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NEW MUSIC

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MONTHLY

weezer



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x-ecutioners
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hatebreed
evil in a positive way

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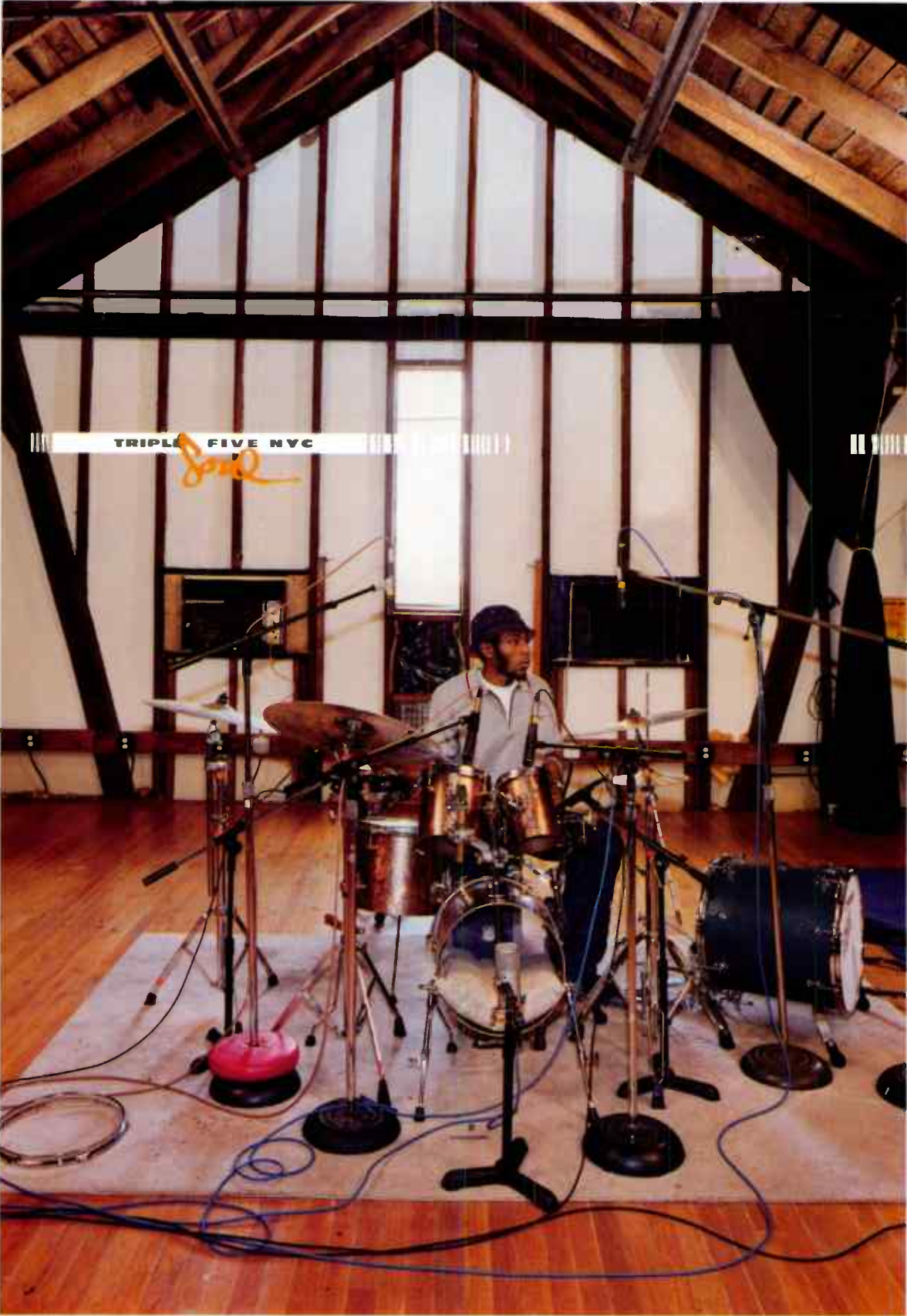
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World Radio History

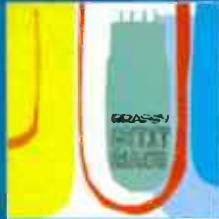


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WEEZER 56

At first they were just lucky geeks with a cool video and a couple of cute hits. Then their second record made them critical darlings with no sales. Now they're alterna-veterans with an amazingly devoted cult appeal. Jon Regardie tries on their sweater.

THE ORB 42

Alex Patterson, the techno sorcerer who once charted *Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld* seems to be orbiting the nether regions with no direction home. Eric Demby punches his ticket.

PEACHES 44

Can a woman with Rhea Perlman hair turn on anyone but Danny DeVito? She can if she's Peaches. Dylan Siegler makes sure it's fresh and juicy.

ATERCIOPELADOS 46

U.S.-backed military death squads are on the right and drug lord-funded guerrillas are on the left; Aterciopelados are caught in the middle, playing the pipes of peace over simmering beats. Enrique Lavin drinks in the rich Colombian goodness.

HATEBREED 48

They may be from New Haven, but they're still hardcore's next big thing. All they have to do is settle a few fights they've had—with other bands, bouncers and their label—and they'll be fine. Lorne Behrman referees.

X-ECUTIONERS 52

Four guys in the Bronx are reinventing the wheel—the steel wheel, that is. Like the Justice League Of Hip-Hop, this quartet has banded together to oust mediocre rap in favor of inventive scratches and swipes. Kelefa Sanneh keeps things spinning.

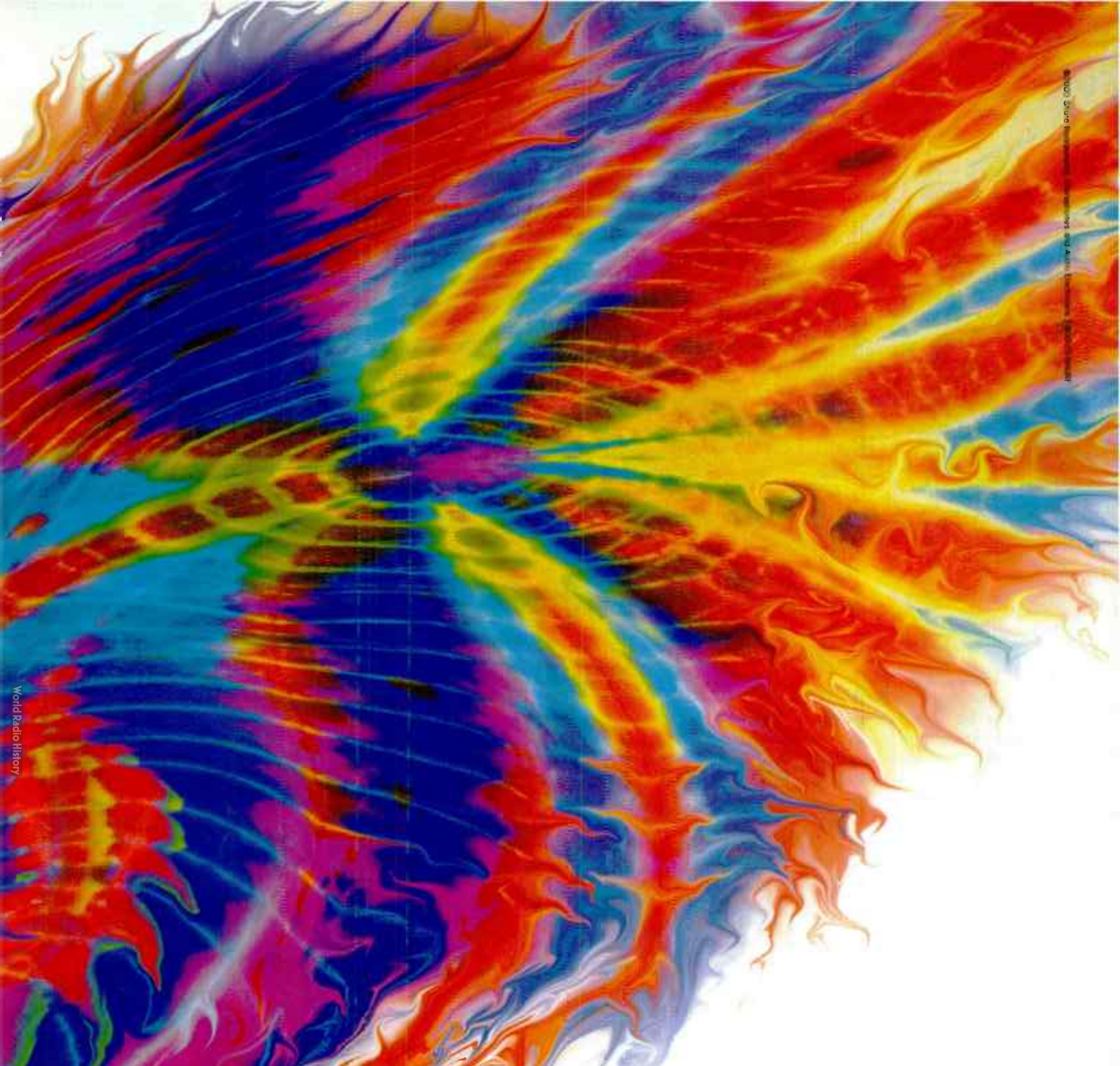
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An April shower of tunes: Weezer, Guided By Voices, the Living End, Monster Magnet, Sepultura, Mellowdrone, Aterciopelados, KRS-ONE, Soulive, Alpha, Jack Johnson, the Minus 5, Mellow, Red House Painters, Kings Of Convenience, Cropduster, Husking Bee, AM/FM, Mink Lungs, Les Savy Fav.

COVER AND THIS PAGE: WEEZER PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANTHONY MANDLER/ART MIX THE AGENCY; STYLING BY ERIC BERG, GROOMING BY STEPHEN LEWIS.

time to breathe.





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World Radio History

time to play.

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44 48

QUICK FIX 18

Creepier Lagoon checks into hotel hell, KRS-ONE writes music for heads sitting on the head, we find the perfect gun for Axl, the red heart of Red House Painters' Mark Kozelek, a year in Run-DMC delays finally exposed (this will be our last Run-DMC piece for a while—we promise).

ON THE VERGE 37

As exciting to discover as Easter eggs: Endo, AM/FM, Lisa Shaw and Mellow.

THE SCENE IS NOW 82

Land Of The Emo Sun: Japan gets personal.

LIFE/STYLE 94

Nortec designers translate the sound of Tijuana's Tech-Mex into a border buffet of graphic style.

BUSKING BEAUTIES 97

The streets are alive with style.

IN MY LIFE 98

What's more punk than being covered with shark guts? Joe Queer goes fishing.

FILM 99

When you perform the bard's *King Lear* in the desert, you're gonna be shaking and baking.

GAMING 100

Imagine if Austin Powers shagged *The Avengers'* Emma Peel and gave birth to a videogame heroine—oh, behave!

LIGHTREADING 102

Do you ever feel like a circle in a world full of squares? So does *Zero Girl*.

BOOKS 103

Raymond Pettibon and *Punk Planet* bring that nevermind spirit to art galleries and libraries.

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Williamsburg: A hipster enclave grows in Brooklyn.

GEEK LOVE 106

Jovi saves.

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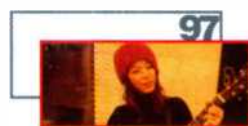
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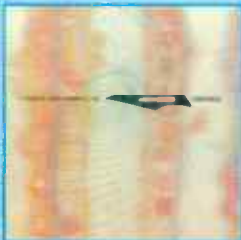


PEACHES: ANDREA BLANCH; HATEBREED: DALE MAY

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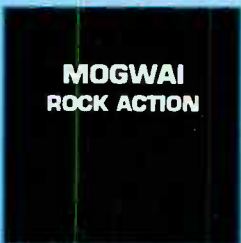
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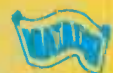
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christmas in april

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"the christmas song"**

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rock from

MONSTER MAGNET

SEPULTURA

THE LIVING END

postcore from Japan

avant rock from
Williamsburg, Brooklyn

Colombia's Aterciopelados,
KRS-ONE, the Minus 5,
Alpha and more.





1 WEEZER "The Christmas Song" (Geffer-marscope)
Tell the first robin of spring to chill for a bit, because we have some unfinished holiday business. Weezer's "The Christmas Song" is a brand new track that was only released in the Los Angeles area. As for Weezer cheese Rivers Cuomo never expecting the band's debut to be a smash and his disbelief that their follow-up, *Pinkerton*, tanked, turn to the cover story on p. 56.

2 GUIDED BY VOICES "Chasing Heather Crazy" *Isolation Drills* (TVT)
Little Bobby Pollard is growing up and rocking out—GBV's new *Isolation Drills* is "less a typical GBV flag-waver than a power-chord suicide note from a class clown who's decided to get serious in a hurry. That said, the renewed power and fidelity of this rock machine is undeniable." For more, see the Review on p. 72.

3 THE LIVING END "Roll On" *Roll On* (Reprise)
Straight outta Melbourne, Australia, the Living End had a big modern-rock hit with the punkabilly sound of 1998's "Prisoner Of Society." On *Roll On*, "The group spreads its wings even farther... incorporating everything from Britpop vocal harmonies to huge arena-rock guitar riffs into its politically charged anthems. The band's stunning combination of stylistic flash and raw power will turn lesser punk bands green with envy." For more, see Best New Music on p. 33.

4 MONSTER MAGNET "Heads Explode" *God Says No* (A&M)
In the March issue of this esteemed rag, Monster Magnet troop leader Dave Wyndorf described the band's new record as a "meltdown" from all the hype that followed their breakthrough sludge-rock album *Powertrip*. Instead of writing a sequel to that blockbuster, he followed with a set of psycho-sludge headtrips like the one you'll hear here.



5 SEPULTURA "Sepulnation" *Nation* (Roadrunner)
Thrash-metal giants Sepultura take it global on *Nation*, their second album without founding member Max Cavalera (now rocking Soulfly). The kicker "Sepulnation" sets the tone for an album that crosses ethnic borders like Waldo on speed. "We still consider ourselves a young band... we've never really been afraid to try new things," says bardmember Andreas Kisser. For more, see Metal, Mar. '00, p. 83.

6 MELLOWDRONE "Fall On Your Knees" *Glassblower* (Pushbutton)
Miami's Jonathan Bates (a.k.a. Mellowdrone) took an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach to *Glassblower*, his debut EP for Pushbutton Records. In addition to playing all of the instruments (except drums), he used everything that got in his way to craft the EP's haunting, atmospheric sound—including creaking chairs and his washing machine. The result combines the heaviness of the Deftones with the digitized melancholy of Nine Inch Nails.



7 ATERCIOPELADOS "El Album" *Gozo Poderoso* (BMG U.S. Latin)
War has a way of galvanizing a nation's artists; it follows, then, that Colombian duo Aterciopelados have found themselves moving "away from moody lo-fi punk to an elegant, electronic Latin dance groove." The duo's lyrics have also taken a leap from personal introspection to something more outward and demonstrative, the search for universal peace... For more, see the Feature on p. 45.

8 KRS-ONE "Get Yourself Up" *The Sneak Attack* (Front Page-Koch)
When one of the most respected names in hip-hop says he's praying to a porcelain god, you know to take him literally. "I put the toilet seat down—not in use—and write rhymes." Voice of the late-'80s duo Boogie Down Productions, KRS-ONE, claims the humble john is still "critical to his creativity." For more, see In My Room, p. 24.

9 SOULIVE "One In Seven" *Doin' Something* (Blue Note)
"Soulive has been one of the hottest draws on the live funky jazz circuit over the past couple of years, enlivening jam-band audiences with a contemporary take on '60s soul jazz," so goes our review of *Doin' Something* (Blue Note). For one of those multimedia experiences we've heard so much about, listen to "One In Seven" while reading the rest of the Review on p. 79.

10 ALPHA "South" *The Impossible Thrill* (Melankolic-Astralwerks)
Alpha's *Come From Heaven* earned raves from authorities as sketchy as Madonna and, well, this magazine. For *The Impossible Thrill*, the duo of Andy Jenks and Corin Dingley added strings and live instruments to their down-there downtempo, and recorded at studios ranging from Abbey Road to Dingley's mum's house. See the Review on p. 62.

11 JACK JOHNSON "Flake" *Brushfire Fairytales* (Enjoy)
He was born on the North Shore of Oahu, was competing as one of the top surfers in the world by 14 and after a near-fatal surfing accident, began making surf films. Now Jack Johnson is concentrating on music like "Flake," releasing *Brushfire Fairytales* (Enjoy) and touring with Ben Harper through the spring. From our Review on p. 73 "While Johnson flashes the same brave sincerity as Harper, his songs are less smoldering, more soft-spoken."

12 THE MINUS 5 "You Don't Mean It" *Let The War Against Music Begin* (Mammoth)
Scott McCaughey's the Minus 5, which has included members of Wilco, the Posies, Los Lobos, High Llamas, Ministry and R.E.M., "combines elaborate '60s-grounded arrangements with thoughtful (but unpretentious) lyrics..." on their new "concept album about death, but with sleigh bells on every song." For more, see the Review in last month's issue, p. 70.

13 MELLOW "Paris Sous La Neige" *Another Mellow Spring* (CyberOctave)
You could give your band a wacky, edgy name and have people ask what it sounds like, or you could just pick Mellow for your droning and weepy soundscapes and get it over with. To taste the retro-futurist pop found on *Another Mellow Spring* (CyberOctave), try the sample-size "Paris Sous La Neige" found here. Check page 40's On The Verge for more about the French trio, their collaborations with fellow Frenchmen Air and the rest of France's "nasty" music.



14 RED HOUSE PAINTERS "Byrd Joel" *Old Ramon* (Sub Pop)
Red House Painters' Mark Kozelek on acting like a rockstar in *Almost Famous*: "It was six months of my life where I had nothing to worry about. If I had a hair nail, there'd be five people that'd run over and take care of it for me." Hear Kozelek being a real rockstar on "Byrd Joel," from the new *Old Ramon* (Sub Pop), and learn more about his ladykillin' ways from the Q&A on p. 22.

15 KINGS OF CONVENIENCE "Failure" *Quiet Is The New Loud* (Source-Astralwerks)
Eirik Glambek Bøe and Erlend Øye (pronounce that, we dare you), also known as the Swedish duo Kings Of Convenience, are back with a "slow, melancholy set that makes the most of a minimalist palette," and makes truth out of their pithy album title. Seldom has a lone brass instrument sounded so lush. For more, see the Review p. 74.

16 CROPDUSTER "People Person" *Drunk Uncle* (We Put Out)
The wacky Northern Jersey rockers of Cropduster "pack in tight alterna-pop hooks and quirky instrumental breaks (involving the likes of cowbells matched with distorted guitars) like the ones that Cake and Fountains Of Wayne built their names on..." For more, see the Review on p. 68.

17 HUSKING BEE "The Sun And The Moon" *The Four Color Problem* (Toy's Factory)
Tokyo post-hardcore quartet Husking Bee hasn't quite established a name here in the States yet, but love from U.S. emo kingpins like Jimmy Eat World's Jim Adkins, who contributes vocals to "The Sun And The Moon," may help change that. More about Husking Bee and the Japanese postcore scene is found in this issue's The Scene Is Now, p. 82.



18 AM/FM "A Best Man (Put My Girlfriend On Fire)" *Mutilate Us* (Polyvinyl)
"I just want to write music that's, like, pretty," explains AM/FM's singer/guitarist Brian Sokel (who once called dub-punk outfit Franklin home). It's fortunate then that his band feels the same way he does, as evidenced by tracks like "A Best Man (Put My Girlfriend On Fire)" from their debut LP, *Mutilate Us* (Polyvinyl). More on these On The Verge Philly indie-rockers awaits on p. 38.

19 MINK LUNGS "Silent Sex" (Arena Rock)
LES SAVY FAV "Rome" *Rome (Written Upside Down)* (Frenchkiss-Southern)

The angular, unpredictable rock that's been brewing in Brooklyn's vital Williamsburg neighborhood over the past few years finds two of its headiest examples in Mink Lungs and Les Savy Fav. Without even recording a full-length, new Arena Rock Recording Co. signing Mink Lungs has become a cult favorite, combining the mad songwriting chops of its four members and drawing occasionally on the hula-hoop skills of bassist/vocalist Miss Frosty; art-punk trio Les Savy Fav has terrorized audiences (and venue managers) across the country with frontman Tim Harrington's raucous stage antics, which often include props—like, you know, fire. For more, see Localzine, p. 104.

ATERCIOPELADOS: MARIA MADRIGAL; AM/FM: JASON BLANEY





ORISHAS

a lo cubano

 SIRECO

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★★★★★
-Rolling Stone

"The mix of Afro-Cuban and hip hop beats seems, at first, a patently obvious thing to try. But even if it's been done before, the end product hasn't approached the perfect integration found in the debut album by Cuban rap quartet Orishas"
-Billboard

"Now someone has finally taken Latin hip-hop to another level... Orishas has created a highly original musical stew by combining equal measures of rap and Afro-Cuban idioms."
-Los Angeles Times

"Our nations may remain divided, but this album packs enough promise to unite the youth of each under the banner of hip hop."
-Vibe Magazine

"Grounded in the rhythms that arrived in Cuba ages ago with African slaves, 'A lo Cubano' is the organic link between the disparate worlds of rap and rumba."
-Miami Herald

"...these Cuban expats, [have] made the hip-hop en español record the post-Kid Frost world has been waiting for."
-Spin Magazine

MADISON BLUES

Much in the same way Joe C. is mentioned at the time of his passing, your mention of O'Gayz Corral [Localzine: Madison, Wisconsin, February 2001] is also humorous... in a sad way. That is to say O'Gayz has since been torn down. A fire in the neighboring bar damaged the building beyond repair. Those of us who experienced live music there will miss her dearly.

David Tillotson

wrecks_manning@hotmail.com

Whoever said it's better to burn out than to fade away never saw a favorite club go up in flames. Or the Styx/REO Speedwagon pay-per-view. The razing of O'Gayz is definitely sad. Perhaps it's time we admitted we have some sort of curse, like Sports Illustrated: Supposedly when an athlete appears on the cover of that magazine, they go into a slump, but some of CMJ's articles seem to be causing people to die and clubs to burn up and shit. So for those of you who complain about our coverage of overexposed artists, just stop and think that maybe we have ulterior motives. (Not that we want Art from Everclear dead... just, like, maybe make his nuts hurt.) —ed.

UNSKINNEE BOP

The Love You Live story [February, 2001] was an excellent tribute to the often unforgotten aspect of music: The live performance. Thumbing through the pages and seeing names such as Black Eyed Peas, Dead Prez and Marilyn Manson made me giddy with excitement that I would turn the page and see a picture of one of the greatest live acts around. And then the story ended. The 2 Skinnee J's deserved to be a part of your story. I refer to their shows as "entertainment extravaganzas," featuring thrifty costumes, rehearsed choreography, improvisation and crowd participation, not to mention mind-bending beats and lyrics that always get the party bumpin'. Their show is so polished it rivals that of KISS and Blue Man Group. Check out Volumizer due out this spring or any of their upcoming tour dates. Give this funky, hip-hop-oriented party band more attention.

John Rathouz

Crowd participation? Anyone else frightened by that? Just let me drink and watch your dumb band. —ed.

A WOMAN OF A CERTAIN AGE

Scott Frampton's aside in the "Letters" section of the February issue prompted me to write. He mentioned [that *CMJ New Music Monthly* appeals to] "startlingly different demographics." I'll take "startlingly different" as a real

compliment. Thank you! Just wanted you to know that there are folks of a certain age in Canada who appreciate all the crankiness, diversity and insight of your coverage. I enjoy confounding the good folks at my local bookstore when I pick up my copy; the November '00 issue with Marilyn Manson on the cover really threw them for a loop. Assume nothing about your audience; just keep giving us your honest version of the truth and we'll sort the rest out for ourselves. Given all of the other stuff we could spend our money on, risking \$20 (this is Canada after all) on a CD is always worth it, and recommendations from *CMJ* are increasingly the basis of my decisions. Thanks for keeping the horizons open and entertaining.

Sandra Kochan in the British Columbia boonies

Thanks, Sandra, this is the most touching letter—not sent by a prisoner—in quite some time. And you're not even using broken pieces of the CD to shank somebody in the laundry room. —ed.

I LOVE A LOVE PARADE

I just wanted to say that I recently read the article on the Love Parade in the November 2000 issue and absolutely loved it. I'm planning on going next year and can't wait. Also, I think the writer of this article does a great job of describing the atmosphere there. I've been to quite a few techno festivals in Europe and can definitely identify with what the writer is saying.

Vanessa Rogers

Vvaletta@aol.com

We're glad that someone could identify with what the writer, B. Werde, was saying. Since we've not been raving since '95, much of his baggy-panted wisdom was lost on us. —ed.

TRY THINKING OF FAMOUS BASEBALL PLAYERS

OK, I've held off as long as I've could, but now that I'm drunk enough I have to rant. Please, please for the love of God STOP!! Stop the dumb-ass "humor" pieces!! They are SO inane, immature and stupid!! It's bad enough you have f-ing fashion spreads, do you have to waste space with idiotic pieces that are not funny? I've come to terms with all the other changes to your mag but I cannot abide by your L-A-M-E attempts at "humor"!!

Michael Carey

Dear Michael, you've stumbled onto a dirty little secret about our business: Music journalists are

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more than just frustrated musicians, we're frustrated comedy writers and clotheshorses as well (harder to excuse is our own Neil Gladstone, who just plain dresses funny—we love him, but hey, the gas station shirt thing is so 1999). Regardless, we've taken your criticism to heart and have decided to cancel two pieces scheduled for an upcoming issue. The first, "Gallagher vs. Gallagher," was to compare/contrast everyone's favorite melon-mashing comedian and that wacky and loveable Oasis frontman Noel Gallagher—to hilarious effect! Again! I tell ya, that's a joke we just don't get tired of! The other piece was a swimsuit shoot in Ibiza with J Mascis and the guy from Smashmouth, which frankly, we were thinking of canceling anyway. Thanks, we'll be here all month. —ed.

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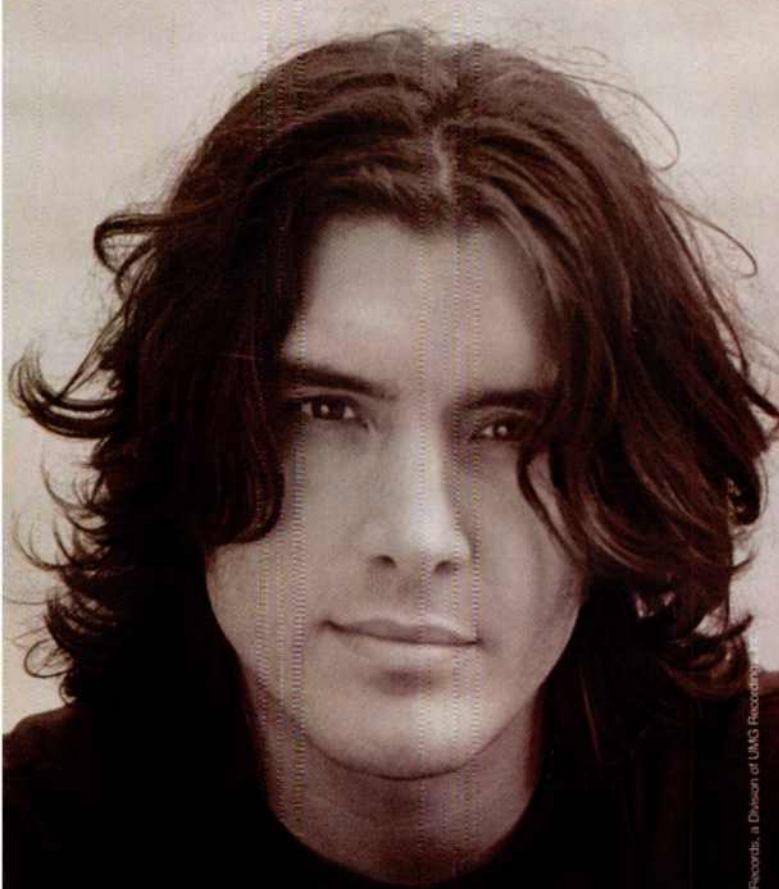


bob schneider

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metal and steel*

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* "Metal and Steel" appears on March sampler track 13

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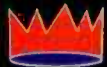
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hotel california

Such a lovely place? Ask Creeper Lagoon's Sharky Laguana, who found out why they call it the graveyard shift.

STORY · TOM LANHAM PHOTO · ANGIE WYANT

When Sharky Laguana left his relatively tame hometown of Cincinnati for the bright lights of San Francisco a decade ago, it seemed like a smart move. Big mistake. The chick he'd followed quickly ditched him and he was in financial straits so dire he took the first job that came along: working the graveyard shift at a seedy residential hotel he soon dubbed "Creeper Lagoon."

"I would've rather starved to death out here than have ever gone back to Ohio," says Laguana, who later named his band Creeper Lagoon. At 30, he sort of resembles a leaner, hungrier John Doe. But a decade ago he was even leaner and hungrier, subsisting on a diet of burritos, Top Ramen and Orowheat bread, and dealing with creeper after nocturnal creeper as a clerk at the Civic Center Inn.

The experience, he swears, could fill a police detective's casebook. Luckily, iron bars protected Laguana from the public. Gunfights, murders, suicides—he saw 'em all. "There was one guy I gave CPR to, who'd been drinking vodka while doing cocaine and heroin—the guy was purple, dark purple," recalls Laguana, over lunch in a comfy San Francisco cafe. And don't forget that night the three bikers dropped in,

whacked out on crystal meth.

"Then the next morning one of 'em comes downstairs, holding his neck while blood is squirting out from between his fingers. He comes up to me and says, 'You! You are Satan!' and then starts doing goose steps in circles in the lobby, wearing nothing but leather chaps and a vest, with arterial spray all over the room. Once again, I dialed 911 and told 'em we had a live one, come on down and pick him up."

Laguana remained on the dreaded night shift for five long years. Thankfully, he

Harrison and Mercury Rev/Flaming Lips cohort Dave Fridmann. In the old days, he couldn't afford a sampler, so he made actual tape loops using magnetic reel-to-reel tapes and splicing them, then taping them together to record onto his 4-track.

That was back when Creeper Lagoon was a duo; Laguana had reunited with old Ohio buddy Ian Seftchick, who had not only relocated to the Bay Area, but was toying with similar sonic ideas. The band later expanded to include current drummer David Kostiner and bassist Dan Carr.

Still, amid all the major-label hoopla, Laguana is haunted by his trial-by-desk-clerk-fire. "The whole thing was a downer—really depressing," he scowls. "I seriously thought I was going absolutely nowhere. The fact

that we've even made it this far never ceases to awe me."

How did Creeper Lagoon's music turn out so jangly and upbeat? Laguana's logic is every bit as twisted as his hotel guests: "Because we're kind of optimists at heart. We try and be bitter and cynical and negative—we complain a lot and we bitch and whine and moan. But I think at the end of the day, we're really secretly optimists. And we truly believe that everything's gonna turn out alright, even if we know better." **NMM**

"The fact that we've even made it this far never ceases to awe me."

isn't subjected to such scenarios anymore: The other Creeper Lagoon has just released a third record, *Take Back The Universe (And Give Me Yesterday)* (DreamWorks). *Universe's* chiming Badfinger-cheery anthems and the elegiac, seven-minute stunner "Keep From Moving" are rooted in that hotel, in early Portastudio experiments Laguana conducted during off hours, upstairs in his tiny room.

"I only had a 4-track and a guitar," he notes, proud that DreamWorks' *Universe* budget enabled him to work with notable producers such as the Talking Heads' Jerry

songs of love and liposuction



Matmos grooves on surgery and toilet seats.

Wondering about that weird slurping noise that opens Matmos's *A Chance To Cut Is A Chance To Cure* (Matador)? The one that sounds like a field recording of liposuction? Actually, that's what it is. Half the fun of the experimental electronic duo's spattery, stuttering beats is figuring out what they were before editing and processing. In the past, Drew Daniel and M.C. Schmidt have built funky grooves out of everything from a latex T-shirt to crayfish neural tissue; the new album is mostly recordings of medical technology—acupuncture, rhinoplasty, laser eye surgery and so on—mutated into prickly rhythms, tones and loops.

Their fleshy machine music brought Matmos to the attention of Björk, who invited them to contribute to her forthcoming album and to "run the beats-and-freaky-noises department" on her imminent world tour, flying them out to a fancy London studio.

At the moment, Schmidt and Daniel are extending their

"everything's-an-instrument" policy to a project with New York string ensemble the Kronos Quartet. "We brought them things to bow," says Schmidt. "We brought them a toilet seat, the cage from a deep fryer, a hubcap, a butter-chopper and a metal record rack."

"They were amazing with the toilet seat," Daniel chimes in.

As for the next Matmos album, Schmidt says, "My intent is to purchase a mini baby-grand piano and play it and sample it. Then we'll take a saw to it and take pieces off of it, until we're all the way down to the harp, sampling and playing it at all the stages in between. And then we'll bring in a harpist."

"Because of space," Daniel notes, "we'll have to get rid of either our breakfast table or our bed."

"I vote for sleeping under the piano."

"I think sleeping under it sounds really romantic, but I can see having to get up in the middle of the night and slamming your head on it." >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



WEIRD RECORD DJ Smallcock's Teenie Weenie Adventure

Join us, if you will, for a story about the search for true love. It begins with our protagonist, Australian producer Lucas Abela

(known to an intimate few as DJ Smallcock) stalking his beautiful love interest VIVI from a Brisbane Internet café to Beijing on the verge of Y2K. During the excursion, the 28-

year-old (who admits to living in a van—down by the river, most likely) wanders the city in search of VIVI, recording nine hours of Beijing radio with his handheld cassette recorder. And after the New Year breaks, he whittles the cacophonous mess down—in one sitting, using nothing but the pause button—to more than 55 minutes of dreamy sonic epilepsy. The resulting record, *Yinyue* (Dual Plover), is a barrage of what you might expect: wildly distorted Chinese ramblings,



brief encounters with actual songs, blips, jerks of static and ephemeral respites of silence packed into 16 nameless tracks that each clock in at 3:33 (sans the final track, which mysteriously calls it quits at 3:28). Smallcock has Self's Matt Mahaffey—who used nothing but toy instruments to make *Gizmodgery* (Spongebath)—beat in eccentricity, but Mahaffey's still got him licked in the listenability department. Then again, the good DJ has VIVI. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

check your head

Who's the next Radiohead?

For all its inherent ambiguity, Radiohead's *Kid A* is clear about one thing: Radiohead doesn't want to be Radiohead anymore. Here are five bands whose recorded résumés render them perfectly suited to take the job, ranked according to several important standards of Radioheadosity. >>>STUART BERMAN



	Radiohead song the band's music most resembles	Art-school dropouts?	Aching falsetto meter rating (1-10)	Are they paranoid androids?	Do they hate the media?
 TRAVIS	Looking for more of the lilting lullaby loveliness of "High And Dry"? Track down this Scottish quartet's <i>The Man Who</i> (Sony).	Yes. Singer Fran Healy, bassist Dougie Payne and guitarist Andy Dunlop all bailed on the Glasgow School Of Art.	7. Singer Fran Healy does a perfectly serviceable Yorkey, but only really lets 'er rip on "As You Are."	Possibly. Not overt Luddites, but the title of the U.K. hit "Writing To Reach You" hints at repressed anti-e-mail bias.	Feelings were hurt initially when hipster journos slagged them, but selling 2 million albums in the U.K. has cheered them up.
 COLDPLAY	If you loved the swaying waltziness of "(Nice Dream)," you'll want to take the plunge on this Brit-rock quartet's <i>Parachutes</i> (Nettwerk).	No. All members met at and—with the exception of bassist Guy Berryman—graduated from London's University College.	8.5. Chris Martin obviously attends the same weekly Jeff Buckley séance as Thom Yorke.	Definitely. "I wanna live in a wooden house," Martin sings in "We Never Change." Potential blood relation to Ted Kaczynski under investigation.	Starting to. Martin is growing increasingly miffed at critics mentioning his Christian upbringing—though that didn't hurt Creed.
 JJ72	Picture the epic surge of "Fake Plastic Trees" crossed with the cynicism of "Optimistic" to envision this Irish trio's self-titled full-length (import only on Lakota).	Yes. Singer Mark Greaney studied history of art and philosophy at a Dublin college for two whole weeks.	9.5. Greaney makes Geddy Lee sound like Barry White.	Yes. To quote their song "Algeria," "I need some hibernation/ Hide me from the evil/ Protect me from the vultures." Are there vultures in Ireland?	Becoming more wary of critical emphasis on professed Joy Division influence and on bass-babe Hilary's, er, "mounds" of joy.
 SIGUR RÓS	This Icelandic quartet's <i>Ágætis Byrjun</i> (import only on Fatcat) combines the spacey "Bulletproof" with the ominous "Climbing Up The Walls."	No. In fact, former drummer Ágúst dropped the band to pursue a graphic-design career.	11. <i>Ágætis Byrjun</i> is essentially a single 71-minute "ooooooooohhh."	Undetermined, though title of "Vidrar Vel Til Loftarasa" translates roughly into "Fuck Bill Gates."	Despite orgasmic reviews, they've done few interviews. Perhaps they're misanthropes, or maybe music journalists can't afford to fly to Reykjavik.
 MUSE	There's no mistaking that this English trio's <i>Unintended</i> (Maverick) recalls the spastic, distorto-grunge explosions of "My Iron Lung" and "Paranoid Android."	No. Signed to Maverick Records while most people their age were attending first-year lectures on Formalism.	6. Frontman Matt Bellamy is too much of a Nirvana fan to work up a prolonged wussy wail.	Yup. 1999's <i>Showbiz</i> 's opening verse, "Come waste your millions here... Another corporate show/ A guilty conscience grows."	Only when journalists ask them, "So, you fancy yourselves the next Radiohead?"

?&A: RED HOUSE ROMEO

Red House Painters' Mark Kozelek
on hangnails, girls and the Gap

These days you may best know the Red House Painters from their cover of the Cars' "All Mixed Up" that saunters through a Gap commercial. It may be hard to believe that a quartet known for its eerie gloom and stark beauty is now peddling scarves, but keep in mind that the band's legal wrangling with Island Records shelved their last album, *Old Ramon*, for three years (it's about to be released by Sub Pop). You may also know the Red House Painters' enigmatic frontman, Mark Kozelek, from his appearance as Stillwater bassist Larry in *Almost Famous*. But the man who has a rep both as a curmudgeon and a bit of a backstage Romeo gave us a different performance. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN

Do you shop at the Gap?

Yeah, I've bought some things at the Gap. I've bought T-shirts and socks and boxer shorts.

What about the scarves your song advertised?

You mean how do I feel about it from a moralistic point of view? That's the whole thing: I did get some money from it. [Songwriter Ric Ocasek and the publish-

ing company took home the bigger paycheck, Kozelek says.] When you're in your early 20s, you can say you'll never do something like that. But I'm almost 34 years old and... I'm in a different position. I've got lawyers' bills, a lot of IRS bills, accountant bills. When you get an opportunity like that which requires no work at all, it's just like: "There you go. Use the song in a commercial."

How did you like acting in *Almost Famous*?

It was six months of my life where I had nothing to worry about. If I had a hangnail, there'd be five people that'd run over and take care of it for me. After what I had been through—I was at war with Island Records—it was kind of nice to be treated with respect.

In *Almost Famous* and in general, guys get into rock to meet girls. What about you?

When I first started singing in a band I was 18 and we played in the basement of this place. I remember there was this girl next door that I had a crush on and she'd always lay outside in her bikini, and she was married. She never really talked to me. One day [we were] playing and then somebody came to pick me up and I was going out the front and she said, "Hey, who's that singing?" And I said, "Me." And



she said, "That sounds really nice." That felt nice... Sure, I've met girls from playing, and I've had some really nice girlfriends, and I've got some nice ex-girlfriends that are still my friends... We're all adults here. If you're in a band and meet girls through that, there's a certain stigma that follows you around that doesn't with a guy who happens to be a good looking guy who might not be the most interesting. If the really good-looking guy takes advantage of girls, that's OK. But if you're doing it because you're a guy that plays in a band and a girl relates to you because of that, then it's like, really bad.



MOFFAT, LEFT

Listen to Arab Strap and you may think Scottish singer/songwriter Aidan Moffat devotes his time exclusively to wine, women and song. The band's brand of pop—extended lamentations on the sad state of Moffat's affairs, romantic and otherwise—is sparse and nearly dirge-like. Even though the melodies on last year's *Elephant Shoe* (Jetset) and the new *The Red Thread* (Matador) are somewhat sprightlier, Arab Strap still makes music to complement those sinister post-weekend hangovers. Here, Moffat tells what gets him through those hazy Mondays. >>>JON CARAMANICA

IN MY ROOM: Surviving hangovers with Arab Strap's Aidan Moffat

A Mogwai's Jedi

"On top of the telly, next to my new lamp, there's a talking Japanese Yoda toy that Martin from Mogwai gave me because he knows I'm a *Star Wars* geek. He gave me it after his last night out before he moved to London. It was quite touching."

Quality programming

"In the [VCR] is a *Simpsons* tape. My brother tapes them off Sky TV for me because I've still only got four channels. He gives me them every few weeks and I watch them in marathon sessions, usually on Monday nights to help me relax. I've never seen a bad one yet."

State-of-the-art electronics

"On the floor, plugged into the telly, is a Sportel Paddle game from the '70s. A mate called Jonnie gave it to me when I was 'round his house one night, and I thought he would've asked for it back by now but he says I can keep it. Twenty-five years of technology later and *Pong*'s still better than most computer games."

Centerfolds

"Next to the bed, in case I get bored with the TV, there's a pile of books and comics. The best book is a book of pictures of Kylie Minogue. No words, just pictures. Perfect for Monday."



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MIGHT WE SUGGEST... shooting stars

We're not saying that Puffy and Eminem "allegedly" waving guns around is cool (though the thought of Elvis shooting at a TV image of Robert Goulet is pretty badass), but more and more, a pistol is a part of today's hectic rockstar lifestyle. Finding that perfect piece can be tough for the style-conscious artist, so we asked Roger Eckstine—contributing editor for *Gun Tests* magazine (www.gun-tests.com) and the leader of the blues/jazz outfit the Bourbon Street Beasts—for his firearm suggestions. >>>PAUL SEMEL

Who: Tommy Lee

Why a gun is needed: Well, Pam has big guns...

Type Recommended: Grizzly 50 Big Boar rifle

Reason: "Only a long gun with a barrel so heavy it requires a bipod to prop it up will do him justice."

Who: Fiona Apple

Why a gun is needed: People are more likely to take your anger seriously if you're waving a gun around.

Type Recommended: 38 Super Open Class race gun by Carter Custom, complete with compensator and red dot scope

Reason: "With 'Criminal' still her biggest hit, this gun will keep her a 'bad, bad, girl.'"



OUR GUN EXPERT

Who: Prince

Why a gun is needed: To ward off angry ex-girlfriends and their husbands.

Type Recommended: Smith & Wesson 3913LS 9mm pistol with LadySmith grip

Reason: "It can be fitted with a silencer that will reduce muzzle blast to squeaks, chirps and other whiney noises comparable to faux orgasms."



Who: A.J. McLean of the Backstreet Boys

Why a gun is needed: Back streets are dangerous.

Type Recommended: Red Rider BB gun

Reason: "Legal for minors; good for piercing ears."

Who: Axl Rose

Why a gun is needed: To ward off paparazzi and ex-Guns N' Roses bandmates.

Type Recommended: Steyr Scout rifle

Reason: "Its short barrel won't snag on scarves or bandannas; its long-range capability will grab the much-needed attention of the publicity machine."

Who: Phish

Why a gun is needed: Twelve years of constant comparisons to the Grateful Dead will piss off even the most laid-back hippie.

Type Recommended: Hi-Point Model 380COMP handgun

Reason: "Cheap guns like the Hi-Point .380 are so notorious for malfunction they are often referred to as 'Jam-a-matics.'"

Who: Kathie Lee Gifford

Why a gun is needed: With her singing career not going so well...

Type Recommended: Beretta S686 Silver Pigeon Skeet

Reason: "Good for shooting clay pigeons, or in her case, numerous leftover copies of her *Heart Of A Woman* CD."



IN MY ROOM: KRS-ONE on the Q.T. in the W.C.



Ask rapper/prophet KRS-ONE about his favorite book, and he offers a synopsis of 10 to 15

texts he's been studying. Ask him why he vanished from the hip-hop scene, and he dissertates upon how capitalism destroyed rap. "The artists have become so desperate as people, [they've] become record merchants," he explains. So it's no surprise that the new *The Sneak Attack* (on KRS's Front Page imprint, now distributed by Koch) delivers lengthy messages about religion, academia and his campaign to decriminalize hip-hop. "KRS-ONE is gonna be on a mission to show the American mainstream that there is another kind of hip-hop. I'm gonna position myself as a catalyst for peace, light and knowledge." Here, he describes his favorite room—the bathroom. >>>ANDREW SIMON

The Can

As far back as I can remember, I've always chosen the bathroom as my place of solitude. That's the time when I'm at peace, the time when I'm tending to myself and feel the most secure. And everyone in my whole family knows not to disturb me. I barricade myself there.

Lyric Central

The bathroom is the rhyme-writing center. I put the toilet seat down, sit on the lid, hunch myself over the sink and write. "Step Into A World" was written in the bathroom. [So was] "MCs Act Like They Don't Know." *I Got Next* as an album was written in the bathroom. It's a habit that I'm trying to quit... but my highest level of creativity is [in there]. Everything just flows outta me. [Laughs]

Chat room

My wife and I have had some really long conversations in the bathroom. Our longest conversation was six hours in a bathroom in L.A.

Reading material

Nelson George's *Hip-Hop America* is the greatest book of all time, in terms of explaining hip-hop culturally and sociologically. *Critiques Of God: Making The Case Against Belief In God*, [edited] by Peter A. Angeles—he's really putting together some pointy atheist arguments. In the business of God, you have to be able to convince the atheist. If you can't convince the atheist, you can't convince the believer.

Ballydowse



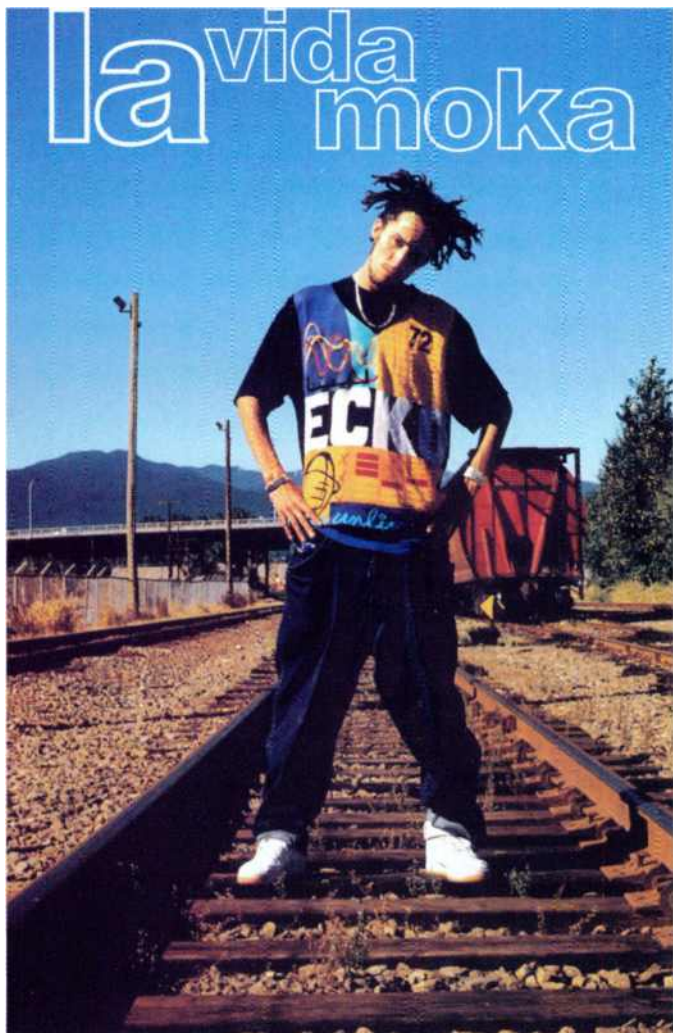
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Moka Only eats, sleeps and rhymes—and then he rhymes again.

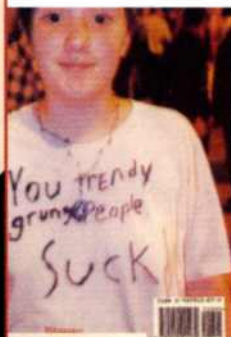
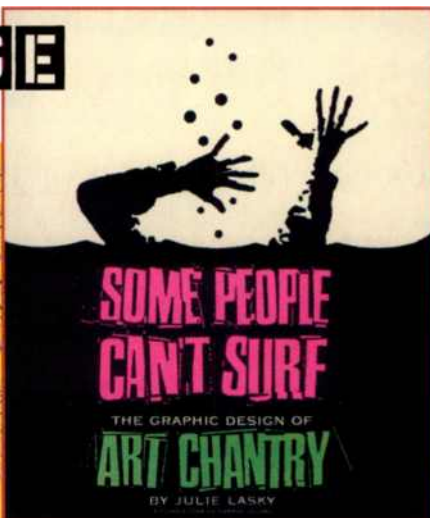
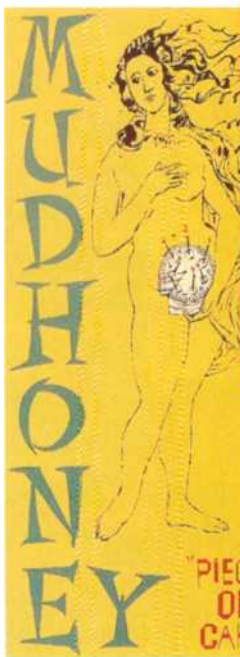
What can you do in a couple of hours: Wash your car? Bake some cookies? Moka Only, the smooth-drawlin' Vancouver native who declares himself the "West Coast's most prolific" MC can write and produce a "bangin'-ass" song—from scratch. His latest collection, *Road Life* (Perilunar), was recorded like many of his previous releases: in his living-room studio at a remarkable rate of a song every one to three hours. While few of his projects have had major distribution, Moka keeps churning out material and doesn't much worry about circulation: "I get letters from, like, Denmark," he says. "Somehow these kids have it... I think the Internet has something to do with it."

Haven't heard of Moka? The 27-year-old began dropping pearls into the murky pool of independent hip-hop in 1994. What's more, he debuted nationally with momentary pop sensation Len, appearing on their 1999 album, *You Can't Stop The Bumrush*. Moka, who simultaneously compares his range to that of Prince and confesses to the audacity of that comparison, claims the crossover coup wasn't so out of character. "I'm getting more and more of an appreciation for what goes into making pop music," he says. "There's actually an art to it."

Moka scored a deal with Universal through Len frontman Marc Costanzo and is now working on his first major-label release for next year. "It's a straight pop-slash-conga-slash-bebop-slash-tap dance album," he laughs. Understandably, this project will be a lot more "club-friendly" than the 25 tracks of laid-back synth funk and clever introspection that make up *Road Life*. The best part about the Universal deal is that Moka still gets to release projects whenever and wherever else he pleases, like *Road Life* and this spring's *Lime Green* (Battle Axe). "I can't be with a major label and only release one album once every two or three years," Moka says. "That shit's ridiculous." >>>NEIL DRUMMING

gorgeous GRUNGE

If you figure grunge blended punk rock's core elements into a palatable entrée for the pop masses, then Art Chantry's graphic design took the core elements of punk-rock flyers—photocopies and paste—and nearly elevated them to the level of pop art. Inspired by thrift-store snapshots, busy department-store catalog spreads, scribbled lettering and automotive product ads, Chantry's flyers and album covers were both overzealous and sarcastic—an appropriate visual complement to the gritty, grandiose sounds that made his hometown Seattle "Gen-X ground zero" in the late '80s and '90s. The new collection, *Some People Can't Surf* (Chronicle) follows the designer's work from early copy-shop experiments to covers for *The Rocket* (the newspaper that chronicled the Seattle scene's rise) to ad spreads for BahamasAir (rock can't always pay the bills). >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



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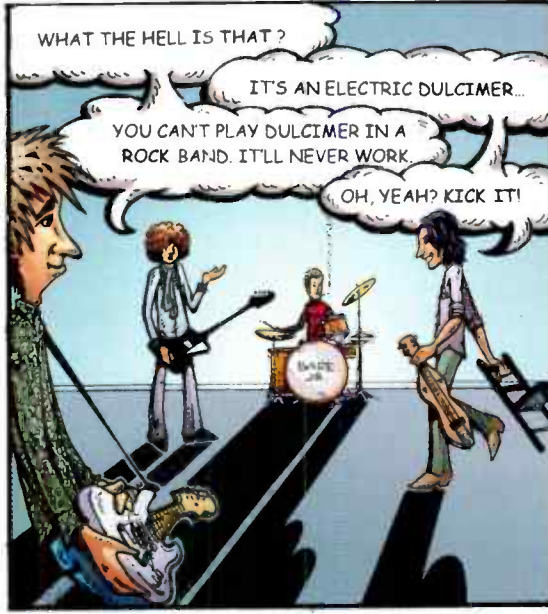
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The Sample Life: The Troublemakers' Top Five Sampladelic Soundtracks

The conga drums, percolating bass and cheeky B-movie samples that bubble through the

it seems that they made more of an effort for the music and worked hard on the feel of the soundtrack. Now, most soundtracks are like movie marketing tools; they don't serve any purpose in the movie."

Troublemakers' debut, *Doubts & Convictions* (Guidance), conjure up a cinematic world of double agents and full-bodied women sporting little silver guns. The French group formed three years ago when Fred Berthet—a veteran of the Parisian club circuit—found himself teaching a class on sample-based music and soon paired with two students, Arnaud Taillefer and Lionel Corsini, crafting tunes anchored with the thick funk hooks and jazzy rhythm sections favored in '70s film soundtracks. Here, Corsini lists five sample-worthy soundtracks. >>>RICHARD THOMAS



Trouble Man, Marvin Gaye (Motown), 1972

If another French techno outfit hadn't beaten them to the punch, Troublemakers would have paid homage to this "perfectly constructed soundtrack" by naming themselves Trouble Men. The funky rhythms and Motown sensibilities found throughout Marvin Gaye's streetwise score still serves as a blueprint for all of Troublemakers' uptempo jams.



Black Caesar, James Brown (Polygram), 1973

High-speed chases, long, blue Caddies and James Brown's "try hard, die hard" lyrics inspired the arrangements of the Troublemakers' "Chez Roger Boité Funk" and "Groover Is Back." "The movie isn't very good," admits Corsini, "but in the '70s,



Enter The Dragon, Lalo Schiffrin (Warner Bros.), 1973

"Funky yet mellow," *Enter The Dragon* may not be a blaxploitation flick, but according to Corsini, it holds its own with the best of them. "The feel of the soundtrack is very near to the action in the movie," he explains, citing its influence in Troublemakers tracks like "Fatigue Universelle."



Vertigo, Bernard Herrmann (Varese), 1958

"We don't have a preference of what we like to sample," informs Corsini, but as far as film scores go, Herrmann—whose credits include *Citizen Kane*, *Taxi Driver* and *Psycho*—can do no wrong. "Vertigo is a classic," he says, and the Troublemakers' flamboyant use of strings in "Awake" is pure Hitchcock.



The Thomas Crown Affair, Michel Legrand (Rykodisc), 1967

How could you leave out this composer's searing sensuality? The sex-kitten samples on "Hum Hum," one of the more shagadelic cuts on *Doubts & Convictions*, are heavily influenced by this classic '60s film. The sweeping string arrangements on the track "Get Misunderstood" are very similar to Legrand's as well.

kings of delays: A YEAR IN PURGATORY WITH RUN-DMC'S CROWN ROYAL

For the past year, Run-DMC's anticipated comeback album, *Crown Royal*, has been one of pop music's most mysterious no-shows, enduring a series of delays that have kept it off the shelves more than a year past its original street date. What's been holding it up? Take a look inside the album's surprisingly eventful year in limbo. >>>NATHAN RABIN

2008

JANUARY

Arista announces the upcoming release of Run-DMC's first album in seven years, featuring collaborations with Kid Rock, Method Man and Nas. Many magazines are suckered into covering the project.

MARCH

Crown Royal is officially delayed as Arista negotiates with collaborators' labels over singles rights and Run negotiates with "Ay Papi" collaborator Fat Joe over sandwich rights.

MAY

With no *Crown Royal* release to help sales, magazines languish on the stands; magazine editors bitterly curse the heavens.

JULY

Mid-summer release date is pushed back when it's discovered that the Third Eye Blind collaboration makes no sense whatsoever. Later, it's decided that it doesn't matter.



FEBRUARY

Realizing that his contribution to *Crown Royal* consists solely of coughing nervously in the background during Everlast's guitar strumming, Darryl "DMC" McDaniels returns to the studio to hum softly during several songs.

APRIL

Sir Bob Geldof announces the formation of the charity supergroup Artists For The Release Of *Crown Royal*; the group's maiden project, "If You Love Something, Set It Free (Song For Run-DMC)" features a reunited Bell Biv DeVoe.

JUNE

U2 frontman Bono declares that he "will not play South African entertainment mecca Sun City until apartheid ends and Run-DMC's *Crown Royal* is released." Upon being informed that apartheid ended in the early '90s, Bono complains that Sun City has lousy acoustics.

AUGUST

Former president Jimmy Carter flies to New York in hopes of meeting with Arista executives: "I'm pretty sure if I can sort this thing out, I'll finally snag that damn Nobel Prize and maybe a little booty for my troubles," he is overheard mumbling.

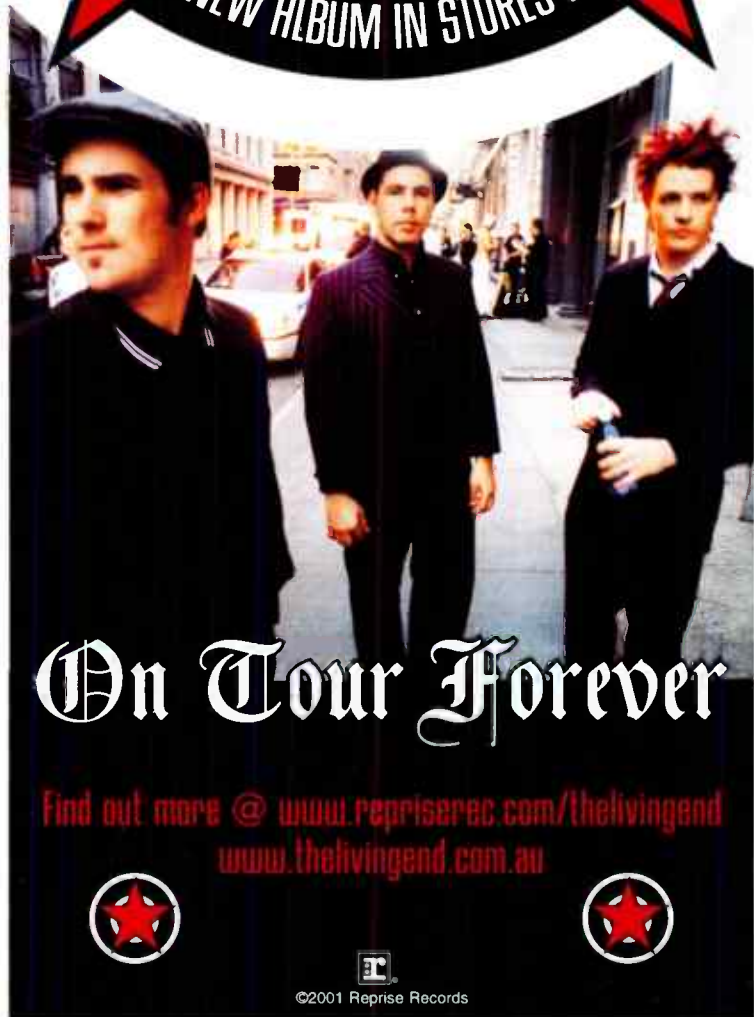
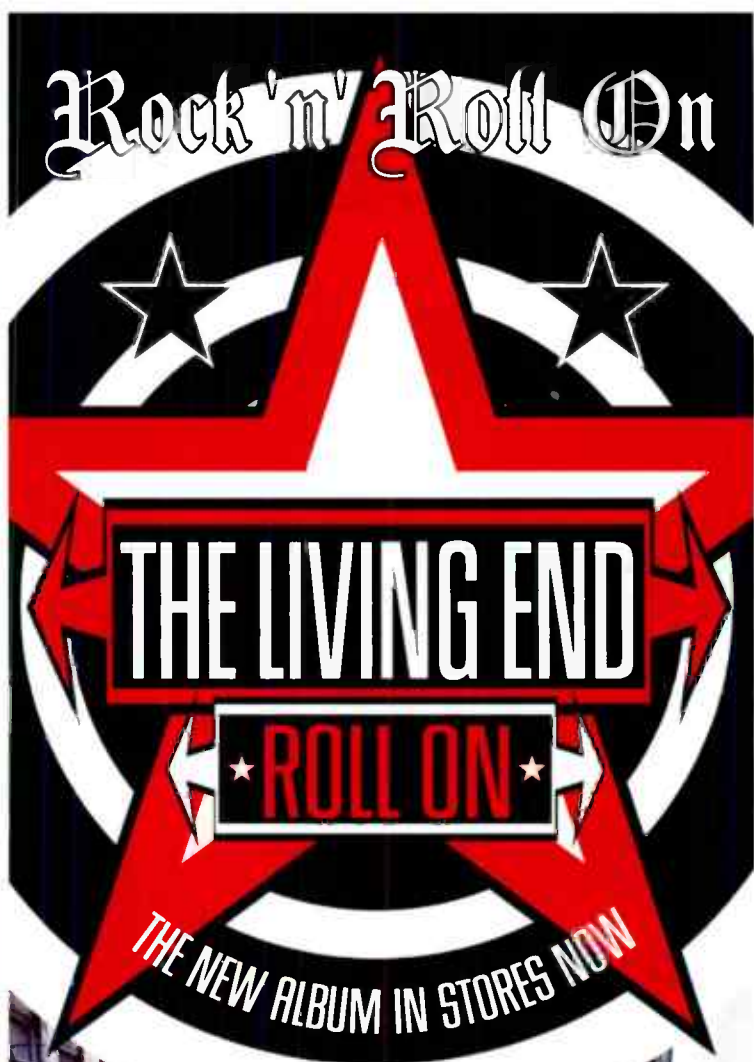




ELECTROMEDIA

Upgrading your photographic memory.

Fifteen years ago, Heather Champ took a photograph of herself in a mirror. She thought it looked kind of cool, so she took a few more. Eventually, there were so many that she started a web-site, **Jezebel's Mirror** (www.jezebel.com/mirror), to hold them all—there are now about 500 of them, featuring her image in all sorts of reflective surfaces, sorted by date, her hair color and what else they contain (friends, pets, you name it). It's proven so popular, in fact, that it's spawned Friends of Jezebel's Mirror (www.jezebel.com/fojm)—reflected self-portraits by several hundred visitors to her site, their expressions somewhere between the self-consciousness of the photograph subject and the different self-consciousness of the mirror gazer. The Web is full of idiosyncratic little photo projects like Champ's. Some are more or less informative: The hacker zine **2600's** site hosts **Payphones Of The World** (www.2600.com/phones), a gallery of what coin-op telephones look like from Ecuador to Uganda. Others are considerably sillier, like **CliffyB's Cat-Scan** (www.cat-scan.com), which features a new image of a feline on a scanner every day. (Lots of paws. A few too many cat butts.) And some are all the way into no-comprende territory, like **Hats Of Meat** (www.hatsofmeat.com), whose motto explains it all: "remembering the past, cherishing the present, and celebrating the future of meat hats." One of the sweetest, though, is **Through The Eyes Of A Child** (www.eyesofachild.com)—the work of 12 children, aged five to 16, under the guidance of professional photographers, documenting the world as they see it. The next generation of artists starts right here.



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Did we mention that Run's gotten rather large? Like, dlrigible.

SEPTEMBER



Aerosmith parachutes onto the roof of Arista headquarters, hoping to free the *Crown Royal* master tapes; the mission is aborted when Steven Tyler catches his floor-length silk scarf under CEO L.A. Reid's ottoman and winds up with a blistering rugburn.

NOVEMBER



OCTOBER

President Carter invites Arista executives and Run-DMC to Camp David in search of a resolution. Jam Master Jay storms away from the bargaining table when he receives his mini-bar tab: "\$8.95 for macadamia nuts? That's extortion!"

DECEMBER

Declaring that the "long national nightmare is over," Arista announces that *Crown Royal* will finally be receiving an official release. Run is reported hungry.



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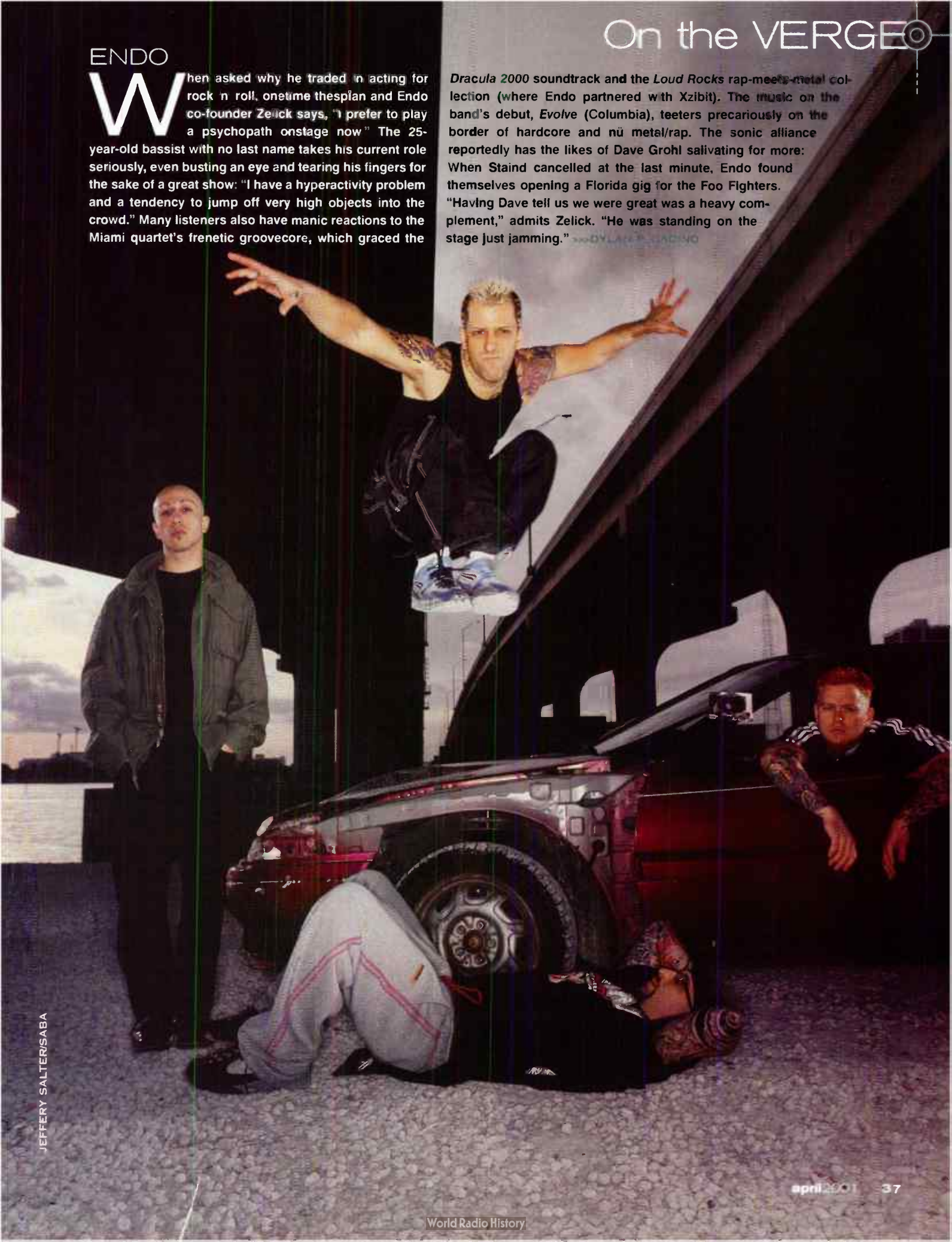
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ENDO

When asked why he traded in acting for rock 'n roll, onetime thespian and Endo co-founder Zelick says, "I prefer to play a psychopath onstage now." The 25-year-old bassist with no last name takes his current role seriously, even busting an eye and tearing his fingers for the sake of a great show: "I have a hyperactivity problem and a tendency to jump off very high objects into the crowd." Many listeners also have manic reactions to the Miami quartet's frenetic groovecore, which graced the

Dracula 2000 soundtrack and the *Loud Rocks* rap-meets-metal collection (where Endo partnered with Xzibit). The music on the band's debut, *Evolve* (Columbia), teeters precariously on the border of hardcore and nu metal/rap. The sonic alliance reportedly has the likes of Dave Grohl salivating for more: When Staind cancelled at the last minute, Endo found themselves opening a Florida gig for the Foo Fighters. "Having Dave tell us we were great was a heavy complement," admits Zelick. "He was standing on the stage just jamming." BY LAUREN LADINO



JEFFERY SALTERS/ABSA



JASON TANAKA BLANEY

AM/FM

Talk to Brian Sokel of Philadelphia's AM/FM about the unabashed, studio-based guitar pop on their debut long-player, *Mutilate Us*, and gardening terms crop up: "The songs grow on their own," explains the singer/guitarist. Flowery metaphors might seem curious to anyone familiar with the dub Clash mishmash of Franklin, the hard-touring rock band Sokel called home for eight years. But when the band split, Sokel—with help from new bandmates Mike Parsell and Terence Yerves—decided to fully cultivate his pop muse. Although the sweet,

harmonic *Mutilate Us* is coming out on noted emo label Polyvinyl (which will also reissue the band's earlier EP, *Audict*, later this year), AM/FM's sound is a far cry from the label's post-hardcore crew, skewing closer to the contemplative work of Red House Painters and the shimmering pop of the Beach Boys. "I just want to write music that's, like, pretty," explains Sokel. "Recently I saw the Flaming Lips play in Philly. I was amazed by the fact that the lyrics are cheesy as hell, but it's beautiful. You can call it whatever you want, but it's music for the sake of music." >>>BRIAN HOWARD

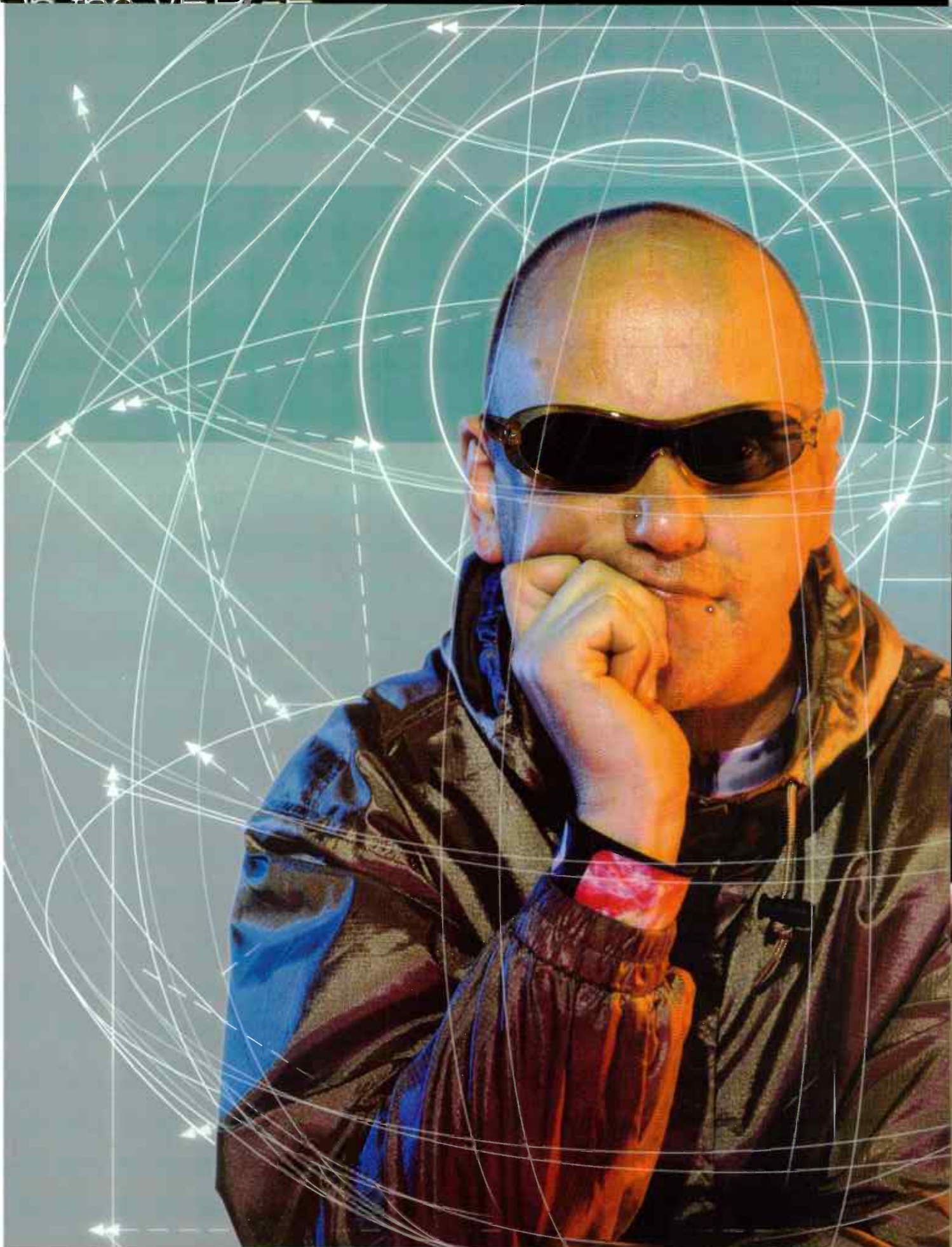


LISA SHAW

Singer Lisa Shaw has come a long way since she moved to Harlem in the late '80s to make tracks with her cousin, a former drummer for Lisa Lisa And Cult Jam. "Back then it was a lot rougher—a couple of times I'd wake up and a car would be engulfed in flames in front of my window!" That cousin, however, introduced the innocent young Toronto transplant to naughty after-hours spots like Save The Robots, and to connections that led to everyone from Q-Burns to Itaal Shur. About a year ago, she caught the attention of West Coast house label Naked Music and recorded a single, "Always," whose Miguel Migs remix took off on dancefloors worldwide. Despite that success, Shaw decided to go in a different direction for her Naked full-length debut (tentatively titled *Central Living*). "I wanted to do a classic soul album," she explains, "but a little edgier." And though she doffs her hat to a variety of remixers-in-the-wings, she won't compromise her own sound. "I come from a very diverse background in music," she admits, "but the more I write my own stuff, the more I have to have a connection to it that comes from me." >>>ADRIENNE DAY

PHOTO: JANE HUNTINGTON, HAIR & MAKEUP: SOO HEE LEE





World Radio History



go ask alex

Try to get an answer from the Orb's Dr. Alex Paterson. No, really, just try.

STORY: ERIC DEMBY PHOTO: JAMES STAFFORD
DIGITAL IMAGING: BRENDAN MORAN

If techno has a Jerry Garcia, it would have to be the Orb's Dr. Alex Paterson. Much as countless hippies tuned in for the first time while jamming to the Dead 30 years ago, ravers in the early '90s dropped their substance of choice with the warm ambient dub of the Orb as their shamanic guide. Years before ecstasy demanded primetime coverage, Paterson emerged as one of techno's first superstars, and a pill-and-tab-gobbling one at that. Now, with his chill-out anthem "Little Fluffy Clouds" a decade old and a brand new baby girl asleep in her crib, the 41-year-old Dr. Alex seems to inhabit a sprawling imaginary universe akin to the musical one he fashioned on his 1991 debut album, *The Orb's Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld*. Has this psychedelic astronaut bought an intergalactic ticket, but forgotten to book a return flight?

For all intents and purposes, he doesn't seem to give a shit. On the heavily delayed eve of the sixth Orb album, *Cydonia* (MCA), Paterson yawns: "Suppose it's a relief, or a release. Very happy that it's gonna come out. I just wish it could have taken a little bit less time."

Aside from its dreamy pop gem single, "Once More," *Cydonia* alternates between murky trudges through techno dub and flaccid ambient noodles. However, attempting contact with Planet Orb to discuss the reasoning behind the work isn't easy. Eschewing any deeper meaning, Paterson calls *Cydonia* "a good name." After a bit of prodding, he plucks from his library a copy of the sci-fi reference book *Planetary Mysteries*, where he learned of the purported ancient Martian city of Cydonia. The good doctor then proceeds to extol the virtues of Joseph Campbell and paranormal author Colin Wilson.

Paterson's rants sometimes degenerate into ramblings, as when a question about the upcoming Orb tour, scheduled to start in the U.S. in April, somehow morphs into a diatribe about his newly found adoration for the hippopotamus. "They are the most amazing creatures in the world," he exclaims, "they do all these things underwater." He goes on to explain how a looped image of the species breakdancing underwater will likely be projected during the upcoming performances, he continues, the first manifestation of what he proclaims "hippo-hippie," but eventually refines to "hippo-hop." "I've just discovered what I was going on about yesterday," he says, quite pleased with himself.

Now in full-disclosure mode, Paterson says the tour will also feature tracks from yet another Orb album, including their very first country tune, which he mentions with a maniacal chuckle. "It's very Bruce Hornsby," he reveals. "I've been a secret fan of his for a long time; 'The Way It Is' is a top tune, one of the top tunes ever written." Yeah, but where is Bruce now, I wonder. "I'm really, really lucky that people are actually interested in what I'm doing," he responds, humbly. "I could be a boring old sod and everyone's telling me to fuck off, but not yet." **NMM**



HAIR & MAKEUP: TRACEY L. GRANTHAM/CAMERON MANAGEMENT

sleazy pickins

Does Peaches make you hot?

No? Don't worry, she will.

STORY: DYLAN SIEGLER PHOTOS: ANDREA BLANCH

Onstage, a rocker chick turned art-scene queen known as Peaches is prancing to the dirty-bass surge emanating from her MC-505 drum machine. Now and again, she dons one furry gorilla-hand glove to punctuate a half-spoken, half-belted gem like, "Let's get over this/ I'm your lovertits" or "Come on hot rod/ Give me your wad," grabbing her crotch and grinding with her miniskirt-clad backup singer.

Clearly, this isn't your average striptease—Peaches' Rhea Perlman hair and decidedly awkward looks help her express a raw, tweaked sexuality not usually found even in the skeeviest highway strip joints. Her brash behavior, set off by her uniform—pink tie-back halter top, shiny pink short-shorts, knee socks, tennis shoes, aviator glasses—is bafflingly spellbinding. But some of the show's most intriguing moments are transpiring offstage:

A skinny hipster is gyrating against a friendly neighbor in the front row, while a blond businesswoman seductively undoes her companion's button-down shirt one button at a time, sliding her knee up his khaki-clad inner thigh.

Over coffee the day before, the matter-of-fact 30-something Peaches, born Merrill Nisker, recalled a soundman in her native Toronto who had to leave the soundboard to get busy with his girlfriend in the middle of her performance. Still, she insists that she didn't fully realize the inflammatory nature of her act until her first hometown gig two years ago. "I'm a do-and-then-think-later kind of person. I really didn't have a calculation, I was just lonely and horny and smoking pot and masturbating a lot," she explains. The resulting combo of hip-hop and vaudeville, a potty-mouthed, fingers-in-questionable-places assault to the senses, is spelled out on her debut, *The Teaches Of Peaches* (Kitty-Yo-Caroline).

Although the trendy Germans at her label, Kitty-Yo, are down with the lyrics on the record—"Suck/ Suck it up.../ Suck and let go," for instance—they signed Peaches in her pre-vocals days, while she was busking through Europe with her 505 and sometime collaborator MC Chilly Gonzales. (The two later went on to open for *Elastica* on 14 North American dates).

Maybe Kitty-Yo foresaw what American audiences (like the waspy boy now being led out of the club by his necktie) are just getting a taste of: The most arresting aspect of Peaches' act is not just her lyrics. Peaches is

challenging in a performance-arty way, but as catchy as top-40; dirty as a homemade porno, but as familiar as your den mother, and this duality jogs the Puritanical sexual mores it turns out (even after Elvis, Iggy, Prince and Madonna) we're still harboring.

While an explicit performer like Lil' Kim might provoke an audience's desire for Kim, per se, "I feel like the Annie Sprinkle of music, which is more of a sexual conduit than people wanting to have sex with me," says Peaches (at which point I look down at my retractable ballpoint and realize I've been working the plunger in and out, in and out of the body of the pen). "I remember the coolest reaction, this girl ran up onstage, wiped the sweat off my chest, and then ran back to her boyfriend, put it on his lips and just started making out with him." So is that the goal—to inspire peoples' lust for each other? Peaches shrugs. "The only goal for me is to rock." **NMM**

the velvet revolution

Caught in Colombia's crossfire, *Aterciopelados* plays for peace.

STORY: ENRIQUE LAVIN PHOTO: MARIA MADRIGAL

On a white adobe wall along one of Bogota's main drags, a graffiti writer's urgently scrawled message cries out in blue paint: "Do You Want This To Be Another Vietnam?" The warning that calls to the main boulevard echoes the sentiment of foreign analysts who cite Colombia as a Bosnia-grade political flashpoint.

As the country spins closer and closer to an all-out civil war between U.S.-backed right-wing paramilitary death squads and drug-lord funded leftist guerrillas, the trippy, alternative dance duo *Aterciopelados* (Ah-tair-see-oh-pay-LAH-dos), whose name means "the velvety ones," are quietly orchestrating a "velvet" revolution for the country.

On the edge of town, at the foot of the city's ubiquitous mountain, Monserrate, 50 or so dancers warm themselves around a 12-foot bonfire outside a converted Spanish-colonial windmill where a winter rave is staged under the clear, star-pocked sky.

In soft-spoken Spanish, bassist/programmer Héctor Buitrago says he tracks down raves whenever he has a chance. Over the past few years, his musical tastes have moved away from moody lo-fi punk to an elegant, electronic Latin dance groove. The duo's lyrics on *Gozo Poderoso* (BMG U.S. Latin) have also taken a leap from personal introspection to something more outward and demonstrative, the search for universal peace. In the refrain of the dreamy title

track, vocalist Andrea Echeverri coos, "La música es amor" ("music is love"), continuing in the ideological vein of "Música" from their 1996 Grammy-nominated *La Pipa De La Paz* (The Peace Pipe), where the duo promised that music would save us.

"Music is a gozo, a joy, that could unite us, and it's powerful. It could move people, young people, into doing positive things," says Buitrago, who has long given up his shoulder-length dreadlocks in favor of short, uncombed hair.

The duo's lyrics reflect an optimistic belief that music outlives any war. "In difficult situations where people are tormented, artists create things more emotively than in places that are stable," he says, expanding on his and Echeverri's sense of lyrical responsibility.

Aterciopelados formed around 1990 after Echeverri, an art student at the time, took up Buitrago on his invitation to use her folksy pipes to personify his intellectual punk. Soon, the two became romantically involved. Although they're no longer a couple, each has the other's name tattooed on one arm.

"Studying art generated this great interest in finding myself, to break from the norm," says Echeverri, sitting on a sofa in a spare bedroom in her modest two-story apartment, which acts as both her ceramic art studio and the band's rehearsal space. "Héctor's personality is very much his own, which is what defines *Aterciopelados*," says the tall, slender singer in her tuneful Bogotan accent. "We always look inwards rather than outwards. It's a constant inner

search, where we want to be honest and say what we have to say."

Her apartment mirrors her Colombian kitsch and pop-art sensibility: religious trinkets and iconography, pre-Colombian masks and statuettes, Mexican wrestling dolls. The music of Algerian-born DJ Cheb i Sabbah plays on her stereo. These elements inform the group's music, which is rich in Colombo-centric colloquialisms and rhythms that tell allegorical stories of urban and global social conflicts.

Echeverri is one of the few well-known female voices in Spanish-language alternative music, and over the years she has acquired a pseudo-diva status in the alterna-crowd in Colombia and in the rest of Latin America. Her cheeky hairstyles, tattoos, piercings and second-hand chic represent a Latina feminism countering the rigid, church-and-state conservatism that still strangles individuality in much of the Americas. "Florencia Rockera," a hit off of their innovative 1995 rock-meets-Colombian-folk album *El Dorado*, defined her as the poster girl of Latin rock. The song's title means "little rock blossom."

"We wrote *El Dorado* at a difficult time in our lives, a time of deceptions where we didn't see much future in many things, and used music as a release," says the singer. "Now we feel there's a lot of love in many places, and we make our music with softer, smoother sounds to transmit useful things to people." That smoothness reverberates nicely this Bogota evening. But some nights, if you listen carefully, you can hear the crackle of gunfire in the hills. **MM**



World Radio History



fight club

Battling their label, bouncers and each other, the hardcore heroes of **Hatebreed** are slugging to survive.

STORY: LORNE BEHRMAN PHOTOS: DALE MAY

It's a pissing-rain Friday morning and Hatebreed vocalist Jamey Shanahan is squinting through the windshield of his brother's ivory 1973 Lincoln Town Car, guiding the white whale down the roads of New Haven, Connecticut and picking out hometown landmarks. We pass the street he grew up on, the club where he saw his first all-ages show and his first apartment.

"I lived on my own at a really young age," says the 23-year-old Shanahan. "At 13, I had my own apartment and at 14, I had my own house with the guys in my band—we got money from shows, and we sold drugs." Shanahan's laugh falls somewhere between bewildered amusement and weary regret. "I've always had people say, 'You're so lucky you started so young, you're going to have so many things to fall back on—you can use the music business as a tool to achieve what you want in life.' But I look and see how counterproductive I've been and think, 'Damn, if I really took control of what I was doing when I was 13, I might be in a better place.'"

Seven years ago, Hatebreed set out to be the biggest hardcore band there ever was. "We wanted to be the band that turned the scene on its ass, have a reputation like Slayer or Biohazard, come onstage feeding back and the kids are already mauling each other. Everything was so safe [when the band began], it made us sick," says Shanahan, referring to the politically correct hardcore that dominated the late '90s D.I.Y. scene.

On last year's *Tattoo The Earth* tour, Hatebreed seemed like they'd sniffed out the beast—receiving the biggest response out of a roster that included Slipknot and Sevendust—and now they must

decide how to close on that dream without the crew killing each other or going AWOL.

"There have been times where we were like, 'Oh not again,'" Hatebreed bassist and first mate Chris Beattie says with disgusted laughter about band's stormy moments, "Drummers leaving in the middle of the tour, [us] finding a kid in the crowd and still going on with the tour. Having no equipment on major tours. Having our record label take our bus from us and basically leave us stranded sitting in a parking lot somewhere." The band's original skin-pounder, Jamie Pushbutton, is currently serving 15 years for armed robbery (he's been replaced by Rigg Ross) and guitarist Matt McIntosh split in 1999 to hold down a steady job and pursue his side project, Eventide (he's been replaced by Sean Martin).

The release date of Hatebreed's written-but-not-yet-recorded sophomore effort, *Perseverance*, has been shifted from March to June, according to Shanahan, as band and label work out some problems. "Right now it's all legalities. All the material is written and we've been practicing for at least four months. It just has to do with our current contract—I don't think legally I'm supposed to say any more," Beattie says.

When Hatebreed signed their record deal with the venerated but low-profile indie Victory Records (Earth Crisis, Boy Sets Fire, Snapcase), they had already toured the nation four times and had the bestselling demo (sold through Victory mail order) and 7-inch single in Victory history.

The band's 1997 debut, *Satisfaction Is The Death Of Desire* (Victory), is a stellar offering of metal-precise, anthemic hardcore

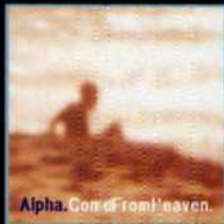
"Where we're from, if you're going to go slander someone, there is a price to pay. But we're above that now."

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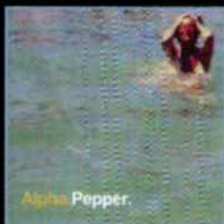
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that's hooky and urban groove-laden without succumbing to pop-punk cliché or rap-metal pose.

"When we made the record we were psyched. We felt like we were going to be up there with Sick Of It All and Sepultura," laments Shanahan. Early post-*Satisfaction* tours saw the band opening, playing to the first 50 kids that walked into a 2000 capacity venue. Undeterred, Hatebreed spent the next four years touring and getting a few lucky breaks with Danzig, Entombed, Soulfly and Slipknot.

Shanahan, the captain of Hatebreed, was booking all-ages hardcore matinees by age 13; by 14 he was a minor celebrity in the New Haven hardcore/punk scene, selling out clubs with his band, Jasta-14. Besides being the band's most established member, it's clear that his street-savvy marketing keeps Hatebreed on the rise. A few years back, when Hatebreed played Des Moines, Iowa, Shanahan bonded with one of the moshing kids in the audience, who turned out to be Slipknot's Shawn #6 (the clown percussionist). When Slipknot came through New Haven in 1999 opening for Biohazard, Shanahan sent a buddy with a box of T-shirts and a note congratulating the band on their *Ozzfest* slot. After a thank-you call from Joey #1 (drums), Hatebreed was invited a week later to play seven arena shows at 7000 to 10,000 capacity. Slipknot also secured Hatebreed their slot on *Tattoo The Earth*. And that's just one of the many kind gestures that has helped Hatebreed sell 150,000 copies of *Satisfaction*, making it Victory's best selling release.

Shanahan's parents divorced when he was 13, mostly due to his father's Vietnam War-scarred past, which manifested itself in post-traumatic stress syndrome, landing him in a VA hospital. Shanahan attended one of those public middle schools filled with "hippies, punkers and buck-wild gangsters," and he never finished high school (although he has his GED). "You got kids out there that can't even cook. Sure they know algebra, but you know what? I'm never going to need algebra," says Shanahan. "I have enough math skills to go into a club and settle up."

When speaking about *Perseverance*, Shanahan, who writes all the lyrics and 90 percent of the music, is vague: He calls it "more brutal" with "thrashier blast beats," and the most concrete he gets is comparing it to Slayer. "There's a song called 'Unloved'; the last lyric is, 'You were never part of my life and you never will be.' My girlfriend heard it and was like, 'Who was that about?' I'm not going to get into it that—it's my business. I don't want people to know every bit of my business," he says hesitantly. He confirms that Slipknot's Mick #7 and Slayer's Kerry King will play dual guitars one track, noting proudly, "It will be the only solo ever on a Hatebreed song."

In 1994, Shanahan and Beattie founded the quintet, christening it Hatebreed as a salute to ghoulish punks the Misfits and their greaser-punk standard "Hatebreeders." Shanahan and Beattie met up with guitarist Lou "Boulder" Richards and the trio modeled Hatebreed after their boyhood idols—thuggish New York City hardcore acts like the Cro-Mags, Agnostic Front and Madball.

That thug pose seemed very real when tales of beatdowns and sexual misconduct began surrounding the band. Shanahan speaks in general terms when discussing the incidents, explaining that they occurred many years ago and involved bouncers "disrespecting" Hatebreed fans.

"People saw us as a bunch of jocks that go and beat the shit out of each other," Shanahan reasons. "So they automatically take a stance against it, even if they don't know about the band, and then you have people boycotting our shows, talking shit about us on the Internet. Where they're from, people are used to talking things out; where we're from, it's not really like that, if you're going to go slander someone, there is a price to pay. But there's only been a couple situations like that and we're above that now."

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“At 13, I had my own apartment and at 14, I had my own house with the guys in my band—we got money from shows, and we sold drugs.”

Currently, Hatebreed is banned from playing many local clubs. “That’s going to change,” he says of their blacklisted standing. “We’re so big in Connecticut now, clubs would be stupid not to do business with us; we’ll just be more responsible in the way that we act and in the way that we tell our friends to act.” Shanahan is more forthright about the notorious Hatebreed home movies. While on tour around 1996 and 1997, one Hatebreed roadie asked women from each town to flash their breasts for his video camera. Shanahan explains, “People started hearing about this infamous video and saying, ‘Oh, it’s 13-year-old girls and they’re having sex.’ It was nothing like that. When we’d go to someone’s house and stay with them, they’re not going to say, ‘Oh Hatebreed had a video with girls showing their tits.’ The stories just kept getting more elaborate.”

Shanahan wears a plain black baseball cap, baggy jeans, and a heavily padded charcoal jacket. He has a stocky awkwardness and a warm, delicate smile befitting a teddy bear-tough dad. He refers to his two-year-old baby girl, Madison, as a “well-rounded individual.”

“It’s funny, everybody says all the tough guys have daughters,” he says cheerfully, navigating down an anonymous road of strip-mall suburbia. “I definitely wouldn’t want my daughter to be in those situations. You’re young, you live, you learn.”

Shanahan points to a little store called “News Haven” on the driver’s side of the street. He grins: “That’s where I used to go and buy *Maximum Rock ‘N’ Roll*; now I go in there and laugh at myself in *Metal Maniacs*.” **NMM**

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Two turntables and a microphone? How about four turntables and a killer sound all their own? The **X-Ecutioners** cut loose.



STORY: KELEFA SANNEH PHOTOS: CHARLIE LANGELLA

At first, it looks like an episode of MTV's *Cribs* gone horribly wrong: One of the world's greatest DJs lives in a compact little house, half covered in light-blue paint, across the street from a warehouse, in the South Bronx. The turntable legend known as Roc Raida appears on the front porch, smiling shyly.

He's wearing warm-up pants and a long-sleeved shirt that says "Built From Scratch," and he whispers a hello as he retreats into the inner sanctum, a 10-by-15-foot room that looks like a hip-hop clubhouse. There are action figures and toy cars, posters of Al Pacino and Bruce Lee, a brand new computer and an old-school television. But mainly, there's music: shelves and shelves of LPs and 12-inch singles, a mixing board, drum machines and microphones. More importantly, there



are five turntables, and the new Afu-Ra album is spinning on one of them. Raida's partner Rob Swift strolls in, wearing baggy pants and a jacket by Abercrombie & Fitch. He's holding a bottle of orange juice in one hand, and with the other, he starts chopping up the Afu-Ra record, absentmindedly working the crossfader until rudimentary beats and rhymes give way to a stuttering jumble of sounds. His expression is bored, perhaps restless, but his fingers are dancing on the mixer as if they had a mind of their own.

Swift, one fourth of the turntablist group the X-Ecutioners, is tuning up his instrument. The group's history dates back to the late '80s, when Raida was part of a DJ crew called the X-Men. As that crew expanded and evolved, the four members decided to form a group and change their name to avoid a lawsuit from those who hold copyrights on a certain group of costumed mutants. When the lineup solidified—Roc Raida, Rob Swift, Total Eclipse and Mista Sinista—it was one of hip-hop's first full-fledged supergroups.

So what's the point of having four DJs, instead of one? Well, part of the payoff is density: While most X-Ecutioners tracks are based on fairly standard breakbeats, they are always layered with a dizzying variety of scratches and cuts, so that each beat is pulled in four different directions at once. And then there's the importance of variety—Rob Swift offers a tour of the group members' distinct styles. "I'm the mental one of the group," he explains, without a hint of pretension. "My routines will have you watching me, like, 'What made him think of doing it that way?'" By now, Total Eclipse has wandered in, wearing jeans and a Yankees hat. Rob glances at him: "Eclipse is intense. He does everything, and he does it at a real fast pace." All eyes turn to our host, who's waiting to hear what Swift has to say about him. "Raida?" Swift

throws up his hands, confounded. "He's the real flashy one. You'll see him perform and you're like, 'Wow! How the fuck he do that?'" And then there's Mista Sinista, who's missing in action. "He's just real funky," Swift says, fondly. "Like, if he's performing, he just has your head nodding, like, 'Yo, he's killing it!' It's like watching the James Brown band or something."

In case you haven't guessed, the X-Ecutioners are definitely a live act, even though the members use recorded material. They're always talking about performing, and they met one another at DJ battles. One of their best routines looks like a DJ version of a *Soul Train* line dance: They file in behind two decks, and every man takes a turn, juggling the same beat in a slightly different way. Just sitting in Roc Raida's clubhouse, they sound as if they're just itching to get back on stage and move the crowd. But these days, the X-Ecutioners hardly have time to practice and perform. They're busy doing something that few turntablists do, and even fewer turntablists do well: They're making an album.

This is actually the X-Ecutioners second chance at it (that's also a rarity). In 1997, they created a dense, technically impressive disc called *X-Pressions* (for the electronic music-focused label Asphodel). But now the X-Ecutioners have signed to hip-hop label Loud, home to big-name rappers like the Wu-Tang Clan and the late Big Pun. *Built From Scratch* is the X-Ecutioners' big chance to escape the insular world of turntablism and join the ranks of mainstream hip-hop stars.

Even if electronic DJs like Fatboy Slim and Moby are household names, hip-hop DJs have been struggling for recognition as of late. Once upon a time in the late '70s, DJs ruled hip-hop, and rappers were just the supporting talent—more often than not, they rapped about how good the DJs were.

Things changed in the early '80s, when hip-hop turned into rap. "Once Run-DMC and LL Cool J really started to break out," Rob Swift explains, "they were so charismatic, and they had so much personality, that people tended to focus on them. People saw the DJ as the third person, the third leg—and as a result, all groups started being treated that way."

Even as many rappers eschew DJs in favor of synthesizers, samplers and live sounds, DJs are making advances to regain lost ground. Mixtape and radio DJs are going gold and platinum with heavily promoted albums featuring cameos from rap glitterati. The records, like Funkmaster Flex's *60 Minutes Of Funk, Volume IV: The Mixtape* (released by Loud late last year) tend to be heavy on star power (Flex got unreleased raps from Eminem, DMX and just about everyone else) and light on turntable trickery. For the X-Ecutioners, the success of mixtapers like Flex and DJ Clue points to a golden opportunity. "A lot of kids know Funkmaster Flex and DJ Clue," Rob Swift explains, "but they aren't aware that there's another type of DJ."

Of course, the X-Ecutioners may be unique, but they're not alone. In fact, there's a whole slew of turntablists on the come-up, combining old-fashioned technology with newfangled technique: Mixmaster Mike, the Beat Junkies and the Allies have all made a case that playing with records can be just as interesting as playing with words. Among these crews, the X-Ecutioners stand out for their insistence that a turntable should be treated like any other instrument: They use traditional song structures, so that in between the catchy choruses, each member has a chance to do his "verse"—much the way a jazz band might give each player a solo. On his 1999 solo LP, *The Ablast*, Rob Swift even included live instruments, further strengthening the



“A lot of kids know Funkmaster Flex and DJ Clue, but they aren’t aware that there’s another type of DJ.”

connection between turntablism and jazz.

But as anyone who’s ever listened to a Yngwie Malmsteen record can tell you, chops don’t mean a thing without good songs and a compelling vision. That’s the problem with the nascent turntablism genre—too often, it degenerates into a bunch of kids doing tricks for each other. The skills are generally top-notch, but it’s often not the sort of thing you’d want to listen to at home.

That’s precisely the dilemma facing the X-Ecutioners as they try to take turntablism big-time. They may not be ready to abandon turntablism for mixtapyery, but they’re not afraid to collaborate. *Built From Scratch* will include cameos from Everlast,

Big Pun, veteran lyricist Kool G Rap and the rookie rock group Linkin Park. They’re also eager to match great tricks with great songs, to narrow the divide between the pop-friendly world of mainstream rap and the turntablism’s esoteric domain. As Rob Swift puts it, “Since New York is the home of hip-hop, we’re trying our best to kind of stay traditional, but still advance and be innovative and appeal to younger kids, you know? I feel we’re a bridge.”

Even as he says this, Rob Swift is nearly drowned out by the sounds of guitar-rock icon Billy Squier. Total Eclipse has jumped up on the turntables, and he’s playing with two copies of Squier’s 1980 anthem, “Big Beat.” Roc Raida has his

hands on the mixing board, and his reticence has finally given way to something approaching enthusiasm. “Yeah, yeah!” he’s saying, nodding his head as Eclipse creates a whole new rhythm out of Squier’s familiar backbeat. “Something simple. Something with drums.” By now, the whole room is nodding, but Eclipse barely notices—he’s too busy juggling the beats to pay attention. And soon, no one’s thinking about album sequencing or crossover success; even the voluble Rob Swift has fallen silent. In a little blue house in the Bronx, a DJ is performing the kind of miracle that hip-hop DJs have been performing for a quarter of a century: He’s making old records sound new again. **NMM**

W E E Z E R

ALL THAT YOU CAN'T LEAVE BEHIND



STYLING BY ERIC BERG; GROOMING BY STEPHEN LEWIS.



STORY: JON REGARDIE

PHOTOS: ANTHONY MANDLER / ART MIX THE AGENCY

WEEZER WAS YOUR GUILTY POP PLEASURE OF THE EARLY '90S, THE ANGST-RIDDEN AND ENDEARING GEEKS WHO REMINDED YOU WHY MELODY MATTERED. THEN THEY UPPED THE ANTE, MADE A DIFFICULT SECOND RECORD, AND POP FANS CEASED TO CARE. LEAD WEEZE RIVERS CUOMO DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT, GREW A BEARD AND HID OUT AT HARVARD. FIVE YEARS LATER, THE BAND STILL SELLS OUT SHOWS. THEY HAVE A NEW RECORD WITH HOOKS GALORE. BUT WILL THE LITTLE GIRLS UNDERSTAND?

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



sk Weezer's mercurial capo, Rivers Cuomo, about his expectations for the band's first album in four and a half years, and he lets his angst flow: "I think it will fail on a commercial level and also alienate our fans."

"Do you really think that?" asks drummer Pat Wilson, as if it's something

he forgot to check during the recording. After all, the group is already finishing up mixes on this January afternoon in L.A.

"It's my fear," answers Cuomo, steadily enough to indicate that he's not joking. Pressed to expand, he adds, "When we put out the blue album [as the band's '94 self-titled debut is known], I never thought it would do anything, and it was huge. When we put out [the '96 follow-up] *Pinkerton*, I never thought it would fail so miserably as it did. So you shouldn't ask me."

Welcome to "Weezer's Theater," an unpredictable drama in which a talented, if tortured, lead and his three supporting players encounter unbridled success in the first act and then face critical success (and commercial failure) in the second. Always intriguing, often ironic and occasionally comedic, the group, whose seasoned members are all pushing or past 30, find themselves at the opening of their third act.

Surprisingly, the show continues to draw a crowd, even though the group made its splash back in the early '90s with two striking videos: the canine-filled "Undone—The Sweater Song" and the '50s-'70s nostalgia of "Buddy Holly." As the band rekindles its peppy, melodic pop for a grand entrance, they encounter a musical landscape dominated by growling, villainous rap rock. Despite the fact that Weezer again seems to be in the wrong place at the worst of times, they boast a devoted cult following.

Flashback to the band's guest slot on last summer's Warped Tour. The audience of young skaters came to see Green Day, NOFX and Face To Face, yet Weezer shocked the house, earning a tremendous response from both the other bands and the fans.

As the curtain rises, the audience wonders if a band whose only platinum effort came out in 1994 can bring the rest of the nation into their rabid fanbase. How did they do it the first time?

ACT I: POOR BAND, RICH BAND

If ever a band seemed destined to fail, it was Weezer. Formed on Valentine's Day in 1992, the band began with Cuomo, who enlisted bassist Matt Sharp, drummer Pat Wilson and guitarist Jason Cropper. Playing around Los Angeles, they eventually built up a following big enough to capture Geffen's attention. Guitarist Brian Bell replaced Cropper and Weezer's self-titled first album (produced by the Cars' Ric Ocasek) arrived in May of 1994, just a month after the death of Kurt Cobain, when grunge outfits like Pearl Jam and Soundgarden ruled radio.

As the album's first single, a goofy, infectiously tuneful track with the unwieldy title of "Undone—The Sweater Song," trickled to radio, the group hooked up with a rising, visionary video director named Spike Jonze.

"The treatment for the video was 10 words," remembers Joy Ray, who produced the video for Jonze. "It said, 'A blue stage, a

Steadicam, a pack of wild dogs.' We had Bernardo Bertolucci's Steadicam operator. We had about 25 dogs that were released onto the stage and we filmed the whole thing in one shot." As for the band, Ray recalls, "They were very unassuming. They were like, 'Oh golly gee whiz. A live video.'"

"Sweater" found an audience, cueing the entrance of the next single, the irresistible "Buddy Holly." Jonze returned, this time crafting a video that cleverly mixed mocked-up band footage with clips from the TV show *Happy Days*, making it appear as if Weezer were at Al's entertaining Fonzie, Richie, Potsie and friends.

Weezer exploded on MTV, and "Buddy Holly" won four Video Music Awards in 1995. "Sweater" hit number six on the *Billboard* modern rock chart, and "Buddy Holly" climbed to number two.

"They came up with this pop sound that was very unlike grunge," remembers Lisa Worden, music director of influential Los Angeles radio station KROQ, an early champion of the band. "It stood out like a sore thumb in a great way."

A third single, "Say It Ain't So," followed, and Weezer reached number 16 on the *Billboard* Top 200, en route to selling more than 2 million copies. Yet while the band reveled in the attention, it also encountered stereotyping. The record's innocent, often bittersweet songs—especially "In The Garage," an ode to playing *Dungeons & Dragons* and listening to KISS albums—saddled the group with a geek-rock tag. Magazines harped on the *Revenge Of The Nerds* theme. To make matters worse, culture vultures accused Weezer of orchestrating its image.

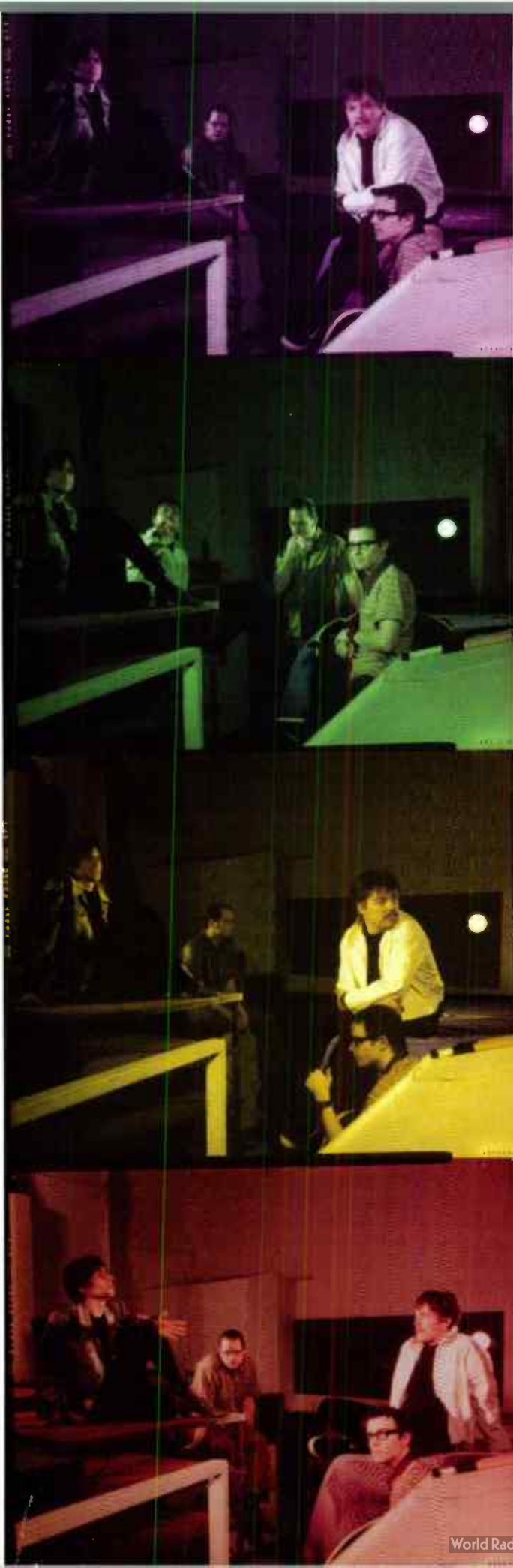
"There were a lot of people who thought we were kind of stinky, kind of geeky, like it was all a big plan. It just wasn't true," insists Wilson. "At the time, there was a certain Gen-X culture critic that was so typical, cynical, hated everything, except the most impenetrable, noisy rock... I remember at the time, [zines like] *Maximum Rock 'N' Roll* and *Ben Is Dead* would all bemoan the corporate approach. They would see these guys dreaming up our shtick. And it couldn't have been farther from the truth."

INTERMISSION

When it comes to examining the past, the cast of Weezer is analytical. Wilson is the most balanced, as he mentions the joy of hearing his music on the radio and seeing crowds increase at shows, and then qualifies it: "It feels bigger now than it did then." Cuomo, an often contrary figure, professes to be completely unsatisfied with Weezer and *Pinkerton*. "I'm never happy with anything in the past," he says in his measured tone. "It's my nature. I feel really optimistic about the future, but God, anything I've done, it's embarrassing."

In similarly individual ways, each member seems to have defined his role within Weezer. Wilson, dressed in grandpa pants and a hipster-ish short-sleeved brown shirt and with his hair slicked back, plays the joker, the showman, a guy prone to bursting into falsetto song. He's the rare drummer who not only talks, but does so thoughtfully.

Bell, impossibly thin inside a thrift-store orange-red leather jacket, wears his bangs unkempt. He's the most stylish and quiet of the characters, though ready to offer a positive comment. Mikey Welsh, who replaced Sharp in 1998, sports tattoos, floppy hair and a scary cop mustache. (Cuomo, who has a similar mustache during



the interview, loses his before our photo shoot.) A former Bostoner and ex-member of Juliana Hatfield's touring band, Welsh speaks slowly. He's the friendly, able backup for the crew, content to let someone else star.

Then there's Rivers. More on him later.

ACT II: THE TEMPEST

If ever a band seemed destined to achieve monster success, it was Weezer. Even though Cuomo had taken time off after the first album to study English at Harvard, the group had the momentum of three hit singles and a double-platinum debut disc. With their wit and proven ability to deliver vivacious hooks, the members of Weezer were destined to be heroes.

When Weezer triumphantly returned to the studio in 1996, they left Ocasek behind, electing to produce the record themselves. The result, *Pinkerton* (named for a character in Cuomo's favorite opera, *Madame Butterfly*, not the detective agency), traded the blue album's overwhelming pop sensibility for caterwauling guitars and fewer singalongs. The lyrics also turned more aggressive: "Tired Of Sex" concerned a narrator no longer thrilled by his ability to bang a different woman every night, a theme that sounds far more like backstage rockstar antics than the previous album's lovable geek pastimes. In other tunes, Cuomo wailed about the girls he could not have and the girls who would hurt him.

"It's definitely an aggro record," sums up Wilson.

Pinkerton's more complex arrangements received many positive reviews, and it was even heralded by the burgeoning emocore movement. But radio virtually ignored it, a fact that infuriated Cuomo.

"I thought we'd come up with *something*, a really cool new sound and passionate, heartfelt music, and radio seemed to turn in the exact opposite direction at the time," he says, admitting that he understands now why the record wasn't embraced by the radio or record buyers.

Although *Pinkerton* sold only a fraction of what *Weezer* did, the bandmembers claim they actually saw little difference at the shows. They filled 1500-seat houses with a fanbase that would stick by the band. *Pinkerton* resulted in the shift from mass to a somewhat smaller acceptance. And the bandmembers reason that a selective audience may not be such a bad thing.

"There was a time when there was mass hysteria over 'Buddy Holly' and all that," says Wilson. "But I don't think those people are fans of bands in a serious way. They're more like, 'Music, that's cool.' Which is fine. But we didn't really drop off, I don't think, among people who were legitimately into seeing bands."

Then Weezer's atmosphere shifted, as Cuomo changed venues and decided to focus on Harvard. Press reports said he lived a hermit-like existence, spending large chunks of time alone and growing a thick beard. In early 1998, the band convened in an effort to record a new album, but Cuomo was unhappy with the results, and the recordings never saw the light of day. (It's rumored that, when Cuomo began the third album for the second time, he had 100 songs written.)

"It's a Weezer interview. We don't need to talk about the other shit."

The other players found different outlets. Bassist Sharp abandoned Weezer for his other project, new-wavey outfit the Rentals. While in Boston, Cuomo played a handful of solo shows, and back in Los Angeles, Bell performed with his group Space Twins and Wilson dabbled in an act called Special Goodness.

"There was kind of a need to do something else," Wilson says. "At the same time, if we could have been doing Weezer, we would have been doing Weezer."

About the Space Twins, Bell begins, "It was a whole different thing—"

"It's a Weezer interview," interrupts Cuomo forcefully. "We don't need to talk about the other shit."

I laugh, thinking Cuomo is joking. It quickly becomes apparent from his stone expression that he isn't. I start to say that I think it is an important subject because it involves the way the band arrived at their new album, but I only get half of the comment out before he cuts me off.

"That's fine," he seethes. "But we don't need to talk about it." He's almost like a husband who doesn't want to discuss his wives' affairs. Maybe he hopes to quash any discussion of rumors that his autocratic tendencies produced tensions within the band that almost caused a breakup. Maybe it relates not to the others' musical interludes, but to his own: Who knows if during those solo shows in Boston, Cuomo found that he actually needed Weezer, that to make music he requires this specific adoring cast?

After an uncomfortable silence, I ask if he will at least explain why he won't discuss the interim period?

"No."

INTERMISSION

Rivers Cuomo was born on June 13, 1970, and raised in Connecticut by massage-therapist parents. At age 18, he moved to Los Angeles with hopes of starting a music career, but Weezer didn't come together until he was 22. He instantly became the Weezer auteur, a role the others allowed him to assume. Cuomo wrote every song on the first two albums (he shares credit for two songs on Weezer) and when discussing the band's musical process he says, "I write all the songs and bring them to rehearsal and we play them." His statement is undisputed; no other member tries to take any responsibility.

Cuomo, a slight figure wearing red-and-blue leather Nikes and draped in two winter jackets (even though this is L.A.), prefers to remain quiet when possible. He often seems uncomfortable discussing his music. When he does talk, he often proceeds like there is a tax on words; he gives short sentences and must be pushed to say more. He regularly ponders before speaking and there's often an uncomfortable period of dead air between a question and his answer.

ACT III: A RIVERS RUNS ALL OF IT

If ever a band seemed to be on the brink of either skyrocketing or crashing, it is Weezer. There are equally compelling arguments for the quartet's upcoming failure or success: On the negative side is the long absence and a marketplace where angry nü-metal slurry commands the radio dial.

Arguments for success begin with the rabid fanbase. A handful of recent "secret" shows in Los Angeles, under the nom de rock Goat Punishment, were packed. In addition, KROQ's Worden notes that even today, listeners consistently request the hits off Weezer.

The most compelling evidence of future success, however, is the new album. The band has returned to producer Ocasek. Says Cuomo, "We know him. We feel safe with him. We know what we are going to get."

The recording process was exceptionally quick, about one month from start to finish. With Welsh on bass the songs are heavier than in the past, says Cuomo. Yet he also describes the sound as closer to the first record than to Pinkerton. "It doesn't try quite as hard," says Cuomo.

"The songs are very infectious," adds Bell. "The one you hear last is the one that sticks in your head the most."

Indeed, the song "Don't Let Go" instantly recalls the blue album, with its big, exuberant pop hook suggesting quintessential Cheap Trick. The peppy number expands with harmonic "ooooh-whoa-whoa" sing-along refrains. It makes curious sense when the band says the song feels like it could be from a John Hughes movie. (Not *Home Alone*, Wilson stresses. "The classic stuff, *Pretty In Pink*.")

"Island In The Sun" meanwhile carries a lighter, dreamy flavor, and with lines like "It makes me feel so fine," it seems Cuomo

is more upbeat than the last go-round. Yet the singer claims the words are the album's weakest element.

"The lyrics suck," he states outright. "I wanted to concentrate on other things, like the structure, the melody, that sort of thing, and something has to take a back seat. This time it was the lyrics."

He labels the words to "Don't Let Go" "super generic," and claims not even to understand the topics of some other songs.

"The lyrics are so subconsciously originated," he says. "I didn't sit down and write a song about something. Just whatever came out, came out... They're more like early Beatles songs, where the lyrics are just kind of fluffy and they don't really matter all that much, but the songs are great."

Weezer has scheduled about eight months of touring, taking them across the U.S. several times and also to Europe, Asia and Australia. Now on Interscope Records—they survived Universal's acquisition of Geffen and other labels several years ago—they feel they have the publicity machine behind them.

As optimism abounds, Cuomo admits to a fear, one different than the outright failure he described earlier: He is scared of too much success.

"I don't want it, for some reason, to get really popular in a crossover way that pisses off our fans," he states. He mentions that when Weezer plays with acts deemed "sell-outs," the fervent fans mount Internet campaigns and in other ways let the group know that they disapprove. Cuomo says he is wary of corporate-sponsored tours (though they just did one with Yahoo!) and too many magazine covers, commenting, "All these things can add up and really piss off our fans."

Despite these comments, there is still a hole in the story. Why has Weezer returned at all? Why has Cuomo decided again to draw open the curtains, play shows and make records? I ask him why, as he sits looking bored, clipping his fingernails. His reply: "I don't know. Why not? It's fun." **MMM**

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REVIEWS



STEVE ALMAAS

Kingo A Wild One Parasol

If you can recall when Hoboken was hip and "quirky" was the ultimate compliment, Steve Almaas's first American album in 15 years should bring back some good memories. Almaas was probably the first punk-rockster ever to cross over into country music: His original group, the Suicide Commandos, were Minneapolis's original punk band—no doubt the young Replacements used to sneak into their shows. Later, he turned up in Hoboken with the nifty country-pop combo Beat Rodeo, whose two IRS albums are worth combing the used bins for. After

a break from music and a stint playing bass for Chris Whitley, Almaas picks up exactly where Beat Rodeo left off. The support crew includes some of his old collaborators, among them onetime Bongos leader Richard Barone and co-producer Mitch Easter, who does his usual sparkling mix. Almaas sings with the same fresh-faced enthusiasm, and his songs have the same modest charm: They're toe-tappers rather than earthshakers. But his hooks have a way of getting under your skin, and his tunes are able to evoke Buddy Holly without sounding hokey. And since Almaas's idea of a happy sentiment is "Baby's got a roof over her head/ Woke up this morning, I wasn't dead," he can still wear the "quirky" tag proudly. >>>BRETT MILANO

Out

March 6

File Under

Simple country-pop pleasures

R.I.Y.L.

Marshall Crenshaw,

Mitch Easter, Buddy Holly



ALPHA

The Impossible Thrill Melankolic-Astralwerks

As a lush, gooey soundtrack for meaningful glances, Alpha works just fine, especially now that Corin Dingley and Andy Jenks's electronics have waltzed away from the Nyquil dub that imbued 1997's *Come From Heaven*. But as much as the sound has smoothed out into the cool pulse of an especially urbane date record, *The Impossible Thrill* seems only to emphasize a certain ache. It's unabashedly romantic, with ebullient string swells, ride cymbals pinging in supper-club rhythms and three vocalists (two women, one man, plus a guest spot from Massive

Attack's Daddy) working variations of pleas and whispers—if only there were a sense that any of this ended well. "South," whose fat bass groove makes it one of the more propulsive numbers, stops short, like someone just pulled the plug on Helen White's lyrics about "losing my sense of wonder/ There's no cure." And little noises like the scrape of a stylus clicking against the end of a record's run-out groove or creepily jocular voices clucking "I couldn't agree more" taint the sumptuousness of the music, wafting through the mix like the acrid smell of wine left to molder in bottom of the glass and candles burned down to the blackened base. For what amounts to a slow dance between romance and dissolution, *The Impossible Thrill* is awfully pretty music that won't spoil the conversation between courses. >>>SCOTT FRAMPTON

Out

March 20

File Under

Intimate low-key groove

R.I.Y.L.

Massive Attack, Everything But The Girl, downtempo PJ Harvey

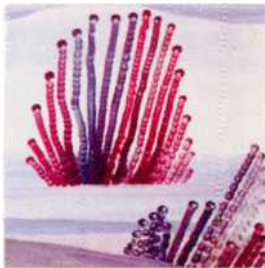


TIFFANY ANDERS

Funny Cry Happy Gift Up

Being the daughter of indie filmmaker Allison Anders may have helped Tiffany Anders break into the biz—it certainly helped hook the younger Anders up with Dinosaur Jr. guitarist J Mascis, who composed the soundtrack for and cameo'd in Mom's *Gas, Food, Lodging* before drumming and singing on Tiffany's debut EP, 1998's *Runnin From No Place To Nowhere* (Up). And maybe Mom's connections are also what got Polly Jean Harvey interested in producing Tiffany's debut full-length, *Funny Cry Happy Gift*, considering that, while somewhat promising, *Running From No*

Place To Nowhere wasn't exactly a resounding success from either a songwriting or performing point of view. But, ultimately, it's Tiffany who has to prove herself worthy on *Funny Cry Happy Gift*, and without heavy-handed help from Harvey, she does just that, both as a singer and a songwriter. There's nothing groundbreaking or particularly challenging about the album—it's your basic singer/songwriterly indie-pop affair with minimal production embellishments. Anders, who simply sounded unsure of herself on the EP, now in stronger voice sounds something like Bettie Serveert's Carol Van Dijk or Juliana Hatfield, harmonizing with herself to good effect throughout. The melodies linger, the subtle hooks hit home, and the low-key delivery generates an appealing intimacy, which is exactly what this kind of album is supposed to do. >>>MATT ASHARE



APPENDIX OUT

The Night Is Advancing *Drag City*

Halfway through Appendix Out's third album, *The Night Is Advancing*, the music comes to a standstill. Main man Ali Roberts spreads the notes so far apart that "Fortified Jackdaw Grove" decelerates from dirge to near-silence, and it's a mesmerizing feat, especially when his ensemble revs up for a caterwauling crescendo. This precarious balancing act continues across each of the Scotsman's bleak songs, with heartily plucked acoustic strings and backing drones conjured on flutes, bagpipes and clarinets rising and falling like the nod of a night watchman struggling to stay

awake. And yet this collection never fades into nothingness, rather tiptoeing along a line of sparse melody and occasionally, fleetingly evolving into something resembling a pop song. "Year Waxing, Year Waning" and "Hexen In The Anticyclone" maintain a steady gait, using guitars and banjos to strike an old-time country pose, albeit one that's unthinkably suggestive of both the medieval and the postmodern. To be sure, Roberts's vocal quavers merit the Will Oldham comparisons that greeted Appendix Out's two earlier discs, but the sidewinding, methodical music created here also belongs to a Scottish tradition that stretches back decades to the '60s folk act the Incredible String Band, if not centuries to the pagans. By turns bewildering and bewitching, *The Night Is Advancing* moves forward carefully, always keeping one foot in the past. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES

Blow In The Wind *Fat Wreck Chords*

LESS THAN JAKE

Greased *No Idea*

Right about the time that K-Tel—the company that invented the TV-infomercial top-40 compilation—took to releasing emocore and alt-country collections, the punk-rock supergroup Me First And The Gimme Gimmes (featuring members of NOFX, Swingin' Utters, the Foo Fighters and Lagwagon) bit back and began turning vintage pre-1980 cutout-bin pop hits (John Denver, Simon & Garfunkel, show tunes) into Pennywise-style thrash-punk nuggets. It's a gimmick that should have worn out its welcome quicker than you can say, "But I thought Rancid was the Sha-Na-Na of the '90s." But the Gimmes' reconstruction of "classic" rock—quick, crisp, sharply executed punk; earnest, clear-headed arrangements; time-tested hooks—has proven uncannily impervious to whatever sarcasm or irony you'd care to ascribe to them.

This time out, the Gimmes take on the '60s; once again, the Gimmes win, and the era is merely absorbed into SoCal's genre-flattening skate-punk template. The Gimmes' bleached-blond doo-wop (Del Shannon's "Runaway") is better pop-

metal than the Offspring; their girl-group romps ("My Boyfriend's Back") run rings around the Donnas. Taste ceases to matter: Barry Mann's "Who Put The Bomp" rubs up against Cat Stevens's "Wild World"; the Turtles' "Elenore" whispers sweet nothings to Dylan's "Blowin' In The Wind"; and Tammy Wynette's "Stand By Your Man" weeps softly next to the Shirelles' "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" It's the Decade That Changed The World: Who knew it all sounded like Bad Religion?

The last Gimmes outing included an epic loungecore take on "It's Raining On Prom Night." But Less Than Jake's *Greased*—eight selections from the elementary-school sleepover fave *Grease* soundtrack, performed by a mostly ska-less ska-punk band—is a joke desperately in search of a punchline. Recorded on the fly several years ago and issued in a tiny edition, it's now getting its first wide release. But the cleaned-up mix doesn't really help the muddy, off-handed production, and the band's lack of enthusiasm trundles on long after the novelty's worn off. It's an act of vague recollection rather than a salvage mission, and since ska-punk is almost as passe as the soundtrack in question, the Jakes sound like the ones in need of an emotional rescue. Then again, there are worse things you could do... >>>CARLY CARIOLI



Out

February 27

File Under

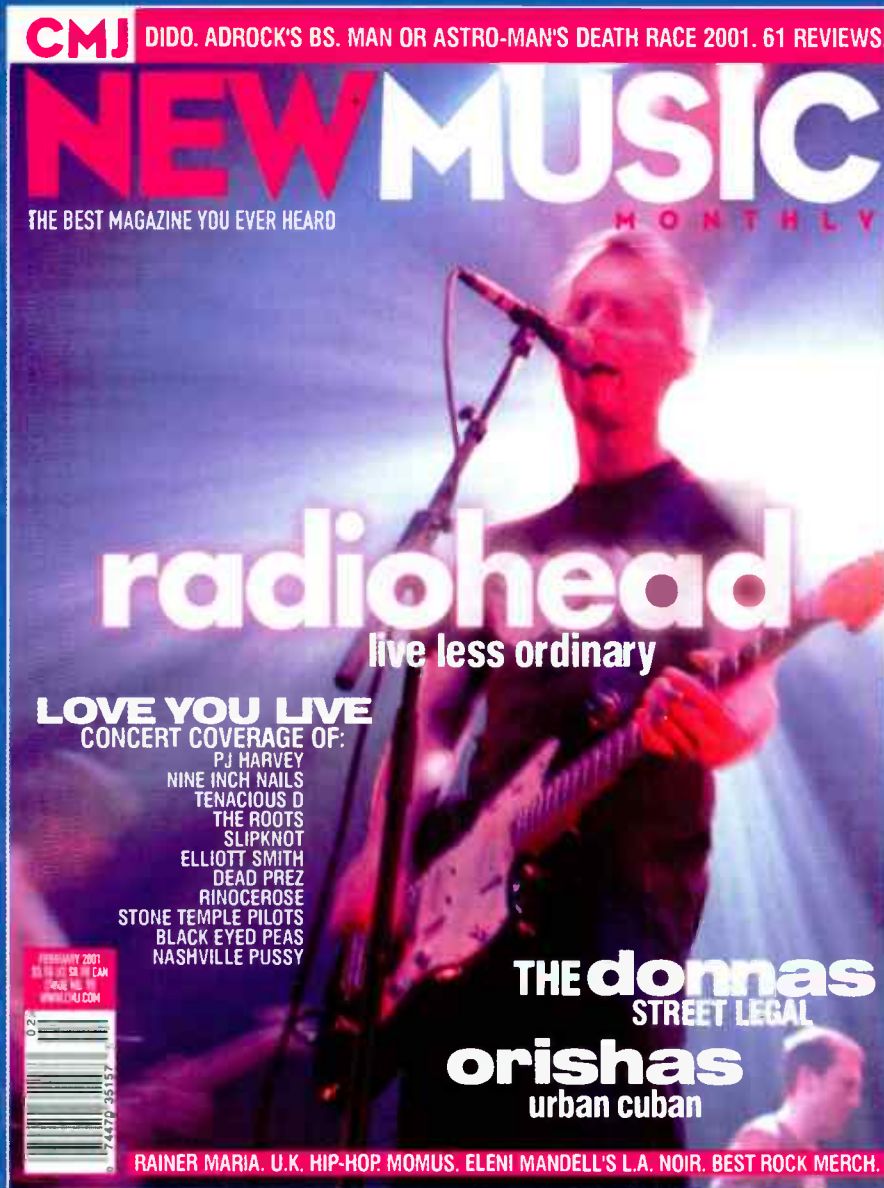
The CD equivalent of
Adrian Zmed in *Grease 2*

R.I.Y.L.

Olivia Newton John's
"Physical," Mr. Bungle's
"Travolta," *Grease 2*

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World Radio History

**ARAB STRAP****The Red Thread** Matador

Listening to *The Red Thread* for the first time on headphones on a commuter bus was bewildering. Between the growl of the engine and the grunt of Aidan Moffat's voice, between the roar of the road and the rumble of Malcolm Middleton's music, it soon became impossible to distinguish what was real, and what was Arab Strap. Moffat is more narrator than singer: His gruff incantations make Leonard Cohen sound like a boy soprano, and his thick Scottish burr makes the lyrics sound filtered through a bass clarinet. Arab Strap's appeal has always been in the brutally candid, emotionally riveting manner Moffat delivers apparently authentic tales of debasement and desire amid Middleton's dank but increasingly sophisticated soundscapes. Highlights: the flowing, oceanic techno-goth of "Last Orders"; the inexorable death trip of "The Devil-Tips"; and the spy in the house of love and death and sex and dreams that is "Infrared." There are few moments of light: "Love Detective" sounds like Bono reciting beat poetry over '50s West Coast Latin jazz. This doesn't rock, but it surely rolls, a recurring nightmare so intriguing that you can't wait to doze off into the next evening's adventure. >>>WAYNE ROBINS

Out

February 27

File Under

Tales from the dark side

R.I.Y.L.

Leonard Cohen,

Black Box Recorder,

Serge Gainsbourg

There are few moments of light: "Love Detective" sounds like Bono reciting beat poetry over '50s West Coast Latin jazz. This doesn't rock, but it surely rolls, a recurring nightmare so intriguing that you can't wait to doze off into the next evening's adventure. >>>WAYNE ROBINS

**AUCH****Remix Tomorrow Goodbye** Force Inc.

For this remix project, Auch's Ekkehard Ehlers recruited some of his multitalented peers, the best and brightest of electronic music's experimental regiment, to reshape his signature click-pop techno creations. The results run the gamut of what is good and bad in experimental techno today. On the pleasant end are Sutekh, Farben and Gez Varley, who bring to Ehlers's quiet, droning beats a flair for the visual, the sultry and the energized (respectively) by stressing the emotive yet often buried synth work that peppers the starkly cold techno found on Auch's original work, *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye*. Less pleasant is the dolorous intro of Donnacha Costello's otherwise house-y vibe, and Dat Politics' decision to splice snippets of Auch tunes in an aggravating non-sequitur fashion over missing basslines—one can stand only so much chintzy carnival music in a lifetime, and this piece of bland electronica goes beyond all reasonable allowances with its goofy blips and blaats. The quietest contribution on *Remix Tomorrow Goodbye*, remixed by Full Swing, is perhaps the most rewarding. Allowing Auch's delectable techno thrust to resonate through a powerful echo chamber and intense digital effecting, it captures the spirit of experimental techno's dancefloor roots by emphasizing a strong rhythm without succumbing to its plasticity. >>>HEATH K. HIGNIGHT

Out

January 23

File Under

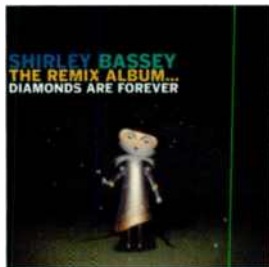
Maximal minimalism

R.I.Y.L.

Maurizio, Monolake,

Various Artists

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**SHIRLEY BASSEY****The Remix Album... Diamonds Are Forever** Nettwerk

Singer Shirley Bassey is best known in the States as the brassy belter of the theme from the movie *Goldfinger*, but in the U.K. she's a near-legendary diva, kind of like Barbra Streisand, only with more built-in raunchiness. Uninhibited by good taste, she pounces on every banal ballad like a ham actor finally getting a juicy role, milking the sucker for all it's worth. As pop vulgarity goes, it doesn't get much better, and the idea of adding a little more sonic glitz to her presentation, which is the premise of *The Remix Album*, doesn't immediately seem like a good idea. It doesn't play out all

Out

February 13

File Under

Gilding the diva

R.I.Y.L.

Propellerheads' "History

Repeating," Jaguar

commercials, Bond themes

that impressively either; after all, aside from a superfluous timeliness, what can Propellerheads bring to a perfect confection like "Goldfinger," or Away Team or Groove Armada add to the emotional striptease of such chansons as "Where Do I Begin" and "Never Never Never," respectively? When these mixmasters are working with the quaint instrumental passages of the original tracks, there's a certain textural inventiveness evident. But once Bassey comes in, things always fail to mesh. She's just too stolid a presence to blend with the playful loops of electronica. Still, this works as a novelty goof, and listening to Twelvetree's Lady reconstruct her reconstruction of "Light My Fire" or DJ Spinnac add turntable asides to her rendition of "Spinning Wheel," one can get off on the layers of wrong-headed interpretation. >>>RICHARD C. WALLS

**ANDREW BIRD'S BOWL OF FIRE****The Swimming Hour** Rykodisc

Andrew Bird has always reached out with a vengeance. Originally heard as the old-timey fiddle sideman who helped Squirrel Nut Zippers sell their retro vaudeville and swing, Bird on his own has focused more on the hot "viper" or gypsy jazz of the '20s and '30s, pushing the neo-swing popular renaissance into more challenging and historically interesting areas. But the fiddler and singer/songwriter has always had other strings to his bow as well, and on his band's third outing, *The Swimming Hour*, Bird calls quite a

Out

April 3

File Under

Post-swing retro chic

R.I.Y.L.

Tom Maxwell, Blue Rags,

Squirrel Nut Zippers

few different tunes. That's his resonant voice front and center over the chugging outlaw blues of "Way Out West" and it's the only thing that ties such a composition in with the self-consciously flaky folk of "Dear Old Greenland." Bird never leaves his roots entirely behind: Opener "Two Way Action" updates '70s Memphis soul and "Too Long" pairs his playful fiddle and lyrics with a tub-thumping, tuba-powered waltz. Plus, the solid musicianship of his crew, which includes sultry singer Nora O'Connor, keyboardist Pat Sansone and Latin-inspired guitarist Colin Bunn, keeps the level sky-high, despite the live sound and style of the recording. Now that he has shown that he can do it all, it may be time for the talented Mr. Bird to finally bring it all together into one distinctive musical vision. >>>CLEA SIMON



BLACK BOX RECORDER

The Facts Of Life *Jetset*

When Black Box Recorder released *The Facts Of Life* in England last year, the title track became a top-20 hit and the album established Luke Haines as the latest in a long line of British songwriters to expertly intertwine social commentary with tales of unraveling relationships. The ex-Auteurs frontman has written some spectacularly dark songs over his career, but his style's especially well suited for this band. It features the equally acerbic songwriter John Moore and singer Sarah Nixey, whose lovely, detached delivery adds steaminess to the sexier tracks while

softening the blow of the morose material. Unlike the title track, whose minimalist R&B backing features Nixey pseudo-rapping about young romance, most of *Facts* operates around deceptively simple pop orchestration. "The English Motorway" places a couple on an emotional road to nowhere; they become mesmerized not only by their strained relations but by the passing landscapes, while a gurgling synthesizer puts the listener in the backseat. "The Art Of Driving" offers an upbeat variation on the theme, and is one of the few tracks to feature Haines's deadpan vocals—sadly, given their effectiveness on 1999's *England Made Me*. On her own, however, Nixey's at ease, teasing the mood between tension and effervescence, and slyly evoking varied pictures of British life that translate smoothly on this side of the pond. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN

Out

March 20

File Under

Apocryphal glitter
and essential gloom

R.I.Y.L.

The Cardigans, Stars,
the Magnetic Fields



THE BLACK HALOS

The Violent Years *Sub Pop*

It seems pretty obvious that the guys in the Black Halos are just shorthaired glam-metal refugees from the '80s who are smart enough to realize that the new millennium has already started. And with a little imagination, you can even picture the videos for the power ballads "Capt. Moody" and "50 Bourbon Street"—a leather-dipped cowboy sitting at a table in a blue neon-lit roadhouse, tears running down his face, smearing his eyeliner as he downs another Jack and Coke. And the chanted chorus of "Sell Out Love"—"Sell out, sell out your loving to

Out

March 20




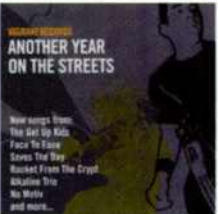

File Under

Glam punk
R.I.Y.L.

Generation X, D Generation,
Mötley Crüe

me, sell out, sell out your love"—will, no doubt, require heavy audience participation when the Black Halos get around to making the double live album they were born to record. What makes this Vancouver quintet appealing is that it's almost as if the band's Poison-and-Mötley Crüe metal impulses are being deeply scrutinized by its punk-rock conscience, so you get all the "Nothing But A Good Time"/"Too Fast For Love" hooks without the cheesy indulgence. When the guitars aren't sticking to the meat of a tune, they're accentuating its melody. Frontman Billy Hopeless has mastered the tone and meter of Dead Boys vocalist Stiv Bators, and though his drooled "Come A-W-N" singing style is heavily affected and often annoying, it provides a gritty counterpoint to the disc's satiny luster. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN

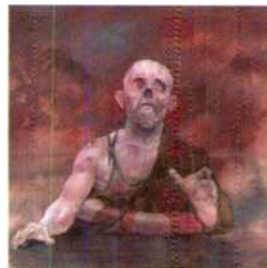
THE COMP FILE (Our guide to compilation CDs)

					
TITLE	Motion: A Six Degrees Dance Collection (Six Degrees)	Music From The Motion Picture <i>The Gift</i> (Will-Lakeshore)	Know Your Enemy (Archenemy)	Another Year On The Streets (Vagrant)	Concerts For A Landmine Free World (Vanguard)
CONCEPT	Hey! Your world music is in my dance! No, your dance music is in my world!	Brooding country tunes set the mood for a psychic thriller.	Indie-poppers with a chronic case of synth flu.	Tastefully blossoming punk label Vagrant delivers new biz from their roster.	Landmines bad! Live acoustic geetars good!
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	International jetsetters on a continental budget	You like your misery with a little <i>twang</i> .	Depeche Mode worship is not an obsession—it's a way of life.	Melody-minded punkers	Folkies and country kids with political leanings
NAMES TO DROP	Bebel Gilberto, dZihan & Kamien, DJ Cam	Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson, Loretta Lynn	We're All Gonna Die, the Elevator Drops, Freezepop	The Get Up Kids, Saves The Day, Face To Face	Emmylou Harris, Steve Earle, Mary Chapin Carpenter
SUMS IT UP	"Drumming Up A Storm" (Bob Holroyd)	"Furnace Room Lullaby" (Neko Case)	"Glittering" (Blake Hazard)	"Crawl" (Alkaline Trio)	"Big Ol' Goofy World" (John Prine)
VERDICT	Only a guest rap by Robin Leach could make this more pseudo-worldly.	Grab a bottle o' Wild Turkey and settle back for a night of unmatched countrified melancholy.	Rife with Casio beats, icy melodies and bored-sounding singers, this'll tide you over until the new new new wave hits.	Vagrant's snapped up some of pop punk's choicest new bands, and this comp's got a handful of rare tracks from the best. Tasty.	These tracks are sparse, beautiful and a real effing downer—but in that good way. Bonus: Your gloom benefits a good cause.

**BOMFUNK MC'S****In Stereo** Epic

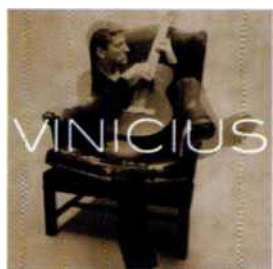
Rapper B.O.W. (Brother Of Words) and DJ Gismo are a pair of ambitious funksters who have taken Finland (and subsequently other parts of Scandinavia and Continental Europe) by storm as Bomfunk MC's. They're a hip-hopping party train on wheels of steel who came rolling onto the Finnish dance scene with a boxcar full of bona-fide breakdancers and a big bag of old-skool tricks. If that sounds vaguely familiar, that's because just two years ago an English duo by the name of the Freestylers landed on these shores with more or less the

same basic playbook. And if Bomfunk MC's weren't aware of that then, it's a mighty interesting coincidence that *In Stereo's* big European single was a housed-up hip-hoppity mélange of sampled slide-guitar, rubbery synth bass and Caribbean-inflected dance instructions titled, yes, "Freestyler." It's a dancefloor natural, particularly for DJs playing to an older crowd who might have vague memories of wasting nights away to the tune of "White Lines" or to a new generation of ravers weaned on Fatboy Slim's referential big beats. But like the rest of *In Stereo's* retro block-rockin' confessions, "Freestyler" sounds too studied and generic to take seriously—song titles like "Uprocking Beats" and "B-Boys & Flygirls" pretty much say it all. >>>MATT ASHARE

**BUCK 65****Man Overboard** Anticon

Hailing from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Buck 65 is one of those ambitious post-wigger rappers with the audacity to stretch hip-hop beyond preconceived notions of the genre. Which means, in the case of *Man Overboard*, few narratives, no song titles, no choruses and no fun. You know it's going to be a bummer when Buck 65 begins the disc with a "hip-hop" version of the Lord's Prayer ("Give us this day our daily gift/ Of science to drop and knowledge to lift"). Like an English major with tattered copies of Ginsberg and Kerouac, Buck 65 tends to rhyme in beat-

inspired fragments and unedited diary entries, a method which loses its charm long before the 70-minute disc is over. And his delivery—drier than saltines, limper than bibb lettuce—is lacking rhythmic conviction or force. Despite all this, the production is darkly brilliant. Composing on the outdated SP1200 sampler, Buck's ominous beat-science combines gothic paranoia and outsized blaxploitation flourishes into trippy sound collages that seem to cry out from a haze of self-medication. And when Buck lifts the mannered artsiness—forgetting the non sequiturs and nonsensical couplets—he can be compelling and occasionally, touching. "This collection of sketches rough and scattered is arranged by instinct! There's entropy at work, but mostly it happened by accident," he intones on track 10. At least he admits it. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN

**VINICIUS CANTUÁRIA****Vinicius** Transparent

Brazilian pop musicians have a history of revering their own traditions even as they depart from them, and Vinicius Cantuária ably expands on the legacy here. His new-millennium bossa nova has a combination of contemporary freshness and stylistic depth that is quintessentially Brazilian, but is equally influenced by the fact that Cantuária has spent six years in New York. While bossa's '50s pioneers took up with Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd, Cantuária taps Bill Frisell, Marc Ribot, Marc Johnson, David Byrne and others for this classy, ambitious set. The

music is eclectic and moody, but smooth as silk, at times reminiscent of maestro Caetano Veloso, with whom Cantuária toured for 10 years. "Cliché do Cliché," co-written with Gilberto Gil, is typical—it's an ambient, sultry ballad with a warm vocal melody and overall sentimental impact enhanced by abstract instrumental interplay between two guitars and a violin. Covering Jobim's "Ela é Carioca," Cantuária hews closer to classic bossa nova, with Frisell subtly extending the guitar harmonies. A few tracks rely on more aggressive rhythms, like "Ordinária," where racing brush work in the drumming contrasts with slow, languorous guitar chords, or "Rio," where Byrne joins in on a lively but pensive samba. But most of the music is sublimely relaxed, seductive, and utterly free from rote genuflection to the traditions it so skillfully reinvents. >>>BANNING EYRE

**NEAL CASAL****Anytime Tomorrow** Morebar

As a kid in the '70s, singer/songwriter Neal Casal drove cross-country with his mother, and his music retains the melodies of the era and the rhythms of the road. *Anytime Tomorrow*, Casal's seventh album of sun-kissed, twangy pop, is so redolent of early-'70s Southern California country rock that it's almost a surprise to find out he resides on the chilly farmlands of Western New Jersey. The album, though, was recorded in North Hollywood with a cast of renowned West Coasters, including venerated producer Jim Scott, pedal-steel whiz Greg Leisz (Joni Mitchell, k.d. lang)

and keyboardist John Ginty (Jewel, Matthew Sweet), along with Emmylou Harris's drummer, Don Heffington, and New Jersey vocalist Angie McKenna, whose sweet voice plays Emmylou to Casal's Gram Parsons. Jim Scott does for Casal what he did for Tom Petty and Whiskeytown—he creates a spacious, clean sound that allows the songs to breathe and melodies to flow freely. But it's Ginty who is the secret weapon here, with a multitude of subtle keyboard sounds bubbling up to color Casal's lyric scenery, such as a touch of Farfisa organ on "Oceanview," and shimmering B3 organ and Richard Manuel-style piano on the gorgeous "Fell On Hard Times": "From fireworks and peaches/ To weed, speed and bluegrass/ From buses that burn/ And barns that lean down." >>>MEREDITH OCHS



THE CHAMBER STRINGS

Month Of Sundays Bobsled

Chamber Strings songwriter Kevin Junior has pulled off a neat trick. Again. On the follow-up to 1999's exquisite *Gospel Morning*, Junior simultaneously borrows from so many influences that he manages to transform stylistic homages into something uniquely his own. Besides a knack for crafting devastatingly lovely songs that use nostalgia and desire as an emotional jumping-off point, the guy certainly knows his pop history: *Month Of Sundays* is awash in lavish, knowing references to universal touchstones, from the Beach Boys and Brill Building-era Goffin-King to cult

objects of fascination like ex-Swell Maps main man Epic Soundtracks, with whom Junior recorded and toured before Soundtracks' death in 1997. A minor-key piano figure opens the instrumental title track, which quickly establishes a lush atmosphere of Brian Wilson/Todd Rundgren-style opulence. As with his band's last album, there are a few scuffed pearls scattered about that reveal the influences behind the eggbeater-shag hairdo Junior favors (the Stones-via-Primal Scream-ish "Let Me Live My Own Life" pulls out an arsenal of Keef-worthy licks). But mostly, Junior's more satin than sleaze. With brass and strings underpinning a Gordy-gilded melody, and Junior's pillow-talk tenor gliding over the pulse of churchy organ, "It's No Wonder" sounds like the lost lovechild of Alex Chilton and the Temptations. >>>JONATHAN PERRY

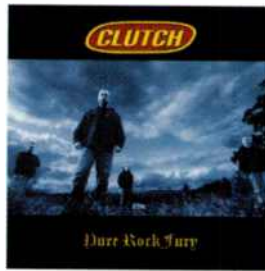
Out

March 27

File Under

Pleasingly tuneful version of that annoying record store guy R.I.Y.L.

Beach Boys, Alex Chilton, Swell Maps



CLUTCH

Pure Rock Fury Atlantic

Clutch reinvent themselves with each record: Early material planted them squarely in the Helmet school of hardcore; 1995's *Clutch* turned them into funk-metal preachers; and 1998's *The Elephant Riders* painted them as Corrosion Of Conformity's well-read cousins. *Pure Rock Fury* rolls the best of each into one, balancing the experimentation that dominated *Riders* with slabs of good ol' rock. The "Paranoid"-esque punk metal of the title track tempers the ever-shifting time signatures of "American Sleep," while funk workouts "Frankenstein"

Out

March 13

File Under

Clutch's cargo consolidated R.I.Y.L.

Corrosion Of Conformity, Helmet, Black Sabbath

(not the Edgar Winter song) and "Braizenhead" are bridged by the comic-book-hero hardcore of "Immortal." The bandmembers have also tightened up: Tim Sult's guitar solos are leaner, Dan Maines's bass tone has grown fatter and Jean-Paul Gaster's drums finally thunder like they do onstage. Vocalist Neil Fallon forsakes his signature historical fiction and conspiracy tales for wry commentary: On "Careful With That Mic..." he skewers rap-metal lunkheads not with Bizkit-style insults but by embarrassing their flow with off-beat lines like "Mmm, this ice cream is really good, you want some of it?/ Oh, my bad, I didn't know you were lactose intolerant." The result is less diverse but more solid than their past efforts; for a band that hasn't achieved the exposure it deserves, that might be the right move. >>>TOM MALLON



NIKKA COSTA

Everybody Got Their Something Virgin

As Nikka Costa sings on "Tug Of War," there are two inner Nikkas duking it out for supremacy—maybe more. The daughter of veteran trad-pop producer Don Costa and godchild of Frank Sinatra himself, Nikka began her career 20 years ago as one of those freakish, *Fame*-like child prodigies (she opened for the Police at age eight); became a big teeny-bop star everywhere but in America; reinvented herself five years ago (à la Alanis) as an Angry Chick Rocker; and is finally making her U.S. debut as a retro-funk chanteuse in the

Erykah Badu/Macy Gray mode. And we do mean retro, with a pre-hip-hop bounce and late-'60s touches (phase-shifted guitars, dissonant horn choirs, comfy electric pianos) worthy of Lenny Kravitz. The two Nikkas confront each other on every track—the naïve girl and the jaded pop professional, the Fiona Apple-type prodigy and the seasoned journeyman, the earthy alto rising from the depths and the churchy melisma dripping from above, the Saturday-night swinger and the Sunday-morning sermonizer. Indeed, Costa's lyrics range from the go-girl self-affirmative to the outright messianic vein of Kravitz or P.M. Dawn. Costa's out to save your soul for Soul—if she can save her own first. >>>GARY SUSMAN

Out

April 4

File Under

Jill of all trades

R.I.Y.L.

Erykah Badu, Macy Gray, Fiona Apple



CROPDUSTER ★

Drunk Uncle We Put Out

Hoboken, New Jersey's Cropduster purportedly named their second effort *Drunk Uncle* because the bandmembers call each other "Uncle." It's not the most inventive nickname, but it is appealing in a sophomoric way, like something the guys on *Friends* might come up with. Cropduster's songs teeter on the same fine line, the one between endearing and stupid, packing in tight alterna-pop hooks and quirky instrumental breaks (involving the likes of cowbells matched with distorted guitars) like the ones that Cake and Fountains Of Wayne built

Out

January 16

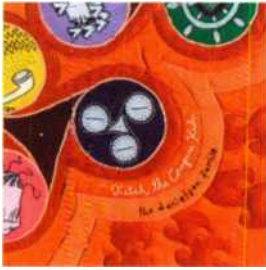
File Under

Oisinguous and loving it

R.I.Y.L.

Weezer, Cake, Fountains Of Wayne

their names on back in the mainstream modern-rock heyday of 1996. But that was a long time ago, and these days, Cropduster's Marc Maurizi offers a cocksure, jokey lyrical style ("Five, six, they always follow three and four"; "Got a lot of friends/ They all know my name") and nasal, *Mellow Gold* croon that too often come across as an act; worse, there's the sense that maybe that act has the band itself fooled, too. That's not to say that the quartet's music isn't catchy and well-played—tracks like "People Person" (about hating *People* magazine) and "Mind Rock," the record's most fuzz-laden and least self-consciously ironic number, are rollickingly strummy. And with production slick as a bowling alley, at the very least, Cropduster doesn't sound like a bunch of wannabe mainstream alterna-rockers—they sound like the real thing. >>>DYLAN SIEGLER



THE DANIELSON FAMILIE

Fetch The Compass Kids *Secretly Canadian*

Where most music fueled by religious fervor takes a generic backseat to the message, the Danielson Famile project is so deeply eccentric that it exists far beyond the dimensions of Christian rock (or any other kind, for that matter) in some interplanetary, as-yet-unnamed realm. With piano anchoring every cut, *Fetch The Compass Kids* comes across as a demented church-basement rehearsal for a Passion play directed by and starring resident enthusiast Daniel Smith. When the tempos stop shifting more than early King Crimson, tunes as jaunty

as Ben Folds Five's emerge. But then those are sung by Smith, who frequently revs his pitch up to a pew-clearing 78 rpm. It can get wearisome peeling off these layers of terminal originality to get at the introspection underneath, but the songs here still manage to convey a one-of-a-kind sense of spirit possession. The only question that remains is where Smith can take his vision next. However much the Danielson Famile sound like no other band in history, *Fetch The Compass Kids* isn't all that different from the group's four previous albums (three of which *Secretly Canadian* reissued earlier this year). Here's hoping that in the future, he offers bigger roles to his siblings, especially sisters Rachel and Megan, who respond to a particularly self-searching verse with a hilarious chant of "Calm down, Dan." >>>KEVIN JOHN

Out

April 2

File Under

Heaven is a place in space

R.I.Y.L.

Marcy, Lucia Pamela,
the Shaggs



ALANA DAVIS

Under The Rainbow *Elektra*

Three years ago, when Alana Davis released her debut album, *Blame It On Me* (Elektra), she played the Lilith and H.O.R.D.E. fests, and established an immediate footprint with a daring version of Ani DiFranco's "32 Flavors." Listening to her long-awaited second album, *Under The Rainbow*, it's obvious that Davis is not in alternative land anymore. This polished, pretty, but ultimately predictable-sounding disc is a virtual disavowal of Davis's Greenwich Village singer/songwriter roots, and of any affiliation with the likes of DiFranco. With tracks like

"God Of Love," "Circus Of Love" and "Easy To Love," Davis has been positioned as something of an urban pop diva. She's certainly got the chops for it. The daughter of noted jazz bassist Walter Davis Jr. and vocalist Annamarie Schofield is in her mid-20s, but has the power and finesse of a soul singer twice her age: Think of a young Chaka Khan, or a Sade with guts and gusto. But the overly polished arrangements highlight the mellismatic qualities of her voice at the expense of connection. And where's her guitar? Oh well. The anthemic title song sounds like a multi-format hit, and you'll be hearing the rest as well, as background music in hipper bistros from the Bay Area to Boston. >>>WAYNE ROBINS

Out

May 8

File Under

The real slim Sade

R.I.Y.L.

Sade, Erykah Badu,
Chaka Khan

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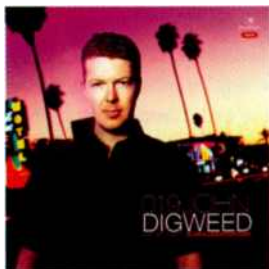
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JOHN DIGWEED Global Underground—Los Angeles

Global Underground—Boxed

The setting where a DJ spins is often as important as the crowd in determining the quality of a set. But despite L.A.'s reputation as the seat of all things superficial, trance champion John Digweed delivers a two-CD mix that goes beyond skin deep on his third *Global Underground* edition, tapping into the spiritual and cerebral sides of the City Of Angels. While harder, physical cuts like Bipath's primal "Paranoize" and Dirty Harry's sexy, laughing "Musica" speak to the feet and pelvis, others—such as Way Out West's gradually building

"The Fall" (featuring a swirling snippet of the jazz standard "Autumn Leaves")—stimulate the ears, brain and heart. Usually, the U.K. native operates on several levels concurrently, emphasizing tracks that change character frequently (the spacious, then throbbing, "One" by Aria), or slowly unite seemingly incongruous components (the warping, mechanical beats and Badalamenti-esque strings of Brothers Love Dubs' "1-800-Ming"). Although many cuts feature reflective breakdowns where the beats spiral off into the ether, the feeling of constantly moving through three dimensions never subsides. Digweed teases every sense, and engages each body part, perpetually skirting the edge of climax, so when the 140-plus minute set ends with a bang—literally—with Salt Tank's "The Energy," the impression left is one of lingering euphoria, not a sudden comedown. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY

Out

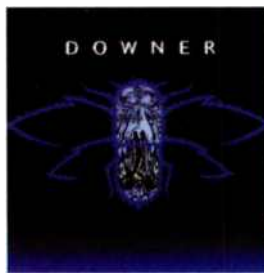
February 27

File Under

Beats for a sound
mind and body

R.I.Y.L.

Dave Ralph, Deep Dish,
Bedrock



DOWNER

Downer Roadrunner

If Metallica continue their transformation from metal titans to alternative hard-rockers, they could do much worse than to end up sounding something like Orange County's Downer, who find a way to combine the angst, alienation and heavy riffage of Tool with the grunge-derived, detuned mudrock of Godsmack and Alice In Chains. Downer comes from the same post-punk scene that spawned the Offspring and Korn, and the band's salient feature is the vocal work of John Scott, who brings to mind the Ozzyish singing of Dexter from the

Out

April 10

File Under

Grunge redux

R.I.Y.L.

Helmet, Godsmack,
Jane's Addiction

Offspring. Scott's flair for the dramatic helps turn thick, guitar-driven stompers like "Bi Furious" and "Flex" into entertaining platforms for his thespian inclinations, and lead single "The Last Time" reaches anthemic heights that aren't that far off from classic Jane's Addiction, and are just as tuneful. Producer Bob Marlette, who's worked with Tony Iommi, Sinistar and Alice Cooper in the past, brings out Downer's explosiveness without sacrificing anything in the way of warmth, and drummer Tracey Sledge injects his muscular beats with a nice sense of groove. It may be marketed as nü metal, but it also signals the reemergence of something that not too long ago we all willingly called grunge. >>>MARTIN POPOFF



ENDO

Evolve Columbia

Miami's Endo is the latest in the long line of radio-ready metal bands to emerge fully formed from the bowels of the music industry in the last few years. The group may have an urban pedigree, but its disenfranchised grunt sounds positively middle-American on this debut offering. Singer Gil Bitton raps and rocks his way through a melee of violent riffs, letting up only for the occasional hissing electronic interlude. His take on rage rock is far from revolutionary, but the band does manage to come up with its share of raucous grooves to frame his anger. "I

Out

March 20

File Under

Menacing merch-metal

R.I.Y.L.

Disturbed, Puya,
Union Underground

can't breathe 'cause I don't wanna breathe no more," sings Bitton at the beginning of "Malice," summing up the song's leaden stomp. The singer's instincts are stronger than most of his contemporaries—this guy knows when to rhyme and when to whine. He works up a little sneer during the chorus of the punked-out "Penicillin," one of the disc's few real jolts of adrenaline. The band also tacks a thrashy outro onto the end of "Save Us," but mostly it suffers from a rookie case of the suburban sludge blues. And no amount of rancor from Bitton is enough to cure that. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON

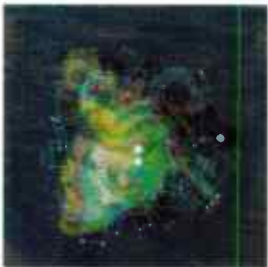


ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD • R.I.Y.L. - RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



the ex
dizzy spells
 Out
 April 17
 File Under
 Time-hardened punks
 R.I.Y.L.
 Fugazi, Shellac,
 Public Image Ltd.

Twenty-plus years into their career, Dutch punk band the Ex are the only still-extant band of their generation about whom it's impossible to say that their old stuff was better. They've gotten considerably smarter, tougher and more inventive with time. That said, *Dizzy Spells* is basically a twin to 1998's *Starters Alternators*. As before, the lyrics are generally either punning geopolitical rants by head shouter G.W. Sok (on Union Carbide's PR firm Burson Masteller: "They master disaster/ They mask the burning store") or based on texts by obscure poets; as before, the core of the band's sound is guitarists Terrie and Andy's dueling shredding-sheet-metal atonalities and Gordian-knot rhythms; as before, Sok's harangues are replaced by six-fisted drummer Katrin and her faintly Eastern European-folk soprano for a couple of tracks. Still, this is a grimmer and denser album than the Ex has made in many years. Their rhythmic edge seems somehow vengeful, and Sok's words are underscored by a new weariness about the passage of time. But taking the long view is why being professional punks for this long has improved them: They've actually directed their lives by their anarchist principles for decades, and you can hear it both in their articulate fury and in the collective precision of their attack. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



STEVE FISK
999 Levels Of Undo Sub Pop
 As a performer and a producer, Steve Fisk put together a résumé that is as impressive as it is extensive—from cameos on Negativland's *Escape From Noise* and Stephen Jesse Bernstein's *Prison* to work with Soundgarden, Nirvana, Unwound and Soul Coughing. Fisk is a savvy, intelligent audio manipulator whose kitchen-sink approach is occasionally a bit overwhelming, always unique and often rather amusing. Fans of his stellar instrumental-rock project Pell Mell or Pigeonhed, his collaboration with Satchel singer Shawn Smith, should, however, be warned that Fisk's solo recordings are his most challenging. *999 Levels Of Undo*, with all its subversive sonic twists and turns, is no exception. Guest vocalists (Heather Duby, Pain Teens' Bliss Blood, the Gardenias' Stephanie Schulz and poet Richard Denner), guest musicians (Soundgarden's Kim Thayil, Pell Mell's Greg Freeman, Shtum's Christian McNeill) and a litany of loops make it hard to pin this album down to any one sound or style. Fisk ruminates on a range of subjects, including physics ("Polymorphic Light Eruption"), international relations ("Amateur European," "LEstancia") and simplicity ("The Backwards Song"), while "Aviation Oakie" contains something that sounds like a quote from *Speed Racer*. Meanwhile, the music runs the gamut from jungle and techno grooves to hip-hop beats to what might be anime soundtrack samples, which makes categorization not only impossible, but utterly meaningless. >>>MARK WOODLIEF

Out
 March 6
 File Under
 Give the producer some
 R.I.Y.L.
 Negativland, William Orbit,
 Spacetime Continuum

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the single:
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 mastered by Howie Weinberg





KINGS OF CONVENIENCE ★

Quiet Is The New Loud Source-Astralwerks

Kings Of Convenience is a promising Norwegian duo that matches the title of its second American release with a winsome and, yes, rather quiet brand of folky pop. The slow, melancholy set makes the most of a minimalist palette, primarily the hushed vocal interplay between Eirik Glambek Bøe and Erlend Øye, their acoustic guitar strums, and occasional dabs of piano, brushed drums, or a lone brass or string instrument. With their simple shuffling arrangements, the pair's songs recall the early '80s

acoustic work of Everything But The Girl, especially on vaguely jazzy numbers like "Singing Softly To Me" and "The Girl From Back Then." Like Simon & Garfunkel did a few generations earlier, Kings Of Convenience stuff their songs with feathery two-man harmonies that billow out from breezy melodies. Songs like "I Don't Know What I Can Save You From" and "Summer On The Westhill" are lovely and jewel-like, tiny prisms projecting rays of emotions, while the tart "Failure" suggests a more flowery Spinanes. The sincerity and sweetness may be cloying to some—as on "Little Kids," which begins, "Little kids playing in the park downtown..."—but it's all part of *Quiet Is The New Loud's* considerable charm. >>>LYDIA VANDERLOO

Out

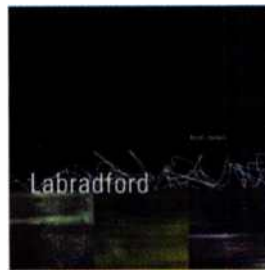
March 6

File Under

Soft sells

R.I.Y.L.

Red House Painters, the Softies, Belle & Sebastian



LABRADFORD

Fixed::content Kranky

For those who swear by its intoxicating effect, Labradford's signature sound—crisp baritone guitars twanging in an eerie, ambient twilight—is an absinthe-like intoxicant whose formula ought to be kept secret and sacrosanct. Sure enough, the drumless Virginia-bred trio strays little from their Eno-meets-Morricone mindset on *Fixed::content*, working with the same restraint and cinematic minimalism that made the group's previous recordings such perfect examples of millennial nacht-music. If anything, Labradford has pared down from the string quartet-assisted sound of

Out

February 20

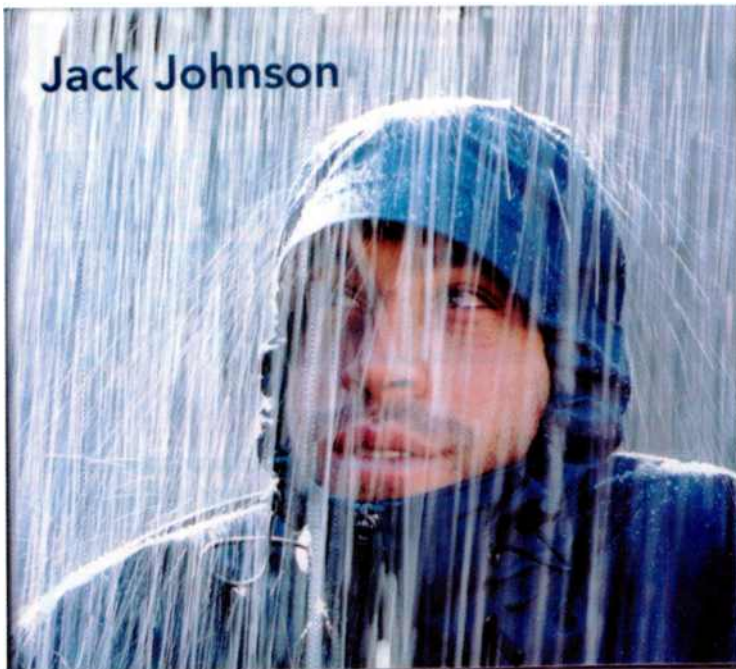
File Under

Cinematic slowcore

R.I.Y.L.

Low, Pan-American, Stars Of The Lid, Brian Eno

Naranja, relying on guitar, bass and swatches of vintage keyboard. *Fixed::content's* epic closer, "Wien," a study in shuddering silences, bell-like motifs, and tonal colors, is blue in mood and black in humor, a purple-green meditation shot through with shades of regretful gray—a ruddy winter sunset over the rushes, shadowed by stormclouds. Too pastoral? Maybe, but Labradford's secret is as much structural as lyrical, and their compositional strategy is as much about the intention that spawned it as the images it spawns. In other words, if Labradford's music were half as simple as it sounds, its appeal wouldn't remain such a mystery. You could describe *Fixed::content* as just another fine example of David Lynch-inspired rock, but there's more at work here than simply a Bauhaus rereading of Dick Dale's songbook or an electro-acoustic treatment of Duane Eddy. >>>JAMES ROTONDI



Jack Johnson

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LOS SUPER SEVEN

Canto Columbia Legacy

Los Super Seven, David Hidalgo and Cesar Rosas's Los Lobos offshoot, made its mark as a Mexican-American supergroup with a 1998 album of the same name and won the Grammy for best Mexican-American music performance for their efforts. On *Canto*, the group's second outing, however, Hidalgo, Rosas, Ruben Ramos and Rick Trevino broaden their horizons to encompass a wider cross-section of Latin America and welcome Peruvian singer Susana Baca and Brazil's legendary Caetano Veloso, as well as Mavericks frontman Raul Malo, into the fold. Gone from the Grammy-

Out

March 13

File Under

Pan-Latin

R.I.Y.L.

Los Lobos, Caetano Veloso, Ry Cooder

winning lineup are Flaco Jimenez (whose accordion work was key on the first CD), Freddy Fender and Joe Ely. The results are mixed: Freed from their Tejano moorings, Los Super Seven drift all over the Latin musical map. The disc begins promisingly enough by homing in on Central America with Malo's gloriously full-throated vocal on "Siboney" and a thoughtful "El Pescador," where Cesar Rosas sings his heart out. On the downside, Veloso's dreamy remake of his own "Qualquem Coisa" doesn't improve on the original, and the sublime Tex-Mex feel of Rick Trevino's "Paloma Guaramera" makes for a disjointed lead-in to Veloso's closing cut, a new version of "Baby," even more cutely psychedelic than his '60s original or the cover by Os Mutantes. *Canto* is an ambitious effort, but it never quite catches its stride, and even the normally wonderful Susana Baca sounds strangely out of step. >>>CHRIS NICKSON



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LOVE TRACTOR

The Sky At Night Razor & Tie

To borrow a phrase from another well-known Athens band, Love Tractor was always somewhat out of time. Breezy, countryish, slightly cosmic and largely instrumental, the group's records—like 1984's *Til The Cows Come Home* and 1987's *This Ain't No Outerspace Ship*—didn't have much to do with alternative rock even in its '80s heyday. It has even less to do with what's going on now, which may be why their new album—not strictly a reunion, since they sat out the '90s without officially breaking up—sounds so refreshing. Like

their last couple of '80s albums, *The Sky At Night* ditches the instrumental format and has vocals throughout. But the voices are just one element in the soundscape. The arrangements are about doing a lot with a little: "Palace Of Illusion" wrings beauty and tension out of a ridiculously simple rhythm-guitar lick. "The Ship Sailed On" is a six-minute song with one line of lyric, but it's the right line at the right time. And "Balthus" has to be the most poetic song ever written about taking laundry off a clothesline. The band sounds unaffected by the 13-year break, and R.E.M. diehards will be glad to know that Bill Berry comes out of retirement to play some percussion. >>>BRETT MILANO

Out

March 6

File Under

Cosmic American music

R.I.Y.L.

R.E.M., *Widespread Panic*,
Television



MIRWAIS

Production Naïve-Epic

With the domestic release of Mirwais' debut album, America gets its chance to see why its biggest pop star, Madonna, hand-picked the French producer to helm her latest, club-friendly "reinvention." That, or Daft Punk were too busy, since Mirwais' esthetic, with its slinky basslines and techno shadings, echoes that of the French house champions. It's particularly evident on songs like "I Can't Wait" and "Disco Science," the song that not only samples the intro to the Breeders' "Cannonball" but also initially caught Madonna's ear. Mirwais' production, though, is more eclectic than you'd expect, for both good and ill: from the DJ Shadow-like barrage of rumbling drums and DJ cuts on "Definitive Beat" to the plaintive singing and *Twin Peaks*-ish babbling of Madonna on the spooky "Paradise (Not For Me)" to the dreadful, noodling trip-hop of "Involution." Like many French dance-music producers, Mirwais is best when he's being sexually playful, as on "V.I. (The Last Words He Said Before Leaving)," a slow, gripping shadow dance filled with meandering guitar licks and elicit bedroom talk. Unfortunately, Mirwais isn't so much sexy as he is pornographic: all throbbing bass, brutish dancefloor force and a neglecting of the nuances. Then again, knowing her history, that could just very well be the reason the Material Girl chose him in the first place. >>>JOSEPH PATEL

Out

April 3

File Under

House-boy techno

R.I.Y.L.

Madonna, Daft Punk,
DJ Shadow

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MONSTER MAGNET

God Says No A&M

Singer Dave Wyndorf seems more Idiot King than Lizard King, but he does a damn good knock-off of Jim Morrison's hell-burnt ghost on the title track to Jersey outfit Monster Magnet's fifth disc, crooning mock-Satanic poetry over a snaky groove that's full of incense and peppermints. *God Says No* dips a toe into trip-hop's rhythmic stew, but this album's an unabashed throwback to the '60s glories of garage psychedelia—raw enough to feel uncalculated, but calculated enough to have all the right signifiers: hairy fuzz-tone guitar, cheesy organ and a

Out

March 27

File Under

Four-car garage psych

R.I.Y.L.

Rob Zombie, Marilyn Manson,
the Seeds

three-chord heart. "Kiss Of The Scorpion" could be a *Nuggets* cut, if not for Wyndorf's ravings about living in the flames of the sweetest hell and sucking the cock of the fire god. Wyndorf's fetish for sin, damnation and demonology remains both asset and liability. His yowling for doom and violation is a hoot, yet he's a one-trick—or worse, maybe one-joke—lyricist. Luckily, he's also a charismatic performer who can jolt his voice into rubbery twists for each song, even putting on a lascivious mud mask for the Mississippi one-chord blues stomp "Gravity Well." And when Wyndorf becomes too much—or not enough—guitarists Ed Mundell and Phil Caivano blast out of the mix like fireworks, their explosive colors obliterating his dark posturing. >>>TED DROZDOWSKI



NEBULA

Charged Sub Pop

Fu Manchu released its strongest collection of action-kid punk around the same time the three disgruntled Fu Manchu expatriates of Nebula issued their full-length 1999 debut, *To The Center* (Sub Pop). Main Nebula songwriter and guitarist/singer Eddie Glass crafted the type of lava-lamp proto-metal record you could drift away to toking on a Sunday afternoon, a safe distance from the Foghat "Slow Ride" territory of Fu Manchu's *King Of The Road*. This time around, the titles alone—"Do It Now," "Ignition" and "Shaker"—make it

Out

April 10

File Under

Retro hard rock

R.I.Y.L.

Blue Cheer, Led Zeppelin, Free

clear that Eddie and the boys could give a shit about comparisons. The tunes on *Nebula* burst through Nebula's past stoner daze, lean and muscular, with a cocky hotdogging swagger. "Do It Now" brims with Fu Manchu-isms, the MC5-meets-Zeppelin pummel of the riffage, the high-tension lyrics like "turn it off, plug it in," "complete the action, go with it," and "do it now or you're gonna miss." Other tunes stay vigorous, mining the throaty, chugging blues tones of paisley thud acts like Free and Iron Butterfly. With the four cuts featuring prominent acoustic guitars, Nebula goes for weighty gloom. But the poppy "This One" conjures up glorious late-'60s warmth, nappy sideburns, elephant pants and the breezy heft of "Saturday Freedom"-era Blue Cheer. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



OLD 97'S

Satellite Rides Elektra

Like any country crooner worth his tear-diluted beer—and like their heartland rocker acolytes in the Bob Seger/John Mellencamp school—the Old 97's have learned to play uplifting songs with depressing lyrics. On their fifth album, the band (for whom “alt-country” seems too limiting a term) plays tunes about deserted small towns, torn-down landmarks and dead sweethearts, all designed to set boots a-tappin’ and voices a-hollerin’. Blame it on singer/composer/guitarist Rhett Miller, who can make even a joyful stomper like

“King Of All The World” sound like James Cameron’s suicide note. (Give bassist Murry Hammond credit, too, for the high-lonesome sound of his two fist-wavers, “Up The Devil’s Pay” and “Can’t Get A Line.”) Miller’s lyrics here are filled with mordant one-liners, like “I believe in love but it don’t believe in me,” and “I may be a bird in a cage, but at least it’s your cage.” “Weightless” is the funniest musical vision of the afterlife this side of the Talking Heads’ “Heaven,” and his “Am I Too Late” is the most danceable dirge since Pearl Jam’s cover of “Last Kiss.” Grab your favorite manic-depressive, pour a shot of tequila and arsenic, slap down this disc, and paar-taay! >>>GARY SUSMAN

Out

March 20

File Under

Bipolar roots rock

R.I.Y.L.

Wilco, Son Volt,

John Mellencamp



THE ORB

Cydonia MCA

Twelve years ago, the Orb’s commander-in-chief, Dr. Alex Paterson, practically invented ambient house with the remarkable debut *Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld*. Mashing up samples of lawnmowers and Buzz Aldrin with Augustus Pablo-style dub and Pink Floyd-ish ambience, it turned legions of guitar lovers on to the then-nascent electronic music scene (the single “Little Fluffy Clouds” was later used by Volkswagen for their Beetle ads). Paterson followed up with the excellent, dubby *UFOrb* before spiraling

Out

February 27

File Under

Little dubby house

R.I.Y.L.

Moby, Lee “Scratch” Perry,

Brian Eno

off into deep space with two aimless late-’90s opuses. Thankfully, Cydonia rediscovers the creative highs of the Orb’s early days. Working with a pool of collaborators, Paterson balances his earthy dub sensibilities with the multi-layered, rhythmic production sound that made him famous. For every bass-heavy slice of ambience (the quaking “A Mile Long Lump Of Lard,” the gently undulating “Centuries”), there’s a dancefloor-oriented workout (the progressive trance of “Turn It Down,” the breakbeat science of “Thursday’s Keeper”), all helped by the addition of live vocalists—an Orb first. Of course, there is still much silliness (the fairground wurlitzer on “Egnable”) but the result is an album that continually surprises with repeat listens. That Orb in the sky is still pleasingly in a terrestrial orbit. >>>KIERAN WYATT



SHUGGIE OTIS

Inspiration Information Luaka Bop

Singer/guitarist Shuggie Otis was an early-’70s session musician on soul records (and the odd Frank Zappa disc), but he also made one collector-favorite album of his own in 1974 before drifting off to God-knows-where. *Inspiration Information* was clearly the product of somebody who’d spent a lot of time listening to Sly & The Family Stone’s *Fresh*—it’s got the same kind of accidental, dope-speed funk, with rhythms and voices casually percolating into place alongside each other—but also lighter and more playful than that

landmark of sludge-soul. When he’s not copping Sly’s moves altogether (as on “Aht Uh Mi Hed”), Shuggie’s voice and guitar playing are so airy they threaten to blow away in the breeze, and snatches of organ and strings swirl in and out of the mix like autumn leaves. When he hits a groove, though, he evokes the kind of dancing that doesn’t happen in a crowded disco, but alone on a beach on a sunny day. This reissue appends a couple of single tracks from around the same time as *Inspiration* (notably “Strawberry Letter 23,” a later hit for the Brothers Johnson), as well as the long 1971 instrumental “Freedom Flight,” where Otis channels the first rays of the rock-soul sun that barely rose. It’s not exactly a “psychedelic classic,” but it’s a smooth and pleasant trip. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK

Out

March 20

File Under

Little lost soul

R.I.Y.L.

Mid-’70s Sly Stone, early Funkadelic, Os Mutantes



NICHOLAS PAYTON

Dear Louis Verve

For a while, Nicholas Payton seemed like the anti-Wynton: a young New Orleans trumpeter who dug deep into the hard ‘n’ horny roots of his hometown’s jazz and left the pretensions to... well, you know. Payton even cut an album in 1997 with the legendary Doc Cheatham, who was then seven decades into his career and spicy as ever. But lately, Payton’s taste for smooth, large-ensemble arrangements has taken him into supper-club terrain. Last year’s *Nick @ Night* got bogged in Payton’s crusade for harmonic sophistication, which played out too often as

borderline fuzak treacle. And this tribute to Louis Armstrong spends much of its time ignoring the late giant’s fat genius in favor of Payton’s desire to stamp his own all over Armstrong’s music. King Louis rightly believed that a simple melody, a nice spare harmonic structure and a gutty tone—whether it be from his trumpet or his voice—was nearly all that was necessary to put over everything from his seminal small-group instrumental breakthroughs like “Potato Head Blues” to his late-career vocal hits, “Hello Dolly” and “What A Wonderful World.” That, and heart. Granted, Payton’s solos here wave Louis’s banner; especially the little corker in “Blues In The Night.” And some entries, like “Tiger Rag,” stay street. But Payton makes things too lush too often. So once again the best tribute to Armstrong remains his own spirited recordings. >>>TED DROZDOWSKI

Out

March 20

File Under

Medium-lite jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Louis Armstrong, Doc Cheatham, Sidney Bechet



RAISINS IN THE SUN

Raisins In The Sun *Rounder*

The Raisins are a seasoned assortment of songwriters' songwriters and musicians' musicians, all of whom have logged at least a couple of decades in rock. And the Sun would most likely refer to the dry desert heat of Tucson, Arizona, where they teamed up in the studio with little more than 10 days to turn a list of potential song titles into a record. Jules Shear, who's written songs for everyone from the Bangles to Roger McGuinn, and former Green On Red guitarist Chuck Prophet split most of the vocals; veteran bassist

Harvey Brooks (the Doors, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan) and drummer Winston Watson (Dylan, Warren Zevon) lay down a firm, grooving rhythmic foundation throughout; Jim Dickinson, whose vast credits include everything from playing piano on the Stones' "Wild Horses" to producing Big Star's *Third* and the Replacements' *Pleased To Meet Me*, divides his time between organ, piano and the gruff lead vocal on "Nobody Loses"; and the production team of Sean Slade and Paul Q. Kolderie (Radiohead's *Pablo Honey*, Hole's *Live Through This*), fill in where needed on guitar and keys. There's no showboating here, no sense of egos battling it out. Instead, Raisins In The Sun simply get down to the business of working up some gritty, soulful roots rock that's as timeless as it is refreshing. >>>MATT ASHARE

Out

February 6

File Under

Deep deep roots

R.I.Y.L.

Jules Shear, Warren Zevon,
Chuck Prophet



REACH THE SKY

Friends, Lies, And The End Of The World

Victory

Boston's Reach The Sky is one of the most visible proponents of the clean-cut, no-frills brand of East Coast hardcore that's been making a comeback on the all-ages scene over the last few years. This is music for doing backflips off speaker cabinets to, all right, but with lyrics as sentimental as the tempos are testosterone-driven. On its second Victory full-length, the band moves perilously close to emo territory: With his pristinely picked intros and

sliding octave licks, guitarist Chris Chasse is already there, and singer Ian Larrabee sounds like he's learning to love melody more every day. But the group's jackhammer beats are as uncompromising as ever, and only the toughest hardcore thug could resist a wistful floor-punching anthem like "This Sadness Alone." On "Good Bye And Good Luck," Larrabee confirms his status as punk's cuddliest teddy bear, slapping a long-lost friend on the back even as he laments how the two have grown apart. His high voice cuts through the din better than that of your average gruff-voiced hardcore frontman, whether he's actually singing on the borderline pop-punk of "A Year And A Smile" or just yelling over a mosh breakdown. Reach The Sky may not be the first band to make the pit safe for hugs, but it's definitely leading the revival. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON

Out

March 20

File Under

Nice guy hardcore

R.I.Y.L.

Ignite, H2O, Gorilla Biscuits

KINGS OF CONVENIENCE QUIET IS THE NEW LOUD

Norway's Kings Of Convenience find themselves at the forefront of a quiet revolution, crafting beautifully melodic ballads that fans of Nick Drake and Belle and Sebastian will instantly be drawn towards.

"The beauty of Kings Of Convenience is their understatement. It's two guitars, two voices and no fuss" - NME

Co-produced by
Ken Nelson (Coldplay, Badly Drawn Boy).

Available on CD/LP





THE SADIES

Tremendous Efforts Bloodshot

It's not necessarily the ingredients in the Sadies' psychedelic country stew that makes this disc 35 minutes of intrigue. It's the raw, feverish, sometimes silly and sometimes scary garage-rockin' energy that guitar-playing and singing brothers Travis and Dallas Good, drummer Mike Belitsky and bass player Sean Dean bring to the mix. The Canadian quartet's fourth release incorporates everything from echoing spaghetti-Western twang to eerie keyboard moodswings à la the Doors, sometimes all on one tune ("Pass The

Chutney"). The primal agony of the vocals on "Loved On Look," penned for Elvis by country songwriting legend Dallas Frazier, is ragged and mean-eyed, right down to the "shoop shoop" in the chorus. A thoroughly lo-fi affair produced with the help of Steve Albini, *Tremendous Efforts* contains a few swaying instrumentals such as "Ridge Runner Rag" and the kinda Celtic companion "Ridge Runner Rell," bolstered by bluegrass-playing members of the very musical Good family. The Good brothers also have a knack for particularly bleak or morbid lost love ballads and even the occasional catchy pop melody, all leavened by unapologetically average vocals and far-above-average fire. >>>BILL KISLIUK

Out

March 20

File Under

Insurgent, lysergic country

R.I.Y.L.

Neko Case, Geraldine Fibbers,
Robbie Fulks



BOB SCHNEIDER

Lonelyland Universal

Around Austin, Texas, Bob Schneider has seen his local rep snowball by infamous proportions. In the process, he's had to shoulder the inflated expectations of a town as well known for its growing list of almost-rans (remember Charlie Sexton?) as its homegrown legends. That might explain why, on *Lonelyland*, Schneider sounds like he wants to be everything to everybody. But in truth, Sandra Bullock's antsy beau is simply being true to his near manic impulse to dabble. The on-album epitome of artistic ADD, Schneider's

Out

March 13

File Under

Charisma-laced groove 'n' pop

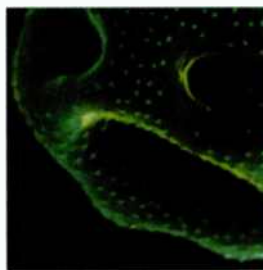
R.I.Y.L.

Ben Harper, Lowell George,
less-busy Dave Matthews

14-track solo debut is a patchy, often inspired muddle of emotional dips and turns and stylistic fits and starts. Whether he's reconciling the musky funk grooves he perfected fronting H.O.R.D.E. faves Ugly Americans with Little Feat's So-Cal swamp boogie ("Jingy"), jawing like a Hill Country G. Love on the Tom Waits tip ("Under My Skin"), or portioning out jammy reflections on woman's saving graces ("Madeline"), Schneider more than gets by on his frumpy charisma and soulful, scarred dirt road of a voice. And when he tones down the swagger and settles into the role of jaded idealist/pop balladeer ("Metal And Steel," "Big Blue Sea," "The World Exploded Into Love"), he thrives through sheer cult of personality. >>>HOBART ROWLAND

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ROBERT SCOTT

The Creeping Unknown Thirsty Ear

Whatever meager constituency still follows the careers of the mid-'80s crop of New Zealand rockers will want to snap this record up, if only because five of its 19 songs constitute a mini-reunion between bassist Robert Scott and guitarist David Kilgour of the Clean, one of the Flying Nun armada's flagship bands. (Scott, of course, is also a key member of the Bats and the Magick Heads.) Of the songs both appear on, "Fog And Wind" comes closest to their now classic blend of electric strum and organ drone, with unfussy drumming supplied by ringer

Out

February 6

File Under

Dunedin by submarine

R.I.Y.L.

The Clean, the Bats,
Roy Montgomery

Greg Cairns. ("When Shade Was Made," without Kilgour, is in the same vein.) The bulk of *The Creeping Unknown*, though, consists of mood-driven, mostly instrumental tracks that evoke the verdant lushness of Scott's country via a blend of organic and electronic elements. A few under-a-minute miniatures ("Extinguisher," "Creek Country") do little beyond displaying a single synth or mandolin figure, while the delay-drenched title track dissolves any vestigial traces of pop structure. This is all a genuine departure for the reliably craftsman-like Scott, but it doesn't play to his strengths. His most memorable experiments, such as "The Wick Effect" or the piano-driven "Shelf Control," still resemble songs, offering a jolt of melody alongside their sonic manipulations. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD • R.I.Y.L. - RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



SKINDIVE

Skindive Palm Pictures

You have to admire the sheer careerist chutzpah of Skindive. Other bands (hello, Smashmouth) write occasional songs with the express idea of selling them to commercials and movies, but Skindive's entire raison d'être seems to be to create soundtrack fodder. In fact, every song among the baker's dozen on the band's self-titled debut (including one self-titled theme song) demands to be played during the opening credits of the next James Bond movie. The mastermind behind these tracks is Dublin-based composer/guitarist/producer Gerry Owens, who has said he prefers

the music of John Barry (the James Bond theme composer), Henry Mancini and Burt Bacharach to current pop. Nonetheless, he's assembled a rock band with all the thumping assault of Korn, including a singer from the U.S., Danielle Harrison, who was savvy enough when she first heard Skindive's demos to fly from Los Angeles to Ireland to audition. The resulting tracks, built on the sinister augmented and diminished chord changes familiar from Barry's work and on the contrast between Harrison's clear peal and Owens's menacing stomp, all sound like variations on Garbage's theme from the last Bond flick. Not that the music lacks variety—many tracks have enough of a Massive Attack feel to work just as well in the next *Matrix* movie. Listening to the entire CD will leave you shaken, if not stirred. >>>GARY SUSMAN

Out

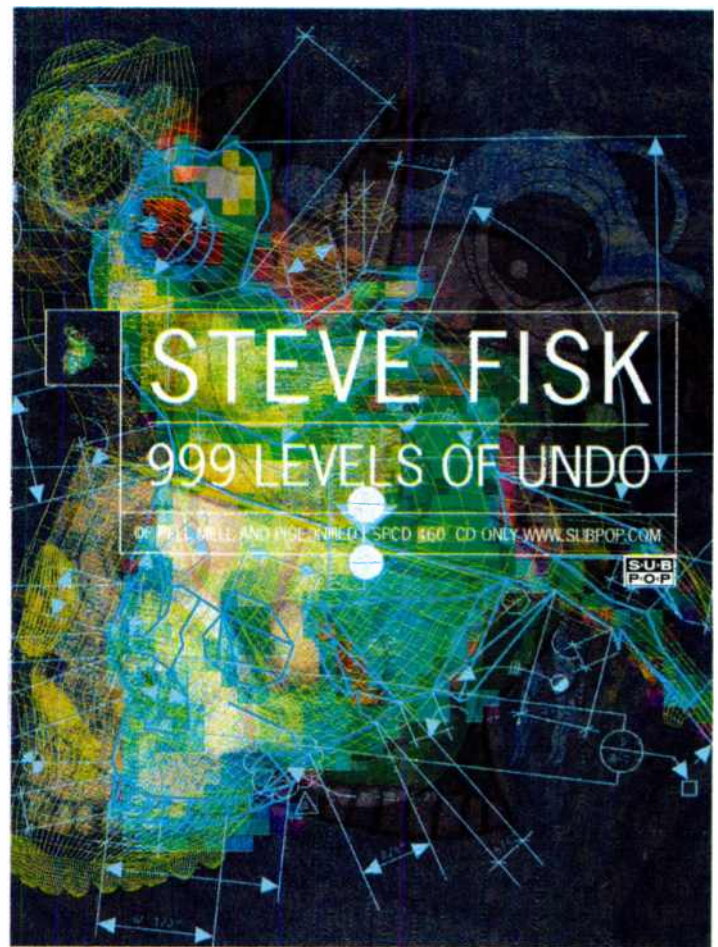
April 3

File Under

Score kings

R.I.Y.L.

John Barry, Burt Bacharach,
Massive Attack



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SUB
POP

SOULIVE

Doin' Something Blue Note

Soulive has been one of the hottest draws on the live funky jazz (or is it jazzy funk?) circuit over the past couple of years, enlivening jam-band audiences with a contemporary take on the soul jazz sound of '60s groove legends like Grant Green and Lou Donaldson. The youthful organ trio continues to evoke funky soul jazz on their Blue Note debut, *Doin' Something*, which features appropriately down-home song titles ("Bridge To 'Bama," "Solid") and a credibility-enhancing guest spot from James Brown sideman Fred Wesley. Not that

these guys need the help. Soulive are masters at manipulating the well-worn organ-trio sound—throaty Hammond B-3 swells, spidery guitar lines and cymbal-driven drum cycles—into multi-climaxing trips for the brain and booty. Their brand of funk lies somewhere in between Art Blakey, James Brown and DJ Premier—Alan Evans rides the cymbals like a jazz man, but pounds the snare with a crackling 808-like snap; his brother Neal holds down the low end with chunky organ runs and left-hand bass bumps; guitarist Eric Krasno tears through the top end with a mixture of Grant Green-style directness, slippery bebop lines and yearning B.B. King bends. The drum 'n' bass bridge on "One In Seven" and the dub flourishes on "Solid" are cool po-mo touches, but they feel unnecessary—Soulive tastes best as raw, uncut funk. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN

Out

March 13

File Under

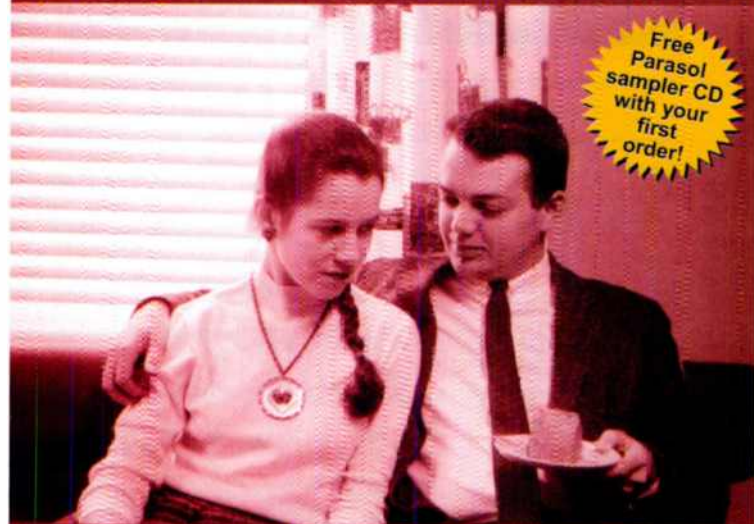
Snaazy organ-groove jazz

R.I.Y.L.

Grant Green, Greyboy Allstars,
Maceo Parker



Bettie Serveert • June & the Exit Wounds • Fonda
Mike Levy • Club 8 • Neilson Hubbard • Bikeride
Steve Almaas • Beauty Shop • Jenifer Jackson • Sarge
Quickspace • Elk City • Doleful Lions • Starlet • Braid
Twin Princess • Vitesse • White Town • Friends of Sound
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THE SCENE IS NOW



Japancore

HOW JAPAN IS HELPING EMO GET ITS GROOVE BACK.

Post-hardcore was a spectacularly exciting idea a few years back: a mix of hardcore's rebellious energy and indie rock's pretty melodies that grabbed the reins from tired pop-punk and grunge. Fast forward to today, though, and the angsty, packaged rebellion of wealthy white emo kids seems to be missing something.

Postcore's not dead exactly; you just have to look somewhere besides America's suburbs to find the sincerity and intelligence that used to mark the style—somewhere like Japan. While the country's music scene is best known for giggly kitsch-pop, lisped karaoke yawps and the chilling tones of the koto, that's certainly not all the archipelago has to offer. Japan's take on postcore embodies the innovation the country is known for, and the burgeoning scene (with bands like Husking Bee selling to the tune of 100,000 copies in Japan)

may be just what our floundering genre needs.

Though the Japancore fleet avails itself of some of America's resources (producers like Mark Trombino and J. Robbins; labels like Doghouse and Deep Elm), bands like Naht and Husking Bee are delightfully free of the trite pseudo-sensitivity that brought on the emo backlash. No horn-rimmed glasses, no three-word/six-syllable bandnames—and the influence of Japanese culture brings refreshing new twists to the genre's soft-loud dynamism. The most important difference, though, is the traditional Japanese sense of mutual respect—something the U.S. post-hardcore scene once embraced, but is arguably losing sight of. "There is some kind of friendship between these bands that have the similar spirit," explains Supercar's Koji Nakamura. "The most important thing is to respect each others' music."

NAHT

Although Naht is still relatively unknown to fans in American post-hardcore circles, the quartet is poised to be the first of Japan's scene to succeed Stateside. Their debut full-length, *The Spelling Of My Solution* (Toy's Factory), was produced by Jawbox/Burning Airlines frontman/DeSoto Records godfather J. Robbins, with packaging designed by Bluetip/Swiz main man Jason Farrell. They've got a slot reserved on the sixth installment of Deep Elm's *Emo Diaries* compilation series, and singer Seiki (one name, like Cher) recently switched from Japanese to English lyrics: "I don't care whether the lyrics are in English or Japanese," he explains. "The reason why I sing in English is that my favorite bands [like Fugazi, Jawbox, Minor Threat, the Stooges] sing in English. But I think singing in your mother tongue is cool."

R.I.Y.L. At The Drive-In, Bluetip, Fugazi

HUSKING BEE ★

There's no mistaking the American influence on Husking Bee's recent EP, *The Sun And The Moon*, and the band released that record on Doghouse, an American label, to match. The Tokyo quartet is far from stereotypical emo; instead, they ricochet from teary acoustic laments to head-nodding punk romps, all infused with the requisite urgent-and-sincere quality. They'll get another chance to rock American crowds with the Stateside release of their new LP, *Four Color Problem* (Toy's Factory), which features guest vocals from Jimmy Eat World's Jim Adkins. Singer Masafumi Isobe says that U.S. showgoers' too-cool-for-school attitude ain't got nothin' on the kids in Japan: "We [have] enjoyed playing [in America]," he says, since Japanese audiences are much less likely to get rowdy. "The [lively] atmosphere that the audience [offers to the] artist is different."

R.I.Y.L. The Promise Ring, Piebald, Rainer Maria

EASTERN YOUTH

"I couldn't stand getting old and die without saying anything and keeping my mouth shut," articulates Eastern Youth's vocalist/guitarist Hisashi Yoshino. It's fortunate then that his band has so much to say: Since their inception, they've released five albums, formed their own record label (Sakamoto Shoten), organized a successful bi-monthly concert series in Japan called *Kyokuto Saizensen* (releasing several corresponding compilation CDs) and most recently, toured the U.S. with American post-hardcore powerhouse At The Drive-In. Although Eastern Youth's music slants towards Get Up Kids-ish poppy punk, their lyrics are decidedly parked in emo territory: A verse of "Chiri Yuka Hana" translates to "One gust of wind is enough to make blossoms fall/ Swaying illusions, vain dreams/ Yet I see the usual blue color of the midday sky embracing the town even today." Translations are the only way that American audiences can sample Yoshino's poetic leanings, however. "Even if I do speak English, I would like to sing and express in Japanese," he offers. "The language itself reflects the history, the culture and the life. That is to say, myself."

R.I.Y.L. Jimmy Eat World, the Get Up Kids, Samiam



COCOBAT



HUSKING BEE

COCOBAT

Cocobat embodies the brutal face of Japanese hardcore—though their cover of Journey's sensitive-rock opus, "Separate Ways" (on their most recent Toy's Factory EP, *Araña*) does point to a cuddly side. Despite GN'R-rivaling lineup changes over their 10-year existence, their m.o.—teeth-gritting guitar chugs and unrelenting drum explosions—hasn't changed. Bassist (and sole original member) Take-Shit admits to growing up with a soft spot for disco, but an introduction to U.K. hardcore punk in his early teens started him down the aggro-rock path that eventually landed Cocobat on the 1996 Warped Tour, in the studio with New York hardcore producer/guru Don Fury (for 1996's *Return Of Grasshopper*) and onstage with Biahazard, Sick Of It All and Rocket From The Crypt. But despite those associations, Take-Shit doesn't see his band as fitting the genre. "We have an element of hardcore, but I think we are a heavy-metal groove band, he says." Their love of metal is evident in their records' stunning packaging, featuring deliciously ghoulish artwork from Pushead (of Metallica and Misfits renown).

R.I.Y.L. Sick Of It All, Glassjaw, Metallica

ESSENTIAL ALBUMS

1. Husking Bee
Four Color Problem
(Toy's Factory)

2. Naht
The Spelling Of My Solution
(Toy's Factory)

3. Various Artists
Kyokuto Saizensen 7.16
(Sakamoto Shoten)

4. Supercar
Change!!
(Sony Japan)

5. Cocobat
Tsukiookami
(Toy's Factory)

TOP 75



BLUR
THE BEST OF
(VIRGIN)

#1

5 YEARS AGO

CIBO MATTO
VIVA! LA WOMAN (WARMER BROS.)

NOISE ADDICT
MEET THE REAL YOU (FELLAHEEN-GRAND ROYAL)

POSSUM DIXON
STAR MAPS (INTERSCOPE)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
SATURDAY MORNING... (MCA)

SMASHING PUMPKINS
MELLON COLLIE AND THE... (VIRGIN)

10 YEARS AGO

CHARLATANS UK
SOME FRIENDLY (BEGGARS BANQUET-RCA)

LUSH
GALA (4AD-REPRISE)

HAPPY MONDAYS
PILLS 'N' THRILLS AND... (ELEKTRA)

SISTERS OF MERCY
VISION THING (ELEKTRA)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
RED HOT + BLUE (CHRYSALIS)

ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1 BLUR	The Best Of	Virgin
2 PJ HARVEY	Stories From The City, Stories From The Sea	Island
3 LOW	Things We Lost In The Fire	Kranky
4 U2	All That You Can't Leave Behind	Interscope
5 DEATH BY CHOCOLATE	Death By Chocolate	Jetset
6 RADIOHEAD	Kid A	Capitol
7 THE DÖNNAS	Turn 21	Lookout!
8 SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS	Liquored Up And Lacquered Down	TVT
9 FATBOY SLIM	Halfway Between The Gutter And The Stars	Astralwerks
10 THE CAUSEY WAY	Causey Vs. Everything	Alternative Tentacles
11 PIZZICATO FIVE	The Fifth Release From Matador	Matador
12 THE LIVING END	Roll On	EMI-Reprise
13 TAKAKO MINEKAWA	Maxi On	Emperor Norton
14 OUTKAST	Stankonia	Laface-Arista
15 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE	Renegades	Epic
16 THE HONEYDDGS	Here's Luck	Palm
17 JOHNNY CASH	American III	American-Columbia
18 THE GENTLE WAVES	Swansong For You	Jeepster-Never
19 STARS	Nightsongs	Le Grand Magistery
20 COLDPLAY	Parachutes	Netwerk-Capitol
21 PÖE	Haunted	Atlantic
22 THE SHIPPING NEWS	Very Soon, And In Pleasant Company	Quarterstick
23 ERYKAH BADU	Mama's Gun	Motown
24 DAFT PUNK	One More Time (CD5)	Virgin
25 GOSSIP	That's Not What I Heard	Kill Rock Stars
26 YO LA TENGÖ	Danelectro (EP)	Matador
27 MEDESKI MARTIN AND WÖDD	The Dropper	Blue Note
28 DELTRON 3030	Deltron 3030	75 Ark
29 JURASSIC-5	Quality Control/W.O.E. Is Me (EP)	Interscope
30 ACETONE	York Blvd.	Vapor
31 LLAMA FARMERS	Ei Toppo	Beggars Banquet
32 VARIDUS ARTISTS	Badlands	Sub Pop
33 GARAGELAND	Do What You Want	Foodchain
34 DIFFUSER	Injury Loves Melody	Hollywood
35 PEPE DELUXE	Super Sound	Emperor Norton
36 GARY NUMAN	Pure	Spitfire
37 EUPHÖNE	Hashin' It Out	Jade Tree
38 STEPHEN MALKMUS	Who The Fuck Is Stephen Malkmus (EP)	Matador
39 DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL	The Swiss Army	Drive-Thru
40 CALL AND RESPONSE	Call And Response	Kindercore
41 JIMMY SMITH	Dot Com Blues	Blue Thumb-Verve
42 SDUNDRACK	O Brother, Where Art Thou?	Mercury Nashville
43 Q AND NOT U	No Kill No Beep Beep	Dischord
44 ELYSIAN FIELDS	Queen Of The Meaow	Jetset
45 VARIDUS ARTISTS	Strait Up	Immortal-Virgin
46 BADLY DRAWN BÖY	The Hour Of Bewilderbeast	XL-Beggars Banquet
47 R.L. BURNSIDE	Wish I Was In Heaven Sitting Down	Fat Possum-Epithaph
48 DRUMS & TUBA	Vinyl Killer	Righteous Babe
49 ARCHER PREWITT	Gerroa Songs	Carrot Top
50 THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS	Mass Romantic	Mint
51 PALD ALTO	Palo Alto	American-Columbia
52 DRESSY BESSY	The California EP	Kindercore
53 WHISTLER	Faith In The Morning	Wiiiija-Beggars Banquet
54 AZURE RAY	Azure Ray	Warm
55 RED TELEPHÖNE	Cellar Songs	Raise Glant Frogs
56 PAN SONIC	Aaloppiiri	Mute
57 ADD N TO (X)	Add Insult To Injury	Mute
58 SICK OF IT ALL	Yours Truly	Fat Wreck Chords
59 ACTIONSLACKS	The Scene's Out Of Sight	Self-Starter
60 MARGO GURYAN	Take A Picture	Franklin Castle
61 RÖNI SIZE/REPRAZENT	In The Mode	Island
62 MATTHEW SWEET	Time Capsule 1990-2000	Zoo-Volcano
63 LESS THAN JAKE	Borders & Boundaries	Fat Wreck Chords
64 NEW FÖUND GLÖRY	New Found Glory	Drive Thru-MCA
65 EVERCLEAR	Songs From An American Movie	Capitol
66 PONTIUS COPILOT	Madagascar	Hello
67 BROKEBACK	Morse Code In The Modern Age	Thrill Jockey
68 TINFED	Tried [+] Tree	Third Rail-Hollywood
69 GREEN DAY	Warning	Reprise
70 SÖNGS: ÖHIA	Ghost Tropic	Secretly Canadian
71 BRASSY	Got It Made	Wiiiija-Beggars Banquet
72 WU-TANG CLAN	The W	Loud-Columbia
73 MÖUNTAIN GOATS	The Coroner's Gambit	Absolutely Koshher
74 UNION	To Be Good At Something	Ghostmeat
75 SUPERDRAG	In The Valley Of Dying Stars	Arana Rock

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. I'm not a fuckin' bot!

1	THE HAUNTED Made Me Do It	EARACHE
2	VARIOUS ARTISTS Dracula 2000 Soundtrack	COLUMBIA
3	HOPE CONSPIRACY Coldblue	EQUAL VISION
4	CRADLE OF FILTH Midian	KOCH
		
5	SICK OF IT ALL Yours Truly	EAT WRECK CHORDS
6	ANNIHILATOR Carnival Diablos	METAL-IS-SANCTUARY
7	DYING FETUS Destroy The Opposition	RELAPSE
8	CRYPTOPSY And Then You'll Beg	CENTURY MEDIA
9	EARTH CRISIS Last Of The Sane	VICTORY
10	LIVING SACRIFICE The Hammering Process	SOLID STATE
11	OBITUARY Anthology	ROADRUNNER
12	MORBID ANGEL Gateways To Annihilation	EARACHE
13	RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE Renegades	EPIC
14	BRUJERIA Brujerizmo	ROADRUNNER
15	CANNAE Troubleshooting Death	EAST COAST EMPIRE
16	NONPOINT Statement	MCA
17	NEVERMORE Dead Heart, In A Dead...	CENTURY MEDIA
18	NEUROSIS Sovereign (EP)	NEUHOT
19	CARNAL FORGE Firedemon	CENTURY MEDIA
20	RHAPSODY Dawn Of Victory	LIIRD
21	ENSLAVED Mardraun...	NECROPOLIS
22	VARIOUS ARTISTS Strait Up	IMMORTAL VIRGIN
23	ABSCISS Punishment and Crippled Reality	GASHED!
24	NILE Black Seeds Of Vengeance	RELAPSE
25	AMEN We Have Come For Your...	I AM VIRGIN



>>>If Tony Iommi is the godfather of stoner rock, then **Spirit Caravan's** Scott "Wino" Weinrich is the Sabmaster's crazy American relative—the one who toils in the junkyard out back and doesn't attend family picnics. Wino stacked riffs with doom-metal pioneers Saint Vitus and the Obsessed before getting his power trio on the road to ruin; among the glut of bands currently bulldozing the stoner-rock genre, their earlier recordings proved them accessible yet grizzled leaders. Now, they've returned to speak the *Elusive Truth* (Tolotta). "We called the album that because I like to try to stimulate thought. I think in life, or in philosophy, which in my mind are pretty entwined, you're always going through your days sort of wondering. I do a lot of research, or I call it research [laughs]. It's just my quest for knowledge, trying to find out and understand what everything is about. I'm trying to understand the meaning of life, the meaning of existence," Wino says. And the sound of the album? Diverse, as Wino notes: "A little doom, a little psychedelia, a little rock 'n' roll."

NEWS



SLIPKNOT

>>>**Slipknot** is currently in L.A. recording their next album with producer Ross Robinson, promising the record will be "sicker and crazier" than the last. Touring commences in the summer. Robinson has also been tapped for the next **Glassjaw** album, currently in the writing phase... **Opeth** frontman Mikael Akerfeldt has planned a psychedelic blues project with personnel from Landberk and Spiritual Beggars... **Messiah Marcolin** (Candlemass, Memento Mori) is working on a solo album with members of Swedish stoner rockers Roachpowder... **Il Nino**, a six-piece Hispanic metal act featuring former members of Pro-Pain, is currently recording their debut full-length with Ron St. Germain of Soundgarden and 311 fame... Before the end of the year, **Entombed** promise a live album, a new studio album (due in October), a four-track EP, another North American tour and releases from two side projects... Ronnie James Dio divulges that the next **Dio** album will be "harder, faster and heavier." Dio is also assembling an album for the Children Of The Night charity (www.childrenofthenight.org), which helps sexually abused children... Spirit Caravan's Wino has been asked to supply vocals and lyrics to a song for Dave Grohl's metal project, **Probot**.

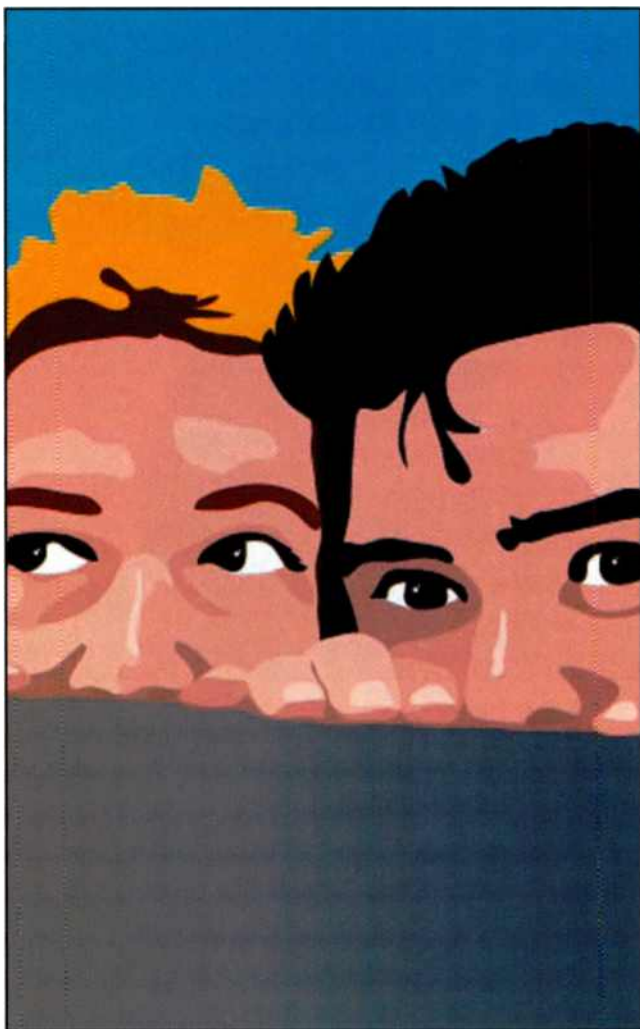
IN THE BINS

MY OWN VICTIM's *Deadly* (self-released) offers a strafing batch of riffs that fuse Pantera-esque metal with the post-hardcore of Downset and the millennial vision of Earth Crisis.

Rock And Roll Killing Machine (Revelation) from **DROWNINGMAN** is a dizzying whirlwind of extreme Mersa-core activity jazzed up between Dillinger Escape Plan and At The Drive-In.

Shut Your Breath (Hollywood) is the second album from **SIMON SAYS**, who pound Papa Roach turf with a sense of dynamics that's oddly evocative of Nine Inch Nails.

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



>>>>**Lemon Jelly's** quirky debut, *Lemonjelly.Ky* (XL-Beggars Banquet) is tough to pigeonhole, and that's the way they like it. "I ran a club in London with a wheel that had 12 different categories of music—country 'n' western and techno and drum 'n' bass and heavy metal," explains Fred Deakin, the DJ of the pair. "Every half hour we'd spin the wheel, and play whatever came up." Deakin's partner is Nick Franglen, a studio whiz who has programmed keyboards and percussion for the likes of Pulp, Björk and Primal Scream. The album, actually a collection of three EPs released since '98, isn't as diverse as a Deakin set. Most of the songs are downtempo exercises in jazzy drums and light piano riffs, laden with samples borrowed from instructional videos and fairy tales: "This is the Staunton Lick," instructs an austere British voice, as a sunshiny track of acoustic guitar and feathery electronic touches unfolds. "Surely, no greater king has ever lived," the voice intones, above a music-box melody of organ plinks. It all sounds like a nutty uncle's bedtime tale as you slip into a la-la land of fatuous but intriguing beauty. "We think it will sell above Celine and Whitney in the States," deadpans Franglen.

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 1 | FATBOY SLIM
Halfway Between The... | ASTRALWERKS |
| 2 | SUPA DJ DMITRY
Scream Of Consciousness | WAX TRAXI-TVTV |
| 3 | RONI SIZE/REPRAZENT
In The Mode | ISLAND |
| 4 | DAFT PUNK
One More Time (CD5) | VIRGIN |
| 5 | JAZZANOVA
Remixes 1997-2000 | COMPOST |
| 6 | GATECRASHER
Global Sound System | INCREDIBLE-EPIC |
| 7 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Hi-Fidelity Lounge: Vol. 2 | GUIDANCE |
| 8 | FUNKSTAR DE LUXE
Keep On Moving | HYPNOTIC |
| 9 | CONVERTER
Blast Furnace | ANT-ZEN |
| 10 | BEN WATT/JAY HANNAN
Lazy Dog | ASTRALWERKS |
| 11 | PAUL OAKENFOLD
Perfecto Presents: Another... | LONDON-SIRE |
| 12 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Motion: A Six Degrees Dance... | SIX DEGREES |
| 13 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Xen Cuts | NINJA TUNE |
| 14 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Shadow: Hard Sessions | SHADOW |
| 15 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Rareworks | ASTRALWERKS |
| 16 | PAN SONIC
Aaltopiiri | MUTE |
| 17 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Dystopian Visians | DYSTOPIAN |
| 18 | PEPE DELUXE
Super Sound | EMPEROR NORTON |
| 19 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Cybonetix 2000 | DSBP |
| 20 | DIESELBOY
The Sixth Session | PALM PICTURES |
| 21 | VICTOR DINAIRE
Logic Trance 4 | LOGIC |
| 22 | ADD N TO (X)
Add Insult To Injury | MUTE |
| 23 | VARIOUS ARTISTS
Hi-Fidelity Dub Sessions Vol. 2 | GUIDANCE |
| 24 | ASCHE
Distorted Disco | ANT-ZEN |
| 25 | SUICIDE COMMANDO
Mindstrip | METROPOLIS |

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

NEWS



DEEP DISH

>>>>Here come the robots: **Kraftwerk** will release a Stateside remix edition of their first single in 13 years, cultivated from a 30-second jingle composed for a German exposition. "Expo 2000" (Astralwerks) will include the group's own remixes, a few from Underground Resistance and reworks by Rolando, Orbital and Francois K... The boys of **Deep Dish** continue to stake their claim as America's top DJ export. The pair was nominated for a Grammy for best remix for their work on Madonna's "Music." They'll follow that up with two mix CDs this spring: *Yoshiesque 2* and the next *Twilo* installment... **Andrew Weatherall** (a.k.a. Two

Lone Swordsmen) is starting a new techno and house label, R.G.C.; he's also mixing the newest label comp for Force Tracks. Expect Force's brand of dubby, minimal house from the likes of Luomo, Safety Scissors and M.R.I.... A moment for Brazilian guitarist and composer **Luiz Bonfá**, 78, who died January 12 in Rio de Janeiro. His work with Antonio Carlos Jobim on the soundtrack to 1959 Cannes winner *Black Orpheus* was North America and Europe's first major exposure to bossa nova.

IN THE BINS

Romanthony (vocalist on Daft Punk's "One More Time") returns as the **PHATT PUSSYCAT** with *Phatt Life* (Glasgow Underground), a tasty album of filtered disco and futuristic R&B.

Montreal's **MISSTRESS BARBARA** brings her global following Stateside with the aptly titled *Relentless Beats* (Moonsine), a mix inspired by her hard house and banging techno sets.

JAN JELINEK uses second-long loops of jazz, murky techno pulses and a very busy sampler to create *Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records*, another minimal masterwork on Pole's Scape label.

1	TALIB KWELI AND HI-TEK Reflection Eternal	RAWKUS
2	OUTKAST Stankonia	LAFACE-ARISTA
3	DELTRON 3030 Deltron 3030	75 ARK
4	COMMON Like Water For Chocolate	MCA
		
5	BAD SEED "Uggggnnnhhh"	J GRAND-RAWKUS
6	BLACK THOUGHT "Hardware"	MCA
7	WU-TANG CLAN The W	LOUD-COLUMBIA
8	GRAND AGENT By Design	GROOVE ATTACK
9	4TH AVENUE JONES "Respect"	INTERSCOPE
10	SMUT PEDDLERS "That's Smut"	RAWKUS
11	XZIBIT Restless	LOUD
12	DV ALIAS KHRIST "Rejuvenation"	TOMMY BOY
13	JAY-Z The Dynasty...	ROC-A-FELLA-DEF JAM
14	GURU'S JAZZMATAZZ Vol. 3: Streetsoul	VIRGIN
15	JURASSIC-5 Quality Control... (EP)	INTERSCOPE
16	UN Sung HEROES Unleashed	SCENARIO-75 ARK
17	MISSION Contagious	INDIVIDUOUS URBAN
18	MYSTIKAL Let's Get Ready	JIVE
19	LUDACRIS Back For The First...	DEF JAM SOUTH
20	M.O.P. Warriorz	LOUD
21	DJ HURRICANE Don't Sleep	JOINT SLEEP-TVT
22	SNOOP DOGG Snoop Dogg	NO LIMIT-PRIORITY
23	VARIOUS ARTISTS Lyricist Lounge Vol. 2	RAWKUS
24	ACEYALONE Accepted Eclectic	GROUND CONTROL-HU GRUV
25	MEMPHIS BLEEK The Understanding	ROC-A-FELLA



>>> His nom-de-plume may be **Mr. Dead**, but New York's Chris Davis is in fact very alive, perpetually on a quest to get to the center of what hip-hop is all about. "Lately, I've been trying to figure out what strippers and car rims have to do with hip-hop," he intones, with notable puzzlement in his voice. "But for the life of me, I can't figure it out." Dead is, of course, referring to the over-abundance of conspicuous video wealth and the dearth of lyrical skills coming out of camps like Cash Money and No Limit. Much of Dead's sophomore effort, *Metabolics Volume II: Dawn Of The Dead* (WordSound), rails against these false prophets; in the driving, horn-punched "Lungevity," he growls: "Fuck a bling bling/ Shinin' your shit/ You ain't legit/ With your childish mind/ Childish rhyme bullshit." Dead's flow is honest, natural and convincing, and a slew of minimal-leaning beats are provided by head producer Bimos, with help from DJ Wood, M. Sayyid and high-profilers like Prince Paul and Dan The Automator. Moonlighting as a special effects gore guru, he's the model of versatility: "I can make you a gallon blood for you to use in a movie, and then I can turn around and spit on the soundtrack. It's covered like that."

NEWS



TY

>>>After a big 10th year in 2000, the Ninja Tune empire continues to roll in 2001 with a new full-length by Big Dada newcomer **Ty** (Awkward) and singles from dope female MC **T-Love** (remember "Return Of The B-Girl"?) and French rappers **TTC**, and Quannum full-lengths by German superheavy funksters **Poets Of Rhythm** and **Lyrics Born**. Check www.ninjatune.net for more and more... After releasing the amazing Micranots debut last fall, Subverse will precede the long-awaited Bigg Jus solo debut, *The Black Mamba Serums*, with re-releases of albums by **MF Doom** (a.k.a. Zeb Love X of KMD) and **KMD**. They've also just signed Seattle's **Source Of Labor**. More info is at www.subversemusic.com... It's already a great 2001 for turntablism on celluloid, as **Qbert's** mind-fondling animated scratch epic *Wave Twisters* and the documentary *Scratch* debuted at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival in late January... And rapper/poet/actor Saul Williams's much-talked-about debut *Amethyst Rock Star* will finally be released in the U.S. in late May on American-Columbia (the European album release will be on Talkin' Loud in late winter, with a U.S. single, "Penny For A Thought," on Ozone to precede it). Word is that it's as dope as one would hope.

IN THE BINS

Whacked out Nova Scotia DJ/rapper **BUCK 65's** *Man Overboard* (Anticon) comes at us with sensible dementia and damned groovy sloppy hip-hop. More, please.

The High & Mighty and Cage combine forces as the **SMUT PEDDLERS**, and the goofy sex-charged rhymes on *Pam Again* (Fawkus) deliver one long money-shot of fun.

Philly rapper **GRAND AGENT** comes very correct on *By Design* (GrooveAttack), with production by Kutmasta Kurt added to tracks by Bronx legends Lord Finesse and AG.

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

>>>>**Thelonious Monk** was a genius of the jazz piano whose work, like Picasso or Einstein, wound up spilling outside the borders of his discipline and influencing audiences in all kinds of profound ways. Hearing Monk's music with 30 years of hindsight is a liberating experience—you're listening to jazz of the '50s and '60s, but what you really hear is Captain Beefheart And The Magic Band, Frank Zappa and Bob Dylan confounding their fans, and a host of other ways in which Monk's legacy lives on. Monk is one of the greats who presents the total package: Not just a brilliant musician but also a powerful anti-authority figure, an icon of hipness and a beacon for free thinking. As such, he's something of a poster hero for an alternative concept to the perception of beauty and truth, a patron saint for anyone who's ever rejected the mainstream entertainment culture of his or her day as hollow and unsatisfying, whether it's beach movies, laugh-track TV sitcoms or boy bands. He had a certain vocabulary on the piano that the three-CD set, *The Columbia Years 1962-1968* (Sony Legacy), explores (it's not his complete Columbia recordings, but close to it). After listening to this, his idiosyncrasies on the piano become clear and you grow to love and anticipate them—he'll throw down certain splashy chords, thump a bassline with his left hand or stagger the beat on a riff of chords like he's not sure where the next one's going to fall. There's an element of bravery to thinking against the numbing grain of the mainstream, and Thelonious is there to remind us that it's not us who're crazy, it's the rest of the world.



>>>>A few quick mentions of some great recent titles: Rhino has rolled out a **Tim Buckley** anthology that's a great introduction to a cult artist that more people need to hear. The two-CD set distills his uneven and widely divergent catalog into a coherent portrait of a very influential artist. Rhino has also rolled out an anthology of **Curtis Mayfield's Love Songs**. While such a concept may seem cheesy on its surface, there was simply no one like the honey-voiced "gentle genius of soul" when it came time to pick a record to put you in the mood for getting snuggly. Vanguard Records will soon be releasing a concert recording from blues and gospel legend **Rev. Gary Davis**. This live *At*

Newport CD captures an acoustic gospel and blues singer in the process of being rediscovered by a whole new audience in the 1960s. On the jazz front, Columbia will be releasing two little-known CDs by jazz legend **Dave Brubeck** (the architect of "Take Five," the song that bequeathed the toe-tapping 5/4 time signature to the world of popular music). First there's a double CD recorded *Live At Carnegie Hall*, and then there's *Jazz Impressions Of Japan*, a 1964 LP recorded after Brubeck's Quartet toured Asia as part of a goodwill tour. It's a CD that warrants examination if you're into unusual jazz albums that are high in quality but still slightly off the beaten path.

IN MY CRATES

JAPANCAKES' ERIC BERG CALLS OUT 5 FLASHBACK ESSENTIALS



BERG, SECOND FROM LEFT

RAVI SHANKAR

"He was all I would listen to for about a year—no real pop or anything. I really got into his very loose Indian drone music, which had one basic note he would always come back to. He would kind of mess around until he was done. That's sort of how [Japancakes] started."

THE CARPENTERS

"The fact that I like this is kind of disgusting, in a sense... I like how there's no distortion, very simple sounds. I haven't been able to incorporate [their sound] into my stuff, but that's probably for the best."

MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT

"I loved their first few albums, especially *Confessions Of A Knife*. I was 16 or 17, and it was borderline rebellious devil music stuff. In high school, I ate that stuff up."

FLEETWOOD MAC

"They're killing me. I love Mick Fleetwood. It's hard to get past some of their stuff. You see Lindsey Buckingham and you're like 'Whoa, eh, can't do it.' Even some Stevie Nicks stuff is pretty scary. Not to be the typical music junkie, but *Rumours* parties."

SPARKS

"They're number one on my list right now. My brother gave me *Angst In My Pants* for Christmas last year. It took a while, and then I was like, 'This shit is amazing.' Their song, 'Eaten By The Monster Of Love' from *Valley Girl* is killer."

Interview by Richard M. Juzwiak.

Japancakes' new LP, The Sleepy Strange, is out now on Kindercore Records.

WORDS GET IN THE WAY

UNDERSTANDING DANCE MUSIC'S DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEM

A decade ago, most people only recognized two kinds of underground dance music. There was house (the mellow, vocal stuff DJs played in gay clubs), and then there was techno (the aggressive, instrumental stuff DJs played at raves). But that rudimentary classification system quickly went the way of the leg-warmer as serious techno students started to mark the fluctuations of sounds, tempos, rhythms and overall temperaments of the evolving music through the creation of myriad subdivisions. Soon, soulful "techno" begat pounding "hardcore," which begat the hyperspeed rhythms of "breakbeat," which begat the dubby bass and beats of "jungle," which begat the intricate rhythmic structure of "drum 'n' bass," and so on and so forth.

"Within most styles of music, people will jump on a particular artist or a band," explains Scott Richmond, content manager of Satellite Records, one of America's most comprehensive electronic music outlets. "But in dance music, there's more development within genres than there is within artists themselves. You're not standing there waiting for the latest record from Joe Blow to come out because whatever style of music he makes, there are a ton of records that came out this week that are within that genre."

But the inherent problem with classifying the constantly multiplying forms of dance music is that, since there's no universally accepted guide for defining where one genre ends and another begins, the categorization process is extremely arbitrary. Some sources, such as Richmond's Satellite Records site, register around 40 distinct genres of dance music, while other rattle off more than a hundred.

"Nine years ago in England, people were already talking about how everything was getting so fragmented and that no one knew what was what anymore," says Gabe McElwine, a former vinyl distributor who previewed and categorized about 500 pieces of vinyl each week during his seven-year tenure at the Watts and Syntax distribution companies. "I think all of the genre-tagging has gone a bit overboard, but it's a necessary evil. People are just getting a little bit more savvy about the music."

For the newbie listener, grasping the swarm of genre titles that pervade dance music can be an intimidating, if not impossible, task. Since words alone often impede the comprehension process, the Internet's ability to juxtapose text with audio has made it an essential resource for serious students who forgo the jargon of DJs and journalists and keep their own ears tuned to the actual music being produced. Here are a few of the best sites for tracking the historical and current trends of dance music.

www.satelliterecords.com

The chief motivation behind Satellite Records' online database is capitalistic: They want you to buy records. But to make it easier for their 21,000 monthly visitors, Satellite archives nearly every piece of vinyl in its catalog as Real Audio. Each record is referenced by artist, title, label and, most importantly, a cross-reference of the subgenres to which it applies. With an average of 300 new records added to the site each week, Satellite has arguably become the



ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS CHING

Internet's best resource for not only buyers who want the newest music, but for enthusiasts who want to keep tabs on emerging sounds and scenes as they develop.

www.groovetech.com

Groovetech's "Listening Lab" allows surfers to hear and purchase dance CDs and 12-inches by searching an extensive online music database. The site is designed for experienced music listeners who know what they're looking for (searches for specific labels and artists yield better results than generic genre tags), but the lengthy, high-quality Real Audio clips make the site worthy of a visit. While you're there, check out the site's radio stations and archive of live sets from up-and-coming and superstar DJs.

www.newgrounds.com/portal

With "Chemical Breakbeat," "Terrorcore," "Stupid House" and 97 other subgenres diagrammed flowchart-style in Ishkur's Guide To Electronic Music (developed by 22-year-old Kenneth Taylor), this site verges on the ridiculous. But the ease of navigation, pithy genre descriptions and fairly accurate audio accompaniment make the site one of the most well-organized and ambitious tutorials for those looking to see just how deep the rabbit hole goes.

>>> **Nobukazu Takemura's** 12-inch "Sign" (Thrill Jockey) is technically a single, but it's a mighty generous one, on which the rapidly fluttering electronic tones of Takemura's earlier records (under his own name and as Child's View) learn to interact with other instruments. The title track is one of his prettiest, cleverest pieces to date, and the most songlike—though it's "sung" (in English) by what sounds like a Macintosh speech synthesizer. There's also an android-funk workout called "Cogwheel," and on the B-side, there's "Souvenir In Chicago," which pairs Takemura (on droning, feedback keyboards) with half of Tortoise for a dramatic jam that goes on for more than 35 minutes. Just when it's starting to coast, it turns into a flickering cut-up of John McEntire's drumming. Takemura's organ tone quavers but holds steadfast, while everything else sputters like snow in the sunlight; all of a sudden it achieves escape velocity, and nothing's left but a pointillist electronic sparkle for the second half of the piece.



LE TIGRE

>>> From *The Desk Of Mr. Lady* sort of rhymes with "what's yr take on Cassavetes," which could be why it's the name of **Le Tigre's** spiffy new EP (of course, it's on *Mr. Lady*, too). Yes, it's preaching to the choir—the electro-punk trio fronted by Kathleen

Hanna is hardly going to do otherwise—and light-handed they're not. (The point of "Bang! Bang!" appears to be that racist, murderous cops suck.) But they make their points better with music than words, especially on a brilliant little piece called "They Want Us To Make A Symphony Out Of The Sound Of Women Swallowing Their Own Tongues," which sets fragments of nervous giggles, ums and glottal stops to a mutant freestyle beat. There's a fabulous Rachel Kozak cut-and-paste remix tacked on to the end of the disc, too... Portland, Oregon's **Dear Nora** is nominally a trio, though their 7-inch EP *Dreaming Out Loud* (Magic Marker) was

actually written and recorded solely by singer/guitarist Katy Davidson—in 24 hours. Which, considering that it includes eight songs, is a neat trick. (If a lot of them seem to be about herself, playing music and being in her room, that's understandable under the circumstances; calling one song "One Two Three Four," though, would be pushing it if it weren't such a good little tune.) Davidson's a big-hearted la-la pop formalist—Heavenly's tender refractions of early Beatles are obviously a big influence—and the formal limitations and casualness of this project make her carefully worked-out harmonies even more charming... **Guyana Punch Line** involves former members of the unbelievably brutal South Carolina hardcore band In/Humanity. For about 30 seconds, their *Youth For Smashism* 7-inch EP (Coalition) sounds like they've gone all melodramatic and emo. Then Chris Bickel opens his mouth, and the hounds of hell leap out. He's paranoid, he's furious, and he means no good at all. One song is pro-suicide (specifically his own), another is pro-violence ("time to call off the calling off," the lyric sheet interprets his screaming), and a third is a sort of Crowleyan manifesto about breaking stuff (Bickel is big on manifestos: His home page at hometown.aol.com/anakrid/mypage.html links to his essay "The Function Of The Orgasm In Punk Rock"). Yikes, and wow.

A FEW QUICK DROPS OF THE NEEDLE



STEPHEN MALKMUS

>>> Back in 1977, punk heroes **Wire's** first single was "12XU." To commemorate their reunion tour of last year, they've just released a new 7-inch called—wait for it—"Twelve Times You" (available only from their website, Pinkflag.com). It's actually two variations on the original mono-

maniacal anthem: one a headlong dash for the finish line recorded live and augmented with a heavy electronic foot and some sampled drill noises, the other an almost wholly mechanical abridgement, in the vein of some of guitarist Bruce Gilbert's solo

stuff. It might be the harshest thing they've ever recorded... "Discretion Grove" (Matador) is the first single from **Stephen Malkmus's** self-titled album, and in the tradition of Pavement, it appends a couple of otherwise unavailable songs. "Sin Taxi" and "Leisurely Poison" sound all but made up on the spot—there's a what-the-hell attitude about the instruments, which meander in and out of the mix, and the lyrics play cat's cradle with themselves. The latter song fades out after two verses for no apparent reason... The Jesus & Mary Chain flamed out fairly ignominiously a couple of years ago, but ex-members Jim Reid and Ben Lurie (along with two Gun Club types) have formed **Freeheat**, whose debut EP, *Don't Worry, Be Happy* (Hall Of Records), is an encouraging sign. For one thing, Reid sounds like he gives a damn about something again, although he hasn't entirely forsaken his patina of icy rock 'n' roll cool; for another, his bandmates' songwriting is pretty fine too, especially on "Nobody's Gonna Trip My Wire," which arrives wrapped like a present in analog synth whooshes.

FEBRUARY 27

ARAB STRAP The Red Thread *Matador*.
BATTLEFIELD BAND Happy Day *Temple*.
BIOWIRE Disparation *Kindercore-EWB*.
BLESSID UNION OF SOULS The Singles V2.
BOMFUNK MC'S In Stereo *Epic*.
SLIMM CALHOUN The Skinny *Elektra*.
CALIBRE Jane's Twitch/3am *Thermal-Nu Gruv*.
 —12-inch.
CAMP LO Trouble Man *Stimulated-Loud*.
CAPPADONNA *Epic*.
THE CHAMBER STRINGS Month Of Sundays *Bobsled*.
CHARIZMA Devotion *Stones Throw-Nu Gruv*.
 —7-inch.
CRAIG'S BROTHER Lost At Sea *Tooth And Nail*.
CRYSTAL SIERRA Morena *Virgin*.
DJ DESIGN Hookie And Baba Flakes Breaks *Replicant-Nu Gruv*.
 —12-inch.
JOHN DIGWEED Los Angeles *Boxed*.
 —Double CD.
FUNK Widescreen *Nuphonic*.
FUNK D'VOID Desperado *Soma*.
 —12-inch.
JUDY GARLAND Judy At Carnegie Hall *Capitol*.
 —Three-CD remastered reissue of her 1961 concert.
GEORGIA MIDDLEMAN Endless Possibilities *Giant Nashville*.
JOHN HAMMOND Wicked Grin *Virgin*.
IKON On The Edge Of Forever *Metropolis*.
JAY DEE Welcome To Detroit *BBE*.
JET SET SATELLITE Blueprint *Netwerk*.
SHARON KENNEDY More Irish Folk Tales For Children *Rounder Kids*.
DAVE MATTHEWS BAND *RCA*.
MOMIUS Folktronic *La Grand Magistry*.
THE MOTHER HIPPS Green Hills Of Earth *Future Farmer*.
ORBIT XLR8R *Lunch*.
PEARL JAM Domestic Bootlegs (Set 1) *Epic*.
 —A whole pantload of live shows from Pearl Jam's last American tour.
POWDER PRODUCTIONS *Glasgow Underground*.
RAE & CHRISTIAN Sleepwalking *Studio K7*.
RETINA Volcano Waves 1-8 *Hefty*.
KIM ROBERTSON Dance To Your Shadow *Narada*.
DUNCAN SHEIK Phantom Moon *Atlantic*.
DJ SIFU Solenoid *Thermal-Nu Gruv*.
 —12-inch.
SLAM VS UNKLE Soma 100 *Soma*.
 —12-inch.
VARIOUS ARTISTS World Library: Romania *Rounder*.
 —From the Alan Lomax Collection, a CD of Romanian peasant music from the 1930s-50s.
VARIOUS ARTISTS World Library: Yugoslavia *Rounder*.
 —A double CD taped at a Yugoslavian folk festival in 1951.
XZIBIT X *Loud*.
ZAD Zao *Solid State*

MARCH 1

GWENMARS Driving A Million *SeeThru*.
HEART Strange Euphoria *Epic Legacy*.
 —Three-CD retrospective.

MARCH 6

27 Songs From The Edge Of The Wing *Relapse*.
ACEYALONE Accepted Eclectic *Ground Control-Nu Gruv*.
ALIEN ANT FARM Anthology *DreamWorks*.
STEVE ALMAS Kingo A Wild One *Parasol*.
AM/FM Mutate Us *Polyvinyt*.
AMORPHIS Tales From The Thousand Lakes *Relapse*.
 —With the Black Winter Day EP and a Doors cover as bonus tracks.
BALLY SAGDO Dub Of Asia *Echo Beach*.
BEATNUTS Take It Or Squeeze It *Loud*.
 —I suppose I'll have to squeeze it, taking it sounds so unpleasant.
BLOCK 16 Now If Not Sooner *Nuphonic*.
 —12-inch.
KIM BURRELL Live In Concert
C AVERAGE Second Reckoning *Kill Rock Stars*.
VICTOR CALDERONE <Energy=VC2> Vol. 2 *Tommy Boy Silver*.

CASH AUDIO The Orange Sessions *Orange*.
DJ DEEP Respect Is Burning Presents: Respect To DJ Deep *Astralwerks*.
DOG FASHION DISCO Anarchists Of Good Taste *Spitfire*.
BOBBY DOOWAH The Musical Mayhem Of Bobby Doowah *Beyond*.
STEVE FISK 999 Levels Of Lindo *Sub Pop*.
FREE DESIGN Cosmic Peekaboo *Marina*.
GENOCIDE SUPERSTAR We Are Born Of Hate *Relapse-Distortion*.
THE GO *Sub Pop*.
 —7-inch.
GREYBOY *Ubiquity*.
HEFNER We Love The City *Too Pure*.
KRISTIN HERSH Sunny Border Blues *4AD-Beggars Banquet*.
JENNIFER JACKSON Birds *Parasol*.
KINGS OF CONVENIENCE Quiet Is The New Loud *Source-Astralwerks*.
KRAFTWERK Expo 2000 Remix *Astralwerks*.
 —CD single.
LAPTOP Opening Credits *Trust Me*.
LENOLA Treat Me To Some Life *File 13*.
MEGASHIRA *Infracom*.
 —12-inch.
MUM Sincerely Yours 2/5 *Klein*.
 —12-inch.
NOVASONIC DOWN HYPERSPACE Mathing *Moonlight Spectra Mobile*.
LAURA NYRO Angel In The Dark *Rounder*.
DURS Distorted Lullabies *DreamWorks*.
THE PRAYER BOAT Polichinelle *Atlantic*.
AMY RAY Stag *Daemon*.
 —The Indigo Girl's first solo record.
PETE ROCK *BBE*.
 —12-inch.
SCANNERFUNK Wave Of Light By Wave Of Light *Sulfur*.
SLAM VS UNKLE Narco Tourist *Soma*.
 —12-inch and CD single.
TLM Electrastars *Hydrogen Dukebox*.
TAXI Blue Zero One *Infracom*.
TAXI Take What You Want *Infracom*.
 —12-inch.
UKO *Klein*.
GEORGE USHER GROUP Days Of Plenty *Parasol*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS No Categories Vol. 4 *Ubiquity*.
 —Upcoming tracks from Ubiquity artists, including Jack Costanzo, Dark Leaf and EW Wainwright.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Shoe Fetish—A Tribute To Shoes *Parasol*.
 —Matthew Sweet, Matt Bruno and others honor the Illinois power poppers.
CRISTIAN VOGEL La Isla Piscola *Novamute*.
 —12-inch.
W.G. SNUFFY WALDEN Music By... W.G. Snuffy Walden *RCA*.

MARCH 13

ALKALINE TRIO Hell Yes *Lookout!*
ATOUR DE LUCIE Faux Movement *Netwerk*.
BABALU Hi-Fi Lo-Tech Spaceblues *Kindercore-EWB*.
THE BASTARD SONS OF JOHNNY CASH Walk Alone *Ultimatum*.
BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB *Virgin*.
THE BLAKE BABIES God Bless The Blake Babies *Zoë*.
CLUTCH Pure Rok:k Fury *Atlantic*.
DAFT PUNK Discovery *Virgin*.
BUDDY DEFRANCO Plays Benny Goodman *Verve*.
 —Reissue.
BILL DOGGETT Wow! *Verve*.
 —Reissue.
DUBCHECK Down Memory Gap Lane *Unitone*.
JOSE LUIS ENCINAS Guitarras Romantica *Narada World*.
FERRANTE & TEICHER Great 1970s Motion Picture Themes *Capitol*.
FUNK D'VOID Dcs *Soma*.
HOWE GELB Confluence *Thrill Jockey*.
STAN GETZ Fall '61 *Verve*.
AL GREY Snap Your Fingers *Verve*.
HANK DOGS Hal' Smile *Hannibal*.
BEN HARPER Live *Virgin*.
THADDEUS HOGARTH Trying To Believe *Spinning*.
SHIRLEY HORN You're My Thrill *Verve*.
FREDDIE HUBBARD "Live" At The Left Bank *Label M*.

IDJUT BOYS *Nuphonic*.
JON B. *Epic*.
ARDAVAN KAMKAR Over The Wind *Traditional Crossroads*.
KING COBB STEELIE Mayday *Rykodisc*.
JIMMY LAFAYE Tomorrow *Bohemia Beat*.
LES GAMMAS Now I Sleep *Compost*.
 —12-inch.
LOS SUPER SEVEN Canto *Columbia Legacy*.
LUTI-KRISS Throwing Myself *Solid State*.
MATMOS A Chance To Cut Is A Chance To Cure *Matador*.
MESCALITO Tummy Touch.
 —12-inch.
JAMES MOODY The Moody Store *Verve*.
 —Reissue. That's where I shop.
SHUGGIE OTIS Inspiration Information *Luaka Bop*.
OUTSIDERZ 4 LIFE Outsiderz 4 Life *Virgin*.
OVER THE RHINE Films For Radio *Back Porch*.
PERET Rey De La Rumba *Narada World*.
LUCKY PETERSON Smooth Sailing *Blue Thumb*.
DJ RECTANGLE Ultimate Ultimate Battle Breaks V. 5 *Ground Control-Nu Gruv*.
 —Double LP.
SOFT BOYS Underwater Moonlight ...And How It Got There *Matador*.
 —Double CD.
SKI Selected Works *Second Skin*.
DJ SPINNA & PETE ADARKWAH Funk Rock *BBE*.
SONNY STITT/GENE AMMONS Boss Tenor In Orbit *Verve*.
 —Tracks from Susana Baca, Sheila Chandra, Yungchen Lhamo and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Irish Traditional Music In America: Chicago; The East Coast; Light Through The Leaves—Traditional Irish Wind Instrumentals; The Music Of Ed Reavy *Rounder*.
 —Field recordings of Irish standards performed in America.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Nice Up The Dance: The Best Studio One Discomixes *Heartbeat*.
 —A discotic good time, featuring Ken Parker's "My World Is Falling Down." Join the club, buddy!
SARAH VAUGHAN Viva Vaughan *Verve*.
 —Reissue.
VELVET ACID CHRIST DialB *Metropolis*.
 —CD single.
WILLIE & LOBO Live In Concert *Narada World*.

MARCH 20

YOLANDA ADAMS Live *Elektra*.
ALPHA The Impossible Thrill *Melankolic-Astralwerks*.
AMORPHIS Tales From The Thousand Lakes *Relapse*.
 —Reissue.
ANIMAL CRACKERS Animal Cracker Breaks I *Stereo-Type-Nu Gruv*.
ARTFUL DODGER *London*.
THE ASHLEY STOVE All Summer Long *Merge*.
THE BLACK HALOS Violent Years *Sub Pop*.
 —Ah, the violent years—reminds me of high school. Black boots and threats of suicide; those were the days.
LARRY CARLTON/STEVE LUKATHER No Substitutions—Live In Osaka *Favored Nations*.
LOS CHICARRONS *Tummy Touch*.
DJ EDDIE DEF Inner Scratch Demons *Ipecac*.
HEATHER DUBY AND ELEMENTAL *Symbiant Sub Pop*.
 —CD-EP.
LARS FREGRIKSEN & THE BASTARDS *Helicat*.
CESARIA EVORA *RCA*.
CHARLIE HADEN *Verve*.
CHARLIE HADEN & GONZALO RUBALCABA *Verve*.
TOM HARRELL *RCA*.
HOWE Confluence *Thrill Jockey*.
ILL NINO *Roadrunner*.
JOLIE & THE WANTED *DreamWorks*.
LOS CHICARRONS *Tummy Touch*.
 —12-inch.
RICHARD LUGO *Elektra*.
LUPINE HOWL 125 *Beggars Banquet*.
ANGIE MARTINEZ Up Close And Personal *Elektra*.
JOE MCPHEE Trinity *Atavistic-UMS*.
THE MINDERS Golden Street *spinART*.
MODERN ENGLISH The Best Of Modern English: Life In The Gladhouse 1980-1984 *4AD*.

MOSLANG-GUHL (VOICECRACK) Knack On *Atavistic-UMS*.
OLD 97'S Satellite Rides *Elektra*.
OSKER Idle Will Kill *Epitaph*.
NICHOLAS PAYTON Dear Louis *Verve*.
PULLMAN Thrill *Jockey*.
RAM-Z *TVT*.
REACH THE SKY Friends, Lies, And The End Of The World *Victory*.
RECOIL Hydrology 1 + 2 *Mute*.
 —Reissue from Alan Wilder, formerly of Depeche Mode. He quit the Model! I just don't understand it.
ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET As Was *Atavistic-UMS*.
RACHAEL SAGE Painting Of A Painting *MPress*.
SEPULTURA Nation *Roadrunner*.
DJ SHIRO Subterranean Breaks II *Stereo-Type-Nu Gruv*.
SKINLESS Foreshadowing Our Demise *Relapse*.
SKRAPE *RCA*.
CLEM SNIDE Your Favorite Music *spinART*.
STAIND *Elektra*.
STRIKE ANYWHERE Chorus Of One *Jade Tree*.
NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA Hush No Koe *Thrill Jockey*.
LUTHER THOMAS & THE HUMAN ARTS ENSEMBLE Funky Donkey *Atavistic-UMS*.
TOW DOWN By Prescription Only *Elektra*.
TRU LIFE *DreamWorks*.
UNLOCK *Maverick*.
US BOMBS Marchin' On *Helicat*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Deep River Of Song: Georgia Peaches *Rounder*.
 —From the Alan Lomax Collection, field recordings made in Georgia from 1933-1946.

MARCH 21

THE EMBARRASSMENT Blister Pop *My Pal God*.
EMPEROR PENGUIN Damn *My Pal God*.
PAUL NEWMAN Re-Issue! Re-Package! Re-Package! Re-Evaluate The Songs *My Pal God*.

MARCH 26

DRUNK HORSE Tanning Salon/Biblical Proportions *Man's Run*.
FOR STARS We Are All Beautiful People *Future Farmer*.
MIA Lost Boys *Alternative Tentacles*.
OPERATOR GENERATOR *Man's Run*.

MARCH 27

AZOA Birth *Glasgow Underground*.
BARDO POND *Matador*.
BIG PUNISHER Endangered Species *Loud*.
BUCKCHERRY Time Bomb *DreamWorks*.
CHUSCALES Midnight In Madrid *Narada World*.
CONJURE ONE *Netwerk*.
PATRICK DAWES *Tummy Touch*.
FURTHER SEEMS FOREVER The Moon Is Down *Tooth And Nail*.
THE OELXOTONE ROCKETS Green Room Blues *Tooth And Nail*.
GANGSTA BOO *Loud*.
GINUWINE The Story *Epic*.
KOMBO Cookin' Out *GAP*.
KRAZIE BONE Thug On Da Line *Loud*.
KEIKO MATSUI Whisper From The Mirror *Narada Jazz*.
NOBB DEEP Murda Muzik Soundtrack *Loud*.
PEARL JAM Domestic Bootlegs (Set 2) *Epic*.
JOCELYN POOK Untold Things *Real World*.
RITON Habib *Grand Central*.
 —12-inch.
PETE ROCK Petestrumentals *BBE*.
DON ROSS In From The Cold *Narada*.
SKINNY PUPPY Doomsday Live *Netwerk*.
TANK Force Of Nature *Virgin*.
TREBLE CHARGER Wide Awake Bored *Netwerk*.
 —You can probably relate to this if you've actually made it this far in the list.
UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES Latin Stroll *Soma*.
 —12-inch.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Plastic, Volume 5 *Netwerk*
BERNIT VERGARABAT *Universal Latino*.
NEXT DOOR *RCA*.

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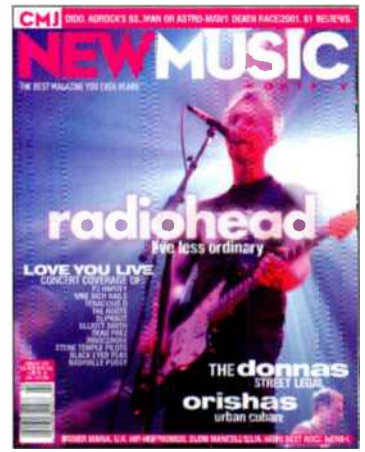
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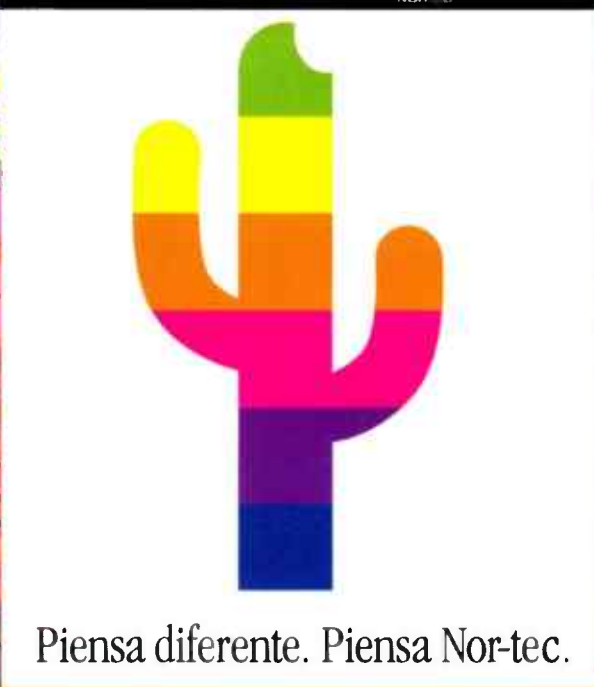
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THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A DONKEY SNOW



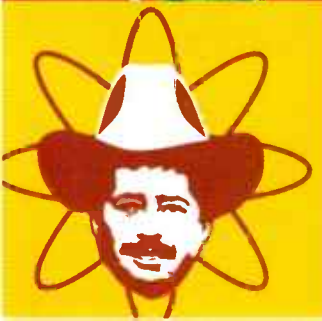
Piensa diferente. Piensa Nor-tec.



PROCEDENTES DE TIJUANA
PROGRAMAS DE TIJUANA



NORTEC
NORTEÑO GROOVES + TAMBORES BEAT



NORTEC



TURBLE

DON LOOR

SEX, drugs 'n' guacamole:

the nortec look



When some folks think of Tijuana, Mexico, they think of a brackish cultural cul-de-sac with pink stucco walls, random gunfire, skanky prostitutes and a mariachi band dolefully strumming "Cielito Lindo." But the real Tijuana has a vibrant culture that stems from its global positioning: Not a stone's throw away from San Diego, but fully in Baja territory, a young group of artists has launched Nortec, a collective that borrows cultural riffs from both sides of the border.

While the music of Nortec garnishes the cool hipster swag of minimalist techno with traditional, accordion-driven norteño and Sinaloese music (check out the new Nortec Collective compilation *The Tijuana Sessions Vol. 1* on Palm Pictures), the art often focuses on tweaking the semiotics of border culture, manifesting itself in graphic design, video clips, fiction writing and clothing that tackle everything from American corporate logos (see the Apple computer cactus) to Tijuana drug cartel leaders (witness the Arellano brothers, grafted onto the psychedelic backdrop of a Nortec party flyer).

"Many drug lords live in the city, so [the artists] borrow from that, giving it a fresh look," explains Enrique Jiménez, a record label owner and journalist who occasionally documents the Nortec scene. "Sometimes the state of our culture is so bad, it becomes kitsch." And this kitsch is what sets the scene for their local parties, where Nortec slides and videos are screened and attendees approximate their own versions of the Nortec look—replete with sombrero and cowboy boots. "It's like what happened to fashion after John Travolta in *Urban Cowboy*," laughs Jiménez, "but everyone has their own modern ideas." >>>ADRIENNE DAY

RESARE



RTEC

HOVER2000 EXPCHANNOVER2000 EXPCHANN



HOVER2000 EXPCHANNOVER2000 EXPCHANN

MEXICO

Zoom In, Over And Out

BY TOBEY I. GRUMET



Flowlab 42" Deep Carve Skateboard

If you love to snowboard but can't always find snow, check out the Flowlab Deep Carve, a skateboard that offers 14 inline skate wheels mounted on curved steel axles, making the pavement feel more like powder. The 42-inch maple plank lets you log almost 45-degree turns—just wait 'til you see those losers in the BMWs salivate. (\$200, www.flowlab.com)



Kodak Max HQ

The invention of the disposable camera was truly genius. It's small, easy to use and available at any corner drugstore. There's just one problem: The picture quality sucks.

Kodak is upping the ante with the Kodak Max HQ, which boasts an automatic flash system, Kodak Max 800 film and a 30 mm aspheric lens that is also used in Kodak's re-loadable 35 mm cameras. Now all you need to do is remember to buy one. (\$11, www.kodak.com)

Panasonic DVD Camcorder

Panasonic has taken digital video one step farther with its new VDR-M10 DVD camcorder, which records high-quality video and still images onto a 2.4 GB recordable DVD. Because you're using a disc-based system, you'll get extra storage and almost no degradation of picture quality. You'll also get up to 60 minutes of video in fine mode (120 in standard), and every scene is indexed and displayed as a tiny thumbnail image. Don't tell Dad, he'll get one and then you'll be sorry. (www.panasonic.com)



Specialized Armadillo Tires

There's nothing worse than being thrown off your bike because of a flat. Specialized has found a way to give you flat-free riding without a loss in performance. Co-developed with DuPont, the new Armadillo series bicycle tires feature a pretty indestructible subthread barrier of Kevlar material shot with Elastomer, and if your Armadillo tire flats, the company will automatically replace the tube for free. Now you can finally recreate Mountain Dew commercials without anxiety. (\$29.99-39.99, www.specialized.com)

J-P.A.C. Adrenaline Backpack

Okay, so the underside of this backpack looks like a wrinkled alien's butt (don't ask how we know that—or about the probes), however, you'll appreciate that rugged rubber butt when you're falling on your own backside in the outback or even a back alley. The accessories definitely make this outfit, including add-ons for holding CD players, cell phones, MP3 players and much more. (\$185; www.journeyunlimited.com)

PETER BERSON



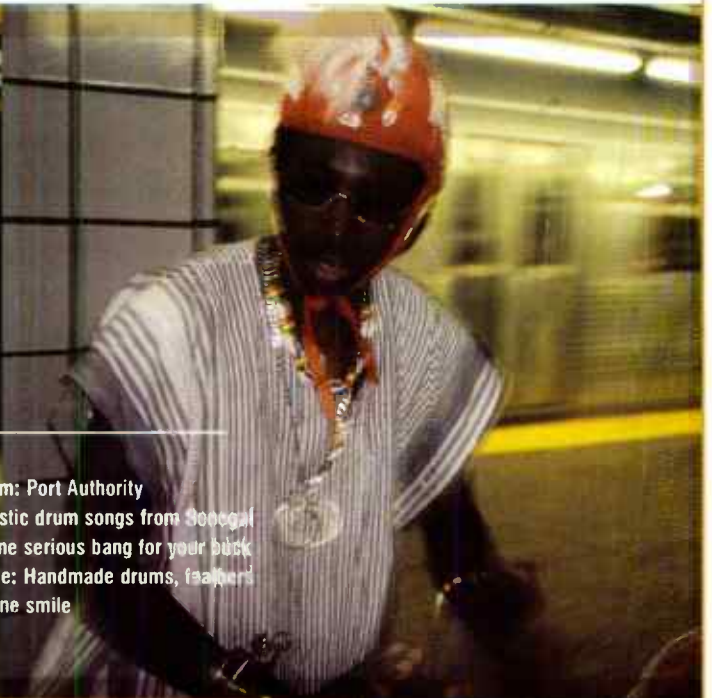
SUBTERRANEAN STYLE

STORY: JESSICA DAVIES
PHOTOS: BRENDAN MORAN

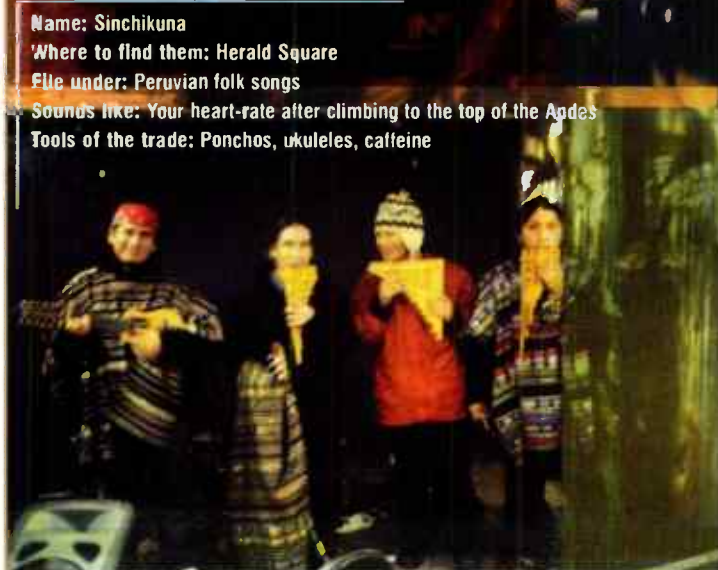
It takes more than a Simon & Garfunkel cover tune to convince a New Yorker to part with a quarter. That's why you have to hand it to these subway mavericks, who manage to mesh visual style and song into the chaotic clank of five o'clock rush.



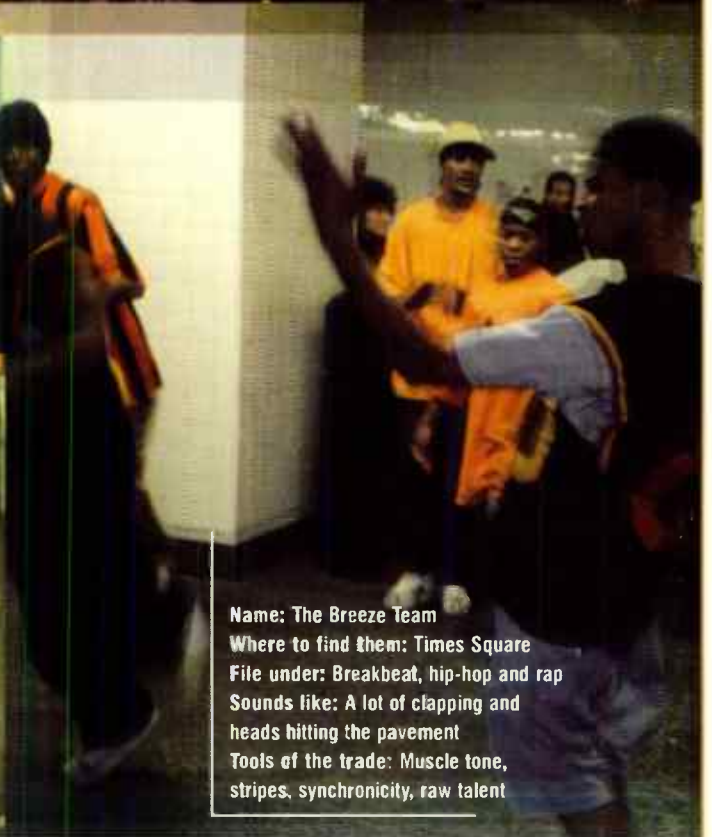
Name: Sherry
Where to find her: Union Square
File under: Jewel meets Bob Seger
Sounds like: The best song to overhear in a dorm hallway
Tools of the trade: Turtleneck, indie intellect, pretty hands



Name: Georges
Where to find him: Port Authority
File under: Acoustic drum songs from Senegal
Sounds like: Some serious bang for your buck
Tools of the trade: Handmade drums, feathers and suede, genuine smile



Name: Sinchikuna
Where to find them: Herald Square
File under: Peruvian folk songs
Sounds like: Your heart-rate after climbing to the top of the Andes
Tools of the trade: Ponchos, ukuleles, caffeine



Name: The Breeze Team
Where to find them: Times Square
File under: Breakbeat, hip-hop and rap
Sounds like: A lot of clapping and heads hitting the pavement
Tools of the trade: Muscle tone, stripes, synchronicity, raw talent

OLD PUNK AND THE SEA

JOE QUEER, FISHIN' MUSICIAN



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE QUEER

If *Old Man And The Sea* was required reading in your high school, you might imagine a fisherman's life through a sentimental—albeit gritty—haze. Commercial fisherman Joe Queer will happily toss saltwater on your illusions. "Sometimes I just get out there and laugh," he says. "I thought I was a punk rocker, and I'm out on a boat with a dead shark, covered in guts." It's certainly a career twist for Queer, who's led the gleefully offensive punk-pop band the Queers since 1982, and now splits his time evenly between the band and his brother's fishing vessel off the New England coast. Why

the seafaring life? Queer can record and tour when he wants, and although he hasn't yet written a sea shanty, he finds the ocean inspirational. "I've always got songs in my head. I'll tell my brother, 'I need to get my recorder' and go hum a chorus." Besides, he likes living a dual life: "By working, you realize where you fit into the scheme of things"—and Queer notes that some upstart punkers could use a similar lesson. "I get a kick from these kids doing working-class 'oi' stuff when most of them are supported by their girlfriends," he says. "I take pride in knowing that not many punks could do this job." >>>LISA GIDLEY

SHAKESPEARE IN HEAT

LOST IN THE SAHARA? LET'S PUT ON A SHOW.

When 11 bus passengers find themselves stranded in an abandoned mining town in the African desert, their reactions follow the standard path of crisis response: shock, denial, cataclysm of emotions... desire to perform a Shakespearean tragedy? A raw, penetrating drama laced with gallows humor, **The King Is Alive** (IFC Films) plots the vacation-gone-awry of those ill-fated tourists (including characters played by Jennifer Jason Leigh and Janet McTeer), who, in order to forget their grim predicament, decide to stage a production of *King Lear*. However, petty jealousies surface, and attempting the play only serves to heighten the tension.

"My film is about the survival of the soul," says director and co-writer Kristian Levring, a 43-year-old Denmark native. The film also examines the rediscovery of the human spirit, much like *King Lear*. "The play is about a king who loses everything and goes through several degrees of madness before rediscovering himself. The play was a good fit. It's similar to the journey the characters go through in the film."

Levring is one of the creators of *Dogma 95*, the oft-cited "vows of chastity" aimed at obliterating the superficial elements of modern filmmaking. (The rules are strict: Films must use hand-held cameras; off-camera music is prohibited, etc.) "Dogma is a difficult process," says Levring, the last of the four *Dogma* founders to make his directorial debut. "It's kind of a striptease act where you throw



away everything you learned and end up with the most basic tools you can imagine to make a film." For his cast, this meant no makeup, no flattering soft lighting, no change of wardrobe, no comfy trailers. "You need actors willing to take you places in the mind where you never expect to go.

Plus they can't be preoccupied by vanity. They can't worry about looking beautiful," says Levring, who reports that *Dogma* had a profound impact on his actors. "Some of the cast called me afterwards, when they were doing normal films and said, 'We don't know how to do this anymore!'"



tattoos (he inks his body with clues) to keep on track. Director Christopher Nolan unfolds the narrative in reverse, causing the meaning of events to change as the film moves from the end to the

>>>>In the vigorous thriller **Memento** (Newmarket Film Group), *L.A. Confidential's* Guy Pearce attempts to avenge the rape and murder of his wife. The catch: He suffers from short-term memory-loss and uses Polaroids and

beginning. The final result is a memorable mindfuck worth repeat visits... If you're in the mood for a sentimental journey, consider **The Dish** (Warner Bros.). Alternately funny and poignant, the comedy (based on the ubiquitous "true story") tells of the role an Australian tracking station played in the Apollo 11 mission. Mixing historical drama with *Down Under* tomfoolery (a potentially hazardous combination), *The Dish* is a delight... Tobias Schneebaum is a tough man to figure out. For example, the 78-year-old artist/historian/adventurer once had to ask his neighbor Norman Mailer to toss a dead mouse for him, yet he braved the Peruvian and Indonesian jungles and dined with cannibals. For more on his extraordinary life, check out the documentary **Keep The River On Your Right: A Modern Cannibal Tale** (IFC Films).

No One Lives Forever

(Fox Interactive) PC



Had Austin Powers shagged *The Avengers'* Emma Peel (oh, behave!) their offspring could have been Cate Archer—the vixen-licious superspy who stars in *No One Lives Forever*. Mixing camp and comedy with wicked guns and laugh-your-ass-off gadgets, this first-person shooter takes place in a shadowy world of psychedelic '60s espionage and B-movie conspiracy, drawing on everything from the classic Bond flicks to Dean Martin's Matt Helm movies. While stealth is occasionally called for, sometimes only heaping helpings of hot lead can resolve a sticky situation. The result is surprisingly witty, refreshingly original and more fun than a Swedish penis pump. Yeah, baby! Yeah! >>>STEVE TILLEY

Sacrifice

(Interplay) PC



I just had to scrape my jaw off the floor. *Sacrifice* is either the action man's strategy game or the strategy man's action game, but no matter how you look at it, it's un-frickin'-believably gorgeous. The premise? Pick a deity to serve, summon critters to fight for you, kick the other gods' divine asses, then sit back and lord over the planet. The Universal Law Of Skepticism demands that anything that looks this good has to be dumber than a sack of sickles, but *Sacrifice* manages to squeeze tons of novel gameplay out of the oh-so-wearisome real-time strategy genre. But did I mention: It's beautiful. It's fun. It's clever. It's twisted. *Sacrifice*, will you be my girlfriend? >>>S.T.



Screen Light & Magnifier

(Mad Catz) Game Boy Color



How much light does it take to adequately illuminate the Game Boy Color's screen? Think midday in Arizona. OK, it's not that funny, but it's not far off either. Ask yourself why the crazy little Worm Light (made by Nyko) that attaches to the unit's extension port and applies a spot of colored glare to the Game Boy screen has become a multi-million seller. If you like to play in the dark and you're looking for even less eyestrain, check out the Mad Catz Screen Light & Magnifier. It gives you a 150% screen-size advantage (be the envy of your friends), along with two lamps to evenly illuminate the Game Boy screen. Why didn't Nintendo just back-light the damn thing in the first place? Still waiting on that one. >>>AARON CLOW

Skies Of Arcadia (Sega) Dreamcast



Okay, you've probably seen *Skies Of Arcadia's* storyline before—that upper-class-oppresses-lower-class plot of more than a few role-playing games out there. Of course, you meet friends along the way who will offer to join your quest to overthrow the oppressive, entitled Valuan Empire. Hackneyed though the plot might be, it's amazing to watch it play out in high-res graphics and splashy battle sequences. During some scenes you can actually be fooled into thinking you're acting out one of those Saturday morning anime imports. While some of your *Final Fantasy*-loving, Playstation-dependent buddies might cry "copycat" from time to time, *Skies Of Arcadia* is sure to leave most of them drooling for a Dreamcast. >>>A.C.

Sound Stage Speaker System (InterAct Accessories) all game systems

Under normal circumstances, you'd have to sell a kidney on eBay to afford a decent surround-sound setup. InterAct's latest accessory package is anything but normal, however. A relatively inexpensive solution for the aurally fixated video gamer, this aptly named 72-watt, 5.1 speaker system breathes new life into tired digital soundtracks. Between subwoofer-boosted bass and theater-mode support, nerds can zone out in high style while playing Silicon Valley's hottest fare. Although the remote control responds to stimuli worse than an ex-girlfriend, setup is a breeze and audio quality is phenomenal. Unlike most comparable packages, rest assured that if you turn it up, this sucker will bring the noise. >>>SCOTT STEINBERG

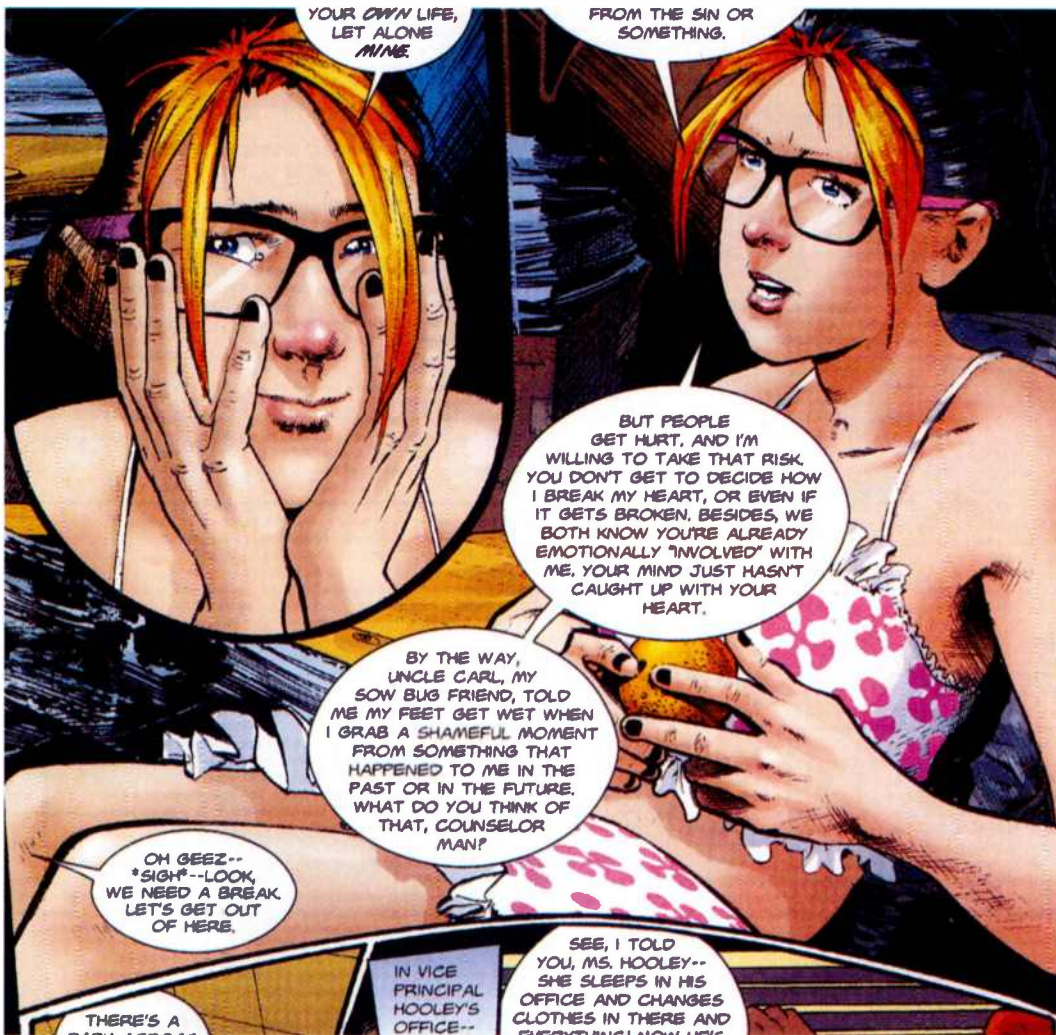


QUICK BYTES

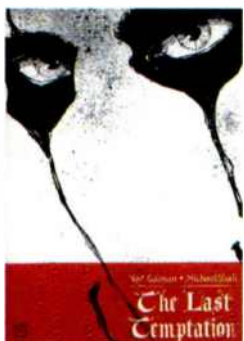


In the suspicious minds of console gamers, welcoming the cold-hearted Microsoft juggernaut into the fold ranks up there with inviting Susie Syphilis to your kegger. Which is why all eyes were on Bill Gates's console lovechild, **Xbox**, when it was unveiled in a flurry of cheeseball glam at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. And damn if those gamers' eyes didn't grow wide with wonder when the über-geek's minions showed off eye-popping demos of the upcoming titles *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee* and *Malice*. Due to be on store shelves this fall, Xbox will go head to head with Sony's PlayStation 2 and Nintendo's upcoming GameCube. But the Redmond Raiders couldn't have unveiled their sleek DVD-based machine at a better time, since the bloom is off the PlayStation 2 rose and nobody really knows what to expect from the new Mario Machine. OK, Bill, you've got our attention. Now show us your follow-through. >>>S.T.

MY HERO ZERO



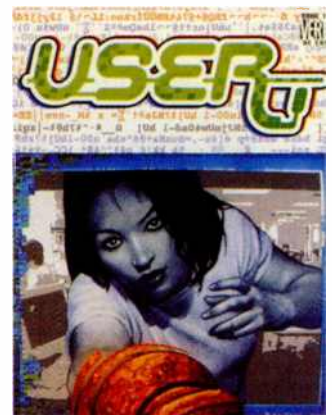
Sam Kieth is best known for co-creating *Sandman* in the late '80s—and then leaving after a few issues, on the grounds that he “felt like Jimi Hendrix in the Beatles.” His fluid, wacky art hasn’t been seen much lately, but he’s returned with the very, very strange **Zero Girl** (Homage). It’s sort of a high-school coming-of-age story, in which geeky social out-cast Amy Smootster comes to terms with her body and her crush on her guidance counselor. Of course, Amy is under the protection of everything with a circular shape, threatened by square shapes, and her feet produce puddles whenever she’s embarrassed. And did we mention her best friend, a sow bug named Uncle Carl? Kieth warps what would normally be straight lines into curves on almost every page, both as a formal nod to his heroine and as a natural consequence of his story’s deliciously bent worldview.



>>>>Kieth’s old *Sandman* partner Neil Gaiman collaborated with Alice Cooper, of all people, on a three-part miniseries six years or so ago. **The Last Temptation**, a horror tale about a top-hatted, familiar-looking evil showman attempting to corrupt a teenage boy, has finally been collected in a single volume (Dark Horse). The story is hard to take seriously—come on, it’s about Alice Cooper—but Michael (Puma Blues)

McGonigal has just launched the even more culture-vulture-ish zine **Yeti** (\$7.95 from P.O. Box 3061, Seattle, WA 98114). The first issue’s a fat paperback with short articles on far-out music of every description, as well as cartoons, photography and fiction, and a CD with unreleased songs by Elliott Smith, Stereolab, and others... Michelangelo Matos’s **Greatest Hits** is subtitled “A Mixtape ‘Zine,” and that’s what it is: eight music writers (including, memorably, CMJ’s own Kurt B. Reighley) presenting extensive annotations to their personal mixtapes—explaining why they love the songs they love and why they put them together. It’s small, high-concept, and wonderful. (For info, e-mail GreatestHitsZine@hotmail.com.)

Zulli’s flickering, baroque linework goes a long way toward conveying the scariness the words aspire to... **User** (Vertigo) is part fantasy, part meditation on how fantasies are constructed, and what they do in the real world. Tautly written by Devin Grayson, it’s a miniseries about a young woman who becomes obsessed with virtual reality as an escape from the quotidian miseries of her life; Sean Phillips’s art-in-the-real-world sequences are appropriately blurry and mock-photographic, and John Bolton paints the VR parts of the story in a style that’s sword-and-sorcery via digital cool... Former *Chemical Imbalance* editor Mike



williamsburg



brooklyn

It's hard to say what made longtime residents of Williamsburg, Brooklyn cringe more: the time a New York listings rag proclaimed the area "Brooklyn's Wildest Nabe!" or the rumor that the neighborhood would play host to MTV's next *Real World* series. Williamsburg's abandoned industrial buildings, storefronts and somewhat rickety row homes have housed a stunning array of artists, musicians, DJs, trapeze artists, dropouts, drinkers and low-key carousers for the past 20 years. When bored Manhattanites and more "adventurous" nouveau riche started moving in over the last five (and driving up rents), the original freaks freaked. A local pickup band even named itself the Kenn Firpo Rent Explosion in honor of the mysterious Williamsburg real estate broker Kenn Firpo, notorious for cashing in.

Fact is, though, the educated, white children of the middle-class who decided to be starving artists in Williamsburg were originally interlopers themselves—the neighborhood's heart is at the junction of vital Polish, Latino and Hasidic Jewish strongholds. The groups that started out tolerating each other (ever read *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn*?) now put up with the burgeoning coffee shops, clubs, bars, even a hipster mini-mall/loft complex (complete with

T1 connection) in an old girdle factory.

As rents rise, the neighborhood's boundaries expand; the name "Williamsburg," in real estate ads and hipsters' mouths, has begun to apply to every adjacent section of Brooklyn—Greenpoint, Bushwick, Clinton Hill—where there are still raw loft spaces to be converted and dark, potholed streets to be navigated. Status is calculated by how few stops into Brooklyn from Manhattan on the L subway line one lives—"Please don't throw me in the briar patch with the fifth-stoppers!" joked central-'Burg resident Greg Glover, head of the local label Arena Rock Recording Company recently. But whichever side of the gentrification line you stand on, there is undeniably dynamic art, music, performance and low-key carousing to be had in the 'Burg, from Rubulad, the "secret" basement firetrap-cum-party space that looks like a dorm room gone mad, to Galapagos (70 N. 6th St., 782-5188), the classy, candlelit bar in an ex-truck hangar featuring \$5 16mm films twice a week, to the Stinger (241 Grand St., 218-6662), an insanely popular storefront bar boasting live shows from local acts like Mink Lungs. It doesn't have a sign, but in true Williamsburg fashion, it's constantly mobbed anyway.



MINK LUNGS AT THE STINGER



LUXURY AQUATICS AT RUBULAD



A RUBULAD PARTY COMES TO BLOWS



PINBALL AT THE ABBEY

OUT WITH THE IN CROWD BILLBURG CELEBS SHOUT OUT THE HOT SPOTS

ONEIDA's Papa Crazy

At a show at **The Good/Bad Art Collective** (383 S. 1st St., www.goodbad.org) in 1999, "we set up a huge fur cave and all wore fur on the hottest day of the year. The heat and crowd were intense and we got all muddy and bloody while destroying a huge Hammond organ that had been lying around our space."

ANTIBALAS

saxophonist Martin "Doctor" C-Perna

"The Antibalas headquarters is **Amayo's 40th Chamber** (340 Grand St., 486-9660), a small, two-floor spot where we play monthly shows and hold parties. [The space doubles as a Kung Fu Studio; Amayo is the group's vocalist.] There's also **The Family** (282 Broadway, 599-0276), a collective with lots of dope parties, benefits, and film screenings."

Fontaine Toups of

VERSUS and CONTAINÉ

"There's so much going on out here. **Rare Book Room** (85 S. 6th St., 599-0342) is the music studio where Versus recorded *Secret Swingers* and some of *Two Cents Plus Tax*. One of the earliest Versus shows was at a bar called **The Ship's Mast**, which has now relocated to the Southside (351 Kent Ave., 599-1936)."

LES SAVY FAV drummer Harrison Haynes **996 Club** (996 Manhattan Ave., 389-3818) hosts "really D.I.Y. shows, booked by younger, non-professional promoters. We

saw [the Sacramento band] !!! there, and it was great. It was like, wow, I can't believe all these people crawled out of the woodwork and came all the way out here."

John Flansburgh of THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

"We do a lot of our bread-and-butter recording at **Coyote Recording Studio** (100 N. 6th St., 387-7958). We always have rehearsal lunch around there, usually at **Plan-Eat Thailand** (141 N. 7th St., 599-5758)."

IDA's Karla Shickele

Shickele runs **Big Deal Art Records Junk** (479 Humboldt St., 609-0014) with former Ida drummer Miggy Littleton, where vinyl junkies and second-hand-junk junkies both score. While in the neighborhood, "go to **Phoebe's Café** (323 Graham Ave., 599-3218), which takes the prize for cutest counter staff," says Shickele.

SCOTTY HARD

"I moved to Williamsburg because it was cheap. And nobody lived over there when I moved over there, which I liked. And now it's a real hipster/scenester kind of spot." Starving artists congregate at "**Sweet Water Tavern** (105 N. 6th St., 963-0608), which is right around the corner from my house. That's the punk bar."

★ *Local Williamsburg bands Mink Lungs and Les Savy Fav appear on this month's CD. For more info, see p. 12.*

LOCAL LOGIC: WILLIAMSBURG'S MOST

Impressive CD selection:

Earwax (218 Bedford Ave., 486-3771)

Popular pool table:

The Abbey (536 Driggs Ave., 599-4400)

Generous cocktail:

Pete's Candy Store (709 Lorimer St., 302-3770)

Likely place to spot a member of Les Savy Fav tending bar:

Enid's bar (560 Manhattan Ave., 349-3859)

Difficult to pronounce venue:

Sin-é (142 N. 8th St., 486-0634)

Tiny art gallery (it fits one person at a time):

Holland Tunnel Art Projects (61 South 3rd St., 384-5738)

Dependable art gallery:

National Gallery Of Brooklyn (90 Berry St., 384-3913)

Appropriately named bar:

Kokie's Place (212 Berry St., 486-6187)

Bawdy performance event:

Bindlestiff Family Circus (www.bindlestiff.org)

Inexpensive slice of pizza:

The Charleston (174 Bedford Ave., 782-8717)

All phone numbers are in the 718 area code.

BON JOVI

STORY: DYLAN P. GADINO ILLUSTRATION: NICHOLAS MEOLA

A tiny cloud of dust danced around my ankles each time I fired the tightly wound baseball at the trio of steel milk bottles. With each pitch, I shot glances in all directions—to the right, my mother smiling with a fistful of dollar bills. Behind me, teenage girls clad in black spandex and sweater dresses, their Aqua-Netted hair cemented inches off their scalps. To the left, four eighth-grade metalheads from school, uniformed in biker jackets, Metallica T-shirts and bad attitudes. Straight ahead, a glorious vision of coolness and calm: Jon Bon Jovi staring knowingly back at me from the gold-look frame on the carnie-booth prize wall. His slight smirk screamed, "Let it rock/ Let it go/ You can't stop a fire burning out of control," in the midst of the Sacred Heart Church carnival.

With two bottles down and Mom out 13 bucks (I'd already passed her \$10 limit), this last pitch would result either in the loss of my 10-year-old dignity or would yield my very own glossy, framed image of Jon. "Love is a social disease," I said to myself, unaware of what the hell that really meant. Without another thought, I pitched—and down went the last bottle.

Playing it cool, I began to mouth, "We won't be cheated/ Now we're standing undefeated/ I'm the king of the mountain" as I took my time perusing the prizes, turning my nose up at the G.I. Joe action figures, plastic travel mugs and the other miscellaneous crappola that typically showed up at Jersey carnivals. It was the Jovi poster I wanted—there was no doubt in my mind—but I didn't have the nerve. Since the start of fifth grade at Midland, the cool metal kids had ruthlessly derided my afro-do, black, acid-washed jeans and *Cosby* Show-era sweaters, which didn't add up to a hip rep, even in 1987. They roared with laughter when, on the first day of Mrs. Weiner's music class,

The fifth-graders roared with laughter when, on the first day of Mrs. Weiner's music class, I announced that Bon Jovi's 7800° Fahrenheit was my all-time favorite tape.

I announced that Bon Jovi's 7800° Fahrenheit was my all-time favorite tape and that Bon Jovi was my all-time favorite band.

With another quick glance back at the Aqua-Net girls, I turned to my mom, and gently asked her to tell the carnie that she wanted the poster for her daughter—my sister who doesn't exist. Poster in hand, I gathered my brother and father (who actually do exist) and told them I was nauseous and that we had to leave at once.

Once home, I ran to my tiny bedroom, where Jovi pinups (and denim jacket patches I was too embarrassed to actually iron on) adorned my wall. After carefully relocating my older paraphernalia, I nailed the missing piece of my Jovi shrine smack dab in the middle of the wall—low enough to enjoy while sitting at my homework desk and high enough to peer at from my loft bed. That night, I fell asleep with the lights on, gazing at my idol.



Later the same year, Mom and Dad took me to my first concert, Jovi at Long Island's Nassau Coliseum, an experience marred by the incessant, solo-obscuring shrieks of busloads of Jersey girls. At recess that following Monday, I tried to talk music with some eighth-grade metalheads: Certainly they'd be impressed that at age 10, I'd already been to a rock show. I imagined that after I gave them a detailed account of my experience, they'd come around and finally agree that Jovi ruled. Instead, when I again professed my love for the band, they laughed and called me Dildo, a clever spin-off of my first name.

Sure, they laughed at me in the light of day, but those Cliff Burton-loving rebels were the same guys who, at school dances, couldn't wait for the traditional last song, Bon Jovi's "Never Say Goodbye." That was their cue to ask a girl to dance and perhaps win a chance at some eighth-grade tit. As for me, I got to sit back, close my eyes, and sing along: "Remember days of skipping school/ Racing cars and being cool/ With a six pack and the radio/ We didn't need no place to go," I sang, half posing for the video that was never made to go with it.

I suppose I was lame. It wouldn't be long before the meatheads would get to me, and by grade eight the likes of Metallica, Overkill and Nuclear Assault would be my new favorites. Those same meatheads, however, could never take the Jovi out of my soul, the copy of *Fahrenheit* out of my dual-cassette player, or the framed photo of Jon off of my wall.

Jon, if you're reading this, New Jersey-based freelance writer Dylan Gadino hopes you'll be free to sing at his wedding on July 13, 2002. Yeah, we know, he's living on a prayer.



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