

CMJ

NEW MUSIC
MONTHLY

BEST NEW MUSIC

**BEN FOLDS FIVE
ED'S REDEEMING QUALITIES
PORTASTATIC
GERALDINE FIBBERS
YOUNG GODS**



URGE OVERKILL

**SOUTHERN CULTURE
ON THE SKIDS
CHARLIE HUNTER
JOHN COLTRANE
AND 43 REVIEWS INCLUDING
SUGAR · BURNING SPEAR
PAW · X · BEASTIE BOYS**



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World Radio History

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underestimate
the power of
soup.*



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Produced by Andy Wallace and Blind Melon • Engineered and Mixed by Andy Wallace • Management: Chris Jones





CMJ

NEW MUSIC
MONTHLY

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Q. What do you think of the new recording media, Digital Compact Cassette and Mini-Disc? Is the world ready for another music format? Do you have any intention of getting a player for one of the new formats? Why or why not?

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

In the July issue we asked, in a fit of whimsy, "what rock star would you invite to dinner and what would you serve?" We got a letter that I can't find in the sea of corrections on my desk, lambasting us for "pandering to the masses" with our Lollapalooza question two months before, and asking why we asked as stupid a question as this one. Well, we think the following speak for themselves.

Dinner at my place. I would invite Courtney Love. I would graciously set out a fine dining table, lustered [sic] with antique china and drably lit by black candles surrounding a mid-evil [sic, we hope] chandelier. I would ask that she wear an antique dress that matches the antique setting. The rice would come to us in a large ball, tightly packed and ever so moist. The Chinese chicken chow mein and fried rice, delivered directly from Little Dragon's House Of Chew, would be poured over the top. Once we were finished, I would put on the music of Odium (a grunge band from Vail, CO that never gets any recognition from the locals) and we would dance violently on the tables, thrashing our hips around and breaking the plates.

*Unsigned,
Vail, CO*

It would be an honor and a privilege to serve dinner to my favorite rock star, Steve Tyler of Aerosmith, a man of energy, inspiration and true LIGHT. While always Aero-appreciative, my extreme Aero-fanism began coincidentally at a mutual time of intoxication cleansing. It helped me stay strong in my decision to change my ways. Besides that, Aerosmith ROCKS!!! For dinner, I would serve a medley of organic tulip petals, gently steamed and sprinkled with a dash of zook. Mercury pie makes a fine dessert. It would be magic.

Dragon Aerogator, of the Dragon Aerogator Band Featuring Agent 12
Massapequa Park, NY

Censorship, Pt. 1

I feel that CMJ should pressure record companies to contribute un-censored album cuts to the compilation discs you release. I really enjoy the Alanis Morissette cut on this month's CD, but noticed that a certain "uc" was dropped from her lyrics. This is especially funny since Felicia Meier quoted that exact lyric in her review!

You guys are a driving force with a certain

amount of pull, I'm sure. And since I am paying for the privilege of hearing "bleeding edge" new music, let's keep it raw.

*Geoff Cox
Nyack, NY*

In the words of Ol' Dirty Bastard, "oh baby, we like it raw..." Yes, we always opt for uncensored material, even if that means risking offending a few readers (see letter below). Occasionally, we will end up with a "radio" mix of the track that censors a word or two. It's usually not so much a matter of not putting enough "pressure" on the labels (they are generally quite happy that there is a medium for the uncensored versions), as much as it that there are a slew of inherent difficulties in getting more than 20 DATs to the CD mastering place on time. Sometimes, the "radio" mix is all that's ready—really, you wouldn't believe how helter-skelter this whole business is—when we need the DAT.

For those of you curious about the censored word, Alanis Morissette said "fuck."

Censorship, Pt. 2

I have enjoyed your magazine for the past two years, and I especially appreciate the CD. As a graduate student in music, I enjoy hearing new artists.

But I found something on last month's CD that deeply troubled me. You can choose to include a lesbian song and I can choose not to purchase your magazine.

It's as simple as that. You made an economic decision. I made a moral decision.

*N.T.
Hudson, OH.*

This letter came to us via the good folks that handle our customer service, so it took a little while to get here. We really had to think hard about what N.T. was writing about, here: What "lesbian" song is he talking about? When we finally figured out that the letter is most likely in reference to "I Kissed A Girl" by Jill Sobule in the April issue, some of us had a good laugh and some others got pretty steamed. It isn't, after all, a song that any of us—especially the lesbians among us—would consider "lesbian," and even if it was, we find that sort of intolerance, well, intolerable. This isn't about foisting any social agendas on our readers—there are plenty of music magazines that do that—but not censoring the music on the disc is a moral decision.

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the song "beginning to end"
is on this album



2 guys in this band used to be in
gang green (boston based hardcore punk band)

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that will

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World Radio History



BOREDOMS: Synthesizer Guide Book On Fire

There are weirder bands than Japan's Boredoms, though not many, and many more are better-known, but no band as weird has ever been as widely seen and heard. Over their ten-year career, they've become the friendly face of the radical noise scene, partly on the strength of their berserk records (each of which sounds different from the others—and from everything else), but mostly on the strength of their legendary live shows. Boredoms have been called "the best live band in the world," and the rigorously choreographed chaos of their stage act—part hardcore, part abstract noise, part circus, with frontman Yamatsuka Eye ramming the microphone down his throat and everybody leaping into each other—is spectacular.

The Boredoms seated around a conference table today amid the remains of a largish order of sushi, though, are not quite the same Boredoms that tore up the second stage of Lollapalooza two years ago, and the main stage last year. Vocalist Yoshikawa, Eye's foil and partner in screaming and acrobatics, is nowhere to be seen. The band asserts that this is because, like the group's former dancer God Mama, Yoshikawa has become invisible.

That sounds a little scary. Are the remaining Boredoms frightened that they may become invisible too? Yoshimi P-We, the group's drummer/trumpeter/screamer/fireball, nods. "We are afraid," she says carefully. Is there anything that can be done to prevent invisibility?

The band confers. As with most questions, Japanese phrases ricochet around the room, and there's general hilarity before an interpreter summarizes: "Everybody's going to be invisible eventually, not just Boredoms. But even though we'll become invisible, we'll still play, so don't worry."

The language barrier is more intense than you'd think. The band's music gets around it, for the most part, by being in a "Bore-language" of screams, gurgles and glossolalia, which they alone speak (though Eye notes that "if you listen to us carefully, you will probably understand"). But in person, language and idioms get in the way. When they're asked what they think about when they're playing, a minute or two of discussion gets boiled down to "Kind of spaced out, but a Japanese term... kind of not thinking anything, but kind of thinking something. It's very hard to find an English term." "Hanging out," Eye suggests. More laughter all around.

The problem is compounded by the fact that besides being from Japan, in terms of their mindset and relationship to language, they're basically from another planet (many bands have members leave, for example, but few have to cope with invisibility). You simply have to suspend disbelief and take whatever they say on its own terms; like their music, their worldview is completely consistent, it's just that they've made up all the rules themselves.

Discussion turns to Eye's new collaborative project with John Zorn, Mystic Fugu Orchestra. The rest of the band hasn't heard the name before, and cracks up: "fugu," they all repeat over and over, "fugu orchestra." Guitarist Yamamoto is especially affected by the bug; every few minutes for the next half hour, he mutters "fugu orchestra" and giggles quietly to himself.

Then there's the matter of Boredoms' new record, the mysterious *Chocolate Synthesizer*, a 15-"song" masterwork that's their most extraordinary and conceptually unified work to date. But what exactly does its title (and central conceit) mean? This turns into an especially lively Japanese discussion. The summary: "Japanese ancient people kind of made a clay pot, a long time ago, so they made synthesizers out of the clay." More recently, they've recorded the third in their series of *Super Roots* EPs; they describe this one as "ambient hardcore."

That's the kind of idea that just doesn't occur to waking minds. In fact, a lot of the logic Boredoms use to link up sounds, genres and passages of music that ought to clash but sound right together is the logic of dreams. It's also the logic of the Surrealist and Dada art inspired by tapping into the unconscious (*Chocolate Synthesizer*, in fact, may also be linked to Marcel Duchamp's "chocolate grinder," and song titles like "Synthesizer Guide Book On Fire" are straight out of Dali's dream-inspired art). Does their music come to them in dreams? Bassist Hira responds by telling a story that involves a lot of hand gestures. It's rendered as "Hira was crying in his sleep yesterday. There's a big sculpture at the old expo in Japan. It looks a little bit human, and normally the hands are up in the air, but the hands were down, so he had to start crying. He doesn't really understand why."

"Ah," Yamamoto says, nodding sagely, "fugu orchestra."

—Douglas Wolk

ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS in my room

GEORGE REAGAN

HAGFISH

Massive Attack
Protection

William Orbit
Strange Cargo III

Tripping Daisy
I Am An Elastic Firecracker

Films: *Red, White and Blue*

Portishead
Dummy



Tours We'd Like To See

Back To School

School Of Fish, Schoolly D, Mad Professor, Professor Longhair, Professor Trance, Chemlab, Blackboard jungle, Cram, The Four Freshmen, Lab Report, Special Ed

QUICK FIX



INNOCENCE MISSION: Color Me Impressed

Who says color therapy is a bunch of New Age hokum? Certainly not Lancaster, PA's prescient Innocence Mission, which titled its latest A&M outing *Glow* and purposely tinted yellow its vintage photograph of five '40s ladies swinging from strange suspended barrels. Color figures into singer/songwriter Karen Peris's image-laden lyrics as well, especially in the lilting, Natalie Merchant-ish first single, "Bright As Yellow." So when Peris sits down for a recent discussion about the disc in the restaurant portion of LA's Luna Park, it makes perfect sense that she would inadvertently choose the one yellow-tableclothed booth in a sea of white linen. Realizing with a start that she's done this, she rolls her eyes, turns slightly red, and starts giggling in embarrassment. "I know, what does it all mean?" she sighs, anticipating the first question.

The "Glow," according to Peris, is what's captured in the mugs of those boisterous barrel-swingers, who resemble a bunch of WACs training for some surreal tunnelling assignment. "Or maybe it's girls on a field day, or maybe it's just a bunch of friends," she offers. "But the back cover is one of those faces enlarged, just to see her smile. And color is a way to describe the emotions, a way to visualize them, and yellow is just a vibrant color." "I do not want to be a rose/I do not wish to be pale pink/But flower scarlet, flower gold/And have no thorns to distance me," Peris sings on "Yellow," in phrases as lovely and lissome as her haunting Lorelei trill. And yellow isn't necessarily her favorite color, she adds. "But because it's so vibrant, it's a way to describe people who aren't self-conscious at all, people that can walk into a room and instantly make others feel more comfortable. I'm not envious, but I'm in awe of that kind of person."

Oddly enough, the mouse-shy Peris—who speaks in a near-whisper and often stares at the yellow tablecloth while answering—will roar like a lion when her group takes the Luna Park stage later that evening, confidently strumming her big acoustic guitar through jangly *Glow* fare like "Brave," "Keeping Awake," and a particularly invigorating version of "Bright As Yellow." A brilliant cover of the old Judy Collins hit "Both Sides Now" ends the chiming show on a chiming note, and the crowd cheers the Innocence Mission for several stomping minutes. Clearly, Peris just walked into the room and made everyone feel more comfortable. How? As she'd said earlier, "I think a lot of people who are shy, inside are maybe really gregarious. But they just don't know how to show it."

—Tom Lanham

▶ "BRIGHT AS YELLOW" BY INNOCENCE MISSION APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

ARTISTS' in my room PERSONAL PICKS

CARY HUDSON

BLUE MOUNTAIN

Junior Kimbrough And
The Soul Blues Boys
All Night Long

Neil Young
Zuma

Pavement
*Crooked Rain, Crooked
Rain*

Book: Joe
Larry Brown

Skip James
She Lyn'



Cruel Thing

After busting a gut over *Crank* #4, our lawyer decided to detail the 'zine's extra-legal affairs. He tells us it "embodies or contains content that was derived by the following criminal acts and civil torts":

- 1) assault and battery
- 2) obscenity
- 2) libel
- 4) felony distribution of lewd materials for profit
- 5) fraud
- 6) misrepresentation
- 7) breaking and entering
- 8) intentional infliction of emotional distress
- 9) trespass to land
- 10) trespass to chattels
- 11) burglary
- 12) conversion
- 13) invasion of privacy for commercial purposes
- 14) inhumane treatment of animals
- 15) misrepresentation

We all recommend it highly.

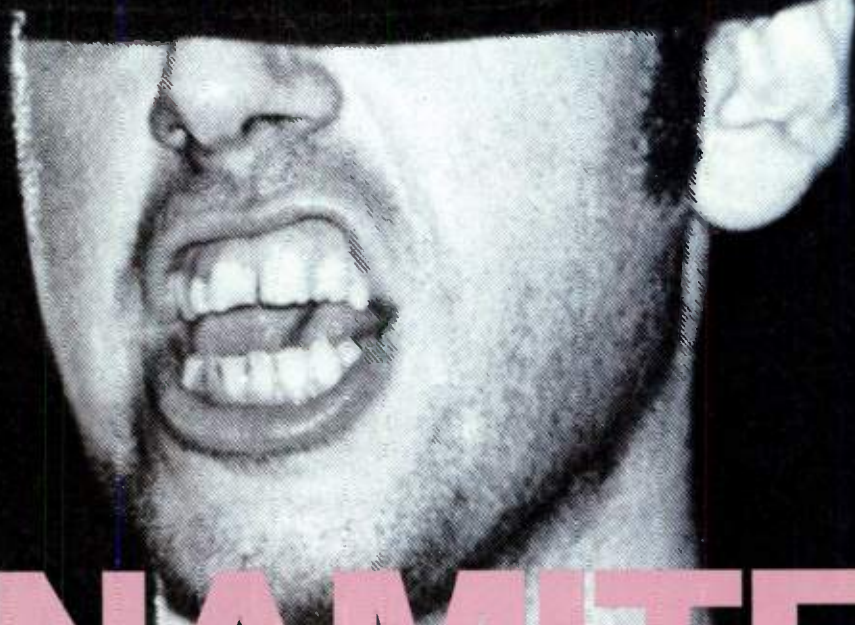


Jazz's Young Lion Cubs

Anyone who grew up listening to Cannonball Adderly's *A Child's Introduction To Jazz* will appreciate Newark, NJ public radio station WBGO's

Jazzmatazz: Jazz For The Young Adult newsletter. Although it includes standard kid fare like a maze and a seek-and-find word puzzle (we're still hoping to find "harmoldic"), this four-pager makes for a hip, hep introduction to jazz; issue one features an interview with trombone/sea shell player Steve Turre, and a piece called "What Is Jazz, Anyway" posits "Africa + USA = Jazz" The new second issue features a concise appreciation of Miles Davis that doesn't gloss over his drug habit. Write WBGO/88.3 FM, 54 Park Place, Newark, NJ 07102 for details.

BIG AUDIO



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radioactive on-line: <http://radioactive.net>



radioactive

World Radio History

QUICK FIX

THE APPLES IN STEREO: Smiley Smile

Denver, Colorado's pop heroes The Apples In Stereo are unstoppable song-making machines. At the center of the Elephant 6 Recording Company—a loose collective of half a dozen or so bands who all play on each other's records and in each other's live shows—they've been writing and recording songs since the age when most kids are buying their first records.

"When I was six, I moved to Ruston, Louisiana from South Africa." Robert Schneider explains. The band's main singer, songwriter, arranger and multi-instrumentalist, he's perpetually threatening to explode from sheer enthusiasm for whatever he's talking about. "That's when I met Jeff [Mangum, of Neutral Milk Hotel]. I got a 4-track when I was 15, and I would record Jeff's songs with him. Will of Olivia Tremor Control and Jeff had their own band, called Maggot and, like, some other things. Also, our friend Bill, who's also in Olivia Tremor Control, I started a band with him about that time. Then the other guys moved to Athens, Georgia and started a band, Synthetic Flying Machine.

"Then I met Hill [Hilarie Sidney, the Apples' drummer and an excellent songwriter in her own right] and our best friend Jim, who used to play bass in the Apples, and we became really good friends really quickly—they'd been recording in a band called Von Hemmling, they'd been doing that on their 4-track, this really cool stuff. My dad had given me a new 4-track for my 21st birthday... that's a big South African tradition, to give the eldest son something for the 21st birthday, or at least he made it out to be. So I drove down to Athens and saw Synthetic Flying Machine play, and I was like 'oh my God, I have to start a band up in Denver,' and I was listening to 'Apples And Oranges,' the Pink Floyd song, and I was like 'that's it! The Apples!'"

The upshot of all this was both the Apples In Stereo and Elephant 6—an pure-pop label which has released or been credited on records by the Apples as well as Olivia Tremor Control (who double as Chocolate USA's rhythm section), Neutral Milk Hotel (Mangum with assistance from Hill and Robert, who says "I came up with trombone arrangements and stuff like that"), Secret Square (Hill helping out her friend Lisa), Marbles (Robert more or less solo), and more.

The band's first full-length album, *Fun Trick Noisemaker* (Elephant 6-spinART) is in keeping with the low-tech, pure-pop aesthetic—it was recorded on an 8-track machine. "I really like using an 8-track," Robert says, "sub-mixing things and ping-ponging them... It's the way Brian did it. We met him! Did I tell you he's my hero?"

He wouldn't even have to mention it. "Brian" is, of course, the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson, at the mention of whose name the Apples suddenly go all reverential. "We played a benefit in L.A., a tribute concert," says Hilarie. "We played 'Heroes And Villains' and 'In The Back Of My Mind.'"

Robert jumps in: "Brian recorded 'Heroes And Villains' all in pieces, and never put together a final, perfect one, so we took the pieces and structured them and put them together ourselves, our own way... We're going to record it one day. A punk rock Velvet Underground version of the Beach Boys. When we drove to California, we put in a *Smile* tape as we crossed the border, thinking 'Wonder if we're going to meet Brian Wilson...'

"But then Brian showed up! He was there, while we played... we turned around this corner, and there was Brian, sitting on the couch. I almost had a seizure. I mean, you don't realize how much we love Brian Wilson. To me, especially, it's the most significant artistic influence in my life. The way he talked about recording music and stuff, I can just relate to it perfectly.

"You get to grapple with your hero-worship when you meet somebody. Because the Brian that I worship is Brian when he was my age, doing the same sort of thing I'm doing. And the guy I met was Brian, he was the guy who did that, but it wasn't quite the same... it's just strange." —Douglas Wolk



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

**MIKE
EISENSTEIN**
LETTERS TO CLEO

Sloan
Twice Removed

The Figgs
Lo-Fi At Society High

The Gravel Pit
King Kong Sessions (demo)

Pinball:
Road Show

Flattop Johnny's
Pool Hall
(Boston)



Weird Record Of The Month

Carrying surf-beat instrumentals to their illogical extreme, The Shatners ditch beach and car themes for Star Trek chants like "He's Dead, Jim" on the band's new *Full Length Album* (Planet Pimp). Other tracks include "Green Blooded Love," "Klingon Boarding Party" and "Beam, Daddy, Beam."



#6



The Okapi 5-5 1/2 ft.



The Geraldine Fibbers
Lost Somewhere Between
The Earth And My Home
on tour near you soon



Ben Harper
Fight For Your Mind
on tour near you soon



Whale
We Care
featuring "Pay For Me"



The Verve
A Northern Soul
featuring "On Your Own"

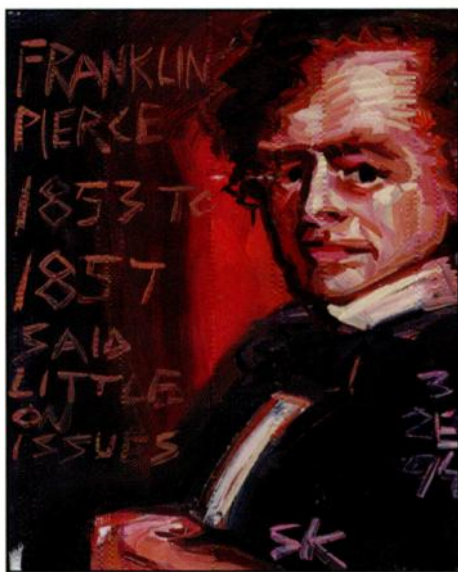
- Although not "discovered" until the twentieth century, the okapi had a solid career on the legitimate stage during the reign of Queen Victoria
 - Its subsequent portrayal of the Okapi in Hamlet, however, led to a serious type-casting problem.
 - But what're you gonna do, eh?
- Coming August 29:
Boy George,
Cheapness And Beauty



QUICK FIX

Steve Keene: High Art On The Cheap

People who've come to a few large indie-rock shows in New York City have found themselves confronted by a real-life rock 'n' roll bargain: hundreds of original paintings by Brooklyn-based artist Steve Keene. Keene paints



historical scenes, still lifes, cityscapes, portraits of Presidents, you name it, in a bold, striking and inimitable style, almost always with some witty or surreal caption (a portrait of George Washington is captioned "SEEING THE FALL AT THE 9:30 CLUB IN APRIL 1988 REVOLUTION AND ITS INITIAL EXPERIMENT IN SELF-GOVERNMENT," neatly conflating Washington's historical significance and the meaning of his name in the present). He's done cover artwork for Pavement's *Wowee Zowee* (and side group Silver Jews' *The Arizona Record*), as well as a few compilations, including *Thread Waxing Space: The Presidential Compilation*.

But the most attention-grabbing thing about Keene's paintings is their price. They're usually displayed with a sign offering them for sale for ridiculously low prices—\$5 for small paintings, \$10 for medium paintings and \$20 for large ones—and a box to put money into, on the honor system. And the large paintings get very large—one of the wall-sized tapestries Keene sometimes paints appears as the backdrop in Pavement's new "Father To A Sister Of Thought" video.

Keene explains that he does 40 to 50 paintings a day, often variations on the same image, so he can support himself comfortably selling his work for prices he thinks are reasonable. He'll be selling his paintings on the upcoming "Sextacy Ball" tour featuring My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult and Lords Of Acid, and they'll also appear on the covers of a handful of forthcoming records. —Douglas Wolk



ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS **in my room**

ERIC JOHNSON
ARCHERS OF LOAF

Helium
The Dirt Of Luck

TV: Space Ghost Coast To Coast

Billie Holiday
Greatest Hits

Pavement
Wowee Zowee

"Anything Color Me Badd touches"

COOL THING



Arizona's 20-ounce bottles of iced tea with ginseng extract have become such a staple of CMJ headquarters that we've considered filling our water cooler with the stuff. But that would be missing half the point. The ginseng may have whatever healthful properties anybody feels like attributing to it: fine. The reason they're so cool is their gorgeous dark-blue bottles with raised lettering, redolent of old-time medicinal remedies and neat things on grandparents' shelves. Even better, the label peels off easily.



Promo Item Of The Month

To promote its *Bubbapalooza Vol. 1* compilation, Sky Records sent out this bag of Grandad's Real Bacon Rinds ("the industry's vintage rind"). Not coincidentally, some members of the CMJ staff have recently embraced vegetarianism.

RUSSELL SIMMONS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
TOLLIN / ROBBINS INC.

★ **P R E S E N T S** ★

THE SHOW

THE SOUNDTRACK

ONYX ★ REDMAN/METHOD MAN ★ 2PAC ★
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★ BONE, THUGS & HARMONY ★ JAYO FELONY ★
DOVE SHACK ★ DOMINO KALI RANKS ★
A TRIBE CALLED QUEST ★ STANLEY CLARKE ★
SUGA ★ SOUTH CENTRAL CARTEL ★
G FUNK PRODUCTIONS featuring WARREN G,
THE TWINZ AND BOROC OF THE DOVE SHACK

MOVIE OPENING THIS AUGUST



BEST NEW MUSIC

BEN FOLDS FIVE

Ben Folds Five

Passenger-Caroline



If you haven't had a chance to catch the live nightclub theatrics of Chapel Hill's Ben Folds Five (which culminate with Ben himself disassembling his baby grand on stage—not actually part of the stage act, but fascinating nonetheless), their self-titled debut is a great introduction to the band's light-hearted yet dramatic, Badfinger-meets-the-Beatles [*I believe they've met—ed.*] sound. The Ben Folds Five, with its piano/bass/drums lineup, doesn't exactly conform to Chapel Hill scene's traditions. In fact, the BFF calls to mind the great early '80s pop sounds of Joe Jackson or Jools Holland-era Squeeze. Like them, Ben's approach to the piano is not limited to traditional rock chords: There are references to Gershwin as well as the basic exercises everyone's mother made them do for early piano lessons. What is also strikingly different is that Ben Folds has a classic pop crooner voice, and the two backing vocalists harmonize perfectly—there are no flat notes here. What the band lacks in guitarage it more than makes up with intensity. The lyrics to "Underground" are even snide enough to skirt the fringes of punk territory, never mind the fact that the sometimes pretentious and cliquish nature of the indie movement itself is the subject under attack here ("Officer Friendly's little boy's got a mohawk," "It's industrial/work it underground"). "Where's Summer B.?", with its tambourine-backed beat and clean backup vocals, calls to mind psychedelic-era Beach Boys, as does the more orchestrated and happy-go-lucky "Philosophy." The Ben Folds Five stands poised to be a significant player in the revival of the piano as a legitimate rock 'n' roll instrument, and pop as a smart-alecky indie art form. —Aaron Clow

DATALOG: Released Jul. 25.

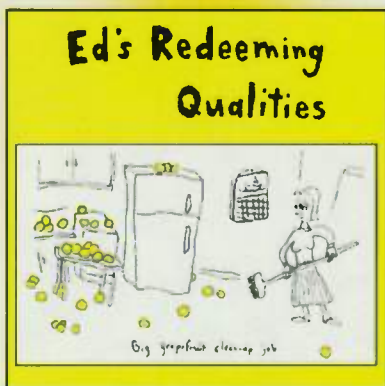
FILE UNDER: Piano-based, harmonized pop-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Badfinger, Squeeze, Joe Jackson, Suddenly, Tammy!

ED'S REDEEMING QUALITIES

Big Grapefruit Cleanup Job

Slow River



If you thought They Might Be Giants cornered the market on quirky a few years back, forget it. Ed's Redeeming Qualities, a four-piece from San Francisco, has all but reinvented that crown, with titles like "Another Song In Celebration Of Chickens" and "Song Nancy Hates." Recorded live last year, *Big Grapefruit* showcases Ed's weirdness in an unadorned, one-take setting, where the offhanded feel of such lines as "are you a unicorn or are you just glad to see me?" ("The Princess & A Horseman Of The Apocalypse Have Lunch") resounds with gleeful cheer and idiot-savant thoughtfulness. What redeems Ed's, though, is its ability to conjure bizarre situations without sounding forced or purposefully weird. Whether singing about strange foliage ("Rib Garden," reminiscent of a child's tune) or a road trip ("Drivin' On 9," which has been covered by the Breeders), Ed's jangles along with its ukelele, tin whistle, bongos and found instruments like rice and a cardboard bass with an earnestness that sounds like they're making it up as they go along. They even manage a nearly straightforward acoustic ditty, the cheery, lilting "I Will Wait." Refreshingly sweet, never boring, Ed's is a surprise with every track—which means *Big Grapefruit* packs 21 small wonders. —Rande Dawn Cohen

DATALOG: Released Jul. 1.

FILE UNDER: Quirky pop.

R.I.Y.L.: They Might Be Giants, Bongwater, Robyn Hitchcock.

GERALDINE FIBBERS
Somewhere Between the Earth
and My Home

Virgin



The Geraldine Fibbers have been L.A. club legends for years; Mike Watt was so impressed with the Fibbers he asked lead singer Carla Bozulich to sing on his celebrity-heavy *Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?*, where she held her own against heavyweights like Vedder, Rollins, and even Sonic Youth tot Coco. With their long-awaited major label debut, the Fibbers seem to be trying to singlehandedly revive the lost art of cowpunk, the mixture of rock, punk, and country that flourished in the early '80s under the direction of bands like the Meat Puppets, Rank And File and X. Cowpunk lost its edge after a while (the Meat Puppets went Top 40; X went soft), but it's back. The record's rich instrumentation—violins, a stand-up bass, something that sounds alarmingly like a bassoon—may not be the stuff traditional cowpunk is made of, but it's close. What's striking is how much the Fibbers seem to genuinely love country music, and how much of a feel they have for its form. They have more empathy for country's bar-dwelling, trailer-park denizens than an Opry-full of glitz-happy RebaKathyTrishas, so much that the record has to fight not to slip into bathos at times. In fact, with her thick, raspy drawl and air of weary resignation, Bozulich's only true compatriot may be George Jones. She may not be the next Exene, but with some rhinestones and shellac, she'd have a hell of a future in Nashville.

—Allison Stewart

DATALOG: Released Jul. 18. Bozulich was formerly in the industrial band **Ethyl Meatplow**.

FILE UNDER: World-weary cowpunk.

R.I.Y.L.: X, early Lone Justice, the Meat Puppets, Kitty Wells.

PORTASTATIC
Slow Note From A Sinking Ship

Merge



Portastatic's second album is the reason that it should never again be thought of as merely a "side project" of Superchunk frontman Mac McCaughan. While it was initially a solo singer/songwriter indulgence for Mac, Portastatic is now as fully fleshed-out and impressive as his "other" band. Portastatic doesn't sound at all like Superchunk—it's not lively and bouncy and it doesn't have lots of crunchy guitars. McCaughan's voice is much more restrained here; he doesn't holler, but rather sings gently and soulfully. These 14 songs are delectably mid-fi, and all of the elements are well-tempered; the result is an album whose graceful minimalism is often breathtaking. On "Running Water," the bent, faucet-drip guitar notes combine with McCaughan's delicate delivery, and on "A Cunning Latch" the interplay between vocal melody and keyboard accompaniment (by Superchunk drummer Jon Wurster) is brilliant. Besides Wurster, McCaughan also enlisted the aid of members of Erectus Monotone, Polvo and the Ashley Stove. Still, Mac did most of the work (recording and producing the album himself), and it's his master mind that makes *Slow Note From A Sinking Ship* a true gem.

—Jenny Eliscu

DATALOG: Released Jun. 19.

FILE UNDER: Gentle indie-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Bricks, the Chills, Phil Ochs.

YOUNG GODS
Only Heaven

Interscope



The Young Gods are the last industrial band, the end of an evolutionary chain. (Contemporary bands like Nine Inch Nails and Ministry, most often associated with the genre, are essentially industrial polliwogs that have learned to breath the air of the media age.) *Only Heaven* is clean, crisp and perfect, but only at a distance. It's menacing in its sterility, but like Saturn's rings, its razor-sharp appearance is made up of huge chunks. Each block of sound—and these are *great* sounds—is assembled with clock-like precision, and yet the great rolling bassline of "Strangel," the imploding percussion of "Kissing The Sun" and the backward scratching of "Moon Revolutions" all feel like elements of great, spontaneous rock 'n' roll. It's an odd feeling, like something is both in control and spinning out of it, and it's this paradox that leads to the record's undeniable intensity. It's very easy to get lost in the internal landscapes formed by the looped slabs of sound and the great howling wind behind it all, or to take it on as a soundtrack for your paranoid fantasies, something encouraged by the sibilant hiss of singer Franz's French-Swiss accent. Industrial music was always equal parts the sound of the factory floor and music of an industrial society, and the Young Gods are the last, silicon manifestation of that. *Only Heaven* sounds like any other epic rock record, only more human than human.

—Scott Frampton

DATALOG: Released Aug. 1.

FILE UNDER: Industrial.

R.I.Y.L.: Front 242, Nine Inch Nails, Einsturzende Neubauten.



JOHN COLTRANE

by James Lien

You don't just hear the sound of John Coltrane—you taste it, you see it, you grab it out of the air. Even on the most simple and lowly of vehicles like "Chim Chim Cheree" or "My Favorite Things," the sheer power and intensity of his sound makes one wonder and marvel. At times, he didn't really sound like he was playing a saxophone at all—it was like the cry of some exotic animal, or some meta-language spoken by alien beings who had long ago moved beyond the hindrances of words. In the case of the saxophone, it's mostly a matter of timbre, but the instrument itself is almost pure personality, and John Coltrane was the most eloquent and meaningful person to ever speak through it. After his death in 1967, his influence continued to reverberate, not just in jazz, but almost everywhere, from Gil Scott-Heron ("Lady Day and John Coltrane") to Green On Red ("Talking John Coltrane Stereo Blues"). Few artists of any discipline have had so wide-ranging an impact. He's not just in the company of Miles, Bird or Monk: he's in the league of Picasso or Chaplin, in terms of 20th-century art.

For one thing, if you follow the music's history, he was possibly jazz's last great innovator, unless you start watering down the criteria and letting some far lesser lights into the conversation. Sure, there have been other ground-breakers, but nobody since has really packed the same wallop.

At what point did John Coltrane become the giant of the saxophone, the "period on the end of the sentence," as box set producer Joel Dorn describes him? Even early on, there were signs that something was afoot. Think about it: at one point when Coltrane was young, the minister of the church his family attended gave John a key to the church, so he could practice there freely without disturbing the neighbors around the Coltrane home. It's possible to follow that line to the spirituality of his later works, including its culmination in *A Love Supreme*. That was his greatest quality—"such deep rivers of spirituality going out to sea," as saxophonist Charles Lloyd describes it.

Rhino-Atlantic has just issued a seven-disc box set chronicling Coltrane's two and a half years on the Atlantic label, *Heavyweight Champion: The Complete Atlantic Recordings Of John Coltrane*, and taken in one humungous lump, they're pretty amazing. In places, you can even hear Coltrane playing motifs or licks that are later expanded upon in the Impulse! years. The idea of Coltrane doing covers of pieces like "My Favorite Things" was a pretty commercial move, one he employed throughout the Atlantic years (and returned to less frequently later on). Other cuts on *The Heavyweight Champion* present the definitive, perfect renderings of some of Coltrane's most classic tunes, such as "My Favorite Things" and "Naima," along with valuable pieces like "Blues To Elvin" or "Village Blues." But more importantly, you get to eavesdrop as Coltrane puts together his classic quartet—when drummer Elvin Jones and pianist McCoy Tyner come on board, you can hear the three players "click" with each other, and the music instantly heats up a notch.

Meanwhile, GRP Records has begun reissuing a whole slew of Coltrane's later recordings on the re-activated Impulse! label. Actually, if you're keeping score, this represents the fourth or fifth time that these titles have been reissued throughout the years. That doesn't matter: they could launch a new John Coltrane Awareness Campaign every day of the week, and we'd still be excited. He was that kind of a monumental talent.

The Atlantic set may cost a pretty penny, but it's gorgeous. The liner notes detail everything from session information to interviews with his fellow musicians to a fascinating glimpse of young John Coltrane provided by his cousin Mary Alexander. (She herself is immortalized in Coltrane's composition "Cousin Mary" on the set.) The seventh disc presents virtually the entire recording session that resulted in the album *Giant Steps*, including false starts, dialogue and alternate takes. You can hear Coltrane at work, which is pretty cool.

On the Impulse! front, GRP has reissued *A Love Supreme*, the most famous Coltrane album, along with *Ballads* and an album of duets with vocalist Johnny Hartman. The next wave of reissues is slated to include *Sun Ship*, his last release on Impulse!, and *The Africa/Brass Sessions*, an expanded edition of *Africa/Brass* (which, incidentally, was his first release on Impulse!). *Africa/Brass* is a truly amazing album, an exploration of rhythm that's worlds away from his last session for Atlantic, even though they were only days apart. And what's probably most exciting about the whole reissue program is that GRP is at work on a "lost" album of previously unreleased, unheard John Coltrane recordings. At this point they're still at the early stages, working with Coltrane's widow, Alice, trying to figure out who's playing what instruments, when things were recorded, what the titles of the songs are and so on, but it's an exciting and intriguing prospect.

All of these reissues bring up the inevitable question: What are we to make of John Coltrane today? What to make of a sometimes drug-intoxicated, immensely spiritual creature making such beautiful sounds? The only answer is that you have to hear the music. Everybody has to hear this music. As his musical life ("career" just seems the wrong word) progressed, Coltrane's playing became freer, looser and less tethered to the ground. On these later recordings, Coltrane's sound has more yearning and expressiveness, but also an augmented tinge of sadness and pain about it. Coltrane had a supernatural abundance of that fundamental quality of music, the ability to directly channel emotion and transmit feelings through his instrument. "Out" was the adjective often chosen by people to describe where Coltrane was going. But in reality, he was going further in.



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World Radio History

Charlie Hunter

THE MAN WITH TWO BRAINS

BY JAMES LIEN

He's only really been on the scene for a few years, but the music world is already rife with stories about Charlie Hunter. The best one involves a well-known headlining artist hanging out backstage before his gig while Charlie is onstage with his two trio-mates. "Great band," the headliner says, hearing what sounds like bass, drums, saxophone and guitar, "but if they're just a trio, then who's sitting in?" Part of what makes Charlie Hunter such a spectacular guitarist is his seemingly impossible technique, in which Hunter manages to play two parts at once, somehow playing rhythm guitar chords and a totally separate bassline at the same time. In spots, he sounds like the Man With Two Brains, as each part is totally independent, like two musicians jamming. He's taken that approach and applied it to his own particular brand of funky, soulful jazz music that's reminiscent of '60s albums by Donald Byrd, Grant Green, Lou Donaldson and others. Some call it acid jazz, but it's broader than all that.

In fact, it's so broad that he's got three albums in the bins right now. The first out the gate was *Bing, Bing, Bing!*, his debut on Blue Note; then there's *T.J. Kirk* (Warner Bros.), a side project with some of his musician friends. Charlie's trio is also featured on *The Up And Down Club Volume 1*, first in a set of compilations on Prawn Song-Marmoth spotlighting the vibrant San Francisco Bay Area jazz/funk scene.

Part of the secret to his sound comes from his custom 8-string guitar, which gives him the extra bottom end for basslines: "I had this guy Ralph Novak make me a seven-string. And then I realized I wanted to have more bass range, so I got this 8-string, and it's a lot more of a logical instrument. I would tell anybody, if you wanted to switch from six to seven, to just forget it and go straight to eight," he says with a laugh.

Like most musicians who develop an innovative, unconventional style (the most obvious predecessor in Charlie's case being guitarist Stanley Jordan), Hunter honed his approach not in the classroom, but as a street musician. "I was a street musician for a long time in Europe," he recalls. "I didn't really get the opportunity to go to school [for music], mostly for economic reasons. So I decided to go to Europe and kind of be a bum for a while, and see what happens. I went to France, stayed in Paris, learned some French. I played in the Paris Metro, all the lowest rungs of busking... Then I made friends with some real serious buskers, who really knew how to busk, who took me with them to Zurich. That's where I really started to make some cash, and learned a lot of music, too." Part of what happened in Switzerland no doubt wound up having some influence on his current style. "I quit playing guitar for a while when I was there, because there were too many guitar players, and they were all better than me," he laughs. "So I said, 'what do I need to play guitar for?' I played bass, a string bass on the street for about six months."

So when did he develop his unusual approach, and more importantly, why? "It just slowly developed. I began to play with real drummers, so there became an urgent need to get good at it." As Hunter gigged around San Francisco, he plugged right into a burgeoning acid jazz/funk/dance scene that's documented on the *Up And Down Club* compilations. "There's a lot of places to play, and we play in a variety of settings with different musicians, different approaches to music," Hunter says of the scene, though touring will keep him away more now that he's in two bands. "I have a new drummer, now," he says, updating us on his trio. "He's the drummer for Kirk, Scott Amendola."

Hunter is referring to T.J. Kirk, a loose aggregation of Bay Area players whose music is a rather improbable combination of Thelonious Monk, James Brown and Rahsaan Roland Kirk. Rather than pay tribute to each of the three musical geniuses individually, the group recombines their songs into oddball amalgamations of several tunes at once, that surprisingly, sound great and actually make sense musically. Instead of straight covers, the music is an ingenious combo of all three. "It was a bunch of jazz musicians saying, 'How can we make a pop culture statement using things that are not necessarily pop-cultural icons?'" Hunter explains. At press time, the album was slated for August release, with a T.J. Kirk tour in the works for September. It's not even released yet, and already it's bugging people out, especially those easily-blown minds in the music business world who can't handle the idea of a fusionary combination of two jazz giants and one funk god. "Originally it was [going to be called] James T. Kirk, and Paramount nixed the idea. They like own the name James T. Kirk or whatever." Then, "one guy who owns like 40 percent of one James Brown song" refused to let the band release its Monk-meets-The Godfather rendering of "Ruby, It's A Man's World My Dear." Hunter explains the hassles: "We've just been through hell and high water on that one, I mean, every twist and turn, in every possible way. I can't imagine Elvis Costello being freaked out if we used his tunes. Or Kurt Cobain." (In fact, Hunter does a beautiful, eloquent cover of "Come As You Are" on his Blue Note CD.) "I wish I could afford to take myself as seriously as people in the pop world do," he concludes.

"It's supposed to be fun, man, we're trying to introduce this music to people who have never heard it before, and hopefully they'll hear 'Ruby My Dear' and say 'that is one of the most moving ballads I've ever heard.' And hopefully they'll go out and get the original and go, 'wow, now that is where it's at.'" **END**

this month's
model

World Radio History

PHOTO BY GEORGINA ZWISLOCKI

SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS

DOES DIRT TRANSLATE ON A MASS SCALE?

by Tim Stegall

"I think dirt track racing and rock 'n' roll have a lot in common."

Southern Culture On The Skids mainman Rick Miller can juice more damaged wattage from a Danelectro while hurling Colonel Sanders' finest at a crammed barrelhouse crowd than any other guitar hero you may care to name. But there's neither a guitar nor a drumstick to be found in his hands at the moment. Rather, Miller's explaining the title of his band's latest LP, *Dirt Track Date*. "There's more action per mile on a dirt track than on any international paved speedway," states Miller in a tone far less inbred than the one he uses onstage. "Just like there's more action in a small, packed juke joint on a Saturday night than any arena show ever! And a lot of the garages that they prepare the cars in around here, man, the songs are recorded in, too! There's a lotta parallels there, y'know? And before asphalt, there was dirt, right? And before the Eagles, there was Link Wray. So we're working on that perspective."

An interesting perspective to take, considering that SCOTS now shares a label with the Eagles. *Dirt Track Date* is the band's first release under its new agreement with DGC, after releasing umpteenth-jillion-and-one mostly out-of-print records on scattered indie labels. Which explains why *Dirt Track Date* features a few re-cut SCOTS oldies, including a track that'll have many veteran fans asking, "How many times are these guys gonna recut '8 Piece Box'?"

"That was one compromise that we did make with the record label," says Miller of the third appearance of SCOTS' chicken-hurling live set staple. "They wanted '8 Piece Box' on the new record, and we're really sick of the song! I'm serious! There are some nights where I just can't look at another piece of chicken! But the crowds love it, so we will do it as long as people wanna hear it."

So Miller and band (bassist Mary Huff and drummer Dave Hartman) cope with Keith Richards' worst nightmare ("Bloody 'ell, I've gotta play 'Satisfaction' *again*!!!") by reminding themselves: a) audiences love "8 Piece Box," chicken-chucking and all; b) audiences pay the bills; and c) the song's two previous recorded appearances have maybe sold 5000 copies between them. And considering that *Dirt Track Date* will probably reach more people than the entirety of SCOTS' discography, it becomes apparent the band could have found itself starring in worse record-company-scripted horrorshows. ("Guys, I want you to meet your new song doctor, Desmond Child!")

In fact, other than demanding "8 Piece Box" and asking the band to get a manager, DGC has left Southern Culture On The Skids free to be Southern Culture On The Skids. They wanted the band to cut another Cramped exhumation of southern-fried swamp roots and Link Wray fuzz and trailer-trash living, at the studio of its choice (Reflections Studios in Charlotte, NC) with the man SCOTS wanted to record it (Mark Williams, who worked on the band's classic "El Santo" single, soon to be reissued on Estrus).

"We figured if we did it in Charlotte," Miller jokes, "nobody'd ever wanna visit us while we were playing, because it's probably one of the more boring cities around. I like Charlotte a lot. There's not a whole lot to do there since Heritage Park is gone." Besides, Reflections, which has previously hosted mostly gospel sessions, has "the best-sounding live room I've ever been in. We always try to find rooms that sound really great, because the old rock 'n' roll records, or any good records, they always have a few room mikes up catching the drums live and the amps, giving 'em breathing room."

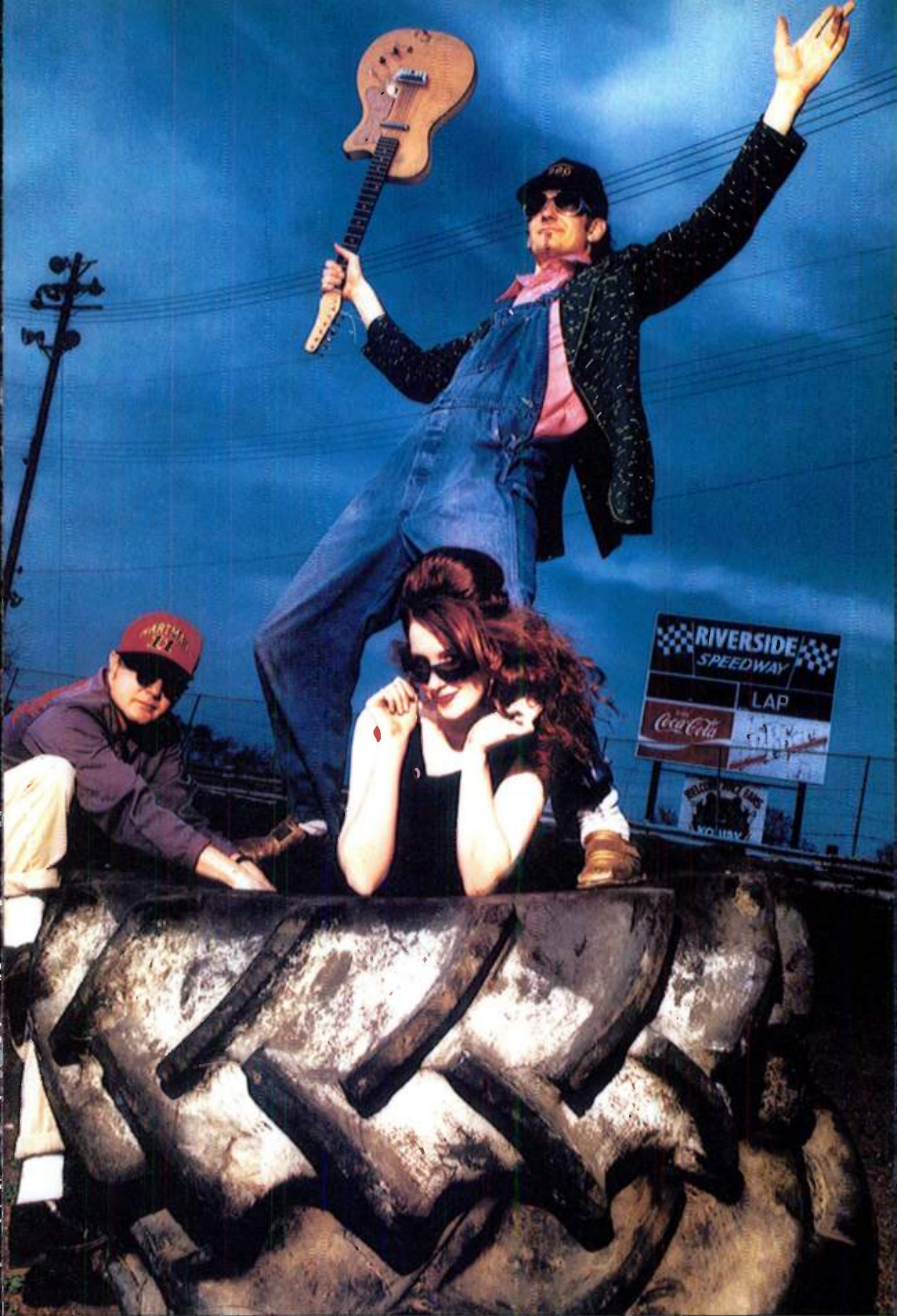
Breathing room is one of Miller's—and SCOTS'—major rock 'n' roll concerns. "Does rock 'n' roll happen in clubs that hold more than 300 people? I don't think so! You go to a show where there's 1000 or 1200 people, it's something different. Then you go to a show that's in an arena, and it's *really* different! The sorta intimate atmosphere that's conducive to all kinds of improvisation on the audience's or the band's part, that energy that gets transferred and stuff. I think that's the biggest obstacle that rock 'n' roll has to face. Because so many people that buy records do nothing but go to big shows.

"Smaller clubs is the only way to go! All the nuances are lost on a bigger stage. All your gestures, you kinda feel like you need to consolidate them all into certain types of gestures, instead of doing all the things you would do in a room of 100 or 200 people. That's something we come up against, especially now that we are playing a few bigger stages and stuff. You gotta wonder how to convey that thing that you've been doing for so long on a smaller stage to a bigger room. Some bands can pull it off. Heavy metal bands can do it, but that's all gestures: power-chords and hair! It looks good from a distance, but real rock 'n' roll or punk rock, do they really translate? That's one thing that I always think about: As you get more popular—which is great—but how do you keep the intimacy of those shows you always remember?"

Southern Culture On The Skids has to figure that one out for itself, as it faces its own expanding audience on its endless tour schedule, which it now faces in a new, cellular-phone-equipped van (purchased because the group tired of breaking down in towns unheard of by most tow truck drivers). Really, though, the band won't have to worry until it finds itself needing to sound less like Southern Culture On The Skids and more like Black Oak Arkansas. Or unless it finds itself cutting "8 Piece Box" on its next record. With Desmond Child in the control room... **END**

☛ "SOUL CITY" BY SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

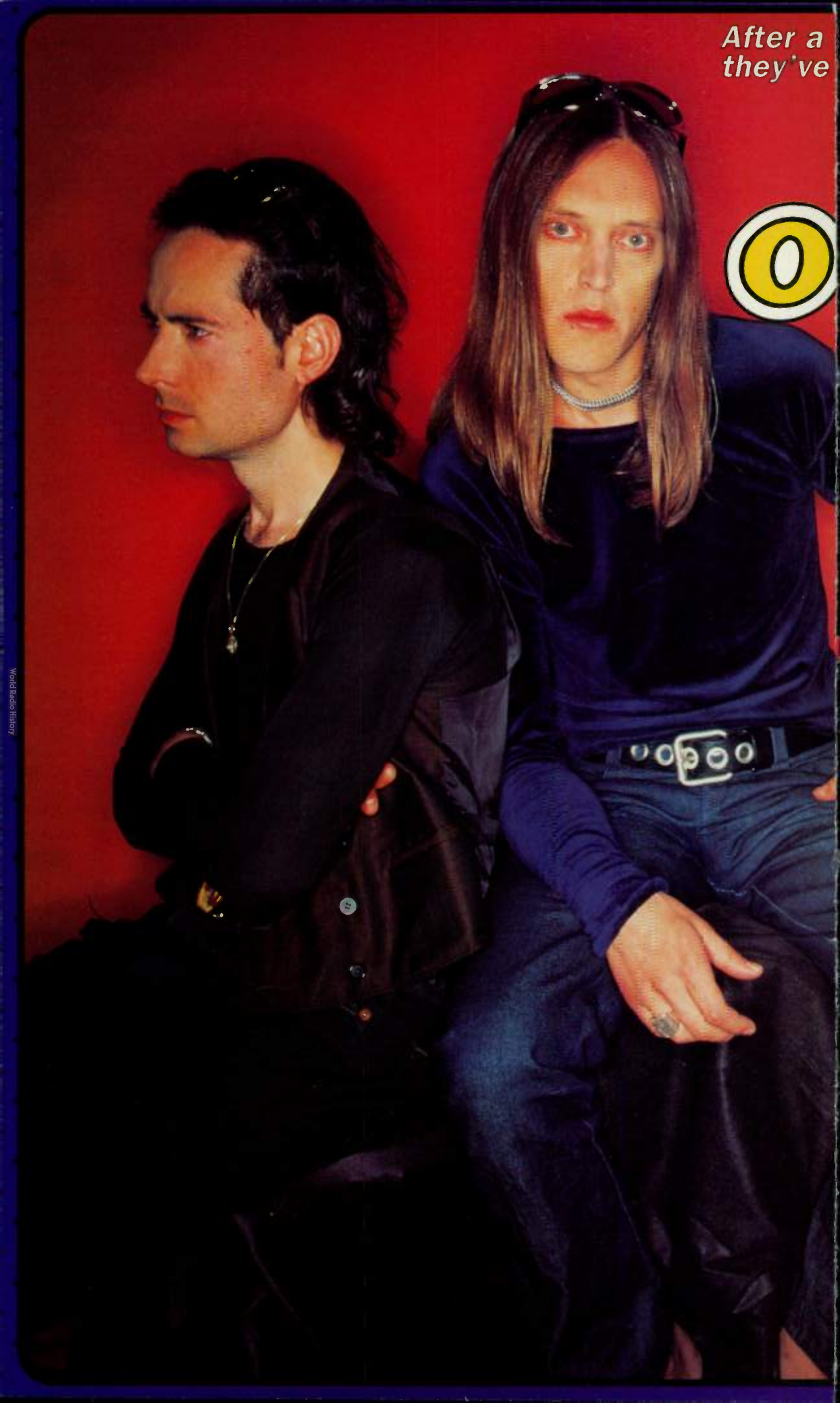




SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Too Much Pork For Just One Fork (Moist)
Ditch Diggin' (Safehouse)
For Lovers Only (Safehouse)
Peckin' Party (EP) (Feed Bag)
Southern Culture On The Skids (Sympathy For The Record Industry)
Dirt Track Date (DGC)

After a
they've



one-take whim makes them the rock stars
always pretended to be,

URGE VERKILL

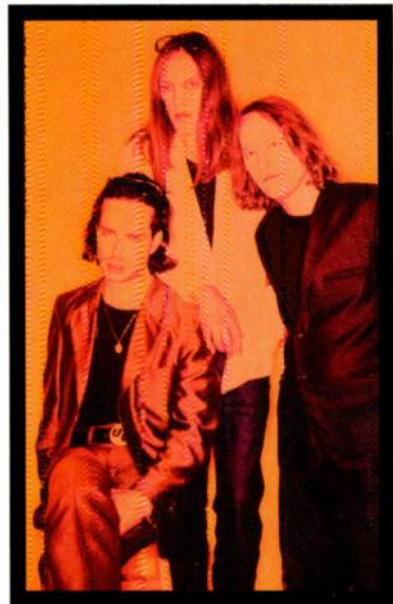
prepares to
EXIT THE DRAGON

by Scott Frampton

photographs by Paul Ellledge



"We're just really unconscious right now—not planning anything. We're just trying to make it sound good," King "Eddie" Roesser says by way of good-bye at the doorstep of The Bank, the Urge Overkill clubhouse and headquarters. It's an odd farewell; the interview had ended a good 20 minutes earlier, and if this were just another rock star platitude, he certainly wouldn't have waited until after offering directions to the El train and a few unsolicited ideas on last-minute Chicago fun before the evening's flight. It's also an odd thing to hear from Urge Overkill, a band whose image of flamboyant cool seems nothing if not a conscious, concerted effort. But Eddie's goodbye reveals an essential truth about Urge Overkill: this band, for all the matching suits and rock-in-a-suave-place hype, has not strayed from its "rock geek dream" of making music that, to them, sounds good.



L-R: Blackie C, Nash Kato, King "Eddie" Roesser

The new record, *Exit The Dragon*, does sound good, very good—especially if you consider 1991's *Supersonic Storybook* EP to be an Urge high point. The record's sound is warm and dry, almost subdued compared to the ecstatic pop-rock flourishes of the major-label debut, *Saturation*. And although *Dragon* seems more serious than its predecessor (guitarist Nash Kato asserts that it's mostly because *Saturation* was so over-the-top: "We were singing about our favorite TV shows—not to belittle the material"), it's thankfully not one of those all-too-frequent post-success records dwelling on and decrying the rigors of fame. If anything, Urge seems bemused by it all, especially the international success of the "Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon" single from the gold-selling *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack.

"We did this ten-day thing in Europe," King says, explaining today's leisurely recoil on The Bank's shady back porch. "We went to Spain, France and Italy. It was crazy, because we weren't on tour, but all the record company people there all wanted to see who could party hardest. When we left Paris, they said 'You tell them in Italy what a great time you had in Paris.' We get to Milan and they're like 'You had fun in Paris? Well, we'll show you.'

"Well, then, in Milan they threw us this dinner party—and I don't know how they did this—and there were like over 50 models at this long table." Nash interjects, which both he and King do with the ease of an old married couple, so get used to it. "I know that Milan is a big fashion center and everything, but..."

"These guys were tapped into the fun machine in Milan."

"It was like being at the Miss America pageant. 'So—where you from?'" Nash feigns a belle's accent: "Oh, I'm from Texas.' 'Uh, North Carolina.'"

"That's such a rock cliché, hanging out with all these models."

"But we weren't complaining."

"They wanted to tap us into 'this is Italy, this is how we do it.' And then we got to Spain, and it was even better. The weird thing about Spain is that there's a form of sorta popular rock music [that has an element of] flamenco."

"They're more into *La Musica*," Nash cracks.

"We can't possibly conceive of what they find interesting about music, but it's in 'Girl.' For some reason, that song has it."

"It didn't hit me until I got over there, and I went 'wait a minute' and sure enough, man..."

"Every teenager in Spain knows the words to that song. So we went on this show and played and there's like 300 kids that for some reason... I mean there's only a couple of radio stations in Spain and because CDs are like 30 dollars and stuff, [buying music] is not as important as it is here. But somehow that's our first gold record."

"Platinum, now."

"Platinum in Spain. You have no idea."

"These three markets were, heretofore, closed like an iron door. We got our toe in the door a little bit by opening for Nirvana, but when we went back on our own before 'Girl,' it was not good. But now... wow."

"Wow" is the band's prevailing sentiment toward "Girl," a one-take whim recorded at (producer and Shimmy Disc impresario) Kramer's Noise New Jersey studio for the *Stull* EP that followed *Storybook*. "'Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon' was something that we did completely spontaneously. It took like two hours. We were right at Kramer's and we needed some songs." King begins.

"He pulled out that single."

"And we were like 'we can play this, there's like four chords.'"

"[Kramer] was pushing it. We were into the song, but we were doing it and thinking 'maybe this could be a b-side or something.' But he ran in and laid that piano track down and came back and he said 'here's your hit.' And at the time, we were on an indie label and thinking 'What the fuck are you talking about? There's no hit. We don't have hits.' That man deserves... Anyone reading this should just stop and give three cheers to Kramer the prophet."

"So this thing we did at Kramer's house in two hours, you drive around here and it's on the radio all the time. And if you really listen to it, you wouldn't believe how fucked up it really is. The choruses go like half as fast as the verse."

"My pitch is way out—it's all first-take stuff. And he wouldn't let us touch it. He wouldn't let us fuck with it. We didn't want to fuck with it because it didn't really matter."

"It was just so bizarre to all of a sudden hear that on the radio all over the place."

"When they came to us about using the song, we asked if they wanted us to re-record or remix it, or had they heard the original, because the rest of [the soundtrack] is all '60s stuff, but no, [Quentin Tarantino] wanted that version. It's just the way he thinks."

continued on next page

"We were convinced that there was no demand for rock anymore. We were so close to saying 'we're in the wrong damn business.'"

Before
it was called
Acid Jazz
it was called



impulse!

Act on Impulse!

"It has, like, a dark side."

"It wasn't until we went to a pre-screening in L.A... watching it, how he used it, all of a sudden it made perfect sense. All of a sudden, we understood. Somehow it works."

"It did make me like the song more..."

Eddie pauses—he has been speaking haltingly from the start, prone to long breaks, but this time it's to take the gorgeous black Danelectro copy Nash has just brought out to the porch. Nash, taking care of everyone on the scene, turns, drops a cold Schlitz 50th Anniversary can into my lap, and says, "The King is always happiest when he's strumming a guitar. Really, most interviews he has one. Me, I never touch a guitar until [knock, knock] 'five minutes, Urge.'" And sure enough, Eddie loosens up like a lush on his first drink.

"You do something like that with so little predetermination—just kinda leave it for what it is—and there's something there that even though we really thought we were doing it on *Saturation*, we weren't doing it as much as possible, as much as we did on *Storybook* because we were forced to finish that in a week. That was a week working nights."

"We made a record like that in a week," Nash concurs. "And now we spend, what, 8, 10, 12 weeks. On this one, we decided to go back to that. 'Girl' really opened our eyes up to what people like about the band: performance over perfection."

"I think with *Saturation* it wasn't doing shit over and over, but that we were sorta over-concentrating. 'Cause if we concentrate, we can play really good like that. We almost over-did it."

"[*Dragon* producers] The Butcher Bros. were really adamant that we not always go for the perfect take. We were really going for what they call the 'Urge charm.' We didn't understand it until 'Girl' became a hit with all its flaws, and then we thought," Nash says, scratching his chin in mock thought, "perhaps that's what they were talking about."

The songwriting team of Kato and Roeser also went back to taking some time out to get away from home before heading into the studio.

"We've got a pal... he's got this place. Nash and I will just go kick back in rural Minnesota. One of my buddies from high school, he's got kids, animals, the whole bit. And we go chill there with some acoustic guitars."

"Set up in the barn—way outta here where we can't be found. Way out there, you're just cut off from any pressure. Nobody has the phone number. You're just cut off. Us, amps, in a barn. I mean, the cows moo..."

"It's a nice, normal image that no one would imagine of us."

"There's nothing else to do but rock. You can take a break and ride some horses, but that's it. We've done that for every record but *Saturation*, and I think it shows, too. It's the one departure."

"*Saturation*, at the time, it was the years of heavy angst grunge. What was going on right then was 'feel my pain.' Everybody, MTV had people wearing chains and dancing around like they were in hell. And we were like 'Fuck this, man, music is supposed to be fun.' And I think that *Saturation* was an unconscious reaction to that, like 'This is bullshit.' Saying 'it doesn't have to be like this' and 'you can do something that's not so heavy-handed.' We really felt that we did it. And I think we've done a lot of songs like that in the past. Unfortunately, 90% of the people out there, probably all they know is that we did a Neil Diamond cover and recorded 'Positive Bleeding' and 'Sister Havana,' two songs that exist only to celebrate rock music."

Life is good sitting out the heat of a sweltering 95-degree day in the back of The Bank, a real granite-columned former lending institution in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. Its three levels house the band's rehearsal and recording space, drummer Blackie O.'s swank one-time living quarters, now inhabited by new bass player Scott Evers, who the band is currently breaking in for the long tour ahead, and an apparently well-stocked fridge. Life is so good, in fact, that it's hard to imagine that just a few years ago, Urge was on the brink of giving it all up.

"We were convinced that there was no demand for rock anymore. We were so close to hangin' it up. We spent five years in that fucking van right there." Nash points to the brown Ford Econoline that Urge bought from Soul Asylum. ("They still think it was a mistake to give it up. They get all misty when we pull into Minneapolis," he chuckles.) "After five years of playing the same Court Tavern-type [a divey bar in New Jersey] shows, where you come to town and it's always the same crowd, we were so close to saying 'we're in the wrong damn business.'"

"I think that our biggest mistake in this whole thing," King adds, "is that we assumed people to have some sense of higher intelligence that added to their enjoyment of music, and we found that to be a grave miscalculation. It's obviously too late, but I guess we were wrong."

"Enter Nirvana. It just changed everything. They picked us up on tour and we didn't even know who they were. But just to see—what they did on stage every fucking night was a whole different story, don't even get me started—but just for us to see this rock band, a three-piece (at the time we were still a three-piece) and

look out there and there's a thousand kids. Sold out. Every night. And it was rock. It totally revived us."

"It was really cool. We were lucky enough to see them play every night."

"One of the highlights of our career."

"You wouldn't believe really how good and how inspirational it was to just to see it night after night. All this stuff is worth it. Rock really can be transcendent."

"Pearl Jam was a great inspiration as well, working with them."

"Really killer live band."

"Every fucking night. I can't tell you how hard it is to rock 10, 12 thousand kids. And they're

"'Girl' really opened our eyes up to what people like about the band: performance over perfection."

rocking the guy in the back row of the third balcony. That's hard to do, man. That was a big wake-up call for us. We thought 'this is how big it gets,' and when we first dipped our toe in, that was some cold water, man." After the European jaunt and a few days in L.A. to work out *Exit The Dragon's* cover art, the band is now settling into the task of re-learning the songs it cut in the studio some months before. ("We got back here and it was time to remember what it was like to stand up and play a guitar and sing," Nash says, stamping out a cigarette. "'How does this go?'—songs we wrote—'How does this go?'" Down in the basement rehearsal spot, the band has been working on the sound from 7 in the evening to 3 or 4 in the morning, mostly in front of an autographed, life-size Chrissie Hynde stand-up. Hynde joined Urge on stage for a few notable shows in the tour following *Saturation*, but she seems to represent something more to the band.

"She was like 'everything now sucks,' but she was very vocal about saying [about Urge] 'I like this.' We were pretty thrilled. Growing up, the Pretenders were just one of the coolest."

"With the Pretenders and Clash and all those bands, there was this certain measure of rock. The '80s were so dead, and now there's this alternative thing—there's just no measure. Young kids today just have no idea. Well, maybe they do, I don't know. And I'm not saying this from a cynical standpoint. We are from that era where the measure was higher, and we're just trying to meet that. We don't know if we achieve it or not, but that's what we strive for. There used to be a certain measure of rock, a musical measure. People went the extra mile: write a song, what the fuck. Play it well and sing it out." **END**

▶ "SOMEBODY ELSE'S BODY" BY URGE OVERKILL APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

DISCOGRAPHY

- Strange, L... (EP) (Ruthless)
- Jesus Urge Superstar (Touch & Go)
- Americruiser (Touch & Go)
- "Wichita Lineman" 7" (Touch & Go)
- The Supersonic Storybook (Touch & Go)
- Stull (EP) (Touch & Go)
- Saturation (Geffen)
- Exit The Dragon (Geffen)

FIG DISH

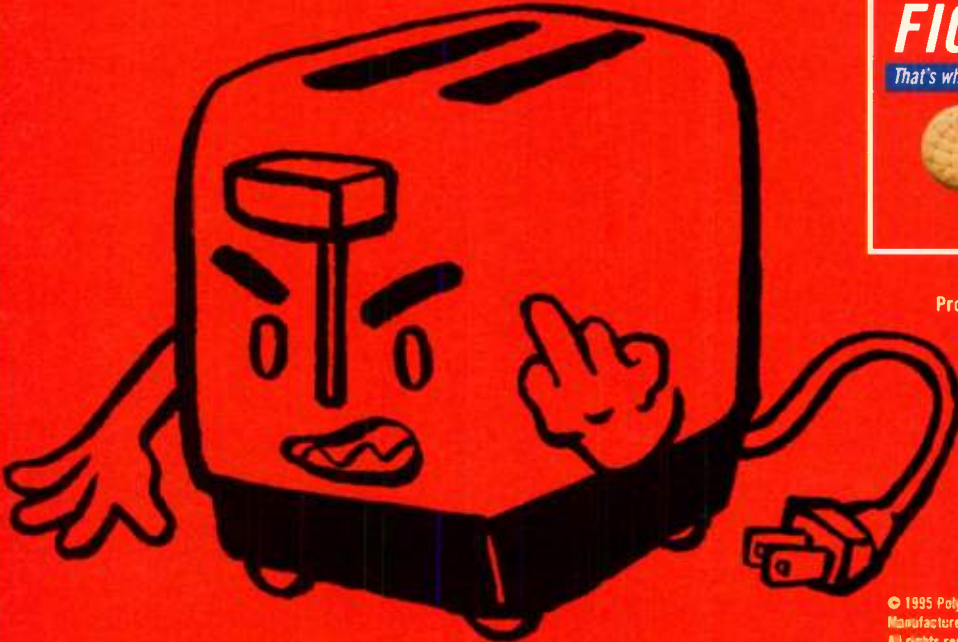



FIG DISH

That's what love songs often do



13
songs

the debut album
Produced by Lou Giordano

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ULTRASOUNDS

the new album from

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ALICE DONUT *Pure Acid Park* *Alternative Tentacles*

Veteran New York underground heroes Alice Donut have spent years making evocative records that bear more of a resemblance to a smarter, less aggressively ironic Redd Kross than either outfit would probably care to admit. And while Alice Donut haven't reached even Redd Kross's level of cultdom, there's always hope. After years of so-so releases, *Pure Acid Park* is the band's most cohesive, accomplished record yet. By now Alice Donut records have settled comfortably into formula: Take some lyrics that are reliably cryptic, but capable of cutting to the chase ("I remember/When I thought you had something to say"). Add some fuzz, some thick guitars, some psychedelic touches, but not too many. It's a formula hundreds, maybe thousands, of underground bands have taken to heart, but only the Flaming Lips do this sort of thing better. There isn't a clinker in sight. "I Walked With A Zombie" puts the band's fondness for cheesy '50s sci-fi to a Dick Dale beat. "Freaks in Love" is creepy and clever, while "Big Cars and Blowjob" is, uh, pretty self-explanatory. They're literate ("Dreaming in Cuban" lifts its title from Christina Garcia's novel), and socially progressive, too: In "The Senator and the Cabin Boy," the band expresses concern about the Contract With America. Now, would Redd Kross do that?

—Allison Stewart

DATALOG: Released Jul. 21.

FILE UNDER: Manic, evocative fuzz-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Redd Kross, the Flaming Lips.



APARTMENTS *A Life Full Of Farewells* *Hot-Restless*

Unlike the more sensitive songwriters out there, former Go-Between Peter Milton Walsh keeps most of his preciousness under his hat. Leading the Apartments by forging a middle ground between verbiage and melody, Walsh foregoes the easy, catchy riff and settles right in to tell his stories. By turning what first appear to be clumsily phrased, prosaic titles like "Not Every Clown Can Be In The Circus" into gentle, breathily wise observations ("Here's to the losers, some get away, some fall behind" on "Thank You For Making Me Beg"), Walsh keeps a weighty tone in check. It doesn't hurt that underneath the words floats a spacious, bittersweet acoustic guitar jangle, or graceful orchestral wash, as if to offset throwdown that might be taken too quickly to heart. But Walsh can turn eerily, almost morbidly emotional on a whim—on "She Sings To Forget You," he quaveringly croons "Goodbye dream" to a slow, unrelenting piano, and he's both precious and believable in a way only American Music Club's Mark Eitzel has been able to accomplish elsewhere. And while the Apartments' songs often fail to offer variety in style or technique, you can't argue with the utterly catchy, trumpet-laced "All The Time In The World," a song that suggests that should the perfect pop tune ever be written, the Apartments will have their hand in the mix.

—Rande Dawn Cohen

DATALOG: Released May 23.

FILE UNDER: Thoughtful, breezy guitar pop.

R.I.Y.L.: The Auteurs, American Music Club, Aztec Camera.



BEASTIE BOYS *Root Down EP* *Grand Royal-Capitol*

Clocking in at under 30 minutes and sporting three versions of the title track, *Root Down* might as well be a maxi-single, but the inclusion of seven live cuts from the Beasties' ongoing tour allows this disc to qualify as an EP, if not an essential entry in the group's library. "Root Down" was a standout on last year's *III Communication*, a potent hip-hop throwdown that would have fit nicely on *Paul's Boutique*. Here it's offered in its original, already slammin' incarnation and two equally worthy mixes that bring something new to the party. Though the group has been overemphasizing its thrash roots lately, MCA, Ad-Rock and Mike D are still spry rhyme masters—which is reassuring, since the remainder of the EP is a thrash-and-funk-fest. Drawing mainly on the group's last two albums, except for a punky rethink of *Licensed To Ill*'s "Time To Get Ill," the live portion of *Root Down* offers enough change-ups between funk and punk to amuse. But the trademark Beastie live antics (manic energy, shrieked vocals, spacey jams), so winning in person, lose a lot of charm in the transfer to your den. The jams are kicked, but the annoyingly echoey sound and the virtual absence of crowd noise makes you wonder if the Boys recorded this in an empty airplane hangar.

—Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Released Jun. 6.

FILE UNDER: Brief samplers for the faithful.

R.I.Y.L.: Beastie Boys, Bootsy Collins, Pennywise.





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BUFFALO TOM *Sleepy Eyed* EastWest—EEG

Early on in its four-album career, Buffalo Tom found a sound and stuck with it. After the Dinosaur Jr. Jr. sound of its self-titled 1989 debut and the neo-punk blast of *Birdbrain*, the trio from Boston turned to mildly gritty guitar pop flattened by Bill Janovitz's lackadaisically passionate vocals, and it's never looked back since. All of which makes *Sleepy Eyed* pleasingly familiar, and utterly predictable. Alternating between the speedy awkwardness of "Sun Dress" and the countrified balladry of "Twenty Points," *Sleepy* never pushes the envelope of the tried-and-true twangy artlessness that got Buffalo Tom a fashion spread in *Rolling Stone* and a guest spot on *My So-Called Life*. Certainly, Buffalo Tom can make sparks fly when it wants to: "Crueler" turns from another macro-observation on life's disappointments into a dryly poetic, meandering lament, while lyrics like "like a drug on the tip of your tongue, she will sparkle" fairly jump from "Sparklers," as if to reassure the listener that potential still exists for the Toms. For now, don't expect radical change—as the face of safe alternative rock, Buffalo Tom knows what works. —Ranee Dawn Cohen

DATALOG: Released Jul. 11.

FILE UNDER: Straightforward '90s guitar-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Soul Asylum, Catherine Wheel, Cold Water Flat.

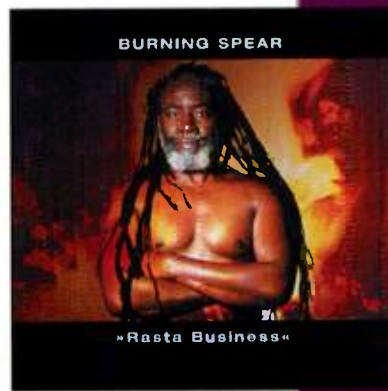
**BURNING SPEAR** *Rasta Business* Heartbeat

Winston Rodney, a.k.a. Burning Spear, has spent more than 25 years at the forefront of reggae music as a songwriter and performer, and accurately describes his role in the development and international popularization of reggae as "foundational." And in a musical climate in which reggae's keepers of consciousness keep dying senseless deaths (Prince Far I, Peter Tosh, and, most recently, Garnett Silk) or have diluted their music and message to cater to contemporary dancehall-driven tastes, Spear's music is a refreshing sonic oasis. *Rasta Business*, Spear's latest album, is a joyous, if slightly monotonous, testament to Rodney's commitment to the ideals of Rastafari and the healing power of conscious roots reggae. Spear's trademark has always been bouncing basslines, Nyabingi-style drumming, and piercing horn lines creating a textured backdrop for his nasal musings on Jah, Marcus Garvey, and injustice, and *Rasta Business* is no exception. On tracks that are more dance-oriented than the usual Spear offerings, Rodney calls for a return to Africa ("Africa"), the addition of a Garvey component to school curricula worldwide ("Subject in School"), and for youth to honor and respect their parents ("Creation"). But most of all, Spear calls for peace, unity and an appreciation of reggae; *Rasta Business* is standard Burning Spear, admittedly repetitive in its preachiness, but possessed of a veteran rootsman's reggae sensibility, featuring hypnotic instrumentation and Winston Rodney "talking [and] reasoning, about some constructive things." Give thanks. —Philippe Wamba

DATALOG: Released Jun. 20.

FILE UNDER: Rastaman foundation.

R.I.Y.L.: Bunny Wailer, Culture, Israel Vibration, early Steel Pulse.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Danceland Years* Pointblank Classics

With the blues getting so much disrespect these days—both from punk-bred acts like Jon Spencer Blues Explosion or '68 Comeback who appear to be *laughing* at the form [we take issue with this—eds.], and from the "scholars" who kill it with their freeze-drying "reverence"—reissues like this are totally necessary. Driven by a music fan's love of the form, Morry R. Kaplan sought, through his Danceland label, to document some of the amazing sounds he was hearing pour from Detroit's postwar blues scene, one not as celebrated as Chicago's, though possibly as fertile. Many of the acts he captured (Candy Johnson, Tony Blues Lewis) never amounted to much, but Kaplan inadvertently made history when sides he issued by an artist going by the name "Little Pork Chops" turned out to be John Lee Hooker's first recordings. Like much of *Danceland Years*, Hooker's sides are basically small-combo jump blues numbers, though with his unmistakable boogie groove and ragged high-voltage guitar work. They're also the most gutbucket of an album's worth of more dance-oriented urban blues numbers. But with its necessity-bred one-track/one-take recording and acetate fidelity, *Danceland Years* should provide both pleasure and a history lesson for the lo-fi fan. —Tim Stegall

DATALOG: Released May 23.

FILE UNDER: The blues, man!

R.I.Y.L.: John Lee Hooker, Big Joe Turner, the Fat Possum label.



"I wish I was in caveman times. I like the caveman look. It was simple—the little rags, the animal skins. It was dope." —TLC's Left Eye, from an interview from *LaFace Records' The Rhythm Of Black Lifestyle* premo magazine.

BEN FOLDS FIVE



"In a big pond of squeal and feedback, Ben Folds Five is a breath of fresh air... not only is it an alternative to the alternative, they also write great songs."
—Hits



Passenger



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World Radio History

DANCING FRENCH LIBERALS OF '48 Powerline Broken-Revenge

When the Gits' lead singer Mia Zapata was murdered two years ago—a case that remains unsolved—her longtime bandmates were left with an unenviable set of options regarding future projects. Rather than attempt to “replace” the charismatic frontwoman, the Seattle-via-Ohio bunch opted to close ranks and carry on with guitarist Andy Joe Spleen—the closest thing to Joey Ramone this side of New Hampshire’s legendary Queers—taking the mic. The newly-christened band, fleshed out by guitarist Julian Gibson, is unrepentant in its flag-waving punk idealism, never using three chords where two will do, seldom tempering the raw abandon. Joan Jett, a conspirator of bad-attitude bunches from the Germs to Bikini Kill, weighs in with a duet on “In A Past Life,” while Spleen mugs solo through a dozen more. The “kids” who were drawn to the bubblepunk revival of '94 might even find a little to like within the grooves—and will likely get more of a chance to find out once the Liberals appear on the Warner Bros. roster. —David Sprague

DATALOG: Released May 16.

FILE UNDER: D, and that rhymes with P and that stands for punk.

R.I.Y.L.: Ramones, Gits, Hard-Ons.

DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM Rhythm Record Volume One K

“We’ve got the tools to reclaim the sound,” intones Calvin Johnson on the most recent Dub Narc single, “Industrial Breakdown.” Calvin’s always played the Luddite, challenging the factory-like pop world with the blunt instrumentation and homemade production values of Beat Happening and the Halo Benders. But of all his projects, none has seemed more quixotic than this “band,” in which he attempts to work his minimalist transformation on the kind of funky music that lately relies on studio smoothness. Happily, this first full-length release reveals more technique in the Dub Narcotic toolbox than one might have expected. Its mostly instrumental songs are stripped down to rhythm and little else, with simple, Sesame Street melodies like “Echo Control” tooted out on a melodica. Others, such as “Foxy Manacle,” are almost all bass and open space, with just a few blips and burbles of noise breaking the surface. When effects are used (a “respirator” tape loop, a heavy delay on the snare), they are simple and obvious in Calvin’s typical you-could-do-this-at-home gesture. While other dub remixes expand or add to the originals, Dub Narc’s new versions tend to be subtractive. On “Bite Attack,” the “Bite” single is recast with a single drum, some wind chimes, and Calvin’s voice faded all the way back, as if to see how far he can get from the machine and still make a sound. —Andrea Moed

DATALOG: Released Jul. 11, on vinyl only. A new EP,

Industrial Breakdown, also available on vinyl and CD.

FILE UNDER: Primitive funk-dub.

R.I.Y.L.: King Tubby, early Beastie Boys, Beat Happening.

ANNE DUDLEY Ancient & Modern Echo

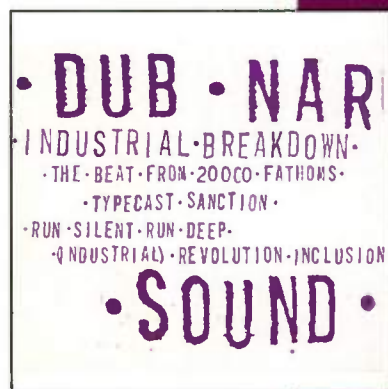
As a member of Art of Noise, keyboard player Anne Dudley contributed to some of the most intelligent electronic music of the '80s. Moving onto various solo projects, the classically-trained Dudley has now given in to her higher impulses on *Ancient & Modern*, a Windham Hill-esque excursion into classical/pop crossover. The pop influences are thankfully at a bare minimum—a bit of tribal drumming on “Canticles of the Sun and Moon”—but anyone familiar with English choral music will feel right at home. The urge to follow in the footsteps of Benjamin Britten seems to be instinctual for the English (think of Paul McCartney’s *London Oratorio*). Fortunately, Dudley acquires herself much better, resetting several Bach hymns and traditional carols. “The Holly and the Ivy” gets recast in a Philip Glass mold, and “The Tallis Canon” turns very dark and pensive. Dudley’s own setting of “Veni Sancte Spiritus” goes for ethereal vocal harmonies, while “Communion” sounds like soundtrack music waiting for a movie. *Ancient & Modern* isn’t very groundbreaking, but it’s well-crafted and tasteful to a fault. —Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Released in U.K. & Europe Jun. 20.

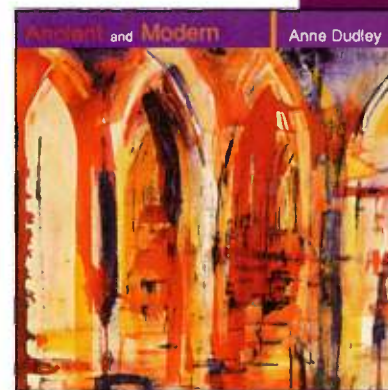
FILE UNDER: Classical lite.

R.I.Y.L.: Recent Vangelis, Delius, Elgar.

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



“I just hate when people call [Ed Wood] the worst filmmaker of all time. That should be reserved for the jackasses who made *Last Action Hero* and *Home Alone 2*. Tor Johnson and Vampira will be cool 20 years from now; nobody’s gonna give two shits about *Home Alone 2*.” —Rob Zombie, on Plan 9 From Outer Space.



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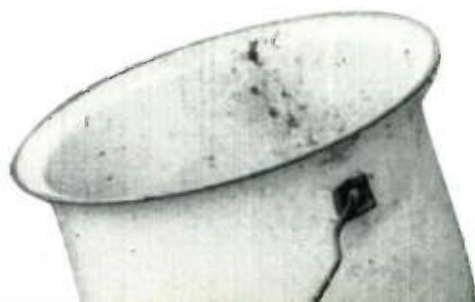
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JOE ELY Letter To Laredo MCA

In Joe Ely's current hometown of Austin, Texas, he's treated as a king, and rightfully so. Of all the latter-day Texas singer/songwriters, Ely's music is the most majestic. He sings intricate tales of life in and around the Lone Star State, each performed with an uncommon intensity. *Letter To Laredo* is Ely's tenth album, and his finest collection of songs yet. He sings about the vast distances on the Texas plains, about rivers and ranches and about lust and unrequited love. Each of the tunes here is rendered with a sonic clarity rare even for him. Gut-string guitar rings out with longing while accordion and dobro mix somberly, and his rugged, expressive vocals bear the stamp of years on the road. Ely can count many artists as confederates, and a few (Bruce Springsteen, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Raul Malo of the Mavericks) lend their voices as backing on several of *Letters To Laredo's* tracks. Others, like Tom Russell ("Gallo Del Cielo") and Butch Hancock ("She Finally Spoke Spanish To Me"), see their songs performed with style and grace. Think of *Letter To Laredo* as an epic journey through the still untamed West. With Joe Ely as the tour guide, it's a trip I'd be glad to take over and over again.

—Jim Caligiuri

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 29.

FILE UNDER: A sound as wide as Texas.

R.I.Y.L.: Kevin Welch, Tom Russell, Lucinda Williams.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION The Jewel In The Crown Green Linnet

This fiftyish band occupies a smug perch on the pinnacle of rock history. Once, they launched the folk rock movement and the careers of Richard Thompson and Sandy Denny. Today, two or three albums later, they headline their own annual folk festival, rocking out with a little less energy than the Seldom Scene [a *bluegrass band that covered Clapton's "Lay Down Sally"*—ed.] and considerably more than the Eagles. They're too homely to cultivate singer-songwriter cults of personality, so like our Nashville artists, they take good songs wherever they can find them. These include a moving lament about a teenage daughter (she becomes a porno star—very Nashville) and a lilting pseudo-traditional recast of "Crime of Passion" as "The Naked Highwayman." You'll pick up the Leonard Cohen vibe long before you reach the final cut, a cover of "Closing Time." The lyrics aim for depth—after all, it's hard to sing a completely superficial love song to some babe who's pushing 60 and already your wife. As with Leonard, the music isn't especially prettified (except for an instrumental dedicated, of course, to somebody's daughter), and the songs' effectiveness relies on the lyrics. There's no Celtic harp or trilling female vocalist to obscure them—just Simon Nicol's solid baritone, guitars and fiddle. (Purists should be warned that tinkling synthesizers taint two or three songs.) Try to ignore the title cut, a long-overdue (150 years?) protest against British imperialism. There are 14 other songs, so you won't miss it. And remember, if you're not grown-up enough to like this record, Mom's birthday is never more than a year away.

—Nell Zink

DATALOG: Released May 30.

FILE UNDER: Low-cholesterol, high-fiber folk.

R.I.Y.L.: Leonard Cohen, June Tabor, October Project.

FIG DISH That's What Love Songs Often Do Atlas-A&M

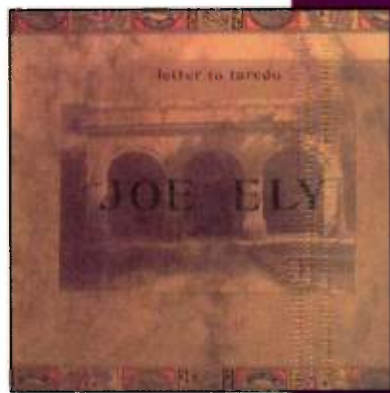
Fig Dish musters up a respectably tight-fisted punch of buzzing guitar caterwaul on its debut record, but it's not any masterful instrumental ingenuity that makes this Chicago band a stand-out. These lads are pop songsmiths first and foremost, and they've perfected their formula with distinctive and emphatic vocals delivered by a guy who can really sing, and isn't afraid to show it. Whether it be in a plainly-delivered melodic rasp of "Quiet Storm King," the crystal-clear mood and tempo changes of "Bury Me" or the toughened, hooky choruses that pepper most of the album's 13 tracks, Blake Smith's pipes never leave the spotlight, doing these clever tunes justice time and again. And as gritty, angst-filled and guitar-driven as they may seem, these songs are actually as poppy and crafty as can be, with knotted bridges leaning hard on the verses, drawing out the catchy subtleties in those ever-impending sing-along choruses. "Chew Toy"'s grumpy melody breaks into a chorus of cynical, but totally unironic "na-na-na"s that are as irresistible as they are unexpected, and it's one of the rare moments on *That's What Love Songs Often Do* where Fig Dish slips us a peek into its bag of pop tricks; the rest of this catchy ride is cloaked in a satisfyingly tough rock vibe.

—Cheryl Botchick

DATALOG: Released Aug. 8.

FILE UNDER: Rock for the pop fetishist.

R.I.Y.L.: Soul Asylum, Social Distortion, Replacements.



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HAGFISH ...Rocks Your Lame Ass London

Although major and minor record companies alike are scrambling all over themselves to atone for whatever sins they've committed against punk rock since its '77 heyday, what they've been offering in the interests of greed and lost time has been weak enough to merit the minting of a new subgenre: record-company punk. In other words, punk as faceless and sterile as the factory-made light metal and grunge of the last ten years. Dallas' Hagfish, although it has certain superficial similarities to many of the record-company punk bands (obvious stylistic debts to both the Descendents and the Archies, nagging choruses, sugar rush tempos), has a few things working in its favor, including a raging guitar sound stolen wholesale from vintage Van Halen and an overall cynicism which instantly separates them from the bulk of its happy-go-lucky peers. The band's strong visual image (matching suits!) is also a plus in a scene with no discernible fashion sense. Sure, ...*Rocks Your Lame Ass*, as a title, is about the stupidest variation of *Never Mind the Bollocks* theme seen yet. But the music's strong enough to run roughshod over such reservations. —Tim Stegall

DATALOG: Released Jun. 27.

FILE UNDER: Neo-punk that doesn't suck.

R.I.Y.L.: Green Day, All, Ramones, Undertones.

HALF JAPANESE Hot *Safehouse*

Jad Fair's gift has always been to take the *faux-naif* persona of a Jonathan Richman and push it past the point of reasonable romantic optimism into something more desperate. It was true of the pubescent no-wave charmer of "Her Parents Came Home" or "Firecracker," and it's true of the Jad-as-rock-frontman we find on *Hot*, Fair's 30th-odd release (counting solos and side projects). If I were the love object of "Part Of My Plan," in which destiny whispers to Jad, "kiss her, kiss her," or "Smile" (the album's highlight) with its numerous breathless choruses of "every day's a new day, a brand new day for us," all in his patented whine-croon, I'd be torn between wedding bells and restraining orders. Where some recent records (especially with the Pastels) have played up Fair's sweetie-pie side, this line-up of 1/2 Jap isn't afraid to get a little malevolent. The undistilled garage wallop of "Black Fruit," with its barrage of incomprehensible megaphone-shattered vocals, outnumbers the "true love is born"-shtick of "True Believers" nearly two to one, though Fair is undoubtedly sincere about both. Special kudos to drummer Gilles Reider, who has no qualms about laying on the snare, and letting some speed-metal fills peek through the wall-of-punk. And kudos to Jad Fair for making records this aggressive 20 years into his recording career. —Franklin Bruno

DATALOG: Released Jul. 16.

FILE UNDER: Avant-savant savagery about girls and monsters.

R.I.Y.L.: Early Modern Lovers, Some Velvet Sidewalk, Velvet Underground.

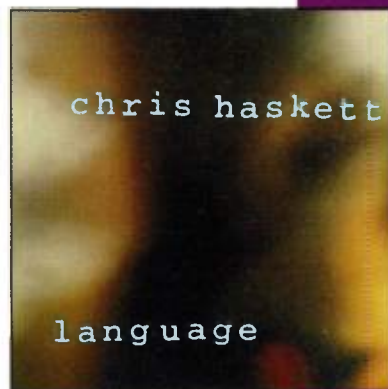
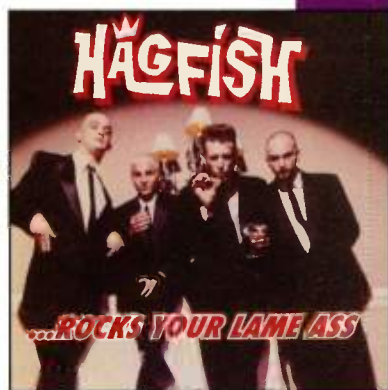
CHRIS HASKETT *Language* 213CD

It's unfortunate but understandable that Chris Haskett's fractious guitar excursions often get ignored in the context of the Rollins Band. Buffeted on one side by the bellowing of Hammerin' Hank himself and on the other by the Viking-ship rhythms of Sim Cain, Haskett is often reduced to pedal-to-the-metal wailing by survival instinct alone. Those expecting similar behavior on the largely acoustic *Language* will likely be nagging at their volume buttons in utter confusion. Meditative and warm, songs like "Spider Mother" and "Days In A Lifeboat" share a head with rustic English folkies like, say, the Incredible String Band. This being the post-modern era, Haskett plays some tape-manipulation games on a few tracks, but the addition of treated dialogue only succeeds in subtracting from the mood. *Language* is slippery enough in its construction that two of every three spins will probably result in the listener giving up at the halfway point, but that third time, as the adage goes, is really quite a charm. —David Sprague

DATALOG: Released Jun. 19.

FILE UNDER: Improv folk from the acid coffeehouse.

R.I.Y.L.: Incredible String Band, John Fahey.




HEALTH AND HAPPINESS SHOW *Instant Living* Bar/None

The Bongos were the best American band of the early '80s. Yeah—you can name your faves; R.E.M., Replacements, whoever—but *nobody* else could give a record drama, tribal-esque drumbeats, hypnotic melodies and guitar lines that were the audio equivalent of a DNA matrix like they could. James Mastro was the guitar architect of the band—Mr. Infinity Riff, himself. Two years ago, he re-emerged with Health And Happiness Show. HAHS's first release found Mastro to be a reconstructed Yankee Waterboy. The band's sophomore opus, *Instant Living*, is ample proof of what good ideas, chops and extensive roadwork can do for a band trying to find its own way (result: no more Celtic stuff). A record chock-full of sweet verities, ringing grits, chooglin' bass, bucolic pedal steel, assorted mandolins and fiddles, and those tribal-esque drums, *Instant Living* is nothing less than undistilled heartland honk. From the Flying Burrito Bros.-like "Anytime" to the cornfield stomp of "Tossed Like A Stone" and the Bongos-redux of "Portrait Of Disaster," Health And Happiness Show swings and rings like a church bell on a clear, clean Sunday morning. —Tom Terrell

DATALOG: Released Jul. 25.

FILE UNDER: Roots pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Flying Burrito Bros., Moby Grape, Mekons.


INBREDS *Kombinator* TAG

While firmly bound to the lo-fi aesthetic (though the remixed version of this disc ups the fidelity a notch), the Inbreds infuse their maddeningly insistent tunes with seductive hooks, both vocal and melodic. Operating primarily with bass and drums (though frontman Mike O'Neill sneaks in a few guitar fillips here and there), the Kingston, Ontario power (-pop) duo cooks up a feast that's as Anglo as bangers 'n' mash; soaring harmonies (see "Any Sense Of Time") beckon, while drummer Dave Ullrich's carefully arranged skittering (on songs like "Link" and "Round 12") maintains that oh-so-cool Brit art-school detachment. That balance may be struck a bit too carefully: After a few listens, there's a craving for some of the daffy interludes that punctuated the band's home-brew releases, but *Kombinator* has enough agreeably gawky moments to make up for that. Pure pop for anti-social people. —David Sprague

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 15.

FILE UNDER: Lo-fi New Wave.

R.I.Y.L.: Refrigerator, Guided By Voices.


JUNE OF '44 *Engine Takes To The Water* Touch And Go

As a new band featuring members of Louisville's Rodan, known for its affinity to the slow-core ways of Slint, June of '44 must work hard to keep its spare, ringing melody lines, choppy bass and spacious song structure from sounding like hand-me-downs from their older sibling bands. They just about manage it on this studied and disarmingly earnest debut with about half an album of subtle genius and another half of quite listenable brooding rock. The genius parts happen when the heavy, rhythmic guitar lines take the lead, producing insistent grooves that easily carry both the compact "June Miller" and the more expansive "Take It With A Grain Of Salt." It's when they try for atmosphere that the sonic clichés creep in. The eight-plus-minute "Have A Safe Trip, Dear" is an especially ponderous rendition of the quiet-quiet-loud-quiet formula. As the vocalist mutters menacingly in Albini-esque blank verse over a metronome bass line, you can hear the screaming and big drums a mile off. This sort of emotive potboiling works better on "I Get My Kicks For You," a spoken dirge that contains no sneering refrains or split-second tempo shifts, isn't even very heavy, and is the album's most unlikely gem. —Andrea Moed

DATALOG: Released Jun. 20.

FILE UNDER: Slow-momentum rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Rodan, Slint, Shellac, Shorty.

LIQUORICE Listening Cap 4AD

A listening cap is a child's toy that comes with its own book. What a wonderful way to enforce control on an unpredictable source, a metaphor which only occasionally works on Liquorice's debut album. A collection by Tsunami's Jenny Toomey, Hated and Ida's Dan Littleton, and His Name Is Alive's Trey Many, Liquorice is a supergroup designed to completely underwhelm. With clear acoustic guitar framing spacious, wandering production and Jenny Toomey's slightly off-kilter, trembling voice, Liquorice's music completely subverts the mystery of the recording process by sounding exactly like what it is—bargain-basement tunes made on the cheap. This works, sometimes—from the muted, calm vocals of Littleton on "Breaking The Ice" to a jangly, silly Robyn Hitchcock-esque romp, "Team Player." "No Excuses" comes closest of all the album tracks to being memorable, with a repetitive, funky bassline and Toomey's alto approximating a low-key Kristen Hersh. But many songs lack hooks or a linear melody, and without anything to hold onto they dissipate like cotton candy. And then there's the attempt at tossing the experimental sink in, as on "Drive Around," where a scratching needle across vinyl is ear-piercing, or "Trump Suit Edit," which is marred by fuzzy distortion, as on a worn-out audio tape. In order to make the chaos contrast against the sweet emptiness of the music, it has to sound less forced, less like an attention-getting device. Instead, the noise sits on top of the tune, not making any sense where it is. There's nothing wrong with being extemporaneous, but a listener needs a reason to care about a record, something to hold onto. And Liquorice doesn't offer one.

—Randee Dawn Cohen

DATALOG: Released Jul. 11. "Stalls" single also available on Simple Machines.

FILE UNDER: Experimental acoustic.

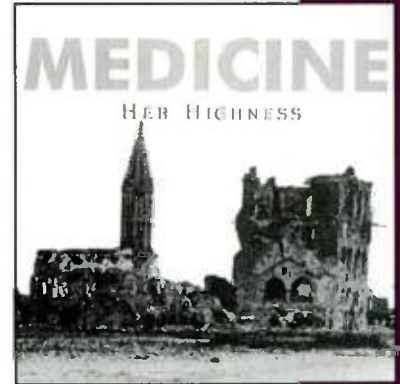
R.I.Y.L.: Hole Unplugged, Tsunami.



MALFUNKSHUN Return To Olympus Loosegroove-Epic

Formed by Regan Hagar and brothers Andrew and Kevin Wood in the early '80s, Seattle's Malfunkshun fused glam, punk and metal with a sense of pomp (they were known to wear Kiss makeup and spandex on stage, but then again, it was the '80s) that has become legendary, if only in retrospect. Malfunkshun played sporadically for years, until Andrew Wood formed Mother Love Bone with Green River's Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard, who, of course, went on to form Pearl Jam after Wood o.d.'d. At this point, if Malfunkshun registers in the mainstream zeitgeist at all, it's as the band that was thoughtful enough to break up and get out of the way so that there could one day be Pearl Jam. Aside from a few odds and ends on various compilations, *Return To Olympus* (released on Loosegroove, Gossard's Epic imprint) is Malfunkshun's first proper record. *Olympus* sounds like the early Mother Love Bone demos must have, with the same love of '70s Zeppelin riffs, as well as Zeppelin's penchant for over-the-top mysticism. It's a sweet, hopelessly young record, and everyone on it sounds about 19 (which they probably were). Andrew Wood is shown off to much better advantage in Mother Love Bone, and Hagar does much better work with his new band, Satchel. (Kevin Wood currently plays with Loosegroove act Devilhead.) *Return To Olympus* may hold the most value for completists, though Malfunkshun's cover of Ted Nugent's "Wang Dang Sweet Poontang" is a keeper.

—Allison Stewart



DATALOG: Released Jul. 18.

FILE UNDER: Roots of the Seattle sound.

R.I.Y.L.: Mother Love Bone, Led Zeppelin, Satchel, Devilhead.

MEDICINE Her Highness American

Lots of guitarists can coax waves of feedback and distortion out of their instruments, but Medicine's Brad Laner has shown potential to be this generation's premier sculptor of sound, a noise Rodin. Playing with a barrage of battered equipment, he's chiseled the edges of trip-pop, making all sorts of "wrong" sounds gloriously right. On Medicine's third LP, *Her Highness*, Laner seems to have worked at a quicker pace, turning out sounds of gloom instead of turning them inside out. It's Medicine's most repetitive, least surprising record, although its deep drones and range of effects make it a great workout for your speakers. Where some bands lay down guitar lines over a thick rhythm section, Medicine pounds out rhythms over blankets of guitar. Airy, seraphic singer Beth Thompson plays hide-and-seek—often, you can hear her breathing, but can't always locate her. When Laner adds some whisper-singing, it seems to bring out Thompson's best harmonies or Siouxsie-style crooning. Medicine has the potential to drill above and below this warmed-over Cocteau Twins-derived middle ground. *Her Highness* sounds complacent—it's post-blowtorch, boudoir psychedelia.

—Danny Housman

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 22.

FILE UNDER: Psychedelic texture-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Ultra Vivid Scene, Curve, My Bloody Valentine.

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

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD

MINUS FIVE *Old Liquidator* ESD

A more-interesting-than-usual side group composed of Peter Buck, Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow from the Posies, and beloved entertainer Scott McCaughey, the Minus Five seem to be taking this gig pretty seriously. Not only have they been unusually prolific (they released an EP through John Flansburgh's Hello CD Club), but their full-length debut doesn't have the blowsy, recorded-between-beer-runs feel of most side products (remember the Hindu Love Gods? Didn't think so). It's full of wise and well-crafted acoustic pop tunes, several of which would do an R.E.M. record proud. As usually happens with side projects, though, everyone on this has sounded better somewhere else. R.E.M. touring member McCaughey (who once titled a record *My Chartreuse Opinion*, as if you needed another reason to love him) leads the transcendent, unjustly ignored Young Fresh Fellows, R.E.M. used to be really good, and the Posies have had their moments. The Minus Five sound like a particularly adept bar band, which is good enough for *Old Liquidator's* low-key folk tunes and its scattered party rave-ups. They aren't afraid to leave on all the one-takes, mistakes and outtakes either, plowing through the record's copious wrong notes with admirable dignity and aplomb.

—Allison Stewart

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 5.

FILE UNDER: Quirky but inspired rock 'n' roll.

R.I.Y.L.: Young Fresh Fellows, late Replacements, NRBQ.

MUSIC REVELATION ENSEMBLE *In The Name Of...* DIW-Columbia

Led by avant-blues guitarist and composer James Blood Ulmer, ably supported by the popping and thumb-whacking electric bassist Amin Ali on one side and the furious but very precise polyrhythmic phenomenon Cornell Rochester on the other side, the Music Revelation Ensemble blasts to bits any preconceptions of contemporary jazz. These are high-energy, warp-speed, metallic explosions modulated by super-quick, almost intuitive reactions and interplay. Multi-talented Sam Rivers appears on soprano, tenor and flute on three cuts; altoist Arthur Blythe, with his robust and keening upper register work, is on another; and baritonist Hamiett Bluiett of World Saxophone Quartet fame explodes on one cut. The power of this music is like a volcano erupting, but the beauty of the music is the finesse and accuracy of these gifted musicians, who play in a whirling, freestyle, no-holds-barred manner that is as invigorating as a double cup of Cuban espresso. The Music Revelation Ensemble is not for everyone, but if you like to be on the cutting edge of jazz, it doesn't get any sharper than this.

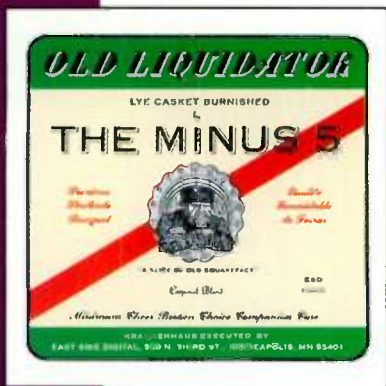
—Kalamu ya Salaam

DATALOG: Released May 16.

FILE UNDER: Cutting-edge jazz.

R.I.Y.L.: Last Exit, Hal Russell NRG Ensemble.

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



"They were playing not rock 'n' roll, but actual African music. That's kinda hard to focus on, culturally." —David Lee Roth, on *the Talking Heads*.

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PAW *Death To Traitors* *A&M*

Lawrence, Kansas' Paw first surfaced in the wake of the post-Nirvana signing ballyhoo a few years back with naught but a seven-inch or two to its name. The resultant debut album, *Dragline*, proved that not only could the band fit the intended bill of an angst-y, roaring guitar-rock beast, but that it had its own ideas of how to add some flavor to an already well-defined genre/marketing niche (read: grunge). If you dig through all the layers of flannel-clad volume, Paw is a country band at heart. Singer Mark Hennessey has a deep, hearty set of lungs that sound equally at home howling over a fierce wall of powerchords as they do gently pining for his mama's kitchen and hunting dog. Even when the band is going full throttle—kinda like being carried along in the eye of a twister charging its way across a Midwestern landscape—a stray backwoods colloquialism or downright pretty guitar arpeggio artfully betrays the menacing nature of it all. As far as second albums go, *Death To Traitors* could have shaken things up a bit more (a few tracks sound like slightly restructured versions of songs from the band's first LP), but then again, if it really ain't broke, why try to fix it? —Colin Helms

DATALOG: Released Aug. 8.

FILE UNDER: Back-of-an-open-pick-up grunge.

R.I.Y.L.: Dinosaur Jr, Mule, early Soundgarden.

RED KRAYOLA *Amor And Language* *Drag City*

Mayo Thompson has got to be some kind of center of gravity for the off-center. *Nobody* else makes records with supermodel Rachel Williams as cover star, L.A. art dealer Margo Leavin in the credits, and members of Gastr del Sol, Overpass, Tortoise, and the faculty of Pasadena Art Center (not to mention German painter Albert Oehlen) on the grooves. So what does this cynosure of the cerebral wings of several disciplines sound like after 20-plus years of coloring outside the lines? An off-the-cuff art-rocker, concerned more with the play of ideas than their polished presentation. Most of this EP was recorded bass-ackwards, with a lined-in, untreated guitar and vocal (you can hear Mayo breathing off-mic fairly often) being laid down before such niceties as, say, a rhythm section. "AI" (Artificial Intelligence?) features not one, but two such after-the-fact drum tracks, with George Hurley and John McEntire playing separate parts (presumably without reference to each other) in each channel, operating independently in the manner of hemispheres of a divided brain. "T (I, II)" uses experimental results from cognitive science as the governing metaphor of a love lyric: "We were turning you over in our minds/at about 10 rpm.../a mental picture, a mental picture of you." And it even has a hook! But for every one of Thompson's connections the listener does "get," there's probably five s/he's missing. Why, for example, does "The Wind" suddenly quote from "Moonlight Becomes You"? On this nine-song, 25-minute EP, the answers are less the point than the opportunity to observe a venturesome mind and his talented entourage. —Franklin Bruno

DATALOG: Released Jun. 25. A previously unreleased 1967 album, *Coconut Hotel*, also available.

FILE UNDER: Not-as-pretentious-as-it-sounds conceptual art-fun.

R.I.Y.L.: Slovenly, Pere Ubu, God Is My Co-Pilot, bands named above.

RESIDENTS *Gingerbread Man* *East Side Digital*

There they are again, those one-eyed, top-hatted stares of the Residents, peering into the chasms of our souls. They've been around for eons, making evil Halloween music, and they hit the ominous mark again with *Gingerbread Man*. This time, the Residents weave nightmare fairy tales with a cast of characters sharing stories of their respective demises. The Confused Transsexual decries the loss of his gender, not feeling connection with humanity as a man or woman; the Aging Musician laments: "Maybe if I put a bullet in my brain/They'd remember me like Kurt Cobain." Over warbling samples and keyboards, the sing-songy "Run, run, as fast as you can, can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man..."—something entrenched in our memories of childhood—pulls together the songs. With its brief length (37 minutes), *Gingerbread Man* serves as an opera or musical in miniature—almost like a depressed Gregory Chaucer creating an electronic *Canterbury Tales*. If that's not enough, or if you're interactively inclined, the Residents have also create a CD-ROM version of the story, so you can manipulate the '90s' Brothers very Grimm. —Molly Wright Steenson

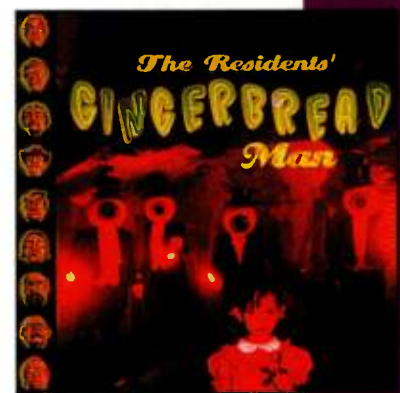
DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 5.

FILE UNDER: Eerie ghost-story operas.

R.I.Y.L.: Naked City, Negativland, Captain Beefheart.



"He was controllable as long as he was drinking. He was a very, very unhappy guy, real nasty. He's [short], but who knows for sure what he was so miserable about?" —Jerry Heller, on his experiences managing Van Morrison in the '60s and '70s, from an interview in BAM.




SAGE *7th Standard Rd.* Will

Sage works about as many angles on the rock three-piece as you could imagine, and they still keep it cohesive. Their riffs and melodies have tinges of prog-rock and Middle Eastern and Latin music, while the jazzy drumming restlessly avoids straight-up heaviness. The band's sense of atmospheric connects its range of song-styles, from brooding ballads to turbo-powered bizarro-billy. Producer extraordinaire Steve Fisk recorded *7th Standard Rd.*, the group's second album, and added a few tasty organ settings and licks. It's a rewarding record that doesn't try to storm the senses with the band's chops, but finds poignant pockets of music where few other bands look. Over bouncing, rubber-band propulsion, the trio drives impassioned, warped melodies and disturbing, creepy lyrics. Of the two singers, guitarist Marc Olsen has the more distinctive voice, a smoky wheeze that creeps under the skin and registers disjointed images, as in the graveyard-bound "Still One Place." But bassist Guy Davis brings some welcome guts to the mic and creative counterpoint to the jams. Whipping up a haze and plowing through it with gusto, Sage has definitely cleared its own path.

—Danny Housman

DATALOG: Released Jun. 27.

FILE UNDER: Cryptic, off-kilter rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Skin Yard, Savage Republic, early Soundgarden.


PAUL SCHUTZE *Apart* Caroline

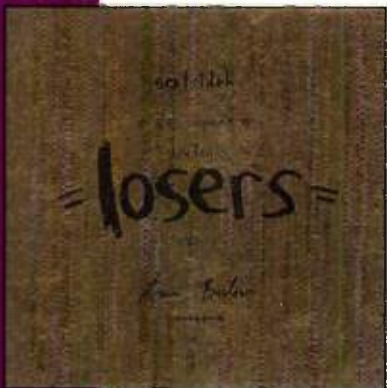
This two-disc instrumental collection by keyboardist/composer/sometime Eno-sideman Schutze walks a narrow path between pleasing avant-ambient and vapid effects-peddling. Disc I starts promisingly enough: "Rivers Of Mercury," with its shrill burble of pentatonic synths over deft-sounding (probably programmed) cymbals, wouldn't be out of place on an old ESP-Disc release. And a few tracks scare up some tension, with a mild industrial rumble reminiscent of a better-recorded version of old *Ear To The Grindstone* compilation tracks. But too many traffic in uninteresting rhythm beds ("The Sleeping Knife Dance"), Fripp-derived stings of what might be guitar ("The Coldest Light"), and, most often, the aimless, delay-laden string-synth textures that give "ambient" a bad name. Disc II, again, starts strongly with "Throat Full Of Stars," in which atonal sounds in several registers approach and recede at slightly different rates, all the layers remaining interestingly distinct. However, the three-part closer "Sleep" compounds the weakness mentioned above, sounding like nothing so much as the soundtrack for an "artsy" segment on the Playboy Channel. The obvious intelligence at work on the best pieces on *Apart* makes the silliness of the rest a disappointing mystery.

—Franklin Bruno

DATALOG: Released Jun. 8.

FILE UNDER: Soundcarving of variable keenness.

R.I.Y.L.: Eno's ambient records, Aphex Twin.


SENTRIDOH *The Original Losing Losers* Shrimper

Lou Barlow describes *The Original Losing Losers* as "over 40 songs of good manipulation or evil sincerity," and it's precisely this combination of traits that makes his songs great. Since his initial solo ventures in the late '80s (when he was still in Dinosaur Jr.), Barlow has been a home-recording pioneer whose lo-fi mastery is unmatched. The original cassette-only version of this Sentridoh recording—titled, simply, *Losers*—was released in 1990, and with its hand-crayoned inlay, it was like a tape made just for you by your pal, Lou. *The Original Losing Losers* is the third revised edition of that recording, and its 43 song-bites are, according to Barlow, "compiled from truly inferior tapes of stupid self involvement." Self-involved though it may be, this is Barlow's catharsis and, because of the intimacy of these home recordings, it's easy to feel like part of the process: He's perched on the end of his bed, howling into a tape recorder, and if you're lucky, maybe he'll let you sing a verse. Barlow's silly duets with his little sister (e.g. "Take An Aspirin") could be the work of any pair of siblings, but while anyone with a voice, a guitar and a four-track could do it three times, few could carry it off 43 times. Informal sketches ("I feel good about me inside me" repeated 14 times over hurried guitar strumming) are balanced by beautiful, complete songs that combine somber melodies with tender guitar playing. As lo-fi becomes high-brow, it is Barlow's willingness to share both silly self-indulgences and serious song-writing that makes *The Original Losing Losers* extremely rewarding.

—Jenny Eliscu

DATALOG: Released Jun. 27.

FILE UNDER: "True indie-folk trendsetting."

R.I.Y.L.: Sebadoh, Smog, Palace Brothers.

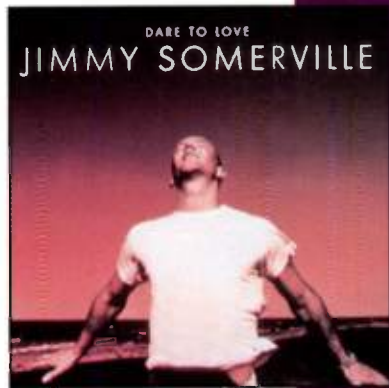
JIMMY SOMERVILLE *Dare To Love* London

Former Bronski Beat/Communards frontman Jimmy Somerville has pretty much taken the '90s off, but judging by *Dare To Love*, his first full release since 1990's *The Singles Collection*, more artists would be well advised to retreat from the studio for a period to collect their thoughts and music. *Dare To Love* is a remarkably consistent and entertaining collection of finely honed dance/pop, a genre that, let's face it, doesn't generally place a premium on personality. Somerville, however, has never been one to sacrifice his convictions to the beat. Here, they're carried along by wide-ranging rhythms (a dub intro here, a disco break there) and imaginative instrumental adornments (Spanish guitar solos, violin interludes). The erstwhile "Smalltown Boy," who scored back in the mid-'80s with a cover of Donna Summer's "I Feel Love," turns now to the Supremes for a faithful cover of "Someday We'll Be Together." Elsewhere, "Heartbeat" is a soaring, gushy opener ("I can see tomorrow in your eyes"), "Hurt So Good" lays a lilting island beat and soulful brass below Somerville's tried and true falsetto, "By Your Side" matches a hip-hop tempo with mid-period Beatles-esque pop, and so on. Lyrically, Somerville celebrates the gay lifestyle of the '90s, which, in his own words, encompasses "life, love, sex and death." Indeed, the romanticism of much of the material is colored by AIDS, and even the most jubilant outpourings are weighed down by a hint of grief. Still, the album is called *Dare To Love*, and it's about action and interaction. However Somerville's renewed interaction with his audience was delayed, it was time well spent. —Steven Stolder

DATALOG: Released Jul. 25.

FILE UNDER: Dance-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Erasure, Donna Summer, Book Of Love.

**SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS** *Dirt Track Date* DGC

Southern Culture On The Skids has always been a conspiracy of groove and grind, of crushed velour and tuck-'n'-roll naugahyde, of beehive hair and eight-track tape decks in gun-rack pickup trucks. Theirs is a world where Link Wray obscurities and a thousand lost swamp-grass blues 45s run riot in the hands of three punk-bred ne'er-do-wells. And not a dab of that has changed. In fact, a good chunk of *Dirt Track Date* will sound quite familiar to SCOTS vets, including the unpteenth recording of their chicken-tossing live fave "8 Piece Box." This isn't to say that familiarity is contemptible, just...well, *familiar!* Which means it'll thrill SCOTS fans and novices alike. But, oh, to be a SCOTS virgin catching that first earful of their patented shag-carpeting-and-walnut-paneling rock. Suffice to say there are probably worse ways to spend a Saturday night than to pick up this, a case of Coors Light, and that sweet young thang who'll probably take those empties home for use as hair rollers. Dig the cold bucket of Colonel Sanders from the back of the icebox, put on "All-Star Caged Grudge Match Wrestling" on the tube, slip this into the boombox, crack open a few future hair rollers, and let 'er rip! Best cut: the countless minutes of dirt track racing noises at the end. —Tim Stegall

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 15.

FILE UNDER: Smashed-and-torn roots thrash.

R.I.Y.L.: The Cramps, the A-Bones, Hasil Adkins.

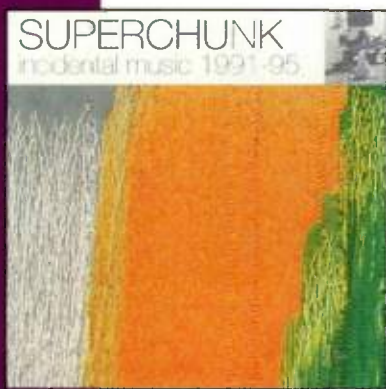
**SUGAR** *Besides* Rykodisc

It's the third best-of-Bob (Mould) project this year, but unless you've been remarkably devoted in collecting Sugar's promos, b-sides and live shows, you probably haven't had access to these puppies. *Besides* collects those stray dogs that never found their way onto *Copper Blue*, *Beaster*, or *File Under: Easy Listening*, and slaps them together in a 70-minute dose. Here's the solo side of Mould in a different version of "I Can't Change Your Mind," lushly spreading nasal harmonies over thick acoustic guitar. Over there is the Who's "Armenia, City in the Sky," capturing the headbanging stealth of Sugar's covers. Up ahead: bassist David Barbe nabs the songwriting spotlight, plunging into "Where Diamonds Are Haloes." Considering *File's* turn toward the unplugged, *Besides'* strengths come from the raucous, feedback-chord side of Sugar—of which the album has no shortage. The first 25,000 copies of *Besides* offer a bonus CD: 18 live songs at Minneapolis' First Avenue in October, 1994. These tracks yield Sugar's leakproof expertise, as they tie your eardrums to a monster truck and whip them around the block, the buzzy din of Sugar in your veins. —Molly Wright Steenson

DATALOG: Released Jul. 25.

FILE UNDER: Superpower pop guitar.

R.I.Y.L.: Superchunk, FIREHOSE, the Replacements.


SUPERCHUNK *Incidental Music 1991-95* Merge

In the liner notes to Superchunk's second singles-and-rarities compilation, offhandedly titled *Incidental Music*, a seemingly weary Mac McCaughan summarizes the album in a way that might serve as the *raison d'être* for the group itself: "whatever, it's just a bunch of songs." Such is the curse of Superchunk, ever satisfying the demands of indie cred when all they want to do is bash their way into the statosphere with their proletarian punk-pop. The band really hasn't altered its sound much in the three years since *Tossing Seeds (Singles '89-'91)* came out; in fact, listening to the two collections back-to-back, it's hard to tell which is which, except for the presence of "Slack Motherfucker" on the earlier album. But what Superchunk's critics miss is just how capable Mac, Laura, Jim and Jon are at what they do. If you need proof, indulge in "Mower," with a goofy chorus ("It was a robin's egg, and it was blue") yelled by Mac so passionately you'll be singing it for days; or the should-be-classic "Cadmium," about the color of blood spattered when you "hit self-destruct." Compilations are a great way to get to know Superchunk, who spread their love over a dizzying array of singles and EPs to keep themselves from getting bored—and 18 tracks is fabulous Chunk value for the money. The tunes do run together somewhat: A cover of the Magnetic Fields' "100,000 Fireflies," widely praised when it came out, sounds like just another pit stop in this context. But Superchunk has seen the Peter Principle and knows its limitations; let us praise, not bury them for it.

—Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Released Jun. 19. Video for "Mower."

FILE UNDER: Efficient indie-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Husker Du, Buzzcocks, Green Day.


SUPERSUCKERS *Sacrilicious* Sub Pop

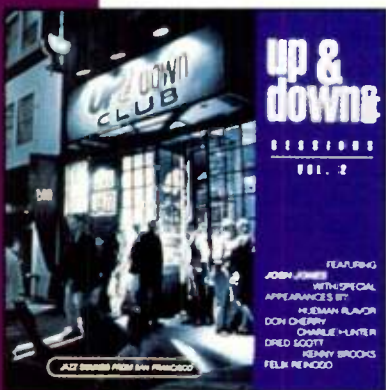
Aside from the more wholesome and smiley Fastbacks, Supersuckers are the last practitioners of Marshall-stacks-and-a-sneer punk rock on the increasingly grungeless Sub Pop roster. They know the value of Dead Boys-derived powerchords and loutishness, but there are too many Kiss lunchboxes and scuffed Ozzy records in their closets to escape the clutches of utter kitschiness. After three LPs' worth of their crash-'n'-burn wiseguys, the Supersuckers are still basically the Supersuckers, but this time there are a couple of differences. For one, *Sacrilicious* marks the debut of ex-Didj it Rick Sims as a Supersucker, and it's hard not to spot Sims's manic guitar stylings and Detroit-on-acid songwriting herein, especially on "Run Like A Motherfucker," the only one of his four tunes to feature his patented Helium Boy vocals. Then there's the horn section on "My Victim," which might as well have its name changed legally to "Try A Little Tenderness." Or the utterly blue "Don't Go Blue," with its slide guitar, string bass, and keyboards (courtesy of Miss Bobbie Nelson, sister of Willie, at whose Arlyn Studios in Austin this was tracked). Produced with gonzoed energy and a meticulous ear for sonic detail by Butthole Surfer Paul Leary, *Sacrilicious* is the most accomplished of all Supersuckers records to date, and hardly more-of-the-same.

—Tim Stegall

DATALOG: Released Aug. 8.

FILE UNDER: Snotty-but-silly power-punk.

R.I.Y.L.: Dead Boys, vintage Damned, Motorhead, Didj it.


VARIOUS ARTISTS *Up & Down Club Sessions, Vol. 1 & 2* Prawn Song-Mammoth

One of the major acid jazz laboratories in this country is San Francisco's Up & Down Club, where musicians and vocalists from various backgrounds share talent and ideas. Mammoth Records' *Up & Down Club Sessions*, two CDs of selections by the club's staple ensembles, compiles some of the Bay Area's best acid jazz, served up live and direct and in lots of different flavors. Hueman Flavor, an ensemble that dominates the second of the album's two volumes, sports dark and funky basslines, an inventive and rich-toned tenor saxophone, a honey-voiced female vocalist and a rapper on tracks like "As I Reach," "Round Midnight" and "Destiny," while on the hip-hop end of the acid jazz spectrum, Alphabet Soup waxes poetical over a laid-back jazz groove on "Music In My Head." On a different tip, "Knucklebean" by the Kenny Brooks Trio, a fast saxophone-driven free-for-all, and "Up And Around" by the Will Bernard Trio, a highly-improvised and guitar-dominated tune, are more reminiscent of hard bop and Wayne Shorter-style fusion. Other styles are represented as well: The Charlie Hunter Trio and The Dry Look offer straight and nasty jazzy instrumental funk on "Funky Niblets" and "Mr. Puffy" respectively, while the Josh Jones Latin Jazz Ensemble sizzles with an insistent and up-tempo recipe of Latin jazz on "Here on Earth" and "Blues in Havana." Jazz has always been about inclusion and cross-pollination, and, though hip-hop fans will find most of the rhymes unimpressive, this compilation should offer something to appeal to all tastes.

—Philippe Wamba

DATALOG: Released Jun. 27.

FILE UNDER: Flavors for days.

R.I.Y.L.: Buckshot LeFonque, Incognito, UFO, Donald Byrd.

THE WALKABOUTS *Setting the Woods on Fire* Cargo

It says something about the inroads (or lack thereof) the Walkabouts have made in their own country that this 12-song set appears in America more than a year after it came out in Europe. It's a surprising state of affairs, considering that this quintet is a mature, full-service rock band with all the appeal of, say, the Screaming Trees. Musically, the quartet stands apart from the pack, thanks to the wide-ranging keyboards of Glenn Slater and the plaintive/gruff vocal poles held by Carla Torgerson and lyricist Chris Eckman. While *Setting The Woods On Fire's* disposition is pensive and vaguely ominous throughout, there's a full range of material to be found here. "Sand and Gravel" is a somber and resolute tune with a stately vocal by Torgerson, and Eckman steps to the fore on "Old Crow," an *Exile On Main Street*-like rocker with Slater making like Nicky Hopkins on the keys while Eckman whips slide guitar runs across the muck. "Hole in the Mountain" brings the two voices together over a chugging Stones beat and brass from guests the Tiny Hat Orchestra Horns. There's something about the Walkabouts that makes one think of Thin White Rope. Maybe it's a shared taste for no-nonsense music, or that the Walkabouts' songs, like those of their defunct (and sadly neglected) California counterparts, seem to be set someplace off the interstate and far from any tourist attractions. Still, you can't help but hope that the Walkabouts will eventually prove easier to locate.

—Steven Stolder

DATALOG: Released Apr. 14. Cargo will soon release two other Walkabouts albums new to America, *New West Motel* and *Satisfied Mind*.

FILE UNDER: Rock with roots.

R.I.Y.L.: *Exile On Main Street*, *Fairport Convention*, *Jayhawks*, *Eleventh Dream Day*.

WCKR SPGT *A Tea Party Of Love* Car In Car Disco Product

Give a college student a guitar and a four-track recorder and you're likely to get something like *A Tea Party Of Love*, an album spewed from the psyche of Wckr Spgt. In the nonsensical tradition of They Might Be Giants and Ween, Wckr Spgt's subject matter includes such riveting subjects as a flock of ducks in Grand Rapids, e.e. cummings, and the realization that "Freud was right." Lo-fi to the max (the hum of the tape recorder is evident throughout), this *Tea Party* is only for students of the absurd. Sure, anyone can sit down and chant "I don't want to be left alone with David and Shirley Jones," but Wckr Spgt usually manages to reach an inspired level of silliness. The album's two centerpieces are an epic about the condition of Howard Cosell's theoretical sores, and two advertising jingles turned inside out: "WEA" with the refrain "Take good care of yourself, cookie lover," and "So This Is What They Call Early Retirement," which cranks up the Casiotone beat box. On the negative side, the self-absorption has a backwash of real nastiness, and the lack of musical variety does pall after a time. But hey, where else can you hear songs called "Everyone's Dead (Oh No)" and "Your Red Hair Hides A Long Neck?"

—Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Released Jul. 1. A companion cassette, *Finger Food*, is also available.

FILE UNDER: Lo-fi wanking.

R.I.Y.L.: Ween, They Might Be Giants, Violent Femmes.

X *Unclogged* Infidelity

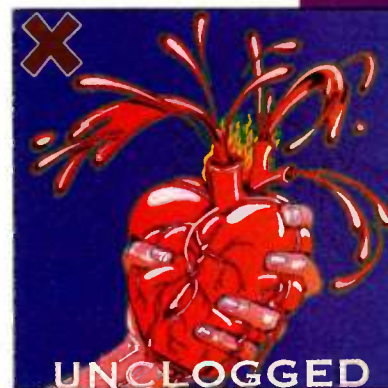
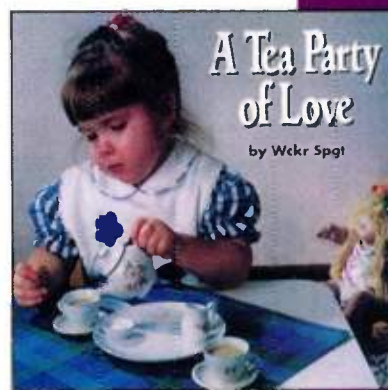
L.A.'s original pogo poets, grown sick of residing in a corporate music world that holds neither sympathy nor reverence for them and their accomplishments, pull out, decide their music's important enough to keep X going come Hell or Top 40, then turn their amps off. (And put the record out on their own label.) Which isn't as bizarre a move as one might guess: Anyone remember the Knitters, the country-folk drenched side project John and Exene piloted with Dave Alvin? The Knitters this ain't, however. Much like the cover illustration, X grabs its past and attempt to squeeze new life from its heart. The band at least succeeds in recasting old standards like "White Girl" into some interesting new settings. Certainly the country & western heart of many of these tunes is more readily apparent, and the near-absence of Billy Zoom's (or, more recently, Tony Gilkyson's) roaring sparkle-coat distortion forces or allows them to add new flavors and spices, like D.J. Bonebrake's subtle vibraphone. Perhaps the most interesting X record in years, if simply for the new kicks they manage to find in their past.

—Tim Stegall

DATALOG: Released Jun. 13.

FILE UNDER: Punk's country heart.

R.I.Y.L.: X, Dave Alvin.



"Lately, I have had this crazy idea that I'd like to get into stock car racing—let out some of that work week tension, you know. Thing is, I don't know anything about the sport other than it's mostly left turns..."

—from a letter to the editor of Stock Car Racing Magazine.

FLASHBACK

ROOTS • REISSUES • RETRO

by James Lien

IN THE BINS ABC, Easy As 1-2-3



It's very pleasant on the desert island where this columnist has retreated to ride out the waves of Michael Jackson hype and hysteria. No TV, radio or newspapers—I figured I'd just take the next year or so off, and when I returned, all the hoopla over the King Of Pop would have subsided, although I could have sworn I picked up a few seconds of "Man In The Mirror" on the shortwave radio I brought with me. If you absolutely must succumb to some form of this hysteria (or is that *HISter*ia?), we'd recommend Motown's lavish **JACKSON 5** anthology *Soulstation!* over the Epic solo

set in a second. It was still in production as this column went to press, but it promises to spotlight the wondrous period of '68-'72, when the Jacksons were a bona fide treasure of American soul music as well as one of Motown's most successful entertainment commodities. Following in the style of previous lavish Motown sets dedicated to Marvin Gaye, the Temptations and Smokey Robinson, this box set shows that The Jacksons, Michael included, have never since been as good as they were in this golden time.

Seminal German industrial artists **EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN** have just had their essential '80s albums reissued on CD by Thirsty Ear. The super-scary *Drawings Of Patient O.T.* (1983) and *Halber Mensch* (1985) are among the finest and most riveting albums the "industrial" genre produced. But more recent fans of the genre might be best forewarned. There's very little that resembles techno here: It's more like performance art or some kind of unspeakable cathartic ritual. Highly recommended for listening to while stripping paint or performing any task that involves operating other heavy machinery.

On the jazz front, things are looking better than ever. In one of the best catalog moves ever, GRP has revived the fabled Impulse! label; the legendary jazz imprint was home to just about every major figure in the jazz world of the '50s and '60s, including John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, Pharoah Sanders, you name it. The label has been reactivated—look for new recordings from McCoy Tyner and Charles Lloyd, among others—but they've also gone back and remastered one of the most impressive jazz catalogs of all time. The new CDs feature 20-bit remastering and packaging that includes extra liner notes and photos, modelled after Japanese reissues, which any diehard CD collector will tell you are the best on the planet. The first batch included three John Coltrane titles (for more on Trane, see the article on page 16), with future titles including Sonny Rollins' *East Broadway*, Charles Mingus' *Mingus Mingus Mingus* and *Black Saint And The Sinner Lady*, Archie

Shepp's *Fire Music*, Pharoah Sanders' *Karma*, and a never-before-heard Duke Ellington solo piano concert tentatively titled *Live At The Whitney*. Hopefully, as they continue, the folks behind the Impulse! catalog won't overlook obscure but wonderful albums in the vaults in favor of just releasing those by the bigger names and more famous stars.

In the "You Gotta Hear This" category, AVI Entertainment has just released *Blues Hangover: Excello Rarities*, compiling rare tracks from the legendary swamp blues label of the '60s. The reason to own it: The second disc includes the never-before-released recordings of one **EARLY DRANE**, an anonymous bluesman from Euporia, Mississippi. Drane apparently mailed in his audition tape to Excello out of the blue, and there's really nothing else in the world like the home-recorded charm in its 45 minutes. He was one of those characters who got everything wrong. Take his "Leaving In The Morning": Unlike most blues songs where the singer goes to Chicago or California to a better life, in this case the singer is rather happily leaving the North to go back to sharecropping on the farm for the "bossman." Judging from the rest of his songs, he didn't fare much better. He performs a rendition of the hymn "Were You There (When They Crucified My Lord)," which indicates that he clearly didn't know anything other than the title and the basic melody line of the first line. From there, he spins a rambling, off-the-cuff meditation that bears little resemblance to the song, and only a passing similarity to the Biblical account. Meanwhile, while Drane is singing, dogs bark, the TV blares in the other room, and at one point you can clearly hear women or children carrying on a conversation in the same room. Something in his cracked guitar work and garbled lyrics marks him as a precursor and spiritual kin to another mystery man, Jandek, and if he'd been rediscovered in time, he might be considered today as immortal a bluesman as Mississippi John Hurt or Lightnin' Hopkins, something that makes his recordings all the more poignant.

Verve has just released *His Majesty King Funk*, by the late jazz guitarist **GRANT GREEN**. This 1964 outing also features funk-jazz guiding light Donald Byrd, with bonus tracks from Byrd's *Up With Donald Byrd* album, recorded at the same sessions. On the more modern funk tip, look for the Mercury-Chronicles two-CD **OHIO PLAYERS** retrospective, *Funk On Fire: The Mercury Anthology*, which includes such great funk workouts as "Skin Tight," "Sweet Sticky Thing" and "Love Rollercoaster."

If **DUKE ELLINGTON's** *Far East Suite* is a less-than-celebrated jewel in his mighty canon, it's only because so many of his other monumental achievements and major works are so massive, it's inevitable that something somewhere has to get overlooked. In the fall of 1963, Duke Ellington took his orchestra on a remarkably ambitious world tour, and two years later he composed one of his grandest works, *The Far East Suite*, released in 1966. These musical impressions of exotic lands show his orchestra in a whole new light, approaching new tonalities, new sounds, years before such world music/jazz fusions were commonplace. In hindsight, Ellington's tour of the Middle and Far East was even more extraordinary in that it was conducted under the auspices of the United States State Department, a sobering observation given today's political climate, where the only time music seems to be discussed in political arenas is in terms of slashing funding for the arts and education, or censoring "offensive" lyrics. This makes *The Far East Suite* food for thought as well as wonderful music. **END**



IMMORTAL Battles In The North

Osмосe

Emperor, Mayhem and Burzum are all rotting in jails or graves, and while poetic younger bands In The Woods and Ulver continue to develop, *Battles In The North* is a hyperspeed black assault that holds fast the evil Nordic dominance of the underground. While Immortal is not the most notorious black-metal band in Norway, these "sons of Northern darkness" are the only wholly extreme group with three albums under their bullet belts and any performance history at all. Eking by with minimal atmospheric flair, the furious fightin' guitarists Abbath and Demonaz mostly funnel their emotional sides into building a barrage of Bathory-like force. With blasters like "Cursed Realms Of The Winterdemons" and "Moonrise Fields Of Sorrow," *Battles* is pure metal eccentricity: a blur of spurting wickedness, baroque bombast, and foul temper. The effect is remarkable, similar to that hypnotic thrill of threshing ice in a whining blender.



RIFFS

The new **SAMAEL** mini-LP, *Rebellion* (Century Media), is pompous and polished, taking a more fluffed approach to heavy death-metal than even last year's elaborate *Ceremony Of Opposites*. The Swiss quartet tends to be a little ponderous in all its atmospheric splendor, but patience pays rewards. After a minute of silence at the beginning of the untitled sixth track, a piece of sophisticated Euro-pop served Samael-style, shows the unique inner character of a heavy band whose main songwriter is a drummer second and an electronic composer first... Farther down to Earth (on the same sophistication scale) sits **CANDIRIA**, whose innovative and promising five-song demo *Subliminal* (c/o Eric Matthews, 3216 Avenue K, Brooklyn, NY 11210) dips and dives into darkness with



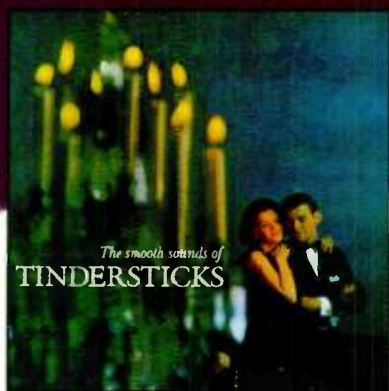
radical speed, voracious vocals, and intricate arrangements. Like early Morbid Angel, all the band's quirks unify to powerful effect... **SEPULTURA**, being of sunny South American temperament, isn't afraid to let the good times roll along with a few heads. Its second home video, *Third World Chaos*, will please fans and interest outsiders with its live footage and quick interview cuts between promo clips for "Territory," "Arise" and "Inner Self." Frontman Max Cavalera takes an outspoken role as Third World rock star, emphasizing political aspects of Sepultura that often go unnoticed in the midst of all the thrashing. Jello Biafra sits in on "Holiday In Cambodia," passing the generational gauntlet... The World Wide Web is stuck with plenty of metal nerds with nothing to tell except the names, song titles, and running times of every record in their predictable collections. In the proliferating Nation of xKull (<http://www.interport.net/~spidr/index.html>), however, an ever-growing array of reviews and interviews is only part of the picture.

Beyond the metallic zone of this mysterious and arcane realm, you can visit a funeral home with coffin advertisements, a berry-filled forest path, hearty and wrenching comments on cars, and an overarching schema of prehistoric poppies, flying alien crystal birds, inverted mountain ranges and such. The expanse of xKull has all the imagination much of the Internet lacks.



- 1 **FEAR FACTORY**
Demanufacture
Roadrunner
- 2 **WHITE ZOMBIE**
Astro-Creep: 2000...
Geffen
- 3 **FLOTSAM & JETSAM**
Drift
MCA
- 4 **MORBID ANGEL**
Domination
Giant-WB
- 5 **CLUTCH**
Clutch
EastWest-EEG
- 6 **FIGHT**
A Small Deadly Space
Epic
- 7 **SOULS AT ZERO**
A Taste For The Perverse
Energy
- 8 **MONSTER MAGNET**
Dopes To Infinity
A&M
- 9 **DEICIDE**
Once Upon The Cross
Roadrunner
- 10 **GRIP INC.**
Power Of Inner Strength
Metal Blade
- 11 **FILTER**
Short Bus
Reprise
- 12 **OVERKILL**
Wrecking Your Neck - Live
CMC
- 13 **CROWBAR**
Time Heals Nothing
Pavement
- 14 **DEATH**
Symbolic
Roadrunner
- 15 **MISERY LOVES CO.**
Misery Loves Co.
Earache
- 16 **PRIMUM**
Tales From The Punchbowl
Interscope
- 17 **FAITH NO MORE**
King For A Day, Fool For A Lifetime
Slash-Reprise
- 18 **SUFFOCATION**
Pierced From Within
Roadrunner
- 19 **UGLY KID JOE**
Menace To Sobriety
Mercury
- 20 **MALEVOLENT CREATION**
Eternal
Pavement
- 21 **SAM BLACK CHURCH**
Superchrist
Taang!
- 22 **KORN**
Korn
Immortal-Epic
- 23 **CATHERINE WHEEL**
Happy Days
Fontana-Mercury
- 24 **KING DIAMOND**
The Spider's Lullabye
Metal Blade
- 25 **NIXONS**
Foma
MCA

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



TINDERSTICKS

"Here"

Sub Pop

"I was dressed for success," the bass voice intones over gentle vibraphone and organ, "but success it never comes..." And suddenly it's clear: this is a tear-in-my-martini cover of Pavement's "Here," the least characteristic song on *Slanted And Enchanted*, and the one that stuck in everyone's memory most. A strange song to have on a first album, it's a sort of end-of-career self-assessment, the darker side of "My Way": "everything's ending here." The point that Tindersticks makes by giving it a full and serious easy-listening work-up is that, divorced from the irony and detachment that define Pavement, it really is a tremendously powerful song. A good point alone doesn't make a good record, though, so it's fortunate that Tindersticks treats "Here" with unsmirking care, giving its music genuine lushness and thoughtful orchestration, and its lyrics a restrained, passionate reading.

New York. And on the other side of a split single on Time Bomb, **SLANT 6** makes its farewell bow with a terrific original, "I Love You A Lot," and a tweaked cover of David Bowie's "Rebel Rebel," both marked by the band's clipped, beelining instrumental ferocity (and equally characteristic botched drum fills).

The first single by **SUKPATCH** (Slabco) doesn't look like anything much—it's got a real eye-strainer of a sleeve—but what's inside is original, catchy and a whole lot of fun. The band's big trick is combining homemade, slightly out-of-tune guitar/synth pop tunes with venerable breakbeats and a few found sounds, then running it all through a lo-fiolator to give it a sense of disjunction and accidental coherence. "Cabo San Lucas" is a casual, jolly take on the sonic ideas of My Bloody Valentine's "Soon"; "Jerry Mulligan On 45" is a slight, pastoral tune with some nice backwards guitar, layered bass and a chintzy, pooting little drum machine that sounds exactly right. Fans of Spare Snare should keep an eye out for this one.

CORDELIA'S DAD's recent, superb album *Comet* consisted mostly of acoustic versions of traditional American folk songs. Now the band has turned its attention to electric rock, with "Three Snake Leaves" (Scenescof). The results are also awfully impressive—in no small part because of the band's background in folk music, which pokes its head through in these songs' melody lines, vocal ornamentation and general sense of dignity and import. The anthemic power of the choruses, male/female harmonies and general guitar-sound depth bring Versus to mind, but there's nobody who sounds quite like this; it's worth the effort it may take to seek out.

Finally, the purest pop kick of the month comes from **MARBLES**—also known as Robert S. of the Apples In Stereo, with some help from other members of the Elephant 6 recording collective. "Go Marilee" (Bus Stop) is two and a half minutes of jangly joy, sparkling all over with handclaps and shaking bells. The flip, "Grant Me The Day," is as true a homage to Brian Wilson as has ever been recorded—possessed with the spirit of the beach without actually quoting any of the man's songs, and helped along by Robert's pellucid crooning.

The "what was *that?*!" award for this month goes to East Lansing, Michigan's hometown heroes **DOWN**, whose astonishing third single "Don't Dig The New Breed" (Bonehead) is a 56-second electrical shock—it blindsides you with its opening, blurs and sparks to keep you from following where it's going, ends just when you're expecting it to take off, and doesn't make any sense at all until it's all over and you can put together the pieces. "Get out of the way," Scott Sendra sings, while he plays guitar like a shorting connection. The other side's "Solid State" is only four seconds longer; like "New Breed," it starts with a jolt, then builds up to a climax that never comes, so you have to play it again for the payoff. Extra points for the extraordinary packaging, which incorporates an entire circuit board.

If two one-minute songs aren't enough for you, try the *Sixty Second Compilation* (Coat-Tail), which gives ten diverse rock and jazz avant-garde types a minute apiece. A few names are familiar, like Elliott Sharp, who contributes the dark techno-based "Roil," and Zeena Parkins, whose "Sleazy" is a creepy bit of Weimar Republic ooze. Some lesser-known names do some awfully impressive stuff here, too, especially the Flying Luttenbachers, whose screeching, noodling "Deception" plays high-end/low-end dichotomies for all they're worth, and the L-R Duo's harp/accordion improv "Tandt."

THE MAKE-UP—former Nation Of Ulysses frontman Ian Svenonius's new band—has suddenly cranked out three singles. Opinions of them differ around here. Those of us who haven't seen the band live find the records to be interesting but unmemorable amalgams of '60s garage and raw R&B-isms; those who have swear by the singles. Two of them, though, are splits with unimpeachable sides by other bands. "Trans-Pleasant Express" (Black Gemini) is backed with **THE META-MATICS'** crackling neo-No Wave experiment "Absence Of Rhythm," a gem that wouldn't have been out of place as a bonus single with *No*

BY TIM HASLETT

VARIOUS ARTISTS The Theory of Evolution

Warp-Wax Trax!/TVT



London's Evolution label has released some of the most challenging techno of the past year and

a half. Home to such visionaries as Reload, E621, The Jedi Knights and Wish Mountain,

the label has refused to be circumscribed by narrow definitions of techno.

The nascent electro revival was helped along in no small measure by the

team of Tom Middleton and Mark Pritchard (better known as Global

Communication), who under the pseudonyms listed above have created some

of the most progressive, hyper-kinetic techno on wax in the past year. The

most jolting track here is "Antacid" by Link and E621, a springy electro-

charged floor slammer which first appeared as an import only a few weeks

ago. One of the more unsettling moments is Wish Mountain's "Royal

Wedding," which dissects the wedding vows of Charles and Diana to chilling

effect. The early projects by the indefatigable Reload can also be found here,

including "Birth Of A Disco Dancer" and "Sexomatic," both of which blaze with

a thousand gigawatts of electric energy. These artists negotiate the space between

the dancefloor and the avant-garde with considerable dexterity, and, more importantly,

you can hear just how much fun they had making this music.



ON THE FLIP SIDE

As the New York house world grows more incestuous and stagnant, other U.S. cities are exploring the possibilities of deep house. **Sharam** and **Dubfire**, who make up the Deep Dish collective, launched their tiny label in Germantown, Maryland a year ago, and are now on the verge of quitting their day jobs. Their newfound occupational freedom is due in no small part to three records: "Love Songs" by **Chocolate City** (Deep Dish), **Prana's** "The Dream" (Tribal America-I.R.S.) and **Quench's** "Sexy Dance" (Tribal America-I.R.S.), all of which are enjoying international turntable acclaim. "Love Songs" is the most sublime moment in dance music this year, with an unequaled sense of melody and melodrama, buffered by stinging sax blasts and Hammond chords that seem to enter the bloodstream directly. "The Dream" is another piping hot Hammond exercise with bottomless basslines with smoothly rounded edges and hints of delicate vocal samples flitting to and fro. The Deep Dish team devises tracks that are, like the best contemporary dance music, blissfully weightless and supremely heavy at the same moment... The highly prolific duo of Dougans and Cockbain (that's **Future Sound of London** to you) is not new to underground dance music. Despite what you might think, the team first came to prominence in '88 during England's acid-inspired summer of love with the terrifying **Humanoid** project. Since that early outing, they've been navigating the highways and byways of the new electronica like few of their peers. The release of their latest project, **ISDN** (Astralwerks-Caroline), comes at a time when the group's popularity in the U.S. is increasing daily. Culled from several live radio broadcasts, this collection represents FSOL's need to break free from the restrictions of live audience performance. They hold that live stage shows are the last vestige of rock 'n' roll's dominance among popular musics. This ambitious album ranges from the wiggled-out jazz atmospherics of "Far Out Son Of A Lung" and "Smokin' Japanese Babe" to the lunar histrionics of "Study Of Six Guitars" and the spooky "You're Creeping Me Out." **ISDN** is music from this world but not of it.



- 1 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Transmissions From The Planet Dog
Planet Dog-Mammoth
- 2 **IRRESISTIBLE FORCE**
Global Chillage
Astralwerks-Caroline
- 3 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Theory Of Evolution
Warp/Max Trax!/TVT
- 4 **SVEN YATH**
The Harlequin-The Robot
And The Ballet-Dancer
Eye Q-WB
- 5 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Tresor 3: New Directions In
Global Techno
NovaMute
- 6 **FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON**
ISDN
Astralwerks-Caroline
- 7 **HARDFLOOR**
Respect
Harthouse-Eye Q
- 8 **APHEX TWIN**
I Care Because You Do
Sire-EEG
- 9 **SPICELAB**
A Day On Our Planet
Harthouse-Eye Q
- 10 **ORB**
Orbvs Terrarvm
Island
- 11 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Positive Energy
Moonshine
- 12 **MOUSE ON MARS**
Vulvaland
Too Pure-American
- 13 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Earthrise.ntone.l
Instinct
- 14 **PROTOTYPE 909**
Transistor Rhythm
Instinct
- 15 **MOBY**
Everything Is Wrong
Elektra-EEG
- 16 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Jungle Warfare
Moonshine
- 17 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Hypnotic State
C&S-MicMac
- 18 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Jungle Massive
Payday/frr-London
- 19 **KIRLIAN**
Data (EP)
Sahko (Finland)
- 20 **PARADISE 3001**
Sunsports
ESP-Sun-Roadrunner
- 21 **BLACK DOG**
Spanners
EastWest-EEG
- 22 **DIE KRUPPS**
Rings Of Steel
Cleopatra
- 23 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Delusions Of Grandeur
Hard Kiss
- 24 **SEEFEEEL**
Succor
Warp (UK)
- 25 **KEN ISHII**
Innerelements
R&S

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

25

- 1 **MOBB DEEP**
The Infamous
Loud-RCA
- 2 **GRAND PUBA**
2000
Elektra-EEG
- 3 **OL' DIRTY BASTARD**
Return To The 36 Chambers:
The Dirty Version
Elektra-EEG
- 4 **MASTA ACE INCORPORATED**
Sittin' On Chrome
Delicious Vinyl-Capitol
- 5 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Pump Ya Fist: Hip Hop Inspired
By The Black Panthers
Avatar-Polygram
- 6 **NOTORIOUS B.I.G.**
Ready To Die
Bad Boy-Arista
- 7 **MIC GERONIMO**
"Masta IC" (12")
Blunt-TV7
- 8 **B.U.M.S**
Lyfe 'N' Tyme
Priority
- 9 **SHOW & A.G.**
Goodfellas
Payday/frr-London
- 10 **ROOTS**
Do You Want More?????
DGC
- 11 **ARTIFACTS**
Between A Rock And A Hard Place
Big Beat
- 12 **THA ALKAHOLIKS**
Coast II Coast
Loud-RCA
- 13 **HEATHER B**
"All Glocks Down" (12")
Pendulum-EMI
- 14 **SPECIAL ED**
Revelations
Profile
- 15 **KING JUST**
Mystics Of The Gods
Black Fist-Select
- 16 **JEMINI THE GIFTED ONE**
"Funk Soul Sensation" (12")
Mercury
- 17 **RAEKWON**
"Glaciers Of Ice" (12")
Loud-RCA
- 18 **METHOD MAN**
Tical
Def Jam/RAL-Island
- 19 **AZ**
"Sugar Hill" (12")
Pendulum-EMI
- 20 **ACEYALONE**
"Mic Check" (12")
Capitol
- 21 **THE NONCE**
World Ultimate
Wild West-American
- 22 **BIG L**
Lifestylz Ov Da Poor & Dangerous
Columbia
- 23 **NAUGHTY BY NATURE**
Poverty's Paradise
Tommy Boy
- 24 **COMMON SENSE**
Resurrection
Relativity
- 25 **MAD LION**
Real Ting
Weeded-Nervous



HIP-HOP

BY GLEN SANSONE

GURU

Jazzmatazz Vol. 2: The New Reality

(Chrysalis-EMI)

When Gang Starr's Guru released his first all-star-packed experiment *Jazzmatazz*, chances are he didn't know that he would be raising both hip-hop and jazz to a beautiful new level. It can be argued that at the time both hip-hop and jazz were suffering from a lack of fresh musical ideas. But when jazz greats like Donald Byrd and Lonnie Liston Smith played alongside the thud of slammin' hip-hop beats, the styles not only blended better than rice and peas, but took on logical new forms and embodied the deep-rooted traditions of Afro-American culture. For *Vol. 2: The New Reality*, Guru had the difficult task of making a record that sounds every bit as refreshing as the first. *Jazzmatazz Vol. 2* offers greater variety and sounds more like a complete record instead of an experimental showcase; it builds upon a firm foundation and mixes in a strong message with a wider global cross-section of talent that stretches into R&B, soul, funk and reggae. *The New Reality* is amazingly consistent, even as it carries vocalists ranging from rapper Kool Keith ("Young Ladies") to Chaka Kahn, Patra, and Ini Kamoze, who adds luster to "Medicine." Unlike the first *Jazzmatazz*, Guru doesn't sit back and play tour guide; his rapping skills are in top form on "Respect The Architect" and "Nobody Knows" (featuring vocalist Shara Nelson), and he speaks with passion and conviction on "Lifesaver" and "Living In This World" (featuring Sweet Sable). Now that the rap-meets-jazz concept is no longer new, crazy-cool Guru is taking yet another step forward to remain one of black music's most crucial artists.

BONUS BEATS



As a polished, sharp-dressed teenager, **SPECIAL ED** recorded two acclaimed albums: *Youngest In Charge* and *Legal*. But then, Ed seemingly vanished. Perhaps it was because rap music was beginning to reflect more hardcore reality, and Ed needed some time to examine and experience life on his own for his music to mirror the times. His four-year hiatus saw him contributing only the title track of Spike Lee's film, *Crooklyn*. On "Crooklyn" and on his new album *Revelations (Profile)*, Ed is all grown up, and his updated style (which now includes dancehall) boasts a confident, rough edge. Ed is cast in a classic MC mold: His self-confidence is just as perceptible as his ingenious, sharp-witted, Brooklyn-bred raps. On cuts like "Neva Go Back" and "We Rule," Ed flexes a cadence with a natural, almost effortless rhythm similar to L.L. Cool J.'s, but with a more jagged, start/stop quality. And like great MCs of the past, Ed's raps (just listen to the KRS-One-sampling "Lyrics") systematically knock out competitors, raise their arms, and dance in victory...We hate to be late on such brilliant records, but two records already in the racks, **SHOW & A.G.**'s *Goodfellas (Payday/frr-L.L.S.)* and **GRAND PUBA**'s *2000 (Elektra-EEG)*, are more than worth the investment. Show & A.G.'s second full-length is a Bronx-styled beatfest, and a dead-on reflection of street-wise, East Coast realness, free of clichés and dime-store catch-phrases. Grand Puba is the former leader of Brand Nubian, and his bubbly, quirky delivery is as affectionate as we've ever heard it on *2000*, his follow up to *Reel To Reel*. He's backing off the Nation of Islam rhetoric, and his frolics in sparse, soulful designs are a real treat...With the enormous success of Warren G., Domino and Coolio's "Fantastic Voyage," the mellow G-Funk sound has replaced "gangsta" rap as the preferred West Coast hip-hop style. The **TWINZ** come from the Warren G. camp, and the group's debut album, *Conversation (G-Funk/RAL-Island)* has a satisfying mix of steaming string and bass samples, meshing to form seamless, kickin' G'd up funk. Like Warren G.'s "This DJ," "Journey With Me" packs lyrics that lament about life in the 'hood, but the message is lost in the ultra-slick, slow-grooved track. Crooner Nate Dogg makes an appearance, too. Word out.

Compiled from the *Civil New Music Report's* weekly *Billboard* charts, collected from *CMJ's* point of progressive radio reporters.

on the verge

UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS

compiled by Lydia Anderson

Oblivians

The Oblivians hail from Memphis, Tennessee, home of the blues and, of course, rock 'n' roll. Like the output of megalopolis dwellers the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and Railroad Jerk, the smaller-town Oblivians' music is submerged in historical blues/rock. The Oblivians, however, add a sharp, garage-rock edge to their catchy tunes. These mono-mongrels have released records on Estrus and Sympathy For The Record Industry, and their latest full-length is a fine dish called *Soul Food* on Crypt. —Dawn Sutter



PHOTO BY CHRIS TOLIVER

while the rest of the band stands stoically in matching white vinyl suits and over-sized pearl necklaces, he screams and swings from the rafters like a white, acrobatic Prince. The band has two singles on its own Black Gemini label, and will have a new one on K this fall. —Dawn Sutter



Tortoise

Instrumental rock bands are becoming much more in fashion these days, and it's awfully exciting to see tried-and-true rock 'n' roll formulas twisted in new ways. Chicago's Tortoise, boasting members of the Sea & Cake, Red Krayola, Eleventh Dream Day and Gastr Del Sol, constructs powerful rock songs without the aid of vocals or guitars, shifting the emphasis to the group's beefy rhythms and spirited percussion. Live, the rhythms envelop the songs, threatening to swallow them up whole, before storms of crashing cymbals and warm showers of vibraphone reassert the songs' structures. On record, the group is even more experimental: The band's self-titled debut of last year was an aural feast, but the recent *Rhythms, Resolutions & Clusters* (Thrill Jockey) stretches the possibilities even further, subjecting the earlier material to remixes by infamous knob-twiddlers Brad Wood and Steve Albini, among others. An all-new Tortoise album will be out early next year, and Tortoise member/studio hack John McEntire is busy in his home studio recording Stereolab and Run On, among others. (LA)



Sone

Like indie-rock heroes Pavement and the Grifters, Portland, Oregon's Sone plays a dizzying game of dodge-ball with handfuls of gnarled noise embedded with prickly melodies. But unlike many younger bands playing in this arena, Sone doesn't bring this game down to a science, instead maintaining an artful sense of chaos: Scraps generated from lo-fi synths, rumpled bits of feedback and various background noises went their way around the songs on Sone's self-titled debut (*Earth To*) like hyperactive little leaguers running after the same ball. After putting out another 7" single this fall, the group will release its second LP on its own label. (LA)

by Mark from the Dentists

To Surf, Perchance To Sleep:

A Year On The Internet

Someone told me that the thing to do was "cruise on the information superhighway," so I went straight out, got myself a library card, and stood in non-fiction trying to look like Keanu Reeves. "No, no, no," I was told. What I needed was a PC, an Internet account, and, for some bizarre reason, a mouse.

Once I'd finally been put in the right direction, I changed my name. I became Mark@dentists.demon.co.uk, which I felt was very exotic, and I'm sure that this was probably what Prince was getting at when he changed his name to ♪. Anyway, for those of you not in the know, you sign up to an Internet company to gain access to their big computer and the world, using a common or garden phone line doubled with the all-important modem (a small box-like thing with lights, a bit like a Gameboy but about 50 times more interesting to look at). You can correspond and join in with discussions, or just watch if you're so inclined. I decided to wade into the ocean of words that is known as "alt.music.alternative" and paddle in its tributary, "alt.music.independent".

And it's been fun.

Traditionally, your first attempt at communicating with the world has to be a test message, just to get the thrill of your name appearing on the screen., I always read the test attempts, not only to make sure that someone else is as clueless as I am, but also out of stubborn curiosity. The headings always say "Test message - please ignore" or "Don't read", so I always do. Normally they then go on to say something like "testing, testing, testing" or similar, but I once read one that said "Why the fuck are you reading this? I told you it was just a test! Get a life!" which I felt was very brave for a first go. I wrote back that I hoped all his/her (no gender on the Net, chums) future postings would be as entertaining, and he/she wrote back that Nine Inch Nails were the greatest, so that, unfortunately, was the end of that.

Once you're confident that you have The World's attention, you can begin to share your views and opinions. You can also upset large numbers of people at the same time, which is handy. There are three sure-fire ways to do this:

- 1) Say something unpleasant about Kurt Cobain or confess that his death was not a major blow in your life.
- 2) Say something unpleasant about Morrissey's sex life.
- 3) Send a chain letter promising riches beyond your wildest dreams if you send \$5 to this address.

I've had a go at all of these, with the usual results—death threats, am I stupid/sad/inhuman, why am I wasting everyone's time, etc.—but my greatest success by far was purely by chance. Some strange dude posted the question "Do you masturbate?" in alt.music.alternative. Naturally, I was intrigued, and posted the innocent reply "What do you think I'm doing now?", chuckling quietly to myself and thinking no more of it.

Then World War Three broke out.

For days, I received stacks of e-mail chastising me for my flippant remarks, asking what kind of pervert I was, wasn't there something better I could do with my time like write a decent song (looooooser!), learn to play my guitar properly (as if!), was my keyboard sticky (??), right down to simply being told to *get a life!* Someone even had a go at my name, 'cause I was signing off as "Mark from The Dentists"—didn't I think this was pompous and egotistical? Well, no, actually, I was getting fed up replying to mail that asked "Are you Mark from the Dentists?", so I thought I'd give some clues. There's obviously a thin line between "clue" and "ego"!

Another good way to gain friends and influence people is to get involved in an argument you cannot possibly win. Someone asked "Why do all Brit bands suck?" and suddenly I felt compelled to share my theory on the British music press and how they screw you up by saying that when your band goes to America, it will be a bigger event than The Beatles and the moon landing put together. Step right up, London Suede, Blur, Oasis...

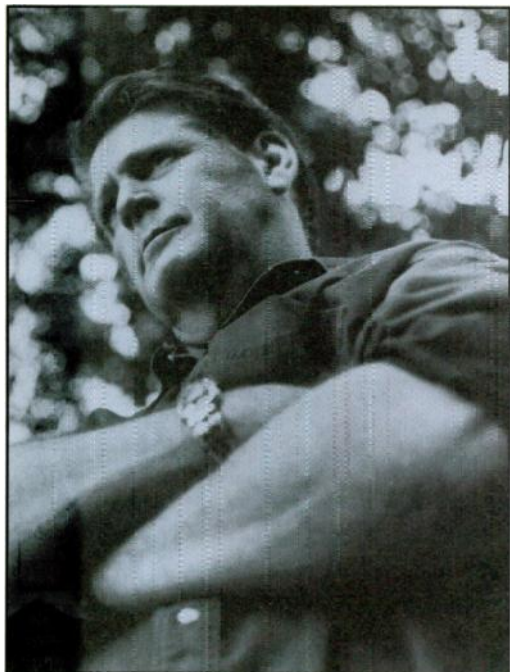
On a more positive note, it has to be said that the Net is the gateway to all you ever wanted to know about a particular band/song/genre. You can swap ideas, theories or tapes, buy bootlegs, champion your fave band, dis Pearl Jam, join countless mailing lists, hunt for messages from Courtney Love and even indulge a few fantasies. I, myself, am still waiting for the nude pics of Shonen Knife I was promised... hey, wait a minute, what kind of pervert am I?

Surf's up!

Mark Matthews plays bass in the Dentists, whose newest album is *Deep Six (EastWest-EEG)*.



The Dentists (l-r): Mick Murphy, Rob Grigg, Bob Collins, Mark Matthews



mixed media

compiled by dawn sutter

I JUST WASN'T MADE FOR THESE TIMES

(Palomar Pictures)

Principal songwriter and producer of the Beach Boys' golden years and one of rock's best-known survivors, Brian Wilson has outlived physical and mental abuse as a child, malignant schizophrenia, and the encroachment of therapists. He certainly seems a ripe topic for biography, and he's had his share, both on the page and on the screen. But record producer Don Was, in his directorial debut, approaches things differently. His black-and-white documentary is decidedly smaller in scope, concentrating on Brian as a songwriter and creative force, rather than on his life as an infamous celebrity casualty.

I Just Wasn't Made For These Times (named after a song from the classic *Pet Sounds* album) centers on a series of recording sessions Was arranged with Brian and a variety of studio musicians. Brian is also seen singing with daughters Carnie and Wendy ("Do It Again"), mother Audree and brother Carl ("In My Room"), and collaborator Van Dyke Parks (on a new co-composition). It's when Was's cameras interview these participants that the capital-Q quirks of Brian's life emerge. Wendy and Carnie laugh over how Brian blasted the Ronnettes' "Be My Baby" every single morning. Brother Carl recalls that fellow Beach Boy Mike Love thought the ill-fated *Smile* project "was airy-fairy." Mother Audree remembers Brian as "a well-rounded, great kid."

Brian views his teen years (also documented by some home-movie footage) quite differently: "I turned to music," he says. "It was my only friend." Thus began the apparently bittersweet triumphs of the Beach Boys' golden age, in which Brian progressively exercised more creative control than any pop artist had previously, culminating in the triumph of 1966's *Pet Sounds* and the fiasco of 1967's unfinished *Smile*. "Brian felt the guys resented him," says ex-wife Marilyn, "and they did. He was just torn down."

But the short feature, which barely mentions Brian's extended period under the thrall of therapist Eugene Landy, is not all tragedy: There is an overriding air of celebration about Brian's success and survival. As if to cement what may be a new period of emancipation for him, Wilson and his second-wife-to-be drive around his old neighborhood of Hawthorne, Los Angeles in a '50s Chrysler, until they locate the address of his childhood home, only to find it's been demolished by a freeway. Full of life, Brian just laughs. And keeps on laughing.

—Eric Gladstone

RIVER OF GRASS

(Strand)

Cozy is a bored, lonely housewife who one day puts on a little blue eyeshadow and just walks out, leaving her babies asleep on the couch. "They say the mother-child bond begins at birth. This never happened for me, and every Sunday I kept waiting for a nice couple in a station wagon to come and take these children away," she says in the film's deadpan narration. What Cozy doesn't realize is that in the river of grass that is the Florida everglades, there is someone just as lonely as she is—well, she doesn't realize it until she bumps into him at a bar. Lee, a directionless 30-year-old who still lives with his grandmother, has just found a gun, which makes him a perfect match for Cozy, the daughter of a homicide cop who's misplaced his. When Cozy and Lee meet, they drink, then swim, then kill a man. The two embark on an adventure, running from law, family and their miserable lives.

River Of Grass is carried by the spectacularly witty writing behind its minimal dialogue and Cozy's first-person narration. Its clever twists and compelling story make it easy to see why the film has won acclaim at both the Sundance and Berlin film festivals. Music is provided by Big Star, Roky Erickson, the Jayhawks and Sammy. (DS)

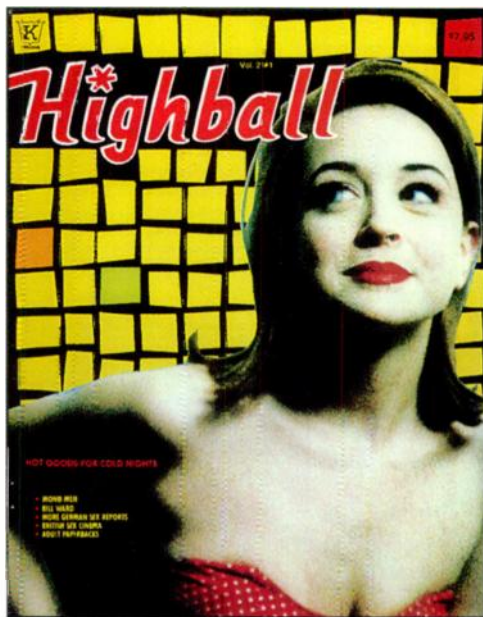


HIGHBALL/MONSTER! INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 67 Oberlin, OH 44074-0067

'zines

Sex and monsters, the topics for *Highball* and *Monster! International*, may not be the most novel concepts for fanzines, but rarely are they seen in such stylish combination. The two magazines are published sporadically and usually separately (though by the same people); the latest issue (#4) is a combination of the two, a girly-ghoul magazine with articles on the nudie vampires and busty beasts of obscure '60s flicks and pulps. The magazines also throw in a twist of garage rock, as with an article found in issue #2 of *Highball*—a discussion of adult paperbacks written by A-Bones drummer (and co-owner of Norton Records) Miriam Linna, a collector of the perverse publications. The beautifully designed combined issue incorporates sexy comics (by artists like the Coop), as well as a flexi-disc (by Man Or Astro-man?). (DS)



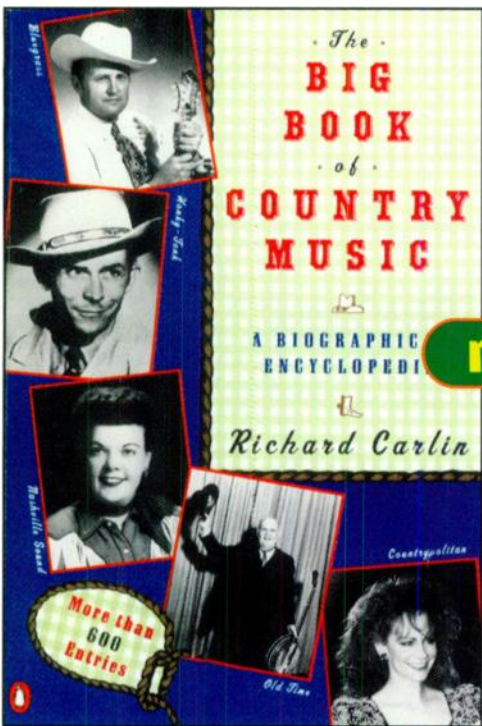
THE BIG BOOK OF COUNTRY MUSIC: A BIOGRAPHICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

By Richard Carlin

(Penguin, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014)

This new reference book of country music and its many offshoots and cousins is extremely informative, with lively (at times, hilarious) writing and thoughtful commentary. The 526 pages detail the lives, musical styles, influences and recordings of over 600 artists, along with a recommended discography of each. From old-timey to countrypolitan, Carlin

highlights early greats including Fiddling John Carson, Uncle Dave Macon, the Skillet Lickers and the Bogtrotters, and modern stars like Garth Brooks, Billy Ray Cyrus, the Judds, k.d. lang and Alison Krauss, including practically every noteworthy in between. Although we've already spotted several artists' names misspelled, we're very pleasantly surprised to find entries on Roy Smeck, the Holy Modal Rounders, Mike Nesmith, Michelle Shocked and the Good Ol' Persons (although unfortunately no Lee Hazelwood or Butch Hancock). The author has some refreshing and intelligent criticism for such sacred cows as Patsy Cline and Bob Dylan, and includes saccharine country artists like Marie Osmond and Debbie Boone for some humorous skewering. *The Big Book* is not afraid to call Crystal Gayle antiseptic, or to call a junky novelty song a junky novelty song, nor is it so serious that it can't make light of Dwight Yoakam's baldness. —David Newgarden



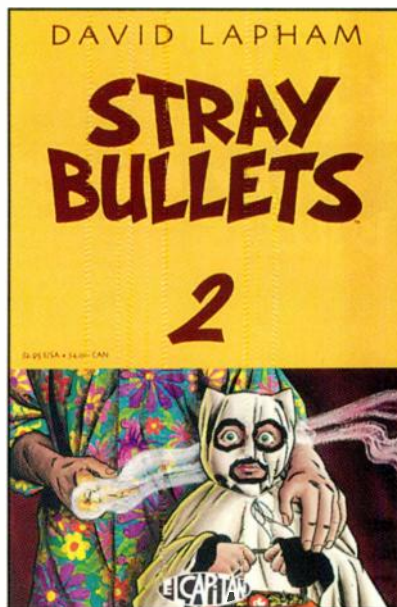
reads

STRAY BULLETS

by David Lapham
(El Capitán)

funnies

David Lapham did a bunch of uninspired work for second-string mainstream comics companies Valiant and Defiant. Then he started self-publishing *Stray Bullets*, his own project, and blossomed into a major new talent. *Stray Bullets* is a horrifying examination of the way that violence breeds more violence and ruins every life it touches. It's a series of linked stories about small-time figures in the Baltimore underworld, and the people around them who catch their stray bullets, both literal and metaphorical—in one issue, a young girl sees a murder in an alley, is cautioned by her sister to never tell anyone about it, and ends up trapped and destroyed by fear that metastasizes into brutality. Lapham doesn't resolve his stories; he abandons them at the point where the rest is inevitable. He uses a European-style eight-panel grid, giving every image equal weight, except for a few large panels that consequently have particular emotional power (that may be the only thing that keeps parts of the series from being too intense to bear). He also drops hints and cross-references between issues, about characters we see and characters we only hear about, jumping back and forward in time—there's a master plan here whose dimensions we're only beginning to make out. —Douglas Wolk



TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY



PRIMUS

ARTIST	ALBUM TITLE	LABEL
1 PRIMUS	Tales From The Punchbowl	Interscope
2 BJORK	Post	Elektra-EEG
3 CATHERINE WHEEL	Happy Days	Fontana-Mercury
4 YO LA TENGO	Electr-O-Pura	Matador
5 CHRIS KNOX	Songs Of You & Me	Caroline
6 SEAM	Are You Driving Me Crazy?	Touch And Go
7 KENDRA SMITH	Five Ways Of Disappearing	4AD
8 STEEL POLE BATH TUB	Scars From Falling Down	Slash-London
9 PAVEMENT	Wowee Zowee	Matador
10 THE VERVE	A Northern Soul	Vernon Yard
11 THURSTON MOORE	Psychic Hearts	DGC
12 BABES IN TOYLAND	Nemesisters	Reprise
13 MOONPOOLS & CATERPILLARS	Lucky Dumpling	EastWest-EEG
14 FUGAZI	Red Medicine	Dischord
15 SUPERCHUNK	Incidental Music 1991-95	Merge
16 SUPERGRASS	I Should Coco	Capitol
17 GWEN MARS	Magnosheen	Hollywood
18 UNWOUND	The Future Of What	Kill Rock Stars
19 GENE	Olympian	Atlas-A&M
20 ESQUIVEL!	Music From A Sparkling Planet	Bar/None
21 ELVIS COSTELLO	Kojak Variety	Warner Bros.
22 MUFFS	Blonder And Blonder	Reprise
23 NATALIE MERCHANT	Tigerlily	Elektra-EEG
24 PORTASTATIC	Slow Note From A Sinking Ship	Merge
25 SOUNDTRACK	Batman Forever	Atlantic
26 DRUGSTORE	Drugstore	Honey/Go!-London
27 BAILTER SPACE	Wammo	Matador
28 TRIPPING DAISY	I Am An Elastic Firecracker	Island
29 ALL	Pummel	Interscope
30 GROVER	My Wild Life	Zero Hour
31 BAD BRAINS	God Of Love	Maverick-WB
32 RED KRAYOLA	Amor And Language	Drag City
33 FILTER	Short Bus	Reprise
34 PELL MELL	Interstate	DGC
35 LOW	Long Division	Vernon Yard
36 SLANT 6	Inzombia	Dischord
37 BOREDOMS	Chocolate Synthesizer	Reprise
38 CHRIS ISAAK	Forever Blue	Reprise
39 HUM	You'd Prefer An Astronaut	RCA
40 JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Experimental Remixes (EP)	Matador
41 GUIDED BY VOICES	Alien Lanes	Matador
42 OBLIVIANS	Soul Food	Crypt
43 EVERCLEAR	Sparkle And Fade	Tim Kerr-Capitol
44 APPLES IN STEREO	Fun Trick Noisemaker	spinART
45 TRICKY	Maxinquaye	Island
46 SOUL ASYLUM	Let Your Dim Light Shine	Columbia
47 RADIOHEAD	The Bends	Capitol
48 JUNE OF 44	Engine Takes To The Water	1/4 Stick-Touch And Go
49 INNOCENCE MISSION	Glow	A&M
50 TRUMANS WATER	Milktrain To Paydirt	Homestead
51 TRULY	Fast Stories...From Kid Coma	Capitol
52 BOB EVANS	The Bradley Suite	Elektra-EEG
53 MATTHEW SWEET	100% Fun	Zoo
54 18TH DYE	Tribute To A Bus	Matador
55 EXCUSE 17	Such Friends Are Dangerous	Kill Rock Stars
56 MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?	Live Transmissions From Uranus	Homo Habilis
57 DENTISTS	Deep Six	EastWest-EEG
58 CHAVEZ	Gone Glimmering	Matador
59 MORPHINE	Yes	Rykodisc
60 CLOUDS	Thunderhead	Elektra-EEG
61 QUEERS	Move Back Home	Lookout!
62 LABRADFORD	A Stable Reference	Kranky
63 JULIANA HATFIELD	Only Everything	Mammoth-Atlantic
64 WILCO	A.M.	Sire-Reprise
65 LUNACHICKS	Jerk Of All Trades	Go-Kart
66 HAGFISH	...Rocks Your Lame Ass	London
67 NERDY GIRL	Nerdy Girl (10")	No Life
68 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Red Hot + Bothered (10")	Kinetic Red Hot-Reprise
69 BOYS LIFE	Boys Life	Crank!
70 ELASTICA	Elastica	DGC
71 GREEN APPLE QUICK STEP	Reloaded	Medicine/Giant-WB
72 BRACKET	4-Wheel Vibe	Caroline
73 PJ HARVEY	To Bring You My Love	Island
74 ROCHES	Can We Go Home Now	Rykodisc
75 HELIUM	The Dirt Of Luck	Matador

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.

World Radio History

DIRECTORY

A LISTING OF LABELS WHOSE ARTISTS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

213CD
PO. Box 1910
Los Angeles, CA 90078

4AD
8533 Melrose Ave., Ste. B
Los Angeles, CA 90069

A&M
1416 N. La Brea Ave.
Hollywood, CA 90028

Alias
2815 W. Olive Ave.
Burbank, CA 91595

Alternative Tentacles
PO. Box 419092
San Francisco, CA 94141

American
3500 W. Olive Ave. #1550
Burbank, CA 91505

AVI
10390 Santa Monica Blvd.
Ste. 210
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Bar/None
PO. Box 1704
Hoboken, N.J. 07030

Black Gemini
c/o 1708 Euclid St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Bonehead
216 N. Magnolia
Lansing, MI 48912

Broken
PO. Box 460402
San Francisco, CA 94146

Bus Stop
PO. Box 3161
Iowa City, IA 52244

Capitol
1750 N. Vine St.
Hollywood, CA 90028

Cargo
3058 N. Clybourn Avenue
Chicago, IL 60618

Car In Car Disco Product
112 N. Harvard Ave., Ste. 19
Claremont, CA 91711

Caroline
114 W. 26th St.
11th Fl.
New York, NY 10001

Century Media
1453-A 14th St. #324
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Coat-Tail
PO. Box 1007
Madison, WI 53701

Columbia
550 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Crypt
PO. Box 140528
Staten Island, NY 10314

Deep Dish
20043 Placid Lake Terr.
Germantown, MD 20874

DGC
9130 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90069

Def Jam
652 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

Drag City
PO. Box 476867
Chicago, IL 60647

Earth To
PO. Box 42164
Portland, OR 97242

Echo
Chrysalis Building
Bramley Rd.
London W10 6SP, UK

Elektra Entertainment Group
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10019

EMI
1290 Ave. Of The Americas
42nd Fl.
New York, NY 10104

Epic
550 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022

ESD
530 N. 3rd St.
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Giant
8900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 200
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Grand Royal
PO. Box 26689
Los Angeles, CA 90026

Green Linnet
43 Beaver Brook Rd.
Danbury, CT 06810

Heartbeat
1 Camp St.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Impulse!-GRP
555 W. 57th St.
New York, NY 10019

Instinct
222 W. 14th St.
New York, NY 10011

Interscope
0900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1230
Los Angeles, CA 90024

I.L.S.
825 8th Ave.
New York, NY 10019

Infidelity
740 N. La Brea Ave., 1st Fl.
Los Angeles, CA 90038

I.R.S.
394 Broadway, Ste. 901
New York, NY 10012

Island
825 8th Ave.
New York, NY 10019

K
Box 7154
Olympia, WA 98507

London
325 8th Ave., 24th Fl.
New York, NY 10019

Mammoth
Carr Mill, 2nd Fl.
Carrboro, NC 27510

MCA
70 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608

Mercury
325 Eighth Ave.
New York, NY 10019

Merge
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Chapel Hill, NC 27514

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Hollywood, CA 90028

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Beverly Hills, CA 90210

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Bertelsmann Bldg.
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

Reprise
3300 Warner Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91505

Restless
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Hollywood, CA 90028

Rhino
10635 Santa Monica
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Roadrunner
225 Lafayette St., Ste. 407
New York, NY 10012

Rykodisc
Shetland Park, 27 Congress St.
Salem, MA 01970

Safesound
PO. Box 3349
West Lebanon, NH 03784

Scenescap
PO. Box 88
Northampton, MA 01061

Shrimper
PO. Box 837
Upland, CA 91785

Slabco
PO. Box 85510
Seattle, WA 98145

Slow River
PO. Box 487
Durham, NH 03824

spinART
PO. Box 1796
New York, NY 10156

Sub Pop
1932 First Ave.
Seattle, WA 98101

TAG
19 W. 21st St., Ste. 501
New York, NY 10011

Thirsty Ear
274 Madison Ave., Ste. 804
New York, NY 10016

Thrill Jockey
PO. Box 476794
Chicago, IL 60647

Touch And Go
PO. Box 25520
Chicago, IL 60625

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23 E. 4th St.
New York, NY 10003

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825 Eighth Ave., 26th Fl.
New York, NY 10019

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338 N. Foothill Rd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Will
1120 17th Ave. E. #103
Seattle, WA 98122

Warner Music International
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10019



NEW RELEASES AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1995

AUGUST 22

FRIENDS OF DEAN MARTIN TBA (Sub Pop)
MEDICINE Her Highness (American)
MOTHER HIPS Part Timer Goes Full (American)
MILES DAVIS Plugged Highlights (Columbia)
DISHWALLA Pet Your Friends (A&M)

AUGUST 29

KEPONE Skin (1/4 Stick)
SUPERCHUNK Hyper Enough (EP) (Merge)
DRIVIN' N' CRYIN' Rapped In Sky (DGC)
SPARKLEHORSE Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot (Capitol)
P TBA (Capitol)
BEACH BOYS The Smile Era (Capitol) (three-CD set)
JOHN LEE HOOKER Alternative Boogie (Capitol) (three-CD set)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Texas Guitar Killers (Capitol) (two-CD set)
JAWBREAKER Dear You (DGC)
C&C MUSIC FACTORY (Columbia)

SEPTEMBER 5

THE MAKE-UP "The Believers" (7") (K)
SOUNDTRACK Devil In A Blue Dress (Columbia)

SEPTEMBER 12

WILDLIFFE SOCIETY Wildlife Society (Blunt-TVT)
AIR MIAMI Me, Me, Me (Teen Beat)
BLAST OFF COUNTRY STYLE TBA (Teen Beat)
UNCLE WIGGLY Jump Back, Baby (Teen Beat)
LOS MARAUDERS Every Song We Fuckin' Know (Teen Beat)
MEAT PUPPETS TBA (London)
TALLULAH GOSH TBA (K)
LENNY KRAVITZ Circus (Virgin)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Music Of Joy Division: Means To An End (Virgin)
BOO RADLEYS Wake Up! (Columbia)
CYPRESS HILL Temples Of Boom (Ruff-Columbia)
G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE Coast To Coast Motel (550)
MORRISSEY Southpaw Grammar (Reprise)
APE HANGERS Ultrasound (A&M)
BIVOUAC Full-Size Boy (DGC)
BOSS HOG TBA (DGC)
ANN MAGNUSON The Luv Show (Geffen)
LISA LOEB & 9 STORIES Tails (Geffen)

SEPTEMBER 19

GROTUS Mass (London)
PULP TBA (Island)
DON CABALLERO II (Touch And Go)
TAR Over And Out (Touch And Go)
UZEDA TBA (Touch And Go)
S.P.A.S.M. TBA (Touch And Go)
KARL HENDRICKS TRIO Some Girls Like Cigarettes (reissue) (Merge)
SUPERCHUNK Here's Where The Strings Come In (Merge)
MERCURY REV See You On The Other Side (WORK)
EVE'S PLUM Cherry Alive (550)

SEPTEMBER 26

EAST 17 Steam (London)
SOFTIES It's Love (K)
HALO BENDERS TBA (K)
DAVID BOWIE Outside (Virgin)
OASIS TBA (Epic)
VELVET UNDERGROUND Box Set (A&M)
SONIC YOUTH TBA (DGC)
LOUD LUCY TBA (DGC)
VARIOUS ARTISTS DGC Rarities, Volume 2 (DGC)

All dates subject to change

4,651 Miles Denver to Tuktoyaktuk 3,324 Miles Honolulu to Tuktoyaktuk 6,265 Miles Boston to Tuktoyaktuk 4,594 Miles Atlanta to Tuktoyaktuk 4,450 Miles

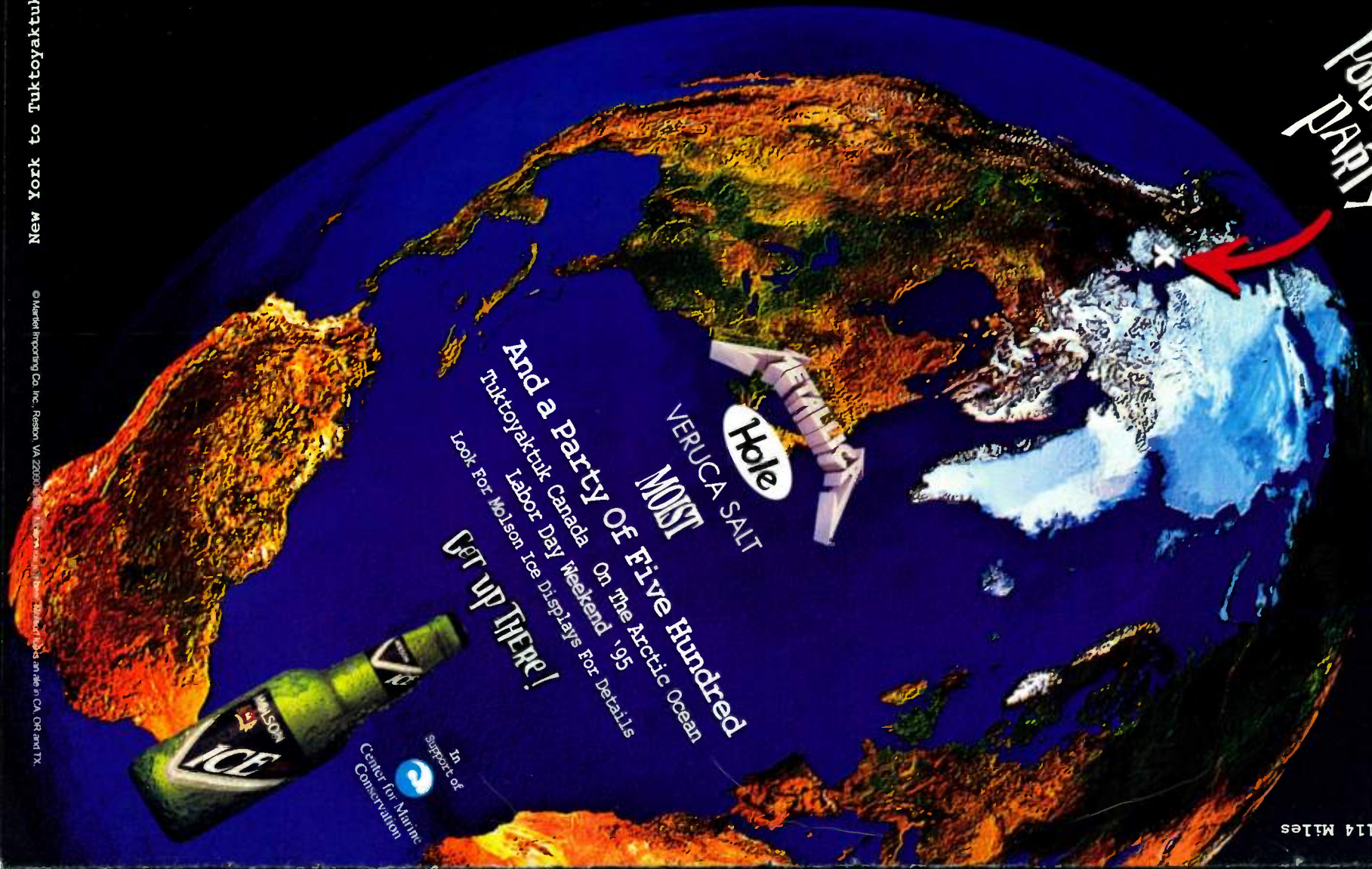
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Big Audio Dynamite



The Rake's Progress



Ed's Redeeming Qualities

You know what I'm saying?" Yeah, we do—and we can't think of a better way to describe "Soul City," from the grease-crazy road veterans' new *Dirt Track Date* (DGC).

With punk trailblazer Mick Jones (ex-Clash) at the helm, **BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE** sails through a sea of punk-pop soundalikes. Through a number of name changes—now returning to its original moniker—and seven albums, B.A.D. has always fused punk with dance. Its latest, *F-Punk* (Radioactive) is no exception, and "I Turned Out A Punk" could easily be an anthem for the '90s punk explosion.

Russell Simmons, hip-hop's foremost entrepreneur, is at it again, this time with a feature film called *The Show*. Both **ONLYX's** "Live" [track 17] and dancehall newcomer **KALI RANKS's** "Kill Dem All" [track 18] come from the soundtrack to *The Show* (Def Jam), a star-studded affair featuring established acts like L.L. Cool J., 2Pac, Notorious B.I.G., Mary J. Blige, A Tribe Called Quest, Stanley Clarke, Redman/Method Man and South Central Cartel. Look for it at a theater (and record store) near you.

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS takes its name from a series of etchings by William Hogarth depicting a young man frivolously wasting his inheritance. The band's frontman, Tim Cloherty, can relate to this sad tale—in the course of a year, he spent the whole of a large cash settlement from a car accident. Cloherty learned his lesson, and his quartet is one of New York's hardest-working bands. "When I Kiss Her" is from the group's debut full-length, *Altitude* (Almo).

Lancaster, Pennsylvania's **INNOCENCE MISSION** has been together for more than twelve years. On its latest album, *Glow* (A&M), the chemistry between the band's four members is as potent as ever. The band says it strives to recreate states of consciousness; of "Bright As Yellow," vocalist Karen Peris says, "I wanted to write about a quality I admire in people who aren't self-conscious. They can make others comfortable just by being themselves."

ED'S REDEEMING QUALITIES started out in New Hampshire, then migrated out to San Francisco, where they're based now. Named after a poem by the late founding member Dom Leone, Ed's has quietly built up a cult following over the last 6 years for its disarmingly sweet low-tech pop. The band's fans include the Breeders, who've covered their "Drivin' On 9" and brought along their singer/guitarist/violinist Carrie Bradley on tour. "I Will Wait," from Ed's third album *Big Grapefruit Cleanup Job* (Slow River), is a charming, hilarious calypso sung by ukelele player Dan Leone.

CMJ

NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

VOLUME 25

SEPTEMBER 1995

Last year, a four-song demo tape by **FIG DISH**, produced by Brad Wood (of Shrimp Boat, Liz Phair's band and countless hip producing credits), turned some heads. The Chicago quartet, whose name is a phonetic approximation of the Bavarian translation of "fuck you," delivers the kind of guitar rock that sounds easy, but that few bands can pull off so successfully. "Seeds" (which originally appeared on the demo) is a melodic, garage-y punk song from the band's debut full-length, *That's What Love Songs Often Do* (Atlas-A&M).



Fig Dish

Those of you expecting the ecstatic pop-rock of "Sister Havana" or "Positive Bleeding" might need a listen or two to succumb to the more subdued joys of "Somebody Else's Body," the first single from **URGE OVERKILL's** new album *Exit The Dragon* (Geffen). Then again, nothing about this month's cover stars remains subdued for long: the song's hooky melody is bound to follow you around like a bad credit report, albeit much more pleasantly.

If David Lowery ever decides this songwriting thing isn't going to work out, he can rest assured that **CRACKER** could earn a fine living as a cover band. The group's version of "Good Times, Bad Times," from the Led Zeppelin tribute *Encomium*, was for many, the disc's high point, and this new cover of the Flamin' Groovies "Shake Some Action," from the *Clueless* soundtrack (Capitol), gets the song exactly right, with Lowery adding a jagger-esque sneer to the Groovies' finest pop moment. *Clueless* also features Counting Crows' acoustic version of the Psychedelic Furs' "Ghost In You."



Urge Overkill

Sebadoh's Lou Barlow and John Davis (a solo artist in his own right) have made a few records together under the name the Folk Implosion. Bob Fay (also of Sebadoh) and Mark Perretta play and record together as Deluxx. Put the two duos together, and you get the **DELUXX FOLK IMPLOSION**, who've been recording and playing in public

3 THE 10

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. Do not operate heavy machinery.



Ben Folds Five



Blue Mountain



Ké

for a couple of years. Their first released recordings, including the brief, jarring "Daddy Never Understood," appear on the soundtrack to the movie *Kids* (London).

BEN FOLDS FIVE refers to its sound as "punk rock for sissies." The Chapel Hill trio is completely guitarless, but makes up for the lack of strings with plenty of ivory: Frontman Ben Folds plays a killer baby grand. For more 88-key kicks, tune in to the group's self-titled debut (Passenger-Caroline). Anything but sissified, "Underground" is a biting look at the exploitation of the alternative music scene.

Boston's **LETTERS TO CLEO** has been receiving attention ever since its video for "Here And Now" began rolling under the closing credits to television's *Melrose Place*. "Awake" is culled from the band's second full-length, *Wholesale Meats & Fish* (Giant), which is even more upbeat than its debut. Singer Kay Hanley says: "This time there was nothing to bum about. I'm looking at things around me and laughing, like I do in real life."

After spending a disappointing year in Los Angeles trying to become rock stars, **BLUE MOUNTAIN** returned to its hometown to play down-home, gritty blues. Bassist/vocalist Laurie Stirrat says, "You get to an age where you can appreciate good music without caring whether it's hip or not." The Oxford, Mississippi trio has an undying affinity for its roots, and so its songs center around life south of the Mason-Dixon line. "Soul Sister" can be heard on the band's debut, *Dog Days* (Roadrunner).

Raised in London, Paris, California and Kansas, **KÉ** writes songs that are as diverse as his background. The 23-year-old singer/songwriter co-wrote and co-produced his debut album, *I Am I* (RCA), but his passionate, distinctive vocals are what make his songs so alluring. "Strange World" is an acoustic guitar-driven tune that will leave you wanting to hear more from this promising young musician.

JOHN COLTRANE's *A Love Supreme* (Impulse!/GRP), newly reissued on the 30th anniversary of its original release, is one of the greatest jazz records ever made; some would say the greatest. (Its second section, "Resolution," is included here.) Serene and powerful, it presents Coltrane and his classic quartet (pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Elvin Jones) at the height of their powers. Coltrane called it "an attempt to say 'THANK YOU GOD' through our work, even as we do in our hearts and with our tongues."

Following albums dedicated to the air and the sun, the ecology-minded international rock stars **MANÁ** dedicate their latest album, *Cuando Los Angeles Lloran* (When The Angels Cry) (Warner Music Int'l), to water. The "alterna-Latino" group hails from Guadalajara, Mexico, and while "Dejame Entar" can be heard on *Cuando Los...*, the

group also recently participated in the international version of the Led Zeppelin tribute, *Encomium*, and the soundtrack to Francis Ford Coppola's forthcoming motion picture *My Family*.

MALFUNKSHUN formed and broke up years before its hometown—Seattle—became the site of the grunge explosion. (Its late singer Andrew Wood went on to Mother Love Bone, members of which are now in Pearl Jam.) A decade after the trio's demise, its first full-length album, *Return To Olympus* (\$50-Epic)—on which "Jezebel Woman" appears—is finally available. Drummer Regan Hagar now plays with Satchel, and Kevin Wood is in Seattle's Devilhead.

In their early teens, **KLOVER**'s Chris Doherty and Brian Betzger were members of Boston's hockey-and-beer-core legends Gang Green; Doherty says that without new vocalist/guitarist Mike Stone, the new band's debut "would probably have been like another Gang Green record." Betzger and Doherty had been jamming with bassist Darren Hill (founding member of The Red Rockers and former bassist for Paul Westerberg), and, with Stone rounding out the quartet, churned out over twenty songs in the course of two weeks. "Beginning To End" is from Klover's debut album, *Feel Lucky Punk* (Mercury).

"We never cared about image or lyrics or philosophy," says **HAGFISH** bassist Doni Blair, "it was just the pure energy that got us excited." The Dallas quartet crafts punk-pop tunes that are as crisp as its snazzy matching suits. Its debut album is rumored to have been recorded in the nude, and while its members swear that their clothes remained on for *...Rocks Your Lame Ass* (London), one can't help but wonder what brand of excitement inspired "Stamp (Eat It While I Work)."

"I've spent more money on demo tapes than we spent making this record," boasts **APE HANGERS** vocalist/guitarist Peter Stostjedt. Though it cost them a meager \$3000 to record and produce, the band's debut, *Ultrasounds* (A&M) promises to continue the band's series of overnight successes (they got signed after playing a backyard barbecue that was one of their first-ever shows). Named for the large motorcycle handlebars that you have to reach up and grab, the Ape Hangers are as rock 'n' roll as Harley Davidsons and black leather jackets. "I Don't Want To Live Today" also appears on the soundtrack to *Empire Records*.

Rick Miller has a few words for people who call his band **SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS** "retro rock." "Now what is that supposed to mean? I'd rather have them say, 'Come to the show! They got songs about food! They got songs about banging pots! It'll be a great time! You want to get drunk? It's great music to dance to!'



John Coltrane



Hagfish



Ape Hangers

FEEDBACK

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<input type="checkbox"/>	2. URGE OVERKILL	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. CRACKER	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. DELUXX FOLK IMPLOSION	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. BEN FOLDS FIVE	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. LETTERS TO CLEO	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. BLUE MOUNTAIN	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. KÉ	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. JOHN COLTRANE	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. MANA	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	11. MALFUNKSHUN	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	12. KLOVER	5	4	3	2	1
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<input type="checkbox"/>	19. RAKE'S PROGRESS	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	20. INNOCENCE MISSION	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	21. ED'S REDEEMING QUALITIES	5	4	3	2	1

1. Are you...?
 Male Female

2. How old are you?
 under 18 35-44
 18-24 45+
 25-34 What's it to you?

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 other _____

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 3-5 more than 10

5. Where do you usually buy your tapes/CDs?

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Classified section

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Localzine

BY ROBIN GENOVESE

TORONTO, CANADA

With a population that tops the 4 million mark, Toronto is Canada's largest city and doubles as Ontario's capital. Toronto—known as York when it was a British colony two centuries ago—sits at one end of the "Golden Horseshoe", or the westernmost tip of Lake Ontario that looks like a horseshoe. Detroit's about 200 miles southwest of Toronto. Buffalo's an easy hour and a half. Rochester's about two and a half hours to the southeast.

Toronto is an art and entertainment lover's paradise, a big city with a homey side, often compared to New York minus the filth and the violence. The Canadian music business is headquartered in this city. Bernie Finkelstein's True North label celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. His first signing was Bruce Cockburn in 1970; the company has just inked a distribution deal with World Domination for Canada. Finkelstein remembers Toronto as a busy, informal environment for live music in the mid- to late '60s during the Yorkville coffeehouse scene that gave artists like Joni Mitchell, The Mynah Birds (with Neil Young), and Sparrow (later Steppenwolf) their start. Campus radio is just fine here, with three stations: U of T, Ryerson, and York. And then there's the "modern rock" station, CFNY.

LANDMARKS

If you're the sporting type, remember that Toronto is first and foremost a hockey city. The **Maple Leafs** are an organized religion with a distinguished history most Third World nations would die for. The hopeless hockey buff should check out the newly constructed **Hockey Hall Of Fame** on Front and Yonge. Top it off with a drive-by salute to **Maple Leaf Gardens** on College and Church. Good luck getting rinkside seats for hockey games. They've been spoken for. For generations. Really!

The **CN Tower** is a three-minute walk west of the Skydome along Front. Easily Toronto's most recognizable landmark, this communications tower is unfortunately something of a tourist trap with lame "virtual reality" gizmos for the kids and equally nerdy discos for Mom and Dad. But the spectacular view of the area cannot be disputed, and the hefty admission is



worth it for a full view of Toronto and environs from all directions. If acrophobia isn't a **problem**, continue up to the highest observation deck where claustrophobia might very well bite you. Try to go up the Tower after dark, on a clear night. Don't do it drunk.

On a more rustic note, why not pay Charles a visit at the **Metro Toronto Zoo**? A 23-year-old gorilla, Charles has been painting for some 20 years. His favorite colors are yellow, purple, and black, and he has to be away from female distraction to do his thing. Charles' self-portrait—lots of beautiful black blobs and a footprint—flew out of an auction, and his art has fetched up to \$4000. His works are touring Ontario. Demand to see them in your town.

The **Royal Ontario Museum** (Bloor and Avenue Road) and the **Art Gallery of Ontario** (Dundas and Beverly) are world-renowned for their new and often limited-engagement exhibitions. The AGO has a particularly interesting collection of Canadian art—Inuit works and the Group of Seven figure prominently. The ROM features a breath-taking Buddhist sculpture gallery. The curious Bata Shoe Museum just opened at the corner of Bloor and St. George.

Ace comedy has always had a cool connection with music in Toronto, from SCTV to the Kids In The Hall. Gilda Radner, John Candy, Dan Ackroyd, Martin Short, and Mike Meyers all got their start at **Second City**, The Old Firehall (110 Lombard). You can still attend silly improv shows here every day of the week. Student rates are available—1-800-263-4485.

G.S.T. (GRAB, STEAL, & TAKE)

There's no way of getting around the G.S.T., Canada's nationwide 7% goods and services tax tacked onto everything you buy or think about needing. Add this to Ontario's provincial sales tax of 8%, and you've got 15% extra attached to your loot. It hurts. If you're foreign, save all your receipts and notate G.S.T. registration numbers accordingly; the Canadian government will refund you your G.S.T., but you have to pay it initially.



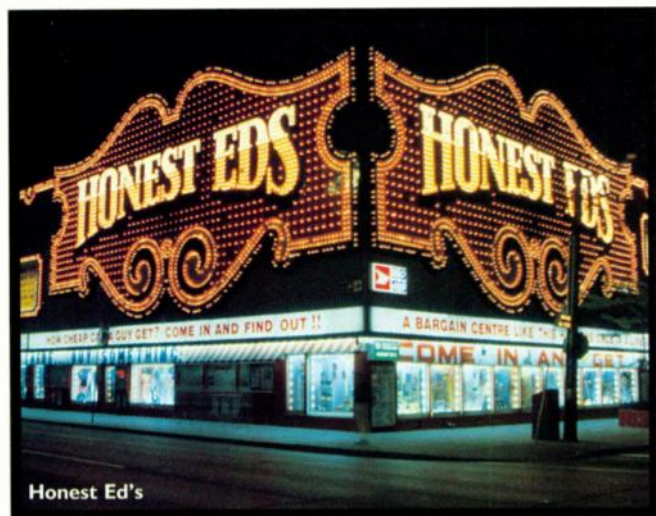
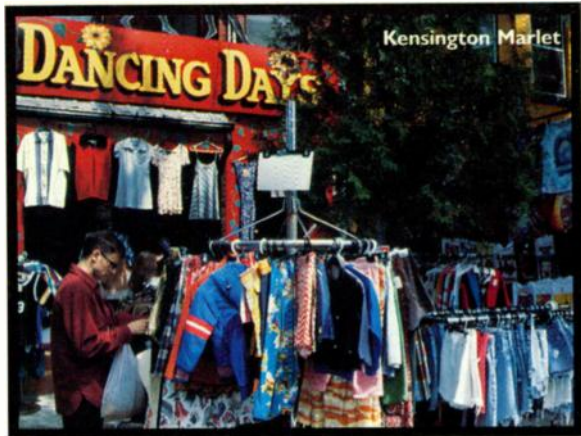
Hockey Hall Of Fame

Toronto has an unspeakably high cost of living to begin with, but it's possible to dodge the pitfalls if you're patient and artful.

Honest Ed's is your first stop on the campaign. It might be your last. One solid block of shlock along Bloor at Bathurst, decorated like Vegas, neon night and day, festooned with beckoning slogans: "HONEST ED'S A NUT! BUT LOOK AT THE CASHEW SAVE!" and "ONLY THE FLOORS ARE CROOKED!" Honest Ed's is the only place in town where you can find Kraft Dinners and fur coats under the same roof at bargain-basement prices. You'll save a lot of money and have a blast. Wear comfortable shoes.

Clothing and novelty hunters should check out the Kensington Market (Chinatown—Dundas/Spadina area). Although prices are sometimes higher than you'd expect, this area is famous for used clothing bargains and retro threads. **The Basic Blues** (farther north on Bloor and Brunswick) has a particularly tasty selection of used jeans, with alterations thrown in free and block candy at the front.

The selection of new and used music here is amazing. **Record Peddler** (Yonge and Isabella area) is known for alternative/heavy fare, with **Rotate This** and **Vortex** (both on Queen St. W.) offering a similar hodge-podge of interesting stuff. **Planet X** and **Driftwood Music** are good bets for used music on Queen St. These shops are all indie-operated, support local music, and have a lot of character. Rotate recently hosted a mini-Melvins gig in the back room. While you're on Queen, you should check out the **Silver Snail** (near Spadina) if you're into comic book culture.



call in Toronto is at 1 a.m. It's probably the most unpopular law in the city, but it's the law, and apparently crimes involving alcohol have been somewhat lowered as a result. The heart of the club strip is on Queen St. There are too many clubs to detail, but the best clubs for live music are the **Rivoli**, the **Horseshoe**, the **Ultrasound**, the **Cameron House**, and the **Bamboo** on Queen, the **El Mocambo** on Spadina, and **Lee's Palace** on Bloor. These clubs also feature well-known international acts, but these are the staple places to see local performers live. The El Mocambo has free shows every Monday—Elvis Mondays—showcasing spanning new talent. The **Bovine Sex Club** (Queen and Bathurst) is probably the most reliably trendy club to frequent. Out-of-towner rock stars of the day usually crash at the Bovine after their gigs, sporting free drink tickets saying "MOO." I have friends who sometimes play Scrabble on the street along Queen because there's so much going on outside they don't want to miss any of it. Make Queen St. your base and go from there—pick up **NOW** (free every Thursday) and see what strikes your fancy. There are clubs for everybody here.

THE WITCHING HOUR, PT. 2: 1 A.M. ONWARD

Okay, here's what happens. Everything *officially* ends at 1 a.m. as far as imbibing goes, but an underground network of post-1 a.m. alternatives has popped up in the wake of prohibition. These alternatives are called "boozecans". You'll probably hear of where a "hot" boozecan is happening from somebody or other; if several people concur on the info, maybe it'll be your luck night. You take your chances with these things. You can never be certain of the establishment's safety, its fire codes, or of the liquor quality. And you risk getting busted. I'm not condemning or condoning boozecans; I'm just letting you know they exist so you won't wonder why people keep repeating the same address to you over and over at last call. **END**

EATS

Because of Toronto's healthy ethnic diversity, you'll have a lot of food to choose from. **Future's Bakery** at Bloor and Brunswick is a great choice all year round. It's inexpensive, with a cool atmosphere—a total U of T hangout, but the jocks go across the street to the Brunswick House. The food is largely Ukrainian, with the baked goods stealing the show. The steamed hot chocolate in a bowl is to die for. People often go to Future's after a concert down the street at **Lee's Palace**.

I recommend setting aside one evening for **Movenpick's Marche** at Yonge and Front, next to the Hockey Hall of Fame. This is a European concept restaurant, where you can buy groceries and eat at the same time. You're given a card to present at "stations" of interest to you—pasta, bakery, salad bar, etc.—and whenever you order a selection from that station, your card is stamped, the item is placed on your tray, and you're on your way to eating. The card is given to the cashier *after* your meal—gratuities are included in the prices of the items. If you lose your card, you pay \$100 or wash dishes for a week. If you don't get carried away, it's a lot of fun, and the food is decadent. Go with a friend, and avoid peak eating hours because you'll have to wait for a table.

THE WITCHING HOUR, PT. 1: 9 P.M. TO 1 A.M.

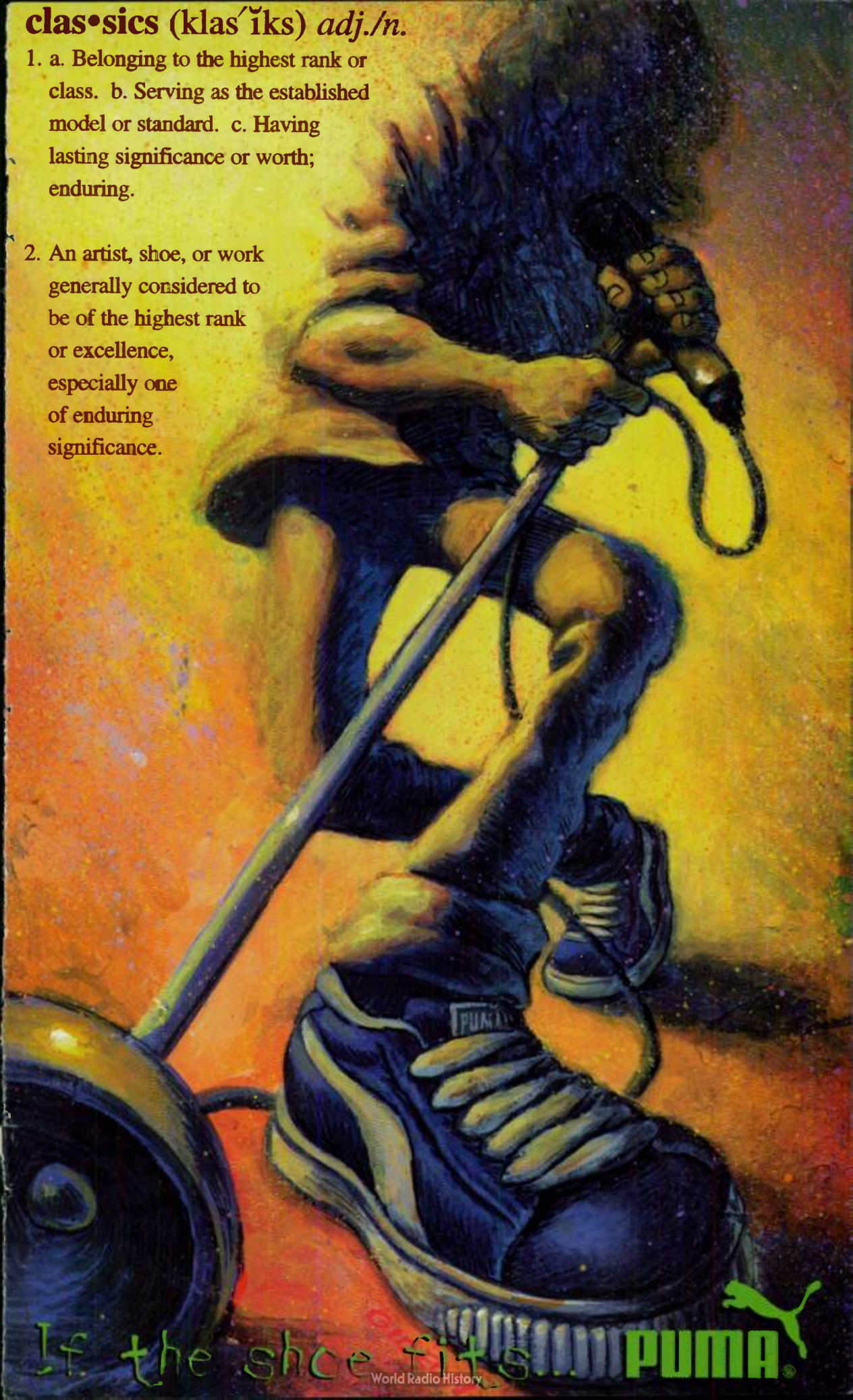
The clubs are active seven days a week—depends on what you're into. If you're into getting plastered, you'd better get an early start, because last



clas•sics (klas'iks) *adj./n.*

1. a. Belonging to the highest rank or class. b. Serving as the established model or standard. c. Having lasting significance or worth; enduring.

2. An artist, shoe, or work generally considered to be of the highest rank or excellence, especially one of enduring significance.



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