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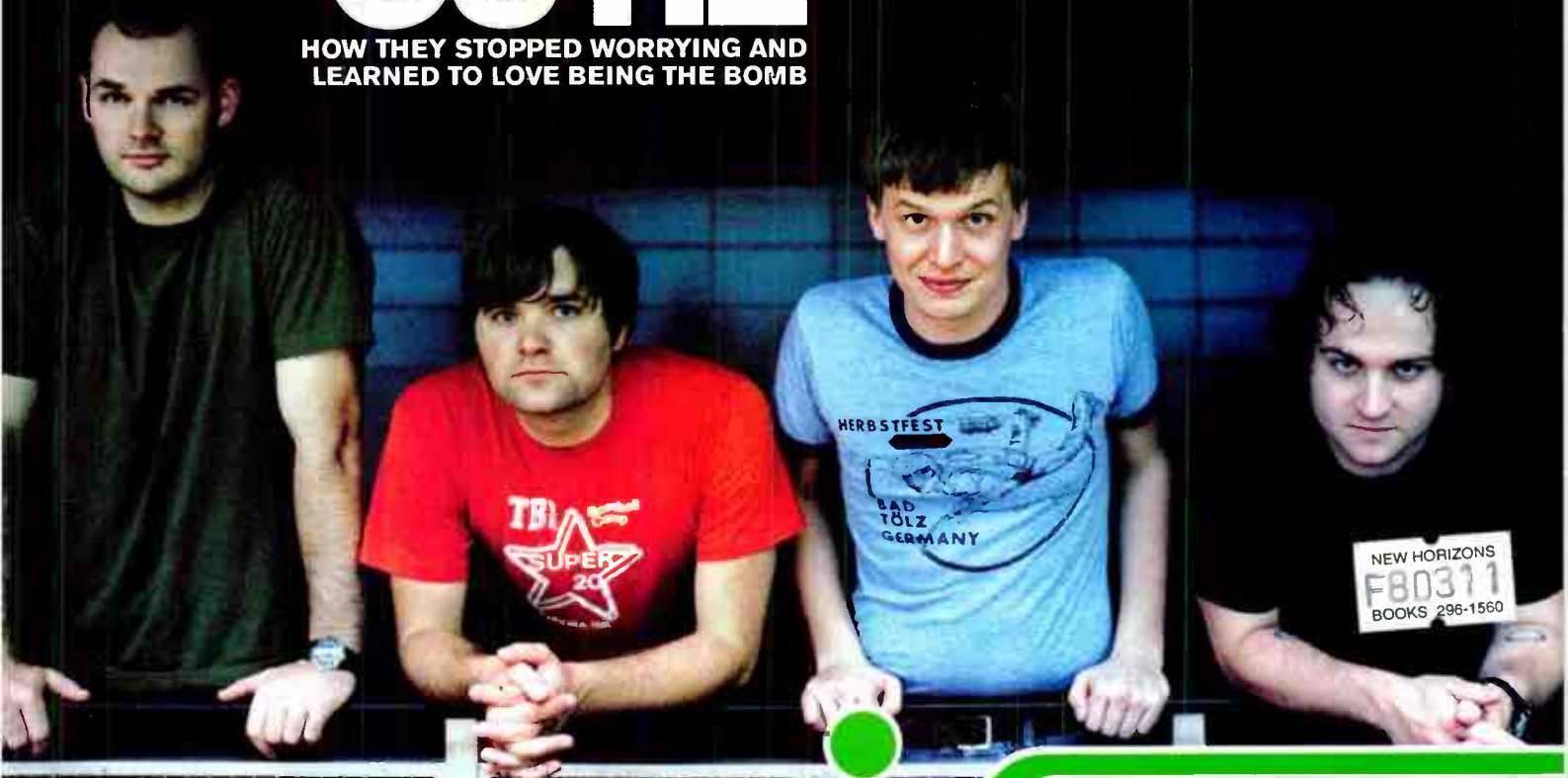
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MONTHLY

DEATH CAB **FOR** CUTIE

HOW THEY STOPPED WORRYING AND
LEARNED TO LOVE BEING THE BOMB

ATMOSPHERE
DON'T CALL ME EMO, WHINEY
THE FIRE THEFT
THE RAPTURE



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ISSUE NO. 118
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- METRIC
- LAKE TROUT
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- SUFJAN STEVENS
- AVENGED SEVENFOLD
- TV ON THE RADIO
- THE APPLESEED CAST
- ERASE ERRATA
- ALEXI MURDOCH

The Distillers. Belle And Sebastian speak. Buddyhead's Hollywood hang. The Macho Man: Oh yeah!



Hono, Kona	trick guide	wake boarding	rock & roll	skate
Hawaii	behind the scenes	interviews	sydney	motocross
honey	backstage	santa monica	aspen	surfing
aspen	music videos	hilo	hawaii	snowboarding
hawaii	base jumping	hono	base jumping	audio/video
santa monica	wind surfing	metal	wind surfing	hawaii
switzerland	sky diving	acid rock	backstage	hip hop
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NEW MUSIC[®]



ON THE VERGE



ATMOSPHERE



DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE 46

Ah, sweet indie-rock guilt. It's way cooler to tour in a broken van and sleep on a dirty floor, right? Death Cab For Cutie says eff that. They've grown as mature as the sound on their fourth LP, *Transatlanticism*, and are trading up to buses and beds—and if that's wrong, baby, they don't wanna be right. They'd also like you to kindly shut up about Jawbox, please. Kara Zuaro gets on the bus.

THE FIRE THEFT 38

With Sunny Day Real Estate, Jeremy Enigk hid behind a wall of words, his cryptic lyrics giving nothing away, and his lack of interviews giving away even less. Now a few years older and more comfortable in his own skin, three-quarters of Sunny Day is laying it bare as the Fire Theft. Arye Dworken takes fire to the people.

THE RAPTURE 40

The Rapture put out one barnburning 12-inch and a runaway hit EP before retreating to the shadows to craft their masterpiece. In the two-year wait, every band in Brooklyn jacked their sound. With *Echnes*, Brooklyn awaits the return of the kings. Yancey Strickler enters the house of jealous hipsters.

ATMOSPHERE 42

Atmosphere's brand of hip-hop is more sting-sting than bling-bling, and after bringing his confessional style to Epitaph, he's preparing to flay himself on the world stage. Richard M. Juzwiak brings the Band-Aids.

ON THE VERGE 19

Sign our yearbook with the class of 2003: Sufjan Stevens, TV On The Radio, the Stills, Avenged Sevenfold, Erase Errata, the Applesseed Cast, Metric, Okkervil River, Lake Trout, Alexi Murdoch.

ON THE CD 35

Death Cab For Cutie, the Strokes, Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros, the Stills, Wheat, To My Surprise, Belle And Sebastian, Paul Westerberg, Cassandra Wilson, Dido, Hey Mercedes, the Finger, Avenged Sevenfold, the Twilight Singers, the Applesseed Cast, Armsbendback, Mates Of State, Serj Tankian, Audra Kubat, Los Lonely Boys, Cerveris.

QUICK FIX 10

Macho Man Randy Savage snaps into the rap game, the Distillers bite you with a *Coral Fang*, Primus' Les Claypool's house is the shit(ter), the Charlatans' Tim Burgess pulls a solo caper, Belle And Sebastian blow their (Trevor) Horn, five records that make April March's Elinor Blake say *oui*, and Her Space Holiday's Marc Bianchi thinks you're an asshole, asshole.

LOCALZINE 52

Buddyhead's Travis Keller has a skelter in Hollywood, California.

GEEK LOVE 82

Sushirobot's Rick Roberts feels a Rush of blood to the head.

BEST NEW MUSIC 54

REVIEWS 58

CMJ BIZ 81

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DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE (COVER AND THIS PAGE): DREW GOREN; ATMOSPHERE: SETH KUSHNER

Yo, where the cheese go at?

Dudes, I was just noticing that *the* favorite part of the *CMJ New Music Monthly* issues has been shockingly removed recently: the snappy and biting Editor's response to the reader's letters! What the heck, man? That was the best. Plus it was a great way for all you kooks to bone up on your chops. Did I miss something? Was there a bomb threat at the office? Was it just too darn controversial? Whatever the reason, please try and get back to responding to them, even if you have to tone it down a bit.

hugonaut@earthlink.net

A joke that needs to be explained isn't a joke, you know? Too often, we'd get letters and e-mails from people who didn't enjoy or understand the style of the responses. "You have a whole magazine to express your opinion" was the usual complaint, like we were being bullies by what we thought was mocking the false egalitarianism of most magazine letters to the editor sections. But when your main point is to skewer the importance of opinion, you have to accept that not everyone is going to go along with you, and after a while, we—or rather, I—just couldn't accept that so easily anymore. If people aren't getting it, it's not the readers' fault, it's the magazine's. —ed.

Serious about music... and ellipses

Hey whats up. Okay recently you guys gave a review of the Murs new album [March, 2003]... *the end of the beginning...* okay you guys need to fire the guy who wrote that review... your mag is *College Music Journal* right? Honestly, is the guy who wrote the review even in college... or a 40 yr old drop out who listens to music on the side ... and makes a few extra bucks writing for you guys... basically he said the Murs album copied to many different styles... it sounded to me like he was trying to say that people who listen to hip-hop only listen to one specific type of hip hop... "basically either you are a thug or you are a backpacker... or you are a skateboarder... or you like bitches and hoes..... but there is no way that you can like all of this in one persona." Your writer completely offended me... as a person who likes

all styles... also have you looked on your *CMJ* top ten hip hop albums... Murs is number one.... please invest more time in who u let review albums.... has this writer even heard the sampler that was handed out months ago... remember this writer and that review when you have to send someone to suck Murs's dick when you ask him to be on the cover of *CMJ*. Okay sorry if that was offensive... but I take my music pretty serious... other than that ... um keep up the good work...

Marlon
acidjaz@yahoo.com

Christopher R. Weingarten, 16 years shy of 40, responds: Weird. My intention actually was to paint Murs as a multifaceted guy. But I will suck Murs' dick if you think it would make for an interesting cover story.

Fine and Dandy

I have an idea for an article. I think it is time you give us all some information about your music "reviewers." Why should we trust these people? For example... What does *CMJ* require from a "reviewer" before they can get that job? How many times are they required to listen to albums before reviewing them? It seems they are often more interested in hearing their eloquent selves juggle adjectives around and getting their words printed than accurately pegging/describing an album for *CMJ* readers. To wrap up—and point to the cause of this note—I'd like to say whoever the person is who reviewed Dandy Warhols *Welcome To The Monkey House* needs to listen to it again. It's a great album from a band that works too hard for too little reward.

Reid
Yokohama, Japan
Been with *CMJ* since issue #8

Been caught keggering

If a beer keg sounds better than the new Jane's Addiction CD, why would you include a song from that same CD on the August Disc? Just curious.

Nathan Duin
St. Paul, Minnesota

Because beer kegs are too hard to mail.
—ed.

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The Bomb Squad



Elcodrive



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relax to paris



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3 remaining Finalists are entering the final round of Competition. On 10/23/03, they'll compete at the Knitting Factory during the CMJ Music Marathon in NYC. Only one deserving unsigned act will win the chance to perform LIVE on the AMAs, 11/16/03 on ABC-TV, 8:00p.m. (ET/PT).

WHICH FINALIST DO YOU THINK SHOULD WIN?

Elcodrive relax to paris The Bomb Squad

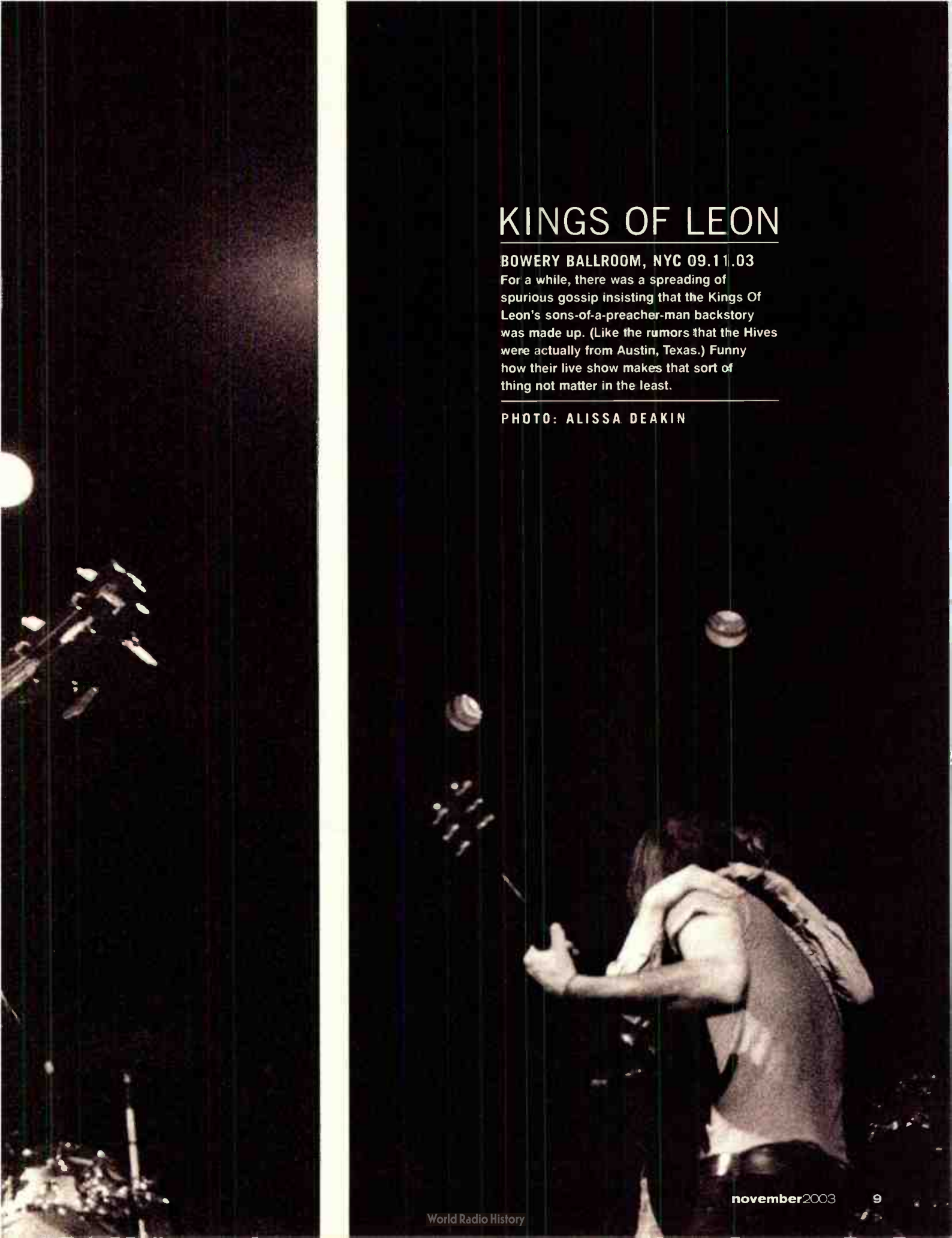
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KINGS OF LEON

BOWERY BALLROOM, NYC 09.11.03

For a while, there was a spreading of spurious gossip insisting that the Kings Of Leon's sons-of-a-preacher-man backstory was made up. (Like the rumors that the Hives were actually from Austin, Texas.) Funny how their live show makes that sort of thing not matter in the least.

PHOTO: ALISSA DEAKIN



WEIRD RECORD

The Ignoble Savage

Now that the smoke has cleared from the Nas/Jay-Z, KRS-One/Nelly and Hatfield/McCoy feuds, a nation desperately searches to fill the old-fashioned diss-war void. Who better than skills for Slim Jims and 10-10-220? Reheat some 15-year-old beef with Macho Man Randy Savage's *Be A Man* (Big 3), in which he snaps into his old nemesis Hulk Hogan with a fervor your dad usually reserves for griping about the government, dropping his signature "Ooooooh yeaaaaahh!" more often than dog barks on a DMX record. He cops lyrics from Ice Cube's "No Vaseline" ("Hot diggity damn Hulk, I'm glad you set it off/ Used to be hard Hulk now ya done turned soft") and drops assurances that he's still Savage-from-the-block ("Ya'll remember me from back in the day/ The wrestling O.G., Randy Savage don't play"), with a surprisingly tight flow. Well, surprisingly tight for a middle-aged, musclebound beef jerky salesman with an audible constipation problem. >>>TOM MALLON

11.01.93 Flavor Flav allegedly tries to shoot someone; he's arrested and charged with attempted murder. **11.03.88** U2's *Rattle And Hum* movie is released; they are charged with releasing self-indulgent, bloated crap. **11.05.98** Ol' Dirty Bastard threatens to kill a former girlfriend and is arrested. **11.11.69** Jim Morrison gets arrested for drunkenly causin' a ruckus on an international flight. **11.12.87** At his comeback concert, Sly Stone gets arrested for skippin' out on child support. **11.14.70** Santana releases "Black Magic Woman"; he remains at large. **11.19.01** Scott Weiland gets arrested after a domestic dispute at a Hard Rock Café hotel. **11.21.80** After paramedics find an intoxicated, naked 16-year-old girl at his house, Don Henley gets arrested and charged with a whole shitload of stuff. **11.21.95** Billie Joe Armstrong drops trou at a Milwaukee concert and is, consequently, arrested. **11.23.76** Jerry Lee Lewis shows up at Graceland waving a gun and demanding audience with the King... twice. He is subsequently blah blah blah... **11.29.76** Jerry Lee goes for the double shot, literally, when he accidentally caps his bass player twice in the chest during soda-bottle-shooting hijinks. You guessed it... arrested.

FAKEBOOK

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

Zagat's Music Guide

"Opinions are like assholes" in this "bullshit" guide to "the 1,000 top albums of all time."

Stereophonics fire drummer

U.S. audiences fail to notice—that the band even exists.

The Strokes, *Room On Fire*

All you who complained that this band was a bunch of rich kids who went mainstream finally get what you wanted: The recording sounds like hell, just like rich indie kids'.

The National, *Sad Songs For Dirty Lovers*

"90-Mile Water Wall": The best "You're a piece of shit but I love you anyway" song in years.

Mötley Crüe, *Music To Crash Your Car To* box set

"Hey, guys, won't it be funny to make the title a reference to when Vince Neil killed a guy?"

Ryan Adams, *Rock N Roll*

Where he makes a convincing Smiths song and other displays of reckless talent sure to endear, confuse and rankle.

Great White drummer survives head-on car crash

Having thwarted death's design, they're now being picked off one by one by the dude from *Candyman*.

Now That's What I Call Music Vol 14

At least it's gaining on the *New Wave Hookers* series.

Billy Ray Cyrus' *The Other Side*

The one apparently hidden by the ape-drape mullet

Britney Spears, "Me Against The Music"

A conflict established long ago (this burn brought to you by the National Fish Barrel Shooting Council).

NEWSFEED: Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Karen O to do a track with Har Mar Superstar, in between writing songs for the second YYYs album • Interpol to start work on their sophomore album after



THE DISTILLERS' BRODY DALLE ON...

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND THE SINGLE WOMAN

I'm not really educated or well-versed in economics or politics and wouldn't be able to sit down and have a serious conversation about what's wrong with the world. But what I see on the news and read in newspapers and see from other people's stories are gonna come out of me. My music's more about injustice than real politics. I'm not a victim and I ain't no martyr, but I've been really candid in the past and it's kind of bitten me on my ass. That's not the reason I changed lyrically, but I didn't want to be so specific with certain subjects this time.

SISTERS IN ROCK

I love Shirley Manson to death, but one of my favorite women in rock these days is Karen O from the Yeah Yeah Yeahs because she's just this hilarious mix of Bettie Boop and Phyllis Diller. I love her and think she's totally great onstage and in person.

STIMULATION, PT. 1: DYING FOR IT

I still have a desire to go back to academia and learn more just to keep growing as a person. People die when they're not stimulated or maybe

they end up on skid row smoking crack for the rest of their lives because the human condition requires constant stimulation.

STIMULATION, PT. 2: GETTING IT ON TOUR

CMJ: So who all has been stimulating you on this tour?

DALLE: [pause, followed by violent laughter]

DRUMMER ANDY OUTBREAK: [also laughing] That's kind of a loaded question.

DALLE: [still laughing too hard to speak, begging off]

OUTBREAK: Well, I've got these giant butt beads... they've been stimulating me for, like, the whole tour. I go with the 12 gauge, it's like an apple, or a baby's arm.

When she wasn't teasing Lollapalooza crowds with selections from the Gil Norton-produced *Coral Fang*, Distillers frontwoman Brody Dalle (formerly *Armstrong*) spent most of this summer on the arm of Queens Of The Stone Age dude Josh Homme. Just saying.

Interview by Chad Swiatecki.



Tough Love

Her Space Holiday

Marc Bianchi knows a thing or two about heartbreak—he once released a record called *Home Is Where You Hang Yourself*, for chrissakes. His new *The Young Machines* turns down the symphonic leanings of last year's *Manic Expressive* and turns up the signature clicky-beat weirdness of his new label, Mush, but retains all that endearingly sappy miserablism. *It's for your own good: lovelorn@cmj.com*

My girlfriend is a fucking asshole. She was not, however, a fucking asshole when we moved in together eight months ago. Is there a pill or potion, perhaps even a tea or self-help class that might cure her fucking assholiness? Because to be quite honest, this apartment is sweet and the rent is ideal.

—Jarrod, San Francisco, California

Man, I feel your pain. I've been in this same situation: You meet, fall in love, start spending every night together. One morning, you roll over, stroke her cheek and say, "This is nice, poodle. I wish I could wake up to your beautiful face every morning." And then slowly but surely, things start falling apart. Now she constantly bitches and moans about how messy you are... What's a little piss on the bathroom floor? It will dry. And so will her tears. I mean she should feel



honored that she can work all day and come home to you passed out on the couch with your hands in your pants and a pile of dishes in the sink. The good news is, there is in fact a cure for her dickishness, and that is you moving out. The change her new boyfriend will experience will be remarkable. I think you meant to start your letter with "my girlfriend is fucking an asshole." Good luck and keep us posted.

Last night, I was at this party, and Steve from *Blue's Clues* was there. Thing is he's kinda hot when he doesn't have on that striped shirt and isn't talking to a cartoon dog. I was making eyes at him and stuff but I felt uncomfortable striking up a conversation since I was drunk and I knew I'd say something like, "Hey, so can we do it on your thinking chair?" Maybe I should e-mail him. What do you think?

—Tracey, Bronx, N.Y.

You are a sick sick girl. I think you need to sit back and look at your motivation. Is it Steve that you're really turned on by, or is it by the show itself? I myself have also been swept up in the presence of megastars before. It's really intoxicating thinking about what could be, you know? One minute you're living a normal life, and the next you're sitting around the table at some fancy restaurant sipping juice boxes with Babar and the original cast of the *Great Space Coaster*. And the sex! Think of laying there in a king-size racecar bed, with only the dim warmth of a clown nightlight illuminating the room... while the sweet sounds of Raffi's new album pumps out of his "my first boom box" radio. It's enough to make you bite your lip in two. But none of that is real, these icons of the media are just people like you and I. Sad, lonely, suicidal people. Look past the power and the fame and settle down with the boy next door. It's your best bet.

Love, Marc

The Coral are already at work on their third album, before their second has even been released in America • Coldplay's *Live 2003* DVD/CD to include "See You Soon," a "lost" song only previously

IN MY ROOM

Who: Les Claypool of Primus

Where: His Rancho Relaxo in Northern California

Why: Les and his pioneering oddball avant-thrash band Primus is back for another round—polyrhythmic drum octopus Tim Alexander back in tow—with their prog-ariffic *Discipline-arian* new EP/DVD combo *Animals Should Not Try To Act Like People* (Interscope).



LES AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR CRAPPERS

I have several different colored toilets. The house is like a time capsule from the '70s. I have a lime green toilet which looks like Kermit The Frog, I have a blue toilet, of course, your standard white toilet, a beige toilet and a brown toilet. The time green one's my favorite—I just love showing people that toilet.

HEY, NICE ORGAN

My Lowery home organ belonged to a friend of mine's grandfather, and he traded it to me for a set of golf clubs. It has a built-in Leslie and built-in reverb. Of course it has the old bossa nova drum machine and all that stuff in it. The thing sounds amazing, so I've got it set up in the main room of my house underneath this neon sign that some fan made me that says "Rancho Relaxo." It'll be on the next record, I'm sure.

TILE AND ERROR

My house is a tribute to the '70s. There's so much tile in my house. I have orange tile on the kitchen countertops, yellow tile on the floor, blue tile in the bathroom—it's all bright '70s. When I moved in, my friends were like, "When are you gonna remodel this place?" Pfft, I'm *never* remodeling this place.

Interview by Christopher R. Weingarten.

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ZEN ARCADE

MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES
(MIDWAY FOR XBOX, PS2, GAMECUBE)

Argument: Video games were better way back when. Sure, no one would let you shoot a hooker in the '80s, but there was no motion sickness-inducing 3D, ridiculously intricate puzzles or controllers the size of a NORAD command desk, either. Revisit the simple joys of one-button joysticks and 2D, single-level games with the 22 old-school classics on *Midway Arcade Treasures*. It's all here: the anti-social window-breaking joy of *Paperboy*, the vehicular destruction of *Roadblasters*, the masochistic, why-am-I-doing-this torture session of *Marble Madness*. There's no stacked heroines here, but in the two hours you spend solving a single level of *Tomb Raider*, you could destroy the entire country in *Rampage*. Besides, you look at too many digitized boobs as it is. >>>TOM MALLON

THE MIX

TITLE: Enough To Frighten My Love... But I Don't Have Any Love

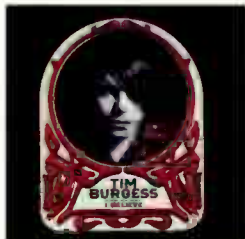
MADE BY: indiesock (a.k.a. Christopher Petro of Santa Maria, California)

1. **Allen Ginsberg**
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2. **Tom Waits**
The Fall Of Troy
3. **Breeders**
Happiness Is A Warm Gun
4. **The Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy**
Television, The Drug Of The Nation
5. **Gil Scott-Heron**
The Revolution Will Not Be Televised
6. **Beck**
Hollow Log
7. **Jeff Buckley**
Hallelujah
8. **The Kingston Trio**
Green Back Dollar
9. **Memphis Slim**
Beer Drinking Woman
10. **Pavement**
Here
11. **Rod McKuen**
Jean
12. **Jimmy Cliff**
Johnny Too Bad
13. **Kraftwerk**
Ruckzuck
14. **Charles Bukowski**
A Little Atomic Bomb
15. **Julie Doiron**
Oh These Walls

Conceptual continuity... who needs it? Get scattered in the Mix forum at www.cmj.com.

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TIM BURGESS *I Believe* (Straight Trippin'—[PIAS])

What it is: Charlatans U.K. frontman Burgess basks in the sunshine of his adopted Californian home, releasing his eclectic first solo disc.

Why you want it: No, the Charlatans aren't breaking up, but the Manchester-based band does face the challenge of collaborating with a singer who's relocated to L.A. (And, apparently, left some of his Englishness behind.) Of course, *I Believe* unavoidably bears the Charlatans mark—especially in Burgess' liberal use of the falsetto he perfected on the band's last album, *Wonderland*, on tracks like "I Believe In The Spirit"

and "Be My Baby"—but at the same time, with their country twang, funk and soul interludes, and generally sunny dispositions, these are songs that could only have been born from a lengthy West Coast incubation. And whatever culture he's embracing, if Tim Burgess is anywhere near as happy as he sounds on the immensely uplifting "Oh My Corazon" (yes, even the Spanish is seeping in), then surely his days in the sun aren't likely to end anytime soon. >>>DOUG LEVY

LINK: www.timburgess.info

R.I.Y.L.: Charlatans U.K., the Thrills, Richard Ashcroft

released on their out-of-print *The Blue Room* EP • **The Chemical Brothers** are recording their fifth record, for 2004 release • **Sonic Youth, the Liars, the Locust** and more have joined together as Bands Against Bush, to



BY VINCENT G. CURRY

Putting his sad-sack face to perfect use, William H. Macy stars in/as **The Cooler**, a guy whose luck is so bad, he “cools” the luck of others. Alec Baldwin plays the boss of a fading casino, who uses Macy’s Schleprock powers to change the fortunes of successful gamblers. When Macy wants to leave, Baldwin sends the showgirl he’s got a crush on (Maria Bello) to get him to stay. Unfortunately, she actually falls for him, which makes him happy, so his luck improves, which then makes the gamblers lucky and Baldwin pissed. Now **this screams comedy, but it apparently screamed this to everyone but the director**, who instead created a dull melodrama about losers and the “corruption” of Vegas by its recent family-friendly conversion (tell that to the people buried in the desert). Oh, and you’re forced to see Maria Bello cup Macy’s ball sac... ♦♦♦ Remember that scene in *Boogie Nights* when Dirk Diggler tries to rob the drug dealer? Well, like a lot of that film, **it was based on a real event in the life of porn star John C. Holmes**, only in real life the robbery succeeded and led to four people being brutally murdered with Holmes at the center of it all. This is the story of **Wonderland**. Like most good actors, the weirder the character, the better Val Kilmer is, and he shines here as John Holmes. He’s supported by an all-star cast (Lisa Kudrow, Kate Bosworth, Josh Lucas, Tim Blake Nelson, Carrie Fisher, Eric Bogosian, Dylan McDermott, Christina Applegate), mostly playing lowlifes, but in the end it comes down to Kilmer, whose performance was so uncanny it disturbed Holmes’ real-life wife. The direction is initially too stylized, but finally settles down into a nice piece of L.A. noir. My only complaint: The Liberace connection is left out.

For more rants, go to www.angrygeek.com.

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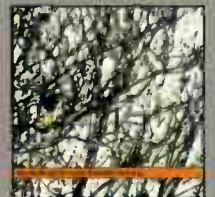
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BELLE AND SEBASTIAN ON...

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DRUMMER RICHARD COLBURN: We were ready to do an album, so we had three or four producers in mind. For a fifth, just for a giggle, we said, 'Oh, we'll pitch Trevor.' And he was the only one who ended up responding to any of it. He came up to Glasgow to hear us rehearse a few times, just to get a rough idea of what we're all about. I think at first maybe he had a plan in his head to record us one way, and then when he actually met us and he saw the way we work, he probably had to radically change it.

TODD SOLONCZ CUTTING HALF THEIR MUSIC FOR STORYTELLING

VIOLINIST SARAH MARTIN: We actually put a lot of work into it before it turned out a little differently—six minutes of our music in the film. We'd all written quite a lot of instrumentals and songs, and we'd recorded everything, and we played it to Todd and he would pick what he wanted for the film. So I think we sort of felt that we could do things jus-

tice by actually finishing them off and releasing it as our own album.

COMPLAINTS THAT TOO MANY BANDMEMBERS WRITE SONGS

SINGER/GUITARIST STUART MURDOCH: I don't really care. I know for a fact that it's been a tremendously positive thing. I'm not in this band for the fans; I'm especially not in the band for the critics or the record company. The band makes records because we like to do it and we must do it and we're interested in pleasing ourselves. This might sound harsh, but it's true: If we can't develop and try things out and have a bit of fun, then there's no point in doing it.

Interview by Mikael Wood.

Belle And Sebastian can be heard courting graying Buggles fans and teenaged lesbians on their new Dear Catastrophe Waitress (Rough Trade).

MARISA PRIWITERA

administration," planning concerts and voter-awareness events; meanwhile, **Tom Morello**, **Billy Bragg** and **Steve Earle** are planning the Tell Us The Truth tour for election season next year... * * * * *



5 SPOT

FIVE RECORDS THAT TRIGGER APRIL MARCH'S ELINOR BLAKE

1. Leo Ferre, "La Solitude"

A hard, heavy and elegant French spoken-word classic featuring Zoo—one of the best French backing bands ever.

2. Bee And Flower, *What's Mine Is Yours*

I love atmospheric music that suggests a place but not necessarily a specific time. This

is a great example of that: an ancient wide-open California scape fused with cramped New York City. The songwriting is beautiful and Dana Schecter has a great naked-style vocal delivery.

3. Warren Zanes, *Memory Girls*

Pure pop class. Lyrics are key to my being won over by any piece of pop music. I'm still mourning Mick Jagger's lyrical genius pre-*Some Girls*. Warren has all the lyrical chops and a firm but not too predictable grip on the reins of classic pop songwriting.

4. Toby Dammit, *Top Dollar*

A percussion album which truly delivers pathos, elegance, hysteria and melody to boot. This would have been one of [Serge] Gainsbourg's favorite motoring albums.

5. The Blasco Ballroom, *Film*

The soothing Sunday morning album is a tough category. For me it's been mostly inhabited lately by Dashiell Hedayat, Vashti Bunyan or Francois de Roubaix. Blasco slides right in there with this killer album. It's mellow but far from meek and loaded with atmosphere.

Find further pure pop class on April March's Triggers ([PIAS] America).

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David Dondero | *THE TRANSIENT*

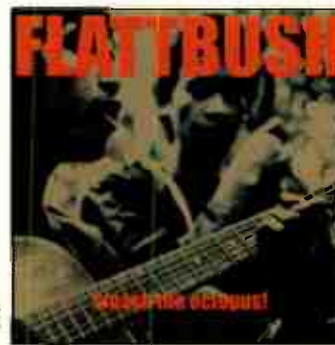
"An eloquent, endearing, and memorable record" - CMJ
"David Dondero is in a class of crazies only available in the U.S." - La Opinión de Magala/Spain



Oranger | *SHUTDOWN THE SUN*

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Jackpine



Flattbush | *SMASH THE OCTOPUS*

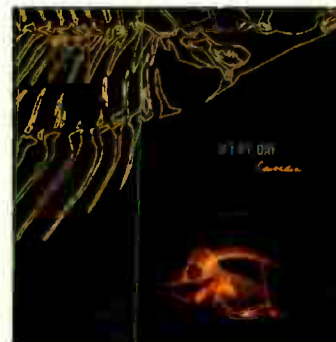
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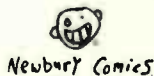
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ON THE VERGE

Sufjan Stevens	20
TV On The Radio	21
The Stills	24
Avenged Sevenfold	25
Erase Errata	26
The Appleseed Cast	27
Metric	28
Okkervil River	30
Lake Trout	32
Alexi Murdoch	33

NEVER TRUST ANYONE WHO TELLS YOU THEY KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.
THE 10 BANDS HERE ARE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN WHO WE THINK IS GOING TO MAKE THE LEAP
SOMETIME SOON, AND THOSE WE WANT TO. BECAUSE YOU KNOW, MUSIC IS LIKE THAT.



SUFJAN STEVENS

The problem with creating a multi-layered masterpiece is that some day, someone's going to ask you to play it. Sufjan Stevens learned that the hard way with *Michigan* (Sounds Familyre/Asthmatic Kitty), a songwriter's dream bursting with vibraphones, oboes, clarinets and basically anything Stevens could strum or hit with a stick—he's credited with over 20 instruments. Unfortunately, Brooklyn's answer to Badly Drawn Boy made an album so good that it's damn near impossible to recreate live. "I can hardly perform [the songs myself]," Stevens says. The part-time Danielson Famile member decided to go for simplicity, assembling a band of friends—the ever-expanding, uniform-bedecked Michigan Militia Band And Choir—and skipping *Michigan's* hardest tracks

altogether. "My band is made up of unskilled musicians... none of them are really trained. I actually wrote a lot of new material for the live show, it's much simpler. Some of my recordings get a little too... involved." Finishing what he's started with his home state may prove harder still—he intends one album for each state. "I know it's a ridiculous project, I don't think I'll finish it," he admits. "It'll take years and I'll be in my 70s." He's determined to try though, drafting more friends if need be. "I might collaborate with bands from those states, get them to write half the material. I'm working on Rhode Island right now, and I've been calling everyone I know who lives there." He trails off, considering the enormity of the task, and laughs. "It's probably not realistic at all." >>>TOM MALLON



The '80s-throwback wasteland of Williamsburg, Brooklyn is the last place you'd expect someone to concoct a completely fresh take on pop music. But that's exactly where TV On The Radio created their stunning, near-unclassifiable *Young Liars* EP (Touch And Go). Picture the Ink Spots manning a bank of samplers, Peter Gabriel fronting the Beta Band, or the Pixies forced to make due as a futurist doo-wop group and you're getting close. Vocalist Tunde Adebimpe and music man David Andrew Sitek (producer for the 'Burg's other great band, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs) have taken a long road to get there though, starting off as a lo-fi four-track project and taking a mercifully brief but educational stop as a live improv-with-audience-participation act. "We'd have a few things programmed and I would have no lyrics at all, so I would ask someone for a song topic," Adebimpe says. "One time we made a song about plaid—just the pattern, plaid. We [finished] and I was like, 'This is just ridiculous.'" The live band has now grown into a five-man electro-organic hybrid, and please don't try to jump onstage—improv is out of the question. "It started to get a little too... too free. You don't wanna turn into a jam band. Especially a jam band that's taking opinions from a thoroughly inebriated crowd. We had shows where at the end, it would just be some 40-year-old guy freestyling over some other guy who had come up and decided to drum," Adebimpe says. "We wouldn't even be onstage, we'd just be staring. Like, this is TV On The Radio!" —TOM MALLON

TV ON THE RADIO

Fall 2003

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THE STILLS

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 

Iron Maiden, Metallica, Pantera..." Oddly enough, Stills drummer Dave Hamelin is describing the sound of his first band with frontman Tim Fletcher. Of course, this was nearly a decade ago, well before the two formed the group that's rapidly gaining a reputation for broodingly melodic songs that would make Morrissey and Bono proud. But while the Stills' debut album, *Logic Will Break Your Heart* (Vice), is full of introspective and heartfelt multi-layered tracks like "Gender Bombs" and "Still In Love Song," it was actually metal that brought together the songwriting half of the Montreal-based quartet. And a girl. (There's always a girl.) "There was this girl, Jen, that I went to school with," explains Hamelin. "She went to a grad—like a prom—with this

guy who ditched her there. So she ended up hanging out with this other guy, Peter, who was Tim's best friend. Peter was into metal, and I was into metal. I met Pete through her, and then through Pete, I met Tim, and we started a band." A band called Amentum, no less. And there's more: "The metal band took on different incarnations," says Fletcher. "We got into different kinds of music. Pete went off and did his own thing, but we stuck together. And then, 10 years later, that same girl went out with Greg [Paquet], our guitar player. And that's how we met him. Ten years later." *Quelle coincidence!* (Hey, the band is mostly French Canadian.) As for Amentum, we're told recordings do exist. "And you're never going to hear them," says Fletcher, with a grin. "Ever." >>>DOUG LEVY

PETER SUTHERLAND

Whenever someone asks us what kind of music we play, we just say 'heavy metal,' because it's easier," Avenged Sevenfold frontman M. Shadows says of influences that range from Iron Maiden to Metallica, Guns N' Roses, Pantera, Bad Religion and NOFX. The result of such hard-and-heavy eclecticism is the quintet's second full-length, *Waking The Fallen* (Hopeless), a volatile fusion of punk melody and metal intensity that'll spin your head around like a barn owl's. Combining unpredictable rhythm shifts, melodic hurricanes and abrupt vocal turns, Avenged Sevenfold manages to appeal to metalheads, hardcore kids, punk rockers and even nü-metal fans. "It's not like we try to do that, it just happens," Shadows says. While the band's music has attracted a variety of followers, they've also found their share of haters along the road to recognition. "As soon as we started selling a certain amount

of albums, all the hardcore kids hated us," Shadows reveals. "If you like us, you can be anything you want, but if you don't like us, then that's fine, just don't complain about it." As a band that would fit comfortably on both the Warped tour and Ozzfest stages, all Avenged Sevenfold want to do is spread their music beyond the borders of Orange County. "We've always carried ourselves as a band that was going to do better things. We didn't make this band to impress you. We do this for ourselves." —TRACY JOHN

AVENGED SEVENFOLD



LISA JOHNSON



When not barking bratty vocals with Erase Errata, Jenny Hoyston gets her hands up “The Nastiest People In The World.” It’s for her solo Punch And Judy sideshow called *Paradise Island*, soundtracked by her own home recordings and featuring “a couple of terrifying-looking puppets who say all the bad things that I never would,” Hoyston cheerfully explains. But she hasn’t always been the bold soul seen fronting Erase Errata, the Bay Area band whose penchant for improvisation has had them pegged as a no wave-y, distaff Dog Faced

Hermans. In high school, she sighs, she was “a total nerd. And being a lead singer with no guitar in front of you? It took a lot of work to get my nerve up. Two of the first five shows Erase Errata had, I got chest pains in the middle of the show from being so nervous and I had to lay down on the stage, like, ‘I’m gonna die if I don’t collapse right now!’ So I’d lay my dead body down and remain motionless until I got my breath back—people probably thought it was part of the act.” Subsequently, Hoyston, who’s also formed a side project with Sonic Youth’s Kim Gordon called *Anxious Rats*, arrived at a perfectly unusual recording technique. Either at home with her four-track or in the studio tracking *At Crystal Palace* (Troubleman), she confesses, “I sing better kneeling. I always feel more grounded and focused that way, maybe because more of my legs are touching the actual ground. That would create a grounding effect, wouldn’t it?” >>>TOM LANHAM

ERASE ERRATA

THE APPLESEED CAST

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 

Comparisons to Thom Yorke bounce right off the Appleseed Cast's frontman Christopher Crisci. "It's kind of absurd, really. It's flattering as hell, but I don't see it," he says modestly before launching into a monologue about the differences between his band and the British kings of angst. But one critic saw it, and the mention of the Appleseed Cast as "America's answer to Radiohead," though a stretch, has only helped to gain the Lawrence, Kansas quintet a lot of attention. After their last albums, the meandering, mellow *Low Level Owl: Volume 1* and 2, they opened for Jimmy Eat World. Crisci admits that warming up the audience was hard; they had to combat both the different sound dynamics of big venues and their lack of a following among the teenage set. "You're playing to 5000 kids and 100 of them have heard of

you before, I really couldn't judge the crowd, couldn't tell if they were into it." The impact of this year's tour in support of their new disc, *Two Conversations* (Tiger Style) has been less ambiguous. "The turnout has been incredible," Crisci enthuses. "Every tour has always been better than the one before it." This growing success is also due to the mood of the new record: upbeat and melodic, driven by keyboards as well as the group's charging, intertwined guitar lines and vocals. "We wanted to make a simple straight-ahead rock record, 10 songs under four minutes each," Crisci says. Not exactly *Kid A* stuff, but that teenage set might come calling after all. >>>JESSICA HILBERMAN





All we get is dead disco, dead funk, dead rock 'n' roll, remodeled," croons Metric singer Emily Haines on "Dead Disco." Without full knowledge of her skill, Haines might seem a cynical scenester taking potshots. Fortunately for Metric, "dead" is grossly inappropriate: The Los Angeles-based quartet's full-length debut, *Old World Underground, Where Are You Now?* (Everloving), injects new energy and life in nü-wave music, exuding '70s analog synth sounds, extruding the Cars' quirk-rock through a contemporary perspective and exhuming those old Moog "mood music" albums. Metric slumped in New York City (sharing a Brooklyn loft with the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Liars) and Toronto (performing as part of Toronto's Broken Social Scene, appearing on *You Forgot It In People*), but couldn't find the right label to release an LP. Desperate, the band pooled its money and drove from Toronto to L.A. in a last-ditch attempt to find a deal. The

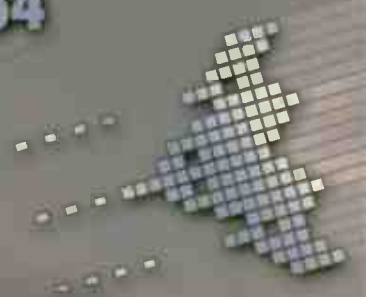
METRIC

move luckily yielded bountiful connections and friendships. "I've met a lot of music industry people in my life—I still have a lot of trouble with it, when you encounter shoe salesmen in the realm of art," says Haines. "When we got here, we were at absolutely rock bottom in every regard. Amazingly, we've met the best people I've ever met in the music business." One of those people was Michael Andrews, who produced *Underground*, and helped focus the band's sound, adding energy by recording Metric live. So instead of "dead disco," we get fresh disco, crisp punk, loud rock 'n' roll, unbridled. >>>CHRIS NIXON

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OKKERVIL RIVER

You could expect someone who cites Buster Keaton as his all-time favorite actor to have a goofy but resourceful way of solving problems. When Okkervil River's Will Sheff had his car stereo stolen four years ago, he turned the loss into an ad hoc songwriting method. "I don't have the money to get a new one, so I sing a lot in the car," he says. "I'll start singing a line just as it comes out in a particular melody, and then I'll get to the house, pick up the guitar and figure out how it fits together with instruments in the background." The ambling song progressions and soaring instrumentation on Okkervil's third (and most elegant) release, *Down The River Of Golden Dreams* (Jagjaguwar), carry a sense of motion and space that stems from their open-road composition down Red River in Austin, Texas. Sheff's carefully strung lyrics tell stories of compromise and coping because, for the most part, he's too content with his low-budget lifestyle to mope about it. With a long, easy laugh that transcends his reverence for the expressionless Keaton, Sheff explains, "I think that the feeling of regret for not being able to do what I love to do would be greater than the feeling of satisfaction I'd have from getting a car stereo." >>>KARA ZUARO

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48. KILLING JOKE Killing Joke
49. BELLE AND SEBASTIAN Dear Catastrophe Waitress
50. PEACHES Fatherfucker

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World Radio History



Like the local fried delicacy it's named after, Baltimore-based experimental band Lake Trout doesn't exactly come as advertised. "We're a rock 'n' roll band now," says singer Woody Ranere of the evolution of a band that once headlined raves. "We've added more structure to our sound, taking the time to incorporate what we were totally lacking before—the 'rock' influences we all grew up with." The first clue here is that Ranere is identified as "singer"—the

five-member group's previous albums were composed of incongruous, all-instrumental live sets. "We never holed up in our parents' basement to refine what we sounded like," says multi-instrumentalist Matt Pierce. "Instead, we played live, evolving to whatever the fans responded to." The band insists that the lyrics on the recently released *Another One Lost* (Palm), the first non-instrumental album in the band's seven-year history, give them staying power. "All we have to do now is train the new fans," laughs Pierce, although the band sometimes books two shows for the same city—one to showcase the new stuff, and one that's entirely instrumental. At least the group's name will always fit its ever-evolving sound: "'Lake Trout' doesn't have any type of metaphorical meaning," says drummer Mike Lowry, noting that the food version of the phrase is neither trout (it's whiting), nor culled from lakes (it comes from the sea). "I picked it because it sounded cool." >>>MAGGIE OVERFELT

LAKE TROUT

LAURA GEMINA

ALEXI MURDOCH

As swiftly as he brings them to a hush, Alexi Murdoch gets a New York crowd singing a tune that's not even on his self-released EP, *Four Songs*. It's emblematic of how the London-born L.A. dweller persuades listeners with his seductive whisper and intricately plucked guitar. Nick Drake and other acoustic bards of yore come to mind, but that was never Murdoch's aim. "The British Folk Movement is something I didn't know existed until recently," he blushes. "I only heard Bert Jansch a few months ago because someone handed me a CD at a gig." Other Brits

meant more. "Pink Floyd was a big harmonic influence," he offers. "It was so symphonic, it couldn't help [but] shape your ear." *Four Songs* has brought labels courting, but Murdoch's more focused on "right" than "right now." "There's always some consideration at work," he says of the industry. "Maybe we should shave some time here because radio won't play it or pick it up a few beats per minute, because studies have shown..." he jokes. Murdoch claims to have prepared himself for any success...or none at all. "The truth of what my trade is as a musician—if you get rid of the industry—is that I would have to go from town to town and get people to come and pay to sit in a venue," he says. "Not to get all Marxist about it, but in that sense you're not alienated from your labor at all. There's something really satisfying about that." >>>STEVE CIABATTONI



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THE STROKES

JOE STRUMMER

BELLE AND SEBASTIAN

PAUL WESTERBERG • THE STILLS • HEY MERCEDES
NOVEMBER 2003 • ISSUE 118

15. **THE APPLESEED CAST** "Fight Song" *Two Conversations*
www.tigerstylerecords.com
The Appleseed Cast appears courtesy of Tiger Style Records.
See On The Verge p. 27.

16. **ARMSBENDBACK** "Garry Gilmore's Eyes" *The Waiting Room*
www.armsbendback.com
ArmsBendBack appear courtesy of Trustkill Records.

17. **MATES OF STATE** "Ha Ha" *Team Boo*
www.matesofstate.com
Mates Of State appear courtesy of Polyvinyl Record Co.
See Review p. 68.

18. **SERJ TANKIAN** "Bird Of Paradise (Gone)"
Bird Up: The Charlie Parker Remix Project
www.savoyjazz.com
Serj Tankian appears courtesy of Savoy Jazz.

19. **AUDRA KUBAT** "Georgia" *Million Year Old Sand*
www.audrakubat.com
Audra Kubat appears courtesy of Times Beach Records.

20. **LOS LONELY BOYS** "Real Emotions" *Los Lonely Boys*
www.loslonelyboys.org
Los Lonely Boys appear courtesy of Or Music.

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CERVERIS "Can't Feel My Soul" *Dog Eared*
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World Radio History



1. **DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE** "The New Year" *Transatlanticism*
www.deathcabforcutie.com
Death Cab For Cutie appears courtesy of Barsuk Records.
See Cover Story p. 46.
2. **THE STROKES** "12:51" *Room On Fire*
www.thestrokes.com
The Strokes appear courtesy of RCA Records.
3. **JOE STRUMMER & THE MESCALEROS** "Coma Girl" *Streetcore*
www.strummersite.com
Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros appear courtesy of Hellcat Records.
See Review p. 74.
4. **THE STILLS** "Still In Love Song" *Logic Will Break Your Heart*
www.thestills.net
The Stills appear courtesy of Vice Recordings.
See On The Verge p. 24.
5. **WHEAT** "I Met A Girl" *Per Second, Per Second, Per Second...Every Second*
www.wheatmusic.com
Wheat appears courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
See Review p. 76.
6. **TO MY SURPRISE** "Get It To Go" *To My Surprise*
www.tomysurprise.net
To My Surprise appears courtesy of Roadrunner Records.
7. **BELLE AND SEBASTIAN** "Step Into My Office, Baby"
Dear Catastrophe Waitress
www.belleandsebastian.co.uk
Belle And Sebastian appear courtesy of Rough Trade.
See Answer Me p. 16.

8. **PAUL WESTERBERG** "Making Me Go" *Come Feel Me Tremble*
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Paul Westerberg appears courtesy of Vagrant Records.
9. **CASSANDRA WILSON** "Honey Bee" *Glamour*
www.cassandrawilson.com
Cassandra Wilson appears courtesy of Blue Note Records.
10. **DIDO** "White Flag" *Life For Rent*
www.lifeforrent.com
Oido appears courtesy of Arista Records.
11. **HEY MERCEDES** "Quality Revenge At Last" *Loses Control*
www.heymercedes.com
Hey Mercedes appears courtesy of Vagrant Records.
See Review p. 67.
12. **THE FINGER** "Snakes & Scorpions" *We Are Fuck You*
www.indian.co.uk
The Finger appears courtesy of One Little Indian Records.
13. **AVENGED SEVENFOLD** "Chapter Four" *Waking The Fallen*
www.avengedsevenfold.com
Avenged Sevenfold appears courtesy of Hopeless Records.
See On The Verge p. 25.
14. **THE TWILIGHT SINGERS** "Decatur St." *Blackberry Belle*
www.thetwilightingers.com
The Twilight Singers appear courtesy of One Little Indian Records/Birdman Records
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Love & Theft

THE FIRE THEFT IS
THREE-QUARTERS OF SUNNY
DAY REAL ESTATE, BUT
THIS BAND IS DIFFERENT IN
MORE THAN JUST NAME.

STORY: ARVE ØVORKEN
PHOTO: MATTHEW WELSH

I was never really nervous about putting out a Sunny Day [Real Estate] album," Jeremy Enigk admits, "I'm actually nervous about putting this record out."

He's talking about a new band, the Fire Theft, and a new perspective that's come with it. It's his first output since the dissolution of SDRE two years ago. He's not practiced in talking to the press about his music—he did very little of it with that band—but he's chatty and affable, and doing a lot of it now. This hesitance with fans, though, is especially new. "This one is a definite change of direction—lyrically, musically," he explains. "It's not what the Sunny Day fans expect to hear."

Sunny Day Real Estate earned its fame by making the varied emotions it brought to punk more forceful than the one—anger—that had sustained it, turning a generation of hardcore kids into expressive softies. Then, the band broke up, only to reform after a two-year hiatus to release two more records, then break up for good. The Fire Theft shares very little with its past, besides three-fourths of the original Sunny Day line-up: Enigk, guitar and vocals; Foo Fighter Nate Mendel, bass; and drummer William Goldsmith.

The Fire Theft, in essence, is a psych-rock band channeling the music of SDRE; they haven't completely abandoned their previous aesthetic, they're just kind of remixing it. Enigk still strains his volcanic vocal chords, the guitars still wrap mysteriously around the primal drums like smoke ascending into the air and the songs reek of urgency and desperation. On the new self-titled Rykodisc album, you can also hear remnants of 2000's critically acclaimed *The Rising Tide*, specifically "Faces In Disguise," serving as a loose blueprint for the record's songs. But what was once rooted in punk now feels almost rooted in prog, with sweeping, grandiose gestures of sound and full,

expressive textures. Enigk is perfectly aware of just how different everything is.

"I've really never put words together that are so easy to interpret," he says. "With Sunny Day, things were of a more cryptic nature. Doing what we've done for the Fire Theft is a new direction." Enigk's past tendencies were toward lyrics laid out like a Burroughs cut-up, but he's indeed shifted noticeably in the Fire Theft, with lines like, "I thought that I was crazy/ All along it was just a girl."

To the faithful, Enigk's words are treasure. And because he so seldom gave interviews to put them in context, his legend blurs into myth. One only needs to visit the messageboards and chat rooms revolving around the Fire Theft and Sunny Day Real Estate to grasp the attention to detail and obsessive appreciation of both the band and his solo work. Fans are even in the process of organizing a tribute album to Enigk's infrequent solo output, called *Enigkmatic*.

With that kind of track record, though, why would he completely disassociate himself from what made him the sensitive punk's John Lennon in the first place?

Truth is, Enigk's always been disassociated. While Sunny Day Real Estate was dubbed a "Seattle band," the singer makes certain to mention that his small town of Kirkland, Washington, on many different levels, is nowhere near Seattle. Moreover, it never has been. "From the beginning, we really had nothing to do with the whole grunge scene and the Seattle explosion," he says. "Even in the days of Sunny Day playing locally, [it wasn't] with Pearl Jam

or Nirvana or Soundgarden. We were the outsiders to the outsiders."

Throughout the start of the band's career, they were wary of the spotlight focused on so many Seattle bands, and eventually on their own, shunning the attention. "We thought we had to be these brooding rockers and the truth is we didn't even know how to react to interview requests," Enigk reveals. "But that's changed over time as we became more comfortable..."

Naturally, though, with change comes inevitable backlash. Some are already put off by the new sound. One disgruntled fan writes on the band's message boards: "What's with the Sting-like overproduction? The tired vocal theatrics? The cheap 'n' easy 'big' sound... hearing this song has completely changed the way I see the Fire Theft."

But Enigk, despite that admitted hesitance, is feeling positive. Fresh from a small buzz-building tour, his contentment is apparent.

"I'm just excited. We're playing smaller venues. [It's] intimate and fun and more responsive to the audience," he says. "We showed up to the shows and people in the audience were grinning like mad. I walked out of a New York show feeling completely satisfied. I remember thinking, 'Wow, this is what they're like before the music came out officially, just imagine what it could be like after it's had time to circulate.'" **NMM**





STIR ECHOES

After the Rapture's underground-stoking EP and 12-inch, every band and its brother in Brooklyn hit on the Gang Of Four influence. In the two-year wait for the full-length, *Echoes*, is the now sound yesterday's news?

STORY: YANCEY STRICKLER • PHOTO: KEVIN WESTENBERG

← LUKE JENNER, VITO ROCCOFORTE, GABE ANDRUZZI, MATT SARER

"THERE'S GONNA BE RIOTS IN THE STREETS!"

It's a sweltering August afternoon in New York, and the Eastern Seaboard has just lost power in a massive blackout. The ground on Second Avenue opens as passengers rescued from a stranded subway car emerge from a sidewalk grate to join the parade of New Yorkers trekking home to darkness. Moments earlier, in a Chelsea office building, the power dies during an interview with New York post-post-punk quartet the Rapture, but the potential for chaos only excites drummer Vito Roccoforte. "All the power went out? That rules!"

When a blackout last led to New York riots, as it would not this time, the city's musical landscape was a crosstown clash of disco and punk that created everything from the Contortions to Madonna. The long-delayed *Echoes* (DFA/Strummer/Universal), the Rapture's first full-length in four years, lands somewhere between; it's a slick blend of dissonance and pop that—believe it—takes cues from Italian writer Italo Calvino. "He uses a lot of different forms in his writing, and out of necessity, we do the same," saxophonist/key-boardist Gabe Andruzzi says.

Compared to the band's timid 1999 debut, *Mirror*, or the caustic, Gang Of Four-derived rock of 2001's *Out Of The Races And Onto The Tracks EP*, *Echoes* is a mankind-sized leap forward. Credit DFA, a New York-based label and production team led by James Murphy and Tim Goldsworthy. The label's biggest release to date is the Rapture's "House Of Jealous Lovers" 12-inch single, which pairs a *more cowbell*, four-on-the-floor beat with razor-thin guitar riffs, giving dancefloors something to groove on and indie kids a use for pop's old turntable.

The Rapture met DFA several years ago at one of the band's first New York gigs. "We were both looking for direction. Them as a production team—they were just getting started—and us as a three-piece looking to make a record," bassist Matt Safer explains. "They seemed like interesting people. We got along with them well personally and musically. We both

took a chance."

Despite appearances, the Rapture isn't Aaliyah to the DFA's Timbaland (though they'd be pleased with the comparison). *Echoes* sounds surprisingly under-produced for an album supposedly created by studio heads. "Open Up Your Heart" and "Infatuation" are both stark piano ballads, "The Coming Of Spring" and "Echoes" are raucous, loose jams and the minimal "Love Is All" sways to a stilted, Byrds-like gait.

But then there's "Sister Saviour," which Giorgio Moroder might have produced for Donna Summer. Over bubbling keyboard bass and the beat from "Billie Jean," the Rapture channels disco's coke-addled ennui into sassy, femme-fatalistic lyrics. "It didn't start very disco. It was just pop. It developed in the studio, and in some ways, the development of the song mirrors the development of the record," says Safer. "When we first went in, we had an unclear idea of what we wanted to do. We wanted to take some risks in the studio, sound a little poppier and push into territory beyond straight-up live dance music to using more machines." And so *Echoes* became the Rise of the Machines, starring "I Need Your Love" as Straight House, "Killing" as Jeep Thumper and "Sister Saviour" as Disco Diva #1. It's a formidable trifecta that could imaginably raise the Rapture from hipster cachet to bonafide stardom.

The band has had two years to consider the possibilities while being courted by a myriad of labels before opting to release *Echoes* through the Universal Records subsidiary Strummer.

The quartet still isn't sure if the wait was worth it. "We lost our fucking minds, and we lost a lot of time," says frontman Luke Jenner. "On the other hand, we've gained a lot of experience, like how to be a band in a whole different way. This is new for us. Everything's a mystery. It's like we're in pro-rock school 101." **NMM**



Atmosphere take the lively road to maturation on *Seven's Travels*. Slug, exorcized of the self-deprecation of last year's *God Loves Ugly*, keeps self-inflicted jabs to an anecdotal minimum, like in "Shoes," where he describes a "hella cheap" failed encounter that ends with him alone, drunk and naked on his date's bathroom floor. "National Disgrace" is a tongue-in-cheek plea for stardom, as Slug figures he's "rowdy, stubborn, loud and arrogant," qualities that are "as American as apple pie and embarrassment." He calls *Travels* Atmosphere's "De La album" because of its bright diversity and likens it to his version of *Gulliver's Travels*.

"We're really doing a good job of trying to sound like the Jungle Brothers," Ant chimes in.

"The record is about all of the sacrifices I've made in order to do what I do. But Seven is the kid in me," Slug says of the character, "And on this record, he comes out and plays a little bit."

The disc oozes with a love of funk and soul, which Ant says he hadn't previously been able to express through Atmosphere. Kanye West-y sped-up vintage samples form many of the tracks' hooks, while oye-como-hop meets "Planet Rock" in "The Keys To Life Vs. 15 Minutes Of Fame."

"I'm trying to be Marley Marl," admits Ant. "My friends are my Juice

Crew. Everybody Marley worked with sounded best when they worked with him. That's what I'm attempting to do."

Slug can match Ant's breezy tone since Lucy Ford, a central character in Atmosphere's music that has plagued Slug like an anti-muse, is (temporarily?) off his back. Lucy, based on Slug's real-life on-again-off-again (for good?) girlfriend Rita, though, does cameo as the inspiration for the closing song, "Always Coming Back Home To You."

"Ultimately, what I'm saying is that I might fuck up and I might be tempted to do shit, but no matter what, I always end up back home," says Slug. "The dope shit is that at the end, I'm back there and she's not."

Slug's a writer's writer who puts heartache aside to relish irony. And there's even more to be found in the choice of the first single, "Cats Van Bags." The track hisses with reverb, thanks to a distorted scratching sample, while guest Brother Ali and Slug spit harder than anywhere else, save the similarly gritty sucker-punch of an opener, "Trying To Find A Balance."

"People hear [Cats] and they're like, 'They changed up their steez because they're on a punk label,'" says Slug. "And then when you get the record, it's the same old shit. To the motherfuckers that get mad about it: Go. I didn't want you anyway."

Slug's the kind of self-sufficient/indulgent public figure who'd rather smack you in the face with his dirty laundry than woo you by playing a false idol. He exudes personality, not persona, because he'd rather let "Slug be Sean be Slug be Sean." Regardless, Atmosphere has attracted a devoted following that's largely young, white and often female.

"I don't think that's a statement on whether or not I'm making true-head rap anymore because when I make it, those girls aren't there," says Slug.

But there's another aspect of Slug that could be a draw to kids who don't even know how to pronounce "Enyce": his skin. Slug's just-shy-of-olive tone is a product of his multiracial background, which includes Native American, white and black. (Ant doesn't get so specific, but says that his background is similar.) But Slug hasn't really approached this issue in his music because, it turns out, even public confessors-cum-historians have their skeletons (Slug's 8-year-old son, Jacob, is another one, though Slug says he doesn't rap about Jacob so as not to expose him).

"I didn't want [race] to weigh in on anything for a long time," he says. "I was caught up in this ideology that you could appreciate my music for just the beats and rhymes. But I see myself coming to a point where [race] is going to start making its way into my music, just because it's in my thoughts and conversations and I'm not insecure about it anymore. I think it comes down to the fact that I have established myself. I had to be the Pied Piper for a while, so that when they come to the water, I can drown 'em."

The masses Slug's leading are only relative. Even with Epitaph's help, he doubts that he'll ever make it to the mainstream. Besides, it wouldn't seem right for a guy whose shtick depends on failed conquests and near-loserdom. While he says he's always been adamant about shunning corporate record deals, even the celebrity aspect no longer appeals to him.

"I don't want to be 2Pac anymore, 'cause he's dead," says Slug. "I don't want to be LL because he licks his lips too much. I'm pretty content being me. If I could just learn to be extremely happy being me, then I've got it all covered, I've got it all figured out." **NMM**



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World Radio History



DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

Coney Island Of The Mind

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE'S INDIE-ROCK ASCENDANCE HAS TAUGHT THEM A FEW THINGS ABOUT ROMANCE. THERE'S FINDING THE BEAUTY IN AN AGING, OFF-SEASON BOARDWALK, AND THEN THERE'S THINKING IT'S TRUER TO SLEEP ON FANS' FLOORS THAN ON A TOUR BUS. WITH *TRANSATLANTICISM*, THEY SHOW THE PRESENCE AND SKILL TO NAVIGATE BETWEEN THOSE TWO SHORES.

STORY: KARA ZUARO • PHOTO: DREW GOREN

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S **CD**

← FROM LEFT: CHRIS WALLA, NICK HARMER, BEN GIBBARD, JASON MCGERR

C

oney Island is open for business. Over the hum of electricity, screams from the Cyclone and the drone of sideshow announcers' refrains, it's hard to picture the landmark attraction's serene off-season that Ben Gibbard sings softly about in "Coney Island," on Death Cab For Cutie's *The Photo Album*.

DCFC bassist Nick Harmer and drummer Jason McGerr make a beeline toward the artillery beside a sleepy, thick-necked sideshow announcer shouting, "You come to Coney Island, you must shoot the freak. Guaranteed to put a smile on your face." The armored freak is an ordinary guy in the middle of a paint-stained obstacle course, grudgingly rising to meet his challengers. When the rhythm section opens fire on him, he dodges their paintballs by leaning lazily to one side and then another.

Gibbard watches from the sidelines. Shoot The Freak reminds him of a friend who is employed as a Rent-A-Nerd. "You know, for kids' parties. Sort of like a clown or a magician," he explains. "He got to create his own costume, with fake teeth and everything. The kids just make fun of him and kick him. I think it's rad."

Guitarist/keyboardist Chris Walla frowns. He's just finished talking about his crush on Sarah Vowell, an essayist and NPR personality who touts her nerd-pride. "Isn't she such a toddler-teenager-grandma?" he says, dreamily. "There's something about how the words don't roll out of her mouth quite the way you'd expect them to."

A house engineer at John Vanderslice's purist recording mecca, Tiny Telephone, in San Francisco, Walla mans the production seat for most of Death Cab's recordings. In the five years since the band's inception in Bellingham, Washington, Walla's artful production has grown to be as integral to the band's clean, intricate sound as Gibbard's literate lyrics.

His and Gibbard's tendency is to approach music, and perhaps most situations, from two very different angles: Gibbard looking ahead, Walla soaking in the scene. In the subway station, Gibbard leans over the yellow line to catch the first glimpse of the incoming train. Walla examines stalactites on the subway ceiling. Sitting on a boardwalk bench, Gibbard is yammering on about the stories they'll tell when they grow into "aged rock stars," Walla is shouting, "Right now, with that helicopter flying over us, don't you feel like we're in *Jaws*?" When the freak-shooting is through, Walla wants to take a picture of the Astroland sign with the slide film in his camera. Gibbard wants to know if the concession stands serve beer.

Chatty and fidgety, Ben Gibbard isn't so much the reserved, lonely hearted romantic that his refined, poetic lyrics might suggest. He's a hyperactive storyteller with an elaborate, and often choreographed, monologue for every topic. His animated hand gestures easily shift into impromptu dance moves. An anecdote about elderly Austrian lounge singer Louie Austen, who performs with a young DJ sidekick, involves beatboxing and a throaty snippet of a melodramatic love song, performed with a sway of his shoulders and fist at his furrowed brow. Pointing and swaggering up Broadway, he demonstrates the Hall & Oates number he's been

practicing for his next karaoke outing. When he gets riled up about the WB reality dating show, *elimiDATE*, or the fights the band used to have ("Jason, you missed the days where Chris would put his guitar headstock through the fucking grill of his amp because he didn't want to go on tour!"), his speeches speed up and are colored with creative profanity. It's not quite what you'd expect from a guy who writes about the shooting stars he sees out the window as his lady drives him home.

Harmer, the only bandmember with earrings and visible tattoos (a clean black circle on the inside of each forearm), is toting a hefty backpack. Inside, he has a couple of trucker caps; he switches from navy blue to maroon mid-evening, and allegedly has more colors back at the hotel. He also carries a notebook, where his daily thoughts are stored, along with an elaborate tally of all the beverages the band consumed the night before. "We don't usually do this—that's why I had to make a list for the occasion," he explains. "The vodka and cran was Jason's. That was kind of a joke."

McGerr, the band's even-keeled new drummer, smiles quietly, taking it all in.

"With the addition of Jason, we finally have our ideal four solid musical people all working together," Gibbard says. "Not to discount, of course, [previous drummers] Nathan [Good] or Michael [Schoor]'s input on the records, but we've known Jason so long that we speak the same language in a way we never had before."

As a result, the songwriting process changed on *Transatlanticism* (Barsuk), Death Cab's fourth LP. Gibbard penned the first draft of the songs and Walla led the recording process, as per usual, but their rhythm section added a louder voice than on previous records. The recording process changed, too. Whereas *The Photo Album* had to be completed in a set time period in order to get the record out in time for a pre-arranged tour, *Transatlanticism* was recorded with the freedom of a slower pace. Working through a series of five-day sessions in Tiny Telephone and Seattle's Hall of Justice, the band had the opportunity to move away from songs and come back to them fresh.

The slower pace aided the creative process, as did the help of Brian Eno and painter Peter Schmidt's *Oblique Strategies*. The *Strategies*, written on a set of cards, were devised in 1975 to spark artistic ideas and encourage productive thinking in the creative sphere. They make subtle suggestions, like, "Honor thy error as a hidden intention," "Use 'unqualified' people," or, simply, "Water."

"They're vague in the way that horoscopes are vague," Walla says. "If you're not into it, you won't get anything out of it." Harmer, who is definitely into it, says, "The 5th ghost voice on the record was definitely Brian Eno."

The finished record will be released as a hybrid CD, equipped with Super Audio sound quality. "I think on a really subconscious level, Super Audio makes music more compelling to listen to," Walla explains. "Like with vocals, for example, it's easier to understand what somebody's singing because your brain isn't doing as much work trying to separate out voice from cymbals and guitars and all those frequencies that get smashed together on a CD." Listeners need a special player to hear the Super Audio, but since



World Radio History

**YOU COME TO CONEY ISLAND,
YOU MUST SHOOT THE FREAK.**

it's a hybrid, it plays on an ordinary player as well. Walla believes that Super Audio will eventually replace the CDs that we listen to today, and *Transatlanticism* may be reason enough to be the first one on your block to get a player—there's a lot to hear. On the slow-building title track, for instance, it takes concentration to listen through layers of sound to hear a delicate sample, like the whirring descent of an aircraft soaring across the crest of the song.

Their next challenge will be bringing these intricate sounds to the stage. "We're gonna make a really big effort for the first time to create more of the samples and the keyboard sounds and whatever else there is that we just scrapped through onstage as a garage band—you know, two guitars, bass and drums," Walla says, but since they won't be adding any extra players to their live show, it won't be easy. "We'll have to prioritize, and figure out what's really crucial to making the songs feel the way they do."

For the band, the best part of the upcoming tour is a driver-equipped tour bus. They don't have any concerns about their relatively swank transportation altering their underdog image.

to the meat of the work instead of staying with some crazy kids who keep you up all night talking about Jawbox when you're obviously trying to fucking sleep."

Gibbard's complaints reflect the more eloquently stated message on "The Sound Of Settling": The crisp tune, complete with bah-bah-bahs, is one of *Transatlanticism*'s poppiest tracks, but the lyrics reference the welcoming of old age. The Death Cab guys are ready to start living like grown-ups—though they're grateful for the kindness offered to them by so many strangers on their early tours, the band's history reads like a Rough Guide to indie-rock accommodations.

Recalling a typical host, Harmer says in his deepest dude voice, "We had a huge rager last night. We haven't had time to clean up, but if you push the cigarette butts aside, you can make a spot to sleep on the floor." Walla, quoting an animal lover who once shared her den with them, squeaks, "Yeah, you have to be careful about the hamsters because I don't actually know how many of them there are anymore. I can't bear to see them in the cage, so they just kind of run around," he shakes his head at the

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN TOURING WAS A VACATION—WE'D LEAVE THE NIGHT BEFORE THE SHOW JUST TO GET THE FUCK OUT OF TOWN. IT WAS SO AWESOME TO DRINK TRUCK-STOP COFFEE AND EAT FIG NEWTONS FOR DINNER. NOW, I JUST WANT TO GET TO WORK INSTEAD OF STAYING WITH SOME CRAZY KIDS WHO KEEP YOU UP ALL NIGHT TALKING ABOUT JAWBOX WHEN YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO FUCKING SLEEP.

"All of us are past this Catholic-style indie-rock guilt about taking a bus." Gibbard says, "No, dude, taking a bus is rad."

The new wheels seem like an opportunity to bring along some grown-up entertainment. Gibbard says, "I think we're gonna try to bring quality films and buy a bunch of documentaries and have some educational material." He mentions that he just picked up Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Three Colors* trilogy, and his affinity for Kieslowski's art films is the first remark of the evening that connects him to the persona who writes songs littered with metaphors and musings about the patterns in his ladyfriend's dress. But Walla throws a bucket of water on Mr. Sensitivity.

"You're gonna end up watching *Evil Dead 2*," he says.

"I know," Gibbard shrugs. "And making dick and fart jokes. I'm sure there'll also be *Friday* and *Encino Man*. We all could appreciate the highbrow stuff but I'll never deny that *Money Talks* is one of the funniest movies I've ever seen in my entire life. When my girlfriend told me she saw *Jackass* four times in the theater, I was like, 'I love you.'" As soon as the words come out, his cell phone rings, "Hey," he says, glancing at it, "That's her!" He grins, puts it away, quickly gets back to business.

"There was a time when touring was a vacation," Gibbard says, his speech already gaining speed. "We'd leave the night before the show just to get the fuck out of town. It was so awesome to drink truck-stop coffee and eat Fig Newtons for dinner. Now, it's like, I don't want to eat a fucking Taco Bell bean burrito every night like when I was 21." "I don't want that for you either," Harmer quips, making a face and holding his hand under his nose. "Seriously," continues Gibbard, "I still love traveling, but all the little annoying things that were once kind of fun and, 'Oh, isn't this crazy!' now are just fucking annoying. I just want to get

memory. "The floor of the place was like the floor of a hamster cage—shredded newspaper everywhere." And then there was that show in South Carolina, where their host suggested staying with a girl he knew, who allegedly lived on an island off the coast of Georgia where "fresh mangoes" grew on the trees and there was plenty of room for everyone to sleep.

Gibbard gets to tell this one, and the others are cracking up before he even begins. "Of course, we drive all night through fucking 100 degree heat and we get there and come to find out that not only is it a) not on the beach but b) there are no fresh mangoes and the futon that was supposed to be ours to sleep on is being used by a hippie. And there was a baby there that was crying all day, and the whole time this kid is in the bedroom trying to get the girl to sleep with him, because she was getting married and they used to date so the whole thing was like, 'Come on, just one more time.' Then the hippie leaves the fucking futon, but then goes outside and is playing didjeridoo on the front porch," Gibbard stops to catch his breath. "See, those are the things that we're over now."

Harmer chimes in, with unfeigned sadness, "But we're not gonna have good stories like that anymore."

There's a rare moment of quiet as Gibbard leans back on his bench. The guys are looking in different directions, grinning. Coney Island is getting dark, and finally you get a glimpse of Gibbard's lyrics, in the song named for this setting: "I can hear the Atlantic echo back rollercoaster screams from summers past/ And everything was closed at Coney Island, and I could not help from smiling."

Gibbard pipes up again, cheerfully disagreeing with Harmer. "No, those stories find you," he says. "Those things will still happen. Once you leave your door, things just happen to you." **NMM**



Underage prostitutes in Mumbai, India. Virtually all were sold into the sex trade in very early adolescence.
Photo: Dayanita Singh

imagine

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



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Buddyhead's Los Angeles

STORY: TRAVIS KELLER

The guys who run Buddyhead are crass, rude, snotty and just generally mean to almost everyone. But they're also funny as shit, and know more about enjoying a day in Los Angeles than anyone this side of a pre-recovery Mötley Crüe. Follow this outline while walking around Hollywood with the new *Gimme Skelter* compilation (Nettwerk) in your discman—with tracks from Mudhoney, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Burning Brides and Primal Scream, among others, all lovingly collected by Buddyhead.

The Hotel Café (1623 1/2 N. Cahuenga Blvd., 461-2040, www.hotelcafe.com) is owned by illustrious international playboy Marko Shafer, who's better known for his days as the author of the Buddyhead Sex Advice column than for his wild sexploits in the south of France. Marko has since moved on up and now runs one of Los Angeles' best kept secrets. They've got live music every night of the week, so you may just catch the next Fiona Apple. You'll have to deal with the occasional annoying but laughable teen actor (like Brittany Murphy and all her plastic surgery), but usually the crowd is a good bunch of folk. As for the neighborhood, it's located on Cahuenga Blvd., which is quickly turning into "L.A.'s Lower East Side," up the street from Amoeba Music (see below). And it sits one door over from the Burgundy Room (1621 1/2 N. Cahuenga Blvd., 465-7530), across the street from the Beauty Bar (1638 N. Cahuenga Blvd., 464-7676), and around the corner from the überduber hip Star Shoes (6364 Hollywood Blvd., 462-7827), where

they have shoes in the window (go figure). I recommend trying one of the Hotel's tasty grilled European-style panini sandwiches (they're super awesome) and their selection of bottled and draft beers. The wheat beer they have is great, but that might be 'cuz it's the one Marko always gives me for free.

Amoeba (6400 Sunset Blvd., 245-6400, www.amoebamusic.com) is not only a record store that has everything your little record-collecting heart desires, but also a cultural meeting place and one of the hearts of the music community here in the City of Angels. Where else can you witness the dude from Crazytown browsing the L section and discovering Led Zeppelin for the first time? Or Casey Chaos explaining Refused to the guitar player of System Of A Down? This place really does have one marvelous and stunning inventory of new and used CDs, LPs, 7-inches, tapes and DVDs, as well as music posters, collectibles and music books. They haven't gotten hip to a magazine section yet for some reason, but I like to tell myself that it's on the way very soon. My glass is half full, biotch. Also if you're "a singer looking for a bass player, guitar player and drummer who's really into the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nirvana, Metallica, Pearl Jam and Staind," the bulletin board just might be your new favorite hangout. You should go buy all of the records Buddyhead put out here; they even have our shit on vinyl. Wow!

I was gonna tell you all to check out Black Market Music (841 N. La Cienega Blvd., 310-659-6795) but Joe told me they ripped Alvin off last time they went there, so fuck them. Plus, I heard that the guy that runs Future Music (7509 Sunset Blvd., 850-7509) used to be in a band on Slash Records, which is punk. Don Devore loves this place 'cuz it's got lots of weird effects pedals you won't find anywhere else and offbeat samplers and shit. Tell these dudes Buddyhead sent you so they'll cut us some deals.

I'm not really into hot dogs, but Aaron loves them (go figure) and he says the dogs at Pink's Hot Dogs (709 N. La Brea Ave., 931-4223, www.pinkshollywood.com) are muy bomb. Just drive your rent-a-car down La Brea and right before you hit Melrose you'll witness a line of people waiting in the heat to get their own Pink's Hot Dog. Once you pay for your doggy and go inside you can check out their "celebrity photo wall," where they have a killer photo of Axl Rose in his prime. It's worth the wait in itself.

Looking for a yummy flaming margarita while you're in Hollywood? El Compadre (7408 Sunset Blvd., 874-7924) is the place



to go. (El Sid is killer too, but it's on the east side and drinking and driving is bad.) The décor is great, like a Disneyland ride with the fake roofs they have over most of the tables. They also house one of best live mariachi bands on Sunset Blvd.—nothing like getting sung to while you shove food in your

mouth. This place is across the street from the Guitar Center, so once you're tired of listening to that 15-year-old nü-metal head trying to pound out "South Of Heaven" on that neon-green Ibanez with gold hardware, just step across the street to El Compadre and drown your sorrows in some fine Mexican food.

If you're hungry—and I know your fat ass is—and you just can't decide what you want, check out the **Farmers Market** (6333 West Third St., 933-9211). As long as you don't mind rubbing elbows with Hollywood's elderly, you're gonna love this place, with its hodgepodge of restaurants and food stands. It's a little weird now because they built this retardedly big Mall of America bullshit next door, so there's an influx of tourist families milling around in there, but they don't bite. The French crepe place is my favorite; I'd even go as far as saying that they have the best chocolate strawberry crepes in this country. They've got everything: fresh nut stands, sushi restaurants, delis, bakeries, a magazine stand and there's even a bar in the middle where all the blue hairs get wild and rowdy all day.

Boardners (1652 North Cherokee Ave., 462-9621) is my favorite bar in all of Hollywood. It looks like it hasn't been remodeled since the '70s (which is a good thing), the whiskey is cheap (that's good too), the crackheads always wanna talk about basketball with me (sometimes it's a bit scary but normally this is good too), the bartenders are friendly in that "I knew Lemmy" kind of way, and the jukebox has Guns N' Roses, Tom Petty, Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath. What more could you ask for?

Located just a short walk down the street from my house on Hollywood & Highland, **Highland Grounds** (742 N. Highland, 466-1507) is a place I'd never step foot in if it wasn't so fucking close. Otherwise I don't think the neon hippie mural painted on the outside would have drawn me in. But don't get me wrong, I'm glad I

stumbled upon this laid-back coffee shop/restaurant. The food is great (the vegetarian chili is awesome), the service is trippy, and they have these huge iced mochas that are cheap (your head will hurt in a good way after one of these). If you get real lucky you might end up there on open-mic night where everyone is allowed onstage. Yes, I have way more folk in my life than I should.

Once owned by Frank Sinatra, **Dominick's** (8715 Beverly Blvd., 310-652-7272) is now owned by Jon Sidel, who just so happens to be the man responsible for signing the Icarus Line and Burning Brides to V2 Records. Dominick's is so nice, if we didn't know Jon they'd never let us hang out there. Its dark and sexy interior with polished wood walls complete with porthole windows makes you feel like you're riding deep in the belly of a large luxurious boat. There's also the open-air patio with a giant brick fireplace if you'd rather hang with all the good-looking people who smoke. The steaks here are my favorite, but in all honesty, all the food is excellent. And the mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese are unreal.

More like cafeteria food than fast food, **Tommy's Burgers** (5873 Hollywood Blvd., 467-3792) will wreck your stomach and colon for days. But in a good way. Aaron swears by this place, the home of the Southern California Chili burger. If you come to L.A. and don't eat here, you haven't really been to L.A.

There's no way in hell the 12 security guards stationed out front with Uzis will let you inside so you can check out all the million-record sales plaques of the Beatles, Garth Brooks, MC Hammer and Pink Floyd, but you can still stand outside and look at the Capitol Records building (Vine just above Hollywood Blvd.).

Located right below some AAA motel, the **101 Coffee Shop** (6145 Franklin Ave. by the 101, 467-1175) is the best diner in Hollywood as far as I'm concerned. Breakfast here is served here all day and they have the Stooges (*Funhouse* event!), Stone Roses, Primal Scream and the Velvet Underground on the jukebox.

If you're up for a freak show (and I mean freak show), poke your head into the **Hollywood Post Office** (Wilcox Ave. between Sunset and Hollywood), where there's always a line of people waiting for service and people working there who never want to work. They'll come up with the best excuses for why they won't help you, though, so at least you'll be entertained while you wait an hour for that stamp you need. Meanwhile, you'll witness fighting crackheads, crazy old people who argue about President Bush and almost come to blows, dysfunctional and deformed strippers... And the Buddyhead P.O. Box is in the building too! So is the Dim Mak Records one, and we're just a few boxes away from the Girls Gone Wild P.O. Box and the Henry Rollins P.O. Box, so you know we feel like we're in good company there. (In case it didn't translate, I was being sarcastic.)

Visit www.buddyhead.com for more information about Gimme Skelter and more caustic commentary on, well, everything.

All numbers in the 323 area code unless otherwise stated.



BEST
NEW
MUSIC

AZURE RAY

CLEARLAKE

THE FIERY FURNACES

NON-PROPHETS

THE SHINS

SUN KIL MOON

TORA! TORA! TORRANCE!

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



AZURE RAY

Hold On Love Saddle Creek

Omaha, Nebraska-based Azure Ray could possibly be the first band on the Saddle Creek label to appeal to both hipsters and their NPR-listening parents (and this is not, repeat, not a bad thing). With a majestic, beautifully dark sound that is at once spare and full of warmth, they combine the ethereal vocal style of early-'90s David Lynch chanteuse Julee Cruise and the intense melancholy of Leonard Cohen with the seductive atmospheric of Portishead. Bandmates Orenda Fink and Maria Taylor possess lovely, fragile-sounding voices that intertwine like a double helix, floating over lush, acoustic folk-tronic collages, accented by piano, cello and violin. The band's third album, *Hold On Love*, is their best effort yet, full of understated ruminations on life and how we live it. There are many standouts (the kitschy, retro-flavored "If You Fall," the haunting "Sea Of Doubts," the symphonic Dusty Springfield-inspired "Nothing Like A Song"), but "The Drinks We Drank Last Night" has the most emotional resonance. The song boasts the great line, "On a swing you push me hard, so I'll come back to where you are"; with its sing-songy melody, plaintive lyrics and heartbreaking delivery, it's a grown-up lullaby that's worth the price of the album alone. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

Link
www.missouri.edu/~lmrnpc
File Under
Gorgeous, folk-tronic dream pop
R.I.Y.L.
Bright Eyes, Barbara Manning,
Mazzy Star



CLEARLAKE

Cedars Domino

In the precious "Keep Smiling," Clearlake singer Jason Pegg nutshells the U.K. quartet's credo in a single lyric, "As soon as you raise your voice/ You know you've lost the argument." *Cedars*, Clearlake's second full-length, crystallizes the moment just before collapse—a tire's squeal, a lover's glare—and harnesses its pre-impact potential, turning uncertain tension into song. The fantastic opener, "Almost The Same," juxtaposes a drawling melody with a chugga-chugga-chugging guitar riff, double-timing a *Disintegration*-era Cure hook into a glorious Strokes-y rocker. For the timid Clearlake, this is an unbridled yelp, and it suits them wonderfully. In "Can't Feel A Thing," guitars crackle like cellophane cereal as Pegg convincingly mourns his novocain-injected ennui. But these two tracks—two of the album's best—are exceptions, not rules. Most of *Cedars* mopes between the Cure and Coldplay with its peculiarly British introspection and baroque arrangements. The furrowed-brow foreplay pays off with the disc's culmination, a movement of three cuts opened by the ominous "It's All Too Much," which bleeds into "Treat Yourself With Kindness" with chirping guitars and clever snare-play. As the bombast melts away, the pastoral gait of "Trees In The City" takes its place, all reassuring coos and tender tones. "Do you ever get the feeling/ That you're being watched," Pegg smugly sings. In time, Jason, you will be. >>>YANCEY STRICKLER

Link

www.clearlake.uk.com

File Under

British art rock

R.I.Y.L.

The Cure's *Disintegration*,
Coldplay, Cocteau Twins



THE FIERY FURNACES

Gallowsbird's Bark Rough Trade

Like any future Ben Affleck/Jennifer Lopez vehicle moviegoers may get the opportunity to endure, the Fiery Furnaces face a rocky road to world domination: They're a scruffily attired brother-and-sister combo from Brooklyn who play dirty, amped-up garage-blues filled equally with references to historical antecedents and the modern hipster's situation. In other words, join the club, and don't let the door hit you on your way to the late-night watering hole. Yet there's more to *Gallowsbird's Bark*, the band's peculiar debut, than their profile portends. For starters, Eleanor Friedberger's cool Chrissie Hynde sneer is a refreshing change of pace from the bored Williamsburg sneer; her singing in "Tropical Iceland" evokes that title's sense of escape and she holds her own against caterwauling roadhouse guitar riffs in "Asthma Attack." Friedberger thankfully tweaks most of neo-garage's lyrical tropes, too, bragging that she "pierced my ears with a three-hole punch" in "I'm Gonna Run" before copping to eating "12 dozen doughnuts for lunch." *Gallowsbird's* doesn't pack the sexy-creepy punch of the Furnaces' live show (of which the distaff Friedberger's unflappable non-banter is a highlight), but it indulges the band's fondness for off-kilter circus keys and lush acoustic guitars—another departure from type that serves them well. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Link

www.thiefuryfurnaces.com

File Under

Atypical art-garage

R.I.Y.L.

Holly Golightly, the White Stripes,
the Pretenders



NON-PROPHETS

Hope Lex

Three tracks into the Non-Prophets' *Hope*, Sage Francis rattles off one of the album's most telling lines: "I'm your typical hip-hop political figure, but I'm not right-wing or left-wing, I'm middle finger." Like many of the soundbites uttered by the rapping half of this straight-edge duo, it's smart, quotable and would look great on a T-shirt. A morsel like this also makes one hungry for a greater message, manifesto or thesis. Listen carefully through Francis' jazzy, polyrhythmic delivery and every few lines you'll be rewarded with another brilliant kernel such as, "Single cell amoebas evolved into simpletons singing 'Jingle Bells' for Jesus/ Not to knock the teachings that Jesus brings, 'cause the Bible's a good read like Stephen King." What does it all add up to? As Francis turns phrases faster than an Audi on the Authobahn and drops more pointed references to Bill O'Reilly and Matthew Shepard than an episode of *Politically Incorrect*, you are left with only flashpoints of vocal genius. And that's when Joe Beats steps in, impressively filling the muddy lyrical moments with skittering scratches, muted beats and noirish keys. While *Hope* may not make for a non-stop explosive evening, it has more than enough fireworks to keep you ooh-ing and ahing from start to finish. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

Link

www.non-prophets.com

File Under

Backpackers with brains

R.I.Y.L.

Blackalicious, MC Paul Barman,
Cannibal Ox



THE SHINS

Chutes Too Narrow Sub Pop

It's almost inevitable that the Shins' sophomore effort would up the rock quotient from 2001's *Oh, Inverted World*. Despite the members' long prehistory as Flake, they made their debut as isolated Albuquerque dreamers; now, they're day-jobless pros who toured incessantly in the two years between releases. The mostly self-produced result won't rate them a cover story in *Kerrang!*, but it is more sharply focused than its predecessor, emphasizing crisp guitars over soggy organs and performance over atmosphere. "So Says I" is a peppy Nuggets tribute, while "Turn A Square" ramps up from a "Pretty Woman" riff-variant to a charging double-time climax. Despite this new assertiveness, the Shins' main strength—prime mover James Mercer's melodic imagination—remains intact, as does its downside: Mercer's knotted tunes often make his thoughtful lyrics needlessly opaque. And the band still lacks a convincing bottom end, despite replacing founding bassist Neal Langford with Scared Of Chaka's Dave Hernandez. Beyond the aforementioned rave-ups, the most striking track is "Those To Come," a Syd-'n'-Nick acoustic nocturne with imagery to match: "Quaking leaves and broken light/ Shifting skin, the coming night." It sounds suspiciously like a Mercer solo recording, suggesting that the leader's recent relocation to Portland may be the first step in a more than geographical split. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

Link
www.subpop.com/bands/shins
 File Under
 Battle-ready ex-underdogs
 R.I.Y.L.
 The New Pornographers,
 the Zombies, Guided By Voices,
 Sex Clark Five



SUN KIL MOON

Ghosts Of The Great Highway Jetset

Sun Kil Moon, Mark Kozelek's new project, isn't measurably different from his work under the Red House Painters moniker, nor does it differ much from his solo releases. And that's just fine. *Ghosts Of The Great Highway*, like RHP's great *Songs For A Blue Guitar*, is a melancholy mix of transfixing acoustic ballads and hypnotic electric drones. With RHP-cohort Anthony Koutsos or American Music Club's Tim Mooney on drums and Geoff Stansfield on bass, plus an occasional string trio, Kozelek sings his minor-key melodies in a slow, sad voice that's sometimes a falsetto sigh and sometimes a tenor moan. "I just want to die with you again," he cries in "Floating," and most of *Ghosts* has a brooding gravity. But Kozelek throws in lyrical curve-balls now and then: "Glenn Tipton" begins by name-dropping not only the Judas Priest guitarist, but also Jim Nabors, Bobby Vinton, Cassius Clay and Sonny Liston ("I like them all," Kozelek sings). Songs tend to lock into a circular guitar figure and gradually unfold—sometimes too gradually, as in the 14-plus minute "Duk Koo Kim" and the Spanish-flavored instrumental "Si, Paloma." But the electric "Salvador Sanchez" and its acoustic doppelganger "Pancho Villa" rank with Kozelek's best work, and Sun Kil Moon's *Ghosts Of The Great Highway* is a pensive, powerful addition to the Kozelek canon. >>>STEVE KLINGE

Link
www.jetsetrecords.com
 File Under
 Still house-painting
 R.I.Y.L.
 Red House Painters, Crooked
 Fingers, Mojave 3, Pearl Jam's
 quieter moments



TORA! TORA! TORRANCE!

A Cynic's Nightmare The Militia Group

Scores of bands in the past two years have tried to replicate At The Drive-In's articulate fury since the El Paso, Texas punks dissolved in 2000. Some aped the start-stop guitar stabs or conjured something akin to Cedric Bixler's impressionistic lyrics and rattling scream, but they fell short because they couldn't capture the hair-on-fire, "This is all that matters!" urgency that Tora! Tora! Torrance! nails on *A Cynic's Nightmare*. The follow-up to 2001's *Get Into It* began as an EP and grew into a full-length when the Minneapolis quintet struck gold with songs that fuse the lyrical abstraction of ATDI with the try-anything musical spirit of Refused. An unmistakable statement of purpose comes early on "Another Drink To Yr Health" when Nick Koenigs warns "I want my head to explode/ With the sounds coming out of those amps" as guitarists Jon Tester and Sam Johnson barrel ahead atop a galloping rhythm section. Also potent are slow burners like "Sapphire Jungle" and "I Thought This Was A Punk Show," which bleed into each other and allow for a guitar noodling and vocal effects magic show that never gets overwrought. "UFO," a sketchy eight-minute instrumental passage that sounds lifted from a Text record (more proof of the debt to the Refused family tree) closes things out on a down note, though an MP3 editor can trim it and leave the nine Kevlar-tough songs that make this a damn near-perfect punk album. >>>CHAO SWIATECKI

Link
www.themilitiagroup.com
 File Under
 The shake of things to come
 R.I.Y.L.
 Refused, Hot Snakes,
 the Blood Brothers

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Japanese Samurai Punk

北京
 HANG ON THE BOX

noodles

Beijing Girl's New Wave

clatter

"Blinded By Vision"



On Tour Now!

Wearied of over-hyped guitar bands like Yeah Yeah Yeahs and the White Stripes? Clatter eliminates guitar clutter altogether with a line-up consisting solely of bassist Amy Humphrey and drummer Joe Hayes. Employing a myriad of mind-altering effects...Humphrey emerges as polyrhythmic pyrotechnic by slapping, riffing and soloing in the grand tradition of Larry Graham, Les Claypool and Geezer Butler. Hayes is no slouch either, gamely grooving with tasty fills and inventive call-and-response phrasing.

--Amplifier Magazine

www.clatter.com

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REVIEWS

THE ALUMINUM GROUP
 APRIL MARCH
 BLACK BOX RECORDER
 ISOBEL CAMPBELL
 THE CREATURES
 CRITERIA
 THE DIRTBOMBS
 DISBAND
 THE DISHES
 THE DISTILLERS
 DIVERSE
 ENVY
 THE EVERYOTHERS
 FIVE DEEZ
 GALACTIC
 GORKY'S ZYGOTIC MYNCI
 HELICOPTER HELICOPTER
 HERO PATTERN
 HEY MERCEDES
 WANDA JACKSON
 THE LADYBUG TRANSISTOR
 MATES OF STATE
 THE MAVERICKS
 THE MOLES
 NANANG TATANG
 BETH ORTON
 PLASTIKMAN
 THE PLEASED
 THE ROSEBUDS
 SEVENDUST
 SISTER SONNY
 SOUTH
 SPOTTISWOODE AND HIS ENEMIES
 JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS
 MATT SUGGS
 TRUE LOVE
 THE TWILIGHT SINGERS
 VARIOUS ARTISTS: VERVE REMIXED 2
 LUKE VIBERT
 WHEAT



THE ALUMINUM GROUP

More Happyness *Wishing Tree*

The leaders of Chicago's Aluminum Group, brothers Frank and John Navin, are as overtly gay in their aesthetic reference points as Carson Kressley—even their name is borrowed from a sleek, Eames-designed furniture line. But the effect is more malevolent than whimsical: Take "Without The Erte," in which an argument about an Art Deco thrift-store find becomes the focal point of a sad, slightly cruel ("He pushed me up against a dead tree") love affair. This song's violently flanged vocals and a roughhousing breakdown in "Biplane Serpentine" supply the disc's harshest moments; more often, the arrangements

make their points by understatement, coasting on slowed-down bossa rhythms and Blue-Nile-esque piano flourishes. *More Happyness* also backs away from the post-tronica textures that dominated 2000's *Pelo*. Contributions by various Tortoise/Sea & Cake members rarely deflect attention from the brothers' subterranean (and indistinguishable) voices, or from their peculiar lyric sensibility: What is one to make of a hook-fragment like "Gather in the filter of the pool," or the racially charged rough-trade scenario of "Colored Town"? A pair of zipless ballads ends the album anti-climactically, but for most of its length, *More Happyness* is the aural equivalent of a sex therapist's waiting room, its classy décor at odds with the uneasy desires it contains. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

[Link](#)

www.wishingtreerecords.com

[File Under](#)

Coolly unsettling electropop

R.I.Y.L.

Future Bible Heroes,
the Postal Service, Sparks,
Our Daughter's Wedding

APRIL MARCH

Triggers (PIAS) *America*

For all her pigtailed-and-plaid-skirt innocence, Elinor Blake, the artist known as April March, has always infused her cheery, French-peppered '60s-inspired pop with darkly absurd themes. On "Sugar," from 1999's *Chrominance Decoder*, she sang of being defiled in the forest over a happy-go-lucky beat. Her latest, *Triggers*, finds her cooing so sweetly through upbeat cocktail music that if you're not paying attention, you'll probably miss that there's often a maggot lurking in the daffodil bed. In "Sometimes When I Stretch," Blake sings of pretty trees in the park, but is sure to also let us know about the need-



[Link](#)

www.piasamerica.com

[File Under](#)

Smart, sweetly sinister

Franco-American pop

R.I.Y.L.

Valerie Lemercier, Ivy,
Serge Gainsbourg

dles and empty bottles on the ground. And "Somewhere Up Above" is a piece of candy-coated bombastic pop about a horrific car accident that proves you can't second-guess death. In other words, God *est très amusé* when people make plans. Musically, *Triggers* remains true to Blake's now-established style of mixing French yé-yé tributes—she seems as equally inspired by France Gall as Françoise Hardy—with jazz-influenced electro-pop sung in her native English. Some people might find Blake's slavish Francophilia a tad pretentious, but there's something undeniably admirable about such devotion to a genre, and it's her rapt dedication that gives her light-as-air creations heft. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK



BLACK BOX RECORDER

Passionio One Little Indian

Considering Luke Haines' genuine intellectual convictions, what's most surprising about Black Box Recorder is that they haven't blown anything up yet. He and his rather subversive musical comrades (one of his projects was named for the '70s terrorist group Bader-Meinhof) seem like so much life waiting to imitate art, that one can easily conjure delightful visions of them firebombing a Tesco's or dynamiting a shopping center in a Leeds suburb. Until then, we'll have to settle for the figurative terror that is their ongoing lyrical battle with the firmly

entrenched banality of modern life. On the cleverly titled *Passionio*, the assault begins with haste on the opening track, "The School Song," where they take a disgusted swipe at the institutionalized dulling of individual thought, but with a hysterical fetishistic disciplinary undertone. "These Are The Things" and "British Racing Green" take even deadlier aim, mocking yuppie life as a continuous cycle of shirt ironing, get-well card writing and lovely little boxes of chocolates. Even other-guy-from-Wham! Andrew Ridgley takes a thrashing here. As usual, all of this condescension is delivered by Sarah Nixey in a steadfastly detached voice—the aural equivalent of rolling one's eyes in exasperation. Their music remains a slick mix of '60s Euro-pop and '90s Brit-pop, as oddly sexy as it is intentionally lackluster—like Saint Etienne, but utterly bored. Darling. >>>KEN SCRUDA-

Link

www.blackboxrecorder.org

File Under

I'm so bored with you

R.I.Y.L.

Saint Etienne, Pulp, reveling in your moral superiority



ISOBEL CAMPBELL

Amorino Instinct

On Belle And Sebastian's albums and EPs, founding (and now former) member Isobel Campbell's vocal turns were a welcome change—in gender, if not introspective spirit—from those of Stuarts Murdoch and David. But on her first release under her own name, after several as the Gentle Waves, the appeal wears thin fast. Song after song on *Amorino* is delivered in the same breathy, pitch-imperfect chirp, modeled closely on Jane Birkin's, regardless of musical or emotional appropriateness. It's a shame, because the playing behind her is remarkably assured,

thanks in part to producer/arrangers Dave Patterson and Geoff Allen, who trade the sketchy harm of Campbell's past bandmates for jazzy, old-pro polish. The Dixieland stylings of "The Cat's Pyjamas" are insufferably coy, but "October Sky" and "Love For Tomorrow" graze the bar for pop orchestration set by John Barry and Jack Nitzsche, blowing the singer's featherweight presence away in the bargain. Campbell stands her ground more effectively on "The Breeze Whispered Your Name," the best of several bossas, and the genuinely affecting "There Is No Greater Gold." Devoted followers of tweedom will treasure every last shaky note of *Amorino*; the unconverted may find themselves sticking to the above modestly scaled standouts—and the disc's three instrumentals. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

Link

www.instinctrecords.com

File Under

Self-svengali'd baby-pop

R.I.Y.L.

Belle And Sebastian, Jane Birkin, France Gall, Françoise Hardy



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THE CREATURES

Hai Instinct

Shakespeare wrote of Cleopatra: "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety." Maybe there's something in all that kohl eye make-up, because those words could also apply to Siouxsie Sioux. Indeed, the eternally sexy Siouxsie and her curiously ageless drummer-husband Budgie had barely completed their comeback tour with the Banshees in 2002 when an impromptu drumming session between Budgie and Taiko drum master Leonard Eto touched off another fiercely singular record for their adjunct Creatures project. *Hai* finds

the Delphian duo once again indulging their most peculiar avant-garde inclinations. Their intentions are quickly clear as the record opens with four minutes of frantic, thunderous drumming, punctuated with occasional yelps from Siouxsie; the percussive mayhem slides right into the second track, "Around The World," which unabashedly flaunts the glamour of their life of endless world travels. From there, *Hai* becomes a frenzy of exotic, fearsomely precise percussion histrionics, dark atmospherics and Siouxsie's carnal wailing. It takes a bizarre turn by track six, "Tourniquet," a haunting, jazz-inflected dirge, and both "Further Nearer" and "City Island" follow in that vein. It's grandiose, deeply European music, but embraces Asian and African influences with aplomb. >>>KEN SCRUDATO

[Link](#)

www.thecreatures.com

File Under

Asian Gothic

R.I.Y.L.

Siouxsie And The Banshees,

Peter Murphy, PIL



[Link](#)

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File Under

Omaha prodigal son returns

R.I.Y.L.

Rival Schools, Cursive, Weezer

CRITERIA

En Garde Initial

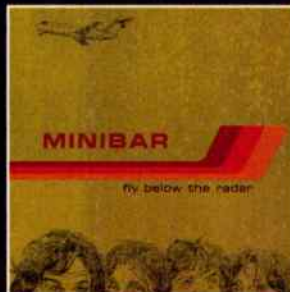
"I started a band that can't break up, cause it's down to one man." So sings Stephen Pedersen on the debut disc from his new "solo" outfit Criteria, and regardless of whether his latest effort is actually more stable than past stints in Cursive and the White Octave, it's likely catchier than both. Fusing Quicksand-influenced guitars and no-frills drumming to form a skeletal hard rock backdrop for his pissed-off *Pinkerton* musings, Pedersen taps into the confessional Omaha vibe and runs with it. He draws on his area's natural resources as well, drafting members of *Desa*

parecidos, the Good Life and Bright Eyes to fill in the gaps of his makeshift band, and the results are as unflinchingly tight as you would expect from folks who've spent their entire lives playing together. Sure, he may cop a Bright Eyes vocal melody on the opening track, and he's admittedly a direct descendent from the Tim Kasher school of rock writing, but Criteria is ripe with its own smart-alecky personality and melodic know-how. There are a few fleeting moments of generic rock progressions, but the majority of *En Garde* is filled with smart, self-referential vocals and intelligent variations on the chugging guitar rock style, making it one of the better records of its kind in a long time. >>>PETER D'ANGELO

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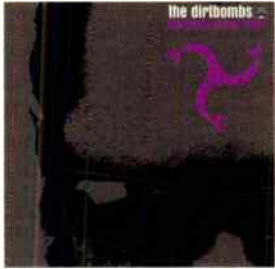
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THE DIRTBOMBS

Dangerous Magical Noise *In The Red*

Even newcomers to Detroit's rock hotbed will crease their foreheads and be ready to call bullshit about halfway through *Dangerous Magical Noise*, as Mick Collins, on the track "Stuck In The Garage," charges today's scads of late-to-the-party Stooges worshipers with "No motivation! Just imitation! All irritation!" Even if the barb hits close to the truth, it comes off as a classic pot/kettle argument since DBs frontman Collins practically impregnated Detroit with the sound of bass-free rock with his late '80s band the Gories, and bassist Jim Diamond works the boards

at his Ghetto Recorders studio, serving as the audio midwife for releases by heavy hitters like the White Stripes, the Go and Red Aunts. While the band's swaggering attack on "Start The Party," apart from the band's two-drum/two-bass attack, does little to separate it from the Mormon family-sized mob they've spawned, they pull off tricks most of the new-garage generation wouldn't think to try: supercharged pop on "Get It While You Can" and "Earthquake Heart" and tortured groove on "Thunder In The Sky" and "21st Century Fox." The well-placed creative turns and loose-limbed Kingsmen-like feel keep all traces of earnestness at bay and, while the odd generic Nugget like "Motor City Baby" does squash the momentum, just try to keep from laughing on the Soul Train dreams of "I'm Through With White Girls." >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

Link

www.dirtbombs.net

File Under

Garage rock papa-docs

R.I.Y.L.

The Gories, the Mooney Suzuki, the Kingsmen



DISBAND

In Small Rooms Ernest Jenning Record Co.

At its best, Disband recalls the nimble post-hardcore of forgotten San Francisco greats Hickey, who coupled punk's energy with prog-lite time signatures. Though relatively time-change free, "Dimmer" is Disband's Hickeyest track, gleefully speedbumping its earnest melodies with staccato drum fills and guitar riffs ripped straight from the mid-'90s Slowdime catalog. And best of all for emo/post-hardcore/Madlib-your-own-genre-name novices, not knowing Hickey or a single Slowdime act (Kerosene 454 4-evah!)

Link

www.heydisband.com

File Under

Mercurial post-hardcore

R.I.Y.L.

Polvo, Braid, Jawbox

doesn't preclude any groove-getting-on with *In Small Rooms*, the Chapel Hill, North Carolina band's first LP. Likewise, the obvious templates for standouts "Capture The Flag" (Jawbox) and "The Worst Kisser In The World" (Dinosaur Jr) mean nada. Disband knows how to write a hook, even if singer Greg Collins (he of the, at times, Kermit The Frog back-throated delivery) doesn't really know how to sing one. "Some Sunsets" boasts the disc's tenderest tune, but Collins, so used to yelping his way through stirring anthems like "Bears Will Kill You" and "Where's My Rocket," sings hesitantly, mistaking nerves for emotion. Yet "Some Sunsets" is but one song of 11—the other 10 cuts are fine (if predictable) indie rock. And with "Baby, Your Love Makes Me Want To Write My Congressman," Disband pulls off a decent impersonation of hometown heroes Polvo. Don't call it math rock—it's civics-rock! >>>YANCEY STRICKLER



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THE DISHES

3 File 13

If Eminem and Jack White's pinched-nose vocal deliveries didn't tip you off, consider the cat officially out of the bag: Midwestern people talk funny, projecting sounds from the high nasal passages instead of the diaphragm, the principle result of which is a lot of really long eeeeeee sounds attached to words where they really don't belong. Want more proof? Throw 3, the newest arty pile of garage-punk from Chicago's Dishes, and dig to singer/guitarist Sarah Staskauskas' linguistic tics on "Hot Wired," where the chorus becomes "hot wayeeerd" amidst a pile of "oh bay-

eeebayeeel"s and Kiki Yablon's full-barrel riffage. The high-tone sass of these 10 tracks acts more as an endearing quirk than a detriment, though, as the quartet freshens its take on a done-to-death form by beefing up a minimalist art-punk skeleton with garage's twin hallmarks of fuzz and distortion. Leadoff track "Got Something To Tell You" bears this out best, following a high-octane but commonplace opening with a six-minute jam that's as much "Pink Flag" as it is "T.V. Eye." A host of lean but muscular two-minute blasts follow the attention span-challenging opener, with the only variation coming on a cover of the Litter's "Action Woman" that adds a dollop of Motown girl-group syrup, albeit with the region's distinctive twang that makes the Beach Boys' riff on Southern feminine vocal patterns in "California Girls" seem petty by comparison. >>>CHAD "FLINT" SWIATECKI

Link

www.thedishes.com

File Under

Hot wayeeerd!

R.I.Y.L.

The Donnas, Von Bondies, the Cramps



THE DISTILLERS

Coral Fang Warner Bros.

It's fun that the first song on recent divorcée Brody Dalle's latest record is called "Drain The Blood"—a tease that the album could be a tell-all emotional bloodletting and peek inside the (by all gossip and speculation) fiercely bitter split between Dalle and Rancid frontman Tim Armstrong. There are allusions, with lines like "He's gone/ He's gone away" on the song's final bridge, but hoisting rumormongers on their own petards, the track is more an indictment of the guts-and-all thirst of the media and fans for the most private of secrets. Dalle plays it close to the

Link

www.thedistillers.com

File Under

Thick (celebrity) skin

R.I.Y.L.

Rancid's Rancid (the second one), Hole, Babes In Toyland

vest on *Coral Fang*, turning her torment inward and making the album a metaphor-heavy meditation (see the three rope- or noose-themed songs in a row) instead of a visceral screed. There's a similar musical expansion, here; the band sustains the breakneck drive it's always had a firm hand on ("Coral Fang," "Hall Of Mirrors") while adding "The Hunger," a slow-building goodbye letter that shares several DNA strands with Hole's "Northern Star," to its repertoire. Drawing the Dalle-Courtney Love connection out further, *Coral Fang* is akin to Hole's *Celebrity Skin* by channeling an emotional trauma (Dalle's divorce : Kurt Cobain's suicide, for those studying for the SATs) into a guarded but ultimately more rewarding artistic statement. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

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NEVER ENOUGH RECORDS



DIVERSE

One A.M. *Chocolate Industries*

Even without its starring MC, Diverse's *One A.M.* would stand out as one of the year's best debuts. The Chicago rapper shows love for his form (and impeccable taste) by enlisting some of indie's most eminent, and they return the love in spades. Prefuse 73 turns three tracks, including the highlight "Jus Biz," which finds Diverse idealistic ("The bottom line's not always dollar signs") and Prefuse surprisingly restrained—his glitches shuffle along with a sunny, blating bassline and his own backing vocals. While Madlib sprinkles vintage soul with "Ain't Right," RJD2 owns *One A.M.* with his

five tracks. "Certified" sports a churning guitar that interlocks with funk keyboards while electronic bleeps bounce around the beat. "Explosive" is just that, with sky-high drums and a nearly monotone bassline that guest Lyrics Born matches with a shotgun staccato. Tortoise's Jeff Parker fits right in, producing the jazzy ode "In Accordance." As for Diverse himself, he has the vocabulary, finesse and rashness of a slam poet—his accomplished flow is as self-defeating as it is unrelenting. He barely gives listeners a breath to absorb what he's saying, though brief moments of clarity find a boastful, but devoted rapper that's not ashamed to admit he's "one with the universe." But his lyrics are often so scattershot that calling him "Diverse" is putting it kindly. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

Link

www.chocolateindustries.net

File Under

Uprock and perplex

R.I.Y.L.

Del Tha Funkee Homosapien,

Acycalone, Prefuse 73,

Soul Position



ENVY

A Dead Sinking Story *Level Plane*

As if it weren't hard enough to decipher hardcore songs in English, take a stab at comprehending them in Japanese. Regardless of the language barrier (it's all just screaming anyway, right?), Toyko's Envy brings their sincere and unrelenting hardcore Stateside. The songs on their fourth LP, *A Dead Sinking Story*, are each more than five minutes of technical, multifaceted mayhem. Filled with crushing riffs, pummeling rhythms and gut-wrenching vocals, the jarring tunes are also recurrently inundated by lengthy, muted breakdowns and serene atmospheric soundscapes. On close examination, it's clear that the

lyrics (this is possible, since the CD booklet provides the lines in both Japanese and English) complement the intensity of the compositions; in the searing track "Unrepairable Gentleness" vocalist Tetsuya Fukagawa frenetically shouts, "Consider a life/ Grasp the memories given birth and rubbed out/ And seize a broken heart/ Which wishes for the last day and endures." The disc closes with "A Will Remains In The Ashes," a 13-minute emotional whirlwind of layered guitars and haunting vocals that fluctuate between passionate wails and soothing spoken words. Packed with poignant expressions of fury, sadness and hope, *A Dead Sinking Story* demonstrates that you don't have to know what Envy is saying to understand what they're feeling. >>>TRACEY JOHN

Link

www.level-plane.com

File Under

Hardcore with breathing room

R.I.Y.L.

Hopesfall, pre-Jupiter

Cave In, On The Might Of

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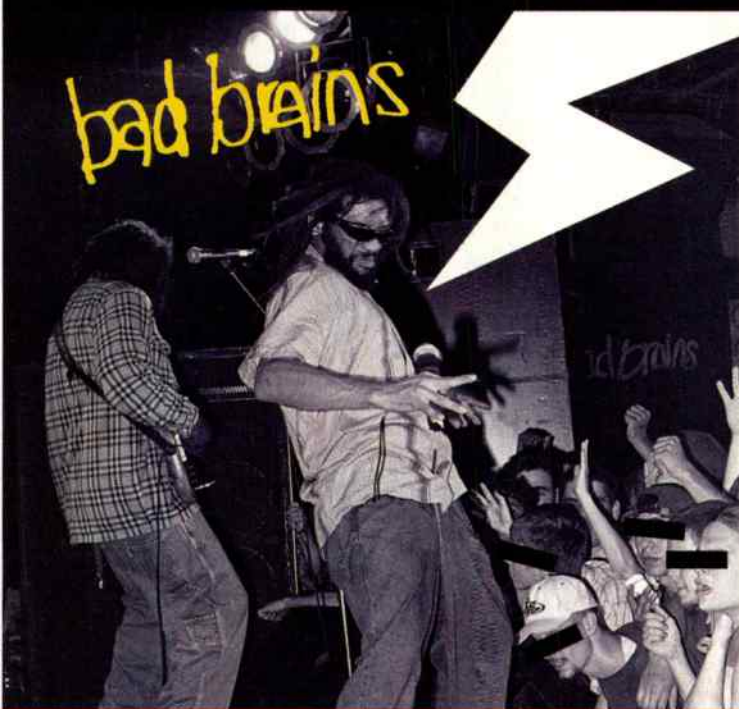
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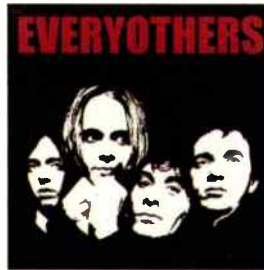


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THE EVERYOTHERS

The Everyothers *Hautlab*

Don't be surprised if the next time your thumbing through the *Weekly World News* you find a story about the members of a band that plugged a cable into a Ouija board, channeled the spirit of Ziggy Stardust, and then ran the output through a vintage distortion box to record their new album. As the Everyothers' self-titled debut begins, singer Owen McCarthy's tanned-leather croon washes smoothly over Joel Cannon's blue-glitter leads and John Melville's crisp beats, and you're transported to those days when David Bowie's moody glam was imbued with

the grime of Lou Reed and Iggy Pop. On tracks like "Make Up Something," the sinewy guitars punch and jab while the vocals coolly sashay. But this reverent slice of historical reenactment (even down to arrangements and tones that display a studious appreciation of mixing-board maestro Tony Visconti) occasionally leaves one wanting for Bowie's fluttering saxophone, honky-tonk keys and soulful backup swoons. And that's when it's most apparent that such a clear lineage can be both blessing and curse. While the Everyothers aren't Bowie, they are often what you might hope Bowie would sound like today: Ziggy Stardust without the grease paint and padded shoulders, just plain old rafter-shaking arena blues rock with a flair for drama. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



FIVE DEEZ

Kinkynasti *K7*

Five Deez are all over the hip-hop timeline, from the old-school to future funk. It's an interesting listen, going from their mellow jam "Another Love Affair" to the disco joint "Funky" to lounge trip-hop cut "The Ocean." But Deez are at their best when they bring the old-school back, as on the title track. On "Four Black Dudes," the um... four black dudes challenge the competition to an old-fashioned backyard battle: "Stop lyin', swearin' you a gun clap veteran/ You need to rock a turtle neck sweater an' keep it from gettin' chopped." And Slick Rick is honored on their version of "Hey Young World." When they explore

trip-hop, however, their mellow madness may lose some hip-hop heads; the heads have a point here. Producers Fat Jon The Ample Soul Physician and Sonic get points for being bold and experimental, but the Tricky-esque tracks sprinkled throughout the CD seem out of place. Though the group states very clearly in their intro that this is not your usual hip-hop set, Five Deez just sound better over more basic throwback beats, and when complemented by singers like Venus Malone and Amleset Solomon, than they do on cuts like "Tonight" or when Stones Throw star Dudley Perkins sings a quirky tune in his eccentric voice. This is seasoned hip-hop for a slightly sophisticated ear. >>>JESSICA KOSLOW



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GALACTIC

Ruckus Sanctuary

This jam-friendly party band has always shown respect for funk's roots, most obviously the brand pioneered by New Orleans' legendary Meters. Yet, secure with themselves, they've never shied away from experimentation, either. Rather, they've incorporated those influences to help forge an informed new funk sound. The instrumentals on *Ruckus* demonstrate their latest innovation most clearly. "Moil," for example, uses modern tech tools to turn a deep groove into a kind of "Jungle Boogie 2003"; "Bongo Joe" comes off as Spaghetti Western booty music. The last track, the digital DJ-ish "Mercamon," is solid evidence that funk will indeed have a life after hip-hop. Wordless, this music speaks loudly enough. Which brings us to "the Houseman." Galactic's most traditional aspect, soul vocalist Theryl DeClouet, is also their most debatable. He struts his soulful stuff nicely enough on the first track, "Bittersweet"; he carries the band's surprise take on General Public's "Tenderness." But even so, songs like this and the smooth "Uptown Odyssey" could have benefited from a falsetto or female vocalist like the one employed so effectively on the chain gang-meets-front porch blues of "Gypsy Fade." If Galactic were, as they claimed on a previous album title, *Late For The Future*, then the electro-soul-funk of *Ruckus* finds them nearly caught up, even at a surprisingly succinct 45 minutes. DeClouet's hit-or-miss appeal may be the only thing slowing them down now. >>>ROBIN A. ROTHMAN

Link

www.galacticfunk.com

File Under

Big Easy-going funk

R.I.Y.L.

The Meters, G. Love, groove-y

Medeski Martin And Wood



GORKY'S ZYGOTIC MYNCI

Sleep/Holiday Sanctuary

Gorky's Zygotic Mynci enjoyed a brief mid-'90s Next Big Thing moment. The quartet has since ceded to Super Furry Animals the lead role of Wales' musical ambassadors, abandoning in the process nearly all the kitchen-sink psychedelic excesses that marked them as an Irish Sea answer to the Elephant 6 contingent. *Sleep/Holiday* is so laid back and pastoral that it could be filed in the Celtic folk section without raising eyebrows. The Myncis maintain a fleeting connection to the indie crowd, however. "Mow The Lawn," *Sleep's* only rocker, is a by-the-numbers boogie, frontman Euros Childs' manic yelps notwithstanding, and the church-organ

Link

www.gorkys.com

File Under

Pastoral folk in indie

rock's clothing

R.I.Y.L.

The Coral, the Waterboys'

Fisherman's Blues, Bert

Jansch, the Essex Green

drone of the overly long "Pretty As A Bee" seems an obvious nod to Sigur Rós. The rest of the disc registers as more heartfelt, a wispy blend of piano and gently plucked guitar it's easy to imagine being performed by the fireside of a remote village pub. Childs' reedy voice and unique accent still lend an exotic flair, even without using the Welsh tongue the band occasionally employed in its early days. And like a sleepy pub evening, some of *Sleep/Holiday* fades into the background, but hopefully the Myncis can shake their remaining rock trappings and follow their hearts, as it's hard to argue with effortless breezy joys like "Eyes Of Green, Green, Green" and "Waking For Winter." >>>GLEN SARVADY

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HELICOPTER HELICOPTER

Wild Dogs With X-Ray Eyes Initial

Ah meat-and-potatoes alternative rock, where have you gone? Well, right here: Boston-based Helicopter Helicopter seem to answer that question with every propulsively poppy rock track on their latest, *Wild Dogs With X-Ray Eyes*. It's not a very well-kept secret that a simple combination—a couple of guitars, a bass and some drums, with the occasional keyboard—can make a meaningful, heartfelt racket, but most alt-anything bands we're dealt currently seem to have somehow forgotten that. Not so with this Boston-based foursome. Helicopter Helicopter don't bury their

songs in flashy gimmicks, or try too hard to smooth out originality into generic radio-ready sounds, yet the songs feel instantly familiar and uncommonly comfortable—and most certainly worthy of a listen. This music isn't about complex manifestos, or polemical philosophizing; they seem destined for far simpler, far more immediate and honest entertainment. For Example, "Harsh Light" is a big, bouncy delight; "Talk The Flyer Down" soars above the clouds on its simple pure pop power, and "Talented Socialites" sings like a diva with its chiming guitar lines and intertwined vocals. In all honesty, *Wild Dogs With X-Ray Eyes* is an entire album filled with 12 engaging, entirely pleasurable songs. The only shame of it is that those pleasures have come to be so rare. >>>JEFF BROWN

Link

www.helicopterhelicopter.com

File Under

Like alt-rock when alt-rock meant something

R.I.Y.L.

The Replacements, the Fastbacks, Guided By Voices



HERO PATTERN

Cut You Out Redi-Made

Hero Pattern is a guitar band from New Jersey; they effectively straddle the fence between those who'd hold being from the Land of Bruce and Jovi against them and folks who consider it an endorsement. For a first album, *Cut You Out* is a mature, well-crafted rock record resplendent with a sound that swings for the fences, and happily, reaches the seats more times than not. While this isn't a band who let swaggering rock clichés define their sound, most of this disc is almost too radio-ready: It's full of well-built arena rock, redolent of Tonic or Sister Hazel, with

Link

www.heropattern.com

File Under

Jersey drive

R.I.Y.L.

Sister Hazel, Tonic, Semisonic

robust melodies, heavy choruses and big, domineering guitars, with just a faint topnote of emo. Tracks like "What Do You Have To Say?" and "Watch" really have that post-grunge modern-rock feel nailed. On the title track, singer Jason Kundrath belts over gigantic power-pop guitar hooks lines like, "I'm gonna cut you out just to stop the bleeding/ I swear every time you touch me it leaves a bruise/ You're just a big mistake that I'm still repeating/ You're just another game that I'm bound to lose." It's damn catchy, but ouch. Someone give that guy a big hug and a cup of soup or something, quick. >>>JEFF BROWN

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HEY MERCEDES

Loses Control Vagrant

Bob Nanna has never really had "bite," at least no sentiment or inflection that would break skin. He's never had to; his riffs have never been perfunctory, always snaking and careening into solid bond, post-punk graph paper with his many six-string counterparts in Braid and now Hey Mercedes. It makes the alliterative, half sneer/half sincere lyricism go down a lot smoother. Braid immediately recalled the steel-trap power puzzles of Jawbox rather than the lithe lullabies of the Promise Ring. Sadly, Hey Mercedes has gradually pared that one-armed scissor into an agreeable, painless pop

stencil) and *Loses Control* is, ironically (given the title), the most measured, incombustible output of Nanna's career. With the exception of the busy staccato swipes and indelible palm-muted changeups in opener "Quality Revenge At Last," this second full-length is thoroughly docile. Even when Nanna smarmily informs a love interest that "they're playing your fucking song," he douses the grump in a bubbly "Wool" chorus. His romanticism harkens from the era of Atari the gaming system, not the Ataris' awful emo devolution, but the playing isn't inspired enough to match. Hey Mercedes seem too comfortable in their zone as the "radio-friendly Braid," unwilling to take compositional risks that would separate them from an increasingly generic pack. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

[Link](#)

www.heymercedes.com

[File Under](#)

[Twelve laps on the emo](#)

[hamster wheel](#)

[R.I.Y.L.](#)

[The Get Up Kids, Rainer Maria,](#)

[Burning Airlines](#)



WANDA JACKSON

Heart Trouble CMH

So, has your 65-year-old grandmother been teaming up with the Cramps lately? If your grandma's rockabilly queen Wanda Jackson, then the answer is "Yes, and she's also been working with Elvis Costello, Dave Alvin and Rosie Flores." Early rockers often didn't share in the kinds of riches that allowed performers of later decades to coast into their sunset years. And as a result, much like Muddy Waters or Howlin' Wolf before her, Jackson, in her sixth decade of service, has a raw edge you're not likely to hear from Mick Jagger. *Heart Trouble* is her first studio album in 15 years and features 16 (!) solid tracks of the Oklahoma Queen at

[Link](#)

www.wandajackson.com

[File Under](#)

[Never too old to rock 'n' roll](#)

[R.I.Y.L.](#)

[The Cramps, Rose Maddox,](#)

["old-time rock 'n' roll," but](#)

[the kind that'd kick Bob](#)

[Seger in the nuts](#)

her purest, tackling country, R&B and rockabilly with equal authority. Her backing band varies, often including Tom Waits' bassist Larry Taylor and session drummer Stephen Hodges (Waits, Bruce Cockburn), players who know how to keep a tight grip on a loose groove. No attempts are made to "update" her sound with gratuitous nods to modern-day hip-hop or even garage rock. Elvis Costello tastefully duets for Buck Owens' "Crying Time." The Cramps keep their psychobilly in check and Beck guitarist Smokey Hormel sticks to the essentials. You don't, after all, try to overpower the queen. Because even if she's 65, you can't. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



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File Under

Orchestral pop, without the snot-
and-tear-stained love songs

R.I.Y.L.

Mull Historical Society, Jonathan
Richman, the Essex Green

THE LADYBUG TRANSISTOR

The Ladybug Transistor Merge

Words like "fey" and "twee" get tossed in the direction of smart, orchestral rock bands far too liberally these days. Pity the poor band with a proclivity for retro songcraft and Bacharachian vocal richness, lest they be tossed in the pile alongside Belle And Sebastian and left to wither away. If there's any justice to be had on this mudball, Gary Olson and his cohorts in the Ladybug Transistor will skirt that fate and instead pick up the slack of the like-minded but creatively skidding Elephant 6 collective. The Brooklyn band's latest, self-titled album offers hope that that may come to pass, with Olson's regal, accessible compositions

often kicking off with a simple guitar/drums/piano combo before being joined by violin, vibes or cello that flesh out the songs but never crowd anything out. The songs where Olson (vocals, trumpet) takes the spotlight are all strong if somewhat interchangeable—distinguishing "Song For The Ending Day" from "These Days In Flames" at 100 paces may be an impossibility—but they make the venues for keyboardist/flautist/vocalist Sasha Bell damn near unforgettable. "Hangin' On The Line" jogs through a pristine rock (for their purposes) setup, but "The Places You'll Call Home" is the play-10-times-in-a-row killer, riding a heavenly flute counterpoint while Bell sings, "Hey, what is this weather?/ Baby, it's looking alright." While this disc is playing, it's hard to disagree. >>>CHAO SWIATECKI

MATES OF STATE

Team Boo Polyvinyl

Mates
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Link

www.polyvinylrecords.com

File Under

Connubial frisky fugue

R.I.Y.L.

Rainer Maria, the Anniversary,
Jejune

This third Mates Of State album opens with a salvo of neck-breaking, detuned crunch guitar, a flurry of Jason Hammel's unyielding, nuclear double bass, then froths to an explosive head as keyboardist Kori Gardner roars "GET THE FUCK UP!!!" Psyche. Yeah, like we don't know exactly what's coming on a Mates album. Gardner and Hammel are in actuality urbane newlyweds; the former knits and plays vintage organ, the latter plays Galaga and drums, and they shout/sing at each other over this buoyant dual instrument setup in a way that either drives you fucking bonkers or into ecstatic rapture. Maddeningly unpredictable time changes still abound and Gardner still plays like a maestro slumming at Ringling Bros. Basically, the Mates have written one charming, highly original, complex song and subsequently recorded 30 odd versions of it. These 12, while nowhere near as breathtaking as the first batch (*My Solo Project*), are a considerable improvement over the last (*Our Constant Concern*), which probably has much to do with *Solo Project* co-producer John Croslin's return to the board. "Ha Ha" and "Open Book" in particular are spiked with the amenable caterwauling that admirers will find, um, comfortably familiar. Just know that "Separate The People" ain't about no circle pit. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

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



THE MAVERICKS

The Mavericks *Sanctuary*

The Mavericks again play it deep, swanky, and un poquito twangy on their first release since 1998. The CD is eponymously titled (so is the band's 1990 debut) for a reason: It's a new beginning for a band once rumored to have split up. During the hiatus, singer Raul Malo released a solo album and hooked up with Los Super Seven, bassist Robert Reynolds worked with Swag, and seasoned L.A. guitarist Eddie Perez joined the fold. But practically everything old and lovable about the Mavericks is still in the mix and still terrifically engaging. "Time Goes

By" has simpatico singers Malo and guest Willie Nelson mixing and matching like they were born for the task. Malo's deep, burnished singing contrasts beautifully with Willie's reedy, Texas-tinted declarations as the two amble over rootsy, low-scorch guitars, oozing organ, chunky horn blasts and ever-intensifying stacks of nah-nah-nah vocals. Old influence Roy Orbison channels his way into "In My Dreams" and "Wondering," the latter soaked with nostalgia. And "Shine A Light" and "Would You Believe" are slabs of summery pop, spiked with Havana-born horns hinting at the Nashville band's original Miami homebase; the songs are easy to sing along with and recommended for car cruising. But about that sappy cover of the Hollies' "Air That I Breathe"? Take oxygen, as needed. >>>PHILIP BOOTH

Link

www.mavericksmusic.com

File Under

Malo = good

R.I.Y.L.

Raul Malo, Chris Isaak,

k.d. lang



THE MOLES

On The Street *Wishing Tree*

Richard Davies led the orchestra pop movement of the mid-'90s, both as a solo artist (see 1996's seminal *There's Never Been A Crowd Like This*) and in his brilliant one-off collaboration with Eric Matthews as Cardinal. The Moles—Davies' first band—were more Oz pop than orch-pop; the Sydney, Australia band bridged the gap between the Verlaines, the Bats and the Clean, and the layered chamber-pop that Davies would later perfect. *On The Street* includes most of the Moles' only full-length, 1992's *Untune The Sky* (Davies appropriated the Moles

Link

www.wishingtreerecords.com

File Under

Arty Aussies

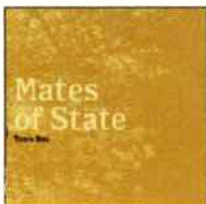
R.I.Y.L.

The Verlaines, Cardinal,

the Olivia Tremor Control

moniker for his first solo album, 1994's *Instinct*), plus tracks from their two EPs and two singles. From the psychedelic garage rock of "What's The New Mary Jane" (not a Beatles cover although a bit Beatles-esque) to the dreamy meditation "This Is A Happy Garden" to "Bury Me Happy," with its ringing guitar straight out of the La's "There She Goes," the Moles were a great pop band. But they were also arty and experimental, evidenced not only by *Rare And Weird*, the accompanying CD of intermittently interesting obscurities, but also by the droning, Wire-y "Wires," the Joy Division-like rumble of "Crown Souls," and the trippy, organ-based "Breathe Me In." The Moles, by definition, were comfortable in the underground, but *On The Street*, thankfully, lets them see the light again. >>>STEVE KLUNGE

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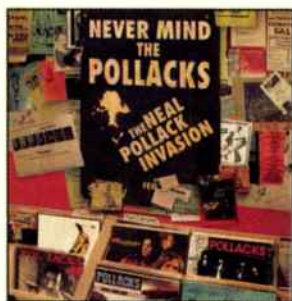
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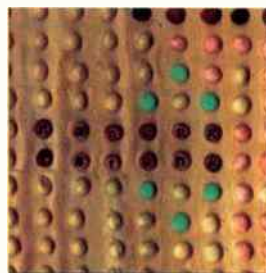
Dressy Bessy DRESSY BESSY

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NANANG TATANG

Muki Tiger Style

Nanang Tatang is the sound of Dan Littleton and Elizabeth Mitchell, co-founders of Ida, taking things—as anyone familiar with that band might expect—very slowly. Ida's albums have always felt like the audio complement to a day at a luxurious spa, and this relaxing afternoon tea of a disc is no exception. Recorded over the past three years in the couple's home studio that moved from New York City to Rhode Island as they took on parenthood, *Muki* works along similar melodic and hypnotic lines. Mitchell sings in gorgeous resignation, while Littleton crafts minimalist landscapes with piano, guitar, harmonium and even drum machines where the sound of the sea is just out of reach. The bucolic setting puts an extra "easy" in their easy-listening ways, with the harmonium creating the illusion of motionless time. They occasionally aim for a discordant harmony to unsettle things. Mitchell sounds nearly stressed for "Daydreaming (And I'm Thinking Of U)" as her notes hold on instead of customarily dropping off. Mostly, however, these are Brian Eno's ambient exercises recrafted into songform and given lyrics you'd expect to read in a small literary book where abstract paintings illustrate the private epigrammatic thoughts. Essentially it's new age music for people who prefer a bit of shape and perspective in their effort to achieve bliss. >>>ROB O'CONNOR

Link

www.tigerstylerrecords.com

File Under

Sounds for the spa

R.I.Y.L.

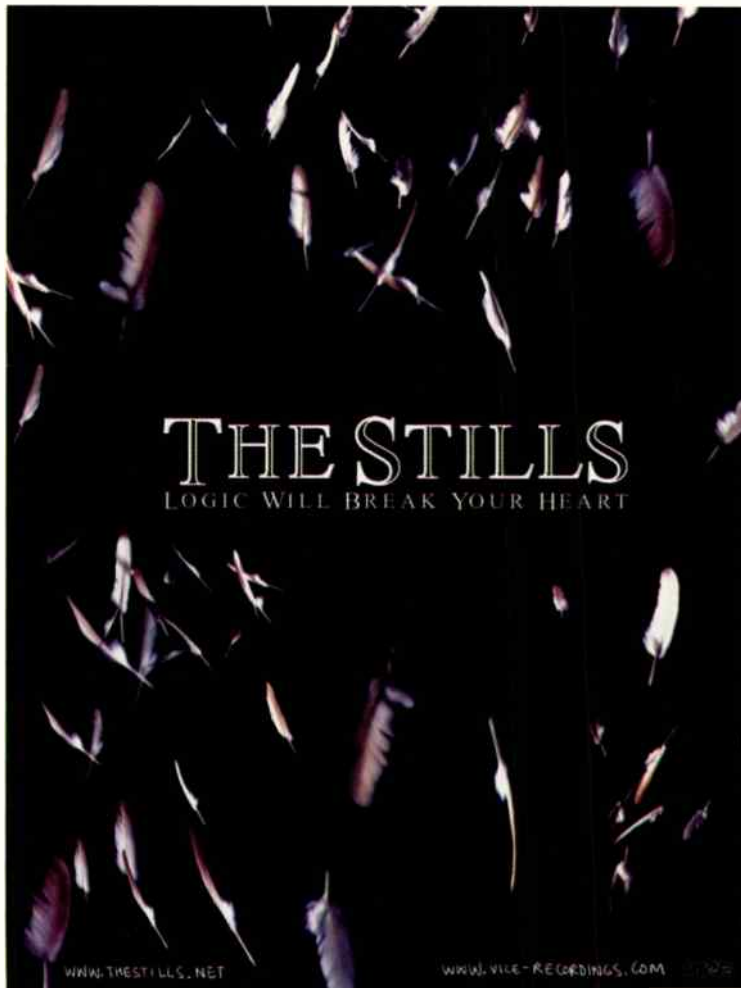
Ida, Low, Pale Horse And Rider

...exuberantly delivered lyrics and head-bopping choruses. On its most accomplished album, Dressy Bessy pulls itself from the ranks of other pop outfits... **MAGNET**

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BETH ORTON

The Other Side Of Daybreak Astralwerks

The best remixes are those that come off not as altered versions of the original song, but as actual collaborative efforts between two artists. And Beth Orton knows how to pick 'em. Four Tet's reconstructed versions of "Carmella" and the title track from her *Daybreaker* disc make it clear why he was an obvious choice: The man knows what he's doing. With his string samples and music-box clinks and clonks, Four Tet actually improves on the originals of both; the same can be said for U.K. hip-hop pioneer Roots Manuva, who also takes on "Daybreaker," bringing it into

Link

www.bethorton.mu

File Under

Even better than the real thing

R.I.Y.L.

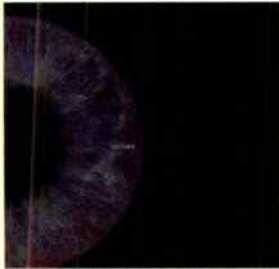
Four Tet, Lamb,

Sarah McLachlan

dub-tastic video game territory, tossing in his own smoky rhymes in the process. But before getting into Two Lone Swordsmen's spaced-out electro take on "Anywhere," it should be noted that *The Other Side Of Daybreak* isn't just a remix collection: The disc also contains Orton's live acoustic take on "Concrete Sky," album cast-offs like the bittersweet "Ali's Waltz" and the rollicking "Bobby Gentry," the dark, beat-heavy "Beautiful World" and a stripped-down take on the Five Stairsteps' "Ooh Child." Meanwhile, keep in mind that Orton is prone to collaborations to begin with, and *The Other Side* starts to look like exactly that: not so much a B-sides/rarities collection as a look at the same work in a different, but no less appealing, light. >>>DOUG LEVY



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



PLASTIKMAN

Closer M-nus/Novamute

Many a minimal techno freak will swear that Richie Hawtin is God, and if he can be believed on *Closer*, his first Plastikman full-length in five years, Hawtin agrees. He makes his major vocal foray on the jittery opener "Ask Yourself" on which he growls, "I know everything," and then, "I am everything." Always the frugal deity, Hawtin has held onto his minimalist leanings with such fervor that they feel genetically encoded. This makes for an effectively creepy album that's more hypnotic than anything that passes for trance. But it's often about as inspiring as a metronome. Hawtin is too content

Link

www.richiehawtin.com

File Under

Lead us not into abundance

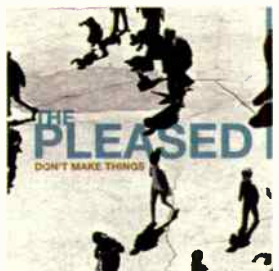
R.I.Y.L.

Jeff Mills, M. Mayer, Carsten

Jost, Matthew Herbert's

Let's All Make Mistakes

to let his same-y tracks bleed into each other. While the first half of *Closer* is dour almost to the point of downtempo, the pace picks up on "Headcase" and "Pingpong." Both illustrate the admirable risk Hawtin repeats—he starves listeners with sparseness so that they can truly appreciate variation (the glitchy hi-hats that cameo on both tracks). But only on "Mind In Rewind" does Hawtin go further. While it's substantial with toiling polyrhythms, a subtle, emotional string melody and those cantankerous vocals, it's a chiller that comes off as lean as ever. "Rewind" is exciting because it's paradoxical. The bulk of *Closer*, though, shows that work tossed off hallowed hands is still tossed off. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK



THE PLEASED

Don't Make Things Big Wheel Recreation

After two years of skinny ties and stabbing guitars, it's fair to wonder whether our little "garage" rock renaissance is reaching the end point of diminishing returns. For evidence that the end is nigh, or should be, new album *Don't Make Things* by the Pleased seems like a good place to look: The San Francisco five-piece bring the usual influences to their work (Velvets, Television, the Smiths), and put across that same-old, same-old louche energy available from any number of Strokesalike bands. Frontman Rich Good's vocals alternately recall French Kick Nick Stumpf and the

Link

www.thepleased.com

File Under

Hod-rod garage rock

R.I.Y.L.

The Walkmen, Interpol,

the French Kicks

Walkmen's Ham Leithauser, and like the Walkmen, the Pleased lean toward the lush. The basslines recall Interpol. And so on. So it's a happy surprise to find that *Don't Make Things* makes a good case that there's still some magic to be mined from them thar sounds. Every song is cannily arranged and produced, and over the course of the album the momentum never flags; it's all darkly elegant and more than a little sexy, and you can hear a distinctive, wonderful ambition here and there. Best-case scenario, this is a band poised (like Radiohead, circa *Pablo Honey*) to outgrow their influences in a big way—and it's a good bet they will, since the Pleased seem to be restless with those influences already. >>>MAYA SINGER

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THE ROSEBUDS

The Rosebuds Make Out Merge

The Rosebuds are a three-piece from Raleigh, North Carolina known locally for their high-energy live shows—who else could successfully create a dance party playing "Superstition" on a Casio? The band's stellar debut proves they can effectively translate a dynamic live show to disc, delivering an album jam-packed with some of the most fun indie pop in years. Produced by Brian Paulson (Superchunk, Wilco), *Make Out* kicks off with a strummy guitar intro on "Back To Boston," with the band's energy and confidence gradually increasing as the track progresses. The bouncy pop sounds of "What Can I Do?," with its

infectious singalong lyrics and perfectly timed handclaps, bring to mind another North Carolinian band, Ashley Stove, while Southern influences surface yet again in "Big Heartbreak," a slightly countrified, mid-tempo track with galloping drum beats. The heavy organ-style keys and Ivan Howard's soothing vocals in the closer, "Make Out Song," should make wooing the guy or girl of your choice a snap. Lyrically, there's not a lot of challenging material here—the focus is on light-hearted subjects like going to rock shows and romance. The Rosebuds' optimistic, hook-laden songs should export their local acclaim to indie-pop audiences across the continent. >>>CAROLINE BOROLLA

Link

www.therosebuds.com

File Under

Dance mix USA, Southern style

R.I.Y.L.

Ashley Stove, Rilo Kiley,
pre-Pinkerton Weezer,
later Superchunk

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SEVENDUST

Seasons TVT

Seasons is Sevendust's fourth album, and for those who've been following the band since its self-titled debut, it's a jaw-dropping shock that this Atlanta hard rock band isn't a platinum-seller by now. Sevendust doles out radio rock, replete with monstrous hooks, catchy choruses and riffs edgy enough to ignite more than a few dangerous moshpits. The band also exudes a genuine, straight-from-the-heart vibe, thanks to frontman Lajon Witherspoon's soulful, breathlessly impassioned delivery. But, for some reason there's a missed connection between Sevendust and the mass media forces that take a

band from well-loved to ubiquitous, and it's sad, because this is the kind of radio-friendly rock you might actually want to crank up on a road trip. Perhaps the smartly put-together rock 'n' roll on *Seasons* will allow Sevendust to take that next step. Moody, starin'-at-the-shoes rock like Staind or Diet Grunge like Creed may still clog the bowels of commercial radio, but the bitter "Enemy" or the heartfelt title track from *Seasons* could cleanse rock airwaves like an enema. *Seasons* is a clinic of how to write a solid, straightforward song: The band doesn't color outside the lines, but it doesn't need to—the work it does within them is impressive enough. They say "Keep it simple, stupid" for a reason, and *Seasons* is simple without being boring. >>>AMY SCJARRETTO

Link

www.sevendust.com

File Under

Platinum-sized rock with a
heart of gold
R.I.Y.L.

Recent Metallica,
Stone Sour, Saliva



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



SISTER SONNY

The Bandit Lab Five One Inc.

Sister Sonny hails from that musically fecund outpost of the far north (Bergen, Norway) which has spawned such recent notables as Kings Of Convenience, Röyksopp and Poor Rich Ones—all bands that don't seem to get enough sun, so instead spend innumerable hours noodling around in dank practice spaces and cozy wood-paneled recording studios. Whereas the Bands of Bergen's collective calling card has often been ethereally melancholic melodies swathed in warm atmospheric arrangements, Sister Sonny's *The Bandit Lab*, (billed as a '2

record set on 1 compact-disc') should dispel any notion that Norway's offerings are of only one strain. Only the band's second official Stateside release, this self-proclaimed sprawling exploration of musical styles and motifs is both ambitious and satisfying; a culmination of nearly 10 years of EPs and full-lengths that have brought the band recognition overseas and even an appearance at Norway's version of the Grammys. From the disco-meets-Britpop "Stupid And The Silver Fox," to the just plain bizarre circus waltz "Neon Party" and the ultracool pop-infused "Leonard In Drag," the disc's stylistically eclectic offering grows on you with each new listen. More importantly, the songs are crafted with such exquisite care that *The Bandit Lab* should manage to quickly steal your affection in whatever mood it finds you. >>>KARL WACHTER

Link

www.sistersonny.com

File Under

Northern Cool

R.I.Y.L.

Spiritualized, Röyksopp, Pulp



SOUTH

With The Tides Kinetic

From *Here On In*, South's debut, winsomely mixed post-Radiohead Britpop with fascinating interludes of DJ electronics that both expanded the scope of the album and lent it an air of experimentalism. While that album is a bit schizophrenic, it introduced a band that seemed eager to explore whatever ideas came its way. For *With The Tides*, the London-based trio traded producer James Lavelle (U.N.K.L.E.) for Dave Eringa (Idlewild, Ash), and gone are the forays into atmospheric that helped distinguish South from any number of

Link

www.south.uk.net

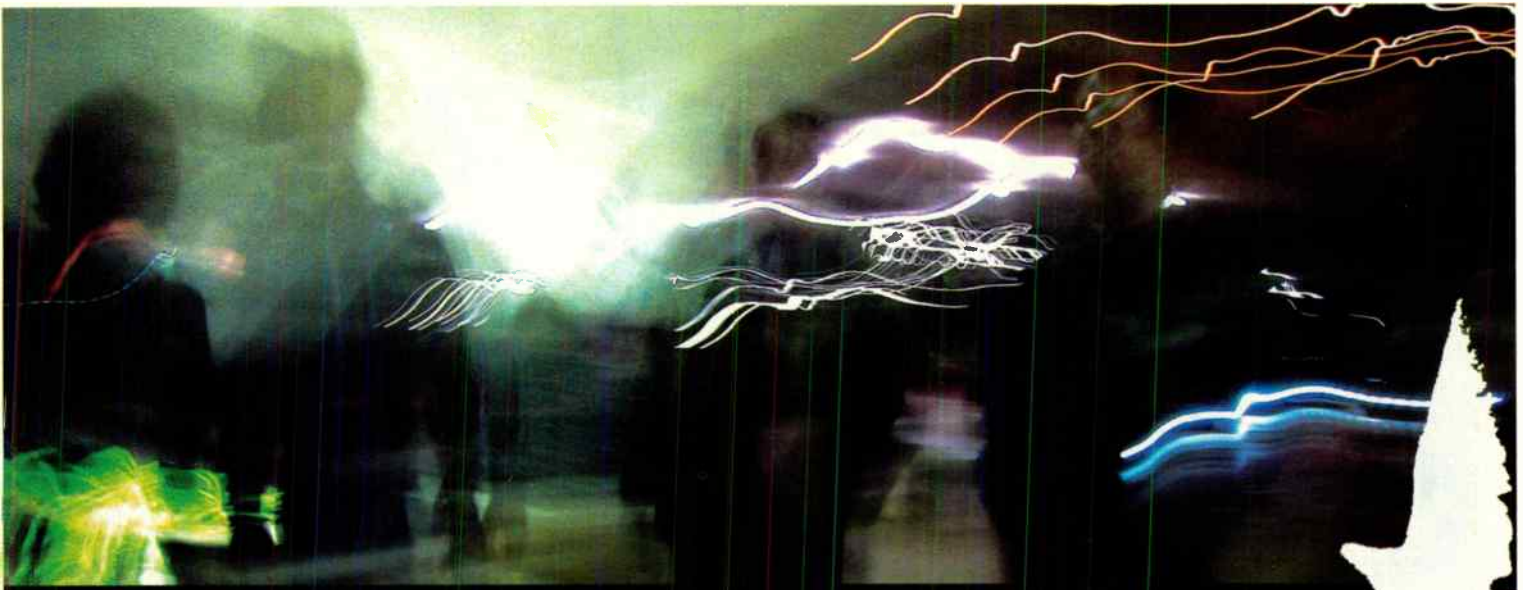
File Under

OK computing

R.I.Y.L.

Radiohead, Coldplay, Elbow

baby Radioheads. What's left are sweeping anthems and melancholy ballads full of moaning vocals and ringing guitars, and while they're nice enough, they are sadly faceless. "Colours In Waves" and "Straight Lines To Badlands" both borrow heavily from "Paranoid Android," and South's OK Computer fixation drifts throughout *With The Tides*. "Motiveless Crime" blends cinematic strings, New Order-like guitars, and galloping drums, and the banjo-laced "Loosen Your Hold" and the grand "Natural Disasters" integrate Zombies-like harmony vocals, but these creative touches don't outweigh bombastic fluff such as "Fragile Day." *With The Tides* ends with "Threadbare," which steals another page out of the Thom Yorke fakebook, this one with the notes on fuzzed-out vocals and grandiose crescendos. "I've lost my thread/ Could be forever," sings Joel Cadbury, and that's an apt summary of South's current direction. >>>STEVE KLINGE



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SPOTTISWOODE AND HIS ENEMIES

Building A Road Grantham Dispatch

Jonathan Spottiswoode is an Englishman in New York with a skewed artistic vision. His Enemies are a six-piece band with an instrumental palette (clarinet, mandolin, Wurlitzer) resembling Tindersticks without the brooding darkness. They're versatile enough to flex from the title track's Muscle Shoals R&B to the mariachi flavorings of "Youngest Child." Nonetheless, much of *Building A Road* might come off as polite blues rock without iconoclastic touches like the sax bleats on the building-to-cacaphony "Drunk" or the juxtaposition of "Wild Thing" guitar riffing with horn charts on "Lazarus." Atop this smorgasbord,

Building A Road weaves a narrative of sybaritic living, a botched relationship and ultimately redemption, with Spottiswoode imparting his tales of hedonism and spirituality in a conversational baritone that recalls Leonard Cohen. Spottiswoode can be hilarious in the role of cad. His backhanded mea culpa in "I Didn't Hurt You Intentionally" offers, "She's not your equal, I've heard it said/ But at least she forgives me when I mess with her head," and the slinky come-on "Play Me In Your Bedroom" asks that final favor of his estranged lover if she won't take him back. Spottiswoode's call-and-response with a smoldering gospel choir is among the disc's greatest charms. More focused than his self-titled debut, *Building A Road* finds Spottiswoode still aiming for the grand gesture and increasingly hitting his mark. >>>GLEN SARVAOY

Link

www.spottiswoode.com

File Under

Men behaving badly, but copping to it

R.I.Y.L.

Tindersticks, Leonard Cohen, Robbie Robertson, Daniel Lanois



JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS

Streetcore Helicat

Posthumous albums always have a special poignancy, especially when they come from an icon. And Strummer, who died last December at age 50, was an icon for his work with the Clash. But more than that, in recent years he'd reinvented his music with the Mescaleros, exploring world music and discovering what it means to be English in the modern, multicultural world. Some of the 10 tracks here had been completed before his death, and some, finished by the band and others (such as the rough acoustic "Long Shadow")

remain appealingly raw. Strummer was obviously distanced enough from his past to be self-referential, with "London's Burning" references on "Burnin' Streets" and a mention of "London Calling" on the dreamtime radio broadcast of "Midnight Jam." But he was also living in the present on the fiery, almost post-apocalyptic "Coma Girl" or the intensity of "Get Down Moses." At its best, this is the equal of Strummer's greatest work, but it's impossible not to feel that it's incomplete. That's definitely not the case with his stripped-down take on Bob Marley's "Redemption Song," though. The reggae god's most heartfelt song becomes a naked statement in Strummer's hands, the kind of epitaph any man could wish for. This album isn't perfect, but it's human and passionate—the way the man himself always was. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

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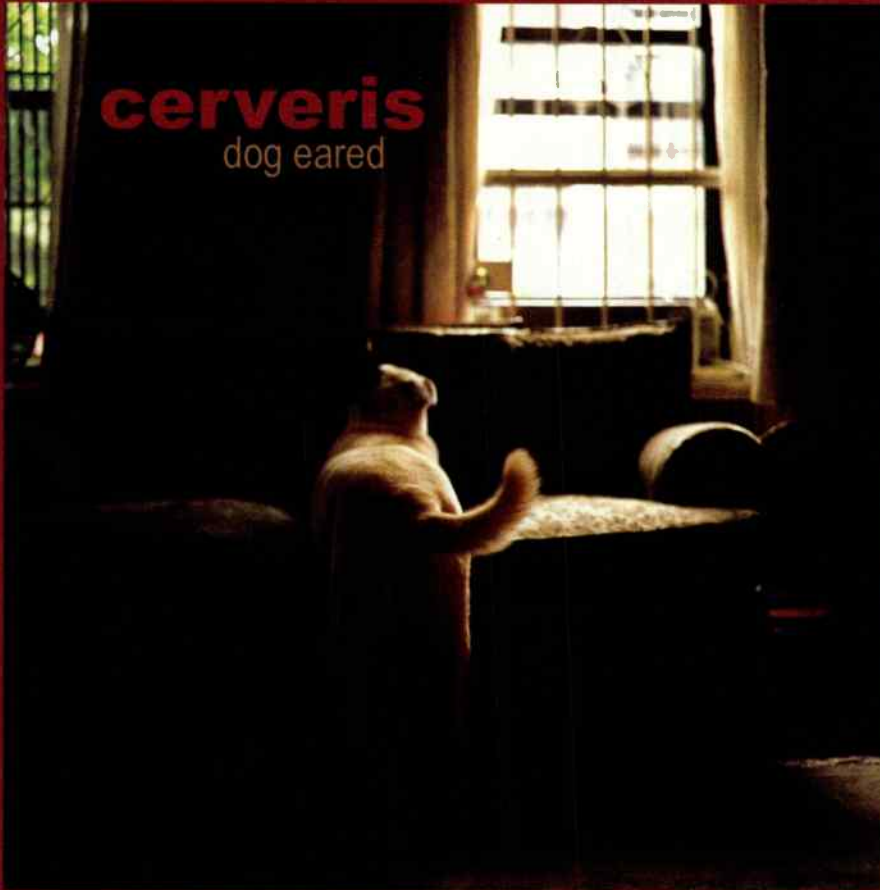
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R.I.P.

R.I.Y.L.

The Clash, Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie



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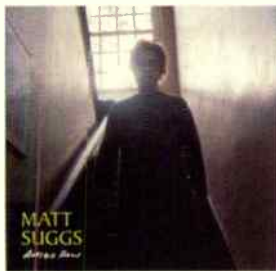
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MATT SUGGS

Amigo Row Merge

Matt Suggs' solo debut, *Golden Days Before They End*, was released two years after the demise of Butterglory, driving home the point that his days as one half of that illustrious '90s indie-rock duo were long gone. *Amigo Row*, Suggs' sophomore effort, is as beautifully arranged as *Golden*, featuring warm guitar pop tinged with country and blues. The album's 11 mature, well-developed songs rely heavily on Suggs' piano prowess and his Ray Davis-meets-Stephen Malkmus vocals, as well as on Thee Higher Burning Fire, the Brooklyn-based, Velvets-influ-

Link
www.mattsuggs.com
File Under
I can't believe its not Butterglory
R.I.Y.L.
Early Kinks, Stephen Malkmus
And The Jicks, the Ladybug
Transistor

enced band that accompanies him. Setting the album's moody tone is the opener "Father," a dramatic, slightly dark piano ballad, while more upbeat is the midtempo jangly pop of "Frontier Towne (O Janie)," with falsetto backing vocals appearing in the chorus. You'll need to dig deep to find remnants of Suggs' previous band's endeavors in most of the songs here, the exception being the album's anthemic, all-out rocker "Calm Down." Opening with intense pounding on the snare, the song gradually adds in rumbly bass lines, crisp guitar work and delicate keys, which combined with Suggs' ever-confident vocals, make it one of the disc's defining moments. *Amigo Row* is another fine testament to Suggs' powerful songwriting ability—one that deserves wider attention. >>>CAROLINE BOROLLA



TRUE LOVE

I Was Accident Not Lame

"Did you sleep with the radio on?" True Love asks on the logically titled "Radio On"—and it's not rhetorical. Radio, when it meant something, means something to this band. How else do you account for singing songs (in three-part harmony) about girls, rock and girls who love rock? One of the intriguing things about *I Was Accident*, other than its fearless embrace of golden-age guitar pop, is that all members of this Jersey trio sing lead. Identifiable styles emerge among the three—one sometimes like *Brutal Youth*-era Costello, one like Bob Pollard with serious vocal chops, the

Link
www.trueloverocks.com
File Under
Guitar pop, you gotta problem
with that?
R.I.Y.L.
Matthew Sweet, Teenage
Fanclub, Badfinger

other kind of like a young Roger Daltry when he wasn't trying to belt every line—but overall, their styles are cohesive enough to not be distracting. The same with the songwriting. "Burn Rubber" sounds like when alt-rock bands tripped over themselves to claim Big Star as an influence, until a huge wave of tight harmony crashes over the whole thing, as if ProTools had an "ELO" button. "Throwing Back The Ring," which features Television's Richard Lloyd on guitar, boasts a Badfinger-worthy chorus leavened by its lyric, "Oh my God, all of the shit that's going on." And the effect of the brilliantly catchy bridge on "Don't Mean Anything" actually recalls a line from another song, "Mr. Sad": "Have you ever been faced/ With a smile you could not erase?" >>>FRANK MANSFIELD

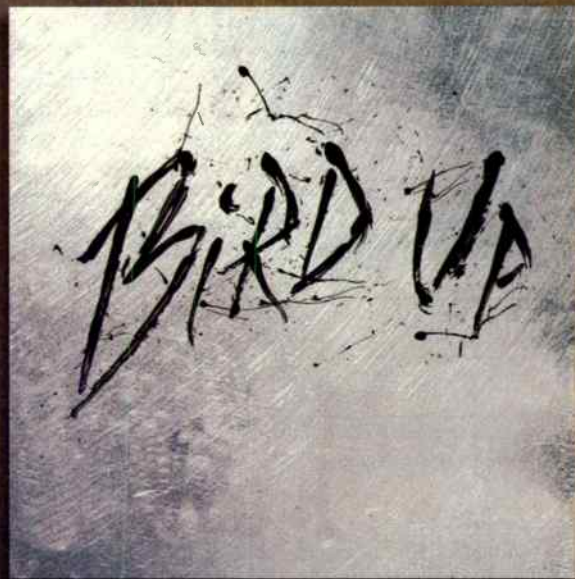
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THE TWILIGHT SINGERS

BlackBerry Belle Birdman/One Little Indian

No doubt it's happened to you. You're walking down the street late at night, and there they are: two strangers—lovers, you realize—in the heat of a pitched private battle they've taken aggressively public. Like muscle revealed by flayed skin, pain and betrayal and recrimination are laid bare to a world that shouldn't see it—and tact decrees you avert your eyes and move on. But you can't. It's too true. Ex-Afghan Whigs frontman Greg Dulli makes art of that experience. The Whigs' masterpiece, *Gentlemen*, was unsettling precisely because it was at once terrifyingly raw and terri-

fyingly private, a concept album about vampiric love that won't die, no matter how many stakes the principals drive into its heart. Dulli's first post-Whigs album, *Twilight As Played By The Twilight Singers*, turned down the volume on the intensity, weaving a jazzy atmosphere around his typically R&B- and punk-influenced sound. Follow-up *BlackBerry Belle* keeps the sonic experimentation going, notably in its hip-hop beats, but Dulli's back in full-throttle guitar and vocal form. The album is gorgeously crafted ("Papillon" and "Fat City" are particularly swoon-inducing), but in feeling it's Whigs wild and Whigs raunchy. It's a little overwrought, but that's the point: *This*, Dulli seems to assert, is the intensity with which love should be waged. >>>MAYA SINGER

Link

www.thetwilightingers.com

File Under

More Songs For Lovers

And Fighters

R.I.Y.L.

The Afghan Whigs,

Jeff Buckley, Alpha



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Verve Remixed 2 Verve

Why assign the latest batch of so-fresh DJs and other artists to dig into and remix jazz gems of earlier vintage? Because it's there, cynics might say: Verve is loaded down with a wealth of viable, available material, so it makes good economic sense to freshen up the tracks for consumption by a new generation. Regardless of the obvious financial calculations, the label's second collection of dancefloor remixes works well enough. There's nothing startling or definitive here, but producers Dahlia Ambach Caplin and Jason Olaine have overseen several intriguing collaborations, including Dan The Automator's percolating, backbeat-slapping take on the Latin soul rhythms of Willie Bobo's "Fried Neckbones And Some Home Fries," and Matthew Herbert's moody, absolutely haunting reworking of Oscar Brown, Jr.'s stirring "Brother Where Are You," injected with hand claps and ethereal background vocals. The bass throb and chattering percussion of Dizzy Gillespie's classic "Manteca" are enhanced with a Funky Lowlifes remix, Gotan Project adds complementary bleeps and squiggles to Sarah Vaughan's lovably kitschy "Whatever Lola Wants," and Koop amps up the dreamy feel of Astrud Gilberto's "Here's That Rainy Day." Kudos to Verve for giving more than lip service to the notion of new interpretations leading listeners back to the old-school sources; a companion disc, *Verve Unmixed*, offers the original versions of all 14 tracks heard on *Remixed 2*. Bonus essay question: Compare and contrast. >>>PHILIP BOOTH

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www.ververemixed.com

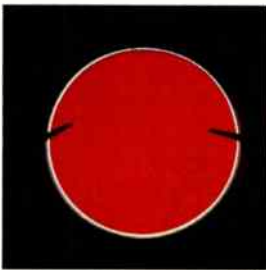
File Under

Acid jazz will eat itself

R.I.Y.L.

Verve Remixed, Dan The

Automator, Matthew Herbert



LUKE VIBERT

YosepH Warp

The early days of Chicago house taught us that house is a feeling, with an ubiquitous, preachy sample from Chuck Roberts. Who knew that Luke Vibert was paying such close attention? YosepH is his musical love letter to the Roland TB-303, the synthesizer responsible for the wailing sound-stabs and moaning basslines that helped define acid house (dig the punny "pH" of the album's title). But instead of a straightforward, stomping salute, Vibert turns out subtler homage. YosepH does for the late '80s and early '90s what Metro Area's full-length debut did for the preceding musi-

Link

www.brainwashed.com/vibert

File Under

Revolution 303

R.I.Y.L.

Larry Heard, Metro Area,

Plaid, 808 State, LFO

cal decade—both subdue their club influences to result in swank that's just shy of danceable. Sure, the beats of "Slowfast" percolate with caffeinated fervor and the title track evokes old-school Kevin Saunderson at his crabbiest, but Vibert's hip-hop influence is unshakable. He spends most of YosepH nodding his head and playing it cool. As ADHD-inflicted synths bounce all around a track like "Syntax," chiller breaks help keep them in check. Even YosepH's most meta/obvious moment, "I Love Acid," is too cool for elation—it struts along as robo-vocals rhapsodize. "I love acid/ Move your mind, move your feet," we're told, though Vibert's guttural basslines (along with the bulk of YosepH) end up landing in the middle of the two, right where you can feel 'em. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK



WHEAT

Per Second, Per Second, Per Second...

Every Second Aware/Columbia

Wheat's *Per Second, Per Second, Per Second... Every Second* opens with "I Met A Girl," a song so joyous that it threatens to cancel out everything else in its wake. With a big, stuttering beat, ricocheting guitars, and Scott Levesque's tenor voice singing with eager desperation, "I met a girl I'd like to know better," the song is a summery treat. Fortunately, the rest of Wheat's third album, while not quite as over-the-top exuberant as its lead track, isn't a letdown. It's full of soaring melodies, succulent harmonies, and lush layers.

Link

www.wheatmusic.com

File Under

Jangly, dreamy pop, done right

R.I.Y.L.

The Pernice Brothers, Posies,

Brendan Benson

Like its predecessor, 1999's seductive *Hope And Adams*, *Per Second* was produced by Dave Fridmann, whose hand is visible in the occasional electronic effects that burble in the background and in the crisply layered harmonies rising in the foreground. But Wheat has more in common with classicists like Tom Petty and the Pernice Brothers than with Fridmann cohorts like Mercury Rev or the Flaming Lips; what the Massachusetts trio loves best are memorable melodies and irresistible hooks, regardless of whether the songs are bittersweet or just plain sweet. With the murmuring "Hey, So Long Ohio" and the soft lullaby "The Beginner" at one end of the spectrum and the reverberating "World United Already" and rolling, thumping "These Are The Things" at the other, *Per Second* is a high-spirited, cheery treat. >>>STEVE KLINGE



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2 GUIDED BY VOICES <i>Earthquake Glue</i> Matador	27 QUASI <i>Hot Shit</i> Touch And Go	52 KILLING JOKE <i>Killing Joke</i> Red Ink/Zuma/Epic
3 MY MORNING JACKET <i>It Still Moves</i> ATO/RCA	28 VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Verve Remixed 2</i> Verve	53 SMALL BROWN BIKE <i>The River Bed</i> Lookout!
4 PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES <i>The New Romance</i> Matador	29 MANDO DIAO <i>Bring 'Em In</i> Mute	54 IGGY POP <i>Skull Ring</i> Virgin
5 BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB <i>Take Them On, On Your Own</i> Virgin	30 MOJAVE 3 <i>Sprout And Rafter</i> 4AD/Beggars Group	55 LAGUARDIA <i>Welcome To The Middle</i> Universal
6 THE RAVEONETTES <i>Chari Gang Of Love</i> Columbia	31 STEVE BURNS <i>Songs For Dustmites</i> [PIAS] America	56 BJÖRK <i>Live Box 1993-2002</i> One Little Indian
7 BEULAH <i>Yoko</i> Velocette	32 JOSH ROUSE <i>1972</i> Rykodisc	57 ANDREW W.K. <i>The Wolf</i> Island
8 SPIRITUALIZED <i>Amazing Grace</i> Spaceman/Sanctuary	33 THE WRENS <i>The Meadowlands</i> Absolutely Kosher	58 BEN LEE <i>Hey You, Yes You</i> Red Ink/F2
9 THE WEAKERTHANS <i>Reconstruction Site</i> Epitaph	34 BLACK BOX RECORDER <i>Pain-chronica</i> One Little Indian	59 NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS <i>Polaris</i> Tone-Cool/ATO
10 DRESSY BESSY <i>Dressy Bessy</i> Kindercore	35 PENNYWISE <i>From The Ashes</i> Epitaph	60 THE MARS VOLTA <i>De-Loused In The Comatorium</i> GSL/Strummer/Universal
11 FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS <i>Show Me Your Tears</i> spinART	36 SUPER FURRY ANIMALS <i>Phantom Power</i> XL/Beggars Group	61 BRITISH SEA POWER <i>The Decline Of British Sea Power</i> Rough Trade-Sanctuary
12 THE DANDY WARHOLS <i>Welcome To The Monkey House</i> Capitol	37 SAVES THE DAY <i>In Reverie</i> DreamWorks	62 BELLE AND SEBASTIAN <i>Dear Catastrophe Waitress</i> Rough Trade-Sanctuary
13 CONSTANTINES <i>Shine A Light</i> Sub Pop	38 MATMOS <i>Civil War</i> Matador	63 WARREN ZEVON <i>The Wind</i> Artemis
14 BROADCAST <i>Haha</i> Sound Warp	39 THE FIRE THEFT <i>The Fire Theft</i> Rykodisc	64 METRIC <i>Old World Underground</i> Where Are You Now? Everloving
15 RAPTURE <i>Echoes</i> DFA/Strummer/Universal	40 SLUMBER PARTY <i>3 Kill</i> Rock Stars	65 BALLBOY <i>A Guide For The Daylight Hours</i> Manifesto
16 DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL <i>A Mark, A Mission, A Brand, A Scar</i> Vagrant	41 STEREOPHONICS <i>You Gotta Go There To Come Back</i> V2	66 FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES <i>The Fiction We Live</i> Vagrant
17 ENON <i>Hocus Pocus</i> Touch And Go	42 THRICE <i>The Artist In The Ambulance</i> Island/Sub City	67 HELLA <i>Total Bugs Bunny On Wild Bass</i> Narnack
18 IRON AND WINE <i>The Sea And The Rhythm</i> [EPI] Sub Pop	43 RADIOHEAD <i>Hail To The Thief</i> Capitol	68 SOUTH <i>With The Tides</i> Kinetic
19 THURSDAY <i>War All The Time</i> Island	44 APRIL MARCH <i>Triggers</i> PIAS America	69 A PERFECT CIRCLE <i>The Thirteenth Step</i> Virgin
20 RUFUS WAINWRIGHT <i>Want One</i> DreamWorks	45 SOUNDTRACK <i>Lost In Translation</i> Emperor Norton	70 PEACHES <i>Fatherfucker</i> XL/Beggars Group
21 RANCID <i>Indestructible</i> Hellcat	46 IMA ROBOT <i>Ima Robot</i> Virgin	71 THE JOGGERS <i>Solid Guild</i> Startime International
22 THE DECEMBERISTS <i>Her Majesty</i> The Decemberists Kill Rock Stars	47 PREFUSE 73 <i>Extinguished</i> Outtakes Warp	72 ALL GIRL SUMMER FUN BAND <i>Summer Of '98</i> Magic Marker
23 SUPERCHUNK <i>Cup Of Sand</i> Merge	48 PUFFY AMIYUMI <i>Nice</i> Bar/None	73 JET BY DAY <i>Cascadia</i> Kindercore
24 JET <i>Get Born</i> Elektra	49 KRAFTWERK <i>Tour De France Soundtracks</i> Astralwerks	74 NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE <i>Greendale</i> Reprise
25 BOUNCING SOULS <i>Anchors Aweigh</i> Epitaph	50 MICHAEL FRANTI AND SPEARHEAD <i>Everyone Deserves Music</i> Boo Boo Wax/Parlophone	75 GLASSEATER <i>Everything Is Beautiful When You Don't Look Down</i> Victory

5 YEARS AGO

ELLIOT SMITH *XO* (DreamWorks)
SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS *Perennial Favorites* (Mammoth)
BELLE AND SEBASTIAN *The Boy With The Arab Strap* (Matador)
BOB MOULD *The Last Dog And Pony Show* (GM/Rykodisc)
BEASTIE BOYS *Hello Nasty* (Grand Royal/Capitol)

10 YEARS AGO

BREEDERS *Last Splash* (4AD/Elektra)
SMASHING PUMPKINS *Siamese Dream* (Virgin)
NIRVANA *In Utero* (DGC)
JULIANA HATFIELD THREE *Become What You Are* (Mammoth/Atlantic)
BUFFALO TOM *Big Red Letter Day* (Beggars Banquet/Eas' West)

HIP-HOP TOP 10

1	LIFESAVAS Spirit In Stone Quannum
2	MADLIB Shades Of Blue: Madlib Invades Blue Note Blue Note
3	ONRY OZZBORN The Grey Area One Drop
4	OUTKAST Speakerboxxx/The Love Below Arista
5	MARS ILL Backbreakanomics Gotee
6	ATMOSPHERE Seven's Travels Rhymesayers/Epitaph
7	OMID Monolith Mush
8	RASCO Escape From Alcatraz Coup d'Etat
9	BROTHER ALI Shadows On The Sun Rhymesayers
10	PARTY FUN ACTION COMMITTEE Let's Get Serious Definitive Jux



#1 HIP-HOP
LIFESAVAS
SPIRIT IN STONE
QUANNUM



#1 LOUD ROCK
ARCH ENEMY
ANTHEMS OF REBELLION
CENTURY MEDIA



#1 RETAIL
A PERFECT CIRCLE
THE THIRTEENTH STEP
VIRGIN

LOUD ROCK TOP 10

1	ARCH ENEMY Anthems Of Rebellion Century Media
2	DIMMU BORGIR Death Cult Armageddon Nuclear Blast
3	SEPULTURA Roorback Steamhammer/SPV
4	IRON MAIDEN Dance Of Death Columbia
5	FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES The Fiction We Live Vagrant
6	ZYKLON Aeon Candlelight
7	CHILDREN OF BODOM Hatecrew Deathroll Century Media
8	THE BLEED Pass The Flask Fiddler/MCA
9	SPINESHANK Self-Destructive Pattern Roadrunner
10	SUPERJOINT RITUAL A Lethal Dose Of American Hatred Sanctuary

RETAIL TOP 25

1	A PERFECT CIRCLE The Thirteenth Step Virgin
2	DMX Grand Champ Def Jam
3	THURSDAY War All The Time Island
4	ERYKAH BADU Worldwide Underground Motown
5	JOHN MAYER Heavier Things Aware/Columbia
6	SAVES THE DAY In Reverie DreamWorks
7	DAVID BOWIE Reality ISO/Columbia
8	WARREN ZEVON The Wind Artemis
9	SEAL Seal IV Warner
10	STORY OF THE YEAR Page Avenue Maverick
11	SHEEK LOUCH Walk Witt Me Universal
12	VARIOUS ARTISTS Neptunes Present... Clones Star Trak/Arista
13	BUBBA SPARXXX Deliverance Beat Club/Violator/Interscope
14	COLDPLAY A Rush Of Blood To The Head Capitol
15	BEYONCE Dangerously In Love Columbia
16	E-40 Breakin News Jive
17	BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB Take Them On, On Your Own Virgin
18	MY MORNING JACKET It Still Moves ATO/RCA
19	YING YANG TWINS Me And My Brother TVT
20	IRON MAIDEN Dance Of Death Columbia
21	WHITE STRIPES Elephant Third Man/V2
22	JOHNNY CASH American IV: The Man Comes Around Lost Highway/American
23	YOUNGBLOODZ Drankin' Patnaz La Face
24	MARY J. BLIGE Love And Life Geffen
25	EVANESCENCE Fallen Wind-Up

RPM TOP 10

1	VERVE REMIXED 2 Verve Remixed 2 Verve
2	VARIOUS ARTISTS #K7 150 !K7
3	PREFUSE 73 Extinguished Outtakes Warp
4	PLUMP DJS Eargasm Finger Lickin'
5	KRAFTWERK Tour De France Soundtracks Astralwerks
6	ANANDA PROJECT Morning Light King Street Sounds
7	ILS Soul Trader Mytopia
8	AMON TOBIN Verbal Remixes And Collaborations Ninja Tune
9	BT Emotional Technology Nettwerk America
10	PEPE DELUXE Beatitude Emperor Norton

JAZZ TOP 10

1	TERENCE BLANCHARD Bounce Blue Note
2	ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO Tribute To Lester ECM
3	VARIOUS ARTISTS Verve Remixed 2 Verve
4	DAVE HOLLAND QUINTET Extended Play: Live At Birdland ECM
5	JACD PASTORIUS BIG BAND Word Of Mouth Revisited Heads Up
6	MARTY EHRLICH Line On Love Palmetto
7	WILLIAM PARKER VIOLIN TRIO Scrapbook Thirsty Ear
8	KURT ELLING Man In The Air Blue Note
9	DANILO PEREZ Till Then Verve
10	BLUE SERIES CONTINUUM The Good And Evil Sessions Thirsty Ear

JUST OUT

OCTOBER 14

ADEMA Unstable *Arista*
 BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO Classics *Rounder*
 CHRISTIANSEN Stylish Nihilists *Revelation*
 CURLIPANODIE ...But The Past Is Not Through With Us EP *Revelation*
 FREEDOM ARCHIVES Chile: Promise Of Freedom *Alternative Tentacles*
 THE GITS Enter The Conquering Chicken *Broken Rekids*
 HARD-ONS Very Exciting! *Bomp!*
 WANDA JACKSON Heart Trouble *CMH*
 BEAU JOQUE AND THE ZYDECO HI-ROLLERS Classics *Rounder*
 JUMP KABLES JK JK
 JUST A FIRE Light Up *Asian Man*
 ALI AKBAR KHAN Swara Samrat *AMMP*
 KITES Royal Paint With The Metallic Gardener *Load*
 LECTRIC CHAIRS Sparkolounger *Dionysus*
 LIVING SCIENCE FOUNDATION Last Call For Nightfall *Second Nature*
 LORETTA Translation *Benchmark*
 PEACHFUZZ About A Bird *Orange Sky*
 PIPEDOWN Metal Weaponry *A-F*
 QUAILS Song Is Love *Mr. Lady*
 SEKSU ROBA Pleasure Vibrations *Eenie Meenie*
 SIMON AND GARFUNKEL Essential Simon And Garfunkel *Columbia/Legacy*
 TWILIGHT SINGERS Blackberry Belle *Birdman-One Little Indian*
 THE SIRENS Meet The Sirens *Sympathy For The Record Industry*
 STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS Maximum Overdrive *Alive!*
 STRIKE ANYWHERE Exit English *Jade Tree*
 THOSE UNKNOWN Those Unknown *TKO*
 THRALL Lifer *Alternative Tentacles*
 TRIUMPH THE INSULT COMIC DOG Come Poop With Me *Warner*
 UNION 13 Symptoms of Humanity *Disaster*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Beautiful: A Tribute To Gordon Lightfoot *NorthernBlues/Borealis*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Gospel Brunch Classics *Rounder*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Just Because I'm A Woman *Sugar Hill*
 VIDA BLUE The Illustrated Band *Sanctuary*
 VISION Detonate *Chunksaah*
 WESLEY WILLIS Greatest Hits, Vol. 3 *Alternative Tentacles*

OCTOBER 21

ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND Live at the Atlanta International Pop Festival - July 3 & 5, 1970 *Epic/Legacy*
 ANTI MC Bitter Breaks Vol. 1 *Mush*
 ANTI-FLAG Terror State *Fat Wreck Chords*
 ASCII DISKO Ascii Disko *Metropolis*
 BOBBY BARE JR. Ok I'm Sorry *Bloodshot*
 BASEMENT JAXX Kish Kash *AstralWerks*
 BLEACH Astronomy *Metropolis*
 PAUL BURCH Fool For Love *Bloodshot*
 CLEARLAKE Cedars *Dominio*
 BRUCE COCKBURN High Winds White Sky; Humans; Stealing Fire *Rounder*
 CRACK PIPES Snakes In My Veins *Emperor Jones*
 CRDWN Possessed 13 *Metal Blade*
 THE DIRTBOMBS Dangerous Magical Noise In The Red
 DISILLUSION Back To Times Of Splendor *Metal Blade*
 DOPE Group Therapy *Recon-Artemis*
 DRAG-ON Hell And Back *Virgin*
 VAN DUREN Idiot Optimism *Lucky Seven*
 ESTRADASPHERE Quadropus *Mimicry*
 FIGHTING JACKS The Dying Art Of Life *Tooth And Nail*
 ALASTAIR GALBRAITH/CONSTANTINE KARLIS Radiant *Emperor Jones*
 GREEN DAY 39/Smooth (Remastered + More) *Lookout!*
 GREEN PAJAMAS Through Glass Colored Roses: The Best Of The Green Pajamas *Hidden Agenda*
 JOY ELECTRIC The Magic Of Christmas *Tooth And Nail*
 KING DIAMOND The Puppet Master *Metal Blade*
 KLEZMER CONSERVATORY BAND Taste Of Paradise *Rounder*
 CARMEN LUNDY Something To Believe In *Justin Time*
 MILLENCOLIN ...And The Hi-8 Adventures *Epitaph*
 VAN MORRISON What's Wrong With This Picture? *Blue Note*
 WILLIE NELSON Willie Nelson's Greatest Hits (And Some That Will Be); Pancho And Lefty; Always On My Mind; Tougher Than Leather *Columbia/Legacy*
 NEUROISIS AND JARBOE Neurosis And Jarboe *Neurot*
 OPUS Breathing Lessons *Mush*
 PINHEAD GUNPOWDER Compulsive Disclosure *Lookout!*
 PLASTIKMAN Closer *Mute*
 RUSH Rush In Rio *Atlantic*

BRIAN SETZER Nitro Burnin' *Funny Daddy Surf/Dog*
 THE SHINS Chutes Too Narrow *Sub Pop*
 SLIPSTREAM Transcendental *Hidden Agenda*
 SPAIN Spirituals...The Best of Spain *Restless*
 SPEAKING CANARIES Get Out Alive: Last Type *Story Scat*
 THE STILLS Logic Will Break Your Heart *Vice*
 JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS *Streetcore Helicat*
 JIM SUHLER AND MONKEY BEAT Starvation Box: The Best Of Jim Suhler And Monkey Beat *Lucky Seven*
 SUICIDE COMMANDO Axis Of Evil *Metropolis*
 THE BLOW The Concussive Caress *K*
 GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS George Thorogood And The Destroyers; Move It On Over *Rounder*
 TLC Still Crazy...Always Sexy...Forever Cool... *Arista*
 TOTAL SHUTDOWN Total Shutdown *Tigerbeat 6*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Christmas Chill: A Six Degrees Collection *Six Degrees*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS This Is Solid State *Solid State*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Wig In A Box *Off*
 VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA Live *Communion/Hau Smusik*
 VISHISS Subliminal Criminal Hymnal *DreamWorks*
 DJ WALLY Nothing Slays The Same *Thirsty Ear*
 WANDA JACKSON Heart Trouble *CMH*
 WANNADIES Before And After *Hidden Agenda-Cooking Vinyl*
 YD LA TENGO Today Is The Day *Matador*

OCTOBER 28

BOOKS ON TAPE Books On Tape Sings The Blues *Grey Day*
 MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER Essential Mary Chapin Carpenter *Columbia/Sony Nashville/Legacy*
 CLOGS Thom's Night Out *Brassland*
 CODE Whatever It Takes *A-F*
 CURSES #88% *Empty*
 DENALI Instinct *Jade Tree*
 FAT EYES Fat Eyes Presents A Dancehall Twofor: Fat Eyes Deelite and Dancehall Attack *Heartbeat*
 FAT EYES Dancehall Deelite *Heartbeat*
 FLUX OF PINK INDIANS Fits And Starts *Dr. Strange*
 FREEZE Land Of The Lost/Rabid Reaction *Dr. Strange*
 KHANATE Things Viral *Load*
 LEVINHURST Perfect Life *Green Galactic*
 MINDS Plastic Girls *Dirtnap*
 THE NATIONAL The National *Brassland*
 ANA POPOVIC Comfort To The Soul *Ruf*
 QUICK FIX KILLS Saint Something *My Pal God*
 RS3 Always About A Girl *Shut Eye*
 SCHOOLYARD HERDES Funeral Sciences *Control Group*
 TOTAL SHUTDOWN Messiah Will Not Come Till He Hears Your Tears *Load*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Buzzlighter #6 - Take Out! *Shut Eye*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Disturbing Peace *Six Weeks*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Sex & Subversion *Thick*
 WHEAT Per Second Per Second Per Second Every Second *Aware/Columbia*

NOVEMBER 4

BLUE SERIES CONTINUUM Sorcerer Sessions *Thirsty Ear*
 CANNIBAL CORPSE 15 Year Killing Spree *Metal Blade*
 ERASURE Oh L'Amour *Mute*

FALCONER Sceptre Of Deception *Metal Blade*
 NIK FREITAS Heavy Mellow *Future Farmer*
 GUIDED BY VOICES The Best of Guided By Voices: Human Amusements At Hourly Rates; Hardcore UFOs: Revelations, Epiphanies and Fast Food in the Western Hemisphere *Matador*
 TOBY KEITH Shock 'N' Y'all *DreamWorks*
 MY FAVORITE The Happiest Days Of Our Lives *Double Agent*
 PACO AND FREDERIK Atlantic Breakers *Global Underground Music*
 PLUS MINUS You Are Here *Teenbeat*
 IGGY POP Skull Ring *Virgin*
 MARK ROBINSON Origami & Urbanism *Teenbeat*
 TRACY SHEDD Red *Teenbeat*
 BOB SEGER Greatest Hits Vol. 2
 THRILLS So Much For The City *Virgin*
 TRANSATLANTIC Live In Europe *Metal Blade*
 VADER Blood *Metal Blade*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Tooth And Nail 10 Year Anniversary Box Set *Tooth And Nail*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS The Nail *Tooth And Nail*

NOVEMBER 11

ADOLPH AND THE PISS ARTISTS Hate Generator *TKO*
 ANTIQOH ARROW Gems Of Masochism *Three One G*
 ARAB ON RADAR Queen Hygiene II/Rough Day At The Office *Three One G*
 ARTIMUS PYLE Fucked From Birth *Prank*
 AVSKUM Punkista! *Prank*
 BOLIDES Science Under Pressure *Dionysus*
 ROBERT BRADLEY AND BLACKWATER SURPRISE Sil Lovin' You *Vanguard*
 BRODY'S MILITIA/WIDESPREAD BLOODSHED Split *Sound Pollution*
 CEX Maryland Mansions *Jade Tree*
 DANMUSH From Here... *Sound Pollution*
 DEFIANCE Nothing Lasts Forever *Punkcore*
 DUVALL Volume And Density *Asian Man*
 FLYING LUTTENBACHERS Systems Emerge From Complete Disorder *Troubleman*
 DAVE HOLLISTER Real Talk *DreamWorks*
 JOLIE HOLLAND Catalpa *Anti*
 LINK Kids Are Alright *Adeline*
 PDREST Prude Juice For The Heritage Swinger *Seeland*
 PULSES Little Brothers *Dirtnap*
 RDVSVETT Thitma Karin *Six Weeks*
 RUM DIARY Poisons That Save Lives *Substandard/New Red Archives*
 SIX PARTS SEVEN Lost Notes From Forgotten Songs *Suicide Squeeze*
 SPITS Spits *Dirtnap*
 THOSE UNKNOWN ...And They Gave Us Scraps *TKO*
 THOUGHT RIOT Sketches Of Undying Will *A-F*
 TRISTEZA Espuma *Gravity*
 UNDER PRESSURE Still No Future *Sound Pollution*
 USAISAMONSTER Tacheyana Compost *Load*
 WRETCHED ONES Less Is More *TKO*
 YEAR FUTURE Year Future *Gold Standard Labs*

NOVEMBER 18

FLOETRY Live In New Orleans *DreamWorks*
 MINDERS The Future Is Always Perfect *Future Farmer*
 N.E.R.D. Fly Or Die *Virgin*

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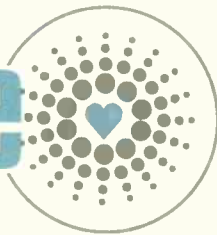
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Rush

STORY: RICK ROBERTS OF SUSHIROBO
ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA

My friend Eddie, at age 30, has finally hustled enough work writing music for websites and documentaries that he was able to quit his day job. I assumed he'd be proud—but instead, he's a little embarrassed. Most of the music he writes is tailored to the tastes of his clients, who usually favor the clichéd and pedestrian. "Well," I said, "at least your 13-year-old self would be proud that you're making a living writing music." "Yeah, right," Eddie snorted. "My 13-year-old self thought that by now I'd be playing bass for Ronnie James Dio."

When I was 13, I had a dream, just like Eddie: I was going to become the young second guitar player for Rush, astounding the audience with my uncanny, note-perfect renditions of Alex Lifeson's parts, freeing Alex up to concentrate on his temple blocks and Taurus pedals.

Even in these times of post-post-irony, Rush is a hard sell. I currently sing for a lean art-punk band that owes way more to Wire and Devo than woolly 1970s bands that wrote side-long epics requiring Roman numerals in the track listings. None of my bandmates share my affection for Rush (a band they've described as "Tiny Tim does prog-rock"). I've been met with uncomfortable silence after insisting there are elements of Rush in the music of Slint, Tortoise and Fugazi. I have even gone so far as to say Alex's fluidly textural guitar solo in "Limelight" is the closest approximation in hard rock to John Coltrane's sheets of sound. (As punishment for making this comparison, I was denied access to the tour van CD player for days.)

At age 13, Rush offered a world utterly free of the real issue of adolescence: sex. Aside from the shamefully tight pants Alex wears on the back of *2112* and the ass crack that recurrently appears in their artwork, Rush's utopia is completely asexual. For a painfully shy boy, their music offered a safe buffer from the urges that embarrassed and overwhelmed me. While my peers groped each other to the strains of Ted Nugent's "Wang Dang Sweet Poontang," I remained a wallflower, timidly clinging to Rush's vision of a world governed by the intellect, not the body. Their excellent album *Hemispheres* addresses this very conflict, though the gelded lyrics refer chastely to this theme as the contest between "Dionysus (Love)" and "Apollo (Wisdom)."

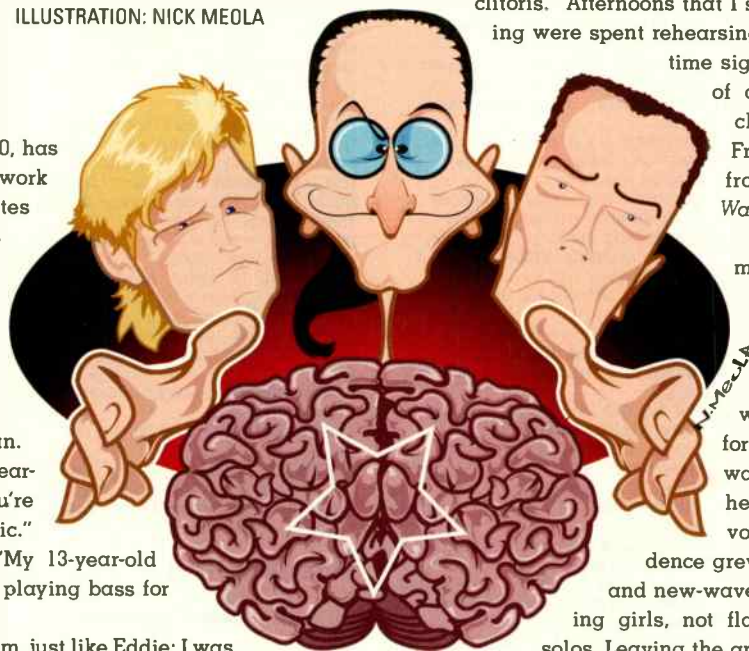
Too awkward to even speak to a real girl without my throat drying up, I spent my early teens parsing drummer/lyricist Neil Peart's heavy-handed allegories and allusions to Ayn Rand, George Orwell and Samuel Coleridge. I ran to the dictionary to look up "didact," "panacea" and "quantum" long before I bothered to check "clitoris." Afternoons that I should have spent masturbating were spent rehearsing intricate guitar lines in 15/8

time signatures. Other boys dreamed of owning Camaros to impress chicks; I wanted to speak French (listen to "Entre Nous" from the album *Permanent Waves* for an explanation).

Eventually, I had to accept my biological destiny and acknowledge one harsh, incontrovertible truth: Girls hate Rush. In my whole life I have met only one woman who expressed any fondness for their music, and I suspect she was just being contrary to shock her punk-rock clique. As my voice deepened and my confidence grew, I learned that singing goth and new-wave hits was my inroad to meeting girls, not flawlessly aping Alex's guitar solos. Leaving the arrested boys' club of prog-rock behind, I entered a new age with a new identity. When I finally lost my virginity, it was to the sound of the Violent Femmes' first album, not "Tom Sawyer."

Now that I'm older, I've come to terms with my ugly prog-rock past. I am no longer secretive about my love for Rush, but respect that my band and my fiancée fail to grasp the greatness of Geddy Lee's voice. I leave my Rush CDs home when I'm on tour, and when my honey is home they stay snug in their cases. But one night last week, after she fell asleep, I gave in to an urge to revisit the soundtrack of my youth. Creeping through the apartment like a horny father with his secret stash of porn, I popped *Moving Pictures* into the CD player and cranked up the headphones. And it sounded fucking amazing.

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