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MONTHLY

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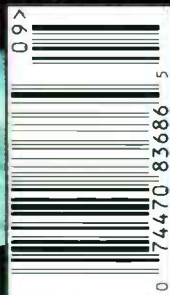
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MY MORNING JACKET



WAYNE COYNE BLRNS THE SUN

MY MORNING JACKET 24 ON THE VERGE 16

My Morning Jacket can pick a slow acoustic ballad à la Neil Young, lay into an endless jam like the Allman Brothers, psych out like Pink Floyd or headbang over a Flying V like Metallica. With a reverb tank the size of the Grand Canyon, they're updating classic rock for the indie set. Steve Klunge sets the controls for the heart of the grain silo.

Rival bands, united by (our) taste: These Arms Are Snakes, Kings Of Leon, Ima Robot, the Wrens.

PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES 20 ON THE CD 35

This Seattle fivesome made a record in insecurity, blew up in seconds, broke up in secret, and then reunited onstage. Now, with *The New Romance*, they're setting about kicking your ass in a very public manner. James Montgomery takes his licks.

My Morning Jacket, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, the Constantines, Killing Joke, Kittens For Christian, the Bronx, the Chemical Brothers, Frank Black And The Catholics, Kings Of Leon, the Raveonettes, Beulah, the Sleepy Jackson, Leaves, Deadstring Brothers, Rufio, Supagroup, Béla Fleck And The Flecktones, Derek Trucks Band, Viktor Vaughn, Brother Ali.

MF DOOM 22 QUICK FIX 8

On one side, a gigantic, rapping three-headed space lizard; on the other, a smooth, rapping time-traveler. And the guy in the middle, the one rapping through a metal mask that he wears due to an experiment gone horribly wrong? He's the *normal* one. Christopher R. Weingarten enters the alternate universe of MF Doom.

Eddie Izzard breaks down the super powers that come with transvestism, Richard Devine's homemade synths are feeling the heat, five records that would make Summer Hymns' hymnals, Chris Lee recommends you shave your girlfriend under cover of stealth, we take more potshots at Ray Manzarek, Cerys Matthews emerges from Catatonia, and Tenacious D/Trainwreck star Kyle Gass owns the stage, Pupkin-style.

CMJ NMM 10TH ANNIVERSARY 29 LOCALZINE 40

All this Pixies/My Bloody Valentine reunion talk got us so worked up that we were magically transported back to the early '90s, when putting Velocity Girl on the cover seemed like a good idea. Join us in celebrating 10 years of avoiding things like self-congratulatory anniversary coverage.

The Flaming Sideburns warm up Helsinki, Finland.

THE SUN 32 GEEK LOVE 66

Having some random guy elbow in and start running your interview is every writer's nightmare. Unless that guy is Wayne Coyne, and he starts asking your subject really embarrassing questions. Chad Swiatecki throws his notebook away.

Tom Mallon investigates reports that Barry White is qualified to satisfy, and what he finds will shock you.

REVIEWS, CHARTS, SERVICES

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MY MORNING JACKET (COVER AND CONTENTS): DREW GOHEN; ILLUSTRATION: GRAHAM BRICE

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On occasions like this, our 10th anniversary of publishing *CMJ New Music Monthly*, people often ask, "What's your favorite issue?" And my answer has always been the same: "The next one." As much as I've been proud of what any given issue has accomplished, I've always loved the promise held by the next one more.

That's how a decade has gone by, issue by issue.

Liberal use of the first person aside, this 10th Anniversary issue isn't about me, Scott Frampton, a.k.a. "—ed," or "editorguy." I just happen to be the most obvious thing that connects 1993 to 2003. Never mind me, I just work here.

CMJ New Music Monthly owes its existence to some very hard-working people and some significant leaps of faith. Robert K. Haber—Bobby to anyone who's met him—is CMJ. He started the company out of college, his first office in his parents' basement. After establishing *CMJ New Music Report* as the voice of college radio, Bobby thought about all the former college DJs he met who told him how much they missed getting *New Music Report* once they got out of school, but didn't have a need, or the scratch to pay for, a weekly trade magazine. This led him to launch *New Music Monthly*; any of you collectors out there will remember that it began as *CMJ New Music July* (changing, of course, with the month the issue was dated). None of us knew what we were doing when this thing started, and a good thing, too, because otherwise we'd never have gone through with it.

Originally, there was no full-time staff. Everyone working on the magazine had another job at CMJ. The art department would lay out the magazine after they were done with the *New Music Report*, meaning no work on the magazine happened until 6 p.m. Eventually, a managing editor was hired and the editor's other responsibilities were reassigned. This is worth mentioning because, after all this time, we're pretty much back where we started, with three full-time editorial staffers and a one-woman art department. The years in between saw some steady growth, a few more people working on the mag, and the enervating experience of being swallowed up by, and summarily pushed through the digestive tract of, the dot-com revolution. But again, here we are.

CMJ New Music Monthly mostly owes its existence, however, to you, the readers. And so we thank you. We can only hope that the next issue of the magazine, and the next one's next one, live up to the faith you've had in this rattletrap enterprise. You people are aces.

And so, see you next time.

CORRECTION:

In the July 2003 issue's *On The Verge* section, *Minus The Bear's* Highly Refined Pirates is listed with an incorrect label affiliation. *Suicide Squeeze Records* is the correct label. *CMJ New Music Monthly* regrets the error. But there's something poetic in running a correction in the 10th anniversary issue, no?

EDITORIAL

Editor-In-Chief: SCOTT FRAMPTON

Associate Editor: NICOLE KEIPER

Assistant Editor: TOM MALLON

Contributing Editors: STEVE CIABATTONI,
DOUG LEVY, CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN

Interns: CAROLINE BOROLLA, MARISA BARDACH

ART/PRODUCTION

Art Director/Designer: DARCY DOYLE

CD Production: SEAN CAESAR

Publisher: ROBERT K. HABER

Vice President/VGM: MIKE BOYLE

Account Executives: JON RAYVIO,

PETER WEINSTOCK

Director of Marketing: STACY CHALOEICHEEP

Circulation Coordinator: ANTONIA SANTANGELO

THE CMJ NETWORK

CED and President: ROBERT K. HABER

COD: JAY B. ZISKROUT

CFD: VICTOR NEY

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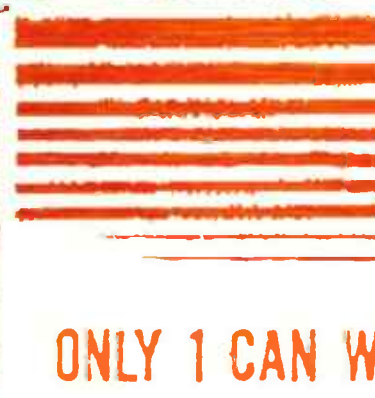
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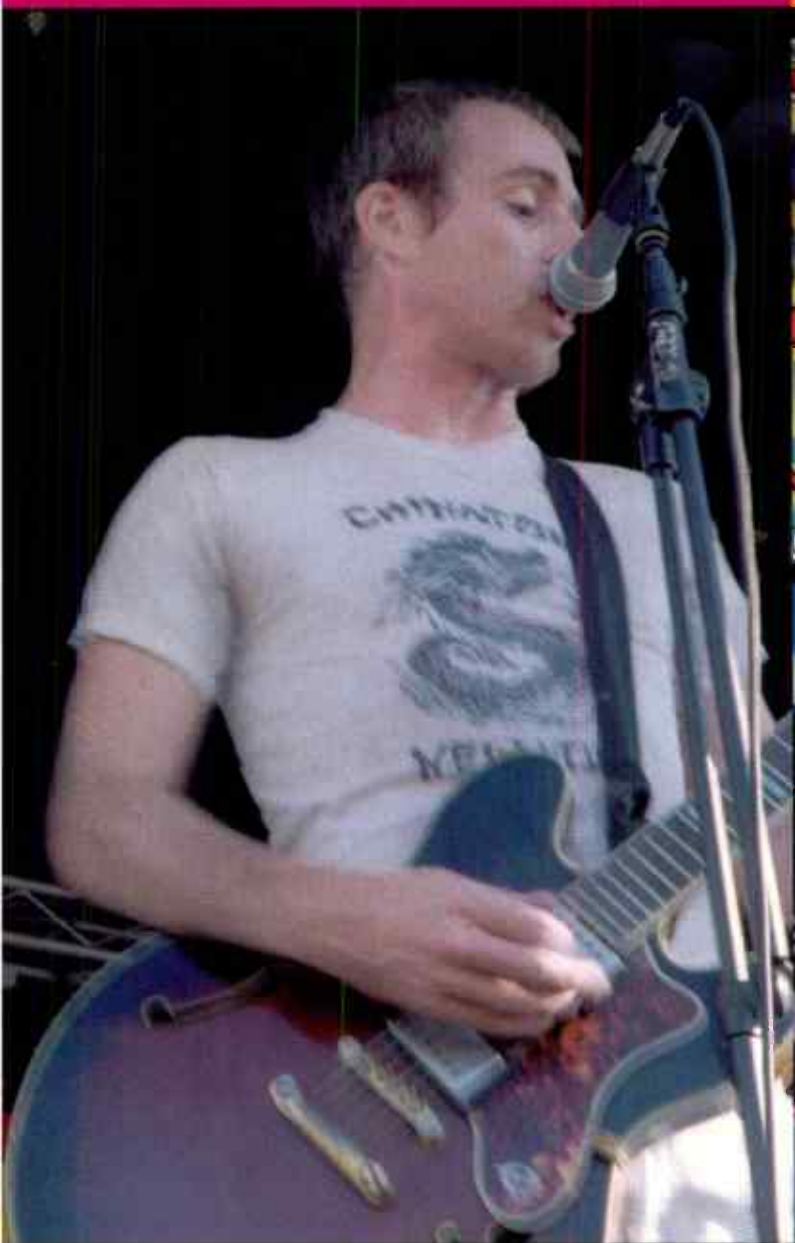
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SIREN FEST

CONEY ISLAND, NYC 07.19.03

Each year, the Village Voice Siren Fest has hipsters descending on Coney Island like the Deftones on a backstage catering table. This summer's was another scorcher, literally and figuratively. Ironic shirts soaked in sweat and mesh caps melting in the sun didn't stop Interpol (who weren't playing) from strolling the boardwalk in full suited regalia, though. Left to right: !!!, the Kills, Ted Leo, Sahara Hotnights.

PHOTO: JUSTIN SCURTI



WEIRD RECORD

Pray For The End, Beautiful Friend

Ray Manzarek's spent a lot of time positioning himself as the musical genius behind the Doors. Check out the back cover of this record for a surely objective testimonial: "Ray Manzarek was the musical twist in Jim Morrison, the crawling King Snake's tail... the supreme interpreter of words." On 1999's *Freshly Dug*—presumably reissued to feed the mania whipped up by the Doors 21st Century—the supreme interpreter of words teamed up with the supreme interpreter of puffy pirate shirts, "latter day master lyricist" Darryl Read. Recorded live in one day, Read throws down poetry slams that make Morrison read like Blake: "Musical images were formed and executed/ With diligent perceptions/ ...But behind the beat/ The man/ Was grooving/ Behind the beat." Manzarek supremely interprets Read's reedy readings with a beat-free, half-roadhouse blues, half-piano wank mix, all with sounds that could have come from your brother's Casio. "I am the dark angel/ We are the last poets," Read intones. Let's hope so. >>>TOM MALLON

09.01.83 Mick Jones gets the boot, ruining the Clash. **09.04.65** While the band buys a guard dog, **the Who's van**, with all their equipment in it, is stolen. Oh, bitter irony! **09.05.93 Dave Navarro** joins and ruins the Red Hot Chili Peppers. **09.09.66 Yoko Ono** meets John Lennon and ruins the Beatles. **09.11.77 Questionable Sept. David Bowie Move #1:** Bowie records "The Little Drummer Boy" with Bing Crosby. **09.12.87 Morrissey** quits the Smiths before things can get embarrassing. **09.12.90 Stevie Nicks** and Christine McVie quit Fleetwood Mac before... too late. **09.14.91 Questionable Sept. Bowie Move #2:** Tin Machine releases *II*. **09.21.84 Questionable Sept. Bowie Move #3:** His second-worst record, *Tonight*, is released. **09.23.72 Questionable Sept. Bowie Move #4:** After he gives them the song, Mott The Hoople scores their only hit with the Bowie-penned "All The Young Dudes." **09.23.91 Izzy Stradlin**, getting while the getting is good, quits Guns N' Roses. **09.25.90 Dave Grohl** joins and makes Nirvana. **09.29.77 Papa** needs a brand new band when **James Brown's** whole band quits on a tour stop in Florida.

FAKEBOOK

Because it's not what you know, it's what people think you know.

Spiritualized, *Amazing Grace*

Ladies and gentlemen, we are rocking your face.

Death Cab For Cutie, *Transatlanticism*

This, right after the Postal Service and his Post-Parlo solo split—Gibbard's becoming more Pollard with each passing day.

Arkansas man wakes up after 20 years in coma

Still thinks it's 1984; *NME* cover story coming soon.

Hipster Bingo

www.catbirdseat.org/catbirdseat/bingo.html. By the time you read this, it'll be as yesterday as trucker hats. Trying to keep up is futile.

50 Cent's G-Unit clothing line

Fitty "hopes to expand into... childrenswear." Aw, Kevlar for your little thug.

Metallica burn, back-to-school edition

Lars pissed kids are online stealing music; drivers pissed his snare sound has them out on the street, stealing hubcaps.

Shelby Lynne, *Identity Crisis*

The last record had her ass hanging out on the cover, but this mostly mellow new one—which shows her being a musician—is way sexier.

The Bronx

Yes, a band from California shouldn't be allowed to call themselves that. Too bad they're too good to hate for it.

Ween, *QUEBEC*

Sadly, their new disc is missing the rejected "Bitch, where the muthafuckin' cheese go at?" Pizza Hut jingle.

The Martinis

Joey Santiago gets by with a little help from his friends—the ones he was in the Pixies with, for example. So when's the damn reunion already?

NEWSFEED: Ryan Adams puts the kibosh on Whiskeytown reunion rumors on ryanadams.org, lashing out at Caitlin Cary for talking about

The really, really, very funny **Eddie Izzard** on...



Rock 'n' roll, part II

I tried to nick everything I could from rock 'n' roll, because rock 'n' roll nicked from everyone else... When you look up what the definition of rock 'n' roll is, you get this interesting thing of just pure energy. The pure punk thing, which can be great because it's a release of energy; with some thought behind it, it can get somewhere, as certain bands did. Or it could be just throwing up everywhere and trashing your hotel room, which is energy, though I don't know quite where it gets you. So in comedy, we don't do that.

That's a man, baby

I like making it a wannabe thing, transvestism: "Everyone wants to be a transvestite these days, but you can't train to be a transvestite. It's a gift. A gift from God. And from Beelzebub. A joint, shared gift..." You can say such weird fucking things, and you can blow people away in meetings, because they're just freaked out that you're a transvestite. "Look, don't say that to me, because I'm a transvestite, and I can kill you with this fuckin' phone. You know how we're trained. You know the stories." Their brain just goes to the fuckin' Bahamas, because they don't really have the power to deal with that shit. You talk a lot of shit. "As a transvestite, I've been trained in jujitsu. I could take your kneecaps out. Give them to small children."

He's a lumberjack and he's okay

Once you tell everyone you're a transvestite, you've got quite a lot of dark stuff out of the closet. Actually, it's not dark. See that's the shame—it just looks dark in the closet.

Yes, we know he's not a musician. Go see Eddie Izzard's *Sexie* tour, in North America through November, anyway. Interview by Scott Frampton.

it to the press • **Iggy Pop's** *Skull Ring*, featuring four tracks with fellow Stooges Ron and Scott Asheton, due Sept. 30 • **The Cure** aiming at early 2004 for >>>



Tough Love

Chris Lee Brooklyn-via-Carolina soul-slinger Chris Lee has many things going for him: He has one of those silky smooth croons that make the ladies go all googly-eyed; up until a recent shaving escapade, he managed to successfully pull off growing a moustache; and on his new *Cool Rock* (Misra), he brazenly muses "Lately I Want You," and it worked—Lee's now a newlywed. Learn from him, he is wise. *Stop trying to solve your own problems, you know nothing:*
lovelorn@cmj.com

My girlfriend has become convinced that I want to sleep with her best friend. We've known this girl as long as we've been dating and this has never been an issue before. This girl has expressed an idle interest in me, but has never acted on it in any way. I enjoy her company but would never dream of cheating on my girlfriend though she is convinced enough of my guilt (!?) that she's ready to leave me over this. What do I do?

—Matt, New York City



First of all, Matty, let's just pause and bask in the glorious self-admission that of course you want to sleep with her best friend. This will help immensely in step two of the prescription, in which you will spin this lascivious truth like Karl Rove doing the friggin' Lindy hop. You should perform a tortured, tear-drenched soliloquy (which I highly recommend pre-scripting) detailing to your paramour your swingin-gest guilt-speckled fantasies. Wholly confess your carnal "sin." Plead for mercy and beg to be flagellated for your unchaste thoughts toward another. Then, just as she begins to evince her first desperate existential wince, forcefully trumpet your bravery, courage and valor in resisting the siren song of this motley temptress she calls a friend. You'll get priceless points for brutal honesty, soul-baring sensitivity (although actual tears must flow to qualify for this), and ultimate chastity. And if she doesn't buy it, just go ahead and bag the friend.

I can't stand my girlfriend's haircut. She has these ridiculously uneven bangs. It's almost embarrassing to go out in public with her. I know if I tell her, it will hurt her feelings. I don't want to be mean, but I'm about to shave her head the next time she stays over. My friends have started calling her "Bangs" instead of her real name. What do I do?

—Paul, Bend, Oregon

I'm vexed as to how anybody from a 'burg as cosmopolitan as lovely Bend, Oregon could be sporting a suspect coiff. Anyway, unless this woman in any way resembles Uma Thurman or Patricia Arquette, you are absolutely correct—the bangs need to go. Do launch a commando/stealth-shave if necessary. Or simply ply her with strong spirits and suggest a "makeover." Whatever it takes. Although you want to make sure that nickname does not stick around after the shearing.

I broke up with my girlfriend about three weeks ago. I just felt we didn't have that much in common. We're trying the "still friends" thing, and hung out last weekend. We were drinking and she came back to my apartment, and you can guess what happened. Now she's calling me again constantly, e-mailing me twice a day. What do I do?

—Ben, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Oh man oh man do I remember these prickly predicaments! I don't have enough digits to count the number of girls to whom I've given the Heisman, albeit with the "still friends" corollary, and subsequently ended up back at one of our places, alone together, hammered, with loins ablaze... But Ben, come on, please, it doesn't take a very seasoned imagination to "guess what happened," and all I can say is that whenever I've done the same thing, i.e. taken a woman home with me and read aloud from Burke's *Reflections On The Revolution In France* and then made passing reference to his "other seminal work" about the Sublime and Beautiful, I've at least thrown her a bone. For the love of Christ, answer her e-mails and let her know Burke's tomes can be found in any self-respecting library, not to mention you can cop one for 4 ducats used on Amazon...

Love,
Chris

their Ross Robinson-produced new record • **Liars'** second record, *They Were Wrong So We Drowned*, pushed all the fuck way back to February 28 • **Death**



BY VINCENT G. CURRY

Movies about bands suck as a rule. A movie about an all-girl rock band based on an autobiographical stage play? Now you're 0 for 3. Much to my surprise, *Prey For Rock & Roll* proved to be a very engaging film, with a refreshingly realistic edge to it. Yes, there's an abundance of clichés (drug abuse, infighting, quest for a record contract, etc.), but they're rock's clichés as much as, or more than, the movie's. Admittedly, **it also helped that I saw it at a screening filled with tattooed rock chicks**, including the writer of the original stage play, Cheri Lovedog (of the band, um, Lovedog). Gina Gershon, who does her own guitar and vocals, stars as the leader of the all-girl band, Clamdandy (yeah, that means exactly what you think it does).

The band includes guitarist Lori Petty, to whom time has not been kind, though those weird tics seem to be gone, and the luscious **Drea DeMatteo on bass—finally in a role where she can show all her tattoos**. Gershon plays a tattoo artist by day, rocker by night who's approaching her 40th birthday and questioning whether or not she should still be chasing this rock 'n'roll fantasy in a Britney Spears world. Not helping matters are the bassist's drug problem, a violent attack on one bandmember and the senseless death of another (by movie logic, which one is obvious, since she's the least likely to go). Despite the darkness, it's not a depressing film; the first half is almost a slice-of-life comedy/drama. The ending even manages to be upbeat, standing up for tilting at windmills—no matter how stupid you look in leather pants at your age.

For more rants, go to www.angrygeek.com.

ILLUSTRATION: GRAHAM BRICE

“There are older fans who want to see it one more time, and there's younger fans who want to see it once, what it was like. We won't disappoint. There's bad news and good news. The bad news is we look like aging transvestites. The good news is we've always looked like aging transvestites.”

—Dee Snider tells *Billboard* what to expect from Twisted Sister's curse-free summer amusement park tour.



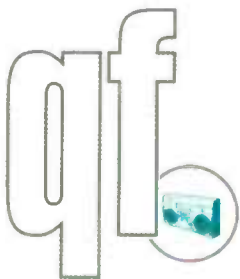
LEADERS OF THE OLD-SCHOOL

NCAA FOOTBALL 2004

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR XBOX, PS2, GAMECUBE)

Despite the touted “all new facial animations,” this isn't a first-person shooter. Rather, it's a chance to rewrite college history, just like you wished you could on your weekly Walk Of Shame. Well, college football history, anyway. In addition to its regular player modes, *NCAA Football 2004* offers heaps of “classic” modes: Play as the leather-helmeted 1924 Notre Dame Fighting Irish (or 99 other old-school teams), recreate 20 of the most famous games in NCAA history, or indulge in inter-school rivalry games, booing and all. This year's version of EA's hit franchise also includes a new feature in its Dynasty mode where an issue of *Sports Illustrated* is generated each week to rip apart your performance, just like the real thing. >>>TOM MALLON

Cab For Cutie's fourth album, *Transatlanticism*, due Oct. 7 • Garbage in the studio, working on the follow-up to 2001's *Beautiful Garbage* • Ben Folds >>>



MY FAVORITE GEAR: HOT BOT HEAT

Richard Devine's sensitive synths are crazy from the heat

"Don't go in Rich's bathroom, man! He's got some weird shit in there on the countertop," twangs Richard Devine in mock-terror, illustrating a pal's hypothetical reaction to the monstrosity lurking in his loo. "It'd just rage at you!"

Thankfully Devine's water closet isn't infested with those nasty Georgia toilet alligators, just a totally boss touch-sensitive synth. "While [people] are in my bathroom, they touch it and it scares the shit out of them," Devine says. "It won't do anything if your hand's not touching it. Then you put your hand on it and it's just—wwaaaaaooooooshaaaaahhh-haoooooww! It just totally roars. It's just so violently fucked up and loud."

Built by Rich's longtime friend/synth tech Tim Adams and inspired by the touch-sensitive work of synth pioneer Don Buchla, Devine uses the device like a theremin, culling some of the animalistic sounds heard on his dense, meticulous electroacoustic opus *Asect: Deseect* (Schematic). Devine records sessions of himself "hand dancing" over the sensors—not something usually associated with shit built with the same parts as Goldfinger's lair.

"[Adams] builds all these crazy high-tech doors that have key access codes that use your fingerprints and stuff," Devine says. "So he has access to all these crazy little control mechanisms. They're actually really hard to get." >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



THE MIX

TITLE: Scary Beginning

MADE BY: Azjpege (a.k.a. Jason Kiningham of Phoenix, Arizona)

1. **Goldfrapp**
Lovely Head
2. **Broadcast**
A Man For Atlantis
3. **Stereolab**
Space Moth
4. **Godzuki**
Contact
5. **Gorillaz**
Faust
6. **The Avalanches**
Slow Walking
7. **A Band Of Bees**
Punchbag
8. **Josh Rouse**
Ugly Stories
9. **Kid Loco & Tim Keegan**
Cocaine Diana
10. **Andrew Bird's Bowl Of Fire**
Dear Old Greenland
11. **The Avalanches**
Electricity
12. **Badly Drawn Boy**
The Shining (Avalanches Remix)
13. **Lamb**
Gabriel
14. **Faithless**
Crazy English Summer
15. **Zero 7**
End Theme

That's an avalanche of Avalanches, all right. Shake more ass in The Mix forum at cmj.com.

OF GREAT IMPORT

Get it from over there, 'cause you can't buy it here.



CERYS MATTHEWS *Cockahoop* (Blanco Y Negro)

What it is: Former Catatonia frontwoman's first solo outing, featuring a mix of original and traditional material.

Why you want it: *Cockahoop* is the result of the Welsh Cerys Matthews' journey into the American South. The disc was recorded over the course of the better part of a year in Nashville, with steel guitarist Bucky Baxter playing producer. A far cry from the anthemic arena rock of her former band, the songs here were recorded with the help of a host of Nashville session musicians, most of whom were understandably unfamiliar with the decidedly un-

country singer. Gone are the layered electric guitars that previously backed Matthews' gravelly Björk-meets-Marianne Faithfull vocals, in favor of acoustics, along with banjos, pedal steel, autoharp, organ and even French horn. Matthews left Catatonia two years ago, following rehab treatment for exhaustion. Not only does she sound rested here; she sounds downright serene. >>>DOUG LEVY

LINK: www.cerysmatthews.info

R.I.Y.L: Catatonia, Dolly Parton, Janis Joplin

RICHARD DEVINE: AMBER VAUGHN

to release three EPs this year; also producing William Shatner's upcoming record • **Jack White** to produce part of Loretta Lynn's new record • **Doves** begin

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IN MY ROOM

Who: Kyle Gass of Tenacious D/Trainwreck
Where: His apartment in Sherman Oaks, California

Why: As one half of Tenacious D, Kyle Gass rocked acoustics and comedy harder than anyone since Foreigner's unplugged "Juke Box Hero." As his alter ego Klip Calhoun, he's gone the full-band route to take on country-rock with Trainwreck. Jack's off somewhere "allowing it to happen."

Me, baby... me

I've noticed that in my apartment there's lots of things containing me in them. Like I have like a gold record on the wall with my picture on it. And there's some Tenacious D posters. And now there's some Trainwreck paraphernalia, my new side project. It comforts me to have these little pelts on the wall. Just to say, "Hey, you're doing okay, keep going." Ya know, look at these little, uh, little blue ribbons you got here.

American grandstand

I recently bought a little PA. I've got a sorta big apartment, so one-half of my living room is like a little bandstand. I'm kinda like the guy in *The King Of Comedy*. What's his name? Rupert Pupkin. Ostensibly, it's so I can practice—but that's crap. It's just so I can have a little show ready to go. Like my girlfriend and I put on the PA and we do home karaoke and stuff. It's a lot of fun. Just before lovemaking. It's kinda like our pre-amble... Break out the Air Supply, and then we're doing, ya know, the horizontal mambo. [James Taylor?] There you go. Although she's so young she doesn't know who he is. That's where I'm at now. 'Yeah, don't worry baby, he's good. Trust me.'

Interview by Tom Mallon.



5 SPOT

FIVE RECORDS THAT WARM UP SUMMER HYMNS' ZACH GRESHAM

1. Johnny "Guitar" Watson, *Bow Wow*

This is one of his last records before dying onstage during a Japanese tour a few years ago. It's a bit cheesy with the vocoder scating, talkboxes and such, but it's impossible not to be taken in by the joy of this record. Truly a master of reinventing himself and taking cliché to the next level.

2. Gary Wilson, *You Think You Really Know Me*

Almost everything I've been wanting in a record. I wouldn't have known that it was recorded over 20 years ago. It has a desperate, funky element to it that folks I play it for either love or hate.

3. J.J. Cale, *Really*

I found this record, supposedly one of his least enticing, for \$.99 and I have really enjoyed it. His songs are very laid back and have a very distinctive sound to them. Others have made his songs hits but his versions and style far outshine Eric Clapton ["Cocaine"] and etc...

4. Bonnie "Prince" Billy, *Master And Everyone*

Will Oldham is one of the few artists that I can buy their records with complete confidence. He is a gifted and prolific songwriter... Mark Nevers' subtle production and Will's performance make this batch of songs one of the best in a while.

5. Nicolai Dunger, *Tranquil Isolation*

I saw him play for a very intimate crowd at some church in Austin and it was a very nice way to spend 30 minutes on a warm afternoon. And Van Morrison comparisons aside, this guy is an excellent frisbee player who can throw the disk in some very funky yet always consistent ways. The recording and production is sublime, courtesy of the Brothers Oldham.

Summer Hymns' Clemency (*Misra*) is out now and vocoder-free.

TRAINWRECK: TONY BLASKO; SUMMER HYMNS: CAMILLE SHUNNARAH

work on the follow-up to *The Last Broadcast* • **Ozzy**, in a bid to further chip away at his legacy, to re-record Sabbath's "Changes" as a duet with Kelly ****

September 2003



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28. READ YELLOW Read Yellow [EP]
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30. NOFX The War On Errorism
31. CLEM SNIDE Soft Spot
32. BLUR Think Tank
33. RH FACTOR Hard Groove
34. STARLIGHT MINTS Built On Squares
35. DEAD MEADOW Shivering Kings And Others
36. MAYDAY I Know Your Troubles Been Long
37. JACK JOHNSON On And On
38. GILLIAN WELCH Soul Journey
39. EXPLOSION Sick Of Modern Art
40. JUNIOR SENIOR D-D-Don't Don't Stop The Beat
41. JAYHAWKS Rainy Day Music
42. OFFICER MAY Smoking In A Minor
43. GLENN BRANCA The Ascension
44. ERASE ERRATA Dancing Machine: The Erase Errata Remix Record
45. BROADCAST Pendulum
46. LIZZIE WEST Holy Road: Freedom Songs
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THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES

We're trying to break free of the big hardcore kids with the hooded sweatshirts," Ryan Frederiksen hisses. "There's so many limitations... The scene has this holier-than-thou attitude of, 'If you're not a traditional hardcore band, then you're not worth listening to.'" You can't blame the guy for being bitter. In the past six months alone, his band—the awesomely monikered Seattle spazzes These Arms Are Snakes—have been called the saviors of hardcore, pretenders to the throne, geniuses, sellouts, charlatans, assholes and shams... all before they even released a note of music. "The hype machine is a weird thing. The first show we played, we sold the room out," Frederiksen says. "It's been crazy the entire time." The buzz could be attributed to the band's pedigree (vocalist Steve Snere was in Minneapolis' Kill Sadie, Frederiksen played guitar in Nineironspitfire, and bassist Brian Cook was a founding member of seminal art/noise propagators Botch), but the Snakes back it up. Their debut EP, *This Is Meant To Hurt You* (Jade Tree), is as exciting and visceral a statement as hardcore has made in years: Snere howls bloody murder over Frederiksen's guitar explosions and Jesse Robertson's moody keyboards, everything turning on the punishing undercurrent of Cook's and drummer Joe Preston's low-end heroics. It's dramatic, thrashed post-hardcore that angers and invigorates. "We recorded everything as a demo, then went back and re-recorded everything in the studio," Frederiksen says. "When we were finished, we were listening to it all, and it hit us. We were like, 'Holy shit! We're good!'" >>>JAMES MONTGOMERY

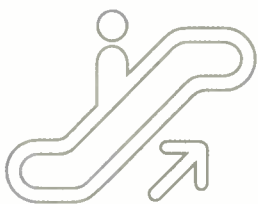
ROBIN LAANANEN

KINGS OF LEON



In his aviator shades, shag haircut, flared jeans and Skunk Baxter goatee, tough-talking Tennessean Caleb Followill cuts an impressive retro-rock figure as he powerchords through soundcheck with his family band, Kings Of Leon. Naturally, the music he and his two brothers and cousin make is a blast from the Southern past, as well—their RCA debut, *Youth And Young Manhood*, sounds like Molly Hatchet on the Strokes and steroids, from the opening “Red Morning Light” to the hidden album-closer “Talihina Sky.” And Talihina, sighs Followill—the son of a travelling Pentecostal minister named, of course, Leon—is what he’s been thinking about lately. It’s the small Oklahoma hamlet where their annual reunion is held, where the Kings are the scheduled entertainment this year. “And we can’t wait to see characters like our cousin Cleo, who has a methamphetamine lab in his school bus, and Uncle Bud, who’s walked up to us with a live deer in his arms saying ‘Hey—look what I just caught in the creek,’” the 21-year-old drawls. Now that the band is becoming famous, “We’re kinda worried—I hope it’s not gonna be weird.” Because when the royalty checks do roll in, Followill swears, “I just want an old shitty pickup truck. I wanna look like I don’t care, just like my clothes and my appearance.” >>>TOM LANHAM

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 



Here's a story for the kids!" shrieks Ima Robot singer/brain-trust Alex Ebert on the Los Angeles quintet's first single "Dynamite." The high-powered nu-wave workout, however, is anything but wholesome family fun: Between angelic "ah-ahs" and pogo-stick punch-drunk energy, Ebert croons

IMA ROBOT

about randy women and torrentially ejaculating men. It's not exactly *Romper Room*—more like a love song wrapped in Ziggy Stardust's feather boa. There's a manic joy throughout their self-titled Virgin debut, a fine response to the luck the band's had so far: "Everything that we've wanted we've gotten," enthuses Ebert, "great shows, amazing press, great response from people." Bassist Justin Meldal-Johnsen (Beck, Tori Amos) and drummer Joey Waronker (R.E.M., Beck) dropped lucrative sideman work to join the then-relatively unknown Ima Robot, bringing a wealth of experience and an airtight rhythm section to the band. Ebert still can't figure why a couple of big-shot session guys wanted to join his

group of renegade L.A. kids: "Justin joined before we were signed, which made no sense. He left Beck to join us. But they couldn't have known all of this was going to happen. I guess on some gut level, they felt it and they knew it." For rock vets like Meldal-Johnsen and Waronker, shooting a video is old hat, but the process of filming "Dynamite" was completely new for Ebert—an experience that really showed him his band's strength. "It was the first opportunity to watch myself onscreen," he says. "We're totally insane. It's fantastic—I don't think I've seen this kind of energy before [in a band]." >>>CHRIS NIXON

JELLE WAGENEER



THE WRENS

If you want, you can blame that whole Creed thing on the Wrens. Well, sort of: In 1996, the Jerseyan foursome released *Secaucus*, their second album, and faceless Grass Records (now Wind-Up) eagerly produced a contract they expected the band to re-sign. But the Wrens refused, a decision that didn't sit very well with a certain Grass executive, who vowed to make the next band to walk through his door famous. Enter a minister's son, his own prison in tow. "There are no real horror stories, not the kind our friends' bands have fallen prey to," says guitarist Charles Bissell. "Our career as a band has been just a series of good stories to tell later." The Wrens haven't allowed their 12 years of

label "courtship rituals" to wither their robust rock-hood. Instead, the emotion and hilarity was bagged into the tell-all aggregate of this year's *The Meadowlands* (Absolutely Kosher). The band's third release scratches each vulnerable punk-pop verse with raw melody and rock abandon. "There were tears, bloodshed and acrimony over this record. We had to step back and ask, 'What are we doing it for?'" Bissell laughs. "This record was us easing back into it." "The House That Guilt Built" admits within the first minute of the album, "I'm nowhere near what I dreamed I'd be/ I can't believe what life's done to me," as though it were a verbal agreement between listener and musicians to endure, together, the Wrens' personal history in 13 tracks or less. Bissell likens their labors of love to the proverbial pot-shots of dating. "All this time," he offers, "we were looking for a label in all the wrong places." >>>KATIE HASTY



dig. this

**Pretty Girls Make Graves
rocked, then refined,
now rule.**

STORY: JAMES MONTGOMERY • PHOTO: MICHAEL LAVINE

Andrea Zollo is playing tour guide. Tucked away in the back room of a dimly lit Mexican restaurant, she's chowing on Chilean Sea Bass and extolling the dubious virtues of Seattle, her de-facto hometown.

"It's the serial-killer capital of the world, and it used to be the suicide capital too," she says, poking at a hunk of fish flesh. "It's a depressing environment, and even though the weather is really shitty, it isn't all about the shitty weather. It's all about the lack of light."

Of course, Zollo is wearing all black as she's saying this, brushing pieces of her dark hair out of her eyes. She's wearing a choker around her neck, a tiny heart pendant dangling below that. Nodding in agreement around the tiny wooden table are nearly all the other members of her band, *Pretty Girls Make Graves*. Bassist Derek Fudesco, a skinny 6'7" dude with chunky glasses, will later split a "bleeding heart" chocolate dessert with Zollo, also his girlfriend. Guitarist Jason Clark is the fashionable one, wearing a black welder's cap, skintight jeans and bright white sneakers. Drummer Nick DeWitt elucidates in slow, drawn out prose, stabbing his clenched fist with a fork when the answers evade him. The band's other guitarist, Nathan Thelen, would've been here too, but he's just become a father. His daughter was born as the fireworks lit up the bleak Seattle night on July 4th.

"It's so depressing in the city that you need a creative output," Fudesco says. "Shitty weather makes for sitting inside of your basement and creating music."

They've always done just that. Except up until 2001, it used to be with other people's bands.

"I was in other bands with pretty much everyone in every Seattle band," Clark laughs. "I played with a whole bunch of 'em."

"I knew all of these guys from other area groups, and I was looking for something new," says Fudesco, who left shock-a-billy punkers the Murder City Devils for *Pretty Girls Make Graves*. "When we all got together and played, I could tell this was it. It just felt right. And I knew that this band would take over all the other bands pretty rapidly."

It did. Within a year, the Girls had cut an EP for Seattle label Dim Mak records,

and found themselves on a national tour with riot grrrls gone wild *Bratmobile*, where they became friends with *Bratmobile* drummer/*Lookout! Records* co-owner Molly Neuman. "The whole tour was this giant 'holy crap' moment," Zollo admits. "It was our first tour ever. And Molly was there throughout the whole thing. We never even shopped our EP to other labels. Molly told us, 'Whatever you guys want to do, we'll put out,' and we were like, 'Yeah, okay. Let's do it.'"

So just like that, they had a record deal. Wanting to keep their momentum rolling, the band hurried into the studio with producer Phil Ek. After nine pressure-cooker days, often working in 24-hour shifts, the group emerged from the studio—unwashed and a little gamy, but with a jaw-dropping debut in tow. Released in April 2002, *Good Health* ripped through nine songs in less than 30 minutes, the album an urgent bulletin of urban unrest, hyperspeed guitars and Zollo's earth-shaking pipes, drawing much of its immediacy from the circumstances under which it was recorded.

"It was just brutal," Zollo says. "I had lost my voice by the second day, but we knew the record had to be finished, so there was nothing we could do about it." The band immediately headed back out on the road, but the combination of studio fatigue and the exhaustive scope of their tours began to take their toll. There was in-fighting and backbiting, tantrums and turmoil, and by the time the Girls limped overseas last December, everything came to a head.

"This is the first time we've ever talked about it," Fudesco says. "But we broke up as soon as we got to Europe. We decided that we were done, and then we toured Europe for a week."

"Everyone was pretty insecure about their place in the band," offers DeWitt. "Everyone thought they had to prove something."

"We all have such strong personalities. We're all assholes," Zollo says. "But I thought we were done for good. I was severely depressed, because these were gonna be our last shows."

Twenty minutes before they were set to go onstage at London's Garage club, the group had a meeting and said the things that needed to be said. Then they blew the doors off the place. ("That show," Fudesco says, "was like one giant hug.")

It caught the attention of a gentleman in attendance, one Gerard Cosloy, co-owner of *Matador Records*. The courtship began almost immediately, and within a matter of weeks, *Pretty Girls Make Graves* were signed, sealed and delivered.

Inspired, the band re-teamed with Ek, headed up to Bear Creek studios, essentially a giant barn in the wilds north of Seattle. Marathon days marred the *Good Health* sessions, but here, they settled in for a more relaxed month of recording. Ideas were bounced around, expanded, scrapped and resurrected. Creativity was the coin. And it shows.

Their new album, *The New Romance*, is a bold statement, a refined departure from the grubby punk of *Good Health*. Songs build and collapse, moody synths roll in like fog and spiky guitars flare up then disappear. Zollo's vocals, formerly submerged in an ocean of feedback, are given top billing, and she delivers with bravura. There's a horny *Farfisa* organ, and delicate xylophone tones. It's a band record. And while there's still tons of emotion, it's of the tempered, mature variety.

"The new record is a lot more thought out, a lot more mature," DeWitt says. "We all work so much better together now."

"And you can hear that on *The New Romance*," Zollo adds.

"A lot has happened to our band," Fudesco remarks, "and we're all better friends for it."

Three nights later, *Pretty Girls Make Graves* are playing a free show on a pier jutting out into the Hudson River. Zollo stalks the stage like a lion tamer, her voice deep, clear and raw. Fudesco and Clark bound about like supercharged Superballs. DeWitt pounds away from a near standing position. And proud papa Thelen finally shows, wearing a striped sportcoat and strutting like Mick Jagger. But it seems that no matter how hard they try, the band just can't seem to shake that Seattle darkness; the day of the show was marked by heavy downpours, and by the time the Girls took the stage, the sky was dark, heavy and gray. It's something that Zollo seems to notice too. Right before the band tears into *Romance*'s "All Medicated Geniuses," she pauses, surveys the crowd, and offers up a dedication:

"This song is for all the kids who used to live in Seattle," she laughs. "Who got out." **MM**

THREE FACES OF DOOM

Metal-masked MC MF Doom can't also be rhyme-dropping time-traveler Viktor Vaughn, and rapping three-headed space lizard King Geedorah, can he?

STORY: CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN
PHOTO: BIGG JUSTOLEUM

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S **CD**



Despite the fact that their rhyming styles are dangerously similar—a leisurely yet meticulously syncopated cadence bolstered by leftfield patterns and zigzagging subjects—there is no reason to believe that MF Doom, King Geedorah and Viktor Vaughn are the same guy.

C'mon, MF Doom is the underground hip-hop vet (formerly Zev Love X of New York political eccentrics KMD) who donned a metal mask after a sabotaged experiment "damaged his image." How could he be Viktor Vaughn, a time-traveling scientist/rapper from another dimension, or King Geedorah, a giant three-headed space lizard who can't even visit Earth anymore, let alone rap here, ferchrissakes?



"Geedorah channels through me, given that he's a reptile," says Doom from his Atlanta lair. "You know, he's huge. We both have a vested interest in hip-hop and humanity. We see eye to eye—and it's hard to see eye to eye with somebody with six eyes."

Transmitting telepathic messages through Doom, Geedorah has created *Take Me To Your Leader* (Big Dada). Produced by Doom himself (via telepathy, naturally), *Leader* is a trebly concoction of lo-fi beats and howling samples culled from old flicks hidden in Doom's vast video collection. Geedorah's messages were translated by Doom—like ancient history theorist Zecharia Sitchin tackling the Sumerian tablets—turning his alien tongue into rhyme form so humans can easily grasp his outsider view of Earth.

"Last time I was here it was beautiful," says Geedorah, telepathically communicating through Doom. "This was millions of years ago. It's beautiful now too, but it was ill then. It was like a tourist type of place. People try to go to Cancun, go see girls and whatnot every once in a while. Everyone goes there and meets up,

people go to different resort areas, it was almost like that. Now? It's a lot different. The amount of nuclear weapons that the United States, so-called, possess *alone* is more than enough to blow this shit to smithereens—to space-dust-type shit. So you think of that and you think, 'There's people in the world that's still hungry... come the fuck on!'

"I'm here to fucking make that shit back to normal," says Geedorah, "help humans bring it back. [Earth is] too much fun. What the fuck, if niggas blow Cancun up it'll be fucked up, right?"

Geedorah speaks and raps with his second head—well, second in our system of calculation, since he sees everything as "zero," thus making "head number two" merely "the second zero." Contrary to his depiction in *Godzilla* movies (early chances to spread his message that, through filmmaker Kazuki Omori's bungling, portrayed him as a rubber-suited menace), Geed is here to make humans part of the galactic fam. But, yeah, he still beefs with *Godzilla*.

"They call *Godzilla* the beast? The equivalent of the beast on Earth would be institutionalism, the big systems, the jails, the police, the fucking government, anything that's oppressing you. So, of course I got beef with the beast. That nigga's fucking shit up constantly, and when I come and stop the nigga, he gotta get like eight other motherfuckers to try to stop me," Geedorah says. "Geedorah's peaceful. It's just a shame that we can't just fucking all have the fucking big ill party that we need to have. There's a margin of error, the earth wobbles a little, but like 2032 is the party, so either humans gonna be there or they're not. They got their invitation, can they get their tuxedos ready?"

If anyone can foresee what happens in 2032, it's Viktor Vaughn, a scientist/MC who occasionally dabbles in time traveling when not taking out suckers. Actually, he can only see *probable* futures and, for the time being, he's stuck in our dimension because his time machine is fucked up. But while he was here, he dropped *Vaudeville Villain* (Sound Ink), a battle-ready document detailing his exploits over the avant-electro beats of Sound Ink cronies King Honey, Heat Sensor and Max Bill.

"The way the gizmo works is you have to tap into one of those probable futures, like the most probable at that specific moment," says Vaughn of his *Sliders*-like mechanism, with a dirtier drawl than Doom or Geedorah. "I would say the futures I have seen, some of them look bleak, a few of them look promising, but it can be changed at any minute, so I still have faith. But I'm like this: If it don't go good, I'm gonna break out. I'm trying to get my shit fixed now, so... I hope y'all will be alright."

Unfortunately Vaughn, whose album is a story of his own life that doesn't follow the "flimsy" concept of chronology, can't tell us about the future at the risk of causing a paradox. He's seen stuff that looks "like *Terminator 3* out this muhfucka," but, like Geedorah, believes there's hope and wants to stick around for the party.

"If I make it back and I find a way to come back, I'll come back," says Vaughn. "I like it out here. The women out here are ill." **NMM**



World Pacific History

my

morning

Reverb: That's What's Happening

jacket

These Louisville, Kentucky homies will make fans of anyone: indie hipsters, old hippies—even the Dixie Chicks asked them to open some shows. Because they're true believers. Rock is the faith and reverb is the sacrament.

STORY: STEVE KLINGE • PHOTO: DREW GOREN

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

The Hog Pit, perched on the edge of New York's Meatpacking district, is sort of a family-friendly version of notorious faux biker bar Hogs & Heifers, down the street. It has barbeque, bottles of Lone Star in buckets of ice, classic rock and country on the jukebox and lady bartenders in cowboy boots. It's the sort of place that inspires futile questions. Like asking My Morning Jacket to describe their own music.

"Rock 'n' roll. That's all I can say," singer/guitarist Jim James says in a standard, but deceptively appropriate, response. "It's everything: Rock 'n' roll encompasses all the emotions."

And then the jukebox in the next room kicks in, and drummer Patrick Hallahan smirks. "I can't help it, this song is just amazing as the backdrop to this conversation. It's 'Achilles Last Stand' by Led Zeppelin. Fuckin' amazing."

"That's one of the things about your question," keyboardist Danny Cash interjects. "This [Led Zeppelin song] is rock 'n' roll, Chuck Berry's rock 'n' roll, Roy Orbison's rock 'n' roll. Rock 'n' roll encompasses the entire spectrum. Radiohead's rock 'n' roll, Beck's rock 'n' roll. Anybody that's doing anything remotely in that spectrum is rock 'n' roll, so it's nice to be in that category. Because we can do anything in that field."

That's not a boast. My Morning Jacket see rock 'n' roll as an invitation, as a field of opportunities, perhaps even as a calling.

Like Led Zep, echoing from that jukebox, My Morning Jacket are a Rock Band. Their songs can be soulful or trippy or explosive. They play slow, acoustic country ballads and long, loud electric jams. All bands hate categories and pigeonholes, but it's particularly problematic for this one. The Louisville, Kentucky band gets compared to Southern-by-the-grace-of-god rockers like Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers as much as the Neil Young of "Southern Man"; they're associated with psychedelic rockers such as Pink

Floyd and the Flaming Lips one moment, then with indie bands like Grandaddy and Galaxie 500 the next. Or they're lumped in with the alt-country posse.

They've received personal invitations to tour with Guided By Voices, Ben Kweller, the Foo Fighters and Bob Dylan. The Dixie Chicks asked, but scheduling didn't work out. They've opened for Beth Orton, Doves, Burning Brides and Swearing At Motorists. This summer, they played both the Bonnaroo Festival of jam bands and the Field Day Fest with Radiohead and the Beastie Boys. Their first two albums came out on the twee indie label Darla; the new *It Still Moves* is on Dave Matthews' RCA imprint, ATO. Live, they've been known to cover Erykah Badu, Black Sabbath, Elvis Presley and Elton John. They're at home in all those worlds, because it's all rock 'n' roll.

It Still Moves flows through Stonesy rockers ("Dancefloors"), acoustic shuffles ("Golden"), ghostly epics ("Steam Engine") and lush pop ("Just One Thing"). "Run Thru" builds upon a slow slide-guitar figure but turns into a drum-heavy, Iron Butterfly-like psychedelic freakout in the middle. The album, their third, is the sound of a band joyfully reveling in possibilities.

My Morning Jacket formed in 1998, but their roots go back much further. James and lead guitarist Johnny Quaid are first cousins (Quaid, at 26, is a year older than the rest of the guys). The two grew up together, playing air guitar to Alice In Chains' *Facelift* and AC/DC's *The Razor's Edge*. Hallahan, who joined MMJ after their second album, and James (born four minutes apart, coincidentally) have been best friends since they met at a church summer camp when they were in fourth grade.

Only Quaid and bassist Two Tone Tommy had played in a band together before forming My Morning Jacket. As Hallahan tells it, "As far as the Louisville band scene is concerned, we were kinda in the same circuit, but I would have a different band than Jim, and Danny was in a solo band. I remember the first time I ever met Danny Cash, we were playing the same show, and he was a solo act. He was playing guitar and singing with a drum machine, doing a cover of Black Sabbath 'Paranoid' with a bra on."

"It was a sports bra," Cash deadpans.

"Yeah, he needs support," cracks Quaid.

After hearing MMJ's debut, 1999's *The Tennessee Fire*, Cash was so eager to join the band that he switched instruments when he heard that James was looking for a keyboard player. "I remember I used to see Jim's old band play," he says, "and as a joke at the end of the set, he'd shout, 'Good

night, New York!' do the whole big rock thing. And I remember the first time we played New York, he said 'Good night, New York!' to New York. It was really weird."

Later that night, they'll embrace the weirdness of living out a dream again, opening for Pete Yorn and the Foo Fighters at the 3,400-capacity Hammerstein Ballroom in NYC.

It Still Moves' "One Big Holiday," which has been a live favorite for several years, alludes to those youthful dreams of these longtime friends. Starting with a shimmering guitar figure and a bassline reminiscent of the Cure's "A Forest," the song builds to a transcendent epiphany of interlocking guitars. "It's about wanting to escape the boring everyday world of jobs and headaches and just go play music and have fun, live one big holiday and be on permanent vacation," says James. "Because we all always wanted to be in a rock band and play guitar solos and jump off our amps and have fun."

Which is what they did nearly continuously after the release of 2001's *At Dawn*, developing a reputation as a must-see live act. Their first two albums only hinted at the power and scope of the band's live performances, but *It Still Moves* takes measures to remedy that. "A lot of the stuff on the other two records was done really, really fast," says Quaid. "But with this new record, we played the songs so much live—a lot of the songs we had for like a year or two—so we had a lot of time to spend on it."

"Instead of basically making a studio record and playing it live, we're a live band and then we had to take it into the studio," says Cash.

They recorded *It Still Moves* above a three-car garage on Quaid's grandparents' farm outside of Louisville. Niko Bolas, who had worked with Neil Young and Journey's Steve Perry, helped them set up the studio. They used some of the same equipment that Bolas used on Perry's hit "Oh Sherry." "There's a straight Jacket/Journey connection now; together forever!" marvels Quaid. Bolas also hooked them up with the legendary Willie Mitchell, who produced Al Green's hits, to add horn arrangements to "Dancefloors" and "Easy Morning Rebel."

James says, "We took the master tapes down there [to Royal studios in Memphis], and it was like watching Picasso paint a painting or watching Mozart conduct an orchestra, just the way that those guys wrote the charts for the horns, the way they moved the horns and positioned them around the microphone to get a balance of sound. It was unbelievable."

“Reverb just makes me feel like a supernatural being; it’s like the difference between playing in heaven and playing on earth. Reverb makes everything right, like a recording you can stick your head into and swim around in.”



PEARL JAM: EDDIE VEDDER, MIKE RODDEN, JEFF AMENT, STONE GOSSARD, DAVE KRUSE

One of the band's hallmarks is its use of deep layers of reverb, and the band chuckles and rolls their eyes at the mention, although Quaid admits, "I would have been offended if you didn't ask."

"We like to pride ourselves on the best reverb possible. I'm a reverb maniac," says James, eager to describe the different methods they used: They recorded the drums in the big garage space; they have a huge plate-reverb the size of a queen mattress; engineer Danny Kadar helped

if you know that song, but at the end, it just explodes and he's just belting it out. I couldn't believe it. I could not believe I'd never heard this man; this kind of music just couldn't be made by humans." Listen to a song like the ghostly elegy "Rollin Back" or the rolling "Golden," and you'll hear more Orbison than Flaming Lips.

The second half of *It Still Moves* is riddled with metaphysical references that suggest James recognizes something transcendent and transformative that is

When the band performs live, the words often get lost in the reverb and the energy, but that matters little. As James says, they have other priorities. "We want to take a song somewhere, and we keep building it and building it and get it to a really rocking place." At the Hammerstein, the band wastes no time building; they come out swinging, literally. From the opening chords of "Dancefloors," James and Two Tone Tommy, who had their long hair pulled back all day, swing their manes, vintage Metallica-style, and James hunches over his Flying V guitar, stomping his feet. This ain't no country band.

Left to their own devices, MMJ play two-and-a-half-hour sets full of long jams and covers. Opening slots allow only a glimpse of the band's range—they only have 30 minutes tonight. During "O Is The One That Is Real," which starts as a slinky ballad before building to a desperate, lofty climax, James' hair covers his face and microphone, and his voice emanates as if from some otherworldly place (or perhaps as if from a Kentucky silo). Even though the Hammerstein's cavernous sound deadens MMJ's calibrated, celebrated reverb, the passion in the playing and the sweeping scope of the melodies isn't dampened. After a rousing "Mahgeetah," the band is done. Great though it was, the set was just a tease.

Pete Yorn follows, and try as he might, never gets the Hammerstein to rock; the Foo Fighters do, in their winning, efficient way, but their songs quickly become redundant. My Morning Jacket makes the rest of the bill look like one-trick ponies—singer/songwriter, pop-rock, whatever. It's all the clearer, MMJ are something special. They play rock 'n' roll. Whatever that is.

That afternoon, when walking past juxtaposed posters hyping the new Beyoncé album and advertising a Lou Reed performance, a remark is made about "two great American icons." James scoffs, "I hate Lou Reed. There's only one or two songs I really like.

"I think he turned music into a fashion show."

Lou Reed is an intellectual, something he won't let you forget, whether he's writing about heroin, street hassles or Edgar Allan Poe. There's no ironic distance in My Morning Jacket. Sure, they relish some of the artifice of classic rock when they perform, but their enthusiasm is genuine and infectious. They trust their instincts.

"We pride ourselves on not thinking," says James. In the church of reverb, they'd rather pray. **NMM**



them rig silos as reverb chambers for recording vocals.

"The reverb controls us," adds Quaid, to group chuckles.

Why all the reverb?

"Reverb just makes me feel like a supernatural being; it's like the difference between playing in heaven and playing on earth," says James. "It's like reverb makes everything right, like it makes everything real. I can't stand to sing without reverb; I can't stand to play guitar without reverb. To me, it's the thing that makes me love music. I think the most classic recordings of the world have tons of reverb on them, like Roy Orbison, Etta James, really big, huge three-dimensional reverb. Like a recording you can stick your head into and swim around in. You hear tons of vocals back in the background with tons of reverb on them and a big vocal up here with a little reverb and a horn over there with no reverb. It really creates 3-D."

"There's the initial sound, and it has this thing following it that tapers off in the back. Magical," says Hallahan, wistfully.

That there have been two Roy Orbison references is no accident. James was weaned on Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe and had scoffed at Orbison, whom he associated with the theme song to the film *Pretty Woman*. But four or five years ago, he stumbled across Orbison on the PBS television show *Austin City Limits*. "He played 'Running Scared'; I don't know

outside himself: "This earthly body, just a temporary home" ("Easy Morning Rebel"); "Oftentimes I would hope and pray/ Then faith came my way" ("Run Thru"); "So I do believe/ None of this is physical/ At least not to me" ("Steam Engine").

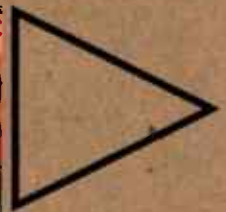
"I feel like I'm a very spiritual person, and I really believe in God. I don't know what God is, I don't know if I can call it anything, but I really believe that everything's tied together through some force that we don't understand. But, yeah, I was raised Catholic—I think we were all raised Catholic—and I think that in itself has inspired me to want to find my own faith, and not to give faith a name or a lot of rules and regulations to go with it. I think you can be a spiritual person and you can pray—I pray every night, but I just kinda pray to 'the thing,' you know... I think that it is tied to music, too."

But, although the Jacket's live performances demonstrate the fervor of true believers—believers in the power of rock 'n' roll to take you on a journey of epiphanies and ecstasies—the songs never proselytize. In fact, many of the songs, James admits, are built on stream-of-consciousness non-sequiturs.

"Most of my favorite songs are the melody and the way somebody sings and the way it's being done, rather than what they're saying," James says, and the rest of the band nods in agreement. "But I also love Bob Dylan, which is all about the words. I think I try and have both of them."

10

A whole decade of this mess.
Amazing even to us.



PRECIOUS MOMENTS

What people most often bring up to stop us from crying in our beers

Fugazi retrospective, Feb. 2002

Telling, perhaps, that one of our favorite moments is when we shut up, letting Fugazi—and some of their most ardent supporters—tell their story.

“Smashing Peanuts,” Dec. 2000

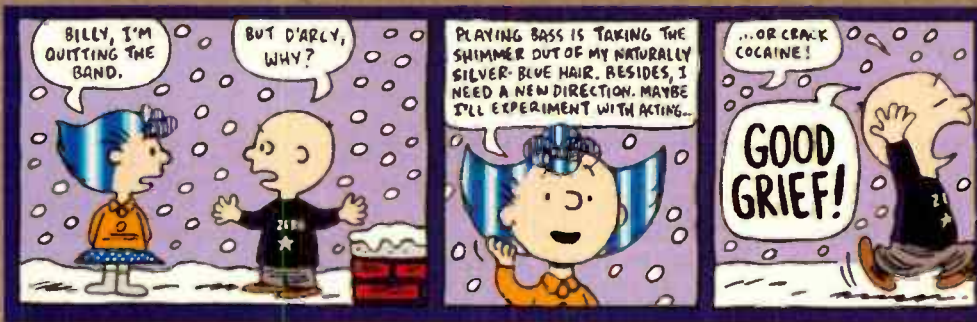
A drunken comment linking Billy Corgan's bald head to the Charlie Brown Christmas special + the genius of comic artist Ward Sutton = good times.

“Eat Me” Oct. 98

Answering that age-old question, “If Fiona Apple were a piece of candy, how nutty would it be?”

Janeane Garofalo's Eddie Vedder

Again we shut up, this time letting two famous people talk to each other. Again it's better. No, we'll never learn.



FACTS: OH, SWEET IRONY: THE FEBRUARY, 1997 “FUTURE OF MUSIC” ISSUE—THE ONLY ONE WITHOUT AN IMAGE OF AN ARTIST ON THE COVER—HAD NO FUTURE, AFTER A TORNADO HIT THE TRAIN

ON THE VERGE REPORT CARD

One part self-congratulation, one part self-flagellation.



BAND/DATE	THE OFFSPRING SEPTEMBER 1994	ELLIOTT SMITH NOVEMBER 1995	JIMMY EAT WORLD MAY 1999	BURNING BRIDES SEPTEMBER 2001	INTERPOL AUGUST 2002
WHAT WE SAID:	"The group thrashes through 14 relentless tracks, doing its SoCal hardcore forefathers proud. Look for the Offspring to continue to trample past the competition."	"His second full-length is a quiet, shadowy and delicately crafted snattering of tunes spun from his clean, whispery voice and gentle strumming."	"[Clarity] shows Jimmy Eat World to have achieved a level of sophistication uncommon among emo-core outfits... The group doesn't rely on bludgeoning the listener with brute displays of emotion."	"Art-rock pansies, boy bands and divas beware: Burning Brides want to destroy you and your weak music."	"The lone element of style in an otherwise trashy, garage-ridden landscape... owes as much to My Bloody Valentine as it does to new wave and Joy Division."
WHAT HAPPENED:	They did just that, becoming the first Epitaph band to break the top 5 and managing (for better or worse) five <i>Clockwork Orange</i> -rotation hits, selling millions of records in the process. (And creating the most annoying single of 1998.)	Elliott's solo career went from a side-project to full-time business after he quit Heatmiser, and is to date the only On The Verge artist to ever perform at the Oscars. (We weren't invited; there's always next year.)	<i>Clarity</i> got them dropped, but they stuck it to their former label by following it with a hit-packed platinum record and riding a well-placed teens-in-their-underwear video to the top of the TRL heap, Fiona style.	As this piece ran, our favorite new band of 2001 launched a tour that made the Israelites' time in the desert look like summer vacation. In fact, they're still on it. <i>Two years later</i> . What are you guys, Metallica?	New York's sharpest-dressed men evaded the hype that nailed the Strokes down by splitting New York on a year-long tour that landed them on every major festival and on the stages of Letterman and Leno. Where, of course, they looked fabulous.



BAND/DATE	SAVE FERRIS SEPTEMBER 1997	ZEBRAHEAD DECEMBER 1998	NICKY LOVE, MELISSA LEFTON MARCH, OCTOBER 2001	ENDO, UNLOCO, STEREOMUD, EARSHOT 2001-2002	DAMONE MAY 2003
WHAT WE SAID:	"Monique Powell's big, brassy vocals turn little songs... into Broadway show-stoppers."	"What does Zebrahead, winner of 'Best Orange County Band' at the 1997 L.A. Music Awards, mix with its high-energy, punk-inspired rock? Rap."	"Leggy Nicole Love (yes, that's her real name) could be on a Paris runway right now..." (Nicky Love); "On her confidently named first single, 'Hit Song,' Lefton calmly, coolly surmises that the future looks bright: 'The market research/ Says we will make it.'" (Melissa Lefton)	"Many listeners also have manic reactions to the Miami quartet's frenetic groovecore..." (Endo); "Twelve chunky tracks soaked with moody reflections and melodic anger..." (Unloco).	"I've felt like I'm in jail ever since all this [up-and-coming band on a major label] stuff's going on. So I won't be missing a damn thing if they drop us."
WHAT HAPPENED:	That voice also helped popularize the "Hey fellas, let's recast this '80s hit as a ska song!" phenomenon, plunging us into a long, dark, national nightmare.	Unfortunately, 311 had already cornered the market on shitty ska-flavored frat-boy rap-rock, and these guys sank like a stone. Not even the hussy on the cover of their next record could save them.	Guess the market research never told either one of these gals that their records would never come out, but it did teach us that when you fool with pop tarts, you're gonna get burned.	The rap-rock explosion of 2001 dragged us kicking and screaming into a world of bad photos of tatted-out dorks jumping, scowling and pointing. It turned out that these four bands were only on the verge of being dragged kicking and screaming right into the cutout bin.	We stand behind the record, a totally sweet slice of big dumb pop-rock, but we'll take note the next time someone starts bitching before their record even comes out: Guitarist/sole songwriter Dave Pino, quoted above, quit the band days after our article on them printed.

SHIPPING THE MAGAZINES, BLOWING THEM ALL OVER THE MIDWEST... 40,000 CDS GOT CRACKED IN HALF AS THEY WERE INSERTED INTO THE MARCH, 1994 ISSUE, ON THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS...

AHEAD OF OUR TIME

It can't *all* be self-deprecating, you know.

October 1993: Smashing Pumpkins

Back then, Billy had hair, a sunnier disposition, and everyone was safely far away from horses and rocks. We caught him just as *Siamese Dream* was about to lay down a stranglehold on alternative rock radio. (And before he wandered into his first custom leather shop.)

September 1996: Fiona Apple

A full year before "Criminal" made her (and her underwear) famous, Fiona graced our cover. We also got her before her "drunken public rambling" phase. Score!

September 1999: Mos Def

The former Black Star MC has grown into a true hip-hop renaissance man—plays, movies and TV—with a style, grace and quality control that seems to elude guys like Will Smith. Some day the rest of the country is going to catch up.

June 2000: P.O.D.

There was something about four guys who look like the local chapter of Thugs For Jesus that really warmed our hearts. It just happened to warm our hearts two years too early.

July 2001: Coldplay

At the time, they were four nice lads on Nettwerk making purdy songs, and Chris Martin was nearly a virgin. Now they sell out Madison Square Garden and he's wrecking Gwyneth Paltrow.

HONORABLE MENTION

March 1999: Nirvana Nostalgia

Long before the journal-raiding corpse-flogging that accompanied the 10th anniversary of *Nevermind*, Nirvana biographer Michael Azzerad's essay on what Nirvana meant, and how long we'd have to wait for someone to fill their shoes, helped us mark the fifth anniversary of Kurt's death in a tasteful and respectful manner. (There's a first for everything.)

August 1996: The Return Of New York Rock

We're so sage that we predicted the return of New York rock a full six years early. The Strokes were still in charm school though, so we had to go with D-Generation. It's the thought that counts, right?



A HEAD UP OUR ASS

Covers we wish we could cover again—with the dirt of a shallow grave.

September 2000: Everclear

What was worse? Doing a cover on Everclear or with Everclear? The stats: two interviews, two interviewers, one pissed off Art Alexakis, hours and hours of fun, no one happy with anything.

January 1998: Mary Lou Lord

"is Ready For Her Close-up Now," read the headline. Close up to commuters, apparently, as she was soon back to busking in Boston train stations after this record tanked.

June 1999: DJ Rap

Actually our head was up in someone's cleavage. But we weren't the only ones—the issue, unlike her record, sold really well.

February 1998: Goldie / July 1998: Tricky / October 2000: Roni Size

Despite the impassioned arguments of rave-attending editors, there's a truth we finally had to accept: black English electronic artists—not popular.

May/June 2001: Depeche Mode

When the office's reigning DM fan says it's a bad idea, listen. At least we were early on the '80s synth nostalgia that would soon be annoyingly commodified into electroclash.

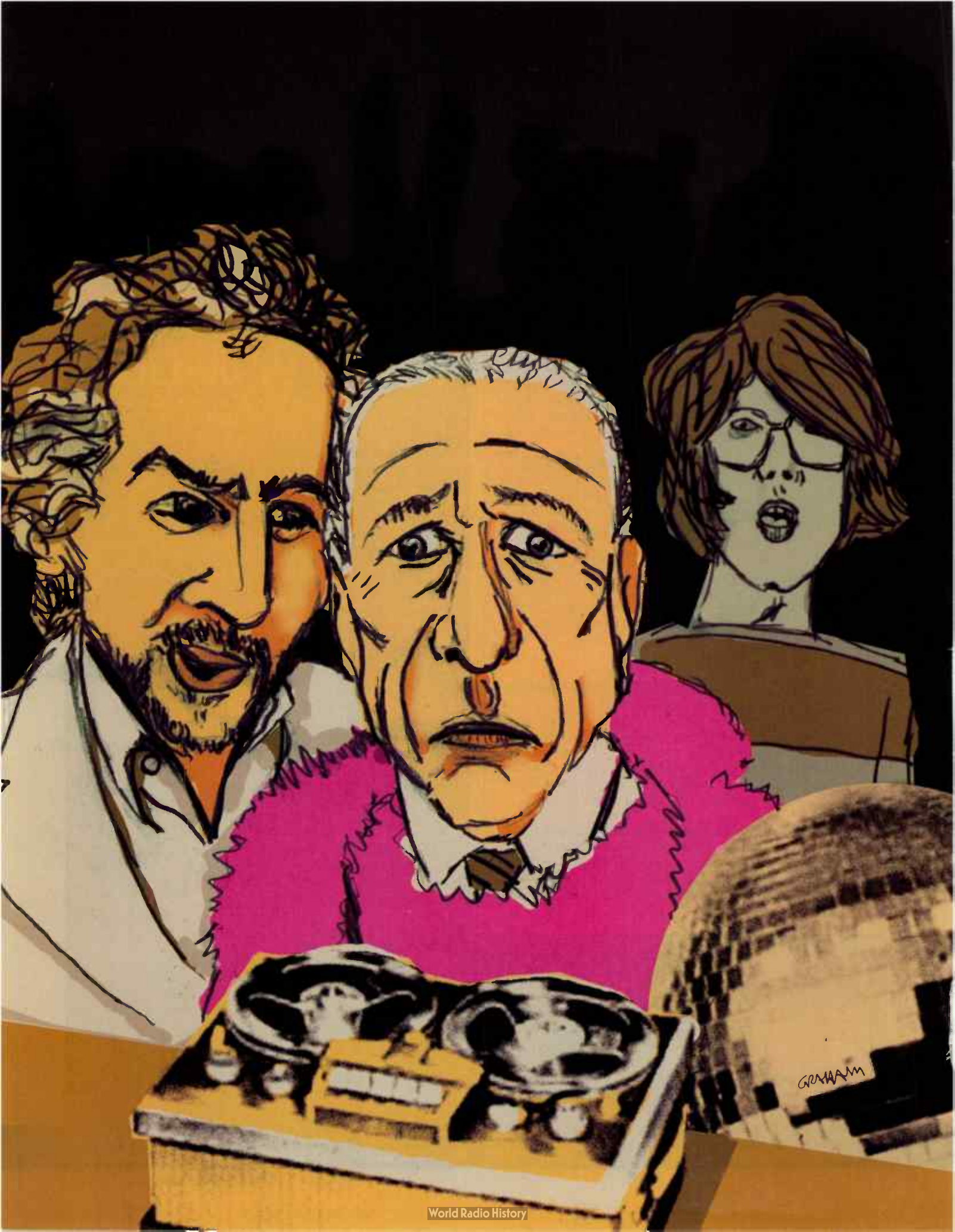
HONORABLE MENTION

March 2000 Run DMC

Perhaps overestimating public interest in the return of the hip-hop icons, we went for the early-word-of-mouth gamble... not realizing that they'd take a whole year to release an album that not even DMC—or anyone, really—even liked.



OCTOBER, 1997: ISSUE #50 DEBUTS NEW SIZE. IT LOOKS BETTER, FITS BETTER ON NEWSSTANDS. IT DOESN'T FIT ON THE TOILET TANK, HOWEVER, AS A RASH OF LETTERS LATER INFORMS US...



SUN BURN

This article was supposed to be about the Sun, specifically its dizzying ride from Columbus, Ohio garages to a Warner Bros. record deal after all of one gig in Los Angeles last year. Given his hometown's honor roll of like-minded, ragged punk-inspired bands (New Bomb Turks, Gaunt, Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments) that went largely unnoticed outside the Midwest, the Sun's Elvis Costello style-biting lead singer/guitarist Chris Burney, queried on a stop on the band's spring tour opening for the Flaming Lips, admits to being as bewildered as anybody, "I don't know. We're the bastard children of the Columbus music scene. We were just lucky." It was about then that Flaming Lips singer Wayne Coyne, wearing a linen suit before the show and oblivious to the interview in progress, hunkered down next to Burney to discuss the rumors of his relationship with Lorca Cohen, daughter of Leonard.

STORY: CHAD SWIATECKI • ILLUSTRATION: GRAHAM BRICE

COYNE: So you go out with Leonard Cohen's daughter, huh? That's your claim to fame?

BURNEY: Her name's Lorca. She's very nice.

C: How'd that happen?

B: We met at a party one night when I was living in L.A. I hopped in the back of her pickup truck and asked, "Will you take me away from this weak party?" We talked all night and we've been friends and lovers ever since. I like her a lot.

C: Does she like you?

B: Yeah. She's older—28.

C: She's 28, and you're how old?

B: 23.

C: Gotcha. So have you guys had sex?

B: What? Yes. Why?

C: Just wondering. Have you met her dad?

B: Yeah. We have Sabbath dinner together.

C: Yeah? What does he think of your music?

B: He's like, "Oh, nice. You're a songwriter." He gave me a really

nice compliment on some stuff I was 4-tracking—but I don't think he's heard the rest of my stuff.

C: Do you like him?

B: Oh yeah, a lot. He's a really nice, smart, funny, sweet man.

C: There you go. You think you guys are going to get married? How long have you known each other?

B: We've known each other for more than a year.

C: And is it exclusive? It's just you and her?

B: Yeah.

C: So do you think someday you'll be, like, Leonard Cohen's son-in-law? I mean 'cuz, if he's Archie Bunker then that makes you Meathead.

B: I don't quite think of him like that.

C: Does he know you're having sex with his daughter?

B: I'm sure he assumes as much. We have been seeing each other for a year.

C: I don't know. Guy like you, I might think "You know, he's kinda... Maybe he's gay." I don't know... Well what do you think? Are you looking to be Leonard Cohen's son-in-law?

B: I'm more concerned about the relationship with Lorca at this point. It's like... no, I don't... Leonard's never entered into the picture. He's nowhere in the equation. Everything's between me and her.

C: Not at all?

B: No.

C: Does that man have any idea how insignificant he is to you? If I was someone like Leonard Cohen I'd say, "Come on, that's a bonus." Look, if it was Pauly Shore it'd be different, but it's Leonard Cohen we're talking about here, kid.

B: That's what's nice, is that he's not like that.

C: Yeah, I suppose. [Aside] He probably doesn't even know who Pauly Shore is.

E: I do, too. I pay attention to pop culture.

C: I meant Leonard Cohen. You ever ask him for some help,



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MY MORNING
JACKET

KILLING JOKE
THE RAVEONETTES
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BEULAH • KINGS OF LEON

SEPTEMBER 2003 • ISSUE 116

14. **DEADSTRING BROTHERS** "Entitled" *Deadstring Brothers*
www.deadstringbrothers.com
Deadstring Brothers appear courtesy of Times Beach.

15. **RUFIO** "White Lights" *MCMLXXXV*
www.rufiomusic.com
Rufio appear courtesy of Nitro.

16. **SUPAGROUP** "What's Your Problem?" *Supagroup*
www.supagroup.com
Supagroup appears courtesy of Foodchain.

17. **BELA FLECK AND THE FLECKTONES** "Off The Top (Line Dance)" *Little Worlds*
www.flecktones.com
Bela Fleck And The Flecktones appear courtesy of Columbia.

18. **THE DEREK TRUCKS BAND** "Elvin" *Soul Serenade*
www.derektrucks.com
The Derek Trucks Band appears courtesy of Columbia.

19. **VIKTOR VAUGHN** "Mr. Clean" *Vaudeville Villain*
www.sound-ink.com
Viktor Vaughn appears courtesy of Sound-Ink.
See Feature p. 22.

20. **BROTHER ALI** "Forest Whitiker" *Shadows On The Sun*
www.rhymesayers.com
Brother Ali appears courtesy of Rhymesayers Entertainment.
See Best New Music p. 43.

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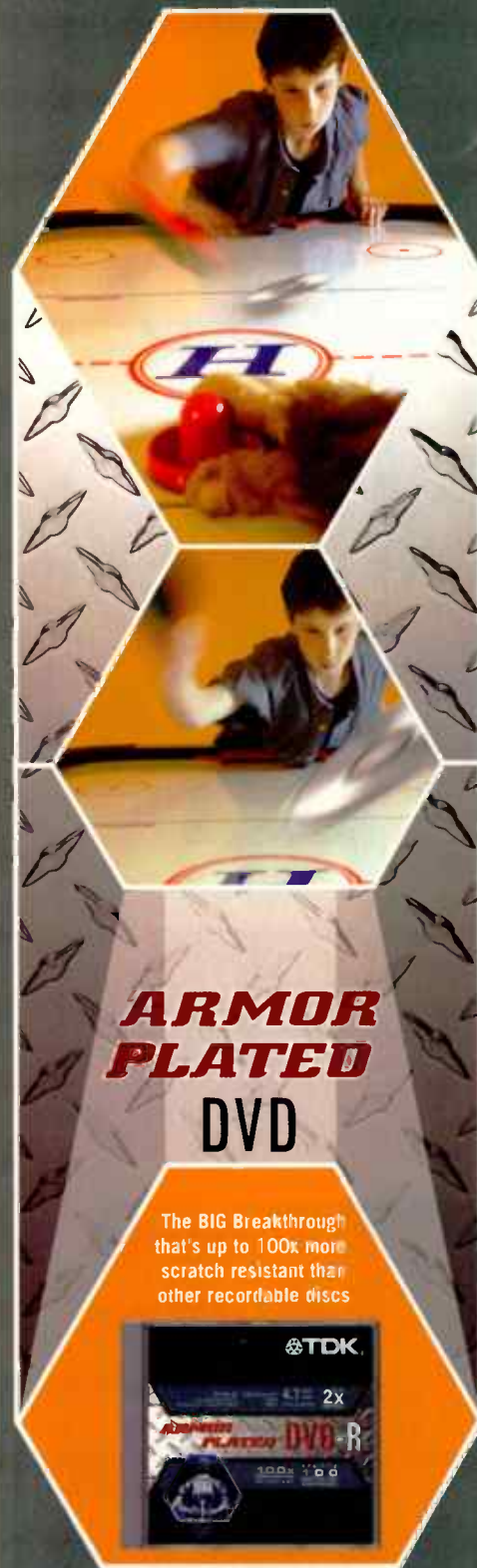


1. **MY MORNING JACKET** "One Big Holiday" *It Still Moves*
www.mymorningjacket.com
My Morning Jacket appears courtesy of RCA/ATO.
See Cover Story p. 24.
2. **BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB** "Stop" *Take Them On, On Your Own*
www.blackrebelmotorcycleclub.com
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club appears courtesy of Virgin.
See Review p. 47.
3. **CONSTANTINES** "Nighttime/Anytime (It's Alright)" *Shine A Light*
www.constantines.ca
Constantines appear courtesy of Sub Pop.
4. **KILLING JOKE** "Blood On Your Hands" *Killing Joke*
www.killingjoke.com
Killing Joke appears courtesy of Zuma/Red Ink/Epic.
See Best New Music p. 44.
5. **KITTENS FOR CHRISTIAN** "Grubby Hands" *Privilege Of Your Company*
www.kittensforchristian.com
Kittens For Christian appear courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment/Red.
6. **THE BRONX** "False Alarm" *The Bronx*
www.thebronxxx.com
The Bronx appears courtesy of Ferret Music/White Drugs.
See Best New Music p. 43.
7. **THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS** "Block Rockin' Beats (Radio Edit)" *Singles 93-03*
www.thechemicalbrothers.com
The Chemical Brothers appear courtesy of Astralwerks.
8. **FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS** "Nadine" *Show Me Your Tears*
www.spinartrecords.com
Frank Black And The Catholics appear courtesy of spinART.
See Review p. 46
9. **KINGS OF LEON** "Molly's Chambers" *Youth And Young Manhood*
www.kingsofleon.com
Kings Of Leon appear courtesy of RCA.
See On The Verge p. 17.
10. **THE RAVEONETTES** "That Great Love Sound" *Chain Gang Of Love*
www.theraveonettes.com
The Raveonettes appear courtesy of Columbia.
See Review p. 55.
11. **BEULAH** "Your Mother Loves You Son" *Yoko*
www.beulahmania.com
Beulah appears courtesy of Velocette.
See Best New Music p. 42.
12. **THE SLEEPY JACKSON** "Good Dancers" *Lovers*
www.thesleepyjackson.com
The Sleepy Jackson appears courtesy of Astralwerks.
See Best New Music p. 44.
13. **LEAVES** "Crazy" *Breathe*
www.leaves.tv
Leaves appear courtesy of DreamWorks.
See Review p. 52.

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East Alley Records
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Seattle, WA 98112

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300 E Alameda Ave.
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**Waterloo Records
And Video**
600-A North Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX 78703



maybe writing some tunes? He's just sitting around watching football. What else has he got to do?

B: He's not just sitting around watching football. He does stuff. He reads a lot.

C: Well he certainly isn't putting out many records.

B: What do you want? He's 76 years old. It's not like he's going on the road all the time. [Cohen's *actually* 69.—ed]

C: No, and he's not writing songs, either.

B: I don't know...

C: Does she live in the same house he does?

B: Yeah.

C: She still lives at home?

CMJ: Have you had sex in their house?

B: Fuck—Jesus Christ... No.

C: So you haven't had sex with her in the house?

B: No.

C: But she still lives at home?

B: It's a house, but there's two levels in it and they're not attached.

C: Son, when I lived upstairs from my folks, I said that I still lived at home.

B: Then, yes, she still lives at home.

C: No one's ever asked you about this before?

B: No, I usually dodge it pretty well.

C: So people will wonder if you like her more because of Leonard Cohen. I mean, if she was just a normal gal—

B: They don't.

C: They're gonna.

B: That's their prerogative, to quote Bobby Brown. They can wonder all they want.

C: So what are your intentions, young man?

B: Are you calling me out? I've already been called out by

Leonard for my fuckin' intentions on some of these very same principles.

C: And what did you tell him?

B: It wasn't in such strict...

C: [Finally noticing the tape recorder] What were you guys talking about before I showed up? It should have been this, because he seems to be struggling with it quite a bit. Here you go, man, here's the story right here. What did you say to Leonard about all this?

B: I'm the quiet shy boy that his daughter seems to be—

C: Did you just call yourself a boy?

B: I'm grown up. I call myself a man in other instances.

C: But you just called yourself "a quiet shy boy."

B: I'm talking about what he's—

C: Make sure that's on the tape. Chris refers to himself as a quiet, shy boy... at 23.

B: I'm talking about the Chris that's sitting at the dinner table not saying a fuckin' word to anyone.

C: You just called yourself a quiet—

B: I'm fucking shy. So what?

C: You don't seem too shy to me. You strike me as a pretty cocky, revolutionary guy. So getting back on track, what did you say when Leonard asked you what your intentions were?

B: He didn't ask me what my intentions were.

C: So Lorca. That's a weird name.

B: She's named after a Spanish playwright. She's smart. Kinda nerdy.

C: Does she call you a shy boy?

B: No. Well, sometimes.

C: Eh, we're probably getting into your pillowtalk, and I don't wanna get that deep. I just heard stories and you just didn't seem like the Leonard Cohen's daughter-dating kinda guy. The sort of music you do wouldn't lend itself to that.

B: That's just the stuff we're playing on this tour. We've actually got a lot of acoustic stuff.

C: But you don't play any of that stuff now. How was the interview going before I showed up? Little wishy-washy?

CMJ: Not like it is now.

C: Did you know that Leonard Cohen connection? He should be telling you that stuff. Then you'd say, "Fuck, I had some stupid questions like, 'Why'd you start the band?'" But now, well, I'll just let you guys finish the interview. I thought we were all just sitting around visiting like old friends when I got here. [To CMJ] You see, you just weren't interesting enough.

CMJ: I get that a lot. **NMM**



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Helsinki, Finland

STORY: THE FLAMING SIDEBURNS

The Flaming Sideburns are originally small-town boys from the backwoods of Finland (with the exception of Buenos Aires-born singer Eduardo Martinez), and Helsinki is our refuge. As soon as we were able, we escaped the countryside—with its vast woods, thousands of lakes and endless winter—and found home in Finland's capital.

What really makes Helsinki special is the people. Each year a lot of kids move here from other parts of Finland to fulfill their dreams—be it university, art school or a rock 'n' roll band. It's a similar kind of melting pot to other Scandinavian capitals like Stockholm, Oslo or Copenhagen.

There's one million people living here, and like in some American cities, downtown is where it happens. This makes Helsinki a very compact place to live and spend your time in. You can just take a walk to most places worth visiting,

and anything outside of walking distance can be easily reached by tram (tram number 3 takes you almost anywhere you need to go) or subway.

When it comes to rock 'n' roll Helsinki is the last stop. Not too many foreign acts make it all the way up here but if they do, they don't usually go any further. Take a look on the map and you'll realize there's not too many places to tour in the north or east of Helsinki. Partly because of that the local scene is blooming: Without foreign bands playing each night of the week the



THE FLAMING SIDEBURNS: NAUSKA; LOCATIONS: JAY BURNSIDE



local bands get their opportunity.

The home of rock 'n' roll in Helsinki is Tavastia Klubi (Urho Kekkosen katu 4-6, www.tavastiaklubi.fi) located in the heart of the city. The club has been there more than 30 years, so they have their shit together: The soundsystem of the 800-capacity room is top quality, and the program is the best around. You can even fill your stomach at their restaurant, *Ilves*. No wonder the Flaming Sideburns have played here more than 50 times.

Downstairs at Tavastia you'll find a smaller venue called *Semifinal* for upcoming bands, smaller foreign acts and great parties. If *Savage Jungle Party* takes place while you're staying in Helsinki, do not miss it.

For the underground parties the place to go is *Bar Alahuone* (Töölönlahdenkatu, opposite the parliament house). As our guitar god Johnny Volume puts it: "They've got different kinds of programs each night but the feeling is always right. And the environment is truly unique."

Other cool downtown bars include *Café Mockba* and *Corona Bar* (both at Eerikinkatu 11). For late-night drinking you should go either to "hetero-friendly gay bar" *Lost & Found* (Annankatu 6) or "the hellhole" *Manala* (Dagmarinkatu 2). The latter also serves food late at night.

Speaking of food... There's plenty to choose from: Thai (*MaiThai* at Annankatu),

Indian/Nepalese (*Satkar* at Lönnrotinkatu 26), all-day breakfast (*Tori* at Fredrikintori), garlic (*Kynsilaukka* at Fredrikinkatu 22), pasta and tapas (*Bar Tapasta* at Uudenmaankatu), better Russian food than anywhere in Russia (*Kasakka* at Meritullinkatu 13), Italian (*Taormina* at Aleksanterinkatu 22), Japanese (*Kabuki* at Lapinlahdenkatu 12) and so on.

For original Finnish food and old-timey atmosphere you should visit *Sea Horse* (Kapteeninkatu 11) or *Salve* (Hietalahdenranta 11). Check out the fish cuisines—Helsinki is located right by the sea so there's a long tradition for that. If you are hunting records you should check out *Stupido Shop* (Iso-Roobertinkatu 2D-22) for lots of new music, *Fennica* (Albertinkatu 35) if you're into oldies and roots music, or *Oskun Divari* (Runeberginkatu) for independent stuff. *Carlings* at Forum shopping center (Mannerheimintie 20) has the best variety of denim and *Boot Factory* (Mäkeläncatu 62) has great handmade boots. For second-hand shopping, look for yellow signs of *UFF* all over the city. The best fleamarkets are located at *Makasiini* (Töölönlahdenkatu) and *Hietalahden tori* (Hietalahti market place) during the summertime.

The neighborhood of Kallio right next to downtown is the home of the *Flaming Sideburns*, as well as some of the coolest low-key bars, second-hand record stores, restaurants and vintage stores. Over here you can find our little local watering hole *Heinähattu* (Vaasankatu 23) where regular people from the neighborhood share the tables with local musicians. It's a cosy meeting place and hosts some of the wildest parties.

In Kallio you'll also find Helsinki's best second-hand record stores, *Black & White* and *Hippie Shake* (both in the corner of Toinen Linja and Hämeentie) as well as *Goofin' Records* (also on Hämeentie) with the best collection of American roots music this side of the Atlantic. If you want to eat cheap but

great food, check out the pizzas at *Mare Chiaro* and the buffet at *Sävel* (again, both on Hämeentie). The amusement park *Linnanmäki* is also located in Kallio.

Finland is famous for its nature, and even in Helsinki you can experience that by taking a boat to the archipelago and islands like Suomenlinna and Pihlajasaari just few minutes out of the city. "But that only applies during the summer," as guitar player *Ski Williamson* reminds—in the winter you'll get your balls frozen off. Yeah, you got it right: Weather is the biggest problem in Helsinki. The winters are long, dark and cold but we've learned to live with that (even though we don't like it too much). It's always warm inside and occasional blizzard never stops the city. Anyhow, the best time to visit the town would be from May through September. That's when the city (and the girls) are really blooming.

LOCAL LOGIC: HELSINKI'S BEST

Place to get drunk with local rock personalities:

Bar Loose (Fredrikinkatu 34, www.barloose.com) is the living room for musicians and the like—with the best jukebox in town and loads of rock 'n' roll junk on the walls, before you know it you'll be stone drunk with the locals until the wee hours of the morning. The best nights to visit are Sunday to Thursday when rock 'n' roll professionals are having their time off.

Bit of familiarity for homesick

Americans: You can find McDonald's and Pizza Hut all over the place, but we'd recommend *Cantina West* (Kasarminkatu 23) and its great tex-mex food instead.

Place to buy vintage instruments:

Aron Soitin (Fredrikinkatu 55) and *Soitin Huttunen* (Caloniuksenkatu 3).

The Flaming Sideburns' new Sky Pilots (Jetset) puts a more cerebral twist on their ballsy, cocksure garage-rock.



BEST NEW MUSIC

BEULAH
THE BRONX
BROTHER ALI
CONSONANT
KILLING JOKE
THE SLEEPY JACKSON
SUFJAN STEVENS

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



BEULAH 

Yoko Velocette

Beulah albums are growers. 2001's *The Coast Is Never Clear* registered at first as intelligent, catchy, passable pop—and then, just when you thought you'd sucked all the marrow out of it, the album snuck up on you, like a particularly nasty and enjoyable addiction. The operative word being "nasty." For all Beulah's purported sunniness, the '60s-ish pop instrumentation and beachside harmonies played sheep costume for frontman Miles Kurosky's wolfish lyrical bite. On *Yoko*, the darkness is front and center. Although there are glimmers of the Elephant 6 sound of their earliest records, Kurosky has traded in pop for prog: There's a new spaciousness in the songs, though a keen ear will hear the usual instrumental suspects worked gingerly into the mix. Yet for all the minor chords, Kurosky can't keep down his instinctive talent for (yes) sunny melodies. "Landslide Baby" is a case in point; what begins as an Eno-esque synth and guitar drone turns on a dime into a breezy, pop-tastic gem, cresting on Kurosky's joyful delivery of the lines, "'Cuz you're scared and you're weak and you don't give a fuck/ About me!/ And I do believe that you hate yourself." Yes! That's why Beulah albums stick with you longer than it seems like they should—because Kurosky has the utter conviction in his nastiness to shoot it out of high-beam melodies and make it sound like love. >>>MAYA SINGER

Link

www.beulahmania.com

File Under

Dark side of the sun

R.I.Y.L.

Wilco, Granddaddy,

Teenage Fanclub



THE BRONX

The Bronx White Drugs/Ferret Music

When Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art Of War*, "In death ground, fight" he wasn't thinking about Hollywood Boulevard, home to junkies, pimps, hookers and the four young lads of the Bronx, who even in name have distanced themselves from Los Angeles by almost 3,000 miles. The band's self-titled debut is a 30-minute aural Hulk-out, fed by the good drugs and bad streets of the city that spawned them. Produced by Sunset Strip alum and former Guns N' Roses guitarist Gilby Clarke, the album is a far cry from Mötley Crüe or Yngwie Malmsteen. "They Will Kill Us All (Without Mercy)" bubbles like the La Brea Tar Pits, thick and dark with vitriol and the throat-shredding vocals of singer/screamer Matt Caughthran. "Heart Attack American" and "Cobra Lucha" draw favorable comparisons to the Blood Brothers and early Drive Like Jehu—not bad company for a band that formed just last October. Only towards the end of the disc does rigor mortis set in. "Strobe Life" could be a Transplants toss-off and "Kill My Friends" rages like a hurricane with no eye. Still, *The Bronx* remains a promising debut from a band that surveyed the decay around them and decided it would be better to leap into the fray than be pulled below it. >>>ANDY DOWNING



BROTHER ALI

Shadows On The Sun Rhymesayers

There's something about producer Ant's (Atmosphere, Deep Puddle Dynamics) beats—cribbed from the DJ Muggs school of austere whines, melancholy strings and morose Morriconeisms—that makes MCs want to wear their hearts on the sleeves of their Triple 5 Soul. In the vein of fellow Minneapolis rain-catcher Slug, Brother Ali is 250 pounds of albino Muslim emo-hop whose eloquent rhymes are as dark as his skin is pale, documenting each grain of grit with the eloquent precision of, as he boasts, "the modern urban Norman Rockwell," or at least a backpacker-friendly Mobb Deep ("Some parents only touch their kids when the whip's brought/ That's why bad kids do bad shit, just so they can get caught"). *Shadows On The Sun* is riddled with standouts—a testament to Ali's diverse, darkly humorous gut-spillage. Ali's idea of a brag-rap is boasting about standing proud after a bicuspid-bashing gang-jump ("Win Some Lose Some") or just goofily poring salt on suckers with Slug and a clarinet's cartoonish squiggle ("Blah Blah Blah"). Highlight of highlights "Forest Whitiker" is a laundry list of Ali's fucked-up exterior—from red eyes to razor bumps—followed by an emotional purge, extinguishing his self-consciousness ("To everyone out there who's a little bit diff-a-rent/ I say damn a magazine, these is God's fingerprints"). His hulking frame holding infinite depth, Ali may be pale, but not pale in comparison. >>>CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



CONSONANT

Love And Affliction Fenway

Though linked to Clint Conley's previous band (recently reactivated post-punk pathbreakers Mission Of Burma) by his throaty, oddly sweet vocals and trademark melodic turns, Consonant are quickly turning out to be far more than a retread of past glories. Last year's debut was no cream puff, but this time, bassist Winston Braman and drummer Matt Kadane (also of the New Year) sound like a working unit, locking together the harshest songs ("Cauldron," "Blue Story") with unexpectedly metallic precision. At the other extreme, "She's Driving Fast" is a tender, rhythm section-free tangle of guitars, with Conley and Chris Brokaw (Come, Codeine) circling one another like ravenous, uncertain lovers. What hasn't changed is the power of Conley and non-performing lyricist Holly Anderson's songs, which marry poetic depictions of sexual love ("First, fireflies inside his gut/ Then shooting stars behind her breast") to solidly formal (but not formulaic) rock structures. Other than the lighthearted "Mysteries Of The Holiday Camp," which recounts the band's All Tomorrow's Parties festival appearances, the emotional stakes on *Love And Affliction* run high, from the plea for "proof that what we killed was love" in the opening "Little Murders" on. Anyone who thinks adulthood is an inherently more emotionally stable time than adolescence should proceed directly to the naked, slow-building "Cry," where Conley evades his daughters' questions before a week-long roadtrip: "Why do you have to go?" >>>FRANKLIN BRUND

Link
www.thebronxxx.com
File Under
Hulk angry! Hulk smash!
R.I.Y.L.
The Blood Brothers,
Drive Like Jehu, Hot Snakes

Link
www.rhymesayers.com
File Under
Brother, can you spare a rhyme?
R.I.Y.L.
Atmosphere, Eyedea,
Sage Francis

Link
www.fenwayrecordings.com
File Under
Modern maturity
R.I.Y.L.
Mission Of Burma, Come,
Silkworm



KILLING JOKE

Killing Joke Zuma/Epic

Killing Joke's self-titled 1980 debut rests in the pantheon of records like *Raw Power*: A masterpiece that sounds like complete shit, with the band threatening to burst the walls of the reedy production. By the time they got into a respectable studio, lineup changes and mental instability had thinned the band's intensity; the perfect Killing Joke sound existed only in your imagination. Until this also-self-titled, er, re-but, that is: With Gang Of Four's Andy Gill behind the boards and Dave Grohl on drums, the band finally gets the treatment it deserves. Gill's skills take Geordie Walker's guitar from a rusty knife to an earth-ripping pavement saw, and Youth's bass from a pebble to a landslide. Two decades have given Jaz Coleman both a deep layer of gravel in his throat and a more fucked-up world to break apart lyrically. On tracks like "The Death & Resurrection Show" and "Blood On Your Hands," he's positively breathing fire, raining judgment on a world of "man-made hell and a manmade devil" while the band bludgeons the point home. There are definite missteps: "You'll Never Get To Me" abandons the rage and finds arena schlock instead, and the remake of "Wardance," while more timely than the original, still seems like an afterthought, but these are blotted out by the sheer assault of *Killing Joke's* indestructible first half. Seven years after their last effort, Killing Joke is in furious, fighting shape. >>>TOM MALLON

Link
www.killingjoke.com
 File Under
 Music to march to
 R.I.Y.L.
 Ministry, the Damage Manual,
 Murder Inc.



THE SLEEPY JACKSON

Lovers Astralwerks

Another much-hyped export from the Antipodes, another case of dirty denim and carefully mussed hair, another... George Harrison-loving psych-pop unit with actual melodies and a hippy-dippy worldview to boot? Hey, these days we'll take what we can get. *Lovers*, the debut album from Perth's very appropriately handled the Sleepy Jackson, diverges from the scruffy neo-garage set in fine style, embroidering dreamy, well-rounded melodies with lots of creamy slide guitar, strummy acoustics, droning violins and layered backing vocals that Brian Wilson (or at least the Polyphonic Spree) could appreciate. Frontman Luke Steele seems to have studied the three Bs—the Beatles, the Beach Boys and the Byrds—as well as any other guitar-toting pop nerd his age, but there's a dazed, dizzy edge to his writing that suggests he's seen Spiritualized and the Dandy Warhols, too; opener "Good Dancers" blasts off into a cosmos of elegantly bent guitar tones and "Don't You Know" ambles along at a head-nodding pace familiar to career stoners everywhere. The relatively hard-charging "Vampire Racecourse," which reimagines Sonic Youth as devoted Ride fans, brings the band back to Earth, but they don't sound nearly as comfortable down here as in their own slightly eccentric orbit. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Link
www.thesleepyjackson.com
 File Under
 Dreamy drone-pop
 R.I.Y.L.
 The Beatles' *Revolver*, the Dandy Warhols, late Teenage Fanclub



SUFJAN STEVENS

Michigan Sounds Familyre/Asthmatic Kitty

Sufjan Stevens loves a concept: 2001's *Enjoy Your Rabbit* stuck strictly to electronics and named each song for a different symbol of the Chinese zodiac. Now he's tackling the United States—all 50. Where fellow Brooklynite John Linnell tried to do a song per state (still unfinished), Stevens intends a full record for each. *Michigan*, an ode to his birthplace, is the first volume, and an astounding start. The multi-instrumentalist (credited here on over 20 instruments) takes the pastoral singer/songwriter tack on these 15 songs, and there's hardly a bum track in the lot. His *Michigan* is probably the saddest place in the country, brimming with lightly touched pianos, breathy vocals and barely strummed guitars, creating an atmosphere of hollowed-out factories, shrinking dreams and rural ennui. It's populated with regret-filled characters, some dying to get out and others longing to go back, with tales like "I've no idea what's right sometimes/ I lost my mind, I lost my life/ I lost my job, I lost my wife." He breaks the gloom with vibraphone-laden instrumentals and upbeat moments like the Stereolabby "Oh Detroit, Lift Up Your Weary Head." Those disappointed by recent efforts from Ed Harcourt and Badly Drawn Boy should find what they're looking for here. Stevens is a powerful and affecting songwriter; hopefully he can take *Michigan's* quality to the other 49 states. >>>TOM MALLON

Link
www.sufjan.com
 File Under
 Stately singer/songwriter
 R.I.Y.L.
 Ed Harcourt, Badly Drawn Boy,
 Hem, Nick Drake, Stereolab



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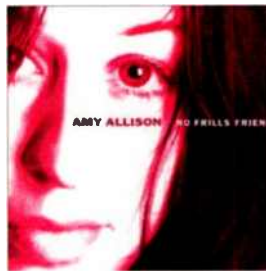
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World Radio History

REVIEWS

AMY ALLISON
 FRANK BLACK & THE CATHOLICS
 BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB
 BOUNCING SOULS
 BRASSY
 CANOE
 THE CARLSONICS
 CHRIS CLARK
 CLIENT
 DANGER MOUSE & JEMINI
 ADAM GREEN
 GUIDED BY VOICES
 TERRY HALL & MUSHTAQ
 HAMELL ON TRIAL
 JOE HENRY
 HIM
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 THE JEEVAS
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 JEFFREY LEWIS
 LOW FLYING OWLS
 MOJAVE 3
 THE NEW AMSTERDAMS
 THE PASTELS
 PIGEON JOHN
 THE RAVEONETTES
 REQ
 JOSH ROUSE
 SEÑOR COCONUT
 SPARKS
 SPINESHANK
 THE STAR SPANGLES
 STEREOPHONICS
 SUKILOVE
 SUNTAN
 THE TERROR SHEETS
 VAZ
 THE WEAKERTHANS
 WELLWATER CONSPIRACY
 YOU AM I
 WARREN ZEVON



AMY ALLISON

No Frills Friend Diesel Only

Last time out (2001's *Sad Girl*), Amy Allison offered up 12 broken-hearted songs that pungently detailed the despair of a lonely girl. On *No Frills Friend*, Allison takes listeners down a relationship timeline from the first tension-filled first days ("What's The Deal?") and gush of emotion ("Baby, You're The One"), to doubt ("Don't String Me Along"), the breakup ("Dreaming's Killing Me") and recovery ("Hanging On A Moment"). All along, Allison's simply evocative voice bends to provide emotional punch à la Elvis Costello's *Almost Blue* and Kasey Chambers' *Barricades & Brickwalls*. Producer David Scott, who

fronts the pop outfit the Pearlfishers, backs Allison's voice with a slightly orchestral twang that pushes the singer into more comfortable surroundings; the gorgeous "Pretty Things To Buy" is a prime example. While *No Frills Friend* is lacking a rev 'em up tune like *Sad Girl*'s "Shadow Of A Man," this collection balances the dour nature of the album's lyrics with the souled-up "Baby, You're The One." And just like *Sad Girl* had the heartbreaking closer "New Year's Eve," this album features the wrenching "Say It Isn't So," where Allison desperately whispers at the close, "Have you forgotten/ I'm your best friend." It's enough to send chilly memories down the spine of the most lovelorn. >>>DAVID JOHN FARINELLA

Link

www.amyallison.com

File Under

Heart-wrenching twang

R.I.Y.L.

Kasey Chambers,

Elvis Costello's *Almost Blue*,

Tammy Wynette



FRANK BLACK & THE CATHOLICS

Show Me Your Tears SpinART

Gifted with an epic-sized personality, it's natural enough that as a solo artist (and with his band the Catholics) Frank Black tends to release albums of epic scale: double albums, simultaneously released albums, just-plain-long albums. Even among the best of these (*Teenager Of The Year*, *Dog In The Sand*), part of the musical experience has been to pick wheat from relative chaff, to discover the better, pared-down album hidden inside the behemoth. Clocking in at a mere 13 tracks, *Show Me Your Tears* is Black's tersest album in ages—and his best. A distillation of the

Link

www.spinartrecords.com

File Under

Mad for sadness

R.I.Y.L.

Tom Waits, the Pixies,

P.W. Long & Reelfoot

rootsy, live-to-tape sound he's been working since *Pistolero*, the LP's clarity of purpose is also a reflection of Black's rediscovered emotional directness. He's baring his veins here, singing about bad love, and even Pixies fans who haven't been able to get with Black Francis' retrograde thing in the past should find something to love in the self-hating fervor of "Horrible Day," even though it sounds like the Stones, and "Massif Centrale," even though it's a Pixies-esque tease. The occasional lugubrious moment rears its head (the Animals rip-off "New House Of The Pope"), but more consistently Black is channeling his disappointment into his summa state of fury, and the frailty of the most beautiful songs ("My Favorite Kiss," "Coastline") registers doubly powerful as a result. >>>MAYA SINGER

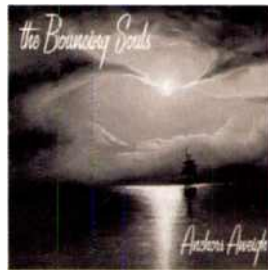


BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Take Them On, On Their Own Virgin

Show of hands: how many people felt swindled after ripping open B.R.M.C.'s debut and finding almost none of the propulsive evil promised from the blazing first single, "Whatever Happened To My Rock N' Roll (Punk Song)"? It's understandable, since most of the band's first-rate songs like "Rifles" and "Salvation" got cemented by lumbering tempos and gauze-like vocal and guitar effects. Bassist/vocalist Robert Turner owned up to those flaws in interviews and said his goal was to throw off the shackles, which brings us to *Take Them On, On Their Own*. Shedding

some of the haze and picking up the pace, but rarely doing both at once, the disc is a study in a band finding itself. "Stop" begins promisingly, with Turner's heavy-as-hell bass leading into Peter Hayes' psychedelic guitar swirls, and "Six Barrel Shotgun" plants both feet on the accelerator for a bit of "Whatever Happened"-style daring. It feels like the band has hit its stride, until the album slips into an uncomfortable middle ground. Before you can wonder if the last record's successes were mere flukes, the final track, "Heart And Soul," begins with some Joy Division-style chime and combines the previously disparate elements of speed, fuzz and weight into a driving pop song. If it's the direction B.R.M.C. end up taking, then one mostly frustrating album will be worth it. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

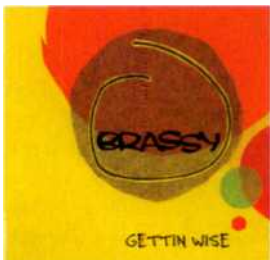


BOUNCING SOULS

Anchors Aweigh Epitaph

Few bands are better served than the Bouncing Souls by punk's ethos of placing a premium on passion and energy over skill and execution. Vocalist Greg Attonito has always been something of a 'tweener lyrically—alternating lovelorn, growing-up odes with political angst, but doing neither with complete prosaic precision—while bandmates Pete Steinkopf (guitar), Bryan Kienlen (bass) and Michael McDermott (drums) always keep the tempo and volume high enough for the band's two-minute blasts to take hold. It's a surprise, then, that *Anchors Aweigh* isn't just a passable re-hash, but

rather sports songs with sharp claws that dig in like never before, beginning with the head-buzzing trifecta of "Apartment 5F," "Kids And Heroes" and "New Day." The third song satisfies most of all, because it sustains its galloping momentum even though at 3:40, it's the second-longest of the disc's 16 songs. A mid-album breather comes from "Night Train," a paean to lost love ("Goodbye to me and you, goodbye to the life we knew/ One last long embrace, then go and walk on through") that sways slowly and avoids sliding into "Good Riddance (Time Of Your Life)"-type schmaltz. Not every sentiment manages that balance, but the overall drive of songs like "Sing Along Forever" carries them—as Attonito sings "Give me a reason to care/ I'll sing along forever," it's clear that even when they don't manage the former, fans will follow through on the latter. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI



BRASSY

Gettin Wise Wiiija/Beggars Group

Wouldn't it be, um, not as unfortunate if No Doubt managed to cut an album of 14 "Hella Goods"? Y'know, just the right *tasteful* blend of punk, hip-hop and new wave to back Gwen's dying Wookiee cry? NYC-via-Manchester quartet Brassy have accomplished that niche feat on this endearingly vapid sophomore boogie disc. Muffin Spencer handles Brassy's dying Taun Taun cries—yes, that's Jon Blues Explosion's kid sis; a moment of silence as we reflect on the fact that she's the more relevant sibling in 2003. For better or worse, Muffin is no longer intent on informing us *in every song*

that we're listening to Brassy, B.R.A.S.S.Y. and/or the B-R-A-double S-Y beat. For glorified house-party funkateers, her band is still incomprehensibly arrogant, but Brassy walk the walk; Stefan Gordon's stutter-step riffs hopscotch deftly between groovy synth belches and breakneck house fills. You may cotton to *Gettin Wise* for its—ass-bad pun intended—brass balls, but may never fully embrace it, thanks to Muffin. Her voice is an acquired taste—as is Soylent Green. Like fellow sucka m.c. Eve, Muffin plays the confidence card in lieu of cred. Every song is about its title ("Hit 'Em Hard," "Still Stealing," "Turn This Thing Up"). Manifesto in summation? Brassy rocks the party. I concur. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI



CANOE

I Give You Canoe! Amazing Grease

Too psychotic to simply be considered garage revivalists, Austin, Texas' Canoe seem hellbent on making a mutant hybrid of trashy, bashy hamfisted noise and catchy, contagious, keyboard-driven balls-to-the-wall fun. On *I Give You Canoe!*, their debut album for Pavement's Scott "Spiral Stairs" Kannberg's Amazing Grease label, they get pretty close to supercharging their sound into Stooges/MC5 Armageddon rock. Big dumb fun has never sounded so fresh and infectious, sort of like if Andrew WK fronted Ween, or if the Pulsars were led by Jon Spencer. Big greasy riffs careen uncontrolled, keyboards squeak and honk, cymbals crash and hiss and rock clichés get turned on their ear; Canoe not so much crafts but perhaps incubates a timeless oddity that defies any current definition. *I Give You Canoe!* is a genre Frankenstein, Freedom Rock gone horribly (but happily) wrong. Standout tracks include the silly yet addictive "Corndogs Are Our Friends," which sounds like the Hives' Howlin' Pelle Almqvist teaming up with '80s goofballs the Silicon Teens for a romp. Other delights include the cheery "Feed The Raccoon," the buoyantly new-wave bop of "Don't Tell" the manic panic of "Girlfriend" and the just plain odd "Panty Pile." *I Give You Canoe!*

may well be the feel-drunk hit of the summer. >>>JEFF BROWN

Link
www.brmc-virginrecords.com
File Under
Stuck between second
and third gear
R.I.Y.L.

Jesus And Mary Chain, Depeche
Mode, Joy Division, Ride

Link
www.bouncingsouls.com
File Under
Chutzpunk
R.I.Y.L.
NDFX, the Descendents,
half the Epitaph roster

Link
www.brassy.com
File Under
English Muffin, heavy
on the jam
R.I.Y.L.

Elastica, the Faint, Republica

Link
www.canoeforyou.com
File Under
Can You Canoe?
R.I.Y.L.

JSBX, Southern Culture
On The Skids, Sparks,
? And The Mysterians



THE CARLSONICS

The Carlsonsics Arena Rock Recording Co.

Good or bad, some albums reveal their modus operandi right away, while others are exercises in delayed gratification that take a half-dozen or so spins before they click and make their quirks and charms apparent. The self-titled debut by the Washington, D.C. fivesome the Carlsonsics is a different beast entirely; a good 20-plus listens in and the damn thing keeps changing, dodging comprehension and attacking from new directions each time. One night you're cooking macaroni and cheese when Edward Donohue's raw-nerve guitar and Aaron Carlson's

Link

www.carlsonics.com

File Under

The downtown boogie

R.I.Y.L.

Radio 4, the Stooges, the Sun, later AC/DC

choked vocals on "The Leisure Class" pipe in from another room sounding like they jumped off Skull Kontrol's agit-punk opus *Deviate Beyond All Means Of Capture*. The next day in the car stereo, "Done In" has the soul and shake appeal of some great Stooges songs, and later that night on the iPod's headphones, "Senator Trudge And The Clap Division" shows off the latent hooks of a mega-caffeinated and disheveled lineup of the Who, saying nothing of the rib-cracking riffage of "Malaria Drive Through." The subtle but endless style shifts are headache-inducing for sure, but the real bother is that they keep the band's sturdy and danceable grooves from ever taking the top billing they deserve. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI



CHRIS CLARK

Empty The Bones Of You Warp

Even laptop musicians can suffer quarter-life crises. Twentysomething Chris Clark's dour sophomore album, *Empty The Bones Of You*, is initially as disappointing as the shift from breezy college life to the real world. There's barely a trace of the out-of-the-gate vigor of his 2001 debut *Clarence Park* or even the 11th-hour hedonism of this year's *Ceramics Is The Bomb* EP. The recent Bristol University grad instead crackles and rattles off 14 cranky tracks that require attention without ever demanding it—he's angsty, not bratty. No longer interested in hooking, he's taken to

Link

www.warprecords.com

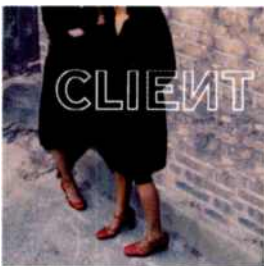
File Under

Letting off the glitchiness

R.I.Y.L.

Aphex Twin, Joseph Nothing, Marumari, Funkstörung

merely smearing his songs with plaintive melodies while music-box sounds act like surface decoys. The album's best track, "Tycan," bubbles under with fragmented, layered ambient requiems while its beats change half a dozen times. But *Bones* reveals itself as more than maudlin. The fuzzy hip-hop of "Wolf" and "Gob Coitus" help offset Clark's berserk mood swings like "Gavel: (Obliterated)." Clark succeeds in this variance: Defiantly abstract and painstakingly pieced together, *Bones* is boiling with emotion, fraught with frustration and wholly human. Fans of his earlier work may lament the lack of a single track as catchy as *Clarence Park*'s "Lord Of The Dance" or *Bomb*'s "Rob Lee," but that's life. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK



CLIENT

Client Mute

Divorce Client's self-titled debut from what's going on in music today and it comes off as a sturdy synth-pop record. Contextualize it and it's derivative, if not passé, electroclash. And that's sort of a shame, because in every attempt to channel and lampoon the '80s, nothing reflects Italo disco's endearingly misguided attempts at soulfulness as precisely as Client's "Price Of Love." The track is kissing cousin of Ladytron's "Playgirl," right down to the tummy-tickling bassline. But if the duo has missed their 15 minutes on the electro circuit, it probably doesn't bother

Link

www.client-online.net

File Under

What love's got to do with it

R.I.Y.L.

Ladytron, DMX Krew, Visage, Dubstar

them—Client themselves love lacking context. They're generally photographed from the neck down and cloak themselves with monikers Client: A and Client: B, even though they're Kate Holmes (of Technique) and Dubstar's Sarah Blackwood. Blackwood's singing is a feat, balancing a robotic tone with tunefulness over Holmes' songs. But when she moans, for example, "Touch me, make me tremble" on "Diary Of An 18 Year Old Boy," she's fey, not sexy. When Client fail, they're so straight-faced that it's impossible to chalk it up to electroclash's standard irony. In fact, as successfully minimal and catchy as many of *Client*'s laptop-spun tracks are, they're missing the key element of fun. A good pop record is a good pop record no matter when it arrives, but glee is of the essence. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK



DANGER MOUSE & JEMINI

Ghetto Pop Life Lex

What do you do if you were born an MC? If you're Jemini The Gifted One, you write a song about it, called, naturally, "Born-A-MC," collaborate with a dope producer, drop an album and keep grindin', doing what you love. Though Danger Mouse & Jemini look like an odd pairing (one's large, one's small; guess which is which), they sound in sync. In fact, Jemini's above-average voice and rhymes are much catchier when layered over DM's rich, eclectic beats. (He samples Portishead, for example.) Jemini's lyrics, which are deceptively simple, often cause a chuckle with their juvenile charm. Check these two lines

Link

www.lexrecords.com

File Under

Brainy beats from

the other Brooklyn

R.I.Y.L.

Brand Nubian, Black Star, Pharoahe Monch

from "Omega Supreme (Who?!)": "The problem is I never learned to lie for shit/ Sometimes I get sperm in my eye because I be on my own dick"; "Defenseless against this/ From the beginning it was senseless/ You bit off more than you can chew and it's knocking out your dentures." "The Only One" boasts a funky soul sample, "What U Sittin On?" stars Tha Liks, and the Pharcyde gets theatrical on "Medieval." At times, especially on the title track, Jemini sounds like Grand Puba and there's definitely a Brand Nubian vibe in the air. Most important, Danger Mouse & Jemini are repping "That Brooklyn Shit" (as noted on track #8) right. >>>JESSICA KOSLOW



ADAM GREEN

Friends Of Mine Rough Trade America

What has Adam Green done? The first words out of his mouth on his new CD are "Bluebirds are so natural," and he's soon accompanied by the deft staccato plucking of a string quartet. This from half of the Moldy Peaches. But before devotees of that band have a chance to cry foul, Green is already crooning the most inappropriate near-rhyme with "months" one could think of, and doing so with an easy air of sincerity that always seems to coat even his most outrageous lyrical musings. *Friends Of Mine*, Green's second solo effort, made while on a continuing Moldy Peaches

Link
www.adamgreen.net
File Under
Anti-folk superstar
R.I.Y.L.

The Moldy Peaches, early Beck,
Jonathan Richman, Ween

sabbatical, is his first real studio record, and his most polished recording to date. But Green's new songs retain his unique sense of melodic invention, and continue to match it with some of the most witty, obscene and poetic lyrics out there. Amid the jarring and occasionally pornographic, Green leaves room for some satiric sweetness: On "Jessica," Green asks the teen star: "Jessica Simpson/ Where has your love gone/ It's not in your music, no." Most of the songs clock in at around two minutes, and the relatively crystal-clean production, featuring an acoustic combo with string quartet on every track, gives a constancy to the overall sound of the record, leaving listeners to focus on Green's clear strength, his elegant, accomplished songwriting. >>>KARL WACHTER



GUIDED BY VOICES

Earthquake Glue Matador

Somewhere along the line, the quality of Guided By Voices' songwriting completely eclipsed the concerns over the fidelity of their recordings. Purists still hanker for their 4-track days, and pop fans got a kick out of their late-'90s major-label upgrade, but for Bob Pollard and crew, the emphasis has always been on kicking out as many jams as possible and then moving on to the next project. *Earthquake Glue* fits right into this formula with its good-enough production and some of the strongest material GBV has come up with since they decided to write songs with more than one verse. As Pollard sings about "the

Link
www.guidedbyvoices.com
File Under
Indie rock's standard-bearing
troubadours
R.I.Y.L.
Kinks, the Who, any of
the last 14 GBV records

stock market crumbling and the rock market tumbling," on the epically charged "A Trophy Mule In Particular" he doesn't seem upset, but typically aware of the changing environment that continues to make this band oddly relevant. GBV thrive in the underbelly of American rock music, where records of this caliber are anxiously awaited and revered by fans and ignored by those who haven't bothered to become obsessed. Regardless, these 15 tracks are a testament to Pollard's status as a pop savant, and though he floods the market with more releases than folks probably care to listen to, *Earthquake Glue* is proof that his best material continues to be stamped with the GBV moniker. >>>PETER D'ANGELO

JESSE HARRIS & THE FERDINANDOS

THE SECRET SUN

The major label debut from
the GRAMMY®-winning writer of
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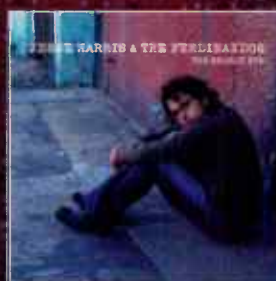
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TERRY HALL & MUSHTAQ

The Hour Of Two Lights Honest Jons/Astralwerks

Terry Hall, the musical chameleon formerly of the Specials and Fun Boy Three, has issued another collaborative invention, a mash-up of an album between him and Middle Eastern musician Mushtaq, a member of the British hip-hop ensemble Fun-Da-Mental. Hall, a Polish refugee with a Jewish heritage, and Mushtaq, a Middle Eastern Muslim, have fused a fantastic mélange of East and West, traditional and modern music. (Damon Albarn, whose Honest Jons label released the disc, adds guest vocals on a few of the tracks.) Others have tread some of the same terrain as Hall and Mushtaq, most notably Bill Laswell

with Material's *Hallucination Engine*, or Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's collaborations with Massive Attack, but Hall and Mushtaq don't seem as interested in the hypnotic funk and dub roots of Middle Eastern music as they are in crafting a culturally unified work of Occidental and Arab traditions. Jewish Klezmer music melds seamlessly with Arabian instrumentation, and a new idea of what constitutes Middle Eastern music is born. The tracks work best when Hall emerges from the background, uncoiling his uniquely reserved vocals. Standouts include the haunting "Ten Eleven," the awkward lurch of "A Tale Of Woe" and the vibrant, mystical "Sticks And Stones." >>>JEFF BROWN

Link
www.astralwerks.com
 File Under
 Roadhouse on the
 roadmap to peace
 R.I.Y.L.
 Material, Cheb Mami,
 Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan,
 Transglobal Underground



HAMELL ON TRIAL

Tough Love Righteous Babe

Ed Hamell's the guy you meet in a bar and listen to his cryptic stories, then try to retell them later only to find they don't make sense. He's not lying or necessarily exaggerating, but the stories require his exact wording and timing to come across. *Tough Love* is the folk-punk's fifth studio album. With 16 songs and five producers credited (Ani DiFranco and Andrew "Goat" Gilchrist among them), it rambles and tucks itself in with a number of stylistic surprises. Hamell's guitar remains up front. But where he's best known for sawing away rambunctiously and singing as if speeding on methamphetamine, he now occasionally slows down to gently fingerpick and sing with great care, as on the Matthew Shepard-inspired lament "Hail" and the DiFranco duet "All That Was Said." A punk at heart, when he does turn it up a notch, the backing support of guitarist Gary Lucas (Captain Beefheart, Jeff Buckley) and bassist Ernie Brooks (Modern Lovers) turn his beatnik prose into a garage band revisited. Hamell likes the nightlife and most of his characters tango with drugs and the danger of old city streets. Hamell's own chemical demons resurfaced during his recovery from a serious car accident in 2000 and are memorialized through the Percodan haze of "Downs." The old school punk-poet survives. >>>ROB O'CONNOR

Link
www.hamellontrial.com
 File Under
 Street poet found in garage
 R.I.Y.L.
 Ani DiFranco, Peter Laughner,
 Lou Reed

occasionally and singing as if speeding on methamphetamine, he now occasionally slows down to gently fingerpick and sing with great care, as on the Matthew Shepard-inspired lament "Hail" and the DiFranco duet "All That Was Said." A punk at heart, when he does turn it up a notch, the backing support of guitarist Gary Lucas (Captain Beefheart, Jeff Buckley) and bassist Ernie Brooks (Modern Lovers) turn his beatnik prose into a garage band revisited. Hamell likes the nightlife and most of his characters tango with drugs and the danger of old city streets. Hamell's own chemical demons resurfaced during his recovery from a serious car accident in 2000 and are memorialized through the Percodan haze of "Downs." The old school punk-poet survives. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



JOE HENRY

Tiny Voices Anti-

Don't brand Joe Henry a "singer/songwriter" unless you're willing to add a few disclaimer adjectives to that tag: adventuresome, soul-searching, heady. Henry's early albums (the excellent *Kindness Of The World* in particular) were the strummy, folky type of works closely associated with a traditional singer/songwriter, but his later albums have tossed aside the acoustic guitar and 4/4 forms in favor of a wider, weirder palette of soulful instrumentation and introspective expression. *Tiny Voices*, his first album for Anti- (the label for which he produced Solomon

Burke's Grammy-winning CD *Don't Give Up On Me*) has a jazzy, last-call feel that was also heavily implied on 2001's *Scar*. On "Animal Skin" Henry wants to be Chet Baker and Leonard Cohen rolled into one (can you say "par-tay!"). The wandering, gauzy horns and heavy-lidded piano splashes deepen the mood, which you might think is sexual passion, but don't be fooled, it's just good old-fashioned despair with a red scarf thrown over the lampshade. The biggest risk Henry takes here is recording his own "Flesh And Blood," a track Burke had already taken to metaphysical heights. The result is a mixed blessing, as one realizes that Henry's vocal delivery is nowhere near the level of his ever-intriguing songwriting and arranging. >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

Link
www.anti.com
 File Under
 Almost blues
 R.I.Y.L.
 Chet Baker, Elvis Costello,
 Tom Waits' Alice



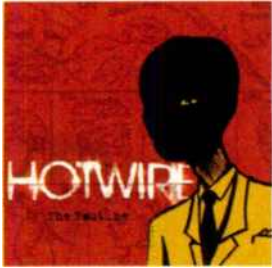
HIM

Many In High Places Are Not Well Bubble Core

If one of indie-rock's many subtexts emphasizes the endless opportunity available to any talentless nobody with a guitar and a four-track (and a bedroom, of course), multi-instrumentalist Doug Scharin's Brooklyn-based post-rock ensemble HiM demonstrates that open-ended collaboration with many talented somebodies can yield fruit just as ripe. *Many In High Places Are Not Well*, HiM's latest album, is another document of the band's mission to update jazz-rock fusion for hipsters put off by the artwork on old Weather Report LPs; the group's m.o. is

adding and subtracting instrumental voices and percussive rhythms to muscular, detailed grooves that seem to stretch on forever. As such, the strength of *High Places* lies in the abilities of its players, which here include members of Isotope 217, Múm, June Of 44 and Tom Tom Club. They don't disappoint: Opener "Elementals" floats a melted-butter slide-guitar line over tensile bass-and-drums chatter, "Many In High Places" piles up polyrhythms like snowflakes, and "Perspective From A Slow Spin" pits waves of guitar feedback against forlornly muted trumpet peals. The group seem unconcerned with the nasty business of actually playing songs, though, so *High Places* doesn't invite you back for more in the way that Tortoise's equally long-winded *TNT* does. But it's a potent display of collective prowess. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Link
www.bubblecore.com
 File Under
 Grooves for groups
 R.I.Y.L.
 Tortoise, Califone,
 Medeski Martin And Wood



HOTWIRE

The Routine RCA

Hotwire surfaced last year with an abrasive EP, and toured with monolithically heavy bands like Poison The Well, Killswitch Engage, Shadows Fall and Kittie to support it. The California quartet was definitely the odd-band-out at the time, since its music, while hard, isn't very extreme at all. Apparently, the band returned to the studio to retool and repolish its debut before unleashing it for mass consumption. *The Routine* benefits from the nips and tucks; it's a tight, smart record. The opener "Not Today" lays down a guitar riff that sounds

lifted from Tool's *Undertow*, while ensuing cuts like "Invisible," "Rugburn" and "Tweaked" come full bore, sweat and spit seeping out of every pore. *The Routine* escapes the classic "faceless" rock dilemma by keeping the time signatures and dynamics (lots of screaming from vocalist Rus Martin) of its under-three-minute anthems slightly left of center. This edginess, however, makes for a real conundrum: The band's not heavy enough for Ozzfest attendees, yet too heavy and angular for alt-rock radio. While record execs might bite their nails down to bloody stumps over such a quandary, it's to Hotwire's credit that the format in which they most want to succeed is your stereo. >>>AMY SCIARRETTO

Link

www.hotwiremusic.com

File Under

Smart, but not brainy, rock

R.I.Y.L.

Tool's *Undertow*, Sparta, the Revolution Smile



THE JEEVAS

1, 2, 3, 4 Setanta

Crispian Mills has been reborn. Well, not so much reborn as reinvented, but it's a fitting metaphor for someone who has dedicated so much of his time in the spotlight to spirituality. Mills, of course, was the voice of Kula Shaker, the '90s Britrock act that first gained attention for its heritage (Mills is the son of Parent Trap star Hayley Mills), then for its pop songs invoking Hindu mysticism. Now we have the Jeevas, Mills' new band; as before, the singer remains in charge of songwriting, so the Kula Shaker comparisons are both numerous and inevitable. But for one

Link

www.thejeevas.com

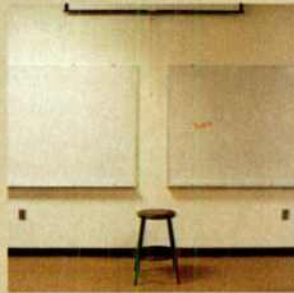
File Under

Up for the count

R.I.Y.L.

Kula Shaker, Tom Petty, the Who

thing, this is a more basic rock album than either of the KS discs, featuring fewer production flourishes and a simpler three-man lineup. For another, despite the name (a variation on a Sanskrit word for "soul"), there's no actual singing in Sanskrit this time around. What you get instead is a '70s flashback ride with flourishes of Americana, Deep Purple diving, an Undertones cover ("You Got My Number") and plenty of undeniable Whoisms. Mills hasn't always been able to properly express himself, but he has consistently struggled (or seemed to, at least) to keep his heart in the right place. Now it's simply migrated a bit back West. So maybe not so much reborn or reinvented, but relocated? >>>DOUG LEVY



Beulah Yoko

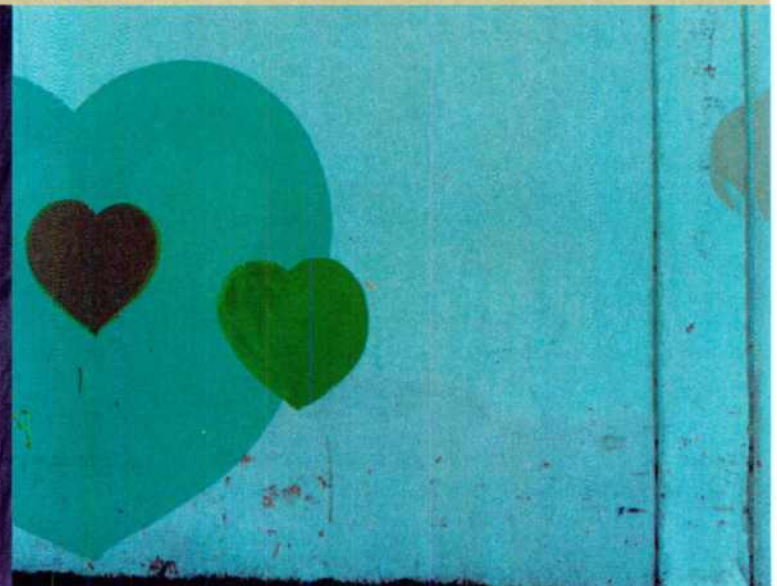
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www.velocetterecords.com
www.beulahmania.com

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LAKE TROUT

Another One Lost Rz/Palm

Imagine the League Of Critically Acclaimed Influences. At the head of the table is Captain Falsetto, able to seduce any woman with his Britpop swoon. To his right, Doctor Swoosh, who hypnotizes and elevates audiences with his analog-synth gurgles. Who can overlook Swoosh's sidekick Beaty Man, with his funky rhythms that are at once groovy and then suddenly sporadic. And everyone's fave curmudgeon, Mr. Grind, never lets the other ones forget the good ol' days when all you needed was a fuzzbox and a sneer to overcome the masses. You throw all

of these influences into one band and the result could easily be a force of unending evil. But on *Another One Lost*, Baltimore's Lake Trout combines these elements into a pop miasma that occasionally hovers close to other alterna-heroes, yet retains a distinctive identity. The quintet, which writes tunes by laying down beats and then jamming over them, avoids traditional structures. On one song, an ethereal whoosh drops into a catchy chorus that, once over, never reappears. Sometimes the elements are so sparse that it's easy to forget the disc is still spinning, only to be jarred by a buzzing, two-note guitar riff. While Lake Trout doesn't win every battle on its fourth outing, it succeeds often enough to pleasantly defy expectations, which, remember, is the war this League is fighting. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

Link

www.laketrou.com

File Under

Noodler's delight

R.I.Y.L.

Radiohead, Citizen Cope,

Sigur Rós



LEAVES

Leaves DreamWorks

Of late, it's getting so that "Icelandic" can describe a band's sound as clearly as its nationality. As with local notables like Sigur Rós or Múm, Reykjavik's Leaves create a lush and spacey sonic landscape, washed in reverb and a distinctly melancholy air. But where those other artists, and national treasure Björk like them, put a focus on sculpting mood into something experimental and stylistically complex, this trio delivers easily digestible moody pop songs. Often, to great effect: Opener "I Go Down" shares a chorus of falsetto coos that smack of Coldplay or Travis' best—

pretty, catchy and easy to like. But mixed in, too, are a handful of tracks that fall solid in that camp Starsailor inhabits, where directness feels more like bluntness, with hooks that are too obvious but not quite gripping, and the simplicity feels more unfortunate than intentional. Singer Arnar Gudjonsson is competent, often engaging, and guitarist Arnar Olafsson and bassist Hallur Hallsson back him deftly. "Epitaph" shows Leaves at their most morose, Olafsson dressing a somber piano ballad with tasteful guitar squiggles—but gaudy Michael Kamen-esque string accompaniment drizzles cheese on the works. It illustrates Leaves' strength and weakness: They're capable of setting a gripping mood and crafting hooks that hit their mark, but further exploring the traces of adventurousness that only peek into this debut would serve them well. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

Link

www.leaves.tv

File Under

Ice pop

R.I.Y.L.

Starsailor, Travis, Embrace



JEFFREY LEWIS

It's The Ones Who've Cracked That The Light Shines Through Rough Trade



It's not a great sign that the most immediately winning cut on Jeffrey Lewis' sophomore effort is a jokey follow-up to an earlier joke song. Complete with spoken-word drop-ins ("Hey, I thought you were into psychedelic music"), "No LSD Tonight" finds Lewis haplessly fending off unwanted "druggie attention" generated by "The Last Time I Did Acid I Went Insane," the title track of his 2002 debut. This track, and others backed by brother/bassist Jack Lewis and drummer Anders Griffen ("Texas,"

Link

www.roughtraderecords.com/jl.html

File Under

Anti-anti-anti-folk

R.I.Y.L.

The Moldy Peaches, Jonathan

Richman, Dan Bern

"Graveyard") are charmingly modest slices of Dead Milkmen-style dork-punk. But these are outnumbered by underfed acoustic tracks, depending heavily on Lewis' minimal strumming and microphone-shy home-taper croak. The interest here is almost wholly verbal, with thematic concerns ranging from personal integrity ("Don't Let The Record Label Take You Out To Lunch") to twisted childhood 'reminiscences' ("Back When I Was 4," a Dylanesque fabrication that doesn't end until he's 106). Though musically lightweight, these songs' canny reupholstering of moth-eaten singer/songwriter conventions suggest that Lewis is far less naïve than he wants to sound. If so, he might as well drop the act, especially if the annoying, juvenile side of his writing ("If You Shoot The Head, You Kill The Ghoul") goes along with it. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

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LOW FLYING OWLS

Elixir Vitae **Slinky**

An "elixir vitae" is a potion that alchemists believed would grant eternal youth or eternal life, and although Sacramento's Low Flying Owls are more death- than life-obsessed (when it comes down to it, there's a fine line between the two, isn't there?), they perform their own kind of transmutation on their second album. *Elixir Vitae* takes two drams of Spiritualized, one link of the Jesus And Mary Chain, and a few tabs of Syd Barrett-era Pink Floyd and swirls them for 43 minutes. The result is a trippy, heavy, at times over-reaching

album of neo-psychedelia. The album opens with the pounding "Glad To Be Alive," which mixes screaming guitars, whirring keyboards and Jared Southard's faux-Brit vocal sneer. Southard's glad to be alive only because he's thinking so much about death, as is apparent from "Looks Of A Killer" (a slinky incantation with a wild sax solo), "Georgie Shot Johnnie" (a stately, lysergic trip built on layers of keyboards), and "The Last Day On The Planet" (a fragmented, filtered Floyd flashback). At times, Low Flying Owls could dilute their sources more subtly, as with the Mercury Rev-isionist "Strange Connection" or the Fall-seasoned "Swingin' Sam" (check Southard's way of spitting the phrase "the cross-dress-ing H-I-V pos-i-tive hus-band-uh"). *Elixir Vitae* may be fool's gold, but it still glitters brightly. >>>STEVE KLUNGE

Link

www.lowflyingowls.net

File Under

Better living through alchemy

R.I.Y.L.

Spiritualized, B.R.M.C.,

Syd Barrett-era Pink Floyd



MOJAVE 3

Spoon And Rafter **4AD**

Like awkward teenagers growing into their looks, Mojave 3 realize their artistic ambitions with stronger songwriting and greater musical focus with each successive album. As members of Slowdive, they mastered the art of the haze: slippery, gorgeous yet formless instrumental passages where the song was nearly lost. For Mojave 3 album number four, singer/songwriter Neil Halstead capitalizes on the progress he made with the band's 2000 release *Excuses For Travellers* and his solo album, last year's *Sleeping On Roads*, where he tapped his Nick Drake and

Damien Jurado fascinations for the perfect confluence of sturdy melody and somber tidings. With the group in tow—Alan Forrester's keyboards particularly color this world—Halstead works the band's yin-yang to his advantage, casting himself as a 'shoegazer cowboy' singing from the lunar desert. The group's heavy atmospheric—echoed guitar tones, distant keyboard lines—create epic grandeur throughout. "Battle Of The Broken Hearts" is a six-minute-plus orchestral tug of war that resolves into the relatively direct piano ballad "Hard To Miss You." "Writing To St. Peter" recalls a lonely Western vibe via satellite transmission (Arizona to London, perhaps), with Halstead's remorseful voice sounding distracted, like someone whispering deep secrets to the insecurity of a cellphone, proving that no matter the technology, the emotions remain the same. >>>BOB O'CONNOR

Link

www.mojave3.co.uk

File Under

Dreamscape country ballads

R.I.Y.L.

Nick Drake, Gene Clark,

Mazy Star

THE RAVEONETTES



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THE NEW AMSTERDAMS

Worse For The Wear Vagrant

My, how Matt Pryor has grown. From his day job fronting emo poster children the Get Up Kids, one might infer that he and his adolescent pack were lodged in pop-punk arrested development. Yet, with his ever-evolving side project, the New Amsterdams, Pryor has been set free to unpack his inner adult impulses, and on *Worse For The Wear*, those mature ideas make for comfort food, sort of chicken soup for the indie soul. Pryor's New Amsterdams project fits somewhere in the ever-nebulous singer/songwriter mold—in the same sphere as Paul

Westerberg or Elliott Smith, but just barely. Like Ryan Adams, Pryor plays comfortably with the idea, occasionally hinting at Americana roots without ever really surrendering to it. Yet when the twang does seep into a few tracks, like on "The Spoils Of The Spoiled," or the banjo-fueled "Asleep At The Wheel," it truly is a comfortable fit. Those many Get Up Kids fans looking to complete their collection are treated well on *Worse For The Wear*, too. Tracks like "Hover Near Fame" have a great meaty mid-tempo radio-friendly feel, and other highlights, like "Hanging On For Hope," or "All Our Vice" have that reassuring bittersweet sound Pryor has become known for. *Worse For The Wear* is a complete album of compelling songs—not just Kids' stuff. >>>JEFF BROWN

Link

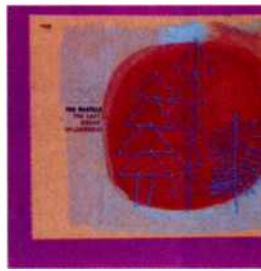
www.vagrant.com

File Under

Kids growing up

R.I.Y.L.

The Get Up Kids, Elliott Smith, American Football



THE PASTELS

The Last Great Wilderness Geographic/Domino

Glasgow, Scotland's Pastels are so closely associated with an endearingly amateur brand of bedroom guitar-pop that their band photo could appear next to Webster's definition of "shambolic." Having recently focused on their Geographic label, the Pastels' core breaks a six-year silence to deliver the soundtrack to British director David Mackenzie's "supernatural thriller," *The Last Great Wilderness*. The results, however, bear a closer resemblance to the Chicago post-rock soundscapes of producer and collaborator John McEntire. Most of *The Last Great Wilderness'* 24 minutes is comprised of instrumentals that, befitting a soundtrack, emphasize mood over melody, not to mention flute and trumpet over guitar. Although the Pastels' last outing, 1997's *Illumination*, hinted at a Yo La Tengo-like shift toward the soft and subtle, this excursion still surprises. Katrina Mitchell contributes one of only two vocal leads, sublimely playing off a muted trumpet on a charmingly understated cover of Sly Stone's "Everybody Is A Star." The dance-y Britpop-inflected closer "I Picked A Flower" offers the most tangible connection to the Pastels' earlier work. Even here the Glaswegians throw a curveball, as ringleader Stephen Pastel buttons his lip and enlists Pulp's Jarvis Cocker (who's in fine form) to sing lead. The Pastels reportedly have a full-length pop disc in the works; *The Last Great Wilderness* is a pleasant if slight release, but perhaps not the intermezzo fans crave. >>>GLEN SARVADY

Link

www.dominorecordco.com

File Under

Post-rock film score

R.I.Y.L.

Tortoise, recent Yo La Tengo, Brakeback, Kings Of Convenience



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PIGEON JOHN

Pigeon John Is Dating Your Sister Basement

When Pigeon John kicks off his new record by complaining about the travails of getting signed, is it a) because the California backpacker is about to drop science so fresh most labels deem it uncommercial, b) the unabashedly underground and upbeat rapper wants to mock all those thug wanna-B-boys trying to get signed by the majors, or c) because Pigeon John's posse, L.A. Symphony, may be fly, but his solo shit is so weak he struggled for years to get a deal. The truth is probably some mixture of the above, but rappers take note: If you're going to mock all of the

Link

www.pigeonjohn.com

File Under

Backpacker Central

R.I.Y.L.

MC Paul Barman, L.A. Symphony, Will Smith

also-rans, your beats and rhymes better illustrate why you're better than they are. While John's lilting flow and reggae-scented tracks go down easier than a Mango Mai Tai, the meters and arrangements are so uneventful that this summery cocktail doesn't have much kick. Occasionally, John's narratives save the mix, such as when he describes a father who walks out on his child to struggle through the hip-hop industry. "I looked in your eyes, pretended to grin, said that I loved you and you're my best friend/ ...I'm sorry, but I'm leaving." Unfortunately, such stirring lines don't come along often enough to make *Pigeon John Is Dating Your Sister* a welcome part of the family. >>>NEIL GLAOSTONE

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Link

www.theraveonettes.com

File Under

Following the Jesus
& Mary Chain

R.I.Y.L.

The Jesus & Mary Chain,
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club,
the Cramps, Buddy Holly

THE RAVEONETTES

Chain Gang Of Love Columbia

The Raveonettes are a Danish boy/girl duo whose shtick is to place creative limits on their songs (like their eight-song *Whip It On* EP, "in glorious b-flat minor"), keep them all under three minutes, and claim to be starting a Danish rock 'n' roll renaissance. The first two parts are true enough; the third—we'll just have to wait on that. In the meantime, it's hard to fault singer/guitarist Sune Rose Wagner (the boy) and bassist/singer Sharin Foo (the girl) for their taste in rock 'n' roll, which starts somewhere around Buddy Holly and the Everly Brothers and works up through Phil Spector's wall-of-sound girl grounds to likeminded

modern nostalgia of the Cramps and the Jesus & Mary Chain—maybe even the Pixies. The result on their full-length, 13-track debut *Chain Gang Of Love*, an only slightly less consistently rockin' outing than *Whip It On*, is a whole lot of Buddy Holly chord progressions filled with reverb-drenched Link Wray riffs, Poison Ivy riff raff and simple, clap-along backbeats, all finished off with fuzztone basslines and white-noise guitar tantrums. On top of it all, Wagner and Foo trade vocals like Jim Reid and Hope Sandoval should have much more often in a fine display of style over substance or, more accurately, style as substance. >>>MATT ASHARE



Link

www.req.net

File Under

Selected automotive works

R.I.Y.L.

Nightmares On Wax,
Prefuse 73, Dabrye

REQ

Car Paint Scheme Warp

British graffiti artist and hip-hop aficionado Req knows that he doesn't have to go plastic on his tracks to stay fresh. Warp's resident headnodda cruises miles away from labelmate Prefuse 73's heart-palpitating robohop, though the two share respect for the source genre they mess with. *Car Paint Scheme* has been shelved since 2000, when it was supposed to be issued by Skint, but it still feels like a progression from last year's barely writ *Sketchbook*. Req is characteristically minimalist here, but his instrumentals are robust and sometimes even funky. "Train Jam" is a

rickety bump through the junkyard with a recurring guitar riff that's dirtier than Fred Sanford's place. "Friscoheat" is a freaky rave-up that blatantly illustrates Req's reluctance to just groove on a hot breakbeat. This resistance is easy to miss on the low-key tracks that mastermind the *Scheme*. "Mirror Beats" offers only a shred of melody by way of eerie, ambient chords while kicks and snares fight for space. The drums of "Style Mentorz" are particularly enthusiastic, but the song tanks when Kid Acne gets on the mic and shifts the focus to his embarrassingly deliberate flow and lyrics ("My whole body turns electrical/ Like the eel swimming in my testicle"). It's not enough to destroy the solid *Paint Scheme*, but it does make it seem as if it's been keyed. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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JOSH ROUSE

1972 Rykodisc

At last, after years of writing soft, pinning love songs, Josh Rouse is finally starting to work his long-dormant mojo. He tested the simmering waters of soul on last year's R&B-tinged *Under Cold Blue Stars*; on *1972*, he dives headlong into his favorite year of music history. (It also happens to be the year both he and his Telecaster were born.) Nebraska-born and Nashville-based Rouse often gets unfairly pigeonholed as adult contemporary, but now that he's taking the sweet-talking, bootie-calling lead of Al Green and Marvin

Gaye and giving his lucid folk some room to groove, he's cutting off comparisons with earnest singer/songwriters he usually shares the bill with. Rouse's knack for story-songs shines through on "James," but this tale of a heartbreaking boozehound is lifted on a rising tide of flute riffs, Curtis Mayfield-like falsettos and the flourishes of a disco-ready string section. *1972*'s catchiest track, "Come Back (Light Therapy)," an upbeat tune about sun-deprived Scandinavia, recalls Steely Dan's quirky lyrics and undercuts their easygoing sound with a thumping bassline. While he gets spiritual on "Sparrows Over Birmingham," poising his voice beside a gospel singer's velvety tones as if he's singing along with the gospel station on the radio, "Under Your Charms" gets downright sexual. Pairing slow-building arrangements with the caress of his raspy vocals, it's sultry enough to make your baby-mama blush. >>>KARA ZUARO

Link

www.joshrouse.com

File Under

Countryside seduction

R.I.Y.L.

Marvin Gaye, Steely Dan,

Freedy Johnson



SEÑOR COCONUT

Fiesta Songs Emperor Norton

Señor Coconut (a.k.a. Atom Heart, a.k.a. Uwe Schmidt) made a small splash three years ago with his kitschy Latin versions of Kraftwerk songs. And once the laughter died down, it had to be said that they worked curiously well. This time he's seriously upped the cheese factor, darting back to pillage rock, pop and New Age classics and add a little cha cha cha. "Riders On The Storm" definitely benefits from his handiwork, adding a rhythmic spring to the Doors' sullen, bluesy mystery, while Sade's "Smooth Operator" is a natural candidate for some smooth mambo stylings. The godawful Elton John pop hit, "Blue

Link

www.multicolor-recordings.de/

senorcoconut

File Under

Con queso

R.I.Y.L.

The New Latinaires,

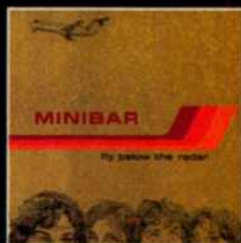
El General, Weird Al Yankovic

Eyes" finds itself reborn as Latin Vegas material and, remarkably, the song sounds much, much better. Not all his covers work quite so well: "Beat It" has been done to death (and how do you top Weird Al?), while "Oxygene (Part II)" is all rhythm and no melody, and "Smoke On The Water" is too obvious, and here in both English and Spanish versions, too much. The four *real* Latin pieces here actually fare much better, including last year's club hit "Electrolatino." But when the stylings aren't surgically grafted onto the originals, the fit is natural and unforced, and on something like "Negra Mi ChaChaCha," the flow is much freer. Four beers into a party it's probably indescribably hilarious. If sober, take in small doses. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

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SPARKS

Lil' Beethoven Palm

Sparks—essentially the California brothers Ron and Russell Mael—have crafted an unlikely 30-year career, careening from big-beat glam rock to Giorgio Moroder-produced disco bleeps to skinny-tie new wave. *Lil' Beethoven* marks another stunning departure that still sounds quintessentially Sparks, thanks to the arch irony and subtle love of showtunes that permeates the band's catalog. Russell (he of the aging matinee idol looks) handles all vocals, playing call-and-response to his own multi-tracked operatic chorus, while Third

Link

www.allsparks.com

File Under

High-concept symph-pop

R.I.Y.L.

Stephin Merritt, "Bohemian

Rhapsody," Pet Shop Boys

Reich accountant lookalike Ron supplies a backdrop of grand piano and symphonic bombast. Opener "The Rhythm Thief" succinctly conveys *Lil' Beethoven's* largely guitar-and-beat-free credo. "Oh no, where did the groove go?" frets the chorus as the thief taunts, "Lights out, Ibiza!" Lyrical zingers are all over *Lil' Beethoven's* nine songs. "How Do I Get To Carnegie Hall?" is built around an old borscht belt joke ("Practice man, practice!" exhorts the chorus), and "What Are All These Bands So Angry About?" namechecks Richard Wagner, Billie Holiday and Howlin' Wolf. Sparks finally strap on the guitars for "Ugly Guys With Beautiful Girls," resurrecting their long-dormant power-chord salvos to cathartic effect. Initially conceived as the work of a cantankerous classical progeny, Sparks left enough fingerprints for fans to rat them out, and created a witty and inventive work, despite a concept that at times outpaces the melodies. >>>GLEN SARVADY

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SPINESHANK

Self-Destructive Pattern Roadrunner

If the "self-destructive pattern" is following the nü-metal formula, then Spineshank is on the right path. Three years after their sophomore album *The Height Of Callousness*, their latest effort doesn't reinvent any wheels, though it's surely more polished (thanks to producer GGGarth Richardson) than younger bands of the genre. To their credit, Spineshank fashions undeniably catchy (though derivative) nü-metal tunes packed with searing riffs, driving beats and prog-rock accents. However, what they

Link
www.spineshank.com
File Under
More than 30 seconds past its
allotted 15 minutes
R.I.Y.L.

Fear Factory, Disturbed pull off musically, they lack lyrically. Vocalist Jonny Santos and drummer Tommy Decker co-wrote lines that an angst-ridden adolescent still traumatized about Mom and Dad's divorce would pen; in "Slavery" Santos wails, "I reject the way you need/ Hurt yourself to get to me/ I will break away from you/ My regret is knowing you/ This feels like slavery." But profundity is probably not the objective when Spineshank have crafted their most radio-friendly album to date. While vocal schizophrenia abounds (guttural screaming one moment and melodic crooning the next), ballads like "Smothered" and "Forgotten" render *Self-Destructive Pattern* merely palatable at times. Clogged with redundant breakdowns, trite lyrics, and other nu-metal clichés, Spineshank's latest fails to measure up to their earnest debut (1998's *Strictly Diesel*) and becomes another disc to toss onto the heap of tired mall-metal bands. >>>TRACEY JOHN



THE STAR SPANGLES

Bazooka!!! Capitol

The Star Spangles might be the new New York garage band least concerned with deviating from well-worn formula: Where the Strokes milk a distinctly 1990s sense of rich-kid ennui and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Karen O makes use of a post-Blondie chic, these shaggy refugees from upstate small-town-dom gleefully bash through sloppy gutter-pop that boasts no more chords than are absolutely necessary and sounds like falling asleep in your clothes for a year straight—in other words, exactly like early Replacements with the Ramones' compositional economy. What's surprising about *Bazooka!!!*, the band's debut

Link
www.thestarspangles.com
File Under
Note-perfect neo-garage
R.I.Y.L.

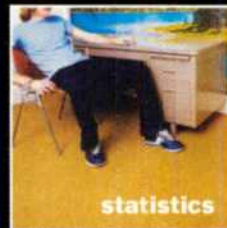
**The Replacements,
the Heartbreakers,
early Soul Asylum**

after a couple of big-in-England singles, is how much life they give such a tired concept. Frontman Ian Wilson does a great Paul Westerberg (you know: terrible singer, great vocalist), so his raggedly manic exclamations in "I Don't Wanna Be Crazy Anymore" and the terrific "Which Of The Two Of Us Is Gonna Burn This House Down?" carry real weight; it's nice to hear someone so proud of his drunkenness evince such desperation. And like his forebears Johnny Thunders and Bob Stinson, guitarist Tommy Volume spills amplifier fuzz all over the place, constantly threatening to derail an already unsteady show. Still, it's hard to imagine the Spangles extracting much more from this vein. >>>MIKAEL WOOD



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STEREOPHONICS

You Gotta Go There To Come Back v2

With 2001's thinly veiled solo album, *Just Enough Education To Perform*, Stereophonics frontman Kelly Jones made it extremely clear that, for the time being, the Welsh rock trio was a band in name alone. It's difficult to say how things have changed internally, but at least this time he lets the other guys play more. True, there are JEEP-worthy (read: unworthy) songs here, like the languidly saccharine "Climbing The Wall" and "You Stole My Money Honey," which sees Jones finally complete his long-heralded



SUKILOVE

Sukilove Hidden Agenda

As simple as the subject matter of these 13 songs may be—take the last four letters of Sukilove's moniker and you've got the central theme—bandleader Pascal Deweze's compositions are noteworthy for offering a glimpse of what today's pack of emo rockers might sound like in 10 years when they have mortgages and toddlers yanking at their cardigans. Not that Deweze or his bandmates seem like the thick-framed glasses, satchel-rocking type, but Sukilove's breezy strum-and-drum instrumentation and things-are-gonna-get-better lyrics have a lot in common with *Wood/Water*, last year's

Link
www.stereophonics.com
File Under
Nice place to visit...
R.I.Y.L.
Black Crowes, Faces, Oasis

Link
www.sukilove.com
File Under
Flowers of romance
R.I.Y.L.
Freedy Johnston, Alejandro Escovedo, twang-free Steve Earle, Van Morrison

transformation into Rod Stewart. But as the opening funk-riddled rock dirge of "Help Me" and the '70s wah-groove of "High As The Ceiling" indicate, while the 'Phonics may not be champing at the bit to get back to the stadium-sized anthems that brought them to fame in the U.K., they're clearly still willing to shake their moneymakers. Plus, *You Gotta Go* also features some bold experiments from a group that has been notoriously trad and technophobic: "I'm Alright" is Stereophonics-gone-trip-hop, while "Rainbows And Pots Of Gold" plaintively succeeds despite eschewing the concept of a chorus. Jones also plays around with layered vocal effects and styles significantly more than he ever hinted he was capable of; the moving "Nothing Precious At All" even sees the singer add backing textures on which he sounds shockingly like Prince. And for a band like Stereophonics, that's about as daring as you get. >>>DDUG LEVY

adventurous swan song from the Promise Ring. Sukilove's songs avoid being overly precious; "Time To Go" begins the album with languid guitar and piano accompanying Deweze as he laments, "Oh my friends, how I miss your smiles in evenings where moods grow low and my conscience is pointing at the door." The spare arrangements put the focus on Deweze's angelic but sturdy voice, though he gladly cedes the spotlight when guests show up—including Bettie Serveert's Carol Van Dyk on "Shame You Never Worry." The circus-like stomp of "Man (Ain't Man Enough)," complete with horns and rapid-fire fingerpicking, provides a nice change and shows Deweze can fun with the forlorn. Let's hope the kids learn to do the same. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

THE COMP PILE (OUR GUIDE TO COMPILATION CDS) BY CAM'RON DAVIS

TITLE	Punk Seven Inch CD: 1988-1989 (Lookout)	State Of The World (Tableturns)	Bad Scene, Everyone's Fault (Dying Wish)	Swami Sound System Vol. 1 (Swami)	Neone Meate Dream Of A Octafish (Animal World)
CONCEPT	Lookout collects their first six 7-inches on harder, more durable plastic	Indie hip-hop gives a state of the turntable address	Pop-punkers break their backs bowing to Jawbreaker	Label sampler proving once again that John Reis has better taste than you	Captain Beefheart gets a more dignified tribute than Jawbreaker
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	Love punk, hate vinyl	Those needing more than paper cuts	Fans of bands with better influences than songs	You prefer garage rock be made in actual garages	Weirdos not satisfied with 2003's other Captainless Beefheart record
NAMES TO DROP	Corrupted Morals, Plaid Retina, Yeastie Girlz	Rob Swift, Cannibal Ox, Slug, J-Live	Face To Face, Sparta, Riddlin' Kids	Rocket From The Crypt, Hot Snakes, Testors	Mike Watt, Jad Fair, Miss Murgatroid
SUMS IT UP	"10 Seconds Of Anarchy" (Isocracy)	"Tekwizardry" (Total Eclipse and Supa Dave)	"Shield Your Eyes" (For Amusement Only)	"Psycho I.D." (Sonny Vincent)	"Sugar 'N Spikes" (Nel Aspinal)
VERDICT	Remember 15 years ago when Northern State was called the Yeastie Girlz? Yeah, so do we.	This nonstop mix slices up more vinyl than your local fetish bar.	It's everyone's fault the scene is so bad, but who's responsible for letting Nerf Herder on this disc?	Swami still rocks harder than you, too, even while wearing that turban.	These trout-masked replicas come close to outwearing the Captain himself.



SUNTAN

Send You Home Kimchee

Suntan's musical journey has them a bit lost. On *Send You Home*, the Boston quartet manages to drift from Tripping Daisy at their most hallucinogenic and lethargic all the way to Sigur Rós at their most comprehensible, passing Love And Rockets and pre-article Verve along the way. Still, wherever these shoegazers happen to be going, they rely on the buildup/payoff route (as opposed to the aimless-drifting or the exploring-the-vibe m.o.'s) to get them there. Each creation crawls purposefully toward some vague destination somewhere in the distance,

slowly gaining strength along the way. They build and build and then, well, sometimes pass Go and collect \$200—and sometimes they don't. Suntan have mastered the first half of the equation, with expansive songs that enthrall even as they wander past the seven-minute mark, but sometimes fail to deliver on the second. "Every Night" has enough cascading guitars and aching vocals to inspire catharsis. But the climax of the three-part "Send You Home" is so grating even a busking subway "saxophonist" who extorts money with his God-awful playing would cover his ears. Ultimately, *Send You Home* is like a killer road-trip to somewhere you may not want to go. The point is the journey, not the destination. >>>NORM ELROD

Link

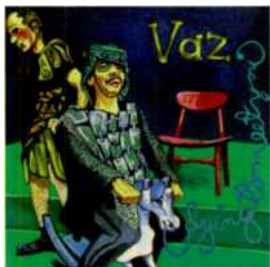
www.suntanmusic.com

File Under

Are we there yet?

R.I.Y.L.

The Verve, Love And Rockets, trippier Tripping Daisy, Sigur Rós, early Spiritualized



VAZ

Dying To Meet You Gold Standard Labs

Jeff Mooridian Jr. plays his crash and hi-hat the way Mike Tyson used to play an opponent's face. Try not to self-inflict spinal paralysis to the tune of *Dying's* opening blitzkrieg, "They've Won." Just study—the timing, speed, repetition and focused power are fucking superhuman. Only difference: Mooridian is a straight-up 98-pound weakling, a balding, unobtrusive gentleman who barely has an entry in his profession's almanac. Absurdity. He and fellow Minneapolis distortion merchant Paul Erickson rearranged nerd noisecore standards for years in the criminally unsung

Hammerhead, and continue to artfully fuck shit up in Vaz. Nowhere near as edge-of-reason combative as their earlier collaborations, *Dying* thrives on Erickson's evolution as a vocalist and guitarist. He's channeled his four-chord drone and previously banal everyman moan into a measured, Jupiter-dense assault. The incorporation of quirky humor (see falsetto goof "Drive-by Swordfight") and buoyant male backups ("Give Us The Creeps") might alienate longtime listeners (all three of them), but will more likely provide the differentiation newcomers need to appreciate the more punishing chunks of magma. As usual, Vaz abandon their best ideas too quickly: "A Crown In My Future" seems ripe for combustion after a taut, extended bridge, but *Dying* generally operates on the two-minute ceiling. No time for wankery, and even less for obscurity. >>>ANDREW BOWAZELLI

Link

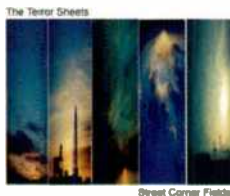
www.thevaz.com

File Under

Velociraptors rock

R.I.Y.L.

Chokebore, Helmet, C Average



THE TERROR SHEETS

Street Corner Fields Sad Robot

Fortunately for the Terror Sheets, memorable tunes need not be buoyant and bouncy to stick in your brain. The Seattle trio's *Street Corner Fields* is meant to score a lonely late night rather than an aimless, sunny Saturday (or, as their name might imply, some bloody vision of horror). Vocalist Joe Syverson treats us to beautifully simple and understated melodies sung, strangely enough, like the Catherine Wheel's Rob Dickinson trapped in a cardboard box. His supposedly heart-rending and observant lyrics are virtually unintelligible, though a sense of quiet desperation seeps through. A hollow echo that finds its way into atonal, indie-leaning guitars and thin, crashing percussion now and again compounds the effect. Other times, he's left exposed by the jangle of a simple acoustic guitar and the sprite-like disappearing act of fairytale keyboards. Either way, these two to three-minute ideas can be breathtaking. "Gravel Specs" and "Sister States" lay forth two of the simpler, more stunning melodies committed to plastic in a while. The problem is they're just ideas, not fully developed songs. Nothing here ends so much as it stops. In the grand scheme of things, though, his shortcoming doesn't detract from the listen all that much. So don't fear these Terror Sheets, embrace them. >>>NORM ELROD

Link

www.sadrobotrecords.com

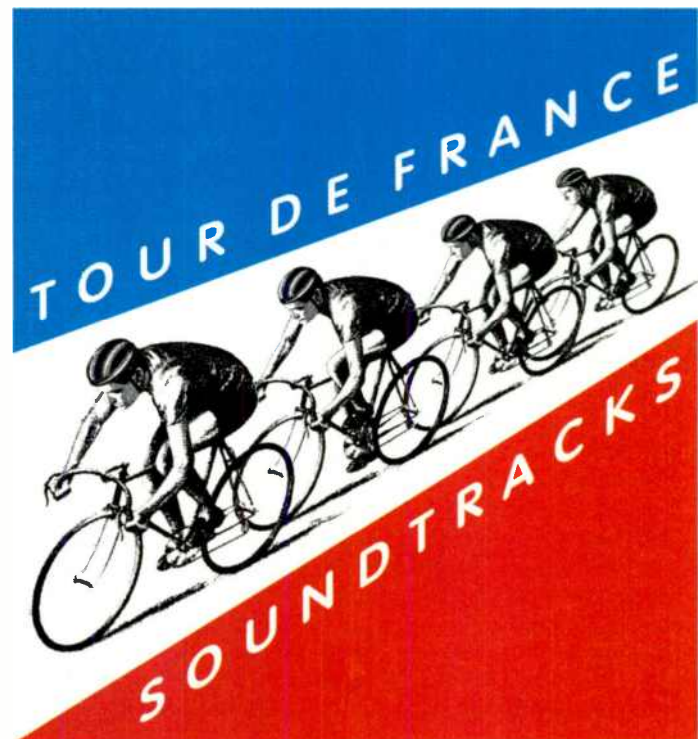
File Under

Do not be afraid

R.I.Y.L.

Radar Bros., Idaho, the New Year, Elliott Smith

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THE WEAKERTHANS

Reconstruction Site Epitaph

The Weakerthans rank near the forefront of a spate of Canadian bands currently attracting broader and much-deserved accolades. The Winnipeg quartet's first two albums married punk's ferocity to musical subtlety and hyper-literate, emotionally intricate lyrics (which, come to think of it, is a baggage-free definition of emo). *Reconstruction Site* consolidates the Weakerthans' strengths, downplaying blaring guitar passages and gentler country-folk excursions in favor of an immediately accessible array of upbeat, guitar-driven, uncommonly smart pop/punk songs. The idiosyncrasies that

make the Weakerthans special, such as Stephen Carroll's steel guitar, are now tightly woven into each track rather than set apart as genre pieces. Frontman John Samson hasn't shirked his lyrical responsibilities (the man also finds time to run a publishing house, which explains titles like "Our Retired Explorer Dines With Michel Foucault in Paris, 1961"), and *Reconstruction Site* is rife with evocative imagery of hospital rooms and mortality. Samson takes a solo acoustic turn on "One Great City," delivering a somber rallying cry ("I hate Winnipeg") against his town's gentrification over a plaintive melody that would do Elliott Smith proud. *Reconstruction Site's* release on Epitaph poises the Weakerthans for a larger audience; some of those newfound fans, reeled in by these infectious tunes, will peel back the cover and realize the gem they have on their hands. >>>GLEN SARVADY

Link

www.theweakerthans.org

File Under

Punk-pop with a Ph.D

R.I.Y.L.

The Promise Ring, the Get Up Kids, Jimmy Eat World, Superchunk, Bright Eyes



WELLWATER CONSPIRACY

Wellwater Conspiracy Transdreamer/Megalforce

Either current Pearl Jam (and ex-Soundgarden) drummer Matt Cameron has an extreme case of attention deficit disorder, or he's one of the most creative musicians playing these days. It's a question a simple spin through Wellwater Conspiracy's eponymous latest doesn't answer conclusively. WWC—the combination of Cameron and ex-Monster Magnet/Queens Of The Stone Age guitarist John McBain—traverse a wide variety of landscapes on their fifth offering. Witness the cracked, Beatles-esque melody of "Galaxy 265," which gives way to the '60s garage-psych via

Seattle Grunge City sludginess of "Sullen Glacier." Somewhere in the middle of the 11-song set is the Blue Man Group-flavored "Rebirth" and a tune, "Crow Revolt," that borrows from the New Orleans jazz-funk of the Meters. A sonic blender seems to be the point, since from the band's first release, the Cameron-McBain team has made their *raison d'être* to push the musical envelope—nothing on this release smacks of the drum-guitar wankery the band's pedigree suggests. Indeed, it's just the opposite. Throughout, Cameron and McBain play to the song and only step out when appropriate. For example, the eerie guitar solo on the Steely Dan-feeling "My Darker Bongo" fits squarely within the song's emotion. It's clear that Wellwater Conspiracy will continue to hack away at musical boundaries in search of something original. Thank God for that. >>>DAVID JOHN FARINELLA

Link

www.nowinvisible.com/wwc.html

File Under

Accessible experimentation

R.I.Y.L.

Soundgarden, Pebbles, channel surfing through classic-rock radio



YOU AM I

Deliverance SpinART

Rightfully stars in their native Australia since the early '90s, You Am I have perfected the loose, swaggering rock 'n' roll epitomized by British bands of the early '70s such as the Faces and the Rolling Stones. But there's nothing nostalgic or contrived about *Deliverance*, the band's sixth studio album: It's as loaded with bar-band exuberance as it is with well-crafted melodies, and the quartet plays with a reckless abandon that puts to shame most of the current spate of garage-rock pretenders. Guided by Tim Rogers' tuneful rasp (cf. Rod Stewart or Paul Westerberg), *Deliverance* is both a

fine starting place and an impressive addition to You Am I's catalog (and it's a mortal sin that none of the band's uniformly excellent previous albums is currently in-print domestically). *Deliverance* moves effortlessly from chiming, Byrdsy pop ("Ribbons And Bows"), to big riff rock ("Who Put The Devil In You") or waltzing acoustic soul ("Til The Clouds Roll Away"), and although the focus is on rocking and rolling guitars, organ, cello and piano occasionally sweeten the arrangements. "Well I gave up drinking for a whole half week/ To see how the story ended," Rogers declares to begin "One Trick Tony"; *Deliverance* is another boozy, scruffy chapter in You Am I's brilliant career. >>>STEVE KLINGE

Link

www.youami.net

File Under

Australian for rock 'n' roll

R.I.Y.L.

The Faces, the Replacements, the Libertines



WARREN ZEVON

The Wind Artemis

It's been well-publicized that *The Wind* is Warren Zevon's last will and testament. The Los Angeles-based songwriter, who hit his stride in the late 1970's with brilliant tales of twisted fuck-ups, was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer last year and retreated to the recording studio with a guest list that suggests a Rock And Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony more than a living wake. The inclusion of so many stars (Bruce Springsteen, Don Henley, Ry Cooder, Jackson Browne and Tom Petty, for starters) accurately testifies to Zevon's impact on his fellow musicians.

However, aside from guitarist David Lindley, who conjures up the fury of Zevon's mid-'70s work with his trademark lap steel during "Numb As A Statue," the only musicians making any notable impression here are Zevon and his longtime collaborator Jorge Calderon, who co-wrote seven of the tracks. (Springsteen sounds positively hoarse on "Disorder In The House.") "Please Stay," "Keep Me In Your Heart" and "Knockin' On Heaven's Door" are the expected moments of sentiment sung with no punches pulled; expectation doesn't mitigate the sadness, though. The smart-assed bad boy can be heard swaggering through "Dirty Life & Times," "The Rest Of The Night" and the electric 12-bar blues of "Rub Me Raw." At times like these, charged with this much life, Warren Zevon is actually saying good-bye. >>>ROB O'CONNOR

Link

www.warrenzevon.com

File Under

A modest last stand

R.I.Y.L.

Warren Zevon, Bob Dylan, Jackson Browne



Underage prostitutes in Mumbai, India. Virtually all were sold into the sex trade in very early adolescence.
Photo: Dayanita Singh

imagine

(you may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one)



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May '03 YEAR YEAR YEARS

Since 1978, the *CMJ New Music Report* has been the primary source for information and chart data on college, non-commercial and commercial alternative radio airplay.

CMJ

NEW MUSIC REPORT

TOP 75

#1 RADIOHEAD HAIL TO THE THIEF Capitol



1 RADIOHEAD Hail To The Thief Capitol	26 MELT-BANANA Cell Scape A-ZAP	51 TINDERSTICKS Waiting For The Moon Beggars Banquet
2 SUPER FURRY ANIMALS Phantom Power XL/Beggars Group	27 VENETTA RED Between The Never And The Now Epic	52 DEFTONES Deftones Maverick
3 THE MARS VOLTA De-Loused In The Comatorium GSL/Strummer/Universal	28 CLUB 8 Strangely Beautiful Parasol	53 THE TYDE Twice Rough Trade/Sanctuary
4 MOGWAI Happy Songs For Happy People Matador	29 JAY FARRAR Terroir Blues Act/Resist/Artemis	54 THE CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA Man With A Movie Camera Ninja Tune
5 GRANDDADDY Sunday Will-V2	30 THE AMERICAN ANALOG SET Promise Of Love Tiger Style	55 YEAR OF THE RABBIT Year Of The Rabbit Elektra
6 THE CLIENTELE The Violet Hour Merge	31 BLUR Think Tank Virgin	56 MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK I Am The Movie Epitaph
7 FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE Welcome Interstate Managers S-Curve/Virgin	32 KENNA New Sacred Cow Columbia	57 GILLIAN WELCH Soul Journey Acony
8 FIREWATER The Man On The Burning Tightrope Jetset	33 SWORDS PROJECT Entertainment Is Over If You Want It Arena Rock	58 S.T.U.N. Evolution Of Energy Interscope/Geffen
9 YEAH YEAH YEAHS Fever To Tell Interscope	34 KINGS OF LEON Youth And Young Manhood RCA	59 SAM ROBERTS We Were Born In A Flame Universal
10 THE DANDY WARHOLS Welcome To The College [EP] Capitol	35 THE LOCUST Plague Soundscapes Anti/Epitaph	60 YO LA TENGO Summer Sun Matador
11 BRITTA PHILLIPS AND DEAN WAREHAM L'Aventura Jetset	36 THE POLYPHONIC SPREE The Beginning Stages Of... Good/Hollywood	61 FROG EYES The Gordan River Global Symphonic/Animal World
12 TRICKY Vulnerable Sanctuary	37 CLEM SNIDE Soft Spot spinART	62 THE APPLESEED CAST Two Conversations Tiger Style
13 GUSTER Keep It Together Palm-Reprise	38 JUNIOR SENIOR D-D Don't Don't Stop The Beat Crunchy Frog	63 STATISTICS Statistics Jade Tree
14 MADLIB Shades Of Blue Madlib Invades Blue Note Blue Note	39 BEEHIVE AND THE BARRACUDAS In Dark Love Swami	64 STEADMAN Revive Elektra
15 ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES Take A Break Fat Wreck Chords	40 EELS Shootenanny! DreamWorks	65 TV ON THE RADIO Young Liars Touch And Go
16 BRAND NEW Deja Entendu Triple Crown/Razor And Tie	41 SUFJAN STEVENS Michigan Sounds Familyre/Asthmatic Kitty	66 MONIEEN Are We Really Happy With Who We Are Right Now? Vagrant
17 PINBACK Offcell Absolutely Kosher/Touch And Go	42 ANDREW BIRD Weather Systems Righteous Babe	67 POISON THE WELL Come Before You Velvet Hammer/Atlantic
18 THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS Electric Version Mint/Matador	43 TORA TORA TORRANCE A Cynic's Nightmare Militia Group	68 DENISON WITMER Recovered Fugitive
19 ROONEY Rooney Geffen/Interscope	44 THE WHITE STRIPES Elephant Third Man/V2	69 BRENDAN BENSON AND THE WELLFED BOYS Metare Startime International
20 THE BLACK EYED PEAS Elephunk A&M	45 ALKALINE TRIO Good Mourning Vagrant	70 LESS THAN JAKE Anthem Warner Bros.
21 DEATH IN VEGAS Scorpio Rising Sanctuary	46 AM RADIO Radioactive Elektra	71 JACK JOHNSON On And On Moonshine Conspiracy/Universal
22 DROPKICK MURPHYS Blackout Hellcat	47 UI Answers Southern	72 YELLOWCARD Ocean Avenue Capitol
23 FOUR TET Rounds Domino	48 JUANA MOLINA Segundo Domino	73 LEFTOVER SALMON/CRACKER D Cracker, Where Art Thou? Pitch A Tent
24 AMBULANCE LTD. Ambulance Ltd. [EP] TVT	49 METRIC Old World Underground, Where Are You Now? Everloving	74 VARIOUS ARTISTS Yes New York Wolfgang Morden
25 LIZ PHAIR Liz Phair Capitol	50 !!! Me And Gullah: Down By The Schoolyard (A True Story) [CD5] Touch And Go	75 SINGAPORE SLING The Curse Of Singapore Sling Stinky

5 YEARS AGO

BEASTIE BOYS *Hello Nasty* (Grand Royal/Capitol)
LIZ PHAIR *Whitechocolatespaceegg* (Matador/Capitol)
SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS *Perennial Favorites* (Mammoth)
BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE *Strung Out In Heaven* (TVT)
RASPUTINA *How We Quit The Forest* (Columbia)

10 YEARS AGO

SMASHING PUMPKINS *Siamese Dream* (Virgin)
URGE OVERKILL *Saturation* (Geffen)
MATTHEW SWEET *Altered Beast* (Zoo)
PAUL WESTERBERG *14 Songs* (Sire/Reprise)
BJÖRK *Debut* (Elektra)

HIP-HOP TOP 10

1	MADLIB Shades Of Blue Madlib Invades Blue Note Blue Note
2	BROTHER ALI Shadows On The Sun Rhymesayers
3	UGLY DUCKLING Taste The Secret Emperor Norton
4	PUSH BUTTON OBJECTS Ghetto Blaster Chocolate Industries
5	GANG STARR The Ownerz Noo Trybe/Virgin
6	AKROBATIK Balance Coup d'Etat
7	SOUL PURPOSE Breaking Records Coup d'Etat
8	THE BLACK EYED PEAS Elephunk A&M
9	WILDCHILD Secondary Protocol Stones Throw
10	LIFESAVAS Spirit In Stone Quannum



#1 HIP-HOP
MADLIB
SHADES OF BLUE: MADLIB INVADES
BLUE NOTE BLUE NOTE



#1 LOUD ROCK
TYPE O NEGATIVE
LIFE IS KILLING ME ROADRUNNER



#1 RETAIL
SOUNDTRACK
BAD BOYS II BAD BOY ENTERTAINMENT

LOUD ROCK TOP 10

1	TYPE O NEGATIVE Life Is Killing Me Roadrunner
2	BLACK DAHLIA MURDER Unhallowed Metal Blade
3	POISON THE WELL You Come Before You Velvet Hammer/Atlantic
4	NEVERMORE Enemies Of Reality Century Media
5	AS I LAY DYING Frail Words Collapse Metal Blade
6	ENTOMBED Inferno Music For Nations
7	HASTE The Mercury Lift Century Media
8	DARKEST HOUR Hidden Hands Of A Sadist Nation Victory
9	EVERY TIME I DIE Hot Damn! Ferret
10	DEFTONES Deftones Maverick

RETAIL TOP 25

1	SOUNDTRACK Bad Boys II Bad Boy Entertainment
2	CHINGY Jackpot Capitol
3	BEYONCE Dangerously In Love Columbia
4	RADIOHEAD Hail To The Thief Capitol
5	ASHANTI Chapter II Murder Inc./Def Jam
6	COLDPLAY A Rush Of Blood To The Head Capitol
7	THE WHITE STRIPES Elephant Third Man/V2
8	EVANESCENCE Fallen Wind-Up
9	THE MARS VOLTA De Loused In The Comatorium GSU/Strummer/Universal
10	MACY GRAY The Trouble With Being Myself Epic
11	ANNIE LENNOX Bare J
12	50 CENT Get Rich Or Die Trying Shady/Aftermath/Interscope
13	JACK JOHNSON On And On Moonshine Conspiracy/Universal
14	THE BLACK EYED PEAS Elephunk A&M
15	GUSTER Keep It Together Palm/Reprise
16	METALLICA St. Anger Elektra
17	NORAH JONES Come Away With Me Blue Note
18	LIZ PHAIR Liz Phair Capitol
19	THREE 6 MAFIA Da Unbreakables Hypnotized Minds
20	KEITH MURRAY He's Keith Murray Def Jam
21	MICHELLE BRANCH Hotel Paper Maverick
22	AUDIOSLAVE Audioslave Interscope/Epic
23	STAINED 14 Shades Of Gray Flip/Elektra
24	SEAN PAUL Dutty Rock VP/Atlantic
25	LINKIN PARK Metemora Warner Bros.

RPM TOP 10

1	LATIN PROJECT Nueva Musica Electric Monkey
2	AS ONE So Far (So Good) Ubiquity
3	SOUNDTRACK Rise: The Story Of Rave Outlaw Disco Donnie Utensil
4	EMO This Is My Home Stereo Deluxe
5	NICOLAS MATAR Sun Dance Journeys By DJ
6	POLE Pole Novamute/Mute
7	R. MYERZ AND THE J. HERREN BAND A Special Album Emperor Norton
8	FOUR TET Rounds Domino
9	BONOBO Dial M For Monkey Ninja Tune
10	DEATH IN VEGAS Scorpio Rising Sanctuary

JAZZ TOP 10

1	KEITH JARRETT/GARY PEACOCK/JACK DEJOHNETTE Up For It ECM
2	TED NASH Still Evolved Palmetto
3	GREG OSBY St. Louis Shoes Blue Note
4	WILLIAM PARKER VIOLIN TRIO Scrapbook Thirsty Ear
5	MCCOY TYNER Land Of Giants Telarc
6	PAT METHENY One Quiet Night Warner Bros.
7	EDDIE PALMIERI Ritmo Caliente Concord Picante
8	KENNY BURRELL Blue Muse Concord
9	ERIK TRUFFAZ The Walk Of The Giant Turtle Blue Note
10	JAVON JACKSON Easy Does It Palmetto

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NUMBER ONE GUN Celebrate Mistakes *Floodgate*
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MIRAH YOM TOV ZEITLYN, GINGER BROOKS
TAKAHASHI AND FRIENDS Songs From The Black Mountain Music Project *K*

AUGUST 26

ALEXISONFIRE Alexisonfire *Equal Vision*
ARCH ENEMY Anthems Of Rebellion *Century Media*
BRIGHT BLUE CALM Direct Approach For Casual Conversation *Level Plane*
CLEARLAKE Almost The Same EP *Domino*
CLIENT Client *Mute*
MANDO DIAO Bring 'Em In *Mute*
ENVY Dead Sinking Story *Level Plane*
GROWING Sky's Run Into The Sea *Kranky*
WAYNE HANCOCK Swingtime *Bloodshot*
HAVOC Our Rebellion Has Just Begun *Punkcore*
INSULT Emo Bashing Fastcore Pimps *Six Weeks*
LAST EMPERER Music, Magic, Myth *Raptivism-Ryk*
LOWER CLASS BRATS Clockwork Singles Collection *Punkcore*
MELOMANE Solressol *Vermillion*
T.S. MONK Higher Ground *Hyena*
NAPPY ROOTS Wooden Leather *Atlantic*
NOISEMAKER The Signal *Different Drummer*
OVERSEER Wreckage *Columbia*
PEPE DELUXE Beatitude *Emporer Norton*
RADIO 4 Electrify EP *Astralwerks*
RANCID Indestructible *Helicat*
SOUNDTRAK Soundtrak *Ace Fu*
STARS Heart *Arts And Crafts*
JIMMY STURR Let's Polka Round *Rounder*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Alan Lomax: Popular Songbook, Vol. 1 *Rounder*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Box Of The Blues *Rounder*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Uncorrupted Steel 2 *Metal Blade*
VAZ Dying To Meet You *Gold Standard Labs*
JOHNNY WINTER Johnny Winter; Second Winter (reissues) *Columbia-Legacy*

SEPTEMBER 2

BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB Take Them On, On Your Own *Virgin*
JEFF BUCKLEY Live At The Sin-E (Legacy Edition) *Columbia-Legacy*
THE BYRDS Sweetheart Of The Rodeo (Legacy Edition) *Columbia-Legacy*
DAVE DERBY Even Further Behind *Badman*
OOSH Dosh *Articon*
DYNASTY Dynasty *Tigerbeat 6*
GUIDED BY VOICES Get Out Of My Stations *Stiltbreeze*
INNOCENCE MISSION Befriended *Badman*
KNIFEHANDCHOP Rockstopper *Tigerbeat 6*
MIGHTY CASEY Original Rudloway *Traffic-Landspeed*
CHRIS MILLS Plays And Sings/Nobody's Favorite *Powerless Pop-Carrot Top*
MUDDY WATERS Muddy Mississippi Waters Live (Legacy Edition) *Columbia-Legacy*
NATIONAL Sad Songs For Dirty Lovers *Brassland*
RICHARD X Presents His X-Factor Volume One *Astralwerks*
SPOKEN A Moment Of Imperfect Clarity *Tooth And Nail*
STARS Heart *Arts And Crafts*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Alan Lomax: Blues Songbook, Vol. 1 *Rounder*
VARIOUS ARTISTS West Side Story *Sony Classical-Legacy*

SEPTEMBER 9

BRITISH SEA POWER The Decline Of British Sea Power *Rough Trade*
DAVID BYRNE Lead Us Not Into Temptation *Thrill Jockey*
NOAM CHOMSKY Emerging Framework Of World Power *Alternative Tentacles*
CLAN OF XYMOX Farewell *Metropolis*
DEADSTRING BROTHERS Deadstring Brothers *Times Beach*
ENON Hocus Pocus *Touch And Go*
FELIX DA HOUSECAT A Bugged Out Mix *Emporer Norton*
TONY FURTADO Live Gypsy *Dualtone*
GOSSIP Undead In NYC *Dim Mak*
HAROLD RAY LIVE IN CONCERT Harold Ray Live In Concert *Alternative Tentacles*
IRON AND WINE Sea And The Rhythm *Sub Pop*
LITHOPS Scrypt *Thrill Jockey*
MATTHEW HERBERT BIG BAND Swing Time *Accidental*
JOHN MAYER Heavier Things *Aware-Columbia*
NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS Polaris *Tone-Cool-ATO*
NOVAKILL Hard Tech For A Hard World *Metropolis*
PHANTOM LIMBS Displacement *Alternative Tentacles*
PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES The New Romance *Matador*
PRIDE AND FALL Nephesh *Metropolis*
QUASI Hot Shit *Touch And Go*
RASCO Escape From Alcatraz *Coup d'Etat*
SICK OF IT ALL Life On The Poles *Fat Wreck Chords*
SMALL BROWN BIKE The River Bed *Lookout!*
SO So *Thrill Jockey*



DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE: OCTOBER 7

SOUNDTRACK Lost In Translation *Emporer Norton*
TOWN AND COUNTRY 5 Thrill Jockey
JAMES BLOOD ULMER No Escape From The Blues: The Electric Lady Sessions *Hyena*
WRENS The Meadowlands *Absolutely Kosher*

SEPTEMBER 16

CARLA BOZULICH Red Headed Stranger *Dicristina Stair Builders*
CHEAP TRICK Essential Cheap Trick *Columbia-Legacy*
DRAG-ON Hell And Back *Virgin*
IMA ROBOT Ima Robot *Virgin*
MAHALIA JACKSON Essential Mahalia Jackson *Columbia-Legacy*
PAULA KELLEY The Trouble With Success Or How You Fit In The World *Kimchee*
KID BYNAMITE Cheap Shots, Youth Anthems *Jade Tree*
KING CREOSOTE Kenny And Beth's Musakal Boat Ridez *Domine*
KRIS KRISTOFFERSON Essential Krs Kristofferson *Columbia-Legacy*
SHELBY LYNNE Identity Crisis *Capitol*
MATES OF STATE Team Boo *Polygram*
STEVE MILLER BAND Young Hearts - Complete Greatest Hits *Capitol*
OKKERVIL RIVER Down The River Of Golden Dreams *Jagjaguwar*
A PERFECT CIRCLE Thirteenth Step *Virgin*
SAVES THE DAY In Reverie *Dreamworks-Vagrant*
CHALEE TENNISON Parading In The Rain *DreamWorks*
PROZACK TURNER Death, Taxes, And Prozack *DreamWorks*

SEPTEMBER 23

THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS The Singles 93-#3 *Astralwerks*
FINGER We Are Fuck You/Punk's Dead Let's Fuck One Little Indian
KINK/ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE Split *Sub Pop*
LAWRENCE ARMS The Greatest Story Ever Told *Fat Wreck Chords*
LEAVES Breathe *DreamWorks*
SONDRE LERCHE Don't Be Shallow EP *Astralwerks*
MAVERICKS Mavericks *Sanctuary*
MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO Storm: The Studio R.M.X.S. *Timu Corp.*
THELONIOUS MONK The Paris Concerts *Hyena*
NEAL MORSE Testimony *Metal Blade*
PEACHES Fatherfucker *XL-Beggars Group*

ROYKSOPP Spoiler *Wall Of Sound-Astralwerks*
SIX FEET UNDER Bringer Of Blood *Metal Blade*
SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE Live At The Fillmore East 1968 *Epic-Legacy*
SOUTH With The Tides *Kinetic*
STRING CHEESE INCIDENT Untying The Not *SCI Fidelity*
ROSIE THOMAS Only Laughter Can You Win *Sub Pop*
VARIOUS ARTISTS 10 Years Of Astralwerks *Astralwerks*
RUFUS WAINWRIGHT Want *DreamWorks*
DAVIO S. WARE Threads *Blue Serles*

SEPTEMBER 30

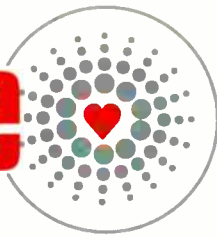
SCOTTY EMERICK The Coast Is Clear *DreamWorks*
IGGY POP Skull Ring *Virgin*
BONNIE RAITT The Best Of Bonnie Raitt *Capitol*
SOUNDTRACK SSX 3 *Astralwerks*
STRIKE ANYWHERE Exit English *Jade Tree*
THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH Phenomenon *Tooth And Nail*

OCTOBER 7

ATMOSPHERE Seven's Travels *Rhymesayers-Epiphany*
DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE Transatlanticism *Barsuk*
11TH DREAM DAY Prairie School Freakout *Thrill Jockey*
FALCONER The Sceptre Of Deception *Metal Blade*
HOWE GELB Ogle Some Piano *Ow-Ow*
JIN Almost Famous *Virgin*
MARIA My Soul *DreamWorks*
RIDE Waves *First Time*
VISHISS Mr. Holland's Opus *DreamWorks*
WILLIAM ELLIOTT WHITMORE Hymns For The Hopeless *Southern Classical-Legacy*

OCTOBER 14

ADEMA Unstable *Arista*
FROM ASHES RISE Nightmares *Jade Tree*
WANDA JACKSON Heart Trouble *CMH*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Just Because I'm A Woman *Sugar Hill*



Barry White

STORY: TOM MALLON • ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA

We're saying to chicken sandwich lovers everywhere that at Arby's, it's 'Love at First Bite' or your money back... nobody in the industry has taken this bold a stance with chicken."

That was Lloyd Fritzmeier, head marketing shill for Arby's, a restaurant I wouldn't have eaten in if I were starving, introducing their new line of sandwiches in 1998. That day, Lloyd hammered home the wedge that drove Barry White and I apart.

My relationship with Barry was complicated. A dumb college kid, I couldn't hope to understand this sophisticated older gentleman. Barry was exploring the mysteries of love; I was stuck on the mysteries of my navel. All I knew was that Barry White = sex, and sex = funny, and I ran with it.

Ran so far, in fact, that four days into college, I was already knee-deep in the first of an embarrassingly long line of joke funk bands. My friend Neil was Larry White, Barry's illegitimate white bass-playing brother, and I was Cleophus James, sideman extraordinaire. We took Barry's butter-smooth monologue style and mashed out a seven-minute slow jam, "Get On Top," and debased his upbeat moments in the Casio-synth-horn disaster "Mack That Ass." Crimes against music were being committed.

With each new song, I felt more like Judas. Secretly I was growing to love Barry's never-self-conscious love jams, but publicly I mocked his entire legacy. Under cover of darkness I wore out a dusty used-bin copy of *Stone Gon'*; with the rest of "the band" I jacked his beats for wah-drenched porno songs like "Theme From Hoedown: The Movie."

And then, just as my respect for Barry was about to outgrow my inability to keep a straight face at titles like "I'm Qualified To Satisfy You," along came Lloyd. And with him, Appetite Man.

That was the day that Barry, presumably spurred by a raft full of greenbacks and a "Free Arby's For Life" card, started making sport of himself. Appetite Man was to Barry what Chef is to Isaac Hayes—an obnoxious, if hilarious, caricature. But where Chef was offering his chocolate salty balls, Barry had a different confection to put in your mouth: the Chicken Bacon 'N Swiss.

The theme was "give in to your adult tastes," and they had

picked the right spokesman. Over a bed of smooth, creamy soul, and even creamier chicken, Barry promised "true satisfaction." And rightly so—this man was qualified to satisfy you. With each new ad, Barry began to work his magic, assuaging my every Arby's-related doubt.

"Cluck, cluck, baby," Barry intoned, as the lazy, sensuous camera movements brought the Chicken Bacon 'N Swiss into focus. The sandwich sat proudly on its plate, stacked high as Mt. Everest, the lavish spread of Swiss cascading down its sides in an avalanche of fromage. The chicken glistened, bacon sitting proudly atop it. Sure it was from Arby's, but if Barry endorsed it, it must be good, right?

After the next ad, in which Barry's disembodied voice appeared as a young man's id, urging him to salivatory new chicken-related heights, the die was cast. In a daze, I found myself at the Arby's counter, money pouring from my wallet, a string crescendo arching in my head... before they slapped the sorriest sandwich I have ever seen on my plate.

There was chicken, there was bacon, and yes, there was Swiss, but this was no Everest. This was a speed bump. Still, I remembered Barry's words: He was qualified to satisfy. Down the hatch.

The strings collapsed in a violent discord. Love at first bite? Bone-dry chicken, chewy bacon, Swiss that failed to cascade in any way whatsoever—who issued Barry's satisfaction certification, anyway?

Half the sandwich tossed away, I trudged home, cursing Barry's memory. That night he had his last, bassy laugh. Some form of Arby's-inspired Montezuma's Revenge—White's Blight, perhaps?—gripped me, and I entered a long, dark night of the soul. (Or intestine.)

Barry and I, thanks to Arby's, were never to be the same. I put my trust in him, and he let me down. He sold me out. He...

...just passed away in the middle of my writing this article. Well, that's awkward.

This was going to end frivolously, with a few laughs about the perils of fast food and how I learned to appreciate Barry for real down the line. Death changes everything: Now I have to establish some sort of profound connection between the death of a pop-culture icon, master of a genre, even, and a fucking sandwich. So here goes.

With that sandwich, Barry taught me about love, about the promise of "true satisfaction." There ain't no true satisfaction, baby. Sometimes love might look pretty, but just because it's topped with crispy bacon floating on a sumptuous bed of Swiss doesn't mean it can't leave a bad taste in your mouth. Love—like Arby's—is always a gamble. Maybe you'll leave satisfied, maybe you'll get botulism. Either way, you're gonna go sometime, so you may as well clean your plate. R.I.P., big guy.

Tom Mallon is Assistant Editor at CMJ New Music Monthly and sincerely hopes no one still has copies of any of the music mentioned in this article.





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