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# ROCKPILE

**NIG ENDO**

**MERCURY REV**

**TIGHT BROS. FROM  
WAY BACK WHEN**

**JIMMY EAT WORLD**

**WHITE STRIPES**

**SENSEFIELD**

**GORILLAZ**

*Everyone Likes Cartoons*

**WELCOME TO HELL**

*Where Satanic Metal Rules*

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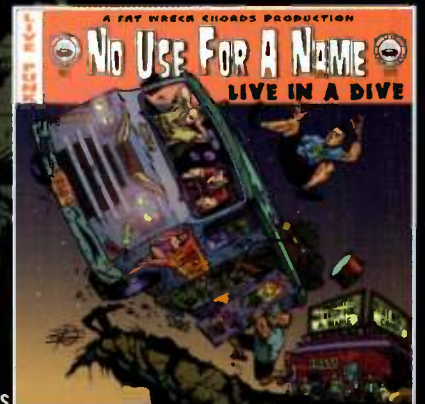


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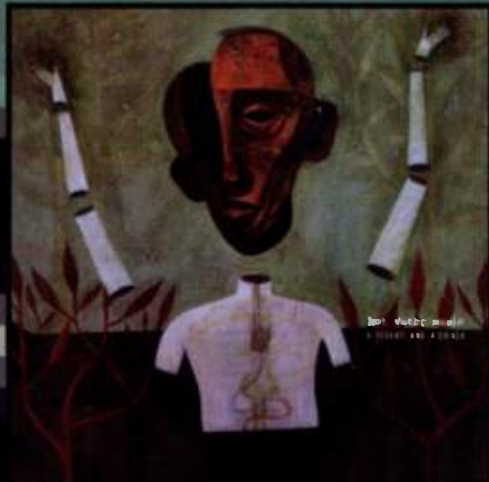




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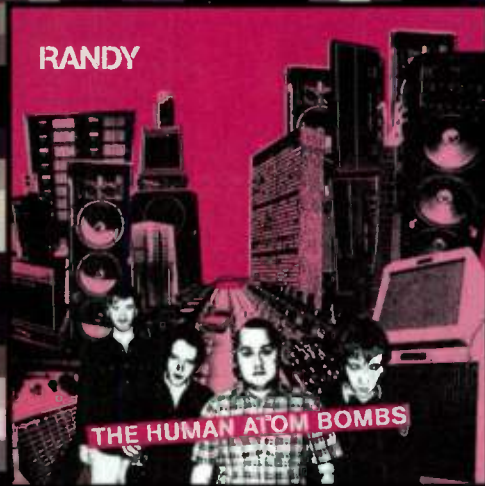
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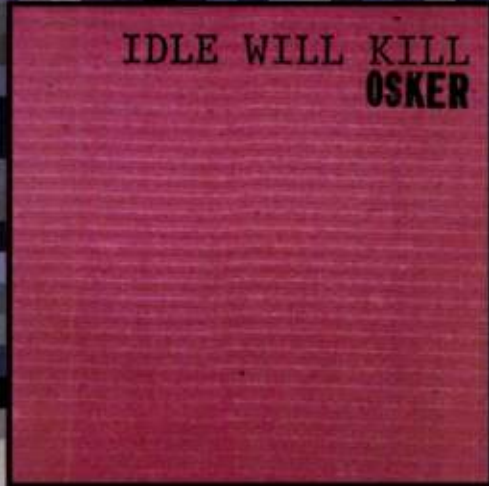
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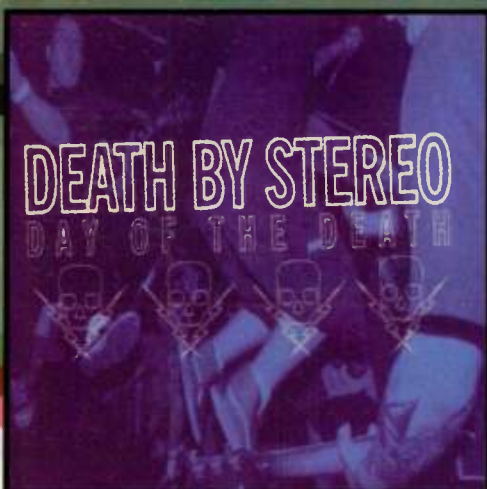
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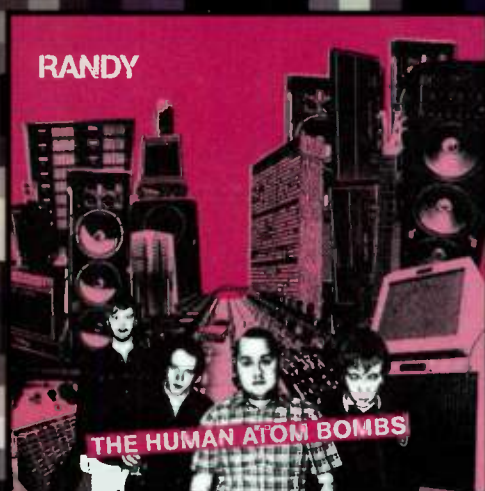
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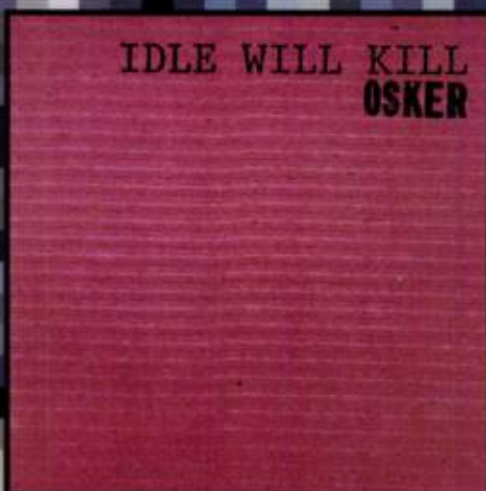
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
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# letters

## Wrong Address?

When I was 16 or 17, I used to clean houses and help old people move for money. I'll never forget the one day me and my friend Colby had to help this one elderly woman move out of her apartment. She lived in a three-room dump on the sixth floor and she kept, no lie, 15 cats. Needless to say, the place stunk. The job stunk too. The whole time we were trying to move her chiffarobes and chairs, this old fart would be having long, uninterrupted conversations with her cats—"Who's a scrambler cat? Who wants to lick mommy's feet?" Me and Colby ended up quitting a few weeks later, mostly because of the psychological toll this woman and the job had extracted from us. The Ted Leo article gets the most sugar from your last issue, while stories on The Faint and Owls score points for content, but could've been better written. Watch out for scrambler cats.

Tom Fox  
Long Island, NY

## Ben Baiting

Ben Folds thinks "Blame it on the Bossanova" is a good song. His favorite color is beige and his favorite movie is *Forrest Gump*. His favorite food is white bread—no fixings and a diet Tab cola. Rockpile's recent article proves him to be Mr. Rogers. This guy thinks the *Golden Girls* constitutes edgy, black comedy. I have the seen the face of the ultimate bore, and it is Ben Folds. "No Thrills," indeed.

Anonymous  
via email

Seriously, who are you—Steve Irwin? Indiana Jones? Wrestled any crocodiles or dove from burning jets today? —Mike McKee

## Howling at the Dead Moon

Do a story on Dead Moon. They got a great review in your last issue (#73), and if they do indeed sound like "Neil Young as a punk rocker," than Dead Moon is probably the best thing out right now. It sure as hell beats stories on Mark Eitzel.

Dale O'Riordan  
Newark, DE

## She Drops More Knowledge Than A Clumsy Librarian

While this is redundant and understated to anyone who knows about hardcore music, I feel I need to send out a big, hearty "fuck you" to Victory Records and their new boy band, Minus. I've never heard the band—their promo photo has ensured me I don't want to. I could easily turn out a multi-page letter flaming Victory and the band for such stupid assed, Howard Stern type bullshit using everything from the theories of bell hooks to the lyrics of Team Dresch, but instead I'll keep it real simple: Why is it cool to treat women like objects? What is hardcore about this? Aren't women made to feel excluded enough from the boy's club of loud music without this? I'm sure the band and the record label has a great excuse for the photo, but most of us are sick of listening at this point—listening to their shitty music is hard enough.

Sonja Maldono  
Hanford, CA

The photo Sonja is referring to depicts the members of Minus (Victory Records) watching three model-type women, clad only in underwear, digging into some fried chicken. Its inclusion in *Rockpile* (#73) was the result of a last minute accident.—Mike McKee



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# gravel pit

## EXCAVATING DINOSAUR JR.

Dinosaur Jr. may have broke up more than four years ago, but thanks to the redux hounds at Rhino Records, fans can expect a new release soon with *Ear Bleeding Country*, a 19-song anthology compiled under the direction of former band leader J. Mascis. Rhino let Mascis choose some of the tracks, as well as remove some of those he didn't want on the album. He was quoted as saying he wanted to include songs he still plays today, since they have lasted him for this long. In addition to various Dinosaur Jr. tracks from the last 15 years, Mascis has also included a cover

of the Cure's "Just Like Heaven," post-Dinosaur Jr. song "Where'd You Go," as well as "Take A Run At The Sun," a song he wrote for the *Grace of My Heart* soundtrack. Former pro skater Neil Blender, who also designed the artwork to *Without A Sound*, contributed the cover art. The album will be released October 2, but don't expect any tours in its support. Not only is Mascis in the process of recording a follow-up to his solo debut, *More Light*, he is also recuperating from a car accident suffered while on tour with Mike Watt and The Fog this past June.



DINOSAUR JR.

## STUCK ON AN ISLAND WITH WEEZER

Most bands are lucky to make even one music video in their career. Weezer is in the process of filming a completely different and new video for its single "Island in the Sun." The original video for the song was directed by Marcos Siega and enjoyed some air time on MTV. The members of the Boston indie-cum-arena rock band noted Siega's approach initially grabbed their attention with its simplicity and departure from cheesy island motifs. Interscope, Weezer's label, however, felt the single might benefit from a video revisiting. The new video is directed by the

acclaimed Spike Jonze, perhaps best known for his work on the Beastie Boys' "Sabotage" video. The casting department was still left with a bit of a puzzle with Weezer bassist Mikey Welsh still missing in action at the start of the shoot. Welsh allegedly checked himself into a Boston psychiatric hospital more than a month ago, and it is unclear if he will be available for any of the band's October tour. The new video will not feature Welsh. While Weezer hopes he returns in time for the upcoming tour, the band is currently auditioning replacements.



WEEZER



## SMOKE CLEARS FOR MAN'S RUIN

San Francisco's Man's Ruin Records boasts an impressive track record. In six years, the label helped popularize some of rock's strongest revivalists, including Melvins, Fu Manchu, Acid King and the Candy Snatchers. If 2000 was the year stoner rock broke, Man's Ruin, no doubt must be credited with doing some of the breaking, serving as a virtual institution in the re-burgeoning scene along with contem-

poraries such as Music Cartel and Tolotta. The label also served as a vehicle for the unique artwork of label owner, Frank Kozik. Sadly, the future of the label seems to be in jeopardy, as rumors of a permanent shut down loom. A statement from some of the label's larger distributors alluded to its bankruptcy earlier this year. No official word has yet been issued from Man's Ruin headquarters.



COAL CHAMBER

## J.K. ROWLING, WATCH YOUR BACK

If you were an ambitiously pierced and tattooed Nu-Metal goth rocker, you might stump yourself with how to spend your free time. While options like scaring neighborhood children, studying the occult or inventing the long-awaited eight-string guitar might all seem enticing, the truly creative rocker will always take the path less traveled. For Coal Chamber frontman Dez Fafara, the choice was easy. Fafara and his girlfriend, Anahstasia, recently completed a children's book now being shopped around to potential publishers. *The October*

*Bunch* is the title of Fafara's series, named for a group of children who wear Halloween costumes every night before they set out on an adventure. In the series' debut, *Finding Blackie*, the bunch comes across its first black cat. Fafara hopes to make his book into a series of—you guessed it—13 segments. In other Coal Chamber news, Fafara and guitarist Meeqs Rascon contributed to Overseer's debut album on the song "Where is God." The band is currently in Los Angeles recording its third full-length, *Dark Days*, with producer Ross Hogarth.

## Milemarker

A blasting keyboard chord screeches through the earpiece as Milemarker singer/guitarist Dave Laney picks up the phone in the middle of a band practice.

"Sorry about that," he says. "We're just finishing up."

This is the only apology Laney makes for the keyboards. They are, in fact, Milemarker's exotic trait, the result of a fruitful experiment challenging the traditional notion of a hardcore band. The group's fourth record, *Anaesthetic*, finds the quartet on Jade Tree records with a better knack for fusing those not-always-compatible sounds of synthesizers and simple indie-punk.

Birthered as an emo hardcore band, the band's penchant for innovation and creative stage shows soon puzzled emo puritans in the group's old hometown of Chapel Hill, N.C. Laney recalls one instance where the band played behind a solid black screen and a TV screen displaying the word "entertainment." The reception eventually warmed as Milemarker grew into one of Chapel Hill's staples. Earlier this year, however, the band voted collectively to move to the Windy City to tackle the challenge of new surroundings.

Laney is open about his band's evolution.

"Our first record was half typical guitar, bass, drums, and the other half was computer loops," he explains. "Our second album, half of it was just two keyboards and drums. For our third record we started to try and integrate those sounds. Now, on *Anaesthetic*, we're

getting it down."

The want for variety came naturally for the band. As Laney explains, the members of Milemarker listen to everything from Johnny Cash to Drive Like Jehu.

"We'd had our fill of turning the guitars up to ten, the screaming and the headbanging," confesses Laney. "It was definitely a conscious decision to go in a different direction and to do something new and keep it interesting for us personally."

On *Anaesthetic*, the blend works well—the sounds gel, often defying peoples' preconceptions. Defining this new hybrid, however, requires a flexible explanation. At times on the album, simple rock progressions—often tempered with ominous synth washes—mutate into dark, new wave vibes as keyboardist and backing vocalist Roby Newton shrieks her techno-punk yowl over a crashing keyboard sweep. In other moments, *Anaesthetic* is reminiscent of an agitated version of The Cars, or Moss Icon pilfering an older sibling's '80s new wave record collection.

The essential idea of this record, according to Laney, is one of accessibility, experimentation and balance.

"All the parts were relatively equal," he shares. "No one thing jumped out. It's about having that synthetic keyboard sound and be able to have a more traditional kind of rock song with that quirky, electronic sound that pulls out of it all of a sudden. We wanted to make it more cohesive."

—Michael Coyle

L-R: DAVE LANEY, ROBY NEWTON, AL BURIAN, SEAN MUSICK



## CLUELESS CENSORS TO STEP UP PARENTAL ADVISORIES

The Recording Industry Association of America is in the process of enacting a new campaign to increase awareness of its famed parental advisory stickers, utilizing a mass mailing of brochures to parents, parent-teacher organizations, school administrators, coaches, guidance counselors and local and federal officials. This beefed up content watch comes in response to several recent congressional meetings examining the entertainment industry's marketing and distribution of controversial material. Currently found on albums or products deemed offensive or unsuitable for children, the advisory stickers may soon be accompanied by refurbished counter-top displays and store posters courtesy of the National Association of Recording Merchandisers and pa-

rentalguide.org. Administrations such as the RIAA clearly have a finger on the collective pulse of today's young people, an insight used to land the most influential of celebrity endorsements. In an impressive demonstration of cool, the RIAA has landed at least one universally revered and worshipped by today's edgy young adult—Quincy Jones.



## DIALATED PEOPLES RELEASE FOLLOW-UP ALBUM



Dialated Peoples is set to release its follow-up to 2000's *The Platform*. The group's new album, *Expansion Team*, will be available to the public on October 23, and will feature a variety of big-name producers as well as a some guest MCs. Rakaa, Babu and Evidence have enlisted the production services of DJ Premier (Gang Starr, Limp Bizkit) to work on the track "Clockwork," ?uestlove (the Roots, D'Angelo) to produce "War" and the Alchemist (Everlast, Big Punisher)

to work on "Worst Comes To Worst," "Panic" and "Live On Stage." Additional producers include Da Beatminerz (Bahamadia), Juju (Beatnuts) and Joey Chavez (Aceyalone). Publicists for the group also confirmed rumors of collaboration with The Roots' Black Thought on "Hard Hitters" and Tha Liks on "Heavy Rotation." The trio will be promoting the new album via a European tour with Linkin Park, followed by a North American headlining jaunt.



# JIMMY EAT WORLD

By Waleed Rashidi

**J**immy Eat World is one busy band. Their morning is filled with interviews, the afternoon holds a photo shoot at Universal Studios in Los Angeles and the evening is rounded out with a record store appearance. The Arizona-based quartet is shuttled with their management from location to location, event to event, receiving phone calls and lists of instructions from various personnel firing at them from every angle about every little detail. Some might find this a tedious, burdensome way to have your day scheduled. For Jimmy Eat World, it's all in a day's work.

With *Bleed American*, the group's DreamWorks debut and third major label full-length, the band hopes to do even more. Jimmy Eat World might have the ticket—and it's not based on luck or due to "third time's the charm" colloquialisms. Signed to Capitol in their teens, the musicians are now a wiser, more mature unit with wisdom enough not to repeat past errors.

"Well, we're better at it," vocalist/guitarist Jim Adkins responds. "There have been mistakes, but I don't regret anything. Through our less-than-ideal experiences in the past, we've been armed with this incredible knowledge I don't think you could get any other way than just by going through it and fucking up. We wouldn't be able to make the correct decisions today without them."

But unlike many of their contemporaries who went from indie to major back to indie, Jimmy Eat World simply hopped across the field from Capitol to DreamWorks.

"We got the best vibe in the short run that they'd do a good job at working our record, but also that they're genuinely interested in careers," he says. "They're a business—of course they want to have hit records—but our criteria was that it's important that the label has enough juice to get it happening now, but also stand behind you later on, not if, but when things start going wrong."

Everything's been right so far: *Bleed American* is one of the finest rock records made this year and certainly the band's best recording. Chock full of outstand-



L-R: TOM LINTON, JIM ADKINS, ZACH LIND, RICK BURCH

ing pop-rock hits, emo ballads, aggressive punk numbers and some tracks with a combination of the aforementioned, *Bleed American* once again proves the band isn't very keen on sounding redundant. For Jimmy Eat World, innovation in the songwriting process, rather than being influenced by what's popular, doesn't seem to be anything new.

"We've always been pretty low under the radar when it comes to making records," Adkins says. "We've never gotten input from the label as far as direction or anything like that. When it comes to tunes, there's not really a whole lot of self-censorship... We pretty much just go with whatever happens to strike us at a time, and later on when it comes to decide which songs we're going to actually record for an album, we sit down and just judge which are the best songs. If they sound completely different from one another, then that's OK. If you made a record of just burners that are pounding you in the face, it would kind of lessen the effectiveness of it. Or likewise, if you make an album of all mellow, ambient, kind of textural sort of stuff, it kind of lessens the effect of that."

The recording of *Bleed American* actually began months before negotiations with DreamWorks even commenced. The band decided to fund the eight-week recording effort themselves with merchandise money made during tours in hopes of seeing a returned investment once they signed to a label willing to foot the bill. Once again, Mark Trombino (Blink-182, Rocket From The Crypt) was the band's only candidate as engineer. His impeccable track record includes the previous two Jimmy Eat World records.

"We just got together with Mark and decided we'd make the record on our own," Adkins says. "Mark was gracious enough to basically work on spec for his fees. We did a tour right in the middle of when we were recording and it did really well so we could raise most of the money to pay for the record. Plus, we both see eye to eye on how arrangements should be on every aspect of production, right down to sonically how a drumset should sound."

And as far as recording is concerned, *Bleed American* is the first time the band didn't use the assistance of analog tape. "That was kind of scary at first," Adkins



says of the experience. "I'm convinced that we couldn't make the record that we made without working the way we did, straight to Pro Tools. It enabled us to do things that would have taken for fuckin' ever if we were working on two—especially since we were paying for all the studio time ourselves."

Firing off with the title track, the album exudes an intensity not found since the *Static Prevails* days—darker guitars, minimal instrumentation, urgent rhythms and a sense of immediacy—when the band really had no time to waste.

"*Bleed American* is more concise, more to the point," Adkins says. "*Clarity* was like getting away with something, just due to the fact that we were in the studio, and we could be like 'Shit, let's rent some tympani today.' With *Bleed American*, the attitude was starting with the simplest, most basic structure and the most basic instrumentation, something that's incomplete, and barely slide layers over to the point where it felt complete."

In addition to the Jimmy Eat World standard fare, the band brought in a few friends to help sing along on "A Praise Chorus," "Authority Song" and "If You Don't, Don't."

"We're all fans of Promise Ring, and Davey [vonBohlen, Promise Ring vocalist/guitarist] is a great guy," says Adkins. "'A Praise Chorus' is influenced by our first tour that they brought us out on, just seeing the response at the shows. That was kind of like a turning point for us, and I think that's when we started getting a little more momentum as a band. I just thought it would be really cool to include him in that tune."

"There's a woman named Rachel Haden, and she used to play in a group called That Dog that I was a big fan of," he says of "Authority Song." "We basically got to know her through friends and other musicians, and in the last couple of years we've gotten to be friends. I've always wanted her to sing with us, and she's been a fan of our tunes. It just worked out, she was living in L.A., and I gave her some tunes and asked her to come down, and we ended up putting her to work."

So with a new album and label in tow, Jimmy Eat World is pleasantly forced to look ahead and create plans. Although Adkins isn't a fortune teller, the vibe is that he couldn't be happier.

"Only now are we at the point where we're starting to make goals that are a little bit more long-term. You know, eight months instead of tomorrow. In the past, with everything we've done it's always been a very short-sighted goal, really focusing on making everything we're doing in the immediate present the best we can. It was never a thought that entered our minds that we would get to this point. The record isn't even out yet, but we never thought we'd get to this point. I can only—shit man, who knows what's going to happen when it comes out. I don't know."

## 5 questions



## AMERICAN ANALOGUE SET

American Analog Set has released three albums and embarked on several tours of the United States playing alongside groups like The Lapse, Mogwai and Death Cab For Cutie. The group's new album, *Know By Heart*, appears courtesy of Tiger Style and demonstrates the work of a band coming into its own. Fans are advised not to go trick or treating with the band.

Answers by Andrew Kenny, vocalist/guitarist

### **What kind of a role do you feel regionalism continues to play in music, despite world-shrinking technologies such as the internet?**

I live in Austin, a city people tell me is pretty wired. Even so, cities have scenes and that's where music is born. I feel more connected with other bands from Austin, despite what little we might have in common musically.

### **Artists are commonly asked with whom they would someday like to collaborate. What band or artist do you most hope to avoid working with?**

Here's a work of fiction. Creed's manager comes to me and asks me to sing some backing vocals on their record. "They're huge fans, Kenny, so be a sport. It's this song that goes 'with arms wide open, and the strings come in and the wind machine kicks up on the video shoot and it'll be great."

### **What commonly used words by music reviewers should be outlawed?**

"Melodic" has got to go. It needs to be broken into at least two different categories—probably more. Are there real melodies, or does the bass player just wander around like a goddamn boat that came loose from the dock in the middle of the night. (*Rockpile* uses the word "melodic" 14 times in this issue)

### **Describe the strangest place and situation in which you've ever performed live? (Bar Mitzvahs are just the tip of the iceberg...)**

The summer we got together, we had a big party and we were the entertainment. We invited everyone we knew including our families. We played two sets. Who plays two sets?

### **What was your best and worst Halloween costume?**

My best costume was my priest outfit. I wore it like three years in a row. I had my drivers license photo taken in it. When I was in fifth grade, I went as Mork. I tried really hard to stay in character all night. After we got egged by some highschoolers, it turned into a real drag. My best friend was a robot and some years later he told me that dragging his egg-encrusted, cardboard-and-foil costume home with a geeky 11-year-old pretending he was a coked out comedian pretending he was from outerspace was way worse than getting egged in the first place. So, that had to be the worst costume ever because it affected others.

# MUSIC FOR THE MOVIES IN YOUR HEAD

## An Interview With Mercury Rev's Grasshopper

**L**ife imitates art, or so they say. And as the story of a musician's random mugging—wrong place, wrong time—unfolds, it's almost no surprise it plays out like a scene from *Behind The Music*.

"I was at the Jazz Festival in New Orleans in this bar watching a Cuban band with a friend of mine," starts Mercury Rev guitarist Sean "Grasshopper" Mackiowiak. "We were the last ones there. We walked out, and we just went around the wrong corner. It happened really fast. There were two guys. They had a gun on my friend, and they cut me and took our wallets. I was bleeding pretty badly. When I went to the hospital the doctor said, 'I don't think this is very good, three of your fingers might be paralyzed.'"

At this point, Grasshopper started to freak out. "Then the doctor put on a magnifying lens, looked in the wound and said, 'No, you're all right.' Luckily, it just missed cutting my tendons."

Ten stitches later, what can only be considered a very fortunate close call has transformed into a not-entirely-unpleasant memory. Speaking about "Little Rhymes," one of his favorite tracks on Mercury Rev's fifth album, *All Is Dream*, he laughs to himself.

"When I was recording 'Little Rhymes'—the middle solo—I was playing it with my arm in a sling. Just that memory makes me chuckle," he says. "And, I've got a nice little scar."

The trick to having a sense of humor is the ability to laugh when you're the one paying. For the members of the genre-bending, ethereal art-rock band Mercury Rev a sense of humor is central to everything they do. In the current hyper-dysfunctional climate of commercial rock radio, a band can either generate a cult following or appeal to the mass market, but not both. These dream-rockers continue to forge ahead, creating the type of music they do like no other band. Like its predecessor, *Deserter's Songs* (which was almost universally critically acclaimed as the No. 1 album of 1998), *All is Dream* continues to walk the shoulder of the mainstream highway.

Grasshopper's bandmates include vocalist/chief lyricist Jonathan Donahue, drummer Jeff Mercel and bassist Dave Fridmann, who stopped touring with the band after the release of Mercury Rev's second album, *BOCES*, to spend more time with his family and concentrate on his own studio business. Fridmann now acts as the group's exclusive producer and engineer, while also working extensively with bands such as The Flaming Lips. *All is Dream* was recorded over the

course of a year in Fridmann's studio in rural Fredonia, N.Y.

"We'd record maybe 10 days a month," says Grasshopper, "but even in that time off you still feel like you're working, because you're still thinking about arrangements or little parts."

Despite the seemingly relaxed recording schedule, sessions for *All Is Dream* were tense in unforeseen ways. "There was record snow in Fredonia, and more than a few times we were literally trapped in the studio," he explains. Often, the band had to shovel three feet of snow off the studio roof, for fear it would cave in. "Every time we'd drive up, there would be more snow than three weeks earlier. It just kept piling up and not melting. Finally, there were six-foot-high mountains of snow around the driveway. It was unbelievable."

Did such extreme weather conditions have an unexpected effect on the creative process? "Sometimes it's just cabin fever, like *The Shining*, but sometimes, in those moments, the spark happens."

And of course there was arguing, he continues, "but then, out of that comes a different idea or approach you wouldn't think of." Searching for an example, he offers, "I

like 'A Drop in Time,' because it was recorded during a snow storm and, when I listen to it, it reminds me of that Christmasy feel."

In accordance with a band developing from the principal members composing music to accompany experimental films, highly visual qualities have always permeated Mercury Rev's music. *All Is Dream* begins with the breath-taking, soundtrack feel of "The Dark is Rising." This observation turns out to be right on target. "We thought of (that song) as the opening of a John Huston film, where there's the wide landscape of the Grand Canyon and it kicks in with that epic sound. In the same way, we wanted "Hercules," the last song, to be like the ending credits. Themes run throughout all the songs, and we thought of them as little scenes in this film. We're making the soundtrack, and the film is in the listener's head. Whatever image you get out of it (is appropriate)."

A prime influence on Mercury Rev's latest album is the work of composer/arranger Jack Nitzsche, who passed away shortly before the band began work on *All Is Dream*. Grasshopper relates his deep admiration for a creative enigma whose career spanned not only pop song production and arrangement

continued on page 61



L-R: Jonathon Donahue, Jeff Mercel, Grasshopper

By Gail Worley

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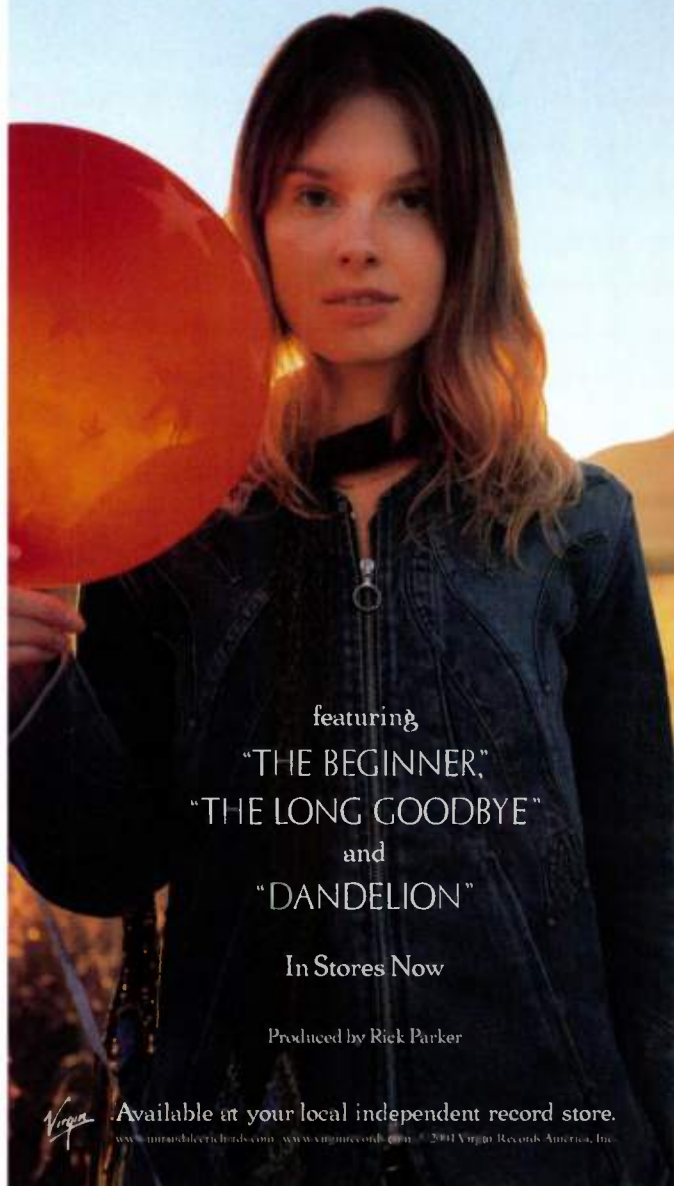


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## THE WHITE STRIPES

**O**utside of legendary San Diego club The Casbah, a young girl in an Acura pulls up and barks at the doorman, "Any tickets left?" The doorman shouts back, "No, sold-out since yesterday." These days The White Stripes, media favorites and underground rock darlings, are the hot ticket just about everywhere. Hailing from Detroit, "siblings" Jack and Meg White have raised quite a few eyebrows with their new release, *White Blood Cells*. College kids want to hear them, and A&R sharks want to sign them. The White Stripes aren't just another run-of-the-mill indie rock band—they are the buzz band, period. So does buzz equal success or the bargain bin? "It can be good or bad—nobody knows," explains future rock god Jack. "The cover of our new album kind of relates to that, all the attention on the band."

Deciding whether or not to sign on the dotted line may be a no-brainer for some musicians, but Jack seems a bit more apprehensive. "Everyone throws all their ideas at you, and they expect you to make a decision," he says. "It's not easy. A lot of things sound good, but they are probably not going to be good."

So what would be an ideal situation for The White Stripes? "I don't know," Jack says. "A lot of people ask, 'What do you want? We will give you whatever you want.' We don't really know what we want—we just want to make records, write songs and play. That's what we want."

At times, the band's sound is hard to pin down. It is a blend of '60s garage with a sprinkle of The Kinks, a smidgen of The Animals, some Delta Blues and a whole lotta Motor City attitude.

After a few more shows in the States, The White Stripes head off to England—land of Morrissey and shepard's pie—to play to sold-out crowds and tape a session with the legendary John Peel.

And after that? Will The White Stripes stay indie or take their chances with the corporate machine?

"It is stupid for us to give up what we have now, where we can do whatever we want," Jack declares. "Give that up just for money—that is so lame."

Well, there's your answer.



## The Yayhoos

Behold a bunch of Yayhoos who've served their country in such seminal outfits as the Georgia Satellites, Kenny Wayne Shepard Band, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, Steve Earle and The Dukes, Shaver, Paul Westerburg and the Del Lords among others. Now lock the four road warriors in a barn with six microphones, no road maps and a pile of amps, guitars and drums. Then turn 'em loose for eight days. What you'll get is *Fear Not The Obvious*.

Meet the new boss—same as the old boss. Yayhoos Dan Baird, Eric "Roscoe" Amble, Keith Christopher and Terry Anderson graduated from the school of hard knocks and dirty socks. A roots rock Frankenstein on a mission to revive the primal instinct fathering the bastard child known as rock 'n roll, these quattros hombres summon all ye of little faith to witness a musical rebirth via an album of improvised solos, real instruments, no over dubs, no tape loops and absolutely no digital samples.

"Music is boring when it's played too correctly," shouts Baird from his Nashville digs. The gap-toothed hillbilly Lothario who rocketed to MTV fame as the voice of "Keep Your Hands To Yourself" likens mainstream rock to the phenomenon of "watching paint peel."

Baird will gladly snatch credit for assembling the Yayhoos. When his comrade Amble needed songs for a solo record the ex-Satellite was summoned to New York, and the two sat

around for four days throwing a baseball and writing tunes. Enter another pair of old friends, and the project proceeded to waggle like a wind-up toy. The unholy foursome passed around guitars, the bottle and melodic fragments while the tape rolled.

"We captured the magic of everyone pushing in the same direction while learning the song,"

recalls Baird. "It's like those old Chuck Berry records where the band didn't quite know the chords, and they all just went for it."

Falling somewhere between The Band's second album and The Replacements' *Pleased To Meet Me*, the Yayhoos have made a record that defies the times. From performances that are purposely unwashed and

somewhat slightly dazed, the band has the cahones to include a down 'n dirty Southern boogie version of Abba's "Dancing Queen" from their set list as the debut disc's final nail in the coffin.

"I want to be so damn roots rock that I get worse as I play," declares Baird. Mission accomplished.

—Tom Semioli



L-R: DAN BAIRD, ERIC AMBLE, KEITH CHRISTOPHER, TERRY ANDERSON.

## 5 questions



## ONEIDA

Oneida emerged out of a Brooklyn warehouse in 1996. Sharing a real disdain for their real names, PCRZ (guitar, woodies, vocals), Hanoi Jane (bass, guitar vocals), Bobby Matador (woodies, guitar, vocals) and drummer Kid Millions soon garnered less than glowing reviews begging for a decrease in volume. This kind of background sounds intimidating—at least until Matador exposes himself as a comic book nerd.

Answers by Bobby Matador

**What kind of a role do you feel regionalism continues to play in music, despite world-shrinking technologies such as the internet?**

Some folks think the live experience is of paramount importance. You have to be there. I dreamed about teleporting when I was a kid, although the X-Men taught me that it can be dangerous if you accidentally teleport yourself into space occupied by other matter. Although, air is matter too, so was he usually teleporting

into some sort of vacuum? I mean, what the fuck?

**Artists are commonly asked with whom they would someday like to collaborate. What band or artist do you most hope to avoid working with?**

Nick Lowe.

**What commonly used words by music reviewers should be outlawed?**

Album, song, debut, eponymous, seminal, sophomore effort, DJ, all adjectives and adverbs, synecdoche.

**Describe the strangest place and situation in which you've ever performed live? (Bar Mitzvahs are just the tip of the iceberg...)**

I'd have to say it would be the time we played on a flatbed truck, rolling down a Georgia highway. Once the time machine comes along, though, you better believe I'll be performing in the past. The future's cool, but that's kind of like opening your presents before Christmas morning.

**What was your best and worst Halloween costume?**

The Beekeeper, supervillain of my own creation and member of the Superlegion of Ultradoom (accompanied by all Oneida members in their own supervillain personae: Cathead, the Familiar, and the Immigrant).



## NIC ENDO

By Curran Reynolds

**On** a low, dimly lit stage in the basement of New York's CBGB, Nic Endo presides over an arsenal of electronic weaponry. With a regally graceful economy of motion, the otherworldly waif governs her machines, conjuring an alien symphony of noise. Discordant, extraterrestrial tones evolve into sinister melodies, eerie industrial tinkering give way to driving electro beats. With each slight movement, Endo leads the enraptured crowd through her thrilling world—a wondrous, terrifying and sometimes deafening place.

Born to a Japanese mother and German father, Nic Endo spent her youth in Frankfurt, Germany, playing classical piano, listening to Bebop records and making pilgrimages to Berlin to escape the

boredom of her hometown. It was there in the early '90s she befriended Alec Empire, a forward-thinking DJ spinning breakbeats with the Bass Terror Crew. A few years later, in 1997, Empire invited Endo to join his new group, Atari Teenage Riot—a "digital hardcore" insurgence squad already making a stir with its anti-establishment anthems. She began as a touring member of ATR, but soon proved herself an indispensable creative force in the group. Touring with ATR inspired Endo to begin recording solo material.

"When I got home from an ATR tour in December 1997, I wanted to capture what I had done so far in ATR in its pure form, on record," she explains. "I wanted to keep the impact and the energy of the live shows."

continued on page 61

## Dead Meadow

"Steve and I went for this walk on this mountain path," begins Dead Meadow guitarist Jason Simon. "We lifted up this boulder, and there was a little cave that we crept inside. There was this guy—half-beast, half-man—there. He had rags on and was pounding out rhythms with mammoth bones."

Listening to Simon explain how his band acquired their drummer, Mark Laughlin, is enough to prove its music comes from a time long forgotten by today's youth. Still, thanks to a well-received, self-titled debut, Dead Meadow is finally seeing some light at the end of the cave.

A few years ago the band's thick, warm sound caught the attention of Fugazi's Joe Lally, who had recently issued a CD on his Tolotta label re-releasing the obscure, oft-sought-after album by Maryland's doom-rock pioneers The Obsessed. Although the three members of Dead Meadow grew up in the '80s and '90s among a strong line of punk and indie bands from the nation's capital, their collective musical effort has more in common with The Obsessed and other fuzzed-out '70s garage groups.

In recent years, many bands have taken to imitating the image, sound and meaning of music of other eras. Dead Meadow maintains it is not one of these retro outfits. As caveman drummer Laughlin

states, "We're not a concept band by any means. It's not a joke. We're very serious about it, and it's not contrived. It's just what we play."

"A lot of bands nowadays are playing '70s metal in almost a sarcastic way," adds Simon. "We're trying to create some sort of mood and an overall feeling."

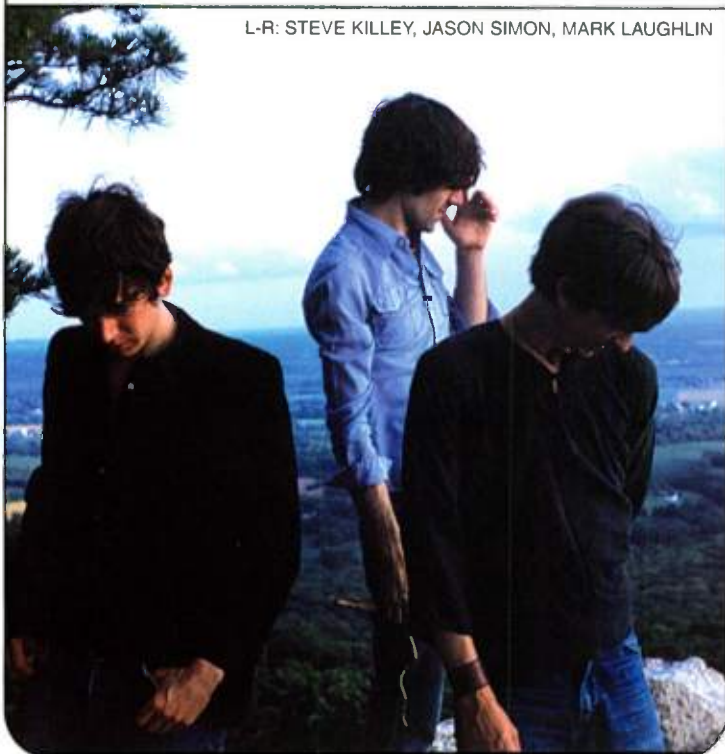
In creating this vibe, Dead Meadow draws on inspiration from some of the greats. Droning guitars, swelling bass and grooving drum lines define the music with nods to Black Sabbath, Sleep and Led Zeppelin. Simon says he and his bandmates admire these pioneers not just for their music but for their knack for imagery.

"When you're 13 and listening to Led Zeppelin, they paint an insane picture in your mind," Simon says. "They paint the best picture. There's such a mood and vibe to them."

With a passion for music and poetic, fantastical lyricism, Dead Meadow is dedicated to continuing the tradition and painting soundscapes of its own. There is an undeniable feeling when listening to the band's Tolotta release—a feeling like being whisked off to a far-away land. Hopefully, the next Dead Meadow album, already recorded in a barn (no joke) and set for a fall release, will bring listeners back for more.

—Christopher Baronner

L-R: STEVE KILLEY, JASON SIMON, MARK LAUGHLIN



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## SENSE FIELD

**M**ajor labels have created their fair share of hit makers. Just turn on MTV or commercial radio and witness those at the top of the charts. Southern California's Sensefield was a prime candidate to become the next big thing. While possessing an accessible rock sound and image, it also had the edge from the independent scene necessary to distinguish itself amongst the sea of machine-made alternative bands. Having toured with many bands from the emo and hardcore scene in the early part of the '90s, it had plenty of indie-rock credibility, and most importantly, it was blessed with the backing of Warner Brothers. But blessing quickly became curse—Sensefield had just completed its major label debut, *Under The Radar*, when an overhaul in management caused the album to be shelved. Although barely intact, the band walked away firm believers they could bounce back.

"We sort of felt lost at sea," vocalist Jon Bunch explains, looking back at one of the worst moments in Sensefield's lengthy and generally successful career. "It was sort of like being on the base of Mount Everest and looking up at the peak and having somebody tell you to go climb it. We totally thought it was going to be a daunting task. But actually, we were wrong."

The task Bunch speaks of was the re-recording of the record they made for

Warner Brothers. This time, they did things a little differently.

"We didn't have to use the same title or lyrics, we could change the melodies around, we could do whatever we wanted. We weren't bound by anything, you know? And that's what gave us the inspiration to accomplish such a feat, because going back into the studio we wouldn't be able to recreate the record."

And so they didn't, and bounced back a year later with *Tonight and Forever*, the band's first official release in five years, on the Nettwerk label. Self-produced by the band and engineered by guitarist Chris Evenson, *Tonight...* is a clear example of the quintet using strictly their own means and know-how to create a polished gem of an album.

"They gave us the ultimate freedom," Bunch says of the band's new home and management. "And that's what made making this record fun."

Fun is just one of the many adjectives describing *Tonight and Forever*. Dynamic, passionate, bitter, driving and sensitive are certainly others. And yes, the band still retained the polished, radio-friendliness found on its Warner Brothers sessions for *Tonight*.

"This feels good to us—I like the way it makes me feel," Bunch says of the final product. "It sounds weird, but I started to feel happy again. I found this deep joy in making this record again."

**By Waleed Rashidi**

L-R: Chris Evenson, John Stockberger, Rodney Sellars, Jon Bunch, Rob Pfeiffer

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-Jay Farrar

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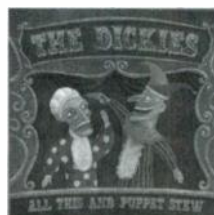
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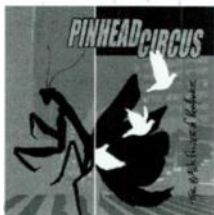
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## 5 questions



### BREAKING PANGEA

The last two years in music have been ruled by extremes. From the face painting of rap-core clowns to the incense lighting of Lilith Fair faves, extreme image and gimmickry has defined the musical landscape, both in the Top 40 and indie realms. To simply be a band, of friends and musicians, making original music, seems to be the sweetest understatement of the times. Pennsylvania's Breaking Pangea is one such band, concerned more about music and songwriting than posturing or media bombast. The group's new album on Undecided records demonstrates the benefits of this music first approach. Still, guitarist Fred Brody is an uninspired costumer when it comes to Halloween. Brody is in serious need of the seasonal resource offered by this month's Afterthought.

Answers by Clint Stelfox and Fred Brody

#### **What kind of a role do you feel regionalism continues to play in music, despite world-shrinking technologies such as the internet?**

I think local scenes are as strong as they have ever been, and technology is only bringing them closer. Before the internet, some kid might not have known there are shows he can go to 10 or 15 miles from his house, or that his favorite band is playing in town that night. I am all for world-shrinking

technology. I think that most people would rather feel that they are part of a national scene as opposed to a regional one.

#### **Artists are commonly asked with whom they would someday like to collaborate. What band or artist do you most hope to avoid working with?**

I don't think we would ever limit ourselves, this band has never had any limits and I would hate to start now. We have kicked around the idea of having guest vocalists and musicians. I think we decided that we would have to write a song where it seemed appropriate to have that kind of thing. We have never been the type of band who writes a part or song just for the sake of doing it. But if David Lee Roth asked Fred, I am sure he would come up with something.

#### **What commonly used words by music reviewers should be outlawed?**

I hate the guys who review local band demos and talk about the sound quality. It's like, yeah, the recording sounds bad—they're local, these guys are poor. Review Aerosmith if you're worried about that. It doesn't help the scene ripping bands apart.

#### **Describe the strangest place and situation in which you've ever performed live? (Bar Mitzvahs are just the tip of the iceberg...)**

We played last night at someone's house. The second our set ended, all the lights went out and this girl who no one knew came out of the back room with a baseball bat, screaming like a maniac for everyone to get the hell out of her house. This is in the pitch black, because she had turned the power off.

#### **What was your best and worst Halloween costume?**

In fifth grade I was a punk rocker for Halloween. The Friday after Michael Jackson won all his awards for the *Thriller* album, my school had a Michael Jackson day. I dressed up in black pants and had the white glove and was moonwalking all over the place. I wish I had the red zipper jacket though!

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## Tiger Army

Ordinary guys daydream about girls and cars. The thoughts of Tiger Army's Nick 13 run much darker—the Tiger Army frontman is fascinated by the night.

"I like the nighttime far better than the daytime," Nick carefully reveals. "Physiologically and psychologically, I am more comfortable at night. I would much rather be active when no one else is around. My fondness for the night is also a metaphor for my relationship to society—it distances me from most of the people I meet."

Surprisingly, in person, the charismatic frontman is able to share this sort of reflection without sounding overly dramatic. Seeing the band live is completely convincing. Nick's longtime allegiance to a subgenre of punk rock and rockabilly called psychobilly separates him and his Tiger Army even further from the mainstream.

"I welcome the psychobilly label," the singer/guitarist proudly states. "The psychobilly subculture originated in Europe, and it is very opened minded. I do not feel



L. R. GEOFF KRESGE / LONDON MAY, NICK 13

at all restricted by the label because there are so many different influences on psychobilly. I want people to become more aware of the psychobilly scene here in the States."

Not surprisingly, Tiger Army's latest record, *II: Power Of Moonlite*, highlights Nick's two biggest influences—the psychobilly scene and the nighttime hours. Nick is fortunate to have

many talented friends who share his view. Apart from Nick, Tiger Army includes Geoff Kresge on stand-up bass and London May behind the drums. AFI singer Davey Havok and Rancid's Lars Frederiksen and Matt Freeman also appear on *II: Power Of Moonlite*, which was released this summer on Hellcat Records.

With the album, Nick hopes to reach out to others more like himself.

"My interests prohibit me from relating to the average person on the street," Nick says (he's dead serious). "At the same time, I think the people who listen to Tiger Army's music are unable to relate to the mainstream in many ways. With Tiger Army, I have found there are a lot of people who relate to where I am coming from."

—Stephen Rafael

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## THE TIGHT BROS. FROM WAY BACK WHEN

**T**he Tight Bros. From Way Back When want to be taken seriously. The Olympia, Wash., quintet is waging war against the new troop of irony-for-irony's sake, joke metal bands—heavy on parody, low on inspiration—and taking aim at easy one-off comparisons to AC/DC. Although the Bros. pack a hefty sense of humor and owe a debt to Angus Young and Co. for sound and inspiration, the band's sophomore album on Kill Rock Stars, *Lend You A Hand*, is unquestionably the biggest gun in their arsenal.

The quintet has taken to delivering up a shot of high octane rock 'n roll along the likes of Fireballs of Freedom, The Fucking Champs, The Cherry Valence and The Candy Snatchers. Tight Bros. is already something of a supergroup, composed of former members of some of indie rock's edgier names such as Karp, Witchyboo, Mukilteo Fairies and Behead The Prophet NLSL. Ironically, these five gents are now making waves, not only on the indie circuit, but as part of a new breed of bands dedicated to keeping rock alive.

With this task of preservation comes some obstacles and heathens. The members have taken to defending their faith via the Kill Rock Stars web site. In a recent candid Q&A, Roadie Roddy prodded the band about allegations of rivalry towards joke metal bands, such as the female-front-

ed AC/DC tribute group Hell's Belles. Tight Bros. lanky frontman Quitty took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of true metal. His answer boasts some diplomacy, but leaves little room for ambiguity.

"We are forced to straddle that line [joke metal]," explains Quitty. "But that's not a world where we want to be."

Despite this firm attitude, even the Bro's themselves aren't exempt from the lashings of rumors and criticism. One mule-headed detractor even suggested Tight Bros. was in fact a Candy Snatchers cover band. Quitty isn't phased, quickly spitting back, "Is it tough being a third-rate David Fricke (famed *Rolling Stone* know-it-all editor)?"

With tongue firmly planted in Bon Scott's cheek, the Tight Bros. From Way Back When's sophomore effort, *Lend You A Hand*, is not to be denied—all sarcasm aside. The 12 tracks of blitzkrieg rock 'n roll will tear the roof off any tinted T-Top Monte Carlo and leave the driver's mullets rippling in the wind. Starting off with the manic, hard-charging "Make It A Habit" and snortin', sneezin', chokin' and wailin' their way through to the album's closer, "Inside Looking Out," in little more than 37 minutes, these Bro's obviously mean business.

The album is full of soloing guitars (boiled through 100-watt Ampeg

continued on page 65

By Greg Barbieri

L-R: Quitty, Nat Damm, Dave Harvey, Jake, Dwarren, Sean Kelly



K

In the early '90s, Karla Schickele formed the band Beekeeper with her brother, Matthew. In the fall of 1996, the band Ida, in need of a bass player for its tour, borrowed Schickele from Beekeeper. Although years before the formation of K, these earlier times with Ida were the origins for her somewhat solo adventure.

Schickele collected a number of songs that didn't work for either band, and under the moniker K, these homeless tunes have been released on her first full-length, *New Problems*, on Tiger Style Records.

During her first jaunt with Ida, Schickele brought a demo tape containing songs and material she wrote in her bedroom throughout the years. Impressed by her songwriting skills, the members of Ida encouraged her to do more with her songs.

"We really connected, and that was a big origin for K, although it was years before I started doing it," Schickele explains. "Just singing with Dan and Liz was a completely unique experience. They got excited about it,

so I got more excited about it."

While *New Problems* demonstrates several songs centered around the piano, Schickele only came to the instrument three years ago, quite by accident while house sitting.

"I never played piano," she admits. "I thought 88 keys was just really an excessive number of variables. Strictly speaking, it's an instrument of percussion. I realized, goddammit, this is just a drum. I just started writing on piano, and it felt very free to me because I had no idea what I was doing. It felt right."

Through her work with Ida, Schickele sharpened her skills with arrangements and quickly began to pound out new material—songs based around the piano, instead of bass or guitar.

The next step on the path to K's existence came when her friend, Tara Jane O'Neil, invited Karla to record.

"Tara had just finished recording *Perogrene* for herself," explains Schickele. "She had her equipment. She was getting into being an engineer, and she was damn good at it."

The two recorded a few of the tracks now found on *New Problems*. Although Schickele solely wrote and arranged all but one of the songs on *New Problems*, the album is not the result of a solo project.

"I think of it as a collaboration," Schickele reflects. "I've drawn on the talents of all my friends, recklessly and relentlessly."

While the vision is clearly Schickele's, many a widely known musician appends to the album. Schickele's sundry styles—from the piano/violin ballad of "Not Here" to the standard guitar/bass/drum approach of "Reminder"—showcase the diversity of her talents.

After several years of steady touring and recording, the industrious Ida is currently on a brief hiatus. Schickele says she looks forward to continuing her songwriting one way or another. For her, the relationship between K and Ida is natural, tight and symbiotic.

"Different projects strengthen each other sometimes in indirect ways," Schickele explains. "The



KARLA SCHICKELE

more I learn about arranging, the more I can learn about presenting songs in a live format. What I learn is going to end up strengthening what I do in Ida. It can also give me a place to work stuff out."

—Christopher Baronner

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## Pistol Grip

The sound of Pistol Grip recalls the wild and wooly days of Southern California punk, when bands with talent, intelligence and originality dominated the scene. *Shots from the Kelico Pass (1980), the latest full*



# DILETTANTE IN THE MIST



THE MAN BEHIND  
**GORILLAZ**  
DAMON ALBARN  
SPEAKS OUT ABOUT  
THE ANIMATED  
**FOUR SOME**  
BY MARTIN WILLIAMS

L-R: MURDOCK, 2-D, NOODLE, RUSSEL

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## Pistol Grip

The sound of Pistol Grip recalls the wild and woolly days of Southern California punk, when bands with talent, intelligence and originality dominated the scene. *Shots from the Kalico Rose* (BYO), the latest full-length from this Los Angeles-based five-piece, is a heady mixture of traditional SoCal attitude and some new and interesting influences.

"I have always been a big fan of classical baroque melodies," says guitarist Chase Revenge. "I like a lot of minor chords in my music."

Distilling this musical sensibility through hard-as-nails hardcore has resulted in one of the more unusual records in recent years. Together with wacked out lead vocalist Stax, ripping guitarist Hollywood, deep and dangerous bassist Slowey and kickass drummer Boxcar Kelly, Revenge has crafted a set of catchy, smart and memorable songs. Disguised as a standard rock 'n roll tune, "Bourgeoisie" is a standout, slithering into the listener's cerebellum with a brutal message and an infectious hook. Much of the rest of this album is pretty



darned hooky as well—and if Revenge is to be believed, this is nearly by accident.

"To me hooks are important, but they are actually the last thing I work on," he says. "I focus mostly on harmonizing the vocal melody with the chords. I don't like it when bands rely too heavily on hooks and leave the rest of the song flat."

The themes addressed on *Kalico Rose* cover familiar ground: government, religion, greed—all the big-

gies. There is, however, a freshness to the tunes themselves, and to the lyrical style, which gives them their own unique flavor.

"Kids are always going to hate adults, authority, rules, politicians," he says. "It will always be about rebellion and anger. I just think the political figures change, pop music changes and authority may transform—but they are all still present and always will be. C'mon, would life be worth living if

you had nothing to bitch about?"

The universal nature of these issues goes even beyond the confines of punk and hardcore, therefore the music of Pistol Grip has the potential for an appeal beyond the underground.

"I personally feel our music can strike a chord with anyone," he says. "Everybody on this earth has felt what we feel at least at one point in their lives."

—Mark Ginsburg

## :BOILERMAKER

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## The Rapture

"It doesn't sound like other records coming out now," says The Rapture bassist Matty Safer of the band's new EP, *Out Of The Races And Onto The Tracks*. "It's a lot rawer, and there's mistakes on it."

While not necessarily a great introduction, Safer's comment couldn't be more true. According to drummer Vito Roccoforte, the six-song EP was recorded nearly straight through in one take with no overdubs. The result is a sublime, lo-fi jam session committed to wax—a beautifully flawed afternoon's worth of edgy guitar, sinister basslines, stomping drumbeats and singer Luke Jenner's pitch-perfect howls and shrieks.

In many ways, the mistakes of *Out of the Races...* are its greatest strengths. The Rapture's looseness radiates punk rock purity in an era where massive overproduction has become the status quo.

"We used to have a keyboard player," Roccoforte explains. "Keyboards took up so much space. In a band, it's really important to leave space for each other. Now all of a sudden we have a lot more space. This record is about us expanding as a three-piece."

Jenner, Safer and Roccoforte conjure up a new brand of rock music labeled by them as "sonic deathfuck groove." They are as influenced by Chic, Timbaland and Happy Mondays as by more obvious heroes like The Minutemen, Pixies and Wire. *Out of the Races...* is brimming with references to dub, disco, punk and blues

and serves as music to which listeners can think, scream and, most importantly, shake tail.

"We all go dancing at (New York dance club) Centro-Fly, though no one would expect it of us," says Safer of the band's diverse inspirations. "We've been listening to a lot of funk, dance and Brit-pop lately." Meanwhile, Roccoforte admits to being a bit of a metalhead. This open mindedness can be traced to its migratory history. The Rapture has never stayed in any one place long. Since its 1998 formation in San Diego, the band has bounced around the United States, eyes and ears wide open. Along the way, they put out a couple of albums on seminal indie label Gravity Records and toured with bands of all sorts. In May 1999, Jenner and Roccoforte relocated to New York, recruiting Safer—a Washington, D.C., native—to take over bass duties. These most recent migrations are depicted on the cover of the new EP, perhaps as a tribute to some of the sticky obstacles the band has endured.

"I slept in our van under the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway," remembers Roccoforte. "We were just hustling, trying to get ourselves on our feet."

Two years later, Roccoforte still considers New York a tough city but believes the opportunities outweigh the sacrifices.

"You can take it to a higher level in New York," he says.

—Curran Reynolds



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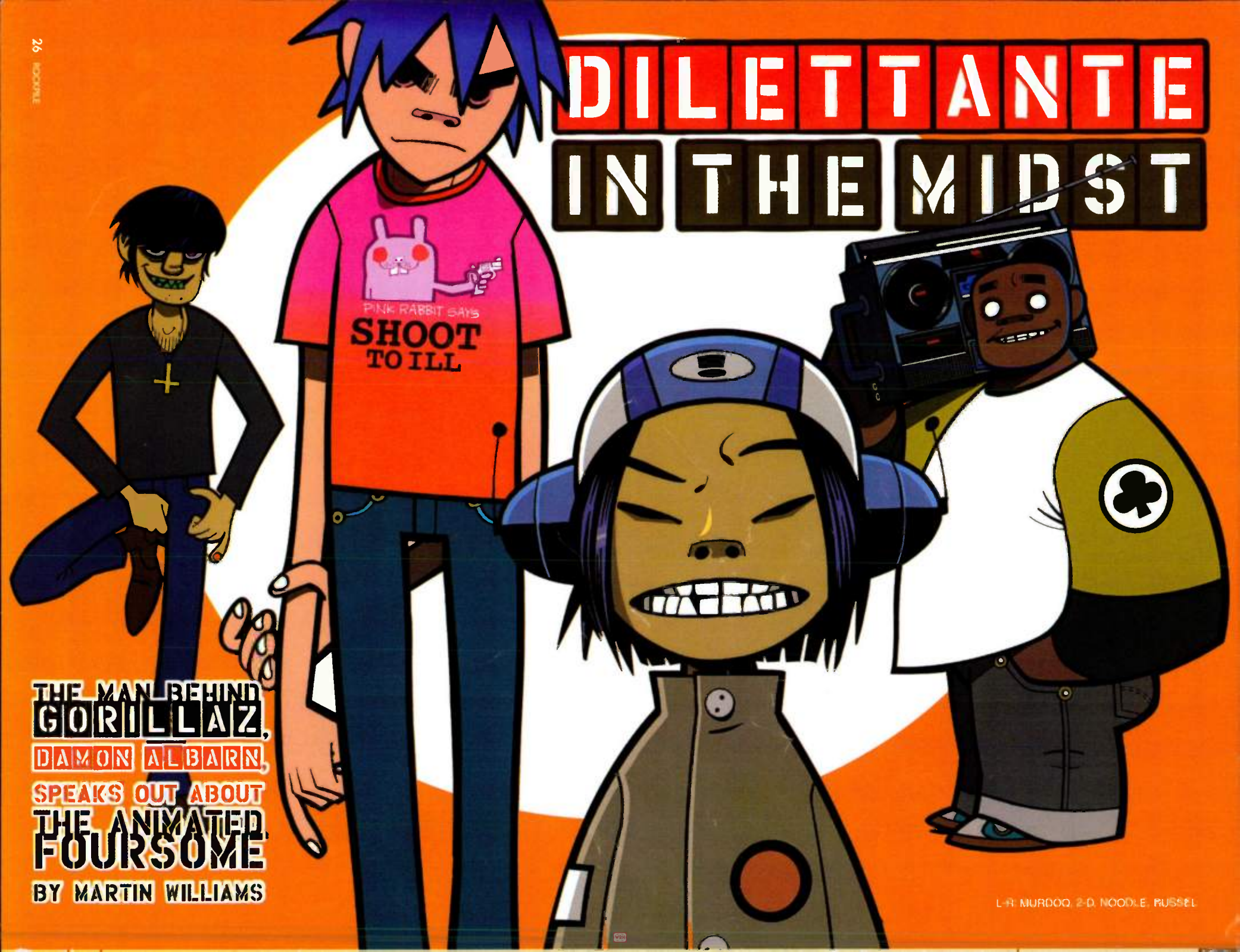
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# DILETTANTE IN THE MIDDLE



THE MAN BEHIND  
**GORILLAZ**,  
DAMON ALBARN,  
SPEAKS OUT ABOUT  
THE ANIMATED  
**FOUR SOME**  
BY MARTIN WILLIAMS

L-R: MURDOQ, 2-D, NOODLE, RUSSEL

# WE'VE REALLY TAKEN IT TO WHERE WE WANTED TO TAKE IT, WHERE THESE ANARCHIC, UNPREDICTABLE CHARACTERS CAN SPEW VITRIOL ON ANYONE AND EXIST IN THEIR OWN SPACE

—ALBARN



## ISN'T IT IRONIC?

Damon Albarn is sitting in the conference room of his record company's New York offices. It's the first of three days of press, during which he has the dubious pleasure of addressing himself to a conveyor belt of music hacks, all interested in what he has to say because of who he is—major pop star in his native United Kingdom as frontman for Blur, erstwhile actor, composer of film scores and most recently puppetmaster to pop terrorists Gorillaz.

Despite this, it's interesting Albarn's main concern seems to be in obfuscating his public presence. "I would prefer to completely disappear," he says when asked about his star status. The nearest he can get to invisibility is Gorillaz.

Originally cooked up three years ago by Albarn and his then-flatmate, cartoonist Jamie Hewlett, Gorillaz is a self-proclaimed "zombie hip-hop" outfit. This post-modern response to the empty cult of celebrity in the form of an animated four-piece, in theory, diverts the media glare from Albarn, leaving him free to pull the strings Oz-style from behind the curtain. (During live performances the musicians play behind a screen onto which the animated characters are projected.)

"There'd been a few things in the air," Albarn says about the project's inception. "I'd had a conversation with Can in Cologne over tea one afternoon, and they suggested that I should recreate myself as a virtual entity. I'd been saying that some of the stuff I'd done over the last 10 years I was embarrassed about. Not because I didn't recognize my frame of mind at the time, but because I'd been drawn into the whole celebrity thing more than maybe at the time I'd given myself credit for. And they said, 'Look at your first 10 years as a very public college course, and now you've graduated.' Which was a nice thing to say. I think they're the sort of people that have 50 brilliant ideas a day and distribute them to people. Can are an amazingly important band. So maybe that was in the air. And Jamie had been asked to draw some pictures for some people that were music-related, and all of that kind of fused together. Then once we'd sort of said, 'Yes, we'll do that,' we started to recognize the possibilities."

Ladies and gentlemen, if you'll check your disbelief at the door: Gorillaz was assembled by a Satanic bassist from Stoke-on-Trent called Murdoc. It features gangly poster-boy vocalist 2-D, Russel the outsized rapping drummer and diminutive Japanese guitarist Noodle. They make a combined noise something like the laid-back melodic dub of Augustas Pablo, blended with cartoon thrash of Blur's "Song 2."

"It was enough that we agreed to go on this journey together," Albarn says of whether the characters were developed in tandem with the music. "They're Jamie's characters. I added one thing, which is the ability of Russel to call on spirits so that we could introduce, when I wanted, a whole host of different musicians. And once that idea was in my head, I thought, I can do anything with this, I can actually go wherever I like. Which, for someone who's been changing all the time, was like a godsend. It was like, here I've found a perfect platform to experiment as much as I'd wanted to in the past."

As a more or less pranksterish response to the modern dominance of vapid celebrity, surely the whole Gorillaz scam relies on the anonymity of the true perpetrators (comprising Albarn, Miho Hitari, Tina Franz, Ibrahim Ferrer, Del the Funkee Homosapien and producer Dan the Automator). Given his vocal disdain for the spotlight, isn't Albarn disgruntled to be here, talking the talk and taking the brunt of the Gorillaz media cattle call as the band's acknowledged figurehead? "We did the same press junket in Europe, and now the record's at the top of the charts in virtually every country in Europe, so it made a massive difference us putting that little bit of effort in."

And if such unabashed mercantile chart awareness sits ill with Damon's anti-celebrity stance, he's achieved at least a portion of his aim for Gorillaz. "This week they're on the cover of (U.K. pop mag) *Smash Hits*, and they've done the editorial for it, so we've really taken it to where we wanted to take it, where these anarchic, unpredictable characters can spew vitriol on anyone and exist in their own space. Murdoc's been in *Esquire*. He's been asked to be in *Penthouse* and *Hello* magazine. Gorillaz becoming successful is all about holding a mirror up and going, 'this is shit, stop it.'"

The line between Gorillaz achieving its goals and becoming the thing it satirizes is a fine one. Doesn't this suggest the project has a limited shelf life? "We've always said that as soon as the ideas aren't good enough, we'll stop. It's the easiest thing in the world to stop this." Albarn pauses, before falling back into character and quickly adding, "or they might go and do solo projects, which they're quite capable of doing. They've all got their own styles of music. 2-D's worked with Massive Attack, Russel's just done a Redman remix and Murdoc is itching to get his metal album out—he's itching to work with Tool."

It's all very demographically calculated, but really, isn't Gorillaz just an Albarn vanity project—a solo album by another name?

"There would never be a Damon Albarn solo album. I'm not into the cult of myself," he asserts worthily, but with apparent limited self-awareness. "I like working with musicians. I love the interaction, I'm a musician. I make a moderately successful pop star, but I'm a good musician."

Even so, Albarn is relishing the comparison his own manufactured band is getting with the chart-topping stars of the *Popstars* TV program in Britain. "The press tried to link them as some kind of new phenomenon," he says, admitting, "it was pre-prepared, but everything's pre-prepared. The nail in the coffin is that *Popstars* are putting out their next record at the same time as our next record, and we're going to beat them to No. 1, so that'll be the end of them."

With a U.K. television feature planned for autumn, the future for Gorillaz seems to lie up on the silver screen. "The more successful it gets the bigger the film offers get. I think we're up to about \$10 million now, but we need to get to about \$50 million before we can make the film that we want to make."

Until then, Albarn is content enough to—as he sees it at least—deflect attention from himself. "I can talk about the concept," he says. "I'm not actually having to talk about myself, which is boring and just perpetuates an aspect of our culture that I'm just fucking fed up with. And I think there's too much emphasis on it now. Celebrity has become big business in itself. It's a very viable career for people—just celebrity—without any reason for it or content." ■



# WELCOME TO HELL

ROCKPILE TAKES ON THE DEVIL'S MUSIC



Varg Vikernes

**As** if October weren't scary enough with all those Disney's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* re-runs, *Rockpile* sets its sights on the darker side of the loud music spectrum. Join us as we descend into the nether-regions of deafening guitars, inverted crosses and cheesy lyrics...

## Fireproof Your Church:

THE SCOOP ON BLACK METAL  
BY MARK GROMEN

WITH ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY MIKE MCKEE

Black metal is a narrowly defined subgenre typified by satanic lyrics, often violent imagery and the unholy din. If you're thinking Living Colour, you're way off target. Variations on the theme include crude, outlandish armor of spikes and chains, as well as Kabuki-inspired "corpse paint"—almost exclusively black on white theatrical grease-paint worn on the face, representing death. Although Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin offered up occult lyrics, while Alice Cooper, then Kiss, embraced face painting and over-the-top, distasteful stage antics, the origins of black metal are attributed to the British trio Venom, credited with coining the phrase with the title to its second album.

## The Genesis Of Primal Evil

In a musical void populated by the dying days of disco, late-'70s U.K. rockers flocked towards guitar-dominated metallic sounds. Marrying a Motorhead intensity to punk's rudimentary understanding of musicianship, groups like Venom defined themselves by sheer volume, anti-Christian rhetoric and satanic symbolism (think pentagrams

and goat heads). The buffoonery and hyperbolic nature of Venom—one album's artwork proudly proclaimed "the death of your God we demand"—made great copy, and the threesome quickly became the darlings of a scandal-hungry British press. With imitation doubling as flattery and the quickest way to a recording contract, numerous devilishly aligned bands followed Venom's path.

## The Devil Takes Form: THE RISE OF BLACK METAL

Elsewhere, the enigmatic Bathory—a one man garage band from Sweden—began doling out the dark rock as early as '82 and is now widely cited as an inspiration by the current crop of black metallers. Led by Quorthon, Bathory helped popularize firebreathing and Viking mythos. Sporadic recordings and a shroud of secrecy enveloped all aspects of the band, elevating its cult status. In the pages of emerging metal publications, Denmark's Mercyful Fate engaged in a running public feud with Venom. Years later, both admitted to merely orchestrating the press for publicity purposes. Although the rivalry was indeed fabricated, a precedent had been set for intense feuds between bands—a facet of black metal culture doomed to escalate towards violence, murder and lunacy.

## Borne Of Odin's Blood: BLACK METAL'S GLORY DAYS

The true glory of black metal was to be Scandinavian. It was Norway where the genre would reach its apex among some of its most devout followers. While many bands toiled

away in near obscurity, a series of church burnings and murders served as modern black metal's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," blowing the cover off of a vibrant, albeit demonic, underground.

Amongst the most blackened horde, Mayhem, the universally acknowledged lynchpin, is the only intact, active entity—still, the original-member count is questionably low. Mayhem guitarist Euronymous is cited by many as the godfather of black metal, while Mayhem's *Deathcrush* is regarded by some as the definitive black metal album. The members' notorious onstage behavior is rumored to include, for starters, pig disembow-ement. A hollowed-out boar's head is often donned by the lead singer and to this day remains a part of the mic stand. Their notorious off-stage behavior includes, well, killing each other. The group's most notorious and ironically nicknamed singer, Dead, went Hemmingway, blowing out his own brains. Obviously besides themselves with grief, the surviving members of the group snuck a couple photos of the crime scene before authorities arrived, hoping to use the Polaroid moment as an album cover. Undaunted and strangely inspired by Dead's demise, the band continued until a former bass player, Varg Vikernes, aka Count Grishnack, stabbed Euronymous for not being evil enough. Losing one member to suicide and another to murder equated to a fantastic, although repugnant, promotional tool, catapulting the Norwegians to international infamy. Despite the collapse of band unity, Mayhem is hailed as one of the genre's true pioneering kings, alongside Darkthrone and the murdering Count Grishnack's solo project, Burzum.

*continued on page 60*





## A BLACK METAL FAQ

BY MIKE MCKEE

**Q:** Why is it called black metal when it's all white guys who play it?

**A:** The "black" in black metal refers to evil, such as in black magic, not race, such as in Black History Month. We don't know why black metal fans are predominantly white. Why do so many white people like Meg Ryan or Calvin Johnson?

**Q:** Do black metal musicians wear corpse paint all the time?

**A:** There are no guidelines for when to wear or remove corpse paint, but most bands and fans agree, corpse paint is for special occasions and only for those who are confident in their path of darkness. Most rockers probably skip the make-up if they're just running out for milk and bread.

**Q:** Is there rivalry between Swedish and Norwegian schools of black metal?

**A:** The pursuit of credibility is focal to black metal culture. While at times the Sweden vs. Norway originator/innovator debate has been inflammatory, other periods have seen it dismissed as a non-issue. Suffice to say, there has been no "We're All In The Same Gang" movement as American hip hop experienced between east and west coasts.

**Q:** If I listen to black metal, just as a joke, will I still go to Hell?

**A:** Definitely. Consult Deuteronomy 23:6. If you went to see the Beastie Boys on the *License To Ill* tour (when they had the giant, hydraulic penis), listened to N.W.A.'s *Straight Out Of Compton* or lied to your parents about watching porn, there is little hope for your eternal soul.

**Q:** Why are black metal band logos so damn hard to read?

**A:** Simple, because when you add upside down crosses and pentagrams and sinews and thorns to anything it just looks cooler. Some band logos can get pretty involved. Try staring at the Abruptum logo on the band's debut full-length. Eventually you'll see a sailboat... or a schooner. ■



Mortiis

## MEET THE AUTHOR: MORTIIS

BY MARK GROMEN

One of Jim Henson's less-annoying puppets once mused it's not easy being green. Apparently, being an ageless, demonic elf has its ups and downs too, even when you're at the top of your game. The bio of Scandinavian black metal band Emperor wasn't entirely rosy. Guitarist Samoth did time in jail for torching churches, while drummer Faust stabbed a man and has since languished in jail. It was the group's bassist, Mortiis, who—it seemed—came out unscathed in this *Behind The Music*. After the demise of Emperor, the elf-eared, hook-nosed, corpse-painted Mortiis continued to spread his dark gospel of keyboard-driven, medieval metal, garnering legions of loyal followers. Well, even black metal trolls get the blues.

### Secrets Of My Kingdom

BY MORTIIS

Rumors of a book from the tortured artist have been circulating for a while. The black leather-bound, gilded-page edition is credited with having been penned in '92-'95, although there's an addendum from late last year, where the author downplays much of what's written,

even disowning the title! Black and white illustrations and the medieval font employed for each heading (as there are no proper chapters) give the impression of some ancient tome. Stylistically, very similar to *The Book Of Nod*. Initially sold with a copy of *Stargate*, the man's most recent musical work, the autographed edition is limited to 850 pieces worldwide. How many more copies will be published, like most everything else surrounding Mortiis, remains a mystery.

Essentially, *Secrets Of My Kingdom* reads like a self-help book for the man/elf himself, wrestling with the creation of a character who seems to have completely displaced its creator. Much like Leonard Nemoy's initial autobiography, *I'm Not Spock* (another pointy eared fellow), Mortiis attempts to unmask his creation and let people know he's not a total wacko. Psychologically speaking, the alternate universe Mortiis rules over is the understandable byproduct of a shy loner questioning man's existence and the injustices of everyday life. Through a series of lyrical poems, Mortiis doesn't so much as explain the inner workings of his grandiose fictitious world/vision, but rather elaborates in greater detail than song allows (as many of the artist's earliest compositions were lengthy instrumental soundscapes), on the places inside his head. It's left for the reader to judge how devoted the author is to sanity. Much like a musical concept album, the transitions between passages are often weak, leaving audiences dependent on a larger picture all too often obscured. ■



# SLAYER



l-r: Tom Araya, Kerry King, Paul Bostaph, Jeff Hanneman

## FAMED AXEMAN KERRY KING HEADS SOUTH OF HEAVEN WITH AMY SCIARRETTO

**N**o other word in the English lexicon is more synonymous with metal than Slayer. In fact, the band's legion of slack-jawed, long-haired, leather-clad fans don't even refer to metal's uncontested royalty as simply "Slayer." It's become "Fucking Slayer." At gigs, talented opening acts—although hand picked by the headliner—get heckled, booed and taunted by Slayer's rowdy and ravenously devoted fans.

"The coolest thing for me is seeing decent bands open for us and get crushed by our audience," says the band's big, bad, bald and heavily tattooed guitarist Kerry King. "That's power right there. A lot of bands deal with it differently. Some will chant 'Slayer' while on stage, using reverse psychology on the crowd. But the crowd knows when they're being fucked with. If it's a friend's band, I feel bad. But it's definitely power."

This kind of power takes time to harness, says King. The loyalty and respect of fans worldwide is, in fact, a by-product of more than 20 years of slinging some of the fastest and meanest metal known to man. The foursome, rounded out by singer/bassist Tom Araya (known to bang his head in figure-eight formation while performing), guitarist Jeff Hanneman and drummer Paul Bostaph, is one of the most name-checked bands in heavy music—rivaled only by Metallica and Pantera for co-authoring the thrash genre and sticking with it.

Currently, King and company are on the road with Pantera, Static-X, Skrape and Morbid Angel, together packaged as the *Extreme Steel* tour. Fans have wondered what has taken Slayer and Pantera—the biggest "still metal" titans—so long to hit the road together.

"I think we're always on different schedules," offers King. "I hang out with them more than I do with my own band. It sure wasn't for lack of wanting to because we're friends."

The tour has been a hoot so far, with the bands stirring up mischief along the way. A peek at any of Pantera's three home videos provides a good introduction to the backstage booze and boisterousness. Within the first weeks of the tour, members of both bands were suffering from Sharpie marker tattoos inflicted on each other.

On the tour, Slayer is previewing two new songs from its forthcoming album, cheerily titled *God Hates Us All*. The band's set list sticks with familiar, older material to maximize fan satisfaction and interaction.

And while satisfaction for fans might be a priority for the band, pleasing anyone else has never really been on Slayer's agenda. The group is no stranger to controversy, having pissed in the face of religion throughout the bulk of its career. King says he has no fear of backlash from religious in response to the new album's anti-Christian title.

"I've had people say, 'So if you call it *God Hates Us All*, you must believe that there is a God because you say he hates,'" King shares before offering his retort. "No. I don't buy any religion."

Where religion leaves off, the law isn't far behind. Currently, Slayer is embroiled in a lawsuit charging the band with inspiring someone to commit a grisly murder. King insists he wishes to remain as removed as possible from the ugliness, but cannot comment on the case for legal reasons.

Opposition notwithstanding, King says he's more excited about *God Hates Us All* than he's been about any recent Slayer record. "Usually, everybody does the lyrics," says King. "But out of 14 songs, I contributed to 11. I had a lot of ideas."

Literally, his ideas won't be winning any awards from the 700 Club. "Disciple," one of the new songs the band is testing out live on the *Extreme* tour, challenges the Christian notion of man in God's image. Another song, "New Faith," suggests the Bible is nothing but folklore.

"For thousands of years, you are force fed this ancient script and then you find out they made this shit up," relates King, a natural diplomat, who then shares the song's chorus, "Welcome to the horror of revelation."

King understandably feels *God Hates Us All* is the most over-the-top, angry Slayer record since *Reign In Blood*. Despite the band's veteran status, it shows no signs of mellowing—or slowing down. Fans might wonder how Slayer can keep up the fast pace as its members age.

"It's more about staying edgy and staying credible," offers King. "When you get up to playing fast, you'll be able to do it. For endurance, you have to weight lift and try running so you don't lose it. But we're more about edge, credibility and staying relevant."

Having revolutionized hard rock and helping to carry it into the new millennium, the gang has a case for pride. The ever-modest King concludes, "Slayer's got more cred in its guitar picks than most bands have on an entire album."

**T**he best way to Six Feet Under frontman Chris Barnes' heart is introducing horror films into the conversation. Drop the name Lucia Fulci, and you're as good as gold. Barnes wastes no time to laud the work of the late Italian splattermeister whose low-budget cult classics like *Zombie* set new standards for cinematic gore during the '80s.

"The *Gates of Hell* is my favorite. It's a scary movie. I just love the low-budget stuff—to me that's scary. It looks evil. There's nothing evil about a Wes Craven film.

It doesn't take much prodding for Barnes to reference another one of his Fulci favorites, *The Beyond*.

"There's nothing like seeing someone get sulfuric acid poured on their face," he enthuses.

There's a lot of Fulci, literally and figuratively, on Six Feet Under's fifth and latest album, fittingly titled *True Carnage*. For his part, Barnes has written his most viscerally brutal and graphic material since his dismissal from Cannibal Corpse—where he'd become an underground icon for unleashing some of the sickest material in metal history.

Accompanying songs such as "Impulse To Disembowel," "Knife, Gun, Axe" and "Cadaver Mutilator" is exclusive artwork from notorious tattoo artist Paul Booth, detailing disturbing, babies-in-formaldehyde packaging. He also directed an eyeball-gouging, gut-pulling video for "The Day The Dead Walked," included on the enhanced CD.

"There's some real sick shit on there," notes Barnes with a stoned cackle—he's been burning joints for much of his all-day interview session.

Barnes and Booth became fast pals after meeting a couple years ago when Booth designed the cover for SFU's 1999 album, *Maximum Violence*. In addition to illustrating the band's album covers, Booth is also illustrating its singer, continuing work on an elaborate tattoo wrapping around Barnes' torso.

"It's got bodies ripping and tearing my flesh and pulling out bones and stuff like that," according to the singer.

Booth's film work on the "The Day The Dead Walked" video is equally grotesque. Barnes describes the imagery as brutal gore, inspired in large part by Fulci's films.

Death metal purists who devoured Barnes' barf-inducing fare with Cannibal may have been a bit puzzled by the comparatively relaxed groove of SFU's debut *The Haunted*, the THC-tinged trippiness of *Warpath*, the tribute experimentation on *Graveyard Classics* and the band's stint on punk's Warped Tour in 2000. Between the rampant gore, churning musical mayhem and Barnes' trademark guttural vocals, *Carnage* will feel like a lost friend—back from the dead and ready to kill.

"I risked a bunch by starting the band when I did, but I had to do it," says Barnes, who formed SFU in 1993 as a side project with Obituary's Alan West and Death's Terry Butler and Greg Gall—West was eventually replaced by Massacre guitarist Steve Swanson.

"There's people out there that are still listening to what I have to say—however absurd it might be," reflects Barnes. "I wrote my heart out on this shit and told some brutal stories."

Indeed Six Feet Under has prospered—by death metal standards—in spite of its strange trip to the far fringes of the genre and competition from European black metal bands like Emperor, Marduk, Dimmu Borgir and Cradle of Filth, which have gained a foothold in the American underground. There were plenty of fans looking for something betwixt and between Cannibal's in-your-face brutality, Morbid Angel's blast furnace fury or Decide's unrepentant blasphemy. SFU certainly fills the void.

But at its heart, Barnes reckons his songwriting never strayed too far from the grisly path he carved with Cannibal. The material may have been less depraved and shocking, but Barnes doesn't see it as a departure.

"It's all about killing people, one way or another," he laughs. "The world's a pile of shit, so at least if it can't be done it needs to be said. I don't want to be demonized—I'm saying the same thing as the TV news, except

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## CANNIBAL CORPSE'S FORMER FRONTMAN, CHRIS BARNES, GOES UNDERGROUND WITH PETER ATKINSON



# SPIRIT ON THE RISE



**JASON PIERCE LETS IT COME DOWN  
BY JOHN D. LUERSSSEN**



ason Pierce is a polite chap. To be honest, it's something you probably wouldn't expect from a guy who suddenly and rather mercilessly sacked his last line up two years back. But the mild-mannered brainchild behind Spiritualized answers questions about the highly publicized sacking, his take on the hype machine that is the British music press and his latest opus, *Let It Come Down*, in a soft, refined British inflection.

Clearly more comfortable letting his music do the talking, the early part of the dialog is amiable, but somewhat leaden despite attempts to pep things up. Gossip-addled instincts pounce at the outset of the discussion, probing Pierce about the motives behind passing out pink slips to the last incarnation of Spiritualized.

"Without being mean, I had taken it as far as I could with that line-up," Pierce says respectfully of his work with guitarist Mike Mooney, bassist Sean Cook and drummer Damon Reece—the collective spawning 1997's widely lauded *Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space*.

"I had really wanted to keep growing," Pierce continues a little less cautiously, without altering his mellow tone. "For certain people, it had become less about the music, more about the money. Demands were being made to me about how much cash would be required for them to show up and make the performances. It's not about the money to me—that's not why I make music—but Spiritualized is mine in name, and I have to safeguard it."

Conceived 12 years ago during the demise of his previous band, the efficacious '80s trance-rock outfit Spacemen 3, his spin-off group has always embodied much of the same ethereal and adventurous musical vibe. Yielding four studio albums and a live record while evolving from the distortion-bolstered, psychedelic minimalism of 1992's *Lazer Guided Melodies* to the recently dropped, orchestra-fostered epic *Let It Come Down*, the group has vastly expanded the way rock is perceived.

Written and visualized by Pierce over a two-year stretch, his new, 11-song offering was initially recorded at George Martini's Air Studios with co-conspirators/Live at the Royal Albert Hall holdovers Thighpaulsandra (keyboards) and Ray Dickaty (saxophones). New core members Doggen (guitar), Martin Shellard (bass), Kevin Bales (drums) and Tom Edwards (percussion) were also on hand to pour the album's foundation.

Once the musical understructure had been set, the project budged to the legendary Abbey Road facility, where Pierce, using his production alias J Spaceman, worked with sometime Spiritualized member John Coxon laying down the orchestral and choral arrangements.

Recounting the gestation of *Let It Come Down*, Pierce reveals, "I wrote the orchestrations by humming them into a dictaphone, which was quite involved because I don't have any formal experience composing. Later they were transcribed, but the whole thing was quite a

lengthy process. Putting it all together, we used numerous players—nearly a hundred orchestral musicians and vocalists. In some instances, we had accumulated something like 90 or 100 tracks, because when I work at mixing everything together I don't want to have to go back and add something. I like to have everything that I might want or need there when I tie it all together.

"This record is about removing all the things that had previously made Spiritualized Spiritualized," he says, defining his latest lush opus. "I wanted to let the songs stand alone, which I think we've done. The challenge for us now is to execute it live and keep it exciting. First and foremost, we are a live band.

"We'll be traveling with 13 players—including a brass section—although I might like to stretch it out to 15 people to give it a richer feel if I can," Jason asserts. "We've got European dates lined up in September and October, but to be honest I'm looking forward to bringing the show to America and really spending time there. I think America's great, what I've seen of it from inside a bus window, but at some point I'd really like to discover it. We're scheduled to play at Carnegie Hall, which should be quite a thrill."

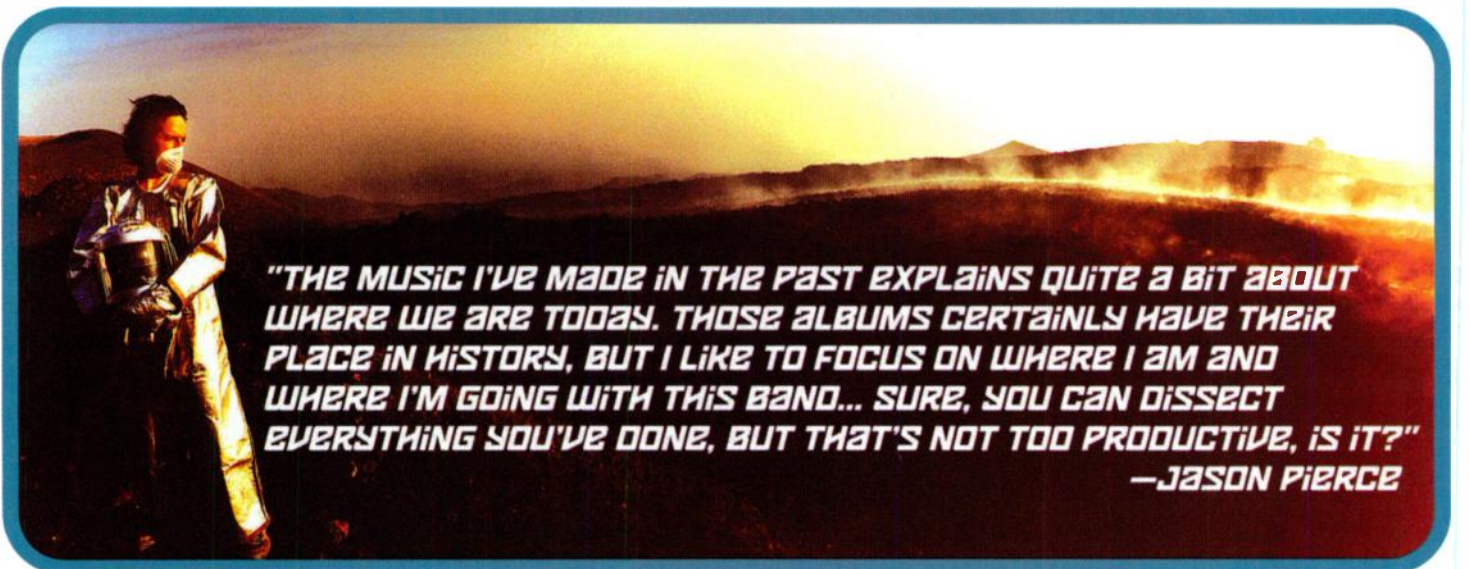
When asked if it's stressful gearing up for a new album's release, Pierce casually utters, "Not really. I don't really buy into the machinery. I'm not concerned with what the press thinks or if it goes to such and such a chart position."

How did it feel when his last studio album scored Album of the Year honors by one U.K. weekly? "The press here in England can be ridiculous," he answers, dismissing the acknowledgment. "They're always hyping things to death. I try to shy away from it all. I don't look at money and record sales as a basis of success. I'm successful because I do what I want to.

"I really don't have much interest in the pop scene," he adds. "I never have, really. Most of it is inconsequential wallpaper. If you want to know what I'm listening to lately, I will recommend this New York jazz artist I've been digging named Matthew Shipp. I would urge people to check him out."

When asked if he ever revisits his earlier material, Pierce declares like a true visionary, "I'm not really interested in going back and listening to the old records. The music I've made in the past explains quite a bit about where we are today. Those albums certainly have their place in history, but I like to focus on where I am and where I'm going with this band. The same goes for us doing things like playing shows at the CN Tower in Toronto and the World Trade Center. That was a pretty interesting idea, to play the highest shows in the world, but I don't need to relive it. Sure, you can dissect everything you've done, but that's not too productive, is it?"

And there, within Jason Pierce's parting observation, lies the Spiritualized tenet—keep reaching further, retain your imagination and sense of adventure, and when all else fails, let it come down. ■



**"THE MUSIC I'VE MADE IN THE PAST EXPLAINS QUITE A BIT ABOUT WHERE WE ARE TODAY. THOSE ALBUMS CERTAINLY HAVE THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY, BUT I LIKE TO FOCUS ON WHERE I AM AND WHERE I'M GOING WITH THIS BAND... SURE, YOU CAN DISSECT EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE, BUT THAT'S NOT TOO PRODUCTIVE, IS IT?"**  
**—JASON PIERCE**



# DOING IT HER WAY

## Nikka Costa Takes Control

There are a lot of words to describe Nikka Costa's music—funk, rock, hip hop, soul, earthy, raunchy, sexy, powerful. It is all this. In fact, she seems to be all of it herself. This former child star grew up from under the umbrella of famous producer/dad Don Costa (Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Sarah Vaughn) and turned into a raucous gypsy redhead with a fiery, soulful voice to match. Although it's actually her fifth album, her newest release, *Everybody Got Their Something*, marks her real introduction to American listeners. Costa's debut effort at the tender age of eight went multi-platinum in Europe, South America, Israel and Mexico, and by 15 she had released two more albums. While *Everybody Got Their Something* has plenty of tender moments and intimate vocal performances, Costa makes her mark through the detailed production, exceptional vocal arrangements and furious energy exerted on this album. Playing her talent and sex appeal to the maximum, clad in tight hip-hugger jeans and skimpy tops, she works every angle of her natural resources. In fact, you might recognize her from the overtly sexy video for the album's first single "Like A Feather," Buzz Worthy on MTV and in heavy rotation on MTV2. »

by Andre Calilhanna

Costa's retro style and musical inclinations suggest influences by Janis Joplin, Terence Trent D'Arby, Lenny Kravitz, Prince and Joan Osborne, to name but a few. Her musical gumbo is spicy.

*Everybody Got Their Something* continued to pick up momentum in the States as Costa spent part of the summer hammering through a European festival tour before returning home for a headlining run.

"I definitely like the way the album came out, and I'm really proud of the way it sounds," she says while watching Wimbledon and enjoying a day's break in a hotel room in rainy Scotland. "We worked really hard on it. It took about two years from writing to mixing, so it was a pretty long, arduous kind of task.

"When I first started this project, I thought it was going to be more of a rock record, but I kept writing these soul tunes, and I was like, 'Well I guess this is what it's going to be.' It makes sense, because ever since I've been buying records for myself, I've been listening to stuff like Stevie Wonder, Sly and the Family Stone and Aretha Franklin. But I wanted to combine that with rock. I feel really good about it, and I'm excited to be playing, and it's a trip to finally be releasing something in the States, where I'm from. It's totally cool."

# Costa's life has weathered some amazing twists and turns, and her art reflects it in all the right ways.

While Costa's influences also include pure rock 'n roll from bands like The Black Crowes, *Everybody Got Their Something* has an unmistakable funk groove throughout, showcasing a maturing artist in the midst of her own rediscovery. Fueled by a hot single, the album is landing Costa a name as a new breed of funk/soul artist with a little hip hop in the mix. Released this past May on Cheeba Sound/Virgin Records, *Everybody* pops up like a mole tunneling through funk, R & B, rock and alternative charts alike. On the road, Costa and company still seem to be carving out exactly where the sound ultimately belongs.

"We were in Switzerland yesterday where we supported AC/DC," Costa says, with a disarming—perhaps relieved—giggle. "Everybody, from The Black Crowes to George Thorogood, all stopped touring with AC/DC because the crowd are such die-hards, and they really only want AC/DC. The crowd got into it, and then they

were impatient and drunk and it was pretty funny. We played the harder songs and tried to tailor the show a little bit so we didn't get eaten alive."

Costa is no stranger to tough crowds and tough situations. When she was 12, her father passed away, an event to rock the foundations of any young girl's life. Throw in the fact this girl was a star in the midst of her career, and it takes on new meaning.

"I didn't want to sing anymore because it turned into a bad situation," says Costa, recalling what was obviously a confusing and painful time for her. "The media wanted to exploit his death, and they wanted me to sing songs about his death, and it was just gross. So I was like, 'You know what? I'm going to go to school and just chill out.' I mean when you're 11, you're not really thinking about career moves. I just didn't want to do it anymore."

Plodding through the tail end of a restrictive contract at a young age, Costa endured a brief period of wear-this, sing-like-this pressures before finally taking a much needed break. She married and moved to Australia after high school, then took some time to clear her head and start writing her own songs. At the time, she was performing and recording showtunes and covers. But there was a songwriter developing inside, and Costa soon formed a rock band, cut an album and toured around the continent for while.

"I started writing songs and started concentrating on what kind of artist I wanted to be and taking control of my career," says Costa of her time in Australia.

After living and performing *Down Under* for a few years, Costa decided it was time to come back to the United States and try to get a record made. She relocated to Los Angeles and put a band together in the hopes of finding a producer and a record deal. Both came when she met the owner of Cheeba Sound, Dominique Trenier. They connected through a friend of Costa's, and after hearing her album and seeing her new band live, Trenier put the wheels in motion to get *Everybody Got Their Something* realized. The album—almost an instant staple on college and alternative radio—exposes Costa's wide range of influences, introducing an artist with years in music. The songwriting is catchy, showcasing the diversity of Costa's abilities, while the production offers a few experiments and creative instrumentation, offering heavy doses of vocals through sparkling leads and various harmony tracks.

*Everybody Got Their Something* kicks off with "Like A Feather," which combines a Terence Trent D'Arby-meets-The Jackson 5 lo-fi funk sound and simple groove. Costa's energetic vocal performance is consciously understated through the song's production, exemplifying the time and care spent in the production and recording processes while setting up the material to come. The tracks to follow range from a contemporary ballad featuring some of Costa's most poetic and personal lyrics, to a down-tempo soul searcher, to a catchy, danceable track establishing her as a real auteur. The listener is treated to a wide variety of musical and production styles. Her vocal performances and the arrangements of her harmonies are soulful, complex and always right on target. Costa's got a real knack for when to turn it on and free-style and when to play it close to the vest and let the groove do the work. It's all very organic, establishing an effortless musical diversity.

One of the most interesting and insightful moments on the album is "Nikka Who?" featuring a six-year-old Costa recorded in a personal and very cute moment at home with her mother and father. The real beauty comes in the juxtapositioning of the young, obviously talented little girl with the remarkably mature vocal performance of "Just Because," one of two soul-scratching tracks penned solely by Costa. It's a real treat to hear some of these intimate moments, and while ▶





she brushes it off as something simply done to fill space, it's an encapsulated sound bite telling quite a story. *Everybody Got Their Something* successfully integrates different facets of an unconventional life and a myriad of musical influences melded into a top-shelf album. Costa's life has weathered some amazing twists and turns, and her art reflects it in all the right ways. In talking to the young singer, it seems clear she's maintained a lot of control over the direction and focus of her new career.

"I was very careful in picking the people around me that I've entrusted to make the decisions," she reflects. "I definitely need to know what's going on, because I've been in the position where you're just playing out someone else's vision of what they think you should be doing, and that's just not my vibe. It was a good learning experience, but from that point on I knew I was never going to do anything I didn't want to do again." ■



# RUNNIN' THE SHOW



## DOGWOOD

"THIS IS NOT A NEW ALBUM" FR018

These Southern California punk veterans, have released album after album of solid, catchy melodic punk. Playing across the country they have established themselves as a force to be reckoned with. This CD is

a re-release of Dogwood's old "Self Titled" independently released CD. This version contains an all new layout including lyrics, new artwork and more. Musically Dogwood play melodic punk in the vein of Good Riddance. Many people have called this CD their best ever!



## ONE 21

"SELF TITLED" FR020

The newest member of the Facedown Family. Philadelphia's own One 21 are back, bringing a new diverse sound to the Facedown roster. With this new One 21 full length you'll find in

your face aggressive rock and roll influenced punk rock in the vein of the Clash and other '77 styled punk rock. Look for this veteran band on the road promoting this incredible new CD!



## OVERCOME

"MORE THAN DEATH" FR019

One of the most influential Spirit Filled Hardcore bands ever! Arizona's Overcome released 3 full length CD's & 2 eps, "the Life of Death" CDep, the "S/T" 7". These two eps are now out of print

but have been re-released on this CD with additional never before heard live tracks and more! Remastered with new artwork and pictures. A must for any Overcome fan!



## FIGURE FOUR



"WHEN IT'S ALL SAID & DONE" FR016

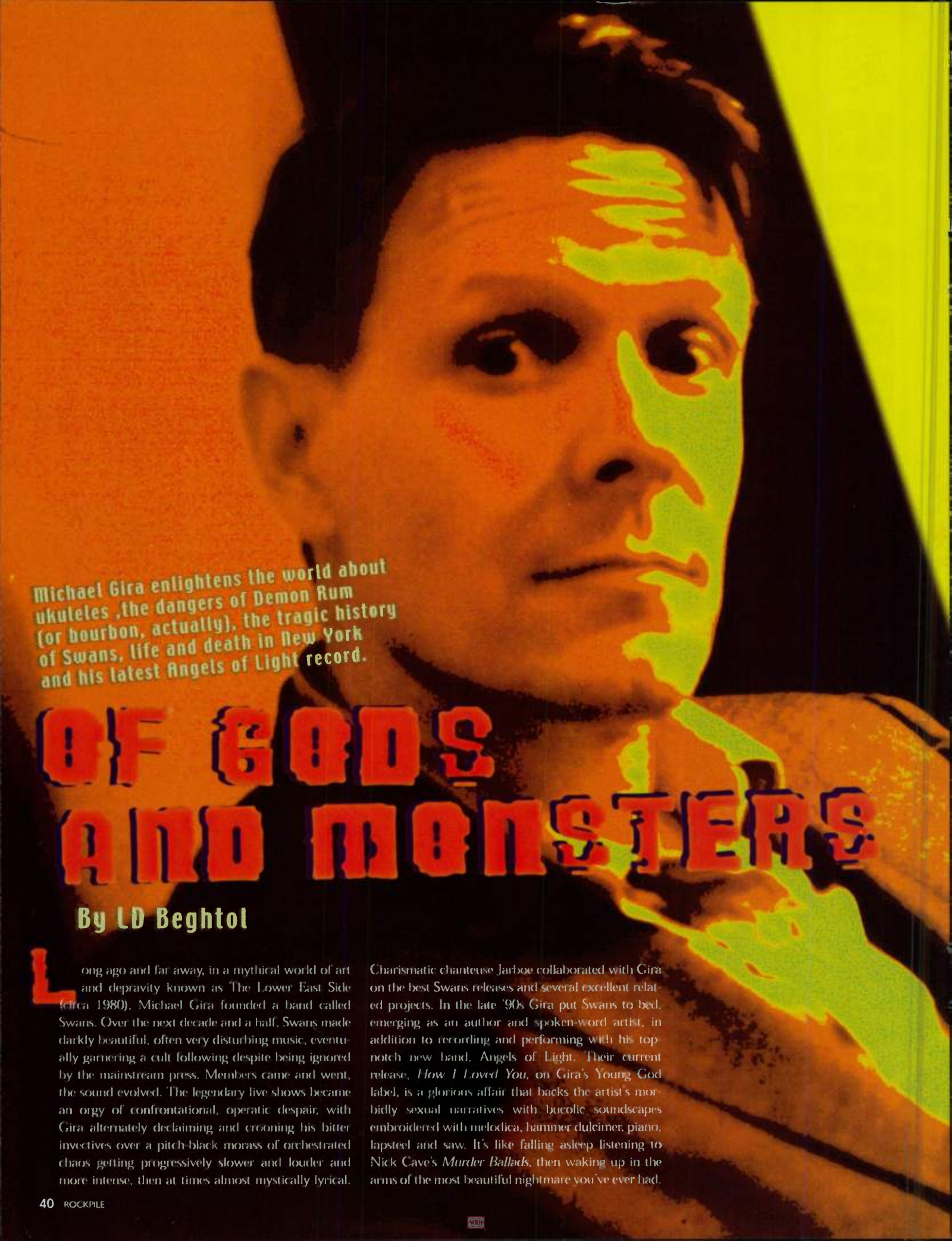
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Michael Gira enlightens the world about ukuleles, the dangers of Demon Rum (or bourbon, actually), the tragic history of Swans, life and death in New York and his latest Angels of Light record.

# OF GODS AND MONSTERS

By LD Beghtol

**L**ong ago and far away, in a mythical world of art and depravity known as The Lower East Side (circa 1980), Michael Gira founded a band called Swans. Over the next decade and a half, Swans made darkly beautiful, often very disturbing music, eventually garnering a cult following despite being ignored by the mainstream press. Members came and went, the sound evolved. The legendary live shows became an orgy of confrontational, operatic despair, with Gira alternately declaiming and crooning his bitter invectives over a pitch-black morass of orchestrated chaos getting progressively slower and louder and more intense, then at times almost mystically lyrical.

Charismatic chanteuse Jarboe collaborated with Gira on the best Swans releases and several excellent related projects. In the late '90s Gira put Swans to bed, emerging as an author and spoken-word artist, in addition to recording and performing with his top-notch new band, Angels of Light. Their current release, *How I Loved You*, on Gira's Young God label, is a glorious affair that backs the artist's morbidly sexual narratives with bucolic soundscapes embroidered with melodica, hammer dulcimer, piano, lapsteel and saw. It's like falling asleep listening to Nick Cave's *Murder Ballads*, then waking up in the arms of the most beautiful nightmare you've ever had.

**People often assume an artist's work is autobiographical. Does that trouble you?**

I'm always plagued with that, but I'm not really bothered by it anymore. Most of the songs I've written in the last 20 years grew out of some personal experience or preoccupation, but generally I abstract them. Why should anyone care about my own personal problems? 'My Suicide,' for example, isn't from my point of view necessarily, but if I didn't have some kind of familiarity with that inclination, it would've probably come off as specious. Maybe it does, anyway. I don't know!

**How I Loved You has some really beautiful songs. Is this something you tried for, or did it just come out that way?** I just sit down with the guitar and start playing without any preconceptions or knowing where it will lead and let the song take shape by itself. I'm not a good enough musician to start out with an idea or a style I want to achieve.

**Any instruments you're interested in learning?** I struggle enough as it is with in my limited vocabulary of guitar and voice. I wanted to keep *How I Loved You* in the realm of instruments played in real time by real people, no programming, etc. For the next record I'm hoping I can have it be just acoustic guitar and voice, with a few bits of orchestration here and there. But I always get carried away.

**What's your take on collaboration?** I used to be violently anti-collaborative, but I've opened up to it a lot more lately. The rampant egoism of my early days was long ago kicked out of me. The Angels records have grown through allowing other people to breath inside my songs, and I like the result. It's just a matter of choosing people whose sensibilities are correct in the first place, trusting them as people and musicians.

**Who would you like to work with?** Oh, let me see now—Brian Eno, Bob Dylan, Low, John Cale, Leonard Cohen, Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, Del McCoury, Johnny Cash, Whitehouse, Panonic, PJ Harvey, Doc Watson.

**What made you think of the ukulele for *How I Loved You*?** I work with people because I like what they do, and/or like them personally. Bliss Blood (vocalist/ukulelist for The Moonlighters) qualifies on both counts. The ukulele seemed appropriate for the songs in question—it has a lightness and playfulness, which counterbalances my usual moping and negativism.

**You've just fled Manhattan again—this time for Brooklyn. How's life for you out there? Very, very different from the Lower East Side you loved/hated in the '80s?** I live in a normal, working-class section of Brooklyn now, with a garden out back and a little plot in front for a tree and flowers. That's about as opposite as it gets to the windowless Lower East Side bunker I lived in for 15 years.

**How is New York different now from your early days there?** Now the Lower East Side has nothing to do with the old days. When I first moved there in 1980 or '81, there was gunfire every night, used syringes and dead rats outside my door, broken glass everywhere. And about nine out of every 10 buildings were abandoned but housing drug dealers. The line for dope stretched for blocks. The police would cruise nonchalantly by, ignoring it. It was extremely dangerous but the rent was cheap—I paid \$100 a month. There was a point when the neighborhood reached a desirable equilibrium—still affordable, but a little safer. But now it's just ridiculous. Affluent, really.

**Where would you live if nothing—money, politics, geography, whatever—were an issue?** My favorite part of the world is the Four Corners area in the Southwest. I've spent a good deal of time there, working in the desert in southern Utah and in southern Colorado, near the

New Mexico border. It's where my body feels most acclimated. Ideally, when I'm rich I'll have a house there and a place in New York, too.

**Your parents are so hopeful and happy on the cover of *How I Loved You*. When you think of them, is that what you see? Or do you see what they became after their American Dream crashed and burned?** I sometimes romanticize their golden, early years, because they did embody the post-war optimism—and materialism—of their generation. But the loss of those ideals, and their undoing, was probably inevitable. And maybe a good thing in the end.

**How does one reconcile conflicts like that?** I don't really have any desire or hope to reconcile conflicts or problems. I just do my work and try not to worry too much about what a fucked-up, piece-of-shit human being I am! Anyway, you can't blame other people for your problems.

**There's always been this tragic mythos about Swans. How does that make you feel?** When I think about it at all, it's usually with regret. Fifteen years of pointless struggle except for the work itself, much of which was worthwhile. And I appreciate the fact that younger people are still discovering it, which is probably the main reason I still have a career. But if the only people interested in Angels of Light were old Swans fans I'd be in deep shit, indeed.

**What's the worst review your work has ever got?** They're all bad, because if you pay attention to them they can make you second-guess yourself.

**Worst press in general?** Probably the worst experience we ever had with Swans was in '85 or '86 with an interview for *Spin* magazine. The writer came over to our house, was very polite, proper and solicitous. I had the walls covered with my drawings, which were violent and sexual, and various risqué photos on the walls. Things like that. So I presume she got a certain impression she felt gave her license. Anyway, she conducted the interview, seemed enthused about us and the work, then when it was published she'd written new questions from the point of view of a dominatrix to her slave. Things like, 'Tell me, Michael Gira, you sniveling worm, before I spank your bottom, about your new album.' Then she inserted an answer drawn from a more polite question. The entire interview was constructed this way—false questions and answers taken completely out of context.

**That's so evil.** Extremely embarrassing, even humiliating. It made us into a really one-dimensional, ridiculous cartoon. It was absolutely devastating. To this day, I can't imagine how anyone could be so shallow and malicious—to come into your home, to be treated courteously and then to do such a thing.

**Tell me about your new solo album.** It's just me with an acoustic guitar, croaking my songs. And its only available through the Young Gods website [<http://www.younggodrecords.com>]. People seem to like it, though, and I recently had a great time doing a few solo shows in Ireland, so I want to do more of it. It's very frightening, but its also the ultimate way to perform. If you can carry that off, you can do anything.

**What's your favorite drink?** Any beer from the tap in Bavaria or the Czech Republic. Otherwise, it would be Bookers Bourbon, straight up. However, the latter draws out the violent, sex-crazed demon within, so I avoid it in the interest of survival and other people's safety.

**Does television still effect you so strongly as it once did?** I stay away from TV these days. Like so much else in the modern media environment, it's a corporate conduit leading directly into your brain, designed for psychic behavioral control. But it's pointless to complain about it. People's identities and perceptions, their anxieties and desires—including my own—have been so successfully shaped by it, that it's like complaining about the weather.

**If you were invited to a "Come As You Went" costume ball, where the guests dress as their favorite literary or historical suicide, who would you go as?** I guess Jesus qualifies as a suicide, since he could have chosen to avoid his death, so I'd like to be him. ■

LD Beghtol is a musician and writer currently living in the murky depths of Brooklyn. He plays the ukulele in his band Flare and does all manner of things in the bi-coastal artpop ensemble, Moth Wranglers. He recently stopped wondering why people look at him funny on trains.

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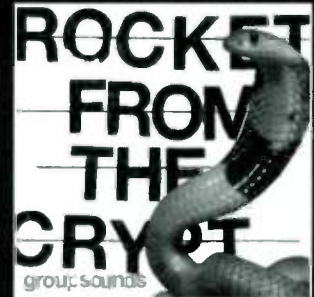
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## JOY DIVISION

### Heart & Soul



Conjuring up images of black raincoats and bleak outlooks, Joy Division—fronted by the late, fabled Ian Curtis—made unique, dark music in an era of predictable, plastic new wave and abysmal cock rock. In lieu of punk’s angst and energy, Joy Division balanced temperament and expression to make music as unpredictable as epilepsy (the illness that supposedly fueled Curtis’ suicide). The 81-track box set, *Heart And Soul*, compiles nearly everything the foursome ever recorded, accounting for the Manchester group’s short but prolific tenure (1977-1980). Disc one incorporates early *Unknown Pleasures*-extracted songs like “Disorder” and “She’s Lost Control,” yielding jagged, tense creations that were half a world away from the mainstream chart dreck of ‘79. Commencing with “Digital” and “Glass,” both excerpts from a Factory Records sampler, Curtis’ voice is a gloomy force to be reckoned with when his baritone utters, “Young hearts fail,” amid the angular yet insightful performances of bandmates Hook, Sumner and Morris. When the band sidesteps the heartache long enough to discharge trad-rock based numbers like “Ice Age” and “Novelty,” uncovering such rarities is an utter thrill. The second disc chronicles the group’s definitive *Closer*-period, marking a maturation in both sound and vocal scope. Curtis exhibits enough self-confidence to croon his way through “Atmosphere” and “Decades,” before losing all hope on the haunting, funeral ode “The Eternal.” “Procession moves on,” he offers, eerily tapping the nails in his own coffin. If the seminal, posthumous single “Love Will Tear Us Apart” is uplifting, it’s in tempo only, as Curtis beckons, “There’s a taste in my mouth, as desperation takes hold.” Poor bastard. Discs three and four join demos, rehearsal takes, some unspectacular live material and most importantly, the outfit’s earliest offering, “An Ideal For Living,” recorded as “Warsaw.” Primitive and rather obviously derived from Bowie’s *Low*, these young scrubs hone their cold, metallic craft, giving fans more insight than they ever might have wanted. In the last song he ever wrote, “In A Lonely Place,” Curtis brings the listener deep into his desolate world. *Heart And Soul* is a predominantly sorrowful journey, and although it’s not worth taking literally, it is certainly worth taking. (Rhino)

—John D. Luerssen

#### disc 1

01. Digital
02. Glass
03. Disorder
04. Day Of The Lords
05. Candidate
06. Insight
07. New Dawn Fades
08. She’s Lost Control
09. Shadowplay
10. Wilderness
11. Interzone
12. I Remember Nothing
13. Ice Age
14. Exercise One
15. Transmission
16. Novelty
17. The Kill
18. The Only Mistake
19. Something Must Break
20. Autosuggestion
21. From Safety To Where?

#### disc 2

01. She’s Lost Control 12”
02. Sound Of Music
03. Atmosphere
04. Dead Souls
05. Komakino
06. Incubation
07. Atrocity Exhibition

08. Isolation
09. Passover
10. Colony
11. Means To An End
12. Heart And Soul
13. Twenty Four Hours
14. The Eternal
15. Decades
16. Love Will Tear Us Apart
17. These Days

#### disc 3

01. Warsaw
02. No Love Lost
03. Leaders Of Men
04. Failures
05. The Drawback
06. Interzone
07. Shadowplay
08. Exercise One
09. Insight
10. Glass
11. Transmission
12. Dead Souls
13. Something Must
14. Break
15. Ice Age
16. Walked In Line
17. These Days
18. Candidate
19. The Only Mistake

20. Chance (Atmosphere)
21. Love Will Tear Us Apart
22. Colony
23. As You Said
24. Ceremony
25. In A Lonely Place (Detail)

#### disc 4

01. Dead Souls (Live)
02. The Only Mistake (Live)
03. Insight (Live)
04. Candidate (Live)
05. Wilderness (Live)
06. She’s Lost Control (Live)
07. Disorder (Live)
08. Interzone (Live)
09. Atrocity Exhibition (Live)
10. Novelty
11. Autosuggestion
12. I Remember Nothing
13. Colony
14. These Days
15. Incubation
16. The Eternal
17. Heart And Soul
18. Isolation
19. She’s Lost Control (2)

#### For Fans Of:

*New Order, The Faint, Egghunt*

Ratings: ●●●●● The Bomb ●●●●● Highly Recommended ●●●● It Doesn’t Suck ●● Better Than Silence ● Don’t Bother

## ACTION FIGURE PARTY

### Action Figure Party



How funky is the instrumental jam-style album opener "Everybody Ready," with its horn/sax hits and swagger and swing style? An intermittent vocal sample questions, "Every-body ready?" You should be. An impressive roster of guest artists appear on the disc. And Greg Kurstin, the brainchild behind Action Figure Party, sure is a Moog fan—the retro synth is all over this album. (**The Verve Music Group, 1755 Broadway, New York 10019**)

—Liana Jonas

## AGENT 51

### Just Keep Runnin'



Agent 51 is reminiscent of a little cousin with ADD—tireless and in your face in a way that's slightly endearing at first, but becomes annoying before long. As a result, no one is paying attention when moments of surprising coherence and fun break through (the sweet Tom Petty "yeah-yeah" on "Let It Roll" and the ripping "Lock 'N Load"). It's just really hard to

respect this sort of gang-chorus punk rock. (**Adeline, 5337 College Ave., #318, Oakland, CA 94618**)

—Luke O'Neil

## THE AMERICAN ANALOG SET

### Know by Heart



Lo-fi indie rock with soothing percussion can either put you in a calm, relaxed state or a coma. The American Analog Set is definitely something to chill out to or even make out to. Subtlety is what really makes this record—the minimal addition of an electric piano or even a xylophone drastically picks up key points in the music. The dual vocals create strong harmonies but lack substantial melody, while percussion keeps this laid back band somewhat exciting. Typical rock beats are replaced by more percussive sounding Latin or jazz rhythms. (**Tigerstyle, 149 Wooster St., 4th Floor, New York 10012**)

—Teil Linn Wise

## ANNIKA BENTLEY

### With Leak, Blink and Breath



Annika Bentley has scored two independent films, performed at

countless music showcases throughout the east coast and midwest and appeared on CMJ's *Certain Damage* series. This second, self-released full-length evokes comparisons to Tori Amos, Rufus Wainwright and The Rachels, while carefully avoiding the melancholic pitfalls of the 20-something piano-driven singer/songwriter mold. And when Bentley isn't avoiding the gloomy mood-swings of the genre, she's at least making them work well for her music. On the CD's weakest moments, Bentley seems to be lending a soundtrack to the emotionally overwrought poetry characteristic of grade schoolers. But when Bentley and her backing band deliver more confidently, she turns chamber music upside down with a surfeit of tempo changes, stark imagery and sweeping strings. What Catpower has founded through the art of the nervous breakdown, Bentley re-tools with the mechanics of orchestration and a larger-than-life, symphonic sound equal parts medieval canon and modern pop. (**Billy Likes Records, P.O. Box 10781, Rochester, NY 14610**)

—Chris Lawrence

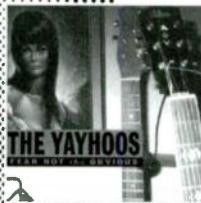
## ATOMSMASHER

### James Plotkin's Atomsmasher featuring Dave Witte and Speedranch



There are no immediately accessible beats, no uniform rhythms and no real identifiable hooks on this new noise-oriented release by the good people at Hydrahead. Dissonance and grating sheet metal noise dominate much of this CD, which for all its abrasives still sneaks in as engaging somehow. Dave Witte, former percussionist for hardcore grind/noise champs Discordance Axis and Human Remains, is featured on this project, lending a somewhat human touch to an all-too-often mechanically sterile approach. While the fusion of open-ended jazz sensibilities to the ear-shattering brutality of post-punk violence noise makes for an interesting experience, ultimately Atomsmasher is a progressive, if not alienating, noise record few outside a limited pale will appreciate. True, no one predicted ska would blow up the way it did in the '90s, but then again, most commercial ska bands didn't come off as the soundtrack to an evisceration. Atomsmasher, therefore, is probably

# "Hey you kids, turn that down!!!!"



**THE YAYHOOS 'Fear Not the Obvious'** Good ol' boy rock so greasy you'll need a moist towelette near the hi-fi. Supergroup featuring Dan Baird (Georgia Satellites), Roscoe Ambel, Terry Anderson and Keith Christopher. Riffing, swaggering good times. Perfect soundtrack for fixing up that old Nova SS on the front lawn. CD \$14



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—Chris Lawrence

### THE BETA BAND

#### Hot Shots II



Devising a sound based on strategically placed piano bits, trip-hop backbeats and lulling vocals, The Beta Band has created something truly interesting. With its second full-length, *Hot Shots II*, this Scottish-English fourpiece strays from its Bristol peers with a tweaked foray into psychedelia focusing more on groove than the beat. Each song brings something new to the table—"Human Being" is an experiment including acoustic melody, accordion, loops and samples culminating in a distortion-friendly aftermath. Mellow tracks like "Eclipse" flow with a slow-moving drum beat and light ambient touches. The bonus track, "Won," closes the album by rising and falling into a full-on hip hop assault, confirming the Beta's aren't just dipping into one avenue of thought. After a few spins

it's obvious why Radiohead chose The Beta Band as its North American opener—it needed some lessons to improve its tinkering. (**Astralwerks**, 104 West 29th St., New York 10001)

—Dan Pastorius

### THE BUSINESS

#### No Mercy For You



Sure, this kind of thing is old hat, but The Business does it well. With a post-punk mohawk sound straight from '78, these lads rip through "Code Red," "Hate K.D.," "Belmarsh" and a lot of other songs about poverty, violence and the street. Hell, there's even a song called "Anarchy in the Streets," with the growling lyric "that shop has a TV/grab it and take it home with me." The usual, but refreshingly fun and tuneful nonetheless. (**Burning Heart**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 90026)

—Mark Ginsburg

### CAIRO

#### Time of Legends



The trio known as Cairo has its musical roots in progressive rock—

particularly the English art-rock sounds of the '70s. Indeed, many of the tracks on *Time of Legends* evoke the sounds of bands like ELP and Genesis. The album features seven tracks—including three instrumentals—each one taking the listener on a musical roller coaster ride with many unexpected twists and turns. Any given point could be a slow passage with multi-part vocal harmonies, a high-speed guitar and keyboard attack, a straightforward rock tempo or a beautiful, atmospheric piano passage. Like many albums of this genre, there's a lot going on in *Time of Legends*, so it may take a few listens to really absorb all it has to offer. Overall, the album showcases what Cairo is really capable of as musicians and songwriters. (**Magna Carta**, PMB 1820, 280 E. 51st Street, New York 10022-6500)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

### CLUB 8

#### Club 8



Club 8 is Sweden's answer to Sadé. The words "sweetest taboo" fit neatly into almost every one of

the songs on this self-titled album. Teenage girls will undoubtedly listen to this CD non-stop for weeks after just getting dumped. It's heartfelt pop with over-produced guitars and choruses repeating just enough times to get drummed into your subconscious for the next 72 hours. At its best, the album leans toward the gloomy brilliance of Portishead but swings back into Vitamin C just in time for the hook. (**Parasol**, 905 S Lynn St., Urbana, IL 61801-5205)

—Teil Linn Wise

### COQUETTISH

#### Total Pops Madness

Coquettish serve as Japan's ambassadors of skacore. Its easy enough to imagine American delegates like Less Than Jake, the Pietasters, Link 80 and Against All Authority sitting down at the negotiating table with Coquettish to hammer out the fine print of some global skanking treaty. Humor, pop and an upbeat air characterize Coquettish as it has similar groups Stateside. At times the sugary elements of the pop-til-

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## MURDER CITY DEVILS



If *The Munsters* was a modern-day television show, the perfect band to write the theme would be Murder City Devils. On *Thelema*, this Washington band continues expanding its unique brand of rock. Keyboardist Leslie Hardy is always at the forefront of the Devils' music in an industry style where guitars usually blast away. Organs weave in and out of the wall of guitars, giving the music a creepy, mad scientist's-laboratory atmosphere. The band actually seems more fit to practice in a graveyard than a garage. Even the third track, "Midnight Service at the Mutter Museum," is an ode to the macabre Philadelphia museum dedicated to medical oddities and mon-

strosities. The sound may seem goth or like death-rock, but it is far from it. What separates Murder City Devils from the aforementioned genres is the guitar work of Dann Gallucci and Nate Manny. They take a head-on approach to rock, letting the organs establish the feel and mood of the songs. Spencer Moody's vocals are also standard rock fare by being coarse and tense, but are certainly far from the typical—and formulaic—wavering goth. *Thelema* continues to show Murder City Devils are tough to categorize and even tougher to ignore. (Sub Pop, P.O. Box 20645, Seattle 98102)

—Steve Mowatt



### track listing

01. That's What You Get
02. Bear A Way
03. Midnight Service At The Mutter Museum
04. One Vision Of May
05. Bride Of The Elephant Man
06. 364 Days

**For Fans Of:** *Beneath the Shadows*-era TSOL, 45 Grave, Electric Frankenstein

you-drop attitude may collapse *Total Pops Madness* under the weight of its own *Muppet Babies* vibe, but *Coquettish*, it must be said, is if nothing else fun, danceable and prepared to deliver without pretense. By many counts, the skacore boat has since set sail from America's trendier harbors. *Total Pops Madness* is engaging in portraying how this style is still interpreted in the Far East, and at face value, fun anywhere on the map. (Asian Man, P.O. Box 35585, Monte Serano, CA 95030)

—Chris Lawrence

### DANIEL DALE JOHNSTON

#### Rejected Unknown



Recorded with a full backing band and equipment more high-end than a boombox, Daniel Johnston's latest effort, *Rejected Unknown*, is a departure of sorts from his traditional sound. Upon first listen, the obligatory hiss which accompanied Johnston's previous works is noticeably absent—gone is the Radio Shack sound so definitive of his past efforts. In its place, a modern, full, almost sleek production



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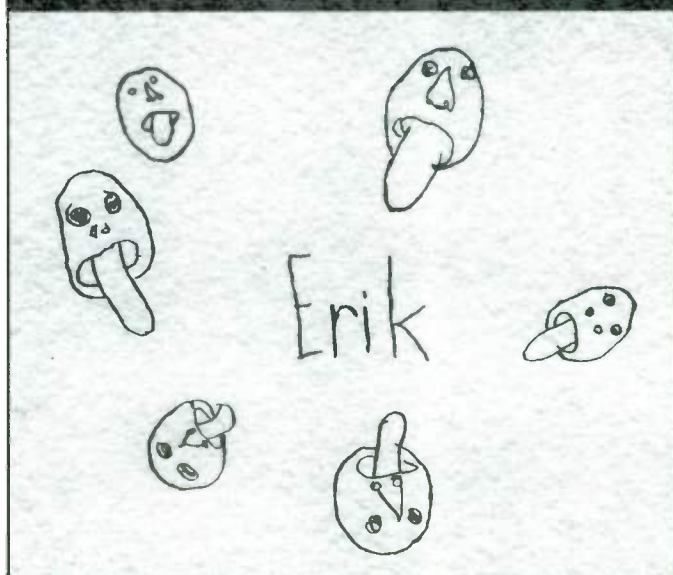
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## Erik Sanko



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pores from the speakers, showcasing the fully realized dream of Johnston's introverted visions. While the odd vocal stylings, guitar parts and keyboard touches he is notorious for are all present, they are bolstered by meaty hooks and an unfettered recording process. Although fans of Johnston's earlier work may be a bit surprised at first, they'll no doubt be enamored of his updated sound by album's end. **(Gammon Records)**

—Dan Pastorius

#### DRAGONLORD

##### Rapture



The side project by Testament guitarist Eric Peterson—who also handles the scraggly, black metal vocals—is a grandiose composition nestled somewhere between the glossy horror mosaic of Cradle Of Filth and the heavier, power-metal tinged Gothenburg melodies. Starting with a sweeping keyboard

instrumental, the seven remaining tunes feature the ivories alongside a pair of guitars. Peterson is joined by current members of Testament, as well as friends like bass mercenary Steve DiGiorgio. "Born To Darkness" begins with a solitary piano, while other instruments gradually converge on the song as Peterson spouts a few lines of clean dialogue. "Judgment Failed," meanwhile, sees him alternating between modulated whispers and high pitched yelps. **(Spitfire, 101 Bay Ave., Hicksville, NY 11801)**

—Mark Gromen

#### THE DROPSCIENCE

##### Experimenting With Contrast



Listeners might be surprised to learn The Dropsience has only been in existence for 15 months. The band's members are seasoned veterans, having played in groups such as Sterling Silver, Camera Obscura and The Passenger Train

Proposal. So then, should we call it a supergroup or a spin off? Niether label is as appropriate as simply calling the band refreshing. Throughout its crescendos, *Experimenting With Contrast* stays true to its name. Straddling the line between subtle chaos and sonic fury, The Dropsience uses contrast to its advantage—weaving jazzy forays with Fugazi-influenced rhythms to create a multi-layered sound. The experimentation comes across sounding raw yet refined. For those who like their music just below the mainstream radar, this is a well-executed score. **(Happy Couples Never Last, P.O. Box 36997, Indianapolis, IN 46236)**

—Jonathan Cholewa

#### DROWNINGMAN

##### Still Loves You



There's no doubt these guys will rock the wallet chains off half the kids in your town, but instead of wit and charm, Drowningman dishes out tough-guy posturing. The guy with the sweet-ass ink sleeves who hasn't read too many books might be into this kind of thing on a Monday night

at a plastic beer cup club. But in the band's defense, there is some genuine emoting going on here—and raucous energy at the expense of tunes doesn't necessarily mean you're not going to be wildly popular in these aggressive times. In fact, vocalist Simon Brody's screams actually have a repeating quality long after the disc is turned off. **(Equal Vision, P.O. Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534)**

—Luke O'Neil

#### 59 TIMES THE PAIN

##### Calling the Public



We can't live without heroes. Madonna filled the blonde goddess void left by Marilyn Monroe. When Jerry Garcia died, Phish emerged as jam band torchbearers. With Joey Ramone gone, who's next in line to fill the shoes of the '77 punk rock purveyors? Despite snazzy licks and textbook cool looks, it won't be 59 Times the Pain. Immersed in teenage rebellion and *London Calling*-schooled politics, the Swedish four-piece is a little too palatable. The album's title track could get a crowd's attention, but it's

#### THE NERVE AGENTS

##### The Butterfly Collection



Take a Lovecraftian poetic sensibility, some manic guitar, a vocal attack reminiscent of Rudimentary Peni and a great big lump of something unclassifiable, and the result would be *The Butterfly Collection*.

This is a sick, pretty, harsh, breathtaking, lovely, ugly record. Sure, some of these songs are thematically familiar, like "War Against!" and "New Jersey"—but others are straight out of an expressionist painting ("The Vice of Mrs. Grossly," "So, Very Avoidable," "Princess Jasmine of Tinseltown." At times, the tunes seem to break down into a Nomeansno declamatory style, but then they shoot right back up again to a mad frenzy. The Nerve Agents really have something unique going here. Eric Ozenne, Dante Sigona, Zac Hunter, Timmy Stardust and Andy Outbreak have carved out their own artistic niche

and moved hardcore punk forward into a new and weird place. **(Hellcat/Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 90026)**

—Mark Ginsburg

#### track listing

01. The Poisoning
02. Crisis
03. War Against
04. The Vice of Mrs. Grossly
05. Madam Butterfly
06. Princess Jasmine of Tinseltown
07. What Then?
08. The Legend of H. Gane Ciró
09. But I Might Die Tonight
10. Metal Pig
11. New Jersey
12. So, Very Avoidable
13. Oh, Ghost of Mine
14. Frost
15. The Cross

**For Fans Of:** The Twits, The Dead Kennedys, Rudimentary Peni

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anti-work week message is nothing new. "Dead on a Day Like This" smacks of Blondie until a lackluster chorus plummets the song. If 59 comes to your town, put on those steel-tip boots and dance. Just don't trade in your copy of *Rocket to Russia*. (Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 90026)

—Neal Ramirez

### FLUKE

Ten Years of Fluke: Progressive History X



This is an historic year for Astralwerks, first with the re-issues of the wholly brilliant Neu! albums and now a retrospective of the pioneering '90s techno act Fluke. Three guys from outside of London—Jonathan Fugler, Mike Bryant and Mike Tournier—combined their affinity for acid house, funky grooves and get-down breakbeats to make some momentous, big beat techno. Their original, DIY, home-recorded track "Thumper!"—starting off the collection—garnered enough attention to remix the likes of Bjork, New Order and the Smashing Pumpkins. Throughout you'll find old school electronics and spacey vibes

("Groovy Feeling"), worldly rhythms ("Bubble") and rumbling, gritty movements ("Bullet"). This is a real find for techno-philes and will be a hit at your Saturday night house parties. But don't expect the impact of the Neu! re-releases, the ripples from Fluke can't match the former band's influential supernova. (Astralwerks, 104 W. 29th St., New York 10001)

—Charles Spano

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH Original Motion Picture Soundtrack



Hot on the heels of the controversial musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* comes the soundtrack of the film adaptation. While musical soundtracks are generally a mere rehash of the music used in the play, the producers of *Hedwig* enlisted A-rate indie talent to make this one a little more interesting. Bob Mould tackles lead guitar chores while the members of Girls Against Boys show up to play their respective roles in the music's context. The result is a rock-heavy soundtrack guaranteed to appease both fans of the play and the participating bands involved. Songs like "Tear Me Down" and

"Angry Inch" demonstrate Mould revisiting his Hüsker Du punkness, while the riff on "Exquisite Corpse" sounds like it was lifted straight from *Freak On Ica*. Although the lyrical content revolving around a transsexual rock star gets old pretty quickly, the backdrop for those words rocks quite hard. (Hybrid Recordings, 2 Penn Plaza, 26th Floor, New York 10121)

—Dan Pastorius

HI-STANDARD Love is a Battlefield



Japanese pop punks follow up their third full-length (featuring "Teenagers Are All Assholes") with a near-perfect 4-track EP. Just like almost every other art form, it seems we have to look to Japan to get an original take on tired melodic punk. These interesting songs make you want to dance and sing along like an idiot. "Can't Help Falling In Love" is a nice diversion, fulfilling the requisite cheeky cover quota, but believe it or not, this old Elvis gem has a hard time standing out next to the fresh originals. (Fat Wreck, P.O. Box 193690, San Francisco 94119)

—Luke O'Neil

### THE IMPOSSIBLES

Return



The Impossible's wear their influences a little too obviously on the sleeve. Much of *Return* sounds like Weezer circa the blue album but minus the out-of-nowhere punch. As where Rivers Cuomo had no clue what the heck emo was, the Impossible's come off like emo for the masses. The kick-off track, "Enter/ Return," has the makings of an MTV2 hit. This isn't to say *Return* is bad, actually there is some great songwriting here and hooks a plenty. The Weezer-esque moments like "Never Say Goodbye" with its feel-good grind and processed vocals, the falsetto on "Connecticut," and the "oh-oh-ohs" on "Oh, Angelina" are pretty darn catchy, it's just that we've heard it before. But the Impossible's can stun when they are out on their own. The crunchy, feedback on "Stand Up>Fall Down>Get Crushed" sounds original, and the last two tracks, "Decompression/Debilitation" and "Stopping Sound," are both beautifully mellow, melodic whispers. (Fueled By Ramen, P.O. Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604)

—Charles Spano

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## SICK ON THE BUS - Set Fire To Someone...

Go-Kart release of the latest from Sick On The Bus. Featuring members of Varukers and Legion of Parasites. Think GBH meets the Damned while hanging out with Lemmy!

**JAD FAIR AND DANIEL JOHNSTON**

**It's Spooky**



Redefining the line between quirky and obnoxiously strange, Jad Fair and Daniel Johnston resurface from indie-rock obscurity with a reissue of their 1989 collaborative jaunt, *It's Spooky*. Composed of 31 off-kilter songs featuring lo-fi genius, the album captures the duo's penchant for schizophrenic lyrical musings over jangling guitar licks, bouncy piano melodies and simple, child-like drum beats. Original tunes like "I Did Acid With Caroline," "Frankenstein Vs. The World" and "Casper The Friendly Ghost" blend in well with such eclectic covers as the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" and the Butthole Surfers' "Sweet Loafed." As an extra bonus, the enhanced CD portion of the disc features Johnston playing "Don't Play Cards With Satan" on organ and is alone worth the price of admission for old fans as well as those who are just curious. (Jagjaguwar, 1021 South Walnut, Bloomington, IN 47401)

—Dan Pastorius

**JOYDROP**

**Vibrate**



Joydrop arrives with a sterile, politically correct brand of pop rock bearing all the elements of a hit record—except the intangible ability to speak to its listener. Singer Tara Sloane has a sweet, controlled voice, and the songs' arrangements use everything cool in production today—intermittent hip hop beats, digital effects and a classic guitar-driven formula. Still, there is no getting around the album's lack of soul. Like Sloane's vocals, everything on the album is too controlled, too polished. *Vibrate* suffers from a sheen dashing any gem hiding underneath. Packaged and ready for retail, Joydrop could survive on image alone if radio can make something of the uninspired material. (Tommy Boy, 902 Broadway, New York 10010)

—Andre Calilhanna

**KNUT**

**Bastardiser**



You know how in Hell you have to toil through the monotony of a thousand eternal swamps with little hope of respite in sight, and there are those weird swirling tentacle things with

teeth that come out of the ground and wrap around your throat and stuff? Or how in a nightmare you are trapped in a faceless Labyrinthian series of corridors leading nowhere and you're being chased by the most horrible creature imaginable? Listening to Knut is sort of like that—which is exactly the reason many people will dig it. (Hydrahead, P.O. Box 990248, Boston 02199)

—Luke O'Neil

**KRISIUN**

**Ageless Venomous**



The Brazilian terror trio has returned with eight new hateful anthems and a pair of instrumentals. The later is something of a surprise, especially the nearly six-minute "Serpent Specters." Most of the drumming on *Angeles Venomous* is precision fast with superhuman speed, despite the fact Krisiun have dabbled with a few more colors on the palette this go round. But not every song receives the same breakneck speed of delivery. Still, saying the Brazilian nuts have slowed down would be grossly inappropriate. The second instrumental, "Diablos," has the fleet-fingered frenzy attack of an acoustic guitar, leading into the closing "Sepulchral Oath." (Century Media, 1453-A 14th St., #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404)

—Mark Gromen

**LANDING**

**Oceanless**



It is so annoying when musicians try to be artsy and utilize one note sustained for three minutes in a song. In the case of *Oceanless*, this excessive intro is painful. You have to fight not to skip the first track. Eventually, other notes and instruments join the mono fray, but not before audiences have fallen asleep or given up on the disc entirely. Landing's lack of an engaging opener puts the album at high risk of being tossed aside. (Strange Attractors Audio House, P.O. Box 2827, Olympia, WA 98507)

—Liana Jonas

**LIFE IN A BURN CLINIC**

**Individual Rites**



Distributed through Metal Blade, the Prosthetic label appeals to the more fringe metal character. The oddly named trio Life In A Burn Clinic lives up to the imprint's reputation, with most of the 13 tracks coming in under 90 seconds. "The Great Unkind" opens the disc with 17 seconds of silence before launch-

ing into a rudimentary assault owing much to the spirit of punk. Three songs into the album, "Glazed Indifference" is the first semblance of a melody, and "Torso Farm" begins acoustically before degenerating into a more virulent sound. (Prosthetic, 6230 Wilshire Blvd., PMB 128, Los Angeles 90024)

—Mark Gromen

**LOVE AS LAUGHTER**

**Sea To Shining Sea**



Barring the album's first two cuts—the punk/Brit rock-influenced "Coast to Coast" and "Temptation Island"—Love As Laughter takes listeners on a grim ride, much in the style of The Velvet Underground. "Sam Jayne= Dead" offers the first taste of the captivating melancholy to follow. Its repeating chorus, "Shoot me in the head," is backed by lazy, fuzzy, distorted guitars. The drums, with their heavy cymbal work and shuffling snares, recall underground '60s rock. The transcendental "Miss Direction" is the musical equivalent of coming down from a drug-induced high. Its dark, lonesome and sparse sound, with southern-blues influences, could sober up a clown. The dirge anthem "Druggachusetts" sounds like a slow-motion swim through a lava lamp. One

can see the use of irony in the band's name and cheery album title. Listeners will appreciate the mind-altering experience that is *Sea To Shining Sea*. Here's hoping the band gets heard from sea to shining sea. (Sub Pop, P.O. Box 20645, Seattle 98102)

—Liana Jonas

**THE LYNSDAY DIARIES**

**Remember The Memories**



Everyone should have a friend like Scott Windsor. About a year ago his good friend was seriously injured in a car accident. To help with the mounting medical bills, Windsor organized a benefit concert. He wrote a song, "Whispers Of A Long Goodnight," dedicated to his friend. It received a great deal of attention, which led to the birth of The Lyndsay Diaries and its album *Remember The Memories*. For anyone who has ever felt loss, this album will touch you deep inside. Its 11 tracks will yank at your heartstrings. And though it can be a painful listen, it demonstrates the meaning of true friendship. Let's hope Windsor's next offering is a little more upbeat, and not full of so much heartache. (The Militia Group, P.O. Box 18A129, Los Angeles 90007)

—Jonathan Cholewa

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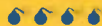
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## ERASE ERRATA

Other Animals



Despite the best efforts of a bungling music press, those in the know in the early '80s quickly learned there was no such thing as new wave. The existence of styles such as no wave and now wave here at the turn of the millennium is still a topic of some debate. Whether or not the terminology is ready for them, the women of Erase Errata are coming, armed with a danceable cacophony of mangled '80s schlock and violent synth-punk. Manic, jarring bursts of rhythm and guitar drive the soundtrack to a post-apocalyptic dancefloor where the raucous art of Kleenex, Gang of Four, Dog Faced Hermans and the Slits slamdances into the best intentions of The Go Go's and The Waitresses. This 13-song CD comes following a

string of highly celebrated releases including a self-released seven-inch single and a split seven-inch with east coast chaotic Black Dice. Chances are this band doesn't give a damn what you have to say about when and how badly it's out of tune—Erase Errata seems bent on loftier goals, or at least just having fun, opting for high energy and intensity rather than tedious technical perfection. Although this Oakland, Calif., quartet might find kindred spirits in groups such as Tracy and the Plastics, Le Tigre and Red Monkey, Erase Errata charges listeners with ferocious originality. **(Troubleman Unlimited, 16 Willow St., Bayonne, NJ 07002)**

—Mike McKee

### track listing

01. Tongue Tied
02. Billy Mummy
03. Delivery
04. 1 Minute
05. Marathon
06. Other Animals Are #1
07. High Society
08. French Canadia
09. How to Tell Yourself  
From a Television
10. Fault List
11. C. Rex
12. Walk, Don't Fly
13. Dexterity is #2

**For Fans Of:** The Ex, Black Dice, Kleenex/Lilliput

## MARK MALLMAN AND VERMONT

Mark Mallman and Vermont



Mark Mallman's songwriting style could easily be compared to Tom Waits', exhibiting a similarly eclectic, lyric-centric aplomb, but without the throat-churning growl. Mallman has a breathy rasp, no doubt—his comes more from a lack of effort rather than over-exertion. His methodical songs wear a sleepy Midwestern cloak, coupled with sometimes clunky but assured musical sensibilities. Lyrically, Mallman enjoys taking a playful attitude, sneaking lines like "I'm freer than an underwearless man/I'm freer than Japan" in the midst of a verse. His sense of humility is inextricably tied to his self-confidence. While Mallman and company won't take you by force, you might find them sneaking into your subconscious when you're not looking. **(Guilt Ridden Pop, 2217 Nicollet Ave. South, Minneapolis 55404)**

—Andre Calihanna

### MASTERS OF REALITY

Welcome to the Western Lodge



Catchy guitar hooks and dark, breathy and mysterious vocals define this dynam-

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# LeFT - my disease

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— Amazon.com Review

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ic band. "It's Shit" is a clever song with a good bridge. It's got an industrial vibe slowed down immensely from the genre's usual relentless pace. "The Great Spelunker" contains heavy drums, funky rhythms and infectious hooks and leads. (**Spitfire, 101 Bay Ave., Hicksville, NY 11801**)

—Liana Jonas

### MY RUIN

#### A Prayer Under Pressure of Violent Anguish



My Ruin is a heavy rock trio fronted by former white female rapper Tairrie B. But the music on *A Prayer...*, the band's second album, is rooted more in extreme metal than rap. Featuring thick, densely heavy rhythms and brutal, distorted riffing, the band is very tight and focused, making the music a force to be reckoned with. Unfortunately the vocals (listed as "Throat" on the CD cover) are the downside—most of the songs contain the type of screaming, indecipherable vocals common in many extreme metal bands. Over the years, Tairrie B. built herself a reputation for addressing controversial political and social issues in her lyrics. Any meaningful messages she might have on *A Prayer...* are unfortunately lost on the listener, due to her

abrasive vocal delivery. (**Spitfire, 101 Bay Ave., Hicksville, NY 11801**)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

### NOONDAY UNDERGROUND

#### Self-Assembly



Think Edwyn Collins' swagger, Beck's eclecticism, a '60s shag music-meets-Tahiti '80s falsetto vocalist and you'll have yourself Noonday Underground. A prominent bassline and psychedelic rock guitars and organs characterize the opener, "The Light Brigade," as well as most of the rest of this ultra-hip album. This is swingin' fun, in a cool way, of course. The Moog and celestial choir bits could have landed this song on the soundtrack to *The Thing*, if there ever was one. It's deliciously trippy in a back-in-the-day way. You can almost see the micro minis and hair-sprayed coifs. (**Bar None, P.O. Box 1704, Hoboken, NJ 07030**)

—Liana Jonas

### OTEP

#### Jihad EP



This EP is a five-song prelude to a full-length due early next year from this female-fronted, nü metal outfit. Minimal

musicianship backs sometimes rapped, sometimes weakly sung vocals. Barked male shouts accompany "The Lord is My Weapon," while the excruciating, eight-minute "Germ" is spoken word. While the music isn't winning any awards, Otep scores even lower in other categories, leaving an impression most listeners will have difficulty taking seriously. Christian overtones, lyrics and imagery simply don't sit well with what the band is doing. Warrior Soul ranted against the system in a similar manner, but precious few should ever try it—especially Otep. (**Capitol, 1750 Vine St., Hollywood 90028**)

—Mark Gromen

### PARKER AND LILY

#### Hello Halo



Vintage guitar and tube amp sounds sparsely decorate this David Lynch-inspired landscape. Vocals drenched in reverb add to the half-asleep quality of this '50s retro pop effort. Parker and Lily are so mellow they make the Cardigans look like a thrash metal band. Every song essentially sounds the same, with vibrato guitars and electric pianos lingering in a hazy void. (**Orange Recordings 2001**)

—Teil Linn Wise

### THE PARTISANS

#### So Neat



Yes, this is indeed the same band which raged on "17 Years of Hell" back in the late-'70s. The old boys are together again—still raging—with a very hooky, catchy sound and plenty of spite. Hopefully, this three-song CD is only the beginning of a new era for The Partisans, because the material is amazing. "Hysteria", in particular, kicks major ass. Shamelessly stealing the main riff from The Stooges "I Wanna Be Your Dog," then throwing all kinds of cool, nasty sounds on top, the band paints one hell of a dark, evil, terrifying landscape. Very nice. (**TKO, 4104 24th St., #103, San Francisco 94114**)

—Mark Ginsburg

### RANDY

#### The Human Atom Bombs



What do you do when you're cold, blond and bored? You put together a punk band and make a weird, fun, loud record. Randy is a Swedish quartet with a sound like rock 'n roll shoved through a rusty pipe and then spit out onto a

continued on page 53

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# under the radar

by Gail "Jaded" Worley

Sublime when done well, but worse than any other music on the planet when done poorly, what often passes for dance music can wear thin pretty quickly. British disco pop band Tinstar's sophomore effort, *Dirty Bird* (V2 Records), tells the tale of a dance group raging against the machine of techno and electronica to reclaim its soul, literally. This very sexy record makes one imagine what Squeeze might have sounded like if they'd been influenced by



## TINSTAR Dirty Bird

Prince. A primal drone beneath the hip-shake of "The American" creates some funky, grinding grooves, and the added harmonica puts a swamp boogie feel on the whole sweaty mix. Here, vocalist Dave Tomlinson sounds like the late Michael Hutchence at his most hand-down-the-front-of-his-pants libidinal. With an urgent throb-and-thump that's as old-school disco as Donna Summer, "Angel of the North" has probably been remixed by every London DJ (and it's radio-friendly at just three-and-a-half minutes long). "Pacify," a she-done-him-wrong scorcher, flaunts a syncopated groove in sweet contrast to a soulful electric keyboard. You can bet a lot of people will buy what these guys are selling. The cool thing is Tinstar keeps it real by laying down a solid foundation of bass, drums and guitar before loading up on the requisite programming. These memorable tunes will appeal to both ravers and rockers. No parking on the dance floor.

Jonny Polonsky knows firsthand how unfair the music business can be. Back in 1996, Polonsky's major label debut, *Hello, My Name is Jonny*, had critics deservedly salivating all over this über-talented 21-year-old. The kid was golden until his label crashed, distribution fell through and a new label deal just didn't pan out,



## JONNY POLONSKY There Is Something Wrong With You

leaving him with a completed second album, which, sadly, would never be released. Five years later, a much-anticipated follow-up comes via *There Is Something Wrong With You* (Eggbert Records). This 16-minute sampler of six exhilarating power-pop gems in the style of the Replacements and the Plimsouls was worth waiting for. On the propulsive "Long Gone," Polonsky sounds a bit like mid-'90s Goo-Goo Dolls covering The Only One's new-wave classic, "Another Girl/Another Planet." "Gone Too Far" reveals a Pixies influence (Frank Black's assistance not only helped Polonsky score his first record deal, but Black also once took him on the road as his opening act). While Polonsky used the one-man-band approach for his debut, here he enlists the amazing John Freese on drums and the versatile Solomon Snyder—who cut his teeth with industrialist, Chris Connelly—on bass. One can only wonder what took Polonsky so long to make a comeback.

## This Month: Let it rock, let it roll, let it go...



As commercial radio gets more unlistenable by the minute, discovering *Mine and Yours*, the astounding second album from singer/songwriter extraordinaire David Meade, feels something like falling in love. It's exciting, it's fresh, it's beautiful and (to cop the lyrics from a '70s radio hit) "it feels like the

first time." With a voice compared to both Paul McCartney (for its buttery-smooth texture) and the late Jeff Buckley (for his soaring near-falsetto that packs a tremendous emotional punch), Meade is like oxygen in a pop music vacuum. If you enjoy well-crafted pop songs with meaning, this album is packed full of them—the bittersweet lullaby "Comfort," the elegant, heartfelt title cut just begging for a place on the soundtrack to the next blockbuster romantic comedy, the full-on McCartney feel of "Elodie." On every tune, Meade's lyrically rich melodies paint gorgeous pictures without falling into arty excess. It's easy to lionize pop music icons who wrote hit songs two or three decades ago, but more of a challenge—especially if you're a critic and a music fan—to avoid cynicism and recognize good music coming out today. There are people making records right now, writing music that can compete with those whom we revere as pop gods. David Meade is one of them.

## DAVID MEADE Mine And Yours



There are few genres of music more tedious than the so-called nü-metal consisting almost entirely of angry teenage males randomly screaming and ranting about how messed up their childhood was. Those who rely on the radio for their taste of hard music are either served up a plate of crazed wolverines or a band

whose singer sounds like the guy from Creed. Seven Channels, on the other hand, dish out something a bit different with their self-titled album on Palm Pictures. They sound like Finger Eleven fronted by Max Collins from Eve 6. Playing what they call "Muscular" hard rock, Seven Channels aren't complete strangers to melody and appear able to exorcise their dark demons without wallowing in the monolithic angst mopey of every freaking band sounding exactly like Korn. Though most of the songs deal with themes like broken relationships of various types, loss and longing, Seven Channels see the light at the end of the tunnel. "Helium" is an upbeat-yet-heavy guitar-rock anthem with a pulsating urgency to set the mosh pit a-flailing without anyone losing an eye. "Superconnected" sounds like the radio hit here (think Staind with a serious shot of adrenalin). Despite a sameness to their songwriting, there's some amazing guitar work present, and Ben Holt's drummer is by far their strongest asset.

## SEVEN CHANNELS Seven Channels



**RECORDS** continued from page 51  
 Beach Boys' 45. Melodic, manic and ferocious, *The Human Atom Bombs* is 17 tracks of constantly shifting strangeness with hilarious lyrics. There is also a nice tone of social commentary mixed in among the smartass comments and ludicrous juxtapositions. It's good. Really good. (**Burning Heart, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 90026**)

—Mark Ginsburg

#### REDUCERS SF

**Crappy Clubs and Smelly Pubs**



Scratchy vocals belt tales of working class woe over squealing and crunch-

ing guitars on the Reducers' first full-length on TKO. Following a healthy string of seven-inch singles on the Bay-Area label (and a few others scattered across the States), this San Francisco foursome has arrived intact, and prepared for its debut long-player. The production is notably slick on Crappy Clubs, not just for the band, but for the genre as a whole. While in many ways this frees the band, accentuating the musicianship and instruments, it doesn't help to actualize the band's vision of smoke-filled beer halls and graffiti-bombed, hole-in-the-wall rock clubs. Regardless, as fans of the

Dropkick Murphys and Rancid grow lonely, Reducers SF offer a welcomed fix of street punk. (**TKO, 4104 24th St., #103, San Francisco 94114**)

—Chris Lawrence

#### RUFIO

**Perhaps, I Suppose...**



Rufio is a band of kids in their late teens who idolize Blink 182. The only difference is when Rufio's parents told them not to curse, they listened. The result? A nice boy version of the pop/punk stars. Too many songs on this CD have the listener wondering, what's the point and do we really need another Blink? "One Slowdance" is sure to wow the hearts of many lovesick teen punks. The best songs let drummer Mike Jimenez ease his usual Gonzo pace. Guitarist Clark Domae manages to sneak in some fine heavy metal riffs on "Face the Truth," but the real soul of the group is in Scott Sellers' voice, which will either make you swoon or cringe depending on whether or not you're listening to the words. The lyrics are often sweet and heartfelt, but lines like "Tears are feelings we can't say/Tears mean that you care" (from "Tears") push the envelope of emo cheese. (**The Militia Group, P.O. Box 18A129, Los Angeles 90007**)

—Neal Ramirez

#### SCOUT NIBLETT Sweet Heart Fever



There is nothing commercial about Scout Niblett's *Sweet Heart Fever*, and it sure beats the hell out of most of the swill on contemporary radio. The singer/guitarist's sound is an amalgam of Lucinda Williams, Patsy Cline and Janis Joplin with her own brand of musical minimalism. Even though it's just her and an electric guitar, the songs are abundant in their bare approach. Barring some awkward guitar chord choices on "Miss My Lion's" intro, Niblett's sexy drawl could woo a steer. On the disc's one semi-upbeat number, "Big Bad Man," Niblett successfully pulls off a southern-rock beat. Throughout *Sweet Heart Fever*, Niblett's voice writhes like a cat in heat. She seems to relish being in this anticipatory place, twisting audiences who are along for the ride. (**Secretly Canadian, 1021 S. Walnut, Bloomington, IN 47401**)

—Liana Jonas

#### SHADY VIEW TERRACE/THE LAWRENCE ARMS

**Split CD**



It's been a long time since a post-hardcore archetype like SVT has been heard from. While it's not necessarily a

continued on page 55



#### BOMBAY 2: Electric Vindaloo



In 1999 Motel Records brought us *Bombay The Hard Way: Guns, Cars, And Sitaras*. This concept album salvaged sound tracks from 1970's Indian *Masala*, or "mixed spice" movies originally composed and arranged by two very ahead of their time gentlemen known as Kalyanji and Anandji. These films were called "mixed spice" because they borrowed heavily from Western successes such as James Bond and Superfly while incorporating themes from Kung Fu flicks and traditional Indian drama. On *Guns, Cars, and Sitaras*, we hear the original movie tracks much as they were first presented to Indian movie goers, with only a few tracks remixed with new drum loops and additions from turntables. *Electric Vindaloo*, however, is almost entirely re-composed. Featuring DJs in the realm of Kid Koala, Mixmaster Mike and Dynamite D, *Bombay 2* is immediately more ambitious than the first. Titles like *Basmati Beatdown*, *T.J. Hookah*, and *Sexy Mother Fakir* assisted by the scratching of gong samples and the riding tones of djaree doos help the concept to fully flesh itself out. While the fact that this sequel is as good if not better than the first holds strong for fans of *Bombay 1*, executive producer Adrian Milan would be smart to leave it that and quit while he's ahead.

—Matthew McGlynn

#### track listing

01. Ram Balam: *Ursula 1000*
02. Bionic Kakaan: *DJMEDJYOU*
03. Theme From Twin Sheiks
04. Third World Lover: *Kid Koala & Dynamite D*
05. Rah-Keet
06. Hydraulic Carpet Ride: *Mixmaster Mike*
07. Bollywood B-Boy Battle
08. Mr. Natwarla: *DJMEDJYOU*
09. Basmati Beatdown: *Dynamite D*
10. T.J. Hookah
11. Superstar Sam (*skit*)
12. Disco Raj: *DJMEDJYOU*
13. Sexy Mother Fakir
14. Inspector Jay's Big Score: *Spic-Beatz & Pak-Man*
15. Electric Vindaloo: *Steinski*
16. Dil Street Blues
17. Chakra Khan

**For Fans Of:** *Loop Guru, Natacha Atlas*, Indian gangster movies

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L-R: Pam and Boots of The Coup



### CORMEGA The Realness

After beginning what seemed a promising career, often outshining MCs who dared share the same song or stage, hip hop's Cory McKay, aka Cormega, fell victim to industry politics and was virtually black balled after a 1997 split with manager Steve "The Commissioner" Stout and fellow MC Nas. Mudslinging and a potentially dim future characterized Cormega's absence from the underground hip hop scene, which had embraced him just months before. Enter 2001—Cormega's first full-length, *The Realness*, serves more as a homecoming than a debut, re-introducing this skilled MC back to his home in the raw underground to speak his peace and set the record straight about anyone who questioned his authenticity. On the first track, appropriately titled "Dramatic Entrance," Cormega unleashes the same subtle but hard flow he aced in the late '90s, speaking his peace and eliminating any doubts towards his authenticity. On "Thun and Kiko," Cormega pairs with Prodigy of Mobb Deep to unleash sharp lyrics over DJ Havoc's distinct, bass-heavy beat patterns. Cormega isn't just about flaunting his style—songs like "Fallen Soldiers" and "Glory Days" deal with the struggles of growing up in the ghetto and remembering the fallen. Although there is the hidden track "Killas Theme" from 1998 with Mobb Deep, sadly, much of Cormega's early material is lost and absent from this release. Still, with eyes on the future, *The Realness* is easily one of the best albums so far this year. (Realness Landspeed, 39 Broad St., Quincy, MA 02169)

### DA BEATMINERZ Brace 4 Impak

Rawkus is at it again with its second compilation in a row, Da Beatminerz' *Brace 4 Impak*. Don't get it wrong though, *Brace* is totally different than the *Hi Teknology* album. This compilation comes across more hardcore on some points, although less inspiring on others. Da Beatminerz stay true to the Rawkus tradition with steady, upbeat drum patterns and raw, underground melodies. With featured artist such as Heather B, Pete Roc, Busta Rhymes, Buckshot and fellow Rawkus labelmates Talib Kweli and the Cocobrovas, this album is a must-have for any underground collection. Hot tracks like "Hustler's Theme" by Philadelphia's The Last Emperor and "Drama" by Shadez of Brooklyn let listeners know what a thug is about, while "Open" with Pete Rock and Caron Wheeler and "The Anti-Love Movement" with Talib Kweli and Total's Keisha give the album an organic, sensitive touch. Despite—or in light of—its shallow and commercial moments, songs from Jayo Felony, Rass Kass and Lord Tariq will have radio heads buzzing. *Brace 4 Impak* is a good start to a good future. Although the compilation at times seems it was rushed, most of the music will still soothe underground ears. Ironically for Da Beatminerz, what *Brace* lacks in beats, it makes up for in depth and lyrics. (Rawkus, 676 Broadway, Fourth Floor, New York 10012)



### THE COUP A Q&A With Boots

The Coup's line-up has changed since *Last Album*. DJ Pam took a less active role in this latest album. Who picked up the production?

Pam is currently working on her all-female compilation, so she really didn't have a lot of time to spend on this album. Actually, I did the entire album with the exception of Sahir from Hedrush, who did the track I had with dead prez. E-Roc (THIRD MC?) became a longshoreman in 1997, because he had a family to take care of and it was good money.

What are your thoughts on this versus previous Coup releases? What's in the future for the group?

"Thought About It 2" comes from personal experience, so it's real close to me. Also the song "Clean Drawers" is one of my favorites. The first single will be "Five Million Ways to Kill a CEO." We got an animated video in the works for it. The second single will probably be the dead prez song, "Get Up." With labels, we've been on 75 Ark for a year now. Their deal was the best as far as the money and creative control. We'll be touring in the fall. I've got a live band with professional musicians, and we'll be going all over.

In the past, you've been very active in the Black community. Is there anything that you have going on now?

I have always had a problem with balancing my music with my community work. So, I am either doing things in our community (Oakland, Calif.) or I'm concentrating on my music. But we were just campaigning against Prop. 21, which gives Oakland police access to children's high school behavioral records.

Why do you think more rappers aren't involved in the community?

Because it's not profitable to them. Most other rappers do what they think people want to hear instead of being true to themselves. We're dealing with attaining material things through struggle. These rappers nowadays only discuss the material and not the struggle.

What inspired you to combine social consciousness with party tunes?

When I was younger, my father was an activist, and they would always have these meetings. At these meetings they would be playing cards, listening to music and eating. Even though they were really meetings about community affairs, they were still parties. I realized having a feel-good atmosphere was a better way to deal with struggle and social issues.

So the music is for the party and the lyrics are for the message?

Yeah. Back in the day, guys like Rakim and Slick Rick had jams out, and it wasn't the lyrics that made everyone in the party dance. It was the beat that really mattered. I'm trying to get that feel and have a message through my lyrics at the same time.

**RECORDS** continued from page 53  
bad thing, these Warped Tour vets and ex-The Broadways guys do it better than most, with dueling scream vocals and collapsing and exploding guitars. TLA has a hard act to follow, but it sets itself apart from the scathing burn of the record's first half. Think of it as the other side of the genre—slowed down a notch or two, still feeling the pain, but this time the sweet melody is gonna save us from thinking about everything we've left behind. (Asian Man, P.O. Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030)

—Luke O'Neil

### SIGH

#### Imaginary Sonicscape



On its Century Media debut (the band's fifth full-length overall), this weird Japanese black-metal trio prove right from the opening "Corpsecry-Angelfall" its latest offering will be as challenging as past efforts. Combining an infectious power rhythm, death metal vocals and a heavy dose of psychedelic elements, Sigh concoct a hypnotic mix. The final minute of this track delves into a minute, symphonic realm. "Nietzchean Con-spiracy" begins like a bad porno soundtrack, overridden by electronic effects. Sigh is for the most open-minded fan, someone with a sense of adventure and a pair of ears comfortable hopscotching across genres. (Century Media 1453-A 14th St., #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404)

—Mark Gromen

### SPARECHANGE00

#### Fifty Thousand Moments



In a world filled with Blink-182, Green Day and Lit, you have to wonder if there is room for one more prepackaged punk band. The answer is no. What Earth might enjoy more is a little variation. Sparechange00 cannot necessarily be looked upon as a savior, but it sure does provide a much needed change. Not too pop, but just punk enough. Not too snotty, but just enough sarcasm in its lyrics to evoke a smile. Overall, the five tracks comprising *Fifty Thousand Moments* represent a nice middle ground. (Cargo, 4901-906 Morena Blvd., San Diego 92117)

—Jonathan Cholewa

### SPOKANE

#### The Proud Graduates



Minimalist in production and arrangement, Spokane delivers eight songs on *The Proud Graduates*. The Richmond, Va.,

band rambles and winds through the recesses of the mind of frontman and writer Rick Alverson. It's pretty clear Alverson is central to the band, painting every minute with a somber and lethargic brush. The songs are moody and rich with warm vocal tones and strings—each track seems to float, breathing with heavy sighs carried by the dream-like ambient guitar. *Graduates* is melodic, with a slow sort of drawl, but as a whole, the album tends toward cavernous introspection and loses the listener in its vast emptiness. Don't drive at night to this one. (Jagjaguwar)

—Andre Calilhanna

### SPYGLASS

#### Strategies for the Stranded



*Strategies...* contains passionate experimental rock providing a wide variety of sounds as well as well-crafted songs reminiscent of the noises heard on one of Radiohead's latest collections. Vocalist Barbara Trentalange belts out her innermost thoughts in a confident rock star manner, culminating in a sonic attack with the firm structure of a Coldplay song. The complex musical arrangements flow effortlessly throughout drastic changes, making each song a complete roller coaster ride of throaty vocals, melodic guitar and a variety of keyboard and synth noises speeding over a tightly constructed bass and drum groove. (Pattern 25, 610 20th Ave. East, Seattle 98112)

—Teil Linn Wise

### STRETCH ARM STRONG

#### A Revolution Transmission



Stretch Arm Strong is a band willing to leave it all in the songs, and as each frantic track on *A Revolution Transmission* passes, the message in the music becomes stronger. It's an unlikely mixture at times, as the band's loud assault is accompanied by heartfelt lyrics touching on an array of intricate subjects. The personality of these songs is the *Transmission's* most impressive trait. In the midst of larynx-shredding vocal delivery, Stretch Arm Strong proudly sneaks in a melodic chorus or bridge and then explodes back into impressively tight hard rock riffs. It's an unexpected development continually unfolding as the album progresses, and with each musical phrase, the depth Stretch Arm Strong exhibits becomes more engaging. Don't expect anything revolutionary—formulaic hard rock emulating contemporary commercial

punk bands backing white Christian boys fits squarely in the fold of the status quo. Still, Stretch Armstrong delivers a powerful transmission. (Solid State, P.O. Box 12698, Seattle 98111)

—Andre Calilhanna

### SUGARCULT

#### Start Static



Sugarcult wastes no time getting down to business, hitting with the first of 11 unmistakably pop choruses only 35 seconds into the album. From here, the band pummels through punk-flavored pop (including a jazzy hidden track), leaving behind any baggage to slow it down. Instead, everything is sweet—in keeping with the name—ensuring no mistakes about its intentions. Sugarcult is interested in taking over the airwaves with air-tight songwriting and an energetic display of unencumbered rock 'n roll on *Start Static*, its national debut. The substance is in the furious chord changes and endless harmonies, so while the songs are mostly sugar-coated, you'll remember most of them after just one listen. (Ultimatum, 8723 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232)

—Andre Calilhanna

### SUNSET VALLEY

#### Icepond



On its third album, the Portland power trio, led by the well-named Herman Jolly, explores melodic pop sounds reminiscent of labelmates Death Cab For Cutie. But while Death Cab meanders through complex gems, Sunset Valley keeps the tunes relatively linear and to the point. With a sound ranging from Northwest, rainy day psychedelia ("Blackberry Bushes") to indie guitar rock ("Wired Nights") to Syd Barrett or Skip Spence-style rambles ("Help Me Babe"), it's sure to please all around. "Misery Jet," with its mellow, lapsing, '60s songwriter grooviness, is the stand-out on a record with plenty of contenders (don't miss the swelling melancholy of "Nico Ride"). Think the bucolic pastorals of Grandaddy, but with backwards glances, old-school rock and minus Jed the computer. (Barsuk, P.O. Box 22546, Seattle 98122)

—Charles Spano

### TORAI TORAI TORRANCE!

#### Get Into It



While obviously very adept musicians, this quintet just misses the mark. continued on page 57

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## DARKEST HOUR

The latest release from Darkest Hour, *So Sedated So Secure*, is a bit of a departure from the other albums in the Victory Records hard rock catalog. In fact, the band sounds more like Euro metal than the hardcore imitation for which the label is commonly known. However, Victory saw something special in the Washington, D.C., metal outfit and signed the band after its former label, MIA, folded in early 2000. Darkest Hour combines power metal riffs, throat-ripping vocals, hardcore speed and aggression to defy easy categorization. Sometimes reminiscent of Judas Priest, Testament, early Sepultura or even Megadeth, the band always maintains its dark, heavy atmosphere, but isn't afraid to venture into a piano solo ("Another Reason"). *So Sedated So Secure* is something different and interesting, recalling old bands while adding a new twist. Darkest Hour will tour consistently throughout this year and next, so look for them on the road with Zao, Rise Against and Reach the Sky.

## PURE RUBBISH

Move over, Old Skull. Clad in tight jeans and Converse All-Stars, Pure Rubbish is a band going full steam ahead to revive the tradition of trashy, thrashy garage rock in the vein of Hanoi Rocks and Guns 'N Roses. It comes as no surprise its members cite punk legends The Ramones and

Dead Boys as some of their main influences. The band just finished a summer jaunt playing the second stage of Ozzfest, and while none of this would seem odd for most bands, the founding members of Pure Rubbish are only 15 and 17 years old! Lead guitarist and vocalist Derek Dunivan started the band when he was only 14, enlisting his younger brother, Evan, to play drums. Because Derek's voice was still too high to sing the material, Dad was the original singer for the band. Now, at the ripe old age of 17, Derek has taken over the mic. The rest of the band is rounded out by two recent high school grads, bassist Mike McWilliams and guitarist Jarrett Gardner. Pure Rubbish's first effort, a self-titled four-song EP, was recently released on Priority Records. It includes three of its own gritty, sleazy rock anthems, as well as a cover of AC/DC's "Let There Be Rock." Judging by the raw sound and catchy hooks, it seems as though these kids are caught in a time warp, relishing an era when Kiss and Motorhead ruled the earth. Although the eponymous EP is a good introduction to Pure Rubbish, a full length album, *Glamorous Youth*, will hit stores early next year.



## SWARM

Fans of Death Angel will be glad to know the members of the '80s metal outfit have resurfaced as Swarm. Following the break up of their former band,

singer Mark Osegueda, guitarist Rob Cavestany and drummer Andy Galeon went their separate ways, both musically and geographically, but reunited in San Francisco in 1998. With the addition of dub and jazz bassist Michael Isaiah, this new incarnation is more rock-oriented—only traces of the thrash years remain. The music is still aggressive and hard rocking, but it's more diverse and light-hearted than past works from Death Angel. "Dark Western" sounds like it was influenced by the raw rock of AC/DC, while "Karma" could almost pass for a Tool song. Swarm spent the summer touring in support of Alice In Chains guitarist Jerry Cantrell, during which the band was known to break out a Death Angel song or two in its set. Look for Swarm's new EP, *Devour*, on Industrial Strength records.



## MESHUGGAH: Rare Trax

Much to the delight of hardcore fans, Meshuggah has assembled a collection of ear-piercing, head-banging, fist-pumping, crazy math metal for a new release titled *Rare Trax*. This CD on Nuclear Blast includes the three songs comprising Meshuggah's first mini-LP, 1989's *Psykisk Testbild*. It also features the demo versions of Meshuggah classics "Abnegating Cecity" and "Internal Evidence," a remix of *Chaosphere's* "Concatenation." From the opening notes of the first track, it is obvious this CD is out to kick some ass. The band rips drum beats at the speed of light and employs twisting, turning technical riffs and screams so loudly, even the listener gets a sore throat. To top it all off, the CD includes three mpeg video tracks. The first is a video for "New Millennium Cyanide Christ," which consists of the band sitting in its tour bus playing air guitar and air drums while the singer lip-synchs into a pen. If Meshuggah is known for turning the standards and conventions of hard rock upside down, this video should just as firmly force people to rethink their perceptions, revealing an often hidden fun-loving side. Apparently, this band is only frightening until there's a video camera around. *Rare Trax* is required listening for Meshuggah fans, and a strong introduction for those just learning about the band.



**RECORDS** continued from page 55  
 On *Get Into It*, its style of math rock blended with punk aesthetics comes across as the sonic equivalent to Rage Against The Machine with less rage, while vocalist Nick Koenigs sounds like the illegitimate son of Pery Farrell. In fact, Tora! Tora! Torrance! does its best Jane's Addiction impression on "Hottest Pants," while it just plain rocks on the fuzzed-out "Shot Down In America." The mellow sounding "Remember The Alamo" ends the album on a good note, bringing us down after a wild turbulent ride. So with a little polishing of the rough edges and a little fine-tuning, Tora! Tora! Torrance! might go on to make great music and have a fine career. (**The Militia Group, P.O. Box 18A129, Los Angeles 90007**)

—Jonathan Cholewa

**VELVET**

**Where Are The People?**



Velvet tries hard to rely on quirky, clever pop songwriting, as "My Friend Fur" and "19th Century Bicycle" suggest, but the laborious intelli-pop meanderings quickly reveal the truth. Velvet's attempt to craft effortlessly

light material never gets beyond its own front porch, and *Where Are The People?* gets mired in a pseudo-hip whirlpool sounding like a Broadway review gone alternative. It's not a pleasant combination, and Velvet spends the whole album trying to escape itself. Sadly, it never happens. (**Eskimo Kiss, 144 NE 29th St., Oak Island, NC 28465**)

—Andre Calilhanna

**VIOLET**

**We Both Know It's Out There**



Harkening to The Cowboy Junkies, Violet is the voice of Meredith Minogue buttressed by the guitar of Jim Barry. The two share writing credits and make up Violet as *We Both Know It's Out There* shifts from mysterious acoustic numbers like "My Blue Son" and "Shelter To Splinter" to upbeat tracks like "Tangled Root" and "The Martyr Song" to outright rockers like "Undercurrent." Through all the incarnations the band graces, Minogue's vocals serve as an anchor, although sometimes sounding detached. This could be a function of the recording, which sounds well-executed but home-grown. The effect strips the band bare,

despite some crafty arrangements, and *We Both Know It's Out There* doesn't quite dazzle by the album's end. (**Wine & Vinyl, P.O. Box 4336, Grand Central Station, New York 10163**)

—Andre Calilhanna

**VIZA-NOIR**

**Viza-Noir**



If most bands described as math rock work with the controlled structure of, say, algebra, Viza-Noir is all calculus—a system of precise estimation, curves and slopes, chaos and clockwork. On the Chicago band's first LP, a follow-up to its two debut seven-inches, Mike O'Connell, Joe Kaplan and Don MacAdam aren't afraid to play with reckless abandon. "Lit Up" is a true, thrashy, rock 'n roll anthem with crashing guitars and all-out vocals. On "The Fisher-man," the threesome layers spirals of noise and tips a hat to Wire. "Plastic Statuette," with its near spoken vocals, marching drums, bass groove, and start-stop structure, superbly recalls the Minutemen. The all-too-short, six-song disc ends with "Pool of Flame," conjuring a black vista of impending doom as it moves from a

nervous rhythm to a farewell crawl. Watch your back, because this band is going places and they are taking the listener along, like it or not. (**Flameshovel, 2322 W. Walton Ave., Chicago 60622**)

—Charles Spano

**WAYNE**

**Metal Church**



In 1985, a band called Metal Church put out a killer debut, stirring much interest in metal circles. After its second album, *The Dark*, singer David Wayne left the fold, eventually returning to a reunited Metal Church in the late-'90s. Following the release of a new album, *Masterpeace*, and a consequent tour, Metal Church once again parted ways. But that didn't deter Wayne from wanting to continue. He formed a new band, Wayne, along with guitarist Craig Wells. Hence the album *Metal Church*, which continues in the same musical direction of their former band. Specifically, the songs are rooted in heavy, no-frills, riff-based metal. The music is powerful and energetic, evoking many of the European hard rock/metal styles of continued on page 59



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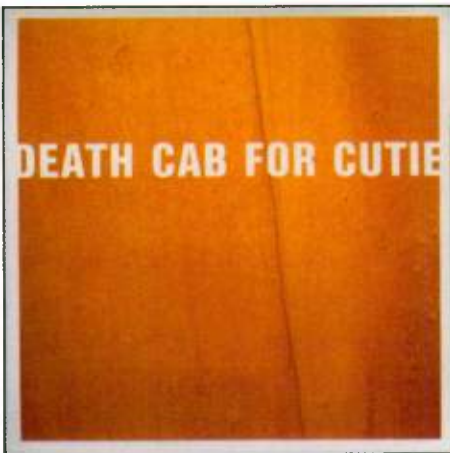
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**COPS AND ROBBERS**





## DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE The Photo Album

Formed in the sleepy town of Bellingham, Wash., back in 1998, Death Cab For Cutie quickly gathered up a strong local following, signing to the local indies, Elsinor and Barsuk, and releasing a debut album, *Something About Airplanes*, within the band's first year. Three years later, one might assume the hype would have died down. But we've all been warned about what happens when we ass-u-me. The group's sophomore full-length, *We Have the Facts and We're Voting Yes*, rocketed Death Cab into the national limelight. Now, the sensitive quartet is poised to take the world again by storm with the release of *The Photo Album*, a 10-song letter of emotional and powerful pop. Despite all the musical success, the members of Death Cab haven't escape without some battle scars, although few of them are band-related. Throughout the last year, bassist Nick Harmer nearly lost an eye in a boating accident, guitarist Chris Walla completely lost his balance and broke a foot, while guitarist Ben Gibbard fractured his left arm in a bike accident. Suspiciously, only the group's new drummer, Michael Schorr, escaped unscathed. Weathering these injuries and on-tour illnesses, the band finally made it back to the road in the spring of 2001. Luckily for fans, the group also made it back into the studio. *The Photo Album* picks up, in many ways, where *Facts* and the group's *Forbidden Love* EP left off, focusing on the fluttering images of past loves, hopes and dreams of childhood and the present. *Photo* could easily be the soundtrack to one's most nostalgic super 8-mm home movies.

—Mike McKee

## HOLLY GOLIGHTLY Singles Round Up

While Shakespeare once quipped the world was a stage, Holly Golightly, for more than six years, has been suggesting, at least for her purposes, it's in fact a garage. As the undisputed queen of indie garage rock, Golightly has released a dizzying catalog of 13 full-length albums on such respected labels as Sympathy For The Record Industry, Kill Rock Stars and Teenage Kicks. In addition to this formidable discog-

raphy, Golightly also boats 13 varying accessible singles. This new CD from Damaged Goods seeks to level the field, making even the most obscure and out-of-print of Golightly's singles available on one easy format. Golightly is a British singer/songwriter who gained notoriety first as a member of The Headcoatees (Billy Childish's '90s backing band) and again as an industrious, gifted musician fronting her own group alongside garage aficionados Bruce Brand, John Gibbs and Dan Melchior in 1995. Golightly approaches the garage style without gimmickry or costume, instead mixing the garage and indie traditions of The Raincoats, Tuscadero and early Kinks with the timeless, narrative quality of Billy Bragg and Nick Cave to form a unique musical career. Golightly has collaborated with Rocket From The Crypt and even starred in the band's video for its recent single, "Lipstick." What's more is Holly Golightly is, indeed, her real name—Mom was reading *Breakfast At Tiffany's* while pregnant.

—Chris Lawrence



## HIGHWAY TO HEAVENLY K Re-Releases Heavenly Vs. Satan

Realistically, in a street fight, the devil would cream this British indie-pop foursome (see our "History Of Black Metal" article earlier in this issue). In their favor, the members of Heavenly would at least have the people of K Records on their side. K has had Heavenly's back since the get go, releasing nearly every piece of music the band has ever put out, including the works of Talulah Gosh and Marine Research—the members' bands, which preceded and followed Heavenly. *Heavenly vs. Satan* is an important part of the band's complete catalog, marking the transition from Talulah Gosh—arguably one of the most influential underground bands from the '80s British indie scene. When Talulah Gosh disbanded in 1988, the gang—Amelia, Pete and Matthew—recruited Rob and Cathy to form the renowned Heavenly. Originally released in 1990 in England and Japan through Sarah Records, *Heavenly vs. Satan* never reached American soil, except for over-priced imports (coveted copies surfacing stateside have been known to go for in excess of \$100). This handsome re-release finally

brings this indie classic to the Yankee hordes, garnishing the album with six bonus tracks—out of print singles "I Fell In Love Last Night," "Over and Over," "Our Love is Heavenly," "Wrap My Arms Around Him," "She Says" and "Escort Crash on Marston St." While much of this material is best suited for diehard fans, lacking some of the sugary hook of classics like "Sperm Meets Egg" and "P.U.N.K. Girl," it provides an interesting view of an extremely influential band's formative years. Consider *Heavenly vs. Satan* the introduction to your Modern Indie Pop 101 textbook.

—Chris Lawrence

## LOST KIDS Belle Isle Is On Fire

The members of Lost Kids look like they're ready to torch New Granada High (consult the seminal American teen film *Over The Edge* for reference, poser). Shaggy hair, shades and painstakingly thrift-stored late-'70s clothes match the music distinguished by sassy, guitar-driven swingers a la Thin Lizzy, T. Rex or Rolling Stones. Ironically, some of the tunes on this new four-song EP could just as easily have come from a mulleted sibling of Nation of Ulysses (check "Where the Lost Kids Go" for a '69 Firebird re-tooling of *Plays Pretty For Baby*). Although *Belle Isle* only contains four songs, none of which clock in over the four-minute mark, this is enough time for Lost Kids to establish a sound rooted heavily in the more stripped-down side of '70s guitar rock's spectrum, while still injecting enough originality to stand on its own. While some listeners will drop out along the way, there is a good many who aren't burnt on irony and '70s retrospect who will keep this in the stereo for a long time. (GSL, P.O. Box 178262, San Diego 92177)

—Chris Lawrence

## THE RONDELLES Shined Nickels And Loose Change

If the opening track, "Six O'Clock," doesn't have listeners dancing right away, the scale-skipping, uptempo chorus of the following "Safety in Numbers" will leave them no choice. Make no mistake, The Rondelles are irresistibly infectious. Shined Nickels and Loose Change is a 14-song dance party with nods to lo-fi garage contemporaries like The Bangs or Kenickie and the greats of Phil Spector's roster. While highlights on Shined include the upbeat romps of "The Fox," "Backstabber" and "Strike Out," adorable renditions of Madonna's "Like a Prayer" and the church classic "Angels We've Heard on High" add a fun, playful angle to an already feel-good album. Although it's a small town in the rainy northwest, Olympia, Wash., has shown time and again, long after the loss of Don Corneileus, some people know how to really cut a rug. (K, P.O. Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507)

—Mike McKee

**RECORDS** continued from page 57 the late-'70s and early-'80s. Tracks like "The Choice" and "Burning at the Stake" demonstrate tight musicianship and driving tempos. As with previous Metal Church albums, there are also softer, subtler passages on some tracks, as well as an interesting cover version (Mountain's "Mississippi Queen"). Overall, *Metal Church* represents what a true metal band should sound like. Reverend Wayne does it again... Amen. (**Nuclear Blast**, 1453-A 14th St., #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

### THE WHITE OCTAVE

Menergy

How long can one listen to dissonant, nauseating emo? Think of the new album by the White Octave as a test of endurance. The North Carolina group—which exists in a vacuum where Shellac is the only other band—serves up 42 minutes of generic, cute-boys-who-make-bad-music rock. The most rabid emo fans might be able to stomach *Menergy*, but for most the part in "Splashed Into Serpents" where

lead singer Stephen Pedersen (ex-Cursive) yelps like a wounded seal could be the musical representation of Hades. That yelp is enough to mar any of the music's intricacies. Even the engineering work of Shellac's Bob Weston (Archers of Loaf, Rachel's) can't save this poor excuse for an album. (**Initial, P.O. Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217**)

—Neal Ramirez

### THE WORKIN' STIFFS

Dog Tired... And Then Some



Work, work, work—this band is all about it. Another chip off the cinder block of working-class punk, *Dog Tired... And Then Some* offers up anthems about the tough road the underprivileged must walk every day, played in triple time. Yep, it is a tough road. And yep, this is a pretty familiar theme. Good musicians, solid production—this will probably be a big hit, because although there's nothing revolutionary on this disc, it ain't bad. (**TKO, 4104 24th St., #103, San Francisco, CA 94114**)

—Mark Ginsburg

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## Black Metal Now

Initially vilified for daring to sing in English—by bands and fans alike—groups such as Immortal, Emperor, Marduk and Satyricon have gained a wider degree of respectability than the early Norse gods. While the influential Dead Silence Productions label has since folded, several record labels such as Candlelight, Napalm and Council are devoted to releasing black metal bands. Due to a glut of latecomers, the black metal cauldron currently boils unattended, away from the scrutiny of most mainstream magazines and labels. A few bold publications, such as *Grimoire*, dare to cover black metal unabashedly, often interviewing bands in a refined, baroque and botched version of Olde English (“Q: How has thou maintained so diabolical a tour without the enchanted fingers of Thograk The Eviscerater? A: Maintained have we but through the loyalty and bloodlust of Freya, Devourer Of Lamb Guts... uhm, my girlfriend, she letteth me crash on her couch”).

Despite limited attention from standard music magazines, black metal bore (unfortunately, the key word here is bore) its first major documentaries several years ago with the publishing of *Lords Of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground* by Michael Moynihan and Didrik Soderlind (Feral House Press). *Lords* follows the struggles of these tortured souls to obtain absolute evil, stay true to the scene and torch a few churches along the way. An abundance of typos, discrepancies and repetition, however, often makes the book more difficult to read than some of these bands’ logos.

Few black metal bands today enjoy the publicized infamy garnered by some of the genre’s pioneers. But history and musical trends have a devilish way of repeating themselves. While other metallic subgenera might boast a brief reign in the spotlight these days, rest assured true practitioners of the blackened arts will continue playing to the faithful, ultimately reemerging in a grander and more vile form! ■

I’m putting to music. I don’t think that endangers anyone.”

Barnes took his share of flak from the morality squad with Cannibal—from bannings to denouncements from politicians including presidential candidate Bob Dole, who obviously missed the subtle poetic irony of “Entrails Ripped From A Virgin’s Cunt.” Things have been relatively subdued in this regard for Six Feet Under. This calm might change with *True Carnage*, however.

As if the gory packaging and splatterific lyrics weren’t enough, *Carnage* features an incendiary duet with Barnes and Mr. “Cop Killer” himself, Ice T, on “One Bullet Left.”

Ice’s profane rant on “One Bullet Left” plays out like a home invasion.

“It might tweak people out, but I think that that’s the only way people end up listening, when you slam them in the face with something,” said Barnes. “People don’t hear you in the corner talking about nice things. You’ve got to tell them about the shit that’s fucked up.”

Barnes and Ice met at the infamous Milwaukee Metalfest a few years back. In Ice, Barnes not only found someone who respected his work, but a kindred spirit.

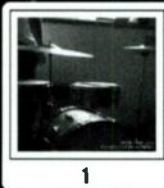







“He’s shocked a lot of people with what he’s said, he’s been banned all over,” Barnes offers of the Original Gangster. “He’s told people what’s up and people don’t like it. People have hunted him down and searched him out for nothing. And I feel I had the same thing done to me with Cannibal, making me feel like I’m saying something way wrong.”

For now Barnes is content with being sick and twisted. The seasoned frontman says he is looking forward to a hefty tour this fall, offering him the opportunity to share the brutality with the masses. The formidable tour package spreading the gospel of Six Feet Under also includes the likes of Napalm Death, Dimmu Borgir and Witchery. At least somebody isn’t afraid to still be into horror metal. ■


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NIC ENDO continued from page 16

The result was 1998's *White Heat EP*, followed by *She Satellites: Poison Lips* in 1999 and the brand new *Cold Metal Perfection*, a fiercely independent manifesto of psychedelia, rhythm and noise. With this latest creation, the woman once pegged as "the pretty girl in Atari Teenage Riot" is finally forging her identity as a solo artist.

The stark stage set and stock-still audience at the CBGB show might seem a far cry from ATR's action-packed rallies, but the intensity of the performance is just as great. Endo offers her own observations on the impact of her recent solo gigs.

"During my solo shows the atmosphere is always very intense," she discloses. "My music is improvised and changes a lot. That makes people very attentive, and they try to follow the music, in a very passive, concentrated state. There are also crowds—mainly when I'm playing shows in a rock or hardcore context—who really go off when I'm playing pure noise sets, by screaming, headbanging or even dancing pogo to it. Last time I played a pure noise show in the U.S. there were a couple of Limp Bizkit fans coming up to me and saying it was the most evil, hardest shit they had heard in their whole lives."

Endo's solo work is also politically charged. Her haunting sound-



scapes replace ATR's anarchistic cheerleading, but the same ideology underlies it all—music as catalyst for revolution. With the Japanese symbol for resistance painted boldly across her face, Endo is the embodiment of rebellion.

"I think that at present music and arts in general are the most effective and powerful means to spread political ideals and ideas," she says. "Nowhere else can such a powerful level of emotion be linked to. Revolution is when people's awareness is changed. Music has that potential."

"In the last century—because of the misogynist structure in society—real innovations in music were triggered predominantly by men. This is slowly beginning to change now. Especially by using electronic equipment, women will be able to take that step and do pioneering and challenging work. This is one of my ambitions that drives me in my work. I believe that if women are in complete control over their creativity and their presentation of their personality and sexuality as self-determined people, the positive development in this direction will at some point apply to society, since music is still the strongest and most influential expressionist art form. I also hope there will be a lot more women that even risk the step of being role models for other girls and women. There aren't enough. This must change."

The complex, improvisational journeys on *Cold Metal Perfection* draw not only from her experience as a member of ATR, but also from her years of classical piano study and jazz listening. Her influences, from Debussy to Sun Ra to Throbbing Gristle, are all apparent.

Unlike many contemporaries, Endo does not aspire to inhuman perfection through her use of electronics. On the contrary, she uses machines to convey thoughts and feelings, and it is vital to her that all the human imperfections remain intact. Like her jazz idols, Endo believes improvisation is key.

"I think the future of electronic music lies in the human unpredictability," she declares. "I have a lot of ideas how to create new sounds right now. I need to find ways of making this technology do what is in my head in the moment."

MERCURY REV continued from page 16

but composing scores for big-budget Hollywood movies. "When I first met Jonathan, I was telling him about Jack Nitzsche and the Phil Spector stuff that he did all the arrangements for. Jonathan said, 'I think that's the same guy who did *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.' We checked it out and (discovered) it was the same man." Already familiar with Nitzsche's other projects, like the Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want" and Neil Young's classic album *Harvest*, the two musicians knew they wanted to work with him in some capacity. "We liked the fact that he did such diverse arrangements for film and for rock 'n roll—both of which we're interested in. We got in contact with him after *Deserter's Songs* and sent him a copy. He called us back and said he really liked it. Basically, we wanted him to arrange some strings on a few songs, but he said, 'I don't arrange anymore. I'd rather produce.' We were like, 'Whatever, we just want to work with you.'"

After meeting with Nitzsche in August 2000 and playing him rough takes for the songs "The Dark is Rising" and "Spiders and Flies," the man Grasshopper describes as "a total character" agreed to work on *All Is Dream*. "He called Jonathan and said, 'I'm going to go down to Mexico, and then I'll send you some of (what I've done).' A day later, his son called us and said that he passed away. When we were recording we went ahead and worked with him in mind. We felt like his spirit was around. At least we were thinking of him."

Asked how the band's music has progressed since their previous album, Grasshopper states an increased confidence in the group's own unique vision. "When *Deserter's Songs* (became so successful), it made us say 'OK, we're doing something worthwhile.' There's still moments of questioning, like, 'Is this any good?' But on a general level, we were a lot more comfortable with what we were doing. All of us have so many ideas, and it's (a challenge) picking which ones (to pursue)—being comfortable enough to let some of your ideas go and to know that the songs need that space. The parts you don't play are just as important as what you do play. Then when you do shine, it makes it shine that much brighter."

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Equal Vision has signed Baltimore band **Liars Academy**... **One King Down** has broken up—again. This should be the final blow for the band, which has swapped singers and broken up once before... **Mike Patton** is reportedly interested in recording vocals for a **Dillinger Escape Plan** EP... **Burn** is reunited and recording some stuff. Former **Glassjaw** bassist **Manny Carrero** is now in the band, which has recorded a six-song EP for EVR. It should hit the streets by the middle of November... **Papa Roach's Coby Dick** was seen wearing a **Boy Sets Fire** t-shirt at a recent Ozzfest date... The **Universal** conglomerate is interested in signing **Hatebreed**. Since the band has waited eons to release a new album, it would seem they're probably procrastinating in order to finagle their way off their current label... **Victory Records** has signed long-standing, Cleveland-based hardcore band **Ringworm**... **Escape Artist** has signed Connecticut band **In Pieces**... **Anodyne** has just finished recording a new full-length album, titled *The Outer Dark*,



ONE KING DOWN



CAVEIN

(**International**) **Noise Conspiracy**, comprising ex-members of the almighty **Refused**, will release *A New Morning, Changing Weather* (Epitaph) this month... **Earth Crisis** may have just broken up, but word has it **Karl Buechner** has a new band called **Nemesis**. Somebody somewhere said Buechner's going in an industrial aggro direction, but we'll believe it when we see it... **Kittie** guitarist **Fallon Bowman** has reportedly left the band in an amicable parting of ways. She is expected to be replaced by a male axeman, to help dilute Kittie's image as chick rock only worthy of attention because they are girls with guitars... Alabama hardcore band **Few Left Standing** is breaking up due to the pressures of having a family. We'll miss them... **Ignite**, which was dropped by **TVT Records** after one album, is working on new material... There's a **Throwdown/Poison The Well** split in the works... **Drowningman** will release a compilation of demos and seven-inches shortly... **No Innocent Victim** and **Living Sacrifice** are releasing a split about to surface somewhere. Viva la Jesuscore. ■

due out at the end of the year... **Cave In** has been demoing, and some track titles are "In Harm's Way," "Youth Overridden" and "Penny Racer"... Ohio's **Premonitions Of War** has signed to **Goodfellow**... **Revelation** has signed **A18**, featuring former members of **Instead**, **Chorus** and **Outspoken**... **Resurrection A.D.** has signed New Jersey punk rock band **Knuckle Sandwich**. A spring 2002 release is being eyed... Rumor has it Pennsylvania metalcore band **Mushmouth** has changed its name to **Out To Win**, which is also the name of one of its albums... **New End Original's Jade Tree** debut, *Thriller*, is due out in October. The band features former-**Far**/current-**Onlinedrawing** singer **Jonah Matranga** and **Texas Is The Reason's Norm Arenas**. *Thriller* contains some retooled Onlinedrawing songs, which are fuller thanks to the support of a complete band. Some songs are bouncy pop punk, others are contemplative and Radiohead-esque. Simply amazing... **Nerve Agents** have signed to **Epitaph**... **Agnostic Front** will release *Dead Yuppies* (Epitaph) later this month... **The**



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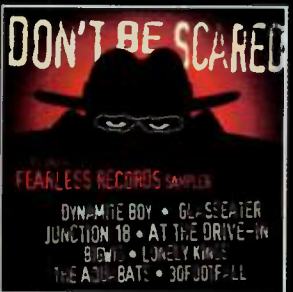
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## WAYNE

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## MESHUGGAH

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## V/A

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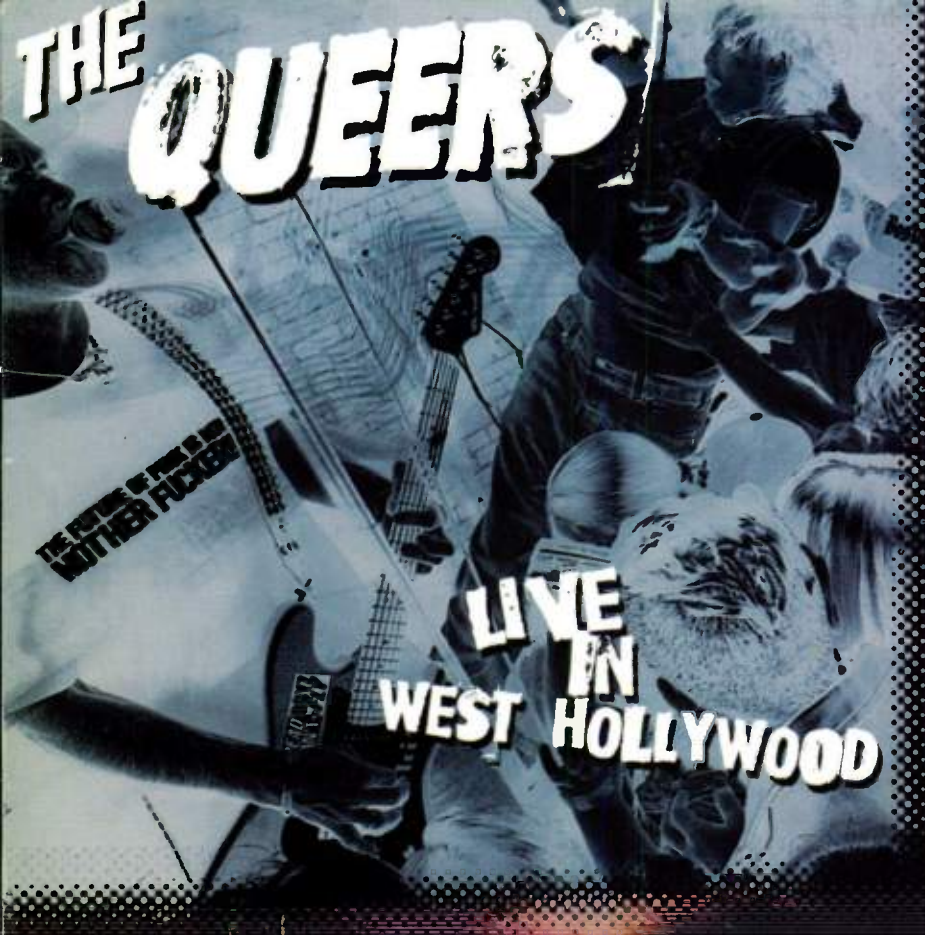
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