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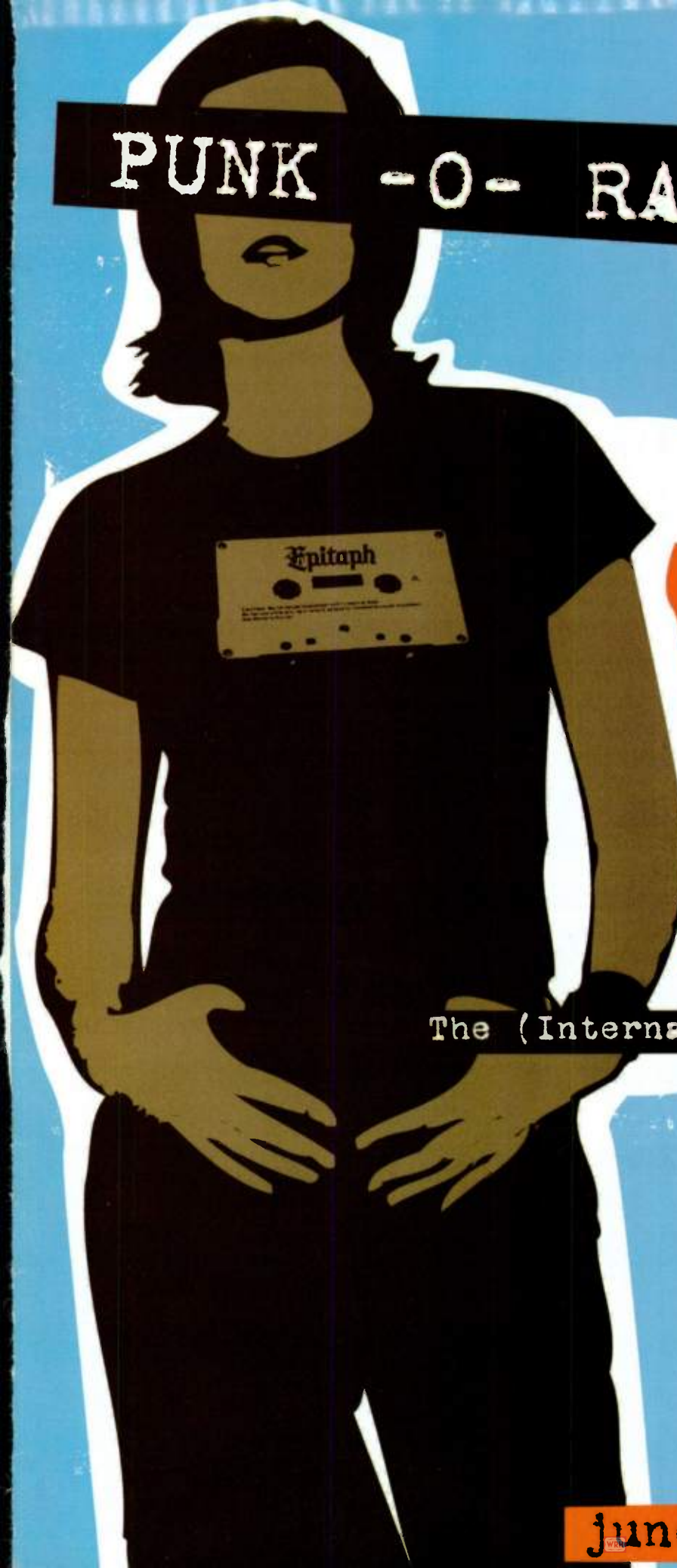
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7

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volume 8 • number 7

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
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
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# Letters

## Yo, Jello, Quit Talkin' 'Ish

I just got my copy (issue #81) and it's a good one. I feel I have to say something about the Jello thing in the news section. I hate to be reactionary, but sheesh. On behalf of the truth, I'd like to say that Jello's insinuations are misleading, inflammatory and really just untrue. I have not heard of disappointed promoters, and it is and has been a part of the touring lineup's press release to point out Brandon Cruz is singing. I saw the show here and everyone looked pretty happy to me. The highest ticket price I know of is \$15. If Jello is so anxious to distance himself from the tour, then why doesn't he stop talking about it? What a creep.

Jen Casebeer  
Manifesto Records

Hey Jen,

Thanks for the different perspective. Jello seems like a weird bird to me, but \$15 to watch the kid from The Courtship of Eddie's Father (Cruz's child-actor past comes out!) sing "Holiday in Cambodia" still sounds like a bum deal.

Mike McKee  
Music Editor

## Anyone Have a Spare Lion?

This is a really rockin' magazine. I enjoy reading it. However, I was a little disappointed in your review of Shmunks for You in the May 2002 (#80) issue. Personally, I don't like the band much, but it seemed like you gave them a bad review just because they're Christians. True, punk rock has been based on such things as deviance and subversion, but who says that a certain type of music should be limited only to people who don't believe in God? I'm also in a Christian rock band and by no means do we try to force Jesus into anything. We just write music about what we love. Many people misunderstand the goals of us so-called "bible-thumpers" when it comes to music. The point isn't to convert people, but to glorify God through music. Doing that should be possible in every genre of

music, including punk rock. I noticed that there was another review on a Christian band, Stavesacre, and I'd like to point out that I thought it was fair because it focused more on the music, rather than the band's religion. Thanks!

Natalie Klett  
Glenside, PA

## A Farewell to Vinyl Ink's Main Man

As a teenager growing up in rural Delaware, the only access I had to music was country radio stations and the local mall record stores. I don't remember how the first Vinyl Ink catalog made its way into my hands, but the event changed my life. A whole new world had been opened up to me by a tiny record store in Silver Spring, Md., and its owner, George Gelestino.

On Wednesday, April 17, George passed away.

Record collectors are a strange breed. Being one himself, Gelestino had a unique understanding of our needs and wants. Vinyl Ink was a one-man operation, so any time a customer called, it was often Gelestino himself who'd field the request, no matter how obscure.

I suppose the most upsetting thing about losing Gelestino is now there is one less person who cares so deeply about music and being part of a community of musicians and fans. Downloading files from the Internet is not the same as the experience of shopping at a real record store, even if it is out of a mail-order catalog. There is no ambiance or mystique there, only digital code, and the number of people who recognize the difference is dwindling.

Gelestino signed off on all of his record lists with the quote, "The art we hate is more important than the art we kind of like." The fact he still viewed rock music as art really says something about his character in a time when huge profits are more important than talent or soul to most major record companies.

—Oakland L. Childers  
Entertainment Editor,  
Colorado Daily



## X "At Home With You" CD/LP

Based around the creative core of singer/guitarist Steven Lucas and former ROSE TATTOO bass player Ian Rilen, X have churned out a devastating catalog of fractured rock songs and solidified their reputation as one of Australia's most intense live acts over the past

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"[X] took rock-n-roll and, years ahead of their time, created a unique hyper-charged sound that still hasn't been bettered for power and pure grunt." - Matt Dickson, 'Spiral Scratch', 1997

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IN THE WORKS: New stuff from THE FUSES and NATIONAL RAZOR f.d.i.c. Keep an eye out for THE ORANGES BAND in your area soon. Check the website for updates, release dates, MP3s, show listing, and much more!



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**NO USE**  
for a name

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"As usual, NUFAN have created a top-notch package of structurally perfect ditties that cause the ol' baby-blues to well-up and mist with joy." - Razorcake

"Another excellent release of melodic hardcore and mid tempo punk. No Use for a Name have always seemed to me to be more intelligent than many bands of similar sound"  
- Punk Planet

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## BJORK AGAIN

Icelandic sensation Bjork plans to release an album of greatest hits this fall, featuring songs she has been working on through the One Little Indian label. The as-yet-unnamed album is projected to include a diverse mix, combining some of her more established work such as "Venus as a Boy" and "Army of Me" with more experimental sounds. Speculation suggests her recent collaboration with the electronica hipsters of Matmos will debut on this new, unique album. No release date has been set.



## WANT SOMETHING DONE RIGHT?...

There's no knowing who might be the next caller when a radio station sponsors a contest. Nonetheless, it's bound to be a shock when the voice on the line is the subject of a contest's trivia question. The plot only thickens when the voice is as familiar as that of Paul McCartney. Recently, a Los Angeles radio station ran a contest offering tickets to a Brian Wilson concert, if listeners called in to answer the question, "on what song does Paul appear eating a carrot?" After several listeners failed to answer the question correctly, the agitated ex-Beatle, who happened to be listening to the whole thing transpiring on his car radio, called in on his cell phone to answer the



damn thing himself with the song "Vegetables." Mr. McCartney generously passed the tickets on to a lucky listener.

## PHILANTROPY SEVENDUST AND SUM 41 STYLE

It's hard to top a concert for Bangladesh, but Sevendust and Sum 41 seem to have their hearts in the right place. After 14-year-old Cameron Gallion (who appeared in Sevendust's video for "Praise") passed away last February from cancer, the band decided to help honor its friend and support his family. The hard rock band coaxed an autographed guitar and a pair of drumsticks from the fellow rockers of Creed for a charitable Ebay auction benefiting the Gallion family. Meanwhile, the usually sophomoric and irreverent Sum 41 recently acted in the interest of protecting wildlife. After writing a letter to Manitoban Minister of Conservation, Oscar Lathlin, the band (with support from PETA) successfully liberated six polar



bears (half of which were Manitoban) being held by the Suarez Bros. Circus.



## AIN'T NO PARTY LIKE A KISS PARTY...

Snoop's homies might not be leaving 'til six in the morn, but Ace Frehley of Kiss recently proved no one can truly party like him. An intimate birthday celebration for Ace and 500 of his closest friends in Hackensack, N.J., wound up full of surprises, beginning with a bomb threat. Frehley, who reportedly arrived on the scene already very intoxicated, and his guests were evacuated while police and emergency units—complete with K9 agents—checked out the scene. After about an hour outside, the guests were allowed to return inside to kick off the festivities. Rumors suggest Frehley soon began arguing with the event's promoter over wanting more cash to continue signing fans autographs. Meanwhile, the scheduled Q&A session lasted a paltry 10 minutes consisting

of Frehley complaining about bandmate Gene Simmons and insisting he was through with Kiss. Simmons surprised all in attendance when he announced he'd be releasing a solo record later this year. The biggest surprise of the day, however, would leave Frehley nearly speechless. According to reports from the inside, when it came time for Frehley's birthday cake to arrive at the table, guests and the birthday boy himself were shocked to find one of the presenters to be none other than Gene Simmons, who said nothing and quickly left as quietly as he'd entered. The visibly angry Frehley took a minute to collect himself before taking the microphone and announcing plainly, "It's amazing what some people will do for money." And how.

## RADICAL COMPILATION CELEBRATES RAMONES LEGACY

Just a year before the anniversary of his death, Radical Records has released a tribute to the late Joey Ramone titled *Ramones Forever: An International Tribute*. The compilation album, released Stateside May 28, enjoyed a European debut in Belgium a few months prior under the moniker *1,2,3,4... A Lo-Fi Ramones Tribute*. The New York-based Radical Records, located a short distance from the legendary CBGB's, plans to donate a portion of the proceeds to the Joey Ramone Fund in support of the Lymphoma Research Foundation. *Ramones Forever* features bands from continents across the world, all of which are undoubtedly influenced by the Gabba-Gabba Heyers. True to Joey's dedication to support new up-and-coming bands, the 23-track compilation features



relatively obscure groups including Golden Green (Belgium), No Bluff Sound (France), 5¢ Deposit (USA), Huntingtons (USA) and Ramon Da Silva (Hungary). With an eclectic mix of sounds hailing from a large variety of persuasions (including punk, ska, lounge and others), *Ramones Forever* is certainly an appropriate method of honoring the legacy and the influence the seminal group continues to exert on today's music scene.




## MAYBE THEY SHOULD LET SOMETHING ELSE GUIDE THEM


Indie rock group Guided by Voices can't seem to stay healthy. For the second time in one year, physical injuries have caused the group to rearrange its schedule. After Jon McCann, the band's drummer, broke his hand last summer, GBV was forced to disappoint fans by completely canceling its tour. This May, the band once again announced a change of plans after vocalist Bob


Pollard experienced a back injury. As a result, the start of its summer tour with My Morning Jacket was delayed until last week (the tour had been planned for an early-May start). While one hopes future injuries will be avoided, it's safe to bet no harm has been done to affect the success of its latest album, *Universal Truths and Cycles*, prepared to hit shelves this week.





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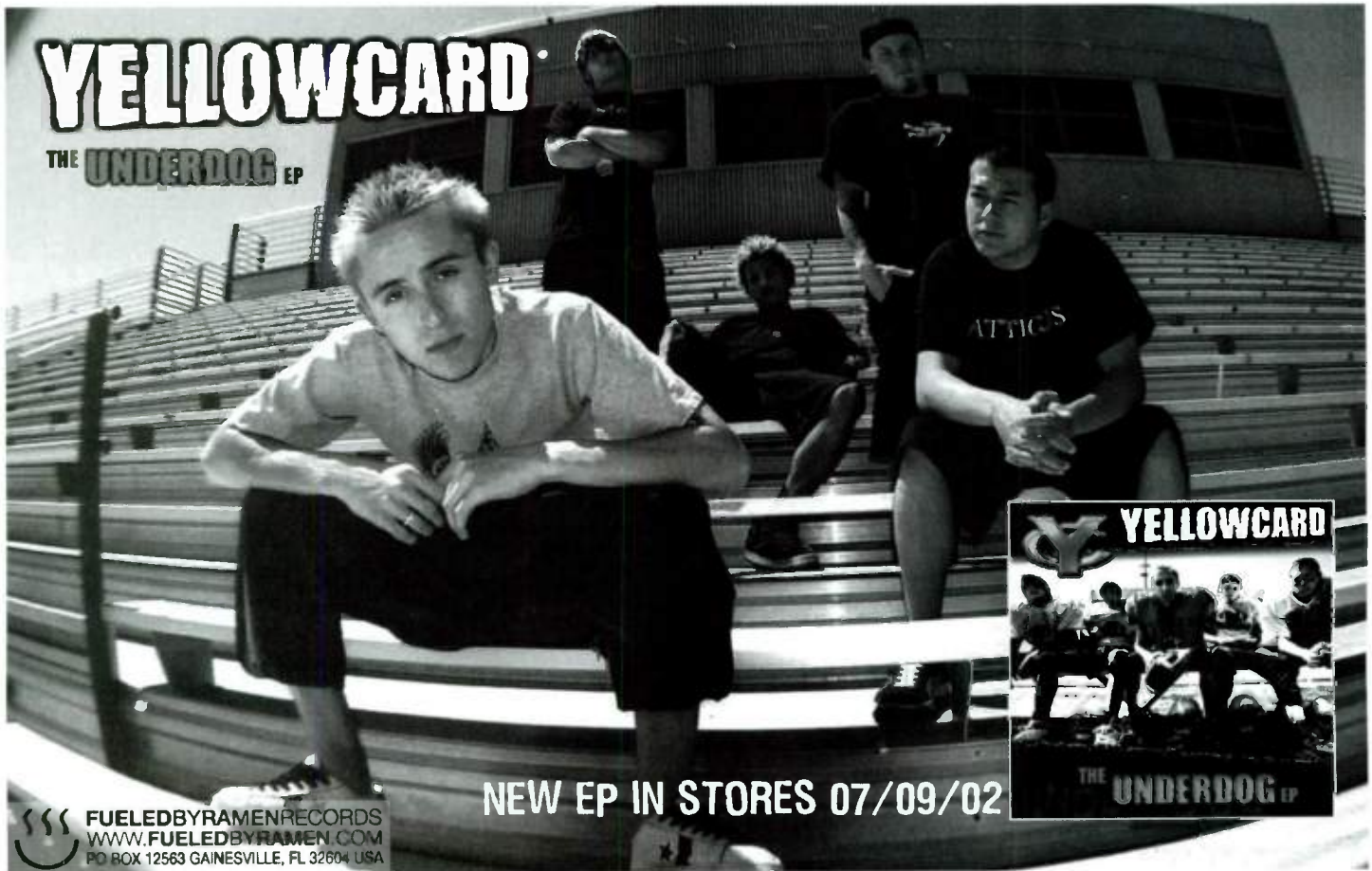
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## Josh Rouse easy listening ▶▶

Singer/guitarist and Nebraska native Josh Rouse has a tiny secret—he's an adult contemporary junkie.

"I like Air Supply, man," Rouse remarks a tad defensively. "I'm a closet easy-listening fan."

Luckily, he's also one of the most vibrant and engaging songwriters around, nailing the aesthetics of human relationships on the head with unabashed sensitivity. His latest effort, *Under Cold Blue Stars*, is a sublime jaunt through the simplicity of America's heartland and the unedited thoughts of those inhabiting it. From joyous, utterly sincere love songs to wistful tales of fear, betrayal and abandonment, the record covers a heap of emotional ground.

"The songs are a mixture of my own personal feelings and relationships I've observed—my parents, my friend's parents, etc.," Rouse says, leaving little room for anonymity.

Much like his brilliant, fly-on-the-wall commentary about the relationships of others, the incomparable comfort of home has been a recurring theme throughout his career. (*Home* is actually the title of his 2000 full-length.) On the *Blue Stars* track "Nothing Gives Me Pleasure," he waxes nostalgic once again ("home is where I always want to be/home is there for you and is for me/home is where I never want to leave").

"It's more of a subconscious thing," Rouse comments when asked about the resurfacing of this idea.

"It's a word I seem to levitate to. For some reason, it just seems to pop out. There's always a sense of movement in my songs, I guess. I never sit down and plan anything; I just like to let it happen."

Regardless of the source of inspiration, *Under Cold Blue Stars* is a passionate time capsule. Each story threads itself through the lush musical framework of the record, soaked with the most expansive arrangements of Rouse's career.

Rouse himself considers the new record to be moodier and more atmospheric than his previous efforts, a quality he attributes in part to the contributions of producer Roger Moutenot.

*Blue Stars* is a harmonic hyperspace of cellos, vibes and honey-sweet narratives. In the hands of a lesser power, Rouse's beautiful vignettes about true love would most likely congeal into mozzarella.

"It's all about the person delivering the love song," he comments, trying to explain why some ballads just have a special something. "I mean, Tom Waits puts out beautiful ballads. But I'm pretty sure they wouldn't be the same if Aerosmith tried to cover them."

Like Waits, Rouse's songs work because they're unabashedly heartfelt and real, with no makeup or shrink wrap. He has created his own form of easy listening—music that's candy for the ears and medicine for the soul.

—Joe Sweeney



## MINISTRY: Sphinctour 1996

DVD: 1 hr 28 min : Sanctuary Records

First of all, when viewing this concert footage from 1996 released by Sanctuary Records, you have to look at it as a CD with incidental imagery, because no one could possibly sit riveted for the entire length of this one-hour-and-28-minute-long diatribe. Unfortunately, all of the tour's highlights are used up in the disc's opener, "Psalm 69." Believe it or not, this Ministry debacle is slightly reminiscent of a Britney Spears concert, complete with multiple costume changes but sans the choreographed dancing monkeys. Granted, the footage was filmed over several dates, but it is spliced together in such a way to make it appear like one concert with Al Jourgensen donning several different outfits within each song. To keep awake, one can actually count Mr. Jourgensen show-

casing seven diverse styles of headgear—including chainmail, a cowboy hat, top hat, wool cap, bandana, taxi-driver's cap and the ever-fashionable towel. We get to watch the intoxicated frontman wandering aimlessly on the stage between brief vocal stints, swigging from assorted bottles of whiskey, bearing an uncanny resemblance to Gary Oldham in *Dracula*. For added excitement, Al takes the occasional break from imbibing said alcoholic beverages to kindly spray the audience with Jack Daniels and other assorted amber-colored liquids. Despite all the negativity, however, the music featured is a nice sampling of classic Ministry—but the footage could have been enlivened with some kind of commentary or at least a few backstage shananigans. (Sanctuary)

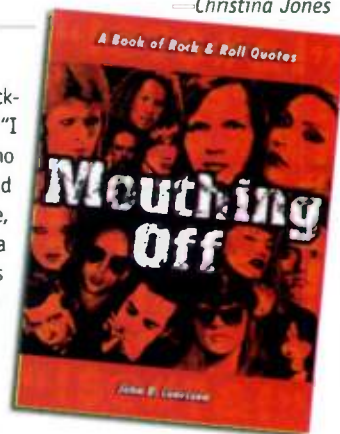
—Christina Jones

## MOUTHING OFF: A Book of Rock & Roll Quotes By John D. Luerssen

There are some things only a rock star would say. John D. Luerssen, luckily, has been doing a lot of listening. His new book, *Mouthing Off: A Book of Rock & Roll Quotes*, compiles some of the witty, opinionated, silly and downright embarrassing musings from rock's big (and not-so-big) names. While it's no surprise to hear some of Marilyn Manson's lip, catching some of the lines leaked from the musicians of groups like Beat Happening, Quasi, Sebadoh and Whiskeytown can be even more amusing. Whether it's Billy Bragg reflecting on new-found fatherhood or Steve Albini estimating the hypothetical benefits of a Lollapalooza tour bus running off a cliff, Luerssen has mined rockers great and small to deliver a truly entertaining book. Few can argue with the muted genius of Pete

Townshend when he shares, "The fact of the matter is, I'm fucking brilliant," or when Megadeth's Dave Mustaine ruminates, "I used to sit up and freebase for five, six days in a row with no sleep. My hair would be all stuck together like somebody had jacked off in it." With many more amusing artifacts like these, *Mouthing Off* is sure to delight all those interested in taking a peek (even one of guilty indulgence) at some of the things musicians have to say about their careers, the media, songwriting, growing up, romance, idolatry, politics, fans, money, sanity and, of course sex, drugs and the rock 'n roll lifestyle. (The Telegraph Company)

—Mike McKee



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# ROCK ain't DEAD— IT JUST SMELLS FUNNY:

**SPEEDEALER and THE HELLACOPTERS** Keep Guitar Rock Alive the Old-Fashioned Way.

The year is 1994. REO Speedealer is onstage somewhere in Lubbock, Texas. Mesh trucker hats slung low over grizzled, unshaven faces, the four men blast through about 15 songs in less than 30 minutes. The audience is scarcely acknowledged as the band wreaks havoc. There are no conventional rock star moves here—no one-liners, no announcement of song titles, no nothin'—just Jeff Hirshberg's leather-lunged lyrical barking and warp-speed, Motorhead-style rock.

Halfway around the world in Stockholm, Sweden, two drunk punks named Nick Royale and Dregen promise each other they'll never stop rocking and form a band called The Hellcopters. The band releases a modern classic, *Supershitty to the Max*, on White Jazz records.

Time passes. Problems arise.

Band members are replaced, Dregen forms a new band called The Backyard Babies. The Hellcopters acquire a new guitarist (Strings Dahlqvist) to augment the line-up of Royale, Boba Fett, Robban Hellcopter and Kenny Hellcopter and continue to rock. The Texans of REO Speedealer record an eponymous disc, which almost goes unheard as the band's first label, Royalty Records, folds. Worse, the band is threatened with a lawsuit from a similarly named, humorless '70s rock act. Undaunted, Hirshberg and his brethren drop the REO from their name and soldier on, playing nearly 309 dates per year without the support of a label.

The Hellcopters record more distilled MC5-ish music and tour Europe incessantly, releasing four glowing gems of rock in the process.

Neither band has stopped playing in their eight-year runs. So, who says guitar rock is dead?

"To be quite honest, it's something that I don't really think about," says Hirshberg, with a quiet demeanor belying his stage persona. "We do our thing—we always have. It seems like rock 'n roll was supposed to die about 30 years ago or something. It was supposed to be some kind of phase that was going to die after Chuck Berry had a few hits. I think it just evolves into a different monster. People who say that rock is dead, well, their days of rock 'n roll are long over, I guess. We don't worry about things we have no control over."

Royale agrees wholeheartedly.

"I don't think it's dead at all—it doesn't seem that way to me," he says. "Old-style guitar rock isn't big in America right now, but guitar rock isn't gonna die. There are a few good bands, but most of them don't get the attention they deserve. The Gaza Strippers are an amazing band. There are quite a few like this."

After a few years of unsupported piggyback dates on tours with bands like Fu Manchu, Zeke and Karma To Burn, Speedealer caught the eye of Michael Alago, the Palm Records A&R whiz known for signing Metallica. The fruit of this union, *Second Sight*, is both more brutal and mature than the band's previous efforts. For Hirshberg and his bandmates, a record deal makes things a little easier.

"With a record label, you get posters," he says. "Sometimes there's an ad. They get you doing interviews, and they get posters out there.

Hopefully they'll get some radio stuff. They book ads and get your record into the stores—that's nice. People know we have a record out, but we don't have a bus or anything. We still have to bust our asses."

Things are much the same for Royale and his Hellcopters. The band has always been well received, and American hipster labels like Sub Pop and Man's Ruin clamored for the Stateside rights to *Payin' the Dues* and *Grande Rock*, The Hellcopters' second and third albums, respectively. San Francisco's Gearhead Records won the rights to *High Visibility*, The Hellcopters' newest effort, and has set the band to burn across the States.

"If you compare Sweden with America, they're very different," says Royale. "For one thing, Sweden is very small and America is very big. That makes a difference. The countryside always changes in America. I kind of enjoy that. We stop at the truck stops and all. We buy stupid cassettes of really bad bands. It's like a million countries in one."

For Hirshberg, touring is just business as usual.

"We like to play and travel," he explains simply. "You can only play but so often in your hometown. It's better than working a day job."



Of course, the business of rocking must be taken seriously, and all that crap about musicians and their self-indulgent, substance-abusing ways are mostly embroidered for the sake of image. Well... kind of.

"We started out as just wanting to put on a decent show, but being in tune didn't really take precedence," Hirshberg laughs. "We were into getting really fucked up and playing. It was an excuse to start drinking or doing drugs in the middle of the day. It was about getting up there and beating the hell out of the guitar, drums, bass and my voice. It was about going fast as hell, and then being done. These days the same feeling is behind it all, but it's more interesting when you can actually express yourself more when you do something more involved. So we lay off that stuff these days."

The Hellcopters began in a similar fashion, as an outlet for youthful energy.

"When we first started out, we'd be drunk and say, 'Let's make a twin-guitar type of band with MC5 in mind,'" says Royale. "We just wanted to play something we liked. Having done that, we're just hoping to write better songs. I think we're going in the right direction. There's no use for us to do our first album four times over."

Since big-guitar rock isn't enjoying the prominence it once relished, misconceptions about Speeddealer and The Hellcopters are prevalent, and these bands face some of the same narrow-mindedness found in *Easy Rider*.

"I think a lot of people get scared of us because we have long hair," Royale giggles. "There aren't too many long-haired bands around anymore. Even metal bands don't have long hair anymore. Some punk rock kids get a little put off by us."

Image is a powerful thing, and when a band plays songs like, "Double Clutchin' Finger Fuckin'" and "Crank Bait," some folks will naturally assume the primary writers are deeply embedded in the trucker lifestyle.

## "WE'LL BE DOING THIS WITH BIG BELLIES AND BEARDS AND BALD HEADS."

"People think we're into cars and trashy stuff, and that's for a good reason, I guess," Hirshberg says. "The band isn't really about that, though. Two of the guys in the band actually work on cars and whatnot, but it's nothing we really talk about—it's not a super-important topic when we're hanging out."

But what's a magazine article without some prattle about a band's new record? Here's the short version: Speeddealer has a new record. It's called *Second Sight*, and it was produced by the guy who most recently played bass with Metallica—Jason Newsted. Overseas, the fanzines have been drilling Hirshberg and his bandmates (Harden Harrison, Eric Schmidt and Rich Mullins) about Newsted and his daily habits, including his choice of breakfast cereals and gossip about his old band. Please. Suffice it to say, *Second Sight* offers a swift kick to the gonads of the wimpy, slump-shouldered driveler presently languishing on our airwaves. It rocks, and Hirshberg admits Newsted helped a little.



"I think he did a lot for the vocals," he says. "He helped to make them a little more palatable—there's less screaming at every turn. That was a conscious effort even before Jason came along. He cleaned up the vocals. I have a tendency to start yelling. He made me do the vocals over and over until it sounded right. He brought that out and made us a little more patient with the process. He instilled a sort of calmness over the whole project. We'd always just done everything at a breakneck speed—not just the songs, but the recording process. He helped us lay back and take a breath instead of just rushing through it."

The Hellcopters' *High Visibility* was produced by a relatively unknown Chips K.—a European punk producer with recording credits on The Nomads, Sator and The Turpentes under his belt. The disc is an essential slab of MC5/Grand Funk Railroad/Ramones-laden goodness. It also rocks, as expected.

According to Royale, Chips K. managed to put a leash on the band's sometimes overly enthusiastic guitar soloing.

"We like guitar solos," Royale admits. "We love them. But Chips is not very keen on the guitar solo. We kind of compromised a little bit on that. Then again, we do the solos longer live. It's a record, and it's supposed to showcase your songs, not your guitar. He was also out of the studio for two days while we did the solos. We got to sneak in some stuff."

So what's changed for these bands after all these years? What keeps them going?

"Now, more than ever, boring as it may sound, we just want to write good songs," Royale says. "We have the energy, we have that, but to me, the most important thing to do is to write a song that is better than the one I wrote before."

For Hirshberg, the band is the key.

"We still strive to be as tight as possible, but our definition of tightness has totally changed," he says. "Our concept of playing as a unit was far off from what really playing as a unit truly is."

The ultimate question, however, remains to be answered—how long can these bands realistically continue to rock?

"It depends on how long we have fun," Hirshberg says. "It's up to us whether or not we still enjoy writing songs and touring. That's what it comes down to. We could be in our 40s doing this."

Royale concurs.

"We've lasted longer than I thought," he snickers. "We'll keep doing it as long as it feels good. I feel like even if we don't want to, it's something we have to do. We'll be doing this with big bellies and beards and bald heads."

—Erik Caplan

# FORWARD IN REVERSE:

## Back to the Future with Trans Am

Flash back to the first time you owned the prestigious Atari 2600, back when going to see *Star Wars* meant going to see *Star Wars*, and hairspray was in vogue—for guys. Trans Am in 2002 is what the future used to sound like circa 1985. While the rest of the world has packed away most Reagan-era artifacts (from all things Pac Man to 'Til Tuesday), Trans Am-ers Philip Manley (guitar, keys, vocals), Nathan Means (bass, keys, vocals) and Sebastian Thomson (drums, keys, vocals) are still playing their 2600s and listening to New Order, Herbie Hancock and Kraftwerk.

"We get a little self conscious when the idea is brought up that we have this retro vibe," admits Manley. "We play on equipment that is really outdated, and we're not really up-to-date with technology."



The kitsch comparison is inevitable for Manley and his Washington, D.C.-based trio. Their creativity is simply a factor of their upbringing. While some turn their noses up at history, Trans Am pays homage to it with its newest synth-laden Thrill Jockey effort, *TA*.

While the band has a reputation for being a collection of control freaks, Manley says with *TA* Trans Am took laissez-faire to another level, allowing longtime band engineer Jonathan Kreinik almost complete autonomy in mixing the record.

"We loved it and are really pleased with how it turned out," says Manley. "It was still stressful, but in a different manner."

While *TA* comes across as pretentious without being painful, Trans Am's throwback sinister feel comes from the heart. The band has toured America enough times, after all, to understand the importance of innovation. The upcoming tour in support of *TA* finds the band adding a fourth member to make the transition from record to stage a smoother one. Musician Chris Turco will join Manley, Means and Thomson.

"It really gives a lot of freedom to play the songs," explains Manley. "When these songs were born in the studio, at one point it hits us, 'Oh shit, we have to play these live.' I've noticed having Chris play with us dissipates a lot of tension among the three original members of Trans Am, which I think is a good thing. Tension naturally builds up over time and can wear you out, although it also makes for some pretty cool and fucked up music."

While it's hard to argue with a description of Trans Am's music focusing on kitsch and experimentation, it's safe to say the band achieves the coveted hipster status of "fucked up, but cool fucked up." Scoring the pinnacle of cool accolades as one of indie music's It bands of the last several years, Trans Am recently broadened its horizons to include a collaborative release with the guitar wizards of The Fucking Champs. The five-song EP, *Double Exposure*, featured Trans Am lending a synthed-out sheen to The Champs' prog-metal assault, culminating in an updated version of guitar-based driving-and-partying rock anthems—Cheap Trick has met Don Caballero.

This latest album sees at least one move towards a more conventional rock approach. After six original albums and seven years together, Trans Am has

**"WE PLAY ON EQUIPMENT THAT IS REALLY OUTDATED, AND WE'RE NOT REALLY UP-TO-DATE WITH TECHNOLOGY."**

demonstrated it can let its music do the talking. Over its past two efforts, however, the band has slowly been making vocals more consistent and less of an anomaly.

"It wasn't like I had a notebook full of lyrics from high school," Manley laughs, reclining at the band's National Recording Studio in Washington, D.C. "We all write about different things."

The singing on *TA* will undoubtedly raise a few comparisons to the likes of New Order, although it should be noted Trans Am is careful to balance these moments with lo-fi Fat Boys-style proto-rap as found on track five's "Basta."

It seems eclectic variety is what drives much of Trans Am's output. What else could fans expect from a band credited with having fused the ironic camp of the '80s arena-rock hangover and *Over the Edge*-style teen angst with today's electronic-minded hipper-than-thou set. While Manley maintains his band is free from the short shelf life of any particular zeitgeist, he chooses to keep the definitions open-ended.

"We like to think we're modern," he smirks. "Modern, if only in the sense we're alive today."

—Chris Johns

## Schatzi reluctantly pop ▶▶

What's in a name? Well, for Schatzi (est. 1996 in Austin, Texas), whose name is often misspelled and mispronounced (the phonetic spelling, S-H-O-T-Z-E-E, the most common of "about fifty different ways"), it's an identity. "We're always happy when we see it in the paper somewhere and it's spelled right," laughs singer/guitarist Christian Kyle. "We feel like we're growing as a band."

If simply spelling Schatzi's name correctly brings a feeling of growth, accurately assessing its sound would really make the band (Kyle, co-lead vocalist/guitarist Monte Williams, bassist Marc Fort and drummer Marc Ford) feel like big boys. Unfortunately, that's easier requested than granted.

In a drive-thru world, the easy way out rules. Rather than do Schatzi justice (which is to summon an all-you-can-eat buffet of influences including the Flaming Lips, Elvis Costello, '70s classic rock, The Promise Ring, Cheap Trick and a dash of '80s metal), quickie critics will brand them pop punk. Naturally, Kyle rejects this. To him, pop punk equals Green Day, and Schatzi doesn't sound "anything like that." As a songwriter, he explains, everything he hears will come out in his music, voluntary or otherwise. "I can listen to Reba McEntire, and maybe a one-second melody (of hers) will come out in a song, but no one would ever know but me," he says, laughing. "Of course, it would come

out in a cool way."

Therein lies Schatzi's appeal. On the band's Mammoth Records bow, *Fifty Reasons To Explode*, the above-named references (and some clandestine sonic handshakes) are tossed in a blender to create a sound that is hooky, melodious, profoundly rocking and, yes, cool. Sure, it smacks of a certain trendy sound, but under scrutiny, the songcraft (particularly on tracks like "Sucked Into Something," "Flush" and token first single "Death of the Alphabet") shines. If only there was a way to dodge the looming labelmaker whose tongue spells P-O-P P-U-N-K...

Oh, but there is. The way, Kyle says, is to deliver the music to discriminating music lovers via viable vectors: tours, college radio, the internet and, ahem, cool magazines. Let careful ears define the music. It may not produce instantaneous supernova success, but that was never the pri-

mary objective. It's a career Schatzi wants. Gold records are neat and shiny, but the mainstream can wait. "As long as we can still keep putting out records and playing shows, that's really the main focus. I think it's going to be a success as long as we can build up a crowd that way. But I wouldn't be upset if we sold 100,000 records, you know."

—Randy Harward



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IN COLOR

# LOOKING HOMeward:

Indie rock's Renaissance woman **Kaia Wilson** takes the time to revisit her roots with *Oregon*.

With her very own record label to run, a nationally recognized touring band to front and two dogs and cats to feed, one might think it would be difficult to find time to record a solo album. Somehow or another, Kaia Wilson has found enough time to do it again, this time with the release of *Oregon*, on her Mr. Lady imprint, a delightfully mellow album with songs capable of lulling the indie of rockers to a melancholy calm.

"I grew up in a town called Jasper, Ore.," explains Wilson. "I really have been missing Oregon. I've been away from there now almost six or seven years."

Wilson's Pacific Northwest roots are brought to the forefront in her latest solo endeavor. As much as she has left her mark on Oregon (she put the pine-covered state on the indie rock map in the early '90s with riot grrrl legend Team Dresch), it has clearly made an impression on the artist as well. A song titled "Oregon" belongs to her power trio, The Butchies. Lyrics to the as-yet-unreleased tune are included in the liner notes to Wilson's new solo record. To really drive the point home (home being the key word), she frames the songs on her new album with various photographs taken from her childhood on the Jasper farm.

"Those are my cows, those are the trees in our backyard," she smirks, noting the photo credits go to dear old dad.

Despite the cliché, *Oregon* marks Wilson's introspective homecoming as well as a new level of maturity as an artist. While a tear-in-my-beer melancholy is nothing new to her solo material, *Oregon* strives for a specific sentimentality where the usually dominant theme of love lost is replaced by the nostalgia, vulnerability, loneliness and strength of personal identity—where you've come from, where you're at and where you're headed.

Wilson presents this dialogue musically as a completely acoustic record, drawing only on the occasional bits of flair for spicy effect. The production, simple and raw, only serves to enhance the album.

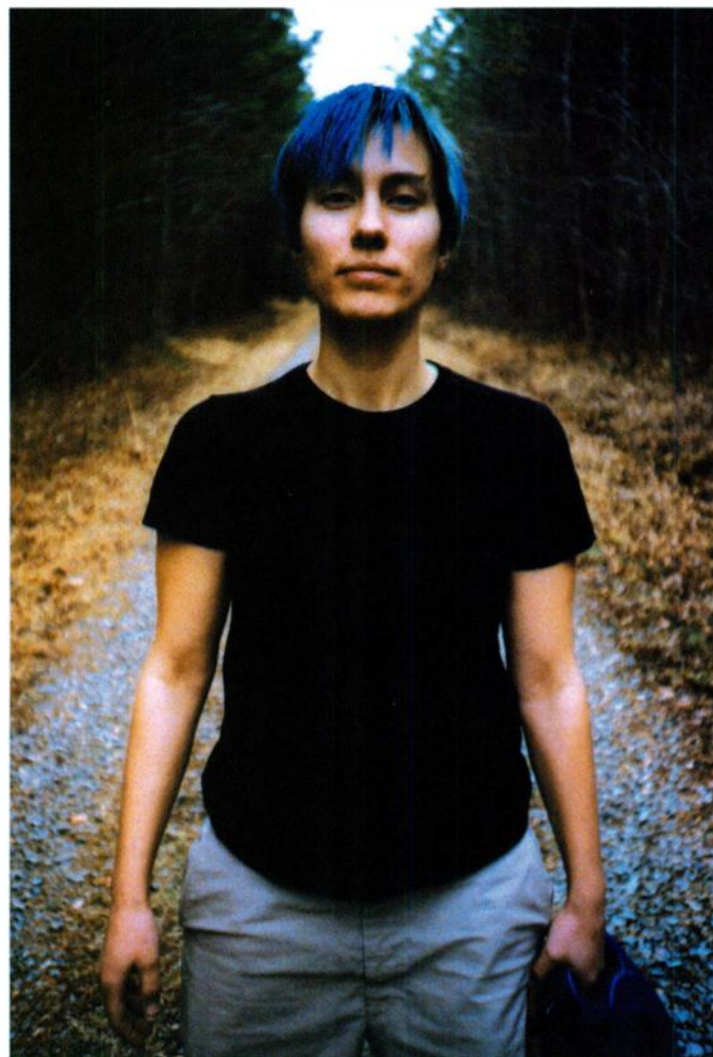
"I definitely wanted to do an acoustic record and originally set out thinking I'll just record it on a four track or do it myself on an eight track," Wilson shares. "I was totally too lazy to figure out how to do that right, but I definitely wanted it to be fairly sparse and just simple."

Forgoing the bedroom recording route, Wilson tracked the entire album at Chris Stamey's home studio, Modern Recording, in Chapel Hill, N.C. The studio lends a nearly tangible feeling of relaxation to *Oregon*, contributing to the home-cooked ethos of Wilson's compositions.

"It was kind of a co-production thing," she says. "It's really comfortable because it's a home. There's even a dog there."

Wilson considers Stamey an impressive songwriter and says he and his Modern Recording studio were her only choices for engineering this latest record. The pair's history began in 1998 when Stamey engineered The Butchies' second record, *Pop. 1975*. Since then, Le Tigre (also on Mr. Lady) has worked with him on both of their full-length records.

Although similarities can be found in the production and in some of the writing, Wilson says it's clear to her early on where her songs are headed.



"It's often like, 'Oh yeah, this is definitely a Butchies song,' or 'Yeah, this is definitely acoustic,'" says Wilson. "I'm just trying to write as many songs as I can—I don't write a whole lot. There are some songs I've written over the last four years that are supposed to be kind of acoustic numbers."

**"I WAS TOTALLY TOO LAZY TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO THAT RIGHT, BUT I DEFINITELY WANTED IT TO BE FAIRLY SPARSE AND JUST SIMPLE."**

With a backlog of solo material stretching back four years, Wilson is rarely short on songs. Time, however, tends to be in a tighter demand. After jump starting Mr. Lady in the mid-'90s with her partner, Tammy Rae Cartland, the indie film and record label quickly ascended to the role of a flagship for radical lesbian and feminist musicians and filmmakers. Some of the artists on its current roster (Tami Hart, Le Tigre) are national headlining acts on the indie rock circuit.

The Butchies, meanwhile, tour regularly and are currently working on their fourth studio album, also set to be released on Mr. Lady.

Despite the packed calendar, Wilson still sets time aside to perform her solo material.

"I'm playing a couple of shows out in San Francisco, including the Nectar Stage at Gay Pride, which is very exciting," she explains. "But I haven't set up any tour. What I want to do is just drive across country and have it be very mellow. Not this big tour—just playing a couple of shows here and there."

Whether here or there, audiences are advised to watch and listen as Wilson brings a bit of *Oregon* to towns across America.

—Kris Somera



# Brand New Sin band on the rise ▶▶

This year's New England Metal and Hardcore Festival fell on two extremely chilly April afternoons in central Massachusetts. Anyone familiar with the late-winter or early-spring weather of New England knows this isn't the best weather for standing outside The Palladium (or any other place). Despite the frosty conditions, hundreds of fans lined around the block from the venue showcasing more than 60 of the most extreme bands from the heavier genres.

With a bill including Cannibal Corpse, Killswitch Engage and Pissing Razors among the performers, no one was expecting Brand New Sin, a new blue-collar American hard rock group, to own the stage for the weekend. The Syracuse, N.Y., band succeeded in doing so, however, delivering a performance music industry insiders and heavy music fans are still buzzing about two months later.

Considering this blistering set marked the band's sixth show, it doesn't take a master of the obvious to figure out Brand New Sin is clearly a rock band on the rise.

"It's very natural for us to be onstage," guitarist Slider says. "We love it, we're showmen. When we're playing, we're all kind of fighting to be the guy up in front."

It is this playful, onstage dynamic between

the six members defining it as such an impressive live act. Boasting three guitarists among its lineup, the group not only creates a wall of sound, but offers an impressive visual with the sheer girth of its members—the experience is comparable to standing in a freeway watching an 18-wheeler speed towards you.

"With Brand New Sin, you've got six very large individuals up on stage, and we command the crowd," offers vocalist Joe Altier.

The band hails from the ashes of the metalcore band Godbelow and boasts a slew of varied influences on its self-titled debut (Now or Never Records). The album's first single, "My World," is a rock anthem sure to appeal to fans of Corrosion of Conformity or Bad Company. The melodic "Missin' You" could easily pass for a lost Allman Brothers gem, housing enough southern-style blues to make Kenny Wayne Shepherd green with envy. The relentless "S.S.P." offers a chunky guitar riff and a gravelly vocal reminiscent of Monster Magnet, while "Broken Soul" possesses the intensity of Black Sabbath, replete with a mosh-inducing breakdown illustrating the band's hard rock roots.

"If Lynyrd Skynyrd got together with Metallica and had sex it would

basically come out to be Brand New Sin," Altier says.

It's the combination of those eclectic influences, along with its members' undeterred commitment, defining Brand New Sin as worthy of the instant acclaim it seems to have garnered.

"By the time we started playing our instruments, artists like Metallica and Slayer were the cool bands. We have the rock of the older bands we grew up listening to with the intensity of bands like Metallica and Megadeth. We use all of our influences."

—Kevin Boyce





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# ROCK 'N ROLL LIFESTYLE:

After a near brush with fame (and death),  
**IMPERIAL TEEN** gets back in the saddle.

About a half-hour ago the members of Imperial Teen packed into a van in their home base of San Francisco and are now rolling up and down the hills of northern California. Later, after hours and hours and hours on the Golden State's many highways and pee breaks in assorted rest stops, they'll arrive in San Diego, where the pressure will be on for them to take the stage and unfurl a kick-ass set to back up the critical praise and hype surrounding their just-released third album, *Go*.

This is the rock 'n roll life.

But at this very moment, in this very van, a cell phone has been passed from lead singer/guitarist Roddy Bottum to bassist Jone Stebbins to guitarist Will Schwartz, who just happens to be driving. One hundred miles per hour.

This isn't the rock 'n roll life. This is now life and death.

Now the other members of Imperial Teen are dumping in their drawers. So rather than share his views on *Go*, a collection of 12 up-tempo confections sweeter and more addictive than a chocolate avalanche, Schwartz gives up and passes the phone over to drummer Lynn Perko, who is the most anxious of the passengers.

"Um, I'm sorry I can't really talk," he says. "They're kind of freaked out. I better not talk."

So even if Schwartz and Imperial Teen can't make like The Eagles and drive in the fast lane in real life, they can and are doing so, figuratively, in their career as a unit.

A new deal with the much-respected Merge label, strong press for the new record, a little buzz—this is surely the fast lane for a young rock band. But they've also been caught in the road blocks and traffic jams.

Imperial Teen started in 1995 as a side project for Bottum, who was then the keyboard player for Faith No More. Bottum had known Stebbins and Perko for a while, and he and Schwartz met in Los Angeles. Instantly there was a chemistry and a chance to bottle up shared interests and influences in music.

"Everyone was looking for some kind of cathartic release," Bottum explains. "I think we were all going through weird times in our lives. The focus point was really just sort of the chemistry between the four of us rather than any sort of music proficiency or song-writing craft."

Before long, Faith No More broke up, freeing Bottum from any commitments. Having an inclination toward catchy, melodic, new wave-inspired pop rather than power metal anyway, he shifted his attention to Imperial Teen full time.

And it was around then the collaboration began to transform into more of a "band-band," as Bottum calls it, rather than a spontaneous collection of pals learning new instruments and screwing around.

"Yoo-hoo," from 1999's *What's Not to Love* (on the Slash/London label), nearly broke them out into the big time. The tune landed on the *Jawbreaker* soundtrack and later spawned a video featuring the movie's star, Rose McGowan.

"I think it looked like we were really on the fringe of fame—maybe we were," Bottum recalls, with a bit of non-interest in the matter.

The label stalled between the band's first record, *Seasick*, and then again after *What's Not to Love*. Slash/London and Imperial Teen were no longer moving in the same direction. Finally, the band broke free and landed on Merge, home of Superchunk and Spoon, among others.

"Merge seems to be more on the same page," Stebbins says. "It's run by Superchunk. They're a band, and they know what it's like to be on tour, as opposed to some businessman who has no idea."

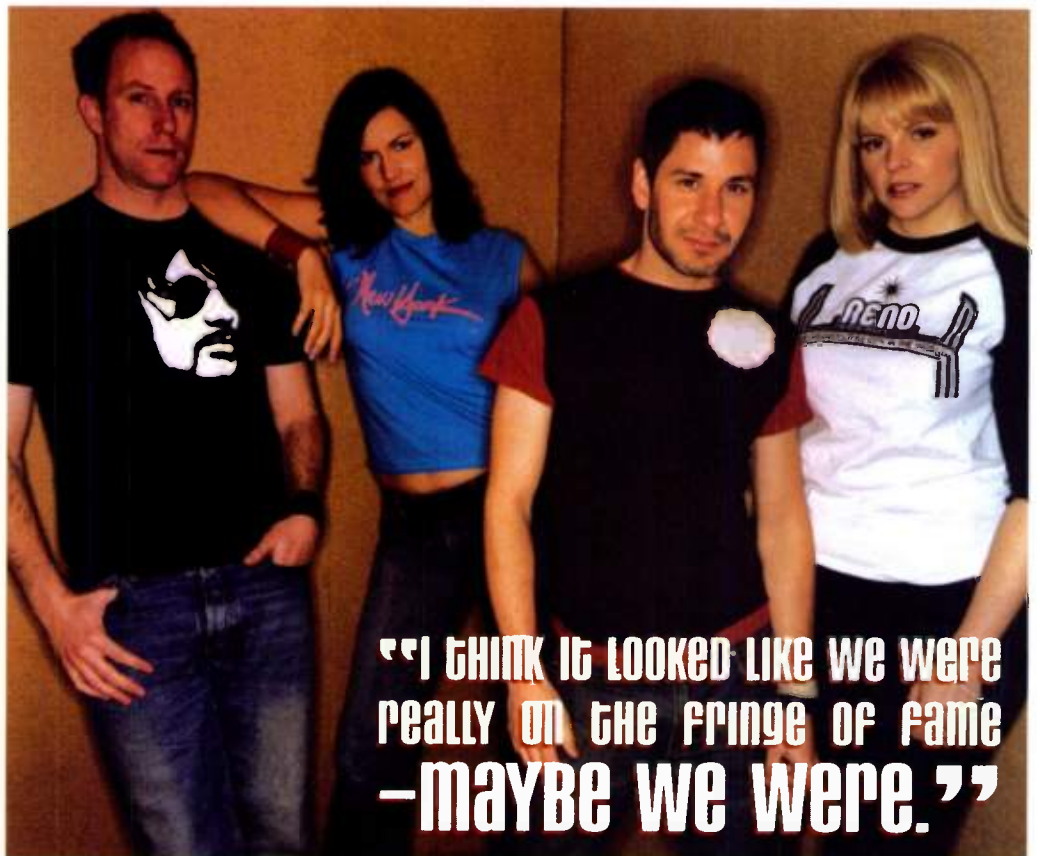
Which brings us to *Go*, a speed demon of an album crunching with a punky spunkiness served like a musical sandwich. Half of the secret is the girls' voices shouting out with the attitude of Wire, Sleater-Kinney or the Go-Gos at their coolest. The other half is Bottum and Schwartz, who provide the Velvet Underground-style muscle.

The combination of the two sounds is nearly flawless. Take "Baby," a song leaning heavily on the band's bratty side. Stebbins and Perko's shouts of "woo" and "baby" are brought down by Bottum's lovely crooning.

One gets the sense Bottum and his pals could have talked all day about the forthcoming tour and what's next for the band, but after the particularly heart-racing drive, all they want is to collect themselves now Schwartz is finally out of the fast lane.

"All right, we got the truck stopped now," Bottum says, relieved. "We're all going to go to the bathroom."

— Peter Dinklage



"I THINK IT LOOKED LIKE WE WERE  
REALLY ON THE FRINGE OF FAME  
—MAYBE WE WERE."



## V For Vendetta multi-personal ▶▶

V For Vendetta defy definitions. The band's newest release, a full-length on the renowned queer/feminist film-and-record label Mr. Lady, bears the title *Beneath this Mask, Another Mask*. This quote, taken from the famous artist Claude Cahun, concludes in the liner notes with the words, "I will never be finished lifting off all these faces."

For Cahun, a favorite artist of guitarist Michelle Marchese and drummer Cara Hyde, this phrase noted the surrealist photographer's tendency for gender-bending and portraying herself as different characters. For the melodic math duo V For Vendetta, which has been gracing the indie, punk, queer, feminist and math-rock show circuits of the Northeast Corridor for years, the statement is more about the lack of diversity in punk.

"These days there is more room for different kinds of music and ideas in indie and punk, but there's no real cross-pollination", says Marchese. "You wind up being pigeonholed due to just one angle of your work, instead of being seen as multi-faceted—like most bands and most people actually are."

The guitarist continues to explain it is just as important for V For Vendetta to share the stage with a female-fronted, post-Riot Grrrl outfit The Gossip as it is to play with indie supergroups like Don Caballero.

"We do our best to stay complete," she adds. "This mindset can create a challenge for the audience, the promoter and for us—but that's the point."

V For Vendetta has walked the tightrope on a number of occasions, playing queer/feminist punk shows with bands like The Butchies and Le Tigre as well as math-rock extravaganzas with

June of 44 and Shipping News. Marchese and Hyde's newest release will be backed up by a five-week U.S. tour playing all of these kinds of events and more. The album itself, crafted with the help of Keith Souza, carries with it a range of emotions, with intense rock songs and quirky ballads dealing with issues ranging from the band's hometown (Providence, R.I.) to feminism to chairs.

In terms of the duo's practice of feminism itself, Marchese feels there's something radical about women involved in more technical music. As wowed audiences and a strong new release suggest, both she and Hyde are providing the community with plenty of it. In addition, the two members of the band have met and introduced many female musicians across the country to one another, set up shows and events and participated in national music conferences such as the Future of Music Policy Conference based in Washington, D.C.

"I got interested and involved with punk because of the D.C. scene," Marchese explains. "I'm still positively affected by the way Dischord, Teenbeat and Simple Machines made music personal and continued to try to create community locally and nationally."

With Marchese and Hyde both working in sound and running a number of Providence shows, their role in the community is evident. It makes curling up to listen to *Beneath This Mask* all the more applicable once one has developed a sense of their context. Still, no matter how familiar listeners might feel towards the duo, Marchese and Hyde continue to surprise audiences over and over again—as typical women artists may.

—Katy Otto

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JULY WITH CLUTCH & FU MANCHU



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# MORE THAN JUST THE SUM OF ITS PARTS: ALOHA takes prog rock to a new level.

After the rush of late-'90s genre fusion, today's musical climate has become increasingly Balkanized. Punk, once again, is for the most part punk, new-wave is back as new-wave and old-school dirty rock 'n roll is, unfortunately, still just that. Of course many bands continue to combine some of these disparate elements together in what is left of the diminishing originality potential, but few do it with such surprisingly organic seamlessness as Cleveland's Aloha. For proof, check the band's second full-length, *Sugar*, courtesy of Polyvinyl.

Terms like progressive and free-form jazz, the monikers attributed in spades to Aloha, are usually anathema to most rock fans. In the world of the rock critic, jazz is particularly burdensome and pretentious—not unlike a Faulkner novel—best suited for people who look into the mirror while masturbating.

But somehow, with an ear toward a vocal hook and a overarching sense of song-structure, Aloha manages to transcend the ghettoized wankery into which they might easily have fallen.

"We're definitely a rock 'n roll-based band," says singer/guitarist Tony Cavallario, stating it makes much more sense to people once they see the band live. Aloha's approach to songwriting, he says, is traditional in the sense it usually originates from a set of guitar chords or a vocal melody, leaving the band to build from there. As songs grow, however, Aloha leaves things more open-ended than many of its peers.

Admittedly, a piano and guitar line-up prominently featuring vibraphone and conga drums doesn't sound like anyone's idea of a standard rock set-up. Cavallario insists the rock element is a big part of the band's sound, however. Although its recordings sound fairly elaborate at times, the band, which also includes Cale Parks, Matthew Gengler and Eric Koltnow, plays as a four-piece on stage.

"On the record people think there is a lot of extra stuff going on," says Cavallario. "But we're basically just like a Led Zeppelin."

This description is certainly a far cry from the pitch the band threw at Polyvinyl, the label now responsible for two of the band's releases.

"I told them we were a mix between Genesis and the Red House Painters," he recalls. "At the time that may have been more true."

True or not, it worked, landing in a classic demo-tape signing.

Bands like Braid and Rainer Maria, he says, were responsible for attracting Aloha to Polyvinyl. While Cavallario admits his band's music might not match stylistically with a lot of the label's output, he feels there is definitely enough of a common thread to keep like-minded folks interested. The dichotomy between pop and jazz, he says, is not something he worries about consciously.

**"ON THE RECORD PEOPLE THINK THERE IS A LOT OF EXTRA STUFF GOING ON. BUT WE'RE BASICALLY JUST LIKE A LED ZEPPELIN."**

"We're not necessarily concerned with the sum of our parts," Cavallario explains. "There are people who think it makes no sense, and other people, that's why they like us."

The band has plans to tour extensively in support of the album with a 50-date, cross-country stint, and also plans to tour Europe and Japan. At the moment, the members are split between Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Bowling Green, Ohio—a situation Cavallario refers to as a logistical nightmare (surely Split Enz could relate). For now, Cleveland serves as the focal point. Cavallario says he feels a valuable but intangible quality towards the city, joking about living "in the shadow of the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame." According to the frontman, a real underdog sentiment pervades a lot of the Clevo scene, where even a supergroup like Pere Ubu seems just shy of receiving its full due.

Perhaps it's this dynamic driving Aloha's mission to share its music with a wider audience. As Cavallario explains, however, sometimes the reward is one of quality rather than quantity.

"It's really a matter of figuring out how to find the people to play in front of," he shares. "You don't always have to come home with shitloads of money or have to have sold 200 CDs in two weeks or something. You just have to have experiences that will help you keep going as a band. It's like an existential battle. There are so many bands, and you can ask so many questions of yourself, but in the end, all that matters is that you enjoy what you are doing."

Cavallario, for one, seems sure. It seems likely people everywhere will soon catch on as well.

— Luke O'Neil



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# SLAY LADY SLAY:

ARCH ENEMY frontwoman, **ANGELA GOSSOW**, can scream with the best of 'em.

Angela Gossow, lead singer of Swedish metal band Arch Enemy, has encountered a pretty common problem when performing live. At every show, there's always some drunk idiot yelling, "Show us your tits!" to any pretty girls trying to rock out and enjoy themselves. It's happened to Gossow, but she has a pretty simple way of dealing with it.

"I ignore it," she laughs. "I would tell them, 'show me your dick first,' but most of the time I can't even hear these comments because this band plays so loud when we are onstage."

As if drowning out such tasteless, classless comments with extreme metal music weren't enough, Gossow's onstage persona is a frightening sight, one capable of beating even the most belligerent drunk into submission.

"I behave aggressively on-stage," she offers. "Most guys are quite afraid when the demon comes out. I am not shy or hiding behind the microphone, so it's not like I am an easy target."

Lookout, metalheads of the world. Angela Gossow hath arrived.

Prior to Gossow joining the band at the tail end of 2001 (five years into its existence), Arch Enemy's fiercely technical, melodic death metal held its own. Founding member and self-taught guitarist Michael Amott served time in seminal metal band Carcass. Bassist Sharlee D'Angelo, until recently, split his time between Arch Enemy and another legendary metal act, Mercyful Fate. He's since given up the Fate to focus on Arch Enemy full time.

It was obvious Arch Enemy had a top-grade pedigree of first class musicians, although under the frontmanship of Johan Liiva, something was missing. Enter Gossow, with looks like the cover of *Vogue* and a voice like an exorcism.

Thanks to her petite frame, flowing blonde hair, fine bone structure and graceful manner, one is hardly prepared for the venomous grunts and dead-waking growls Gossow lends to Arch Enemy's new album, *The Wages of Sin*. Some have compared her style to the late Chuck Schuldiner of Death. This makes for quite a lofty comparison in the metal world, but Gossow can hold her own and deserves such accolades. Her extra X chromosome is the missing link. Swedish death metal has now entered the Ovarian Age.

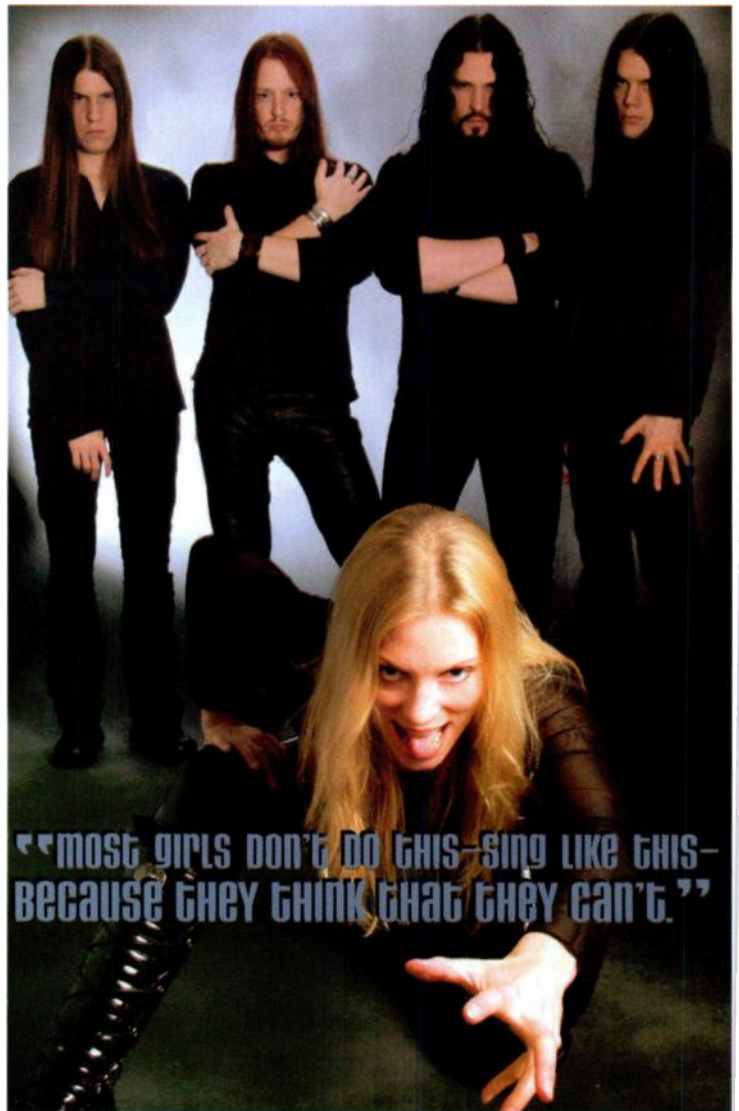
Gossow was working for a heavy metal magazine when she interviewed Arch Enemy on its *Burning Bridges* tour. The young Gossow small talked with the band before sharing a tape of her own death metal group, Mistress. Later, as Arch Enemy continued touring and started writing the music for *The Wages of Sin*, singer Liiva left the group to form NonExist. Arch Enemy needed a strong frontperson, since fans weren't fond of Liiva's live performance. The remaining members made a dream list of replacements. They recalled Gossow, whose commanding voice and stage presence had impressed them a few months back.

She flew from her home in Germany to Sweden for an audition. According to guitarist Amott, Gossow quickly left an impression with the band.

"She kicked our asses pretty hard," he laughs. "She was twice as loud, intense and powerful as any big guy. She had this little body. When she did some of our old songs, we were blown away."

Gossow confides, for her, the pairing with Arch Enemy is a dream come true. Having toiled through the mud of the metal underground for nearly 10 years, Arch Enemy provides a rewarding home. She gave up a high-paying internet advertising job and put her studies in economics on hold in order to pursue the band as a full-time project.

Arch Enemy's music is precise and vicious enough to warrant the attention of



metalheads, but it's undeniable the addition of Gossow might attract possible casual listeners. In a genre 99 percent dominated by males, she says, "Most girls don't do this—sing like this—because they think that they can't."

Gossow is an unintentional role model, though she seems to bring constructive perspectives to the table.

"I don't want to be a role model," she says. "Most women cat fight when they meet each other over stuff like, 'maybe she's better than me as a vocalist' or 'maybe she looks better than me.' It's like a competition. It's important that females are loyal to each other. We need normal relationships and females to assume the same position as men in metal."

Amatt interjects with a laugh, "Metal is very white and male, isn't it?"

In Europe metal is a more popular form of expression than it is in the States, but female-fronted death metal is hardly the standard. For Gossow, however, finding her place came naturally. According to the demon-throated frontwoman, she simply thought the music was cool and craved a position in the spotlight.

Although she came in towards the end of the writing on this album, Gossow was still able to contribute original lyrics to the new release. "Enemy From Within" is about a consuming depression, while "Ravenous" is a rather gory, gothic tale depicting a murderer who sucks up his victims in order to absorb their powers. Clearly, Gossow isn't shy and dainty in picking her subject matter—a quality affording her some acceptability in metal's gory aesthetic.

Collectively, the members of Arch Enemy don't think the addition of Gossow will result in a wild leap in record sales. Luckily, the band stands on far more than the novelty of its membership.

"Arch Enemy is not easily accessible," offers Gossow. "We're not going to overtake the new metal audience because it's a gimmick. You have to actually like the music."

—Amy Sciarretto

## Barcelona breakup beats ▶▶

Formed in the spring of 1998, Barcelona comprises four computer-savvy, soccer-playing friends from the Washington, D.C., area. Christian Scanniello (drums), Ivan Ramiscal (keys), Jason Korzen (guitar) and Jennifer Carr (bass) came together to escape their dot.com day jobs and perfect geekified indie pop. Four years and no magazine covers later, the band has decided to relinquish its duties crafting anthems for the I-survived-teased-hair generation.

"We were empowered 20-somethings who felt we had real value because of the things we knew," says singer Jason Korzen about Barcelona's inception. "All we ever talked about was computers and gadgets and things we wanted to build."

In between writing code, the members of Barcelona built synth-immersed pop songs and brought honest-to-goodness fun back to indie music. With the sensibilities of a modern day Human League, the band's lyrical themes of robots and computer break-ins allowed for a witty humor absent among too many rock bands. Through 1999's strong debut, *simon BASIC*, and 2000's breakthrough, *zero-oNe-INFINITY* (both on March Records), Barcelona amassed a rabid fan base, including writer/director Cameron Crowe (*Say Anything*, *Almost Famous*), who picked the track listing for its final album,

2001's *transHUMAN revolution* (pulCec).

The party vibe, which grew with each album, can be attributed to the tight-knit D.C. scene, whose constituents Korzen describes as "good, active people involved in making a scene fun."

Though some may yearn for a *Behind the*

*Music*-style clash as fuel for the split, the band ended its career amicably with two bombastic shows in February. The members' future endeavors include whatever makes them happy, be it coaching soccer, snowboarding or making more great music.

—Neal Ramirez



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# DEAD RECKONING

Steve Sostak and Chris Daly of Chicago's Sweep the Leg Johnny reassess seven years in the indie trenches

by Steve Paul Gibbs

**THE** sinewy, tattooed saxophone player, the one with the smiling eyes and the cheeks puffed out like he's sucking on a couple of golf balls, fixes us with another of those stares reaching deep into our very souls and continues playing a 14-minute piece of elusive, progressive punk rock genius poetically called "Sometimes My Balls Feel Like Tits."

You'll recognize this man as Steve Sostak, leader of a bunch of Chicagoan innovators collectively called Sweep the Leg Johnny, and you'd damn well better meet his gaze sometime soon before it's just too late.

"The wall between the performer and audience can be broken with a simple visual connection," explains Sostak. "It's intense and fun as hell."

This is as accurate a description of the Sweep live experience as anyone has ever found. For more than six years of playing 366 shows a year, Sweep has never tolerated anything approaching mediocrity. Only now this ethos appears to have caught up with its aching limbs, and the rumor goes the band's new album, appropriately titled *Going Down Swingin'* and subsequent tour to promote it, will be its last.

"I think we've all considered this the last thing we will do for a while, if not forever," he elaborates. "Personally, I'm looking to see

how the new CD does on its own. Instead of playing 250 shows to support it, we are looking at 30 to 35. If the record does as well as we hope, I imagine that we will be able to rid ourselves of some serious debt and reconsider our level of commitment—at least as far as time constraints."

Guitarist Chris Daly seems to be a little more certain of the outcome. "As of now this is probably the last album, but the touring will hopefully continue," he shares. "But we haven't known our future for seven years. I guess some sort of common sense has finally caught up to us, unfortunately."

Like many thousands of products of the American collegiate system with musical, non-academic aspirations (Sostak and Daly met at Notre Dame), band members have other interests to pursue and burgeoning alternative careers to forge.

As the recently married Sostak explains, he is about to graduate with an education degree and hopes to spend more time with his new family. He explains the band feels it's time to investigate the other aspects of life, such as "working shitty jobs and drinking shitty beer. And going to graduate school, which will probably encompass the same type of behavior. Some breathing room from the independent music world will do all of us good, especially me."





Perhaps more telling than any of this vocational management is Sostak's critique of the current scene of which his band is such a thriving part. Far from being the refreshing antithesis to the faceless corporate puppets blighting the mainstream, it seems many of the underground movements simply mirror its more exalted counterparts.

"A majority of independent music is packaged and promoted with the same ethic as the majors," observes Sostak. "I am repulsed by any backstabbing that goes on in independent music and the scene that encompasses it. I think I soured quickly on how much red tape really exists in the independent world. When I got into playing punk shows, I really wanted to let hard work and writing speak for itself... and for a good while it did. But, in essence, I would just like to see the hierarchy and scenes destroyed. I would like shows to become diverse occasions to open minds and make new friends."

His comment, however, is mere conjecture over a future, whilst only a few months away sits on a relatively distant horizon. First comes the fourth Sweep album, 51 minutes of an intensely beautiful whirlwind melding many intricate layers and contrasting cameos into a glorious whole. To the uninitiated it may appear chaotic, but there is an orchestration and a lightness of touch rare among bands who rock so hard. The fact it opens with a 14-minute, multi-hued suite only serves to make *Swingin'* even more of a challenging proposition.

"We seem to find ways to get rid of any casual listener very quickly," he jokes. "The record is so solid and a great tribute to where we are and how far we have come as a band. I think it's a benchmark record for us. Chris and Mitch (Cheney, guitarist) are so good together it's scary. John (Brady, bass) and Scottie (Anna, drummer) are so tightly wound. It can be listened to on many levels... critically as musicians, or if you just want to let your hair down and headbang."

Even more so than previous album *Sto Cazzo*, *Going Down Swingin'* captures the thrill of Sweep the Leg Johnny in its true element—on stage.

Sostak agrees, explaining he feels this album is more appealing to him since it comes as is, with little post production.

"The studio tricks of *Sto Cazzo*, which were fun as hell because we recorded it in an apartment, are gone," he says. "Here, the band is heard for what it is—dynamic, fun, smart rock."

"It captures a different aspect of the live sound," Daly interjects. "We didn't do a lot of overdubs or a lot of different instruments, just went in the studio and pounded the songs out in two days."

Of course, far from wallowing in the sadness of the band's (possible) demise, we should celebrate its rich legacy and many grand achievements. Ultimately, though, and as is the way of many musicians, Sostak looks towards the more personal aspects of what the band has brought him.

"I think we will be remembered by the handful of people we performed for as a live force with intricate and passionate rock songs. More than anything, friends and beer pals to a lot of people worldwide. If we never write another song, I can look back upon our four records and say we never got worse. We always moved forward as students of music and writers. Our learning curve has been immense and the new record is definitely an apex."

Whilst this is clearly indisputable, can Sweep not continue to push the boundaries of innovation and achieve more both musically and commercially?

Sostak answers a confident yes to the above, but confesses he feels life on the road has blurred his vision of his own musical goals. As he sees it, the rest and distance from the band's infamously intense schedule is the most sensible move now. Besides, as Sostak explains, slipping to a more casual gear does need to represent a retreat.

"I think Sweep was destined for little commercial success due to our lack of business sense piled on to our lack of music identity," he begins. "We missed out on understanding the behind-the-scenes issues, and our music tended to ride fences of scenes. As far as being good-hearted guys and original musicians, I think we succeeded greatly."

Surely, for a band like Sweep, these downsides—the perceived lack of business sense and musical identity—are actually major plus points. After all, hasn't it forged a strong personality with Sweep's strict, independent ideology, and in playing with many different styles of band, opened the eyes of fans to new genres?

"We have played with hippie bands, hardcore bands, you name it," Sostak admits. "But I always wanted to have a chance to play to more people. We tend to do really well in front of large audiences and have been known to blow a few bands off the stage if they happened to not bring their A game. I would have loved to challenge bigger bands and share the stage with them and learn a lesson or two about becoming better. In the end, it's about sharing energies."

"The best thing I can say for Sweep is Sweep is Sweep. In maybe 10 years from now, *Going Down Swingin'* will carry a lot of weight simply out of its uniqueness. And if I had to decide between longevity and a quickie, I'd have to choose the prior."

Yet one also gets the impression Sweep is just one part of an ongoing creative process, with Sostak, Daley and Cheney's Check Engine project representing another part, and any number of potential future components to explore as well.

"Again, time will tell," Sostak considers. "I've turned my creativity back home—to rebuilding my health and my foundation. Stagnation is death. I feel like I am still learning so much. For instance, my sax playing is still so unrealized, despite its essence in the Sweep sound. I really feel like I have a lot of ideas and energy to offer the future of Sweep, or any other project. It's getting exciting again, and that, more than anything, is what I have needed for about a year or two now."

Nonetheless, Sostak is acutely aware of the potential dichotomy between its avowed work ethic and the apparently unforgivable sin of taking time off.

"One of our biggest concerns with slowing down was that we would lose some of the identity we built as tour fanatics," says Sostak. "I imagine most Sweep friends understand that we can't see them two or three times a year anymore. We always felt that if we toured harder than anyone else and wrote good music that we could make ourselves into a huge band. That logic is obviously flawed, but the stories and friends we have made make up for any deficiency in fame and fortune."

For two musicians who state their greatest achievements as "trying" and graduating from college, equating their success turns out to be a predictably hazardous task and a particularly inexact science. Daly wants his musical exploits to take him even further—to Japan, New Zealand and Australia. Still, he says he is already happy with what he and Sweep have done thus far.

Sostak, on the other hand, is even more phlegmatic, explaining how he has always wanted to learn and tour more.

"There is still so much left unfulfilled at this point," he says. "I would like to write new, greater songs, play to many more people than we even had, tour Asia and pay an electric bill. But I have played music with my friends in a good rock band for seven plus years and traveled the world. I feel very successful."

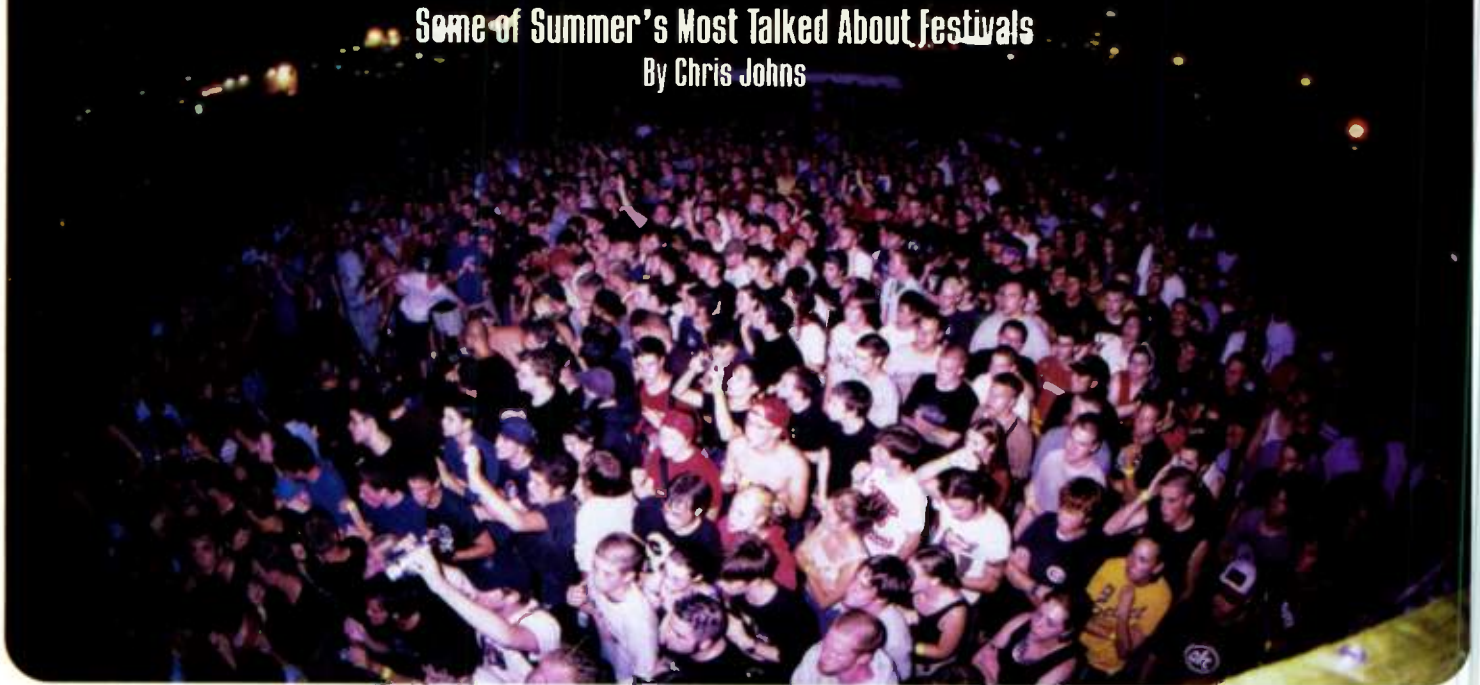
"All things considered, I would love to still be writing with the vigor and tour with the commitment of the last seven years. Time will tell if our pocketbooks and bodies can take the abuse."

Whether Sweep splits up or not, whether it focuses its musical energies on other bands, or even if it disappears back into the morass of our education system, these five self-confessed geeks have left a lasting legacy for people to discover, feed off of and be inspired by in years to come. And Sweep's done so in the only way it knows.

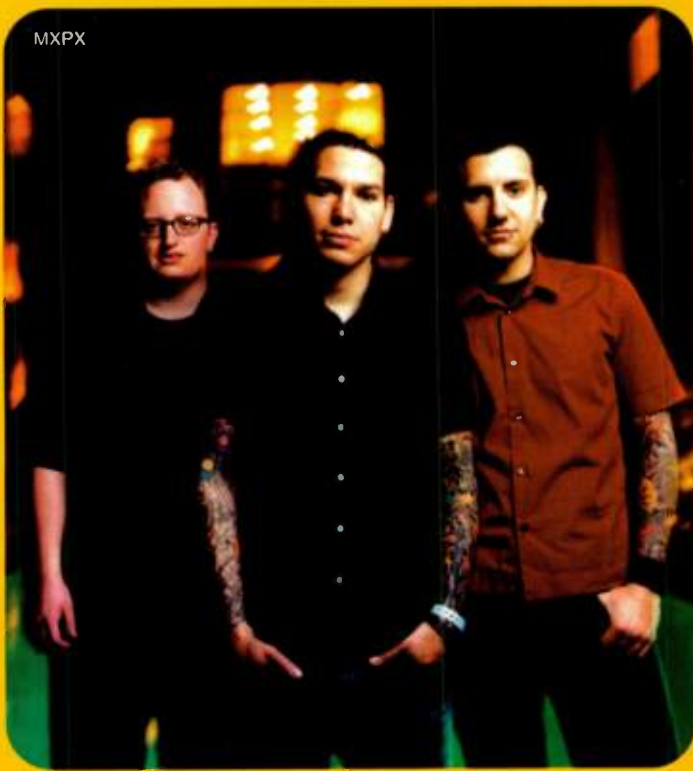
"I feel like if we are going to stop playing, I want to go out with a strong showing," Daly concludes. "Even if this is it, we put everything we have into this band, this album. We would rather go down swinging than to just stand there dumbfounded." ■

# WE KNOW WHAT YOU'LL DO THIS SUMMER

Rockpile's Chris Johns Previews  
Some of Summer's Most Talked About Festivals  
By Chris Johns



MXPX



Dillinger Escape Plan

# it's

a cool spring evening in West Hollywood, and the kids are out in full force. The unkempt queue stretches down Sunset Boulevard. Save for several hundred lucky fans, industry-types and celebrities, most of these common folk won't see the inside of the Key Club, where a privileged few will be clicking elbows with rock's elite at the Vans Warped Tour 2002 kick-off party.

Along with an impromptu set from Box Car Racer, party goers are treated to an intoxicating mantra of promises about the intensity of this year's lineup, a non-stop parade of rockstars and the chance to experience the excitement of the tour's sixth annual launch. Sets from Good Charlotte, Finch and The Used paint the sonic background to the event's bash, but this annual show is as much a celebration of the future as it is today's stars.

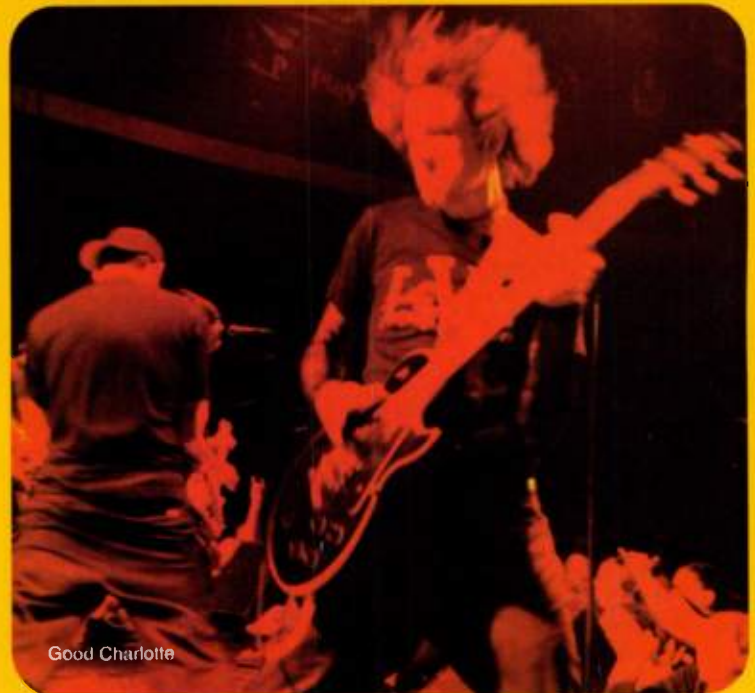
Apart from the spectacle, the most riveting aspect of the kickoff party is the raw anticipation in the air. It's not only the press and trying-hard-to-be-down industry types who are excited, however. The summer ushers in a whole host of package tours and music festivals, marking the hottest days of the rock calendar for many fans.

"People were asking me, 'How long are you going to beat a dead horse?'" founder Kevin Lyman remembers when prompted about the early days of the Warped Tour. He started the punk-meets-skate festival in the late '90s on the heels of a then-declining, yet festival-trailblazing Lollapalooza. Lyman concedes he recognized the Warped niche while taking in a Porno for Pyros show in the wake of Lollapalooza. Now in its second decade, Lyman has seen his vision blossom into a multi-million dollar, eight-week trek drawing nearly 500,000 total fans last summer alone.

"We've been doing this for several years now, and I have bands doing the tour for the fourth, fifth time," Lyman adds. "They like the vibe, what the tour stands for, and, most of all, they see the way we're so fan-oriented in our approach. Warped has evolved for the better over the years."

Early in the year as it may be, this is the unofficial start to the summer package season—Warped Tour style.

With the package touring circuit now healthier than ever, other treks join the Warped Tour as staples on the summer marquee. Lyman is aware of the substantial Warped piece of the summer




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touring pie, but there is a myriad of other packages—full tours and festival weekends—densely packing the rock landscape.

The folks at Initial Records' are rolling out Crazy Fest June 21-23 at Waterfront Park in Louisville, Ky. With the fest already in its fifth year, Initial's Senior V.P. Ryan Patterson emphasizes the Initial staff's attempt to include "Classic all-stars (Sick of it All), hot up-and-comers (Thursday) and current top dogs (AFI)," into this three-day event. Although it all comes together in the end, Patterson can't help but relate what a small label goes through to put together such a massive weekend.

"Booking Crazy Fest is at once fun, frustrating, rewarding and really damned hard," he says, "but it's all about the music, and our goal is to feature as many headlining quality bands as possible."

While garnering headlining acts might not be the goal for Ladyfest, it does attempt to focus on a specific part of the festival-going population. Estrogen is strongly encouraged but not required here, as these independent festivals focus on women in arts and music. The first Ladyfest was held in Olympia, Wash., and has since been duplicated in Chicago, New York and Glasgow, Scotland. With another scheduled for March in Philadelphia, Ladyfest DC will be held Aug. 7-11 at various clubs, galleries, coffeehouses and art spaces in the Washington, D.C.-area. Ladyfest DC co-public relations coordinator Gretchen Corl says all proceeds from the event will go towards local charities. Unlike Vagrant America or Crazy Fest, Ladyfest has no direct affiliation with any one record label but is organized with the assistance of more than 140 volunteers. Some of the confirmed bands scheduled to play include Erase Errata, The Naysayer, Mary Timony, Del Cielo, The Dishes and Dame Fate. Along with new projects from several former riot grrrl stars (think Kathi Wilcox from Bikini Kill), Ladyfest DC promises a special reunion from indie legend Tsunami.

Whatever tickles your music fancy, there's likely some sort of package out there, but for a sample, here's a brief list of the who, where and what-should-I-look-for guide to summer 2002.



## Warped Tour

Growing every year, Warped Tour '02 kicks off June 21 in Boise, Idaho, and wraps up Aug. 18 in Detroit, hitting a total of 47 cities. The tour will feature Bad Religion, NOFX, Flogging Molly, No Use For a Name, Good Charlotte, Alkaline Trio, Lagwagon, MXPX, Something Corporate and Reel Big Fish, among many others. Demonstrations by skaters Steve Cabellaro, Mike Frazier, roller skater Brian Wainwright and BMXers Rick Thorne and Dave Romwell will complete the extreme sports aspect of this festival. This year's edition will also feature "Reverse Day Care," where fans can leave their parents while they go and enjoy the show, and "Warped Are They Now?"—a traveling museum of Warped Tour memorabilia including photos, old tour posters and merchandise. Check out [www.warpedtour.com](http://www.warpedtour.com) for details.

## KraZY Fest

Initial Records is giving the kids what they want in Louisville, Ky. Over three days, June 21-23, this sleepy central city will awaken to the likes of Sick of it All, Snapcase, Bane, AFI, Tiger Army, Dillinger Escape Plan, Black Widows, Thursday, Ultimate Fakebook and Elliot. Weekend and single-day passes are available to what Initial promises to satisfy everyone's hardcore and emo tooth. Tighten your messenger bag and point your browser to [www.initialrecords.com](http://www.initialrecords.com) for details.

## OzzFest

The fest named after TV's most popular family man is back this year, continuing to secure heavy music's place on the map. The legend grows each year as wife/manager/co-star/rotten ham thrower Sharon Osbourne puts together this bastard festival. Included will be a con-

course of attractions, exhibitors and exhibitions known as the Village of the Damned. Ozzfest '02 kicks off stateside July 7 in Bristow, Va., and concludes Sept. 8 in Dallas. The show will feature Ozzy, System of a Down, Rob Zombie, P.O.D., Down and Hatebreed among many others. Check out [www.ozzfest.com](http://www.ozzfest.com) for details.

## Area2

The ubiquitous Moby is at it again. While the jury is still out as to the place of electronic music beyond automobile ads, Moby will travel the States with his brainchild Area2 festival, along with legendary chameleon David Bowie, Busta Rhymes, Blue Man Group and Ash. Area2 will cross the states from July 28 to Aug. 16 before Moby does his own thing. Check out [www.moby.com](http://www.moby.com) for details.

## LadyFest DC

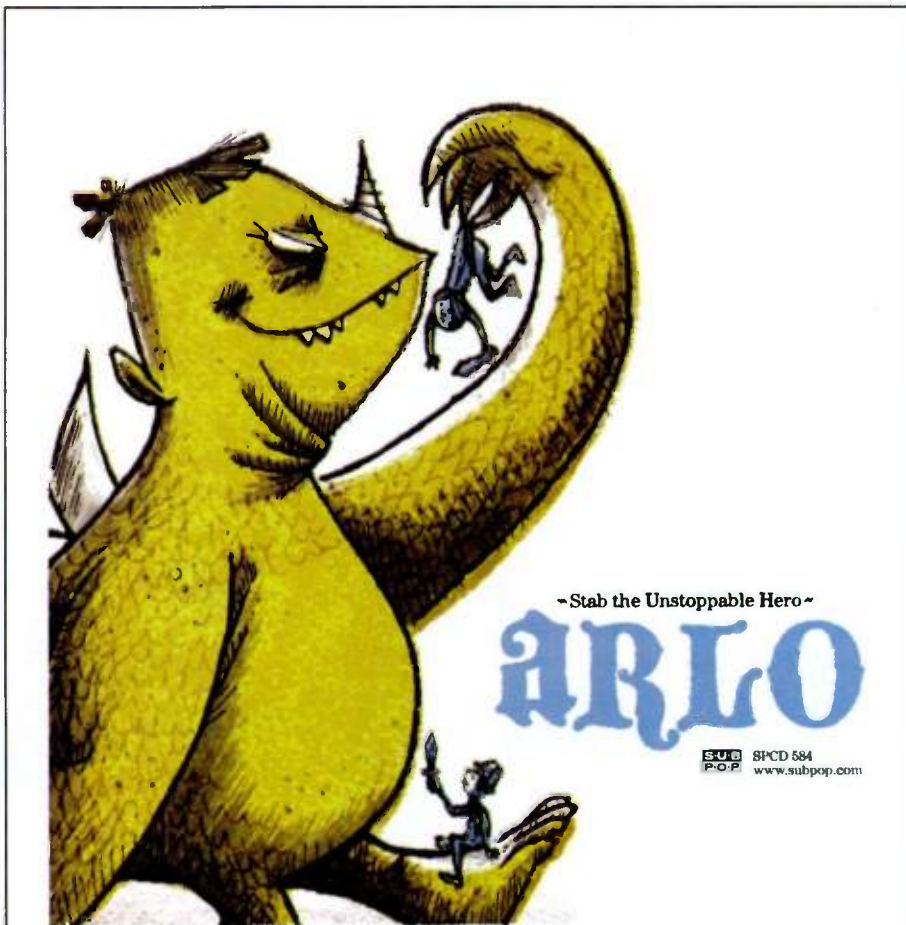
You go, girl is the mantra here as the capitol city gets it together Aug. 7-11 for some of the most recognized and promising women in music. Ladyfest DC's unique approach will include bands, poets, artists and other creative types. Proceeds from the festival will benefit various female-oriented area charities. Featured artists include Tsunami, The Dishes, Del Cielo, Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, Paper Doll and Dame Fate among many others. Check out [www.ladyfestdc.org](http://www.ladyfestdc.org) for details.

## ROLLING ROCK TOWN FAIR 3-3

From Latrobe with love—folks in this tiny western Pennsylvania town are opening their fields for the third summer extravaganza on July 27, courtesy of the Rolling Rock brewmeisters. Featured artists include Godsmack, Outkast, Nickelback, P.O.D. and Sevendust. Check out [www.rollingrock.com](http://www.rollingrock.com) for details and a whole lot of talk about how much you should drink their beer. ■



The Mighty Mighty Bosstones





# TOGGLES

17000 years after

The Replacements,

Paul Westerberg

finally comes into

his own with a

new double album.

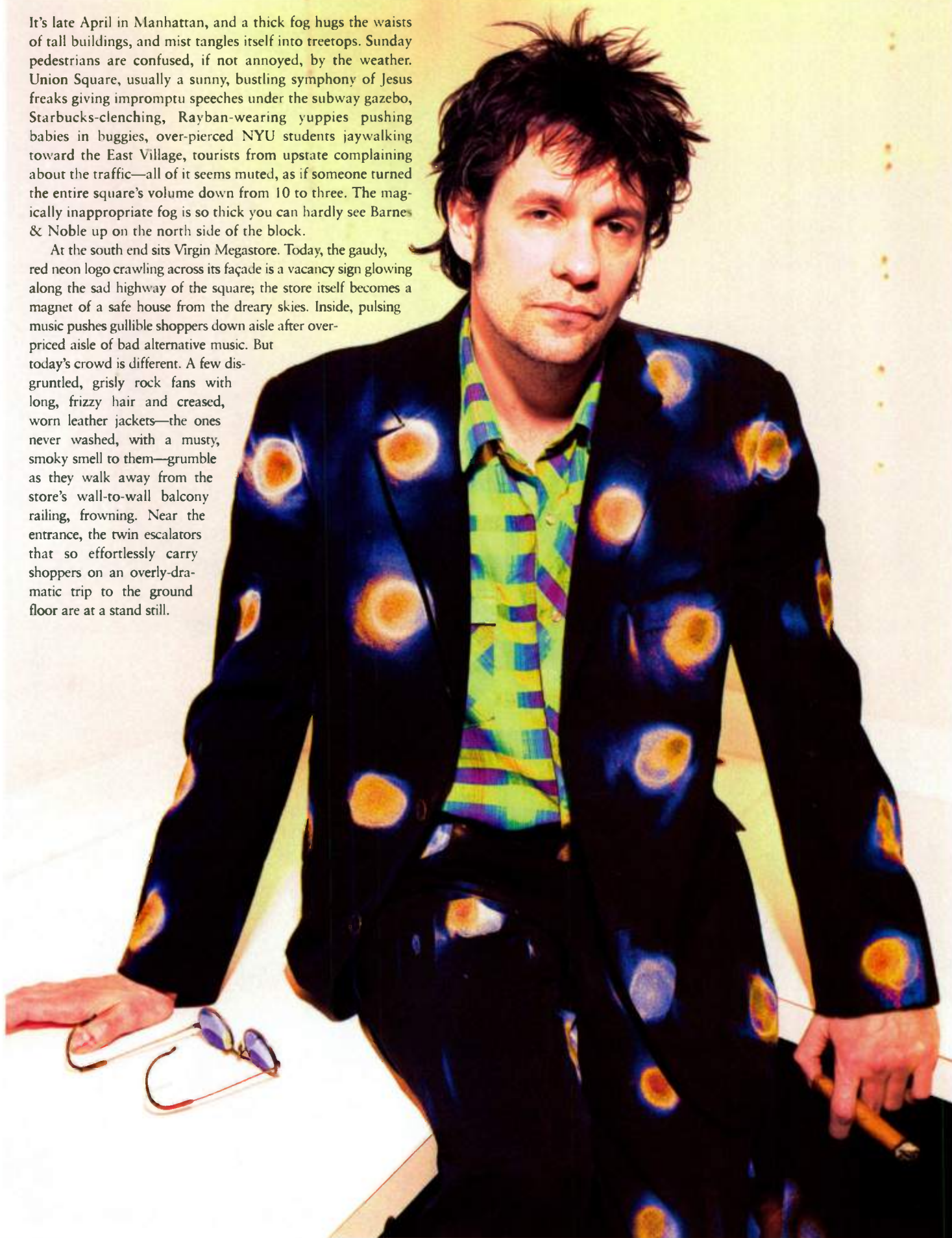
Says: By Lauren Vega

Photos By Christopher Piper

# TITANS

It's late April in Manhattan, and a thick fog hugs the waists of tall buildings, and mist tangles itself into treetops. Sunday pedestrians are confused, if not annoyed, by the weather. Union Square, usually a sunny, bustling symphony of Jesus freaks giving impromptu speeches under the subway gazebo, Starbucks-clenching, Rayban-wearing yuppies pushing babies in buggies, over-pierced NYU students jaywalking toward the East Village, tourists from upstate complaining about the traffic—all of it seems muted, as if someone turned the entire square's volume down from 10 to three. The magically inappropriate fog is so thick you can hardly see Barnes & Noble up on the north side of the block.

At the south end sits Virgin Megastore. Today, the gaudy, red neon logo crawling across its façade is a vacancy sign glowing along the sad highway of the square; the store itself becomes a magnet of a safe house from the dreary skies. Inside, pulsing music pushes gullible shoppers down aisle after overpriced aisle of bad alternative music. But today's crowd is different. A few disgruntled, grisly rock fans with long, frizzy hair and creased, worn leather jackets—the ones never washed, with a musty, smoky smell to them—grumble as they walk away from the store's wall-to-wall balcony railing, frowning. Near the entrance, the twin escalators that so effortlessly carry shoppers on an overly-dramatic trip to the ground floor are at a stand still.





Down below, situated adjacent to the World Music and Classical sections, is a single, over-stuffed plush red chair sitting contentedly behind two pylons roping it off from the public. Gear cases are stacked neatly on either side of the chair building up a barrier around it, still latched, waiting patiently to be unloaded. Power cables are coiled, poised and waiting. A few burly members of Virgin's staff pace impatiently in circles near the vacant throne, but for the most part, the ground floor is empty. A couple in their late 30s slowly make their way across the floor to the up escalator. "I guess it wasn't meant to be," says the woman, rubbing the man on his back with a comforting air, as if he had just struck out at the last game of his little league season.

The time is 6:32 p.m. and Paul Westerberg, today's six o'clock in-store performer, is a no-show.

Just two and a half hours prior, hundreds of New Yorkers had made pilgrimages from the five boroughs and beyond through the eerie, drizzly fog into Union Square to line up against the glass-walled exterior of the store. Many of them wore ground floor access badges (Virgin's equivalent to a backstage pass) laminated with Westerberg's blurry, black and white scowl—a complementary gift with the album when purchased during its first few days on sale. The bulk of the crowd were die-hard fans, late-30-somethings who'd spent the mid-'80s memorizing the lyrics to *Tim*, probably later writing-off Westerberg during his *Singles* phase, only to pick him up again with *Suicane Gratification*. There were some 20-somethings in the crowd, too, who'd probably read stunning reviews of *Pleased to Meet Me* on some best-of list at the end of the century.

Shortly after six o'clock on Sunday, when the Virgin in-store DJ came over the loudspeaker and announced, "Paul Westerberg has missed his flight. This is not a joke. We are serious," the typically cynical murmurs flew. "That's Paul Westerberg, alright," some were saying. "The bastard didn't even show up for his own gig."

Twenty-four hours later, the same crowd was singing a different tune. On Monday, one of Westerberg's only days off on his two-week "no band, no charge" tour through record stores across the States, they all lined up again—devoted fans and badge-holders, members of the press and record execs. And though he'd been compensating for the prior day's mishaps by packing in back-to-back interviews, meet-and-greets and a stint on Letterman, when Westerberg finally made his 26-and-a-half-hour-late entrance onto the floor met with wild applause, he hardly looked phased. He broke right into "Best Thing that Never Happened," and all was forgiven.

"Sorry to make you wait so long," were Westerberg's first words to his crowd that night. The prior evening, 600 miles away on a runway in Detroit, Westerberg sat for eight hours while mechanics scratched their heads and attempted to find out what, exactly, had caused his plane's radar system to fail. Ironically, even after they'd taken off

and were headed into New York near two a.m. Monday morning, they still didn't make it.

"Finally, when we were about to land—and I've never heard these words come out of a pilot's mouth—we hear, 'We don't have enough gas left.'" Westerberg lets out a roar of laughter, recalling the incident he sarcastically refers to as the highlight of his tour. "We don't have enough gas?! So, we landed in Newark. I just felt bad that people were waiting (that night). Hopefully somebody spread the word that I wasn't going to be there in enough time that people weren't standing in the rain."

But of course, they were anyway. Westerberg's fans are the types who would stand in the rain to wait to see him just so they could contract a cold as proof of their devotion.

In the long run, it was worth it. Occasionally glancing at a messy, torn spiral-bound notebook of lyrics and tabs and "nursery rhymes and shit" scrawled so illegibly even his guitar tech didn't know which side was up, Westerberg plowed through a full hour of songs from his new double album, *Mono/Stereo*, and sprinkled everything from "Waiting for Somebody" to "Alex Chilton" in between. He forgot lyrics and said "fuck it" as fans egged him on, singing with him, singing for him. He spit into the microphone on more than one occasion. And smack during the middle of "Got You Down," a slow, sweet ballad from the *Stereo* half of the album, Westerberg's strap slipped from the body of his guitar causing an awkward, dissonant slide down the wrong side

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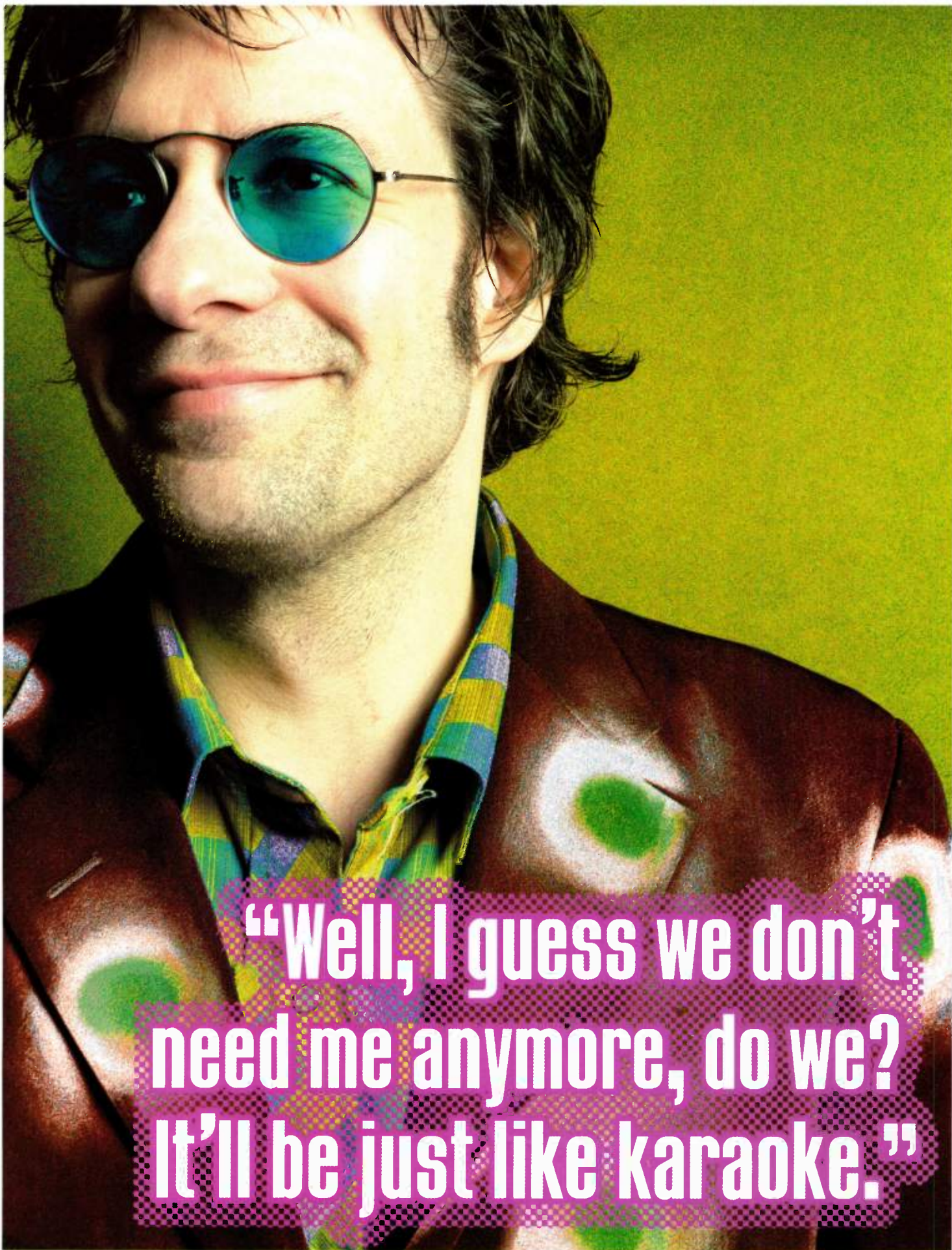
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**“Well, I guess we don’t  
need me anymore, do we?  
It’ll be just like karaoke.”**

of a beautiful chord as he fumbled to catch it on its way to the floor. The crowd gasped, embarrassed for him. The singer stopped, halted his lyrics mid-sentence and smiled, not saying a word, re-strapped the guitar, took a deep breath, and picked up right where he left off, and a glorious, dumbfounded cheer went up from the crowd. "That's Paul Westerberg, alright," some were saying. "That bastard's one hell of a performer."

"I did have a good time," Westerberg admits of the tour a week later, back home in Minneapolis. "I had a good time—even though I was in shambles half the time, afraid that I was going to be brutalized. But I knew that I was pretty much in the company of friends. The fans were starting to get it by the time I got to Chicago. They were showing up with lyric sheets. Now all someone else has to do is yell out the chords, and we'll have it made."

He chuckles, before smiling and adding, "It all comes full-circle, eventually. Well, I guess we don't need me anymore, do we? It'll be just like karaoke."

The truth is, Westerberg wants to remember so much. Caught up sweeping the dust off old lyrics from one song, as soon as someone else calls out another, he's spun around again, wanting to recall everything at once and taking requests for songs he's long forgotten just so he can play them once more. The fact he's the one who's manipulating the performance is what he gets a kick out of. Sure, he was in a great band 15 years ago, but these days he'd rather be in control of his own songs, his own tour. And now, furnished with a full-fledged recording facility in his basement and the managerial power to tour with three guitars instead of a three-piece band, he's proven he's his own boss.

When asked if he's gotten used to the idea of being a solo artist versus leading a band, Westerberg seems confident about his situation.

"It makes no difference," he says. "Making a record now, I can make any style of music I want—the kind I used to make, or the kind that is on *Stereo*, or the kind you've never really heard yet."

As for the chemistry of a gradual, communal songwriting process and jamming with a full band, Westerberg says this is what he misses least. Noting the rarity with which The Replacements jammed together in an open-ended frame of mind, Westerberg admits he hates teaching people songs, noting, "I hate not playing the music full-throttled. I like to perform, but I don't like to jam."

For the new record, almost as if to drive home his adamant opposition to ever play in a band again, Westerberg disguised himself—but only in a half-assed attempt—as Grandpa Boy, a rock minded cousin to the solo acoustic efforts recorded under his own name. Material for *Mono/Stereo* was split accordingly—the straight-ahead, Fender-fed rock songs akin to *Don't Tell a Soul*-era 'Mats appear under Grandpa Boy on the *Mono* record, while *Stereo*

is a clean, crisp collection of acoustic ballads and well-honed lyrical storytelling. As he states in plain language on the liner notes, Grandpa Boy's *Mono* "is rock 'n roll recorded poorly, played in a hurry," and under Westerberg's given name, *Stereo* is a collection of songs "cut mostly live in the middle of the night" with no effort made "to fix what some may deem as mistakes." Together, they are the yin and yang of his current status as a songwriter. The songs are raw diary entries of his past two years, written in three-minute increments. And there are character flaws and technical mishaps, and he doesn't mind one bit.

"I don't see me quitting this," Westerberg says of his fondness for DIY basement recordings. "I mean, if I was ultra-rich, I might. I simply recorded these songs out of boredom, if nothing else, just to entertain myself, just to make my own music, because I'd look through my collection, I'd turn on the radio and not hear what I wanted to hear. I wanted to go down to my basement and make it myself."

The former Replacement frontman goes on to explain how several times during the recording of the double-CD album, he found himself left with a little bit of tape on a reel, left to guess the remaining time. Westerberg plowed ahead, sincere, if not clumsy, approaching these bits of tape as opportunities for quick, three-minute post scripts.

"I think three distinct times, the tape ran

out on the songs because I tried to put something good at the ends of it," he laughs. "I left 'em on there. There's nothing hi-tech about what I was doing."

*Mono/Stereo* is Westerberg in the present tense. It encapsulates his ability to invent himself as not just a singer, but a bassist, percussionist, "superfluous" lead guitarist and background vocalist simultaneously. It gives him the backdrop on which to tell the story of his adolescence with a mature voice, recounting days of getting drunk after church at 13, on through his haphazard 20s spent drinking and smoking with the Replacements, on into his 30s, when he finally stepped into the foreground to record his own songs. Only now, at 42, has he really come into his own, slipping into adulthood simultaneously with fatherhood, even leaving traces of his son's voice to be heard at the end of a track or two—evidence of both his home-grown aesthetic and his devil-may-care attitude toward the cleanliness of his production. Besides, retakes are taboo.

"I'm a believer in fate," Westerberg says. "Just like the tape runs out—I figure, you're done. Or I can't find the lyrics that I wrote, so I'll make up some different ones, and then I'll find the lyrics, and then it's like, 'Should I go back and change 'em?'" Nah. I'm kind of superstitious, almost to a ridiculous extent. But it's great. Superstition is right... for baseball, and rock 'n roll alike." ■

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# The Sidelined Side Project

HOW NO USE FOR A NAME TURNED BASEMENT TAPES AND DIVERGENT PLANS INTO *HARD ROCK BOTTOM*.

by John Vettese

**N**ot too long ago, Tony Sly thought about taking a short respite from his singer/guitarist duties in No Use for a Name to pursue a side project. He didn't think too long, though. Once his cohorts in the seminal Southern California skate-punk band got an earful of the infectious tunes Sly was coming up with on his basement four-track, they grew impetuously motivated to work on a new record.

"The side project got kind of sidelined," Sly says. "I didn't even have anybody in mind who I'd want to work on it with yet, I hadn't gotten that far into it. It was just like put some stuff on tape, put it out there, see what happens."

Fortunately, there was no shortage of material for him to utilize when he embarked on the brief venture back in early 2001. With 15 years experience as No Use's chief songwriter, Sly spends a good deal of time composing music without really being sure where (if anywhere) it is going to end up. Sly describes his songwriting style as open-ended, without ever being married to a single, specific destination.

So when the time came, Sly simply picked up some of the songs he'd been kicking around and committed them to tape on a four-track. He describes it as mostly being straightforward acoustic-guitar-and-vocal renditions, with some cuts containing bass and lead guitar overdubs.

"First, I thought that if I'm going to have a side project, I probably shouldn't sing," he remembers. "And then I noticed that the songs I came up with sounded a lot like No Use for a Name. What's the point of doing a side project if its just gonna sound the same as your band?"

Ironically, the band wound up being the key factor grounding Sly's solo endeavor. To start, Sly's friendship with and loyalty to the other members of No Use—Matt Riddle (bass), Dave Nasie (guitar) and Rory Koff (drums)—made him question the wisdom of branching out on his own. More importantly, it had been almost two years since the band got back from the road in support of its last proper full-length, 1999's *More Betterness*, with only a live album (2001's blazing *Live In A Dive*) and scattered gigs to hold them over in between. The band was itching to work on some new material. Sly's basement tape gave No Use the kick it needed.

Upon hearing his solo tapes, Sly's bandmates were quickly reinvigorated, resolving to immediately begin working on a new album. With the renewed momentum in NUFAN, Sly says he was more than happy to leave his side project in the dust.

Thus, No Use set to work on *Hard Rock Bottom*, pulling songs from Sly's tape and fleshing them out. The breakup-ballad first single, "Dumb Reminders," has a fair heaping of pep, while the anthemic "International You Day" gets driven into overdrive thanks to fierce, electronic-sounding hi-hat beats by Koff. Meanwhile, "Any Number Can Play" is supplemented by an organ line oddly reminiscent of The Specials.

To ease the transition from solo compositions to No Use material, the band teamed up once again with Ryan Greene, the West Coast production guru (NOFX, J Church, Propagandi), who has recorded every No Use full-length since 1995's *Leche Con Carne*. Hitting up Greene's Motor Studios in San Francisco, the band began by tracking a full set of demos, then going through an arduous process of rewrites before recording the final product.

"The whole thing took about two months," Sly chuckles. "That's a ridiculous amount of time to be working on a punk record."

Nevertheless, the result of all the tribulation could be the most refined album No Use for a Name has released to date. *Hard Rock Bottom*'s 13 cuts are loose and poppy, yet tight and driving, though Sly tends to look to the latter.

"The new record is a little faster, a little harder, a little more vicious," he says. "We did so much touring after *More Betterness*, everybody just got better at their instruments. Musically, it's more complex than we've ever been." ▶▶

**N**ot to be buried in the complexity is the album's softer side. The minute-long opener "Feels Like Home" just features Sly, a tender melody and a clean electric guitar plucking out gentle arpeggios. A violin-and-cello duo opens the first 10 seconds of "Pre-Medicated Murder" before meeting up with a brutal drumbeat. And even though the bulk of the record is vigorous as all hell, vocal harmonies have adopted more of a delicate emo tone, as heard on "Friends of the Enemy."

Sly cites an affection for The Get Up Kids and Alkaline Trio, but doesn't see *Hard Rock Bottom* as following any trend.

"When I sit down and read the lyrics, I think of *More Betterness* as being more of a personal, emotional record," he says. "The songs on *Hard Rock Bottom* might give off the appearance of being that way, but really none of the songs are about my life."

The new album is the first to feature new lead guitarist Dave Nassie, formerly of Suicidal Tendencies and Infectious Grooves. Nassie joined the group in mid-1999 when former axe-slinger Chris Shifflet left to join the Foo Fighters. Lineup changes are nothing new to the band. Shifflet had, in turn, replaced Chris Dodge, who departed in 1995 after *Leche Con Carne*. Riddle joined at the same time to replace original bassist Steve Papoutsis, leaving Sly and Koff as the only veteran members who have been with No Use from the start.



**"The whole thing took about two months," Sly chuckles. "That's a ridiculous amount of time to be working on a punk record."**

Sly remains optimistic. While he admits lineup changes have made their impression on their band, he feels it's all been for the best. He describes Nassie as a great musician and seems pleased with the metal sensibility the new guitarist has brought to the band.

For proof, audiences need look no further than the rip-roaring '80s guitar solo in the midst of the cutesy-pop of "Angela."

"His favorite band is Van Halen or something crazy like that," Sly laughs.

One of the album's starkest surprises, however, appears in a decidedly non-metal moment, with Sly singing a duet with Karina Denike on No Use's rendition of Sinead O'Conner's "This is a Rebel Song"—invoking a similar quality to The Pogues' classic "Fairytale of New York," which features Shane MacGowan and the late Kirsty MacColl.

Despite a firm appreciation of all genres of music, Sly doesn't look too fondly upon the turn the industry has taken in recent years, both in the punk world and in general.

"When Blink-182 came out, the major labels wanted to find six more of them," he says. "So you get a lot of young bands who just go for broke, cash in. Then, the labels ruin them when they don't hit it big." He is equally unhappy with the seemingly incessant parade of prefab rap-metal bands, questioning how much of it will actually stand the test of time.

"People aren't going to look back in 20 years and say, 'that Limp Bizkit record is so nostalgic,'" he smirks.

This frustrated view can be seen in *Hard Rock Bottom*'s album cover. Sly says the band initially set out to create a goofy-looking image. What appears on the album is a wiry-haired homeless man in front of a liquor store, holding a guitar in the midst of a punk rock jump. Little aspects and details, spied upon closer inspection, offer more in the image, however. Loose change in the character's guitar case come to mirror the state of the economy, while the back cover's shot of the same guy rocking the sidewalk with arms outstretched to an absent crowd references the band's cynicism towards the music industry today.

Gripes aside, No Use is anything but an uptight band.

Upon completing *Hard Rock Bottom*, the band spent some time relaxing in San Jose, taking over Pamona's Glass House for a free concert. Footage from the event gradually evolved into a video for "Dumb Reminders," helping the band and fans gear up for this summer's Warped Tour, which the band will be playing from start to finish.

As the summer hype descends on 2002, it seems there is little time for side projects for the members of No Use for a Name.

Sly confesses he still occasionally tracks a solo song here and there for his own enjoyment, while Massy jams in Huntington Beach blues bars when he gets the chance.

Riddle and Koff don't do too much in this department, however, Sly explains with a hearty chortle.

"I don't know what their deal is," Sly says. "I think their side project is playing video games." ■



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AND MORE....

# GOING UNDERGROUND

You Can't Fight  
Girls Against Boys

By Alyson Mead



**W**hen Girls Against Boys frontman Scott McCloud rasps “I won’t listen to reason/I won’t listen to you /Cause in the context/Everywhere cool is nothing new/You’re five ways to nothing new,” he could be talking about anything from the decidedly sterile climate of pop music today to the band’s brush with major label greatness.

Signed to Geffen in 1996, GVSB released its last record, *Freak\*On\*Ica*, to wide critical praise and constant touring. The disk’s harder-than-hard but difficult to categorize sound encompassed everything from the thumping rhythms of techno to the dirty-rock grind of its Washington, D.C., hardcore roots and revealed equally strong songwriting talents. Its hard-earned, sexy boy image continued to throb in hearts across the globe. All was good.

And then fate spoke.

Like many artists, Girls Against Boys was directly affected by the merger of Interscope and Geffen in 1998. What had looked like a natural progression—after selling ever-more numerous albums on indie labels Touch And Go and Adult Swim, and penning songs for movie soundtracks left and right (among them *Clerks*, *Mallrats*, *Permanent Midnight*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*)—started to appear distanced and weird. Drummer Alexis Fleisig jokes about the band’s union with the newly merged company not lasting too long.

“Actually, it was pretty long, it just wasn’t that fruitful,” he laughs. “We had been gaining momentum with each record, and for a while, it felt fun to be involved in some bigger thing that was just steamrolling along. But at the same time, it’s out of control. You’re working with people you don’t even know, and

you don’t know if they even are working because everyone’s afraid of losing their jobs and being related to anything that could be seen as a failure.”

Although Geffen managed to hold onto the band’s contract throughout the chaotic climate of the merger, GVSB was no longer happy not knowing who it was recording for and what type of support it could expect from its new creative home. After some assorted legal wrangling, the band got out of its contract about two years ago and went about the daunting (to other people, perhaps) task of finding another label.

“The whole Geffen thing turned into a pretty draining experience,” says Fleisig. “It affects everything. One minute you’re feeling really confident and strong, and the people around you are friendly and supportive. And then you’re in a situation where you don’t know anyone, and it’s a hard place to be in when you weren’t originally concerned with being commercially successful in the first place. The tide just shifts around you.”

The band alternates between philosophical and delusional when it chalks up the experience to part of being in a rock band. What would have wrecked careers or lifelong friendships only strengthened the resolve of GVSB. Realizing it would have a stronger group of people behind it at an indie, the band sucked it up and went label shopping.

*You Can’t Fight What You Can’t See* is Girls Against Boys’ return to the familiar territory of indiedom, released on Delaware’s prolific Jade Tree label (*Jets to Brazil*, *Pedro the Lion*, *Milemarker*, *Denali*, *Trial By Fire*). Having worked with some of the larger independent bands out there, Jade Tree is equipped to deal with a band boasting its own built-in (and relatively rabid)



fan base and the capability to sell the hell out of its newest release.

"Once we got out of the Geffen contract, we had offers from a variety of labels large and small," says bassist Johnny Temple. "After finally wrestling our career back from the suits at Geffen/Universal/Vivendi/Who-Owns-Them-This-Week, we are thrilled to be with Jade Tree."

Fleisig couldn't concur more.

"We looked around and were trying to reassess how we felt about stuff. Signing to another major label just felt like the same thing again, and Jade Tree was really interested and excited. Plus, we're getting older, and feeling that you can do no wrong gets a little world-weary after a while."

One might think with all those problems looming large in life, writing music would be the furthest thing from the band members' minds, but GVSB found itself in the enviable position of having tons of new songs to choose from when it compiled its new record.

*You Can't Fight What You Can't See* reflects the desire to control its own musical destiny and comes as a result of many years spent playing together, refining its sound. But rather than work a song to death, GVSB kept it real. These tracks stutter and spew, ending on a dime or launching into another sonic direction with nothing but a hooky guitar riff or a rhythmic shift to carry you along. The DIY aesthetic dies slowly, if at all, and only after numerous curmudgeonly years spent shaking its fist at comers, whippersnappers and wannabees.

"We had a lot of new songs, so we were able to pick the best 11, and that's a nice little luxury to have," explains Fleisig. "We also spent less time in the studio because we had a more limited budget. On the last record we massaged some of the songs a little too much, and in a way we might have overthought it a tiny bit. This time it was faster, and we focused more of the performances instead of the final tweaking."

Also adding to the multi-level soundscape is producer Ted Nicely, who worked with the band on its previous three records and brings a huge, arena-type sound to the fuzzy and intricate inner workings of GVSB. It seems he alone, besides the guys in the band, understands what's maddening and attractive about this outfit and where the band is at this point in its career, when it can be slick and cute and smart-ass and deep and rock the hell out of your ears while still being sensitive and thoughtful on a planet screwed beyond repair. How he does it is anyone's guess, but he does, and he should be heralded, if only for helping GVSB realize its potential.

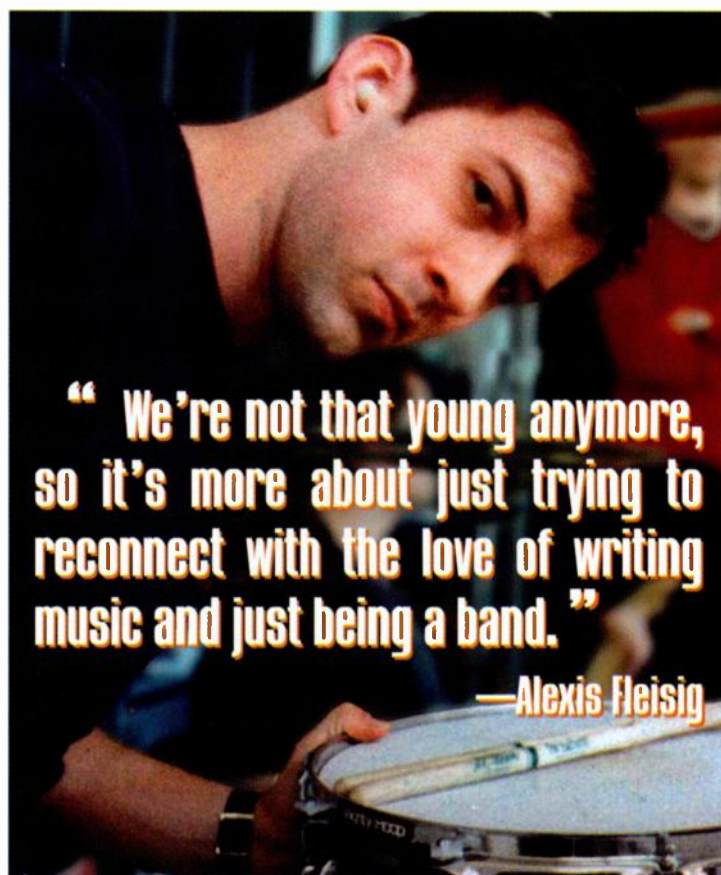
Fleisig says the band has no one way of finding the elusive creative voice, sometimes writing five songs one week or taking a month to finish a single tune. The band members get together and jam on a regular basis, hoping the bad-ass threads will come together and make something pretty or ugly or just not sucky. The same secret ingredient responsible for binding these guys together for 20-odd years of music making in various bands is the same thing helping them blend the steel-shredding guitar attack of Big Black (to say nothing of the calculated crunch of McCloud's Soulside past) with techno and vague stirrings of funk and hip hop. While you'll never find Girls Against Boys in the urban section of your local record store (it's not trying to prove its hipness to anyone, thank you very much), elements from all kinds of music are woven so tightly you can't even imagine the guys separate from one another.

"The songs come from a variety of mental places," says Fleisig. "We're not that young anymore, so it's more about just trying to reconnect with the love of writing music and just being a band."

Its last record had GVSB breaking into twos and giving songs to the other half to modify. This resulted mainly in partially disjointed tunes without a discernible center. For *You Can't Fight...*, the band stuck strictly to a collective writing process. While this kept things moving at a faster pace, Fleisig laughs when it's suggested perhaps GVSB might soon rival industrious writers like Weezer in turning out new material.

"We'll never be as prolific as those guys," he chuckles. "But you know what I noticed? Weezer and The White Stripes have two-minute songs. Maybe that's why they write more of them. For us, it depends on our moods and how much sleep we've gotten."

*You Can't Fight What You Can't See* opens with the catchy "Basstation," (bearing a title and groove reminiscent of the more bare-



**"We're not that young anymore, so it's more about just trying to reconnect with the love of writing music and just being a band."**

**—Alexis Fleisig**

bones "Bass" from Temple's Soulside time) marking an auspicious beginning for a record so damn pumped about its rhythm section. With the album's opener, accelerated guitars move in circular patterns and the drums lag lazily, a half beat behind.

Truly, drummer Fleisig and bassist Johnny Temple (also known as the band's nonstop reader and proprietor of Akashic Books) anchor Girls Against Boys to the floor and provide guitarist McCloud and keyboardist Eli Janney a firm canvas upon which to splat bursts of texture here and there. The low end of the bass' reach and the matching range of Fleisig's drums pound chests while the guitars and keyboards flutter about in heads. Listening to *You Can't Fight What You Can't See* on headphones is like hearing your skull split open and your thoughts spill over the floor—but not in a Pushead sort of way.

"Tweaker" opens with McCloud intoning "Amazing/Sensational" in a dry-ass monotone, disbelieving his words even as they leave his mouth, then breaks apart with snarling balls of guitar. "Miami Skyline" is a nightmare journey out the window of any journey gone wrong. Sung in a bored, Thurston-Moore inspired drawl, the song skirts this close pop sensibility, while still maintaining McCloud's penchant for painting the most perfect love songs into the darkest corners.

In light of the similarities between the dark, bass-heavy music of late-'80s indie and the rave-inspired music of today, Fleisig is quick to point out his band's diverse range of influences. Temple is an avid fan of hip hop and reggae, while Janney spins as a deep house, club DJ fairly consistently. McCloud and Fleisig, meanwhile, are the resident rockers, focusing on current peers like The Pattern and Trail of Dead.

Lately, Fleisig says, he and his rock-oriented partner have been finding a lot of fuel in the bands GVSB has played with throughout the past year. Peers such as Super Furry Animals and Yeah Yeah Yeahs bask in the drummer's Hell Yes list.

"They might not sound that new, but they have a perspective that's new," he reflects, before stopping abruptly, perhaps wondering if he hasn't caught himself in a bit of a web. "But then again, was it really new if there's no one there to hear it? I don't know."

He laughs as if he's realized the world's oldest question has no answer. ■

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# SELBY TIGERS

## The Curse of the Selby Tigers



It's not surprising St. Paul, Minn.'s *Star Wars* rockers Selby Tigers have opened for Moldy Peaches, since they seem like the closest contemporary to the Tigers' maniacal boy/girl shouting matches. While Moldy Peaches might put off some listeners with their crazy, lewd lyrics and over-the-top, bunny-suited stage shows, Selby Tigers are not only out of control and destructive but relentlessly catchy and impossible to ignore. Not a band to be nailed down by genre, the Tigers frantically invoke new wave, surf rock, Huggycat, the X-Ray Spex and Gang of Four in their dual guitar, musical socio-political warfare. Arzu D2's off-kilter, '50s slow dance finishes the album with something brilliant and truly worth hearing. It's as if this band has brought Poly Styrene and Lora Logic back from Hare Krishna retirement. Really, the band's name says it all—part nod to the members' Selby Avenue home, part high-school team mascot, part rebel army—it's a philosophical moniker demanding cheerleading and teenage rabble-rousing. Just when it seemed as though the mainstream had taken full ownership of punk rock, the ruckus begins again. (Hopeless, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409)

—Charles Spano

### track listing

01. Dolph Indicator
02. Cheerleading is Big Business
03. Down in Uppertown
04. L5S1
05. The Littlest One
06. You're Off the Project
07. (Is This) The Boulevard?
08. Tell it to the Judge
09. Neighbor With a Defect
10. Snoball
11. Superbreakout!
12. Punch Me in the Face (With Your Lips)
13. The Prom I Never Had

**For Fans Of:** International Noise Conspiracy, Knives Out, Tilt

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

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Hot Rod Circuit  
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 High On Fire Caitlin Cary  
**Flaming Lips**  
 Whippersnapper  
**Mary Timony**  
**Beth Orton**  
 Jim & Jennie & The Pinetops  
**David Cross**  
 Selby Tigers  
 Death By Chocolate



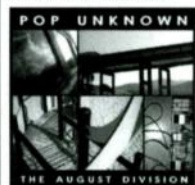
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## ADAM WEST

### Right On



Why would someone request to be bludgeoned? The title of the opening track to *Right On* seems a baffling favor to ask of someone, though the song itself is something to which anyone could relate. As many of the other tracks on the album, "Bludgeon Me" pulses with energy and pizzazz. *Right On* is one seamless, hyperactive party-rock disc served with a redneck edge. The vocals are delivered with ample rasp from a throat fit for the blues, helping to define the new band. This album plays like a rowdy night at a local bar, complete with brawls and shot contests. (Fandango, 3403 Mt. Pleasant St. NW, Washington DC 20010)

—Liana Jonas

## ALL THE DEAD PILOTS Easily Lost in the Present



With less than a year's experience to its name, All the Dead Pilots has clearly outgrown its modest Baltimore roots. As evidenced on its promising debut, *Easily Lost in the Present*, intelligent indie guitar rock still has a place outside of 1997. At first listen, tracks like "Holds Me" unfold with an assured chime, not unlike Creeper Lagoon. But the level of complexity builds when All the Dead Pilots dabbles in unconventional time signatures as on the tricky drum loop of "Constantly Keep." The record dips in a few places, especially during bumbling down-tempo numbers like "Sapling," dampening the rest of the album's energy. But the band plows ahead, even creeping south into Dischord territory with some shouted vocals, hardcore breaks and a very Joe Lally bassline. (Ambiguous City, P.O. Box 31560, Baltimore 21207)

—Chris Fritz

## AVOID ONE THING Avoid One Thing



There is no ska music in sight on the debut from Avoid One Thing. Led by bassist Joe Gittleman of the Mighty Mighty Bosstones and including drummer Dave Karcich of Spring Heeled Jack (the ska band, not the electronic outfit), Avoid One Thing instead opts for melodic punk leaning towards the crisp rock side of the Bosstones—not entirely fresh, but at least it has some

catchy hooks. From the pogo opener, "Yakisoba," to the 7 Seconds-style back-up vocals on "Bomb-Building Songs," Avoid One Thing embraces a positive hardcore vibe looking back about a decade. Not exactly retro or nostalgic, the album does manage to convey a genuine feel-good groove without pushing it into the bratty goofiness of the MTV punk crowd. (Side One Dummy, 6201 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood 90028)

—Charles Spano

## THE BEVIS FROND Triptych



Nick Salomon was born a few decades too late. The sole force behind British neo-psychedelia outfit The Bevis Frond, Salomon would be a perfect fit for the early-'70s scene, nestled comfortably between T. Rex and a fledgling Queen. *Triptych*, the Frond's third album, was originally released in 1988 on Salomon's Woronzow label. Now receiving the official archival treatment, the record comes complete with bonus tracks and comprehensive liner notes. Album opener "Into the Cryptic Mist" sets the Pink Floyd freakout tone nicely with overindulgent keyboard and guitar solos around every turn. But Salomon can also craft a decent pop song on his four-track basement equipment. "Lights are Changing" is one such example, as it recalls "Trust"-era Elvis Costello. "Nowhere Fast" is also a welcome psych departure bordering on punk. Many of the previously unreleased archival tracks aren't necessary, but with a maddening back catalog to rival Bob Pollard, Salomon needs to do something with all his tape. (Rubric, 75 Leonard St., New York 10013)

—Christopher Fritz

## JELLO BIAFRA The Big Ka-Boom Part One (Spoken Word Album #6.5)



It's hard to review a Jello Biafra spoken-word album without simply recounting the subject matter. As on his other releases in this series, Biafra's commentary is smart, funny and extremely necessary, particularly in the current climate. Here he wraps his high-pitched, sarcastic tones around the war on terrorism—sometimes stating the obvious, at other times shedding light on truths which should be obvious (and would be, if not for the blind obedience the populace and the

media has shown the current administration since the events of Sept. 11). To paraphrase a quote on one of the early Alternative Tentacles compilations, "If irony is dead, then what the hell is this?" (**Alternative Tentacles, P.O. Box 419092, San Francisco 94141-9092**)

—Mark Ginsburg

### BLACK LABEL SOCIETY

1919 Eternal



Ozzy Osbourne's guitarist, Zakk Wylde, is back with another collection of raw, heavy rock dirges. Yes, while Mr. Wylde is back in Ozzy's solo band, he still manages to find time for his solo project, Black Label Society. On *1919 Eternal*, the fourth release from Black Label Society, Wylde is further exploring the sound he leaned towards on previous BLS releases. Dirty, distorted and detuned guitars infiltrate much of the album's material, paired well with Wylde's resonant, testosterone-heavy vocals—not to mention his usually brilliant, expressive guitar solos. Above all, Wylde's focus is on the songwriting, which is palatable enough to attract many a fan of heavy music. Another fine release from

this enduring rock icon. (**Spitfire, 101 Bay Ave., Hicksville, NY 11801**)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

### BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL The Scavenger Bride



The entity known as Black Tape for a Blue Girl has a fascination with some of the more subtle approaches to songwriting. If new age could be blended with Goth's darker leanings, the result might sound like *The Scavenger Bride*. Hauntingly quiet, soothing and ethereal, the music could serve as the movie soundtrack to a romantic drama. There is an enchanting calmness throughout much of the material, and yet the mood often leans towards a passionate melancholy. *The Scavenger Bride* is the perfect music for introspective relaxation, or perhaps a quiet, romantic evening for two. No home should be without this disc. (**Projekt, Box 9140, Long Island City, NY 11103**)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

### BRANDO

Single Crown Postcard



Brando's vocalist Derek Richey bears

an immediate resemblance to Flaming Lips mastermind Wayne Coyne, and the swirling synths unearthed on *Single Crown Postcard* do little to dispel the notion the band is a cheap Lips knock-off. The meandering guitar lines of "Judy Garland" recall those of admitted Brando influences like Sebadoh, but unfortunately go nowhere. The canned keyboards of "Driving to My Desert" and the tinny drum machine loops are glaringly obvious and amateurish. "Carbon Copies" offers a nice enough oscillating synth line, but just doesn't pass as terribly original. Brando fares better when incorporating electronics into the mix ("Two Years") instead of the guitar-heavy tricks it normally turns ("Paul Revere"). (**Luna, 1521 W. 86th St., Indianapolis, IN 46260**)

—Christopher Fritz

### THE BUSINESS

Hell 2 Pay



On this three-song EP, The Business does what The Business has done for more than 20 years. A touch of cockney punk, a sprinkle of Judas Priest, goofy gangster lyrics and—vóila—here's another Business release. Street

punk kids love this band, so they will probably love *Hell 2 Pay*. For everyone else, there's a neat cover of the cool Eddie and the Hotrods tune "Do Anything You Wanna Do". Damn, it's so close to the original it might even be called reverent. (**TKO, 3126 W. Cary St. #303, Richmond, VA 23221**)


—Mark Ginsburg

### CANNIBAL CORPSE

Gore Obsessed




Cannibal Corpse returns with another album, which can mean only one thing—the airwaves aren't safe anymore. Those familiar with the band will get to hear more of its trademark calling card—loud, angry, aggressive, bone-crunching extreme metal. If the music doesn't scare away the average non-metal fan, the disturbing, graphic cover art to *Gore Obsessed* certainly will. Like so many other extreme metal albums, the songs on it become indistinguishable from each other, and the album ends up sounding like one continuous blur. One really has to be a die-hard fan of this style in order to appreciate *Gore Obsessed*. Then again, at least Cannibal Corpse is consistent in delivering what its




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**POISON THE WELL**  
Tear From the Red

Staunch scenesters already recognize every new band sounds just a little bit like Dillinger Escape Plan, Shai Hulud, Converge or Poison the Well these days. It's been said imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so Florida's PTW is undoubtedly feeling the love. The band's 1999 album, *The Opposite of December: A Season of Separation*, was a textbook case of piping hot, moshpit-friendly metalcore breakdowns, punctuated by so-pretty-they-hurt melodic parts. Some argue the album set the bar for a particular style of hardcore. With *Tear From the Red*, PTW has raised the same bar. The breakdowns are sure to incite circlepits from Boston to Los Angeles, while frontman Jeff Morreira tests out his singing voice with bitter, venom-laden lyrics. ("Cursed with never being seen in your dreams/I'll walk around dead to you" is quite the kiss-off.) PTW also tries its hand at an Incubus style of rock with the acoustic "Moments Over Exaggerate" and "Pieces of You in Me." (Trustkill, 157 Spoonbill Court, Jupiter, FL 33458)

—Amy Sciarretto

fans expect. (Metal Blade, 282 Cochran St., BMP 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065-2793)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

**CAPITOL CITY DUSTERS**

Rock Creek



The Capitol City Dusters have one thing on their mind—summer jams. Granted, their newest release, *Rock Creek*, comes with snippets of the typical Dischord sound glutting the label's rock cache since the powers that be decided, "well, you needn't yell." But mostly, the Dusters have produced a record sure to push any listener into actively pursuing Molly Ringwald while still desperately trying to maintain a rocky friendship with James Spader (and before prom no less!). In this barely-visited vein of not-punk, not-rock, just-look-at-my-hairdo music, *Rock Creek* packs enough hokey and flippant hooks to mix perfectly with sand in your shoes and Italian ices. If the music doesn't win you over immediately, then the lyrics will definitely win you the Pantera sticker at the ring toss. The absolutely ridiculous content of said lyrics and their awkward delivery will

have your cheeks so red with embarrassment you might want to try a higher SPF. But are you embarrassed for the band, or embarrassed you are singing along? It's really hard to care when it's summertime and the only concern you have is deciding whether or not to attend Freaknic this year. So, sing along to "This is the Story of Revolution," and sing it loud: "He's dressed just like a revolutionary/but he's singing like a yellooooooow macaw." Just make sure you do it before Labor Day. (Dischord, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007)

—Don Malkemes

**CAITLIN CARY**

While You Weren't Looking



Like George Harrison, who shocked the music world when he upended his more colorful mates on the subtle masterpiece *All Things Must Pass*, former Whiskeytown quiet one Caitlin Cary steals thunder aplenty from wunderkid Ryan Adams via an engagingly romantic collection of Americana pop on her debut. Produced by Chris Stamey, Cary throws a knockout punch during the first few measures of the opening cut, "Shallow Heart,



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Shallow Water," melding heartache and jangle pop. Akin to early 1970s songbirds Christine McVie, Linda Thompson and Sandy Denny, Cary's soulful delivery belies her young age. Bolstered by a little help from old band members Adams (duet on "The Battle"), Mike Daly, Skillet Gilmore and Mike Santoro, along with former Jayhawk Jen Gunderman and Chip Robinson of Backslider ("Keys To The Fair"), Cary's star-studded affair should establish her alongside Lucinda Williams, Neko Case, and Cowboy Junkie Margo Timmins as contemporary roots rock royalty. (Yep Roc, P.O. Box 4821, Chapel Hill, NC 27515)

— Tom Semoli

#### CHOMSKY

##### Onward Quirky Soldiers



Geeks unite! In between a rousing game of Dungeons and Dragons and reruns on the Sci-Fi Channel, pop in Chomsky's disc and listen to the sound of five nerds rocking intelligent new wave emo pop. The space choir interlude to album opener, "Straight Razor," gives way to 11 nifty tracks following the less-familiar geek-rock path through neighbor-

hoods closer to The Get Up Kids than Weezer. This is fun, feel-good, keyboard-driven rock full of classic lines like "Hey neighbor, can you give me the time?/It always feels like it's rock-thirty in my mind." Sean Halek's vocals are solid and emotional without being sappy, occasionally reminiscent of Elvis Costello. The prog-rock keyboards are so lame they're absolutely perfect in each of these songs. *Onward Quirky Soldiers* is a quality album made to piss off tough guys and keep the skinny kids in thick glasses bouncing. (Idol, P.O. Box 720043, Dallas, TX 75372)

—Zach Needles

#### CONCRETE BLONDE

##### Group Therapy



Listeners won't know what to make of the first twangy notes resonating from Concrete Blonde's album opener. Do you fast forward or give it a shot? Opting for the latter, mid-song I still can't decide whether this disc is going anywhere. It's kind of like amateur night at the Apollo, where some contestants are cheered while others are assaulted by Sandman the Clown. "Roxy" is a mid-tempo, dreamy retro-

**SEAFOOD**  
When Do We Start Fighting

Music is perhaps Britain's greatest export, with a "next Radiohead" touted every six and a half minutes. Sadly, few deliver on the promise, and a slew of middling bands are sent packing back to their island home. One new tryout in the contingency is indie outfit Seafood, formed back in 1996 (and you can tell). With crunchy guitar lines and a propulsive rhythm section, Seafood keeps its five-year-old delivery fresh with a healthy dose of ability. The clearly Brit, almost Jarvis Cocker-like delivery of vocalist David Line is offset by Caroline Banks' backing vocals. "Cloaking" is a familiar-sounding framework with walls of guitar pouring dutifully from Marshall stacks. "Similar Assassins" shows Seafood can do the down-tempo thing as well, as it is the most single-worthy of all the tracks and features a simple guitar line Rivers Cuomo would envy. (Nettwerk America, 8730 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, 90211)

—Christopher Fritz

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Christiansen are the latest haul from the Lemoine scene turning heads. With their strong melodies, hardcore intensity and pop sensibility they chart unexplored territory by fusing together the passion of Fuuzzi, energy of Thursday and messianism of At The Drive-In for a refreshing howl.



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esque affair—adequate, but uninspired. “Violent,” fittingly, packs a bit more punch, maintains the retro vibe and sounds somewhat like The Alarm in its guitar work. The tastiest highlight is the Latin-inspired lounge number “Your Llorona.” The track oozes and swims with oh-so-blue vocals. Those who are already fans of Concrete Blonde should pick up *Group Therapy* to maintain the collection. Outsiders, however, would do best to realize this is not the band’s strongest foot forward. The disc is bland and lacks anything catchy, drifting from song to song without any general cohesion. By the end, you’re still sort of left wondering what it was you were listening to for the past hour. (Manifesto, 740 North La Brea Ave., Second Floor, Los Angeles 90038-3339)

—Liana Jonas

#### THE DETACHMENT KIT

The Raging, Quiet Army



Despite its somewhat patrician and serendipitous origins (band meets in art school, moves to Chicago, records first album at Electrical Audio, etc.), The Detachment Kit is more than just a bunch of spoiled, snotty kids. Sure

they’re that too, but with one cardinal difference—these Richie Rich’s can make with the rock. *TRQA*, the debut album mentioned, has all the post-punk amenities, from the stop-and-gulp shredding to the shuddering rhythm section. The singer even boasts one of those peculiar indie-rock accents, equal parts Colonel Sanders and Mark E. Smith. And though the Kit sticks too close to its influences at times (Les Savy Fav and The Pixies, most noticeably), there’s enough innovative syntax and sharp timing here to insure future output will surely deliver the goods. Now, if only this troop could do something about those sissies out of D.C. with the similar name. (The Self-Start Foundation, P.O. Box 1562, New York 10276)

—Reed Jackson

#### DIAGRAM OF SUBURBAN CHAOS

Status Negatives



*Status Negatives* is trans-Atlantic travel music. With a moody undertow and punctuated beats, Diagram of Suburban Chaos’ proper debut marries the best of intercontinental electronica. Spanning the Krautrock minimalism of Deutschland and the best IDM of

stateside dancehalls, the one-man band creates a beautifully ordered chaos. The ebb and flow of the synths on album opener, “Mental Wound,” is shat-tered by punchy beats, and the off-time deep house vibe of “Brane Dam-age” is too off-kilter for even the funkiest person to get down to. But getting down is not the point; getting into is. The electronic squeal of “Clogg” can make heads bob, but on a more cerebral level than most Saturday night club drek. Every song flows seamlessly into the next, with each offering a different melodic idea, and giving the feel of one singular composition. “Rooftop” polarizes ambient melodies and skittery breakbeats to great effect. Even the ultrasonic freakout pastiche of “Fn-tonal” has a hook. Diagram of Suburban Chaos has assembled the best elements of Autechre and Mouse on Mars without all the confusion. (Imputor, P.O. Box 17489, Seattle 98107)

—Christopher Fritz

#### JULIE DOIRON

Heart and Crime



It’s not often we hear shoegaze coming from a woman. Normally, it’s left

to artists like Neil Halstead and his ilk. But Julie Doiron is an exception to this unstated rule. Never has a female singer/songwriter sounded so laconic. Unlike typical coffeehouse confessional fare, Doiron’s *Heart and Crime* tinkers with convention by offering subtle changes in structure and tempo, setting gems like “Too Much” and “The Surgery is Over” just left of center. Nary a song rises above a din, and the front-and-center vocals elevate the intimacy of Doiron’s whimsies to wrenching levels. Most tracks consist of a simple acoustic guitar line and said vocals, but keys and harmonica are occasionally tossed in to keep the oft-dark proceedings from becoming repetitive. With an honest delivery free of animosity, Doiron escapes the acerbic Alanis factor common among jilted songwriters of this style. A most welcome exception. (Jagjaguwar, 1021 S. Walnut St., Bloomington, IN 47401)

—Christopher Fritz

#### FILMMAKER

Break This Fall



The Prozac rockers of Filmmaker look outward, inward and back in again on their short, sharp debut disc. Guitar-

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driven, gloomy and often bittersweet, singer Carl Johnson pours his heart out over some babe who has done him wrong through six tracks of epic proportions. Moaning lines like "roaming eyes read cheating lips, as roaming hands brush cheating hips" in the plundering dirge "Spineless Heartless," these four Canadian lads ply their misery with an alternative arena-rock wall of sound rising and falling within each melodramatic utterance. The staccato rhythms of "Falling and Falling" and the power chord bravado of "Offenses Between Us" actually lift the spirit despite the shoe gaze. (Faraway, 5 Hutton Place, St. Albert, AB Canada T8N 5W6)

— Tom Semioli

### GAY DAD Transmission

Somewhere The London Suede and Poison are cringing at Gay Dad's second full-length album, *Transmission*—an utter mess of faux glam and a testament to the dark side of Britpop's skinny, white moon. Cliff Jones (Britain's response to Jon Bon Jovi, without the New Jersey conviction) leads the trio through nearly an hour of pedestrian rock failing to bring any interesting ideas into fruition. However pitifully Gay Dad rocks, the pinnacle of *Transmission's* crap is its ballads. "All My Life" sounds like Hedwig covering Tommy Gnosis' songs, while "Everything Changes" could drive the average listener to cut off their ears. After this sort of torture, even the album's least embarrassing moments, such as the band's take on Ziggy Stardust-era Bowie, "Always Now and Forever" (damn that '80s hair rocker chorus), are hard to stomach. *Transmission* is an unnecessary experience. (Thirsty Ear, 22 Knight St., Norwalk, CT 06851)

—Neal Ramirez

### THE GENERATORS State of the Nation

The Generators have totally jettisoned the poppy overtones of their previous releases for a much heavier, louder and more raucous approach on *State of the Nation*. Apparently, someone in the band read a paper and got really, really mad—this latest offering sets its focused sights on the many tribulations of today's headlines. Musically, listeners can expect skilled, traditional streetpunk with a rock edge. Whatever happened between this and the last Generators record, it's a good thing! A fun band has become great, hitting it hard and tearing chunks from the sky. (TKO)

—Mark Ginsburg

### THE GET SET Down Marriott Lane!

The Get Set hasn't gone and ripped off one recently successful rock band for *Down Marriott Lane*. No, the Los Angeles-based quartet pilfered the entire hit-making modern rock department store. Such a musical shoplifting spree hasn't been seen since the days of hair-metal. In Aisle five, the band swiped Everclear's mastery of slick, two-part high-low vocal harmonies. In Aisle one, the band members stuffed Weezer's penchant for quirky song structures and random dystopian moments under their shirts. In Aisle 11, lead singer Rob Goraieb snagged the vocal stylings of both Lit frontman A. Jay Popoff and Third Eye Blind's Stephan Jenkins. The lyrics and song ideas on this record are so amazingly moronic, the listener actually feels less intelligent after only two or three listens. "Make it happen, it's up to you/see it clearly, see it through," Goraieb sings in "Make It Happen." (Crank!, 1223 Wilshire Blvd., #823, Santa Monica, CA 90403)

—Pete Bothum

### GIANT LEAP Giant Leap

There's something so soothing and erotic about Middle Eastern-style music in an electronic (and percussionless) soundscape. Listening to "Dunya Salam," listeners will be torn between steamy foreplay or reflective meditation. Giant Leap is purely electronic mood music with a variety of flavors. This worldly and panoramic approach to subdued ambient music is enriched by cameos from guest artists like Neneh Cherry and Michael Stipe. (Palm, 601 W. 26 St., 11th Floor, New York 10001)

—Liana Jonas

### THE GLORIA RECORD Start Here

During its brief existence, the band Mineral built a large following with its brand of emotionally charged, heart-felt songs. Critics everywhere swooned, lavishing praise for its inspired use of dynamics and a unique approach to song structure. After only two albums, however, Mineral called it quits. Featuring former members Chris Simpson and Jeremy Gomez, The Gloria Record is the next step in an evolution of a sound. For the most part, the same passionate, angst-ridden dynamics are present, and the sound is familiar, yet unique. It could be the lineage of its members, or the '80s-bred synthesiz-

ers, which provide a bed for the melancholy lyrics. The instrumental "Start Here" fittingly begins the album, quickly followed by the epic "Good Morning, Providence." "The Overpass" is also noteworthy, while the rest of the tracks serve as a great supporting cast. Mineral fans will not be disappointed. (Arena Rock, 68 Greenpoint Ave., 4th Floor, Brooklyn 11222)

—Jonathan Cholewa

### GREAT PLAINS GYPSIES Ride the Blinds

Thanks to *Ride the Blinds*, you won't have to borrow your parents' worn copies of *4-Way Street*, *Workingman's Dead* or *After the Gold Rush*. The Gypsies joyfully turn the clock back to the heady days of tin soldiers and Nixon comin' via a comfortable meld of Americana, folk, blues, bluegrass and roots pop. Led by singer/songwriter/prophet Dan Whitaker, this collection is laden with warm acoustic ditties and winsome love songs rendered with ragged glory. "New Lonesome Road Blues" features fancy banjo pickin' and plucky pedal-steel licks, while "Hot Mama Blues" details the pitfalls

of dabbling with wine, women and whiskey by way of Scott Schenke's Keith Richards meets Carl Perkins riffing. Keep your lava lamps burning. (Sunny Smedley, 2323 N. Hamlin, Suite 2, Chicago 60647)

—Tom Semioli

### NEIL MICHAEL HAGERTY Plays That Good Old Rock and Roll

Neil Michael Hagerty wants to take you to flavor country. Sporting three names, a likable backup band and a brambly throat, Hagerty makes vintage rock for contemporary beer commercials. His scuffed approach mirrors the carefree breeze and hedonistic ramble of bygone working-class chestnuts CCR and CSN&Y. Inventive use of violins, saxophone and guitar squall makes *Plays* more than a mere aural wax museum or trendy revivalist act, however. This is hardly *Hagerty Comes Alive* (which is a good thing, y'all). A casual air eliminates '70s bloat and ensures these songs retain their Colorado mountain freshness. In many ways, Hagerty has done to Joe Cocker and Steppenwolf what Pavement did

continued on page 51

## ANNA BY ANNA WARONKER



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## ROBERT BURKE WARREN *Chasing the Fade*

Record companies apply the Americana tag with increasing frequency these days, especially when marketing any kind of pop/rock music featuring aspects of roots, blues or country to mainstream audiences. Funny, but back in the '60s and '70s, artists like the Grateful Dead, Rolling Stones and The Band just called it rock. Singer/songwriter Robert Burke Warren's music will be labeled Americana in a heartbeat, despite easy comparisons to the decidedly rocking John Mellencamp and songwriting great Bob Dylan, so go figure. Backed by his amazing Turpentine band, Warren (a former bassist for garage-rockers The Fleshtones) offers a six-song EP, *Chasing the Fade*, on his own Jack Pot Music label. Over the half-dozen tracks (a preview of the full-length by the same title due in the fall), Warren displays a striking musical facility and a luminous talent for penning heartfelt lyrics to envelope the listener. On "Sudden Strangers," his appealing, smoky voice brings vibrant life to this slow-dance tale of "accidental honesty." The playful, cryptic lyrics of "Alkaline" ("A touch of you brings out the best in me/too much of you gonna be the death of me") and the irrepressibly funky "Junkman" highlight his dead-on storytelling sensibilities. Warren even covers Bobbie Gentry's "Mississippi Delta" (which splits the difference between Creedence's "Born on the Bayou" and Tony Joe White's "Polk Salad Annie").

## SEAN ALTMAN *alt.mania*

New York quirk rocker Sean Altman wears the hat of a true innovator for bringing (of all things) a capella vocals to rock music through his former vocal group, Rockapella. Once he's on the mic, one note from Altman's lips is enough to lay waste to any argument about the need for instrumental accompaniment. As a regular contributing vocalist to N.Y.'s all-star tribute series *The Loser's Lounge*, Altman's got the vocal chops to pay homage to Freddie Mercury, Bryan Ferry and Neil Diamond. His liquid-candy voice is truly amazing, and his songs follow suit on his latest, *alt.mania*, on Chow Fun records. Like his previous musical masterpiece, *Seandemonium*—hilariously picking over the minutia of post-divorce acrimony—*alt.mania*'s 15 songs find Altman back in the romantic trenches with his smart-ass sensibilities fully intact. One minute he's crooning, "I know it's bad form/to still be broken hearted" ("Unhappy Anniversary"), and the next he's cracking wise to the girl who did him wrong with "Whatever you know you think you see/You don't know dick about me" ("Dick About Me"). While Altman's lyrics explore a Todd Rundgren-meets-Weird Al scenario, musically the tunes range from '50s doo wop to Badfinger-esque Beatles imitations to The Left Bank. Keep listening when the music's over for real-life messages from Altman's answering machine sure to amuse and amaze. The brilliant *alt.mania* is available exclusively from [www.seanaltman.com](http://www.seanaltman.com).



## COBER *Crashpilot*

The music of Cober—a melodic, goth-influenced band hailing from Seattle—leads one to speculate whether Hole would still be a viable force in rock had Kurt Cobain lived to ghost write his wife's material. As distasteful as it is to mention Courtney Love in reference to any artist with genuine talent, Cober's astoundingly gifted singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Sheila Bommakanti has crafted a nearly flawless debut, *Crashpilot*, sure to remind many of *Live Through This*-era Hole. With this said, there's so much more going on here. "After Dark," a tale of unrequited love and its subsequent surrender (sample lyric: "I am a victim to myself") shares the cathartic quality of anything found on The Cure's two indispensable '80s albums *Seventeen Seconds* and *Faith*. Likewise, a song like "Night Light" recalls the atmospheric guitar work of Echo and the Bunnymen and early-'80s U2. Odd chord progressions and Bommakanti's incomparably expressive vocals—alternating between a seductive whisper, a haunting wail and shades in between—nudge the listener further into *Crashpilot*'s disquieting dreamworld in a quietly soul-wrenching way. Just as the languid "Call it What it is" slowly builds in intensity but never quite reaches the point of release, this album leaves its hooks in you beyond repeated spins. Find out more about this promising band at [www.cober.org](http://www.cober.org) and pick up the brilliant *Crashpilot* at CDBaby.com.

## UPTOWN SINCLAIR *Uptown Sinclair*

The band's name is a clever play on the name of the late, well-known novelist, but Uptown Sinclair—recently voted "Best Modern Rock Band" by the *Cleveland Free Times*—is creating a buzz with its self-titled EP, now distributed by D-text Records. Best described as a post-progressive power pop quartet, Uptown Sinclair's musical visionary is singer/guitarist Dave Hill (a former bassist for Cleveland's underground glam-rock gods Cobra Verde), whose talent for penning memorable tunes reflects his rather broad taste in the rock music of the past three decades. Consider how the guitar bridge of "Superman" sounds like it was lifted from the chorus of Judas Priest's "Livin' After Midnight," while, if you strip away the vocals from "First Thing in the Morning," you can easily sing the words to Velvet Underground's "Sweet Jane." The slide-guitar effect on "Landslide" makes it a Steve Miller-esque rocker, and "Never Miss a Thing"—one of those beautiful, inspiring-wistfulness, transcending-nostalgia pop songs to make you feel good about getting bummed out—will quickly become a favorite. Surely, one listen to the white-boy funk of "Sentimental" will convince you Dave Hill doesn't just write great pop songs, he also knows how to treat the ladies right. Check out [www.uptownsinclair.com](http://www.uptownsinclair.com) to find out when the boys from Cleveland will be in your town to rock you like a hurricane, or something similar.



**RECORDS** continued from page 49  
to R.E.M. and Big Star back in the '90s, making it looser, more rock-oriented and more relevant to modern life. No surgeon general's warning is needed—enjoy guilt free. (Drag City, P.O. Box 476867, Chicago 60647)

—Reed Jackson

### HELLA

#### Hold Your Horse Is



Hooray! Break out your calculators kids, because the new math has arrived. Imagine math rock is a spider spinning a silken web. Hella is this same spider soaked in speed—the web is a little sloppier, but—goddamn—look at that spider go. In the end, the listener is left with the thought *Hold Your Horse Is* is “radiant” or at least “some pig” (check *Charlotte's Web* references). Hella pours itself from two fronts—guitarist Spencer Seim and drummer Zach Hill. Spencer plays as if he is trapped between Yngwei Malmstein and Leadbelly with a hint of Dick Dale to surf things up. Zach Hill is a motherfucker! No, really, I heard he did your mom last night. I also heard from some ephedrine-basted fans, Zach doesn't use a double-kick, which seems impossible. When friends ask me about this record, it doesn't make me say, “yeah, I'll burn it for you,” but rather beam, “Momma done baked that cornbread.” (SRC)

—Don Malkemes

### TIM HEIDECKER MASTERPIECE

#### Theatre of Magic: Original Cast Recording



I haven't been this excited about musical theater since Neal Patrick Harris joined the cast of *Rent!* Set in medieval times, Heidecker's *Theatre of Magic* combines action, introspection and a clever plot twist bringing about a hot new take on feudalism. The power trio guides us through a landscape where serfdom and fat grooves go hand in hand. Behind all of this rock rests themes and sub-themes cutting to the root of humanity with a gravitas comparable to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The Masterpiece's enchanting social omniscience flows through every lyric—sometimes hitting a little too close to home. Every person at some point in their life has thought, “the wizard is a dragon,” or at least has been “searching for rainbows and gold.” And with the heavy '70s-rock riffs, electronic hand clapping and special-effects loops, the audience is mystically transported to a time where warlocks ruled over “king-

doms of dungeons.” Besides its scant 40-minute run, the only major criticism to be made towards *Theatre* concerns the dragon's vocals, which at times seem forced and indifferent. It is an original dragon, however, and I know he's been climbing in and out of cauldrons for years. In its entirety, *Theatre of Magic* strongly proclaims, “Andrew Lloyd Webber, The Masterpiece has smote thee.”

—Don Malkemes

### THE HIGH FIDELITY

#### Demonstration



Deviating between electric touches and eclectic instruments such as an omnichord, timpani and gongs, The High Fidelity creates music celebrating the junk pop culture of the early '90s. Throughout its latest effort, *Demonstration*, The High Fidelity's sound runs the rock 'n roll gamut, drawing influence from '60s rock and '80s new wave looped all together with a smooth hip hop beat. By drawing from so many different wells, The High Fidelity attempts to create a weird fusion of genres appealing to the ear. After several spins, *Demonstration* proves a dense, endlessly entertaining album overflowing with ideas not dissimilar from *Midnight Vultures*-era Beck. The band completely ignores the nihilistic trends of current American rock culture completely, in effect creating an engrossing, fun record. (Freedom in Exile, P.O. Box 2413, E. 14th St., New York 10009)

—Dan Pastorius

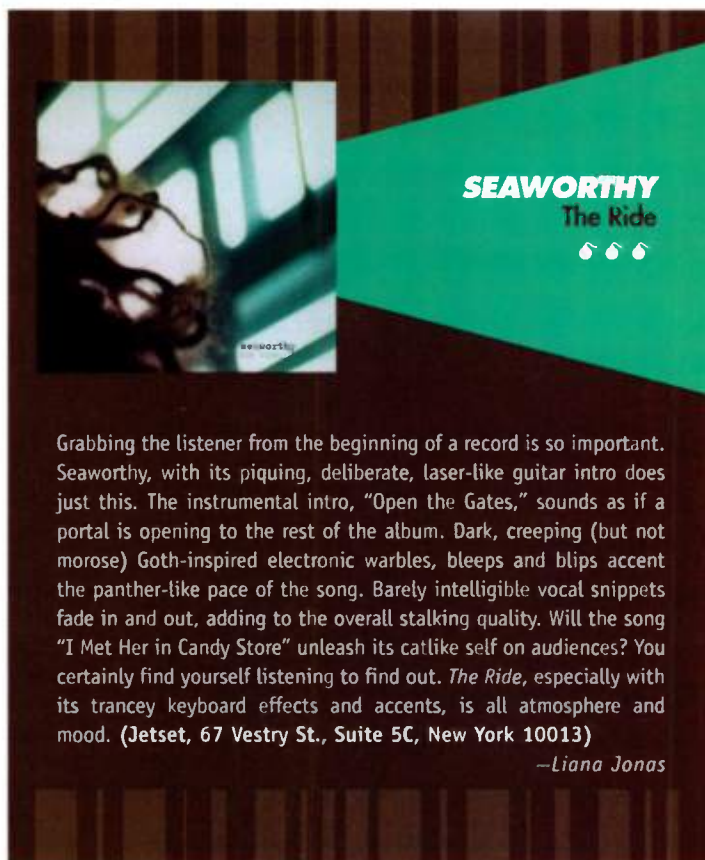
### YUKA HONDA

#### Memories Are My Only Witness



While it's a fun collection of songs (upbeat, playful, eclectic and driven primarily by loopy electronic instrumentation) and nicely produced, this debut work of Yuka Honda's (executive produced by the famously esoteric John Zorn) offers little to separate her as a composer. Sadly, too, considering she's the primary engine behind Cibo Matto and has done some impressive work as an instrumentalist and was a genius sampling for works by Arto Lindsay, Los Lobos, Medeski Martin & Wood and Yoko Ono to name a few. But the one thing *Memories* lacks is a heart. Sure it's got a pulse. And a damn good one, too—surfacing in the form of easygoing, danceable backbeats and meticulously placed samples that wouldn't have sounded as cohesive in anyone else's hands. (She also owes part of this to a support team

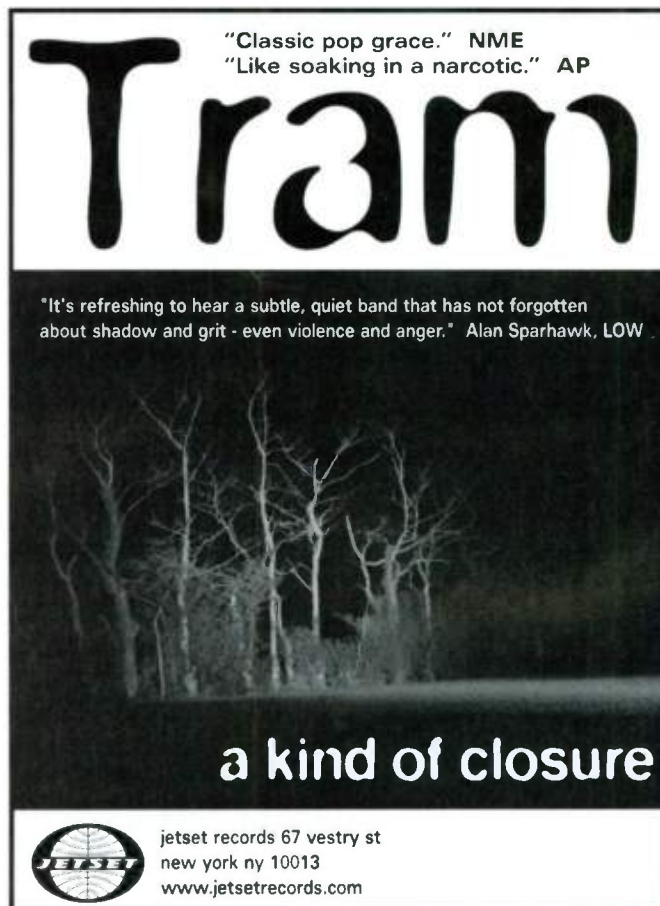
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**SEAWORTHY**  
The Ride  
◆◆◆

Grabbing the listener from the beginning of a record is so important. Seaworthy, with its piquing, deliberate, laser-like guitar intro does just this. The instrumental intro, “Open the Gates,” sounds as if a portal is opening to the rest of the album. Dark, creeping (but not morose) Goth-inspired electronic warbles, bleeps and blips accent the panther-like pace of the song. Barely intelligible vocal snippets fade in and out, adding to the overall stalking quality. Will the song “I Met Her in Candy Store” unleash its catlike self on audiences? You certainly find yourself listening to find out. *The Ride*, especially with its trancey keyboard effects and accents, is all atmosphere and mood. (Jetset, 67 Vestry St., Suite 5C, New York 10013)

—Liana Jonas




“Classic pop grace.” NME  
“Like soaking in a narcotic.” AP

# Tram

“It's refreshing to hear a subtle, quiet band that has not forgotten about shadow and grit - even violence and anger.” Alan Sparhawk, LOW

a kind of closure



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Every now and again an artist decides to stray from his usual work to test the waters in another pool. For **Questlove**, drummer of the world-famous Roots, the pool seems more like an ocean. Making his solo debut, one would expect Quest to make a compilation of pure hip hop, featuring the latest and greatest. As a member of The Roots, he surely has a dizzying wishlist of artists at his fingertips to make a cameo. Quest does the opposite, compiling a host of oldies and goodies called **Babies**

**Making Babies.** Strangely enough, the drummer of the No. 1 band in hip hop has put together an album featuring remakes of old songs from artist like Smokey Robinson, Earth, Wind & Fire and Chaka Khan—just to name a few. Tracks like “That’s What Friends Are For,” sung by the immortal Denise Williams, and “Before the Dawn,” sung by Patrice Rushen, take you back to the days of Chef Boyardee and grape Kool Aid in grandma’s kitchen. Unless you were born before 1957, that’s where those tunes need to stay. Even the Isley Brothers drop in for a performance of the ‘80s date song “Sensuality.” Essentially, this album is a mixtape from 1970. Somebody get the flux compocitor! *Babies* would be an easier listen had Quest added in some drum tracks or some scratches to spice up the dated material. Now this writer is no hater, but getting the hip hop generation to listen to, let alone buy, this album is going to be harder than getting Michael Jordan to retire. Questlove’s motivation to do this album is still unclear, but it might be an essential disc for the family reunion. (**Urban Theory/Backspin**, 328 Flatbush Ave., P.O. Box 205, Brooklyn 11238-4302)



Fresh off a North American tour supporting last year’s critically acclaimed *Double Figure*, **Plaid** is back with its new EP, *P-Brane*, on Warp Records. The dynamic duo of Ed Handley and Andy Turner is well known for its smooth trance sounds, but not many know about the diversity the team’s music can possess. Their brash combination of spine-tingling, skillfully patterned drums and the smoothness of the melodies

makes for a truly unique sound making listeners unsure whether to get up and dance or lay back and close their eyes. The tracks on the EP flow together so seamlessly, it seems as if they’re one long, continuous song blended by beat-changing mixes. The first track, “Coat,” starts with a soothing mechanical sound followed by drum and bass tones jumping like gremlins inside your CD changer. The next song, “Diddymoosedid,” follows a similar pattern, starting smooth, then, after about a minute, booming with drum patterns only a raver could love. Don’t get it wrong, this isn’t all about the drum and bass—this electronic work of art borrows flavor from many genres. The hip hop, jazzy “Stills” comes off with a King Britt-meets-the-RZA sound. The original song literally glides through the speakers with a perfect balance of high and low riffs and hard-hitting bass tones. The enhanced CD also features a video for “Eyen” from last year’s *Double Figure* album. *P-Brane* is a must-have for anyone who enjoys drum and bass, techno or trance, as Plaid delivers a masterpiece even a non fan of the genre can appreciate. (**Warp**, 648 Broadway, Suite 600A, New York 10012)

## HIP HOP NEWS

**Talib Kweli** has been hitting the bricks, going from city to city up and down the East Coast to promote his upcoming solo album, *Quality*. The tour, featuring his back-up singers Stephanie and Tiffany (together The Shock Rockas), is a variety of Kweli’s prior work with **Mos Def** (Blackstar) and **Hi-Tek** (Reflection Eternal) and some of his new stuff as well. He also adds some freestyle sessions to the full-length concert, along with some mini performances from the singers and DJ. Look for *Quality* on **MCA** mid-summer... **The Neptunes’** first album, *NERDS*, has hit the streets with a strange and intense buzz. The album, surprisingly, is less focused on hip hop than on pure-to-the-bone fusion. *NERDS* is a rock/rap experiment often all-too-worthy of its title... **Camron’s** new album, *Come Home With Me*, is his third solo effort, but his first on **Jay-Z’s Roc-a-Fella** label. Already blowing up airwaves with the single, “Oh Boy” and “Just Fire” (featuring fellow Roc members **Beanie Sigel** and **Memphis Bleek**), Cam will tour to promote the album nationwide... **Styles** from the **LOX** will be releasing his solo debut on **Ruffrider/Interscope** in the coming months. You can catch a preview of Styles on **Rawkus’ Soundbombing III**... **Sauce Money** is gearing for a return after a three-year hiatus... Former **Quester Q-Tip** also makes a return with his next effort, *Kamaal the Abstract*... **Busta Rhymes** has released a com-



pilation of some of his best hits, while also working on a new **Flipmode Squad** album... **Blackalicious’** second album, *Blazing Arrow*, is in stores now, ready for inauguration as your new summer jam disc... **DJ X-Dream** drops *Trance Theory Vol. II* on the electronic tip... **Cormega** and **Xzibit** are both in the studio making their respective albums... Philly princess **Ms. Jade** is coming strong this summer with *Girl Interrupted*... Meanwhile, **Deftones** and **Fear Factory** personnel turn up on “The CIA is Still Trying to Kill Me,” the new single from indie bad boy **Non Phixion**, courtesy of the progressive **Landspeed** label. The single is just a hint of what’s to come on Phixion’s forthcoming *The Future is Now* album. More next month...

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## BACK ISSUES



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**Aug 00**  
Sonic Youth  
Damage Manual  
XTC



**#61**  
**Sep 00**  
Nashville Pussy  
At The Drive-In  
Nina Gordon



**#62**  
**Oct 00**  
Dandy Warhols  
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John Doe



**#65**  
**Jan 01**  
J Mascis  
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**#67**  
**Mar 01**  
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**#71**  
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The Living End

**QNTY**

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- \_\_\_ #42 Jan 99 Famous Monsters, Incubus, Sevendust
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- \_\_\_ #49 Aug 99 Switchblade Symphony, Superchunk, Orange 9MM
- \_\_\_ #50 Sep 99 The Magnetic Fields, The Get Up Kids, Cibo Matto
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- \_\_\_ #53 Jan 00 Mike Ness, Danzig, Buzzcocks
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- \_\_\_ #60 Aug 00 Damage Manual, Sonic Youth, XTC
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- \_\_\_ #62 Oct 00 Dandy Warhols, John Doe, Bettie Serveert
- \_\_\_ #63 Nov 00 The Sea And Cake, The Posies, Modest Mouse
- \_\_\_ #65 Jan 01 J Mascis and the Fog, Less Than Jake, Versus
- \_\_\_ #66 Feb 01 Stephen Malkmus, Add N To (X), New Found Glory
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- \_\_\_ #68 Apr 01 Rocket From The Crypt, Luna, Tortoise
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- \_\_\_ #71 Jul 01 Melvins, Spirit Caravan, The Living End
- \_\_\_ #72 Aug 01 Kool Kieth, Radiohead, Coldplay
- \_\_\_ #73 Sep 01 Kevin Smith, Ben Folds, Rufus Wainright
- \_\_\_ #74 Oct 01 Nikka Costa, Spiritualized, Michael Gira
- \_\_\_ #75 Nov 01 Superchunk, Lambchop, Rival Schools
- \_\_\_ #76 Dec 01 Suzanne Vega, Le Tigre, Butthole Surfers
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- \_\_\_ #78 Mar 02 The Promise Ring, Pete Dinklage, Bad Religion

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**RECORDS** continued from page 51 comprising Rick Ellis, Bill Ware and Cibo Matto vets Dumo Love and Timo Ellis.) But it lacks a tangible sense of personality, self and a particular sound—in other words, it's missing the essence of what should distinguish a Yuka Honda song from one composed by Moby, an artist she sometimes—for better or for worse—has the uncanny tendency to sound like. It's just not what you'd expect from the same person who molded the endearingly goofy, but intricate songs of *Viva La Woman* and *Stereotype A*. Then again, we should all know better than to compare any artist's solo work with ensemble work. This stuff's more techno than it is Cibo, anyway. (Tzadik)  
—Irene Yadao

**THE HUDSON FALCONS**  
For Those Whose Hearts  
and Souls are True



Possibly one of the hardest working street punk regiments out there today, The Falcons return with round two on GMM records. Endlessly touring in true-dirt-and-grit style, the Falcons are true to their rock 'n roll. Unionized and battered by the road, they mix worker politics with hard-edged punk,

earning themselves the respect of both those who would agree and disagree with the street poetry of frontman Mark Linskey. Fans of last year's *Desperation and Revolution* will be pleased with The Falcons follow-up effort. "Johnny Law" packs the most standout punch, while the acoustic track, "Disciples of Soul," shows the versatility of the band both musically and lyrically. Those who are already fans will recognize a few re-do's on the record, with updated versions of "Scab" and "I'm a Worker." In true New Jersey style, when The Hudson Falcons sing about being hard in the midst of hard times, it's for real. Unlike the ringleaders of the New Hard, they don't need scary masks to prove it. (GMM, P.O. Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333)

—Louis Woodward

**IMPERIAL TEEN**

On



The fact Imperial Teen still sounds fresh is worthy of admiration. Releasing its sugary debut, *Seasick*, in 1996, the alterna-bubblegum group highlights the pop instincts of former Faith No More keyboardist Roddy Bottum on lead vocals and guitar. Equally vital to

the group's sound are the new-wave-transplant synth embellishments and punky rhythm section. Following 1998's critically-lauded *What is Not to Love*, Imperial Teen has not wavered from groovy, beatified music. *On* is swarming with bright harmonies, booty-shaking keyboards and the sunny exuberance of Imperial Teen's home state of California. While things tend towards the lo-fi ("Mr. and Mrs.") and Devo-indulgent ("Teacher's Pet"), enough of *On* is endearing ("Undone," "The First") and infectious ("Ivanka," "Million \$ Man"), keeping Imperial Teen's sound exceptional. (Merge, P.O. Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514)

—Neal Ramirez

**AMY JANE**  
Wide Open



Folk songstress Amy Jane wants to seduce you—she makes no bones about it. Hopelessly romantic, Jane's addiction to love lost, love unrequited and love imagined floats by with a stark lyrical honesty akin to Cranberry Dolores O'Riordan, Ani DiFranco, Emm Gryner and Joni Mitchell's confessional touchstone Blue. Barely accompa-

nied by guitar, piano and a nearly invisible rhythm section, Jane concocts trance-inducing spells with a tint of Celtic melancholy. The only song failing to ponder the perils of Eros is "Blessing," a hopeful wish of spiritual fulfillment for a young boy. If Amy Jane can stop obsessing about men for awhile, she just might find the bliss for which she's searching. (Pinnacle, 398 Columbus Ave., PMB 183, Boston 01226)

—Tom Semioli

**JETTISON RED**  
Clear as Day



*Clear As Day* starts off strong with "Did You Call?," a melodic emo rocker with nods to Sugar and the Replacements. The next song, "Believe," is even better. It's faster and catchier, leaning more towards poppy punk. The next song, "Intro in D," further establishes the Bob Mould-isms, but something goes slightly awry on the next track, "Birdhouse." It's not a bad song, but the track seems out of place, opening with a Stevie Ray Vaughn-style slide guitar riff. Just as listeners start to get used to the new direction, it's

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**PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES**  
Good Health

With a name taken from a Smiths song, it's not surprising Seattle's Pretty Girls Make Graves upsets the pop punk status quo. The band (including bassist Derek Fudesco of Murder City Devils) has been grabbing attention in the Pacific Northwest for about a year now. But, it's on *Good Health's* opening track, "Speakers Push the Air," Pretty Girls makes its mark on the world. A jangling melody spirals out of control until it is buzzing maniacally with the emotion of a young Morrissey thrashing on the floor, microphone in hand. Though the sentiment would have suited the young Mancunians, the music is more Discount than Johnny Marr. On songs like "The Get A Way," vocalist Andrea Zollo (formerly of Deathwish Kids) introduces herself as one of rock's most unique new voices, combining a sweet, nostalgic charm with real raw power. With the untitled fifth track, drummer Nick DeWitt establishes the band's ability to drop ghostly dub rhythms, while "More Sweet Soul" and "Ghosts in the Radio" showcase the dual guitarists' repetitive Gang of Four angularity. (Lookout, 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)  
—Charles Spano

back to emo for three more tracks. Then "She's a Keeper" takes it back to some funky rock completely out of place on this album. All in all, *Clear as Day* is a decent poppy rock record, delivering hooks and passion, but lacking focus. (Static, 17215 Mack Ave., Detroit 48224)

—Zach Needles

## KINGS COUNTY QUEENS

### Big Ideas



The Kings County Queens don't make a good first impression. At first, the listener wonders if these guys and gals aren't a bunch of squares with National Public Radio dreams. Did Chris Bowers and Daria Klotz turn to each other after polishing off pleasant-but-goodie-goodie tunes such as "Strangers" or "Nothin'" and say, "Good times, good times?" Did bassist Eric Eble and accordion player Suzanne Price trade sips of warm milk between takes? Eventually though, after a few of the 12 tunes on *Big Ideas* score the listeners' attention, it becomes evident The Queens aren't so boring after all. The reverb-soaked guitar on "My First Day Without You" and the rustic harmonica on "Virginia" suggest a hidden badassery. Despite the rocky first impression, it's hard not to like the hyper-retro rockabilly songs here—like the lyrics, they're catchy and interesting in their stripped-down simplicity. "Whatchamacallit" offers this priceless line, "You can vanish without a trace/because I could the extra space/Just leave me here with the memories/and all the pointless shit we cannot face." Good times, good times, indeed. (Rubric)

—Pete Bothum

## KNIEVEL

### The Name Rings a Bell That Drowns Out Your Voice



Unlike its vaunted namesake, Knievel doesn't use any flashy special effects or gravity-defying nitro packs. Rather, this trio from the great Suburu Outback relies on quaint, plain-spoken melodies and a whole lot of understated charm. Though the result packs less vicarious thrill than seeing Saint Evel jump over a crocodile pit, *The Name* finds its own spectacle in barbed guitar/keyboard displays, coupled with subtle vocals knowing just when to unleash a burst of relaxed effusion. Think Flaming Lips without the Mercury Rev jones or a less woozy version of The Clean but with the pop savvy of both left perfectly intact. Though Knievel might leave more

adventurous listeners a bit underwhelmed, these Aussies prove there's plenty of small gold left in the grounded, mid-tempo mine of pop rock. (In Music We Trust, 15213 Bevington Ave., Portland OR, 97267)

—Reed Jackson

## KUNG FU KILLERS

### Game of Death



Of the six tracks on this disc, four sound like the same song. The vocalist hisses and snarls while the band slams forward at light speed. The only standouts are the covers at the end, The Misfits' "I Turned Into a Martian" and Black Flag's "Room 13." "Martian" is no better or worse than the average garage band slamming through the tune at practice. "Room 13" is pretty good, but fails to take the piece in a new direction. Kung Fu Killers have more ability than most of this tired genre, but creativity is sorely lacking. (TKO)

—Mark Ginsburg

## LANDSPEEDRECORD!/PROSOLAR MECHANICS

### Urban Development Series Vol. 4



This split kicks off with five tracks from Landspeedrecord! Everything about this band is refreshing. This is eccentric D.C.-style indie rock bearing a striking resemblance to quirky geniuses The Dismemberment Plan, especially in Charley Jamison's vocals. Angular guitar work, new wave keyboards, garage rock drumming, unique lyrics and well-placed group singalongs make for a satisfying and interesting listen. The second half of the disc, containing four songs by the Prosolar Mechanics, doesn't fair so well. Although the Mechanics have plenty of quality rock mettle to offer, Landspeedrecord! is a difficult introduction to follow. Without the same intense spark as its discmates, Prosolar Mechanics suffer from poor placement. The band does manage to throw down with moody groove rock sporting vocals reminiscent of the nasal (in a good way) draw of Dance Hall Crashers. Overall, *Vol. 4* is an above-average split release. (Ambiguous City)

—Zach Needles

## THE LONG WINTERS

### The Worst You Can Do is Harm



Somewhat of a northwest indie *Superfriends*, The Long Winters counts in its retinue members former and current of Harvey Danger, Deathcab for Cutie and The Western State Hurricanes. Rather than battle evil-doers,

this not-so-motley crew instead aspires to breathe life into the long dormant corpse of alternative rock circa 1995. Some might consider this a dastardly act in itself. Inarguably, the band channels some adept and propulsive guitar gush, with a hairier jaw and longer waistband than most of the sissy hand wringing raging through popular music lately. *Harm* works best when siphoning the jellied gasoline of the late-great Sugar, as on the fulminating "Car Parts" and "Medicine Cabinet Pirate." Other times, TLW sounds like its titular old man, indulging in some well-crafted, navel-gazing nostalgia pieces even Incubus wouldn't touch. Those of the wide-eyed, sweater-clad persuasion will surely find much to thrill to here, and two or three tracks will even cause the faded grungers in the back to raise their Ranier just a little bit.

—Reed Jackson

## MARY LOU LORD

### Live City Sounds



Recorded in the fall of 2000, live in the subways of Boston, *Live City Sounds* marks Mary Lou Lord's first recorded material since '98's *Got No Shadow*. On

this collection of covers—all acoustic—Lord pays homage to the legendary Bob Dylan with her rendition of "You're Going to Make Me Lonesome When You Go" and Daniel Johnston on "Speeding Motorcycle" (which is also currently featured in a Target commercial). In addition, she also covers songs by Elliot Smith, Bruce Springsteen and the Magnetic Fields. Listeners would do well to investigate Lord's rendition of The Pogues' "Sayonara," a song illustrating some of the real beauty of Lord's delivery and style. Any doubts about the authenticity of this disc should be put to bed soon enough—just listen closely for the sound of subway trains and the clapping. Lords' sweet voice and demeanor will ultimately draw you in, while covering some great songs doesn't hurt either. (Rubric)

—Jonathan Cholewa

## MARY LORSON AND SAINT LOW

### Tricks For Dawn



Maybe Lambchop's recent *Is a Woman* was more of a literal statement than previously suspected. On the handsomely titled *Tricks for Dawn*, singer/guitarist Mary Lorson (of Emily continued on page 57





## SELDOM

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Originally formed as a death metal act, North Carolina's **CODESEVEN** somehow morphed into a melodic emo band, much like former metalcore screamers Cave In. You may remember Codeseven from its 1998 college radio hit, a cover of Don Henley's "Boys of Summer," popularized by its inclusion on the WWF Sunday Night Heat program and The Howard Stern Show. The band's first single and album, *Sense of Coalition*, meanwhile, received lots of acclaim among the hardcore scene. It's latest effort, however, **THE RESCUE**, may take the band to new heights. Soaring melodies and solid songwriting anchor down the release, while sweet vocals and psychedelic guitar effects give it an ambient quality. It may be a little too mellow for hard rock fans, but if emo listeners like the direction Cave In has moved, then Codeseven should be a sure bet as well. The band has toured with the likes of Saves the Day, Boy Sets Fire and New Found Glory, and it will tour tirelessly in sup-



port of this release. Look for *The Rescue* on The Music Cartel label.

Philadelphia's **GO! FOR THE THROAT** is bringing its debut album to the hardcore youth crew via Uprising Records. The band's aggressive, old-school sound draws from obvious influences like Dag Nasty and 7 Seconds, but the band also tends to venture into the metal/punk crossover world, a la DRI. The idea for the band hatched when guitarist Colin McGinniss—a former Kid Dynamite roadie—got together with drummer John Ilisco and formed a posi-core outfit known as Pipewrench. They added bassist Brian Kantorek to the line up and kicked around on the underground for several years with this moniker before finally settling into a harder sound and the youth crew-oriented name. With a like-minded lineup intact (thanks to the immaculate vocals of Ed Olsen), G!FTT began playing out live, spreading its gospel. It wasn't long



before the band's spirited jams wound up on Uprising, and G!FTT is currently pounding the pavement in support of the debut album.

Walking the fine line between metal and hardcore, **ARSON** churns out heavy-as-hell guitar riffs and throaty vocals on its first full-length release, **LACERATE THE SKY**. Released on Resurrection A.D. Records, the tempo is a bit slower than on Arson's previous EP, *Words Written in Blood*, but this allows the band to be a little more artistic and technical with its songcrafting skills. Ex-E-Town Concrete guitarist Ken Pescatore brings some influences from his former band into the mix, but you will find no rapping within the Arson catalog.



The band embodies the heavier moments of E-Town, evoking an old-school metal sound and hardcore emotion. Arson has played shows with God Forbid, Biohazard and All Out War so far, and promises fans a U.S. tour this summer.



## THE FANTOMAS MELVINS BIG BAND:

### Millennium Monsterwork

What can be said about these two experimental bands? Both defy words and descriptions in their own way. For those who don't know, The Melvins have enjoyed a 17-year career, traversing every musical avenue known to man over the course of about 20 albums. Fantomas, led by the ubiquitous Mike Patton, along with full-time Melvin guitarist King Buzzo and drummer Dave Lombardo (formerly of Slayer), are the ultimate noise-core band, changing tempos rapidly behind Patton's screams without any rhyme or reason. Both bands can be subtle or abrasive, wacky or creepy, and they have been known to cover anything from *The Godfather* theme to Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit." It seems only fitting these two criminally unique bands should come together for *Millennium Monsterwork*. The CD was recorded live at a San Francisco New Year's Eve show on December 31, 2000, and no doubt a bizarre New Year's Eve it was. The set features a cacophony of both Melvins and Fantomas songs, with band members Buzzo, Dale Crover and Kevin Rutmanis representing for the Melvins family and Patton, Lombardo, Trevor Dunn and Dave Stone in attendance for Fantomas. Some of the cuts included on the CD are the Fantomas interpretation of "The Omen" and the Melvins' classic "Hooch," as well as a new song, "Ol' Black Stooges." *Millennium Monsterwork* was released on Ipecac Records, also home to a new proper Melvins album, *Hostile Ambient Takeover*. Fans can look for a new opus from Fantomas later this year.



RECORDS continued from page 55

Dickinson-core band Madder Rose) possesses enough Black Velvet sweetness and tarnished grace to give Kurt Wagner a run for his large collection of headgear. Lorson allows her chamber-pop ensemble Saint Low out to play a bit more than does Wagner of his Nashville troupe, and the results couldn't be finer. "Friends I Have Been Drinking," unwinds with the conversational ease of an inebriated autumn twilight, while the cloistered buzz of the strings and piano throughout ensure Lorson doesn't get too singer/songwriter on us. An introspective record never once bogging down, *Tricks for Dawn* hits all the right notes to woo you and makes it look like common Southern hospitality. Or maybe just Southern Comfort. (Barsuk, P.O. Box 22546, Seattle 98122)

—Reed Jackson

**LUCAS SHINE**  
**No Cure For Life**



A soothing side project commandeered by Peter Hutchinson of Subduing Mara and Miracle Legion's Ray Neal, Lucas shines on its rootsy, folk-filled sophomore effort. Melancholy to

the point of bemoaning "everybody wants what they don't have" in "All The Things," Lucas peppers its Americana posturing with occasional fuzzy guitar licks and B-movie keyboards. At times reminiscent of Luna, Damon & Naomi and Ultra Vivid Scene, the band also excels at pure mood music, as evidenced in "Wrong Again"—a sleepy dirge slipping into a chorus worthy of Roger Waters at his most desperate. Though "Where Were You" kicks out the garage-rock jams, the disc rides into the sunset with the candy-coated country honk of "Sweet" and "Stranger." Sweethearts of the rodeo they ain't. ([www.LucasShine.com](http://www.LucasShine.com))

—Tom Semioli

**MANIFESTO JUKEBOX**  
**Desire**



"Paralyzed," the first track on Manifesto Jukebox's album, *Desire*, sounds like Midnight Oil playing melodic hardcore—not a bad thing in the least. Maybe it's because the Finnish band does such a great job matching jangly, '80s guitar riffs with the intense drive and shredded vocals of hardcore. From the first song on, the record has serious momentum. "Lux-

ury of Indifference" sounds like Husker Dü, and "I'm All Smiles When Your Plans Come Crashing Down" goes from Black Flag circa *In My Head* to what could be Idlewild. The only worry with Manifesto Jukebox is the band has a tendency to be almost too consistent. *Desire* is the group's debut from 2000, just now making it to America. Its follow-up, *Remedy*, is also slated for release this month and certainly should be worth a listen. With a summer tour scheduled, maybe Manifesto Jukebox will get the Stateside attention it deserves. (Combat Rock, PL 139, 00131 HKI, Finland)

—Charles Spano

**GREG MACPHERSON BAND**  
**Good Times Coming Back Again**



Being a working man is tough—just ask Greg MacPherson. He and his band craft songs with the lyricism and melody of the blue-collar everyman. Catchy, tight hooks rumble underneath working-class views of momentary joys, shortchanged dreams and routine existence, creating a moving sound floating between the realms of folk, indie and straight-ahead rock 'n roll. At a time when rock music is moving further and further away from

what made it great in the first place, it is good to hear the Greg MacPherson Band try to step things up and attempt to bring it all back around to where it began. (G7 Welcoming Committee, P.O. Box 27006, C-360 Main St., Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4T3)

—Dan Pastorius

**MU330**  
**Ultra Panic**



MU330 is bright, happy ska with bitter, sarcastic edged lyrics. Without actually creeping into the darkness, the words play around the fringes of twilight, hinting at images and thoughts contrary to the upbeat sound. Let the song go by without listening too closely, and it might appear to be another party anthem. Lean in a little bit, and the party seems to have gone very, very wrong. There may be hope for new school ska yet. (Asian Man, P.O. Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030)


—Mark Ginsburg

**THE NAYSAYER**  
**Heaven, Hell Or Houston**




*Heaven, Hell Or Houston* doesn't pick

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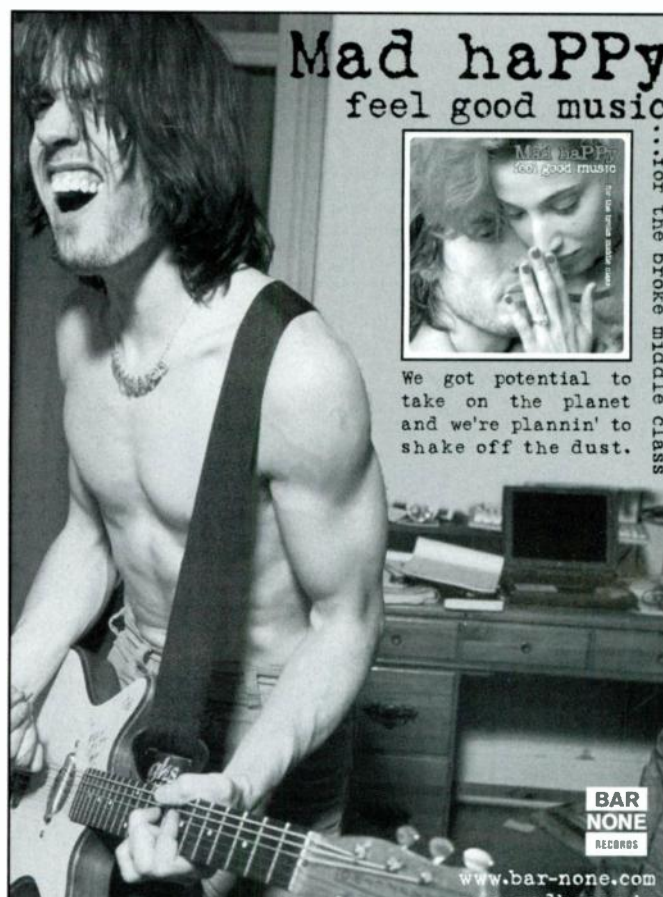


**SQUAD FIVE-O**  
Squad Five-O




Pinning the retro tag on a new band is like searching a box of Crayolas for the perfect air-colored crayon. It's a given that guitar-driven rock bands will sound like somebody else from one era or another. The key to originality is in the songwriting, and in the case of Squad Five-O, sparks of originality glitter atop the grim reality of sameness. The band seems to have chosen the late-'70s/early-'80s as a starting point—the sound of punk's first influence on arena rock bands (Cheap Trick, *Some Girls*-era Stones). The Squad opens it's self-titled CD with the explosive, anthemic, long-titled "I Don't Want To Change The World, I Just Want To Change Your Mind," and plows through most of the 13-song disc with a heavy dose of thick guitars, bouncy bass lines and melodic vocals. Paring down by losing some of the seemingly obvious filler tracks might have raised the overall grade on this CD, but take it for what it is—music for the adolescent set. (Tooth & Nail, P.O. Box 12698, Seattle 98111)

—Joe Cherry



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Shellac drummer Todd Trainer may have mad skills behind the kit, but give him a bigger musical reach and you've got trouble. **BRICK LAYER CAKE** features Mr. Trainer manning all instruments and vocals, and



may be the greatest recorded evidence against complete artistic control since Bette Midler got her own TV show.

**WHATCHAMACALLIT**

lacks any of the snap, crackle or pop of Trainer's other band, instead sinking to the bottom of your stereo like a bowl of soggy cereal. With its laconic vocals, unconscious axe work and diluted drumming, the record elicits an experience somewhat akin to taking loads of Valium while watching an unhinged Spalding Grey rant about his growing ennui. The conceptual underpinnings and sheer challenge of Brick Layer Cake will no doubt delight a small number of closeted Touch and Go acolytes, and might even amuse the artist's friends and family. The unsuspecting public, however, should stay well clear. (Touch and Go, P.O. Box 25520, Chicago 60625)

—Reed Jackson

Not wasting any time, the ever-prolific Atom Goren, of the infamous **ATOM & HIS PACKAGE**, returns with a five-song EP following up last year's *Redefining Music* (Hopeless Records). As foreshadowed on *Redefining*, Atom continues to employ more and

more rock guitar to his otherwise electronic accompaniment. Starting with the bouncy "I'm Downright Amazed At What I Can Destroy With Just a Hammer"—an upbeat, self-effacing look at those first, frightening steps into home ownership—**HAMBURGERS** lays claim here and there to a heightened sense of slick equally fit for longtime fans and a newer, more snowboardy and shirtless-and-sunburnt stagedivey crowd. When not putting a less obnoxious spin on the shimmering summer jam style, Atom sings of African road trips and ambiguous law breaking with all the grace of a nasal Ovid.



"Wonderman" directs an unflinching and disapproving scowl at some weak decisions from an old friend saddling up to the congratulations-you're-just-like-your-parents retirement plan.

Atom and the Yamaha QY-20 sequencer—known to readers and fans as the lovable Package—close *Hamburgers* with an electro pop rendition of "Head Gone Vertical," a song by the fellow Philadelphia punks of AMFM. Much like Ellohead lunchboxes, plastic Christmas trees, pizza-in-a-cup and forest green cars, Atom & His Package continue to prove wrong all the so-called experts who branded this a passing trend. (File 13, P.O. Box 2302, Philadelphia, PA 19103)

—Mike McKee

Anyone who's ever seen **KING KONG** remembers the experience for years to come. For one, frontman Ethan Buckler is nearly as tall as the gargantuan simian from which his band takes its name. Standing approximately 12 feet tall, with a lanky build and a deep but unassuming voice, Buckler strikes an impressive visual rivaled only by his lyrics.

For its latest album, King Kong sets its sights on the



cosmic landscapes traversed by Captain Kirk, aliens and pigs. Early on the disc, Buckler and company address one of man's earliest quandaries, "What Lies Beyond?" Later, they

treats listeners to "Space Travel," "Black Hole" and the arresting "We Are the People of Kong," rhythmic tracks prone to a bounce and a kick, demonstrating the band's lighthearted approach. Fans will no doubt find most of these tracks enjoyable, especially when referenced with the group's previous works. Newcomers might as well start with **THE BIG BANG**—outer space is as down to earth a subject as the band has covered to date. Sadly, the fixation on the stars puts a muzzle on the quirky delivery, spending most of its material midway through the album. Still, if the extraterrestrial life is anything like King Kong, then the space program is still worth funding in full. (Drag City, P.O. Box 476867, Chicago 60647)

—Mike McKee



## FIELDS & STREAMS:

### Kill Rock Stars Returns to the Lost Art of the Compilation

In the mid-to-late-'90s, Kill Rock Stars made a name for itself (and many of its off-center bands still a few years shy of the limelight) with a series of compilation albums showcasing what else was happening in punk and indie music at the time. Several years later, the label now enjoys some notoriety for having broke a few new celebrated sounds (think Sleater-Kinney for starters, y'all), so it will be interesting to see what will become of some of the groups on *Fields & Streams*, the label's first compilation record in some time. Of course, it's not all new faces on this collection—former Helium frontwoman Mary Timony drops some solo science, while Amelia from Heavenly unveils her new band (Tender Trap), former Team Dreschers lend a Butchies track and Tony Joy (of Universal Order fame) serves the rock with The Convocation Of. Then there's the established names like Fifth Column, Comet Gain and Mecca Normal. The compilation's biggest weakness is its size—two CDs packed with more than 20 tracks each from bands of varying notoriety and varying quality is a ponderous bulk for all

but the most dedicated potential fan. Despite this weight, it is the relatively smaller fish who give *Fields & Streams* its momentum. New York's terminally hip Yeah Yeah Yeahs and the UK's anarcho-bike-punk Red Monkey display a devotion to the art of moving butts, while alt-country's Neko Case and the new wave noise jerks of Erase Errata keep the flavors diverse through the dizzying list of artists. Some of the best game in this wilderness, however, comes late in the second disc with the always dramatic, vaudevillian antics of Two Ton Boa ("Porcelain Throne") and the deconstructed two-basses-and-a-drum-kit antipop of Pittsburgh's Lorelei. Unwound, Witchypoo? Please, you're so last year. (Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State Ave., PMB 418, Olympia, WA 98501)

—Mike McKee



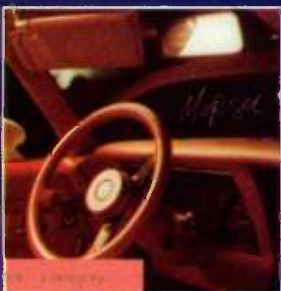
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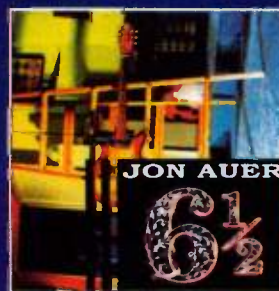
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**RECORDS** continued from page 57  
up until the second song, "The Naysayer," when the band really makes its presence felt. The album begins with "Dead End Road," a hushed take on alt-country by no means slack. But "The Naysayer" finds the group sending its desert psychedelia into outer space—and it only gets weirder. The more you listen to *Heaven, Hell Or Houston*, the more Anna Padgett's woe-ful observations and strange deadpan delivery confound you. "Hawaiian Pool" is downright eerie. On "66 Cicadas," Padgett sounds like she is having an epiphany worthy of Syd Barrett: "Come to me slow like I'm getting in the water of the freezing Atlantic—and the sun and the sand on me—and I'll tell you later what I'd like you to do, you tell me right now what I'll do to you." It's not as catchy as Trailer Bride's similar territory, but it's at least as off-kilter. (Carrot Top, 935 W. Chestnut, Suite LL15, Chicago 60622)

—Charles Spano

**NINE INCH NAILS**

**And All That Could Have Been**



While Trent Reznor's experiments in the studio have proved consistently nothing short of depressed genius,

the live power the band commands when performing has failed to be properly captured until this point. With the release of *And All That Could Have Been*, Reznor capsulizes select cuts from he and his band's manic performances onto disk, proving his machine-created sound translates better opened up rather than locked in the studio. Tracks like "March of the Pigs," "Sin" and "Starfuckers Inc." lambaste listeners with their up-tempo, angst-riddled drive, while others like "The Great Below," "Piggy" and the album closer, "Hurt," reach new depths of depravity with Reznor's emotion-tinged vocals captured in the live experience. Although Nine Inch Nails releases are always few and far between, they always prove worth the wait, and fortunately for fans who cannot get enough, *AATCHB* is no exception. (Nothing/Interscope, 2220 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404)

—Dan Pastorius

**OH MY GOD**

**The Action Album!**



A rock 'n roll band sans guitars usually ends up sounding like electro pop lite, but Oh My God proves this theory wrong by providing a driving sound

based solely on organ, drums, vocals and bass guitar. With its latest release, aptly titled *The Action Album!*, Oh My God creates a commercially viable sound with a unique, distinguishable tone. Singer/bassist Billy O'Neil boasts a strong, powerful vocal style, while organist Iguana rounds out the album's sound with quirky, distorted keyboard tones. Oh My God does have some kinks to work out if it wants commercial airplay (better production and a fuller sound would really help), however the band succeeds where others have failed in terms of creativity and originality. (NoVo Arts, 200 S. La-Salle, Suite 1400, Chicago, 60604)

—Dan Pastorius

**ORTHRELM**

**Asristirveildrioxe**



This is as much a crossover record as a Skrewdriver anthology—though for very different reasons. The bafflingly titled *Asristirveildrioxe* packs 99 tracks of Orthrelm's music, adding up to a grand total of 12 minutes. What Orthrelm calls music, however, many will probably peg as a manufacturing error or at least a blistering cacophony. It's a calculated cacophony though, forged with short bursts of frenzied, jazz-meets-a-Maiden-solo guitar sure to leave listeners dizzy. These are the hellish, Bizarro-World versions of the hot licks you play on a vintage Flying V before handing it back to the music store clerk, warning him, "you might want to let that cool down, buddy." Drums are mysteriously absent from the lion's share of the disc, though this should come as no surprise since Orthrelm also disposes with other pop mechanisms such as vocals, choruses, chords and any discernible, repeating structure. Most will probably find the noise of this technically apt duo abrasive or pretentiously experimental. Those brave few who dare, however, will be carving the name of this album into their skin—providing they can spell it right. (Tolotta, P.O. Box 4412, Arlington, VA 22204)

—Mike McKee

**PAN AMERICAN**

**The River Made No Sound**



When Mark Nelson is not making music in Labrador, he's doing it with his permanent side project Pan American. The new album, *The River Made No Sound*, much like previous works, is a journey through minimalist soundscapes, littered with spaced-out chirps, glitches, and low, pulsing beats. "Raised Wall" is a collage of

various electronic sounds over a bed of mellow synths, while the hypnotic sounds of the wind on "St. Cloud" may prove to be far too relaxing. Overall, the minimalist dub of *The River Made No Sound* is a welcome diversion. It's nice to have on those days when you just want to relax and wind down after a busy day. (Kranky, P.O. Box 578743, Chicago 60657)

—Jonathan Cholewa

**PENNSYLVANIA MUZZLE LOADER**

**Keystone State**



Ignore the lousy name. Aspera's drummer, Drew Worth, takes a vacation from the Psychedelphia scene to kick out some raw rock 'n roll. Pennsylvania Muzzle Loader's debut EP mixes up the Stones circa *Exile* ("Rock You Up"), AC/DC ("My Engine Runs on Alcohol") and even a melodic number ("Shiver Me Timbers"), which is as close as this band is going to get to bittersweet. The sound isn't as ironed out as Rye Coalition or the Tight Bros., but Pennsylvania Muzzle Loader is a band with the potential to really shake things up. Rumors indicate a fuller release from the band in coming months, courtesy of former Excelsior rockers, suggesting one of America's most out of shape cities still has a lot to offer in the way of rock music. (Hot Dog City, 752 S. 16th St., Philadelphia, 19146)

—Charles Spano

**PENTAGRAM**

**First Daze Here: The Vintage Collection**



With a name like Pentagram, one might associate this band with satanic or black metal. Alas, this it not the case at all. *First Daze Here* was recorded by an obscure heavy rock band existing in the early '70s. At long last, the good folks at Relapse have made the group's vintage material available again with this release. The style of lyrics and music found here are not far removed from those of the band's contemporaries. Influences such as Black Sabbath, Blue Cheer and Jethro Tull, among others, can be heard on all 12 tracks presented here. This compilation album conjures up (no pun intended) the spirit and sound of a bygone era in rock, perhaps the most influential one. Fans of vintage heavy rock and stoner rock will definitely appreciate Pentagram. (Relapse, P.O. Box 2060, Upper Darby, PA 19082)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

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**RED SEPTEMBER**  
Wake Up Call



Is it me, or is a song about the joys of the internet just a touch lame? This ode to the web comes nestled within an album full of satirical social commentary dampened by cheese and clichés. The music is a mix of Bob Mould, The Clash and The Replacements, but the weaknesses of the album are the lyrics, the presentation and the cheesy liner notes suggesting “play loud for maximum damage.” There are some strong points, however, like the riffs invoking memories of very early Green Day and the wit displayed in a song title like “My God (Can Beat Up Your God).” Overall, Red September needs some time to grow and shake some of its bad habits. With a little maturity, this band could become something substantial. (Static)

—Zach Needles

**THE RIFFS**  
Dead End Dream



Should Steve Jones of the Sex Pistols really be held up as a sound and style to emulate? Given Steve was just struggling to play Who and Chuck Berry riffs, maybe not. The Pistols were great in their time, but times have changed. The Riffs are a throwback act, unearthing the corpse of Sid Vicious and dragging it around the stage. This is low-effort punk ‘n roll with nothing special to offer. These boys have too much playing ability to live under the shadow of someone else’s style. (TKO)

—Mark Ginsburg

**THE ROOTS OF ORCHIS**  
Some Things Plural



The Roots Of Orchis lay down extremely chilled instrumental hip hop background jams. This sounds a lot like the work of a single DJ, but it’s actually a whole band—an interesting footnote to an already engaging listen. The band has crafted some very unassuming, atmospheric slow-jazz perfect for a relaxing listen. The only problem is the moments tip-toeing between laid-back and overstayed welcome. What keeps the Roots Of Orchis afloat are the relaxed grooves and the band’s uncanny knack for creating atmospheres. (Slowdance, P.O. Box 30375, Portland, OR 97294)

—Zach Needles

**KELLY SLUSHER**  
Rocks and Tears



After recording *Rocks and Tears* with

Rocketship’s Dustin Reske producing and contributing backing vocals, Kelly Slusher packed her bags, bid farewell to California and headed to Philadelphia, where she continues to sulk. Fans of the debut EP *The Lovely Leave* (Dutch Courage/Red Square) will undoubtedly rejoice in this stellar full-length, released on the prestigious Spanish label, Elefant. *Rocks and Tears* is a study in melancholy-sans-ennui. Armed with some cheap keyboards, a trusty drum machine and one of the most angelic voices to hit the indie scene since Pam Berry, Slusher takes listeners on a journey into her world of broken hearts and chilly evenings. “I Need You” is an ace up-tempo number, while “Sing That Song” and “One More Thing” highlight Slusher’s mellow side, not unlike Marine Girls or an indie pop Portishead. (www.elefant.com)

—Neal Ramirez

**SPORTIQUE**  
Modern Museums



At the beginning of the ‘80s, both the British pop and independent charts were brimming with enough synth-pop and lightweight new wave to fill multitudes of sweet sick lads searching for eventually what was to become Blur. Sportique probably blossomed from this moment in rock ‘n roll, hoping to bring the post-pop sound full circle. The band’s latest effort, *Modern Museums*, is filled with brash, spiteful rock songs both immediate and catchy with no traces of the above. Impetuous, snarling vocals litter the band’s post Brit-punk sound with poppy guitars interweaving over a strong, controlled backbeat. While Sportique falters at points (“How Many Times..?” and “Art & Shopping” both sound too pretentious for their own good), *Modern Museums* proves an exciting and compulsively listenable album. (Matinee, P.O. Box 76302, Washington, DC 20013)

—Dan Pastorius

**SUCKAMCS**  
Da Album



Irony rappers walk a thin line between so-bad-it’s-good and simply so-bad. SuckaMCs find themselves in the latter category. With the exception of the chorus in “Jump Up and Down on My Nuts” (the only glimmer of hope the SuckaMCs don’t share the same Greek-lettered tattoo), *Da Album* is about as good as a first-semester date rape. Perhaps they should listen to Black Tea (star of the indie-released *Winners of the World’s Worst Rap Contest* EP)

and learn how a true master of irony rocks the mic. Of course, they could also go back in the studio and work on a response to “Shaniqua Don’t Live Here No Mo’,” because I’m sure the brothers of Sig Ep need something to listen to when they’re playing beer pong. I pray the only people buying this record say things like, “Dude, I know this guy named Tim, but everybody calls him Keg Brains. He gets totally fucked up and starts rapping.” (Ace Fu, P.O. Box 552, New York 10009)

—Don Malkemes

**SUKILOVE**  
Talking in the Dark



Zzzzzzz. We here at alt-country/rock-pop headquarters punched in some numbers to reveal Sukilove is in fact a side project of Chitlin’ Fooks frontman Pascal Deweze of Belgium. In Fooks, Deweze is paired with Carol Van Dyk of Dutch alternative legends Bettie Serveert. Our suggestion to Mr. Deweze—if Chitlin’ Fooks is indeed your day job, please, by all means, keep it. *Talking in the Dark*, this seven-song mini-album, is just fine. But, man, the first song—the plodding, sulking title track—is a whop-

ping five-plus minutes of sleep-inducing guitar strumming. “We’ll Sleep Together Again” sounds like something quiet and rowdy, but soon slinks into quiet boredom. Where’s the rock, baby? It’s just not here. So, we’ll have to settle for the soft pop. Deweze paired with a slide-guitar serves up a tasty slice of Paul Westerberg-esque songcraft on “White Boy Blues.” The rest is just a snoozefest. (Parasol, 303 West Griggs St., Urbana, IL 61801)

—Pete Bothum

**TAPPING THE VEIN**  
The Damage



Within the first 15 seconds of “The Ledge,” the listener is lured in by the soothing sounds of electronic music, coupled with the soft vocals of the lead female singer. It’s not too long, however, before the opening track on Tapping the Vein’s *The Damage* shifts into a hard, aggressive sound. The rest of the album seems to veer back and forth between these two musical extremes, often touching many points in between. For all of its musical diversity, Tapping the Vein’s songs do have several qualities in common—all

continued on page 63

**Here are some items that you might enjoy**

 <p><b>Mark Kleiner</b> Love to Nite CD \$12ppd former Jungle and Sister Lovers frontman Mark Kleiner's debut album with Kurt Dahlke (New Pornographers) on drums and Pete Bastard (Flash Bastard) on bass</p>	 <p><b>young and sexy</b> Stand up for Your Mother CD \$12ppd debut album by this lush co-ed co-lead pop combo that might have you thinking of the Carpenters and Guided by Voices</p>
 <p><b>Tennessee Twin</b> Free to Do What? CD \$12ppd debut album by Cindy Wolfe, imagine BC rainforest folk/country with a Valley Girl twang!</p>	 <p><b>Various Artists</b> Tribute to Nashville CD \$12ppd Kelly Hogan, Dallas Good, Neko Case, Carolyn Mark and others pay tribute to Robert Altman's classic '70s musical movie</p>
 <p><b>Volumizer</b> Gaga for Gigi CD \$12ppd ex members of the Painted Sticks, Disrags and U-3RKS team up to create a brand new buzz-saw punk rock document with lots of pop!</p>	

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# STRAIGHT FROM THE EDGE

by Amy Sciarretto

VISION OF DISORDER has broken up, according to guitarist Matt Baumbach. Former members of the Long Island band are working on other music projects. RIP, VOD... Brutal metalcore band MARTYR AD, featuring former members of DISEMBODIED, has moved from FERRET MUSIC to VICTORY RECORDS... POISON THE WELL is in the process of signing to VELVET HAMMER/ATLANTIC. Congrats to the Florida metalcore behemoth... Guitarist Lou "Boulder" Richards has left HATEBREED and will not be replaced. The band will soldier on as a four-piece... BLINDSIDE's new album, *Silence*, will be out next month... TRY.FAIL.TRY has reunited after a two year hiatus. The New Jersey band is on the road and will record this year... Boston's esteemed AMERICAN NIGHTMARE will work on new material this summer. The band is currently dealing with copyright infringement over its name, since a disappointing bar band from Philadelphia now owns the copyright for the name. The situation is being handled by lawyers from both parties, but we all know how a street battle would play out... Washington, D.C.'s GRAY MATTER—featuring Dante Ferrando from IRON CROSS—has called it quits after playing its final show on the roof of FOOD FOR THOUGHT, a bar/restaurant frequented by the band... Anthemic emo legend BOY SETS FIRE braces for the release of its WIND UP RECORDS debut album. While the band reportedly sticks to its patented hardcore/emo formula, only the public can decide whether BSF will fare as well as labelmates CREED... Philadelphia's TOO DAMN HYPE label has released a flurry of devastating hardcore from the likes of HEIDNIK and HEROD... LOVE IS RED is circulating a demo called *The Sweet Surrender*... THE ROBOTIC EMPIRE label is circulating some voracious metalcore these

days. Empty those wallets for THE NOW's self-titled release, which is screamy, dissonant metalcore in the vein of CONVERGE... The new TIME IN MALTA will surprise fans of the California band's previous releases with its new album, due on EQUAL VISION later this month. Stepping away from the blistering vitriol of the latter release, in favor of more palpable post-hardcore, the band's new album promises to leave an impression... KIDNEY ROOM RECORDS' star band FRAIL has reportedly parted ways. Rumors suggest some of the members have already started new projects. Keep those ears peeled... SNAPCASE is done recording *Pariahs*, and the band has stepped things up a notch with songs sure to bring back the mosh. Kudos to the band and producer BRIAN MCTERNAN for making a record both rocking and hardcore at the same time... Metalcore band ENDICOTT is about to replace the late, great ONE KING DOWN as the kings of Albany hardcore. The band's demo, featuring carnivorous songs "Surfacing" and "Taking Back The Hour," will hurl unsuspecting listeners into a coma. Boutique hardcore labels, take note... Be on the lookout for great things from OPEN HAND... Former TOOTH AND NAIL faves PROJECT 86 are headed into the studio with Matt Hyde, who manned the boards for the latest Hatebreed and SLAYER albums... Hardcorephiles still mourning the demise of female-fronted WALLS OF JERICHO need to check out MANHUNT—the band offers vicious, estrogen-fueled metalcore of the highest order... EXOTIC FEVER RECORDS fave LIGHT THE FUSE AND RUN continues to wow crowds with its debut full-length, *All Your Base is Belong to Us*. Featuring former members of FORCE FED GLASS, the Richmond, Va.-based band blends intricate guitar work with the heavy weight of metallic hardcore. More next month...



SNAPCASE



TIME IN MALTA

**RECORDS** *continued from page 61*  
are captivating, sensual and even hypnotic at times. Consistency is a virtue when it involves these types of qualities. With luck, Tapping the Vein should have no trouble attracting a sizable audience. (**Nuclear Blast America, 1453-A 14th St., #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404**)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

## TEMPLARS

### The Horns Of Hattin



Ever been standing outside a show, listening to alcohol-influenced reminiscings of punk rock glory days? You know, the ones shouted from the brat who was in diapers when Combat 84 was playing an encore version of "Rapist," when The Last Resort was releasing radio-edited versions of "The Resort Bootboys," and maybe he was even in elementary school when Blitz reformed with a drum machine. He's the guy who thinks everything that was real came and went in the early '80s. He's wrong. And he needs to take a look around and take part in some very special things happening today. The Templars are one of the bands taking street punk to a level of which the granddaddy's of Oi! who influenced them never even dreamed. Following The Templars' medieval motif, it would be appropriate to describe the new disc with words such as "battering ram," "two-handed sword" and "battle tested." The band deserves more praise than such simple wordplay, however. Simply put, in 20 years the kids of tomorrow will be wishing they had lived through the days when The Templars rocked the warehouses and the dive bars of today. What's more, this band shows no signs of venturing into vain, mainstream aspirations or weak electronica—and The Templars have enough songs to avoid repeating one for an encore.

—Louis Woodward

## TOOG

### Easy Toog For Beginners



Toog (a.k.a. Weinzaepflen) isn't just French, he's Parisian. Though he is more attractive than a member of Radiohead, his oddball musicianship is what will catch the listener's interest—at least initially. Thematically *Easy Toog for Beginners* contains more of the bizarre tales the mysterious singer featured on his domestic debut, *6633*. Most of the album is sung in his native

tongue, but some of the better songs—such as the touching "The Wild Jackalope"—present the Toog craziness in English. Whatever language Toog chooses, his most prominent vernacular is the electro-baroque musical backdrop calling to mind Wendy Carlos and Momus (the even weirder Brit who helped turn Toog onto music making). In Japan and certain parts of Europe Toog could play arenas for hours. Everywhere else, he will induce some festive laughs but won't satisfy over time. (**Le Grand Magistery, P.O. Box 611, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303**)

—Neal Ramirez

## VARIAC

### Hard Starward



Variac tries hard to ignite on "Chicago," with its driving guitars and pulsating hi-hat line. But something is missing—raw energy. What's missing is the gut. *Hard Starward* is rife with tasty guitar work (somewhat resembling early U2), rich in dynamics and catchy hooks and an overall marketable rock package (think The Calling-meets-any indie band USA). The best song on the disc, "It Always Is," reflects this best. But without the oomph, all the well-crafted material in the world won't save this record from being bland. Variac does have potential, however. It just needs to harness its inner rock star. (**Rustbelt, 118 E. Seventh St., Royal Oak, MI 48067**)

—Liana Jonas

## VENUS THROW

### Film Noir



Venus Throw kicks out dirty, '50s-inspired rock—a fairly tedious and annoying genre, to be blunt. There are a few high points to be found on *Film Noir*, however. The hot-rod guitar work of Bruce Smith conjures comparisons to George Thorogood, while the second track, "Walk Dumaine," is a backwoods shuffle distanced enough from swing to remain enjoyable. The real anchor weighing on *Venus Throw* is the overall vibe this greaser's paradise was contrived too earnestly to take seriously. If it focuses more on its strong points and less on nostalgia, the band could make a much better impression. (**Bossy L'il Thing, 10301 Duryea Drive, Richmond, VA 23235**)

—Zach Needles



## JOY ELECTRIC

### THE ART & CRAFT OF POPULAR MUSIC

Joy Electric is not fashion. It is Style. Joy Electric maintains its utter uniqueness and incomparability. This retrospective is a simple document to stellar songwriting and proof that a musician doesn't need to interpret the trends, but remain true to their vision regardless of what others think.



## SQUAD FIVE-0

### SQUAD FIVE-0

For their second album on T&N, this gritty rock band records with producer Barry Poynter (Zao, Juliana Theory) and heads off in a different direction, closer to the street rock of the Clash meets the Ramones meets the Rolling Stones. A dozen songs with more singing and less chanting, and a new upbeat sound. Featuring "I Don't Want to Change the World I Want to Change Your Mind," "Screaming With the Sirens," and "Underground Hearts."



## MEWITHOUTYOU

### [A-->B] LIFE

In the now saturated post-hardcore scene new T&N band mewithoutYou proves that their sound is truly revolutionary. Drawing inspiration from Fugazi, Radiohead and Refused, mwy creates intelligent, emotional and downright rockin' music.



## STARFLYER 59

### CAN'T STOP EATING

SF59 reader Jason Martin gives some of his most arresting songs for the EPs they've released between their several brilliant full-lengths, and this new one features the brilliant lead off single "Compeing," as well as "Happy Birthday John" and "Theme from Dromedary."



## ACE TROUBLESHOOTER

### THE MADNESS OF THE CROWDS

Twelve astonishing new melodic rock songs fill this new album from Ace Troubleshooter, the Minnesota band that toured their debut into the hearts of Americans coast to coast. Ace has made amazing strides musically, and lead vocalist John Warner's sublime and expressive singing is sure to attract many new fans of modern rock. Includes "Estelle," "2:00 Your Time" and the title track.

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**THE WATCHERS**

**Royal Hunt**



Fusing hard rock with lush synthesizer sounds, The Watchers won't settle for simple, three-chord rock songs. For proof, look no further than "Intervention," the 14-minute opus starting off *Royal Hunt*. Full of driving tempos, solid metal guitar riffs, colorful keyboard passages and thematic vocal harmonies, the music never becomes repetitive or predictable, remaining fresh for its entire duration. The rest of the songs consist of live versions of several tracks, including "Lies" and "Epilogue," as well as remakes of four of the band's previous studio tracks. As a compilation, *Royal Hunt* is a worthwhile release for existing fans of The Watchers and would make an excellent introduction for newcomers. (Century Media, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

**WHIPPERSNAPPER**

**Appearances Wear Thin**



Interesting, challenging punk is a rare commodity, and the verdict is

still out on whether Whippersnapper qualifies. *Appearances* fails to challenge or raise the bar, but then one could say the same about Missy Elliot and girlfriend basically ruled the party jams court this year. Simply put, while Whippersnapper hardly invents the wheel, there's no reason to not have some fun with it, if you're into the whole modern punk thang. The vocals are pretty and brim with predictable but tangible emotion, the drums pound out the expected gallop and the guitars add a bit of California flavor. Whippersnapper seems competent enough, though it's clear the band won't truly shine until it aims for something outside the box. (Fueled By Ramen, P.O. Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604)

—Jared Hoffman

**WONDERLICK**

**Wonderlick**



Composed on a lark and never intended for official release, internet music mavens Jay Blumenfeld and Tim Quirk (a.k.a Wonderlick) have rendered an accidental concept album. A tuneful collection of techno-colored dream pop built upon acoustic guitars and

drum machines, the vibe rekindles memories of the Cure, Echo and the Bunnymen and Love and Rockets. Employing effects-laden vocals atop reverse loops, drowsy pedal tones and cacophonous hoots, grunts, groans and spoken word, cuts such as "Donner Lake," "Hearts and Stars" and a devilish cover of Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart" succeed on pure moxie. Celebrity sleuth notes cameos by punk magician Pen Jillette and Steve Michner of Big Dipper whilst vocal harmonies by Court & Spark's Wendy Allen provide the female foil. (Future Farmer, P.O. Box 225128, San Francisco 94122)

—Tom Semioli

**THE WOULD BE GOODS**

**Brief Lives**



The Would Be Goods' *Brief Lives* is one of those rare joys—an album in which nearly every track is just as enjoyable as the next. Crooner Jessica Griffin will no doubt remind some listeners of Dominique Durand from Ivy, while the music can best be described as '60s-inspired British pop. The violins on "Bad Lord Byron" transport audiences back to medieval

times, while "Vivre Se Vie" adds an interesting twist. With so much attention paid to the current crop of male, guitar-oriented English bands, the pop genius of The Would Be Goods may get overlooked. All the same, *Brief Lives* packs the sort of transcendental delivery needed to defy the harsh environment, ranking the band alongside peers like Coldplay or Travis. (Matinee)

—Jonathan Cholewa

**RICHARD YOUNGS**

**May**



Red House Painters leader Mark Kozelek is blessed with the ability to make 10-minute folk songs interesting. Richard Youngs is not. By abandoning the traditional verse/chorus/verse structure for more of a free flowing method, Youngs' works have a more hymnal quality. His delivery is somewhat similar to that of Paul Simon minus the pop sensibilities, and his style might actually have potential were songs like "Wynding Hills of Maine" not clocking in at more than seven minutes. There's no excuse for a 40-minute, six-song EP. (Jagjaguwar)

—Christopher Fritz

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# Punk Rock Times

Your monthly source for new punk rock releases NO. 27 July 2002



**Dillinger Four**

*Sittin' in the Comedy*  
A series of the classic 14 to 16 min, catchy, mean and best of all Punk Rock. FAT / FAT001 Out Now



**Hanover Saints**

*Truth Rings Out*  
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**Hopelessly Devoted to You, Vol 4**

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**The Mighty Mighty Bosstones**

*A Jackknife to a Swan*  
11 New songs from the Kings of Punk. Side One. Punkrock / SOT1234 Out 7/02



**Noise Ratchet**

*Till the Hell Falls*  
When the hell did they come from? Punkrock / MTRC Corp TMG003 Out Now!



**Original Sinners**

*Live, Legends and Prophecy*  
Live, Legends and Prophecy. Featuring Exotic Elements from the legendary Punk band "S". NITRO / 12847 Out 6/26/02



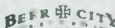
**Time in Malta**

*A Second Engine*  
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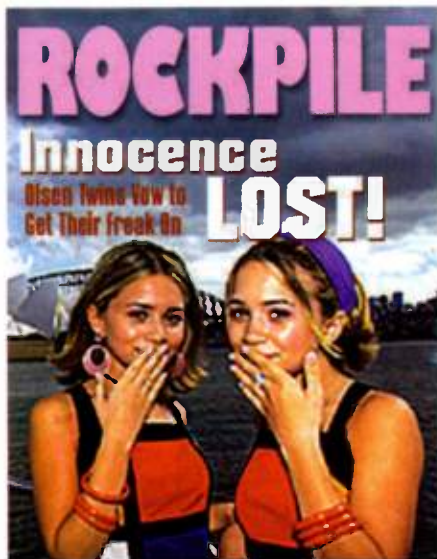
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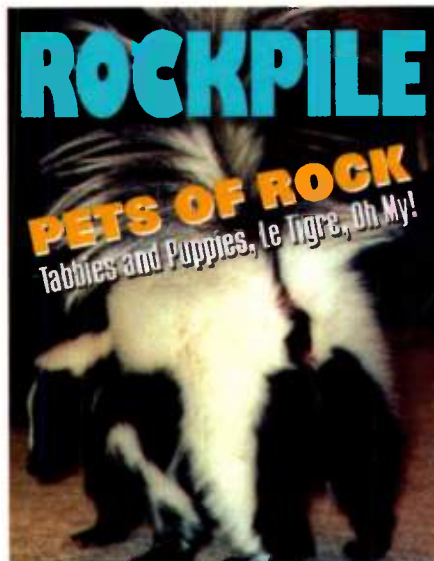
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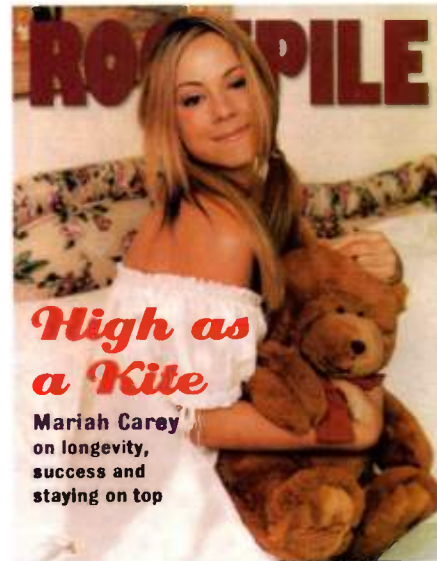
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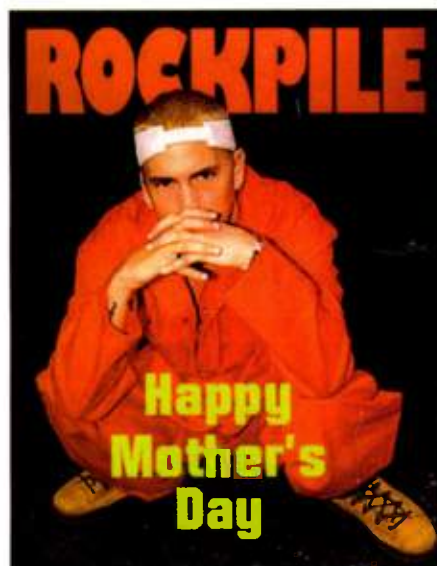
**May 2001** Our controversial teen issue featured soon-to-be-legal child stars Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen, who colorfully challenged reigning MTV lolitas, declaring “we’re four implants and a record deal away from making Britney look like Mother F\*\*king Theresa.” Just moments before going to print, however, Uncle Jesse refused to sign some last-minute release forms. Following Dave Coulier’s advice, we “cut it out.”



**July 2001** Engaging profiles of famed four-legged companions had our July issue shaping up pretty well, when everything went to the dogs. A white stripe painted down the back of Gwen Stefani’s cat brought nature’s fury crashing down upon us as Krist Novoselic’s skunk, Courtney, gave chase—a slave to its libido. Once cornered, Courtney stunned reporters with an impressively effective stink gland. The tapes were destroyed when one writer dove—handbag, recorder and all—into a tub of tomato juice, ruining the interviews.



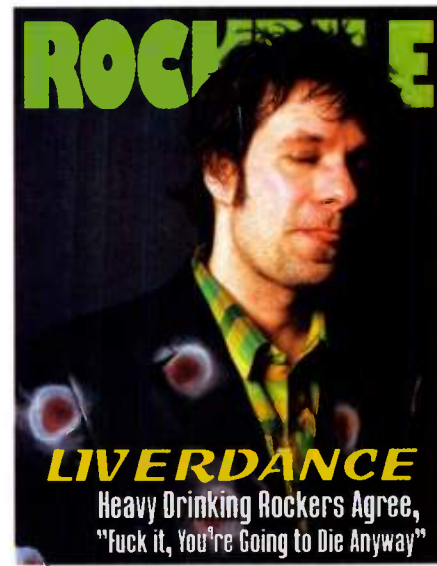
**February 2002** *Rockpile* attorneys virtually red-penned the majority of Reed Jackson’s interview with floundering diva Mariah Carey in the wake of the flop of *Glitter* and her absurd appearance on MTV’s *Cribs*. The diva’s lawyers threatened to sue if we ran the story with the subsequent pullout quote, “I’ve got a fucking habit to support.” To compound our problems, ad reps from Jim Beam refused to be associated with some of ways their products incidentally appeared in photos taken at Carey’s estate.



**May 2002** It was a great disappointment to 86 our very special Mother’s Day cover story. Despite several small, heartwarming sidebars with famous artists and their mothers, we were left with very little printable copy from our heated chat with badboy MC Eminem and his mom. Our staff photographer assigned to the shoot received a broken nose trying to pull apart the feuding duo, after which the real Slim Shady proceeding to stomp on the interview tapes.



**June 2002** After our most recent reader poll demonstrated an alarming shortage of female readers in the seven-to-14 age demographic, our Aaron Carter issue sought to recoup the lost sales. Imagine our surprise when we were scooped by *Tiger Beat*’s full-color pull-out poster issue, leaving us with no other option but to run our back-up story on Face to Face (whoever they are).



**July 2002** Our tribute to the herculean drinking of rock’s masters of longevity featured exclusive interviews comparing the waning internal organs of Keith Richards, Paul Westerberg, Shane MacGowan and Tom Waits. The riveting cover story was nixed in the 11th hour when the month’s key ads for Viagra and Johnson & Johnson’s rubbing alcohol pulled out.

# WELCOME TO THE SUBTERRANEAN SECT



**ORIGIN**  
*Informis, Infinitas, Inhumanitas*

Merciless, enormous and all-encompassing, ORIGIN deliver a sonic barrage of inhuman proportions with the mind-eroding *Informis Infinitas Inhumanitas*. Faster, darker and more complex than anything the death genre has issued to date, *Informis Infinitas Inhumanitas* showcases ORIGIN's otherworldly musicianship while delivering heinous amounts of the band's unique "aggro-tech" extremity. On tour with NILE, ARCH ENEMY and HATE ETERNAL this summer.



**BROKEN BONES**  
*Bonecrusher*

The sound of BROKEN BONES is the sound of punk at its most primal and vicious, the crashing roar of pissed-off youth taken to its angry limit. One of the most vital hardcore punk acts of all time, BROKEN BONES formed out of the ashes of DISCHARGE and took the British underground by storm. In the mid-80's crossover scene BROKEN BONES exploded like a full-speed, head-on punk/metal train wreck. The acid test for anyone who claims to be hardcore today, BROKEN BONES' sound and spirit remains punk, drunk, and loud as fuck! THE FIRST TIME ON CD!



**DIMENSION ZERO**  
*Silent Night Fever*

The Swedish super group Dimension Zero features the talents of Jesper Stromblad and Glenn Ljungstrom of In Flames, Jocke Gothberg (ex-Marduk) and Hans Nilsson (Luciferian, Diabolique). "not only is my head blown clean off my shoulders, but also the day this album is released, Death Metal will certainly feel invigorated much in the same way it was when Arch Enemy's *Wages Of Sin* and Nile's *Black Seeds Of Vengeance* were unleashed upon the world."—DIGITALMETAL.COM



**SUSPERIA**  
*Vindication*

Norway's Susperia boasts a stellar line-up of highly skilled musicians (Dimmu Borgir, Sathyron, Old Man's Child) whose roots are firmly entrenched within the Norwegian heavy metal scene. Officially the final record to be recorded at the recently closed Abyss Studios with Peter Tagtgren, *Vindication* builds upon the extreme roots of their prior release, *Predominance*, while incorporating newer and more diverse elements. Susperia are not black, not death, just pure energetic, aggressive METAL!



**PRIMAL FEAR**  
*Black Sun*

Primal Fear's last release, *Nuclear Fire*, helped establish them as one of Europe's leading "true metal" exports, and their newest release, *Black Sun*, will surely continue this trend. The German commandos of Primal Fear have conquered Europe and now have their sites set on America. No one will be safe from the piercing metal fangs of the new kings of true metal, Primal Fear!



**SKINLAB**  
*reVolting Room*

The culmination of three years worth of writing, recording and touring, *reVoltingRoom* is not only Skinlab's most accessible record to date, but also their most mature and focused offering yet. Produced by Steve Evetts (Snapcase, Hatebreed, Dillinger Escape Plan) and mixed by Andy Sneap (Nevermore, Earth Crisis, Stuck Mojo), *reVoltingRoom* will be the group's most successful and critically acclaimed release to date. See Skinlab with Superjoint Ritual in Phila on 6/9 and in Pittsburgh on 6/13!



**MARDUK**  
*La Grande Danse Macabre*

Black metal pioneers Marduk heed the call to arms with their latest studio release, *La Grande Danse Macabre*, which is set to seize the throne of the genre's lecherous kingdom with instrumental wizardry and coarse vocal majesty. Out now, Marduk's *Blackcrowned Box Set*, containing two cds worth of unreleased and hard to find material, a video cassette, and a booklet featuring tons of never before seen deprived imagery as well as a full biography! See Marduk with Danzig at the Electric Factory in Phila on Sat. June 22!



**AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED**  
*Frozen Corpse Stuffed With Dope*

An overwhelming, concentrated outpouring of perceptual stimuli, *Frozen Corpse Stuffed with Dope* is a snarling digital nightmare, dealing lethal doses of ANB's dementia-producing "machine gun hyper-grind". Nasty, systematic beatings arise from 2000 beat per minute drum onslaughts, vein-splitting vocals and a piranha-like six-string attack. Intricate, obtuse artwork by Aaron Turner (ISIS) further adds to the surrealistic AGORAPHOBIC vision. Features members of Pig Destroyer!!!!



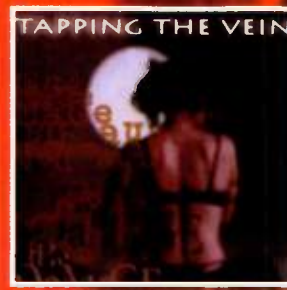
**ELCTRIC WIZARD**  
*Let Us Prey*

A marijuana-induced minefield of riffs, alchemy and screams of the undead! On tour with Sons Of Otis. See Electric Wizard @ Khyber Pass 6/27!



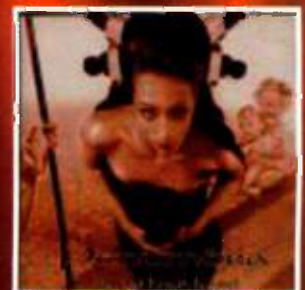
**EARTHRIDE**  
*Taming of the Demons*

Dave (Spirit Caravan) Shermans' whiskey burned vokills train wreck into a punishing mountain of bleak Doom. Envision a Hell's Angels rally colliding with a Black Sabbath concert. UGLY, RAW, NASTY PURE MARYLAND DOOM METAL!



**TAPPING THE VEIN**  
*The Damage*

The seductively dark blend of heavy alternative, goth and hard rock bestows Tapping The Vein's full-length debut *The Damage* with a vast spectrum of musical expression that will appeal to a diverse fan base ranging from Tori Amos and Sheryl Crow to fans of Lacuna Coil and The Gathering! See Tapping the Vein with Kings X at The Trocadero on June 4th!



**PENUMBRA**  
*The Last Bewitchment*

Much acclaimed Metal/Goth with tinges of Theater, Theater of Tragedy, and Cradle of Filth, Penumbra weave elegant passages with trained twin female vocals and smooth chorus, while using rough male vocals to back their extreme metal foundations. Already hailed as the band to watch in Europe, Penumbra is sure to be a leader on the American Goth/Metal front.

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