens up the sound, creating greater spaces for Chris Barth and his merry pranksters to get weird. Guitars ring out individually and the rhythm section lays itself bare. For better and worse, they've inherited the Soft

Link

[www.theimpossibleshapes.com](http://www.theimpossibleshapes.com)

File Under

Chiropractic psychedelic rock

R.I.Y.L.

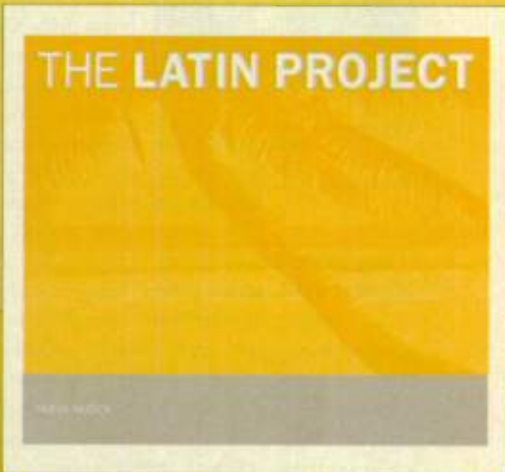
The Soft Machine, Olivia  
Tremor Control, Rain Parade

Machine's ability to shift gears without warning, maintaining a roller-coaster-like romp throughout their instrumental passages and giving Barth's playful lyrics an incredibly eclectic backdrop. "The Line So Flexible" shows off the group's ambitions and faults in four and a half minutes with its stops, starts and exploratory noodlings. "Kids Need Creeks" trudges with heavy footstomps and an ominous off-kilter guitar lead. From here you either slip on the headphones and go further into the trip or respectfully bow out due to motion sickness. The band is best at atmosphere. The swooping loneliness in the slide guitar "I Live On Your Roof" perfectly captures a reflective mood. "A Final Feast Forever," with its creaking mellotron and sudden late-entry horn section, creates orchestral grandeur reminiscent of the more bizarre studio experiments of the first psychedelic era. With an unlimited studio budget who could say where they'd end up? >>>ROB O'CONNOR



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**THE INCREDIBLE MOSES LEROY**

Become The Soft.Lightses *Ultimatam*

The Incredible Moses Leroy, essentially the brainchild of Ron Fountenberry, is one of those mad geniuses whose very idea of craftsmanship means constructing lush and layered mini-pop masterpieces out of things found lying around his apartment. Not simply content with making a simple pop song, Fountenberry constructs breathlessly clever, intricately constructed bedroom symphonies where twee xylophones, fluid basslines, folksy guitars, swelling new wave synths, snippets of unidentified sounds and the odd occasional guest meld magically into precise, perfect shimmering summery pop masterstrokes. Produced by Joey Waronker (drummer for R.E.M., the Smashing Pumpkins, Beck and Badly Drawn Boy), who helmed a few tracks on the first Moses Leroy release, *Electric Pocket Radio*, the new album shows a much-improved understanding of the mechanics of pop music. *Become The Soft.Lightses* is more assured, more at home with itself, more firmly rooted in a singular mood and sound. Together Fountenberry and Waronker crafted a comfortably consistent album focusing more on songcraft and melody, and less on impressing with the cut-and-paste craftiness that only slightly marred his last effort. Instead, songs like "L.O.V.E." and "Transmission C" come across as hybrids of every '80s idea worth recapturing, from O.M.D. and XTC through Prince and New Order. Moses Leroy weaves an instantly likeable, instantly familiar, yet utterly unique and fun album. >>>JEFF BROWN

Link

[www.mosesleroy.com](http://www.mosesleroy.com)

File Under

Summery bedroom pop

R.I.Y.L.

New Order, Prince, Cibo Matto, piña coladas and getting caught in the rain



**KLUTE**

Lie Cheat & Steal / You Should Be Ashamed

*Breakbeat Science*

Too often, producers take the obvious route and exploit the frenetic nature of drum 'n' bass to create tracks that are as oppressive to listen to as they are danceable. Tom Withers (a.k.a. Klute), though, is all about soft pitches—hummable melodies are up front, leaving the whiplash breaks pitter-pattering in the background like rain on fast-forward. *Lie Cheat & Steal* breezes in with "Now Always Forever," a track so uplifting that its immediate spiritual connection is with late-'80s Chicago house. A gentle melody squiggles

Link

[www.kluteproductions.co.uk](http://www.kluteproductions.co.uk)

File Under

A rumble in the jungle

R.I.Y.L.

LtJ Bukem, Adam F, Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson

along with the breakbeats in the vocal of "Part Of Me," and an ominous bassline is countered by ethereal chanting in "Song Seller." While *Steal* is reliably pleasant, Withers seems to be the type of producer that gets a good idea or two and sticks with it. That changes on the set's second disc, *You Should Be Ashamed*, on which the hat Withers has always tipped at techno falls off and lands in 10 tracks of Motor City mayhem. Unbroken beats dominate *Ashamed*, which, while handled by Withers with similar gentleness, is a bit more unpredictable and sprawling than *Steal*. An electric bass boogies on "Tubby," and "Ultralo" stacks myriad melodies higher than the Penobscot Building. Withers avoids cheap retro-novelty in his salute to the old school, making *Ashamed* totally fresh and something to be proud of. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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**BEN LEE**

Hey You, Yes You F2

Bennie may be back from his jet-setting across the globe with actress/girlfriend Claire Danes and his newly assembled supergroup, the Bens (with Ben Folds and Ben Kweller), yet his time away hasn't been time well spent. With *Hey You, Yes You*, Lee fails to live up to that child-prodigy reputation he earned as a precocious 14-year-old. He still hasn't found the recipe for that killer album some sense he still has in him. As it is, the rhyme schemes used on *Hey You* strike as a bit too sophomoric, with sing-songy moon/June couplets too common to mark this as a grown-up singing-songwriter affair. But he hasn't given up hope just yet. This time out, Lee enlisted beatmeister extraordinaire Dan The Automator (Gorillaz, Handsome Boy Modeling School) in hopes that he'd add that glitchy post-modern veneer so prevalent on all those successful arty albums of this modern century. And it actually works in spots, with tracks like the *Blur*-esque mélange of "Aftertaste," the skittish "Running With Scissors" or the more intimate "Shine," yet the majority of the songs are a bit thin and uninspired. They all seem mired in mid-tempo blandness and Lee's delivery seems stuck in an all too nasal whine. Simply put, Ben Lee's so-called career is in serious need of some counseling. >>>JEFF BROWN

Link

[www.ben-lee.com](http://www.ben-lee.com)

File Under

Mannish boy

R.I.Y.L.

Evan Dando, Shawn Mullins, any other nasal sadsack in the singer/songwriter vein



## MEDICINE

**The Mechanical Forces Of Love** Astralwerks  
 Before Conor Oberst, there was Brad Laner. A similarly hyperactive rock prodigy, Laner has since his mid-teens released music and started bands with about the same frequency that less type-A personalities change sheets or pay cell-phone bills. After releasing his last album under the Medicine moniker in 1995, Laner has now returned to the fold of his most famous and justly heralded project for his latest opus, *The Mechanical Forces Of Love*. The album picks up where Medicine's shoegazing left off, making strange bedfellows with that dreamy

Link

[www.bradlaner.com](http://www.bradlaner.com)

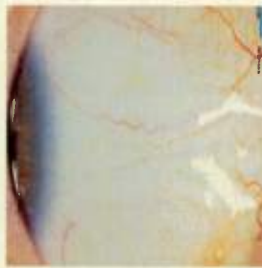
File Under

Here, there and everywhere

R.I.Y.L.

His Name Is Alive, Primal Scream's *Screamadelica*, Air

sound and all the other musical genres Laner's ear has wandered to in the meantime. Abetted by Shannon Lee, (daughter of Bruce and brother of Brandon, but that's just trivia), Laner sinks blossoming pop melodies into scrawls of industrial noise, rifles ambient dub for stuttering loops and beats and riffs on funk and dream-pop a la early Mercury Rev and Flaming Lips—sometimes separately, and frequently all at once, using Lee's vocals as a through-line. Results range from the shambolic electro-funk of opening track "As You Do" to industrial-lite pop, to the drifting atmospheric fuzz of "Negative Capability." Overall, *The Mechanical Forces Of Love* is both a Pro Tools-obsessed art-rockers wet dream and a free ride inside the brain of a guy with musical attention deficit disorder—scatterbrained but pulled off with perfectionist finesse. >>>MAYA SINGER



## MINUS

**Halldor Laxness** Victory

Halldor Laxness, the Icelandic Nobel Prize-winning author, uses a Herman Hesse high-speak for tales of Job-like characters who aspire to artistic greatness under the harshest situations, his gift with words so pronounced that the stories resonate even if his protagonists never realize their dreams. *Halldor Laxness*, Minus' sophomore album of precision post-hardcore metal, finds the Iceland natives also aiming for lofty heights, but unlike its countryman, the results aren't as enjoyable when the band falls short of its goals. The sound popularized by At The Drive-In's cross-

Link

[www.minus.tv](http://www.minus.tv)

File Under

Do the math-core

R.I.Y.L.

Snapcase, Delftones, At The Drive-In

cutting guitar stabs is the prototype for Minus' sound and more often than not the music succeeds, with Bjarni and Frosti's guitars showering sparks when they clash or rumbling like thunder when they lock step. The stumbling block here is singer Krummi's pained vocals that recall Candlebox's Kevin Martin rather than a new-millennium Rob Tyner. And where ATDI's lyrical abstractions lent an air of mystery, Krummi's straightforward lyrics ("To join the club, I'll bring lots of girls and drugs and have lots of fun," on "The Ravers") lack the depth these songs need. Things do pick up toward the end: "Insomniac" dials down the aggression and suggests a metallic Radiohead, and "Last Leaf Upon The Tree" features frosty Macy Gray-ish vocals from Katiejane Garside over lumbering, jagged guitars. Trip-core? There's an idea worthy of a Nobel Prize. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

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**THE NAYSAYER**

**Pure Beauty** Carrot Top

On two previous full-lengths, the Naysayer's Anna Padgett—backed by Ruby Falls/Retsin drummer Cynthia Nelson—carved out one of the fresher indie-pop personae of recent years, delivering edgy vignettes of modern-gal discontent with deadpan wit and uninflected vocals to match. This five-song EP filters her sensibility through country music's formal and narrative conventions even more completely than 2002's *Heaven, Hell, Or Houston*, with mixed results. The title track offers a reason to stand by your man Tammy Wynette never mentioned:

"Your dick is a stick of pure beauty to me." This song and the Leon Payne-penned "Things Have Gone To Pieces" (a hit for George Jones in 1965) share a brittle charm that makes up for their sketchy arrangements. But the uptempo two-step "My Liver Needs A Lawyer" cries out for grittier rhythmic backing than Padgett, Nelson and guests seem willing to provide. Most troubling is the white-trash scenario of "Frank & Terri Ann": Wife-beater loses his arms to a falling pick-up, loving spouse forgives him, their marriage improves. Intentionally or not, the song comes off as cruelly disengaged in a way that even a sweetly harmonized chorus ("Love, sweet love, what a mysterious force") fails to dispel. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

Link

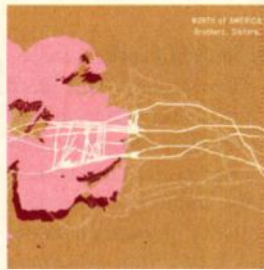
[www.thenaysayer.com](http://www.thenaysayer.com)

File Under

A-pickin' and a-smirkin'

R.I.Y.L.

K., Ida, the Roches



**NORTH OF AMERICA**

**Brothers, Sisters** Level Plane

Halifax wunderkinds North Of America are out to prove that post-hardcore isn't just for repressed American youth anymore. They've clearly taken strong cues from the kids of D.C., Chapel Hill, and Chicago: the synergistic dual vocals of Fugazi, the interloping guitar twangs of Southern indie rockers, and the infectious energy of new schoolers like the Blood Brothers. But they've also toned their old screamo style down into a more digestible and less offensive form. The unexpectedly Malkmus-style vocals (not to mention the oh-so-close-to-pretentious title) of

Link

[www.level-plane.com](http://www.level-plane.com)

File Under

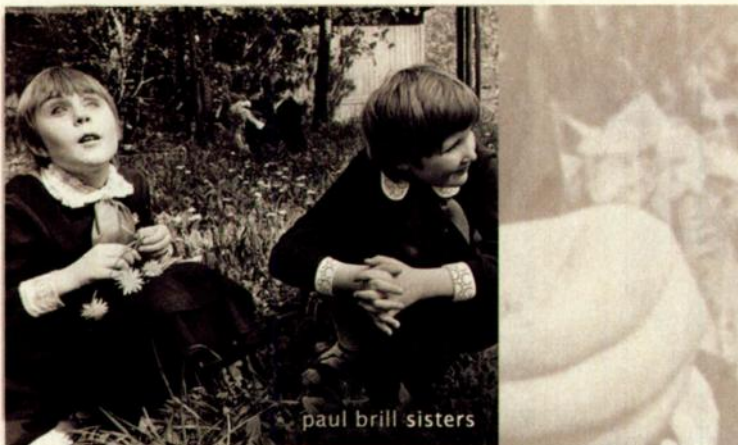
Angular rain, angular rain

R.I.Y.L.

Jazz June, Fugazi's vocals,

Braid

"Oh My God, Oh My God, Everybody, Oh My God" are a far cry from the band's vicious early efforts, but the attempt to make a more comprehensible product pays off with some easily accessible, albeit occasionally dated, rock. There's a constant trade off between tumultuous rhythms and fist-pumping hooks; the incessant shifting is where North Of America are able to inject a bit more of their personal style, even if the end results are almost always impassioned punky sing-a-longs. Regardless, the band has unmistakable talent, and their decision to express their emotions with premeditated incision instead of simple whining is a welcome change from the emo nation. This is what happens when you learn from your influences instead of just copying them. >>>PETER D'ANGELO



paul brill sisters

**paul brill sisters**

"Displays a knack for the stark story, told with bare, yet vivid description..."

[An] excellent effort..." **Harp**

"Exquisite..." **Mojo**

"For those wondering, 'Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?' he's right here..." **Billboard**



**MARC OLSEN**

**Brighter When** Roslyn/Burn Burn Burn

Former Sage/Sky Cries Mary guitarist Marc Olsen (not to be confused with former Jayhawk Mark Olson) operates in a narcotic twilight where even the most tumultuous emotions are muted. He may be ecstatic, he may be upset, but it all warbles out as one modest sound. His third solo album and first for the newly formed Northwest label Roslyn opens with the title track where his Neil Young-with-laryngitis whisper synchs with the buckling stirrings of warmly distorted electric guitar. It's the sound of a tight-knit group playing in a small room, nicely shaded with

Link

[www.roslynrecordings.com](http://www.roslynrecordings.com)

File Under

Narcotic, narcoleptic

space anthems

R.I.Y.L.

Elliott Smith, Spain, Giant Sand

emphatic ensemble work that never attempts to do too much—Jake Nolte's atmospheric Rhodes piano is the essential ingredient that grounds these gravity-defying wisps. Even as the sound expands for the spacy-tribal-metronomic pulse of "To Hear Laughter" and "Disarray," it's with an eye towards economy, each note placed carefully within the reverberating glaze. Despite his shyness, Olsen can truly captivate as the inviting shaky emotional tenor of "Afterglow" sucks you in, or as the Elliott Smith-like finger-picked ballad "The Whole Thing Starts" melodically stirs. Things end on a telling note: a cover of the Velvet Underground's "I Found A Reason," where Olsen's twilight finds the morning after in Lou Reed's tale of redemptive self-love. >>>ROB O'CONNOR

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## PARTY OF ONE

Caught The Blast *Fat-Cat*

Some bands push the envelope of good taste; Minneapolis' Party Of One torches the whole Office Depot. "Six Million Anonymous Deceased" is an slovenly funk number about a Holocaust victim ("She said she was going to camp"), while "Baghdad Boogie" is sung from the point of view of an Iraqi soldier. Crass? Definitely, but it's the impious, cut-the-crap crassness that great punk rock has delivered from "Belsen Was A Gas" on. In an adenoidal whine recalling '80s geek-rock icons Half Japanese and Happy Flowers, guitarist Eric Fifteen rants about the slaughter of East Timorese ("Belgrade Sends Its

Regards") and his own suicide (the perversely catchy "Shotgun Funeral") as if they amounted to the same thing. The raw, eight-track production is no more nuanced than the lyrical content, but the playing itself is: Bassist Terrika Kleinknecht and Geoff McCusick pass inventively (if not always tightly) through any number of styles, while Fifteen mangles almost-familiar guitar riffs à la early Malkmus. Only the last two tracks lose focus: "Baby Doll" is a one-joke rap parody, while "Shock To The System" is a more conventional slice of indie-prog. Before this, though, *Caught The Blast* is an incendiary, singlemindedly misanthropic debut. >>>FRANKLIN BRUND

Link

[www.fat-cat.co.uk](http://www.fat-cat.co.uk)

File Under

Lo-fi nihilism

R.I.Y.L.

Angry Samoans, Randy

Newman, Pavement,

Refrigerator



## THE REVOLUTION SMILE

Above The Noise *Flawless*

After posting Fred Durst's ill-gotten Interscope VP digits a zillion times on their priceless gossip page, Buddyhead.com watched the Chocolate Starfish exact "revenge" by thrusting a ham fist into their label roster and extracting the Revolution Smile. Listening to the Sacramento quartet's reconfigured full-length debut, it's unclear what Buddyhead, home of jagged punk nasties like the Icarus Line and Your Enemies Friends, ever saw in their Smile to begin with. Frontman/guitarist Shaun Lopez teamed with Onlinedrawing's Jonah Matranga as

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[www.therevolutionsmile.com](http://www.therevolutionsmile.com)

File Under

More of that he says-

she says bullshit

R.I.Y.L.

Skrape, Trustcompany, Trapt

the six-string smarts behind post-mortem influential Far, but here sounds barely an evolutionary rung above Puddle Of Mudd thug Wes Scantlin; behold and fear that ugly Cali surf jock snarl. Dave Sardy, former Barkmarket heavy and producer behind brainy mid '90s ballbreakers from Orange 9mm to Helmet, is behind the board here, and the sludge bass lead to "Bonethrower" gets things off on the right thrash. Then the "hooks," "melodies," "themes" and other unfortunate songwriting malfunctions gallop in, messily finger-painted with whiny Rev Smile-from-the-block affirmations ("Association built on what's cool... you must be some kind of an alien"). The pleasant, detuned downstrokes of "The Ride Of Los Angeles" and "I Wish I" recall Far, but without Matranga's monster range and sweet idealism, the Noise is generally deep-throat thuggery befitting the Limp oracle. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

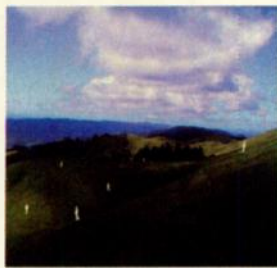
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friends of mine

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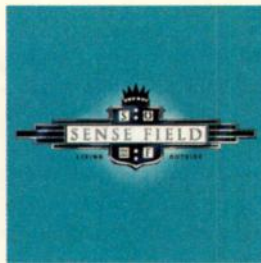
**RF**

**Interno Odd Shaped Case**

"When working on *Interno* I successfully fell asleep one day listening to mixes. I took that as a good omen and representative of the sound I wanted to accomplish." Berkeley, California-based multi-instrumentalist Ryan Francesconi sums up the sentiment of the music he creates succinctly there, which, depending on how you look at it, could be considered soothing, hypnotizing and comforting, or overwhelmingly boring. If you've a palate that welcomes the subtle sound designs of Fennesz or Matmos, your take will more than likely be weighted

Link  
[www.are-f.com](http://www.are-f.com)  
 File Under  
 Static lullabies  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Fennesz, Múm, Matmos, Freight Elevator Quartet

to the former. For much of this record, Francesconi made use of a program he created called Spongefork, which both generates and scrambles sounds for all sorts of loopy textures, and then added organic sounds from guitar, flute, clarinet—even sawblade. The result is a mix of reserved, glitchy beats and swirling, atmospheric sounds that makes *Interno* come off a lot more like a woozy soundtrack than an album. In the right setting, this can be bliss—background lullabies for a lazy summer Sunday night, driving music for when the conversation's flowing. There's much to get lost in, with all the layers RF's built in and the repetitive snakecharming of the beats—a welcome salve for frazzled nerve endings. The nature of these sort of digital lullabies, though, means that once the music's off, it's lost, too. >>>NICOLE KEIPER



**SENSE FIELD**

**Living Outside** Network America

If you're interested in adopting this ex-Revelation Records junkyard dawg/current cuddly, eager-to-please, latter-day emo puppy, you (and your folks) should know the following: As insanely catchy and heartfelt as Sense Field's palm-muted, problem-solving pop is in your own room, you might as well surrender your genitalia at the door of their live show. They're that cloying and wack. They make Goo Goo Dolls look like Neurosis. Yet, on disc, the dilemma persists: How has Sense Field not broken through? *Living Outside* is a contextual replica of 2001's equally delectable, shoulda-been-a-monster *Tonight And*

Link  
[www.sensefield.com](http://www.sensefield.com)  
 File Under  
 Shameless(ly undeniable)  
 adult alternative  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Onlinedrawing, Jimmy Eat World, Our Lady Peace

*Forever*, fat as Farley with punchy, dual guitar melodies and Jon Bunch's scoop-out-your-teenage-heart-with-a-dull-spoon croon, which careens from wussy falsetto to staggering airhorn. Oft-employed toy piano makes for affecting and tasteful percussion, and just-right Pro Tools flourishes in "Take What You Want" and "You Own Me" segue seamlessly into so-stale-they're-fresh hooks. Sense Field even slip in a loose, whirring interpretation of the Cure nugget, "A Letter To Elise," that sans the helpful spoilers of reviews like this, comes off like another darling, bittersweet original. Maybe these guys are only at the one-at-a-time *Night Of The Living Dead* stage of brain drain; full-scale mall zombie takeover should be on the horizon. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

**THE COMP PILE** (OUR GUIDE TO COMPILATION CDS) BY TOM MALLON

<b>TITLE</b>	Branches And Routes (Fat Cat)	We Came From Beyond Volume 2 (Razor & Tie)	Peace Not War (Future Appletree)	Yes New York (Wolfgang Morden)	Punk Vs. Emo (Fastmusic/Mindset)
<b>CONCEPT</b>	Six years of sound narcotics from one of London's most diverse labels	Digging up underground hip-hop	Bands from three continents throw down some protest songs	A thorough sampling of NYC's best	Will the conflict never cease?
<b>TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC</b>	You're desperately in need of some aural sex	Defectors from the Top 25 countdown	Conscientious objectors	Emaciated guys in women's jeans, and the women who love them	Weeping teens and <i>Hot Topic</i> punkers
<b>NAMES TO DROP</b>	Sigur Rós, Kid 606, Black Dice, Múm	Aesop Rock, Slug, Wildchild, Planet Asia	Public Enemy, Yo La Tengo, Ms. Dynamite	The Strokes, Radio 4, Calla, the Rapture	Onlinedrawing, Born To Lose, the Early November
<b>SUMS IT UP</b>	"Pursuant To The Vibe" (Mice Parade)	"Devastating MC's" (Esoteric, Celph Titled & Apathy)	"Combat Rock" (Sleater-Kinney)	"NYC" (Interpol)	"Insincerity As An Artform" (Further Seems Forever)
<b>VERDICT</b>	The label that discovered Sigur Rós apparently makes its offices in the Halls of Good Taste.	Mike Nardone's <i>We Came From Beyond</i> radio show's been spotlighting hip-hop's best for 15 years, and doesn't let up here.	Ani DiFranco: "It's time to get our government to pull its big dick out of the sand of someone else's desert and put it back in its pants."	All the joys of living in New York, without the people. Or the smell. Or the draconian lifestyle laws. Or the...	In war, nobody wins. Especially not in this one.



## SHAI HULUD

**That Within Blood Ill-tempered** Revelation

Veterans Shai Hulud made their name with a brutal onslaught of metal-influenced hardcore, and *That Within Blood Ill-tempered* is a true testament to both genres. They've loaded *Blood* with multi-layered guitars and mathematical rhythms, making it more technical and inventive than their previous efforts. However, the most technical of difficulties occurs in the dense lyrical content: Even if vocalist Geert van der Velde clearly enunciated his abrasive, monotone screams, rhetorical mystification abounds (what exactly is "that within blood ill-tempered" anyway?).

In "Willing Oneself To Forget What Cannot Otherwise Be Forgiven," van der Velde wails, "If that which merely tears seldom lasts/ How can that which breaks ever heal...Here I am/ Forsaken just as I forsook the sun." What art thou saying, Geert? To their devoted fans, the cerebral singer is gushing with intellectual splendor; to everyone else, he's merely spouting pretentious jargon. But whether you're bewildered by the lyrics or not, Shai Hulud indisputably brings uncompromising hardcore to the forefront with a passion and honesty that is rarely seen these days. In all its complexity, *That Within Blood Ill-tempered* proves that aggressive music can still be sincere and inspiring, even if you don't understand exactly what it is it's trying to inspire. >>>TRACEY JOHN

Link

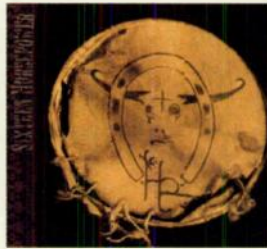
[www.hulud.com](http://www.hulud.com)

File Under

Metalcore (King James version)

R.I.Y.L.

Indecision, From Autumn To Ashes, Darkest Hour's Mark Of The Judas



## SIXTEEN HORSEPOWER

**Olden Jetset**

On its last outing, *Folklore*, 16 Horsepower perfected the art of sounding disquieting even while remaining quiet. *Olden* presents the Denver-based trio in its earlier, more aggressive clothes. Although this collection of mid-'90s demos is cleanly recorded and its arrangements vary little from versions that appeared on the band's three major-label releases, the removal of a layer of production sheen renews the songs' stark intensity. Frontman David Eugene Edwards' vocal delivery, a restrained, desperate wail reminiscent of the Gun Club's late Jeffrey Lee Pierce, summons

Link

[www.16horsepower.net](http://www.16horsepower.net)

File Under

Reverb and religion

R.I.Y.L.

Nick Cave, Grant Lee Buffalo, the Gun Club, less jokey Violent Femmes

the fervor of a medicine show barnstorming the Old West, channeling the fire-and-brimstone religious imagery of his Nazarene preacher grandfather. Unusual string instruments like the bandolier and hurdy gurdy (in addition to more conventional slide and electric guitar) lend the music an anachronistic feel and a unique sound several paces removed from alt-country. Without ever rocking out, Edwards and his bandmates (drummer Jean-Yves Tola and since-departed bassist Keven Soll) deliver the tension and catharsis central to rock music. Given Edwards' transfixing stage presence, it's surprising that *Olden's* six live tracks add little to the eerie immediacy of the studio demos. Somewhere between a greatest hits and an odds 'n' sods compilation (with interview snippets contributing to the bootleg vibe), *Olden* is a great opportunity for the uninitiated to catch up on a powerful band. >>>GLEN SARVADY



## THE TYDE

**Twice** Rough Trade

The Tyde's fine 2001 debut *Once* drew rampant comparisons to Beachwood Sparks, partly for their breezy twang but mainly because the California bands shared three members. To combat this identity crisis, Tyde frontman/songwriter Darren Rademaker ups the tempos on *Twice* and jettisons two of the overlapping players, retaining bassist/brother Brent. The Sparks' smooth, retro vibe remains a decent reference point, but the power-pop jangle and encyclopedic musical vocabulary of Velvet Crush (with whom the Tyde shares drummer Ric Menck) is at least as illuminating.

Link

[www.thetyde.com](http://www.thetyde.com)

File Under

SoCal rock tutorials

R.I.Y.L.

Beachwood Sparks, Lloyd Cole, Velvet Crush

Distinguishing the Tyde from their cousins is the prominent keyboard work of Ann Do, ranging from the organ charge of "Crystal Canyons" to the new-wave synth squiggles of "Memorable Moments." *Twice* exudes a love of Lloyd Cole-style '80s Britpop, channeling these influences through a heady, laid-back SoCal prism connecting Love to Buffalo Springfield to the Plimsouls. Darren's voice can be treacly and precious on softer tracks, but he's usually energized by a quintet dispensing aggressive hooks, like on the beach-party boogie "Shortboard City." On the country-flavored "Blood Brothers," Darren defiantly challenges, "If you want to know what it's like to be a man/ Try spending 25 years in a band." He's underestimating the age of some of the Tyde's influences while padding his own résumé, but his band melds that lengthy timeline impeccably. >>>GLEN SARVADY

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**WEED PATCH**

**Maybe The Brakes Will Fail** Ohgrowupalready  
Weed Patch is L.A.-based songwriter Neil Weiss, and for the first verse or so of opener "Let Go Of The Wheel," it shows—the clacking drum machine and disjointed feedback promise yet another glorified-demo "project" of modestly noisy ambitions. But three minutes later, after sharply executed vocal harmonies and a surprising but fitting trumpet hook, it's clear that Weiss has achieved something more: *Maybe The Brakes Will Fail* is a full-blooded alt-country opus that easily overcomes its studio-bound origins. Much of the credit goes to Seth

Link

[www.altcountry.nl/weedpatch](http://www.altcountry.nl/weedpatch)

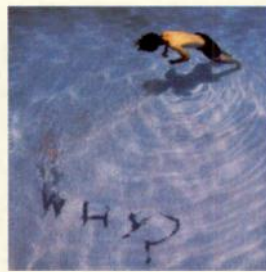
File Under

Artful roots-pop

R.I.Y.L.

Granddaddy, Gram Parsons, Uncle Tupelo

Rothschild's transparent, detail-oriented co-production, and to a strong bench of sidemen, including dobro-banjo ace Ben Peeler and drummers Adam Maples and Malcolm Cross. But it's Weiss' disciplined songcraft that makes the disc more than a skillful exercise. Clever touches ("I'm feeling lucky/ Like a horse in Kentucky") flash by with offhanded ease, while the emotional free-fall depicted of "Nothings" and "Dreaming My Days Away" is checked by an unfussy, formal and melodic directness. On a more self-indulgent record, the sudden optimism of the closing "Crash Landing" might seem silly, or at least unearned; but by the time Weiss sings, "I will still be standing/ When the sun comes up again," most listeners will hope he's right. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



**WHY?**

**Oakland** azulasyllum Anticon

One day the Genre Police are going to storm-troop the local indie retailer, knock the door-closer from its meticulous fastening, clumsily scramble to the CD racks and shred all the bin cards—because there has to be something Anticon can do to forever banish the label from the hip-hop section. Oakland-via-Cincinnati producer-poet-weirdo-outsider Why?'s tiny music—diminutive in duration, volume and design—is even more out there than *Themselves* or (co-Why?-penned) *cLOUDDEAD*. As if using Beck's "Loser" as post-rock fodder instead of pop-song

Link

[www.anticon.com](http://www.anticon.com)

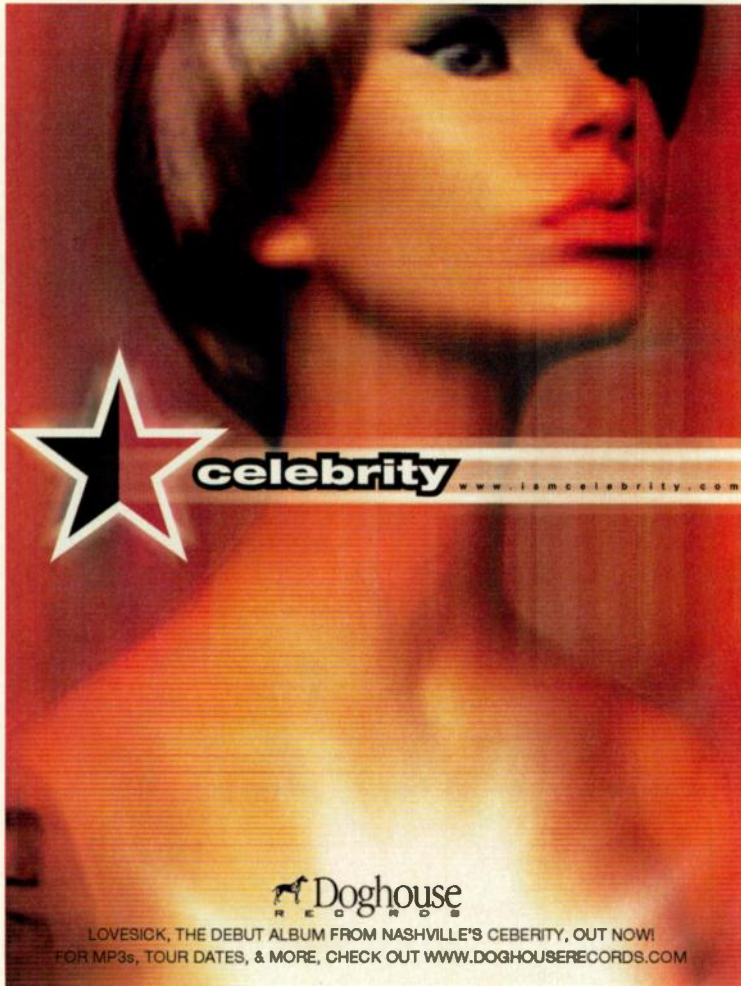
File Under

Why bothered

R.I.Y.L.

Fog, Basehead, cLOUDDEAD

otter, Why? cobbles fuzzy, funkless beats and formless washes of guitar (or piano, static, samples, toys, etc.) to form a lumpy bed that distorts the posture of his forlorn beat poetry, scribbled on napkins and spewed into minute-and-a-half-long playground jingles. In the opener "Ferriswheel," words are jostled into piles and set against little more than acoustic guitar, maracas, a triangle and a mildly atonal choir of Why?'s buzzing along joylessly: "If you can teach a dog to/ Play the kazoo/ If an ape can take an interest in his hairstyle/ It only follows that you'd enjoy a morning jog in high-heels/ While your dancing shoe feet bleed." With a voice like a rusty horn and a sound like a rusty machine, Why? is a lost cause that doesn't need choruses for you to touch his stereopathic soul. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



**WIDE RIGHT**

**Wide Right** Pop Top



A self-proclaimed rust belt girl, Leah Archibald never really left Buffalo, even if her home address now reads Brooklyn. It's a fact she accepts with equal parts anger on songs like "Pete Best" (about the friends trapped in her hometown) and resignation, as found in the determination to find a good time and barbequed chicken at the "Firemen's Fair." But if you think that makes her music resigned (angry's another story), think again. While Archibald ultimately farts artiness in a lawn-kitsch town, her guitar-bass-drums lineup smells like beer and pretzels at 1 a.m. rather than

Link

[www.widerightmusic.com](http://www.widerightmusic.com)

File Under

The Buffalo side

R.I.Y.L.

Bottle Rockets, Drive-By Truckers, Ani DiFranco

meat and potatoes at 6 p.m. Songs like the self-explanatory "Go To Hell" and the you-can-go-home-again monument "400 Miles" rock right past indie's attitude comas and never once look back to the salad days of alt-rock. And if you think that means her Buffalo stance offers up no smarts, well, how many songwriters could give Vincent Gallo his due for his mugging vanity project *Buffalo 66* and prove themselves one helluva film critic in the process? And on "Another Way," Archibald has more to say about sexuality than is dreamt of in the teaches of Peaches. She's more than friends, less than lovers with her gay buddy. But what will ultimately force a definition of their relationship is that at 4:30 a.m., she's up with her son and he's still at the bar. >>>KEVIN JOHN

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## YEAR OF THE RABBIT

Year Of The Rabbit **Elektra**

Ken Andrews, the viscous voice anchoring this *Watership Down*, fronted one of the most egregiously underrated rock bands of the '90s, Failure, whose *Fantastic Planet* (the abstract, stoner kid brother of Tool's *Aenima*) brings vomit to my lips every time I find it rotting in a used bin. While Andrews reportedly had hella stress collaborating with Failure's multi-instrumentalist co-auteur Greg Edwards, their conflicting visions pushed the songs from space-rock operas to high art. Year Of The Rabbit, Andrews' first "real band" in a while (he did some enjoyable, if typically unheard, electro-pop under

Link

[www.yearoftherabbit.net](http://www.yearoftherabbit.net)

File Under

Today's horoscope: failure breeds success

R.I.Y.L.

Blinker The Star, Self, Cave In

the pseudonym On), suffers without a comparable heavyweight challenger. Refugees from National Skyline and Shiner have the rock-out chops, but this is clearly Andrews' vessel: the pervasive, wary romanticism, the launch pad phase-shifting and the perfectly dense, detuned progressions. All of it is loud and most of it is lovely, just in a "collection of singles" way. "Vaporize" and "Absent Stars" crunch and march double-time, like less drugged-out, gritty cuts from Failure's *Magnified*, the imaginative "Rabbit Hole" is a clear-cut Nirvana-fied smash, and the slithering boa bass of "Hunted" affords a well-deserved mid-album decompression period. Let's just hope that next time Andrews strays even further from the gravitational pull. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI



## MICHAEL YONKERS BAND

*Microminiature Love* **Sub Pop**

Heard one way, the Michael Yonkers Band's *Microminiature Love* belongs with late '60s experimental envelope-pushers like Captain Beefheart and Frank Zappa. The album, recorded for Sire Records in 1968 but not released until Destijl's vinyl issue last year, is full of nuggets of fucked-up blues guitar, anti-war screeds and psychedelic declamations. But *Microminiature* also sounds like a prescient forerunner of avant-garde punks like Pere Ubu and early Sonic Youth, with weird tunings, quavering vocals and stripped-down, lo-fi rock. Yonkers, who still lives in his native Minnesota, tinkered with guitars, chopping them up and adding homemade pedals and knobs, in search of distorted perfection and perfect distortion. "My House," one of six tracks that Sub Pop has appended to the original album, begins with a repetitive garage riff that gradually becomes drenched in reverb and feedback; it's a three-minute journey through the looking glass. Likewise, "The Thunder Speaks" evolves into a syncopated groove that rocks like the MC5 or the Troggs. While the Hendrix ramblings of "Scat Jam" sound dated, the Vietnam rants, such as the explosive "Boy In The Sandbox" and the impassioned "Kill The Enemy" are sadly relevant. Backed by his brother Jim Yunker on drums and Tom Wallfred on bass, Yonkers is a guitar hero that never was, but perhaps now will be. >>>STEVE KLINGE

Link

[www.subpop.com](http://www.subpop.com)

File Under

Garage psych archeology

R.I.Y.L.

Captain Beefheart, Pere Ubu,

Angels Of Light,

the *Nuggets* collections

tars, chopping them up and adding homemade pedals and knobs, in search of distorted perfection and perfect distortion. "My House," one of six tracks that Sub Pop has appended to the original album, begins with a repetitive garage riff that gradually becomes drenched in reverb and feedback; it's a three-minute journey through the looking glass. Likewise, "The Thunder Speaks" evolves into a syncopated groove that rocks like the MC5 or the Troggs. While the Hendrix ramblings of "Scat Jam" sound dated, the Vietnam rants, such as the explosive "Boy In The Sandbox" and the impassioned "Kill The Enemy" are sadly relevant. Backed by his brother Jim Yunker on drums and Tom Wallfred on bass, Yonkers is a guitar hero that never was, but perhaps now will be. >>>STEVE KLINGE



## ZYKOS

*Comedy Horn* **Post Parlo**

It takes a lot to make a good first impression these days, especially when treading down the crowded indie-rock road of straightforward pop songwriting. Austin, Texas' Zykos are proof of the possibilities though, melding simple structures with the right amount of creative impulse and experimentation, and eschewing flashiness in favor of solid composition. *Comedy Horn's* success comes from a relentlessly bouncy and upbeat vibe, augmented by piano melodies and tinny drumbeats that crop up around every corner. The pop-punk tone of singer Mike Booher might throw

Link

[www.zykosmusic.com](http://www.zykosmusic.com)

File Under

Austin's Rookies of the Year

R.I.Y.L.

Silver Scooter, Spoon, Western Keys

listeners for an initial loop, but his hefty lyrics justify his intonation. Over the often-danceable beats and glimmers of technological experimentation, it becomes pretty clear this is no amateur show. Like a junior version of the New Pornographers with some more aggressive impulses, Zykos fiddle with male and female vocals, meandering song styles, and a relaxed sense of self-assuredness that belies the fact that this is their debut disc. From the sparse intro of "Listening Pills" through the song's infectious coda, it's clear that Zykos has hit its stride early, and as evidenced by the epic "Understanding Fire," they're not afraid to stretch a good tune into an emotionally powerful and expansive rocker. If this is how Zykos begins their career, momentum alone could carry them into a much bigger spotlight. >>>PETER D'ANGELO



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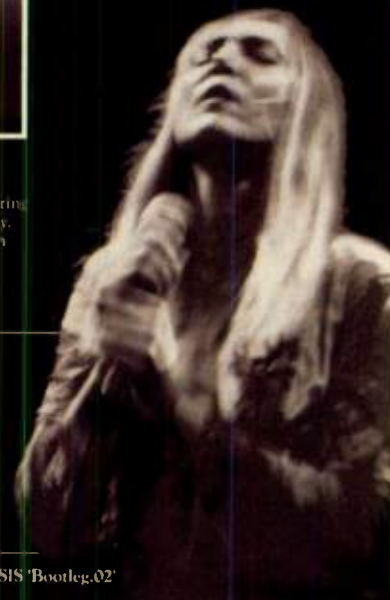
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LOW CULTURE  
'Edward's Lament!'



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<input type="checkbox"/> Jun '98	Garbage	<input type="checkbox"/> Sep '01	Björk
<input type="checkbox"/> Jul '98	Tricky	<input type="checkbox"/> Oct '01	Ryan Adams
<input type="checkbox"/> Aug '98	Smashing Pumpkins	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov/Dec '01	Sevendust
<input type="checkbox"/> Sep '98	Rancid <b>SOLD OUT</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Feb '02	Chemical Brothers
<input type="checkbox"/> Oct '98	Rob Zombie	<input type="checkbox"/> March/April '02	Starsailor
<input type="checkbox"/> Nov '98	Beck	<input type="checkbox"/> May '02	Wilco
<input type="checkbox"/> Dec '98	Marilyn Manson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> June '02	DJ Shadow LIMITED QUANTITY
<input type="checkbox"/> Jan '99	Beth Orton	<input type="checkbox"/> July '02	The Flaming Lips
<input type="checkbox"/> Feb '99	Ani DiFranco	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aug '02	The Hives LIMITED QUANTITY
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar '99	Kurt Cobain	<input type="checkbox"/> Sept '02	QOTSA
<input type="checkbox"/> Apr '99	Blur	<input type="checkbox"/> Oct '02	Jurassic 5
<input type="checkbox"/> May '99	Ben Folds Five <b>SOLD OUT</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov '02	Sigur Ros <b>SOLD OUT</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Jun '99	DJ Rap	<input type="checkbox"/> Dec '02	Pearl Jam
<input type="checkbox"/> Jul '99	Chemical Brothers	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan/Feb '03	Audioslave
		<input type="checkbox"/> March '03	Ben Harper



July '03 ROBERT RANDOLPH



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May '03 YEAH YEAH YEARS



April '03 THE WHITE STRIPES

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Since 1978, the *CMJ New Music Report* has been the primary source for information and chart data on college, non-commercial and commercial alternative radio airplay.

# CMJ

NEW MUSIC REPORT

# TOP 75

#1  
**GRANDDADDY**  
SUNDAY  
WILL-V2



1 GRANDDADDY Sunday Will/V2	26 PINBACK Offbeat! Absolutely Kosher/Touch And Go	51 ARAB STRAP Monday At The Hug And Pint Matador
2 RADIOHEAD Hail To The Thief Capitol	27 CLEM SNIDE Soft Spot spinART	52 BROADCAST Pendulum Warp
3 YEAH YEAH YEAHS Fever To Tell Interscope	28 KAITO Raid-Raid spinART	53 JAYHAWKS Rainy Day Music Lost Highway/American
4 THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS Electric Version Mint/Matador	29 GOLDFRAPP Black Cherry Mute	54 JUNIOR SENIOR C-D-Don't Don't Stop The Beat Crunchy Frog
5 BLUR Think Think Virgin	30 CAESARS 39 Minutes Of Bliss In An Obsolete Musical World Astralwerks	55 SENSES FAIL From The Depths Of Dreams [EP] Drive-Thru
6 THE WHITE STRIPES Elephant Third Man/V2	31 MANITOBA Up In Flames Leaf Label/Domino	56 RJD2 The Horror Definitive Jux
7 EELS Shooterzanny! DreamWorks	32 THE LONG WINTERS When I Pretend To Fall Barsuk	57 ERASE ERRATA Dancing Machine: The Erase Errata Remix Record Troubleman Unlimited
8 LIZ PHAIR Liz Phair Capitol	33 !!! Me And Gardens Down By The Schoolyard [A Two-Song CD] Touch And Go	58 NINA NASTASIA Run To Run Touch And Go
9 YO LA TENGO Summer Sun Matador	34 THE GOSSIP Movement Kill Rock Stars	59 THE NATURAL HISTORY Beat Beat Heartbeat Startime International
10 MOGWAI Happy Songs For Happy People Matador	35 PLEASURE FOREVER Alter Sub Pop	60 RH FACTOR Hard Groove Verve
11 FOUR TET Round! Domino	36 STARFLYER 59 Old Tooth And Nail	61 TINDERSTICKS Waiting For The Moon Beggars Banquet
12 THE MARS VOLTA De-Loused In The Comatorium Strummer/GSL/Universal	37 THE STARLIGHT MINTS Built On Squares PIAS America	62 BEN HARPER Diamonds On The Inside Virgin
13 NOFX The War On Errorism Fat Wreck Chords	38 GILLIAN WELCH Souls Journey Acony	63 THE FLAMING LIPS Fight Test [EP] Warner Bros.
14 PREFUSE 73 One Word Extinguisher Warp	39 ENON In This City Touch And Go	64 GOOD RIDDANCE Bound By Ties Of Blood And Affection Fat Wreck Chords
15 ALKALINE TRIO Good Mourning Vagrant	40 ROONEY Rooney Geffen/Interscope	65 TOSHACK HIGHWAY/SIANSPHERIC Magnetic Morning Aspirin Age Sonic Unyon
16 WIRE Send Pink Flag	41 BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE You Forgot It In People Arts And Crafts	66 EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE Plagiarhythm Nation Seeland
17 DROPKICK MURPHYS Blackout Hellcat	42 THE LUCKSMITHS Naturvlaste Drive-In	67 AKROBATIK Balance Coup d'Etat
18 DEFTONES Defines Maverick	43 PETE YORN Day I Forgot Columbia	68 ...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD The Secrets Of Elena's Tomb [EP] Interscope
19 THE FLAMING SIDEBURNS Sky Pilots Jetset	44 VENETTA RED Between The Never And The Now Epic	69 THE TROUBLE WITH SWEENEY I Know You Destroy Burnt Toast Vinyl
20 AMERICAN ANALOG SET Promise Of Love Tiger Style	45 BRAND NEW Deja Entendu Triple Crown/Razor And Tie	70 ARMOR FOR SLEEP Dream To Make Believe Equal Vision
21 VERBENA La Musica Negra Capitol	46 TOMAHAWK Mit Gas Ipecac	71 STEREO LAB ABC Music: The Radio 1 Sessions Strange Fruit
22 BRITTA PHILLIPS AND DEAN WAREHAM L'Avventura Jetset	47 THE PERNICE BROTHERS Yours, Mine And Ours Ashmont	72 THE THORNS The Thorns Aware/Columbia
23 JACK JOHNSON On And On Moonshine Conspiracy/Universal	48 AUTECHRE (CURATED) All Tomorrow's Parties 3.0 ATP	73 THE BLACK KEYS "nickfreakness" Fat Possum/Epitaph
24 THE DECEMBERISTS Castaways And Cutouts Hush/Kill Rock Stars	49 ESSENTIAL LOGIC Fanfare In The Garden: An Essential Logic Collection Kill Rock Stars	74 LAMB What Sound [Deluxe] Koch
25 LESS THAN JAKE Anthem Warner Bros.	50 LUCINDA WILLIAMS World Without Tears Lost Highway	75 FOG Ether Teeth Ninja Tune

### 5 YEARS AGO

MASSIVE ATTACK *Mezzanine* (Virgin)  
ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT *RFTC* (Interscope)  
SONIC YOUTH *A Thousand Leaves* (DGC)  
BAD RELIGION *No Substance* (Atlantic)  
TRICKY *Angels With Dirty Faces* (Elektra)

### 10 YEARS AGO

PJ HARVEY *Rid Of Me* (Island)  
PRIMUS *Pork Soda* (Interscope/Atlantic)  
PORNO FOR PYROS *Porno For Pyros* (Warner Bros.)  
THE FALL *The Infotainment Scan* (Matador/Atlantic)  
CRANES *Forever* (Dedicated/RCA)

## HIP-HOP TOP 10

1	<b>AKROBATIK</b> Balance <b>Coup d'Etat</b>
2	<b>BROTHER ALI</b> Shadows Of The Sun <b>Rhymesayers</b>
3	<b>PRINCE PAUL</b> The Politics Of The Business <b>Razor And Tie</b>
4	<b>RJD2</b> The Horror <b>Definitive Jux</b>
5	<b>WILDCHILD</b> Secondary Protocol <b>Stones Throw</b>
6	<b>MR. DIBBS</b> 30th Song <b>Rhymesayers</b>
7	<b>UGLY DUCKLING</b> Taste The Secret <b>Emperor Norton</b>
8	<b>FAKTS ONE</b> "The Show Starter" b/w "Life Music" (12 Inch) <b>Coup d'Etat</b>
9	<b>VU (VARIABLE UNIT)</b> Handbook For The Apocalypse <b>Wide Hive</b>
10	<b>PUSH BUTTON OBJECTS</b> Ghetto Blaster <b>Chocolate Industries</b>

## LOUD ROCK TOP 10

1	<b>DEFTONES</b> Deftones <b>Maverick</b>
2	<b>BLACK DAHLIA MURDER</b> Unhallowed <b>Metal Blade</b>
3	<b>LAMB OF GOD</b> As The Palaces Burn <b>Prosthetic</b>
4	<b>CHIMAIRA</b> The Impossibility Of Reason <b>Roadrunner</b>
5	<b>SOILWORK</b> Figure Number Five <b>Nuclear Blast</b>
6	<b>DARKEST HOUR</b> Hidden Hands Of A Sadist Nation <b>Victory</b>
7	<b>TYPE O NEGATIVE</b> Life Is Killing Me <b>Roadrunner</b>
8	<b>SHAI HULUD</b> That Within Blood III-Tempered <b>Revelation</b>
9	<b>ANTHRAX</b> We've Come For You All <b>Sanctuary</b>
10	<b>IN FLAMES</b> Trigger [EP] <b>Nuclear Blast</b>

## RETAIL TOP 25

1	<b>RADIOHEAD</b> Hail To The Thief <b>Capitol</b>
2	<b>ANNIE LENNOX</b> Bare J
3	<b>METALLICA</b> St. Anger <b>Elektra</b>
4	<b>LUTHER VANDROSS</b> Dance With My Father J
5	<b>STEELY DAN</b> Everything Must Go <b>Reprise</b>
6	<b>LED ZEPPELIN</b> How The West Was Won <b>Atlantic</b>
7	<b>GRANDDADDY</b> Sunday Will/V2
8	<b>DROPKICK MURPHYS</b> Blackout <b>Hellcat</b>
9	<b>JOE BUDDEN</b> Joe Budden <b>Def Jam</b>
10	<b>JACK JOHNSON</b> On And On <b>Moonshine Conspiracy/Universal</b>
11	<b>THE WHITE STRIPES</b> Elephant <b>Third Man/V2</b>
12	<b>COLDPLAY</b> A Rush Of Blood To The Head <b>Capitol</b>
13	<b>JEWEL</b> 0304 <b>Atlantic</b>
14	<b>50 CENT</b> Get Rich Or Die Trying <b>Shady/Aftermath/Interscope</b>
15	<b>EVANESCENCE</b> Fallen <b>Wind-Up</b>
16	<b>NORAH JONES</b> Come Away With Me <b>Blue Note</b>
17	<b>TRAIN</b> My Private Nation <b>Columbia</b>
18	<b>FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE</b> Welcome Interstate Managers <b>S-Curve/Virgin</b>
19	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> 2 Fast 2 Furious <b>Def Jam</b>
20	<b>DEFTONES</b> Deftones <b>Maverick</b>
21	<b>STAIN'D</b> 14 Shades Of Gray <b>Flip/Elektra</b>
22	<b>GILLIAN WELCH</b> Soul Journey <b>Acony</b>
23	<b>SEAN PAUL</b> Dutty Rock <b>VP/Atlantic</b>
24	<b>EELS</b> Shootenanny! <b>DreamWorks</b>
25	<b>BROTHA LYNCH HUNG</b> Lynch By Inch: Suicide Note <b>Siccmade</b>



**#1 HIP-HOP**  
**AKROBATIK**  
BALANCE COUP D'ETAT



**#1 RPM**  
**PREFUSE 73**  
ONE WORD EXTINGUISHER WARP



**#1 RETAIL**  
**RADIOHEAD**  
HAIL TO THE THIEF CAPITOL

## RPM TOP 10

1	<b>PREFUSE 73</b> One Word Extinguisher <b>Warp</b>
2	<b>FOUR TET</b> Rounds <b>Domino</b>
3	<b>DEADLY AVENGER</b> Deep Red <b>Shadow</b>
4	<b>DJ SOUL SLINGER</b> Ecosystem: The Brazilian Joint <b>Unity Entertainment</b>
5	<b>RALPH MYERZ AND THE JACK HERREN BAND</b> A <b>Emperor Norton</b>
6	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> Idol Tryouts: Ghostly... <b>Ghostly International</b>
7	<b>THE CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA</b> Man With A Movie Camera <b>Ninja Tune</b>
8	<b>DEEP DISH</b> Global Underground: Toronto <b>Global Underground</b>
9	<b>STATELESS</b> Art Of No State <b>Ubiquity</b>
10	<b>808 STATE</b> Outpost Transmission <b>Shadow</b>

## JAZZ TOP 10

1	<b>RH FACTOR</b> Hard Groove <b>Verve</b>
2	<b>JOHN SCOFIELD BAND</b> Up All Night <b>Verve</b>
3	<b>ERIK TRUFFAZ</b> The Walk Of The Giant Turtle <b>Blue Note</b>
4	<b>BOBBY PREVITE AND BUMP</b> Counterclockwise <b>Palmetto</b>
5	<b>BILL FRISELL</b> The Intercontinentals <b>Nonesuch</b>
6	<b>TED NASH</b> Still Evolved <b>Palmetto</b>
7	<b>SOULIVE</b> Soulive <b>Blue Note</b>
8	<b>GARAGE A TROIS</b> Emphasizer <b>Tone-Cool</b>
9	<b>CHICK COREA</b> Rendezvous In New York <b>Stretch</b>
10	<b>RAVI COLTRANE</b> Mad 6 <b>Eighty-Eight's/Columbia</b>

# JUST OUT

## JULY 8

CYRUS CHESTNUT *It's All Right With Me* Warner Bros.  
 THE CLIENTELE *The Violet Hour* Merge  
 FAITH AND THE MUSE *The Burning Session* Metropolis  
 FICTIONAL *Fiction* Metropolis  
 HAUJOB *Vertical Theory* Metropolis  
 JULIANA THEORY *Live Tooth And Nail*  
 CEVIN KEY/KEN MARSHALL *Dragon Experience* Metropolis  
 MGI THE VISIONARY *Looking Back* Uprok  
 QUETZAL *Worksongs* Vanguard  
 DAVID LEE ROTH *Diamond Dave* Magna Carta  
 SOUNDTRACK *How To Deal* Capitol  
 SPARKS *Little Beethoven* Palm  
 THALIA *Thalia* Virgin  
 TWIN ATLAS *Inside The Skate Scandal* North Of January/Twilight Furniture

## JULY 15

BEAR VS. SHARK *Right Now, You're In The Best Of* Hands *Equal Vision*  
 SI BEGG *Director's Cut* Mute  
 DAVE BROCKIE EXPERIENCE *Songs For The Wrong* Metal Blade  
 CHEAP SEX *Launch Off To War* Punkcore  
 CHINGY *Jackpot* Priority  
 DEADWEIGHT *Stroking The Moon* Alternative Tentacles  
 DEFARI *Odds & Evens* High Times  
 DESA *Demonstrates Birth* Substandard-New Red Archives  
 JOE ELY *Streets Of Sin* Rounder  
 FONDAS *Coming Now, The Fondas* Sympathy For The Record Industry  
 SEB FONTAINE *Perfecto Presents Seb Fontaine* Thrive-Perfecto  
 FRIENDS FOREVER *Killball* Load  
 STAN GETZ *Captain Marvel* Columbia-Legacy Jazz  
 GODHEAD *Evolver* Reality  
 JAN HAMMER *First Seven Days* Columbia-Legacy Jazz  
 HEAVENLY STATES *Heavenly States* Future Farmer  
 HONEYRIDER *All Systems Go* Orange Sky  
 ICED EARTH *Alive In Athens* Century Media  
 ICED EARTH *Days Of Purgatory* Century Media  
 TED LEO/PHARMACISTS *Treble In Trouble* Ace Fu  
 LORDZ OF BROOKLYN *Graffiti Roc* High Times  
 MEDICINE *Mechanical Forces Of Love* Wall Of Sound-Astrahwerks  
 JESSY MOSS *Street Knuckles* DreamWorks  
 MR. BRADY *Dirty* Battle Axe  
 NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD *New Mexican* Disaster Squad A-F  
 NICOTINE *School Of Liberty* Asian Man  
 OBLIVIONS *Rock 'N' Roll Holiday (Live In Atlanta)* Sympathy For The Record Industry  
 PARIS, TEXAS *Are You Ready* Polyvinyl  
 POLE *Pole* Mute  
 SOUNDTRACK *Across 155th Street* Melee-DreamWorks  
 30 YEARS WAR *Under The Gun* Substandard-New Red Archives  
 U.S. BOMBS *Put Strength In The Final Blow* Disaster  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Flowers In The Wildwood* Trikont-Bubblecore  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Punk Rock Is Your Friend: Kung Fu Sampler #4* Kung Fu  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *R.U. Electronic Vol. 2* Lo-Bubblecore  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Russendisko Hits* Trikont-Bubblecore

## JULY 22

ROB CROW *My Room Is A Mess* Absolutely Kosher  
 THE DANDY WARHOLS *Welcome To The Monkey* House Capitol  
 HEM *Rabbit Songs* DreamWorks  
 HAUJOB *Vertical Theory* Dim Mak  
 KARL HENDRICKS TRIO *The Jerks Win Again* Merge  
 JANE'S ADDICTION *Hypersonic* Capitol  
 MARIA *My Soul* DreamWorks  
 MYSTIC *Cuts For Luck, Scars for Freedom (Learning To Breathe)* DreamWorks  
 SENSE FIELD *Living Outside* Network  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Branches And Routes* FatCat  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Survive And Advance, Vol. 3* Merge  
 YELLOWCARD *Ocean Avenue* Capitol

## JULY 29

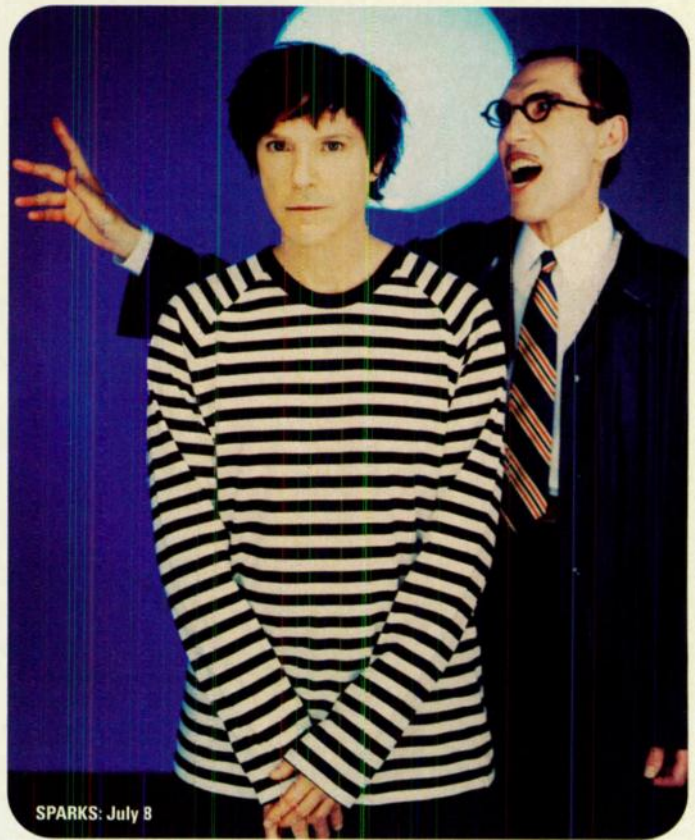
CAMBUS *Rip The Jacker* Babygrande-Koch  
 CRESCENT *By The Roads And The Fields* Fat Cat-Bubblecore  
 D.F.A. *Defy False Authority* Six Weeks  
 JESSY MOSS *Street Knuckles* DreamWorks  
 JS *Ice Cream* DreamWorks  
 KALMAH *Swampsong* Century Media  
 LABYRINTH *Labyrinth* Century Media  
 LEAFCUTTER JOHN *Housebound Spirit* Planet Mu-Bubblecore  
 NEVERMORE *Enemies Of Reality* Century Media  
 NIGHTRAGE *Sweet Vengeance* Century Media  
 PAINT IT BLACK *CVA* Jade Tree  
 POLYSICS *Neu* Asian Man  
 RUNNAMUCKS *Of A Different Breed* Six Weeks  
 DAMPARTAIN *Dan Sartain Vs. The Serpentes* Swamp  
 THE SLEEPY JACKSON *Lovers* Honest Jon's-Astrawerks  
 SUPER FURRY ANIMALS *Phantom Power* XL-Beggars Group  
 TORAI TORAI TORRENCE *A Cynic's Nightmare* Militia Group  
 PAUL VAN DYK *Global* Mute  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Punk Seven Inch CD Vol. 2* Lookout  
 WHATEVER IT TAKES *Fistful Of Revolution* A-F  
 ZION I *Curb Servin'* Live Up-Raphivism  
 ZS ZS *Troubleman Unit*

## AUGUST 5

DEAD SCIENCE *Submariner* Absolutely Kosher  
 FUNKER VOGT *Revivor* Dim Mak  
 PANSY DIVISION *Total Entertainment* Alternative Tentacles  
 ARUNDHATI, ROY *Come September - In Conversation* Wit Howard Zinn *Alternative Tentacles*  
 SISTERHOOD OF CONVOLUTED THINKERS *Better Days* Teenbeat  
 VELVET ACID CHRIST *Hex Angel (Utopia/Dystopia)* Dim Mak

## AUGUST 12

ALBATROSS *We Are The Lazer Viking* Ace Fu  
 ASTERISK *Dogma* Three One G  
 BLUSOM *Go Slowly All The Way Round The Outside* Second Nature  
 RAY BRYANT *Somewhere In France* Hyena  
 CASH BROTHERS *A Brand New Light* Zoe-Rounder



SPARKS: July 8

CASKET LOTTERY *Possibilities And Maybes* Second Nature  
 DUDDOS *Kogioeso! Shura-Shu-Shun!* Sound Pollution  
 EXTOL *Sinergy* Century Media  
 EUROPA 51 *Abstractions* Lo  
 HIM *Many In High Places Are Not Well* Bubblecore  
 HARUNA ISHOLA *Apala Messenger* IndigeDisc Hyena  
 INHUMAN *New Nightmare* A-F  
 MAKOTO *Human Elements* Good Looking  
 MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS *Just To Spite You* Dirtnap  
 NORTHER *Mirrors Of Madness* Century Media  
 CHIEF STEPHEN OSADEBE *Sound Time* IndigeDisc-Hyena  
 PANSY DIVISION *Total Entertainment* Alternative Tentacles  
 BUDDY RICH *Wham* Hyena  
 ROY *Tacomatose* Initial  
 RUDIMENTS *Bitch, Bitch, Bitch* Asian Man  
 RUDIMENTS *Circle Of Empire 1990-1993* Asian Man  
 SANTANA *Caravanserai; Moon Flower; Love Devotion Surrender; Welcome (reissues)* Columbia-Legacy  
 SOLGER *Codex 1983* Empty  
 SPOTLIGHT SYNDICATE *Forget The Static Past* Substandard-New Red Archives  
 STIGMATO INC. *Realty Check* Utensil  
 STRYCHNINE *Die Oakland Stadtmusikanten: Live* TKO  
 THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES *This Is Meant To Hurt You* Jade Tree  
 BOB THOMPSON *Sound Of Speed* Bacchus Archives  
 TRUXTON *TruXTon* Substandard-New Red Archives  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Boston Scene Report* TKO  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Fueling The Flames Of Revolution* A-F  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *Gravity Video 2* Gravity  
 VIKI/HAIR PLACE *Split* Load

## AUGUST 19

ALIEN ANT FARM *tsuANT* DreamWorks  
 BUNNYDRUMS *PKD/Simulacra* Dim Mak  
 FIRESIDE *Get Shot* V2  
 MOWED BY VOICES *Earthquake Glue* Metazor  
 HOCICO *Disidencia Inquebrante* Dim Mak  
 THELONIOUS MONK *Crisis Cross; It's Monk Time; Solo Monk; Underground (reissues)* Columbia-Legacy Jazz  
 MOWETT *A Goodfella's Life* DreamWorks  
 NUMBER ONE GUN *Celebrate Mistakes* Floodgate  
 SLUMBER PARTY 3 *Kill Rock Stars*

STAR SPANGLES *Bazooka!!!* Capitol  
 MATT SUGGS *Amigo Row* Merge  
 SUPERCHUNK *Cup Of Sand* Merge  
 MIRAH YOM TOV ZEITLYN, GINGER BROOKS, TAKAHASHI AND FRIENDS *Songs From The Black Mountain Music Project* K

## AUGUST 26

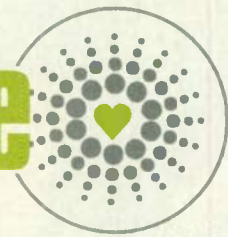
ARCH ENEMY *Anthems Of Rebellion* Century Media  
 CLIENT *Client* Mute  
 MANDO DIAO *Bring 'Em In* Mute  
 T.S. MONK *Higher Ground* Hyena  
 CHALEE TENNISON *Parading In The Rain* DreamWorks  
 STARS *Heart* Arts And Crafts  
 JOHNNY WINTER *Johmy Winter; Second Winter (reissues)* Columbia-Legacy

## SEPTEMBER 2

JEFF BUCKLEY *Live At Sin-E* Columbia-Legacy  
 THE BYRDS *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* Columbia-Legacy  
 MUDDY WATERS *Muddy Mississippi Waters Live* Columbia-Legacy  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS *West Side Story* Sony Classical-Legacy

## SEPTEMBER 9

NOAM CHOMSKY *Emerging Framework Of World Power* Alternative Tentacles  
 ELBOW *Cast Of Thousands* V2  
 LEAVES *Breathe* DreamWorks  
 MATTHEW HERBERT BIG BAND *Swing Time* Accidental  
 NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS *Polaris* Tone-Cool-ATO  
 PHANTOM LIMBS *Displacement* Alternative Tentacles  
 PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES *The New Romance* Matador  
 HAROLD RAY LIVE IN CONCERT *Harold Ray Live In Concert* Alternative Tentacles  
 STEREOPHONICS *You Gotta Go There To Come Back* V2  
 JAMES BLOOD ULMER *No Escape From The Blues: The Electric Lady Sessions* Hyena



## Journey

STORY: ALEX GREEN • ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA

Summer was hot in California in 1979. Before things like El Niño, J. Lo and global warming fucked with the ozone, the one thing you could count on where I grew up was that when summer came, you were going to be hot all the time. Nights would stand still with heat—we'd ride bikes deep into the darkness, sprinklers would lisp the alphabet across suburban lawns and when I finally went to bed, outside I could hear guys and girls chasing each other under the moon, cracking the code that solved the mysteries of love, over and over and over.

But I had my own love to resolve. Just nine years old, I had fallen in love with Kelly Crosby, who was 17 and had swim practice an hour before I did. We were on the same team, but the older kids and the younger kids rarely mixed. I'd always see her leaving just as I got there; she would wrap her towel around her waist, tie her hair back and walk up the stairs. Every time she disappeared around the corner, I would be struck with longing.

The problem was, I had no idea how or when to tell Kelly Crosby I loved her. With my secret heart on joyful fire, I'd stay up late and give in, song after song, to the pull of AM radio. Peter Frampton, Sweet and Queen were all irresistible, but nothing made me want to change my life more than Journey's "Lovin' Touchin' Squeezin'." The song had just what I needed—a singer who admitted, "You're tearing me apart," but who refused to be dissuaded. Possessing the kind of voice that landed some impressive vocal triple axles, Journey's Steve Perry could sing big—that was always obvious—but on this song, his plaintive yowl coupled with his soaring falsetto added up to a dizzying resolve inside of me that seemed to say: *It's time.*

But just to be sure that it really was time to tell Kelly Crosby how much I loved her, I played an impromptu game of aural "she loves me, she loves me not," in which I would count the number of "na"s in the secondary "na-na-na-na-na" chorus at the end of the song. If the number was even, I'd tell her at the swim meet the next day. If it was odd, I'd wait.

It was even. I would finally confess. But the next day when I got



to the pool, the unimaginable happened: The meet was canceled. A dead rat had been found in the pool and the water had to be treated for 24 hours before anyone could go in.

There was only one thing to do—I had to go to her house and tell her. She only lived nine streets away, so I got on my bike and pedaled over. When I got there she was out front washing her car with a handsome guy who had parked his motorcycle on the sidewalk. They were playing music really loud and throwing bubbles at each other. I felt sick—like a promise had been broken, a story untold—and I knew nothing would ever be the same again.

Kelly Crosby disappeared into the tapestry of peripheral people in my life, and that was that. She probably graduated from high school, finished a PhD in art history, got married and bought a great house in Carmel with a sprawling garden—but I haven't really thought about it.

Even now that I'm in my 30s, whenever I count those "na-na-na-na"s, the number is always different. I've come up with 97, 89, 94, and—I still can't figure this one out—543. But whatever number it really is, every time I hear "Lovin' Touchin' Squeezin'" it's somewhere in July of 1979, and I can feel the tug of longing the same way I did when I was nine. And maybe the song wasn't right and I wasn't really supposed to be with Kelly Crosby, but in it I still hear possibility. And no matter how many "na-na-na-na-na"s there really are, something is always about to happen, and there's nothing wrong about that.

*Alex Green teaches Composition and West Coast Cool: A History Of California Music at St. Mary's College of California. He is also Faculty Advisor of KSMC, the student-run radio station.*

...UNTIL JUSTICE ROLLS DOWN LIKE WATERS  
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY STREAM

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



A young boy learns about the history of the  
civil rights movement. Montgomery, Alabama.  
Photo: Eli Reed/Magnum

# imagine

( you may say i'm a dreamer, but i'm not the only one )



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