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## ON THE COVER ANI DIFRANCO

"Most people like to write the story of the young entrepreneur something, which is a little distasteful to me, but it very rarely comes down to what I actually do." What she actually does is all she wants to do: play music for people. Story by Scott Frampton.

## FEATURES - LOVE YOU LIVE IMPERIAL TEEN

"We didn't write as long as it took for this record to come out. We've done a lot of waiting." Three years after a critically lauded debut, the boy-girl-boy-girl band finds that the waiting is the hardest part. Story by Kurt B. Reighley.

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"I feel like I've done that part of my life, getting things down exactly as they happen. Now I want to spend a little more time crafting things." At the ripe old age of 20, the Aussie singer/songwriter gets serious with his meticulous third solo album. Story by David Daley.

## THE NEW BRITISH INVASION: PAUL OAKENFOLD AND CARL COX

Two top UK DJs are looking to turn the US DJ culture renaissance into a revolution.

"My personality goes hand in hand with what I play, with why people are going bananas," says Carl Cox. "I'm going crazy when I'm on the decks." William Werde gets the spin from the DJ famous for his triple-turntable technique.

"I don't have to come to America and try to break the door down for the British underground sound. I could make a lot more money being in Europe, or traveling in Asia," explains Paul Oakenfold. "But I want to play in America." M. Tye Comer catches the rave pioneer on his exploration of the new world.

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Got live if you want it: 44 bands in 4 pages.

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COMMENTS



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style**

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## The Mayor Of Simpleton

Been buying your 'zine since what now seems like the Big Bang, love it, crap, crap, crap, hate it, yada, yada, and so on and so forth. IMPORTANT PART: This can be construed as a warning—if you don't put XTC on your cover when their loooooong-awaited new album comes out next year, I will sulk like a child till wayyyyy past my bedtime. If XTC doesn't make 'Best New Mus.c.' I will launch a golden shower assault upon my pants and hang out in the CMJ staff rooms, effectively upsetting at least someone, for some time. If, however, there is no mention of XTC at all in any way (which we all know could never happen, nudge, wink), I will encourage every man, woman, child and beast I can to defecate freely on any or all of my back issues and from then on, proceed to spit in the direction of all passing magazine stores. Oh, and will make grandiose threats to never buy that shitty CMJ ever again. Hi, I'm Canadian.

Carl  
 lightbody@mailexcite.com  
 p.s. I'd love to have you folks over for cocktails and dulse.

*The outpouring of Carl's bellicose bladder wouldn't make for the first disturbing discovery in the CMJ men's room. But executive stall-talkers and undeleted downloads aside, I feel prouder than Neville Chamberlain pointing Carl and the rest of our readers to our XTC story on page 9. We'll be by to collect our drinks and edible sea algae once the UN inspectors can verify that all Carl's bodily functions and fluids are for peaceful, civilian use only.* —Ed.

## Canada goosed

Excellent mag, folks. I'm writing in response to Joe's letter in the November issue. As one of the "Canadianese" Joe speaks of, I must say that I agree, on the whole our correspondence is boring (though, unlike Joe's, it is usually very literate). Unfortunately, I have to disagree about ignoring Canadian artists. We aren't upset that Americans ignore Canadian artists, we're upset that you ignore the wrong Canadian artists. People like Mariah Carey and the Barenaked Ladies are a constant irritation to the Canadian people. Ignore them. Concentrate your attention, instead, on Our Lady Peace, the Tea Party, the Tragically Hip, Big Sugar, and so on. You got it right by reviewing Sloan, but they're pretty mainstream up here. More later, when Dave Foley's comments need to be reinforced.

August C. Bourre  
 thepop88@t.otmail.com

*Mariah Carey is from Long Island, not Canada, though the two places have often been linked as inexhaustible resources of the famed mullet haircut. (Joey Buttafuccho, meet*

*the National Hockey League.) While it is not the place of the CMJ New Music Monthly staff to comment on Mariah Carey and her midriff bearing ways as a possible irritation to the Canadian people, the vacuols pop chanteuse August is most likely thinking of is Celine Dion, she of the phonetic English, lawn-dart physique and currently-playing-in-the-elevator-to-Hell pop radio ubiquity "My Heart Will Go On." —Ed.*

## Takin' care of business

I am Canadian but I tend to agree with Joe (Letters, Nov. 98). Canadians should stop complaining about Canadian bands not getting enough coverage in the States for the simple reason: Canadian bands kinda suck. They do. It's just a fact and I think we should just accept that after BTO, the well ran dry. But it's not our fault, there is a golden ration which states that the number of good bands a nation can produce is directly proportionate to the size of the population. And Canada doesn't have that many people despite its land mass. So it's unfortunate, but not surprising, mediocre artists like Celine Dion, Bryan Adams, Sloan, Tragically Hip, 54\*40, Loverboy, Ashley MacIsaac, Nomeansno, Leonard Cohen, SNFU, Sarah McLachlan, Joni Mitchell, DOA, Skinny Puppy, Bruce Cockburn, Frontline Assembly, Alanis Morissette and Neil Young have scarcely been heard outside their own country. Much less been given the chance to scale the charts or make any kind of impact on the international music scene. It's a shame no one outside of Canada will have a chance to hear any of these artists because these are some of the good ones. Never mind the ones that really suck.

Jake  
 Somewhere on the left side of Canada

*You get the feeling that Jake is trying to trying a little too hard to make up for his countrywoman Alanis Morissette's lack of understanding of the meaning of irony? —Ed., who thinks finding a fly in your Chardonnay would be ironic only to David Cronenberg, who is, by the way, another fine Canadian.*

## Open mic night

The December 1998 issue of *CMJ New Music Monthly* was just candy. One question though: When did Henry Rollins morph into Denis Leary?

Tom  
 sigmabeta953@yahoo.com

*If you'd been walking around with your former band's symbol tattooed to the back of your neck and there was a persistent rumor that at any moment you were about to launch out of the closet like a Murphy bed, you might want to start yucking it up a bit yourself.* —Ed



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L-R: Partridge, Moulding

## The Seven Years War

**XTC** ends its strike with a revealing book, a four-CD set of live BBC recordings and a new studio album.

Story: Steve Ciabattoni  
Photo: Johnny Guinta

After the success of 1992's *Nonsuch*, XTC went to Virgin Records (its home in the UK) and pitched ideas for new projects and asked if it couldn't have a better contract, please. After all, the band had been with the label longer than Richard Branson! Virgin yawned and XTC went on strike for five years.

"I thought, 'We'll just keep stockpiling [songs] and they're gonna let us go one day,'" says chief songwriter Andy Partridge.

"The worst thing," says Colin Moulding, "was they had some of Andy's songs. They were going to use that as a bargaining position to get what they could before we left."

"Everyone said, 'This is the end of you, everyone's gonna forget you,'" says Partridge. "'You'll never get a record deal because no one will be interested in a has-been band.'"

Not making records left time for Partridge, Moulding and bandmate Dave Gregory to chat with journalist Neville Farmer for his book *Song Stories*, an XTC fetishist's delight, loaded

with interviews that get to the bones of every XTC song ("Pink Thing" is about Andy's penis and his son, for those who care). "Neville has this thing where he tries to belittle you in a way," says the soft-spoken Moulding. "A lot of the song titles we discussed with him in a positive way and he'd wrap it up in a negative way," he says, later flipping through the book to point out a backhanded phrase.

"I like the fact that it's sort of beautifully flawed," says Partridge, explaining that none of the interviews were airbrushed. "And there's a few surprises," he continues. "Because you think, 'Blimey! Did Dave really think that?'"

Partridge took another dive into the past when the BBC sent over tapes that would make up *Transistor Blast* (TVT), a four-CD collection of live performances, including a complete 1980 concert. "Enough time—enough phlegm—has gone under the bridge to listen to this old naïve, energy-packed stuff," says

(Continued on page 10)



(Continued from page 9)

Partridge. "I kind of enjoyed it. There was something kind of thrilling in the sort of playful violence of it all—exhilarating in a kind of idiot way."

Other things filling Partridge's time during the strike were an illness, a burst eardrum and a bitter divorce. XTC finally inked a new deal and began recording *Apple Venus Vol. 1* (due in February on TVT), but there were to be two more casualties. Producer Hayden Bendall couldn't finish the project and waved goodbye, and Dave Gregory decided he'd had enough of not having enough input and left the band. The album was finished by Partridge and Moulding using everything from Colin's front room to Abbey Road Studios.

"With this record there was a kind of air of middle-aged desperation," says Partridge. The long struggle and the pressure of not having made a record for years had its impact. "There was a greater expectation [for me] building up to doing *Apple Venus* than there was building up to the very first album that we did," says Partridge, clenching his teeth to drive the point home.

*Apple Venus* is primarily acoustic and seasoned with orchestrations that recall the highlights of *Nonsuch* and *Skylarking*, though somehow more modest and more ambitious at the same time. The "push your car from of the road" nursery rhyme "River Of Orchids" is a clever crisscross of three cyclical melodies that comes off like Philip Glass writing pop tunes. "I think the record is going to surprise people," says Partridge. "They'll probably think it's really middle-of-the-road or dead square."

No one, however, could consider "Your Dictionary" a middle-of-the-road song. For all the bile Partridge has for his former label and the music business in general ("It's the devil's asshole of an industry," he says with an all-too-knowing grin), it's nothing compared to the venom spilled in the song towards his ex-wife. "It was written in a real rage when I was a cuckolded husband," he notes bluntly. "I believed in it for five minutes, but when I got a bit happier about the situation I began to feel a bit embarrassed by the lyrics thinking, 'Oh, that's a bit petulant.'" The unflinching ditty makes "How Do You Sleep?" (the Lennon swipe at McCartney) sound like "Wind Beneath My Wings." Choice lyric: "F-U-C-K, is that how you spell friend in your dictionary?" Partridge continues, "My relationship with my ex-wife is not great but I know when she hears this—the shit's really gonna fly."

## Meltdown



Country-styled chanteuse **EDITH FROST** heats up on her new *Telescopic*.

If Patsy Cline had lived longer, it wouldn't be difficult to imagine her today, trading nights of sumptuous standards with Bobby Short at New York's elegant Carlyle Hotel. As recently released live recordings of Cline have revealed, despite her hard life and hard living, she was less a hardcore honkytonk gal than a wondrous pop stylist.

Chicago chanteuse Edith Frost gets colored with the country brush as well, and the sad songs and influx of steel guitar on her gorgeous new album *Telescopic* (Drag City) probably won't help dispel such typecasting.

"I like it when people compare me to freaks like Syd Barrett," says Frost, sipping coffee at New York's hipster haven Limbo. "There's a lot of elements I want to put into my music that can't be summed up by saying 'country.' I love it, but I'm not trying to make a straight-up country record, or any kind of record at all. I don't want to be able to peg it to any one genre. I mean, the first band I ever flipped out over was the Carpenters. I kind of dig those cheesy layered vocals."

Where Frost single-tracked her vocals on her sparse, sorrowful debut *Calling Over Time*, *Telescopic* dresses up her dew-eyed, downbeat songs and luxuriates with harmonies and beautifully simple vocal melodies.

"We spent the same amount of time making it—six days—but we just had a different approach this time," she says. "We couldn't make another record that was more stark. I wanted to do something full-on. Also, we were recording it with a different combination of people, and we weren't in Chicago."

Instead, Frost and her band sequestered themselves in Warrenton, Virginia, about an hour outside Washington, DC, home to elusive producers Adam and Eve—actually Neil Hogerty and Jennifer Herrama of Royal Trux—and really concentrated on the songs. The solitude was necessary after the last album. Frost had just moved from Brooklyn to Chicago then, to start over after a difficult divorce. Time has eased her pain somewhat, judging by her new songs. There are more tunes about moving on and forgiveness here, even playful tunes like "Bluish Balls" and the warily hopeful "Falling." Still, it's the saddest songs that seem closest to Frost's heart, the beautifully chilling ones pulled from real pain.

"I want to pick at the scabs, and most people don't like to do that," she says. "But writing is hard. I just try to get it as best I can. A lot of them seem transparently simple to me. I read other people's lyrics that are so out there, and take you to a whole other dimension. They can take themselves out of their own experience and write these crazy, cool things. I'd love to do that—if I could just do some exercises to channel some more writerly writer than myself." >>>David Dalay



ALEXIS WILSON







## Do The Bakabaka

Photo: Jeffery M. Hayes

With *D*, **TARIKA** revives the dance sound of '70s Madagascar.

One and a half times the size of California, Madagascar is one of the biggest islands in the world, lying off the east coast of Africa. Its population originally came from Polynesia and Africa. Slaves were brought to and taken from Madagascar. And it has some of the most fascinating music you'll hear anywhere, a melange that brings to mind Africa, Indonesia, Polynesia, and even South America—often all at the same time. This fusion is exemplified by Tarika (which translates, simply, as 'the group'). On its new album, *D* (Green Linnet), Tarika reworks old Malagasy 45s from the '70s, as well as adding a handful of originals.

"There are so many styles, and they're all different," explains leader Hanitra (pronounced 'ansch'), who sings and plays percussion. "It's because of the different origins of the people and the way we all evolved in different corners of Madagascar. The styles I've taken on the album are the most recognizable, the best known. I'm just scratching the surface. I've even invented a dance of my own, the bakabaka, which we're going to launch in Madagascar."

Making the album was a real labor of love for the band, which includes Nero on vocals and percussion; Ny Ony on guitars, vocals, and bass; Solo on bass, vocals, and percussion; and Donné on the marovany (a kind of zither), valiha (the Malagasy harp), melodeon, and vocals.

"I realized that these great dance tunes were no longer on the radio or on record," says Hanitra, "and they reminded me of my youth, and they were great. In the space of a month I learned 35 songs, the words and structure, and I thought about the arrangements. We played them all on stage last summer, and the ones that got the best response everywhere became our choice." Even so, it was probably inevitable that *D* wouldn't consist entirely of covers. "I write music all the time," she continues. "I was finding other rhythms within me, and I wanted to put them in there. I think I'm going to have to do dance workshops to show how all these dances go. On this record alone, there are 12 different dances, and it's not like salsa, where you only have one step to learn."

Over the course of the last six years, Tarika's music has grown in complexity and stature. Its last album, *Son Egal*, was decidedly political. Was this a deliberate change?

"I didn't think of it like that, but that's how it happened," answers Hanitra. "Son Egal got a lot of people thinking. *D* is for dancing, it's a lighter thing, although it still has two or three political songs. I can never escape that." >>>Chris Nickson

## Label Profile

In 1989, Phillippe Lehman—Parisian funk collector and DJ—made a collection of his rarest, funkier 45s on an



LP for a party. The record was so well received that he (and a partner) started the label Pure to reissue similarly obscure classics. When Phillippe moved to New York in 1995, he and former Pure customer Gabriel Roth produced an album by the Soul Providers featuring '70s funkster Lee Fields. Pleased with the album, the two incorporated as Desco to carry on the reissuing tradition of Pure and to add new production credits. "No bullshit, rough-and-heavy funk, in the vein of '68 or '69," says Phillippe, when asked to describe his label's music. "The shit we'd buy in a store." Today Desco boasts artists including the Other Side, Nino Nardini, Sharon Jones, Lee Fields, the Daktaris, the Whitfield Brothers, Sugarman Three and others, all of which sport more funk than a week's worth of gym laundry. *Spike's Choice*, a collection of 22 singles, is a great starting point for the uninitiated and is a veritable *tour de funk* of Desco's best.

## Weird Record Of The Month



Wish you paid more attention in American History 101? No time to read, but you're dying to brush up on Civil War lore? Kill (or shall we say assassinate?)

both birds with one stone with *Songs And Ballads Of American History And Of The Assassination of Presidents* (reissued by Rounder). One in a series of 71 releases from the Library of Congress's Archive of Folk Culture, the record offers historical perspectives—passed on in the rich oral tradition of folk song—on Civil War battles and the assassinations of Presidents McKinley, Garfield and Lincoln, and one on the greatness of George Washington. Packaged with an illustrated booklet that includes lyrics and historical context, *Songs And Ballads* won't be storming anyone's Top 40, but its gritty picking and gravelly voices warmly recall a time when the events of the day were chronicled in song.



**LIFE'S RICH PAGEANT** 

Elephant 6 affiliate **OF MONTREAL** goes from *A Petite Tragedy* to *The Gay Parade*.

Of Montreal is a troupe of eloquent misfits, musical storytellers who play with classic pop, bouncy rock and an occasional skills shuffle, infusing it all with pure personality. It's a description that also fits the Kinks on *The Village Green Preservation Society*, and the similarities are not lost on Of Montreal's Derek Almstead, who had this to say about his band's upcoming work: "It's called *The Gay Parade*, and it's this parade of wacky characters—all the songs are character studies, like *Village Green*. I wouldn't say it's psychedelic, because there's not a lot of [makes "wah-wah-wah" sound] crazy electronic stuff. But it's more whacked-out, crazy sounds. Lots of bells and whistles."

Almstead and his band hail from Athens, Georgia, and are part of the ubiquitous Elephant 6 band collective (that includes Neutral Milk Hotel, Olivia Tremor Control, Apples in Stereo and countless other like-minded musicians). Like those bands, Of Montreal creates freaked-out pop masterpieces, albums that work both as collections of songs and as containers for umbrella narratives. You can hear the Elephant 6 in the band's sound, but it distinguishes itself in its affection for a clear, undistorted delivery.

The band's most recent album, *The Beanie Drama: A Petite Tragedy* (Kindercare), tells a simple story of the arc of a romance. Explains Almstead, "In general what's happened so far is that a couple of songs will appear and—a leap—with *A Petite Tragedy*, Kevin [Barnes] wrote a couple of songs and he noticed a general theme. There was obviously something going on in his head that he noticed, and he wanted to fill in the gaps. The same thing happened with the new one. There were a couple character songs that we had and then we got the idea that it would be fun to make it this extravaganza of characters."

Expect *The Gay Parade* to appear in early spring on **Bar/None Records**.

>>>Randall Roberts



KEVIN WILLES

**IN MY ROOM:**  
**ROYAL CROWN REVUE**  
James Achor



**Various Artists**  
*Beg, Scream & Shout: The Big Ol' Box Of '60s Soul*

**James Ellroy**  
(book) *American Tabloid*

**Various Artists**  
*Star-Volt Singles 1955-1968*

**The Clash**  
*London Calling*

(film) *Touch Of Evil*

**JESUS LIZARD**  
Duane Denison



**Song On A Can**  
*Industry*

**Guillermo Gomez-Pena**  
(book) *The New World Border*

**Marc Ribot**  
*Marc Ribot Y Los Cubanos Postizos*

**Mike Davis**  
(book) *City Of Quartz*

*Esquima & Inuit Songs*

**GRAVITY KILLS**  
Jeff Scheel



**TWA Aviator**  
(in-flight magazine)

**Pitchbiter**  
[www.pitchbiters.com](http://www.pitchbiters.com)

**Massive Attack**  
*Mezzanine*

(film) *A Perfect Murder*

**Gary Numan**  
*Exile*







DAWNY CLINCH

## Q&A

### Vic Chesnutt

On Vic Chesnutt's latest record, *The Salesman And Bernadette*, his backing band is Lambchop★, the 13-piece (give or take a few) Nashville orchestra, consisting of guitars, strings, horns, vibes and countless other instruments, that has its own records out on Merge. Chesnutt's album was recorded on five consecutive weekends in Nashville, and also features Emmylou Harris on the wonderful "Woodrow Wilson." The record is Chesnutt's first for Capricorn Records after leaving Capitol. >>>Randall Roberts

**Q: Do you think that recording only on weekends creates a different sort of vibe?**

**A:** All those guys work. Me, I don't. I'm a bum, so it doesn't matter to me. Every day's a weekend for me. Or every day's a workday, basically. Rock 'n' roll never sleeps. Here it is a Saturday, and I'm working. For them it was good. They get off work for the weekend and get to play. It was very loose. We had lots of snacks to eat, lots of good beers to drink—it was really fun. And we wanted to have fun. We didn't want to do the songs a thousand times. And a lot of times we would play the songs different ways. We were like, 'Okay, that was a good take. Let's do it really slow now.' Just for fun. Sometimes the slow version was great.

**Q: How did you introduce your songs to such a large group?**

**A:** Before we started in the studio, for a day or two I would just sit there with my guitar and play and they'd listen to it and, not jam along, really—just listen to it. And then I made them a tape, of course, and sent them a tape of all the songs, and Paul Niehaus, the steel player and guitar player, wrote out a chart for everybody. They just had this chart, not like a chart with notes written on it, but just the chord structure, so everybody would know the structure of the song, and then we just kinda got together and played.

**Q: I'm completely intrigued by the idea of you harnessing the energy of such a large band.**

**A:** They're such good friends of mine, and they're such real people. They're very sweet and funny. They kind of wrapped around me like a blanket. It was really easy to do, very, very easy. And that's what I wanted for this record. I wasn't thinking, "Oh Capitol, I've gotta make a really slick record." I just was like, "I want to have some fun and do a little number."

**Q: You said that you picked songs that you thought would work well with Lambchop. What kind of song works well with Lambchop?**

**A:** [Laughs] That's a funny thing. Songs with room for the horns to play parts. On their new record [*What Another Man Spills*] they were into this soul thing, and so I really wanted to exploit that—little parts for horns to do their thing. Also, I wanted to exploit the old Lambchop-y feel, too—the atmospheric, cinematic mess that they do so well.

**Q: It's strange to hear Emmylou Harris harmonize the words, "Once he had his picture taken with Adam Clayton Powell."**

**A:** I was worried that she would think it was a stupid song. Some people don't understand that song. But she said she loved it. And I told her, "I know it's a strange song, and I just hope you like it." And she said, "Normal is only a cycle on the washing machine." And I was like, "God, now that is a tattoo." I'm going to tattoo that on my privates. Or right across my forehead.

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### SIDE ONE:

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Caught a Lite Sneeze  
TRANQUILITY BASS  
We All Want to Be Free  
BECK  
Fume  
PJ HARVEY  
One Time Too Many  
RAMMSTEIN  
Fierate Mich  
CORNERSHOP  
Funky Days are Back  
Again  
CIBO MATTO  
Birthday Cake  
BRATMOBILE  
Juswanna  
BEN FOLDS FIVE  
Missing the War  
DANDY WARHOLS  
Hard On For Jesus  
DEFTONES  
mx  
BJÖRK  
I Miss You

### SIDE TWO:

DJ SHADOW  
Stem/Long Stem  
GARBAGE  
Hammering In My Head  
DUNCAN SHEIK  
Wishful Thinking  
HOLE  
Gutless  
ANI DIFRANCO  
Shy  
RAGE AGAINST THE  
MACHINE  
Vietnow  
FREEDY JOHNSTON  
Evie's Garden  
EORN  
Good God  
ELASTICA  
Hold Me Now  
NINE INCH NAILS  
Sin  
SEBADOH  
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L7  
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SLEATER-KINNEY  
Dance Song '97

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## RANDOM QUOTES

"They refused to carry it, yeah, but I don't think they carried our last album either. And to be honest with you, **I don't think Wal-Mart's a place where people should buy music anyway.** Kids go to record stores. [Wal-Mart]'s like a place where people that live in trailer parks go to buy their toiletries."  
—*Marilyn Manson, on the beautiful people*

"**It's kind of a nice paradigm, or not paradigm... paradox.** There's a better word for it. I forget the word. It was in my head. It does start with a 'p,' but I forgot what it was."  
—*Courtney Love, on word-play*

"**I never really got a chance to enjoy my so-called success,** so the B-boy that spawned me was buried under the brain, and it wanted to break out. When he broke out, all my childhood shit broke out with me, so instead of being fucking 28, I became 18, and then from 18, I flashed back to being eight. So, it's like I'm becoming three ages at one time."  
—*The Wu-Tang Clan's RZA, on quantum leaps*

## TOURS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

**20,000 Leagues Tour:** Whale, Phish, Shark Quest, Seahorses, Reel Big Fish, An Emotional Fish, Jellyfish, Country Joe And The Fish, Starfish, Eels, Seaweed, Scuba Divers, Submarine, Moby.

## GIVE UP THE FUNQUE

Parisian duo **CASSIUS** grooves into the US with *1999*.

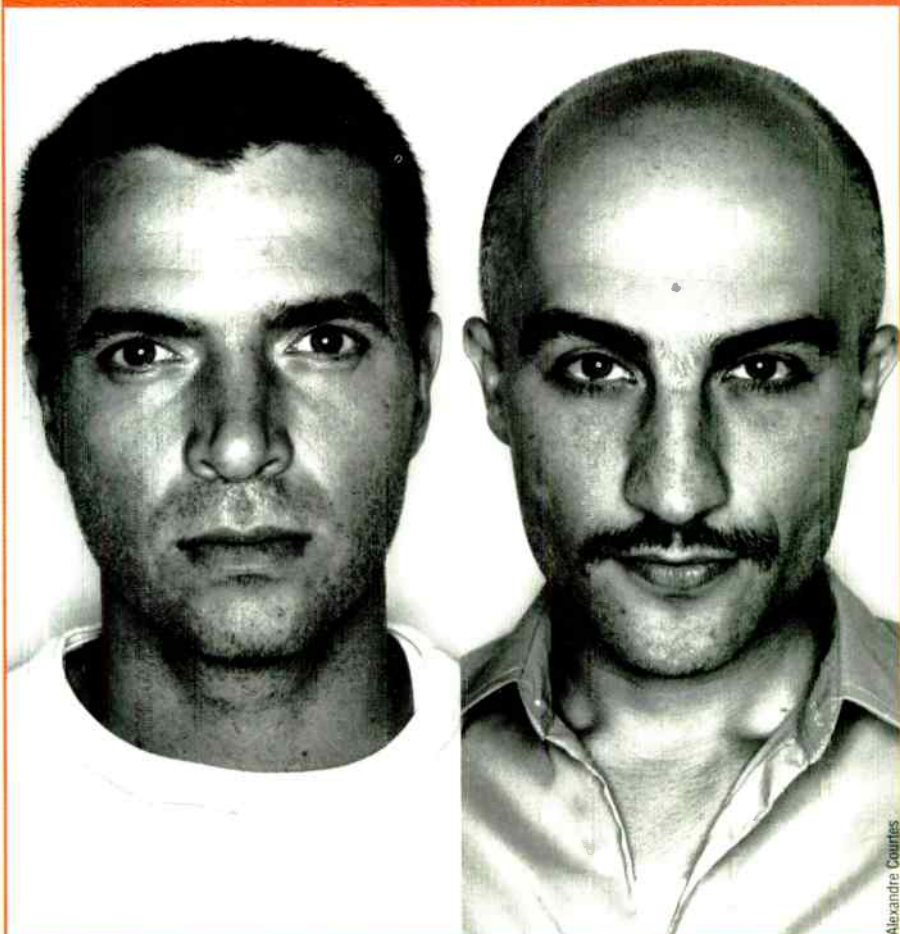
It's a few hours before Cassius will get the crowd at Twilo—Manhattan's dancefloor of the moment for international house and techno stars—grooving to a style of funk-driven French house reminiscent of that plied by their countrymen, and tonight's co-stars, Daft Punk. Philippe Zdar and Boombass (Hubert Blanc-Francard), who comprise Cassius, have a formula they call the "Cassius Mix": Philippe on the turntables and Boombass working a sampler. And they couldn't be happier with where it's led them.

"We are really excited," says Philippe in a thick French accent. "It's with friends. We do a lot of things with Daft Punk. We're all in our twenties, and this is like the tenth time we've done something together in another country. It's like a holiday. When I was in New York City for the first time, I went to Sound Factory, which is now Twilo. I never would have thought that one day I'd come back to play."

The pair has been together in one form or another since 1993, releasing laid-back, hip-hop oriented singles with French rapper MC Solaar, and as Motorbass and La Funk Mob. As Cassius, they hope to follow in the footsteps of Daft Punk in another regard: releasing a successful dance album. The duo's *1999* (Astralwerks) ranges from house to hip-hop, but the dominant element is the funk—guitar samples, drum ticks with attitude and soulful vocals—dripping from each track like honey from a hive.

"For us, it's the following of funk. It's funk from the future. 'New Funk.'" says Philippe, who was a huge fan of James Brown growing up. "It's 1999, 2000. So we're not playing with drums or things like this. But we're still going in the same directions."

>>>William Werde



L-R: Zdar, Boombass

Alexandre Courtes



**SLEATER-KINNEY**

The Hot Rock

Kill Rock Stars

Despite its title, Sleater-Kinney's fourth CD doesn't have a tune like *Dig Me Out's* "Words And Guitar" or *Call The Doctor's* "I Wanna Be Your Joey Ramone"—a tune explicitly worded, so that there may be no confusion, to convey the sense that whatever gender-specific socio-political baggage one may wish to attach to this band, Sleater-Kinney is first and foremost a guitar-driven rock group, working diligently within the boundaries of the punk tradition. The new disc's title cut, "The Hot Rock," is actually about a stolen diamond. Which proves, if nothing else, that Sleater-Kinney possesses a sly, self-aware sense of humor. Like the boys in Rancid, the three women in Sleater-Kinney (singer/guitarists Carrie Brownstein and Corin Tucker plus drummer Janet Weiss) seem blissfully unaware that there are people out there who believe the '90s underground rock insurgency is dead, that the guitar is an anachronism, that punk is over again. And so, on *The Hot Rock*, Brownstein and Tucker simply go about their business—urgently twisting barbed guitars around each other's spirited voice—while Weiss pounds out a brisk backbeat, singing about love and loneliness, sorrow and joy, adding a nice touch of cello to a get-well-card ballad ("The Size Of Our Love"), and just generally sounding like one of the most inspired and inspiring rock bands around.

>>>Matt Ashare



**OUT:** February 23.

**FILE UNDER:**

Women who rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Bikini Kill, Hole, Unwound.

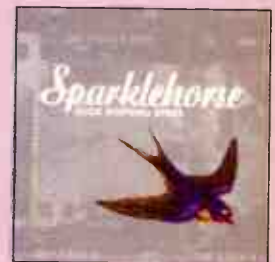
**SPARKLEHORSE**

Good Morning Spider

Capitol

Sparklehorse mastermind Mark Linkous has a good excuse for the long delay between 1995's brilliantly moody *Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot* and its follow-up, *Good Morning Spider: He was dead*. After flat-lining for two minutes, Linkous spent months recouping in a London hospital (acknowledged here in "St. Mary's") and in a wheelchair, which gives biographical credence to the imagery and titles of songs like "Painbirds" and the "Now I lay me down to sleep" opening of "Come On In." Not that there's any need to psychoanalyze this amazing and complex album; it's enough to marvel at its strange beauty. Like *Vivadixie* but with even stronger songcraft, *Good Morning Spider* has, but doesn't suffer from, a bipolar disorder. Most of the songs waltz slowly with quiet fragility, with whispered and slightly distorted vocals atop acoustic strums colored occasionally with cello or sparse keyboards and random noise bursts, but a few tracks, including the disorienting opener "Pig," rave-up with Stooges-like abandon, with snarled and distorted vocals atop metallic riffs. The juxtaposition highlights the delicacy of the one and the energy of the other—and the tracks that verge on "normal" pop, particularly "Sick Of Goodbyes" (co-written by Cracker's David Lowery) and the sweetly psychedelic "Sunshine," dazzle against the polarized background. It's music worth living for.

>>>Steve Klinge



**OUT:** February 9.

**FILE UNDER:**

Resurrection blues.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Cracker, Richard Buckner, Tom Waits.

**BONNIE PRINCE BILLY**

I See A Darkness

Palace

Will Oldham's latest moniker sounds upbeat, but don't worry, song titles like "Darkness," "Another Day Full Of Dread" and "Death To Everyone" indicate that Oldham hasn't lost his dark streak. Oldham continues the sad, spooky ruminations on religion and relationships that were staples of Palace's work, yet his emotions are even more intense with this new project. The song structures are less even-tempered, peaking when Oldham stretches for the high notes, and his straightforward lyrics show him at his most honest and vulnerable, offering such heartbreaking lines as "Did you know how much I love you/There's a hope that somehow you can save me from this darkness." Oldham's four bandmates (guitarist Bobo Arellano, pianist Colin Gagon, bassist Paul Oldham and drummer Peter Townsend) know when to say when. They let loose on the rockier tracks but are unobtrusive elsewhere, letting Oldham's weary vocals and guitar take the spotlight. While the folkier tracks sound like Palace's neo-spirituals, there are a few bold surprises, such as the addition of gentle piano on most songs, the echoey guitar and drum crashes of the spooky "Madeline Mary," and the stretched-out wah-wah guitar on the mournful "Death To Everyone." It's just a shame that the album's closer, "Raining In Darling," feels incomplete. Oldham's falsetto could move you to tears if only the song were fleshed out a little more.

>>>Wendy Mitchell



**OUT:** January 19.

**FILE UNDER:**

Haunting folk-rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Edith Frost, Tobin Sprout, Palace's *Viva Last Blues*.





MIRANDA PENN TURIN

## BETH ORTON

Central Reservation

Deconstruction-Arista

It'd be easier to get a handle on Beth Orton if she'd stick to one type of music—or at least one per album like Beck, who alternates DJ-oriented albums with indie folk projects. But, without meaning disrespect to Mr. Hansen, Orton has no interest in easy categorization. *Central Reservation*, Orton's follow-up to 1997's acclaimed *Trailer Park*, shows her maturing beyond her eclectic debut's haunting fusion of trip-hop with arty folk. Cleverly, on *Reservation*, Orton blows up her own hype—not just by adding jazz and lush pop to her earlier folktronica, but also by *uncomplicating* her sound: The last three songs of the album proper are pure folk, with nary a breakbeat or blip. Make no mistake; Orton's sullen qualities remain. Her lyrics probe darkly ("Blood Red River" asks, "Why must people always want what they can't have?"), and her trip-hop songs make Portishead's sound boisterous. Moodiest of all is Orton's voice, which quavers no matter what she's singing. That includes the bonus remix of the title track by Everything But The Girl's Ben Watt, an unmistakable sample of his pop drum 'n' bass. It's an unabashed, probably futile crossover move, but who knows? Orton has already shown she can get folk and rave culture to bend to her; there may be diva blood flowing in that lanky frame of hers, too.

>>>Chris Molanphy

**OUT:** February 9.

**FILE UNDER:**

Lush, eclectic folktronica.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Everything But the Girl, Suzanne Vega, Fiona Apple, Sandy Denny.



## BUILT TO SPILL

Keep It Like A Secret

Warner Bros.

Doug Martsch has a funny mind, one that messes with the basic chords, structure and overall design of the standard rock song until it's all jumbled up. The result is never confusing or convoluted, never pretentious or "post" anything. Just kinda peculiar and wonderfully fresh. On last year's *Perfect From Now On*, his band Built To Spill stretched songs past seven and eight minutes, but somehow managed to make them still seem like meandering, three-minute rock ditties. On *Keep It Like A Secret*, the band does the opposite. Songs are shorter—save the heroic "Broken Chairs"—but seem like epic jams. The major hurdle obstructing mass appreciation of Built To Spill has always been Martsch's voice. Were it deeper and more... well, *guy, BTS* would be hailed more often. But alas, his mousy whine takes several listens before you fall in love with it—and at that point, you can't imagine its absence. While acclimating yourself, you can concentrate on his guitar prowess; his innate, skewed solos are remarkable without sounding flashy, and he makes use of textured overdubs to create vicious, overwhelming guitar conversations. On paper, lots of pieces to meld together, but coming out of the speakers, *Keep It Like A Secret* is a fantastic, catchy rock album, one that you'll return to over and over again. Go.

>>>Randall Roberts

**OUT:** February 2.

**FILE UNDER:**

Skewed guitar glory.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Eels, Modest Mouse, Pavement.



## OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL

Black Foliage: Animation Music

Flydaddy

It took the Olivia Tremor Control more than two years to assemble *Black Foliage*, but it'll take longer than that for fans to unravel this 27-track safari. This is the kind of record that avid indie-rock followers will dissect, play through headphones as an escape into fantasy and maybe even try to synch up with classic films. The Athens, Georgia, quartet wrangles with sounds, wriggle through verses and wrap themselves in melodies and countermelodies. Guitars, horns and harmonies hover and collide as the singers toss off lines like "There are several layers of meaning/Hundreds of different aspects of the soul." Banjos and guitars flit around like bees, landing abruptly to sting and provoke one movement into the next. Themes and titles recur, assuming varied contexts along the way; the "Combinations" that appears early on consists of five seconds of noise, while a track with the identical name 20 slots later is a looped lead-in to "Mystery," which sounds like the Beach Boys covering a gypsy field recording. Halfway through *Black Foliage*, OTC cooks up a fuzzy feast that could be the Elephant Six collective's apotheosis. A sturdily strummed guitar mingles with guest Julian Koster's ethereal singing saw as Neutral Milk Hotel's Jeff Mangum sings in his unmistakable voice, "Gather your wit, your will, your life, your power"—an invitation to delve into this daunting epic.

>>>Richard Martin

**OUT:** February 23.

**FILE UNDER:**

American pop pastiche.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Zappa/Beefheart, Neutral Milk Hotel, Eno's pop records.





ACHILLE

CLEM SNIDE



## CLEM SNIDE

Broken hearts and empty bottles may be pervasive themes of country music, but they're nowhere to be found in Clem Snide's tender songs. That's because Clem Snide isn't your average country band. Israeli-born singer-guitarist Eef Barzelay and cellist Jason Glasser led what was originally a no wave noise outfit—named after William Burroughs's term for his posterior private part—in Boston in the early '90s. The two moved to New York City and coalesced into an acoustic-based, mildly twangy ensemble, recording the halting debut *You Were A Diamond* (Tractor Beam). Barzelay's subjects of choice read like a twentysomething's personal ad, with references to Nick Drake mix tapes, long drives and favorite sweaters, all neatly posited in sad, yet hopeful, melodies. "I guess I'm a romantic guy when all's said and done," Barzelay admits. Expanded to include upright bassist Jeff Marshall and drummer Brad Reitz, the band's live shows, which sometimes featured covers of Sonic Youth's "Schizophrenia" and the obscure Hank Williams tune "Lost On The River," led to label interest and an eventual deal with Sire. Don't expect any bleak turns on the major label debut, due by mid-1999. Says Barzelay: "I've written a couple of 'fuck you' songs, but I like to be more empathetic. That feels better to me."

>>> Richard Martin



P.J. OLSSON

## P.J. OLSSON

P.J. Olsson's eponymous EP (on Red Ink) might mark his recording debut, but the 29-year-old California singer/songwriter has been on the verge in certain regards for much longer. "I already knew when I was four or five that I was going to be a musician," he admits. His parents shared this disposition (his father is a classical conductor and composer), and the homestead rang with music of all stripes, from Gershwin to the Beatles to Brahms, all influences on Olsson's own pop ditties, characterized by a refreshing blend of complexity and accessibility. After years of exploring the extremes between coffeehouse confessionals and studio-wrought trickery, Olsson eventually hit on a slippery, kinetic combination of discrete loops and samples mated with acoustic guitars and live instrumentation. What distinguishes Olsson from similar pioneers is an eerie voice that's equal parts Elliott Smith and Al Green plus an idiosyncratic lyrical bent. "My songs are songs—not tracks—whether they use this production [style] or not," stresses Olsson. "I don't need my beats. If I don't have my backing tapes, the guys and I will get up and play the same songs. That's what brings music into the future." In Olsson's future: his major-label debut, for Columbia, due later this year.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



MIKAEL P. ERIKSSON

HELLACOPTERS EP

## HELLACOPTERS

Like the Ramones, the Hellacopters have a strong sense of family—members include bassist Kenny Hellacopter, singer/guitarist Nicke Hellacopter, guitarist Dregen Hellacopter, and drummer Robert Hellacopter. And like Mudhoney, their concept of punk rock owes more to *Nuggets* than to *Never Mind The Bollocks*. But unlike either, the Hellacopters are from Sweden, a country best known in the music world as the home of fresh-faced pretty-pop of ABBA and the Cardigans. So when the Hellacopters geared up to kick out their version of the jams a couple years ago, well, it would be fair to say that they might have felt like they had something to prove. At least that's the feeling you get from *Superslitty To The Max!*, the group's blistering 1996 debut—a raw-powered, revved-up homage to the proto punk of the Stooges, the MC5, and the Sonics that has finally been released in the US by poster artist Frank Kozik's Man's Ruin label. The band's equally convincing sophomore disc, *Payin' The Dues* (available as a Swedish import on White Jazz), still hasn't found a home in America, but judging from the recent stuffed-beyond-capacity New York shows, we're guessing it won't be hella long until it's out here.

>>> Matt Ashare



# IMPERIAL TEEN

Story: Kurt B. Reighl  
Photo: Kim Apl

## That awkward phase

For the San Francisco band, the only thing more difficult than the difficult second album is waiting for it to be released.

Imperial Teen's gear sits ready to go on the darkened nightclub stage when the band is MIA at our appointed interview time. Pressed as to the tardy quartet's whereabouts, the venue's manager simply rolls her eyes and points to the parking lot, indicating a garishly customized van à la Scooby Doo's legendary Mystery Machine.

The vehicle rocks to the sound of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Bad Moon Rising," but any occupants are invisible, the back windows covered with tin foil. As I press my ear to the side of the van, I hear muffled giggles and coughing. I step back and knock. The door cautiously slides open, and smoke wafts out of the shag-carpeted interior. Drummer Lynn Perko pops out her blonde head.

"Hey, man," she smiles radiantly. "We were just blowin' some grass. Wanna join us?" I pause in disbelief...

And so should you, because this never really happened.

"My favorite part of rock stories is always the first two paragraphs, where the interviewer talks about how he arrived," chuckles the real Roddy Bottum. *Björk answers the door in a shimmering dressing gown, and offers me hot tea and powdery*



emon cookies. "That's the best part. Whatever happens after that..." he continues with a dismissive wave of his hand. "Let's skip to the end."

The San Francisco foursome—rounded out by Jone Stebbins and Will Schwartz—provided the press with plenty of juicy points of entry when they debuted in 1996 with *Seasick*. Two of the members boasted resumes linking them to other influential outfits (Faith No More, Sister Double Happiness), and the Imperial Teen Filofax was bursting with the names of high profile, controversial friends, such as Mr. and Mrs. Courtney Love. And—yawn—some of the band's members are gay.

With sketchy lyrics that rarely address sentiments explicitly, thus allowing fans plenty of room to draw their own conclusions, Imperial Teen has inspired in many cynical adults an ardent devotion typically reserved for *Tiger Beat* types. But since artists' personal lives inform their aesthetic, some people mistakenly allow the aforementioned incidentals to take up too much time when discussing the band. "I'm sure [those topics] will come up again, because those things are interesting, too," admits Roddy. "But they're not interesting for us to talk about."

Besides there are far more exciting topics to discuss with Imperial Teen. Like *What Is Not To*

*Love* (Slash), the group's sophomore full-length. The 11 songs retain the qualities that distinguished their debut—memorable yet durable melodies, discrete arrangements—yet they feel more sure-footed. The punk rock urgency of Blondie and X still simmers at the center of the group's sound ("Gotta Dance" recalls vintage Billy Idol), but the measured pace of "The Beginning" and "Open Season" imparts the record with a degree of confidence and casual swagger missing from albums far more ambitious.

"This record is a different kind of pop," clarifies Will. "It's pop music, but it's not as censure, and it isn't as structured."

"It's not as obvious," agrees Roddy.

Two of the new tunes clock in at over seven minutes, yet never wear out their welcome. "Hooray" took shape at an informal taping, but nailed a moment in time the quartet wanted to preserve. "We don't really practice that song, and we all have to be on the same vibe for it to work," says Lynn. Rather than re-record the track, they simply put the demo version on the album.

"'Alone in The Grass' is about atmosphere," comments Roddy of the other extended song. "It takes time for that to

develop, and then it goes away. The swelling ebb and flow became such an exciting part of the song they allowed it to stretch out even further than planned.

"Those are both the type of songs that need space," he continues. "At one point we were working with a producer, and he wanted to edit 'Hooray.' But it just didn't make sense." The shortened version seemed to compromise the song's essence.

"We listened to it, and it was fine, but it wasn't what happened," shrugs Lynn.

But one episode they'd have preferred to edit to a shorter running time was the period between the completion of *What Is Not To Love* and its arrival in stores. "We didn't write as long as it took for this record to come out," Roddy notes. "We've done a lot of waiting." Frustrated with delays, they cut a few more non-LP tracks, and released the single "Ivanka" (the second 7" on the band's own Custom.45s label). "We were able to go in, record the songs, design the cover, and get the single out before the album."

Thanks to its finesse with hooks and its boy-girl-boy-girl line-up, Imperial Teen has netted comparisons to ABBA; considering the group's musical-chairs instrumentation, shared lead vocals and collaborative songwriting, Fleetwood Mac probably provides a more accurate parallel. Yet unlike either of those legendary outfits, Imperial Teen has no pockets of domestic distress fueling the creative fire. The four were friends before becoming a band, and that foundation still serves them well. "What we do as a group, the outcome of it and where it goes, is more precious to us because we're close," says Roddy.

That shared depth of feeling translates on wax. In an era where most people are simply too busy to sit down and fully explore an album over and over, Imperial Teen makes records that seem remarkably easy to love. But do they as consumers still encounter releases that touch them in a similar fashion?

Lynn and Roddy concur that today they rarely develop intense connections to albums like they did in their youth. But 26-year-old Will won't hear such talk. "[Music's] one of the biggest things in my life. I couldn't imagine not having huge emotional attachments to records. This past year that happened with the Björk record. I can't get over that record. It's so beautiful to me." The intensity he gleans from Otis Redding, or Sonic Youth, or Miles Davis only seems to increase with time.

That's only half of the Imperial Teen dynamic, though. What about the impulse that drives the band to whip off a seat-of-the-pants cover of Belinda Carlisle's "Mad About You" at its show that night? Will admits that he's just as apt as the next lad to frolic around foolishly to a song he loves. "That actually happened the other day, before we left on tour. I put on [the Breeders'] *Last Splash* and it's such a great record, I was late for practice because I was dancing around in my room."

END





# DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

UK electronic duo

## AUTECHRE

has a simple aim: change  
how you experience time  
and space.

Story: Kurt B. Reighley

Photo: Nina Roberts

Have you ever had that nightmare where you're back in high school, and suddenly have to take a final exam for a class you haven't attended all year? Discussing the music of Autechre evokes the same feeling. So it seems fitting that the Manchester duo of Rob Brown and Sean Booth are conducting interviews in a French restaurant. Distilling their disquieting compositions into prose proves as formidable as speaking a language you've never studied. Or getting a French waiter to smile. Fortunately, while Autechre is challenging to talk about, its members are remarkably easy to talk to.

The two speak in overlapping exchanges; the penchant for finishing each other's thoughts points back to their working relationship. "We don't have specific roles," says Booth. "It's like two old mates..."

"...with very similar backgrounds, and similar ideals, but different methods of achieving them," Brown concludes.

"We'd probably go down different roads to get to the same place," adds Booth.

When Autechre first emerged, it seemed tangentially related to identifiable electronic genres. In the notes to Warp Records' seminal *Artificial Intelligence* compilation (Wax Trax!-TVT, 1993), the pair checked Arthur Baker, Baby Ford, Meat Beat Manifesto and Renegade Soundwave among their influences; their background in electro occasionally manifested itself audibly on their debut *Incunabula*.

But over the years, the UK duo has moved farther afield of conventional approaches to form or harmony, opting instead to concentrate on sounds for sounds' sake. In the wrong headspace, the skittering, mercurial cuts of their eponymous fifth album (Warp-Nothing) make Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music* sound like *Hello, Dolly*. But if you're willing to





coloration, and rhythm always has some sort of dynamic shape, a curve," admits Booth. "Curves and straight lines are always apparent. There are very definite parallels." Such as the topographical images on the covers of *Amber* and 1997's *CicliiSuite* EP (Warp UK), or in their visual remixes under the Gescom moniker, altering color, space relations, and so on in graphic works.

"We're quite interested in architecture generally," Booth continues. "Actually moving through spaces. The experience of moving through an interesting or well-made space, rather than just being in it and seeing pictures."

"Just turning a still space into a transitional space," adds Brown. "Yet it's only transitional because your point of reference is in transition."

Hence their fascination with the relationship between time and music. "The process of something completely changing, all the time, as you move through it," says Booth. "Your sense of it is changing."

To tailor such impressions on the new album, the duo concentrated on computer software more than previously. "A lot of the melodies, and stuff like that, was from using things that we'd made, rather than things that [other] people had made," says Booth. Now the duo can manipulate elements within their tracks in greater detail. "Things get really interesting when you've got the opportunity to create your own environment in which to work, because obviously the aesthetic is completely under your control."

At the end of the day, the two don't crease their brow with worry about how audiences perceive or discuss their work. "We're driven by a childlike fascination, and a total curiosity," Booth insists, struggling not to simplify matters too much. "A love for an aesthetic, without really understanding why. There's a lot of good in naïveté."

Perhaps, Brown suggests, the ideal way to grasp Autechre's elusive muse is not to try. "Take an old electro record, like Man Parrish's 'Hip-Hop Be Bop (Don't Stop).' That aesthetic has been with me for years, from not understanding it at all, but just learning it as a presentation of sound. And 15 years later, I know exactly what they're doing, and when and why—well, maybe not why—but how. And that record still spins me out. Now I've got these two ways of viewing it, but I prefer the first one."

suspend any attachment you feel to old-fashioned ideas like repetitive melodies, or easily identified timbres with physical counterparts, Autechre offers a refreshing tonic from conventional recordings.

Even the term "music" seems ill fitting. The only obvious links between *Autechre* and a conventional album are very basic: Booth and Brown record organized sounds on compact discs that are disseminated via traditional channels like record shops. "That's what we always say," agrees Booth, concurring with this assessment.

The pair's oeuvre begs to be discussed in tactile terms; their tracks conjure up phonograph needles skating across sandpaper slipmats, or metallic insects building paper clip castles. Although synesthesia—a subjective sensation of a sense other than the one being stimulated—is a topic they've addressed before, they still appreciate its value as a tool for discussing compositions that, like their own, move beyond Western traditions.

"Chords always seem to have some sort of



# THE NEW BRIT

Almost a decade after they helped launch the rave scene in England, Carl Cox and Paul Oakenfold are once again leading a DJ movement. Is America ripe for conquering?

Photos:

# PAUL OAKENFOLD

Rave Crusader

LOVE **live** **live**

newmusic



# ISH INVASION

Peter Jay

CARL  
COX  
Triple Threat



# THE NEW BRIT

**"I want to get drunk, I want to be involved where the people are. I want to dance on the podiums."**

It's a little after one on a Saturday morning, and most East Coast revelers are winding down their nights out. But not the fabulous twenty-somethings filing from the phalanx of taxis in front of New York City club Twilo. Although the line out front is a city block long, there's no rush: The club's doors will stay open until at least seven, and DJ Carl Cox hasn't even started his set.

Cox, who's about to release his first self-produced album, *Phuture 2000* (Moonshine), in the US, is the brightest star on the horizon where the club circuit meets the rave scene. Though he rose to prominence on the shoulders of a swelling ecstasy subculture in early-'90s England, that subculture, that scene, and that music have finally spilled over into mainstream America. "Bridge and Tunnelers" throw on all the shiny, black clothing and perfume they can find and head from suburban New Jersey and Long Island to Twilo, where they join Manhattan trendoids and technofiles to indulge in the staples of the rave scene—cutting edge dance music and good drugs—without the unsightly trappings of a warehouse.

"Coxy"'s debut at Twilo last July drew the club's largest crowd ever, and marked a critical mass of sorts for the American underground dance scene. "It took from 1991 to '97 or '98 for people in America to think 'Yes, he's there,' or 'This is what he does and this is why we're here,'" says Cox. "And every single track I laid down, it was just completely bananas. Bonkers. It's like the whole thing's been lifted away,

to the point where the doors are open for other people to come through."

Named "The Best DJ In The World" for both 1996 and 1997 by British magazine *DJs* reader poll, Cox joined a Friday rotation of internationally renowned DJs that now includes Germany's Paul van Dyk and the UK's Sasha and Digweed. "Twilo has always been the club—even when it was the Sound Factory—that a lot of people really enjoyed," acknowledges Cox, sitting on his bed in Manhattan's SoHo Grand, scraping a room service plate clean. "But it had that New York sound, that would never go above 130 [beats per minute], would never come out with pure instrumental tracks and no vocals. The DJs then—your Junior [Vasquez], your [Danny] Tenaglia—were the stars that were commanding the nights, commanding what they wanted to do. I enjoy that, and I've been involved in that for many years. But of course, while all that's going on, the rest of the world is rocking!"

Cox's Twilo employment—recently extended through 1999—is showcasing not just his hard, driving sound that is part techno and part funky house, but also his ebullience. The energy in the DJ booth is visible: Cox, his trademark ear-to-ear grin and bald head hunched above his massive, bouncing frame. One second he's whirling to rifle through crates of vinyl, fist pumping in the air, the next his hands are a blur as he shuffles records on and off the tables. "I want to get drunk, I want to be involved where the people are. I want to dance on the podiums," says Cox. "My personality goes hand in hand with what I play, with why people are going bananas. I'm going crazy when I'm on the decks. I'm waving a record knowing that if I put it down and I play it that they're going to go off!"

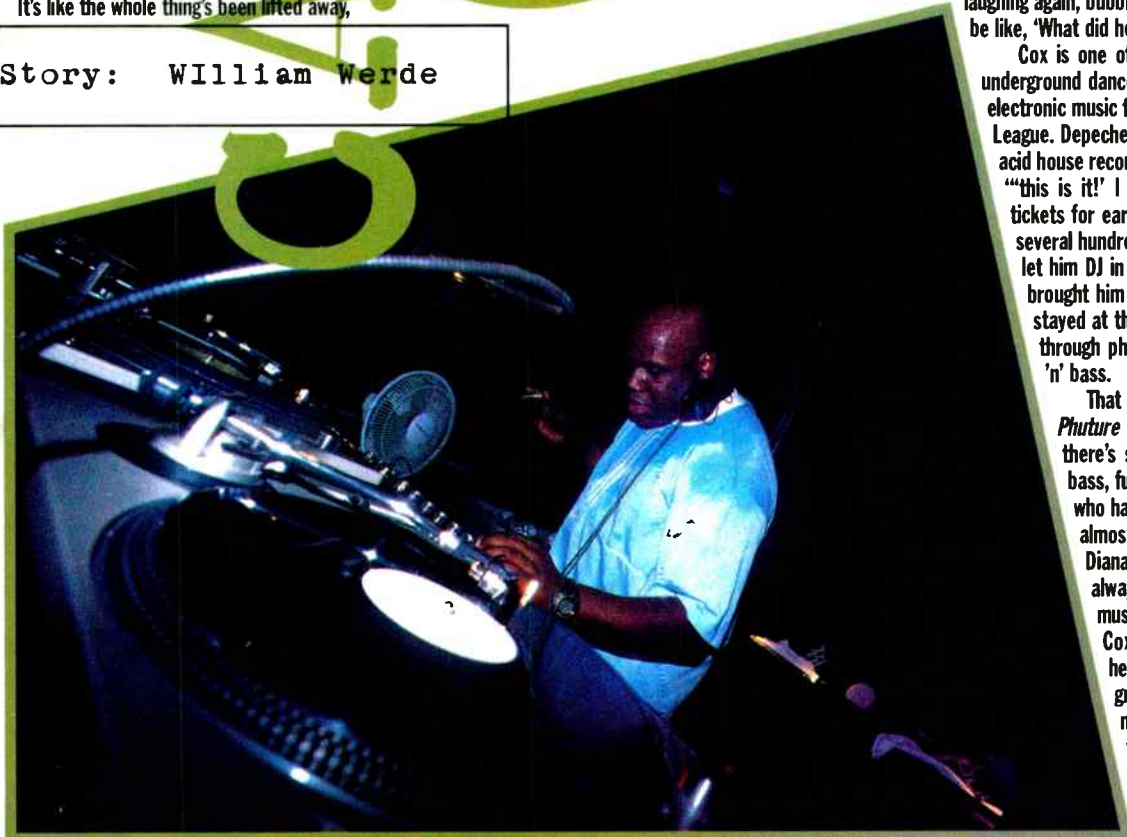
It takes an ear for music and precise timing to fuse records on two turntables for hours at a time, but when Cox finds his groove, he is often using three. Bass lines and melodies are spliced into new sounds and spontaneous remixes. "It's just like, 'Okay, those two are working, right good. And then—'" his loud snap echoes in the hotel room and his big grin has returned, as he relives that moment when a DJ nails a mix just right and 1500 people are there to appreciate it. "It's a spontaneous thing. There'll be two records in the mix and I'll just see a record and be like 'that could do it.' I'll get it in and it'll be going and then I'll pull the middle one out"—his arms are moving now, as he plucks invisible records from crates only he can see, and slams them on imaginary tables—"and those two are rocking, then pull that one or these two or those two and—bang—work it. Even I'll stand back sometimes and just be like 'Christ!'" He's laughing again, bubbling at the thought. "People will look at it and be like, 'What did he do?'"

Cox is one of those "founding fathers" who defined the underground dance music scene as he grew with it. "The term electronic music for me was always like Gary Numan or Human League. Depeche Mode," he says. "The first time I heard [an acid house record], it was like"—his hands clap, sharply—"this is it! I loved the element of progression." Selling tickets for early British raves, Cox realized he was moving several hundred per party and started asking promoters to let him DJ in exchange for his sales. His high-energy sets brought him popularity in the scene's early years and he stayed at the top by playing what people wanted to hear through phase after fad—acid house, hardcore, drum 'n' bass.

That same anything-goes approach was applied to *Phuture 2000*. "There's big beat tracks on there, there's soundscape techno tracks, there's drum 'n' bass, funk, soul, all sorts of things really," says Cox, who has stuck with his "whatever I like" formula for almost 30 years, since the days when he would play Diana Ross records at family parties. "There's always been that tag that DJs can't make albums," muses Cox. "There's Phil Collins and there's Carl Cox, and never the two shall twain, you know?" he laughs. "I grew up playing the piano and I grew up playing the drums. And that qualifies me as a musician. Technology has allowed me to push the elements of playing those instruments a lot further."

END

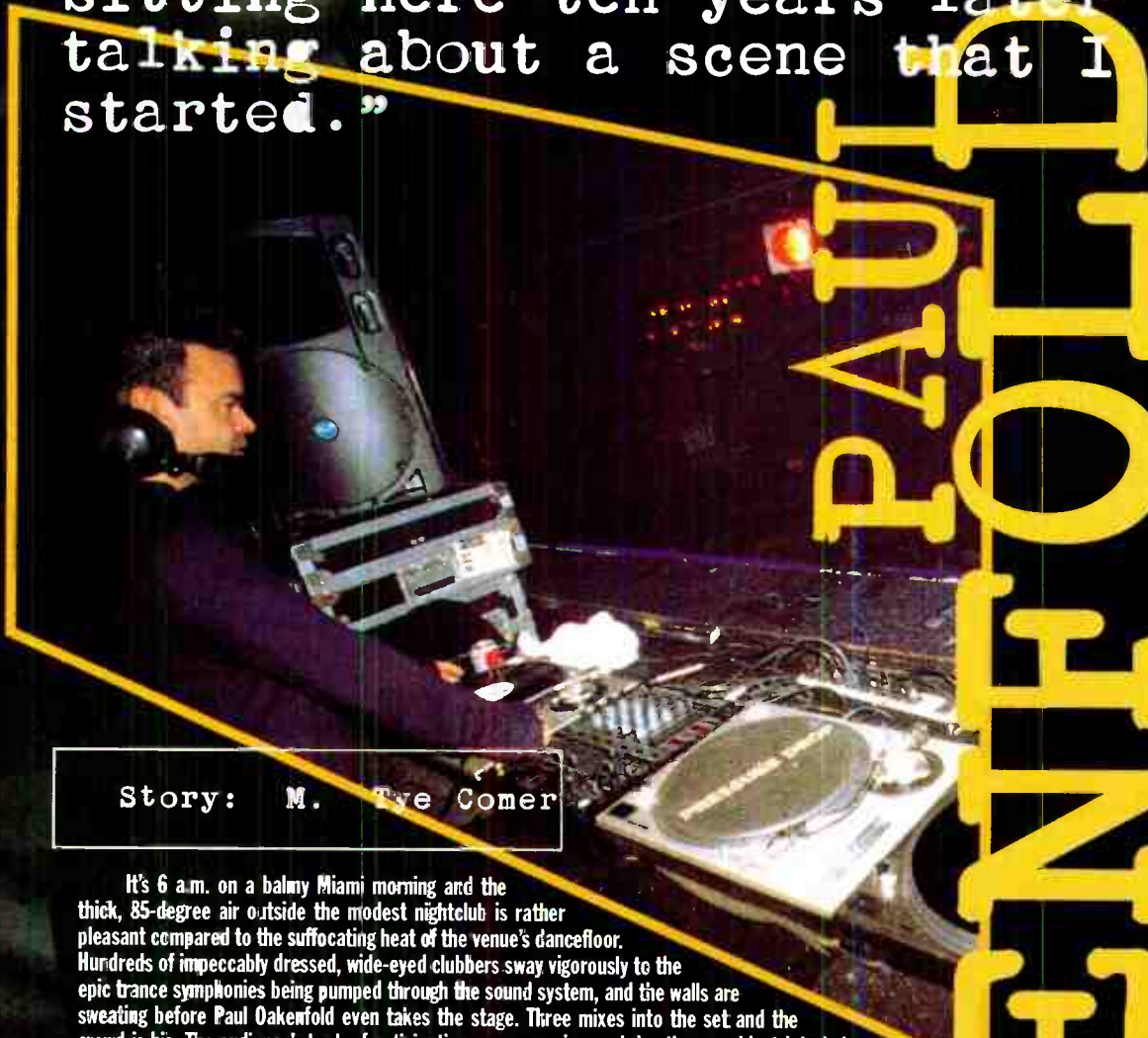
Story: William Werde





# ISH INVASION

“I never expected to be sitting here ten years later talking about a scene that I started.”



Story: M. Tye Comer

It's 6 a.m. on a balmy Miami morning and the thick, 85-degree air outside the modest nightclub is rather pleasant compared to the suffocating heat of the venue's dancefloor. Hundreds of impeccably dressed, wide-eyed clubbers sway vigorously to the epic trance symphonies being pumped through the sound system, and the walls are sweating before Paul Oakenfold even takes the stage. Three mixes into the set and the crowd is his. The audience's hush of anticipation accompanying each beatless, ambient interlude is followed by raised arms and shrieks of ecstasy exploding at each euphoric chorus, indicating that tonight will be a typical Oakenfold experience.

But then one of the turntables shorts out with an alarming crackle. And from the horrific look on the club owner's face, it's obvious there's not a spare in the house. As a frenzied employee runs off to locate a replacement, a thousand eyes stare at Oakenfold, looking for instruction, wondering what will happen now.

"It's hard to play on one turntable for two hours," recalls Oakenfold some months later. "I was like, What do I do? Do I just pack up and leave? I couldn't do that because it wouldn't be fair to the people who came. I had to soldier through. I just played one record after another on the one deck. I looked at it this way: I'm at home, I've got 600 people with me, and I'm playing them tunes. The night became all about the music. And at the end of it, I was like, fuckin'-a... it actually worked!"

Most jockeys, who rely on layering records, beat matching and other turntable trickery, would have imploded in the face of such a fiasco. Yet from the audience's enthusiasm, you'd think that Oakenfold, heralded 1998's #1 DJ in the UK's influential *DJ Magazine* Reader's Poll and the "Biggest DJ In The World" in the 1999 Guinness Book Of World Records (based on the estimated number of people he has played for), had given the performance of his life. Then again, Oakie is a DJ who doesn't rely on smoke and mirrors. He puts his faith in his vinyl, and whether he's armed with two working turntables or not, he lets the music speak for itself.

"The first thing about DJing from my point of view is... the music," he says. "You could go and practice in your room for five hours a day for the next month, and technically you'd be great. But if you're choosing all the wrong records, then it ain't going to work for you. [I] work on the music first... changing the mood, creating the vibe, taking people on a journey. Musically, I think [UK DJs] are ahead of the game because that's what we're more interested in."

If British DJs have a standard to live up to, it is Oakenfold who sets the height of the bar. Not only

was this influential DJ, producer, remixer and label head (of Perfecto Records) there when London discovered rave during the summer of 1988, he happened to be the one who made the introduction. He was the man who went on holiday to Ibiza (an island off the coast of Spain), brought home its anything-goes party ethic, where hip-hop was played next to rock next to house with no questions asked, and turned it into an ideology, birthing English rave culture.

"It was never planned," he continues. "I never expected to be sitting here ten years later talking about a scene that I started. It was just something I really liked doing. I only do these things because I want to do them. I don't have to come to America and try and break the door down for the British underground sound. I could make a lot more money being in Europe, or traveling in Asia. But I want to play in America. It's a challenge for me."

Seeing America as the last battle to be won, Oakenfold has embarked on a US invasion which includes his first ever domestically available mix CD, *Tranceport*, more US releases on his Perfecto imprint, and a touring schedule that will take him to every major mainland city. While his brand of spiritual, dramatic dance music is not exactly an anomaly in the US underground—progressive scenes in areas such as Florida, California and New York have swooned to the sounds for some time—the man and the music have yet to be embraced with the unrepentant devotion they receive in other parts of the world.

"[By the end of 1998], me and Dave [Ralph, Oakenfold's opening act and right hand man], are going to [have done] 50 shows in America. [In '99] we're looking at doing 60 shows—from universities and colleges to clubs to raves," he says. "We're going right out to the people."

"I knew the electronic scene was starting to happen [in the States] and I was waiting for a new generation of kids who are open-minded enough to want something new. I was waiting for the change that was bound to happen."

"When I played in Atlanta two months ago, it was like playing at a rave in England ten years ago," he says with a smile. "The dress, the look, the whole attitude and vibe of it... I was laughing my head off because it was so great. I feel like I'm starting all over again."

END

# PAUL OAKENFOLD



# BEN LEE

## Cyclone Ranger

"I want to write catchy pop songs that stadiums of people can sing. I want to write songs you can listen to in Yugoslavia."

Story: David Daley  
Photo: Dennis Kleiman

Ben Lee won't play his song "Household Name" anymore, but he still has designs on being one. Perhaps he's a little more sensitive to the downward career trajectory of the teen icon these days. Maybe his girlfriend, actress Claire Danes, pointed out that offhanded cruelty towards Kirk Cameron could only backfire someday. Still, the song contains an element of ironic self-deprecation. "You're never quite so cute/And I should know/Once puberty takes its toll," Lee noted, in a verse as much about himself as TV's Punky Brewster.

Indeed, Ben Lee cannot be called simply a pop prodigy anymore. Four years ago, at 16, he was anointed the next Alex Chilton or Steve Winwood for his acclaimed *Grandpaw Would*, and its follow-up *Something To Remember Me By*, a charming acoustic chronicle of a teenage mid-life crisis (which includes "Household Name"). Lee's insouciance, boyish good looks, and winning Australian accent—not to mention his sense of humor, insights that would seem hard earned by someone much older, and Danes on his arm—made him an instant media darling.

Now, at 20, Lee is just another songwriter on his third record. Insights into career and romance anxieties that seemed profound coming from a teenager seem less original from someone in his twenties. There are fresher-faced teens behind you, and a hunger for authentic young angst, so much so that a writer for TV's *Felicity* got hired for her insights into teen culture, but fired when it was revealed she was not 19, as she'd claimed, but actually 32.

So the ever media-savvy Aussie knows it's no longer possible to coast on charisma, or on sounding wise beyond one's years. Building the career he wants means stepping up, like Chilton did between "The Letter" and Big Star's *No. 1 Record*, or Winwood between the Spencer Davis Group and Traffic. Indeed, that's the story behind his winsome new *Breathing Tornados* (Grand Royal-Capitol).

Unlike Lee's first two solo records, or the teenage kicks of his riotous pop-punk combo Noise Addict, *Breathing Tornados* wasn't





recorded quickly during school vacations, but with the luxury of time, the indulgence of a label like Grand Royal, and his pick of songwriting collaborators, including Harmony Korine (*Kids, Gummo*), That Dog's Petra Haden and Ed Buller (Psychedelic Furs). It's the first time one of Lee's albums has sounded finished and polished, and it's also his most diverse and ambitious effort yet, with melodies that last, lyrics that matter delivered with emotion rather than a smirk, and crafted soundscapes in place of an acoustic strum.

"I've always been conscious of what kind of music I'm allowed to make being my age. I think that's why I made *Something To Remember Me By*, which is a folk record, because I wanted to make the music of an old man," Lee says, over pizza across the street from his TriBeCa rehearsal space. "This time, I wanted to step up the game in terms of my performance, but also to reclaim it as my own. I want to be fearless. This album is about fearlessness. In the beginning, that meant tearing the songs down by myself, and on my own, and I did that. Then I got to a point where I couldn't tear them down anymore, and I was beginning to entrap myself. Now I have to start building something up that I can tear down later."

It took Lee four months in the studio to build *Breathing Tornados*—eight times longer than the two weeks Lee had spent on each of his previous records. Despite his famous collaborators, his most important studio companion was a computer. Almost all of the bass, horns and drums on the album were programmed on the computer. Lee had every intention of replacing the synthesized horns with real ones, and replacing beats with real drums, but the computerized versions had been labored over so much that by the time real musicians were brought in to play those parts, it wasn't as good. Lee also concentrated on his vocals, and exhibits real range, from the throaty ("Ship My Body Home") to the tender ("Sleepwalking").

"There was a commitment to the feelings on this album," he says. "I just wanted to put everything on the line. A song like 'Finger In The Moon'—the vocals on that were just really hard to do. That was one of the first songs I really sang

in my life from a place that was physically as well as emotionally painful. I was always more interested in letting things speak for themselves, I guess."

One song that does speak for itself is "Birthday Song," a transatlantic love letter to Danes. It's interesting new territory for Lee—a combination of caution and exhibitionism—knowing that every love song will be examined for details about his relationship.

"I know what I'm doing. I know how much I'm

giving up, and now when I'm keeping," he says. But Lee also admits that being in a relationship that frequently earns gossip column mentions has affected the way he writes love songs. "I think that has just fanned my interest in understanding that. I'd be lying if I said, 'No, I didn't think about that,' if I said, 'I write in a little room and I don't think anyone will ever hear it.' I want to write catchy pop songs that stadiums of people can sing. I want to write songs you can listen to in Yugoslavia."

So if this record seems a little less personal, a little less open, perhaps even more of a calculated exercise than the growing-up-in-public fantasy of Lee's other albums, that's almost the point, he suggests.

"All the beat writers wrote about getting it down quickly because it's going to be different," Lee says. "I didn't have a sense of that as a kid, but I understood the concept, and I knew there was something pure about what I was doing. I didn't know what it was, but I wanted to get in, get it down, and leave. Otherwise, time will fuck it up. I'll fuck it up. Now as I'm a bit more stable, that's not as big a worry. You're not changing as quickly."

"I feel like I've done that part of my life, getting things down exactly as they happen. Now I want to spend a little more time crafting things. It's fine if people don't like that as much, but it all comes from the same person, and the same place. So I think [those records] are intriguing, and they intrigue me more now because when you're a teenager, yesterday is like years ago."

Still, what really interests Lee these days is the next record he'll make, which will stem from what's sure to be a singular path—somewhere.

"I could go anywhere from this record. That's what makes me so happy," Lee says. "I could put out the strangest record next time, go further into instrumental stuff, or I could go back to a purely acoustic record. I don't think any of it would be surprising, and that's what's exciting to me. This record is the center and from here it could take any direction."

"That's why it's liberating to me for people to hear it, to realize there's all these different sounds in my head. I don't want people to know what to expect. I like the possibility that people who liked me before will get turned off by it, and that there will be new people who like it," he says. "I mean, this could go anywhere, you know? This record is about breathing tornados. This record's about being amped. It's about being ready to go. Where you go is a whole different thing."

END





LOVE U @ U  
LIVE





# ANI DIFRANCO do the EVOLUTION

Her Righteous Babe label has grown from a tour-supporting cottage industry into a business name-checked by the *Wall Street Journal*, but one thing hasn't changed: Ani DiFranco is always changing.

Story: Scott Frampton  
Photos: Susan Alzner





# ANI DIFRANCO do the EVOLUTION

“Break on through to the other side!” Ani DiFranco sings in a laughing voice that’s somewhere between cartoon and karaoke. Her manager, Scot Fisher, whose own considerably more subdued version of Jim Morrison had echoed through the bare hallway a few minutes before, is walking DiFranco through the additional office space recently added on to the Righteous Babe headquarters in downtown Buffalo, New York, his outstretched arm easily clearing her head.

Back inside an earlier office expansion (tours of Righteous Babe move to a steady beat of “and then we added this space...”), the halls are buzzing. Ani’s here, the genuine affection behind the hugs and how-are-yous obscuring the fact that they’re all bracing themselves for the work to come. DiFranco’s 12th album, *Up Up Up Up Up Up*, will be released in two months, and new music from Ani DiFranco is Righteous Babe’s reason for being, not to mention DiFranco’s.

There’s a tired bounce to her step as she drags a chair into one of the new, empty offices. Her own office at the label, which has sold more than two million of her records, is smallish, and at any rate didn’t have any chairs

at the time of our interview. The bounce is exaggerated by the thick rubber soles of her platform boots, which honestly have a good way to go if they’re going to make her appear tall. The first surprise about Ani DiFranco is that she’s so damned little. Sure, her guitar looks big in her sinewy arms, but stages have a way of making people seem bigger, especially when commanded by a strong presence such as hers.

We pull into the bare office and set up across an old gray desk that perfectly matches the day outside the uncovered windows. The ambiance is something like that of an Eastern European interrogation room, which is probably appropriate given her sentiments about how she’s been portrayed by the press. Her current media profile is of a sharp-minded young CEO who shrewdly runs a business that enables her to bring home double what artists like Hootie & The Blowfish make on each disc sold (“apparently I have it all over Hootie,” she says), and that image itself supplanted one of a strident, man-hating arch-feminist with a ring through her nose. The nose ring is, of course, accurate, but she has issues with the rest.

“Most people like to write the story of the young entrepreneur something, which is a little distasteful to me, but whatever makes a good story. But it very rarely comes down to what I actually do. As you can see, there’s a whole lot of people in there who work really hard and I don’t know what they do,” she says with a husky chuckle, “but they’re doin’ it real well. People sort of perceive me as being the brilliant business mastermind behind it all, but it’s a bit of a fallacy.”

She’s noticeably weary, both of the subject and perhaps in general, given that she’s now cradling a recently produced cup of coffee as if it were the Christ child. When the idea is raised that her current business-savvy public perception is not too unlike her initial politically-fueled one in that they both marginalize her and her songs, she pauses and it seems as if she’s about to take the easy way out and agree with the interviewer. But with a breath of the steam rising from her cup, she cracks a wide smile that seems to indicate that she’s not *that* tired, and hell, maybe never is.

“I’d certainly like to agree with you. I think that anybody in the public eye, as it were, [develops] all kinds of justifications about



how they're persecuted, how they're misunderstood, and I'd hate to be on that bandwagon. 'First they called me this and then they called me that. It's because they can't accept my true genius.' But there is a lot of sidetracking with this whole media thing," she says with a slow nod emphasized by a tall knot of hair dyed the colors of a calico cat. "It's kind of funny to me that I started off being this militant punk with too much attitude for her own good, who had no idea what she was doing, just cutting off her own nose to spite the face of the industry. Now I'm like some sort of devious genius in a business sense.

"It's so amazing that it never occurs to them what I spend my time doing. Why do people show up at the shows? I'm not sure that the political circumstance that the music is couched in would be enough to make me buy a ticket to a show if there wasn't something else there."

The something else is readily apparent to a growing legion of fans, which if not rabid, are at the least extraordinarily devoted. But this is what spending ten or so years on the road can do, especially when you're able, with an increasing eloquence, to give voice to feelings and observations that for many, often go unspoken. She was young (still is, actually, at 28) and pretty well fearless, and so standing under the lights, didn't realize that she was the perfect scrim on which the growing audiences were projecting their own desires and frustrations.

"It's funny, because to me, it just seems normal. It's only when people the last few years started pointing it out 'you've got this crazy, rabid...'" she explains, rocking her head from side to side, which she tends to do when she doesn't have the third item in a series or is missing the end of a sentence. "I started thinking 'I do? What is it usually like?' I don't get to see a lot of other shows, unfortunately, because I'm so busy going to every fucking Ani DiFranco show that there ever was. Life on the road is so solitary on the way, because it's so busy. But I'd go to other shows and it really strikes me that somebody that for instance has one album out that's very successful and has a big hit single, there's a different relationship. People are sort of waiting to hear 'that song' and then they all react to that song. Where I guess my core audience has been developing as I've been developing, for ten years.

"But then I think also because I'm a folk singer at heart, and I just come from this community of people where there's really no theater. That's misleading because there certainly is a theater to storytelling, but there's not a lot of pomp and circumstance. Folk singers just sort of walk up on stage and just start talking to people. It's an art form born in bars and coffee houses, so there's just not a lot of place for pretension or posturing. And now I get up on bigger stages and try to do the same thing, and I think it's more shocking to people that somebody is their goofy-assed selves just talking and bumbling through."

She has a point. The second surprise about Ani DiFranco is that she's, well, a little goofy. She's not a cut-up, at least not to someone she met only half an hour ago. But she does add cartoon voices to ideas she thinks are silly, and her body language seems to speak to the idea that she thinks of herself as a really big dope about half the time. Her measure of fame, it seems, is like something that everyone has told her to remember but she keeps forgetting about anyway. "Goofy," come to think about it, is her word, and not wholly accurate. A better one is "human," not in the and-I-need-to-be-loved-just-like-everybody-else-does sense, but the just-plain-

“People sort of perceive me as being the brilliant business mastermind behind it all, but it's a bit of a fallacy.”

folks sense. The last surprise is that this shouldn't have been a surprise at all, because her journey from self-produced demo tape through *Up Up Up Up Up Up* is a distinctly human endeavor.



*Up Up Up Up Up Up* further stretches the boundaries that DiFranco tested with her last disc, *Little Plastic Castle*. The incipient funk that's always manifested itself in her off-kilter

phrasings and idiosyncratic sense of rhythm ("I've always had this outside sense of syncopation going on with the two things I know how to do at once, which is sing and play guitar" she says) is fully evident on the new record, which she recorded live in the studio with her touring band. A full-time rhythm section and Wurlytzer organ fill the record with soulful, pre-sample era grooves, and that's brought out the best in DiFranco. Her voice ranges from a soft croon to a bluesy keen, and she nips at lyrics with a scat-like playfulness, teasing out lines like "Virtue is relative at best/There's nothing worse than a sunset/When you're driving due west" ("Virtue").

If DiFranco's success has thus far been seen as something of a phenomenon, it's this continued evolution that will make her a major artist regardless of her business arrangements or political positions. The problem with being a fish-with-eyes is that the rest of your original school doesn't always understand your forays onto dry land, and so it is the way with DiFranco and her fans, many of whom may be left wondering if their beloved revolutionary sweetheart is succumbing to commercialism.

"I'm just trying to keep myself interested. It's funny that there's a degree of calculation attributed to everything you do. I put out the *Little Plastic Castle* record and people were saying it's my most commercial record to date, because it's better produced than my [previous] records, [which is] because I've learned a few things there... I'm just on my own little journey," she asserts, more mystified than resentful. But others' expectations do weigh on her. "People expect of me folk songs. When the track has been groovin' for two minutes and nobody's said anything yet and nobody's singing, I'm afraid that that's really going to throw people

and they're going to think, 'What the fuck?' It's all about the expectations. So I sort of expect people to call this record indulgent.

"[Expectations] occur to me. It's hard when once you've been described and framed up and hung on various walls by other people for too long to be innocent, to pretend that you don't know what people are going to say about this or that. But I still try and just make music without regard for that, even though sometimes I lie awake at night thinking about all those things that people are going to say.



But it has really helped to not be tuned into the chatter," she says of her policy, imposed after her *Spin* cover story in 1997, of not reading anything written about her. "It's helped me so much to just focus on my work. Because now I really am thinking less and less, because less and less of it gets to me—'Oh now, she's doing this, or she's trying to do that'—because then you start worrying about how to counteract people's expectations or perceptions, which is just as self-conscious as anything really calculated."

It just seems more well meaning, and in music, you don't get points for being well meaning. "And fuck, it doesn't make a good record."

None of this is to say that DiFranco worries too much about any of her records. "I do have a healthy case of the fuck-its. That has certainly gotten me where I am, if anything. I'm just the furthest thing from a perfectionist, which I have my regrets about. I tend to not listen back to all the albums too much. But I think people spend a long time making albums and they try really hard and they get people who know things to help them out, and I made a good ten albums not knowing a thing about how to make a record. I was just kinda making it up, to greater and lesser degrees of success along the way."

DiFranco's wariness about the reaction to *Up Up Up Up Up Up* might be because this time around she's in the unfamiliar position of being pretty happy with the record now that it's finished. "I'm kind of proud of that one," she says with a slight grin, which even at a small percentage of her usual beam is still a good bit larger than the average smile. "I think making the live record [*Living In Clip*] was really educational for me because just listening to recordings of myself live taught me a lot about the audience and it taught me a lot about myself, too. Live, where I really make my music, onstage, I'm so busy that I don't really have an objective view of what's going on. And I realized that most of those songs sounded much more like themselves onstage than they do on any of the albums that they were recorded onto, so I just came up with the ingenious idea of playing live in the studio, getting together with my band, just making music that same way we do on stage."

Working with a band has also opened up her songwriting, allowing her to emphasize that

groove and to work in influences from current faves like Maceo Parker and Trouble Funk. "Fuck, there's only so much indulgent license to stand there and groove with your acoustic guitar before people are like..." she says, tapping impatiently on the table with the fake nails she affixes on her right, strumming, hand. "To have this group of musicians that I work with now—the palette is just so much bigger. And I think it's enabling me to get away from the verse/chorus, verse/verse/chorus small form."

As much as the new record can be

"I feel less and less righteous about everything, which is not to say I feel any less dedicated to political change."

described in terms of new musical influences and expanded possibilities, it also reflects personal changes for DiFranco. She married last spring ("[It's] the last thing that people, including myself—the irony is not lost on me—expected that I'd be doing," she says) and the new perspective that the "social commitment of love" has brought informs songs like "Angry Anymore," which examines her parents' relationship with an adult's understanding. In fact, much of *Up Up Up Up Up Up*, with songs like "Everest" and "Virtue," could be said to be about not particular issues, but perspective. While a change in her sound may raise a few eyebrows, a perceived weakening of her political resolve draws a different kind of ire.

"I think there's a real—which I think has been written about and commented on in the media—'you go girl' element of my audience. And I'm still perceived [as I was] way back in the beginning when I was this militant, fang-toothed feminist from hell. But I think my politics are mutating and changing along with my music and I'm certainly still a feminist and still very much wanting to contribute and work for the 'women's community,'" she says, chuckling at the phrase before digressing to

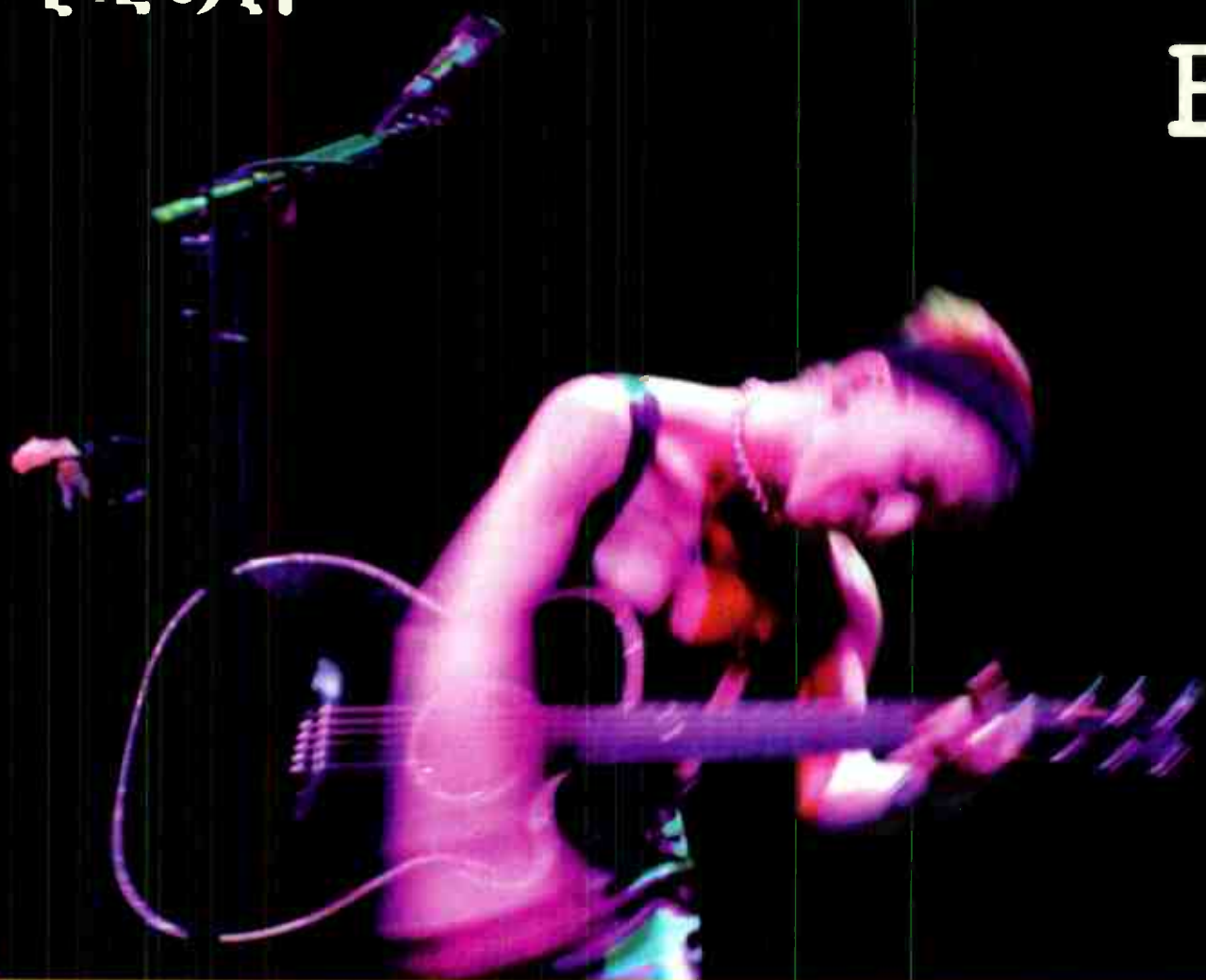
relate an ongoing joke about her "goal to start a retirement home for aged feminist rock stars and folk musicians. We joke around [that] it's going to be this community of portly musical dykes and assorted feminists, and their pets."

"But until then..." She continues, "One of the things I learned from listening to the live tapes is—and it made me understand the perception of me more, because I think people perceive me more through my audience. 'Cause when they're standing there in a group of thousands of people and I say something that smacks of female empowerment—self-empowerment, really—and everybody cheers it, and then there's all this other stuff in the song that doesn't get the cheer. And it was really listening to the recordings of what was in the songs, again and again, night after night, city after city, the same lines cheered every night, cheered right over the next few lines. And I think, 'Oh, okay, this is what people are talking about when they reduce me to one element of my politics or character or whatever.' And I'm afraid that there's less of that going on now in my consciousness. I feel less and less righteous about everything,

which is not to say I feel any less dedicated to political change. I find it hard. It's scary to think of, you know, as people get older they get less angry and they're just like fuckin', triple A radio. But I do think there are maybe less lines in my songs that are going to appeal to the cheering section, which again I think is maybe, I hope, a small section of the audience, but a noisy one. So I may lose a lot of people who are off in that."

Outside, cars are speeding through the synchronized traffic lights on Washington and Goodell Streets, determined to careen through what Fisher pointed out as the most dangerous intersection in Buffalo. The slate-colored day is temperate but windy, and the room is getting cool from a cracked window. DiFranco pulls the threadbare sleeves of her chartreuse sweater—which hangs over a Godzilla T-shirt died the colors of a Tide box and black nylon painter's pants—up over her wrists and pushes them toward her face. Her coffee has done its work and she shifts in her chair like a restless child in church. But talk of politics has started her focusing on this life and where she fits in it, and she begins to stretch across the table, reaching out with both arms toward one of the windows.





"The big picture is getting alarmingly big for me. It's very humbling for me to not necessarily feel like you have the space to be right about anything. This recent shooting in Buffalo, the abortion doctor [Arnold Slepian]... I think in times past I would've been up on rooftops screaming about what was going on. And I've noticed that my reaction to this now is 'Okay, it's just become too dangerous.' Women in this city are not safe. Women in Birmingham, Alabama, are not safe. Women across the border in Hamilton, Ontario, are not safe. Doctors—we're all just not safe," she says, gently slapping the table with both palms, her eyes a little damp. "I think that people who believe in women's freedom of choice need to go on a really concerted effort to reach out. There's so much divisiveness, so much non-listening that goes on. I think our new

strategy has got to be, 'We respect your morality, we respect your opinions. To be against abortion is totally fine; we understand that, we sympathize with that.

other's morality. I feel more mortally scared and sad about the recent events because I think the battle has got to end."

"It's scary to think that as people get older they get less angry and they're just like fuckin', triple A radio."

We just think everyone needs to make that decision for themselves.' [But] no one of us can tell all of us how to be or what to think. We cannot dictate each

But really, I'm talking about my experience, not necessarily about me, but what I know."

It's not that Ani DiFranco isn't angry anymore, just that her anger has reached its practical limits. And so it too evolves into something else. "The more traditional role of the folk singer is that they see a social ill or an issue and they write to it to be the sort of newspaper of the community," she says. "But my politics are much more experiential, personal."

"I think I look at the world through a somewhat political lens, so people can sort of project issues onto my songs.

-END



# LOVE YOU LIVE

ALL PHOTOS FROM 1998 CMJ MUSICFEST







**@BAND NAME • photographer**

- 1 **mission club foundation** • patrick halev
- 2 **bis** • patrick halev
- 3 **misfits** • eddie mallur
- 4 **faithless** • chris johnson
- 5 **dennis** • eddie mallur
- 6 **dictators** • eddie mallur
- 7 **beth orton** • ebet roberts
- 8 **gogol bordello** • patrick halev
- 9 **helicopters** • ebet roberts
- 10 **handsome family** • patrick halev
- 11 **get up kids** • patti ouderkirk
- 12 **sunny day real estate** • patrick halev
- 13 **doktor kosmos** • ebet roberts
- 14 **firewater** • patrick halev
- 15 **idle wild** • rahav segev
- 16 **natural calamity** • patti ouderkirk
- 17 **man or astro-man?** • eddie mallur
- 18 **hive** • eddie mallur
- 19 **roots** • patti ouderkirk
- 20 **six finger satellite** • eddie mallur
- 21 **kehimi karié** • ebet roberts





**LOVE U TO LIVE**

ALL PHOTOS FROM  
1998 CMJ MUSICFEST





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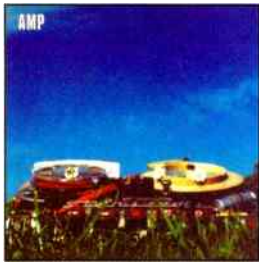


44

**BAND NAME** • photographer

- 32 **type o negative** • eddie mallur
- 33 **plecebo** • rahov segev
- 34 **orange 9mm** • rahov segev
- 35 **cythone** • patti auderkirk
- 36 **mency mark** • patrick haleyi
- 37 **ozomatli** • patrick haleyi
- 38 **apples in stereo** • patrick haleyi
- 39 **pj harvey** • ebet roberts
- 40 **meat beat manifesto** • patrick haleyi
- 41 **whale** • rahov segev
- 42 **modest mouse** • ebet roberts
- 43 **cornelius** • ebet roberts
- 44 **snowpony** • ebet roberts
- 45 **mercury rev** • rahov segev
- 46 **dj spooky** • chris johnson
- 47 **buffalo daughter** • patrick haleyi
- 48 **neurosis** • rahov segev
- 49 **hooverphonic** • chris johnson
- 50 **daniel johnston** • patrick haleyi
- 51 **dälek** • chris johnson
- 52 **mix master mike** • rahov segev
- 53 **afghan whigs** • ebet roberts
- 54 **dj krush** • chris johnson





**AMP** ★  
**Stenorette**  
**Kranky**

Amp usually gets lumped in with the Bristol drone-rock axis (as opposed to that city's well documented trip-hop scene), but that's more a factor of geography than sonic style. Amp may also share that Bristolian interest in abstraction and gift for buried melodies, but unlike Flying Saucer Attack's all-encompassing wall of noise or Crescent's grating smudges, Amp's sound is minimal and eerily spacious. Karine Chariff's vocals are front and center on most tracks, although they're flat, syrupy, almost numb-sounding.

**OUT:** November 24.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Dark, exploratory ambience.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Cranes, early Cocteau Twins,  
Bowery Electric.

Everything else on *Stenorette* echoes and rattles, too—the piano that carries the melody on many tracks, the feedback loops and jagged-sounding guitars, the plodding dub bass lines. The only thing on *Stenorette* that sounds crisp and assertive is the drum programming underpinning the uptempo songs. Third Eye Foundation's Matt Elliot used to collaborate with Amp, and though the percussion on *Stenorette* doesn't bear his chaotic jungle signature, his influence is still felt as the drum programs stutter and pound even while they move at a stately pace. It's a jolting counterpoint to the airy and dreamy listlessness that characterizes the rest of the album, especially the lovely piano-driven instrumentals, which have all the studied tranquility of a Satie etude.

>>>David Jarman



**BOO RADLEYS** ★  
**Kingsize**  
**Creation-Never Records Group**

The coming millennium has split the cultural world in two, with some peering wistfully back and others fixing their gaze toward the future. The Boo Radleys meditate on this dichotomy throughout the latest effort in their decade-old recording career, grappling with issues of age, music and politics on the verge of Y2K. "I'm 28 but I feel much younger," sings monosyllabic vocalist Sice at one point on *Kingsize*, an album that suggests that he and his mates have soaked up every Brit-pop maneuver during their decade of coexistence. The Boo

**OUT:** January 26.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Traditional Brit-pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Stone Roses, Manic Street  
Preachers, Blur.

Radleys kick things off with an Aphex Twin-like electronic barrage on "Blue Room In Archway," then scoot into a horn-riddled groove for "The Old News Stand In Hamilton Square" and set up the anthemic paean to Black Panther founder Huey P. Newton in "Free Huey" with an insistent pushbeat that gives way to guitarist Martin Carr's furious riffs. Each new track takes a dizzying twist, by turns baroque, shoegazer, Northern soul or sprawling straight-up pop. One minute the Boo Radleys are as "High As Monkeys," the next they're building "Monuments For The Dead Century." In the breathtaking end to this distinctly British album, the Boo Radleys come to a conclusion about all this millennial hub-bub, stated eloquently in "The Future Is Now."

>>>Richard Martin



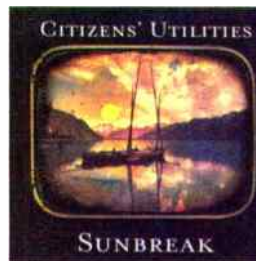
**BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL** ★  
**As One Aflame Laid Bare By Desire**  
**Projekt**

The mainstream press, when obliged to fill space, occasionally poses the question "why won't goth die?" (The easy answer is that it's already undead.) One of the main reasons it's still as pale and healthy as ever is Sam Rosenthal, partly through his efforts as head of the Projekt label, but also through his band, Black Tape For A Blue Girl. For more than a decade now, Rosenthal and his revolving cast of helpers have been turning out a long series of immaculately crafted ethereal panoramas. Everyone involved would probably deny

**OUT:** January 12.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Dusky mood music.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
This Mortal Coil, early Dead  
Can Dance, Love Spirals  
Downwards.

the analogy, but This Mortal Coil is a useful reference point, and not only because of Black Tape's status as a label-guru's cavalcade of musical whimsy. The two groups also share a gloomy chamber-music sensibility, mixing ominous synth-based instrumentals with songs about loss and regret, featuring melodramatic, androgynous-sounding vocalists and fleshed out with stark string arrangements and woodwinds. This works better as background music than foreground music; it can get wallpappy after an hour, but Black Tape does a beautiful job of creating a lush, all-enveloping sound that's soothing yet brooding. "Goth" may not be the right word since this is no acid-bath of torment and angst. *As One Aflame* is more of a gentle wash, perfect for late-night contemplation or, um, making out.

>>>David Jarman



**CITIZENS' UTILITIES**  
**Sunbreak**  
**My Own Planet**

The three things rain-inflicted Pacific Northwesterners relish most are coffee, beer and those brief moments when one of the looming cumulus clouds misses its cue and lets the sun peak out from the sky. Seattle's Citizens' Utilities weave these coping mechanisms into their third album, the tellingly titled *Sunbreak*, as themes and metaphors. In "She Becomes My Sunbreak," a lover's arrival works as a buffer against seasonal affective disorder, while "Coffee And Beer" sounds like the type of song Roy Orbison would've written if he'd been chasing down

**OUT:** November 17.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Northwest garage-country.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Son Volt, Grandaddy, Meat  
Puppets.

pretty women in the shadow of the Space Needle. These tracks also signify a subtle shift in the Citizens' game plan. Earlier efforts concentrated on nuanced guitar interplay and pristine three-part harmonies; this record does as well, but Joshua Medaris and Chad Shaver sling their gee-tars like grizzled country rockers playing the 3 a.m. slot at a roadhouse bar. "Cooperation In Space" serves as a sort of bridge to the quartet's more effusive sound, beginning with a gentle, jaunty and jangly pop sheen and evolving into extended, rhythmically punctuated jams of Zeppelin-esque proportions. To drive home the transition, the group closes out *Sunbreak* with a caffeinated cover of a song by '70s folk-rockers America, "Sandman," with alternately raucous and refined guitar riffs reflecting the push-and-pull effects of coffee and beer.

>>>Richard Martin





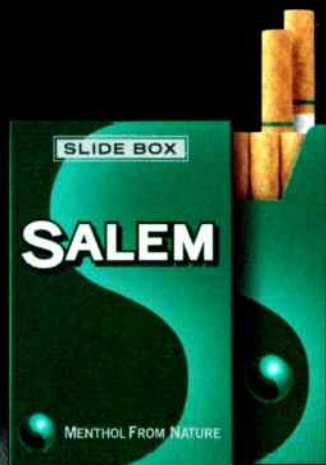


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**DIG**

**Life Like**  
RadioUniverse

Five years ago, with its elliptical name and three-guitar attack, California's Dig should have taken its rightful place next to Stone Temple Pilots in the pantheon of grungy-come-latelys. But the band's late-'93 debut made it just a little late for America's black celebration. Lost in Dig's brief moment of MTV fame—spurred by the earnest, minor hit "Believe"—was singer-guitarist Scott Hackwith's better-than-average songwriting skills. Unwilling to pack it in when pop culture told it to, Dig has released its third album, *Life Like*, and it's a surprisingly

likable, tuneful affair, a stab at power-pop that suits the group better than grunge ever did. The opener, "Live In Sound," is Brit-pop better than the Brits have done it lately, the kind of tune that would have made Paul Weller proud. Guitars still dominate Dig's sound, but they coexist with piano, organ and layers of multi-tracked voices; the songs themselves are, with a couple of drawn-out exceptions, economical, tight, and even a little funky ("The Fuzz"), with only the occasional spacey interlude ("Coming Down," "Busstopping") breaking the crunchy fun "Comfortable," the guitar-heavy closer, serves as the only reminder of Dig's old sound, but it's short and sweet enough not to sound like it's yearning for flannel-clad days of yore.

>>>Chris Molanphy

**FUNKY GREEN DOGS**

**Star**  
Twisted America

Many a holiday cookie buffet includes a plate of treats called divinity, crispy dollops of whipped egg whites and sugar that dissolve instantly in the mouth. Occasionally the baker will tint them with food color, or fold in chocolate chips, preserved fruit, or chopped nuts for contrasting texture. To the uninitiated, such morsels might seem bland; likewise, neophytes will dismiss *Star* as monochromatic dance floor fodder. But connoisseurs praise divinity's addictive simplicity and consistency, qualities

**OUT:** February 23.

**FILE UNDER:**

*Mi casa es su casa.*

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Danny Tenaglia, Deep Dish, Liberty City.

underground house doyens Oscar Gaetan and Ralph Falcon—alias Funky Green Dogs, alias MURK—share with this humble confection. If you're familiar with earlier FGD jams ("Fired Up," "The Way," "Reach For Me"), you'll discern subtle variations within the established formulas on their sophomore full-length. Contrasted with their traditionally Spartan approach, the single "Body" shimmers with surprising commercial polish (an additional Club 69 remix strips down to a rawer groove). The elastic funk of "Just A Little Luck" could pass for a lost Sister Sledge gem, while "Won't Stop Loving You" recalls MURK's Liberty City hit "Some Lovin'." These ten tracks are light and sweet, with just enough variety to sustain interest. If the pleasure seems fleeting, that's part of the charm.

>>>Kurt B. Reighley

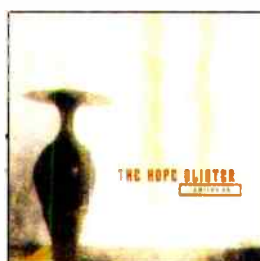
**DR. ISRAEL**

**Inna City Pressure**  
Mutant Sound System

This album from Brooklyn resident Dr. Israel borrows its title from a Goldie song, while musically pairing reggae vibes with the frenetic breakbeat pulse of modern-day jungle music. (Of course, jungle itself may have begun as a reggae invention, when Jamaican record producers seeking to liven up the dancehall jacked up the preset tempos on their drum machines.) Throw in some dub and some Bad Brains-style nods to punk, and you've got quite an ambitious formula. Israel has been loosely affiliated with Brooklyn's WordSound posse, which if

you're familiar with that studio crew's dub missives, is saying a lot about his style. In several places Israel pulls out neat tricks: A song will start off like it's going to be a tepid computer reggae instrumental, but then a really cool jungle beat comes spiraling in out of nowhere, giving the track an extra kick. Elsewhere, members of Rancid lend a shot of punky reggae flavor to "Coppers." That said, for such a promising start, the album is not without its major flaws—generally, each good idea goes on for a couple of minutes too long, leaving less ganja-inclined listeners waiting impatiently for Israel to get around to the next cut. Dr. Israel remains, however, an artist to keep an eye on; whether this is the finest album he's capable of is another matter.

>>>James Lien

**HOPE BLISTER**

**...smile's ok**  
4AD-Mammoth

This Mortal Coil may well have been the centerpiece in the 4AD label's stable of artists during the '80s—if not for the quality of the group's output, then still for its status as label head Ivo Watts-Russell's pet project. The core duo of Watts-Russell and John Fryer, along with whatever luminaries happened to be in the studio, put together three gorgeous albums of swoony instrumentals and an odd array of cover tunes. TMC hasn't been heard from since 1990, but Watts-Russell and Fryer have returned with what's billed as a "sequel":

**OUT:** January 19.

**FILE UNDER:**

Ethereal cover band.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

This Mortal Coil, His Name Is Alive, Black Tape For A Blue Girl.

the Hope Blister. Instead of a revolving cast of the Who's-Who of Ethereal Brits, the Hope Blister sticks with one set of players, fronted by chanteuse Louise Rutkowski, who provided some of the vocals on TMC's *Blood*. ...smile's ok picks up where *Blood* left off, fleshing out the emotionally-wrought vocals with string arrangements and a synth-based wash of sound—it's sentimental and heavily ornamented, but beautiful all the same. ...smile's ok is all cover tunes; if there's been any change from This Mortal Coil, it may be that Watts-Russell has eased up on his Big Star fixation. Instead the covers span from proto-new wavers who influenced TMC's sound (Brian Eno, David Sylvian) to '90s artists who, in turn, owe a big debt to TMC (Slowdive, Cranes).

>>>David Jarman





**DIANE IZZO**

**One**  
**Sugar Free**

Quick, name a wide-ranging 60-plus-minute debut album from a female singer-songwriter from Chicago, produced with typical clarity by Brad Wood. Yes, Diane Izzo's *One* has the trappings of Liz Phair's *Exile In Guyville*, and the comparisons don't stop there: Izzo's sense of melody and her relatively flat voice also show debts to Phair, while the moody intensity, whisper-to-a-scream tensions, and chanted choruses sometimes echo PJ Harvey's premier *Dry*. That's lofty company, and to say that *One* doesn't measure up to either of those landmark debuts only means that Izzo won't

**OUT:** January 19.  
**FILE UNDER:** Mood-swinging singer-songwriter.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Liz Phair, PJ Harvey, Sue Garner, Cat Power.

reconfigure the landscape of rock 'n' roll—not many albums, debuts or otherwise, do. The album doesn't come into full focus until "Venice," track seven of 14, when the tone brightens and the mandolin and accordion add new textures to what had been standard-issue guitar-bass-drums. The varied strengths of the subsequent songs raise the album's rating a notch on whatever scale you favor (stars, numbers, letters). There, touches like trumpet, banjo, and sitar broaden the sound, and Izzo's ability to range from the ranting and rhythmic "Wicked Spell" to the folksy Dylanesque closer "House Of Diana" show she commands several confident voices. In the end, if not at the beginning, *One* is a compelling, if not incomparable, debut.

>>>Steve Klinge



**BAABA MAAL AND MANSOUR SECK**

**Djam Leelii: The Adventures**  
**Yoff Productions-Palm Pictures**

Among the best-known musicians to come out of Senegal, Baaba Maal leads a band that pulls the crowds with its rock-influenced, earth-shakingly funky music. But there's another side to Maal's music, and it may be best represented by this 1984 album *Djam Leelii*, a series of acoustic guitar duets with Maal and his longtime collaborator, the griot Mansour Seck. This album has now been re-released with three additional tracks from the same period. Maal and

**OUT:** November 3.  
**FILE UNDER:** Art music with African roots.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Youssou N'Dour, Ali Farka Toure, Salif Keita.

Seck recorded these songs not long after they arrived in France from Senegal, where they had been immersed in their native Fouta musical traditions. The songs on *Djam Leelii* adapt some of these traditions to Maal's emerging funk-rock aesthetic, adding percussion to produce gently grooving songs like "Sehilam." Other tracks, like "Muudo Hormo," are more ballad-like, exploiting Maal and Seck's instrumental chops in the service of gorgeous melodies. Maal's arching, slightly droning vocal style will be somewhat familiar to fans of Youssou N'Dour and other etoiles of Dakar, but the music itself sounds incredibly fresh and informative to both Senegalese and Western musical contexts.

>>>Andrea Moed



**LES BATTERIES**

**Bell System**  
**Rift**

Ostensibly, Les Batteries are a percussion duo featuring the able skinsmanship of Rick Brown (Run On, Timber) and Guigou Chenevier, but their new album *Bell System* proves that M.O. to be more of a springboard than a classification. Chenevier and Brown's search for rhythmic synchronism leads them into strange realms of inspired hysteria where propagandic theater and electronic improvisation are as welcome as a cowbell and a drum key. Though Les Batteries' history stretches back to the mid-'80s, and they've enjoyed modest success and high esteem in Chenevier's native France—including

**OUT:** January 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** Accessibly experimental percussion duo.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Harry Partch, John Zorn, Soft Machine.

commissioned work for the Museum of the French Revolution—this new album is the duo's first Stateside release. Recorded in Chicago by Tortoise's John McEntire, *Bell System* is a wildly schizophrenic work, touching on the percussive texturalism of Harry Partch here, the heady jazz-rock-opera of Carla Bley's *Escalator Over The Hill* there, and cacophonous creative impulses throughout. The album seems to reach a sonic impasse with every track, only to turn on itself, and take the listener in a completely new direction. Witness as "Guigno," the album's most buoyant and seductive tune, is suddenly upended by the video-game-of-the-absurd that is "Andrea." Linear it is not, but grab-bag experimentalism the likes of *Bell System* is rarely this engaging.

>>>Matt Hanks



**MATT POND PA** 

**Deer Apartments**  
**Lancaster**

During deer season, New Hampshire natives have to wear bright clothes and make sure not to go in the woods or risk being mistaken for Bambi. For Matt Pond, who grew up in Hanover, New Hampshire, deer continue to be a strong reminder of that queasiness that used to creep up when he left the house as a child partially wrapped in red tape to make sure no one took a potshot at him. Pond's current residence, Philadelphia, has its own gun problems and plenty of other ones as well.

**OUT:** October 6.  
**FILE UNDER:** Angst-driven ballads.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Elliott Smith, Smog, Nick Drake.

The terse ballads on *Deer Apartments* reflect on the differences between the two cultures and feeling lost in both of them. Anxious, achey and pining, Pond often comes off like the introvert who's mumbling to himself at the end of the bar. His lyrics are oblique, though a clear, deprecating quip occasionally gets through. These moody thoughts are bedded in gallant and often gorgeous arrangements. Waves of bowed cello roll over bristling guitar and rumbling tom-toms. Pounding waltz tempos tumble and swirl, and a tune that starts off like a courtly dirge turns into a bedroom rocker. Jumpy buildups give way to passages of soaring release. Kind of like one those long sweaty evenings filled with difficult decisions, *Deer Apartments* is exasperating and energizing, and eventually cathartic.

>>>Neil Gladstone





## MOJAVE 3

**Out Of Tune**  
4AD-Sire

It's difficult to make music that's at once melancholic, languorous and wistful without it quickly becoming boring. England's Mojave 3 tackles the challenge with a laudable measure of success, however, evoking the slow, numbing euphoria of a good Quaalude with its gentle caress of quiet country- and folk-tinged beauty. Built from the remnants of early '90s dreampop band Slowdive, Mojave 3 still makes sparing use of its sonic past—strikingly pretty guitar melodies, a sublime sense of atmospheric—

but with a much simpler and more straightforward approach to its songwriting. Unlike 1996's *Ask Me Tomorrow*, which based its melodic appeal on the soft angelic cooing of singer Rachel Goswell and a rich layering of pedal steel guitar, *Out Of Tune* finds vocalist/songwriter Neil Halstead taking a firmer grip on the reins. Here, his flat, modest voice takes over, couched in a gentle shimmer of acoustic guitar, Hammond organ and the occasional touch of brass. At times, this more subtle approach leaves some tunes dead in the water, where a richer layering of pedal steel or male/female vocal harmonies would have given a valuable boost to his lovelorn navel gazing. But on the most carefully structured songs—at least half of the album—the band's slow, steady unraveling of Halstead's romantic muse results in nothing less than daydreamy bliss.

>>>Colin Helms



## RONDELLES

**Fiction Romance, Fast Machines**  
Smells Like

I'm somewhat puzzled by the nostalgic tone of the Rondelles' music. They conjure up visions of teenage heartbreak as if they were a youthful mirage, but I reckon the three players haven't broken out of late teendom themselves. When was the last time a teen had hot kicks at the "Drag Strip Race"? Do post-feminist girls really plan their lives around boys anymore? Surely not ones that are wise enough to be in a band! Lacking the snotty brashness of the Donnass and the high art lo-fi charm of Bratmobile, the

**OUT:** November 9.

**FILE UNDER:**

Grrrrs in the garage.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Donnas, Bangs, Emilys Sassy

Lime, Bratmobile.

Rondelles seem to lay quiet in water that is traditionally thrashed about in. The cloaky guitars and insistent organ squall have all the cheesy earmarks of a good time grrrl group, but I miss the ranting "I'm gonna push you around" vocals. The lovely voice of singer Juliet never seems to rise above the clang, and makes songs like "Mission: Irresistible," with its come-hither snarl, sound strangely tame. But when the vocals fit the songs, as on "Do It For Me," the Rondelles come into their own. Perhaps when their obsession with girls in the garage becomes a fainter objective, the sophisticated mystique that hovers at the edges of their music will rise up and conquer.

>>>Lois Maffeo



## PEARL JAM

**Live On Two Legs**  
Epic

Only music critics bother with the grunge distinction anymore. By the time that Soundgarden and Pearl Jam reached the apex of their popularity, they had eclipsed whatever down and dirty Seattle aesthetic that might have originally applied. Pearl Jam is a regular old rock band, and boy, do people love rock bands! It's hard to disparage Pearl Jam because its earnestness is what defines it. The band's relationship to its fans is like a romance, and the fight with Ticketmaster a parking lot brawl to show its love. *Live On Two Legs*

is a valentine in this same regard—a document of Pearl Jam's recent US tour that was widely praised for the fondness between the band and the trend-defying sold out crowds that greeted them from coast to coast. While obsessive music freaks are contrarians who love hearing their favorite songs creatively messed with in live settings, mainstream rock fans like comfortably similar versions of their faves. Pearl Jam delivers warm versions of hits "Daughter," "Evenflow" and "Better Man" that diverge from the originals only in their slight worldweariness. More intriguing are the flirty "Hail, Hail," the bluesy "Red Mosquito" and the fierce "Do The Evolution." Pearl Jam seems to have more fun playing the songs for which people aren't holding up the bar quite so high.

>>>Lois Maffeo



## SATISFACT

**The Third Meeting At The Third Counter**  
K

Judging by the recent output of bands like Quasi, Dub Narcotic, Cadallaca and the Spinanes, a shipment of secondhand keyboards found its way to the Pacific Northwest sometime in the past few years. And if anyone knows the delivery man, I'd like to buy him a beer. Each of these groups deploys the instrument with its own twist; Satisfact uses it on its third and final full-length to dispense random splatter and sonic washes atop a brand of angular art punk that's less

**OUT:** January 26.

**FILE UNDER:**

Drone-influenced art punk.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Unwound, Fugazi, Pere Ubu.

overtly retro than on the band's past releases. Guitarist Matt Steinke (who reserves his more incendiary leanings for his work in Mocket) delivers vocals in an almost spoken tone that manages to sound detached even when he's shouting. With a sturdy rhythm section and well-stocked arsenal of guitar effects, Satisfact's more urgent and impressive songs bear a strong resemblance to the output of its geographic brethren, Unwound. Even at a brief 30 minutes *Third Meeting* unravels toward the end, falling back on some mediocre space rock jamming. Still, the band hits its mark more often than not. A few years back Pere Ubu coined a great phrase by proclaiming its "Return to the Avant Garage." Satisfact seems hell-bent on a similar mission, with a bit more emphasis on slacker nihilism.

>>>Glen Sarvady



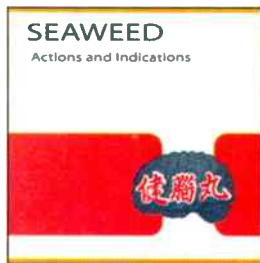
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**SEAWEED** ★  
**Actions And Indications**  
Merge

**OUT:** January 12.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Well-executed pop-punk.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Quicksand, Foo Fighters,  
Superchunk.

At first blush, the notion of a Seaweed record in 1998 sounds like a punk rock mercy date, or at least Merge/Superchunk's Mac and Laura doing right by one of their band's earliest touring partners after its parting company with Hollywood Records. But on the evidence of its first release in three years, Seaweed doesn't need anybody's pity. *Actions And Indications* is an accomplished blast that finds the Tacoma, Washington, quintet's youthful spirit undimmed. Chalk part of this up to interim drummer Alan Cage (also of Quicksand), who lends Dave Grohl-

ish oomph to several numbers ("Thru The Window," "Let Go"). The rest of the band deserves credit for finding some range within its two-guitar format; in addition to the expected metal-minus-solos, there's a convincing cover of Joy Division's "Warsaw," spacious emo-anthems ("Against The Sky"), even a thick power ballad ("Stay Down") sung by guitarist Wade Neal. As for the rest, if you've never cottoned to singer Aaron Stauffer's brand of melodic grit, his contribution here won't change your mind. But even such silly moments as Stauffer's dismissal of a cop ("I don't hear his hassle/Cuz I know that he's an asshole") add to the sense that Seaweed hasn't stopped growing, even if the guys aren't necessarily growing up.

>>>Franklin Bruno



**SEBADOH**  
**The Sebadoh**  
Sub Pop-Sire

**OUT:** February 23.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Lurching, skewed first-person pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Grifters, Helium,  
Lemonheads.

Judging from *The Sebadoh*, Lou Barlow's inelegant ouster of nice guy drummer Bob Fay couldn't have been a happier, more guilt-free break for the band. Its newest incarnation is undeniably high off the fresh blood and gasoline spewed by replacement Russ Pollard. Energy rings off the album because of Pollard's drumming; the band couldn't do "Cuban"—which is, um, Cuban-sounding despite screwy tweaking—without him. His intensity, along with the wheeling, febrile guitars, perfectly belies the emotion scrawled beneath Barlow's studiously flat vocals. Producer Eric Masunaga (Dambuilders) inserts his favorite electronic

blippery way behind the back burners, and the subtlety works. Jason Loewenstein gets half of the album's real estate (the more fucked-up half), screaming things like "I'm gonna get so wasted!" loudly and passionately enough that inebriation sounds like a completely original plan. His better half, Barlow, isn't as perverse as he used to be: The golden-toned "Tree" is very nearly a love fest on the order of Simon & Garfunkel. *The Sebadoh* continues along *Harmacy's* simpler lyrical path, shredding the band's more disturbing conceptual elements. But in approaching some version of normalcy, the band hasn't lost its momentum or relevance. You may have to turn the volume up louder to appreciate *The Sebadoh's* toned-down vibe, but once you do, you'll recall how good it feels to smash your head on the punk rock.

>>>Anne Marie Cruz



**SKINNERBOX** **Demonstration**  
Triple Crown

With a resume as impressive as his longevity in the New York punk scene, Skinnerbox leader King Django shouldn't have to worry much about credibility. He's the man behind the Stubborn All-Stars, founder of Stubborn Records, a noted producer at his Version City Studios, and one-time member of hardcore heroes Murphy's Law. Yet he still has critics to answer to, and he ably responds on *Demonstration's* snotty "Ska, Punk And Disorderly" and "Hepcat Season," a "lyrical spanking"—as Django writes in the liner

notes—that continues a hip-hop-style lyrical battle with LA's Hepcat. The rest of *Demonstration* is spiked with more understated character, as it combines obscure compilation tracks, covers and eight originals. The assortment of covers ranges from jazz ("A Fine Romance") and juicy R&B snarl ("You Rascal, You") to a haunting reading of The Clash's "Straight To Hell," a brash take on The Jam's "Billy Hunt," and a version of the Stooges' "No Fun" that belies the original's desperation with ska's upstroked rhythms. On the originals, Jack Ruby, Jr. of the Toasters lends a soulful vocal to "Heat"'s tense urban mythology, while Django delivers a nice kiss-off on "Goodbye And Good Life," a New Orleans-styled R&B romp.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Mark Woodlief

**SLACKERS****The Question**  
Hellcat

This third-wave Brooklyn ska squad has smartly evolved by focusing its collective eye as much on ska tradition as on contemporary pop influences. Witness *The Question's* mix of Montego stylee with the Beatles-esque sitar on trombonist Glen Pine's "Mountainside." Mindful of ska's blend of American and Caribbean forms, the Slackers simmer jazz, R&B, reggae, pop and soul together to create a stew's worth of hard living, good times, and rock-steady tunes. By eschewing any ska-punk

inclinations, the Vic Ruggiero-led Slackers define their sound with tight songwriting, increasingly solid musicianship, and rugged sonics. The band's beefy, noir-ish rhythms, matched by expert horns (Pine, Jeremy Mushlin on trumpet, Dave Hillyard on sax) and smooth percussive detail, give *The Question* a cohesive musical structure above and beyond ska's always-insistent characteristics. Calls for unity ("Power"), odes to joy riding ("Motor City") and B-movies ("The Mummy"), and an assortment of earnest love songs (including "Do You Know," "Yes It's True," "Make Me Smile," and the earnest title track) make *The Question* one of the brightest and most understated moments of the modern ska era.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Mark Woodlief

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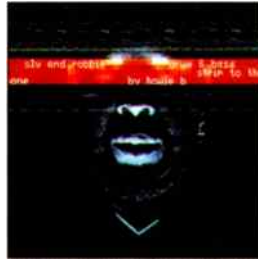
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## reviews

R.I.Y.L. = RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE



### SLY AND ROBBIE

Drum And Bass Strip To The Bone by Howie B  
Palm Pictures

There are probably very few people in possession of the complete works of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, and there's good reason for that: This pair, as a rhythm section and producers, has played on so many reggae records from the mid-'70s onwards that only the most dedicated trainspotter could possibly put together a complete discography. In the mid-'80s their solo work went a little soft, the production became a little slick and the lo-fi quality of their music was drowned in 128 track digital studios. Now, in a seemingly unlikely alliance, Sly & Robbie have handed over production dues to Scottish electronic surgeon Howie B. You really only

**OUT:** January 12.

**FILE UNDER:**

The original drum 'n' bass,  
reimagined.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

King Tubby, Augustus Pablo,  
Pussyfoot label, Rhythm &  
Sound/Maurizio.

need listen to the first minute of the apocalyptic, nine-plus-minute opening track "Into Battle" to hear that this is a marriage made in heaven (and probably also in hell). Howie B's tendency to commune with the dead and round up extraterrestrials for his projects aligns itself in an uncanny way with the zipping highs and stomach-rumbling lows that Sly & Robbie can produce at the drop of a hat. The album tends to sag a little around the midriff when things get a little lite-headed on tracks such as "Zen Concrete," but that aside, this a visionary album for the future of reggae, and its hybrid descendants, which are everywhere. >>>Tim Haslett



### SMOG

Knock Knock  
Drag City

"Let's move to the country/Just you and me," suggests the prolific Smog (a.k.a. Bill Callahan) in the opening moments of his umpteenth release, but two songs before the end, the narrator's back-to-nature move has gone awry: "I had to leave the country/Though there was some nice folks there." In between, it's a bumpy ride through every available style, strewn equally with gems (the acoustic prison tale "River Guard") and potholes (the pre-boogie Royal Trux-isms of "No Dancing"). There's even some winking self-reference: "Teenage

**OUT:** February 3.

**FILE UNDER:**

Eclectic, downcast singer-  
storytellers.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Palace, Cat Power, Vic Chesnutt.

Spaceship," a cousin of Smog's earlier and better "Star Wars," works in a nod to his very first album, *Sewn To The Sky*: "I was a teenage smog/Sewn to the sky." Callahan's singing is clearer and more expressive than ever, and most every song rates a well-realized arrangement. "Hit The Ground Running" is particularly ambitious, overlaying a rustic-Velvets stomp with a (possibly synthesized) string quartet and, disturbingly, a children's chorus. But despite Callahan's still-improving production skills, *Knock Knock* steps back from the sustained intensity of his best work, lacking the sonic and narrative cohesion that made *The Doctor Came At Dawn* and *Red Apple Falls* such refreshing (albeit depressing) breakthroughs. >>>Franklin Bruno



**SOMATIC**

**The New Body**  
Caipirinha

Having cut his teeth as the violinist in the late-'80s experimental NYC pop ensemble Hugo Largo, Hahn Rowe recently reemerged as the producer of several exquisite drum 'n' bass-flavored tracks on *Soak*, the 1998 solo LP from former Hugo Largo singer Mimi Goese. With *The New Body*, the debut full-length under Rowe's Somatic moniker, his inventive programming and compositional styles, and particularly his deft deployment of distinctive timbres, take center stage. The opener, "Raw Dog," bubbles animatedly

with faux tablas and a rubbery upright bass line. Rather than hit the listener with everything in his arsenal at once, Rowe wisely elects to drop elements discretely, then shift their prominence around in the mix like an aural interior designer in a white room. "Venusian Jazz" starts off with a Spartan snare drum, then slowly folds in piano punctuation and a noir saxophone line. "Nu Detroit" begins with a similarly spare set-up, then adds layer upon mercurial layer, yielding an arrangement of slippery pitches both as chaotic and ordered as a multi-tiered Japanese cityscape. As polychromatic as Jackson Pollack's work, the music of Somatic is arty in the best sense of the word, infused with a unique aesthetic that challenges the ear even as it invites extensive investigation.

>>>Kurt B. Reighley

**JOHN SOUTHWORTH** ★

**Mars Pennsylvania**  
Bar/None

*Mars Pennsylvania* is the weirdly compelling debut by Toronto's John Southworth. The London-raised strange bird is son of Brit Peter Shelley—not he of the Buzzcocks but an obscure '70s glam rocker who once worked with Gary Glitter's producers and, as an A&R man, signed a pre-King Crimson Robert Fripp. Which could explain Southworth's eclectic and somewhat embarrassing unhipness (or not). Sure, lounge pop is popular with the kids today, but probably not when it's peppered with surf guitar and sung like Randy Newman with an English accent and a preoccupation with social

outcasts and extraterrestrial life. While Southworth segues from Sammy Cahn to Todd Rundgren to David Bowie with ease, that arch, adenoidal musical-genre-blender shtick has been mined well by Bar/None alums They Might Be Giants. Still, like TMBG, he's got a great backing band, witty lyrics and pretty songs. Take the Stan Getz-flavored trifle, "Girl On The Moon," replete with magic wand organ sprinkles or the Bacharachian "Man If We Could Surf Forevermore" with ambitions to "Tickle Pasadena till she roars/And jet-ski Oklahoma till she's sore." "This Halloween I Go As Me" poignantly articulates the lonely outsider feeling. There, Southworth sings, "The world doesn't need another freak," but he ekes out a charismatic case for keeping another one around.

>>>Anne Marie Cruz

# Out of Tune

## mojave 3



### The New Album

Featuring the single  
"Some Kinda Angel"







**STARSEEDS** ★

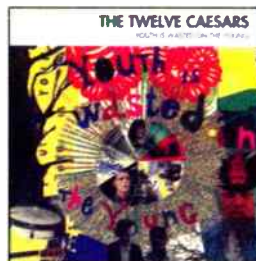
**Parallel Life  
Millennium**

Don't be surprised if you walk into some swank new boutique and hear the Starseeds over the loudspeaker. The duo's combination of frosty hollow tones and whispery vocals is perfect to listen to while you browse through racks of shiny apparel designed to make you look like a cast member of *2001*. The Starseeds' multi-instrumentalist Alex McGowan paints soundscapes with a palette of icy synthesizer swells, pulsating organ and radar bleeps. The dead air between every

**OUT:** January 12.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Interstellar house.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Cocteau Twins,  
Hooverphonic, Enya.

swoosh and gurgle is almost as important to the music as the hushed notes. Regina Dannhof's breathy swoon sails over this ethereal stew. Most of her words are lost in the layers of reverb and echo, though the liner notes offer transcriptions. "Heavensairportcoffeeshoprestaurant" begins: "There is a picture in my soul which I always deny." Okay, so maybe you're not missing much by not hearing what Dannhof's saying. What makes the Starseeds more than sonic wallpaper is the sizzling beats. They might not be funky enough to get you dancing, but they'll keep you from falling asleep. They add just enough spice to make your eyes bop as you stroll past the silver pants and neon bright shirts in that imaginary space-age boutique in your mind.

>>>Neil Gladstone



**TWELVE CAESARS**

**Youth Is Wasted On The Young  
Minty Fresh**

Sweden plus Minty Fresh doesn't always equal the futuristic cocktail-kitsch of the Cardigans, Kameda, or Doktor Kosmos. Borrowing their album title from Winston Churchill, their gloriously grand vocal sneer and stadium-rock ambitions from Oasis, and the '60s-through-the-present pastiche of Madchester and Brit-pop, Stockholm's Twelve Caesars sound like the latest pop saviors sprung from the pages of *Melody Maker* or the *NME*. Sometimes it sounds like they've nicked their influences second-hand—"You Don't Mean A Thing To

**OUT:** December 8.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Stylish "super-sonic" Swedes.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Oasis, Stooges, Inspiral Carpets.

Me" resembles Primal Scream aping the Rolling Stones, "I'm Gonna Kick You Out" feels like a carbon-copy of the Inspiral Carpets doing organ-tinged psych-pop, and "Optic Nerve" could be an outtake that didn't make the recent Oasis B-sides collection. Still, the four-piece writes songs with a confident swagger, a triumphant, anthemic ring, and a mordant sense of humor—obsessive love songs in search of a trashy slasher flick. "I wanna smoke crack/Cause you're never coming back," roars singer Cesar Vidal in the album-opener "Sort It Out." Plus, the Caesars mix and match genres so well, bounding between psych-pop, glam, and mod stylings—they wanna be adored and they wanna be your dog—with such effortless glee and infectious enthusiasm that this is a likable listen even at its most derivative.

>>>David Daley



**TWO DOLLAR GUITAR** ★

**Train Songs  
Smells Like**

It never mattered whether Tim Foljahn was singing "Happy Guitar" or "Let Me Bring You Down"—his weary drawl and somber vocal tone brought you down, whether you actually *let* him do it or not. So if the idea of Two Dollar Guitar instrumentals seems like a respite from the depressed state of his vocal delivery, well... it's not. *Train Songs* is a lumbering musical documentary with bass, guitar and drums, all dirty with soot and black smoke. An improvisational homage to the locomotive, *Train Songs* crawls along steadily and evenly; rather than the usual "winging it" approach taken by many improvisers, Two Dollar Guitar's wanderings seem less "free" improvisations than structured ones. Most have a defined, bottom-heavy bass line that holds the songs together, while drummer Steve Shelley (of Sonic Youth) does his best imitation of the rhythmic grumble of track and wheel scraping along. Over all this, Foljahn, who's a wonderfully literate guitarist, meanders and comments, adding clang and landscape. Most importantly, even though the song titles dictate the theme—"Asheville Special," "Virginia Creeper," "Erie Lackawana," and so on—the music succeeds on its own in capturing the essence of the locomotive's somber existence, of the end of an era. Not really a party record, but a fantastic downer.

**OUT:** October 19.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Modern American field recordings.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Dirty Three, Tren Brothers, Pell Mell.

>>>Randall Roberts



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It took nearly a decade for **TERRY FRANCIS** to gain recognition outside of his faithful camp of London followers. But once the dam broke in 1997, venues and clubbers the globe over couldn't get enough of the man known as the master of tech-house. Perhaps the wealth

of attention suddenly paid to the veteran jockey was due to his controversial "Best New DJ" award at that year's Muzik Awards ceremony (an honor which, in reality, came 10 years late). But, more likely, it was his acclaimed *Architecture* mix—a hypnotizing release that showcased his affinity for dubby, soulful house grooves, ethereal vocals and icy techno textures. Striking while the iron remains red hot, Francis returns with a second worldwide tour and **Architecture Volume 2** (Pagan), a 14-track collaboration that picks up where his first audio adventure left off. Leaving fancy turntable trickery behind, Francis concentrates on producing a smooth, flawless mix, slowly bleeding each song into the next with effortless precision, prompting listeners to ride his groove until it reaches its final destination. Cascading from celestial breaks and uplifting deep house to smoldering tech-funk, Francis takes this excursion to deeper and darker places than its predecessor, while he exhibits the same flawless skills and uncompromising ear for melody that made his first mix so entrancing.... During the past couple of years, San Francisco's Om Records has emerged as one of the best downtempo labels in the business. The imprint's chill, stony grooves and uplifting house rhythms have

proven suitable for both mental and spiritual inspiration, and such is the case with two of the label's most recent compilations. **Mushroom Jazz 2** (Om), named and compiled in honor of the famed Bay Area acid-jazz nightclub, finds resident maestro **MARK FARINA** once again conducting an orchestra of soul-stirring jazz melodies backed by dubby backdrops and midtempo hip-hop rhythms. Most renowned for spinning deep house grooves, Farina does an excellent job at keeping the vibes flowing, using multiple copies of records to cut, scratch and splice in the varying beats and musical phrases. Yet his smooth-as-silk



execution never falters, resulting in a soulful mix that serves as an excellent follow-up to its 1997 predecessor. Those moved by slightly higher BPMs will be engaged by **Sounds Of Om** (Om), a 15-track collection mixed down by San Francisco's **DJ FLUID**. This compilation rides a smooth and luxurious house edge and features previously unavailable remixes from the label's catalog of artists, including Naked Music, Terra Deva, and Fluid Motion. Talents such as King Britt and Derrick Carter round out the collection with their exceptional remix efforts.

>>>M. Tye Comer





# klezmer

**Just imagine! Klezmer is being played by goyim as well as Jews these days. It's influencing the avant-garde downtown scene in Manhattan and is in the midst of a revival that seemed inconceivable to me, the son of Jewish immigrants from Poland, in 1960. At that time Yiddish culture seemed to be on its last legs, but it's made a modest comeback. How did this happen? What is klezmer music anyway? Funny you should ask.**

Klezmer, a type of popular and celebratory music, was created by Yiddish-speaking Jews from Central and Eastern Europe centuries ago from an amalgam of influences. Jewish liturgical music and the songs of the Chassidic sect were a source for klezmer as well as the folk and popular genres of the peoples Jews lived among. Certainly klezmer music has strong similarities to other forms of Eastern European and Balkan music: Doinas are played by both Jews and Romanians, and both dance the hora. Russian and Ukrainian music also has much in common with klezmer.

Jewish immigrants brought klezmer to the US. In Europe the music had evolved constantly and it continued to do so here, absorbing influences from jazz and dance bands. One outfit was called Joseph Cherniavsky's Yiddish-American Jazz Band. It included in succession two of the greatest stars of 1920s klezmer music, Naftule Brandwein and Dave Tarras. Both were brilliant clarinetists, although they were strikingly different in some respects. Brandwein couldn't read music, while Tarras was a fine reader and had a broader music education—he was a polished player, though not as original as Naftule. Brandwein drank, hung out with criminals, and was very eccentric; once he played wearing an Uncle Sam outfit wrapped with Christmas lights and was nearly electrocuted when he began perspiring. Tarras, a more bourgeois type, was a good businessman and became New York's bar mitzvah king. Both were, however, major influences on today's klezmer players.

By the 1940s, klezmer music had declined in popularity. Jews were assimilating and turning away from Yiddish culture. Some associated Yiddish with their persecution in Europe. Zionism was on the rise, Israel was reborn, and Hebrew was becoming increasingly popular. In the 1950s one significant klezmer artist did come to the fore, Mickey Katz. Singer/clarinetist Katz did very funny satires of American pop tunes in Yinglish, but what went unnoticed was his band's superb instrumental work and sophisticated, complex arrangements. After 1960, though, forget it—Yiddish culture was corny, old hat.

Or so I thought. Actually there were forces at work I could not fathom. One was the revival of Orthodox Judaism, led by the Chassidim. Many of them used Yiddish in their everyday lives, enabling it to be heard a bit more. More important causes for the rise of interest in Yiddish culture came from secular sources. Forces, including Alex Haley's *Roots*, created an interest within many ethnic groups in discovering their family backgrounds, which, in the case of many American Jews, led back to their Yiddish-speaking European forebears, as musician/historian/musicologist Henry Sapoznik has

pointed out. Sapoznik has noted that many young Jews were proud of, and identified with, the impressive accomplishments of Diaspora communities in Europe and the US, and in Jewish socialist organizations, such as the Workman's Circle, which championed Yiddish culture.

The revival of Yiddish culture included the revival of klezmer in the mid-1970s. Sapoznik, in addition to his scholarly activities, formed a klezmer band, Kapelye. Andy Statman, already a brilliant bluegrass mandolinist with a great deal of curiosity about other forms, was studying clarinet with Tarras, who looked upon him as his successor. And Statman did become a superb clarinetist who creatively blended klezmer with other genres. The Klezmerim, a Berkeley, California-based band, composed of Jews and gentiles that performed klezmer and Balkan music, released their *East Side Wedding LP* in 1977.

Around 1980, Hankus Netsky, a graduate student and instructor at the New England Conservatory of Music, began putting together



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

DON BYRON

THE SCENE IS NOW



klezmer bands and giving concerts there. Out of this came his Klezmer Conservatory Band, which he's led ever since, and which has become quite popular, cutting a number of albums for Rounder. This band launched the careers of a couple of members who became influential in their own right, trumpeter Frank London and clarinetist Don Byron. Netsky's compositions and arrangements reflected his classical training, but he was mainly a popularizer rather than an innovator. London and Byron were more daring. Both men were excellent jazz musicians but had knowledge of other genres—between them classical, R&B, rock and Latino forms as well as klezmer.

Both London and Byron had been exposed to New England Conservatory teacher Joe Maneri, a precursor of today's "new music" movement, in which a variety of genres from around the world are being synthesized to create new ones. Maneri, among the greatest improvisers of the past half century, had been doing this since at least the mid-'50s, although he's only recently getting recognition for it, and he imparted some of his knowledge to not only London and Byron, but also to other important figures in the current avant-garde.

London has gone on to become the musical director of the Klezmatics, one of the most well-received klezmer bands, and a mildly progressive one. But more interesting is his work with Hasidic New Wave, which plays Chassidic themes, some daringly arranged, and uses free improvisation.

Byron is the first African-American klezmer star. His career has been unusual in that he gets involved in one particular type of music for awhile and gives it intense concentration, then moves on to something else. He's told me that his klezmer career is over and his last CD had hip-hop and rap influences. Byron made a rigorous study of Katz's work and went on to cut a CD called *Don Byron Plays The Music Of Mickey Katz*. Most of the tracks on it are covers of Katz's material, but there are a couple of fine original Byron pieces containing a blend of jazz, classical and Semitic (not necessarily klezmer) influences.

The trumpeter on this Byron CD was Dave Douglas, arguably the best jazz trumpet player to emerge since Freddie Hubbard. Douglas has played Western-influenced music backed by strings, and Hungarian- and Bulgarian-marked pieces with his Tiny Bell Trio. In 1993 Douglas joined with composer/alto saxophonist John Zorn, the most well-known figure in the new music field, bassist Greg Cohen and drummer Joey Barron to form Masada, one of the most important of the new Jewish bands. Zorn, the leader, has written hundreds of compositions for Masada based on scales associated with Jewish music, but the group's music is also marked by the work of Ornette Coleman.

Rising interest in world music has drawn the attention of Jews and non-Jews toward klezmer. Since the early '90s a number of impressive klezmer and klezmer-influenced new music bands have emerged, such as the Paradox Trio and the New Klezmer Trio.



HASIDIC NEW WAVE'S GREG WALL

Not all klezmer stuff is far out. There are plenty of "inside" klezmer bands such as Brave Old World, which appeals to traditionalists, and other bands that blend rock and Latino ideas with klezmer. Klezmer music has been doing well in some European countries including Germany and Austria. The people who play klezmer do it for various reasons. Some, like Cleveland's Bert Stratton, whose band Yiddishe Cup plays traditionally, have social as well as aesthetic concerns. He remarked, "It's exciting to play concerts, but it's also very important to play weddings. It's an honor to be a part of the most important day of someone's life. And playing the music opens up avenues for people to get involved in Jewish culture without having to go to a synagogue." Others look at the music as exciting and interesting without being concerned about culture factors. Either way, those who draw from klezmer, a form that was once virtually dead, are enriching the world's musical vocabulary.



# Robert Goulet

**Blondie's "The Tide Is High" may have been the first 45 that I bought as a kid, but the soundtrack to my childhood was far from rock-centric. While other kids my age were groovin' to "Pac-Man Fever," I was dancing around the living room singing along with tunes from Camelot. Really.**

Before I knew the name Robert Goulet, I knew the name Billy Bigelow. That's the character Goulet played in the theater-in-the-round production of *Carousel* that I saw when I was only five years old. I don't remember much about the performance itself because even seated on the aisle, I was too small to see over the people in front of me. But what I'll never forget is how every time Goulet ran up the aisle between scenes, he patted me gently on the head and called me "darlin'" or "cutie." Nearby women, my mother included, sneered jealously as the tall-dark-and-handsome Goulet showered all of his attention on me. A few years later, I joined the Official Robert Goulet Fan Club and started corresponding with the man himself. I would send him drawings or handmade gifts and he would send a short note thanking me and calling me "Little Darlin'." I was proud to be the only kid I knew who had a 52-year-old golden throat as her pen pal.

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*Robert Goulet*

mucked up the lyrics to our national anthem when he sang it at a boxing match. What's more, many looked on him as a second-rate Tony Bennett or Mel Tormé, or a third-rate Sinatra. I had never thought of Bob as the guy who inspired Elvis Presley (who later replaced Goulet as my silly obsession) to shoot his television in disgust when Goulet's mug appeared on it. I had never looked at him as being so lampoon-worthy that a *Saturday Night Live* sketch would feature Phil Hartman-as-Frank

Sinatra saying "Bob Goulet. Now *that's* no talent." What did I know? Truthfully, none of this would have mattered much to me because my admiration of Goulet went beyond his well-trained voice, well-bred charm and rakish good looks. It was his accessibility that I most adored. After all, how many kids get Christmas cards from their musical idols?

When I listen to Goulet's records today, his too-formal voice and increasingly silly choice of tunes (did he really have to do "Bridge Over Troubled Water"?) occasionally give me a quick chill of embarrassment for the fella. But these days Goulet clearly has a sense of humor about himself, and when I see him dressed in drag as a meter maid in that Mercedes Benz commercial, I know that I'm laughing with him, not at him. END.

One of the perks of my fan-club membership was that it insured that I would get to go backstage at any Goulet performance I attended. So in 1985 my family took a summer jaunt to see Goulet perform at a Catskills resort, where my mom and I inadvertently stumbled in on Goulet's soundcheck the afternoon of his show. With a bit of finagling, I was able to meet him and the chivalrous gent escorted my mother and me back to our room, where he gave me a gentle kiss on the cheek and promised to save me a table up front for the show that night. *Camelot's* Lancelot had become my own personal knight in shining armor.

Once I was in my teens, my contact with Goulet started to peter out. I was more interested in boys my own age and had finally switched from AM to FM radio listening. My grandfather had started to taunt me about Goulet, saying his real name was "Stanley Appelbaum" and that he was "light in the loafers," as if the insinuation



THE WRITER, CIRCA 1986, WITH GOULET

that my heart-throb was Jewish and gay—both of which were equally objectionable to my Archie Bunker-like Grandpa—would extinguish my affection for the singer. But the truth is that by the time I was 14 I knew I was just too old to hang on to my childhood crush.

So I put all of my Goulet correspondence and memorabilia in a box in the attic and tried to pretend that I had never been so uncool as to have been a Robert Goulet groupie. Because it was around that time that I began to become aware of how often Goulet's name was being used as a punch line. After all, the Canadian-bred singer had inadvertently





BY IAN CHRISTE

## metal top 25

- 1 **DEATH**  
The Sound Of Perseverance Nuclear Blast America
- 2 **SEPULTURA**  
Against Roadrunner
- 3 **NOTHINGFACE**  
Everyday Atrocity DCide-Mayhem
- 4 **BLACK SABBATH**  
Reunion Epic
- 5 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
ECW Extreme Music Slab-CMC International
- 6 **MESHUGGAH**  
Chaosphere Nuclear Blast America
- 7 **SPINESHANK**  
Strictly Diesel Roadrunner
- 8 **SOUNDTRACK**  
StrangelandTVT
- 9 **BOLT THROWER**  
Mercenary Metal Blade
- 10 **SOILENT GREEN**  
Sewn Mouth Secrets Relapse
- 11 **ROB ZOMBIE**  
Hellbilly Deluxe Geffen
- 12 **FEAR FACTORY**  
Obsolete Roadrunner
- 13 **QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE**  
Queens Of The Stone Age Loosegroove
- 14 **SHADOWS FALL**  
Somber Eyes To The Sky Lifeless
- 15 **SAM BLACK CHURCH**  
The Black Comedy Wonderdrug
- 16 **BRUCE DICKINSON**  
The Chemical Wedding CMC International
- 17 **SOUNDTRACK**  
Bride Of Chucky CMC International
- 18 **DEICIDE**  
When Satan Lives Roadrunner
- 19 **ALL OUT WAR**  
For Those Who Were Crucified Victory
- 20 **DAMNATION A.D.**  
Kingdom Of Lost Souls Revelation
- 21 **ROACHPOWDER**  
Viejo Diablo TMC
- 22 **KORN**  
Follow The Leader Immortal-Epic
- 23 **HAMMERFALL**  
Legacy Of Kings Nuclear Blast America
- 24 **MARILYN MANSON**  
Mechanical Animals Nothing-Interscope
- 25 **CRYPTOPSY**  
Whisper Supremacy Century Media

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

## EC8OR

World Beaters

Digital Hardcore Recordings

Napalm Death, Brutal Truth, and Fear Factory are a few of the metal standard-bearers that have tried throwing hardcore techno into their roaring morass of sound. Earache Records has encouraged such blurring of genre lines, first releasing compilations of drum machine headache by the Industrial Strength label, then opening its vaults for the *Hellspawn* remix compilation. Still, the most convincing adrenaline-tech comes from Berlin's Digital Hardcore label, and among its roster—including Atari Teenage Riot, Bomb 20, and Shizuo—the most direct and intrusive middle finger has been thrust upward by the dark duo EC8OR. On *World Beaters*, EC8OR spits abrasive breakbeats in a swirl of screams and digital gibberish, all to the purpose of destroying past culture and making itself a star. If that isn't the same regressive set of ethics that motivated Venom, Black Sabbath, and Burzum at their best, those bands just weren't as over-stimulated and articulate. EC8OR is a hyper-excited burst of hormones and shock value, with a unique sense of how to ruin a perfectly good Onyx sample and still come out okay. The cover song of choice on this effort unfortunately isn't by Voivod or Celtic Frost; it's the Stooges' "Dirt," where singer Gina V. D'Orio gasps tartly and lurching gap-toothed techhead Patric C. throws in a bed of low-sloping sub-bass moans. *World Beaters* is ecstasy on the verge of being the end of ecstasy, or, as they put it, "Gash In Your Subversive Idyll."



>>> Whatever ground **DEICIDE** has lost to European black metal in the past three years could be recouped in a cinch if all acts were set on a stage and experienced in real time. The Florida quartet is a burly and powerful sight to consider, Satanic rednecks whose amps and drum kit seem to shudder a few feet forward with each powerful thump. So a live record—*When Satan Lives* (Roadrunner)—proves the crew's mighty mettle, even if it was recorded at Chicago's decidedly un-metal House of Blues. The effort proves that Deicide has concocted some incredibly catchy songs over its decade-long history, and the group is even more frighteningly coordinated live than in a studio. Needless to say, an entire album of Eric and Brian Hoffman's deft between-song guitar squiggles would put anything the Knitting Factory has ever hosted to shame.... Though the basic black metal formula of raspy guitar, gobbling drums, and scorched vocals is by this point all-too-entirely-and-officially played out, nobody bothered to tell the American act **NOCTUARY**. The band's *For Salvation...* (Lost Disciple) falls awfully close to being more-of-the-same, but if you don't mind reading-between-the-hyphens, you'll find the band's metallurgically tight act to be appropriately gritty and second-hand inspired.... For those who have exhausted the fat catalog of dodgy Mayhem bootlegs, it is time to look into the band's side projects. **KVIKKSØLVGUTTENE** is an outing bred by bassist Necrobutter and a couple of guys named Zathan and Det Skal Du Drite I. Their album *Kreig* (Voices Of Wonder) is intricate metal with unusual physical presence. With slamming syncopated grooves and desiccated vocals, the trio recalls some groovy Celtic Frost fused to a modern wall of plastic explosive heaviness. The cover photo, of a stained and pants-less African mercenary holding a severed hand in his mouth, puts forth most accurately the immediacy of this whole wrong-minded shebang.

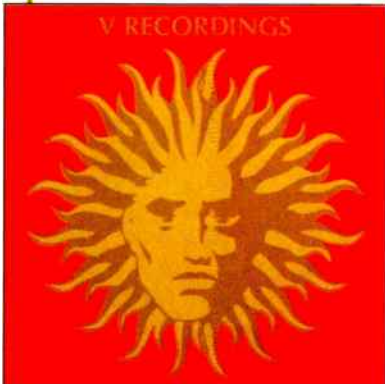


# PLANET V

Various Artists

Ultra

It is probably now apparent to most that drum 'n' bass is on a life support system and that if it doesn't get a massive re-infusion of creativity and innovation, it'll become the freestyle of the '90s—laughed at because it couldn't escape the monotony of the two-step formula. But maybe this is a eulogy preached over an empty grave, because there are a handful of artists and labels always testing the limits of what's acceptable in the field, extending its horizons just a little further. It's not surprising that a lot of this creative ferment is going on in Bristol, which remains a city of uncanny musical output. It was the folks at Bristol's V label who introduced the world to the Roni Size/Reprazent crew, whose album *New Forms* broke new ground in drum 'n' bass and gained the music a considerable reputation on this side of the Atlantic. The first two volumes in the V Classic series are of tremendous quality, and *Planet V*, the third, is the most diverse and exciting yet. Certainly no harm is done by the inclusion of Adam F's "Brand New Funk," which is already a contender for d'n'b track of the year with its Roy Ayers-styled bass groove and twists and turns. Surprisingly, the two tracks by Ed Rush & Optical, the Freddy Kruegers of the genre, are not what you might expect. You wouldn't want to be left alone with a lot of their recent tracks, particularly the evil and destructive "Cutslo." But here, they inflect their nightmarish scenarios with a "touch of jazz," as disco producer Nick Straker once put it. Ray Keith's contribution snaps straight out the two-step mold, the drums moving like a sidewinder in the desert, the percussion racing to keep up and a sonorous bass pulse keeping things (barely) under control.



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>>> Producers Ed Rush and Optical, mentioned above, can certainly take the breakbeat and bass line to frightening levels of intensity. The Alec Empire/Digital Hardcore movement is also gaining momentum with the release of records like Bomb 20's outrageous *Field Manual* and bracing material from Christoph de Babalon. And then there's **DJ SCUD**, who really doesn't give a damn whether you stand still or go into paroxysms in the face of his nearly inhuman music. This is the breakbeat taken literally to the breaking point. You can't even hear the breaks, they move by at such speed that they become like white noise, but somehow DJ Scud and **CHRISTOPH FRANGELI**, who recorded the monstrous "Bodysnatcher" 12" (Ambush), manage to keep a groove roaring at full pitch. On Scud's collaboration with **NOMEX**, a modest 7" single entitled "Total Destruction" (Maschinenbeau), the pair injects a deep Jamaican dancehall spirit into the mix, almost defying the listener to endure the sensory overload. Surprisingly, Scud's music possesses a sort of soulfulness that is quite absent from a lot of what's termed hardcore within contemporary electronic music.... Always one to tinker at the fringes of electronics and hip-hop is **DJ VADIM**, the Russian-born, London-based DJ and producer whose name is a staple among underground downtempo headz worldwide. Recently he's been in the studio with **PRIEST** and **BEANS** of the Anti-Pop Consortium and together the trio has produced one of the most challenging experimental hip-hop records of the year, *The Isolationist EP* (Jazz Fudge). Vadim provides beats and production while the Anti-Pop guys provide the rhymes, and their synchronicity is extraordinary. Vadim is darker and deeper than ever before, and he was never an upbeat fellow to begin with.

# dance top 25

- 1 **TALVIN SINGH**  
OK Island
- 2 **KRUDER & DORFMEISTER**  
The K&D Sessions Stud!o K7
- 3 **MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO**  
Actual Sounds + Voices Nothing-Interscope
- 4 **GROOVERIDER**  
Mysteries Of Funk Higher Ground/Columbia-CRC
- 5 **DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID**  
Riddim Warfare Outpost
- 6 **FATBOY SLIM**  
You've Come A Long Way, Baby Astralwerks
- 7 **PAUL VAN DYK**  
Seven Ways Mute
- 8 **SKINNY PUPPY**  
ReMix Dys Temper Nettwerk
- 9 **PAUL OAKENFOLD**  
Tranceport Perfecto/Kinetic-Reprise
- 10 **UNKLE**  
Psyence Fiction Mo Wax-London
- 11 **PISH POSH**  
Up Jumps The Boogie Raw Kuts-Rawkus
- 12 **PLASTIKMAN**  
Artifakts (BC) M\_nus/Novamute-Mute
- 13 **THE ORB**  
U.F. Off: The Best Of The Orb Island
- 14 **WAGON CHRIST**  
Tally Ho! Astralwerks
- 15 **FAITHLESS**  
Sunday 8PM Cheeky-Arista
- 16 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Deeper Concentration Om
- 17 **60 CHANNELS**  
Tuned In Turned On World Domination
- 18 **PHOTEK**  
Form & Function Astralwerks
- 19 **AUTECHRE**  
Autechre Warp/Nothing-Interscope
- 20 **KEVORKIAN DEATH CYCLE**  
Dark Skies Metropolis
- 21 **SPAHN RANCH**  
Beat Noir Cleopatra
- 22 **TRIP THEORY**  
Something For Your Mind Intersound
- 23 **APOPTYGMA**  
Berzerk 7 Tatra-Metropolis
- 24 **BOARDS OF CANADA**  
Music Has The Right To Children Warp/Skam-Matador
- 25 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Moonshine Over America 98 Moonshine

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



BY BRIAN COLEMAN

## hip-hop top 25

- 1 **OUTKAST**  
Rosa Parks LaFace-Arista
- 2 **HIGH & MIGHTY**  
B-Boy Document Eastern Conference
- 3 **PETE ROCK**  
Tru Master Loud-RCA
- 4 **7L & ESOTERIC**  
Def Rhymes Direct
- 5 **JAY-Z**  
Hard Knock Life Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam
- 6 **EMINEM**  
Just Don't Give A Fuck Interscope
- 7 **BRAND NUBIAN**  
Don't Let it Go To Your Head Arista
- 8 **A TRIBE CALLED QUEST**  
Find A Way Jive
- 9 **ROOTS**  
Don't See Us MCA
- 10 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Slam Sampler Immortal-Epic
- 11 **BLACK STAR**  
Definition Rawkus
- 12 **LAURYN HILL**  
Doo Wop Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 13 **PACEWON**  
I Declare War Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 14 **METHOD MAN**  
Dangerous Grounds Def Jam
- 15 **MEDINA GREEN**  
Crosstown Beef Rawkus
- 16 **CYPRESS HILL**  
Tequila Sunrise Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 17 **FAITH EVANS**  
Love Like This Bad Boy-Arista
- 18 **HIEROGLYPHICS**  
You Never Knew Hieriperium
- 19 **JAY-Z**  
Can I Get A... Roc-A-Fell-Def Jam
- 20 **KURUPT**  
We Can Freak It Antra-A&M
- 21 **PRAS**  
Blue Angels Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 22 **BRAND NUBIAN**  
The Return Arista
- 23 **HELTAH SKELTAH**  
I Ain't Havin' That Priority
- 24 **VIRTUOSO**  
Incinerator Brick
- 25 **SOLE & MOODSWING 9**  
3 Guys In A Bar 45 Below

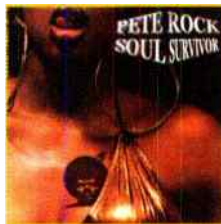
Compiled from *CMJ New Music Report's* weekly Beat Box charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

DJ QBERT 

Wave Twisters Episode 7 Million:  
Sonic Wars Within The Protons

Galactic Butt Hair-ISP

The turntablist full-length genre is still in its tender infancy, but there are few albums of this ilk that will ever be more inventive, mind-expanding and just plain freaky as DJ QBert's long-awaited solo debut. As hinted at by years of much-sought-after and cherished mix-and-mash tapes by Q and the ever-expanding Invisibl Skratch Piklz family, there must be something in the Bay Area water supply that makes DJs tread heavily on the outer edges of both tricknology and reality. With that in mind, be forewarned: *Wave Twisters* is not music that is meant to soothe you. This is the soundtrack to an outer-space nightmare set light years away. A glance at some of Q's song titles begins to tell the story: "Electric Eye Beam Abduction," "Inside-Out Body Warp," "Destination: Quasar 16.33.45.78," "Razorblade Alcohol Slide" and the charming "Grandpa Wears Fat Laces." The relentless, futuristic sounds, pulses, cuts, chirps, tweaks and scrapes on this 17-track aural odyssey reference everything from evil intergalactic dentists to the uneasy acceptance of nocturnal emissions, and the compositions, cuts and execution are exemplary. As background music, this is straight-up maddening; as headphone music, it's simply cinematic.



>>> Since the honorable **PETE ROCK** and rapper CL Smooth parted ways, Pete has been keeping a relatively low profile. But he's obviously been busy, and with his solo debut *Soul Survivor* (Loud), he is as on top of his game as ever. He's been rocking some sick tracks in the last few years for the likes of Rakim, the Lost Boyz and All City, but *Soul Survivors* makes it quite obvious that he's been hoarding the really ill stuff for his own bad self. Mr. Rock has downsized the horn-drenched jazz samples and mellow rare grooves that made him one of the hottest producers of the early '90s, but his leaner, grittier new style suits him just fine. He's also got tons of vocal help from a cast including Inspectah Deck and KuruPT (featured on the killin' single "Tru Master"), CL Smooth, Big Punisher, Raekwon, Method Man, OC, Kool G. Rap, Common, Beanie Man and a hell of a lot more. And he's in full gear when he goes it alone, as on the excellent "#1 Soul Brother."... The heads at Nervous Records have come up with another excellent voyage through the world of underground freshness with *Hip Hop Independents Day: The Sequel*, which works its way through New York (of course) to Toronto, Texas, Ohio, Virginia and Washington, DC. There are absolutely no duds on this set, but standouts include K-Otix's "7 MCs Part II," the Masterminds' "Sunshine," Mathematik's "Better By The Letter" and the criminally underrated Godfather Don's "Pick Up The Mic."... And while we're on a various artists kick, take the time to seek out the expansive and crucial five-CD set **Tommy Boy's Greatest Beats**, which collects extended 12" mixes, familiar classics and an entire remix CD with revisions by the likes of DJ Premier, Grooverider and even Double Dee & Steinski; **KID CAPRI's** star-studded *Soundtrack For The Streets* (Columbia), showcasing top-shelf work by Slick Rick, Nas, KRS-One, Ras Kass and more; and the deep left coast underground excavation of **Beats & Lyrics 2** (Industry).



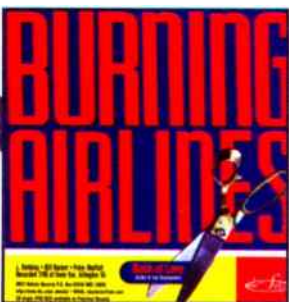


>>> Paul Caporino's band **M.O.T.O.**, which tends to max out both the "crude" and "catchy" axes, lost some momentum when he stopped playing with drummer Beck Dudley and turned it into a one-man project. With the new six-song *Eternal Standby 7"* EP (M.O.C.), though, he's back in the groove: grimy, yummy and cheerfully mean-spirited, pinning the recording

meters in the red and bellowing away. And if the lyrics don't seem to get too far beyond the titles, well, the point is to drive the hooks into your brain, whatever it takes. Best chorus: "I hate my fucking job/I hate my fucking job/Oh-oh-oh oh-oh-oh oh-oh-oh"—okay, maybe you have to hear it. Best song title: "I Know You Gotta Do The Things You Gotta Do But Why You Gotta Do 'Em To Me?"

>>> Alan Sparhawk and Zak Sally of Low have a duo of their own, **HOSPITAL PEOPLE**, which has just released an excellent debut single, "Crash" (Duck Suit). It's an electronic pop project, using what sound like very, very old analog synthesizers and drum machines—the A-side comes off somewhere between the Normal's "Warm Leatherette" (the car-crash imagery, the hissing rhythms) and early Gary Numan (the frigid vocal delivery and the dry-ice synths, subliming out of the mix). On the other side, "We'll Be Philosophers" has more big, cold sweeps of synthy-strings and a persistent bass pulse. Sparhawk can't keep the humanity out of his voice, but then the wobbly synths come in and transport you back to 1981, when robots ruled the earth.

>>> Scarcely a month goes by without a few releases from Elephant 6 Recording Co.-related bands, and this month's are pretty choice: The **MINDERS** have a lush three-songer, "Black Balloon" (Little Army). Their specialty is the kind of instrumental variation that did wonders for the mildly psychedelic '60s pop bands (e.g. the Pretty Things, the Left Banke) which they take after. And they've picked up other little musical tricks by close listening, too: bass parts that move independently from the chords, Paul McCartney-style, and the occasional incursion of psyched-up backwards guitar. Meanwhile, **NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL** has a gorgeous-looking picture-disc 7" (Blue Rose) that pairs their most recent album's "Holland" with a new song, "Engine," which showcases Julian Koster's singing saw.



>>> A few quick drops of the needle: **BRAID** and **BURNING AIRLINES**, to commemorate their tour together, have released a split single of new wave covers (DeSoto). Sort of. Burning Airlines' version of Echo & The Bunnymen's "Back Of Love" is decent-not-great, but Braid's "Always Something There To Remind Me" is a brilliant, muscular reinvention of the

# BEDHEAD

"Lepidoptera"/"Leper"  
Trance Syndicate

The eighth and final record by Bedhead, and the final release on its label Trance Syndicate, this 10" is essentially a postscript to the band's album *Transaction De Novo*, but what a postscript. Bedhead has always been interested in making its songs as pure and simple as it can get away with, and "Lepidoptera," the album's linchpin, is almost blanchingly pure: A tiny two-guitar



figure (which was written out as sheet music) waltzes slowly through a series of permutations, accompanied by the slightest of percussion. The lyrics are in the voice of a paralyzed man, who watches a moth that he imagines to be his guardian angel. One of the band's Kadane brothers, it turns out,

had the brilliant idea of turning the sheet music upside down, and playing the notes that were indicated that way; the result is the longer, slower "Leper." The real stroke of genius here, though, is "Leper"'s lyric, a conceptual inversion of "Lepidoptera" to complement the musical inversion: It's from the point of view of the moth, watching the man, and saying "Now things are backward/That were never meant to be forward." And Bedhead's musical touch on "Leper" is flawlessly light, so feathery it hardly seems affected by gravity at all; they're floating away from us, vanishing into the light at the record's center.

song. The funny part is that they've clearly learned it from Naked Eyes' cover (listen to how they bend the last word of the phrase "how we used to be"), but their interpretation brings out the weird rhythmic tricks and chord changes that Burt Bacharach's original is loaded with.... The **FRUMPIES** (essentially Bikini Kill, minus Kathleen Hanna and plus Bratmobile's Molly Neuman) have broken their silence of a few years with their poppiest single to date, "Eunuch Nights" (Kill Rock Stars), and collected all their 45s on an inconsistent but intriguing CD, *Frumpie One Piece*... Buyer, be careful: the **Hi Peach!** compilation 7" (Nana) includes a track by Solex—but it's a Spanish D.I.Y. punk trio, not the Dutch woman who recorded *Solex Vs. The Hitmeister*. It's still a fun comp of international pop types, also including the Merseybeat-ish London quartet Baby Birkin doing the self-explanatory "Bossa Nova Baby Birkin" and Japan's Fifi & The Mach III ripping up the Go-Go's' "How Much More."



# ethiopique

ethio jazz & musique instrumentale 1969-1974

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## VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ethiopiennes Vols. 1-5 Buda Musique-Allegro

Nowadays, the influence of Western music upon the world is pretty cut and dried: Turn on the radio in Turkey or Lisbon or Rio and you'll hear bad imitations of Madonna and Depeche Mode, sung in that region's language. But it wasn't always that way: Back in the '60s and '70s, in the days before satellite dishes and MTV, some amazing music happened as a direct result of folks opening those boxes of records shipped in from the States. Ethiopic, in particular, was swept rapturously away by the sounds of soul music, R&B and later, funk emanating from America. Swayed by the sounds of Otis Redding, James Brown, Sam Cooke, and Carla Thomas, Ethiopians adapted this foreign sound to fit in with their own traditional music and instruments, absorbing the influence and writing songs in their own language and style. Sound intriguing? It is. The five-volume series *Ethiopiennes* documents the landscape of Ethiopian pop music from this "golden era." The bands in the photos uncannily resemble Jamaican bands of the '60s like the Skatalites or Maytals—there are lots of photos in the booklets of guys in zoot suits with bow ties holding horns. And the music? Chances are, you've never heard anything like it, and you will fall in love with it. So forgive me a moment if I sing the praises of Tsehaytu Beraki, a fierce female vocalist who played her *krar*, a traditional Ethiopian lute-like thing, in her mother's beer-bar; or Tewelde Redda, the guitarist whose amplifier was little more than an oversized modified radio. There are gruff-throated vocalists, nimble guitarists and swaying horn sections, all recorded in that raw sound that makes you feel like you're really listening to a stack of old records. If you love the American soul music of Stax, the warm sound of vintage reggae, the '70s funk of Sly Stone and the heavy Afro-beat of Fela Kuti, or if you just want to hear something truly wonderful, these records are for you.

BY JAMES LIEN

>>> Guitarist **JOHN FAHEY** was a monstrously important figure in both blues and in alternative music, exploring the sonic potentials of weirdly tuned vibrating guitar strings a full two decades before Sonic Youth. Fantasy Records has just re-released his classic second album, *Death Chants, Breakdowns, And Military Waltzes*. Fahey first released this album in 1963, then re-recorded it and re-released it again in 1967, and this CD compiles both versions. (It's not a reissue, but Fahey's latest live solo electric recording on *Table Of The Elements* is also a real stunner.)



>>> In celebration of **KRONOS QUARTET's** 25th anniversary, Nonesuch Records has released an ambitious ten-CD box set called *25 Years*, chronicling the Quartet's history as the preeminent modern classical quartet that hipsters all know and love. (Among other things, Kronos has covered Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze.") Throughout the set, the one constant is that the Quartet has always offered a refreshingly alternative, smart, witty take on modern classical music, whether it's the aforementioned string quartet interpretation of psychedelic rock, the group's work with African percussionists, or its rendering of influential works by composers like Philip Glass and Steve Reich.

>>> The **CREATION** was one of the most beloved cult bands of the '60s. Not quite a pure British invasion band, the group predated the stadium-stomping hard-rock bands such as Led Zeppelin and Humble Pie that would conquer America again in the '70s. Like the Small Faces or the Zombies, the Creation was never much of a hit in the States, but Retroactive Records' two CDs, *Making Time* and *Biff Bang Pow!*, collect the best moments from the band's swinging '60s career.

>>> If you want a CD mastered to capture the glorious sounds of raw pre-war music on grainy old 78s, check into the Yazoo label, which has just rolled out two wonderful new collections titled **My Rough And Rowdy Ways** (subtitled "Early American Rural Music Badman Ballads And Hellraising Songs"). The hellraisers are great to put on before a night on the town. On a more serious note, it can be immense fun to contemplate the characters and events of these narrative badman ballads. What's up with Billy Lyons, who gets killed by Stagger Lee in a scuffle over Lee's stolen Stetson hat? Why on earth would he mess with the hat of a vicious killer like Stagger? Was he a fool or did his bravado get the better of him? And what about the sheriff, who seems strangely ambivalent about punishing this bad deed?



>>> Late last year, Impulse! Records did quite a few good deeds. First, there was a massive, eight-CD box set of material from the original **JOHN COLTRANE QUARTET** ★ *Complete Impulse! Studio Recordings*, including almost a whole disc's worth of never-before-heard music. Then there was Impulse!'s "New Thing" series, a set of incredible reissues of rare music from the days when Impulse! label was on the cutting edge of free jazz movement, with titles by

**PHAROAH SANDERS, SAM RIVERS, CECIL TAYLOR, DEWEY REDMAN** and others. Of particular note is the double-CD **ALBERT AYLER** *Live In Greenwich Village*.

>>> Continuing to play catch-up for a moment, there were quite a few other great releases that snuck out towards the end of last year. Rhino released a four-CD **RANDY NEWMAN** box set and a **GANG OF FOUR** retrospective that told the tale of this definitive early punk/new wave combo. Reggae label Heartbeat Records released *Bongo Red*, a fabulous collection of vintage '70s reggae sides from **ALBERT GRIFFITHS** and the **GLADIATORS**. Island Records released *Modern Classics*, a best-of collection of **PAUL WELLER's** more recent solo material (from albums such as *Wildwood* and *Heavy Soul*).



1	JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Acme	Matador-Capitol
2	BECK	Mutations	OGC
3	AFGHAN WHIGS	1965	Columbia-CRG
4	R.E.M.	Up	Warner Bros.
5	PJ HARVEY	Is This Desire?	Island
6	JETS TO BRAZIL	Orange Rhything Dictionary	Jade Tree
7	SOUL COUGHING	El Oso	Slash-WB
8	FATBOY SLIM	You've Come A Long Way, Baby	Astralwerks
9	CAKE	Prolonging The Magic	Capricorn
10	BELLE & SEBASTIAN	The Boy With The Arab Strap	Matador
11	764-HERO	Get Here And Stay	Up
12	MERCURY REV	Deserter's Songs	V2
13	SON VOLT	Wide Swing Tremolo	Warner Bros.
14	MACHA	Macha	Jetset
15	SPIRITUALIZED	Live At The Albert Hall	eConstruction-Arist
16	CAT POWER	Moon Pix	Matador
17	SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE	How It Feels To Be Something On	Sub Pop
18	CAROIGANS	Gran Turismo	Mercury
19	MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO	Actual Sounds + Voices	Nothing-Interscope
20	LESS THAN JAKE	Hello Rockview	Capitol
21	STEREOLAB	Aluminum Tunes	Orag City
22	IOAHO	Alas	Buzz
23	PLACEBO	Without You I'm Nothing	Hut-Virgin
24	SIX BY SEVEN	The Things We Make	Mantra/Beggars Banquet-Interscope
25	EELS	Electro-Shock Blues	OreamWorks
26	SILVER JEWS	American Water	Orag City
27	PROMISE RING	Boys + Girls (EP)	Jade Tree
28	WHALE	All Disco Dance Must End In Broken Bones	Hut-Virgin
29	EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN	Ende Neu	Nothing-Interscope
30	REEL BIG FISH	Why Do They Rock So Hard?	Mojo
31	DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID	Riddim Warfare	Outpost
32	HIGH LLAMAS	Lollo Rosso (remix EP)	V2
33	JAO FAIR & YO LA TENGO	S range But True	Matador
34	MOMUS	The Little Red Songbook	Le Grand Magistry
35	GOLDEN SMOG	Weird Tales	Rykodisc
36	CINERAMA	Va Va Voom	SpinART
37	JONATHAN RICHMAN	I'm So Confused	Vapor
38	UNKLE	Psyence Fiction	Mo Wax-London
39	HOVERCRAFT	Experiment Below	Blast First-Mute
40	PHISH	The Story Of The Ghost	Elektra-EEG
41	AITHLESS	Sunday 8PM	Cheeky-Arista
42	ARCHERS OF LOAF	White Trash Heroes	Alias
43	UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH	Almost Here	Virgin
44	TALVIN SINGH	OK	Island
45	HIS NAME IS ALIVE	Ft. Lake	4AO
46	KARATE	The Bed Is In The Ocean	Southern
47	NADA SURF	The Proximity Effect	Elektra-EEG
48	ZEBRAHEAD	Waste Of Mind	Columbia-CRG
49	NUMBER ONE CUP	People People Why Are We Fighting?	Flydaddy
50	QUEERS	Punk Rock Confidential	Hopeless
51	COMBUSTIBLE EDISON	The Impossible World	Sub Pop
52	PUSHMONKEY	Pushmonkey	Arista
53	GROOVERIDER	Mysteries Of Funk	Higher Ground/Columbia-CRG
54	ICU	Chotto Matte A Moment!	K
55	VARIOUS ARTISTS	In Their Eyes: '90s Teen Bands	Cheap Oate-Rhin
56	PROLAPSE	The Italian Flag	Jetset
57	URSLIOE	Adventure	Virgin
58	SEAM	The Pace Is Glacial	Touch And Go
59	BUFFALO TOM	Smitten	Beggars Banquet/Polydor-A&M
60	OASIS	The Masterplan	Epic
61	MOCK ORANGE	Nines & Sixes	Lobster
62	JAWBOX	My Scrapbook Of Fatal Accidents	OeSoto
63	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Zum Audio Vol. 2	Zum
64	JULIE RUIN	Julie Ruin	Kill Rock Stars
65	RONDELLES	Fiction Romance, Fast Machi	Smells Like
66	GHOTI HOOK	Songs We Didn't Write	Tooth & Nail
67	MINERAL	End Serenading	Crank!
68	PORTISHEAD	Roseland NYC Live	Go! Beat-London
69	ELLIOTT SMITH	XO	OreamWorks
70	WILLIE NELSON	Teatro	Island
71	HI-FIVES	Get Down!	Lookout!
72	SQUAREPUSHER	Music Is Rotted One Note	Warp/Nothing-Interscope
73	DEPECHE MODE	The Singles 86-98	Mute-Reprise
74	THE EX	Starters Alternators	Touch And Go



FIVE YEARS AGO

1. SPINO JT

SPINOUT DELICIOUS VINYL

2. VARIOUS ARTISTS

NO ALTERNATIVE ARISTA

3. TOM WAITS

THE BLACK RIDER ISLAND-PLG

4. LEMONHEADS

COME ON FEEL THE LEMONHEADS ATLANTIC

5. VARIOUS ARTISTS

STONE FREE: A TRIBUTE TO JIMI HENDRIX REPRISE

TEN YEARS AGO

1. R.E.M.

GREEN WARNER BROS.

2. SONIC YOUTH

DAYDREAM NATION BLAST FIRST-ENIGMA

3. THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

LINCOLN BAR/NONE-RESTLESS

4. WATERBOYS

FISHERMAN'S BLUES ENSIGN-CHRYSLIS

5. MINISTRY

THE LAND OF RAPE AND HONEY SIRE-WARNER BROS.

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



# LIFE/STYLE

## JON STEWART: DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THOSE BIG LIGHTS

"I don't think I've ever gone anywhere where you walk in and everybody turns and the guy behind the counter goes, 'Oh my God, look who it is!' I mean, people who recognize me, there's never that sense of intimidation or whatever it is that people get when they see Brad Pitt or one of those things. It's more like, 'Ah, you're that fuckin' guy from that thing.' And then they push me and run away."



Interview by Jenny Eliscu  
and Barbara Klugman  
Article by Jenny Eliscu

Jon Stewart's self-deprecating style has always been a mainstay of his humor, but his humility is not just a comic

shtick: For a guy who has, in the past few months, appeared in two movies (*The Faculty* and *Playing By Heart*) and started filming a third (with Adam Sandler), put out a book (*Naked Pictures Of Famous People*), and started a gig as the new host of TV's *The Daily Show*, he is remarkably reluctant to acknowledge his growing celebrity.

"I worry about people not giving me any more opportunities to make what I want to make much more than I worry about [my profile] getting too big," he says, over coffee and a cruller at the Twin Donut shop around the corner from the Chelsea studio where he's just spent the past three hours being photographed. "Because I just don't see that happening and the progression I've had even up to now doesn't feel much different than it did when I was working the clubs. I've worked shitty clubs and shitty towns where no one knew who I was, and I've been on MTV and worked nice clubs where people knew who I was, and it's not much different."

Stewart may be reticent to admit to any major changes in his life since he first began doing stand-up at New York City's The Bitter End in 1987, but anyone who's been had an eye on the 35-year-old comedian knows that his career has had its ups and downs. In '93, he began hosting his own talk show on MTV—a major break for the Jersey-born comic—only to have it canceled in '95, after one season of national syndication via Paramount. Today, much like Ben Stiller, another diminutive Jewish funny guy with ties to MTV and a failed series bearing his name, Stewart seems poised to break into the big

(Continued on page 64)

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## ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE

(TriMark)

Oh, joy, there's another movie featuring a) couples taking it on the lam in vintage cars, b) junkies shooting up in their necks, and c) robberies going awry. As tired as these elements have become, however, *Another Day In Paradise*—the latest from director Larry Clark (*Kids*)—flourishes thanks to its outlaw ambiance and surprisingly entertaining performances. The movie, set in an unnamed Midwestern town in the 1970s, concerns Bobbie (Vincent Kartheiser), a delinquent dooper, and his easy-to-please girlfriend Rosie (Natasha Gregson Wagner). Then along comes Uncle Mel (James Woods), a self-described "junkie and real good thief," who offers to take Bobbie on a big-time heist. So Bobbie and Rosie pile into Mel's black El Dorado alongside his girlfriend Sid (Melanie Griffith) for a not-so-excellent adventure. Clark, who considers this a counterpart to *Tulsa*, his 1971 kids-on-drugs photo essay, gives the movie a relentless, hell-bound pace and creates a suitably seedy, cheap-motel-room atmosphere. Despite their tough exteriors, both Woods and Griffith show a vulnerable side that makes them likable. And even when things disintegrate into a farrago of pulpy clichés, an appealing slacker decadence remains intact. >>>John Elsasser

## JAWBREAKER

(Columbia-TriStar)


Rose McGowan has quickly become the reigning scene-stealing queen of young Hollywood—on and off the screen. (If you disagree, then you didn't see that dental floss-thin get-up she wore at the MTV Video Music Awards.) But even this vivacious vixen's best efforts can't revive *Jawbreaker*, a tepid black comedy that attempts to channel the spirits of *Heathers* and *Carrie*. McGowan is the devilish leader of Reagan High's most popular gal-pals. After the gals accidentally kill their best friend during a birthday prank, McGowan convinces the others to make it look like murder. With sexy leads, a quirky supporting cast (Pam Grier, Carol Kane) and rock-star cameos (Marilyn Manson appears in a leisure suit and mustache, the Donnas play the prom), *Jawbreaker* could have been a cult fave for the *Scream* generation. But 26-year-old writer/director Darren Stein's effort lacks the requisite clever twists and cheeky gallows humor to sustain interest. With numerous shots of the curvy stars vamping in butt-hugging, cleavage-revealing

## HILARY AND JACKIE

(October)

Hilary And Jackie could move even the most cold hearted to tears. Emily Watson (*Breaking The Waves*) masters the flighty personality, spastic body language, and passionate performance style of Jacqueline du Pré, a cello prodigy troubled by both her genius and the fame that it brought, and then crushed by multiple sclerosis. Rachel Griffiths (*Muriel's Wedding*) portrays flutist Hilary who chooses marriage and motherhood over music. Together, they create a symphony out of this tale of clashing personalities, sibling rivalry, coming of age and forgiveness, all of which is orchestrated through director Anand Tucker's use of dual point-of-view sequences and art-film angles. Most interesting are the severe close-ups and grating sound effects used to establish the love-hate relationship between du Pré and her talent in scenes where she is seen playing her cello. The music contains the needed power to push the flow of the film and, even with an all non-musician cast, it isn't ruined by flawed conducting or musical technique. *Hilary And Jackie* pushes past a simple retelling of the du Pré sisters' biography to give viewers a complete sense of these women's trials and triumphs.

>>>Carrie Bell



clothing, *Jawbreaker* looks like something a 26-year-old movie-loving man would make. It should do decent business among horny teens, prison inmates, and members of the Rose McGowan Fan Club, though. >>>John Elsasser

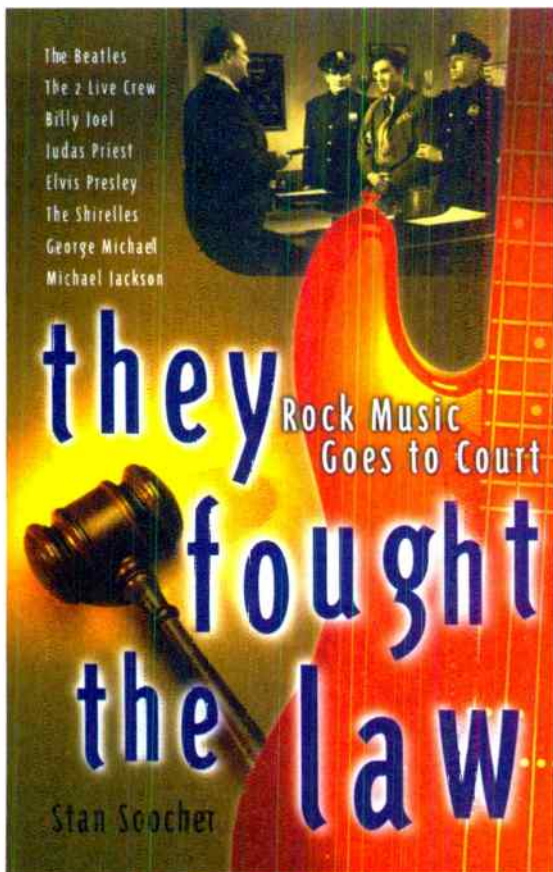
## ARLINGTON ROAD

(Polygram Films)

Ever notice how when coworkers or neighbors comment about a perpetrator of violent crimes they always say something like, "He was always pleasant and clean," or "I can't believe she would do that. She volunteered at the church and the school"? It's this phenomenon that makes Tim Robbins, who has effortlessly portrayed characters both sympathetic (*Jacob's Ladder's* troubled veteran) and sinister (*Bob Roberts's* slippery politician), the perfect

casting choice in this grim and realistic is-he-or-isn't-he-a-terrorist-bomber thriller. Oliver Lang (Robbins), his sugary sweet wife (Joan Cusack), and their Stepford children move into a perfect Washington, DC, suburban neighborhood in a house across the street from Will Faraday (Jeff Bridges), a paranoid history professor who lost his FBI agent wife in a Ruby Ridge-type disaster. To the tune of spooky Angelo Badalamenti instrumentals, Bridges slowly realizes that even families that enjoy baseball and birthday BBQs may not be what they seem. The plot is intricate enough to keep you guessing and *Arlington Road* doesn't have the kind of predictable or disgustingly heroic ending that Hollywood often expects you to swallow, although more complete character development would have added a bigger bang. >>>Carrie Bell





**THEY FOUGHT THE LAW:**  
**Rock Music Goes To Court**  
 By Stan Soocher  
 (Schirmer Books)

Elvis Presley, Billy Joel, John Lennon and Paul McCartney had more in common than the ability to record hit after hit. These superstar songwriters and rock legends spent an inordinate amount of time away from the glitter of show business, hunkered over legal documents in mahogany-hued attorneys' offices and fretting over royalty payments and management deals gone awry. Music attorney and journalist Stan Soocher writes about these and

other icons in *They Fought The Law*, a clear-minded, intricately detailed and often troubling look at the court cases that occurred away from the spotlight during these pop icons' careers. Soocher explores music law from all angles, using well-publicized lawsuits as a window into the machinations of the business. From the perpetual battle between the Presley estate and bootleggers of Elvis merchandise to the famed infighting among the Beatles camp to 2 Live Crew's First Amendment issues, pop's history resounds with courtroom drama and back-room settlements, and the author presents each instance in challenging yet accessible prose. On a par with record biz exposes such as *Hit Men* and *The Mansion On The Hill*, *They Fought The Law* hammers home the point that the missing element in the "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll" formula is most decidedly "Cash."

>>>Richard Martin

**YOUR VIGOR FOR LIFE APPALLS ME: ROBERT CRUMB LETTERS, 1958-1977**

(Fantagraphics)

Comics artist Robert Crumb, creator of Mr. Natural, Flakey Foont, Fritz the Cat, etc., was a reluctant counter-culture hero of the '60 and '70s. But it's the unabashed objectification of women found in his later work that seems to have left the most lasting public impression, thanks in large part to Terry Zwigoff's 1994 documentary *Crumb*. Almost as a rebuttal from the adoring comics community, Fantagraphics dusts off this collection of Crumb's correspondence, culled primarily from his

adolescent years. *Your Vigor For Life Appalls Me* chronicles Crumb's relationship with kindred spirits Mike Britt and Marty Pahl, whom he met through the tight-knit underground comic/fanzine community. Crumb's paranoid and obsessive personality jumps from each page, whether through his constantly self-deprecating remarks or his energetic doodling. Though it's hardly a "feel good" book, for someone so renowned for his disgust with humanity, *Your Vigor* shows Crumb as a childlike and caring individual, deeply concerned about and affected by his friends' and family's feelings. *Your Vigor* provides compassionate insight into the life of one of the more curious characters in pop culture.

>>>Sam Cannon

**HICKORY WIND: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GRAM PARSONS**

By Ben Fong-Torres

(St. Martin's Griffin)

In his lifetime, Gram Parsons didn't sell all that many records, but in the 25 years since his passing, his legend has grown. Now that the alt.country music he helped pioneer has become a fully established genre, it's a good time for the reissue of this book (first published in 1991). Let's begin by saying it's not perfect: Writer Ben Fong-Torres sketches his subject well—most particularly his early years, which could have come from a Tennessee Williams play—but he never seems to penetrate to the heart. You come away with a sense of what Parsons wanted to be more than what he actually achieved, which was a great deal. It might have been the Eagles who reaped the commercial rewards of the ideas forged by Parsons with the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers, but it's Parsons's records that are still influencing generations of musicians. There was, you hope, more to him than the rich Southern fuck-up that seems to lurch through these pages. This book opens the window a crack; the full picture is still waiting.

>>>Chris Nickson

**THE GOOD LIFE**

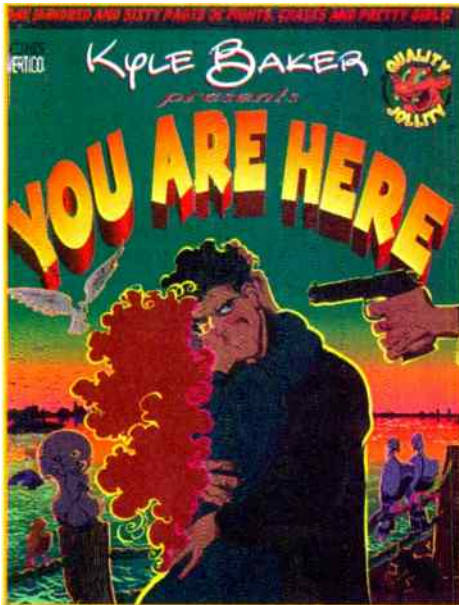
By Tony Bennett (with Will Friedwald)

(Pocket Books)

You won't find any dirt on Frank Sinatra or any other legends here, but if you're interested in a surprisingly honest, detailed and distinctly American tale about an immigrant's son and his triumphs and knockdowns, *The Good Life* will entertain. There's name dropping aplenty, but few juicy show biz stories. Tony the painter would rather tell you about his childhood art teacher and Tony the legend would rather recall how Duke Ellington sent a choir over to his hotel to cheer him up on one of his darkest days. Those dark days included several failed relationships, a drug-ridden career nose-dive in the '70s and a failed label venture. Bennett's suave sincerity throughout is somewhat refreshing in the star autobiography world, and his bold candor on racism (in Depression-era New York, in WWII, and later in the march with Martin Luther King, Jr.) creates perhaps the most revealing glimpses of the carefree crooner.

>>>Steve Ciabattini



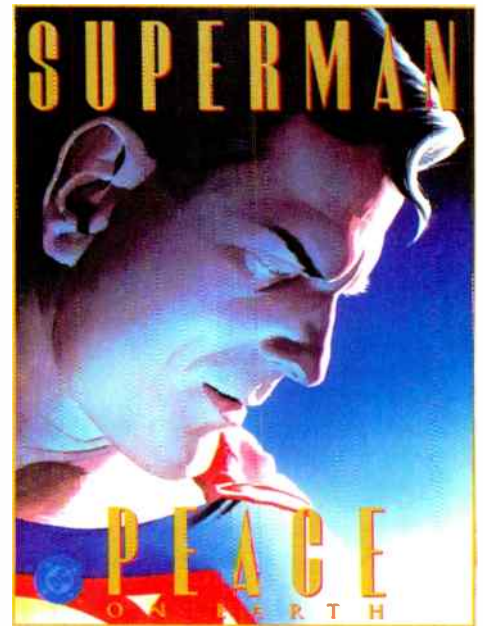
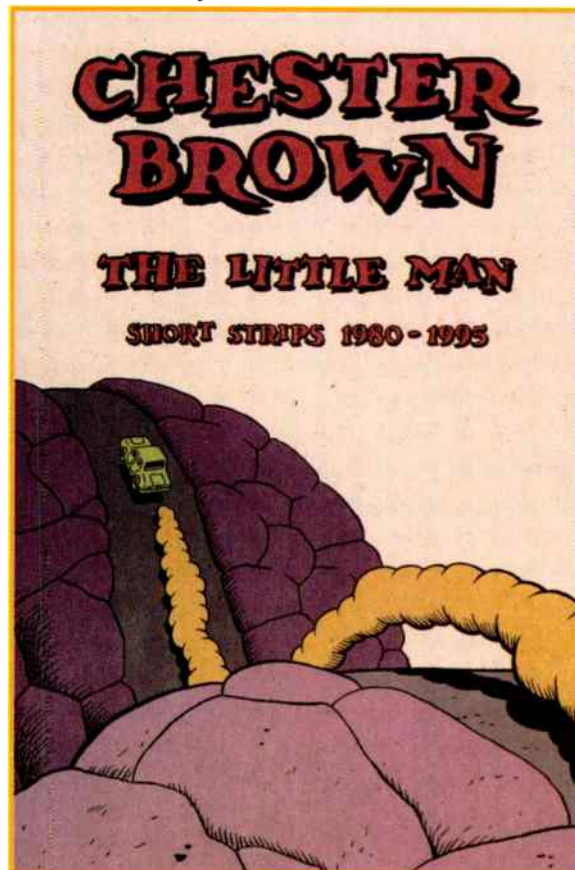


The easiest way to get beyond the problem of comics being too close to a standard form is to break them out of their usual format—the 32-page pamphlet that's been associated with North American comics for decades. But the success of Chris Ware's *Acme Novelty Library*, with its wild issue-by-issue fluctuations in appearance, has encouraged comics artists to experiment with different shapes, sizes and lengths. The best comics of the last few months, in fact, are mostly in formats unique to themselves.

At the top of the pile is Kyle Baker's 160-page graphic novel *You Are Here* (Vertigo), which barely qualifies as a comic book: With its dialogue all in captions beneath each panel and its lush cel-style coloring, it looks more like the story board for an animated film. Of course, it might have some trouble getting made into a movie, with its cute animals and funny-faced comedy-relief characters bumping up against strippers and graphic violence, but in Baker's imagination, it all comes together. His fans have been waiting almost eight years for the follow-up to his brilliant graphic novel *Why I Hate Saturn*. He serialized a couple of chapters of something called *You Are Here* in the anthology *Instant Piano* a couple of years ago, but he seems to have scrapped them and started over. The new story concerns a former jewel thief who's gone straight, fallen in love with a nature girl and moved to the

country; he comes back to the city to find a serial killer he once cuckolded coming after the two of them. It's a weird combination of light comedy and terror, but Baker pulls it off, mostly thanks to his gift for sharp, sarcastic dialogue ("That's my mom. Just ignore her. It's easy and fun"). And he's also an unmatched caricaturist, setting wildly distorted faces and bodies against gorgeous, realistic-looking backgrounds for an effect that makes the story all but pop off the page.

Chester Brown is about as different a cartoonist from Baker as there is. *The Little Man* (Drawn & Quarterly), a small, handsomely printed collection of 15 years' worth of his short black-and-white strips (mostly reprinted from his old series *Yummy Fur*), alternates between berserk scatological fantasies and flat, austere autobiography. A story about an awful former housemate of his, "Helder," is followed by "Showing 'Helder,'" about the process of drawing the first story and talking over which parts of it do and don't work with his friends. The later pieces show off his mastery of unusual page and panel composition, but the early, more overtly neurotic work, with its characters hopelessly confused by language and constantly shadowed by horrible death, sticks in the



memory. One story starts as a little comedy with Brown drawing himself as a bunny and his friend Kris as a gerbil, as he often does, and ends with them screaming as they're tortured and eaten by an owl. Though Brown has yet to collect his unnerving adaptations of the Gospels, *The Little Man* also includes a rendition of a Gnostic story involving Jesus's twin that ranks among his best work.

Artist Alex Ross (who won practically every industry award there is for *Marvels* and *Kingdom Come*) and writer Paul Dini (producer of the *Superman* and *Batman* animated series) have revived a long-lost comics format: the oversized "treasury edition." *Superman: Peace On Earth* (DC Comics) is a relatively huge (13 1/2" x 10") one-shot, whose plot is an attempt to answer an obvious question: If there were a Superman, why wouldn't he, say, eliminate hunger? But whatever: The point of looking at this book isn't to read a story, it's to ooh and aah over Ross's stunning, lush artwork. He paints all of it, mostly from live models, and if that means his images sometimes look a little stagey, it also means his art has a rich realism that's rarely been seen in this medium before. He may be starting to spread himself a little thin—the upcoming *Earth X* series for Marvel is going to be based on his designs but drawn by somebody else, always a danger sign of impending art-factory problems—but this is a beautiful piece of work, and nobody in comics comes closer than Ross to the virtues of classic American illustration.



So the tree's been hauled out to the Dumpster; the presents have been filed, broken, eaten or laundered; the cards are just coming down off the mantelpiece, and your sweetie has just given you the speech that starts with "we need to talk" and ends with "I want you to know that I really value you as a friend." What do you do next?



Why, you head straight to your computer, of course. And your first stop, without a doubt, should be **Breakup Girl** ([www.breakupgirl.com](http://www.breakupgirl.com)). Lynn Harris, the Breakup Girl herself, is the Net's leading advisor on broken hearts and what to do about them. Her motto: "Feel better, schmeel better." The center of the site is her "Breakup Girl To The Rescue" column—updated every week, and always very, very long—in which B.G. counsels a dozen or more letter-writers at length about their romantic trauma. The column's been going on for well over a year, and it's developed its own Seinfeldian in-jokes and pet references (you'll have to look for yourself to find out what, exactly, a "loft-builder" is). Harris is a deft, funny writer, but she's also full of advice that's completely sensible, rarely saccharine, and occasionally counter-intuitive—though not a bad idea. And she has a way of cutting through to the heart of a question, or noticing the important questions a letter-writer doesn't ask. If nothing else, the column is worth reading as proof that there are people out there whose love lives are infinitely more painful, convoluted and bizarre than your own. The site also has a hopping discussion board, a series of Breakup Girl comics ("Eeek! B.G., why are you holding *Mars And Venus Book Of Days*?" "It's for my Halloween costume!" "You're going as John Gray?" "Can you think of anyone scarier?"), and a set of electronic

postcards that you can send to loved, prospectively loved, or not-really-loved-any-more ones ("you may have nodes on your

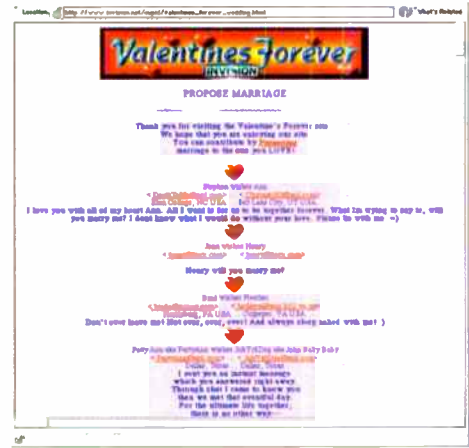


larynx," she explains, "but you still have needs"). Extra points for naming the company that puts the site together Just Friends Productions.

At this point, you're going to want to subscribe to **Two Solitudes** ([www.freedonia.com/ts](http://www.freedonia.com/ts)), a short romance presented in the form of blind carbon copies of the characters' correspondence, emailed to you. To say any more would be to say too much. Just do it, okay?



Of course, there are any number of romance-related sites out there on the Web; console yourself in your single misery by checking out the weirder ones. Start with



[www.geocities.com/Paris/Metro/6107/](http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Metro/6107/), which advertises itself as the first site devoted to couples made up of taller women and shorter men. Uh-

huh. Or have a look at **Valentines Forever** ([www.invision.net/cupid/valentines\\_forever\\_wedding.html](http://www.invision.net/cupid/valentines_forever_wedding.html)), and marvel at the sheer, terrifying number of people who have not only proposed to their significant others online, but documented it on the site. Feel like doing it yourself? Send a postcard from [www.greetsomeone.com/cgi-bin/step1.pl?maryme8:cards:0](http://www.greetsomeone.com/cgi-bin/step1.pl?maryme8:cards:0)—but don't be surprised if the object of your affection runs screaming. And if you feel like venting about your ex—or just reading the results of hundreds of other people doing the same (well, maybe not about your ex)—have a look at the Ex-Girlfriends/Boyfriends Page ([www4.linknet.net/babcock/ex.htm](http://www4.linknet.net/babcock/ex.htm)), a twisted but engaging forum for people's horror stories.

So you've been surfing the Net for a while, checking out sites, dropping the occasional email to people. Maybe some of them write back. Maybe one of them writes back a few times. And then you write back a few times, and you find yourselves on IRC all night once or twice, and there's a little two-line note in your mailbox when you log on every morning, and you're forwarding amusing pieces of net-dreck back and forth a few times a day, and you start signing your notes "love," and then you realize—oh, God, help me, I'm having an Internet love affair. This is the time to bookmark **Cyber Romance 101**



([web2.airmail.net/~walraven/romance.htm](http://web2.airmail.net/~walraven/romance.htm)), a set of links to all things relating to virtual heartthrobs. A lot of it should be taken with a grain of salt (avoid the "fiction and poetry" section if you value your settled stomach, not to mention the essay on "cyberlove" that links to a "second income opportunity"), but at least it's got a bunch of perspectives on the peculiarly agape-ish relationships that can develop between people who are in constant contact but may never meet in person. Good luck.



# High-End Stereo: Big Bang/Little Bucks

CD PLAYERS	WINNER	SONY CDPXA1ES	\$350
	RUNNER-UP	NAD 515 (multi-disc player)	\$499
INTEGRATED AMPS <small>(An integrated amp is pure pre- and power amp combined—no tuner or radio. Too much stuff under the hood can mean crummy sonics.)</small>	WINNER	NAD 214	\$499
	RUNNER-UP	CREEK 4330	\$495
SPEAKERS	WINNER	TANNOY M1	\$250
	RUNNER-UP	B&W DM602	\$550
SUBWOOFERS	WINNER	PSB ALPHA SUBSONIC 1	\$439
	RUNNER-UP	HSU RESEARCH TN1225HO	\$495
TURNTABLES	WINNER	REGA PLANAR 2	\$350
	RUNNER-UP	MUSIC HALL MMF (with cartridge)	\$299
INTERCONNECTS	WINNER	KIMBER PBJ	per pair \$68
	RUNNER-UP	MONSTER CABLE	N/A
LOUDSPEAKER CABLES	WINNER	MONSTER CABLE M2.2S	eight-foot pair \$425
	RUNNER-UP	AUDIOQUEST INDIGO	eight-foot pair \$187



So you're thinking, "Sure would like to hear those Belle & Sebastian, Chemical Brothers and (fill in your band) records the way God intended." Time to head to the mall? Not necessarily. Before you plunk down your hard-earned cash at a generic retail outlet that would as soon sell you some '80s workout videos as stereo gear, consider the high-end alternative.

For slightly more green than that cheesy Panasonic mini system, which will assail your ears in gauzy bass and screechy treble, and likely break in a fortnight, you can purchase an entry-level high-end system that will a) knock the socks off your friends' cookie-cutter hifis, and b) last far longer.

The following list is just a rough guide of high-end components, with both personal favorites and some recent award winners. Even if you can't buy everything at once, each piece listed here—all under \$500—is a good stepping stone to building a quality high-end sound system. >>>Ken Micallef

THE WINNERS:

Old and/or cheap CD players are the pits, and sound like hell. This Sony is rock solid ergonomically and sonically, with a headphone jack and a digital output if you want to upgrade to a separate digital-to-analog converter.



If you want to play a bunch of discs for your party, the NAD 515, from longtime high-end manufacturer also known for also producing budget-minded gear, can do it in style.



At 80 Watts per channel, the 214 can kick out any jam with booty to spare—a refined presentation but not at the expense of slam.

The souped-up, 100 dollars more "R" version of this 40 Watts per channel amp recently took *Stereophile* magazine's 1998 Budget Component of the Year Award.



At a little more than one foot tall each, you wouldn't think the Tannoys could kick much booty. But in addition to burly, bombing bass notes, the M1's top end is well integrated, a real plus in this price range. Recently awarded 1998 European Loudspeaker of the Year honors.

A bookshelf speaker that almost qualifies as a mini column, the 602 is a deceptive gentle giant. It may not have ultimate finesse or the best manners, but its bass reproduction is prodigious and warm, and it will play loudly with just a little juice.



This mighty mite can bust up the baddest hip-hop while also delivering the lowest note of Charles Mingus's acoustic bass. If you must use it for action-adventure soundtracks, go for it.

Well under four bills, the HSU provides the ultimate in stomach-rattling low-end.

Rega is a long-standing maker of high-value-for-the-money turntables. With an excellent tone arm, the Planar 2 is lightweight, but substantial enough to deaden vibrations from dancing roommates. Solid bass, good speed control.



This may look like a Technics, but it ain't. This belt-driven beauty (never go for direct drive; too noisy) includes a Goldring Elan cartridge on an adjustable tone arm, delivering a smooth top-to-bottom performance.

Believe it or not, the cable hooking up your system is almost as important as the system itself. And also the quickest way to upgrade. The PBJ is a longtime industry fave, smoothing out rough edges while revealing detail.



Circuit City promotes the hell out of this stuff, and, hey, it works. Some of them are the size of a tree limb, but the bass response is spectacular.

Rolls off or smoothes out treble glare, delivers solid midrange focus, offers quick-witted bass response.



Makes the rough spots smooth, and reveals nuances of treble and midrange. Best when bi-wired, allowing that your speaker has two sets of binding posts.





## VIDEOGAMING GRIM FANDANGO

(LucasArts)

A far cry from the scores of 3D shooter-clones, the Mexican folklore-inspired comical adventure *Grim Fandango* is as important an installment to your CD-ROM collection as landmark games like *Quake* and *Unreal*—and that statement comes from a 3D shooter addict. Where *Grim Fandango* breaks the typical find-the-clues/solve-the-puzzles format is with the content itself. The game's action takes place in the Land Of The Dead—a land through which, according to Aztec beliefs, the soul travels for four years on the way to its final resting place in the ninth underworld. Your character, travel agent Manny Calavera, has the job of selling deserving clients an express trip through, but he's finding that even his most deserving clients aren't qualifying for tickets on the Number Nine (which will whisk them through the Land in four minutes instead of four years). To quote the game's hook-line: "Something's rotten in the Land Of The Dead and you're being played for a sucker." Depending on what LucasArts does to get the word out, *Grim Fandango* could do for adventure gaming what *Final Fantasy VII* did for role-playing games. It's that groundbreaking. >>>Aaron Crow

(Continued from page 57)

time. Before he accepted the job hosting *The Daily Show*—a post left open by Craig Kilborn, who is leaving to become *The Late, Late Show's* new Tom Snyder—Stewart had been offered gigs on a handful of different late night talk shows.

"Well, that's show business," he says. "Everybody is always about to reject you for something as they're about to consider you for something else to reject you. Everybody's always considering rejecting you. I can't tell you how many times you'd meet somebody and they go, 'Oh man, we were gonna use you in this movie.' 'Oh, you mean the one that already came out?' It's like a girl breaking up with you before you even go out with her. It's like going to somebody's wedding [and saying], 'Hey, I was gonna go out with you three years ago.'"

In person, Stewart is very funny and articulate, if a tad defensive, and is obviously most at ease when he's riffing on some topic unrelated to himself, like politics, television (*The Real World* being a particular fave), or music. Talking about changes he might make to *The Daily Show*, he jokes, "It'll be monthly. The [five] questions are all going to be science and potent potables.... I'll be wearing the Alanis Morissette pants-skirt. The new version of the—I don't know what—it's like an apron that's cut, but also with galoshes.

I don't know what she's got going now. It's bellbottoms and a skirt that doesn't come down as long as the bellbottoms. It's like, 'I don't want to spill anything... on my leg.' My guess is one of those is radioactive-proof. One of the layers may be lead. And if you push her stomach, her hair does get shorter, and then you can pull it out again."

One of the main reasons Stewart accepted *The Daily Show's* offer was his desire to remain in New York City, where he says he leads "a very boring sort of routine life that doesn't leave much room for tabloid fodder. Other than the extraterrestrial stuff." So his contract with the Show will last for what Stewart characterizes as "awhile," and he's happy to have the opportunity to get comfortable in his new post. "I've never been in a situation before where we didn't have the sword of Damocles hanging over our head all the time," he explains. "It's going to be a situation we grow into. It's also cable, [which is] a much different world. 'You only got a .6 [rating], we always get a .7—the show's dying!'"

When he's not filming a movie or working on the Show, Stewart plans to return to doing stand-up. "And then there's always Bannigan's at night," he adds. "Maybe two nights a week to pick up some cash money. Ask me about my guacamole!"

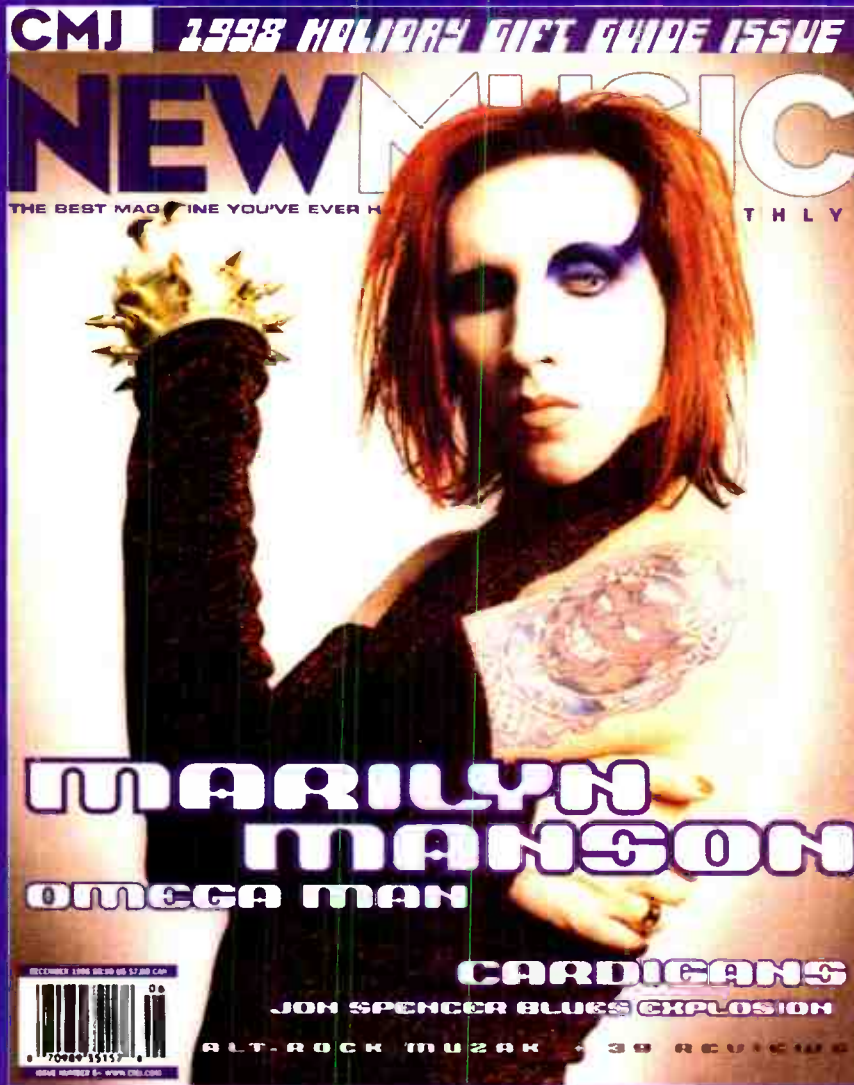
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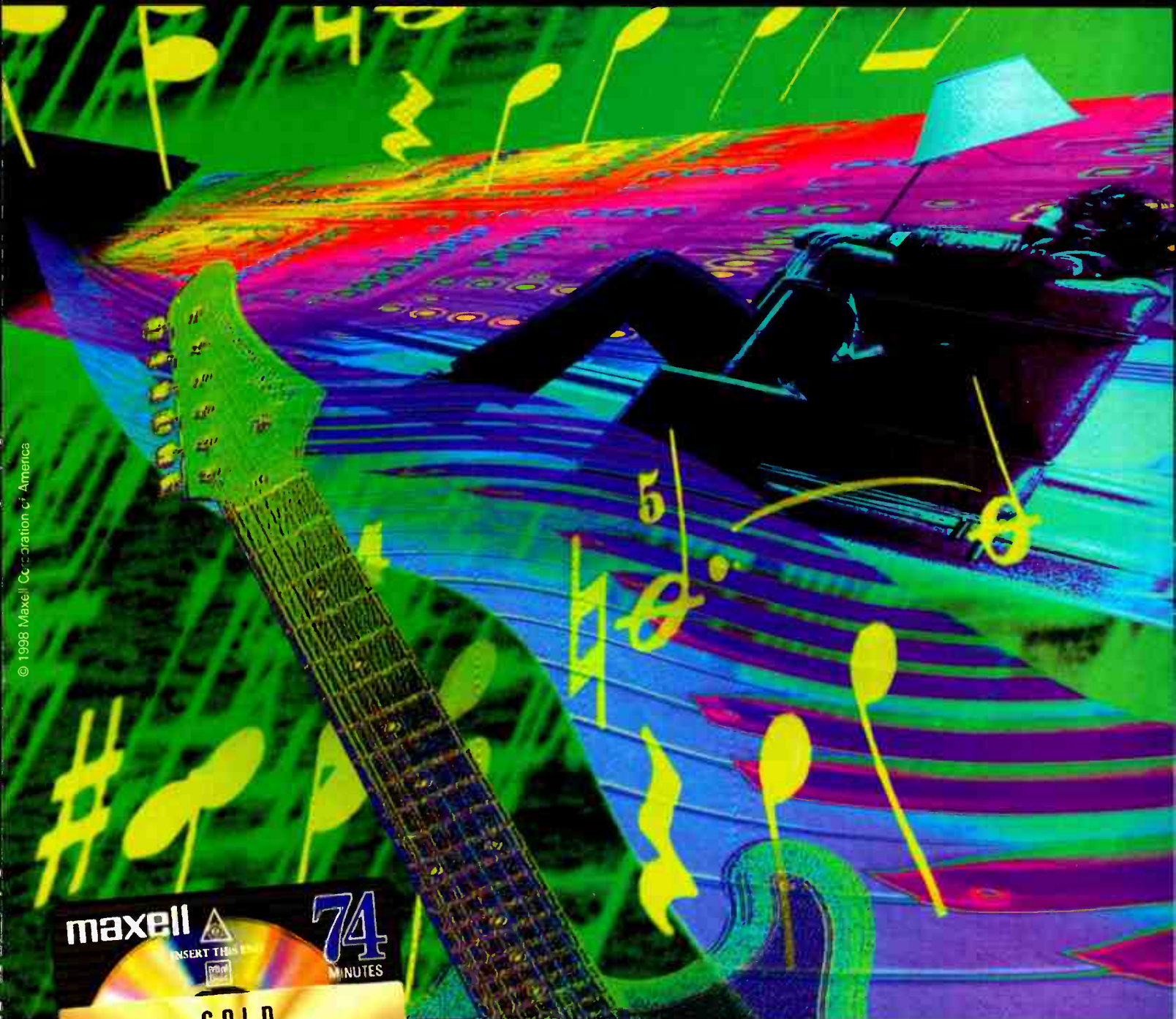
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and the scenes had a huge overlap." "I Got To Know" is from Skinnerbox's new album, *Demonstration* (Triple Crown). (See review, pg. 43.)

**16** The members of Swedish garage rock band the HELLACOPTERS barely even recall what it was like to record their debut album, *Supershitty To The Max!* (Man's Ruin), from which "(Gotta Get Some Action) Now!" is taken. "It all went by so damn fast," bassist Kenny explained to an interviewer. "I hardly remember anything. I don't remember that I've been in the studio recording it, hardly. It went by so damn fast because it was such an intense time." (See On The Verge, pg. 17.)

**17** "He would yell at me for not playing 'retarded' enough," TWO DOLLAR GUITAR mainman Tim Foljahn told the *New York Press*, describing his experience playing with Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore in a collaboration called Male Slut. "He'd give me a part to play, and I'd say, 'Thurston, that is the stupidest guitar part I have ever heard,' and he'd say, 'Yeah.'" "Oiseau Bleu" is taken from Two Dollar Guitar's third long-player, *Train Songs* (Smells Like). (See review, pg. 46.)

**18** "I've been using his paintings, and his thoughts about those paintings as a jumping off point," says BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL's Sam Rosenthal, talking about the inspiration he took from French modernist artist Marcel Duchamp in writing the songs for *As One Alone Laid Bare By Desire* (Projekt). "I merge some of his thoughts with my own. Reaching a brief enlightenment—a realization caused by erotic desire—and then falling back into the swirl of things. Actually, the song 'Given' highlights this kind of realization—the idealization of love as a concept rather than dealing with it as a real thing." (See review, pg. 30.)

**19** Listening to AMP's music, fans of experimental rock won't be surprised to learn that the band's founder, Richard Walker, played with Flying Saucer Attack's David Pearce and Philosopher Stone's Gareth Mitchell in a band called Secret Garden, when the three were attending art college in Bristol, England. Today, Walker plays with vocalist Karine Charf and the latest result of that collaboration is *Stevorette* (Kranky), from which "Tomorrow" is taken. (See review, pg. 38.)

**20** "It's like a one-man band who gets a tape recorder and records the drums, rewinds it and plays guitar over it, and then plays the bass line over that," said turntablist DJ QBERT about the process he used for recording his debut full-length, *Wave Twisters* (Galactic Birt Hair-ISP). "You can't do it unless you have some skills. And it has to sound good, 'cause you could put it together and it could sound like shit. So much of it is trial and error, experimenting, joking around, what ifs and 'wouldn't it be cool...?'" "Cosmic Assassins" is from the new album *Wave Twisters Episode 7 Million: Sonic Wars Within The Protoms*. (See Hip-Hop, pg. 53.)

**1** "As a solo performer, there were many times where I had to be my own rhythm section," said ANI DIFRANCO in a recent interview. "So I developed this bass-heavy sound, played bass lines under the melody and chords, and did a lot of pulling and slapping to emulate the sound of a band. Now that there's a real bass player in the band, I've had to change my writing somewhat—and that was weird. It was like, 'What are you going to do, if I'm playing this?'" "Jukebox" is from her 12th album, *Up Up Up Up Up Up* (Righteous Babe). (See feature, pg. 28.)

**2** "When you're listening to music, whether it's something that's new or old, when you do connect—time stops and somehow you're in this stream of a song or idea—I've described it as feeling like going home. Those are the only moments that remind me of why music is so important: You're being taken somewhere," says Ivo Watts-Russell, explaining the inspiration behind his latest project, HOPE BLISTER. "Sweet Unknown" is taken from the group's debut album, ...*sniffle's OK* (4AD/Mammoth). (See review, pg. 39.)

**3** "We've always thought that you should start off with ten percent your own stuff and 90 percent influences and the whole object of your life is to get it the other way around," BOO RADLEYS guitarist Martin Carr recently told *WAVE*. "But most bands seem like it's their main ambition to sound more and more like some other band. So we weren't interested in having this album sound like a classic record, we didn't want it to sound like 1968. We wanted it to sound like 1998." "Kingsize" is the title track to the British group's latest album (Creation-Never Records Group). (See review, pg. 38.)

**4** SEAWEED can take a licking and keep on ticking. The Tacoma, Washington, group has been together for a decade now and, despite the fact that its major label alliance with Hollywood Records ended after just one record, and that its longtime drummer recently left the band (to be replaced by Quicksand's Alan Cage), Seaweed is still pounding out amazing punk rock tunes. Witness "Antilyrical," the kick-off track on its new album, *Actions And Indications* (Merge). (See review, pg. 42.)

**5** With pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Elvin Jones, the JOHN COLTRANE quartet's sonic experimentation and chord-based improvisation pioneered free jazz. "I try so many things at one time," said Coltrane in a 1960 interview, as he was leaving the Miles Davis quartet to start his own. "I haven't sorted them out. I have a whole bag of harmonic devices I'm trying to work through." "Bessie's Blues" is



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seaweed



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all the more interesting that some guy can come along and dare to do it." "American UFO" is from his latest, *Mars, Pennsylvania* (Bar/None). (See review, pg. 45.)

**11** "I think there's little LAMBCHOPs in cities all over the world," says the group's frontman, Kurt Wagner. "Mr Chesnutt, for instance I mean, when I heard what he was doing, it just rang my bell. It was like, 'Yeah! I'm sittin' at home writing those same... sometimes those same phrases and stuff!' It scared the shit out of me. It was that weird, and that just sorta reinforced it, like, 'Yeah, maybe I'm not crazy.'" Wagner and co. recently teamed up with Chesnutt on his new album, *The Salesman And Bernadette* (Capricorn), but "The Saturday Option" is from the group's latest album, *What Another Man Spills* (Merge). (See review, pg. 53, Oct. issue; Vic Chesnutt Q&A, pg. 13.)

**12** "You can't take [sad songs] too seriously," says EDITH FROST, "because if you did, every time you played them you would start crying. At least I would. I mean, you have these feelings, and these feelings pass—and maybe part of the process is writing the song. But you don't want to get depressed about it all over again every damn time you perform." "Are You Sure?" is taken from Frost's second long-player, *Telescopic* (Drag City). (See Quick Fix, pg. 10.)

**13** "The whole thing was an accident," says MATT POND, about his solo debut *Deer Apartments* (Lancaster). "It began because I was trying to make an album with my previous band and nothing was working out, so I decided to just record the songs." "Fortune Flashlight" was written when *Deer Apartments* was almost done and Pond had concluded that all of his songs were pessimistic. "I tried to write an optimistic one, but it wound up being sarcastic." The song, he explains, recalls being a child, wanting to be older and then realizing, you are old. (See review, pg. 40.)

**14** "Usually I try to write songs that will make me feel good or get something off my chest," says OF MONTREAL's Kevin Barnes. "Even though people might think the lyrics are cheesy, I always loved the '60s music the best. That was a time when people were writing really innocent songs. I love [Brian Wilson] the most of all musicians. There aren't too many people around who are as completely honest as he was. Honesty goes in and out of style." "One Of A Very Few Of A Kind" appears on Of Montreal's latest, *The Bedside Drama: A Petite Tragedy* (Kindercore). (See Quick Fix, pg. 12.)

**15** "It was pretty cool, but there was a lot of violence back then, that ultimately killed that scene," says SKINNERBOX mastermind King Django, about the old days of New York City ska. "The main thing at that time that was nicer is that the reggae and the ska were still tightly linked. There was still a lot of Jamaican influence in the ska,

lifted from the recently released eight-CD box set, *John Coltrane: The Classic Quartet—Complete Impulse! Studio Recordings* (Impulse!). (See Flashback, pg. 55.)

**6** Drum troop KODO—practitioners of the Japanese tradition taiko—has been practicing its art for nearly 20 years. Kodo's broad assortment of drums and percussive instruments includes the o-daiko (a 900 lb. drum) and the shinobue (flute), and is enhanced by kekegus, vocal shouts from the troupe. *Sai-Su* (Red Ink), a remix album, weds Kodo's traditional sound with production work from DJs and producers from the dance community. Bill Laswell produced the album, and underground hip-hop star DJ Krush, Kevin Yost and DJ Strobe lend their talents as well. "Wax Off," is heard here.

**7** "If you want to label us," says the STARSEEDS' Alex McGowan, "don't put 'UK ambient trip-hop,' but 'global galactic sensuality.' When I think of ambient trip-hop, I think of instrumental stuff that doesn't have a face. Our music has a face and personality. We put everything into it. We live for it. When we do music we forget about record deals, press commitments, etc. It's a private and intimate process." "Parallel Life" is the title track to the duo's debut album (Millennium-Nevor Records Group). (See review, pg. 46.)

**8** "I was 18 when I was doing Slowdive—I was young and wanted to make noisy records and didn't want to bother with writing songs," says MÓJAVE 3's Neil Halstead, talking about how his approach to music has evolved over the years. "This time, I wanted to do something more with song structure, and something more acoustic-based. We didn't talk about it much before we recorded, it was just that I'd changed by the time I wrote these songs." "Some Kinda Angel" is culled from the band's second album, *Out Of Tune* (4AD/Sire). (See review, pg. 41.)

**9** When he was younger, P.J. OLSSON spent a lot of time tinkering with samplers, mixers and other forms of electronic production. "I was doing things like mixing hip-hop beats with Middle Eastern and Native American sounds," he said in a recent interview. "I'd get up on stage and sing over that. Eventually I realized that what I was trying to do with the machines wasn't working and got rid of everything production-oriented and got out an acoustic guitar." "Visine" appears on Olsson's self-titled debut EP. (See On The Verge, pg. 17.)

**10** "I just got so fed up with the music scene over the last ten years," said JOHN SOUTHWORTH in a recent interview. "I went back and bought every kind of pop record I could find, from Gilbert and Sullivan to Ahha, Burt Bacharach and even Gershwin—music that people today would consider totally out of it—truly alternative music. The fact that there aren't any 20-year-olds writing love songs anymore makes it



mójave 3



i. olsson



ohn southworth

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## JANUARY 8

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Forward Till Death Lookout!*  
—A cut from every *Lookout* release in '98, plus unreleased tracks from *Avail* and *Mt. T Experience*

## JANUARY 11

**ARLING & CAMERON** *Speeding Down The Highway* 12" *Emperor Norton*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Pop Romantique Emperor Norton*  
—French pop songs covered by *Magnetic Fields*, *Apples In Stereo*, *Sukia*, *Air* with *Françoise Hardy*, *Luna* and more  
**VERSUS** *Autumn Leaves* (reissue) *TeenBeat*  
—Collection of early singles and compilation tracks

## JANUARY 12

**ARSONISTS** *Backdraft 12" Matador*  
—Matador's first hip-hop signing  
**BEASTIE BOYS** *The In Sound From Way Out!* (vinyl reissue) *Grand Royal*  
**BLACK CROWES** *By Your Side American-Columbia*  
**EDIE BRICKELL & NEW BOHEMIANS** *Best Of Geffen*  
**CARPENTERS** *Yesterday Once More* (reissue) *A&M*  
**CARPENTERS** *Close To You* (reissue) *A&M*  
**CARPENTERS** *A Song For You* (reissue) *A&M*  
**CARPENTERS** *Singles 1969-1973* (reissue) *A&M*  
**CARPENTERS** *Voice of the Heart* (reissue) *A&M*  
**CARPENTERS** *Loveliness* (reissue) *A&M*  
**CHURCH** *Magician Among The Spirits Plus More Thirsty Ear*  
—Reissue of 1996 album with four additional tracks  
**J.D. CROWE & THE NEW SOUTH** *Come On Down To My World Rounder*  
**CUCKOO** *Breathing Lessons Geffen*  
**DON CABALLERO** *Singles Breaking Up—Vol. 1 Touch and Go*  
—Collection of the band's singles from 1992-1998  
**MARCIA GRIFFITHS** *Truly Heartbeat-Rounder*  
**GROOP DOGDRILL** *Half Nelson Beggars Banquet*  
**HOPE BLISTER** *...Smile's Okay 4AD-Mammoth*  
—New project from 4AD label head and *This Mortal Coil* mastermind *Ivo Watts-Russell*  
**HUGO LARGO** *Drum* (reissue) *Thirsty Ear*  
—Reissue of 1987 album from NYC band featuring *Tim Sommer* and *Mimi Goese*  
**JOE JACKSON** *Jumpin' Jive A&M*  
**KODO** *Sai-So Red Ink*  
—Remixes of 1997 album *Ibuki* by *Bill Laswell*, *DJ Krush*, *Strobe* and others  
**LAZYCAIN** *Five Days, Eighty Hours Big Wheel Recreation*  
**LO FIDELITY ALLSTARS** *How To Operate With A Blown Mind Skint-Columbia*  
—Pushed back from its original release date; see review in the November '98 issue  
**LONE JUSTICE** *The Best Of Geffen*  
**MAGNETIC FIELDS** *Holiday* (reissue) *Merge*  
**MAGNETIC FIELDS** *House Of Tomorrow EP* (reissue) *Merge*  
**METALLO AND THE FIXER** *Systematik Ruin Metropolis*  
**MICROPHONES** 7" *Up*  
**MOJAVE 3** *Out Of Tune 4AD-Sire*  
**NEVERS** *The Nevers Sire*  
**DAVID OLNEY** *Through A Glass Darkly Philo-Rounder*  
**PASTELS** *Illuminati—Pastels Music Remixes Up*  
—Remixers include *My Bloody Valentine*, *Cornelius*, *Stereolab*, *Mouse On Mars*, *Jim O'Rourke* and *John McEntire*  
**ROOTS MANUVA** 12" *Ninja Tune*

**SEAWEED** *Actions And Indications Merge*  
**SMOG** *Knock Knock Drag City*  
**SOUNDTRACK** *Another Day In Paradise V2*  
—Features *Otis Redding*, *Bob Dylan*, *Chocolate Genius*, *N'dea Davenport* and others  
**SOUNDTRACK** *Jawbreaker London*  
—Includes *Imperial Teen*, *Letters To Cleo*, *Grand Mal*, *Transistor* and others  
**SWANS** *Cop/Greed/Holy Money Thirsty Ear*  
—Three classic albums reissued in one neat double-CD set  
**TAD** 7" *Up*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Alan Lomax Presents Caribbean Voyage: Caribbean Sampler Rounder*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Alan Lomax Presents Caribbean Voyage: Carriacou Calaloo Rounder*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Alan Lomax Presents Caribbean Voyage: Eastern Indian Music In The West Indies Rounder*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Up Next Up*  
—New material from *Up* artists including *Quasi*, *Tad*, *Jana McCall*, *Dickless*, and *Get Bunny Love*, plus previously released material from *Mike Johnson*, *Modest Mouse*, *764-Hero* and more  
**CHERYL WHEELER** *Sylvia Hotel Philo*  
**WHITFIELD BROTHERS** *EP Desco*  
**MICHELLE WILSON** *Tryin' To Make A Little Love Bulleseye Blues*

## JANUARY 19

**BAD MANNERS** *Rare & Fatty Moon Ska*  
—Rare, unreleased and remixed recordings from this British ska legend  
**CROCODILE SHOP** *Everything Is Dead And Gone Metropolis*  
**ANI DIFRANCO** *Up Up Up Up Up Up Righteous Babe*  
**GODSPEED YOU BLACK EMPEROR!** *Slow Riot For New Zero Kanada EP Kranky*  
**LIGHTS OF EUPHORIA** *Voices Metropolis*  
**LIVING END** *The Living End Reprise*  
**ROY MONTGOMERY/CHRIS HEAPHY** *True Kranky*  
**GLEN SCOTT** *Without Vertigo SSO*  
**SILVER JEWS** *Cocksucker Blues (7") Drag City*  
**SUGAR RAY** 14:59 *Atlantic*  
**T-MODEL FORD** *You Better Keep Still Fat Possum*  
**JIMI TENOR** *Organism Warp-Sire*  
**VIRGO'S MERLOT** *Signs Of A Vacant Soul Atlantic*  
**WANG INC.** *Wang Inc. 12" Thrill Jockey*

## JANUARY 26

**AERIAL M** *Remixes Drag City*  
—Remixes by *Flacco* (*Tim Goldsworthy* of *UNKLE*), *DJ Your Food* (*Tetsua's DJ*), *Bundy K. Brown*, and *Tide + Ticked Trio*  
**BONESHAKERS** *Shake The Planet Virgin*  
**HADDA BROOKS** *I've Got News For You! Virgin*  
**TIM CARROLL** *Rock And Roll Band Sire*  
**CASSIUS** 1999 *Astralwerks*  
**COLD CUT** *Let Us Replay Ninja Tune*  
**DAMNATIONS** *Half Mad Moon Sire*  
**DOVETAIL JOINT** 001 *Columbia*  
**JULIA FORDHAM** *The Julia Fordham Collection Virgin*  
**FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS** 100% *Columbian Virgin*  
**NEIL HAMBURGER** *Left For Dead In Malaysia Drag City*  
**COLIN JAMES** *And The Little Big Band Too Elektra*  
**SAM PHILLIPS** *Best Of Virgin*  
**TEN FOOT POLE** *Insider Epitaph*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Anthology Of World Music:*

*Music From Rwanda Rounder*  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Del-Fi Jungle Five! Del-Fi*  
—18 tracks never before released on CD; includes *Preston Epps*, *the Grippes*, *the Shadows* and more  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Reggae Roots Vol. 5 Island*  
—Features *Bob Marley*, *Jimmy Cliff*, *Lee Perry*, *Steel Pulse* and more  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Respect Is Burning Vol. 2 Astralwerks*  
—French funk house from *Parisian club Respect*; includes members of *Daft Punk*, *Les Rhythmes Digitales*, *Motorbass* and others  
**YUKMOUTH** *Thugged Out: The Albulation Virgin*

## FEBRUARY 2

**ABBA** *Abba* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *The Album* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *Arrival* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *Live* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *Ring Ring* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *Super Trouper* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *The Visitors* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *Voulez-Vous* (reissue) *A&M*  
**ABBA** *Waterloo* (reissue) *A&M*  
**B\*WITCHED** *B\*witched Epic*  
**COLLECTIVE SOUL** *Atlantic*  
**GEARWHORE** *The Picture 12" Astralwerks*  
**DAVID HOLMES** *This Film's Crap Let's Slash The Seats A&M*  
—Domestic release of record preceding *Let's Get Killed*  
**HONKY TOAST** *Whatcha Gonna Do Honky SSO*  
**APRIL MARCH** *Chrominance Decoder Ideal*  
**MASE PRESENTS HARLEM WORLD** *The Movement Columbia*  
**SOUNDTRACK** *Hedwig And The Angry Inch Atlantic*  
—Music from the off-Broadway rock opera  
**SOUNDTRACK** *Message In A Bottle Atlantic*  
—Includes original tracks from *Hootie And The Blowfish*, *Edwin McCain*, *Sinead Lohan* and others  
**TOASTERS** *Live In London Moon Ska*  
—Recorded at the *Boarderline* in London, features special guest *Dr. Ring Ding*

## FEBRUARY 9

**ASHLEY STOVE** *New Scars Merge*  
**BAD LIVERS** *Dust On The Bible Quarterstick*  
—CD reissue of 1991 cassette-only release of gospel and spiritual standards  
**NIGEL BUNN** *Index Emperor Jones*  
**D'ANGELO** *Voodoo Virgin*  
**D GENERATION** *Through The Darkness Columbia*  
**ROKY ERICKSON** *Never Say Goodbye Emperor Jones*  
**PETER GABRIEL** *Live* (Reissue) *Geffen*  
**JOHN WESLEY HARDING** *Trad Arr Jones Zero Hour*  
—Covers of songs by British folk singer *Nick Jones*  
**JEGA** *Spectrum Matador*  
**DAMIEN JURADO** *Rehearsals For Departure Sub Pop*  
**DUFF MCKAGAN** *Beautiful Disease Geffen*  
**MUCHO MACHO** *The Limehouse Rink Beggars Banquet*  
**OVAL** *Aero Deko (Part Two) 10" Thrill Jockey*  
**POOLE** *Among Whom We Shine SpinART*  
*SAM PREKOP* *Sam Prekop Thrill Jockey*  
—Debut solo album from singer for *the Sea And Cake*  
**SEBADOH** *The Sebadoh Sub Pop-Sire*  
**SKEME TEAM** *Plan-A 3-2-1-Zero Hour*  
**SPARKLEHORSE** *Good Morning Spider Capitol*  
**SOUNDTRACK** *Still Crazy London*



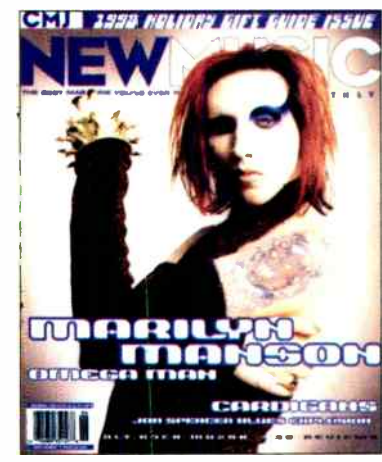
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PHOTOS: KATHLEEN COTTER

**The Chamber of Commerce began calling Nashville “Music City” in the early 1970s, about a century after its first musical export, the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, toured Europe, and nearly 50 years after WSM-AM 650 began broadcasting the Grand Ole Opry. (WSM still does, and it’s the only station you’ll need.)**

Most of the old money in town—and there’s said to be lots of old money here, and more churches per capita than anywhere else in the United States—makes it a point to attend neither Fisk nor the Grand Ole Opry. Nevertheless, Nashville is both a regional hub and the center of the international country music business. Gathered at the edge of the piles of money being burned by Garth, Shania, and Reba are dozens of singers, songwriters, and pickers. Would-be industry pros are lured by good music business programs at Belmont University, and half an hour south at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro. In short, there’s always a pool of fresh ideas bubbling on the fringe.

Though you will see skilled ensembles on stage every night of the week, few proper bands exist. The standards of musicianship are high, there’s plenty of session work, and networks of friends run deep, so most shows feature semi-unrehearsed aggregations pulled together by the singer for just that evening. Many friends play together regularly, and in all possible configurations, but it’s not the same as catching a tightly rehearsed and motivated band.

Still, plenty of local bands are worth seeing, notably the Nevers, a black-suited Southern version of the Kinks, with an album due on Sire; Shinola, which backed Dolly Parton on her latest album; Lambchop, which backed Vic Chesnutt on his latest album; Paul Burch and The WPA Ballclub (Burch doubles as Lambchop’s drummer); garage group Los Straitjackets; Bare, Jr., which plays boogie grunge; the Screaming Cheetah Wheelies, which signed to Capricorn for their third long player, and the past masters of cowpunk, Jason & The Scorchers.

Mostly, though, Nashville is a songwriter’s town. Here are some comparatively unknowns to seek out: Tim Carroll, Kevin Gordon, Hayseed, Tom House, Duane Jarvis, Lonesome Bob, Tomi Lunsford, Buddy and Julie Miller, Greg Trooper... on and on. And on a very good night Steve Earle, Emmylou Harris, or Lucinda Williams may step from the audience for a song.

### Listening

The good news for travelers (if not for local players) is that few shows sell out, so you shouldn’t have trouble getting tickets. Music tends to start early, especially midweek, and typically ends before midnight. Just pick up a copy of the *Nashville Scene*, the local free weekly, and study its calendar.

The bad news is that Nashville is not an easy city to navigate, so buy a map and be patient. Built on a spoke and wheel plan, Nashville is at the intersection of three different interstates. It’s all made more confusing by the city’s habit of changing street names every few miles, and by a present binge of highway reconstruction.

If you’re in town on a Friday or Saturday night, you must attend the **Grand Ole Opry** (follow signs to Opryland; 889.3060). Mostly a living museum, the Opry rarely sells out these days, even when one of the younger stars deigns to show up. Whether or not classic country is your cup o’ joe, it’s worth seeing 70-something Porter Wagoner strutting his collection of spangled Nudie suits.

**The Station Inn** (402 12th Ave. S.; 255.3057) books the best bluegrass in town, and the well-worn chairs at the back of the room came out of Flatt & Scruggs’ tour bus. The venue’s Tuesday night picking party is orchestrated by the Sidemen, a loose group of young players and whoever else happens to be around. Down the road a piece, **The Sutler** (2608 Franklin Rd., 297.9195) feels like a 1970s living room and has a varied booking policy, ranging





from alt.country to jazz to whatever. Big name club acts tend to end up at the newly remodeled **Exit/Inn** (2208 Elliston Pl.; 321.4400), while punk, rockabilly, and garage artists play across the street at the newly rechristened **The End** (2219 Elliston Pl.; 292.8642). The other touring venue of choice is **12th & Porter** (114 12th Ave.; 254.7326), where the food at the attached restaurant is surprisingly good.

For glimpses of the past, explore the storied environs of Lower Broad(way). Home today to neon chains (including the oddly amazing NASCAR Cafe), Lower Broad still offers the venerable **Tootsie's Orchid Lounge** (422 Broadway; 726.0463), the bar across the alley from the legendary **Ryman Auditorium** (116 5th Ave. N.; 889.6611), where all kinds of famous names were carved into the wood during the heyday of the Grand Ole Opry (which left the Ryman during the Nixon years). Pre-urban renewal, BR5-49 and other locals got their start at the bar/boot shop **Robert's Western World** (416 Broadway; 256.7937).

### Eating

Nashville offers few great upscale restaurants, but plenty of rewarding diners and a surprising array of good ethnic food. If you must blow up somebody's expense account, try the **Boundry** (911 20th Ave. S; 321.3043), and make a meal of its shifting array of hors d'oeuvres.

If it is your money, many "meat & threes" are available (as in meat and three vegetables, if you count macaroni & cheese as a vegetable, and we do). **Rotier's** (2413 Elliston Place; 327.9892) stays open latest (they serve until 10 p.m.) and is near several clubs. You'll want to go early to **Prince's Hot Chicken Shack** (123 Ewing Dr.; 226.9442), though they're open way into the evening. It's in a sketchy neighborhood, but, far more to the point, the cayenne accumulates in the oil and the later you go, the hotter the chicken is. Order mild no matter how much of a hot food stud you think yourself to be, and bring plenty of dollar bills for the pop machine.

Nashville has a curious selection of ethnic restaurants, including several fine Thai establishments, at least one authentic sushi server, and two serviceable Indian places. Oddly, nothing claiming to serve Chinese food should be trusted, while many of the Mexican joints are terrific. My favorite is a Salvadoran restaurant/grocery called **Las Americas Taqueria** (4715 Nolensville Rd., 315.8888). Everything is both cheap and good (and you'll pass a number of other solid ethnic restaurants on Nolensville), but the pupusas are especially recommended.

Late night there are few choices, but it's hard to fault the **Hermitage Cafe** (71 Hermitage Ave.; 254.8871), where you can get breakfast anytime, they never replaced the window with the bullet hole, and the jukebox is a constant delight.

### Record Stores

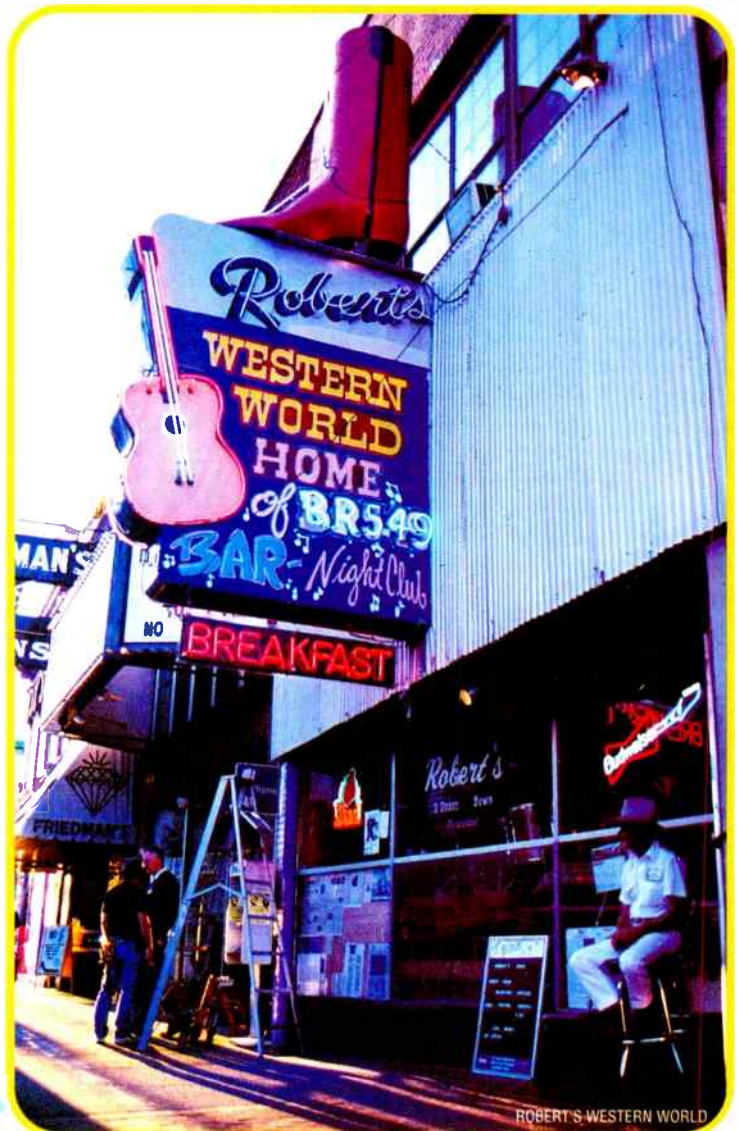
In a town where most folks get their music for free, there aren't a lot of record stores, but what's here sometimes houses amazing music. Begin with **The Great Escape** (1925 Broadway; 327.0646), which doesn't buy promos but does sell everything from 78s to comic books. Further down Broadway is the venerable **Ernest Tubb's Record Shop** (417 Broadway; 225.7503), opened in the late '40s because none of Tubb's fans could find his records. It's also the longtime home to his post-Opry show, the "Midnight Jamboree" (the Jamboree is now out at Opryland). **Phonoluxe Records** (2609 Nolensville Rd.; 259.3500) has a huge and rewarding collection of old vinyl, though the staff well knows its worth.

### Other Attractions

For art, try the **American Pop Culture Gallery** (Wesley Pl. at Vanderbilt; 327.1977), the fine outsider art gallery **Outside The Lines** (5133 Harding Rd., 356.9536), or **Hatch Showprint** (316 Broadway, 256.2887), the century-old letterpress shop now run by the Country Music Foundation as a nonprofit regional treasure. For thrifting try, well, everywhere, and there's a giant swap meet at the fairgrounds the last weekend of most months. **Katy K** (113 17th Ave. S., 259.4163) sells fine vintage clothes, and makes even finer new threads. **Manuel's** (1922 Broadway; 321.5444) is far pricier, but, then, he's the reigning prince of rhinestone couture.

All phone numbers are area code 615.

*Grant Alden is co-editor of No Depression magazine, cooks Chinese food in the comfort of his own home, and doesn't care if the NBA strike ever ends.*





# Becky Never Got to Vote on the Law that Killed Her

Since June 1990, the Supreme Court has clamped down on a young women's right to legal abortion. More than 39 states have passed parental consent and notification laws requiring women under 18 to tell their parents before having an abortion.

Becky Bell was a victim Indiana's parental consent law. Unwilling to disappoint her parents, Becky sought a back alley abortion and died at age 17 from a massive infection.

Congress is now debating the so-called "Child Custody Protection" Act. This law prohibits anyone from taking a young woman across state lines for an abortion if she lives in a state that requires parental consent. Help stop this deadly law.

It's time to take action. It's time to...

## stand up for abortion rights.



**you can go quietly.  
or you can  
rock for choice.**

To find out what you can do to keep abortion **safe & legal for all women**

Check out our **web site** <http://www.feminist.org/>

or **write** 8105 W. 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048

a project of the **feminist majority**

**World Radio History**



You've never heard anything quite like this before.



# p.j. olsson

The Self-Titled Debut.

Featuring

**"Visine"** (on this issue's CD)

**"Pray I Don't Die" and "Thorazine"**

Produced by PJ Olsson and Jaimie Candiloro

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# KODO

## sai-sō

< the remix project >

featuring:

Bill Laswell

DJ Krush

Strobe

Kevin Yost

Intelligente

David Beal/David Baron/Lindsay Jehan

David Beal/Kasz



For ten years DJs have been lifting samples from Kodo, Japan's leading Taiko drummers, to construct fierce, world-flavored breakbeats. Last year, Kodo decided enough was enough.

So here it is: *Sai-so* ("reborn"), The Remix Project. From Bill Laswell's hallucinatory immersions to Intelligente's NY Drum n' Bass, *Sai-so* covers it all, and covers it right. For a taste, check out the creepy ambience of "Wax Off" on this issue's CD . . . and don't miss Kodo on tour:

Jan 21-23 Stanford CA  
Jan 27-31 Los Angeles CA  
Feb 4 San Antonio TX  
Feb 5 Austin TX  
Feb 6-7 Houston TX  
Feb 10-13 Dallas TX  
Feb 17 Milwaukee WI  
Feb 18 Madison WI  
Feb 20 Chicago IL  
Feb 23-25 Ann Arbor MI

Feb 28 Boston MA  
Mar 6 Newark NJ  
Mar 8 New Brunswick NJ  
Mar 9 Princeton NJ  
Mar 10 Washington DC  
Mar 13 Atlanta GA  
Mar 16 Melbourne FL  
Mar 17 West Palm Beach FL  
Mar 18 Naples FL  
Mar 20 Clearwater FL

Produced by Archie Meguro and Paul DeGooyer,  
based on tracks originally produced by Bill Laswell

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