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*Peter Murphy*  
kendra smith • helium



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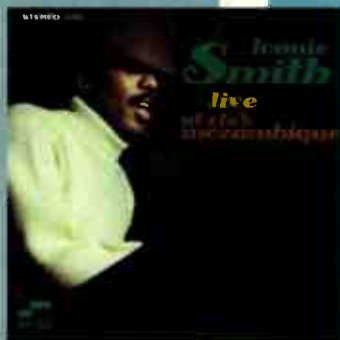
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World Radio History

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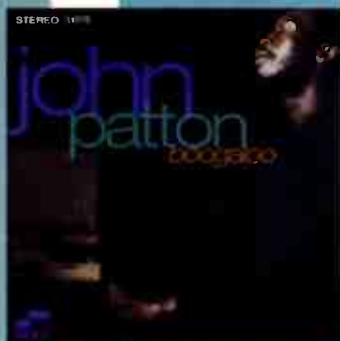
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COVER: Chris Isaak photographed by Michael Tighe

CORRECTION: The photos accompanying the article on the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (April) were taken by Eleanor Smith, a New Orleans-based photographer.

INSIDE  
JUNE 1995

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**On Sunday, March 28, founding member of N.W.A. Eazy-E died of AIDS. What effect, if any, did the death of one of the founders of gangsta rap have on your perception of the disease and how it's contracted? Do you think it will change anyone else's perceptions or actions?**

**Tell us what you think by mail, fax (516-466-7159) or e-mail (cmj@cmjmusic.com).**

- As a regular Letters To The Editor feature, the CMJ editors pose questions to you.
- our esteemed readers—
- this is the "Q" part—
- as well as answering some of your questions directly.

## Consolidating Culture

In the April issue, we asked what you thought of MTV and its effect on making and/or breaking bands. Here's what you said:

I'm not willing to accept that MTV has some effect on breaking new artists to the mainstream, but I guess it happens. But really, music is for listening, not for watching. I don't have cable and I'm glad I don't have MTV coming into my home 24 hours a day. Sure, there's the occasional cool program, but I'm sure that once in a blue moon an intelligent, insightful article finds its way into *Hustler*, and I don't buy that either.

In a little more than ten years, MTV has gone from a minor cultural outlet to a producer of "culture" and indeed to a cultural product in its own right—what Consolidated might call a piece of the culture industry—all while shortening the attention spans of American teenagers. MTV is a triumph of dadaism, where style is passed off as substance and individuality is practiced in a painstakingly prescribed manner.

Does the music even matter on MTV any more? Or is it just wallpaper? For that matter, did it ever matter?

George Zahora  
via e-mail

## Philly Defense

The Localzine on Philadelphia in the April *CMJ New Music Monthly* is a total ripping of the City Of Brotherly Love!

First off, you tell the whole world that the music scene sucks without researching all the music outlets and clubs in the city. Then you destroy the sports teams, saying that they suck when only the Sixers really suck. The Phillies are the defending National League Champions and the Eagles only lost seven in a row at the end of the season, but they *do not suck!* Come on man, check out the facts!

Now, when you called our beloved Mummies a bunch of macho guys dressing up like Liberace, well that really upset me. I have been living in Philadelphia all my life and the Mummies are very, very talented, normal, everyday people from the Delaware valley who are Showmen and Showwomen. What you should have done was visit the Mummies Museum (2nd & Washington Aves.), then cast judgement.

In the club section, you missed the coolest night club in the entire city. Asylum, 1517 N. Delaware Ave.—the one and only Industrial club in Philly. No mousse, no hairspray and no IROCs allowed. Asylum is full of really cool people with tattoos and body piercing and all weird stuff. I know, I am the disc jockey at Asylum on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

Did you even turn on the radio in Philadelphia? Well, that does suck about Philly. No good radio stations at all. WDRE is at 103.9 and not 102.7. WXTU is NOT the Temple station call letters. WRTI is the Temple station, otherwise known as Jazz 90.

You missed a great record store just a few stores down the street from 611 records. Noise Pollution is one of the best places in the city to find vinyl and bootleg live CDs.

Well, next time you do Philadelphia for the Localzine section, I suggest researching the city just a little bit more before you draw conclusions that the City Of Brotherly Love SUCKS!!!!!!!

Rich "Mad Dog" Russo  
Sewell, NJ

*Rich misses the point of Neil Gladstone's article here. The idea wasn't that the music scene, or anything else, in Philadelphia sucks, but that this is a typical topic of conversation in the area. After all, the sentence in question was followed by "In reality, the music scene here is doing just fine." Likewise, he wasn't commenting on the actual quality of Philly's sports teams, just that these are things people often say. As for my research of this, I spent the first 18 years of my life 3 miles from the Delaware river (and closer to Philly than Sewell, I might add) and know a good cheesesteak when I see one. And as for the Mummies, anyone who dons feathers and sequins should be able to take some ribbing now and again. —ed.*

## How To Endear Yourself To Bands

Your April CD is one of the best ever. Each cut is a winner. Your publication has led me down what were formerly hidden musical paths. Your reviews are right on the money and have aided me in purchasing CDs.

I live on a Navajo Reservation 110 miles from Albuquerque. Since subscribing to *CMJ*, I have made many trips into the city to see bands that you have covered. I am often able to talk with band members about their cuts on your CDs and their reviews/interviews in your magazine. This endears me to them. They give me free things and buy me drinks. The band Catherine even invited me to stay at their hotel so I wouldn't have to make the drive back that night. Michael Petak opened for Catherine, and I was able to get him and his band to play an afternoon show for our high school students the next day.

George Erickson, St. Bonaventure Mission  
Thoreau, NM

## The Rain It Raineth

Why haven't I heard the Raincoats? You seem to refer to them a lot in the R.I.Y.L. sections, but I've never heard of them. I'm out of the loop!

Jayson  
North Miami Beach, FL

*The Raincoats—three women and a rotating cast of percussionists—seem to have influenced more bands than they sold records. They originally released three albums between 1979 and 1984, all recently reissued by DGC. Last year, at Kurt Cobain's request, the band re-formed for a tour (Steve Shelley of Sonic Youth played drums), and they released an EP on Shelley's label Smells Like Records. A terrific Raincoats greatest-hits LP (vinyl only), Fairytales, just came out on Tim Kerr Records.*

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Please do not use E-mail for any customer service problems. Trouble with your subscriptions, broken CDs or other questions should be referred to 1-800-414-4CMJ.



This is the painting for "My Friend Maurice". The song "My Friend Maurice" can be heard on the CD that comes with this magazine. It is also available on the Home album IX, which you can buy at a record store.

# NO.



# IT'S NOT. IT DOESN'T. & IT WON'T.

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Drink Wisely

# QUICK FIX

## Bruce McCulloch: Shame-Based Comedy

Generally the best way for an interviewer to establish rapport with an artist is not to say, "So, you used the urinal next to mine in the Austin Convention Center," but for *Kids In The Hall's* Bruce McCulloch, arguably the funniest and strangest member of a very funny, very strange comedy troupe, something so routinely uncomfortable seemed impossible not to mention.

McCulloch readily points to this sort of chance meeting as "That's the worst thing about the small sliver of celebrity that I've somehow accumulated, like 'Oh, I saw you the other night, and you were at like Kentucky Fried Chicken and you were a little bit drunk and you were just eatin' it by the curb...' Oh great. People never see you when you're running really well through the wilderness with no shirt on, it's always drunk at Kentucky Fried Chicken." But two guys standing at urinals making sidelong eye contact is exactly the sort of thing he finds funny. "I find people in a restaurant dividing up a check a lot more funny than a stand-up's best two minutes. That's my whole groove in this whole deal: figuring out people and their obsessions and their sad marches and their disappointments and people in over their head and stuff, that's what I love."

So while McCulloch was in Austin to perform a few songs from his new record, *Shame Based Man*, in front of a semi-captive audience at the South By Southwest Conference ("I said to my friend Bryan Connelly, who plays guitar, 'it'd be such a great move for us to go up and play 25 minutes of generic boogie rock—just like 'oh yea, baby'—and people would just think 'what the fuck is this.''" 'Cause it's always a bad move to go 'Oh we're gonna rock now.'"), he spent more time surveying the scene and watching people and their obsessions.

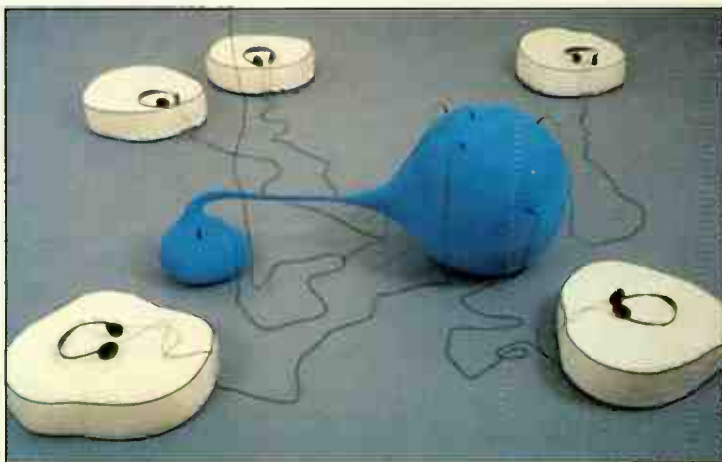
"I saw a guy the other day. He came out of a restaurant, pulled a comb out of his pocket, he looked at it and he put it back in his pocket and just walked away and I found myself thinking about that for a couple days. Just this simple action and it made me insane."

—Scott Frampton

## Tours We'd Like To See

### SPRINGTIME IN AMERICA:

Green, Green Day, Green Magnet School, Green Jelly, The Greenberry Woods, Permanent Green Light, Uncle Green, Gang Green, Green On Red, Green River, Green Apple Quick Step, Cobra Verde and... Al Green?



PHOTOS COURTESY TANYA BONAKDAR GALLERY



PHOTO BY DANNY CLINCH

## ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS **in my room**

### THOM YORKE RADIOHEAD

Kraftwerk  
*Autobahn*

Geraldine Fibbers  
EP

Movie:  
*Naked Lunch*

Book:  
Guy Debord  
*Society Of The Spectacle*

Autechre  
Amber

## The Amorphous Body Study Center

New York's Tanya Bonakdar Gallery recently had a multi-media exhibition, "Charles Long and Stereolab: The Amorphous Body Study Center." The sculptor Charles Long created a group of oddly shaped, oddly textured pieces (one was a giant blob of pink putty with tools for visitors to the gallery to reshape its surface). Most of the sculptures had things to sit on next to them; all of them had multiple sets of headphones playing new songs by Stereolab, written especially for the exhibition (and collected on a CD sold at the gallery); the idea was that people would experience a moment of sedentary leisure communally but individually.



# QUICK FIX

## Tunes That Won't Get Soggy In Milk

We've already sung the praises of Nickelodeon's *The Adventures of Pete and Pete* [Quick Fix, Feb.] for both its choice of guest stars, including Iggy Pop, Michael Stipe and Juliana Hatfield, and its background music, which has featured songs from Magnetic Fields, Chug, Nice, Drop Nineteens and Polaris, the *Pete And Pete* "house band" featuring Mark Mulcahey of Miracle Legion. Now, in the spirit of the Shadows Of Knight's "Potato Chip" single and those '70s cereal box cut-out flexi-discs, you and every 12-year-old in the country can get a copy of Polaris' "Happily Deranged" cassette single by sending in box tops from Kellogg's Frosted Mini Wheats.

Not only is this a return to getting cool stuff from cereal boxes (viva la Quisp!), but it's more cool music snuck into the developing minds of the nation's young. Beats the Archies any day.

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FROM the adventures of PETE & PETE

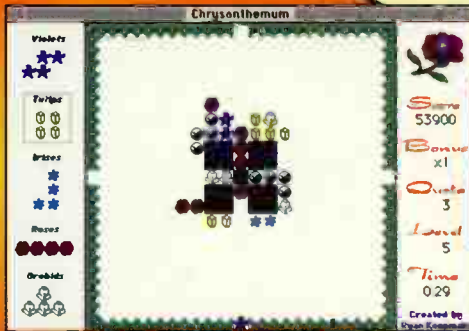
You can only get it here!  
Frosted Mini-Wheats™ cereal presents an exclusive collection of music from "The Adventures of Pete & Pete."™ Our custom cassette features three jammed tunes performed by Polaris, Pete and Pete's favorite garage band: "Way, Soaky," "Staggering" and "Caravan II." So get ready, and remember to watch for "The Adventures of Pete & Pete"™ on Nickelodeon™ and now home video.

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Music From the adventures of PETE & PETE... Featuring Polaris

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## COOL THING

**Chrysanthemum**, a hopelessly addictive computer game written as "jobware" ("if you like this game, give me a job"). Sort of a cross between Tetris and flower-arranging, Chrysanthemum is non-violent, pretty to look at, fast-paced, and teeth-gnashingly challenging. Plus—unlike most similar games—you can actually win if you get good enough (this usually takes a few months). It can be downloaded for free at most major ftp software archives.



## ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS in my room

### BLACKIE ONASSIS

URGE OVERKILL

Chuck Berry  
*Live In Montreal '69*

Rolling Stones  
*Get Yer Ya-Yo's Out*

The Stooges  
*The Stooges, Fun House*

Roxy Music  
*Roxy Music, For Your Pleasure, Stranded*

Dr. Dre  
*The Chronic*

## Weird Record Of The Month

Ever wonder where cowboys like Jimmy Rodgers got their yodeling from? Well, they got it from immigrants from Europe, and even today if you travel through small towns in America's West, sometimes in the middle of Texas you'll find orderly rows of houses with little gardens and clearly German architecture, and authentic Bavarian polka and waltz bands blaring oompah oompah into the night. German journalist/musician Thomas Meinecke travelled around Texas, collecting and recording German music that exists in America's heartlands, and the spirited results shine on the compilation *Texas Bohemia: The Texas Bohemian Moravian-German Bands* (Trikont Records, Kistlerstrasse 1 Postfach 901055, D-81510 Munchen Giesing Deutschland German import). It's a smorgasborg of toodling tubas, stomping oompahs and spirited yodeling, and if you like the Latin Playboys, Tom Waits or Dixieland jazz, it's well worth checking out. — James Lien





## Found In The Translation: The New German Scene

### ARTISTS' **in** my **room** PERSONAL PICKS

**ANDREA JUNO**

RE/SEARCH BOOKS

Movie: **Mamma Roma**  
(Pasolini)

Movie: **Contempt**  
(Godard)

Abba  
*The Visitors*

Music Hour  
*No Excess Is Absurd*

Book: **Franco Yates**  
*The Art Of Memory*

Indie aesthetes may be able to debate the merits of Dayton vs. Columbus, Ohio. They may know the latest new thing from New Zealand, or London, or even Japan. But rarely do they look past these places for new musical happenings. So it may come as some surprise that Hamburg, Germany right now has a scene which rivals any other for diversity, creativity and maybe even sheer number of bands. There's Die Golden Zitronen ("Golden Lemon"), Die Sterne (named for Germany's leading news magazine), Captain Kirk And, Zen-Fascisten (Zen Fascists), Mutter (Mother), Kolossale Jugend (Colossal Youth), Flowerpornoes, Huah!, Die Aeronauten, Lassie Singers, the onerously named Ostzonenuppenwurfelmachenkrebs and many others.

Most prominent in this new scene is Blumfeld, the band which is considered its leader. Blumfeld's dominance may stem from the facts that it was included in German *Rolling Stone's* top 10 of '94, that its latest independent album *L'Etat Et Moi* broke the German top 100, that it sold out nearly every show on its last tour of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, or that it's the first to release its album here in America (on the Big Cat label). More significant creatively is that the band sings almost entirely in German (even in Deutschland, English is the standard parlance of rock), and that *L'Etat Et Moi* makes compelling social statements without sacrificing a musical ingenuity that recalls Pavement (who, by the way, are avid fans), prime Sonic Youth, early Fall, and folkie Phil Ochs.

While Germany may be known for influential bands like Kraftwerk, Can, Neu and Einstürzende Neubauten—not to mention techno—Hamburg's new bands take these groups and integrate their ideas into a wider palette, with inspirations from Dylan to post-punk from the Rough Trade and Postcard labels. Golden Zitronen perhaps blend the Stranglers with the Yardbirds; Die Sterne affect a sort of disco groove with punk attitude; Zen Fascists' lo-fi electro is reminiscent of Suicide or the Silver Apples; Captain Kirk And produces jazz-bop soundtracks; Huah! suggest Beck directing the TV Personalities; Kolossale Jugend are lo-fi punk-funk; Lassie Singers are riot grrls with talent; Mutter and Flowerpornoes are apocalyptic pop. As Ted of Golden Zitronen sees it, in New York, where everyone

just says "good gig" or "good record" to each other, whether they mean it or not; these bands actually discuss each other's ideas and performance. Politically, they see German unification as a direct route to Nationalism (read: Nazism), are virulently anti-fascist, and make seemingly more Nazi jokes than even John Lennon ever did.

Of course, Hamburg is best known in the rock world as the early '60s crucible of the Beatles, a fact of which the new scene is very conscious. During a recent visit, many musicians were quick to remind this outsider of the history, and there's even a party band, The Three Normal Beatles (in which Ted also plays) who are very much a combination of Hamburg-era Beatles (beer-fueled R&B covers) and the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion (beer-fueled R&B originals). The clubs where the Fab Four proved their mettle

around the Reeperbahn/St. Pauli red light district are no longer there, but many of the new bands live nearby and gather together in their own bar, The Golden Pudel, co-owned by Golden Zitronen. Though not all of the bands live there, the presence of Blumfeld, Golden Zitronen, and the label L'Age D'Or, which has released much of the music, makes Hamburg the focal point of the scene.

Blumfeld is currently touring in the U.S., and Big Cat is planning a compilation of many of these bands (in most cases the music is easily strong enough to overcome any language barrier). But music fans who pride themselves on being ahead of trends may want to contact L'Age D'Or directly (at Max-Breuer-Allee 163, 22765 Hamburg, Germany). Or just get on a plane and go see for yourself. —Eric Gladstone



**DIE GOLDEN ZITRONEN**

## Inner Child, Outer Sleeve

It's nostalgic, self-effacingly funny and saves a ton of money on cover art: Childhood snapshots are appearing on record covers with such frequency, as we see in these recent examples from (l-r) Peter Stampfel, Everclear and Matthew Sweet, that old brownie and 110 cameras are becoming the packaging equivalent of lo-fi 4-track recordings.



# QUICK FIX

## ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS **in my room**

**JEFF TWEEDY**  
WILCO

**Mott The Hoople**  
Retrospective

**NHL Hockey on ESPN**

**Fletcher Henderson**  
A Study In Frustration

**Beach Boys**  
Smile bootleg

**Pervis Spahn**  
Blues 'N More  
(Chicago Local  
Cable Access)



## The Next Chant

Latcho Drom is the soundtrack to an extraordinary 1993 documentary (winner of the Prix Gervais at Cannes) that tells the story of the Rom people, or Gypsies, and their flight from India through Europe with only the music that is their oral history. The soundtrack, recorded live with no overdubs, is not as somnolent as the Gregorian chants of last year's monk craze, but it's every bit as spiritual.

Clovis, New Mexico 1990



Corsicana, Texas 1989



PHOTOS BY BUTCH HANCOCK

## Butch Hancock's Strange Dreams

Butch Hancock is a renaissance man. He's attempted, and often achieved, success as a singer, songwriter, photographer (see above), painter, architect, record label owner, art gallery and zen philosopher. Hancock, however, is probably best known as part of the Lubbock, TX posse that includes Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Joe Ely and Terry Allen. Ely, Gilmore and Hancock were in the short-lived, but long lamented, Flatlanders in the early '70s, and Gilmore has had such success singing Hancock's songs, each says they can't remember who wrote which song.

While he's recorded seven albums on his own Rainlight Music label and written hundreds of songs over the years, Hancock has just released his first in-the-studio-with-band record, *Eats Away The Night*, for the North Carolina-based Sugar Hill label. With help of Lucinda Williams' band, including guitarist Gurf Morlix, who produced, Hancock gives fresh and expansive performances of some of his best known songs ("If You Were A Bluebird," "Boxcars") as well as introducing some new ones like the otherworldly "Pumpkineater" and the charged-up "Junkyard In The Sun." When asked what took him so long to make a record like this, he seems dumbfounded. "Believe it or not, I don't really have a good answer for that," he laughs. "In fact, once I got in there and started doing the album, I was asking myself the same question."

For a man who's written hundreds of songs, one would think it would be difficult to pick out 11 for a new record, but Hancock had it down to a science. "We wanted to get two or three of the old ones, to kinda have a familiar base, as well as a couple of songs I'd never done before," he explains. "I arranged the songs in an order that I felt could be visualized as a movie. I certainly haven't written the script yet."

You'd also suspect that someone that with so much songwriting experience would have a handle on where songs come from. "I've been getting new theories about that over the years," he says. "I've seen all these books on how to write songs. But I'm beginning to think that nobody knows how they write songs. I've paid close attention to it all my life and I don't really don't know how it's done. I've had dreams of certain songs. The best one was when I dreamed I was asleep. Then I woke up in the dream and I was in this little weird room, and in the corner was this bald-headed little man with big thick glasses on. His deal was that by mental telepathy, he could tell you where any airplane was in the world. I said 'I'll try ya.' So I give him a flight number and his glasses start to glow a bright red like a Christmas lantern. He says, 'that flight's over Texas right now.' Then I had a flash of what the airplane looked like, so asked him if he had a picture of it. So he reaches under the bed and pulls out a shoe box and pulls out a picture that's exactly what I was thinking of. Then he says 'I've got something I want you to hear.' He pulls out a reel-to-reel tape recorder, dusts it off, and it starts playing what I think was Jimmie singing and a weird little rubberband-and-cigar-box kind of band playing. But it had this beautiful, eerie tune and just then I woke up. I remember being disappointed that I didn't get the rest of the song and thinking I have got to get back to that dream. After awhile, I fell back asleep and started to dream again. The little guy was standing there with his arms folded and a satisfied look on his face. He says to me, 'Did you like it?' and I said 'It was great. Can you play it again?' He re-threaded it and replayed it and I eventually got the gist of it. It turned into a song called 'Once Followed By The Wind.' That's the most bizarre one, I don't think a lot of people believe that story, but that's actually how it happened." —Jim Caligiuri

World Radio History



St. Johnny Let It Come Down  
 Pell Mell Interstate  
 Hardvark Memory Barge  
 Nitzer Ebb Big Hit  
 Skiploader Anxious, Restless\*

# So Darn Groovy!



\* Don't forget your special gift album, ready

# BEST NEW MUSIC

**THURSTON MOORE**  
**Psychic Hearts**  
Geffen

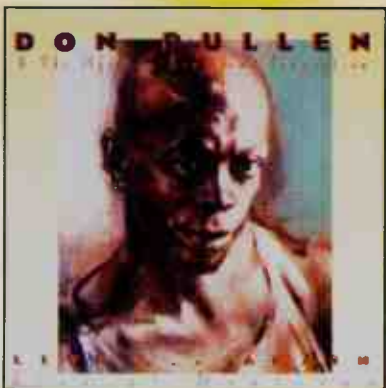


Thurston Moore, Sonic Youth's king of the open tuning, teams with his bandmate, drummer Steve Shelley, for *Psychic Hearts*, with occasional support from Tim Foljahn of Two Dollar Guitar. The resulting sound will be familiar to Sonic Youth listeners, although the desperate edge of Kim Gordon and Lee Ranaldo is decidedly missing. While some of the pieces sound improvised, as befits a side project, there are also gems such as "Psychic Hearts." It's remarkable that someone who's been at this as long as Moore has can still capture the ennui of adolescent angst this sharply: "What the hell/Summer's done/What's it like goin' out/No one knows what you're about." Perhaps to make up for Gordon's absence, Moore pays homage to two of his greatest female influences: Yoko Ono on "Ono Soul" ("Bow down to the Queen of Noise" is the very first line) and "Patti Smith Noise Scratch." The album wraps up with an eloquent 20-minute instrumental, "Elegy For All The Dead Rock Stars." Although obviously a tribute to Kurt Cobain, it applies equally to Bob Stinson's death, though if it was written before, as it seems, it's eerily prescient. Listening to the mature intelligence behind this album, it's clear why Moore, unlike these two and so many others, has survived and shows no signs of slowing down.

—Heidi MacDonald

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9.  
**FILE UNDER:** Artful, elegiac dissonance.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Sonic Youth, Nirvana.

**DON PULLEN**  
**Live... Again**  
Blue Note



"Music is the healing force of the universe," said sax master Albert Ayler. Here's the proof. Keyboardist Don Pullen is successfully fighting cancer. Recorded live at Montreaux in July of 1993, *Live... Again* is so strong. So beautiful. So joyous. So full of life. Pullen's African Brazilian Connection band features Carlos Ward's brilliant, tart alto saxophone; Nilson Matta's pulsating, propulsive acoustic bass; J.T. Lewis' sinewy and sensitive drum kit; and the firelight of Senegalese percussionist/vocalist/composer Mor Thiam. Listening to Pullen's music is like taking a long, deep drink of medicinal sonic refreshment. Although only one of the five compositions is his, each selection is stamped by Pullen's deft carpet of lyrical/rhythmic piano trills. Some of the sounds he gets out of the piano are the result of playing with his knuckles (it's physically brutal—occasionally there is blood on the keys when he finishes), but the swirls are always intelligently employed and adroitly integrated into the rhythm. My favorite track is "Ah George, We Hardly Knew Ye," the 18-minute tribute to the late saxophonist George Adams, Pullen's former partner of many years. Beginning with a gorgeous, floating and percussive four-minute opening solo, Pullen demonstrates his originality as both a pianist and composer. By the time the band floats in, a meditative mood is established that will cause any listener to remember their own departed loved ones. "Ah George" is more than a tune, a groove, a riff or a mood; this is truly a great "song." Indeed, "Ah George" in particular, and the whole album in general, is one of the great healing moments of recorded music. Regardless of your musical taste, I guarantee you'll appreciate *Live... Again*. Pullen's music is genuine, elemental, emotional, and resonant of all things good and beautiful. Listen and give thanks!

—Kalamu ya Salaam

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 30.  
**FILE UNDER:** Life-affirming jazz.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** McCoy Tyner, late Dizzy Gillespie.

**APHEX TWIN**  
**I Care Because You Do**  
*Sire*



Given Aphex Twin's reputation as a pioneer of ambient techno and his recent collaboration with Philip Glass, you might call him an experimental musician, but his carefully crafted pieces are no experiments; they show an unflinching instinct for what works. With its playful, catchy beats, *I Care Because You Do* is a total shift from last year's *Selected Ambient Works, Vol. II*, but it's no less artful. The most distinctive thing about this music is its organic quality. Metallic sounds are twisted and squeezed into birdlike coos and snarls, or given a sort of wetness in the reverb, as if a soft thing were soaked in soapy water and thrown against the wall. Twin's typical *modus operandi* is to invent one of these strange noises, loop it, and build a song around it, deftly weaving a tribal drum here, a siren there into a web whose structure is easily heard but never predictable. At other times, his theme is rhythm. "Alberto Balsom" is a multi-voiced meditation on samba-ness, while "Cow Cud Is A Twin" follows a funky, loping beat from its streetside origins (with a slamming car door on bass) to some dance floor in our dreams. One of the most endearing tracks, "Wet Tip Hen Ax," merges the two tactics. To a normal keyboard riff, Twin adds a noise that really does sound like a wet tip hen ax, whatever that is. Then he sneaks in an oboe from out of nowhere, displaying another trait rarely heard in techno these days—a sense of humor.

—Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Thinking person's techno.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Moby, Material, Perry & Kingsley, Future Sound Of London.

**OL' DIRTY BASTARD**  
**Return To The 36 Chambers:**  
**The Dirty Version**  
*Elektra*



Even in the cut-throat hip-hop arena, the cliché "You ain't heard nothin' like dis" really does apply to the solo effort by the Wu-Tang Clan's Ol' Dirty Bastard. The differences aren't rooted in the musical makeup of *Return To The 36 Chambers...*, but in ODB's crazy, unconnected rhyme technique. But merely hearing ODB is only half of the package. This Brooklyn-bred nutcase is to be experienced like a thrill ride: At one moment you're terrorized by uncertainty ("The Stomp"), while at other times his hilarious, Tourette's-like splutterings provide a huge adrenaline rush ("Brooklyn Zoo"). Best or worst of all, his smash-mouthed lyrical madness is nearly impossible to understand—imagine a homicidal version of Biz Markie and you're at a good starting point. ODB breathes, shrills and slurps loudly like a babbling wino, and he rarely rhymes in unison with the groove, but the instinctive, off-the-cuff approach is the album's most intoxicating feature (listen to the intro of "Goin' Down"). With sludgy production (courtesy of Wu-Tang's RZA) in the same Shaolin style of the Wu-Tang Clan, Ol' Dirty Bastard and his fellow swarm of killa bees trade lyrical blows, most notably on "Raw Hide" and "Snakes," helping to keep you rockin' to the mixed bag of mayhem for many months to come.

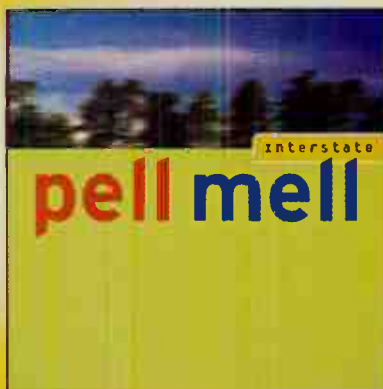
—Glen Sansone

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 28.

**FILE UNDER:** The sound of the street.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Wu-Tang Clan, Redman, Flavor Flav.

**PELL MELL**  
**Interstate**  
*DGC*



Without the benefit of a single big-time power chord, Pell Mell has consistently created engaging, all-instrumental guitar records. No flashy solos, no effect-laden gimmickry (well, maybe a little reverb and distortion) or interstellar space rock hybrids, no lyrics, no vocals. Just good old-fashioned ensemble chemistry. Each song on *Interstate* works like the dynamics of good conversation. First, a thought in the form of a guitar line is introduced. Then comes a response, a reaction to that thought: a shuffling drum beat, maybe. Then another response comes from a third party, perhaps a dissenting voice, a thumping counter-bass line, that momentarily takes the song in a different direction. As the conversation kicks in, the voices take it in ever-shifting directions, sometimes agreeing, sometimes not. Occasionally, the conversations on *Interstate* flow slowly, awkwardly, like those talks we have about difficult, emotional things ("Constellation," "Drift"). Others are more like passionate arguments, and pump as fluidly as well-lubed pistons ("Blacktop," "Vegetable Kingdom"). Some linger just long enough to help you kick back and relax, the way it is when talking with an old friend. The upshot of all this is that when you allow someone a chance to speak, you just never know where that language will lead you. Perhaps, with a little luck, you'll end up on the *Interstate*.

—Bob Gulla

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25. Band includes producer Steve Fisk.

**FILE UNDER:** Engaging rock guitar instrumentals.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The Ventures, Television.



# Helium

MARY'S TRICK

by Franklin Bruno

**"I was one of those people who had a hard time adapting to life after college... I had problems with getting into bad situations and avoiding getting out of them, and that's what Helium used to be. I've really changed that around, and things are a lot better now."**

Mary Timony, the head and heart of Boston's brilliant Helium, is speaking with regret and relief of the changes in her band and life between 1994's fragmented *Pirate Prude* and the just-released, more cohesive *The Dirt Of Luck* (both on Matador). "Recording *Pirate Prude* was the most pathetic experience. It was really fast—I would record my stuff and then I would go to sleep... That whole record is weird to me, I can't even listen to it."

*The Dirt Of Luck* starts where *Pirate Prude* leaves off, being simultaneously a less harrowing and more musically satisfying ride. "I think this... record is less hyper-aware. It just feels good, and I had more fun being creative on it." One huge difference is the replacement of original bass player Brian Dunton with Ash Bowie, who also does duty in Chapel Hill's Polvo. "Before... Helium was like this solid structure, and I'd be reacting against it, or making noise against it. And also it was kind of that way psychologically. Now that Ash is in the band, we intertwine better." Bowie's arrival (the two had previously played together informally) coincided with the up-in-the-air status of Helium at the time. "I didn't really know what was going to happen in terms of who was going to be in the band after we finished recording. First of all, it was just Sean and I recording it at the beginning of the summer, and then Ash came in and hung out in the studio, and it ended up working really well."

*Pirate Prude* is elaborate in its own way, but more time and care were spent by Timony, Bowie, and drummer Shawn Devlin (ex-Dumptruck) on the new record. "It took a lot longer. We recorded it, and then we scrapped two-thirds of it and did it over with Ash... But we're finally done and we're glad." Whatever the circumstances, Helium this time out is more "together" in every way. Songs that would have taken six minutes to develop now take three, Timony's guitar says more and rambles less, and even Devlin has switched from the foursquare attack that characterized an earlier era of Boston rock to a more fluid style that takes its cues from Pavement's Gary Young and Sebadoh's Bob Fay.

Although it's as easy as ever to find fractured personae and psychic damage on *The Dirt Of Luck* (see especially the succinct "Superball," in which Timony calls herself "fragile/as an eggshell/and mad as hell"), the growth in the band is matched by a new concern in

Timony's songs with the possibility of personal growth and rebirth, or at least escape. Speaking of the attitudes that produced *Pirate Prude*, she says, "Whenever I wrote songs in that period... in an unconscious way, these themes of being a prostitute keep coming up. I've also had other relationships that end up making me feel really cheap, like I'm being used. I'm really changing now, but that's the way I used to be... In the past year, I've definitely had to change certain things in my life, because I just couldn't survive thinking that way."

"Pat's Trick," the first single, is as good an example as any, with its references to May fairs, seed planting, and lost innocence. "What's happening in the song is that I'm hoping for a better life... I'm hoping to become alive again." The Pat of the title is Timony's older brother. "I wrote it after talking to him, because I was really depressed, and he also was, and we were like, 'How are we going to get ourselves out of this situation?' So it's kind of a song about hoping to grow. It sounds so corny!" (It's worth mentioning that, in conversation, Timony is both determined and self-deprecating, nothing like the formidable, vengeful personae she projects in her songs, which makes their intensity all the more impressive.)

Of *The Dirt Of Luck*, Timony says, "There are themes that run through it, but it's not quite so regimented and structured [as *Pirate Prude*], because I felt like I had more of a chance to communicate through the music. But there are themes. What I was talking about in 'Pat's Trick' is in a lot of the songs, about feeling dirty and dead and hoping for a regeneration. A lot of it comes out in these weird religious references that don't mean anything."

The title figures of songs like "Trixie's Angel," "Medusa" and "Skeleton" alternate between being embodied by the singer and being external figures that help the singer escape or outgrow her situation. The play of self and voice is as deftly ambiguous (though not always as clear) as in the work of such poets as John Berryman or Sylvia Plath, not to mention the songs of Kristin Hersh or Polly Harvey. Quizzed about such tactics, Timony admits, "I'm definitely singing about myself. Even if I do adopt a personality, it's another way of explaining my little experience... Sometimes a personality feels good to take on because it expresses a certain thing. In 'Skeleton,' I imagine going crazy and becoming the devil, because I'm so angry."

Upcoming plans include moving, more collaborative songwriting with Bowie (the shoegazy "Baby's Going Underground" on *The Dirt Of Luck* being the first fruit) and, finally, a full tour for a band that's been playing Boston and New York for years, never making it west of Chicago. If reports are any indication, the Helium live experience is as compelling as the band's records. Timony and company may even include some of the scarier parts of *Pirate Prude*, despite her reservations. "We'll play 'XXX' and 'I'll Get You, I Mean It,' but we don't actually call them by those names on the set list, because it's so weird for me." As, undoubtedly, it will be for us.

#### DISCOGRAPHY

**Mary Timony with Autoclave:**  
 "I'll Take You Down" 7" EP (Dischord)  
 Autoclave 10" EP (Dischord)

**Helium:**  
 "The American Jean" 7" (Warped)  
 "Hole In The Ground" 7" (Pop Narcotic)  
 "In A Box" on *Why Do You Think They Call It Pop?*  
 compilation (Pop Narcotic)  
*Pirate Prude* EP (Matador)  
 "Puffin Stars" on *Rock Stars Kill* compilation  
 (Kill Rock Stars)  
 "Pat's Trick" 7" (Matador)  
*The Dirt Of Luck* (Matador)

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**"I REALLY LIKE TO USE LUCK AND RANDOM FACTORS AND ALL THE UNPREDICTABLE THINGS IN MAKING MUSIC. I DON'T REALLY LIKE TO OVERLY PLAN WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN," MUSES KENDRA SMITH FROM SAN FRANCISCO, WHERE SHE IS SPENDING A RARE, BRIEF TIME NEAR A TELEPHONE.**

The same could be said of Smith's turbulent career, which for all the gilded stars it's stamped onto the pages of post-punk rock history, is itself equally marked by abrupt changes. Smith's first band was the Dream Syndicate, with whom she recorded two EPs and one album, 1982's exceptional *The Days Of Wine And Roses*, whose chaotic array of sounds mysteriously gel into a rough-hewn beauty. "Improvisation is one of my favorite things in music, one of the things I really liked in the Dream Syndicate," Kendra recalls. While she only sang on one track, her vocals would later become one of her most distinctive qualities as an artist.

Shortly after leaving the Dream Syndicate, while helping former Rain Parade songwriter David Roback assemble *Rainy Day* (an inspired collection of cover versions of songs from the '60s and '70s), Smith joined Roback on two songs; they subsequently recorded together under the name Opal. The group's early recordings, later issued on the thoughtfully named CD *Early Recordings*, were beautifully minimal works, highlighted by Kendra's clear voice. When Opal released *Happy Nightmare Baby* in 1987, it signaled the band's exploration of entrancing—though fully developed and jarringly rugged—rock 'n' roll, what Smith might now call "psychic music." Songs like "Magick Power" delved head-first into rock's raw, psychedelic underbelly.

Then, in 1988, Smith abruptly left the band mid-tour. In even tones, she explains, "It was really apparent we were going in really different directions in a lot of ways: musically and in our approach to what music's for, what you're going to do with it, where you're going with it. And Roback and I have really different ideas about how to do things." Roback called in L.A.-based singer Hope Sandoval to finish the tour; the new "group" subsequently chose the name Mazy Star and went on to hang gold records in its front rooms for 1993's *So Tonight That I Might See*.

Smith took the opposite tack, following her own instincts back to L.A. and then upstate to rural Northern California. She wasn't heard from again until 1992's critically lauded *Guild Of Temporal Adventurers* EP. Kendra reveals the group's intentions: "The idea with the Guild record was to write devotional music in the form of pop music, strictly a religious magical project for no other reason except that." The four-year gap caused concern among her fans, but in fact Smith was quite busy. "At first I didn't [make any music]," she remembers. "I decided just to only do what seemed really necessary to myself, to be able to sort out what was necessary and what was unnecessary, because I think people's needs and wants can really be confused, and that's how you forget how to be content and know how to satisfy yourself."

The separation of needs and wants was made easier by her new living situation, as one of three people farming a 30-acre homestead with little electricity and no phone, where they aim to live "low on the hog." Smith explains: "You sort of take yourself out of the consumer network, and suddenly you don't really need so much money to survive... I know what goes into producing my existence, at least on the physical level, and that's really interesting to

me." It also allowed her to take a really organic approach to making music. With only enough power to run a radio, Kendra figured that "if music was going to happen in any kind of way it would really force its way out, and I wouldn't have much to say about it." After building her own cabin and wiring it for solar power, Smith finally found the time and the means, however minimal, for making music. "As I acquired more DC current, more 12-volt, I acquired a ghetto blaster eventually, and then [began] digging out my other instruments, my guitars and things... Ultimately, I started collecting other instruments, like Turkish drums, hand drums, a couple of hoop drums, I picked up a hand pump harmonium... just started trying to get this mixture of instruments that don't need electricity and the ones I have with electricity."

This mixture of unusual instruments turned up on the *Guild* EP, coalescing into pearly melodies and silvery drones. Smith's faith in the power of music had already been rekindled before she moved upstate. Kendra recalls that Jonah Corey and A. Phillip Uberman (with whom she still collaborates), the other two members of the Guild, "were doing incredible, really powerful psychic music with just whatever was on hand. They really blew my mind. They didn't have incredible gear, they didn't have anything and they were doing ambient stuff. Jonah Corey was writing these amazing pop songs on one string on a guitar. And also being able to transmit really good, really powerful psychic energy that just really existed for itself and not to get something out of it, which makes it much more undiluted."

The other spark igniting her more recent musical explorations was her stumbling upon a pump organ (also called a harmonium) in a junk shop in Northern California. A military field organ, "it had foot pumps and a pretty big keyboard, and it just made this incredible sound. I just played it a little bit and said, 'I just have to have this.'" Her praise for the instrument is as rich as the strange instrument's warm, heavy tones. "It's really a great instrument for spontaneous improvisation... Every time you sit down at it and you start to play, it's almost like a melody just comes onto your hands. And it's also really suited for the drone, which I'm really interested in."

All of these elements—the drone, loose improvisation, pop songs and powerful "psychic energy"—turn up on her solo debut, *Five Ways Of Disappearing*, a natural result of the struggle between organic and inorganic elements. Drones set the slow, chant-like pace of the album's dark introduction, "Aurelia," its wild guitars scratching to be heard, and the trance-inducing "Get There." The open-ended structures of songs like "Bohemian Zebulon"—whose tribal-sounding first half is fraught with weird noises mimicking an uncontrollable storm, but which gently eases into a more melodic, almost carnival-like second half—also suggest her willingness to let the songs choose their own path.

Smith also leaves room for improvisation on the lyrical front. Taking inspiration from Beat pioneers William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, she employed the cut-up method, in which phrases were written on pieces of paper, tossed in a bag and drawn out at random. "I think that using the cut-up method is a really good way to bring in subconscious stuff without getting all hung up on your songwriting or your own judgement factor... What happens when you pull out your phrases and line them up is that your head

# KENDRA

wants to make order out of it. It will; your brain will make order out of disparate images." With lyrics like "Drunk katydid in deep wood/Cup of coffee cools/Ninety-eight degrees/A whimsy and a freak," from "Maggots," her experiments with language accentuate the sing-songy rhythms.

But the pop element is what took Kendra most by surprise. "We were kind of surprised at ourselves that we were writing so many pop songs, because in my mind, I feel really out there musically. But the pop structure is really great, it's like lyric poetry." Smith's pop instincts reach their full fruition on the resolutely bouncy "In Your Head," a surprisingly sweet nugget set in motion by a charming fuzz guitar line and propulsive bass line, adorned by Kendra's echoey vocals and treated guitar sounds. "I wondered if [*Five Ways*] might not end up too eclectic and I wondered if it would make sense. But at the end, to me, it seems really cohesive."



**Selected Discography:**

**With the Dream Syndicate:**

*The Dream Syndicate* (EP)  
{Down There} 1982 (Enigma) 1984

*The Days Of Wine And Roses*  
(Ruby) 1982 (Slash) 1982

*Tell Me When It's Over* (EP)  
(Rough Trade (UK)) 1983

**Various Artists**

*Rainy Day* (Serpent-Enigma) 1984  
(Serpent-Rough Trade (UK)) 1989

**Kendra Smith/David Roback/Keith Mitchell:**

*Fell From The Sun* (EP) (Serpent) 1984

**With Opal:**

"Northern Line" (12")  
(One Big Guitar (UK))

*Happy Nightmare Baby*  
(SST) 1987

**Early Recordings:**

(Rough Trade) 1989

**With the Guild Of**

**Temporal Adventurers:**

*The Guild Of Temporal Adventurers*  
(Fiasco) 1992

**Solo**

*Five Ways Of Disappearing* (4AD) 1995

BY LYDIA ANDERSON

SMITH



"TEMPORARILY LUCY" BY KENDRA SMITH  
APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

# god out of the annex P



SKIMMING THROUGH A BOOK ON THE AFTERLIFE, REGAL ART-ROCKER PETER MURPHY PAUSES HERE AND THERE, AT A CHAPTER DEALING WITH POLTERGEISTS, ANOTHER ON HEAVENLY VISITATIONS, ONE ON SO-CALLED "GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE." HE SEES THE TEXT, HE UNDERSTANDS THE CONTENT. BUT HE IS SKEPTICAL. "THE PEOPLE WHO WROTE THIS BOOK ARE CLEARLY TRYING TO CLARIFY WHAT IS GOING ON OUT THERE, BUT IT'S STILL GROPING, SEARCHING FOR THE ANSWER," HE FINALLY SIGHS, GENTLY CLOSING THE TOME AND PLACING IT FACE DOWN ON THE CONFERENCE-ROOM TABLE. IT'S GOT HIM WORRIED, THIS HUMAN NEED TO SOLVE LIFE'S MYSTERIES. AND WHEN IT COMES TO HIS OWN CAREER—EVEN HIS NEW SOLD OUTING, *Cascade*, HIS FIFTH SINCE LEAVING BAUHAUS—HE'D RATHER REMAIN A SECRETIVE CIPHER.

# PETER MURPHY

by Tom Lauham  
photographs by Alison Smith



"I just write 10 or 12 songs every year or so—that's not a great achievement, is it?" he asks, tapping his Nosferatu-bony fingertips together. "So why are people so interested in Peter Murphy, the man? You can overanalyze it or even sensationalize it, but I think my album is just a series of songs, really, and not a philosophical treatise on Peter Murphy's particular slant on existentialism." He's actually starting to sound angry over the whole rock-star process. "Isn't the painting itself its own justification?" he snips. "Doesn't the end justify the means?"

Murphy clearly wishes he were back home in Turkey with his wife and two children. But—over a grueling 8-month period last year—he's made *Cascade*, and now he has to promote it. He even stops to apologize: "I'm sorry—I guess I'm not being very helpful or articulate." But the album is, as he implies, its own aesthetic reward. Colorful romantic metaphors glisten across its sleek surface—water, mirrors, animals that exemplify inner peace, tranquility. And there are startling contrasts, such as "Scarlet Things In You" and "Mirror To My Woman's Mind," two grand-schemed pop-rock songs that are, on one hand, openly hook-wrought and commercial, and, on the other, some of the artist's most probing lyrical studies.

Murphy's advice to fans scanning his work for clues? Relax. Just relax. And he takes off on a spiritual tangent to explain.

"I believe in God, but I believe it's an unknowable thing. I believe in Adam and Eve, and that God was a hidden treasure and He truly wanted to be known, so He created man. So ultimately, He is knowable through His attributes, the creation of the world around us, what we can say is 'God's creation.' Art and lyrics and making songs and painting pictures—they're all trying to bridge that impenetrable point and describe something which is not apparent, and it's something that only becomes apparent through that expression.

"I think it's that simple—songwriting is a search. And the use of water and birds and mirrors on my album are pure images, which are cleansing. Like 'Wild Birds Flock To Me'—what kind of person is it to whom wild birds flock? This is a very pure person, someone who's so clean and chaste that birds literally flock to them. And we're not given enough information [on Earth] purposely, because if you know that every act has its repercussion, if you know that all roads lead to God and you're saved anyway, then there would be no need to do much while we're here."

Compare the brief but cryptic career of Bauhaus ('78-'83) with its leader's thoughtful, often thought-provoking solo work (and Murphy material along the way, such as "Kill The Hate" and "Time Has Got Nothing To Do With It"); it's a clear-cut journey from black to white, from the sinister to the cerebral. According to Murphy, it was all about power. "And that power was unrefined in Bauhaus. It was raw, and the common denominator in all rock and roll is that power which is quite dark—we just happened to tap into it as a band in a very potent form. It was unfocused, quite naive. We weren't really aware of the repercussions of our combination of imagery, expression and lyrics we were putting out. We were sort of victims of it."

Several years ago, ex-Bauhaus-ers David J., Daniel Ash and Kevin Haskins phoned Murphy with an idea—why not put the old group together again? He remembers feeling ambivalent until Ash himself summed it up with "I don't think I could tap into that [power] again." "And there was something outside of us which was really very powerful, once we came together," notes Murphy, his long flinty features drooping with sadness at the memory. "It wasn't magic or evil—it was just an unknown

thing, and I certainly as a performer exploited it, whereas now I don't ever want to that. I got bitten, I got stung bad."

For those who still insist on knowing more about the offstage Peter Murphy, he finally lays it on the line. "I live in a city. I'm a dad, a father, and I'm probably the straightest guy you've ever met, really," he says with a disarming—and uncharacteristic—grin. "Once I read an Eno interview where he said that one of the most satisfying and rewarding acts is to thoroughly Hoover the house, and I know what he meant. It's a very cleansing sort of thing to do. Like waking up at 4:00 in the morning to take your child to the toilet because he's going to wet the bed otherwise—these are all very practical things, and they focus you.

"Being a father focuses you on someone else's needs other than your own, so you immediately practice being a servant to something other than your own ego. So the idea of who you are and what your life is leading towards is all here, really. It's closer than your jugular vein. God is right in front of you."



## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### with Bauhaus:

*In The Flat Field* (A&M); *Mask* (Beggars Banquet); *The Sky's Gone Out* (Beggars Banquet/A&M); *Press The Eject And Give Me The Tape* (Beggars Banquet); *Burning From The Inside* (Beggars Banquet A&M); 1979-1983 (Beggars Banquet); *Swing The Heartache: The BBC Sessions* (Beggars Banquet)

### with Dalis Carr:

*The Waking Hour* (Paradox-Beggars Banquet)

### Peter Murphy solo:

*Should The World Fail To Fall Apart* (Beggars Banquet); *Love Hysteria* (Beggars Banquet); *Dweep* (Beggars Banquet); *Holy Smoke* (Beggars Banquet); *Cascade* (Beggars Banquet-Atlantic)

# CHRIS ISAAK

**"One of my friends said to me, two years down the line, 'Oh yeah, I was going through the hardest time of my life back then.' But they never said a word to me, never whimpered, and I felt bad—I wished they'd said something, and I bet that really hurt. Because I think it's good to tell people about stuff.**

It's kind of a sarcastic view of the world, but go ahead and tell your deepest, darkest secret to everyone—go ahead, because number one, you'll be surprised how good it feels to get it off your chest, and number two, after you get done telling them everything that's in your head—I've been thinking about suicide, but now that I've met you I've changed my mind—they'll probably turn to you and say 'Hey, did you see *The Flintstones* on TV last night?' A lot of it is going to be missed, so you may as well tell the truth and make it as real as you can and hope some portion of it gets through."

There's no mistaking the flip but deadpan humor—it's Chris Isaak, prefacing his new vibrato-laden theme piece, *Forever Blue* (Reprise). There's no mistaking the rockabilly coif, nor the crooked-but-charismatic boxer's nose (reportedly broken seven times in various bouts), nor the oceanic blue eyes that have set countless female hearts a-pattering since they first invaded American living rooms via the haunting "Wicked Game" video five years ago. His demeanor remains calm and self-assured; he readily proffers handshakes and "howzit goin'?"s to practically all of the San Francisco restaurant staff as he shuffles in for some of their famous boiled shrimp. The owner even scurries out of the back room to inquire "Hey Chris! When's that new album coming?" It's all smiles and first names for a while, until Isaak finally starts delving into *Forever Blue*. His features almost immediately cloud over, and his voice sinks into a soft wallflower monotone as he lays the cards on the table: His three-year romance with a certain former manager ended abruptly last year, and the singer has dutifully penned a pain-wracked elegy to said relationship, in what might easily be termed a "concept album."

Pared down to its essence, this record is the blues. The blues at its most primal and tortured, the feelings of loss that harry the human soul when love's life-affirming candle flickers out. How could this happen to Chris Isaak, of the matinee-idol good looks, of the dulcet-timbred tenor, of major film role fame? "That's what I said to her as we broke up—I'm a handsome rock star—you can't do this to me!" he quips, forcing a half-hearted grin. Then he rouses himself into a fairly believable Cagney: "Nobody does this to me, see! You're not walkin' out on me, I'm walking out on you, see!"

## *Forever Blue* And The Five

**BY TOM LANHAM**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
MICHAEL TIGHE**

World Radio History



# Stages Of Grief

Grief, whether it's over death or the end of a relationship, has five stages, a scale easily transferred to *Forever Blue*. The album begins with shock (the sinewy, backwater R&B creeper "Baby Did A Bad, Bad Thing") and—after 11 songs of inner struggle—ends with the finality of acceptance ("End Of Everything," a lonesome pedal-steel lament). It's arranged chronologically, so, every two or three numbers, you can hear the author switch gears into the next phase of sorrow, working his way out of the grief the only way he can—by documenting the changes, then cathartically burying them in music. And Isaak at his most lyrically weapy is at his most inventive and invigorating. What follows, then, is the breakdown of a breakup, in Isaak's own words.

## SHOCK

**Songs:** "Baby Did A Bad, Bad Thing," the Orbison-gentle acoustic plaint "Somebody's Cryin'" (original title—"Somebody's Lyin'," which Isaak deemed too harsh).

**Lyrics:** "You ever cry when you finally know just how low, low, low she'll go?"; "I know somebody and they called your name/A million times and still you never came."

**Isaak Analysis:** The incident that happened, the main thing, I couldn't talk about because it would still be painful for her. I could say that it came like an explosion, and it came when I was totally unaware. And it was like, one day you have a relationship and you think everything's pretty good, and the next you've got nothing. So I think the "bad, bad thing," when you cut through all the incidents, is when you find out they don't love you and you thought they did. And "Somebody's Cryin'" to me is a whole vision of someone who's in their

house at night and thinking about someone—"I wonder what they're doing tonight? I wonder if they're thinking about me? I wonder if they really know how much this is affecting me, that I really love them that much." And they probably will never know. I worked really hard on the lyrics—"Give me a sign and let me know we're through/If you

## My karma could've been the world with no chance, favor. And still I'm able to

don't love me like I love you." When I sang those, it felt really right, you know what I mean? And I can show you for "Somebody's Cryin'" probably 20 pages of lyrics, because I wrote a LOT. But I always hate it if you're singing something that's not quite right, if they're just moon-in-June lyrics.

## DENIAL

**Songs:** "Graduation Day"; "Walkin' Down There," a fiery '50s-ish foray that ends with Isaak and guitar screaming in tandem.

**Lyrics:** "I went walkin' down there/I went searchin' down there/But there's nothing left for you and me"; "Think of the good times, wishing you were still with me/The way it used to be/Graduation Day."

**Isaak Analysis:** I like that saying, "you can never go home again." There are lines in "Graduation Day" that to me are very emotional, like "a million dreams have all gone bad." There are so many things in my life that I've tried to make work and then screwed up. I dunno, God must watch over me, 'cause He's followed me around and just given me one good thing after another, like "Here, I'm gonna put you in California on the coast, I'm gonna give you a healthy body, you're gonna have a good mind." My karma could've been to be born in some poverty slum somewhere in the world with no chance, and instead I'm born with a lot of things in my favor. And still I'm able to screw things up pretty good. And I could tell you what "Walking Down There"

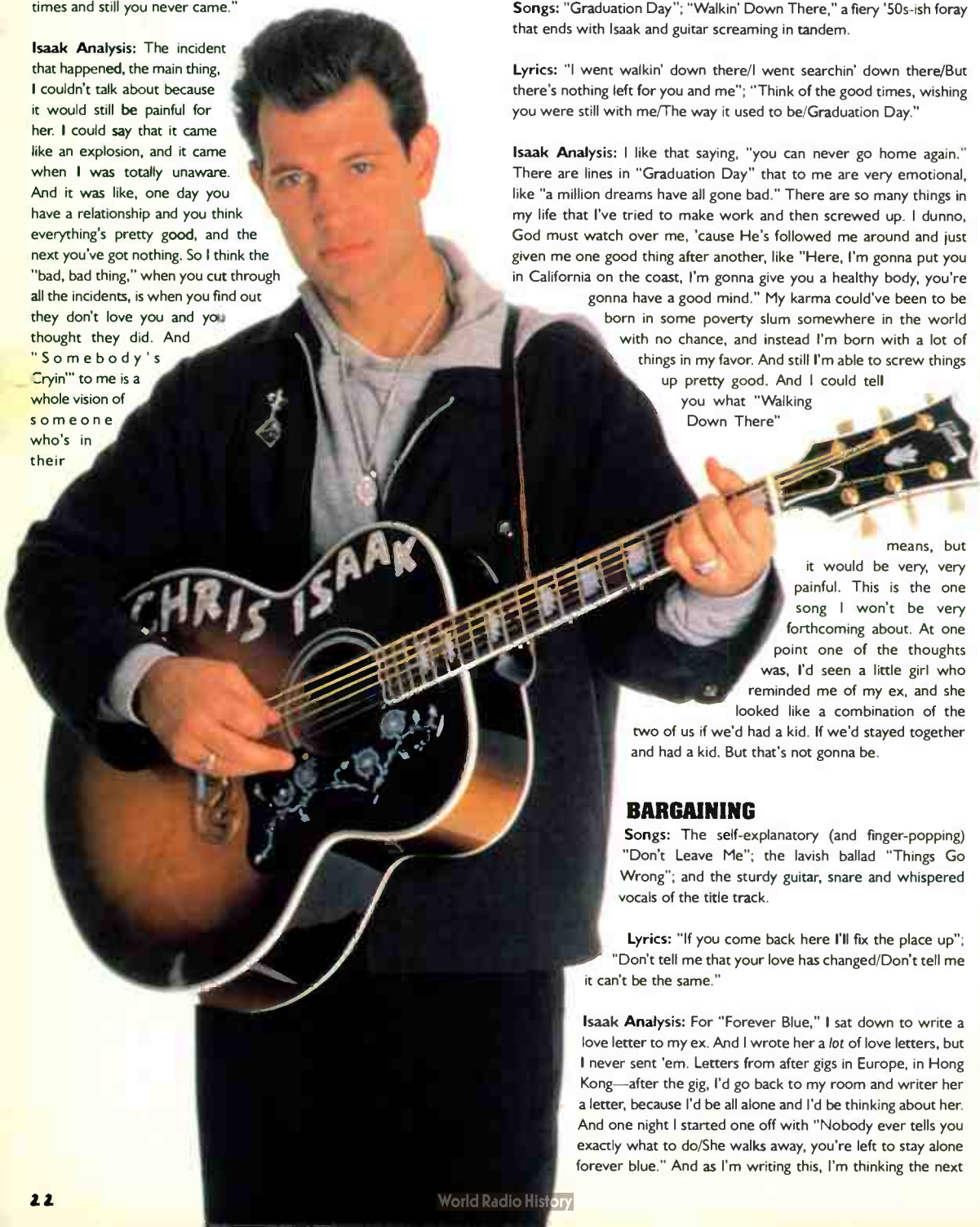
means, but it would be very, very painful. This is the one song I won't be very forthcoming about. At one point one of the thoughts was, I'd seen a little girl who reminded me of my ex, and she looked like a combination of the two of us if we'd had a kid. If we'd stayed together and had a kid. But that's not gonna be.

## BARGAINING

**Songs:** The self-explanatory (and finger-popping) "Don't Leave Me"; the lavish ballad "Things Go Wrong"; and the sturdy guitar, snare and whispered vocals of the title track.

**Lyrics:** "If you come back here I'll fix the place up"; "Don't tell me that your love has changed/Don't tell me it can't be the same."

**Isaak Analysis:** For "Forever Blue," I sat down to write a love letter to my ex. And I wrote her a lot of love letters, but I never sent 'em. Letters from after gigs in Europe, in Hong Kong—after the gig, I'd go back to my room and write her a letter, because I'd be all alone and I'd be thinking about her. And one night I started one off with "Nobody ever tells you exactly what to do/She walks away, you're left to stay alone forever blue." And as I'm writing this, I'm thinking the next



one's gotta open up and be about something bigger than distance, bigger than just yourself, and I got "The stars have all stopped shining," and that was good, because—as you're looking out at the world—it's not just you when things go really bad. When things are great, the whole world's like Disneyland, and when it's horrible, you look around

"Uh, forever? Well, I didn't realize that you were gonna be so messy! I changed my mind!" It's all philosophical bullshit. At the end of "Change," we put on these cymbals that sound kinda like thunder. There's a Hawaiian record I saw one time that has this picture of a Hawaiian sunset going down—it's a beautiful place, but it looks kinda

## to be born in some poverty slum somewhere in and instead I'm born with a lot of things in my screw things up pretty good.

at other people crying and you can't bear to see it. Basically, our times together were all spent talking about work. We worked non-stop. And that's the other thing I felt bad about afterwards—maybe she thought that's all there was to us.

### HOPE

**Songs:** "There She Goes," a walking-paced twangathon that gradually builds in intensity; "Goin' Nowhere," a roughshod rocker; and the spooky little prayer "Change Your Mind."

**Lyrics:** "I don't want nobody/I was happy with you/I can't believe it's over/I keep thinkin' of you"; "Like the stance, like the style, like the way you shake it/You're the kind of a girl I would say is goin' nowhere"; "I believed that we would never say goodbye... you changed your mind."

**Isaak Analysis:** "Goin' Nowhere" is about the bad side of yourself, that you would go out and be attracted to people going nowhere. The idea of a guy going out with a girl who's very superficial—like the clothes, like the tan, like all the trappings on you, and I can tell you're going nowhere, because in my mind, I'm going nowhere too. It's a pathetic song—"Maybe we can find a way to make it seem okay." Get in the car—it'll be almost like love. And "Change Your Mind"—that's what some people say nowadays. They start by saying "I love you forever!" But whenever it becomes convenient, they begin to make excuses,

sad. And I always picture paradise like that, so that song is about an idea in your head about paradise—you think you're gonna be in paradise with someone, but they just take it all away.

### ACCEPTANCE

**Songs:** The sepulchral, echoing "Shadows"; the momentarily uplifting "Believe"; and the coyote coda, "End Of Everything."

**Lyrics:** "Shadows in the mirror/Tell me that we're through"; "I believe in a beautiful day/But not for me/And not for you"; "This is the end of everything/This is the end, that I know/This is the end of everything/Take your love with you when you go."

**Isaak Analysis:** I don't mean "I Believe" in a bad way. You wanna know something? At a time when I was breaking up, I desperately wanted some relationship to work, just to prove it could be done. I loved the idea that Roy Rogers was still with Dale Evans after all those years. And, like, he said "Well, Dale and I never go to bed enemies—we always make up." And if I had one thing I could do right now—if somebody said the world was gonna end in a coupla hours, I'd say "Well, how long will it take me to get over to my ex's house?" And people say to me "Well, why don't you do that, then?" And I say "Because I know the world isn't gonna end right away." In real life, we have to go on for a long, long time.

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# Motorbooty

## Inside the only fanzine that doesn't suck.

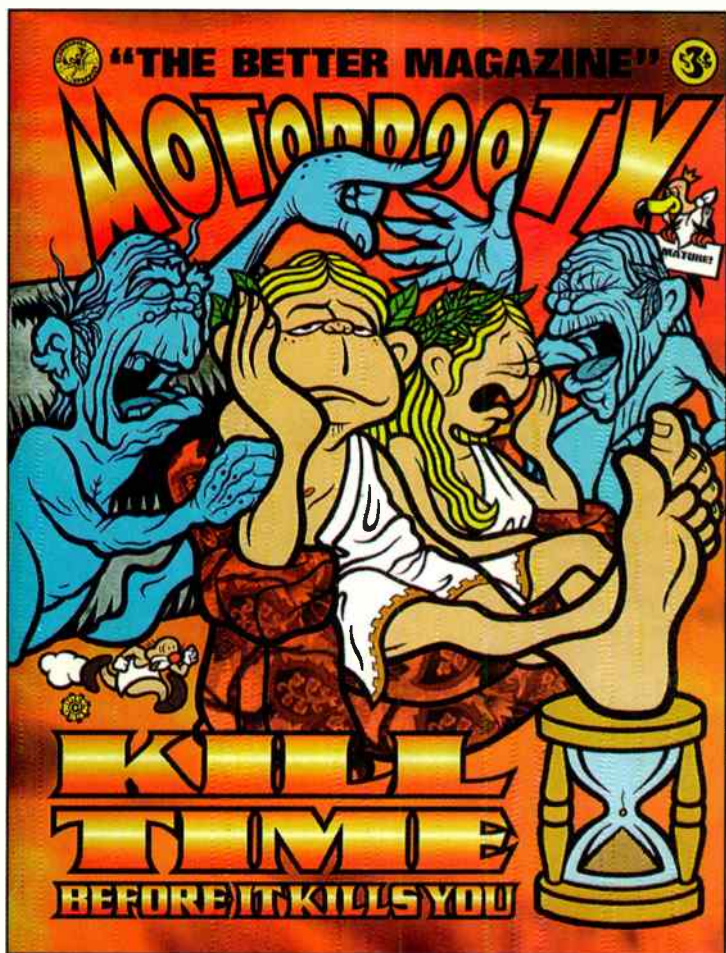
# Affair

Like the records by so many of the bands it reveres and reviles, *Motorbooty's* attitude and limited availability have kept it underground for much longer than it deserves. The magazine's dazzling graphics, withering wisecrass satire, ultra-cool musical taste and Motor City-centric ("No doubt!") vibe make for a visual and mental funhouse that's as funky as its Parliament-derived name. The only trouble is, people have children faster than these guys put together a magazine, and unless you grab one within weeks of its appearance, you'll have to wait another year or two for the next.

Still, it's always worth the wait. Over seven issues in as many years, *Motorbooty* has defined itself as the ultimate indie-rock lampoon; it's loaded with fake advertisements, the table of contents lists more articles that aren't inside than actually are, and there are many (although you're never quite sure how many) articles that are purely the product of its creators' alarmingly fertile imaginations.

Although technically a fanzine (because it's done for fun), *Motorbooty's* avoidance of Terminal Indie Syndrome—self-righteous grandstanding, (sell-)outing of perceived scene heathens, parading mediocrity and sloppiness as D.I.Y. virtues, and most of all, taking it all too fucking seriously—has led the *Village Voice* to deem it "the only fanzine that doesn't suck." Despite that, *Motorbooty's* devastating satires are the last word on "indie-cred," managing within the space of a few pages to render months of badly-xeroxed diatribes and online attitude redundant. These guys were making fun of the scene long before the terms "indie" and "alternative" were even coined, and the official *Motorbooty* shirt says "Indie-Rock Must Die."

Yet the 'zine avoids overdosing on cynicism by being as reverent as it is irreverent. Specialties include imaginatively crazed comics, tastefully thorough retrospectives of the editors' favorite classic musicians (Funkadelic, Detroit Rock, Last Poets, Blowfly, Miles Davis—and they take a novel angle on the first two by including lengthy pieces on the graphic artists who were as much a part of the image as the bands), and articles on people whom they just plain like: Evel Knievel, artist Robert Williams, writer Kathy Acker, '70s comedy troupe the Firesign Theater, Yugoslavian film director Dusan Makavejev, and decidedly non-Yugoslavian filmmaker Russ Meyer. Surrounding this multi-faceted funhouse is Mark Dancey's utterly distinctive cover artwork, based around quasi-conceptual statements like "Kill Time Before It Kills You" and "Everything is Funny (As Long As It Happens To Somebody Else)."



The *Motorbooty* A-Team is a group of old college friends (now a public-interest lawyer, a multi-lingual translator, a freelance rock writer and members of the band Big Chief), all of whom worked together on the University of Michigan's satirical 'zine *The Gargoyle*, but all would agree that Dancey is the mag's Mr. T. Equally comic and sinister, childish and sophisticated, his artwork is a warped world of drunken clowns, reeling floozies, leering animals, pathetic platform-heeled slacker pawns, bad-ass muscle cars and dozens of unidentifiable elements that are more texture than substance. One reader described Dancey's work as "Popeye redrawn by a Mayan hieroglyph artist on acid." (The magazine's other graphic assassins include Lloyd Dangle, Terry LaBan, the Pizz, and occasionally the likes of Peter Bagge and Mary Fleener).

"We were all influenced by *Mad* magazine, and especially underground comics," Dancey says. "The idea that those guys could do whatever they wanted, put it out themselves and get away with it was a big inspiration. And for me, something like a Hieronymus Bosch painting is just hilarious—he was making fun of people and human folly, and the symbols that he used meant something specific to people then, but to us it's just hilarious nonsense: a guy with an apple on his head or birds flying out of his butt."

Originally conceived as a more conventional rock magazine (with record reviews and contemporary interviews), *Motorbooty* instead surveys the current musical climate through its devastatingly funny parodies of alternative rock's sacred cows. Highlights of recent issues



include a thorough listing of the symptoms of "When Good Bands Start To Suck," the "Bank of Coolness and Credibility International" (featuring balance statements of coolness for Sonic Youth, Steve Albini and Ministry), a chart containing dinner conversation topics with various anonymous major-label A&R reps, a ruthless critique of rock literature, a roster of indie labels as minor-league baseball teams (SST Bogarians, Matador Doormats, Dischord Party Poopers, Twin Tone Plaid Sox and more, all with logos to match), and a survey of the New York club scene based on how many members of Sonic Youth (and their children) were present at each gig. All of the starting Bootarians are or have been in bands, including the Necros, Born Without A Face, Mötörhøme, Bored Youth and others, so they're ridiculing a scene that they're very much a part of.

The indie-satire-as-high-concept ideal started in 1989 with an uproarious spoof of Pamela des Barres' *I'm With The Band*, entitled "I've Been With The Band" (starring members of Midwestern indie-rock legends like Big Black, Die Kreuzen, Soul Asylum, and, in their only instance of anything resembling intra-company self-promotion, a member of Big Chief.) "With that issue, we really started to get our act together," Dancey says. "That's when we started writing things that weren't just essays about bands. We started satirizing the whole scene and all its ridiculousness."

"It's always best through humor, even though a lot of people don't get the jokes," says A-Teamer Mike Rubin. "It's possible that we may only appeal to jaded and sarcastic people like ourselves—we've kinda always been our own worst enemies as far as self-promotion! But unlike most people who do fanzines, we do go out and we do have social lives, and half of our jokes are written at shows or at parties."

The absence of "real" coverage of contemporary bands has led readers to wonder whether the staff actually likes anything new. "It's not that we're not paying attention to what's going on," Dancey says. "There are bands now that we think are really important and really fascinating and we love, like Kyuss and Clawhammer and Six Finger Satellite, and we wonder if we should do articles on them, but it has to be something different from what everybody else does—not that those bands have been written about that much. So we include them in our little critiques of what's going on, and we make fun of them!"

The butts of Booty humor are given no quarter, at times to a near-libelous degree. "No, we haven't ever been sued," Dancey says. "We've gotten some idle kinda threats before, but it hasn't come to that, although we do like that we could hit a nerve and set somebody off that much!"

While there is a revolving cast of about twenty contributors, the express is driven by Dancey, Rubin, Barry Hensler, David Merline, Rob Michaels, Dan Plotnick and Dan Rice. Half of them are scattered across the country, and two of the Detroit area residents spend half the year on tour, but they manage to gather at Booty Central two or three times a year to work on the magazine. "We work on things on our own or on the phone," Rubin says, "but all of the best writing comes when we go back home."

Much of the material is uncredited because it's basically written by everybody. "It's a time-wasting and kind of ridiculous way to do it, but the collaboration is really important," Dancey says. "But even if just one of us wrote an article or ad that's meant as a parody, we couldn't sign it, that would give it away and ruin it. We once heard from someone who wouldn't read our magazine because he thought that it showed no pride of authorship—somebody like that is just never gonna get it. I mean, we have a table of contents that doesn't exist in the magazine, and pull-quotes that don't exist in the articles!"

Despite *Motorbooty's* sketchy existence over the past few years, "this is our year of getting organized; we have turned over a new leaf!" Dancey says. "It took two years to get the last issue out, and our goal now is two a year. Each one has sold incrementally more, like the newest one is at least 15,000 and the first was 1500. We've got an office now—we used to have it in my house—and Dave is the managing editor, so he's here all the time and the magazine won't just drop when I go on tour."



Considering the praise Dancey has received for his album covers (Soundgarden's *Badmotorfinger* and virtually every Big Chief release), one would assume he's had loads of lucrative offers. "Thankfully, no!" he says, "And that's good, because I really don't enjoy doing that very much. I'm not interested in being a commercial artist for somebody else's thing—I've done [covers] for friends, or somebody's idea that I liked. But what we're doing is so much better.

"We're trying to build this multi-media thing, we've put together a catalogue of merchandise, and we're trying to do a series of nice silk-screened posters of artwork from the magazines. We're planning to put out an anthology in the near future, containing [previously published articles] and stuff we left out or could expand on, like we could have been a lot more thorough with our Funkadelic piece. And we've been planning little publicity things, like maybe having Big Chief play at the Stooges Wax Museum (featured in issue #5)."

Eighteen bucks will get you a four-issue subscription, but don't hold your breath. "We used to say that four issues is a lifetime subscription," Rubin laughs, "But hopefully now that'll be two years. We want to have the next one done by July, so it'll be a test. We have enough ideas for the next two issues; that's not the problem. The problem has always been, when will we all be there to actually do it?"

"Detroit's really important to the spirit of the magazine. There's definitely a mindset, because that's where we're all from," Dancey says. "We're just sick of having the magazine come out and a few people see it and think it's great and then it's gone. We don't want it to be this secret thing. We don't see why *Motorbooty* shouldn't be on newsstands everywhere."

by **Jem Aswad**

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| Guided By Voices<br>Thread Waxing Space  |     |      |       |     |
| Boradoms<br>The Knitting Factory   |     |      |       |     |
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## 18th dye tribute to a bus



### 18TH DYE *Tribute To A Bus* Matador

Put 'em to the test, and more often than not you'll find your average record collector/rock 'n' roll connoisseur an overly opinionated blowhard, dismissing and embracing bands based on where they're from, rumor, minutiae read on the Internet, or saddest of all, the word of a dirt-ass in some rag, before they've heard note one of actual music. Now, if someone were to blurt out that 18th Dye is an artsy-craftsy guitar band heavily influenced by Sister-era Sonic Youth, and it's from Germany, all you know-it-alls will have already decided what it's like; and, well, many of you will probably be pretty close in your assessments. Like most bands who learned from the mid-to-late-'80s school of arty guitar-minimalism, 18th Dye builds songs from unlikely fragments, based on metronomic ching-ching-ching downstroke guitar lines and fragile, icy arpeggios that usually erupt into blasts of dissonance and feedback. Furthermore, the cold, gloomy vocals and cerebral discipline of 18th Dye's sound will surely reinforce half-baked Yankee stereotypes about our German friends. That's not meant to imply 18th Dye is a formulaic bore. No, no, my friends. Fact is, *Tribute To A Bus* is a solid record, full of stark, beautiful moments and subtle hooks that keep arty self-indulgence at bay. If 18th Dye only took a few more chances it could be a major player really soon.

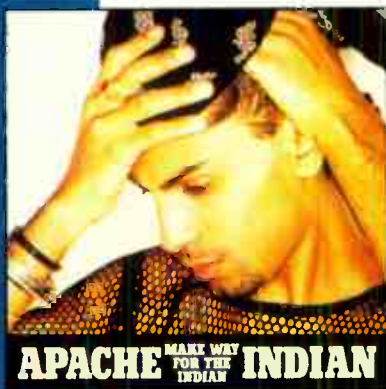
—Steve McGuirl

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 11. First single "Play With You."

**FILE UNDER:** Arty guitar minimalism.

**R.I.Y.L:** Sonic Youth, Stereolab, Luna, Velvet Underground.

### APACHE INDIAN *Make Way For The Indian* Mango-Island



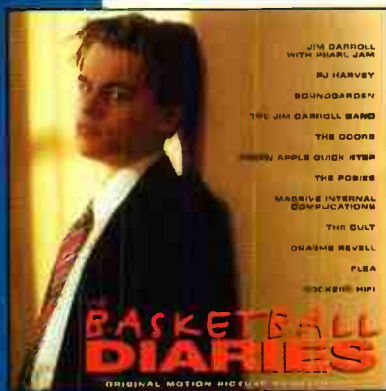
Most of the time, real bhangra—the Indian/British dancehall/rap hybrid you can buy on \$3 cassettes in Indian delis and video rental joints—is bogged down in cheesy synthesizers and pitifully weak beats. The cover art can be fantastic—disco lights and outer-space motifs are common—and the rappers can have great, tough, screaming voices, but too many times, limp music spoils the party. Apache Indian is the first bhangra artist to really receive the juice of Western production, and he rides the beat like a kid who finally gets to hang out with the big boys: the better the beat, the better his delivery, the better the cut. The Tim Dog cameo on "Make Way For The Indian" works best, but the tunelessly crooning reggae vocalizer on "Raggamuffin Girl" ruins what might have been a swinging track if given more disciplined production. The possibility remains that Apache Indian is in transition—"Boom Shack-A-Lack," the single from the last album, is suddenly taking off as a single from the soundtrack to the movie *Dumb And Dumber*. If it's on his third album, too, we'll know that the idea of mixing bhangra and hip-hop was just a novelty. But if he gets it right, look out.—James Lien

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 11.

**FILE UNDER:** Hip-hop with curry flavor.

**R.I.Y.L:** Ini Kamoze, MC Solaar.

### VARIOUS ARTISTS *The Basketball Diaries* Island



The best thing about this, the soundtrack album for the long-awaited film of Jim Carroll's much-loved memoir of hoops, kicks, and poetry in NYC, is the fact that the original version of Carroll's classic "People Who Died" sounds as fresh today as when it first appeared, which is about five times fresher than Pearl Jam's faithful but listless backing of Carroll on a remake of "Catholic Boy." The worst thing about the album is that Carroll sounds almost as tired singing the song as the grunge kings (Vedderless for the occasion) do playing it. Other than this little then-and-now frisson, we get: brief snatches of Carroll's narration (from the book) over composer Graeme Revell's ambient backing; PJ Harvey's "Down By The Water," standing in for the Patti Smith songs that probably should have been in the movie; and a second side full of alt-rock (by the likes of The Cult, Soundgarden, and Green Apple Quickstep) that has as much to do with Carroll's rock 'n' Rimbaud as the product placement in a Richard Donner flick. One criticism that has been levelled at the film is that it never decides between taking place in Carroll's mid-to-late '70s milieu or a '90s update. This soundtrack falls squarely on the latter side of the equation, to its disadvantage. Fans of the movie (or the book) would be better advised to seek out the one-volume Jim Carroll Band retrospective on Rhino.

—Franklin Bruno

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 4.

**FILE UNDER:** Proto-punk goes grunge-soundtrack.

**R.I.Y.L:** Bands mentioned above, *Singles* soundtrack, Carroll's *Praying Mantis*.

**BIOTA** *Object Holder* **R&R**

Out in Colorado, the musical collective Biota (this time, seven people plus four guests) and its visual-arts comrades Mnemonists (three members of Biota and eight others) have been making beautiful, startlingly original records for 15 years, untouched by genre, fashion, influence or much of an audience—there's really no word that approximates what they do, even one as broad as "rock" or "jazz." They play guitars, piano and drums; more often, though, they play accordion, flugelhorn, hurdy-gurdy, nae, clavoline and whatever other reed, percussion and keyboard instruments are at hand. Most of the time, their records sound as if they'd heard about music and liked the idea of it but never actually heard anyone else's, then come upon a cache of instruments and learned to use them to make something that sounded good to them. Biota's music is dense, rich and consistently lovely, with "processing and tapework" adding rumbling, *musique concrète*-like layers to the sound or streamlining it, as necessary. *Object Holder*, essentially a 24-part suite with sections that segue into one another, adds an element that's new to the group: vocals, from guest Suzanne Lewis (a New York resident, from Biota's labelmate Hail), singing texts by members of the group. With the incorporation of "songs," it's their most accessible record to date, at least on its surface. But it takes patience to appreciate it fully; it may take years to probe its depths.

—Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 15.

**FILE UNDER:** Arty, cerebral beauty.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Art Ensemble of Chicago, Gastr Del Sol.

**BLACK DOG** *Spanners* **EastWest-EEG**

Before this debut major-label release, Black Dog was entrenched in the U.K. indie techno scene, synonymous with Warp Records. The title of its previous release, *Bytes*, sets an impish tone for the technological mayhem of *Spanners*. (It's not surprising that the whimsical Bjork has procured Black Dog to write material for her forthcoming album.) On *Spanners*, the British trio dispels any myths that electronic music is limited to formulaic patterns. Its 19 interwoven compositions extend from the Millennium Salsa of "Barbola Work" to the Middle-Eastern digi-tribal rhythms of "PSIL-Coysin." *Spanners* is an epic journey through life in the modern world. On the first listening, some of the Black Dog's experimentalism seems self-conscious and obvious. Listen more carefully, though, and tracks like "Bolt 3" and "Chase The Manhattan," take on a Tangerine Dream-like tone, demonstrating that there's a fine line between industrial and experimental electronic. Further perusal uncovers the sophisticated nuances of a directed soundscape. To get the pan-aural effect of Black Dog's work, one uninterrupted listening is recommended.

—Shona Ting Lipton

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Mutable frequencies.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Yellow Magic Orchestra, Aphex Twin, L.F.O., Tangerine Dream

**CHARLES RIVER VALLEY BOYS** *Beatie Country* **Rounder**

In 1966, when the Beatles had just about had it with this country, a group of New England bluegrass revivalists got together in Nashville to do a uniquely American take on the band that had gotten so many parents upset. Had it been more widely heard, the Charles River Valley Boys' *Beatie Country* might have tamed the Fab Four in the eyes of older Middle America by allowing those oldsters to hear the great tunes shorn of their teen-corrupting sex appeal. Crackpot scenarios like this are easy to imagine as one listens to Rounder's reissue of *Beatie Country*. Heard from an exclusively rock 'n' roll perspective, the record sounds innocent, almost reactionary—especially where McCartney's frenzied falsetto "oohs" are replaced by Dobro flourishes, or the crescendo of "held her hand in mii-eeen!" becomes a trilling yodel. But the CRVB's crossover turned out to be visionary instead, foreshadowing both the "newgrass" movement of the '70s and the pop stylings of people like Mike Nesmith. The Boys are ingenious at spinning the Beatles' simple melodies into the nimble string arrangements that are the hallmark of bluegrass showmanship. On an instrumental rendition of "She's A Woman" and in shimmering fiddle-and-banjo breaks on "Help!" this technical virtuosity almost makes you forget the songs' origins. By contrast, their version of "Yellow Submarine" sounds oddly faithful, a homespun twist on the Beatles' trippy novelty. "Yellow" is pointedly pronounced "yeller" throughout, and when "the band begins to play," it's a tin pot and organ-grinding duet.

—Andreo Moed

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 23.

**FILE UNDER:** Hooky bluegrass.

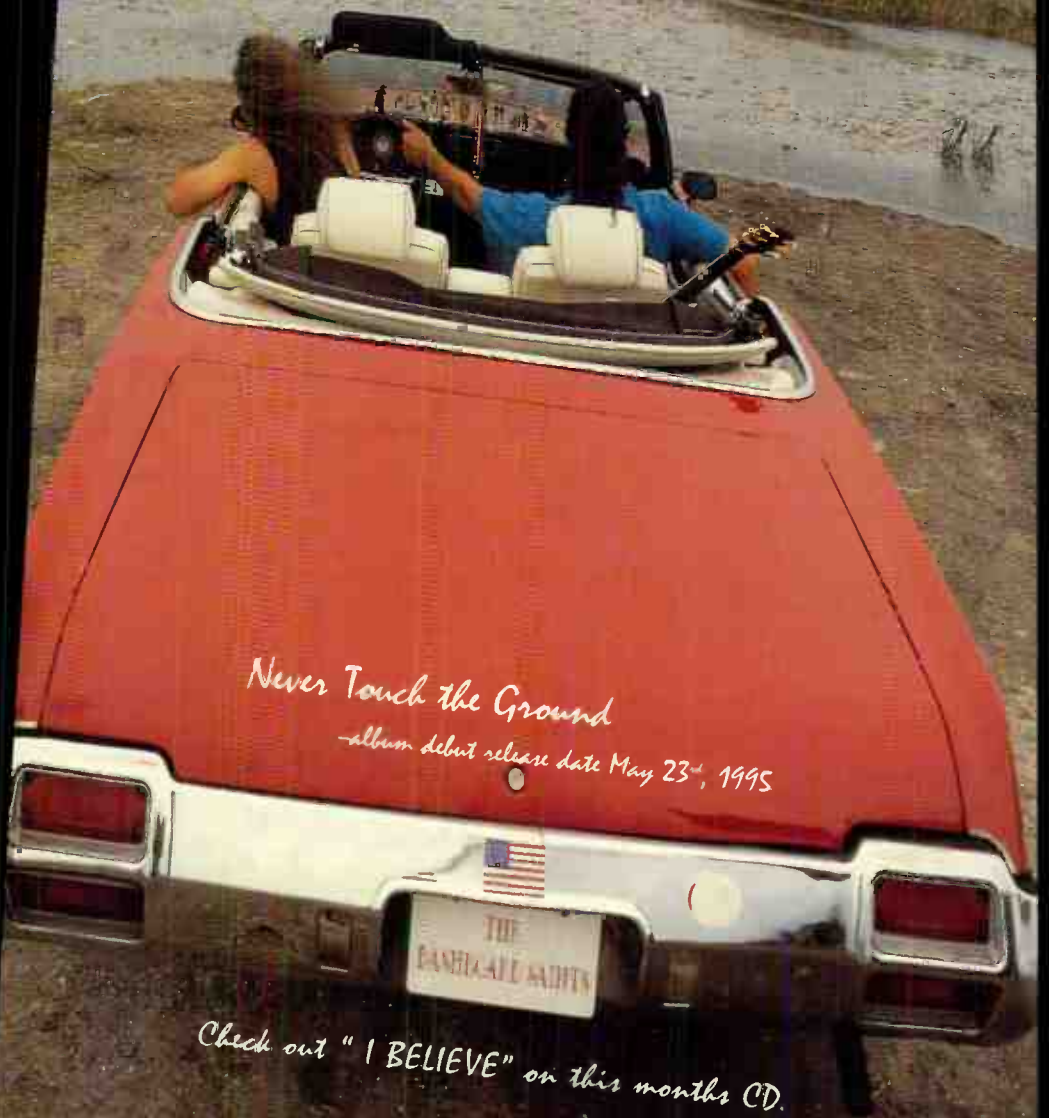
**R.I.Y.L.:** Ralph & Carter, the Monkees, Seldom Scene.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



"I was really trying to not write a song about being on the road because, since Bon Jovi, I feel like everything's been said about it." —Morphine's Mark Sandman, from an interview in *Illinois Entertainer*.

# The Dashboard Saints



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**ELVIS COSTELLO** *The Kojak Variety* Warner Bros.

Recorded between 1989's *Spike* and 1991's *Mighty Like A Rose*, this mish-mash of old jazz, blues, and rock selections that Elvis often sneaks into his concerts shows a new band being road-tested after Costello had given the Attractions the heave-ho. *The Kojak Variety* sounds as loose as an *Unplugged* session, and often less rehearsed and staged than those sets usually come across—it's pretty hard to be self-conscious when you're singing tracks like "Bama Lama Bama Loo" or "Leave My Kitten Alone." Throughout, Elvis does a nice job covering some potentially embarrassing material. Not known (or even tolerated) for his crooning, Costello gives the Sinatra chestnut "The Very Thought Of You" a tender delivery. Whether covering country blues ("Must You Throw Dirt In My Face") or full-throttle electric blues (Howlin' Wolf's "Hidden Charms"), Costello and his band never kid around. This is no schmaltzy Buster Poindexter gee-aren't-old-songs-reat review; it's more like an earnest songwriting perfectionist proving that they don't write 'em or play 'em like they used to. Folks who haven't kept up with Elvis since "Everyday I Write The Book" might find the directness of this material a welcome change from his recent records. Only Mose Allison's "Everybody's Crying Mercy" holds any crafty lyrical bite; the rest of *Kojak* lets Elvis glibly rock, roll and soul around for a change.

—Steve Ciabattone

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9.

**FILE UNDER:** Elvis idols.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Costello's *King Of America*, Lyle Lovett & His Large Band.



**DENTISTS** *Deep Six* EastWest-EEG

In England, for every cloudy or rainy day, a new bright pop song must be written and played to substitute for the sunlight so the daffodils will continue to grow. And back around 1986, Albion's green hills were in pretty good shape, thanks to 20-odd frisky Byrds-meet-Buzzcocks two-guitar pop groups. Most of the rest of the best of these bands have changed styles, or disappeared inexplicably around the turn of the decade, but the Dentists have stayed with it, working and reworking their varietal of concise, energy-yielding Britpop. As a result, each reluctantly blooming petal between Cambridge and Cornwall owes its life to the last few Dentists records. As the smog and gloom of the reactionary '90s settles over America, gardening experts have begun to import British indie-pop in bulk to keep their own crops properly crisp and colorful; last year, for example, EastWest brought Dentists songs into the country in unprecedented numbers, and reports of record strawberry harvests, not to mention sales of stripy socks, were widely credited to the Dentists' single "Spaceman." The new batch of Dentists songs on *Deep Six* may be slightly harder to transport than the last—they're "heavier," thanks to producer Wharton Tiers—but they promise the same beneficial effects. The words are fine non-dumb, non-exceptional boy-girl stuff; there are touches of backbeat and neo-punk aggression ("Weirdo") and distortion to make the record acceptable to novices; a few songs (of 14) sound merely generic, rather than "very good and of their genre"; but at bottom this is as good an inspired and kicking aggregation of purified boy-singer guitar-meets-guitar Britpop as anyone sensible could require. You may need an extra copy for especially rainy days.

—Stephen Burt

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25. First single "Appetite."

**FILE UNDER:** Pure pop for relatively demanding people.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Blur, Teenage Fanclub, Posies.



**DIE KRUPPS** *Rings Of Steel* Cleopatra

Industrial rock and metal really aren't so far apart—heavy guitar riffs, minor-key melodies, drum machines and apocalyptic lyrics on the one hand, and exactly the same (except for the drum machines) on the other. The German industrial ensemble Die Krupps, though, has made at least the recent part of its career out of exaggerating the difference between the two genres, and then bridging it (it's probably best known in the US for its EP of Metallica covers). It's also got a pop sensibility buried in there somewhere, very deep—the band's Ralf Dörper was a founding member of the underrated mid-'80s band Propaganda, Germany's sinister answer to ABBA. *Rings Of Steel* is a sort of summing-up of what Die Krupps has been doing for the last few years: five new tracks, plus 12 older pieces remixed by industrial and metal luminaries from KMFDM's Sascha (who makes "Iron Man" sound like, well, KMFDM) to Sisters Of Mercy's Andrew Eldritch (who brings out the latent pop undertones in "Fatherland"). The most successful reconstruction is "New Temptation," reworked by Einstürzende Neubauten's F.M. Einheit into a thumping, hissing machine on the verge of collapse; the weirdest is "Bloodsuckers," redone as a collaboration with Biohazard (who have problems pronouncing Die Krupps' name) and House Of Pain's DJ Lethal. When *Rings Of Steel* works, which is often enough, it's got enough guitar mass to satisfy both your metal cravings and your industrial jones.

—Juliana Day

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 16. First single and video "Bloodsuckers." Touring in July.

**FILE UNDER:** Industrial-metal hybrids.

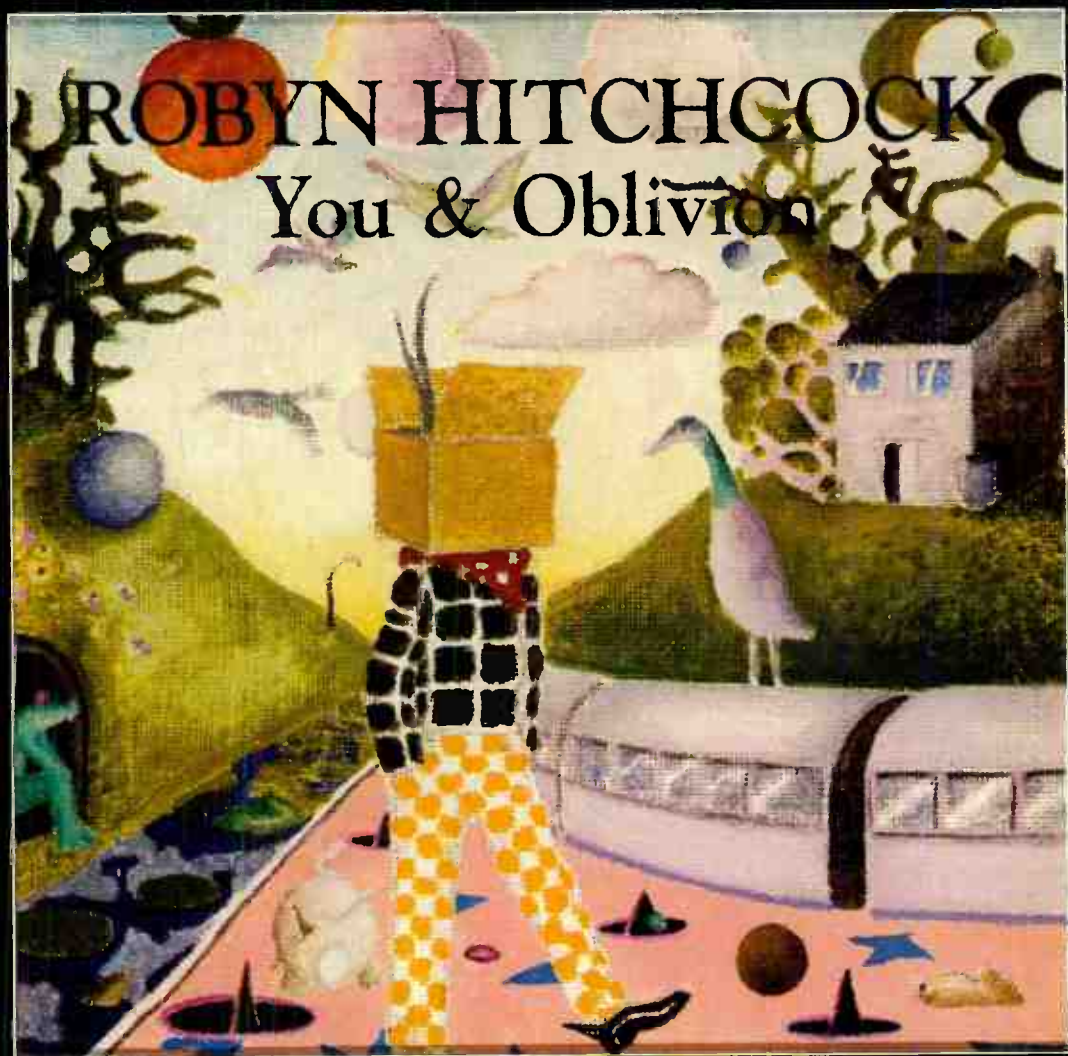
**R.I.Y.L.:** KMFDM, Biohazard, Revolting Cocks.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

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**DISH** Boneyard Beach Interscope

There are moments throughout Dish's debut when Dana Kleiter's voice sounds quite like that of Natalie Merchant, only with more depth, power and range; it's the tomboy version of Merchant's comely wallflower. Where Merchant often glides over songs (note her unplugged version of Patti Smith's "Because The Night," where her voice wistfully trails off in the choruses because she lacks the power to bend and hold the note), Kleiter seizes every opportunity to throw herself into a song, out-muscling the ringing guitars when she isn't trilling prettily. Much of Dish's music has a similar pretty-with-a-wallop feel; after the glowing balladry of "Be Still," the band launches headlong into the rugged "Function" with an impressive ease. Much of Dish toys with an understated '70s folk-rock vibe, giving the impression of an alternative-minded Linda Ronstadt (Kleiter's strong soprano certainly bears the comparison). Further proof of that pudding is the rocked-up, John-and-Exene-styled cover of the Band's dirge "Tears Of Rage" that opens side two. Still, nothing about Dish is that obvious, and it's only after trying to figure out *why* you like it (the "if" comes along pretty quick) that any of the band's influences come into play. Nifty stuff. —Scott Burke

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 11. Kleiter sang backup on Hole's *Live Through This*.

**FILE UNDER:** Comely, surprisingly strong pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Eleventh Dream Day, 10,000 Maniacs, later X, earlier Linda Ronstadt.

**DRUGSTORE** Drugstore London

If Russ Meyer were still scampering around the film world, chances are he'd love to be there when Mazzy Star's lugubrious Hope Sandoval finally corners Drugstore crooner Isabel Monteiro, most likely in some no-luck bar with plenty of breakable objects on hand...Mazzy Star are the real thing—all black heart and greasy R&B/country soul. Drugstore, unfortunately, pander the same winsome-vocal/scratch-guitar in a secondhand mimicry that's far too close for comfort. Let's just make it simple for the consumer—there are countless Sandoval-ish sighs and "doo-doo-doo"s on Drugstore's empty-headed disc, plus the required sylphlike singing that—like Sandoval's—feels like so many gusty drafts from a just-opened crypt. Instrumentation is bare-bones minimum—à la Mazzy Star's David Roback—and most of the lyrics are Grade-B Poe poppycock like "You either die or you keep on burning alive/I'm burning"; "I'm tired of living... this life never changes"; "This city's killing me faster and faster/Gonna tell him I was born broken"; and, of course, the *pièce de résistance*, "Somehow I'll get myself into a coma/Feel my body drifting/Slowly gonna slip away." The creepiest part of this whole phenomenon is that the one-in-a-million Mazzy Star approach has boomeranged back to us so blatantly and so soon. As if no one would notice. Duh. —Tom Lanham

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 2.

**FILE UNDER:** She hangs slightly less brightly.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Mazzy Star, Sharkboy, opium dens.

**East River Pipe**

Poor Fricky

**EAST RIVER PIPE** Poor Fricky Merge

FM. Cornog—who's East River Pipe by himself—makes his records in his ground-floor apartment in Queens. "Bring On The Loser," he sings in the first song on *Poor Fricky*—losers are the subject of all his songs. More specifically, his great theme is loss, and longing for what's been lost. His voice is subtle and quiet, and so is his music; his guitars chime so delicately that you're afraid their sound may shatter at any moment, like a thin strand of glass. As a one-man band, Cornog can integrate all the parts of his songs; when "Metal Detector" suddenly surges out of its repose, it's at a moment that just feels like the right one. These songs can sigh out of existence after two minutes (like "Put-Down," with its rich backing vocals) or drift along as long as they need to; however long they get, they're as economical as a starvation budget. *Poor Fricky*'s main development over earlier records is that ERP is using keyboards more effectively than ever before. "Here We Go" has an organ sound that sounds like a run-down carnival someone's taken their girlfriend to for a last-chance try at reconciliation, and the six-minute-plus "Keep All Your Windows Tight Tonight" is built on a tiny, lush keyboard figure that suggests more instrumentation than there actually is. This is music for when you wake up, look at what's left of your face in what's left of the mirror, and think: I have wasted my life. —Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9. First single "Bring On The Loser." American version subtracts two songs from the British edition, and adds four more.

**FILE UNDER:** Sad, shimmering pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Nick Drake, Pet Shop Boys' slow songs, Neil Young.



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**SPARKLE AND FADE**  
THE NEW ALBUM FEATURING "HEROIN GIRL"



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SOME SAFE GROUND THAT HAS BEEN COVERED  
MORE TIMES THAN A LEFTOVER TUNA CASSEROLE.

# IT'S SOMETHING ELSE

**ENGINE KID** *Angel Wings* *Revelation*

Engine Kid's sophomore effort, *Angel Wings*, marks an important stage in the band's evolution. The trio's first full-length, *Bear Catching Fish*, though teeming with an intriguing blend of melodic punk and noise-core, was slightly unfocused. Nonetheless, it garnered the Seattle natives a sizeable following both locally and nationwide. The band has toured extensively since its formation, and it's done some good. *Angel Wings* shows Engine Kid to have found its direction: The band's songwriting ability has improved and it is, stylistically, more accessible than in the past. Thankfully, Engine Kid's newfound focus has not detracted from its ability to craft innovative compositions that combine aggressive guitar assaults with moody vocal melodies (think Melvins). The passion with which Engine Kid tackles its songs is hard to beat. "Holes To Fight In," with vocalist Greg Anderson's fervent shout and blaring guitars, exhibits the kind of dexterous musicianship and combative song-style that make *Angel Wings* proof of the Kid's maturity.

—Jenny Eliscu

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Moody punk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Melvins, Drive Like Jehu, Unsane.



**EVERCLEAR** *Sparkle And Fade* *Capitol*

*Catharsis* is what Art Alexakis was going to call Everclear's latest album. It would've been an apt title, as the songwriter, guitarist and singer for this Portland trio sees his music as a conduit for reams of latent aggression and anger—not bilious anger, but the vulnerable kind that reveals an obvious hurt. Lucky for us, the fury Alexakis unleashes on *Sparkle And Fade* comes in salvos of thrashy, catchy rock piled with sharp, unfussy lyrics. Everclear's music has a succinctness that hints at punk, but it is primarily informed by the muddy sounds of the Pacific Northwest—a region that must suffocate Alexakis, as he sings of characters who would like nothing better than to be elsewhere. "Heartspark Dollarsign," an ode to a "black girlfriend" no one accepts, and the spiteful "You Make Me Feel Like A Whore" are framed by tuneful riffs nearly as hummable as they are crunchy. Pretty melodies slip in between the riffs on the countryish "Santa Monica" and the heartsick "Strawberry." That latter song's "Don't fall down now, you will never get up" could be Alexakis's credo; he punches at the air like a righteous but insecure guy who's always getting persecuted for something. Hatred of "white trash," impatience with faithless girlfriends, frustration at sexual impotence—it all pisses him off, making one suspicious that the boy doth protest too much. But the fervency of Alexakis's piledriving rock lends conviction and empathy to his rants. Everclear is music for uneasy solitude, when you feel like maybe we'd all be better off someplace else.

—Chris Molanphy

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 23. First single: "Heroin Girl."

**FILE UNDER:** Piledriving rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Mudhoney, early Soundgarden, Bush.



"It figures. They don't give a shit." —Isaac Hayes, after being told the name of the band he just heard was the *Buttthole Surfers*. from *Vibe's* "Soundcheck."

**FLYING SAUCER ATTACK** *Further* *Drag City*

Rumors have been circulating for months about the third album by the English "rural psychedelia" (their words) band Flying Saucer Attack. The most prevalent one was that it was going to be FSA's acoustic album; after an album and a singles-compilation-plus of variations on their formula of odd sweeping cloudlike noises, impressions of disappearing trains, pastorally screeching feedback and gentle melodies buried somewhere impenetrably deep in the mix, they were going to make the *Darklands* to their *Psychocandy*, as it were. Not so. Although *Further* does have some recognizable acoustic instruments (guitar, gong, the tabla that underscores the 12-minute "To The Shore"), they're far from the focus of the record. And neither are "songs"—you're not going to be seeing *FSA Unplugged* any time soon (though "She Is The Daylight" could probably get over on its own). Instead, as the title implies, the band takes its signature idea—huge enveloping billows of sound—a bit further out than it's been before. FSA's structures, based on crests and clusters of sustained tones, have less to do with composition than with wind-chimes. The familiar instruments you hear are to reassure you that everything will be okay, that you can surrender to it—the same way that the sirens are said to sing to people who are drowning.

—Carla Rose

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 18. FSA's live performances always consist of a single long improvisation.

**FILE UNDER:** Abstract psychedelia.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Spacemen 3, ambient Aphex Twin, early Jesus & Mary Chain.



# WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO SAVE AN ANIMAL?



Rue McClanahan

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*Rue*  
**PETA**

**KIM FOWLEY & BEN VAUGHN** *Kings Of Saturday Night* Sector 2

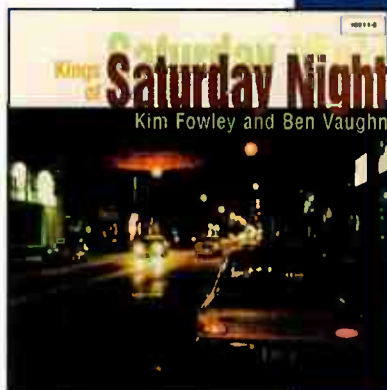
Here's one of the more puzzling pairings in recent history: L.A. songwriter/producer/impresario/instigator Kim Fowley (a music-convention staple who lists the Runaways, the Hollywood Argyles' "Alley Oop" and early Soft Machine as highlights of his four decades in rock) with Philadelphia roots rocker Ben Vaughn. The album sticks to a no-frills rock style, veering between lazy bluesy shuffles, psychobilly, and early Stones-styled R&B, featuring the clever, slightly crazed lyrics that have marked most of both of their recorded output ("Just because I live for thrills doesn't mean I always will"). Despite his second billing, Vaughn appears to be more in evidence than Fowley, although the album ends with a bizarre anti-drug rant that certainly bears the mark of Kim's poison pen. Anyone expecting true weirdness from Fowley's presence on this album may end up being surprised by what a normal, good-time rock 'n' roll album this is.

—Jem Aswad

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** No-frills rock 'n' roll (in the best of ways).

**R.I.Y.L.:** Graham Parker, Alex Chilton, Spanic Boys.



**FREAKY CHAKRA** *Lowdown Motivator* Astralwerks-Caroline

On *Lowdown Motivator*, the Bay Area's Freaky Chakra is a techno group with a split personality. The album is a melange of its trancey/tribal dance-floor singles as well as more ambient and drawn-out exploratory passages; each element is mesmerizing and trippy in its own way. The longer dub tracks like "Goodbye" are surreal in the sheer otherworldliness of their navigations, pulling the listener to sweeping vistas overlooking vividly-colored cyber-landscapes. But the dancier tracks are destabilizing in an even more insidious way: Minute modifications in the three-dimensional soundfield provide the only ongoing sense of difference. These tracks (especially "Multiphasic Invocator") are, perhaps, music's equivalent to Abstract Expressionism in art, where something that on first glance looks only like a repetitive smear instead takes on a life of its own, inside the listener's head, as he or she draws the connections between the dots. The common thread throughout is the sheer artificiality of the music; samples are held to a minimum and any "real" instruments are drowned out by the cascading bleeps and bleeps. The only really organic element anywhere on the album is the guest appearance on "Budded On Earth To Bloom In Heaven" by Curve's Toni Halliday. Her breathy singspeak and the song's slower, more languorous beat make the track a sensual repast; it's really not that far removed from, say, Enigma, although without that band's softcore-porn-flick sensibility. Rather, the treatment her murmurs receive, sounding like a distant radio transmission, is well in keeping with the rest of the album's otherworldliness.

—David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 4.

**FILE UNDER:** Trance techno.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The Harthouse label, Juno Reactor, Curve.



**GENE** *Olympian* Atlas-A&M

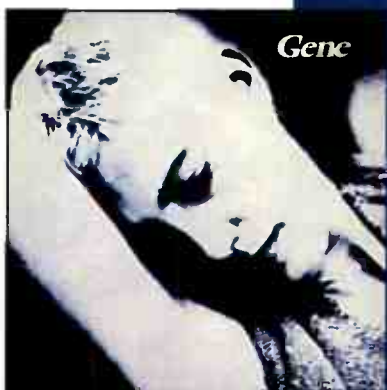
This English quartet's debut owes so much to early Smiths records (was it really 13 years ago?) that it's hard to come to a clear view of it outside of Morrissey's shadow. The opener, "Haunted By You," is a variant of "This Charming Man"'s variant on "You Can't Hurry Love." "We'll Find Our Way" partakes of "Please Please Please Let Me Get What I Want"'s arrangement and brevity (though not its despair). To be fair, most of the songs here can't be traced to individual pages of the Morrissey/Marr songbook. Their influence, however, permeates both the Motown-cum-glam hover of the guitars and the lyric themes of longing for London and the adolescent comfort and romance of one's own melancholia ("Everybody's just turning away from me/Am I really that filthy?")—and, most obviously, the deep, affected vocals of Martin Rossiter, who, on the rare occasion when he isn't copping the Mozzer's growls and dips, sounds like a dead ringer for Microdisney/Fatima Mansions frontman Cathal Coughlan ("Sleep Well Tonight"). Rossiter gets off a few good images ("I'll take your arms and tend you like a vine") but, by and large, the lyrics are too vague for us to know why he's adopted this wrist-to-forehead persona. Guitarist Steven Mason fares better, coming on more "rockist" than Marr ever did, sans the annoying Brian May-flash of the guy who quit Suede. The production is generally understated as well, with band dynamics providing all the necessary bombast for the big Oasis-y chorus of "London, Can You Wait." All of which goes to show that while Gene doesn't always sound like the Smiths, it's better when it does.

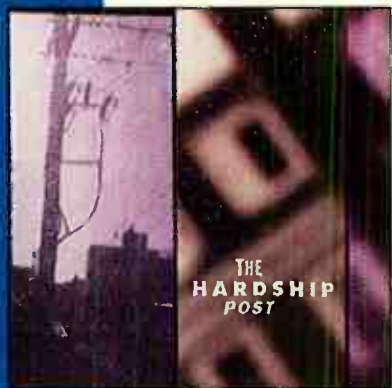
—Franklin Bruno

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jun. 15.

**FILE UNDER:** Brit-rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Smiths, Suede, Microdisney's *Crooked Mile*.



**HARDSHIP POST** *Somebody Spoke* *Sub Pop*

The received wisdom on Halifax, Canada's Hardship Post is that they smell like Nirvana—the last one, and maybe the next one. That's sorta true and sorta not. Instead of the full-bodied bellow of the Sound That Made Seattle Great, Hardship Post goes in for as spare a sound as it can reasonably pull off in a heavy-rock context—the first song on the album is called "New Wave," and the suggestion that the band's favorite ties are skinny ones is apt. Guitarist Sebastian Lippa is as likely to play undistorted arpeggios or little dry chopping sounds as actual chords, and sings in a voice about as delicate as could be effective in a rock band; drummer Matt Clarke keeps a spartan beat and otherwise stays out of the way; and Mike Pick plays as little bass as he can get away with (none at all until about a third of the way into the second song). Pick contributes two calmly creepy songs of his own to *Somebody Spoke*, but it's Lippa's songs that invite the Nirvana comparisons. They're short (the 11 tracks here average under three minutes), almost wordy and lyrically clear, but he's definitely got a knack for minor-key guitar riffs and choruses that channel pure Cobain ("Slick Talkin' Jack," "Garbagetruck"). For all that, Lippa's talent is very much his own, and Hardship Post's trebly intensity is refreshing in a genre where it's become almost too easy to rock by cranking up the density and low end. —Karen Elliot

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 23. "Slick Talkin' Jack" and "If I" appeared on a single last September.

**FILE UNDER:** Fast, sparse guitar-rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Nirvana, Spinanes, Graham Parker.

**HEARTWORMS** *Space Escapade* *Darla*

"This worm's got the blues," sings Archie Moore, revealing a great deal about the gloomy nature of indie-rock Heartworms-style. Unlike Moore's other band Velocity Girl, Heartworms concoct introspective morsels of pop with less hopeful lyrics, and murkier moods. *Space Escapade*, the band's first album, is characterized by lo-fi jangle-guitar and echoing vocals by Moore and Trisha Roy (of Belmondo). Though Moore sings on most of the 11 tracks on this record, Roy's endearing warble is a welcome addition to the mix. Her sweet lilt on the band's rendition of Blondie's "Sunday Girl" is an appealing counterpoint to Moore's glum-guy vocal style. At times ("I Won't Lose My Patience"), the band lapses into a Velocity Girl imitation (with Roy sounding like a lo-fi Sarah Shannon); Heartworms are at their best when they stray from the path of straight and narrow indie-pop. On "Two Suns" (with its Swirlies-like guitar manipulations), Moore's soft sing-speak vocals are aptly suited to the song's placid spirit, and the album's title track speaks volumes about Heartworms' willingness to experiment with their sound. The 16-minute instrumental is simultaneously eerie and enticing: gentle jingle bells and muted guitar fuzz repeat hypnotically throughout. *Space Escapades* is a strong first effort that proves Heartworms to be skillful artisans of pop innovation. —Jenny Eliscu

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 14. First single "Thanks For The Headache."

**FILE UNDER:** Lo-fi boy/girl pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Velocity Girl, Swirlies, Lyls.

"In this workshop, editors critique various writing samples and submissions from the floor with an eye towards conveying standards for all writers to aim towards." — from the South By Southwest conference's program guide description of the Writing Critique panel.

R.I.Y.L.: RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



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# BEN LEE

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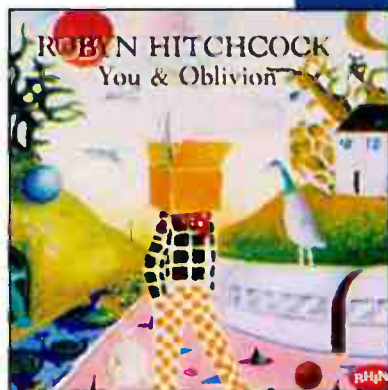
**ROBYN HITCHCOCK** *You & Oblivion* Rhino

For the most part, the 22 songs on *You & Oblivion* are so rare that even Robyn Hitchcock hadn't heard them in years. Recorded in the late '80s, when Hitchcock was doing his best to become a cult icon by releasing sporadic, eccentric pop records (now all reissued on Rhino), *You & Oblivion* doesn't sound at all like a batch of B-list songs—apparently they were just A-songs he had misplaced. What you get aren't song fragments, but complete, nifty acoustic pop songs, often with backing vocals and all, forming a record that's the missing link between his solo landmarks *I Often Dream Of Trains* and *Eye*. You may not want to go nuts and get all nine recent reissues, but it's hard not to recommend at least those two records along with this one, if only for their strange simplicity and perverse charm. A young songwriter can learn a lot from *You & Oblivion*: One—once you've recorded a good song, label it and make a copy; Two—any lyric that rhymes will do in a pinch. Yes, it's easy to dismiss a songwriter who pens songs called "Victorian Squid" and "Take Your Knife Out Of My Back" as a loony (and you'd be half right), but there's a plus side to Hitchcock's lyrical whimsy. When you're as unabashed about what you write and rhyme you're bound to come up with something poetic, ironically profound and unlike anything anyone else is doing. Besides, who wants a record collection full of sane artists anyway? —Steve Ciabattani

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 28.

**FILE UNDER:** Pop for (worthwhile) acquired tastes.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The goofy stuff on Beatles records, Lewis Carroll, Beck, The Byrds.




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"To those freaks of nature who never gave up.../who never change with the fads.../who never lose sight of their dreams.../and who never quite conform to being normal.../Kansas dedicates this album to you." —from the liner notes of the new Kansas record *Freaks Of Nature*.

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**HUM** *You'd Prefer An Astronaut* RCA

The cold winters and icky, humid summers of the Midwest make for either plenty of sweaty, frustrated angst or time trapped indoors to burn, so the region's continual output of new bands year after year is no surprise. Not too long ago, Chicago's nearby Champaign, IL arose as the newest cloistered hotbed of activity in the heartland, and local champs Hum remain the ideal product of the fertility of such a tiny, incestuous scene. Though the group shares half of its members with Honcho Overload and harbors an ex-member of the Poster Children, *You'd Prefer An Astronaut* shows a band both less abrasive than the former and not as bouncy as the latter. Much more than a side project, Hum's impressive chops and layered, hearty playing style lather up into a cacophony that's quite simply a loud, muscular, and melodic hard rock record. And though that may seem a little dry, it's their distinctly Midwestern, by-the-pound approach—sturdy, meaty, no-nonsense—that makes these guitars stick to your ribs. "The Pod" cascades with a waterfall of broad but tidy chords that please by with tight rhythmic vigor, and "Stars," the best cut on the album, maximizes the jolt from muted to loud (little more than a parlor trick these days in the hands of lesser bands) with a frenzied chugging that pops up all over this album's nine tracks. For consistency and sheer might alone, Hum are destined to be Champaign's favorite sons. —Cheryl Botchick

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 11.

**FILE UNDER:** Burly guitar K.O.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Hüsker Dü, Smashing Pumpkins, Swandive-era Bullet LaVolta.

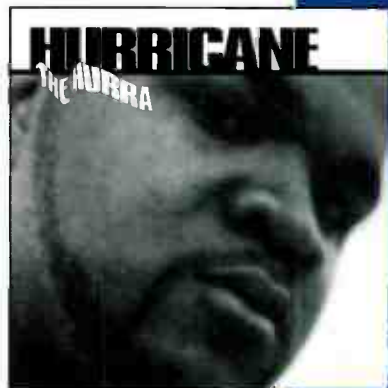
**HURRICANE** *The Hurra* Grand Royal-Capitol

DJ Hurricane, mixmaster for the Beastie Boys, creates aural soundscapes, honing in on a funky rhythm and then building on it, kicking break beats and FX and finally adding on wordy verbiage that keeps every space filled. With Hank Shocklee and the Bomb Squad off the radar screen these days, a talent like that is valuable to have around. But Hurricane has become a less recognizable presence on Beasties records lately as the Boys rely increasingly on their instrumental skills. Hurricane's solo debut shows that he's picked up some tricks from his mentors, but that he comes from a purer strain of hip-hop. On cuts like the booming "Feel The Blast" or "Elbow Room," he takes *Paul's Boutique*'s blaxploitation funk and hardens it into a '90s rumble, holding onto the fat-bottomed, rocking beats. Lyrically, Hurricane isn't fighting for his right to party, he's just fighting. His rhymes—provided not only by the man himself, who is competent but not spectacular, but also by some Beasties—are unsmiling romps through gat-land ("Pass Me The Gun," "Where's My Niggas At"). Hurricane has an ambivalent worldview, summed up by one of the few tracks to offer levity, an LA/Rodney King dis: "Can we all just get along?/There's so much smog in the air." But what Hurricane lacks in standout rhymes, he makes up for behind the boards. What he comes up with there won't revolutionize hip-hop, but other MC's will surely "feel the blast." —Chris Molanphy

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 23. First single: "Four Fly Guys."

**FILE UNDER:** Hardass hip-hop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Bomb Squad, Nas, Cypress Hill.



**KING CRIMSON** *Thrak* *Virgin*

In the '70s, King Crimson always at least had a sense of theatricality and drama; unlike most other prog-rockers, its music somehow evoked the weight and sadness of opera or Goethian myth while the rest of the genre was singing about Atlantis and silly sci-fi plots that no one really understood. Then in the '80s, KC was reincarnated as art-popsters, taking cues from Talking Heads and late '70s Bowie, a danceable beatnik pop band fronted by Adrian Belew's eclectic man-on-acid-about-town persona. Now, in their third lifetime in four decades, they've come back as both, or maybe neither, as something called a double trio. The idea is to have two independent, autonomous trios playing side by side on the same stage but somehow making music together. Sometimes, there's two very different things happening at once; at others, both trios lock together to give extra power and menace to the more traditional Crimsoid dramatic moments. If you already bought last year's independently released *Vroom*, you probably won't be satisfied with *Thrak*, unless you're the sort of fanatical fan that King Crimson has long catered to (if you are, I'll trade you a soundboard tape of Denver in '69 for anything from the '74 U.S. tour). Much of the material is duplicated on both LPs, and "Walking On Air" is a very thin rewrite of *Discipline*'s superior "Matte Kudesai." Still, at the heart of the KC of the '80s and '90s is not just Fripp's oblique persona, but the psychedelic elegance of Belew; by giving him a first-division rock band to helm, Fripp has given him a chance to shine like he hasn't in years, and Belew rises to the challenge. His warmth and humanity provide the perfect foil for Fripp's colder, darker soundscapes, and the results, if not totally successful, are usually worthy of the King Crimson name. —James Lien

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Progressive art-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** '80s King Crimson, '70s King Crimson.

**BEN LEE** *Grandpaw Would* *Grand Royal*

Sixteen-year-old singer/songwriter Ben Lee made a stir in the indie world last year with "I Wish I Was Him," his Australian band Noise Addict's Evan Dando homage (which Dando has been known to play live). His debut solo album shows he hasn't lost his flair for name-dropping—two songs mention the Pixies—or for constructing memorable, sincere pop, particularly in those songs with self-explanatory titles—"Don't Leave," "Song 4 You," "My Guitar." *Grandpaw Would* is rumored to be a response to Liz Phair's *Exile In Guyville*—it's got 18 songs, too; they're about relationships (albeit of a different nature); and Phair's bandmates/producers Brad Wood and Casey Rice each produced songs, fleshing out the skeletal, ultra-lo-fi sound of last year's Noise Addict EPs. Hopefully, people will skip any nebulous analyzing, and just enjoy Lee's charming lyrics ("I'd say if I were a kitty, you'd be the litter/But I don't think that's a suitable metaphor"; "Some things don't change/For instance, me") and maturing voice, plus sweet choruses (one song each) from the Spinanes' Rebecca Gates and, yes, Liz Phair. Lee's music—strummy folk, Phair-esque chugging pop—isn't that distinctive yet, and this plays, sometimes a bit annoyingly, almost like a concept record about pop songs. Still, *Grandpaw Would* is a more than adequate display of an increasingly impressive talent. —Katherine Hodges

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 27. First single "Pop Queen."

**FILE UNDER:** Youthful folk-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Jonathan Richman, Liz Phair, Mary Lou Lord.

**LOW** *Long-Division* *Vernon Yard*

Low's debut, *I Could Live In Hope*, was arguably one of the most overlooked and underrated albums of last year. Set in a delicately executed atmosphere of weightless, minimal instrumentation, the record is a perfect realization of the band's simple beauty. *Long-Division* doesn't always reach the same heights as its predecessor, but is still a great listen. Much of Low's wistful character stems from its sparse structure—a soft, wavering guitar, a lightly brushed snare and cymbal, an unassuming bass stroke—and the slow, gorgeous, ever-so-careful harmonizing of the band's guitarist and drummer (and husband and wife for that matter), Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker. When these elements come together on tracks like "Violence," "Alone," "Stay" and "Caroline," it's the stuff long afternoon naps are made of, immersing its listener in warm pools of peaceful reflection. Each note reverberates off another, hanging in the air momentarily and shimmering, before giving way to the silent space that separates each tone. Choruses echo and float across the hypnotic expanse, and you can almost hear the trio sigh over the music's quiet lull. —Colin Helms

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 23.

**FILE UNDER:** The sounds of (near-) silence.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Codeine, Galaxie 500.

**MAD SCENE** *Sealight Merge*

The Mad Scene was formed a couple of years ago by New Zealander Hamish Kilgour, also of The Clean, and his American wife Lisa Siegel. Their first album, the import-only *A Trip Thru Monsterland*, revealed the group's facility with a moving melody and intriguing, mood-defining experiments, and it laid a suggestive groundwork for *Sealight*, a more cohesive album reflecting the band's solidified lineup, including former Go-Betweens bassist Robert Vickers and drummer Bill Gerstel. The new album's 15 songs play like a soundtrack to the stray phrases and pictures that continuously float through the back of your mind, indifferent to the real-life things—work, school, arguments, love affairs—occurring before your eyes. To suit these ever-changing moods, *Sealight* strikes a lovely balance between dark, dreamy pop and bright-eyed, toe-tapping pop, sprinkled alternately with Kilgour's and Siegel's hushed vocals. While songs such as the spare "Silhouette" and the snappy "Here Goes Nothing" define those two moods, respectively, the dichotomy of this reality-versus-surreality tug-of-war is crystallized by songs like "Hoping," on which Siegel queries "Are you dying/Or living," and finally summarizes: "And you're dying/And living."

—Lydia Anderson

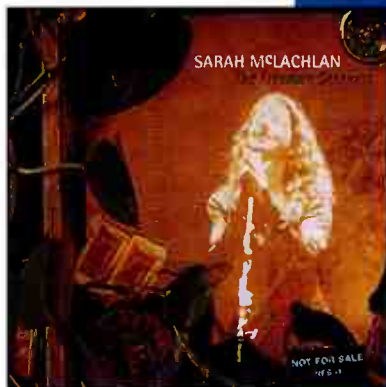
**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9.**FILE UNDER:** Impressionistic, minimalist pop.**R.I.Y.L.:** Nick Drake, Verlaines, The Clean.**SARAH MCLACHLAN** *The Freedom Sessions* Arista

Compact disc prices never fell as promised, but at least record labels are finding new ways to offer bang for the buck. Their newest enhancement (gimmick?) to music CDs is a "multimedia" program at the beginning of the disc featuring interactive graphics readable by CD-ROM-equipped computers. Sarah McLachlan's *The Freedom Sessions*—a collection of alternate versions and outtakes from her hit album *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy*—is one of the first contributions to this fledgling genre. Technophobes and plebeians can pop the disc into a regular audio CD player, skip track 1, and enjoy the music. (Future versions of this tchockke will use "multisession" technology to blend the CD-ROM program seamlessly into the disc so audio-only users won't even notice it's there.)

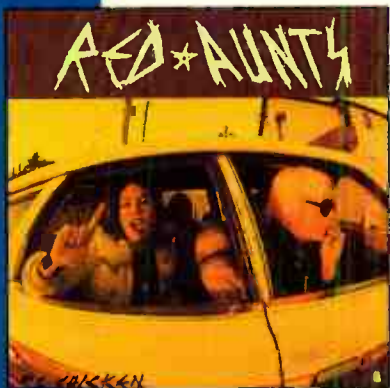
McLachlan's CD-ROM program won't impress hackers who've probed *Myst*. But for folks still new to this stuff, the program is a diversion that might make one a bit more of a McLachlan fan. With a few mouse clicks on the visually attractive screen, Sarah offers thoughts on the Freedom Sessions songs, various cities she's toured, and her trip to Thailand and Cambodia on behalf of human rights organization World Vision. She also shows (tiny!) videos: of her band in the studio and onstage, and of her trip, which was filmed for a documentary. The best feature of all this is actually Sarah's voice—her comments reveal an intelligent and earthy woman who isn't going to allow a cybergimmick to make a joke of her. In this way, CD-ROM serves to supplant that more traditional musician's PR tool, liner notes—an art form that's been hurting since compact discs overtook LPs as the dominant music carrier. At worst, the CD-ROM program is a bauble that you never have to look at again.

As for the music, no amount of electronic meet-and-greet will incline non-fans to immerse themselves in McLachlan's odds and sods. Sometimes the *Unplugged* that wasn't, sometimes a smoother version of PJ Harvey's *4-Track Demos*, *Freedom Sessions* will make its strongest impression on those who've already explored *Fumbling*. That crowd will enjoy a moody, bohemian "Elsewhere," a gorgeous, fully orchestrated "Good Enough," and a spirited version of Tom Waits' "Ol' 55" that shows McLachlan broadening her palette. They will also sit through expendable revisions of "Hold On" (twice!?) and "Mary" that don't make the tunes any more interesting. But by the time you've heard those, the CD-ROM program may have instilled enough goodwill in you to allow Sarah's caprices.

—Chris Molanphy

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 28. Multimedia program works on Windows (3.1 or greater) or Macintosh (System 7) equipped with double-speed CD-ROM drive.**FILE UNDER:** Low-fi music in a high-tech package.**R.I.Y.L.:** Cowboy Junkies, Sheryl Crow, Indigo Girls.



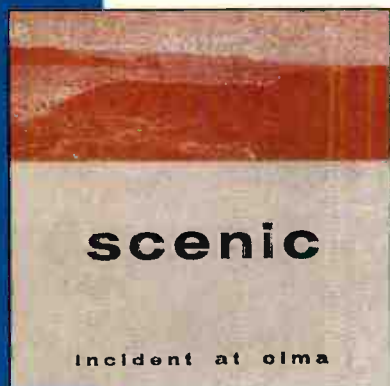

**RED AUNTS #1 Chicken Epitaph**

"14 Songs 23 Minutes" boasts the back cover of the Red Aunts' *#1 Chicken*, which then proceeds to take that squawking chicken to the slaughterhouse with bludgeoning slop-rock riffs and blood-curdling vocals. Serious rage conveyed with soul-felt anger has (oddly) become a sparse commodity in the disenfranchisement-rich alternative hemisphere. Even when Billie Joe sings about "basket cases," his rollicking punk-rock melodies don't effectively convey the frustration he (purportedly) feels, at least not anywhere near as effectively as, say, the Red Aunts. Falling somewhere between early X (without the benefit of Billy Zoom on guitar) and Picasso Trigger, the Red Aunts grab hold of your hate muscle and don't let go. Though the album sounds like it was recorded in a tin can, *#1 Chicken* is the vibe of four pissed-off folks who knew where to rent some decent equipment; the kind of spontaneous, unpracticed, unflashed-out unleashing that's easily distilled into 100% pure adrenaline. Snippets become songs without the labor of too much thought. Notes get hit and recorded whether wrong or right, in tune or tuneless. Fun mistakes happen, too. Melodic guitar lines somehow arise on "Satan." The slide punk guitar and harp solo of "When Sugar Turns To Shit" are funny, and so is the drum bashing (some would call it a solo) on "Roller derby Queen." It's all so basic, so primal, but somehow so right. "Why don't you do it?" vocalist EZ Wider whispers nastily under her breath as the record comes to a close. Yeah, why don't we? —Bob Gulla

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 28.

**FILE UNDER:** Lo-fi, hi-energy punk-core.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Picasso Trigger, Dwarves, Babes In Toyland.


**SCENIC Incident At Cima Independent Project**

*Incident At Cima* is the first album by Scenic, featuring guitarist Bruce Licher, formerly of Savage Republic (who also runs Independent Project, and designed and printed its astonishingly beautiful package). It's what classical musicians call "program music": instrumental music meant to suggest specific events or things, either through sonic imitation or allusion. In this case, what's being evoked is a journey across the Arizona desert landscape. Since one of its defining characteristics is its magnificent stillness, imitation is out of the question. Instead, Scenic uses musical devices that listeners associate with Western desert images: the twanging guitars and sustained chords of spaghetti-western soundtracks, the slowly wailing harmonica of the lonely cowboy (sometimes substituted for by a recorder, flute or blowpipe). It's straight-up gorgeous all the way, clear about what it's suggesting, but free of clichés and imaginatively played. Film music is clearly the model—about half of these tracks share the same simple theme, stated with a different arrangement each time—but what Scenic has accomplished here is impressive: a soundtrack that suggests particular images without an actual film to go with it. —Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 31. "The Kelso Run" is also available as a single.

**FILE UNDER:** Desert soundtracks.

**R.I.Y.L.:** *Twin Peaks* soundtrack, Ennio Morricone, Savage Republic.


**SEASON TO RISK In A Perfect World Columbia**

The funny thing about *Season To Risk* is if you were to stop an average rock schmo on the street, albeit on a pretty hip street, and ask about *Season To Risk*, the average response would be "a metal band." But if you were to give this band a monosyllabic name and put them out on a penniless indie, it'd be the next Helmet (or Jesus Lizard or Fugazi). While these sort of perceptions don't matter much once the record is home pounding your speakers off the wall, the fact that this band is by all accounts the missing link—not merely a combination of particular influences—between metal and noisy indie-rock should not go unrecognized. While comparisons to the aforementioned Lizard are the most accurate, mostly thanks to singer Steve Tulipana's ability to affect David Yow's contorted howl, *Season To Risk* powers its way through a splendid variety of ugly sounds—imagine if Big Black (or more accurately, the later Rapeman) and Pantera had a kid. Stop-start rhythms pervade the songs, which points to another of the band's impressive attributes, the prodigious groove the band invests into this barbed noise. *In A Perfect World*, a title that either points to the band's sense of irony or an even wider misanthropic streak than I'd imagined, is a snarling beast of a record that has the potential to wipe clean some genre distinctions with one bold stroke. —Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 16.

**FILE UNDER:** Grinding noise-metal.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Jesus Lizard, Fugazi, Pantera, Helmet.

"I'm sort of that cab driver who plays classical music while driving, and when you're the passenger in that cab, somehow—even if it's rush hour—it's a little more pleasant." —Melissa Manchester, on *CNBC's AI Roker Show*.

**SENSER** *Stacked Up* *Ultimate/Atlas-A&M*

I managed to see this multi-cultural, multi-musical rap/rock/dub combo in its home element last year (at London's Club Dog), and although playing covers by both Public Enemy and Beastie Boys is wearing its influences on its sleeves just a bit much, the excitement of Senser's live set has translated very well onto its debut LP. Formed five years ago as a metal outfit, the band has since added a DJ, a sound manipulator, and one of the most impressive rappers ever to come out of England (Saudi-born Heitham Al-Sayed), and its blistering sound and forceful political lyrics have made it one of the biggest British press darlings of the past few years. *Stacked Up* features an almost bewildering array of styles, from straight-ahead rap to near-ambient trance to crushing Rage Against The Machine-esque metal (check the Slayer-via-Public Enemy riff on "What's Goin' On"); guitarist Nick Michaelson manages to play like James Hetfield at one moment and Steve Hillage the next, and vocalist Kerstin Haigh adds a refreshing element to the many rhythm and riffs. While tracks like "The Key," "Switch," "Age Of Panic", and the 777-ish "Peace" find the band truly crossing musical and cultural boundaries, a lot of the metallic material sounds rather forced. *Stacked Up* is an impressive debut, and since it's been out for over a year in England, who knows what's waiting around the bend. —*Jem Aswad*

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 4. First single "Age Of Panic."

**FILE UNDER:** Cross-genre political rage.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Rage Against The Machine, Pop Will Eat Itself, Prick.

**RON SEXSMITH** *Ron Sexsmith* *Interscope*

With a name like "Sexsmith," you can just bet that this sensitive Canadian folkie had one hell of a taunt-filled childhood. Eerily enough, as an adult singer/songwriter (*Ron Sexsmith* is his third album, but the first to be released in the states), the guy still sounds like he's living through tortured adolescence and getting bullied a lot. But that kind of stuff seems to shape kids into brilliant songwriters like Jules Shear, Marshall Crenshaw or Jeff Buckley, all of whom Sexsmith stylistically resembles. He's got a frail quaver to his voice that sounds like Jackson Brown after one too many Cosmopolitans, and a skeletal instrumental outlook that's gentle and swaying, the sort of music that makes girls swoon. Sexsmith's guitar moves as slowly as a muddy river, too, swirling with texture and hiding shimmery hooks just below its surface. On "Secret Heart," it ambles along beside vibraphone notes while the artist warbles nearly off-key but heartily. When mistreated youth grow up, they take out their frustrations on the world through material like this, but that doesn't mean it's not great, communicative art. And it makes sense that Sexsmith includes a cover of Leonard Cohen's "Heart With No Companion"—Sexsmith is a direct descendant of Cohen, and they both mine the same fertile "sensitive guy" territory. Now that he's displayed some real creative pluck, maybe the world will start being nicer. —*Tom Lanham*

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Sensitive singer-songwriters.

**R.I.Y.L.:** James Taylor, Bruce Cockburn, Jackson Browne, Leonard Cohen.

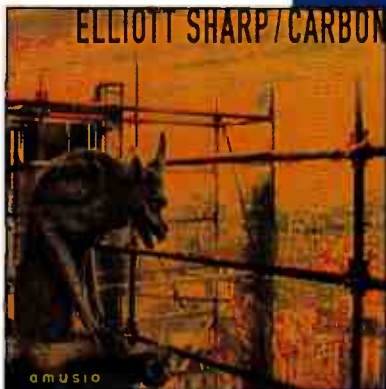
**ELLIOT SHARP/CARBON** *Amusia* *Atavistic*

Over the past twenty years, Elliot Sharp has amassed an extensive catalog of sonic explorations, the result of deep forays into mathematical theory as well as intensive jamming. One of his most frequent working outfits has been Carbon, a noise-rock-based outfit that varies in scope with each project. Carbon's foundation rests in treading (and challenging) the boundary between order and chaos. The group's latest, *Amusia*, is largely a departure from the heavy, noisy work of old. Sharp does more to add texture to these songs, working them into spacious ambience rather than claustrophobic walls of sound, as on the mystic corridors of "Twisted Threads." Sharp's screeching, tinny guitar dances over the lulling, spacey constructions of the band. Suggestions of funk and hardcore lurk around, but the music's most pervasive element is improvisation, which maximizes each band member's contribution and keeps the songs from heading in any one direction. The 70 minutes that make up *Amusia* have a way of getting a bit tedious after awhile, but Sharp and Co. still produce enough bright spots to make this a worthwhile listen. —*Bryan McNamara*

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Outer stratospheric signals.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Last Exit, Chrome, Praxis.




**SNFU** *The One Voted Most Likely To Succeed* *Epitaph*

Canada's SNFU has survived almost a decade, half a dozen albums and at least one breakup; now, finally, the time for its loud-fast-rules-and-harmonies-are-nice-too popcore seems to have come. Singer Chi Pig is capable of lyrics so straightforward you'll blink ("Bumper stickers/Do you really need them?") on some pretty silly topics (mold, a lost thumb, a mutated dog, Larry Flynt). He's also got SNFU's secret weapon: a bellowing, carefully enunciating, dead-on-pitch bass voice the likes of which hardcore hasn't seen since Glenn Danzig went metal. The music behind him is fast and hard, with a meaty wallop, just the way popcore fans like it—the extra edge is courtesy of Dave (Skinny Puppy) Ogilvie's production. The band's taste for dramatic pounces of near-Gothic proportions gives songs like "Eric's Had A Bad Day," a facile but very funny slam at a brainless skate-punk, mock-epic bite. And SNFU never gives its jokes a chance to get old—*The One Voted Most Likely To Succeed* is almost shorter than its title, getting 13 songs over with in less than half an hour. It's one adrenaline burst after another, prefabricated but easy to bang your head to.

—Juliana Day

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Popcore.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Rancid, Bad Religion, NOFX.


**SPARKS** *Gratuitous Sax & Senseless Violins* *Logic*

Through the '70s, the oddly mismatched Mael brothers, Russell and Ron, otherwise known as Sparks, were both disco kings and a quirky American link between 10CC and XTC. In the '80s, their bouncy tunes and oddball lyrics made them New Wave mainstays. Since New Wave is currently undergoing a nostalgic renaissance, one might think that a new album by Sparks would be even cooler than Duran Duran's cover of "White Lines." Not quite. The under-produced *Gratuitous Sax & Senseless Violins* returns to the group's Giorgio Moroder days, and ends up sounding like 1987 Pet Shop Boys—that's not far enough to sound retro, but just far enough to sound dated. Song titles like "I Thought I Told You To Wait In The Car," "Tsui Hark" and "The Ghost Of Liberace" promise a bit of fun, but the fun never starts. Instead, these tunes ramble on and on, with melodramatic lyrics that verge on the hysterical. The most listenable cuts are "When Do I Get To Sing 'My Way?'" (with the clever refrain "When do I get to feel like Sid Vicious felt?") and "Let's Go Surfing," where the melodrama and the minor-key melody actually match for once. Perhaps the Maels should have waited until they were in a better mood before they attempted a comeback.

—Heidi MacDonald

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 28. First single "When Do I Get To Sing 'My Way?'"

**FILE UNDER:** Disco melodrama.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Pet Shop Boys, Fred Schneider, Dead Or Alive.


**STEEL POLE BATH TUB** *Scars From Falling Down* *Slash*

After years of languishing in the shadow of its grungier, bigger-deal Northwest neighbors, Steel Pole Bath Tub has hit its stride with *Scars From Falling Down*. Like any number of the bands currently plumbung punky tempos and screechy vocals, Steel Pole joins noise and melody, but the impressive thing here is that the bands wrings melody *from* the noise. The richly thudding bass, the guitar squeal as often as not composed of varying degrees of feedback, the cudgedged tom-toms are all carefully crafted so that every rush from muted roar to convulsive assault is exceptionally dynamic. This use of chaos as order finds precedent in tightly-wound groups like Big Black and Gang Of Four, and Steel Pole benefits by the comparison, but *Scars* is more drawn-out, looser, and achieves some jazzy moments in the din. This is all no mean feat, and the uncompromising sound points to not just punk rock, but what makes it good. And in the underdog department, it's just plain great to see a band that most often got mentioned in the same breath with Mudhoney and the Melvins because the bands used to *hang out* together come into its own in such a big way.

—Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 2. Touring with Faith No More through May.

**FILE UNDER:** Noise-punk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Shellac, Mudhoney, Breaking Circus.

**SUPER CAT** *The Struggle Continues* Columbia

Jamaican dancehall has made more inroads in North America as a musical influence or a KRS-One affectation than as a genre, but Shabba Ranks is barely a drop in the rub-a-dub bucket. Dancehall is pervasive—witness how its big beats and intriguing vocals have enchanted the hip-hop nation. Super Cat toasts on sex and violence—reality—without getting ugly, as though he will escape from his neighborhood capers unscathed. He doesn't avoid the sweat of gunfights and mating rituals, but neither does he round out his repertoire with exploitation. Introduced to the USA via a cameo on Ice Cube's *Predator*, Super Cat is a fresh, slippery-tongued stylist, with diversity in material that makes this album appealing on many levels. Without betraying the thump and shuffle of the music's deep reggae bass, Cat struts rhythm and melodic sensibilities that place him ready for greater discovery. By the time he's hamming it up on the 12-bar rock 'n' roll of "Josephine," you can nearly imagine Super Cat on the Super Bowl halftime show, a star. If he's smart, he'll charge them by the syllable. Now pass the dutchie. —Ian Christe

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jul. 4.

**FILE UNDER:** Breakthrough reggae dancehall.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Chaka Demus & Pliers, Ahmad.

**JUSTIN WARFIELD SUPERNAUT** *The Justin Warfield Supernaut* Qwest-Reprise

At just 21, Justin Warfield has some audacity. First, he releases *My Field Trip To Planet 9*, an adventurous trip to the far side of jazzy hip-hop, daubed with acid rock. Then, two years later, without necessarily establishing himself as a rapper, he's back with a whole new schtick, this time with few, if any, traces of the material he wrote for his debut. Warfield saturates *Supernaut* with various versions of psychedelic rock—the Beatles, Soundgarden, Lenny Kravitz. Occasionally, he eludes easy categorization by throwing in touches of Middle Eastern popular music ("Crawl") and some Brit shoegazing grooves ("Rollerderby"). But most often, he refers to Sgt. Pepper's as a frame of psychedelic reference. Warfield's lyrics also have a psychedelic, narcotic-inspired lilt: On "Moontower," he sings "Serpent's tongue just grazed the fire, demon-shed tongue drip cornshoe dire." Then there's "In A Mirrored Ladybong": "I'm so inspired rather higher than the flights in my zero. No matter, though. With a talent like his, Warfield is allowed a few silly indulgences and a few rookie mistakes. He's got the panache of Kravitz and the audacity of later-stage Beatles, and a pretty groovy future ahead of him. Sure, he's got some growing to do, too—the material wears a little thin toward the end of *Supernaut*—but that's the exciting part, isn't it? —Bob Gulla

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9.

**FILE UNDER:** Old-time psychedelia.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Soundgarden, Lenny Kravitz, Stone Temple Pilots.

**HECTOR ZAZOU** *Songs From The Cold Seas* Columbia

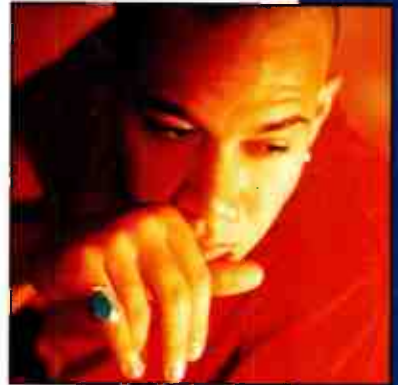
Hector Zazou's last record, *Sahara Blue*, was self-described as a "cross-cultural tribute" to 19th-century French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud, and featured talents as varied as Ryuichi Sakamoto, Bill Laswell, John Cale and actor Gerard Depardieu. While the theme of *Songs From The Cold Seas* is more literal (songs from lands bordered by cold-water oceans) and somewhat less dramatic, the effects of Zazou's unique ability to combine disparate talents and cultures (both records feature a half-dozen different languages) into a single, beautifully realized whole is no less poetic. The "the greater than the sum of its parts" cliché never seems more salient than with Zazou's records; you'll instantly recognize that it's Bjork singing "Visur Vatsenda-Rosu," but her voice is so deftly woven into the fabric of the record that it stands out as just one of many exquisite moments. This speaks to the poetic nature of Zazou's work: It is all a series of indelible moments, not grand, astonishing ideas. Think about it: *Cold Seas* features Bjork, Siouxsie Sioux, Suzanne Vega and John Cale, Lena Willemark, Tokito Kato, Finnish close-harmony folkies Varttina, Jane Siberry and Catherine-Ann MacPhee, among others, and the sounds behind them are equally varied, but it all still feels like one cohesive record. —Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Released Apr. 26.

**FILE UNDER:** Ambient multi-cultural pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Bjork, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Japan, Bel Canto.

"A man convicted of murder in England won a retrial this week because four Jury members used a Ouija board to consult the spirit of one of his alleged victims. An appeals panel reversed his conviction for murdering two newlyweds. Stephen Young's attorney argued that four jurors had, as an experiment, used the Ouija board to ask the murder victims who killed them. The jurors claimed to have received the reply that the defendant was guilty."—from the New York Law Journal



# FLASHBACK

ROOTS • REISSUES • RETRO

by James Lien

## LOST AND RARE GROOVES: BLUE NOTE SOUL

No matter what decade or what course the music took, Blue Note Records has always blazed a trail through jazz without equal. The latest rediscovery of that legacy comes from Blue Note's "Rare Groove" series, a rainbow assortment of reissues of the soulful and funky jazz sounds from the label's late '60s/early '70s period. Not only did US3 and a host of other rappers and DJs lift their hooks and beats from the Blue Note vaults from this era, but acid jazz owes its entire musical existence to the revolutionary blend of jazz and soul grooves that men like Lou Donaldson, Lonnie Smith, Grant Green and John Patton laid down in Rudy Van Gelder's venerable studio.

As jazz in the '60s became more and more "out," people like John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy and Ornette Coleman wound up making music that, great as it might have been, was weirder and wilder and harder for the average listener to keep up with. In all probability, some jazzmen sensed inwardly that if they wanted their livelihoods to depend on playing music, they couldn't keep pushing the envelope, alienating everybody in the process, or they'd end up starving, playing to near-empty clubs. So, seeking a new course, they did what jazz musicians have done since the music's beginnings, and cast about them for raw musical material to incorporate into their music. They hit upon the wellspring of soul and funk music that was blowing up with Sly Stone, James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, the Meters, and others. The results? The sounds of boogaloo, barbeque, and soul jazz spotlighted on these nine reissues. Funky stuff.

To some jazz mavens, especially those with rigid definitions of what jazz should and shouldn't be, the resulting hybrid music was anathema, little more than easy listening. In fact, it was a parallel renaissance that flowered right along with the great soul music of the late '60s and early '70s. It was loose, spirited, free and funky. Once again, jazz was made for dancing and toe-tapping, or to be heard on late-night "underground" FM radio and back-announced by a smooth talking deep-voiced DJ: *And that was Dr. Lonnie Liston Smith, o Copricorn, loying down o tune called "Expressions."* Right on...

Such were the times that Lou Donaldson was able to declare in an album title, *Everything I Play Is Funky*. Grant Green's *Corryin' On* sports playful cover art and a funky cover version of James Brown's "I Don't Want Nobody To Give Me Nothing (Open Up The Door, I'll Get It Myself)". Two discs from Hammond B-3 organ titan John Patton feature self-explanatory song titles like "Boogaloo Boogie," "Soul Man," "Barefootin'" "Shoutin' But No Poutin'" and "Chittlins Con Carne." Donaldson, who'd turned in a boogaloo or two of his own, is heard live in groovy-gig context on a previously-unreleased live album from the Cadillac Club in Newark, NJ. And then there's funky organist Lonnie Smith's *Live At Club Mozambique*, a full-on live recording from 1970 that inexplicably remained on the shelf unreleased for 25 years. It's gritty, down-home, and irresistibly danceable. Donald Byrd was one of the pioneers who mingled funk with jazz from the very beginning. Amazingly, give or take a bit of grayness, Byrd looks today like he has aged suspiciously little since the night the cover photo for *Kofi* was taken in 1968—powerful testimony to this music's youthful vigor and timelessness. Many of these releases also include such crack funk and jazz musicians as drummer Idris Muhammed, guitarist George Benson, organist Charles Earland and guitarist Melvin Sparks, who were among the cream of the crop.

Even though all these releases are also hiply available on vinyl LPs (a move we laud to the heavens), the CD format is ideally suited for this music, because you can program out the occasional clunker (there's usually one ballad per album that destroys the party atmosphere), or, even better, you can pop five discs into a carousel and hit shuffle play, freeing you up to leave the stereo alone and hit the dancefloor to mingle with your guests if you throw these on at a party. A cheaper option would be to simply purchase *The Lost Grooves*, Blue Note's follow up to its immensely popular *Straight No Chaser*: a compilation of previously-unreleased alternate takes on some very funky selections from the Blue Note vaults. Because all the Blue Note musicians were such lions of their craft, there's absolutely nothing second-rate about any of them.

One other tiny point: Blue Note graphics were among the hippest album covers ever, highlighted by Francis Wolff's superb photography, and these reissues and new Lost Groove releases preserve the label's intrinsic aesthetic grooviness down to the last detail. Also, these CDs are among the first we've seen to sport a new kind of jewel box tray with extra-strong design—if you've ever had the infuriating experience of the little teeth that hold the disc in the case break and splinter, they've come up with a solution to the problem. A nice touch.

Donald Byrd *Kofi*

Lou Donaldson *Everything I Play Is Funky*

Lou Donaldson *The Scorpion: Live At The Cadillac Club*

Ronnie Foster *Two-Headed Freap*

Grant Green *Corryin' On*

John Patton *Boogaloo*

John Patton *Understanding*

Lonnie Smith *Live At Club Mozambique*

Various Artists *The Lost Grooves* 



### SOME OTHER RECOMMENDED RARE GROOVES FOR A JAZZ-FUNK MOOD:

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Straight No Chaser* (Blue Note)

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Blue Break Beats* (Blue Note)

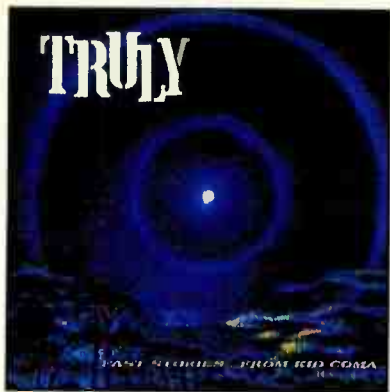
Wes Montgomery *Tequila* (Verve)

*Jazz Dance Classics Vol. 1-4* (Luv N' Haight)

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Deja Vu* (Luv N' Haight)

Roy Ayers *Evolution: The Polydor Anthology* (Polydor-Chronicles)

Herbie Hancock *Mwandishi: The Warner Bros. Recordings* (Warner Archives)



by vlad

truly

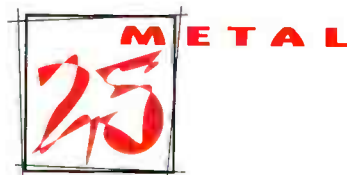
fast stories... from kid coma

Revolution-Capitol

Inevitably, people are going to focus on the fact that Truly includes former members of Soundgarden and Screaming Trees (bassist Hiro Yamamoto and drummer Mark Pickerel, respectively), and yes, you hear traces of those bands and several of their slightly more famous peers on this album—but there's a hell of a lot more to this band than an alumni society. Four years in the making, *Fast Stories* is not an easy album and Truly is not an easy band to pin down. The references are fairly obvious (the above as well as Zeppelin, the Doors and late-'60s psychedelia), but never dominate the band's sound; they combine elements of their influences rather than using them all at once. The droning, low-end riffs bear Hiro's signature, and vocalist/guitarist/keyboardist Robert Roth's melodies and expansive instrumental work have all the hallmarks of a serious obsession with early-'70s excess. Balancing all of that is Pickerel's strong and steady drumming, which holds the sound together where a less tasteful drummer would have driven the band into complete overkill (and with 13 songs sprawling over 72 minutes, this album is excessive enough). *Fast Stories* is often heavy but never bludgeoning, and Roth's soft voice (not worlds away from the Trees' Mark Lanegan's) tempers the band's rougher edges. An album that sounds like it could have been made twenty or five years ago as well as today, *Fast Stories* is an extended trip into several worlds of rock, and it's one of the most intriguing debuts of this still fairly young year.

## RIFFS

On a completely different tack, **A.C.**'s true name is so obnoxious that even their record company won't print it, and their main goal in life seems to be creating 30-second screampcore blasts that make fun of their friends (which is as good a reason to be in a band as any). *Top 40 Hits* (Earache) crams 40 songs into 39 minutes and is as unpleasant an album as you'll find anywhere, but they're so totally obnoxious and their songs are so funny ("Old Lady Across The Hall With No Life," "Don't Call Japanese Hardcore Japcore," an Oi! version of "Stayin' Alive") that they win this month's raspberry award... **SENSER** [heard on last month's CMJ CD—ed.] is a multi-cultural English rap/rock/dub combo that features one of the best rappers (Saudi-born Heitham Al-Sayed) that the blighted Isle has ever coughed up. Mixing thundering electronic beats with power chords, crazed samples and some viciously political lyrics, their debut *Stacked Up* features some truly inspired and innovative tracks ("The Key," "No Comply," "Switch"). At other times they sound like they're trying a bit too hard, but it's a promising debut and, since this album's been out in England for over a year, who knows what they've got up their sleeves by now... **SCORN**'s *Ellipsis* (Earache) is a remix version of last year's *Evanescence* that finds mixing-desk assassins Meat Beat Manifesto, Bill Laswell, Scanner and Autechre twisting the songs into virtually unrecognisable shapes. It's not what you'd call heavy, but it's yet another wild dimension for these pioneering subharmonic purveyors to explore... **FIGHT**'s *A Small Deadly Space* (Epic) finds Rob Halford pursuing his new muse with barely a trace of the old Judas Priest sound (just the occasional high note to remind you who you're dealing with). The record is heavy as fuck, alternating Alice In Chains-ish melodies with big crushing riffs and punishing rhythms. There aren't very many surprises (except for the—gulp—power ballad), but it's heavy as fuck [you said that already, Vlad—ed.] and will probably keep fans happy. Now if they'd just tell us exactly where the small deadly space is...



- 1 GRIP INC. • Power Of Inner Strength (Metal Blade)
- 2 KORN • Korn (Immortal-Epic)
- 3 QUICKSAND • Manic Compression (Island)
- 4 ORANGE 9MM • Driver Not Included (EastWest-EEG)
- 5 MONSTER MAGNET • Dopes To Infinity (A&M)
- 6 FAITH NO MORE • King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime (Slash-Reprise)
- 7 DEATH • Symbolic (Roadrunner)
- 8 SLAYER • Divine Intervention (American)
- 9 MEGADETH • Youthanasia (Capitol)
- 10 OVERDOSE • Progress Of Decadence (Futurist)
- 11 CORROSION OF CONFORMITY • Deliverance (Columbia)
- 12 SICK OF IT ALL • Scratch The Surface (EastWest America)
- 13 SOUNDTRACK • Tales From The Crypt Presents: Demon Knight (Atlantic)
- 14 BOLT THROWER • ...For Victory (Earache)
- 15 A.C. • Top 40 Hits (Earache)
- 16 KMFDM • Nihil (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 17 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Nativity In Black: A Tribute To Black Sabbath (Columbia)
- 18 TREE • Plant A Tree Or Die (CherryDisc)
- 19 SEX, LOVE & MONEY • Era (EP) (Rockworld-Sony)
- 20 MISERY LOVES CO. • Misery Loves Co. (Earache)
- 21 REIGN • Embrace (Mausoleum)
- 22 MACHINE HEAD • Burn My Eyes (Roadrunner)
- 23 WHITE ZOMBIE • Astro-Creep: 2000 (Geffen)
- 24 STUCK MOJO • Snappin' Necks (Century Media)
- 25 SKID ROW • SUBHUMAN rACE (Atlantic)

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

# SINGLES

by douglas wolk



" b i r t h d a y c a k e "

El Diablo

## cibo matto

The highlight of the chaos-mongering Portland sextet (two drummers, two guitarists, bassist, trumpeter) **NEW BAD THINGS'** third single (Sticky) is an improved remake of their long-out-of-print first single, "I Suck." That hysterical indictment of absolutely everything became a favorite of British DJ John Peel, and disappeared in a hurry; check it out this time if you missed it last time. It's a huge, unruly party in the studio, with everybody chipping in silly funk, hip-hop parodies ("Nietzsche was a hero to some/but he never meant a goddamn thing to me/straight-up fascist, just like John Wayne"), war-whoops, and random slams ("Tom Jones sucks!" "...and he's Welsh!").

The new single from **THE MAGNETIC FIELDS** (Merge) establishes one-man-band Stephen Merritt—also the mastermind behind the 6ths, Future Bible Heroes and the Gothic Archies—as not just the most productive creative force in indie-pop, but also the deepest-voiced. He hits a low C on "All The Umbrellas In London," for heaven's sake. (And a lovely song he hits it in, too.)

The other side's "Rats In The Garbage Of The Western World" (as in "We are the ~ so let's dance") is a fevered re-envisioning of '83 MTV-wave; this time, the synthesizers are all sick and distorted and the words are lurking like guerillas behind them.

Merritt's only major rival in the sheer output department is "Push Will," as he's calling himself now, and his band, which is **PALACE** this time around. The mail-order-only "O How I Enjoy The Light" single was the first evidence that the band was fallible. The new "West Palm Beach" single (Palace-Drum City), though, is a return to form. It's two sad, gliding songs about Florida beaches; a kind of postcard from someone who hasn't yet realized that his heart is broken. It's a risky record—it could easily have failed disastrously—but it works.

Of course, not much time can go by without a new **DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM** single, either: "Industrial Breakdown" (K) follows the same basic pattern as most of its predecessors (bargain price, no picture sleeve, dub version on the B-side, general excellence); this one has a crisp guitar-funk groove and words about music-making as a form of revolution ("we've got the tools to reclaim the sound," goes the hook). When James Brown was putting out dance singles every 6 weeks in the early '70s, they came off as bulletins from the front; when Calvin Johnson does it, the front exists only in his mind, but it's really neat anyway.

Sub Pop continues its series of singles by new British New Wave bands in pretty diecut chipboard packaging with **SUPERGRASS's** "Lose It." The A-side beefs up a kinda thin song with harmonies, momentum and the Guitar Sound That Made Seattle Great, but the real treat is the flip, "Caught By The Fuzz"—an acoustic remake of Supergrass's first British single—is silly, featherweight, totally British (in that way that means somebody could write an 8-page sociological analysis of it) and totally charming.

Providence, RI's **AMOEBIC ENSEMBLE** is an instrumental octet with a thing about unusual instruments. Violin and alto sax are about as normal as they get; they also play bouzouki, hurdy-gurdy, glass bells, trombone and bowed restaurant supplies, among other things. The "Driving Music" single (Simply Indefensible) has three neat, clattering little pieces, rescued from noveltyhood by the fact that they sound like they were written and arranged specifically for the instruments they're played on. "Headless Emcee" is the best, a lopsided foxtrot that brings to mind both Tom Waits and Kurt Weill.

For sheer peculiarity, though, it's tough to beat **TROLLIN WITHDRAWAL**, whose third 7", *Magazine Apocalypse* (Chimp) was partially recorded in the back seat of a '87 VW Golf. Most of their songs are rapped over acoustic guitar and bongos, then sped up to a Ween-on-helium pitch, with false starts, mistakes and giggling left in. Even a whiff of audience-conscious silliness would be fatal in this context, but there isn't any. TW just gives the sense that they made these recordings for their own pleasure and nobody else's, and that they really think music should sound like this. It's somehow comforting that somebody thinks that.

Cibo Matto (the name is Italian for "food madness") is a voice-and-sampler duo of two expatriate Japanese women now living in New York. As you may already have guessed, they get a lot of their power from the sound of a multiple-culture pileup. Yuka Honda's keyboard pulls up samples and loops from sources you'd never imagine, when she's not playing souled-out organ parts; Miho Hatori, through her heavy accent, pulls off a convincing hip-hop flow one moment, a torchy recitative the next, a high-pitched squeal ("shut up and eat!") after that. "Birthday Cake," Cibo Matto's first record, is unlike anything else you'll hear this month, and absolutely great: a *tour de force* of Stax keyboards, hip-hop beats, quotes from commercials and cross-cultural rivalry ("Yes I'm cooking for my son and his wife/It's his 30th birthday"). It changes musical direction every 10 seconds or so, but it's one big picture, not a collage—the killer chorus brings it all together. The B-side is a feathery, tragic cover of Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun" that translates it into French and, of course, adds a few food references.



# DANCE

by tim haslett

## various artists

one hell of a storm: versemongers meet soundcreators

Planet Earth

As readers of the music media, you are probably well aware that the term "acid jazz" has become so empty and slippery a reference point that it can be taken to mean virtually anything you like.

The same could be said for the new coinage "trip hop," which seems likely to become equally as ambiguous. This compilation represents a space formed between those two

definitions, and that is exactly what makes *One Hell Of A Storm* so compelling. With some of Britain's finest cool jazz aesthetic practitioners on board, including Howie B, the Hustlers Of Culture and MC Mell'O, this collection embodies the textures of John Coltrane's music filtered through the black nationalist performative poetry of the Last Poets and the Watts Prophets. One of the finest moments here is the serenely disturbing "There's Gonna Be One Hell Of A Storm" by Howie B and Patience Agbabi, which evokes the disquieting sense of anticipation and dread before the storm. Howie B's distant, atmospheric jazz stylings, reminiscent of Portishead's more contemplative moments, wash over the lucid, reflective vocals of Agbabi.

The opening track, "Realise Your True Potential" by Ife Piankhi and Ski, is a whispered pro-black piece with a gently undulating bass part running throughout. Put together in association with the definitive London jazz magazine, *Straight No Chaser*, this is a compilation which will hopefully have many successors.



- 1 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Trance Atlantic (Trance Atlantic/Worldsend-Volume (UK))
- 2 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Trip Hop Test Part One (Moonshine)
- 3 MOBY • Everything Is Wrong (Elektra-EEG)
- 4 PRODIGY • Music For The Jilted Generation (XL-Mute)
- 5 AUTECHRE • Amber (Warp/Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 6 KMFDM • Nihil (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 7 TRACI LORDS • 1,000 Fires (Radioactive)
- 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Logic Trance Vol. 2 (Logic)
- 9 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Harthouse: Axis Of Vision (WHITE LABELS/EYE Q/Onion-American)
- 10 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Ambient Systems (Instinct)
- 11 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Global Virus (Planet Earth)
- 12 777 • System 7.3: Fire + Water (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 13 VARIOUS ARTISTS • American Dream (City Of Angels-Moonshine)
- 14 DIE WARZAU • Engine (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 15 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Counterforce: A Collection Of Deep Beats (frrr-London)
- 16 PLASTIKMAN • Musik (NovaMute)
- 17 µ-ZIQ • Vs. The Auteurs (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 18 VARIOUS ARTISTS • From Here To Tranquility Vol.4 (Silent)
- 19 MASSIVE ATTACK • Protection (Circa-Virgin)
- 20 HEAVENLY MUSIC CORPORATION • Lunar Phase (Silent)
- 21 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Ibiza Afterhours (Moonshine)
- 22 TUSKEN RAIDERS • Bantha Trax (EP) (Clear (UK))
- 23 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Two A.D. (Waveform)
- 24 FREAKY CHAKRA • Lowdown Motivator (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Secret Life Of Trance 2: The Next Frontier (Planet Earth)

## ELSEWHERE

If you're eager to discover where house music has been and where it is going, you could do worse than investigate *Best Of House Music, Vol. 6: Tribal*, the latest installment in an admirably comprehensive series from Profile Records. This time around, the focus is on the history of "tribal" house, and thus we are presented with a batch of true classics, most of which have long since disappeared in vinyl form. Strafe's unforgettably minimal "Set It Off" from 1986 is here, still smoking after all these years. The inclusion of the much-in-demand "Can't Stop" by Plez, from the long, hot summer of 1990, is a real treat. The legendary "Voices," by Jersey garage auteur KC Flightt, and No Smoke's "Koro Koro" are two more gems included here, while Anon's "Whistle" and Lectroluv's "Dream Drums" constitute the most noteworthy of the newer tracks. I would have to recommend the entire series, but this is a fine start... No doubt LEFTFIELD's ambitious new single "Original" (Hard Hands-Columbia Unit 58) is due for release on this side of the Atlantic any day now, but it seems necessary to mention it now, because this is the track that will win them a long-deserved wider audience. The group's history, which began with the stentorian "Not Forgotten" in 1991, has seen the rise and fall of the British progressive house movement which Leftfield helped create. Having come through that now-moribund movement, its maturity is clear. "Original," which features Curve's Toni Halliday on vocals, is a slow drag off a long pipe, drenched in dub atmospheric and sinuous basslines. Halliday's vocals and Leftfield's crisp but never clean production lend "Original" the feel of Portishead at a soundclash with Adrian Sherwood and the ON-U Sound posse. The group's recent *Leftism* album is also well worth your attention... The ceaseless imagination of Carl Craig resurfaces once again on the heart-stopping "Climax" by PAPERCLIP PEOPLE (Open Records-Ministry Of Sound), a racing tour de force of urban electronics. Craig can make drums and basslines heavy and menacing one moment, light and fleet the next, and it's these aural tricks that keep you guessing until the end. Changeless repetition is not what this record is about; its textures and contours shift constantly.



# HIP-HOP

by glen sansone



poverty's paradise  
Tommy Boy

## naughty by nature

It's 19Naughty5, and Naughty By Nature has reached a critical crossroads in its five-year-old career. Following its hook-infested debut, which gave birth to the crafty "O.P.P.," Treach, Vinny and DJ Kay Gee were marching

down a platinum-paved road with their New Jersey ghetto in tow, waving Louisville Sluggers and shouting the choruses in the group's high-energy tracks. The follow-up, however, offered nothing new, despite containing the quintessential hip-hop anthem, "Hip Hop Hooray." With a knack for anthemic, pop-flavored songs, the group's third album, *Poverty's Paradise*, sees Naughty By Nature rediscovering itself. The trio returns to the familiar streets of East Orange for its inspiration.

This one has the vision, cohesion and rock-'em-sock-'em attitude that was only sparingly found on the group's past albums. Treach's rap style is nimble, mixing a sprinter's acceleration with some of his most cunning and poignant statements to date. He raps from the heart of the ghetto with a rare, poetic flair, instead of simply painting warning signs and basing his anger on a sense of hopelessness. On the astounding "World Go Round," Treach asks questions and provides commentary about the world as he sees it: "Why is it always the good that have to go?/And they tell us that's just how this life goes/So I look at the kids and wonder where their life might go." Everything about NBN has gotten noticeably better; Kay Gee's flawless production is strong enough for the street, yet it has a smooth, well-polished shine for crossover audiences ("Feel Me Flow"), while Vinny no longer plays understudy to Treach; his rapping is more assured and distinguished. This is hip-hop paradise.



- 1 ROOTS • Do You Want More!!!!!! (DGC)
- 2 OL' DIRTY BASTARD • Return To The 36 Chambers: The Dirty Version (Elektra-EEG)
- 3 THA ALKALIKS • Coast 2 Coast (Loud-RCA)
- 4 METHOD MAN • Tical (Def Jam/RAL-Island)
- 5 CHANNEL LIVE • Station Identification (Capitol)
- 6 NOTORIOUS B.I.G. • Ready To Die (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 7 THE NONCE • World Ultimate (Wild West-American)
- 8 KEITH MURRAY • The Most Beautifullest Thing In This World (Jive)
- 9 DIGABLE PLANETS • Blowout Comb (Pendulum-EMI)
- 10 SHOWBIZ & A.G. • "Next Level" (12") (Payday/Wir-I.L.S.)
- 11 SOUNDTRACK • New Jersey Drive Vol. 1 (Tommy Boy)
- 12 REDMAN • Dare Iz A Darkside (RAL-Island)
- 13 LORDS OF THE UNDERGROUND • Keepers Of The Funk (Pendulum-EMI)
- 14 JEMINI THE GIFTED ONE • "Funk Soul Sensation" (12") (Mercury)
- 15 COMMON SENSE • Resurrection (Relativity)
- 16 BIG L • "Put It On" (12") (Columbia)
- 17 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Loud 95: Mudder Budders (EP) (Loud-RCA)
- 18 MILKBOWE • "Keep It Real" (12") (Set It Off-Capitol)
- 19 DREAM WARRIORS • "California Dreamin'" (12") (Pendulum-EMI)
- 20 NAUGHTY BY NATURE • "Craziest" (12") (Tommy Boy)
- 21 2PAC • Me Against The World (Interscope)
- 22 BOOGIEMONSTERS • Riders Of The Storm: The Underwater Album (Pendulum-EMI)
- 23 DR. DRE • "Keep Their Heads Ringin'" (12") (Priority)
- 24 SMIF-N-WESSUN • Dah Shimin' (Wreck-Nervous)
- 25 MILK • Never Dated (American)

### BONUS BEATS

A few years ago, Vallejo, California's E-40 (if you're from the area it's E-Fo' Day) burst onto the scene on the independently-released albums *Federal* and *The Mailman*. Part of a large, family-like posse known as The Click, E-40 displays a charismatic twist on the predictable Bay Area funk sound. He's got a sleek, commanding flip of the tongue that sounds more animated and charismatic than anything else from the region—he even creates his own jargon like George Clinton. E-40's new *In A Major Way* (Sick Wid' It-Jive), cruises at a slow speed, dropping pimped-out stories using thick ghetto slang like Iceberg Slim, while the music coats like fog. There are guests on nearly every track, but the best may be "Dusted 'n' Disgusted," which features 2Pac, Mac Mall and Spice 1... For 2PAC, getting embroiled in seemingly endless controversy over the past year has led him to record his most focused and profound album to date, *Me Against The World* (Interscope). 2Pac has tempered the rage and defiance of his previous two records with more hopeful messages (the title track), feelings of remorse on "Dear Mama," and a feeling of isolation. It's as if he has removed himself a bit to reflect upon his turbulent existence, the way blues singers wonder when the pain in their heart is going to subside (especially on "If I Die 2Nite"). Not like he doesn't still have the capacity to sound like the thug he claims to be (check "F\*\*\* The World"), but 2Pac has just taken the time to articulate his blues a little bit better... A few months back, one of the biggest street singles was NINE's "Whutcha Want?" His voice sounds shredded and gritty like a dancehall singer, but his raw, dub-spiced rhythms are pure, Bronx-styled hip-hop. He was first heard on Funkmaster Flex's "Six Million Ways To Die" before releasing his debut album *Nine Lives*. Over a loose-fitting piano loop, "Redrum" waxes poetic about the deluge of violence in hip-hop ("Hostility is building on a daily basis/Sick of all the nonsense/Save the mean faces"), while on most cuts he threatens to whoop the competition like an old-school heavyweight. *Nine Lives* is dramatically garnished with unusually creative samples of strings ("Da Fundamentalz"). But some of the tracks, especially "Hit Em Like Dis" (with vocalist Froggy Frog), come off as jokes or novelties, while other tracks' rhymes dwell heavy on the cliché tip. Word out.

Compiled from the *Caroline Music Report's* weekly Best Box charts, collected from CHL's pool of progressive radio reporters

# on the verge

## UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS

compiled by Lydia Anderson

### scud mountain boys

With bands from Hole to Lambchop dusting off acoustic and roots-oriented instruments, Northampton, Massachusetts' Scud Mountain Boys so far stand alone in weaving traditional sounds into narcotic pop, padded by tender lap steel lines and smooth mandolin pluckings. On *Dance The Night Away* (Chunk), the band's loose amalgam comes off like woozy dream-rock played on traditional acoustic instruments and recorded in the Boys' kitchen (which it was!). The overall effect sounds something like Uncle Tupelo merged with Galaxie 500, while on songs like the upbeat "Where's The Playground, Susie" they sound like the Ass Ponys unplugged and on Dramamine. The Boys are currently recording a single for Sub Pop and a purportedly "country" album with D.C. Berman of the Silver Jews (who wrote liner notes for the band's vinyl-only collection of earlier material, *Pine Box*, also on Chunk). (LA)



### crowsdell

Jacksonville, Florida's Crowdsell writes crafted, crafty songs whose outward simplicity is only a guise for much darker goings-on. First to pull you in are singer/guitarist Shannon Wright's edgy voice and nimble guitar hooks, which at first appear poised and pretty but slowly reveal their darker intentions. Produced by Pavement's Stephen Malkmus, *Dreamette* (Big Cat), the trio's debut album, lurches and swings with delicious melodies that have surprisingly sour centers. Wright seems spooked by the same demons haunting Kristin Hersh and Kim Deal; the lulling guitar riff of "Sad Eyes," for example, belies its lyrics about child molestation. Tugging the other side of the rope are dreamy highs such as "Sugarcoated" and "Weightless." (LA)



### home

Home assembles its sound with an ear to the sly indie-rock technique of genre greats like Pavement, Ween and Built To Spill. In the band's hometown of Tampa, Florida, though, these four lads have rightfully been more than a little intimidated by their local death-metal brethren. So much so that the first couple of years of the band's existence consisted of home recording and the hushed release of eight cassettes (simply titled *I* through *VIII*) to friends and family. The urge to record kept the members of Home out of the van and deeply ensconced in their own heads, eventually driving them to abandon the two-guitar "rock approach" for the flexibility of pitting one guitar against piano and keyboards. The resulting *IX (Relativity)* is a swirling mass of rubbery pop songs, loose, experimental tunes and wandering instrumental gems that serve as a bright introduction to an already-seasoned band. —Cheryl Botchick



### moviola

Hailing from the same Columbus, Ohio hotbed as garage kings Gaunt and the New Bomb Turks, Moviola just might be the next indie-rock sensation. But where its neighbors play greased-back garage punk, Moviola takes to the living-room couch with guitar and mini-amp in hand, striking a more melodic and contemplative note. On record, the foursome plays infectious pop songs, upon which they pile mountains of fuzz and distortion. Singer Jake Housh's quintessentially sorta squeaky, sorta whiny voice perfectly complements such Moviola moments as "Waste" off the first single and "Out To Graze," from the band's latest release, a 10" platter called *Frantic*, released by hometown label Anyway.

—Dawn Sutter

# Building And Running Your Own Web Site: The Poster Children Go Hypermedia

By Rose Marshack

Poster

The concept for a hypermedia web was first developed by a group of scientists who wanted to link together research documents in such a way that footnotes and references in each 'page' could be accessed by pointing and clicking at the chosen word or picture. Following a link in a World Wide Web page can take you to another area of that page, play a song, display a movie or picture, or take you to a computer on the other side of the world. To view the Web, you use a browser such as Mosaic or Netscape, which can be downloaded free from various Internet sites.

To create a Web page, you need a simple text editor and a place from which to serve your Web page. Either your Internet provider can help you with this, or you can find freeware, like MacHTTP, to serve your web page from your computer. The Web page for our band, the Poster Children (<http://www.prairienet.org/posterkids/>), resides on prairienet.org, a freenet that provides unlimited access to Illinois residents and 1 meg of space to store a web page, but a Web page can exist on something as small as a PowerBook, as long as it's connected directly to the Internet.

Our Web page contains our bio, show dates, band photos, QuickTime movies, song excerpts, tour stories, a telnet link to prairienet.org, a link to download our interactive press kit, and links to other neat-o pages. We use TeachText (the most simple text editor available) to write code in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), the language of web pages. There are plenty of HTML editors and browser 'helper' applications available free on the net. For those terrified of writing in HTML, any Web page's source code can be accessed by choosing "view source" from the browser. Using this option, you can copy and modify any interesting-looking page to suit your needs. You can test your page by running Mosaic or Netscape and opening your file locally. This is how I like to edit web pages; I'll run Netscape and TeachText at the same time, make changes in TeachText, and switch back to netscape and reload my page to view my changes.

HTML is not a language to be feared. It is basically text with embedded tags. There is not a lot of control to be had over the appearance of a Web page from its code; the font, letter color, width, length, background color and spacing of a page are completely dependent on the setup of the reader's browser. The idea of the Web is to make information available to anyone with a browser, so the language is necessarily generic and simple. Artists who find the lack of control over the format of web pages bothersome can rest assured; each new version of every browser seems to support more HTML formatting commands.

All of the information you need to learn to write HTML documents is available on the web. I learned HTML in a couple of hours from reading "An HTML Primer" located at <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/general/internet/www/htmlprimer.html>; it took me about 3 hours to get a web page up and running. The commands are usually either tags that surround the text you want displayed, or links with filenames. One such tag, the heading tag, allows you to choose the relative font size of the text it surrounds. There are five levels of heading tag, H1 through H5. Surrounding a sentence with <H1> will cause a browser to display large text; you'd use this for a big section title or if you were displaying a roman numeral line in an outline. <H2> would be the next smaller heading, like a capital letter entry in an outline, and so on. Surrounding letters with a <blink> tag causes them to flash (in some browsers). Embedding a link to a picture or another computer is only a matter of filling in the name of the file or device in a scary little tag, <a href="filename">. That's about as complicated as HTML gets, and remember, you can copy other people's pages.

To add graphics, sounds and movies to a web page, a little bit of hardware is needed. To add pictures, we use a scanner and Photoshop and a shareware program called GIF Converter. We post our pictures in .GIF format. To digitize QuickTime movies, we bought a Videospigot card and software for around \$350; the card attaches to the VCR, and we can dump videotape to our hard drive. We also purchased a Connectix Quicktake camera for \$99, which inputs very low-resolution black and white video to disk. This will be great to take on the road with us to do tour reports; we plan on plugging the camera into the serial port on our laptop to take embarrassing tour QuickTime movies. To stick sound on our Web page, we have a 4-channel sound board which has 2 analog inputs; we attach our CD boombox and use SoundEdit Pro to edit songs. This package cost under \$100. IU.MA.com, a commercial Web page provider, has all sorts of information on the best ways to compress sound for Web pages, plus they provide tons of info and helper applications at their site, [www.iu.ma.com](http://www.iu.ma.com). They will also make a very fine Web page for your band, in case you don't want to worry about this stuff.

We try to update our information at least twice a week and redesign our entire page every other week. There are plenty of dead sites on the Web, and it's a challenge to keep ours interesting. We try to keep our GIFs small to cut down on loading time, and we've heard that people lose interest in a document after about three screens of information. Right now the Web provides us with something akin to running our own pirate television station; we can publish anything we want for free, and anyone with a computer and modem can access it. It's nice to know that a network originally designed for military use now contains everything from band info to current statistics about how many Dr. Peppers are left in cola machines in university labs. Let's hope the freedom continues.



Rose Marshack plays bass in the Poster Children. Their new album is Junior Citizen (Sire).

# mixed media

compiled by dawn sutter



## THE MONKEES

Head  
(Rhino Home Video)

## videos

Let's face it: The Monkees have never been much accepted by the cognoscenti, despite the fact that they got props from Frank Zappa and John Lennon, used no more studio musicians than The Byrds, Mamas & Papas or Beach Boys, and had one of the first Moogs. Must have been something to do with being a TV-created band—an irony, since the TV show was actually more their own creation than the records. In its mania to out-do Richard Lester's Beatles films, the series (which Rhino is releasing in toto this summer) was sometimes unwatchable, but often broadcast more anti-establishment commentary than even *Saturday Night Live*. Still, if the group deserves serious appreciation in the pop culture pantheon, it's for *Head*, the (G-rated!) feature film they made in 1968 with co-writers/producers Bob Rafelson (the show's creator) and the Jack Nicholson. Described in its own trailer as "the most extraordinary adventure western comedy love story mystery drama musical documentary satire ever filmed," *Head* ambitiously plays with about 30 plotlines. They're mostly used just for surface titillation, taking the Pre-Fab Four from Vietnam to the Wild West to the North African desert, prison, a haunted house, a prize fight with Sonny Liston... like a week on *Star Trek*'s holo-deck gone haywire.

Perhaps most succinctly described as Godard meets *I Dream Of Jeannie*, *Head* owes obvious debts to *How I Won The War* as well as all the Beatles films (not to mention their music—many songs here are obvious rip-offs), but it also deserves credit for presaging Monty Python, 2001 and certainly a music video or two. It's not quite Bunuel, but as intellectual camp, it certainly tops Nicholson's better-known *The Trip* and a few other psychotronic classics.

—Eric Gladstone

## OPTIC NERVE

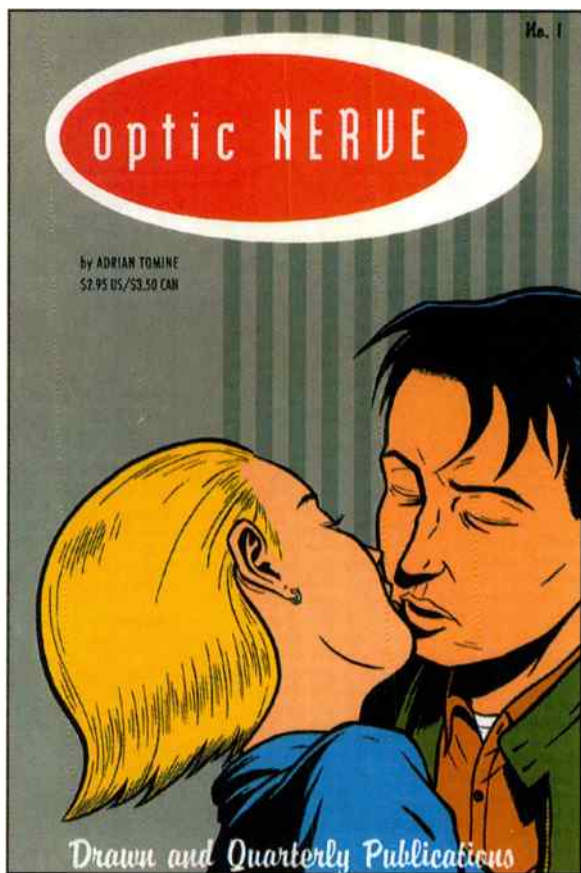
by Adrian Tomine  
(Drawn And Quarterly)

The young cartoonist Adrian Tomine has made a name for himself over the past few years with comic strips in various magazines (including Tower Records' *Pulse!*) and his self-published mini-comic *Optic Nerve*. The new series of the same name is his first full-size comic of his own, and it's about time. Tomine's flat, declarative visual style and his

## funnies

stories of disaffected youth getting their hearts broken owe something to Dan Clowes' *Eightball*. He's both more hopeful and more despairing than Clowes, though. You get the sense that Tomine cares for all his characters, but knows he has to hurt them. His stories are small-scale human tragedies—a man goes on a date with his ex-girlfriend, she tells him they're not ready to be friends, and he gets in a small car accident on the way home; a woman grudgingly acquiesces to her far-away boyfriend's requests to talk dirty to him on the phone. The best story in the first issue is the shortest: "Drop," a strikingly economical four-panel construction about a man falling over a railing by a road at night. Like the other gut-dropping moments in Tomine's stories, it's terrifying because it's absolutely real.

—Douglas Wolk



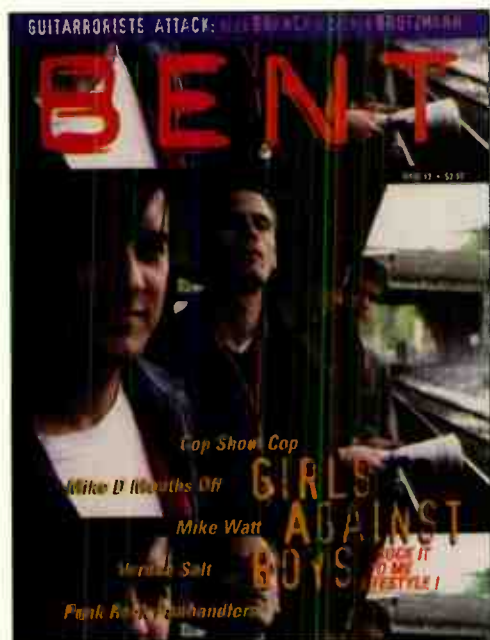
## A PURE FORMALITY

(Sony)

Writer/Director Giuseppe Tornatore, known best for the nostalgic *Cinema Paradiso*, has made a surprising leap with *A Pure Formality*, an allegorical, psychological thriller starring Roman Polanski and Gerard Depardieu. Tornatore gets caught in a few snags trying to bring his existential thought-provoking work to the screen. *A Pure Formality* tells two tales: the story of a man who is suspected of committing a murder and the underlying theme of a man's inner struggle.

The movie begins with a heart-pounding scene: A gunshot echoes in the distance as the camera follows the famous writer Onoff (Gerard Depardieu) running frantically through the rain, then being picked up by police as a suspect in the murder of a body found near his home. Onoff is taken to the hellish, run-down police headquarters, where he's interrogated by a police inspector (Roman Polanski). The inspector finds it hard to believe that his favorite writer could be a suspect for murder, and relentlessly questions the writer for hours about everything from his life to what he was doing at the time of the murder. Here Tornatore begins to unveil the allegory, giving insight to the tortured soul of Onoff, who tells of his disappointment in himself, his struggle with his inner editor. The investigation, which lasts through the night, further reveals Onoff's inner struggle, and the identity of the murder victim is exposed. The film's plot is a bit contrived, almost an existential cliché, but *A Pure Formality* does deserve accolades for so stylishly tackling man's universal struggle with himself. (DS)

flicks



## BENT

1887 Ingleside Terrace  
Washington, DC 20010

'zines

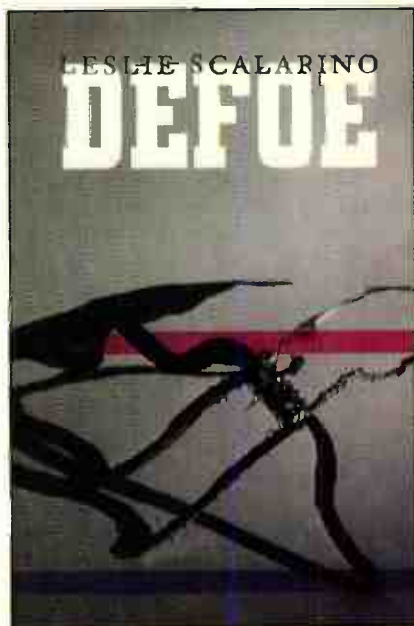
With its full-color cover and well-organized layout, *Bent* looks more like a newsstand rock magazine than its xeroxed brethren, but its small (3000 copies) press run and bite-the-hand-that-feeds-it style keep this fanzine far from the typical mass-market rock rag. Edited by frequent *CMJ* contributor Eric Gladstone, *Bent* casts its acerbic eye on its favorite bands (like cover stars Girls Against Boys), punk rock panhandlers ("It's not cool or punk to beg") and the changes in Veruca Salt promo photos (from "indie band" to "Sex, dammit. S-E-X"). Issue #2 also features Mike Watt, Antietam, Small Factory, Cop Shoot Cop, Caspar. Brotzmann and Glenn Branca.

## DEFOE

by Leslie Scalapino  
(Sun & Moon Press)

reads

In the 18th century, when the novel was a still-developing form, Daniel Defoe's novels were prose catchalls, combining such "low" forms as crime and travel narratives with political reportage and social comment. Mere moments before the 21st, with the novel as we know it all but exhausted, Leslie Scalapino's *Defoe* reclaims its namesake's inclusive, many-voiced polemic spirit. Largely a response to U.S. involvement in the Gulf War, Scalapino demonstrates how "war changes writing." Several narrative threads (a series of drug-related killings, a strike in a cigarette factory) appear and disappear, competing for space and attention with the author's dreams, her skeptical takes on current events, and self-reflexive clues to the book's own method. Scalapino captures the strangeness of our times with deadpan wit: "The sects are comparing the burgeoning war that's being created to the events detailed in the good book describing a war which brings the Armageddon. It's the same... So they're happy." More often, though, she's after more than satire, as passages of static description of scenes and states of consciousness struggle to engage experience in ways unavailable to the conventional novel. The tension between this more poetic aim and "lower," topical ones ("Our leader baring in their country") lends *Defoe* much of its force. Potential readers should be aware that Scalapino's style is initially difficult and replete with subtle syntactic distortions, though no more so than, say, Kathy Acker's. The second half of the book, which has a more stable narrative ground, is probably more accessible than the first. But, as Scalapino puts it, "It's as if the text is only accomplished in 'learning about,' learning how to do it (one's own small motions) in the course of its being read." —Franklin Bruno



# TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY



P J HARVEY

|    | ARTIST                  | ALBUM TITLE                                   | LABEL                    |
|----|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1  | PJ HARVEY               | To Bring You My Love                          | Island                   |
| 2  | MIKE PATT               | Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?                          | Columbia                 |
| 3  | QUICKSAND               | Manic Compression                             | Island                   |
| 4  | ARCHERS OF LOAF         | Vee Vee                                       | Alias                    |
| 5  | MATTHEW SWEET           | 100% Fun                                      | Zoo                      |
| 6  | BELLY                   | King  | Sire-Reprise             |
| 7  | MORPHINE                | Yes   | Rykodisc                 |
| 8  | THROWING MUSES          | University                                    | Sire-Reprise             |
| 9  | JAYHAWKS                | Tomorrow The Green Grass                      | American                 |
| 10 | WAX                     | 13 Unlucky Numbers                            | USA Side 1-Interscope    |
| 11 | BETTIE SERVEERT         | Lamprey                                       | Matador-Atlantic         |
| 12 | ELASTICA                | Elastica                                      | DGC                      |
| 13 | PRICK                   | Prick   | Nothing-Interscope       |
| 14 | POSTER CHILDREN         | Junior Citizen                                | Sire-Reprise             |
| 15 | GOO GOO DOLLS           | A Boy Named Goo                               | Metal Blade-WB           |
| 16 | KMFDM                   | Nihil   | Wax Trax!-TVT            |
| 17 | ROYAL TRUX              | Thank You                                     | Virgin                   |
| 18 | STONE ROSES             | Second Coming                                 | Geffen                   |
| 19 | THE THE                 | Hanky Panky                                   | 550-Epic                 |
| 20 | ORANGE 9MM              | Driver Not Included                           | EastWest-EEG             |
| 21 | IVY                     | Realistic                                     | Seed                     |
| 22 | MARY LOU LORD           | Mary Lou Lord (EP)                            | Kill Rock Stars          |
| 23 | LOVE BATTERY            | Straight Freak Ticket                         | Atlas-A&M                |
| 24 | SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES | The Rapture                                   | Geffen                   |
| 25 | WOLFGANG PRESS          | Funky Little Demons                           | 4AD-WB                   |
| 26 | CAKE                    | Motorcade Of Generosity                       | Capricorn                |
| 27 | FACE TO FACE            | Big Choice                                    | Victory-A&M              |
| 28 | BUSH                    | Sixteen Stone                                 | Trauma-Interscope        |
| 29 | LOW POP SUICIDE         | The Death Of Excellence                       | World Domination         |
| 30 | HAZEL                   | Are You Going To Eat That                     | Sub Pop                  |
| 31 | JEWEL                   | Pieces Of You                                 | Atlantic                 |
| 32 | BETTER THAN EZRA        | Deluxe  | Swell-Elektra            |
| 33 | CLAWHAMMER              | Thank The Holder Uppers                       | Interscope               |
| 34 | FOSSIL                  | Fossil  | hifi/Sire-WB             |
| 35 | MOBY                    | Everything Is Wrong                           | Elektra-EEG              |
| 36 | SLEEPER                 | Smart   | Arista                   |
| 37 | LOIS                    | Bet The Sky                                   | K                        |
| 38 | SMOG                    | Wild Love                                     | Drag City                |
| 39 | POLARA                  | Polara  | Clean/Twin/Tone-Restless |
| 40 | JOHN LEE HOOKER         | Chill Out                                     | Pointblank-Virgin        |
| 41 | PRODIGY                 | Music For The Jilted Generation               | XL-Mute                  |
| 42 | RADIOHEAD               | The Bends                                     | Capitol                  |
| 43 | VARIOUS ARTISTS         | Re/search: Incredibly Strange Music, Volume 2 | Asphodel                 |
| 44 | MILK CULT               | Burn Or Bury                                  | Basura!-Priority         |
| 45 | POND                    | The Practice Of Joy Before Death              | Sub Pop                  |
| 46 | KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION | Cowboys And Aliens                            | One Little Indian-A&M    |
| 47 | URBAN DANCE SQUAD       | Persona Non Grata                             | Virgin                   |
| 48 | CUB                     | Come Out Come Out                             | Mint (Canada)            |
| 49 | HHEAD                   | Jerk  | I.R.S.                   |
| 50 | SOUNDTRACK              | Tank Girl                                     | Elektra-EEG              |
| 51 | #THS                    | Wasps' Nests                                  | London                   |
| 52 | ALEX CHILTON            | A Man Called Destruction                      | Ardent                   |
| 53 | SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS    | The Inevitable Squirrel Nut Zippers           | Mammoth                  |
| 54 | FAITH NO MORE           | King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime           | Slash-Reprise            |
| 55 | SPIRITUALIZED           | Pure Phase                                    | Dedicated-Arista         |
| 56 | VARIOUS ARTISTS         | Trip Hop Test Part One                        | Moonshine                |
| 57 | PORTISHEAD              | Dummy   | Go! Discs-London         |
| 58 | KITTYWINDER             | Scream Of The Weak (EP)                       | Zero Hour                |
| 59 | MAD SEASON              | Above   | Columbia                 |
| 60 | ASS PONYS               | Electric Rock Music                           | A&M                      |
| 61 | MUDHONEY                | My Brother The Cow                            | Reprise                  |
| 62 | CAULFIELDS              | Whirligig                                     | A&M                      |
| 63 | NEGATIVLAND             | Fair Use                                      | Seeland                  |
| 64 | MASSIVE ATTACK          | Protection                                    | Circa-Virgin             |
| 65 | DAVE MATTHEWS BAND      | Under The Table And Dreaming                  | RCA                      |
| 66 | DOG FACED HERMANS       | Bump & Swing                                  | Alternative Tentacles    |
| 67 | LIVE                    | Throwing Copper                               | Radioactive              |
| 68 | LILYS                   | Ecceame The Photon Band                       | spinART                  |
| 69 | TEAM DRESCH             | Personal Best                                 | Chainsaw-Candy-Ass       |
| 70 | GUIDED BY VOICES        | Box (box set)                                 | Scat                     |
| 71 | TRAGICALLY HIP          | Day For Night                                 | Atlantic                 |
| 72 | JULIANA HATFIELD        | Only Everything                               | Mammoth-Atlantic         |
| 73 | FREE KITTEN             | "Nice Ass"                                    | Kill Rock Stars          |
| 74 | SEBADOH                 | Bakesale/Rebound (EP)                         | Sub Pop                  |
| 75 | MONSTER MAGNET          | Dopes To Infinity                             | A&M                      |

Chart data culled from *CMJ New Music Report's* weekly Top 150 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 35 most-played releases that week.

**CHRIS KNOX**

New York, NY • Apr. 3, 1995

Chris Knox is the pivotal figure in the history of New Zealand's alternative music scene—imagine if Iggy Pop, Jonathan Richman, Captain Beefheart and Robyn Hitchcock were all the same person, and you'll understand what he's meant to Kiwi rock. (He's also a gifted cartoonist and recording engineer.) His group The Enemy was the first important New Zealand punk band, an inspiration to dozens of groups that started in its wake. The Enemy turned into Toy Love, who flirted with mainstream Antipodean success; Toy Love, in turn, became the bizarre duo Tall Dwarfs, still going strong after 14 years. And tonight he's appearing to preview *Songs Of You And Me* (Caroline), his fifth solo album.

On his records, Knox tears off irresistible singalong takes on human nature, politics and emotions, one after another. Live, though, he's not a singer-songwriter, he's an entertainer. Grizzled, tanned and squat, wearing shorts (which he changes into on stage), sandals, a headset mike and a torn T-shirt, Knox plays a bunch of his songs both old and new, but he only plays two of them straight through. He interrupts himself to apologize for blowing chords, to comment on where a line or a song came from, or for any other reason that pops up ("There's a bug on my lyrics. [pause, squish] There is no bug on my lyrics"). He commissions a young man from the front row to be a human keyboard stand ("okay, just stand there like that... let's see, 'slow rock'") for "Under The Influence," then spends the song dancing around the stage (dashing back to the Omnichord in time to change the chords) and fondling the head of the hapless keyboard holder. As is his wont, he sings an extemporaneous number about the club where he's playing and the particular audience members he knows. When he gets to the last song, "Not Given Lightly"—the closest he's come to a hit—he stops right before the climax to go into a lengthy discourse about a particularly tricky line in the song, why he doesn't do encores, an especially great encore he saw another band do once... And just as the audience is despairing of ever hearing the end of the song, Knox steps deconstructing his own music, stomps on his pedal, and sails the last chorus straight to heaven.

—Douglas Wolk



NEW RELEASES MAY - JUNE 1995

**MAY 23**

**RACHELS** Handwriting (1/4 Stick-Touch And Go)  
**BOO TRUNDLE** Possible Bodies (Big Deal)  
**CHOPPER** Mad House On Castle Street (Big Deal)  
**BIVOUAC** Bivouac (DGC)  
**TEENAGE FANCLUB** Grand Prix (DGC)  
**DISHWALLA** Pet Your Friends (A&M)  
**POLICE** Live (A&M)  
**LOW** Long-Division (Vernon Yard)  
**CRABS** Jackpot (K)  
**TRULY** Fast Stories... From Kid Coma (Capitol)  
**HARDSHIP POST** Somebody Spoke (Sub Pop)  
**TINDERSTICKS** "Here" (7") (Sub Pop)  
**MARCUS MILLER** Tales (PRA)  
**CHET BAKER** Two A Day (Dreyfus)  
**ESQUIVEL** Music From A Sparkling Planet (Bar/None)

**JUNE 6**

**EGGS** How Do You Like Your Lobster? (Teen Beat)  
**INNOCENCE MISSION** Glow (A&M)  
**GENE** Olympian (Polydor)  
**PAUL WELLER** Stanley Road (London)  
**HAGFISH** Rocks Your Lame Ass (London)  
**WET WET WET** Picture This (London)  
**GROTUS** Mass (London)  
**BREEDERS** Pacer (Elektra)

**JUNE 13**

**ESQUIVEL** More Of Other Worlds, Other Sounds (Warner Bros.)  
**SHANE MACGOWAN** TBA (Warner Bros.)  
**STEREOLAB** Peng (Too Pure-American)  
**NEIL YOUNG** Human Highway (Warner Bros.)  
**PEACH** II (Caroline)  
**KILLING JOKE** Willful Days (Blueplate-Caroline)  
**ENTOMBED** You, Me & He (Epic)

**JUNE 20**

**SCARCE** Deadsexy (A&M)  
**THE VERVE** TBA (Vernon Yard)  
**DARYLL-ANN** Seabourn West (Vernon Yard)  
**LOS MARAUDERS** Every Song We Fuckin' Know (TeenBeat)  
**UNCLE WIGGLY** Jump Back, Baby (TeenBeat)  
**UNREST** B.P.M. (1991-1994) (TeenBeat)  
**SEAM** Am I Driving You Crazy (Touch & Go)  
**SUPERCHUNK** Incidental Music '91-'95 (Singles Compilation) (Merge)  
**GROOVE THEORY** Groove Theory (Epic)  
**CYNDI LAUPER** 12 Deadly Sins And Then Some (Epic)  
**BJORK** TBA (Elektra-EEG)  
**ZIGGY MARLEY** TBA (Elektra-EEG)  
**NATALIE MERCHANT** TBA (Elektra-EEG)  
**PHISH** TBA (Elektra-EEG)  
**GRAND PUBA** 2000 (Elektra-EEG)  
**KYUSS** TBA (Elektra-EEG)

**JUNE 27**

**UNCLE JOE'S BIG OL' DRIVER** Chick Rock (Headhunter-Cargo)  
**G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE** TBA (Epic)  
**EARTH EIGHTEEN** TBA (Medicine/Giant-WB)  
**LETTERS TO CLEO** Wholesale Meat And Fish (Giant-WB)  
**MINISTRY** Filth Pig (Sire-Warner Bros.)  
**RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS** TBA (Warner Bros.)  
**THE STIFFS** Nix Naught Nothing (Onion-American)  
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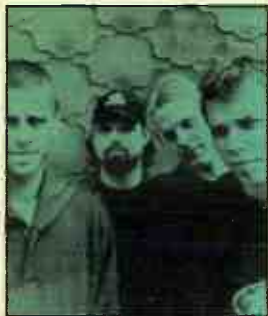
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Satchel



Die Krupps



Moonwash

carrying the piece, the emotional ballad answers the question "Why do I suffer so?" with an uplifting thought: "Until you learn the meaning of light/You're never gonna be all right."

After gaining attention from the metal community for their EP *A Tribute To Metallica*, the German boys of **DIE KRUPPS** have returned to the thudding industrial music—itsself not too far from metal—which first brought them to American dancefloors' attention in 1989. "Fatherland" is remixed by two of the godfathers of today's industrial children, Andrew Eldritch of Sisters Of Mercy and Rodney Orpheus of the *Cassandra Complex*. It appears on Die Krupps' new remix album, *Rings Of Steel* (Cleopatra).

Our second Florida band of the issue is **THE DASHBOARD SAINTS**, which centers on the duo of Claude Roatta and Robert Corriazo, who have been making music together for 10 years. (They've been known to sing in French and Spanish, too!) "I Believe"—a bar-bandish, blues-inflected anthem, with a touch of Caribbean influence—comes from their debut album, *Never Touch The Ground* (ALP).

From a similarly sunny climate, we've got Orange County, CA's **MOONWASH**, with the lengthy, gentle "Cold," from its first album, *Luxurious* (Nightbloom Music). The band recorded everything on the album live in the studio, and it gives the sound a smooth, organic vibe. Neat fact: Frontman Shion Sullivan organized Desert Nights, a series of events with Orange County bands playing all night in the California desert.

**KENDRA SMITH** (interviewed in This Month's Model) has made waves with the Dream Syndicate, Rainy Day, Opal and the Guild Of Temporal Adventurers. *Five Ways Of Disappearing* (4AD), on which "Temporarily Lucy" appears, is her first solo record. Listen to how the song makes expert use of drones, cut-up lyrics and a very peculiar guitar solo; the way Smith does things may not make sense in the head, but it makes sense to the heart.

Northampton, Massachusetts' **SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS** have just released their first album, *Dance The Night Away*—and their second, a collection of early recordings called *Pine Box* (both on Chunk). The band's rock music is brandished with a relaxing country twang. Though the brief, folk-derived "Fiery Coffin"—available only on this *CMJ New Music Monthly* CD—sounds vaguely '70s, the diversity of the albums is very much a '90s thing.

# CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

JUNE 1995

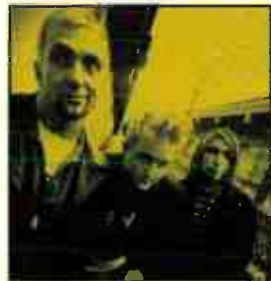
## VOLUME 22

How's this for credibility? When you consider that **DISH**'s perfect-pitch singer Dana Kleiter just completed recording a duet with Mike Johnson (of Dinosaur Jr. and a budding solo career) for a Nick Cave tribute and sang backup on Hole's *Live Through This*, mentioning that guitarist Bo Taylor also spends time in Motocaster seems almost gratuitous. It also is somewhat misleading: Dish may have the alternative-rock pedigree, but "Headlights," from *Boneyard Beach* (Interscope), draws its lulling, sweet sound from a wider pool of influences.



Dish

Wielding the kind of emotional rock melancholia that made the Smiths a household name in the '80s, **GENE** is carrying Brit-rock into the '90s. On its debut record, *Olympian* (Atlas-A&M), Gene offers unabashed displays of gloomy, dramatic guitar-pop. Conveying levels of frustration and agony that could bring you to tears, "Sleep Well Tonight" is a showpiece for frontman Martin Rossiter, the newest favorite cover-boy for the British music press.



Everclear

**EVERCLEAR**'s adeptness at fusing traditional three-chord punk with melodic, psychedelic rock is just one reason why the Portland trio has finally begun to receive the attention it deserves. The twelve songs on *World Of Noise* (Capitol) display the band's ability to communicate a sense of futility through the use of frenzied guitar work and impassioned vocal lines. "Heroin Girl," with its sizeable dose of caustic lyrics and energetic power-pop, is sure to ring in your head for hours.

# ON THE CD

### HOW TO USE THIS PAGE

1. Cut along dotted line.
2. Fold in half.
3. Slip into our CD holder or a jewel box.
4. Enjoy.



Season To Risk

With its second full-length album, *In A Perfect World* (Columbia), **SEASON TO RISK** continues to dispense heavy-hitting rock. The Midwestern quartet's grinding guitar assaults are sure to make you stand up and take notice. On "Jack Frost," STR attacks your senses with its fusion of racing tempos, crashing chords and vocalist Steve Tulipana's coarse snarl. Watch out for them on stage, where they're loud, fast and deadly.

**HUM**'s major-label debut *You'd Prefer An Astronaut* (RCA) proves it to be yet another reason why Champaign, IL could be the next hotbed of punk-rock activity. Bassist Jeff Dimpsey is a former member of Poster Children (who put out the band's earlier recordings on their 12Inch Records label), and Hum delivers the same kind of energetic guitar-rock. Despite its quiet start, with only calm vocals and gentle guitar strums, "Stars" quickly explodes into an aggressive guitar battery and overpowering drum-kicks.



Ben Lee

**THURSTON MOORE** is best known as Sonic Youth's singer-guitarist and the tallest man in show business (in his spare time, he runs a neat little record label called Ecstatic Peace). For the last year, he's been playing with a new band, including his SY bandmate Steve Shelley, that's had some problems coming up with a name (it was Male Sluts for a little while). For *Psychic Hearts* (DGC), they seem to have settled on "Thurston Moore." "Ono Soul" is a tribute to Yoko Ono, the godmother of punk—no kidding.

On Halloween Day, 1969, an ace group of jazz musicians (including guitarist Grant Green, trumpeter Lee Morgan and organist **REUBEN WILSON**) finished up Wilson's album *Love Bug* and recorded this awesomely funky rendition of Sam & Dave's "Hold On, I'm Comin'." For some reason, probably because Blue Note had so much great stuff on tape, it languished in the vaults for more than 25 years, until it appeared on *The Lost Grooves* (Blue Note), a new compilation of unreleased funk tracks. We're glad it finally saw the light of day.

On his solo debut, *Grandpaw Would* (Grand Royal), **BEN LEE**, the gifted 16-year-old songwriter behind Australia's Noise Addict, offers a full plate of sweet pop. Lee's songs brim with bright vocals and lyrics that reveal a level of sophistication far beyond his tender years. "Pop Queen" (with vocal harmonies by the Spinanes' Rebecca Gates) is an ode to the ideal girl, and catchy as anything.



Home

**HOME** has been around for a while (two of its members met 13 years ago at a Christian summer camp). The band has released eight cassettes on its own Screw

Music Forever label, and with *IX* (Relativity), its latest, it's finally gone CD. "My Friend Maurice" is incredibly catchy, but don't let it fool you—the album's wildly experimental, and follows many odd tangents. These guys from Florida's Tampa Bay defy the death-metal madness of their home state, as they're most comparable to the goofy likes of Ween.

**DEEP FOREST** isn't really an artist or a band. Deep Forest (\$50-Sony) is an album, put together by a French keyboardist and a Belgian producer (who was in the group Telex—remember "Moscow Disco"?), built on samples of UNESCO field recordings of Pygmy music from Zaire; just to add to the international mix, it's gone platinum in Australia. "Marta's Song" (perhaps so called because the lead vocal recalls Hungarian vocalist Marta Sebestyen) is serene, weird and—of course—worldly.

The instrumental quartet **PELL MELL** has been making awesomely original records for years, though they haven't gotten the attention they deserve. Maybe that's because members Steve Fisk and Greg Freeman are so well known as engineers and producers (do the names Nirvana, Barbara Manning, Afghan Whigs, Royal Trux and the Wedding Present ring any bells?). "Nothing Lies Still Long" comes from the group's new *Interstate* (DGC), and it's proof that their time is now.

No matter how berserk a rock club usually is, when **LOW** plays, everyone shuts up, sits down, and keeps their eyes fixed on the stage. The Minnesotan trio keeps things so slow, quiet, beautiful and barely-there that nobody wants to break the spell for themselves, let alone anyone else. "Shame" comes from Low's second album, *Long-Division* (Vernon Yard), and features harmonies from guitarist Alan Sparhawk and snare-cymbal-and-that's-it percussionist Mimi Parker, who are also husband and wife.

When SNFU's singer Mr. Chi Pig jokes that he and his band are punk rock "wagon-jumpers," it's because SNFU is one of the longstanding, constantly touring punk bands that helped build the bandwagon that so many new punks are clambering aboard. The band's new 13-song, 30-minute opus *The One Voted Most Likely To Succeed* (Epitaph) finds it in top form, ripping through songs like "Eric's Had A Bad Day" with extraordinary control over its blinding tempos; the guitars are adroitly in synch, and Chi enunciates every syllable as perfectly as a news anchor.

On its debut album, *EDC* (Epic), **SATCHEL** recreates the well-established definition of the Seattle sound. Though it incorporates recognizably "grunge" elements into some of its songs, on "Suffering" the quartet displays a willingness to tamper with the tried-and-true. With crunchy guitars and passionate vocals



Deep Forest



Pell Mell



Low

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# Localzine

As told by Paul Zagoras  
with assistance from Dan Hobson and Michael Gerald  
photos by Scott Sabatke

## KILLDOZER'S GUIDE TO MADISON, WI



Madison is the capitol of the state of Wisconsin. It is a city of a thousand lakes and 100,000 hippies. I only know of four lakes, but the mayor is a hippie. Madison is home to the University of Wisconsin, Ray-O-Vac Batteries, Oscar Mayer and the Weinermobile, and the Credit Union Museum. Steve Miller lived here during his pre-Space Cowboy days; Otis Redding died when his plane crashed in Lake Mendota. Famed ghoul Ed Gein spent most of his life in nearby Mendota State Mental Hospital, visible from the terrace of the UW Memorial Union across the lake.

## CLUBS AND TAVERNS

In the mood for a pickled egg? **Cayz Comic Strip** has them, as well as an assortment of pickled stew bums in various states of decay. The neon sign boasts of "live characters nightly," and inside sits the best jukebox in town. It is popular with Madison punks and alternative folks, because it is next door to **O'Cayz Corral**, the local punk showcase club, and a pitcher of Old Style beer is cheaper at the Comic Strip.

**The Wisconsin Inn** is a biker hangout of sorts, attached to the Capital City Riders' club house. I don't know of anybody who frequents the place regularly, but it has a manly atmosphere and a 25-cent pool table. On Tuesdays, they have tacos two for a dollar. It's reputed to have frequent fights, but I've never had the good fortune of being there when one broke out.

I used to frequent the **Crystal Corner** because it's a neighborhood tavern and it's in my neighborhood. The guys from Butch Vig's Smart Studios hang out there, and one of them is always hitting on my dates. I don't go there any more because I don't want to be slugging a man ten years my elder.

The **Fielder's Choice** has an L-shaped pool table! It also has a 25-cent jukebox featuring that song by the band Head East.

**O'Cayz Corral** is the place to see bands. It's small, dark, and has good sound and a cowboy motif. It was reopened in November '94, and unlike the deceased and beloved former owner (Cay), the new management has shown great consideration and respect to the customers and bands by cleaning the lines on the beer taps regularly. They've also introduced happy hour specials.

**The Chamber** is even smaller than O'Cayz, but features a bald soundman.

**The Barrymore Theater** is a showcase for large touring acts. Once a pornographic movie palace, it's a nice place to see a band, especially if you can weasel your way in for free, as the admission tends to be unreasonably high. Our band Killdozer played here once with the Fall, and the promoter told us to keep the backstage area "quiet as a hospital zone," because Mark E. Smith needed to take a nap.

**The Paradise Lounge** is where I find myself most often. It has a charmingly dark and dank atmosphere, and pitchers of Special Export beer for \$3.25. The bartenders know me as a good tipper, and I've never caused a ruckus there. It's not full of college students, and the jukebox features both Killdozer and Jon Spencer.

## RADIO

The University of Wisconsin has no radio station. However, there is a community-sponsored station, WORT (89.9 FM). Tune in during the evening, as they devote most of the day to New Age, jazz fusion and world music. They do have some good leftist listener call-in programs, and Rockin' John McDonald on Saturday nights has the funniest voice on radio anywhere. All other radio in Madison is crap. Well, there is a polka station on the AM dial from New Glauus, WI.



# HANGOUTS

Downtown Madison caters to the thousands of students who attend the University of Wisconsin. Most of the shops are poster shoppes, trendy clothing shoppes, and coffee houses where smoking is prohibited. I tend to stay away from this area.

Downtown is State Street. State Street is infested with talentless street musicians and panhandlers recently released from Mendota State Mental Hospital, many of whom become street musicians. Two street musicians that aren't too bad go by the names of Catfish and Zulu, a couple of grizzled old dudes with ratty hair and big mangy beards who play country blues. The rest are sensitive young balladeers who think they're Bob Dylan or Jim Croce.



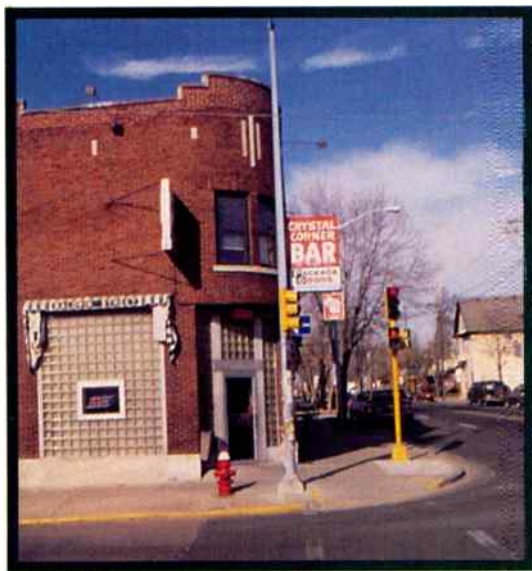
# FOOD

There is no finer place to eat in Wisconsin than **Culver's**, the home of the Butter Burger. A Butter Burger is a thin hamburger fried in butter... mmm! They're best with cheese, ketchup, bacon and onions. Culver's also has excellent malts and sundaes made with custard.

**Nick's** is a downtown bar and grille on the upper end of State Street. They serve incredible homemade pies and homemade ice cream. The place is run by a round Greek man named Nick. His wife makes the pies. Nick once cashed a check for me, even though a sign over the cash register stated "We have a deal with the bank: We don't cash checks and they don't serve drinks." I guess he just couldn't deny a fellow Greek a piece of his wife's delicious pie!

I think Nick's would be the best place for a first date.

**Bennet's Supper Club** is the most amazing place in town. Located on Verona Road south of the beltline, Bennet's has Smut and Eggs on Saturday and Sunday mornings. From 6 A.M. until somebody's wife shows up, they dish up a plate of eggs as you like them, hash browns and toast for \$2.00. For 50 cents, you can add bacon. At no extra charge, they have hardcore pornographic films. They also feature a happy hour special from 6 A.M. to 8 A.M. of bloody marys at \$1.00. The bloody marys have a piece of string cheese in them with a string dangling over the edge of the glass, thus resembling a tampon. Michael once entertained Urge Overkill at this Madison restaurant, and they thought it was fabulous.



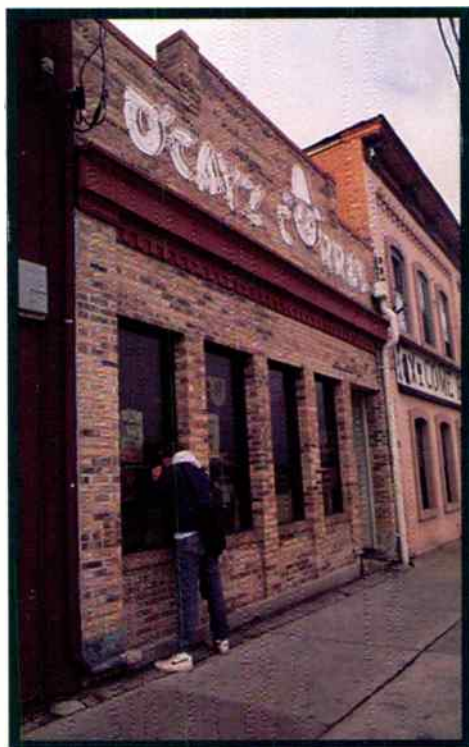
# OTHER STUFF

**Woodman's** is a giant supermarket, and a great place to use coupons. I live to use coupons. A carton of cigarettes is only \$15.99, and they have a cut-rate liquor store to boot.

Woodman's also has a great selection of videos and video games that can be rented overnight for 95 cents. I enjoy playing video games in my swank basement bachelor pad. Among my favorites are *Tournament Bass Fishing* and *Bighead Basketball*.

The importance of beer and its consumption cannot be overstated in Madison. Want more after the local 2:30 AM bar time? Of course you do! Go to the **Plaza Bar**, just off State Street, between 2:15 and 2:30, and make discreet inquiries about where the "Kegger" will be. This college-town phenomenon can keep the beer-thirsty person going until 6 A.M., just in time for Smut and Eggs. One word of warning: the Plaza Bar is a horrible place to hang out before 2:15.

*Killdozer's* new album is *God Hears Pleas Of The Innocent (Touch And Go)*.



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