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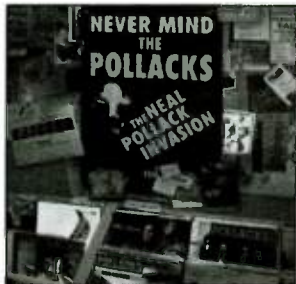
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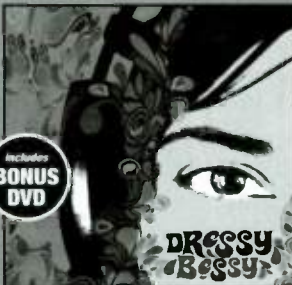
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WRITER ▶ REED JACKSON

A proud Bed-Stuy resident, Reed spreads his autocratic cries for help in several magazines and newspapers including *Revolver* and *The New York Journal News*. He attempts to do the right thing, but seldom succeeds. He likes watching either monkeys or pirates, but never both at once.

SEE ▶ **AESOP ROCK** ▶ PG.40

PHOTOGRAPHER ▶ CHRISSY PIPER

In recent years, Chrissy has toured as a roadie with groups like Hot Water Music, Jets to Brazil and Tragedy, working as a freelance photographer for publications like *Devil in the Woods*, *Alternative Press* and *Venus*. A book of her photography, *The Unheard Music*, is still available through her website, ChrissyPiper.com.

SEE ▶ **AESOP ROCK** ▶ PG.40



WRITER ▶ CHRISTIAN LORENTZEN

An editor at *The New Leader* and *Komar & Melamid's RBS Gazette*, Christian has written for *Movieline* and *Rolling Stone*. He's currently working on a novel about gypsies and Albanian truck drivers in America.

SEE ▶ **DANDY WARHOLS** ▶ PG.22



ILLUSTRATOR ▶ KEITH SHORE

Works at Space 1026 Gallery and Artist Coalition. Art director for *Heckler Magazine*. Helps operate MarketEast.com. He is tired and doesn't know what else to say.

SEE ▶ **DANDY WARHOLS** ▶ PG.22



PHOTOGRAPHER ▶ LIZ TORMES

Unsatisfied with her station as a mere freelance photographer, Liz left Tennessee for New York to add "struggling musician" to her resume. In the meantime, she passes her time shooting big-shot musicians for *No Depression*, *Resonance* and *Harp*.

SEE ▶ **KID KOALA** ▶ PG.46



WRITER ▶ ANDREW PARKS

A solid mascot for today's economy, Andrew rocks a temp gig at *Entertainment Weekly*, proving health insurance is for chumps not college grads. When he's not dodging small children and locals on the train, he contributes to the *Philadelphia City Paper*, *The Buffalo News*, *Punk Planet*, *Skyscraper Magazine* and *Wonka Vision*. His own zine, *Bleach*, should premier in the fall.

SEE ▶ **KID KOALA** ▶ PG.46



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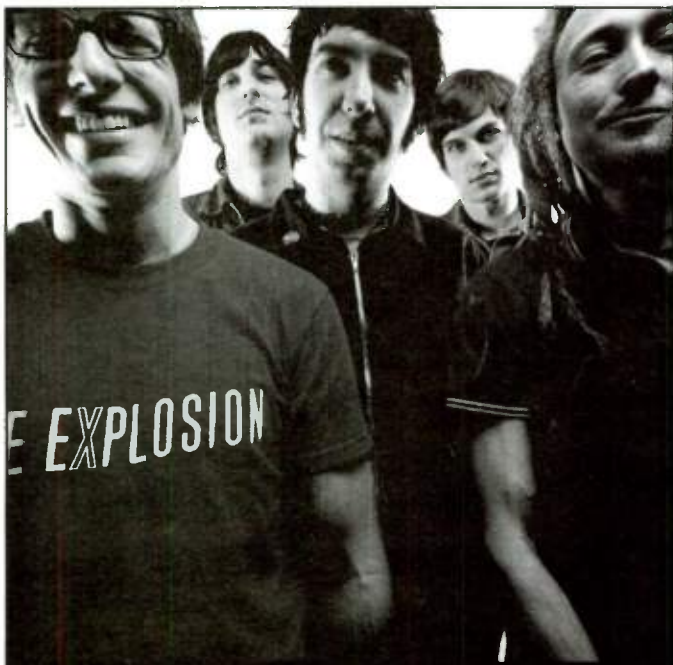
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FEATURES ▶▶

Dandy Warhols 22

New York blackouts ruin our date, so Christian Lorentzen ruminates on a band past its prime who are still fun.

■ Illustration → Kieth Shore

Enon 34

Quick! Enjoy reading about a New York band before all those Rapture articles start pouring in!

Story → Charlotte Robinson ■ Photo → Brad Miller

Barnstormers 36

The Tokyo-New York art collective creates loud art at Baltimore's Lump Gallery.

Story → Mike McKee ■ Photos → Sam Mauney

Aesop Rock 40

The first Def Jux superstar to drop a sophomore full-length chats about allegory and expectations.

Story → Reed Jackson ■ Photos → Chrissy Piper

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Kid Koala 48

Montreal's instrumental maestro sketches out his affiliation with those DJ types.

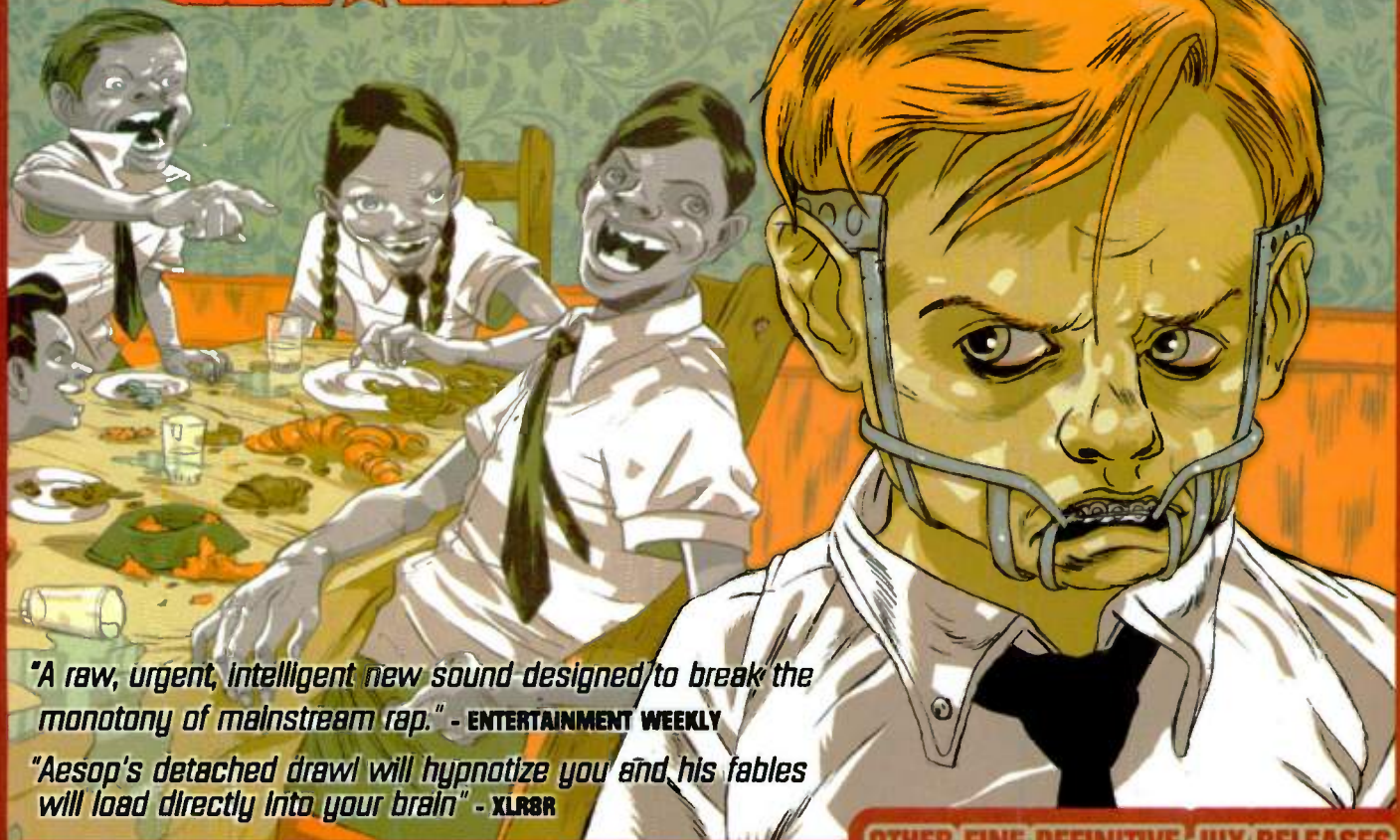
Story → Andrew Parks ■ Photos → Liz Tormes



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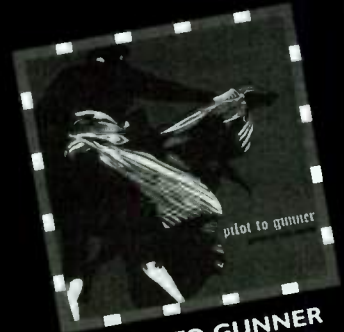
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SELECTIONS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Of course there's no need for music magazines.

To extrapolate, there's no need for the music industry. Anyone who loves music can attest, the value is in the experience, not the pitch, the sale, the trend, the investment. So, those of us busying ourselves at this year's CMJ conference can all go home for an early bedtime.

All the same, it always seemed to me the best music magazines were the ones that realized this and could embrace it without shame or self-deprecation. Even as a tributary adjunct to the real deal, celebrating new music—or at least offering a thoughtful criticism of the status quo—is as worthwhile a pursuit as any. What's not so worthwhile is the circular waste of ink paid towards trainspotting the next big thing, or, perhaps more commonly these days, speculating what will save rock.

While categorization might be a convenient component of our musical vocabulary at this point, it should never direct us towards divisiveness. Some folks might be surprised to find a second consecutive hip hop cover story. Others might have trouble reconciling a magazine with "Rock" in its name running stories on artists like Four Tet, MF Doom, Aesop Rock, Kid Koala, Sheppard Fairey or the Barnstormers collective. The search for the new sound remains intuitive, not subject to the whim of prefixes (post-, alt-, emo-, pop-, new-, no-, electro-, street-, etc.). Rock, after all, like rap, used to describe a music tied to agitation, the spontaneous, inherently progressive adversary to—if nothing more explicit—boredom.

As an artist offered earlier this year, "Middle finger to the indie rocker, middle finger to the wack MC."

Of course, the magazines should be here to applaud the winners.



Mike McKee
Music Editor
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THE TOP 500 HEAVY METAL SONGS OF ALL TIME

BY MARTIN POPOFF



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If you put five hundred songs of any type together in a book, would it matter in what order you placed them? I think not, and that's the sense you get a few pages into *The Top 500*.... Compiled and ranked by Martin Popoff from a somewhat-explained "worldwide" poll of 18,000 rock fans, the book provides a brief review of each song followed by some remarks by members of the band in question. Rock writers create a world all their own; to partake of that, one is usually asked to suspend much in the way of thinking. For example, who could argue with the "stirring, propulsive drumming" that helped vault Dio's "Rainbow in the Dark" to number 46! Ultimately, a coffee table book bound to spark many an intellectual debate. "Welcome to the Jungle" comes in above "Raining Blood?!" Dude, that's fuckin bogus!!

BLONDIE

FROM PUNK TO PRESENT A PICTORIAL HISTORY

In case anyone's under the twisted illusion that WIT or Glass Candy invented the new-wave bombshell persona, *Blondie: From Punk to Present* offers enough photographic evidence to bleach out misconceptions. Luckily, the photos do most of the talking—the grainy, intimate portraits and candid stageshots tell a much more engaging story than the vapid quotes and commentary.



HallBiographies.com

411 VM

ISSUE 59



411VM.com

This issue of the 411 video skate magazine is significant—for fans because it includes an extra DVD of the eS team's *Brazilian Vacation*, and for 411 because it's now just one step away from celebrating its 10-year anniversary. Included in 59 is decent footage from Ragdoll, Chris Senn, James Adams and Stacy Lowery and visual articles on Cairo Foster and Danny Supa's gear (along with a giveaway of Cairo's board). The entree of this DVD is the feature on the Girl team. As always, 411 also covers some contests (Tampa and Vancouver this time). Bonuses include a Globe contest in Australia, a Duffs photoshoot and viewer mail.

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MUSH DVD

MUSH TOUR SPRING 2002

With 17 of hip hop's most forward thinking weirdos all packed into a tour bus for the first organized tour of its kind, it's hard not to think of the landmark Youth Brigade/Social Distortion tour now immortalized by the punk cult classic *Another State of Mind*. With its tighter live-video and candid footage, it's unlikely this *Mush* DVD will catch a similar spot in history. Some of the artists, however, have a good shot, making this 90-minute document something to investigate. Featured are Boom Bip, Doseone, Radioinactive, cLOUDEAD, Labtekwon and Reaching Quiet.



DirtyLoop.com

SLITCH DVD+CD

A SHORT MOVIE BY DIANNE BELLINO

Indie filmmaker Dianne Bellino's *Slitch* is perhaps one of the most apt Back to School experiences you're likely to hear nothing about. Clocking in at a brief 23 minutes, *Slitch* follows the enervated summer days of an aloof, but charming, teenage girl in a beach town. Chapfallen with the small-town gossip of her fairy tale sisters (The Marys) and her own, suburban ennui, Diane Cataldi, the *Slitch* (a contraction of two unflattering insults), resolves to land a socially awkward surfer played by Will Oldham. With a diary-peeking voyeurism and a cozy soundtrack from Oldham himself, *Slitch* delivers *Gidget* for the Drag City set.

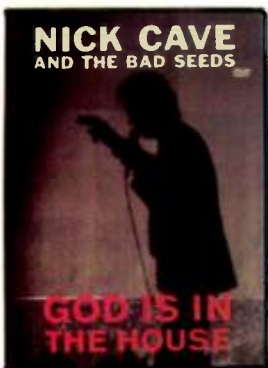


DragCity.com

NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS DVD

GOD IS IN THE HOUSE

People have obsessed over Nick Cave for years, and with good reason. While the list of troubadours and bards of his caliber draws increasingly thin (Tom Waits? Nick Drake?) and his stylistic progeny drop da foogin' ball, now seems as good a time as any for such a filling DVD. Cave, when he's on, conveys a gloom few artists can touch. The empathy often cited in the former Birthday Party frontman's lyrics lives and breathes more when performed. The *Bad Seeds* usher in a lugubrious dirge and Cave answers—"Father, why are all the children weeping?/They are merely crying son/O, are they merely crying, father?/Yes, true weeping is yet to come." It's fitting then, the meat of *God is in the House* comes from a live performance in Lyon, France, circa 2001. The footage is clean and pro throughout while the spooky, intimidating Mr. Grinch staggers through "As I Sat Sadly By Her Side," "The Weeping Song" (which one isn't?) and "Papa Won't Leave You, Henry." Fans and the curious alike will most likely enjoy John Hillcoat's documentary, *No More Shall We Part*. Filmed at the renowned Abbey Road studios, Hillcoat focuses on the Seeds as they record the album of the same name. Hillcoat also directs two of the three promotional videos included on *God is in the House*—"As I Sit Sadly By Her Side," "Fifteen Feet of Pure White Snow" and the Tony Mahony directed "Love Letter."



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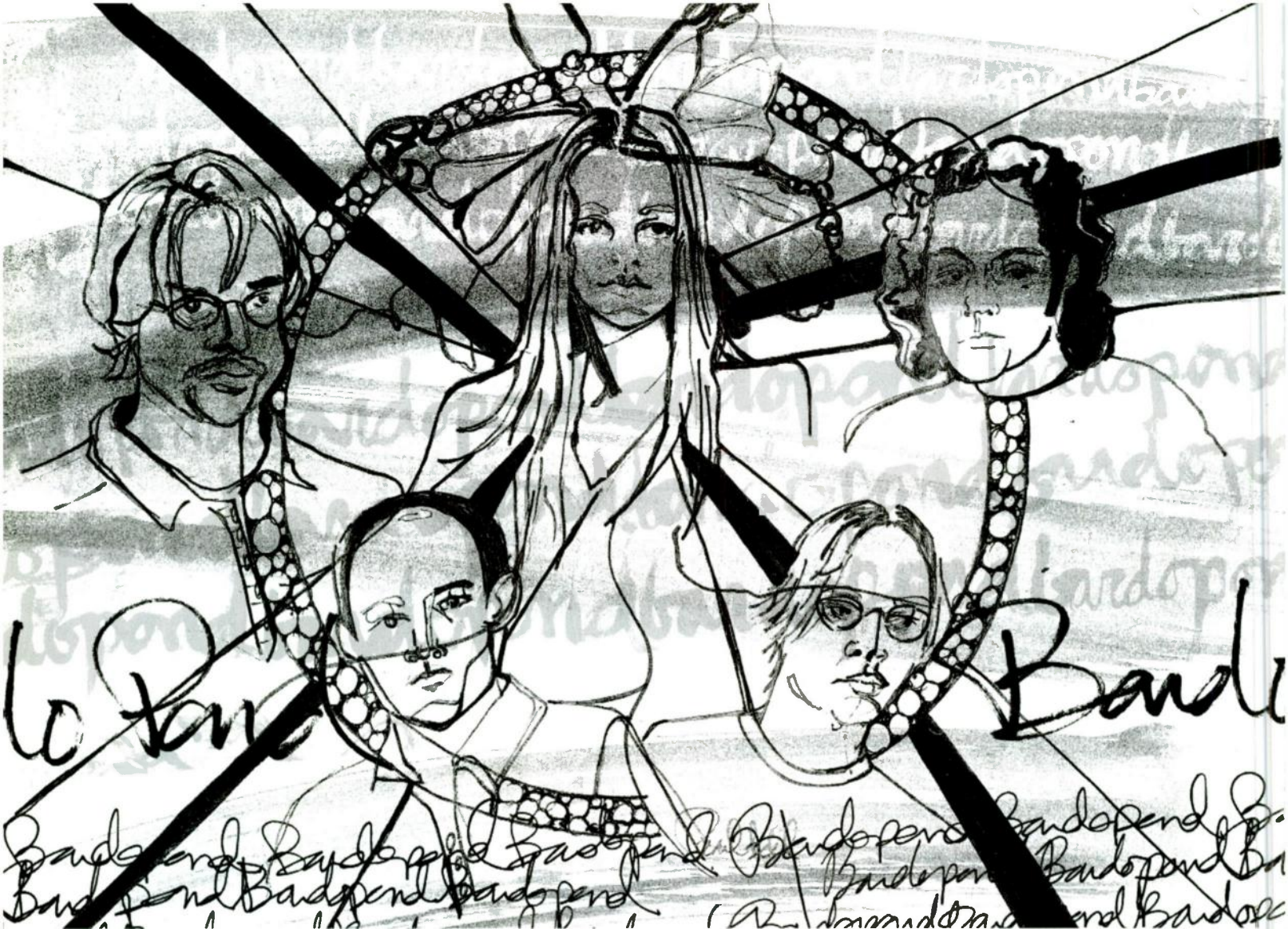
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BARDO POND ■ Massaging the Space Organ

Whether they are talking about the merits of *Zen Arcade*, *Mazy Star* or the *Minutemen*, it becomes readily apparent Bardo Pond is a band comprising much more than its influences. Over the course of the band's existence, Bardo Pond has explored the many sides of psychedelia, from carving out feedback-laced soundscapes to raga-tinged folk numbers and all points in between. Though it's easy to get caught up in finding phrases and categories to describe the band's music, guitarist Michael Gibbons offers a comparison of his band's songs as a crowd of sculptures.

While mainly recognized for mind-bending albums and hypnotic live shows, you could never accuse Bardo Pond of stagnating. In the past year, the band has busied itself by recording its latest record, *On the Ellipse* (ATP), in its home studio, while holding down day jobs and finding time to tour. Though this is the band's first record since its amicable departure from Matador, a fondness for the band's former label shines through when vocalist/violinist Isobel Sollenberger starts talking about the band's tenure there.

"I thought we were so green when we first signed with those guys," admits Sollenberger. "We had never really been on tour and we learned a lot."

Like many of the things Bardo Pond does, the label change was spurred on by a desire to avoid becoming static. Gibbons assesses it was all timing. While

Sollenberger points out *Set and Setting* was the first album recorded in the band's home studio, it's *On the Ellipse*, she says, where the band really takes advantage of the situation.

"It's a different experience," says Gibbons. "We can do the same thing, but we can improvise on top of it, keep working with a song, and finally have it realized in a completely different way."

Fitting then, *On the Ellipse* should find Bardo Pond still trying to contort sounds to its will. Bassist Clint Takeda says the band's newfound freedom of working at its own pace has allowed for more time to reflect and hammer out ideas. He cites the new record as a culmination of the ebb and flow of the spacious and the refined records Bardo Pond have made in recent years.

All involved agree, improvisation and experimentation weigh in heavily in the Bardo Pond approach. Gibbons and his brother, second guitarist Michael note how the band continues to tinker with songs even after albums have dropped.

"We can kind of drop the sludge when we want, pull back and have more space too" says John.

When all is said and done it's Sollenberger, though, who seems best able to verbalize the band's ephemeral credo.

"It's what comes naturally," which, she adds, she cannot explain. ■



MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK

TEXT → DAN PASTORIUS ■ PHOTO → CHRIS STRONG

▲ Full of fuzzed-out hooks, emotional energy and melodic screams, Motion City Soundtrack is Brett Gurewitz's latest signing to Epitaph's ever-growing roster. Closer in sound to the frenzied pop thrill of later Jawbox than Sunny Day Real Estate, the band twists pop's often monotonous approach.

Answers → Justin Pierre.

If you guys could be play on any movie soundtrack of your choice, what would it be? ▶ I would love to be on a Hal Hartley or Jim Jarmusch film soundtrack.

How did Epitaph find you guys? ▶ Matchbook Romance gave Brett [Gurewitz] a copy of the self-released album we were selling at shows only. He called us up and emailed us about getting together possibly when we were next in Los Angeles.

How important to you is creating music that's actually unique? ▶ We just write music that appeals to us. I truly believe that it is impossible to write songs that will sell and make money. How can anyone know what is going to be hot and when? It is insanely ridiculous.

Do you all have the same sound in mind when writing? ▶ There are very few bands that we all draw upon equally. Personally, I tend to rip off Superchunk, Jawbox, Sunny Day Real Estate, The Flaming Lips, Bjork, the Pixies, the Carpenters and Pavement—to name a few.

How do these influences play into the band's sound? ▶ Somehow we are able to write songs that utilize all these different influences and they sound very fresh and new. I am also obsessed with pop culture and television from the '80s, so I tend to reference times and places with commercials and slogans.



PELICAN

TEXT → BRIAN PETERSON ■ PHOTO → ELISE ZELECHOWSKI

▲ Singers can make or break a band. Take a look at rock history. With ego bursting forth, vocalists tend to be the ones translating the musical experience most intimately to the audience.

Instrumental purists argue temper tantrums and pretensions do nothing but cause harm to pleasant musical excursions.

To alleviate these potential pitfalls, Chicago's Pelican chooses to sculpt its heavy rock destroyers sans vox.

According to guitarist Laurent Lebec, even though his group originally wanted a vocalist, the original jam sessions naturally bent towards an instrumental model.

"The possibilities for song craft are really boundless right now, and that's inspiring us," he enthuses. "Also, our audience has responded very favorably to the absence of a vocalist—all the more reason to pursue that angle."

If you've seen the band rock a basement or if you've heard the group's demo sessions (released courtesy of Hydrahead), you can vouch for Pelican's ability to twist unfathomable feeling out of Sabbath-meets Godspeed, You Black Emperor crunch.

While this might sound strange to those used to a verse-chorus-verse-driven formula, Lebec believes the vocal-free choice offers a little musician's lib.

"The challenge isn't inherent to our music style as much as it is imposed by pop culture. Just because someone is singing and their words are associated with certain feelings and emotions, doesn't make their music any more emotional. Easier to remember or catchier? Yes, maybe. But in my experience, instrumental music is a lot more emotionally impacting."

The group's new full-length, *Australasia*, may prove to be the exclamation point on Lebec's philosophy. Listeners will again find themselves challenged as the band continues to adhere to its philosophy of originality versus rigidity.

"It reflects what I'd like our music to represent," adds guitarist Trevor de Brauw. "That bridge between the dual aspects of our character and the unrecognizable hybrid that results at the intersection." ■



HELLA ■ Left Coast Logic

If you believe one particularly virulent message board thread, Hella is both as powerful as Hitler and responsible for ruining music for all right-minded, God-fearing folk. Which can surely only be a good thing.

For a band not yet three years old, Hella polarizes plenty of opinions by daring to try something as radical as only having two members and no vocals, and deviating from a strict 4/4 time signature.

Yet when floundering attempts at comparison mention such disparate entities as Lightning Bolt, Oxes, Primus and the good Captain Beefheart, you know you must be doing something right—creating an infernal storm of math-punk-guitar-and-drum intricacies sure to tie your brain in knots and make you sing in the shower.

Formed in Sacramento in February 2001, simply because drummer Zach Hill and guitarist Spencer Seim couldn't find any other musicians to complete a normal lineup after the implosion of a previous band (Legs on Earth), the duo set out to make music for themselves, music different from other bands, music that will turn bad people nice and nice people bad.

Hella's debut album, *Hold Your Horse Is*, on Kill Rock Stars' imprint SRC, was an exhilarating distillation of the pair's atmospheric discord and a fine complement to its intense live performances. Hella's subsequent material has highlighted a constantly evolving and developing sound, sometimes playful yet always challenging.

A tour with kindred spirits Lightning Bolt and shows with Man... or Astroman? and legendary Minuteman Mike Watt, spread the band's reputation as one of the most amazing live bands in the country.

The discriminating folks at Suicide Squeeze treated fans to Hella's last offering, the brilliantly titled, four-song EP *Bitches Ain't Shit But Good People*. Which was followed by the frenetically fantastic *Total Bugs Bunny On Wild Bass*. Still, without a video documentary like the kindred spirits of Lightning Bolt, Seim and Hill have at least finally been captured on a live album. The as-yet-untitled snapshot is scheduled to appear as a split with Dilute on Sick Room Records later this month.

A third full-length is scheduled for January 2004. It's sure to be one crazy ride—"leave all notions of proper music at the door." ■

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ACEYALONE ■ Doin' it to Ya in Your Earhole

Many underground heads see independent rappers only in contrast to mainstream rap—a bloated, cash-ridden genre arousing only disgust and horror. Such a view is not only unfair to the underground, which has something completely vital and separate of its own to offer, but also to the players at the top of the charts. Despite mass-market culture's many defects, most of the big-time artists have been slaving away for years, perfecting their style and sharpening their skills. By bringing their efforts to the ears of millions, popular rapper's often effect positive cultural change. Just look at Public Enemy.

Aceyalone, a rapper who has stood as a longtime force in the underground, agrees.

"I think that whole distinction is something people have to get over," he offers in his slightly raspy voice. "We all operate within the music business, like a street ball team and a pro team." But the veteran MC, who before his solo career, got his start in L.A. sees the benefits of keeping perspective. After all, this is the man who started his own record label and hip-hop collective, Project Blowed, still based in the heart of the Left Coast, L.A. "It's important to me to operate from a grassroots position," states Acey of his attempts. "The root of anything holds a lot more substance."

Acey's vision of Project Blowed reads something like Ian Mackaye's Dischord crossed with the heady, multi-imprint jazz get-togethers of the of the '50s and '60's: an artist-oriented, financially independent label that supports a large roster of talent who release many group projects. "I don't know everything about business," Acey admits of his entrepreneurial ventures. "So it's very live and learn. I enjoy the challenge."

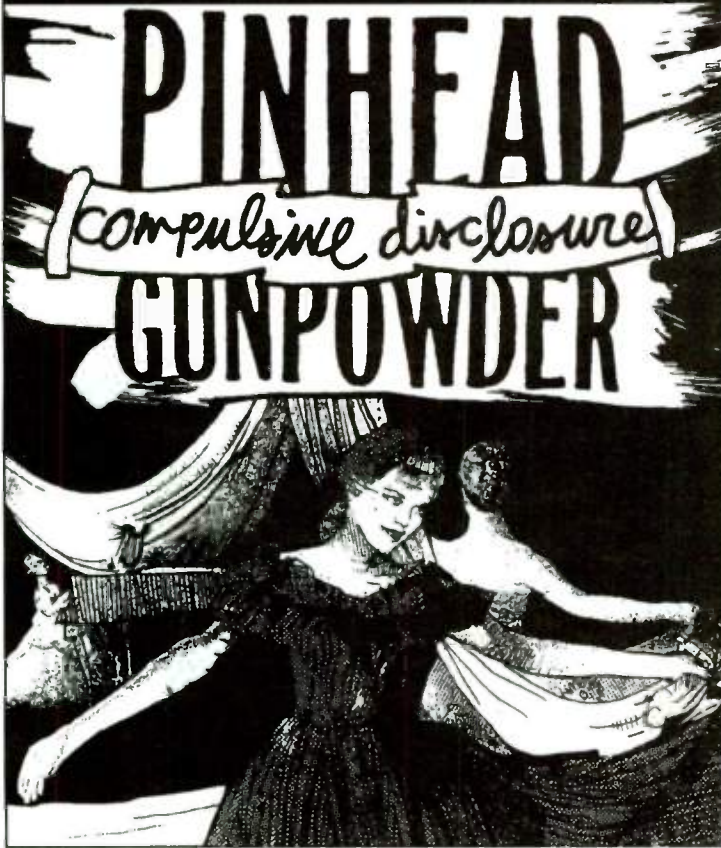
His financial acumen may be limited, but Aceyalone's artistic knowledge

looms large. His recent Project Blowed album, *Love and Hate*. Loosely revolving around the titular themes, Acey's newest work stands on its own, but also forms a blueprint for his plans for Project Blow. Kicking off with the "Love and Hate" intro, which features freeform, repetitive vocals over a blustery production. The record then proceeds to cover almost every inch of the current hip-hop map: old-school party numbers, twitchy Timbaland workouts and loopy bring-the-future trailblazers. Through it all rides Acey's charismatic flow, smooth, yet with a threat of brutality at the edges. Guest talent on "L&H" includes many Project Blowed artists such as Casual and Abstract Rude, and East Coast kingpins like El-P and Sayyid as well as Priest from the defunct Anti-Pop Consortium.

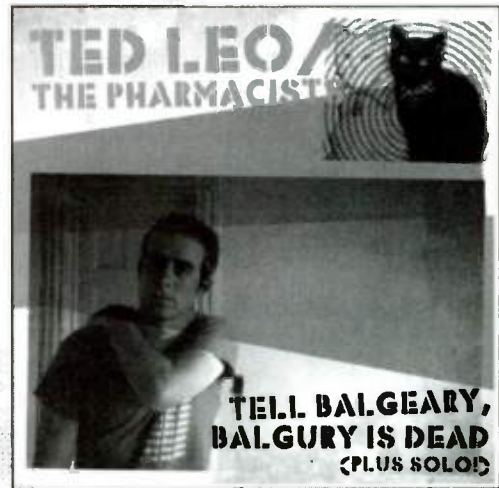
It's a bold record, not only because it unites such a diverse roster of styles and visions, but also for the wideness of its scope. Indie-rap elitists expecting the usual tangle of knotty beats and abstract verbiage will be somewhat disappointed; Acey brings enough to the smorgasboard to satisfy both MF Doom and Jay-Z fans alike. Check out how the brash, bangin' shout-out "Let Me Hear Somn" is followed by the swirling madness of "Lost Your Mind" for proof of this ability to reach all corners. "I don't want to be on MTV or anything," states Acey of his desires. "But I am working on graduating to a consistent level of playing arena shows. I want to be financially stable while still operating within a grassroots position."

Still, Aceyalone manifests some of the sly balance he practices so well on *Love and Hate*. But then again, most corporations started out as grassroots places. Obviously, Aceyalone and Project Blowed wouldn't mind taking over the airwaves. Watch out haters, they could be the next current to sweep up the mainstream. ■

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KEEP YOUR PANTS ON

DANDY WARHOLS SQUAWKIN'

LIKE A BIG MONKEY BIRD

The Dandy Warhols and I had a date, but we stood each other up. New York was still mostly blacked out, but we managed to reach each other to cancel ahead of time. The subways weren't running. I spent the day in the park, and since then, just as if this were my love life, we've been playing phone tag. It's too bad, they seem like a fun time, and bassist Zia McCabe, whom drummer Brent DeBoer and Taylor invited to join the band before she knew how to play, looks pretty cute. I could have taken them to a nice Italian restaurant. But, I wonder if they would've been charmed by anything quite as old fashioned, no matter how much I tipped the mandolin players to serenade our table.

That quarter hour of fame promised to Americans by pop artist Andy Warhol came four years into the game for his self-styled namesakes from Portland, with the 1997 MTV winner *Not If You Were the Last Junkie on Earth*. Throw in opening spots for the ever well-meaning Teenage Fanclub and Radiohead at the height of their karma patrol and you might reckon the Dandy Warhols a full 120 minutes. That other celebrity consolation prize, garnered over the years by the likes of Edgar Allan Poe, Jerry Lewis, and Slash's Snakepit, to be big in Europe, came the band's way after 2000's *Thirteen Tales of Urban Bohemia*. According to trans-Atlantic reports, it's now as big as Silvio Berlusconi. You have to hand it to them for cracking the language barrier.

With their stateside relevance—and since we're talking about a major label band here, we might as well add marketability—still in question, the Dandies return with *Welcome to the Monkey House*, its title ripped from a volume of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s short stories. I've only read *Cat's Cradle*, *Slaughter-House Five*, and (ugh) *Time Quake*, but I can't say the conspicuous contributions of Duran Duran's keyboard player Nick Rhodes on production, guest vocals from the recently resuscitated Evan Dando, the sampling of David Bowie's "Fashion," or the yellow-on-black, zipper-enhanced, Stones-and-Velvets-baiting banana cover lend the affair a discernibly Vonnegutian flavor.

They showed up too late for an invitation to the Factory, but a goal implicit in the band's name must have been achieved when the Thin White Duke himself enlisted the band for this fall's A Reality Tour. Recall the scene in Basquiat when a pre-net-entrepreneur Bowie, playing the same Andy he toasted on *Hunky Dory*, stares quizzically at paintings on the wall of SoHo gallery and mumbles, "I just don't know what's good anymore."

Ziggy, please.

Still, it's hard to knock the Dandies for sticking it out past what could have been respectable, one-hit-wonder status. You have to admire them for milking every A&R man that passed through town for a free dinner when they reigned the Portland club scene on the strength of their indie debut, *Dandy Warhols Rule OK?* Camera ready frontman Courtney Taylor-Taylor (origi-

nally Courtney Taylor) earns a ribbing for the goof of rendering his androgynous name incantatory after an interviewer mistook a hint at pronunciation for a second iteration.

When they first signed with Capitol, the Dandy Warhols were a guitar band, not quite as glammed up as their moniker suggested, more My Bloody Valentine than T. Rex. *Come Down*, their first outing in the big leagues, anticipates this year's Granddaddy phenomenon. Sent back to the studio after the label deemed their initial recordings hit-free, they duly served up *Junky*. That kids might shy away from the needle on the grounds that heroin had become passe, is a warm thought bringing a chuckle to those of us not versed in the damage done, or at least the puke in the bucket. With a Kinks-style beat and plenty of "hey, hey's" and moans in the mix, the single outdid the efforts of the morbidly earnest clones of Junky-of-the-Decade Kurt Cobain crowding MTV playlists at the time. Meanwhile, Junky-of-the-Century Lou Reed, already namechecked on the Dandies' debut, was cooking up Shakespearian allusions to plop into love songs for his new wife Laurie Anderson, on the way to this year's project, a treatment of Poe's "The Raven." Passe, indeed.

As the other Brit-style rocker on *Come Down*, "Cool as Kim Deal," showed, no complex cultural agenda backed up Dandy Warhols' pervasive pop references. A West Coast answer to Oasis, they had ideas about who was cool, and they were out to get some for themselves.

Unless you consider the Testerosa a domestic model, *Thirteen Tales of Urban Bohemia* might have struck you as neither particularly urban nor bohemian. New York, Miami, Detroit,... Portland? The album sees the newly redoubled Taylor-Taylor step up as a frontman, eager to try on a variety of pop styles (think Mick Jagger on *Let It Bleed*). The guitars remain, now augmented by synths and even horns, but are not entirely welcome additions at this point. Taylor-Taylor whispers, sneers, and rants. The sweet pop ballads ("Sleep") and rock anthems ("Big Indian") outdo the attempts at honky tonk ("Country Leaver"), though somehow the Gospel-inflected "Gospel" works. The knowing hipsterism of the single "Bohemian Like You" pales in comparison to its catchier and smarter uncle "Junkie," but tell that to the Romans. Ciao, bella.

Unlike Vonnegut, Taylor-Taylor plays it safe on the new record, delivering slighter pop lyrics and luxuriating in Rhode's synth-heavy production, as if he were test driving the new Duran Duran model. "We Used to Be Friends" and "The Last High" could prove a new sort of hit for the Dandies, their musical and cultural reference points stretching to 1985. "Scientist" might be listenable in a universe that excluded Guided By Voices' *Bee Thousand*, but Taylor-Taylor's clinical credentials just don't stand up to Robert Pollard's. So, is the band so 2000 as some have posited? Ask Vonnegut. ■





MY MORNING JACKET ■ The Dudes Abide

Lifted into the air on a magic carpet made of lustrous brown hair, you're living for the first time. The world rushes by underneath, fast like a blur, tickling as it fades into the ether. Time itself is an afterthought in the brave new world My Morning Jacket has created.

Who the fuck's trying to say this isn't a jam band?

They don't want your adoration. They don't want your dollars. They only want to unlock your spirit and imagination, which, Virginia, you've been keeping shamefully stowed away recently.

"Dancefloor," "I Will Sing You Songs," "Steam Engine" and the instrumental storm of "Run Thru"—Tennessee, goddamn! The heavens coo as you float along—they're feeling it, too. The tingles ignited with each turbulent blast in this quick, albeit smooth, rise and fall, invoke everything from making out in the General Lee to playing your brother's guitar full volume when no one else is home. For a second you wonder what it would be like were

you to slip out of the sky, but then you remember you're in good hands.

Jim James has directed his band toward its most self-assured, determined course laid to tape yet. Whereas other My Morning Jacket albums belied a distracting pluralism, *It Still Moves* roars with a honed intensity balanced on the unique chemistry of the band.

My Morning Jacket's latest is one of those special (although it'd take a cynic to say "rare") albums with the inclination and proficiency to adjust your altitude. In the kudzu-fluttered hum of its hymns and the oh-shit-a-bear-just-ate-my-face of its distorted shadows, it's an expressionist's wet dream. There is no reason to look back, as you soar on your trusty carpet.

When we dream of The Dude Lebowski's more energetic days of youthfully zesty endeavors, we can be sure *It Still Moves* would suffice as a fitting soundtrack.

Now, *you* are privy to some new shit that's come to light, man. ■

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BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

■ Expecting to Fly

"It's finally starting to be a little overwhelming, actually. Which is different, for us, cos we've usually found this slipstream, and it always felt like we could travel, and it was just our own time and place. Now it's starting to get ahead of us, and when it does slip away, it slips away. Maybe someone else is pulling the strings, man, I don't know."

Yet another classic scene from rock 'n roll's uniquely panoramic vista, brought to us by Black Rebel Motorcycle Club's Robert Turner as he drags himself out of his tour-bus coffin just in time for a 5pm soundcheck. It's Saturday, so it must be Edinburgh, Scotland.

"All this kind of shit that we worked for for so long is starting to happen. We expected as much."

As BRMC build things up slowly before the inevitably orgiastic reception of their sophomore album, *"Take Them On, On Your Own,"* completing a supposedly intimate tour of America and the UK just because "if we're gonna begin again and start with new songs for this new record, they should go through the same hard-knocks as the first album." Turner continues to fight against the tide. Lauded in the mainstream for simply daring to take a stance with their own individuality and relative autonomy, they are again moving small mountains by setting big examples.

"We made the album we wanted to make, the way we wanted to make it," explains Turner. "I didn't expect to get away with that as much without a fight. The first record was the same way, but we had to fight tooth and nail to get it, but this time there wasn't any other kind of outside opinion or heavy hand coming in trying to change it. That was really strange, a

scary sort of quiet, like a ghost town, sitting there waiting for something to come and, wow, we got away with it!

"No one heard the record before it was finished, and we were lucky to get away with that, I do know that. I wanna hand it to our label for once for being pretty respectful in that way. Or afraid. Or maybe a little both."

As the band hurtle inexorably towards world domination, on the back of another filthy, low-slung melodic beast, they recognize the opportunities—duties, even—placed before them.

"I just don't like to let possibilities and opportunities to pass by," reasons the bassist. "It's about finding the moment and really really taking it and not just giving up on the words, what you can say. I believe it's a gift to have people's attention. They're listening, if it's only for that moment they are listening. Something can be said."

Of course, sometimes far more personal, pressing matters take control—like losing commercial ground just as your band, the one you've been planning since high school, threatens to explode beyond recognition.

"We were a little cheated. We went out, like five tours across the country, back and forth, trying to get stuff started on our own, and I really felt like our label really let us down. I think we kind of crossed one too many lines with them and it felt like they let us die. That's the worst kind of tragedy, when the record doesn't get heard maybe the way it should have been.

"But fuck it, it's behind us now, we're giving this record... we're gonna kill for it this time." ■

You've been releasing records for years as a part of Deepspace5 and Labklik. Does *Whispermoon* feel like the start of a solo career for you? ▶ I have been in groups for about eight years now, and before that I did a couple solo projects. I do music for a living now, so I wanted to focus on a project that I could tour with and put all my focus towards. So, *Whispermoon* is definitely the start I was looking at for my solo career. With Labklik we lived very far away from each other and the music we made was for artistic outlet purposes. Deepspace5 is almost the same way. A lot of the guys in DS5 have full time jobs that support them and their family, and the road can be hard sometimes.

How did you wind up working with Mush? How do you feel what you sits alongside what other Mush artists are doing? ▶ I worked on *Whispermoon* for about a year, then started sending the record out to different labels. I contacted Robert at Mush, who'd heard me on the Deepspace5 record. We talked for a while about working together and he offered to put it out. It was an offer I couldn't refuse. As far as the other artists on Mush, I know that regardless of the styles of music that other artists put out on the label, we are all artists.

That's the common bond, everyone's trying to put out good hip hop.

How was the recent trip to Europe? ▶ The Europe tour was really eye opening. It amazed me how small these countries were and how little some of the groups would travel. Being a relatively new solo artist, I was curious as to how people would accept me and my music. For the most part it seemed like the European crowds really just dug good, artistic music, and didn't have to have a lot of media hype to get them into what I was doing. In Finland, I played this music festival with several thousand people there, and after the set they chanted for me to do an encore. That was my first encore.

How do you handle criticism that your music is too "out there," or that it's inaccessible to more straight-and-narrow/mainstream hip hop fans? ▶ Everyone has their own opinion on how music should be done. Personally, I think it's good for rap music as a whole to be diversified and have different type of listeners and fans. It just grows the genre. Some people might not like my style, that's totally fine with me. I don't do mainstream raps, I do mystream raps.



LISTENER

TEXT → MIKE MCKEE PHOTO → COURTESY OF MUSH



▲ The newest addition to the Mush Records roster is an unassuming 20-something who first caught peoples' ears as a part of Deepspace5. Somewhere between the abrasive experimentation of Sole and Sage Francis and more straightforward, J-Live narratives, Listener's debut full-length is as driving as it is provocative.

THE APPLESEED CAST

TEXT → BRIAN PETERSON PHOTO → SHELLEY HORST



▲ Due to the short staying power of most rock outfits, it can be quite the task to whittle out a top-to-bottom solid live set.

The Lawrence, Kan.-based Appleseed Cast, however, has other problems—namely, an overabundance of tried and true material the veteran troupe still likes to whip out on audiences. Fresh off the release of the acclaimed *Two Conversations*—the band's fifth album—one can understand the dilemmas involved.

"Our set is getting ridiculous," laughs vocalist/guitarist Christopher Crisci. "We could easily play for an hour and a half, but I don't know how many people would want to sit through that."

Fans of The Cast might beg to differ. Over the past several years, these Tiger Style rockers have built up one of the most impressive resumes in the indie scene. In particular, the group's Deep Elm-released *Low Level Owl* double album received nearly universal adoration from critics and fans alike. Filled with introspective instrumental tidbits and shimmering, heart-wrenching rock anthems, the epic *Owl* prompted some to even call the group the American Radiohead.

While Crisci and his mates downplay such labels, it goes without saying *Two Conversations* is preceded by quite a reputation. Fans and writers are sure to debate the finer points between the group's past and present work, but as Crisci sees it, *Two Conversations* is just another chapter in his outfit's evolution of recorded material.

"I think each one of our records has a very special place with us," snares the soft-spoken frontman. "They each document what our lives were like at the time, so we tend to look back on them with fondness."

So, being akin to soundscapes from the past, most will likely agree that the tones of *Conversations* unfold like a blanket, sprinkling just the right amount of the act's patented, cascading atmospherics. "Southern was shocked to find out how much we didn't know about Chicago and D.C. post-rock," blushes Garcia. "I think in this case, all roads lead to Rome. If you grew up on rock, but don't have a singer, you're going to sound like all the other kids across the country who love rock but don't have singers." ■



SMALL BROWN BIKE ■ More Than a Spoke

Maturity—be it intellectual or musical—takes time. Just ask the fellows from Small Brown Bike. Something unforeseen has slipped into the DNA of the group's new album, *The River Bend*—namely a grander combination of intricate power rock.

Mike Reed, guitarist/vocalist for the former stalwarts No Idea, insists the new found blend of the ethereal and the grandiose didn't happen overnight. Instead, he and his chums have practiced the ancient art of patience to arrive at their company harmony.

"I guess it just comes with growing older and wanting to push ourselves a little more," says the confident Midwesterner. "We just felt fewer constraints on what we were writing. A lot of it just comes from everyone having an equal say and being able to try new stuff without feeling hindered."

Reed says Small Brown Bike is benefiting from largely looking beyond its own past. This doesn't equate to ignoring its roots, though—the trek from No Idea to Lookout has clearly left its mark. This Michigan-based dynamic combo has been in existence since 1997, and while there have been a couple of changes in the band's lineup over the years, the group has essentially remained entrenched in the same format—the key strength being an intense live set.

According to Reed, maintaining the balance between all-out energy

and technical precision is a matter of allowing emotion to call the shots.

"I always want the honesty to come through in our music, whether it's in the studio or playing live," he says. "I think that it's almost unavoidable for us, though."

As for how this heart-on-its-sleeve aesthetic came into play, Reed insists his band owes it all to its humble upbringing far from the pomp and glitz of the coasts.

"Growing up in a small town kind of gives us an underdog viewpoint," Reed admits. "We are all pretty modest guys, and that's the approach that we take as a band. I think this comes across in the music."

This heartfelt ethic not only caters to potential concert-goers, but also has snuck into the band's writing sessions. Going the opposite way of the buzzed up art-rock trend, Reed is satisfied to write straightforward music without any MTV2 push.

Reed and company must have been onto something, because *The River Bend* is as good a record as anything Small Brown Bike has birthed to date. Even the title appropriately conjures the essence of a band ready to make a big splash. Ironically, Reed says he feels it's a good metaphor for the band's morale in recent years.

As Lookout said years ago with another album title, "*Kerplunk!*" Lucky for Reed, the band's not about to sink. ■



MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK

TEXT → DAN PASTORIUS PHOTO → CHRIS STRONG

▲ Full of fuzzed-out hooks, emotional energy and melodic screams, Motion City Soundtrack is Brett Gurewitz's latest signing to Epitaph's ever-growing roster. Closer in sound to the frenzied pop thrill of later Jawbox than Sunny Day Real Estate, the band twists pop's often monotonous approach.
Answers→ Justin Pierre.

If you guys could be play on any movie soundtrack of your choice, what would it be? ▶ I would love to be on a Hal Hartley or Jim Jarmusch film soundtrack.

How did Epitaph find you guys? ▶ Matchbook Romance gave Brett [Gurewitz] a copy of the self-released album we were selling at shows only. He called us up and emailed us about getting together possibly when we were next in Los Angeles.

How important to you is creating music that's actually unique? ▶ We just write music that appeals to us. I truly believe that it is impossible to write songs that will sell and make money. How can anyone know what is going to be hot and when? It is insanely ridiculous.

Do you all have the same sound in mind when writing? ▶ There are very few bands that we all draw upon equally. Personally, I tend to rip off Superchunk, Jawbox, Sunny Day Real Estate, The Flaming Lips, Bjork, the Pixies, the Carpenters and Pavement—to name a few.

How do these influences play into the band's sound? ▶ Somehow we are able to write songs that utilize all these different influences and they sound very fresh and new. I am also obsessed with pop culture and television from the '80s, so I tend to reference times and places with commercials and slogans.



PELICAN

TEXT → BRIAN PETERSON PHOTO → ELISE ZELECHOWSKI

▲ Singers can make or break a band. Take a look at rock history. With ego bursting forth, vocalists tend to be the ones translating the musical experience most intimately to the audience.

Instrumental purists argue temper tantrums and pretensions do nothing but cause harm to pleasant musical excursions.

To alleviate these potential pitfalls, Chicago's Pelican chooses to sculpt its heavy rock destroyers sans vox.

According to guitarist Laurent Lebec, even though his group originally wanted a vocalist, the original jam sessions naturally bent towards an instrumental model.

"The possibilities for song craft are really boundless right now, and that's inspiring us," he enthuses. "Also, our audience has responded very favorably to the absence of a vocalist—all the more reason to pursue that angle."

If you've seen the band rock a basement or if you've heard the group's demo sessions (released courtesy of Hydrahead), you can vouch for Pelican's ability to twist unfathomable feeling out of Sabbath-meets Godspeed, You Black Emperor crunch.

While this might sound strange to those used to a verse-chorus-verse-driven formula, Lebec believes the vocal-free choice offers a little musician's lib.

"The challenge isn't inherent to our music style as much as it is imposed by pop culture. Just because someone is singing and their words are associated with certain feelings and emotions, doesn't make their music any more emotional. Easier to remember or catchier? Yes, maybe. But in my experience, instrumental music is a lot more emotionally impacting."

The group's new full-length, *Australasia*, may prove to be the exclamation point on Lebec's philosophy. Listeners will again find themselves challenged as the band continues to adhere to its philosophy of originality versus rigidity.

"It reflects what I'd like our music to represent," adds guitarist Trevor de Brauw. "That bridge between the dual aspects of our character and the unrecognizable hybrid that results at the intersection." ■

BEHIND ■ THE SCENES



MAGGIE VAIL General Manager of KILL ROCK STARS

Since 1994, Maggie Vail has been the right-hand woman at Slim Moon's Kill Rock Stars label. Part of the KRS roster with her band, The Bangs, Vail handled most of the label's publicity until her recent promotion to General Manager, which has her doing a little bit of everything for what she calls her "favorite label."

Interview → Charlotte Robinson

How did you start working for Kill Rock Stars? ▶ I was helping them stuff promos initially, and then my sister [Tobi Vail, Bikini Kill/Fruppies], who was one of two employees at the time, went on tour with her band, The Frumpies, and needed a sub for her in mail order. While she was gone Slim realized I was up for all sorts of stuff, like answering phones, etc., which was pretty impossible for Tobi at the time, as it was the height of Bikini Kill. We got some weird phone calls in those days.

Now that KRS hires outside publicists, how has your job changed? ▶ I no longer have to make any follow-up calls, which rules. I hated feeling like a salesperson and pitching stories, especially to people who had no idea who or what I was talking about. I do web design, sort out with Slim who we hire for radio and publicity on each project, place ads, design ads, make one-sheets, do mailings, try to license our records to labels overseas, keep our distributor in the loop about press/tours/news about the bands, get merch to bands for their tours, help them find booking agents, send posters to promoters, make sure places like satellite radio and Muze have our CDs, answer the main phone line and general e-mail address.

Should we really kill rock stars? ▶ Nah, I am a pacifist at heart. We should laugh at them though. ■



CLIENT ADDICTED TO SLEAZE

TEXT → CHARLOTTE ROBINSON ■ PHOTO → DJ BRASS

▶ Even if you love the swill packaged as electroclash, you have to admit the stuff sorely lacks the tunefulness and pop hooks of synth bands of the '80s had in spades. Enter Client, an English female duo offering what few synth revivalists have so far—snappy, well-written songs with smart lyrics.

Known only as Client A and Client B (although rumor has it one of them is Sarah Blackwood of Dubstar), Client comes on like the bastard child of many a past synth superstar, with the seedy lyrics of Soft Cell and deadpan vocals reminiscent of Human League. Musically, Client's danceable sound is most akin to Depeche Mode, which is no accident—the pair toured with the '80s vets and is signed to Toast Hawaii, the new label founded by Depeche's Andy Fletcher.

Press photos of Client show the ladies dressed in severe matching outfits, with faces either turned or cut completely out of the picture. It's an icy and ironic statement on the duo's disdain for selling sex. Somehow, of course, it's sexy.

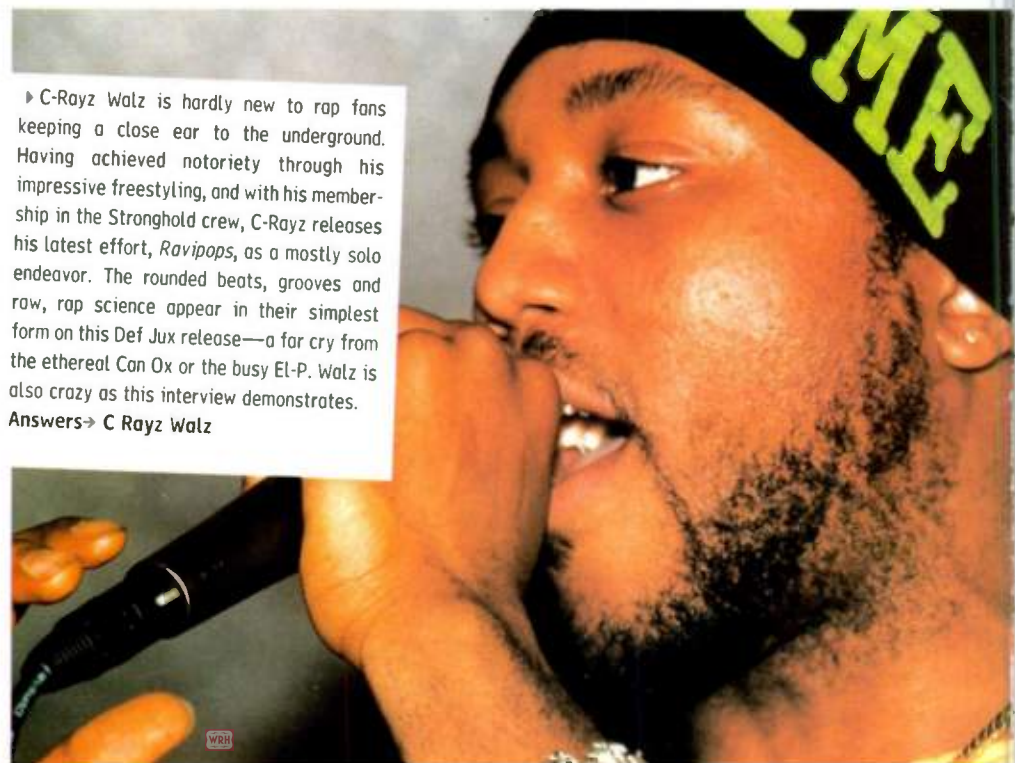
"We were sick of seeing airbrushed photographs of women wearing barely anything on the cover of manufactured records," Client A explains. "So we cut our heads off and wore strict outfits. We didn't intend it to look sexy. Then we realized that the severe look we had assumed tapped into a kind of repressed sexuality and could be seen as very sexual."

Although sleaze is the primary element of Client's sound, not every song reeks of it. In addition to a few more sincere songs about "luv" (as Client B pronounces it in her charming northern accent), there are a couple of stark Kraftwerk-style instrumentals.

Client A lists the German pioneers as songwriting influences, along with Joy Division, Throbbing Gristle and David Bowie.

"We have both always been in love with the classic songwriters, from Bowie to the Smiths to New Order," she says. "We wanted to couple pop sensibility with a dirtier musical sound and that is why we formed Client." ■

At a dizzying 7'-3", Charlotte Robinson is an editor at Venus Magazine and a winner of American Idol regional finals.



▶ C-Rayz Walz is hardly new to rap fans keeping a close ear to the underground. Having achieved notoriety through his impressive freestyling, and with his membership in the Stronghold crew, C-Rayz releases his latest effort, *Ravipops*, as a mostly solo endeavor. The rounded beats, grooves and raw, rap science appear in their simplest form on this Def Jux release—a far cry from the ethereal Can Ox or the busy El-P. Walz is also crazy as this interview demonstrates.

Answers → C-Rayz Walz



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C RAYZ WALZ

TEXT → DAN PASTORIUS PHOTO → UNKNOWN

Describe your earliest memory of joining the rap game. ▶ My earliest memory was rhyming for Bizzy Bee in the park when I was 10 years old. He gave me \$10.

Where does C-Rayz come from? ▶ C-Rayz comes from the mind. I am the light from a triple stage of darkness. Right now, I'm homeless. I grew up in the Bronx. I draw inspiration from visions that I see in the walls, homeless people, my son and society.

You're known for your freestyle. Do you still battle? ▶ When I came up, I battled to release frustration in a physical, non-violent way. Today's battles are strong. It's good to see some cats actually freestyling. For those who want to know, yes, I still battle. I keep my sword very sharp in the age of blunt object idiots.

Is it a challenge to still come across as original with such a volume of competition? ▶ Most stuff is predictable because there are not many original ways you can be stupid. Since these cats find new ways to be stupid everyday, I know representing true school will be the best route for me to go if I want to preserve my soul.

How would you say you fit into today's rap scene? ▶ I fit in today's rap scene like an elephant in a mouse bathroom. You squeaky snitches better make room for me, because I'm coming through to drop the huge pachyderm shit.



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QUASI ■ Staying Together for the Kicks

In the end, it is the people in your life that make it matter. It follows then, that it is the people who make the music matter. Quasi's singer/guitarist Sam Coomes and drummer Janet Weiss certainly couldn't do it without each other—even if they weren't once life partners.

"The most important part is getting to play music with Sam—everything else evolves from that starting point," Weiss says, lounging at Portland's renowned Stumptown Coffee. "If I didn't feel so strongly about playing his music, I wouldn't do it. That sort of love of what the other makes has to be there."

"We persevered through thick and thin in order to continue playing music with each other," echoes Coomes, his soft voice rising above the nerdy electro-techno snapping from the cafe's tweeters. Both seem committed to the chemistry they've found playing together.

"All the fame and fortune is secondary," Weiss adds with a laugh.

The duo may not have scored an episode on *Cribs* or inked a major-label deal, or been named Band of the Year by Time (old hat for Weiss), but Coomes and Weiss have made six albums' worth of substantial music throughout the past 10 years.

Quasi's latest album, *Hot Shit*, finds the pair—thanks to a newfound confidence in the studio—dabbling in new production techniques, lending the album a sometimes atmospheric, soundtrack-ish feel. "Our early recording was more lo-fi," explains Coomes, who used to play in The Donner Party and Portland's underground indie rock legends Heatmiser (which included Elliot Smith on guitar). *The Sword of God* (2001) was the first time Quasi even used equipment on par with a pro studio. Although *Sword* boasts an impeccable presentation—often times more cohesive and engaging than *Hot Shit*, the duo explains it was largely a learning process of becoming accustomed to new gear and how to land desired sounds.

"It wasn't fun at all to make that record, but the learning curve was very steep," says Coomes, picking at a scone between sips of a frothy mocha. "We didn't have to

sweat it with *Hot Shit*, so it was really fun to record."

Although the new album (courtesy of Touch and Go, Sept. 9) uses sparse and spacey electronic effects, it still finds Quasi grounded in the fiery elements of rock 'n roll—raw energy, banging beats and screaming, gritty guitar.

Weiss and Coomes moved from California to Portland in the early '90s, shortly thereafter forming Motorgoat which eventually turned into Quasi in 1993 when they lost their bassist. Since then the band has survived without a blueprint for more than 10 years.

"We don't have a shtick," says Coomes, whose deeply set eyes reveal an imaginative sort of thoughtfulness.

And much of Quasi's honesty has come from Coomes' intelligent, poetic and downright crafty lyricism. Even Weiss interjects to compliment Weiss' unusual style of writing, dreaming up entire songs at once.

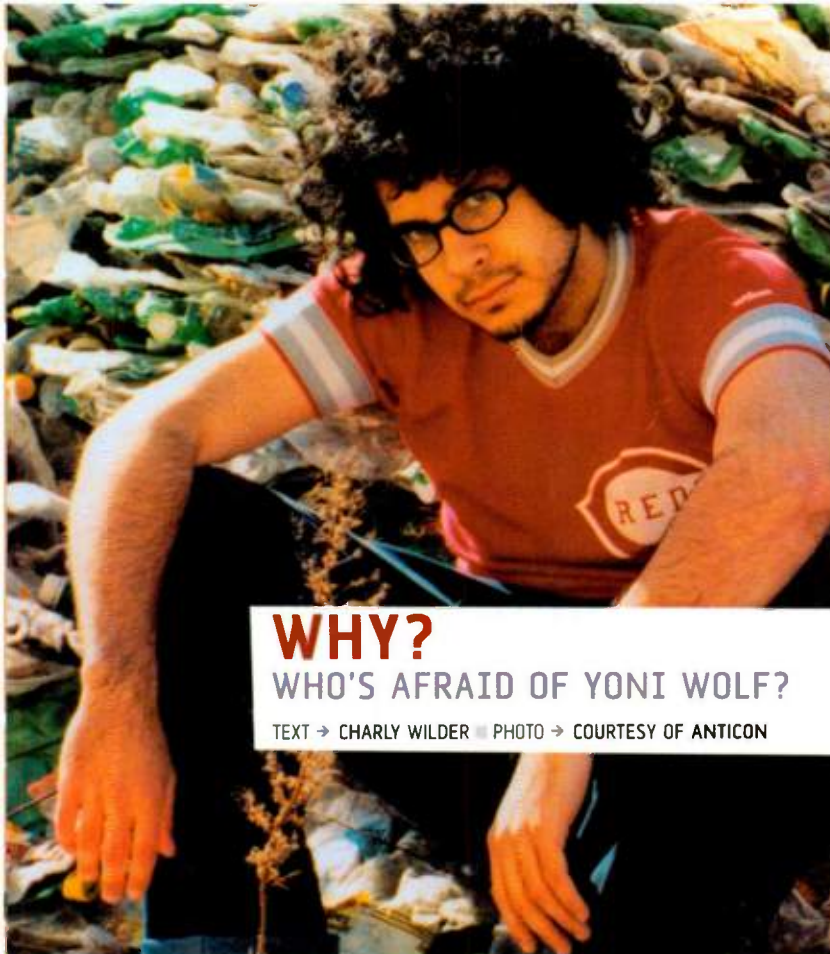
"It's equivalent to someone who's a sculptor, who sees the whole thing before it's done and just uncovers it."

Coomes has a way of saying what we all know to be true but don't have the ability to express with the appropriate finesse.

Forgoing poetry for direct bombast, Coomes provides one of the most entertaining moments on the album when the track "White Devil's Dream" devolves into a psychedelic swirl of feedback and noise over which he calls out The Man by name—from George Bush I and II and John Ashcroft to Tony Blair ("that sellout motherfucker").

In spite of its "War, what is it good for?" sentiment, the formerly married duo continues to find solace in a musical partnership. As Miss Janet explains, it's all about playing with someone still interested in exploring whatever new musical possibilities present themselves.

"This is our sixth record, and I still feel like we haven't made our best one yet," Coomes agrees. ■



WHY? WHO'S AFRAID OF YONI WOLF?

TEXT → CHARLY WILDER ■ PHOTO → COURTESY OF ANTICON

◀ "Hip hop is just a word." Such are the sentiments of Yoni Wolf, a.k.a. Why?, whose early four-track recordings (under various monikers cLOUDDEAD, Reaching Quiet) garnered critical acclaim and landed him on Anticon, the Oakland-based label/collective at the forefront of underground hip hop's newest wave.

In the character of many an Anticon artist, Why? is reluctant to be pigeonholed, and his music equally flees categorization. Full of multi-layered beats, complex, dirty textures and explosively quirky lyrics, his latest release, the *Oaklandazulasyllum*, basks in its own obtuseness. Though it's more testimonial and accessible than cLOUDDEAD, the songs on the album don't always seem interconnected.

"It's not a concept album or anything like that," Wolf understates.

In fact, what unites the songs on *Oaklandazulasyllum* is Why's solitude during their conception. The album basically comprises the material the young artist has created since relocating from Cincinnati to Oakland in 2001.

"I didn't have too many friends at the time, so I had to do most of the work myself," he shares, in stride with his tendency toward self-deprecation.

As one who has collaborated frequently with artists such as Odd Nosdam, Hood, Sole and Boombip, Why? found the change rewarding.

"I've been in situations where I didn't feel comfortable. Collaboration is a marriage of minds, so you have to be compatible. When you work alone, you don't have to answer to anybody."

In September, Anticon will release an EP consisting of a track off *Oaklandazulasyllum* ("Early Whitney") and several as-of-yet-unreleased songs. Though he sees the *Early Whitney* EP as a companion to the existing full-length, Why? admits he prefers the songs on the former.

"They're the songs I've been saving," he says, his voice wavering.

Then, Why? smiles with the self-assurance always lurking just below all the vulnerability and self-doubt in the music. ■

▶ Mike Nardone may not spring to mind like Dilated Peoples when discussing West Coast hip hop. But the 36-year-old radio DJ is often cited as one of Los Angeles' foremost figures, credited with breaking such disparate artists as Cypress Hill and Jurassic 5 with just the drop of his needle.

"He never cooked me dinner or shot hoops with me, but he was one of the first people to put on our record," says Evidence of Dilated Peoples, laughing as basslines rattle behind him. "He realizes talent comes from the bottom and goes on up, which is why his shit is dope."

For the past 15 years, Nardone has championed the unheard with his Sunday night show on KXLU-FM (88.9), Loyola Marymount University's student-run station. The second installment of Nardone's *We Came From Beyond* compilation is both a reflection of his palette and an informed overview of the underground. Aside from previously released favorites from Planet Asia and J-Live, there are a slew of new cuts including a dusty throwback from People Under the Stairs and an organ-grinding collaboration between Aesop Rock, Eyedea and Atmosphere's Slug. There's nary a mainstream artist in sight, despite the number of artists Nardone's attention has helped shepherd from college playlist to major-label contract.

"When you are an underground artist and immersed in the scene, you know all your peers and the music that's coming out," Nardone says, speaking from his Los Angeles home. "Once you step above that level, you fall out of touch with everything underneath you."

Nardone's keen ear has made his show a veritable institution. He remains reserved and modest, speaking in a slow drawl broken by bursts of laughter. His weeks are as relaxed as his demeanor, split between crate digging, raising his two daughters and freelance A&R work for Quannum Projects. He also has instrumentals resting on his hard drive for past collaborator AWOL One and an unnamed MC who may be the next to emerge from the beyond.

"You talk a lot of shit until you get on mainstream radio, then you start liking it," Evidence says. "But at the same time, when that song is playing on the radio, Mike Nardone was playing it six months earlier." ■



DJ MIKE NARDONE

TEXT → ANDREW PARKS ■ PHOTO → COURTESY OF RAZOR & TIE

THEY GOT THE MAGIC STICK

ENON ESCAPES 'THAT NEW YORK SOUND'

Three years, an equal number of albums, and a few lineup changes into its career, Enon has blossomed as the power trio of founder and former Brainiac member John Schmersal (guitar, keys, vocals), Toko Yasuda (ex-Blonde Redhead, bass, keys, vocals), and Matt Schulz (drums). Mixing guitar rock, electronics, bouncing boy/girl vocals, and a playful spirit, the New York band concocts a potent mixture of art rock, new wave, and old-fashioned hooks on its latest disc, *Hocus-Pocus* (Touch and Go). Astoundingly, Enon pulls it off without getting marred in the quickly aging, erroneously dubbed electroclash hype.

If forced to describe *Hocus-Pocus* in a few words, I'd call it skewed, arty pop. How would you describe it?

I'd say, "It's Done! Done! And I'm on to the next one," to quote that silly Foo Fighters' song.

This is your first proper album as a trio. How do you think the pared down lineup has effected your sound?

That's a difficult question to answer. Rick Lee, our former bassist, added a lot to the band, and I feel with his departure we tried to let things breathe a little more, utilizing his space rather than trying to fill it in his absence. But it's hard to think in retrospect. I don't think we were thinking about it that much. It's harder to be a three-piece though, especially live. Everything is pretty naked and you have to be tight. (Sorry about that innuendo.)

Toko wasn't part of the original lineup, but she now plays a large role in the band. How did you transition from being the frontman to having someone sharing the spotlight?

It wasn't that hard for me. I really wanted her to come forward and sing more. She has a great voice and is a good songwriter. It was more convincing her to want to be a lead singer. I would be very happy just being the guitar player in a band again, to be perfectly honest with you. I don't enjoy the baggage of being a lead singer or frontman.

How does your songwriting process work?

For less than minimum wage.

Is it collaborative?

You'd be surprised when collaboration occurs and who writes what. Most people just assume I write the guitar songs because I sing most of them, and Toko writes the electronic songs because she sings those lately. I'd say our songwriting runs the gamut. Collaboration is more like surgery for us— except none of us are doctors.

Does Enon have any kindred spirits in music?

There are so many bands that we are friendly with, but as far as bands that carry the same torches we carry, or who are cutting a piece of the same cloth, that's a little harder. There are bands I feel kindred to like Guided by Voices. I have a great amount of respect for Bob Pollard as a fellow Midwesterner, and for his prolific songwriting. He writes so many different kinds of songs with many different kinds of feelings expressed. But we don't really sound at all alike.

Have you found it hard to escape the shadows of Brainiac and Blonde Redhead?

This question is the only shadow I get to see. I think of my present as an obvious extension of my past. But I think it is obvious more so to myself and within the band. The future is the place to nurture your experiences. To me, the only difference between now and then is the amount of money that this band is throwing away living in New York. Good food, though! Toko doesn't believe in shadows.

What do you hope the future holds for Enon?

A green card for Toko so she can stay in this country and keep playing in Enon. And a world that exists still, so that we can continue to make music in it. My dreams are simple. ■





THE ART OF THE MIX

BARNSTORMERS PRESENTS
THE HIVE MIND SOUNDSYSTEM



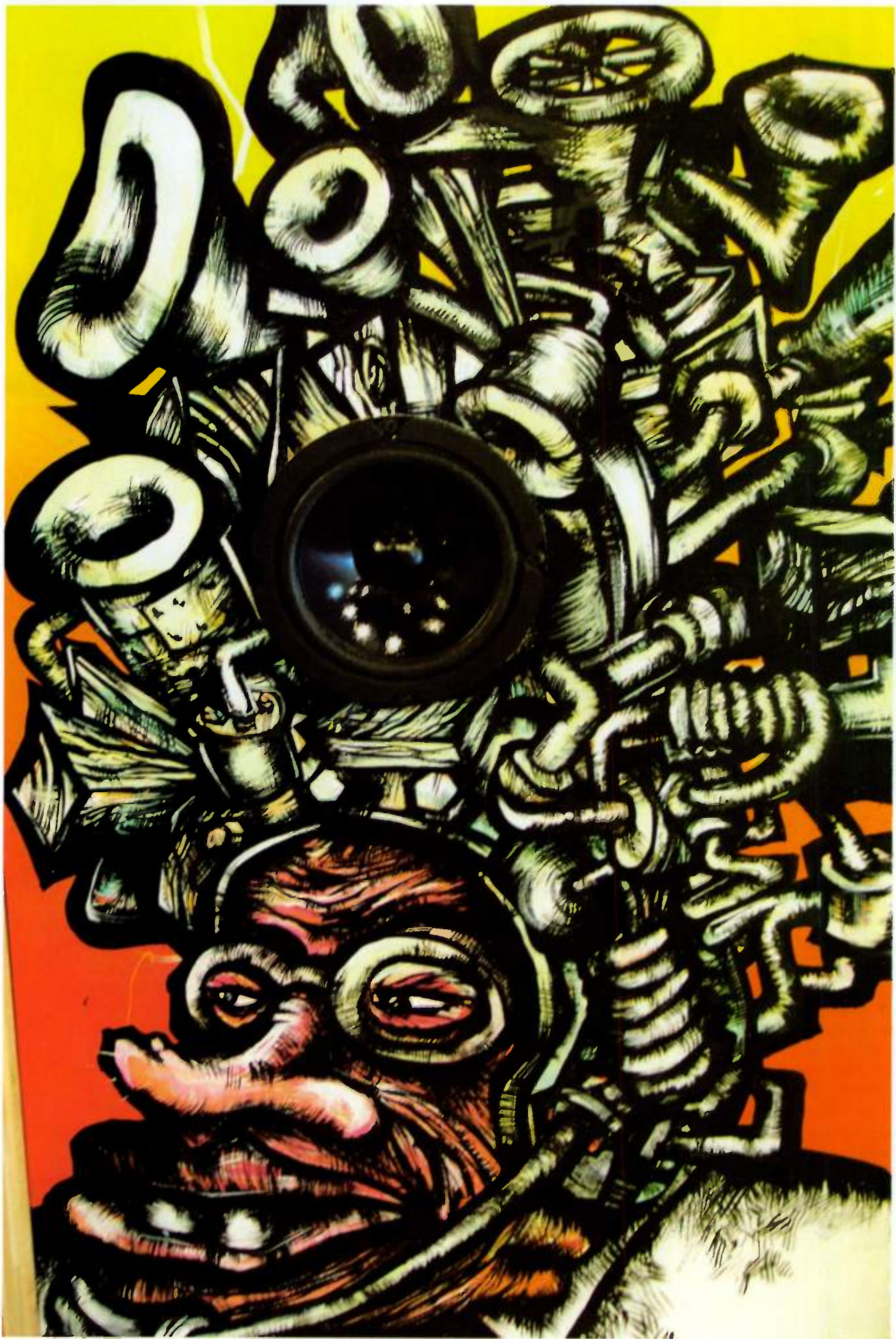
This summer, Raleigh, N.C.'s increasingly renowned Lump Gallery unveiled the Hive Mind Soundsystem—a thunderous tower of artistically modified woofers, horns and tweeters affixed with paint, wood and found objects. With the visuals set, this self-proclaimed “mother of all sound systems” emitted a high-decibel mix of songs selected by each artist in the show’s 20-person crew.

At the center of this group is Barnstormers—a collective of photographers, painters and artists from Tokyo and New York. Founded in 1999, the group is perhaps best known for its annual treks down to North Carolina, where it sets to committing vibrant works on the sides of otherwise drab, rural barns. Lead B-Stormer David Ellis—“Skwerm” if we’re counting tag handles—says he and his mates

refute the “neo-graffiti” label, noting the term itself is sort of silly.


Featured in *The Fader*, *Mass Appeal*, *Tokion*, *Jane* and NPR’s *Morning Edition*, the collective has also presented time-lapse films (*No Condition is Permanent*, *Watching Paint Dry* and the anti-war *Letter to the President*), built a vacant house for displaying art on a Baltimore median strip, and painted live to DJs in Osaka.

With speakers stacked from floor to ceiling, the Hive Mind exhibit is a striking visual. And true to the Barnstormers’ form the process enjoys equal footing with the product. This is demonstrated by Ellis and company’s emphasis on the collaborative aspect of their art, which often involves more than 20 artists seemingly haphazardly in the same project. ■









MAJOR FABLES

AESOP ROCK ISN'T TRYING TO TEACH YOU A DAMN THING

Not every story has to have a moral. Ironically, that's the idea behind newly relocated Brooklyn rapper Aesop Rock's latest record, *Bazooka Tooth*.

An underground MC since the mid-'90s, Aesop achieved wider fame in 2001, when he was still living on the Lower East Side, with his debut on esteemed hip hop label Definitive Jux, *Labor Days*. Shot with Aesop's now signature heavyweight vocabulary, and supported by stylish production courtesy of Blohead, the record wowed critics and fans with its fly-on-the-badly-papered-wall depiction of working-class struggle. An exploration of the nine-to-five life, the album's rapid, stiletto-sharp style and grimy detail tagged Aesop as the intelligent, ethical savior of hip hop, the hero who would right the bling-obsessed genre's moral compass.

Being assigned a messianic role you neither wanted nor asked for is a lot of pressure. Tired of answering questions about his favorite books or personal politics, the rapper went into seclusion, moving away from the rapidly gentrifying East Side to the drab warehouses of Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood. He also quit his day job as an assistant at an art gallery to concentrate on being a 24/7 rhymeslinger. Now, he's back with *Bazooka Tooth*, a very different beast indeed from the message-oriented *Labor Days*.

"Diamond cutter spine/Armadillo armor that wraps around the blade," shouts the first line of the title track. From there, the album erupts in a storm of tightly wired beats and A-Rock's caustic thoughts on celebrity, the state of hip hop, and the Giulianification of New York. *Bazooka Tooth* is the album's central character, a persona better equipped to deal with the pressures of being famous (see the line above about armor) and capable of unleashing devastating salvos against everything he finds wrong with the world...

"You don't want me smilin' at your cameras," he smirks bitterly at the end of his introduction. ▶▶

Not the sort of spleen venting expected from an artist known for his populist sensibilities and wide-ranging intellect. So what happened?

"Bazooka Tooth is my Incredible Hulk," Aesop explains. "I rap from personal experience, my everyday life."

So the angry charisma of B. Tooth is Aesop's way of dealing with his transition to a prominent full-time rapper, and the tension of being immersed in a scene and city that is constantly changing, not always for the better.

"They're like, 'What's up with the name'/I tell 'em, 'Y'all made Bazooka Tooth, I was about to ask the same,'" he fires at the world on the album's first single, "Freeze." In a record rife with bizarre imagery and abstract wordplay, it couldn't be any clearer.

**"THEY'RE LIKE,
'WHAT'S UP WITH
THE NAME'/I TELL
'EM, 'Y'ALL MADE
BAZOOKA TOOTH,
I WAS ABOUT TO
ASK THE SAME'"**

Aesop Rock looks like he could use some of Bazooka Tooth's vitriol right now, at the tail end of a long day of interviews with inquisitive media hacks such as myself. It's only the first day of a week-end-long press junket, and Aesop's shadowed eyes have the tunnel-driven look of a man in for a long and unpleasant haul. Sitting in a room the size of a storage unit, lodged in one of those sleek, faceless New York hotel lobbies that look like a clubhouse for the excessively well-off, it's easy to see where the ideas for *Bazooka Tooth* originate.

Notwithstanding the staying power of such topics, griping about fame, obsessing about matters of b-boy style and taking other rappers to task are not exactly the freshest themes with which to fill a record. From Jurassic 5 to De La Soul to Common, rap artists since time immemorial have spent tons of verbiage on such subjects. Aesop Rock, however, still brings his unique perspective and prodigious talents to *Bazooka Tooth's* endeavors, making the record as important and necessary a statement as *Labor Days*. ▶





JUST NOT BL...

JUST NOT BL...



Aesop's daring, complex production work makes much of the case for *Bazooka Tooth's* relevance. Beats are dense and layered with traces of industrial noise and free-agent jazz flitting in and out between the tricky time signatures. Like Timbaland, there's often a mind-boggling array of different things going on, all piled on top of each other in a dizzying dogpile. Where Timbaland, there's often a keeps the chaos under the spotlight, creating a gritty, car wreck of a song that still manages to look like some futuristic sculpture.

"I wanted to give people the more real Aesop Rock world and we work really well together, but when I produce my own albums, it's all me."

If nothing else, we have the darker, more personal nature of *Bazooka Tooth* to thank for the emergence of a distinct, electrifying producer. But Aesop is aware that such a drastic immersion into a single mind can be too much for both the artist and the fan. When things got too intense, he called in Blochead or ELP as the beat calver.

"People that are my friends and that I've worked with will never be out of the process."

This sort of inclusiveness informs *Bazooka Tooth's* every moment, preventing another laundry list of insider ranting (combative bombast, even if veiled under *Bazooka Tooth's* legendary graffiti documentary *Style Wars*, remembering the subway trains, New York and the hip hop movement by the satellites."

The song sparked an incredible opportunity when it came to the attention of the film's director and producer, who were freer, as part of the soundtrack in the supplementary interviews filling the project's bonus disc. Eventually the song was included

"It was an honor working with the *Style Wars* people," Aesop smiles. "They had a lot of footage, and we ended up making a video part of this enthusiasm stems from Aesop's education as a painter at Boston University, but most of it comes from the man's deep love and respect for all facets of hip hop culture."

At the end of the day, this is the real reason why people should listen and think about *Bazooka Tooth*: Aesop Rock takes hip hop extremely seriously, conscientious in his own efforts. Despite its more standard plotline, this follow-up record is in no way an attempt to cash in.

"I respect the cats in the mainstream who are talented, and have never watered down their style," he says. "It's more satisfying to do something on your own terms and have people like it that way. I'm trying to make something that is very new, very personal and very 2003."

This goal would seem to prevent Aesop's work from achieving the timeless quality to which all good music aspires, and know what that quality is, but I'm trying to find it."

If Aesop Rock's albums hadn't improved so exponentially through the years, I'd tell him, "Slow and steady wins the race." But his meteoric rise has disproved that old homily. Don't believe the fables. ■

THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE

KID KOALA FINDS LOVE IN AN ELEVATOR

Kid Koala has never seen *America's Next Top Model*. In fact, the Montreal-based DJ has never even heard of Tyra Bank's hit reality show, (don't pretend you didn't watch it). It's too bad, too—Koala, the sprightly turntablist who transformed Charlie Brown's depressed assessment of Halloween malaise into the righteous affirmation of "I gotta rock!!!" (on his album *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome*), would have found the tawdry show fertile ground for mining choice soundbites.

It's an even greater shame because the New York hotel Koala is staying in is the same towering glass testament to materialism in which the aspiring contestants slept and catily clawed their way to the top of the fashion world (a shoe-in Trivial Pursuit question 10 years from now).

"No way," laughs Koala, aka Eric San, when I unload this heavy news on him. He looks around his largish, well-appointed room with a hint of newfound appreciation. "So this is where beautiful people hang out."

Of course you can't blame Koala for missing out on one of the couch potato sensations of the summer, he's a pretty busy guy. Not only was he busy making his new record, *Some of My Best Friends Are DJs*, he was also scribbling away at a graphic novel—the recently released *Nufonia Must Fall*, creating a soundtrack to accompany the book, and sitting in at a number of Canadian jazz festivals.

"I had to make up an instrument in order to be accepted by the Canadian Musician's Union," he shares. "They wouldn't accept 'turntable.'"

For his down time, he flew around the world to DJ a bunch of parties. This regimen obviously doesn't leave a lot of time for TV.

Although Sans claims Montreal as his permanent address, he concedes he's rarely there more than eight months out of the year. The rest of his time is spent entertaining revelers all around the globe, something the lighthearted DJ enjoys, even

if the occasional raver gets a little confused.

"This one time in France a girl stormed off the dance floor," recounts Koala. "I have a very short attention span, so I'm always switching things up and changing songs and styles. I guess she was used to something different."

Besides his admitted lack of patience, something else informs Koala's restless ways. His albums show a mind (and a record collection) going in several directions at once, leapfrogging from genre to genre, and collapsing styles like a deck of cards. The aptly titled *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* consists of a hyperactive mish-mash of lightning scratches, tricky beats and savvy pop culture appropriations. The soundtrack to *Nufonia* pulls a complete turnabout, dealing mostly in quiet, instrumental meditations hearkening back to Koala's training on the piano. He has also lent his skills to a number of bands and projects, giving titans such as Radiohead a little street cred, sexing it up with Dan the Automator's Lovage outfit, or backing up the nearly traditional jazz of Mushroom. If there is one consistent aspect of his mercurial personality, it is this fascination and preoccupation with musical approaches of all stripes and persuasions. Sans is a Renaissance Man of the decks, a vinyl polymath with a broad mind and hair-trigger fingers.

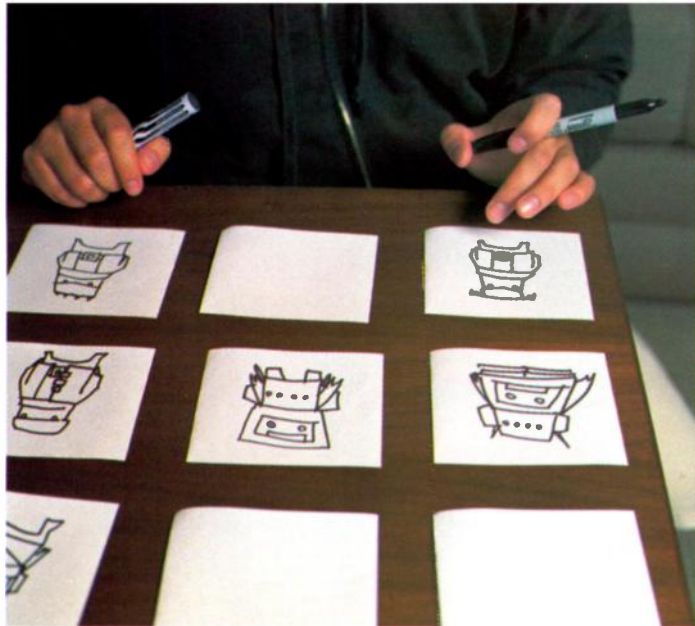
Of course there are some things this wunderkind can't do.

"I don't dance myself," Sans calmly reveals. "I can sit there and do the this-is-cool head-nod," he demonstrates, doing a good job of rhythmically bobbing his noggin.

Despite the diversity of his albums or the peculiar nature of his live sets ("I like to do my solo stuff episodically, like what if all the characters of *The Muppet Show* had decks? And then I'll roll some *Monty Python* or *Kids in the Hall*"), Koala makes music for people to groove to.

"I like to see people dance, since I can't," he reveals. "I can channel that energy into my turntables." ►►





As Koala, Sans has handled this power very well with *Some of My Best Friends are DJs*. A more relaxed affair than the rowdy *Carpal Tunnel*, *Friends* marries Koala's command of hip hop bump with the mellow fruitfulness of the *Nufonia* soundtrack and then honeymoons to the smooth serenades of jazz. From the funky strut of "Skanky Panky" to the audacious samples of coughing and sneezing on "Flu Season" to the seasick Dixieland of "Basin Street Blues," *Friends* unites almost all of Koala's interests and skills.

"I kind of wrote this album track to track," the planner reveals. The end product is a fun, unpredictable record that nonetheless retains a smooth flow. The album's feel reflects Kid Koala's cheerful, energetic personality that quickly hops from subject to subject, while staying on some sort of main track.

Sans's offhand attitude and playful nature belies the intense effort and concentration he puts into his work. While most critics focus on the whimsical aspects of his comics and music, they seldom mention the copious notes Sans makes detailing his samples and beats. The second track on *Best Friends*, entitled "Basin Street Blues," a woozy interpretation of the southern Big Band style of yore, is a direct example of Koala's precise, painstaking method. While the song's swinging brass and smoky bass sound smooth as apple butter, this seamlessness took a lot of work to achieve.

"I had to break it all into tiny pieces," Koala sighs. "All those horns are from different songs, and I had to put them together moment to moment. I actually wrote the bass line myself. I scatted the melody line, and then I listened to a lot of bass solo records until I found the notes I wanted, and then I put them together note by note. The whole thing took about five months."

That's a lot of elbow grease and precious time for a fairly short, muted track blending into the album's more electric-slide oriented material. Especially considering how Sans could have used his jazz sections to corral some session musicians into the studio to bust out a live joint in a few weeks.

"It was more of a study, an idea to test myself," explains Koala. "I wanted to see if I could do something no one had really done before. And I do think it sounds different when you only use a deck to write a song."

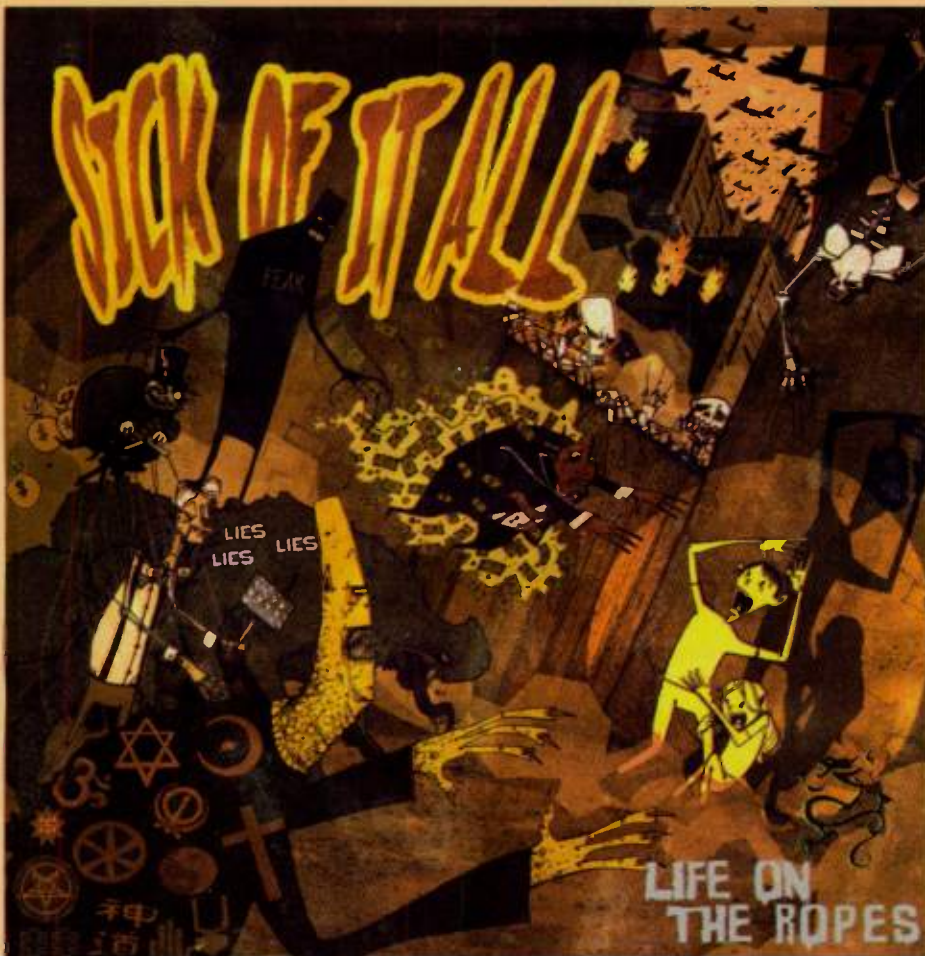
It's this sort of extreme devotion to experiment and craft that separates Sans as a special talent. "Basin Street" does sound different—the trumpets and rhythm section combine uneasily like oil and water, circling each other until an almost standard hip hop beat comes in to crunk the trunk.

But *Best Friends* isn't all daring endeavors and sweaty toil—Koala's typically breezy sense of humorous funk makes numerous appearances as well. Take "Elevator Hopper," an amusing look at the art of picking up women in elevators. Set to a cheesy old-time piano riff and rife with archaic come-on lines, the song is as pathetic as it is funny.

"I took it out of the bars and into the elevators," chuckles Sans. "People spend so much more time at work than they do elsewhere, so I wanted to create a character who's on the prowl in the elevators at the office. Elevators are weird, because you're in the same room with a lot of strangers, and you're only in that space for a very short time. So you have to be quick on your toes if you want to succeed."

The situation is analogous to Koala's, who spends much of his life (in admittedly bigger spaces) trying to impress strangers, with only a little more time to make an impression. Grumpy Gallic women notwithstanding, Koala does a better job than "Hopper's" hapless Casanova. Then again, Sans delivers better material than such chestnuts as "You're very beautiful dear, are you a model?"

One can only hope Koala will have access to a satellite television when *America's Next Top Model* enters season two. There's no telling what he might do with it. ■



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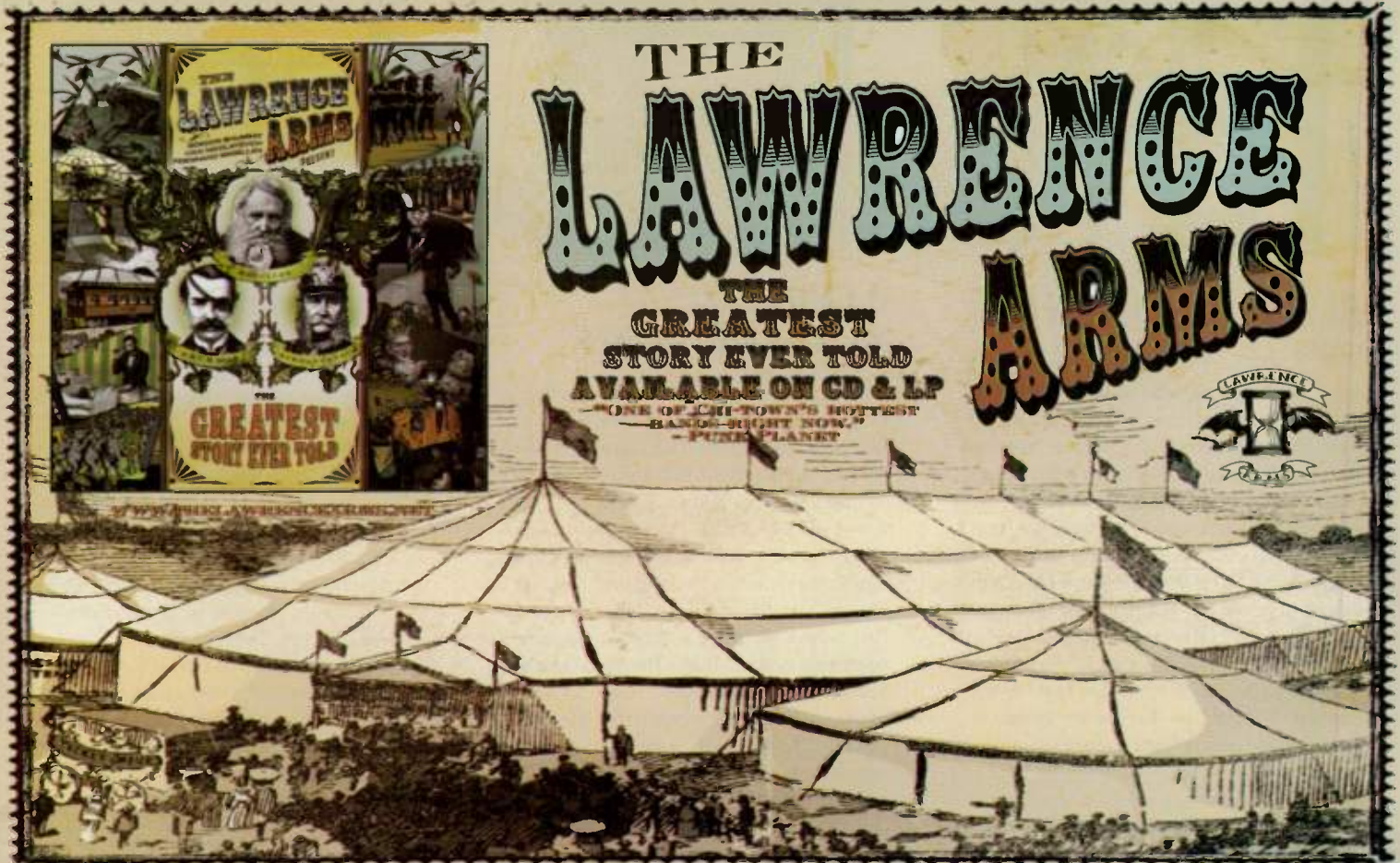


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BRONX THE BRONX

Ay, Yo! Howyogonna cwall yourself Da Bronx when youse are from foogin' California? Whatsamattawidyou, huh? I seen your CD at Tunes while I was picking up da new Donnas record for Christina-Marie. I says to Joey B., I says, Joey, aaaah, What's-up-wid-dis? Not for nuttin', though, Bronx is kinda muscley like dat frickin' thickneck who backed his Iroc over Ma's foot at Coney Island last summer. Badabing, Ay, yo.

IslandRecords.com



THRIVE THE ARTIST IN THE AMBULANCE

No one likes bubblegum, kiddie-power emo, right? It's flash in the pan. It's 90 percent marketing. It's played out, hyped up, cashed out pap for the Everyteen. Will anyone be listening to this in a year, or in six months? Bands like Thrive are a dime a dozen (though rarely so fairly priced on the fan's end of things), soundtracking the lives of cultural lurdanes populating summer fests and keggers. OK, given that *The Artist in the Ambulance* is a really fun, enjoyable record. Surprise!

DirtyLoop.com



CURSEOV DIALECT LOST IN THE REAL SKY

There's indie hip hop that seems like a natural shoe-in for anyone's tastes—why a Tupac devotee wouldn't enjoy *Atmosphere*, I can't explain. Then there's artists like CurseovDialect. Hailing from Australia, a land where—according to advertising lore—a “boomerang” is the word for a remote control, Curse is no less baffling than a cave etching. The velocity of the tongue is this group's most striking feature with verbs and subjects flashing by in doppler-like effect, leaving listeners besotted and amped.

AstralWerks.com



SLEEPY JACKSON LOVERS

Any kid who grew up near a 7-11 can tell you this: there's no one flavor of Slurpee that can touch all of the flavors mixed together. It's common knowledge. In hindsight, our adult pallets can identify the occasional bad choice—lime does *not* often mix well with grape. But, that doesn't mean you never try. On this debut full-length, Aussie rocker Luke Steele dares to pull in a wide repertoire of material with disparate sounds, sometimes clashing sometimes winning. “Vampire Racecourse” is just a cool name for a song, but tracks like “Tell the Girls That I'm Not Hanging Out” and “Old Dirt Farmer” delight in surprising ways. Lacking the cohesion of a classic, *Lovers* is simply fun.

BrokenRekkids.com



J CHURCH/ STORM THE TOWER

J Church has always existed on the periphery of arena-punk's dubious success. Instead of the fast-track path into hit videos and glossy concert books, frontman Lance Hahn and company have chosen to maintain the stoic zen of their own pace, elucidating the beauty of repeating form like a sort of musical Rob Reiman. On this latest outing, however, J Church matches its longstanding punk-as-fuck ideology with a more traditionally aggressive sound. Think *The Mob* meets *7 Seconds* for an indication. Texas' *Storm the Tower*, meanwhile, demonstrates how comfortable it already is with this pounding approach. When the NeoCons get you feeling down, insert disc and seethe.

Epitaph.com



WEAKERTHANS RECONSTRUCTION SITE

Reconstruction Site marks the return of Winnipeg's Weakerthans after a several year hiatus. Widely regarded as the forebears of today's folk punk scene (see *Against Me* or *This Bike is a Pipe Bomb*), The Weakerthans started as a side project of former Propagandi member John Samson. The new record is less folk, more pop, albeit with a steel pedaled, country tinge. The songwriting is solid throughout, but lyrically the album is hit or miss. Sometimes Samson is dead on (“One Great City”), but other times he is esoteric (“Our Retired Explorer”), or occasionally downright corny (“Plea From a Cat Named Virtue”). It doesn't help his vocal delivery recalls *They Might Be Giants*. There are enough good tracks to recommend the disc, but after so many years of waiting, *Reconstruction Site* is a bit disappointing.



THE LADYBUG TRANSISTOR

JESSICA
TANDY

The Ladybug Transistor



Once founder and singer Gary Olson's personal brain child, the band now boasts a solid lineup. While the 'Bug always dressed up its delicate pop songs with trumpet, flute and keyboards, engineer Craig Schumacher (Calexico, Neko Case) gives the band's new material a lushly orchestrated sound. Olson has grown into his voice, swinging with the urbane stylings of Roxy Music-era Bryan Ferry. Opener "These Days in Flames" counters twangy guitar with stylish piano, while "Choking on Air," shimmies and sways like a '60s French pop song. The band stumbles into Belle & Sebastian stagnation during "The Places You'll Call Home," but soon regains its stride with more gentle, countrified rockers. (MergeRecords.com)

—Sarah Tomlinson

TRACK LISTING

DISC ONE

01. These Days in Flames
02. In December
03. 3-Wild
04. Song for Ending the Day
05. Choking On Air
06. The Places You'll Call Home
07. Gospel
08. Please Don't Be Long
09. NY—San Anton
10. Hangin' on the Line
11. A Burial at Sea
12. Splendor in the Grass
13. The Last Gent

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BURGESS MEREDITH



JESSICA TANDY



ELLIOT GOULD



CHARLES GRODIN



THE BALDWINS

7 ANGELS 7 PLAGUES
UNTIL THE DAY BREATHES AND THE SHADOWS FLEE

7 Angels 7 Plagues was a promising metalcore band that has since broken up. *Until the Day Breathes and the Shadows Flee* is the first record that managed to get the band signed to Uprising and then re-released for fans desperate for more material until the members form new groups. Think Converge, Coalesce, Poison the Well. But this isn't just sound-alike hard-core, on the contrary, this lost debut is surprisingly groundbreaking for its genre. The heavy parts are extremely abrasive, but it makes the contrast to the gentle melodicism of songs like "Silent Deaths, Crowded Lives" all the more poignant. Sorry the group's gone, but get this and the even more brutal, staggering and confounding EP from Curl Up and Die on Status Records and you'll have a nice selection of some of the most forward-thinking metalcore of 2003. (UprisingRecords.com)

—Charles Spano

THE AFFLICTIONS
JANET STYLE

It's unclear if the album's title refers to the band's organ player Janet Emmert. One clue might be found in the handwritten message on the back cover—"Song is going fine, Janet fucks up. Way to fucking go, Janet." Maybe this explains why the Farfisa is so low in the mix. Whatever the background, *Janet Style* creates an inventive rock record, part straight-forward drive, part atypical instrumentation (tenor sax, Rhodes piano, Farfisa, no bass guitar). The

debut album from this Chicago band obsessed with ? and the Mysterians (they even cover the garage classic "96 Tears") brings back thoughts of bygone days with a wild jolt of no wave, retro jazz-rock. (KillDeerRecords.com)

—Steve Mowatt

ASTERISK
DOGMA

Dogma is one impenetrable boulder of an album. A tangled amphetamine-paced mess of crushing guitars, nearly incoherent, yowling vocals and an odd pseudo-philosophical slant all obscure the most coveted elements of this head-pounder. Hailed as the only grindcore band from northern Sweden, Asterisk hasn't enjoyed much notoriety outside its cold corner of the world with releases relegated to split seven-inches and compilation slots. *Dogma* is Three One G's attempt to package the entire catalog of the volatile Swedes into one neat CD. Citing mind-bending Japanese prog-rockers Ruins and pure American metal-heads Slayer as key influences, it's the latter taking precedence over the former, though it should be the other way around if Asterisk wants to play up its strengths. If speed and volume weren't Asterisk's top priorities, *Dogma* would definitely make for a much less exhausting listen. (ThreeOneG.com)

—Christopher Fritz

ASTEROID NO. 4
HONEYSPOT

You've heard of stoner rock and you've heard of alt-country. If the two paired up in a seedy hotel the love child might well be Asteroid No. 4. While it's hard to take

frontman Scott Vitt's back-country, *Deliverance*-esque vocals seriously, listeners will enjoy getting lost in the swampy medley of instrumental havoc the band conjures with an accordion, mandolin, dobro and keyboard, which actually sounds quite scrumptious after the fifth bong rip. Tracks like "As Soon as Dawn" are the few precious gems on the record where the band takes itself seriously enough to pass along a heartfelt sentiment along the way. (AsteroidNo4.com)

—Josh Bashara

SI BEGG
DIRECTOR'S CUT

Genre swappers, smarty pants and hip shakers rejoice. Here's a dance album that's also a lesson in music and culture, drawing from influences as far flung as romantic poetry and dancehall. The mastermind behind the mix is Si Begg, the producer, musician and DJ who recorded 2001's *The Mission Statement*, as S.I. Futures. Begg is back with an album of spry techno beats, funk breakdowns and electronic loops, for which he enlists the help of several guests (up-and-coming rapper Miss MC, the UK's Toastie Taylor and Blackitude). Throughout *Director's Cut*, Begg brings a grab bag of sounds and influences, but never loses his grip on the sleek, shimmering mix. (Mute.com)

—Sarah Tomlinson

BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED
SPIRALS

First I was bludgeoned into boredom by this hackneyed metalcore. Then I got dizzy trying to read the nautilus inspired lyrical layout.

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Altogether it was not a pleasant experience. However those that would buy a ticket to a Throwdown/Every Time I Die show might want to look into this 14-track CD. (FerretRecordings.com) —Michael O'Brien

BOBBY BIRDMAN
HEART CAVES

Rob Kieswetter (aka Bobby Birdman) is known for his musical experimentation. His latest EP combines folksy-jangles and '80s pop sounds with a contemporary indie tone, creating songs likely to intrigue even the most discerning listener. The poppiest track, "I Will Come Again" can be compared to a down-tempo, sadder version of the Postal Service, while the album's closer features extended distorted blips and beats showcasing Birdman's innovative side. (KRecs.com) —Caroline Borolla

BRANDSTON/CAMBER/SEVEN STORY
(SPLIT EP)

It's hard to say a bad word about anything that comes out on Deep Elm, a North Carolina-based emo label that's 100 percent independent in the tradition of Dischord (all label services are performed in-house). Not only is their mission to put art before profit and create a non-exclusive music scene, but their execution is unparalleled as well. You can bet your bottom dollar that care and attention have gone into any-

thing that bears their logo, from recording quality to artwork to promotion. This three-way split EP features previously unreleased material from some acts that have been on Deep Elm long enough for the label to call them veterans—Brandston (one song), Camber (three songs), and Seven Story (two songs). All in all, an enjoyable barometer of where emo is going and, in the case of standouts Seven Story, a healthy example of artists pushing the form beyond its boundaries. With more forward-thinking releases like this from Deep Elm, perhaps at some point the appeal of a lazy tag-on identifier like emo will become obsolete. (DeepElm.com) —Saby Reyes-Kulkarn

BREATHER RESIST
ONLY IN THE MORNING

Make no doubt about it, this is tech metal. By now those interested in the genre know the deal—stop-start, off-time, heavy riffing, metal hardcore epitomized by bands like Coalesce and Dillinger Escape Plan. Breather Resist adds a bit of the old Gravity records sound to the mix, making for a noisier result. Steve Sindoni's vocals are screamed, stream-of-conscious pleas, struggling to be heard over the manic playing of Evan Patterson (Black Cross), Nick Thieneman, and the ever changing beats of Geoff Paton. (DeathwishInc.com) —Michael O'Brien



Indian.co.uk

BLACK BOX RECORDER
PASSIONIA

If Porky's had been a grainy work of German film noir, *Passionia*'s opening track, "The School Song," would have been the soundtrack. The following "GSOH QED" is sometimes as hilarious as Momus, though it's probably meant to be taken seriously. Overall, Black Box Recorder's newest record suffers from this sort of schizophrenia throughout. If it were just a joke, it'd be terrific fun—like Make Up, Belle & Sebastian and *Springtime For Hitler*. "The New Diana" will turn every little boy into an androgynous diva-in-waiting a la *Ma Vi En Rose*. The crowning moment comes from "When Britain Refused to Sing," bringing back the stiff upper lip we need to survive. —Prince Buster



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CHEMIST
AUSTRAL ALIEN

Well, the title's kinda clever (they're from Australia) and Alchemist definitely control the market on sci-fi metal. Combining death metal with slick prog rock, they come up with some tight, driving psychedelic numbers ("Speed of Life") and raging bits of not-quite-industrial ("Solarburn"). I have to applaud the band's careful use of synthesizers and the generally spaced-out ambience (check "Alpha Cappella Nova Vega"), not to mention the hint of the Cure on tracks like "Nature On a Leash." Frankly, it makes for a pretty unique metal record. Still, it's not really what I look for in metal and mostly makes me think of Rush: serious musicality that just does not appeal to me. So, if you like Rush, you're there, man. (Relapse.com) —Charles Spano

DAVID LEE ROTH
DIAMOND DAVE

Constantly having his solo material compared to the greatest party rock band ever, the former Van Halen maestro puts the screams and loud guitars on the back burner, and goes deeper into the bluesy, backroom of his musical roots. Hee hee. (MagnaCarta.net) —Michael Christopher

DEADWEIGHT
STROKING THE MOON

Deadweight is a band opting to work on the fringes of the mainstream rather than inside it. Sure, you could label its music as rock, but it sure isn't your

typical brand of roll. A power trio in the truest sense of the word, the instruments of choice are electric violin, cello, and percussion. *Stroking The Moon* opens with "Re-run," setting the tone nicely as Sam Bass plucks at his cello like a man possessed. (AlternativeTentacles.com) —Jonathan Cholewa

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE
TRANSATLANTICISM

Flying dangerously close to an emo vibe before descending into melancholy piano tones and quiet strummings, it's the plaintive nature of *Transatlanticism* which distinguishes itself from emo's standard mournful mopey. Shades of Elliot Smith and Ben Folds mix with quiet and sparse electric guitars for a spellbinding loneliness rife with longing. "Tiny Vessels," on the other hand, builds upon walls of feedback and overlapping guitar textures until receding back and finally settling into subtlety. While the disc lyrically wavers around the nonsensical and obscure for a good part of many of its songs, there always seems to be a devastating emotional kick to the groin waiting in the wings. (Barsuk.com) —Michael Christopher

THE DIPLOMATS OF SOLID SOUND
LET'S COOL ONE

Hailing from Iowa City, these ambassadors of groove lay down a respectable amount of funk for a bunch of corn-fed Midwesterners. Following the lead of bands like Phish and Galactic, The Diplomats are a hippie's best friend. Ridiculous electric keyboard and organ

bleats scuttle back and forth between bluesy guitar riffs, grotesquely inspiring you to jiggle your ass to and fro. Not a fan of jam? Avoid the instrumental-only *Let's Cool One* like a smelly, patchouli-doused hippy after a long sweaty day playing Frisbee in the park. (Estrus.com) —Josh Bashara

DAVID DONDERO
THE TRANSIENT

Singer-songwriter David Dondero kicks off his second solo album, *The Transient*, with a healthy dose of self-deprecating humor on opener "Living and the Dead," chronicling the indignities experienced by a small-time touring musician. Wry humor infuses the entire album, but the songs also look squarely at the bleak moments faced by characters blowing across the country like tumbleweeds, as on the simmering lost love song "Dance of Spring." If Dondero's voice often tremors like that of Bright Eyes' Connor Oberst, it's no surprise, as this album was recorded in Lincoln, Neb., by Mike Mogis (Bright Eyes, Lullaby for the Working Class) and includes appearances by a cast of Bright Eyes regulars, including Oberst himself. Dondero crafts songs with the melancholy and menace of a lone hitchhiker in the rain. (FutureFarmer.com) —Sarah Tomlinson

EAST RIVER PIPE
GARBAGEHEADS ON ENDLESS STUM

Lone troubadour East River Pipe first came to prominence in the early '90s, during the golden boom of

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indiefatuation. Despite the heavy accolades of rags such as *Spin*, his skewed ditties never really got over, and after the boom busted, he pretty much went into seclusion. Though the liner notes describe this as his fifth record, most people have no idea what he's been doing for the past 10 years. *Garbageheads* continues Pipe's penchant for drum-machine waltzes and odd, trenchant observation. Don't be fooled by the Beefheart-esque album title, *Garbageheads* appears to be a loose concept record and revenge fantasy about the rich, fucked up and powerful. Pipe croons tales of the dysfunctional hoi-polloi, resulting in the best song, "Millionaires of Doubt," and its hilariously jaunty coda of "You've gotta breathe through your fiberglass lungs, babe." Let Pipe's latest under your skin, and you will not be disappointed, but you will be somewhat worried. (Merge.com)

—Reed Jackson

Nada, meanwhile, delivers similar fare. (FingerRecords.com) —Steve Mowatt

ESPERANTO
PLAY THIS ANYWHERE

If you're going to wear your influences on your sleeve, then you might as well pick good ones, and Esperanto go with the best: the Pixies. *Play This Anywhere* is skewed and enthusiastic, but unfortunately Esperanto just don't have the gifts of the Pixies or Weezer and the album falls too quickly into easily categorized pop punk. "Good To Go" is catchy for sure, but just as forgettable. Same thing with "Ear To the Ground." It's the type of tune Rivers might write and then discard. Verdict: burn a copy from somebody else, but keep an eye on the band, in another couple of records they just might do something worthy of serious attention. (UprisingRecords.com)

—Charles Spano

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN/EL NADA
ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN MEETS EL NADA

Fans have been waiting three decades for another Electric Prunes album, while fans have only waited about three weeks for another Electric Frankenstein album. This time around, the flagship hardbilly-rockacore band enlists the services of California's El Nada. What more can be said about Electric Frankenstein? The music is no surprise to anyone who's heard the band before. El

FOREVER IS FORGOTTEN
THE ARCHITECTURE IS STILL BURNING

If nothing else, this Wisconsin-based metal-core act has mastered the combination of double-bass drums and sandpaper grafted vocals. These two key ingredients really set the proceedings apart from a lot of the dreck currently parading around the tech-metal and hardcore scenes. Those looking for a mixture of brutal, mosh-inducing riffs and jackhammer style drumming should definitely sneak >>



Tigerbeat6.com

DYNASTY
DYNASTY

Don't hesitate/Or discriminate/Just ride the riddim/And let your hips gyrate/No time for derision or fools who be hatin'/This is Dynasty/They're mission: motivatin'/Adding some 'tude to your dour condition/K.O. on the mic, eliminate the competition/Now I'm not a reveiwer talkin' all that junk/About who sounds like who/Sounding like a punk/This self-titled album is ironically crunk/The beats are lo-fi/The production is rough/But it's also kinda fun/Now that Le Tigre fell off/They "like the cars that go boom"/They "got a meeting in the ladies' room"/Got a CD on Tigerbeat6/Y'all should buy real soon/Now brush your sneakers/Stick your head in the speakers/Ma-meep-meep-meep/Tsk! You're sounding like Beeker. —Slim-A-Bear



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« a listen. If that doesn't entice you, don't worry. Tunes like "I'm Glad You're Dead" speak for themselves. (ThorpRecords.com) —Brian Peterson

FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE
WELCOME INTERSTATE MANAGERS

Between writing new songs, being dropped by Atlantic and shopping for a new record deal, four years have passed since Fountains of Wayne's last album—the universally adored masterpiece *Utopia Parkway*. Having finally inked a deal with Virgin subsidiary S-Curve Records, Adam Schlesinger and company have made their triumphant AM gold return with *Welcome Interstate Managers*. Taking its biographical power-pop to new levels, Fountains of Wayne tackles a few new genres here, with the clever country interplay of "Hung Up On You" and the distinct '60s slant of "Halley's Waitress" and "Supercollider." Still, its penchant for pop-inflected guitars remains Fountains of Wayne's most valuable asset. (S-CurveRecords.com) —Christopher Fritz

GARRISON
THE SILHOUETTE

What happened here? Didn't Garrison used to play mopey ass indie rock? *The Silhouette* is all about rocking. Starting with the punkish rager "Come on Die Young" and finishing with the shoegazer-meets-Janes Addiction "The Closer," this five-song EP delivers the goods. The lyricists certainly have a few issues with friends and lovers. Is this rock 'n roll for the thinking man? (RevHq.com) —Michael O'Brien

IN FLAMES
TRIGGER

Currently one of Scandinavia's premier metal bands (and really, does it get any better than nordic metal?), In Flames will get some play in Europe. American radio will never touch this hair flinging, head banging, true metal jam, opting instead to jock the latest faux metal joint as played by Disturbed. Besides the single, "Trigger," the CD includes "Watch Them Feed" and a cover of Genesis' "Land of Confusions," complete with 180-bpm kick drumming that could easily put hair back on Phil Collins head. (NuclearBlastRecords.com) —Michael O'Brien

KPT.MICHI.GAN
PLAYER, PLAYER

One could argue the whole computers-influencing-music thing has gotten out of control. The Neptunes figured out how to make Britney sound less like a Mouseketeer, and Kid 606 swore his eternal devotion to an iBook. A lot of this digital stuff is pure cotton candy, but occasionally an album comes along that sucks electronic music's toes in all the right ways. No, I'm not talkin' bout The Streets. kpt.michi.gan is some German shit you may never hear, but you really should. This is 40 minutes of the most bad-ass sound exploration you'll hear this year. Fuck guitar rock. Long live metal machine music. (Aesthetics-USA.com) —Neal Ramirez

KRAFTWERK
TOUR DE FRANCE SOUNDTRACKS

Everyone's favorite group of machine-worshipping, syn-

thesizer-doodling Krauts are back, at a time when the importance of their work in the '70s is still beginning to be understood. I'm not sure why the idea of thousands of sweaty bicyclists hurtling through the snooty roads of France motivated the Werk to come out of retirement (let alone devoting an album to the subject), but the French can certainly cancel any cultural debts by serving as the inspiration. *Tour De France* falls somewhere in the territory between the placidity of *Trans-Europe Express* and the all-business method of *Autobahn*. The four tunes tow a delicate line between annoying, incredible and hilarious. It's not as hysterically cutting edge as it could be, in fact parts of this occasionally sound like the *Trainspotting* soundtrack, but enough moments of unexpected texture and import pop up to make this worthy of the Werk's hefty legacy. (EMI.com) —Reed Jackson

LAKE TROUT
ANOTHER ONE LOST

Mixing the organic elegance of flute, Fender Rhodes piano and guitar with disembodied electronic effects and bright, stuttering dance beats, Lake Trout, creates a minimalist world of diverse sounds both beautiful and vigorous. While this is the band's debut release for Palm, the five-piece has built steam since forming in Baltimore in the mid-'90s. This new material can be melancholy, as on "Holding," where gently strummed guitar and mournful vocals evoke British balladeer Thom Yorke, and "Bliss," on which a light flute flutters over an insistent electronic melody. (PalmPictures.com) —Sarah Tomlinson

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Mike Park
For The Love Of Music
Sub City Records / SC024-CD Out 11/11/2003

New Bomb Turks
Switchblade Tongues, Butterknife Brains
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Gearhead Records/RPM 046 LP/CD Out 10/7/03

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LIMBECK
HI, EVERYTHING'S GREAT

Great driving music can be hard to find. Limbeck's second album features 12 charming, feel-good tracks centered around traveling, making it the perfect soundtrack for hitting the open road. Hailing from Southern California's famous pop-punk stomping grounds, Limbeck differentiates itself from its innumerable counterparts by dabbling in folk and alt-country territories. "Honk & Wave" asserts itself as the perfect album opener with intricate chord changes, aggressive hi-hat work and a sing-along chorus. (DoghouseRecords.com)

—Caroline Borolla

LITHOPS
SCRYPT

While initially opening as a piece reminiscent of Lou Reed's infamous *Metal Machine Music*, Lithops latest moves numbingly forward only to bring confusion as nearly every puzzling track on this release is a mixture of computer glitch-type noises, avant-garde rhythms and bizarre synth tones. If nothing else, at least these folks have the gumption to challenge listeners to wade through a barrage of noises from the jungles of Plan 9. (ThrillJockey.com)

—Brian Peterson

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES
TAKE A BREAK

This record is one big amalgamation of lazy jokes. Worse than bad jokes, lazy jokes are attempts at humor so trite and cliché they've reached a level of lameness that makes even morons cringe. Me First and the Gimme Gimmes are built upon the somewhat lazy joke that they are some sort of matching suit, '50's type rock and rollers. Utilizing lazy joke number two, the punk-cover-of-a-non-punk-song, this Fat Wreck Chords super group has released several albums of material. The songs are good to begin with, so the covers are OK, but who the hell is going to listen to this CD more than once? The layout features two of the laziest of all lazy jokes—Chris Dodge's ironic use of urban slang in the liner notes and The Gimmes' break-dancing on the cover. Why didn't Fat Mike get an old white lady to rap on a track or two? (FatWreckChords.com)

—Michael O'Brien

MEDICINE
THE MECHANICAL FORCES OF LOVE

Where is our edgy, mid-'90s Medicine? These days, Medicine's trippy, pseudo-hypnotic songs are more aggravating and amelodic than alt-rocky. As if singer Beth Thompson's high-pitched screechy singing wasn't bad enough, drummer/producer Brad Laner felt the need to double and triple the vocals, creating a record stinging with the caterwauling force of a dozen street-fighting ▶▶



ChicksonSpeed.com

KEVIN BLECHDOM
BITCHES WITHOUT BRITCHES

Noting how brackish and murky the bay was, Salo yelled to everyone, "Yo, open your eyes when you're underwater. It looks like you're being attacked by a shark." Everyone did and laughed, except for OB, who whined, "No—I don't want to get eaten by a shark." This gap between the comically visual and the actualized serves as a persistent theme throughout the poetically titled *Bitches Without Britches*. It should be no surprise to anyone familiar with Chicks on Speed's record label that this is weird as shit (much like how *Inspirational Carpets* were "Cool as Fuck"). This is coprophilic, Hennessey-and-raisin-fueled music for upstarts who aren't afraid to light the curtains on fire, chanting "Blechdum, I'm rollin' Wit U."

—Slim-A-Bear

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« feral cats. The band's first release in eight years, *The Mechanical Forces of Love* is doubly bad, failing miserably to create a cohesive emotional soundscape (other than annoyance) and falling miles short of the band's former glory. (Astralwerks.com) —Julie Gerstein

MILLIONAIRE
OUTSIDE THE SIMIAN FLOCK

Belgian band Millionaire seems to have an identity crisis. Imagine Rob Crow fronting a cross between The Rapture and The Hives. On *Outside The Simian Flock*, the band meanders through a progression of different styles and directions, embracing the kinetic energy of punk, dance beats, '80s synth, and even bits of industrial and folk. Sometimes everything seems to come together so perfectly, while other times the songs come across disjointed. Too polished and dance oriented to be grouped along side a band like the Hives, yet containing too much energy and reverb guitar to be considered a dance band. Sometimes it's good to keep people guessing. (PIASAmerica.com)

—Jonathan Cholewa

MORCHEEBA
PARTS OF THE PROCESS

This compendium of Morcheeba's best singles since the band's 1995 debut is chock full of must-have, trip-hop beats and melodies. The laid-back stylings of vocalist Skye Edwards nearly glide over the Godfrey brother's swingy and oh-so catchy beats. Over the last eight years, Morcheeba's played shy little sister to the elder

Portishead's more brash and cocky sound, but *Parts of the Process* proves the band has a lot to show for its work. In addition to the 16 previously recorded tracks (and a limited edition three-track live DVD), Morcheeba's also included two new songs—"What's Your Name" and "Parts of the Process"—as a small taste of where the band is hoping to go from here. If this is any sign, their future is bright. (Reprise.com) —Julie Gerstein

NANANG TATANG
MUKI

Fans of Ida will appreciate this new effort by the group's co-founders, recorded in their home studio. All the trademarks are here: really long tones ("Bunny Hop Hop"), slightly dissonant harmonic structures, spare arrangements ("On Me Forever"), slow tempos and introspective lyrics, but Daniel Littleton and Elizabeth Mitchell have added primitive drum programming and textured ambience for a relaxing, if slightly disconcerting, new stab at subtle dream pop. This falls somewhere between slow-core like Low and electronica like Triangle or Mum. Definitely rewarding if you have the patience and a daydreamy outlook. If not, you might not be able to handle Nanang Tatang's delicate and fragile style. (Tigerstylerecords.com) —Charles Spano

NUCLEAR ASSAULT
ALIVE AGAIN

This is a live recording of recently reformed speed metal pioneers Nuclear Assault. According to the liner notes, the band re-united "to show these youngsters


how metal is really played" and "to see all diehard metalheads banging and moshing in the front." Who can argue with that reasoning, especially if it comes from one of heavy metal's most acclaimed bands. (SteamhammerRecords.com) —Michael O'Brien

OKKERVIL RIVER
DOWN THE RIVER OF GOLDEN DREAMS

Named after a Russian short story, Okkervil River merges dark, alt-country sounds with avant-guard and rock influences. The results run a similar course as Wilco, Nick Cave, and Tindersticks. Inspiration from these bands is obvious, with Okkervil's third full-length maintaining a rustic charm culled from well-orchestrated textured recording. Will Sheff's heartfelt lyrics sung in an occasional country twang are an excellent compliment to the extended backing band of banjos, electric piano, trumpets and mandolins. (Jagjaguwar.com) —Caroline Borolla

OPETH
DAMNATION


Diehard fans of Opeth probably knew this was coming, but surely fringe fans will be completely shocked and dismayed by the band's newest offering, *Damnation*. Although the title solidly implies another offering of classic, black metal stylings, this time, Opeth has decided to shift gears dramatically, releasing an album owing more to prog rock than metal. The architect for much of this new sound on *Damnation* is Porcupine Tree's Steve Wilson, who handled production duties. Overall, the disc is surprisingly beautiful in its arrange-




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ments—with no crashing guitars, or pounding rhythms, *Damnation* helps to illustrate what many already knew. Lurking under the dark themes and acid-tinged delivery lies a band with a keen sense of melody and lyricism. (KochEntertainment.com)

—Jonathan Cholewa

PHOSPHORESCENT
A HUNDRED TIMES OR MORE

This slowcore folk record takes the off-kilter romance of Grandaddy and Earlimart and pairs it with the stripped-down dreaminess of Miigthy Flashlight or even Papa M for a melancholy and surreal journey through the South. It can be as drowsy as Low ("Where To Strip"), as bare-bones as Will Oldham ("How Far We All Come Away") or as bombastic as Billy Corgan ("Bullet"), albeit in a much quieter way. In the end, *A Hundred Times or More* is an album that has its roots in *On the Beach*-era Neil Young and Phosphorescent manages to build something absolutely sprawling out of the tiniest of all details: a genuinely heartbreaking record. (TheWarmSuperComputer.com)

—Charles Spano

PALOALTO
HEROES AND VILLAINS

Paloalto is a great Brit-pop band... from Southern California. Singer James Grundler evokes the

sound of Travis on *Heroes and Villains*, sometimes pulling a blatantly dead-on imitation of its singer Fran Healy. The songs float along well enough, but ultimately amount to little more than hummable accompaniments to dead space. Some of the more wistful serenades are reminiscent of U2's songcraft, building hope for future efforts. But its when Paloalto turns up the volume and actually stops trying so hard to be Coldplay that the band rises above as more than mere Brit-imitators. (AmericanRecordings.com)

—Michael Christopher

PANSY DIVISION
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

Pansy Division got its first big break opening for Green Day at the height of the trio's mainstream popularity. Perhaps one of the things keeping Pansy Division outside the same MTV-and-stadium spotlight is the band's blunt and sophomoric, queer perspective lyrics. While some waves of hype may have passed some 10 years back, the Division is still owed its due. Here, the band fluctuates between '60s pop and '70s-era Cheap Trick. Moreover, the band maintains its sense of humor. (AtemativeTentacles.com)

—Jonathan Cholewa

PARTY FUN ACTION COMMITTEE
LET'S GET SERIOUS

The comedy skit has been a staple of hip hop ▶



IslandRecords.com

THURSDAY
WAR ALL THE TIME

Who knew this would be good? The overwhelming glut of commercialized, warbly throated faux emo is enough to send the surviving members of Cap'n Jazz screaming in regret. At the center of this limelighted swill is Thursday, a previously unassuming band of Joizey boys who grabbed hold of the genre's magic stick and ran with it. So, no one was more surprised than me when the band's new album, *War All the Time*, turned out to be a real strong showing. Here's an album that couldn't have happened before the breakout of accessible post-punk outfits like At the Drive-In, but it's one of the few claiming the sound with any real command.

—King Chubby

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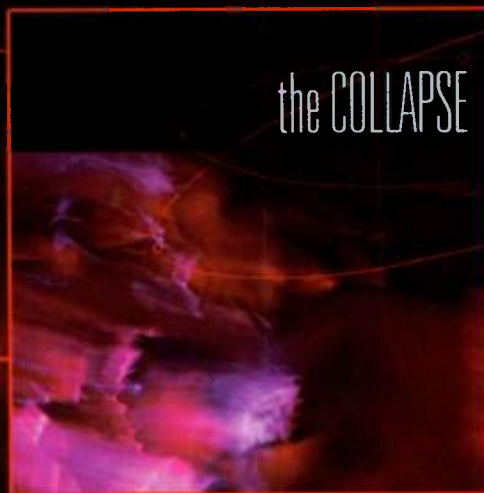
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albums since forever. DefJux, it seems, has now delivered the first full-length skit album. With production attributed to the mysterious Blockhead, *Let's Get Serious* depicts record label execs poking fun at incoming rap demos, bios and photos. Alleged promo tracks jack beats from Salt-N-Peppa, Cypress Hill and Eminem, among others. Sherlock types will pick up on some none-too-shifty references to the floundering (or is it foundered?) Rawkus label. Initially, Party Fun Action Committee is funny, though it's not likely to stand the test of time. (DefinitiveJux.net) —Caroline Borolla

**PARTY OF ONE
CAUGHT THE BLAST**

Can your band sound terrible and still sound great? If you're Party of One, an excitable trio from Minnesota, the answer is "Yes!" Remember how old Pavement records sounded atrocious, like, so bad your sister would come into your room and demand you play something else? Party of One strives for a similar tonal approach. Luckily, most songs on *Caught the Blast* are strong enough to survive the shoddy production. "Shotgun Funeral" will surely get any indie rock DJs' panties in a twist. Could it be the days of slacker grunge nostalgia are upon us? (Fat-Cat.co.uk) —Neal Ramirez

**PFFR
UNITED WE DOTH**

Despite the presence of Snoop Dogg endorsing this group's excellence and skillosophy on the opening track, don't expect any "Gin and Juice"-type G thang.

Instead, this troupe doles out track after track of bizarre instrumentals of jokey samples, acid-jazz loops and a very strange take on pop songs. Surely, Mr. Snoop would find this output unjackable. What remains to be seen is how these fellas managed to kidnap the Doggfather and get him on the record. Hmmm. (BirdmanRecords.com) —Brian Peterson

**PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES
THE NEW ROMANCE**

If Smiths references, boom-swagger-boom music and feisty girl vocals make you want to dig your own grave, steer clear of this Seattle-based rock outfit. Following a well-received debut on Lookout, the Matador clan serves up this new romance. The singing is in the same ball park as Rainer Maria and *Reject All American-era Bikini Kill* (when everyone knows *Pussywhipped* is better), while the music sort of sounds like Sleater Kinney with—Oh my gawd!—a bass guitar. "Holy Names" and "A Certain Cemetery" show a tasteful approach to epic balladry, but mostly this CD kicks out the jams. If you're in college and you like rock music, you know what to do. (MatadorRecords.com) —Neal Ramirez

**POISON THE WELL
YOU COME BEFORE YOU**

Here's another hardcore band determined to piss off its fans. Stealing Phil Anselmo's *Far Beyond Driven* vocals, then mixing them with sugar-sweet melodies over pulverizing beats... What? Blasphemy! Too bad for all you purists because *You Come Before You* rocks just as hard as any-

thing Poison the Well has ever done, and with the influx of stark diversity it tosses about the group seems to have finally found its balance. This is the most refreshing metalcore album in a long time, stemming from a musical chiaroscuro style often attempted but rarely achieved. (Atlantic-Records.com) —Michael Christopher

**POLE
POLE**

Americans, be warned—this is dub. Being British dub, however, Pole is restrained, mannered and elegant. You won't find the rowdy stratospherics of Mars Volta, the sensemilla-fed antics of King Tubby, nor the grit of Gogogo Airheart. Pole makes dub spare, simple and unassuming, sharing as much with downtempo chill and ambient hush as it does with the mutations of dub. Pole makes music suitable for tea time. While the beats are on point and the songs are fluid, the album's secret weapon is rapper Fat Jon, who despite his thug-gish moniker, drops smooth, intelligent rhymes. Together, the efforts achieve the mystic goal of dub, and really of all music, to expand the mind and soul while creating something momentarily timeless. (Mute.com) —Reed Jackson Pollock

**PUFFY AMIYUMI
NICE**

Puffy Amiyumi are a perfect example of the Japanese penchant for taking American styles and subcultures and revving them up to Mach-10. The femme duo's debut, *Nice*, includes tinkling and ethereal break up

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ballads, as well as poppy little numbers replete with hardcore breakdowns (think Weezer) and even a "Teen Titans" theme song. There's something to placate everyone on the aptly titled *Nice*, but not much more than that. **(BarNone)**

—Julie Gerstein

REBEL POWERS
NOT ONE STAR WILL STAND THE NIGHT

Members of the Japanese experimental music collective Acid Mothers Temple team up with Scotsman David Keenan of the similarly minded Telstar Ponies for this extremely meditative release. Consisting of just two tracks clocking in at around 25 minutes each, *Not One Star Will Stand The Night* is a worthwhile work of sustained beauty, which plays as an aural depiction of Kurosawa's *Ran*, conjuring haunting images of ghosts roaming an ancient Asian territory. Rebel Powers achieves this effect by using blissfully droning ostinato guitar passages and clanging bells suffused with washes of cymbal and light percussion. **(Strange-attractors.com)**

—Allan Martin Kemler

RESPIRA
A STILL SILHOUETTE

Take one sullen group of SoCal highschoolers, add equal parts teenage despair and suburban ennui, beat in walls of feedback guitars, garnish with smarmy, juvenile lyrics. It's a well-weathered

recipe yielding predictable results. By now, you know if you like this stuff or not. Respira do earn a few demerits for being longwinded, though. While most emo acts can mope through a song in under three minutes, few of the tracks on Respira's *A Still Silhouette* clock in at under five—some even approach the nine-minute mark. Without really shocking innovation, this lack of brevity can be an albatross around the neck of an otherwise shoe-in for fans of this sound. **(ExoticFever.com)**

—Christopher Fritz

JOSH ROUSE
1972

I love the title. I love the simple, '70s, earth-toned design on the cover, and despite basically feeling blandly alienated by every other Josh Rouse recording, I love this album. Rouse and producer Brad Jones went to great lengths to make this actually sound like it came out of 1972 and they succeeded brilliantly. The title track evokes L.A.'s stimulant-fueled folk-pop scene where "screwin in a hotel room" becomes a poetic line and Carole King, Steely Dan and Neil Young converge as influences to tell a tale of wasted, shimmering, bittersweet nights in Southern California. The Al Green-inspired white boy soul of "Love Vibration" is totally uplifting, and "Slaveship" is such an enthusiastic piano pop number (read Bowie) that it should have been

continued on page 64 >>



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THE COLLAPSE

THE COLLAPSE

It's hard to really get excited about a lot of releases tagged as punk nowadays. It's also hard to find the ones that really stand out. In order to distinguish themselves from the glut of competitors, bands need to do it faster, harder and better than the rest. Out to offer the Northeast corridor a point of reference other than the Juliana Theory, The Collapse arrives louder, heavier and seemingly in some control of its craft. While the first few tracks are standard fare, deep in the disc things begin to look brighter (or darker, depending on your perspective) with innovative tracks like "Grain of Salt and "Audible Sigh."

—Jonathan Cholewa

STICKS AND STONES

:The Strife and Times

At a critical time in NJ punk history (late 80's-mid 90's), STICKS & STONES stirred the youth with their aggressive lead guitar and folk-based rhythms, a straight-forward beat and numerous overlapping vocal melodies. They were truly ahead of their time in terms of musicianship and sounds, but they were also truly doomed. Members later went on to form such notable acts as THE WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, JOHNNY X AND THE CONSPIRACY, and ZERO ZERO. This double-cd set is a complete anthology including full-lengths, demos, 7" singles, and live selections. Available in stores September 9th.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE EDGE

TEXT ▶ AMY SCIARRETTO ■ STRIKE ANYWHERE PHOTO ▶ SHANE McCAULEY



Bayonne, NJ's Rye Coalition has signed to Dreamworks Records, home to punk-as-fuck groups like AFI and Jimmy Eat World and Saves the Day—who has a new record coming soon... Jade Tree prepares to drop new records from Strike Anywhere and From Ashes Rise, essentially stealing the crown from every other band mentioned in this column... Las Vegas noisemonger Curl Up And Die released *We May Be Through With the Past* via Status Records earlier this year. The companion piece, *But the Past Isn't Through With Us*, will be released by Revelation Records this month. Ferret Music will be releasing a repackaged collection of previously released Funeral For a Friend material, titled *Seven Ways to Scream Your Name*. It's rumored the band is about to sign with a major shortly... Speculation says Lamb of God, meanwhile, is also being courted by majors, including Epic... God Forbid is re-releasing the out of print *Reject the Sickness* through PR Records. The band remains dutifully at work on new material for Century Media... The surly hockey heroes of Slapshot will release a new album, *Digital Warfare*, through I

Scream Records shortly... After a decade-long tenure, Elliott has decided to go gently into that good night... Relapse Records delivers two Cryptic Slaughter re-releases... Broken Rekkids presents a split CD with J Church and Storm the Tower... The Militia Group, meanwhile, further distances itself stylistically from bombastic post-hardcore with Tora! Tora! Torrance's new full-length, *A Cynic's Nightmare*—think Hot Hot Heat, but not quite as good... E-Town Concrete has signed an overseas contract with Roadrunner Records. The international division of the label will re-release *The Renaissance* with an extra track culled from band's previous album. E-Town Concrete has also guaranteed it can beat up your favorite band... Century Media releases a new album from Haste... Former Thursday guitarist Bill Henderson has resurfaced in a new, more traditional hardcore outfit called The Procedure, with *Rise of a New Reason* on Blackout Records. Finally, even though you might expect them to be terrible, over-produced garbage, both the new Thrice album and the new Thursday album are actually very fun listens.

THE SUBSECT REVEAL



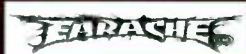
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Black Metal pioneers Gorgoroth return with their most potentially evil release to date Twilight Of The Idols.

Featuring previous members of Emperor, Satyricon, Mayhem, Borknagar, and Immortal, Twilight Of The Idols will go down in black metal history as one of the most sinister and grimmest recordings to date. www.gorgoroth.com



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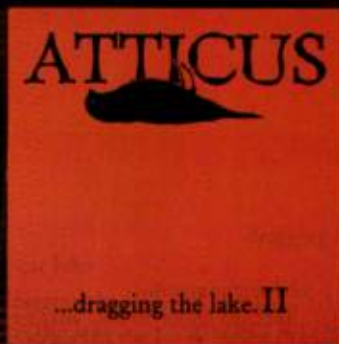
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in *Almost Famous*, and "Under Your Charms" takes Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On" as its point of departure. "It's the end of the night and I'm feeling sexual," Rouse sings, and you better quit laughing and embrace it, baby. Even the titles (try "Flight Attendant") seem straight out of the '70s. Admittedly, I share Rouse's true affection for the music of the period, but whatever, this is great. Rouse pulls it off so magnificently because there's nary a hint of irony or a self-conscious wink, and so 1972 turns out to be a moving and genuine record of the period, only it's not. (Rykodisc.com) —Charles Spano

SENTRIDOH
LOU B'S WASTED PIECES '87-'93

As an integral member of Dinosaur Jr, and a founder of Sebadoh, Lou Barlow has nothing left to prove to the indie rock world. Despite the tarnish his current band (The Folk Implosion) has left on an otherwise spotless lo-fi past, Barlow's pedigree as a songwriter is still highly regarded. During the Sebadoh years, Barlow had the urge to strip his songs down even more. In an effort to temporarily escape the band dynamic, Barlow set up a tape recorder in his living room and christened his new one man force Sentridoh. *Lou B's Wasted Pieces* is a compilation of Sentridoh odds and ends previously only available on cassette. Ranging from piercing found-sound noise attacks ("Pooh Pieces") to straightforward acoustic confessionals ("Suede"), *Wasted Pieces* is about as

low as lo-fi gets—harmonies are sparse and tape hiss is not. (Loobiecore.com) —Christopher Fritz

SICKIDZ
NOW AND THEN

Take a band who hasn't been together in 20 years, record five new songs and put them at the beginning of the record, then tack four recordings from 1980 after them. As the Sickidz themselves explain, "This is our music, this was our music." Musically? Try Jerry Lee Lewis as a death-punk droning "Die, Die" lyrics over a sludgy guitar riff. Grungy, rockabilly guitars join with the bastard-child vocal stylings of Lux Interior and the Killer, Jerry Lee, in sweet, gutter harmony. Ample nods are paid towards the Dead Boys and The Cramps (the latter produced some of the Sickidz earlier material). (SteelCageRecords.com) —Steve Mowatt

SOULS SHE SAID
RUB THE SLEEP OUT

Coming off as a cross between The Strokes and a band of insane, roots-rock crazy street musicians, Souls She Said brings ample frenzy to the table. Helmed by former Ink and Dagger maestro Don Devore, the five tracks on *Rub the Sleep Out* convey an infectious energy presented as Strokes-on-passion. (Buddyhead.com) —Brian Peterson

THE SOUTH DALLAS FUNK FESTIVAL
SOUTH DALLAS FUNK FESTIVAL 1970

This CD is more or less a transcript of the first South Dallas Pop Festival, featuring performances from the

Marchel Ivory Quintet, Soul Seven, The Apollo Commanders, Black Maffia and Les Watson and the Panthers (not the white kids from Brooklyn). Unfortunately, not just the first but only South Dallas Pop Festival (it never quite made it into series status), this CD chronicles a lost time and a little-known, but no less spectacular, chapter in Southern-fried soul music. Another fine release from this Stones Throw offshoot. (Now-Again Records) —Julie Gerstein

SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES
THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH LIVE

Recorded live at Shepherds Bush Empire on an uncharacteristic reunion tour six years after the band's demise, *The Seven Year Itch* shows that Siouxsie and the Banshees still have all of the dark glamour and iconic attack they presented in the late '70s. Siouxsie Sioux's voice sounds Dietrich-ian, if nothing else, and adds a hint of nostalgia to the proceedings, which are otherwise true to the old form: angsty, melancholy and theatrical. All the greats are here in all their glory from *The Scream's* "Pure" and "Jigsaw Feeling" to *Kaleidoscope's* "Red Light" and some old darkhorse entries like "Icon," though it all pretty much stops with material from 1988's *Peep Show*. All in all, a remarkable live set worth the time. (Siouxsie.com) —Charles Spano

SPIRITUALIZED
AMAZING GRACE

Spiritualized maestro J. Spaceman can't be the easiest guy to get along with—he's on bad terms with former

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Spacemen 3 astronaut Sonic Boom, he opened the pod bay doors on all the guys who used to be in Spiritualized and are now in Lupine Howl, and finally, he jettisoned his old label (Arista). So, with that much water under the bridge, what can Spaceman do with his band now? With this hotly anticipated new record, it looks like J has decided to piss off his ardent fans as well. Not that *Grace* is bad—it isn't. But it's not the lush, ornate, post-gospel extravaganza most of the Spiritualized cult demand. Never having been a member myself, I find *Grace's* return to coal-marked Anglo-blues a good thing, particularly on such rhythmically nasty tracks as "This Little Light of Mine," or on the torn hymnal "Lord Let it Rain on Me." *Grace* aptly answers those who have been wondering what the Yardbirds would sound like if they would have let the heroin play the guitar more. (SanctuaryRecords.com) —Reed Jackson

STARS HEART

Stars isn't so much Canada's answer to Human League and Pulp as it is one of the most relevant modern bands in the world. Sounding eerily like the album we wish the Magnetic Fields would release, the second record by this still-growing quartet is a marvelously accomplished affair. Synths, bass and soaring melodies constitute the groups' constantly flowing blood. Every living person deserves to hear music as beautiful as this. If

Heart doesn't make your ticker swell, you don't have one. (Arts-Crafts.ca) —Neal Ramirez

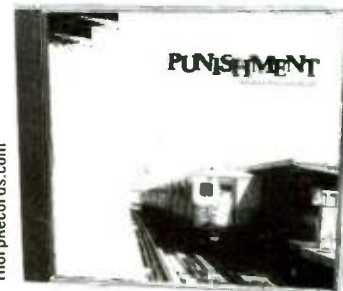
SUSHIROBO THE LIGHT-FINGERED FEELING OF

One listen to Sushirobo's second full-length, and it's clear why the robo in its name isn't without merit. The Seattle four-piece, led by ex-Posies guitarist Arthur Roberts, plays space-age electronic rock, a la Wire or Gang of Four, with an arty poise suggesting emotions generated by artificial life forms. Laser beam effects careen off pulsating basslines and angular vocals and the band creates all this with just guitars. While it lacks a dance track as catchy as "Rat or Mole" from 2002's *Drawing and Garbage Structures*, the album abounds with arcing, playful grooves. Album opener, "Moonfruit," is dreamy pop fun, while "Last Call" has a driven beat and vocals with a tart PIL bite. (Pattern25.com) —Sarah Tomlinson

THE TELESCOPES THE TELESCOPES

According to my rather hazy memory, The Telescopes were a shoegazing band from the very early '90s. Holding this record in my hand, I tried to recall more specific information to form a more coherent picture. Having failed, I put this reissue CD into the stereo, and almost did a spit-take. The opening track, "I Fall She

continued on page 68 >>



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**PUNISHMENT
BROKEN BUT NOT DEAD**

They say you can't get to heaven on the Frankford El, but Punishment still manages to find some catharsis. *Broken But Not Dead* marks the return of Philadelphia's reigning kings of metalcore, with 10 songs (and one intro bust) of chugging guitars and double-bass breakdowns sure to whip the pit into a kickboxing frenzy. Vocalist Joe Hardcore alternates from ultra gruff shouts to death metal growls as he relates all the heartbreak, triumph and knowledge gleaned coming up in the 19124 (zipcode for one of Philly's hawder hoods). Check out standout tracks like "Struggle and Sacrifice" with its gang vocals or "Raised High," Punishment's ode to neighborhood camaraderie. Excellent design by KEM perfectly rounds out this disc's theme of finding oneself in gritty city living. —Michael O'Brien

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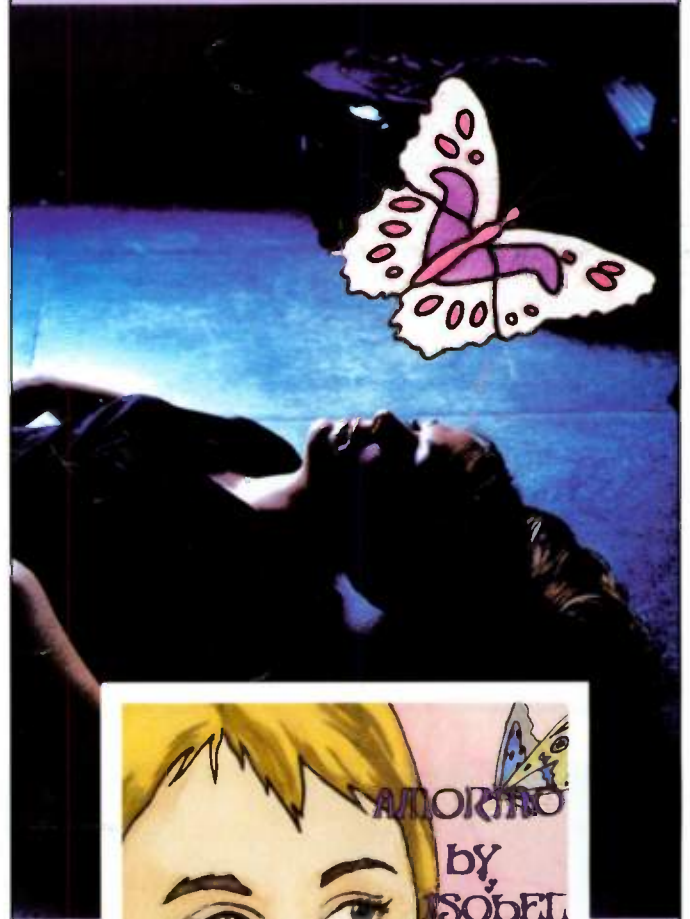
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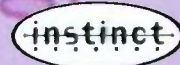
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Screams," is a blunt, howling nightmare of a song, coming a lot closer to the Stooges than to Slowdive. The first half of the record follows suit, before a gradual, bizarre transformation comes into play. The music gets quieter and more surreal as song titles change from "Suicide" and "Anticipating Nowhere" to "Pure Sweetest Ocean" and "Celestial." At one point, there's even a long session of what sounds like whale noises. That the band manages to pull off this change-up without sounding fake is a testament to some unique skill. So it seems The Telescopes was a shoegazing band after all, but one with a whole host of demons in the closet, and a past haunting its sound at every turn. Keep your eyes firmly on your Pumas. (Bomp.com) —Reed Jackson

THIS DAY FORWARD
IN RESPONSE

Years after the honeymoon, the love affair between punk and metal still bristles with passion and, suprisingly, continues to produce more individualized bastard offspring. Just when you thought you'd heard all the possible combinations, along comes a band like This Day Forward. These guys might be quicker to place themselves in the emo or hardcore camps, but who cares about labels anyway? You'll be scratching your head all day trying to decide where to fit this Pennsylvania five-piece, and that's a good thing. More important than where this album fits on the Richter Scale of Heaviness are the deft touches of prog, which add an underlying

intensity. And when I say prog, I mean complexity with grace and taste. Somehow, bands in the hardcore/emo scene seem to have a knack for incorporating ideas from their old Yes albums without trying to sound like the next Tool. This Day Forward have as much command of the music's complexity as of the themes they present. Delivered with intellectual confidence, this absorbing slab of pre-apocalyptic dread ends up galvanizing you rather than pulling you into a wallowing state of hopelessness and despair. Another example of a band that succeeds in stirring up more drama by not hitting you over the head with distortion and gloom. (EqualVision.com) —Saby Reyes-Kulkarni

TRS-80
SHAKE HANDS WITH DANGER

Chicago's File-13 Records (formerly of Philadelphia, nee of Little Rock, Ark.) has added another stylistic feather to its already crowded cap with the addition of TRS-80. Harboring neo-psychedelics (Three Four Tens, Lenola) and rawk bands (Burning Brides) alike, File-13 has now made the leap from analog to digital—although the label's toe was in the pool with Aspera. Named after a primitive personal computer, Chicago's production trio TRS-80 has a particularly organic take on many different electronic styles. The album opener, "Cliff Evans," is a four-minute statement of intent careening wildly from big hip hop beats to tricky glitch parts, while "Hand Over Fist" also shifts gears several times. Most of TRS-80's sound collages work well. (File-13.com) —Christopher Fritz

TSURUBAMI
GEKKYUKEKKAICHI

Driven by the idea that "they are those who are destined from a previous life to become blood brothers," Tsurubami toil in the fields of the collective consciousness to create swirling clouds of activity and silence, building and dissipating like fog over a mountain. Featuring Emi Nobuko, Higashi Hiroshi and Kawabata Makoto of the Acid Mothers Temple, *Gekkyukekkaichi*, the group's sixth release, is a stirring blend of shimmering guitars, multi-directional drumming and anxiously murmuring bass. (Strange-attractors.com) —Allan Martin Kemler

TYPE O NEGATIVE
LIFE IS KILLING ME

Still waving the Black Sabbath flag with reckless abandon, the Brooklyn quartet delivers its most accessible release while opening the door ever so slightly into a warped closet of humor. Singer Peter Steele remains let down by women and bright colors. Type O goes Off-Broadway with "Angry Inch," from *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*—a contender for comedic moment of the disc if only it weren't for the laughably homophobic "I Like Goils," whereupon the arrow-straight Steele laments "I'm quite flattered that you think I'm cute/But I don't deal well with compacted poop." (RoadRunnerRecords.com) —Michael Christopher

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THE VACANCY
EP

It's difficult to describe punk bands without 1) seeming like a know-it-all fuckwad and/or 2) getting way too analytical about what punk is and/or 3) sounding bitter and pining away for a bygone heyday where the punk ethic meant something pure. Because I wasn't there and I wouldn't know, I'll spare you. This seven-song EP manages to achieve a high energy level despite beats that sort of just thump along. What makes these guys stand out is their blend of a slightly more traditional approach and a more modern melodic sensibility. The guitar riffing seems to switch decades from ratty and snot-nosed to chunky and metallic, often in the same song. Vocalist Ben Dietels has a truly distinctive voice that's hard to place in any particular time period and would sound at home in many styles of music. It'll be interesting to see if he starts phrasing things in a way that does his voice justice instead of playing by punk's rigid rules. His vocal lines, in general, aren't terribly original, but on the other hand they are nicely doubled up in places during the harmonies and backing vocal sections. The Vacancy aren't trying to take your head off with intensity, nor do they burn up the intensity they do have with the kinds of short spastic bursts so many punk bands try to pass off as energy. Instead, they let their songs develop gradually, taking their time and earning attention over the

long run, which really puts them ahead—kind of like how the tortoise beat the hare. The Vacancy win by not trying to keep up. The sound quality is a modern-day equivalent of *Legacy of Brutality*. In some ways, the band sounds like they were recorded next door, and that adds considerable charm (seriously). (A-FRecords.com)

—Saby Reyes-Kulkarni

VERSE
FOUR SONGS

Sometimes in these days of electroclash, mash-ups, and IDM, it is nice to hear a band playing unpretentious hardcore. On this four track (duh) CD, Rhode Island's Verse provides the rock solid, breakdown-infused songs known to have powered straightedge bands since the late '80s. While no new ground is broken, Verse travels the worn path well, taking influence from Outspoken, Give up the Ghost and later day Turning Point. Unfortunately the lyrics are still awash with a stabbed-in-the-back mentality. This is a strong release, and those that jock the Deathwish and Bridge 9 catalogs should best peep Verse. (ContrastRecordStore.com)

—Michael O'Brien

VOLTA DO MAR/MURDER BY DEATH
VOLTA DO MAR/MURDER BY DEATH

Both Volta Do Mar and Murder By Death do some occasionally wondrous things—each outfit representing with its own diverse sonic assembly

of tight rhythms and sparse guitar work. Vocally, the tenors often don't spark right. Despite the problems, these troupes do make for a decent listen. (Team-AV.com)

—Brian Peterson

ROCKY VOTOLATO
SUICIDE MEDICINE

It's usually the ones who don't call themselves emo—or shy for that matter—that you really gotta watch out for. Popping in an inconspicuous disc like Rocky Votolato's *Suicide Medicine* won't necessarily set off emo radars—at this point, we've all heard worse, right? Less than a minute into the disc's opening tune lyrics like, "If I have to crack open your skull with my fist/I'll let the light and the sound escape" start to underline the obvious. (SecondNatureRecords.com)

—Josh Bashara

THE VUE
DOWN FOR WHATEVER

Amidst the melange of indie garage bands comes one capable of plugging it with some style. The Vue surfaces with its first major-label release, *Down For Whatever*, an expeditious release of moody pop with a bluesy attitude. "She's Sweet," is a party favorite, while "Frozen Juice" is a wall-flower's anthem. The Vue has created a soundtrack fit for any snotty, emotional and ruthless social set. (RCARrecords.com)

—Abigail Bruley



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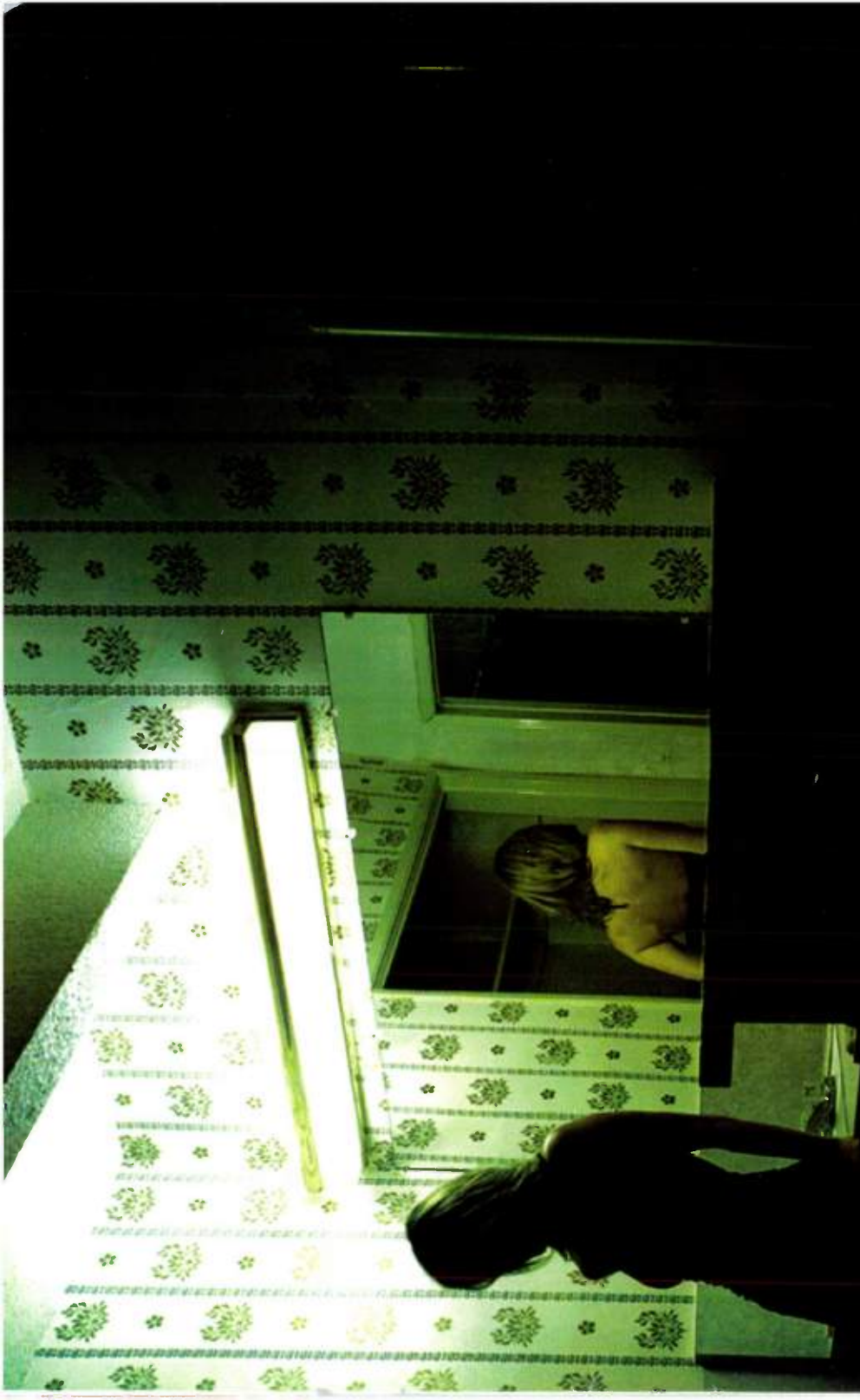
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MATES OF STATE

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Touring in the Pax Americana

ATMOSPHERE

\\...like tasting fruit
off the vine after a
lifetime of grape soda. //

Ink 19



Dufus "1:3:1"



in stores
September 30

\\ Like an encyclopedia of so-called outsider music condensed into a downtown pagan mystery meeting. Dufus's recent "1:3:1" is the most unironically anarchic album I've heard all year... it's the 21st century equivalent of the Fugs at their finest. //

richard gohr, village voice

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TRS-80 - 'Shake Hands With Danger' [FT45 CD]
Available September 23

Chicago's TRS-80 mixes breakbeat, old school hip-hop, downtempo, and electro rhythms with analog synths, samples, and sounds. Shake Hands With Danger finds TRS-80 light years ahead of their already futuristic repertoire. TRS80.com



Need New Body - 'UFO' [FT44 CD/LP]
Available September 23

Ravenous followers of NNB wait no longer! The follow-up to their F13 debut, UFO encapsulates the energy and experimentation that has been dazzling and bewildering audience after audience. neednewbody.com



Martin Rev - 'To Live' [FT46 CD]
Available September 30

As the instrumentalist of the legendary duo Suicide, NYC's Martin Rev has remained one of music's most innovative and influential producers. His new solo album To Live is perhaps his most interesting work yet. martinrev.com



The Dishes - '3' [FT47 CD]
Available October 14

Chicago's Dishes have a reputation for being unusually concise even in the realm of garage punk. By the end of the opening track, you'll have no doubt that 3 is their tightest and most nuanced album. thedishes.com



Sterling - 'Sterling' [FT43 CD]
Still Available / April 15 2003

Chicago's finest instrumental rock quartet, Sterling's new self-titled album possesses an unrelenting background in composition, art and aesthetic. 10 out of 10 according to Vice Magazine.

the spiders
glitzkrieg

the spiders
glitzkrieg

"a fusillade of Stooges attitude and Sex Pistols swagger... How much more Rock n' Roll can you get?" Austin Chronicle

IN STORES OCTOBER 7

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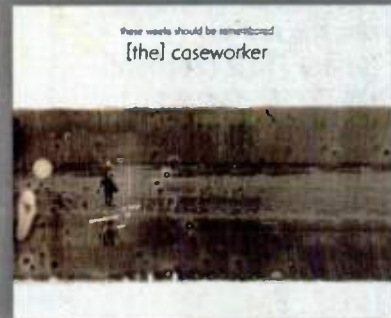
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[the] caseworker

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Pronunciation: /fɪkʃən
Function:
Etymology:
Origin:
Date:
Middle English
14th century
15th century
16th century
17th century
18th century
19th century
20th century
21st century
22nd century
23rd century
24th century
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IN STORES 9.9.03

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