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MARILYN MANSON

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A photograph of PJ Harvey sitting outdoors near a body of water. She has dark, curly hair and is wearing a white t-shirt with a large red lips graphic and blue jeans. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background shows water and some foliage.

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World Radio History

This month's exclusive CD features cover boy **ROB ZOMBIE**, the inimitable **PJ HARVEY**, LA swingers **ROYAL CROWN REVIEW**, country-rocker **ROBBIE FULKS**, Brit-pop from **RIALTO** and **GOMEZ**, Japanese pop from **NATURAL CALAMITY** and **FANTASTIC PLASTIC MACHINE**, solo material from House Of Pain rapper **EVERLAST**, Finnish folk from **VÄRTTINÄ**, American rock from **FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS** and **REMY ZERO**, and power-pop from **SLOAN** plus **CHOCOLATE GENIUS**, **WES CUNNINGHAM**, **DEEJAY PUNK-ROC**, **LIDA HUSIK**, **LISAHALL**, **MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO**, **MEDIAEVAL BÆBES** and **SNOWPONY**.

ON THE COVER AND HERE: ROB ZOMBIE
PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRIS CUFFARO



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"To me, solo records seem like this self-indulgent little project—"Oh, I have this other side to me I must express! Which I don't. This is the only side there is." Katherine Turman gets to know, uh, that special side of the White Zombie frontman, who has just released his first album under his own name.

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"I lost my mind attacking *Either/Or* before it came out. I decided that I wouldn't do that in the future. You can't go, 'I don't want to write songs like that. I want to write songs like this.'" Academy Award nominee Smith talks with Kurt B. Reighley about his major label debut, *XO*.

cat power 34

"I came home from Africa and got all spiritual and political. I had a breakdown. I couldn't talk to my friends. All they wanted to talk about was music, and that didn't make any sense to me." Chan Marshall makes sense of her fourth album, *Moon Pix*, with David Daley.

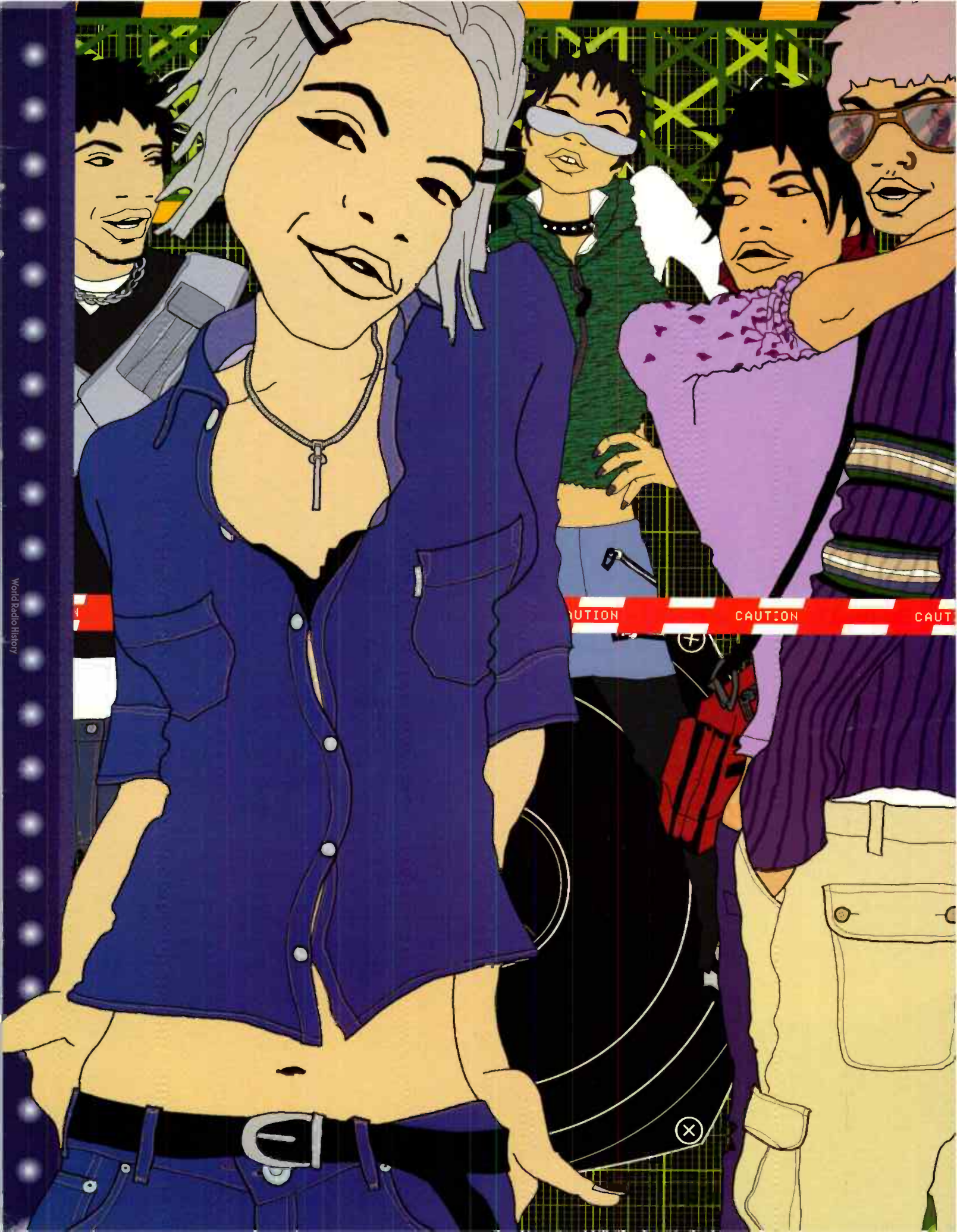
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"I was reintroduced to music all over again, in a country with such an amazing musical heritage and history!" English ex-pat Jack Dangers talks with Kurt B. Reighley about his new album, *Actual Sounds And Voices*, and a record collection measured in yards.

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"Fatboy Slim is the Chemical Brothers' crazy booze hound uncle." Matt Ashare gets the skinny from former Housemartin Norman Cook on his big beat persona.

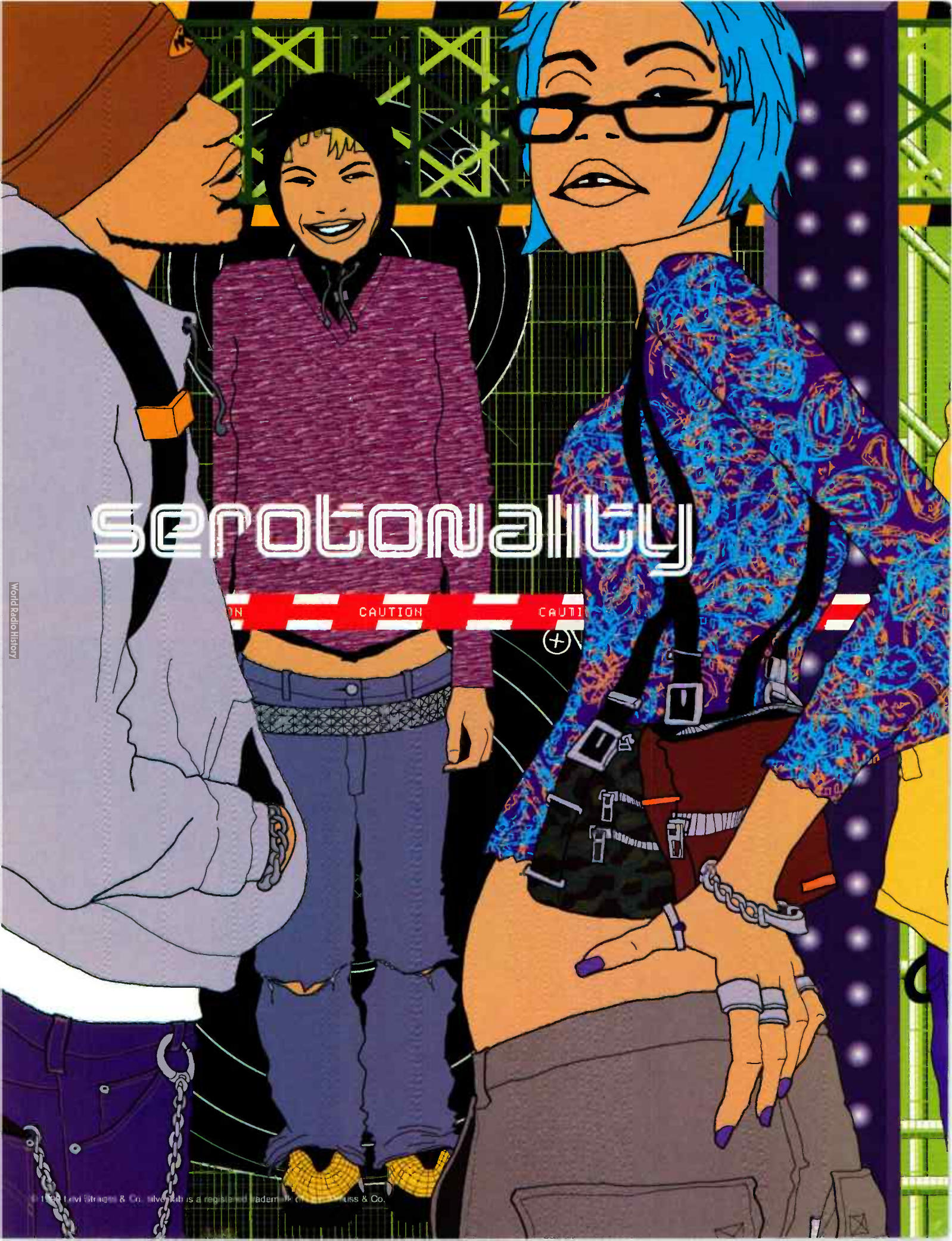
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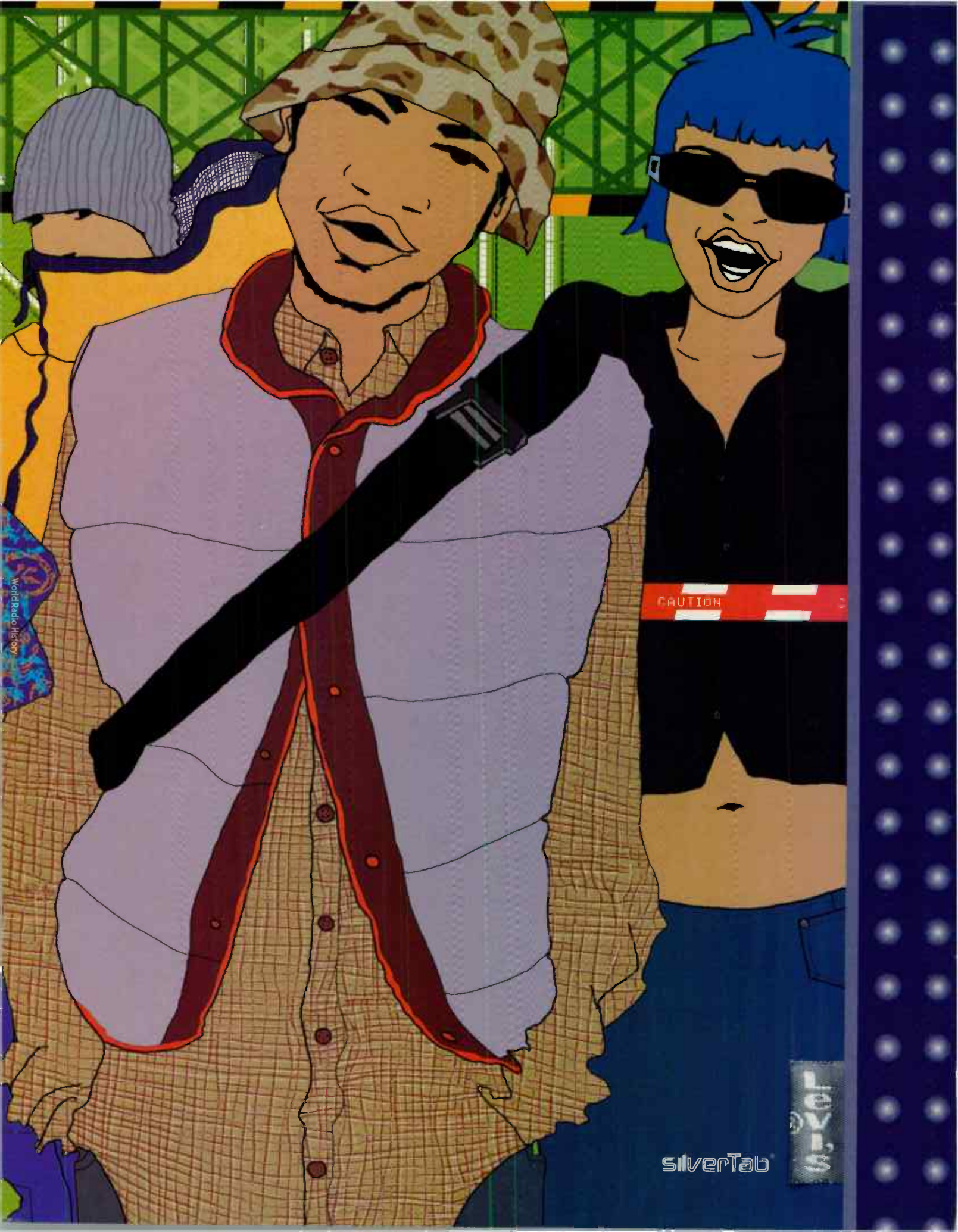


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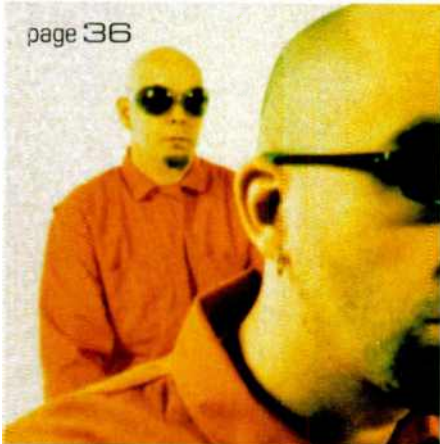
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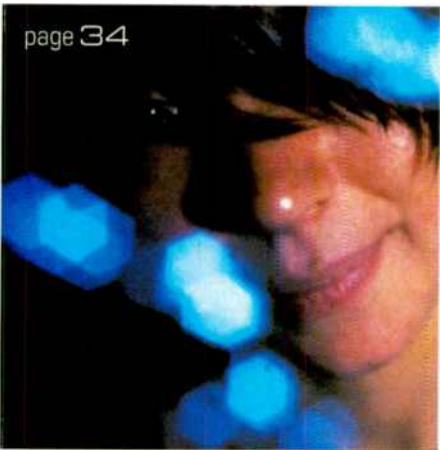
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A month's worth of music, from A to Z:
A MINOR FOREST to TOM ZÉ.

tori's spelling

Regarding your review of Tori Amos's new album *From The Choirgirl Hotel*. The line is "Sleep overs Beene's got some pot, you're only popular with anorexia...." Does that help you understand what that supposed "idiosyncratic syntax" means? It is what she says, as well as how she says it—why not grab a copy and read the lyric sheet before reviewing an album? Your mag rocks despite this slight oversight, as I'm sure you know anyway.

Reviewer Matt Ashare responds, with a laugh: "Yeah, I was completely wrong." In Matt's (and any reviewer's, or copy editor's) defense, lyric sheets often aren't available for the advance cassettes and CDs we work from, so we often must go with only our attuned ears. Personally, I think that Matt's reading of that line in "Jackie's Strength"—"Sleepovers mean get some pie/You're only popular with anorexia"—is actually better, and I bet if asked, the Cornflake Girl would feel the same.... Okay, I can't stand it anymore. I admit it! We made him change the line because of payola from the American Pie Association. Ah, I feel like a huge weight has just been lifted off my shoulders, if not off my waistline. I'm just a man. I can only resist so much. And I swear that was the flakiest crust I'd ever seen. >>> Ed.

less excited at that time of the month

Why? As a 27 year old, a lifelong fan of indie music (sigh, the days when the word "alternative" meant something besides a selling point), I have to wonder why *CMJ New Music Monthly*, one of the last easily accessible resources for said alternative music, constantly flirts with the mainstream. Smashing Pumpkins don't belong on the cover of your glorious publication. They are bigger than Bob Seger in the '70s and now are just a bunch of tripe. *Gish* was a great record and *Siamese Dream* offered more gems to hum, but let's face it, since they've been all chummy they have really gone downhill. Hey, let's dump our drummer when he needs us most and replace him with a machine! Come on *New Music Monthly*, I've definitely disagreed with a lot of your magazine's content in the past (that's part of the reason that I covet you so), but this is too much. How can they possibly be the best new music, is it that dead out there? Is the music scene really that bad? Are you on the verge of becoming a dinosaur that spews the same gobbledygook as *Spin* and *Rolling Stone*? Don't get me

wrong. I still have faith that this is just another time when we don't see eye to eye, but ever since your format change I've become less and less excited to see your mag on the racks on the 15th or 16th of each month.

William A Van Gorden 3

Don't knock tripe until you've tried it. Order the pepperpot soup at Bookbinders in Philadelphia and see what I mean. Oh, about that cover thing, when you've put a band on your cover twice before and it's your fifth anniversary issue, you tend to be happy about things like the fact that said band is really popular. If that's flirting with the mainstream, I can confidently say that I've flirted with worse. Personally, I'd rather see the Smashing Pumpkins on a cover than Dave Matthews's tummy, but one man's tripe is another man's soup, and all magazines try to put artists or personalities on their covers that they think will most appeal to the people who would like and buy the magazine. It's all what seems right at the time, and as long as we're talking soup, right now I could really go for some Gai Tom Kha. >>> Ed.

we got the hookup

You guys always hook me up with the fat track. I want it and yet I can't get it (the whole thing) cuz it ain't released yet. I don't give a fuck how many bitches out there complain about your rag. It seems to be getting better and better to me. You guys got more intuition than most of the takers out there. How can cretins complain that every track isn't a winner. That's the fun, to pick the track you like yourself. Is it enough to warrant space in your letters forum? Could you send me some acknowledgment that you got this letter? You guys rip on a monthly basis. You guys (and gals) are on it.

Geoff Holton
Douglas, AZ

As Homer Simpson might say: "Mmmmm...fat track." Geoff may have answered his own rhetorical question as to what warrants space in the letters column, but more to the point is that I'm fucking starving over here. You want acknowledgment? Great. Well, pal, me and my low blood sugar want the open-face turkey sandwich—with mashed potatoes!—Tad Hendrickson just walked by with. Or, some bourbon bread pudding from 410 Bank Street in Cape May, NJ, because hey, if I'm going to sell out, I'm going to do it in style.

>>> Ed.

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DANIEL MOSS

RASPUTINA'S CELLO HELL

HORSE HAIR, CAT GUT AND WHALE BONES



STORY: TOM LANHAM

CREAGER CENTER

Try as she might, Melora Creager just can't forget Little Rock, Arkansas. Opening for Goth-industrial gods Marilyn Manson with her ladies cello society, Rasputina, fiddling dark dirges while attired in a constricting Victorian corset, she was little prepared for the crowd's reaction.

"We were just sorta thrown into a den of lions there," shivers Creager, safely ensconced in her spooky Brooklyn flat. "They saw the fear in our eyes, they smelled it, and they threw things. Yoga books. Skoal cans. Toilet paper. And I don't know if people realize, just with physics, how much pain a penny or a piece of ice causes when hurled from a distance."

Cellos were dinged and dented. The Rasputina girls tried to tune their instruments to no avail. The most vivid memory Creager has of the evening, she frowns, is of screaming at fellow bandmate Agnieszka Rybska—who "had gone limp and given up"—to "Play, Agnieszka! Play!"

A photography major in school, a jewelry designer by trade, Creager generally stays out of the line of fire. Her surreal take on folk art is featured in the booklet for Rasputina's sophomore CD, *How We Quit The Forest* (Columbia), as are her elaborate pencil sketches, many of which are self-portraits. Although today she is wearing a very current ensemble of tank top, harem pants and floral-print slides,

her apartment is adorned with prints, photographs and sculptures that are at least a century old. A Bach sonata noodles gently from her stereo; a fencing mask—testimony to —hangs nearby.

"I like excessive detail and I like decay," Creager says of her taste in art. "And surreal stuff, like my collages, are real to me. Like, by making something I can actually go there, and it feels real at the time." It follows that much of *Forest* finds Creager, in her delicate vibrato, wondering aloud about strange diseases ("Trenchmouth"), the outdated curing practices of such ailments ("Leech Wife"), and even the twisted experiments that Nazi doctors performed on sets of twins ("Herb Girls Of Birkenau"). The results are agreeable, but why has the multi-talented Creager decided to go full-tilt with the cellos?

"I have a lot of skills, but as I focus on one, the others sort of fall by the wayside," she sighs, pointing to dozens of trays of ornate beads, and a long-dormant glue gun, from her jewelry-designing days. "And a lot of people ask me, 'Oh, you don't do photography anymore? How can you let something like that lapse?' But I really feel like I'm always me and these different things are all the same—Rasputina is a *living* photograph, continuing what I was trying to do in college. It's just another form of expression."

e n d

WEIRD RECORD OF THE MONTH

Are you tired of crassly commercial amphibian acts like Kermit and the Budweiser frogs? Do you pine for the days when the art of frog song took precedent over the almighty dollar? If so, check out *Sounds Of North American Frogs*, an 88-track collection dating back to the mid-'50s and recently reissued on Smithsonian Folkways. Recorded and narrated



by noted herpetologist Charles M. Bogert—the Harry Smith of swamp—*Sounds* captures 57 different species of frogs and toads in their native tongue and habitat, far away from the corruptive influence of

The Man. Bogert, er, dissects the sounds of his little green friends with deadpan authority, but his passion for and knowledge of his subjects are total. From the hypnotic chirp of the Barking Treefrog, which wouldn't sound out of place on an Oval record, to the explosive groan of the Pig Frog, which resembles a wicked fart, *Sounds* is both informative and hilarious.

>>> *Matt Henks*

LABEL PROFILE BLOODSHOT RECORDS

Since 1993, **BLOODSHOT RECORDS** has served as a stable for fringe alternative country artists, such as Robbie Fulks, the Waco Brothers and Old 97s. In fact, the label coined the term "insurgent country" to describe the music it supports. "When we started off," says label co-founder Rob Miller, "we wanted [the term] to ultimately mean a band that puts a record out on our label; you know, I like to think that we define it." The Chicago-based indie takes a punk approach to country music and so its aesthetic is edgier and more stripped-down than most major-label alt-country fare. "Within what we do now there's a tremendous spectrum of music," Miller explains, "but it all has no boundary between the listener and the artist. All that artifice has been stripped away. And I think, with naked honesty, you're gonna fuck up every once in awhile, but I like to think that at least we're taking chances."

BUZZ WORD DOWNTOWN JAZZ

Refers to a style of avant-garde jazz that originated during the '70s "loft movement" in New York City and broadened to include a community of left-of-center artists living and working in lower New York. Far south of established jazz venues and the tradition-bound Lincoln Center, spaces like the Knitting Factory and artist-run lofts continue to feature experimental and highly improvisational music. Chief practitioners include John Zorn and his many varied projects, postmodern swingers like John Lurie's Lounge Lizards, serious jazz improvisers like David S. Ware and electronic adventurers like DJ Spooky

ARNOLD HILLSIDE SHAGGERS

Just as American rock royalty went back to the country in the '70s, today's Brit-packers are goin' up the country in *their own sweet way*. Teenage Fancub, Bernard Butler and now Arnold have taken the English penchant for timeless melody and enveloped it in ringing acoustic guitars shimmering vocals and, in Arnold's case, dollops of Monty Python-esque humor.

"Our music is big in an intimate way," says guitarist Mark Saxby, munching a hot dog on a Manhattan street corner. "Does that sound like nonsense? We don't go for big kettledrums and crashing snares like Bernard—our music is warmer than that. Our songs are inherently anthemic, no matter how we approach them. We're more Bay City Rollers than Phil Spector."

Others might compare Arnold's falsetto crooner, Phil Morris, to Radiohead's Thom Yorke. Beautiful, desolate, yearning, Arnold's dreamy tunes and airy vocals also recall Crosby, Stills & Nash, Nick Drake and Glen Campbell.

"Thom Yorke certainly hasn't invented a style of singing," says Morris. "Tim Buckley and Harry Nilsson did it as well. The Radiohead comparisons we get are because I sing in falsetto, which Thom does too. But Radiohead are quite one-dimensional in their music. They would never write songs like 'Curio,' 'Rubber Duck' or 'Rabbit.' They have their thing down."

On *Hillside* (Creation-Columbia), between sun-drenched country epics like "Fleas Don't Fly," "Hillside" and "Windsor Park," lie moments of goofy humor and bitter reflection. In "Rabbit," a spoken word rant that recalls Michael Caine, or Ewan McGregor from *Trainspotting*, Saxby reels off a blunt tale of life's purpose over nauseating sound effects and a children's choir. "Sometimes the lows outweigh the highs/Take whatever is thrown at you, take the whole fucking lot/You still got a bloody choice."

"It's stream of consciousness," says Morris.

"It's stream of semi-consciousness," laughs Saxby. "People will have to make of it what they will, that is the song's appeal. We thought America wouldn't understand 'Rabbit.' But it's the most important thing on the album. It twists the second half of the record away from the bucclic. It's quite angry isn't it?"

Sensing the dark tone of the conversation, Arnold switches to pet American peevish.

"Why are the water faucets in the hotels so hard to work?" they wonder. Better yet, "Why are all the hotel beds in London worn out, as though slept in by an army of fat, restless tourists?"

"Cause we're a great shagging nation," replies Morris.

"We're the world's greatest shaggers," agrees Saxby. "We make the French look pathetic in the bedroom."

"Yes," affirms Morris. "We are Olympic shaggers. That is our next album title: *England—The Great Shagging Nation*."

>>> *Ken Micallef*



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SLOAN CHORDS OF CANADA ★

"Canadian bands are definitely not cool or don't have that cool perception," laughs Sloan's Jay Ferguson. "We're going to break it down though. We're the last bastions of hope. We're going to show that there are good Canadian bands."

Judging by the records he and his bandmates make and the mania they inspire in their native country, they're well on their way. A recent in-store appearance in Vancouver attracted more than 1,500 kids, who tried to break through the windows of the store after being told the music shop was at capacity.

"It's gratifying that people would actually care about our music that much," Ferguson admits almost shyly. "I think we're a good band, so I'm glad that we get the attention. If we were bad maybe I'd be embarrassed. I appreciate it."

Navy Blues, the band's fourth album, is as unabashedly full of cool '70s pop references as last year's *One Chord To Another* was steeped in 60s allusions. According to bass player Chris Murphy, however, the evolution of each record is more organic than that. "I'd really like to be able to get together with the band and say, 'Let's do this kind of record,'" he says, "but it's kind of impossible because there's no leader, it's just *Lord Of The Flies* all the time."

"I don't want bands to make the same record every time," adds Ferguson. "The best model is the Beatles, who changed pretty drastically record to record. I appreciate bands that make interesting records."

"We're four cover bands," Murphy says of the four distinct singer/songwriters who make up the quartet. "We play our own songs, and then the others have to learn them, and onstage we look like this garage band. We like to have a good time, but we're really serious about making good records. I like to think we walk the line between character and cool."

Sloan's widespread success in Canada—the band recently played to almost 40,000 people at a show in Toronto, and its album went gold in Canada in only three weeks—is far from having been replicated in the US. After two albums for DGC, *Navy Blues*, like *One Chord*, will see release in the States through the band's own Murderecords label, but Murphy sees an advantage to that state of affairs. "We have a really unique economic situation in the playpen environment of Canada," he says. "We can take that money and invest it in ourselves in the States. Why would we go to a major? What are they going to give us? We make enough money in Canada."

>>> Scott Wilson

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DIAMANDA GALÁS

WHAT'S INSIDE A GROWL

Although she definitely qualifies as a "peerless" singer, pianist, composer and diva, Diamanda Galás didn't emerge from San Diego in the late '70s fully formed and without precedents. And just to prove it, she arrives at lunch to discuss her new album, *Malediction And Prayer* (Asphodel), with a two-page checklist detailing her influences.

Some journalists might be insulted by such a pedantic turn, but Galás can be forgiven. Her resume features work with free jazz heavyweights and Europe's more exacting avant-garde composers alike, culminating in a catalog of groundbreaking albums including *The Litanies Of Satan*, *Schrei X Live* and her AIOS trilogy, *Masque Of The Red Death*. With a three-and-a-half-octave range and the operatic training to back it up, she can call down the heavens or unlock the gates of hell when she opens her mouth. Still, many can't see past her vocal pyrotechnics and striking visage, or her gender, to the heart of her artistry.

"People ask me what I think of Liz Phair or Courtney Love," she sputters. "Why do I care? I have no opinion. Why don't they talk to me about music?"

During our three-hour visit, Galás ticks off countless people, places and events—from the Armenian genocide to "On A Clear Day You Can See Forever"—that inform her art. She details the fine points of

Rembetiko, the Greek equivalent of early Delta blues. She speaks of jazz colleagues like Bobby Bradford, Roberto Miranda and Mark Dresser... and poets and filmmakers and composers.

Most importantly, she lists singers: Egyptian legend Dum Kalsoum; flamenco icon El Camarón de la Isla; "the Bessie Smith of rai," Algerian Cheikha Remitti; Amelia Rodrigues, the queen of Portuguese fado; Greek opera diva Maria Callas ("of course"). She adds jazz pioneers: Carmen McRae, Esther Phillips ("because she phrased like she had a razor in her throat"), Annette Peacock. "Patty Waters was a major innovator, and people don't know anything about her. If you're doing anything weird in the jazz scene, people don't write about you until you're dead." She praises Janis Joplin. Her enthusiasm is infectious.

One section of Diamanda's notes reads like a stanza of free verse:

Cash
Ochs
Dixon
Tear apart the song
The range is the paints and the muscle
And the boxer's dance
Monk to Beefheart

These concern *Malediction And Prayer*, for which the diva assembled a program dealing with death, isolation and love. Including songs popularized by Mahalia Jackson, Johnny Cash and even the Supremes, plus texts by Baudelaire, Pasolini and Miguel Mixco set to music, the record wrestles with themes of suffering, redemption and, like most of Galás's work, justice.

"The concept came out of looking at the songs," reveals Galás, who felt the impact of each almost immediately upon discovery. Cash's "25 Minutes To Go" walked into her life while she was touring in 1992. She toyed with Baudelaire's "Abel Et Caïn" for over ten years. "Willie Dixon's 'Insane Asylum' is an opera. There's a mad scene, honey." She dedicated Phil Ochs's "Iron Lady" to Aileen Wournos, a prostitute currently on Florida's death row for murdering seven johns. But her reading features none of the trademark wailing Galás fans expect. "She's a hero to a lot of us, not just as a symbol, but as a woman," explains Galás, "so I wanted to do the song straight."

As she shines a light on her complex artistic legacy and current work, Galás also takes time to dispel certain myths. She never sat in with Ornette Coleman. The influence of Yma Sumac on her technique has been vastly exaggerated. And she didn't hear Yoko Ono until over ten years into her singing career, although in recent years the two have met. "You don't have Yoko as an influence and then mention all these other singers," she grins. Diamanda has a beautiful smile... the better to eat you with, my dear.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley

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IN MY ROOM

HIGH LLAMAS/ADD N TO X

Rob Allum (yup, he's in both bands)

- Cricket
- Sushi
- "Yama in New York City is great!"
- Richard Thompson
- Hard won mental stability
- (film) *Get Carter*
British mob movie from the 1970s"



JESUS LIZARD

David Yow

- Ry Cooder
Soundtrack to *Paris, Texas*
- Stanford Prison Experiment
Wrecreation
- Frank Zappa
Zoot Allures
- Helmet
Meantime
- Trailer Hitch
The Long Tall Tales & Highway Adventures Of...



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RANDOM FACT

JOHN LYDON lived up to his rotten reputation at a recent taping of the *World Cup Fantasy Football* television program. The former Sex Pistol (who will soon be hosting his own TV show on VH1) was booted from the studio after he allegedly cursed audience members, assaulted a producer, threw a lit cigarette into the audience and accosted players on the UK's World Cup team.

RANDOM QUOTE

"When I was a kid, I was playing with some cousins, and somebody called me redboy. And it was like, 'What is that?' I didn't understand, but I could see it on my cousins' faces that this was a bad thing, and it was one of those things that went inside and stayed with me my whole life."

—Robbie Robertson, on his Native American heritage



Fanatic may be too strong a word. And fan doesn't quite cover it. But devotae is probably a fair enough compromise when it comes to describing Jim Beattie's relationship to the '60s pop of Brian Wilson's Beach Boys.

A former and founding member of Primal Scream and Spirea X, Beattie began in earnest to indulge his devout fondness for *Pet Sounds* just over two years ago, when he and Spirea X singer Judith Boyle formed Adventures In Stereo. They began offering aural tribute to the Beach Boys on home-recorded (on a four-track), hard-to-find singles in their native Scotland, which were then collected on a blue self-titled import-only disc. Another self-titled full-length followed (this one yellow), as did a trip to a somewhat more advanced eight-track studio, which yielded the material for another album—the duo's US debut—*Alternative Stereo Sounds* (Bobsled).

Beattie, who handled all of the instrumentation on the early AIS recordings and now sticks to guitar, has gone to great lengths to recreate the sound of the '60s, from placing only three microphones on the drum kit to procuring vintage valve compressors to mixing the final product in mono. "It's what I call mono-stereo or stereo-mono," he explains. "The right channel is slightly out of phase, just by a millisecond, with the left. It's the same mix coming through both channels, but one's just a little bit off. So it's a mono mix that sounds stereo-ish. I was trying to go for a timeless sound—like *Pet Sounds* or *Forever Changes* by Arthur Lee and Love. I wish I could do *Pet Sounds*, but I'm not that talented. So I did the best I could."

Of course, with Boyle handling all of the harmony and lead vocals, the effect is more along the lines of the Beach Girls or perhaps, what the Mamas without the Papas produced by Brian Wilson might have sounded like. But there's no mistaking the surf's-up sentiments of songs like the perky "Out Of Sight" or the sunny "Dream Surf Baby" for anything less than a reverent homage to a man and a band an ocean and three decades removed from Beattie's childhood surroundings.

"If you're from America then you probably don't realize this," he points out, "but American music sounds like America. To a guy in Glasgow who's walking around with rain and dog shit on the ground with his headphones on, hearing the Beach Boys on the radio makes him think of America and wish he were in LA."

>>> Matt Ashare

Q & A EVERLAST

Everlast, the 28-year-old former House Of Pain rapper, made news in February when he suffered a near-fatal cardiac arrest and underwent emergency bypass surgery. Now he's back with *Whitey Ford Sings The Blues* (Tommy Boy), a solo album which finds him playing guitar with a live band as well as rapping over loops and breaks.

>>> James Lien

Where'd this guitar-playing thing come from?

I had been playing guitar, personally, like, at home alone, for a long time. There's pictures of me at five years old holding a guitar. Then we were on tour with the Beasties and I got really cool with Yauch and Adrock—Mike D was a bit of a recluse, hard to get to know unless you hang with him every day or something. But I used to soundcheck with those guys and play guitar, and they wrote some nice stuff about me in *Grand Royal*. They said I was a really good blues player or something. And so people started to check for me. I did some tracks for a Channel Live remix.

You also changed your voice. You're not as hoarse. Is that because you quit smoking and drinking so much?

Actually, Dante [Ross, one of the record's producers] and one of the guys in the studio told me, "Stop yelling." That's the way I used to be, all the time, just like, "Yo!!!!!" It took me two or three days to stop and find my regular voice.

How would you describe your new sound?

If Neil Young was a B-Boy—that's kind of what I'm trying to get. If Johnny Cash met Run-DMC.

So you're going to go on tour with a band, playing live every night?

If you're a rapper, especially with the DAT, you've gotta run the same set every night, and that gets really mundane, like a job. Now I can turn around onstage and just be like, "Yo, fuck this. We're gonna freestyle." As opposed to just a rapper, making up this shit, we're gonna get to the point where we can have the whole band freestyle, right there on the spot.

What about the current state of hip-hop?

I think people are ready for some different shit. I think people are tired of motherfuckers faking, drinking champagne, wearing gold lame jackets in hip-hop, you know. Plus, these cats are running out of disco hits to fucking steal.

Hip-hop is going through its Motley Crue/Poison glam rock stage right now, it's all about the Benjamins. It's weak. It's not about reality. Cats coming out with their first 12" single, where the label went and bought them gold chains, Versace suits and shit. It's ridiculous, insane. Then I see billionaire rock bands like Pearl Jam dressing like they're homeless guys. I got more respect for that.



because they're saying, "Yo, I got a lot of money but I just don't care. I'm just here for my music." Not that I would take it that far. I can't dress like that. I gotta feel fresh, you know what I'm sayin'?

Well thanks a lot for talking with us.

I'm flipping through this magazine. Look at this bad-ass chick right here—Laetitia Casta. Mmm, I'll have to meet her someday.

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Aarhus, Denmark

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Ian Brown
Can't See Me
Solex
One Leader Solex
Jon Spencer Blues Explosion
Wall
Pram
Little Seals
Jay Jay Johanson
So Tell The Girls That I Am
Back In Town
Suicide
Cheroc
Saint Etienne
Like A Motorway
Joy Division
Day Of The Lords
Tricky
Makes Me Wanna Die
Topsy
Playing Monkey First

SIDE TWO:

Charlatans UK
Come In Number 21
Ride
Leave Them All Behind
Man Or Astro-man?
Joker's Wild
Jimi Tenor
Take Me Baby
Smiths
What Difference Does It Make?
Timelords
Doctorin' The Tardis
Speaker Bite Me
Neon
Nick Cave
Do You Love Me?
Dimitri From Paris
Stere Franckis
Arab Strap
Here We Go
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BELLE & SEBASTIAN

The Boy With The Arab Strap

Matador

Scottish troupe Belle & Sebastian's US debut, *If You're Feeling Sinister*, was a glorious moment for understated Brit-pop (as opposed to the oceanic Oasis variety), a seamless meld of downcast Smithsian jangle and evocative story-telling lyrics. *The Boy With The Arab Strap* bristles with the same charm as *Sinister*, the songs billowing with Stuart Murdoch's melancholy vocals and the octet's breezy melodies, but B&S stretches out in several significant ways: Alongside the Murdoch-sung tunes is one led by backup singer Isobel Campbell (the swaying, Heavenly-ish "Is It Wicked Not To Care"), two from guitarist Stevie Jackson ("Seymour Stein," "Chick Factor") and a spoken word story from bassist Stuart David, "Spaceboy Dream," a lighter cousin to the Velvet Underground's "The Box." Musically, too, several songs suggest VU's simple, but propulsive rhythms. Also, whereas *Sinister's* characters seemed confined to Glasgow's streets and dorm rooms, relying on their imaginations for escape, *Arab Strap's* dreamers jet off to New York City, leaving girlfriends behind ("Chick Factor"), and are courted by (Sire Records president) "Seymour Stein." I recently heard a news story proclaiming the death of Brit-pop, the sales of which have waned in the wake of the tidal force of pop pap like Spice Girls and All Saints. Guess they hadn't heard of Belle & Sebastian.

>>> Lydia Vanderloo



OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Brainy Brit-pop.

R.I.V.L.:

Smiths, Nick Drake, Lullaby

For The Working Class,

Galaxie 500.

ROBBIE FULKS ★

Let's Kill Saturday Night

Geffen

"Rocking" and "sincere" aren't words one expects to see connected to Robbie Fulks, but *Let's Kill Saturday Night*, Fulks's major label debut, comes as a surprise after his two previous albums. *Country Love Songs* and *South Mouth*, both on "insurgent country" home Bloodshot Records, featured twists on—and just plain twisted—honky-tonk and western swing, with sarcastic and carefully written songs which laughed with and at country conventions. Those albums were very good; *Let's Kill Saturday Night* is even better. Nothing on them prepared us for the rock 'n' roll anthems, country/folk ballads and, shudder to think, sincere emotion found here, and they only hinted at Fulks's considerable vocal and guitar playing talents. The album opens with two straight rockers: the propulsive title track, which sounds like a classic from the get-go, and the shouted "Caroline," which has echoes of Lynyrd Skynyrd guitars, no less. Then a soulful ballad (a duet with Lucinda Williams), then the witty but aching "She Must Think I Like Poetry," then "Bethelridge," a slow, English folk ballad drone, then more rousing and rocking anthems and suspiciously tender (although sometimes comic) acoustic ballads. Maybe Fulks is showing off that he can sing and write and play in all these styles, but we reap the benefits of his surprising talents.

>>> Steve Klinge



OUT: September 15.

FILE UNDER:

Insurgent Southern rock and ballads.

R.I.V.L.:

Dwight Yoakam, Jason And

The Scorchers,

Whiskeytown.

KAHIMI KARIE

Kahimi Karie

Minty Fresh

Some music is designed for maximum pleasure: Think Phil Spector's "wall of sound," think the Jackson Five, think Beck's *Odelay*, think "Mmm-bop." Now you're in the frame of mind for the domestic debut collection from Kahimi Karie—Japanese star, Paris resident, pop sensation. Karie sings in a high, breathy voice, in English or French, but the voice isn't the real attraction here, although its thinness works well against the clatter of melodies in the production, courtesy of Karie's collaborators (usually Japan's Cornelius and/or the UK's Momus). In the over-the-top style of Beck, who plays harmonica on "Lolita-pop Dollhouse," the music of *Kahimi Karie* combines far-flung sounds into a frothy, saturated mix anchored in perky melodies. "Candyman," for instance, starts with a plucky Jackson Five-style guitar, then brings in horns that could have come from an old Herb Alpert album before Karie's girlish vocals arrive. Although she likes the occasional bossa nova rhythm and covers Serge Gainsbourg and Jorge Ben, Karie is too energetic and too contemporary for the lounge niche; the many buried treasures of samples and sounds (new wave synths, slide guitars, Fall allusions) and the density of the production here are thoroughly late-'90s. Whether or not Japanese pop becomes the next big thing, Kahimi Karie is wonderful right now.

>>> Steve Klinge



OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Giddy global pop.

R.I.V.L.:

Beck, Pizzicato Five, Ivy,

Cardigans.



SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE

How It Feels To Be Something On
Sub Pop

OUT: September 22

FILE UNDER:

Indie emo prog rock

R.I.V.L.:

Radiohead, Pearl Jam's *No Code*, Jeremy Enigk

The saga of Seattle's Sunny Day Real Estate has been, well, let's just say it's been interesting, shrouded in part by mysteries like, "Why did the band originally refuse to play anywhere in the state of California?" Born amidst grunge, Sunny Day seemed poised to become the next great Sub Pop act to make music that really mattered, though rather than taking the road to Nirvana, the band—particularly its singer, Jeremy Enigk—seemed to be reaching for the emotional peaks of U2. Higher powers intervened, strengthening Enigk's devotion to Christianity, and the rest of the band split before the second album was released. The rhythm section joined the Foo Fighters, guitarist Dan Hoerner bought a farm, and Enigk recorded a tortured solo album. Well, Sunny Day is back, and it sounds like the guys have been listening to a lot of Radiohead. Which really isn't such a bad thing. *How It Feels To Be Something On* is gritty and grandiose, cryptic and anthemic, epic yet somehow humble, kinda like *OK Computer*, only less processed. Enigk's pained falsetto and heavy-handed poetics ("trapped in the gloom of the dying light") get a little precious at times, but he sounds right at home in the context of the album's sweeping crescendos and ringing guitars. >>> *Matt Ashare*



Q-BURNS ABSTRACT MESSAGE

Feng Shui
Astralwerks

OUT: September 22

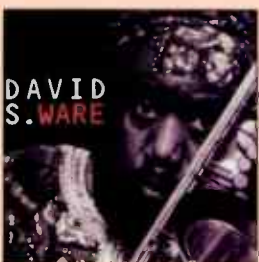
FILE UNDER: Funky

abstraction

R.I.V.L.:

Propellerheads, Dr. Octagon's *Instrumentalist*, UNKLE, Saetel

The stereotype of electronic music is that, whether it's ambient, house, big beat or drum 'n' bass, it's constructed as a linear journey. A song starts like a cross country race and off we go—the beat is the locomotion as the listener travels from sample to sample; the rhythm varies from time to time, and then the song runs out of gas. Does a cut ever stop and look around, content to examine and construct a single place in time? Q-Burns *Abstract Message* does just that: stands in one spot and checks the view, creating actual songs in which the beginning and the end have a similar vibe. Deep inside this circle are hooks, an occasional (true-to-life) vocal, and variations that form part of the whole. This whole is fantastic—downright funky and free. You won't find a lick of d 'n' b snare rolls within; rather, a slow groove rolls these songs from one to the next, with a party vibe that's ripe for grinding or cruising around with the bass way up and the windows way down. *Feng Shui* would be highly recommended if only for the great version of Faust's "Jennifer." That is, however, only the tip. The entirety of the record is worth your cash, a thoughtful, visionary melding of influences that makes for a uniquely funky listen. >>> *Randall Roberts*



DAVID S. WARE

Go See The World
Columbia

OUT: September 22

FILE UNDER:

Non conservative acoustic jazz

R.I.V.L.:

John Coltrane, Archie Shepp, Sam Rivers

Many current musicians view the expansive, allegedly unswinging free jazz of the late '60s as a nightmare from which Wynton Marsalis woke the world. Not tenor saxophonist David S. Ware. *Go See The World* finds Ware and longtime cohorts Matthew Shipp (piano) and William Parker (bass), along with newest recruit Susie Ibarra (drums), taking off from where Coltrane's late quartets edged into exploratory collectivism, and never looking back. Though Ware is a full-bodied player who calls down sheets of skronk at will, this isn't "energy jazz" à la Albert Ayler or Charles Gayle, who treat any concession to form as repressive. After a knotty ensemble section, Ibarra eases "Mikuro's Blues" into 5/4 swing, and it would take the length of this review to detail the interplay between composition and improvisation on the "Logistic," which features ample doses of Parker's wild bowing. Most head-spinning of all is a dense take on Marvin Hamlisch's saccharine "The Way We Were," which splits open about halfway through for Shipp's lush reading of the melody, played too intensely to be taken straight, and ends with Ware's soaring, but still recognizable, restatement. *Go See The World* is that increasingly rare entity, a record that combines tradition, innovation and virtuosity to treat jazz as a still-developing entity. >>> *Franklin Bruno*

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"Gentleman's Blues"



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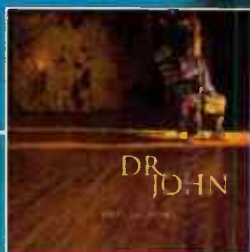
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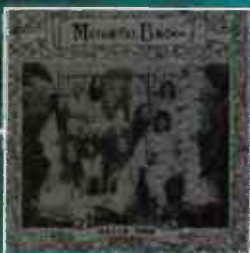
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VOX

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"Salva Nos"



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STEVIE NICHOLS



DOREEN GOLD

sunset valley

When Sunset Valley played its first show to a dozen onlookers in Portland, Oregon, it seemed like just another promising debut. Within months, however, the band's chopped-up pop songs began attracting not only fans and label attention but also additional members. The original trio of guitarist/vocalist Herman Jolly, bassist Eric Furlong and drummer Jonathan Drews recorded the tracks on *The New Speed* (Sugar Free), an artfully angular, post-Pixies blast of tunes that balance space themes ("Red Room Rocket Ride"), would-be TV themes ("Shanghai Shelley") and lovely terrestrial numbers ("California Now"). After the sessions were done, producer Jeff Saltzmann signed on and was placed behind a bubble-shaped vintage '70s organ called the Moog/Cordovox. Then Drews moved out from the drum kit to play guitar, making room for Tony Lash, the former sticksman for Heatmiser who's also a noted producer (Dandy Warhols, Richard Davies, Eric Matthews). Together, the quintet began packing houses in Portland before taking its show on the road, opening for groups such as Possum Dixon and Sixteen Deluxe. The band will record a follow-up early next year, but potential hoppers on the bandwagon beware—this Valley is full. >>> *Richard Martin*

deejay punk-rock

As high-energy breakbeat/hip-hop hybrids continue to wriggle their way onto mainstream dancefloors and radios, the progenitor of the moment is DeeJay Punk-Roc (his real name is apparently as well-kept a secret as Superman's identity). Seasoning his blend with elements of electro, soul and various charged samples and beats, Punk-Roc delivers a sound that's as much Beastie Boys as it is street-wise, booty-shakin' funk. A club favorite in Europe—he's lived there for almost three years and currently maintains two club residencies in Liverpool—Punk-Roc was born and raised in Brooklyn, scratching his first mixes at block parties. A tape of one of his early sets wound up in the hands of the UK's Airdog Recordings via a cousin in Miami; Airdog put his sound on a 12" and he's been busy ever since. Punk-Roc opened for the Meat Beat Manifesto/Prodigy tour this past summer, and he's also played shows with Hooverphonic and Esthero. His stateside debut, *ChickenEye* (Independiente-Epic), has just hit the racks, and he'll be doing a slew of dates around the globe throughout the fall. >>> *William Werde*



LAWRENCE WATSON

lisahall

There aren't many postcard-scenic sights in her cold, gray English hamlet of Chesterfield, admits vocalist Lisahall. Just a crooked church spire, its wood warped into wondrous curves over the rainy centuries—that's the local tourist attraction. Not that she had a lot to send postcards about, growing up there; Hall's parents sheltered her from television and rock music until her late teens, instead teaching her down-home skills like knitting and tatting. But this bashful Emily Dickinson was also secretly writing songs on a Casio keyboard, covertly singing the little tunes she composed. Once out of her shell, Hall hooked up with three synth-pop vets from town to form the faintly gothic (and simply dubbed) Lisahall, with a bevy of keyboard motifs whirlwinding around her dragonfly-fragile voice. And while recording her Reprise debut, *Is This Real?*, in Los Angeles (with producer David Kahne), Hall was free to experience her very first rock concert, the similarly-timbred Portishead, as well as to catch her first panoramic glimpse of Hollywood when Kahne motored the group up Mulholland at twilight. Postcards were mailed back home to Chesterfield, with the truth hidden between the lines: small town girl makes good. >>> *Tom Lanham*



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ELLIOTT SMITH

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MR. MISERY



story:

KURT B. REIGHLEY

photo:

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"Most things I like are often things I don't like. It just depends on the hour of the day."

ELLIOTT SMITH

TV meteorologists in the Pacific Northwest—like most good-looking men—are liars. For months they've promised summer, teased viewers with an occasional day of sunshine, and then unapologetically delivered yet another rain-filled forecast. Today, however, is an exception. On a balmy July afternoon, pedestrians scurrying through downtown Portland, Oregon, are actually loosening their collars. And though his hair and T-shirt remain customarily black, troubadour Elliott Smith's disposition seems a little cheerier, too.

The weather is just one of many factors contributing to Smith's good mood. Much has changed since Elliott last spoke with *CMJ New Music Monthly*, shortly before the release of his 1996 album *Either/Or*, at the penultimate gig by his band Heatmiser. These days Smith's creative energies are focused solely on his solo career. He's left behind the Olympia, Washington, indie label Kill Rock Stars for new digs at DreamWorks. And he's only in town to visit; Smith split Portland for New York City over 18 months ago.

Don't expect Smith to hum "This Used To Be My Playground" under his breath as he navigates these streets. To paraphrase Cole Porter, Elliott happens to like New York. Except when he doesn't. "Most of the things I like are often the things I don't like," he says of his new home, counting the sheer number of people and ease of getting around among the pluses. "It just depends on the hour of the day."

"But people don't look at me funny," he adds. "Not like in, say, Los Angeles, where if you're not driving a Range Rover, and you're wearing long pants..."

Elliott's learned a little about LA, having just wrapped up a two-plus month stay there recording *XO*, his fourth solo album and major label debut. He even met some folks he genuinely likes. "Now I can see why people would live there. But before, it was like, 'Wow, how can you be here if you don't have a tan or want one?'"

Compared to the recording of his last album, the completion of *XO* sounds carefree. "I lost my mind attacking *Either/Or* before it came out," admits Elliott, recalling that he couldn't even settle on a title. "I decided that I wouldn't do that in the future. There's just no point. You can't go 'I don't want to write songs like that, I want to write songs like this.'"

ELLIOTT SMITH

"Sometimes people can do that," he concedes, "but other times they try to force what they feel into a little funnel that gets all clogged up and slows them down. Or it comes through this weird Play-Doh machine they're putting it all through, and then it doesn't make any sense anymore."

This time around, Elliott tried to step back from the recording process. Tom Rothrock and Rob Schnapf (who mixed *Either/Or*) engineered, leaving Smith free to concentrate on the songs. Not that he fussed over performances too closely. "I never paid a lot of attention to getting a good sound in the first place," he confesses. "You can drift out to sea trying to get a good guitar sound. I can't really think of a song I liked because the guitar sounded so great."

But what about the songs? Rest assured Elliott hasn't abandoned his hushed singing, turned the amps up to 11, or collaborated with Roni Size. The 14 tunes on *XO* measure up to the artist's exacting standards; some have been previewed in shows already ("Tomorrow, Tomorrow") and a couple rank among his finest to date (the rollicking "Baby Britain"). Beyond that, he leaves assessment up to individual interpretation. As always, Smith prefers not to dissect the songs, their content or their inspiration in conversation.

"I almost always think the song is about something very different than the person I'm talking to does," he explains. "Whether it's mine or not, it doesn't really matter to me if I know exactly what a song is about." Elliott is concerned more with evoking a mood or an image than in relaying a specific sentiment. "If I do know exactly what they're about, I usually don't want to play them. It's too claustrophobic and the song can't breathe and there's no room for somebody's imagination to draw them in."

Elliott Smith isn't willfully diffident, but anyone who's spent time with him appreciates that trying to nail down his aesthetic is a sure way to silence him. "Sometimes people ask questions that I can't answer," he continues. "Questions like 'What are you trying to do?' or 'Who are you trying to reach?' All they do is reveal that the person I'm talking to really doesn't see my music the same way that I do at all." In Elliott's world, music is an end unto itself, not a means to something greater.

"If there's any reason why people do creative things, it's because it's a part of being a person to react creatively to your life," concludes the singer. "There doesn't have to be a motive for it."

"The fact that some creative things people do wind up being known by a lot of people is the result of exterior factors that the person who made the thing would have to be insane to think that they could control," he adds. Elliott insists his primary objective is simply to write good songs. "Past that point, my goals become much smaller. Like, I want to play [my music] well."

Appearing on the 1998 Academy Awards, then, was not a lifelong desire. "It was all very weird," recalls Elliott of his song "Miss Misery," which appeared in Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting*, being nominated for Original Song honors. Although Smith asks to avoid the topic, later he recounts the drill of doing countless mini-interviews on the subject. "You should talk to whoever writes the songs for Disney movies if you want to discuss all the stuff people were asking me about," he would insist.

His anonymity in Tinseltown actually worked in his favor, eliminating any stage fright on the big night. "I couldn't find a reason to get nervous, given that I was playing for people who didn't pay to see me play. If you're playing for people who came to see you, and paid, and you want to play well for them... then I can see getting nervous."

Ideally, signing to DreamWorks will generate wider audiences that do wish to hear Elliott, with a minimum of additional ballyhoo. So far his new label hasn't pressured him to do anything uncomfortable; there are no plans for a video, and nobody is sweating the radio fate of the first single, "Waltz #2 (XO)." If anything, Smith worries he isn't doing enough. "I pressure myself to answer 'yes' to as many things as I possibly can," he claims. He'd like to keep making records as long as possible, which means that helping his label make a profit from them, however modest, might be a good idea. The rest is out of his hands.

"I quit the program a long time ago, so I've already accepted my fate," he chuckles. "Whenever it wants to show up, I'll be ready for it."

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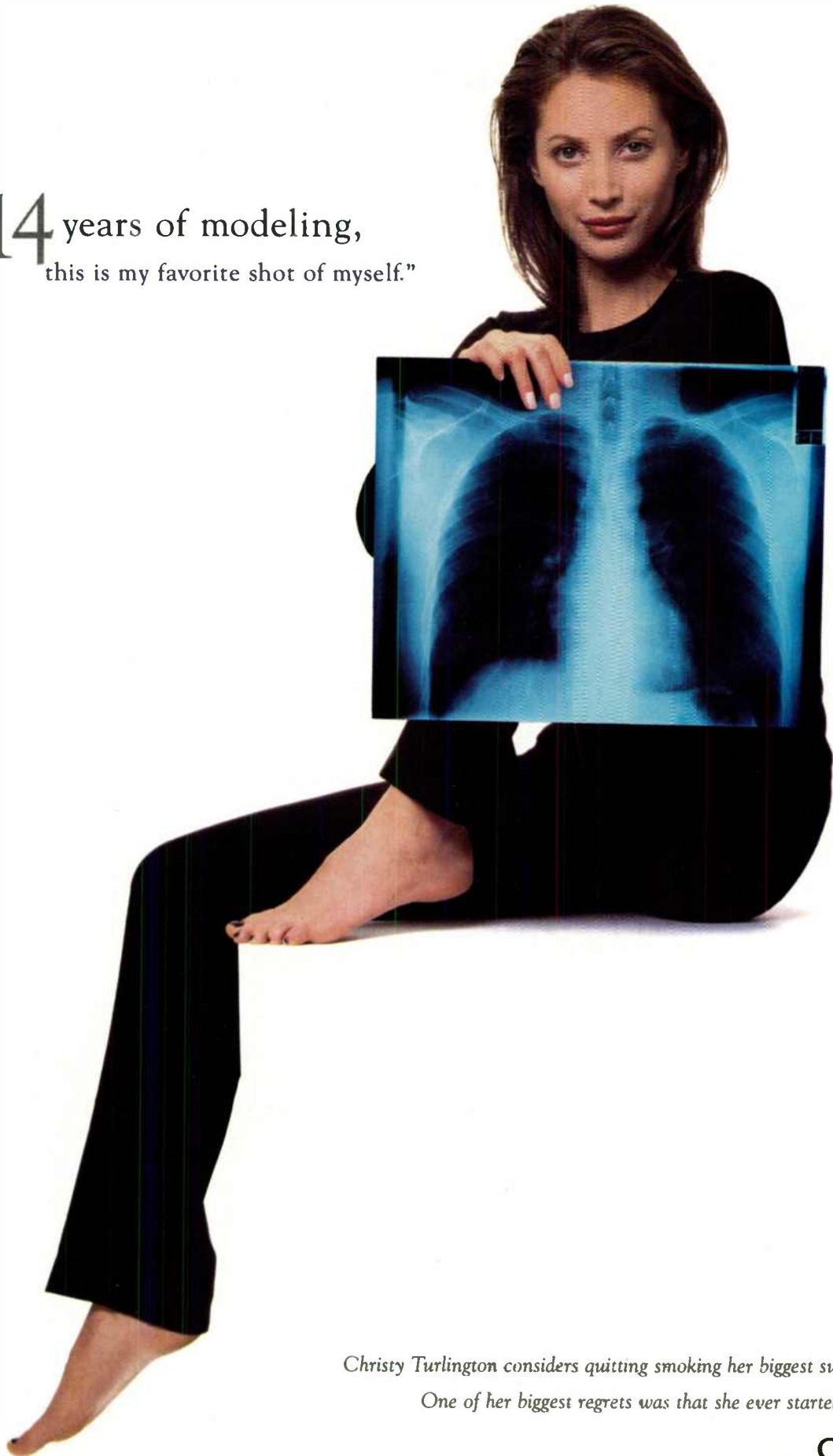
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*Christy Turlington considers quitting smoking her biggest success.
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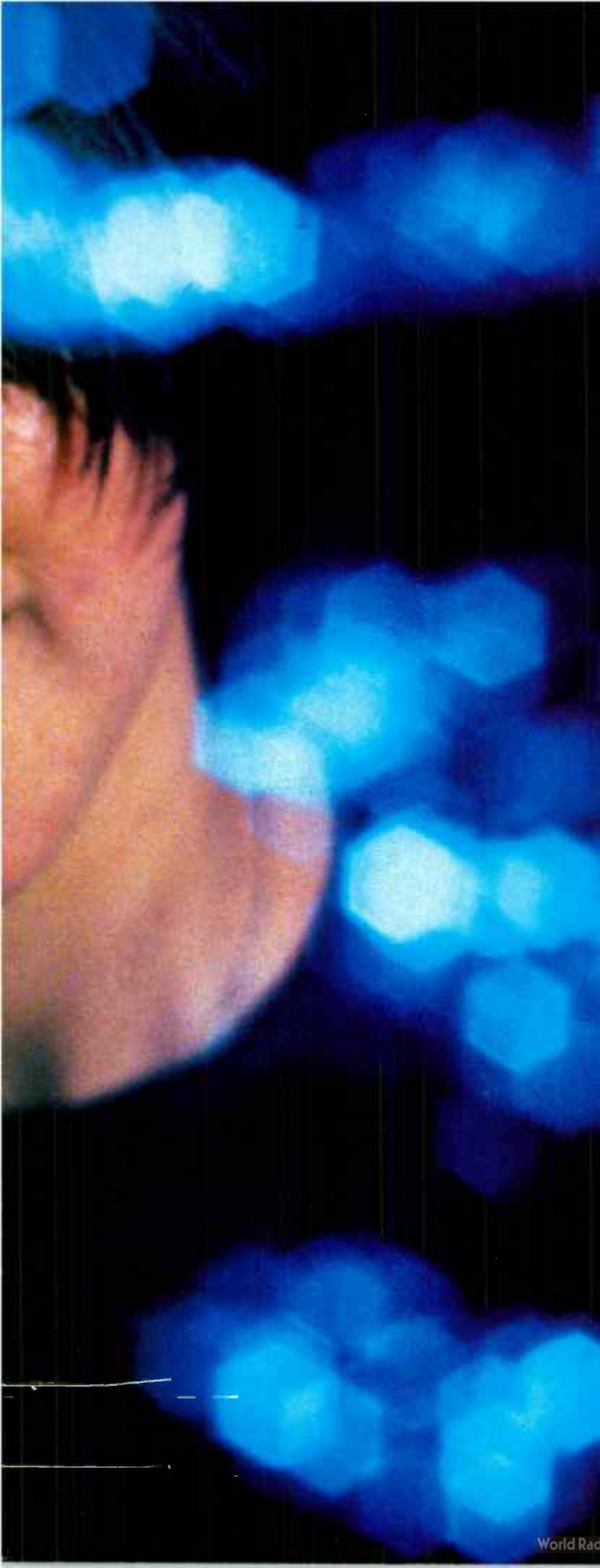


STORY:

DAVID DALEY

CAT POWER

BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON



CAT

Power's Chan Marshall can't help lingering around the SoHo street vendors selling expensive coffee-table photography books. She's looking for a Larry Clark collection, but she's still a classicist at heart. When we finally thread our way through the book vendors to SoHo landmark restaurant Jerry's, Marshall is excitedly exuding over an obscure 19th century Swiss painter named Augustine Lesage, a coal miner who, at the tavern one evening, heard the voice of God tell him that he should go home to paint.

"He had no idea what he was doing," says Marshall. "He's not famous, because he was considered insane. Usually his work hangs in a gallery for crazy people. But his paintings are amazing. I think they're the language of the Bible translated into color. His colors and shapes are so spiritual."

Marshall would never dare call herself an artist. Still, it's obvious that she feels a kinship with Lesage. Neither planned his path—Marshall grew up around music but never thought of playing herself until her 20s. Critics thought Lesage might have come undone and, likewise, even some of Marshall's closest friends have wondered about her mental well-being. She's voiced that concern herself (there's some family history) on a B-side called "Schizophrenia's Weighted Me Down."

Then, in the two years since Cat Power's third album, *What Would The Community Think*, and her bewitching new effort *Moon Pix* (Matador), she's endured nervous breakdowns, the deaths of close friends, and a surreal, nightmarish trip to Africa that led her to give up music for a spell.

"Sometimes I don't know if I should become a nun or commit suicide," she says, matter-of-factly. "It just scares me."

But before she decides, there's time for lunch. Indeed, no crazy person has ever seemed quite so sweet and generous. Marshall chooses Jerry's, despite having been fired as a waitress there because she couldn't stop smiling at frequent customer Sandra Bernhard. Jerry himself seats us, and Marshall breathes a sigh of relief when he doesn't remember her.

Nevertheless, she hasn't gotten over her celebrity fetish. "Let's look for famous people," she says, upon settling into her seat. "There, it's Claire Danes. And Alicia Silverstone. And that's Ralph Fiennes."

The diners she points out don't look anything like them, but for Marshall, it beats talking about herself. She doesn't have much to say about the more obvious aspects of *Moon Pix*—how it's her most focused record ("This one I think I took more control"), about being backed by two-thirds of Dirty Three rather than Tim Fohlman and Sonic Youth's Steve Shelley ("They're all good players"), and why she recorded it in Australia ("I always wanted to go there, and I could write it off").

Yet as she slowly opens up, munching a roast beef sandwich, she spins incredibly complex stories with the same combination of nerviness and shy hesitancy that gives her music such spiritual strength. "I quit music last year because I went crazy," she says. "I got back from Africa, saw some weird shit there." She spent several

(Continued on page 63)



*"I listen to this,
then I listen to that,
and it comes out on
the albums. I can't
help it."*



meat beat manifesto

turn
t He beat
around

story:

KURT B. REIGHLEY

photo:

JAY BLAKESBURG

"meat

Beat Manifesto are an A&R person's worst nightmare," chuckles Jack Dangers, gazing across the sunny treetops bordering the deck of his Northern California home. "It's not like [our sound] changes from album to album; it changes from track to track." To understand why, one need only glance over at Dangers's collection of over 8,000 vinyl LPs, and the oversized portrait of innovative American composer John Cage abutting them. Or simply spend the afternoon gabbing about music with the Meat Beat man himself.

Since the band's inception in 1987, two things have remained constant about Meat Beat Manifesto: Dangers and the name. Unlike many of his peers, Jack doesn't use one moniker for drum 'n' bass projects, another for dub experiments, and so on. "I try to fit everything on to one album, which some people like, and some don't," he admits. "People do like a certain consistency." But from seminal early tracks like "Radio Babylon" right up to the newest MBM opus *Actual Sounds And Voices* (Nothing-Interscope), Dangers has displayed "a certain consistency"—always making inventive tracks.

Meat Beat's sound actually benefits from his short attention span. For example, two winters back, MBM started recording new songs composed on the road. To make things interesting, Dangers invited jazz players Bennie Maupin (sax/reeds) and Pat Gleeson (keyboards) of the legendary Herbie Hancock ensemble *Headhunters* to drop by the studio for one of several days of a marathon jam session.

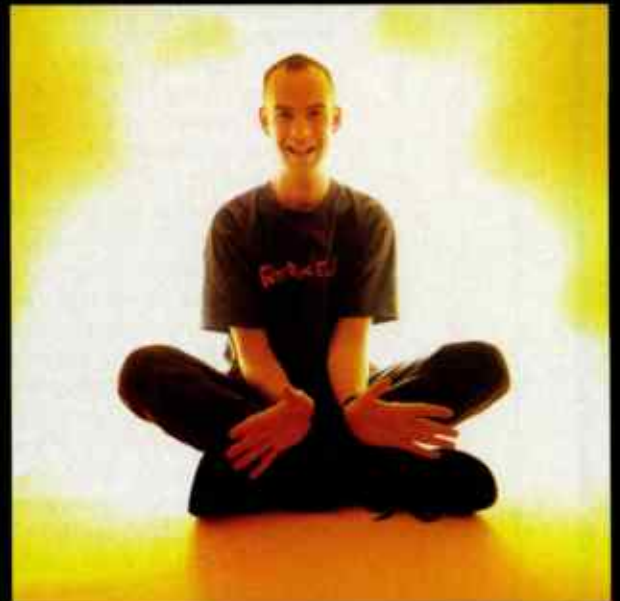
"Then I brought [the tapes] back here, and started to see what was in there," recalls Dangers. He fashioned Maupin and Gleeson's contributions into "The Thumb," a funky collage that owes more to Miles Davis's experiments with tape edits than to any strain of acid jazz. The leftovers were ample enough to cull from further, but nimble Jack had already jumped to the next idea. "That was my jazz month," he notes. Lately he's been focusing on late 20th century classical music. "I've been playing a lot of [Japanese composer Toru] Takemitsu."

"I listen to this, then I listen to that, and it comes out on the albums. I can't help it. I definitely get into a certain type of music, and I'll be into that for however long. That's how I work."

British-born Dangers began amassing his resource center in the late '70s, but didn't own a record

FATBOY SLIM

THE FUNK SOUL BROTHER



Getting a straight answer from Fatboy Slim about something as simple as, say, the origins of his stage name, isn't always easy. Even when he's not loaded. Which is not to imply that he's clean or sober right now, sitting, as he is, at a bar in the Cambridge Marriott drinking beer and smoking cigarette after cigarette a good six hours before he'll be spinning records for a packed house at Boston's Club Karma. "This is the peak before the trough," he explains, which would appear to be his way of indicating that he's now entered a sort of psychic demilitarized zone located somewhere between this morning's violent hangover and tonight's raging drink 'n' drug buzz.

"I haven't DJed sober in the last three years," he admits without apology. "I've been doing it for 20 years, so it's like riding a bike or driving a car. Your reaction time may not be as good, but you can do it. We played in Belfast once, and someone was supposed to score us some drugs, but he got busted on the way in. So they asked if I could DJ without drugs and I said, 'Dunno. Never tried.' I've never been arrested myself, but I have been thrown out of the club that I was playing for doing drugs. Well, they'll attempt to throw me out and then I tell them I'm the DJ and they can't throw me out. The other week I was DJing and I was under the deck," he says, miming the process of laying out lines of cocaine or ecstasy, "and the bouncer came by. I didn't know what to think. He didn't seem to be smiling. I figured he was waiting for me to do it so he could throw me out. So I asked him if it was all right and he said, 'Well, I can't throw you out, now can I?' There were three thousand people dancing."

Fortunately, for reasons of health and sanity, Fatboy Slim is just a persona, an alter ego, or perhaps a façade disguising a rather more down to earth, level-headed person. The man behind the moniker is Norman Cook, formerly the bassist in the socially conscious British pop band the Housemartins (1984-88) and currently, in the guise of Fatboy Slim, one of the hottest DJs to come out of Britain's self-explanatory Big Beat scene. "It's really just a fusion of different musical styles with a walloping fucking big beat," explains Gareth Hansome, the British club entrepreneur whom Cook credits with inventing the term.

Over the years, Cook has, like many DJ auteurs, taken on a number of other aliases, scored several top-ten singles, and remained almost completely unknown in the US. There was the rap-inflected Beats

International, the trip-hoppy duo Freakpower, the house-styled Pizzaman, and the Mighty Dub Katz, who had a minor dance hit in the US with "Magic Carpet Ride." But as Fatboy Slim, Cook has finally begun to establish a solid beachhead in the US, through the release of his full-length debut, *Better Living Through Chemistry*, last year and the more recent, poppy breakbeat-driven radio single "The Rockafeller Skank," a precedent to his forthcoming second album, *You've Come A Long Way, Baby!* (Skint-Astralwerks).

"Fatboy Slim is the Chemical Brothers' crazy booze-hound uncle," Cook jokes. "He's an aging, gorky, nerdy DJ who gets off his nut and waves his arms in the air and makes people laugh. He dresses down more than me. He wears T-shirts, whereas I'd wear shirts. Then again, he always gets completely covered in sweat and beer and even mud. Oh, and Fatboy Slim drinks like a fish. I had four pints of vodka and orange the other night when I played."

"He's the character at the party who actually enjoys himself more than the punters and the dancers," interjects Hansome, who travels with Cook.

"Yeah," Cook continues, "when people come up to me after a show and say 'Top night!' I say, 'Look, I enjoyed it more than you.'"

Maybe so, but Cook, or Fatboy, does go out of his way to ensure that he's not the only one enjoying himself when he DJs. "I like to be as near to the audience as I can so that we can interact. In England the rule is that when I come on people can get on the stage and talk to me. They bum cigarettes off of me, I bum cigarettes off of them, and I do a lot of winding the crowd up, a bit of showboating. Norman Cook would never do that, but Fatboy Slim can. He can cope with standoffish audiences. It just involves a lot of bravado and drinking. It's about standing there and actually shouting at them, 'Look, this is what I do. I'm going to play records. I'm going to have a laugh. I'm going to dance and have a drink. You can either stand there and watch or join in.'"

The tracks Cook spins as Fatboy Slim run the gamut from straight rock and pop tunes to state-of-the-art drum 'n' bass cuts. "I play Jimi Hendrix, the Kinks, house records, rap records, 'Rapture' by Blondie... and my biggest tune at the moment is a drum 'n' bass remix of the Beastie Boys' 'Intergalactic.'" And in many ways, that sort of sums up the more-is-more aesthetic of Big Beat as it's grown up around artists like Fatboy Slim, the Chemical Brothers, Death In Vegas, and the British label Skint Records.

"The music was there first and no one could think of a decent name for it. It was called Chemical Beats, Brit-Hop, Tripno, Amyl House. But basically it's just electronica that you

(Continued on page 63)

"THEY ASKED IF I COULD DJ
WITHOUT DRUGS AND I SAID
'DUNNO. NEVER TRIED.'"

ROB ZOMBIE BIE

HELVETICA EXTRA CONDENSED 40

time of the season



STORY: KATHERINE TURMAN

PHOTOS: CHRIS CUFFARO

"I'm really sick and disgusted of hearing songs about bands' inner turmoils, and their bitching and whining."

here used to be a time in Hollywood, and with music, when there was the dream factory of Hollywood, where Louis B. Mayer ran the studios and they controlled the publicity, when everything was larger than life, and people would look at Clark Gable like, 'I idolize him,'" begins the pleasantly intense and articulate youngish man clad in a "Plan Nine From Outer Space" T-shirt. "There was something to worship, but now you just hear everybody's dirty little secrets, and it makes everything suck. There's nothing to dream about. I think," concludes Rob Zombie, "it's why the world is going to hell in a fucking handbasket."

Sitting in a conference room above a bumper-to-bumper Sunset Strip, down the street from where once-proud landmarks like Ciro's and Preston Sturges' Players Club anchored a seemingly more-innocent, or at least more glamorous, Tinseltown, the man born Rob Straker is railing against the business of this company town.

A modern-day master of theatrical rock, he realizes that everything is an illusion, and that even hindsight is not always 20-20. "Maybe it's always the same," muses the fast-talking singer. "People say, 'Don't you think the state of music is fucked up compared to before?' And I go, 'Yes, but it's probably the same as it ever was, it just always seems like it's getting worse,'" he says with a sad laugh. "All you can do is try not to become part of the thing you're bitching about, which sometimes is tricky."

Though he deals with business straight up, Zombie is all about escapism, in the most positive sense of the word. His new single, "Dragula," is about Grandpa Munster's car, for instance, while "Superbeast" and "Living Dead Girl" lovingly tackle the horror show ground Rob has mined successfully before. Such cartoon- and horror-related interests were the cornerstones of Zombie's childhood, and that of his brother Spider, the equally well-spoken frontman of Powerman 5000. A childhood that, much like Jean Shepherd's *A Christmas Story* or *The Wonder Years*, finds the delights and disappointments of youth ever-present.

Since Rob began writing songs as a teenager, his style has remained consistent. During the six or so lean years following the mid-'80s inception of White Zombie, the band established its scum-rock sound in downtown dives and on independent records like *Soul Crusher* and *Make Them Die Slowly*, but 1992's *La Sexorcisto: Vol. I* and its hit follow-up, 1995's *Astro-Creep: 2000*, turned the colorful group into arena-rock favorites. Now, with an album under his own name, *Hellbilly Deluxe* (Geffen), his own record label, Zombie A Go-Go Records, and further forays into movies beyond soundtracks and a "Beavis & Butt-Head" scene, Zombie is turning into a new Hollywood mogul.

His sole goal is unabashed entertainment, a willing suspension of disbelief, which he's achieved with the over-the-top visuals and sounds of White Zombie. He builds upon that aesthetic with *Hellbilly Deluxe*, which he prefers not to refer to as a solo album. While the dreadlocked frontman terms the status of his former band "in limbo," he doesn't seem anxious to return to the band that brought this Zombie into the light. "I didn't want it to be perceived as a solo record," he says. "To me, that seems like this self-indulgent little project—'Oh, I have this other side to me I must express!' Which I don't. I don't have any other side to me. This is the only side there is."

Onstage, his dreads flying under big hats, disguised under layers of clothing, Zombie comes off like the larger-than-life cartoons and superheroes that ruled his life as a child growing up on the East Coast. But this time out he won't be surrounded by ex-girlfriend Sean Yseult on bass or quiet guitarist J. Yuenger. His new bandmates include one old member, drummer Johnny Tempesta (Mötley Crüe's Tommy Lee guests on the album), along with bassist Blasko and guitarist Riggs, all of whom are pictured in the mass of comic book and horror movie clichés in the CD booklet that accompanies *Hellbilly Deluxe*. "They came in toward the end, but I had them play

Zombie's Bitching and Whining

on the record, because I wanted them to be part of it. I can meet someone, I don't even have to hear them play. I just meet them and I go, 'This guy's cool,' or 'I hate this guy.' That's pretty much where it ends. Any idiot can play. It's pretty much personal. Especially in LA, the town is full of musicians I can't stand being in the same room with for 30 seconds. There are just so many guitar school graduate geeky guys. All technique, no fucking guts," explains Zombie, who utilized the talents of Nine Nails' guitarist Danny Lohner, who was often hanging out at the house/studio of *Hellbilly Deluxe* producer Scott Humphreys. Rob found the right personal chemistry in his two new recruits, and now he calls this lineup "as together visually and musically as White Zombie ever was. I didn't want it to be like, 'This is Rob and these guys we don't give a shit about,'" he says, also admitting he'd spoken to pal Alice Cooper about this aspect of his career move. "I wanted it to really matter. It's like another band, basically."

Yet, aurally, *Hellbilly Deluxe* might as well be the next White Zombie record, so similar is the subject matter, the vibe and, of course, the singing. For fans hoping to glimpse the true inner emotions of the music's creator, forget it. With Rob Zombie, what you see is what you get. He generally writes about things that exist physically: cars, movies and movie demons, not abstracts like love, life and personal demons. The subtitle of his new outing says it best: "13 Tales of Cadaverous Cavorting Inside the Spookshow International."

Though he sits under a poster of Nirvana in the Geffen Records conference room, and Zombie can appreciate the grunge trio, he admits he "never understood it. I thought *Nevermind* was a great album, I thought Nirvana was a great band, but look, you made your fucking bed, lie in it. If you don't want to be a rock star, you don't take Geffen's money, you don't make half-a-million dollar videos. You just don't do it. You. Just. Don't. Do. It," he emphasizes.

"In real life, no one wants to hear your complaints, so why would I want to hear it set to music?" he continues. "When I was a kid, I don't remember seeing interviews with Queen and listening to Freddy Mercury moan and cry. I'm really disgusted and sick of hearing songs about bands' inner turmoils, and their pains and their fucking bitching and whining."

Although he's dead serious, Zombie lightens the mood in his own darkly humorous way. "If you got a lot of pain, you do it the real way: You keep it locked inside and you let it eat at you and it turns you hard and bitter! I wasn't into KISS or Alice Cooper because Alice went onstage and cried that his girlfriend broke up with him," Zombie relates in a faux whiny voice. "He's singing about a fucking black widow, that's cool. Maybe there was some other undertone, but it was creative and cool. I hate crybabies."

As these remembrances suggest, his childhood informs everything Rob Zombie is and does, which is part of the reason he cares so much about fans. He was, and is, still very much one himself. "I was never a casual fan," recounts Zombie. "Your whole life revolved around it. Like signing autographs. I'll sign autographs until my hand falls off, 'cause I understand what that's about. When I was a kid, I'd go to a car show, and Lou Ferrigno, the Incredible Hulk, was appearing there, and I'd get his autograph. The last time I asked someone for their autograph was two years ago," he recalls. "I was at the newsstand looking through a magazine, and there was a picture of Martin Landau

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(Continued from page 43)

made up as Bela Lugosi from *Ed Wood* and I looked over and Martin Landau was standing right next to me. I think next to tearing off a piece of the person's flesh, [an autograph's] the closest thing you can get that actually came from them, and it's one of a kind."

Zombie, who named his band after the 1932 Bela Lugosi early talkie *White Zombie*, snorts at the likes of Matchbox 20 and says he has no use for most current music, but for a man sentimental enough to collect autographs, certainly there's the odd sappy love song that touches his demonoid heart?

"You know, yes and no," he muses. "There were songs that always felt heartfelt in a weird way, like Elton John's 'Rocket Man' or David Bowie's 'Space Oddity.' But it was like in a weird scenario where it was done like art. It's the difference to me between you see a painting in a museum and you see a fucking girl in *Hustler*. This is just what it is: Here's a naked chick. Who gives a shit?" he opines. "And here's the same thing turned into some kind of art that presents something, where other people can read their own life into it. If you're just going, 'My girlfriend broke up with me, she's a cunt,' what in the fuck does that mean to me? It's supposed to have some kind of artistic sense."

That opinion feeds into his newly launched *Zombie A Go-Go* label, which so far has a roster of two: the image-conscious neo surf group the Bomboras and the spooky sounds of the Ghastly Ones. In fact, before he saw the Ghastly Ones at Al's Bar in downtown Los Angeles, Zombie had no intention of becoming a label head. "I thought [the band's show] was awesome. I was like, 'Fuck, this is the most fun I've had at a show in so long I can't even remember.' I was like, 'I want to make a record with these guys.' I've never had that thought before."

As is the case with all of his endeavors, the Geffen-distributed label reflects Zombie's very focused interests. "I wanted it to be a cool label, where you felt you were part of some weird little fan club, a little monster club, where all the bands were interrelated and there would be a real theme to the label, not a bunch of fragmented releases," he explains. "I want the label itself to be important. I want kids to and go, 'Oh, *Zombie A Go-Go* logo, I know I'm going to like this.' That's how labels used to be. Before, when they used to talk about labels, like Motown, the label mattered. Now... you don't buy a Geffen record because it's on Geffen."

Although Rob is clearly a very visual artist, he claims not to be a big fan of the video art form. "I kinda hate videos for the fact that they

do create imagery that gets stuck in your head," he confesses. "But you have to be realistic. Video is here to stay and there's a whole generation of kids who can't even imagine songs without videos."

What about Pearl Jam?

"Disastrous," Zombie laughs. "You go from selling 12 million records to 500,000—great career move! But you can make a lot more choices when you're Pearl Jam. I'm not U2. I don't have 900 gazillion dollars in the bank."

But surely he's in the ballpark of the aforementioned peers?

"I'm selling hot dogs at that ballpark," he chortles. "I'm not in the ballpark. There's a difference. A realistic difference. I always felt that *White Zombie* and bands like us have to work that little extra bit harder, it's like we're the bad people trying to get in on the game, we're not the nice bands doing nice music that everybody wants to write about. Sure, that's what's cool, but you have to be kinda sneaky on how you get your music to the people."

While he's offered himself for mass consumption, again, he rails against the cult of personality. For Zombie, there's no difference between the persona and the person, as opposed to his friend and inspiration Alice Cooper, who likely doesn't have a guillotine in his living room or walk down the street with snakes around his neck.

But Zombie claims that even Cooper is essentially the same on and off stage, and for Zombie himself, "I don't think there's any difference. It is you [onstage], it's just a more blown-up you. You meet a football player, he's still a football player, but he's not in the restaurant tackling the waiter. There's a time and a place for things," he suggests.

Whereas Bowie adopted his Ziggy Stardust character and became just that, an actor in a role, using the last name *Zombie* was merely a clarification of his personality. "[With] money and some success you can be the person you always wanted to be," he says. "You can't be that person because you work at a shoe store and your boss will go, 'You may think you're wearing that to work but here's a surprise, you're not!' It gives you the freedom to be more true to the person you are," he continues, choosing his words carefully. "I don't get to be this big phony person, no, I get to be the *real* person. If I have to work at Blockbuster video, no, that's the phony person, the guy who has to get the haircut he doesn't want, and wear the stupid shirt he can't stand."

Now he's got a job where he can wear sunglasses and dreads, and show his voluminous tattoos at "work." (And no, he

(Continued on page 63)

"You have to be half-dead or heavily MTV-sedated not to get caught up in the delirious spirit put forth by the Finnish group Värttinä."

JAZZ TIMES

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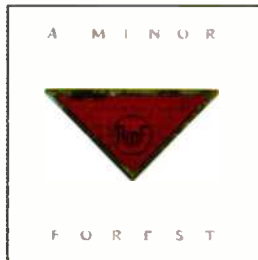
produced, recorded and mixed by tom rothcock, rob schmidt and elliot smith
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A MINOR FOREST

Inindependence
Thrill Jockey

A few minor details about A Minor Forest might help you appreciate the band's level of technical proficiency: First, the band started out while its members were grad students in music at UC Berkeley, and second, they're also members of a Metallica tribute band called Creeping Death. In other words, these are musicians capable of intricate and twisty compositions that rock hard, but which forgo repetition and verse-chorus structure in favor of variations on themes, complicated polyrhythms, volcanic stops and starts, and jagged, atonal interplay between guitar and bass. Drummer Andee Connors, especially, is a powerhouse, guiding the other players through the near-impossible time signatures while adding fills that are elaborate without being ostentatious. Most of the material is instrumental (what vocals there are serve mostly as texture), and the compositions often progress through several movements—the album's centerpiece, "The Smell Of Hot," in fact, keeps building and adding puzzle pieces for 18 minutes. *Inindependence* suffers from some of the usual math-rock drawbacks: lack of accessible or hummable melodies and general humorlessness (except for the cryptic song titles). It is, however, a display of virtuoso musicianship with a particularly strong emphasis on loud-soft dynamics.

>>> David Jarman



OUT: August 11.
FILE UNDER:
Hard-edged math-rock.
R.I.V.L.:
Slint, Don Caballero, Trans Am.

ARCHERS OF LOAF

White Trash Heroes
Alias

Although Archers Of Loaf leader Eric Bachmann warned, "There's a chance that things will get weird," back on their 1993 debut *Icky Mettle*, this Chapel Hill foursome never got too weird for ears accustomed to Pavement's slanted enchantments or Sebadoah's noisier moments. Until now. *White Trash Heroes* marks a departure for the Archers, though not necessarily for Bachmann, who's recently indulged his stranger musical notions under the guise of Barry Black. It's also not necessarily for the better if you were a fan of the shambling, cryptic, barbed-guitar pop anthems that inched the band toward commercial respectability on their first three full-lengths. Synthetic keyboards, odd vocal treatments (including a robotic vocoder chorus on "One Slight Wrong Move"), and a tendency toward mechanized rhythms offer the most overt signs of the group's evolution. But along with the noble urge to experiment, Bachmann appears to be stricken with an unsettling sense of joylessness, reflected in the coldly automated sound of his voice on "Dead Red Eyes," the images of hopeless drunks and indigent whores that crowd the moody "After The Last Laugh," and an album that's short on the bent hooks that have always made the Archers weird in an appealing sort of way.

>>> Matt Ashare



OUT: September 22.
FILE UNDER:
Indie art-pop.
R.I.V.L.:
Pavement, Polvo, Barry Black.

FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS

Frank Black And The Catholics
spinART

Frank Black And The Catholics is just the sort of album that, back in '91, might have offered the next best thing to the Pixies staying together: a promising start for Frank Black's solo career. Recorded live to two-track with a stripped-down quartet, his fourth solo album opens with a playful snippet of the Green Acres theme before plowing confidently into the sturdy yet skewed power-pop of "All My Ghosts," with its manic vocals carrying a reassuring hint of the melody from the Pixies' "Wave Of Mutilation." Sure, session-trained guitarist Lyle Workman occasionally breaks the Pixie spell with overly flashy solos, but he's more down with the back-to-basics program this time around than he was on 1995's *The Cult Of Ray*. Black was born to be a rock 'n' roll oddball, to write and sing lines like "We had a dream that was behemoth" ("Back To Rome"). He doesn't have to try to be different, as he did to his own detriment on his first two post-Pixies releases. With the Catholics he settles back into just being his strange old self, to imagining worlds where people talk like Plato and "sweet potatoes grow all around." It's good to have him back.

>>> Matt Ashare



OUT: September 8.
FILE UNDER:
Rock in a hard place.
R.I.V.L.:
Pixies, Richard Lloyd, Bob Mould, Sonics.

BLONDE REDHEAD

In An Expression Of The Inexpressible
Touch And Go

There's good throbbing and there's bad throbbing. The songs on Blonde Redhead's fourth record, *In An Expression Of The Inexpressible*, have many kinds of throbbing—sometimes riveting, sometimes annoying. On the album opener, "Luv Machine," a pulsing, one-note lead overlaps Kazu Makino's panting, kewpie-doll vocal. Previously, the New York trio used similar elements to great effect, but here the combination is just mind numbing. The thumping bass note propelling the title track is about as exciting as an amplified windshield wiper. On the other hand, all of the parts fall together neatly on "Missile +." The arrangement offsets Makino's lullaby swoon with a symphonic radar bleep. Drummer Simone Pace adds a funky, sputtering beat that makes the mix simmer. "Futurism Vs. Passeism Part 2" is even groovier, and catchy enough to make you forget about its pretentious title and French lyrics (delivered by co-producer and Fugazi member Guy Picciotto). Even so, too many songs here lack the roller-coaster dynamics of Blonde Redhead's last release *Fake Can Be Just As Good*. Perhaps it's because Unwound bassist Vern Rumsey isn't sitting in on this album as he did on the last. Whatever the reason, *In An Expression Of The Inexpressible* is best left to diehard fans.

>>> Neil Gladstone



OUT: September 8.
FILE UNDER:
No wave pop.
R.I.V.L.:
Sonic Youth, Helium, Tortoise, Fugazi.

BOARDS OF CANADA

Music Has The Right To Children
Matador

Operating from a bunker in the Pentland Hills of Scotland, the boys of Boards are the newest reinforcements to that small camp of technoids one could call the Aphex Brigade. Their battle cry is simplicity and directness in composition. With distinctive melodies and crisp, uncluttered textures, they construct where the remix mavens deconstruct. As their first domestic release shows, *Boards Of Canada* is about tonality: warm, shimmering waves of synth that tangle with the beat, but are rarely superseded by it. The mixes aren't especially original, but they do have a broad sense of history. BoC invokes the ghosts of Sugar Hill with beatboxing on "An Eagle In Your Mind," and applies the sharp drum tones of early techno with a lighter and subtler hand on "Telephasic Workshop." The group even attempts to transmute funk into its world on "Aquarius," which spikes an R&B groove with sampled voices calling, "Yeah, that's right!" Even at their most derivative, these songs sound like they were written rather than just mixed—a rarity in electronic music these days. Uncommonly listenable, *Children* seems likely to land in heavy rotation on computer CD players in hipster workplaces, beeps and bloops making a comeback where trip-hop has long reigned supreme.

>>> Andrea Moed



OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER:

Dream sequencers.

R.I.V.L.:

Aphex Twin, Spring Heel Jack, Orbital.

CRITTERS BUGGIN

Bumpa
Loosegroove

Critters Buggin are from Seattle, but are way more groove than grunge. On their third full-length outing, drummer Matt Chamberlain, bassist Brad Hauser and sax player Sherik continue to create their own brand of instrumental, psychotronic-exotica. Integrating furious world-beat rhythms with skronking jazz excursions and sample-based freakouts, Critters Buggin are both off the wall avant-gardists and pure party animals. Much of the Critters' distinctive sound revolves around Sherik's unusual saxophone stylings. Playing his sax through a number of synthesized effects, Sherik unleashes a vibrant squall that embodies a full range of sonic coloring not usually associated with a reed instrument. On "Drums And Bass," the trio engages in a wild percussive ride with deep, bottom-shaking bass grooves and frenetic, unidentified sound-squeals riding on top. Critters Buggin can also mellow down, and on "Raimondi" they devise an echoing, ambient-funk atmosphere replete with a soulful (read: wah-wah), meandering keyboard line. While their everything-but-the-kitchen-sink aesthetic can at times lead to incoherence, the band is consistently creative and almost always exciting. This hyper-kinetic threesome sounds a whole lot larger than its meager numbers might suggest, and is never at a loss for a vibrant riff. Time to pull up to the *Bumpa*, baby.

>>> Mitch Myers



OUT: August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Avant-tribal groove thang

R.I.V.L.:

Tuatura, Henry Threadgill, Jazz Passengers.

BOMB 20

Field Manual
Digital Hardcore

Get ready for the latest dough-faced, seemingly super-idealistic German youth armed with a well-thumbed copy of *The Anarchist's Cookbook* and piles of cheap sampling hardware pushed well into the red—the weapons of the Digital Hardcore posse. *Field Manual* is flooded with more movie/TV samples—from Muhammed Ali to sci-fi disaster movie to TV announcer guy—than a Hi Fi Killers record. And there are lots of abrasive, sped-up noises from Alec Empire's library of video game cool, set to recycled, trashy-sounding beats that veer from sloppy techno to hardcore to garage, but are mostly breaks from hell. It sounds like their Roland's about to explode or something. On totally overboard, deranged tracks like "No Left," "Made Of Shit!" and "Dumb," though, it hardly matters. As "activism," *Field Manual* is pretty suspect. It does follow certain leftist/anarchist conventions; the liner notes, for example, use a lot of big words and have no sense of humor. Perhaps there are 12 year olds out there whose minds will be blown by the didactic content, but more importantly, any parent alive will hate this insistent, loud, grating music. And isn't that what that a-inside-the-circle symbol is really all about anyway?

>>> Mike McGonigal



OUT: August 11.

FILE UNDER:

An aural barrage.

R.I.V.L.:

Alec Empire, Atari Teenage Riot, recordings of WWII

DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID

Riddim Warfare
Outpost

Marketing logic dictates that "techno" and "hip-hop" remain two discrete categories with distinct audiences, broken down along racial lines. That boundary, however, is getting more and more porous every day, and with DJ Spooky's latest, *Riddim Warfare*, that reasoning is out the window altogether. Paul Miller, a.k.a. DJ Spooky, calls his signature style "illbient," a sprawling amalgam of ambient techno and abstract hip-hop. *Riddim Warfare* emphasizes the "ill" more than the "bient"—there are plenty of thumping beats, and some of rap's most skillful voices, including Kool Keith and members of Organized Konfusion. But bookending the vocal tracks are countless out-there instrumentals of stitched-together samples, speed-freak turntable scratches and woozy bass lines, bolstered by guest noisemakers ranging from Arto Lindsay to Thurston Moore. It's a chaotic and uneasy listen, but makes complete sense given Miller's New York roots and avant-garde ideas (he's also a noted writer/critic). While most audio *bricoleurs* set their surreal soundscapes in pastoral or otherworldly locations, DJ Spooky uses the urban multi-culti hubbub as his base for sonic exploration, and *Riddim Warfare* captures all the city's grimy layers of background noise, filtered through a hallucinogenic haze.

>>> David Jarman



OUT: September 8.

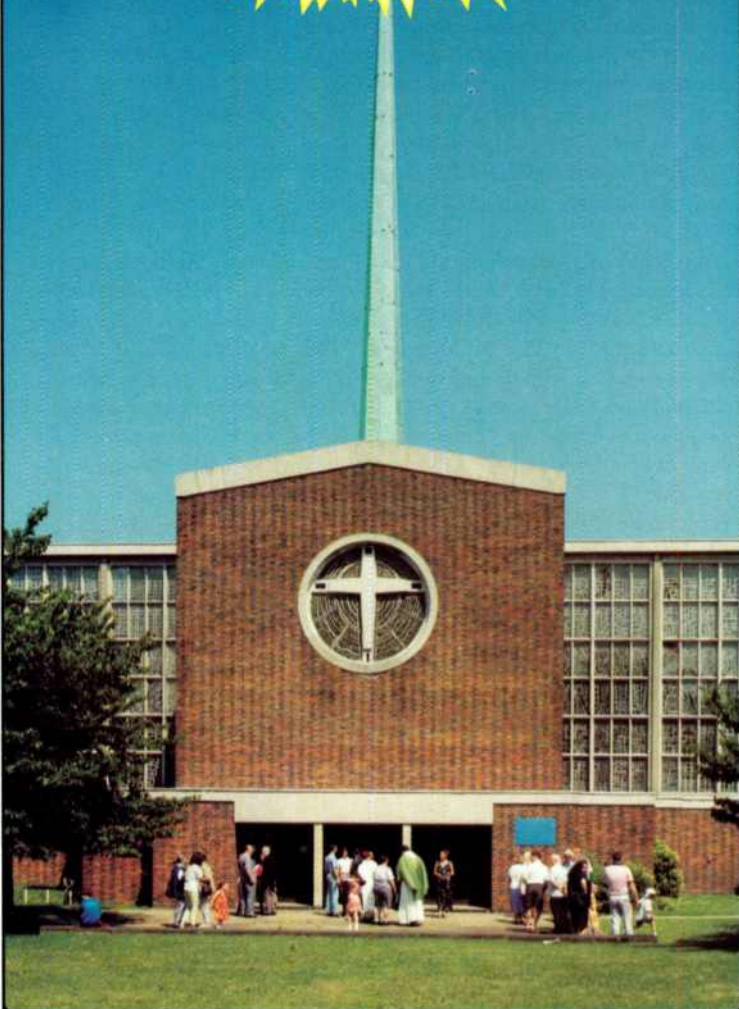
FILE UNDER:

Dadaist hip-hop collage.

R.I.V.L.:

DJ Shadow, Dr. Octagon, Coldcut.

Brothers Gonna Work It Out



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FANTASTIC PLASTIC MACHINE ★

Fantastic Plastic Machine
Emperor Norton



The lead-off track on Fantastic Plastic Machine's first domestic release says it all. Over an oddly-clipped string melody and nostalgically pedestrian techno beat, a breezy female voice proclaims, "Welcome to the fantastic plastic world/This is recycled attitude." Actually, she may be speaking in French—I can't quite tell—but that's what it sounds like she's saying. In any case, it's appropriate. FPM has indeed created its own world, a dizzying coil populated by new romantics and record collecting geeks, where hip-hop, lounge, Latin, drum 'n' bass, and good old pop abide in giddy harmony. FPM is part of an ill-defined, but burgeoning "world pop" genre that includes fellow Japanese cohorts Cornelius and Pizzicato Five, and Europeans Arling And Cameron and the Gentle People. It's a genre that's unrepentantly derivative in content, but undeniably new in its peculiar brand of revisionism. For FPM, the goal isn't as much to create as it is to accumulate. From the Bacharach-inspired au-go-go groove of "Dear Mr. Salesman" (which also borrows the melody from Donovan's "Sunshine Superman") to the group's spot-on sentimental cover of Joe Jackson's "Steppin' Out," FPM captures the abandon and decadence of the genres it plunders, and restructures them for guilt-free consumption. This is Olean for the ears.

OUT: September 15.

FILE UNDER:

Cosmopolitan world pop.

R.I.V.L.:

Pizzicato Five, Luscious Jackson, Cornelius.

>>> Matt Hanks

HOWE GELB

Hisser
V2



The desert does funny things to artists: It seems to concentrate their vision, isolating aesthetics while summoning the most extreme and obscure vibes, until influences and intentions are all skewed. Case in point is Howe Gelb, of Giant Sand and OP8. Using a tired old four-track reel-to-reel, Gelb has created the aptly titled *Hisser*, a somber, songs-from-a-room meditation in which love turns to rust turns to dust. Gelb's sparse vision employs soft guitars that turn loud, a yellow-keyed piano that tinkles and breaks down, and a lonely moaning theremin. In his vast discography, Gelb has run from hard, twangy country rock to soft ballads, and *Hisser* is some of his loneliest, most naked work yet, downright sad and soulful. As in all of Gelb's work, though, there's a swollen heart at the center, one that, even when sounding desperate, holds on to a thimble-full of hope and a strand of optimism. *Hisser* isn't an easy listen; songs collapse before they end (or end before they collapse), they ramble and teeter on the edge of chaos, and rely on loose structures to lead the way. But *Hisser* is the vision of a truly unique and engaging talent, and in its pure heart and soul lies a masterpiece.

OUT: September 15.

FILE UNDER:

Long stem rants.

R.I.V.L.:

Giant Sand, Vic Chesnutt, Victoria Williams, Palace.

>>> Randall Roberts

LISA GERMANO

Slide
4AD

Lisa Germano has mined similar iconoclastic turf over the course of five solo LPs, but has maintained such a high standard that few fans are complaining about a lack of progression. *Slide* alters the equation just enough, de-emphasizing Germano's facile violin playing in favor of harmonium and the eerie keyboard-driven atmospherics that distinguished producer Tchad Blake's projects with other like-minded artists (Tom Waits, Suzanne Vega). Remaining front and center, though, are Germano's lyrical musings. In a weary, flat voice she delivers nursery rhyme-like vocal melodies packed with what detractors call ultra-introspective self-pity, but upon closer inspection are brave portrayals of honest, conflicting emotions. Germano may have learned a thing or two from the Giant Sand cohorts with whom she collaborated on last year's excellent OP8 disc (from which one song is reworked here). She's become more melodically grounded, and has acquired a knack for providing a visceral punch when things become too ethereal. Capitalizing on an otherworldly, but very organic, palette while staying true her to primary vision, Germano has crafted her best record yet. For those unfamiliar with the work of this unique talent, *Slide* is an ideal place to start.

>>> Glen Sarvady



OUT: July 21.
FILE UNDER: Artistic midnight confessionals.
R.I.V.L.: Kristin Hersh, Suzanne Vega, Joni Mitchell.

JULIANA HATFIELD

Bed
Zoë-Rounder

One-time indie queen Juliana Hatfield continues to sound louder, crankier and more jaded with each new album. And that's good news, because her current, snarling pop songs are at least as catchy as her sweeter ones from the MTV days, and they display a lot more depth. "Down On Me" opens *Bed* with a feedback screech, a rush of music biz-directed venom and, in the ultimate bird-flipping gesture, a snatch of "Frosty The Snowman" during the guitar solo. Her guitar tone stays good and dirty throughout, her voice can still melt hearts, and by now she can likely write killer hooks in her sleep. But Hatfield's career is now at an odd crossroads: For the past two years she's been working on her magnum opus, the still-unreleased album *God's Foot*. Like last year's *Please Do Not Disturb* EP, *Bed* was quickly written and recorded as a stopgap. Not surprisingly, some of its tracks sound a bit rushed: She might have stopped to consider whether referring to John Mellencamp's "Jack And Diane" on "Swan Song" was worth the joke, or whether the tune of "Sneaking Around" was just too close to "Stop Draggin' My Heart Around." But the offhand gems on *Bed* outnumber the throwaways, and are enough to sustain interest until she delivers the knockout.

>>> Brett Milano



OUT: August 25.
FILE UNDER: Poison-pen letters with hooks.
R.I.V.L.: Scrawl, Aimee Mann, Tracy Bonham.



The Contender



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HOLE

Celebrity Skin
DGC

On *Celebrity Skin*, Hole has been nipped and tucked, refined into something more conventionally pretty. One thing that survives the makeover, however, is Love's stock in trade: audacity. *Celebrity Skin's* first words are "Oh make me over," and this after a guitar riff that sounds alarmingly like the opening to Def Leppard's "Photograph." After taking just a few seconds to wipe away the past, Love spends the next 50-odd minutes mulling it over, filling the lyrics with references to angels, stars and death, and enough allusions to depression and self-destruction to keep those looking to decode Cobain family secrets in rapt attention. The songs, meanwhile, are expertly executed and adept at pushing rock fans' late-'90s buttons without seeming like merely a product of the times. It's hard to find fault in these songs, five of which were co-written by Billy Corgan, except to say that with the band replacing its ragged edges with a tuneful efficiency, Love's voice is often left searching for notes she never quite locates. When she does revert to her banshee wail, it only seems to reassert that what *Celebrity Skin* most lacks is the sense of desperation that made Hole so compelling in the first place. Conventional prettiness is fine, but it's not quite beauty.

>>> Scott Frampton



OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Auto-Pygmalion

R.I.V.L.:

Letters To Cleo, Liz Phair,

Veruca Salt.

LIDA HUSIK ★

Faith In Space
Alias

A broad range of musical interests is Lida Husik's greatest charm, and possibly her commercial Achilles' heel. After devoting two albums to unassuming psychedelic pop, reaching a high water mark on last year's wonderful *Fly Stereophonic*, Husik returns to the trippy electronic beats that also populate her fertile mind. British soundscape maven Beaumont Hannant is back in the fold, renewing a partnership recorded under the moniker Husikesque in 1994. Husik's sixth solo album, *Faith In Space* plays like a true 50/50 collaboration.

Hannant's backdrops vary from ambient to trip-hop to breakbeats, always providing wide openings for her insinuating melodies and enchanting voice to shine through. The most successful tracks, such as the laconic "Waterfall" and the more energetic "The Planets On," boast solid songcraft that could just as easily be framed as pop or electronica. Fans enamored by Husik's recent indie pop stylings will have to work harder to unearth the hooks, and those with narrower tastes will be confused as hell digging through her back catalog. But Lida Husik seems a lot more interested in art than in careering, and if she can display such skill at genre-hopping, then more power to her.

>>> Glen Sarvady



OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER:

Seamless pop/electronica blends.

R.I.V.L.:

Beth Orton, Saint Etienne,

Björk.

RIALTO

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IRRESISTIBLE FORCE

It's Tomorrow Already
Ninja Tune

Mixmaster Morris has established himself as an authority on ambient music through his numerous releases over the last decade and through his regular columns in British electronic scene chronicler *Mixmag*. His long-awaited full-length project, released under the Irresistible Force moniker, is an album of exquisite sonic textures and moods. The title track is an appropriate opener, with distant sonar pulses rising to the surface of the mix like a slowly ascending submarine, while the shimmering, metallic wash of Morris's characteristic synth sounds circles around the percussion, which is reduced to a series of pings and pongs. The outstanding "Sound Something" opens with what sounds like a Quentin Crisp vocal sample (though it's probably Steve Reich!) about white noise, and then goes on to narrate the progression of the electronic boundary-pushing Morris is engaged in. Those of you living in fear of another pallid, self-indulgent ambient album which functions better as a sleep aid than as a satisfying listening experience needn't worry. Mixmaster Morris is interested in entertaining and provoking, and his self-effacing sense of humor and rhythmic prowess make this a highly enjoyable record.



OUT: September 22

FILE UNDER:

Ambient originator.

R.I.Y.L.:

Early Orb, Mixmaster Morris's *Global Chillage*, early KLF.

>>> Tim Haslett

JACK DRAG

Dope Box
A&M

With the same type of ingenious thinking it took for someone to come up with iced coffee, Jack Drag pours its warm psychedelic pop over cool beats. The Boston trio offers its deliciously funky take on modern-rock on *Dope Box*, which tousles the metaphorical hair of modern rock, jumping into a melodic groove, slamming on the brakes and zipping into electronically enhanced reveries in summery tunes like "Seem So Tired" and "Sinner's Delight." Frontman John Dragonetti won't win any MC battles with lines like "I love you/And wherever you go I want to go there too," but his wry delivery and his bandmates' versatile rhythmic shifts make for a listening experience somewhere between mindless and diverting. The trio props up or drones down its aesthetic with organs, offbeat percussive instruments, microphone trickery and even a reggae experiment ("Kung Fu Dub"), although it stays within a basic rock context. And Dragonetti knows his way around a fretboard, formulating scandalously catchy hooks in songs like "Debutante" and "Surfin' The Charles," and plucking out mesmerizing figures on "Where Are We" that would make even the fussy Billy Corgan approve of Jack Drag's crafty sonic inventions.



OUT: September 8

FILE UNDER:

Fuzzy beat pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Beck, Flaming Lips, Folk Implosion.

>>> Richard Martin

Barry Adamson

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reviews

JESSAMINE

Don't Stay Too Long
Kranky

They may mix hypnotic bass lines with old-school keyboards, (almost) Afro-pop guitar and breathy, pleasant female vocals, but Jessamine is no Stereolab tribute act. Over the course of a handful of long-players and several shorter works, the four-piece has mastered its idiosyncratic brand of heavy, organ-driven prog groove. Unlike so many of its colder drone-on brothers and sisters, Jessamine manages to set up atmospheres, textures and gentle trance-states that you'd want to linger inside of. With *Don't Stay Too Long*, the Portland, Oregon, group has also figured out how to combine its melodies and grooves. It almost sounds like a collaboration between Luscious Jackson and members of Can, and I do mean that as a compliment. The tension between vocal prettiness and fractured, jamming structures, between pop and prog, yields some excellent results, particularly on "It Was Already Thursday" and "Burgundy." *Don't Stay* has an exquisitely lazy, hazy sound. With its tasteful wah-wahs, warm tube amp sound and mellow Wurlitzer rays, Jessamine and Kranky could have foisted this record off as a reissue. It sounds like a classic record made before (most of) you were born, some great discovery unearthed from obscurity. I mean that as a compliment, too.

>>> Mike McGonigal



OUT: August 17.
FILE UNDER:
Atmospheric, melodic,
groove-based drone-rock.
R.I.V.L.:
Bowery Electric, Stereolab,
Laika, Pram.

KLEENEX GIRL WONDER

Ponyoak
March

Just a few months ago Kleenex Girl Wonder released *Graham Smith Is The Coolest Person Alive*, an album that sparked inevitable comparisons to Guided By Voices. KGW mastermind Graham Smith and Robert Pollard share a taste for '60s British tunesmithery, an impossibly prolific nature, and a tendency to deliver the goods in compact lo-fi packages. The big difference is that Smith is only a year removed from high school, and far ahead of Pollard's accomplishments at this checkpoint. Smith's rapid fire follow-up and third full-length, *Ponyoak* delivers 24 new songs and is more consistent and cohesive, although it lacks *Coolest Person's* adrenaline rush of new discovery and its endearing disregard for limitations. The instrumentation centers on acoustic guitar strumming, perhaps a necessity of recording in a University of Wisconsin dorm room. The musical references shift to early new wave touchstones like Nick Lowe and Elvis Costello, with a hint of the Elephant 6 school. A sterling songwriting gift remains in full effect, but at 69 minutes *Ponyoak* would benefit from a little more variety and less freshman year girl trouble. Search out either of these—we're going to be hearing from Graham Smith for years to come.

>>> Glen Savvady



OUT: September 15.
FILE UNDER:
Inspired lo-fi bedroom pop.
R.I.V.L.:
Guided By Voices, early
Kinks, vintage Nick Lowe.

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from other artists?

she's a band.

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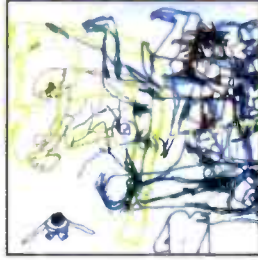
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LAMBCHOP

What One Man Spills
Merge

On their fourth full-length, the nine members of Nashville's Lambchop offer a Godiva assortment of dark chocolate ear candy, rich exteriors shot through with tasteful bitterness. Their base style (caramels and cremes) is a pillowy confection of guitar, horns, cello, trumpet and pedal steel, blended with restraint unusual for such a large ensemble. For variety, there's the crunchier Anglo-pop of "It's Not Alright" (nougat), the Miracles/Isleys soul of "I've Been Lonely" (cherry cordial), and the remarkable "Gimme Your Love," which nails the string-and-wah-wah combo of early disco so perfectly that the barely-there lyrics are forgivable. The sugar-coated pills on *What One Man Spills* are the voice and lyrics of Kurt Wagner, who dispenses with earlier albums' skewed vignettes for a personal, largely downbeat approach. On "N.O." (for "New Orleans"), Wagner sings, "This isn't poetry, it's depravity," though his clear enunciation belies the intended air of dissipation. "Saturday Option" is better, with a cryptic chorus ("Do the shabby thing, you/Separate the wood from the screw") supported by a floating arrangement that's cousin to Yo La Tengo's "Nowhere Near." Despite Wagner's occasional eloquence, his band does the most expressive work here, topping each track with sonic squiggles that warn you what you're biting into. >>> *Franklin Bruno*



OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Lushly arranged anti-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Tindersticks, Vic Chesnutt, Giant Sand.

LOCAL H

Pack Up The Cats
Island

After the modern-rock radio success of "Bound For The Floor" (c'mon, you remember the hooky chorus: "You just don't get it/You keep it copacetic"), you might mistake Illinois duo Local H for a one-hit wonder. Don't count on it. The band's *As Good As Dead* was a sonic joyride with big dumb-rock riffs and smart lyrical content that went largely overlooked. On *Pack Up The Cats*, Local H merges Roy Thomas Baker's fun, indulgent production with more wry commentary—witnessed in titles like "Hit The Skids Or: How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Rock," "Laminate Man" and "All The Kids Are Right"—and the same immediate, burly rock. Scott Lucas owes big vocal debts to Kurt Cobain ("Fine And Good," "Cool Magnet," "Deep Cut," "What Can I Tell You?"), but refuses to succumb to the kind of personal and artistic tortures that haunted the late Nirvana vocalist. A healthy attitude compliments this very cohesive 15-song album. If Local H ever becomes a Nirvana-like sensation, it's all copacetic with Lucas, who bellows on "All-Right (Oh Yeah)": "You could never figure out/What was all the buzz about/I know it's me, it's only stupid me."



OUT: September 1.

FILE UNDER:

Brainy brawn.

R.I.Y.L.:

Nirvana, Foo Fighters, early Elvis Costello, AC/DC.

>>> *Mark Woodlief*

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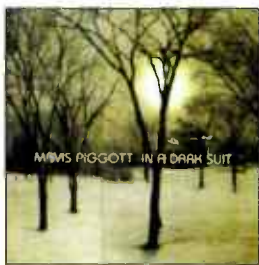
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MAVIS PIGGOTT

In A Dark Suit
Flydaddy

Memories of places are often foundations for works of art. Proust's countryside, Woody Allen's Manhattan, and Beverly Cleary's Klickitat Street all conjure up specific images of the places that had an obvious impact upon their dwellers. The songs on Mavis Piggott's new LP *In A Dark Suit* have the same effect. The band's progression from friendship within the DC hardcore scene to a move to Seattle can be heard in the influences that each scene's music impressed upon them. The martial phrasing and jittery arpeggios of "Night Obscured" and the ropery bass and truncated title of "Sorted" conjure up the Dischord sound that Megan Adkins and Nikky Thomas cut their teeth on. The deliberate pacing, pressuring guitars and vocal intensity of the slow and heavy "An Alias" and "Feel Virtuous" are valentines to the Seattle rock scene of the early '90s. Thomas's drums and John Wickhart's bass create a deep firmament for the bright stars that shine forth in these poetic and beguiling songs. Guitarist and singer Adkins has a subtle and shaded voice and her songs bear lyrical witness to both a searing sadness and a strange strength. *In A Dark Suit* is beautiful and smart—just like everyone's dream date.



OUT: July 21.

FILE UNDER:

The thinking woman's post-grunge.

R.I.Y.L.:

Throwing Muses, Pearl Jam, PJ Harvey, Spinanes.

>>> Lois Matfeo

MEDIAEVAL BÆBES ★

Salva Nos
Virgin

"Going classical" is a time-honored conceit in pop music—think Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio* or Billy Joel's planned foray into the realm of Copland and Ives. So is the novelty act. The Mediæval Bæbes—12 young women, two from Miranda Sex Garden, who sing in Latin and Middle English and take pains to play up their beer-drinking bad girls image in interviews—are both. Listening to this record is infinitely better than reading their press kit. The Bæbes boast about their past jobs—a stripper, a welder, a flight attendant for Lufthansa, etc.—to magazines and don't dodge lazy journalistic tries like "The 12th Century Spice Girls." On disc, they're really not bad. *Salva Nos* may not give the Tallis Scholars any reason to worry, but the women in this group have lovely, if not typically classical, voices and are sparsely accompanied, if at all, by recorder, tambourine and hammered dulcimer. On "Gaudette" and "The Coventry Carol" in particular, the Bæbes sound less like a good church group and more like early-music scholars. If they avoid getting marketed into a corner, the Mediæval Bæbes could turn into something really special. Right now, though, they basically make sex music for yuppies.



OUT: September 8.

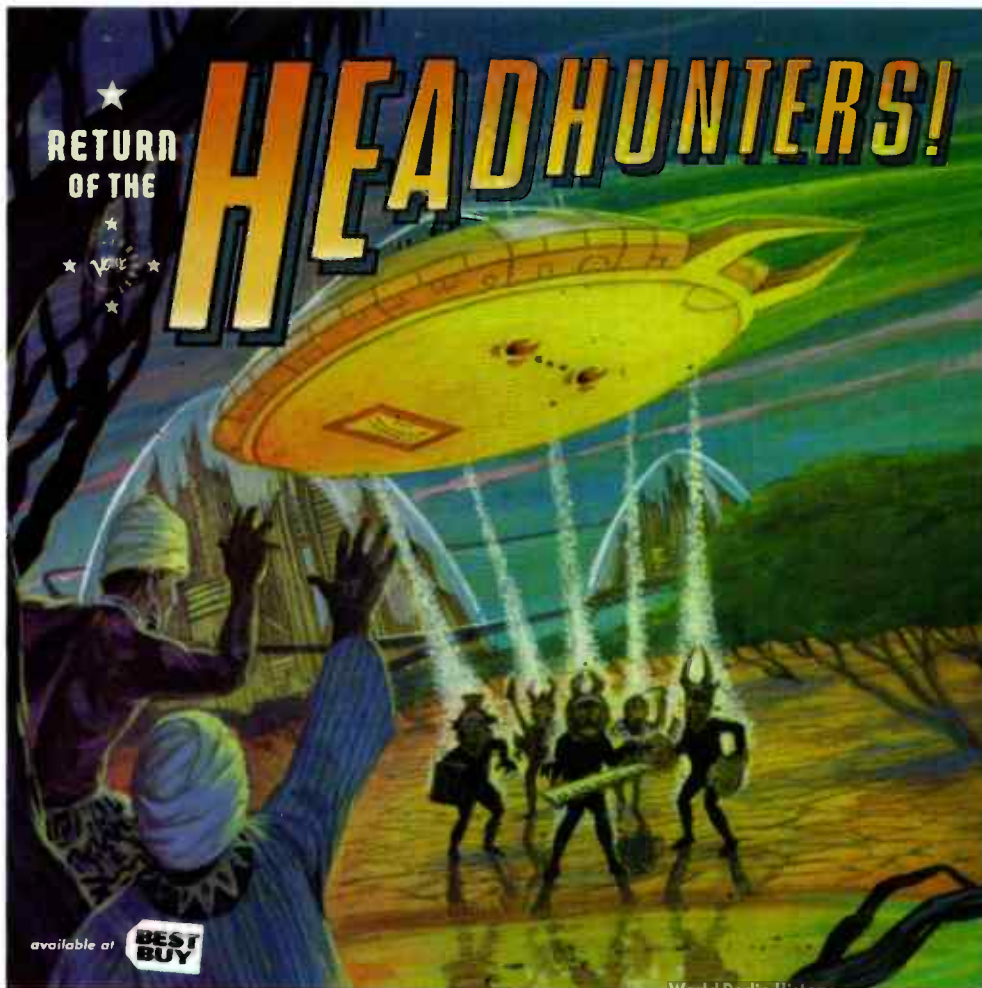
FILE UNDER:

Madrigals for sipping moccachinos.

R.I.Y.L.:

Enya, Gorecki's *Third*, *Chant*.

>>> Andrew Beaujon



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MINI-KING

Mini-King
N2K

In these post-post-modern days, it seems like irony is a required part of any band's makeup. So it's a little hard to believe that the New York quintet Mini-King is reverently resurrecting the ultra-sincere "new romantic" sound. For God's sake, the band's press release compares it to George Michael. The bandmembers even have the Romantic look down, wearing their hair short and their waistcoats long. At first, it's hard to listen to Mini-King's debut objectively because the group's take on '80s-style blue-eyed soul is so stunningly accurate. Joshua Tyler's effortless croon floats atop an epic arrangement of shimmering keyboards, sustained guitar chords and swaying saxophone. The melodies don't bounce so much as soar. After a few more listens, you'll soon recall those days when whiling the hours away in a Parisian café seemed like a noble pursuit. Though Mini-King can't escape being derivative, its members know how to write noble pop songs with gentle hooks. Stephen Abrams's lead guitar work, which owes as much to George Harrison as to Phil Manzanera, adds bite to the layers of glimmering sheen. Mini-King is so good, you might just want to get the Pernod out of the liquor cabinet and start wearing your old espadrilles again. Sorry, I got a little carried away.

>>> Neil Gladstone



OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER:

New romantic soul.

R.I.Y.L.:

Spandau Ballet, Roxy Music, ABC, Simply Red.

MUDHONEY

Tomorrow Hit Today
Reprise

It's been three years since Mudhoney bitterly (and brilliantly) denounced the widow Cobain on *My Brother The Cow's* "Into Yer Shtick," and nine since frontman Mark Arm seethingly forewarned, "When tomorrow hits, it'll hit you hard." Knowingly titling their fifth album in that vein, Arm and co. hunkered down with illustrious Memphis knobman Jim Dickinson and boldly concocted a 12-track collection that pummels beyond expectations. From its muscular beginnings (the sludgy "Cinnamon Girl"-styled riff of "A Thousand Forms Of Mind") and dynamic range (Dickinson's soulful keyboards on several tracks) to an apocalyptic critique of consumerism ("This Is The Life"), *Tomorrow Hit Today* emerges with an echo-ey, fuzzed-out, menacing snarl. Save for a wry juke-joint romp hidden at the disc's end, there's nothing resembling throwaway material here. Arm and Steve Turner trade their best guitar interplay since they first recklessly stomped on vintage effects pedals, and if the band's rhythm section (drummer Dan Peters and bassist Matt Lukin) were any tighter, you'd swear they were ghosts from old Stax/Volt sessions. On "Night Of The Hunted," Arm moans, "We'll stand our ground." Don't doubt him for one second—Mudhoney is hitting very hard, indeed.

>>> Mark Woodlief



OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER:

Grunge genesis.

R.I.Y.L.:

Stooges, Blue Cheer, Superfuzz Bigmuff.



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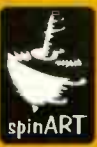
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NATURAL CALAMITY ★

Peach Head
Nickelbag



OUT: September 22.

FILE UNDER:
Laid-back Japanese pop.

R.I.Y.L.:
Lida Husik, Sean Lennon,
Sugar Plant.

Although its name suggests a bunch of guys in black with Alice Cooper makeup that you'd read about over in the Metal column, Natural Calamity is actually a Japanese-American confection that provides a window into an innocent, breathtaking world of dreamy beats and lush pool-side grooves. Natural Calamity is comprised of two Japanese DJs, Shunji Mori and Kunihito Sugimoto, along with American singer Stephanie Heasley. Together the trio combines laid-back, ethereal drumbeats with simple, homemade melodies spun largely from guitars and Heasley's relaxed croon, which meshes well with the music's easy vibe. *Peach Head* maintains a dreamy tone throughout, even when the songs are nubbed with chunky electronic beats, especially prevalent on the three remixes that cap off the album's nine original cuts. The Dust Brothers (who also released this album on their Nickelbag label) bring up the bass on "As You Know" and introduce some gentle hip-hop beats—nothing that'll knock Heasley off her lounge chair, although Kool Keith's body part-obsessed rap on "In The Wee Wee Time" just might. Like all great bands of this mix-and-match decade, Natural Calamity is really only recognizable on its own terms rather than as the product of its myriad global influences. >>> James Lien

WILLIE NELSON

Teatro
Island



OUT: September 1.

FILE UNDER:
Outlaw icons.

R.I.Y.L.:
Johnny Cash, Emmylou
Harris, Jimmie Dale
Gilmore.

After remarkable and award-winning efforts with Emmylou Harris and Bob Dylan, producer Daniel Lanois tries to work that magic again, this time with Willie Nelson on *Teatro*. There was a point in Nelson's career when trendy ideas from record labels or big-time record producers would have been as welcome to him as barbers or auditors, but the Lanois-Nelson match actually works pretty well. When Lanois beefs up the sound or starts adding too much reverb and other vocal effects, it seems off (remember U2 backing Johnny Cash?), especially on the lush reworking of Lanois's own "The Maker." It's best to let Nelson's distinct voice provide its own crackled appeal, as it does splendidly through much of the album's even mix of new material and Nelson nuggets, which date back some 30-odd years. Harris turns up to provide good company for Nelson on nearly every track. Sounding like a veteran Opryland couple, they manage to make the songs sound sweet or desperate or both. The warbling Wurlitzer organ and gentle south-of-the-border groove behind Nelson's ballads and waltzes give *Teatro* an easygoing feel, perfect for his gringo gypsy flatpicking. While *Teatro* may not stir you like Harris's *Wrecking Ball*, it certainly has its own classic moments. >>> Steve Ciabattone

NOMEANSNO

Dance Of The Headless Bourgeoisie
Alternative Tentacles



Its discography is longer than the Old Testament. It's logged more miles on the road than a Dick Simon trucker. And with no sign of retiring, NoMeansNo releases *The Dance Of The Headless Bourgeoisie*, an album every bit as biting and angry as hardcore records being produced by punkers one third their age, and hella funnier. It's an acquired taste—adult contemporary hardcore—but if you can still get a thrill out of punk rock that manages to unite disillusionment and hope, NoMeansNo is among its most thoughtful practitioners. The band thankfully avoids a problem typical of many agit-punks, that of failing to translate the excitement of their live sound into a recording. It seems that as bassist John Wright composed the songs for this record, he kept in mind the famed fierceness of his punching bass style and drummer (and brother) Rob's controlled fury. The music has the burrowing intensity that's usually only provided by standing in front of the loudspeaker. While the songs have moments of over-taxed rhetoric, on the main *The Dance Of The Headless Bourgeoisie* is an examination of a topic more subtle than politics—manhood. And that is a theme most backwards-baseball cap bands can't touch yet.

OUT: June 16.

FILE UNDER:

Adult contemporary hardcore.

R.I.V.L.:

Rage Against The Machine, Fugazi, D.O.A.

>>> Lois Maffeo

REMY ZERO ★

Villa Elaine
DGC



Remy Zero, a five-member band formerly from Alabama and now from Hollywood, clearly draws influence from OK Computer, but Radiohead's blipped-out guts and gizzards prove viable in Remy Zero's more upbeat encasings. (In fact, Radiohead was such a fan of Remy Zero's self-titled debut that it took the fledgling band out on the road soon after the album's release.) The band's follow-up, *Villa Elaine*, is a very engaging album in its own right. Singer Cinjun Tate is a compelling mishmash of Thom Yorke (less detached than) and Freddie Mercury (not as flamboyant as), with a touch of Perry Farrell's whine. The album's interest hinges on Tate's voice, and his varied delivery sticks, giving the sparkingly well-executed music its kick. He's enticingly sedate on "Life In Rain" (the circular guitar line sounding remarkably like Big Head Todd's "Ann Arbor Grandfather"), a soothing ballad that's tripped out on lyrics like "We have oceans left to fly" and irradiated with electronic whirs and beeps. He's infectiously happy on the guaranteed mood-altering "The Problem With Me." "Hollow," *Villa Elaine's* relative epic, moves from muted despair to Queen-y show tune romp and back again. Remy Zero attacks its songs with the acute relish, and its dapper panache will win plenty of smiles.

OUT: August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Modern pop rock.

R.I.V.L.:

Radiohead's *OK Computer*, Posies, Grant Lee Buffalo.

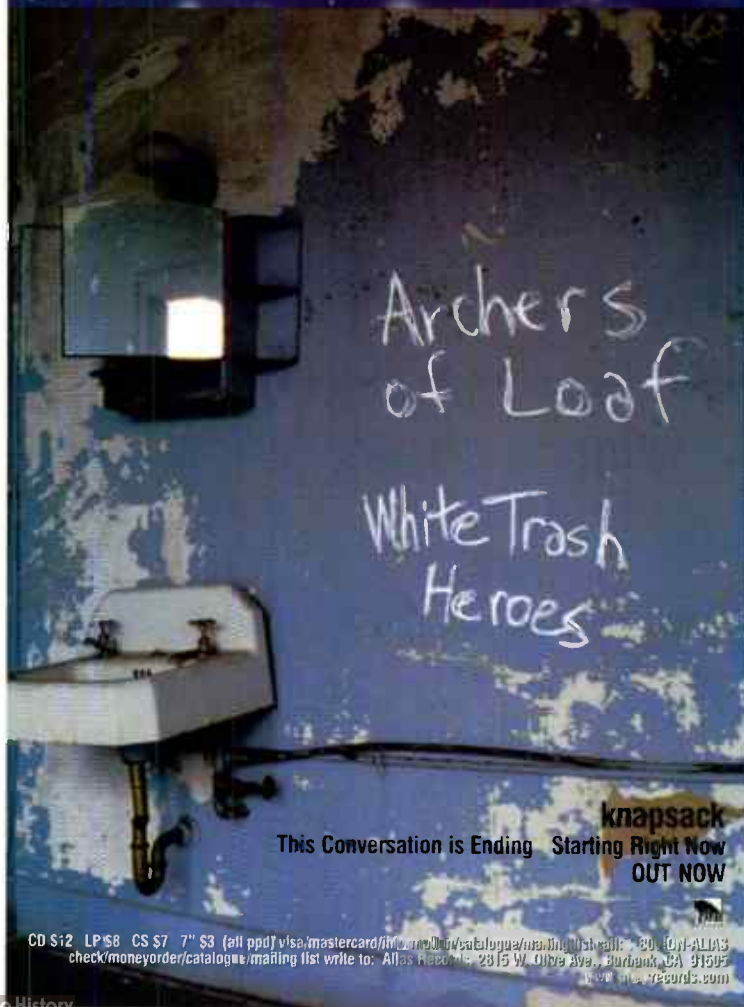
>>> Anne Marie Cruz

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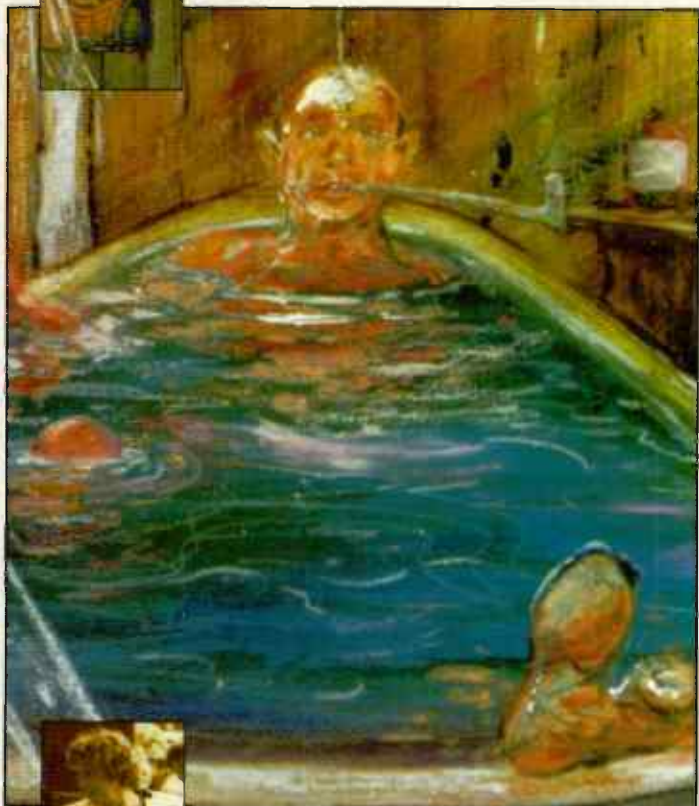


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reviews

RIALTO ★

Rialto
Sire



OUT: September 15.

FILE UNDER:

Stylish Brit-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Pulp, pre-Blur Blur, Oasis.

Lest anyone think Brit-pop a burnt-out genre, Rialto steps up with a collection of snazzy tunes and thoughtfully constructed narratives that hover around the Beatles/Kinks axis. Not just another Oasis-come-lately, the quintet artfully maneuvers between sweet melodicism and lush folkiness, typing out a fresh set of scenes from today's England. Vocalist and guitarist Louis Eliot is an eloquent storyteller, using the Queen's English to relay tales that forward themes of jealousy, loneliness and class struggle. The band backs him with a potpourri of pop devices, conjuring a sweeping string section or mustering "la la la" harmonies atop the straightforward rhythms. Almost every song has merits, but Rialto is most engaging when it shifts into overdrive for guitar-dominated rockers like "Hard Candy" and "The Underdogs," which adds mellifluous trumpet and resounding drums. The singsong tune "Dream Another Dream" is another standout, with a loping verse and a loopy, mildly psychedelic chorus. Keyboardist Toby Hounsham supplies an ear-catching array of sounds that enliven other tracks, such as the uptempo parable "Broken Barbie Doll" and the epic opener "Monday Morning 5:19." Throw in the cinematic "Summer's Over," which depicts the closing-down of a resort at season's end, and you've got a witty and consistent album brimming with splendid imagery and thoroughly pleasing pop.

>>> Richard Martin

SAINT ETIENNE

Good Humor
Sub Pop



OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Cinematic lounge pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

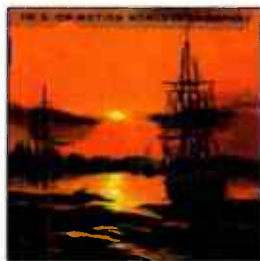
Cardigans, Air, Morcheeba.

Fans of the Saint Etienne's lush early albums like 1994's *Tiger Bay* or the group's cover of Neil Young's "Only Love Can Break Your Heart" may find its first album in four years stark: Its plainer instrumentation, subdued rhythms and limited sampling suggest a shift. But "stark" for this band of retro-nuevo Brits—whose inspirations are equally divided between the cinema and the dance club—is still sinfully rich. During the trio's hiatus, while its panoramic lounge-pop sound was taken to the bank by the Cardigans, singer Sarah Cracknell briefly toyed with a solo career and bandmates/gearheads Pete Wiggs and Bob Stanley refined their sound. The result is not a whit more profound than the band's earlier work, but it's organic enough to stand out in a post-electronica, martini-revival age. The opening "Woodcabin" and the placid "Mr. Donut" set the tone, as Cracknell croons soothingly over little more than a heartbeat rhythm and some tinkling on a soothing organ; on the former, even the lyrics hint at the not-too-hot-not-too-cold approach: "Never write a love song/Never write a trip-out." Still, lest you think Wiggs and Stanley will forever eschew their sound of yore, "Sylvie" pulses with Eurodisco yearning, and "Split Screen" piles on the Bacharach horns as if Saint Etienne were repaving the way to San Jose.

>>> Chris Molanphy

SNOWPONY ★

The Slow-Motion World Of Snowpony
Radioactive



"I have the cold, gray water of the Thames running through my veins," sings Snowpony's Katherine Gifford. Believe it: Like her ex-bandmate Dave Callahan of Moonshake, Gifford is a songwriter in that gin-dry, literary mode that you pretty much have to be English to pull off. On Snowpony's full-length debut, Gifford draws her persona from the pages of detective novels, becoming a crafty, glamorous troublemaker vulnerable only to her memories. Her description of "an outline on the bed where your body once lay" sounds sentimental enough in the sinuous "A Way To Survive," but a few songs later, "3 Can Keep A Secret (If 2 Are Dead)" hints that the outline could have been a chalk one. The music of *Slow-Motion World* is as tricky as the words. Produced by a surprisingly unobtrusive John McEntire (of Tortoise), it combines a live rhythm section—former My Bloody Valentine bassist Debbie Googe and drummer Max Corradi—with Gifford's artful patchwork of looped and sampled guitars and keyboards. The result may be a Manchester pop flashback like "John Brown" or a baroque lullaby like "St. Lucy's Gate," with its distorted loops that flit around like insects on a summer night, or it may drift inscrutably between moods.

OUT: August 25.
FILE UNDER: Electronically bewitched mope-pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Moonshake, Laika, Broadcast.

>>> Andrea Moed

SWELL

For All The Beautiful People
Beggars Banquet



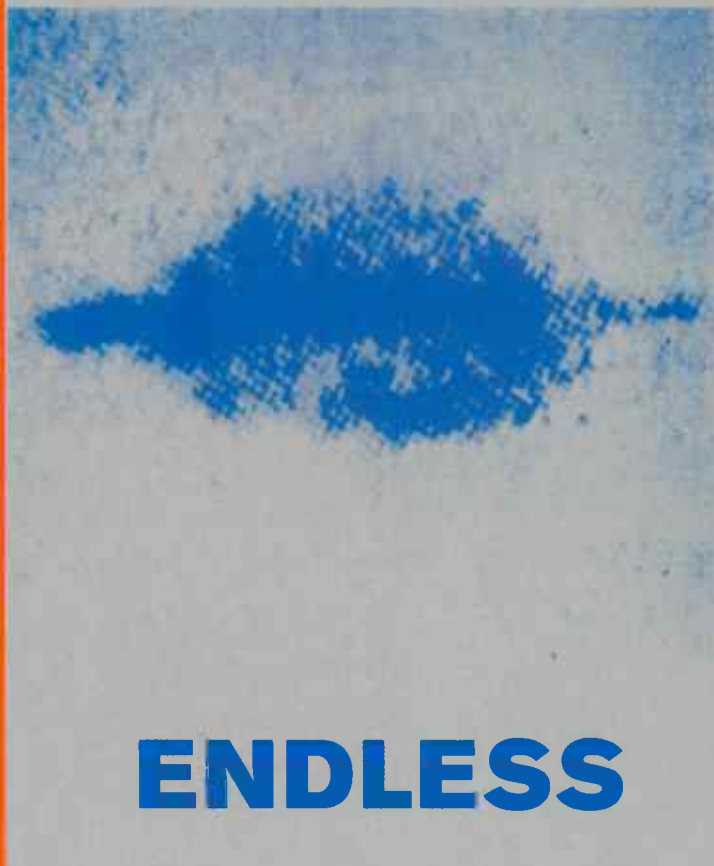
There's a perverse comfort in ambling down rain-splattered city sidewalks while nursing a broken heart, maybe because the maudlin scene makes the depressing thoughts coursing through the brain seem cheery by comparison. Swell's songs have always reveled in such moods, although never more eloquently than on *For All The Beautiful People*. The San Francisco band's fifth album in the last six years showcases singer-guitarist David Freel's increasingly icy wit and further establishes Swell's stereochromatic style, built on accentuated yet spare percussion, jittery acoustic strums and warmly evocative electric piano. He vocalizes in an almost creepy singsong, drawing out syllables and repeating phrases like a grammar school teacher on the verge of a breakdown—especially when he drawls, "Love to write and speak real good" over and over in "Something To Do," a song that segues into an ambient cricket and thunderstorm denouement called "Pink Pink Rain." Freel stitches his black humor into a framework of expertly rendered downcast rock, but Swell can just as well lighten the mood with shrugging musical statements like "Everything Is Good," a celebratory stomp complete with horn section. Things aren't really good, Freel seems to be saying, but they could be a helluva lot worse.

OUT: August 25.
FILE UNDER: Moody urban acousti-rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Acetone, Elliott Smith, Steely Dan's *Pretzel Logic*.

>>> Richard Martin

WW

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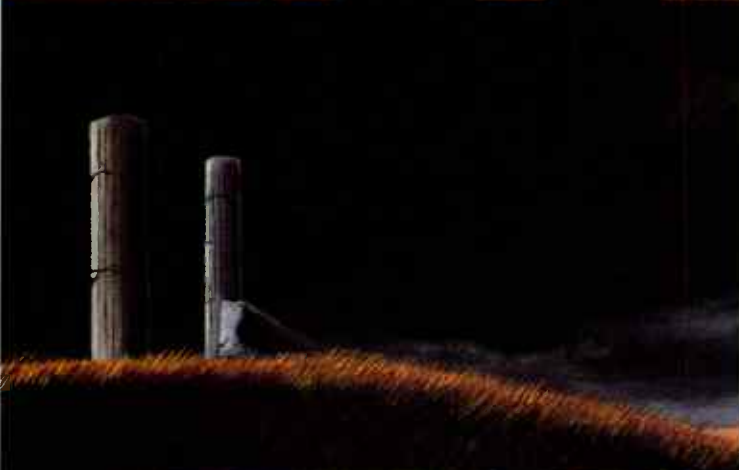
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U.N.K.L.E.

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Mo Wax-London



OUT: September 29.

FILE UNDER:

Trip-hop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Tricky, Portishead,
DJ Shadow.

With its 1995 *Headz* compilation, the Mo Wax label defined a signature sound: lean instrumental hip-hop full of deep, funky beats and eerie, cinematic samples accented by virtuoso scratching. Label boss James Lavelle's own U.N.K.L.E. tracks were among the best and most unique of the bunch. The Mo Wax sound overturned rap and rock orthodoxy by eliminating vocals and reversing the relationship between background and foreground. Three years later, on this first full-length U.N.K.L.E.

record, Lavelle (now in partnership with DJ Shadow) turns his own formula on its head by inviting vocal contributions from a host of rap and rock superstars, among them Beastie Boy Mike D., The Verve's Richard Ashcroft, old school rapper Kool G. Rap, and Thom Yorke of Radiohead. It's an interesting experiment, but the results are mixed. At worst, Lavelle's guests distract attention from his distinctive art, burying it under the vocalist's shtick. "Lonely Soul," for example, gives free rein to Ashcroft's prefab pathos at the expense of everything else. On the other end of the spectrum, "Rabbit In Your Headlights" manages a wonderfully delicate balance between Yorke's Alex Chilton-esque crooning and Shadow's gorgeous palette of samples, beats and noises. This, one imagines, is what Lavelle was striving for. And there's enough of it here to recommend this record despite its failings. >>> Christoph Cox

VARNALINE

Sweet Life
Zero Hour



OUT: August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Reticent alt-country.

R.I.Y.L.:

Son Volt, Mark Eitzel's
West, Neil Young.

Varnaline hits the hi-fi with a fistful of alt-country on *Sweet Life*. The twang, albeit subdued, may be a surprise to fans of the band's first LP, the four-track, home recorded *Man Of Sin*. Frontman Anders Parker skims the emulsive bitterness of the everyday with his steely voice; his brother, John (bass, keyboards), and Jud Ehrbar (drums, background vocals) help steady the lonesome tenor. Parker's voice on "While You Were Sleeping" recalls a restrained Mark Eitzel, full of wistful observations ("The whole world shut down/I watched you breathing"). "Northern Lights" is equally pretty, its heroic sadness bolstered by a guitar line from Harry Chapin's "Cat's In The Cradle." The offhandedly bouncy guitar line masks the pointed lyrics of the XTC-ish "Fuck & Fight," as Parker mimics the vocals of Andy Partridge and Colin Moulding. Purposefully harsh and awkward, the lurching waltz of "Now You're Dirt" kicks up juvenile bitterness toward a dead and buried father. The title track is the emotional anchor. "You had your chance/And all you got was the sweet life," sings Anders plaintively over the progression of plucked strings and bowed bass to a drum-crashing fracas. Reverently plying the innards of frustration, hurt and adjustment without hope of restitution, *Sweet Life* is a fine hymnbook for any congregation of sad sacks. >>> Anne Marie Cruz

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Vihma
Wicklow-BMG



On its seventh album, this Finnish cluster of female singers and accompanying musicians comes on with the fresh-faced enthusiasm of the Von Trapp Family (Värttinä began in the '80s as a 21-member youth club performing Karelian folk songs), but with a dizzying, pan-genre vision that continues to break new ice in the brisk, beautiful landscape of Scandinavian folk. The effervescent flutter of fiddles, button accordion and jazzy saxophones that punctuates the livelier tracks on *Vihma* reminds you that folk was the original, old-school dance music, as hints of klezmer and Celtic music lock arms in Värttinä's dance circle. On a remix of the title track, Värttinä allows some drum programming into its mostly acoustic world, composer Richard Horowitz adding ney flute and keyboards on top with decidedly modern results. Although voices from the Tuvan group Yat-Kha add the unique whistling drone of their throat singing to the mix on two tracks, the lovely, yet bracing, harmonies of its four lead singers remains the group's focus. Värttinä relies less on traditional material than it used to, yet many of its new, original tunes lean on the pastoral simplicity of songs that have lasted through generations. >>> Steve Ciabattoni

OUT: August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Fine Finn folk

R.I.Y.L.:

Hedningarna, Ashley
MacLissac, Le Mystère Des
Voix Bulgares, Zap Mama.

TOM ZÉ

Com Defeito De
Fabricação (Fabrication
Defect)
Luaka Bop



No one thinks or sounds like Tom Zé. A classically trained composer, fashioner of homemade instruments and pop Dadaist, Zé came to renown in his native Brazil 30 years ago, as one of the founding members of the Tropicalia movement (a modernist-inspired cultural sedition that influenced not only music but also nearly every expression of art, and managed to offend Brazil's political left and right simultaneously). Although the Tropicalia era was Zé's most productive, he has forged a unique, if perplexing, body of work in the intervening years. His latest release, *Fabrication Defect*, is a concept album that considers how art can break the dehumanizing cycle of third world life. But even if you don't speak Portuguese, the album's rakish melodies and schizophrenic arrangements are captivating. One of *Defect's* strongest tracks "Defect 4: Emere" combines violin expressionism worthy of the Dirty Three with percussive burps reminiscent of Harry Partch. *Defect* also shares an eccentric quality with the best work of Americans Van Dyke Parks and Frank Zappa, but the similarities are conceptual more than aural. Like all of Zé's recordings, this album is uniquely Brazilian, and singularly strange. Although one misses the analog resonance of his earliest recordings, *Fabrication Defect* is an inspired work, and it proves Tom Zé is still quite crazy after all these years. >>> Matt Hanks

OUT: September 8.

FILE UNDER:

Mad genius, Brazilian-style.

R.I.Y.L.:

Caetano Veloso, Arto
Lindsay, Frank Zappa.

ENOUGH WITH THE PLEASANTRIES

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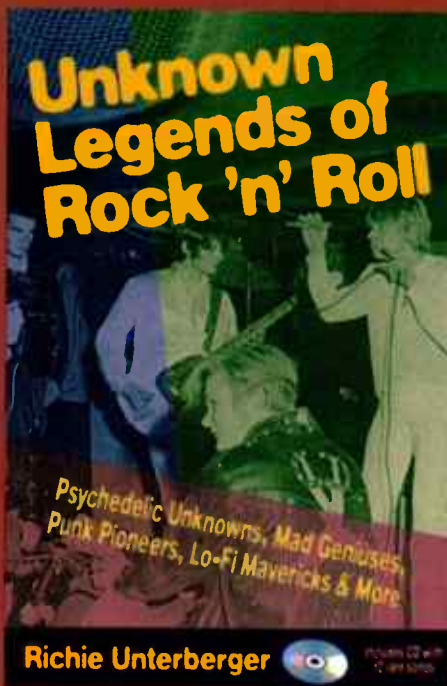
The history of UK drum 'n' bassist **JUMPING JACK FROST** is a long and celebrated one. As one of the forces behind the influential V Records label (which he runs with partner Bryan G.), Frost released the first recordings by Roni Size, DJ Krust and other members of Bristol's Reprazent crew, and his decade-long commitment to underground urban music has made him one of the key players behind breakbeat's rise to international acclaim. Now, through domestic distribution and nationwide touring, Frost has focused his attention on revitalizing the American d 'n' b scene, and **Konkrete Jungle—Maximum Drum 'N' Bass (Konkrete Jungle-Ultra)** should only further the cause. Flying the flag of New York City's popular Konkrete Jungle collective, Frost executes a wide-ranging 11-track mix of drum 'n' bass scorchers, ranging from the soulful, jump-up grooves of DJ Krust's "Soul In Motion" and DJ Ani's "N.Y.C. Right About Now," to the menacing hardstep attacks of 1.8.7.'s "Konkrete Jungle" and 3D & Flow's "Iron Fist." The track selection makes the disc an honest representation of the sounds flowing from today's urban jungles, and Frost's mastery of the breakbeat gives the disc an inherent flow, making this a journey worth taking time and time again... Equally alluring is the ultra-smooth **Ikon Massive (Cosmic Flux Musique)**, a 10-track look at drum 'n' bass in its more melodic, abstract and jazzy forms. **MIKEBEE**, who has a residence at the San Francisco club for which the disc is named, maps out a seamless ride that floats through feather-light tracks by artists such as Funky Technicians, jazz-flavored swingers by the likes of Cujo (Amon Tobin), and abstract mindfucks by innovators like Squarepusher. A recommended treat for those who fiend for the softer sides of breakbeat music... Running in opposition to drum 'n' bass's soulful vibes are the barbaric textures of gabber/hardcore techno, a music made from pummeling jackhammer rhythms and an incessant wall of noise. Many see the genre as the bastard offspring of the electronic dance movement, but the scene has refused to die, thanks to its highly devoted fanbase. The man commanding the pack is New York's **LENNY DEE**, known for making a brutal noise wherever he goes, and **Industrial F**king Strength 2 (Industrial Strength)** brings the relentless mayhem right into your living room. Disc one of the two-disc set is an unmixed collection of tracks from the titular hard techno label. On disc two, however, Dee leads the charge, mixing tracks by Delta 9, D.O.A. Industrial Terror Squad and others with surprising fluidity, given the music's rough, raucous temperament. The collection may not be for everyone, but these cuts and Dee's skills will have fans of hardcore techno salivating like Pavlov's pups.

>>> M. Tye Comer



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CMJ8

rob zombie

(Continued from page 44)

doesn't have a White Zombie tattoo, though numerous fans do.) In Zombie's seemingly not overly ego-driven, well-ordered world (compared to that of, say, Gene Simmons), he claims that he'd be able to deal with, 15 years down the line, releasing new records, and fans not caring, but clamoring for "More Human Than Human" and early Zombie trademarks.

"To me, that's a great thing. It's like, 'You wrote a song 20 years ago, and 20 years later it still means something to somebody.' You don't see how great that is, you fucking asshole? Bands who won't play their hits... you pretentious fuck!" he almost shouts. "That's another big pet peeve of mine. I'm in that place in a sense where people go, 'Are you going to play any White Zombie songs?' I'll play whatever those goddamn people want to hear. I'm there to entertain them. I'll play fucking 'More Human' until I'm dead, if they still want to hear it. You go to see Lynyrd Skynyrd. If they said, 'We're not playing Freebird,' someone take out a gun and shoot them at that point! I'd be like, 'You fucking assholes, I just waited for two years and saved for six months to see this stupid show.' I'd let the audience write the set list for me. It's that fan mentality," he concludes. "As soon as you lose that, you're fucked." **end**

fatboy slim

(Continued from page 39)

can dance to made by people who are normally a bit older—in their thirties—who grew up listening to rap and then went over to house and then got bored of the 4/4 beat

after six or seven years. So they've started incorporating the hip-hop breakbeats they grew up with into the house sensibility about dancing and pace and excitement level. It's also characterized by having a little bit more humor than house, not taking itself quite so seriously."

Thus the name Fatboy Slim?

"Depends," Cook challenges. "What have you heard?"

Well, one magazine reported as fact that it was the advertising slogan for a weight reduction plan for obese children in the '50s.

"That's one of about four stories," Cook finally offers. "One is that there was this old blues singer named Fatboy Slim—my favorite blues singer—and he recorded one song in 1947 called 'Baby I Want a Piece Of Your Pie.' It's about as true as the one you heard. Another one is that the last time I had my photo taken on the television I was a lot heavier than I am now, so whenever anyone got introduced to me they'd say, 'You're not Norman. He's fat and bald.' But, truthfully, it's a reference to me and Damien, the guy who started Skint Records. Because he's quite ample and I'm quite slim."

"Of course," adds Fatboy Slim. "I've been on a drugs slimming diet for a couple years. The pounds just fly off." **end**

cat power

(Continued from page 35)

frightening weeks there in early '97. The stories won't fit here, but they're colorful, fascinating tales that involve seeing people she was told didn't exist, finding herself in the exact place she'd seen in nightmares

years before, and wicked tempters trying to take her to the dark side.

"I came home and got all spiritual and political. I had a breakdown. I couldn't talk to my friends. All they wanted to talk about was music, and that didn't make any sense to me."

So Marshall left New York for South Carolina, where things didn't get any clearer. One late summer evening, she finished reading Denis Johnson's *Already Dead*, which paralleled her experiences in Africa. When she tried to fall asleep, the nightmares returned.

"In the dream, a voice came from the field behind my house, a really coaxing voice. Soft music was playing. 'Meet me in the field. You have no past. Will you meet me?' You know, God wouldn't try to coax you in the dead of night," she says. "I started screaming, and I woke up. The music was still in the room. I had the same feelings I did in Africa. I thought shapes, shapes like a body with a head, were coming through the window from the darkness."

She believes the crucifix in her hallway kept the spirits out. Then she comforted herself by playing guitar until morning, and out came her first six songs in more than a year, five of which became the centerpiece of *Moon Pix*—"He Turns Down," "Say," "You May Know Him," "Metal Heart" and "Cross Bones Style."

"I just had a really big breakdown," she says. "But it's better now. I just kept my faith in God. It's better now. I still feel trapped in some sort of delusional fourth dimension sometimes. I can't tell if a dream is happening, or if someone from a dream is here. That's pretty weird. It scares me." She smiles anyway. "All my friends think I need psychological help, which I probably do." **end**



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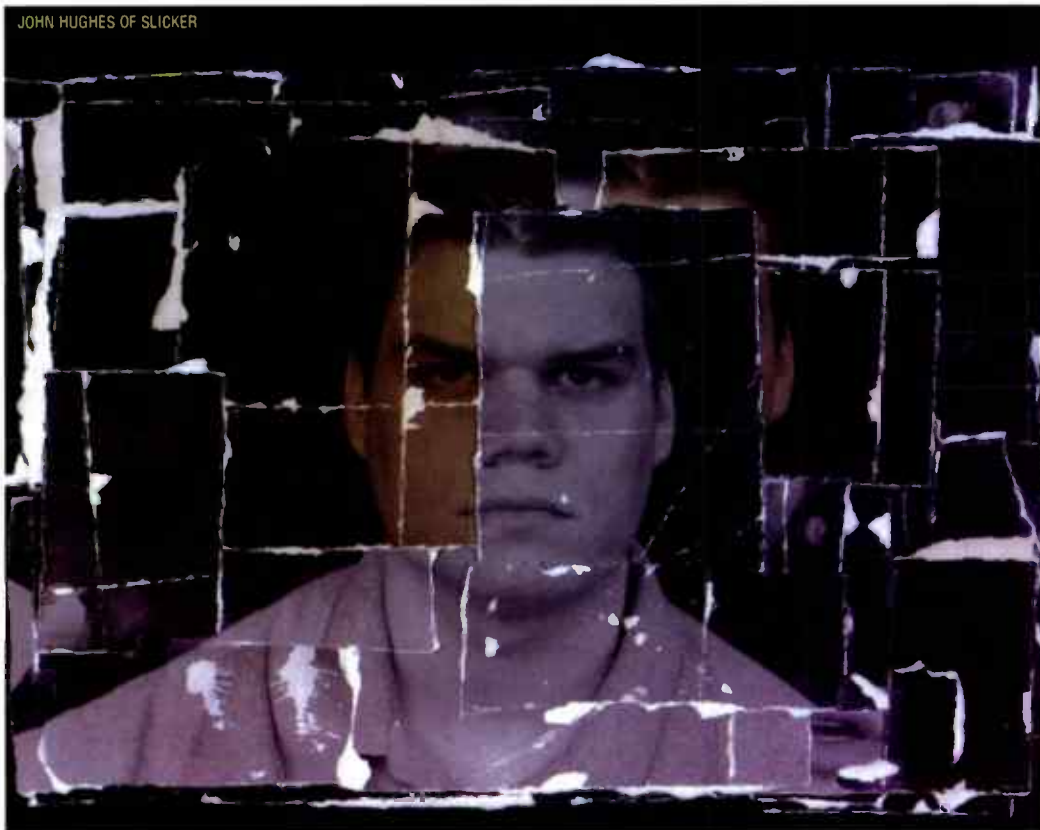
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Chicago's Drum 'N' Bass Scene



JOHN HUGHES OF SLICKER

CHICAGO'S WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD, WHICH CHEAP RENTS ONCE MADE A HOTBED FOR STARVING ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS, HAS BEEN GENTRIFIED, AND THE LINE SEPARATING THOSE WHO LIVE THERE TO BE ARTISTS AND THOSE WHO ARE THERE TO BE COOL BY ASSOCIATION HAS BLURRED. THE HIPSTER MELTING POT IS THE AXIS OF CHICAGO'S DRUM 'N' BASS COMMUNITY, AND ITS DIVERSITY MANIFESTS ITSELF IN THE VARIED STYLES, INCLUDING HARDCORE TECHNO, INDUSTRIAL, HOUSE AND HIP-HOP, THAT INFORM THE MUSIC.

More than many other music movements before it, this scene is about evolution. Previous electronic music styles indigenous to Chicago had distinct characteristics. The various forms of house, from the WBMX mix shows of the mid-'80s to the nu-jack movement headed by the Relief/Cajual labels ten years later, and Wax Trax's signature industrial sound, encapsulated the city's progressive musical variations, centered around driving 4/4 rhythms. But Chicago is still in the process of unfolding its own definition of drum 'n' bass.

The confusion lies in what is being

gathered under this umbrella term. Any artist with an interest in expanding upon the English invention gets lumped into the d 'n' b category. But the fact that there is no one definable scene, or sound, is exactly the beauty of it. With no single reference point, musicians and labels are free to experiment without fear of scrutiny. At least for now.

Tortoise, the lauded five-piece that's been touted as starting its own musical variant, post-rock, has been the catalyst for this beat evolution. The instrumental group has carved its own comfortable niche within the worldwide electronic community, and

without being overtly computerized. Tortoise's organic melange draws upon the aesthetics of punk, jazz, dub and reggae, among other styles.

The members of Tortoise have extended their artistry into numerous interests outside of the main collective, including the Sea And Cake and Isotope 217, among many others. These musicians explore these musical possibilities with a meticulous eye for detail. That's also true of the current state of drum 'n' bass in the Windy City—it's as much about the process as the product.

As Tortoise's sound engineer, Casey Rice is its right-hand man and the musical filter between the band and its audience. A veteran of the local music scene for almost a decade, Rice has dabbled in the progression of beats under the monikers Super E.S.P. and Designer, while keeping his feet firmly planted in his punk rock roots. The duality of his musical experimentation parallels Tortoise's own evolution.

Rice is modest in his accomplishments (which include guitar work with Liz Phair, among others), but somewhat wary of the media's desire to pin down the music he and his friends make. "I guess what might bother me the most about the music media presently is their willingness to construct a story when there isn't one," says Rice. "I'm not a studio wizard or some genius by any means. I'm just someone trying to make and be involved in music that I like and I'd prefer to have as much control over what I make and release as possible."

John Hughes, son of the famed movie maker of the same name, is exploring a new, hip-hop-influenced direction with his latest project Slicker. His other moniker, Bill Ding, is more of a punk rock outfit. An evident introvert, Hughes considers himself somewhat removed from the live music scene, but he's not so sheltered as to be unaware of what's happening around him.

"Even though the scenes are together, they're vastly different," says Hughes. "The only thing that really holds it together is the open-mindedness of everyone who's making it."

Hughes's record label, Hefty (also home to artists like Euphone), is a microcosm of the larger drum 'n' bass picture. "The crossover between the kinds of people making [drum 'n' bass] and their interests is the only thing that binds it," notes Hughes. "It seems like people are very supportive of the different directions people are going with it."

With the rave circuit in a healthy state, drum 'n' bass DJs have a steady foundation to build from. More than the other satellite subjects, those represented by labels like Forte and Cosmic Breaks have a few noticeable consistencies.

"I grew up in this whole dance music/mix show city, so when I play or make music I have a formula that I feel will make people dance or at least keep them on the floor," explains DJ 3D, Forte co-owner and resident spinner at the monthly club Brockout. "I think it's very important not to take this away from dance culture."

The angle explored by Kultbox Records is entirely different. With loyalties to no one genre, this label relies on the cross-pollination of musical strains. Drum 'n' bass may prove to be a transient phase, if the possibilities for expansion someday dry up.

"I don't think Chicago has a drum 'n' bass sound that people can refer to," says Kultbox Records co-owner Kent Henderson. "That will probably come later as more people recycle ideas and more stuff gets released."

Despite the scene's rich output, the number of local live outlets for it remains relatively small. The most successful include the monthly Brockout at Liar's Club, Mad Bar's Monday night event, dubbed Chrome, and the now-defunct Deadly Dragon Sound System.

DDS Sundays at the Empty Bottle provided a launching pad for Tortoise and its cohorts. The night gradually became a musical institution by attracting a broad range of listeners, first indie rockers, then various hipsters, and finally ravers. The artists performing at DDS probed deep into the elements of sound, looking back to past styles such as dancehall and reggae, but taking a very modern approach, deconstructing various components and reconstructing them into something new.

DDS folded when its members decided that expectations were channeling its direction, and that had a palpable impact on the community. The weekly event was so influential that several promoters have borrowed the name, much to the dismay of those originally involved, who wish to preserve DDS's integrity for a possible upcoming album.

A few bigger clubs are cashing in on the current popularity of drum 'n' bass. As the audience expands, some of the DJs and devotees are becoming disillusioned with the factors regulating the local drum 'n' bass nights. Mad Bar, for instance, draws a mix of music purists and fun-seeking clubgoers, creating an odd environment, albeit one that, to an extent, still works.

"The majority of the people just like the groove. They don't understand the music's history, it's just what's hip," says Chrome resident DJ and Guidance recording artist Hunter AD. Born from a series of underground parties with the same name, Brockout has become one of Chicago's most influential drum 'n' bass nights. Even as such nights draw bigger audiences, some promoters are less apt to push boundaries for fear they won't turn a profit.

"Unfortunately the promoters who've been down with jungle since day one have lost so much money it's not been worth the hassle for them to do it anymore," explains 3D.

March 6, 1997, marked the first attempt to fuse all of the pieces of the Chicago drum 'n' bass puzzle. Summit was held in Smart Bar with

the intention of letting the melting pot work out its own definition of the form. The lineup included rave junglists Snuggles, Phantom 45 and 3D, along with U-Sheen (with John Herndon from Tortoise) and Casey Rice as Designer. The large and varied audience that turned up revealed the scene's potential, both musical and financial.

"That night was my highest paid club night I've ever played in Chicago," says 3D. "It just takes someone to put it together. None of us have time, and no one else seems to care enough to do it."

A year later, the Kultbox label delved into the promoting business, throwing an event called Gabber Jungle War. Featuring many of the same artists as Summit, this night spun off the hardcore jungle sound and fringe artists who weren't getting bookings at raves.

"The night shed light on the local artists who push boundaries and are not content to pigeonhole themselves in one genre. That's definitely the future of what is going on here, we think," says Kultbox co-owner Robby Rob.

Given its roots overseas, drum 'n' bass may never be a genre most closely associated with Chicago. Once local labels such as Kultbox, Forte and Cosmic Breaks start pressing more, and more widely available, wax, however, Chicago drum 'n' bass will become noted for



"EVEN THOUGH THE SCENES ARE TOGETHER, THEY'RE VASTLY DIFFERENT. THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY HOLDS IT TOGETHER IS THE OPEN-MINDEDNESS OF EVERYONE WHO'S MAKING IT."

its own distinct characteristics within the style. When the formula develops further, it may earn its own distinct name. But for now, the scene struggles to make the term drum 'n' bass fit its own peculiar blend of sounds.

A PRIMER IN CHICAGO DRUM 'N' BASS

JUSTIN TEWN

Escape From Apathy (Guidance)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

3D & Snuggles Present Terminal Beats (Forte)

3D & SNUGGLES

Empire/Enchanted (Kultbox)

REDESIGNED (CASEY RICE)

Arashi/Half Of Life (Kultbox)

KID ENTROPY

Super Natty/For The Love Of It (Cosmic Breaks)

BY STEVE CIABATTONI



Genesis

"...A LARGE BLACK CLOUD DESCENDS INTO TIMES SQUARE, STRADDLES OUT INTO 42ND STREET, TURNS INTO A WALL AND SUCKS IN MANHATTAN ISLAND. OUR HERO, NAMED RAE, CRAWLS OUT OF THE SUBWAYS OF NEW YORK AND IS SUCKED INTO THE WALL TO REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS UNDERGROUND. THIS IS THE STORY OF RAE."

—PETER GABRIEL, INTRODUCING "THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY"

We Genesis fans draw distinct lines between Peter Gabriel-era Genesis and Phil Collins-era Genesis in the same way our brethren geeks, the Trekkies, separate Captain Kirk's *Star Trek* and Captain Picard's *The Next Generation*. (For reasons of both editorial space and pride, we won't even discuss the new Genesis singer, Ray Wilson, or *Deep Space 9* for that matter.) Just to keep my geek point total in check, I didn't like any era of *Star Trek*, but in my book, there was no better progressive rock band than Genesis while Peter Gabriel was at the mic. Yes and King Crimson fans will no doubt hotly dispute this in their starship-trooper-web or LarksToungeIn-Aspic.com chat rooms, but neither band brought the sense of theater (or lunacy) to the

table the way Genesis did. Despite the band's eventual and exponential decline, I respect Phil Collins (yes, you read right, *I respect Phil Collins*) for keeping the flame alive for two fine records (*Trick Of The Tail* and *Wind & Wuthering*) following Pete's departure. After that, guitarist Steve Hackett left, Tony Banks stopped using the Mellotron as much and, well, the '80s claimed another victim (see also Mike + The Mechanics).

I found myself getting into Gabriel-era Genesis thanks to an older brother who was wrapped up in any kind of rock that had some sort of mythic quality (Rush's "By-tor And The Snowdog" was big at our household). Genesis records like *Foxtrot* and the epic *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* (ahhh, the

glory days of gatefold vinyl) meshed with my acute Anglophilia and my pubescent fascination with poetry I really didn't understand. All I knew was that Genesis tracks like "Fountain Of Salmacis" (which references Ovid) and "The Colony Of Slippermen" (which paraphrases Wordsworth's "The Daffodils") sounded cool, epic and important. Hell, it sounded like William Blake or Tolkien writing for the Moody Blues. Gabriel's voice never had much range, but his hoarse, barbaric yawns made the band's arty music seem tougher and more prophetic, if not more menacing. He always seemed to be singing as if he were one of the oracles or wise men that were often referenced in the lyrics.

Looking back on that era (as the recent Atlantic four-CD set *Genesis Archive 1967-75* does), I'll grant that some of the lyrics and music are a bit much. But consider that the absurdly long and lyrically dense "Suppers Ready" was written in 1973, when Gabriel and his art school chums were only 23. This is heavy, opera-quality stuff, folks. I spent a few days trying to figure out all the chord shifts and a few days more unraveling the arcane references woven into the lyrics (who the hell was Magog?). Few bands, if any, had done anything that pretentious that well before, and few have since. Hey, it's a song about good and evil and the Book Of Revelation: You're entitled to 25 minutes, a flute solo from Pete and seven separately-titled song sections. When Spinal Tap's St. Hubbins and Tufnel wrote their epics "Stonehenge" and "Rock N Roll Creation," could "Suppers Ready" or tales like "The Return Of The Giant Hogweed" have been far from their minds? True, without Bowie's Ziggy Stardust, Gabriel may not have been encouraged to go so far, but that "Slippermen" getup with the mutant yellow lumps was pretty out there. And his red dress and fox head outfit from the *Foxtrot* tour really let you know that the band turned up to put on a show.

In January 1975 Genesis had no radio singles or hits in the States to speak of, but the group proceeded to play *The Lamb* in its entirety at LA's Shrine Auditorium. (The first two discs of the box capture the full set.) I imagine that solidified the concept album as a legitimate art form right there. Regardless, the band's pretentious art rock staked out a permanent place in my heart. Although, if you ever spot me at a WOMAD festival wearing a yellowing *Foxtrot* T-shirt, feel free to instruct me to get a life.

e n d

BY IAN CHRIS TE

THORR'S HAMMER

Dommedagsnatt

Southern Lord

Putting a grunge bummer twist on music from sad Northern climates, a gang of sludge kings from Ballard, Washington, backs up teenaged Norwegian exchange student Runhild Gammelsæter for four crushing tunes here, all long in the tooth. The mighty



"Troll" appeared last year on the *Awakenings* compilation of female-powered death metal; other tracks on this EP similarly tend towards the powerful Corrupted/Eyehategod style of suffocating doom and crushing distortion. Gammelsæter's vocals flip between sustained corrosive grunts and ethereal spooking chants in the vein of Varttinä or the Bulgarian State Women's Choir. The four-piece band walks as equals with any staggering metal outfit, incorporating the Northwestern crawl of the Melvins, Earth and Thrones. It comes across as a perfect depressing statement full of dignity and timeless poise. This sludge-Norwegian

confluence is a neat genre-meld, and this band pulls it off almost as freely as if it were an honest rehearsal room accident. The sounds of *Dommedagsnatt* stand their ground fiercely. Each beat has the bluntness of a telephone pole being resolutely thrust into the ground, unwilling to be uprooted except by act of God. In the wake of such massive distress, it is tempting to dismiss Thorr's Hammer's riot grrrl neighbors in Olympia, Washington, as babies; luckily, Bikini Kill's savage new *Singles* collection is a reminder that rough dresses come in all sizes.

>>> What could be the final release from the inimitable **VONDUR**, *The Galactic Rock N Roll Empire* (Necropolis), pulls the formal hood off of the metal genre and reveals the hideous id that makes such dark art compelling. Ugly and indecisive Norwegians, members It and All (both also of Abruptum) churn through such mulch anthems here as "Kill Everyone," "The Raven's Eyes Are As Mirrors On The Bottom Of Satan's Black Halls" and massively uncool covers "Rocka Rolla" (Judas Priest) and "Red Hot" (Mötley Crüe). The mixture favors a drum machine, inspiration over perspiration, and sheer chaotic metal madness over technical mastery. This is black metal in its undisciplined dream state, and thus infinitely more pure than most of the over stylized dreck on the shelves. Insane props to the Crüe-tastic cover art, too... After a long period of pushing progressive death metal and noise, Relapse Records has turned lately towards presenting the ultimate incarnations of grindcore. As with Agoraphobic Nosebleed and Nile, **NASUM** provides a densely packed portion of gutter-scraping guitar, hysterical paired vocals and blast beats. The band's 38-track *Inhale/Exhale* is pretty much a constant exposition of the same system: a blustering speed genre ransacked by indecipherable emotions and gas mask imagery... Judging by the prolific output on micro-labels by bands like Rotting Christ and Varathron, the metal population of Greece has a firm handle on how to reconfigure '80s metal for consumption by modern audiences. By and large, Athens-based Black Lotus Records doesn't do much to improve its nation's comfortable niche. The label's first release, *One With The Swan* by **SWAN CHRISTY**, however, is a notable curiosity; it's the first black metal effort influenced primarily by Billy Joel. Lingering nearly too long in an execrable return to outdated pretense metal, most of the record remains a lounge-based light symphonic rock outing where large-sized soul-searching extends to the point of hand-wringing by the piano man. It's a bit ridiculous, but will certainly work for fans who favor Samael as often as Meatloaf or Elton John. Extreme music, it seems, lends itself to extreme comparisons.

metal top 25

- 1 **VISION OF DISORDER**
Imprint Roadrunner
- 2 **ANTHRAX**
Volume 8: The Threat Is Real Ignition
- 3 **SLAYER**
Diabolus In Musica American/Columbia-CRG
- 4 **SYSTEM OF A DOWN**
System Of A Down American/Columbia-CRG
- 5 **FEAR FACTORY**
Obsolete Roadrunner
- 6 **MONSTER MAGNET**
Powertrip A&M
- 7 **SOULFLY**
Soulfly Roadrunner
- 8 **KILGORE**
A Search For Reason Unsound-Revolution
- 9 **NILE**
Amongst The Catacombs Of Nephren-Ka
Relapse
- 10 **CROWBAR**
Odd Fellows Rest Mayhem
- 11 **CLUTCH**
The Elephant Riders/Wishbone (EP)
Columbia-CRG
- 12 **VOIVOD**
Phobos Slipdisc
- 13 **CRADLE OF FILTH**
Cruelty And The Beast Fierce-Mayhem
- 14 **BENEDICTION**
Grind Bastards Nuclear Blast America
- 15 **DARK FUNERAL**
Vobiscum Satanas Metal Blade
- 16 **INCANTATION**
Diabolical Conquest Relapse
- 17 **GRAVITY KILLS**
Perversion TVT
- 18 **DRAIN S.T.H.**
Horror Wrestling The Enclave-Mercury
- 19 **THERION**
Vovin Nuclear Blast America
- 20 **ICED EARTH**
Days Of Purgatory Century Media
- 21 **ZAO**
Where Blood And Fire Bring Rest
Solid State-Tooth & Nail
- 22 **ULTRASPANK**
Ultraspank Epic
- 23 **GORGUTS**
Obscura Slipdisc
- 24 **IN MY EYES**
The Difference Between Revelation
- 25 **GRINSPON**
Licker Bottle Cozy Universal

Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Loud Rock charts collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

GROOVERIDER

Mysteries Of Funk Higher Ground-Columbia

Grooverider's debut album could not have been more appropriately titled. From James Brown and George Clinton on, the essence of "funk" has long been difficult to dissect. It can never be fully defined, though, because its mysteries are revealed only in the music itself. Clinton also understood that if you free your mind, your ass will follow and that digital tricknology could definitely move your ass. Grooverider knows the mysteries of funk and its technologies, and this concussive album bears witness to a life spent in hot DJ booths, under studio pressure, where he nurtured a good dozen of Britain's most highly respected drum 'n' bass producers. Even knowing that won't have prepared you for this record, which breaks every rule of drum 'n' bass orthodoxy and has a great time in the process. The increasingly monotonous two-step routine will soon be forgotten, because *Mysteries Of Funk*, like 4 Hero's new *Two Pages* LP (reviewed below), makes the generic term "drum 'n' bass" seem as tired as a graveyard shift worker. This 13-track set opens with the bullet-riddled acid-bath "Cybermatic Jazz," which manages to sample both the original *Star Trek* series as well as *The Next Generation*, while never slipping into the derivative sci-fi sampledness that plagues a lot of bad dance music these days. Drum 'n' bass engineer extraordinaire Optical worked the boards on these tracks, and his characteristic muddy sheen is felt across the wide range of sounds here, which from the contemplative low-rider number "C-Funk" to the jagged, glowering acid spikes of "On The Double" never fails to amaze.



>>> The wait for the **4 HERO** album *Two Pages* (Talkin' Loud-Mercury) has been excruciating for those who have followed Marc and Dego through their vertiginous careers. Having recorded numerous tracks for their own Reinforced label, and working under such pseudonyms as Tek 9 and Jacob's Optical Stairway, the two have consistently redefined drum 'n' bass, leaving their peers scratching their heads in astonishment. This ambitious 20-track record is more like a travelogue than a dance record, covering new lands and spaces only hinted at in their previous work. The two "pages" are divided quite evenly over two discs. The first is a gorgeous collection of deep UK street soul and hip-hop which features Ursula Rucker (who's worked with Massive Attack among others) on a number of tracks. They come awfully close to the fearful territory of a David Sanborn, yet steer clear of its bloated excesses—a feat few could manage. The second disc is where the science fiction turns factual and the rhythm turns fanatical, as 4 Hero drops beat arrangements that seem to defy gravity. "We Who Are Not Of Others," the opener, is a perilous journey into post-drum 'n' bass that is likely to change the way artists and fans think about the music... Stefan Betke is the engineer on the numerous records that have emerged from the touted Berlin label Chain Reaction. His sense of timing and suspense have informed tracks by Vainquer, Maurizio, Porter Ricks and others. Under the name **POLE**, he's recorded a full-length record, *LP One* (Play It Again Sam), which goes so deep into the echo chamber that the bass line disappears over the horizon. On "Fliegen" and "Kirschenessen," Betke sounds like he recorded pebbles skimming the surface of a frozen pond, transmitting tiny shock-waves that register just below the level of consciousness, and yet are infused with a mammoth but restrained rhythm.

dance top 25

- 1 **WINK**
Here/Here: Ovum/Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 2 **KEOKI**
Attained/Ego-Trip: Moonshine
- 3 **COVENANT**
Europe: 21st Circuitry
- 4 **AMON TOBIN**
Permatation: Ninja Tune (Canada)
- 5 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Dun X Machine 2: COP International
- 6 **MASSIVE ATTACK**
Mezzanine: Circa-Virgin
- 7 **PLASTIKMAN**
Consumed: M-nus/Novamute-Mute
- 8 **TRICKY**
Angels With Dirty Faces: Island
- 9 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
MTV's Amp 2: Astralwerks
- 10 **MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO**
"Acid Again" (5): Nothing-Interscope
- 11 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Concrete Jungle Maximum Drum 'N' Bass
Concrete Jungle-Ultra
- 12 **WITCHMAN**
Heavy Traffic: Deviant (UK)
- 13 **DJ ICEY**
Generate: frr-London
- 14 **BEN NEILL**
Goldbug: Antilles-Verve
- 15 **LDW**
Duff Remix Low: Vernon Yard-Astralwerks
- 16 **EIGHTY MILE BEACH**
Indiment: Welter: Om
- 17 **RX**
Beside Toxicology: Invisible
- 18 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Obediaphobia: Pendragon
- 19 **LUKE SLATER**
"Love" (5): Novamute-Mute
- 20 **PIGFACE**
Below The Belt: Invisible
- 21 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Intense Presents Logical Progression Level 3
Good Looking (UK)
- 22 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Here Come The Drums: Hip Hop Drum 'N' Bass
Caipirinha
- 23 **FRONT 242**
Re-Born (Live 1998): Metropolis
- 24 **TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND**
Rejoice Rejoice: MCA
- 25 **MIX MASTER MIKE**
Anti-Theft Device: Asphodel

Compiled from DJM New Music Report's weekly RPM charts, selected from DJM's pool of progressive radio reporters.

BY BRIAN COLEMAN

hip-hop top 25

- 1 **BLACKSTAR**
"Definition" Rawkus
- 2 **BLACK EYED PEAS**
"Joints & Jams" Interscope
- 3 **CAM'RON**
"Horse & Carriage" Entertainment-Epic
- 4 **NOREAGA**
"N.O.R.E." Penalty-Tommy Boy
- 5 **GANG STARR**
"Militia" Noo Trybe-Virgin
- 6 **LAURYN HILL**
"Lost Ones" Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 7 **BLACK MOON**
"War Zone" Duck Down
- 8 **SPORTY THEIVEZ**
"Cheapskate" Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 9 **LORD DIGGA**
"My Flow Is Tight" Game
- 10 **BEASTIE BOYS**
"Intergalactic" Grand Royal-Capitol
- 11 **RAS KASS**
"H2O Pool" Patchwork-Priority
- 12 **DEFARI**
"Never Lose Touch" Tommy Boy
- 13 **XZIBIT**
"What U See Is What U Get" Loud-RCA
- 14 **ECLIPSE**
"World Premier" Conception
- 15 **DEF SQUAD**
"Countdown" Def Jam
- 16 **GOODIE MOB**
"Beautiful Skin" LaFace-Arista
- 17 **JAZZY JEFF & THE FRESH PRINCE**
"Summertime '98" Jive
- 18 **FAT JOE**
"John Blaze" Mystic/Big Beat-Atlantic
- 19 **CROOKED I**
"DJs And MCs" Noo Trybe-Virgin
- 20 **DIAMONDS IN DA ROUGH**
"The Doe" Roc-A-Fella
- 21 **KURUPT**
"We Can Freak It" Antra-A&M
- 22 **SHOWBIZ & AG**
"Full Scale" Fat Beats
- 23 **DON SCAVONE**
"The Force" Makin'
- 24 **FAT JOE & PUFF DADY**
"Don Cartagena" Mystic/Big Beat-Atlantic
- 25 **ONYX**
"React" Def Jam-Polygram

Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Best Box charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

STYLES OF BEYOND

2000 Fold

Bilawn

The always-fertile Los Angeles underground has unearthed another hip-hop gem: a diamond in the rough that goes by the name Styles Of Beyond. While abstract troopers like Aeyyclone's Project Blowed legions and the Jurassic 5 tend to focus on



more oblique forms of reality, this two-man crew—commanded by rappers Takbir and Ryu—has a strictly real, no-nonsense take on the world. On the duo's full-length debut *2000 Fold* it comes strong with mercury-tongued, highly intelligent and always on-point lyrics to match some excellent tracks, finessed by new-jack Vin Skully with one-offs by DJs Rhetmatic, Revelation and Cheapshot and with some additional help from rap vets Bilal Bashir and the Divine Styler. There is an honesty and straightforwardness in this group's approach that is refreshing in a time where up-and-coming crews tend to focus

more on how dope they *think* they should be, instead of coming to terms with the reality of their surroundings. But don't think that S.O.B. isn't a cocky crew—these guys show on cuts like "Dangerous Minds," "Many Styles," "Killer Instinct" and "Back It Up" that they aren't to be slept on, but the humility on a track like "Winnetka Exit" is proof enough that their heads and hearts are in the right place.

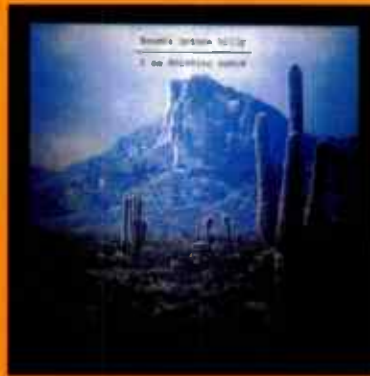
>>> Straight out of an Atlanta that people are finally through sleeping on comes **PARENTAL ADVISORY** with an unassuming, charming and enjoyable CD, *Straight No Chase* (DreamWorks). Milking their experiences with artists from the region (Organized Noize produced the group's 1992 debut), this trio has taken its time to simmer and serve a self-produced platter that organically melds the worlds of P-Funk-ity psychedelic soul and Southern rap swagger in a natural way that too few have done before. Group members Mello, Big Reese and K.P. do their part to inject their musical souls into a slew of laid-back cuts, from the laissez-faire rap of "Like We Do" to the (George) Clintonian "Ecstasy" and the more rock-ish "Temptation"... On a diametrically-opposed musical plane comes Brownsville, Brooklyn's **M.O.P.** with its new *First Family 4 Lif* (Relativity), the follow-up to 1996's impressive but mainstream-exposure-deprived *Firing Squad*. It's quite clear that rappers Lil' Fame and Billy Danzenie haven't become any mellow since then, and their styles still stand as an impossible-to-ignore, in-your-face and sometimes frighteningly sincere force to be reckoned with. "Breakin' The Rules" and "Down For Whateva" are proof positive that there are few rap groups harder than they are, but Fame and Billy refuse to let up even on a more sentimental offering like "Blood, Sweat & Tears." Let's hope that these Brooklyn bombers get the props they deserve this time around... The Bomb label continues to pump out the best in experimental turntablist musings with two new offerings: **DJ DISK**'s excellent *Ancient Termites* and **DJ FAUST, SHORTEE & CRAZE**'s *Fathomless* EP. Disk uses his vast wealth of experience with weirdos like the Invisibl Skratch Pkllz, Buckethead and Primus to weave his way through a frequently brooding and ethereal soundscape that produces all kinds of hallucinations, from smoky jazz scratches to unadulterated hip-hop breakdowns. And the DJ Trio of Faust, Shortee and Craze continues where DJ Faust's *Man Or Myth* (also on Bomb) left off, taking chances and pushing limits with tempos and beat construction, veering from drum 'n' bass maneuvers to compositionally dense works of aural art.

BONNIE PRINCE BILLY

"I Am Drinking Again"

Domino (UK)

Will Oldham, the man with more names than some phone books, has turned up again with a new pseudonym; this time he's Bonnie Prince Billy (snicker), and he's released a couple of singles on which his real identity appears nowhere. On the CD-single "I Am Drinking Again," he's backed up by a couple of his brothers for one of his best dirges in ages, slow and mournful, perpetually two steps from falling apart and always somehow in one piece anyway. It's graced with a great lyric that goes from intoxicated abstraction to real poetic leaps and emotional force, and then (as proof of Oldham's perversity) back again. The barely labeled treat that comes next is a cover of, of all things, the Cranberries' "Dreaming My Dreams With You," given the ragged-but-right treatment. There's also a 7" by Bonnie Prince Billy on the Chicago label All City. "Black Dissimulation" is a not-terribly-coherent solo number; the flipside's "No Such As What I Want" isn't too great a song either, but it's got some gorgeous playing by a supporting cast including Gastr Del Sol's David Grubbs and two-thirds of the Dirty Three.



>>> Continuing to hang around Scotland, Glasgow's fabulous **LUNG LEG** just toured with Washington, DC, soul-punk poseurs the **MAKE-UP**, and released a split single (Vesuvius) to celebrate it. Lung Leg's side, "Krayola," is the band's meatiest recording to date, with herky-jerky rhythmic crosstalk that's getting closer than ever to Swiss indie-underground legends Liliput (a resemblance accentuated by three interlocking women's voices), and a big post-punk chorus of "you don't mean that much to me." And the Make-Up? Ian Svenonius's fake-Prince squeals and inability to carry a tune are still annoying, but "Pow! To The People" is a great song title, and the organ-and-drum-based arrangement rattles along pleasingly.



>>> Belle And Sebastian fans, especially those who got into Stuart David's "Spaceboy Dream" on their new album, should lend an ear to David's solo project **LOOPER**, whose debut single "Impossible Things" (Sub Pop) is cut from the same cloth (the B-side's called "Spaceboy Dream #3"). Both sides are essentially short stories read to music in David's very heavy Scottish accent—it may take a few listens to make out all the words—but the music is splendidly executed, with live instruments and samples playing off each other and some sharp Miles Davis-ish trumpet on the flip. While

you're at it, check out David's Looper home page at www.treehouse.clara.net.

>>> **MODEST MOUSE** is all about rambling, in both the physical and the temporal sense, and in collaboration with **764-HERO** (the name on the sleeve spine is 7MO6DES4T-HMOEURSEO), the band has come up with a heavy-duty ramble in "Whenever You See Fit" (Suicide Squeeze-Up), a 12" single whose A-side goes on for a little under 15 minutes. It's really just a little two-chord plod (and having two

drummers playing on it makes it plod even more), and it doesn't have much in the way of lyrics, but the players have space to stretch out and play with it, and the strained cries of Isaac Brock's voice and guitar grow more effective as the song goes along. The B-side has two remixes—one by DJ Dynamite D that's all twinkly and gets predictable fast, and a much better one by Scientific American that underpins the percussive murk with a subterranean bass throb.

>>> A few quick drops of the needle: For anyone disappointed by the fact that the **BEASTIE BOYS'** otherwise excellent *Hello Nasty* doesn't include enough of their swell funk instrumentals, look to the nearest vinyl emporium for the 7" of "Intergalactic" (Capitol) (marked "For Jukeboxes Only," but that's not the case), whose B-side has a slinky little throwaway called "Peanut Butter & Jelly," featuring keyboards by Money Mark... The sui generis "comedian" **NEIL HAMBURGER** is at it again, on a label-less 7", *Pays Tribute To Diana, Princess Of Wales, 1962-1997*. The A-side, allegedly recorded live in Australia, finds him cracking jokes that aren't even theoretically funny (and therefore, somehow, are); the B-side is "a moment of silence," and the whole thing's on "limited-edition black in mourning vinyl."... Ever wonder what My Bloody Valentine drummer Colm O'Ciosoig is doing these days? Turns out he's drumming in an instrumental band called **CLEAR SPOT** (named after a Captain Beefheart album), which has just released its first single, "Moonman Bop" (Duophonic). Both sides are nervous grooves with odd keyboard effects and wild, stumbling beats... In the department of entertaining novelties, Boston's neo-old-school punks in **SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN** have released a 7" picture-disc tribute to Shampoo. Yes, *that* Shampoo—the British band that beta-tested commodified feminism as a marketable phenomenon for cute, prefab pop a couple of years ago. They do serviceable punked-up versions of "Girl Power," "Bouffant Headbutt" and "Kinky Ken," and make a case for the idea that any sufficiently attitudinal song can get over on the strength of that attitude no matter what arrangement it's given.

BY JAMES LIEN

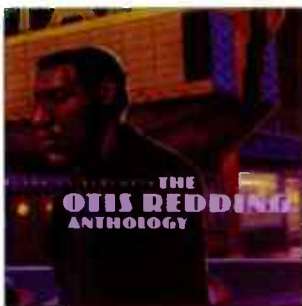


>>> Twenty years after its now-historic concerts at the Budokan judo arena in Tokyo, it's time for a hats-off to the early years of **CHEAP TRICK**. Hot on the heels of releasing an expanded two-CD set documenting the group's complete concert at Budokan, Epic (in conjunction with Sony Legacy) has just re-released deluxe editions of the group's first three classic albums from 1976-78, *Cheap Trick*, *In Color* and

Heaven Tonight. All three are rounded out by copious liner notes, extra photos and additional bonus tracks, many, but not all, of which come from the group's ultra-cool 1996 box set *Sex, America, Cheap Trick*. In hindsight, the group provided a refreshing blast of cartoonish rock tomfoolery against the generally pompous, prima-donna performances of the era's other rock stars.

>>> As if the tremendous *Nuggets* set weren't enough, Rhino has also issued an insane compilation called **THE '70S DISCO BALL PARTY PACK**, containing two CDs of prime disco music and—get this—a three-ring binder with all the instructions and information you need for staging your very own disco party in the privacy of your own home. After all, it's been a while and some of us may have forgotten some of the finer points, like the actual steps to the hustle. The two discs are chock full of disco hits. Even without the party tips, this is the disco compilation you'll want to round out your CD collection.

>>> They say he taught Elvis how to sing: **CHARLIE FEATHERS** was one of rock 'n' roll's original wild men, crawling out of backwoods Memphis and setting the world on fire with his primal rock 'n' roll and keening, heartbroken country. John Fahey's Revenant label has just released *Get With It*, a raw, rocking two-CD collection of his early and rare material—this stuff is so wild, even a few '70s punk-rockers seem like they were playing catch-up. The wonderful set features all of Feathers's commercial releases for labels like Flip, Sun, King, Meteor, Kay and Wal-Mat, plus some late '60s home recordings with none other than the late Holly Springs blues legend Junior Kimbrough.



>>> Rhino has also released *Dreams To Remember: The Otis Redding Anthology*. At two CDs it's not as hefty as the larger *Otis!* box set of **OTIS REDDING** material, but again, it's just right for the average consumer. I like to think of it as being just enough songs for a weekend's worth of casual listening, without feeling like you've gotten completely swamped by the stuff.

>>> Motown always seems to be celebrating some anniversary or other. Now it's the venerated label's 40th, which it's honoring with the **ULTIMATE MOTOWN RARITIES COLLECTION VOLUME 1: MOTOWN DOES MOTOWN**. Its premise is rather interesting: You get to hear mostly-unreleased recordings of great Motown artists of the '60s and '70s covering the hits of other

NUGGETS: ORIGINAL ARTYFACTS FROM THE FIRST PSYCHEDELIC ERA

Box Set

Rhino

In the wave of prosperity that swept America in the wake of World War II, the automobile rose to ascendancy. One of the signs of

suburban luxury was not only to have the finest car Detroit could offer, but also to build a garage to put it in. Similarly, another symbol of American relaxation was the recreation room, usually a basement outfitted with table tennis and maybe a second TV. An unexpected side effect to emerge out of these suburban temples was the phenomenon of garage rock. In the wake of the Beatles and Rolling Stones, scores of quasi-delinquent teenage kids in such hideaways picked up electric guitars, cheap organs and drum sets, and proceeded to bash them



with hormone-fueled aggression. The resulting garage rock revolution had an attitude that prefigured the "I don't care" aesthetic of punk by a full decade. Originally released in 1972, the *Nuggets* compilation was an essential document of the great unsung music of this period and genre, including now-legendary bands like the Electric Prunes, the Strangeloves, the Barbarians, 13th Floor Elevators and Mouse & The Traps. Now Rhino has expanded the original *Nuggets* album into a lavish four-CD box set, and what a treasure it is, full to the brim with fuzzed-out primal rock 'n' roll, lost psychedelic freakouts and pop radio gems in all their low-fi resplendent glory. It's a must-own for fans of true rock 'n' roll.

Motown artists of the era. Thus David Ruffin does the Jackson 5's "I Want You Back" and Marvin Gaye croons the Temptations' "My Girl." It sounds like a really wacky marketing idea, but it's also a thinly masked attempt to reap even more lucrative publishing royalties from songs. The treasures of the Motown era that would interest real music fans—such as the hosts of single B-sides, alternate versions and early 45s by obscure groups—remain buried in oblivion for who knows how long.

1	BEASTIE BOYS	Hello Nasty	Grand Royal-Capitol
2	BILLY BRAGG/WILCO	Mermaid Avenue	Elektra-EEG
3	BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE	Strung Out In Heaven	TWT
4	LIZ PHAIR	Whitechocolatespaceegg	Matador-Capitol
5	BRIAN SETZER ORCHESTRA	The Dirty Boogie	Interscope
6	TRICKY	Angels With Dirty Faces	Island
7	BLACK EYED PEAS	Behind The Front	Interscope
8	RASPUTINA	How We Quit The Forest	Columbia-CRG
9	LUCINDA WILLIAMS	Car Wheels On A Gravel Road	Mercury
10	SPINANES	Arches And Aisles	Sub Pop
11	GRANT LEE BUFFALO	Jubilee	Slash-WB
12	PIXIES	At The BBC	4AD/Elektra-EEG
13	SHONEN KNIFE	Happy Hour	Big Deal
14	12 ROUNDS	My Big Hero	Nothing-Interscope
15	OZOMATLI	Ozomatli	Almo Sounds
16	MASSIVE ATTACK	Mezzanine	Circa-Virgin
17	MPX	Slowly Going The Way Of The Buffalo	A&M
18	JESUS & MARY CHAIN	Munki	Sub Pop
19	BARRY ADAMSON	As Above So Below	Mute
20	DRUGSTORE	White Magic For Lovers	Roadrunner
21	OF MONTREAL	The Bedside Orama A Petite Tragedy	Elephant 6-Kindercore
22	MOGWAI	Kicking A Dead Pig	Jetset
23	PLASTILINA MOSH	Aquamosh	Capitol
24	BAXTER	Baxter	Maverick
25	CIV	Thirteen Day Getaway	Lava-Atlantic
26	POSSUM DIXON	New Sheets	Interscope
27	SMASHING PUMPKINS	Adore	Virgin
28	BARENAKED LADIES	Stunt	Reprise
29	WINK	HereHear	Duum/Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
30	BIG SANDY	Dedicated To You	HighTone
31	ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT	RFTC	Interscope
32	SPRING HEELED JACK USA	Songs From Suburbia	Ignition
33	RANCID	Life Won't Wait	Epitaph
34	VEHICLE BIRTH	Tragedy	Crank!
35	ROBERT POLLARD	Waved Out	Matador
36	BIKINI KILL	The Singles	Kill Rock Stars
37	SUPERJESUS	Sumo	Warner Bros.
38	GETAWAY CRUISER	Getaway Cruiser	550
39	GRAVITY KILLS	Perversion	TWT
40	VARIOUS ARTISTS	MTV's Amp 2	Astralwerks
41	ULTRABABYFAT	Silver Tones Smile	Velvet
42	SOUNDTRACK	The X-Files: The Album	Elektra-EEG
43	BIO RITMO	Rumba Baby Rumba	Triloka-Mercury
44	LES THUGS	Nineteen Something	Sub Pop
45	7% SOLUTION	All About Satellites And Spaceships	K-Ray
46	SONIC YOUTH	A Thousand Leaves	DGC
47	BAD RELIGION	No Substance	Atlantic
48	HI FI KILLERS	Possession	Loosegroove
49	SWINGIN' UTTERS	Five Lessons Learned	Fat Wreck Chords
50	GARBAGE	Version 2.0	Almo Sounds
51	MONORCHID	Who Put Out The Fire?	Touch And Go
52	TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND	Rejoice Rejoice	MCA
53	EMBRACE	The Good Will Out	DGC
54	ARAB STRAP	Philophobia	Matador
55	POUNDSIGN	Wavelength	Fantastic
56	MARC RIBOT	Marc Ribot Y Los Cubanos Postizos	Atlantic
57	TRAGICALLY HIP	Phantom Power	Sire
58	ELLIOT	U.S. Songs	Revelation
59	BOMB20	Field Manual	Digital Hardcore
60	NEW YORK SKA-JAZZ ENSEMBLE	Get This!	Moon Ska
61	WILL OLOHAM	Black/Rich Music	Drag City
62	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Little Darla Has A Treat For You Vol. 10	Darla
63	SEAN LENNON	Into The Sun	Grand Royal-Capitol
64	VIOLENT GREEN	Hangovers In The Ancient World	Up
65	TORI AMOS	From The Choirgirl Hotel	Atlantic
66	DON CABALLERO	What Burns Never Returns	Touch And Go
67	SUGARCUBES	A Collection	Elektra-EEG
68	MIX MASTER MIKE	Anti-Theft Device	Asphodel
69	N'DEA DAVENPORT	N'Dea Davenport	V2
70	VARIOUS ARTISTS	For The Masses	1500-A&M
71	GIRLS AGAINST BOYS	Freak* On *Ica	DGC
72	JEFF BUCKLEY	Sketches For My Sweetheart The Drunk	Columbia-CRG
73	MONEY MARK	Push The Button	Mo Wax/Hfr-London
74	COWBOY JUNKIES	Miles From Our Home	Geffen
75	ACTIONSLACKS	One Word	Arena Rock



#1 **Beastie Boys**
Hello Nasty

FIVE YEARS AGO

1. URGE OVERKILL
SATURATION Geffen
2. PAUL WESTERBERG
14 SONGS SIRE-REPRISE
3. SMASHING PUMPKINS
"CHERUB ROCK" (5") HUT (UK)
4. PJ HARVEY
RID OF ME ISLAND-PLG
5. FUGAZI
IN ON THE KILLTAKER DISCORD

TEN YEARS AGO

1. SUGARCUBES
LIFE'S TOO GOOD ELEKTRA
2. CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN
OUR BELOVED REVOLUTIONARY SWEETHEART VIRGIN
3. WIRE
A BELL IS A CUP UNTIL IT IS STRUCK ENIGMA
4. IGGY POP
INSTINCT A & M
5. PATTI SMITH
CREAM OF LIFE ARISTA

Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 30 most played releases that week.

L I F E / S T Y L E

HOW HAPPY IS TODD SOLONDZ?

HAPPINESS, THE NEW FILM FROM WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE DIRECTOR SOLONDZ, IS COMING TO A THEATER NEAR YOU. MAYBE.

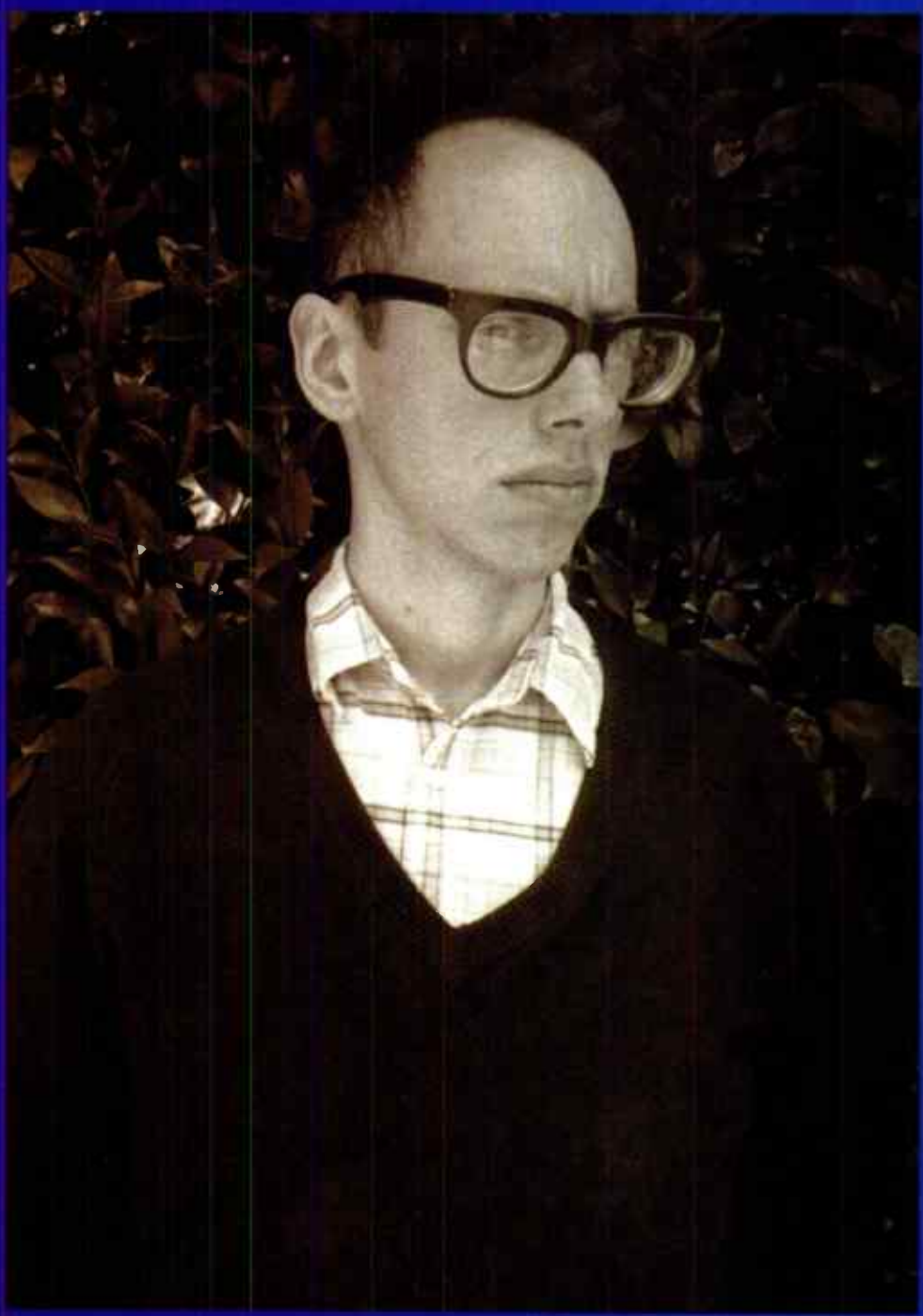
When Todd Solondz's *Welcome To The Dollhouse* became the Sundance Film Festival's Grand Jury Prize winner in 1996, and went on to touch the nerves of the inner-nerd inside us all, Solondz was pleased, but rather nonplused, by its jarring effect and critical success. It was, after all, just one of the stories in his creative well and not, as many people were certain, the autobiographical outpouring of his life.

"A lot of people walked out of *Dollhouse* saying that it was the story of my life, that I was Dawn Weiner," says the sweet-natured director. "Anyone who **STORY: MILLYS LEE** knows me really never says that. People who don't know me can think what they want."

Letting people think what they want can cut both ways. Solondz's latest creation, *Happiness*, won the International Critic's Prize at Cannes in May—"I didn't even know I was eligible for anything!"—but October Films also dropped the film from its fall lineup due to its controversial subject matter, which includes masturbation and pedophilia. (The film is back at an indie production house, Good Machine, and is still scheduled for a fall release.) It was rumored that October Films was pressured to do so from higher-ups at its parent company, Universal.

"Somebody must have read the script," Solondz jokes, but he is also quick to defend his difficult subjects as "a tool to get to explore some of the underlying concerns. The idea of desire, how desire is thwarted and unrequited love and alienation and isolation—these are the kind of ideas that draw me in. This is one of the several ways of exploring that. It's hard living in today's times—it's out there in the media, it's hard not

(Continued on page 78)



HENRY GARJUNEL

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*** compiled by jenny oliver ***

YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

(Gramercy Pictures)



L-R: KEENER, STILLER

"What was your greatest fuck?" It's a question that recurs, just that crudely, at several key points of Neil LaBute's *Your Friends And Neighbors*. Two films is all it has taken for writer-director LaBute to acquire a fixation Woody Allen took years to (over-)develop. But unlike Allen's light-comic approach to sex among neurotics, LaBute's dark, barely comic take is as polarizing as it is bracing: Like *In The Company Of Men*, his breakthrough 1997 feature, *Your Friends* is hard to love, yet is creepily

intriguing. Here LaBute remains fixated on old themes: Everytown, USA—the new film takes place in a nameless college burg—and the craven instincts that motivate human sexuality and the improbability of love. His clout has, however, bought him a bigger, higher-wattage cast: *Men*'s Aaron Eckhart, this time playing a sympathetic nebbish, is joined by Jason Patric, as a psychopathic jock who views sex as revenge; Ben Stiller, as a selfish drama teacher whose sexual appetite is greater than his meager talents; Catherine Keener (*Living In Oblivion*), Stiller's foul-mouthed mate, who learns of his infidelity and falls into her first lesbian affair, with Nastassja Kinski, a flirty museum assistant. From the first scenes, LaBute holds out little hope for the characters, mocking their jobs and their relationships. Make no mistake, the *Your* in this film's title is an indictment—of the presumably smart, self-absorbed audience attracted to this sort of film, and the modern, amoral places in which they live and work. >>> *Chris Molanphy*

PECKER

(Fine Line Features)

From the moment John Waters had transvestite Divine eat real feces on camera in *Pink Flamingos*, the filmmaker forever altered independent cinema. Though he mellowed a bit in the last two decades with *Hairspray* and *Cry Baby*, his off-beat sensibility is back with a vengeance in the oddball comedy *Pecker*. The title character is a kid (Edward Furlong) whose penchant for photography allows him to capture the essence of his small town existence through candid shots of his strange family and friends. When his work is noticed by a New York socialite (Lili Taylor), he lands a big gallery show that inadvertently makes his family famous. Waters's usual assortment of strange characters this time includes Pecker's fag-hag older sister (Martha Plimpton) and his Laundromat supervisor girlfriend (Christina Ricci). *Pecker* has a few shortcomings—the acting is a little weak and, after Waters's last film, *Serial Mom*, this one seems low-concept—but this lean, mean little film brings the fun back into independent filmmaking and reminds us what it was all about in the first place.

>>> *Anthony C. Ferrante*

DEAR JESSE

(Cowboy Booking International)

Filmmaker Tim Kirkman was born in the same North Carolina town as Republican Senator Jesse Helms, and both men were raised as Southern Baptists. As he addresses Helms in *Dear Jesse*, Kirkman points out a more significant similarity: "For most of your 24 years in the US Senate, you've been obsessed with homosexual men; for most of my adult life, so have I." Kirkman's highly personal documentary is part open letter to Helms; part road trip through the state; and part diary of his life following a rough break-up. Kirkman never turns the film into a personal attack on Helms. Instead he tries to understand the viewpoints of the diverse group of North Carolinians he interviews—Kirkman's extended family, a conservative newspaper editor, a single mother who faces prejudice after adopting an HIV-positive child. Like Michael Moore's *Roger & Me*, Kirkman's debut feature film is simultaneously funny and touching, taking controversy out of the headlines and onto front porches. Characteristically, Helms attacked *Dear Jesse* before its premiere, calling all homosexuals "intellectually dishonest." With an open mind, Helms might see this film as a startlingly honest and compelling portrait of one young man's coming to terms with himself and his home state.

>>> *Wendy Mitchell*

ORGAZMO

(McGober Films)

You've gotta hand it to *South Park* creator Trey Parker. Ultimately, he and his partner Matt Stone may be flashes in the pan, but before going down this devilish duo is putting its overnight celebrity to good use—their starring in *Orgazmo*, which Parker also wrote, directed, and produced, is this celluloid equivalent to a wet dream: the pair cawts naked with porn stars like Chelsey Lain, stages elaborate kung fu fights, declares flatulence and orgasms powerful weapons, blows stuff up, mocks religion and other moral, social and political norms, and throws around words like "stunt cock" and "double vaginal, double anal" as if they were dramatic pauses. And they get away with all this through a perverse story line based on a Mormon-cum-porn star-cum-superhero named Orgazmo, whose trusty sidekick Chods-Bey modifies sex toys into crime-fighting tools. In creating what will surely go down in midnight movie history, Parker offends and parodies everyone and then tricks even the most politically correct into laughing about it. *Orgazmo* certainly isn't for everyone—if you didn't snort uncontrollably at *Showgirls*, you'd probably prefer a nice game of Scrabble—but it will keep the "never thought those four cartoon kids were funny" backlash at bay. At least until Stone's band, DVD-A, puts out a record, anyway.

>>> *Carrie Bell*

NO DEPRESSION

Edited by Peter Blackstock and Grant Alden
(Dowling Press)

To the hardcore country music fan, one trait dictates the success or failure of an artist: authenticity. This trait, we discover in *No Depression*, has less to do with regional origin, dialect or dwelling place, than it does with possessing a rural heart and cut-to-the-bone emotion. A collection of writings that first appeared in the seminal "alternative country" magazine of the same name, *No Depression* the book paints a broad picture of the state of country music at the end of the century. Chapters on Merle Haggard, Palace, Gillian Welch, Townes Van Zandt, Victoria Williams & Marc Olson, Wilco, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Freakwater and others seamlessly meld the past with the present, crawling little outright distinction between Nashville rebels and Chicago bar bands. *No Depression's* major failing is its relentless dead-serious tone, which leaves the reader parched halfway through, craving a mouthful of levity, or at least a smile. The writers have great taste, though, and they know their history, which is the book's achievement, and what makes it essential reading for those curious about authentic country music. >>> *Randall Roberts*

DAY JOB: A WORKPLACE READER FOR THE RESTLESS AGE

By Jonathan Baird
(Allen & Osborne, Inc.)

Day Job is actually a work of fiction, but that fact won't lessen its impact for anyone whose means of paying the rent isn't directly tied to a higher plane of existence. The book clobbers the zeitgeist of "Gen X" with stirring quotes about life and happiness from great writers (Whitman, Jung, Thoreau, plus ancient proverbs and parables) and an unabatingly dry sense of humor. *Day Job's* unusual conceit is that it's the journal of disillusioned protagonist Mark Thornton, a recent college graduate working in the customer service department of a graphics company that's undergoing a trendy, jingoistic management technique overhaul. Thornton's journal, however, is the result of an alternative motivational method he's discovered: a company called SysCorp that reviews employees' writings and responds to their particular concerns with advice buoyed by literary quotes. The resulting instructive contents are not as specific to Thornton's case as you might imagine, and are in fact so universal as to inspire continual head-smacking, belly-laughing moments of revelation. How can you resist a book that describes its supporting cast with character sketches like "5 yrs. on the job; breakdown judged to be forthcoming; monitored like San Andreas and prodded by thrillseekers"? >>> *Cheryl Botchick*

LIFE/STYLE

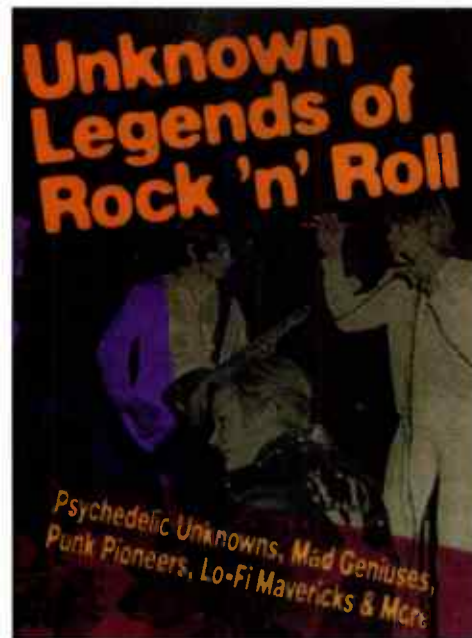
>>> compiled by Jonny Otazu <<<

UNKNOWN LEGENDS OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

By Richie Unterberger
(Miller Freeman Books)

If you agree that "unrefined," "raw" and "weird" often describe some of the most exciting rock 'n' roll, you're sure to revel in Richie Unterberger's *Unknown Legends of Rock 'N' Roll*. Former *Option* editor Unterberger profiles 60 innovators,

eccentrics and cult favorites, ranging from the relatively familiar (R.I.Y.L. faves Syd Barrett, Nick Drake, the Raincoats, Can) to the impossibly obscure (the Mystic Tide, which released only four local singles). Although grouped into 13 categories (such as "Out of the Garage" and "From the Continent"), many of the artists have a psychedelic bent, and nearly three-quarters of them made their significant recordings in the mid-to-late-'60s. Unterberger is more interested in telling the stories of the musicians than in analyzing the "legendary" qualities of their music, and each piece develops around his firsthand interviews with the artists (including Wanda Jackson, Robert Wyatt and X-Ray Spex's Poly Styrene) or their associates. A "Recommended Recordings" list follows each chapter and, better yet, *Unknown Legends* includes a CD featuring archival recordings of 12 of the more obscure artists. The short profiles—they average five pages—make perfect bedtime reading, and at his best, on Love or Françoise Hardy or Martin Newell, for instance, Unterberger succeeds in making you crave to hear the recordings of these fascinating musicians. >>> *Steve Klinge*



ONCE THERE WAS A VILLAGE

By Yuri Kapralov
(Akashic Books)

"Our block is known as 'little Nam,'" writes Russian immigrant Yuri Kapralov, "although I've been told by a few friends who returned from Vietnam that they felt much safer over there." Kapralov is an artist, an essentially peaceful man whose life has nonetheless been defined by war zones: The post-WWII Caucasus region where he spent his childhood, and New York City's East Village of the late '60s and early '70s, a crumbling neighborhood of desperate junkies, naive hippie kids and poor immigrants. The latter is the subject of Kapralov's 1974 memoir, now reprinted by Akashic Books, the company co-founded by Girls Against Boys bassist Johnny Temple. Though it spans almost a decade, *Village* shares with other war narratives an underlying sense of transience. One after another, we meet Kapralov's neighbors, chess buddies, drinking buddies and adversaries, only to see them get killed or arrested, go crazy, die of drink, or simply move away. As depressing as this book sounds, Kapralov's deft characterizations keep the story lively throughout, and make it possible to understand how he remains committed to a place where violence is so routine and fate so arbitrary. >>> *Andrea Moed*

>>> compiled by douglas walk <<<

ZINES

SOUND COLLECTOR

Heavy on design and reflecting its editors' passionate musical tastes, mostly of the indie-rock variety, *Sound Collector's* second issue is a well-intentioned attempt to find new ways of writing about music, though it fails as often as it succeeds. At its worst, it can be untenably pretentious, as with an article on "instances of 'sound construction' in the recordings of The Make-Up"—please. But some of its ideas, like a review of truck stops based on their jukeboxes' contents, are novel and fun, and an interview with the Flaming Lips about their multi-boom box "experiments" actually sheds some light on their intentions. The subjects of the writers' curiosity are indulged in pieces that usually don't fall into the 'zine trap of having been done to death already; a memorial to the great, unknown Charles Brown Superstar is under-researched, but at least it's something, and profiles of the Blackjack and Cuneiform labels are informative and surprising. Other interviews in this issue include Autechre, Will Oldham (a typically cryptic email exchange and Deerhoof. (P.O. Box 13089, Philadelphia, PA 19101) >>> DW



THE IMP

The second issue of Dan Raeburn's 'zine *The Imp* is devoted to an exhaustive, mostly hilarious analysis of Jack Chick tracts—the warped little religious cartoon pamphlets that appear under windshield wipers, in trick-or-treat bags and on public transportation seats. Raeburn has read nearly everything Chick has ever published, and compiled a 28-page concordance of the comics' characters, Chick's obsessions (particularly with the Roman Catholic Church, which he believes is the Whore of Revelation), and key words: You'll learn the true meaning of the inevitable interjections "Haw Haw Haw," "Yaaaaah!" and "@!!!*!" Beyond that, though, he goes deep inside the Chick empire, with a lengthy profile of the man himself and his international publishing operations, a breakdown of the artists who have worked for him (including an appreciation of the fabulously versatile, accomplished Fred Carter), and an extended and insightful, if utterly irreverent, analysis of Chick's writing, ideology and aesthetics. "Chick's a skinhead outsider," he writes, "so busy pointing fingers at other factions with charges of selling out to The System it's a wonder he has time to crank out his own controversial, self-published rants, which of course he gives free to prisoners and sells to his indie distributors at a slim to nil profit margin. If this scenario sounds familiar, it should: simply put, Chick is punk as fuck." (\$5 to Dan Raeburn, 1454 Summerdale 2C, Chicago, IL 60649) >>> DW



COMIC FAT FURY

(America's Comic Group)

Back in the '60s, there was a great, low-key comic book called *Herbie*. It was published by a small-time company and it only lasted a few years, but it made an indelible impression on future cartoonists—one-off *Herbie* tributes surface from time to time, and now stories from the original series are being reprinted (though with dubious production quality and ultra-low-grade printing). The premise is pretty simple: fat, hyper-laconic, lollipop-loving Herbie Popnecker is derided by his father as a "little fat nothing." But nobody knows that when he puts on his long underwear and sticks a toilet plunger on his head, he becomes the Fat Fury, idol of millions, defender of the innocent and scourge of evil doers everywhere, threatening bad guys with "you want I should bop you with this here lollipop?" Shane O'Shea's stories have a dryly absurd sense of humor, from Herbie's telegraphic dialogue to villains who owe more than a little to the ve-find-moose-and-squirrel school, and Ogden Whitney's art, understated to the point of flatness, lets O'Shea pile up the ridiculousness without tipping his hand. >>> DW



WEB BROWSING

SILVERBALL NEWS AND VIEWS

(www.pinball.org/silver)

Fess up: The last time you played pinball, you were drunk. Actually, every time you've played the game, you've been standing in a dark, smoky room, drinking the demon alcohol and flirting with that cutie eyeing you across the room. How can you possibly concentrate under such circumstances, let alone take the game to the next level? Well, there are ways to improve your game, and Silverball News And Views is where it's at. Believe it or not, there are strategies to pinball; the constant wacko hit-the-ball-as-hard-as-you-can style is all wrong if you want to earn extra games. Silverball is the most extensive and thoughtful pinball site out there (and there's a load of them). The e-zine is well written and obsessive, covering news, league play, historical essays, new and classic game reviews, and strategies. Another useful site is www.pinball.com, the official site of pinball makers Bally and Williams. You can learn about each of their games: where to aim, how to play, and why that itchy seemingly inconsequential button up next to the screaming eye is the key to big-time scoring. A bit of sober investigation is all that stands between you and free games galore. Get to work.

>>> Randall Robert's

WEB BROWSING

MOONLIGHT ON VAN VLIET: THE CAPTAIN BEEFHEART RADAR STATION

(www.beefheartb.com)

Revenant Records recently announced that it would be releasing a four-CD set of previously unavailable Captain Beefheart material late this year, which should quicken the hearts of the small army of cultists devoted to Beefheart's work, both his music—including *Trout Mask Replica*, a strong candidate for strangest record ever made—and his painting, done under his real name, Don Van Vliet, the artistic outlet on which he's focused since he made his last record 15 years ago. This site is the ultimate resource for 'Fhearthearts, with a huge gallery of paintings, sound files of hours of unreleased and unavailable material, up-to-date news, and what looks like every word ever written about Beefheart. And, for the uninitiated, there's a section called "The Party Of Special Things To Do" that's a good introduction to his unique, sum-baked delights.

>>> DW

LIFE/STYLE

>>> compiled by douglas walk <<<

VIDEOGAMING

NFL XTREME

(Sony PlayStation)

From the makers of *Game Day*, *NFL Xtreme* is a new five-on-five football game for the PlayStation platform that mimics other arcade style games such as *NHL Open Ice*, *NBA Jam* and Electronic Arts' new *NFL Blitz*. The game combines all the peripheral action of modern football—helmet-popping, torso-twirling hits, taunting ("This is my house!") fancy end zone celebrations and all those yummy injuries—with the rules of every non-purist's favorite off-season sport, arena football. Players take on the physical dimensions of real players (e.g. the Jets' Aaron Glenn is a twig next to the Bucs' Mike Alstott) and the game is played on a 50-yard field with no out-of-bounds. If your favorite part of the old *Madden* football games was the ambulance time-out, or you're mesmerized by Shannon Sharpe's "hulk flex," this is your kind of game. Players can get up after being tackled and deck any opponent (the announcer might say, "What is he doing?"), check out the rad trail of fire they leave when you hit the speed boost, and limp after an aggressive hit. Sure it's mindless violence, but the game is actually a lot of fun to play, especially with a friend.

>>> Glen Sansone



MIKE ALSTOTT TAMPA BAY BUCCANERS

WEB BROWSING

RECKANKREUZUNGSKLANKEWERKZEUGE

(www.tiac.net/users/shekeb/breaks.html)



Want to have drum 'n' bass demystified for you in a hurry? Pay a visit to this oddly named site, subtitled "Hrvatski's Breaks Page," and observe just how much of d'n'b is directly descended from the Winstons' old instrumental soul single "Amen Brother" and its unforgettable drum break. The page includes a RealAudio version of the entire song, as well as downloadable samples of the "Amen" break at normal tempo, sped up, flanged, rearranged into a hardstep beat, and otherwise messed with—and, if you're a fan of recent electronic music, you'll recognize almost every one. The page also includes a bunch

of other familiar breaks as downloadable files, along with references of where they come from (two particularly famous ones are from songs by Amon Duul and Love!) and where they've been used. It's fascinating, if a little disillusioning.

>>> DW

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

TELEVISION PERSONALITIES

Seinfeld and *Larry Sanders* are gone and, unfortunately, the new TV season doesn't promise to be a stellar one for new series. (The Olson twins are back, okay?) But there are some diamonds in the rough. Below, a primer to what's worth watching. —Stef McDonald

SHOW	WHERE & WHEN	WOOT	THE CONCEPT	THE LOWDOWN	PROGNOSIS
FELICITY	Tuesdays at 9 p.m. ET on WB	My So-Called College Life	A sweet young Californian (Keri Russell) follows her crush across the country to attend college in the Big Apple.	It's got angst! It's got a love quadrangle! It's got a good-looking cast!	Very good. It follows the powerhouse <i>Buffy The Vampire Slayer</i> .
CHARMED	Wednesdays at 9 p.m. ET on WB	Party Of Three Witches Of Eastwick	Three orphaned sisters (including Shannen Doherty, Holly Marie Combs) in San Francisco discover they're witches, each with a special power.	It's not as spooky or hip as <i>Buffy</i> , but it's fun and the girls get to kick some butt. Plus, Shannen Doherty is back!	Too tough to call. It goes up against Fox's <i>Party Of Five</i> but it follows <i>Dawson's Creek</i> .
THAT 70s SHOW	Sundays at 8:30 p.m. ET on Fox	Dazed And Coming-Of-Age	Bell-bottomed kids navigate their way through adolescence in Minneapolis.	Nostalgia for the '70s may be passé, but when the pot smoke clears this sitcom is equal parts goofy, groovy and sweet—and it comes from the producers of <i>3rd Rock From The Sun</i> .	Very good. It's sandwiched between <i>The Simpsons</i> and <i>The X-Files</i> .
CUPID	Saturdays at 10 p.m. ET on ABC	Touched By A Cupid	In this dramedy, sparks fly when a guy who claims to be the love god (Jeremy Piven) plays matchmaker and crosses paths with a psychologist who runs a singles group (Paula Marshall).	Is he really Cupid? Is he crazy? Who cares? This is smart and feel-good (really) and it has an edge. Wasted on <i>Ellen</i> , Piven shines here as a quick-witted, smart-assed charmer.	Not good. It's buried on Saturday nights, where only the lovesick will be home to watch.
SPORTS NIGHT	Tuesdays at 9:30 p.m. ET on ABC	The Jock Files	A cross between <i>Larry Sanders</i> and <i>Arts & Crafts</i> , this sitcom offers a fast-paced, behind-the-scenes look at a nightly sports news show just like ESPN's <i>SportsCenter</i> .	It's not nearly as funny as those <i>SportsCenter</i> commercials or as brilliant as <i>Sanders</i> , but it's teeming with energy and rah-rah spirit.	Good. It's sandwiched between <i>Spin City</i> and <i>NYPD Blue</i> (but it competes with <i>Felicity</i>).
THE BRIAN BENBEN SHOW	Mondays at 9:30 p.m. ET on CBS	Murphy Brown Dreams On	This sitcom follows the misadventures of an affable but aging news anchor in LA who's been demoted to the human interest desk.	Everybody loves Brian Benben (HBO's <i>Dream On</i>), who again plays a schlub who's unlucky in work and love.	Good. Only <i>Ally McBeal</i> stands in its way, but this has the testosterone factor in its favor.

TODD SOLONDZ?

(Continued from page 73)

to address it. The film is compelling insofar as it is in some way a reflection of the world we all live in. That's why I hate to see [the taboo subjects] be a distraction from the larger, more important meaning of the film."

Following the complex interwoven lives of a dozen central characters, *Happiness* chronicles the lives of the Jordans, a middle-class New Jersey family searching for that elusive inalienable right through a series of wayward social connections. "It's about finding a kind of emotional connection, reciprocation, and the obstacles to that and the price we pay to achieve that kind of intimacy and honesty. We all are subject to whims of desire and we all have needs of attachment and finding intimacy with others."

In the film, Joy (Jane Adams) is a 30-year-old ESL teacher guilelessly trying to find Mr. Right. Her sisters Helen (Lara Flynn Boyle), an eerily shallow best-selling author, and Trish (Cynthia Stevens), a cheery homemaker,

compete with each other to be the one who "has it all." Meanwhile, their parents (Ben Gazzarra and Louise Lasser) contemplate the reasons why their golden years aren't fulfilling their expectations. Added to this disaffected misery is Trish's husband, Bill (Dylan Baker), a psychiatrist who finds himself trapped with perverse longings, and the gem of the bunch, Allen (*Boogie Nights'* inimitable Philip Seymour Hoffman), a pent-up loner who spends a great deal of time working the phones. *Happiness* examines all the ways in which human beings try to form connections to one another but fall short.

"It's a peculiar [movie], I suppose," Solondz says of a film that on the surface is peopled with nerds, perverts, losers and the chronically alienated. "I suppose one has to be adventurous, a little open-minded going into the movie. I feel I will have failed if the audience watches the movie and looks at the characters and says, 'Look at those freaks up there. Thank God that's not me.' But rather that they can see how on some level there is

some kind of connection that is made, some kind of empathy, that what some people may characterize as depraved and evil—that it's all part of who we are. You don't literally have to be any of these people with any of these particular problems to identify and see that



it's the world that we live in. When we go to the supermarket, these are the people we are surrounded by, that we walk through this world and it's not a freak show." **end**

meat beat manifesto

(Continued from page 37)

player until 1985. "I'd go 'round to a friend's house and tape them, then borrow his tape recorder, because we were a very poor family," he explains. His favorites were Kraftwerk, Cabaret Voltaire and Throbbing Gristle ("There was a period between '78 and '80 where I wouldn't listen to anything that had a guitar"), largely because nobody had heard of them. Championing unknown bands gave him an identity among his peers at school.

He stepped up his consumption towards the decade's close, with the emergence of Meat Beat. "That's when I started buying records because there might be a sample on there." When he moved to America a few years ago, the situation exploded. "This culture doesn't exist in Europe," he says of the US collectors scene. "You can't buy a batch of records relatively cheap, unless you're looking for Samantha Fox 12"s. [The market] dried out in the late '70s."

As a consequence of this aural bounty, the way Dangers listened began evolving, and his mercenary pursuit of samples tapered off. "I was reintroduced to music all over again, in a country with such an amazing musical heritage and history!" He quickly illustrates the connection between our nation's expansive sonic culture and one of his other passions, drawing a parallel between Dickie Goodman's 1950s cut-and-paste novelty singles like "The Flying Saucer" and the silk screen celebrity portraits of Andy Warhol. "Sampling is pop art! The whole thing is American," he reflects.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Meat Beat Manifesto has received back in kind just as much acclaim as it's doled out over the years. Not long ago, Chuck D of Public Enemy—another big influence on Dangers—singled out MBM and its colleague Consolidated in England's *NME* as his two favorite bands. Likewise, though the Prodigy may have lifted part of "Radio Babylon" for its rave anthem "Charly," Liam Howlett has long given Dangers props, and took MBM out on tour with his outfit in America this past summer.

Sadly, his contemporaries in Future Sound Of London, who also lifted a "Babylon" soundbite for their single "Papua New Guinea," have been less forthcoming with lip service. In a recent interview, they denied the connection. "That's like sampling 'Funky Drummer' and saying 'Yeah, I played that,'" says Jack, who actually gives Depth Charge's eponymous debut single the nod for originally inspiring "Radio Babylon." "I would never do that to anyone, no matter who asked me." e n d

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World Radio History

SEPTEMBER 8

BELLE AND SEBASTIAN The Boy With The Arab Strap *Matador*
BLONDE REDHEAD In An Expression Of The Inexpressible *Touch And Go*
BARE JR Boo Tay *Epic*
WES CUNNINGHAM 12 Ways To Win People To Your Way Of Thinking *Warner Bros.*
DANCEHALL CRASHERS Blue Plate Special *MCA*
FUCK Conduct *Matador*
GOMEZ Bring It On *Virgin*
GRIEVOUS ANGELS Miles On The Rail *Bloodshot*
HOLE Celebrity Skin *DGC*
I AGAINST I Headcleaner *Epitaph*
KAHIMI KARIE Kahimi Karie *Minty Fresh*
KNAPSACK This Conversation Is Ending Starting Right Now *Alias*
WAYNE KRAMER Live Like A Motherfucker *Epitaph*
SID & MARTY KROFFT Greatest Hits *Interscope*
LAMBCHOP What Another Man Spills *Merge*
P.W. LONG Push Me Again *Touch And Go*
Second solo album by former lead singer of Mule
MAIN Firmament III & IV *Beggars Banquet*
MEDIAEVAL BÆBES Salva Nos *Virgin*
MILLENCOLIN Same Old Tunes (reissue) *Epitaph*
MORELLA'S FOREST From Dayton With Love *Tooth And Nail*
NATURAL CALAMITY Peach Head *Nickelbag*
Features an appearance by Kool Keith and a Dust Brothers remix
PLUSH More You Becomes You *Drag City*
MARCUS PRINTUP Nocturnal Tracks *Blue Note*
ROADSIDE MONUMENT I Am The Day Of Current Taste *Tooth And Nail*

HENRY ROLLINS Think Tank *DreamWorks*
Spoken word

SAINT ETIENNE Good Humor *Sub Pop*
SLACKERS The Question *Hellcat*
PATTY SMYTH Greatest Hits (Featuring Scandal) *Legacy-Columbia*

VARIOUS ARTISTS All Men Are Liars *Fat Possum*
Featuring bluesmen like R.L. Burnside, Hasil Adkins, Junior Kimbrough and Cedell Davis

VARIOUS ARTISTS In My Life *MCA*
Beatles tribute album coordinated by former Beatles manager George Martin and featuring high-profile musicians (Celine Dion) and actors (e.g. Jim Carrey, who performs "I Am The Walrus")

VARIOUS ARTISTS Offering *Studio K7*

VARIOUS ARTISTS Tannis Root *Grand Royal*
Featuring Money Mark, Sonic Youth, Beck, Sean Lennon, Buffalo Daughter

TOM ZÉ Com Defeito De Fabricação (Fabrication Defect) *Luaka Bop*

SEPTEMBER 14

FLIN FLON Flin Flon *TeenBeat*
New band from Mark Robinson of Unrest and Air Miami

PHILIP GLASS Koyaanisqatsi (reissue) *Nonesuch*
First time that the entire original score to the Godfrey Reggio film is available on CD

DAVID GRUBBS The Thicket *Drag City*

MOEBIUS/PLANK/THOMPSON Ludwig's Law *Drag City*

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA Tango Zero Hour (reissue) *Nonesuch*
STEPHEN PRINA Push Comes To Love *Drag City*
RED KRAYOLA Live In The 1960's *Drag City*
RED KRAYOLA "Father Abraham" Remixes *Drag City*
TRUE LOVE ALWAYS Hopefully *TeenBeat*

SEPTEMBER 15

COMPANY SEGUNDO Lo Mejor De La Vida *Nonesuch*
First US release from the 90-year-old founding member of the Buena Vista Social Club
EUPHONIE Breaking Parole EP *Hefty*
FLIPMODE SQUAD The Imperial *Elektra*
ROBBIE FULKS Let's Kill Saturday Night *Geffen*
GALAXY Angel *Blue Room Americas*
FRED NERSCH AND BILL FRISELL Songs We Know *Nonesuch*
KID CAPRI Soundtrack For The Streets *Columbia*
LISAHALL Is This Real *Reprise*
MARILYN MANSON Mechanical Animals *Nothing-Interscope*
METALSPARK Corrosive *Blue Room Americas*
MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES Live *Big Rig-Mercury*
Live album, recorded over five nights at Boston's Middle East club
MORRISSEY My Early Burglary Years *Reprise*
PHOTEK Form And Function *Astralwerks*
Six early singles plus remixes and two new songs
AMY RIGBY Middlecence *Koch*
SOUNDTRACK Permanent Midnight *DGC*
TRAGICALLY HIP Live Between Us *Sire*
FRANK ZAPPA Mystery Disc *Rykodisc*

SEPTEMBER 22

TIFFANY ANDERS Tiffany Anders (EP) *Up*
ARCHERS OF LOAF White Trash Heroes *Alias*
AUX 88 Xeo-Genetic *Direct Beat*
BASSHOLES When My Blue Moon Turns Red *In The Red*
BLACKS Dolly Horrorshow *Bloodshot*
CAT POWER Moon Pix *Matador*
CHEMICAL BROTHERS Brothers Gonna Work It Out *Freestyle Dust-Astralwerks*
DJ mix album
DEEJAY PUNK-RDC ChickenEye *Independiente-Epic*
DICKLESS Anthology *Up*
DIRTBOMBS Homdog Fest *In The Red*
DJ SPOOKY Riddim Warfare *Outpost*
ALEC EMPIRE The Destroyer *Digital Hardcore*
EVERLAST Whitey Ford Sings The Blues *Tommy Boy*
HOVERCRAFT Experiment Below *Blast First-Mute*
LIDA MUSIK Faith In Space *Alias*
Recorded with electronic musician Beaumont Hannant
IRRESISTIBLE FORCE It's Tomorrow Already *Ninja Tune*
CHRIS ISAAK Speak Of The Devil *Reprise*
LYLE LOVETT Step Inside This House *MCA*
MINI-KING Mini-King *N2K*
MUDHONEY Tomorrow Hit Today *Reprise*
MURDER CITY DEVILS Empty Bottles, Broken Hearts *Sub Pop*
NIELDS Play *Zoë-Rounder*
ORB U.F.Off, Best Of *Island*
PAPRYA Pink *Maverick-Reprise*
Q-BURNS ABSTRACT MESSAGE Feng Shui *Astralwerks*

SECOND COMING Second Coming *Capitol*
SLICKER Confidence In Duber *Hefty*
SONICROME Breathe The Day *Capitol*
SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE How It Feels To Be Something On *Sub Pop*
VARIOUS ARTISTS World's Greatest Club Mix *Hypnotic*
YATSURA Slain By Yatsura *Sire*

SEPTEMBER 29

BUFFALO TOM Smitten *AGM*
CABALLACA Introducing Cadallaca *K*
FURRY THINGS Moments Away *Emperor Jones*
GALAXIE 500 The Portable Galaxie 500 *Rykodisc*
GANGER Hammock Style *Merge*
GOBLINS Millennium *Atavistic*
GOLDEN SMOG Weird Tales *Rykodisc*
PJ HARVEY Is This Desire? *Island*
PETER JEFFERIES Substatic *Emperor Jones*
JULIE RUIN Julie Ruin *Kill Rock Stars*
Solo project from Bikini Kill's Kathleen Hanna
MERCURY REV Deserter's Songs *V2*
ORANJ SYMPHONETTE The Oranj Album *Rykodisc*
ZEEHA PARKINS No Way Back *Atavistic*
PAUL NEWMAN Only Love Can Break Your Heart *Emperor Jones*
PM DAWN Dearest Christian *Gee Street*
SEAM The Pace Is Glacial *Touch And Go*
SLY AND ROBBIE Strip To The Bone *Palm Pictures*
SOUL COUGHING El Oso *Slash-W/B*
TAKE 1 "Emergency Breaks" (12") *K*
U.N.K.L.E. Psyence Fiction *Mo Wax-London*

OCTOBER 6

764-HERO Get Here And Stay *Up*
ANDUK Together Alone *Columbia*
BAD MANNERS Rare *Moon Ska*
BLOCK Timing Is Everything *Capitol*
TRACY BONHAM Trail Of A Dust Devil *Island*
COMBUSTIBLE EDISON The Impossible World *Sub Pop*
CYPRESS HILL IV *Columbia*
FLAT DUO JETS Lucky Eye *Outpost*
LESS THAN JAKE Hello Rockview *Capitol*
LOCUST Morning Light *Sire*
MXPX B Sides *Tooth And Nail*
PINE VALLEY COSMONAUTS ...Salute The Majesty Of Bob *Wills Bloodshot*
Members of Waco Brothers, Bottle Rockets and Mekons support 19 different singers, including Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Neko Case and Robbie Fulks, on Bob Wills covers
SCOFFLAWS Record Of Convictions *Moon Ska*
SIX BY SEVEN The Things We Make *Interscope*
STARFLYER 59 In Fashion Focus *Tooth And Nail*
STEREO TOTAL Stereo Total *Bobsled*
SON VOLT Wide Swing Tremolo *Warner Bros.*
VALLEJO Beautiful Life *TVT*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Ska: The Third Wave—The Checkered Box Set *Beloved*
WAGON CHRIST Tally Ho! *Astralwerks*
Another moniker of Luke Vibert (a.k.a. Plug)

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June '98 GARBAGE

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San Diego, California



(Continued from page 90)

stop for national touring acts ranging from Superchunk to swing bands, and The Casbah is home base for locals such as Rocket From The Crypt and the Dragons. The main room here is intimate and sounds better than ever with recent p.a. upgrades; the back bar features vintage '70s and '80s arcade games (Centipede, et al), two pinball machines and two pool tables. The best drink is still bartender Scott Ricks's Chocolate Martini, but cold microbrew pints are ever popular.

Brick By Brick (1130 Buenos Ave., 276-3993), less successful as The Spirit a couple of years back, often books touring acts—Squirrel Nut Zippers, Stereolab, Girls Against Boys—that have outgrown The Casbah's confines.

Strangely ignored by the record industry as its scouts scoured bar rock turf for the new Nirvana is the cavernous **SOMA** (5305 Metro St., 239-SOMA), the city's leading all-ages venue. This warehouse space hosts national acts with bigger draws, and spurred "second-wave" San Diego acts like Blink-182 and Buck O.

Nine onto the national scene. The venue expands (to over 1000 capacity) and contracts (to 200) depending on the show, and visitors can expect mediocre-to-good sound, plenty of thrashy bookings (plus ska and swing) and no alcohol served.

For a quieter evening, try **Java Joe's** (4994 Newport Ave., 523-0356) in Ocean Beach. Best known as Jewel's launching pad, this tiny, mostly-acoustic coffeehouse also supports local comers like Steve Poltz and the Rugburns.

The Gaslamp

Beginning with the 1985 opening of Horton Plaza, blossoming in the early '90s with massive restructuring, and now complete in its gentrification, downtown's former red-light district has metamorphosed from seedy urban blight into the tourist-ready Gaslamp Quarter. An indiscriminate walk through the area will uncover plenty of eateries and meet-markets (wonderful architectural facades, too), but don't miss the **Star Bar** (463 E. St., 234-5575), home of an amazing elixir called the Mojo. While the Star now shrewdly charges a cover on weekend nights (boo! hiss!), there isn't a more colorful saloon in town.

For fans of the macabre, there's nothing more chilling than a visit to the Gaslamp's **Museum Of Death** (548 Fifth Ave., 338-8153), housed in a former mortuary. The provocateurs who run the joint have assembled a stunning multi-media environment that includes video, photography and a room devoted to execution instruments. Not—duh—for the faint of heart.

Hillcrest and Beyond

Hillcrest, San Diego's one-stop bohemian/alternative lifestyle district (and former Cunanan stomping grounds), is packed with shops, ethnic restaurants, an art-house multiplex cinema and much more. While two Starbucks have infiltrated the 'hood, indie businesses still thrive,

including the aforementioned Off The Record. Some of the more popular and affordable restaurants (for vegetarians and carnivores alike): **Taste Of Thai** (527 University Ave., 291-7525), **Chilango's** (142 University Ave., 294-8646) and the **Crest Cafe** (425 Robinson Ave., 295-2510), but there really is something for everyone in this nabe.

Just east of Hillcrest, the motto "Cold Beer, Warm Friends" holds true at **Live Wire** (2103 El Cajon Blvd. at Alabama, 291-7450). Here you'll find the city's best jukebox, plus a cozy place to watch for local indie-rock scenesters and sample from among the 24 different beer taps (there's a small wine selection, too). Just up the street, the venerable **Red Fox** (2223 El Cajon Blvd., 297-1313) serves cocktails and steaks in a darkened piano-bar setting.

Newly competitive with the Red Fox is the **Turf Supper Club** (1116 25th St., 234-6363), a former "old man" tavern with a horse-racing theme, a piano bar, a grill-your-own-steak (\$5.95) menu, and hep back-to-the-future decor.

Tijuana

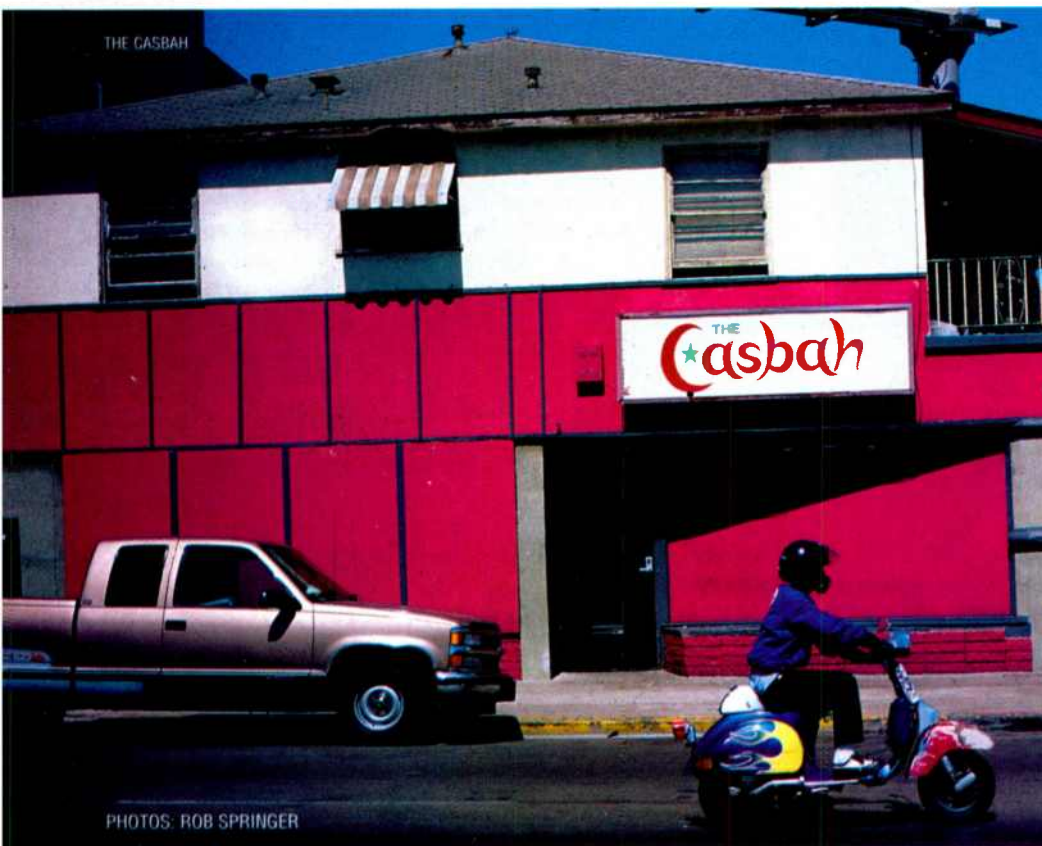
Talk about a tale of two cities. Although significant artistic and cultural interchange has been forged between San Diego and Tijuana, Avenida Revolucion—the center of night life—still often looks like a scene out of *The Last American Virgin*. Live and let live, I always say, but bear in mind there's more to Tijuana than just tequila shooters and burro rides. Tee-Jay is just minutes away whether you drive your own car or take a trolley (231-8549 for info) from downtown to the border in San Ysidro. Passports aren't required, but a rational frame of mind is recommended—no one wants to spend a night in a Tijuana jail.

Breakfast

One word: Perry's (4620 Pacific Hwy., 291-7121). They don't call it "the breakfast house" for nothin'.

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San Diego, California



PHOTOS: ROB SPRINGER

¶ THE FIRST THING VISITORS TEND TO NOTICE HERE IS FRIENDLINESS; THE NEXT IS THE BRILLIANT WEATHER. YOU'D BE FRIENDLY TOO IF THE AVERAGE YEAR-ROUND TEMPERATURE IN YOUR HOMETOWN WAS 65 DEGREES WITH LESS THAN TEN INCHES OF ANNUAL RAINFALL. THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, SAN DIEGO AIN'T. ¶ WE DO, HOWEVER, HAVE OUR ODD VERSION OF THE GREEN RIVER KILLER (REMEMBER CROSS-COUNTRY FELON/VERSACE ASSASSIN ANDREW CUNANAN?) AND WEIRDO CULTISTS LIKE HEAVEN'S GATE, THE UFO THEORISTS WHO MADE NATIONAL HEADLINES WITH THEIR 1997 MASS SUICIDE. THIS IS A STRANGELY POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT WHERE SURFERS ARE BUSINESSMEN (AND VICE-VERSA) AND NATIONAL BORDERS—MEXICO'S JUST A FEW MILES SOUTH—FOSTER BOTH CONTROVERSY AND MULTI-CULTURAL OPPORTUNITY. ¶ WITH A POPULATION AT 1.2 MILLION AND GROWING, SAN DIEGO IS A BIG CITY—AMERICA'S SIXTH LARGEST. BUT THE JUXTAPOSITIONS OF LEISURE (BEACHES) AND BUSINESS (TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TOURISM), OF OLD (SPANISH-BUILT MISSIONS, BALBOA PARK) AND NEW (URBAN REVITALIZATION) CREATE A SMALL-TOWN CHARM SELOOM FOUND IN MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS.

Radio

One caveat for college-radio devotees: San Diego is sorely lacking in non-commercial FM stations. It's a sad but undeniable fact that the area's two major university stations, San Diego State's excellent **KCR** and UCSD's **KSDT**, only broadcast on cable (sigh). How a market this large doesn't find room for widely available collegiate broadcasting is a great mystery (most likely to do with massive signals launched from neighboring Tijuana), but San Diego City College's **KSDS** does deliver excellent jazz and blues programming at 88.3. Local commercial titan **91X** and its slightly sassier rival, **92.5ive**, offer obligatory alt-rock fodder and sell those youth-market ads.

Record Stores

Without strong college radio, the scene's major asset may be its independent record stores, which sponsor plenty of in-store gigs and offer loyal support for local groups. After recently closing its branch near SDSU, **Off The Record** is now chockablock with out-of-print vinyl, imports and 7" singles at its main location (3849 Fifth Ave., 298-4755), and boasts a heavy selection of goth/industrial and electronic releases.

Lou's Records (434 N. Coast Hwy. 101 in Encinitas, (760) 753-1382) is slightly out of the way—25 minutes north of downtown—but, like all things So Cal, it's freeway-close and well worth the drive. With a deep catalog and a tremendous selection of reggae, indies and imports, Lou's is actually housed in two (!) buildings—one for new stuff, one for used—and is the county's best source for just about anything.

If you find yourself up the coast even further, check out **Spin Records** (2940 State St. in Carlsbad, (760) 434-0807), a growing indie store with a friendly, helpful staff and an increasingly strong selection.

Venues

When the San Diego rock scene got "hot" in the wake of Seattle's grunge success, the place to be was **The Casbah** (2501 Kettner Blvd. at Laurel, 232-HELL). It remains one of the best 21-and-over venues in the US. Eclectic bookings make the bar a favored tour

(Continued on page 89)



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