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# NEW MUSIC

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MONTHLY

## THE MARS VOLTA'S EFFED-UP YEAR



**Mark Kozelek's**  
(the Red House Painters guy)  
**Sun Kil Moon**

**TRAVIS**  
**KILLING JOKE**  
**42 REVIEWS**

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Love advice from those (naked) Suicide Girls. Is the Darkness a joke? (Seriously, anyone really know?)

World Radio History

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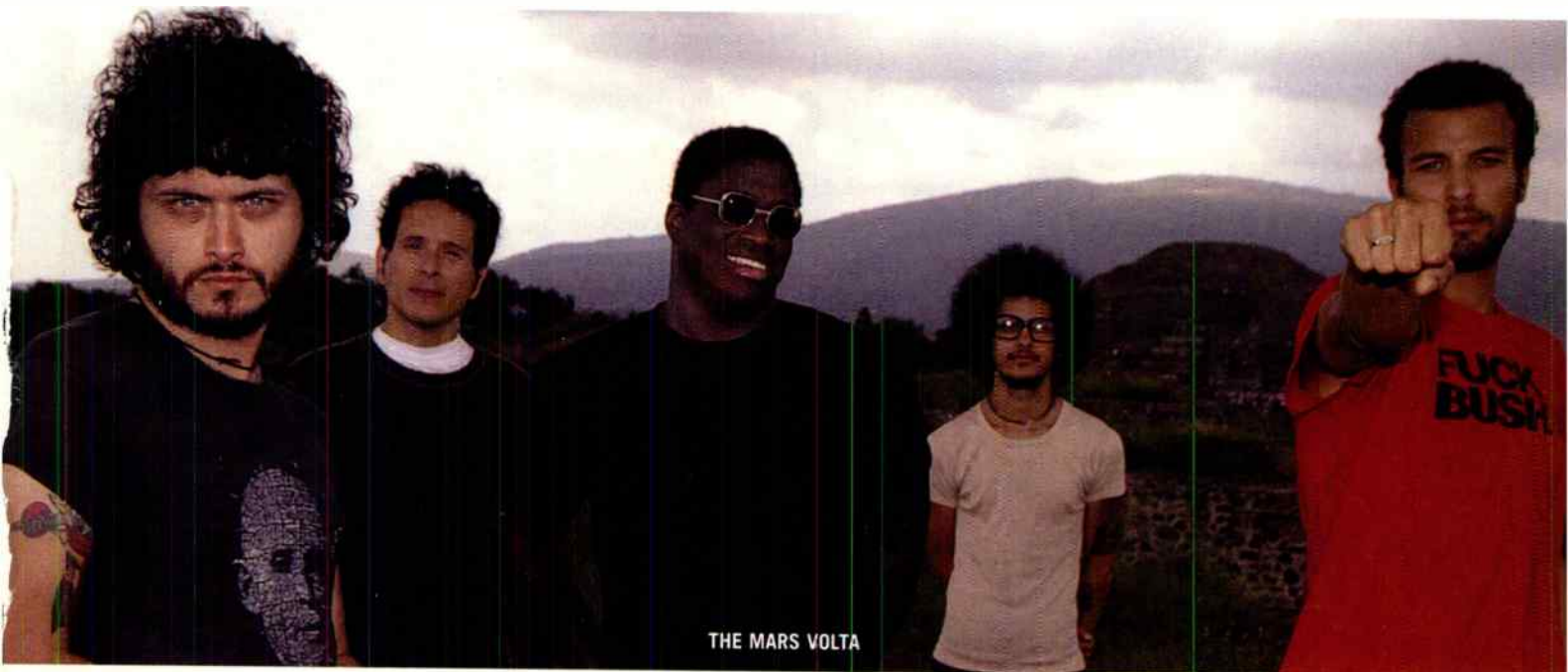
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World Radio History



THE MARS VOLTA

## THE MARS VOLTA 22

Twelve months, two departed friends, a few thousand pissed-off Red Hot Chili Peppers fans, one root canal, one genre-vivisecting prog-rock labyrinth and one seriously confounded Latin Video Music Awards audience—at the year's end, the proverbial Mars Volta rollercoaster finally docks in the station. Christopher R. Weingarten is tall enough to ride.

## SUN KIL MOON 18

Mark Kozelek's played characters both onscreen and off: the "Tiny Dancer"-belting bassist of *Almost Famous*' Stillwater; the drowsy sensitive singer of real life's Red House Painters. Now he's rewriting the script with Sun Kil Moon. Tom Lanham holds the cue cards.

## ON THE VERGE 14

Sad, goofy, upset and twisted: The National, the Darkness, Coheed And Cambria, SSION.

## ON THE CD 35

The Mars Volta, British Sea Power, the Darkness, the Go, the Fiery Furnaces, Sly & The Revolutionaries, the Twilight Singers, Al Green, Adam Green, Coldplay, the Magnetic Fields, Kelley Steltz, Boys Night Out, Jack Johnson & G. Love, Bob Marley & The Wailers, Thrice, Armsbendback.

## QUICK FIX 8

Get Spiked like Jonze; Travis grows a pair; Killing Joke always had a pair, now they're even bigger; get love advice from naked Goth girls; five records that sullied the Dirtbombs' Jim Diamond; yet another installment in our increasingly embarrassing series of exposés on how much we love *The Lord Of The Rings*; say UNKLE all over again; and find out what Lil Jon keeps between the windooooooooooooooooos and the walls.

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Get off your ass and find the best club in your town.

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Arye Dworken goes to the Extreme!

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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2003 29

The fact that our annual gift guide is just one giant hint to our friends and family that this is what we want for Christmas/Hanukkah/Festivus has been, year by year, completely lost on our friends and family. Don't make the same mistake: Buy some of this sweet gear for you and yours. Also visit Christmas past, present and future with Death Cab For Cutie, Mates Of State and more and to reward you for thinking of others for once, there's a whole page of free swag for you to win.

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THE MARS VOLTA (COVER); DREW GOREN; THE MARS VOLTA (THIS PAGE); DANIELLE VAN ARK

## Colonel Mustard, in the library, with a modem

I am angry. I am angry at all artists who claim file-sharing is theft. I am angry at all artists not wanting to lower the price of a CD. I have had enough!

Many artists are stealing money from my wallet. They put together a CD that has only a few good songs at best and the remainder of the album stinks. Are artists going to give back my money for buying an album that should have been an EP at best? I have many CDs that fall under this criteria. I bet you do, too! Many artists are spoiled and live beyond their means. They spend millions of dollars making videos, having stage props for their live performances and living personal lifestyles well beyond their means. Let me clue you in, if I go to a concert, I go because I want to hear the band live. Fireworks, dancers, etc. are stupid at a rock show! I go to a show, it's because I want to rock, not to see a 4th of July orchestrated ice escapade show. Therefore, if artists would eliminate stupid expenses like videos and stage props, and live within their means, they would have more money in their pocket and I would not have to pay so much to go to a show or for a CD. Bottom line, spoiled brats, live within your means and quit stealing from me!

I do have a request for *CMJ*. Please publish a list of all artists who are speaking out against file sharing and lowering CD prices. I want to make sure I never buy any of their music (which I will use that term "music" loosely for many of them) ever again.

James Mustard  
Chicago

*Sorry, we're not about to start compiling an enemies list for you, especially since this issue is a lot more complicated than the fact that musicians aren't often paragons of fiscal responsibility. (Even if someone blows*

*their paycheck, it doesn't mean that they don't deserve to be paid for their work.) Which isn't to say that we have any more of an idea of how to solve this mess than anyone else. —ed.*

## RIAA took my baby away

The music industry is gonna kill its own economy. Why can't the industry understand that about the downloading of free music? The corporate music stores only stock a select amount of merchandise, meaning that if you aren't there to purchase something in the *Billboard* Top 100, you more than likely aren't going to be able to get what you want. If the music industry understood the instant gratification of being able to get what you want when you want it, would they be in the trouble they were in? The music industry has yet to back the fans of music and now they are taking them to court and suing them? If this doesn't make you want to download free music, I don't know what does. Who wants to order online and have to pay added shipping fees? When does the music fan get decent treatment? I just wanna rock. Please don't sue me.

starvine@yahoo.com

## Cavalier about Clay

My colleagues and I would really like to hear any news regarding Clay Aiken and his upcoming CD. I just stumbled upon your magazine and I thought I would love to this [sic] periodical with Clay Aiken in it. Thank you.

*Clay Aiken fans don't have colleagues. They have classmates. —ed.*

---

**CORRECTION:** In the September issue's Reviews section, the correct title of the new Leaves record should be *Breathe*. Sure it was a long time ago, but it still haunts us, even now.

---

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# CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

## THE MARS VOLTA COLDPLAY BRITISH SEA POWER THE FIERY FURNACES

ADAM GREEN • THE DARKNESS • THE MAGNETIC FIELDS

DECEMBER 2003 • ISSUE 119

**13. BOYS NIGHT OUT** "I Got Punched In The Nose For Sticking My Face In Other People's Business" *Make Yourself Sick*  
[www.boysnightout.com](http://www.boysnightout.com)  
*Boys Night Out* appears courtesy of Ferret Music.  
See Gift Guide p. 39.

**14. JACK JOHNSON & G. LOVE** "Rainbow"  
*Thicker Than Water Soundtrack*  
[www.jackjohnsonmusic.com](http://www.jackjohnsonmusic.com)  
*Jack Johnson & G. Love* appear courtesy of Brushfire.

**15. BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS** "African Herbsman"  
*African Herbsman*  
[www.trojanrecords.com](http://www.trojanrecords.com)  
*Bob Marley & The Wailers* appear courtesy of Sanctuary Records Group/Trojan Records.  
See Gift Guide p. 39.

**16. THRICE** "To Awake And Avenge The Dead"  
*The Illusion Of Safety*  
[www.thrice.net](http://www.thrice.net)  
*Thrice* appear courtesy of Hopeless Records/Sub City Records.  
See Gift Guide p. 39.

**17. ARMSBENDBACK** "Primera (Last Goodbye)"  
*The Waiting Room*  
[www.armsbendback.com](http://www.armsbendback.com)  
*ArmsBendBack* appear courtesy of Trustkill Records.  
See Gift Guide p. 39.

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cut along dotted lines, fold and insert into jewel case



**1. THE MARS VOLTA** "Teleators" *De-Loused In The Comatorium*

[www.themarsvolta.com](http://www.themarsvolta.com)

*The Mars Volta* appears courtesy of GSL/Strummer Recordings/Universal Music Group.

See Cover Story p. 22.

**2. BRITISH SEA POWER** "Remember Me (Single Version)"

*The Decline Of British Sea Power*

[www.britishseapower.com](http://www.britishseapower.com)

*British Sea Power* appear courtesy of Rough Trade Records America, Inc.

See Gift Guide p. 29.

**3. THE DARKNESS** "I Believe In A Thing Called Love" *Permission To Land*

[www.thedarknessrock.com](http://www.thedarknessrock.com)

*The Darkness* appears courtesy of Atlantic Records.

See On The Verge p. 15.

**4. THE GO** "American Pig" *The Go*

[www.thego.info](http://www.thego.info)

*The Go* appear courtesy of Lizard King Records.

See Review p. 52.

**5. THE FIERY FURNACES** "Tropical Iceland (Single Version)"

*Gallowsbird's Bark*

[www.thefieryfurnaces.com](http://www.thefieryfurnaces.com)

*The Fiery Furnaces* appear courtesy of Rough Trade Records America, Inc.

See Gift Guide p. 39.

**6. SLY & THE REVOLUTIONARIES** "White Rum" *Trojan Dub Box Set*

[www.trojanrecords.com](http://www.trojanrecords.com)

*Sly & The Revolutionaries* appear courtesy of Sanctuary Records Group/Trojan Records.

See Gift Guide p. 39.

**7. THE TWILIGHT SINGERS** "Fat City (Slight Return)" *Blackberry Belle*

[www.thetwightsingers.com](http://www.thetwightsingers.com)

*The Twilight Singers* appear courtesy of One Little Indian/Birdman.

**8. AL GREEN** "I Can't Stop" *I Can't Stop*

[www.bluenote.com/algreen](http://www.bluenote.com/algreen)

*Al Green* appears courtesy of Blue Note Records.

**9. ADAM GREEN** "Jessica" *Friends Of Mine*

[www.adamgreen.net](http://www.adamgreen.net)

*Adam Green* appears courtesy of Rough Trade Records America, Inc..

See Gift Guide p. 29.

**10. COLDPLAY** "God Put A Smile Upon Your Face" *Coldplay Live 2003*

[www.coldplay.com](http://www.coldplay.com)

*Coldplay* appears courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.

See Gift Guide p. 31, 39.

**11. THE MAGNETIC FIELDS** "All I Want To Know"

*The Stephin Merritt Soundtrack To Pieces Of April*

[www.nonesuch.com](http://www.nonesuch.com)

*The Magnetic Fields* appear courtesy of Nonesuch Records.

**12. KELLEY STOLTZ** "Underwater's Where The Action Is" *Antique Glow*

[www.electriccity.org](http://www.electriccity.org)

*Kelley Stoltz* appears courtesy of Jackpine Social Club.

\* Load disc into your PC or Mac for more information about the artists and labels featured on this CMJ New Music Monthly CD.

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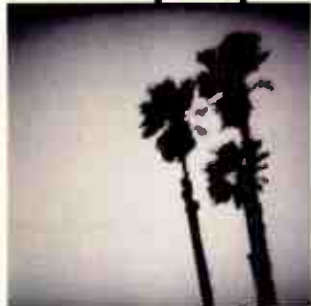


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# WELL HUNG ARTISTS

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**THE TWILIGHT SINGERS**  
*Blackberry Belle* (One Little Indian/Birdman)



**BRITISH SEA POWER**  
*The Decline Of British Sea Power* (Atlantic)



**THE MARS VOLTA**  
*De-Loused In The Comatorium* (GSL/Strummer/Universal)



**THE DARKNESS**  
*Permission To Land* (Atlantic)

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COLDPLAY • THE MAGNETIC FIELDS

KELLEY STOLTZ • BOYS NIGHT OUT

JACK JOHNSON & G. LOVE

BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS

THRICE • ARMSBENDBACK

\*As selected by our panel of  
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Milwaukee, WI 53211

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**Boogie Records**  
3301 W Central  
Toledo, OH 43606

**CD Central**  
377 S Limestone St.  
Lexington, KY 40508

**Criminal Records**  
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Atlanta, GA 30307

**DCCD**  
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Washington, DC 20009

**Desirable Discs**  
13939 Michigan Ave.  
Dearborn, MI 48126

**East Alley Records**  
336-B Main St.  
Rochester, MI 48307

**Fingerprints**  
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Long Beach, CA 90803

**Good Records**  
617 N Good Latimer Expy  
Dallas, TX 75204

**Graywhale CD Exchange**  
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Salt Lake City, UT 84102

256 East 12300 S  
Draper, UT 84020

4300 Harrison #7  
Ogden, UT 84403

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Suite D  
Kearns, UT 84118

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Pueblo, CO 81003

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**Jackpot Records**  
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West Babylon, NY 11704

**Luna Music**  
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**My Generation**  
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Westlake, OH 44145

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Orlando, FL 32816

2000 Gulf To Bay Blvd.  
Clearwater, FL 33765

**Record Archive**  
1880 E Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14610

1394 Mount Hope Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14620

**Rock-A-Billy's  
New And Used CDs**  
8411 Hall Rd.  
Utica, MI 48317

**Record Emporium**  
3346 N Paulina Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60657

**The Record Exchange**  
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Los Angeles, CA 90026

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Cincinnati, OH 45223

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Seattle, WA 98107

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Some models can even be used as remotes for household equipment. The stylish black sunglasses and portal for the back of your head are sold separately.

③ **Watches with MSN Direct**  
(\$199, [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com))

Not content merely to bring you phones that talk and a computer screen that'll run your fridge, Microsoft's teamed with

Fossil and Suunto to create watches that do damn near everything. Through their MSN Direct service, these watches will automatically adjust themselves for time zones, give you news, stock quotes, weather and whatever other info you choose through a customizable Web page. It will also—we shit you not—tell you what time it is.

**Sirius Satellite Radio**

(\$12.95 per month, [www.siriusradio.com](http://www.siriusradio.com))

Commercial radio blows—the only argument is how large the animal appendage. Well, here's a rare case where folks with satellites orbiting the globe are only looking to take over your life in a good way. With 60 commercial-free music streams to choose from, Sirius will free your loved one from a morning commute trapped with The Cooter And The Madman In The Morning.

# ALL RIYL'D UP

Wondering what to buy those fans of these half-dozen popular records? Well, here, let us help, so the clerk in the record store can get back to that sandwich.

**OUTKAST** *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below* (LaFace-Arista)  
Prince *Dirty Mind* (Warner Bros.)  
Funkadelic *One Nation Under A Groove* (Capitol)  
Goodie Mob *World Party* (LaFace)  
Ms. Dynamite *A Little Deeper* (Interscope)  
Stark Reality *Now* (Stones Throw)

**THE WHITE STRIPES** *Elephant* (V2)

Buzzcocks *Singles Going Steady* (EMI)  
Mando Diao *Bring 'Em In* (Mute)  
R.L. Burnside *A Ass Pocket Of Whiskey* (Matador)  
The Black Keys *thickfreakness* (Fat Possum)  
Nuggets: Original Artyfacts From The First Psychedelic Era, 1965-1968 *Box Set* (Rhino) (for someone you really love)

**THE POSTAL SERVICE** *Give Up* (Sub Pop)

Her Space Holiday *Young Machines* (Mush)  
New Order *Substance* (Qwest)  
The Notwist *Neon Golden* (Label)  
Stars *Heart* (Arts & Crafts)  
Sparks *Profile: The Ultimate Sparks Collection* (Rhino)

**METALLICA** *St. Anger* (Elektra)

Lamb Of God *As The Palaces Burn* (Prosthetic)  
Shadows Fall *The Art Of Balance* (Century Media)  
Avenged Sevenfold *Waking The Fallen* (Label)  
Meshuggah *Nothing* (Nuclear Blast)  
Shat *The Cunt Chronicles* (Buddyhead)

**FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE** *Welcome Interstate Managers* (S-Curve/Virgin)

Various Artists *Come Out And Play: American Power Pop, Volumes 1 And 2* (Rhino)  
The Cars *The Cars* (Elektra)  
Nada Surf *Let Go* (Barsuk)  
The Posies *Dream All Day: The Best Of The Posies* (Interscope)  
Superdrag *Last Call For Vitrol* (Arena Rock Recording Co.)  
Subscription to [Milfhunter.com](http://Milfhunter.com)

**NORAH JONES** *Come Away With Me* (Blue Note)

Rosie Thomas *Only With Laughter Can You Win* (Sub Pop)  
Jolie Holland *Catalpa* (Anti-)  
Nina Simone *Nina: The Essential Nina Simone* (Metro)  
Ella Fitzgerald *The Intimate Ella* (Verve)  
Joni Mitchell *Court And Spark* (Elektra)

# TURBONEGRO

---

**HENRY FONDA THEATRE, LOS ANGELES  
10.03.03**

The Hives may be at the forefront of the much-ballyhooed Swedish Invasion, but do they have songs with titles like "Rock Against Ass" and "Rendezvous With Anus?" Didn't think so. Here, Hank Von Helvete affects an Alice Cooper look and rocks against ass, indeed.

---

**PHOTO: ERIC RASMUSSEN**



**BEING SPIKE JONZE** While his feature films have earned him critical acclaim, the videos, shorts and documentaries that fill *The Work Of Director Spike Jonze* (Director's Label/Palm) are the true treasures for repeat viewing. From '90s benchmarks like the Beastie Boys' "Sabotage" and Weezer's "Buddy Holly" to lesser-known but even more impressive clips for Wax and Notorious B.I.G., Jonze has been pushing the limit of a typically formulaic art form from day one. The

DVD—the first in a series that includes directors Michel Gondry and Chris Cunningham—is hilariously overblown, culminating in a far-from-believable spotlight on the Torrance Community Dancers, the fictionalized troupe showcased in Fatboy Slim's "Praise You." Footage from the director's days shooting skate videos, twisted shorts and a truly groundbreaking interview with Pharcyde's Fatlip add up to a greatest-hits reel filled with endlessly entertaining visual candy. >>>PETER D'ANGELO

## FAKEBOOK

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

**Finding holiday cards from last year**

Cleaning your office is for pussies.

**Murder By Death**

Hardcore name on a hardcore label, yet sounds like Cursive waking up hungover next to the Bad Seeds.

**www.Grouphug.us**

Because it's funny when bad things happen to other people.

**Punk Rock Holocaust**

A movie featuring the simulated murders of members of the Used, A Simple Plan, Andrew W.K., Mest and more.

Someone's getting sued—this movie's been running in our heads for years.

**Kevorkian, Russian for "Pepper"?**

Jam Master Jay and Celia Cruz both mysteriously die after filming Dr. Pepper commercials.

**The Matrix Retreaded, please!**

Who cares if the movie blew: Keep the series going or Keanu makes another Dogstar record.

**Hey, Westerberg! Hey, OutKast!**

Next time, just one really good record at a time. Not two pretty kinda good ones.

**40 gigs of envy**

Is your 10GB iPod letting your woman down?

**Atmosphere appearing on MTV2 and drive-time K-Rock between Korn and Puddle Of Mudd**

Hate to say "Told you so," but... No wait, we love saying "Told you so."

**12.3.1965** Keith Richards' guitar hits a microphone and he's electrocuted onstage in California. He's revived and finishes the show. **12.3.1971** Frank Zappa And The Mothers Of Invention burn down the house at the Montreux Casino, inspiring Deep Purple's "Smoke On The Water." (They didn't finish the show.) **12.3.1979** Eleven people are killed at a Who concert in Cincinnati. **12.6.1969** The Stones' infamous Altamont show, at which four people died. Hells Angels surround the band after Keith criticizes them from the stage, he says "Fuck you." They back off and he finishes the show. **12.9.1992** Bill Wyman decides that the show has gone on quite long enough, thanks, and quits the Rolling Stones. **12.10.1971** December '71 gets worse for Zappa when, one week after surviving Montreux, he's pushed off a London stage by a jealous fan, breaking his leg, ankle and skull. **12.11.1976** Ace Frehley, ignoring Keith's example, gets electrocuted onstage in Florida. Not wanting to be left out, he finishes the show. **12.23.1964** Brian Wilson has a nervous breakdown and finishes the show almost for good—he doesn't return to the stage for 35 years.

**NEWSFEED:** Fiona Apple's third record slated for February release • Metallica fans and haters alike can watch a grown man cry in the docu-

# TRAVIS' FRAN HEALY ON...

## "RE-OFFENDER," THE BAND'S NEW DOMESTIC-ABUSE-THEMED SINGLE

I had a conversation with my Mom about three weeks before the song was written, and I was asking, "Why did you stay with Dad when he was being volatile to you?" And she explained it—like most women, the fear of what lies in the unknown was greater than the fear of getting a beating from the person they're with. It happens. And my father did that because his father did that, and breaking the chain is very hard to do. So she stayed with him, but eventually, when she had me, she was beginning to think, "I've got to move out—I've got to get away." She's heard the song, too, and she's glad I had courage enough to cover such a sensitive subject. And [its parent record, *12 Memories*, on Epic] is an equally aggressive album, and certain songs on it are very aggressive. But it's intrinsically hopeful. The very fact that you've written a song about [abuse] means that inside, you have hope—there's hope in you, and hopefully everyone else. And "Quicksand" is a song about where we all are. We're stuck, stuck in the quicksand—civilization, the Western world, we're stuck in it and it's up to our waists now. Within another 100, 200 years, we're not gonna be here anymore as a species and maybe then the planet will finally get some peace. I mean, in the world today you've got a tiny sliver of people who own all the money, own all the land and have all the power. And they own all the media as well. And by controlling the media, they control the people, and by controlling the people they can basically get away with murder and do anything they like. And humans are obsessed with scale—"How big is it? How small is it?" They think the bigger the problem, the harder it is to change it. But problems are sizeless, and you can change a problem simply by changing your thinking.

ANTON CORBLIN

## WRITING ANTI-WAR ANTHEMS LIKE "THE BEAUTIFUL OCCUPATION" AND "PEACE THE FUCK OUT"

You watch TV these days and everything is lies, lies, lies. Everything politicians come up with is half-truths, but there's no such thing as half-truth. If it's not the truth, it's a lie. And when you're a child, the most powerful word is the first one you learn: "Why?" "Why Mom?" And it's like, "Well, because the sun comes up in the morning." "But why?" You keep saying it and saying it. And as an adult, you should keep right on asking why. Why did they fly planes into those buildings? Why do we have to

go to war? Don't just follow these people off the edge of the precipice like lemmings. One of the biggest wake-ups for me in the past years was suddenly one day you wake up and go, "Fuck! I'm an artist! That's what I am—I'm not a pop star, not a famous person. Before all of that, I'm an artist, and I've always been that." Hallelujah—I woke up to the fact that I actually have something to do. And your job as an artist is to stand in the crowd's nest and call out "Iceberg!" or "Land ahoy!" You shout down to the deck and they act accordingly. And then you either avoid disaster or celebrate newfound land. We've got a voice. And Travis is the people's band. We'll always be the people's band.

Interview by Tom Lanham.



mentary *Some Kind Of Monster*, which follows the band through rehab and the making of *St. Anger*, to be released next year • **Amen** will return in March with >>>



## Tough Love

The ladies over at [Suicidegirls.com](http://Suicidegirls.com) were aware of a very lucrative fact: Indie-rock folk enjoy naked people as much as anyone else. Thus, their digitized homestead of clothing-impaired indie lovelies was born. That they were sage enough to recognize that fact made us comfortable letting their Girl Missy guide your romance woes. And Missy delivers in spades. Stop whining: [lovelorn@cmj.com](mailto:lovelorn@cmj.com)

**I recently started dating this guy in a band. After decades of Yoko jokes, I have a Yoko fear that's big as a truck. I'm so afraid of commenting about anything relating to their band that I change the subject every time it comes up, which when I think about it, may be making it look like I hate his band. I don't. Is every woman who dates a musician doomed to the Fear Of Yoko forever?**  
—Samantha, Cincinnati, Ohio

Bands are like families. Judd Nelson in *The Breakfast Club*, "This is what happens when you spill paint in the garage at my house"-type of families. Most of them will implode anyway given enough time and alcohol. You are "the other woman" who is taking Daddy away from time with the kids. Any time spent with you is time that isn't



spent achieving the dream, dude. Your mere presence is disrupting. If you truly love the music, break it off and let him be free to do all the groupies and Oxycontin he feels like, because that is what being in a band is really about.

**I'm bi, but most of the time I date girls. About three months ago, I started hanging out with this guy James, and he's being really serious. This might sound weird, but I kind of date guys with fun in mind, and when I settle down it will most likely be a girl. I don't know how to tell him this, or if I should tell him at all. Should I just break it off since we clearly aren't looking for the same thing?**  
—Jeremy O., Providence, Rhode Island

That whole bi theory is that it's the person you fall in love with, not the gender. That isn't for you, you just want to get laid and whoever is willing to do the job is cool, right? You should just tell Jimmy that you are into the bull-riding but you're no cowboy and cut him loose. Go get a mirror and some lube and settle on the only relationship you are capable of having. Just don't come crawling back to Jimmy when your reflection gets fed up with your lack of intimacy; he and his new boyfriend will be on their way to Vermont by then to live happily ever after.

**I've been seeing this guy for about a month. Last week I slept with him for the first time, and it was great. But then I was talking to a mutual friend of ours who said that Joe (the guy) told him that he "porked" me. Here I thought we shared an intimate moment, when in actuality we were "porking." I really like this guy, but this "porking" business has got me skeeved. Should I be bothered by this, or is that just guy talk?**  
—Sherry, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Perhaps he was a virgin who had seen one too many teen movies in his impressionable childhood and you were the first woman benevolent enough to let him stick it in. His friend should definitely have let him know that "porking" is not even a term in circulation these days and certainly isn't a word used to describe a night of passion spent with a lovely lady. Sounds like the friend wants to get in your pants and thought he would make the other guy look like a jerk. I say next time you get your man in the sack, bend him over your knee and let him know who's porking who.

xoxo,  
Missy  
[www.suicidegirls.com/girls/Missy](http://www.suicidegirls.com/girls/Missy)  
[missy@suicidegirls.com](mailto:missy@suicidegirls.com)

**Death Before Musick**, on System Of A Down guitarist Daron Malakian's EatUrMusic label • **Primus** to offer every concert from this fall's Tour de Fromage—



## SMOKING THE CRACKS OF MORDOR

**THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING**  
(EA FOR XBOX, PS2, GAMECUBE, GAME BOY ADVANCE, PC)

Holy shit, just when it seemed impossible to get any more worked up for the triumphant finale of *The Lord Of The Rings*, along comes this game to push you to heretofore unseen levels of pumpage. *The Return Of The King* may well be the *Grand Theft Auto* of folklore. Stomp acres of orc ass across 12 beautiful levels, play as eight different characters (voiced by the real actors), witness some of the best fighting choreography ever in an action game (taken straight from motion captures of the movie's actual stuntmen) and let phrases like "the horde of the Dark Lord Sauron" and "the road to Orthanc" drool off your tongue. When our friends find out how stoked we are, we might not have them anymore, but that's cool, because we can play as *Gandalf The Motherfucking Wizard*. Somewhere, Robert Plant is more excited than is perhaps legally permissible. >>>TOM MALLON



## IN MY ROOM

**Who:** Lil Jon

**Where:** His soon-to-be-abandoned crib in Decatur, Georgia

**Why:** *Kings Of Crunk* (TVT), Lil Jon's latest release with his intrepid East Side Boyz, has been on the *Billboard* chart for over a year—and its Southern-fried, *sturm und draug* party-hop is more apocalyptic and gleefully obnoxious than any punk record you'll hear all year.

### SNEAKERBOXXX

There's fuckin' clothes everywhere. The clothing companies just give me a lot of clothes. I'm totally out of closet space. Totally. I've got 200 fuckin' fitted caps, 200 pairs of sneakers, four closets full of clothes. Clothes is still in boxes. My jacket closet is filled to the brim and jackets are laying on the bed and shit. I had to take over one of my son's closets to put my jackets in. I got a music room where I produce and that shit is full of clothes. I can't even go in there and work, 'cause clothes is all over the place.

### THRASH MONEY MILLIONAIRES

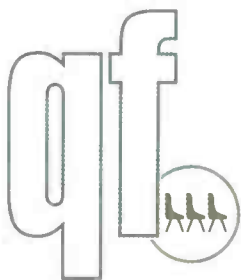
I used to listen to a lot of Ramones, Dead Kennedys, early Faith No More when they was the shit, Chili Peppers, all the way down to Agent Orange... I used to skate. I got me a deck at my house, I gotta get me some new shit. I got *Thrasher* magazines laying around the house. *Thrasher's* the bible.

### BROTHER'S CUP

I got 10 pimp cups. The lady that makes 'em—she says I've got the most. I get a new cup every month or two. I drink out of it when I'm on the road and shit—not at the house. Maybe when I move into my new, big, extravagant house, I'll just have a glass of water or orange juice [from them]. That'll be some cool shit... walk around in my nice robe.

*Interview by Christopher R. Weingarten.*

where they will perform *Sailing The Seas Of Cheese* in its entirety—for purchase on [primuslive.com](http://primuslive.com) • **The Prodigy** bumps back the release of *Always Outnumbered*, >>>



# 5 SPOT

## FIVE RECORDS THAT MAKE THE DIRTBOMBS' JIM DIAMOND WANT TO EXPLODE



### 1. **Romantics, *Rhythm Romance***

We're doing a split-cover single with them. This one didn't sell anything, but it's got a great song called "Mystified" which we did a dub reggae version of.

### 2. **Stiv Bators, "L.A. L.A." 10-inch**

This was Stiv Bators in his blues period away from the Dead Boys. It was unusual to have him throwing together a garage-rock band in 1979 or 1980 that's so different from what he had done.

### 3. **The Dirtys, *You Should Be Sinnin'***

This super-stripped-down Crypt Records band is like the best punk sound there is—and not punk like Rancid or Good Charlotte crap that you hear now.

### 4. **The Osmonds, *Phase-III***

The Osmonds were the first concert I ever saw and I still love their bubblegum stuff from 1969-72, before they got all Branson, Missouri-sounding.

### 5. **Kraftwerk, *Trans-Europe Express***

People don't talk much about the lyrics in Kraftwerk's songs, but I love that song "Showroom Dummies" because it's about the beautiful people going out to a club, looking good and acting like a bunch of showroom dummies while they're dancing.

*The two-bass, two-drum attack of the Dirtbombs' Dangerous Magical Noise (In The Red) sounds nothing like the Osmonds or Kraftwerk.*

Interview by Chad Swiatecki.

# THE MIX

**TITLE:** My "Obscure-but-guaranteed-to-please-even-friends-who-know-zero-about-music" Mix

**MADE BY:** stellamarie23 (a.k.a. Kim Remsberg of Washington, D.C.)

- 1. Kenna**  
Hell Bent
- 2. Black Box Recorder**  
Start As You Mean To Go On
- 3. Trembling Blue Stars**  
Letter Never Sent
- 4. I Am Kloot**  
Darkstar
- 5. Four Tet**  
Everything Is Alright
- 6. The Magnetic Fields**  
I Think I Need A New Heart
- 7. Bis**  
Detour
- 8. Gay Dad**  
Joy!
- 9. Tin Star**  
Head
- 10. Tin Star**  
Disconnected Child
- 11. The Faint**  
Worked Up So Sexual
- 12. The Origin**  
Growing Old
- 13. Phoenix**  
If I Ever Feel Better
- 14. Soulstice**  
Lovely
- 15. Sub Sub**  
(Ain't No Love) Ain't No Use
- 16. Simple Minds**  
Dancing Barefoot
- 17. Peter Murphy**  
I'll Fall With Your Knife
- 18. Terranova**  
Chase The Blues
- 19. BT & Richard Butler**  
Shineaway
- 20. Geneva**  
If You Have To Go

*This Christmas, give the gift of better taste in the Mix forum at cmj.com.*

## OF GREAT IMPORT

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



### UNKLE *Never, Never, Land* (Mo' Wax/Island UK)

**What it is:** Follow-up to the 1998 debut album that paired Mo' Wax boss James Lavelle with DJ Shadow and a host of A-list guest vocalists.

**Why you want it:** It's been quite some time since the original UNKLE project's batch of beat-driven songs fronted by the likes of Thom Yorke, Richard Ashcroft and Badly Drawn Boy. And, as is often the case with temporal lapses, much has changed on *Never, Never, Land*. In fact, considering that DJ Shadow constructed most of the music on the last disc, *Psyence Fiction*, just about everything has changed. Shadow's been replaced by Lavelle's more recent co-conspirator,

Richard File, while Ant Genn has hopped into the producer's chair. The new eclectic vocal guest list includes Queens Of The Stone Age's Josh Homme, South's Joel Cadbury, Massive Attack's 3-D and former Stone Roses frontman Ian Brown, who's rejoined on his track ("Reign") by his old bandmate, Mani. Lavelle, meanwhile, with a well-balanced mixture of acoustic laments and obsidian beat-journeys, has taken the unstable formula he originally started with and refined it into a dark, sparkling aural elixir. >>>DOUG LEVY

**LINK:** www.unkle.com

**R.I.Y.L:** Massive Attack, RJD2, South

*Never Outgunned*, their first real record since 1997, to spring 2004 • **Radiohead** is rumored to be compiling an EP of remixes from *Hail To The Thief* for next year, includ-



# KILLING JOKE'S JAZ COLEMAN ON...

## HIS DAY JOB COMPOSING FOR THE PRAGUE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA VS. WORKING WITH KILLING JOKE

When I work with classical music I'm trying to create a more desirable reality, but when I work with Killing Joke, it's catharsis, exorcism.

## THE EMOTIONS BEHIND THE REUNITED BAND'S SELF-TITLED DISC

There's strong feelings, a lot of anger. And last year when we recorded the album, we'd gone through a lot of fuckin' stuff, if we're going to be perfectly honest, on a personal level—I think everybody had... I've got to say, the last track we recorded was "Seeing Red." It was really difficult for me to sing some of these lyrics. In fact, when I finished singing them, I literally just broke down for about half an hour and left the studio. The song resonates, I think it was that second verse that did it in the end—and what's happened in my life.

## THE EMOTIONS SAID DISC ENGENDERS IN FANS

They're jerking off over it; they're fucking creamin' themselves. It's fucking orgasmic, and you know it!

## DAVE GROHL BEHIND THE KIT

Our idea initially was to [use] three of our favorite drummers. When [Grohl] heard the album he said, "I've got to do all of it." He heard five tracks, and then when he heard the other five tracks he wet his pants.

## THE OLD DAYS

When we didn't have much money, I'm talking like '79 now, we'd borrow a friend's Ford transit van, and we used to drive around to Rough Trade Records where they used to



store their records and we'd back the van up and all run out and nick as many boxes of records as possible—throw 'em in the back and drive off. The last time we did this, right, we nicked about 20 boxes of these records and brought them back to our squat—and it was all Killing Joke records.

## THE NOW

You know Killing Joke's always been a sound, there's never been an image—it's a sound, a sound and a ceremony. You know the concerts these days are like cere-

monies. They're not like concerts, no. The people who come to Killing Joke concerts, they're the people who really made the music. It's the truth.

*Killing Joke (Zuma/Red Ink/Epic) is the first record in the band's 25-year career to get the band's sound, including Geordie Walker's monster guitar, right. Or, as Coleman puts it, "It was like God walked through the room."*

*Interview by Gerry Hart.*

ing mixes by Madlib and Four Tet • **Ash** is in L.A. working on the "louder" follow-up to *Free All Angels* with Nick Raskulinecz (Foo Fighters, QOTSA) \* \* \* \*



## THE NATIONAL

If Nick Cave had discovered the horror of suburban ennui before the Bible and heroin, we might not have had to wait so long for a record like the National's *Sad Songs For Dirty Lovers* (Brassland). The Brooklyn five-piece's second record approximates the audio equivalent of impaling a dusty copy of *The Sound And The Fury* on a guitar cable, shifting deftly between brooding, textured alt-country and driving rock, while overflowing with stories of flawed people making horrible decisions that would do Steinbeck or Faulkner proud. It's a wrist-slittingly perfect bedroom misery record, but front-man Matt Berninger wants you to know that everything's okay—he's not drinking himself to death or getting divorced every five seconds. "I knew there was a lot of relationship stuff on the record, but it's been funny reading some of the reviews. There was [one] that came out the other day... It was a great review, but I really felt sorry for myself after reading it," he laughs. *Sad Songs'* confessional lyrical style has misled critics and listeners alike into thinking Berninger's an emotional wreck, but he'll take it as a compliment. "I guess it's good, that [means] it's well-written. You read *Lolita*, and the perspective of Humbert Humbert in that, you really believe it's true. I don't know if Nabokov was a pedophile or not, but you just believe that it's a real thing going on," he says. But you can put that "Get Well Soon" card back on the rack—the songs are character studies, not a whiskey-soaked diary. "I've been getting calls of condolence and e-mails, and people have been sending me hugs, they're really worried about me," he says. "Which is nice but unnecessary." >>>TOM MALLON

HEIDI HARTWIG

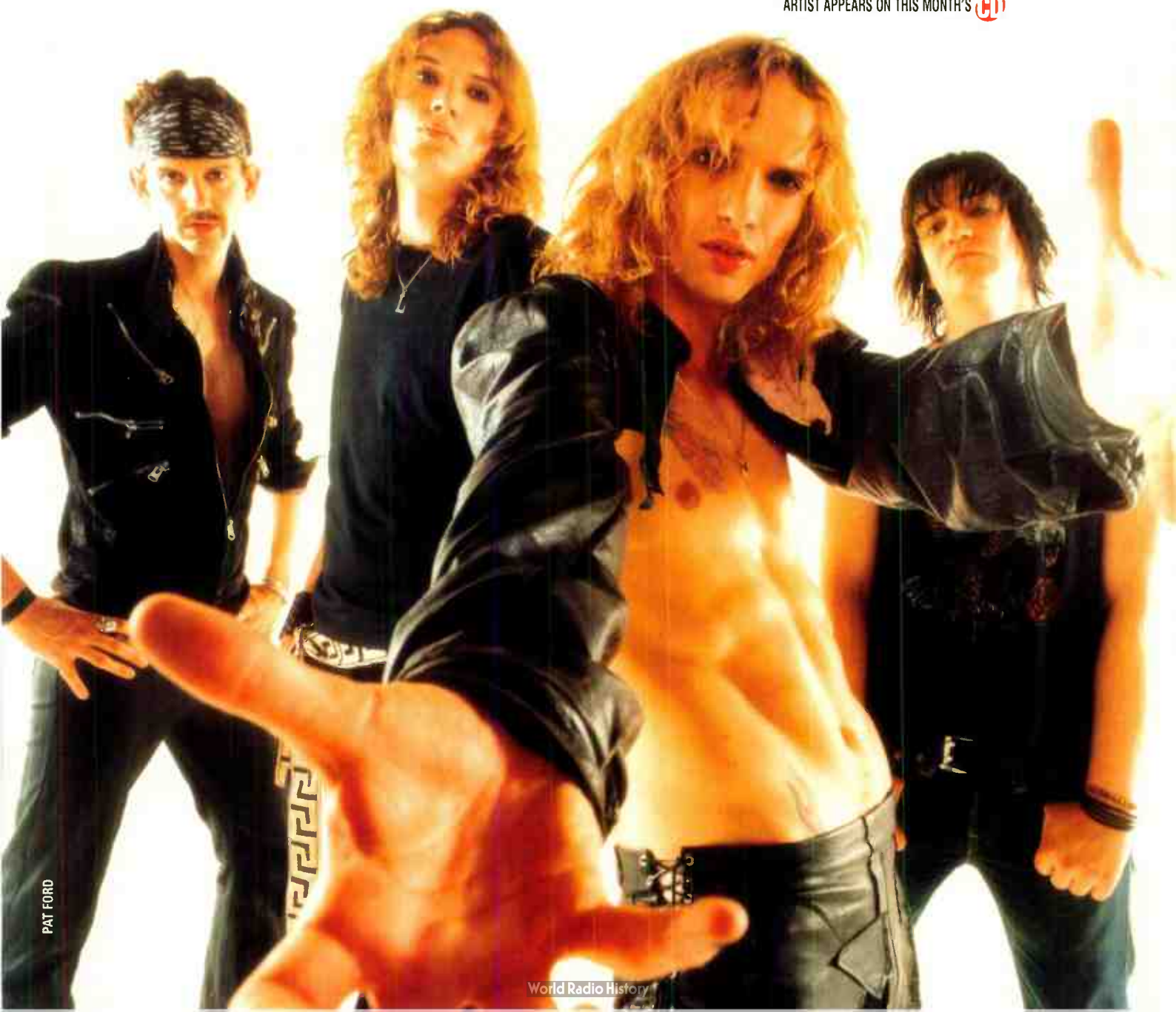
**Y**ou've got to hand it to campy U.K. glam-rockers the Darkness. Virtually unheard of a few months ago, the band currently has several taxicabs tooling through London with their devilish forked-tail logo painted on, their own ASCAR (the British version of NASCAR) race car (#69, of course), a busy online support presence dubbed the Darklings, a legion of rabid acolytes who call themselves DOGs (Darkness Official Groupies) and a Number One album in Britain, the Judas-Priest-meets-Loverboy falsetto-fest *Permission To Land* (Atlantic). There's even a Bob Ezrin-produced Yuletide single on the way, "(Christmas Time) Don't Let The Bells End," replete with chimes

# THE DARKNESS

and an operatic boys' choir. And longhaired, spandex-trousered frontman Justin Hawkins makes his retro-chic rock under one simple guiding principle: "If you enjoy it, that's all you really need to know about it." "We're not contrary just for the sake of it," he continues, after lifting up a vintage Aerosmith T-shirt to reveal his now-famous flame tattoos, licking up from his loins. "At the moment, what we're doing is very fashionable, but we were around before it was fashionable and we'll

be around when it isn't anymore. We're just doing what we do." And how did Hawkins acquire the songwriting skills exhibited on "Black Shuck" and "Get Your Hands Off My Woman"? From his stint penning advertising jingles, naturally. His favorite was a radio commercial "which consisted of getting kids from a famed academy-type school who couldn't sing, and then just making 'em sing stuff in my register. And they really had to struggle." >>>TOM LANHAM

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 





# COHEED AND CAMBRIA

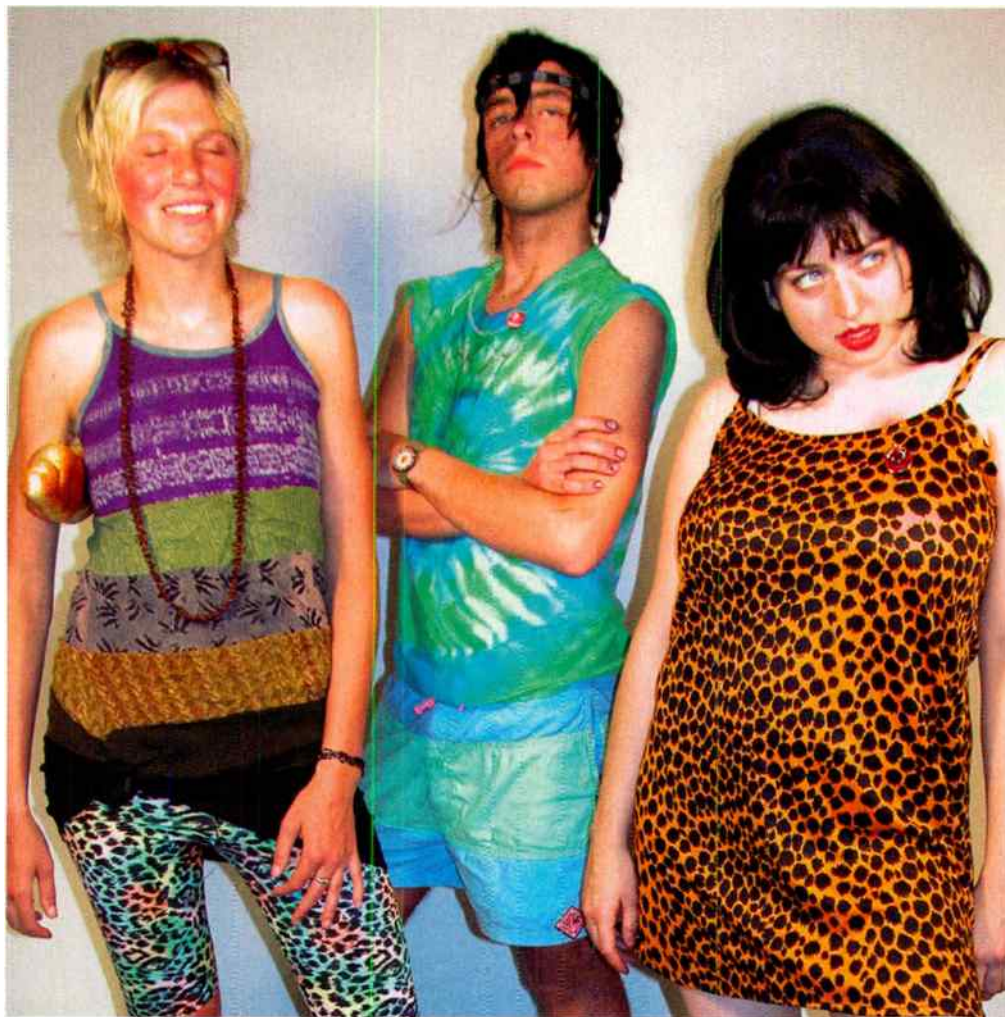
I was never a choir boy and I never had any vocal lessons. It's just the way I've been singing," reveals Coheed And Cambria vocalist Claudio Sanchez, when asked about his helium-high singing voice. He cites Cyndi Lauper, Michael Jackson and Freddie Mercury as vocal inspirations, but Sanchez has most often

been likened to the king of castrated vocalists, Geddy Lee. "I can see the comparison, but none of us are actually Rush fans. I'd rather be compared to a band that I admire than to a band that sucks," he laughs. The Rush resemblance also stems from the lengthy, intricate songs that make up *In Keeping Secrets Of Silent Earth: 3* (Equal Vision), a beautifully complicated chunk of heavy, filled with melodic-pop sentiment and heartfelt lyrics. A continuation of the group's 2002 debut *The Second Stage Turbine Blade*, *In Keeping Secrets* documents the ongoing saga of two celestial beings named Coheed and Cambria; the story, which deals with various

emotional themes, was created by Sanchez, a science-fiction and comic-book fanatic who prefers not to disclose the details. "I like leaving the records open-ended for the kids to get their own interpretations." The "kids" to which Sanchez fondly refers are the throngs of devoted fans who've latched on to the New York quartet over their year and a half of non-stop touring. The attention's earned them a lot of freedom—including the chance to release a series of comic books to accompany the albums. Which, obviously, pleases Sanchez. "As of now, we're so happy with where we are," he beams. "We wouldn't want to be anywhere else." >>>TRACEY JOHN

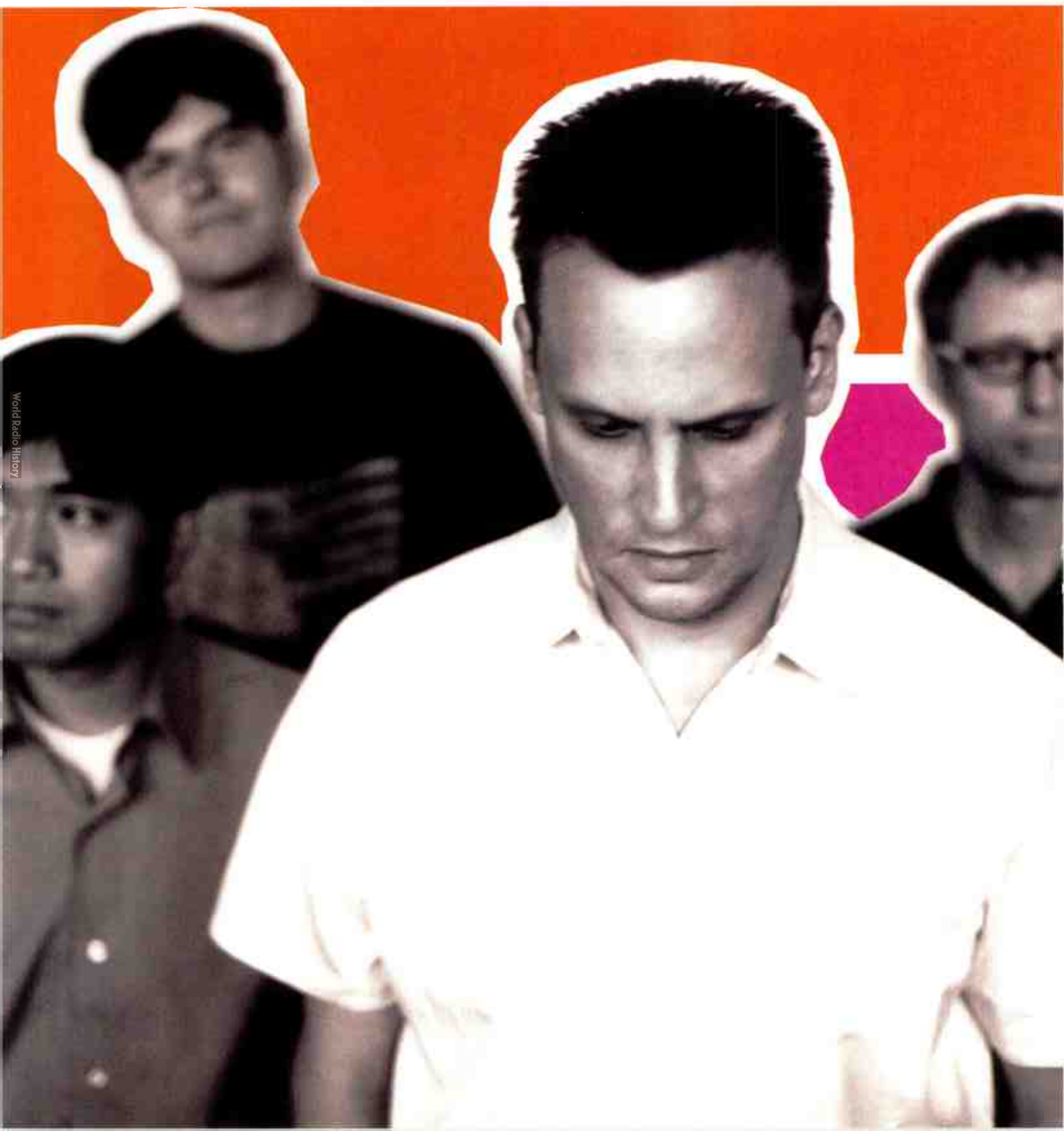
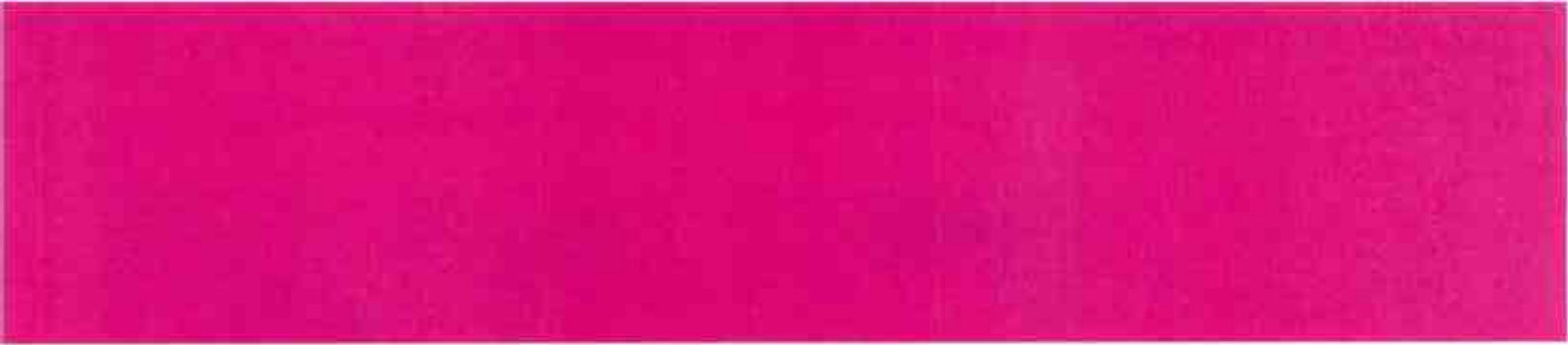
CHRISTOPHER K. GEORGE

The name is simpler than it looks: "It's like 'mission' without the 'mi' or 'profession' without the 'pro,'" explains Cody Critchelo, SSION's songwriter and all-around brainiac. But pronunciation is not the only confusing thing about this outfit. For one, people always mistake these Kansas City dirty dancers for New Yorkers (probably because Critchelo is responsible for the iconic and mildly demented artwork on the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' *Fever To Tell*). Plus, due to their barnyard animal costumes, videos, backdrops and props, some critics assume that SSION is a performance art troupe. Not true, says Critchelo: "Contrary to popular belief, the music always comes first!" And the music on *Opportunity Bless My Soul* (Version City) is downright confounding in its mix of pop theatrics and basement-rock-band grit. "My biggest musical influence was definitely Hole," he says. "Live Through This was the reason I started playing guitar," he explains, and the influence shows on songs like the sloshed and desperate ode to love, "I



## SSION

Fucking Care About You." Critchelo just might be early Madonna and Courtney Love trapped in a man's body, playing music that is equal parts Pussy Galore and the B-52's—and all this in the Midwest. "We're definitely loners here in Kansas City, as well as most places in the world," he considers. "But I think it's a very exciting time to be in the Midwest because there is a certain spastic energy going around. And I will bet a million dollars my closet is bigger than anyone's apartment in NYC." >>>CHARLES SPANO



World Radio History

# A NEW MOON RISING

After six brilliantly miserable albums with Red House Painters, Mark Kozelek's moving into a new home, called Sun Kil Moon.

STORY: TOM LANHAM • PHOTO: AMANDA MARSALIS

## "Hold me closer, tiny dancer."

That scene in Cameron Crowe's note-perfect music-journo reflection *Almost Famous*, where Patrick Fugit's befuddled teen *Rolling Stone* reporter is trapped on his subject Stillwater's tour bus, post-band feud? That's Mark Kozelek as the fed-up, longhaired Stillwater bassist, breaking the simmering silence by singing along with Elton John on the radio—the whole bus eventually joining in for a *Godspell*-like crescendo.

It's a great scene. And Crowe couldn't have picked a better voice to pull it off—a

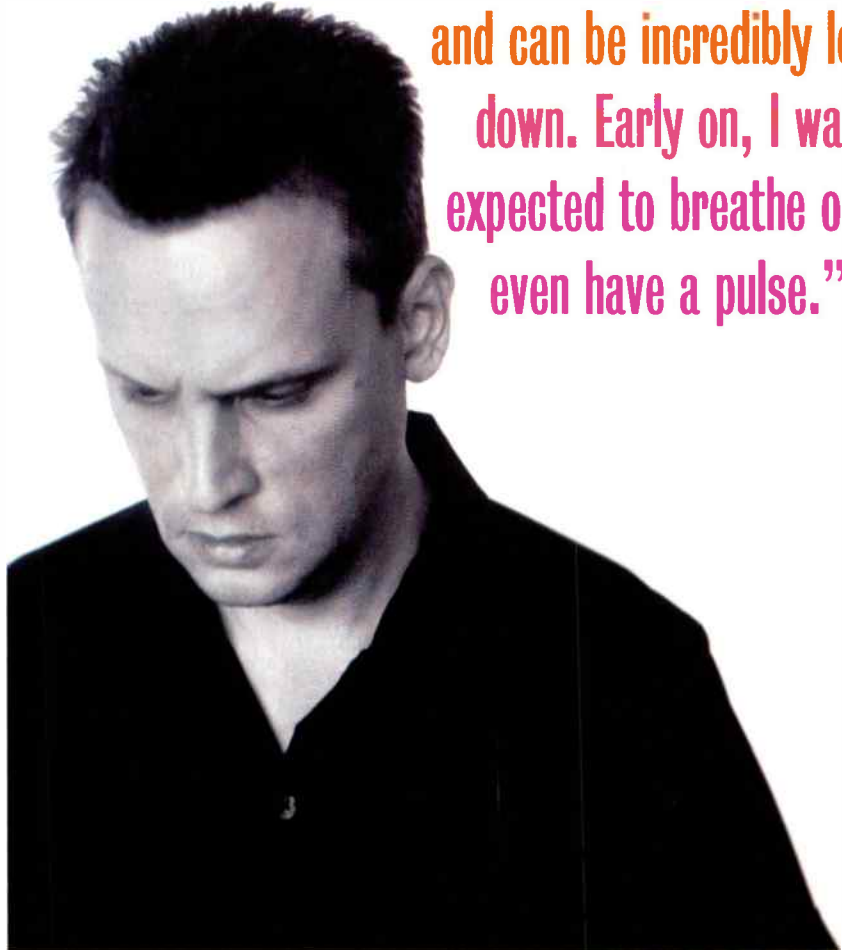
lissome, lugubrious tenor that once anchored 4AD heartthrobs Red House Painters and currently washes over Sun Kil Moon. But Kozelek still isn't sure how he landed the gig in the first place.

"I had one little part in *Vanilla Sky*, too, where the guy comes over to Tom Cruise and says, 'Dude, fix your face!' That was me," smiles the 36-year-old Kozelek, who's since trimmed his mane to a respectable length. "I guess Cameron really liked my music; they needed a bassist for Stillwater and somebody apparently said, 'Maybe we should check out this guy Mark

from Red House Painters.' So he called me, I flew out and met him, but I didn't think I'd get the part. But two months later he called and hired me."

An added bonus was performing songs with the fictional Stillwater, penned on-set by the likes of Crowe, Peter Frampton, Heart's Nancy Wilson (Crowe's wife) and her sister Anne. "That was incredible for me," he purrs. "Because I remember being in fourth grade and getting *Dreamboat Annie* and *Frampton Comes Alive!* for Christmas. So growing up, these were just classic,

“There are people who put a lot of weight on meeting you, they have expectations, and can be incredibly let down. Early on, I wasn’t expected to breathe or even have a pulse.”



very legendary people to me. And then to be around ‘em every day, hanging out with Nancy and Peter...” His voice trails off for a minute. “Hey, I don’t live in Hollywood, I don’t see celebrities every day. It was just amazing.”

Kozelek has amassed some mythology of his own over his 12 years in music. Kind of a tenderhearted poetic profile, swathed in the ethereal, doe-eyed strains of cult combo Red House Painters. “And there’s no escaping whatever original thought someone’s gonna have of you,” he concedes. “But I feel like throughout my career—if that’s what you wanna call it—I’ve always surprised people. Always. Maybe in the beginning, I put out two or three records that were very similar. But I changed from 4AD to Island Records, I made a solo album that was a lot more rocked-out, did a record of all-AC/DC covers, a John Denver tribute, even had a part in *Almost Famous*. I always feel like there’s something new happening. And I do have a sense of humor.”

Ergo, Sun Kil Moon’s new *Ghosts Of The Great Highway* (Jetset). It blends greasy arena-rawk power chords with soft, Americana-rustic strumming, and is loosely rooted in his fascination with boxing. The songs “Pancho Villa” and “Salvador Sanchez” are both based on lesser-known pugilists, and his group moniker was nicked from an obscure Korean fighter named Sung-Kil Moon. Kozelek just liked the feel of the three syllables together. “It’s like a little poem, those powerful little words,” he says.

The contrasts on *Ghosts* are striking. The opening ballad, “Glenn Tipton,” nods to the Judas Priest guitarist, but soon morphs into an elegy for a late friend; the loping, jangly acoustics of “Carry Me Ohio” recall his naive Midwest upbringing; the raffish, raucous electrics of “Lily And Parrots” describe his Bay Area neighborhood, where a famous flock of wild parrots rules the roost. Kozelek rises from his seat to study his surroundings; no birds in sight today. “But that’s why I’ve been living in this apartment for so long,” he smiles, gesturing toward the scenic Golden Gate Bridge. “I just love waking up and seeing that view every day. It

inspires me, because I’m from Ohio and being out here is still kind of exotic to me.”

Does Kozelek realize how gravely some acolytes took the RHP breakup after six albums? He knows, he knows. “And there are different categories of fans,” he frowns. “There are those fans who are like, ‘Well, you’re not what I expected you to be from listening to this music, and that’s okay.’ Then there are the ones who say, ‘You are what I expected you to be.’ But every once in a while you get a person who’s like, ‘You’re not what I expected you to be, and I’m very upset about this.’ There are people who put a lot of weight on meeting you, they have expectations, and they can be incredibly let down. I mean, early on, I wasn’t expected to breathe or even have a pulse. But as the years have gone on, I’ve made a point to show people that there is color to my life, and I think that’s coming through now.”

As if on cue, a FedExed script is delivered to Kozelek’s door. Another director besides Crowe is now considering him for a role. Will that—and Sun Kil Moon—help shake his miscasting as “somnolent sensitive guy”? He’s banking on it. “When I go on tour at the end of this year, I’m gonna play the same places I was playing 12 years ago. And not that there’s a certain stigma that follows you around, but what’s happened to R.E.M. hasn’t happened to me so far. There’s been no real buildup.

“So I felt like if I put out this record and called it Mark Kozelek, it’s pretty much gonna sell what my last solo album sold. With Sun Kil Moon, I really wanted to do something new, tour with people I haven’t played with before, so it could be a different thing. I mean, it still feels the same when I write music—I’m still just doing what I’ve always been doing. But I like this whole new band concept.” **NMM**



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THE ARTISTS OF THEIR YEAR:

# THE MARS VOLTA

STORY: CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN • PHOTO: DANIELLE VAN ARK  
ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S 

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"I had this problem for a whole fucking year now. Some people are gentle when it comes to giving you shots," says Cedric Bixler-Zavala, the wriggling, howling, microphone whipmaster for the Mars Volta, with a stuttered chortle that bursts from his nose, "and some people aren't."

**Getting booed by stadiums packed with yuppies; pushing a revolving door full of bassists; recovering from the deaths of friends, relatives, beloved bandmates—no one takes shots like the Mars Volta.**

And Cedric had just one more to take in late October, a shot through his healthy white enamel into extremely sensitive tooth pulp: a root canal.

"He wasn't that gentle, but every time he hurt me, he'd be like, 'I'm really sorry, man.' He grabbed my arm; I've never had a dentist do that," Cedric says. "I'm used to going to Mexico where they look at your teeth and go, 'Yeah, we'll knock that fucking thing out. Twenty bucks.'"

He was knowingly aggravating his abscessed, throbbing chomper, soothing the throat that produces his soaring tenor with licorice and honey; he still shudders when he talks about the surgery. **But if anything is apparent from The Fucked Up Year Of The Mars Volta, they will persevere... and something beautiful will come from the fragments.**

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**O**n May 25, Jeremy Michael Ward, the sound manipulation architect for the group's recordings and live shows, passed away from an apparent drug overdose. The Mars Volta's debut record was to be released in a month, and the buzz was already overwhelming. Two weeks after his friend had passed, Omar Rodriguez-Lopez was to be en route to the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater in San Antonio, Texas. Instead he was at home in Los Angeles, mildly distant, somewhere between the phone cord tethering him to the ground and his justifiably tangled headspace. On that day, June 12, guitarist Omar was asked, if you could be anywhere, would you be at home thawing out or emoting through live performance?

Omar replied, "For right now, it's at home. And very soon it will be to play in front of people. I'm going through something and I feel like an animal that should be caged right now. So, I find a warm feeling in being at home and cleaning my room and making music at home and cooking meals and watching the ants on the pavement. Stuff like that. I can't even really begin to understand how my brain is processing everything, so therefore I don't feel like I belong outside anywhere. I think everything will manifest itself into wanting to play and expressing myself that way, but for now it's so good to have the comfort of objects, all these objects that remind me of who I am, or who I've been, and the fun I've had before."

They went back out two weeks later, although Omar said, "If we waited six years, it would still be too early."

Six months after Jeremy's death, Omar is asked the same question. He responds with a laughed "huh," a pause, an "um" and a stifled chuckle that eventually evolves into a real chuckle when he repeats the question to himself. "Right now I'd have to say exactly where I am. I'm at the stage where all these things are coming open for me—there's a lot of ideas coming out."

**L**et it be said that this story has a happy ending—a year that ends in a surprise coup on Clear Channel where a cryptic, labyrinthine, 2112-meets-avant-hardcore concept album called *De-Loused In The Comatorium* (GSL/Strummer/Universal)

shimmies salsa shuffle and Afrobeat breakdowns between Nickelback numbers; a year that ends with five (or six) brothers closer than ever before; a year that ends with... an appearance on the Latin Video Music Awards.

The Mars Volta emerged at the glitzy Miami VMA ceremony as fishes out of water. Clad in "raggedy" tatters, no one talked to them but the camera people and some of the hosts. The barking paparazzi accosted them on the red carpet, inciting Cedric's partner-in-'fro Omar to huff off (cutting in front of a glad-handing Dido), resulting in a choir of booing shutterbug-a-boos. They performed an abbreviated song—singing their proverbial body electric with their trademark Stooges-cum-

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**"It's like getting up after being punched and having to keep running. The wound was still fresh. Everyone could see it, I think."**

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*Saturday Night Fever* death disco—for a very confused audience.

"I felt like we were the orphans from some school that had a big flood and our school got fucked up, so we got put into the big ritzy Beverly Hills High," Cedric says. "And we're there during orientation with Daisy Fuentes in front of us."

Somewhere between punker situationists and almost-famous ironists, the Mars Volta agreed to show up, if only for "the spectacle"—they lived inside the award ceremony full of inexplicably present celebs ("There's a couple people in Korn that look Hispanic," says the Chicano Cedric, "I don't know why Kelly Osbourne was there") and observed it "like seeing *Faces Of Death* or pornogra-

phy," as Omar notes.

The Mars Volta is no stranger to big events that confound audiences; they cut their honey-and-licorice-coated teeth on them. With the exception of a handful of club dates, the very first Mars Volta tour—launched at the beginning of 2003—was a trek through amphitheaters and stadiums with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, playing to receptive Europeans and decidedly American Americans, who booed and threw things at the two dandelions and their crack backing band.

"[In Europe], people were actually listening and deciding whether they actually liked it before walking away or trying to call their friends on their cell phone," says Omar, who treats an arena full of people like a "backdrop," playing only to his bandmates.

"I think we're doing something right," Cedric says. "I saw [Seattle art-spazzes Blood Brothers] and people were booing them, chanting 'AFI.' And my only advice to them was, 'Try doing AFI for a whole fuckin' month.'"

As the tour rolled on, Mars Volta would spend many of the off hours talking to reporters about the album they had completed in January ("and what we thought of Sparta," laughs Cedric, referring to the less oblique other 3/5 of their former band, At The Drive In). The most-reported element of *De-Loused* was its content—the album, a cinematic conceptual narrative, was a loosely fictional epitaph for friend and artist Julio Venegas who, after a failed morphine-induced suicide attempt left him in a coma, eventually took his own life in 1996. Was it difficult, in interview after interview, to keep confronting the tragic death of a close friend?

"No, it was great!" pipes up Omar, with an insistent dead-seriousness. "Yeah, it was really great... The first question when people ask us about it is, 'Why would you write an album about him?' To be able to sit there and try to explain to someone what someone like Julio meant to us, it's the best thing in the world. We answer that question by the record itself, but some people need it in black or white. To also be able to give an answer to another person and to yourself in black and white like that... it's a form of therapy. I would imagine it's the equivalent of when you go to a drug rehab or Alcoholics Anonymous and you have to stand up and say out loud what your issues are."



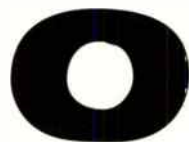
CEDRIC BIXLER-ZAVALA, JUAN ALDERETE, IKEY OWENS, OMAR RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ, JON THEODORE

Omar—raised on both Santería and Catholicism, but subscribing to a system of beliefs all his own—treats a death as an event, not to contemplate mortality, but to celebrate *life*. *De-Loused* itself was a celebration of Julio, a way to confront his decision and eventually a celebration of his decision, an acceptance that they would never understand it. “I just think death gets a one-sided view most of the time. It gets this slant, this taboo... It gets *typecast*,” Omar exclaims with a self-aware chuckle. “There’s so few people and so few cultures that try to unravel and understand the mystery and the beauty and the gift of death. All these things that essentially keep our planet turning. It’s as necessary as the sun or water.”

For Cedric, it was not as easy. “It’s kind of hard to keep talking about Julio all the time, definitely. All of a sudden it comes off like I’m selling a car, instead of trying to tell people about a friend of ours who died,” Cedric says. “When you have five interviews lined up in a row, you try

to just spit out the story as quickly as possible and it just becomes the back of a movie box.

“More than just his spirit is all over everything. We have these T-shirts that have this symbol that he used to sign all of his art with. And a lot of people wear the T-shirt and don’t even know what it really means. And it’s more than just a logo for us,” Cedric says. “When our record plays—maybe you think it’s cheesy—but for us it’s like a lighthouse. If Julio and anyone else is out there, they can see we’re still here and we still have this spirit that we all started off with.”



Omar recently bought a bunch of old analog equipment and has been holing himself in his room, writing and recording material that may or may not appear on the next Mars Volta record. The music isn’t necessarily *about* Jeremy, but is certainly influenced by the spirit of his “rambunctiousness.”

“There’s a lot of Jeremy’s spirit with me right now. And I want to make sure that I don’t forget about it as time passes by. So right now, I really want to enjoy the moment. It seems like we’ve been talking nonstop through dreams. I really love existing through that right now.”

Once again, Omar is forced to confront death and responds by celebrating life. One of the really great things about death, says Omar, is that you learn so much about yourself from the person who passed away.

“Jeremy always had such a low opinion of himself, and he always thought people didn’t like him. He always felt really misunderstood. I think it’s something that we all go through,” Omar says. “When Jeremy passed away, one thing I learned about myself, on the really basic level, [was] understanding that he had it so wrong from what he pictured in his own head. He told me once, before he died, he said, ‘You know, if I died tomorrow. I think you would be the only person that would cry.’ And I think almost every



single person I called the night that he passed away—almost every single person that I called—cried immediately on the spot.”

Six months later, Cedric and Omar share Jeremy stories like they did Julio stories, confident in the fact that their friend is best remembered through his life, not his death. Jeremy: a totally rambunctious guy when he had a few drinks in him, a total sweetheart when sober, a wordsmith who always surprised you when he opened his mouth, a timebomb with a dark sense of humor, a music-obsessive who introduced Cedric to Fela Kuti in high-school, a fellow affable enough to work his way into OutKast’s dressing room during an At The Drive-In *Farm Club* taping, a fellow outrageous enough to end up chased from the same lot by security.

“One time we played with De Facto [the dub project featuring Cedric, Omar, Jeremy and Volta keyboardist Ikey Owens] at the Camden Monarch in London. We locked the keys to the backstage, and he had to pee so badly,” Cedric says, in between hysterical laughs. “He ran off-stage in the middle of a song. He couldn’t get in there, so he got back onstage and he just pissed his pants. He just pissed his pants and played his melodica. He had these jeans on and you could totally see it. And everyone was cheering. It was great! That’s just the thing with Jeremy, there were so many great moments.”

Omar describes the first show without

Jeremy as “perfect,” “everything that it needed to be,” “the best show we could ever have.” Omar says, “I remember at the time thinking that our last show with Jeremy at Northsix in New York was the best show we’ve ever played. But when we ended up playing this show, I had this feeling, as cliché as it sounds, the feeling of knowing we were given his blessing. That he was there and he was just as excited as we were and that we had his blessing to continue playing and to exist and to be happy. I felt actually like, for that one show, he was there to play with us for that short moment—and then he went off to go do whatever it is he had to be doing.”

“It’s like getting up after being punched... and having to keep running,” says Cedric. “The wound was still fresh. Everyone could see it, I think.”

Omar attempted to explain to interviewers that many great things would come from Jeremy’s death, explaining to mostly confused scribes how the universe works. They didn’t understand what he meant; neither did he. But since then, the band has a feeling of going through war together, a feeling of intense brotherhood, closer than ever before.

“To go through the very first awkward practices of having a spot where there’s a person missing, a spot where there’s an energy missing, a place where somebody would have said a joke that is no longer there, a moment where you know somebody would have been asleep

on the couch and nobody’s asleep on that couch—to come out that other end,” says Omar, “there’s really nothing like it.

“There’s nothing like playing places you’ve played before and remembering moments in a very positive way. Saying, ‘Remember when fucking stupid Jeremy jumped off this thing and he cracked his foot and he was walking around with a cane for the rest of the tour?’ And everyone’s laughing at the end of the night,” Omar says. “It’s made such a strong and beautiful impact on the band.”

The Mars Volta—Omar, Cedric, Ikey, drummer Jon Theodore, newly acquired bassist Juan Alderete—have escaped a tribulation-filled 12 months with their kinship stronger, their spirits exploring, their musical pyrotechnics intact. Omar’s brother, 20-year-old Marcel, has joined up as their new percussionist and Cedric gets excited every time he comes home and hears the “wububububublu” of rewinding analog equipment coming from Omar’s room.

They’ve taken the highest road possible—finding the brighter sides of irate audiences, death... even dental surgery.

“Now [Cedric] knows what it’s like,” Omar says, laughing. “Now he knows what it’s really like. I don’t know what it’s like and I always say that shit. ‘Have you heard the (International) Noise Conspiracy?’ ‘No, I’d rather get a root canal.’ Now, he actually knows which he would rather do.” **NMM**

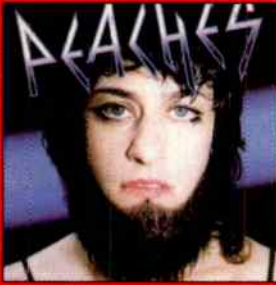
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An 80-year-old woman, one of countless civilian war victims, living in the basement of her bombed-out Chechen home. Magnum Photos

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**No Thanks: The '70s Punk Rebellion**  
(\$64.98, [www.rhino.com](http://www.rhino.com))

Starting, appropriately, with "Blitzkrieg Bop," and ending, appropriately, with "Love Will Tear Us Apart," this four-CD box set assembles 100 songs from when punk was an idea more than a genre. (The Sex Pistols, contrary even into their golden years, declined inclusion.) The Mekons' "Where Were You?" segues into the Germs' "Lexicon Devil"—damn. This year, give the gift that says, "Shut your pie hole about what punk really was and what it really is now and what Good Charlotte fans who used to listen to \*NSYNC think it is and just listen."

**Screenblast ACID 4.0**  
(\$69.95, [www.screenblast.com](http://www.screenblast.com))

Always thought that your favorite track would sound better with more cowbell? Get remixing with Screenblast ACID 4.0: The latest version of the popular looping software lets you pull in whole tracks, analyze their tempo with its Beatmapper function and start throwing loops on top willy-nilly. ACID's also perfect for creating your own music, from scratch with your own loops or with a little help from [screenblast.com](http://screenblast.com)'s extensive loop library.

**Manhunt** ⑤  
(\$49.99, PS2, [www.rockstargames.com](http://www.rockstargames.com))

Let's be frank: This game scares the shit out of us. All those bleak movies warning us of future televised bloodsports come to a head in *Manhunt*, a gore-laden chiller that's part *The Running Man* survival horror, part *8MM* snuff film, and all disturbing. You even get to choose (from three levels of brutality) how nastily you dispatch your enemies as you creep through an urban nightmare that would give the creatures from *Silent Hill* the heebie-jeebies. As compelling as a particularly gruesome car accident, but you might want to buy this one for yourself rather than your nephew.

**Imaspeaker**  
(\$19.99 for single speaker, \$29.99 for dual, [www.tdk.com](http://www.tdk.com))

Most items that attempt to function as two things fail miserably at least one. Not so with the TDK Imaspeaker, which is kicking ass at carrying your CDs and hiding a speaker at the same time. We don't recommend using it on the subway, but just try going on a picnic without one from now on, smart guy. You'll see!



①



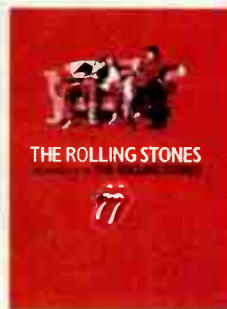
②



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**KORI GARDNER**  
**OF MATES OF STATE** on what she'd like to give this year:

"I would write a book about the person I was giving it to and only let him or her read it. Or I would paint them. I did that for my parents once—I am the worst artist in the world. They hung the portraits up in their basement."

**① Aesthetic Apparatus**  
(\$20, [www.aestheticapparatus.com](http://www.aestheticapparatus.com))

If your friends are going to decorate their place like a dorm room, at least help them inject it with a bit of class. (Especially if their place is in fact a dorm room.) Aesthetic Apparatus posters are handscreened, for pretty much every single band you like, in limited, hand-numbered quantities. If the D.I.Y.-ness or the limited edition-factor doesn't get them all hyped up, that every poster is completely gorgeous will.

**② Philips Key Ring MP3 Player**  
(\$99-\$149, [www.philips.com](http://www.philips.com))

With so many MP3 players hitting the market this season, we often find ourselves asking, "Yeah, it's got great features, but can I fit it in my ass?" The answer is yes. This curiously shaped, tiny MP3 player has a cord to hang around your neck, but is small enough to fit anywhere, so you can enjoy jamming in even the tightest spots.

**③ Eddie Izzard, Circle DVD**  
(\$19.98, [www.anti.com](http://www.anti.com))

Eddie Izzard doesn't dress as a woman for laughs, but that doesn't mean he doesn't think it's funny—just like Papal history or the Death Star cafeteria.

**④ According To The Rolling Stones**  
(\$40, [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com))

It's hard to say what's more amazing: That a one-band photo archive this huge exists, or that the Rolling Stones still have enough long-term memory to grant the ridiculously extensive interviews in this book. A must for any über-Stones fan, and a hell of a peek into rock's gaping maw for the rest of us.

**Once In A Lifetime**  
(\$59.98, [www.rhino.com](http://www.rhino.com))

Talking Heads took nervous, can't-cope-with-modern-living art-rock to the top of the charts when Radiohead were still in grade school. Their rather more jubilant take on it is now immortalized in this three-CD/one-DVD retrospective, featuring a wide selection of their gloriously fractured songs and a complete collection of their bent videos. Everything is newly remastered and sounding amazing, so until they reissue the individual records, this is the cleanest Head you're gonna get.

MATES OF STATE: KATHY GARDNER

## Philips Audio Jukebox

(\$399, [www.audio.philips.com](http://www.audio.philips.com))

One thing the artists questioned for this gift guide taught us: Everyfreakingbody wants an iPod under their tree this year. But let's be honest here, that thing is so 2002. Enter the Philips Audio Jukebox—tiny and light like the iPod (less than six ounces), with MP3 and WMA playback, navigation simple enough for those of us who aren't supercomputernerds, and 15GB of space for all your rock needs. And the most important thing: It's a sleek silver and black, which looks much more rock than that zen marshmallow theme Apple has going.

## ESPN NBA Basketball ESPN NFL Football ESPN NHL Hockey

(\$49.99, Xbox/PS2, [www.espnvideogames.com](http://www.espnvideogames.com))

Nobody knows how to help you enjoy sports without actually participating in them more than ESPN, so it's no surprise that their leap onto game consoles has been so successful. Players in these games are so faithfully rendered that you'll recognize them before you even see their numbers—you can even read tattoos. All are equipped for online play and feature actual ESPN announcers to make it the most realistic experience possible; in *NFL*, you even get to deck out your very own crib with trophies.

## Coldplay Live 2003 DVD

(\$19.99, [www.coldplay.com](http://www.coldplay.com))

Funny how Coldplay manages to appeal to your cynical college-aged brother, your 14-year-old sister and even your Mom. But it makes anything associated with the band a useful holiday gift—hence the inclusion here of *Coldplay Live*, a two-disc DVD/CD set recorded in Sydney, Australia, with more than 90 minutes of live melodic moping, a tour diary, band commentary and a 40-minute documentary.

## TreeTubes

(\$26.14, [www.futureforests.com](http://www.futureforests.com))

While you're giving in to the lure of crass consumerism this holiday season, don't forget the hippies on your list: They'll be so impressed with your choice of a TreeTube—which holds a certificate that represents a mango tree you've adopted in the "Coldplay forest" in India, a sapling in Joe Strummer's Rebels Wood on the Isle of Skye, or one of many other artists' adopted forests, in the recipient's name—that they might stop thinking you're capitalist scum for a whole afternoon.



## CHRIS WALLA OF DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE on the one gift he most wants to give this year:

"The gift of time travel. This would facilitate your trip to Wembley Stadium to see Queen in 1986."



## Flavas

(\$14.99, [www.flavas.com](http://www.flavas.com))

We're not entirely sure if Flavas are hopelessly offensive or just hopeless. But we're positive they spread holiday cheer. P.Bo is our favorite. She's sassy.

## CATGee Lifestyle Tin

(\$34.95, [www.catgee.com](http://www.catgee.com),  
[www.iwantoneofthose.com](http://www.iwantoneofthose.com))

Nothing says "I think you might have a serious genetic deficiency" quite like the CATGee Lifestyle Tin. This handy case has everything you need to take your own DNA sample and get it analyzed—then you can even get your profile on a T-shirt. As if you don't have DNA all over your T-shirt to begin with.

## Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun

(\$49.99, Xbox/PS2/Gamecube,  
[www.eagames.com](http://www.eagames.com))

Electronic Arts' *Medal Of Honor* series gives new meaning to "The Art Of War," and its latest installment is no exception. *Rising Sun* takes you to the Pacific Rim, beginning with the first bomb dropped on Pearl Harbor and spiraling through nine missions of *Saving Private Ryan*-esque intensity. Perfect battle choreography and highly cinematic backgrounds make for a movie-worthy experience; all that's missing is "Ride Of The Valkyries" in the background.

## Xbox Music Mixer

(\$39.99, [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com))

Her name is Rio and she dances on the sand! The Xbox Music Mixer comes with everything you need to start your own karaoke party—use the 12 tracks that come on the disc, or use fancy Microsoft technology to strip the lyrics out of whatever MP3s you put on your Xbox hard drive. Now you can finally karaoke to Pavement or Cursive; they're never on key, so why should you be?

## Max Payne 2: The Fall Of Max Payne

(\$49.99, Xbox/PS2/PC,  
[www.rockstargames.com](http://www.rockstargames.com))

Rockstar Games' talent for couching insane orgies of violence in high style and the most beautiful graphics to ever hit your screen grows even stronger with *Max Payne 2*. Max has been reinstated in the NYPD—despite mercilessly slaughtering a small country's worth of thugs in the first—only to bring the apocalypse once again, while being simultaneously pulled into a melodramatic, soap opera-worthy love story. Well, a soap opera where you kill everybody, anyway.

①



### The New Pornographers, *Mass Romantic* ③

(\$11.98, [www.matadorrec.com](http://www.matadorrec.com))

You've read about this record and heard the blathering about "Letter From An Occupant," but did you buy it? Originally released in the U.S. as a Mint import, *Mass Romantic's* renown outreached its distribution. Now widely available (and remastered), it's a fine fit for any aesthete's stocking.

### Ian Christie, *Sound Of The Beast: The Complete Headbanging History of Heavy Metal*

(\$24.95, [www.soundofthebeast.com](http://www.soundofthebeast.com))

There are tons of music books, and more than a few about metal. Why this one? Ian Christie can write, so he can convey what the rise of Black Sabbath and Metallica felt like, not just what it means.

### MAGPiX B350 Digital Camera ⑥

(\$129.99, [www.magpix.com](http://www.magpix.com),  
[www.iwantoneofthose.com](http://www.iwantoneofthose.com))

No more cumbersome zoom lenses and pesky film for you: Say hello to the Magpix B350, a combination binoculars/digital camera. Zoom right in and snap away—perfect for bird-watching, stargazing or taking pictures of unsuspecting naked people.

### Need For Speed Underground

(\$49.99, Xbox/PS2/Gamecube/Game Boy Advance/PC, [www.eagames.com](http://www.eagames.com))

*Need For Speed Underground* is the latest in this year's line of *The Fast And The Furious*-inspired street racers, and may be the finest. Rip through city streets at Ludacris speed in a car so customizable that we wouldn't be surprised if you could change the upholstery.

### GoVideo D2730 Networked DVD Player ①

(\$299, [www.govideo.com](http://www.govideo.com))

It was only a matter of time before someone put out a DVD player that hooks up to your computer. With the GoVideo Networked DVD player, bring up all your "digital content" and "MPEG 1 and 2" files on your big screen TV. You know, just in case you'd rather watch *Naughty/Nice Night Nurses 9* in the living room instead of the den. Merry X-mas!

②



### ② Lennon Legend, An Illustrated Life Of John Lennon

(\$40, [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com))

We've all had that experience of sitting around listening to Sgt. Pepper's and reading *Pat The Bunny* and wishing we could combine the two things, no? A lucky person on your gift list can thank James Henke for creating *Lennon Legend*, a hardcover book chronicling Lennon's life and featuring replicas of memorabilia, from his childhood report cards, to handwritten lyric sheets and poems for Yoko, that you can remove and play with.

③



⑤



④



⑥

### ④ A'Diva Speakers

(\$225, [www.roundsound.com](http://www.roundsound.com))

Your living room looks re-goddamn-diculous with those gigantic speakers everywhere. Try these five-inch spheres instead. Because of their size they can go anywhere—you can even mount them in your ceiling. Painted balls have never sounded so good.

### The Brick Testament: Stories From The Book Of Genesis

(\$14.95, [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com))

Brendan Powell Smith's *Bricktestament.com* makes the Bible fun for everyone, condensing its big, scary passages into friendly, plastic Legos. *The Brick Testament* collects his version of Genesis—you can tell which one is God by the big beard and angry eyebrows. If you're into Jesus, give it to your kids, if you like to make fun of Jesus, give it to your friends. Either way, Jesus wins!

### Soundtrack To The Apocalypse

(\$53.99, [www.slayer.net](http://www.slayer.net))

Christmas cheer got you down? Give 'em a little bah humblod with the most scary and evil band in the history of scary and evil things, Slayer. Three CDs and one DVD of pure Slaytanic horror, and if you get the limited edition, you get a wall banner to scare your mom and an extra live disc that comes in a *blood pack* with *floating skulls* in it. Thank you, Dark Master, we knew all our sacrifices would one day be rewarded.

### ⑤ Donald S. Passman, *All You Need To Know About The Music Business*

(\$30, [www.simonandschuster.com](http://www.simonandschuster.com))

Want to know how a major-label artist makes \$1.21 on each CD sold? Want someone to run screaming from the record business? Or at least enter into it with clear eyes? This fifth update of Passman's no-shit guide to the music industry makes as much sense out of it as anyone can.

### EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY on the worst gifts they've ever received:

**Chris Hrasky**, drums: "The rest of the band promised me two Bruce Springsteen tickets. On the day of the show, they handed me a CD (not Bruce Springsteen) and their apologies."

**Michael James**, bass: "For Christmas my mother gave me an Amish-made walking stick to add to my collection. Except that I don't have a walking stick collection and never have. Ever. Sorry Mom."

**Mark Smith**, guitar: "In 2002, my favorite grandmother gave me a datebook/appointment calendar for the year 1991, along with a picture of Jesus hugging a young man. Also included was a page of coupons for Long John Silver's. This is true."

**Munaf Rayani**, guitar: "A few years ago I was given a set of golf clubs by my best friends and bandmates. I used them twice. The next year I was given *Tiger Woods PGA Tour* for the PlayStation 2 and I have played it every day since. I don't particularly like golf."

### Sharper Image Personal Entertainment Center ①

(\$699.95, [www.sharperimage.com](http://www.sharperimage.com))

### Archos Video Jukebox AV300

(\$549.95-\$899.95, [www.archos.com](http://www.archos.com))

Ah, television, it's not just for home anymore. The Sharper Image's Personal Entertainment Center is as extensive as it sounds: Watch DVDs on its 7-inch screen, play CDs, the radio and MP3s, hook it up to cable to watch TV... it even has a "Sound Soother" in it to lull you to sleep. The Archos Video Jukebox lets you store up to 50 movies (up to 80 hours), and you can even download "video content" from your PC. And you know what *that* means.



### Grand Theft Auto Double Pack ②

(\$49.99, Xbox, [www.rockstargames.com](http://www.rockstargames.com))

Two years and one million dead hookers later, we're *still* not sick of these games. Now your PlayStation-deprived friends can finally join the fray, as the most amazing game franchise ever lands on the Xbox. This season, give the gift of ultra-violence.

### Pearl Jam double-header ③

(Both \$19.98, [www.pearljam.com](http://www.pearljam.com))

For those of you making fishy faces at the mere mention of Pearl Jam, one word of advice: Quit flapping your yap until you've experienced them live. To help you out there, there's the *Pearl Jam Live At The Garden* DVD—a two-disc set of their painfully kickass July 8, 2003 performance at NYC's Madison Square Garden, featuring guest appearances by Ben Harper, members of the Buzzcocks and nearly three hours of unbridled rock goodness. Devoted Pearl Jam fanatics will be doubly pumped about the two-disc *Lost Dogs* rarity set, which includes 31 tracks previously found only as B-sides or on compilations.

### Blue Man Group The Complex Rock Tour Live DVD

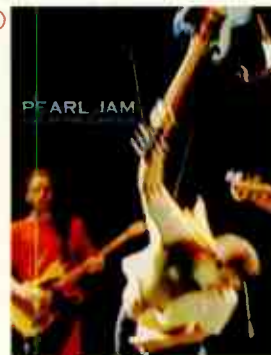
(\$14.99, [www.blugman.com](http://www.blugman.com))

It's very possible that your parents like Broadway, which we all know is an illness there is no cure for. Soothe their need for bombast with something that's a legitimately awesome spectacle: the Blue Man Group's *The Complex Rock Tour Live* DVD. The nonstop visual and aural excitement of a live Blue Man performance is a serious "Holy shit!" experience—only one very different from *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.



### MATTHEW CAWS OF NADA SURF on what he wants most this holiday season:

"I want someone from the California Closet Company to come over and build a shelving system that hides all the stuff in my apartment so that all that's left out is a bed and a guitar. This is of course impossible as it costs a fortune. I've tried to do it myself but ADD wins every time."



## CHRISTMAS RAPPING!... YEAH, WE WENT THERE

Some folks are so damn hip-hop-obsessed that they think *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is a seasonal B-side from the mustachioed guy in Leaders Of The New School. Buy that tortured soul one of these DVDs, pour some Cristal in the eggnog, and soon you'll be both chillin' and coolin' just like the proverbial snowman.

**Life IS...** The Life And Times Of Todd Shaw  
Ho ho ho! No, that ain't Santa, biitch... that's the first three minutes of the pimptacular Too Short documentary, *Life IS... The Life And Times Of Todd Shaw* (Grass Roots). It's more business than freaky tales, but at least you can learn the mackin' trade (Lesson one: Keep your tour money in your sock).

**Beef**  
After devouring that crimson-ribboned Hickory Farms gift sausage, top it off with a big slab of *Beef* (QD3). This meaty documentary studies the history of battle rhymes from Busy Bee and Kool Moe Dee's legendary snap fights to 50 Cent and Ja Rule's lopsided slap-fight.

**Mush Tour Spring 2002**  
What else does Santa have in his backpack—er, sack? *Mush Tour Spring 2002* (Mush) is a live tour doc featuring the label's stable of art-hop weirdos (Labtekwon, Radioinactive, Boom Bip And Dose One, Reaching Quiet, cLOUDDEAD) spreading oblique rhymes and asymmetric beats like Christmas cheer.

**\*Helpful Holiday Hip-Hop Hint**—rapping into one of your mom's glass ball ornaments makes you look like you're in a Hype Williams video! Try it! —CHRISTOPHER WINGGARTY



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Check out MOJO 256F and other TDK portable players at [www.tdk.com](http://www.tdk.com), The Digital Sweetspot™.

# 'TIS BETTER TO RECEIVE

So yeah, wouldn't it be nice to buy lots of stuff from the preceding pages for your friends and family?

Great, now that that's out of the way, look at all this stuff for you to win.

Go to [www.cmj.com/hmm](http://www.cmj.com/hmm) to enter and see full contest details.

## Björk, Live Box ②

[www.bjork.com](http://www.bjork.com)

Over the last few years, Björk has slowly collected her favorite live performances.

Culled from England, Spain, New York, London, Prague, Vienna, Montreaux and more, she has sculpted a definitive live companion to her four studio albums (*Debut*, *Post*, *Homogenic* and *Vespertine*) in this box set. They are some of Björk's best live performances ever.



## Coldplay Live 2003 ④

[www.coldplay.com](http://www.coldplay.com)

To celebrate how much they ruled you in 2003, Coldplay are giving away a signed lithograph and a copy of the *Coldplay Live 2003* DVD/CD to rule you well into 2004. Now Gwyneth won't be the only one to have Chris Martin tacked to her wall!



## Trojan UK Hits Box Set, Trojan 35th Year Anniversary, Trojan Dub Box Set ⑦

[www.trojanrecords.com](http://www.trojanrecords.com)

Three box sets, nine discs—over 150 classic reggae recordings. Trojan offers a rich history of reggae's finest artists including: Bob Marley & The Wailers,

Desmond Dekker, Jimmy Cliff, the Upsetters, Ken Boothe, Dennis Brown and many others.



## Rough Trade 25th Anniversary

[www.roughtradeamerica.com](http://www.roughtradeamerica.com)

To celebrate their 25th Anniversary, Rough Trade is offering a grand prize of all their U.S. releases from 2003: 14 full-length CDs, 10 EPs, two vinyl singles (including a rare Kills one-sided 7-inch), plus posters, stickers, and postcards for many of the artists. Answer three questions about the label at [cmj.com](http://cmj.com); ten winners will receive the *Rough Trade 25th Anniversary* CD. See Back Cover



## ① Trustkill Label Gift Set

[www.trustkillrecords.com](http://www.trustkillrecords.com)

Win a copy of every kickass CD released on Trustkill Records in 2003! The best bands in the scene right now, including Open Hand, Throwdown, Nora, Bleeding Through, ArmsBendBack and Most Precious Blood.

## ③ Ferret Label Gift Set

[www.ferretstyle.com](http://www.ferretstyle.com)

Choose any six CDs from Ferret's Web store, as well as a Ferret T-shirt and one of any band's T-shirt.

## ⑤ Thrive Super-Pack

[www.subcityrecords.com](http://www.subcityrecords.com)

Sub City is giving away a signed LP copy of the critically acclaimed Thrive release *The Illusion Of Safety...* In addition to this super-rare item, they've also thrown in a super-cool Thrive T-shirt, a sure-to-keep-you-warm Thrive hoodie and a copy of the *Madden NFL 2003* video game, featuring Thrive music.

## ⑥ Nokia 3650 Phone

[www.nokiausa.com/phones/3650](http://www.nokiausa.com/phones/3650)

The Nokia 3650 can take and store over 1,000 photos, as well as recording and playing back video on its full-color screen. You can even record voice clips to go along with photos and videos and e-mail them to yourself or your friends. Play games, surf the Web, get customizable backgrounds and ringtones, and even make phone calls! Product and pricing availability based on service offered in your area. Subject to change. May require a one or two year service activation with featured wireless carrier. One-time wireless activation fee and early termination fees may apply.



## ⑧ Sirius Satellite Radio and The Kenwood Here2Anywhere™

[www.siriusradio.com](http://www.siriusradio.com)

Win a year's subscription to Sirius Satellite Radio (see page 38), plus a Kenwood Here2Anywhere™ on which to listen to it. The Here2Anywhere connects with any car, home, personal computer or marine audio system. It lets you see what's playing on other streams by song title or artist name before selecting, and it has a sweet memory and recall feature.





## Indie-Rock Clubhopping, USA

For a decade, Localzine's put a spotlight on all that's cool about towns and cities throughout the world. But what about that one club, the one the locals know, love and call home? Who better to guide you to the best rock clubs in town than the bands who populate them night after night, and the labels who helped put them there? This quick, handy guide might lead you to your new favorite band—or at least a spot to get a good buzz on while ogling boys and girls in chunky glasses.

### CHICAGO, IL

**Califone's** Benny Massarella  
**"THE HIDEOUT** (1354 W. Wabansia, 773-227-4433) is the perfect place to see a show: low capacity and soundpeople who know their stuff. The fact that talkers can sit at the bar behind the double doors and the listeners can be left alone to listen is priceless. That said, my absolute favorite venue to play (and listen) is the **OLD TOWN SCHOOL OF FOLK MUSIC** (4544 N. Lincoln Ave., 773-728-6000). The acoustics and sightlines are fantastic. It's a theater, but it's perfectly intimate as well."  
*Califone's* Heron King Blues will be out in early 2004 on *Thrill Jockey*.  
[www.thrilljockey.com](http://www.thrilljockey.com)

### NEW YORK, NY

**Radio 4's** Anthony Roman  
 "The best places to dance or hear dance music lately are both in Brooklyn. **THE ROYALE** (506 5th Ave., 718-840-0089) is a cool little spot that features a great dance night called "Step On," hosted by leg-

endary British writer Tony Fletcher—great selections that never get too obvious. There's also a great house night called "Vanilla Fudge" run by the Turntables On The Hudson crew. Those guys do a night at the **MODA CAFE** (294 5th Ave., 718-832-8897), which is conveniently located next door to my record shop, *Somethin' Else*. Both places let you go crazy and feel very uninhibited. Which is important."  
*Radio 4* has a remix album, *Electrify*, out on *Astralwerks*. The follow-up to 2001's *Gotham!* is due in 2004. [www.r4ny.com](http://www.r4ny.com)

**Instruction's** Arty Shepherd  
**"THE MERCURY LOUNGE** (217 E. Houston St., 212-260-4700) is the best-sounding room in NYC, and when the band sucks you can run from the horror and get a drink—that is a major plus. **PIANOS** (158 Ludlow St., 212-505-3733) is getting up there though, I've been there more than any other place to see bands of late. Plus it's close to [Mexican restaurant] *Sombrero's* so you can run for a margarita to go..."  
*Instruction* are recording their debut with *Bob Ezrin*, for release on *Geffen* in 2004.  
[www.instruction-music.com](http://www.instruction-music.com)

### AUSTIN, TX

**Explosions In The Sky's** Munaf Rayani  
 "When you walk into **THE PARISH** (214 E. Sixth St., 512-478-6372), it's as though you're in a ski lodge. The sound is huge from any corner, and all the people who work there are fantastic. You're lucky if you get to play there."  
*Explosions In The Sky's* *The Earth Is Not A Cold Dead Place* was just released by *Temporary Residence*.  
[www.explosionsinthesky.com](http://www.explosionsinthesky.com)

**Misra Records' Phil Waldorf**  
 "The **CAROUSEL LOUNGE** (1110 E. 52nd St., 512-452-6790) is a circus-themed



honky-tonk bar that hasn't changed much in the past 50 years. The circus theme is surreal—there's a giant pink elephant and a huge circus mural directly behind the bands and a carousel with chickens instead of horses behind the bar—hence the name."  
 Visit [www.misrarecords.com](http://www.misrarecords.com) to order the latest from *Chris Lee*, *Centro-matic* and others.

### OMAHA, NE

**Cursive's** Matt Maginn  
 "Omaha is in a transitional period with its live venues: Many opening, closing and changing hands. For the past few years, **SOKOL HALL** (2234 S. 13th St., 402-346-9802) has been the place with consistently good shows. This is mainly due to Robb and Jason at *Saddle Creek* and *One Percent Productions*. Both act as independent promoters who frequently book shows there. They work hard for the bands and for the music fans in Omaha. The bar staff are also great and very generous."  
*Cursive's* *The Ugly Organ* was released this spring on *Saddle Creek*.  
[www.cursivearmy.com](http://www.cursivearmy.com)

### BOSTON, MA

**Kimone's** Tim Den  
**"THE MIDDLE EAST** (472-480 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, 617-864-EAST) is by far the best live music venue in the area. A 200-capacity upstairs venue, a downstairs that holds 800, a corner that hosts eclectic live music for the restaurant's patrons, and an upscale 'in-between' room that often has the likes of *Frank Black* playing acoustic. What's more, they have great food and drinks!"  
*Kimone's* *Meres Of Twilight* is on *Silverthree Recordings*; its follow-up is due in 2004. [www.kimone.com](http://www.kimone.com)





## PHILADELPHIA, PA

### The Trouble With Sweeney's

Joey Sweeney

"Lots of people will give you guff about the more 'prestige'-type clubs in Philly: **The Khyber**, **North Star**, **First Unitarian Church** and so on. But the faux-Asian, long-running hipster nightspot **SILK CITY** (435 Spring Garden St., 215-592-8838) might be the most fun place to play. Partly because it's an underdog, partly because there's history there (the club has been open for like 15 years and hosted King Britt's early DJ residencies), and partly because Silk City is a party space, a living testament to the old '60s Technicolor discotheque idea where live bands and DJs rub up against each other freely and in sync. Last summer, TTWS did a residency there and it was a real milestone for us. By the time it ended—at the last show, we played the Velvet Underground's *Loaded*—the shows were packed. Silk City let us build an audience on our own terms; our gigs in Philly have been better ever since."

*The Trouble's I Know You Destroy is out on Burnt Toast Vinyl.*

[www.thetroublewithsweeney.com](http://www.thetroublewithsweeney.com)

## SAN FRANCISCO, CA

### The Pleased's Noah Georgeson

"**NOE VALLEY MINISTRY** (1021 Sanchez St., 415-282-2317) is actually a church, but they occasionally have shows. Not like Creed or Stryper, but amazing and authentic shows for infidels and believers alike. The audience sits straight-backed in the pews and musicians play sweaty at the pulpit. It's a pretty holy scene. If there isn't a show at the Ministry (which there usually isn't) get thee to the **HEMLOCK TAVERN** (1131 Polk St., 415-923-0923), a cozy, candle-lit

indie club where your brother's Captain Beefheart cover band might play one night, and Cat Power might sneak in and play a secret show the next."

*The Pleased's debut, Don't Make Things, is out now on Big Wheel Recreation.*

[www.thepleased.com](http://www.thepleased.com)

## CHAPEL HILL, NC

### The Rosebuds' Kelly Crisp

"**KING'S BARCADE** (424 S. McDowell St., Raleigh, 918-831-1005) is really the heartbeat of the Triangle (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill); besides being the best venue, they have a pop-culture trivia night once a week, and a Gong Show and "Cover Up" (where local bands cover anyone they want) each year. Last year Ivan [guitar/vocals] got together a great backing band and became Roy Orbison for the Cover Up, while I decided to wait it out for the Gong Show, where I won the grand prize for an auctioneer sketch."

*The Rosebuds' Make Out is out now on Merge. www.therosebuds.com*

## BIRMINGHAM, AL

### Arena Rock Recording Company's

Greg Glover

"**THE NICK** (2514 10th Ave. S., 205-252-3831) is essentially the CB's of the South. The wooden box of a building is a former 'Magik Market' (that's 7-11 to you Northerners!), and has so many staples in the wall from years of posting that some wonder if that's what keeps it standing. It's always been supportive of local bands as well as more established acts. Some who've served and been served include: Jane's Addiction, Violent Femmes, Robyn Hitchcock, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pilot To Gunner and Superdrag. As the slo-

gan on the Coca-Cola sign out front simply states, "The Nick rocks."

*Visit [www.arenarockrecordingco.com](http://www.arenarockrecordingco.com) to order the latest from Calla and Pilot To Gunner, among others.*

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

### Retisonic's Jason Farrell

"While I lived in D.C., my favorite club was the **BLACK CAT** (1811 14th St. NW, 202-667-7960). No better place to see bands while getting yourself caught up in the soap opera; very catty, very exciting, very happy to be out. Now, as a visitor disconnected from the drama, I like it for different reasons: sound, space, food. Dante (the owner) has been active from the D.C. scene's inception, and when he opened, he finally gave it a solid place that had everything, including longevity—I think they're up to 10 years."

*Retisonic's Lean Beat EP is available from Silverthree Recordings.*

[www.retisonic.com](http://www.retisonic.com)

## NASHVILLE, TN

### Venus Ham's Kip Kubin

"**THE END** (2219 Elliston Pl., 615-292-8642) has the most half-hearted marquee in town, and standard indie fare décor (black on black), but the soundsystem is anything but standard. Nearby buildings shake, drinks wobble off tables and ears ring for days. But it's not just loud, it sounds great. Smoking and drinking are encouraged and it's hard to find an expensive cover here. You leave feeling like you are supporting artists who care enough to drive for hours and hours in cars or vans to share their music with you."

*Venus Ham's Big Beautiful Sky is out on MCA. [www.venusham.com](http://www.venusham.com)*



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**MUSIC**

**ADVENTURE TIME**

**THE AUTUMN DEFENSE**

**BETH GIBBONS & RUSTIN MAN**

**JOLIE HOLLAND**

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**ADVENTURE TIME**

**Dreams Of Water Themes** Plug Research

**A**dventure Time's Daedelus and Frosty cut the line between whimsical and cloying with a pirate's sword. *Dreams Of Water Themes*, the first full-length product of the team of DJ-producers, is brimming with airy flutes and exotic strings. But instead of coming off as a twee hip-hop concept album, *Dreams* is a journey of heedless invention. There's no narrative in sight, as the set's water "themes" are actually just motifs. Buoy bells ring in "Rusty Anchors Wrestling Waves," while beats shift like tides and moods change from optimistic to ominous. "Sent From Sandy Shores" walks just like a samba until tentative electronic beats throw it and guests Saul Williams and Sacajawea (a.k.a. Mia Doi Todd) overboard into uncharted territory. But the two best tracks are also the pair that have the least-detectable water association. "Eel Sand Witch" cuts and pastes tribal percussion and winds into a breakbeat symphony, while "General Midi Vs. Rusty 4eyes" meshes frenetic breaks with a jazzy piano and sounds like ex-Pizzicato Fiver Yasuharu Konishi at his most berserk. The difference here, though, is that Daedelus and Frosty refuse to just groove, opting instead to push the track as far as it can possibly go within its two-and-a-half-minute running time. That *Dreams* doesn't always live up to its titular concept is forgivable, since Adventure Time never stop making good on their moniker. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

Link  
[www.plugresearch.com](http://www.plugresearch.com)  
File Under  
Fish-on-fish exotica  
R.I.Y.L.  
Dabrye, Prefuse 73, DJ Shadow,  
the Dublab compilations



## THE AUTUMN DEFENSE

**Circles** Arena Rock Recording Co.

**C**alifornia seems to be having a diva moment these days. With that nutty recall and the Terminator as governor, the state's got the rest of the country's attention again, and it extends to the music realm, too: Just take one look at the startling popularity of the Thorns on VH1 and the enthusiastic response the Irish band the Thrills are getting, and you'll see that California in the early '70s is the new New York in the late '70s. The Autumn Defense's second album, *Circles*, is a lovely piece of mellow folk-pop that similarly pays tribute to the ghosts of Laurel Canyon. Driven by the songwriting of Wilco bassist John Stirratt and musician/producer Pat Sansone (Joseph Arthur, Josh Rouse), the band expertly nails that laid-back SoCal vibe without undermining the Heartland roots of the album—it was recorded in Nashville and Stirratt's home, Chicago—most likely because there is a resigned, observational quality to the songs. Acoustic guitars, strings and subtle tambourines create a wintry landscape where the West Coast is a lonely, distant dream that grips you on the dreariest days ("The Sun In California"). "Iowa City Adieu" is a gorgeous waltz about hitting the road that could've been taken straight from Gram Parsons' songbook. And what is California dreaming if not an escape? >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

Link  
[www.theautumndefense.com](http://www.theautumndefense.com)  
File Under  
Retro strings and pretty things  
R.I.Y.L.  
Wilco, Cat Stevens, Gene Clark



## BETH GIBBONS & RUSTIN MAN

**Out Of Season** Sanctuary

**W**ell, this smacks of all sorts of cheeriness, doesn't it? Beth Gibbons, the mournful Bristol lass who has given us nigh 10 years of such bare despondency that she probably even had people in the North worrying for her, joining Paul Webb from Talk Talk (a desperately underappreciated band)—best to hide the razor blades, then. And, indeed, this is a solemn affair, a walk through minefields of gut-felt emotions, those that may blow you to pieces should you step the wrong way here or there. It's also deeply un-trendy, bereft as it is of beats or cheeky samples. Instead, earnest explorations of gospel, blues and British folk music are accented by Webb's dark, deeply European post-punk sensibility, resulting in a sound that seems firmly rooted in tradition yet remarkably un-beholden to any idea of the conventional. Gibbons' voice is more chilling than ever on "Show" and the ominous "Spider Monkey," freed as it is from the usual production gimmicks. Even "Romance," a fairly straight jazz number, builds to a spooky conclusion. Not surprisingly, Webb's quasi-eponymous track, "Rustin Man," sounds like Talk Talk's unfinished business, a shapeless, fascinatingly surrealistic piece of music, viscerally punctuated by Gibbons' eerie, disembodied vocal. *Out Of Season* is a blindingly real work of art, as utterly riveting as it is starkly, achingly emotional. >>>KEN SCRUDATO

Link  
[www.bethgibbons.com](http://www.bethgibbons.com)  
File Under  
Quiet storm  
R.I.Y.L.  
Portishead, late-era Talk Talk,  
Beth Orton



## JOLIE HOLLAND

**Catalpa** Anti-

**W**ith her haunting ruminations on early 20th Century American folk music, Jolie Holland almost makes Gillian Welch sound slick and modern. Holland's own songs, along with covers and re-imagined traditionals that are sprinkled like wildflowers throughout, channel everyone from folklorist Zora Neale Hurston and Irish poet W.B. Yeats to vintage Texas songbird Hattie Hudson and bluesman Willie McTell. At no time, however, does *Catalpa* sound like a sober PBS documentary slowly panning over sepia-toned photographs as banjos plink in the background. After rambling from her Texas home through New Orleans to Vancouver and finally settling in San Francisco, Holland self-released *Catalpa* before being picked up by Anti-, and was one of fellow labelmate Tom Waits' nods for this year's Shortlist Prize. Long before that spooky singing saw appears on the closing "Ghost Waltz," Waits was no doubt moved by Holland's ability to deliver both pastoral beauty and apocalyptic terror in tracks like "I Wanna Die," an ironic sing-along slice of Appalachia. Bliss and tragedy join hands again for "All The Morning Birds," which ponders loved ones who have passed. "I'm telling you now/ You are the stars that I'll follow endlessly," she sings. But somehow her wistful whistling at the end of the track says so much more. Songs like these are neither old nor new: They are timeless. >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

Link  
[www.jolieholland.com](http://www.jolieholland.com)  
File Under  
Americana splendor  
R.I.Y.L.  
Gillian Welch, the Handsome Family, Alan Lomax field recordings



**LUCERO**

**That Much Further West** Tiger Style

**T**here's always been a crop of suckers for the cigarettes-and-whiskey voice: that pleading, tattered-but-beautiful yelp that Bruce Springsteen's done so well, that Bryan Adams always pretended so hard at, that Ryan Adams succeeds at from time to time. It gets you somewhere in that place where dusty jeans, morning smokes and broken-down Chevys feel romantic, where simplicity feels like poetry. But to get it honest, like the singer's really had their chords shredded by screaming-tough nights and too much booze and too little sleep—who really hits that mark, lately? It's been hard to find without breaking out old Replacements records. But Ben Nichols, mouthpiece of Memphis four-piece Lucero? The man has it. On Lucero's third, as Nichols struggles through "Sad And Lonely," you *feel* it, almost too much. All 12 songs are the kind that kick you right in the gut, in the way you hope to get kicked every time you press play on a new disc. *That Much Further West* is simple, Americana-tinged rock 'n' roll, honest in composition and delivery, direct and beautiful in the way a driven 4/4 drum-beat and bassline and gritty rock guitar chords are supposed to be but rarely are. It's familiar, yes, but never like a photocopy, always like that guy you meet at the bar, whose every word makes you know you'll be great friends for a long, long time. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

Link  
[www.lucerofamily.net](http://www.lucerofamily.net)  
 File Under  
 Good old American rock 'n' roll  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Son Volt, Uncle Tupelo,  
 Bruce Springsteen, Whiskeytown



**PLAID**

**Spokes** Warp

**T**hough marquee auteurs like Aphex Twin and Squarepusher get all the name-checking, London's Plaid—veteran knob-twirlers Andy Turner and Ed Handley, also known from their days with post-rave notables Black Dog Productions—might actually be the truest embodiment of Warp Records' "intelligent dance music" ideal. The duo construct rhythmically sophisticated yet momentum-minded electronic grooves, then trick them out with whatever tonal and textural manipulations they can extract from their hard drives; you can dance gingerly to it, but the music's real pleasure lies in the remarkable depth and variety of its sounds, how elegantly Turner and Handley mine any number of forms or subgenres for sonic ore. *Spokes*, the fourth Plaid album and the follow-up to this year's remix collection, *Parts In The Post* (in fact a perfect introduction to the band's aesthetic), oozes the cool, clear efficacy of software at work: Opener "Even Spring" jams a fractured percussion pattern beneath a halo of delicate electric piano bumbles; a synth squiggles to life from a bed of ambient crinkle à la Björk's *Vespertine* in "Upona"; "Get What You Gave" deploys fake steel drums in a bid for a slot in a future *Star Wars* cantina band's repertoire. The only downside to this open-eared approach is that it's hard to pin down exactly what Plaid don't sound like. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Link  
[www.plaid.co.uk](http://www.plaid.co.uk)  
 File Under  
 All-purpose IDM  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Aphex Twin, Autechre,  
 Funkstörung



**SOUL POSITION**

**8 Million Stories** Rhymesayers/Fat Beats

**T**he team of RJD2 and Blueprint first made waves on "Final Frontier," one of the few tracks on RJ's stellar *Deadringer* to feature an MC. The two regrouped as Soul Position for the *Unlimited EP*, a six-song exercise that showed growth like an adolescent shooting from 5'2" to a gangly 6'4". That upward trajectory continues with the duo's first full-length effort, *8 Million Stories*, a hip-hop blast steeped in battle culture and old-school soul. RJD2's familiar soundscapes are dotted with strings, pianos, drum 'n' bass and flare-ups of funk horns that set a perfect backdrop for Blueprint's easy flow. Blue attacks "Look Of Pain" like a young Del, rapping about how quickly dreams die in the ghetto as piano chords swoon like they've been pounding cheap cognac. Like Ghostface Killah, Blue is a master storyteller, able to capture sentiments in a few simple words. Such is the case on the soulful "Right Place Wrong Time" where the line "You live 10 minutes from me, but every telephone call feels like long-distance" speaks volumes about a dying relationship. Not all is despair though: "The Jerry Springer Episode" is made-for-TV hilarity and "Fuckajob" builds from an *Office Space* quote to a 9-to-5 rant like *Dilbert N The Hood*. *8 Million Stories* showcases Soul Position's burgeoning talents—here's hoping they have more than a few tales left to spin. >>>ANDY DOWNING

Link  
[www.rhymesayers.com](http://www.rhymesayers.com)  
 File Under  
 One down, 7,999,999 to go  
 R.I.Y.L.  
 Del Tha Funky Homosapien,  
 MF Doom, Blackalicious

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# REVIEWS

## BASEMENT JAXX

BENT

BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE

[THE] CASEWORKER

BOBBY CONN AND THE GLASS GYPSIES

THE CRACK PIPES

DA LATA

MATTHEW DEAR

THE DELGADOS

ELECTRIC MUSIC AKA

EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY

FEABLE WEINER

THE FINGER

B. FLEISCHMANN

THE GO

GRAND CHAMPEEN

GRANDPABOY

HYMIE'S BASEMENT

THE KINGSBURY MANX

KINKY

LEXICON

THE MINDERS

MIDWEST PRODUCT

MY FAVORITE

NEUROSIS & JARBOE

NOONDAY UNDERGROUND

OVERLORD

+/-

SERAFIN

STRIKE ANYWHERE

THE STROKES

PAUL VAN DYK

PAUL WESTERBERG

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

WIG IN A BOX: SONGS FROM AND INSPIRED

BY HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH



## BASEMENT JAXX

Kish Kash Astralwerks

Kish Kash, the Jaxx were taking a bath, deep into a Saturday night. Or maybe it was an Olympic-sized pool, 'cause the London duo's third disc overflows with hooks and guest appearances, confirming Simon Ratcliffe's and Felix Buxton's status as pop's ultimate dilettantes—gleeful tastetesters and tastemakers eager to genre-hop anywhere ("Get the keys, Simon, while I get the strings") as long as there's a beat attached. The disc begins with the bombastic swells of "Good Luck" as BellRays vocalist Lisa Vennum-Kekaula sasses over a skittering bounce before blossoming into full-fledged orchestral divahood. "Good Luck" is as close as Kish Kash comes to all-systems-go dance-pop anthems like Remedy's "Rendez-Vu" and "Red Alert" or Rooty's "Romeo" and "Where's Your Head At." Instead, the album sustains Basement Jaxx's trademark delirious peaks, sacrificing the traditional album arc to make every track shine. But there are standouts within standouts: 18-year-old U.K. garage comer Dizze Rascal ragga-raps over a Barfis-sweet, Sega-goes-Bollywood swing in "Lucky Star," "Living Room" sounds like the Pixies in Andre 3000's ambitious grip and "Tonight" tours a Moroccan burlesque house with curves and gentle swerves. It's an E-addled whirlwind that finally hits the after-after-party with the sighing "Feels Like Home," though the repeat button proves irresistible. >>>YANCEY STRICKLER

Link

[www.basementjaxx.co.uk](http://www.basementjaxx.co.uk)

File Under

E-bullient pop house

R.I.Y.L.

Daft Punk, 2 Many DJs,

Junior Senior

Link

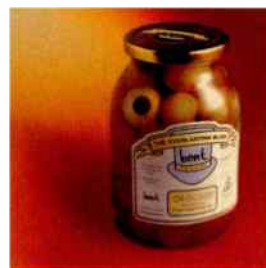
[www.bent-world.com](http://www.bent-world.com)

File Under

Daffy downtempo

R.I.Y.L.

Lemon Jelly, Zero 7, Röyksopp



## BENT

The Everlasting Blink Guidance

After three-chord garage rock, chill-out electronica must be the easiest music to make: Select a bouncy Casio preset for a rhythm track, slow it down to a comfortable sitting speed, layer some bloopy keyboard tones over it, hire a faceless semi-diva to moan about clouds and voilà! Instant success and eventual martini-lounge ubiquity. Doing chill-out electronica well, however, is another matter, one that involves a careful balance between form and function, between songwriting and endless looping, between a sense of humor and an accidental parody of hipster ennui.

On its second album, *The Everlasting Blink*, the U.K. duo Bent gets that balance about right, adding to the formula memorable (and occasionally gorgeous) melodies, cleverly chosen samples and a casual goofiness that keeps good-taste tedium at bay. Veteran pedal-steel player BJ Cole (who's logged time with both Olivia Newton-John and Luke Vibert) drops in for a few tracks, and the trio make beguiling space-age tropicalia together: "Moonbeams" soundtracks a midnight beach party, which later floats away past the horizon in the title track. Big-in-England country singer Billie Jo Spears joins the party via sample for "So Long Without You," the album's centerpiece; when she jumps up an octave for the tune's chorus, it sounds like she's right there. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Link

[www.bent-world.com](http://www.bent-world.com)

File Under

Daffy downtempo

R.I.Y.L.

Lemon Jelly, Zero 7, Röyksopp



Link  
[www.brianjonestownmassacre.com](http://www.brianjonestownmassacre.com)

File Under

You gonna finish that?

R.I.Y.L.

The Dandy Warhols,  
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club,  
Flaming Groovies

## BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE

...And This Is Our Music Tee Pee

Imaginary but plausible Anton Newcombe quote: "There are no original thoughts, so why even fucking try, right?" Factual but deluded Anton Newcombe quote upon storming off a New York stage: "Y'all's haters, not lovers. You killed Jim, Jimi and Kurt. Well, who's next?" The Brian Jonestown Massacre frontman didn't die for the crowd's rock 'n' roll sins that winter night, though he obviously meant to. Like a cult leader who preaches that death begets absolution, Newcombe doesn't live for the present, he plays for days of future past—imagined audiences eons from now who might

mistake him for a forgotten '60s legend, not a legend-in-his-own-write who's forgotten the '60s are decades gone. And even Jonestown's glory-days-by-proxy have disappeared—it's been 49 dog years since the band's last truly great disc, the decadent mod of *Take It From The Man!*, and the lite-rock of *...And This Is Our Music* ain't turning no tides. It starts well with ballads "Starcleaner" and "Here To Go," both hazy remnants from BJM's *Methodrone* days, but these recycled tracks are themselves so recycled over the disc's remainder that even the Sierra Club would eye them warily. Most tracks merely hint at others' glories, and tepidly at that. This isn't our Jonestown. >>>YANCEY STRICKLER



Link

[www.caseworkermusic.com](http://www.caseworkermusic.com)

File Under

Slow and steady wins the race

R.I.Y.L.

The Radar Bros., Idaho,  
the Terror Sheets, Codeine

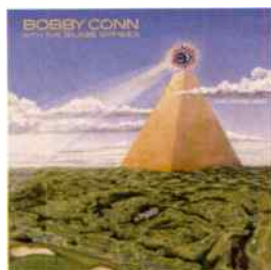
## [THE] CASEWORKER

These Weeks Should Be Remembered

Manifesto

Sometimes it's nice to take it down a couple of notches, what with so many bands "rockin' out old school" these days. San Francisco's [The] Caseworker, made up of former members of Half Film and Swell, is the latest downer in the slowcore medicine cabinet, and their debut, *These Weeks Should Be Remembered*, is top shelf. Not surprisingly, most everything here is slower than Jessica Simpson doing long division and is not suggested for use while operating heavy machinery. But slow for [The] Caseworker doesn't mean

boring. There's enough built-in momentum, feedback and detail in these songs to keep them from drifting into the nothingness. Enscenced in perfectly cool and spacious production, Conor Jonathan and Eimer Devlin's gauzy, breathy voices never rise above a murmur. God only knows what they're singing about, but it really doesn't matter much when the brooding guitars feel this good. Plodders like "Fiction" (both parts) crawl along as if shouldering layer upon layer of feedback, while "Revived," helped by some surprisingly upfront bass work, manages to push ahead at what amounts to a fast clip for these guys. The only low point is the innocuous "...At The Edge Of The Water," a tease of an instrumental that comes off more like an over-repeated intro than a song unto itself. But one little misstep over a long run can be forgiven. >>>NORM ELROD



Link

[www.bobbyconn.com](http://www.bobbyconn.com)

File Under

Activism never sounded so sexy

R.I.Y.L.

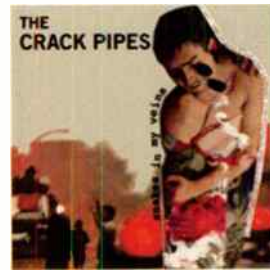
Beck, Prince, Devo

## BOBBY CONN AND THE GLASS GYPSIES

The Homeland Thrill Jockey

It isn't likely that Jim Steinman will ever write a Broadway show that bristles with raucous sex appeal and a searing political agenda, but if he did, it would probably sound a lot like *The Homeland*. Bobby Conn is a musical anomaly, and along with the faux-disco rock of the Glass Gypsies, he's made an album that while at times hilarious, also reeks of serious musicianship. The show-stopping ballad "Home Sweet Home" is a redneck, rifle-toting, pro-USA anthem delivered with enough *Rocky Horror* panache to create its own cult, and the fist-pumping

illuminati roller-disco of "We're Taking Over The World" is unnervingly triumphant. You can practically smell the irony in these tunes, and the endless shots at W's America are incisive, but it doesn't take a House subcommittee to realize that *The Homeland* is, at its core, an innovative rock record that nearly overshadows Conn's political motives with a barrage of funk, punk, disco and show-tunes, with just enough sleaze. It doesn't hurt that Conn's new band features Euphone bassist Nick Macri and a guitarist named Sledd who's capable of vicious trauma-inducing solos, but it's the melodic creations that this band helps flesh out that are the true star of the show. And with a golden-voiced singer and a penchant for tongue-in-cheek glam styling, you're guaranteed it's going to be one hell of a show. >>>PETER D'ANGELO



Link

[www.thecrackpipes.com](http://www.thecrackpipes.com)

File Under

Cold-blooded blues

R.I.Y.L.

The Gun Club, Black Cat Music,  
Jon Spencer Blues Explosion

## THE CRACK PIPES

Snakes In My Veins Emperor Jones

On *Snakes In My Veins*, the follow-up to their debut, *Every Night Saturday Night*, Austin's the Crack Pipes waste no time in tearing the cover off the ball. Led by the fiery yowl of singer Ray Pride, the blissful shrieks of "United Snakes" sound like the blues by way of AC/DC, and the organ-fueled "Avenues And Boulevards" immediately evokes the Doors. Pride probably has *Waiting For The Sun* and *Highway To Hell* on warped vinyl in a leaking flat somewhere in Texas hillcountry, but influences aside, his lippy snarl and horny swagger are all his own. Elsewhere, the

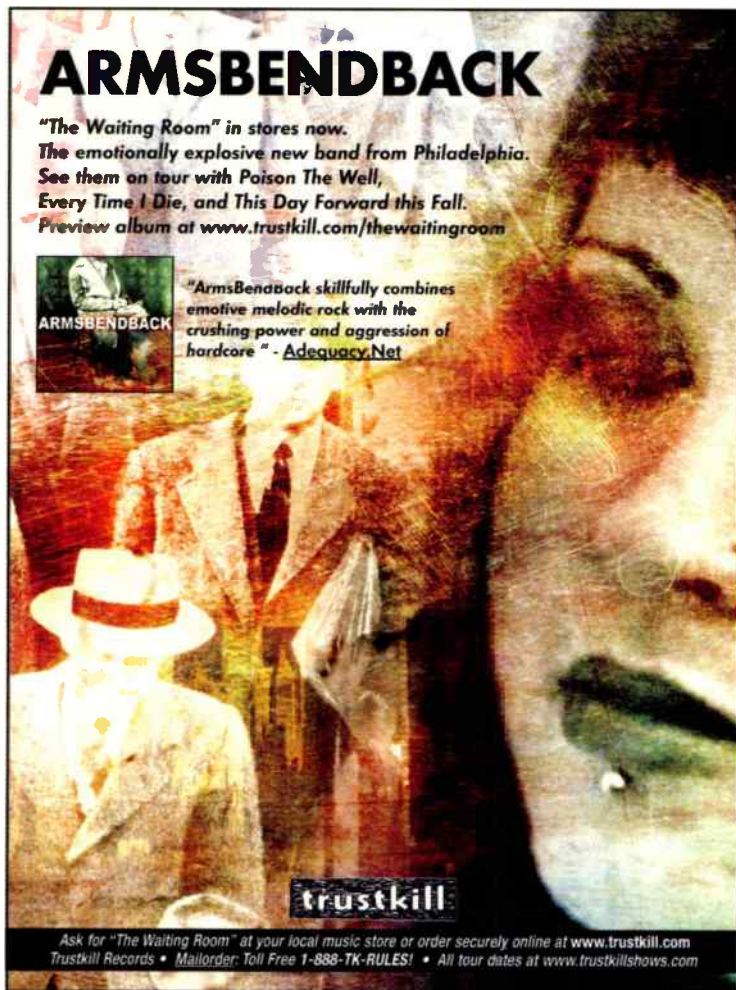
Dylanesque "Super Motel 8," which showcases guitarist Billy Steve Korpi's nimble fingerpicking, is a lo-fi modern blues classic, and the title track is a nasty slice of garage rock. In addition to the 11 originals, the album closes with two covers: A vicious and unrepentant take on Aretha Franklin's "Save Me" and a sizzling reading of Eric Burdon's "I'm Going To Change The World." With its menacing aural attack of libidinous bluesy swerves and drooling primordial stomp, *Snakes In My Veins* is the kind of album that will sound good if you play it while you're washing the car, but it will sound better cranking it up while you're getting it dirty. >>>ALEX GREEN

# ARMSBENDBACK

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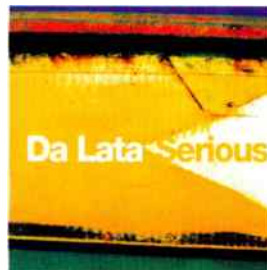


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## DA LATA

Serious Palm Pictures

Da Lata's 2000 debut, *Songs From The Tin*, established them as one of the best blenders of dance and world music (in their case, the world is represented by Brazilian rhythms and sounds). It's taken them three years to craft a follow-up, and like the proverbial curate's egg, it's good in parts. Producer/musicians Chris Franck and Patrick Forge (along with programming ace Toni Economides) find a fine balance between electronic and organic sounds that explodes out of the speakers on the Afrobeat-inflected title track, with singer Mamani Keita turning in a wondrous vocal. Brazil is still part of the

Link

[www.dse.nl/~dalata](http://www.dse.nl/~dalata)

File Under

Hopeful expeditions in new worlds

R.I.Y.L.

Transglobal Underground, Bebel Gilberto, Tony Allen

palette, most notably on the excellent "Firefly," where berimbau and other percussion instruments create texture and melody, but now it's only one of many colors in their box. "If U Don't Know" takes Marcelo Jeneci Da Silva's Brazilian accordion on a gorgeous little trip to France, while "Reeling" dives into pure R&B and "Can It Be?" sounds simply like filler. But then there's "Distracted Minds," a duet between Nina Miranda and African superstar Baaba Maal that subtly connects the dots between Africa and Brazil while keeping a foot in downtempo. It's a masterpiece of understatement, and it stands as an example of what's possible for this group when it explores connections in music. Hopefully Da Lata will delve deeper into the uncharted next time around and leave the ordinary behind. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

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Time Out New York

Highly recommended not only to fans of the Marlborough sound, but also to anyone who likes melodic, thoughtfully arranged pop.  
The All Music Guide



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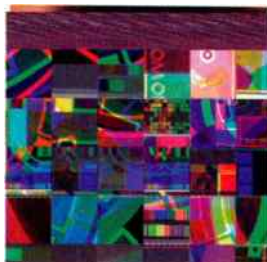
### Dressy Bessy DRESSY BESSY

...exuberantly delivered lyrics and head-bopping choruses. On its most accomplished album, Dressy Bessy pulls itself from the ranks of other pop outfits... MAGNET

Eaton is one cool customer; and her band mates know their best music arises from showcasing her in all her multitracked glory.

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## THE DELGADOS

Domestiques Chemical Underground

Putting a gloomy Scottish spin on the Pixies, the Delgados have turned out consistently great indie-pop records since they released their first full-length, *Domestiques*, on their own Chemical Underground label in 1997. Later albums like 2002's *Hate* and 2000's *The Great Eastern* both showed the sublime results of applying stunning, full-blown orchestration to songwriting that contains the increasingly difficult element of surprise. Now the band is re-releasing *Domestiques* with five additional, previously unavailable tracks. What's striking is the sophistication

Link

[www.delgados.co.uk](http://www.delgados.co.uk)

File Under

Scotch tape ops

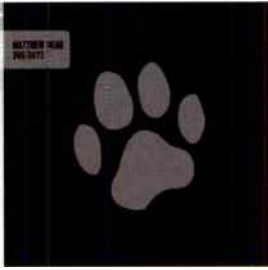
R.I.Y.L.

Arab Strap, Mogwai, Belle & Sebastian

of their songcraft this early in the game and how well their influences meld into one cohesive, distinct sound: part high-energy jangle ("Friendly Conventions"), part mid-'90s Pavement tribute band ("4th Channel") and part nerdy, cold-climate folk ("Leaning On A Cane," "Smaller Mammals"). The opener "Under Canvas Under Wraps" comes off like a delicious schoolyard taunt set against a wall of buzz-saw guitars and dramatic drum rolls. But the real character of this rumpled-shirt, lo-fi pop lies in its cool Scottish art-school vibe and the boy-girl vocals of Alun Woodward and Emma Pollock, who trade lyrics like quips in a *West Wing* episode—quick and clever on the surface with a roiling passion on the underside. Also an apt description of the Delgados' music. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK

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## MATTHEW DEAR

**Leave Luck To Heaven** Spectral

Matthew Dear's beats don't pound, they drift. *Leave Luck To Heaven*, Dear's first LP following a string of 12-inches under his own name, as well as the False (for Plus 8) and Jabberjaw (for Perlon) handles, shimmers to microhouse's warm sway. Microhouse is electronic music's first rural refuge (trance tried but wound up in the 'burbs), a genre defined by spaciousness and amber waves of sustain. But unlike their IDM sorta-brethren, microhouse luminaries like Dear, Michael Mayer and Luomo aren't lowering the threshold for what's danceable, they're raising the potential

of the microchip's fluidity. *Leave Luck To Heaven's* first single, the Prince-worthy "Dog Days," veers around pulsing keyboard jabs, looping the melody in ever-tightening circles like an airplane in its death spin as Dear's reverbed vocals cower below. Not exactly off the farm, sure, but absolutely off the saddle. Dear (an ex-pat Texan who now hails from Michigan) is well attuned to microhouse's bucolic/urban schism as cuts like "Fex," which sounds like beavers constructing a dam inside a Ford plant, blare beats into arid landscapes—call it a little house on the prairie. Geographic juxtapositions aside, the Italo-disco-tinged "The Crush" and "But For You" burst with potential energy and put the electron in electronic. >>>YANCEY STRICKLER

Link

[www.matthewdear.com](http://www.matthewdear.com)

File Under

Rise of the micromachines

R.I.Y.L.

Luomo, the Kompakt label,

Afukun



## ELECTRIC MUSIC AKA

**The Resurrection Show** Sanctuary

In the game of national identity stereotyping, there's a good bit of fun to be had with the idea of "Scotland, land of drunken louts." So when all that a band like Electric Music AKA can offer the public is innocuous fare such as *The Resurrection Show*, here's supposing that they feel a certain patriotic duty to get good and trousered, for advertising's sake. Because this they proudly do, they'll remind you, even though the only crossover between drinking and the music on *Resurrection* comes in the word "lush." The record is deluged with meaty, clean guitar chords, soaked in spacey analog keyboards, and pure

heavin' with bells, harps and glockenspiels. This beautiful and painstaking production clothes some very basic pop songs, and it works pretty well some of the time. The problem is that former rock journo Tom Doyle is simply not a very good singer, and this ends up miring the music when it should be dancing. Further weighing things down is their overly repetitive phrasing, particularly noticeable on their annoyingly catchy first single, "Something Up With The Stars." You get the feeling they were aiming for the sort of album that warms your knapper and brings back fond memories of the womb. What they actually delivered is some generally pretty music, but nothing really transcendent. But then, some things, like a deep-fried Mars bar, make more sense when you're blathered. >>>JOE KERN

Link

[www.electrimusicaka.co.uk](http://www.electrimusicaka.co.uk)

File Under

S'nae pure brilliant,

s'nae pure shite

R.I.Y.L.

Air, the Beta Band, Travis

STEPHIN MERRITT

# Pieces of April



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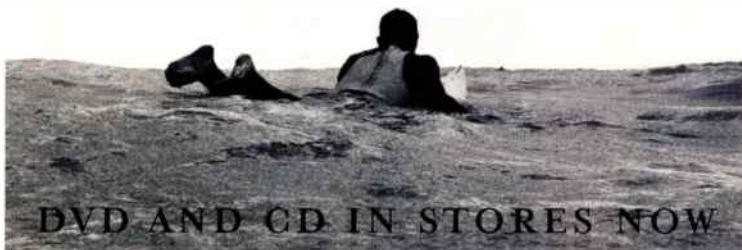
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The first song on Explosions In The Sky's new album is called "First Breath After Coma." It begins with a faint, steady kick drum approximating a heartbeat: dum dum, dum dum. It says, yes, we are still alive; yes, there is still hope. This drum-as-heartbeat pulse becomes a subtle motif throughout *The Earth Is Not A Cold Dead Place*. Like one's own heartbeat, it is usually unconscious, and quietly comforting. Much of the album feels like waking up: Songs unfurl slowly with minimal instrumentation—delicate two-guitar interplay, initially, with bass and drums eventually rousing to join them—stretching, building in intensity, sleepily rolling over to become hushed again, finally exploding as if the band were tearing down curtains to let sunlight flood the listener's bedroom. There isn't much to differentiate the five instrumentals that comprise *The Earth Is Not A Cold Dead Place*—they follow the same formula—but what the Austin, Texas band lacks in variety it makes up for with sustained purpose: to create anthems of optimism. Explosions In The Sky had the misfortune of its last album being released a week before September 11, 2001—the cover art depicted a plane crash. There's nothing to suggest *The Earth Is Not A Cold Dead Place* is about that day—it's simply an album for starting over. >>>DANA BUONICONTI

## EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY

The Earth Is Not A Cold Dead Place

Temporary Residence Ltd.

Link

[www.explosionsinthesky.com](http://www.explosionsinthesky.com)

File Under

Rise and shine,  
instrumental division

R.I.Y.L.

Mogwai, Sigur Rós,  
Godspeed You! Black Emperor



## FEABLE WEINER

Dear Hot Chick Ooghhouse

It happens every Easter. A milky brown foot-tall rabbit greets kids in the morning, waiting to be devoured in a day-long juvenile orgy of sugar, caffeine and endorphins. But hopes plummet as with the first bite, the lepus crumbles and reveals a hollow inside, leading you to polish it off in an unsatisfied 15-minute sitting, feeling as empty as the just-devoured treat. This record's a lot like that. There's nothing wholly offensive about *Dear Hot Chick*, Feable Weiner's just-reissued debut, but while the whiz-bang guitars, multi-part harmonies and "whoa-ho!" choruses try too hard to re-create ages-old power pop, it never quite coheres lyrically. Lead singer/guitarist Atom Andersen does drop humorous, quotable lines often enough (the winner being "You said this song is lame and/ I said so is your face" on "Lameface") but too many wince-inducing blunders cancel out most of the successes. "7th Grade" tries to work as a middle-school answer to "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" but fails because its "Why won't you go out with me?" chorus is about as sophisticated as it gets. The shame is that Andersen and the rest of this band of Tennesseans have the music down, but pack as much maturity as expected of a band packaging its album, as this one is, in a miniature Trapper Keeper. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

Link

[www.feableweiner.com](http://www.feableweiner.com)

File Under

Tooth-rotting power pop  
R.I.Y.L.

The All-American Rejects,  
Fountains Of Wayne,  
Cheap Trick

Atom Andersen does drop humorous, quotable lines often enough (the winner being "You said this song is lame and/ I said so is your face" on "Lameface") but too many wince-inducing blunders cancel out most of the successes. "7th Grade" tries to work as a middle-school answer to "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" but fails because its "Why won't you go out with me?" chorus is about as sophisticated as it gets. The shame is that Andersen and the rest of this band of Tennesseans have the music down, but pack as much maturity as expected of a band packaging its album, as this one is, in a miniature Trapper Keeper. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI



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## THE FINGER

We Are Fuck You/Punk's Dead Let's Fuck

One Little Indian

"I was listening to our album again today, and I think there's really no doubt in my mind that it's the greatest album ever recorded." What ever are we to do with Ryan Adams? Statements like the above have become *de rigueur* for the humility-challenged singer/songwriter, but as the hyperbole increases, as it does on his new side project, the quality of his recordings decreases at the same rate. While playing hardcore punk dress-up in the Finger, Adams and cohort Jesse Malin adopt the pseudonyms Irving Plaza

Link  
[www.indian.co.uk](http://www.indian.co.uk)  
File Under  
Vanity sick  
R.I.Y.L.  
Black Flag, Social Distortion,  
Hank Williams III

and Warren Peace because contractual obligations bar Adams from recording outside the Universal umbrella. But the monikers will also, hopefully, spare the duo's mainstream fans of the unfortunate none-two punch of *We Are Fuck You/Punk's Dead Let's Fuck*. Recorded in one session, *W.A.F.U./P.D.L.F.* has the haphazard verve Adams has coveted since he first name-checked Black Flag as an influence, but none of the craft Malin brought to D Generation. Heavy on indistinguishable minute-and-a-half blasts, the album's first half is sorely missed by the time the near-metal of "Casper Lynch" and "Punk's Dead Let's Fuck" lumber by later on. The First Amendment guarantees Adams and Malin the right to engage in self-indulgent back-slapping of this sort, but just because they're famous doesn't mean they should try to involve us in the least. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI



## B. FLEISCHMANN

Welcome Tourist Morr Music/Charizma

B. Fleischmann makes good-(slightly)-old-fashioned IDM that's as inviting as the title to his third album. A two-disc (loosely) conceptual set, *Welcome Tourist* oozes with both ambition and tangible, tear-dropped melodies evoking the subdued moments of Aphex Twin,  $\mu$ -ziq or Plaid. Like a busy passport, the album is repeatedly stamped with live drums, piano and guitar. The traditional instrumentation, though, never infringes on Fleischmann's wholly electronic vibe—throughout the album, he uses grinding guitar reverb to get the effect glitches, and

Link  
[www.bfleischmann.com](http://www.bfleischmann.com)  
File Under  
Suitcase hues  
R.I.Y.L.  
Squarepusher, Fridge,  
Autechre

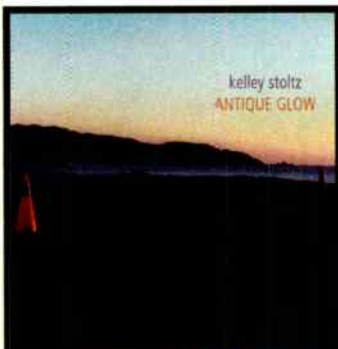
plays distorted, irregular beats off looped piano melodies. On the gorgeous highlight "The Blessed," a really broken breakbeat speeds along a turbulent path as far-off guitars buzz like planes flying overhead. A two-chord guitar riff drives "Pass By" while bleeps rhythmically smash on the windshield. Fleischmann doesn't let anything play as he lays it—he's constantly mutating his songs, steering introductory piano compositions and drum solos into fizzing, distorted collages. *Tourist's* second disc contains only one track, the appropriately named "Take Your Time." The 46-minute suite is a showcase for Fleischmann's texturizing/mutating approach writ long. *Tourist* is an album of transition and seamless adaptation. Traveling never goes this smoothly, but you can't knock Fleischmann for playing like it's possible. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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Threespheres

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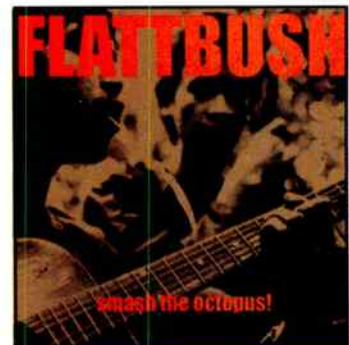
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**THE GO**

The Go Lizard King/Koch

The trailblazers always miss out on the attention once the trail becomes a four-lane blacktop. Back in 1999, while the music world was rudding through the nadir of its rap-rock fascination, a Detroit combo with a promising guitarist by the name of Jack White put out a little-noticed album full of bare-bones, greasy rock on Sub Pop called *Whatcha Doin'* that pretty much crystallized everything great about the neo-garage movement that'd rise to the city and nation's cultural forefront two years later. Four years on, White's a starfucking tastemaker, playing sold-out theaters with his sister-cum-ex-wife while the Go tag along as an opening act, luck into the noon slot on Lollapalooza 2003 and have to go to England to get any respect. Some bands might respond to such injustice by cashing in and slavishly trotting out their takes on this year's garage-rock model, but thankfully the Go have moved forward. Replacing the cavernous, degenerate tone of its debut with an only slightly less cavernous sound topped with a heaping scoop of '70s glam rock, the quartet has left its genre constraints behind to become the best-sounding rock bar band of the new millennium. The Marc Bolan influence is practically tattooed on every track, especially "Games" and "Ain't That Bad," but the best songs here also use straight pop ("Hardened Heart Blues") or punk ("Growd Up Wrong") to create a whole new old sound that'll probably be all the rage in 2007. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

Link  
www.thego.info  
File Under  
Movin' on  
R.I.Y.L.

T. Rex, ? And The Mysterians,  
Rolling Stones, the Damned



**GRAND CHAMPEEN**

The One That Brought You Glurp

Take an amphetamine-fueled Uncle Tupelo, stir with an earlier incarnation of Soul Asylum, throw in bits and pieces of the Chainsaw Kittens, the Replacements, Cheap Trick and Redd Kross and you'll have, aside from one really good group of drinking buddies, an ingredients list for Austin, Texas' Grand Champeen. *The One That Brought You* is sort of the soundtrack for the apocalypse afterparty, where the amps are turned to 11, and the band seriously needs to step back from the ledge. Most songs race by at a pace best described as fast, drunk and furious, but this isn't an indictment—rather, it's dumbfounded praise that

Link  
www.grandchampeen.com  
File Under  
Staggering developments  
R.I.Y.L.

The Replacements,  
the Chainsaw Kittens,  
a really really inebriated  
Cheap Trick, Ween

anybody that drunk could make music this good. With an album like this, it'd be far easier to hold up its few flaws than to even attempt to capture the magnificence of the 12 tracks that captivate, but certain gems, like "That's Never Why," "Alma Matter," or "The Rest Of The Night" are screaming for a moment in the sun. Then again, "The Good Slot," "Paid Vacation," "Leave It All Day" and "No Hope" might get jealous—maybe it's easiest just to love them all. Put simply, from tipsy start to sweaty finish, Grand Champeen is a winner. >>>JEFF BROWN

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HYMIE'S BASEMENT

## HYMIE'S BASEMENT

Hymie's Basement **Lex**

The atmospheric sense it makes for Fog (a.k.a. Andrew Broder) and cLOUDDEAD's Why? to join forces is about where the coherence of *Hymie's Basement* ends. This 45-minute string of non sequiturs opens with a laugh that could be maniacal or signify that the album is a bit of lighthearted fun, but ends up resounding smugly. Predictably great meeting-of-the-minds production is trampled by Broder and Why?'s halfhearted pop songwriting (excepting the catchy, chiming indie opener "21st Century Pop Song"). Although Broder and Why? defy conventions by letting their words spill out over (or sometimes uncomfortably squeeze into) the melodies they write, they can't fit their lyrics into rational thought, either (the command to "masturbate your birthday party" in "America Too" isn't even worth a head scratch). The album has the effect of someone telling you they're weird, when you know that real weirdos don't have a shred of such self-awareness. To be fair, there's plenty of showing on *Hymie's Basement*, too: The vocal of "Parrots" sounds like it was pressed to vinyl and then manually manipulated, while "You Die" has an unsteady, exhilarating beat that's constantly being sped up and slowed down. It took Broder and Why? two weeks to record *Basement* and then two more to mix it. What they've forgotten (or maybe ignored) is that effortlessness is best appreciated when it isn't detected. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

Link

[www.lexrecords.com](http://www.lexrecords.com)

File Under

Basement's wack

R.I.Y.L.

Sift & Oily, cLOUDDEAD,

Kleenex Girl Wonder, Ween

ventions by letting their words spill out over (or sometimes uncomfortably squeeze into) the melodies they write, they can't fit their lyrics into rational thought, either (the command to "masturbate your birthday party" in "America Too" isn't even worth a head scratch). The album has the effect of someone telling you they're weird, when you know that real weirdos don't have a shred of such self-awareness. To be fair, there's plenty of showing on *Hymie's Basement*, too: The vocal of "Parrots" sounds like it was pressed to vinyl and then manually manipulated, while "You Die" has an unsteady, exhilarating beat that's constantly being sped up and slowed down. It took Broder and Why? two weeks to record *Basement* and then two more to mix it. What they've forgotten (or maybe ignored) is that effortlessness is best appreciated when it isn't detected. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK



## THE KINGSBURY MANX

Aztec Discipline **Overcoat**

Don't let the Kingsbury Manx fool you—it's pretty damn hard to be so nondescript and captivating at the very same time. The Manx effortlessly deliver another lonesome yet whimsical collection of folksy chamber pop nuggets in their third album, *Aztec Discipline*. It's a dreamy, woozy collection of contemplative ambiguity and comforting warmth. Nick Drake, Tim Buckley and Syd Barrett-led Pink Floyd managed of-any-age simplicity in various shades and hues during the late '60s and early '70s, and Kingsbury Manx at times echo their various threads wonderfully (if not religiously)

Link

[www.thekingsburymanx.com](http://www.thekingsburymanx.com)

File Under

Pink moonage daydream

R.I.Y.L.

Nick Drake, Elliott Smith,

the Sea And Cake, Bedhead,

the Byrds, early Pink Floyd

as in "Hunting Trips" and "Pinstripes." Elliott Smith (God rest his weary soul) was perhaps best at it over the last decade, and the Manx recall Smith's fractured beauty on tracks like "Your Castle" and "Dinner Bell." Sometimes the ghosts of Pavement, Beachwood Sparks and Yo La Tengo wander in and make themselves at home in the music on *Aztec Discipline*, but never enough to overshadow the originality of the band's music and vision, and that just might be the point. *Aztec Discipline* cultivates the idea that it's a pastoral work for the ages; dependent on a few of the best independent musical archetypes, it's yet somehow solitary, somehow uniquely timeless, somehow totally Kingsbury Manx. >>>JEFF BROWN

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## KINKY

Atlas Network America

It's becoming ever more apparent that what Manchester once was to England, Monterrey now is to Mexico. Not only is this similarly industrial, landlocked northern city the current home to a plethora of remarkable bands (including Kinky, Plastilina Mosh and Genitallica), but the Monterrey scene also follows the Mancunian penchant for spawning music that makes you want to spend the entire night and a good part of the next day in the vicinity of a spectacularly lit dancefloor. Kinky stepped into the international spotlight last year

with their critically lauded self-titled debut, an album reminiscent of the Chemical Brothers but brimming with regional influences and copious rawk energy. With their sophomore effort, *Atlas*, the quintet concentrates on creating a more organic sound, perhaps in a move to make the disc more representative of their not-to-be-missed, crowd-mesmerizing live show. The resultant songs successfully incorporate classic Norteño rhythms, heavy metal guitars and innovative vocal melodies (sung in Spanish and English). But fans fear not—this is still a raucous, righteous party record, and to that end lacks nothing in musicality or creativity. You only need hear the infectious and inventive "The Headphonist" (featuring a guest vocal from Cake's John McCrea) to understand that *Atlas* is here to map the way to the good times once again. >>>KARL WACHTER

Link

[www.kinkytheband.com](http://www.kinkytheband.com)

File Under

Unbeatable groove

R.I.Y.L.

Plastilina Mosh, the Chemical Brothers, Nortec Collective

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## LEXICON

Youth Is Yours Spy Tech

If you analyze some things too closely, you drain all the fun out of them, such as *South Park*, Slurpees and Lexicon. Any hardcore hip-hop head who glances at the list of influences the L.A. duo namechecks on the liner notes of *Youth Is Yours* will probably write the album off faster than Vanilla Ice's line of sorbets. Sainted progenitors like Eric B. And Rakim and De La Soul share space with Oasis, Missing Persons and Dire Straits. Just in case that lineup of artists doesn't help you conjure up what Lexicon sounds like, brothers Nick and Gideon Black are a couple of alterna-

Link

[www.lexiconmusic.com](http://www.lexiconmusic.com)

File Under

L.A. backpacker rap

R.I.Y.L.

Slick Rick, Ugly Duckling

geek wiseass rappers who rhyme about partying and girls while dropping references to the Ramones, Jerusalem and *The Harder They Come*. Unlike most snide backpackers, the brothers Black boast a smooth flow punctuated by supple ripples and eargrabbing stutter-steps. Layered over DJ Cheapshot's chipper mix of reggae bass, ska horns, woozy swing and shoulder-twitching big-band tunes (perhaps a nod to the Blacks' grandfather, Paul Barry, who toured as a crooner with Tommy Dorsey), the combination is as innocently addictive as *Schoolhouse Rock* (with a few more four-letter words thrown in). None of it will get your woofer thumping, but it will get your neck wiggling and your bro-downs chuckling. >>>NEIL GLAOSTONE



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



## THE MINDERS

**The Future's Always Perfect** *Future Farmer*  
Recorded and otherwise, the Minders' history is of how the band sloughed off its Elephant 6-ness, step by step. Apples In Stereo frontman and E6 co-founder Robert Schneider started the band with its current mainstay, Martyn Leaper, but was sidelined into production by the time of the band's first release; thereafter, Leaper and ex-drummer/current keyboardist Rebecca Cole left their and Schneider's hometown of Denver, and as of 2001's *Golden Street*, had moved production in-house as well. If *Golden Street* sounded like the work of a band that knew its musical territory a little too well, blindly and somewhat blandly

Link

[www.futurefarmer.com/minders.html](http://www.futurefarmer.com/minders.html)

File Under

Deep-sixing the Elephant  
R.I.Y.L.

Guided By Voices, the New Pornographers, Imperial Teen

following the shimmery '60s pop template it had mapped out on debut album *Hooray For Tuesday*, new record *The Future's Always Perfect* has the vitality of new inspiration. True, Leaper's vocal melodies continue to take Bob Pollard-style flight, and the old influences are still in play (Beatles, Brian Wilson, Kinks). But there's a new depth to be found in the record's keys-drenched arrangements, effective on the somewhat new wave-y tracks, such as "Hahaha," and quietly thrilling on more typically Minders-esque material, like album closer "All The Way Round." The key is in the nixing of all those doubled-up harmonies; in their place, the layered piano and synth hooks darken the band's palette for the better. Though the songs sound as airy as ever, they never feel slight. >>>MAYA SINGER



## MIDWEST PRODUCT

### World Series Of Love

Ghostly International

On *World Series Of Love*, Midwest Product are ravenous to go even further than their far-reaching debut, 2002's *Specifics*. That set's cohesive combination of electronics and a guitar-bass-drums setup is expanded further via dance rhythms and vocals. The move toward pop-ification seems odd, since *Specifics'* charm was its willingness to emit as much warmth as abstraction—IDM rarely sounds that homey. But everyone needs diversion, and for an act like MP, a seven-song EP named after a line in Prince's "U Got The Look"

Link

[www.midwestproduct.com](http://www.midwestproduct.com)

File Under

Sho 'nuf do be cookin'  
R.I.Y.L.

The Notwist, Isan, Cornelius

is the perfect place to get off. Despite its robotic vocals and doofy lyrics about bank telling, "Bank" ends up paying off with a spazzy, high-pitched keyboard hook that shows up between verses. A trio of mid-EP instrumentals reasserts MP's deft integrating skills, especially "Duckpond" (originally a track from Ghostly's excellent *Idol Tryouts* compilation), where sputtering clicks and handmade beats guide the track to a gorgeously intense crescendo. The release doesn't touch *Specifics'* cohesiveness, but nothing fails as badly as "Motivator," the trio's rockiest track yet with would-be hardcore lyrics ("The source of your fatigue, lives in secrecy/ Searching for a cause, that everyone can see") that should make MP rethink just how much they want to do the vocal thing. OK guys, you've had your fun. Now get back to business. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

from the composer of the music for **DE LA GUARDA**

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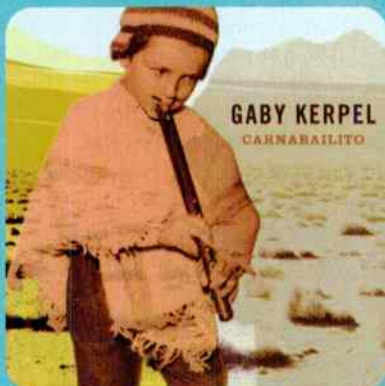
— *Boston Globe*



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**MY FAVORITE**

**The Happiest Days Of Our Lives** *Double Agent*  
My Favorite's *The Happiest Days Of Our Lives* is, at long last, a new new wave concept record whose premise involves more than cheekily trekking back to the retro-future. Culled from the Long Island-based band's three-EP series and including four tracks from the unreleased *Famous When Dead*, this compilation re-sequences the material to tell an album-long story inspired by Joan of Arc. Songwriter Michael Grace Jr. sharpens his focus not on Joan the demigod, but on Joan the "first messed-up kid on earth," as she's described in the liner notes. *Days'* songs nimbly and

Link  
[www.lostdetective.com](http://www.lostdetective.com)  
File Under  
Forever now (always)  
R.I.Y.L.  
Pulp, Magnetic Fields, the  
Psychedelic Furs, Saint Etienne

often brilliantly trapeze the line between history and allegory. "Loneliness is pornography to them, but to us it is an art," a line that would be self-serving and Plathy, illuminates the Grace-sung "L=P," which parallels dorm-room isolation with Joan's imprisonment. While My Favorite's sound certainly salutes the likes of the Psychedelic Furs and New Order (and sometimes Saint Etienne, thanks to the sunshine-voiced Andrea Vaughn), the retroism isn't gimmicky. Instead, it's matter-of-fact, underscoring the overall theme of history's inevitable repetition. A bonus disc of remixes by the likes of Soviet and Future Bible Heroes accompanies *Days*. Although a bit redundant even in isolation (only six *Days* tracks are covered in the span of 14 remixes), it's the kind of embarrassment of synths that My Favorite usually just hint at. >>>RICHARD M. JUZWIAK

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**NEUROSI & JARBOE**

**Neurosis & Jarboe** *Neurot*

A foreboding tom-tom beat, like fatal sledgehammer strikes, introduces this disc, heralding the entrance of something wicked. The admonishing fanfare of "Within," the first track of this self-titled collaboration, could stand against any horror score. Then the vocals come in: Sounding frightened and humbled, Jarboe repeats the line: "I know, if God wants to take me, He will—*He's coming!*" Effectively chilling—with these co-conspirators' illustrious track records (Jarboe is renowned for her work in Swans and World Of Skin; Neurosis has built its own noise-metal genre) they most certainly know what they're doing. Between her trademark seductive Southern drawl and Goblin-esque *Suspiria*-d keyboard intentions, Jarboe's tantalizing affects icily match Neurosis' diminished look on music and happiness. As Neurosis has evolved over their 15-year recorded history, their music has spaced out, increasing their ability to contrast musical moods. On "Receive," guitarist (and background singer) Steve Von Till creates an acoustic motif, accentuated by Jarboe's throbbing keyboards, and adds new delays throughout the song; Jarboe beautifully sings and recites poetry against Von Till's grated voice. The nine-minute epic "Erase" works the other end of the spectrum, as Jarboe screams against pulsing drums and keys, in between breaks of quiet whispered musings. This collaboration smartly embraces some of the most brutal and deceptive music from both artists' careers. >>>KORY GROW

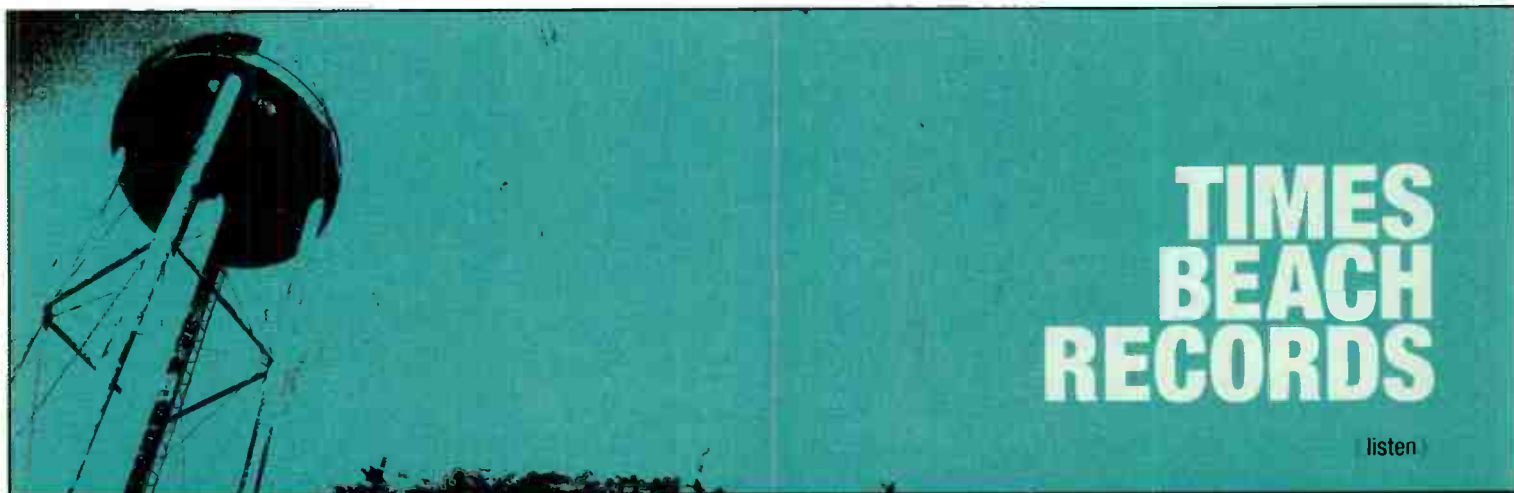
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File Under  
Something wicked  
R.I.Y.L.  
Isis, Anita Lane,  
Suicide (the band)

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

					
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>MTV2 Headbangers Ball (Roadrunner)</b>	<b>Off The Wall—Ten Years Of Wall Of Sound (Astralwerks)</b>	<b>Punk Goes Acoustic (Fearless)</b>	<b>Compulation: Volume One (Pow World Empire)</b>	<b>Ennio Morricone Remixes Volume One (Compost)</b>
<b>CONCEPT</b>	Mighty bands like Slayer clash with complete bull-shit like 36 Crazyfists	Ten years of the label that knew the '80s were coming back long before VH1	Emo songs as they were written: Acoustic, in someone's bedroom, crying	North Carolinians flout some hometown pride	Morricone gets his shit mixed up all over again
<b>TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC</b>	You sift through MTV2's metal show for that one good video	You just wanna dance, dance, dance!	People with LiveJournals	You worship at Chapel Hill	You have a twangy-guitars-and-tumbleweeds collection
<b>NAMES TO DROP</b>	Meshuggah, Lamb Of God, Killswitch Engage, Mastodon	Propellerheads, Röyksopp, Les Rythmes Digitales	Taking Back Sunday, Thursday, From Autumn To Ashes	The Rosebuds, Portastatic, Schooner	International Pony, Hakan Libdo, Kid Sundance
<b>SUMS IT UP</b>	"Destroyer Of Senses" (Shadows Fall)	"Start The Commotion" (The Wiseguys)	"Alone In The World" (Glasseater)	"Turn Up, Stay Home" (North Elementary)	"Il Buono, Il Brutto, Il Cattivo" (Swell Session)
<b>VERDICT</b>	If you could delete most of the Roadrunner bands on this Roadrunner-released comp, this disc would be afuckingmazing.	A handy intro to one of the U.K.'s best electronic indies.	While easier on the ears, playing your songs on acoustic guitar doesn't make them any less shitty.	In addition to horses and good vacation spots, North Carolina is also apparently overflowing with great indie-pop bands.	Memo: If Ennio Morricone had had access to house beats, he still wouldn't have used them.



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## NOONDAY UNDERGROUND

**Surface Noise** *Setanta*

*Surface Noise*, Noonday Underground's second album, is half retro-nostalgia, half über-contemporary technophilia. Leader Simon Dine got his start in Adventures In Stereo, and he sticks with the thick layers of samples and rhythm loops that were AIS's early hallmarks. He's also stuck in the late '60s: *Surface Noise* touches on Shirley Bassey-style lounge pop, John Barry film music, Motown soul and jazzy grooves. But where *Self-Assembly*, his debut, sometimes smacked of novelty, *Surface Noise* benefits from a rotating cast of vocalists, all of whom revel in Dine's timewarped din. The wonderful

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[www.noonday-underground.com](http://www.noonday-underground.com)

File Under  
Space-age bachelors  
with laptops  
R.I.Y.L.

Adventures In Stereo, Style  
Council, Topsy, Solex

Daisy Martey returns for four tracks, and her sexy slur on "Boy Like A Timebomb" and "Go It Alone" ooze intrigue and mystery. Martey is part Dusty Springfield, part Martina Topley-Bird, and she'd be the album's highlight if it weren't for one Paul Weller. Dine worked on Weller's recent *Illuminations*, and Weller repays the favor with "I'll Walk Right On," an irresistible, conga-fueled soul workout; it's easily one of Weller's best post-Jam performances. Weller also appears on the altogether different "Thunder Park," which is full of ominous strings and Esquivel-like bubbling sound effects. In the company of Martey and Weller, other vocalists like the Trash Can Sinatras' Francis Reader don't stand much of a chance. *Surface Noise* is Dine's show, but his wisest move was to share the spotlight. >>>STEVE KLINGE

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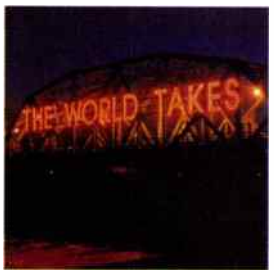
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## OVERLORD

**The World Takes** *Storm Tower*

Hearing Overlord for the first time, you might assume the group is a latecomer to the '80s revival, or just aping the Magnetic Fields. But George Pasles' one-man Pennsylvania band has been turning out first-rate, '80s-style Manchester mope-rock since the mid-'90s, and it's about time the rest of the world caught up to his personal retro-revolution. Overlord revels in the austere beauty of a haunting synth peppered with a four-note guitar lead and spare, driving snare hits. Every song drifts along at nearly the same misty pace while remaining ever so

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[www.overlordusa.com](http://www.overlordusa.com)

File Under  
Mope-rock  
R.I.Y.L.

The Magnetic Fields,  
Joy Division, New Order

slightly distinct: The 10-minute-plus "Stillbornagain" melts and slides with a backwards-masking effect that suggests a harmonium; a spry ukulele and toy vibraphone perk up "Warm Body." Yet none of it overwhelms Pasles' guttural pining, as he oozes out lines like, "The sad are wretched/ And the happy are merely wrong/ And you shift your pitch/ To match who you'll string along." While Pasles' lyrics may be maudlin, his melodies temper the melodrama with economic refrains that soothe and celebrate each song's dour glory. Overlord reminds you that you needn't look back in shame at '80s angst. Just leave the Kohl eyeliner and dippity-do in the drawer. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

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+/-

**You Are Here** *Teenbeat*

Although +/- shares with its Teenbeat label brethren a fondness for simple, circular riffs, the New Yorkers add their spin by melding them with electronic beats and coolly detached vocals, creating a sound akin to a spartan New Order. James Baluyut's voice resembles big brother Richard's, and on occasional guitar-driven rockers like the standout "Trapped Under Ice Floes (Redux)," comparisons to the siblings' on-hiatus band Versus are inescapable. *You Are Here* is James' show, and he largely sidesteps pigeonholing by emphasizing keyboards and acoustic guitar. The elegant "Megalomaniac" (sung by fellow Versus refugee Patrick Ramos) is a winning change of pace, but other folk-based melodies lacking synthetic beats and electric guitar veer toward the pedestrian, drawing attention to a lyrical mixed bag. Baluyut's metaphors run amok, linking frayed relationships and cell-phone reception on "Cutting Out," but it's his vocal register he strains on "She's Got Your Eyes," where a math-rock bassline anchors his portrayal of a spurned lover/single mom who menaces, "I'll find out where you live/ And surprise wife and kids." Baluyut adopts a male stalker's persona on "No One Sees You Like I Do," tracking the daily routine of an apparent stranger, and the shards of cacophony that punctuate his victim's assault disturb on multiple levels. *You Are Here* is an ambitious and often intriguing record, but one whose reach at times exceeds its grasp. >>>GLEN SARVADY

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File Under

Hypnotic, beat-tinged indie rock

R.I.Y.L.

New Order, Unrest, Versus, Madder Rose, Death Cab For Cutie

keyboards and acoustic guitar. The elegant "Megalomaniac" (sung by fellow Versus refugee Patrick Ramos) is a winning change of pace, but other folk-based melodies lacking synthetic beats and electric guitar veer toward the pedestrian, drawing attention to a lyrical mixed bag. Baluyut's metaphors run amok, linking frayed relationships and cell-phone reception on "Cutting Out," but it's his vocal register he strains on "She's Got Your Eyes," where a math-rock bassline anchors his portrayal of a spurned lover/single mom who menaces, "I'll find out where you live/ And surprise wife and kids." Baluyut adopts a male stalker's persona on "No One Sees You Like I Do," tracking the daily routine of an apparent stranger, and the shards of cacophony that punctuate his victim's assault disturb on multiple levels. *You Are Here* is an ambitious and often intriguing record, but one whose reach at times exceeds its grasp. >>>GLEN SARVADY



**SERAFIN**

**No Push Collide** *Elektra*

Emerging from the Camden club scene, London-based Serafin seems to have adopted a formula: Take a verse from Radiohead, add it to a chorus from Linkin Park and top it all off with guitar riffs à la Queens Of The Stone Age. Unfortunately, this mix isn't as copasetic as one would hope, thanks to an overemphasis on brawn and not enough brain. The majority of *No Push Collide* finds the band cranking out raw and relentless anonymous rawk that often lacks a melody, despite their mostly tasteful influences. When Serafin manage to transcend the jagged, muscular guitars and life-is-miserable crooning, the result is the

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[www.serafin.co.uk](http://www.serafin.co.uk)

File Under

The band between videos

you recognize on an

MTV2 rock block

R.I.Y.L.

Foo Fighters, the Vines, Linkin Park

power-pop standout "Day By Day." And on "No Happy" they lighten up and even sound a bit like Blur—granted, it's a version of Blur that's spending eight hours a day in the gym and popping steroids like Sweet Tarts. So where's the good news? When the band slows down to brake for melodies ("Ordinarily Me"; "Peaches From Spain"), they find the center they seem to be lacking and are better for it. The last song on the album has Serafin asking, "Who Could I Be?" Once they figure that out, they might well be on their way. >>>MICHELLE KLEINSAK



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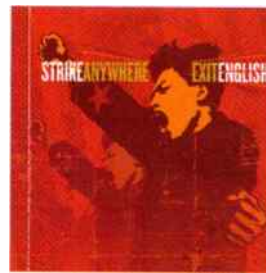
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## STRIKE ANYWHERE

Exit English Jade Tree

"I pledge allegiance to the world," Strike Anywhere frontman Thomas Barnett yowls on "To The World," but the world isn't the only thing this Richmond-based hardcore outfit promises fealty to on its second Jade Tree full-length. *Exit English* falls squarely in a tradition of positively minded, progressively political hardcore that stretches back to the Clash and includes contemporaries like Avail and Hot Water Music—which means that what the disc lacks in musical subtlety, it makes up for in well-meaning sentiment: eloquent exhortations to

overturn apathy and considered responses to the blind nationalism of a post-9/11 America. And really, it's more musical than it might appear: Guitarists Matt Smith and Matt Sherwood get several varieties of fuzz-toned chug out of their instruments, drummer Eric Kane propels the music without trampling it and Barnett doubles some of his vocals with tight harmony lines that increase their emotional punch. They even spike "Extinguish" with a pure pop chorus and do a sort of hardcore power ballad in "Fifth Estate," a relatively contemplative screed against mass-media hegemony Howard Zinn could headbang to. If it were filled with woebegone reflections on twentysomething heartbreak, *Exit English* would be a serious snoozefest; it's the band's conviction that's convincing. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Link

[www.strikeanywhere.org](http://www.strikeanywhere.org)

File Under

People-power punk

R.I.Y.L.

Lifetime, Kid Dynamite, Avail



## THE STROKES

Room On Fire RCA

Go ahead. Call the Strokes' sophomore record *Is This Still It*. Pile on and say "The Way It Is" or "What Ever Happened?" still sound like the same song the meta-hip Big Applers recorded 11 times more than two years ago. You're right. But you're also very, very fucking wrong. What naysayers, and perhaps Radiohead sound sculptor Nigel Godrich, judging from their aborted partnership, fail to realize is that that one song is a knockout whose tail-spin guitars and skitter-pop drumming have gotten both stronger and more manic. There's growth all over *Room On*

Link

[www.thestrokes.com](http://www.thestrokes.com)

File Under

Feels like the first time

R.I.Y.L.

Television, the Cars, *Is This It*

*Fire*, most impressively from singer Julian Casablancas' downtown howl, which has taken on a hint of danger while his smoky croon could still stop a granny glasses-rockin' chica from across Avenue B. Incremental development also comes on "Between Love & Hate," where drummer Fab Moretti does his best impression of a cheap Casio rhythm track, and lead single "12:51"'s Cars-worthy hook suggests Ric Ocasek is in the control room instead of Gordon Raphael reprising his *Is This It* role. As welcome as the new elements are, it's strangely satisfying when "I Can't Win" pops from the speakers sounding like "Last Nite"'s kid brother as Casablancas laments, "Everything we have to say has been erased in just one day." Proof that sometimes staying put is the best option of all. >>>CHAD SWIATECKI

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ME TREMBLE

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File Under

Hey, I was a Replacement!

R.I.Y.L.

You Am I, Grand Champeen,  
*Exile On Main Street*



**GRANDPABOY**  
Dead Man Shake *Fat Possum*

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[www.fatpossum.com](http://www.fatpossum.com)

File Under

Even Westerberg gets the blues

R.I.Y.L.

Black Keys, Alex Chilton,  
Flat Duo Jets

Paul Westerberg is at his best when he's at his worst, and he knows it. After trying too hard to show that he wanted to be taken seriously as a mature adult singer/songwriter on lackluster albums such as *Eventually* and *Suicane Gratification*, Westerberg returned last year with the invigorating one-two punch of *Stereo* and the pseudonymous Grandpaboy venture *Mono*. Collections of one-man-band recordings, some of which stopped literally when the tape ran out, they reconnected Westerberg with the lovable loser/dirty rocker persona that he perfected as leader of the beloved Replacements. And now, here comes the regular once again, with another matched-set of seemingly tossed-off home studio recordings, both with a rootsy bent.

Westerberg has an instantly recognizable guitar sound, somewhere between Alex Chilton's power pop and Keith Richards' bluesy rock 'n' roll, and both the Westerberg album *Come Feel Me Tremble* and the Grandpaboy effort *Dead Man Shake* prioritize loud, biting guitar riffs over lyrics and songwriting.

But, as with most prime Westerberg, it's a

fine line between half-assed simplicity and casual brilliance. Loaded with loud, Stones-y riffs and simple, repetitive choruses, *Come Feel Me Tremble* is fun, even if Westerberg's trademark word-play is in short supply. On "Making Me Go," he reaches back for one of those classic "Never Mind"/"Bastards Of Young" riffs, buzzy and inspiring, and the fact that he does little beyond repeating the title ad infinitum matters not; it's a great three minutes. And there's brilliance in the tender ballad "Never Felt Like This Before," the jaunty drinking song "Knockin' Em Back" and, especially, the Sylvia Plath memorial "Crackle & Drag" (included in electric and acoustic versions, it's one of the few songs where Westerberg seems to care as much about the words as the riffs). *Tremble*, some of whose songs come from the separate DVD documentary of the same name, ends bizarrely with a cover of Jackson Browne's singer/songwriter chestnut "These Days." Why, I don't know. While *Tremble's* heart is with the Stones, *Dead Man Shake* looks back farther, to rock 'n' roll's bluesy roots. Westerberg uses his Grandpaboy guise for a mess of messy covers and some 12-bar originals. He croaks and croons through Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" and the Rat Pack classic "What Kind Of Fool Am I?" and plays some wheezy harmonica in the Jimmy Reed tune "Take Out Some Insurance." Like his hero Alex Chilton, Westerberg puts his indifference to pitch to good use: The covers have an endearing, first-take spontaneity, and originals such as his hometown valentine "MPLS" and the swampy "Vampires & Failures" equal *Tremble's* best. On both *Come Feel Me Tremble* and *Dead Man Shake*, Westerberg tries just hard enough, and just good enough. >>>STEVE KUNGE

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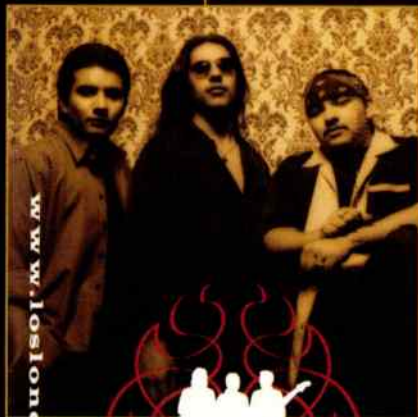
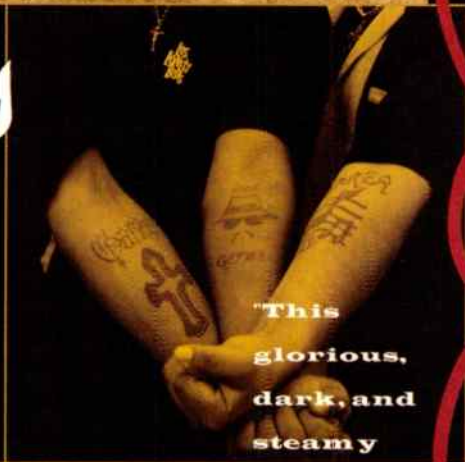
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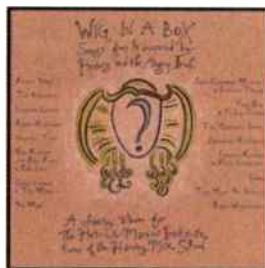
*Reflections* Mute

It's only a matter of time before a superstar DJ gets tired of spinning other people's records on a beach in Ibiza and makes his own. I guess dancing and debauchery among the beautiful isn't enough for some people. Soon after, a revelation hits, "Maybe if I get someone to sing..." And presto change-o, the DJ is now a musician and pop star. If only it were that easy. *Reflections*, German-born DJ extraordinaire Paul van Dyk's fourth batch of original moody house thumpers, proves again that he sometimes deserves to be let out of the booth and

into the studio. While less consistent than 2000's *Out There And Back*, his latest still generally gets the job done, flowing like a DJ set from the dark galloping opener, "Crush," through the beat-happy apex, "Knowledge," to the pounding closer, "Kaleidoscope." *Reflections* loses focus when van Dyk sacrifices mood and feel for an onslaught of beats, a temptation many a fine DJ succumbs to. The vocal collaborations work when he treats voices as instruments, not conveyors of an important message; the lead turns sound stale and tacked on, and the lyrics are about as deep as a puddle of beer. Of course, to over-analyze is to miss the point. This is dance music, meant for, you know, dancing. >>>NORM ELROD

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Wig In A Box: Songs From And Inspired By Hedwig And The Angry Inch* Off



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File Under

Star-studded and on-the-money

R.I.Y.L.

Rufus Wainwright,  
the Polyphonic Spree, Ben  
Kweller, living and letting live

piece. This uncommonly cohesive tribute project accentuates the strengths of its top-drawer roster through the near-perfect assignment of that material. Frank Black does a neat psychobilly turn on "Sugar Daddy," and the collaboration between Sleater-Kinney and the B-52's' Fred Schneider sounds precisely as you'd expect. The pairing of Yo La Tengo with Yoko Ono is just the kind of eyebrow-raiser Yo La delights in pulling off. It's the poignant tracks, however, that cement the case for *Hedwig* as more than a *Rocky Horror* grandeur to "The Origin Of Love"; signature tune "Wicked Little Town" gets two lovely treatments, an understated telling by the Breeders and a lush take by Bens Kweller, Folds and Lee. The highest point bridges affecting and affectation, as the Polyphonic Spree turn the title track into a glorious, jaunty slice of '70s AM ear candy. (Proceeds go to the Hetrick-Martin institute, supporting gay youth.) >>>GLEN SARVADY

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# CMJ

## NEW MUSIC REPORT

# TOP 75

**#1**  
**DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE**  
TRANSATLANTICISM  
BARSUK

Death Cab for Cutie Transatlanticism



1 DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE Transatlanticism Barsuk	26 AESOP ROCK Bazouka Tooth Definitive Jux	51 THE STILLS Logic Will Break Your Heart Vice
2 BELLE & SEBASTIAN Dear Catastrophe Waitress Rough Trade/Sanctuary	27 STARS Heart Arts And Crafts	52 TRAVIS 12 Memories Epic
3 THE SHINS Chutes Too Narrow Sub Pop	28 CLEARLAKE Cedars Domino	53 MATMOS Civil War Matador
4 JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS Streetcore Hellcat/Epitaph	29 PRIMUS Promo De Porage Animals Should Not Try To Act Like People Interscope	54 IRON AND WINE The Sea And The Rhythm (EP) Sub Pop
5 THE RAPTURE Echoes DFA/Strummer/Universal	30 APOLLO SUNSHINE Katonah spinART	55 JET Get Born Elektra
6 MOJAVE 3 Spoon And Rafter 4AD/Beggars Group	31 AZURE RAY Hold On Love Saddle Creek	56 THE ROSEBUDS The Rosebuds Make Out Merge
7 MATES OF STATE Team Boo Polyvinyl	32 RACHEL'S Systems/Layers Quarterstick	57 BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB Take Them On Your Own Virgin
8 YO LA TENGO Today Is The Day (EP) Matador	33 BETH GIBBONS AND RUSTIN MAN Out Of Season Sanctuary	58 THE RAVEONETTES Chain Gang Of Love Columbia
9 THURSDAY War All The Time Island	34 SPIRITUALIZED Amazing Grace Spaceman/Sanctuary	59 DENALI The Instinct Jade Tree
10 OUTKAST Speakerboxxx/The Love Below Arista	35 THE THRILLS So Much For The City Virgin	60 VARIOUS ARTISTS Wig In A Box: Songs From And Inspired By Hedwig And The Angry Inch OH
11 DRESSY BESSY Dressy Bessy Kindercore	36 A PERFECT CIRCLE Thornmouth Step Virgin	61 BASEMENT JAXX Kish Kash Astralwerks
12 THE WEAKERTHANS Reconstruction Site Epitaph	37 SAVES THE DAY In Reverie DreamWorks	62 STORY OF THE YEAR Page Avenue Maverick
13 TED LEO/THE PHARMACISTS Tell Balguary, Balgury Is Dead (EP) Lookout!	38 ANTI-FLAG The Terror State Fat Wreck Chords	63 LADYBUG TRANSISTOR Ladybug Transistor Merge
14 PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES The New Romance Matador	39 HEY MERCEDES Loses Control Vagrant	64 RICKIE LEE JONES The Evening Of My Best Day V2
15 DAVID BOWIE Reality ISO/Columbia	40 SOMETHING CORPORATE North Drive-Thru	65 BEULAH Yokn Velocette
16 COMEED AND CAMBRIA In Keeping Secrets Of Silent Earth, 3 Equal Vision	41 SOUNDTRACK Lost In Translation Emperor Norton	66 PEACHES Fatherfucker XL/Beggars Group
17 TEENAGE FANCLUB Four Thousand Seven Hundred... Jetset	42 LYRICS BORN Later That Day Quannum	67 THE DISMEMBERMENT PLAN A People's History Of The Dismemberment Plan DeSoto
18 ATMOSPHERE Seven's Travels Rhymesayers/Epitaph	43 THE DISTILLERS Coral Fang Sire/Reprise	68 CAMPFIRE GIRLS Tell Them Hi Interscope
19 THE TWILIGHT SINGERS Blackberry Belle Birdman/One Little Indian	44 MXPX Before Everything And After A&M	69 THE DELGADOS Domestiques Chemikal Underground
20 IGGY POP Skull Ring Virgin	45 STRIKE ANYWHERE Exit English Jade Tree	70 WEEN Quebec Sanctuary
21 STEREO LAB Instant 0 In The Universe Elektra	46 THE DECEMBERISTS Her Majesty The Decemberists Kill Rock Stars	71 THE WRENS The Meadowlands Absolutely Kosher
22 ERASE ERRATA At Crystal Palace Troubleman Unlimited	47 RYAN ADAMS Rock N Roll Lost Highway	72 GUIDED BY VOICES Earthquake Glue Matador
23 KID KOALA Some Of My Best Friends Are DJs Ninja Tune	48 THE DARKNESS Permission To Land Atlantic	73 THE KINGSBURY MANX Aztec Discipline Overcoat
24 MY MORNING JACKET It Still Moves ATO/RCA	49 THE BOOKS The Lemcn Of Pink Tomlab	74 THE UNICORNS Who Will Cut Our Hair When We're Gone? Alien8
25 RUFUS WAINWRIGHT Want One DreamWorks	50 ENON Horus Pocus Touch And Go	75 SOUNDTRACK Kif Bill A Band Apart/Maverick/Warner Strategic Markets

### 5 YEARS AGO

JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION *Acme* (Matador/Capitol)  
AFGHAN WHIGS *1965* (Columbia)  
SOUL COUGHING *El Oso* (Slash/Warner Bros.)

### 10 YEARS AGO

NIRVANA *In Utero* (DGC)  
BREEDERS *Last Splash* (4AD/Elektra)  
PEARL JAM *Vs.* (Ep:)c

## HIP-HOP TOP 10

1	<b>ATMOSPHERE</b> Seven's Travels <b>Rhymesayers/Epitaph</b>
2	<b>OUTKAST</b> Speakerboxxx/The Love Below <b>Arista</b>
3	<b>AESOP ROCK</b> Bazooka Tooth <b>Definitive Jux</b>
4	<b>LYRICS BORN</b> Later That Day <b>Quannum</b>
5	<b>LIFESAVAS</b> Spirit In Stone <b>Quannum</b>
6	<b>C-RAYZ WALZ</b> Ravipops (The Essence) <b>Definitive Jux</b>
7	<b>VIKTOR VAUGHN</b> Vaudeville Villain <b>Sound Ink</b>
8	<b>DANGER MOUSE AND JEMINI</b> Ghetto Pop Life <b>Lex</b>
9	<b>RASCO</b> Escape From Alcatraz <b>Coup d'Etat</b>
10	<b>SOUL POSITION</b> 8 Million Stories <b>Rhymesayers/Fatbeats</b>



**#1 HIP-HOP**  
**ATMOSPHERE**  
SEVEN'S TRAVELS  
RHYMESAYERS/EPITAPH



**#1 LOUD ROCK**  
**HATEBREED**  
THE RISE OF BRUTALITY  
STILLBORN/UNIVERSAL



**#1 RETAIL**  
**THE STROKES**  
ROOM ON FIRE  
RCA

## LOUD ROCK TOP 10

1	<b>HATEBREED</b> The Rise Of Brutality <b>Stillborn/Universal</b>
2	<b>THE CROWN</b> Possessed 13 <b>Metal Blade</b>
3	<b>MORBID ANGEL</b> Heretic <b>Earache</b>
4	<b>DIMMU BORGIR</b> Death Cult Armageddon <b>Nuclear Blast</b>
5	<b>BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME</b> The Silent Circus <b>Victory</b>
6	<b>STATIC-X</b> Shadow Zone <b>Warner Bros.</b>
7	<b>KING DIAMOND</b> The Puppet Master <b>Metal Blade</b>
8	<b>SIX FEET UNDER</b> Bringer Of Blood <b>Metal Blade</b>
9	<b>MUSHROOMHEAD</b> XIII <b>Universal</b>
10	<b>IRON MAIDEN</b> Dance Of Death <b>Columbia</b>

## RETAIL TOP 25

1	<b>THE STROKES</b> Room On Fire <b>RCA</b>
2	<b>OUTKAST</b> Speakerboxxx/The Love Below <b>Arista</b>
3	<b>R.E.M.</b> In Time: The Best Of R.E.M. <b>Warner Bros.</b>
4	<b>LUDACRIS</b> Chicken N Beer <b>Def Jam South</b>
5	<b>THE SHINS</b> Chutes Too Narrow <b>Sub Pop</b>
6	<b>HATEBREED</b> The Rise Of Brutality <b>Stillborn/Universal</b>
7	<b>DIDO</b> Life For Rent <b>Arista</b>
8	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> Kill Bill: Volume One <b>A Band Apart/Maverick/Warner</b>
9	<b>GERALD LEVERT</b> Stroke Of Genius <b>EastWest</b>
10	<b>VAN MORRISON</b> What's Wrong With This Picture? <b>Blue Note</b>
11	<b>ROD STEWART</b> As Time Goes By: The Great American Songbook Part II <b>J</b>
12	<b>BELLE &amp; SEBASTIAN</b> Dear Catastrophe Waitress <b>Rough Trade/Sanctuary</b>
13	<b>THE RAPTURE</b> Echoes <b>DFA/Strummer/Universal</b>
14	<b>DAVE MATTHEWS</b> Some Devil <b>RCA</b>
15	<b>STING</b> Sacred Love <b>A&amp;M</b>
16	<b>DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE</b> Transatlanticism <b>Barsuk</b>
17	<b>JAGGED EDGE</b> Hard <b>Columbia</b>
18	<b>JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS</b> Streetcore <b>Hellcat/Epitaph</b>
19	<b>OBIE TRICE</b> Cheers <b>Shady/Interscope</b>
20	<b>JET</b> Get Born <b>Elektra</b>
21	<b>LOON</b> Loon <b>Bad Boy Entertainment</b>
22	<b>JOHN MAYER</b> Heavier Things <b>Aware/Columbia</b>
23	<b>COLDPLAY</b> A Rush Of Blood To The Head <b>Capitol</b>
24	<b>SOMETHING CORPORATE</b> North <b>Drive-Thru</b>
25	<b>A PERFECT CIRCLE</b> Thirteenth Step <b>Virgin</b>

## RPM TOP 10

1	<b>HYBRID</b> Morning Sci-Fi <b>Distinctive Breaks</b>
2	<b>LFD</b> Sheath <b>Warp</b>
3	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> Bird Up! The Charlie Parker Remix Project <b>Savoy Jazz</b>
4	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> Verve Remixed 2 <b>Verve</b>
5	<b>THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS</b> Singles '93-'03 <b>Astralwerks</b>
6	<b>KID KOALA</b> Some Of My Best Friends Are DJs <b>Ninja Tune</b>
7	<b>PREFUSE 73</b> Extinguished: Outtakes <b>Warp</b>
8	<b>BASEMENT JAXX</b> Kish Kash <b>Astralwerks</b>
9	<b>MATMOS</b> Civil War <b>Matador</b>
10	<b>PAUL VAN DYK</b> Reflections <b>Mute</b>

## JAZZ TOP 10

1	<b>CASSANDRA WILSON</b> Glamoured <b>Blue Note</b>
2	<b>VERVE REMIXED 2</b> Verve Remixed 2 <b>Verve</b>
3	<b>JASON MORAN</b> The Bandwagon <b>Blue Note</b>
4	<b>EITHER/DRCHESTRA</b> Neo-Modernism <b>Accurate</b>
5	<b>MARTY EHRLICH</b> Line On Love <b>Palmetto</b>
6	<b>SEX MOB</b> Dime Grind Palace <b>Ropeadope</b>
7	<b>ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO</b> Tribute To Lester <b>ECM</b>
8	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> Bird Up! The Charlie Parker Remix Project <b>Savoy Jazz</b>
9	<b>DAVE HOLLAND QUINTET</b> Extended Play: Live At Birdland <b>ECM</b>
10	<b>GEOFF MULDAUR</b> Private Astronomy <b>Deutsche Grammophon/Edge</b>





# Extreme

STORY: ARYE DWORKEN • ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA

## When I was in high school, I came to the brutal conclusion that Gary Cherone had even penetrated my mom.

Although he would deny it, the lead singer of Extreme was with my mom in our kitchen conjuring up his best falsetto, swooningly intertwining his angelic vocals with the harmonies of his guitarist, Nuno Bettencourt, as a guitar was plucked and slapped (just as their groupies inevitably were) in the background. It was unnerving. This wasn't supposed to happen. Gary and Nuno were taking away all the pleasure of my metal rebellion. They were a hard rock band that was supposed to rock hard. Not rock hardly.

Thereafter, I found Extreme's presence everywhere: in my dentist's office, my dry cleaners and—gasp—my local supermarket, Pathmark. Walking up and down the aisles, I listened to "More Than Words" drift through the tinny speakers, only to be interrupted for the occasional price check on honeydew ("...More than words/ Is all you—attention, clean up on aisle five"). I wanted to grab ahold of the suburban moms in their Members Only windbreakers as they whistled along, shake them for never hearing *Extreme II: Pornograffitti's* other songs, like "He Man Woman Hater" or "Suzi (Wants Her All Day What?)." You wanted ballads? Go listen to the balding safeness that is Phil Collins. Grab your exhausted cassette of Chicago's *Greatest Hits* and look away, baby, look away. Heck, start your own band and name it "Moderate." But please, leave my Extreme alone.

And then a week later as I turned on the radio to hear Extreme's newest single, suburban moms everywhere rejoiced. Another ballad was born, and its name was "Hole Hearted."

While some insist that the most influential movies of their youth were *E.T.*, *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* or *Star Wars*, mine was *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*. It is Keanu Reeves' definitive acting role (was that acting? Discuss) and it introduced me to the glories of hair metal. Yes: the glories of hair metal. To this day no movie has been bold enough to send Socrates, Joan of Arc and Napoleon to the mall whilst flying arpeggios tangled furiously in the background. It was Fruity Pebbles to my ears. Later on, the closing credits informed

me that the mall scene song, my newest *raison d'être*, was Extreme's "Play With Me." I bought their debut album the next day. Which coincidentally was also the day I decided I needed to have long hair.

Throughout the years I stuck with Extreme, from their self-titled album until their final album, *Waiting For The Punchline* (I can boast to be one of its 17 proud owners). And despite the ambitious brilliance of their grandiose 1992 effort *III Sides To Every Story*, my favorite remains *Pornograffitti*. Granted, I felt slighted when "More Than Words" became a surprise make-out hit (dude, we don't make out in metal, we tongue), but as I grew older and debunked the Myth of Cooties, I realized that we all get sensitive once a while. No, that's not a tear. It's just that something got in my eye.

Sporting a decent voice and having a best friend, Moshe, who could replicate the best licks around Elizabeth, N.J., I learned how to play a dead ringer of "More Than Words." Doing something this feminine never felt so manly. Night after night, we would sit upstairs in Moshe's attic for hours strumming our hand-me-down acoustic guitars. I delivered the most passionate and heartfelt Cherone I could muster. I closed my eyes and imagined having long black curly locks and a thousand "chicks" screaming my name (though I was sure they would mispronounce "Arye"). Once we felt confident enough with our rendition, we decided to record it. Like an indie-rock band, we procured a mini-cassette recorder, found a tape to record it on (we taped over a copy of a Police album—our way of sticking it to Sting) and went through four renditions until we got it just right.

As all stories involving awkward teens and music goes, there was a girl. Those days, she became the target and association of every cheesy lyric I had heard. I finally understood, when Cherone and Co. sang, "There's a hole in my heart that can only be filled by you," what that hole felt like and how it could be filled. I desperately wanted to impress her, as the only thing I had working for me was a significant comic book collection. I decided to play her the cassette.

One night after my algebra homework, I picked up the phone and nervously dialed every number as though I were asking someone to marry me. Each button pushed was another proposal, and the following digit relived the humiliation and despair.

The phone rang.

She picked up.

I asked her if I could play something that Moshe and I had recorded, and, hesitatingly, pressed the play button. While I was supremely confident with our rendition, I was certain that she couldn't know how huge this moment was for me. This was massive. This was Extreme.

The song ended and I put the phone back to my ear to absorb her gushing. And I'll never forget the first thing she said to me for as long as I live.

"That was really great, Arye. My mom really loves that song."

*New York-based freelancer Arye Dworken no longer has a shaggy mane, but he'll still never settle for less than metal.*



**SONG:** Leaving (Always on Time Part II)  
**ALBUM:** Ashanti  
**ARTIST:** Ashanti

**ARTIST FACT**  
 Ashanti's book, *Foolish*, released in Nov. 2002, is a collection of her original poetry and thoughts on love.

**R&B and HIP-HOP**

**MUSIC CHOICE**

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**SONG:** Been Caught Stealing  
**ALBUM:** Ritual De Lo Habitual  
**ARTIST:** Jane's Addiction

**ARTIST FACT**  
 Jane's Addiction called it their "essential LP" and *Ritual De Lo Habitual* was released in '92.

**ROCK**

**MUSIC CHOICE**

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**SONG:** The Simple Life  
**ALBUM:** The Simple Life

**ARTIST FACT**  
 Eminem's film debut *D-Mile* became a stylish success, taking in \$10 million in its opening week.

**EMINEM**

**MUSIC CHOICE**

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**SONG:** ...And the Winner is  
**ALBUM:** ...And the Winner is  
**ARTIST:** ...And the Winner is

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