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
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
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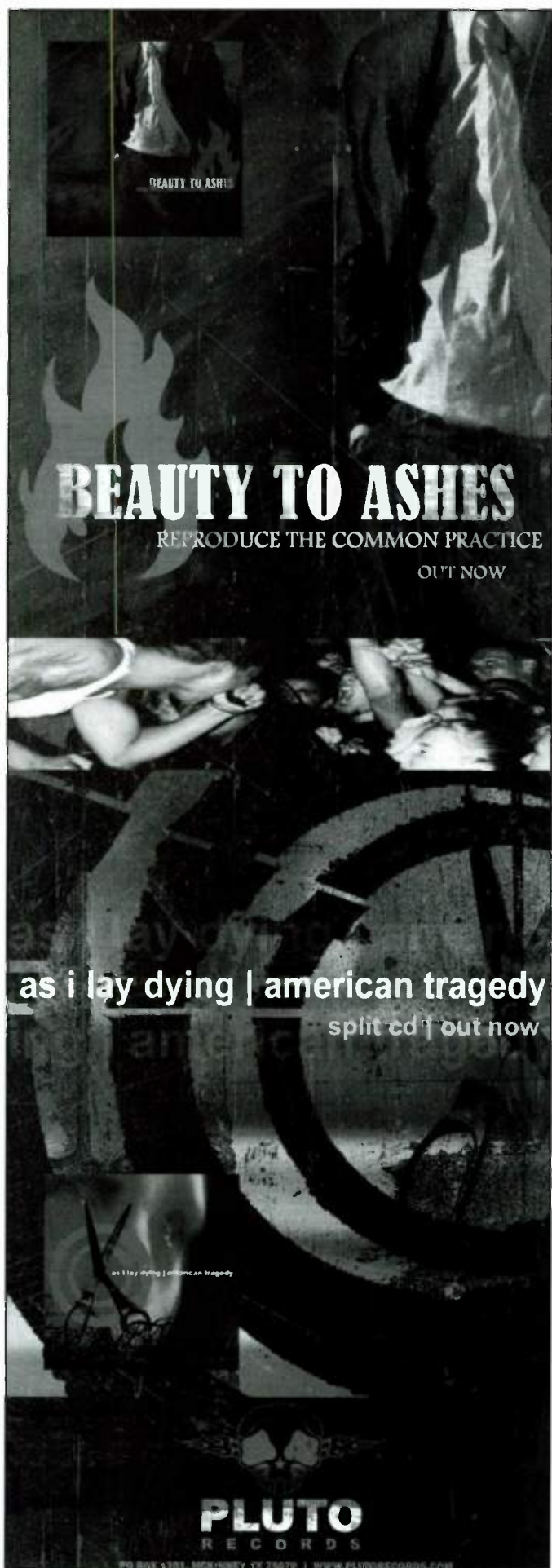
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The Rumpshakers Have Their Say

I wanted to write in because I feel like your magazine has improved a lot since I first started picking it up. Whereas before I was never too excited about many of the artists you covered, I now find myself stopping to read a handful of articles each month, which is a good sign since I usually just look at the pictures. I noticed you cover a good amount of hip hop these days, and I was wondering, as a fan, why you hadn't thought about covering more electronic, drum and bass music. If you ask me, DJs and producers like Carl Cox, Timo Maas, Paul Oakenfold and Carl Michaels are just as exciting, if not more, than the latest emo boy band. I just think it's a shame that artists like this get dismissed as disposable dance tracks when they deserve a lot more credit for what they do. Just a suggestion. Keep up the good work.

Nikki Domingues
New York

Floyd Fever—Catch It!

More Floyd! More Floyd! More Floyd!

Bruce
via email

Sworn Enemy of Metallica

As a 60-year-old rock groupie, I am not your desired demographic, but I do go to many of the original music clubs, buy the music and am always looking for guidance as to what to listen to. Print alone is not the best medium to accomplish that objective.

I was impressed with your publication and have a suggestion. It would be much more valuable to both your readers and the bands if it facilitated access to the music. Possibilities include creating a website where a full cut from each (selected) artist in your pages would be available to hear/download; and/or distributing a sampler CD bundled with the magazine.

The website could provide either links for purchase or you could do that in house. I do not have the requisite familiarity with the music business to be more spe-

cific, but my experience as an entrepreneurial lawyer leads me to believe it is all doable.

Richard Block
Philadelphia

I Believe the Term is "Silver Fox"

Nice Jets article. What else can be said, but, "Ohmigod, Blake looks O-L-D!" Granted, it had been years since I'd seen Jets [to Brazil], or Jawbreaker for that matter. Still, it was startling to see how much so prominent an artist had aged.

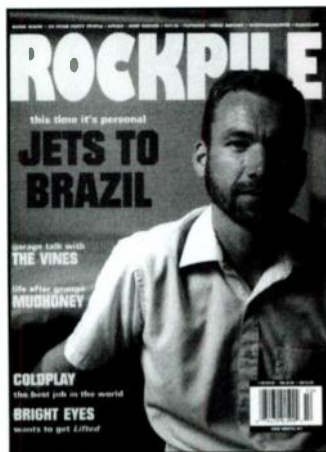
Tom
Queens, NY

SEPARATED AT BIRTH

Here's some mix ups from the nursery I thought I'd share...

- The Donnas* and...
- Jem and the Holograms*.
- Jimmy Eat World* and...
- Scrooge McDuck* diving through a huge pile of money.
- Mary Timony* and...*Winona Ryder's* character from *Beetlejuice*.
- Billy Corgan* and...
- Yul Brenner* in *Westworld*.
- The Promise Ring* and...
- A hungry squirrel* foraging for nuts.
- Beachwood Sparks* and...
- The Star Trek* episode where they go back to the wild West.
- Ryan Adams* and...
- Mayor McCheese*.
- Conor Oberst (Bright Eyes)* and...
- A heaping bowl of steamy Cream of Wheat*.

Reed Jackson
Seattle, WA



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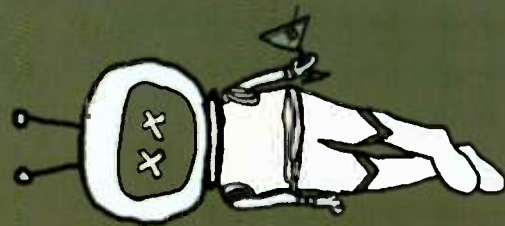
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What on Earth?: An Obscure Band Returns to the Stage

An astonishingly clean-cut Dylan Carlson made the live rounds this fall, marking the first time in eight years he's taken the highly influential, yet largely obscure Earth out on the road. Fans in a handful of East Coast cities who weren't quite sure what to make of Carlson's pre-tour comments about "listening to a lot of jazz lately" were treated to sessions of 45-minute-long explanations marked by rattling feedback and free-form noise. Luckily, the experimentation was balanced with a consistent return to groove-oriented, fuzzed-out tunes. The slightly trying density of the improv stretches were saved through the impressive drum work of Carlson's partner, Adrienne Davies, who clearly had no objections pounding the hell out of her kit. Earth continues to explore the balance of quaking walls of crackling noise and the gentle squeals of an overdriven guitar.

Although the band had been largely inactive for the past several years, a re-release of some rare material on No Quarter Records helped revitalize both the fans and the players. While last year's *Sunn Amps and Smashed Guitars* caught the attention of new fans, the big questions now is "When's the new album coming?"

—John Vettese



MODERN MUSIC MINUTES

With releases from **Of Montreal**, **Add N to (X)**, **Apples in Stereo**, **Jets to Brazil** and **El-P**, fall 2002 has already been a busy time for new music. Meanwhile, the winter looks just as promising, with **Rocket From the Crypt** in the post-production stages of a new album on **Vagrant** and trips to the studio from **Yeah Yeah Yeahs**, **Reggie & The Full Effect**, **Alkaline Trio**, **The Strokes** and emo-core dinosaurs **Sense Field**... **Saves the Day** announced yet another lineup change this fall with the departure of guitarist Ted Alexander—the band lost founding drummer Bryan Newman just last year. In lieu of a replacement, singer Chris Conley has taken over guitar duties himself. Wrapping up a tour this October, the band now heads to the studio to work on its follow-up to *Stay What You Are*... San Diego's spastic outfit **The Locust** releases two new discs this winter as well—one being a **John Peel** sessions record, the other slated for a release on **Mike Patton's Ipecac** label... **The Electroclash Tour** kicks off this fall as well, featuring such sex-positive, electronic artists as **Peaches**, **Chicks on Speed** and **Tracy and The Plastics**... Meanwhile, the **CMJ Music Marathon** runs Oct. 30 to Nov. 2 in, where else, New York with performances from every band in the world.



Add N To (X)

FIVE QUESTIONS

glasseater



Glasseater runs New York with an iron grip preceded only by the late, great Notorious B.I.G. As Kings of New York, running Alphabet City, the members of Glasseater channel an electric, urgent sense of hard rock and post-hardcore and run it through the emo machine—no, seriously, they actually own one. Even before the release of the band's debut album, Glasseater had been heralded throughout the underground as the only band "so bling, they're blang." As a click dedicated to its whole, as well as the sum of its parts, the obvious comparisons to Native Tongue, The Warriors and The Bad News Bears have dominated much of the press on this young foursome. Opinionated, earnest and all under 100 pounds, each member brings a delicate nuance to the fold. When pressed, however, the entire group agrees unanimously it is in dire need of a nutritionist on tour.

Answers by Anthony, bass
Describe your prediction for the most inappropriate Halloween costume this year.
Osama bin Laden outfit.

What already existing song could you perform and record better? Why?
An older song that we have called "Breakaway" that's going to be on the new record.

What myth or misconception would you most like to see associated with your band?
That we're rich and famous.

Magazines are always talking about how this or that band are here to save music. As an artist, what do you think is hurting music?
Nu-metal.

What's the first trick to survival you learned on tour?
Eating at taco bell for \$5 a day.

Despite its rather singular sounding name, One Man Army in fact boasts a number of three—Jack Dalrymple (guitar/vocals), Heiko Schrepel (bass) and Chip Hanna of U.S. Bombs on drums. Formed in 1996 in San Francisco, the band has released two full-length albums (Dead End Stories and Last Word Spoken) and toured the United States extensively, opening for the likes of Social Distortion, The Bouncing Souls and others. Now, the band drops its third album on the renowned BYO label. With a healthy stock of influences from The Toy Dolls and the Swingin' Utters, One Man Army enjoys a seat in the East Bay street punk throne. Answers by Heiko Schrepel, bass

Describe your prediction for the most inappropriate Halloween costume this year.
Noelle Bush powdering her nose!

What already existing song could you perform and record better? Why?
"Richmond is a Hard Road to Travel." Because it's paved now and there were no recording studios in 1863.


What myth or misconception would you most like to see associated with your band?
We are or are not in it for the money.

Magazines are always talking about how this or that band are here to save music. As an artist, what do you think is hurting music?
I'm not here to save anything... We are going to see the end of record companies as we know them soon. Digital technology and CD burning are here to stay. Music is going to be

live and performance oriented, which will put the power where it belongs. In the hands of the artists.

What's the first trick to survival you learned on tour?
Don't drive while you're sleeping—or vice-versa.







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ONLY THE STRONG...

ever-evolving Snapcase takes a new turn

It's 10 a.m., and all is well in Buffalo, N.Y. Just home from a European press tour and a three-and-a-half week Canadian jaunt with melodic punkers Rise Against and Strung Out, Snapcase frontman Daryl Taberski is still. Just weeks before the release of his band's fourth album, *End Transmission*—unarguably the group's most ambitious document in its 11-year existence—Taberski, 31, is lounging comfortably in the home he shares with his bride of one year, Elizabeth, and the couple's labrador retriever. He speaks with a so-subtle lisp, softly, barely elevating his voice above a quiet rumble—a truly opposite reflection of the time he spends on stage where he's an overcharged sparkplug. Right now, he's smitten to be the quiet family guy.

Taberski and crew—guitarists Jon Salemi and Frank Vicario, drummer Tim Redmond and bassist Dustin Perry—are, with good reason, pleased with themselves. Perhaps their greatest accomplishment seems to be their ability to remain relevant inside a fast-moving, fickle genre. Despite constant touring in the midst of earning college and graduate degrees, dealing with a near break-up and countless lineup changes, Snapcase has outlasted most contemporary veteran hardcore bands—Earth Crisis broke up in 2001, Strife regrouped to drop *Angermans* last year only to drop off the radar again. Snapcase, however, has remained and has evolved with dignity in the process. With history, honesty and vision in their favor, the members of Snapcase have just created a new masterpiece.

After the release of its previous album, 2000's *Designs for Automotion*, it was obvious the band had not pushed the envelope as far as its members would've liked. Independent, however, from the idea of taking chances within the muscular hardcore scene, *Designs* is a massively strong album with Snapcase embracing familiar pop arrangements and deftly dishing out the band's signature uber-positivism—it proved to be the perfect extension to the furiously emotional 1997 release, *Progression Through Unlearning*.

THE ALBUM IS ABOUT AWARENESS OF WHERE THE WORLD IS HEADING AND WHAT IT'S GOING TO COME DOWN TO

This year, the straightedgers from Buffalo have done it. After demoing 20 songs, tracking 17 and ultimately choosing 13 with the help of producer Brian McTernan (Thrice, Reach the Sky), the quintet has mustered the fortitude to birth something truly unique—a conceptual, hardcore opera.

"We pushed the envelope a lot further this time around," says Taberski. "I am definitely content with the creative output."

Citing some embellishments absent on the final mix, such as Perry's violin contributions and experiments with a stand-up bass, Taberski admits he feels the band still could have pushed things more. Ultimately, he concedes, it was just as important for the band to present a balance so as not to appear like it was trying too hard.

Expanding on the lyrical themes of songs like the Vonnegut-inspired "Harrison Bergeron," from *Progression* and *Designs*' "Typecast Modulator" and "Bleeding Orange," Snapcase inadvertently sculpted a concept album.

"We didn't set out to write a concept album from the get go," Taberski explains. "We just wrote a lot of songs and they inspired it."

In fact, without the literary component—a story set against the backdrop of Earth in 2071—*End Transmission* is a normal Snapcase disc about breaking from society's mold and living life as an individual. This time, the themes are imported to developed characters assigned to play the traditionally anonymous protagonists. In *Transmission*, the pariahs, the lowliest of the savages do little but simply exist in a stifling caste system. The Earth has spawned a



new society where economics, technology and efficiency have taken the place of human emotion. The system yields an advanced civilization for the upper class while the discarded class is left stripped of its identity, barely breathing at the bottom. In "First Word," Taberski screams, "Now it's the end/now it's in sight/now is the start of a future domain/let's start the end."

So begins the revolution against the elite and the hope to escape an overpopulated yet lifeless planet.

"The album is about awareness of where the world is heading and what it's going to come down to," reflects the 30-something frontman. "And in *Transmission's* case, it's too late and there's really nothing to be saved on Earth. The only thing left to do is be brave enough to escape and to leave everything you know behind and just start over."

Though *End Transmission* is heavy in its themes, Taberski warns against reading too far into the specifics. As he sees it, listeners won't need to fixate on the story line just to enjoy the record.

"Sometimes people want music to be the one part of their life where they don't have to think—and that's fine," he reasons. "But for those who want more, it's there."

With the end of *Transmission's* opening track, "Coagulate," it's clear this is no ordinary Snapcase album. "Cadence," a somber, piano-driven segue begins creeping slowly toward the explosiveness of "The Beat"—a slow-motion hammer to the head. And while the album is played with the same precision for which the band is already known, it seems the boys have found a new priority in creating lush atmospheres in addition to the grumbling aggression on each track. In many instances, angular riffs have yielded to cascading chords, static screaming has given way to spoken-word verses. Perry's bass work is busy but tasteful, adding a remarkable amount of texture to moodier selections. In songs like "Exile Etiquette"—driven by Redmond's tribal drumming and a swelling chorus—and "A Synthesis of Classic Forms," Snapcase's typically bright, polished tone sends Tool-esque darkness through the hardcore filter.

At first listen, some of the drastic changes in *End Transmission* will no doubt turn off Snapcase fans and fans of traditional hardcore. Any fan who's stuck with the band since its 1991 *Comatose* seven-inch on Victory Records and the stellar 1993 debut, *Lookingglasself*, however, is most likely already used to encountering some changes with each subsequent Snapcase release.

"Over the past few years, I really learned to understand the value of underground music," says Taberski. "I think it's important, to me anyway, to be a highly regarded underground band that will be remembered. We've never been a band that banked itself on commercial growth and success. Right from the very beginning we were just psyched to be playing music in the basement. And then you make a CD. Then you tour across the country playing with other bands, and people are wearing your T-shirts. We never expected any of that."

—Dylan P. Gaudio

Jason Loewenstein makes a good first impression ▶▶

Jason Loewenstein—most notably known in indie-rock Valhalla as the guy who plays the more aggressive songs in Sebadoh's catalogue—is nervous. However, his anxiety does not stem from the band in which he has spent the past decade in “temporarily” hiatus, nor does it have anything to do with his erstwhile bandmates at all. Rather, the feeling he is experiencing centers around his debut solo offering, the colorful *At Sixes and Sevens*, and how his first foray into uncharted musical territory is a more than exhilarating experience.

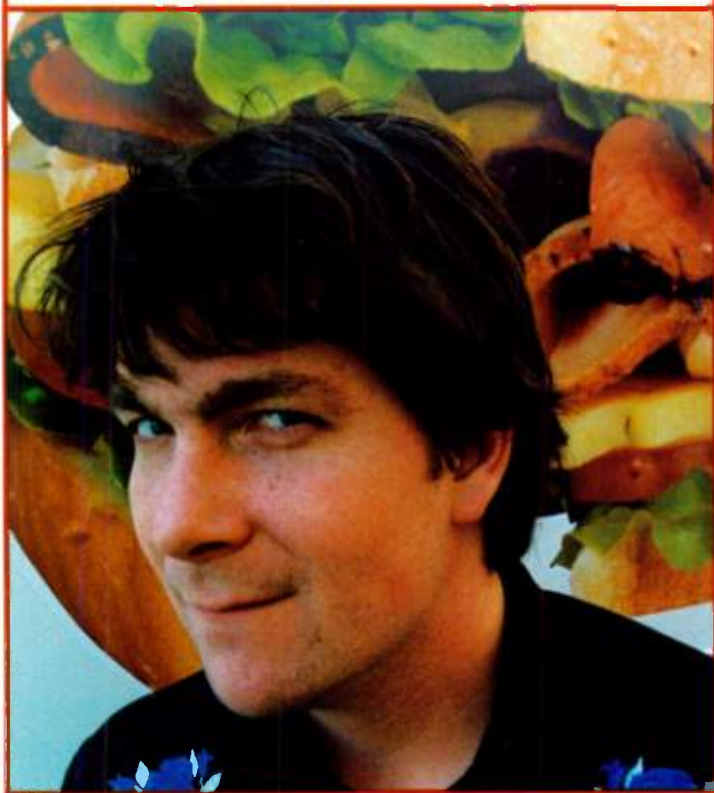
“For 10 years I was touring with Lou and whoever the third member of Sebadoh was,” Loewenstein explains. “I’ve learned everything I know from being in that situation so long. I learned a whole lot about songwriting from Lou and stuff, but it is scary and different and exciting to be out by myself right now.”

Unpredictability has always been Loewenstein’s signature trait, his Sebadoh output largely composed of wild, combustible, grunge-meets-punk rants. *At Sixes and Sevens* continues in this trajectory, although its 14 songs are by far his most memorable to date. Songs like “I’m a Shit,”

(stealing the title from the best would-be John Ashcroft biography), “H/M” and “Transform” display sophisticated songwriting techniques maintaining his trademark crunch, while “Crazy Santana,” “Mistake” and “Roswell to Jerusalem” celebrate a more seasoned Loewenstein, showcasing the unconventional pop songwriting and sensitive wit only hinted at in previous efforts. To his credit, Loewenstein played every instrument and recorded the entire effort completely by himself. This noted, *At Sixes and Sevens* is most definitely the Jason Loewenstein project for which fans have been waiting.

“Luckily for me, I think that I keep getting better,” he laughs. “I’m moderately good at all of the instruments, so I knew that I could play the drums and just build up from there. I knew I had to work hard, because your first effort is kind of what you’re measured by. It is kind of horrible. I had to make it sound kind of good, to take that extra effort to make a record that I was really proud of and be able to stand by it. I’m pretty sure this is that record.”

—Dan Pastorius



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DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

debonaire **Interpol** makes its way to fame and fortune

Whoever said good things happen to those who wait probably had Interpol in mind. The New York quartet started plowing through clubs back in 1998, but before the summer of 2002, its resume featured little more than the standard-British press accolades and two criminally obscure EPs.

Interpol's 11-song debut album, entitled *Turn on the Bright Lights*, is a testament to the band's patience. It will solve a few mysteries while keeping others shut tight. What bands provide obvious frame of reference? Word up, Joy Division and Wire. What are the songs about? Fahgetaboutit!

In a rare moment of rest before the band's elaborate U.S. and European tours, guitarist Daniel Kessler was eager to discuss Interpol's new record.

"What we really wanted to do with the album was recreate what we do live," says Kessler, elaborating on Interpol's approach to recording. In true spirit, organs and keyboards provide the few embellishments to the conventional band dynamic.

Interpol recorded its debut in November of 2001 at Tarquin Studio in Connecticut. Peter Kelis (Mercury Rev, Clem Snide) and Gareth Jones (Depeche Mode, Clinic) manned the boards and monitored band sanity during the 16-hour days.

"I was pretty much a zombie the whole time," Kessler remembers hazily. "I didn't leave the studio for nine days."

Perhaps due to crammed sessions, the band deemed certain final mixes less than spectacular. Instead of taking the tunes to another studio, Interpol opted to wait three months for Kelis to wrap-up work with the Get Up Kids and corrected the unsatisfactory tunes at Tarquin.

Although he concedes it was a difficult decision, Kessler says he's happy with the decision he and his bandmates made, sure this was the best path to getting the songs right.

The CD/LP arrived in August courtesy of Matador Records—not too shabby a home for one's debut record.

"I like the fact that Matador's roster has a pretty wide variety," Kessler says.

From Plone to Pavement to Mogwai, his list of much-admired labelmates is brimming with heavy hitters. Kessler quickly reflects on the sentimentality of this particular relationship.

"It's really cool to be a New York City band on a New York City label," he grins.

Turn on the Bright Lights captures Interpol in a complex stage of raw, formative naiveté and assured composure. Kessler is quick to point out his influences "don't really relate to the band," but an admitted love for the Smiths and the Clash gives "Say Hello to the Angels" a strong bite. A closer-to-home musical scene informs other album highlights like "PDA" and "Obstacle 1."

"I moved to D.C. when I was pretty young," Kessler explains. "I started getting into Soulside [pre-Girls Against Boys], Fugazi and Dag Nasty."

Hardly Dischord or Brit-pop pillagers, Interpol is a band finding its voice through a long-nurtured love of music, not outright theft.

Alongside the stark and shimmering guitar interplay of Kessler and Paul Banks, who handles lead vocals, the band's strongest asset is its vigorous rhythm section. Bassist Carlos D. recalls a funkified Peter Hook while drummer Sam Fogarino is the spinach to the band's Popeye's bicep.

Banks' deadpan vocals and stark lyrics act as another instrument in the mix, at times taking a backseat for the album's more atmospheric moments. Lilted guitars on "Untitled" hint at Slowdive, while "Hands Away" is so airy it almost floats away like a forgotten balloon.

Donning swanky suits and playing each note to a tee, the boys are highly stylized. Nevertheless, Interpol's desire to look presentable—or even, dare we say, delectable—doesn't distract from the music. Interpol is not the "boy band" *Jane* would have you believe. It's just a band with great influences and greater promise.

While Interpol has already made the press starry eyed, the masses of independently minded music lovers are the next target. Besides relentless touring throughout the rest of 2002, two videos for the songs "PDA" and "NYC" are in the works. Kessler half-jokingly imagines the clips on *Total Request Live*.

"We'll have plenty of bling, bling in the videos," he boasts like an as-yet-unrealized P. Diddy. "We got some fast cars and hot ladies."

Until Interpol wrangles MTV's top spot from Eminem, the majority of *Turn on the Bright Lights* is primed for audio-visual daydreaming. But that reverie where you discover an exciting new band on the cusp of something big? That, my friend, is reality.

—Neal Ramirez

IT'S REALLY COOL TO BE A NEW YORK CITY BAND ON A NEW YORK CITY LABEL



EL-P his mind is playing tricks on you >>

In a convenience store in Brooklyn, something unusual is transpiring—EL-P is trying to make himself as clear as possible. The former Company Flow frontman, infamous throughout the underground for laying down convoluted rhymes more perplexing than Qwest's accounting records, is currently taking pains to make sure his words emerge completely comprehensible.

"I'll have a pack of Winston Lights," the non-plussed artist is saying to an unaccountably bewildered storekeeper. A pause follows as EL-P waits for the transaction to complete itself.

"They're the ones that say Winston," he elaborates helpfully, as the clerk apparently needs more specific information to seal the deal. "They have a big Surgeon General's warning on the side, about 20 in a pack, small rectangular shape," he continues, evidently at a loss.

Happily, matters eventually resolve themselves, and the now smoke-laden MC returns to business.

The whole situation begs a question. Maybe the man who spits "Motherfucker does this sound abstract? I hope it sounds a lot more confusing than that!" on his solo debut, *Fantastic Damage*, should think about taking it down a notch?

"I never consider if people are gonna dislike my style," levels EL to the shopkeepers of the hip-hop world. "The movies I watch, the books I read, they all require a little time to reveal themselves. My style is



who I am. If people don't like it, that's perfectly understandable, but I can't and won't change."

This fierce inflexibility hallmarks all of EL-P's output. It led him to found his own Definitive Jux record label, now featuring like-minded iconoclasts such as Cannibal Ox, Aesop Rock and RJD2, many of whose albums EL-P also produced.

"Hip hop has always been about one-uppin' the other guy, constantly trying to find a new style," muses the Def Jux CEO regarding the reasons behind the label's origins. "With commercial rap, it seems like the music is at the mercy of whatever happens to be selling at the time, and trends seem to have a much longer shelf life than they should.

Fantastic Damage appropriately celebrates the boundless freedom of hip hop in the jubilant old-school ode "Squeegee Man Shooting," even while tracks such as "Stepfather Factory" and "T.O.J." squirm under the marching jackboots of corporate progress. Filled with EL-P's signature production work of stripped, raw beats, obscene shenanigans and the ominous dissonance of the digital world, *Damage* forms one long testament to a schizophrenic mood.

"I try to balance things between really cold horror movie massacres and hippie, daisy-sniffing shit," laughs EL about his wide range. "Seriously though, I try to have moments of clarity among all the chaos that really connect, that you can really feel."

If the hermetic verbiage and often harrowing complexity of this currently (and deservedly hyped) producer and MC doesn't jibe with the artist's previous statement, EL-P understands "This record was a really isolating, tumultuous experience in many ways," he sighs. "I got deep into my head, with no one around to pull me out. But I'm starting to actually enjoy the whole thing now, so be careful."

To hear EL-P describe it, you'd think he'd just spent six months in a leaky boat (Split Enz, anyone?). Judging from his tone, now the record has blessed public ears, one quickly gets the sense all the slow convenience stores in the world won't be enough to stop him.

—Reed Jackson

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CARDIAC ARREST

rock's broodingest duo **Black Heart Procession**
reach out and kill someone

Contrary to popular belief, the two core members of moody rock extremists The Black Heart Procession neither a) live in a shadowy cave with only the company of albino bats to sustain them or b) spend their days ensconced in an ebony cloud of sorrow and doubt from which they emerge only once a year in order to transfer their morbid weltschmerz to recorded form. Instead, BHP piano/bass organ/optigan maestro Tobias Nathaniel strolls the streets of the incalculably sunny nexus of San Diego, where both he and Black Heart vocalist/guitarist/saw manipulator Pall Jenkins reside.

"People tend to think its very odd or funny that we live in San Diego," mutters a slightly hung-over Nathaniel from his home in one of the shiniest burgs in America. "But they don't realize that the weather is the same here every day, it makes you long for anything resembling a season. And the static state breeds a complacency that is disturbing."

Though Nathaniel suggests his band's hometown may not be so incongruous to their kind of forlorn waltzes after all, he completely deflates The Black Heart Procession's rep as a band worthy of 24-hour suicide watch.

"I think if we were still depressed after playing our sort of music all the time, something would really be wrong," he chuckles. "Sinking ourselves into such a sad, lonely place for the records really gets therapeutic. I think we are all very normal, productive members of society in part because of what we do."

It's not hard to see how Nathaniel, Jenkins and occasional drummer Joe Plummer became saddled with their heroes-of-heartbreak pedigree, however. Since coalescing amid the fragments of Jenkin's and Nathaniel's previous band, the more indie-minded Three Mile Pilot, The Black Heart Procession has released three of the most strip-mined constellations of isolation and rue since Nick Drake jumped over the pink moon.

This approach culminated in 2000's *Three* (Touch and Go) where we find the gloomy, swashbuckling ballads found on 1998's *One* (Headhunter/Cargo) and 1999's *Two* (Touch and Go) pared down to a slight pulse, with only a faint brush of piano or trumpet fleshing out Jenkins' keening voice and plague-ridden sentiments. *Three's* unremitting economy stood like a bleak monument on a remote island—blank, puzzling, monumental and astounding. Nonetheless, Black Heart's further distillation of their already stark and stylized aesthetic left many wondering if the band had wandered into a blind alley.

To wring more bereft tragedy out of quiet atmosphere seemed an impossible task, leading to rote and tiresome repetition at best. To many, it seemed as if the Black Heart had finally stopped beating. Enter the new album. Titled *Amore Del Tropico*, it immediately attracts attention as being the first BHP opus not to be christened after a number. The cover art is radically different as well—instead of the mute nightscapes depicted on the earlier records, *Amore* features a colorful drawing of a furrowed man aiming a magnifying glass at the viewer, enlarging his menacing and accusatory eye. Behind the man can be glimpsed the splayed body of a woman, blood pooling around her head. Even without hearing note one, it's easy to discern there's something amiss with The Black Heart Procession.

Nathaniel enlarges upon what exactly is going on.

"The record is loosely arranged around a murder mystery, written from the perspective of the killer," he confides. "Originally we were going to do a more cohesive noir type thing, but it ended up being more vague in the end."

To capture this homicidal atmosphere the band ditched much of the hollowness of its previous work, deciding to utilize the haunting attributes of violin and cello, the lurid sultriness of female backup singers and a spook-twang guitar

technique reminiscent of Chris Isaac and Roy Orbison. The first track, "Tropics of Love," sets all of these elements to an enchanted Calypso tempo, aptly summarizing how terribly far The Black Heart Procession has departed from its earlier methodology.

When alerted to this wide divergence in his band's sound, Tobias concedes the differences but doesn't admit to a concentrated effort on the Procession's part.

"We didn't consciously sit down and plan on doing this story at first or detail how we were going to write this '60s noir pop record or anything like that," he asserts from his sun-shaded lair. "We just started writing music, and this idea gradually evolved as it went along. At some point we decided that we were going to develop and record this certain group of songs rather than some others we were working on, but in the beginning we were just trying a bunch of different stuff."

Nathaniel fingers the recording process behind *Amore* as the primary culprit behind the band's transmogrification. Set to tape in the new 24-track studio in Pall's house, the album was the first BHP work not fashioned under time constraints in a foreign atmosphere.

"Doing it ourselves, we just had so much time to work on it," fills in Nathaniel. "This led to us really experimenting and trying to bring in instruments that were unavailable to us before. We wanted to bring in as many people to play as we could, which is a huge contrast to the bare bones circumstances of our earlier stuff."

This attitude led to as many as 13 people playing on one track, which leads Toby to express some skepticism as to how the songs are going to be translated into the live environment. On record, however, the added numbers flow as smooth as spilt blood, imparting a rich and vigorous texture to the still-quiet melodies and sinister implications.

As concrete and vivid as the sounds may be, the narrative underlying them is still much more ambiguous. Nathaniel shies away from revealing details, only saying that a DVD featuring all the members of and collaborators with the band as well as bonus audio tracks, is in the works. Like the *Twin Peaks* movie, he promises, it will tie up all loose ends.

Even though *Amore Del Tropico* uncovers the previously submerged theatricality of The Black Heart Procession, its themes of murder and betrayal will hardly dispel the band's image as a bunch of creepy obsessives with a mortality fixation. Nathaniel sighs, glances out of the shades at the glaring sun outside and resigns himself to the perceptions of others, before parting with one last defense.

"If only people knew I drive a white Firebird."

—Reed Jackson

I THINK IF WE WERE STILL DEPRESSED AFTER PLAYING OUR SORT OF MUSIC ALL THE TIME, SOMETHING WOULD REALLY BE WRONG



Shadows Fall across the land >>

"I fear the day I open my mouth and nothing but dust comes out," laughs Shadows Fall frontman Brian Fair. Amidst fleeting thoughts of caring for his voice, he admits to recently having paid a visit to a vocal coach before recording the band's magnificent thrash-meld effort, *The Art of Balance* (Century Media Records). "I've basically ignored everything he's told me. From cold beer to pizza every night, who knows? After 12 years of being in hardcore and metal bands, I've figured out what I can and can't do with my voice."

For the other members of Massachusetts-based Shadows Fall—guitarist Jonathan Donais, guitarist Matthew Bachand, bassist Paul Romanko and drummer Jason Bittner—the beauty of their metal lies not only in knowing limits but in their extreme musical confidence.

"The technical side of the playing with all the time changes, stops and starts rarely fazes us," says Fair about the band's intricate song structures. "The challenge was to be able to incorporate all of the technicality into a complete album without downgrading the intelligence of the music. Everyone is so schooled with regards to their instrument that the technicality is almost an afterthought at this point."

"Recording for us is now more of what fits and not how much stuff can we cram into one song," Fair continues before revealing how Shadows Fall manage to stay ahead of the curve by looking to the past.

"All of us grew up listening to *Master of Puppets*

and *Number of the Beast*. There were times when it wasn't always cool to say you listened to that stuff."

Fair cites the new Down record, among others, as an example of a band not being afraid to write a heavy song, a bluesy song, and to cover all the bases. "We have [on *The Art of Balance*] the ballad, the epic, the trash and the death metal too."

Life on the road for Shadows Fall is more than a means for delivering their message to the masses. Fair says the band found inspiration from time spent on the road listening to music other than metal.

"We're a bunch of old rockers when it comes down to it," Fair reveals.

"After you've been pounded every night for five hours a night by five different metal bands, you get in the van and its time for a break. That's when the Johnny Cash and the old Boston tapes come out."

While *The Art of Balance*—the band's follow-up to the much-heralded *Of One Blood*—has many in the metal community keeping tabs on these up-and-comers, sometimes it becomes a matter of convention that gets Shadows Fall noticed as Fair's nearly five-foot long locks leave many fans in his wake.

"It's more out for their own protection that the kids grab my hair when I get near

the front of a low stage, because they're sick of getting blasted by it during the show. But people who usually get the most upset are the security guards," Fair continues. "They'll be looking around for who they have to kill before they'll realize it's just the asshole on stage."

—Chris Johns



PLAIN WHITE T'S



PLAIN WHITE T'S

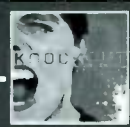


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Mike Patton could win himself a Grammy

Few musicians have accomplished what Mike Patton has during his tenured, decade-long career. Since introducing the world to a contagious fusion of heavy metal, hip hop, funk and progressive rock with the platinum-selling outfit *Faith No More*, Patton has continually reinvented himself through a variety of different projects both unmistakably him and remarkably dissimilar at once. Whether it is the ska-induced throttle of *Mr. Bungle*, the manic metal-based bits of *Fantomas* or the full-on rock of *Tomahawk*, there has always been something for fans of Patton's unique taste to latch onto. At long last, this mad scientist of left-of-center rock discusses the status of each of his current projects and sheds some light on a few of his surprise endeavors including a stint in the *Dillinger Escape Plan*, his work with Dan "The Automator" Nakamura in *Peeping Tom* and a not-so-distant military themed record with the renowned turntablists *The Xecutioners*.

When *Tomahawk* first came out, the interaction between you and Duane Denison (*Jesus Lizard*) was something most people were very curious to hear. It's fun, it really does work pretty smoothly. We've got a little system, he writes most of the music and I just kind of put my special sauce on it. But yeah, it is a fun group, and it is something kind of different for me because it is more like a rock band. I really haven't played in one of those in a while.

Was the hard rock band idea already in motion when you became part of it? The whole way it went down was actually kind of weird. I met him at a show, and his guitar playing has always kind of stood out to me. I said "Hey, I have this record label (*Ipecac*) that puts out a lot of weird shit, and I'd like you to do a record for it. Whatever you want to do, I don't even want to know about it, just do it. Here you go, just tell me where to send the check."

He called me a few weeks later and said, "Well, I have all of these songs sitting around and they're kind of like rock tunes, and I want to see what you think of them." I listened to them and told him they were fucking great. Then he invited me to be a part of it. I didn't expect that, but who am I to turn him down?



I PLAY WITH GOOD PEOPLE, IT IS THAT SIMPLE. YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH PEOPLE WHO WILL BUST YOUR CHOPS AND KEEP YOU ON YOUR TOES

It seems like the perfect pairing for the kind of material you both have put out so far. The same could be said of you and Buzzo with *Fantomas*.

I play with good people, it is that simple. You want to play with people who will bust your chops and keep you on your toes and hopefully make you better. The chemical experiment of putting two new people in the room—something different is going to happen or should happen, and that is the kind of theory that I believe in. You get very comfortable when you work with the same group of people for too long, and there is something to be said for that, becoming tight and all that, but once that happens, once the band kind of becomes one person, you make your statement, you make a few records, and that is about all you can do.

Was part of this progression starting something as experimental as *Fantomas*? It was the same way that the idea for *Tomahawk* started off kind of, except for the fact it started with me instead of Duane. It basically came from me in my basement studio cranking out all of these weird little vignettes, and pretty soon I had



like 50 of them. Sometimes you do those things and they just sit on your shelf and you don't do anything with them. With these, I guess I had a lot of that stuff in me from my high school days so I really felt like I had to do something with it and put a band together to play this stuff because I felt strongly about it.

THE MUSIC

MR. BUNGLE

That is pretty much in hibernation, for lack of a better term. Everyone is doing different things, it is a weird collection of people and it is not the most functional atmosphere in the whole world, so my attitude with it right now is back off, when it happens it happens. In the past, I haven't really been that casual with it, but in my old age I'm learning to let nature take its course and see what happens.

PEEPING TOM (A new project between Patton and Dan "The Automator" Nakamura)

Peeping Tom is me kind of messing around with the song form in a playful way, in groove-based kind of stuff. The songs are not that complex—it is like three or four parts per song, and it is still really dense, poppy stuff. It isn't FM radio, that's where that word 'pop' can be a little misleading, but it is the way my ears hear it—this is the way I think it should sound. So this is my take on pop and groove kind of stuff. You have to realize—and it has taken me a while to realize it—pretty much anything I do is not going to be 100 percent X, Y or Z. It is not going to be rock rap, it is not going to the punk funk, it isn't going to be any of that. So gosh, I really don't know what the fuck it is going to be.

There's already a precedent for the chemistry between you and *The Automator*, with your cameo vocals on his *Lovage* project. Is this impression something listeners should be bringing with them when they approach *Peeping Tom*?

Well, the difference there is that he wrote that stuff and I'm writing *Peeping Tom*, so it is a little more schizophrenic, more of a sound clash kind of approach of contrasts and extremes. I'm still trying to keep them in the song format, so it is a real chore and exercise for me, but it is pretty cool.

THE XECUTIONERS

Talk about a sound clash, that one is going to be a real head butting experience. What I did was I gave the X men 100 records and told them to make me up some tracks using only those records. I told them not to use those scratch records that they always use and I said, "I don't want a routine or anything, just come up with some tracks. Some of them I want to be beat-based and bouncing, other stuff I want to be completely abstract and without a beat at all." I wanted to see what they could do. So far the results have been amazing. Those guys are for real, they are musicians that are thinking and are one of the few good guys coming out of that scene. They're pushing it and are very interested in working with a freak such as myself. We're going to have a military or battle theme to the record, so I think we're going to call it *General Patton Versus the X-Men*.

DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN

I really tip my hat to those guys, they are something else. They are stretching out a little bit, which is why I think they got rid of their singer, because their music is stretching out. The world that they come from... Oh man is it horrible. These guys are coming from a dead-end genre. There is just nothing interesting going on at all with 99 percent of those bands. Wait until you hear this CD, it is the typical stuff you would expect them to do, really complicated and fast and crazy, and then it will stop on a dime and go into this ballad part. You have to love them because I think they are really pushing the limit.

THE FUTURE?

I could tell you about three or four more other projects, but they won't happen for fucking years, you know? There will be another *Fantomas* album out middle of next year. *Tomahawk* too, we'll actually record that before the end of the year in November.

I've been talking off and on for years with 3-D from *Massive Attack* about doing a record. There's other projects just kind of floating out there. We'll have to wait and see.

—Dan Pastorius

Hermano veterans of the underground ▶

When the seminal Kyuss broke up in 1996, the split seemed to have a domino effect on the world of underground rock 'n roll. Much like the infamous brooms in Disney's *Fantasia*, the pieces of Kyuss began to spawn little baby bands, and those bands spawned other bands, and so forth. Soon, the ravenous, loyal followers of underground riff rock were overwhelmed by bands containing Kyuss alumni, such as Fu Manchu, Queens of the Stone Age, Slo Burn, Mondo Generator and others. Many of those outfits carried on Kyuss' tradition of thick, distorted, down-tuned rock, and the stoner rock movement had peaked once again. The musicians pigeonholed into this genre have been fighting the moniker ever since.

"The band members think the music we play is rock 'n roll," says John Garcia, former singer of Kyuss and current throat for Hermano. "The kids can say it might be stoner rock or rock 'n roll or desert rock, and so be it. I welcome it with open arms. I just hate the word sludge. That's horrible."

All sludginess aside, Hermano is a straightforward rock band following along the riff-heavy trail pioneered by bands like Deep Purple and The Obsessed. While Garcia is the only ex-Kyuss member in this new group, his bandmates come with a pedigree of their own. Drummer Steve Earle hails from the Afghan Whigs, while guitarists David Angstrom and Mike Callahan and bassist Steve Brown paint

Hermano as its own, vibrant creation.

It was Brown, in fact, who hand-picked the players on Hermano's debut album, *Only a Suggestion*, exchanging demo tapes back and forth with each of the band members. The mastermind finally brought all the distant members together in a Cincinnati studio for the first time in April 1999. Being veterans of the rock trade, the musicians all clicked almost immediately, banging out an eight-song album in less than 72 hours.

"I didn't know any of them, except Dave Angstrom," says Garcia. "But once I got in the studio with everyone it was like we'd known each other for a long time."

Despite the fact Hermano actually recorded the material for its debut album more than three years ago, the CD was finally released this summer on Tee Pee Records. The material may not be anything groundbreaking, but it's a great meat-and-potatoes rock record, offering up juicy, distorted riffs and a thick slab of machismo, delivered through Garcia's commanding vocals.

"The music that I play will never become huge," admits Garcia. "I'll never make a million dollars or sell 50,000 records. The music that I play is not commercial-friendly. It's probably too heavy for some people. But it's the music I think is missing in



my life right now. I try to play songs that I miss, or that I haven't heard before that I want to hear. They wind up dictating themselves."

In addition to Hermano, Garcia is still very committed to his other band, Unida, and suggests a new record may be out within the year. Hermano, meanwhile, is already planning its second record. As for his old friends in Kyuss, however, Garcia says he doubts he'll ever play with them again.

"I think a lot of good music has come out of the disbanding of Kyuss," he muses. "When Brant Bjork left, he went on to play with Fu Manchu—one of the greatest bands out there. Nick Oliveri took off with The Dwarves for a while. Josh Homme hooked up with Nick again for Queens of the Stone Age. Scott Reeder is producing bands like 60 Watt Shaman and Orange Goblin. I joined Slo Burn for a while, and now Unida is there and this Hermano thing."

"It's real cool—I couldn't ask for a better time in music right now."

—Mandy Feingold



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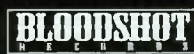


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ENTER THE DRAGGING

Karate's Geoff Farina wakes on and wakes off about his band's slow rise

Karate's moniker, suggestive of people in robes breaking giant blocks of ice with their heads and Bruce Lee's deadly floss, may be the only aspect of the Boston/Rhode Island band not painstakingly thought through.

"No, I'm afraid not," guitarist/singer Geoff Farina admits with a laugh, confessing no member of the band practices the mortal martial art. "We just thought of the name in a hurry, because we were going to play a show in a week.

"Sometimes I think we could have made a more fitting choice, but now we're stuck with it for better or worse."

The flashy attire and destructive images associated with Ralph Macchio's fighting style may not have much to do with the New England band—Farina is joined by drummer Gavin McCarthy and bassist Jeff Goddard—but the Eastern discipline's focus on restraint and self-awareness could tie in more than Farina lets on.

For nigh on nine years and five albums, Karate has shaped a continuously fluid and conscious sound, gracefully changing stances like a serene Grasshopper perching on the edge of a boat. In the mid 1990s, Karate specialized in guitar fireworks and heart-smitten lyrics—a technique sure to have rightly branded them the notorious emo tag in these more niche-oriented times. Fortunately for everyone involved, the loss of second guitarist Eamon Vitt in 1997 resulted in a sea change for the band.

As a trio, Karate rethought and pared down its sound, soon unveiling 1998's subsequent *The Bed is in the Ocean*, ushering in a pronounced transformation for Karate. The record's understated guitar, syncopated structure and microscopic attention to detail demonstrated just how far the band could go in reinventing itself.

This approach culminated in 2000's lugubrious *Unsolved*, an even more overtly jazzy exercise. Though chock-full of complex passages and technical meditations, the album packed more noodle than a cheap Italian restaurant. Still, tracks like "Small Fires" and "Sever" are natural classics.

Despite the leap in vision the band had undertaken, the album's labyrinthine meanderings and extended improvisational moments left a few fans dazed and confused.

"Karate is about the slowest evolving band I can think of," acknowledges Farina when challenged to explain the long stylistic gestation of his band. "But we've definitely outlived a lot of different bands belonging to a number of different genres that we were lumped in with at the time. And I think we've been getting better and better slowly as well."

Those who favor actual songcraft over attenuated jamming might take issue with this last statement, but with Karate's new record, *Some Boots*, all debts will be forgiven. *Boots* foregoes the stylized trappings of *Unsolved* instead adopting an unencumbered feel somewhat similar to the anthemic crescendos found on the group's recent EP, *Cancel/Sing*.

Happily, Karate has also returned to writing actual melodies, dri-

**MUSIC IS A CULTURAL LANGUAGE,
WHEN YOU HEAR IT...IT'S LIKE
WATCHING CULTURE GROW
IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES.**

ven by Farina's plaintive voice and precise observations. "In Hundreds" opens with feverish Sonic Youth harmonics, then fugues into a gritty bass choogle, while Farina levels to an unnamed friend, "You're just a couple minutes shy of changing things for good." "Corduroy," on the other hand, capitalizes on a slowly parting curtain of delicate simplicity, ending in an epiphany worthy of a James Joyce story.

"I think *Some Boots* represents Karate's best attempt at mixing songs and technicality," muses Farina over the latest opus. "Obviously we all like to play a lot, but we felt like this one should be more song-oriented as well. We all like strange sounds, but we wanted every sound there for a reason this time."

This goal may not always have been met, as skillful yet pasta-filled solos still crop up in songs such as "Airport." No matter how much it tries to play it straight, Karate is still a band in love with Steely Dan—and it shows. Nonetheless, *Some Boots* still stands out as the band's most natural expression of its unique aesthetic, and it will be sure to please both pointy-headed techies, introspective bookworms and adorers of a quality tune. Farina chalks it up to the infamously intellectual band's increasing lack of self-regard.

"This one was our least self-conscious records," he claims proudly.

When alerted this doesn't say all that much, he laughingly agrees.

"I, personally, am really super self-conscious when I play, very aware of what I'm doing and trying to do. In music, that can sometimes be a detriment."

The former Secret Stars collaborator explains he feels this type of self-consciousness is unavoidable whenever an artist tries to expand on his craft. The trick, according to Farina, is to balance the level of new achievement with one's natural instincts.

Ultimately, Farina remains optimistic about his band's multifarious approach and hopeful about the state of music in general.

"Music is a cultural language," he gushes. "When you hear it, and there are so many varieties and kinds of it, it's like watching culture grow in front of your eyes. When people make it, and it's good, it becomes a new way to articulate things, to comment on your own life in a way that people will want to hear."

It is this enthusiasm and insight defining Karate as a valuable band at the end of a hard day's night. All three members may be classically trained (check out McCarthy's deft percussion throughout), intensely eggheaded, (Farina uses words like "striated" like it ain't no thang) and unabashedly jammy, but their unique devotion to the many possibilities of rock 'n roll will always have a place in the hearts of both the warriors and the meek alike.

—Reed Jackson



Not long ago, the notion of Omaha, Neb., as a musical and cultural Mecca was pretty far from popular consensus. Nowadays, however, with the sudden success of the Saddle Creek label and nationally recognized names such as Bright Eyes and Azure Ray, the Great Plains city is sure to be remembered as more than home to the key sponsor of Jim Fowler and Marty Stouffer's Wild America (you do remember Mutual of Omaha's insipid plugs in mid-'80s nature shows, right?). Alex McManus, perhaps best known for his positions in Lambchop and Empire State, along with his contributions to the works of Vic Chestnutt, proves headlining tour-mate Bright Eyes won't go down as Nebraska's one and only favorite son. (Conor does, however, play in McManus' live band.) Recording and performing under the moniker The Bruces, McManus' debut (Hialeah Pink) is further vindicated with the release of *The War of the Bruces* (released on Misra Records)—a rich, emotive collection of distinctly American songs.

Answers by Alex McManus, songwriter

What already existing song could you perform and record better? Why?

Probably my song "Upbeat," which was on a Dutch compilation a few years ago. It's a pretty good two-

chord song with a strong melody. I did it on a four-track when I hardly knew what that was, and it just sounds shitty. I can hear it in my head now with full-on drums.

What myth or misconception would you most like to see associated with your band?

That my name is Bruce.

Magazines are always talking about how this or that band are here to save music. As an artist, what do you think is hurting music?

I don't think you can hurt music—it exists because it has to. Bad music doesn't hurt music, it teaches you what not to do. If I hear a band on the radio that I truly despise, I always listen until the end so I can find out who they are and know to never listen to it again! It makes you think 'why did this affect me so much?' ...Or infect me so much.

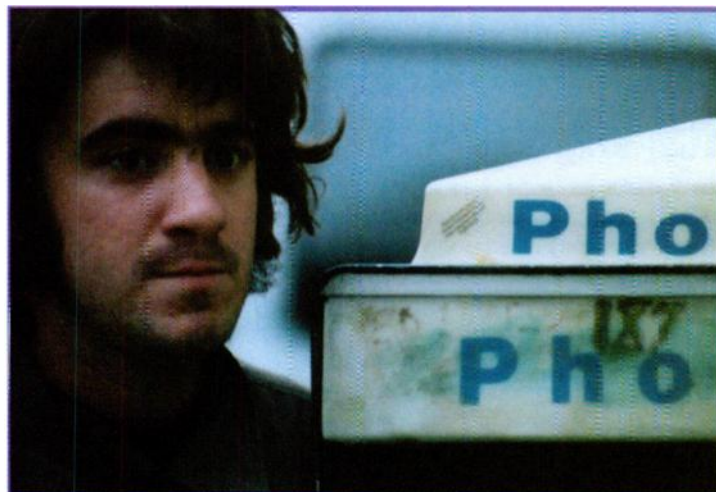
Describe your prediction for the most inappropriate Halloween costume this year.

No costume at all.

What's the first trick to survival you learned on tour?

Be organized, be on time and take care of your health. In other words, don't fucking slack off.

Nik Freitas starving for art ▶▶



Nik Freitas knew when he left his gig as a staff photographer at *Thrasher* magazine, his last paycheck in his hand, he had to make a record. And he knew the last paycheck was all the money he had coming in the near future.

Freitas' debut, *Here's Laughing At You* (Future Farmer), was definitely recorded guerilla-style, the piano parts even snatched up on a less-than-legal recon mission at a local music school. Still, the songwriter's lyrical maturity and smart arrangements bely the record's humble origins, lo-fi moments and beer-soaked, late-night sessions.

"The place we recorded at was with all our friends' equipment, and it's above a business, so you couldn't go up there until after nine at night," says Freitas. "So we'd go up there at nine and usually leave at around seven or eight in the morning. We did it for a month straight, every single night. It was gnarly."

Surviving primarily on his final check from *Thrasher*, Freitas carefully rationed out his main expenses—recording tape, jerky and beer—and couch surfed at the home of *Here's Laughing* producer Aaron Estes.

Living by such a Spartan means can't be good for the guts, but it clearly stimulated the duo's creativity.

"A lot of rad stuff happened from being totally delirious," explains Freitas. "The last song on the record, I don't even remember doing. We did it kind of live, and I tried it 60 times. We went to the bar, and all I had was a chord progression. Right before closing time, Aaron said, 'let's just do that one.' We wrote the lyrics on the way back—don't even remember

doing it."

This colorfully recorded song is "All the Time in the World," a Lennon-esque piano ballad exemplary of songwriting chops Freitas already clearly possesses. "Check the Weather," meanwhile, is a Rhodes-driven pop tune reminiscent of early-'70s AM radio, down to the requisite "doo-doo-doo." Other songs on *Here's Laughing* illustrate an untainted, central California vibe, healthy doses of Built to Spill and an indie rock edge. Freitas' voice, high-pitched yet warm, carries all of this without indie's screeching, out-of-key tendencies.

Freitas writes on just about every instrument he can find. Living by a rule he learned from a Thom Yorke interview (better songs are written on instruments new to you, says Thom), he writes on Rhodes piano and guitar.

"One of the songs I even wrote on bass," admits Freitas, referring to the album's starting track, "Pictures of the Sun."

Clearly, Freitas has a fertile imagination and a good handle on the head-to-heart equation of his songwriting.

"Songwriting comes from the heart," he reflects. "The head part comes later when you think, 'Oh, this part goes too long.'"

Freitas has received a lot of attention for his background at *Thrasher*, but he's clearly ready to move beyond the ground he's already traversed.

"I'm over it," he says with clarity, not petty spite. "I'd rather think about the music."

—Nick Tangborn



REMEMBER HIP HOP?

urban alchemists Dälek create a nostalgic new sound

Now is a glorious time for independent music. Major label music execs are left scratching their heads about who to blame for sluggish sales, while at the same time trying to control the file-sharing Frankenstein they helped create (after all, whose idea was it to go digital?). Such file sharing has undeniably made new sounds vastly more accessible to music-hungry youth. As a direct result of this aural cross-pollination, independent musicians are becoming bolder in their attempts to bridge long-standing genre gaps. Best of all, it seems audiences are following suit.

This is not to say musical hybrids are anything new. The Cowboy Junkies released *Trinity Sessions* in 1988, arguably the advent of what is called alt-country today. And yes, modern chamber-pop can be traced back to the days of Shelleean Orphan (at least for those who missed Dog Faced Hermans).

Hip hop, meanwhile, seemed one of the more stubborn genres in the face of rock crossover, perhaps stymied by the weak major-label alliances marketed early on (think Run DMC-meets-Aerosmith, Public Enemy-meets-Anthrax and the *Judgment Night* soundtrack).

For those weaned on the big guitars of Sonic Youth, Swans and Slowdive, an indie-rock crossover with hip hop proved to be a hard sell. In the early '90s, however, the proliferation of what-was-once-the-underground left much of the musical landscape imbued with a reinvigorated attitude towards independent, street-level artistry and business. Indie flagship label Matador began experimenting, releasing acts like The Arsonists, Non-Phixion and Large Professor.

In a few exciting years, backpack heroes like cloudDEAD, DJ Spooky, DJ Shadow and the Def Jux family have irreversibly changed the notion of indie rock/hip hop crossover.

Dälek (head of the eponymously named trio) and fellow MC Oktopus met at New Jersey's William Paterson University in 1996 when Oktopus, who ran a budding studio at the time, opened his partner's eyes to indie rock legends Flying Saucer Attack, Black Flag and (maybe most importantly) My Bloody Valentine. Within the next year, the duo discovered turntable madman Still. With the new addition, the dynamic was complete and a hip hop enigma had been formed.

In true, autonomous fashion, the group's first full-length was released through Gern Blandsten Records, an obscure but revered punk label known for releases from underground heroes such as Rorschach, Chisel, 1.6 Band, Weston, Van Pelt, Radio 4 and Ted Leo. Despite limited distribution—the label has since grown tremendously—Dälek is anything but critical about this initial pairing with the Gern Blandsten label. Oktopus and Dälek even revisited the label when they produced the solo record of a fellow Jersey MC, Oddattee, earlier this year. As Dälek explains, few labels could have been a better match, given his fiercely independent perspective and the symmetrical history of punk and hip hop throughout the last decade.

"All of this music began as the voice of angst-filled youth," he reflects. "It was the only voice that people really had. I watched it become so amazing and then watched it become this commercialized shell of itself."

After an agonizing wait, Dälek and its disciples now celebrate the release of the group's second full-length, *From Filthy Tongues of Gods and Griots*, released through Mike Patton's Ipecac label. Understandably, *Filthy Tongues* is already considered one of the key albums in today's abstract hip hop movement. A dark lament of hip hop culture, *Tongues* is dense with urban imagery and transcendent self-

IT BEGINS AS UNDERGROUND, AND ONCE CORPORATE AMERICA GETS ITS HANDS ON IT, IT'S OVER

exploration. At its core, and more than anything else, the album is most certainly hip hop. Around this core swirl dense layers of droning feedback, cinematic string samples and Middle Eastern flourishes culminating in the would-be jam session where Kevin Shields plays Ustad Haffizullah Khan ragas on guitar at full volume, Onyx takes turns with Hood on the drum machine and John Cage talks incidental music with Mantovani through the spirit medium of Chinua Achebe.

It's a slippery hybrid, but to Dälek it is intuitive. In fact, it's the only way he can think of to redeem hip-hop. After commercialization cashed in on the art during its golden age in the late '80s and early '90s, hip hop was left low on inspiration, exploited and bereft of meaning. It's a trend Dälek says he sees across the board.

"It begins as underground, and once corporate America gets its hands on it, it's over," he explains with all the certainty of a college professor.

For Dälek, the road to hip hop redemption has been a regiment of peculiar collaborations (with Faust and Kid 606, for instance), non-stop touring (opening for De La Soul, Dillinger Escape Plan, Rye Coalition and Pharcyde to name a few) and staying true to old-school roots, while still managing to borrow from an ocean of diverse influences. In coming months, the trio will be touring with indie punks Oxes and indie metal experimentalists Isis.

"I think that the tide is changing in hip hop in general," says Dälek, surprisingly optimistic while confined to his house with pneumonia. "Listening to My Bloody Valentine for the first time, my jaw was on the floor. It was something that completely changed the way I listen to music and the way I wanted to structure music. It just showed me that so much more was possible."

Luckily for his fans, Dälek offers as much food for thought as he does for the aural senses. As a lyricist Dälek wrestles with some pretty heavy subjects, almost mythical in scope. On "...From the Mole Hills," he reflects back on the urban life he remembers as a youth, drawing parallels to ancient religion and culture ("I remember hip hop/That's my Mount Zion"). In the album's rousing centerpiece, "Black Smoke Rises," Dälek's gruff voice climbs over mountains of noise and religious doubt, petitioning his listeners with a heady challenge once he reaches the summit—"Why question a life only borrowed?"

Like all good activists Dälek retains a sense of humor about most everything he feels strongly about, especially the commercialization and exploitation of hip hop. Just mention MTV's hideously scripted VMA Awards and his eyes light up with a mix of amusement and horror.

"I'm still trying to figure out the whole split of rap and hip-hop, I don't even understand that," he laughs openly. "They have the best rap category, and then they have the best hip hop category. I don't even know what the fuck that means."

For Dälek, Oktopus and Still, there are no genre boundaries and marketing tags, just a sonic assault to leave audiences of all colors, cultures and record collections with their ears ringing and eyes open.

—Jon DeRosa



The Damn Personals put the rock back in Indie Rock ▶▶

The story of the Damn Personals opens where all good rock 'n roll legends begin and end—with a 70-year old flute player dancing naked on the beach.

Upon pulling into San Diego, bassist Jim Zavadoski and drummer Mike Gill were taken to a nearby hospital in search of antibiotics to help ease a persistent on-tour illness. Left with nothing to do, guitarist Anthony Rossomando and frontman Ken Cook rounded up tourmates The Explosion and headed to the beach.

"It was like an obstacle course," laughs Rossomando. "We had to walk down this mountain, and climb across streams. It was like an obstacle course. So when we finally get to the beach, we take off toward the water together. It was great, like paradise."

The boys' idyllic summer fun was short-lived, however, as the pale, tattooed, denim-clad East Coasters soon realized they'd mistakenly dropped in on one of California's many nude beaches. Enter nude flutist.

"We were totally sober and totally astonished," recalls Rossomando.

Aside from being good for some laughs, the story is indicative of the places the band's new record, *Standing Still in the USA* (Bigwheel Recreation), is taking the boys—wherever they want to go.

It's rare the Boston band does not have a show booked, though Rossomando insists he and

his bandmates enjoy the rigorous schedule.

"Everyone is losing their minds," he offers as proof. "Shows are good, because you find a way to get to them and it's distracting from all the other shit, this underbelly of responsibility. We're the champions of being, as Ned Flanders would say, 'neglectorinos.'"

It's easy for East Coasters to take for granted everyone else is familiar with the Damn Personals. In New England, the band has been, perhaps reductively, likened to a cooler, indie version of Aerosmith. In the band's hometown, Damn Personals are regarded as one of the preeminent groups on the scene. Another recent tour with The Walkmen ("They were really cool, but I wasn't sure if they were offended by us or patting us on the head like we were cute little puppies," relays Rossomando) and the next to come will likely be the chance for the rest of the country to catch Personals fever.

For now, some time at home and the comforts of his girlfriend's punishing shower are some of the main things on the young guitarist's mind, at least until pressed about his band's place in the evolving map of modern music.

"The straight-up rock band angle had been a concept of the

band at one point, but that's probably the case for every band," he reflects. "Ever since we learned to play our instruments we aren't a garage band anymore, and we'll never be able to play that well, so we won't be a progressive band. You can cross those two out."

Ultimately, Rossomando says, he just wants to hang out in the sunshine, go to the beach, jump around in the waves until he's tired and then fall asleep on the sand. This time around, he leaves out the elderly exhibitionist—or maybe he was just being a neglectorino about it.

So, how does the guitarist's beach-blanket dream end?

"Hopefully we'll make a record that will sound like Primal Scream meets Fugazi," he grins.

—Luke O'Neil



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The Bouncing Souls and Anti-Flag Walk Together, Rock Together

by John Vettese

On the surface, Anti-Flag and The Bouncing Souls aren't the most obvious pairing in the punk rock world. The former grew out of a focused, community-minded assemblage in Pittsburgh, the latter cut their teeth in the scattered hardcore, ska and punk scenes in suburban New Jersey and New York City. While Anti-Flag heavily favors progressive political lyrics to an almost thrash-based backing, the Souls do just fine with feel-good anthems tackling personal issues and a penchant for '80s kitsch and trivia.

Still, something keeps bringing the two groups together. This fall alone, they've shared the stage at the Plea For Peace/Take Action charity tour before heading out on a small dual tour together. Now, they even share a record together, collaborating on the fourth installment of BYO Records' split series.

"I first saw Anti-Flag at ABC No Rio in 1993," recalls Sid-Vicious-Delicious Souls bassist Bryan Kienlen. "ABC is a crusty, little DIY venue in New York City, and years ago I was definitely a lot crustier for lack of a better word."

Kienlen fondly remembers this point in his life, noting an unceasing quest to discover what he now terms "the punkest of the punk," then looking to the genre not just as a music scene but almost as a religion. Seeing a young Anti-Flag rail against the government and corporate businesses at ABC not only delivered him an embodiment of his search, it revived his interest in the musical end of things.

"They were punk as hell, which you really had to be to play there," he continues. "But they were amazingly good as a band. In a way I had forgotten how important that was."

Kienlen explains how he stayed in touch with Anti-Flag, later catching another AF set in the band's hometown. The relationship between the Souls and the radicals from Iron City gradually evolved into a string of you-play-my-town, I-play-your-town shows that continued to this day.

"I always liked what they were about and how they do things," adds Souls guitarist Pete Steinkopf. "I think we're kind of on the same wavelength as far as the way that we view being in a band, the things we want out of it—doing things your way on independent labels, sticking to your philosophy and not letting anyone steer you from your path."

The admiration is clearly mutual.

Anti-Flag drummer Pat Thetic talks openly about how, even before



they'd struck up a friendship, he and his bandmates looked up to the Souls as being a bit older, a bit more experienced and a fine example of how to make a living playing music.

Above and beyond that, however, he said he loves the Souls for the help they've given Anti-Flag along the way.

"We played one of their record release shows when we were younger," the drummer reflects. "I don't remember exactly which one it was, but they invited us out to New York, which was huge for us because we were playing a sold-out show."

These days, with the Souls holed up in north Jersey working on their next full-length (expected on Epitaph in May) and Anti-Flag about to go back into the studio with former Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morrello at the helm, the BYO split and ensuing tour served as a bit of a release for the two bands. While BYO had previously paired acts such as the United Kingdom's Leatherface with Hot Water Music and NOFX with Rancid, a closer bond is difficult to find between the Anti-Flag/Souls pairing.

"We always talked about it," says Steinkopf. "Both bands always said that they wanted to do it together. But we'd be doing this and they'd be doing that, or we'd have time and they wouldn't have time. So eventually it just worked out that both of us had time and BYO needed two bands to do the next split."



BOUNCING SOULS

ly left the bands' tour running parallel to the Plea For Peace itinerary.

"The routings were similar, so they called us up and said 'hey, we'd really like you guys to be a part of this,'" explains Steinkopf. "Once we got all the information about it, it seemed like a pretty cool cause and a good thing to be a part of. It kind of happened by chance, but I'm glad it did."

"THEY WERE PUNK AS HELL... BUT THEY WERE AMAZINGLY GOOD AS A BAND.

IN A WAY I HAD FORGOTTEN HOW IMPORTANT THAT IS." — BRYAN KEINLAN OF BOUNCING SOULS

The two bands took full advantage of the opportunity to kick out some new cuts. The Souls deliver another great nostalgic ditty in "Punks in Vegas," with vocalist Greg Attonito wailing, "Here's to the memories." Flag, meanwhile, contemplates global equality in "No Borders, No Nations." Then, of course, there's the cover songs—the Souls include a reworking of Cocksparrer's "We're Coming Back," while Flag tackles longtime group favorite The Buzzcocks with "Ever Fallen in Love With Somebody (You Shouldn't Have Fallen in Love With)." In solid, pop punk tradition, both bands then cover each other.

While camaraderie at shows on record comes as second nature to the two bands, touring is no exception to the rule. All the same, the Souls' Steinkopf explains, luck played its part in landing both groups on the Plea For Peace tour.

Intending to celebrate the split CD's release, the two bands had booked a last hurrah of a tour for the fall. Several twists of fate ironical-

The charity tour wound up raising a hefty sum (some 10% of the gross door receipts) for a teen suicide prevention group, The Hopeline Network, on a cross-country trek featuring everything from the synth-driven feminist rally of Le Tigre to the melodic post-hardcore of Thursday.


Despite all the shared show bills, mutual respect and admiration—not to mention a split CD—one can't help but wonder if the conceptual differences between the two bands are ever the source for a rift. Wouldn't hard, leftist politics come off as a bit overbearing alongside songs about fleeting love at the convenient store and '80s teen movies? Or conversely, wouldn't personal musings seem a tad puerile in the face of more graven, serious issues?

The answer from both sides is a resounding "no."

"I think it works because kids can relate to both things," muses Steinkopf. "People like us for certain reasons, people like them for some reasons. Besides, I like to play with bands who aren't exactly the same as us, it makes it more interesting." ■



KEVIN

RATING 



MIKE

RATING 

Arguably, Manowar is more metal than any other band on the planet—it has also debatably become the worst. The band's latest, *Warriors of the World*, is a contender for this year's finest comedy album. Unfortunately, it's not laughs Manowar is going for from its crowds. Unlike the faux metal group Fozzy, which understands drivel like this is more shtick than credible, Manowar is still stuck in 1982, believing someone, somewhere still wants to hear this crap. Twenty years have gone by since the band's debut (*Battle Hymns*), though listeners would never know it while listening to this album. Lyrics like, "Now we will fight for the Kingdom/fighting with steel/Kill all of them/their blood is our seal" (from "Call to Arms") and "Tonight we strike/there is thunder in the sky/Together we'll fight, some of us will die" (from "Hand of Doom") will make crowds yearn for another Nirvana to come along and stab an ice pick through the collective heart of bands like this. Those left curious to hear why the credibility of metal went into the toilet after grunge need look no further than *Warriors of the World*. (Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St., PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065-2793)

—Kevin Boyce

My colleague Kevin is crazy. Sure Manowar hasn't changed much in 20 years, but then neither has the three-day weekend. For many true believers, even those who surrendered their flowing locks and torn-up jeans, the men who once decreed, "Wimps and posers leave the hall!" will always have a special place in the heart. Irony and shtick have a way of sucking the sincerity and passion out of high art and expression, although to what degree Manowar ever enjoyed a place in such lofty realms most fans will never be sure. What loyal listeners will agree on is the visceral, gut reaction of fun and life this music invokes. This is to say nothing of the ridiculous, often misogynist, macho and downright ludicrous content of the band's lyrics. This also glosses over the fact Manowar divested itself from the burdens of innovation ages ago. Still, when the band of Viking rockers blows its war horns, one can rest assured the call will be answered in droves. Kiss the goat, slay the dragon, unsheathe the blade—just don't go chasing waterfalls. (Metal Blade)

—Mike McKee



Hessian photos courtesy of Buddyhead.com...apologies

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BY MIKE COYLE

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE REFUSE TO DRY UP,
RETURNING TO THRIVE WITH A THIRD ALBUM

The vast Southern California desert is where Los Angeles goes to die. The elderly spend their last days at water-guzzling golf courses, the heat easing their arthritis. The young, when they go there, go to buy or make methamphetamines, or to steal from the retirees. When they come back they are aged beyond their years and much meaner. You need a strong reason like looming death or addiction to live somewhere where a one-hundred degree day is considered cool.

Josh Homme and Nick Oliveri grew up in this desert, so you know they're resilient. Somehow, amidst the oppressive heat and barren landscapes, the two not only toughed out the elements but slowly forged a new metal sound.

This sound, delivered by their band Queens of the Stone Age, is finding its way to all sorts of cooler climates these days because they've just about perfected it on their third album, *Songs for the Deaf*. Along with drummer du jour Dave Grohl, the duo has made a metal masterpiece. It's been a long time since an album rocked this hard without being ridiculously banal and self-indulgent. Perhaps Grohl, who absolutely brings down the house here, will be a part of yet another group restoring integrity to heavy music in the mainstream.

Homme and Oliveri first met in middle school, where only a wily mix

of air conditioning, punk rock and cold beer helped them survive. The two bonded quickly, soaking up Black Flag and Minor Threat records like a cactus does water, waiting patiently for a friend to return from Los Angeles with more. High school yielded a relatively sizable group of heavy music fans and would-be musicians with rumors of local bands playing secret, generator-powered punk under the starry night sky. The bands at those first desert parties, namely Yawning Man and Across the River, became the touchstones for the sound Oliveri and Homme would perfect in their first band, Kyuss, and transcend with Queens.

Homme describes Across the River as a good punk band with a great guitarist. He says it was Yawning Man, however, who had something new, something deep and low.

What they played was metal-baked, slowed and twisted a bit from the desert heat. This was music tough enough to thrive in a place where the dictionary says nothing should.

Kyuss, including drummer Brant Bjork, became the vanguard of the desert rock sound, building a very loyal following via the generator parties. Upon their arrival in Los Angeles, the group was seen by the right people and eventually signed to Elektra records, releasing the seminal

Blues for the Red Sun and *Welcome to Sky Valley*. An Australian tour with Metallica followed before the desert fox disintegrated.

Burnt, Homme went to the one place he believed music to be dead—Seattle. By 1995 the myth of grunge had broken the spirit of the musicians. Nobody wanted to be in a band—an arrangement perfect for Josh Homme, who rolled into town looking to do anything but play music.

Seattle ain't no place for a desert man though, and Mark Lanegan, singer for the Screaming Trees, probably didn't have to beg too much to get Homme to join his band on the last incarnation of Lollapalooza. It's maybe lucky, after all, Homme took the opportunity as the trip would lead him to an epiphany whilst driving the tour van through—of all places—the desert.

"Things become smaller and less cluttered in the desert," Homme muses. "I realized I need to be making music, and that's that. 'So what,' about what people think."

So-what-about-what-people-think could be the motto for Homme's Queens of the Stone Age. Bucking metal tradition from the get-go, Homme explains the band's name is just the first of several obstacles overtly closed-minded listeners will have to overcome. "They can't even say it, so hopefully they won't want to come see us," he laughs, reflecting on the oft macho extreme music fan encountering his band's outlandish moniker.

Brute machismo, as Homme sees it, isn't the point, regardless of what convention might suggest. The wiry guitarist adds he's not afraid of stopping a pit when things get too violent.

"That's not what it's about—it's a party," he emphasizes. "You know, if all you shirtless men want to rub up against each other, that's fine, but take it to the back room. I'd rather see groovin', dancin', drinkin' and making out."

With Oliveri back on bass and Alfredo Hernandez on drums, Queens of the Stone Age released its debut album in 1998. Homme accurately describes it as "guitar heavy trance, robot rock and heavy Devo."

From the album's opening notes, the effect was reminiscent of a more hypnotic Kyuss. Apparently, the time away from the desert had only made the crew edgier.

"It announced a new sound," Homme says, contemplating his band's

debut. "Kyuss had a real committed following of people. I really respected that those people were into my music as much as I was, but we got painted into a musical corner. I didn't ever want to be there again, but I wanted to bring everyone who was cool from the Kyuss crowd with me."

Queens' debut was soon followed by the expansive *Rated R*—an album full of startling moments of beauty setting listeners up for big, suckerpunch riffs. The record earned the band an opening slot on Ozzfest 2000. A combination of Nick's regular display of drunken nudity and songs as universally lovable as "Feel Good Hit of the Summer" (a musical list of all the drugs Homme had ingested the day before recording) garnered the band some special attention, critical praise.

Homme's Seattle connections, the glut and folly of nu-metal and the British press' love for onstage nudity seem to have set the most auspicious stage possible for the band's third album.

"This album is really made for people who are already into us," Homme begins, when asked about *Songs for the Deaf*.

The first two build to this goal, he explains, although one can't help but wonder if he's allowed for current variables such as increased radio airplay, a buzzworthy, *Evil Dead*-inspired video and the general hype involved when one of rock's most revered drummers goes out of his way to play on the new record. New fans seem inevitable.

"Parts of getting bigger weird me out a little bit," Homme confesses. "I've become accustomed to being under the radar for the last 12 years. I've had the luxury of this all going slow. I don't feel afraid of fame, because I feel like our musical path is chosen."

Chosen or not, Homme reveals the path through *Songs* wasn't composed of entirely smooth footing. The band struggled with the label, already hungry for a radio hit, early on, leaving the sessions uninspired and unproductive. A dizzying deluge of standout drumming from percussion whiz Dave Grohl, however, quickly refueled Homme and Oliveri, saving the record.

Grohl is at his best here, tight as a robot, rolling around his drums almost as frantically as Keith Moon—a stutter step here, an extra, unexpected roll there.

Homme and Oliveri are with him every step, exploding chord progressions and staying as fluid as their timekeeper while jamming the songs into a spirited metal groove deriving power in its resolve.

With chemistry so potent, one can't blame Homme for being a little sore at Grohl's quick departure—the Foo Fighters frontman fled before Queens was able to take its new material on the road.

"There's a part of me that was saying, 'Stay, don't go. You know you want to. You know you should,'" Homme recalls. "It was such a classic situation, and rock is the search for a classic moment, and they don't come up all the time. So don't spit in the face of one when it's here."

Although his comments might paint the Queens guitarist as feeling a bit scorned, it's yearning rather than spite one hears most clearly. Ultimately, Homme concedes, Grohl has got to do what makes him happy.

One can't blame him for being a little itchy, considering the tall order Queens demands out of its drummers. The band wasted no time landing a replacement when Grohl set sail, deciding on Joey Castillo, a former drummer for Danzig, Goatsnake and Wasted Youth.

"For the first time, this feels like a permanent thing," Homme shares happily.

Line ups aside, Homme has learned to accept, along with his fans, no matter who he and Oliveri play with, the trio will be turning out exceptional, hard and original music—a truth as certain as the desert is hot. ■

ROCKPILE FUN FACT» Queens of the Stone Age Nick Oliveri bassist missed the scheduled interview time when an expected trip to the hospital required some x-rays for broken ribs. We're all happy to report Nick is OK.



DARKER THAN BLUES

BUILT TO SPILL Frontman **DOUG MARTSCH** Goes Solo—Still We Follow



STORY BY NEAL RAMIREZ
ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL BUKOWSKI

Doug Martsch, the talented guitarist/singer/songwriter, is at his home in Boise, Idaho with his wife, Karena, and eight-year-old son, Ben. Despite a reputation as an elusive artist, today, he wants to talk. Not about his band, Built to Spill—the revered rulers of the indie rock empire. He wants to discuss his debut solo outing, *Now You Know*. And if you get him riled up, he'll swear that Curtis Mayfield kicks the collective asses of all modern groups on MTV and VH1.

"I Want to be Able to Surprise People"

Few Built to Spill fans could have predicted the turn Doug Martsch takes on *Now You Know*. As always, the album contains great songs, but instead of the usual layered Built to Spill style, most tunes are delivered with a traditional blues anti-gloss. Martsch's signature guitar style is mostly shelved for the slide guitar/open-G tuning approach of old blues greats like Blind Willie Johnson and Mississippi Fred McDowell.

"The whole record is sort of based on McDowell's style of playing," Martsch reveals. "He's pretty great."

A long time fans of blues-inspired rock à la Hendrix and Zeppelin, Martsch admits traditional blues never quite struck as resonating a chord with him as when he first heard McDowell's album *The First Recordings* (recorded by Alan Lomax in 1959).

"When I first started playing that way I didn't intend to make a record," Martsch shares. "I was just kind of doing it to be able to do it. Because it sounded so nice to me."

Now You Know even features Martsch's cover of McDowell's tune, "Woke up this Morning with my Mind on Jesus." It's a fitting homage from one innovative musician to another.

"That song is the one that I don't really use his style on, because he uses his style on it," Martsch says before humbly adding, "I couldn't even come close."

His rendition comes complete with an acoustic guitar run through a distortion pedal.

"I Didn't Even Mess Around With it"

Martsch recorded the album at his home studio using a 1/2-inch, 16-track Tascam. The studio had previously only been used for demoing Built to Spill material.

"For the solo record I bought a bigger tape machine and a bigger board," says Martsch. "It's the only real project I've done."

While the album does have a more stripped-down quality than

we're used to hearing from Martsch, the quality of the recording is anything but ramshackle.

"I didn't expect myself to be able to get good sound, so I didn't even mess around with it," Martsch admits with a chuckle. "I just threw mics up and thought, 'well, this will be a lo-fi record.'"

While some songs have the sound of vintage blues ("Offer," "Stay"), other songs veer more into the realm of recent indie rock. "Heart (Things Never Shared)"—the album's first single—was recorded separately from the majority of the songs. With light strumming, the song sounds the most like a typical Built to Spill track.

The album was completed in early 2000, and Martsch figured he'd release it on an indie, like say, his long-time supporter, Seattle's Up Records. Major label crap prevented this, unfortunately. Lucky for fans, Warner Bros. has at long last decided to make an honest album out of *Now You Know*—and you thought they'd never ask!

With *O, Brother* still the rage and the White Stripes robbing old blues dudes blind (no pun intended), the timing is perfect for *Now You Know*. Despite trends, Martsch's first solo album is a fine addition to his canon.

"I Always Felt my Strength was in Overdubbing and Crafting Songs"

When people started asking Martsch to play the occasional solo show, he was more than reluctant.

"I never wanted to," he admits almost bashfully. "I never really felt the acoustic thing would lend itself to what I did."

What turned the Brian Wilson of indie rock around, reconsidering his one-man-band approach?

As the rural artiste explains it himself, he acquired the itch during the last Built to Spill tour, where he would occasionally play a few songs from the solo record in the midst of BtS's set.

"Playing in that context, where I was pretty comfortable being on the stage because I had had the band with me, I started to like it," he shares.

Those lucky enough to catch early incarnations of the solo songs know what to expect from Martsch's autumn tour—just Martsch and an acoustic guitar.

Like the solo shows, most of the album is Martsch alone, but some key songs on *Now You Know* feature a group of talented musicians from Boise.

John MacMahon, from Martsch's favorite Boise band, Draw, lends both his artistic and musical talents (MacMahon painted the image appearing on the album's cover and played cello on several cuts). The rhythm section for the album's full-band tracks is composed of drummer Daren Adair and bassist Travis Ward. It's the first album Martsch has recorded in his hometown, though he hopes it won't be the last. ▶

“I Don’t Wanna Make Shitty White Reggae”

With all the action around Martsch’s solo record, fans may wonder about the state of Built to Spill. They need not worry. Martsch plans on working with Brett and Scott on a new album in early 2003.

In the meantime, Martsch says, he’s lined up a few other projects to keep busy.

“I started a cover band, and we’re going to make a record,” he says, referring to the band called the Boise Cover Band.

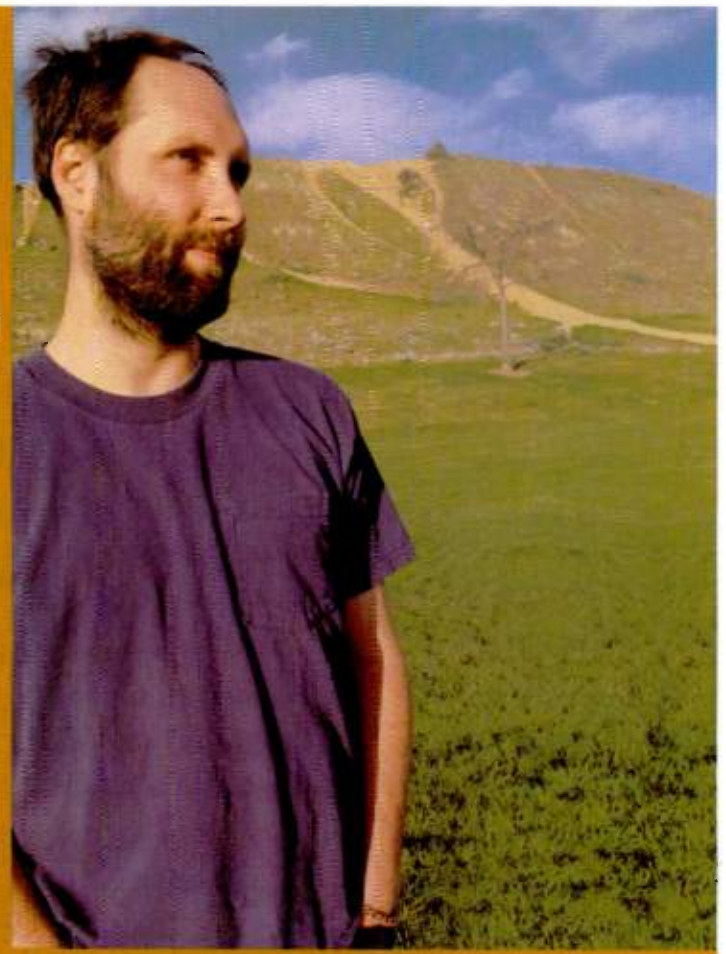
Although the band does mostly older reggae songs, Martsch says, he and the boys from Boise take a not-so-traditional approach when forming their renditions of these classics.

Readers will no doubt get a little edgy when they learn guitarist Ned Evans uses a fretless guitar (unless, of course, they also enjoy their subscriptions to *Modern Gig Dude* and *Guitar World*). Fortunately, Martsch promises the BCB avoids the trappings of gear junkies and world music snobs.

“I mostly like rocksteady—stuff from ’67 to ’69,” Martsch shares, illustrating the differences between Ziggy Marley’s “Tomorrow People,” the Mighty Diamonds’ “I Need a Roof” and Desmond Decker’s “Pressure Drop.” “It’s all really soul influenced. I really like the production. It’s all really Curtis Mayfield.”

While the Built to Spill frontman concedes he’s sure his newfound obsession with rocksteady-era reggae will work its way into his day job’s material, Martsch is careful to note it will all be in good taste.

“I don’t wanna make shitty white reggae, but I’m sure it’s gonna have some sort of influence,” he grins.



“We Get Cable for Buffy the Vampire Slayer”

Now You Know is Martsch’s most personal-sounding record. Lyrically, however, the abstract approach usually found on Built to Spill records is revisited.

“I wanted to tell stories more like a traditional songwriting style, lyric-wise, but I just couldn’t do it,” Martsch shrugs. “I don’t have it in me. As with all Built to Spill records, my wife, Karena, contributed a bunch of lyrics. We used nonsense and made up stuff that sounded all right.”

“Open up your window to the world if you want the world to show you happiness and pain,” Martsch sings on “Window.” A chugging rhythm gives the song a pulse, but the lyrical imagery brings the song to life. Along with “Heart,” “Window” could be a hit. Well, a hit on NPR and college radio, at least.

Over the years Martsch has revealed a passion for both concise pop songs and jam-band riffage. Still, he keeps the experimental guitar bits to a minimum on his solo venture. All the same, fans will notice some familiar Stratocaster dexterity on “Lift” and “Sleeve.”

“I guess I kinda wanna do everything at once,” he explains. “The best records are a decent mixture of planned ideas and happy accidents in the studio and a certain amount of improvised instrumentation.”

When asked, somewhat off topic, if he has a favorite song from the summer of ’02, Martsch is frank.

“I don’t think I even know any songs that came out in the summer of 2002,” he says. “We get cable for basketball and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* season, and then we have it turned off. When we have cable, I’ll watch a little MTV or VH1. I never like anything. It’s all just disgusting. Even good things don’t sound good to me when they’re in that context.”

Perhaps it’s time Martsch made a new video. ■

*Apologies to Curtis Mayfield for the headline on the author’s behalf.



k.

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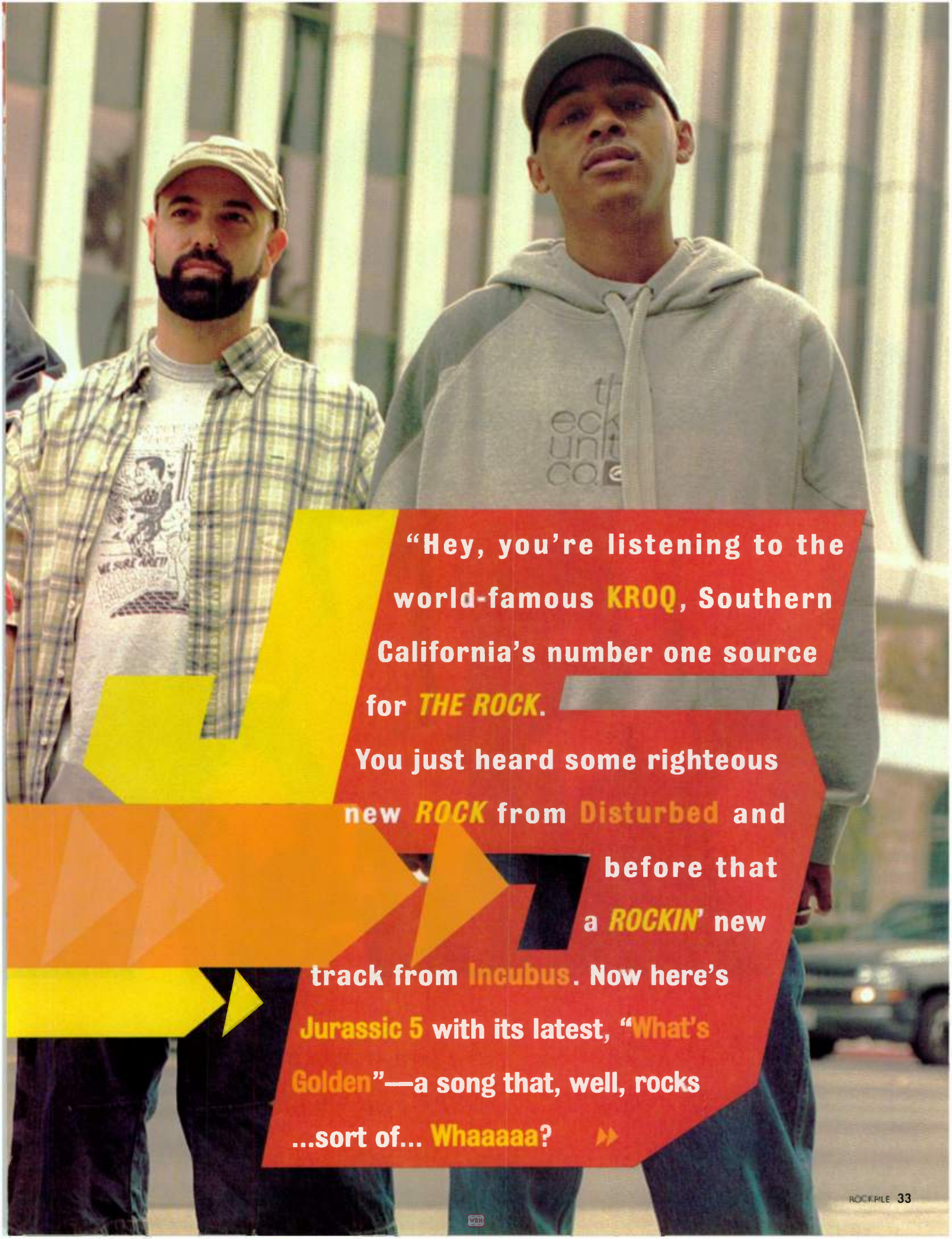
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JURASSIC 5 RETURNS TO TEACH AND TO ENTERTAIN ▶▶ BY KURT ORZECK



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You just heard some righteous new **ROCK** from **Disturbed** and before that a **ROCKIN’** new track from **Incubus**. Now here’s **Jurassic 5** with its latest, “**What’s Golden**”—a song that, well, rocks ...sort of... **Whaaaaa?** ▶▶



“LIFE IS RICH, and we’re here to take some risks musically, as well as say some real shit, and make your ass move and entertain you visually,”

AS

if mainstream rock radio hasn't proven itself interesting enough in recent months with the addition of some idiosyncratic new talent (c'mon guys, y'all know the names), it's time for an even more drastic—and graciously welcomed—appendage, Jurassic 5—one of the freshest, brainiest and liveliest acts known in today's bustling hip hop sphere. Sure, Eminem gets some airplay on the same stations, but being the overrated, surrogate son of Vanilla Ice he is, we can easily discount him from the equation.

"Life is rich, and we're here to take some risks musically, as well as say some real shit, and make your ass move and entertain you visually," the lanky, cavern-throated Chali 2na explains.

Chali is one of four wordsmiths in the group, with Marc7, Akil and Zaakir rounding out the bunch. Beatmakers Cut Chemist and DJ Nu-Mark bring the count up to six Jurassics, in fact, not five.

Digits are crucial, as is suggested by the title of the group's new album, *Power in Numbers*.

"On the level of being signed to a label, there's power in numbers in the simple fact that, at the end of the day, you've gotta sell records," shares the ever-behatted Marc7. "It's the reality of the record business. You can't expect them to keep pouring money into you if you're not selling."

While the jocular Jurassics haven't exactly cleared the record-store shelves—neither their self-titled EP nor their previous full-length, 2000's *Quality Control*, claim platinum status, a common feat nowadays for many hip hoppers—there's plenty of indication Interscope is expecting a reversal with J5's latest release.

Take, for instance, the plush Beverly Hills lunch the label treats them to on this otherwise lazy Tuesday afternoon—juicy steak plates and desserts all around. The label has also intensified its publicity arm in hiring a reputed independent firm to help promote the new release. And it only takes a quick glance at the floor to notice Pumas strapped to all 12 feet—as it just so happens, J5's management company is in cahoots with the sneaker brand.

For a group having coagulated at a wee cafe in South Central Los Angeles back in the early '90s, these riches may seem a bit egregious, especially considering how the group prides itself on its homemade, self-produced handiwork.

But leave it to Senor 2na to justify J5's current position in layman's terms.

"I really feel you," he begins in response to those who whine and complain about the group's major-label status. "But tell me this, think all those underground cats who play at the club down the block from you. You go to the door and pay your money. By that definition, they've sold out. You've paid for their services."

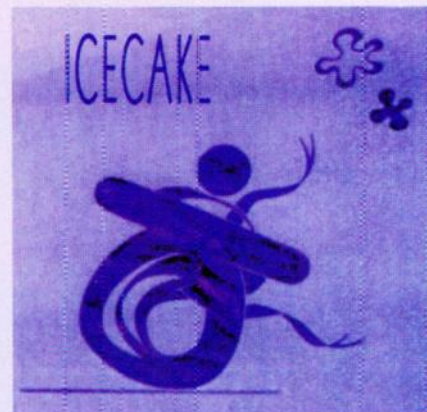
Of course, the tired major-label debate is one most cultivated scholars have long since resolved or abandoned. Still, to the few collegiate stragglers who continue to brood over the issue, Chali proclaims some priceless words.

"I say, OK, you do me a favor," he smiles. "If you've got one of those trust funds, give me your fund and I will make albums for you. Only you. Exclusively for John Q. Then you can go play it for your homies, but don't sell it to them. If you're going to give it to them, you've got to do it for free."

Amongst the chameleonic J5's many crossover abilities is its unique capacity to deliver palpable underground and retrospective flavors to a wider audience. The sextet's sounds have commonly endowed them with the "Next School" tag. It's interesting to note the symmetry as a battalion of young rock bands are reintroducing lost heroes to a new generation (again, you know the names), hip hop acts such as J5, Mos Def and The Roots are doing the same on the other end of the musical spectrum. >>

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"I THINK JURASSIC 5

***is out there to teach as well as entertain.
We want the newcomers to pay homage to the old thing—
understand where it came from, understand where it's going."***





ith hip hop, you see a lot of people on third base who haven't gone up to bat yet," reflects the soft-spoken, pint-sized Akil. "Quality Control was our at-bat, and we've begun to run a 360-degree circle around what hip hop comprises.

The EP was '80 to '83 and *Quality Control* was '83 to '85. *Power in Numbers* sounds like the middle era."

The 32-year-old Chali seconds the notion.

"Through our travels, we meet people on a day-to-day basis that have never listened to a whole Run DMC or LL Cool J album all the way through," he reports. "These are some of the most famous rappers ever."

After a few pensive moments, the commanding MC returns to the subject, this time with an arresting clarity.

"I think Jurassic 5 is out there to teach as well as entertain. We want the newcomers to pay homage to the old thing—understand where it came from, understand where it's going."

Wedge between key cuts like "What's Golden" (the first single), "Freedom" and "Thin Line" (featuring Nelly Furtado) is "A Day at the Races"—at 110 BPM, the fastest J5 track to date and, with guest spots by rap hierarchy Big Daddy Kane and Percy P, one of the most reverential.

"That dude is cool as a motherfucker," Chali beams about the Smooth Operator. "He had a gold gauntlet, diamond studded with the word 'Kane' on it. This little homegirl he was with, he just asked her to go get it for him!"

Not to be overlooked is the massive turntable replica J5 erected as part of its stage set on the recent Smokin' Grooves tour, a theatrical prop feat hearkening back to vintage LL Cool J jaunts.

The comparison seems well-placed, as Nu-Mark relates *Power* to LL's '87 record, *Bigger and Deffer*.

"That's how I feel—the sonic quality is bigger. It's a little more thought-out with the beats and rhymes," he says.

Compared with *Quality Control's* easy going entry, fans might be surprised by the direct assault into politics and social morays taken by *Power in Numbers*. After a short instrumental jingle (the same one closing *Quality Control* as part of an inter-album bridging maneuver the band plans to continue throughout its career), the album begins. Instantly, the four rhymer launch into "Freedom" and "If You Only Knew." The former strikes directly into the heart of national currents ("My culture's screwed cause this word is misconstrued"), while the latter launches a counterattack on peers, critics and listeners who have misconstrued the group itself.

"Freedom is basically a question that's on everybody's mind right now, moreso than anything else," Chali asserts. "So we were, like, 'let's address that real quick to let people know that we are human beings.'"

J5's smooth delivery and its masterful blend of rollicking rhythms and bristling beats flow throughout in a grade-A, velvety, voluptuous wine for J5 lovers.

"People may say we stray away from the harmony that made people like us," Chali interjects. "But I think, personally, we've gotten a lot more melodic."

"I could throw this album on for my mom and not have to explain to her what hip hop is," adds Akil.

After joshing about one of the group's most notorious tours, one in which they supported Fiona Apple, the MCs joke, "We've covered every market except the Celine Dion shit... and that [Fiona] was close to it."

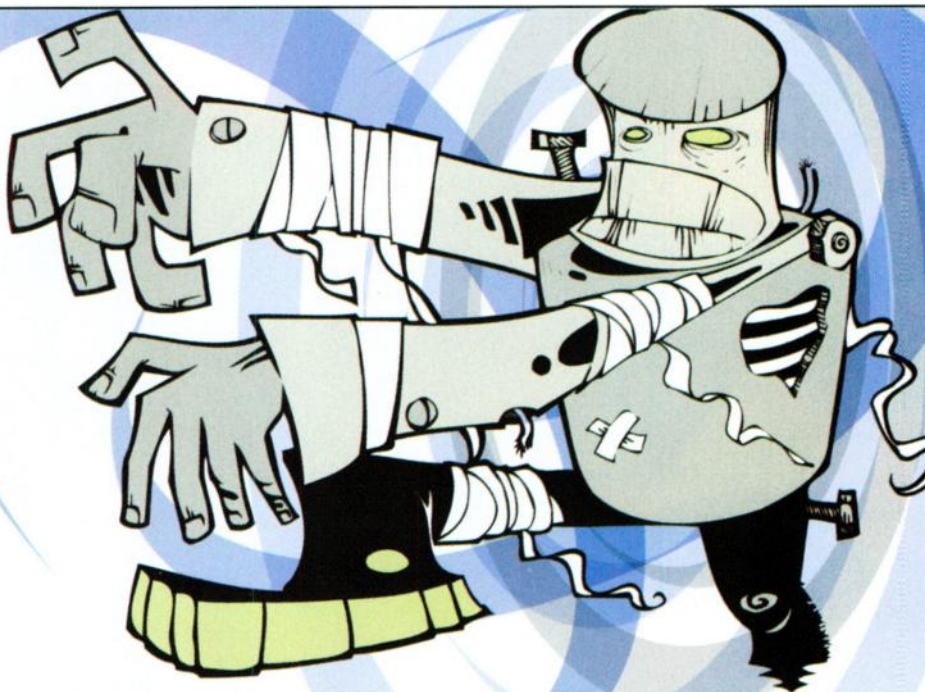
Marc7 has, in typical J5 style, an unwaveringly positive outlook on music as it stands today, despite whatever odd paths he and his group may have traveled.

"When we first started, there was a lot of gun talk and things of that nature," he shares. "Now there's an appreciation for us because more kids out there love hip hop. There are artists who just make commercial shit, but the respect the artists get from the labels is a lot better. Right now is a great time to be a hip-hop artist." ■



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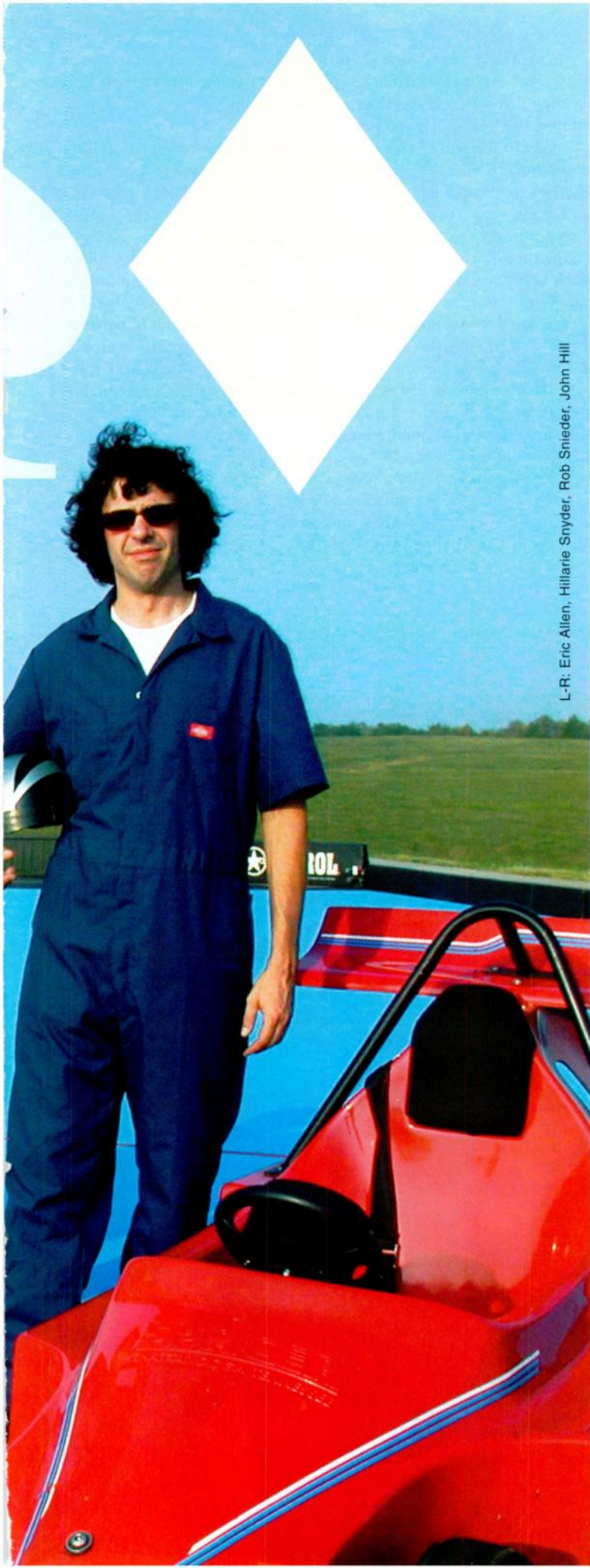
Alternative Press called 'Volume Plus Volume', "smart, angular emocore" that "swirls, stops and starts to disorienting effect(s) - you'll feel as though you're falling down a short flight of stairs, pausing, then taking another quick tumble" and with "no guilty pleasure, Rescue reward those who favor sonic complexity with their emo." Produced by Mark Haines.

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Built for Speed

by Allan Martin Kemler





L-R: Eric Allen, Hillarie Snyder, Rob Sniader, John Hill

leadfoot rockers, **Apples in Stereo** push the peddle to the metal, leaving critics and skeptics in the dust



In a year traumatized by terrorism, accounting scandals and a lingering recession, the view of the world, which popular culture chooses to reflect back on to its public, seems to bear little resemblance, if any, to the day-to-day reality of most American lives. As the encroachment of ever-increasing media consolidation threatens to further constrict the information we receive and the discussions we have; as the threat of war looms on the horizon and our civil liberties are ripped to shreds amidst jingoistic fervor; as the link between advertising, consumerism and our apathy disinterest towards governing our own cities and towns becomes increasingly clear, it seems proper to ask what role our artists should play in helping us choose and frame the issues informing our lives and how we might respond to them.

On the other hand, it can be argued pop culture is nothing if not a release from the heavy issues burdening us all. Maybe looking for answers to philosophical, social and economic problems from women and men armed with guitars and easy rhymes may not be the best way to proceed.

But didn't Plato both entertain and enlighten with the *Allegory of the Cave*? Didn't Blake counsel us in *From the Everlasting Gospel* that Jesus was not actually meek or mild and it would be Satan who would try to pacify us? Didn't Bob Dylan electrify our synapses with "Chimes of Freedom?"



Somewhere in between these poles falls, the Apples in Stereo. Like the Impressionists, who evoked wondrous sensations hinting at half-realized truths buried in the recesses of our souls, the Apples create blissfully soothing harmonies wrapped in effervescent melodies tugging on the heartstrings and calling out the universal names for the ineffable nexus of emotions, thoughts and feelings governing our existence.

Robert Schneider, the man behind the Apples' genius, studied both music and philosophy at the University of Colorado at Boulder, so he is no stranger to such esoteric notions. And given the prodigious amount of exceptionally beautiful music he and his wife, Hilarie, and their band of friends have created over the last nine years, he could easily turn his attention toward any number of issues and codify them into elegant anthems summing up the most crucial elements, and all in 4/4 time. Fortunately or not, though, he's not interested.

"I hate topical songwriting, I think it is artless," he explains, responding to *Village Voice* critic Robert Christgau's recent suggestion Schneider could be a major force if he had anything to say. "Christgau is right. For somebody who talks a lot, I really don't have much to say. But it is not by accident. I want to make music that is timeless, which from my perspective is the opposite of timelessness. I want to evoke without coming out and stating what I'm talking about."

In contrast to most of the Apples' previous records, the new album—*Velocity of Sound* (Spinart)—borrows more from The Ramones than The Beatles. Where its previous efforts seemed to tread the path between the groovy and the twee, *Velocity* simply rocks. One reason for the disc's newfound sound, Schneider says, is a strict but self-imposed mandate on himself to eschew the use of acoustic instruments, partially because the last album took a year and a half to make and partially because he wanted the album to sound more like a real band.

"In the past I was so hung up on high fidelity, I wanted this one to be more raw," the Apples frontman explains. "I wanted to take off in a direction that wasn't retro. The more stuff you put on a record, the more it dilutes the feeling of a real band."

To get to the real source of the record's sound, however, you have to go back 20 months. Between moving from Denver to Lexington, Ky., (where Schneider says he and Hilarie could afford to buy a house) and the birth of their son, Max, the band experienced a break in its continuity.

The break gave the band time to think about exploring new directions. Eventually, this led to Schneider's decision to try to capture the band's live sound. In order to do this, he recalls, he decided to get rid of all the usual pre-conceived arrangements and production flourishes. Often, he confesses, many of the embellishments on previous Apples albums were subtle in-jokes referencing his favorite albums of yesteryear.

"I started to realize that maybe if we were going to do something really great, we should be doing something that isn't referential to other people's stuff," reflects the native South African. "So we decided to use the eight-track instead of the 16-track, because I wanted it to sound fuzzy and because I didn't want to have as many choices."

Despite the lack of whistles, horns, acoustic guitars and all the other stuff that make Apples in Stereo records such a fun listen, *Velocity* hits the nail on the head. Instead of the breathy bedroom melancholia of tunes like "Pine Away" or "About Your Fame," or the watery psychedelia of "Strawberryfire," or the funky, blue-eyed soul of "The Bird That You Can't See," the Apples' seventh full-length simply grinds raunchy chords against trash-can drums to create a cornucopia of old-fashioned, angry rock 'n roll. ▶▶

"I wanted to take off in a direction that wasn't retro..."

I am sick of retro, I am sick of oldies, I want to make new sounds and sing with my own voice."



If *Velocity* sounds decidedly less retro, perhaps it is because Schneider purposefully avoided writing in his typically dreamy, wistfully introspective way. In an effort to distance himself and the band from its back catalog, Schneider says he tried to be direct and anti-poetic instead of pretentious and faux-deep. Furthermore, with the proliferation of so many retro bands, especially those fetishizing the '60s, Schneider says he wanted to rebel against the revolution he helped to start.

"I am sick of retro, I am sick of oldies," he laments. "I want to make new sounds and sing with my own voice. I want to burn down the past and say 'fuck you' to current trends and do our own thing for the future."

As artists should. But what about addressing current events? What about Christgau's question? With such an abundance of talent it is interesting to think about what the Apples could do if they tackled such timeless issues as war, greed and corruption. Still, when you think about it, who really needs another "Biko" or "Farm on the Freeway."

While great art can illuminate and crystallize the salient points of important issues with a degree of clarity unknown in politics—Picasso's *Guernica* or most of Max Ernst's work comes to mind—the Apples, though not nearly as grim, are perhaps more like Edvard Munch's *The Scream*. Vivid yet impressionistic. Audiences infer through feelings what the Apples' music is saying from its textures and sounds rather than actually understanding it literally.

So maybe Christgau is wrong. Maybe the Apples do have something to say. They're just not going to spell it out in big, block letters.

"My music is about expressionism, not statements," Schneider insists. "I don't want to say anything. I want to evoke without coming out and stating what I'm talking about. That is how we experience life. It doesn't come with commentary." ■

"My music is about expressionism, not statements,"



"I don't want to say anything. I want to evoke without coming out and stating what I'm talking about."

"That is how we experience life. It doesn't come with commentary."

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SAVE ROCK 'N' ROLL

THE PATTERN

Real Feelness



With the proliferation of processed pop slop, many have gone astray and lost sight of rock 'n roll's true meaning. One band with the answer is the collective of Bay Area garage revivalists known as The Pattern. Whether you consider it ironic or fitting that such unabashed, universal rock should come from a former frontman of Bay Area punk legends The PeeChees, it's clear The Pattern intends to deliver. On its current long player, *Real Feelness*, the band sets out to put us back on the straight and narrow, and to remind us of what rock 'n roll is all about. In terms of sound, The Pattern takes its cues from both sides of the pond, employing the Motor City madness of the MC5 with the '60s era British soul of The Kinks. While many of The Pattern's peers have begun to reap the benefits of the current rock revival (an ironic, cosmic reference to a "poser explosion"), only a few will be left standing when the dust settles. In the end you can bet your soul shaker The Pattern will be a part of the group, channelling both Ray Davies and Wayne Kramer, forming Lookout! Records' great white (striped) hope to do what every band promises—save rock 'n roll. (Lookout!, 3264 Adeline St, Berkeley, CA 94703)

—Jonathan Cholewa

THE PATTERN



Track Listing

01. Fragile Awareness
02. You or You
03. Nothing of Value
04. Thunder Us
05. Mary's Sister
06. Selling Submarines
07. She's A Libra
08. Last Night Called
09. Let's Get Important
10. The Best Hate The Rest
11. Happy Sarong
12. Rangefinder

for fans of:

Peechees, The Strokes, Modest Mouse

ADD N TO (X)
Loud Like Nature



England's sickest electronic saboteurs return with the (un)usual mix of digital tyranny and gummy cyberfunk. ANTX's most endearing and perplexing trait has always been its inability to decide whether to crunk up the party or cower in paranoid fear. The trio's fifth record doesn't let up the tension. Consummate Buck Rogers soul workouts like "Party Bag" and "Total All Out Water" sit comfortably next to the goose-stepping beats and Arctic blasts of freon-fests such as "Invasion of the Polaroid People." Though little has been made in the way of thematic progress, this arty trio has obviously grown more accomplished with its craft—at times it seems to have pop and locked the synths and thrown away the key, only to unexpectedly reign affairs in with a patch of anxious melody or fascist whip crack. By the end of ANTX's indoctrination, even the most unpliant citizen will be convinced a dance soundtrack to 1984 could be possible after all. (Mute, 140 West 22nd St., Suite 10A, New York 10011)

—Reed Jackson

ANDY DICK & THE BITCHES
OF THE CENTURY



Milan

Finally, there's something out there's appropriate for the shelf next to Tenacious D. The two groups are eerily similar, from their toxically funny frontmen to their stand-up-routines-as-decent-rock-songs shtick. And like the D, audiences' appreciation of Dick's musical work is likely to depend entirely on each person's threshold for his act in general. There are some brutally funny moments on here—the psychotic "Love Ninja," the Men Without Hats referencing in "Stephen Hawking," the Primus-meets-Wild-Man-Fischer ooze of "Little Brown Ring" and the rehab autobio "30 Days 30 Nights." For sheer power, though, the 88-second fury of "I'll Fuck Anything That Moves" should have Andrew WK signing up for the witness relocation program. Andy Dick is funny, and his band rocks harder than a coke boner. (Milan, 8750 Wilshire Blvd., 2nd Floor, Beverly Hills 90211)

—Brian Baker

ANDY STOCHANSKY
Five Star Motel



On the spectacular *Five Star Motel*, former Ani DiFranco drummer Andy Stochansky builds a captivating pop album incorporating shimmering arrangements, groovy melotron, grandiose strings and shuffling beats, all built around genuinely moving acoustic guitar grooves. Stochansky's voice is in league with Jeff Buckley's—it slides effortlessly from whispers to soaring heights. "Wonderful (It's Superman)"—a standard alternative rocker—is the only uninspired tune on a painstakingly crafted and downright impressive album. "One Day" beautifully gives a nod to Brian Wilson's masterful string arrangements, while "Miss USA" is about as uplifting a gem as you'll find, making *Five Star Motel* one of the finest pop albums of the year, second only to Brendan Benson's near-perfect *Lapalco*. (BMG Music, 1540 Broadway, New York 10036)

—Charles Spano

BARRY ADAMSON
The King of Nothing Hill



In the 20 years since his work with Magazine and the 15 since forming the Bad Seeds with Nick Cave, Adamson has carved a fascinating solo niche for himself as a rock performer, film composer and songwriter. On *The King of Nothing Hill*, Adamson's ninth album of new material (1999 saw the release of the *Murky World of Barry Adamson* retrospective), the respected multi-instrumentalist has blended all of his various disciplines into an amazing pop pastiche of soulful electronica, thumping R&B and evocative film scoring. Vocally, Adamson oozes skillfully from a Barry White rumble to a Marvin Gaye shiver to an Iggy Pop moan, all supported by a thumping soundtrack subtly blending the best of jazzy blaxploitation and Bacharach-arranged indie rock ("Cinematic Soul"). *The King* almost makes one wish there was a movie to accompany Adamson's funky song cycle. (Mute, 140 W. 22nd St., Suite 10A, New York 10011)

—Brian Baker

BASTARD SONS OF JOHNNY CASH
Distance Between



On their sophomore album, *Distance Between*, the Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash declare the twang is still a viable rock element. With a mix of country, folk and straight rock, the Bastard Sons manage 12 songs ranging in tempo and

feel. "Monte Carlo," an upbeat ode to lead singer and songwriter Mark Stuart's 1970 Chevy, kicks off the disc, daring the listener to call the album country. "Hard Times," a ballad, and "Marfa Lights," relying heavily on a slide guitar, are more obvious attempts at a traditional country-Western feel. The haunting "Burn Down" and the head-bopping title track, however, defy such easy classification. *Distance Between* is a bold step in the development of this San Diego-based band, and in Stuart's songwriting. Whereas the group's debut (*Walk Alone*) plowed more old-time country territory, this latest offering holds more promise for fans of a wider rock audience. (Ultimate Music, 8723 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232)

—Greg November

BEN WEASEL
Fidatevi



Best known as the sarcastic front man of seminal Bay Area punks Screaming Weasel, Ben Weasel's first official solo album, *Fidatevi*, does not stray too far from the blueprint. While Weasel has been criticized in the past for his inconsistent output, he takes it all in stride and even manages to poke fun at himself in the first lines of the lead track, "Patience," when he sings, "I have six guitars that I can barely play/and a questionable singing voice as well." While most of the songs on *Fidatevi* are the standard Weasel fare some have come to expect, the lone exception is the surprisingly good "Strangers," with its acoustic guitar, piano and somewhat coherent vocals. (Panic Button, 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703)

—Jonathan Cholewa

BEYOND THE EMBRACE
Against the Elements



Dedicated metalheads have a deep appreciation for New England. Sure, Vermont is home to Phish and New Hampshire is known more for its granite than metal, but Massachusetts has produced an abundance of thrashy metalcore bands proudly carrying the flaming horns of metal high (Killswitch Engage and Shadows Fall to name two). New Bedford's Beyond the Embrace is a fine addition to the region's budding stable of aggressive bands. Like Soilwork and In Flames, this group delivers a high-octane concoction of classic San Francisco thrash and melodic Swedish

ATOMIC 7
Gowns by Edith Head

CD \$12ppd

Sometime between the birthdays of Joe Tex and Webb Pierce in the year 2001, an instrumental rock

& roll band was born in a small town in Toronto. Equally at home in Vegas dives, west Texas honky tonks or Hamilton oysterbars, Atomic 7 features Brian Connolly (Shadow Men on a Shadow Planet) on guitar, and are hell bent on reestablishing go go dancing in clubs across the country. Gowns by Edith Head is more elegant than a fabergé egg, more precious than fabergé bacon and due for release first-thing 2003 in the USA! Out already in Canada.



CAROLYN MARK
Terrible

Hostess CD \$12ppd

Album #2 from Canada's country queen, aka "The Other Carn Sister." Judging by her new disc, shindigs at the Mark household are a helluva trip. Terrible Hostess has the unstydy feel of post-bacchanalian revelry... She consistently channels the spirit of Patsy Cline, and at the same time deserves props for capturing the nauseous insanity of a true house party." (NOW, Toronto ON)



YOUNG AND SEXY
Stand Up for Your Mother

CD \$12ppd "The alluring, opening guitar strains of 'Stand Up to Your Mother' carry the low chill of a Canadian winter before introducing the first of many striking harmonies between Paul Pittman and his muse, vocalist Lucy Brain. The most amazing moments occur when Pittman and Brain join voices. Stand Up for Your Mother can appear daunting with its maze of misdirections, but have faith: Young and Sexy's seductively cerebral master plan really works." (Time Out New York)

MARK KLEINER
Love to Night

CD \$12ppd The first concert of my live-music-watching career was Shann Cassidy at the CNE Stadium in 1977. Fifteen years later, Welsh band The Pooh Sticks munched '70s AM radio into perfect contemporary pop gems. The latest touchstone on my ceaseless quest for musical summer lovin' is Mark Kleiner. (eye, Toronto ON) "...a buoyant summertime delight." (Aquarius Records)

VOLUMIZER
Gaga for Gigi

CD \$12ppd This is what you get when you mix ex-members of U-JRJKS, Pointed Sticks and Disbrags! "Volumizer plays simple punk songs not that much different from that of old punkers The Razelles but somehow manage to repackage the music to fit into here and now. Volumizer is a throw-back to the old school punk days but they are completely relevant and almost refreshing in the Canadian punk scene." (Music Emissions)



OPERATION MAKEOUT
Hang Loose

CD \$12ppd

Katie, Jesse and Anna "energetically march their way through 10 biting songs tied together by

their reflections on being stuck in places that are neither here nor there.... Lapi gets entangled in an energy so electric, it leaves her vocals as uncontrollable and volatile as a water-soaked wire flailing at all sides." (The Gazette, London ON)

JOHN GULIAK
The Black Monk

CD Goiak's strength is his deep, empathic voice and his bars—bones, from-the-streets and from-the-field approach. His stories sound honest and laugh and true and all these other cowboy clichés that describe a fellow who tells it like it is—and then tells you a little bit more, maybe a little more than you wanted to know. Goiak's closest emotional kinfolk are bands like Winnipeg's Weakerthans, he's got that invertebrate split coursing through his chords and characters. Suitable accompaniment for driving across the prairie or walking through the concrete jungle. Take your pick. (Vue, Edmonton AB)

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death metal. The title track houses some guitar work sounding like it was jacked directly from the Iron Maiden songbook, while "Compass" is sure to get the moshpits swirling with its At the Gates-style riffs and deathly delicious vocals. If this isn't metal, than what is? (**Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St., PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065-2793**)

—Kevin Boyce

BLOOD RED

Hostage



On this debut full-length, Blood Red exhibits a keen sense of melody at some points actually quite beautiful (see the piano-backed "Our Lady of Mayhem and the closing "Old New York"). For much of *Hostage*, however, the band sounds like standard radio rock, competently played without really standing out. The distorted guitar sounds terrible, but overall, Blood Red's music is sure to find some eager ears. The vocals, however, have problems. Only sometimes on key, and quite often sung in a heavy-handed, melodramatic style, they really take away from the album as a whole. (**Initial, P.O. Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217**)

—John Robinson

THE BLOW

Bonus Album



Everything put out on iconoclastic Oly label K Records tends to sound alike, and newcomers The Blow prove no exception. Two female voices sing in quavering counter harmony, accompaniment is sparse and incidental, the production and technique all shout homemade and self grown. People who adore the distinctly insular type of naïveté known to spring from Washington state's minuscule capital will assuredly love this EP as well. A few moments on *BA* even hint at a broader, Microphones-styled rubber imagination, but when all is said and done, outsiders and critical listeners will not find much to thrill to with The Blow, which is probably just the way everyone involved wants it. (**K, Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507**)

—Reed Jackson

BROKEN SPINDLES

Broken Spindles



Playing music described as new wave punk is Joel Petersen's main gig in The Faint. With his side project, Broken

Spindles, however, audiences can subtract punk from the equation, leaving a memorable sound anchored on throbbing bass, incessant beats and a driving rhythm closer to the beat-influenced styles of Braniac than Human League. With Broken Spindles, Petersen creates an exciting menagerie—composed of 11 tracks filled with hooks, melody and layered guitars, his project comes off as more pop-oriented than experimental. Clean production keeps the synth-based sound from sounding muddled or overbearing, thus adding a very listenable luster to the album. In this, Petersen continues as a conduit in making synth-driven songs accessible to the indie-minded majority. (**Tiger Style, 149 Wooster St., Fourth Floor, New York 10012**)

—Dan Pastorius

CARISSA'S WIERD

Songs About Leaving



From the acoustic-based indie rock and Elliot Smith-styled pop to Belle and Sebastian melodies, Carissa's Wierd plays gorgeous, lovesick melodies staying close to its influences. Recorded and mixed in a quick seven days by Death Cab for Cutie's Chris Walla, the band's third effort, *Songs About Leaving*, shows longtime collaborators Mat Brooke and Jenn Ghetto perfecting their craft with lush harmonies, light strings and subtle acoustics. Each member of Carissa's Wierd presents herself as a talented musician—from both Brooke and Ghetto to its now fully-formed band, its oblique songwriting technique manages to snag listeners with entrancing hooks and appealing vocal rhythms. While the majority of the album deviates little in its entirety, it proves the perfect mood music for those enjoying honest, straightforward songs with just a hint of emotion. (**Sad Robot, P.O. Box 3171, Seattle 98114**)

—Dan Pastorius

CHAMPION

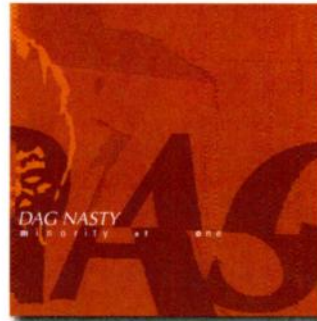
Count Our Numbers



In releasing records by American Nightmare, The Hope Conspiracy and Shark Attack, Boston's Bridge Nine records has become the label of the hour for up and coming hardcore bands. While such a pedigree makes each of Bridge Nine's subsequent releases eagerly anticipated, it also ensures each new record will have to match the high standards of the label's early work. So the stage is set for *Count Our Numbers*, the new, six-song CD from

Dagnasty

Minority Of One



Though the indie gang deb Hollis Queens mans the traps for a certain crew of notorious NYC sleaze merchants, Lo-Fi does not play Deputy Roscoe to her more established group's Boss Hogg. Queens firmly takes center ring here, singing and playing the guitar, leaving the drums to Speedball Baby basher Martin Owens. And though Queens' somewhat flat voice does lack the trashiness to fully convey the lusty lyrics, her crisp stick-and-move guitar attack ensures this side project will be set apart from the flock. Standouts such as the slicked-back sputter of "Runaround" or the cougar-in-a-cage prowl of "White All Around" more than testify to Queens' skills to pay the bills. Occasional forays out of the rock-blues carport end happily ("Little Plant" and laughably "Lucy"), but the light overall tone and tenacious rhythms of Say it More should capture those pesky Dukes and then some.

(**Tiger Style, 149 Wooster St., Fourth Floor, New York 10012**)

—Reed Jackson

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Seattle's Champion. While Champion is unlikely to supplant American Nightmare as the next big thing, the band does kick out some tried and true straightedge hardcore, right down to the dog pile of X-ed up kids on the booklet cover and the obligatory, two-page thanks list. The musical and lyrical content is either generic or classic, depending on the listener's appreciation for a well-played mosh part and ruminations on youthful friendships both forged and lost. In keeping with the classic theme, Champion rounds out the disc with a cover of Alone in the Crowd's "Is anybody there?" (**Bridge Nine, P.O. Box 990052, Boston 02199-0052**)

—Michael O'Brien

THE CHERRY VALENCE

Riffin'



Recorded by Tim Green, *Riffin'* finds The Cherry Valence laying down some all out rawk calling to mind Rye Coalition and the Tight Bros. As the title suggests, this is an album about riffs—Aerosmith songs played like Zeppelin and AC/DC—all courtesy of guitarist Cheetie Kumar's wiry Black Flag-inspired intensity. The

Cherry Valence can come off sounding equally like the MC5 and Bad Brains jamming together ("Sweat, Sweat, Sweat") or some old Foghat tune ("Undercovers"). "World of Trouble" moves from Black Sabbath heaviness to ZZ Top grooves—both as if fronted by Steven Tyler, leaving not so much a path of destruction, but a feel-good, rock 'n roll vibe. (**Estrus, P.O. Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227**)

—Charles Spano

THE COST

Chimaera



Released on Lookout! Records—the label perhaps best known for spawning pop-punk poster boys Green Day, The Cost's aptly titled *Chimaera* seems out of place. While the majority of the Lookout! roster tends to play a more upbeat brand of punk, The Cost is more a black sheep than any drunk uncle showing up to family functions in his army greens. The band's brand of melodic hardcore conveys more somber images than happy-go-lucky themes. Playing a technically proficient, cathartic style of rock, at times brooding, at times spooky, The Cost wastes no time in trying to measure

its best efforts up against those of Black Flag (the band hits as hard as this yesterday great) and The Misfits (without the ham-fisted, dark imagery). Not afraid to wear its opinions on its sleeve, The Cost makes hardcore music for the thinking man or woman. (**Lookout!, 3264 Adeline St, Berkeley, CA 94703**)

—Jonathan Cholewa

D+

D+



It's been a long time gone for D+, but not so much as changed. Sure, charter member Phil Elvrum has gone on to greater fame with the more expansive Microphones, but the music of this low-power trio has stayed pretty much the same in the four years since its debut record, *Dandelion Seeds*. Former Beat Happening waif Brett Lunsford still directs most of the proceedings with his dog-eared voice, while this second record still hoes the same old rural/folk row. The tempos remain calm and the harmonies gentle, with little else in the way of adornment. Yet the unassuming and uncompromising manner in which these Anacortes, Wash., wallflowers set about their craft is still enough to give city slickers pause. D+ is small town music at its best—peculiar, lonesome, ingenuous and inviting. (**KNW YR OWN**)

—Reed Jackson

DIEHARD YOUTH

Without the Kids We Would Be Dead



Diehard Youth's *Without the Kids We Would Be Dead* is like an elbow to the jaw—hard-hitting and direct. Comparable in style to early Cro-Mags or Chain of Strength, Diehard Youth plays a raw brand of hardcore preaching tolerance, faith and fighting for the right to vague rebellion. *Without the Kids* weaves in essays of nationalistic pride and the importance of family in "9-11 Wake Up Call" and "Posi as We Wanna Be," no doubt making coach proud with this display of its wholesome, Adidasized side. Judging by its intelligent lyrics—rivaled only by Yeats (or, maybe an early Ray Cappo), Diehard Youth clearly wants to walk the road of peace while strutting with a mountainous chip on its shoulder. The band emotes a critical theme in wall-of-sound anthems "Boondock Saints" and "The Message"—a wild animal becomes most dangerous

when cornered, so don't put its back to the wall. (**Thorp, P.O. Box 2007, Upper Darby, PA 19082**)

—William J. Donahue

DREW ISLEIB

Sounds Through the Wall



Drew Isleib is not a singer/songwriter shrouded in an enigma or cloaked in mystery. His debut, *Sounds Through the Wall*, plays precisely the way its title suggests, like a peephole into the artist's confessional booth. Isleib writes all the songs, plays a stack of instruments and is not afraid to paint an honest, miserable picture with his words (his depiction of "taking the poison together" in the song "Vodka" is particularly back-breaking). Segments of this emotional ride are tantamount to hearing a talented, dejected guy sing his guts out in the room next door at a truck-stop Best Western. (**Ernest Jenning, 906 Summit Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07307**)

—Joe Sweeney

THE ENEMIES

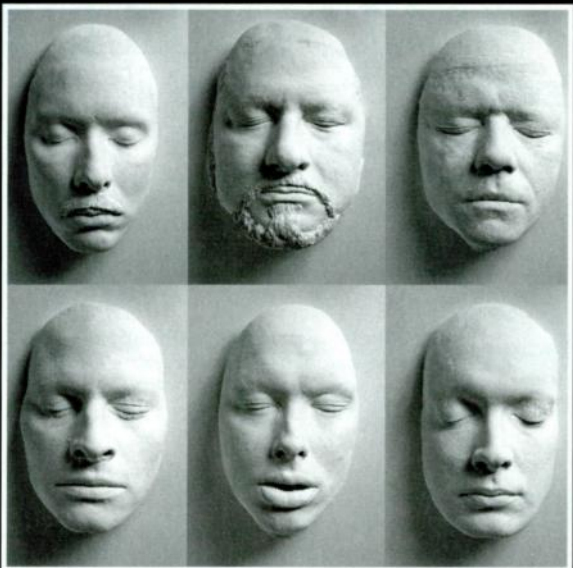
Seize The Day



This record is going to be a big seller at Hot Topic. The music can do its best to resist this fate—even developing a raw pop-punk sound with a touch of the macabre in order to provide a somewhat refreshing burst of music into a dying scene, but nothing can stop the vocals from taking this record straight to mall-punkdom. The lyrics are comparable to those cats outside my window fighting, though maybe not as cool. No matter how the music structures itself, the vocals steer The Enemies to the imminence of someday having a song on the *Varsity Blues II* soundtrack. I got a good one for you. On the second track of *Seize The Day*, entitled "Something to Lose," we are forced to listen to lyrics such as, "look at those laugh lines, so inquisitive." What does that mean? I think the band uses words it thinks it knows the meaning of, but it's not the real meaning. (Think "plethora" and "inconceivable.") Listening to The Enemies is like meeting someone really cool, only to find out they are dating an asshole. Rather, this album is as good as buying a Black Flag shirt for 18 bucks. (**Lookout!, 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703**)

—Mike McKee

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Save Rock 'n Roll



Anyone who's actually had their luscious chops set ablaze (Bacardi 151 and cigars don't mix, kiddies) knows real flaming sideburns are no fucking joke. Unfortunately the rather inflated title of this album doesn't appear to be a gag either, as the ensuing songs are filled with the sort of testicular swagger, reedy twang and beer-commercial glitz most lunkheads seem to equate with saving rock music nowadays. To be fair, these dudes do a fairly good job of it—the nimble bass playing and crisp tempos are well-appreciated, but there's a frightening lack of sleaze in the whole thing. The production seems uniformly clean, the guitars and vocals too well-tailored, making this album seem about as dangerous as the new family-friendly Times Square. Ultimately The Flaming Sideburns need to up the wattage, get down in the muck and compete with more degenerate (and fun) colleagues like The Catheters if they plan to live up to the album's claim. Actually lighting their carefully mussed tresses on fire might help as well. (Jetset, 67 Vestry St., New York 10013)

—Reed Jackson

THE FLESHIES

The Game of Futbol



What a strange record. Fans of The Fleshies might be a little taken aback by the nearly traditional structure of the opening song, "Fists of Mercy." It's weird not to hear something weird coming from the Fleshies. The track is tough, no doubt about it, but it's also fairly straightforward. When a band is known for taking an end run around anything normal, this kind of material is always a shock. Of course, this moment of normalcy passes quickly as the title track kicks in. "The Game of Futbol" is a haunting ode to the joy of sports, with pleasant, creepy, high-pitched vocals. "Bon Bons" takes the tempo back up to rockin' levels with slamming drums and an anthemic chorus. From here the old Fleshies sickness is back, probably best represented in "The Sexiest Man Alive," where the band includes sheep noises and twisted, hilarious lyrics. (Adeline, 5245 College Ave., #318, Oakland, CA 94618)

—Mark Ginsburg

Lo-Hi

Say It More



Though indie gang deb Hollis Queens mans the traps for a certain crew of notorious New York sleaze merchants, Lo-Fi does not play the Deputy Roscoe to her more established group's Boss Hogg. Queens firmly takes center ring here, singing and playing the guitar, leaving the drums to Speedball Baby basher Martin Owens. And though Queens' somewhat flat voice does lack the trashiness to fully convey the lusty lyrics, her crisp stick-and-move guitar attack ensures this side project will be set apart from the flock. Standouts such as the slicked-back sputter of "Runaround" or the cougar-in-a-cage prowl of "White All Around" more than testify to Queens' skills to pay the bills. Occasional forays out of the rock-blues carport end happily ("Little Plant" and laughably "Lucy"), but the light overall tone and tenacious rhythms of *Say it More* should capture those pesky Dukes and then some. (Tiger Style, 149 Wooster St., Fourth Floor, New York 10012)

—Reed Jackson



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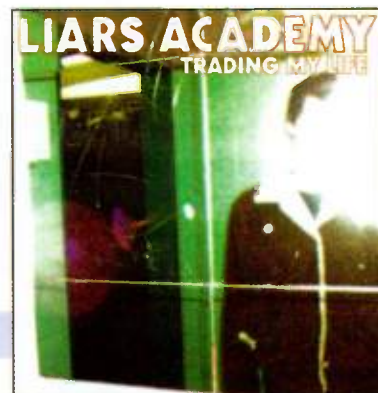


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Frederic Galliano
and the African Divas



The world has not yet likely heard a record quite like this. The result of four years spent traveling through West Africa and recording with more than 50 different musicians and singers, Galliano's document is an enchanting convergence of cultural voyeurism, African rhythms, world music flavor and electronica's modern frame. At times, Galliano and his diverse cohorts slip into the implied adult contemporary quagmire always circling such a venture. More often than not, however, the authenticity of the native artists with which Galliano collaborates affords listeners some security from the dangerous pitfalls separating African-Western crossover and theme music from *The Cosby Show*. It's likely any radio attention this album receives will be limited to the NPR set, though it's hard to imagine any worldly lover of music wouldn't be able to find something to enjoy here. (www.pias.com)

—John Robinson

**GRAIG MARKEL
The Gospel Project**



As one of the primary creative movers and shakers behind Goth indie rockers Tagging Satellites, Graig Markel has succeeded by recognizing the spaces between notes, ideas and players. On his two solo albums, last year's *Hard Grammer* and his latest, *The Gospel Project*, Markel has broadened his understanding by eschewing his Goth tendencies to explore the intersection of the slinky vibe of '60s Motown/'70s R&B and soulful contemporary indie pop. In Markel's hands, the results are everything great soul music should be—romantic, heartfelt, smart, and meticulously arranged. Combining the pop edge of Francis Dunnery, Joe Pernice and Beck with the smoldering magnificence of the era's best soul signatures, Graig Markel has made an album as groovy as a late night DJ's record collection, as sexy as a striptease and as smart as an indie record shop clerk. (Recovery/Pattern 25, 610 20th Ave. E., Seattle WA 98112)

—Brian Baker

**GREAT LAKES
The Distance Between**



Following up a self-titled debut on Kindercore two years ago, Great Lakes returns with *The Distance Between*. This time, the band finds its home at Orange Twin, a label run by members of Elf Power, dedicated not only to releasing music, but also working for land preservation and sustainable development. When not pressing CDs, the gang is busy tending the earth at the Orange Twin collective commune—who knew Elf Power had so much in common with Crass? With nine people in the band, one would expect unlimited textures and lush instrumentation from Great Lakes. What listeners are treated to, however, is a relatively straightforward and lo-fi pop-rock album invoking the raw energy of the garage or basement tradition. There is a distinct retro feel to many of the songs, with those like "Sister City" trying to revive the same vibe as bands like The Hives, and others like "Now is When" sounding like segue cues from *The Brady Bunch*. (Orange Twin, 475 Forest Rd., Athens, GA 30605)

—Eddie Fournier

**GREY EYE GLANCES
A Little Voodoo**



For those who just can't get enough of Jewel, Shawn Colvin or Sheryl Crow post-selling her soul, the new record from Grey Eye Glances waits freshly glossed and pre-packaged. *A Little Voodoo* is a record made for listeners who don't like to mix those pesky feelings with their music (e.g. hardcore fans of commercial rock radio). Tracks like "Big Red Boat" are sure to cause immediate gingivitis, while the rest of the record is jammed with empty, sugary cream puffs trying to pass as pop songs. The perfect gift for the friend or family member in your life who pretends to like music but actually doesn't. (Sojourn Hills, P.O. Box 114, Wynnewood, PA 19096)

—Joe Sweeney

GUTTERMOUTH

Gusto



While much of the current crop of punk bands have tailored their music for mall zombies, there are a few holdovers who have refused to

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alter their sound. The party punkers of Guttermouth are some of the few who have remained true to their own beer-goggle obscured vision. Friend to frat boys everywhere and verbal enemy of the establishment, the band has consistently churned out one party anthem after another. On *Gusto*, the band's second for Epitaph, lyrics like "It was my intent, to land a scholarship in punk and avoid imprisonment," from "Scholarship in Punk" indicate the band has not lost its penchant for immature lyrics. On the Casio-tinged send up "My Town," the band surprisingly keeps its composure as it bobs through a mediocre B-52's impression. Although *Gusto* probably will not rank as one of Guttermouth's finer moments, it is still fun just the same. (Epitaph, 2798 West Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 90026)

—Jonathan Cholewa

HAVALINA

Space Love & Bullfighting



Suckers for flamenco guitar beware, Havalina packs a Latin-fla-

vored punch with more kick than a fifth of Jose Cuervo. However, every decent tequila binge has its pros and cons—so does this Long Beach, Calif., five-piece. On the plus side, Havalina's good time sounds are a hard temptation to resist—listening to this band is fun. On its debut, *Space Love & Bullfighting*, the group combines Latin jazz with a plethora of styles, including pop, country, blues and a little punk—essentially all the music fit for a Quentin Tarantino flick. While the fusion of those aforementioned sounds is interesting enough, it sometimes causes Havalina to lose focus. Tracks like "Space and Mexico," the undeniably catchy "Pluto" and "Losing You" are some of the band's finer moments, while "You Got Me Cryin'" and the B-52's-ish "Rocket Ship" and "Worst Days" never quite reach the same standard. Overall, *Space Love & Bullfighting* is a solid listen, albeit one flawed by the occasional inconsistency. (Tooth & Nail, P.O. Box 12698, Seattle 98111)

—Kevin Boyce

continued on page 51

Milemarker

Satanic Versus



From the new wave "Join Our Party" to the atmospheric "Lost the Thoughts but Kept the Skin," Milemarker demonstrates its ability to evolve and remain fresh. Although the band does branch out into some new territory throughout this new six-song EP, the

overall feel remains unchanged—those who liked Milemarker before will probably like them now. Perhaps the most interesting boons come via the enhanced CD portion of *Satanic Versus* (clever, no?), which not only includes videos for three songs, but also allows the user to actually remix two of the tracks from the EP. Nerds who pay attention to studio credits will be delighted to learn Steve Albini recorded half of the songs on this record. Math nerds will quickly point out half of six is, of course, three. (Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810)

—John Robinson



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RYKO

CQ

Set in 1969 Paris, Roman Coppola's stylish directorial debut, *CQ* ("Seek You"), is a film within a film, as Coppola spins the story of a crew making a James Bond-esque sci-fi flick (set in the far off year of 2000) called *Dragonfly*. Problems ensue when the director becomes infatuated with the film's female lead and the editor must develop and shoot an ending to the story. The original



score, on Emperor Norton Records, composed mainly by the French pop duo Mellow, perfectly captures the cheesy pop psychedelia of the era with a mix of instrumentals, original pop songs and classic French pop hits from the '60s. Just as the film is very much a visual homage to Roger Vadim's cult classic, *Barbarella*, "Code Name Dragonfly"—the fictitious film's title song—sounds inspired by Jane Fonda's memorable, zero-gravity striptease. It's a safe bet American audiences are unfamiliar with "Ce Soir Je Vais Boire" (loose translation, "Tonight I'm Going Drinking") by Claude Francois, but you don't have to speak French to groove along. The breaking glass sound effect at the end is also a nice touch. The exuberant "Le Responsable" by Jacques Dutronc—like a hipper version of The Grass Roots' "Midnight Confession" on speed—also transcends all language barriers. Knowing intuitively what each song needed instrumentally, whether it be a full orchestra, horn section, or simple accents of an acoustic guitar, Mellow's arrangements perfectly serve each song. (The horns on "321... Zero" sound like they were pulled off tracks from The Who's *Tommy*). This is truly a pop album with a symphony's sophistication. "Song for the Loved One" is simply gorgeous, while the bass-heavy "In the Cave" provides a suspenseful mood bolstered by some freaky organ. The free-spirited aesthetic of Paris in the late '60s is so authentically emulated as to induce a pretty heavy nostalgia trip. Mellow went all out in their efforts to detail *CQ* with a rich, seductive musical narrative. This record surely stands apart from the film, proving they succeeded brilliantly.

Me Without You

Me Without You chronicles the lives of two best friends, Holly and Marina, growing up in London in the '70s and '80s, through their lives as teenagers and on into their 40s. With the film spanning much of the new wave/punk-emphasized '80s, the Columbia Records soundtrack makes great use of some well-chosen pop tracks, including derivations of new wave (Echo and the Bunnymen) and underrated '80s treasures (The Stranglers' "Skin Deep" alone is worth the price of this disc) as pop cultural shorthand to help advance the story. The electronic pulse of The Normal's avant-punk ode to making love in the aftermath of a car crash, "Warm Leatherette," Depeche Mode's breakthrough hit, "Just Can't Get Enough," two tracks from the first Clash album (does it get much more punk than "White Riot?"), "Another Girl, Another Planet" by karaoke favorites The Only Ones, Wreckless Eric's "Whole Wide World" and Scritti Politti's "The Sweetest Girl" all make for a scintillating mix



tape time capsule. The eclectic soundtrack also underscores a diversity easily overlooked in the era, with Charlene's one hit wonder "I've Never Been to Me" and Nick Drake's "Cello Song" further coloring the film's focused mélange of an aural landscape. Other cuts cover everything from Sonny & Cher and Tim Buckley to "Rings Around the World"—the title track from the latest Super Furry Animals disc. No matter how jaded you think you are, one listen to *Me Without You* will give you a pleasantly sentimental kick in the pants.

24 Hour Party People

Before dance music mutated into sterile/minimalist/techno drum and bass, with other junk thrown in for good measure, dour British post-punk gave way to the birth of a thriving,

drug-addled, musical subculture and a fertile club scene now euphemistically referred to as Acid House. *24 Hour Party People* is an excellent faux-documentary recalling the emergence of this scene as it spawned from Factory Records (a maverick independent record label based in Manchester) and the now legendary Hacienda night club. TV journalist Tony Wilson established Factory Records after attending one of the first Sex Pistols' gigs, and the disc appropriately kicks



off with the Pistols' "Anarchy in the U.K." With its minimalist production aesthetics, "Anarchy" provides a startling and important contrast for music standing at the complete opposite end of the aural spectrum to punk rock (tracks by The Clash and The Buzzcocks also work as transitional voices). Joy Division, New Order and The Happy Mondays make up the bulk of Factory Records' back catalogue. As such, the careers of these three bands provide the main focus for the movie and they are all well represented on the Warner Bros. soundtrack. Joy Division's best-known songs, "Love Will Tear Us Apart" (a standard of any "Goth dance night" in clubs worldwide), "She's Lost Control" and "Transmission" are all here. You'll also find "Temptation" and the supremely-played-out "Blue Monday." The stand-out track by New Order is a live version of "New Dawn Fades," featuring Moby and Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan. There are also killer tracks by less-popular but still noteworthy Manchester bands such as The Durutti Column and 808 State, whose quasi-pastoral "Pacific State," with its ambient saxophones, shows a warmer, less clinical side to electronic music. Anyone even slightly familiar with this seminal moment in rock history will be thoroughly transported back in time by the soundtrack. *24 Hour Party People* makes its biggest impact as a lesson in music history, articulating the bridging of musical genres, from early-'80s dance culture to the electronica/ambient/trip hop music of today.

HAVEN

Between the Senses



This group of sensitive, love-addled rockers first released *Between the Senses* in its Manchester, U.K., homeland, where it has been rightfully doused with critical acclaim. While the record is largely the product of a band raised on *The Bends*, the influence is presented tastefully, and the songs never apologize for their youthful, tender beauty. *Between the Senses* is driven by an all-too-classic inspiration—these boys are confused and enraptured by love, and they're getting it out of their systems by writing delicate, radio-friendly pop songs. "Say Something" has a glistening Jeff Buckley aura about it, with simple, fragile harmonies present throughout invoking The Byrds and The Beatles more than Starsailors and Elbows. (Virgin, 338 North Foothill Rd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210)

—Joe Sweeney

THE HEXTALLS

Call it a Career



Call it a Career is a record for those who like the music of The Queers but find the

humor of, say, "Ursula Finally Has Tits" to be just a tad too sophisticated. The Hextalls bash out 13 catchy, three-chord pop punk blasts like their namesake blasted Chris Chelios' head in the 1996 playoffs. Unfortunately, lyrical opuses like "Get Off the Boobs" and "Adventure Island" are weaker than a soft goal through the five hole. I won't even comment on "Hextall vs. Grandma"—a tale of the goatee-sporting goalie taking on a geriatric Gretzky-esque granny. Still, fans of Screeching Weasel or The Queers, as well as those with an appreciation for playground comedy, may dig this disc. (Shredder, P.O. Box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94912)

—Michael O'Brien

THE HI-FREQUENCIES

The Hi-Frequencies



Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, it doesn't get any whiter than this. The Hi-Frequencies make frothy rock 'n beat for the whole family to enjoy, without any of the troublesome seedy underbelly. One sunny listen to bouncy tracks such as "To Do" (or hell, any of the others on this record) will have audiences waxing nostalgic for the days of malted

continued on page 53

Of Montreal

Aldhils Arboretum



On *Aldhils Arboretum*, the fifth album from of Montreal, the Athens, Ga., quintet clings onto the sound of its native sound of the '60s with a firm Kung-Fu grip, giving 2002 a healthy dose of shag-a-delic tunes, certain to induce either dancing or nausea, depending on your tastes. With 14 psychedelic pop songs cluttered throughout the album, *Aldhils Arboretum* is, at best,

mediocre Brit-inspired rock performed by talented musicians with a penchant for Donovan. But then, there's never been any false advertising with the Athens band. Those who like the product will be hard pressed to find another provider guaranteeing the same impeccably thorough and consistent service. Sure, songs like "Old People in the Cemetery" and "Natalie and Effie in the Park" seem inspired and abetted by mind-altering narcotics. In fact much of the entire album could've been composed in the midst of a healthy acid trip. But, whoever said Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey should have all the fun. *Aldhils Arboretum* will likely appeal to its target audience best, delighting fans of the Elephant 6 Collective, Herman's Hermits and burners who have grown sick of Belle & Sebastian and *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*. (Kindercore)

—Tony Perkis



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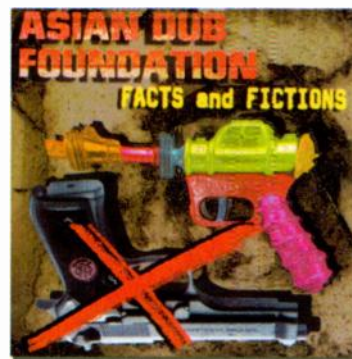
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After more than a decade of hip hopology under his belt, **Large Professor** (aka Extra P) takes a step out the hip hop hall of fame to bless listeners with his first solo album. From the man who brought us the beats like Main Source's "Looking Out the Front Door" and Eric B and Rakim's classic "Let the Rhythm Hit 'Em" comes the long-awaited full-length, *1st Class*. The Queens native is responsible for teaching the likes of DJ Premiere and Prodigy (Mobb Deep) the tricks of the production trade he was also instrumental in Busta Rhymes' development as a young talent. The Professor is even credited with having nurtured a young Nas under his wing. Large Professor has come a long way since his days as a 17-year-old high school prodigy who went to school by day and went into the studio at night. He's gone from recording the no. 1 one hip hop single in the country to producing tracks for top tier artists, to basically falling off the radar. It's pleasing to report the man behind the scenes returns with a seasoned flow and cutting edge beats not only equalling the youngsters of today, but surpassing them with sample-free works at many turns. Appearances from nas, Q-Tip and Busta Rhymes add some depth and perspective to the Professor's nearly flawless production—a formidable, if predictable, blend of old school, b-boy rap mixed with hard-hitting, heavy beats designed for the SUV set. (Matador, 625 Broadway, New York 10012)

It doesn't get much more backpack than England's **Asian Dub Foundation**, with beats and production drawing from a wide range of sounds centered in rap, rock, reggae, salsa, Asian and West Indian tradition. Having burst onto the Euro scene in 1995, the Foundation has maintained a buzz throughout the underground on both sides of the Atlantic for years. Finally, *Facts and Fictions* arrives, marking the group's first proper introduction to American audiences. Crossing over into such a large, established scene is a difficult task, to be sure, and ADF falls short now and again. On the whole, however, the group commands respect, even by the sheer weight of its creative experimentation. Much of *Facts and Fictions* invokes the sounds of vintage, mid-'90s rave parties, loaded with repetitive drum patterns and spacy melodies, seemingly unphased by the developments in drum and bass. Lyrically, Asian Dub Foundation scores moderately with this installment, relying perhaps too heavily on the played I'm-the-man-and-you-aren't vibe. "Journey," one of the album's strongest lights, however, burns with a 21st century sound fusing eerie sounds with drums tighter than a hole in a tooth pick. *Facts'* debut coincides with the release of *Frontline*, a collection of remixes and rarities from the group. (Beggars' Banquet, 580 Broadway, Suite 1004, New York 10012)



HIP HOP NEWS

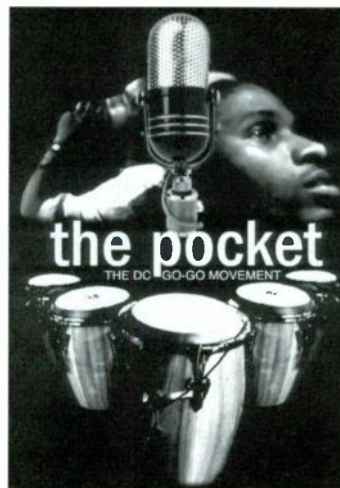
by Ahmad Lawton



Def Jux continues to rule the school with **RJD2's** *Dead Ringer* dominating college charts and **El-P's** *Fantastic Damage* still sweeping the nation. The relatively young label is also home to **Mr. Lif**, whose new album, *I Phantom*, documents what might well be the best live MC around today... Vinyl-master **Peanut Butter Wolf** releases *Jukebox 45*, a new compilation CD celebrating the vinyl-single format with a collection of hand-picked artists doing exclusive songs. The CD unearths material previously available only on a vinyl-only series from PB Wolf's **Stones Throw** label... The teacher **KRS-One** returns yet again with *Prophets vs. Profits*... **Matador Records**, perhaps best known for releases from **Liz Phair** and **Mary Timony**, continues to expand the hip hop vision it began with **Arsonists**, now releasing a new record from **Large**

Professor... The **Boot Camp Click** reunites for *The Chosen Few* on Duck Down Records... **Jurassic 5** comes back in the harmony with its latest, *Power in Numbers*—maybe you've read about it?... **El Da Sensei** drops his solo debut, *Relax, Relate, Release* on indie label **Seven Heads Recordings**... Meanwhile, **LL Cool J** drops album No. 10, appropriately titled *10* on **Def Jam**... **Skillz's** *I Ain't Mad No More* comes via **MCA**... Country linguist and internal weatherman (figure 'em out) **Nelly** stars in *Snipes*, a new film produced in part by the people of **RuffNation** (**Lauryn Hill**, **The Goats**). The film, shot on location in Philadelphia, documents one young man's action-packed rise through the seedy underbelly of hip hop's world of street teams. Watch closely for a cameo from **Schoolly D**. Another *Snipes* cameo comes via Philadelphia's **Charli Baltimore**, whose as-yet-untitled album drops this month. The land of cheese-steaks and soft pretzels celebrates another hip hop victory with the release of **Ursula Rucker's** new EP, *Seven*. Finally, the long-awaited new record from **The Roots** supposedly drops in time for Thanksgiving. Titled *Phrenology*, the new album promises plenty to be thankful for, even if it won't be Eve or Jill Scott passing the 'taters. More next month...

THE POCKET: DC'S GO-GO MOVEMENT



For almost a quarter of a century, three generations of people from our nation's capitol have celebrated one of music's best kept secrets, Go-Go. The victim of cyclical invasions and disruptions from an exploitative media and an out-of-touch government, Go-Go music and culture has proven to be self-sustainable, exciting and always evolving. It is this energy and story writer/director Nicholas Shumaker attempts to share with *The Pocket: The DC Go-Go Movement*, a new independent film from Rolling Shin Entertainment.

Fusing elements of soul, funk, Latin, rock and conga music, Go-Go

has played as the voice to a historically neglected community—the real neighborhoods of Washington, D.C., passed over by travel brochures—creating a nearly \$10 million-a-year local industry in the process.

Incorporating interviews and live footage from Go-Go greats such as Little Benny, Experience Unlimited, The Uncalled 4 Band and the godfather of Go-Go himself, Chuck Brown, *The Pocket* succeeds at the fairly risky task of introducing America to a musical tradition three generations deep, virtually nonexistent outside the Beltway.

Reflections from respected artists outside the Go-Go realm help to lend depth and perspective to *The Pocket's* vision, calling on such artists as Jill Scott, George Clinton, bass guru Bootsy Collins, Henry Rollins and Fugazi's Ian MacKaye.

In an economy and industry increasingly dominated by aggressive, indiscriminate marketing and global trends, *The Pocket* illustrates one beautiful, influential and eloquently regional example of the vitality of independent, grassroots music and art. (Rolling Shin, 3644 Reservoir Rd., Washington, DC 20007, www.thedcpocket.com)

—Mike McKee

RECORDS continued from page 51
milk, Buddy Holly and segregation. The wholesale re-creation of an earlier generation's sound can't help but arouse some admiration, and the Frequencies certainly know what they are about—every song on their second album exudes a lively and good-natured wave sure to elicit smiles from even the most curmudgeonly of souls. But the '50s and its music were a fucked up time, full of repression, seething resentment and explosive anger, and any band trading in the era's forms has a responsibility to address some of these issues or risk sounding pointless, no matter how pleasant the music. (**Teen Regime, P.O. 100167, Pittsburgh, PA 15233**)

—Reed Jackson

HUDSON BELL

Captain of the Old Girls



Who is this relatively unknown artist, who, by the second song—with little introduction—can mesmerize listeners so completely. With his stunning guitar-and-reverb-drenched slow burner "Expatriate," Bell will soon have audiences dropping jaws to the floor. It's a wonder his name isn't already scrawled

across the shirts of teenagers everywhere, with music magazines poring over his past like rumped, indie-snob detectives. *Captain of the Old Girls* is the sound of rain pouring down on a sunny day, of someone looking at an old photograph of someone else and seeing their own flaws reflected. Bell's Jeff Mangum-by-way-of-Neil Young voice fits these well-versed ruminations of love and loss, and in light of the glut of lo-fi releases these days, the high-fidelity clarity of this record's production brings the wounded messages of these songs home like headlights on a long-forgotten road. A little more bass on the more rocking numbers would've been nice, and that a few songs end too soon, but it's a minor quibble on a record filled with major steps forward. (**Upperworks**)

—Brian Parks

**I HATE YOU
Discography**



Currently, the hardcore kids chant, "all the kids are fuckin' dead." I Hate You was the predecessor who implied, "all the kids are fuckin' dumb." I Hate You carried this unpopular implication throughout the mid-to-late-'90s until its

violent last show, regrettably referred to by this reviewer as *The Emasculation of Dom Umile* (the band's guitarist). This discography not only makes accessible the totality of the band's recordings, it also tells a story (something discographies rarely do). The tracks recede from the public's grasp into a surreal esoterica of poorly recorded demos, until the CD finally concludes with the audio of the band's career-ending donnybrook. I Hate You's tale is as interesting as the story of Andy Kaufman or the murder of the first person who dared to ponder an imaginary number. I Hate You played a brand of hardcore elevating the genre to the ranks of such works as *Being There* or *My Breakfast With Blassie*, or possibly a rough draft of *A Modest Proposal*. The point was subtle and placed inside a form of music inherently up-front, an approach mocked by Men's Recovery Project (see Gravity Records' seven-inch from the band). Sadly, the Project's Sam MacPheeters is applauded while I Hate You was beaten for playing a show. While lacking re-definitive music, this discography documents one of the truly comedic hardcore bands to ever exist—please figure it out from the snippets of banter, samples or the Weezer and Blur riffs hidden in otherwise traditional

mosh fare. Still, I wonder—in the wake of I Hate You's posthumous release—will the kids finally get it? Probably not. And that's the best joke of all. (**Deathwish, 432 Morris Ave., Providence, RI 02906**)

—Don Malkemes

**THE IMPOSSIBLE SHAPES
The Impossible Shapes**

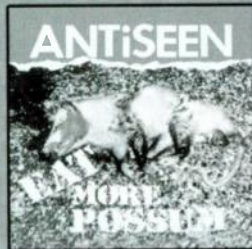


The scenario is easy to imagine. A bunch of friends get together now and then, hang out in somebody's living room and record some quiet indie-pop melodies on a four-track. After a while, they decide to release a full-length. The Impossible Shapes' debut has all the vibe of a late-evening get-together, an approach suiting the majority of this debut just fine. Singer and main songwriter Chris Barth has just enough of a hook in these songs to keep them (and the listener) going, while the band's instrumentation is appropriately sparse and atmospheric. The record's less-is-more approach does lose some steam by the end of the CD, like a bedtime story without a good ending. Better things are surely in store for this band, given time and a few more catchier melodies. For those who like the quieter moments

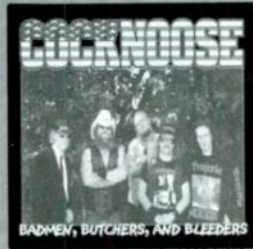
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of Beulah, Beechwood Sparks and the American Analog Set, this record might be a good way to come down after a hard day of the world's upheaval. (www.toopure.com)

—Brian Parks

IN EXTREMO

Sunder ohne Zügel



If Germany's got a lock on freaky metal bands, then In Extremo holds the key. Forget Rammstein and Accept! (Most of the world probably has forgotten Accept already.) Coiled serpents, half-naked women and scraggly tree roots fronting the cover of the band's latest album, *Sunder ohne Zügel*, create a spooky mystique reminiscent of a druid beach party. But In Extremo has created something much more intriguing than just something cool to ogle while pounding Grolsch. The seven-piece band employs instruments like bagpipes and what sounds like a Hindu sitar on the first two tracks, "Wind" and "Krummavisur." The album kicks off with an otherworldly prologue giving way to an eerie metallic backdrop. The vocals stay calm but seething, giving the impression something strange and ominous truly is afoot at the Circle K. Don't bother try-

ing to decipher the lyrics without a mastery of the German tongue. (*Metal Blade*, 2828 Cochran St., PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93062-2793)

—William J. Donahue

IN FLAMES

Reroute to Remain



The production on this record is incredible. Everything sounds bright and crisp. In a moment of weakness, I actually believed Jesper Stromblad had ferried over from Sweden to play the guitar parts in my bedroom. Alas, it was not to be. Unfortunately, the songs fail to deliver as strongly. One quickly develops the impression In Flames is striving for a wider audience with this album, incorporating elements of the dreaded nu-metal, with vocalist Anders Friden sounding eerily like the guy from Korn when he tries to sing instead of scream. At certain times, as on the title track, the band is in top form, pounding out triumphant, anthemic metal, still strutting the Gothenburg sound it helped popularize. More often than not, however, In Flames seem to be trying too hard to cross over instead of sticking to what it does best. (*Roadrunner*)

—John Robinson

KEPLER Missionless Days



Kepler floats through a dreamworld inhabited by Low, Tram, Codeine and Hope Sandoval. *Missionless Days*, the band's second album, hums along, gently building slow-motion melancholy fantasies. Songs like "A Workhorse" find the poetry in work-a-day lifestyles, anonymity and loneliness, pairing Dave Pajo post-folk with a country-tinged lap steel. But it's on "Our Little Museum" the group really shines. While recounting the lovely trinkets of a relationship where the couple will "always get off and always feel safe," Samir Khan finds a bittersweet resonance in happiness and also a nostalgia for the present. (*Troubleman Unlimited*, 16 Willow St., Bayonne, NJ 07002)

—Charles Spano

KNIVES OUT Heartburn



The members of Knives Out are all assholes. They now belong to the small cadre preventing me from dropping out of hardcore. It's impossible to walk away from the genre with a band like this spitting on the graves of so many. Mu-

sically, Knives Out blends the primal Ink & Dagger (before the bloodsucking rockers tested how much art we could take) with the unlikely blissful sounds found in the marriage of Integrity and Iconoclast (no one thought it would last). The lyrical content and delivery flies from the same cave as American Nightmare—a twisted mix of The Smiths, Joy Division, Bukowski's *Love is Dog From Hell* and Henry: *Portrait of a Serial Killer*. Love has already torn Knives Out apart, and now the remains lick their wounds with *Heartburn*. Buy this record, rock out, hold back the maudlin tear with gritted teeth and pray whatever happened to Knives Out doesn't happen to you. (*Deathwish*, 432 Morris Ave., Providence, RI 02906)

—Don Malkemes

KOUFAX Social Life



Some old timers might remember Sandy Koufax as a tall, taciturn lefty who pitched for the Dodgers back when they still called Brooklyn home. He posed little threat until the final six years of his career, when he suddenly manifested a slippery curve and tight fastball making him one of the most

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dominating hurlers to grace the history of the game. Koufax the band sadly shows little signs of developing the same heat boasted by its august namesake. To be sure, the quartet's musky take on piano-led rock leaves a refreshing taste at first. Plus, it's always nice to see kids remember back when Randy Newman didn't lick Disney's ass. Unfortunately, Koufax often can't see past its own bluster, coasting on attitude and bounce when nailing down decent melodies ought to be the priority. If these lads don't get to work on their game, they could be left with some no-hitters of their own, which—outside the stadium—is a very bad thing. (*Vagrant/Heroes & Villains*, 2118 Wilshire Blvd., #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403)

—Reed Jackson

LA MUSICA DELLA MAFIA
Il Canto Di Malavito



No matter how this mediocre music is packaged, it's still a cheap ploy to play on the recent success of *The Sopranos*. Those who enjoy this are no better than those who applaud the IRA during the St. Patrick's Day parade. It's laughable. It's something to play if

you're wooing a lively catch from the boardwalk of Wildwood, N.J. While the La Familia seems to be a point of pride for some, I try to suppress the historical humility of originating from lowly goat herders accustomed to centuries of Moorish rape and conquest. La Musica Della Mafia doesn't invigorate, but rather embarrasses—especially when one considers what monumental contributions said culture has offered: Cicero, Felini, the Roman Senate and, most importantly, plumbing. If anything, this CD is as culturally insulting as gangsta rap. (*PIAS America*)

—Don Malkemes

LADYTRON
Light and Magic



This new wave/house quartet has an obvious affinity for the glory days of '80s synth-pop and the electronic anomalies of Kraftwerk, as each of their songs feature brash drum machine loops, tinny synths and breathy female vocals. Unfortunately, the attempts at kitschy sexiness are unforgivably half-baked—if you whisper an empty phrase repeatedly over a boring techno beat, it's a recipe for a headache, not an aphrodisiac. The

production on *Light and Magic* is perfect for club goers who just want a background of incessant thumping. Those looking for a more front-and-center musical experience might find the weaker moments of this album an uninspired stab at ambiance. In truth, a bout of '80s, thin-neck tie nostalgia would be better treated by dusting off those Depeche Mode LPs. Ladytron's real value is in its interpretation of yesterday's sound. Like any translation, some elements communicate soundly, while others leave the listener a bit baffled, unsure of how to react. (*Emperor Norton*, 102 Robinson St., Los Angeles 90026)

—Joe Sweeney

THE MEKONS

Oooh!



For those having followed the nearly 25-year-old saga of The Mekons, it's no surprise members of the band have become accomplished painters and sculptors in recent years. Much like its often well-worn, skewed paintings of western-American culture, the band has spent a career creating songs in much the same way—mixing older influences with edgier hues.

Ample doses of alcohol refashion the mix into a palette tending to splatter the canvas in one fell swoop. The Mekons' records have always been a document of a certain time period and the certain moods of its members. This latest chapter finds the band in dramatic, slightly American-gothic mode, with songs from American country, rock and gospel traditions with touches of atmospheric English dub (they do still straddle both continents, anyway). This open-ended tone paints pictures of wind-swept paths to nowhere, roaming skulls, lost souls of the living and dead and a Jerusalem dropped somewhere between Dodge City and rural Virginia. Not all of guitarist Tom Greenhalgh's songs work, but he also leads the band through possibly the album's best song, "Only You and Your Ghost Will Know." Jon Langford, meanwhile, gives life to some of the best songs on the record, with Sally Timms' voice sounding as enchanting and haunting as ever. Caution be damned, and let the canvas drip with life all over again. (*Touch and Go*, P.O. Box 25520, Chicago 60625)

—Brian Parks

continued on page 57

THE REPLACEMENTS

"Nobody even bothers to deny The Replacements' brilliance anymore, and these reissues explain why...."

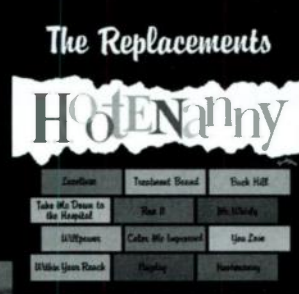
— Rolling Stone, 9/19/02



SORRY MA, FORGOT TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH
★★★ — Rolling Stone



STINK
★★★★ — Rolling Stone



HOOTENANNY
★★★★ — Rolling Stone



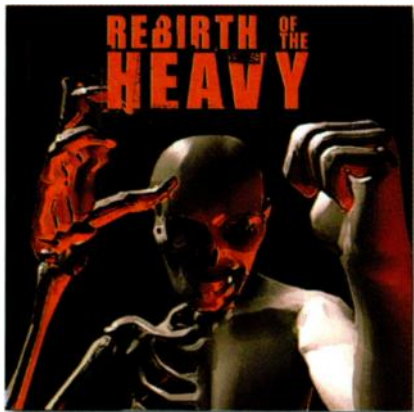
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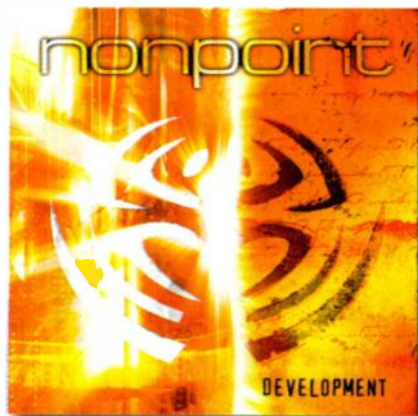
For all those missing their recommended daily allowance of rock 'n roll lately, it's time to pick up **Rebirth of the Heavy**, a new compilation from The Music Cartel. One listen is like taking a multi-vitamin to replenish your malnourished rock 'n roll spirit. Haven't had enough stoner rock lately? Sons of Otis, Suplecs and Fireball Ministry will make up for



it. Has your punk intake been a little low? Ratos De Porao and Antiseen will come to the rescue. And if you are lacking in classic guitar rock, Novadriver, Electric Frankenstein and Dozer will quench your thirst. A dose of metal rounds out the necessary nutrients, with songs by Lambs and The Cumshots ("Oh Honey, Grandmom asked what you're calling your new band") filling the void. Luckily, it's all wrapped up in one handy, 16-track package. The tunes on this disc range from the slowest, cloudiest doom to full-throttle rock mania. Just to name a few stand-out tracks, Los Natas delivers soothing, psychedelic, Hispanic rock with "El Cono Del Econo," while Grand Magus contributes a thick slab of bluesy, doom-laden rock with "Lodbrok."

As a well-accomplished band in the wide world of modern hard rock, **Nonpoint** is not a stranger to sharing bills with The Deftones and Sevendust. When the band took to the road with bling master Jay-Z, Talib Kweli, Nappy Roots and The Neptunes' N.E.R.D., however, preaching to the converted was no longer an option. This past August, singer Elias Soriano and company joined the diverse artists of the Sprite Liquid Mix tour, blessing the band with a great opportunity to play to some new ears.

"It gave us a chance to play in front of people we've never played in front of before," beams Soriano. "The response was pretty



good," says singer Elias Soriano. It seems the hip hoppers were pretty accepting of the hard rock sandwiched just before Blackalicious. The unique tour also granted Nonpoint the chance to spread the word about its sophomore album, *Development*, on MCA Records. On this newest record, listeners are treated to a more refined Nonpoint, with Soriano displaying a wider, more dramatic vocal range less reliant on screaming. The aptly titled *Development* showcases the band's newfound knack for harnessing mid-tempo melodies over chunky nu-metal formula.

"We try to write music that is a story about our band," says Soriano. "We don't want people to just beat each other up in the pit. We want to give you stuff that's gonna keep you coming back."

For now, Nonpoint is enjoying the success of the single "Your Signs," as the band plans to keep up a frenetic tour pace throughout the year in the wake of *Development* and the Liquid Mix tour.



Eighteen Visions has just unleashed its newest opus of genre-melding hardcore, *Vanity*, on Trust-kill Records. The band has had some tough times since forming in 1995, losing a lot of players and frequently changing labels. Most of the band members are also in other groups, including Throwdown and Bleeding Through, with their variety of musical commitments often causing the revolving personnel. After completing *Vanity*, the band parted ways with guitarist Brandan Scheipatti, who wanted to concen-

trate on making heavier music with Bleeding Through. Luckily, most of Eighteen Visions' music is written by drummer Ken Floyd and guitarist Keith Barney. *Vanity*, meanwhile, couldn't do a better job of depicting the band's sound during this period—truly one of the most diverse in hard rock today. The album's opener covers an acre of ground, evolving from some heavy hardcore breakdowns to a

melodic, acoustic bridge, all in one song. "A Short Walk Down a Long Hallway" is an electronic interlude, while "Gorgeous" employs a true thrash-metal breakdown fit for Slayer. The acoustic ballad "The Critic" is a total shock to the system. Eighteen Visions has a way of being totally abrasive one minute and completely mellow the next, somehow working each mood like a charm. Reportedly, undaunted by the loss of Scheipatti, the band has already written a number of new songs since the release of *Vanity*.

Yes, hardcore fans, this is the very same Roger Miret who for nearly two decades has fronted the legendary Agnostic Front. The heavily tattooed icon can now be found playing guitar and singing in a new, street punk side project. **Roger Miret & The Disasters** recently released a self-titled debut album on Tim Armstrong's Hellcat Records, and the band delivers just the sound fans would expect—classic New York City punk rock. The Disasters rip it up just like The Dic-

tators, Stiff Little Fingers and Rancid, with a sound sure to have both old school purists and the Blink 182 teeny-bopper crowd shouting Oi! Miret first got the band together with New Zealand native Rhys Kill, a guitarist with a passion for The Clash and Buzzcocks. The two began writing and recording as a duo, but when Boston band The Brusiers broke up, Miret invited bassist Johnny Rioux to join the fold. The band laid down a demo with Dropkick Murphys drummer Matt Kelly, which led to a deal with Hellcat. Kelly has since returned to his regular duties with the Murphys and also with The Disasters, who are now playing with The Krays/NY Rel-X drummer Johnny Kray. Miret recently finished up a tour along with Agnostic Front, but he is staying on the road, touring the East Coast and Europe with his new street punk outfit.



THE MISS

No Radio



The Miss recalls a time in the halcyon days of '70s new wave/punk when bursts of emotion crashed headlong into spiky and choppy guitar waves, with melodicism no more than an occasional concern or occurrence. There are hints of everything from Gang of Four to The Fall to Public Image Ltd. to the earliest discordant XTC singles in The Miss' angular and agitated presentation, and there's barely a chance to catch your breath as the band tears through its 11 tracks in 22 minutes. If there's a downside to The Miss, it's perhaps the reverence the band brings to its translation of the era. The band's next album might be better served by a shade less history and a dash of prediction. (Morphius, P.O. Box 13474, Baltimore, MD 21203)

—Brian Baker

THE MUSHROOM RIVER BAND

Simsalabim



This is one badmotorfinger of a disc, no doubt about it. The Mushroom River Band might more appropriately be

named Lemmy's Kids, given its members' obvious appreciation for all things Motorhead. Fast, furious and full of rock n' roll attitude, *Simsalabim* delivers quality metal with a full dose of punk's sneer and the requisite wailing solos. Slayer, Motorhead, Megalith, step aside—the new generation is here. The lyrics snarl out messages of self possession and dismissal, rejection of society's judgment and, above all, the desire to be awesome. The Mushroom River Band manages the task without ever sinking into self parody. (Revolver USA, P.O. Box 40322, Albuquerque, NM 87198)

—Mark Ginsburg

NICOTINE

Samurai Shot



For a punk band, Nicotine sure gives fans their yen's worth. The Tokyo import scores as a cut above the average three-chord punk band. Some tracks on the quartet's ninth album, *Samurai Shot*, sound a lot like surf rock, or in Nicotine's case, tsunami rock. Every so often the band borrows riffs from Judas Priest, Iron Maiden ("Bio Blood Society," "Amnesia"), UB40 and Billy Milano's M.O.D. ("Killer Shark Attack"). Most die-hard punk

fans would probably prefer vocal tracks with a little less reverb and guitar licks with a bit less polish, but it's all in good fun. Nicotine's not quite as poppy as Screeching Weasel or top-40 punk bands Blink 182 and SUM 41. The band does, however, deliver each of the 25 tracks on *Samurai Shot* with a unique and up tempo attitude. While each song has its own distinct pulse, each one fits the same mold—funny, funky and saturated with groovy hooks. (Asian Man, P.O. Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030)

—William J. Donahue

NO. 2

What Does Good Luck Bring?



On *What Does Good Luck Bring?*, Neil Gust of Heatmiser further investigates the crunchy guitar rock and spiraling chord progressions originated by bands like Television. This is a straight-ahead rock record, without much digression from the indie sound, like Stephen Malkmus without the irony or Elliott Smith with a sunnier disposition. It's this consistency keeping No. 2 from getting more attention—sadly, it deserves much more. Neil Gust's songwriting is thoroughly accomplished. On

"More, More," he easily applies catchy momentum and hooks while "Stranger's March" shuffles along in a bittersweet haze. It takes some time to crack the surface of *What Does Good Luck Bring?*, but there's a pop center at the core, suggesting vast potential. (In Music We Trust, 15213 SE Bevington Ave., Portland, OR 97267)

—Charles Spano

NO KNIFE

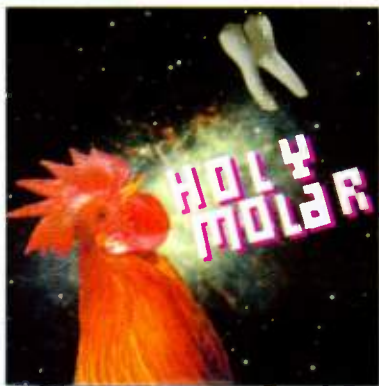
Riot For Romance!



San Diego's No Knife may be doomed to be under appreciated. The quartet has been around for eight years, quietly sharpening its sound in the far corners of the indie-rock world. Aside from the occasional jaunt with more marketable entities such as Sunny Day Real Estate and The Get Up Kids, No Knife has mainly escaped any larger notoriety. Part of the blame may be laid on the group's slippery approach to music making—a dense, intricate and workmanlike technique recalling other square pegs Shiner and later Shudder to Think. Despite the exclamation point in the record's title, No Knife is not a flashy band. Instead the concentration

continued on page 60

Add the former and current members of The Locust, Charles Bronson, Swing Kids, Cattle Decapitation, Get Hustle, The Crimson Curse and Final Conflict, now mix vigorously with ample hype and a collector's savvy—thus is **Holy Molar**, something the kids will surely sink their teeth into (pun intact).



Those with the magnifying glass and patience enough to read the accompanying insert will learn this double three-inch CD set compiles what is allegedly the project band's first live show in San Diego and the group's first studio recording. Both are manic, raw and chaotic—qualities perfectly in place with the band's motives. Jarring, "I-think-that-means-you-need-a-new-Atari-sound-card" spasms are the soundtrack to quasi-narrative lyrics shrieked in a lazy man's take on the Olde English. While, "Hindsight Tween the Hind Legs"

and "Dungeons and Drag Queens" deserve recognition for some of the more chuckle-worthy song titles of the new millennium, sadly many of the tunes are shorter than their confounding titles. Those who have followed the trajectory of that crazy San Diego sound (either first hand or via Ebay) will appreciate this as the latest chapter. It's difficult to foresee anyone arriving to the party late to take this as anything more than a nightmare. And that's just fine.

(Three One G, P.O.

Box 178262, San Diego 92177)

The Dutch indie Konkurrent might mean little to most American readers. The label, however, has for several years been the curator of an interesting series of collaboration records titled *In the Fishtank*. To date the series has captured teamwork from the likes of No Means No, Guv'ner, Tortoise, Low and The Dirty

Three, Willard Grant Conspiracy and Telefunk and June of 44. For the latest installment in the series, Konkurrent has wrangled in some players from America's **Sonic Youth**, Holland's avant-jazz outfit **ICP** and two anarcho-skrunk rockers from **The Ex**. Lee Ranaldo, Steve Shelly, Thurston Moore and newly minted Youther Jim O'Rourke add percussionist William Winant to the fold, while Luc and Terrie from The Ex add bass and six-string guitar to the reed and brass contributions of members of ICP. The result is about as weird as you'd probably expect, with free jazz eclipsing pop or

rock. Of the eight tracks, none extend beyond the six-minute mark, with the artists instead choosing to present a series of short but semi-digestible pieces culled from the two days of recording in the land of bikes, canals and red lights.

(Konkurrent, P.O. Box 14598-1001 LB Amsterdam, NL)



With releases from Low and Godspeed, You Black Emperor!, most people don't associate Chicago's Kranky label with a dance party, unless, of course, we're talking about people who have been to an **Out Hud** show. Featuring members of !!!, the band concentrates on booty shaking, though in a different light than ass-maestros DJ Assault and Timbaland. Influenced by the renowned and obscure of acid house, hip hop, turntablism and funk, Out Hud reinvents the rules of the disco as well as the indie rock show. Having cut their teeth in the all-ages punk circuit, the members of Out Hud demonstrate a tight sense of urgency, working a crowd better than the illest hype man this side of the Smokin' Grooves tour. The band emigrated from Sacramento in 2001 to settle in Brooklyn, landing square in the sights of countless Williamsburg hipsters. *S.T.R.E.E.T. D.A.D.*—it's doubtful it



stands for anything—arrives after nearly two years of waiting, but delivers soundly on the promise of the band's previous singles. For a sampling of some of the band's finest work, listeners

are directed to "Dad, There's a Little Phrase Called Too Much Information" and the uniquely New York "The L Train is a Swell Train and I Don't Want to Heat You Indies Complain." (Kranky, P.O. Box 578743, Chicago 60657)

INDIE ROCK CONFIDENTIAL

Death Cab for Cutie's 1997 album, *You Can Play These Songs With Chords*, gets a reissue Oct. 22, bringing new life and new listeners to this formerly cassette-only release... Songwriter **Franklin Bruno** returns with *A Cat May...* on **Absolutely Kosher Records**. Meanwhile, former **Tsunami/ Simple Machines** frontwoman **Jenny Toomey** pays homage to Bruno, covering several of his tunes on a new album of her own titled *Tempting* (Misra Records)... K the label drops new jams from **CoCo** and **Wolf Colonel**, while **K** the artist (born Karla Shickele) and former **Ida** member prepares for the release of a split seven-inch with indie rock bard **Ted Leo**. Leo it seems has been busy on his own, demoing new songs for his follow-up to 2000's *Tyranny of Distance* (Lookout!). Leo's band, **The Pharm-**

acists, has endured the loss of second guitarist James Canty and incorporated a keyboardist. Now Ted can pull off those **Impressions** covers more authentically... Hot on the heels of her split release with former **Ida** guitarist **Dan Littleton**, **Tara Jane O'Neil** releases *TJO TKO* on **Mr. Lady Records**... **Gern Blandsten Records** (**1.6 Band**, **Radio 4**, **Liars**) gears up for a release of material from influential punk-funk outfit the **Big Boys**... **Kill Rock Stars** delivers the second full-length from **The Bangs**, titled *Call and Response*... Retooled as a frenetic trio, Washington, D.C.'s **Q and Not U** returns with *Different Damage* (Dischord), making a strong attempt at most exciting record of the year. Fellow Washingtonians **Shelby (Frodus)**, **Steve and Stephen (Dead Meadow)** have released

their self-titled debut as **The Cassettes** on **Lovitt**. The label also delivers a retrospective of the criminally obscure **Maximillian Colby**. Former members of the band would go on to form **Sleepytime Trio**. With a fresh remastering job from Silver Sonya's **Chad Clark**, hopefully the band's legacy will spread... Philadelphia's **AMFM** prepares for the release of *Sky is the New Ground*, courtesy of **Polyvinyl Records**, while the label also releases a new album from fellow Philadelphians **Matt Pond**, PA... More next month...





TRIK TURNER
Trik Turner
(RCA)



PETER CASE
Bee Line
(VANGUARD)



CLENCHED FIST
Welcome to Memphis
(THORP RECORDS)



JACKPOT
Shiny Things
(SURFDOG)



NIK FREITAS
Heres Laughing At You
(FUTURE FARMER)

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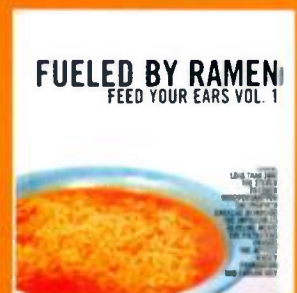
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Movin On
(Resurrection A.D.)



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Kill It
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VARIOUS ARTISTS
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RECORDS continued from page 57

here is on the details, with screws tightened carefully and plenty of attention to the small flourishes. With just enough vigorous melody instilled into the complex pummel and near jazzy asides, No Knife certainly proves itself a needed antidote to the high-pitched simplicity currently grabbing the nation's ears. Still, the question remains—will those ears ever listen? (**Better Looking, 11041 Santa Monica Blvd., PMB 302, Los Angeles 90025**)

—Reed Jackson

THE N.Y. REL-X

She's Got a Gun / Paranoia



A collection of two EPs on one CD, *She's Got a Gun/Paranoia* showcases the female fronted Rel-X as one of the few contemporary street punk bands with multiple female members. The obvious comparison here would be Vice Squad, but in a genre so male dominated, it seems like a lazy man's parallel to draw. The Rel-X stick to the catchier end of '77, locking into a mid-tempo Eater feel. "Proles" and "Come and Gone" are some of the catchiest in this collection, though fans who find this hit-

ting home would do well to investigate the work of fellow New Yorkers The 99's (previously known as Devotchkas), later Banner of Hope and Sister Mary Rotten Crotch. (**TKO, 3216 W. Cary St., Richmond, VA 23221**)

—Louis Woodward

THE REINDEER SECTION

Son of Evil Reindeer



In America, the idea of creating a side-project and effectively incorporating dozens of friends and musical peers seems impossible. In Scotland, it's as commonplace as a guitar pop hit. The Reindeer Section (pitiful moniker that it is) is Gary Lightbody of Snow Patrol with guests from nearly every great Scottish band out there (Mogwai, Teenage Fanclub and Belle and Sebastian are just a few). Taking musical cues from Mark Kozelek, Lambchop and Badly Drawn Boy, *Son of Evil Reindeer* sounds surprisingly personal, a quaint pop triumph. Are you moved by sincere folk ballads and lush, vibrant performances? Check this out. (www.brightstarrecordings.com)

—Neal Ramirez

SAHARA HOTNIGHTS

Jennie Bomb



Hailing from Sweden, this four-piece rock revival outfit wears its influences on its sleeve. With nods to The Runaways and other garage greats, Sahara Hotnights arrives right on time to bask in the sun of rock's current chic, aided in part by fellow Swedes The Hives. While the band delivers a solid interpretation of '70s and '80s punk-influenced rock, *Jennie Bomb* is weighted with the ballast of imitation. While several songs on the album sound like good candidates for a radio single, how the album will hold listeners' attention as a whole is debatable. In its favor, the group invokes elements from other, less traditional sources, calling to mind Republica and The Pixies. (**Jetset, 67 Vestry St., New York 10013**)

—Don Malkemes

SICK OF IT ALL

Live in A Dive

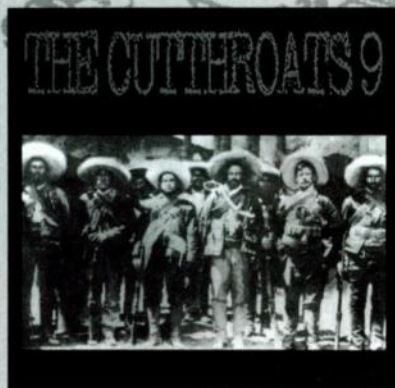


Sick of it All is the latest band to be featured on Fat Wreck Chords' *Live in a Dive* series. Here, the undisputed kings of NYHC are captured on a 2001 tour at San Francisco's Bottom

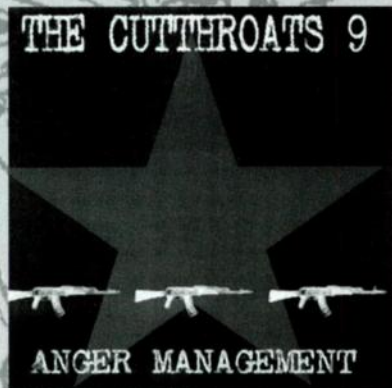
of the Hill night club. The recording is excellent, with the set list spanning material from the self-titled seven-inch ("Friends Like You") to 2000's *Yours Truly* ("Blown Away," "America"), including all the classic SOIA tracks. In fact, if frontman Lou Koller's numerous calls to "Let's move San Fran" were expunged, this disc could very well serve as a greatest hits record for the band. As for the small amount of on-stage banter and introductions, it is no different than anything that has been heard at a SOIA show in the past five years. The only surprise is the guest vocals (by an audience volunteer) on "Rat Pack." While Sick of it All's studio records have been declining in quality for several years, the band remains one of the top live acts in underground music, and this disc does a good job in capturing the intensity and ecstasy of a SOIA gig. The enhanced CD contains video of the show and an interview with the band, while the vinyl version contains the bonus track "Bullshit Justice." (**Fat Wreck Chords, P.O. Box 193690, San Francisco 94119**)

—Michael O'Brien

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SINNERS AND SAINTS
The Sky is Falling

Former team captains of Blood for Blood and The Ducky Boys pair up to form this new outfit. Sadly, the results fail to do justice to the best work of either band. *The Sky is Falling* jettisons forth in hopeful fashion with "Dead So Soon," a Guns 'N Roses opening jaunt. Soon after, a swath of messy influences and aimless direction becomes apparent. If these hardcore heavy-weights felt a calling outside of punk rock, good for them for chasing it. Fans, however, may or may not wish to follow. At best, "Dead So Soon" and "Like a Suicide" could've appeared on GNR's *Use Your Illusion*. At the record's worst, however, listeners will find the band reflecting Soul Asylum ("Marquee Lights") and Blink 182 ("Never Too Young to Die"). (Bridge Nine, P.O. Box 990052, Boston 02199-0052)

—Louis Woodward

SIXER
Beautiful Trash

Just when street punk seems to be a burnt and hollowed out subgenre, along comes a band to inject new life. Sixer may not be singing about anything revolutionary, but the tunes are clever, the changes are skillful and the style has a tone all its own. Vocals are similar to Mike Ness of Social Distortion, a whiskey-soaked sound with an appealing dose of rocker cool. Guitars ring beautifully across hellishly catchy drums. Richmond, Va.'s Sixer is likely a fun band live and a welcome change from the endless parade of cookie-cutter acts trying to be GBH. (BYO, P.O. Box 67609, Los Angeles 90067)

—Mark Ginsburg

THE SPITFIRES
Three

The hype around Canada's Spitfires is hard to figure. Sure, these guys can play, but what they're playing is typical drinking 'n driving music. There is nothing special or astounding about the songs or the execution, yet awards and accolades keep coming at The Spitfires. Is it simply because people are surprised to find Vancouver natives pumping out this kind of music? Is this band benefiting from the cliched image of the mild-mannered Canadian? The bottom line is *Three* is a fair CD with some decent rock

songs, some decent pop songs and nothing extraordinary. (Scratch, 726 Richards St., Vancouver, BC V6B 3A4)

—Mark Ginsburg

STRIKING DISTANCE
The Fuse is Lit

Now *this* is hardcore! Even fans who have caught Striking Distance in passing at a show or two will be left in awe as they crank up *The Fuse is List*. This album will have fists in the air, pumping chants of "Fuck Your Image," while the band tears through its circlepit-styled anthems. Anyone with a history in this music will have to concede Striking Distance has delivered, reminding the most cynical of the old school of the initial excitement and visceral attitude of hardcore. Brutal lyrics accompany a drummer who sounds like he's playing his way through a connoption fit. The bonus obligatory live at CBGB's tracks are lukewarm and uninspiring, but the six-song main course will have listeners coming back for seconds and thirds. (Bridge Nine, P.O. Box 990052, Boston 02199-0052)

—Louis Woodward

SUPERDRAG
Last Call For Vitriol

The fourth record from bread-and-butter Tennessee rock band Superdrag is precisely what one would expect from the quartet. Devoted fans are sure to be pleased with *Last Call For Vitriol*'s Husker Du guitars and Matthew Sweet melodies. None of the album's 12 offerings are particularly memorable, however. It's tough to stomach the cliché-ridden opener, "Baby Goes to Eleven," and the rest of *Vitriol* swims in classic rock limbo, failing to capture the die-hard Jagger/Richards attitude. "Safe & Warm" is the high-point, a pleasant, countrified stroll, but unfortunately it's the only time Superdrag strays from its formula. (Arena Rock, 242 Wythe Ave., Studio 6, Brooklyn 11211)

—Joe Sweeney

UNSILENT REIGN
Strangers Amongst Ourselves

While *Unsilent Reign* has been flying under the radar since 1998, its latest disc, *Strangers Amongst Ourselves*, has all the right ingredients to catapult this band into the national spotlight. Like Earth Crisis, this South Florida mosh pit instigator dishes out the metalcore by

continued on page 63

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TP-002
Herrmano
The first released album of JOHN GARCIA of KYUSS/UNDA fame in almost 3 years. Look for the new Herrmano album in Summer of 03. "Indisputably one of this years best."
- CMJ New Music Report

TP-003
High on Fire
The reissue of High on Fire's classic self-debut CD. "heavier than Poison ideas in a dump truck" (KRRK) -Kerrang!

TP-043
Slugging Slab
Slugging Slab is back with their follow up to 2001's *The Dealer*. "swamp rock, dirt metal mantras that are back with another ass-load of truck driving, gas punching boogie blues hard rock" - KRAM.com

TP-045
Bad Wizard
Bad Wizard's following to 2001's *Freak East*. "The members of Bad Wizard put to shame many other bands who try to recreate the rock of the seventies."
- The New Yorker

TP-046
Blush Please
Four release featuring Chris Korb of ATOPIC (ITCHWAX). Blush Please's debut contains nine tracks that range from straight hard rock to subtle pop.

TP-047
Last Great
The follow up to 1999's *Spastic*. "Lyle Ann and Vince Wilson did not do well in the Chess's rehearsal space."
- *Bludgeoner*

TP-048
Bandage
Bandage's third album up to 2001's *Range* and brings "heavy metal" with a drunken slanting for a "wonder" (KRRK) -Kerrang!

TP-049
All Rights
Debut CD from the Greenhorns, NYC. Includes "The Greenhorns & Co. ALL NIGHT" available in three 7" vinyl sets. "The Jersey Beat"

TP-050
Caroline
The Atomic Records LP and "TP", the music scene of Clearlight LP. The young band of Condemned, Dawn and FRENCHGOLD, Slugging Slab, "The Dealer", "The Bad Wizard", "Tree & Jay" and "The Slugging LP".

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One Nation Under has broken up on the eve of the release of *Bless the Martyr* and *Kiss the Child*... **Norma Jean** has parted ways with its singer, canceling its tour plans, and is now seeking a replacement... **Beloved** has tapped Brian McTernan (Snapcase, Thrice) to record its *Solid State* debut... **Deathwish Recordings**, the label run by Converge leader Jake Bannon, has a slew of new releases coming out, including a Converge DVD, a *Suicide File/Hope Conspiracy* split and a *Drowningman* single... **Not Waving But Drowning** has broken up after four years of forward-thinking hardcore... **American Nightmare** is now known as the abbreviated AN because of legal issues surrounding its former moniker... After years of toiling on the New Jersey scene, **E-Town Concrete** has signed with **Razor & Tie** (a label best known for rock ballad compilations) and is in the studio working on new material for its label debut, expected to be released in early 2003... In other NJHC news, **NJ Bloodline** has broken up after what seemed like an eternity... **Rampallah** is the new band of **Blood For Blood's** Rob Lind... **Chimaira** is calling its new album *The Impossibility of Reason*. The metalcore landmark is due out early next year... Brandon of **Eighteen Visions** has left the group to concentrate on his main band—the amazing, black metalcore of **Bleeding Through**. The *Visions* don't foresee replacing

him and will continue on as a four piece... Legendary hardcore band **Slapshot** has reformed and plans to release new material sometime next year. Meanwhile, in late October the band will headline a Boston show featuring reformed versions of fellow Bostonians **The Bruisers** and **Slapshot** frontman **Choke's Stars & Stripes**... Members of **Candiria** will soon reveal a new side project called **Ghosts of the Canal** with **Five Episodes From the Subconscious** on Candiria's own *Coma* imprint... **Cannae** has signed with **Prosthetic Records**, home to **Lamb of God**... Rumor suggests **Black Widows**, featuring former **Endpoint** vocalist Rob Pennington, have left **Initial** and signed to **Equal Vision Records**. **Equal Vision**, meanwhile, has just released *Alaska*, the new full-length from **Fairweather**... **Buddyhead.com**, the infamous, absolutely hysterical website has maintained a record label for several years now (see **Ink** and **Dagger's** final album). Now the dot-com has issued **Your Enemies Friends' The Wiretap EP**—a must have for fans of **Murder City Devils** or **Pretty Girls Make Graves**... **Triple Crown Records** has signed **Alabama's Northstar**... **Thursday** will release its final effort for **Victory** in the form of an EP with live performances and a few news songs... **Zao's** Jesse Smith has joined **The Underwater** in the wake of his former band's implosion... **Sub City Records** has released the benefit compilation *Plea For Peace, Take Action, Volume Two*. The double-disc set collects exclusive, previously unreleased material from **Poison the Well**, **Cave In** and **God Forbid**, along with already available tunes by **AFI**, **Open Hand** and **Digger**... **Piebald's** vocalist Travis has undergone surgery to remove blood blisters from his vocal chords. The band, however, has been adamant in insisting this obstacle will not set it back... **Shelby** from **Frodus** returns to the rock world with a self-titled debut on **Lovitt Records** from his new band, **The Cassettes**. Finally, the filming of **Hot Water Music's** much anticipated music video has been postponed. More next month!

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RECORDS continued from page 61
 the truckload. In fact, it's a challenge to slam your body against the unsuspecting sucker next to you while listening to this album. Produced by the band with Jeremy Staska (Poison the Well, Shai Hulud), *Strangers Amongst Ourselves* is one of 2002's essential metalcore releases. Simply put, if your blood excitedly simmers while listening to Hatebreed's *Perseverance*, Eighteen Visions' *Vanity* or Killswitch Engage's *Alive or Just Breathing*, you will want to add this album to your collection immediately. (**Too Damn Hype, P.O. Box 63524, Philadelphia 19147**)
 —Kevin Boyce

UN Sung Zeros

Moments From Mourning



When Dashboard Confessional's Christopher Carraba performs on CNN, it's worth wondering if all modern punks are striving for mainstream acceptance. Enter Floridians Unsung Zeros. On *Moments From Mourning*, the band seems to meander aimlessly through punk clichés in search of acceptance. Mired in an identity crisis, desperate to belong, the band seems unable to decide exactly from whom it craves validation. Rather than writing with abandon or emotion, the band seemingly tries too hard to write for what it thinks the Oi Polloi will want to hear. Overall, *Moments* seems to lean a bit more towards pop than it does punk, at times sounding as though it has more in common with '70s AM radio than even the most commercialized punk outfits. Could this be REO Speedwagon for the wallet and chain generation? (**Eulogy Recordings, P.O. Box 8692, Coral Springs, FL 33075**)

—Jonathan Cholewa

VISION

Just Short of Living



For those who missed the boat on this one, *Just Short of Living* is a reissue originally released back in 1992. Though not the most memorable work the band has ever done, there are some cuts here with which newer fans may want to get acquainted. The group's classic "Animosity Overkill" lies within, while the opening track, "Tribute," is definitely a shiner. This is probably old hat to long-

time fans of this credible and hard-working hardcore outfit, though newcomers will delight at the band's penchant for displaying its punk roots (the band's been known to cover Cocksparrer's "Where Are They Now?"). Just Short of Living is a strong chapter in the history of a band still boasting plenty to say. (**Knife or Death, 805 Adele St., Northfield, NJ 08225**)

—Louis Woodward

VIVA DEATH

Viva Death



Freud termed the unconscious thirst for oblivion "the death instinct," theorizing it lurked in the minds of every human being. Viva Death bring this buried inclination to brutal light, with charming song titles such as "Murder by Proxy" and "The Rigor Mortis Shake." Fleshing out (haw!) their grim aesthetic is a mix of industrial strength grind and old rock menace. In spite of all the heavy distortion and frenetic beats, Viva Death doesn't scare as many people as it would like. The group never embraces the full-bore post-human terrorism practiced by contemporaries The Lack, nor commits to the suicidal fixations elaborated by forefathers Skinny Puppy. Instead this debut record presents our death-repressing civilization with a lukewarm portrait of a half-realized crush. Perhaps getting a little more in touch with their hidden obsessions will help Viva Death reach everyone else's. (**Vagrant**)

—Reed Jackson

VORTIS

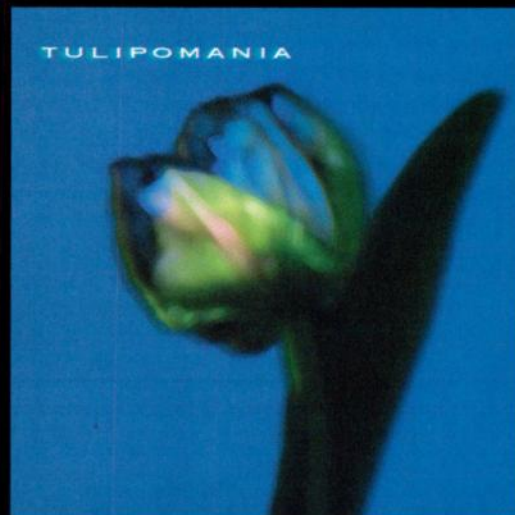
Take the System Down



Vortis deserves some credit. It takes most bands at least a track or two to scare potential listeners away from an album, but Vortis does the deed in the first 12 seconds of *Take the System Down* with the introduction of its singer—a vocalist whose skills can only be described as a mentally challenged old man trying out for a demented cheerleading squad. It's a shame the band's vocalist should be so grating, because parts of this record contain some pretty cool, politically fueled, Dead Kennedys-style punk. Musically, some songs groove, while others flirt with a country roll. There are moments on *Take the System*



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where Vortis kicks into gear, blaring with high-octane rock 'n roll. Once the singer starts in, however, it's all reduced to little more than a parody of itself. Those who like their rock gritty enough to wince through the head-splitting vocals will have no complaints. Those easily annoyed are advised to steer clear of this, lest their heads should explode. (**Thick, 409 N. Wolcott Ave., Chicago 60622**)

—Zach Needles

WOKE UP FALLING

Dividing Blue From Blue



Listeners who like tasteful rock with a pop sensibility might appreciate the songs on *Dividing Blue From Blue*. As one of the album's song titles suggests, there is "Something Beautiful" about the fresh-sounding, well-crafted music of *Woke Up Falling*. Much of the album's material features focused, vibrant, guitar-based rock songs, covering plenty of diverse ground. Even a casual listen might be enough to attract the attention of many a listener. Fortunately, the quality of the material on *Dividing Blue From Blue* may just captivate

the listener's attention for the album's duration. (**M-Theory, P.O. Box 500802, San Diego 92150**)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

YOHIMBE BROTHERS

Front End Lifter



Made up of Vernon Reid (Living Colour) and DJ Logic, with guest appearances by Slick Rick, Prince Paul and all of Living Colour, the Yohimbe Brothers pair off-the-hook samples and beats with Reid's characteristic, glammy guitar. It's a mix best described as space-age, psychedelic hip hop for house parties in the sky. On "6996 (Club Yohimbe)," Prince Paul and Slick Rick provide a hilarious intro and sexed-up rhymes to make for one happening joint. At the heart of all the cuts is Reid's guitar, constantly conjuring memories of Living Colour, making for a sound much slicker than anything DJ Shadow, DJ Qbert or DJ Spooky would release, without the gritty resonance of all-out innovators like the Def Jux crew. (**Ropeadope, Village Station, P.O. Box 1021, New York 10014**)

—Charles Spano

**NEXT MONTH
IN ROCKPILE ISSUE #77**

Q And Not U

Sigur Rô's

Paul Barman

Isis

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Glasseater

St. Etienne

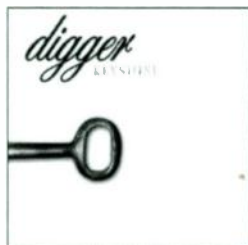
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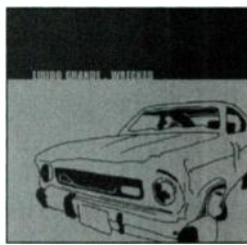


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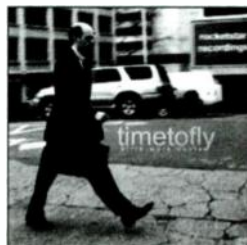
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An Indie Rock Halloween Pictogram Ghost Story



Illustration by Ezra Sherman

On a crisp, October evening, two teenagers from  named Belle & Sebastian, went out on a date . Belle had been looking forward to a

pleasant evening, but she was beginning to worry Sebastian might not be such a gentleman after all. She was starting to wish he could learn to keep his hands

to himself. After all, she wasn't about to . Sebastian, meanwhile, was getting frustrated with Belle and all her prudish, old-fashioned friends.

"," he scowled as Belle pushed him away. Before long, the two began to argue and Belle ran from the car in a huff to fix her  in the ladies room.

Faintly, she heard a strange noise outside that sounded like people whispering. , she followed the sounds outside into the dark woods behind the


snack bar. Suddenly, she spun around to see  and the scariest horse monster ever! He had nasty teeth and fiery, . The monster was scary looking too,

with horns,  and black and . Her hair stood on end as her skin broke out in . Quickly, Belle turned and began to run with all her might,

but the woods were thick and covered in . Just as she thought she might outrun the hellish fiends, she tripped over  and came crashing down into

a . Instantly,  and the monster had her surrounded! "That's it!" thought Belle, sure that she was a goner and would soon be . Just then,

when doom seemed certain, Sebastian arrived to . The monster and  were dangerous foes, but, luckily, Sebastian knew  and the villains

were soon defeated. "Gee, it's a good thing you know , " said Belle, catching her breath. Then she turned to the band and asked, "But, what are you all

doing here in the woods?" "Our van broke down," explained Geoff Farina. "We were hoping to find a phone over at the snack bar. That's when we ran into these

hooligans. You see,  trained this monster as his henchman so he could try to scare the snack bar out of business and take it over himself."

"Yea. And I would've gotten away with it," cursed . "If it hadn't been for you meddling "

THE END

ANSWER KEY: 1=River City High 2=At The Drive In 3=Cave In 4=Friends Of The Stone Age 5=Make Up 6=Guided By Voices 7=Elliot Smith 8=Bright Eyes 9=Nine Inch Nails 10=White Stripes 11=Hives 12=Vampire 13=The Roots 14=Puddle Of Mudd 15=7 Fingers In The Box 16=Saves The Day 17=Karate 18=Get Up Kids

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- *Metal Maniacs*



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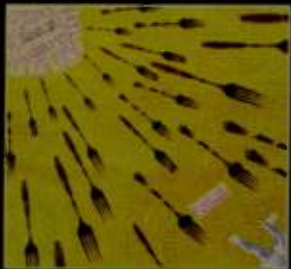
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