

CMJ

NEW MUSIC

QUICK FIX: DIRTY THREE
BUZZKILL / FLUFFY
JAMES TAYLOR QUARTET

Marilyn Manson

OVER 30 REVIEWS
INCLUDING:

BAD BRAINS

THE CLEAN

HANDSOME

THE PRESIDENTS
OF THE UNITED STATES
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RED HOT + RIO

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World Radio History

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

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MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE

CMJ

NEW MUSIC
MONTHLY



FEATURES

16 GOLDEN PALOMINOS

Poet Nicole Blackman meets Palomino whiz Anton Fier, and what emerges is something creepy. Interview by Kurt B. Reighley.

18 ROBERT FORSTER

The once and future Go-Between holds forth. Interview by Franklin Bruno.

20 WILCO

Jeff Tweedy gets back to the roots of roots-rock. Interview by Tom Lanham.

22 SCENIC

Out in the Arizona desert with this instrumental combo. Interview by Steven Mirkin.

24 MARILYN MANSON

Trent Reznor's (thirteenth) disciple is ready for (Antichrist) Superstardom. Interview by Kurt B. Reighley.

30 CATCH THE .WAV

Cool music sites on the World Wide Web.

DEPARTMENTS

4 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In which you, the readers, discuss Evan Dando's age, appearance and middle name.

6 QUICK FIX

Fluffy, Dirty Three, James Taylor Quartet and other glances at our briefs.

14 ON THE VERGE

Divine Comedy, JB3, Seely and Rex. You heard about 'em here first.

44 TOP 75

75 records played a lot on college and alternative radio, in convenient numerical order.

50 MIXED MEDIA/MULTIMEDIA

Movies, comics, 'zines, web sites and books. Turn off that stereo—it'll hurt your ears.

53 JUST OUT/DIRECTORY

A list of forthcoming releases, and addresses of labels whose records appear in this issue.

56 FEEDBACK

Mail, fax or email and let us know your opinion.

57 ON THE CD

Knowledge is power, they say, and we're all about empowerment.

61 LOCALZINE

Jordon Zadorozny of Blinker The Star shines a light on Montreal, Quebec.

MUSIC REVIEWS

12 BEST NEW MUSIC

January's best: new albums from Don Byron, Thee Headcoats, Heatmiser, Miracle Legion and Splashdown.

32 REVIEWS

Where the elite meet to greet musical treats. And otherwise.

45 SPECIALTY PAGES

Flashback Pick: The Who; Metal Pick: Manowar; Singles Pick: Atari Teenage Riot; Dance Pick: Tek 9; Hip-Hop Pick: Ghostface Killah.

LETTERS

Lemonheads' rock of ages

I like the Lemonheads, but I seem to remember Evan Dando being 29 when *Come On Feel The Lemonheads* came out. So by my math, he must have been 29 for at least, oh, 3-5 years.

Brad Shelor
via email

Could it be that the man who said "I've got two words for you—I don't wanna end up in that hospital again!" and "I wanna stay out of the news. I wanna stay out of jail. I wanna stay out of the insane asylum—all four of those things" just had trouble subtracting the date of birth on his driver's license from 1996?—ed.

No, I really like him for his music

Finally, a magazine has recognized the Lemonheads as a band with talent and not just a band that is fronted by a cute guy. Evan Dando is, of course, very attractive but he is also a very intelligent and talented person worthy of respect. I must admit that I have only listened to the Lemonheads since about 1993 and only own *It's A Shame About Ray* but I never get tired of it and plan on buying the new album soon. I know that if I were a musician of Evan Dando's caliber the last thing I would worry about would be selling albums. I would be content with a small but loyal group of followers, as he appears to be.

Anja Mitchell

But with math skills like that, if his group of followers was small or large, would he be able to count well enough to tell the difference?—ed.

Who knew his middle name?

Evan fuckin' Dando on the cover? How about someone who needs the exposure?

Brett M. Bakker
Albuquerque, NM

We thought that Evan needed the exposure, but we got distracted by how much we liked his new record and miscounted ourselves when we went over his financial ledger. We thought that he'd sold far fewer records than he actually has, so we screwed up, as people always do, when we equated obscurity with authenticity.—ed.

For Squirrels = R.I.Y.L.?

I've got to say bravo. A faithful *CMJ New Music Monthly* buyer, I have, on more than one occasion, read how inaccurate your R.I.Y.L. reviews were. Recently, however, I proved their accuracy. I had heard this great track on the radio. Thinking it was

R.E.M., I went and bought all of their old CDs. No luck. So, one day, having forgotten the whole deal, I relaxed with my sampler from December '95 (kudos to the Grinch!) and what's that I hear? Check the track: For Squirrels, "8:02 PM." Check the review (in my expansive *CMJ* library): December '95, Best New Music, For Squirrels, "R.I.Y.L.: Early R.E.M." Inaccurate? It could've saved me some money. Keep the worthy reading coming.

Chris Cooper
Enfield, NH

Yosemite Abe

"I'm not interested in gossip, only the music!" I insisted to my new British friend, who was driving the tour bus to Yosemite National Park. While on vacation, I predictably catch up on my reading. As I have with *CMJ*, and your July interview with Stone Temple Pilots found me empathetic towards Robert DeLeo. I'm not (nor have I ever been) a successful band-member, but I do have friends like Scott Weiland. Don't we ask that others not judge them while they stumble and fall? I'm willing to judge the STP unit as a whole—as they are presented to me musically. To hell with predictions and who-will-be-around-tomorrow existentialism. The new album is frankly, to borrow my new friend's phrase, "fucking brill."

Abe Hollander
Baltimore, MD

Brill? An edible European flatfish related to the turbot? British slang is cool.—ed.

Point, Counterpoint

It would be cool if I knew half the bands you talk about or cover. Cover more mainstream artists.

Jeremy Pitts
Wilsonville, OR

Damn good—a lot of the reviews and music from artists that I'm unfamiliar with!

Tom Brandt
Spencer, IA

Please, do meet me

Do you ever have ways of meeting *CMJ* staff? Or email?

Valerie Hesslink
Carbondale, IL

The only reader I've ever considered meeting enclosed a business card with the note "I only work nights and my stage name is Kat..." But we do have email: cmjmonthly@cmjmusic.com—ed.

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World Radio History

MIKE JUDGE

QUICK FIX



dirty three

stories without words

"I had been playing violin in orchestras, but I never really liked the violin in rock music at all," the instrumental trio Dirty Three's Warren Ellis explains. On a whim, he glued a guitar pick-up to his violin, and began to play through a set of effects pedals. "When I first started playing electric violin four years ago, I just wanted to make a real racket," he recalls. "Then I started to come around to liking the normal sound [of the violin], and I found that I could get more character in the sound by using different bow pressures and stuff like that."

The Dirty Three came together almost by accident in Melbourne, Australia, when Ellis began playing around to hastily organized shows with guitarist Mick Turner and drummer Jim White. Turner and White had played together in several bands, though Ellis had limited performing experience. He had few expectations for the collaboration, although he wanted to devise a way to combine his classical training with the rush of a rock band. What they ended up with combined Ellis's frenzied, passionate violin improvisations

with Turner and White's simple but gorgeously played chords and rhythms, and gained them a reputation as an extraordinarily powerful live act.

Horse Stories (Touch And Go), Dirty Three's third album, is a poignant, often stunning refinement of its style: a dry, controlled affair, emphasizing the group's fragile sense of dynamics. "We've always wanted the recordings to be representative of how we sound, rather than being some really fancy thing that sounds really dated," Ellis says. "We always play live when we record. We just set up and go for it."

If there is a consistent theme running through the Dirty Three's music, it's Ellis' insistence that the group's songs are about real life, despite the lack of vocals. On stage, Ellis regularly introduces songs with stream-of-consciousness ramblings that usually evolve into coherent stories. "I started talking because I wanted people to know that the songs were lyrical," he explains. "More and more of our songs seem to be about things that have happened to us over the last few years. 'Sue's Last Ride' is about a friend of Mick's who died—she overdosed and died in the back of a car, and that piece is kind of a little memorial to her."

Ellis says the beautiful and somber "Everything's Fucked" is particularly evocative for him. Cascading violin lines glide over Turner's tentative chords and White's jittery martial rhythms to conjure up the odd relief that comes when everything has fallen apart. "For me, that song was a kind of purging of a rather debased existence I was living for a few years," Ellis explains. "It's quite pretty and sort of positive and uplifting at the same time. It sort of acknowledges the sort of self-destruction that you can put yourself through. Sometimes we've played that song, and if things haven't been going right, I've pretty much had to stop in the middle of the song 'cause I've been in tears." GREG MILNER



in my room

artists' personal picks

F.M. CORNOG East River Pipe

Pet Shop Boys
Bilingual

Curtis Mayfield
All Time/Classic Collection

Miles Davis
Sketches of Spain

L.L. Cool J
"Doin' It"

Nick Kent
(Book) The Dark Stuff

THE BIZ

music industry
parlance, explained

Soundscan

Soundscan is a computerized system that keeps track of exactly how many copies of a record are actually being sold, based on UPC code scanners in most big record stores; Billboard bases its charts on it. It provides far more accurate indications of what's selling and what's not than the previously common system, based on store managers' often fudged reports. However, the sales figures Soundscan gives are often unrealistically low for albums that see most of their sales at smaller stores that aren't equipped with the system.

label profile

sooj

The New York label Sooj was founded early last year by Jeff Gordon and Path Soong, to release CDs by "painters who record and musicians who paint." So far, it's produced half a dozen discs documenting the aural side of visual artists. The first Sooj release was a 1985 conversation between interviewer Melvyn Bragg and the British painter Francis Bacon, and more recent releases have featured interviews with Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock (one of only two known recordings of Pollock's voice) and Andy Warhol (*Uh Yes Uh No*). Rock-types Ric Ocasek and Alan Vega express their visual sides in the booklet for *Geichertiktz*, and provide backing for spoken-word artist Gillian McCain on the disc. Up next is a spoken-word disc by poet Robert C. Morgan ("he paints with words," the label explains). DOUGLAS WOLK



FLUFFY

black eye

Out Now

"as pure punk as
the 90's get"

Robert Christgau - The Village Voice



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QUICK FIX



james taylor quartet

house organ

Let's get it clear right now: This has nothing to do with *that* James Taylor. No fire, no rain. Different guy, different country—England—and completely different music. *This* James Taylor plays an old Hammond organ, leading a band that creates a hot mix of funk, jazz and old movie themes in the unholy stew known as "acid jazz," which has very little to do with jazz, and even less to do with acid.

"Acid jazz is just a term that some silly man came up with as a way of presenting a bunch of artists," Taylor says. "It doesn't mean anything, really. I'd rather be known as a band in our own right than [one] from this silly 'scene.'" That 'scene,' though, has grown and grown, and over the course of 10 years and 10 albums, the JTQ has carved a place for itself. "We occupy a very peculiar niche at home. We don't enter the charts, or get into the music papers, but we do sell out large

venues consistently. And we do sell a lot of records." He pauses for a moment. "I like where we are."

A decade ago, though, that was nowhere. James and his brother David (who plays guitar in the band) were living in a small town. James, influenced by Booker T. and Jimmy Smith, had just bought his first Hammond organ. "People would say, 'What the hell is that? Don't you realize you can use a sampler?' They didn't understand my feelings about it, that it was a cool instrument." The band formed soon after, coalescing around the idea of movie music. From there, they discovered funk, jazz and dance music, and now "the records are heading back to where we started, but recorded properly. We're taking our cues from the late '60s and early '70s, but we're mixing it with what we grew up with, like punk. There's a lot of energy onstage, a lot of anarchy. We challenge the audience."

Now, finally, the band is touring America to challenge audiences over here. Four of its albums have been issued domestically, and the most recent, *A Few Useful Tips About Living Underground*, will hit stores in January. "We've been going on and packing our punches with four- or five-minute pieces, things that might shock or surprise"—including covers of "America" and "Whole Lotta Love"—"and later on it gets funky. There's a looseness we incorporate into the latter half of the set. Everything lets rip."

And Taylor has definite plans for the future. "JTQ will continue, and I'll be a Hammond player in the British R&B tradition, like Brian Auger or Georgie Fame, endeavoring to enjoy myself with that instrument. However, I also envisage a record company run by myself, putting out lots of artists in the same genre. And I want to hit the movie theme thing, with strings, big, flashy strings. But," he adds wryly, "it won't be called acid jazz." **CHRIS NICKSON**

mix tape

by Doug Sell

"Women And Love
At The End Of Love
And Stuff Like That"

SIDE ONE:

Red House Painters
Katy Song
Matthew Sweet
Thought I Knew You
Sunny Day Real Estate
48
Counting Crows
Anna Begins
Seam
The Wildcat
Pearl Jam
Black
Throneberry
Velvet Maroon
American Music Club
Why Won't You Stay
Uncle Tupelo
Anodyne
Soul Coughing
Janine

SIDE TWO:

John Coltrane
A Love Supreme (pt. 1:
Acknowledgement)
Jack Logan
Female Jesus
Freedy Johnston
The Mortician's Daughter
Dave Matthews Band
Lover Lay Down
Nirvana
Drain You
Sting
My One And Only Love
Grant Lee Buffalo
Honey Don't Think
Afghan Whigs
When We Two Parted
American Music Club
I've Been A Mess
U2
Love Is Blindness
Tindersticks
Raindrops

buzzkill

the band that just can't win

There was once a band of young men in New Brunswick, NJ, called Butthead, whose heavy style of punk was quickly making it a favorite among the college town's bar patrons. Then, "Lo and behold, a show called *Beavis And Butt-head* came out and everyone's showing up at our shows yelling quotes from the TV show. We went to Delaware and played a gig and everyone was screaming 'Beavis, hey Beavis,' so we changed it," says drummer Mike Polilli. After much argument, the band chose Buzzkill, which aside from having a nice ring to it, seemed appropriate because "we had gotten into a fistfight with the band Buzzoven after a gig."

Things were then going swimmingly—last year, the renamed trio signed to famed punk rock indie Alternative Tentacles and earned a slot on Lollapalooza's small stage on the East Coast leg of the tour—"And then, lo and behold, a show called *Buzzkill* comes out on MTV. I didn't even mind the *Beavis And Butt-head* thing because I like the show, but *Buzzkill* is a bad show. Now the new thing is these idiots are going to pick up instruments. They drive around in a beat-up van, it's three guys, their logo is kind of similar to our old logo."

Still, Buzzkill's full-length follow-up to the "Meat Is Dinner" 7", *Up*, was released in early October, "and that show'll be gone like *Dead At Seventeen* or whatever." **JENNY ELISCU**

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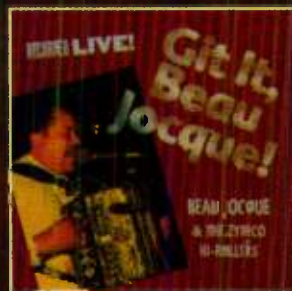
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QUICK FIX



fluffy

catch the buzz

It's a fact: Fluffy gets flack. The Fluffsters—four voluptuous British vixens in miniskirts and platform boots—are slugging down bottles of their fave American export, Miller beer, and grousing about the situation. The band's first single, "Hypersonic," for instance, not only celebrated the joys of vibrator use, but featured a rather hefty one for a cover photo—ka-blam! Flack. The next release, "Husband," took potshots at gruff, pushy boyfriends in a decidedly Bobbitt sort of way. Can you believe it? *More flack!*

Frisky blonde bassist Helen Storer unsheathes her claws first. "I don't think England gets us, because they kinda don't get the..."

"Irony!" hisses platinum-haired singer/songwriter Amanda Rootes. Storer nods. "Yeah, irony. They don't get the whole theme that we're into—it's become such an issue. Over in England they're like 'What's CBGB's? We're only interested in anoraks, baggy trousers and birds.' Guitarist Bridget Jones and powerhouse drummer Angie Adams start snickering at this reference. "You know how they dress, all those 'lad' bands," Storer continues. "And we come on and we're called Fluffy and we're four girls and

we play loud punk and we're wearing boots and miniskirts and they're like 'What's *this*?!' They don't know what to say, so they give us shit—the press is quite cynical in Britain."

Rootes (after returning from the ladies' room to announce "Hey, this pill I'm taking right now keeps turning my pee orange!") feels compelled to explain her playfully trashy lyrics. "Hypersonic," she sighs, "seemed like a natural, normal thing—after all, it's the '90s, and the Hypersonic is the best-selling vibrator in England. But everyone was really shocked by the single. And with Fluffy songs like 'Cheap' and 'Husband,' so many women come up to us after shows, going 'God, I really like that verse "I feel so cheap." So many women have gone through that—your lonely teenage years where you sort of do things you don't wanna do because you're young and getting sexual experience. And you just feel really cheap about it. And our line in 'Husband'—'Your girlfriends know you better than him'—a lot of girls get that way with their boyfriends. You just can't relate to him, he's like an alien. So you go hang out with your girlfriends who understand you a whole lot more."

But don't get these London lasses wrong. "Men are great! We love men!" purrs Rootes. "We're talking about *dickead* men, not *all* men," Storer elaborates. "It's only a small minority of men who are shit." Rootes gets a far-off look in her big mascaraed eyes. "Ah, if only we had a man..."

"If only we had a man *right now*!" Storer finishes the thought.

Ahem. Cough, cough. Yup, it sure is sad that there are no men around this afternoon.

Realizing the flack-inviting faux pas, all four Fluffy gals break into hysterical laughter. And Storer starts backpedaling quickly. "We, uh, didn't mean it, um, like *that*! You're a, uh, *journalist*! So you're, um, *neutral*, right? Right?" **TOM LANHAM**

weird record of the month

Guitarist/singer/electric-rake player Eugene Chadbourne has made some weird records in his time, but he's topped himself with his new "C&W opera," *Jesse Helms Busted With Pornography* (Fire Ant). The very loose plot concerns Senator Helms' advocacy of the "smokeless crack pipe" and... uh... Did we mention Chadbourne's backing band, which includes 2/3 of the Violent Femmes, half of Camper Van Beethoven, experimental saxophonist Lol Coxhill, and the Legendary Stardust Cowboy? Did we mention the covers of CVB's "Take The Skinheads Bowling" and Dolly Parton's "The Company You Keep," or the nine-minute Lefty Frizzell medley?

Jesse Helms busted with pornography



The C&W Opera by Eugene Chadbourne with royalties of the Violent Femmes, Camper Van Beethoven, Jimmy Carl Black, Don Helms, Kenny Malone, The Legendary Stardust Cowboy and Lol Coxhill

in my room

artists' personal picks

BOB GREEN Grassy Knoll

The Verve
A Northern Soul

David Torn
What Means Solid, Traveler?

Gillian Welch
Revival

My Bloody Valentine
Loveless

Ed Hall
La-La-Land

< QUOTE >

"And the bands on it with us, they're totally part of a rising tide of glam rock that's started to mushroom now."

—Psychotica's Pat Briggs

< /QUOTE >

tours we'd like to see

Kinetic Energy:

Smashing Pumpkins, Throwing Muses, Talking Heads, Stabbing Westward, Rolling Stones, Screaming Trees, Killing Joke (suggested by reader Gregory B. Bretz)

random fact

228 pounds of ground beef plus 72 pounds of spices, tomato purée and onions: That's the ingredients of a 300-pound meatloaf prepared by a Pittsburgh restaurant in celebration of a Meat Loaf concert appearance. Unfortunately, the one-big-meatloaf-deserves-another gesture went unappreciated by the singer, who had to cancel the show due to—no joke—food poisoning.

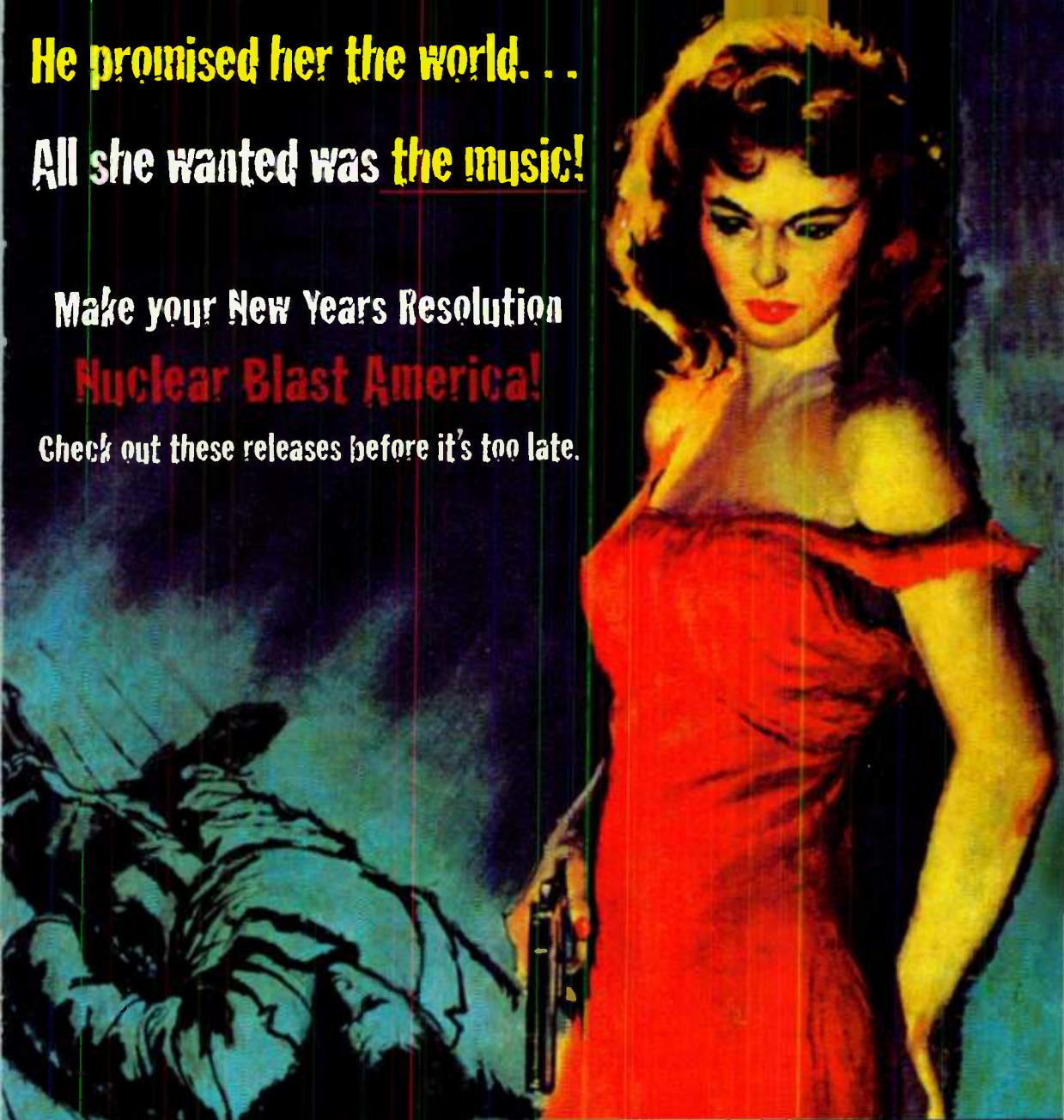
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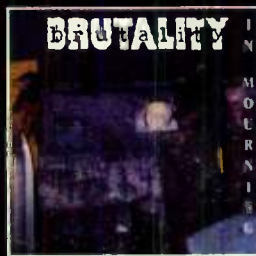
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best new music

[the five best releases this month]



DON BYRON / Bug Music / Nonesuch

Don Byron cuts loose! Well, of course, not without some intellectual justification: on *Bug Music*, the clarinetist seeks to elevate the status of neglected bandleaders John Kirby and Raymond Scott by reinterpreting their music and placing it alongside Duke Ellington and a dash of Tchaikovsky. The result is one of the most fun, lively jazz albums of the last few years. In his work as a bandleader, Byron cultivates music in which the traditional elements balance the weight of abstraction and interpretation, and the modern elements are as finely honed as the sharpest swing-era jazz. *Bug Music*, then, is a natural outgrowth of his gallery of inspirations. John Kirby was an African-American swing-era bandleader, and Raymond Scott

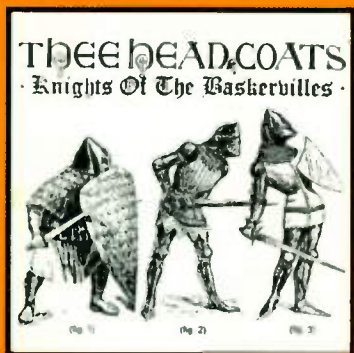
composed sheaves of music for cartoons and television shows. Both were fond of unusual chord progressions and wrote with a fine attention to detail and texture; both have repertoires of unperformed music. Byron explores the swinging, playful music with his own

remarkable clarinet driving the band. The group plunges lustily into backbone riffing and tightrope phrasing alike, and the many great solos are augmented by nimble comments from the others. There's a lack of bottom-end sounds on the album (even the bass is bouncy, and there's no tuba), but you'll likely be flying too high to notice. **DANNY HOUSMAN**

DATALOG: Released Oct. 20.

FILE UNDER: Swinging jazz.

R.I.Y.L.: Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Raymond Scott.



THEE HEADCOATS / Knights Of The Baskervilles / Birdman

There was once an age where you couldn't spit in any decent record shop without hitting a Billy Childish-related release, solo or as part of Thee Headcoats, Thee Headcoatees, Thee Mighty Caesars, Thee Milkshakes, Thee Stash, or any number of other outfits. For the most part, the artistic quality of these releases was quite high, but the law of diminishing returns eventually kicked in. It's a good thing, then, that Rochester, Kent's dyslexic genius took a well-deserved rest to concentrate on his painting and his sprawling, Celine-like autobiographical novel *My Fault* (just published by Codex). Judging by the three long-players that have recently emerged (including a Headcoats Sect record done with Don Craine of obscure British

R&B kings the Downliners Sect, as well as another Headcoats LP for England's Damaged Goods imprint), the rest did the man some good. *Knights Of The Baskervilles*, like the other recent Childish issues, displays a reenergized version of what he does best: grafting hard-bitten,

Bukowski-style lyrics of hard-living/-loving to clanky '64 Brit R&B riffs that sound like Childish has taken possession of Dave Davies' old Little Green Amp. The results, as always, are some of the best high-voltage damage any thinking man would be proud to slap his cat silly to. Who says you can't dance to misanthropy? **TIM STEGALL**

DATALOG: Released Oct. 20.

FILE UNDER: Cheap power chords for drunken people's misery.

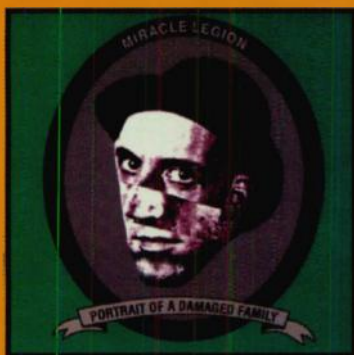
R.I.Y.L.: Mudhoney, the Mummies, vintage Kinks, John Lee Hooker.



DATALOG: Released Oct. 29.
FILE UNDER: Loud, depressing pop craftsmanship.
R.I.Y.L.: Bob Mould's less fun side, Joy Division, Codeine, Morphine, other bands named for downer drugs.

In a snapshot in *Mic City Sons*' booklet, someone is sitting in a metal folding chair, legs atop one of the many beer kegs stored in a dark room (another anonymous backstage?). a paperback book resting in his lap, fingers in ears, eyes shut in annoyance. It's hard to tell whether it's Heatmiser's own Elliott Smith or not. Knowing his Peter Parker role as a bleakly emotional acoustic singer/songwriter, it wouldn't be surprising. See, Heatmiser is Smith's "rock" band, the Spider-Man in him surfacing, if you will. The thing is, Heatmiser's not much crazier than Smith's solo guise. The band was once more Detroit 1969 sounding, but it's downshifted into something a little more befitting the personalities involved. And to judge by *Mic City Sons*, these personalities just might be grimacing and protecting eardrums with fingers at any Motorhead show. There are amps and drums and all manner of "rock" implements employed, instantly increasing the decibels. But the noises

Heatmiser pulls from those weapons are decidedly low-key, definitely subdued. This is real Island-Of-Dr.-Morose music: introspective, deliberate, nothing designed for getting drunk and wrecking shit. In short, if you're in a real Nick Drake or Leonard Cohen mood, but want something a little louder, this is the disc you'll be reaching for. **TIM STEGALL**



DATALOG: Released Oct. 29.
FILE UNDER: New leases on folk-rock life.
R.I.Y.L.: The dBs, Gin Blossoms, The Sea And Cake, early R.E.M.

MIRACLE LEGION / Portrait Of A Damaged Family / Mozzotint

In the locomotive that is popular music, bands get left behind all the time. Miracle Legion has been around off-and-on for 12 years, and it's released a few classic records, *Glad* and *Well Well Well*. But that was a long time ago, and the collective memory has long relegated Miracle Legion to the pages of the *Trouser Press Record Guide*. Still, after some pseudonymous time spent as the *Adventures Of Pete And Pete* house band, Polaris, it's pressing onward, and doing amazingly well. On the surface, the band's music has always had a traditional feel to it. Folk, a tad twangy, and holding on to the early-R.E.M. earthiness that it's always had, Miracle Legion magically transforms seemingly simple ingredients into something beautiful and mysteriously unique, with an edge that gives each song a sense of danger. The band has always been at its best on softer songs, and that's still the case here. The somber tone of Mark Mulcahy's voice is most effective on the slower numbers; there's a purity

deep inside his chords that's instantly recognizable. But even the louder songs are stunning on *Portrait*. If any band of its generation deserves a second chance, it's Miracle Legion. **RANDALL ROBERTS**



DATALOG: Released Nov. 1.
FILE UNDER: Comely electronic pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Garbage, Cranberries, Cardigans.

SPLASHDOWN / Stars And Garters / Castle Von Buhler

Disassembled into its component parts, *Stars And Garters* doesn't seem like much of a pop record. The electronic beats seem to stomp all over everything, and all manner of noise crowds the sweet little melodies and the slight vulnerabilities in Melissa Kaplan's alto. So why is Splashdown's comely pop as warm and welcome as a swallow of whiskey on a cold day? It's the same reason that black-and-white movies are inherently sexier than color, that all those *noir* vixens, nice girls and molls looked so radiant amid dirty cityscapes cloaked in shadow. It's the mystery held by darkness and the sudden power of beauty when the light finally catches it. *Stars And Garters'* first track, "Thunder," is among its rougher ones, stacking nasty slide guitar,

some twisted sitar and beats that sound like they're being played through an old stereo speaker with a torn woofer cone, but Kaplan's vocals eventually emerge the victor, ringing like Dolores O'Riordan's at her most tuneful. The m.o. is essentially the same for the balance of the record, as the songs are made extra-delicious by placing them in unusual musical settings. Eventually, as the disc winds down with the eight-minute "Running With Scissors" (with lyrics taken from a traditional Maori love song), the atmosphere has grown so comfortable and vaguely intoxicating that the sounds don't seem strange at all for pop that is, you're sure, this pure at heart. **SCOTT FRAMPTON**

DIVINE COMEDY

The Divine Comedy is Englishman Neil Hannon, songwriter and vocal stylist extraordinaire. His fourth and newest album, *Casanova* (Setanta), features enough musicians (playing a virtual orchestra's worth of instruments) to populate a small town, and enough passion and style to win over Britain's fickle record-buyers, who landed the album in the top 20, not to



KEVIN WESTERBERG

mention us. On songs such as "In And Out Of Paris And London" and "Charge," Hannon recalls the story-telling style and dramatic delivery of Scott Walker, whose presence looms large throughout, but fans of such savvy British sensations as Pulp and Tindersticks will appreciate Hannon's whooping baritone and the Divine Comedy's poetic style and full-blown song arrangements. At press time, the group was near signing with a U.S. major label, with plans to release *Casanova* sometime in early '97. We sure hope to see the Divine Comedy playing live on these shores soon, with a full orchestra in tow. Now that would be extraordinary. (LA)

SEELY

Atlanta quartet Seely stumbled onto something pretty nifty with its first album, *Parentha See*, released on local label Third Eye. The group's entrancing male/female vocal web and post-shoegazey arrangements caught the ears of taste-making British indie Too Pure, which quickly made Seely its first U.S. signing. Soon after, the band re-recorded the album with producer John McEntire (Tortoise) and emerged with *Julie Only*, which includes a taste of new material.



From the blissed-out, sing-songy flow of "Meteor Shower" (complete with meteor-like noises) to the chiming, tension-rippled "Lucky Penny," Seely flexes its still-developing musical muscles, experimenting with guitar tones and textures and practically grafting vocalists Joy Walters and Steven Satterfield's voices to the songs in a Pale Saints-like fashion. The broader scope of "Past Sap Pass Street & So On" suggests the band's willingness to experiment with dub sounds and thicker arrangements, boding well for Seely's second year in the public eye. (LA)

JB3

Don't be confused by the new pseudonym. JB3 is the same Joey Beltram the electronic dance underground has loved for years. This 24-year-old, Queens-bred artists/producer/DJ rose from the scene in 1991, when he unleashed the hard, minimalistic "Energy Flash" and "Mentasm," paving the way and setting the standard, like a techno Afrika Bambaataa, for the emerging underground dance culture. Those tracks continue to provide historical reference points for a new generation of imitators and disciples, but while 1996 finds the sounds of U.K. drum 'n' bass hoarding the dance world's attention, Beltram is ready to put pure techno back at the helm of the movement. A new record deal with NovaMute and his strongest album to date, *Close Grind*, are setting the stage for the revolution, but it's his raw, trance-inducing techno attack that will spur Beltram's success. Two recently released singles ("Belief" and "Forklift") have already reaffirmed the faith of the believers. Steady yourself now for the shockwave of this bombshell. M. TYE COMER



REX

If you need a soundtrack to accompany a painful breakup, or you've just got a rainy afternoon to kill, an album from Rex might come in handy. The band's label, Southern



Records, refers to Rex's sound as "slash and swoon" for good reason: Its music is forcefully direct in its emotional wallop, but ultimately graceful in its presentation. Counting former

Codeine and current June Of 44 drummer Doug Scharin among its three-man ranks, Rex has a pedigree that puts it in the Ivy League of the slow, tense and dynamic. The band's self-titled debut from last year was a stark, haunting collection of near-instrumentals and woeful guitar and cello sketches, followed by the murkily beautiful *Waltz* EP. The new album *C* finds the band tightening its delicate, doe-eyed instrumentation into more closely reigned song structures, providing a wider emotional canvas for the spidery guitar lines and bleak vocals of Curtis Harvey. Look for a collaborative work between Rex and Chicago blues-punkers Red Red Meat under the moniker Loftus in the spring of 1997. COLIN HELMS

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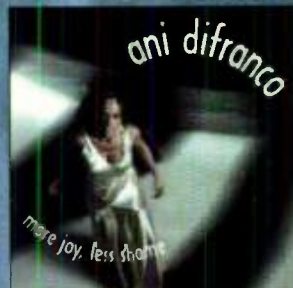
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ON A P

THE GOLDEN PALOMINOS

The pair's unconventional aural venture began after Fier discovered Blackman—who's also recorded as a solo artist, and with KMFDM and Space Needle—via her contribution to a Bill Laswell project. "The first thing that I notice about anyone that I work with is their sound, and how the sound makes me react," explains Fier. "That was my initial attraction to Nicole."

While Fier manipulated Blackman's supple speaking voice in the studio, he was careful to preserve the essence of what drew him to her. "The only direction he gave me was that he did not want me to sing," says Blackman. "It's somewhere between spoken word and singing—it's almost chanting," she observes of her ultimate delivery. "That's what makes it sound so traditional to me; it's almost antique. And yet, for some reason, it sounds very modern. It just jags the ear differently."

Fier also appreciated that Blackman didn't come from a conventional musical background. "I'm not interested in making pop songs," he insists. "Whatever song structure is at this point, it's boring to me." He wanted to experiment with new permutations of words and sounds, breaking traditional songwriting dictums. "To me there are no rules, and this record is proof of that."

To find her muse, the poet tried sleep deprivation. "If I'm exhausted, I hear psychoacoustics," she explains. "So if I'm extremely tired and I'm listening to this..." she says, indicating the music over the speakers, "I'm gonna hear things in the mix that I didn't hear before... It's always been like that. I believe everyone has a sixth sense, just everyone has a different one. I was walking home the other day with a big bag full of vegetables and newspapers, and I'd got my Walkman on, and all of a sudden this voice was telling me this whole line. Five, ten, twenty lines just started pouring out. And I literally dropped the bags, threw open a notebook and started writing. And people were looking at me like a freak, but I've learned to trust that."

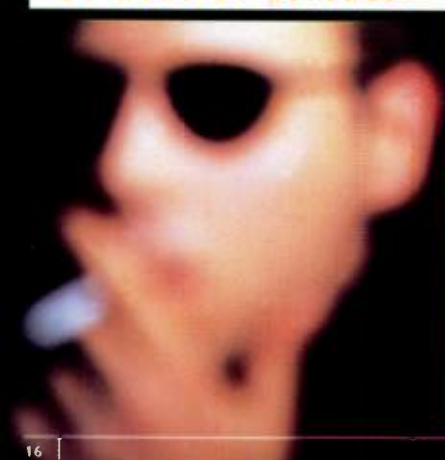
Fier seamlessly complements Blackman's words with musical accompaniments that range from chilling ambient to fluttering drum-and-bass. "I've always been interested in the technology of making music and records," he says. "Jungle is the most exciting music that's happening right now. People are taking a technological innovation like the computer, and sequencing software and samplers, and actually doing something artistic with it, as opposed to simply using a sampler to play back a two-bar loop."

Even more shocking than the triumph of this incarnation of the Golden Palominos with a NIN crowd are Fier's tentative plans for live dates. After he canceled his last tour in 1995, mere days before the scheduled kick-off, the likelihood of gigs to support an album as unconventional as *Dead Inside* seemed wholly unlikely. "This record is important to me," stresses the notorious perfectionist. "I think it's the best record I've done, and I want people to hear it."

Although he's hesitant to discuss the specifics of what such a show might encompass, the set-up is rumored to resemble Portishead's configuration of musicians and DJs playing custom-made acetates. The prospect of the shows both intoxicates and nauseates Blackman. "If something thrills and utterly panics me, that's a sign that it's something I probably should do," she admits. But it sure isn't what she envisioned when he first mentioned doing *Dead Inside* live: "Me and a DAT and the *Solid Gold* dancers." ★

New York poet Nicole Blackman got a surprise at a Nine Inch Nails show the other evening. When the warm-up DJ slapped on the entrancing "The Ambitions Are" from *Dead Inside* (Restless)—the new album that pairs Blackman with Golden Palominos drummer/mastermind Anton Fier—the kids loved it. "To see little Goth girls and secretaries from Bayonne, New Jersey, moving their butts to your track is very strange," she confesses.

BY KURT B. REIGHLEY





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Robert Forster

The Way

BY FRANKLIN BRUNO

1996 was a good year for the presence of Australia's Robert Forster on American shores. It saw not only the release of *Warm Nights* (Beggars Banquet), his first album of originals in four years, but his first American shows as a solo artist, as well as the reissue of five albums by the Go-Betweens (also Beggars Banquet), the consummately literate guitar band he coled with Grant McLennan from 1978 to 1990. (Not to mention the somewhat inexplicable use of the Go-B's 'Spring Rain' in the bowling comedy *Kingpin*.)

Warm Nights, ably produced by Edwyn Collins (of Orange Juice and "A Girl Like You" fame), is an excellent introduction to the distinctive features of Forster's vision, ranging from the unassuming, seemingly tossed-off sparseness of "I Can Do" and the sinuous title track to the assured glamour of "Cryin' Love" and a *Blonde On Blonde*-style overhaul of the late Go-Betweens B-side "Rock And Roll Friend." Everything is united by Forster's vivid evocations of place ("the smell of Queensland grass"), his good-humoredly theatrical vocal presentation (imagine a friendlier version of fellow Brisbanian Nick Cave) and his cautious, exacting fragmentation of song form. We caught up with him in New York, and got him to hold forth on a variety of topics.

On recording with Collins: "The Go-Betweens toured with Orange Juice in '83, and I'd see Edwyn every now and then—we've remained friends. And in the meantime, he was becoming dissatisfied with the way his own records sounded at the end of the '80s. So he did a very bold and brave thing in that he learned how to do it all himself, and then he started to get equipment. He bought a 1969 Neve desk off a film studio, the mixing desk that Terry Gilliam used for *Brazil*.

"When you walk into Edwyn's studio, it looks like the BBC in 1960—all these tubes burning and heating, with a beautiful mix of new gear as well. We have very similar philosophies as far as sound goes. It really came off quickly—we had no pre-production. He's an artist-producer, not a producer-producer, which means it's fairly chaotic; he'll turn to me often and say, 'Well, what should we do next?' All the songs were done live, and then it'd be, 'Okay, what do we want to put on top of it?'"

Impressions Come

On songwriting: "I've always gone with the bare minimum. I'm not someone who has 30 songs. It takes me three years to write 10 or 11, which was true almost all the way through the Go-Betweens, too. I'd come to the record with five, and Grant would have 25.

On lyrics: "To me, there's a really long time between when the first verse happens and the next verse, in terms of the story of the song, and I often wonder how to pick up the thread from one verse to the next. Every verse is something of a fresh start. Also, everything I do is grounded in reality, it's not the mystic, let's look in the dictionary for strange words, 4AD sort of lyrics. It's happening on the corner, and in the kitchen, and in the car—that's just the way that impressions come. It's the kind of detail that there is in everyday life—it doesn't have to be a surrealistic rhapsody, but it can be fragmented."

On the occasional Go-Betweens reunion show: "Grant had moved back to Brisbane too, so we had been knocking around together a bit. And this venue we'd both played at had its birthday, they asked Grant and I if we would play, and Grant said, 'why don't we do it electric with your band,' and then we decided to play Go-Betweens songs. And then this magazine in France was having its 10th anniversary, and they asked us to come over, so we did a couple of warm-up shows in Brisbane and went.

"It's totally accidental—we had no plans, these people just asked us. There's no managers or deals or anything like that. We're a party band—you're throwing a celebration, and you call us up, and we see if we're free." ★

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L-R: Max Johnston, Jeff Tweedy, John Stirratt, Ken Coomer

Jeff Tweedy sits in his New York city hotel room, lazily strumming his guitar while the busy traffic outside his open window, punctuated by urgent fire-engine sirens every few minutes, does its damndest to squelch him. The instrument's neck is inlaid with the name of its owner's celebrated twang-pop outfit, Wilco, which arose from the ashes of another celebrated Midwestern outfit, Uncle Tupelo. And Wilco has a new album out: a 19-track, double-CD set called *Being There* that's as urgent as those sirens. But Tweedy, being from Illinois and all, gets around to discussing the project in his own laconic time. It's a trip that starts in the unlikeliest of places.

ILCO

Being And Nothingness

by Tom Lanham

"See, I was in the shower this morning having these sweeping generalizations," relates the singer, gently setting his acoustic on the floor, right next to a dog-eared copy of Jack Miles' *A Biography Of God*. "Usually when I wake, I'm half-asleep when I make it to the shower and still semi-dreaming. But today I was thinking how most of us have grown up with television almost as a member of the family, almost as a parent. And identity-forming is taking place in later and later stages of people's lives as the 20th century has evolved—in my parents' generation, you were married and had a kid and were who you were gonna be when you were 20 years old. But now it's much more common to wait until you're in your 30s to get married, and television is a parent that doesn't kick you out, doesn't stand you up on your feet and say 'Get going!'"

Tweedy is 29. He's married, has a kid, and has moved from his small hometown of Belleville to the bustling metropolis of Chicago. And if you didn't get the idea from his Jerzy Kozinski/Peter Sellers nod in the *Being There* title—or his deep-thinking shower rumination—the guy, as the analysts say, has a few issues. Tweedy's Bill Monroe T-shirt is draped with an unbuttoned yoked Western shirt, and his black Levis taper down to bright lime-green Hush Puppies that—like Wilco itself—put a playful rock topspin on traditional country style. Tweedy points to his footwear as an example of what he's talking about. "You can't sell things to people unless you convince them that they need it. Like these green shoes—I don't really need them, but I wanted 'em because that's part of my identity, I guess, an external thing.

"And the ideal age to inflict that on people is when they're forming their personalities in their teen years. Now, to keep people in that state of mind for as long as you possibly can is best done by having something like a television or a computer. How else are you gonna convince somebody that they're lacking something in their lives unless they're told? Like the Tollhouse cookie commercial that says 'for quality time': like you need to buy this pre-made cookie dough and make it with your child so you can spend some quality time with the child. And that's just one of the obscenely obvious ones."

It's not that Tweedy's absurdly angry. He's just a bit more sensitive to his surroundings than most. He doesn't believe in organized religion; after reading about everything from Buddhism to Zoroastrianism, he's settled on a personal spirituality that is, he says, "almost biological or something." He feels that television and computers have "really divorced people from each

other," and that "the universe is one cosmic body that takes care of itself, and the planet will eventually cleanse itself, eventually evolve no matter what we do." It's hip to be depressed about it all—so depressed that you write dirge after somnolent dirge, exorcising that depression. But Tweedy will have none of that. On *Being There*, he pokes fun at the fashionably angst-ridden wherever he can. Last, but not least, Tweedy remembers "the first big record that changed my life"—The Clash's *London Calling*. It was a double album. And Tweedy—who'd been writing like mad all through Wilco's 200-date tour supporting its Reprise debut, *A.M.*—wanted to release a two-disc set as well. "So we figured out how to make it a double record for a single record's price," he beams proudly. "We packaged it cheaper than CDs are normally packaged—in a cardboard sleeve that folds out. And I actually like it better than a jewel box." But how best to assess this imposing collection of material?

At one point, Tweedy snarls "Music is my savior/But I was tamed by rock 'n' roll/I was maimed by rock 'n' roll." That probably best exemplifies his life philosophy, with or without thought-provoking morning shower. "That line was totally on-the-spot ad-libbed," he says, "but it's the way I felt at the time.

I felt like on one level, music is a lot more than just rock 'n' roll, but there's a lot more than just music. And I'm healthier and I

feel better about music when I am at peace with the other 90% of my world. I've really been monomaniacal about music ever since I can remember—before I could even operate a turntable I had my mother put the records on for me. But I also hid in music in dangerous ways, almost like an addiction. Hid from relationships, hid from just getting on with my real life. You always feel like you're avoiding something with music sometimes, avoiding some overwhelming reality..."

And facing the music, so to speak, means thinking long and hard about what's going on outside that hotel room window. And thinking about it in the shower, when necessary. Which leaves Tweedy with one final rhetorical question: "Why do I tend to watch the news, get upset about it, worry about it, when I could put on a record I enjoy, go for a walk with my wife and son, and have something positive happen to me? You're making this world. You're projecting any image you want onto your environment!" ★



BACK: Robert Loveless, Brock Wirtz, James Brenner. FRONT: Bruce Licher, Mark Mastopietro

SCENIC

BY STEVEN MIRKIN

With its languid, evocative albums and habit of transfiguring landscape into mood, you might think that Scenic would feel an affinity with ambient music. Think again. "That ambient stuff is music to space out to," Bruce Licher, Scenic's guitarist and frontman, explains with a certain distaste. "Scenic is music to space *in* to." Unlike the compositional and temporal stasis that characterizes most ambient music, he says, with Scenic "you can put on an album and at the end of it you feel that you've been taken on a trip somewhere, on a journey."

Licher, flanked today by two other permanent members of Scenic, bassist James Brenner and drummer Brock Wirtz, speaks with the laconic precision of the architect/designer he is—he designed the elegant, folded cardboard disc packages used by his long-running Independent Project record label ("I wanted to make records fine art"). He's also prone to coming up with interesting-sounding but impractical ideas, such as having the grooves on the vinyl version of *Aquatica*, Scenic's new album, start at the middle and go out.

Scenic has its roots in Savage Republic, the Los Angeles band Licher led in the '80s. He started writing material that just didn't fit in with that band's concept, and instead of reworking the songs, he quit. It took three

years until he was ready to form another band; his impending move to Sedona, Arizona, was the impetus. "I knew I wanted to work with James and Brock and I might not have another chance. Literally, the month I moved is when we had our first rehearsal." The three continued to rehearse after Licher's move, and eventually recorded the album in Arizona; the songs that make up the earlier records *Incident At Cima* and *Sage* were inspired by the desert drive between Sedona and L.A. "Or places unknown,"



**“We don’t want to be a
rock band without a singer,
which is what a lot of
instrumental bands today
are. You keep waiting for
the singer to arrive. I think
with us, you know they’re
not going to show up.”**

Brenner adds dryly. But after they finished recording *Cima*, they took a camping trip into the Arizona desert. After setting up camp, they listened to the album. “We looked at the stars and the moon and these massive cliffs and it was... psychedelic,” Brenner recalls, almost swooning from the memory. “Religious,” is how Wirtz puts it; Licher explains that the nice thing about the music is that “you don’t need drugs to get it. The music takes you there.”

With the “there” of *Incident At Cima* and *Sage* being distinctly airy and *Aquatica*’s theme of water, it might seem that Scenic has made its mission to systematically render the classical Greek elements: air, water, fire and earth. That, too, would be wrong. “It’s really less contrived than people think,” Wirtz says. “People think there’s some grand thematic thing we were going to go and accomplish. It wasn’t like that. It’s pretty unconscious. We went in and started laying tracks down. And the next thing you know...”

Brenner breaks in: “It was like the music was telling us what it needs.” Licher, who worries about being pegged as “this desert band,” likes to point out that even though he has specific ideas about the music, it’s elastic enough that listeners can impose their own scenarios. “A friend of mine in New York said he listened to the album on a Walkman during a snowstorm and it was a religious experience.”

The water motif of *Aquatica*, Licher reveals, came to the band midway through the sessions. “We were listening to the songs and thought, ‘God, this could be on the Mediterranean.’”

That sense of improvisation, the feeling that the songs were very liquid, ran through the *Aquatica* sessions. The songs started at bare bones, with either a riff or some chord changes, and were fleshed out later. Then the band invited friends such as Robert Loveless (who is now an official member of the band), Brandon Capps and Idaho’s Doug Smith to have a whack at them. “In some cases,” Brock says, “the songs have been completely transformed and we had to relearn how to play them live.” How do they know when a song is done? “We don’t,” Licher laughs. “Some things we could have kept adding to, but that would have transformed them into something else.” A few of *Aquatica*’s songs, though, have only one or two elements. “That’s all they needed,” he adds, emphatically.

“We don’t want to be a rock band without a singer, which is what a lot of instrumental bands today are,” Wirtz adds. “You keep waiting for the singer to arrive. I think with us, you know they’re not going to show up. The focus is really on the feeling. The one prevailing thought,” he continues, “is not becoming contrived.”

That quality—which Licher calls “keeping the music organic”—is the prime motivation. Licher describes ‘60s soundtracks by Ennio Morricone, Neil Hefti and early Henry Mancini as having an organic quality. “They create interesting sounds with really basic, straightforward things. Instead of using synthesizers, you have people finding interesting ways to play harmonicas or other instruments.”

What is inorganic? “Remixes,” Licher responds immediately. “We created something and this is the way we want people to hear it.” Besides, he continues, “we do it ourselves, in a sense.” *Aquatica*’s “Dronia” and “Et Tu Dronius,” for instance, are two versions of the same idea. “We were setting up to record ‘Dronia’ and started screwing around with the song, doing it really slow. Doug was doing this really neat ambient thing with his guitar, and we thought ‘that was really neat—let’s record this too.’” Licher even finds it hard to listen to remixes of other bands’ music. “I’ve heard great songs that were trashed.” One alternative, he says, is a joint project, where Scenic sends unmixed tracks to Stereolab, for example, to “see what they come up with.” But otherwise, Licher wants to hear “what the artist has to say. If I want to hear another artist, I want to hear what he says with his own stuff. That’s the most important thing—what statement was this artist trying to make with their music?”

As to what statement Scenic is making, Licher is uncharacteristically mum. In the future, he says, he’d like to do some soundtracks; other than that, the road is open. Is there anything out of the question? “Polyester pants,” Licher smiles. “And dance music.” ★



button topics surrounding
adolescents. In their
backward way,
they understand what's
really scary
about Marilyn:
his charisma.

Apocalypse Now ÷ By Kurt B. Reighley

With his tremendous appeal, Manson has rallied the disaffected youth of America behind him. Meanwhile, music critics belittle his band for its sophomoric blend of heavy metal, industrial and goth clichés. Both these traditionally oppositional camps are in for a rude awakening with Antichrist Superstar, for everything leading up to Marilyn Manson's fourth record has clearly been a dress rehearsal.

"The type of **totalitarian**
Antichrist Superstar suggests is a gr
banding together to **change** what
It's like a **pep rally** for the **ap**

The first record Marilyn Manson ever owned was *Alive II* by KISS. Like most excited young fans, he aspired to meet his heroes. Last summer, he got his wish. "Gene Simmons was wearing his make-up, so at least it was the experience I wanted," admits Marilyn. But his adulation never approached the devotion his own fans display. "I loved Kiss, and I loved Alice Cooper, but I never identified with them on that kind of level, because both of those bands were always very specific that their show was an act. And they liked to separate themselves from it, so it never interested me. Because I wanted to meet what was on stage. I didn't want to meet some old guy who plays golf."

Now Marilyn makes exactly the music he always wanted to hear, secure in the knowledge that the man who makes those records, puts on the concerts, doesn't end when he leaves the public eye. And he ensures that his cult knows it, too. "Meeting people, I wouldn't be anything they wouldn't expect me to be," he insists.

After a riveting MM performance in Milwaukee, one of the first stops on the band's Dead To The World Tour, the faithful wait patiently to commune with their idol. Although the audience at tonight's gig was a balance of males and females, 95% of the fans who have scored aftershow passes are teenage girls. When he

finally greets them, his supplicants come at him with the full flush of their vibrant young emotions; their fluttering hearts set the air vibrating. They ask him to sign anything they can lay their hands on, as they stand before him quivering with excitement. Many hug and kiss him. He exhibits nothing but warmth and grace.

"I consider myself the opposite of the archetypal sex symbol," he confesses, baffled by his own appeal. "I'm not anything like Brad Pitt or Antonio Banderas. But maybe it's the taboo element of my image, which is almost deathlike, that attracts them. Because people always gravitate towards death, because of their fear of it. It exhilarates them." In a world where even sex and violence have been rendered increasingly blasé, death is the ultimate *verboten* thrill.

"I should be the last person that they should be attracted to," he chuckles, "but for some reason I'm not."

Marilyn Manson fans of both genders are steadfast in their devotion. As we watch them scurry around the venue lobby, the amount of effort some kids have put into getting dressed is surprisingly touching: one six-foot boy in a baggy clown suit, sporting an immaculate blue mohawk, looks simply breathtaking. MM's new record *Antichrist Superstar* (Nothing-Interscope) has only been out for two days, but already there are those

who know all the words. Before it had even gone on sale, the album had shipped over 500,000 units, and it will debut on the *Billboard* charts at #3.

Marilyn finds all this very encouraging. "Each time someone listens to the new album, or comes to the show, it's one step closer to being the individual that they really want to be. Which is, to Christian America, the apocalypse. Because in their eyes, being yourself is really forsaking God. That's the way I see myself, and our fans, as an Antichrist figure. Antichrist to me is not only one person, but the collective disbelief in Christianity."

Antichrist Superstar chronicles the personal and spiritual rebirth of Marilyn Manson, as he learns to stop crawling on his belly in the darkness, and is transformed by the swirling forces of change that have gathered around him. Divided into three sections, the 78-minute work begins with the blistering "Irresponsible Hate Anthem" (laced with tender sentiments like "Just kill everyone and let your God sort them out" and "I wasn't born with enough middle fingers"), and culminates in the chilling "The Man That You Hate." Produced by Trent Reznor, Dave Ogilvie and Manson himself, the disc is ambitious in its scope, musically and aesthetically, and easily outstrips MM's contrived earlier offerings.

"This is the definitive Marilyn Manson album, everything that we've been working up to," says Marilyn the morning after the Milwaukee show, propped up in the bed of a Holiday Inn, trying not to antagonize muscles stretched during last night's performance.

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roup of individuals,
the mainstream is.
ocalypse."

"Everything up to this point was carefully placed stepping stones. This record is something that I've wanted to do from the beginning. It was just a matter of the right time, and the right time is now."

Many of the songs were culled from dreams, and tap into Marilyn's evolving philosophy that the past and the future dovetail in our spirit—that it's all inside us, right now. "I've learned to approach my life like an old-fashioned movie camera, in that all of the frames are contained in the camera, all of the pictures are there. But you're only allowed to see one at a time." With *Antichrist Superstar*, Marilyn pops the camera open and lets the reel spool onto the floor, to be consumed whole.

The album also reflects a maturation, especially lyrically. Although Manson's wicked sense of humor and childlike zeal still shine through, the gaily colored costumes and toys once associated with the band are receding into the background, as has the desire to settle for pure shock value. "This record is much more extreme in its dynamics of emotion," concedes Marilyn. "In the past, things were a little one-sided. Now there's just as much vulnerability as there is power. There are certain songs that I now find performing really hard." Rather than send the crowd off into the night chanting one of the big hits, the show closes with "The Man That

You Hate," leaving a disturbing sense of resignation hanging in the air.

The Dead To The World show is a white-knuckle ride, starting with the opening church set that quickly falls into ruin, surrounded with a fence of impaled fallen angels (try finding *that* at Home Depot). But even though a tremendous amount of thought has clearly gone into each snowflake, the meticulous presentation doesn't feel contrived, thanks to the intoxicating amount of energy Manson pours out.

"An album, you spend forever on, but it's really just a blueprint for a performance," he explains. "That's where I feel at home: on stage. So I would take just as much time preparing my place to live. I like to step on stage and feel as overwhelmed as somebody in the audience would." In the second half of the show, when red and black banners unfurl and the band marches on stage in chrome helmets, it is almost impossible to delineate where Marilyn—poised behind a podium—ends, and the throng of kids pumping their fists in the air begin.

"That moment is actually a statement on the relationship between performers and their audiences, totalitarianism and fascism," says Marilyn, who stresses that the show has no intentional Nazi symbolism, which represents an ideology he views as wholly antithetical to his own. But does he honestly expect the crowd to discern these points? "It's possible. If not, they felt great to be a part of it for just that moment."



FLORIAN SCHIMMEL



about things that obviously haven't happened yet, that are going to happen."

Marilyn's propensity for such far-reaching comments hasn't always gone down well, even with those closest to him; rumors of friction between Manson and Reznor constantly abound. "I've always gotten flack for this from everyone that I work with, even working with Trent. I've always seen things as being where they are now, *and* I see things farther ahead." He knows what he wants, he's sure he can get it, and he maneuvers accordingly.

And in order to achieve these goals, some changes have to be made along the way. "I've found that the most important criterion for anyone is that, if they don't believe in what I believe in, it's just not gonna work." For years,

"America is so fascist, but it's so hypocritical about it," he continues. "'The Beautiful People' is a statement on the fascism of beauty. With commercialism and television, everything's completely dictated to you, and if you don't fit into the status quo, you're made to feel not as good as everyone else. The type of totalitarianism that *Antichrist Superstar* suggests is a group of individuals, banding together to change what the mainstream is. It's like a pep rally for the apocalypse."

Despite Manson's tirades against Christians and other "decent" Americans, he knows you must recognize the traits of the enemy existing in yourself to find victory. "In explaining things to people, I've come to terms with [the fact that] a lot of my goals are very Christian, in the end," he admits. "Because people no longer appreciate the taboos of sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll, I have to take them as far as they've ever been taken before, on a grand scale, in order for the world to realize that we have to start over. It's very much like the mythology of the Bible, the end of the world, and the Antichrist, and people are made to make a choice about their faith. I think certain elements of that are correct."

Ultimately, spirituality should be a mercurial system of beliefs that can evolve and change. The important thing is how you apply your belief to your conduct. "When you have a discussion with [Christians]," observes Manson, "they have this penchant for 'it's written in the Bible, so it's true.' And that's the only thing they can fall back on." These days, Marilyn rarely bothers to tangle with such zealots.

"I've taken elements from the Bible, from Satanism, from Nietzsche, from Freud, from Darwin, from Dr. Seuss, and the Kabbal. I couldn't narrow it down to just one thing. My whole take on anything is, I find it completely boring to be one person." Countless critics have taken Marilyn's dichotomous nature as proof that what he's peddling is just shtick, a calculated persona. Which is half right. It is calculated. It's also completely sincere.

"I'm very much a part of everything I do, all the time. Now I've found myself with a new personality of Antichrist Superstar, so there are roles within roles." He's still getting a handle on just what he's tapped into with this added dimension. "Antichrist Superstar is the empowered me, the final evolution of Marilyn Manson... that we may not even have gotten to yet. I went through a transformation on the record, but I also feel like that transformation happens on a daily basis. And on a lifetime scale, it hasn't completed itself yet. There's elements of the record that are prophetic. I talk

Marilyn felt that former guitarist Daisy Berkowitz viewed the band as no more than a very lucrative day job. "That was always very soul-destroying for me." He dreaded the impact Daisy's departure might have on the music, but finally Berkowitz left the nest. Marilyn moved forward, and realized the thing he'd dreaded losing for so long was actually his biggest obstacle.

"Going into this album, there were a lot of musical ideas that he really couldn't understand. When he left, it was trimming away the last piece of fat that was holding us back from being as strong as possible. Not to say that his work with us wasn't good, but it was something that Marilyn Manson had grown out of."

That's Marilyn Manson, the band. Sometimes, the distinction between the group and the individual becomes difficult to make. Marilyn Manson singular likens the situation to the Holy Trinity, except with more members. He stresses that *Antichrist Superstar* was of tremendous importance to bassist Twiggy Ramirez and keyboard player Madonna Wayne Gacy, and adds that Ginger Fish, who joined on drums around *Smells Like Children*, and new guitarist Zim Zum (who had to move in with Marilyn until he'd passed muster) are increasingly vital factors in the MM equation.

For Marilyn Manson, everything's happening at once. And that's just how he wants it. "In the end, it's all about belief," he remarks. "It's like when you're a kid: if you believe something, then it really happened. We've stumbled into a new era as individuals in our band, where we're open to believing anything. I consider our lives to be very supernatural at this point. Not like something you'd see in a horror film, with lightning bolts coming out of my fingertips, but so tuned into the very frequencies that everyone operates on, that I find myself not even having to communicate sometimes. Things just get done, on a very supernatural level. That's exciting."

In the here and now, Marilyn Manson will be touring throughout 1997. The band is looking forward to visiting South America, a continent that's known to thrive on loud music and larger-than-life personalities. "America used to be that way, pre-Nirvana, and I think we're coming back to that era," concludes Marilyn. "Without being self-aggrandizing, I've seen the little tidal waves that I've caused in the music industry, and how people are becoming more evolved in their imagery, and there are lots of new Marilyn Manson-esque people. But I don't get mad at those things. It's like, there's one real Santa Claus," he grins, "but there's a lot of fake ones at the mall." ★

Hackers



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ON SALE

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World Radio History

CATCH THE .wav: MUSIC SITES ON THE WEB

The World Wide Web is rich in resources for just about everything, but music seems to be a particular specialty. There are sites for nearly every band or style of music you've ever heard of, and a little work with a good search engine can take you straight to what you're looking for. But what if you don't know what you're looking for? These six sites are either among our most useful reference tools or among the niftiest destinations we've found lately, and sometimes both. **By Douglas Wolk**

THE ULTIMATE BAND LIST

(<http://www.ubl.com>)



Your search for information about any band should start here. Originally affiliated with the American Recordings site (<http://american.recordings.com>), the Ultimate Band List is exactly what it sounds like: an enormous list of thousands upon thousands of bands, with links to other web resources for each one, including fan and official home pages, lyrics, discographies, newsgroups, mailing lists and guitar tablature. The UBL isn't absolutely comprehensive, but it's more than enough for almost anything you'd want to know about.

(<http://www.firefly.com>)

FIREFLY

An ingenious take on the R.I.Y.L. concept, Firefly suggests artists and recordings you might like, based on a list of your favorite bands and ratings of others, and how they compare to other people's lists. It works amazingly well—after I'd fed in a list of ten of my favorite kinda-well-known bands and given it rankings on maybe a half-dozen more, Firefly presented me with a handful of suggestions starting with one of my all-time faves, the not-exactly-a-household-name Mission Of Burma. Firefly also has a movie recommendation service, and a handful of other user-friendly features, including a personal home page option.





NME

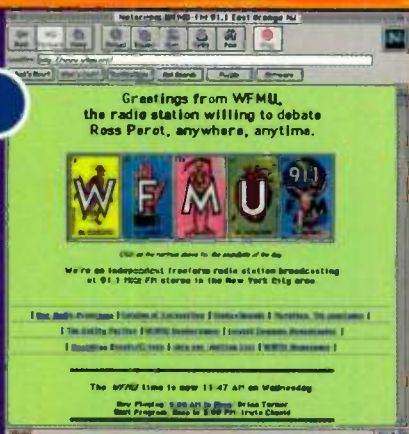
(http://www.nme.com)

The British weekly music newspaper *New Musical Express* is one of the best sources for information on the always-peculiar state of music in the U.K. Its web site has news reports and attitudinal reviews, but what really makes it worthwhile is the discussion forum, "Angst." Letters to the editor and other public discourse are a big deal in England, and "Angst" is always very busy, with some very vehement arguments going on. There's also an area for young hands to upload songs from their demo tapes (and get them ripped to shreds by anyone who happens to be browsing the site). Expect at least one mention of Oasis per page.

(http://www.wfmw.org)

WFMU

WFMU, the legendary free-form radio station in East Orange, New Jersey, has a web site with its playlists, schedule, and staff information. A lot of stations include this information on their sites, but the reason to go here is for the incredible mail-order listings of the wildest, most bizarre records you'll find anywhere, from copyright-flouters Negativland and John Oswald to '60s French pop stars Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin. The catalogue also includes books, comics, T-shirts, and a few things available only through WFMU (we're partial to the "Shemo Meditation Tape"—30 minutes each of "Heer Bee Bee Bee Bee" and "Ahh Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha"—and to the double-CD live-at-WFMU compilation *They Came, They Played, They Blocked The Driveway*).



INDIE CENTRE

(http://www.csd.net/~muji/indiecentre.html)

If you're thinking about putting out a record for the first time—or the fifteenth—Indie Centre is an indispensable resource. For starters, it's got the electronic version of Simple Machines' justly famous *Introductory Mechanics Guide*, a clear, informative, brief guide to releasing records, tapes and compact discs. The site also includes information on dozens upon dozens of sources for mastering and pressing records and CDs, ordering plastic sleeves, getting tapes duplicated, and more—both hard information and people's personal experiences of working with a lot of the businesses it mentions.

(http://www.matador.recs.com)

MATADOR RECORDS

We've said it before and we'll say it again: Matador has easily the best record-label web site we've seen. Besides carefully maintained information on all of its bands (including links to off-site interviews and resources) and frequently updated tour dates and news, it's got links to Matador's deeply amusing newsletter *Scandalo!* and a large, interesting mail-order catalog of other labels' records, and parodies of lots of label-web-site conventions (chat rooms, every-15-second photo downloads). Recent additions include a lively message board and a huge, detailed hypertext article about electronic marketing techniques; before the election, the site also included links to a very funny "Stop The Vote" campaign, a fake attempt to persuade young people not to vote.



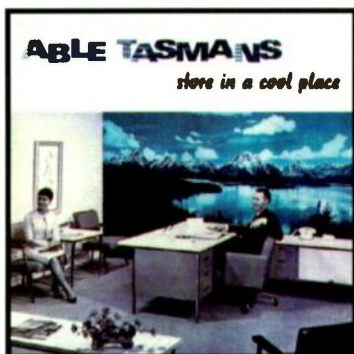
reviews

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

"If God were one of us, He wouldn't have ringlets and a nose ring."

—Allure magazine, on the look favored by Joan Osborne

ABLE TASMANS / Store In A Cool Place / Flying Nun
 BAD BRAINS / Black Dots / Caroline
 ALEC BATHGATE / Gold Lamé / Flying Nun
 BODEANS / Blend / Slash-Reprise
 THE CLEAN / Unknown Country / Flying Nun
 THORNETTA DAVIS / Sunday Morning Music / Sub Pop
 DONOVAN / Sutras / American
 GUITAR WOLF / Missile Me! / Matador
 HANDSOME / Handsome / Epic
 LABRADFORD / Labrador / Kranky
 LIQUID SOUL / Liquid Soul / Ark 21
 MYRA MELFORD TRIO / The Same River, Twice / Gramavision-Rykodisc
 RIC MENCK / The Ballad Of Ric Menck / Summershine
 THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA / II / Columbia
 VARIOUS ARTISTS / Red Hot + Rio / Red Hot+Antilles-Verve
 RED KRAYOLA / Hazel / Drag City
 SATURNINE / Flags For Unknown Territories / Dirt
 SPACE NEEDLE / The Moray Bels Eat The Space Needle / Zero Hour
 VÄRTTINÄ / Kokko / Nonesuch
 THE WANDERING STARS / The Wandering Stars / Nuf Sed
 THE JOSEPHINE WIGGS EXPERIENCE / Bon Bon Lifestyle / Grand Royal
 MARION WILLIAMS / Through Many Dangers / Shanachie



DATALOG: Released Nov. 12.

FILE UNDER: Spaced-out New Zealand pop.

R.I.Y.L.: The Cannanes, The Bats, The Jean-Paul Sartre Experience.

ABLE TASMANS / Store In A Cool Place / Flying Nun

This recently dissolved New Zealand pop group never seemed to master the efficient songcraft that has brought its countrymen so much critical acclaim. While the Chills, Chris Knox, and the others were singing catchy little college radio hits, the Tasmans wrote songs with spooled-out melodic structures, lush with layers of keyboard and guitar that nearly eclipse their gentle, understated voices. Their final album, *Cool Place*, retreats from the keyed-up strumming of their recent work, with a sound so even and well blended that you could almost call it drone. Songs like "That's Why" find a dynamic level and stay with it throughout singer Graeme Humphreys' diffident soliloquies about people in stasis. "Well I've been to the end and there's nothing/Well nothing but something to gain," he chants. His lyrical waywardness pervades the whole album, combining with the densely layered strings and occasional space noises to make it a strange and out-of-body kind of listen. Several songs are built on spiralling little riffs like falling leaves, with hooks that are hard to pick out. On more than one song, it takes a while to realize where the chorus is. But once you hit upon it, it suddenly feels familiar, as if you've known the song for years. **ANDREA MOED**



DATALOG: Released Oct. 15. Recorded 1979. Remixed in 1996, but it still sounds like 1979.

FILE UNDER: Seminal thrash.

R.I.Y.L.: Minor Threat, Bad Brains, Rancid.

BAD BRAINS / Black Dots / Caroline

There isn't any greater compliment you can pay a band than what you can say about the Bad Brains: 17 years ago, when they started, there wasn't anything remotely like them, and although their thrash-punk-metal-reggae-juggernaut style has become common currency among band influences, there still isn't anyone who has played their kind of hardcore with the immediacy and impact of their early days. They were simply jaw-droppingly good, even at the age of about six months, which is where they were when the early demo tapes of *Black Dots* were recorded. These tracks predate the Ric Ocasek-produced *Rock For Light* (one of those albums that launched a thousand other bands) and were recorded at Inner Ear Studios, later to cut the great records by Fugazi, Minor Threat, and virtually every other Dischord band. Bad Brains simply set up their gear and played every song they knew, including early, thrashier versions of songs now considered punk staples, like "Pay To Cum" and "Banned In D.C." Not only were they a great band by any standard, punk or otherwise, but when you hear this, you sense that something completely wild was happening, something without limits or restriction. **JAMES LIEN**

various artists

soundtracks, compilations, etc.



Your favorite Seattle song is almost certainly not on the soundtrack to *Hype!* (Sub Pop). That's fine. The point isn't a grunge greatest-hits, but a document of the sound of the Pacific Northwest at

its most important moment—to show why people were so excited about it. That means lots of live material, as well as prominent placement of a bunch of little-known but very important bands, like the Fastbacks and the Wipers. It explains what that particular place and time meant to people who were there better than any other single record...

Project: Echo is K Records' second compilation of songs from its ongoing International Pop Underground series of 7" singles. While it's not as stellar as the first, *International Hip Swing*, it's got some prime stuff from a wide variety of artists. Lois, Heavenly and the Softies make the kind of soft pop that's most often associated with the label, but Karp, the Copass Grinders and F.Y.P. are all hard and heavy, and there are some neat left-field tracks, like Satan's Pilgrims' surf instrumental, "El Toro." But why no tracks from Beck and Robyn Hitchcock's I.P.U. singles?... In the bad-but-not-uninteresting category, *Skank Down Under* (Moon Ska NYC) is a compilation of modern-day ska-punk bands from Australia and New Zealand. A lot of it is excessively slick and conventional, with too little attention to the groove, but as a cultural artifact, it's head-spinning: an Australian take on an American variation on a Jamaican invention. Dr. Raju's cover of the old jump blues tune "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens" adds one more loop to the internationalist knot... The soundtrack to *Sling Blade* (Island) is mostly vaporous instrumentals by Daniel Lanois, but it does have one real oddity: Local H's super-produced, rock-out cover of Guided By Voices' "Smothered In Hugs." If nothing else, it's making us rethink our theory that GBV would be well served by selling out... Know somebody who's recently broken up with her boyfriend not a moment too soon, or ought to? **Go Girl! Soul Sisters Tallin' It Like It Is** (Rhino) is the ideal present: 18 awesome soul-woman anthems about women's independence, originally recorded between 1964 and 1973. You've heard the Aretha Franklin, Lyn Collins and Betty Wright tracks a million times, but how about Laura Lee's "Wedlock Is A Padlock"? Ilana's "Where Would You Be Today"? Betty LaVette's "Your Turn To Cry"? Fabulous stuff.

Morcheeba

Who Can You Trust?

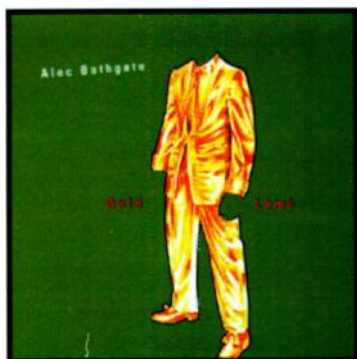


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ALEC BATHGATE / Gold Lamé / Flying Nun ●

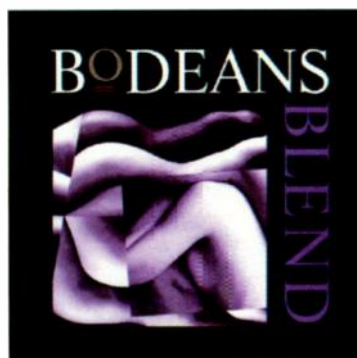
The potential lawsuit from the estate of one King of Rock 'N' Roll must not worry Alec Bathgate one bit. The cover of his new album features a rather familiar shiny gold suit with the head and hands of its original owner cut out. But 5,000 Kiwi-pop fans can't be wrong; the time has definitely come for the Tall Dwarfs' quiet one to step out on his own. Should it be a surprise, then, that Bathgate's songs bear more than a passing resemblance to those of his more renowned partner, Chris Knox? One has visions of a stadium-rock masterpiece (though Bathgate does give that its due, singing "Mama we're all crazy now/Come on feel the noise" on the title track) or a Breeders-like rebirth; instead, this decidedly low-key affair follows the Dwarfs' method carefully. The whole thing is recorded on a four-track, and more often than not, the "rhythm section" is a cheap Casio and a tambourine. So it's all about the songs, two of which appeared on Bathgate's recent "Pet Hates" single. And the songs are... okay. Not great, not all

particularly memorable, but quite pleasant when they're on. And this is where the record's title shows its prescience; like a suit made of its namesake, this LP will stay in the back of your closet, glittering only when it's brought out. **ANDREW BEAUJON**

DATALOG: Released Oct. 20.

FILE UNDER: Low-fi Kiwipop.

R.I.Y.L.: Tall Dwarfs, Spare Snare, Guided By Voices.



BODEANS / Blend / Slash-Reprise

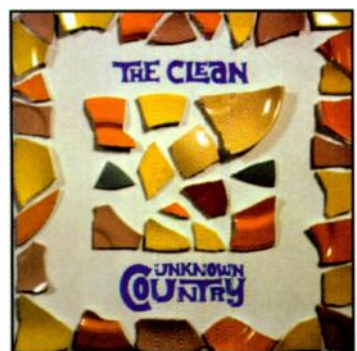
Take a gander at the tragic tale of those poor shmoe from Waukesha, WI, the BoDeans. First album, 1986, *Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams*: critics oohing, cognoscenti ahing, but copies idling in dusty bins. Ten years and six anonymous discs later, Kurt Neumann and Sammy Llanas were still at it, harvesting their winning heartland harmonies and keeping their chins convincingly up. Any other outfit would've probably trudged its sorry self off to the scrap heap. Then, *wham!* Out of the blue, an old BoDeans also-ran, "Closer To Free," gets tagged as the theme song for the Fox TV drama *Party Of Five*. Now the boys are back with another relatively solid melding of twangy chords, chirpy acoustic strumming, and warm campfire-marshmallow singing. As usual, the watery-voiced Neumann is the more likable of the pair—his clanging "The Understanding" is pure anthemic celebration, and his ballad "Do What You Want" is as slick and smiling as any of the classic *Love & Hope* tracks. The raspy Llanas bungles a

couple of overly-earnest numbers (especially the heavy-breathing exercise "Hey Pretty Girl"), but by album's end, you'll be happy that these guys are still around, with a hit under their belt to boot. **TOM LANHAM**

DATALOG: Released Nov. 5.

FILE UNDER: Pop Americana.

R.I.Y.L.: Jawhawks, John Cougar Mellencamp.



THE CLEAN / Unknown Country / Flying Nun

Unknown Country—only the third studio album from the massively influential New Zealand trio The Clean in its almost-20-year existence—is a fine argument for trying to experience any new thing without holding it to your expectations. It's incredibly easy to be struck by how peculiar this record is, and easier still to forget that The Clean has been doing inventive, experimental, and, well, *strange* things in its music all along. *Unknown Country* is complex and lush, but it's also the most difficult Clean record to get a grip on. Although it's broken up into short, discrete pieces, it's not really a "songy" album—an odd move from a band that made its name with endlessly tuneful numbers like "Tally Ho." But although most of the album fairly well evades hooks (and foot-tapping), The Clean's trademark musical frivolity shows up (in, dare I say, more mature fashion than before) on songs like "Chimpy" and the excellent "Twist-Top." And the band continues to be a source of delightfully strange lyrics, e.g. "Franz Kafka At The Zoo," full of whispered intellectual-esque nonsense like "Bertrand Russell likes anchovies on his pizza." The word "challenging" always seems damning in a record review, but *Unknown Country* is evidence that it really shouldn't be. **LIZ CLAYTON**

DATALOG: Released Nov. 10.

FILE UNDER: Odd pop, mellowed with age.

R.I.Y.L.: The Bats, Bedhead, the Great Unwashed.

second thoughts

A look back at an album that came out a while ago, now that we've had some time to think about it.

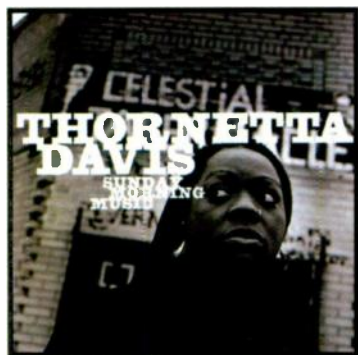


ADEWALE AYUBA / *Fuji Time* / Agogo-Qbadisc

In rock, drummers may be the butt of jokes about stupidity and bad timing, but in Nigerian Fuji music, the drummer is definitely no joke. *Fuji Time*, by Adewale Ayuba and his Bonsue Fuji Organization, boasts no fewer than nine percussionists, who are joined by three vocalists. Ayuba is the fresh new face of Fuji, a pop offshoot of traditional Islamic drumming and singing. Born from music used as an early-morning wake-up call for Muslims, Ayuba's brand of Fuji aims to awaken American ears to the shakin' beat evident in songs like "Fuji Shuffle," "Move Around The Clock" and the half-hour jam "Bubble Fans U.S.A."

With no cheesy keyboards or horn sections gumming up the sound, Ayuba creates hypnotic, yet upbeat grooves with a standard drum kit, talking drums, *bata* (the drum that puts the Afro in Afro-Cuban) and the metal *agogo* from which this new label draws its name. Adding twists on Fuji (itself a fairly recent incarnation), Ayuba invites Red Fox to add some dancehall dynamics to "Fuji Music Anytime," a standout track complete with shout-outs in Yoruban! Ayuba changes little of his style to fit in Fox, suggesting the possibility that he and his group could be a fitting house band for a most interesting Afro-hip-hop LP. Q-Tip, wake up! **STEVE CIABATTONI**

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THORNETTA DAVIS / Sunday Morning Music / Sub Pop

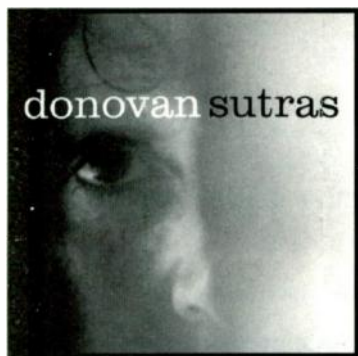
A respected Detroit blues singer, Thornetta Davis got into alternative music by backing up a funk-rock band, Big Chief. Soon after that, they were backing her up instead. Her voice is a little rough by pop standards, but powerful enough to overcome the rawness of the post-punks behind her. The songs lie there limp until she comes in, vocalist and rhythm section all at once. Your first impression might be that she doesn't have the clear, hyperactive voice of a singing star, but she has something else to offer—persistent, inspiring character. Except for Stevie Wonder's "You Haven't Done Nothing," the lyrics are hers and strike a perfect blues attitude: smart sympathy and generosity towards her own pain. "Cry" is a command to a heartbroken ex-lover: "I wanted you to feel this way." "The Deal," a faster and more sex-positive number, has a strikingly allusive chorus: "Love ain't easy if you know what I mean/Staring down the barrel of a love supreme." The instrumentalists meander among lovely acoustic guitars, Zeppelinesque blues, consciously

cheesy wah-wah funk, the acid jazz of MC 900 Foot Jesus—basically, 11 different styles for 11 songs. Thornetta dominates them all. **NELL ZINK**

DATALOG: Released Oct. 8.

FILE UNDER: Eclectic R&B.

R.I.Y.L.: '70s Joan Armatrading, Ruth Brown, Big Chief.



DONOVAN / Sutras / American

It's not widely known that Donovan invented acid house. No, really, check out the title track of *Barabajagal* and tell me the Happy Mondays weren't day-late-and-dollar-short poseurs. What he didn't invent, however, is folk music. That's where he made his mint, though, with hippie-dippie crap like "Catch The Wind," when he was Bush to Dylan's Nirvana; not a logical successor but a pale imitator. It wasn't until Donovan went electric that he began to get seriously weird. "Sunny South Kensington" and "Superlungs My Supergirl" virtually invented Britpop. Now he lives on a private island in the Hebrides and wants for little, save the occasional salvo over pop's bow. *Sutras*, masterminded by Lazarus-maker Rick Rubin, is one of his less successful assaults. There are some nice moments: the beautiful Celtic melody of "Sleep"; the Buddhism-by-numbers "The Way" (its chorus goes "Out of nothing comes the one/Out of one comes two/Out of two..."). But hey, the guy's 50. I wish my parents were still that idealistic. Speaking of which, this record is something of a

classy move, as he eschews cameos from his somewhat-famous modeling children, Donovan Leitch (Junior) and Ione Skye. This is the Donovan we love, but not the material that anybody really likes. I'm looking forward once again to the great psychedelic leap forward. **ANDREW BEAUJON**

DATALOG: Released Oct. 15.

FILE UNDER: If '60s were '90s.

R.I.Y.L.: Cat Stevens, George Harrison.



GUITAR WOLF / Missile Me! / Matador

As far as the tequila-chugging, amp-destroying Japanese garage-rock band Guitar Wolf is concerned, rock 'n' roll is a gift from Heaven, and the best way to honor its giver is to play it as loud, hard and sloppy as possible; if you blow out your equipment, that means you're doing it right. *Missile Me!* sounds exactly like G.W.'s two previous American albums, which is good: artistic growth is not something anyone would want from this band. We get 12 amphetamine-Link-Wray numbers that sound like they were played far too loud for the amplifiers or microphones to handle. The result is a thick, soupy, messy sound, with massive riffs emerging from sprays of feedback and hiss—you can imagine the band bouncing off the walls. Try not to listen too closely to the words, or you'll notice that, for instance, the phrase that sounds like "meat night fighter lookin' low" is actually the title of "Midnight Violence Rock 'N' Roll." (Most of the band's lyrics don't go much further than their titles: "Racing Rock," "Jet Rock 'N'

Roll," "Jet Blues," the improbable "Kung Fu Ramone Culmination Tactic"). It's all over in less than half an hour, which is about all anyone could take, but to get you going in the morning, *Missile Me!* works better than a jar full of vitamins. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

DATALOG: Released Nov. 19.

FILE UNDER: Raw rock 'n' roll the old-fashioned way.

R.I.Y.L.: Link Wray, Teenygenerate, Oblivians.

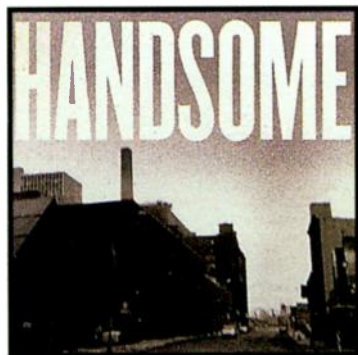
mixed signals



Welcome to "Mixed Signals," a new column honoring the DJ as the audio shaman of the 21st century. We'll sift through the overstuffed market of continuous mix CDs and highlight the best techno, house, drum 'n' bass, hip-hop and experimental compilations, focusing on the DJs and sounds of the underground dance movement. Understand? Good. Now to the music... New York's Jason Jinx has roots stretching back to the formation of the American rave scene. Immersed in club culture for almost a decade, this 23-year-old DJ/producer was one of the primary figures responsible for the success of NYC's now-legendary weekly party NASA. *Sm:)e Mix Session II* (Sm:)e-Profile) highlights Jinx's current skills on the

decks as he seamlessly guides your way through 17 recent pressings on the influential Sm:)e label. Faithful to the relentless groove of hard house, Jinx also allows the disc to drift into tracks that lean towards tribal, progressive and trance, occasionally dropping some of his original pieces into the mix. It's a broad overview of underground house music, served up the way Mr. Jinx has been doing it for years... It's going to be tough for anyone to touch *Muzik Masters* (DeConstruction), a three-CD box set that features mixes by a trio of the UK's top turntable wizards, Dave Clarke (techno), Roger Sanchez (house) and Fabio (jungle). There's not a flawed disc in the bunch. You'll need to throw a few extra bucks on the counter for this one (yeah, it's an import), but you will get your money's worth... This should be old news by now, but if you have yet to pick up *A Scott Hardkiss Mix: Yes* (Hardkiss-Moonshine), you're way, way behind. It's a groundbreaking set from the influential San Francisco DJ/producer, who utilizes turntables, a CD player, two DATs, a sampler, a synthesizer, a smoke machine, a disco ball, and whatever else he could get his hands on at the time. Ranging from Future Sound Of London's "Papua New Guinea" and Orbital's "Belfast" to some of his own collaborations (like Hawke & God Within's "Acid Funk"), the disc is a brilliantly executed lesson on the past, present and future sounds affecting the West Coast vibe. *M. TYE COMER*





HANDSOME / Handsome / Epic ●

When your band's bio name-checks "Tompkins Square Park in the East Village," you can bet your bottom dollar that one of your main selling points is your New York City hardcore cred. Because Handsome includes former members of Quicksand, Helmet, Murphy's Law and the Cro-Mags, the band can't help but be identified by its ties to NYHC's not-too-distant past, when chain wallets were still a novelty and punk rock not yet a commodity. Yet this identification is well deserved. Like the bands from which it is descended, Handsome's chief strategy is to combine dramatic vocal melodies, chugging, tandem guitar lines, and pounding rhythms into brief, catchy anthems designed to appeal to the self-loathing malcontent in us all. Sound familiar?

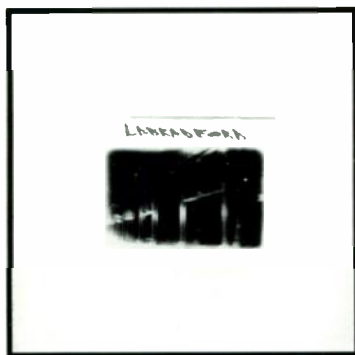
Sure, but these five guys are truly punk rock dynamos, and their flawless delivery makes their self-titled debut fairly exhilarating. Guitarists Tom Capone and Peter Mengede (of Quicksand and Helmet, respectively) wield their axes with such precision and intensity that even the cheesy vocal effect

that visits some of these songs fails to spoil them. The powerhouse rhythm section could jackhammer through the strongest bulwark, and any of these songs could turn a crowd of shoe-gazing ne'er-do-wells into a writhing mass of moshers. Now *there's* hardcore cred for you. JENNY ELISCU

DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 21.

FILE UNDER: NYHC gets a makeover.

R.I.Y.L.: Sense Field, Jawbox, any of its members' former bands, all-ages matinees.



LABRADFORD / Labradford / Kranky

If what they call "space-rock" nowadays is supposed to be soothing, this is not it. Where that school of drone music turns on (in both senses), makes pretty noises, and pleasantly fades, Labradford never allows you to fully relax, and its third album isn't a record you'd want to sleep through anyhow. The first song, "Phantom Channel Crossing," sounds like a field recording of a chained criminal ransacking a garden and patio store (with metallic, echoing organs in the background). Mark Nelson's vocals do nothing to humanize the record, but that doesn't seem to be their objective anyhow. Labradford's landscape is oceanic (especially on "Cipher") and dungeony, unearthly and precariously balanced, plodding and creaking. The high points of *Labradford* are "Scenic Recovery" and "Mid-Range," beautifully layered and repetitive, with fantastic-sounding strings. The album is enshrouded in gentle organ tones that give an illusory sense of what could be a merely wispy, lulling record, but its treasures are its tensions. There's an edginess hidden within

the calm that's integral not only to why Labradford is enjoyable and pretty to listen to, but also to why it isn't boring. LIZ CLAYTON

DATALOG: Released Oct. 15.

FILE UNDER: Ambient Halloween music.

R.I.Y.L.: Faust, Tricky.



LIQUID SOUL / Liquid Soul / Ark 21 ●

What makes acid jazz so immediately tasty is often what leads to much of the music being insubstantial: style is at such a premium (it's no accident that its association with "cool" nightlife is so strong) that often there's little room for substance. This soft-ball lead-in is for Liquid Soul, a Chicago 10-piece juggernaut that takes acid jazz's style cues and winds them into something fierce, funky and inventive. The engine here is sax man Mars Williams, a veteran of new wave acts like the Waitresses, Psychedelic Furs and the Power Station, as well as any number of free-jazz collectives, including Massacre and Hal Russell's NRG Ensemble. Williams ably supports the band's precise funk grooves, but he's also the resident fly in the ointment, throwing things off-kilter with fiery solos that threaten to spin off into Rahsaan Roland Kirksville. His foil is usually DJ Jessie de La Pena, whose loops, grooves and beats make the partnership between acid and jazz an equal one. Recorded more than a year ago, when the band was a still-growing septet, half of

Liquid Soul captures the outfit live in front of one of its usual Sunday night hipster crowds, but even with the studio tracks, you can somehow hear the sound of people dancing. SCOTT BURKE

DATALOG: Released Oct. 29.

FILE UNDER: Funky acid jazz.

R.I.Y.L.: Solsonics, Average White Band, Groove Collective.



MYRA MELFORD TRIO / The Same River, Twice / Gramavision-Rykodisc

Growing up as a young girl, Myra Melford lived in a Frank Lloyd Wright house, and somehow, you can tell by her piano playing. Angular, cerebral, visceral and commandingly intense, Melford's music can open up into a breathtaking vista at one moment and a dark, contemplative space the next. In a Wright-designed room, you might be standing there admiring the view from the windows and never notice that the ceiling spirals up three stories above you; Melford's music conjures a similar experience. She's one of the very few women out there playing jazz piano in a Cecil Taylor/Monk style. She's also phenomenal, and one of New York's many underappreciated treasures, especially amidst the city's Downtown jazz scene. Melford's

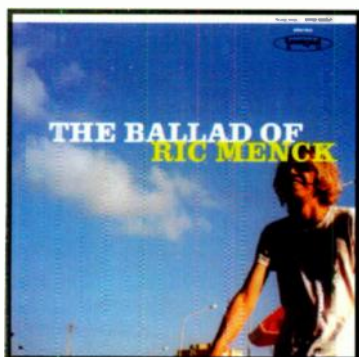
playing is all rippling lines, glossing fluid runs, and beautiful geometric structures, an emotive style of playing that combines loose intuitive feel with immense technical skill. Like a Leonardo drawing, the kinetic work of her trio (with bass and drums) urges you to appreciate not just the

physical beauty of the surface, but the muscles and the bones underneath, and gives you a new understanding of how the whole thing is put together so it can move. Plus, it's fun to listen to. *JAMES LIEN*

DATALOG: Released Oct. 16.

FILE UNDER: Adventurous jazz pianism.

R.I.Y.L.: Thelonious Monk, Marilyn Crispell, Cecil Taylor.



RIC MENCK / The Ballad Of Ric Menck / Summershine

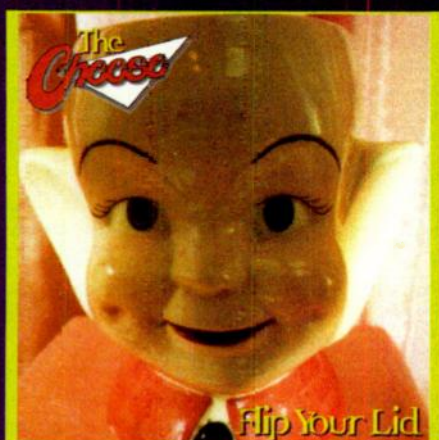
If someone came to you looking for a definition of "jangle," you could do a lot worse than play them this omnibus of late-'80s singles by current Velvet Crush leader/occasional Matthew Sweet drummer Ric Menck. Originally released under the names the Springfields and Choo Choo Train, these nuggets recall the sonic values of that indie moment when the Byrds and Big Star were revered as gods: ringing 12-string paired with airy acoustic strums, tambourines doubling snare drums, lots of vocal harmonies, and chord changes and melodies out of a decidedly '80s version of the '60s. Topping it off is Menck's own breathy, adenoidal voice, a limited instrument that suits the material perfectly—though when he tries to generate a little passion (as on a cover of the Pastels' heartbroken "Million Tears"), the results are more whiny than charming. Lyrical concerns, as one would expect, revolve around summer, ever-elusive girls riding away on bicycles, and a daydreamed, disembodied vision of what romance might be

like. While Menck's uneasy attempts to be more "rock" on recent Velvet Crush records haven't amounted to much, these songs—though a bit cloying heard in one sitting—are, taken individually, gems from a more innocent moment in independent music. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*

DATALOG: Released Nov. 12.

FILE UNDER: Trebly, utopian guitar pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Matthew Sweet, the Field Mice, Velvet Crush.



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THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA / II / Columbia

"Hello, ladies and gentleman, are you prepared to rock?" begins the second album from The Presidents Of The United States Of America. Many will indeed be ready to rock to the Presidents' blend of lively but primitive guitar hammering and purposefully dumb lyrics, but others will want to leave it where they found it. The Presidents got famous playing two guitars with five strings between them, and singing about fruit and animals, and they haven't changed the formula a bit. At least four songs contain references to dirt or swamps, including one called "Froggie," and another called "Bug City." Two others turn to TV for their inspiration: "Tiki God" is based on an episode of *The Brady Bunch*, and "Mach 5" refers to *Speed Racer*. Musically, *II* is a bit

more sophisticated than the band's first release (you can actually hear an electric piano), but it's not going to tax anyone's mental endurance. Singer Chris Ballew still sounds like a cross between Deep Purple's Roger Hodgson and They Might Be Giants' John Flansburgh. Listeners

looking for dumb fun will find it, but the Presidents would do well to remember that line from Spinal Tap: "There's such a fine line between clever and stupid." **HEIDI MACDONALD**

DATALOG: Released Nov. 5.

FILE UNDER: Sophmores at large.

R.I.Y.L.: Green Day, lesser They Might Be Giants.



VARIOUS ARTISTS / Red Hot + Rio / Red Hot/Antilles-Verve

While the issue of AIDS awareness may not be weighing on peoples' consciousness with quite the same ardency that it did three or four years ago, the New York-based Red Hot organization hasn't slowed down releasing its ongoing string of thematic benefit compilations to raise awareness and funds to combat the disease. The latest installment is *Red Hot + Rio*, which teams Brazilian musicians with American counterparts to create radically rearranged versions of classic bossa nova, samba and other Brazilian popular music. The best moment comes when Stereolab (for whom you'd think the Jobim tune "One Note Samba" had been custom-written) teams up with love-jazz legend Herbie Mann. Each party involved

gives something to the mix—the 'Lab gives Mann much-needed hipness, while Mann gives the band a real soloist. The broad-reaching nature of the compilation assures a variety of performances, from George Michael teamed with Astrud Gilberto to Sting duetting with Antonio Carlos

Jobim—hey, even if Jobim were still alive, it would have been awfully hard to convince the composer of "Girl From Ipanema" to change his lyrics to "Girl From Loisaída" to record it with Luscious Jackson. **JAMES LIEN**

DATALOG: Released Oct. 29. Also available: *Red Hot On Verve*, a companion volume of the original versions of these songs.

FILE UNDER: Brazilian trip-hop.

R.I.Y.L.: Pizzicato Five, Astrud Gilberto, David Byrne.

SATURNINE / Flags For Unknown Territories / Dirt

It's hard to resist the charm of Saturnine. Since the band formed in New York City in 1993, it's been steadily taking heartwarmingly familiar pop precedents and shaping them into touching and undeniable new evidence. *Flags*, its second album, features producer Kurt Ralske (Ultra Vivid Scene) putting on his best Mitch Easter impersonation and producing an '80s-sounding gem of brittle, shimmering guitars and sensitively bookish vocals. Guitarists Matt Gallaway and Jennifer Baron have abandoned the dense and distorted sound of their early records for a clean and tight interweaving of melody lines, and the new spaciousness lets the dexterous loveliness of Mike Donofrio's bass and Jim Harwood's drums shine brightly through.

There's no penetrating enigma or wrenching madness in Saturnine's nostalgic evocations of lost days. The band's strength lies in craftily conjuring up the seductive pain of domesticity, and of magic that might have been. With his preoccupation with time and the weather, lyricist Gallaway

is the gentle herald of the band's melancholy. As he says in "Shine Into The Sky": "The sun was shining on the sea, but the sea was aching." The aching sea is here if you want to plunge into it. **MICHAEL SAPIR**

Saturnine



Flags for Unknown Territories

DATALOG: Released Oct. 15.

FILE UNDER: Bittersweet pop.

R.I.Y.L.: The Sundays, the Go-Betweens, Galaxie 500.



RED KRAYOLA / Hazel / Drag City

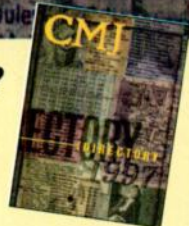
If last year's *Amor And Language* EP featured Mayo Thompson as autocrat, sending guitar and vocal across the globe for production and constraining his collaborators to accompanying what was present, this full-length album showcases Thompson as benevolent ringleader, apparently as interested in letting the talented folks around him shine as in getting his own agenda across. Album credits are an unadorned alphabetical list, signifying art-collective solidarity while confounding musicological speculations. As in the old days, vocal duties are spread around, from Mary Lass Stewart's soprano on "Duck And Cover" to David Grubbs' delightful turn on "Another Song, Another Satan." Of course, Thompson's own sardonic rumble shows up on a clutch of tunes, notably the opening "I'm So Blasé," which, with its sleepy wah-wah guitars and Dr. Dre-like synth line, is the closest thing to a "slow jam" Drag City is ever likely to release. "Dad," a prosy bit of analysis of "syncategorematic expressions" such as "nothing is nothing," is more typically

DATALOG: Release date: Dec. 10.
FILE UNDER: A well-balanced equation of art and pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Pere Ubu, Castr Del Sol, Evan Parker.

cerebral Krayola fare, but even this breaks into a bit of verse at the end: "If we are rigorous as logically normal/The conclusions we reach will be sensational." Guitar manipulator/secret weapon Jim O'Rourke probably deserves a good bit of the credit for getting the wildly varied sonic ideas present here to seem like they belong on the same record at all. The disc moves from an almost-normal "band" sound to seamless combinations of George Hurley's muscular drumming with typewriter noise to the radically atonal sax attack of Lynn Johnston on the free-improv-plus-mixing-tricks "Boogie," without obscuring either Thompson's signature guitar sound, as weedy and un-resonant as his voice is deep, or the dry wit of his unique sense of what adds up to a song. FRANKLIN BRUNO

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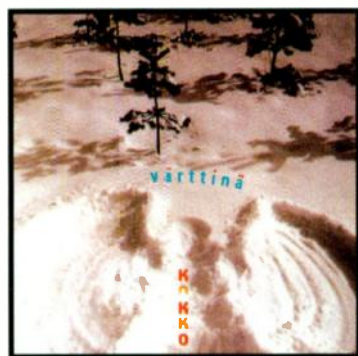




DATALOG: Release date: Jan. 21.
FILE UNDER: Eclectic prog.
R.I.Y.L.: June Of 44, Varnaline, Low.

SPACE NEEDLE / The Moray Eels Eat The Space Needle / Zero Hour ●

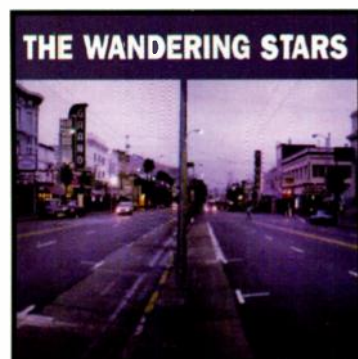
One thing is pretty clear about Space Needle, as of this second album: the three former basement recordists have *massive* record collections, and they're proud of them. The influences-on-sleeve effect of *The Moray Eels* starts with the title (lifted from an old Holy Modal Rounders album), and goes on from there. The lovely "Never Lonely Alone" is a cousin to Low's "Words"; "Love Left Us Strangers" has a sweet keyboard part that seems to have wandered in from a Steely Dan record; "Hot For Krishna," with Max Buckholtz's guest violin part, shows that the band's been listening to the Dirty Three and Van Halen. Elsewhere, the trio (now including Varnaline's Anders Parker) goes off on some proggy excursions, with three nine-plus-minute tracks (they all get rather fuzzy, but the build-and-attack-and-release dynamic of the opening instrumental "Where The Fucks My Wallet" is bluntly effective). Unfortunately, Space Needle's self-conscious eclecticism often gets in its way—it tries to do a lot of very different things, but its heart rarely seems to be in any of them. *The Moray Eels* works best when the band focuses on the strengths that can keep it in *other* people's record collections: its easy grooves and its richly lustrous vocal harmonies. **DOUGLAS WOLK**



DATALOG: Released Oct. 15.
FILE UNDER: Scandinavian joy-pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Gipsy Kings, Cardigans, Deep Forest.

VÄRTTINÄ / Kokko / Nonesuch

Listen to *Kokko* cold, and you might think it's a bubblegum record by those tiny women who ride on Mothra—obviously Japanese, and 12 to 14 inches tall. But watch those umlauts! Värttinä ("Reel") began playing the traditional music of Karelia (southeastern Finland—sorry, no reindeer) as a "kantele" army (fifteen girls on Karelian harps) in 1983. Conveniently located between the hostile powers of Russia and Sweden, its native language frequently forbidden, Karelia came late to the folk music explosion. Detractors still claim that Karelia has no indigenous music and stole its tunes from passing Gypsies. But Värttinä's original lyrics are so graceful and mournful you'd think they'd been handed down for centuries. Barren women, dead lovers, icy winds from the frozen wastes: they're all here, couched beside nonsense syllables in quick, eerie close harmony. You can follow the lyric sheet and sing along—*noin lauloi emoni ennen!* Every time you miss a line, you have to take a drink. Screw up the whole song, and you chug—it's the Värttinä party game! If you're into counting, you'll notice that these songs have things like five-beat measures nine-beat choruses, but the light-jazz worldbeat sound and flawless vocals are smooth as a baby's butt. **NELL ZINK**



DATALOG: Released Oct. 20.
FILE UNDER: Straight-faced melodramatic pop.
R.I.Y.L.: Lee Hazelwood, Palace, Scott Walker, Simon Bonney.

THE WANDERING STARS / The Wandering Stars / Nuf Sed ●

The Wandering Stars are funny, but not really funny-ha-ha. They're more funny-peculiar. It *seems* like they're kidding. Their music is too sappy for it not to be some sort of insidious joke—too tear-jerky, too well-crafted, too clumsily dramatic, and too smart. They've just got to be kidding. But it's unclear because *The Wandering Stars* is presented with a revealingly open heart and a poker face—no wry grin, no tongue-in-cheek irony, no indication at all that they're not serious musicians following their hearts by singing late-'60s AM-radio pop à la Lee Hazelwood and Jimmy Webb. The confusion lies in singer Andrew Rush's voice; it has a soft and pliable demeanor, gentle and a tad effeminate—not bursting with manhood like Tom Jones. So when he sings "I'm Poison," you just have to giggle, because the voice and the message are at extreme odds with each other. Nonetheless, The Wandering Stars are never funny-shitty. They sing in clichés and gush with overwrought drama (sample song title: "Nobody's Humming Your Songs, Papa"), and Rush can come off like a blissfully unaware Will Oldham, but there is something underneath the confusion, something that needles its way into the heart and manages to find a warm spot. **RANDALL ROBERTS**



THE JOSEPHINE WIGGS EXPERIENCE / *Bon Bon Lifestyle* / Grand Royal

The Josephine Wiggs Experience is an ongoing collaboration between Breeders bassist Wiggs and John Mattock, who played drums for Spacemen 3 and Spiritualized. The group's debut offers seven songs and five instrumentals, ethereal études in the subtle interconnections between movement and stability, open longing and homesickness. Like a formalist pastel painting from '20s England, *Bon Bon Lifestyle* has a limited palate of minor tones: the icy light-blue of the keyboards, the golden-brown of the rhythm section, the airy pink of the vocals. These wistful pastels color an unassuming, quietly surprising cross between the fey and breathy singing of the British shoegazer bands (Chapterhouse, Slowdive, Lush), and the crisp,

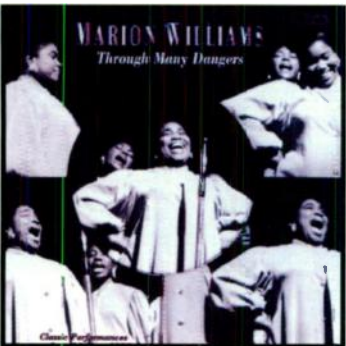
lightly floating grooves of jazz. This pleasant record is something to listen to while wearing an old cardigan, sipping homemade tea, and leafing through a book by Djuna Barnes. Wiggs' singing and writing sometimes seem anemic, but Mattock's outstanding drumming carries the

burden of driving the songs out of the occasional air pocket of insignificance. *Bon Bon* won't change your life, but it will bring into it the cool breeze of a lucid and unique outlook. *MICHAŁ SAPIR*

DATALOG: Released Oct. 28.

FILE UNDER: Bloomsbury Circle pop.

R.I.Y.L.: Everything But The Girl, Robert Wyatt, Slowdive.



MARION WILLIAMS / *Through Many Dangers* / Shanachie

Widely considered to be among the greatest gospel singers of all time, Marion Williams had a voice that is a thing of wonder, an epic force of nature that would not have been tamed if it weren't for Williams' natural instincts, taste, integrity and, most of all, loving commitment to the lyrics that moved her. *Through Many Dangers'* 30 songs cover almost 30 years of Williams' career, up until the last recordings before her death in 1993, and while there are subtle stylistic changes in Williams' approach, there is no decline in quality. Even at an ecstatic peak, Williams never indulges in the blow-hard vocal pyrotechnics that lesser singers of her substantial technical ability indulge in. Every flourish is there for a reason. Take the over-the-top

"Closer To Thee." Her loose take on the lyric is a balance of possession and control and prowess and restraint, so moving it's disturbing. Sometimes she didn't even need a lyric: just dig the two minutes of humming/moaning that end the title track. Delving into religious material may seem a little daunting, but after a listen to "Closer To Thee" or

Williams' a cappella take on "Motherless Children," you'll get over it. And if you're looking for an introduction to gospel, this (along with the Soul Stirrers and Sister Rosetta Tharpe) should do the trick. *RILEY PUCKETT*

DATALOG: Released Sep. 18.

FILE UNDER: Gospel.

R.I.Y.L.: Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Irma Thomas.



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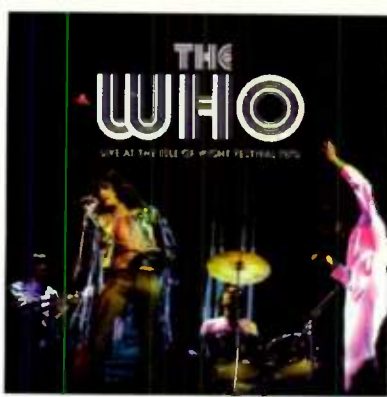
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TOP 75

[Alternative Radio Airplay]

ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1 JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Now I Got Worry	Matador-Capitol
2 LUSCIOUS JACKSON	Fever In Fever Out	Grand Royal-Capitol
3 CARDIGANS	First Band On The Moon	Mercury
4 ARCHERS OF LOAF	All The Nations Airports	Alias/Elektra-EEG
5 TOOL	Ænima	Zoo
6 CAKE	Fashion Nugget	Capricorn-Mercury
7 MARILYN MANSON	Antichrist Superstar	Nothing-Interscope
8 SEBADOH	Harmacy	Sub Pop
9 CATHERINE	Hot Saki & Bedtime Stories	TVT
10 MAZZY STAR	Among My Swan	Capitol
11 YO LA TENGO	Genius + Love = Yo La Tengo	Matador
12 JOHN PARISH AND POLLY JEAN HARVEY	Dance Hall At Louse Point	Island
13 R.E.M.	New Adventures In Hi-Fi	Warner Bros.
14 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS	Factory Showroom	Elektra-EEG
15 KULA SHAKER	K	Columbia-CRG
16 SILVER JEWS	The Natural Bridge	Drag City
17 DESCENDENTS	Everything Sucks	Epitaph
18 LEMONHEADS	Car Button Cloth	TAG-Atlantic
19 WEDDING PRESENT	Saturnalia	Cooking Vinyl America
20 SOCIAL DISTORTION	White Light White Heat White Trash	550-Epic
21 CAT POWER	What Would The Community Think	Matador
22 WEEZER	Pinkerton	DGC
23 BAD BRAINS	Black Dots	Caroline
24 KORN	Life Is Peachy	Immortal-Epic
25 BUTTER 08	Butter	Grand Royal
26 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Pop American Style	March
27 ROOTS	Illadelph Halflife	DGC
28 FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON	Dead Cities	Astralwerks-Caroline
29 PHISH	Billy Breathes	Elektra-EEG
30 LISA GERMANO	Excerpts From A Love Circus	4AD
31 SUZANNE VEGA	Nine Objects Of Desire	A&M
32 SUBLIME	Sublime	Gasoline Alley-MCA
33 SEELY	Julie Only	Too Pure-American
34 RACHEL'S	The Sea And The Bells	Quarterstick
35 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Jabberjaw: Pure Sweet Hell	Mammoth
36 PIG	Sinsation	Nothing-Interscope
37 NEW BOMB TURKS	Scared Straight	Epitaph
38 MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD	Shack-man	Gramavision-Rykodisc
39 YATSURA	We Are Yatsura	Ché-Primary
40 BECK	Odelay	DGC
41 RUSTED ROOT	Remember	Mercury
42 CRANES	The Tragedy Of Oreste And Electra	Dedicated
43 HEADS	No Talking Just Head	Radioactive-MCA
44 BLINKER THE STAR	A Bourgeois Kitten	A&M
45 SWINGIN' UTTERS	A Juvenile Product Of The Working Class	Fat Wreck Chords
46 REX	C	Southern
47 RED AUNTS	Saltbox	Epitaph
48 LILYS	Better Can't Make Your Life Better	Ché-Primary
49 COUNTING CROWS	Recovering The Satellites	Geffen
50 PHANTOM SURFERS	The Great Surf Crash Of '97	Lookout!
51 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Red Hot + Rio	Antilles-Verve
52 FACE TO FACE	Face To Face	A&M
53 OBLIVIONS	Popular Favorites	Crypt
54 SMOG	The Doctor Came At Dawn	Drag City
55 HEAVENLY	Operation Heavenly	K
56 KOMEDA	The Genius Of Komeda	Minty Fresh
57 SPEEDBALL BABY	Cinema	Fort Apache-MCA
58 GRASSY KNOLL	Positive	Netwerk/Antilles-Verve
59 NIRVANA	From The Muddy Banks Of The Wishkah	DGC
60 CHEMICAL BROTHERS	"Setting Sun" (5")	Astralwerks-Caroline
61 RASPUTINA	Thanks For The Ether	Columbia-CRG
62 FIREWATER	Get Off The Cross (We Need The Wood For The Fire)	Jetset
63 SOUL COUGHING	Irresistible Bliss	Slash-WB
64 MY DRUG HELL	This Is My Drug Hell	Countdown-ULG
65 THROWING MUSES	Limbo	Throwing Music-Rykodisc
66 FROGPOND	Count To Ten	TriStar
67 DIRTY THREE	Horse Stories	Touch And Go
68 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Succour	Ptolemaic Terrascope-Flydaddy
69 JANE JENSEN	Comic Book Whore	Flip
70 SHAWN COLVIN	A Few Small Repairs	Columbia-CRG
71 ZUMPAÑO	Goin' Through Changes	Sub Pop
72 DITCH CROAKER	Secrets Of The Mule	In Bloom-Reprise
73 EELS	Beautiful Freak	DreamWorks-Geffen
74 PROMISE RING	30° Everywhere	Jade Tree
75 NERDY GIRL	Twist Her	No Life

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



THE WHO

Live At The Isle Of Wight Festival 1970

Legacy-Columbia

There are many different images of The Who—young pill-popped mods, eccentric rock 'n' roll loonies, badly-dressed aging English businessmen endlessly reuniting to pay off the mortgages on their mansions. *Live At The Isle Of Wight Festival 1970* is enough to erase any embarrassing memory you may have of a bald and paunchy Pete Townshend fronting a Yanni-esque orchestra playing "My Generation" on an acoustic guitar surrounded by plastic sound baffles to protect his ears. From 1968 to 1971 or so, The Who was arguably the best live band on the planet. There's something immensely gratifying about hearing "Young Man Blues" or "Sparks" and knowing that four guys had the power and talent to completely rock a crowd that big, even the dudes huddled in the mud five acres away. Keith Moon plays as if the whole evening were a continuous drum solo, turning The Who's music into this big rumbling thing, while Pete spins mesmerizing solos out of his maroon SG with subtlety and strength. If you watch the footage of The Who at Woodstock or look closely at live photos from this period, you'll usually see a dark splotch on the butt of Pete's otherwise-immaculate white jump suit. That's blood, where he would wipe his hand after cutting his fingers windmilling his guitar to shreds.

From the same tapes of the 1970 festival, Columbia has also issued a lavish box set compiling performances by everyone from the Jimi Hendrix Experience to Tiny Tim. And because the resultant 2-CD *Message To Love: The Isle Of Wight Festival 1970* limits each artist to one or two tracks, unlike the actual festival, you don't have to wait through an hour of Emerson, Lake & Palmer while sitting in a pile of garbage in order to hear the Doors, or stay awake until 3 a.m. to see a brightly colored speck a mile away that sounds like Jimi Hendrix in a jetlagged, pissy mood. Although the box takes its title from a Hendrix song, what you don't get to hear is a pissed-off Hendrix grumbling, "Peace and love and all that other bullshit, see ya later," as he exits the stage. The '60s were ending, and fast—he'd be dead in three months. Best jam title of the festival: Ten Years After's "Extension On One Chord."



With bands like Palace Brothers, Uncle Tupelo and Scud Mountain Boys singing in twangy voices and evoking rustic images of bygone rural America, it'd be nice for folks to go back and check out the real deal. For some two-plus decades, **County Records** has been one of the premier labels for bluegrass and traditional music, reissuing definitive collections of some of the best old-timey music of the '20s through the '40s. Rounding out the label's year-end fall batch, it's just put out a wonderful little collection of *String Bands From Rural Virginia* and a similar set representing the Carolinas; also in the wings is a collection of rural Mississippi string bands that may turn out to be the best of the lot. Then there's *Volume Two of Old Time Songs Recorded From 1926 To 1930* by Charlie Poole And The North Carolina Ramblers. County also does mail-order. Its new stuff can be hit or miss, but basically anything in its catalog with a date during the Depression or a title like *The 1928 Edison Recordings Of Ernest V. Stoneman* is going to be great.

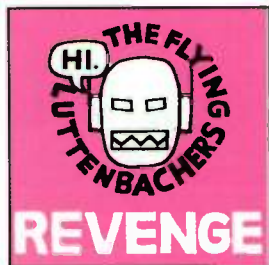


Scott Walker was the quintessential postmodern moody crooner, an influence on Eric Matthews, Richard Davies and their ilk. Razor & Tie has just released *It's Raining Today: The Scott Walker Story 1967-70*, an inspiring anthology compiled by Marshall Crenshaw. Walker's music was a strange and gloomy vision of decadent cabaret pop, like maybe Tom Jones on heroin, and the reclusive crooner served as a role model for Anglo-inspirees to follow, from Julian Cope (who compiled his own Walker collection, *Fire Escape In The Sky: The Godlike Genius Of Scott Walker*) to Pulp's Jarvis Crocker to Soft Cell's Mark Almond and beyond.

The Right Stuff label has put out a two-CD set with an intriguing premise: to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the reggae/world beat magazine *The Beat*, the magazine's contributing writers and editors all selected one track that they felt was definitive, influential or simply their favorite song. The result, *The Sound Of The Beat: 15 Years Of Rhythm And Roots*, is actually a well-segued mix of reggae, African, Caribbean and Brazilian music, including a spectacular Franco & O.K. Jazz track I'd never heard. It sounds like a dippy phrase you'd read in *USA Today*, but it's really true that when you put together the world's music side-by-side, you start to hear the similarities and differences all at once.

RIFFS

The **Flying Lutenbachers** will be getting few props from the Manowar legions, but leader/drummer Weasel Walter and his kin are mighty metal warriors just the same. Their new jazzcore outing is everything the men in furs are not: chaotic, uncontrolled, sloppy, and low-fi. Under the hot pink cover of *Revenge Of The Flying Lutenbachers* (ugExplode-Skin Graft) lurks a shining silver pentagram, blasting the same hyperactive invulnerability that moves metal forward... I wish the first post-Earache release by **Brutal Truth** was as adventurous. Instead, with *Kill Trend Suicide* (Relapse), the sometimes experimental New York quartet gets



down with the twisted crud of the underground blurgrind scene. Brutal Truth easily burns through vaguely activist anthems in the vein of Spazz and Man Is The Bastard, but without the manic spark of the Lutenbachers. I'm left wanting more of the psychedelic noise power pumped out on last year's excellent *Need To Control* CD... A major **Motorhead** reissue campaign is underway in America, bringing remastered and bonus-track-packed versions of six Motormasterpieces: *Overkill*, *Bomber*, *Ace Of Spades*, *No Sleep Til Hammersmith*, *Iron Fist*, and *Another Perfect Day* (all Dojo). These volumes represent the flourishing 1979-1983 creative streak that inspired virtually all major figures in modern metal, and a running history through the liner notes fills in some of the blanks on what it must have been like. Lemmy, Philthy Taylor, and Fast Eddie Clarke's ragged and rollicking blues-based blur tells the poignant tale of the eternal lowlife, presaging the amphetamine-hippie aesthetic of grunge. These six records wipe out most of the rock before them, and cast a shadow over much of what's come since. The same label has similar lofty reissue schemes forthcoming from Raven, Iron Maiden, and Black Sabbath. Don't trust anyone who isn't happy about this project... Incidentally, there's a new **Dio** album, *Angry Machines* (Fierce), and it sucks. Haggard, stale, derivative cyber-concept crap from a career vocalist who should be old and peculiar enough to know better.

METAL TOP 25

- 1 KORN Life Is Peachy *Immortal-Epic* ✓
- 2 TOOL Anima Zoo ✓
- 3 DOWNSSET do we speak a dead language? *Mercury* ✓
- 4 MARILYN MANSON Antichrist Superstar *Nothing-Interscope* ✓
- 5 TYPE O NEGATIVE October Rust *Roadrunner* ✓
- 6 CORROSION OF CONFORMITY Wiseblood *Columbia-CRG*
- 7 OVERDOSE Sears *Fierce-FLG* ✓
- 8 DANZIG Blackacidevil *Hollywood*
- 9 EARTH CRISIS Gomorrah's Season Ends *Victory*
- 10 STUCK MOJO Pigwalk *Century Media*
- 11 MOTORHEAD Overnight Sensation *CMC*
- 12 SAMAEI Passage *Century Media*
- 13 BRUTAL TRUTH Kill Trend Suicide *Relapse*
- 14 GODFLESH Songs Of Love And Hate *Earache*
- 15 ORANGE 9MM Tragic *Atlantic* ✓
- 16 PIST-ON Number One *Fierce-FLG*
- 17 VISION OF DISORDER Vision Of Disorder *Supersoul-Roadrunner*
- 18 KING DIAMOND The Graveyard *Metal Blade*
- 19 MERCYFUL FATE Into The Unknown *Metal Blade*
- 20 MANOWAR Louder Than Hell *Geffen*
- 21 MOONSPELL Irreligious *Century Media*
- 22 INNER THOUGHT Perspectives *Dwell*
- 23 PRO-PAIN Contents Under Pressure *Energy* ✓
- 24 WARZONE The Sound Of Revolution *Victory* ✓
- 25 WHITE ZOMBIE Supersexy Swingin' Sounds *Geffen* ✓

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



MANOWAR Louder Than Hell

Geffen

As an impressionable pre-teen, I lived for a while in the lake country of upstate New York, where Manowar were local heroes and singer Eric Adams was meat cutter at the local supermarket; at the time, classic, manly albums like *Into Glory Ride* and *Hail To England* made sense alongside faster punk-influenced bands like Metallica and Slayer. Now signed to Geffen, Manowar are surprisingly much the same band as before. Ross the Boss jumped ship in favor of the Dictators reunion, and new guitarist Karl Logan seems more capable of superhuman stringwork. Hardened by years of seriousness of purpose, the band is tighter than a Bulgarian powerlifter's buttocks, and absolutely unafraid to sing out anthems like "The Gods Made Heavy Metal"; they toss in a couple songs about motorcycles for good measure. *Louder Than Hell* is generally a heavy meld of John Philip Sousa, Richard Wagner, and jacked-up Judas Priest, but the piano-and-vocal number "Courage" is a weird, inspirational collusion of Freddie Mercury and Randy Newman. Most of the album is utterly ridiculous, but I have the highest respect for the band's formidable musicianship and their unwavering belief in their vision. Metal has changed, Manowar has not—death to false metal, I guess.



ATARI TEENAGE RIOT

"Deutschland Has Gotta Die"

DHR-Grand Royal

There are people making more extreme rock and more extreme dance music than the German DJ Alec Empire, but nobody's making more extreme records that feel like they belong on 7" singles. Empire's m.o. is super-fast distorted gabber and jungle beats punctuated by metal guitars and screamed revolutionary slogans, but his tracks are also easy to appreciate if you're just listening to them rather than being bludgeoned senseless by them in a club. Grand Royal has just released four 7" singles by Empire's various projects (including a solo single and records by Ec8or and Shizuo), but the Atari Teenage Riot record is the best place to start. "Deutschland" has a lot of sonic elements going on (sirens, a couple of different voices howling like ax-murderers or their victims, some punk record being scratched), more lyrics than any of the others, and a final howl so loud you can imagine the recording meter's needle being pinned to the right. "Riot '96" starts out as a straight-up metal headbanging loop, then throws in some bizarre dub effects and a murmuring female voice; "Riot Sounds Produce Riots" is a 30-second Empire manifesto. This is some of the most exciting new stuff to hit vinyl in a while.

The **Third Eye Foundation** is on a roll right now. The group has followed up last month's extraordinary "Universal Cooler" with another single, this time a 12": "Semtex" (Domino (UK)). This one is a more straightforward jungle record, but what sets it apart is its concern for tune and arrangement. At first, it sounds like a typical, entirely rhythm-driven jungle disc, albeit with some nicely droning Middle Eastern-sounding whines in the background. By the time its 10 minutes are over, though, you'll find yourself listening to its fragments of melody and countermelody, its fragile harmonies and its layers of instrumentation.

The **Chemical Brothers'** "Setting Sun" is their long-awaited collaboration with Oasis's Noel Gallagher, and the record that enthusiasts of electronica have been counting on to make the Brothers, and maybe dance music in general, cross over to pop listeners. Well, it's not quite the "Smells Like Teen Spirit" of dance, but it is pretty exciting. The secret pop ingredient is less Gallagher's super-simple melody and singing than the lurching drum groove that defines the song, a cousin to Ringo Starr's drumming on "Tomorrow Never Knows," of all things.



There are a lot of peculiar, no-wave-inflected bands coming out of the Midwest right now, from the Flying Luttenbachers to Duotron to White to Xerobot, but Chicago's **You Fantastic!**, which pairs drummer/pianist Thymme Jones (of Cheer-Accident) with two ex-Dazzling Killmen, has just made one of the strangest records ever come out of that city: the 15-minute *Riddler* EP (Skin Graft). Over the course of its 10 untitled tracks, which all run together anyway, relentless double-tracked drums play tag with fogs of distant guitar noise, descending horn moans and other instrumental solos and duos. Each passage gets supplanted by a new one, and disappears, recedes into the background or fades out; listening to the whole thing is like peeling away the layers of an onion.



The venerable British psychedelia-and-more 'zine **Ptolemaic Terrascope**, financially rescued by the *Succour* compilation, has just released its 21st issue, accompanied by a neat little 7" featuring a high-pitched instrumental by Neutral Milk Hotel and a very long, kinda fun, rather Beethovenish live track (recorded in 1970) by the Hampion Grease Band—it devolves into the *Andy Griffith* theme by the end. The 'zine is pretty neat too, including interviews with current indie faves like the Grifters and the Dead C's Bruce Russell, and classic-rock also-rans Pete Best and Doug Yule, as well as a whole lot of reviews.

New York's **Valentine Six** ☺ has released a pair of terrific, low-profile singles on its own V6 label, "I Saw A Ghost Face" and "Zombie." Slinky and sleazy, driven by singer Parker Valentine's saxophone and Lily Stone's piano parts, they have a creepy backwater sound that meshes surprisingly well with their weird time signatures (imagine a strip-bar version of the *Mission: Impossible* theme). Restraining-order-inducing lyric of the month: "Heads I love you/tails I love you/if it don't come down I just might break a whole lot more than your candy-apple sugar-coated sweet baby girl heart."

IT IS WHAT YOU THINK IT'S NOT

Springheel Jack have rapidly become the most in-demand producers in the vertiginous world of drum-and-bass. They transformed Everything But The Girl's recent album into a landscape of rolling peaks and valleys and whisper-jet basslines, suffused with a gorgeous melancholic tinge. Skeptical rockers found solace in the duo's first album, *There Are Strings*, with its rattling, breakneck percussion that evoked the back-bedroom no-hope aesthetic of Joy Division and Durutti Column's post-industrial Britain. Springheel Jack's U.S. debut, *68 Million Shades...* (Island) is a shimmering, desolate jewel of a record, which moves with the speed of L.T.J. Bukem and the contemplative grace of Carl Craig or Derrick May... There was a time, not long ago, when British house music was held in low esteem in the U.S., regarded as serviceable but lacking in a certain soulfulness that characterized the deep-house lineage of cities like New York and Newark. But that's changing, and one of the organizations responsible is the Azuli label, whose first stateside compilation, *Big Wheels Of Azuli* (Twisted America), features a heart-stopping clutch of tracks from the label's formidable roster. The inimitable Chocolate Fudge offers its head-nodding "Locomotion," while Disco Elements head back to the garage on their staccato, derailed "Keep On Keeping On," utilizing a Salsoul sample to electrifying effect. The inclusion of Thelma Houston, Romanthony, and Ada Dyer ensures that the musical movement across the Black Atlantic is always a two-way affair... As slow-burning hip-hop beats continue to supplant the 4-4 kick of conventional techno, the latter's ambient, sci-fi stylings are finding their way into experimental hip-hop's outer recesses. New singles by **God Complex** ("Strontium 90," on Brick) and **Company Flow** ("Info Kill," on Outrageous) make that abundantly clear. Borrowing heavily from the West Coast ambient tricks of DJ Shadow and Dr. Octagon, these new East Coast crews are making some of the most challenging and inventive electronic music around. Both are well worth tracking down.



TEK 9

It's Not What You Think It Is!?!

Reinforced/SSR-Crammed

Dego MacFarlane's music is the missing link between jungle and techno that so many people have been looking for. Under the now legendary name 4-Hero, MacFarlane made some of the most futuristic drum-and-bass music on wax. (In fact, the second of the two discs that comprise this collection is made up of early 4-Hero material, most of which has been out of print for nearly five years.) His own Reinforced label opened a space for such producers as Goldie and Wax Doctor to tinker with jungle's machinery and change the dance landscape forever. The first full-length outing under MacFarlane's Tek 9 monicker, *It's Not What You Think It Is!?!*, is the most satisfying and ambitious dance music long-player of '96, and it initiates a new musical genre that fuses hip-hop, jazz, and drum-and-bass so fluidly that it defamiliarizes these genres, then redefines each one. "Phat Like A..." is an teeth-gritting electro clampdown, with shades of Mantronix, and "Gettin' Down Again" is a jazz-inflected vocal hip-hop track with a sinuous bassline. *It's Not What You Think It Is!?!* is appropriately titled, and an epochal record.

DANCE TOP 25

- 1 FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON Dead Cities *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- 2 CHEMICAL BROTHERS "Setting Sun" (5") *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- 3 VARIOUS ARTISTS Wipeout XI *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- 4 VARIOUS ARTISTS Digitized *Logic*
- 5 PATRICK LINDSEY The Phat Jive *HartHouse-Eye Q*
- 6 VARIOUS ARTISTS Cup Of Tea Compilation *Quango-Island*
- 7 L.T.J. BUKEM Logical Progression *ffrr-London*
- 8 ALEX REECE So Far *Quango-Island*
- 9 VARIOUS ARTISTS Werks Like A Twelve Inch *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- 10 ELECTRIC SKYCHURCH Together *Moonshine*
- 11 VARIOUS ARTISTS Jazz Jungle *Acid Jazz-Hollywood*
- 12 BANCO DE GALA Live At Glastonbury *Planet Dog-Mammoth*
- 13 JOHNNY VIOLENT Shockler *Farache*
- 14 FUTURE LOOP FOUNDATION Time And Bass *Planet Dog-Mammoth*
- 15 ORB Anotie Aubrey's Excursions Beyond The Call Of Duty *Deviant (UK)*
- 16 VARIOUS ARTISTS Into Topological Space *World Domination*
- 17 NEARLY GOD Nearly God *Durban Poison-Island*
- 18 DATACIDE Flowerhead *Asphodel*
- 19 THINK TANK Skullbuggery *Hakarak*
- 20 BEN NEILL Triptycal Antilles-Verve
- 21 LCD Endorfun *Cleopatra*
- 22 KMFDM Rules (EP) *Wax Trax!-TVT*
- 23 VARIOUS ARTISTS Operation Beatbox *Re-Constriction-Cargo*
- 24 SIGNS OV CHAOS Frankenscience *Farache*
- 25 DJ SPOOKY Songs Of A Dead Dreamer *Asphodel*

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



GHOSTFACE KILLAH

Iron Man

Razor Sharp-Epic

The Wu-Tang Clan has dominated the hip-hop world for the past three years, starting with its classic debut, *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*. Each subsequent solo release from individual members has further added to the Shaolin collective's mystique. The fifth in that series is *Iron Man*, the debut disc from Ghostface Killah. Originally one of the Clan's lesser known figures, Ghost became visible in his co-starring role on Raekwon's *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx* last year. But while Raekwon's album perfected criminology (i.e. East Coast-style gangsta) rap, *Iron Man* delves into more earthy, introspective topics. Ghost rhymes like he has too much to say and not enough time to say it. His unorthodox flow makes his double-meaning-packed lyrics hard to fully absorb at first listen. While last year's single "Motherless Child" first hinted at his troubled childhood, "All That I Got Is You" (featuring Mary J. Blige) passionately details the autobiography of the Clan's most mysterious member over a loop from the Jackson 5's "Maybe Tomorrow." Backed up with support from his Wu-Tang brethren and a surprise cameo by '70s soul group the Delfonics ("After The Smoke Is Clear"), Ghostface Killah saves the day like a superhero by allowing us to take a look at the man behind the mask.

Queensbridge, New York's ice-pick-packing duo **Mobb Deep** (Havoc and Prodigy) has returned with a third album, *Hell On Earth* (Loud-RCA), that, believe it or not, is even darker than 1993's acclaimed *Infamous*. The raw elegance and jazzy-bop beats provided by A Tribe Called Quest's Q-Tip last time have been replaced by eerie, suspenseful bass lines and simplistic but jarring drum kicks, entirely self-produced. Grim tales like "Bloodsport," "Extortion," "Get Dealt With" and "Man Down" are violent narratives on the dangers of street life, detailed with the intense passion of young men who will do whatever it takes to survive in their troubled surroundings. This disc is not for the faint of heart... Equally relentless, and from the neighboring borough of Brooklyn is **M.O.P.** (Mash Out Posse), which has just released its second full-length, *Firing Squad* (Relativity). While the Mobb opts for a slow, soft kill, M.O.P.'s vocalists, Billy Danziene and Lil' Fame, attack you like a stick-up kid, with their menacing lyrics and outright abuse of the Second Amendment. Although the fellas shot many blanks in their earlier works, due mostly to inadequate production, the group's new album triumphs with a handful of productions by the always-in-demand dope groove merchant DJ Premier, whose striking tracks are as powerful as any fire-arm... Going back to Cali, *Bow Down* (Priority), the long-awaited album from the **Westside Connection** (Ice Cube, W.C. and Mack 10) is aiming to resurrect the coastal divisions that have been dividing the hip-hop community for the past year. Waging war on the Big Apple's media ("All The Critics In New York"), adversaries Cypress Hill ("King Of The Hill"), and all other rappers ("Cross 'Em Out And Put A K"), the trio spout vengeful lyrics that unfortunately lack the punch of Cube's old-school catalogue. Sure to be viewed as a career misstep, *Bow Down* is all bark and no bite. God bless your life.



HIP-HOP TOP 25

- 1 JERU THE DAMAJA *Wrath Of The Math Payday* Jffrr-London
- 2 ROOTS *Illadelph Halflife* DGC
- 3 A TRIBE CALLED QUEST *Beats, Rhymes And Life* Jive
- 4 GHOSTFACE KILLAH *Ironman* Razor Sharp-Epic
- 5 KEITH MURRAY "The Rhyme" (12") Jive
- 6 ORIGINOO GUNN CLAPPAZ *Da Storm* Duck Down-Priority
- 7 OUTKAST *Atlies* LaFace-Arista
- 8 DE LA SOUL *Stakes Is High* Tommy Boy
- 9 XZIBIT *At The Speed Of Life* Loud-RCA
- 10 ROYAL FLUSH "Worldwide" (12") Blunt-TVT
- 11 NAS *It Was Written* Columbia-CRG
- 12 LIL' KIM "No Time" (12") Big Beat-Atlantic
- 13 GROUP THERAPY "East Coast/West Coast Killas" (12") Aftermath-Interscope
- 14 MOBB DEEP "Drop A Gem On 'Em" (12") Loud-RCA
- 15 J-LIVE "Can I Get It"/"Hush The Crowd" (12") Raw Shack
- 16 WESTSIDE CONNECTION *Bow Down* Priority
- 17 SOUNDTRACK *High School High* Big Beat-Atlantic
- 18 MEANER "Real Rap Song" (12") Loose Cannon-PG
- 19 COMMON "The Bitch In Yoo" (12") Relativity
- 20 M.O.P. *Firing Squad* Relativity
- 21 BUSH BABEES *Gravity* Warner Bros.
- 22 LOST BOYZ *Legal Drug Money* Universal
- 23 E-40 *Tha Hall Of Game* Jive
- 24 JAY-Z *Reasonable Doubt* Roc-A-Fella Freeze-Priority
- 25 RAS KASS *Soul On Ice* PatchWerk-Priority

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

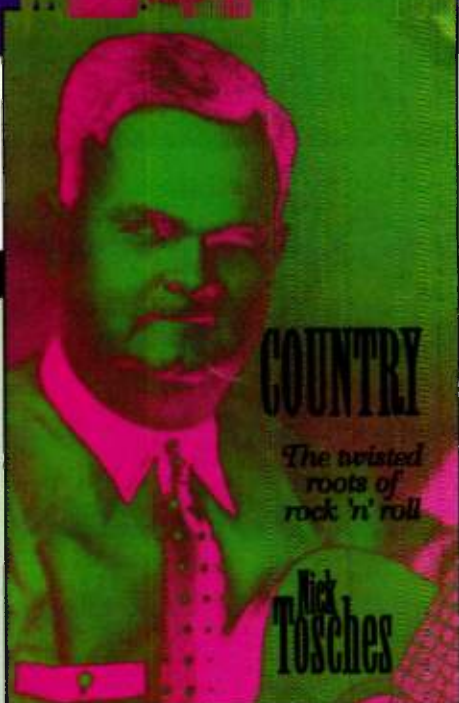
COUNTRY:

THE TWISTED ROOTS OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

by Nick Tosches (Da Capo)

Originally published in 1977, *Country* was the first book by Nick Tosches, who's since written a number of other terrific music books, including *Unsung Heroes Of Rock 'N' Roll* and *Dino*. It's a weird little book, focusing more on country music's hidden sources than on its familiar faces, written in oddly stylized prose, but it's also an irresistible page-turner. Tosches is lovingly, intimately familiar with every byway of the music and its lore, but he's also aware of country's hilarious peculiarities: "Yodeling was not unknown among cowboys. By all accounts, it was no less common than fiddling among oceanographers or tromboning among rare-book dealers." Every page reveals new and inconceivable historical details: the classical Greek roots of a rockabilly B-side, X-rated records by big-name stars, a description of a bacchanalian Jerry Lee Lewis recording session. The new edition appends a chapter on the mysterious Emmett Miller, a little-known blackface minstrel from Georgia who was a huge vocal influence on country music after him. The only disappointing thing about *Country* is that it's nearly impossible to find almost any of the records that sound so tantalizing when Tosches writes about them. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

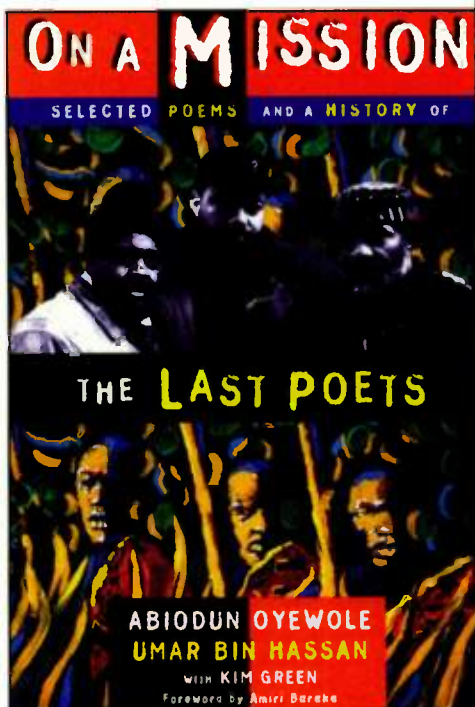
READS



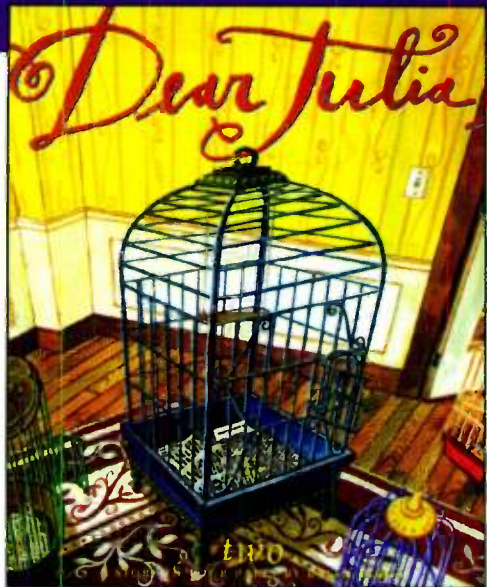
THE LAST POETS: ON A MISSION

by Abiodun Oyewole and Umar Bin Hassan with Kim Green
(Henry Holt)

READS



Few writers have inspired more rappers than The Last Poets. Over the past 25 years, this spoken-word troupe has fought to raise the consciousness of African-Americans with poetic tirades calling for revolution. Ironically, the tension between group members was often filled with more venom than their poems. Backstabbing, drug abuse, theft, assault, incarceration and shady deals marred the lives of several of the poets. *On A Mission* gives two of the original seven members a chance to piece together a story that has many more sides. Abiodun Oyewole and Umar Bin Hassan's personal statements—which make up the "history" portion of the book—read more like grandfatherly recollections of wild youth than in-depth autobiography. Oyewole says being put in prison was actually a "blessing" that helped him get his life in order; Hassan sorrowfully recalls his days as a crack addict. Only few sentences are devoted to discussing the friction between this duo and Jalal Nurridin—an original member who also releases albums as The Last Poets and recently stabbed Hassan in the throat. The most rewarding section of the book features many of these Poets' important poems, including "This Is Madness," "Run Nigger" and "When The Revolution Comes," accompanied by the authors' thoughts on them. **NEIL GLADSTONE**



DEAR JULIA

by Brian Biggs (Black Eye Productions)

COMICS

Like Edward Gorey, Brian Biggs creates little graphic novellas of genteel malignance and madness. His latest, four-part work uses sumptuous, European-flavored pen-and-ink art to render the story of an oddball as enigmatic as a Gorey villain and as alienated as anyone in *Eightball*. The mystery begins beguilingly, with a mistaken room number in San Francisco and a dead body by a highway in Tucson. This *noir*-ish setup defines the circumstances of Boyd Saloman, an egregiously toupéed man whom we find poised on an eighth-floor window ledge with a pair of Icarus-like wings strapped to his back. Boyd's apartment is strewn with the evidence of his unhingement: paper airplanes, stray feathers, a pile of creepy photographs, and a partially written letter to his unseen ex-wife Julia. The letter continues in a flashback to Boyd's childhood to document the growing evidence of his obsession with flight. Biggs's judiciously minimal writing threads the plot across multiple places and times, relying on his increasingly expressive drawings to convey Boyd's state of mind. **ANDREA MOED**

KOLYA

(Miramax)

FILMS

Frantisek Louka (Zdenik Sverak) is a debased cellist in pre-Velvet Revolution Prague. Having lost his position in the Czech Philharmonic, Louka reluctantly agrees to marry a Russian woman willing to pay a lot of money for Czech citizenship papers. Everything's fine until his bride leaves for Germany to join her boyfriend, imposing on Louka the charge of her six-year-old son Kolya. The visual strength of *Kolya* is such that it doesn't reveal itself as a tearjerker until its closing minutes—Jan Sverak's direction and Vladimir Smutney's cinematography never falter. Even the hamfisted symbolism is beautiful: Louka's self-views are at first distorted by mirrors and cheap jewelry, but as he and Kolya get closer all becomes clear. The joys of this film are definitely in the details. Rosin flaking off a bow, murals struck by lambent sunshine, wooden tops spinning in a boy's fevered sleep; these and many other images are reason enough to forget the dopey plot for a while. **ANDREW BEAUJON**



NANCY'S MAGAZINE

(\$3 from P.O. Box 02108, Columbus, OH 43202)

'ZINES

Librarian/poet Nancy Bonnell-Kangas has been publishing an issue or two of her charming, beautifully designed 'zine every year for ten years. She writes about whatever concerns her—usually unrelated to music, counter-culture, or any of the stuff that normally goes into 'zines. Every issue has a theme; the most recent is The Mark Issue. Features focus on people named Mark, things that are marked, punctuation marks, and the "Mark Of The Beast Waistcoat" popular among early Victorian men, as well as some non-Mark-related poetry, cartoons and recipes ("If you make these and don't like them, we'll send a personalized letter of sincere apology"). As with every issue, the new one has a bunch of printing enhancements: phosphorescent ink to illustrate a piece on antibody staining, a foldout poster of "Landmarks In Lawn Care" ("1955. Devon, PA holds a power-mower derby"), and a cut-out cardboard dress containing a poem. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

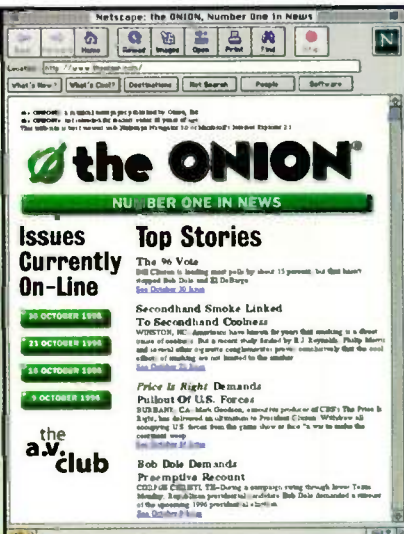


THE ONION

(<http://www.theonion.com>)

One of the highlights of our week here at *CMJ* is getting the new issue of *The Onion*, the best entertainment paper in the world. Each week, the stories (and, well, sometimes just headlines) that precede their listings and entertainment reviews report the most important news: local ("Area Cockroach Fucking Huge"), national ("Christopher Reeve Placed Atop Washington Monument"), international ("Perky 'Canada' Has Own Government, Laws") and human-interest ("Bette Midler Ruptures"). Then, of course, there are the rotating Onion advice columnists—who can forget "Ask That Hindenburg Announcer Guy" and "Ask A Gut-Shot Cop"? As you may have noticed already, good taste is not high on the Madison, Wisconsin paper's agenda, but we crack up laughing almost every time we look at it. *The Onion* has established a web site with the best of its news coverage—just about anything you'd want the paper edition for is here. It's worth looking at once a week, just so you don't miss anything on the order of "Area Stoners Mistakenly Hold Massive Kemp Rally." **DOUGLAS WOLK**

ONLINE



NEW BEAT TRANCEMISSION

(Microforum)

CD-ROM



There have been CD-ROM programs for studio novices that let users "mix" a prerecorded piece of music; there have also been relatively inexpensive sound-editing programs for more advanced users. *New Beat Trancemission*, though, combines the virtues of both. The main setting is a 20-channel mixer with 250 different loops of components of dance music; you can alter their volume, pan them, and introduce samples of your own. It's ridiculously easy to make convincing techno with one hand and about half an hour of preparation—you can't easily speed up or slow down the loops (so much for trip-hop and jungle), but you can pull off all kinds of things that sound neat. There's also a "Fuse Box," for creating (tinny-sounding) percussion patterns that can be looped into the mixer. And "Sound Warp" is a simple but bluntly effective program along the lines of the more expensive SoundEdit Pro, which lets you modify and mix sounds you take off the disc or sample. Microforum is sponsoring a competition for the best compositions executed with *New Beat Trancemission*—we expect that it's only a matter of months until a hit dance record gets made with it, and that it'll be made by somebody who's never recorded in a real studio. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

WELFIT ODDY TANK CORPORATION

(<http://oddy.co.za/index.html>)

Factory tours are usually something reserved for regional school trips or those with highly specific interests, but with the vast, vast selection of World Wide Web factory tours, one no longer has to fall into either category, much less walk through a factory along a chained-off course. Granted, you don't get product samples at the end, but you also wouldn't otherwise get to tour places like the Welfit Oddy Tank Corporation in South Africa. Welfit Oddy makes food and hazardous liquid storage tanks. The site has plenty of information about the business, its history and investment opportunities, but the real pleasures here are the tanks. Animated tanks! Rendered tanks! Drawings of tanks! Then there are factory tours of people making tanks, pictures of workers who are taking a break from making tanks to have some tea (they don't look too happy), pictures of people improving and ensuring the quality of tanks, and more. For those who don't actually need a hazardous liquid tank, they also make luggage trailers. **LIZ CLAYTON**

ONLINE



A LISTING OF LABELS WHOSE ARTISTS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

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

Alternative Tentacles
P.O. Box 419092
San Francisco, CA 94141

American
3500 W. Olive Ave. #15/50
Burbank, CA 91505

Ark 21
3520 Hayden Ave.
Culver City, CA 90232

Birdman
1409 W. Magnolia Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91506

Capitol
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Hollywood, CA 90028

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104 W. 29th St., 4th Fl.
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Boston, MA 02134

Columbia
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New York, NY 10022-3211

County
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Floyd, VA 24091

Crammed Discs
688 S. Santa Fe Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90021

DeConstruction
P.O. Box 18015
Emery, CA 91416

Dirt
P.O. Box 1053
Knickerbocker Stn.
New York, NY 10002

Dojo
P.O. Box 1356
New York, NY 10159-1356

Domino
P.O. Box 4029
London SW15 2NR U.K.

Drag City
P.O. Box 478867
Chicago, IL 60647

Edel America
729 Seventh Ave., 14th Fl.
New York, NY 10019

The Enclave
936 Broadway
New York, NY 10010

Epic
550 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022-3211

Fierce/FLG
285 W. Broadway, Ste. 300
New York, NY 10013

Flying Saucer
P.O. Box 3470
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

Geffen
9130 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90069

Grand Royal
P.O. Box 26689
Los Angeles, CA 90026

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

Island/Quango
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New York, NY 10019

K
P.O. Box 7154
Olympia, WA 98507

Kranky
P.O. Box 538743
Chicago, IL 60657

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

Merzotini
P.O. Box 1634
New Haven, CT 06507

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Cooper Stn.
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6430 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 900
Hollywood, CA 90028

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740 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Qbadisc
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New York, NY 10001

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1540 Broadway
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Newton, NJ 07860

Skin Graft
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Chicago, IL 60625

Southern
3900 N. Claremont Ave., 3rd Fl.
Chicago, IL 60618

Sub Pop
1932 First Ave., Ste. 1103
Seattle, WA 98101

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P.O. Box 23392
Seattle, 98102

Twisted America
90 Park Ave., Ste. 1800
New York, NY 10016

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106 Spring St. #3 S.
New York, NY 10012

Verve
825 Eighth Ave.
New York, NY 10019

Zero Hour
14 W. 23rd St., 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10010

DECEMBER 3

SIZE QUEEN Pimps, Pumps and Pushers *Twisted America*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Big Wheels Of Azuli *Twisted America*
NIPPER! Nipper! *ITU*

JACO PASTORIUS Curtain Call *FM-Another Hit*
LARRY DUNN ORCHESTRA Lover's Silhouette: The Fire *FM-Another Hit*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Latin Oldies 2 *Thump*

DECEMBER 10

FUNKY GREEN DOGS The Way *Twisted America-MCA*
GOD IS MY CO-PILOT The Best Of God Is My Co-Pilot *Atavistic*
RED KRAYOLA Hazel *Drag City*
GHOST Lama Rabi Rabi *Drag City*
OVAL Diskont *Thrill Jockey*

DECEMBER 17

CLAUDE BOLLING A Drum Is A Woman *Milan*
DANIEL PIAZZOLLA Piazzolla By Piazzolla *Milan*
JB3 Close Grind *NovaMute-Mute*

JANUARY 7

MOLLY'S REVENGE 143-*Atlantic*
THE BRAIDS Big Beat-*Atlantic*
ARTIFACTS Big Beat-*Atlantic*
JOHNNY SKILSAW TAG-*Atlantic*
SUGARTOOTH The Sounds Of Solid *Geffen*
THREE MILE PILOT *Geffen*
LAZLO BANE *Almo Sounds*
JONNY COHEN'S LOVE MACHINE If 6 Were 8 *Teen Beat*
SOFTIES (7") *K*
PIZZICATO FIVE Sister Freedom Tapes (EP) *Matador*
LEAVING TRAINS Smoke Follows Beauty *SST*
LABURNUM Rearrange *Ultra Fade*

JANUARY 10

DEAD AND GONE God Loves Everyone But You *Alternative Tentacles*

JANUARY 14

ALICE COOPER Fist Full Of Alice *Hollywood*
SOUNDTRACK Mandela *Island*
LONGPIGS The Sun Is Often Out *Island*
ORQUESTA AMERICA *Milan*
KERGONIAN NUNS CHOIR Chants Of The Angels *Milan*
GEOFFREY ORYEMA Night To Night *RealWorld-Caroline*
MUSICIANS OF THE NILE Charcoal Gypsies *RealWorld-Caroline*
TRANQUILITY BASS "The Bird" (5") *Astralwerks-Caroline*
DELTA 9 Unibomber *Earache*
DOA New York City Speedcore *Earache*
SCORN Vae Solis *Earache*
JOI Amoeba Cleansing Syndrome *EMI*
RICK NELSON Teen Age Idol: The Best Of Ricky Nelson *EMI*
STRAY CATS Runaway Boys: The Best Of Stray Cats *EMI*
WAS (NOT WAS) Forget Everything By Was (Not Was) *Chrysalis*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Traditional Fiddle Music Of Kentucky, Vol. I & II *Rounder*
GENE GOFORTH Emminence Breakdown *Rounder*
RICE/RICE/HILLMAN/PEDERSON Out Of The Woodwork *Rounder*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Squeeze Play: A World Accordion Anthology *Rounder*
NAFTULE BRANDWEIN King Of The Klezmer Clarinet *Rounder*
MNIR NURETTIN BEKEN The Art Of The Turkish Ud *Rounder*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Negro Blues And Hollers *Rounder*
ROOMFUL OF BLUES Under One Roof *Bullseye Blues-Rounder*
UTAH PHILLIPS Good Though! *Philo-Rounder*

All dates subject to change, so don't blame us.



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January Reviews

PRICE
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- L ABLE TASMAN'S Store In A Cool Place *Flying Nun*
- L ALEC BATHGATE Gold Lamé *Flying Nun*
- H BAD BRAINS Black Dots *Caroline*
- J BODEANS Blend *Slash-Reprise*
- I DONOVAN Sutras *American*
- F GUITAR WOLF Missile Mel *Matador*
- L HANDSOME Handsome *Epic*
- L LABRADFORD Labradford *Kranky*
- I LIQUID SOUL Liquid Soul *Ark 21*
- J MARION WILLIAMS Through Many Dangers *Shanachie*
- I MYRA MELFORD TRIO The Same River, Twice *Gramavision-Rykodisc*
- F RED KRAYOLA Hazel *Drag City*
- I RIC MENCK The Ballad Of Ric Menck *Summershine*
- H SATURNINE Flags For Unknown Territories *Dirt*
- L SPACE NEEDLE The Moray Eels Eat The Space Needle *Zero Hour*
- H THE CLEAN Unknown Country *Flying Nun*
- E THE JOSEPHINE WIGGS EXPERIENCE Bon Bon Lifestyle *Grand Royal*
- J THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA II *Columbia*
- L THE WANDERING STARS The Wandering Stars *Nuf Sed*
- E THORNETTA DAVIS Sunday Morning Music *Sub Pop*
- J VARIOUS ARTISTS Red Hot + Rio *Red Hot/Antilles-Verve*
- I VÄRTTINÄ Kokko *Nonesuch*

On The CD

PRICE
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- L ALEC BATHGATE Gold Lamé *Flying Nun*
- J ALEX REECE So Far *Quango-Island*
- I BEAU JOCQUE Gonna Take You Downtown *Rouder*
- F BLINKER THE STAR A Bourgeois Kitten *A&M*
- I FLUFFY Black Eye *The Enclave*
- I HACKERS Soundtrack *Edel America*
- L HANDSOME Handsome *Epic*
- H HEATMISER Mic City Sons *Caroline*
- L JB3 Close Grind *NovaMute-Mute*
- I LIQUID SOUL Liquid Soul *Ark 21*
- J MARILYN MANSON Antichrist Superstar *Nothing-Interscope*
- L MIRACLE LEGION Portrait Of A Damaged Family *Mezzotint*
- L SPACE NEEDLE The Moray Eels Eat The Space Needle *Zero Hour*
- L SPLASHDOWN Stars And Garters *Castle Von Buhler*
- L THE WANDERING STARS The Wandering Stars *Nuf Sed*
- L THEE HEADCOATS Knights Of The Baskervilles *Birdman*
- J UTAH PHILLIPS AND ANI DIFRANCO
The Past Didn't Go Anywhere *Righteous Babe*
- L VALENTINE SIX "I Saw A Ghost Face" (7") *V6*

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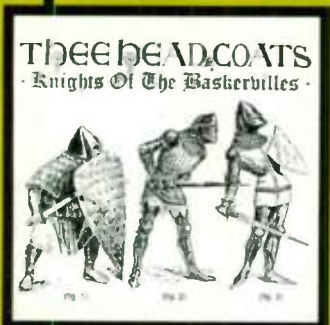
H HEATMISER Mic City Songs Caroline



L MIRACLE LEGION Portrait Of A Damaged Family Mezzotint



L SPLASHDOWN Stars And Garters Castle Von Buhter



L THEE HEADCOATS Knights Of The Baskervilles Birdman

- I ARCHERS OF LOAF All The Nations Airports *Allas/Elektra-EEG*
- H BAD BRAINS Black Dots *Caroline*
- J BECK Odelay *DGC*
- F BLINKER THE STAR A Bourgeois Kitten *A&M*
- E BUTTER 08 Butter *Grand Royal*
- J CAKE Fashion Nugget *Capricorn-Mercury*
- J CARDIGANS First Band On The Moon *Mercury*
- F CAT POWER What Would The Community Think *Matador*
- J CATHERINE Hot Saki & Bedtime Stories *TVT*
- C CHEMICAL BROTHERS "Setting Sun" (5") *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- K COUNTING CROWS Recovering The Satellites *Geffen*
- I CRANES The Tragedy Of Oreste And Electra *Dedicated*
- H DESCENDENTS Everything Sucks *Epitaph*
- G DIRTY THREE Horse Stories *Touch And Go*
- E DITCH CROAKER Secrets Of The Mule *In Bloom-Reprise*
- J EELS Beautiful Freak *DreamWorks-Geffen*
- D FACE TO FACE Face To Face *A&M*
- I FIREWATER Get Off The Cross (We Need The Wood For The Fire) *Jetset*
- E FROGPOND Count To Ten *TriStar*
- H FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON Dead Cities *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- J GRASSY KNOLL Positive *Nettwerk/Antilles-Verve*
- J HEADS No Talking Just Head *Radioactive-MCA*
- L HEAVENLY Operation Heavenly *K*
- H JANE JENSEN Comic Book Whore *Filp*
- J JOHN PARISH AND POLLY JEAN HARVEY Dance Hall At Louse Point *Island*
- I JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION Now I Got Worry *Matador-Capitol*
- J KOMEDA The Genius Of Komeda *Minty Fresh*
- J KORN Life Is Peachy *Immortal-Epic*
- J KULA SHAKER K *Columbia-CRG*
- I LEMONHEADS Car Button Cloth *TAG-Atlantic*
- I LILYS Better Can't Make Your Life Better *Ché-Primary*
- I LISA GERMANO Excerpts From A Love Circus *4AD*
- I LUSCIOUS JACKSON Fever In Fever Out *Grand Royal-Capitol*
- J MARILYN MANSON Antichrist Superstar *Nothing-Interscope*
- I MAZZY STAR Among My Swan *Capitol*
- I MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD Shack-man *Gramavision-Rykodisc*
- I MY DRUG HELL This Is My Drug Hell *Countdown-ULG*
- L NERDY GIRL Twist Her *No Life*
- H NEW BOMB TURKS Scared Straight *Epitaph*
- J NIRVANA From The Muddy Banks Of The Wishkah *DGC*
- F OBLIVIONS Popular Favorites *Crypt*
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- J PHISH Billy Breathes *Elektra-EEG*
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- I THROWING MUSES Limbo *Throwing Music-Rykodisc*
- J TOOL /Enima *Zoo*
- I VARIOUS ARTISTS Pop American Style *March*
- H VARIOUS ARTISTS Jabberjaw: Pure Sweet Hell *Mammoth*
- J VARIOUS ARTISTS Red Hot + Rio *Antilles-Verve*
- I VARIOUS ARTISTS Succour *Ptolemaic Terrascope-Flydaddy*
- K WEDDING PRESENT Saturnalia *Cooking Vinyl America*
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► MONTREAL, CANADA

[by Jordan Zadorozny]

Although I've been living here for years, I often still feel like a tourist in Montreal. I've long since given up trying to make this city mine—I've happily slipped into a glib acceptance that no matter how much I walk, talk, and exist in Montreal, she will always be my stepchild, not a blood relation.

This makes for a good relationship. Neither of us expects too much from the other, and when we surprise one another, usually happily, we share a gratitude that I can't say I've shared with many other cities. We leave each other alone, but when we need someone else, we're there for one another.

Visiting Montreal on anything other than a guided tour can be a bit daunting if you've never been here, but that's no news for any city that hides its charms lest it reveal too much, too quickly, and to too many people. So if you're here for only a few days, you're going to need to know where to go.

First of all, ditch the car. Anywhere too far to walk (almost unheard of in downtown Montreal) can be gotten to by Metro (adopted Parisian word for subway). Montreal drivers are insane, and the street directions are often unfair and cockeyed. By walking, you'll also get the advantage of more than just a great visual cityscape; you might find Montreal to be a bit... mmm... *looser* than most North American cities. Not only are the people here a little friendlier and quicker with a smile, they also



walk faster, talk more, eat worse, drink more, yell louder, fall down more often, and have sex more often, more openly, and with greater enjoyment than most people in most cities on this continent. Significantly, Montrealers smoke more cigarettes than in any place I've ever been in my life. If you're here for a good time, and not a long time, you've already got half the attitude to enjoy yourself in Montreal.

You can start with the city's stylish music scene. For sublime songwriting, wide-paletteted instrumentation, and superb musicianship, **Pest 5000** is hard to top. With four songwriters, this quintet has crafted a twisted pop sound you have to hear. **Leetchdrive**, a new arrival in Montreal from the backwoods of Pembroke, Ontario, is the finest of the new breed (that hasn't broken up, at least; bands implode at an alarming rate here), sporting a shattering, dynamic sound somewhere between Sonic Youth and Swervedriver. **Marlowe**, a group of ex-Goths and gearheads, is set to release its first album of beautifully affected, hi-fi mood pop. Enamored of the likes of The Cure, early Lush, and My Bloody Valentine, Marlowe makes music to touch yourself to. Lastly, the great **Tinker**, getting its, uh, stuff together for years, is thankfully still with us. The band has just released its second album this year, *Soft Shell Friend* (Bear). Accusatory, apologetic, prophetic, poetic, Tinker is one of the good ones. Trust me.

Releases by these bands, and all the best of the rest, can be found at **L'Oblique Records**, at the corner of Marie-Anne and Bernard St. Although the staff's a little grumpy, they definitely have good taste, and consistently stock the best new, used, and imported vinyl, CDs and tapes.

The **Bifteck St. Laurent** (3702 St. Laurent) has been the general cool-rock-related bar for a number of years. It's the place to go after the big show, the day before the big show, the place you've definitely made plans to meet, the place where you



begrudgingly end up at 2:30 a.m. It's the place the indie-elite brag about; it's the place McGill University students show up at to see what the fuss is about and leave a half-hour later, wondering aloud, "What the hell's with this place? Nothing happens!" Local brew Boreale Rousse (red) is the nectar of choice; the best new local, national, and international broad spectrum rock (and surprisingly great hip-hop) provides the tunes over which to kick out of your band that Danish bass player who tours about as well as your grandmother. It's an embarrassingly great place; believe it or not, it was once a crummy steak house and old man bar.

If you've got a few bucks to burn and you feel like lounging out, try the **Yoda Den** (258 Roy East). It's resplendent with chic decor, rabid grooves, and just a little more pretension than necessary (everyone seems to want to be from Chicago!)—you pay for the atmosphere at Yoda Den. Occasionally, an Arabic-style violinist plays over some low grooves into a microphone situated at the bar, mixed perfectly and played through the sound system in all of the bar's rooms. It's actually a very sociable place, but again, hit the bank machine before you hit the Newcastle at Yoda Den.

Cinema L'Amour

So what do you do with the rest of your money? If you're still worried about fitting in in Montreal, you've got to get the intellectual thing going. And what do intellectuals do besides drink? They buy books. I'm not saying you should read anything, but if you're going to make the effort, go to **Danger! Books** (3968 St. Laurent). Not the biggest but definitely the broadest in downtown bookmarts, Danger! does a great job in covering many special interests—you know, like vampirism, UFOlogy, erotica, 'zines, sexual mores, drugs, and all those other Henry Miller books everyone likes to have on their shelf. Danger! also boasts a fairly comprehensive literature section, specializing in some of the more piquant bits of the literary canon like de Sade, and those Celine books that many stores don't carry, probably because he was a junior Nazi.

While you're still on St. Laurent Boulevard, it's well worth your time to check out Montreal's oldest porn house, the **Cinema L'Amour** (4015 St. Laurent.) Besides being only one of two adult movie houses in town, it is actually, hands down, the most beautiful theatre in Montreal. With the kind of lush inner decor you just don't find in movie theatres anymore, this is the place to take that special someone: yourself.

Now that you've blown most of your money on pornography, books



you'll never read, and a hangover, it's a safe bet you're not going to want to spend a fortune on food. Depending on what neighbourhood you're in, I can recommend two highly efficient and tasty eateries. **Gabby's** (on the corner of Mt. Royal & St. Dominique), in the heart of the Plateau, is a cozy little spot with all your favorite home-cooking staples, just a little better than you remember them. Great breakfast tunes here, too, featuring everything from Burning Spear to the new Melvins.

The **Faubourg Ste. Catherine** (1616 Ste. Catherine) is a world-class food court. Mexican, Cantonese, Lebanese and sushi are all nestled together in a very relaxed, people-watching, friendly environment.

It's very difficult to capture a city's essence in a list of places, especially in a city as unique, diverse and fun as Montreal. Besides these few places to check out, I can only say that you should never really worry if you're in the right place in Montreal; the most interesting things seem to happen out of nowhere here, and there's no use trying to predict or divine where to be. Chin up and mouth open is the only advice this tourist can give to another.

Jordon Zadorozny plays in Blinker The Star.



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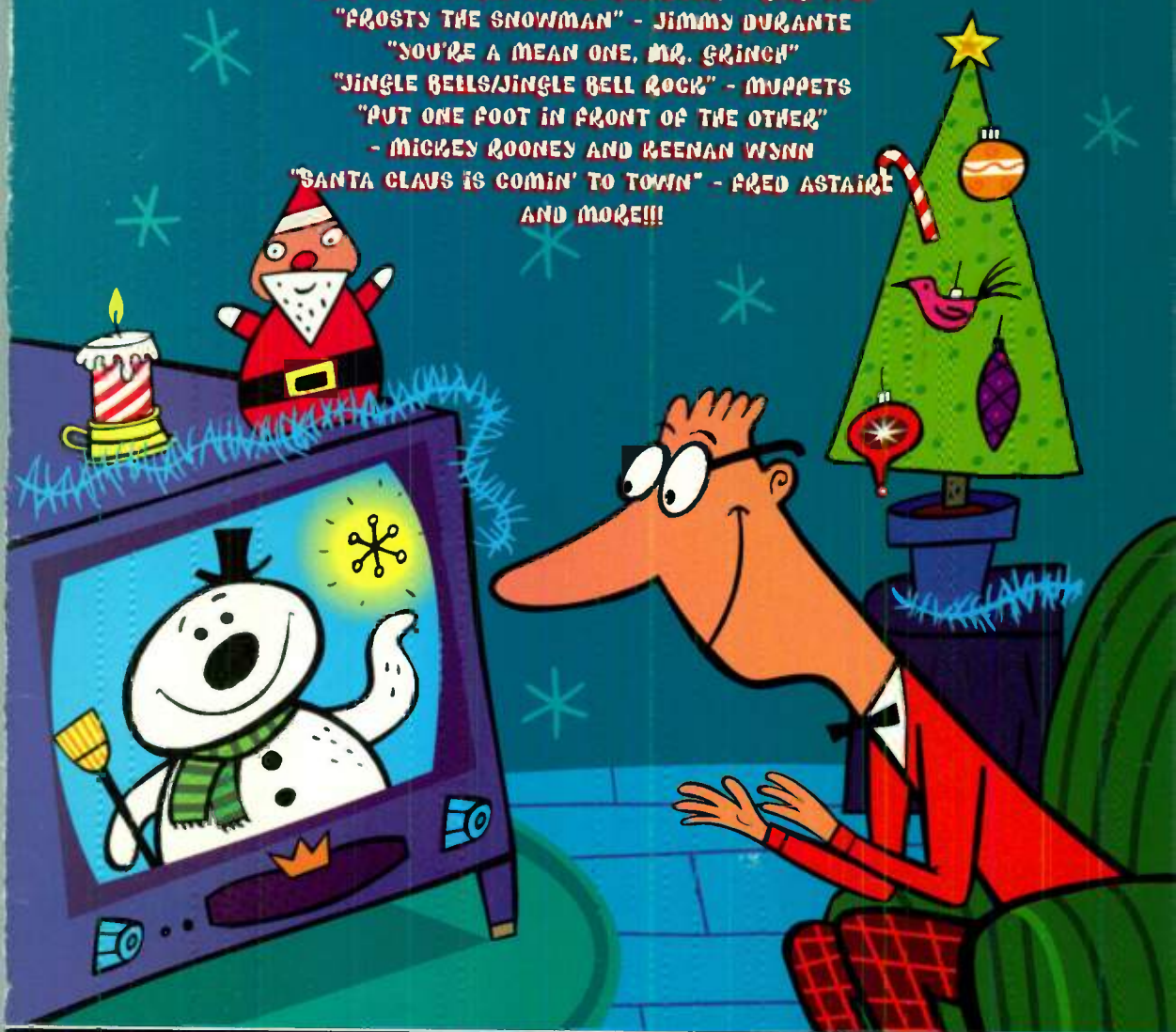
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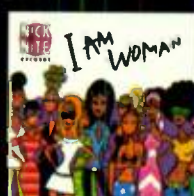
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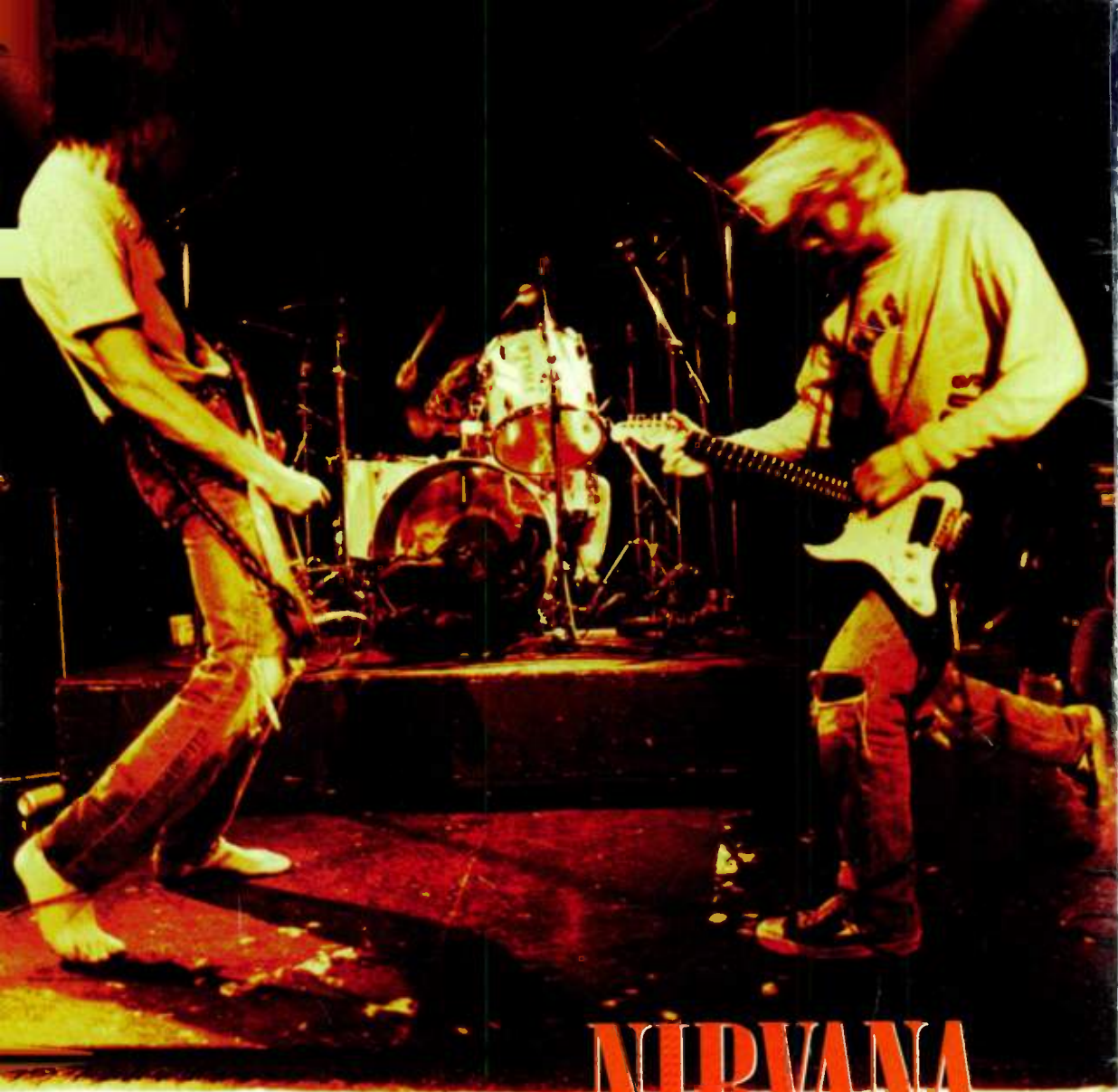


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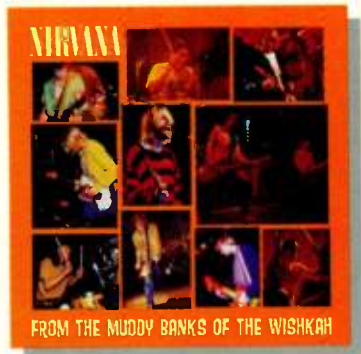
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