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NEW MUSIC
MONTHLY™

BEST NEW MUSIC

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JAMES

SPEARHEAD

THE WEDDING PRESENT

STOLEN MOMENTS:
RED HOT + COOL

liz phdair

yo la tengo. pulp. wool.
alternative on-line
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CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY (ISSN 1074-6978) is published monthly by College Media Inc., with offices at 11 Middle Neck Road, Suite 400, Great Neck, NY 11021-2301. Subscription rates are \$29.95 per year. Subscription offices: P.O. Box 57414, Boulder, CO 80322-7414 / Phone: (800) 414-4CMJ. Application for second class postage paid at Great Neck, NY and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to CMJ New Music Monthly, Membership Office, P.O. Box 57414, Boulder, CO 80322-7414. CMJ New Music Monthly is copyright 1994 by College Media Inc. All rights reserved; nothing may be reproduced without consent of publisher. Unless indicated otherwise, all letters sent to CMJ are eligible for publication and copyright purposes, and are subject to CMJ's right to edit and comment editorially.

Letters to the Editor

Almost every letter we've received in the past month has mentioned a dissatisfaction with the paper CD carrier. We hear you. We're working on it. The following letters primarily focused on other subjects, except for this first one, which is a pretty priceless example of the complaints we've received.—ed.

My mother taught me that life was too short for hate, but I HATE the new container that holds the free CD that comes with your fine magazine. It's an odd size (therefore I can't keep it with my CD singles) and it doesn't have the groups on the back of it. Don't get me wrong, your magazine is great! But it is very tiresome having to turn the magazine to the song list section.

Scott Butler
(address withheld)

I just received my very own copy of the newly-improved-for-the-'90s version of CMJ, and I liked it tremendously. The hard work paid off.

I was pleased to find the recent makeover wasn't merely cosmetic. My only complaint about earlier issues was that you never thought a record sucked. Much to my joy, you trashed left and right in the latest issue.

Thanks for your time and keep up the good work.

Chris Hedden
Washington, DC

Okay, the disc is new music, and I thought I was listening to new music. Where is William Ackerman, for example? Is it old music? What about all this new folk: John Gorka, Bill Morrissey, is it old too? Frank Tovey, Pierce Turner? Do you have to copy the Beatles to be new music?

C'mon, expand your horizons. A lot is going on everywhere: Irish music, Spanish-language (Silvio Rodriguez, Tish Hinojosa), singer-songwriters, folk, new country. To tell me that what's on the Aug.-Sept. CDs is the music that'll save the world...

Mashe Benarrock
(address withheld)

Our conception of "new music" is based on the same roots as what is generally called alternative, but it's open to any and every genre and style of music, and certainly does not exclude the new folk Mr. Benarrock describes. We try to be as eclectic as possible, and we're always open to suggestions from our readers, even when they answer "What can we do to make the magazine and CD better?" with "hire me to write reviews."—ed.

I am an anomaly: a 35 year-old who seeks out as much new, fresh music as possible—"difficult-listening music" as opposed to "easy-listening." While my co-workers and friends are listening to '60s and '70s music (or current bands that sound like '60s and '70s, e.g. Spin Doctors, Black Crowes, Counting Crows), I grab as many new music samplers as I can, listen to college radio and read trade and music magazines. My music collection has sections of classical, of jazz, of mainstream pop, metal, alternative and hardcore. I look for artists that try to really push to the best of their abilities, not to make a product to sell a certain amount of units. My age and background make me very discriminating about what I buy: artists that are "good," not just those that sound nice. And Christ, how do you converse with friends who argue that Michael Bolton is good because he sells a million albums, but Nine Inch Nails is not good because it sounds "weird"? (I tell them McDonald's sells a million hamburgers a day, but nobody will say that it's good food.)

Your magazine and CD samplers expose me to new music that I would not hear otherwise on radio or from friends' collections. Sure, not every artist suits my tastes, but they are all pretty good... and occasionally I find a single that just blows me away, to make me go out and spend money for the release (or more likely, order directly from the record company because I cannot find it in stores). I noticed that you are polishing the magazine here and there, but don't change the format; where else can I find discussions of current releases of every genre, plus sample music from current artists, for a reasonable price?

Rick Hrasch
Hollywood, FL

Please write with your questions and comments. Unless indicated otherwise, all letters sent to CMJ are eligible for publication and copyright purposes, and are subject to CMJ's right to edit and comment editorially. We're just saying that because we like mail so much, though.

WE GOOFED: The Directory section of our September issue should have listed Zoo Entertainment's address: 4363 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028. CMJ regrets the error.

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Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

What do you think about the CMJ New Music

November CD and Magazine? _____

What can we do to make the magazine and CD better?

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RATING FOR EACH TRACK

{5} Borderline genius {4} I'd buy it {3} Decent
{2} So-so {1} Trash it

CHECK THE BOX TO THE LEFT IF THIS CD
INTRODUCED YOU TO THIS ARTIST

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. CRANBERRIES | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. THE BLUE UP? | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. DAVID GRAY | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. THE WEDDING PRESENT | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. K'S CHOICE | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES | 5 4 3 2 1 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. TOM JONES | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. BUTT TRUMPET | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. JUSTICE SYSTEM | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. DIAMANDA GALAS WITH JOHN PAUL JONES | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. SPEARHEAD | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. CONSOLIDATED | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. STATE OF EMERGENCY | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. JAMES | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. BIG HEAD TODD AND THE MONSTERS | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18. KERBDOG | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. MONSTER MAGNET | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20. SPITBOY | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21. TEAM DRESCH | 5 4 3 2 1 |

1. Are you...?

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. How old are you?

☐ under 18 ☐ 25-30
☐ 18-24 ☐ 31-37
☐ None of your business!

3. Where did you buy this magazine?

☐ subscription ☐ newsstand
☐ record store ☐ bookstore
☐ other _____

4. How many CDs do you buy per month?

☐ 0-2 ☐ 6-10
☐ 3-5 ☐ more than 10

5. Where do you usually buy your tapes/CDs?

Store _____
City _____
State _____

6. What radio station do you usually listen to?

Call Letters _____
City _____
State _____

the cranberries

no need to argue

Includes

Zombie

I Can't Be with You

and Ode To My Family

The new album, following their smash debut,
everybody else is doing it, so why can't we?



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WAH WAH

23 compositions
written and performed
by **James**
and **Brian Eno**
recorded at Real World
during
"the Laid Sessions 1993."

"Improvisations are almost
always the seeds of James'
songs... I suggested that
instead of working on
just one record we find two
studios next to each other and
develop two albums concurrently.
One of structured songs (Laid)
and One Of Improvisation (Wah
Wah)."

Brian Eno

"Every Song We've ever
created was spawned from impro-
visation... All the songs on
Laid evolved from this
process. All But Three Pieces
of Wah Wah are being born
as you hear them in an attempt
to capture the moment of cre-
ation spontaneously."

With **Love**, Tim Booth of
James July, 1994

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ARTISTS' **in my room** PERSONAL PICKS

HOWE GELB GIANT SAND

Spanish flamenco guitarist
Tomatito

several albums by
Thelonious Monk

Johnny Cash
American Recordings
(American)

Al Perry And The
Cattle

Jeff Buckley
Peyote Radio Theatre
(Columbia)



PHOTO BY KEVIN WESTENBERG

Pulp: A Soft, Moist, Formless Mass That Sticks Together

"Jarvis! Come here, quick!"

Steve Mackey, Pulp's bassist, is agitated, pointing to a shop window display at San Francisco's touristy Wharf. His long, lean partner from film school, singer Jarvis Cocker, ambles over to see what all the hubbub's about. "Oh my God! That is sick! Disgusting!" he seethes, after taking a long look. "This is a perfect example of what we've been talking about all evening."

It's an ordinary sight for Wharf shoppers—matching his and hers T-shirts featuring the San Francisco skyline, bisected in half on each. For Pulp—who sneeringly dubbed its new disc *His 'N' Hers*—it's a can of worms best not opened. "Do you have that over here—matching bath towels and sweatshirts?" Cocker had been asking only a few minutes earlier, over cocktails at his hotel bar. "What that signifies to me is, you've got two people with only half a personality each, and they only make up a whole person when they're together. And I think that's a bad thing, I mean, it can happen if you've been in a relationship for a certain amount of time, but it implies that—after you've become two halves of the same person—if you split up with them, you're going to have some big problems because you're so used to being in this unit of two people. It's hard to retain your individuality when you're in a relationship, but it's something that you have to try and do."

It's obvious that the 30-year old Cocker, who pens all Pulp lyrics, is not just a snappy dresser (matching turquoise shirt and shoes are today's fare) and an arch, Bowie-limber vocalist—he's a thinker, as well. Granted, he's has a lot to consider in the band's decade-long struggle for anything resembling a hit, but *His 'N' Hers* reads like a college thesis on life, liberty, and the pursuit of romantic happiness. Ultimately, the guy sounds like he'd settle for anyone who won't force him to wear an "I'm With Stupid" jersey.

Thanks to Farfisa-happy keyboardist Candida Doyle, the album has a fluffy carnival feel throughout. Which is good, says Mackey. "We always said we'd know we were successful if people heard our music at fairgrounds—if you're on a ride and they play your song, you know you've made it." But Cocker keeps the outlook downbeat with his dissertations on abused or male-manipulated women, like "Lipgloss," "Pink Glove," "She's A Lady" and "Have You Seen Her Lately?" Having been raised by his mother and grown up with sisters, he instinctively takes the woman's side in all of these situations. "Not that I'm a woman myself," he hastily adds. But the viewpoint "did cause me problems when I started going out with girls, because I'd been used to thinking of them as friends."

Pulp's newest single, "Do You Remember The First Time?," is a touching teen-sex reminiscence which was understandably difficult for shy Cocker to complete. "After I had done it the first time, I didn't tell anyone for five years," he sighs. "I thought that something special had happened between two people, and by talking, somehow it would lose its magic."

So it's with a great deal of maturity that he croons "I don't care what you're doing/No, I don't care if you screw him/Just as long as you save a piece for me." Wouldn't look too nice on a T-shirt, would it? Cocker blushes. "When you do it the first time, you think it's a big step you're taking, that you've joined the adult world or something. Then years go by, you do it a few more times, and you realize it wasn't such a cataclysmic event..." —Tom Lanham

Album Cover Of The Month



The vinyl edition of Three Mile Pilot's *Chief Assassin To The Sinister* (Negative) comes in a mindbogglingly deluxe sleeve with a burlap cover and hand-sewn paper attachments. It looks good, it feels good, and it sounds good too.

Discography:

"My Lighthouse" (Red Rhino (UK))
It (EP) (Red Rhino (UK))
"Everybody's Problem" (Red Rhino (UK))
"Little Girl" (Fire (UK))
"Dogs Are Everywhere" (Fire (UK))
"They Suffocate At Night" (Fire (UK))
Freaks (Fire (UK))
"Master Of The Universe" (Fire (UK))
"My Legendary Girlfriend" (Fire (UK))
"Countdown" (Fire (UK))
Separations (Fire (UK))
"O.U. (Gone, Gone)" (Gift (UK))
"Babies" (Gift (UK))
"Razzmatazz" (Gift (UK))
Pulpintro: The Gift Recordings (Island (UK))
"Lipgloss" (Island (UK))
"Do You Remember The First Time?" (Island)
His 'N' Hers (Island)
The Sisters (EP) (Island (UK))

Wool: Presenting The Space-Rock Comedy Hour



"I grew up in the '50s with the bebop thing," says Wool's bassist Al Bloch, "in the '60s went to Nam, you know, in the '70s came back and got into the prog-rock thing because that was happening, and now here I am, a child 'prodigy.'"

"That's why our new record's called *Box Set*," notes singer/guitarist Peter Stahl. "It's a comprehensive look at our illustrious careers. Even back to the stuff we did in the late '50s with Chet Baker..."

It took a second, but I found out Pete and Al and (most likely) the other two Wool guys, Franz Stahl (guitar) and Chris Bratton (drums) are a bunch of cut-ups.

"But we're absolutely serious," says Pete, trying to explain how Wool's new record is in fact a career retrospective. "It's our life, man, right from the beginning! It was easy to make. All we did was sift through some old tapes..."

Right... The only clue on *Box Set* that could have prepared me for The Al & Pete Show was a silly, 50-second jazz ditty called "Eat Some Ziti," where the band breaks into a scat interlude complete with samples of polite applause.

"It's recorded live at the Vegas Lounge in Washington, D.C.!" Pete lies.

"We just broke out into a jam," Al lies, too. "The tape happened to be rolling."

Oddly enough, the rest of *Box Set* is perfectly serious. By blending a fat, simmering guitar sound with a tense, uncluttered rhythm section, Wool has produced a refreshingly disciplined, coolly rockin' sound, with vast amounts of open space for Bloch and drummer Bratton (formerly of Drive Like Jehu) to roam. As they do so, they lay ample groundwork for the close-to-the-bone guitar work of the brothers Stahl. Throughout, it's the space, almost reggae-like in sensibility (but not in sound) that makes Wool a listen apart.

"The space? Aaah, just a lot of pot, man!" says Pete.

"Comfortable clothes, boxer shorts," Al adds.

Before Wool, Pete and Franz released a slew of records with seminal Dischord band Scream. After that group lost drummer Dave Grohl to Nirvana, they took a brief sabbatical, and emerged the next spring renamed, remodeled and on a major label. Now, as the band looks to the future, what happens next?

"Well, this afternoon we're going to the Dali exhibit at the Met..." says Pete.

"Damn right," says Al.

—Bob Gulla



Watt (center) with Flea (left) and Cris Kirkwood of the Meat Puppets.

Mike Watt Gathers His Friends Together

This month, former Minutemen and FIREHOSE pillar Mike Watt will be making his solo project debut. So what's with the title, *Ball Hog Or Tug Boat*? "It's the eternal question," Watt says. "What is the bass player? Is he the nurturing, sympathetic figure or is he the fucking underdog that must be heard?" To help solve the puzzle, Watt enlisted the help of a roster of friends that reads more like a who's who of the alternative-rock world. The guests on the album include Eddie Vedder, J. Mascis, Curt and Cris Kirkwood, Dave Grohl, Krist Novoselic, Flea, Thuston Moore, Lee Ranaldo, Adam Horowitz, Dave Pirner, Evan Dando, Perry Farrell, Henry Rollins and Mark Lanegan. "I hadn't been this excited to record since the Minutemen, since D. Boon," Watt says. "I was thinking really long and hard about making records, this is almost my 20th record, counting the little ones, and in a weird way I feel kind of selfish about them, the way it's always been this one power trio. But a lot of my ideas and approach to music comes from a culture that I've been around for, like, 15 years, and in a way I kind of wanted to give some of it back to people that haven't got so much recognition."

Most of the record comes from a stockpile of FIREHOSE material that never made its way onto an album. "Next time," he says, "I'm gonna write the songs for the musicians more. But I would like there to be, and I know this sounds Hollywood, a sequel." As for a *Ball Hog Or Tug Boat* tour, Watt says there are no immediate plans, but that he's considering obliging Guided By Voices' invitation to join them for a fall tour.

—Ted Stiles

BLACK 47



Losin' it the first track from the new album **Home Of The Brave**

Produced by Jerry Harrison • Lookout management



QUICK FIX

ARTISTS' **in my** PERSONAL PICKS **room**

MARK EITZEL

AMERICAN
MUSIC CLUB

Fearless
(the movie)

Codeine
Frigid Stars LP
(Sub Pop)

Jack Logan
Bulk
(Medium Cool-Restless)

Oe Kensu
The Silent Cry
(Farrar, Strauss & Giroux)

Nixon
(my cat)

Spacemen 3: Dose Amigos



When they met in a small art college in Rugby, England in 1984, Pete Kember (aka Sonic Boom) and Jason Pierce (Jason Spaceman) were both looking to form a band. After sharing a couple of joints and listening to a few records, they found they had a lot in common. They both loved the strung-out sounds of the Velvet Underground, Suicide, 13th Floor Elevators and the late '60s Rolling Stones, and they both liked to take lots of drugs.

Once they came to the realization that their favorite bands also sounded better when listened to under the influence of controlled substances, and that many of the artists they admired most tended to dabble in various illicit pharmaceuticals, Kember and Pierce decided to form Spacemen 3, a band dedicated to sonically recreating various drug experiences.

Adopting the motto "taking drugs to make music to take drugs to," which they liked so much they used it as the title of the band's first demo in 1986, Kember, Pierce and part-time bassist Pete Bassman spent much of the late '80s stoned out of their minds, with tape recorders rolling, to see what sorts of evocative patterns they could paint with sound. "I don't think it's possible to play the kind of music we did without taking drugs. You just can't encapsulate that sort of experience without really knowing what you're talking about," says Kember today from his home in England.

Nearly all Spacemen 3 songs were sparse and repetitive, with droning guitars and sedated vocals ringing through the mix. Some incorporated chiming church organs and buzzing distortion, but few consisted of more than two or three chords. Spacemen 3 created maximalism out of minimalism, and though its songs featured hardly any shifts in tone or volume, they had resounding emotional intensity, sweeping the listener away into a timeless void.

"I've always found that drones were very evocative, and were really the strongest way to get over the moods and feelings we were trying to translate into sound. One of our early manifestos was, 'for all the fucked-up children of this world, we give you Spacemen 3.' We were really just trying to make music for other people like us who felt alien and didn't quite fit in."

From 1986 to 1991, Spacemen 3 recorded four studio albums, two live LPs and numerous singles, almost all of which will be re-released on Taang! in the coming months. Each of the re-releases will feature many bonus tracks and new artwork. After years of galactic exploration, the Spacemen 3 odyssey came to a halt in 1991, after repeated squabbles and temper tantrums reached a critical point. For their final album *Recurring*, Kember and Pierce reportedly even refused to even be in the same room together when they recorded. While Kember insists that reports were blown way out of proportion, and that the two former best friends just grew their separate ways musically and personally, neither he nor Pierce has been in contact since the demise of the band. Currently, Kember is creating ambient drugscares with Spectrum (Silvertone-RCA) and the more experimental E.A.R. (Sympathy For The Record Industry), and Pierce is playing gentle drone-rock with Spiritualized (Dedicated-Arista).

—Jon Wiederhorn

Elvis: More Sightings



In addition to re-releasing his back catalog on Rykodisc (most recently *Imperial Bedroom* and *Almost Blue*), writing liner notes for it, and touring incessantly with the Attractions, Elvis Costello has found time to sing on no less than seven albums released in 1994. In addition to his own studio LP, *Brutal Youth* (Warner Bros.), Elvis has appeared on one track on each of the following releases this year.

Rob Wasserman, *Trios* (GRP-MCA): "Put Your Big Toe In The Milk Of Human Kindness"—An acoustic trip with Wasserman and Marc Ribot, and Costello's only original composition in the lot.

Brotsky Quartet, *Lameat* (Silva Screen): "She Moves Through The Fair"—A rendition of the haunting traditional ballad, featuring the string quartet of his previous studio LP.

Adios Amigo: *A Tribute To Arthur Alexander* (Razor & Tie): "Sally Sue Brown"—A terse vocal/guitar tribute to the late, great pop/soul man.

The Glory Of Gershwin (Mercury): "But Not For Me"—A lush orchestral version (with help from fifth Beatle George Martin) for the star-studded Gershwin homage.

Tony Bennett, *Unplugged* (Columbia): "They Can't Take That Away From Me"—Elvis croons alongside the amiable legend on yet another George and Ira Gershwin tune.

No Prima Donna: *The Songs Of Van Morrison*: "Full Force Gale"—An a capella version of a Van vehicle with gospel singers backing.

Elvis had been slated to appear on Capitol's Richard Thompson tribute *Beat The Retreat*, but did not appear on the final release.—Steve Ciabattone

My Fake ID by John Flansburgh

ARTISTS' **in my room**
PERSONAL PICKS

MO TUCKER

Bo Diddley

Half Japanese

The Mavericks
What A Crying Shame

Johnny Cash
American Recordings
(American)

Seinfeld

I had a great fake ID. The music I wanted to hear in 1977 was all happening in bars. I was 16 and an immediate convert to punk. Punk rock wasn't even being remodeled as new wave yet, and the groups that defined it seemed to all be climbing into vans and performing in Boston, a short train ride from my suburban home. The arrival of my fake ID coincided perfectly with the first appearances of Pere Ubu, Patti Smith, the Ramones, Talking Heads, Blondie, The Dead Boys, and Richard Hell and the Voidoids.

My friend Jimmy had been working as a volunteer at WBCN, then an influential free-form commercial radio station. He soon discovered the Polaroid ID maker in the back of the office. It wasn't long before we were typing in fake job titles below our 16-year-old faces, trying to figure out what job would be big enough to get us into—but not so obviously bogus to get us laughed out of—Boston's doppelgänger of CBGB, the Rat. "Promotions Assistant" was the innocuous title we settled on.

The very first time we went to the Rat, Jimmy and I walked in on a fight. Someone broke a chair and I wondered if the evening was going to end at a pay phone with me mumbling "Dad, let me explain..." Of course I never had to explain, because I never told him, and I was back at the Rat the next week. Our radio ID's would hypnotize bouncers and doorman all over Boston. Not only could we get through the door, half the time we were ushered in as if there was oversight on the guest list. Wicked.

What was most striking about the punk rockers I saw with my fake ID was the singular nature of each band. Beyond the obligatory short haircuts, the ground rules of the first wave of punk seemed pretty wide open. Patti Smith was a poet. Stiv Bators was not. Television improvised. The Ramones did not. Pere Ubu used synthesizers and were tough, and nobody who used synthesizers was tough.

Punk was both larger than life and within everyone's reach. I took the bait, borrowed a really bad guitar and immediately started writing my own songs on the top three strings. Like my musical heroes the Ramones, I too found other people's songs to hard to figure out.

I soon became a fan of the local scene and was annoyed that good local bands were not being signed up to record deals like their New York counterparts. As always, there was

animosity towards major labels, but we worried more about good bands getting screwed than how it would challenge the bands' intentions or street credibility. Important bands got signed, and punk was important. It seemed a hollow victory for Boston when a pretty exciting live band called the Cars actually did get signed, only to make a record that sounded like Freddy Mercury was doing the backing vocals—and the lyric sheet revealed a grim reality that up until then had been thankfully obscured by bad PAs.

My three years with that fake ID worked pretty good, until I went out of state to college. In Ohio, I found 19-year-olds enjoying "near-beer"—a brew with half the alcohol content of regular beer, specially designed to ease Midwestern youth into a lifetime of drinking. I found I didn't often need my fake ID, and my mid-'70s shag haircut in the picture was getting embarrassing. There weren't a lot of great things about the '70s, but in those last couple of years of the decade—when it was still easy to hitchhike, and you didn't necessarily hear Crosby, Stills and Nash on the drivers' eight track—that was really living.

John Flansburgh sings and plays guitar in They Might Be Giants, who will be touring through March 1995.

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS



From left: John Flansburgh, John Linnell, Brian Doherty, Tony Maimone

Strange Beauties: Laurie Anderson and Arthur Russell

Think about the weird ambivalence of David Byrne's persona in Talking Heads' "Psycho Killer." It's hilariously funny, but at the same time, it's disturbing and sinister. That same blend of humor and darkness, the same mixing of moods, emerges on two recent albums from two other longtime Downtown New York "art music" alumni—two vastly different records that sound really interesting in tandem.

Laurie Anderson was a quirky, artsy figure of the 1980s, an artist who probably didn't represent the real avant-garde as much as she represented people's ideas of the avant-garde. Her latest record, *Bright Red* (Warner Bros.), was produced by Brian Eno, and unlike past work, which was eclectic to the point of kookiness (remember "O Superman"?), *Bright Red* is a spartan, minimalist set of pieces that are at once chilling and humorous. Representing a darker side than her usual repertoire, "Night In Baghdad" is particularly eerie, mocking the TV journalism of the Persian Gulf War: "I wish I could describe this to you better/But I've got this damn gas mask on/So I'm just gonna stick this microphone out the window."

Another Thought (Point Music) is a posthumous compilation of previously unheard music from composer, producer and multi-instrumentalist Arthur Russell, recorded over a span of years before his AIDS-related death in 1992. Russell produced some of the most fondly-remembered underground dance records of the early '80s (including 12"s like Loose Joints' "Is It All Over My Face" and his own "Let's Go Swimming" and "Go Bang"). When he wasn't producing club records, he was fond of locking himself in a studio and creating weird, haunting soundscapes using just his voice and a cello bowed through an echoplex and spacey reverberation. His music was expansive and full of life, but exposed vulnerability in its claustrophobic, muted tones. Mostly, those who don't get it seem to be struck by the distance and weirdness of Arthur Russell's soundworld, but those willing to take the plunge may well find themselves entranced by the warmth and strange beauty of it all. If there is humor in the sinister, and beauty in sadness, these records point to the similarities lurking at the ends of emotional extremes.

—James Lien

QUICK FIX

DEFINITION OF SOUND

Ambient (pron. to rhyme with "clammy rent"—please, not "Tammy jaunt"): A kind of music that is meant to blend into the atmosphere of the room it's played in. Ideally, you shouldn't notice it's playing unless you're specifically listening for it. Often used inaccurately to describe the mostly beatless techno that's played in chill-out rooms: If it's turned up really loud, it's not really ambient. Ambient music is the aural equivalent of wallpaper, and like wallpaper it can be elegant or tacky. The godfather of the genre is Brian Eno, whose *Discreet Music* album was the first self-consciously ambient record; the recent master is the Aphex Twin, whose *Selected Ambient Works, Vol. II* can transform the atmosphere of a room without calling attention to the fact that it's playing.



PHOTO BY WILLIAM CLAXTON

Victoria Williams: Wishes, Dreams and Fluttercakes

Victoria Williams hasn't had it easy. Following years of record-label troubles, the iconoclastic folkie discovered she had multiple sclerosis a few years ago. As a musician in a country without universal health care, she was uninsured and had tremendous medical bills. Her fellow musicians rallied around her with a series of successful benefit concerts and a tribute album, *Sweet Relief* (Thirsty Ear-Chaos), which raised money for her treatment. One of the most interesting tracks on that album was Shudder To Think's rendition of Victoria's "Animal Wild"; Shudder's singer/guitarist Craig Wedren spoke to Victoria on the eve of the release of her new album *Loose* (Mammoth-Atlantic).

Craig: Does your family get what you do?

Victoria: I think so. My sister still wants me to record songs that I wrote a long time ago when I was a kid, out on the porch, just acappella songs.

Maybe you should! Did you have a really wild imagination when you were little?

I liked to go off in the woods with my dog—just the two of us, going on explorations, looking for box turtles. When I was a little girl, I broke a chicken bone once and wished I could sing for people all over the world, and my mother said "Such a big wish! Why, when I was your age, I'd wish for something simple, like an ice cream cone!"

Maybe it's because of the wish that it happened. Good thing about the bone... Do you remember your dreams?

Yeah.

Do you write them down, ever?

Sometimes I do... In New York last week I had some really strange dreams. I dreamed I checked into my hotel and then I went out on this terrace. And the terrace went sort of rambling off, and then it was the desert, a strip of desert that went all the way across the country from New York to California, and it looked like Joshua Tree. I crawled up on this rock formation and fell asleep in this little ball, and I remember I couldn't roll to one side or the other 'cause it was thousands of feet down. Maybe hundreds of feet. Probably more accurate.

That's like a Wile E. Coyote nightmare.

And I woke up really stiff. The next night I dreamed that I was in this hotel, and the whole hotel was on wheels. We were going pretty fast down the highway. I was going, "I'm going to go to sleep. I wonder what town we'll be in when I wake up."

Oh my God, that's such a tour-head dream. I get the most insane dreams like that when I'm on tour. When I'm recording, every time I go to sleep I dream about trying to get a song right. Then I wake up and flop my body over and dream about the same song. Except the components of the song aren't music—I could be walking to the grocery store and buying a bottle of milk, except I'll be like, "No no no, that doesn't sound right! The bridge needs to be different!" Somehow, in my dream-mind, it equals a song.

I can totally relate to that... You can just walk down and get something at the store, when you're recording, and you have a revelation, and you come back and say "okay, we're ready," and sing about something you just got.

It's absorbing and putting out. I really like the idea of living like that as much as possible. All sound and communication is music, if you just listen to it that way.

Oh, yes. I love to listen to the bugs singing and the birds singing. And then there'll be a motor of a boat somewhere, and the screech of tires... It's all a symphony.

What do you hear right now?

A distant whirring of an engine, getting closer... oh! It's a low-flying airplane.

There's this fun game I like to play with myself: to listen to the sounds and try to disassociate what they are and just listen purely to the sound.

What I hear now... It's getting lower now, and closer. It sounds like fluttercakes.

What are fluttercakes?

Fluttercakes? I don't know. I just made it up.

ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS in my room

ROBERT POLLARD

GUIDED BY VOICES

Flaming Lips

Providing Needles For Your Balloons (Warner Bros.)

Strapping Field Hands

Discus (Omphalos)

Chavez

"Repeat The Ending" (7") (Matador)

Cobra Verde

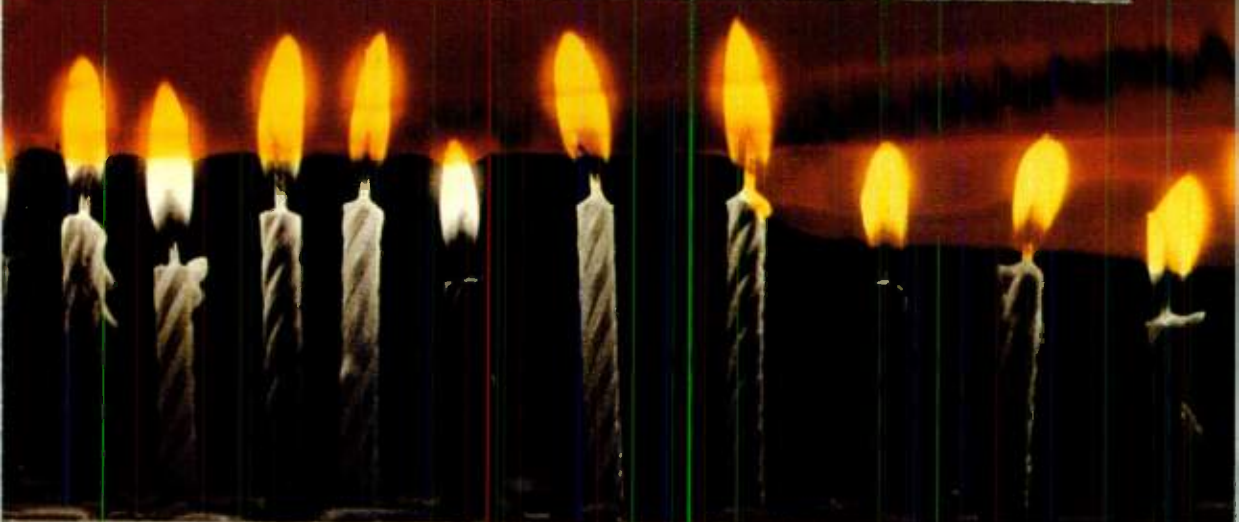
Viva La Muerte (Scat-Matador)

Grifters

Crappin' You Negative (Shangri-La)

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Quicksand, The Jesus Lizard,
The Damned, Living Colour,
Fossil

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World Radio History

BEST NEW MUSIC

PETE ROCK & C.L. SMOOTH

The Main Ingredient

Elektra



This sophomore album from Mount Vernon, New York's Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth may be the best hip-hop record of this year, or the best in recent memory for that matter. A bold statement, but take a close look at what we're dealing with: Pete Rock is one of the ultimate beatsmiths. As producer here, he avoids overused funk and soul samples, digging deeper into his expansive record collection and coming up with an assortment of laungy, mellow and breezy jazz snippets that seem at first like a tough fit for a hip-hop setting. But the results are inspiring, maintaining individuality and an understated cool throughout. C.L. Smooth is the Max Roach of hip-hop verbalizing: never overbearing, C.L.'s rhymes paint textures and abstract visions ("Escapism") and keep a strong, spiritual fortitude that avoids being run over by the beat. On "In The House" and "Caramel City," Pete spins heavy soul out of soft jazz that comes alive when fitted with commanding hip-hop grooves. Especially on "In The Flesh," Pete makes room over his disjointed sonic collages to preserve the lost art of scratching, rocking right along with the beat with the enthusiasm of a teenager drumming out his favorite rhythms. A few cuts ("Take You There," in particular) lean toward breezy soul, using live background singers, while the musical foundation of "Searching" sounds like it could be the inspiration of an acid jazz workout—but these samples are utilized by B-boys who decorate them with gritty street vibes. *The Main Ingredient* reaches beyond the quagmire of jazz-rappers and sub-par producers, and it should stand out as the paradigm that the rest of hip-hop community strives to equal.

—Glen Sansone

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 11.

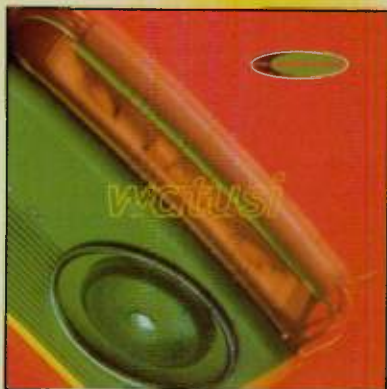
FILE UNDER: Hip-hop benchmarks.

R.I.Y.L.: Gang Starr's *Step In The Arena*, A Tribe Called Quest.

THE WEDDING PRESENT

Watusi

Island



NME C-86, a seminal compilation of the first post-new wave strummy guitar bands, heralded an era of falsetto voices, fey looks, and jagged, rough-around-the-edges melodies. Nearly a decade on, the Wedding Present and Primal Scream are the only C-86 survivors, and both bands now find themselves breaking into the mainstream. David Gedge and his Wedding Present are at the top of their form, unspeakably coy, richly various, and powerful. *Watusi* is an ebullient, consistently satisfying record; 12 songs, 12 hits, comprising nearly as many distinct sounds. "It's A Gas" and "Let Him Have It" are driving dance tracks, redolent of the Rolling Stones as much as Unrest. "Spangle," the album's most intriguing number, lays subdued vocals over an excellent 78 rpm music-box melody, complete with tick-tock beats and a thick layer of surface noise; the result is sad and disorienting, nostalgic in the same way as the Smiths' instrumental "Oscillate Wildly." On the bulk of the record, though, the Weddies make a densely rhythmic, kick-ass noise, heavy but often acoustic and intricate. Steve Albini's makeover several years back gave the band a menace and an epic scope it had been lacking, but with *Watusi* it's gone back to its roots without reverting to form, harnessing the raw shambolic energy of the strum. A couple of times Gedge's Ian Curtis-goes-pop delivery and sensitive-man's-tough-guy lyrics go over the top in a bad way, marring what might have been a fun tribute to Peanuts maestro Schroeder ("Gazebo"), but *Watusi* is more than strong enough to bear it. Nine years on, the Wedding Present has yet to falter.

—Michael Vazquez

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 27. First single "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah."

FILE UNDER: Stirring jangle-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Unrest, early Orange Juice, the Smiths.

SPEARHEAD

Home

Capitol



Spearhead is a new 7-piece funk/rap hybrid fronted by Michael Franti, formerly the main brain behind the group Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy. Now, like Sly Stone moving through various phases, he's changed the vibe. While the '80s found Franti adopting a Public Enemy-inspired mixture of lyrical attitude and impenetrable layers of samples, Spearhead proffers up a hazy version of homeboy funk, with live band, turntables, chunky wah-wah guitar, and Franti's woozy rap/singing style. It sounds a little like Basehead, but while that group rapped about drinking beer and getting laid, Spearhead/Franti focuses on issues: Imagine Chuck D. trying to rap after he'd just been woken up from a deep sleep, and you get a picture of Franti's slurred style. What really separates Spearhead from the pack is *Home's* last 20 or so minutes. Suddenly, right around "Runfayalife," Franti just bugs out on a serious Sly Stone tip, evoking such circa-'70 masterpieces as *There's A Riot Goin' On* and *Stand!* Sly's vision in those days mixed a love for life with a painful understanding of unpleasant political and social circumstances. Consciously or not, Spearhead answers that charge and applies it to life in the '90s. While it may be true that Sly, Prince, and Public Enemy just aren't making the kind of high-quality, aware music they once were, Spearhead is there to pick up the slack.

—James Lien

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 20.

FILE UNDER: Low-ball funk on a conscious tip.

R.I.Y.L.: Beastie Boys, Sly & The Family Stone, Basehead, Curtis Mayfield's *Superfly*.

JAMES

Wah Wah

Mercury



Despite huge overseas hits like "Sit Down," fans on the order of Morrissey and Neil Young, and a reputation for being outstanding live, Britain's James has never quite caught on in America (though the superb title track of last year's *Laid* almost did). Fortunately, the band doesn't appear to care. *Wah Wah* isn't a standard pop record, and it doesn't have standard pop songs, but it's a daring and completely successful move. 20 of the album's 23 pieces were improvised in the course of long jams each night after the *Laid* recording sessions. It's improvisation, but it's not jazz or free improvisation: James is a band of rock musicians that have been playing together for years, and know how to play off each other on the fly and still sound super-tight. Producer and guest musician Brian Eno's "get it all on tape and keep the good parts" aesthetic dominates the album (and its sound—many of Tim Booth's vocals are processed in that unmistakable Eno way). Some of these pieces are 15 seconds long, others are five minutes, but they all give the sense of being the moments that sounded exactly right, patiently edited from miles of tape. Soloing is discouraged, as is monotonous riffing; the group bends each piece in the same direction at once, and keeps it mutating continuously. The whole project is bright and exciting, lit by the still-fresh spark of its creation.

—Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 18.

FILE UNDER: Brilliant pop experiments.

R.I.Y.L.: Late U2, Peter Gabriel's *Passion*, late Art Of Noise.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Stolen Moments: Red Hot + Cool

GRP



A little background: The Red Hot Organization, which put *Stolen Moments* together, is the AIDS-awareness group that assembled the superb *Red Hot + Blue* and the more recent *Red Hot + Dance* and *No Alternative* compilations. *Stolen Moments'* main concept is collaborations between jazz types and hip-hop types; its breakthrough is making sure that the rappers and the jazzbos are both top-notch, and that neither takes precedence over the other. A Tribe Called Quest's work with Ron Carter is one of the few real precedents of *Stolen Moments*; Carter reappears here, twining his super-fat bass playing with MC Solaar's French-language flow on "Un Ange en Danger." Pharoah Sanders and the Last Poets, both '60s survivors who saw the farthest reaches of their arts' revolutions and lived to tell the tale, rasp through the ravaged "This Is Madness." Best of all is "Flyin' High," Digable Planets' collaboration with Lester Bowie and Wah Wah Watson—it's got the exquisite airiness of the most revelatory jazz records and the trippiest freestyle flows. Since the RHO's compilations are more about being great records than sticking to a concept, we also get a few other kinds of tracks. Aided by Ramsey Lewis, Carleen Anderson pulls off a shining dancefloor-jazz vocal on "Trouble Don't Last Always," the Pharcyde and Michael Franti both turn in superb hip-hop tracks, and the album's special bonus disc has extended performances by Branford Marsalis and Alice Coltrane (both covers of John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme"), and a new hip-hop remix of Sanders' "The Creator Has A Master Plan." Sound like a near-perfect lineup yet? Yup—it is.

—Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 15.

FILE UNDER: Top-notch hip-hop/jazz compilations.

R.I.Y.L.: A Tribe Called Quest, Blue Note breakbeats, early-'60s Coltrane, US 3.

"Seattle is the new fashionable thing," says David Gedge. "Everybody's talking about it. You heard it here first." What you are hearing is the wisecracking frontman of the Wedding Present, defending his untrendy band's decision to record *Watusi*, the Leeds, England-based quartet's fourth proper LP, in that fetching but overrated town. *Watusi* is the first full-length, non-compilation album the Weds have released since 1991's rough-and-ready noise-pop masterpiece *Seamonsters*, and

while the new one is way cleaner, slower and quieter than its predecessor, it's every bit as brilliant.

What brought the Wedding Present to the Pacific Northwest was actually Steve Fisk, the lucky fellow who got to produce *Watusi*. Fisk handles keyboard duties for such fine bands as Pell Mell and the Halo Benders, and he was the man behind the starkly beautiful musical accompaniment for the late Steven Jesse Bernstein's spoken-word collection. Fisk played keyboards on *Watusi* as well. "Couldn't keep him off it, actually," says Gedge. "Steve's a bit left of center, a bit of an oddball, a bit eccentric, and therefore completely suitable for the Wedding Present because he's mad," says Gedge. "He has encyclopedic knowledge of cult groups from the last four decades of pop music."

"And all the geeky instruments that they played," says Darren Belk, the new bass player, who also plays in Beachbuggy and runs a seven-inch label called Ostrich GT.

Among the geeky instruments Fisk suggested were trombone, piano, Hammond organ—"a Velvet Underground organ"—as well as the Optigon, which Gedge calls a "children's keyboard made by Mattel that uses light, and plays these weird transparent discs like 'Caribbean' and 'Hawaiian' and all these different '60s styles of music. Mattel got loads of money in the '60s from the success of Ken and Barbie, so they researched this instrument, but you can't buy it any more," says the swarthy singer. On *Watusi*'s slow-sad-love-song centerpiece "Spangle," crispy-crackling static blends gently with the Optigon jingles, giving it a lovely old-fashioned rustling AM-radio backdrop. "Spangle" also displays Gedge's more sensitive (than the usual slam-bang) lyrical side: "I guess I'm heading for a broken heart/Why are you doing this to me?..."



PHOTO BY BILL CALHOUN FOR ROLLING STONE

the wedding present

by gail o'hara

It's so clear/I can hear/But I'm not gonna share you with no one."

Belk sings "Shake It," the first Wedding Present song that does not feature Gedge on lead vocals, and a couple of Seattle-area women duetted with Gedge on some other tracks: Carrie Akre from Hammerbox sings on the ebulliently suave "It's A Gas," and Beat Happening's Heather Lewis sweetens the tones of "Click Click" and "Swimming Pools, Movie Stars." Plus, there's a surfy garage number called "Hot Pants" with a *Hawaii 5-0* feeling that practically makes the listener crave frothy drinks in coconut shells.

Fisk's purist approach occasionally gives *Watusi* a vintage aura that lives up to the name. "It's powerful, it's just more subtle," Gedge says. "It's not just like big massive surges of distorted noise as usual. The emphasis is more on melody rather than distortion."

The Wedding Present has weathered lousy luck with labels since the band stopped putting out records on its own Reception imprint in 1988. First RCA dropped them in the U.S. Then First Warning, the faux indie that released *Seamonsters* (a year later) and the CD collection of *The Hit Parade* (a single-a-month series of 12 limited-edition seven-inches with one original and one cover each), folded. Now the band is on Island, and everything is going along just swimmingly so far. "There are a few teething problems," says Gedge about his new label relationship.

"I don't think Island Records are used to dealing with a group who are so involved in their own affairs," says Belk. "We all know everything about the group, we know what works, how it should be done, and when it should be done. They're not used to groups being so involved, and they're finding it a little difficult to understand. They don't quite trust us to do our job."

"We take pride in making sure we do things right and as on time as possible," Belk continues. "I'm sure within a few months, things will go smoothly because they'll realize that we're working with them and not against them. They'll know what we want and we'll know what they want."

"We need to approve everything. They think we're just in it for the laughs," says Gedge, whose band has always had a stringent creative-control clause in its contracts. But for a band that's been pretty much missing in action for a year and a half, things are picking up. Luckily for us, the Wedding Present will be touring the U.S. from late October through the end of November.

"We have to record a single, do two radio sessions, two in-store appearances, two normal gigs, the Reading Festival, meetings... We've got about an hour to get some sleep in the next three weeks," says Belk.

"When's that?" Gedge wonders.



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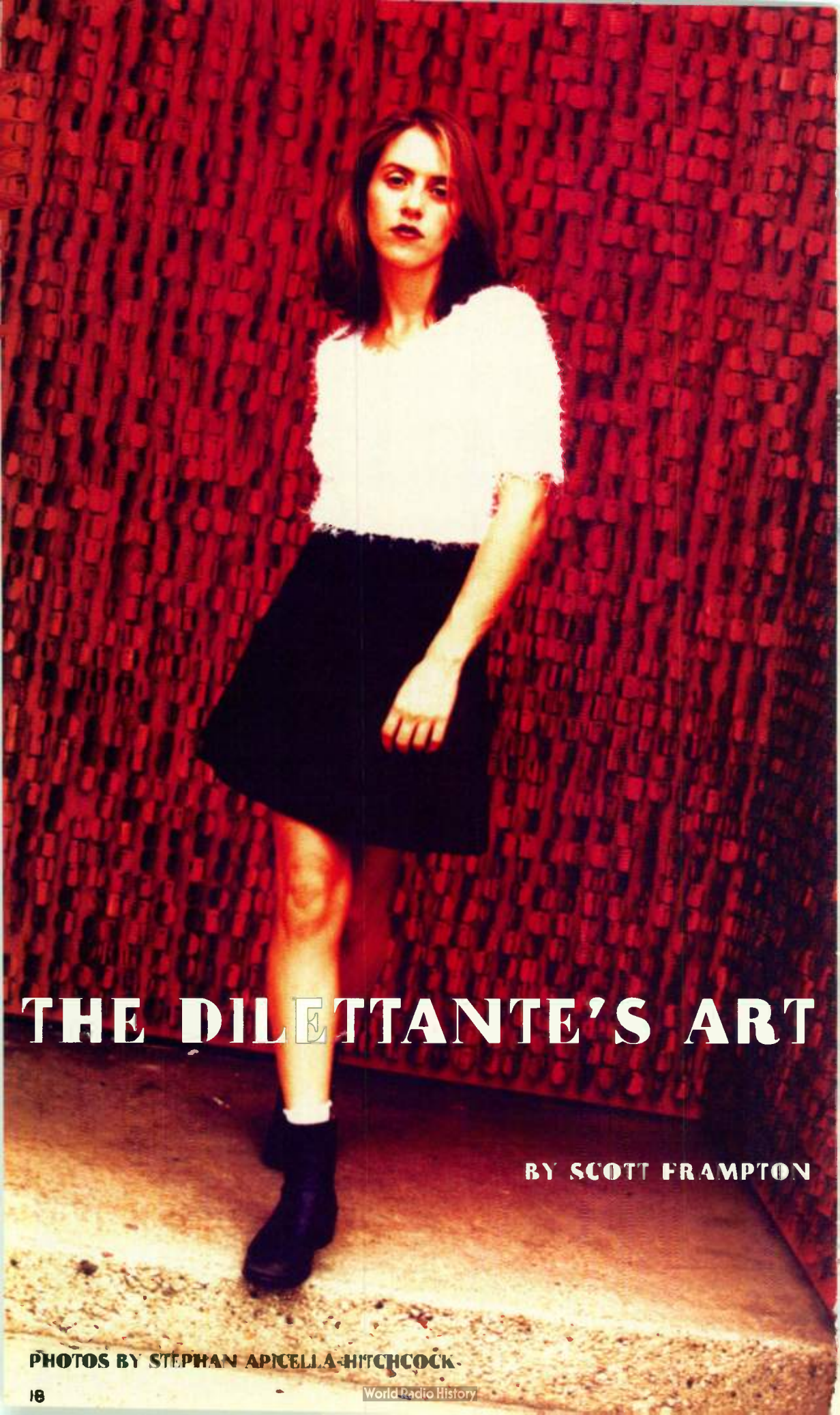
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THE DILETTANTE'S ART

BY SCOTT FRAMPTON

PHOTOS BY STEPHAN APICELLA-HITCHCOCK

"Most people lean toward one thing or another, and I've always been one of those people that went the whole fucking gamut. And what people criticize me for—and rightly so—is that, if you do that, you

LIZ PHAIR

do it at the expense of real knowledge and depth and experience. I will never have expertise at anything but being able to see many sides of a coin that only has two faces. But that's the dilettante's art."

That's Liz Phair: self-absorbed and self-effacing, off in her own little world and making perfect sense all at the same time. She really is everything critics and fans claim her to be, good and bad, and she knows it.

"I'll always write songs harder than I can play them, or at least different than I can play. I have no interest in perfecting my craft. I only have interest in expressing something that will last. Certain things just happen, and because they're so true, they last. There's nothing very special about them. They're just so true, and I think that's what I've got a corner of the market on. You can portray me anyway you want, but I'm never gonna be sitting in my kitchen with white hair and a nose job."

Sitting in her kitchen, the pale light obscuring all features save for that slightly crooked nose and her brilliant blue eyes, the brashness that marked her stunning debut, *Exile in Guyville*, is in reserve. Her flirtatious nature emerges only in a few unsolicited personal appraisals ("You're neurotic-obsessive. Total Achiever Syndrome. That's good, though"), and an easy self-possession is the sexiest thing about her. She's feeling the slack of having a few days off from photo shoots and preparations for her fall tour. Her big eyes narrow, however, as she imagines it all evaporating with the release of *Whip-smart*. "When it's all thrown in my face again this fall, it'll totally wig me out 'cause I'll be Liz Phair Incorporated again."

But *Whip-smart*, a brilliant follow-up to *Guyville* that recasts some songs from her much-circulated "Girlysound" demo tapes, is a few weeks from release, and for now, she can still drive around her Chicago neighborhood ("It's like a big small town here—the relentless pursuit of the middle," as my friend Tom says—and everybody knows everybody else") and sing along to her own new record without anyone noticing. She is relaxed and unguarded, remarkably so for someone who, by her own admission, is "fostering a media career greater... than an actual audio career."

"There's lots of people who have made pronouncements on me having never listened to the record but read the press. Because there's so much of it, they're formulating opinions on that alone. We're just trying to staple a place in rock history as all these female musicians come tearing up the pike. It's like, well, here's my notch—'93, I was there—as everyone goes whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, right on by."

Liz Phair's notch was marked most prominently by *Guyville* topping the *Village Voice*'s 1993 "Pazz and Jop" critics' poll. That mention was based as much on her frank sexuality as the sharp songwriting that shone through the album's song-by-song take on Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street*. It was the open sexuality, of course, that translated this critical success into more mainstream media coverage and made her the focus of much of the year-end critical theory. While discussions of gender politics ambled on, the record's direct, simple tone lulled many into confusing the author with the subject. To many, that sexuality was Liz Phair.

"I'm surprised that writers would mistake another writer. I'm surprised that writers who are expert in concealing motives in language wouldn't recognize that I do the same thing. It's just that it's poetry instead of prose. It's just completely scaled down so that the whole feelings come through. And it's total tedious, obsessive-compulsive work."

"I'm always editing in favor of the natural turn of phrase. You know how Langston Hughes fussed over his work until he was capturing dialect? It would seem very simplistic where it was actually very complicated. So to psychoanalyze something that is my sole artform at the moment is really dumb. What [critics] are psychoanalyzing is a fictitious creature. They're psychoanalyzing someone I've created to conceal some of my own insecurities and to purposefully expose other ones, so I've already done all of this patchwork. There's lots of fodder for psychoanalysis, but it isn't me."

She may be misinterpreted by critics, but it goes double for her public. Of the attention she received for the guy-like sexy swagger she deftly appropriated on *Guyville*, she says, "that attention doesn't fill you up, it depletes you."

"That's usually at shows. You go afterward to sign some autographs and that's when I see that they're completely waiting for something, like little kids at a birthday party. 'Is there a clown? Is there a pony?'" She stops drawing on the backs of the day's mail to lean across the table and make her point. "They want something. They want their own personal snippet to go home and remember. All these hungry mouths, all these gaping baby birds. Some people see me as a wounded soul and want to get that. Some people see me as the girl that scorned them in the schoolyard and they want me to be bitchy and bratty. Some people see me as a kind of hippie collegiate. Think of all the different perceptions of what the songs say and that's the variety you get coming back at you."

She bounces lightly back into her curled position on the kitchen chair, smiling at having satisfactorily described how "this kind of attention just eats at you" and somehow seeming not bitchy or ungrateful as much as very protective of her personal and emotional space. (She saves those sort of resentments for the insularity of indie rock. "What a bunch of grandfathers. I never felt so old and lonely as when I was in the indie scene.") Still, she seems acutely aware of her position in the center of the vortex of hype surrounding her.

"These are the hard learning years. This is 101 and 201. When I'm in the third year of this business, and fourth, I should be pretty much doing what I want, which in some people's eyes will make me greatly cheesier. But I was much cheesier before any of this started. I've totally held myself in because I knew I was going to be looked at. The natural me is much giddier, way more mainstream pop. If people hate me for those reasons now, they have not seen anything. I'm way worse."

"I think that being around [bandmates] Brad [Wood], Casey [Rice] and all my boyfriends in college who were so rigorous about their love of music and what was good and why it was good has, in a way, cured me of ever caring. To me, music speaks to you. And the national anthem is just as valuable as anything Iggy Pop ever did. It all has the same amount of weight for me. There's this whole juxtaposition. And I think that just comes from why I started making music in the beginning, which is just because I'm addicted to tunes."

"I just always wrote songs," she says, tracing the roots of her music back and launching into another of the monologues that characterize her conversation, "My mother used to sing me to sleep every night, 'White coral bells upon a...' We'd sing together and immediately I just started putting in my own words like 'down in the poo-poo' instead of 'valley.' And that was really cute and funny, so I probably went and did some more new words to old songs. And therein lies my rip-off fetish. It gave me good attention when I was probably fucking three or something. And there's a total precursor to *Guyville* in that. I would always take songs at large—whatever type of song I was into—and try to write one of 'those,' I would call it, of that kind of song. So it was totally natural to do my version of the Rolling Stones or to rip off Malcolm McLaren."

"What music really is to me at some bottom level is the songs I sang at camp, songs my mother sang to me. Really simple chants. For me they're archetypal. It's a real girl world. I don't think boys do this. I don't think they sing like girls do. And I don't think they have those little rituals of rhyme," she pauses to illustrate her point with rhythmic patty-cake hand claps, "and melody that girls grew up with. I mean, Barbie fuckin' sings. Dolls sing. Everything is hummed to a melody. Even the National Anthem is intriguing to me lately. I called my production company National Anthem because it's a great song for what kind of songs I'm talking about. It isn't a pop song, and it isn't a folk song, but [anthems] are archetypal. My songwriting is always trying to be a song like that, a song that's like some weird primal something or other. Things like 'bubblegum, bubblegum in a dish' [a jump-rope chant from her song "Slave"], the rhythms of that stuff, and all these childhood things, I try to bring them up in my songs because there's something about those songs that lasts. What are school yard chants? They're not folk songs. They're not pop songs. There's something primal—a way of remembering. It's like oral history."

It's hard not to get caught up in her monologues even as she stops to admit to schoolgirl crushes on Darth Vader and *The Addams Family's* Lurch, or to lament that she can't be so free in public as she once was. "I used to be a great dinner table taker-over, and now it would be a major faux pas for Liz Phair to come in and take over a dinner table conversation because she'd be doing it because she's Liz Phair. When

actually, Elizabeth Clark Phair used to do that all the time." If there's one thing that Elizabeth Clark Phair has in common with the Liz Phair of renown, "potty mouth" and all, it's a propensity for thinking out loud, for embarking on her ad-hoc examinations of everything in her life and what it all means, as if the truth is in another clump of words around the corner. And it's amazing to see, because the directness that makes her songs so arresting is always there, and it's never more brilliant than when she describes her songs and why she writes them.

"Even now, just fighting with my boyfriend and stuff, it just compels me what human emotions tolerate, how flexible they are, how they rebound and how it feels to have something to lose. The risk factor is something I go to again and again in my songs. Whatever in my life has created a flush of blood all of a sudden—be it lust, fear, embarrassment, shame or sudden recognition of impending doom, whatever—those are things I'm going to stick in every song. There's going to be one of those in any song I think is any good. I think are the poetry of what a songwriter does is to take those moments that just fleet—they're here and then they're gone—and kind of immortalize them, to find in 50 words or less some context to pit around one of those moments so that it will be recognizable to another human being."

"Any time any boy had an effect on me like that, a song had to be written at some point. The songs were the venue for things I never felt like I had a chance to say. If I was obsessed with somebody beyond me or that I didn't know, I'd write to them. It was like my secret fetishism... I'll write about stuff that happened a couple of years ago if I get that feeling again. I'm not one to go running to my friends and tell them what happened that day. I wanted to run to the guitar and say it."

Always prone to intellectual flights, she is not above free-form contemplations, when coaxed, of what makes her something special.

"I think I'm a little punk in some sense. I think I say things in a way that's accessible but a little more complicated than that. I say things in such a way that you can recognize them in your own life. I think one of those things is that you can say my words if you're a man or a woman. I give you little slogans... I don't know. I'm making shit up right now. I'm just bullshitting for you. I make up theories at the drop of a hat, it's just something I do... I think one thing I do is cross the gender barrier in

I'M NOT THE ONE TO GO RUNNING TO MY FRIENDS AND TELL THEM WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY. I WANTED TO RUN TO THE GUITAR AND SAY IT.

certain ways and give you emotions that both sides relate to. And I give you words that are not hard to speak and at the same time effectively—not always brilliantly, but effectively—fill the need to speak something that usually goes unspoken. And I think I do a good job of universalizing very private, specific moments, which is a hard task."

"On some level, I'm just trying to make an hour's worth of music worth listening to. I'm not trying to make the fucking pop hit album of the 20th Century. And I think I did my job well. I think I got a B at least, like exactly between a B and a B+. And I don't know what hits a culture to make a *Guyville* but I sure as fuck don't think that it comes along often. And I don't think it comes along twice in a row."

Is Liz Phair for real? Most definitely. She's smart, a gracious host and, well, nice. And to listen to her, not all that hard to figure out.

"Really, I'm just a suburban girl who grew up upper-middle-class and had fawning parents who wanted her to achieve. It's really pretty simple. What my merit is, is my ability to create a character worth psychoanalyzing, but that's not me. That's what I've done. That's the only credit I should be getting. That's the funny irony. What I actually get credit for is kind of bogus, and that's why people get that sense of sham, because no one's picking out the real accomplishment. No, they're picking out, like, 'she's the first woman to take her sexuality and throw it out there.' And that's not true. What I am is the first woman to calculatedly use my sexuality to be mainstream. Well, no—Madonna did that. See, now I didn't even do that. I didn't fucking do anything. All I did was write. That's what's so funny."

DISCOGRAPHY

"White Babies" on *Chinny Chin Chin* compilation (See Eye-Shimmy-Disc)

(note: credited to Kicking Giant; Liz sings it on Tae Won Yu's answering machine!)

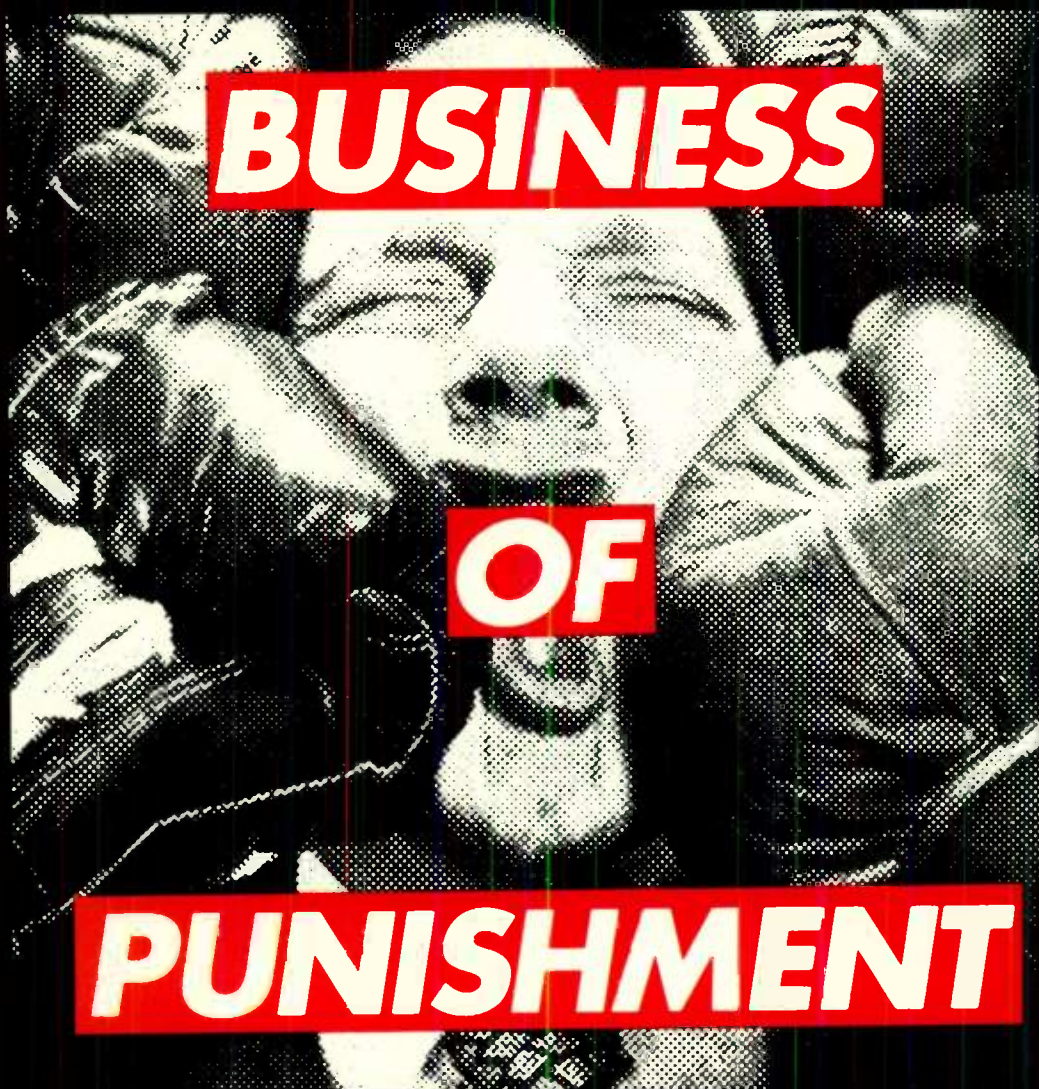
Exile In Guyville (Matador)

"Carnivore" (7") (Minty Fresh)

"Supernova" (7") (Matador-Atlantic)

Whip-smart (Matador-Atlantic)

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World Radio History

10/29/93 BOSTON • Chris Knox stumbles into the club and tells us that his staying up all night at [YLT roadie] Joe Puleo's party last night, coupled with his long day of recording with the Magnetic Fields guy [Stephin Merritt, for his collaborative project The 6ths] today, caused him to have an epileptic seizure. I shove him out into the van and force him to take a nap. Kustomized go on at 7:00 in front of nobody and are loud and awesome. Knox, rested, follows with a great set, makes me fetch him beer between songs, and doesn't even make fun of us once (maybe he forgot?). We play and it's fun. For our encore we bring out former drummer Peter Prescott [who plays guitar and sings in Kustomized] and extra special guest ladies and gentlemen let's give him a big hand all right Mr. Dredd Foole [of the late great Boston band Dredd Foole & The Din], for a high-impact version of "So Tough." (Georgia on bass; Ms. Hubley hit for the cycle in tonight's performance, during which she sang, played drums, organ, guitar and bass.) I am beside myself with glee; at one point I

realize my forehead is resting on my amp. Later on as we pack the van for Joe's cross-country trek, we discover the Jazzmaster is missing. After about two hours of sweat, tears and almost lots and lots of blood, it is discovered safe and sound in Kustomized's rehearsal space. How about that.

11/1 & 2 LOS ANGELES

I flew separately from Ira and Georgia, and it's too bad. Ira told me how they wouldn't let him take the acoustic guitar on the plane and he got in a huge shouting match with an airline clerk,

who, in the spirit of Halloween, was dressed in a bunny costume. [I would've paid good money to see this—ed.]

Refrigerator blow away us & Knox at The Whisky. River Phoenix is gone and so is our tape deck.

11/5 SEATTLE • Kicking Giant open the show and are great. Rachel drums with the skill of a surgeon (although I'm worried her technique could lead to serious back trouble). In his farewell appearance on tour with us, Knox delivers the best of the whole trip. How will we ever get along without him? We

play and it's fun. Knox comes back out for our encore ("The Brain That Wouldn't Die," me on organ) with a bottle of champagne. In a rock 'n' roll first, the majority of the champagne was poured into the people onstage, rather than spraying it all over. That stuff's expensive. Jim [legendary Northwestern comics artist] & Mary Woodring stay for the whole show—they must have a great babysitter.

11/6 VANCOUVER

First appearance of my new winter hat. Everyone laughs. Once the play finishes up, we are allowed to load our equipment into tonight's venue, the Cruel Elephant. We're on a stacked bill with local heroines (and one hero) Cub and Kreviss.

THE BADGE



Cub are good, happy Japanese-candy rock, expert version of [the Velvet Underground's] "I'm Sticking With You." Kreviss' six- or seven-guitar glam noise assault would be a solid reason to move

here. We play and it's fun, sounds great, audience up close, wild and very friendly. Ira said it was like an excellent European show if we were fluent in any European languages. After the load-out, Joe and I scuffle for van keys, which somehow wind up in a dumpster. I don't know how to explain it.

11/8 BOZEMAN, MT • Here comes the snow! Terry [Pearson, YLT sound engineer] spends hours constructing a PA by himself, out of a transistor radio, styrofoam cups, paper clips, and duct tape. Sounds pretty good, too. He's amazing. There are people in Montana who A) know who we are, and B) like us. We play and it's fun, kids frenzied and sweaty as we pull out a few chestnuts and burn off tonight's fabulous meal (cooked by tonight's fabulous promoter). Before the day is out, we all contemplate moving to Montana. In bed in Livingston after the show, watching TV and pondering how Cloris Leachman used to be funny and a real knockout but now she just seems like a crazy old lady.

11/10 MOOREHEAD, MT is the sister city to Fargo, North Dakota, and it's just as cold in either place. We look for a place to eat, so we go into a health food store to ask (there's a good hint for all you travellers out there), and the woman working there recommends Denny's! The club is a storefront and we set up right there on the floor. The kids all seem sort of intimidated by us, which feels very weird. We play and it's fun until the PA blows up four songs into our set. We

MEANS YOU SUCK

YO LA TENGO

A TOUR DIARY

diary and drawings by James McNew



James



scramble and play acoustic for a while, and people come up closer and warm up to us. Eventually, Terry fixes the PA with some chewing gum and white-out. I think we met every person in the room and then loaded out in sub-zero black-ice night. In the van, I wonder if Mark Arm's last name is short for "Armowitz." This keeps me up half the night.

11/12 MILWAUKEE, WI • Torrential rains, gusting winds, lousy weather, lousy drive, splitting headache; soundcheck, call home, eat food, walk across the street to supermarket to try to regain sense of domesticity and sanity, but it doesn't work. Back at the club, some pals from Madison showed, so we played lots of pinball and pool. Opening bands: #1) "Hey Bulldog": the funkier, the better, I always say. #2) Guy yells at us not to put any of our stuff onstage until he's done moving his. We laugh. Joe kills him later. It's Neil Young's birthday, so we open with four of his songs, eventually lapse into our material. Somewhere in there I got all cheered up, too, how about that.

11/13 & 14 CHICAGO • The evening begins with the suave sounds of local supergroup The Sea & Cake. Versus follow with a totally great set, even better than in Minneapolis a few nights back. For some reason, it's always better to see fellow NYC bands in the



versus

Midwest. Richard [Baluyut, of Versus] tells us about how their van was "attacked" by buffalo. Rick Rizzo [of Eleventh Dream Day] joins us for a song and wipes the place up with us. The next night, Freakwater opens with a heartbreaking, blood-curdling set. We play and it's fun, better tonight than last night. And hey, it's Terry's birthday, so he leaves his post behind the soundboard and sings two Gram Parsons songs with us. Bottles of champagne were produced, and again not a drop was spilled. We brought out a piece of cake with a candle on it. Terry really killed, too.



Freakwater

11/20 en route to ATLANTA

At the Dillard House Restaurant (in mountainous Dillard, GA), Joe is mistaken for Kurt Cobain. In Atlanta, best BBQ of the tour: Aleck's B-B-Q Heaven. Another show at the horrible Masquerade, where the atomic-powered disco downstairs pounds up under the stage at such a volume "Nowhere Near" sounded like a Stock/Aitken/Waterman remix. The score so far: Masquerade 2, YLT 0. We vow to rematch.

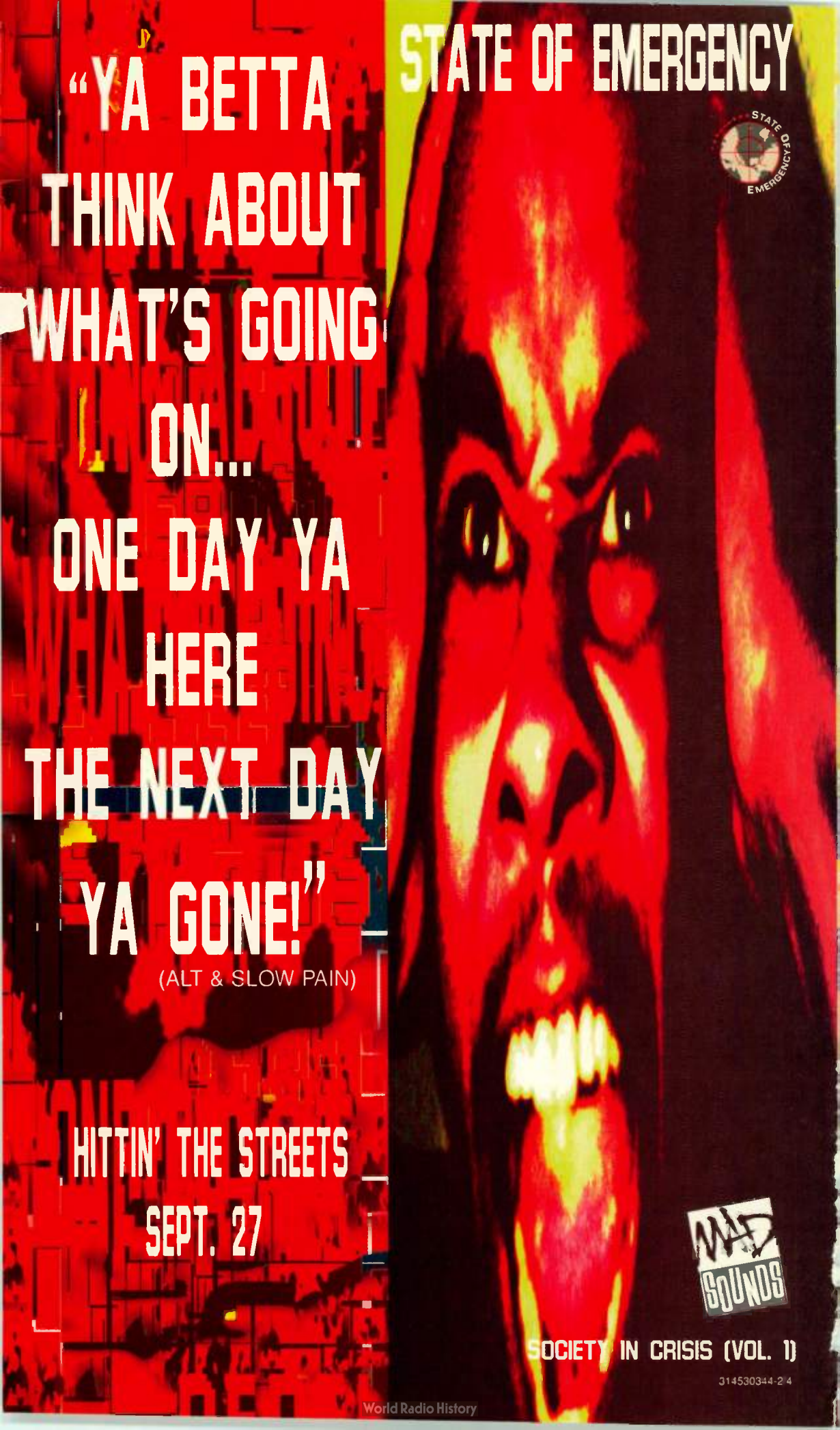
11/27 NEW YORK CITY

Kustomized applies piledriver to CBGB. Schramms never fail to amaze, and Dave's guitar playing makes my eyes cross [Dave Schramm was in the first lineup of Yo La Tengo—ed.]. We play and it's really really fun, friends and family in attendance, and we leave the stage minus seven strings, exhausted and happy. Load out in pouring rain, Mannix-like cab ride home. Part one of U.S. tour officially over. We leave for six-week tour of Europe in 36 hours.

James McNew plays bass in Yo La Tengo and also records as Dump.



Kustomized



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WHAT'S GOING
ON...
ONE DAY YA
HERE
THE NEXT DAY
YA GONE!"

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SEPT. 27



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AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE



AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE Songs Of Praise Restless

Dub is about spliffs, but it's also about space. As the bass echoes and resonates, sound levels increase, then fade, lending the illusion that the music is travelling across a distance. Time-delays and tweaks of the mixing board's knobs are the cause, but the effect is to create a multi-dimensional universe that swells and contracts. Drums, vocals and instruments are arranged at varying depths within this created space, mixed toward the track's surface or submerged. Good dub is a quagmire of rhythm loops, a catacomb of grooves that nudges your ass to move.

Led by jolly percussionist Bonji I and hitched to Adrian Sherwood's On-U Sound collective, African Head Charge revives the historical rhythms of Africa. *Songs Of Praise* hooks spiritual chants with heavy bass, programmed samples and religious drumming. Communal choruses and polyrhythmic percussion dance over ricocheting beats. Rasta dread and fear snarl through the seismic "Hold Some More." For those who like their dub more atmospheric, fat dewdrops of chimes slide down the front of "Hymn" while a guitar riff meteorically sears through the background. Nothing short of time and space travel, *Songs Of Praise* meshes the present with history, tradition with technology. African Head Charge has created, crossed and conquered the distance.

—Julie Taraska

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 11.

FILE UNDER: Dub spirituals.

R.I.Y.L.: Dub Syndicate, Lee "Scratch" Perry, Peter Gabriel's *Passion*.

CARLEEN ANDERSON True Spirit Virgin



Carleen Anderson is the heir to the soul: Her mother and stepfather are Vicki Anderson and Bobby Byrd, both longtime members of the James Brown Revue and tremendous singers in their own right, which would therefore make her the godchild of the Godfather. She's inherited a lovely variant of her mother's voice, too, a simmy but potent alto, like strong tea, that can leap up for electrifying high notes if circumstances call for it. *True Spirit* is the 36-year-old Anderson's first solo album, and her big Janet Jackson move, from the cover pose to the neatly produced dance single "Nervous Breakdown." (Her previous musical career consisted of a couple of memorable vocals on the Young Disciples' *Road To Freedom* album.) But Anderson is more of a balladeer than a dancefloor diva; midtempo numbers like "Secrets" and "Let It Last" let her show off what she's got more than the video-friendly fast ones. And while her voice is luxurious and lived-in, and Ian Green's arrangements are super-fine (it's nice to hear a soul record with guitar and electric piano again), the songs aren't quite up to it. They're neither great enough that her astounding technique can push them over the top nor (like some of what her mother had to sing) bad enough that she can transcend them; they're just sort of there. It's a frustrating misplacement of her obvious talent.

—Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 18.

FILE UNDER: '90s soul.

R.I.Y.L.: Anita Baker, Soul II Soul, Roberta Flack.

"[Prison] has made me more positive. It's put me in a reality check. It's made me realize that you could die tomorrow—and if not die, something could happen to you—and I appreciate that. Right now I'm in a place where some people are doing life and will never see daylight again, and I've gained a lot of friends and a lot of love here, but it's definitely put a more positive attitude in my mind. It's made me realize what the hazards of drugs and alcohol can do."—Rick James, on the prison experience.

VARIOUS ARTISTS Artificial Intelligence II Warp/Wax Trax!-TVT

Techno is potentially the biggest thing that's happened to expand the boundaries of music since the invention of polyphony, but in some ways it's a genre as formally limited as, say, bop. And as arcane: It's got its own set of signifiers, which pretty much don't extend to anything else, and it's the first major style of music since hip-hop that you need some practice to understand. In the clubs, you can dance to anything (guess the Dead Milkmen were right), but if you want to buy your first techno record to take home and listen to more than once, you'll have a great big shelf in front of you at the record store, and you probably won't have the guidance of a radio announcer. That's where the Artificial Intelligence series of albums comes in. They're billed as "electronic listening music." That's as opposed to dance music—4/4 beats are always present on this volume, but they're not always audible (see, for instance Seefeel's "Spangle," which builds up a breathy, chiming polyrhythm from a crystalline chain of triplets), and almost none of it sinks into boom-boom-boom monotony. More to the point, it's as good an introduction as you'll find to the state of techno in 1994—or rather, the state of techno in early autumn of 1994. Catch it now, before it runs even farther away.

—Karen Elliot

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 22. Available on vinyl, single CD, and double CD.

FILE UNDER: Techno 101.

R.I.Y.L.: *Excursions In Ambience*, *Trance Europe Express*, *Aphex Twin*.

VARIOUS ARTISTS Beat the Retreat: Songs by Richard Thompson Capitol

Richard Thompson fans have learned to adapt to lowered expectations. The travails of this underrated journeyman Brit have been well recorded, and his praises (and songs) have been sung by countless musicians, some of whom are putting their money where their mouths are on *Beat the Retreat*. To X, Bob Mould and Dinosaur Jr., who turn "Shoot Out the Lights", "Turning of the Tide" and "I Misunderstood" into urgent punk-pop gems, Thompson's an alternative-folk Lou Reed. To Bonnie Raitt, he's a dark traveler of the blues. And to R.E.M., Syd Straw and Evan Dando, he's an approximation of post-baby-boom folk rock, a one-man Byrds for the modern age. But in his heart, Thompson has always wanted to marry rock to the Celtic folk he knows and loves, an effort that dates back to his stint in Fairport Convention. The artists who "get" Thompson best are the ones who stay true to this notion of rootsiness. June Tabor sounds eerily like Thompson's ex-wife Linda on her stark, acoustic "Genesis Hall"; Los Lobos transform "Down Where the Drunkards Roll" into a sweet folk ballad; David Byrne sings over a quiet choo-choo beat on "Just the Motion"; and Steeleye Span's Maddy Prior and Martin Carthy do "Farewell, Farewell" and the heavily Gaelic "The Great Valerio" like two old souls. "We are fools who think we see the light," sings Prior, closing the album on a downbeat note. For her and her fellow fans, Thompson is that light—he just shines too brightly to see clearly sometimes.

—Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 4.

FILE UNDER: Songwriting hero gets his props.

R.I.Y.L.: *I'm Your Fan* (Leonard Cohen tribute), *Fairport Convention*, *No Alternative*.

WALTER BECKER 11 Tracks Of Whack Giant

Little known Steely Dan fact: Walter Becker can sing. In fact, he sounds remarkably like his ex-partner Donald Fagen, just reedier and more nasal. But that's probably the reason Fagen sang lead on all of the Dan's classics: The group's storied ability to please a wide swath of FM-radio listeners hinged on both the white-room cleanliness of its pseudo-jazz-rock and its credible white-boy soul. Fagen's voice was a key element of that soul—take it out and Dan's music would lean toward laid-back California rock. Which brings us to Becker's solo flight, the truly laid-back and curiously titled *11 Tracks Of Whack* (there are actually 12). Due to that ready voice and a less refined production style than Fagen's solo albums, Becker's music is a bit rockier than the flawless yuppie pop of his old pal (interestingly, the two of them produce each other's records). But these tunes could be termed "rock" only in a middlebrow '80s sense—were *Whack* released in 1985, it probably would have ridden the charts alongside *Brothers In Arms*. Becker's feedback-free, unassuming guitar work is the signal element, playing off the adventurous beats of "Surf and/or Die" and underpinning the funky "Cringemaker." Yet the frequent appearance of sweet keyboards and brief sax interludes underscores Becker's true love for cocktail-party music. What makes it all work is the patented idea of intelligent cool that Steely Dan virtually invented, and that Becker isn't about to tamper with.

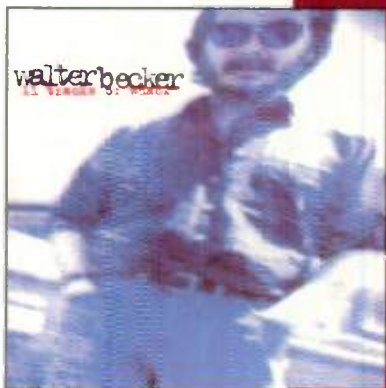
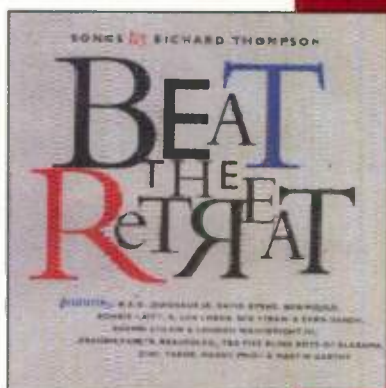
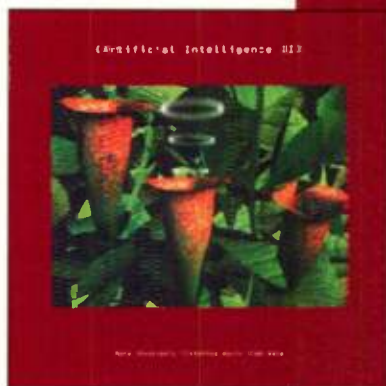
—Chris Molanphy

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 27.

FILE UNDER: Intelligent cool.

R.I.Y.L.: Donald Fagen, Paul Weller, Lindsay Buckingham.

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world radio history

SANDRA BERNHARD Excuses For Bad Behavior 550-Epic

When standup provocateur Sandra Bernhard promises to introduce us to "the firm stance/the clear-cut message/me, me, me," it begs the question "so what else is new?" The answer is that Bernhard set to music is a different experience altogether, which has more to do with her than with the disco, rap and rock she dips into. Like many sexual politicians before her, Bernhard is set free by divahood. As she covers Sylvester's "Mighty Real," wallows in solitude on "Lonely Town," or remembers friends lost to AIDS on "Innocence," her torchy singing allows her a momentary suspension of irony that is impossible for Bernhard the comedienne and tabloid totem. Her smartass edge returns quickly when the subject is her own career. She takes particular pleasure in reviewing her past accomplishments through the lens of the *New York Post* on the pseudo-dance track "Manhattan." Bernhard's nasal parody of a *Post* reader is clearly played for laughs, as is "The Letter," a histrionic rant in the voice of an unstable fan who wants Bernhard to be the lesbian role model she needs. Both impersonations have a mean feel, as if Bernhard is psychoanalyzing her public as closely as they do her. These schizoid swings from club-goddess empowerment to creeping insecurity make *Excuses* a typical Bernhard performance. While she's not a bad vocalist and the band has its moments, the music is essentially a prop in her emoto-rama. Still, what other disco diva could close a number with a wailing "heyvenu shalom aleichem"?

—Andrea Moed

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 23. Video for "Manic Superstar." Touring through mid-November.

FILE UNDER: Psycho pomo disco.

R.I.Y.L.: Patti Smith, Madonna, P.M. Dawn.

**BLACK 47** Home Of The Brave EMI

Sophomore efforts are always difficult, and the rule holds for New York's Irish-rock rebels, Black 47, whose *Fire Of Freedom* roiled with Tammany Hall political fury and uplifting Celtic melodicism. The new *Home Of The Brave* still trades in playwright/singer Larry Kirwan's sweeping imagery—he's a sort of working-class Bono—but it feels like it's treading water, recycling safe clichés until a few more thematic thunderbolts strike. And the weird thing is, it works fine under those pedestrian conditions, thanks to Kirwan's churlish but likable brogue and minefield of happy hooks. He's in trouble with Mafia girls again on the Springsteen-ish "Road To Ruin"; same scenario, different squeeze on the reggae hornfest "Black Rose," replete with admonishing toasting. And of course, there's another Union martyr to follow *Fire's* "James Connolly"—"The Big Fella," Michael Collins, shot to death in '22 by former comrades. It's easy to get caught up in the fervor as Kirwan barks "Hey, Big Fella! Where the hell are you now?" This points to his greatest talent, a knack for making the mundane sound mythical over the course of a four-minute pop song. Whether or not it's only a faddish schtick remains to be seen, but *Home Of The Brave*—even at its weakest moments ("Oh Maureen," an obvious reworking of the earlier "Funky Ceili" trademark)—can effectively rouse the MTV rabble, no mean feat in these days of anesthetic, emotionless art—Tom Lanham



DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 18.

FILE UNDER: Heart-stirring Gaelic rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Mid-period U2, The Pogues, Dexy's Midnight Runners.

BUTT TRUMPET Primitive Enema EMI

Ya gotta love any LA punk outfit with *cojones* enough to call itself Butt Trumpet. But there's more to this flatulent 5-piece than meets the nose, er, ear. Remember when Lee Ving of Fear barked out goof-isms like "Let's Have A War" and "She Just Wants My Beef Baloney"? Same tongue-in-cheek wordplay here, same retardo riffing—punk rock may be back, but groups like Butt Trumpet are making it fun again. "I've Been So Mad Lately" is sneered by a heavily-mascarded miscreant who goes by the pleasant tag Bianca Butthole; after a rousing chorus of "Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you," one particular lyric takes album honors: "You can eat the corn right outta my shit!" Uh-huh. The rest of the disc is barked, brayed or belched by Neanderthal grunter Thom Bone, who states his case so speedily it's not easy to ascertain what he's thinking. But here are some of his deeper reflections: "My name is dickhead/I ain't no inbred/I got a shaved head/Dickhead"; "Plastic people with plastic lives/They think they're so civilized/I think that they're full of shit/They can suck my fucking dick." There's even a hardcore hootenanny that sounds suspiciously similar to The Rezillos' "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight," dubbed "Funeral Crashing Tonight." If Green Day is the Dean Martin of the neo-punk movement, Butt Trumpet is its Jerry Lewis, playing the music proficiently but playing every moment for black-humored yuks. Don't scurry—be happy.

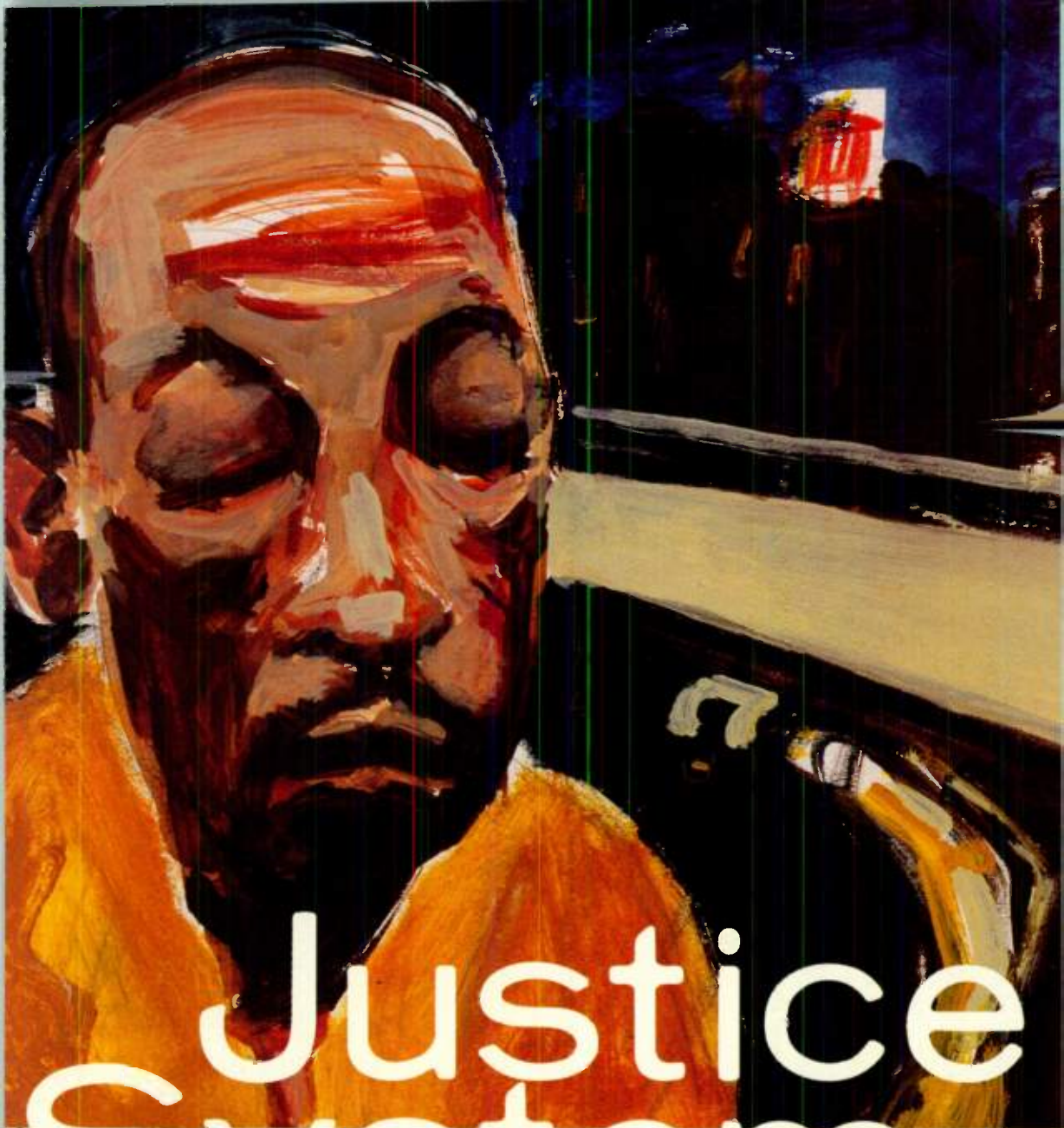
—Tom Lanham



DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 14.

FILE UNDER: Belligerent bathroom-humor punk.

R.I.Y.L.: Fear, Circle Jerks, Meatmen, Alice Donut.



Justice System

ROOFTOP SOUNDHECK

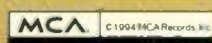
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World Radio History

VARIOUS ARTISTS CBGB's 20th Anniversary Album *Collision Arts-Giant*

Culling performance highlights from a week-long celebration that drew many of the bands that got their start at the club, the CBGB's 20th Anniversary Album doesn't try to present a complete picture of the club's history so much as it offers a *de facto* answer to how a club whose initials stand for "Country, Bluegrass, Blues" became the cradle of punk rock. The artist list, like the club's long-standing booking policy, is eclectic, mixing original punk (The Damned's "Neat, Neat, Neat") and new wave (B-52's "Private Idaho") with Anthrax, Blues Traveler, Cowboy Junkies and still-developing bands like Fossil. So what you get is not a retrospective on birth of punk so much as one big party. The sound quality is, also like the club's, generally excellent, capturing all the live intensity of Helmet's "Just Another Victim" and the manic energy of Anthrax's Joe Jackson cover "Got The Time" perfectly. Quicksand's cover of "How Soon Is Now" is a little on the muddy side, but still holds up after a few listens have worn the novelty off. The CBGB's 20th Anniversary Album may not be the be-all-end-all disc that some feel the occasion deserves, but it is a awfully good time. —Scott Burke

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 11.

FILE UNDER: A frosted slice of rock history.

R.I.Y.L.: Any of the bands mentioned above, *Reality Bites* soundtrack.

CRAMPS Flamejob *Giant*

With the addition of Slim Chance (formerly of the Mad Daddies) on bass, the Cramps stopped sounding like the Cramps, but that doesn't mean they don't sound good. These slick leads are a world away from the brilliant musical ineptitude they displayed around 1980, but the formula hasn't changed: The songs' buoyant simplicity still serves mostly to anchor Lux Interior's zany, energetic vocals. This is a straight-up, '50s-style R&R record packed with sing-along hits like "Let's Get Fucked Up" (the chorus: "Tomorrow we'll feel like we were hit by a truck, but...") and "Naked Girl Falling Down The Stairs." The shrill awkwardness of their early instrumental work has yielded to a warm, punchy, more run-of-the-mill sound, but the sexual innuendo hasn't given an inch. "I wanna be your Siamese chihuahua, sweetheart!" Even a simple tune about beating a rabbit's head against a tree ("Grab it by the legs and swing the big-eyed rabbit... yum yum, eat him up") takes on an obscene cast in Lux's able hands. The immortal Cramps are not for the faint of heart. —Nell Zink

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 11.

FILE UNDER: Rock 'n' roll revivalism.

R.I.Y.L.: Tav Falco, Elvis, the Big Bopper.

CRANBERRIES No Need To Argue *Island*

When a soldier goes off to war, somebody gets left behind, and that's the person the cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan sings for. The characters she inhabits in these thirteen songs are almost all passive victims: the people who are lost, abandoned, emotionally destroyed because they realize too late that they've put themselves second. ("My father liked me/Does anyone care?" she sings in the opening "Ode To My Family.") Ireland, of course, is the national equivalent of those people, and the fact that O'Riordan plays up her Irish accent (or, rather, doesn't disguise it) gives these songs an additional poignancy and political resonance. "I wanted to be the mother of your child, and now it's just farewell," she sings on "I Can't Be With You"; it's a maudlin line on its own, but the contorted vowels ("choi-ild") and cracking tones she gives it make it heartbreaking. Irish themes and ideas run through most of the album (titles include "The Icicle Melts" and "Yeats' Grave"), but the lyrics only get specific about the "Troubles" that have been going on for nearly 80 years on the album's centerpiece, the electrifying "Zombie," built on a rattling, funereal four-chord riff. *No Need To Argue* sticks closely to the sound and style of last year's slow-burning hit debut, *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?* (sometimes too closely—in places, O'Riordan's yodeling vocal signature is almost a tic), but that's a lovely sound and style, and a second helping is welcome. —Karen Eliot

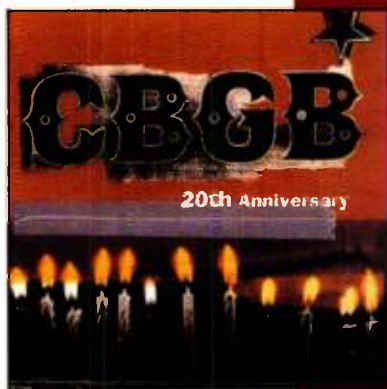
DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 4.

FILE UNDER: Silken, heart-tugging pop.

R.I.Y.L.: The Sundays, the Beautiful South, the Clancy Brothers.

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

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD



"Some people like to say 'well' and some people like to say 'alright,' but me, I like to say 'WELL, ALL-RIGHT!'" —Paul Stanley, on stage, between songs, somewhere in the '70's.



THE FAMILY CAT Magic Happens Arista-Dedicated

With a loving reverence for the pop idiom on its U.S. debut, England's The Family Cat manages to sound retro without sounding dated. *Magic Happens* is an organic, groove-filled extravaganza that also, thankfully, eludes the tag of Beatlesque, siding instead with coy power poppers like the Kinks. Occasionally, as in the fine "Gone So Long," the band stretches, suggesting the long-haired jams of Crazy Horse, while on "Springing The Atom," it shows a fondness for the cerebral doodling of King Crimson. With the UK pop biomorph ebbing and flowing, shrinking and growing in different directions almost weekly, The Family Cat stays blissfully free of current pop trends. Though the production here is retro-sounding, the material's stylistic diversity and the band's flair for a big guitar hook (see the radio-perfect "Wonderful Excuse") gives *Magic Happens* a fine contemporary ring.

—Bob Gulla

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 13. Video for "Wonderful Excuse." On tour now.
FILE UNDER: Retro-modern British guitar rock.
R.I.Y.L.: Suede, Chapterhouse, Ride.



DIAMANDA GALAS WITH JOHN PAUL JONES The Sporting Life Mute

A lot of folks have been marveling at the oddity of this coupling, but when you think about it, the netherworld diva and the man who gave Zep its spine share plenty of common ground—starting with the sheer number of times each has been accused of doing the devil's work. Oddly enough, only isolated stretches of *The Sporting Life* sound calculated to buss the balls of Beelzebub, although those that do (like the wailing "Hex") take the blues to place it hasn't gone since Robert Johnson's peak. More often, though, Jones and Galas, working entirely without the intrusion of guitars (both have insisted, correctly, that the addition of the instrument would be superfluous), seem to be resurrecting the spirit—if not the actual sound—of Led Zeppelin when that band was a source of fear and loathing. Tracks like "Do You Take This Man" and "Baby's Insane" are positively eviscerating in their abandon—a feeling heightened by the powerhouse drumming of Pete Thomas (of the Attractions). Put in this more easily grasped emotional context, Galas' passions seem destined to burn holes into more souls than ever.

—David Sprague

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 6. On tour now.
FILE UNDER: Homicidal love songs, nothing but homicidal love songs.
R.I.Y.L.: Led Zeppelin, Iannis Xenakis.

"Two huge leaders of the [Finnish biker gang Overkill M.C.] came to me—I'm 6' 2" and they were much bigger than me—and they pushed me in a corner and said, 'You. You are Jim Jarmusch, no? I want to tell you something. We are liking so much your films. Come and have a beer with us now.'"

—Director Jim Jarmusch, from an interview in *The Village Voice*.

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LISA GERMANO *Geek The Girl* 4AD

According to Lisa Germano, *Geek The Girl* is a concept piece about "a girl who is confused about how to be cool and sexual in the world." The chorus of the ethereal title track, sung over whistling and a metallic drumbeat, is an insecure "Uh-oh/I'm not cool/Oh no/I'm not cool," followed by a violin-plucking instrumental dubbed "Just Geek." And it's the Riot Grrrl ethic turned in on itself—the female lead is fighting against male domination, but quietly, using simple thought processes that often lead to dead ends. Singing like she's inhaled a balloonful of helium on "Sexy Little Girl Princess," Germano considers sexual stereotypes, then—over the grating feedback on "Cancer Of Everything"—realizes she craves attention. "Of Love And Colors" paraphrases Streisand with "People/All these fucked-up people," and allows the protagonist to finally understand that she's not alone. *Geek The Girl* smacks of autobiography, and, okay, she's pretty weird, a "geek" in common parlance. But if it takes a geek to make intrepid, aurally stunning art like this, point us all to the chicken coop and toss in some toothpaste! —Tom Lanham

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 25.

FILE UNDER: Ethereal, artsy singer-violinists.

R.I.Y.L.: Cocteau Twins, Dead Can Dance, late Alex Chilton.

**GOLDEN PALOMINOS** *Pure* Restless

It seems as if every pop, rock or funk musician in the world has played with the Golden Palominos at some point—everyone from Bob Mould to Michael Stipe to John Lydon has guest starred in Anton Fier's magical outfit of revolving stars. The Palominos' latest, *Pure*, picks up right where one of last year's most sublime transcendental escapes, their own *This Is How It Feels*, left off. Many of the same players have returned, notably Palominos regular Bill Laswell and vocalist Lori Carson. Although from *Pure*'s enchanting conga-and-acoustic-guitar opener, "Little Suicides," it seems like the band is headed in yet another new, more melodic direction, the album soon sinks into a steady and sensual meditative stride, weighed down by Laswell's heavier-than-asphalt basslines. Carson's chilling, ethereal vocals once again form the Palominos' focal point, often conveying both angelic innocence and taut sexuality at once, as on "Wings," which drifts untenably with swirling, atmospheric backup vocals and simultaneously touches with whispered reassurance. The disturbing "No Skin" explores its subdued violent tension with extraterrestrial sound effects coupled to Fier's ringing snare and guitarist Nicky Skopelitis' wiry waka-chicka rhythms. Be forewarned: Given the Palomino's predilection toward continual staff-shuffling, *Pure* could be the last chance you'll get to catch this dazzling, one-of-a-kind breed. —Aaron Clow

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 11.

FILE UNDER: Living, breathing techno-pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Material, Cocteau Twins, Cowboy Junkies.

**GRANT LEE BUFFALO** *Mighty Joe Moon* Slash

More Grand Canyon sundown than Sunset Boulevard slickness, *Mighty Joe Moon* has a similar feel to Grant Lee Buffalo's 1992 debut, *Fuzzy*. Once again, the L.A.-based trio's songs are tenderly intimate, yet grand, juxtaposing an astrally high, lonesome sound with concrete, earthly fortitude. Produced by the band (Grant Lee Phillips on vocal and guitar, Paul Kimble on bass, and Joey Peters on drums), *Mighty Joe Moon* twists the timeworn tack of fusing country and rock and roll elements, resulting in glimmery arrangements over an arid, vast organic soundscape. Shaped by Grant's passionately controlled vocals, standouts include the windswept, tempestuous melody of "Sing Along," the cascade of "Lady Godiva And Me," and "Demon Called Deception"'s blistering, Dylanesque restraint. GLB's lush tunes use sentiment to pack a wallop on "Honey Don't Think" and the ironically titled, brooding "Happiness." Grant Lee Buffalo's vast horizons are postcards from the great wide open. —Robin Eisgrau

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 20. November-December U.S. club tour.

FILE UNDER: Torch songs for the great wide open.

R.I.Y.L.: American Music Club, Mazzy Star, Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds.



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GRENADE Nopalitos *Simple Machines-TeenBeat*

Grenadine the liquid is the thick cherry syrup that makes a Shirley Temple sweet and a Tequila Sunrise blush. On its second full-length release, Grenadine the band, a Washington, DC-area supergroup featuring Mark Robinson of Air Miami (formerly of Unrest), Jenny Toomey of Tsunami and Rob Christiansen of Eggs, make an uneven play for membership in the Highball Nation. The songs on *Nopalitos* (the name means "prickly pear" or tender, edible cactus) are faintly united by kitschy Southwestern themes and Latin-country guitars; the group shares songwriting chores more or less equally, resulting in three fairly disparate sounds with more than a little resemblance to the members' main outfits. "Puddle" is a burgeoning instrumental track that packs an acoustic wallop along the lines of early New Order, while "Big Mexico Sky" sports a softly-frosted drone like some lost Unrest/My Bloody Valentine gem. (As always, Mark's voice has the slightest hint of Wham!-era George Michael.) Several excellent songs bear the Tsunami trademark: slightly atonal, vortically repetitive rhythms energizing Ms. Toomey's deft lyrics and full-throated delivery. While "Barnacle," a wistfully moving portrait of suburban self-reproach, sounds like a great Eggs song, the most distinctive numbers are a series of period pieces, Tin Pan Alley-knockoffs with tense and sometimes flustered vocals like some lost '40s radio sweetheart. It all makes for a relaxed and pleasantly varied record.

—Michael Vazquez

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 31.**FILE UNDER:** New Age Bachelor Pad Music.**R.I.Y.L.:** Unrest, Tsunami, Combustible Edison.**IDAHO** *This Way Out* *Caroline*

In the year since its gut-wrenching debut, *Year After Year*, Idaho's population has fallen by one-half; the former duo has dwindled down to only vocalist/guitarist Jeff Martin. If Idaho's new release, *This Way Out*, is any indication, departed member John Berry was the one primarily responsible for *Year After Year*'s doomy, obsessive character. *This Way Out* has more of the occasional lazy rays of sunlight (like "One Sunday") that periodically poked through *Year After Year*'s low, grey cloud cover. The Codeine-style leaden chords and squashed-sounding vocals have been lightened up, but the predominant tone is still one of introspection and emotional exhaustion. Like Neil Young at his finest, Martin's voice frays around the edges while his beautiful guitar lines soar eloquently and whine painfully at the same time. *This Way Out* is a turn away from plod-rock misery in favor of a more laconic, Robitussin-fueled sound like Yo La Tengo (as on "Drop Off") or a less smug, more heartfelt Pavement ("Fuel"). It's not as compelling and cathartic a listen as *Year After Year*, but it's also more palatable, and therefore maybe ultimately more enduring.

—David Jarman

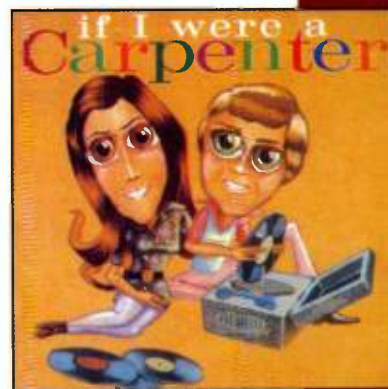
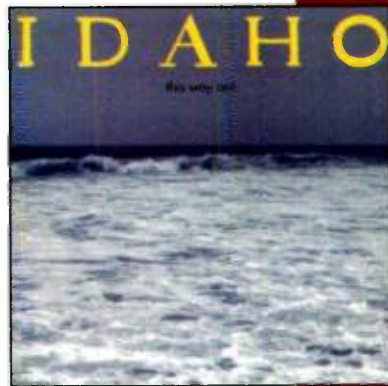
DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 11.**FILE UNDER:** Angst-driven indie-rock.**R.I.Y.L.:** Yo La Tengo, Red House Painters, Joy Division.**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *If I Were A Carpenter* *A&M*

In retrospect, it's impossible not to read the irresistibly bubbly pop tunes that made the Carpenters huge stars as cries for help masking Karen Carpenter's hidden pain. The inane, toothy grin that seemed a symbol of white-bread America was really the symbol of one of that society's tragic victims. Since the Carpenters' hits consist of well-crafted pop tunes by the top writers of the day, they would seem to be perfect fodder for a tribute album. Unfortunately, few of the bands on this album would know a well-crafted pop tune if it walked up and bit them on the butt. There are a few touches of levity, however. Shonen Knife does a goofy take on "Top Of The World," Redd Kross does a nice job with "Yesterday Once More," and Linda Perry turns in a robust performance on 4 Non Blondes' version of "Bless The Beasts And Children." But most of the participants take this as an occasion to bring out their gloomiest tendencies, with the tunes often getting lost in lugubrious washes of feedback, reverb, and straight-from-the-death-bed vocals. If Sonic Youth were the only culprits, it would be one thing, but when Grant Lee Buffalo resorts to a backwards intro to turn "We've Only Just Begun" into something that could more accurately be called "We've Only Just Come Down With TB," it's definitely time to hit the Prozac.

—Heidi MacDonald

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 13. Entire album available as boxed set of 7" singles.**FILE UNDER:** Gloomy tribute albums.**R.I.Y.L.:** Nick Cave, Peter Murphy, *I'm Your Fan*.

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



IVY Realistic Seed



Even if Trent Reznor wants to "fuck you like an animal," there are still some musicians out there that seek to cradle and caress your head, soothing your tortured soul with blissful waves of bittersweet reflection. For Ivy, pop melodies aren't a sign of weakness in an age of power-chord revelry, but an attempt to regain composure amidst all the turmoil. *Realistic*, the band's first LP following its summery EP *Lately*, is laden with bright guitar strums and gauzy effects, which, along with Dominique Durand's breathy Parisian vocals, lift the music through a comforting haze that's comparable to Madder Rose or a more upbeat Mazzy Star. But while the songs on *Realistic* are relaxed and confident, the band's delivery is coy and somewhat wistful. Guitar notes bend and vibrate with yearning, and the vocals are frequently devoid of emotion. Coupled with lyrics like "Have you ever felt lonely/Have you ever felt kicked inside for nothing" ("No Guarantee") and "Why does everything seem like such a waste of time" ("Everyday"), the album winds up being a wonderfully melodic contrast between melancholy and satisfaction.

—Jon Wiederhorn

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 18.

FILE UNDER: Bittersweetness and light.

R.I.Y.L.: Madder Rose, Mazzy Star, Lush.

"There was this story in a comic about a battle in Central Park involving Namor, the undersea god, and the superhero, Daredevil [Daredevil No. 77, Marvel Comics, June 1971]. The whole story comes to a climax as the sun blots out and suddenly, for no reason at all, the Teardrop Explodes. It made no sense, but it was a great name for a group. September '78 was all short four names. Ours was far-fucking-out."—Julian Cope, from his autobiography *Head On: Memories of the Liverpool Punk Scene and the Story of the Teardrop Explodes, 1976-82*.

Diamanda Galás with John Paul Jones



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THE JB HORNS *I Like It Like That Instinct***BOBBY BYRD** *On The Move (I Can't Get Enough) Instinct*

It's impossible to overestimate the effect that Bobby Byrd, Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley and Pee Wee Ellis have had on James Brown and on the music called funk. It was Byrd's band that Brown joined in the '50s and turned into the Famous Flames (and it was mostly for the sake of publicity that Brown was chosen as frontman over Byrd). Byrd played a vital role as the gruff voice (and alternate organist) behind Brown—he's probably been sampled just as much between his "get on up" and "I know you got soul." Maceo's sax was an integral ingredient from "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" onward, and both Ellis and Wesley have made essential contributions as bandleaders, co-composers, and soloists (on sax and trombone). Oh, Parker and Wesley played with Bootsy and P-Funk, too.

Though Byrd cut many essential singles on Brown's Brownstone and People labels (when will Polydor finally compile them?), this is actually his first studio album in well over 20 years. It finds him older but still in strong voice, backed by a respectable band, wife Vicki and daughter Carleen Anderson, and mostly recovering his lost hits—in all ways, not a bad comeback. Let's hope he'll "Keep On Doin'" it.

Wesley, Parker and Ellis have been back together as The JB horns longer than they were together in the first place, working steadily and releasing a variety of albums under all of their names, all of which have something to recommend them. For this, their first studio album as the JB Horns (check the '70s JB's albums for nut-busting genius), they've enlisted the aid of England's Acid Jazz scene (including members of Galliano and Brand New Heavies)—always a hotbed of support for these underappreciated living legends. Most of the first half is just fine but not anything many JB imitators couldn't cook up—not until "What Goes Around" and "Chillin' With Fred" does their true character come out, blending with today's funk styles for something unique. It's not "The Grunt" or "Breakin' Bread," but I'm digging it. —Eric Gladstone

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 7 (both albums). The JB Horns are perpetually on tour.

FILE UNDER: Roots of funk sprout again.

R.I.Y.L.: James Brown's Funky People compilations.

DANIEL JOHNSTON *Fun Atlantic***K. McCARTY** *Dead Dog's Eyeball: The Songs Of Daniel Johnston Bar/None*

Time is a funny thing. Once upon a time, Daniel Johnston seemed like an American lo-fi Jeremiah, Edgar Cayce with a tape recorder. On a handful of cassette-only releases over the course of the 1980s, Johnston and his toys (piano, chord organ, old records, plunky guitar) carved out a unique and disturbing world: of giant monkeys and sinister friends, fire hydrants and undertakers. Vaulting to indie prominence at the end of that decade, Johnston became a figure of legend, a damaged innocent in the big city, tended by left-field luminaries like Kramer and Jad Fair.

Well, it's 1994 and Daniel Johnston is on Atlantic Records, with a full-length release produced and arranged by Paul Leary of Butthole Surfers fame. Bar/None, meanwhile, has released a collection of Daniel's songs sung by K. McCarty of Glass Eye. More than a dozen bands, including Television Personalities and Wimp Factor 14, have covered his songs. What, then, does it all mean? The answer, sadly, is less than you might think. *Fun* has occasional spots of brilliance—"Happy Time" is pure, vintage Johnston, the cosmic child in the valley of surfaces, underlined by a mean, throbbing cello, while "Love Will See You Through" finds him sing-songing to a player piano to great effect—but vast stretches of the album are underwrought, slack, turgid rockers and Casio space blues. K. McCarty, meanwhile, wears out nearly as many styles as there are songs on her 20-song record. On both records, eclecticism eclipses vision, obscuring Johnston's mythic scope in a fog of jokey musicianship. Daniel Johnston still has it in him; here's hoping it comes out next time around. Blame Leary and McCarty, and pray for Daniel. —Michael Vazquez

DATALOG: Release dates: Daniel Johnston: Sep. 6. K. McCarty: Sep. 20.

FILE UNDER: Thorazine shuffle.

R.I.Y.L.: Lo-fi records, the Butthole Surfers (Johnston); cabaret, Rickie Lee Jones (McCarty).



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World Radio History

JUSTICE SYSTEM Rooftop Soundcheck MCA

Eddie Martinez, who co-produced this debut album, was the guy who played a lot of the blistering guitar on all those hard rock/rap sparring matches that graced Run-DMC's great old-school albums, and since Justice System are rappers teamed with a live funk band, it's easy to see how Martinez would be the natural man for the producer's job. Rappers Jahbaz and Folex play off each other in the Run-DMC/Beastie Boys party-jam style, finishing each other's lines, trading rhymes and sparring ideas while the band lays down laid-back funk grooves underneath. To prove their pedigree, "Dedication To Bambaataa" drops more old school references in its three-and-a-half minutes than the last three Beastie Boys albums combined. At their best, Justice System evokes the hand-waving, party-time aesthetic of old-school rap, coupled with the heightened awareness of Public Enemy or De La Soul. If anything, the group gets a little too caught up in the groove for its own good. Some cuts like "Summer In The City" or "Flexin' Tha Ill Funk" work, but others meander a little too much behind the rhymes. What's the point of live instruments if they just play the same simple funk vamps over and over again like a sampled loop anyway? But when Justice System are on, they're on in a way that few who've plied the hip-hop/live band line before have been able to attain.

—James Lien

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 13. Video for "Summer In The City."

FILE UNDER: Live East Coast hip-hop/funk.

R.I.Y.L.: Run-DMC, Basehead, A Tribe Called Quest.

KERBD OG Kerbdog Mercury

Too often, citing the producer in a record review amounts to not much more than rock-critic shorthand for describing a band's sound. In this case, however, Kerbdog's choice of Jack Endino as producer bears mentioning, as it clearly points to this young Irish metal band's conception of hard rock. Endino's production soaks Kerbdog's hard, melodic tunes in a piping-hot wash of tube-amp guitar noise, and succeeds in translating Kerbdog's Amer-indie sentiments (the bass player says his favorite band is Sebadoh; they've covered songs by Hüsker Dü, Big Black and the Ian Mackaye/Al Jourgensen hybrid Pailhead) into this nominally metal context. The result is the best of both worlds: The guitars are all endowed with their proper thud, but never obliterate the essential tunefulness of the songs. Singer Cormac Battle's throaty minor-chord wails, betraying equal loves for Endino's Seattle, Metallica and stout, launch into each song's just-this-side-of-anthem chorus with a raspy soulfulness that wards off lingering hair-rock clichés. It's easy to be charmed by the fact that this band has the Touch & Go and Sub Pop mailorder numbers and named itself after a California BMX club, but it only takes a minute and a half—just until the disc hits the killer chorus of "End Of Green"—to be completely smitten.

—Scott Burke

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 23.

FILE UNDER: Hummable heavy tunes.

R.I.Y.L.: Paw, Soundgarden, Smashing Pumpkins.

K'S CHOICE The Great Subconscious Club 550-Epic

K's Choice has nothing to do with the K label—it's a pop group from Holland. And "pop" is the operative word. Every one of these three-minute nuggets has pretty male-female two-part harmonies (one singer sounds like James Taylor, the other like Bettie Serveert's Carol van Dijk), pristine guitars (whether the distortion pedal is on or off) and simple but memorable melodies. The production is in the AM-radio tradition, decorating these pop shots with tambourines, tinkling pianos, and even (on the half-religious, half-ironic "Elegia") strings. The band positions itself as world-weary and cynical (from the opening "Me Happy": "Love's not what you see/Between the legs of the majority"), but secretly hoping for happy endings ("Walk Away" ends "I will be walking back to you"). And for all the super-polished surface area audible, there's neat stuff hidden a little deeper: The guitar line to "My Heart," as a case in point, is a clever obfuscation of a famous classical theme. Each song is like a scoop of ice cream—cold, smooth and sweet. And there's plenty of flavors to go around here.

—Stephen Pauline

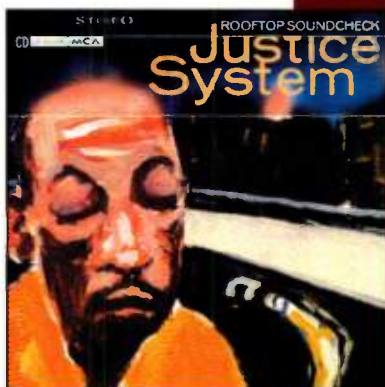
DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 27. Videos for "Me Happy" and "I Smoke A Lot."

FILE UNDER: Dutch treats.

R.I.Y.L.: Juliana Hatfield Three, Tori Amos, Matthew Sweet.

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

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD

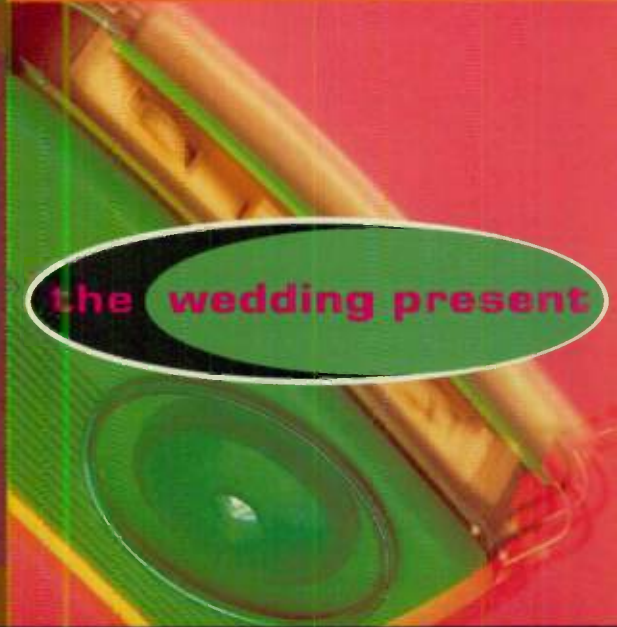


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World Radio History

ED KUEPPER Character Assassination Hot-Restless

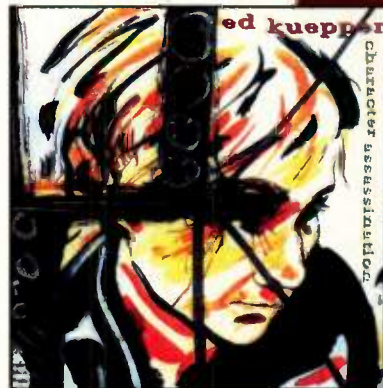
With practically nobody in the U.S. noticing, Australia's Ed Kuepper (pronounced Cooper) has made some of the best no-nonsense rock albums of the '90s. Before going solo, Kuepper was involved in two groups that were enormously influential on the Australia/New Zealand pop scene. From '76-'78, he was a member of the seminal garage/punk group, The Saints (who predated the Sex Pistols); the group's early records, particularly (*I'm Stranded*), still sound vital today. After the breakup of the Saints (who later continued without him), Kuepper led the lesser-known, but terrific, Laughing Clowns ('79-'85), who produced quieter, odder, jazz-inflected songs. In addition to his half-dozen solo albums, Kuepper currently fronts the Aints, whose repertoire includes old Saints songs and lengthy, driving Stooges-flavored originals. On *Character Assassination*, as on his other solo albums, Kuepper plays tasteful, jingling acoustic guitar, here delicately adorned by horns, violin, harmonica and even didgeridoo. The musicianship is excellent, but the orchestrations are thankfully kept lean and spare, and generally don't overwhelm his unmistakable deep voice and catchy melodies. Kuepper's lyrics are intelligent without being pretentious, and he delivers them with subtlety and grace. He can be acerbic and dour without coming across like a martyr (à la Morrissey or Mark Eitzel). *Character Assassination* sounds perfect on a gray, rainy day, but won't hang a cloud over a sunny one.

—David Newgarden

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 27.

FILE UNDER: Well-wrought acoustic pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Go-Betweens, David Kilgour, Leonard Cohen.


LAMBCHOP I Hope You're Sitting Down Merge

Say what you want about Nashville music, but high-minded it isn't. Onstage, Lambchop seems to be the exception. Even in a dank club, Lambchop's nine-odd members are overwhelming in their pre-processed precision: percussionists thud gently, the horn section gusts airily, lead singer Kurt Wagner sits smoking and soliloquizing. On record, these lofty elements are strangely betrayed by the songs' lyrical quirks. Lambchop's delicately ethereal sound is at odds with the flakiness of the words—Mazzy Star meets Camper Van Beethoven. It's peculiar that so many talented musicians would band together for an end result that favors the style of King Missile over Morphine, but in doing so, Lambchop evades annoying in-joke pretension, the sort of stuff that drives the current neo-lounge craze. Songs like "Betweenus" and "Hickey" are superficially poised, but on closer listening, the clunky wit of the lyrics saves them being overly graceful. On the other hand, no degree of musical elegance could rescue "Soaky In The Pooper" from its execrable title. With his country flair, Wagner's vocals rest somewhere between Tom Petty and Leonard Cohen, though on a few of the record's more rocking numbers, he could pass for one of the Blues Brothers. *I Hope You're Sitting Down* works as a record, if you abandon the rule of thumb that the quality of a rock record is inversely proportional to the number of musicians involved, and so long as the sound of a slide guitar doesn't send you screaming from the room.

—Megan McCarthy

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 19.

FILE UNDER: Tasty slop.

R.I.Y.L.: Early Bongwater, Palace Brothers.


MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES Question The Answers Mercury

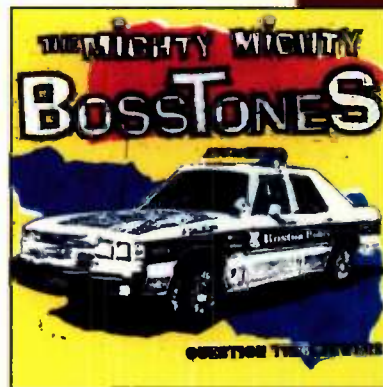
Growing up. It happens to the best of us, even the Mighty Mighty Bosstones. Often better known for their predilection for plaid than their hyper metal-ska, the Bosstones seemed locked in the terminal adolescence that grips all such party bands. With *Question The Answers*, however, the Bosstones get real. This is not to say that this is a "serious" record, just that it cuts down on the tomfoolery in favor of first-rate rock tunes and catchy mini anthems. "Kinder Words" starts the set off with the best song the band has ever done. The song erupts out of its slight hip-hop beginning with a guitar-driven melody reminiscent of some forgotten '70s radio hit (imagine Thin Lizzy playing Skatalites covers with the Chicago horn section; now imagine that it actually sounds good, and you get the idea). The rest of the disc continues on in a similarly rousing fashion. Each song presents its case with the immediacy of someone arguing with an old friend, shouting out each chorus as if they was fightin' words. Still, the fervor is all tucked into tight song structures and occasional three-part harmonies. You can still party to the Mighty Mighty Bosstones (and just as likely party with them when they come to your town), but there's a lot here to remember long after the hangover's faded.

—Konrad Vost

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 4.

FILE UNDER: Tuneful hard-rock ska.

R.I.Y.L.: Green Day, Fishbone, Red Hot Chili Peppers.



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ORBITAL *Snivilisation* *ffrr-London*

Thankfully, there's a middle ground to techno, located somewhere between the grinding synths and monotonously clever samples that dominate our dance floors, and the aimless new-age tinkling that gets played in our chill-out rooms... and its name is Orbital. On *Snivilisation*, as on previous efforts, Orbital never loses sight of the need for melody. Incorporating both danciness and spaciness into its excursions, Orbital has melodies that unfold and involve instead of merely repeating. Laid-back, piano-laced tracks like "Science Friction" and especially "Kein Trink Wasser" are danceable, but ultimately more suited for contemplation; "Kein Trink Wasser," in fact, has a classical sensibility, with its colliding piano parts providing gentle counterpoint, underpinned by what sounds like a cello. The dancier tracks are cut through with Orbital's decidedly English psychedelic whimsy, ranging from the babble of voices in the background of "Philosophy Of Numbers" to "Quality Seconds," a one-minute-long track wherein the group seemingly exorcises all its secret desires to make a 160 bpm club single. The breadth and focus of *Snivilisation* reaffirms Orbital's status as a techno group actually capable of making albums, still a rarity in dance music circles.

—David Jarman

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 23.**FILE UNDER:** Thinking person's techno.**R.I.Y.L.:** Aphex Twin, The Orb, Residents.**POISON IDEA** *Religion & Politics Part 1 & 2* *Tim/Kerr***POISON IDEA** *The Early Years* *Tim/Kerr*

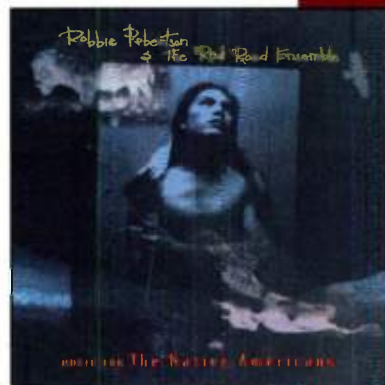
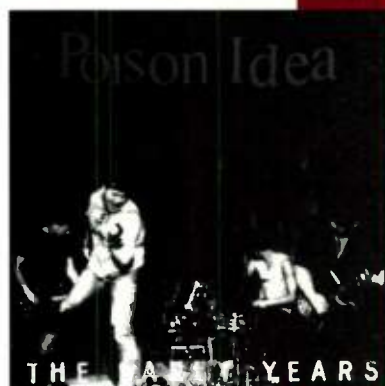
A few years ago, *Your Flesh* magazine asked its readers what band they'd most like to see go down in a plane crash; one reader answered "Poison Idea, 'cause they would live." PI was ugly, heavy and tough: tougher than leather, tougher than its idols the Germs, tougher than absolutely anything. The band broke up last year after 13 years set on "self-destruct" and cranked up all the way. It was a hardcore band because hardcore is an appropriate setting for screaming about betrayal and hatred, bent toward speed-metal because that's the most excessive kind of rock, and played everything much too fast because that's how you make music sound like it's speeding over the edge of the cliff. There's a new batch of Poison Idea reissues and repackages, of which these two are the most interesting. *The Early Years* is, as the title suggests, very early hardcore stuff and "p"-popping radio tapes. It's an archival package, which means we hear "This Thing Called Progress" three times and a couple of songs twice, but there's something to be said for the way hardcore from before Minor Threat's "Salad Days" sounds alike—the album turns into one big furious slam-pit. *Religion & Politics* is an after-the-fact farewell EP of outtakes, covers and a live track that captures where they were at the end: pretty much where they were at the beginning, but smarter, tougher and a hell of a lot more bitter ("Say Goodbye," a kiss-off to a suicide, sounds now like the last word on both Darby and Kurt).

—Douglas Wolk

DATALOG: Release date: Aug. 22 (both). Also newly available on CD: *War All The Time* and *Dysfunctional Songs For Codependent Addicts* (including the infamous *Ian MacKaye* EP).**FILE UNDER:** Destructo-core.**R.I.Y.L.:** Rollins Band, Motorhead, Negative Approach.**ROBBIE ROBERTSON & THE RED ROAD ENSEMBLE** *The Native Americans* *Capitol*

Robbie Robertson has just a bit of Mohawk blood in him, courtesy of his mother, but it runs river-deep throughout this pensive set. Were its songs not so lush and so moving, this project might have come off as daring as it actually is. The programmed drums and wispy keyboards come close to overshadowing the genuine native percussion, which does fine on its own sustaining the beats for these tracks. Robertson has always been fond of such somber and moody grooves; they suit his ever-darkening voice perfectly, and here the grooves give off a religious mysticism. Surprisingly, this record goes easy on blatant political statements in favor of poetry and simpler tales of Native American courage, heroism and leadership. In choosing that path, Robertson and his mix of studio cats and native Americans have still made a grand statement of passion, dignity and pride. Robertson has been working toward something this tender and intimate for a while, and it gives off the sense that he's probably really proud of the whole disc, even if it does gets a bit sleepy towards the end.

—Steve Ciabattini

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 4. A TBS documentary featuring the music aired the second week in October.**FILE UNDER:** Smooth glory.**R.I.Y.L.:** Peter Gabriel, American Indian folk music, U2's quieter songs.**R.I.Y.L.:** RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE


KEVIN SALEM *Soma City Roadrunner*

In the mid-'80s, heartland heart-tuggers like Paul Westerberg and Dave Pirner taught us that sensitive guys can rock, too. But in recent times, the lines between meat-and-potatoes guitar rock and carefully-hewn songcraft have been redrawn, with artists like the above retreating into James Taylor-made flaccidity, and scads of others submerging their songs under riff-happy sonic tonnage. Longtime NYC fixture Kevin Salem—his credits include stints with Yo La Tengo and Freedy Johnston—might not be on a mission to build a bridge between the two camps, but his solo debut sounds like the work of a one-man construction crew. On the vaguely trippy "Lighthouse Keeper" and the Alex Chilton-esque "Forever Gone" (co-written by Butch Vig), Salem and keyboardist Dave Dunton reinforce the notion that a good bar-band groove can be as spiritually transcendent as any shaman's siren song. Salem falls into the same traps as many post-Dylan kindred spirits, cramming one too many twists into some lyrics and attempting to make a good three-minute song last more than seven (the lumpy "Diver"). But when he sticks to the populist-pop basics—as on "Falter" and "Remain"—Kevin Salem's songs hit as hard as long-forgotten favorites blaring from a truck stop jukebox.

—David Sprague

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 25.

FILE UNDER: Transcendent bar-band rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Paul Westerberg, Green On Red, Alex Chilton.


VARIOUS ARTISTS *SFW Soundtrack A&M*

Finally, a soundtrack album programmed like the radio station of your dreams. SFW (Seen Fred Ward?) is sequenced like an alternative *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack for the '90s, with one strong cut after another. There's Monster Magnet's driving "Negasonic Teenage Warhead" and the buzzsaw fretwork of Suicidal Tendencies propelling "No Fucking Problem." Paw contributes a clever cover of the Cheap Trick classic "Surrender," and "Get Your Gun" is a blistering call to arms by Marilyn Manson. The womanist element of SFW (Single Female Wanted?) is less successful. Pretty Mary Sunshine's "Can I Stay" is a psychedelia rehash which borders on cliché, and Babes In Toyland's "Say What You Want" is affected. Soundgarden, directly and indirectly, provides the highlights of SFW (Superunknown Filmic Wonders?). "Jesus Christ Pose" is still excellent (the song sounds like the midpoint between throttle and throb). Better still is Soundgarden lead singer Chris Cornell's acoustic rendition of "Like Suicide." Sung with feeling and power, the cut aptly captures the angst of today's youth. SFW's the rare soundtrack that doesn't leave listeners shaking their heads and muttering "So Fucking What."

—Richard Torres

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 27.

FILE UNDER: Turgid hard-rock soundtracks.

R.I.Y.L.: *Singles* soundtrack, *Temple Of The Dog*, *Reality Bites* soundtrack.

"Women: were brought up—still to this day—to please everyone. To be a traditional female is to please as many people as you can, to be what they expect of you as much of the time as possible." —Liz Phair

SMASHING PUMPKINS *Pisces Iscariot Virgin*

Smashing Pumpkins' *Siamese Dream* spelled out in painfully clear terms what the band's 1991 debut *Gish* hinted at: Lead Pumpkin Billy Corgan has a somewhat limited set of riffs and melodies up his ill-fitting polyester sleeve. The arrangements, studio precision and Corgan's refusal to blush behind his dizzying chops—all of which helped make *Gish* so compelling (especially in the dreadful, grunge-drenched 1991)—couldn't obscure this fact any longer. Of course, *Siamese Dream* has sold two million copies so far. Go figure. So, while the iron is still hot... *Pisces Iscariot*, the inevitable b-sides and outtakes compilation. A collection like this should, through experiments both failed and successful, reveal different sides of a band, but other than a cover of Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide," *Pisces* doesn't pack any surprises or challenges. Most of the tunes here, quite simply, are predictable rewrites of other Pumpkins songs—which isn't necessarily a *totally* bad thing. "Frail & Bedazzled," for example, is one of Corgan's best rockers, and there are a couple more worthwhile moments (check out the cover of the Animals' "A Girl Named Sandoz"). If you're a very big Pumpkins fan, if you empathize with Billy The Fuss-pot so much you'd like to hide under the covers with him, then there's no reason why you won't go ape over *Pisces*. If you have only a casual interest in this band, stick with *Gish*.

—Steve McGuirl

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 4. A videotape, *Vieuphoria*, with live footage shot 1992-94, will be released concurrently.

FILE UNDER: Buzz-bin arena rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Jane's Addiction, Led Zeppelin, Nirvana.

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

VARIOUS ARTISTS *State Of Emergency (Society In Crisis, Vol. 1)* *Mad Sounds-Motown*

"You better think about what's goin' on... you better think about what's goin' on..." intones the chorus of A.L.T.'s "Think About It," and so emerges the theme of *State Of Emergency*. More than a compilation of songs, *State Of Emergency* is a concept album designed to be the "CNN for the black community" that Chuck D. has always claimed hip-hop to be. The collection's aim to emulate the substance of the Last Poets and Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On* spills over to its style as well, especially on the smooth soul of Nadirah's (of Arrested Development) "Winds Of Karma" and, conversely, the harsh agit-prop hip-hop of Ukfe Uye's "Da Spook Dat Sat By Da Door." Despite the alarmist title, the tone here is one of persuasion rather than pedantry. Tracks like Lord Finesse's "Caught In The Ghetto" and Jr. Swing's "Chocolate City" (not the Parliament song) will lull a lot of people into nodding along with their slick beats and catchy choruses before anyone realizes the inherent messages. But that's the way to reach people, and reaching people is *State Of Emergency's* sole aim.

—Scott Frampton

DATALOG: Release date: Sep. 27.

FILE UNDER: Consciousness compilations.

R.I.Y.L.: Public Enemy, Ice-T, Digital Underground.

WIG *Deliverance* *Island*

The problem with *Deliverance* isn't so much Wig's chops, or its presentation, or even its songwriting. In fact, despite gobs of predictable angst ("Angst is no more romantic than the common cold, and should be treated as such"—Lisa Carver) and dangerously lofty projections, some of the record is authentically intense. Wig just doesn't do it ("it" being power and emotion, which one suspects is the band's primary intention) any better than some of its merely competent contemporaries. Vocalist Clark Nova's affectedly dramatic voice howling over layers of armageddon guitars almost cuts it as Reznorian doom and gloom, and the band's high-velocity barrel certainly accomplishes its sonic effect. But where bands like Nine Inch Nails and Killing Joke are able to tread the line between self-indulgence and adventuresome musical exploration, Wig's aggression is content to be an end in itself. Big production polishes make every anguished tone and weighty groove shine with chrome-plated sterility, and lines like "You better tighten the screws, baby" play connect-the-dots with your average alterna-rock pretense. There's nothing actively bad or inferior about *Deliverance*, there's just nothing particularly unfamiliar going on.

—Colin Helms

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 4.

FILE UNDER: Black-cloaked alterna-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Tool, Mission U.K.

VICTORIA WILLIAMS *Loose* *Mammoth-Atlantic*

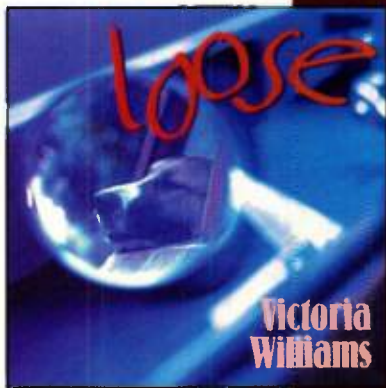
As last year's *Sweet Relief* tribute album demonstrated, Victoria Williams has written a considerable number of the songs that make the whole world sing, and as demonstrated here, they are no less entrancing when she sings them herself. *Loose* is a string of sentimental campfire tales about a man who joins the Peace Corps at 69, a woman who lives in a tar-paper shack, and numerous lovers and friends, in a liberal country-folk vein. The heavy sweetness and light content of most tracks is moderated by the worn, wistful tones of Williams' voice, which vaguely recalls Stevie Nicks. One of the best things about this album is its flouting of the current "Unplugged" singer/songwriter aesthetic through vintage MOR production values. The frequent use of mid-'70s-style backing vocals, phasers, horns, and even timpani seems odd at first, but meshes well with the over-the-top theatricality of Williams' storytelling. These flights are mostly followed by more traditional moments, like the twanging mandolins on "When We Sing Together" and the acoustic duet "My Ally," the kind of simple, sweet ballad that indie guitarists of the Lou Barlow/Barbara Manning ilk cover in droves.

—Andrea Moed

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 4. Playing a few dates in major cities in November.

FILE UNDER: Countrified vaudeville.

R.I.Y.L.: Carole King, Lyle Lovett, Joe Henry.



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WOOL

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TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY

REVEREND HORTON HEAT



ARTIST	ALBUM TITLE	LABEL
1 REVEREND HORTON HEAT	Liquor In The Front	Sub Pop-Interscope
2 STEREO LAB	Mars Audiac Quintet	Elektra
3 LUSH	Split	4AD-Reprise
4 BEASTIE BOYS	Ill Communication	Grand Royal-Capitol
5 MC 900 FT JESUS	One Step Ahead Of The Spider	American
6 L7	Hungry For Stink	Slash-Reprise
7 MAGNAPOP	Hot Boxing	Priority
8 JALE	Dreamcake	Sub Pop
9 HELMET	Betty	Interscope
10 SKY CRIES MARY	This Timeless Turning	World Domination
11 LUSCIOUS JACKSON	Natural Ingredients	Grand Royal-Capitol
12 LOVE SPIT LOVE	Love Spit Love	Imago
13 VELOCITY GIRL	iSimpatco!	Sub Pop
14 SEBADOH	Bakesale	Sub Pop
15 GUIDED BY VOICES	Bee Thousand	Scat-Matador
16 BAD RELIGION	Stranger Than Fiction	Atlantic
17 KILLING JOKE	Pandemonium	Big Life-Zoo
18 SUGAR	File Under: Easy Listening	Rykodisc
19 WEEZER	Weezer	DGC
20 BRACKET	924 Forestville St.	Caroline
21 HALO BENDERS	God Don't Make No Junk	K
22 VELVET CRUSH	Teenage Symphonies To God	Creation/550-Epic
23 FIGGS	Low-Fi At Society High	Imago
24 NOFX	Punk In Drublic	Epitaph
25 NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE	Sleeps With Angels	Reprise
26 FRANK BLACK	Teenager Of The Year	4AD-Elektra
27 JESUS LIZARD	Show	Collision Arts/Giant-WB
28 MOTOCASTER	Stay Loaded	Interscope
29 MELTING HOPEFULS	Space Flyer	Big Pop-Shanachie
30 STONE TEMPLE PILOTS	Purple	Atlantic
31 POP WILL EAT ITSELF	Amalgamation	Nothing-Interscope
32 DINOSAUR JR.	Without A Sound	Sire-Reprise
33 JUDYBATS	Full-Empty	Sire-WB
34 TRIPMASTER MONKEY	Goodbye Race	Sire-Reprise
35 RIDE	Carnival Of Light	Sire-Reprise
36 JESUS & MARY CHAIN	Stoned & Dethroned	American
37 DICK DALE	Unknown Territory	Hightone
38 ROLLING STONES	Voodoo Lounge	Virgin
39 VARIOUS ARTISTS	DGC Rarities Vol. 1	DGC
40 BLUR	Parklife	Food/SBK-EMI
41 TOADIES	Rubberneck	Interscope
42 311	Grassroots	Capricorn-WB
43 GREEN DAY	Dookie	Reprise
44 PALACE BROTHERS	Palace Brothers	Drag City
45 SAMIAM	Clumsy	Atlantic
46 FREEDY JOHNSTON	This Perfect World	Elektra
47 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS	John Henry	Elektra
48 TOAD THE WET SPROCKET	Dulcinea	Columbia
49 LIVE	Throwing Copper	Radioactive
50 JAH WOBBLE'S INVADERS OF THE HEART	Take Me To God	Island
51 RANCID	Let's Go	Epitaph
52 SLINT	Slint (EP)	Touch And Go
53 MIRANDA SEX GARDEN	Fairytales Of Slavery	Mute
54 PIZZICATO FIVE	Made In U.S.A.	Matador
55 OFFSPRING	Smash	Epitaph
56 SONIC YOUTH	Experimental Jet Set, Trash And No Star	DGC
57 ORB	Pomme Fritz	Island Red-Island
58 FRETBLANKET	Junkfuel	Atlas-A&M
59 PAULA COLE	Harbinger	Imago
60 APRIL'S MOTEL ROOM	Black 14	Immortal/Epic
61 DOWN BY LAW	P6	Epitaph
62 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Kiss My Ass: Classic Kiss Regrooved	Mercury
63 MOUNTAIN GOATS	Zopilote Machine	Ajax
64 FRENTE!	Marvin The Album	Mammoth-Atlantic
65 JESUS LIZARD	Down	Touch And Go
66 SEAL	Seal	ZTT/Sire-WB
67 JEFFREY GAINES	Somewhat Slightly Dazed	Chrysalis-EMI
68 DEADEYE DICK	A Different Story	Naked Language-Ichiban
69 MARILYN MANSON	Portrait Of An American Family	Nothing-Interscope
70 FUZZY	Fuzzy	Seed
71 EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL	Amplified Heart	Atlantic
72 SOUNDGARDEN	Superunknown	A&M
73 PUBLIC ENEMY	Muse Sick-N-Hour Mess Age	Def Jam/RAL-Island
74 NOVA MOB	Nova Mob	Restless
75 UNDERWORLD	Dubnobasswithmyheadman	Wax Trax!-TVT

Chart data compiled from the *CMJ New Music Report's* weekly Top 750 radio chart, based on combined airplay of 500 commercial and college/non-commercial radio stations reporting their top 35 most played releases that week.

on the verge

UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS

compiled by lydia anderson

balloon guy

With only two 7"s under its belt (both on the tiny local label Generator), Minneapolis' Balloon Guy is poised to follow hometown heroes Hüsker Dü and the Replacements from the Midwest into national indie-rock stardom. At a recent NYC gig, the crowd was made up mostly of music industry people, looking to pocket one of this year's most promising discoveries. And with good reason: the "Incidentally" 7" is one of the year's best, the title track a gripping sonic concoction, balancing melody and crunching guitar work perfectly. Meanwhile, the band has at least two more vinyl offerings in the works—a single on Third Gear and a double 7" on Generator.

—Bryan McNamara



prolapse

It sounds like Prolapse grew out of scattered seeds dropped by members of

The Ex or Huggy Bear when they weren't looking. But it's precisely these shards of noise and (social) politics which give the Leicester, England, sextet its mouth-bloodying punch. Two feverish singles put the band on the map, "Psychotic Now" (from the *Crate* EP) setting the standard for Linda Steelyard and Mick Derrick's breathless boy/girl vocals, and "Pull Thru' Barker" realizing a more even, Faith Healers-like vibe. The gleeful assault of the singles has been smoothed over somewhat on Prolapse's debut LP, *Pointless Walks To Dismal Places*, which happily retains the initial spark ignited by the singles and the band's vivacious live show.

—Lydia Anderson



disco inferno

The name could mean dance music meltdown, or it could mean records in Hell—anyway, Disco Inferno has nothing to do with the Trammps' boogie hit of the same name. The British band makes brilliant use of MIDI technology, running its rock instruments through computers to make them trigger the sounds of flashing cameras, of jungle birds, of shattering glass. Its songs straddle the gap between solid rock structure and nightmarishly random noise. Disco Inferno has followed up a strange and majestic series of recent singles with its second full-length album, *D.I.*



Go Pop (Bar/None), which once again is ironically named: It's the most far-out, experimental work the group has done to date.

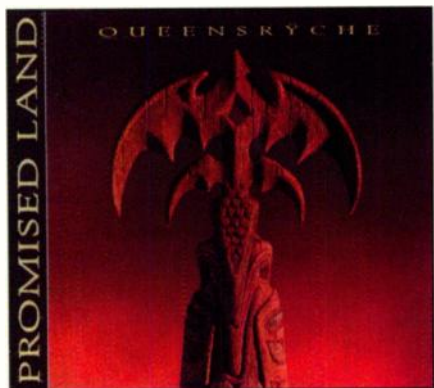
—Douglas Wolk



team dresch

Team Dresch is a mostly vegan dyke punk-pop supergroup from Portland, Oregon, and Olympia, Washington, featuring Jody from Hazel, Donna (Dresch) from Dangermouse and Rastro!, Kaia from Adickdid, and Marci from Calamity Jane. During one live show last summer, TD added to the stage two Public Enemy-style bodyguards (self-defense experts who stood with arms folded), while Jody and Kaia traded off vocals and Donna thrashed around like the "queen of grunge" her bandmates believe her to be. The self-dubbed "emo" band delivers a mighty live punch that demonstrates its always tuneful quiet-loud-quiet-loud dynamics, which can also be heard on a *Kill Rock Stars* 7". Look for the band's self-released debut LP, *Personal Best*, in October—a co-release on Jody's and Donna's labels (Candy-Ass and Chainsaw).

—Gail O'Hara



queensrÿche

promised land
(Chrysalis-EMI)

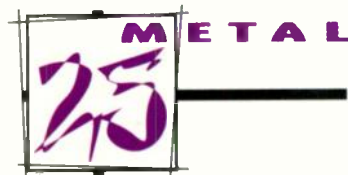


by jon weiderhorn

A heart beats over labored breathing, and an EKG machine beeps in tandem. Suddenly there's a heaving gasp and the flat, high-pitched buzz of a cardiac arrest, followed by a bunch of wiggly sound effects that end with the jangle of a child's toy and the cry of a newborn baby. It's with this pledge of death and rebirth that Queensrÿche's fifth album *Promised Land* enters into the world. Following 1990's ultra-commercial *Empire*, *Promised Land* symbolizes the end of one era and the beginning of the next. Judging by the brooding, introspective sound of the album, Queensrÿche is no longer reaping the pleasures of rock 'n' roll excess, and is instead fretting over the futility of the human condition. Much of *Promised Land* is veiled in darkness, and the subdued chug and plangent ring of many of the acoustic guitar passages communicate a sense of hopelessness, epitomized in the lyrics of "My Global Mind," ironically the most tuneful track on the record: "I feel so helpless/so I turn my gaze to another maze." Songs like "Disconnected," which features wah-wah guitar washes and meandering saxophone lines, and "Out Of Mind," which drifts through a sea of wistful guitar waves and melancholy vocals, are even reminiscent of Pink Floyd, a band Queensrÿche alluded to on its last album. *Promised Land* is a classic transition record. Pop metal fans may regret the lack of catchy sing-alongs and ham-fisted ballads, and hardcore rivetheads will lament the dissipation of raging buzzsaw guitars and urgent, immediate rhythms, but for those who can forget Queensrÿche's past and concentrate on its future, *Promised Land* is an ambitious release that promises big things to come.

IN THE NOOSE

PANTERA frontman Phil Anselmo was arrested and fined \$5,000 after striking a security guard in the head with his microphone at a show with Sepultura and Prong in Darien Lake, New York (outside Buffalo) on June 28. According to Anselmo, the assault was an accident that occurred when fans who were eager to jump onstage got caught in Anselmo's microphone cord, causing it to fly out of his hands and strike a security guard, but several eyewitnesses said the singer intentionally threw the punch because the guard was abusing one of Pantera's fans who was trying to stage-dive. Anselmo was released from custody hours after his arrest, and was allowed to finish the tour... The same can't be said for SEPULTURA, which, on August 5, was forced to pull itself from the last two weeks of dates due to Max Cavalera's worsening knee injury. The angry Brazilian originally damaged his knee sometime in late June while on tour in Europe, and the injury grew increasingly more painful until he was forced to see a physician, who advised him to leave the tour. On August 11 Cavalera underwent several hours of complex surgery, and is now recovering at his home. After Sepultura's departure, PRONG was granted an extended set for the remainder of the tour... MEGADETH will release the follow-up to its platinum album *Countdown To Extinction* at midnight on Halloween, 1994. The record was produced by Max Norman and Megadeth frontman Dave Mustaine, and was recorded in a moveable studio in Phoenix, Arizona built especially for the project. The band originally wanted to rent a house to record in, but when it found that none of the homeowners it asked were willing, Megadeth elected to build a studio inside a warehouse on the outskirts of town. After the band finished recording, it split the studio up into two pieces and trucked it back to Los Angeles... TESTAMENT's new drummer is Jon Dette, a Californian skin-basher who replaced John Tempesta recently after Tempesta quit to join White Zombie. Dette, an Anaheim, California native, has played with a few little-known LA thrash bands, and is a huge Testament fan. He used to share a practice space with Tempesta, and was referred to the rest of the band by the ex-Testament drummer.



- 1 PRO-PAIN • The Truth Hurts (Energy)
- 2 OVERKILL • W.F.O. (Atlantic)
- 3 BIOHAZARD • State Of The World Address (Warner Bros.)
- 4 SUICIDAL TENDENCIES • Suicidal For Life (Epic)
- 5 OBITUARY • World Demise (Roadrunner)
- 6 SOUNDTRACK • Airheads (Arista)
- 7 DOWNSET • Downset (Mercury)
- 8 KYUSS • Sky Valley (Elektra)
- 9 NAPALM DEATH • Fear, Emptiness, Despair (Earache-Columbia)
- 10 HELMET • Betty (Interscope)
- 11 L7 • Hungry For Stink (Slash-Reprise)
- 12 MACHINE HEAD • Burn My Eyes (Roadrunner)
- 13 MARILYN MANSON • Portrait Of An American Family (Nothing-Interscope)
- 14 BILE • Suckpump (Energy)
- 15 STOMPBOX • Stress (Columbia)
- 16 PANTERA • Far Beyond The Driven (EastWest-America)
- 17 BRUCE DICKINSON • Balls To Picasso (Mercury)
- 18 MADBALL • Set It Off (Roadrunner)
- 19 BUZZOVEN • Sore (Roadrunner)
- 20 PRONG • Cleansing (Epic)
- 21 BAD RELIGION • Stranger Than Fiction (Atlantic)
- 22 KERBD OG • Kerbdog (Mercury)
- 23 DROWN • Hold On To The Hollow (Elektra)
- 24 FATES WARNING • Inside Out (Metal Blade)
- 25 KILLING JOKE • Pandemonium (Big Life-Zoo)

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

SINGLES

by douglas wolk



direction ...
Chainsaw

heavens to betsy

What the Riot Grrrrl movement was supposed to do was give very young women the idea that they could create and critique their own culture, instead of consuming the one that was fed to them. What it actually did was launch a couple of dozen fanzines, a couple of dozen bands that sounded like Bikini Kill or Bratmobile but not as good, and a humungous, unwanted media campaign that was pretty painful and annoying to all concerned. There are a couple of welcome bands that have emerged from that scene, though, and the duo Heavens To Betsy is one of the best. Corin and Tracy can't play their instruments or sing that well in a conventional sense (though they're gettin' there fast); what they can do is write affecting, straightforward songs, and sing them with a a horror-stricken passion that sounds like they're nearly sick with desperation. And they say what they mean, with startling bluntness (cf. the enraged "Get Out Of My Head"). On last year's *Calculated* album, that sometimes resulted in clunkiness or preachiness, but this time it really works. The four songs on this 7" EP are the most mature work the band has done to date—"The Ones," in particular, shows that Corin has learned some lessons from the Spinanes and is ready to teach some back—and Heavens To Betsy is pointed nowhere but straight up. Catch on now.

Those of you who are looking for signs that these are the Final Days and the world will be ending soon might check out **BUSTER POINDEXTER's** "Butcher Pete" (Singles Only Label-Tim Kerr). The song is a classic piece of risqué R&B, originally a 1949 single by Roy Brown, whom you may know as the guy who wrote "Rockin' At Midnight." It starts out with one of the worst sexual metaphors ever ("he's choppin' up all the women's meat!"); eventually, it gets a little more ambiguous (they put him in jail and find him "choppin' on his cellmate"), and by the end you can't tell what the hell Roy's talking about. Buster's version is basically an exact soundalike. He's contorted his voice into a convincing imitation of Brown's one-note bellow; the note-for-note baritone sax solo somehow manages to get the same bizarrely flat tone. Best of all, the first side, as on the original, ends with the pronouncement "Hey! Turn this record over—you ain't heard nothin' yet!" followed by a fake "skip"—at 78 speed. Now that's high-concept...

Of course, Roy Brown looks like Catherine MacKinnon next to **THE FROGS**, the best-armed enemies of political correctness in rock. Their fans include Eddie Vedder (who habitually plays them on the PA at Pearl Jam shows), Juliana Hatfield (who named the Blake Babies' *Rosy Jack World* after a Frogs song) and Billy Corgan (who played guitar with them on stage in New York recently). The new Frogs single on Matador has two live recordings from a few years ago: "Adam And Steve," a huge riff-beast with faux-gay-pride lyrics, and "Now You Know You're Black," a baffling take on race relations with a larger-than-life guitar solo in the middle of it...

Another group with a lot of fans in other bands was the Vaselines, the amazing Scots pop group that spawned Eugenius and had at least three of its songs covered by Nirvana. Frances and James of the Vaselines have reunited as **PAINKILLERS**, and their first single is "Tropical Zodiac" (Human Condition). Unfortunately, it's alarmingly dull pop by the numbers, without any of the old band's freshness or bite. Disappointment of the month...

Straight outta nowhere (well, Iowa City) is the self-titled debut 7" EP by **SOUSE LOAF** (S.K.A.M.). Its five songs are pretty random—there's a cover of Pere Ubu's "30 Seconds Over Tokyo," some noise stuff, a brief novelty song called "We're Amish," a little chaotic punk and some violin—but they're also all pretty good. If the band ever finds a direction it'll be doomed, but as long as it keeps flailing around this well it's pretty entertaining...

Experimental guitarist Jim O'Rourke has played with Gastr Del Sol, Kazuyuki K. Null and plenty of other people and bands. Now he's the leader of an instrumental "rock band," **BRISE-GLACE**, and its debut single "In Sisters All And Felony" (Skin Graft) is both very peculiar and very worth hearing. Drummer Thymme Jones provides the skeleton for both sides of the record, with rhythm patterns mixed so high they distort; the rest of the band adds body and color, including a dammy gauze of organ on the B-side...

Calvin Johnson's two current projects, one a rock band and one a dub/dance studio project, collide on the B-side of the **HALO BENDERS'** "Canned Oxygen" single (Atlas), and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups aren't a bad analogy for the result. It's a Dub Narcotic Sound System remix of the Halo Benders' "Don't Touch My Bikini," with an irresistably springy beat and a wild, anarchic dub soundscape...

You've probably heard a bunch about the "New Wave Of New Wave" (you can't have missed it if you've seen the cover of *NME* or *Melody Maker* in the last year). A couple of those bands have recently had records out in the U.S.; you can safely avoid S*M*A*S*H and These Animal Men, who turned out to be almost entirely hype. Their scenemate **ELASTICA**, though, is really pretty neat. Its first American single, "Stutter" (Sub Pop) is a good jumping-on point: just over two minutes long, hooky, sassy and barely legal. And it gets extra packaging points for the gorgeous die-cut sleeve, if you're the sort (like us) who goes for that stuff.



by tim haslett

paperclip people

" t h r o w " (1 2 ")
Planet E Communications

Carl Craig constructs musical cycles of constant anticipation, suspense and release. His deep Detroit roots are beyond question, and he continues to push the envelope of sonic possibility with each record. With the "Throw" 12", released under the name Paperclip People, Craig has ventured as close to mainstream dancefloor accessibility as he is ever likely to, without sacrificing rigorous, demanding experimentation. Simply put, Craig consistently makes records that sound like nothing else on wax. "Throw" has the grandeur, sweep and melodrama of a great disco single, with the floor-shaking, crisp drum attack of a Detroit hardhouse record. Listen closely to Craig's febrile drum work here (not difficult to do, since it's foregrounded in the mix), and you'll hear why dance music's new jacks have a lot to learn in the percussive chop-and-change department. Craig will simply not settle for an endless 4/4 kick drum and a few snares and handclaps. He turns the drums into a distinct voice, so that changes in mood and texture are registered in the flanging, reverbing and distorting of the percussion, not only in keyboard and bassline chord changes. The flipside of the single is a powerful re-working of "Throw" by the dynamic duo Maurizio (two German expatriates in residence in Detroit). The velocity increases with this version (entitled "Basic Reshape"), and the logical conclusion of each synth sequence is deliberately truncated, so that there is almost nothing for the ear to hold on to. The expansive groove is so subtle here that it won't emerge unless played at illegal volumes. Maurizio understands Craig's ability to disrupt the listener's expectations at every turn. It is that crucial element of suspense that is the mark of a great dance record.

INTO THE GROOVE

The embarrassingly young **DJ DEON** was, a year ago, making tracks in his bedroom for friends and spinning at parties. Having been discovered by Dance Mania, he's now released his first, self-titled EP, and it'll tear the roof off a building of your choice. The Roland TR-909 drum machine has become a totem for the growing subculture of backroom trackmakers, but, like a Fender six-string, it can still sound lifeless in the wrong hands. Deon, however, hijacks the machine for a cross-country street chase, stopping for neither toll gates nor roadblocks. The A-side's second track swoops and dives like a swallow, with a couple of synth breaks which have a flat tonal quality that's a perfect counterpoint to the manic percussion. The peaks and troughs in energy levels make this one of the best tracks of the year... Where much contemporary acid jazz has all the bite of a Kenny G sax solo, the output of Germany's Soulciety label is exemplary. This is a label run by funk purists for funk purists. Its peerless catalog has, until recently, been nearly inaccessible in the U.S. Now, however, Instinct Records has begun to release select titles from Soulciety. The first release is the electrifying *On The Move* album by **BOBBY BYRD**, James Brown's legendary keyboardist/backup singer. Byrd's music has turned up on innumerable hip-hop records, and for this exercise he's gone back into the studio to record a sweltering batch of songs. The production here is extraordinary: The drums are recorded loud and pushed to the front of the mix, capturing the percussive intensity of the '70-'74 era. The much-praised **JB HORNS'** new album *I Like It Like That* is now in domestic racks also. The group, comprised of Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley and Pee Wee Ellis (all James Brown band alumni as well), has a funk rhythm section that makes Prince's backing group sound like a Rush cover band. Another essential slab is the *Back To Basics* album, which features the heartbreaking, triumphant vocals of Vicki Anderson, the nuevo-retro '70s funk sound of The Poets Of Rhythm and the bass contortions of Roger (Zapp) Troutman's first band, The Human Body. Lest you think this series is no more than nostalgic blueprint revivalism, be assured that the first drum breaks on the Bobby Byrd disc will change your mind.



- 1 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Trance Europe Express 2 (Volume (UK))
- 2 **UNDERWORLD** • Dubnobasswithmyheadman (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 3 **SEEFEEEL** • Polyfusia (Too Pure/Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 4 **FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON** • Lifeforms (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 5 **ORB** • Pomme Fritz (Island Red-Island)
- 6 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Excursions In Ambience: The Third Dimension (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 7 **DEEE-LITE** • Dewdrops In The Garden (Elektra)
- 8 **ORBITAL** • Snivilisation (ffrr-London)
- 9 **OPUS III** • Guru Mother (EastWest America)
- 10 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Howze O' Dy-No-Mite (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 11 **SANDALS** • Rite To Silence (ffrr-ILS)
- 12 **GLOBAL COMMUNICATION** • "9:25" (12") (Dedicated)
- 13 **POP WILL EAT ITSELF** • Amalgamation (Nothing-Interscope)
- 14 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Psychotrance (Moonshine)
- 15 **MESSIAH** • Twenty-First Century Jesus (WHITE LABELS-American)
- 16 **MOBY** • "Hymn" (12") (Elektra)
- 17 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Technomancer IV: The Hard Edit (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 18 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Tox Uthat Volume 2 (Silent)
- 19 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Septic Cuts (ffrr-ILS)
- 20 **NINE INCH NAILS** • The Downward Spiral (Nothing/TVT-Interscope)
- 21 **MC 900 FT. JESUS** • One Step Ahead Of The Spider (American)
- 22 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Big Hard Disk Vol. 2 (Smash-Island)
- 23 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • United State Of Ambience (Moonshine)
- 24 **PROGRAM 2** • Robotix (Sire-WB)
- 25 **BIGOD 20** • "One" (5") (Sire-WB)

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

HIP-HOP

by glen sansone



In a time when empty threats and gangster posing overshadow many of hip-hop's more conscious artists (cf. the collapse of Arrested Development), Oakland's The Coup is one of the few hip-hop

groups not afraid to take action. Its members are involved

in cultural outreach programs and study groups—they want to

make their revolution on wax a reality instead of a bag of political rhetoric. The Coup's second

album, *Genocide & Juice*, probes deep and close to the roots of racism through the group's

own experiences and stories of ghetto life. The Coup analyzes the way the black

community addicts itself to voluntary genocide by making its neighborhoods' violent

pestilence fashionable in music and videos. Rappers Boots and E Roc, along with the

female DJ Pam, flow with the Oakland/G-Funk drawl (welcoming Bay Area

mobster E-40 on "Name Game"), but they never get caught up in the tired

gangster rubric. Mixing live instruments over tightly-wound funk beds (check the

George Benson loop on "Takin' These"). The Coup searches for clues to the

cause, making accusations along the way, and presenting its messages in a variety

of styles. The most interesting is "Fat Cats/Bigga Fish," an ironic take on the group's

struggle with stereotypical high society, done with humorous and theatrical verve.

HIP-HOP



- 1 CRAIG MACK • "Flava In Ya Ear" (12") (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 2 GRAVEDIGGAZ • 6 Feet Deep (Gee Street-Island)
- 3 ORGANIZED KONFUSION • Stress (The Extinction Agenda) (Hollywood BASIC)
- 4 NOTORIOUS B.I.G. • "Juicy" (12") (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 5 NAS • Illmatic (Columbia)
- 6 MC EHT FEATURING CMW • We Come Strapped (Epic Street)
- 7 PETE ROCK & C.L. SMOOTH • "I Got A Love" (12") (Elektra)
- 8 BEASTIE BOYS • Ill Communication (Grand Royal-Capitol)
- 9 PUBLIC ENEMY • Muse Sick-N-Hour Mess Age (Def Jam/RAL-Island)
- 10 MC SOLAAR • Prose Combat (Cohiba-Island)
- 11 BOOGIEMONSTERS • Riders Of The Storm: The Underwater Album (Pendulum-EMI)
- 12 WARREN G • Regulate... G Funk Era (Violator/RAL-PG)
- 13 ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT • Zingalamaduni (Chrysalis-EMI)
- 14 OUTKAST • Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik (LaFace-Arista)
- 15 JERU THE DAMAJA • The Sun Rises In The East (PayDay/frr-ILS)
- 16 NICE & SMOOTH • Jewel Of The Nile (RAL-PG)
- 17 ROOTS • "Distortion To Static" (12") (DGC)
- 18 O.C. • "Time's Up" (12") (Wild Pitch-EMI)
- 19 DA BRAT • Funkdafied (So So Def-Chaos)
- 20 HOUSE OF PAIN • Same As It Ever Was (Tommy Boy)
- 21 ERULE • "Listen Up" (12") (Pallas)
- 22 BEATNUTS • The Beatnuts (Violator-Relativity)
- 23 A TRIBE CALLED QUEST • Midnight Marauders (Jive)
- 24 MAD LION • "Take It Easy" (12") (Weeded-Nervous)
- 25 BUCKSHOT LEFONQUE • Buckshot Lefonque (Columbia)

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

the coup

genocide & juice

Wild Pitch-EMI

BONUS BEATS

Unless you were living under a rock all summer, one of the hottest-burning singles on the street was **ILL & AL SKRATCH's** "Where My Homiez? (Come Around My Way)." They have since released an album, *Creep Wit' Me* (Mercury), that quickly proves that these two sharply-dressed, crowd-pumpers have the slick, street feel that should appeal to a wide cross section of rap fans. With a keen crossover sensibility, *Creep Wit' Me* has tracks that are as savory as a Marvin Gaye ballad (check Brian McKnight's appearance on "I'll Take Her"), while its strong soul/R&B soundscapes make the duo's B-Boy boasting and routine macking a bit less convincing. Oddly, a few of the songs (like "This Is For My Homiez") reproduce the refrain from "Where My Homiez?," making this effort less adventurous... Not even 20 years old yet, Philadelphia's **DA YOUNGSTA's** kick back in the security of hip-hop tradition on their third album, *No Mercy* (EastWest America). Simple by design, the tag-team raps of Tarik, Taji and Qur'an recruit the time-tested production of Marley Marl, whose oversized hip-hop tracks layer street-funk tracks taken from rap instead of original soul or funk records. The first single, "Hip-Hop Ride"—which is nothing more than a shout-out-filled endorsement for hip-hop—is one of the less filling cuts, but here more than on any earlier record the crew establishes its own identity rather than emulating its older peers... One of the most revered acid jazz DJs/producers is DJ Smash. On *A New Type Of Jazz* (New Breed), Smash plays producer, arranger and mixer on a veritable potpourri of seducing, acid jazz vibes, cruising from studious hip-hop on the title track (featuring Brown Surround) to reggae stylings on "Dance For Ya Foot." The beats don't stop on "Monday Night," the sizzling "Makin' Love, Makin' Music" and the rhythmic crescendos of "Racial Facial"... Better known for da Bears and da Bulls and some dude named Jordan, Chicago is not readily considered a hip-hop hotbed—although Da Brat has helped reverse that maxim. Following up on his debut, *Can I Borrow A Dollar?*, **COMMON SENSE** steps back up to the mic with the thoughtful *Resurrection* (Relativity). Call it hip-hop with a heart: Common Sense's no-frills approach to street expression sees him taking on more human characteristics rather than using flagrant gangster patois. On "This Is Me" he states: "I'm a warrior/still don't have to show gun/it takes one to know one/and no one can tell me how to be." Mixing poetic rhyming with slight traces of vulnerability and compassion ("I Used To Love Her") and a larger dose of rationality, *Resurrection* is a credible statement for the the true essence of the art form.

C.L. Smooth on how his partnership with Pete Rock formed:
 "We met at Mt. Vernon High School. I saw him in the lunch room. And I remember him 'cause he had these loud-ass Nike Airs on. Yellow, light blue—he said "Yo, I got these beats, man, come over... come over and help."

FLASHBACK

ROOTS • REISSUES • RETRO

by James Lien

PHILE UNDER: PHUNK

Last year, the '70s/'90s thang swung into overdrive, and suddenly, the funk was everywhere. The emphasis in the reissue bins was on heavy funk of the '70s, most notably Rhino's *In Yo' Face* series of funk compilations, and PolyGram's excellent Parliament box set. Now disco, R&B, and electronic funk of the late '70s and early '80s reign as the current fat beats of the moment. Rhino has unleashed a series of "old school" compilations called *Phat Trax Volumes 1-5* (a bit of a misnomer, since most of them predate old-school rap by a good five to ten years), which swings the spotlight onto slightly later hard funk jams than *In Yo' Face*, including such immortal hits as Carl Carlton's "She's A Bad Mama Jama" and Mass Production's "Firecracker," and recalling the days when wildly-clad acts like B.T. Express, Tom Browne and Cameo ruled the airwaves.

There's a few single-artist compilations from that period that have just come out, too. Casablanca, the legendary disco imprint, has rolled out a long-overdue collection from Parlet, a George Clinton-constructed female trio that featured most of the usual crew of various P-Funk musicians on board, including Bootsy Collins, Fred Wesley and Bernie Worrell. Looser than the more commercial Parliament singles and wilder than Clinton's other female project, the Brides Of Funkenstein, Parlet's outrageousness made it a central pillar of the P-Funk empire that ruled the late '70s. Mercury's Gap Band has a *Best Of* out, a concise but graphically skimpy packaging of its hits. You have to marvel at songs like "Early In The Morning" and the awesome "Burn Rubber," which were virtually tailor-made for drive-time radio.

By the time Kurtis Blow (also represented by a recent *Best Of*, on Mercury) arrived on the scene, true funk for funk's sake was on its way towards the endangered species list. What some say had happened was this: Disco, with its emphasis on clubs, partying and nightlife, had excluded inner city kids and poorer demographics from the party they'd helped create, and so those who

couldn't afford to go to Studio 54 in the era of Reaganomics were left to their own devices for entertainment. Meanwhile, the black pop field was being inundated with ballads via the likes of Lionel Richie and Luther Vandross, leaving a void for hard party music, which young men in warm-up suits, unlaced sneakers, and gold chains were happy to fill, giving birth to modern-day rap. And so it's no wonder that today, those rappers are turning right around and sampling those very same grooves that gave them inspiration back in the day, and that only ten years on, these grooves are ripe for rediscovery.

I N T H E B I N S

In August the Who released their long-awaited 4-CD set, *Thirty Years Of Maximum R&B* (MCA). What they should have been celebrating was not their history as a whole, but the two years when they ruled the world. From roughly May 2, 1969 to December 20, 1970, the Who were basically untouched by any competition as a traveling rock show. But calling the box *Ten Years Of Maximum R&B*, *Twenty Years Of Minimum Effort* would have been more like it; in fact, most of the previously unreleased tracks are merely clever rearrangements of stuff we've heard before (e.g. the "previously unreleased" version of "A Quick One" is just a jarringly-edited hybrid of two different versions we already have heard, and the new version of "See Me Feel Me" is just the one from *Live At Leeds* faded up in the middle). While the Beach Boys' box set centered on a skillful attempt to reassemble Brian Wilson's ill-fated and unreleased *Smile*, this box treats Pete Townshend's equally-unfinishable *Lifhouse* as a mere footnote to *Who's Next*. And to top it off, over a third of the previously-



unreleased tracks come from the post-1976 era. If you're a casual fan, this will suffice, but it won't replace the power of the original albums like *Live At Leeds*, *Tommy*, or *Who's Next*, all of which will soon be expanded and remastered. There's talk of a definitive live compilation in the future; it may be a couple of years away, but wherever those live tapes may be lying, that's where all that's left of the real Who is... Rumors continue to fly about the possibility of an impending multi-CD box set from NEIL YOUNG, with speculation centering around the possibility of Neil releasing some of the miles of unreleased tape he's collected over the years, perhaps even culminating in a box along the lines of Dylan's *Bootleg Series*. Motown, which for years was notorious for its cheapo "roll the tapes and call the plant" reissues, has finally committed in the past year or two to honoring and respecting the valuable legacy found in its extensive vaults and archives. In the tradition of its stellar Marvin Gaye and Smokey Robinson boxes, Motown plans a late-September release for *Emperors Of Soul*, an equally-lavish **TEMPTATIONS** project, which promises to be a massive 5-CD box set including 109 songs... On the blues front, the finest new series of reissues we've seen this year started back in the summer, when Oakland-based Hightone records acquired the rights to 26 blues recordings on the Testament label, a legendary blues imprint from the '60s and '70s which often featured recordings made in informal, impromptu settings. The first set included discs by the **JOHNNY SHINES BAND**, **FLOYD JONES AND EDDIE TAYLOR**, **OTIS SPANN**, and a highly-recommended album of **FRED McDOWELL** performing in 1966 with members of his church, Hunter's Chapel, near Como, Mississippi. Blues and gospel are inextricably linked, and McDowell's disc, *Amazing Grace*, is a bridge between the two, and one of the finest blues-related reissues in recent memory.

the other “surf music”: alternative music on the internet

by Karen Eliot

Okay. So you've just bought yourself an Internet account, or maybe you've decided to explore the one your college gave you, and you want to go looking for music stuff on-line. Where do you start?

First of all, you should remember that the Net is much more useful for finding information than for finding actual tunes. You can download music if you want—from the **Internet Underground Music Archive** (see our September issue), or from non-Net information services and BBS's that range from the huge (CompuServe) to the miniscule (Bing's Haus Of Soft Creative Non-Violent Playthings)—but it's a time-consuming process (sometimes several hours for a single song) and the fidelity isn't all that wonderful. Besides, when you want to hear a song, you generally reach for the stereo, not the computer.

For music information, though, the Net is an unbeatable resource. If you're looking for information on a specific band, you'll want to start your search at the **ftp** (file-transfer-protocol—files that you can anonymously download to your home computer) music archive at [ftp.uwp.edu](ftp://ftp.uwp.edu), in the [directory/pub/music](ftp://ftp.uwp.edu/pub/music). There's tons of interesting things in there: comprehensive discographies, lyrics for more than 15,000 songs, and archives of dozens of mailing lists (more on those in a minute). A little dedicated rooting around can probably answer most of your questions.

If you're interested in a fairly popular band or style of music in particular, you can always find lively discussion going on on **Usenet**, the huge global electronic “news” service. For general discussion of alternative music, the place to start is alt.music.alternative; indie-rockers can beeline to alt.music.independent for slightly more focused discussion. There are also groups that are more focused (rec.music.reggae, rec.music.industrial, alt.gothic), much more focused (alt.fan.u2, alt.music.pop.will.eat.itself), and, well, much, much more focused (alt.fan.wang-chung, alt.rap.gdead (for fans of both hip-hop and the Grateful Dead), alt.icelandic.waif.bjork.bjork.bjork). As always, it's wise to “lurk” or hang out and read a group for a while before you leap into the conversation. It's even wiser to check and see if the group has an **FAQ** (Frequently Asked Questions) file; what you're wondering about may be something that the group has already been asked about many, many times.

If your tastes are a little on the esoteric side, or if you'd like a discussion with folks who are really devoted to the bands you like, electronic mailing lists are the way to go. The way they work is that you send your mail to a specific address, and everybody on the list gets what you've written as email. There's a document called **The Musical List Of Lists** that includes addresses to subscribe to hundreds and hundreds of mailing lists, from really-deep-thoughts (for discussion of Tori Amos) to jump-in-the-river (Sinead O'Connor) to kiwimusic (pop and noise music from New Zealand) to lists devoted to XTC. Sun Ra, We've Got A Fuzzbox & We're Going To Use It, the On-U Sound label, and British electro-pop of the early '80s. At press time, The Musical List Of Lists was being revised, reedited and moved to a new site; for a current copy, try searching with the veronica tool on gopher. There are also a handful of private, invitation-only mailing lists for discussing music, which generally have a much higher signal-to-noise ratio than the publicly accessible ones; if your writing on Usenet and mailing lists is intelligent and polite, information on them will find its way to you.

Finally, the **World Wide Web** (WWW), a hypertext document that's roughly the size of that miles-wide fungus they found in Michigan a few years ago, has a handful of notable music-related sites. You basically have to have the Mosaic program to make effective use of the WWW, but if you do, there's lots of neat stuff. There are nifty sites devoted to the Beastie Boys, They Might Be Giants and other bands, including pictures, sound samples and even bits of videos; American Recordings has recently set up a Web site with pictures, biographies, and discographies of all its artists, and other labels and bands will be following shortly. Since every site on the Web can be reached from every other site (that's why it's a web, got it?), a little wandering around can take you to all sorts of other cool places to be.

Happy surfing!



[alt.commercial-hit-radio.must die](#)

[alt.music.a-capella](#)

[alt.music.ska](#)

[alt.thrash](#)

[alt.fan.run-dmc](#)

[alt.music.bela-fleck](#)

[alt.exotic-music](#)

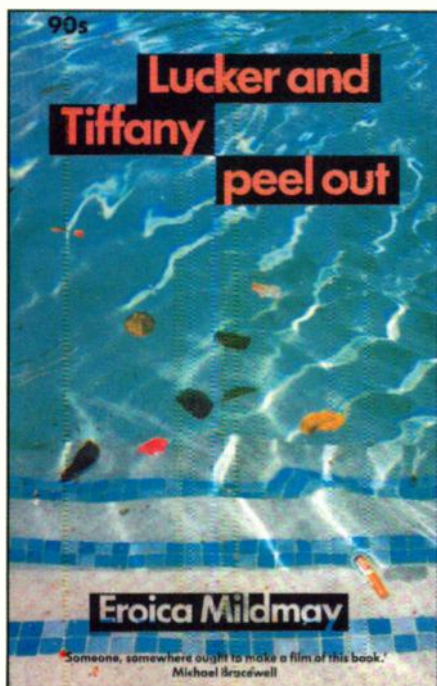
[alt.elvis.sighting](#)

[alt.fan.shostakovich](#)

[alt.fan.laurie.anderson](#)

[alt.rock-n-roll.metal.death](#)

[alt.music.nin](#)



LUCKER AND TIFFANY PEEL OUT

by Eroica Mildmay (Serpent's Tail)

Young British author Eroica Mildmay's first book is in that most American of genres, the road novel. The substance of the plot is a drive across America that the narrator, a young British layabout named Tiffany, takes with her testosterone-dazed boyfriend Lucker. For the first few weeks, they're with a cokehead rock band that lip-synchs its way through stadium shows; after that, it's just the young lovers (who are starting to seriously annoy each other) and the highway. As a narrative, it's no great shakes. What makes it work is Tiffany, a beautifully fleshed-out character: sympathetic but not entirely so, willing to put up with varying amounts of bullshit depending on the situation, occasionally led astray by her hormones but always perfectly aware of what's going on around her, and perfectly sarcastic. "I am not the endlessly patient madonna with X-ray eyes," she says of a fight over a misplaced map, "and I no longer know where anything is on principle. Especially if I didn't pack it in the first place." The book ends abruptly (they run out of money and fly home), but as in the story, it's not the resolution that matters, it's the journey.

—Douglas Wolk

mixed media

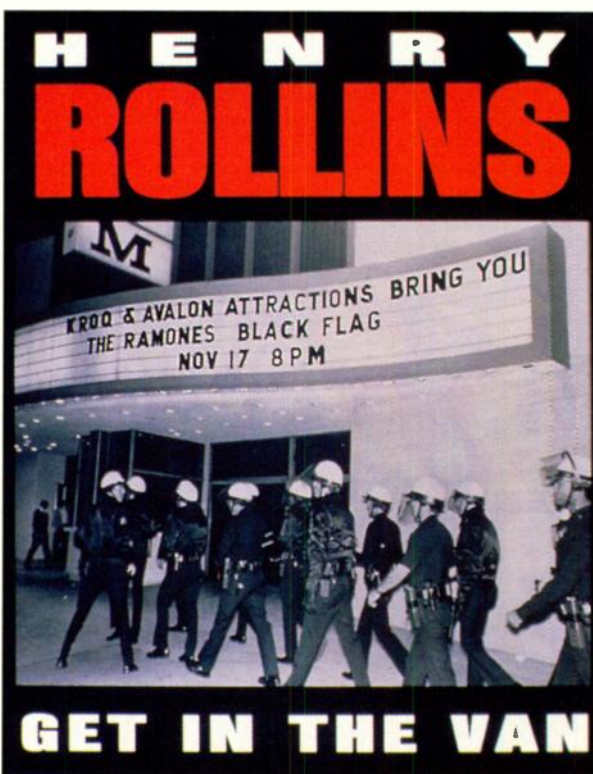
compiled by dawn sutter

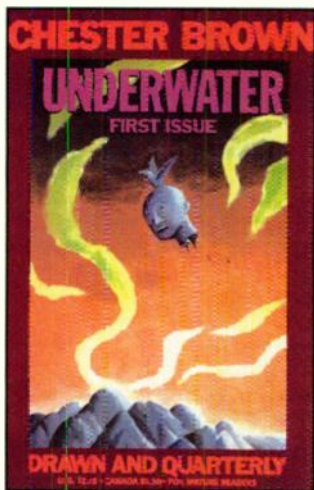
GET IN THE VAN: ON THE ROAD WITH BLACK FLAG

by Henry Rollins (2.13.61)

"Home is bad. It kills. Home makes me soft. Makes me weak. The road is the only thing that keeps me sharp." Henry Rollins wrote that in his diary in 1986, and while it sums up Black Flag's outlook on touring, it also neatly sums up the cycle of *Get In The Van*'s ups 'n' downs. So long as Black Flag is on the road, *Get In The Van* (Rollins' diaries during his years as the group's singer) is absolutely riveting, and for a fan of Rollins or, especially, Black Flag, a source of tons of essential poop. It wasn't that long ago, but the years covered in this book (1981-86) seem like a very different time, and the relentless violence, poverty, and general bullshit the band had to put up with are all described in vivid, and often hilarious, detail.

(Look up the day they came to your town, and see if Henry mentions bustin' your friend's nose with the mic.) While the band isn't touring, however, all the reader is left with is pages and pages of Rollins' narcissistic he-man navel-gazing. But wade through the embarrassing adolescent angst, violence, and overall bad vibes and this is ultimately an uplifting story: a 19-year-old kid who got the chance to sing for his favorite band and changed his life forever. —Steve McGuirl





UNDERWATER

by Chester Brown (Drawn And Quarterly)

The comic that made people sit up and notice Canadian cartoonist Chester Brown was his old series *Yummy Fur*, which started as a series of non-sequitur absurdist jokes and gradually congealed into a brilliant piece of epic scatology, "Ed The Happy Clown," a few Gospel adaptations, and finally a series of autobiographical stories where he developed a masterful, unconventional storytelling style. *Underwater*, his new series, continues the visual style of late *Yummy Fur*, but the story has gone off in a completely new direction. The first issue (whose dialogue is almost entirely in gibberish) seems to be mostly about the development of language in babies, but there are also some surreal, dream-logic sequences and a few things that don't make any sense at all. Yet. If Brown's past work is any indication, hold on, because it will all come together when you don't expect it to.

—Douglas Wolk



A CHAT WITH WHIT STILLMAN

Barcelona, the latest from director Whit Stillman, is the follow-up to his charming and highly acclaimed first film, *Metropolitan*. *Barcelona* finds similar characters, this time two antagonistic cousins, struggling to fit in where, as Americans, they're not particularly wanted. The film has a keen eye for the cultural energy of the "waning days of the Cold War," but also has enormous humor and compassion for its two main characters as they fall for a succession of Spanish women and dream of real hamburgers. We talked to him at his swank Portland, Oregon suite.

CMJ: *Metropolitan* was partially autobiographical. How does *Barcelona*, the city itself, factor into the Whit Stillman story?

WS: Biographically, it was sort of next on the agenda. *Barcelona* is actually the story I started working on first. I was over in Spain, on the set of a movie by Fernando Trueba [of *Belle Époque* fame], but I put it aside to do *Metropolitan*, and I came back to it in June of '91.

CMJ: So how did the time lapse affect the film?

WS: I didn't use any of the original dialogue or the scenes, but I did stay with the idea of the two characters and the first two women. With *Metropolitan*, I'd gotten the idea of using those two actors (Nichols and Eigeman) 'cause I really liked them in *Metropolitan*—I thought they had great chemistry together. When I was talking to Taylor Nichols on the last day of shooting *Metropolitan*, he was complaining that he always played the best friend who didn't get the girl, and I said, "Well, in the next film you're gonna play the protagonist, and you're gonna get the girl."

CMJ: There's some confusion, though, about which girl he winds up with...

WS: I thought I foreshadowed it enough, but there are a lot of people who are surprised. Even at the end of the film, they aren't quite sure what's going on. I like that there is a little bit of mystery and confusion at the end. I think that's good in movies, because normally what we're getting is the opposite of that. We're getting total explanation.

CMJ: Like *Metropolitan*, *Barcelona* is totally character- and dialogue-driven, but in a weird way, it has all the elements of the quintessential blockbuster. Buildings explode, there's a drive-by shooting, there's international intrigue, and there are all of these beautiful women...

WS: Oh God, that's great. Put that in the article.

—Jen Small

funnybooks



GEARHEAD

P.O. Box 4121219 San Francisco, CA 94142

Issue #2 of *Gearhead* has been a long time

in the making; it's been a year since the

first issue was released. The sister

'zine to Chicago's *Speed Kills*,

Gearhead is all about cars and

music, music and cars. This

particular issue has an interview

with surf music god Dick Dale,

a comparison/rating of biker

films, and an interview with

cover cartoonist Peter Bagge.

And if you ever wondered how

they make model car kits, well,

there's an explanation of that in here

too. Oh, and a rockin' split 7" single of

Clawhammer and the Red Aunts.

(DS)

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James



Kerbdog



Monster Magnet

"Jam J" has got a hell of a groove, too—though it's a far cry from the crisp and jangly Euro-pop we've come to associate JAMES with. It comes from the band's new *Vital Wob* (Mercury), a full album of spontaneous moments recorded in the wee hours during the band's *Lord* sessions, hand-picked and assembled by Brian Eno. "Jam J" emerges as an exercise in distortion, from the crunchy thud of its snare to its writhing overdriven bass, and a captivating experiment in dance-rock improvisation.

You might have seen **BIG HEAD TODD AND THE MONSTERS** on the H.O.R.D.E. Festival tour this summer, or on their incessant American tours. *Strategem* (Giant) is the new one from Todd Park Mohr (whose head isn't all that large) and his power trio, recorded in a theater in the band's home state of Colorado. "**In The Morning**" is sure to be played in clubs and on campuses all over the world, wherever you see the band's '77 Plymouth van parked outside.

Somewhere between Drive Like Jehu's arrestingly rhythmic chugging and Soundgarden's bluesy metal lies **KERBDOG**, a group from Ireland that was voted 1993's best new live band in Kerrang! magazine's reader's poll. "**End Of Green**," from Kerbdog's self-titled album on Mercury, blends an unexpected 7-beat riff with a more familiar pop chorus and a touch of the harsh-edged indie-rock the band loves.

Named after a Frank Zappa song, **MONSTER MAGNET** takes its metal-inflected sludgcore to new extremes of heaviness. The group's done everything from Sabbath homages to a one-song, full-length album, and with a slogan of "it's a psychedelic drug thing—you wouldn't understand," you can never be sure just how serious it's being. "**Negasonic Teenage Warhead**" (told you it was heavy) comes from the *S.W. Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*—that stands for "so fucking what," by the way—and like the movie, it's nihilism served with a snicker.

Rarely has a hardcore band channeled as much rage as **SPITBOY** does into such a deliberate, measured sound. "**Removal**," one of the three songs on the *Mi Guepo Es Mio 7"* EP (Albed), shows off the band's singular sense of melody and rhythm (guitarist Kann gives hardcore an entirely new tonal palette), and singer/bassist Paula's air-rendering screams. Watch for a new Spitboy single coming soon on the Ebullition label.

Donna Dresch has played in groups from Dinosaur Jr. to Screaming Trees; her new Portland-based band, **TEAM DRESCH**, which also includes members of Hazel, Adickid, and Calamity Jane, has been amazing West Coast audiences since it started earlier this year (an extraordinarily successful single on Kill Rock Stars didn't hurt, either). The compact, peppy "**She's Crushing My Mind**" comes from the band's debut album, *Personal Best*, which is being co-released by Chainsaw and Candy-Ass—Dresch and bandmate Jody Bleyle's labels.



VOLUME 15

Dolores O'Riordan and her compatriots in **cranberries** crept into the music world's consciousness last year, established a secure foothold, and are prepared to stay there. The Irish group has been touring ceaselessly for the past year, working out its new songs until they strike like a full-force gale. "**Zombie**" is the centerpiece of the new *No Need To Argue* (Island), a scream for mercy from the heart of the country's ongoing civil war, and one of the most powerful things the group has ever done.

Though **THE BLUE UP?** isn't quite a household name yet, it's been at it a long time—since 1986, in fact, with a two-year gap when bassist/vocalist Carolyn Rush left town. Buy the trio, led by singer/guitarist Rachael Olson (she's the one with the amazingly huge vocal range—she says she'd like to be "the listenable Captain Beefheart"), is finally ready to enter your heart. "**Feel Me Dying**" comes from an album that will be released early next year on Columbia.

Folk singers aren't supposed to matter anymore; they're supposed to play festivals in New England, support a few worthy causes and hang out quietly in coffee houses. From the U.K. comes **DAVID GRAY**, a man who has all the looks of a folkie (the Tommy Smothers haircut, the acoustic guitar), but all the intensity of a punk frontman. "**What Are You?**" comes from his latest LP, *Flesh* (Vernon Yard), and like Billy Bragg before him, Gray immediately redefines what one man and his guitar can do.

David Gedge and his band **THE WEDDING PRESENT** have been regulars on the British pop scene for close to a decade, and now they're gearing up for an



cranberries



David Gray

THE ID

HOW TO USE THIS PAGE

1. Cut along dotted line.
2. Fold in half.
3. Slip into our CD holder or a jewel box.



Mighty Mighty Bosstones



Helmet



Justice System

assault on America. The Weddoes, as they're called at home, also know a thing or two about singles—they released one every month of 1992. “**Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah**” is the first single from the new *Watusi* (Island), and it's a perfect introduction to the group's breathless acoustic/electric rush and Gedge's vehement but personable singing.

The Dutch group **K'S CHOICE** knows the secret of a perfect AM-radio-style pop song. First of all, it has to be almost exactly three minutes long. Second, it has to have something creeping below its surface—like, say, a sardonic and bitter take on love. Third, it has to have letter-perfect harmonies and hooks that snag everything within reach. Sound like “**Me Happy**” (from *The Great Subconscious Club* (550-Epic))? You got it.

When the **MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES** first rose up out of Boston's ska and punk scene with *Devil's Night Out*, they played a startling combination of metallic hardcore and bouncy ska. They may be the only band to cover both Slapshot and Bob Marley, but what is most striking about their new *Question The Answer* (Mercury) is how the Bosstones' sound has come together. In “**Kinder Words**,” hard rock and ska blend seamlessly, fueled by Dickie Barrett's beer-soaked growl.

In celebrating the 20th anniversary of his (in)famous East Village club CBGB's, owner Hilly Kristal has pulled out all the stops, as he simultaneously celebrates CBGB's past importance and asserts its present relevance. The *CBGB's 20th Anniversary Album* (Giant), from which “**Just Another Victim**” is taken, is an eclectic collection (The Damned and Blues Traveler appear back-to-back), but none of the bands are as loud as **HELMET**. But then, almost nobody is.

CBGB's is also known for having given a lot of punk and new wave groups their big career break, from the Ramones to whoever's playing this week's Sunday audition night. One of the bands that the club helped out at the beginning was the goofy young **B-52's**. The band is still making music that touches the same party chord, and this version of “**Private Idaho**,” also from the *CBGB's 20th Anniversary Album* (Giant), reminds us just how much fun music can be. What the hell does the song mean? Well, really, who cares, as long as it's groovy.

While bands foolishly cope with flying bottles, spit and bodies of overzealous fans, **TOM JONES** has coolly enjoyed a career of flying lingerie for over 30 years. Jones is also a pretty awesome singer (really!), and “**If I Only Knew**” comes from his new record, *The Lead And How To Swing It* (Interscope). If anyone is going to teach you how to swing anything, Jones is the man. All together now: “What's new pussycat...?”

Recorded for \$700 and released this spring on the indie label Dionysus/Hell Yeah, *Primitive Enemy*, the first album by L.A.'s **BUTT TRUMPET**, built up a cult following. It's just been re-released on Chrysalis, with all its punk obnoxiousness intact. “**I'm Ugly And I Don't Know Why**” will introduce you to the foul-smelling world of singer Thom Bone, guitarist Blare N. Bitch, drummer Jerry Geronimo and bassists (that's right, there's two of them) Bianca Butthole and Sharon Needles.

“Let's take it to the stage!” That was the rallying cry of Parliament-Funkadelic, and the inspiration for **JUSTICE SYSTEM**, a hip-hop ensemble with a live funk band behind it. Folex, one of the group's two rappers, says they started it to “rely on real people making music and having something to say, and not hiding behind DATs and samples.” “**Just Because**” comes from the debut album *Rooftop Soundcheck* (MCA).

“Female punk/opera singer with harrowing timbre seeks underappreciated multi-instrumentalist from legendary rock group...” Whatever the circumstances, Led Zep's **JOHN PAUL JONES** teamed up with vocal iconoclast **DIAMANDA GALAS** for a thudding and intense set of songs, *The Sporting Life* (Mute), from which comes “**Do You Take This Man?**” And no, that's not Bonzo Bonham back from the dead beating the skins, it's Attraction Pete Thomas pumping things up.

Michael Franti is a man who's gone through some changes. His musical career started in industrial-rap terrorists the Beatnigs; that band mutated into Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy. Later, Franti collaborated with William S. Burroughs, and now he's started the socially conscious, lazily funky hip-hop ensemble **SPEARHEAD**. “**Hole In The Bucket**” comes from *Home* (Capitol); Franti's got something to say, and he says it as eloquently as ever.

Speaking of socially conscious hip-hoppers, **CONSOLIDATED** has always let its conscience be its guide, rapping about plenty of issues that are on the group's mind and achieving encores in favor of discussing its performance with the audience. (Consolidated's Adam Sherburne spoke to Spearhead's Franti about activist hip-hop last issue.) “**Cutting**,” from the new *Business Of Punishment* (London), gets its message across with the group's fierce industrial rap-rock attack.

State Of Emergency: Society In Crisis, Vol. 1 is the title of a new compilation (on Mad Sounds/Motown) that focuses on what's going on in the hip-hop underground and the culture around it, including tracks featuring everybody from the Pharcyde to Ice-T to Arrested Development's Ndirah, as well as spoken-word interludes from African-American leaders past and present. **JR. SWINGA** contributes “**Chocolate City**”—not the Parliament song of the same name, but a hell of a groove on its own.

Diamanda Galas
with John Paul Jones

Spearhead



Consolidated



NEW RELEASES
OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

OCTOBER

QUEENSRYCHE Promised Land (EMI)
BLACK 47 Home Of The Brave (SBK)
DIGABLE PLANETS Blowout Comb (Pendulum-EMI)
JAMES Wah Wah (Mercury)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Hey! Drag City (Drag City)
TOM JONES The Lead & How To Swing It (Interscope)
THELONIOUS MONK Complete Blue Note Recordings (4 CDs) (Blue Note)
BRICK LAYER QUICK Tragedy, Tragedy (Touch & Go)
SILVER JEW Starlite Walker (Drag City)
QUICKSAND Chelsea's Going Under (Island)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Axiom Ambient: Lost In The Translation (Axiom)
ANIMAL BAG Image Damage (Mercury)
SYLVIAN/FRIPP Damage (Live) (Virgin)
TANGERINE DREAM Tangents (Boxed Set) (Virgin)
SCARFACE The Diary (Virgin)
IVY Realistic (Seed)
BEDHEAD (Trance)
LOVE BATTERY Nehru Jacket (A&M)
HORSEY Diet Of Worms (Invisible)
SWANS Celebrity Lifestyle (Invisible)
CARLEEN ANDERSON True Spirit (Virgin)
PEGBOY Earwig (1/4 Stick)
SUZI KATZ Three Day Rain (ESD)
THESE ANIMAL MEN Join The High Society (Vernon Yard)
GO-GO'S Return To The Valley Of The Go-Go's (I.R.S.)

KEVIN SALEM Soma City (Roadrunner)
THE LONDON SUEDE Dogmanstar (Columbia)
LISA GERMANO Geek The Girl (4AD)
GOD BULLIES Kill The King (Alternative Tentacles)
SLIM DUNLAP (Medium Cool-Twin/Tone)
DR. DRE & ED LOVER (Relativity)
SNAIL All Channels Are Open (Big Deal-Caroline)
EARWIG Under My Skin I Am Laughing (La Di Da-Caroline)
DEAD CAN DANCE Toward The Within: An Audience With Dead Can Dance (4AD)
MADONNA Bedtime Stories (Maverick/Sire-Warner Bros.)
NEW YORK DOLLS Rock 'N' Roll (Mercury)
BLONDIE The Platinum Blonde Collection (2 CDs) (EMI)
RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS Unsocked (EMI)
EVERLY BROTHERS Heartaches And Harmonies (4 CD box) (Rhino)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Just Can't Get Enough: New Wave Hits Of The 80s, volumes 6-10 (Rhino)
BUCK OWENS The Very Best Of, Volumes 1 & 2 (Rhino)
POISON 13 Wine Is Red, Poison Is Blue (Sub Pop)
ZUMPANO Look What The Rookie Did (Sub Pop)
FROGS Racially Yours (El Recordo)
DA BUSH BABEES Ambushed (Reprise)
LORDS OF ACID Voodoo-U (American)
SWANSONS Shake (Interscope)

EVERCLEAR World Of Noise (Capitol)
GRENADINE (Simple Machines-TeenBeat)
UNREST Greatest Hits (TeenBeat)
MEGADETH Youthanasia (Capitol)
INXS Greatest Hits (Atlantic)
CONCRETE BLONDE Dance Along The Edge (I.R.S.)
LIDA HUSIK/BEAUMONT HANNANT Evening At The Grange (Astralwerks-Caroline)
CUB Come Out, Come Out!! (Mint)

MARY BEATS JANE Mary Beats Jane (Geffen)
THREE MILE PILOT Chief Assassin To The Sinister (DGC)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Woodstock '94 Compilation (2 CDs) (A&M)
BLACK SHEEP Non-Fiction (Mercury)
aMINIATURE Plexiwatt (Restless)
CRAIN Speed (Restless)
RESIDENTS Cube-E Live (reissue) (Restless)
STING Dogstar Compilation: Sting's Greatest 1984-1994 (A&M)
JERRY LEE LEWIS (no title yet, but it's new material) (Warner Bros.-Sire)
JOHN FRUSCIANTE (former Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist) (American)

DINK (Capitol)
GRIFTERS 7" (Sub Pop)
NIRVANA (2 CD set, live and from MTV *Unplugged*) (DGC)
PEARL JAM Vitalogy (tentative title) (Epic)
JIMMY PAGE AND ROBERT PLANT Unleaded (from MTV *Unplugged*; tentative title) (Atlantic)

FRANK SINATRA Duets 2 (Capitol)
STR8-G Shadow Of A 'G' (A&M)
VAN HALEN Seventh Seal (Warner Bros.)
VARIOUS ARTISTS Best Of Unplugged (Warner Bros.)
MALFUNKSHUN (Andy Wood of Mother Love Bone) (Loose Grooves-550 Music)
WEAPON OF CHOICE (Loose Grooves-550 Music)

All dates and titles are subject to change

NOVEMBER

ON TOUR



LUSH

Manhattan Center, New York

August 19, 1994

Lush isn't much to look at. At least, it shouldn't be. The band's music stems from an inner vision, and its physical presence is utterly subordinate to its atmospherics—which is why the group is best viewed in a small club with minimal lighting, and why tonight's performance in a mid-sized auditorium initially fails to captivate.

The band looks uncomfortable. There's so much room to move, yet so little motion. A janitor could easily mop three-quarters of the stage and not get in Lush's way. Harsh beams of lights zip every which way, causing many members of the crowd to avert or cover their eyes, and singer/guitarist Emma Anderson seems to be having trouble with her monitor, making her vocals sound flat and hesitant. The distracting physicality of the performance drags it down. There are so many holes it seems inconceivable that the band's ethereal tendrils will fill every cavity.

At first, they don't. The set starts out musically upbeat but productively downtrodden. "Blackout" sounds shaky and under-rehearsed, as Anderson and singer/guitarist Miki Berenyi's sandpaper strums fall out of step with Chris Acland's sure-footed drumming; and the celestial static of "Starlust" gets sucked into a black hole, leaving it broken and unstable. For the first 10 minutes of tonight's show it appears as if Lush is unable to shine without performing in near-darkness, but as the band begins the buoyant first verse of "For Love," the invisible chunk of lead weighing down the group is removed, and the music begins to soar through the clouds and into the heavens.

No longer is Berenyi's flaming orange hair the center of attention, no longer is the band's inactivity an obtrusion. Now, the music speaks its own language, rendering lyrics and rhythmic structure utterly unimportant, fusing sound and mind into a paradoxically melancholy and uplifting whole. Despite the bitterness and longing inherent in songs like "Light From A Dead Star," "Loveline" and the near-hostile "Hypocrite," the sound of Lush's chiming guitars and mercurial vocals is inspirational, almost religious. "Sweetness And Light," "Undertow" and "Kiss Chase" bathe the crowd in pristine sonic waves, and by the time Lush encore with the slow, mesmerizing "Desire Lines," nearly everyone in the crowd is swaying along.

Lush may once have been one of those British shoe-gazing bands, but these days, when it hits its stride, the idea of associating the band with something as tangible as shoes is as absurd as trying to light a cigarette with a firefly. —Jon Wiederhorn

DIAMANDA GALAS WITH JOHN PAUL JONES

November 10 New York, NY
13 Philadelphia, PA
15 Ann Arbor, MI
17 Chicago, IL
18 Madison, WI
20 Lincoln, NE
22 Columbus, OH
24 Toronto, Ont.
26 Washington, D.C.
30 Austin, TX

ALSO TOURING IN NOVEMBER

American Music Club
Archers Of Loaf
Dinosaur Jr.
Guided By Voices
Liz Phair
Superchunk
Wedding Present
L7/Melvins/Wool
Nova Mob
Thinking Fellers Union Local 282
Cows
Unsane
God Bullies
Dog Faced Hermans
Veruca Salt
Silkworm
Majesty Crush
Grant Lee Buffalo
Family Cat
Babe The Blue Ox
Edsel
311
Helios Creed
Big Head Todd And The Monsters
Candy Machine

DIRECTORY

A LISTING OF LABELS WHOSE ARTISTS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

550
550 Madison Ave.
21st Fl.
New York, NY 10022

4AD
8533 Melrose Ave., Suite B
Los Angeles, CA 90069

A&M
1416 N. La Brea Ave.
Hollywood, CA 90028

Allied
P.O. Box 460683
San Francisco, CA 94146

Arista
6 W. 57th St.
New York, NY 10019

Atlantic
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10019

Atlas
11150 Santa Monica Blvd.
Suite 1000
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Bar None
P.O. Box 1704
Hoboken, N.J. 07030

Candy-Ass
P.O. Box 42382
Portland, OR 97242

Capitol
1750 N. Vine St.
Hollywood, CA 90028

Caroline
114 W. 26th St., 11th Fl.
New York, NY 10001

Chainsaw
P.O. Box 1151
Olympia, WA 98507

Cherry Red
25-29 Fulham High St.
London, UK SW6 3JH

Chrysalis/EMI
1290 Ave. Of The Americas, 42nd Fl.
New York, NY 10104

Columbia
550 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Dance Mania
(c/o Barney's)
3400 W. Ogden
Chicago, IL 60623

EastWest
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10019

Elektra
75 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10019

EMI
1290 Ave. Of The Americas, 42nd Fl.
New York, NY 10104

Epic
550 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Generator
726 Jefferson NE, 2nd Fl.
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Giant
8900 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 200
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

GRP
555 W. 57th St.
New York, NY 10019

Hightone
220 4th St. #101
Oakland, CA 94607

Instinct
222 W. 14th St.
New York, NY 10011

Interscope
10900 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 1230
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Inland
400 Lafayette St., 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10013

London
825 8th Ave., 24th Fl.
New York, NY 10019

Mammoth
Carr Mill, 2nd Fl.
Carrboro, NC 27510

Matador
676 Broadway, 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10012

MCA
70 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608

Mercury
825 Eighth Ave.
New York, NY 10019

Merge
P.O. Box 1235
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Motown
6255 Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90028

Mute
5 Crosby St., 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10019

New Breed
460 W. 24th St. #11C
New York, NY 10011

Planet E Communications
P.O. Box 27218
Detroit, MI 48227

Relativity
187-07 Henderson Ave.
Hollis, NY 11423

Restless
1616 Vista Del Mar
Hollywood, CA 90028

Rhino
2225 Colorado Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Roadrunner
225 Lafayette St.
Suite 407
New York, NY 10012

Seed
19 W. 21st St., Suite 501
New York, NY 10010

Simple Machines
P.O. Box 1290
Arlington, VA 22210

Singles Only Label
P.O. Box 966
New York, NY 10009

S.K.A.M.
P.O. Box 651
Iowa City, IA 52244-0651

Skin Graft
P.O. Box 257546
Chicago, IL 60625

Slash
P.O. Box 48888
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Sub Pop
1932 First Ave.
Seattle, WA 98101

TeenBeat
P.O. Box 3265
Arlington, VA 22203

Tim/Kerr
P.O. Box 42423
Portland, OR 97242

TVT
23 E. 4th St.
New York, NY 10003

Vernon Yard
1790 Broadway, 21st Fl.
New York, NY 10019

Virgin
338 N. Foothill Rd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Localzine

by Andrew Beaujon
photographs by Patrick Graham

WASHINGTON, DC



A RESIDENT OF THE SOCIAL-PROGRESS-THROUGH-ROCK COMMUNE POSITIVE FORCE WELCOMES YOU TO HIS WASHINGTONIAN WORLD

The best time to visit Washington, DC is in the fall, after the tide of tourism has ebbed and when the seas of humidity which slosh around the city all summer have abated somewhat. Fall is also the time that one-half to two-thirds of

the area's population is back home either campaigning for re-election or trying to line up lucrative consulting jobs, so there's a little more air for us non-political types to breathe.

In an attempt to mollify all the colonists who wanted the nation's capitol in their various hometowns, our founding fathers decided, King Solomon-like, to situate the seat of our government on a sinking swamp whose location would please no one. This decision forever molded Washington, DC's transient character. Most people live here for four years or so, and the few who stay any longer are generally government workers who use this area as a home base while scrambling for temporary appointments elsewhere. The children of this strange economy have struggled to entertain themselves for two hundred years, and as an elder member of this population (I've lived here for 17 years, or four and a quarter presidential terms), I can speak with some authority as to the best places to rock and be rocked.

THE GALAXY HUT

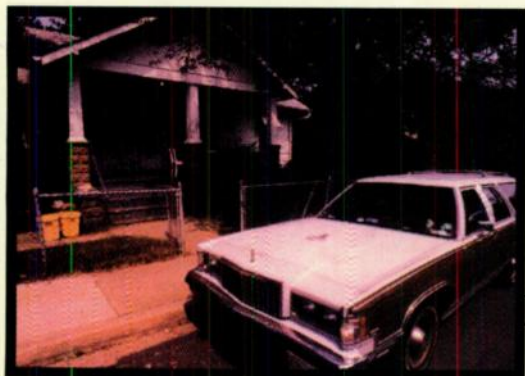
Don't come looking for punk history with a copy of *Banned In DC* under your arm, as almost all of the places in the book are gone, except for the 9:30 Club and the Dischord House, which is actually across the Potomac River in Arlington, Virginia. The Simple Machines and TeenBeat houses are all within walking distance of Dischord, forming sort of a holy troika for the indie-rock nerd on vacation. A note, though—no one likes to be stalked. Call before you come over to visit any of these places and do so at a decent hour. The residents of all these houses routinely get together and commiserate about 3 a.m. phone calls and strangers at the door.

Arlington also features many good bars and restaurants. The Galaxy Hut (2711 Wilson Blvd., (703) 525-8646) and O'Carroll's (2051 Wilson Blvd., (703) 524-5066), a really great old-man hangout which has recently fallen into favor with the scenesters, are your best choices for drinking, and while the Bardo (2000 Wilson Blvd., (703) 527-9399) is the largest bar east of the Appalachians, it's generally packed to the rafters with frat boys on the town. The coolest thing that ever happened there was when William Kennedy Smith was punched out recently by a bouncer. Further down Wilson, in Arlington's Little Vietnam area, you can try Vietnamese food and Vietnamese iced coffee (with condensed milk) at a number of great places, notably Cafe Dalat (3143 Wilson Blvd., (703) 276-0935) and Cheseapeake Seafood & Crab House (3607 Wilson Blvd., (703) 528-8888).

For live music, you have quite a few choices, and they're all back across the river in the District proper. Summertime brings us the free outdoor concerts at Fort Reno park near American University, everyone's favorite being the annual Fugazi show which is really more like a lecture on how not to dance.

SIMPLE MACHINES HOUSE

Positive Force (703-276-9768), a social-progress-through-rock organization and commune, puts on a lot of shows in places like Saint Stephen's Church





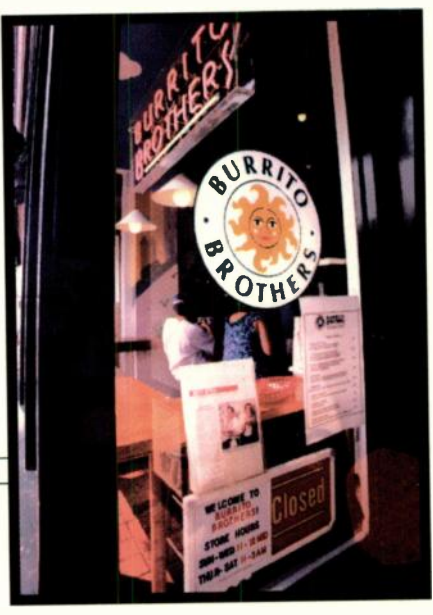
and the Washington Peace Center. The three main DC venues are the **Fifteen Minutes Club** (1030 15th St. NW, (202) 408-1855) which is kind of yuppyish but the most receptive to younger bands looking for shows, yet is sadly not all ages; the **9:30 Club** (930 F St. NW, (202) 393-0930) hosts a lot fewer punk shows these days, and you're much likelier to find yourself here to see the latest British sensation than the local fauna, but it's a great club nonetheless. The **Black Cat** (1820 14th St. NW, (202) 667-7960), the newest and biggest of the three, is owned by local punks and has played host to the majority of good shows lately. Mick Jagger was spotted there recently during a private party hosted by former Nation Of Ulysses mouthpiece Ian Svenonius. I swear I'm not making that up. Beer and cover prices are pretty high at the Black Cat (and for some reason they think Leinenkugel is a microbrew) so sell some spare records before you come.

GO! COMPACT DISCS

The best places to do that are at either **Vinyl Ink Records** in Silver Spring, Maryland (955 Bonifant St., (301) 55-VINYL) or **Go! Compact Discs** back in Arlington (2507 Franklin Rd., (703) 528-8340). The two stores are currently engaged in a trade war that's getting nastier and more public by the week, so watch your words in either. It seems that George, Vinyl Ink's owner, was denied a table by Jimmy. Go!'s owner, at the Go!-sponsored Indie-Rock Flea Market in Arlington earlier this summer (imagine that). Potential lawsuits and miles of bitchy faxes are in the air, bringing a screechy tone to an otherwise very pleasant music scene. Hopefully, they'll work it out soon and we can all shop in peace. If you're looking for non-rock (indie or otherwise) your best bet is **Olsson's** (various locations throughout the area, call the Georgetown store at (202) 338-6712) for classical and jazz; and **12-Inch Records** for dance and techno (in Dupont Circle, which is also the de facto center of the area's gay and lesbian community).

If a vigorous round of record shopping leaves you hungry, there's **Burrito Brothers** (in Dupont Circle and Georgetown) for the best in ingredients and taste; **Dante's**, which is owned by former Iron Cross and Grey Matter drummer Dante Ferranando (1522 14th St. NW, (202) 667-7260), for innovative and delicious food until 4 in the morning; the **Red Sea** (2463 18th St. NW, (202) 483-5000) for mind-blowing Ethiopian (another big cuisine in this area); and **Bob And Edith's Diner** (2310 Columbia Pike, Arlington, (703) 920-6103) for cheap and relatively digestible food 24 hours a day. For coffee, no place in town can touch the on-site roasted brew at **Kofi Hous**, colloquially known as Misha's (112 N. Patrick St., (703) 548-4089) in Old Town, Alexandria, a good place to see famous indie-rockers in ridiculous colonial costumes.

BURRITO BROTHERS



If you're looking for other distractions, there are always the monuments, which are especially nice to visit at night, and the museums, which are world-class and have free admission. The newest museum is the **Holocaust Museum** (100 Raoul Wallenberg Pl. SW where 14th St. and Independence Ave. come together, (202) 488-0400), which is a very popular destination, as well as a devastating experience. Get tickets before you come to town or go there before the museum opens at 10 a.m. Almost all the museums are on the area downtown called the Mall, along a field anchored by the Washington Monument and the Capitol Building and ringed with most of the Smithsonian museums, as well as the National Gallery Of Art. Off the Mall, don't even bother with the National Aquarium—it's a cheap date, but only good if you like to see a bunch of fish swimming in the basement of a government building. A true slacker joy is the **National Building Museum** (401 F St. NW, (202) 272-2448) which has the coolest gift shop in Washington and exhibits on weird things like beams. Another good museum is the **National Postal Museum** near Union Station. My favorite place in DC is **Lady Bird Johnson Park**, right next to National Airport, where you can lie on the ground and watch landing airplanes fly 20 feet above you. Do bring earplugs. Dumbarton Oaks is a beautiful park at the northern border of Georgetown in the District, and a great place for a romantic stroll. Also, while its official name might be Meridian Hill Park, Malcolm X Park is the real name of a decaying yet gorgeously designed park in upper DC near Howard University. A caveat—be out of there by dusk. The American Film Institute in the **Kennedy Center** (202-785-4600) is usually showing something interesting, as is the Biograph in Georgetown, a neighborhood which used to be the heart of the harDCore scene, but is now mostly a bunch of T-shirt shops and cheesy US Marine bars, who share the haircut, if not quite the values, of your average punk. If you're inclined, the **National Symphony Orchestra** (202-416-8100) frequently plays to less-than-full houses in the Kennedy Center as well and is soon to boast one of the world's best conductors in Leonard Slatkin. You can see a performance here for between \$5–20, depending on its popularity.



Washington can be a fun place despite its staid image. Just take care not to engage anyone at all in a political discussion, and never walk alone at night (we do have the country's highest murder rate). Let me know if you're coming, and I'll be glad to take you to the Reflecting Pool some evening.

POSITIVE FORCE RESIDENT ISSAC BROCK HAVING FUN AT THE LOCAL 7-11

Andrew Beaujon sings and plays guitar in Eggs.

THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSS TONES



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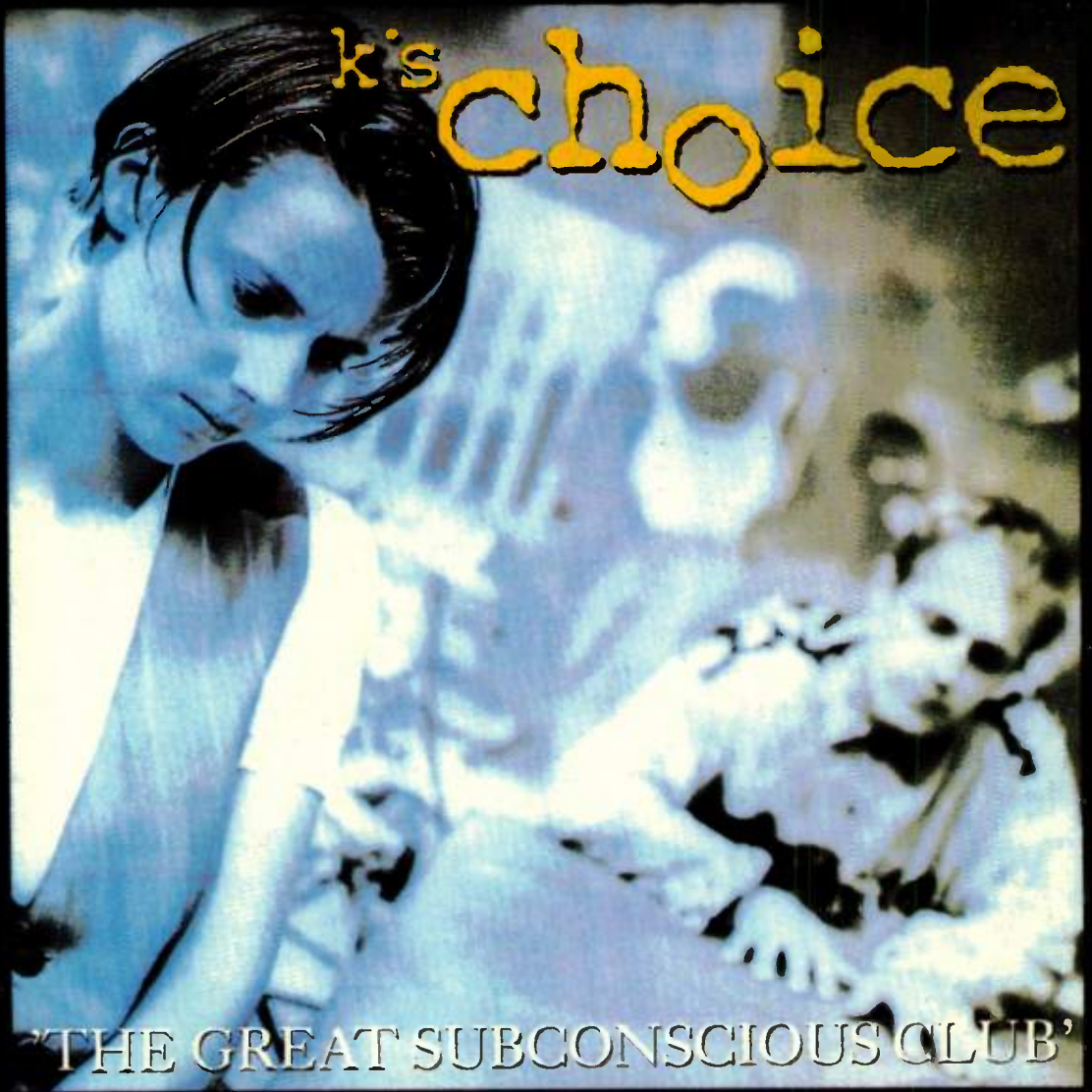


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