

# CMJ

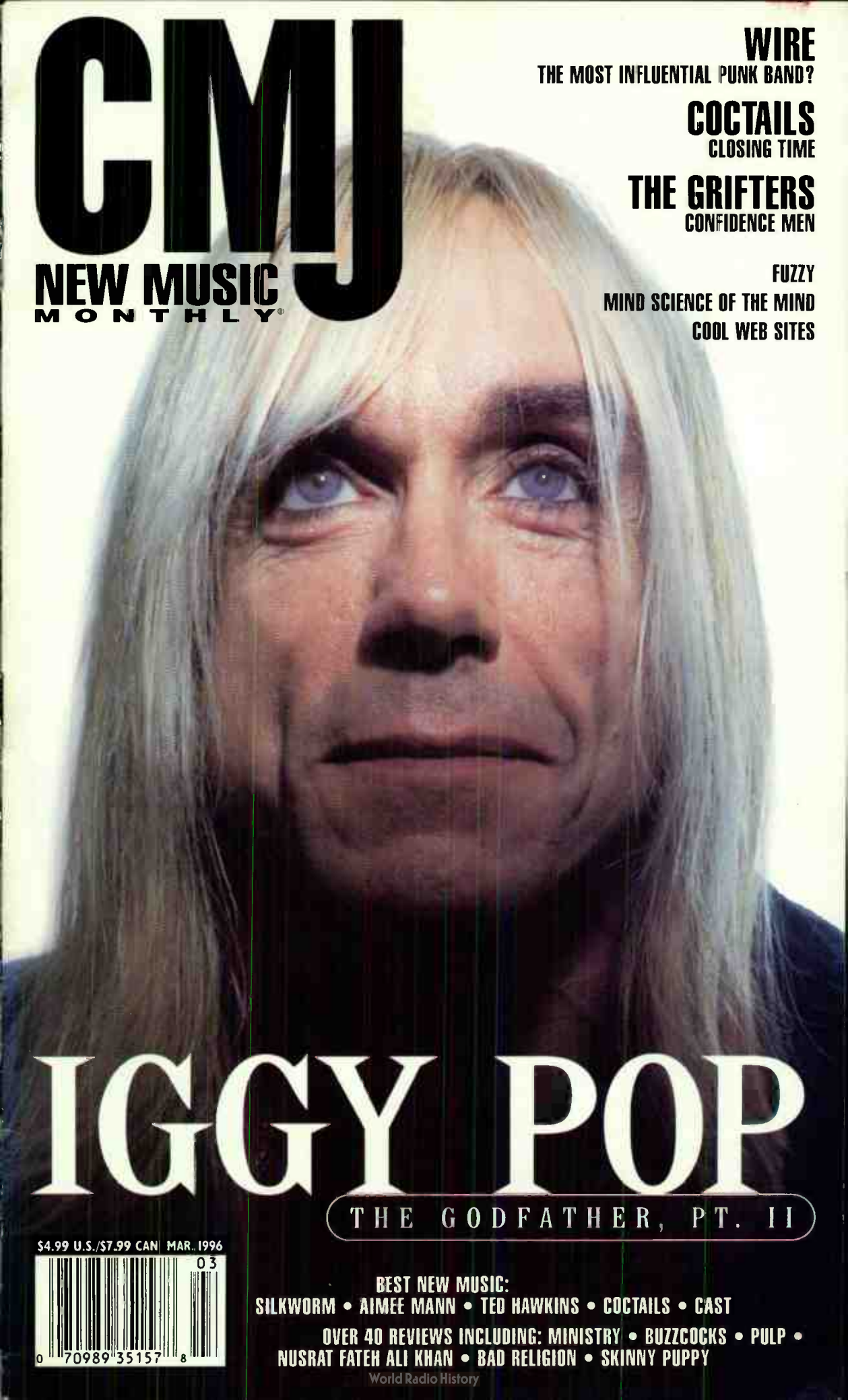
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COOL WEB SITES



# IGGY POP

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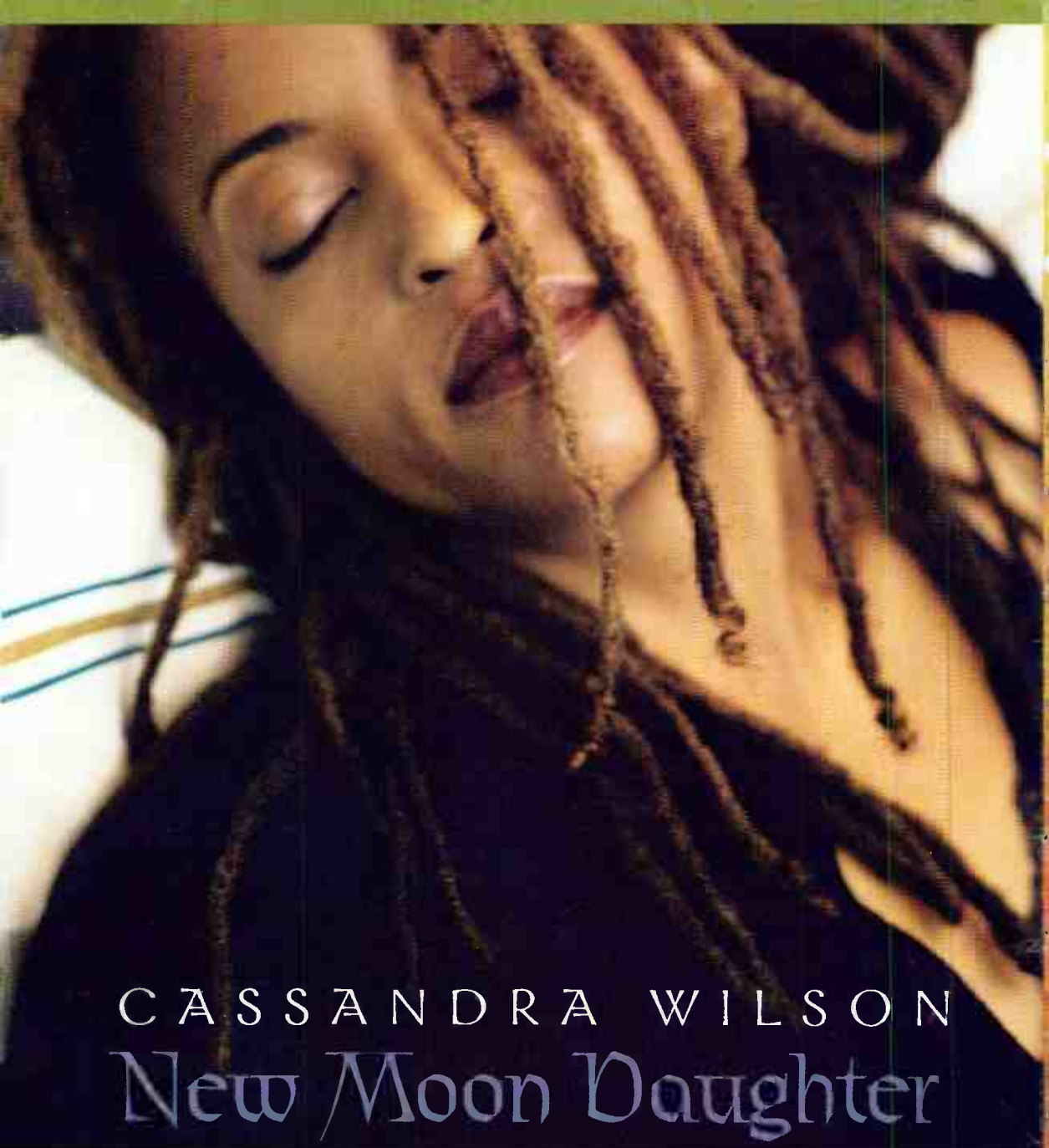
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# CMJ

NEW MUSIC  
MONTHLY

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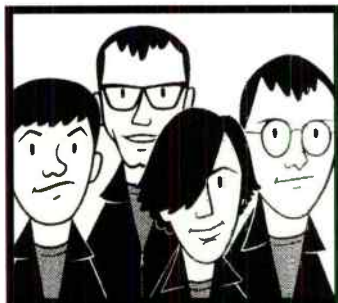
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Let us know what you're thinking, by mail, fax (516-466-7159) or email (cmj@cmjmusic.com).

## Gilligan's Isle of View

If you folks get any more mainstream, you should change the name of the publication to "Spin Jr." or "Rolling Stone 2." It seems that your staff won't do an article on anyone who doesn't have a major PR firm or at least a "suitably professional" press kit...Please wake up: Matthew Sweet is MAINSTREAM. All of those stupid longhaired readnecks from Seattle are MAINSTREAM. Old tired (very tired) acts from the '70s (Bowie, Stones, Van Fucking Morrison, Doors, ad nauseum) are MAINSTREAM. And where were YOU and your editorial staff when the Urban Verbs reunited to close the 9:30 Club in DC with a special show with the Bush Tetras? Probably reviewing another advance release from Green Day, Counting Crows, or some other such MAINSTREAM dreck. At least in the early '80s the SPIRIT was there...

Frank Gilligan  
via e-mail

I was at HOME watching the KNICKS.—ed.

## Pimiento

I am relatively new to CMJ, and not heavily invested in what is new and trendy in music. I'm 38, so I don't go to clubs as much and don't attend college beer bashes either. I have, I believe, found a source of new music that is, for the most part, broad and objective. Your inclusion of Ken Nordine's "Olive" was what really impressed me; I have been listening to Nordine since before I knew who he was, and finding his few recordings is difficult at best. Your publication serves an eclectic taste, and helps satisfy curiosity in different genres.

Tom H.  
Virginia

Nordine is MAINSTREAM.—ed.

## Province Provincialism

I have to rag you out about your disrespect and miniscule coverage of Canada! What's with that? What did we ever do to you Americans except kiss your butt? How come you lacked the info that Bruce McCulloch and The Kids In The Hall are Canadians in the write-up a few issues ago? I am grateful when I see the odd Canadian featured, but SNFU, a veteran classic punk band, could only get noticed after getting on with Epitaph. Same with others, too—have to be on an American label before you guys spit on them. I know it's hard to include everyone, but give credit where credit is due please! There are literally hundreds of fuckin' good bands in Canada squirming for attention. Direct an ear up north, okay? Thanks.

Erin Ottosen  
Ft. Assinboine, Alberta

We've never spat on SNFU, though I wish I could say that the reverse wasn't true... What Erin and every other Canadian reader should know is that we don't ignore good bands simply because they are north of the border—we ignore good bands

everywhere. There's more good music in the world than we could cover in a year of issues, which when you put it all in perspective, makes these concerns seem petty and small.—ed.

Canada is MAINSTREAM—managing ed.

## Radio And Other Garbage

I am so happy I stumbled across your publication last May. I enjoy both the magazine and the music immensely. I have been able to find one or two bands every month that I would otherwise be unaware of. (I'm listening to Garbage today. The disc is an unexpected gem that I would not have found.) The only drawback I have found is that you've made radio boring. It seems that all the progressive independent stations treat your monthly discs as next month's playlist.

Eric See  
Milwaukee, WI

While we'd like to take credit for making radio boring, it seems to have done that on its own.—ed.

## Reviewers' Cheap Tricks

Regarding your recent review of the new John Lennon tribute album, I was dumbfounded by your reference to Cheap Trick "making an umpteenth comeback." Cheap Trick needn't make a comeback for the likes of uninformed critics who've yet to respect the band's hard-earned success and perseverance over the last 21 years—a band that has sold nearly 55 million records worldwide.

As for their version of Lennon's "Cold Turkey," I find its raw presence and hard-driving synergy to be among the few highlights on the entire compilation. More importantly, of all the artists paying tribute to Lennon, Cheap Trick appears on the album for reasons far more deserving than most, since John personally hand-picked both Rick Nielsen and Bun E. Carlos to play during the *Double Fantasy* sessions.

A so-called "comeback" isn't necessary for a band that never disappeared in the first place, not to mention their influence on today's music, which is potently evident. Playing nearly 280 nights a year, EVERY year, America's most underrated rock band continues to garner respect from fellow musicians and industry insiders alike, alongside audiences young and old who remain loyal to their favorite rockers. 16 albums and still sounding better than ever—WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

Anne H. Deck  
Lexington, KY

We've been at some show that some band that broke up 15 years ago played in D.C. And by the way, the "caps lock" key is MAINSTREAM.—ed.

## Mea Maxima Culpa

In our January issue, we misidentified the label of Gastr Del Sol's *The Harp Factory* On Lake Street—it's actually on *Table Of The Elements*. We also misspelled friend and frequent contributor Danny Housman's name (no "e") in *Localzine*.

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# QUICK FIX

## THE ADVENTURES OF PETE AND PETE THE COOLEST BY FAR

Ask Danny Tamberelli, the younger of the two Petes on Nickelodeon's *The Adventures Of Pete And Pete*, who is his favorite guest star, and he'll answer, in a response so quick it cuts off the end of the question, "Iggy Pop."

"By far, he's been the coolest," the 13-year-old reiterates with a reverent nod. And he's right, in more ways than he knows. Iggy Pop, thanks to a recurring role as a neighbor girl's father on the quietly subversive *Pete And Pete* (see our cover story on the Iguana, pg. 24), may be the coolest thing to happen to kids' TV since *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*.

"The fact that ten-year-old kids now consider Iggy Pop to be Nona Mecklanburg's dad—versus lead singer of the Stooges—I think that's pretty great," says producer Will McRobb. "And I guess our thinking is, in some small way, they'll grow up and be changed because of it." While the effects of gently surreal moments like Patty Hearst popping up as a bouffant-helmeted über-mom or Iggy crooning to his daughter at a high school hop for a chance to take the girl for a turn on the dance floor are not likely to surface immediately in the pre- and early-teen audience (tests on my ten-year-old niece have proved inconclusive), McRobb and partner Chris Viscardi's efforts to pack each show with off-beat humor, obscure references and unlikely cameos make *Pete And Pete* the most honestly "alternative" program on television. The immediate upshot of this is that the show is a lot of fun for adults (wouldn't you like to see Adam West chewing scenery again? Silent comedy genius Bill Irwin as a "slightly effeminate real estate agent"?), as well as the kids who tap into the show's uniquely pre-adult sense of logic, but it's also a public



service for young viewers generally offered nothing more outré than Mark-Paul Gosseler's wedge cut—the pop-culture cool, indie-rock equivalent of *Davey And Goliath*.

McRobb continues: "I think the kids are not going to get a lot of the references, and it doesn't really matter. Our goal is to put as many adult references in the show as we can as long as they don't alienate the kid viewers. And we do that with the music, and we do that with the cameos, and we do that with our humor. It provides texture... We write the show for kids, and we'd never do anything that would distance them from the show, but as long as all these things that we like fit and don't interfere with the part of the show that a kid will like and enjoy, then we'll go as far as we can. Iggy Pop, Patty Hearst, whatever music that we might have. All that stuff, even though a kid might not get it—there's just something about it that I think it's good that they are exposed to."

— Scott Frampton

INSPIRATIONAL VERSE: "She came from Greece, she had a thirst for knowledge/She studied sculpture at St. Martin's college/That's where I/Caught her eye" — Pulp, "Common People"

## IN MY ROOM ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS

### JANE SIBERRY

Dionne Farris  
*Wild Seed, Wild Flower*

Antonio Carlos Jobim  
and Elis Regina  
*Elis & Tom*

Book:  
Makes Me Wanna Holler  
Nathan McColl

Voice Of Lebanon  
*Belly Dance*

TV: The Maxx  
MTV

## COOL THING

The revival of the dime-novel aesthetic was a trend waiting to happen long before anyone thought of putting the words "Travolta" and "comeback" in the same sentence. But don't fall asleep yet: neither Tarantino nor Urge Overkill fully explored the possibilities of the genre. Steven Lodefink's beautifully conceived and executed trading-card collection of '40s and '50s paperback covers includes both pulp fiction (including a reproduction of *Junkie*, by "Bill Lee" a.k.a. William Burroughs) and wacky how-to titles (*Marriage, Sex And Family Problems And How To Solve Them*). You can get them for \$5.00 from Steven Lodefink, 118 N. 84th St., Seattle, WA 98103.



## PROMO ITEM OF THE MONTH

We couldn't find anyone, not even our strapping general counsel, who could get the lid off this otherwise lovely import Cast promo CD EP-in-a-can. But where there's a screwdriver (and a can opener), there's a way.



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# QUICK FIX

## MIND SCIENCE OF THE MIND WEIRD SCIENCE

Shudder To Think's 1994 major-label debut was *Pony Express Record*, the band's first album to feature guitarist Nathan Larson. Shudder took elements of prog-rock and polished-up D.C. hardcore and made room for glam-slam melodics and the vocal antics of singer Craig Wedren. Turns out Larson had a lot to do with that album's hardcore grandeur, on the evidence of his side project *Mind Science Of The Mind* (to be released by Epic in April), credited to a group of the same name.

Larson sings and plays guitar, bass and synth noises on *Mind Science*. But adding to the album's intriguing textures are some old chums: Helium leader Mary Timony, Dambuilders violinist Joan Wasser and drummer Kevin March. According to Larson, the four came together as a "band," even though he taught them the songs quickly. "We had always wanted to do some recording together," says the wry Larson, "and the opportunity arose now that we're all in semi-successful, 'hot alternative' bands. We recorded it really fast and cheap. We'd rehearse the songs and just slam into them."

Although they only became bandmates much later, Larson and Wedren went to high school in D.C. together. Larson's girlfriend was pals with Timony, and Larson was immediately struck by Timony's musical skills. He was in the hardcore band Swiz, "jumping around onstage and sort of hitting the bass," while Timony was going to the Duke Ellington high school and studying music. Larson is only just now learning to read music, though he taught himself enough guitar years before to play and sing in New York band Stigmata A-Go-Go, from which he was recruited by Wedren. Timony, meanwhile, roomed with Joan Wasser at college, and Larson made trips to Boston to hang out with the pair.

*Mind Science* possesses Shudder To Think's oddball sensuality without sounding forced. Larson says that Wedren has been "a huge influence on my life, but he's such an original you can't hope to take much of his style." He did borrow Wedren's "phonetic" style of lyric writing, however, where he evolves the words out



of what sounds good to the music. "I like that approach," says Larson. "There's something to hang on to, but the listener can apply his or her own interpretation."

Larson loved the opportunity to play with the well-trained Wasser and Timony. The latter was one of the first people Larson ever jammed with, and he marvels at how she's capable of sounding either sophisticated or "simplistic and sloppy." Plus, he adds, "it was a cool experience playing with women." The band's name came from watching Timony appear very solemn while she played a xylophone late one night; they started calling her the "mind scientist." The group hopes to do at least some East Coast tour dates, and possibly more.

There are moments on *Mind Science* (like the too-short title track and "Do You Rule") where Larson, Timony and Wasser lock horns in an ecstatic hard groove. Yet right after "Do You Rule" they hold back so Larson can sing an enjoyably tweaked and distorted white-soul number ("Aiwass"). Larson says his all-time favorites are Bowie, Prince, and T. Rex, and he certainly seems capable of work at that level. The next Shudder record comes first, however, though Larson frets, "I'm having major writer's block. I think I shot my wad on this record." —Danny Housman

## IN MY ROOM ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS

### LAIKA

*Voices Of The Satellites*  
(Folkways Records)

**Plastic Ono Band**  
*Fly*

**Ken Nordine**  
*Word Jazz Vol. 1*

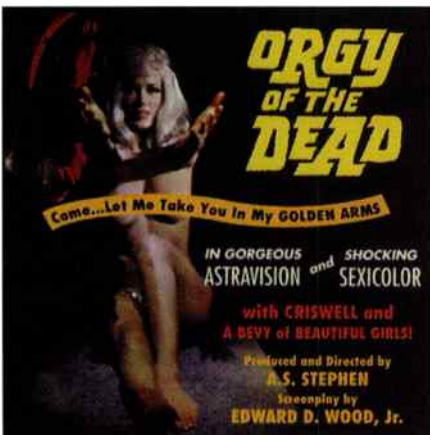
**Miles Davis**  
*Pangaea*

**Woody Guthrie**  
*Dust Bowl Ballads*



## TOUCH OF GREEN

We're a little suspicious of the Grateful Dead-related memorabilia that's popping up to comfort the bereaved legions of Jerry's Kids, but *The Music Never Stopped: Roots Of The Grateful Dead*—a compilation of songs, mostly epochally great, that inspired the Dead—is just fine with us. Especially in its new incarnation as a picture disc with Robert Crumb's artwork. Wow.



### Random fact:

On Dec. 16, a six-foot bust of Frank Zappa was unveiled in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania.

## WEIRD RECORD OF THE MONTH

*Orgy Of The Dead* (Strangelove) is the soundtrack, dialogue and all, of a movie that virtually defines the idea of the Incredibly Strange Film. Its Ed Wood-scripted premise is simple enough: A young couple strays from a car wreck into a haunted cemetery, where they are forced by "the Night People" to watch a ceremony where, as the liner notes explain, "The Emperor hears, through interpretive dancing, the pleas of the many newly dead," all of whom are mostly-naked women. There may be no better comment on the sounds of the bachelor pad era than this disc's combination of vibraphones, the crack of a bullwhip and Wood crony Criswell intoning "A pussycat is born to be whipped."





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World Radio History

# QUICK FIX

## FUZZY

### BECOMING CLEARER

Never underestimate the value of rehearsal. When Boston's Fuzzy was composed of three friends, including guitars/vocalists Chris Toppin and Hilken Mancini, and still sharpening its buzzing guitars and no-nonsense pop hooks, the band got the opportunity of moving into some free practice space vacated by the Lemonheads' Dave Ryan while that band was on tour. It didn't hurt that Ryan, who would soon sign on as Fuzzy's drummer, took a rehearsal tape made at the space with him on the subsequent tour: fellow Lemonhead Nic Dalton heard the tape and decided to release it in Australia on his own Half-A-Cow label.

Fuzzy's bassist, Winston Braman, clarifies: "Dave wanted to know what we had been doing. A friend of ours set this guy up with us, and for like 120 bucks, this guy came down to our rehearsal space and recorded us on some kind of weird little digital thing with a couple of microphones. Dave took the tape... and Nic heard it and was really into it. He liked the whole thing and just put out the whole thing in Australia."

The tape caught the attention of record companies a lot closer to home, and not much later, the band had a finished debut produced at the infamous Cambridge, MA Fort Apache studio, recording haven of Buffalo Tom, Belly, Juliana Hatfield and Come, among a long list of others. Full of quick-attack, guitar-heavy pop, Fuzzy soon gained the band notice for its melodic sensibilities and reckless musical energy. Somewhat hidden among the wall-to-wall guitars though, was the band's well-honed sense of harmony, a trait that was only overt in the brief "Intro," which featured of Toppin and Mancini's voices in a slowly-building a capella choir. But this side of the band is much more apparent on its latest, the



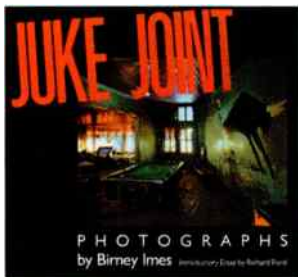
more focused *Electric Juices*, which accentuates the band's harmonies while also more closely approximating its live show. "We tried to work a lot more on the harmonies in the studio this time [because] we had more time," explains Braman. "The last one, we just kind of hacked together because we paid for most of the first record... [the songs] were done in two-day sessions where you'd play all night and try to get something out of it."

One of the songs on the new album, "Girl Don't Tell Me," is a Beach Boys cover, further hinting to the band's commitment to arrangement and composition. Braman confirms, "It's easy to be a reactionary and say, 'Oh, [Brian Wilson] sucks,' like some people say, 'Oh, I hate the Beatles,' [but] everything about him is relevant in a way. Just things like song structure and composition of the songs. I think that's one of the better things that we're able to do... maybe what makes us different than other groups is the harmonies. And the melodies." —Aaron Clow

**INSPIRATIONAL VERSE:** "Swinging like a beef hook on the hips of hell/And the stains on my boots say my life is going well/And to snap your skinny neck in two/Would be the least that I could do" —rjby, "Bud"

### Random fact:

On The Songs Of West Side Story (RCA), "I Feel Pretty" is sung by... Little Richard.



## ROADHOUSE BLUES

Birney Imes' photobook *Juke Joint* (University Press Of Mississippi) is packed with pool tables, ravaged furniture, signs for domestic beer and, of course, jukeboxes. \$8 of

Mississippi's finest roadside establishments are featured here, and aside from two brief essays, there's no hard info on any of the clubs. It's no loss, however; the photos more than speak for themselves. Really, what more do you need to know about the Out Of Sight Club in Yazoo City than what you learn from its handwritten signs: "No Dope Please Crack Will Kill You Look At Your Buddy He Is Dead You No" and "All Whisky Drinking In Here Is \$1.00 (You To) Ice 25 and 50c A Cup"? Many of Imes' photos seem to have been taken in the daytime or early morning, giving some joints a look of recovering from a wicked night of drinking, or perhaps a nasty crack over the head with a pool cue. —Steve Ciabattoni

## MIX TAPE

"A Little Electro Now And Then" by Sean Cooper

Side A:

Clatterbox: Sann Sann  
Spacepimp: The Pimp  
Elektroids: Japanese Electronics  
Doctor Rockitt: Worm In My Foot  
Clatterbox: Montis  
 $\mu$ -Ziq: Phiesope  
Elektroids: Floatation  
Sawtooth: Hostage  
Fusion: Time Travellers

Side B:

West Street Mob: Break Dancin' Electric Boogie  
Man Parrish: Hip Hop Be Bop  
Time Zone: Wildstyle  
Herbie Hancock: Rockit  
Davy DMX: One For The Treble  
Egyptian Lover: Egypt Egypt  
Pretty Tony: Fix It In The Mix  
Jamie Jupiter: Computer Power

## Tours We'd Like To See

SEVEN DWARFS '96: Tricky, Belly, Moby, Pony, Fuzzy, Goldie and Doc Hopper.

Made a good mix tape lately? Tell us about it. In every issue, we will feature a mix tape made by one of us (the editors) or one of you (the readers). Just mail or fax us the track listing, and we'll pick out one we think is interesting for a future issue.



# COMBINE

PRESENTS

*"The History of American Rock and Roll"*



***"Creative chaos from sloppy-drunk  
hicks that live in a fucking swamp...."***

***-Lollipop***



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# BEST NEW MUSIC

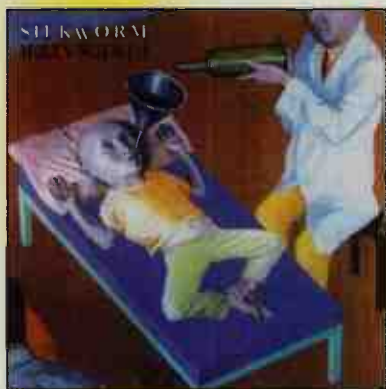
## SILKWORM

### Firewater

Matador

Seattle-via-Montana's Silkworm has played by the rules for over four years, and what has it gotten? A small, devoted following in pockets of the country for three fantastic LPs and a couple of EPs and singles. An unlucky bunch of stubborn hipsters? Pshaw. One of the craftiest, most original rock bands going. *Firewater* sounds like a great rock record should: dry, explosive, yet poignant. Though the band parted with guitarist Joel Phelps since the last record, Silkworm elected not to replace him. The trio maintains a large sound with vertiginous, sticky bass, drums that make you sit up straight, and a protean, astonishing guitarist: Andy Cohen is both a powerhouse virtuoso and—that rare thing in rock—a lyrical stylist, easily the peer of Bob Mould or J. Mascis. But, much as Cohen plays with a cerebral quality, he's no egghead. Check out the knot of slippery riffs in "Lure Of Beauty": He knots them up tight but still doesn't give away the easy groove. The album's title begins to make sense as the 19 songs pile up many references to booze consumption. *Firewater* is also about regret, hindsight, bitterness and lucidity. Cohen and bassist Tim Midgett share the songwriting and singing equally; while both of their regular-guy voices sometimes rise into ear-stretching howls, they're used as effective instruments as well. Cohen juxtaposes odd phrases and jagged impressions that evoke more than their elliptical details. Check out "Nerves," the stomping album opener, which suggests Nirvana with a sound and lyrics that evoke a singer on the brink: "No more stupid tunes/No more easy poon/Goddamn the circumstance that brought me here/And goddamn you, my friends." The album's last track, "Don't Make Plans This Friday," is an instant classic, destined to be covered by a gritty-voiced veteran. Concerning the man's side of a messy divorce, "Plans" has a lasting, trenchant refrain: "Friday night is sacred/It's not time to be wasted." Silkworm damn well deserves whatever greater success awaits it.

—Danny Housman



**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 13.

**FILE UNDER:** Aggressively resourceful, inventive rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The Who, Gang Of Four, Nirvana, Bob Mould.

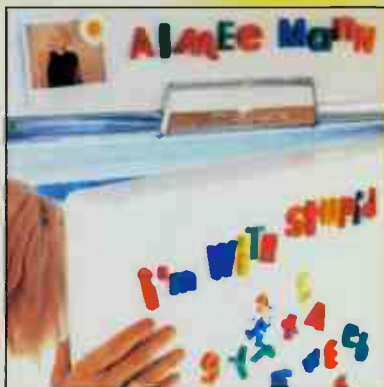
## AIMEE MANN

### I'm With Stupid

DGC

It's been quite a while since we've heard from Ms. Mann. Although her full-length followup to 1993's critically lauded but otherwise criminally overlooked *Whatever* has been finished for over a year, it's only now that we get a glimpse at the fantastic *I'm With Stupid*. While at first it would seem that Aimee has travelled down an entirely different road this time, slicing away at the intense orchestral layering that covered just about every inch of *Whatever*, a listen or two through her newest reveals instead a more subtle approach to arrangements. Mann's basic writing—melodies and lyrics—has always been her strong point anyway, and the lyrics alone on *I'm With Stupid* are testament to her status as one of today's premier pop tunesmiths. For proof, check out the wonderfully quirky "Frankenstein," where Mann likens an unspoken obsession to the building of a monster ("When you're building your own creation/nothing's better than a real imitation"), or the sarcastic, dejected "Superball" ("I'm a superball/You can bounce me once and I'll ricochet/Around the room"). Producer and multi-instrumentalist Jon Brion (Jellyfish, Greys) once again takes care of most of the guitar and keyboard work, lending a raw, personal edge to much of *I'm With Stupid*. Hopefully, it won't be another two years before her next album arrives.

—Aaron Clow



**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 30.

**FILE UNDER:** Rare, original pop brilliance.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Elvis Costello, Jennifer Trynin, XTC.



**TED HAWKINS**  
**The Boardwalk Tapes**  
*Evidence*



Ted Hawkins was sort of a cross between a soul singer and a folk singer: Armed with just a sturdily-strummed acoustic guitar, his gravelly voice, and an encyclopedic repertoire of soul, country and popular music, he would render versions of familiar and unfamiliar tunes which were absolutely unforgettable. Neglected and undiscovered for years, his story became even more poignant when he passed away unexpectedly a few months after his major label-debut, *The Next Hundred Years*, in 1994. In a lot of ways, Hawkins was a repository where most of this country's blues, soul and country music was stored. Many of these songs were staples of his repertoire: Webb Pierce's "There Stands The Glass" was given a twangy neo-country treatment on *The Next Hundred Years*, but here it's just Ted grappling with the song's emotional core. Ted Hawkins used to employ the old soul singer's trick of putting a drop or two of pepper sauce in his water he drank on the stage, giving his voice that extra bit of rough, earnest hoarseness. When you hear him alone and unaccompanied, singing "Let The Good Times Roll" or "Dock Of The Bay," you realize just how close he was to being America's greatest musical treasure. —James Lien

**DATALOG:** Released Dec. 12. Originally issued as two European import CDs.  
**FILE UNDER:** Soul unplugged.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, Johnny Cash's American Recordings.

**CAST** 🍷  
**All Change**  
*Polydor-A&M*



Ever wonder what happened to that witty U.K. combo, the La's? No, there's no reunion planned, but perhaps the next best thing has occurred: La's axeman John Power has formed his own like-minded offshoot, Cast, and taken over vocal duties from the missing-in-action Lee Mavericks. And surprise! It works, in ways that are bound to delight old La's boosters. Cast takes the old band's sunny sensibility and puts a skiffle topspin on it, with Power emerging as a new musical powerhouse for the mid-'90s. On the opening "Alright," his voice cracks, squeaks and squeals, even has trouble hitting the high chorus notes, but the track is such a ragged, rock 'n' roll moment that it commands immediate respect. And Power has a few tricks up his sleeve—the hook of "Sandstorm," for instance, is a psychedelic guitar lead; "Four Walls" borrows liberally from the '60s, but twists the influence into something unrecognizable and skewed; the faux slide-guitar folk of "Walkaway" is as basic as a nursery rhyme, but grows more ornate with repeated listenings. Bands can spend beaucoup producer bucks and hours of meticulous studio time and never come close to hitting the target that this visceral, sloppy session does with apparent ease. —Tom Lanham

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 16.  
**FILE UNDER:** Ramshackle pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Who, Kinks, XTC.

**COCKTAILS** 🍷  
**The Cocktails**  
*Carrat Top*



You don't miss your water 'til your well runs dry. After years of being prized by a few, ignored by most, and generally written off as a "lounge band" (which they simply hadn't been for years), the Cocktails have called it a day. It's our loss. What these four multi-instrumentalists have left as a final testament is a beautiful, shimmering, terribly sad record. *The Cocktails*, assembled from various sessions recorded over a two-year period, is of a piece, in the vein of the Beach Boys' *Smiley Smile* (which its organ parts explicitly recall): it sounds like a huge, magnificent thing scrapped and replaced with its small but perfect model, a wan but unfailing source of warmth. A lot of its songs are instrumentals; some of them sound like they're not finished, but only in the sense that one doesn't finish a story because it's too sad to tell. Everything is murmured, suggested, hummed under the breath; the only moment where the rage the rest of the lyrics hint at comes out directly is the penultimate "Cast Stones," and even that is sorrow more than anger. The Cocktails were first-rate musicians who had no use for irony or poses, even the jokey personae they had early on (they still had matching outfits at the end of the band, but those were models of understated elegance). That meant that beauty was an easy thing for them to touch. Here, they hold it in their hands, then open their palms and let it fly. —Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 15.  
**FILE UNDER:** Classic American pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** The Beach Boys' "Fall Breaks And Back To Winter," Nick Drake, Big Star's *Third*, Unrest.



The world's finally catching up with the Grifters. After years of recording at their favorite hometown spot, Easley Studios, they're not alone; bands like Pavement and Sonic Youth have recorded their recent albums at the Memphis haunt. And after years recording for tiny indie labels, the group has finally inked a deal with Sub Pop. They've long been making top-notch rock 'n' roll, and now more people will hear it.

Last year, the mighty Memphis quartet arrived at a crossroads. Having released three albums on small indie labels—the old-fashioned kind, where one or two people run the show—they were finally feeling the pinch of indie distribution's less-than-bulky muscle. "I think that was one problem with the distribution system we had up until this point," notes guitarist/vocalist Dave Shouse. "The record would go to the store, and the first 10 people who want to buy it, and then it wouldn't be restocked for weeks."

Unlike the many bands that have made careers of landing the perfect record contract, sucking down a year's worth of free meals in the balance, the Grifters resisted jumping ship from Shangri-La, which released both '93's *One Sock Missing* and '94's *Crappin' You Negative*, until last year, despite much underground hubbub and critical acclaim.

But they weren't always fighting off record company execs with barbecued ribs. Back in 1990, when the Grifters formed, options for such bands weren't so numerous. Dave recalls, "It was a post-Slash, Twin\Tone, SST, Homestead period..." "Right in the hole," adds guitarist/vocalist Scott Taylor, before Dave picks up again: "...when bands like Nirvana were starting in Seattle and Pavement was starting in Stockton... so we didn't think of ourselves as an alternative band or an indie band, we just thought of ourselves as a band: 'we're gonna make some music and put it out.'"

Scott expands on this idea, revealing the impetus behind the band's self-releasing its first two singles. "The basic idea was, why make a demo tape to shop to labels when you can spend the same money that you'd spend making a demo tape to make a single that you can sell, and at least have some hope of breaking even on the investment you made and you actually have a product—'Look Ma! We got a record!,'" he finishes in an exaggerated Southern drawl.

"People were real mainstream," recalls Dave. "So we figured we'll put our own records out. And that's when those people called from Sonic Noise [which released the Grifters' debut album, *So Happy Together*]. I thought that someone was playing a joke on us."

The folks at Sonic Noise weren't laughing then, and the staff at Sub Pop certainly isn't laughing now. Having inked a deal further along in their career—and with a label that's recently seen its own growth spurt—the Grifters take a mature and realistic view of the deal. "I don't feel like we're on a big label," says Dave. "It's not like walking into the Sony building. There is a corporate attitude among some people at some junctures, because they realize that if they're going to play the same field and offer the same amount of money, they've got to... and that's cool. We just try to say, OK, we'll see how your commercial instincts work."

"And they're in the business of music," Scott concurs. "We're just in the music business. They're not—or they might be in bands—but in terms of how their relationship with us is, they're not in a rock band, they're not making the music, they're not looking at it in terms of song structure and passion and stuff like that, they're looking at it in terms of 'is somebody going to buy this, or is somebody not going to buy it? Because we want to sell stuff, because that's what we do, is sell stuff.' Because we hired them, or they hired us, to sell stuff for each other."

The group's realistic, unflashy attitude is certainly refreshing. But it doesn't mean that they're goal-oriented hard-liners either. "We don't really expect our record to do anything," explains Dave, much to the chagrin of his publicist, who half-chokes on her beer at the statement. "We're always going to make music for ourselves. I think that's one reason we can't answer questions about expectations, because we literally don't have any. I'm sure Sub Pop would like this record to sell untold millions, and maybe it will."

Things weren't always so clear-cut for the Grifters either. During the making of last year's *The Eureka E.P.*, the band found itself contemplating its next step. "There's a real apprehension and caution about the record," notes Scott. "Not necessarily anxiety or angst, but kind of a caution, of a 'what's going to happen next? We knew it was a transitional record, but we didn't know what the transition was going to be. We knew that things



# The Grifters

by Lydia Anderson  
photos by Daniel Ball



were changing, obviously, within ourselves, within the group, within the way we were recording, the way we write songs, everything had shifted before, and that record showed a lot of it."

"This is the one where we wanted to say, we'll make the best four-track recording we can make," reveals Dave. "Almost to debunk all this bullshit of, 'Oh it's four-track, it's low-fi.' We're on no low-fi agenda, we just don't have money."

Money—or more precisely, more time in the studio—is actually one thing the Grifters' new label deal afforded them. Having three weeks to fool around at Easley "allowed us to write the record, basically," says Dave of the group's Sub Pop debut, *Ain't My Lookout*. "We had song ideas but not much really. It gave us time to pull those ideas together. We only had three songs ahead of time. It also gave us extra time to split off and work out songs separately or in groups of two, without someone else looking over your shoulder. We had more time to mix, and didn't have to settle for a less than satisfactory mix...We had no expectations with this record. It wasn't as heavy [as previous albums], it was less dense, like the EP in that respect."

And like the EP, *Ain't My Lookout* challenged the band to rethink its recording techniques. "[As with the EP, there was] the sense that there are other things besides guitars, and if there are guitars, let's do something different. And if we fail, then we'll have a good time failing," Dave explains. Including their trusty Easley engineers, Doug Easley and Davis McCain, in the recording

process also expanded their vision. "Really, for this record, we just opened it up and said, 'it's you two guys and us four guys and we're gonna do this together.' I think that helped. It was more of a collective effort." Together, the album's 13 cuts offer a newfound diversity in a style that's still identifiably the Grifters'. Like *The Eureka E.P.*, it boasts a tense, suspicious vibe, running like a bolt of energy through the group's crunchy, surprisingly well-dressed rock songs. But there's also plenty of 7"-worthy gems: chew on the ensnaring riff of "Radio City Suicide" or the dog-eared one loping through "The Straight Time," not to mention the Guided By Voices-like pop of "Last Man Alive."

Still, the Grifters aren't quite ready to rest on their laurels yet. Their concern for the future of their art

certainly plays into lyrics like "Oh, to be state of the art—boho/alt/Nobody loves you better than yourself," crooned in a Stephen Malkmus-like whine on *Ain't My Lookout*'s "Boho/Alt." "I want to whistle past the grave," notes Dave with concern. "Everyone's lumped into an indie/alternative rock music category, and this is Top 40 music now, isn't it?" he asks rhetorically before postulating about the genre's future after it's no longer the flavor of the moment.

But if the Grifters are worrying about their place in the music world during the last half of the decade, then they're still ahead of the game. Remember, the world is finally catching up with them. **IMO**

## DISCOGRAPHY

*Disfigurehead* (7" EP) (Doink) 1990  
*The Kingdom Of Jones* (7" EP) (Doink) 1991  
*So Happy Together* (Sonic Noise) 1992  
 "Soda Pop" (7") (Shangri-La) 1992  
 "Corolla Hoist" (7") (Shangri-La) 1992  
*One Sock Missing* (Shangri-La) 1993  
 "Under The Ground" for Simple Machines Holiday Series, Oct. '93  
 "Holmes" (7") (Darla) 1994  
 "Bronze Cast" (7") (Shangri-La) 1994  
*Crappin' You Negative* (Shangri-La) 1994  
 "I'm Drunk" on split single with Guided By Voices (Now Sound) 1994  
 "Queen Of The Table Waters" (7") (Sub Pop) 1994  
 "Stream" (7") (Derivative (Canada)) 1995  
*The Eureka EP* (Shangri-La) 1995  
*Ain't My Lookout* (Sub Pop) 1996

# Last Call THE COCTAILS (1990-1995)

by Rick Reger



## The COCTAILS





You have to admire the Coctails. For most of their career, they were the absolute antithesis of what folks were looking for from indie-rock. It wasn't just that they were quiet, clean-cut and unironically charming, or that they only moved into guitar-bass-drums rock when they'd already mastered vibraphone, upright bass, organ, saxophone and singing saw. It was their attitude: calm, professional in the best sense, and developed from years living and working together. And throughout a career that ended this past New Year's Eve, the band pursued its singularly unorthodox muse.

When the Kansas City quartet moved to Chicago in 1990, the local acts dominating the hometown and national media had the "Chicago Sound." Tar, Rapeman, Jesus Lizard, Naked Raygun—it was the sound of gnashing guitars, over-amped drill-press rhythm sections and thorn-throated howlers that was in demand. It was a sound that reflected the sooty, factory-pocked industrial wastelands on the city's southernmost edge.

The Coctails, however, were like minstrels from a distant, far more benign environment. Archer Prewitt, Mark Greenberg, Barry Phipps and John Upchurch began popping up on local stages wearing matching outfits, wielding acoustic instruments such as sax, vibes and upright bass, and performing gentle, upbeat music that was unashamedly fun.

"When we started out," Greenberg recalls, "we were pretty young and in college and having fun. And having our music be fun was important to us. We were interested in a lot of different styles, like jazz and folk, and in a lot of different instrumental textures. But our music back then had this fun quality to it."

One would have expected such a band to be roundly hooted off the city's stages, but the Coctails quickly developed a following and discovered that several clubs were more than happy to book them as an opening act. Clearly, Chicago hungered for something in addition to its clanking, aggressive sound. The Coctails sated that appetite.

The band's early records, *Hip Hip Hooray* (1990) and *Here Now Today* (1991), nicely document the initial Coctails ethos. Both records took, as the band calls it, an "all's-fair" approach to style. Straight rock 'n' roll, lounge pop, jazz flirtations and peculiar instrumentals nestled cheek-by-jowl and provided an eclectic, affable pop music melange.

Unfortunately, the band's low-key instrumentation, matching wardrobes, occasional nods to Martin Denny and chosen moniker eventually led to an unwanted membership in the erstwhile Cocktail Nation movement. "That was the result of superficial things," remarks Greenberg. "We dressed alike and had a set of vibes. If we'd seen the Cocktail Nation thing coming, we never would have chosen the name we did. Musically, I think we've always had more in common with bands like Thinking Fellers Union Local 282 or Polvo. But people don't actually listen to music anymore. They just pick out surface characteristics and categorize bands on that basis."

In 1993, the Coctails made what turned out to be a permanent move away from the diversified playfulness of the early records. That was the year the band released *Long Sound*. That all-instrumental "jazz" effort mingled blithe post-bop ditties and unexpectedly abstract, revelatory pieces that evoked *Out To Lunch*-era Eric Dolphy. The band even corralled local avant-garde reed heavyweights Ken Vandermark and the late Hal Russell to contribute some frayed, frenetic blowing to those sessions. "At that time," says Greenberg, "we didn't want to put out another 'mixed bag' record. We were falling in love with records like Neil Young's *Harvest* and Slint's *Spiderland*. Those records aren't just collections of songs; they're cohesive listening experiences. We wanted to create something like that"

*Long Sound* succeeded on that level and then some. It served

notice that the unschooled non-virtuoso Coctails had developed into capable, sensitive multi-instrumentalists.

The band's 1994 album *Peel* and the recently released (and final) studio album *The Coctails* found the foursome bringing the invention of their earlier records to a guitar/bass/drum setting. The beautiful new record blends wistfully lyrical songs and instrumentals, and it completes the band's transformation from quirky, good-natured scene oddballs into sophisticated, multi-faceted musicians.

In recent years, the Coctails have developed into a genuine fixture on the Chicago rock scene. The opening slots of the early '90s quickly evolved into packed headline gigs. (They were also known for their merchandise tables, where they sold not just the usual T-shirts, records and CDs, but Coctails dolls, popcorn in silkscreened Coctails bags, Coctails buttons, Prewitt's amazing *Sof' Boy* comics, and more, all of which they made themselves; people who gave them a place to sleep on tour received special handmade Coctails pillows!) But it all drew to a close when the Coctails played their final show at famed Chicago club Lounge Ax on New Year's Eve.

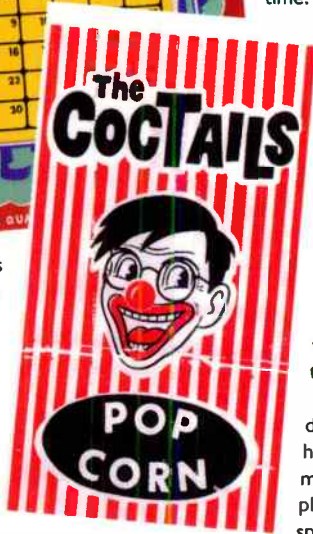
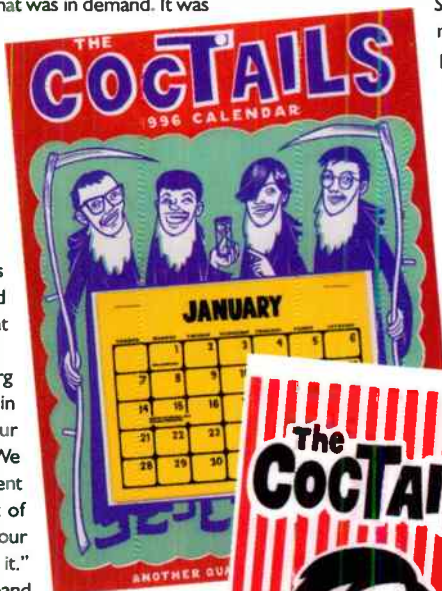
"The four of us have been together for about seven years," says Greenberg. "We lived dorm-style for many of those years and gave the band our complete energy. It's very difficult to get four people to give so much to the same thing for such a long time. During the last couple of years, that energy hasn't been there. So we want to stop because it's time to stop, not because we're dried up and useless."

The group's lengthy farewell concert provided ample evidence that the Coctails hadn't dried up. Garbed in matching, monogrammed T-shirts, the foursome rummaged through their catalogue before an enthusiastic, warmly appreciative crowd. They opened with a series of whimsical instrumentals that set the tone for the high-spirited set.

As the show progressed, it vividly demonstrated how far the Coctails had come as songwriters and musicians. Though the band ladled out plenty of breezy juvenilia, it also spotlighted a number of finely-etched,

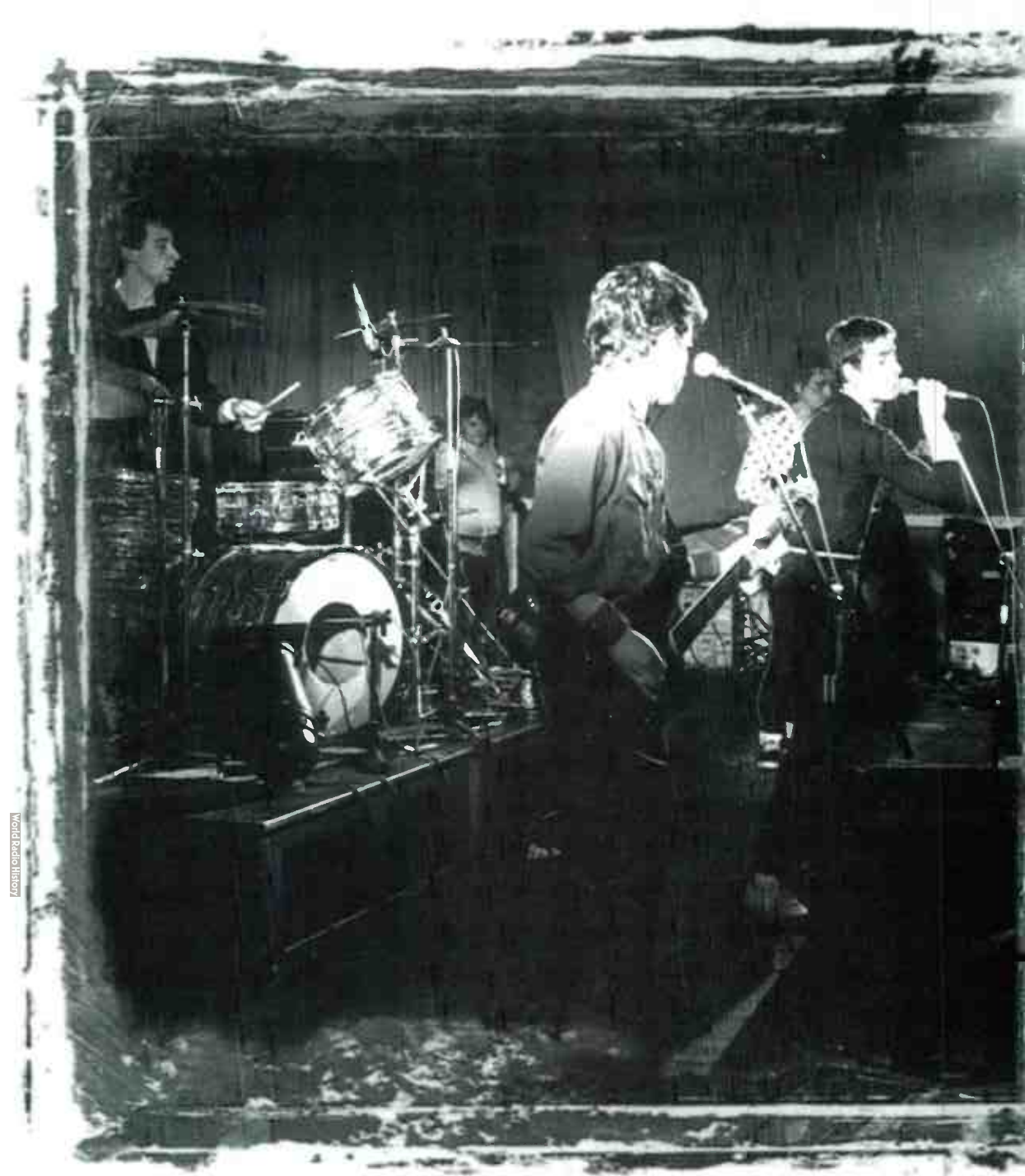
introspective new pieces like "City Sun" and "Cadali," as well as a sharp rendition of "Far East" from *Long Sound*. In addition, the Coctails traded spots among a wide array of instruments with unruffled assurance. Drummer Greenberg took turns on the vibes, organ and guitar, while both Prewitt and Phipps played drums. And reedist Upchurch occasionally pulled a Rahsaan Roland Kirk move, playing two alto saxes simultaneously. Neither the band nor the crowd seemed willing to let the evening end, and only the club's 2 a.m. license eventually brought the Coctails' career to a close. **END**

📀 "CAST STONES" BY THE COCTAILS APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



- Songs For Children 7" EP (Hi-Ball) 1990
- Hip Hip Hooray (Hi-Ball) 1990
- Here Now Today (Hi-Ball) 1991
- Winter Wonderland 7" EP (Hi-Ball) 1992
- The Early Hi-Ball Years (Carrot Top) 1992
- split 7" with Codeine (Simple Machines) 1993
- 3/4 Time 7" EP (Hi-Ball) 1993
- "The Penguin"/"Powerhouse" 7" (S.O.L.) 1993
- Long Sound (Hi-Ball/Carrot Top) 1993
- Peel (Hi-Ball/Carrot Top) 1994
- Tardvark 7" EP (with Dame Darcy) (Hi-Ball) 1995
- Hello Records EP (Hello) 1995
- The Coctails (Carrot Top) 1996

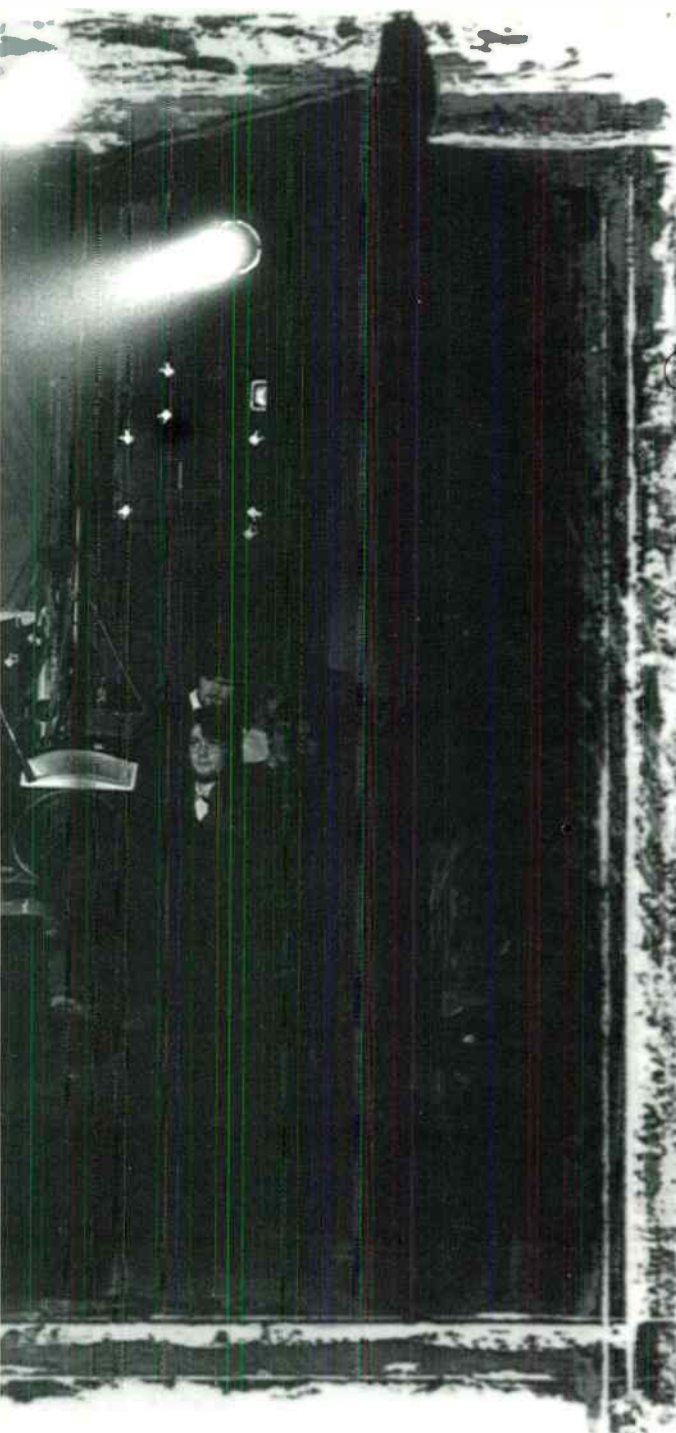
DISCOGRAPHY



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# IT'S SO OBVIOUS: 20 YEARS ON, WIRE HAS BECOME THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BAND THAT CAME OUT OF PUNK.

by Douglas Wolk

If you listen to alternative radio these days, it seems like all you hear is Wire. Well, you may not hear Wire, exactly. You may hear the recent pop hits that cop Wire's sound (notably by Elastica, who are paying them royalties for "Connection," and Menswe@r); you may hear bands that have covered Wire's songs (R.E.M., Big Black, Lush, Minor Threat, Flying Saucer Attack, Henry Rollins). And you definitely hear bands that have been powerfully influenced by Wire's ideas about shaping sound, which have turned up everywhere from punk to techno to experimental rock.

This year, you'll be hearing Wire more than ever—partly because of a new all-star compilation honoring the group, partly because of a series of archival releases of unheard chapters in its history, partly because of its challenging new projects (both together and separately), and mostly because the rest of the music world is continuing to catch on to Wire's ideas and techniques. A brief, subjective overview of the band's 20-year career is in order (those who want to know more are directed to Kevin Eden's excellent, exhaustive book *Everybody Loves A History*):

Wire was formed in 1976, more or less at Watford Art School in England, by guitarists Colin Newman, Bruce Gilbert and George Gill, bassist Graham Lewis, and drummer Robert Gotobed; they played a handful of shows and made a name as one of the outstanding early British punk bands. After a few months, Gill left, and the group started writing tremendously direct and stripped-down songs, partly to compensate for the fact that none of the others were especially good musicians yet. (A live performance from early 1977, documented on *Behind The Curtain*, reveals some incipient good ideas and a laughable Ramones obsession—the song title "Mary Is A Dyke" about says it all.) Near the end of '77, Wire released its debut album *Pink Flag*. It was very smart, very clever, very tough, and mercilessly streamlined: 21 songs in 35 minutes, like firecrackers on a string. (Graham Lewis, in the Eden book: "The songs were all short because they're not long.") *Pink Flag* has a sort of cult around it. On Wire's 1987 tour, they didn't want to play old material, so a band called the Ex-Lion Tamers (after one of the album's songs) opened for them, playing a set that consisted of *Pink Flag* replicated exactly, including the precise amount of time the record had between songs and a 30-second break in the middle "to flip it over"!



# nection is made



Colin Newman, 1995

PHOTO BY MALKA SPIGEL

1978's *Chairs Missing* was very different, both in style and in content. Nearly every song was a gem on its own, as opposed to the blurred rush of *Pink Flag*. The songwriting was richer and more varied, the production showed that the band had learned to use the studio as an instrument, and, more importantly, Wire was no longer identifiably a punk group: it had moved beyond that into something new, and the record still sounds contemporary now.

Almost an album's worth of post-*Pink Flag* songs, some of which eventually appeared on *Behind The Curtain*, were discarded—the band was moving too fast for them. Lewis, speaking on the phone from his home in Sweden, says: "When I got involved in making music with Wire, I'd had a long interest and love affair with pop music and pop art. With meeting Bruce and Colin, I found a place where I was able to explore that. I think we were able to be ambitious about what we were doing, and to keep innovating what we were doing. We just liked making noise, and saying 'God, listen to this'—a lot of the time, everyone was just laughing. It was like a childish reaction, really, a very pure reaction. We kept developing our skills in order to realize our ideas, and the ideas just kept coming. We were writing a lot of material, and we came up with a method which allowed us to do that. I don't think it's very good for forming a career, as such, because we were interested in the work, and that meant that we just jettisoned a lot of material as soon as something we thought was more exciting or better came along."

Wire continued its startlingly rapid progression toward abstraction and spaciousness with 1979's *154* (named after the number of gigs the group had played), a record full of non-intuitive arrangements, songs about travel, producer Mike Thorne's keyboards, and suffocating dread. Some listeners who'd missed *Chairs Missing* wondered if this was even the same Wire they'd heard two years earlier. After a few more singles and a live album, *Document And Eyewitness*, that's mostly a hard-to-take recording of a sort of performance-art piece, Wire went on hiatus.

The group's members continued to record full speed ahead, however, and often appeared on each other's records. Newman's A-Z has an even more extreme version of *154*'s atmosphere of stasis and terror; *Not To*, in contrast, is a sweet pop album, and the instrumental *provisionally entitled the singing fish* anticipates the sort of texture-making that electronic musicians would develop a decade later (Gotobed plays on all three albums). Gilbert and Lewis made four tremendous, unsettling albums of sound-driven (rather than composition-driven) songs as *Dome*, and a couple of aural documentations of art installations they made with Russell Mills, as well as other records as *Duet Emmo*, *Cupol*, *P'O* and *Lewis/Gilbert*.

In the mid-'80s, Wire decided to see what would happen if they got together again and played. The result was a four-track EP released in 1986, the mechanical but joyful *Snakedrill*, and a decision to be a band again on a fairly regular basis. (Still, they continued with their individual projects: Newman recorded a few more solo albums, Gilbert released several records' worth of music he'd written for dance performances and the like, and Lewis did two albums under the name He Said.) Once again, the group sounded entirely different than it had when it left off—in fact, like a different band with the same members, with Newman's voice and Gotobed's ultra-precise drumming the only constants. ("Bruce was always into 'year zero' approaches," Newman recalls.) Two albums, *The Ideal Copy* and *A Bell Is A Cup... Until It Is Struck*, followed in the next two years, as the band relied increasingly on sampling and sequencing technology in the studio, flirted with American college radio success with "Ahead" and "Kidney Bingos," and toured all over the world.

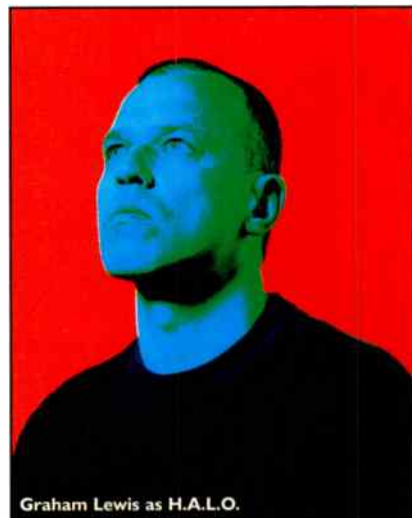
"When we played live," Lewis says, "in order for us to keep our interest and investigate the pieces further, we always came up with a different way of playing them. For 1989's *It's Beginning To And Back Again*, Wire took live recordings, stripped away all but a few tracks (drums, room ambience, that sort of thing), then constructed new versions of the songs around them. *The Drill* was a similar project:

a series of pieces based on variations of the rhythm from "Drill" (usually the climax of this incarnation's performances, sometimes played for up to half an hour). The final Wire studio album recorded was the high-tech and dimly dull *Manscape*.

After its release, Gotobed, whose live drumming had gradually been phased out, left the group; he now works on a farm. Gilbert, Newman and Lewis took the name *Wir* (pronounced "wire"), and made a low-key but adventurous 1991 album, *The First Letter*. Since then, *Wir* has again been on hiatus (with a few exceptions—see below).

The group's members have been keeping busy, though. Lewis recently made an album with Swedish collaborator Orjan Ornkloo, under the name H.A.L.O. (it stands for High Altitude Low Opening, a parachuting technique used to go behind enemy lines); he's now developing new material for which he may return to the He Said name, and working as a DJ and remixer. "I'm not listening to much guitar-work these days, I'm afraid," he says. "One can hear that anyway, everywhere." Gilbert is preparing a forthcoming solo album, *Ab Ovo*, and doing sound-art pieces under the name *The Beekeeper*, DJing from inside a metal shed.

And Newman has found another new musical path, with his wife Malka Spigel (whom he met when he produced an album by her band *Minimal Compact*). "We have a young child," he says. "We had a stark choice when he was born, as we were both in touring bands, between being absentee parents or finding a way to work together while bringing up a child. We chose the latter." That way was starting their own independent label, *swim~*, and moving away from traditional song-forms and into ambient music and techno (they say they mostly listen to drum-and-bass music these days), which they can record easily and at home. "In the beginning," they say, "we tried to make some kind of song/electronic hybrid," with Spigel's solo album *Rosh Ballata* and their group *Oracle*. "We felt tied down by the song structure, and broke free of that with *Immersion*"—a Spigel/Newman instrumental electronic collaboration, which has released an album, *Oscillating*, and a series of remixes by various prominent techno names. "Taking away the narrative vocal, the democracy of who can produce the music is increased..."



Graham Lewis as H.A.L.O.

PHOTO BY ANNIKA VON HAUSWOLFF



CONGRATULATIONS I'M SORRY

# GIN BLOSSOMS

THE NEW ALBUM

featuring the single  
**FOLLOW YOU DOWN**



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World Radio History



PHOTO: MUTE

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### Wire:

*Pink Flag* (Restless Retro)  
*Chairs Missing* (Restless Retro)  
*154* (Restless Retro)  
*Document & Eyewitness* (Mute)  
*Snakedrill* (EP) (Enigma)  
*The Ideal Copy* (Enigma)  
*A Bell Is A Cup... Until It Is Struck* (Enigma)  
*It's Beginning To And Back Again* (Enigma)  
*The Peel Sessions* (Strange Fruit)  
*On Returning (1977-1979)* (Restless Retro)  
*Manscape* (Enigma)  
*The Drill* (Mute)  
*The First Letter* (Elektra) [as Wir]  
*Wire 1985-1990: The A List* (Mute)  
*Behind The Curtain* (EMI (UK))  
*Turns And Strokes* (WMO)

### Colin Newman:

*A-Z* (Beggars Banquet)  
*provisionally entitled the singing fish/Not To* (4AD (UK))  
*Commercial Suicide* (Crammed (UK))  
*It Seems* (Restless)  
*Tree* (swim~) [with Oracle]  
*Voice* (EP) (swim~)  
*Oscillating* (swim~) [with Immersion]  
*Full Immersion: The Remixes* (swim~) [with Immersion]

### Bruce Gilbert & Graham Lewis:

*Dome 1/2* (The Gray Area) [as Dome]  
*Dome 3/4* (The Gray Area) [as Dome]  
*Or So It Seems* (Mute) [with Duet Emmo]  
*8 Time* (4AD (UK))  
*Pacific/Specific (In A Different Place)* (WMO)

### Bruce Gilbert:

*This Way To The Shivering Man* (Mute)  
*Insiding* (Mute (UK))  
*Music For Fruit* (Mute (UK))

### Graham Lewis:

*Hail* (Mute) [as He Said]  
*Take Care* (Enigma) [as He Said]  
*Immanent* (MNV Zone (Sweden)) [as H.A.L.O.]

People from any place (including non-English speaking countries), of any age or gender, with limited means and no backing from any major corporations can produce music which is greatly prized and loved... Progress, we'd say!"

Although Wir has mostly been dormant recently, there's a current flurry of related projects. Last summer saw the release of the above-mentioned *Behind The Curtain*, a collection of early demos and live recordings. The Wire Mail Order service (P.O. Box 322, Alta Loma, CA 91701), which sells projects the group has worked on individually and collectively, has started its own label, WMO. Its first release was a superb expanded reissue of Desmond Simmons' 1981 album *Alone On Penguin Island*. Simmons played guitar on Newman's first few solo records; Lewis and Gilbert produced his album (very much in a Dome style), and the re-release includes demos and live tracks on which Newman and Gotobed play. Late last year, WMO released Lewis and Gilbert's lovely, subdued *Pacific/Specific (In A Different Place)*, two radio sessions from the early '80s.

The really exciting WMO stuff is coming up, though. The *Whore* compilation is scheduled to be out shortly after press time: it's 21 Wire songs, played by a dizzying variety of artists including My Bloody Valentine, Godflesh, Laika, Mike Watt and Band Of Susans (whose sensuous, layered rendition of "Ahead" is the album's highlight). And Wire's own *Turns And Strokes*, due in April, is a sort of "lost album," including nine songs the band played on its 1979 tour but never recorded in the studio, as well as a few rarities. Other forthcoming releases include a collection of Colin Newman demos, a Bruce Gilbert spoken-word album, a second various-artists record (planned for next year, it will be all versions of "Drill"), and—somehow inevitably—in November 1997, the Ex-Lion Tamers' *Flap King*.

There are also a couple of new Wir records that have snuck out. The Hafler Trio have reworked an unreleased Wir track from 1991 and put it out as a 12-inch single, "The First Last Number" (Touch (UK)). And all three members of Wir recently reunited for the first time in years for a collaboration with Erasure: a reworking of that band's "Fingers And Thumbs," called "Figures In Crumbs" (it appears on the British single version). "They actually had to [rent] me a bass—I didn't have one," Lewis says. "We played around loops of various parts of the song. As you can imagine, three men with electric guitars, we made quite a lot of noise for a couple of hours, and then started to focus on what we might do. Basically, what you hear is a live improvisation... We just jammed, the way we always used to. We all had a very good time, and everybody was surprised at how easily the language returned." Newman adds, "It was someone else's track, so there was no 'conceptual pressure.' I enjoyed it!"

After 20 years, how do they find a common ground to work together? "It's probably the sense of humor," Newman says. Lewis concurs: "A common humor allows you to get deeper into the pieces—things can take surprising directions then."

And how do they feel about the way Wire's ideas have been assimilated into what pop music is now—the way that the sounds and processes they introduced have become a part of music's vocabulary (and sometimes have even been mimicked directly)? "In general," Newman responds, "I reckon more people have been influenced by the attitudes inherent in the musical forms than the forms themselves. Which is definitely the best thing."

Lewis has his own reaction. "What is a gratifying thing is that one has been able to travel and meet people in many different countries, and people have found what one has done useful. And a lot of those people have been motivated to be creative themselves. I think that's something we never thought, when we started making our own work. It goes round. I saw a documentary about Don Cherry a couple of weeks ago, and he was saying that he was just so happy to be in this music. He said 'I don't own it; nobody else owns it...' The thing is that when you're in it, you must do your part, and you do your part as best you can." **END**



PHOTO BY ANDREW CATTIN



# CAST



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U.S. tour & album release in April

Produced by John Leckie



World Radio History



# *IGGY POP*

THE GODFATHER OF PUNK,

BY TOM LANHAM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS CUFFARO





## PART II

He stares at a couple of photographs of himself—minutes-old but inexplicably shredded into tiny pieces and rearranged on his hotel room's coffeetable—and thinks for a long, silent minute. In all his travels, in all his 26 years of playing raucous rock 'n' roll, the most amazing thing he's ever seen, says Iggy Pop finally, after some deliberation, had nothing to do with music. At least on the surface. "At a Mexican carnival, there was a sideshow," he recalls, stretching his wiry but muscular frame over a plush chair at Hollywood's chi-chi Chateau Marmont. "And in the sideshow was this collection of really miserable, pathetically screwed-up animals, and they were advertised on the side of the trailer—'See the amazing three-legged dog! See the magic owl! And the three-legged dog was just this poor little dog that had lost its leg, right?'"

"And then there was this owl," Pop continues with a scornful frown. "And that was so sad. The owl is a very fierce creature, and they're just not gonna sit there in the same room with people in captivity. So it was drugged. And that's a sight that's stayed with me—I can't get it out of my mind. To see a drugged owl really upset me because an owl usually has this very strong penetrating aspect to its eyes, and this one was just 'Duuuhhhh...' And you could see the animal's misery, knowing it had lost its animation—it wasn't a pretty sight, but boy, did it stay with me." He attempts to lighten the mood with "something nice to counterbalance that vision, like seeing the Rolling Stones in 1969 at the Detroit Olympia—I was 15 feet from the stage, and just to see that up close was a real motherfucker. Forget the way they sounded. Just the way they looked: intense, every single one of 'em."

Invariably, the conversation drifts back to that owl again, a wild animal struggling to retain its identity while humanity seeks to subdue and control it to preserve its myopic perception of the natural order of things. Aren't there a few striking similarities between the raptor and Pop himself? After all, hasn't this man—born James Osterberg on April 21, 1947—been shaking off the shackles of social convention for most of his adult life? Battling demons, both internal and external, in the hopes of being true to himself? Pop guffaws loudly, adjusts his wire-framed sunglasses, and flips his platinum-blond tresses back over his shoulder. "Yes, in fact when I was talking about it just now, there was this other part of my brain going"—and he assumes the voice of a geeky scientist—"this relates to you—you are the owl!"

Judging by his latest gut-pummeller, *Naughty Little Doggie* (Virgin), Pop has grown more than a little reflective of late. "To Belong," for instance, is a scroungy Stooges-era headbanger roiling with a crunch-guitar riff and the subtle observation: "A bird is sitting on the pavement/Someone broke his wing/Now that bird is gone and nowhere/And he's suffering/Now I understand the setup, I see everything." By the chorus, he's screaming—in his patented headphones-too-tight, nearly-off-key fashion—that the only solution is "To belong... to belong here." The cynicism is as prickly as a hedgehog. "There is definitely a problem in that song," the author admits. "And I think it's something a lot of people go through—you wanna join the group, you wanna join other people, and yet in the process of so doing, on every different level, there are offenses that are gonna be committed against your sensibilities and you have to deal with them somehow."

"Some people are too sensitive to take it. Some are too brutal to notice, and some people are too lazy to deal with it at all. There are a lot of different ways that ball can bounce, but it's still a problem: How much of yourself do you give away to get something back?" The song's sense of urgency—a need to know the answers to life's enduring questions—is real, adds Pop. "And there's a lot of that on several tracks on this record. It's a guy right at the brink, feeling like I need to do the next thing, I need to do something else, I need to break out a little bit, but not quite knowing how. And also

not knowing how to do it safely, but wanting to figure it out."

A quick flea-hop from head to tail of *Doggie*: "Heart Is Saved," a power chord pogo-fest that isn't asking for salvation; the surreal, poppish perambulator "Innocent World," which, of course, implies exactly the opposite; "Knucklehead," a cheesy skin-slammung ode to the poor shmoe who believes what he's told on TV; the guitar-churning anthem "I Wanna Live," which is more about the pursuit of carnal pleasure than longevity. Then there are a couple of shocking cuts where Pop's libido scampers to the full length of its tether: the slow, cerebral "Shoeshine Girl," in which our hero lusts after a solitary femme fatale he sees in an airport one afternoon; and the cocky blues strut "Pussy Walk," an id-stained roll-call of intimate female possibilities. Only Pop, the guy famous for smearing peanut butter over himself and howling "Cock In My Pocket" back in the drug-haze '70s, could make such material sound not sexist, but hilarious and chest-pounding.

Asked to explain himself, Mr. Machismo convulses with laughter. "What's up, Ig? What's goin' on?" he grins, knowing he's stirred up controversy for the umpteenth time. "Pussy Walk," he explains after calming down, was inspired by a stroll down the Big Apple's colorful 14th Street. "Which I love, because it's where all the new Americans—the Caribbeans, South Americans, and Puerto Ricans—come to shop for these inexpensive, often gaudy, consumer goods. I went out of the studio on a break to get some coffee, and on my way there and back I was surrounded by all these dark, obviously Latin and Caribbean women, and I was charmed and fascinated by them. And then I started thinking 'Isn't it a tragedy if I go to my grave and I haven't actually gotten intimate with somebody from these places?'" Pop offers a just-can't-help-it shrug. "I'm curious... well, not just curious—I enjoy the sound of the voice, the way of the walk, the whole different thing."

"So I went back up to the studio and they were changing the tape anyway, and it just happened that the guitar player started noodling with this riff, and it was serendipity—what came out was the first verse and the chorus, and the rest I improvised on the record. And 'Shoeshine Girl' is telling a story that actually happened. She doesn't know that I've written a song for her yet, but her name's Angie and she shines shoes in the Phoenix skyport. But, as I say in the song," and he taps his finger on the table for emphasis, "nothing happened. I had somewhere to go, and someone to see, so I left, but I was spellbound. And that's what makes the song beautiful, the fact that nothing did happen. In fact, in both those songs, what gives 'em the energy is that nothing happened yet."

What? Iggy Pop—one of rock's last true wild men—showing restraint? He seems puzzled by this newfound chastity as well. "That's one thing I've been wrestling with on this record, and in general: How much restraint is good? How much?" The answer? Another sly grin. "I, uh, can't say because I'm a gentleman. Let's just say that I'm trying to work these things out for myself right now. I don't want the door wide open, I don't want the door locked. I'd like it to swing a little, put it that way. And I don't really know how to go about that. I just don't know..."

One thing he's sure of: art, when it's pursued strictly for purist reasons, has the power to keep an artist young. At least mentally and emotionally. And Pop's career, studied in overview, seems to have led to this major creative truth. There were the mad, rebellious years, fresh out of Detroit with the feral Stooges, perhaps best documented by 1973's radical *Raw Power* and the sloppy swan-song concert album, *Metallic K.O.* (soon to be re-released on CD). Then there was the scholarly, Bowie-influenced solo period—'77 to '79, with *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*—when iconoclasts like the



"I went out of the studio on a break to get some coffee, and on my way there and back I was surrounded by all these dark, obviously Latin and Caribbean women, and I was charmed and fascinated by them. And then I started thinking 'Isn't it a tragedy if I go to my grave and I haven't actually gotten intimate with somebody from these places?'"



Sex Pistols were tagging him the Godfather of Punk. Confused, musically muddled times followed, finally petering out with mid-'80s pop-metal mutations of *Blah Blah Blah* and *Instinct*. But the real watershed, the moment where Pop returned to claim the sneering throne, was *American Caesar*, his primal, pedal-to-the-floor Virgin comeback two years ago. The ensuing tour, with a scruffy gaggle of 20-something musicians backing him, was cacophonous, inspired and *lgyy*. Osterberg had at last found his Pop persona again, and *Doggie* is another healthy dose of the same.

And Pop has no difficulty recalling the down years. "There was one point, after I'd made a few albums, I somehow got myself into this rock rut," he sighs. "You know, livin' the life—it's babes, it's intoxication, it's guitar, guitar, guitar. But I got to the point where I just sunk into the sludge of that in the '80s and just couldn't do it

right anymore. It was because I was too into it." It was a fondness for art, film and literature, he adds, that "lifted me out of that, and I'm really lucky for it. I also like stuff like the ethnic arts, the religious arts of Indonesia and Africa, and all the art that goes with what people call voodoo. I draw a lot of strength out of that. A lot. And I spend a lot of time with paintings—I own a Robert Williams, a Joe Coleman, and I have four pieces by Brion Gysin. Plus an ancestor statue sittin' around the house from Indonesia." Maturity—although discouraged in rockdom—is no crime. Stimulants and depressants? "For me right now, that means a glass of wine with dinner," Pop says, almost apologetically. And "I Wanna Live" was written because he felt he was becoming "such a work machine that I didn't know how to touch people anymore, didn't know how to talk to them—I had my guard up all the time. So I made a conscious decision to take on a lot of different kinds of work now, so I can meet different kinds of people and get some different experiences. I'm looking for new experience at this stage in the game."

Hence Pop's upcoming cameos in Jim Jarmusch's film *Dead Man*, and a sequel to *The Crow*, in which he plays the villainous Curve and got to ad-lib a line in a scene where the Crow (re-tooled by Vincent Perez) is coming to kill him. "I say 'Fuck you, bird-dick!'" Pop cackles, convulsing again. "'Cause 'Crow,' get it? *Bird-dick*, right? Yeah!" In addition to a recent appearance in the underrated *Tank Girl*, you can also catch Sir Osterberg on television, in a recurring guest role on Nickelodeon's quietly charming *Pete And Pete* Saturday-afternoon sitcom [see Quick Fix, page 6]. He's the crotchety old neighbor Mr. Mecklanburg, who recently made a team of Halloween truants scrub his walk with a toothbrush as penance. Get ready for his next episode, he warns: "It's called 'Dance Fever,' and I sing in that one. My daughter is gonna go to the high school dance, but the problem is, I'm gonna be the chaperone! So I finally sing a song to her in front of everybody to convince her to have one lousy dance with me."

"Some people are too sensitive to take it. Some are too brutal to notice, and some people are too lazy to deal with it at all. How much of yourself do you give away to get something back?"



Pop begins to croon a bit of it now—"I've paid for your braces/I've dressed you in laces/So won't you gimme one lousy dance?" "Hey, I didn't write it," he hastily adds. "Their writers did! It's sort of an Engelbert thing, and I sang it backed by Luscious Jackson." He swears he has no head shots, no talent agent scouting these roles for him. "People just call me—if they want me, they know I'm not that hard to find."

All except the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, when they were putting on their big tribute bash last summer. He had to fight to get on the bill he says, but fronting Soul Asylum was worth all the hassle. Plus, he got to meet Johnny Cash. "That was a big deal," he says, scratching his chin. "But everybody else there I had seen around at one time or another." That's par for the course when you've been in the business for over a quarter of a century. It's everyday interaction, talking with

strangers, that's the new, interesting experience.

"I tried to talk to somebody just the other day," Pop proudly relates. "I was in a video store, and there was somebody I wanted to talk to, but I was too shy." A block away, he suddenly stopped himself. "I thought 'This is ridiculous—I was too shy?'" So I walked back, and the person was pulling out of the store lot in their car, and I just walked right up to the car and waved and smiled." Their reaction? Pop shakes his head and stares at the floor in dejection. "She looked at me in utter terror and floored the thing, like 'There's a maniac after me! I'm gettin' outta here as fast as I can!'" **END**

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY:

*The Stooges* (Elektra)  
*Fun House* (Elektra)  
*No Fun* (Elektra)  
*Raw Power* (Columbia)  
 WITH STOOGES

*The Idiot* (RCA)  
*Lust For Life* (RCA)  
*TV Eye* (Virgin)  
*Kill City* (with James Williamson) (Bomp!)  
*New Values* (Arista)  
*Soldier* (Arista)  
*Party* (Arista)  
*Zombie Birdhouse* (Animal)  
*I Got A Right* (Enigma)  
*Choice Cuts* (RCA)  
*Blah Blah Blah* (A&M)  
*Instinct* (A&M)  
*Brick By Brick* (Virgin)  
*American Caesar* (Virgin)  
*Naughty Little Doggie* (Virgin)

HEART IS SAVED" BY IGGY POP APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



# Marry Me Jane

A few suggestions on how to hear Marry Me Jane and their first single, "Twentyone":

1) Listen to the CD you get with this magazine.



2) Turn on the radio.

3) Go see the movie "If Lucy Fell," opening everywhere March 8.

4) Buy their debut album, "Marry Me Jane," in stores now. The album features 10 songs from the movie "If Lucy Fell."

featuring  
10 songs from  
the movie

## IF LUCY FELL

   
<http://www.sony.com>

Produced by Jason Robertson and Jerry Bruckheimer.  
Directed by Jason Bruckheimer.

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World Radio History

# NUSRAT

fateh ali khan  
& michael brook



**"If Pakistan had an Elvis, or Punjab a Notorious B.I.G., then it would undoubtedly be the immense, mind-bogglingly virtuosic singer known as NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN. The world's foremost expert of Qawwali, Nusrat is somewhere between a high priest and a rock god."**

*- New York Magazine*

## the new album night song

The follow up album to his duets with PEARL JAM's Eddie Vedder from the "Dead Man Walking" soundtrack

**"I have no food in my refrigerator, but I have every album by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in my record collection."**

**- Jeff Buckley**



Compact Disc and Cassette on

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**BAD RELIGION** *The Gray Race* Atlantic

Bad Religion is no spring chicken, but, even at 15 years old, the band is still squawking. Like the eight records that precede it, *The Gray Race* is characterized by its adamant social commentary: You'd think that by now the quintet would have grown tired of trying to get through to us and vocalist/lyricist Greg Graffin would have started delving into relationships or his personal life or something, but it is the band's relentlessness that makes it so admirable. "This is just a punk rock song written for the people who can see something's wrong," sings Graffin on "Punk Rock Song"—one of the album's many explorations of societal alienation and disenfranchisement. Graffin is a brilliant lyricist, and though there is the potential for his message to go over some of our heads (the guy has a Ph.D. in zoology, for crying out loud), as punk rock becomes increasingly mainstream, there is at last the potential for Bad Religion's message to be heard on a mass scale. Musically, the band continues to deliver crisp, driving punk rock: The tempo slows down a bit with each successive record but, basically, the style remains the same—fiery guitar strumming, bouncy rhythms and really catchy vocal melodies. So when you find yourself singing Graffin's lyrics for days after you've taken *The Gray Race* out of the hi-fi, you'll realize that he's getting through to you after all. —*Jenny Eliscu*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 27. First single "Punk Rock Song."

**FILE UNDER:** Post-hardcore with a message.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Pennywise, Minor Threat, Black Flag.

**BEL CANTO** *Magic Box* Atlantic

In America anyway, "pretentious" is the pejorative of choice sometimes hurled at groups like Bel Canto, who have produced several albums of lush, ethereal Euro-pop tinged with dance rhythms and global accents. The fine line they choose to walk means their music is sometimes precious, other times totally fresh and exciting. *Magic Box* has elements of both, but it's easy to forgive its sappy moments in favor of its pleasing vocal quirks and eclectic conceits. Why should Bjork have all the fun? Still, you may feel as though you're indulging a slightly guilty pleasure when you're lulled by the album's liquid textures and treated vocals—it's the soundtrack you might hear in the Love Boat's after-hours chillout lounge. As you relax into the enchanting, eco-friendly positive-vibes with a mai tai, you suddenly shout "Mom, is that you? Dad, what are you doing here?" While the production is friendly enough for your parents, the instrument layering is just sassy enough for you. Bel Canto can swing you a little, but it won't bend you too out of shape for yoga in the morning. —*Danny Housman*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 27.

**FILE UNDER:** Eclectic Euro-pop daiquiri.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Sinead O'Connor, Kate Bush, Single Gun Theory, Cocteau Twins.

**BUSH CHEMISTS** *Dub Outernational* ROIR

Dub is all about low-tech. The earliest dub records were made with the crudest imaginable equipment; their magic came from things that were jury-rigged and barely held together. A lot of the reason that there's so much cookie-cutter dub around these days is that high-tech studios give the music a slickness that's antithetical to what makes it engaging. The Bush Chemists' Dougie Wardrop keeps his studio in his attic, complete with the same kind of reverb machine King Tubby was using 20 years ago; though he's not averse to using technology to make some of his tracks, he knows that good dub comes from twisting knobs you're not quite sure aren't going to fall off in your hands—from keeping things unpredictable. In its best moments, that's what *Dub Outernational* does: the opening "Dub Exploitation," for example, takes a straight-up reggae track and whammies its guitar chord a different way every time it comes up. Traditional dub is also about sticking with the program, and the Bush Chemists keep things very orthodox—the electronic percussion is the only thing that couldn't have been on a similar record 20 years ago; but they're also good students of their old-school, devoted to finding the essence of their music of choice. —*Douglas Wolk*

**DATALOG:** Released Dec. 20.

**FILE UNDER:** Straight-up dub.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Zion Train, Prince Far-I.





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- H COMBINE The History Of American Rock And Roll Caroline
- I FAUST Rien Table Of The Elements
- L FOLK IMPLOSION Electric Idiot EP Communion
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- L MIKE JOHNSON Month Of Sundays TAG
- E TOMMY KEENE Ten Years After Matador
- H NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN Revelation Interra
- L NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN Night Song RealWorld
- G LAMBCHOP How I Quit Smoking Merge
- I MARRY ME JANE Marry Me Jane 550 Music-Epic
- H MEICES Dirty Bird London
- J MINISTRY Fifth Pig Warner Bros.
- E NOISE ADDICT Meet The Real You Grand Royal
- H JOEL R.L. PHELPS Warm Springs Night El Recordo
- F POEM ROCKET Felix Culpa PCP
- I POSSUM DIXON Star Maps Interscope
- H PULP Different Class Island
- E RUN ON Start Packing Matador
- L SKINNY PUPPY The Process American
- F THERAPY? Infernal Love A&M
- L TIMCO Gentleman Jim Basura!-Priority
- L V-3 Photograph Burns Onion-American
- E WALT MINK El Producto Atlantic

## On The CD

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- L BAD RELIGION The Gray Race Atlantic
- I BUSH CHEMISTS Dub Outernational ROIR
- L CAST All Change Polydor-A&M
- L CHISEL 8 A.M. All Day Gern Blandsden
- L COCTAILS The Coctails Carrot Top
- H COMBINE The History Of American Rock And Roll Caroline
- I CYCO MIKO Lost My Brain! Epic
- L GRAVITY KILLS Gravity Kills TVT
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- J SALIF KEITA "Folon"... The Past Mango-Island
- L NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN Night Song RealWorld-Caroline
- J AIMEE MANN I'm With Stupid DGC
- I MARRY ME JANE Marry Me Jane 550 Music-Epic
- L MYSTERIES OF LIFE Keep A Secret RCA
- L IGGY POP Naughty Little Doggie Virgin
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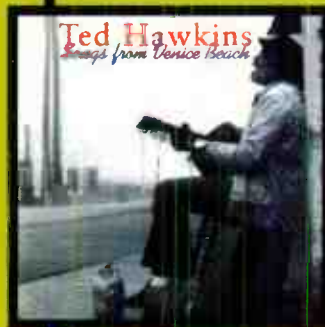
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- G VOODOO GLOW SKULLS Firme *Epitaph*
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**BUZZCOCKS** French IRS

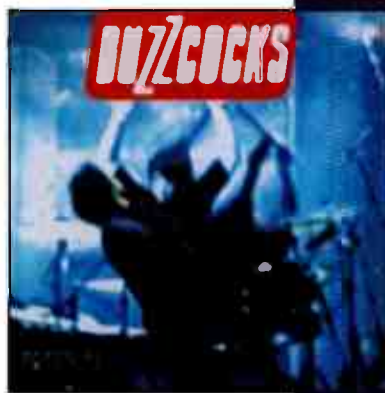
It's beginning to look as if the Buzzcocks need to arm-wrestle Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers to see who gets to put out the most live albums with the same goddamned songs. *French* is one with two differences, however: 1) This is a recent recording of the latest Buzzcocks lineup, which means in turn that 2) *French* doesn't contain the same goddamned songs... just some of them! You also get a number of tracks culled from the last Buzzcocks studio release, *Trade Test Transmissions* (a superb record which got oddly lost in the shuffle), as well as several brand new tunes. So what's it sound like? Well, it sound like the Buzzcocks picking up perfectly from *A Different Kind Of Tension*, playing precise, abrasive modern crashpop which deftly avoids hallmarks of any sort of era while also fulfilling punk's promise. In other words, 1000-hooks-per-second and all-angles guitar work bouncing off a rhythm section taut enough to deflect bullets.

—Tim Stegall

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 23.

**FILE UNDER:** '70s punk vets, no apologies.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Elastica, Green Day, Sugar.

**COMBINE** The History Of American Rock And Roll Caroline

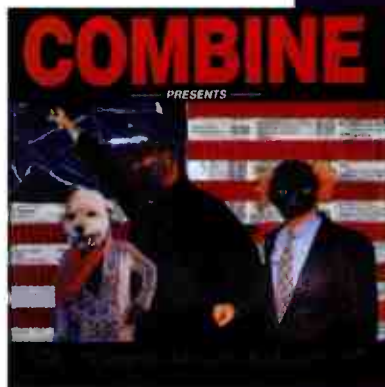
The name Combine might call to mind visions of out-of-control, creaky farm machinery with ravenous threshing blades, but Combine doesn't quite play into the same genre of sluggish rural paranoia as, say, Tad, or even fellow Virginians Kepone. Instead, the band keeps its chops wiry and spry and things moving along at a cheerful clip, relying on terse power trio dynamics (almost everything clocks in under three minutes) and offhand humor for its impact, instead of mountains of sullen, drawn-out noise. That isn't to say that Combine doesn't have large amps; bare-bones Wharton Tiers production emphasizes the band's inherent heavy-osity and pulls it towards lockstep Helmet-style precision on cuts like "Filthy Underthings," though the band more often seems inclined towards looser and funkier bass-driven rave-ups. Brian Pafumi has to push his small and ragged voice to be heard amongst the din, often sounding like a less-effective Black Francis getting buried under the pounding basslines. Pafumi seems to have better luck on the album's understated but anthemic "Rock Narcotic," or "Mudpie," a pleasantly orchestrated ballad calling to mind a less grandiose "Disarm," which gets further dismantled later on the album by reappearing as a casually-delivered rap.

—David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 23.

**FILE UNDER:** Loud, terse rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Minutemen, Pixies, Jesus Lizard.

**FAUST** Rien Table Of The Elements

Can was groovier, Neu denser, but Faust was the flakiest and most joyous of the key Krautrock bands of the German '70s. Encompassing homeade instrumentation, cut-and-paste tape manipulation, and organic improvisation, their albums veered from psychedelic chant-ditties to excruciating prog-rock to noise experiments prefiguring Sonic Youth, Gate and the like. *Rien* (which means "pure" in German, "nothing" in French and nothing in English) is the work of two original members, Jean-Herve Peron and Werner Dermaier, and electro-acoustic composer-producer Jim O'Rourke (Gastr Del Sol, Brise-Glace), with guest appearances by the likes of Japanese noise guitarist Keiji Heino and Dead C./2 Foot Flame's Michael Morley. Like their '70s albums, *Rien* is cobbled together from live and studio materials. O'Rourke's hand is in evidence mainly in the assembly, and the use of strategic silences and idiosyncratic CD indexing to discourage listening to sections as discrete "pieces." As for the music, the results are mixed. One track appears to be a dense, crashing live track intermixed with extended samples from Gorecki's "Symphony Of Sorrowful Songs." The sound of a tape reel speeding up as an intro is as heavy-handed a bit of *musique concrete* as the use of a manual typewriter as percussion is refreshingly light. And the device of reading the credits at the end of the record (one speaker each in French and English) rather than printing the information is witty. But overall, *Rien* seems to emphasize Faust's heavy, almost goth/gloom side in a way that might make them less interesting to the casual listener than some of their older work.

—Franklin Bruno

**DATALOG:** Released Dec. 1.

**FILE UNDER:** Iffy but important resurfacing by influential "art-terrorists."

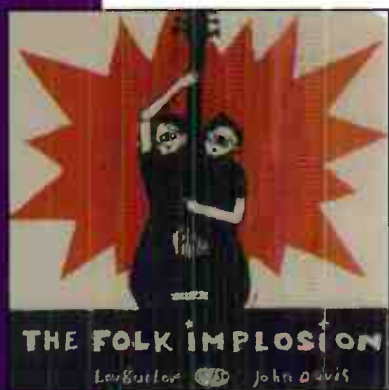
**R.I.Y.L.:** Einsturzende Neubaten, Savage Republic, Dead C.

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

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ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD




**FOLK IMPLOSION** *Electric Idiot EP* *Communion*

*Electric Idiot* might not be what you're expecting from Folk Implosion. "Natural One," from the *Kids* soundtrack, is all over radio and has had folks scampering to record stores in search of earlier releases by band members Lou Barlow (also of Sebadoh/Sentridoh) and John Davis. So the news of this latest Folk Implosion record (most of which was actually released 18 months ago in Belgium) might have you licking your lips, and well it should. The album sounds considerably closer to the band's first record, *Take A Look Inside*, than to any of the *Kids* soundtrack stuff, but it is Barlow and Davis' ability (both together and separately) to continually modify their sound that constitutes the heart of their talent and, hell, what gives them their charm. *Electric Idiot* is less offbeat than *Take A Look*, and—because both the guitar and vocal parts are more aggressive, the melodies (though far from formulaic) hookier and the rhythms stronger—these songs rock out more than most other F.I. stuff. Although Barlow and Davis engage in less miscellaneous weirdness here (though the last track, "Final Score," is pretty free-form), there is still a sense of fun and spontaneity that characterizes the songwriting team. *Electric Idiot* might not be what you're expecting from Folk Implosion—it's better than that. —Jenny Elisca

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 20.

**FILE UNDER:** Home recordings.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Sentridoh, Beck, Bob Dylan's *The Basement Tapes*.


**GOLDEN SMOG** *Down By The Old Mainstream* *Rykodisc*

Contractual obligations prevent the members of Golden Smog from using their real names anywhere on the record jacket or press notes, but the interviews and much-publicized jam sessions they've done (to say nothing of the publicity photos) have blown their cover. The band's members comprise a virtual aristocracy, such as it is, of Midwestern roots rockers, including members of Soul Asylum, the Jayhawks and Wilco. Now that the Jayhawks no longer exist and Soul Asylum is no longer interesting, it would be easy to see *Down By The Old Mainstream* as an irrelevancy, and it is. Like most side projects, it's a shambling, messy indulgence, filled with one-take toss-offs and in-jokes (including the not-exactly-subtle highlight "He's A Dick"), but *Mainstream* is a vastly entertaining record in spite of—or maybe because of—its unrepentant cheesiness. In their day jobs, the members of Golden Smog take an overly reverent view of country music (the Jayhawks especially), but *Mainstream* skewers every country cliché imaginable; numbers like "Red Headed Stepchild" are talk-show, trailer-park country at its finest, and the band's cover of the Faces' "Glad And Sorry" is a keeper. While the full record may not be worth more than three or four listens, it's the perfect cure for anyone who's been scared off sidegroups for a while. —Allison Stewart

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 9.

**FILE UNDER:** Ramshackle but oddly endearing roots-rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Run Westy Run, Soul Asylum, Wilco, Jayhawks et al.

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**GOOPS** *Lucky Kinetic-Reprise*

The Goops' previous indie LP and 45s were tough, promising nuggets of '90s New York punk that weren't exactly mind-blowing, but still intriguing enough to put a marker by their name for future reference. So, you open up this page, and what blows back your earshells is an explosive, promising young band maturing its way into something uniquely its own. If any parallels come to mind, they're ones with the Gits. No, the Goops have nowhere near the level of sophistication the Gits enjoyed, and Goops vocalist Eleanora's howl is more sex-wracked than Mia Zapata's righteous bawl. Still, the ladies share a similar range and skill, as do the instrumental Goops. And considering the purient focus of two-minute bombshells like "Vulgar Appetites" and "Hard Candy," maybe the Goops are delivering all the broken promises made by overhyped female-fronted, sexually frank bands, which is hardly a bad thing in the least.

—Tim Stegall

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 6.

**FILE UNDER:** Hormonally charged street punk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Heartbreakers, Ramones, N.Y. Loose, Joan Jett.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Great Gospel Women, Vol. 2 Shanachie*

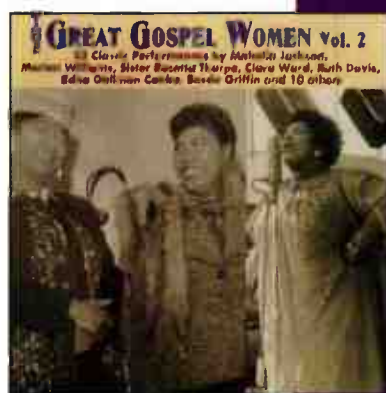
If you've heard the santimonious prurience of Whitney Houston or Color Me Badd, you may blame the gospel tradition for a host of evils—all those off-key glissandos that break from mild bellowing into screeches as if the Spirit came armed with a diaper pin. Still, your first reaction to these lovely recordings from gospel's Golden Age could be disappointment. Why aren't they wailing? Are they sedated? But these stars sang to audiences to whom energy and virtuosity were worthless without "consecration." Unless every moan and gesture radiated reverent simplicity, the twice-born turned catty (calling Mahalia Jackson a "clown," for example). So, like classical musicians, these women submitted to a higher ideal. If they wanted to ad lib, rock out or growl, they had to show that, in all modesty, they couldn't help it. Carefully rationed, their mastery first emerged under constraint, to paraphrase Goethe. Imogene Green, for example, in a voice clear as glass, proudly informs Jesus that she'll be satisfied with a cabin on heaven's back 40 now that he has given victory to her diseased body—it's sweet, subtle and fascinating. The flawless mechanical reproduction that strips every trace of a unique "aura" from today's live art didn't hit the gospel world until about 1989. It costs money. Myrtle Scott's lifetime of performing to breathless, silent, "slain in the spirit" audiences left nothing but two crackling wax disks and a legend. Many of these 33 rarities offer similarly vintage sound quality. One that doesn't comes from 77-year-old Frances Steadman. Lovingly recorded in 1992, "Nobody To Depend On" gets her close to the microphone, whispery and intimate as some unplugged pop star, and you suddenly realize how much the usual gospel sound stems from the need to be heard in the back rows of a church.

—Nell Zink

**DATALOG:** Released Dec. 15.

**FILE UNDER:** Gospel women, great.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, Sweet Honey In The Rock.




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"When a label calls, try not to shit yourself or anything." — Matt Talbott of Hum, giving advice to bands hoping to be signed, in the Illinois Entertainer

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**GRIFTERS** *Ain't My Lookout Sub Pop*

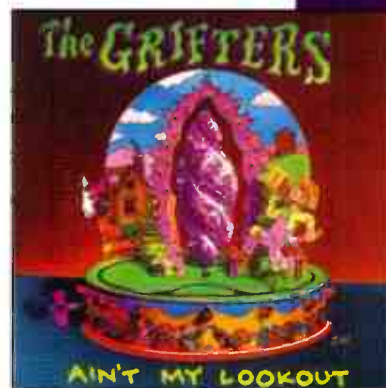
Over the past few albums, the Grifters' sound has slowly shifted shape from their original distortion-soaked stomp to bass-driven '70s rock. *Ain't My Lookout* completes the morph, continuing in the vein of *Crappin' You Negative* while unmuting the guitars completely and bringing in increasingly complex arrangements and song structures. If the result sounds a little like Pavement at times, it's only because Pavement's strayed so far into the rootsy turf that the Grifters claimed first. Going Malkmus one better, singer Dave Shouse harks back to the sardonic tradition of Lou Reed: "Oh, to be the state of the art," he sings on "Boho/Alt," "Nobody loves you/Better than yourself." Even more of a departure is the lushly orchestrated "Pretty Notes," with melodic acoustic guitar abetted by mandolin and female vocals courtesy of Professor Elixir's Southern Troubadours. Combining the straight-ahead, the funky, and the folk, these thirteen tracks are their most varied collection yet. Fans of the sloppy old Grifters may wish the rhythm section would loosen up a bit, but after more than five years together, the band's chops and cohesion are undeniable.

—Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 13.

**FILE UNDER:** Neo-roots rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Dambuilders, Pavement, early '70s Rolling Stones.





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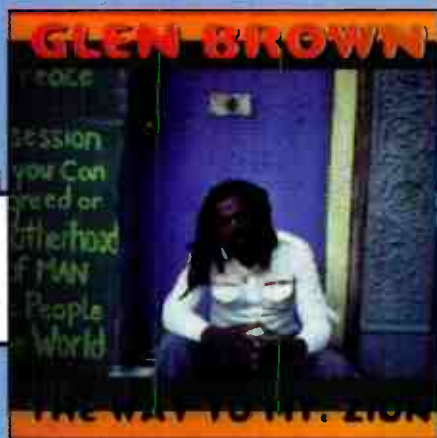
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**HALO BENDERS** *Don't Tell Me Now* **K**

Doug Martsch, with his reedy voice and distinctive single-coil guitar tone, was one of 1994's MVPs, between Built To Spill's *There's Nothing Wrong With Love* and the debut by the Halo Benders, his duo with Beat Happening/Dub Narcotic's Calvin Johnson. *Don't Tell Me Now* is a generally worthy follow-up to the latter album, though we're still waiting for another full record from Martsch's "real" band. Two tracks called "Bombshelter" are the album's centerpiece: "Pt. 1" cleverly uses cold war imagery as a metaphor for closed-mindedness ("Think of all the time you've wasted working on your bombshelter"), while "Pt. 2" is a spanner-in-the-works stump speech, with Johnson recommending that everyone register for the draft 50 times, and reminding us not to "waste all our matches and lighters at those big concerts... Save them for the streets!" The Pastels-styled "Mercury Blues" is almost as pretty as the last album's "Snowfall," and the closing "Crankenstein" flavors a monstrous Vanilla Fudge riff with "Ghost Town"-styled organ under a silly Johnson rap. The album isn't without flaws: Johnson's free-associative lyrics seem less sharp than usual, and he and Martsch overuse their trick of singing in counterpoint (their voices couldn't be more different.) But the record is spirited throughout, and Johnson deserves full credit for moving on from the childlike/libidinous persona of earlier projects—he's not singing about riot grrls' tummies any more.

—Franklin Bruno

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 16.

**FILE UNDER:** Garage-soul, cartoon agit-prop, and casual guitar heroics.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Some Velvet Sidewalk, Treepeople, Pastels.

**JARS OF CLAY** *Jars Of Clay* *Silvertone* **3**

Jars of Clay wrest the acoustic guitar back from the unplugged mini-genre. The band's songs, fully electric in other ways, are built on the acoustic as a rhythm instrument, and not just to put the electric parts into relief: The gentle chime and light scratch of the acoustic's strings is where these songs start. The sound is especially winning when twined to the the close harmonies that make the band's emotional pop seem positively hymnal. The eight songs that Jars Of Clay produces by itself do well to carve out a niche for the band. The subdued sound accentuates the well-crafted melodies and precise musicianship. The two songs where Adrian Belew steps behind the board, however, make the group seem on the verge of a stylistic breakthrough. "Liquid" adds a ghostly, chant-like chorus that undermines the self-assurance that radiates through the other songs, casting doubt on the refrain "This is the one thing that I know." "Flood," on the other hand, pumps the harmonies into America-like flourishes (if the lyrics were similarly obtuse, you'd start looking for a horse with no name) and adds an icy, electronic edge to the acoustic warmth that makes the song sound like little else around right now. No pejorative—this is a nice record, and all the better for it.

—Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 9.

**FILE UNDER:** Innovative acoustic pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Toad The Wet Sprocket, Live, America.

**MIKE JOHNSON** *Month Of Sundays* **TAG**

If some of the thick, heady guitar squalls on Mike Johnson's second album sound familiar, it's because they are: Johnson has honed his primary craft (guitar playing) as a member of Dinosaur Jr, and more recently on Screaming Tree Mark Lanegan's solo recordings. In fact, a few tunes on *Month Of Sundays* sound like Dino leftovers, casually substituting J Mascis' slacker drawl with Johnson's regally seismic baritone. But for the most part, a '70s riff re-reader he's not: Timeless blues and folk structures hold up his moody mini-epics, and the rich, cinematic detailing of acoustic guitar, strings, piano and backing vocals add a near-gothic lushness to his melancholy tales. As the accompaniment to Lanegan's bourbon-stained laments, Johnson's playing sounds confident, intricate, even profound; here, it's not nearly as stark, slightly over-produced, and coupled with his occasionally lackluster songwriting, uninspired. That's not to say he hasn't fully realized a few shadowy novellas: With his rustic Nick Cave-ish vocal take and the majestic stride of his arrangements, Johnson's nearly completed the blueprint for a tortured American rock gem. Give him a bit more time with his pen and some choice collaborators, and stand back.

—Colin Helms

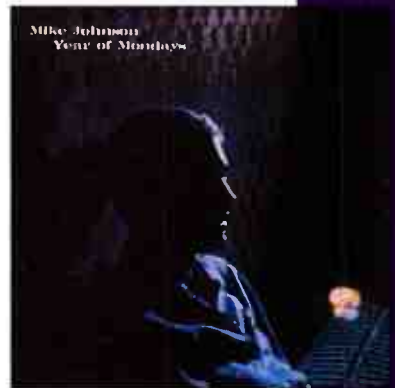
**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 15.

**FILE UNDER:** Murky blues-folk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Dinosaur Jr., Idaho, Tindersticks.



"I don't feel I have to suffer for my art. Once it comes out, it's your turn to suffer for my art." —Jim "Foetus" Thirlwell, from an interview in *Seconds*.





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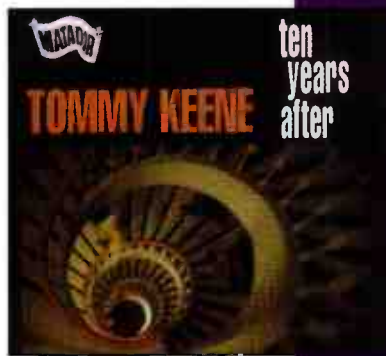
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**TOMMY KEENE** *Ten Years After* *Matador*

Tommy Keene put out several underrated records—pop marvels—a few years back before disappearing into the ether. Rabid Keene-ites the Gin Blossoms gave him an opening slot last year, and following the resulting mini-hoopla, he's back. *Ten Years After* is a beyond-impressive record that excels at the sort of wistful, geeky power pop that you may think no one's doing anymore, but actually no one else is doing well, which is worse. It's a solid and inviting, relentlessly tuneful record that melds the best in sweetly naive nerd rock and Beatlesque (an overused adjective to be sure, but rarely more accurate) pop with a seamlessness that would do Marshall Crenshaw, with whom Keene shares similar sympathies, proud. *Ten Years After* is such a winning record that Keene can be forgiven his excessive devotion to middle-period Tom Petty riffs (as well as to those of seemingly every paisley-popper since time immemorial). And, as is his wont, Keene never misses an opportunity to be maudlin or morose—though only "If You're Getting Married Tonight" really pushes the envelope—but he can get away with it, if anybody can. —Allison Stewart



**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 13.

**FILE UNDER:** Geeky but winning power pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Beatles, Marshall Crenshaw, Elvis Costello.

**NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN & MICHAEL BROOK** *Night Song* *RealWorld*

**NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN** *Revelation* *Interra*

For the uninitiated, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is more or less to qawwali (the spellbinding devotional music of Sufi, a branch of Islam) what Bob Marley is to reggae: the acknowledged master, and the first name that springs to mind for, at least, Western listeners. (He's also about the only qawwali singer whose records are widely available in the U.S.) That means that there's a danger here—if you hear his records and nobody else's, you may think that qawwali means Nusrat, which is as fallacious an idea as thinking that reggae means Marley, or for that matter that gospel means Mahalia Jackson. (For the record, Interra has also just released fine discs by Badar Miandad and M. Saeed Chisti.) Still, he is pretty incredible. If he ever comes to your town, go see this hugely fat man, seated cross-legged and backed by harmonium, tabla, handclaps and a chorus, spend up to four straight hours driving a crowd into an ecstatic frenzy—we're talking people dancing around possessed and throwing money at the stage. Of course, part of the reason Nusrat is the qawwali king is that he's famously willing to do his thing all over whatever backing track is set in front of him, from cheesy disco (see the long-running *Mighty Khan* series of cassettes, available at big-city Pakistani delis) to big-time rock (see his recent collaboration with Eddie Vedder), which brings us to *Night Song*. Khan's collaborator Michael Brook has given him a set of eight tracks of what sounds like, well, tasteful "world music"—in a few passages, the results sound like Peter Gabriel bringing in Youssou N'Dour to give "In Your Eyes" that *otherly* feel. These passages generally last thirty seconds, max, before the mighty Khan starts adapting to whatever he's been given and one-upping it at whatever it's doing. On "Sweet Pain," he rests up for a minute, locks into the drum track, then sings around it in *double time*, with frighteningly deft rhythm. Where his voice is double-tracked or electronically altered, it can sound not-right for a moment; then you realize that what Khan cares about isn't keeping the traditions of qawwali intact on record, it's getting the Sufi message across and giving his mastery some musical challenges, and that *Night Song* is easily digestible pop with one of the world's greatest singers. Pure qawwali, of course, requires a serious attention span: Nusrat sings each song until he's good and done, which means anything between five minutes and an hour. For the raw stuff, go to *Revelation*. It's got a couple of unforgivable flaws, notably fading all four songs at the 15-minute mark and—like all Interra releases—shamefully useless liner notes. ("For the martyrs of the dagger of submission, the Unseen brings a new life every morning," the first of *Revelation's* two sentences' worth of notes goes.) It also has some astonishing performances from Khan and Party, notably "Rabba Lakh Lakh Shukar Manaawa" (go on, call up your favorite radio station and request it), where all the vocalists are just going off into frenzied improvisational wailing and there actually seems to be a hook in there somewhere. Listen to both albums, and you'll have a much better image of everything that Khan is than either alone can give you. —Douglas Wolk



"These are little record companies... They collect all their money for themselves, create their own businesses, create their own economic base, and they don't have to rely on these major labels to loan money and put them in debt to them. Mix tapes is the revolution." —DJ Funkmaster Flex, on the place of DJ mix tapes in the music industry, from an interview in *The Village Voice*.

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 20 (*Night Song*), Dec. 15 (*Revelation*).

**FILE UNDER:** Qawwali.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Great gospel, Youssou N'Dour.



**LAMBCHOP** *How I Quit Smoking* Merge

Lambchop's trip to the studio to record *How I Quit Smoking* must have been like that "how-many-kids-can-cram-into-this-phone-booth" experiment. 18 different people perform on the band's second long-player (that's seven more than are normally in the band) and, far from suffering from too many cooks, it benefits from the lush instrumentation. The band is driven by its desire to recreate the similarly elaborate sound of earlier Nashville artists like country guitar god Chet Atkins. Most of the instruments the band uses are guitars, with which Lambchop slowly covers its canvas with graceful touches like the wailing lap-steel on "We Never Argue" or the tin whistle on "The Scary Caroler." Kurt Wagner's hushed twang is chilling, and though it floats alone in a vast sea of sounds, it's never overcome by the swell. Wagner's ability to hold everyday occurrences under his lyrical microscope is amazing—see, for instance, "All Smiles And Mariachi," where he sings about the difficulties of making conversation on a date ("I feel I should be talking/Rather saying something/Instead of nodding and eating most of the chips.") You might just find yourself pining for a backporch where you could sit and listen to Lambchop, but take heart: They probably wouldn't all fit anyway.

—Jenny Eliscu

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 30.

**FILE UNDER:** Sleepy but elaborate country.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Vic Chesnutt, Palace Music, Chet Atkins.

**MARRY ME JANE** *Marry Me Jane* 550 Music-Epic

While there are few things more tedious than describing a record's worth in relation to its potential commercial success, for *Marry Me Jane*, it can stand as a consumer advisory: You might want to buy it now before it saturates the airwaves. Granted, much of what serves as indicators of this record's future radio ubiquity is extramusical: Eight of the record's 13 songs will appear on the soundtrack of a big-deal movie, *If Lucy Fell*, with big-deal stars (Sarah Jessica Parker, Ben Stiller and Elle MacPherson), and singer Amanda Kravat, it must be said, is easy on the eyes. The story has it, though, that writer/director Eric Schaeffer wrote the film after hearing a tape of Marry Me Jane, inspired by the song "TwentyOne." And it's with that that we get to the real value of this record. What caught Schaeffer's ear is the elegantly simple beauty of *Marry Me Jane*. "TwentyOne" is lulling and sweet and poignant in an utterly palatable way; it's pop as you remember it being, when the radio seemed programmed as a soundtrack to your new experiences. The secret weapon is Kravat's voice: it's clear, bright and supple enough to convey heartbreak through the radio, with a slyly vulnerable quality that suspends disbelief in even jaded listeners. Those looking for underground art can kindly step aside. This is pop, and good enough to recall when it mattered.

—Scott Burke

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 30. First single "TwentyOne."

**FILE UNDER:** Future pop radio mainstays.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Lisa Loeb, Garbage, Letters To Cleo, Fuzzy.

**MEICES** *Dirty Bird* London

*Dirty Bird* starts off with a bang. "Wow," the album's opening track, is one hell of a punk-pop song, and you can just picture singer Joe Reineke snarling as his "huh" kicks it all off. He growls his way through the song as the other two fellas join in on the catchy "wow wow" chorus and chime in for a few other vocal punch points. With horns blaring in the background, "Wow" bounces along for a nearly flawless three and a quarter minutes, epitomizing the energy of a band whose number of records exceeds the number of years it's been together. But "Wow" is misleading because it's so much more dynamic than the rest of the record. The band has released seven records in six years, and while it never really sounds tired, the songs do as *Dirty Bird* wears on. There is a certain appeal to the bouncy garage-rock that dominates the record, but the songs are too often characterized by a sameness that, despite a couple of hot tracks, makes it seem as tepid as dishwater. After the initial, ear-grabbing spark of "Wow," the album sort of fizzles out.

—Jenny Eliscu

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 27.

**FILE UNDER:** Garage-y punk-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Replacements, Fig Dish, Rocket From The Crypt ("Wow" only).



**MINISTRY** *Filth Pig* Warner Bros.

If there's one thing you can say about Ministry, it's that it keeps changing. Unfortunately, *Filth Pig* proves that this is not always good. Continuing *Psalm 69's* move away from the seminal industrial rage of *The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste*, *Filth Pig* is a slowed-down, almost grindcore album. Sampling is kept to a minimum and most of the playing is live. Unfortunately, this just makes you notice that Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker aren't the greatest musicians on the block. Too much of the time, *Filth Pig* falls flat. A cover of Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay" sounds funny, but it's not, trust me. On "Lava," there are tame echoes of the hellish murky screeches of old, but it's kind of like White Zombie without the subtleties. "The Fall" harkens back to older days, with a driving techno beat and weird piano riffs, but it's the exception to the rule. As members of Ministry and all its spin-off bands—from the Revolting Cocks to 1000 Homo DJs—Jourgensen and Barker made some of the most dangerous and important music of the past decade. I played *Filth Pig* for my 17-year-old Ministry fan cousin and he summed it up thus: "Crap. Crap. Crap. Boring. Crap. Crap. Crap. What the hell happened?" Hopefully, Ministry's next change will be back toward the brilliance it has shown in the past.

—Heidi MacDonald

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 30.  
**FILE UNDER:** Slowed-down industrial.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** White Zombie, Slayer.



**NOISE ADDICT** *Meet The Real You* Grand Royal

Who does Ben Lee think he is, Eddie Vedder? Lamenting that "no one loves music anymore" because "no one buys records anymore"; boasting about his "7-inch collection that's like nothing you have seen"; pausing halfway through his album to "give the CD listener an opportunity to pause and reflect," Lee has picked up a devotion to vinyl that's pretty disingenuous coming from a 17-year-old. Then again, one must consider who Lee is hanging out with: The Little Aussie Wonder has become indie-rock's *cause celebre*, counting among his mentors Thurston Moore, Mike D, and producer Brad Wood. Besides, Lee ain't so little anymore. On *Meet The Real You*, from his proficient band Noise Addict (with Wood producing), his voice has dropped about an octave, but it hasn't aged his music a bit—the young Australian has mastered at an impressively ripe age the terseness of good pop. Pro-vinyl tirades aside, Lee's cynical lyrics are often the highlight of Noise Addict's smart garge tunes. He muses on girlfriends who only hang out with him to get into club shows; pathetic friends named Glerp and coy girls named Brinsley; and the chagrin of discovering that his life in no way resembles a John Hughes film. His teen angst is fun because it's both tongue-in-cheek and honest. Lee writes songs that marry hooks with turns of phrase that spread a smile across your face—Liz Phair or Evan Dando on their good days. Leading Noise Addict with the offhand command of a pro, our boy is graduating to the next level.

—Chris Molanphy

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 1. First single "The Shy Girl."  
**FILE UNDER:** Detaching the training wheels.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Jonathan Richman, Ash, Lemonheads.



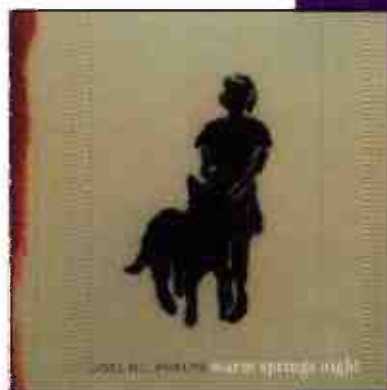
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 "It's never been better, really... Mick is extremely charming, even to me." — Keith Richards, on the current state of the Rolling Stones, from an interview in *Hits*.

**JOEL R.L. PHELPS** *Warm Springs Night* El Recordo

Even before Joel Phelps left Silkworm, one might have wondered whether the band was suffering from too many visionaries. Excellent as it was, their album *Libertine* showed a divergence of tastes among band members that hinted at a solo project or two in the making. Phelps' debut album shows us a closet sentimentalist, all but abandoning Silkworm's tighter-than-tight postpunk for a more spacious idiom. He and his fine four-piece spend most of the album refining the form of the slo-core ballad. Like Will Oldham of Palace, Phelps is a poetic lyricist, and his words evoke cinematic scenes of solitude and conflict. Unlike Oldham, though, he invests a great deal in the song' delivery. He ranges over whispers and rantings. "Warm Springs Night" is the emotional pinnacle of the album, with Phelps howling pleas for reconciliation over tidal-wave guitar chords. Even "God Bless The Little Pigs," a straightforward fast song that would have fit easily on a Silkworm record, is transformed by the rhythm section into something more freewheeling and warm.

—Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Released Nov. 30.  
**FILE UNDER:** Molasses rock.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Palace Inc., Codeine, Rodan, Neil Young.





**POEM ROCKET** Felix Culpa PCP

With their songs running the gamut from dirge to lament, Poem Rocket is the apotheosis of all shoe-, navel- and floor-gazing bands. *Felix Culpa*, a collection of vinyl releases and compilation tracks, is billed as a "Starter Kit" rather than a debut album, but it has a deathly unity that signals a total stylistic certitude: barely qualifiable as a "guitar band," Poem Rocket buries its swirling guitar figures under a muffled cacophony of bass, piano and (say the liner notes) "et al randomness." Poem Rocket works with noise the way a sculptor works with clay—keep chipping away at it until there's a slab left that resembles art. A metallic echo leads off the album and crops up between songs, tying them together as a *leitmotif*. That blast of distant feedback is about the only thing that Poem Rocket allows you to cozy up to; the songs themselves emerge like they're rising from a tar pit. The piano on "The Animal Planter" thumps like a dark approximation of a tribal chant, while "Blue Chevy Impala" starts with dissonant squalls over thumping beats and leavens the gloom with a fluttery, Cranes-like voice promising to "drive like the weather." The Cure's Robert Smith may have once reveled in this kind of malaise (one song here even sounds like a way-slowed-down version of "Charlotte Sometimes," if that's possible), but the members of Poem Rocket have no interest in leading an alien nation of like-minded depressives; they *are* the alien nation. If *Felix Culpa* is wickedly enjoyable and cathartic, it's because the band had the wherewithal to keep it dark.

—Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Released Dec. 10.

FILE UNDER: Love lies bleeding.

R.I.Y.L.: Cure, Cranes, Joy Division, My Bloody Valentine.

**POSSUM DIXON** Star Maps Interscope

Possum Dixon has been scraping around the pop underground for a couple of years now, beloved in its native LA, perennial bridesmaids elsewhere. *Star Maps* is the long-delayed record that, if there's any pop cultural justice (and there isn't) will serve as the band's breakthrough. Possum Dixon's slavishness to new wave gives *Star Maps* the edge in this year's Record Most Likely To Have Been Produced By Ric Ocasek Even Though It Wasn't Really contest. As you can probably figure, a little of this goes a long way, but Possum Dixon has the same sort of fun with new wave that the Lemonheads used to have with punk: hamming it up enough not to take it seriously. It's more of a good time than revisited new wave usually allows for, but this isn't to say that *Star Maps* is anyone's idea of a hayride; despite the presence of so-dark-they're-funny songs like "Your Emergency's About To End" and "Crashing Her Planet," the band has crafted an airless and dark, almost eerily self-contained piece that consistently undersells itself.

—Allison Stewart

DATALOG: Released Jan. 9.

FILE UNDER: Sharp, understated new wave nouveau.

R.I.Y.L.: Weezer, Sparks, Judybats.

**PULP** Different Class Island

You've got to admire Pulp for its tenacity, hanging on long enough to become elder statesmen of the current Britpop scene. The group began as typically drab, mealy-mouthed indie band in the early '80s and refused to give up until both it and the times were transformed in its favor. This Pulp is hardly your older brother's Pulp, however. Those dull grays of old have given way to an explosion of color, with the band's music exhibiting both a mid-'70s Berlin-style motorik clang and hip-swingin' R&B warmth, with an added dollop of Serge Gainsbourg's cool. What this means is that Pulp has built a thoroughly '90s bridge between Bowie's *Young Americans* and *Low* periods, with starvation-slender frontman Jarvis Cocker cast as the Thin White Duke and their massive UK hit "Common People" becoming the "Heroes" of the '90s, and remarkably, it's as good in execution as it is in concept. And, unlike some of Britpop's more hype-glomming insurgents, Pulp has the trousers to back it up. —Tim Stegall

DATALOG: Released Feb. 6.

FILE UNDER: Romantic, stylish Britpop.

R.I.Y.L.: Blur, Suede, Low, *Heroes*, maybe even *Station To Station*.


POEM ROCKET  
felix culpa



POSSUM DIXON

STAR MAPS



PULP  
DIFFERENT CLASS

**RUN ON** Start Packing *Matador*

When rhythm buddies Rick Brown and Sue Garner of Fish & Roses formed a new band with multi-faceted guitarist Alan Licht and extra set of hands David Newgarden, it was hard to imagine what it might sound like. This first album shows off Run On's confluence of singing and songwriting talent to its best advantage, from Licht's reflective, pop-inclined songs to Garner's more rocking numbers. Rick Brown remains one of the most distinctive percussionists around. His dense, driving rhythms, with their trademark maracas and tambourines, are the rationale behind some of the album's best tracks, including the hypnotic "Baap" and "Go There." But it's his unadorned drumming that predominates on "Xmas Trip," the most unconventionally great pop song to come along in years. Brown sings lead against his drumbeats, trumpeter Newgarden provides a surprising bridge and the whole thing is over before you can guess how it came together. Perhaps thanks to Licht's improv background, Run On is a more jam-oriented band than Fish and Roses ever were. With four distinctive playing styles thoroughly meshed, songs can "run on" and on in a single theme without ever sounding repetitious. —Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 27.

**FILE UNDER:** Chamber rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Sonic Youth, Fish & Roses, Can's poppier stuff.



**SKINNY PUPPY** The Process *American*

The last three Skinny Puppy albums also came with the admonition that they would be the band's final release, so it's become easy to take Puppy breakup rumors with a grain of salt, but with the recent death of keyboardist Dwayne Goettel and the current acrimony between the remaining two members, Nivek Ogre and cEVIN Key, it's fairly clear *The Process* is the final nail in this seminal band's coffin. No matter; it shows the band departing on a very strong note. The album is a retreat from 1992's *Last Rights*, which was probably the band's most adventurous, and least listenable, foray into the sonic scrapyard. Rather, Puppy seems to be returning to *Rabies*' more accessible approach, lashing their characteristic electronic overload as well as Jourgensonian guitar throttling onto approachable song structures, even allowing for a few quieter moments of grace and subtlety. "Accessible," of course, is an entirely relative term; you needn't expect to hear this any time soon on your local modern rock station. The album is still dominated by eerie synths, panicky beats, a nightmarish sampling of mass-cultural debris, a plethora of unearthly electronic noises, and of course, Ogre's apocalyptic cut-up lyrics, delivered in a heavily processed screech. The end result sounds less like the work of a "band" and more like a frightening document of a few desperate men trying to exorcise demons from their machines and from their heads. —David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 20. Nivek Ogre will be recording in the future as W.E.L.T.

**FILE UNDER:** Sonic extremism.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Nine Inch Nails' scariest moments, Ministry, Front Line Assembly.



"If anyone out there is a woman, teen-age woman, teen-age woman, teen-age woman, teen-age woman, teen-age woman... look on the label and send me a picture." —Runaways *svengali* Kim Fowley, from *Young America Saturday Night*, found on the *Only In America* compilation

**THERAPY?** Infernal Love *A&M*

Andy Cairns has a problem, as he sings in the very first song on *Infernal Love*. The problem is love. As lead singer and principal songwriter for Therapy?, a trio from Northern Ireland, he helps the album live up to its title. In every song, love is a brutal power game, and need is another name for weakness. The songs alternate between attacking a girlfriend who comes crawling back ("Bowels of Love" and "Misery") and self-loathing pining for the same girlfriend ("A Moment Of Clarity" and "30 Seconds"). Playing this album should banish any reputation of sensitivity on the part of the listener—the misogyny of some of the lyrics is worthy of Axl Rose, especially in "Me Vs. You." Make no mistake, love is war. The final creepy touch is a cover of Husker Du's "Diane," which, as you may recall, is about a guy who murders a girl on a date. Musically, Therapy? sounds like typical late '90s grunge-punk, with Stone Temple Pilot guitars and Smashing Pumpkins cellos, but the playing is solid and lively, with the driving "30 Seconds" a particular standout. The music keeps the hostility from turning cartoonish, which is a good thing because song titles like "Bowels Of Love" are a risky proposition. Suffice to say, you wouldn't want members of Therapy? to go out with your sister. —Heidi MacDonald

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 30.

**FILE UNDER:** Tormented alterna-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The Replacements, Smashing Pumpkins, August Strindberg.






**TIMCO Gentleman Jim** *Basural-Priority*

On the evidence of the live '94 album *Friction Tape* and the new *Gentleman Jim*, Timco is capable of laying bare both small embers and roaring flames, but the trio seems to be underachieving. Singer-guitarist Kevin Thomson can craft minimal ditties, or unwieldy balls of noise, yet doesn't seem to come up with the right combination more than a couple of times each record. Ten songs are not enough to justify an instrumental and a novelty number. His guitar playing is raw and impressive, but needs a good song to work up the momentum to be really moving. Elsewhere, in "Louisiana" and "Steal A Car," he's on the verge of overstating his point with explosions that reference Drive Like Jehu more than Tom Verlaine. Perhaps Thomson is simply impatient with too much brooding and pathos, and wants to rough up the "sadcore" tag he's been assigned. But the record's near-misses are compelling. Thomson dreams of disappearing altogether in the pained "Gone": "When I'm gone, you'll find no traces of me/When I'm gone, don't try to resurrect me/ When I'm gone, you'll wish you'd never met me." The last track, the old jazzy tune "Not For Me," is Thomson's jaunt into a Nick Cave-like corner, singing "I've never known love/Or been shown love," but it comes off as just bitter.

—Danny Housman

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 20.

**FILE UNDER:** Brooding, raw guitar rock

**R.I.Y.L.:** Drive Like Jehu, Nice Strong Arm, the Last Television record.


**V-3 Photograph Burns** *Onion-American*

V-3 hails from Columbus, Ohio, the new American hotbed for garage punk sounds, but don't let that fool you. Anyone expecting the crisply aggressive and pleasantly dunderheaded sounds of New Bomb Turks or Gaunt will be caught off guard. The guitars are crunchy, the vocals are bilious, but nonetheless V-3 can be safely accused of taking the low road. A few songs, like the rollicking "Adam Twelve," reach rave-up tempo, but most of the songs move along at a somnolent midtempo and shy away from pat chorus-verse-chorus songwriting. Combined with low-key production that blunts the impact of the instruments and buries the vocals, which are already a tad sleepy and blase, *Photograph Burns* winds up having more of a '60s Anglophile vibe than a '90s mass-market punk sheen. This shows up not only in the tremolo-dripping guitars but in the toy synths that occasionally pop up in the background, and in a few moments of teapot whimsy that would do Robyn Hitchcock proud, like the helium-filled conclusion to "Hating Me, Hating You." Like fellow Columbians Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments, V-3's thin production and offhand humor don't scream lo-fi pretension, but simply reflect the fact that everything this band needs to say is housed in its lyrical wit and melodic ear.

—David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 20.

**FILE UNDER:** Whimsical, low-key punk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The Kinks, the Jam, Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments.


**WALT MINK El Producto** *Atlantic*

An unusual proficiency on their instruments and a lead singer with a reedy, Geddy Lee-like voice have led to innumerable points of comparison between Walt Mink and Rush. But don't be afraid. *El Producto*, the Minneapolis-based trio's third record and its first for a major label (following a disastrous relationship with a Japanese-owned corporate giant that resulted in the band being dropped before a record could be released) is a curious hybrid of tried-and-true indie rock crunch and prog-rock innovation with a Hendrix/Beck/Rush dinosaur kick. Walt Mink serves up short bursts of bristling pop noise layered over hazy, impossibly vague lyrics, all with a progressive (read: wonk) rock sheen, and while this may not seem like the sort of thing one would want to be good at, it's better than it sounds. The Minks can seem overly arch sometimes, too willing to let whiz-bang musicianship compensate for heart, but they're fearfully capable musicians, and a new drummer wrested from Bitch Magnet, of all places, helps give *El Producto* a rollicking, bottom-heavy feel that the band's past releases didn't even hint at. They've made one of the most skillful and technically accomplished records in ages, even if, ultimately, it's an easier record to admire than to love.

—Allison Stewart

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 23. First single "Listen Up."

**FILE UNDER:** Ultra-proficient, not-quite-prog rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Jennyanykind, Rush, Fudge.

# On the Verge

## UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS

compiled by Lydia Anderson

### Chisel

Chisel has pizzazz. The Washington, DC-based trio is sure to remind you of The Jam: Not only does it sport snazzy mod outfits (stove-pipe pants, skinny ties, tousled-looking haircuts, the works), but its musical style is also a deep bow to Paul Weller and company. The group's songs unite crisp, jangly guitar parts with bounding rhythms and amazing vocal melodies. Singer/guitarist Ted Leo's impressive range is complemented by bassist Chris Norberg's (also of the Heartworms) equally dynamic fret-range and chipper vocal harmonies. These guys are more mod than Mary Quant, and even their song titles—such as "Hip Straights," "What About Blighty?" and "Theme For A Pharmacist"—have a Brit-rock feel to them. These and more can be heard on the band's debut full-length, *8AM All Day* (Gern Blandsten), which was released in January. —Jenny Eliscu



PHOTO BY JIM SAMM

### Cat Power

Chan Marshall's music is intense in an understated way. The rippling strain in her voice, snaking up and over the coarse grooves etched by her guitar, rarely breaks into a scream or yelp, sustaining the pressure of her music. Cat Power's songs stretch points of tension throughout their duration, instead of resolving themselves into easy hooks. Bolstered on record by Sonic Youth drummer Steve Shelley's pitter-pattering rhythms and Tim Foljahn's winding, twisting guitar lines, Marshall's songs find their own voice. Her NYC-based group hasn't toured much, but has already recorded two albums: *Dear Sir* on the Italian label Runt, and *Myra Lee* on Shelley's own Smells Like Records. Look for another domestic Cat Power album later this year. (LA)



### Star Pimp

Star Pimp's dense, dynamic music doesn't go against the grain so much as it doesn't overlap with the output of any other bands we can think of. Vocalist Marcelle Poulos gives the group its distinctive thumbprint; her edgy, tension-filled vocal dips and turns maintain a thin outward serenity that never masks the raw nerve ends uncovered by her band's songs. The wiry black design is fleshed out by Tom Flynn's low, slithery, almost Melvins-like bass lines and Eric Grotke's atypical, scratchy, scabbling guitar work, which together produce songs that make melodic sense despite their slippery handles. On 1993's *Seraphim 280Z*, the group's full-length debut (released on Flynn's own Boner label), Star Pimp strung 13 such songs together with telling samples, forging an impressively well-rounded and individual sound. Almost three years later, the San Francisco quartet will reappear with its follow-up this spring, but this time Flynn's handing over record company duties to the folks at Kill Rock Stars. (LA)



### Boyracer

After releasing *More Songs About Frustration And Self Hate* (Slumberland) last year, British quartet Boyracer really turned heads with its first-ever U.S. tour, which revealed an energetic, punk-fueled band with enough pop sense to keep both the head-bobbing and finger-snapping quotients high. The group finished out '95 by releasing an unusually packaged 5" vinyl single, "West Riding House" (Zero Hour), and ushered in '96 with an EP on Slumberland, *We Are Made Of The Same Wood*. On all of its releases, Boyracer consistently toys with song structure and contents, so that clanging, noise-filled guitars and frenetic rhythms are as likely to define a song as delicate guitar interplay the strained harmonies of vocalists Stew and Nicola. Expect the unexpected on the group's next full-length, *In Full Colour*, scheduled for a March release on Zero Hour, and a second Stateside visit. (LA)

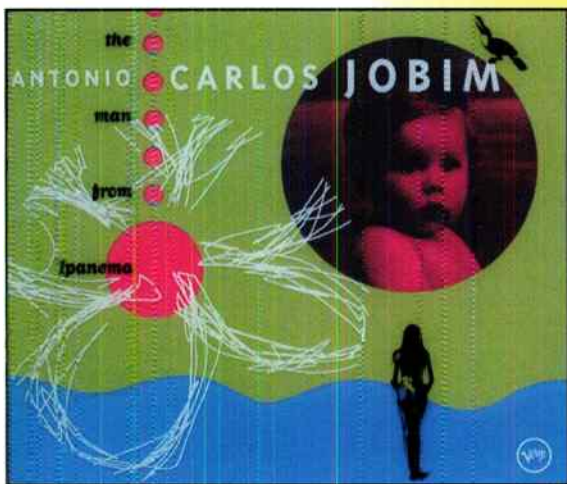




# FLASHBACK

ROOTS • REISSUES • RETRO

by James Lien

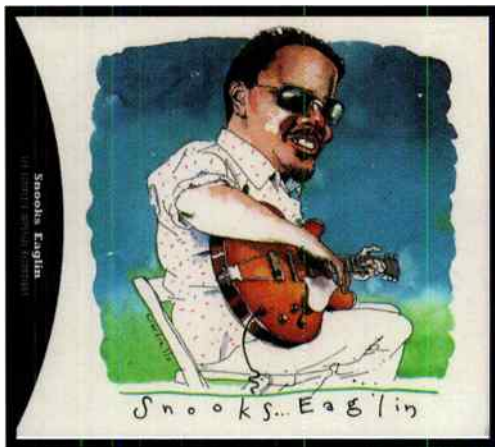


**ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM**  
*The Man From Ipanema* Verve

Antonio Carlos Jobim, composer of "The Girl From Ipanema," was a titan of Brazilian music, mainly because he was one of those people who just had an uncanny knack for writing an absolutely perfect melody that everybody can hum. In a lot of ways, like John Lennon, Beethoven or the little old lady who wrote "Happy Birthday To You," he was one of those people whose music got so huge that it became impossible to really measure its impact: His songs have been sung in movies, performed by jazz singers and instrumentalists, and even used in Coke commercials in the '70s. In addition to penning a score of immortal slices of tropicalia and a colossal force in his own country's music, he was an influence on a host of western musicians, from the aforementioned Mr. Lennon (think of the three-note melody of "Julia") to the Muppets (*Sesame Street* musical maestro Joe Raposo was profoundly influenced by Jobim's easily-singable, simple melodies). This three-disc set has an intriguing premise: one disc presents 23 vocal versions of Jobim's tunes by artists including, of course, Astrud Gilberto (thankfully, Art Garfunkel's monotone rendering of "Água De March" is not included); a second features 15 instrumental interpretations of Jobim's melodies. CD #3 provides a chance to hear side-by-side versions of the same songs by different musicians. In a lavish, wonderful package, it's a stunning testament to his legacy, and brilliantly sunny music.

**SNOOKS EAGLIN**  
*The Complete Imperial Recordings* Capitol

All hail Fird "Snooks" Eaglin, one of the great unsung treasures of '50s and '60s R&B. Capitol has just released his complete recordings for the Imperial label (also home to Fats Domino), some of which have been never heard since their original release on 45 RPM singles. Perhaps because they're both blind soul singers, there's a tendency to compare Eaglin to Ray Charles, but the connection is deeper than that, since Eaglin came up listening to and playing in the mid-'50s New Orleans scene that so profoundly influenced Ray Charles. Legend has it that Brother Ray was pursuing a Charles Brown/Nat "King" Cole piano blues style until he dropped into New Orleans clubs like the Dew Drop Inn and checked out the rocking R&B that was coming out of the Crescent City. Subsequently, he changed his sound, added electric piano, conga drums, backup singers and a New Orleans-influenced beat to his music, and the rest is history. Eaglin was also a prodigy of that same scene, and though his music, recorded circa '60-'63, postdates Ray's, the current had arguably been flowing the other way a few years earlier. There's something soulful in Eaglin's voice that's pure old-school R&B. Simple, earnest and absolutely perfect, there's not a weak moment on the set. The lyrics are especially poignant. Lines like "I got a little girl now/Who's quiet when she's with me/But when I'm not around/She's busy as can be/She can tell some real pretty lies/But she can't look me straight in the eye" become even more moving when you realize that the singer is blind, and when you sense that his only interaction with the girl is through touch and sound, it makes the haunting sorrow of this blues all the more unbearable. These days, Eaglin is happily married, still lives in New Orleans, records for the Black Top label, and performs each year at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.



## IN THE BINS

Also in the last blast of Capitol blues reissues was an essential album by **Mississippi Fred McDowell**. His *I Do Not Play No Rock And Roll* was a landmark blues album at the turn of the '70s. After years of recording him alone and acoustically, as if he were a folk singer, the producers instead took Mississippi Fred into a cheap Jackson studio, recorded him with an electric guitar plugged into a blaringly loud amplifier, and teamed him with a young rhythm section. Although the album title decries the young hippie music of the day, the 60-something-year-old McDowell plugs it in and raises a ruckus that rocks as hard as anything the Stones were doing in '70. The jubilant, spry drumming recalls the "shout" drumming of Sam Carr or Mississippi fife-and-drum music, and

can inspire dancing that can range from spastic shaking to elaborate twirling and jumping. And when McDowell hits one of those raunchy and raucous chords, some may even want to bang their heads. It's a blaring all-out bash... The music of legendary country music outsider Willie Nelson was recently celebrated in a lengthily-titled 3-CD box set *Revolutions Of Time...The Journey: Reflections 1975-1993*. The liner notes begin with a really cool "what a way to go" description of an old man with a wooden leg expiring in the front row from a heart attack during a '70s Nelson concert. In the same spirit, perhaps, there's also a compilation of new and often radically different cover versions of Nelson tunes out on Justice records called *Twisted Willie*.

# METAL

BY IAN CHRISTE



**OLD**  
**Formula**  
Earache

If there's a bell ringing so loudly that you can't think, it's the jarring recollection that Jim Plotkin and his band Old (born Old Lady Drivers) have now issued four consistently groundbreaking albums without a hint of recognition. John Zorn has produced and copied them, Plotkin has toured and recorded with Scorn, and still no one knows what to make of Old. The group is reaching inspiring heights of maturity with less public interest than it takes to paste up a flyer.

Plotkin obviously benefits from being left alone to do what he does best. *Formula* is a pristine departure from the muddled, swirling noise-mass of *Lo Flux Tube*.

Joined by a bandmate from long ago, vocalist Alan Dubin (ex-Regurgitation), Plotkin comes down with a poised citadel of staggered digidrums, psychedelic trance guitar, and out-of-phase vocals. It's the ultimate album that Voivod never completed, slamming modernist perfection from Pink Floyd's progressive grandchildren. Old has created an open-ended departure from the music of the past, fulfilling metal's perpetual promise to deliver us all from the media-driven bind of rock 'n' roll idiocy. This is the heavy analog sound of a robot boy reaching out to other cyborg children, making the emotional maximum of metal and moog. Even if it goes unnoticed, *Formula* is as diverse and musically inventive as Laika and Tortoise, and an eminently respectable and enjoyable release.



## RIFFS

Another excellent new computerized sound is the plodding synthetic black metal of Switzerland's **MORDOR**. The group's *Odes* EP (*Wild Rags*) is a slow, mutton-headed crawl of pounding drums and low black drone. The four songs, including "Black Roses From The Dawn Of Chaos," total over an hour of slow Casiotone death-march obliteration. The band has an Atari-esque, corny quality to its primitive doom sound, redeemed by quality points for the group's originality. Its label's in-house fanzine, *The Wild Rag*, continues to serve as a clearinghouse for untouchable metal products (subscriptions are \$10 for 8 issues to Wild Rags, 2207 W. Whittier Blvd., Box 3302, Montebello, CA 90640)... Meanwhile, **DIABOLOS RISING** has drummed up the ultimate black-metal rave disc with *Blood Vampirism & Sadism* (Osmose). This side project of underground dark metalers Necromantia and Impaled Nazarene is fully heavy, fully trippy, and a concept fully realized. The band is the missing link between Emperor and Goldie, filtering super-fast beats into a danceable pulse and adding extremely psychotic vocals and moody, dark atmosphere. Among the growing number of "dark electronic" projects by Scandinavian black metal groups, Diabolos Rising is far superior to most, succeeding on musical weirdness rather than trite death imagery. At its most conventional, it resembles recent *Einsturzende Neubauten*. By the way, Osmose has altered its ever-catchy label slogan to read "Extremely Artistik. Artistikly Extreme"... And while we're on the subject of processed metal, it's worth noting the new **ICE** remix project, *Code: Quarantine* (Carcrashh). Justin Broadrick's sonic lab hasn't figured out an improvement over the original *Under The Skin* tracks, however—just a studio jam of thick beats and mangled high-end sound. The latest God remix EP sounds similar but far larger and more imposing, and Scorn's newest seems to have the dance-club data bank better cracked. *Quarantine*'s saving grace is that it stretches out in a more cerebral manner than anything Godflesh has done since "Flowers."



- 1 ANTHRAX  
Stomp 442  
Elektra-EEG
- 2 G/Z/R  
Plastic Planet  
TVT
- 3 GWAR  
Rag Na Rok  
Metal Blade
- 4 OZZY OSBOURNE  
Ozzmosis  
Epic
- 5 LIFE OF AGONY  
Ugly  
Roadrunner
- 6 ALICE IN CHAINS  
Alice In Chains  
Columbia-CRG
- 7 DOWN  
Nola  
EastWest-EEG
- 8 SLAYER  
Live Intrusion: Selections From...  
American
- 9 NAILBOMB  
Proud To Commit Commercial Suicide  
Roadrunner
- 10 WICKER MAN  
Wicker Man  
Hollywood
- 11 MARILYN MANSON  
Smells Like Children (EP)  
Nothing-Interscope
- 12 DEFTONES  
Adrenaline  
Maverick-WB
- 13 SIX FEET UNDER  
Haunted  
Metal Blade
- 14 D.R.I.  
Full Speed Ahead  
Rotten
- 15 IRON MAIDEN  
The X Factor  
CMC
- 16 CATHEDRAL  
The Carnival Bizarre  
Earache
- 17 SKUNK ANANSIE  
Paranoid & Sunburnt  
Epic
- 18 INTO ANOTHER  
Seemless  
Hollywood
- 19 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Punk Rock Jukebox  
CherryDisc-Blackout!
- 20 INTERNAL BLEEDING  
Voracious Contempt  
Pavement
- 21 SAVATAGE  
Dead Winter Dead  
Atlantic
- 22 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Metal Massacre XII  
Metal Blade
- 23 SMASHING PUMPKINS  
Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness  
Virgin
- 24 VOIVOD  
Negatron  
Mausoleum
- 25 DISMEMBER  
Massive Killing Capacity  
Nuclear Blast

Compiled from the *CMJ* New Music Report's weekly Loud Rock chart, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters





# SINGLES

BY DOUGLAS WOLK

## COCTEAU TWINS

### Otherness

Capitol

The Cocteau Twins' form of choice is the four-song EP: they've released about a dozen in their 14 years of existence. The idea is to have enough time to become immersed in the Cocteaus' gorgeous but limited world, but not enough time to get sick of it. Last year's *Twinlights* EP was basically Cocteau Twins Unplugged, and not nearly as illuminating as it might have been. *Otherness*, on the other hand, is way illuminating. It's familiar tracks, "recycled" by Mark Clifford of Seefeel into the biggest formal advance the group has seen in a while: exposing the ambient electronic pieces hidden inside its songs. A few seconds of Elizabeth Fraser's voice anchor this version of "Feet Like Fins," and a micro-slice of a James Brown yelp is its figurehead; on "Seekers Who Are Lovers," layers of vocals glide around each other like seagulls, and a humble drum-machine part, brought up to the front of the mix, becomes smoky and expressive. This is lovely, heady stuff.

There are a couple of recent **GUIDED BY VOICES** sightings on 7" vinyl. The first is GBV's long-awaited split single with **NEW RADIANT STORM KING** (Chunk), doing the cover-each-other's-songs thing. NRSK plays "I Am A Scientist" competently and superfluously: it's one of those songs that's so tightly composed that there's nothing that can really be added to it. GBV's version of "The Opposing Engineer Sleeps Alone," though, is the first (non-bootleg) example on record of Robert Pollard singing another band's song, and it demonstrates what a careful, elegant vocalist he's capable of being when he tries. The second new Guided By Voices single is a six-song EP, *Tigerbomb* (Matador)—they tend to treat their 7"s as little albums, which is a nice idea. The scorecard: two re-recordings (not better, not worse, just different) of very good songs from *Alien Lanes*; a useless collaboration with Gem/Cobra Verde guitarist Doug Gillard; two all-but-useless home-studio outtakes (nice slowed-down riff on "Not Good For The Mechanism," though); and a wonderful new Byrds-ish tune, inexplicably called "Dodging Invisible Rays," from secret weapon Tobin Sprout.

High-concept/low-execution single of the month: the two-songs-plus-instrumental-version *Kims We Love 7"* (Grand Royal), credited to **LADIES WHO LUNCH**. The concept: Kate Schellenbach (Luscious Jackson) and Josephine Wiggs (Breeders) do a Kraftwerkified version of Sonic Youth's "Bull In The Heather" and a Casio/Muzak version of the Pixies' "Gigantic"—Kim Gordon and Kim Deal, ha ha ha. Though Wiggs' take on Aerosmith's "Lord Of The Thighs" is about the most delightful thing the Breeders have ever recorded, this project is more a cute idea than anything worth listening to. Too bad.

**SANDRA BELL** has been making mystical, beautiful, grimy-sounding records in Dunedin, New Zealand, for years, often in collaboration with the likes of Peter Jefferies. Her latest, "Angel" (Zabriskie Point), doesn't have any easily recognizable names on the musician list, but it's a gorgeously earthy recording. The A-side is the most rock thing she's done to date, pitting clear-toned keyboards against cactus-spiked clusters of guitar and, for art's sake, throwing in a brief reading from novelist Giovanni Verga. "Gilt," on the other side, is long, dark, and full of strange things reaching out to rub against you—a mysterious passage from one end of the song to the other.

New York's Audible Hiss label, as its name suggests, specializes in records with very harsh, fidelity-to-what? sonics—it's recently released excellent records by the Blue Humans and noise-guitarist Donald Miller. **ARTHUR DOYLE**'s "Love Ship" single presents the saxophonist unaccompanied and practically gasping for air, on each side unsteadily scat-mumbling a theme for a minute, then taking over with a saxophone solo that scrapes the paint off the walls and digs pretty hard into the plaster, too. It's not easy to listen to, but it's absolutely compelling.

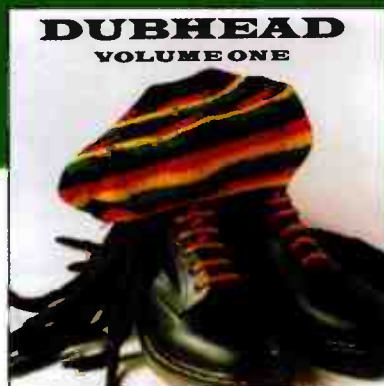
Before the **BEASTIE BOYS** assumed their familiar identity, they were a hardcore band that dabbled in hip-hop as a joke. The eight-song, 11-minute, five-dollar *Aglio E Olio* EP (Grand Royal) is straight-up old-school hardcore—a two-second sample in the middle of "You Catch A Bad One" is the only suggestion that they ever stopped playing matinees with Murphy's Law and Gorilla Biscuits. It's kind of an anachronism, but it's not so much a record as a gesture. And as a gesture, it's totally successful: they've still got the HC thing down just fine (see the three-verse, three-chorus, 42-second "Nervous Assistant"), and besides they're the *Beastie Boys*, which means they can do whatever the hell they want.

There's a small but fertile scene in Boston centered on the 'zine *No Duh* and its nifty associated bands **KARATE** and **SECRET STARS** (which share a member; the Secret Stars' recent, delicate, self-titled cassette on Shrimper is particularly worth picking up). Karate has a split single with local heroes **THE LUNE** on *No Duh*'s label, Lonesome Pine. The Karate side is excellent, a slow, ruminative piece called "The Schwinn"; The Lune's "On Letting You Go" is a solid, multi-part composition with a subtle, smart arrangement. For a much better dose of The Lune, though, track down their "Too Close"/"Too Far" single (Habanera). The former is a super-great, non-rock, where-did-that-come-from song whose instrumentation is built around accordion and trumpet, and the latter is a simple and elegant guitar/bass/drum instrumental.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### Dubhead Vol. One

Shiver-Crosstalk



With the deceleration in dancefloor tempos and the emergence of jungle, a dub resurgence was nearly inevitable. *Dubhead* represents dub's new flowering in the form of 14 British new roots dub crews who have adapted the form's techniques to the new demands of techno and house. Lest you think that this project is mere nostalgia for the impossibly limited equipment used to create King Tubby and Augustus Pablo's towering exercises in sound, be assured that this venture is thoroughly contemporary. "Talking Dubheadz" by All Nation Rockers is a ringing, acid-soaked piece with hammering minor-key piano chords drifting into the ether. Jah Warrior's "Righteous Children" is a percussion-heavy number with an incandescent keyboard figure that drifts around the edge of consciousness. The other contributors here include the Rootsman, Dub Specialists (whose recent *Dub To Dub, Break To Break* full-length is a stellar instance of modern roots dub), Bristol's Henry & Louis, and Rob Smith of the highly respected duo Smith & Mighty. This collection represents only the beginning of dub's promising new wave.



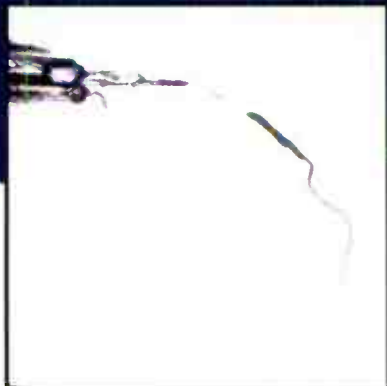
## BACK TO DRUM-AND-BASSICS

Though the drum-and-bass/jungle movement has come to prominence only recently in the U.S., the music, in one form or another, has been a staple of British dancefloors since 1989. The sound mutates quickly, constantly moving on to absorb and encompass new contexts, meanings, and rhythmic influences. As Rob Smith points out, "you can't simulate a breakbeat with a beat machine... it wouldn't have the flaws or the quirky, chaotic element." As the erosion of the 4/4 kick beat continues, looped beats are coming to the fore from every direction. Producers such as Photek, Alex Reece, Wax Doctor, and Hidden Agenda are creating jazz, funk, techno, and house that just happens also to be drum-and-bass music... Jonah Sharp, better known as **SPACETIME CONTINUUM**, has put his febrile mind to work on the highly original "Cairo"/"Roomkick" single (Astralwerks-Caroline), one of the first U.S. experimental drum-and-bass projects. "Roomkick" is a dense melange of rotating, looped breakbeats and off-balance synth sounds. If you were expecting an ambient outing from Sharp, you'll be in for quite a surprise when careening drums burst in on the track's moody atmospherics. Stunning stuff... We mentioned Luke Vibert here last month, and it's for good reason that he turns up once more. His reworkings of a batch of tracks from his *Throbbing Pouch* album (recorded under the **WAGON CHRIST** moniker) have turned up on a four-track EP (Rising High USA) that sees him moving decisively into the drum-and-bass field. He has the assistance of Aphex Twin on the spooky "Spotlight," a raw, staccato number. On "Reedin," Vibert picks apart the original track's elements and rearranges them over a bumpy break-beat. The "Oven Baked" mix is executed by Graham Sutton and Jeremy Simmons of the band Bark Psychosis. This is dance music not intended for the faint of heart...The aforementioned Alex Reece and Wax Doctor run their own label, dedicated to releasing the sort of drum-and-bass forays most people wouldn't touch. One such glistening example is "Detroit" (Precious Materials-Vinyl Distribution) by **JAZZ JUICE**, which, needless to say, is a junglist's paean to the Motor City's extensive techno lineage. You won't hear a kick-drum here, but a barreling cascade of drum loops battling each other for attention. The sustained strings and panoramic texture are pure Detroit, while the filtered breakbeats are pure 1995 British drum-and-bass.



- 1 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Trip Hop Test Part Two  
Moonshine
- 2  $\mu$ -ZIQ  
In Pine Effect  
Astralwerks-Caroline
- 3 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Trance Atlantic 2  
Trance Atlantic/Worldsend-Volume (UK)
- 4 SCORN  
Gyral  
Earache
- 5 CHEMICAL BROTHERS  
Exit Planet Dust  
Astralwerks-Caroline
- 6 LOOP GURU  
Duniya  
Waveform
- 7 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Dark Hearts 2  
Harthouse-Eye Q
- 8 CUBANATE  
Cyberia  
Dynamica-CBM Inc.
- 9 ULTRAVIOLENCE  
Psycho Drama  
Earache
- 10 CYGNUS X  
Hypermetrical  
Eye Q
- 11 GOLDIE  
Timeless  
ffrr-ILS
- 12 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Excursions In Ambience -  
The Fourth Frontier  
Astralwerks-Caroline
- 13 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
The Real Trip: Further Self Evident Truths  
Rising High USA
- 14 LEFTFIELD  
Leftism  
Columbia-CRG
- 15 EARTH NATION  
Terra Incognita  
Eye Q
- 16 MOUSE ON MARS  
Iaora Tahiti  
Too Pure-American
- 17 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Trance Europe Express 4  
Volume (UK)
- 18 PROTOTYPE 909  
Live '93-'95  
Instinct
- 19 EBN  
Telecommunication Breakdown  
TVT
- 20 SISTER MACHINE GUN  
Burn  
Wax Trax!-TVT
- 21 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Swarm Of Drones  
Sombient-Asphodel
- 22 HANZEL UND GRETYL  
Ausgeflipt  
Energy
- 23 DEATHLINE INTL.  
Zarathoustr  
COP
- 24 VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Macro Dub Infection-Volume One  
Virgin (UK)-Caroline
- 25 SOAP  
"Dumb Funk Resistance"  
Harthouse-Eye Q





# HIP-HOP

BY GLEN SANSONE

## DJ KRUSH

Meiso

(Mo Wax/frrr-London)

DJ Krush is no longer Japan's best kept secret. The silent assassin of the turntables (who got his start in the Japanese B-Boy troupe Krush Posse) was among the first wave of producers to experiment with jazz and hip-hop, uniting them like long-lost cousins before it was the in-vogue thing to do. Aside from working with live jazz bands and artists like Ronny Jordan and Pizzicato Five, Krush has released two albums (*Krush* and *Strictly Turntabled*, on the esteemed British Mo Wax label) that expand the jazz/hip-hop concept with sublime textural motifs that are avant-garde without being obscurist. The long-anticipated domestic release of *Meiso* shows Krush pushing the envelope once again. With expert producing hands, DJ Krush journeys through everything from simple American hip-hop on "Most Wanted Man" (featuring the hard rhymes of Big Shug) to musical structures and sounds that seem beamed in from another galaxy. When Krush invites MCs like C.L. Smooth (the jazz-brushed "Only The Strong Survive") or the Roots ("Ground"), you hear two voices at work rather than an MC and DJ; the rapper speaks with his mouth, and Krush, the maestro, relays his emotions through an intricate blend of dark, spellbinding funk beds. The most fantastic moments come on ambient-soaked moments like "3rd Eye" and "Duality," where Krush single-handedly escorts hip-hop beats into a whole new realm.

- 1 GENIUS/GZA  
Liquid Swords  
Geffen
- 2 PHARCYDE  
LaborinCalifornia  
Delicious Vinyl-Capitol
- 3 KRS ONE  
KRS One  
Jive
- 4 MIC GEBONIMO  
The Natural  
Blunt-TVT
- 5 GROUP HOME  
Livin' Proof  
Payday/frrr-Island
- 6 CYPRESS HILL  
III (Temples Of Boom)  
Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 7 BAEKWON  
Only Built 4 Cuban Linx...  
Loud-BCA
- 8 KOOL G RAP  
4.5.6  
Cold Chillin'/Epic Street-CRG
- 9 FAB 5  
"Blah" (12")  
Duck Down-Priority
- 10 ERICK SERMON  
Double Or Nothing  
Def Jam/RAL-Island
- 11 LORD FINESSE  
Hip To The Game (12")  
Penalty
- 12 SMIF-N-WESSUN  
Dah Shinin'  
Wreck-Nervous
- 13 DAS EFX  
Hold It Down  
EastWest-EEG
- 14 THA DOGG POUND  
Dogg Food  
Death Row-Interscope
- 15 LL COOL J  
Mr. Smith  
Def Jam/RAL-Island
- 16 ACEYALONE  
All Balls Don't Bounce  
Capitol
- 17 SUPERNATURAL  
"Buddah Blessed It" (12")  
EastWest-EEG
- 18 FUGEES (TRANSLATOR CREW)  
"Fu-Gee-La" (12")  
Ruffhouse-CRG
- 19 AZ  
Doe Or Die  
EMI
- 20 GOODIE MOB  
Soul Food  
LaFace-Arista
- 21 BLANZAY BLANZAY  
"Danger" (12")  
Mercury
- 22 JUNIOR M.A.E.I.A.  
Conspiracy  
Big Beat-Atlantic
- 23 LADY AMICHE  
"Rock And Comeen" (12")  
Weeded-Nervous
- 24 MAD SKILLZ  
"Move Ya Body" (12")  
Big Beat
- 25 REAL LIVE  
"Real Live Sh\*t" (12")  
Big Beat-Atlantic

## BONUS BEATS

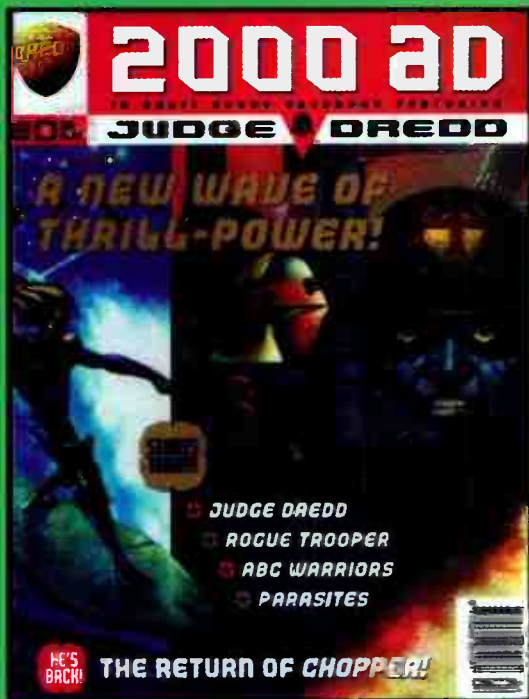


The roots of **DARK SUN RIDER** run back to the tail-end of the '80s and the Brooklyn group X-Clan, an all-business organization that thrived in the post-*It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back* era in rap. The group disbanded after two albums, a few side projects, and hip-hop's growing dependency on gratuitous sex and violence. Brother J has reorganized and refocused his sights on a second coming of hip-hop consciousness and nationalist politics on the mind-crushing *Seeds Of Evolution* (Island). Packing his eloquent verbal gusts in raw, hard-hitting funk, Brother J sounds like an immortal Egyptian sage ("Magnificent Son") speaking in favor of a renewed, disciplined mindset that will expand and heighten the collective mind of the black community... Though the two groups come from two very different directions, *Soul Food* (LaFace-Arista) by Atlanta's **GOODIE MOB** represents a sense of heartfelt pain and blues in the black community not heard from a Southern outfit since Arrested Development. While AD may have been more musically adventurous, Goodie Mob delivers gratifying Southern funk in the spirit of groups like Scarface and Outkast. Most amazing is the foursome's ability to be original and fashionable at the same time. The first single, "Cell Therapy," spins a spare piano loop under a hardcore chorus: "Who's that peekin' in my window/Pow!/Nobody now." With tons of Southern bump and jeep-ready rhythms, cuts like "Sesame Street," "Thought Process" and "Fighting" are some of the best examples of *Soul Food*'s messages teetering on the stressed-out edge of reality. Scidom has the basic struggle to survive been articulated with such drama, passion and smarts. Also check the Mother's Day anthem "Guess Who"... Following his death last year from AIDS, Priority Records has issued *Eternal E*, a 14-cut retrospective of **EAZY-E**'s high-profile career. With proceeds going to pediatric AIDS foundations, this will remind listeners of the profound contribution Eazy has made to hip-hop as an entrepreneur and founding member of N.W.A, despite his on- and off-stage persona. Word out.

Compiled from the *CNN New Music Report*'s weekly Beat Box charts, collected from CNN's pool of progressive radio reporters.

# mixed media

compiled by Ana Marie Cox



## FUNNIES

### 2000 A.D. (Fleetway (UK))

Judge Dredd may have been one of last year's most disastrous movies, and the attempt to bring him to American comics didn't do so hot either, but *2000 A.D.*—the weekly British comic where he's been appearing for more than 15 years—is the reason why it seemed like a good idea. The British stories about the heavily armed, grim-faced future lawman are usually blanchingly hilarious social satire, and fully aware of the undercurrents of fascism that the movie ignored: when Dredd's not rescuing his city from criminals, he's quashing incipient pro-democracy movements. The rest of each issue of *2000 A.D.* (now once again imported to the U.S. weekly, after a long hiatus) contains a handful of science-fiction and fantasy serials; they're usually ultra-violent, plot-intensive, beautifully drawn (often painted) and very funny. *2000 A.D.* has for years been where emerging British comics talents cut their eyeteeth (its famous alumni include Brian Bolland, Alan Moore, Simon Bisley, Dave Gibbons, and countless others); Kevin Walker, who's just starting to break free of Bisley's influence, is the current rising star, but others are worth watching for too. —Douglas Wolk

## FUNNIES

### THB

by Paul Pope (Horse Press, P.O. Box 3112, Columbus, OH 43210)

Paul Pope is the freshest new voice in comics in ages. His ongoing project *THB* is one part very early Hernandez Brothers (recalling the days when *Love And Rockets* was a science-fiction adventure comic), one part Americanized manga (in fact, he's been doing a companion series for a Japanese publisher as *Supertrouble*), one part a more innocent version of "outsider artist" Henry Darger (there's a certain obsession in his work with pubescent girls getting into and out of trouble, and with creating and revising endless pages of their stories) and about eight parts pure Paul Pope. There's nobody else who's got his visual vocabulary or (bizarre) storytelling sense; what he shares with Japanese artists, in fact, is less actual style than an interest in finding ways to draw very quickly and with maximum economy of work. You get the sense that he's doing these comics because they just flow unstopably out of his pen. And the stories are *totally* fun: the newly expanded (to 108 pages) first issue finds the series' heroine HR (yes, Pope likes initials too) defeating a schoolgirl-eating robot by applying Zeno's Paradox. Watch for two mammoth paperback collections, *THB-A*, out now, and *THB-B*, coming in June.

—Douglas Wolk





## LOADED

(Miramax)

Yes, it's another coming-of-age movie. *Loaded*, the debut film from New Zealander Anna Campion, sister to Jane (*Angel At My Table*, *The Piano*), is like an early John Hughes movie without the Brat Pack and with a dark twist. As with, for instance, *The Breakfast Club*, a group of teenagers are taken out of their everyday routines and put in a confined setting where they confess their individual fears and insecurities. This time, the teenagers travel to a remote, haunted mansion to make a homemade 16mm horror film. During the course of filming, the characters ponder heavy coming-of-age topics like life direction, sanity, and virginity. There is a dark side to this film, however: on the last night in the mansion, they take acid to bring about even deeper self-exploration, but it leads to tragedy instead. Despite the often trite script, *Loaded* is redeemed by some of the same elements that have brought acclaim to the more famous Campion—beautiful cinematography, picturesque still-shots and rich colors. But the handsome visuals of *Loaded* don't really balance the script's shortcomings, and what results is an arty teenage film with a demented edge. —Dawn Sutter



## 'ZINES

### CRAPHOUND

(\$4.00 from P.O. Box 40373, Portland, OR 97240-0373)

Sean Tejaratchi, *Craphound's* guiding force, has finally trumped all the cynics who claim that all the best zines have already been written by creating what has got to be the first clip-art zine. *Craphound's* text-to-graphics ratio is about par with either a Little Golden Book or an issue of *Hustler's Barely Legal*. But by combining elements of both, *Craphound* is a better publication than either. Indeed, issues 2 and 3 perfect this mix—the straight-faced surrealism of a children's book and the sly self-parody of good porn—by focusing on a theme of "Sex And Kitchen Gadgets." The issues are dedicated to everyone who "realizes this... is only one topic." Personally, I've always found the kitchen pretty alluring; there's something positively seductive about freshly browned toast, something slightly kinky about an egg beater. Still, after reading through *Craphound*, I'll never look at a melon baller the same way again. (AMC)



## READS

### UNTITLED

by Diane Arbus (*Aperture*)

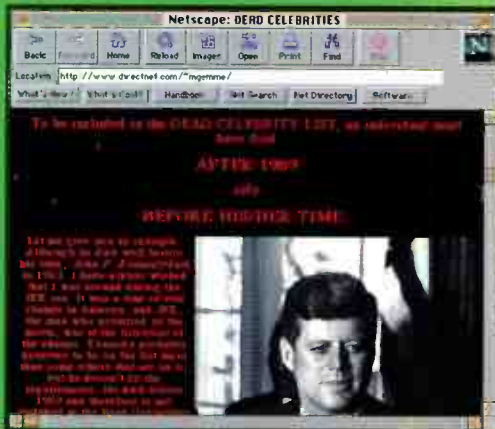
Between 1969 and 1971—the years just before she committed suicide—Diane Arbus shot a series of photographs at residences for the mentally retarded. The results of this project appear in *Untitled*, Arbus' third volume and, according to her publishers, "the only one devoted to a single subject." But what, or who, is the subject here? The figures represented in *Untitled* do not seem to pose so much as stand their ground. Even dressed in vaguely ridiculous Halloween or birthday costumes, as many are, all of these men and women seem sure in their self-knowledge, comfortable in their difference. Each meets the camera's gaze with all the ease of a supermodel, and in each Arbus finds a certain native grace. This dignity, combined with the quiet lyricism of Arbus' camera and her refusal to either pity or mock, quiet any assumptions the viewer might have about what it is to be normal. Whatever her intention, the subject of this investigation is not who is in the photographs, but who is looking at them. (AMC)

# multi-media

## NET STUFF

### Idle Worship: The Celebrity Death Page <http://www.directnet.com/~mgemme/>

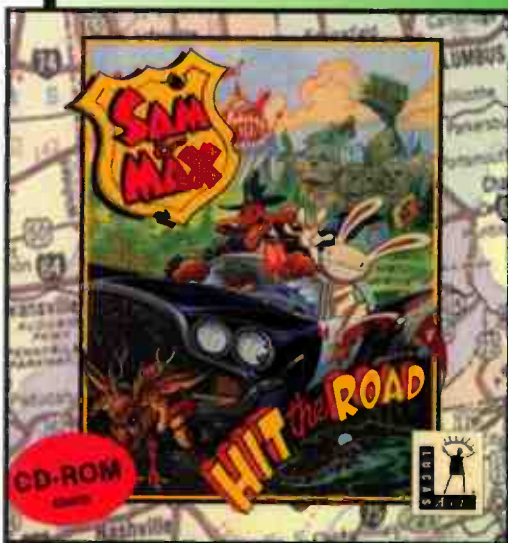
Strangers die every day, but celebrities not quite so often. It is the paucity of famous deaths that makes a page like The Celebrity Death Page possible. Though there have been attempts to immortalize mere mortals, so to speak, on various obituary pages, the task of chronicling stars' falls is not only manageable, but, let's face it, more interesting. This page's creator has taken the trouble to narrow the definition of "Celebrity Death" to an almost absurd, and certainly subjective, specificity. The site's first page spells out the rules: to be included in the list (which, logically enough, usually links each celeb to his or her own page), a star must have died after 1969 and "before his/her time." Thus JFK is not included (bit the bullet before 1969), and neither is Elvis (was "past his prime" when the time came). Who is included? The usual suspects, to be sure—Kurt Cobain, Jerry Garcia and Shannon Hoon—but also some more idiosyncratic choices: Graham Chapman, Sergie Ginkov, Pete Linberg and Hillel Slovak. (AMC)



## CD-ROM

### SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD (LucasArts)

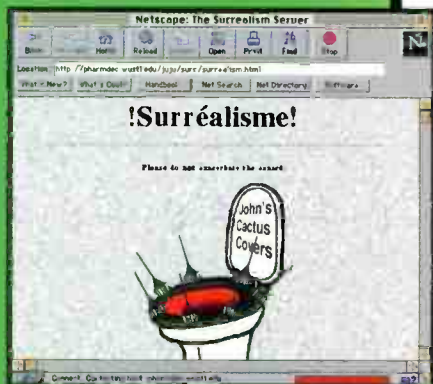
You may recall that a few months ago, we expressed our delight at a compilation of Steve Purcell's *Sam & Max* comics in this space. Our delight has been redoubled with the re-release (for Mac and PC) of the *Sam & Max Hit The Road* CD-ROM, one of the funniest computer games ever released. The plot, such as it is, concerns the ultraviolent dog-and-bunny team of "Freelance Police" traveling all over America in an attempt to track down a frozen Bigfoot who has thawed out and escaped from a carnival. The game's puzzles are beyond silly, but make a weird kind of sense (a hint: you can retrieve the lost mood ring from the World's Largest Ball Of Twine by attaching Jesse James' severed hand to the broken golf-ball retriever, then closing it around the fish-shaped magnet). The music is generated by a special system that improvises on each scene's themes continuously, instead of repeating the same samples over and over; the animation, though a little grainy, is graceful and funny, with lots of tiny background gags; and the dialogue is hysterical ("Mind if I drive?" "Not if you don't mind me clutching at the dash and shrieking like a cheerleader") and entirely in keeping with the comics' style. —Douglas Wolk



## NET STUFF

### "Ceci N'est Pas Un Web Page": The Surrealist Site <http://pharmdec.wustl.edu/juju/surr/surrealism>

Those who believe that Obsession ads and Helmut Lang fashion spreads are what passes for Surrealism these days should point their browsers to the Surrealism site—both a lesson and an exercise in Surrealist thought. The educational material is fairly straightforward: The site includes much of Andre Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto* as well as a concise history of the movement. Much more fun are the exercises in Surrealism, most of which take full advantage of the Web's own propensity for confusion. The most successful is probably the "Surrealist Compliment Generator," which dispenses such nuggets as "Flies dance opera to your wisdom." You don't understand? You're not supposed to. Keeping in mind that a central goal of Surrealism was to reach a "creative state of self-induced psychosis" will make a trip to the site much more bearable, if not exactly comprehensible. (AMC)





# TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY



AMP5

ARTIST	ALBUM TITLE	LABEL
1 AMP5	Pacer	4AD/Elektra-EEG
2 SMASHING PUMPKINS	Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness	Virgin
3 BOSS HOG	Boss Hog	DGC
4 CORNERSHOP	Woman's Gotta Have It	Luaka Bop-WB
5 SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE	Sunny Day Real Estate	Sub Pop
6 RENTALS	Return Of The Rentals	Maverick-Reprise
7 THIRTY OUGHT SIX	Hag Seed	Mute America
8 SPACEHOG	Resident Alien	Hi Fi/Sire-EEG
9 ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT	Scream, Dracula, Scream!	Interscope
10 G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE	Coast To Coast Motel	OKeh-Epic
11 7SECONDS	The Music, The Message	Immortal-Epic
12 OASIS	(What's The Story) Morning Glory?	Epic
13 NO DOUBT	Tragic Kingdom	Trauma-Interscope
14 STEREOLAB	Refried Ectoplasm (Switched On Volume 2)	Drag City
15 PIZZICATO FIVE	The Sound Of Music By Pizzicato Five	Matador-Atlantic
16 MARILYN MANSON	Smells Like Children	Nothing-Interscope
17 PHARCYDE	Labcabin/california	Delicious Vinyl-Capitol
18 SONIC YOUTH	Washing Machine	DGC
19 BUILT TO SPILL CAUSTIC RESIN	Built To Spill Caustic Resin (10")	Up
20 POLVO	This Eclipse (EP)	Merge
21 HELIUM	Superball+ (EP)	Matador
22 PAPAS FRITAS	Papas Fritas	Minty Fresh
23 MR. BUNGLER	Disco Volante	Warner Bros.
24 GARDEN VARIETY	Knocking The Skill Level	Headhunter-Cargo
25 SON VOLT	Trace	Warner Bros.
26 MAGNETIC FIELDS	Get Lost	Merge
27 PASSENGERS	Original Soundtracks I	Island
28 BLONDE REDHEAD	La Mia Vita Violenta	Smells Like
29 AIR MIAMI	Me. Me. Me.	Teen Beat-4AD
30 DEAD MILKMEN	Stoney's Extra Stout (Pig)	Restless
31 DEFTONES	Adrenaline	Maverick-WB
32 TRACY CHAPMAN	New Beginning	Elektra-EEG
33 SISTER MACHINE GUN	Burn	Wax Trax!-TVT
34 VOODOO GLOW SKULLS	Firme	Epitaph
35 NEW BOMB TURKS	Pissing Out The Poison	Crypt
36 SPARKLEHORSE	Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot	Capitol
37 ALICE IN CHAINS	Alice In Chains	Columbia-CRG
38 RED RED MEAT	Bunny Gets Paid	Sub Pop
39 EDSIEL	Techniques Of Speed Hypnosis	Relativity
40 ECHOBELLY	On	Fauve/Rhythm King-550
41 ZEN COWBOYS	Electric Mistress	Moonshine
42 SUPERNOVA	Ages 3 And Up	Amphetamine Reptile-Atlantic
43 YO LA TENGO	Camp Yo La Tengo (EP)	Matador
44 POE	Hello	Modern-Atlantic
45 GAUNT	Yeah, Me Too	Amphetamine Reptile
46 RIDE	Live Light	Mutiny-FLG
47 SUPERCHUNK	Here's Where The Strings Come In	Merge
48 BLACK GRAPE	It's Great When You're Straight...Yeah	Radioactive
49 P	P	Capitol
50 CAPSIZE 7	Mephisto	Caroline
51 RANCID	...And Out Come The Wolves	Epitaph
52 SEA AND CAKE	The Biz	Thrill Jockey
53 ROLLING STONES	Stripped	Virgin
54 NOMEANSNO	The Worldhood Of The World (As Such)	Alternative Tentacles
55 BRIAN ENO/JAH WOBBLE	Spinner	Gyroscope-Caroline
56 SOFTIES	It's Love	K
57 BATS	Couchmaster	Mammoth
58 INTO ANOTHER	Seemless	Hollywood
59 PAIN TEENS	Beast Of Dreams	Trance Syndicate
60 MOUNTAIN GOATS	Nine Black Poppies	Emperor Jones-Trance Syndicate
61 FLAMING LIPS	Clouds Taste Metallic	Warner Bros.
62 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Trip Hop Test Part Two	Moonshine
63 MELTING HOPEFULS	Viva La Void (EP)	Big Pop
64 GREEN DAY	Insomniac	Reprise
65 SF SEALS	Truth Walks In Sleepy Shadows	Matador
66 SOUNDTRACK	Four Rooms	Elektra-EEG
67 BEATLES	Anthology I	Capitol
68 RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS	One Hot Minute	Warner Bros.
69 PRETENDERS	The Isle Of View	Warner Bros.
70 JOE CHRISTMAS	Upstairs Overlooking	Tooth And Nail
71 GARBAGE	Garbage	Almo Sounds
72 ALCOHOL FUNNYCAR	Weasels	C/Z
73 INDIGO GIRLS	1200 Curlews	Epic
74 STRATOTANKER	Baby, Test The Sky	Homestead
75 TEXAS IS THE REASON	"Texas Is The Reason" (7")	Revelation

Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 30 most played releases that week.

A LISTING OF LABELS WHOSE ARTISTS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

**550/Columbia/Epic/WORX**  
550 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

**A&M/Polydor/Atlas**  
1416 N. La Brea Ave.  
Hollywood, CA 90028

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

**Arista**  
6 W. 57th St.  
New York, NY 10019

**Atlantic**  
75 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, NY 10019

**Audible Hiss**  
P.O. Box 1242, Cooper Stn.  
New York, NY 10276

**Blue Note**  
810 Seventh Ave., 4th Fl.  
New York, NY 10019

**Boner**  
P.O. Box 2081  
Berkeley, CA 94702-0081

**Capitol**  
1750 N. Vine St.  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**Carrerashh**  
P.O. Box 392  
Edgewater  
Lakewood, OH 44107

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

**Carrot Top**  
3716 N. Greenview  
Chicago, IL 60613

**Chunk**  
P.O. Box 244  
Easthampton, MA 01027

**Communion**  
290 C. Napoleon St.  
San Francisco, CA 94124

**Crosstalk**  
1557 Honore  
Chicago, IL 60622

**Earache**  
295 Lafayette St., Ste. 915  
New York, NY 10012

**El Recordo**  
1916 Pike Pl., #12-370  
Seattle, WA 98101

**Epitaph**  
6201 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 111  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**Evidence**  
1100 E. Hector St., Ste. 392  
Conshohocken, PA 19428

**Flydaddy**  
P.O. Box 4618  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Geffen**  
9130 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90069

**Gern Blandsten**  
305 Haywood Dr.  
Paramus, NJ 07652

**Grand Royal**  
P.O. Box 26689  
Los Angeles, CA 90026

**Habanera**  
99R Franklin St.  
Allston, MA 02134

**Homestead**  
P.O. Box 800  
Rockville Centre, NY 11571

**Interscope**  
10900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1230  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

**Interra**  
180 Varick St., Ste. 1400  
New York, NY 10014

**I.R.S.**  
3250 Hayden Ave.  
Culver City, CA 90232

**Island/I.L.S./London/Mango**  
825 Eighth Ave.  
New York, NY 10019

**Justice**  
P.O. Box 980369  
Houston, TX 77098

**K**  
P.O. Box 7154  
Olympia, WA 98507

**Kill Rock Stars**  
120 NE State, #418  
Olympia, WA 98501

**KOCH**  
2 Tri-Harbor Court  
Port Washington, NY 11050

**Lonesome Pine**  
P.O. Box 921  
Allston, MA 02134

**Lookout!**  
P.O. Box 11374  
Berkeley, CA 94712

**Matador**  
676 Broadway, 4th Fl.  
New York, NY 10012

**Merge**  
P.O. Box 1235  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

**Osmose c/o Relapse**  
P.O. Box 251  
Millersville, PA 17551

**PCP**  
P.O. Box 1689  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10009

**Priority**  
6430 Sunset Blvd., Suite 900  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**RCA**  
Bertelsmann Bldg.  
1540 Broadway  
New York, NY 10036

**ROIR**  
611 Broadway, Ste. 411  
New York, NY 10012

**Runt**  
Viale E. Duse 16/A  
50137 Firenze, Italy

**Rykodisc**  
Sheffield Park  
27 Congress St.  
Salem, MA 01970

**Shanachie**  
37 E. Clinton St.  
Newton, NJ 07860

**Silvertone**  
137 W. 25th St.  
New York, NY 10001

**Slumberland**  
P.O. Box 14731  
Berkeley, CA 94712

**Smells Like**  
P.O. Box 6179  
Hoboken, NJ 07030

**Sub Pop**  
1932 First Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98101

**Table Of The Elements**  
P.O. Box 5524  
Atlanta, GA 30307

**TAG**  
14 E. 60th St., 8th Fl.  
New York, NY 10022

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

**Verve**  
825 Eighth Ave., 26th Floor  
New York, NY 10019

**Vinyl Distribution**  
70-72 Kings Rd.  
Reading, Berkshire RG1 3BJ, U.K.

**Virgin**  
338 N. Foothill Rd.  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**Warner Bros./Reprise**  
3300 Warner Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91505

**Wild Rags**  
2207 W. Whittier Blvd., Box 3302  
Montebello, CA 90640

**WMO**  
P.O. Box 322  
Alta Loma, CA 91701-0322

**Zabriskie Point**  
P.O. Box 3006  
Colorado Springs, CO 80934

**Zero Hour**  
1600 Boradway, Ste. 701  
New York, NY 10019



NEW RELEASES FEBRUARY-MARCH 1996

## FEBRUARY 20

**MAN... OR ASTROMAN?** Deluxe Men In Space (Touch And Go)  
**RACHEL'S** Egon Schiele (1/4 Stick)  
**BUTTERGLORY** Are You Building A Temple To Heaven? (Merge)  
**BEDHEAD** The Dark Ages (Trance Syndicate)  
**NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN & MICHAEL BROOK** Night Song  
(Real World-Caroline)  
**IDAHO** Three Sheets To The Wind (Caroline)  
**BIG ASS TRUCK** Kent (Upstart)  
**PSYCHIC TV** The Fractured Garden (Invisible)  
**IGGY POP** Naughty Little Doggie (Virgin)

## FEBRUARY 27

**SMUGGLERS** Selling The Sizzle (Mint/Lookout!)  
**VELOUR** (Tooth & Nail)  
**2PAC** All Eyes On Me (Death Row-Interscope)  
**SOUNDTRACK** Schoolhouse Rock (Lava-Atlantic)  
**FRESHMENTS** Fizzy, Fuzzy, Big & Buzzy (Mercury)  
**ODDS** (Elektra-EEG)  
**DOUBLEPLUSGOOD** (Sire-EEG)  
**CHAIN OF STRENGTH** The One Thing That Still Remains True (Revelation)  
**TRIPMASTER MONKEY** (Sire-EEG)  
**COWBOY JUNKIES** (Geffen)  
**MEICES** Dirty Bird (London)  
**SPINANES** Strand (Sub Pop)  
**COMBUSTIBLE EDISON** Schizophonic (Sub Pop)  
**STRUNG OUT** (Fat Wreck Chords)  
**TOO MUCH JOY** ...Finally (Discovery)  
**HUSIKESQUE** Green Blue Fire (Astralwerks-Caroline)  
**WAYNE KRAMER** Dangerous Madness (Epitaph)  
**GAS HUFFER** (Epitaph)  
**WRENS** Secaucus (Grass)  
**SUBDUDES** Primitive Streak (High Street)  
**MAGIC DIRT** Magic Dirt (Dirt)  
**WEEPING TILE** (Seed/TAG-Atlantic)  
**PRONG** (Epic)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Home Alive (Epic)

## MARCH 5

**GIRLS AGAINST BOYS** House Of GYSB (Touch And Go)  
**HORSEY** Swarm (Invisible)  
**TEST DEPARTMENT** Totality (Invisible)  
**MELT-BANANA** Scratch Or Stitch (Skin Graft)  
**DRAIN** Offspeed And In There (Trance Syndicate)  
**FURRY THINGS** The Big Saturday Illusion (Trance Syndicate)  
**MOLOTOV GRASSHOPPER** (Island)  
**DOMINO** Physical Funk (Outburst-Island)  
**UNITED STATES OF POETRY** United States Of Poetry (Nu Yo-Mercury)  
**TINA ARENA** Don't Ask (Epic)  
**CELINE DION** (550)

## MARCH 12

**HALF HOUR TO GO** Items For The Full Outfit (Grass)  
**TRACY BONHAM** The Burdens Of Being Upright (Island)  
**7 YEAR BITCH** (Atlantic)  
**FRENTE!** (Mammoth-Atlantic)  
**FUZZY** (TAG-Atlantic)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Sounds Of The Underground (Columbia)  
**THE TRIP** (Ruffhouse-Columbia)  
**HAMELL ON TRIAL** Big As Life (Doolittle-Mercury)  
**KISS** Unplugged (Mercury)  
**ICEBURN** Meditavolution (Revelation)

## MARCH 19

**GROTUS** Mass (London)  
**CHUCK D** (Def Jam)  
**INTERSTATE** Shadey Pine (How Can I Be Down/RAL-Island)  
**MIKE WATT** (Columbia)  
**SPIN DOCTORS** (Epic)

All dates subject to change. so don't blame us.



# CMJ

## VOLUME 31

### MARCH 1996

NEW MUSIC MONTHLY



Therapy?

For his first new album in four years (and following his American breakthrough retrospective *The Mansa Of Mali*), **SALIF KEITA**, "The Golden Voice Of Mali," has come up with *Falan*... *The Past* (Mango), a lush, lovely album of Afropop. Polyrhythmic jams like "Africa" are lifted into the sky by Keita and producer Wally Badarou's unflinching knack for production ideas, and Keita's voice lives up to its billing. Rough, intense and slashing, it grabs the songs from the outset and never lets go. (See review in January issue, pg. 13.)

"People aren't interested in the orthodox style of music. They only want the stuff that's dancey, it's bollocks, really," says **BUSH CHEMISTS** founder Dougie Wardrop. He should know what people want, since his music career began with the opening of his record shop, Dub Shack, nestled in London's famous Camden Market. Wardrop should know, but it doesn't affect his music much: "Righteous Dub," like the rest of *Dub Outernational* (ROIR), is old-school, orthodox dub, with only the slightest nod toward the modern technology or the dancefloor. (See review, pg. 31.)



Salif Keita

**THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE's** Freda Love is one hell of a trooper: The band's drummer (formerly of Antenna and Blake Babies) recorded "Going Through The Motions," and the rest of *Keep A Secret* (RCA), eight months pregnant. She says, "Being pregnant totally changed the way I played the drums. I just could not sit down behind the kit at all. So I put all the drums up a little bit higher, got rid of the kick drum, and stood behind the kit with a pair of mallets."

To hear **CHISEL** now, you'd never know that it used to be an emo-punk band. The Washington, D.C. trio's frontman has his roots in New Jersey hardcore band Citizen's Arrest, and while the band once reflected that influence, over the past couple of years Chisel has revolutionized its sound. Like the other tunes on its first long-player, *8 A.M. All Day* (Gem Blandsten), "Theme For A Pharmacist" is a showcase for the band's distinctly mod, Brit-pop sound, and will make you glad that Chisel has opted for the high road. (See On The Verge, pg. 46.)



Chisel

**DESMOND SIMMONS** is a bit player in the story of Wire (see article, pg. 18); he played guitar on Wire singer Colin Newman's first few solo records, and the only record he made on his own, *Alone On Penguin Island*, was produced by Wire's Graham Lewis and Bruce Gilbert. That weird, graceful album (on which "Counterpane" appears) has just been reissued by WMO, with a handful of bonus live and demo recordings that demonstrate how the Lewis/Gilbert team transformed Simmons' taut, fairly straightforward songs into unearthly soundscapes that recall their own work as Dome.

Pass the Angostura, because this cocktail is bittersweet... **THE COCKTAILS** have called it a day. But the band's ultimate release is in many ways exactly that: *The Cocktails* (Carrot Top), on which "Cast Stones" appears, is smart, elegant and thoughtful, a fitting bow for a band that exemplified these attributes before they (the band or the attributes) were fashionable. (See Best New Music, pg. 13, and article, pg. 16.)

One of the greatest moments on PBS' *History Of Rock 'N' Roll* series showed a very young **IGGY POP**, playing with the Stooges around 1970, diving into a crowd, standing up on somebody's hands, grabbing a jar of peanut butter and smearing it all over himself with a feral look in his eye. That intensity has never left him; his new solo album, *Naughty Little Doggie* (Virgin), finds him taking a position as a wild-eyed, sinewy elder statesman of the berserk rock he pioneered. Check out "Heart Is Saved" and see what we mean. (See cover story, pg. 24.)

Despite their songs' scorching social commentary, the members of **BAD RELIGION** are really just normal guys. Bassist Jay Bentley says, "There have been a lot of times when after we play a show and walk out of the club, someone will ask us, 'When is the band coming out?' It's funny that because of our name, the kind of songs we write, and the image created on our records, people expect us to be these militant vegans with high-and-mighty ideas." On "A Walk," from the band's ninth album, *The Gray Race* (Atlantic), the 15-year-old band proves that it can still craft catchy, frenetic punk rock with a message. (See review, pg. 31.)



Iggy Pop

Reams of British press can't be wrong ... okay, so it can, but it's not when praising John Power's post-La's band, **CAST**. Power's sense of melody and fresh, liberal take on rock history seem like a fresh breath of perfect pop song air. "Alright" is one of many such pleasant, positive exhalations on the band's debut, *All Change* (Polydor-Atlas). Power says "I want to use [music] to give people hope on the oasis of basic morals; love not Coca-Cola; human life not a semi-detached house. Love, man. Love and hope." (See Best New Music, pg. 13.)



Bad Religion

It's been a long time since the world has heard from **AIMEE MANN**. After numerous delays, the former "Til Tuesday singer's second solo album *I'm With Stupid* (DGC) has finally hit the streets. "Sugarcoated" is about former Suede member Bernard Butler (who co-wrote the song). Mann says, "...the press was intimating that he was some spoiled rock star. And you meet him and he's the sweetest guy. But everyone else gets sugarcoated and he comes out looking like the bad guy." (See Best New Music, pg. 12.)

# ZIP

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. Lift handle before operating pump.



Aimee Mann

"I was seeing it all over the city." **MARRY ME JANE** singer and rhythm guitarist Amanda Kravat says of the origins of her band's name, "'Marry me, Jane. Love, Keith.' So whoever Keith is—this one's for you, babe!" Sometime after the marriage proposals caught Kravat's eye, the New York band's sound attracted the interests of director Eric Schaeffer, whose *My Life's In Tumaround* was a hit on the festival circuit, and he asked Kravat to score the film. Not only did Kravat supply the incidental music, but eight songs from Marry Me Jane's self-titled debut (550-Epic), including "TwentyOne," found their way onto the film's soundtrack. (See review, pg. 39.)

You must remember **POSSUM DIXON**... if the name doesn't ring a bell, the words "Watch That Girl Destroy Me" certainly will. That song, from the band's debut album, was a big hit a couple of years ago, but the Possum Dixon story doesn't end there. *Star Mops* (Interscope), from which "Emergency's About To End" is taken, is brimming with the same kind of catchy pop that made its first effort so appealing. Guitarist/pianist Robert O'Sullivan says "We're about saying 'Goddammit, I can do that, we've got something and it's ours.' We're about falling in love with music." (See review, pg. 41.)



Marry Me Jane

**JARS OF CLAY** couldn't have been prepared for the attention they initially received. The band formed in 1993 at Greenville College in Illinois, where three of the four band members had been studying. After recruiting a longtime friend to play guitar, the band recorded a CD demo "just to see if [they] could pull it off." And pull it off they did. Jars Of Clay sent out some copies of its first effort, and was quickly overwhelmed by the response. "Flood" is the first single from the band's self-titled album (Essential-Silvertone). (See review, pg. 37.)

**GRAVITY KILLS** should have known it was on the road to success when the first song it ever wrote became an immediate favorite in its hometown St. Louis' KPNT: "Guilty" was placed on the station's *Best Of St. Louis* compilation and later appeared on the *Seven* soundtrack. The song, which also appears on the band's self-titled debut album (TVT), was written only four days before submissions for the compilation were due. Two days later, the band had to quickly recruit a new singer after its vocalist called it quits, and the song was completed only 30 minutes before the deadline.



Possum Dixon

**CASSANDRA WILSON** has been studying music since she was nine, writing her own songs since 12 and performing around her home town of Jackson, Mississippi since 19. Her smoky, alluring voice and complex, inventive phrasings have made her one of the brightest lights in contemporary jazz. "Until" is one of five originals from Wilson's second album, *New Moon Daughter* (Blue Note), a record she says is "about the cycle of relationships, how they're into an ebb and flow, how it's up and down with the phases of the moon."

In the form of Sufi Islam devotional music called qawwali, a master singer develops words and phrases into hypnotic incantations. One of the greatest masters of the style is **NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN**, who appears here with "My Comfort Remains," taken from *Night Song* (RealWorld), his collaboration with composer and keyboardist **MICHAEL BROOK**. Khan's singing can also be heard on straight-up qawwali records with his usual accompanists (many of whom are related to him), on strange quasi-disco cassettes, and on two duets with Eddie Vedder on the *Dead Man Walking* soundtrack. (See review, pg. 38.)

In the '80s, Columbus, Ohio's Royal Crescent Mob was a great, underrated funk-rock band, featuring one Happy Chichester, that toured incessantly and made a couple of very cool records. Chichester has resurfaced with a new group, **HOWLIN' MAGGIE**. The quartet has only been together for about a year, but it's already preparing for the early April release of its major-label debut, *Honeysuckle Strange* (Columbia); "Alcohol" is the album's first single.

Former *Suicidal Tendencies* frontman Mike Muir has a new project, **CYCO MIKO**, which finds him, as he himself attests, "bigger, better and crazier than ever!" With the help of Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones, Muir (who also fronts Infectious Grooves) is exploring his punk/hardcore roots on the band's debut album, *Lost My Brain! (Once Again)* (Epic). "Save A Peace For Me" is the epic first track, and offers an apt introduction to Muir's madness.

The fact that ESPN uses **COMBINE**'s songs as background music for its *Extreme Sports* show speaks volumes about the excessive qualities of the band's sound. The three guys in the Norfolk, VA band are also obsessed with alien abduction, so check out the cover of their second long-player, *The History Of American Rock And Roll* (Caroline), which depicts a mutant rock band known as "The Three Wise Guys." Neither of the above details, however, explain how a simple punk-pop song like "Know Regrets" will whiz right by if you don't pay attention. (See review, pg. 34.)

**THERAPY?**'s Andy Cairns (vocals/guitar), Michael McKeegan (bass) and Fyfe Ewing (drums) found each other through a "common interest in the theories of noise, chaos and mass anxiety." It's an interest that has served the band well through four LPs (and four EPs) now, directing the band's culling of the most insidious elements of punk, metal and pop, but it's also something that accentuates the question mark at the end of the band's name. "Misery," from *Infernal Love* (A&M), shows the Irish band maturing from its usual introspective psychodrama and focusing on a new reason for misery: fractured romance. (See review, pg. 42.)



Gravity Kills



Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan



Cyco Miko



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1. Are you...?

- Male       Female

2. How old are you?

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- 18-24       45+
- 25-34       What's it to you?

3. Where did you buy this magazine?

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- record store       bookstore
- other \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many CDs do you buy per month?

- 0-2       6-10
- 3-5       more than 10

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

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City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

6. What radio station(s) do you usually listen to?

Call Letters \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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World Radio History



# Localzine

BY TIM STEGALL

## AUSTIN, TEXAS

**Someday, the rest of the world will wake up and realize there's more to Austin music than folky warblers from Lubbock, sub-Stevie Ray gunslingers, and Trance Syndicate. Someday, Austin audiences, who are spoiled by the richness and diversity of the local scene, will get over both their evil tendency to support only three-month-old bands and their apparent inability to dance.**

And someday, Austin city fathers will cease to encourage the Chamber of Commerce and Tourist Bureau to capitalize on our bumper-sticker reputation as the so-called "Live Music Capital Of The World" as they simultaneously do everything in their power to legislate live music out of existence. Ridiculous noise and post-no-bills laws and resultant fines have already forced famed alternaclub **Emo's** (603 Red River, 477-EMOS) to revoke its trademark free admission policy in the past year. Still, where else can you catch bands of the caliber of the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion for two bucks?

This town's never had as much fun as it did during the (seemingly) 100-day lifespan of a chaotic-beer-soaked garage rock scene that turned places like the microscopic drag barcum-punk club **Blue Flamingo** (7th and Red River, 469-0014) into out-of-control house parties. After leading lights the Inhalants and Crying-Out-Louds disbanded as members relocated to Seattle, the heart of the movement seemed to have been ripped out. Glimpses of it can still be seen whenever ex-Big Boy Tim Kerr and his former Poison 13 cohort Mike Carroll trot out their Lord High Fixers for a rare appearance. Another fine holdover from Austin's brief garage moment is the Paranoids, who manage to make Daniel Johnston and Flaming Lips covers sound oddly like Billy Childish tunes.

Otherwise, clubs like Blue Flamingo, **Flamingo Cantina** (515 E. 6th, 474-9336) and the amazing **Hole In The Wall** (2828 Guadalupe, 472-5599) host a healthy crop of punk rock bands, including the notoriously destructive Motards, Tallboy, Dead End Cruisers, the



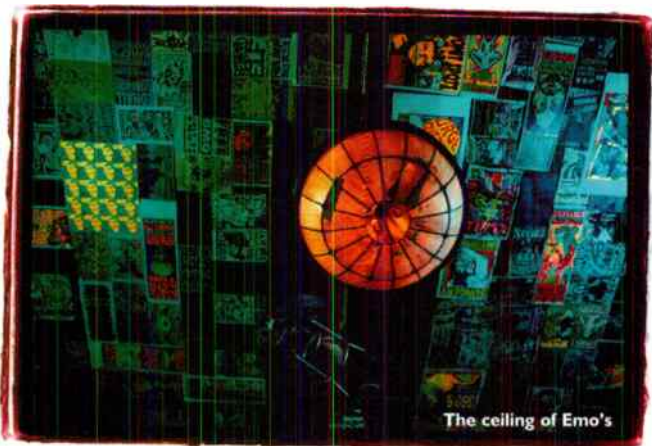
Cov'rs, the Reclusives, Lower Class Brats, the Chumps, and my own snot-caked attempt at finding the hidden ground between "Chinese Rocks" and "Fiction Romance," the Hormones. Scene godfathers Stretford and Jesus Christ Superfly continue on, with LPs out, respectively, on Unclean and No Lie, and the latter pursuing a punishing touring regimen. Scene godmothers Pork, however, just walked away from an unattractive major-label offer and are rumored to be cutting a single for Trance Syndicate.

All is not punk rock in Aus-town, however. There's also a healthy crop of non-candy pop bands playing the Hole In The Wall and **Electric Lounge** (302 Bowie, 476-FJSE), including the high-profile Sincola and Spoon, both of which rely on edgy songwriting, gnarled guitar logic, and unhealthy fascinations with the Pixies. Meanwhile, the veteran Wannabees have just released a fine new album, *Pop Sucker* (DejaDisc), and tour like madmen. Playing the same clubs is a clutch of twisted roots-rock bands formed by ex-punks, including grand raja Evan Johns and his genius guitar heroics, ex-

Hickoid Jeff Smith's two bands, the Gay Sportscasters and Wounded Turkey, and the swampy New York Dolls-isms of Blind Willie's Johnson.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Every Austin visitor should know about the two major food groups: Mexican and barbecue. Sadly, most Austin Mexican restaurants seem to suffer from delusions of haute cuisine. Fans of true Tex-Mex fare were saddened to discover from a recent TV news exposé that local favorite **Seis Salsas** (2004 S. 1st St.) had failed several Health Dept. inspections. Appropriately cheap and greasy are the three **Tamale Houses** (2218 College Ave., 2825 Guadalupe, 5003 Airport), where you can breakfast any time on a pair of hearty breakfast tacos and coffee for two dollars. Also popular is **El Azteca** (2600 E. 7th St.), home of processed-cheese-and-orange-grease-saturated Tex-Mex fare and



The ceiling of Emo's

PHOTOS © 1996 BRUCE DYE

gorgeous calendars featuring Frank Frazetta-styled Aztec women. Although fine barbecue can be had at **Ruby's** (512 W. 25th) or the **Green Mesquite** location at 1400 Barton Springs, there's really only one word in 'cue here: **Sam's** (2000 E. 12th). A plate of sausage, sliced brisket, pickles, onions, beans, potato salad and a bottle of Orange Crush can set you back a mere six bucks, and you can live off the heartburn for the next six days.

This being the sort of town where the official drink might as well be the smoothie, vegetarians are well-served by a rash of grainhead joints like **Acorn Cafe** (2602 Guadalupe) and **Martin Brothers** (2815 Guadalupe), while there's something for everyone at both locations of **Kerby Lane** (12602 Research, 2700 S. Lamar) and **Magnolia Cafe** (2304 Lake Austin Blvd., 1920 S. Congress), including 24-hour breakfasts and great coffee. Speaking of which, it seems as if you can't spit these days without hitting a coffee house on The Drag (the nickname for the stretch of Guadalupe immediately bordering the University of Texas campus). But if you must be seen smoking French cigarettes and drinking a double latte with your nose buried in a volume of Rimbaud, you could probably do worse than the front room of **Quackenbush's** (2120 Guadalupe), long-lived and notorious as the setting for a key scene in *Slacker*.

## MEDIA

After eons without a decent radio station, cable-only campus outlet **KVRX** and the world's first co-op radio station, **KOOP**, ceased their ten-year battle to gain control of the 91.7 frequency and began using it in tandem in the past year, KVRX switching over from cable in the evenings once KOOP ceases broadcasting its daytime programming. The result is a welcome relief from the blandola nature of Austin radio, with a programming mix as daring as any Pacifica outlet. Especially fun is KOOP's Saturday night show, "The Garage Show," in which a high-school German teacher and a local record shop owner blast voltage from across the ages and take a refreshingly unprofessional approach to interviewing bands.

The alternative weekly I write for, *The Austin Chronicle*, has seen some competition from *XL-Ent.*, a weekly supplement produced by major daily *The Austin American-Statesman*. Neither rag has been especially effective in covering the local underground rock scene, but then it's all a handful of young writers and editors can do to correct that, especially when local musicians supplement their grouching on the situation by taking a non-cooperative ideological stance. Then again, maybe underground music is better documented by underground press. Which would be fine, if the fanzine scene was as lively as it was even in the early part of last year. Fine holdouts include punkaholic efforts like *All The Rage* (John Lowe, 2810 Rio Grande #209, Austin, TX 78705), *Apathy, Drugs & Driving* (912-A W. Elizabeth, Austin, TX 78704) and the fun (and hardly weekly) *Geek Weekly* (Jennifer, 2002-A Guadalupe #292, Austin, TX 78705). Especially amazing is a pair of publications issued by an individual named Special Agent Jeremy Rootabaker, the diary-like *Boys In Trouble On The Interstate* and his weekly *Texas Show List*



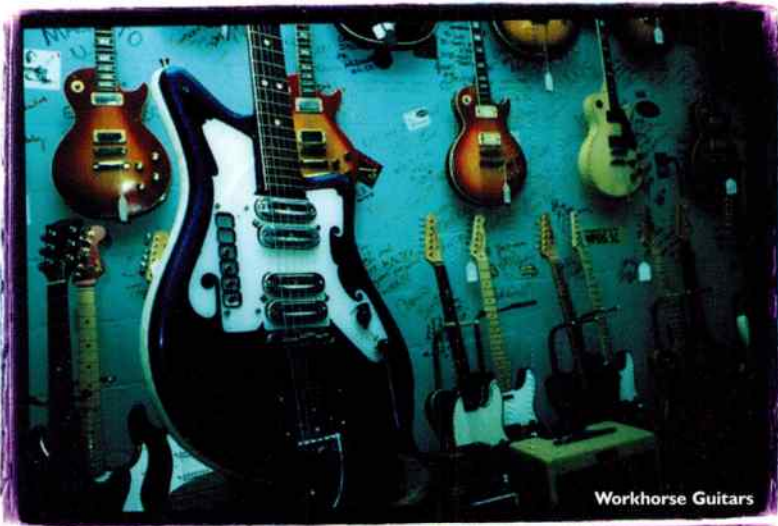
(both available from P.O. Box 8054, Austin, TX 78713-8054; send a dollar for *Boys*), a well-done two-pronged attack from a character known to do amazing things like drive around the state on little or no money just to personally distribute Austin punk rock singles.

## RETAIL

Too many vintage shops around here are too high-priced and based in the '70s leisure suit/elephant bells syndrome for my taste. Those who appreciate more of a '50s or '60s look could do worse than **Amelia's Retro-Vogue And Relics** (2024 S. Lamar), with a spiffy line in antique clothes and 45s and furnishings at fairly reasonable prices. Still, the last word in thrift shopping is **Thrift Town** (5726 Manchaca Rd.), where I've walked off with a week's wardrobe and an armload of ancient soul LPs for 30 bucks.

As for music, there's a clutch of homegrown record shops in operation, the grandma and grandpa of which are **Waterloo Records** (600 N. Lamar) and **Sound Exchange** (21st and Guadalupe), the latter of which is notorious for some of the most humorously grouchy clerks in town and an enormous wall of local singles. On the rise are **33 Degrees** (2821 San Jacinto), which seems to specialize in garage and experimental releases, and **Stashus Mule** (37th and Guadalupe), with a fairly priced clutch of used and collectible wares and a selection of possibly every waking moment R.E.M. have committed to tape.

Guitar hounds can find a ton of pawn shops to choose from, not to mention cool used shops like **Workhorse Guitars** (5531 Burnet) and **Black Market Music** (307 E. 5th), who have all manner of decently priced cool stringed things and can sell you a pack of strings for a buck. My vote for best guitar shop in town, however, goes to **South Austin Music** (1402 S. Lamar), possibly the only full-service music shop in the world neither run nor staffed by poodle-headed *Guitar World* readers and Stevie Ray wannabees, where you can actually get a banjo lesson from the Bad Livers' Danny Barnes and his pet Sam, the coolest dog to ever lie atop a guitar shop counter.



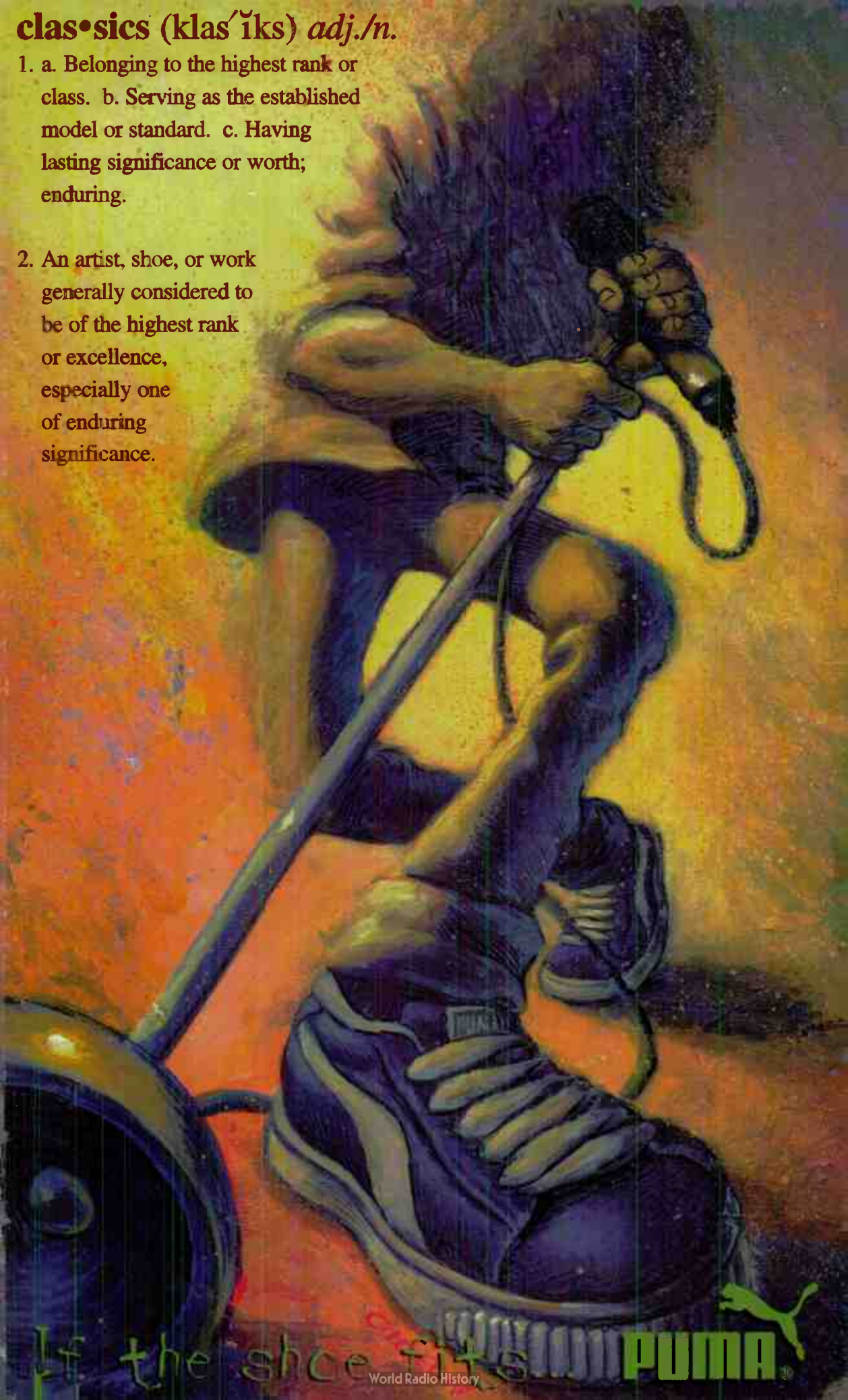
*Tim Stegall, when he's not writing for too many music magazines, can be found torturing his throat and slamming around his guitar for Austin punk rockers The Hormones, who've put out a few singles and plan to release their debut album this spring on Unclean Records.*



# 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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