NEW MUSIC

BEST NEW MUSIC BJORK BEN FOLDS FIVE ROYAL TRUX OVAL EVERGREEN

BUILT TO SPIEL BALLY SAGOO LOIS THE WELSH SCENE

MAR. 1997



STORY BY LOIS MAFFEO

33 REVIEWS INCLUDING PAVEMENT - MOBY - L7 FREEDY JOHNSTON - BEN VAUGHN VERUCA SALT - PORTASTATIC

World Radio History

LESS HANJAKE 6 Songs from the album

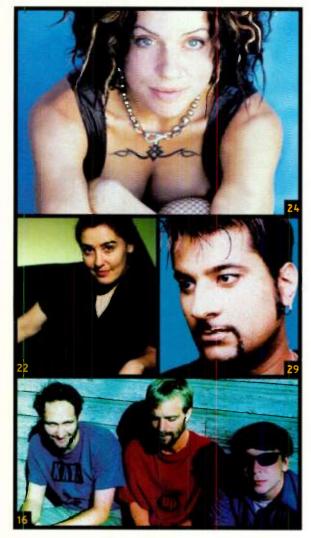
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World Radio History

THE CUIDE TO NEW MUSIC



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LETTERS

What Happens When You Leave Your Resume On The Copier At Kinko's

I know it won't be long now until the whole CMJ staff is working for *Cosmo*, *Rolling Stone*, or *Time*, driving expensive black sports cars, and staging orgies with Hollywood's sexiest stars. I just hope you can still find time to put out a CD every month.

> Gary via email

Ever since last issue's letter column revealed me to be such a suave man of the world, I've been too busy readying the office for Robin Leach's visit to actually give much thought to this month's column. Here, take the wheel, you drive:

Freedom Of Choice, Implemented

Upon viewing Marilyn Manson on the cover of the most recent issue of CMI, I, as an individual, became very satisfied by the fact that I failed to renew my subscription. Why? If the answer is not obvious, I will proceed to explain. I, as one of the Christians that Marilyn is so determined to denounce, would prefer not to contribute to the message he is attempting to send. By subscribing to your magazine, I am doing just that. I realize there are many bands who do not share the same faith that I do; however, they do not blatantly deride what I choose to believe in. I truly hope that you understand where I am coming from!

Name withheld

But Doctor, They Make Me Feel So Inferior

I was stunned to see a reference to Ptolemaic Terrascope. Maybe you guys aren't as lame as I first thought. Now maybe you'll begin reviewing such stroboscopic gems as The Bevis Frond and Adrian Shaw. Brian Robb

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Oh, You Mean The Fourth-Rate Band From Lincoln, Nebraska?

Here is my critique of the January 97 disc: Terrible. Absolutely terrible. Have you guys ever heard of For Against? They are only the greatest band in the U.S.A. But, you wouldn't know that.

> We wouldn't know his name, either via email

Northern Likes

I read your magazine for the basic principle that I live in Yellowknife, the shithole of shitholes, and with our music scene being so limited, the only way to

find out about new and upcoming artists is either to buy music 'zines, or to watch [Canadian music video show] MuchMusic. So I read your magazine. I used to read Rolling Stone, but that bores me, and I found CMJ to be a likely alternative because you cover a lot of the music that I enjoy. Sure, I find bands every now and then that don't appeal to me, but I have to live with the fact that I can be picky sometimes. Oh, yeah, is there any way you could influence labels like Sub Pop, DGC, or Virgin to maybe do a one-time concert up in Yellowknife of maybe 1 or 2 bands as they pass through western Canada? I think that it would do great-people here will see just about anything that comes here-so if you could get a concert here, I'm sure it'd sell like hot cakes.

> Chris Maddeaux Yellowknife, NT, Canada

A Study In International Relations

It's nice to see Pure getting some attention in the States finally. But there was some misinformation (or lack of ...) in your review of the American reissue of Generation Six-Pack [December '96]. First, it's their second album, the debut being the Manchestertinged PureaFUNalia (released 1991, 1 think) that has the totally classic "Spiritual Pollution" on it. Secondly, "Generation" was originally released like two or three years ago up here in Canader. But since it wasn't released internationally, they didn't sell much and, like many good Canadian bands that never get a proper chance, lost their contract. So last year they independently released the far superior Extra Purestrial EP which you should get your hands on because it's a very nice experience. A friend of mine said, upon hearing "Denial" a few years ago, "Why aren't these guys huge?" Then he answered his own question with, "Oh, yeah. They're Canadian."

> Jacob Coombs, BC, Canada

I'm writing to comment about music fans in the States not appreciating Canadian bands. The reason I hate such bands as Our Lady Peace, Barenaked Ladies, Tragically Hip, etc. is *not* because they're Canadian, but because they suck. To make everyone feel better, two of my favorite bands are Canadian: Eric's Trip and Sloan. I don't really think that people go to the local record store, discover that rare 7" with blue vinyl, and put it back because the band's address says Canada.

> Michael Walter Lake Orion, MI

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WHERE ME SUCKS BUT THE MUSIC DOESN'T.

original motion p

picture soundtrack

featuring new music from:

SONIC YOUTH ELASTICA WITH STEPHEN MALKMUS BECK THE FLAMING LIPS BOSS HOG U.N.K.L.E. SUPERCHUNK

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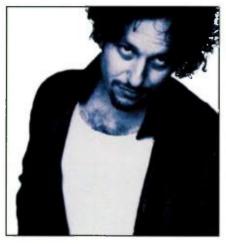
Screenplay by Eric Rogogian basedfor his play Directed by Richard Linklater (<u>Dased and Confased</u> and <u>Slacker</u>) Executive Soundtrack Producers: Mark Kates, Pichard Linklater, Randall Poster ©1999 Geller Provide, Im. ©1999 Castle Pack InterNational



SONY PROTURES SLASSICS



QUICK FIX



reid paley it's not easy being reid e

Reid Paley's got a cold. Arranged on the desk in front of him are an assortment of healing beverages—tea, juice, water, and Wild Turkey. Muttering to himself, he finishes off the juice, pushes the water and tea aside, and concentrates on the bourbon. Having a throat that feels like an open wound just two days before a gig would be a big problem for most singers, but when you've got a voice that's as raw as Paley's, a little soreness is like seasoning. It's a good thing.

Way back in the new wave '80s, Reid Paley fronted a band that Pittsburgh—and later Boston—loved. They were called The Five, and they were loud and fiercely aggressive in a decidedly non-new wave way. Unfortunately, before the rest of the country could get hip to The Five, they broke up. Today, almost ten years later, Paley is living in Brooklyn and starting his career over—sans band. "Ha—you said career," he laughs.

When you see Paley play, it's just him and his guitar, but it's not a folky feelgood experience. This becomes clear as soon as he opens his rather large mouth and lets loose his unholy howl of a voice. Don't even think about referring to him as a singer/songwriter. It makes him apoplectic. Why? "Because of all the wussiness it implies," he barks, "the sitting on a stool in a turtleneck, the faux sensitivity. Granted, I sing and write songs, but I piss and shit too—I'm not a pisser/shitter."

Paley tempers his cynicism with a wellhoned sense of humor and irony, as on his first Sub Pop single, "Time For You": "I'll be fucked down and dirty 'til I'm dead, but I'll find the time for you," he sings. Taking a hit off his drink, he declares, "I'm not a huggy kind of guy."

No, huggy he's definitely not. "I know I can trust something that comes out of a bottle," he drawls in reply when I ask him about true love and romance. "I was in the fourth grade when the note went back to my parents: "What's the matter with Reid? He has the attitude and world view of a disillusioned middle-aged man." Sitting in his "fortress of solitude," surrounded by books written by tough guys like Crews and Bukowski, Paley is still a content malcontent. "I'm here, I'm moving water around, I'm pre-mulch. These are my declining years. I reserve the right to be cranky." JUDY MCGUIRE



in my room artists' personal picks

KELLII SCOTT Failure

Nick Drake Five Leaves Left

Elvis Costello Naïve

Barry Nilsson Nilsson Schmilsson

Beatles Magical Mystery Tour

> Jesus Lizard Goat

tours we'd like to see

Inherit The Wind The Creation, the Evolution Control Committee, Darwin Waiting Room and the Monkees

random fact

The recently knighted Paul McCariney should be addressed as "Sir Paul" or "Lord McCartney," not "Sir McCartney."

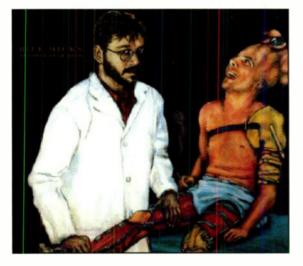
label profile

q division

Q Division, the label, is just beginning to garner the reputation that Q Division, the studio, has had for almost a decade. Founded by producers Mike Denneen and Jon Lupfer about eight years ago, the studio has played host to the likes of Aimee Mann, Jennifer Trynin and Letters To Cleo. The label got its start in 1995, when Lupfer was producing Brian Stevens' debut and, halfway through the album, the label backing the project pulled its funding. Lupfer suggested that they just finish the album anyway, and that he'd start a label to put it out. Since then, Q Division has recorded and released projects by other Boston bands, including the Gravel Pit and Poundcake. Ed Valauskas, bass player for the Gravel Pit, notes that having a record released through the label is "sort of like a glorified demo deal. Instead of doing four or five songs that you submit to [a major label],

you get to make a full record and get it played around here, get it in the stores and hopefully develop some grass-roots fan base." The label's upcoming releases include an album of melancholy pop by Merrie Amsterburg. (443 Albany St., Boston, MA 02118 info@qdivision.com http://www.qdivision.com) *AARON CLOW*





bill hicks another dead hero

"Welcome to 'No Sympathy Night.' Welcome to 'You're Wrong Night," Bill Hicks barks mid-diatribe on Rant In E-Minor, one of four of the late comic's albums recently reissued by Rykodisc. The albums— Dangerous, Relentless, Arizona Bay and Rant (the latter two previously unreleased)—come on the heels of Tool sampling Hicks on Ænima's "Third Eye" and including his portrait in the disc's artwork under the title "Another Dead Hero." Hicks was a real iconoclast—unlike, say, Andrew Dice Clay, he made his outrage funny, not yours—who snuck his way into pop culture during the '80s comedy club boom, so Tool's distinction serves his intentions well.

Hicks' genius lay in his ability to find the humor in how remarkably unfunny the world is, and then for a belly laugh, point out your own complicity. He'd put material on abortion ("why don't pro-lifers protest outside of cemeteries?") or euthanasia ("Put 'em in the movies. Do you want Grandma to die in some hospital room, or do you want her to meet Chuck Norris?") under his general rubric: "I feel it's my duty to pass on information at all times so we can all learn, evolve and get the fuck off this planet." Pancreatic cancer did that for him almost three years ago, and now it's left to his fans to take on his messianic zeal: do us all a favor and listen. SCOTT FRAMPTON

< QUOTE >

"Publishing a book gives you an illusion of mattering, and every minute that illusion gets killed. It's brutal. It's a good way to start a drug habit. On tour I had to do drugs to stay awake, to be nice to everyone I had to meet. I had prescription speed! Cocaine, heroin, then mostly just heroin. I would do it all again the exact same way. It was grueling in a way that's delightful." —Elizabeth Wurtzel (*Prozac Nation*), interviewed in *Qualiteria*

< /QUOTE >

"THEIR SONGS COME HARD, FAST AND YES, SMART, WITH VOLUME AND ENERGY NEVER TAKING THE PLACE OF SONGWRITING. THEY HAVE CRASHING MELODIES THAT EBB AND FLOW WITH LOTS OF STOPS, STARTS AND TWISTS, AND BEALTIFULLY BALANCED BACKING VOCALS."

PRODUCED BY DOUG EASLEY AND THR JSH HERMIT

ON ELEKTRA COMPACT DIS

World Radio History

QUICK FIX



sloan one record to another

"Sometimes I get saddled with the parody thing," says Sloan's bassist Chris Murphy. "It pisses me off when bands do that. The '90s alternative scene is all kind of anti-rock or anti-entertainment. I like playing rock music, and I'd like to be entertaining."

Sloan seems to be doing a good job of that. The boyishly cute quartet from Halifax, Nova Scotia, recently toured Canada to sold-out shows, and will likely be touring the U.S. this spring in support of *One Chord To Another* (The Enclave). The band's last record, *Twice Removed*, went gold in Canada, and was named the best Canadian album of all time in an industry poll. Though honored, the band was appropriately wary. "It was just the right time for it to be championed—still fresh in people's minds," says guitarist Jay Ferguson. "But it blew by Joni Mitchell and Neil Young, so it's a little ludicrous."

The distinction came early in the band's short career, and an odd time. It was rumored that Sloan was breaking up, and its label, DGC, which had asked the band to re-record *Twice Removed* (it refused), dumped the group. "We shouldn't have done it," said Murphy of signing with DGC back in the must-findnew-Seattle days. "But we couldn't not do it: we were talking to the best major label there was. I don't regret it, but I wish we had more chance to develop on our own."

One Chord To Another has already gone gold in Canada, where Sloan released the record on Murder, the label it started in 1992 to put out its first EP, *Peppermint.* "We do have an [indie] sensibility: we try and keep things in our own hands as much as possible," says Andrew Scott, the only non-Halifax resident, who also plays with the Toronto bands The Sadies and Maker's Mark. "But we're not so deluded that we think we're still totally punk rock—we're not."

For a band that is so cautious about the business of music, Sloan is willing to take creative risks—its three albums sound wildly different. "We prepared people for this third record with the difference between *Smeared* and *Twice Removed*," says Murphy. "Now people know that there are no rules with us, so no one will be surprised."

"What we do for a living is almost perpetual adolescence," adds Ferguson. "But that's all right—it's the best of both worlds. We can live like adults, but we get to play rock music at night." MARGIE BORSCHKE

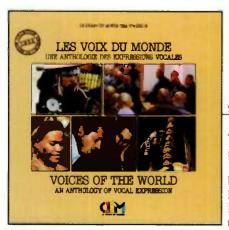
mix tape

"I'm Not Bitter! (Just In Denial)" by Howard Semones "I made this tape for a friend after a weird but amicable break-up."

SIDE ONE: Aimee Mann Long Shot James Say Something Sam Phillips What You Don't Want To Hear Fairground Attraction Perfect Juliana Hatfield Dving Proof Soundgarden My Wave Curve Wish You Dead Carbage Not My Idea Tori Amos Putting The Damage On Bryan Ferry Don't Want To Know **Til Tuesday** Long Cone (Buddy) The Beautiful South You Keep It All In

SIDE TWO: Letters To Cleo Awake Alison Moyet It Won't Be Long Ben Folds Five Philosophy Siouxsie & The Banshees Fall From Grace Biork Army Of Me Berlin The Metro **Tracy Bonham** Buildog Cardigans Hey! Get Out Of My Way No Doubt Don't Speak Annie Lennox Walking On Broken Class Yaz Mr. Blue Nine Inch Nails Wish

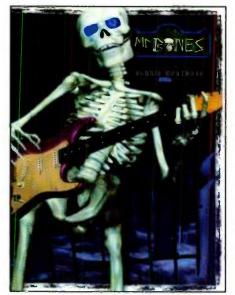
Made a good mix tape lately? Tell us about it. Just mail, email or fax us the track listing.



the world is singing

Two new mammoth, excellent three-CD anthologies collect vocal music from around the world. *Divine Divas: A World Of Women's Voices* (Rounder) is a sequel to 1995's *Global Divas* set: 37 songs sung by women from all over the globe, mostly in folk-based pop forms. Familiar names include Najma, Tish Hinojosa, Françoise Hardy, Marcia Griffiths, Alison Krauss and Ani DiFranco, though a lot of the tracks by less-well-known artists are surprising and rewarding too. For

a jolt of the uncut stuff, though, check out *Voices Of The World: An Anthology Of Vocal Expression* (Le Chant Du Monde), three discs of amazing archival recordings of traditional vocal techniques—103 in all—accompanied by 100 pages of notes. You may have heard a Balinese *kecak* chorus or a Swiss yodel before, but how about the *dshambukware* of Papua New Guinea? Ya mwei, the "voice of a genie" from Gabon? Xwââxâ ritual speech from New Caledonia? Albanian funeral songs? They're all here.



beyond the bleep home arcade soundtracks

In the early '80s, audio stimulation from a home arcade system went only as far as the faint, uninspiring "bloop" of an imploding space invader. But the new breed of vid kids deem a video game's audio ambience as important as the ambidextrous skill required to conquer the final level. The recent frenzy of star nusicians and composers popping up in video game credits has taken the obsession to a new level, with serious game junkies connecting game consoles to their home stereos They're cranking iD Software's Quake for the Trent Reznor-composed soundtrack. They're strapping themselves in to Sony's Wipeout XL to hear techno artists Orbital, Chemical Brothers and Underworld. And these efforts are only the beginning of what could be an explosion of superstar soundtracks to accompany the home entertainment experience.

The fuse was lit in 1993, when SegaSoft approached Spencer Nilsen to compose the score for the underwater adventure quest, Ecco The Dolphin. Its gorgeous, ambient soundscapes won as many fans as the game's action itself. When adolescent players began to write letters saying that the game's score had, as Nilsen remembers, "changed their lives," he knew he'd hit a nerve that could never be ignored again. "When you mention game music to most people, they immediately think of Super Mario Brothers," says Nilsen, recalling the mid-'80s game whose soundtrack resembles a digitally enhanced jack-in-the-box. "(Now) we're dealing with music that is truly groundbreaking, regardless of the fact that it's on a game."

Nilsen is the director, executive music producer, and resident composer of the Sega Music Group, a label formed solely for the release of music featured on SegaSoft video games. With initial releases including Ecco: Song Of Time, the Mr. Bones rock orchestra, and the eclectic Powercuts 1 compilation, Nilsen hopes to mirror the success achieved by full-length movie soundtracks. The label's overall mission is to completely reverse the current roles, and use games to break new artists. Rather than focus on radio and video rotation for exposure, the label places tracks by recent signees in its games. The strategy already seems to be paying off. A group of American peacekeeping troops recently called SMG from Bosnia, requesting biography and tour information for Bygone Dogs, the label's first signing, whose songs they'd soaked up while playing Cyber Speedway. "We are doing the soundtracks of the new century," says Nilsen. "I see it as a real opportunity. It's like the Old West. Everyone's packin' a gun, and anything is possible." M TYE COMER

in my room artists' personal picks

CRAHAM KEMP

Eska "III Spike" (7")

Woolworth's Guitars

Beck "Devil's Haircut"

Japanese Toy Beatbox/Sampler

Dub Narcotic Sound System "Fuck Shit Up" (7")

< QUOTE >

"The Speaker's office is now closed. Please leave a message at the tone. Thank you for call—oh, that's fucked. Uh, you've reached the Speaker's office. Our office is closed. Please leave a message at the tone." —the outgoing message at House Speaker Newt Gingrich's office, as heard by KCBS reporter Bob Butler.

< /QUOTE >

random headline

This revelation from Billboard: "New Head Of K-Tel To Focus On Music Compilations, Rebranding"

inspirational verse

Con Edison, I pray to thee/Please turn back on my electricity/I was led astray/Didn't want to pay/I was disrespectful of your power over me" —Karen Mantler, "Con Edison"

weird record of the month

Lots of kids make up little songs and sing them to themselves. In the case of **Jon**, a very young Japanese boy, he's recorded them, too. *Smoke* (Tzadik) has 23 of Jon's songs, with titles that translate like "A Doggie Goes Boating," "Meow, Meow" and "'I Like It' Song." The boy wonder (the songs *are* awfully good for what sounds like a four-year-old) accompanies himself on toy organ (pretty well), guitar (much less successfully) and some sort of crumply thing, and on a couple of tracks a friend joins in on banjo.



QUICK FIX



firewater bring the animals in

It's Sunday afternoon at Jules' Cafe, where East Village denizens are working off their hangovers over steak frites, beaujolais nouveau and, in our particular corner, pints of Bass. Providing the perfect soundtrack is Uri, a Russian accordionist who looks like the bastard son of Groucho Marx and Roberto Begnini and is sporting an improbable platinum wig of Shirley Temple curls. Giving Firewater's Tod A. and David Ouimet a coquettish smile from behind a beaded curtain, he squeezes out a sly rendition of the bistro standard "Mon Amour" that would make a cool partytape segue into almost anything on Firewater's debut, Get Off The Cross...We Need The Wood For The Fire (letset).

"The guy's a star," enthuses A. "I really want to take Uri on the road." Such a pairing would have been inconceivable in A.'s previous incarnation as frontman for the pneumatic hammercore band Cop Shoot Cop. Which is why, after his former bandmates rejected his creative U-turn into cinematic cabaret-pop, he decided to "kill the Cop." "It's like sex," explains the singer/songwriter, whose instrument

credits on *Get Off The Cross* include a very un-Cop-like bazouki. "Originally it's OK to just get up there and bang, bang, bang. But after awhile, that gets boring, for the recipient as well as the banger. Eventually you want a bit more of the old tension and release." In other words, quips Ouimet, "bring animals in."

As zookeeper for his previous band Motherheadbug, which imploded under the weight of having 17 members, Ouimet jumped at the chance to explore what might happen if Tom Waits and Nick Cave formed a pick-up klezmer wedding band on the occasion of Shane McGowan's elopement. "In many ways, this is an extension of what I did with Motherheadbug," says Ouimet, who first bonded with A. in film school. "But in a more controlled way," A. adds with a wicked grin. "Dave works intuitively, and I'm more of a fascist. I had to stand around with a whip and be ready to discipline him."

Among the seven-piece menagerie who ultimately joined "the circus" are Soul Coughing percussionist Yuval Gabay and Jesus Lizard guitarist Duane Denison. "This was a chance for me to do something different," notes Denison, who, like Gabay, will pop up when schedules permit on the Firewater road tour. "People are tired of straight-ahead indie rock played with an ironic stance," he adds. "Popular music is meant to be consumed. It should be something you want to listen to over and over again."

Was there always a pop songwriter struggling to break out of A.? "No," he demurs. "It was more just getting interested in melody, which is a whole new challenge. Eventually, just destroying things gets redundant. There's something beautiful about...."

"A little pop gem?" Ouimet interjects with a smirk.

"Well, something simple and succinct that gets the message across in as brief a time as possible," elaborates A. "Any old schmoe can strap on a guitar and look cool," he points out. "But it takes superstar caliber to put on a accordion and make it work." *CREE MCCREE*

in my room artists' personal picks

FAT MIKE NOFX & Fat Wreck Chords

Crateful Dead Anything & Everything

> Pearl Jam Vs.

Alanis Morissette Jagged Little Pill

Duran Duran 7 • The Ragged Tiger

Adam And The Ants Kings Of The Wild Frontier

THE BIZ music industry parlance, explained

"the next level"

Code for "expanding beyond the established fan-base" or simply "many more sales," as in "we want to take it to the next level." Often used to justify the sacrifice of one kind or another of integrity. Note: when a successful album's follow-up doesn't sell as well, the phrase "take it to the previous level" is generally not used.

random five

Five things we never want to hear again

- Shout-out tracks at the end of hip-hop records.
- High-priced "EPs" that start with a track from the recent album.
- Covers of '70s hits by "modern rock" bands on soundtracks.
- Second albums that are remixes of tracks on first albums
- (exception: Tortoise)

. Iou Leann.

inspirational verse

"You've been chosen as an extra in the movie adaptation of the sequel to your life" —Pavement, "Shady Lane"

classical crossover piece of the moment

Erik Satie's not-exactly-famous "Gnossiene No. 1" seems to keep appearing on pop records in one form or another. In the last year alone, it's been sampled on the Folk Implosion's "Wet Stuff," used (rather improbably) as a hip-hop backing track on St. Christopher's album, and adapted into "Upright And Locked" on Drain's Offspeed And In There. And the tradition goes back a ways—Family Fodder's early-'80s single "The Big Dig" is a reggae version of the Satie piece. Weird.







the new album featuring "Little Wonder" touring soon!

THE ROYAL TRUX **"SWEET SIXTEEN"**



the new album featuring "Morphic Resident" on tour soon

THE **SNEAKER PIMPS** "BECOMING X"



the debut album out February 25 featuring "6 Underground"

RULES OF "THE GAME" The following rules, newly prepared for this edition; define correct procedure and the rectification of irregularities. No penalties are assessed or proposed for breaches of rules. A penary can punish the offender out can-not restore the eights of a player who may have open damaged. In some cases the players in a game decide on certain penalties to discourage persistent offenders.

CENERAL RULES 1. Players "The Game" may be played by two or more players. In every form of "The Game" each plays for

himsen. 2. Object of "The Game" The coject of "The Game" is to win the sol, either by having the best hand (as explained later) or by making a bet that no other player meets. 3. The Pack (or Deck) "The Game" pack (or deck) consists of a variety of carda, divided into four suits: Spaces (*) Hearts (*), Diamonds (*) Clubs (*), In each suit there are a variety of cards

to be continued World Radio History



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best [the five best releases this month] new multiple of the five best releases this month]



BEN FOLDS FIVE / Whatever And Ever Amen / 550 Music 👄

On its second release (the first, on Passenger-Caroline, began one of those fabled major label 'bidding wars'), Ben Folds Five continues to do what it did on its first superb release: forge hearty pop songs that carry a bite both in lyric and melody. Ben Folds, the trio's leader, lead singer and songwriter, has grown equally adept at showing his caustic bark ("One Angry Dwarf And 200 Solemn Faces") and his astute ability to bring out the pathos of a situation without ever seeming pathetic ("Brick"). The band's distinct, guitar-less instrumentation (Folds plays a fierce piano, with Robert Sledge and Darren Jesse on bass and drums, respectively) suits Folds' classic modern songwriting—sort of as if George and Ira Gershwin had been rolled into one rankled Southerner's body.

DATALOC: Release date: Mar. 18. FILE UNDER: The smartest pop. R.I.Y.L.: Elvis Costello, Joe Jackson, Posies. While Whatever...'s 12 songs don't mark a stylistic departure from the first, eponymous record, Folds' growing ability to write about real people and their awkward situations augurs well for his talent and his future; after all, both Woody Allen and Elvis Costello had to get serious sometime too. Folds'

humor and love of language makes him kin to those two as well, and like them. he is never clever just for the sake of it. As the debut's song "Underground" asked, "Who's got the look/Who's got the phrase/Who's got everything?" Right now, it's Ben Folds Five. *MEGAN FRAMPTON*



BJÖRK / Telegram / Elektra

The remix album has replaced the live double as a musician's crutch—a way to toss off some product without doing much work. But though nine of *Telegram*'s ten song titles are replicated from Björk's last album *Post*, it's not really a remix album: She re-recorded the songs with different producers and collaborators, as well as adding one new track ("My Spine," a brief, sexy collaboration with percussionist Evelyn Glennie). Björk tends to conceive her approaches to her songs separately from the songs themselves (her live performances often have nothing but a vocal melody in common with the recorded versions), so this collection of alternate interpretations is welcome, and it's actually better than *Post*. Most in evidence is a real and

DATALOC: Released Jan. 14. Five tracks appeared on import singles. FILE UNDER: Well-considered reworkings. R.I.Y.L.: Everything But The Girl, Tricky, Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters*. surprising taste for recent trends in dance music (on the other hand, she *is* the only person who's dated both Goldie and Tricky), including Dillinja's intense drum 'n' bass version of "Cover Me." (She's also comfortable with dance music's past: see the glorious disco rendition of "Isobel" she

does here with Deodato.) Graham Massey of 808 State turns a Björkian moan into a vibrating siren and powers his strangely metalloid version of "Army Of Me" with it; the Brodsky String Quartet turns "Hyperballad" into a stately 3-D chess game. Only a R&B-inflected take on "I Miss You," complete with an "Ain't No Nigga"-style rap, falls flat, though the fragment of trombone that hooks it is kind of fun. *DOUGLAS WOLK*



EVERGREEN / Evergreen / Hi-Ball 👄

"Long-awaited debut" is too common a phrase, mostly because it doesn's actually mean a debut is long-awaited because it's good. But Evergreen's debut LP is incredibly good, and for reasons having nothing to do with the band's preceding reputation as another Louisville star vehicle (drummer Britt Walford made his name in Slint and the Breeders). Evergreen rises above, moves aside from, and most of all rocks out of its regiona pigeonhole. Like Fugazi or Shellac if their songs were actually fun Evergreen uses old punk rock, tight musicianship, and its seemingly effortless ability to, well, groove to extremely successful ends. The opener "Fairlane," is a spacious sounding, dizzyish song that lets you know up front

DATALOC: Released Dec. 24. FILE UNDER: Guitar-heavy comfed punk rock. R.I.Y.L.: Wire, Railroad Jerk, Tar. that Evergreen plans to show exactly how easy it is to be melodious and dissonant at the same time. Even the clichés are carried off well, like the super-familiar chuggachuggachugga bit or "Petting The Beast" that you thought only punk

rock bands in Columbus were still starting all their songs with. "Whip Cream Bottle" is the best of the batch, guitar-heavy and poppy, the kinda stuff that makes underage kids from Louisville dig up fake IDs and drive hours to see the band anywhere they play. The familiarity of these songs is lost in their sheer inscrutability—you think you've heard it before, but not quite this way, and you aren't even sure that it was this **good**. *LIZ CLAYTON*



CVAL / 94diskont. / Thrill Jockey

Oval is the product of a trio of German media experimentalists whose approach to sound creation is considerably different from that of most currently working in the electronic music spectrum. Oval's compositions are created by breaking down the technology that theoretically supports them: scratching and painting CDs to create a digital skip, looping the hiccup of a pitted record, shifting and warping the balance and volume levels of a recording to create new, impressionistic tones. Even to the uneducated ears of a non-electronic/ambient music fan, 94diskont, is an eerily beautiful and unsettling record. Its strange popping and lopsided synthetic tones infiltrate the listening environment with fragments of

DATALOC: Released Dec. 10. Vinyl version has a second disc with extra remixes. FILE UNDER: Alien electronica. R.I.Y.L.: Aphex Twin, Brian Eno, the sound of damaged CDs. technological detritus, creating alternately anesthetizing and unnerving sonic collages, often within the span of a single sound bite. These fragmented bits of sound and "aural blind spots" are nothing more than strands of digital noise

meticulously pieced together and layered into lush, alien music. As odd and clinical as this sounds on paper, it's amazingly serene and hypnotic stuff the likes of which are really without precedent. Music of the future? We shouldn't have to wait long to find out. COLIN HELMS



ROYAL TRUX / Sweet Sixteen / Virgin 👄

After all this time spent mining the '70s, perhaps it had to happen. This time around, Royal Trux have become a boogie band, in the mode of the Allman Brothers Band, with shades of the funk influence that distinguished last year's B-side "Shockwave Rider." The Trux pull their biggest surprise on "Don't Try To Hard" (sic), mixing psychedelic keyboard riffs with a bubbly groove worthy of the Jackson 5. "Morphic Resident" takes us back into the band's familiar wah-wah wilderness, with a thumping rock beat, a noodling refrain, and very little to distract one from the question of what in hell a "morphic resident" is. (Turns out the title is a twisted reference to the theories of crackpot biologist Rupert Sheldrake.) Certainly, no Allman fan

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 11. FILE UNDER: Shoogity-boogity. R.I.Y.L.: Allman Brothers Band, Urge Overkill, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. could fail to appreciate the extended, vintage guitar solo on "Golden Rules." What throws the nostalgia just slightly off kilter is that Neil Haggerty and Jennifer Herrema have completely stopped trying to carry a tune. They just sneer out

the words in grizzled voices that have grown almost indistinguishable from one another. Strangely, this only emphasizes the undeniable grooviness of the record Even the gratuitous period sound effects on some tracks—a cowbell, a whistle, a synth glockenspiel—point up the band's mos distinctive talent: that of making a beautiful mess of history. ANDREA MOED

World Radio History

ON THE VERGE

KOMEDA

In '95, the tiny Chicago label Minty Fresh introduced us to Swedish pop sensations the

Cardigans, who've gone on to great things with "Lovefool," and now the indie has imported another groovy Swedish group: Komeda. Komeda's swingin' sounds have a firm rhythmic undertow and welcome a broad pastiche of influences into catchy, but always



surprising, songs. The quartet named itself for a Polish jazz musician who wrote scores for Polanski and Bergman films, and the kinetic energy between film and music charges Komeda's tunes in unexpected ways: jazzy piano runs crop up here, goofy organ bits that encourage listeners to do the mambo pop up there, and throughout, the striking vocals of frontwoman Lena Karlsson set an intriguing tone. Her voice isn't exactly pretty, but its smoky tone is more suggestive and beguiling than the crispest pop soprano. Americans got their first taste of the group last year with The Genius Of Komeda and a couple of live dates, and this year promises a full U.S. tour. (LA)

HI-FIVES

The Hi-Fives have been described as "shockingly unpunk" because they always wear suits and wingtips on stage. But punk rock is about more than cussin' and smellin' bad, and the Berkeley, California, band easily fits the genre's musical bill. The group's founding members, Chris Imlay and John Denery, started playing together in 1988 and, after stints in several different bands, released the debut Hi-Fives record in 1995. Impressed by that album (and familiar with Imlay and Denery from their days in Brent's TV), Green Day asked the band to fill the



opening slot on its West Coast h o c k e y arena tour. With their s e c o n d l o n g player. A W h o l e Lotta You

(Lookout!), the Fives have resurrected mod, '60s-style garage-rock. Fast and sloppy, the band packs 16 songs into the album's 28 minutes. Even though precision takes a back seat to pure energy, there's nary a dull moment during this punk rock thrill ride. *JENNY ELISCU*

MORCHEEBA

After hearing Morcheeba's debut single, "Trigger Hippie," chances are you won't even connect the group with the mass export of trip-hop ambassadors from the U.K. That's because with its fusion of atmospheric

sampling, deep, bluesy melodies and soulful vocals, this London trio stands out like a diamond in a coal mine d is t i n g u i s h e d among its peers and destined to grow more valuable with



DANNA WCC

age. Morcheeba's debut release, Who Can You Trust? (Discovery), is a smooth, languid ride mapped by the instrumentation of brothers Ross and Paul Godfrey, and driven by the honey-coated voice of Skye Edwards. Blending an array of traditional and modern techniques into a fresh, distinctive voice, Morcheeba's music is a tug-of-war of emotions: love vs. loneliness, comfort vs. paranoia. The band also produced and played on nine tracks on David Byrne's upcoming album, due out this spring. M. TYE COMER

JUNE OF 44

Call it what you will—post-core, changerock—it's music that's built on drastic shifts between quiet and loud, and June Of 44 is the genre's All-Star team. Both together



and separately, the band's four members have helped to define in dependent rock in the post-Slint world. Jeff Mueller is a former member of Rodan, Sean

Meadows plays in the Sonora Pine, Doug Scharin in Rex, and Fred Erskine (formerly of Hoover) in the Crownhate Ruin. Nautical themes have always been the band's leitmotif—see the titles of its records (Engine Takes To Water, Tropics And Meridians and The Anatomy Of Sharks) and their accompanying mermaid- and anchorstrewn artwork. But in a more abstract way, it also helps to bring the band's music into clearer focus. As June Of 44's songs change from soft, lapping waves of sound to gigantic tidal crashes, it's easy to picture these punk rock buccaneers confidently navigating their way to shore. JENNY ELISCU

If this is all you want, this is all there is.

GROWN HEIGHTS

HEY WHITE KID. YOU'LE NOT SO HYSTERICAL

more pricks than kicks

Featuring "Foxy Loser" and "More Pricks Than Ricks." Produced by Narman Kerner, Daniel Presley and Crown Heights.

If this is all you need, this is all there will be.



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built to spill

When Built To Spill's Doug Martsch refers to his band's latest record, Perfect From Now On-a record that hasn't even been released at the time of our conversation-he always calls it "that record," as if it were a relic of his distant past. "There were a lot of periods when we were making that record that I was just bummed out and not into doing it all," explains Martsch. "I didn't really know what I wanted to do with [the songs]. A lot of ideas that I had, I didn't really have the abilities to pull them off, you know? Like, a lot of the guitar playing I had certain ideas of how I wanted things to sound and couldn't get the right sound, and couldn't play as well as I hear it in my head or couldn't sing as well as what I had in mind." Perfect From Now On is actually quite beautiful, but Martsch has a downcast attitude about most things. In his lyrics, the closest he comes to optimism is the concession that this world is "not so bad." Indeed, there seems to be a dissonance between this world and the world that Martsch has in mind. He is, after all, the man who wrote the lyric "I want to see movies of my dreams."

After leaving Treepeople in 1993, Martsch began recording under the name Built To Spill with an everchanging group of collaborators. As a songwriter, his strength has always been his ability to incorporate lush guitar work and wonderful, sweeping vocal melodies into unconventional pop songs. Especially on *Perfect From Now On*, dramatic shifts in mood and texture lead to prog-pop mini-symphonies, full of sound and fury.

While he's clearly shifted away from the more compact pop that characterized his previous recordings (the average song-length here is seven minutes), Martsch is careful not to over-analyze the process, and seems to embrace the mysterious nature of his muse. "It just happens," he says. "A lot of the songs...I liked them on certain levels, and on other levels I didn't know what to think of them. But obviously I liked them enough that I felt like they had to be done. And that sort of is how it always is. I record whatever songs I happen to have made up, and I'm not very responsible for that. It's like, songs don't come from a person, they come from somewhere else. "

At the same time, he does distinguish the band's current creative process from the one that generated the songs on *Perfect* and the two long-players that precede it. Where, in the past, different backing musicians played

on each record, the current line-up (which includes g former Spinanes drummer Scott Plouf and fellow Boisean, bassist Brett Nelson) is meant to be permanent. "Now I want a band that, I mean I've got a band that's really good. I want [us] to learn to know what each other's thinking." When he talks about how the trio works together, his tone approaches enthusiasm for the first time. "We have hours and hours of jams on tape that I go through and find out what's interesting," he says. "That record was, like, all in my head and didn't really have any direction, whereas now the songs automatically create their own direction." Because it's so organic, this new process is much more comfortable.

And comfort is very important to Martsch, who considers the well-being of his family the most important priority in his life. Living in Boise, Idaho with his girlfriend Karena and their two-year-old son Ben, Martsch is a full-time dad and a part-time musician. In fact, it was the chance to spend his days with Ben rather than working a crappy day job that led Martsch to sign to Warner Bros. While Martsch says he'd be as happy or happier on a small label (BTS's first two records were released on C/Z and Up, respectively), the promise of financial stability was irresistible. "To me, it's nice to have some money," he explains. "I'm not too concerned about becoming famous. I mean, I'm concerned about it but I'm concerned about not becoming famous more than becoming famous."

Martsch is one of few artists to persuade his label to provide him and his family with health insurance. That would seem like a fairly significant achievement considering that the industry has typically avoided granting artists those types of benefits, but Martsch doesn't think so. "To me, it doesn't mean that bands are gonna get health insurance. It was just like, whatever, some kind of gesture—because we were sort of hardasses about it. And it's not much money to them, really."

But couldn't one hope that this small victory will benefit other bands?

"If one's gonna bother to hope," Martsch anwers, "then one would hope for a bunch of independent labels to do away with corporate-run rock 'n' roll. That's definitely the thing to hope for if you're gonna hope." \star

by Jenny Eliscu

...A LITTLE REBELLION, NOW AND THEN, IS A GOOD THING" THOMAS JEFFERSON

A TRIBUTE TO THE MISFITS IOLENT WORL

SNAPCASE • PENNYWISE • SHADES APART TANNER • THERAPY? • PRONG • 108 BOUNCING SOULS • GOLDFINGER • DEADGUY SICK OF IT ALL • NOFX • EARTH CRISIS • FARSIDE

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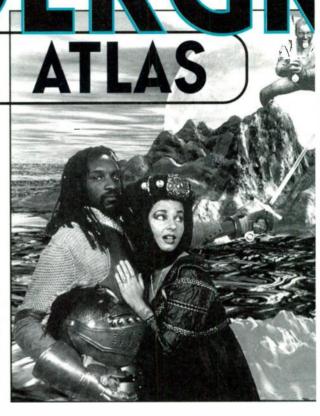
IF YOU'RE DANCING, YOU'RE DANCING.

The family that plays together stays together, they say. Well, it could easily apply to Transglobal Underground, whose new album *Psychic Karaoke* appears at the same time as lead singer Natacha Atlas's solo debut, *Diaspora*. Take a glance at *Diaspora*'s credits, and you'll see Hamid Mantu (drums, programming) and Alex Kasiek (keyboards, programming) featured prominently. They also happen to be the core of Transglobal (along with the wonderfully named bass player, Count Dubulah, who left the fold last summer). Got that? All in the family.

"The whole idea for *Diaspora* was put together by the same team," reveals Alex. "We'd done 'Yallah Chant' live with Transglobal for quite a while, so it didn't really make any sense to do it any other way. And, on *Psychic Karaoke*, 'Tongue Of Flame' was originally done as a Natacha Atlas track. So the albums do keep referring to each other. But even if the musical approach is similar, the overall concept of the two albums is different."

Which is perfectly true. Where TGU gleefully plunders the globe for inspiration, Natacha's album is deliberately more geographically focused. "The main idea was to emphasize my background," she explains, "and stick to the Middle Eastern aspect of it, rather than have a mixture of all kinds of things. My grandfather was born in Egypt, and his family came from Palestine. He came to Europe when he was 15, so my love of that kind of music keeps me in touch with my roots. I've always loved it. There's one traditional song—well, it's traditionally written; it was composed for me by Isam, who lives in Egypt and who's sort of like my uncle, and it was done with a classical orchestra, but some of the rest is based on Arabic scales that we mess about with and move around in a Transglobalesque style."

The "Transglobalesque style" predates the official Transglobal Underground, as Alex recalls: "The name's been going since 1991, but you couldn't have called it a



band then. The first single, 'Templehead,' was recorded before we even had a name. It had tablas on it, a dub sound, a rap sound; it was unlike anything that anyone was doing. After it came out, which was pretty much at the height of the rave scene, we got a call from a label asking us to do an LP. They gave us the money to go in the studio, recorded a bunch of backing tracks, and that was when Natacha joined. We had a great laugh doing it, and the label hated it. They said we were a bunch of obscure, arty bastards, and it wouldn't sell any more than the Orb. We said, 'The Orb are going to sell loads,' and they asked us to leave. To their credit, they did let us take the album."

Another label released it, to a very fair amount of acclaim, and TGU returned to the studio to make a follow-up. "By the time we got the licensing deal for America for the first album," Alex continues, "we'd already finished the second album, and they ended up putting out the second record, *International Times*, with 'Templehead' on it, which was a disappointment for us, because that album wasn't anywhere near as good as the first one. *Dream Of A Hundred Nations* had been a very happy, sparkling record. On the second one we were trying to copy that spontaneous feel, and that feel had been there because most of the people didn't really know each other. Going ir to do the second, there were too many expectations."



But this time out, the band is more than happy with the results. "Psychic Karaoke is the closing of a page, the completion of a lot of stuff we wanted to do—I think it's the most realized record we've done. We knew the people and had the resources to do something close to what we'd always wanted to do. Before we made the album, we had the chance to play the songs live first, and that really changed things. For example, Natacha had been singing one vocal to 'Boss Tabla' for about eight months, then just threw it away the day of the recording and came up with something better. We just felt more confident about what we doing."

The record also shows a real progression of musicianship. Gone, for example, is the reliance on samples that characterized the first two albums. "On the first LP we used a lot of samples," Alex admits, "basically because we didn't give a toss—we were on the dole and it seemed like fun. But once you start selling records, you can't get away with that. On *International Times*, there are a lot of cleared samples. On the new one, there are very few, and that's because they'd been removed by the time we went in the studio, or they'd been mutated so much we no longer knew what they were. We'd use the sample as source material, then bring in musicians to play the parts."

The methods might have changed, moving more from machine to man, but the aim of the band remains exactly the same as it's always been. "The basic philosophy is that if you're dancing, you're dancing," Alex states firmly. "It doesn't matter if it's to Hungarian music, bhangra, rave, anything. Our idea was simply to get people dancing to stuff they hadn't thought of before. Not to do some clever folk collaboration, but in a way that communicated with people like ourselves. I remember going to the first WOMAD festival and seeing Echo And The Bunnymen playing with the Burundi drummers. That stayed with me, and our take is still really that there's not a big difference between the two."

Time seems to be proving him right. The growing popularity of Whirl-y-gig and the breakthrough success of acts like Bally Sagoo and Afro Celt Sound System shows that people are becoming more globally aware, even as they move on the floor. The new fusion of dance and world beats is the legacy of the rave and trance scenes. And it's left the band very busy.

"We've just finished almost a year of touring, and we've got to start writing again soon," Alex says. "Our plan this time is to try and put everything together in one package. But then, for *Psychic Karaoke* we said we were going to make a very cheerful album, so who knows? And we'll be over in the States during the summer. We've never played to Americans before, so it'll be interesting to see what happens."

"We'd like to tour simultaneously, Transglobal and Atlas together, if possible," Natacha says. "We're still working out how we could do it, if we mix the two sets and become one show. It would be very wearing on us. and we might find out we can't do some songs of mine. There's a lot more sequenced stuff with Transglobal, and mine is much more live."

"Well, you hear that with Transglobal, too," Alex points out sheepishly, "but that's because the sequencers break down and we just keep going anyway." *

THAT'S ADLONIANT!* Tom Lanham checks out the new Welsh scene

The lads were drunk, no doubt about it. There were three of them, from the Welsh band Stereophonics, careening through a private Kula Shaker post-show shindig held at London's elite after-hours drinking establishment, the Groucho Club. Acting like they owned the place, they downed a truly heroic amount of free liquor, smacked into and spilled booze upon other horrified partygoers, and basically brayed all evening like ignorant jackasses. Their band, they bragged, had just been signed to a major U.K. label. But most of the English industry bigwigs present eyed them with scowls of disgust. "Welsh lager louts!" one hissed under his breath. "Who in the hell invited those fucking Welsh lager louts to the party?"

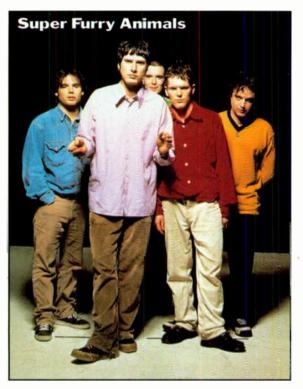
An exaggerated case, true. But it's nonetheless an example of how the relatively quiet principality of

Wales has traditionally been viewed in London music circles. Think of *Deliverance*. Think of that hillbilly plucking away. Or, says Gruff Rhys singer for the Cardiff-based Super Furry Animals—think "sheepshaggers. Every headline you get about us is derogatory, with references to sheep, and that's what the English would call us Welsh people: sheep-shaggers. I don't know what the equivalent would be in the States, but the Welsh are supposedly the scourge of Britain—they're not civilized."

On their debut, Fuzzy Logic (Creation-Epic), a brainy mélange of gritty guitars, Tilt-A-Whirl synth passages and Rhys's warm, watery rasp, the Super Furries sing in the Welsh tongue, which is still spoken as a second language by over 20% of the population. Gorky's Zygotic Mynci, SFA pals who also hail from the more rural North, chirp almost every song in Welsh on their quasipsychedelic singles collection, Introducing Gorky's Zygotic Mynci (Mercury). Can you decipher "Pentref Wrth Y Mor" or "Methu Aros Tan Haf"? For the record, it's "Village By The Sea" and "Can't Wait Till Summer," respectively. But that's beside the point, insists Gorky's Moog/piano-playing frontman Euros Childs. He didn't choose to warble such tongue-twisting syllables. "We speak Welsh every day, so it was chosen for us."

This has caused a few problems for Gorky's. But not the ones you might imagine. Homelanders, says Childs, "don't like us singing in English and Welsh-they want us to only sing in Welsh. Super Furry Animals had a lot of hassles with this as well, because they've gotten big enough in Britain that all the negative attention has been focused in on them." Childs's violinist sister Megan elaborates: "With the history of the Welsh language, people got so worried about it dying out that it's gone to extremes and they've gotten overprotective in a way. Which doesn't let the use of it progress naturally-you've got to make a decision [to sing in Welsh] rather than just letting it happen." Music and politics may make strange bedfellows, but the preservation-bent Welsh Language Society has periodically aligned itself with Gorky's Zygotic Mynci.





Read between the lines and you'll get the full impact: Wales is currently experiencing a rock 'n' roll renaissance that's put it back on the proverbial map. And the phenomenon isn't only occurring in the North.

To understand the strong North/South division, a quick history lesson is required. When the Romans occupied Wales from 100 to 400 AD, they tapped into and quickly sapped—its rich mineral wealth. Later, the North was conquered by Edward I, who presented his eldest son with a swell new sobriquet, one that would be bestowed on monarchs' eldest sons down through the ages—Prince of Wales. By the Acts of Union (1536 and 1543), the downtrodden little land was sucked into Britain's administrative orbit. Bad news for the South. It was heavily industrialized by the English in the 18th and 19th centuries, which consequently sparked a schism that haunts Wales to this day.

Richard Parfitt—the guitar-slinging rowdy who anchors straightforward pockers the 60 Ft Dolls, a trio based in Southern Newport—has strong opinions on the subject. He's friends with both Rhys and Childs, as well as members of Welsh up-and-comers Catatonia, and he's happy to report that "the music scene has never been as healthy as it is right now in Wales. But there are a couple of things I want to say—Wales is split. It's rural in the North, industrial in the South. And a lot of bands like Super Furries come from up North, where everyone lives in the countryside. We come from the South, which is all steelworks, and you can hear that in the sound of the band."

True enough. The Dolls' scrappy Supernatural Joy EP and followup full-lengther The Big 3 are vaguely influenced by Mott The Hoople, and bludgeon the senses instead of caressing them like Gorky's and Catatonia. And they don't sing in Welsh. "Who speaks it depends on which area you're born in," Parfitt continues. "Where I live, nobody speaks Welsh. In fact, nearly all the South of Wales doesn't speak Welsh. 100-200 years ago, when the English used to run the coal mines and they were the bosses, they stopped Welsh being spoken in schools. It was banned from being spoken. But it continues in the North, because it was rural—it was only in the industrial part that it stopped."

Ask your man on the street about Welsh rock heraldry and chances are he'll only come up with a handful of memorable names-Tom Jones. Bonnie Tyler. The Alarm. Or, more recently, the Manic Street Preachers. But that's just the tip of the iceberg, says Rhys. "There have always been bands in Wales-we come from a tradition of bands who used to sing only in Welsh." In Cardiff, he adds, "basically, you shop in Welsh, there's a Welsh TV channel-it's a living European language. There were Welsh psychedelic bands in the '60s, Welsh punk bands in the '80s too. And that scene created the environment for us and other bands like Gorky's and Catatonia to flourish in. But the London-based press has always ignored Wales, apart from the Manics. A&R people never, ever came to Wales until about a year and a half half ago."

In the North, both Gorky's and Super Furry Animals started out on a tiny indie, Ankst Records. In Newport, Parfitt swears that the signing frenzy was spurred on by an attention-grabbing fanzine/record label called Frug. Now there are over 60 hometown bands, all vying for local club showcases. "All of a sudden, A&R blokes from London were coming out every single weekend," marvels Parfitt, who until recently had a day job driving a lorry to keep the Dolls afloat. "You just get one thing going and it starts to happen, starts getting wilder and wilder. And sure, Wales has been neglected and not looked at, and now it's finally being looked at. But imagine how crappy it must be if you're a kid from Yugoslavia or Poland or something and you wanna get in a band. You know that you may as well not fucking bother-you haven't got a chance, have you?"

And there's one thing that every musician involved in the burgeoning Welsh scene can agree on: Tip your hat when you walk by, thank you. Wales has earned your respect. "And we are civilized," says Rhys. "When we go to England, we talk with respect to the English, when we could go over and go 'fucking England this!' and 'fucking England that!' But you've gotta think more positive than that. You've gotta go over there and say 'Listen, this is how it is. Don't call me sheep-shagger!'"

Euros scoffs at the reference. "I'm no sheep-shagger!" he declares, proudly. "I'm a sheep *pimp*!"

Leave it to the more serious Parfitt to tie the package up with some rough working-class twine. Yes, he sighs, the lager-lout profile is hard to shake. "But it *is* definitely changing. Still, the Welsh were one of the last groups that you could racially discriminate against in the U.K. It's difficult to explain to anybody else, but if you're from Wales, you've been robbed of your language—the Anglo-Welsh—you've been robbed of your land as well, robbed of your mineral wealth and robbed of your culture. We're like the Jews of Europe, basically. We're fucking homeless." *****



BY KURT B. REIGHLEY

LOIS

Olympia, WA's indie sweetheart Lois Maffeo has just returned from her first ever visit to Japan, supporting her fourth album, *Infinity Plus* (K). She giddily admits to having fallen in love on the trip... with a superhero named Anpanman. "He's a sugar bun & his sidekick is toast!" she scrawled across the postcard she mailed weeks ago. Now settled over a pint of Guinness in Seattle's Two Bells Tavern, she rhapsodizes over him in greater detail. "Imagine the cutest thing," she beams. "He's got a big round button nose. He looks like a brioche, but with a cherry!"

Her pastry paramour included, Lois' impressions of Tokyo are a cavalcade of sensory input, ten million people in constant motion. "It was so much sensation, all of the time," she continues. Even watching the tube proved a revelation. "The shows look like cable access, but the commercials are super high-tech. So you're watching a game show that is basically Rock, Paper, Scissors, on a shitty little set, and then it goes to commercials with insane, bright colors and just the most intense video magic."

Yet even amidst such torrential chaos, Lois' intimate songs have found an adoring audience. "The K fans cry," she wrote on that same postcard, and it's true. "First you'll feel a girl touching your shoulder, and you can feel her trembling. 'My English... not, not good...'" Lois whimpers in imitation. "And then the tears start pouring down her face. 'Your music... uhhh...' It's so touching!"

Not that Lois is entirely sure what exactly her Japanese fans find so irresistible. "I know there's a really big pop scene there." To some degree, all K artists are held in high regard, because Beat Happening spent a spell there in the '80s. "That was ten years ago, before it was very common for U.S. bands to come over," Lois notes. "Now tons go there. Weird hardcore bands are playing all over Japan. You'll see people walking down the street in a Fuckface T-shirt."

There's been plenty of Lois to go around lately. In addition to *Infinity Plus*, last year she also released the five-song *Snapshot Radio* EP (recorded with friends across America) and "Ship To Shore," her collaboration with Dub Narcotic Sound System, a creamy dollop of homemade trip-hop. She hopes to work with that ensemble more soon. "Before, we always did stuff where they recorded and then I came in to sing it, but we've actually done a few shows together now, so I'm more familiar with how they work."

Although *Infinity Plus* is filled with lyrics that run from the euphoric "I never thought it could feel like this/Falling in love with a single kiss" ("Sunrise Semester") to "True to life is such a bore/Who the fuck said 'Less is more'?" ("Not Funny, Ha-Ha"), don't mistakenly assume that Lois had a rough year romantically. The inspiration for these sublime offerings is neither torn straight from the pages of her journal, nor sprung wholly out of her fertile imagination, but rather comes from somewhere in between.

"Everybody's songs are autobiographical, and if they say they're not, they're bullshitters," Lois insists. "But I'm not saying that everything happens the way the song says it. Artists are filters, and how effective a filter you are has to do with how your songs integrate your personality and experience with something else." Although she regards herself as "detached," Lois understands that a good pop song includes just enough details to make a story real, yet not so many that the listener can't absorb with it personally.

Strumming And Hoping

"The other thing I have to say about songwriters is they'll never really tell you the truth." Which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Lois concurs that knowing too much about artists often interferes with forming personal relationships with their work. "I was pouring coffee at work the other day, and somebody was playing Joni Mitchell's *Blue*. I love that record, but I can only listen to it so much. And this girl is like 'this is my favorite song,' that song 'Carey,' and I go 'That's about Stephen Stills.' How do I know that? And why do I care?

"But I just read a thing with Joni Mitchell lately," Lois continues, getting heated up. Seems Joni declared "Y'know, rock 'n' roll is just about, it's Saturday night, I just got paid and let's party." Lois isn't buying it, well aware that behind every earnest coffeehouse bore, there's a copy of *Court And Spark*. "She is trying to make history change! You are personally responsible for all these people strumming and moaning."

Fortunately, Lois doesn't belong to that sorry set. Even in her moments of despair, her songs and presence have a sense of hope and promise. But while many fans think Lois is pure sweetness and light, her own take on the situation is more complicated, in keeping with the multiple levels on which her music operates. "It sounds terrible," she confesses. "In my heart of hearts, I'm not really a positive person. I have a positive persona, but I'm somewhat cynical in my private life, about politics and commerce, and big business screwing us over. Maybe that's what makes my music so positive-sounding, because I place great hope in music and my art.

"I place an enormous amount of significance on independent music," she adds. One need look no further than the players of *Infinity Plus* for evidence supporting that claim. Heather Dunn (ex-Tiger Trap) returns on drums, while Fugazi's Brendan Canty contributes electric guitar, bass and organ. Two cuts feature Alan Sparhawk of Low, and the record opens with "Rougher," a duet with Elliott Smith. "K and Kill Rock Stars and Touch & Go, they're gonna be fine, because they put out really good music.

"I just feel like I'm totally happy being part of something I have complete faith in, and have no moral issue with. I don't have to worry about pulling a Kathie Lee Gifford when I suddenly realize that my CDs are being manufactured by children making six cents a day."

So if a major corporation approached her right now about using a B-side in a commercial, she'd balk at their lucrative offer? "I don't think I'd really care, but I just can't imagine that happening," she concedes. "It's too cut and dried, the whole idea of 'selling out.' It comes down to the person. I really like Kraft Macaroni and Cheese. Kraft is owned by Phillip Morris, the



scumbuckets turning kids on to cigarettes. And then one of my favorite artists in the world, like [choreographer] Mark Morris, will be doing a program supported by Phillip Morris. Here's my favorite food, my favorite artist, and my least favorite corporation, and they're all tied up together!"

Lois embraces a more flexible worldview, one where being kind and giving of yourself take primacy over splitting hairs about who delivered your pizza. "Worrying about whether a 14-year-old vegan in Oakland is gonna flip you off next time they see you because you're shilling for Microsoft, that's just

silly," she blurts out. "But, on the other hand, let me qualify that I'm really happy that there are kids that have that kind of political commitment." She'd rather hear voungsters shouting "sell out!" than "Sieg Heil!"

Not that hearing the former should concern her. You can usually hear a pin drop at a Lois show. Without seeming authoritarian, she radiates a commanding presence "Part of my performance persona is perhaps a little schoolmarmish, somewhat imposing," she notes. "I remember being really afraid when we did shows with Fugazi last year. When the Spinanes played with them,

DISCOGRAPHY

as the band Courtney Love Univershworths 7" EP (K) 1990 Highlights 7 ' EP (K) 1991 "Hey! Antomette" 7 (Leel Good All Over' 1991

> as Lois: Butterfly Fiss (K) 1992 Strumpat (K) 1993 Lourider (Slabco) 1994 Bet The Sky (K) 1995 Shy Town (EF) (K) 1995 Snapshot Radio (EP) (K) 1996 Infinity Phie (K) 1996

with Dub Narconic Sound System Ship To Shore EP (K) 1996

kids threw gum at them. I thought it was gonna be so intense." She smiles. 'Not a peep. In the three or four shows we did, I don't think anyone yelled or anything."

After 1996's flurry of activity, Maffeo plans to stick close to home for a while. "I want this year to have a lot of personal development," she says. "I want to write more, finish things I've started, and find new outlets.' And before you can even entertain the possibility of Lois growing stagnant, she's babbling about another project: her impromptu theater group. Featuring Calvin Johnson of Beat Happening/Dub Narcotic/K

Records acclaim, Carrie Brownstein of Sleater-Kinney, and a handful of other friends, Olympia's South Capitol Players have delighted audiences with such masterpieces as a ten-minute adaptation of Valley Girl.

"Our most recent thing we did was a play entitled '120 Minutes on MTV," she recalls "[My friend] Jason was Matt Pinfield wearing a swim cap, Calvin was Paul Westerberg, and Carrie was Juliana Hatfield. I was the girl from Letters To Cleo. Nobody knows what her name is, but we just referred to her as 'the girl from Letters To Cleo,' It was brilliant."



ANTP.

and the second

by Lois Maffoo

How I Learned To Stop Wor

It's the feeling I get when I hear a non-gay person use the word "lover." It's the queasiness induced by bumper stickers that say "Visualize Whirled Peas." It's that sensation caused when I hear those hippie moms at the co-op screaming at their kids, "Lennon! Marley! Hands out of the bulk bins!" It's a kind of embarrassed weirdness. It's the weirdness I feel when people try to talk to me about their favorite girl singer/songwriter. Maybe people feel compelled to do it because I'm a girl singer/songwriter and they assume we re all in a secret society. In a recent ungracious post-show moment, I found myself having to dig myself out of some deep doodoo when I was set upon by some angry Tori Amos fans who objected to a joke I made about the commercial jackpot she hit by breastfeeding a big. An irrational temper tantrum I was having at my coffee-shop job turned out to be caused by the 10,000 Maniacs tape that was on. Someone tells me how great Alanis is and I reach for my revolver.

Amdillo

So with this in mind, herewith is a folk tale of sorts, it's the story of how I came to stop worrying and learned to love Ani.



The story of Ani DiFranco begins with a nineyear-old girl starting to play guitar and hanging out with questionable beatnik types who encourage her to let it all hang out. She leaves home at 15 to live as a musical nomad, driving around and playing and driving and playing some more. Several hundred shows later, she finds herself with thousands of fans devoted to her music, and live shows that resemble head-on collisions between electric folk, spoken-word and tent-revival showmanship. In order to get her music out to people, she begins distributing her own cassettes, and what begins as a "pretend" record label soon grows into a full-fledged company called Righteous Babe. Gay audiences dig her for her flirtatious same-sex musical comeons; legions of college girls see in this pierced and jackbooted spazz a goddess who has descended from the heavens to understand them. It's got the makings of a pinko fairy tale, but from which primeval archetype does our heroine spring?

"I do it for the joy it brings..."

Ani DiFranco is probably the first person who will tell you that it's hard work being a goddess. A lot of people love Ani. Not just love, but looooove Ani-the do-or-die kind. And they're letting her know all the time, shouting it out at shows and sending elaborate confessions via her P.O. box. She accepts it with untiring grace and an almost bizarre willingness. "It's a political act to tell your story. Lotta nights I don't feel like telling it, but it's one of my little sacrifices. You have to be upfront about your experiences, because watering it down to make appropriate is counterit productive. I'm forfeiting my privacy and insisting vicariously that others do too."

Some artists can isolate themselves from their fans by a sullen detachment or a front office, but Ani DiFranco's career is founded on the premise that you've gotta sing your life. "Most people afford themselves a certain amount of distance from their work. But this is me, this is my character. I don't have a division between the two." But what about the people who are getting down on her for becoming "too famous" or are going a little overboard in

the obsession department? "It's classic projection! We all use people on stage as symbols, and I am well aware that I am a symbol for people and that it is exacerbated by my honesty. And wow! Sometimes the wrath is incredible—but I try to hold fast to the knowledge that all I can do is be myself."

"Because I'm a joyful girl..."

What is it about her? I go over to my co-worker Jesse's house and ask her to explain it to me. She's the selfproclaimed "biggest Ani fan in Olympia," and I know it must be true, because right after she introduces me to her snake, Diva, I am presented with a cavalcade of clippings, cassettes and photos of Ani DiFranco that bear witness to a love that's both reverential and respectful. She says it's Ani's music and the things she stands for and, mainly, her dedication that inspires it. "But I also just like turning it up and dancing around." So why are some of her longtime fans so bummed and disillusioned by her most recent album, Dilate? Jesse thinks it's just the disappointment of finding out that something you thought was yours and yours alone turns out to be in the public domain. "The new record is about this intense relationship with this guy, and there's just some women that are disappointed that they're not hearing the raw, folkier stuff like Ani DiFranco that was more political and queer. I think she trades on her sex appeal, and when she says stuff at

shows about how her leather pants have a lot of zippers for easy access, I guess she has to deal with what comes back. But it's fun for me, and if it's fun for her and she's not censoring herself, then it's all right as far as I'm concerned. I think it sucks that there are some women who won't let her be."

"I wonder if everything I do, I do instead of something I want to do more..."

Dilate is a beautiful record. It's a glimpse into the opposite table at a restaurant where a girlfriend is just about to be demoted to friend. It's a microscopic examination of envy and adoration. It's a hard-won lesson that you can't know anyone the way you hoped you could. There's no doubt that you're getting the genuine article—Ani DiFranco produced her own album and plays most of the instruments. "I think my songs are the knowing, strong me telling the actual me what she is doing wrong," she says. "Dilate isn't so much a direction of my work as a crazy sidetrack of my life. It was never my thing, this tortured, melodramatic soap-opera scene. But it happened, and the work followed. The process of becoming that vulnerable is irreversible."

"I know there's no grand plan here..."

DiFranco seems to have some reservations about her records ("I hate my albums. I'm a weird one, because I have a lot of insecurity, but I don't have a tolerance for it"), but she has a lot more patience with herself as a live performer, and draws deep appreciation from the opportunity it provides her to transcend her mortal bounds. "I love when I get to the point of sweating hard and when everything just falls away. Before I get to that point, I'm thinking about all sorts of things and doing a lot of self-referencing, but then it all disappears into this visceral experience."

She must love it: she's on the road for about 150 days a year, and she's on year nine of her world tour. Her business partner Scot Fisher describes her intense touring regimen as "her independence thing." "It started with her not waiting around for someone to give her something. She got on the road and got this mailing list going and got her stuff out there."

I wonder about "her independence thing," because aside from being a critical marketing tool, touring can't help becoming a detachment from place, home, relationship, family and community. And although most of those things can be knitted together from the scraps of experience you get when you're traveling, there is still a sense (especially on the song from which Dilate takes its name) that the distortions of separation are both what confound Ani DiFranco and what is at the heart of her identity. "I was a loner kidhyperactive and independent," she says. "I was always making up ridiculous scenarios. And I dreamed of leaving, I just wanted to leave. And touring has been an invaluable experience to me, because there is something primary in me that enjoys being out of context.

I guess I'm extra-curious about this aspect of her career, because I'm not a great lover of touring. I love playing and I love driving but I *hate* not knowing where

I'm going to end up every night. So I ask her how she gets centered, and her answer's genuine zeal offers the most crucial clue to her diggability factor. "I don't get centered. I don't thrive on that. I thrive on chaos. I guess I erave that ability [to be centered] in others, but when I try it I just freak out. I'm blessed with not really caring whether or not I'll come out okay. I have personal liberty, and that is what gets me through the day." She does admit, though, that she has recently purchased a place of her own. I tell her that a friend of mine says that she would finally know if a place was home if she felt she could bury her cat there. Ani laughs and says, "I'm still developing that sense. I ask myself, 'Is this just rooms or is this it?'"

"This is just the way it goes..."

It's perhaps the biggest paradox of Ani DiFranco that she is both a non-commercial counter-culture icon who spends half the year gunning for AAA's major mileage award and a committed small-business owner, whose label Righteous Babe is defying major-label logic by breaking into the charts via the revolutionary beliefs that a label's business side should reflect its artistic side, and that a commitment to making music the way the artist chooses is a better indicator of success than a financial statement. Although Ani isn't a day-to-day employee at the Buffalo offices of Righteous Babe, she is its centerpiece and its guide. Fisher, a longtime friend and the label's head honcho, describes the development of the business from its origins in the back seat of Ani's car to its present position as one of America's largestselling independents. Fisher has known DiFranco since 1987, when they were housemates in Buffalo. In 1993, she blew through Austin, where he was finishing up law school, and a partnership was born. "I saw that she was never in one place at a time and that I was in one place all the time. So basically I began by balancing her checkbook and paying bills. She needed the help, and it seemed more interesting than the gray world of law."

When Fisher graduated, he decided that although he had trained to do criminal defense work, he wanted to "apply for a job" at Righteous Babe. Although Ani was initially skeptical of combining friendship with business, they joined forces and rented an office. 500,000 records later, it appears that it was the right decision. Fisher explains, "I have a knack for business, but you have to have someone with talent for it to work. Ani is one of the most gifted songwriters I've ever heard. She's also a maniac—a workaholic whose touring schedule is endless. She likes to joke that Righteous Babe has done in 10 years what a major label does in six months, but she really does have a sixth sense for business. And I think it's because she doesn't care about money, just music."

"I do it because I learned it from you..."

For a time, DiFranco was the sole artist on Righteous Babe, but last year the label released a collaboration between Ani and the folksinger/anarchist/visionary Utah Phillips. Although combining live performance recordings of Phillips' wry musings on the pitfalls of modernization with DiFranco's "modern" hip-hoppy musical stylings might run counter to the essence of

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either art form, the result is a surprisingly refreshing take on "folk music." When Utah Phillips explains that maybe "folk music is boring, but I am a folk singer and you're folk and we own these songs together!," it reveals what makes a musical community work. DiFranco says she'd rather be compared to Utah Phillips than the latest pop diva. "So what if he looks like Santa Claus and I look like Tank Girl! I'm singing about my experience in the same tradition—only I'm a squeaky, stompy girl."

"I do it just because I want to ... "

So who is the pro-active fairy-tale princess we are left with? Is Ani DiFranco the Anarcho-Cinderella who in her DIY humbleness humbles her major-label oppressors? Or is she the Mock Ugly Duckling who in the process of letting us know she's "Not A Pretty Girl" becomes a cover model for the new generation of feminists? The truly striking thing about Ani DiFranco is that she does the best job characterizing herself. She's a brand new folk tale—the Joyful Girl. And when she asks herself why she does things the way she does, her answer is simple.

I do it for the joy it brings Because I'm a joyful girl Because the world owes me nothing And we owe each other the world I do it because it's the least I can do I do it because I learned it from you And I do it just because I want to Because I want to

Everything I do is judged And they mostly get it wrong But oh well 'Cuz the bathroom mirror has not budged And the woman who lives there can tell The truth from the stuff that they say And she looks me in the eye And says would you prefer the easy way No, well O.K. then Don't cry

I wonder if everything I do I do instead Of something I want to do more The question fills my head I know there is no grand plan here This is just the way it goes When everything else seems unclear I guess at least I know

I do it for the joy it brings Because I'm a joyful girl Because the world owes me nothing And we owe each other the world I do it because it's the least I can do I do it because I learned it from you And I do it just because I want to Because I want to

"Joyful Girl" by Ani DiFranco © 1996 Righteous Babe Music



Maybe you don't know his name yet, but that puts you in a minority: Bally Sagoo is one of the top-selling artists in the world. His last album, *Bollywood Flashback*, sold 20 million copies on the Indian subcontinent alone, and appeared in 41 different pirated versions. In North America, through a network of small Asian stores, two million cassettes of the album changed hands. In India, he has his own show on MTV, and he's been congratulated by the country's president. "Dil Cheez," the first single from the new *Rising From The East*, rose to #12 in the U.K. charts—the first Asian record to make the Top 40. The man is a star.

"When I was growing up, I was hanging around black kids and listening to black music," Sagoo says. "My parents were listening to the old Indian stuff, and I couldn't relate to that. I

BY CHRIS NICKSON



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THERE WAS RESISTANCE, NOT JUST FROM WHITES, BUT FROM INDIANS, WHO THOUGHT WE WERE DILUTING THE MUSIC. I JUST LEFT THEM ALL BEHIND; PEOPLE WERE BUYING MY RECORDS.

was too into discos, clubs, that kind of lifestyle. I wasn't interested in India, where I was from—I was a baby when I arrived in Britain."

He became hooked on music, on the beat and what he could do with it, remixing tracks on a rough setup in his bedroom, then playing his efforts at parties and clubs. "As the years went on, everyone was saying to me, 'You're getting very good at what you do. Everyone likes what you're doing.' My parents asked if I was ever going to make Indian music sound like that, but I wasn't interested. Then I was playing around, took a few Indian tracks and mixed them in with some other things, played it to my family and they loved it; all of a sudden, it sounded quite funky Oriental Star, one of the biggest Asian music companies, heard it, and offered to release my work Back then I was just remixing off CDs, so I told them that if they let me have the master tapes, I could really do something in a professional studio. They said okay, and paid for studio time-it was the first time I'd ever been in a real studio-and I put an album together, Wham Bam!, which came out in 1990. I was working as a salesman in an appliance store. In the

evening I'd go into the studio and work there. They kept putting my records out, and they kept selling more and more. I was getting more into it, and more into the Indian music, too."

But there were still plenty of hurdles to overcome. "There was resistance," Sagoo says, "not just from whites, but from Indians, who thought we were diluting the music. I just left them all behind; people were buying my records." After six East-meets-West albums, Bally decided to try something new, so he "took Hindi songs, old *filmi* classics, and reworked them. I asked my family to tell me songs that had been huge over the last 25 years. I got the artists to sing for me, came home to my studio and worked on it." That record was *Bollywood Flashback*, which moved him to a major label and became the most-bootlegged album ever. It also made him into a true breakthrough artist, a sort of Indian Nellee Hooper.

"The kind of music I make isn't traditional," he gladly admits. "It's not tablas and sitars. We've moved on from that. So now we have Asian soul, Asian dance, Asian house, Asian jungle. I use mixtures—an Indian singer and black rapper on a song, for example. They may not understand each other's words, but the two work together. It's the *sound* that's important." And the sound that Sagoo's found on *Rising From The East* is most definitely his own. "This is all new music. I went to different lyric writers in India and Pakistan, and told them I wanted to do songs about love. Muslims and Sikhs don't get along, and I wanted to help bring them together, to bridge the gap. This time it's not all dance tracks. Most of it is mid-tempo R&B. Musically, I experimented with the sounds, went beyond anything I'd done before."

It's funny how things change. A decade ago, Sagoo was denying his heritage, and "now I'm probably more proud of being Indian than my parents are. It's my motherland, and I've never been as close to it as I am right now. My parents and family are so proud now." \star



"To these indie rock bands that talk about how they're going to stay independent and true to themselves, I say 'Gee, you seem to playing a vintage Fender Mustang. Where exactly did that come from?' As long as the money comes from Mom, I guess it's all right, but not from the evil behemoth recording industry." —Soul Coughing's M. Doughty.

A HOUSE / No More Apologies / Setanta-Bar/None BACKSLIDERS / Throwin' Rocks At The Moon / Mammoth JOHN DAVIS / Blue Mountains / Shrimper HARVEST MINISTERS / Orbit / Setanta-Bar/None JAMIROQUAI / Travelling Without Moving / WORK FREEDY JOHNSTON / Never Home / Elektra MARIA KALANIEMI / IHO / Rykodisc L7 / The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum / Slash-Reprise LATIMER / Live From Sour City / World Domination LONGPICS / The Sun Is Often Out / Mother-Island MERZBOW/MAN IS THE BASTARD NOISE / Voice Pie / Relapse MOBY / Animal Rights / Elektra NERF HERDER / Nerf Herder / Amsta NIPPER! / Nipper! / ITU PAVEMENT / Brighten The Corners / Matador-Capitol PIGEONHED / The Full Sentence / Sub Pop PORTASTATIC / The Nature Of Sap / Merge RADAR BROS. / Radar Bros. / Restless ROCK*A*TEENS / Cry / Daemon RUN ON / No Way / Matador SKY CRIES MARY / Moonbathing On Sleeping Leaves / Warner Bros SPARE SNARE / Westfield Lane / Wabana STRAPPING FIELDHANDS / Cobs On The Midway: Singles 1991-1995 / Siltbreeze THRUSH HERMIT / Sweet Homewrecker / Elektra-EEG BEN VAUCHN / Rambler 65 / Rhino VERUCA SALT / Eight Arms To Hold You / Outpost-DGC

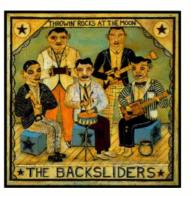


A HOUSE / No More Apologies / Setanta-Bar/None

No More Apologies is something like the sixth album from this veteran Irish pop band. Its various releases have garnered little notice Stateside, which is a bit of a shame, as A House is unusually good at what it does: writing modestly-scaled but more-than-pleasant, occasionally uplifting songs and tossing them together in a casually skilled manner. Main singer/songwriter Dave Couse has a knack for penning lyrics that seem flat on paper but gain life when sung to his generally sunny melodies against the band's slightly anthemic jangle. On "Into The Light," Couse faces encroaching mortality with deceptive optimism ("I'm getting closer/I'm getting brighter... I'm going into the light") and a ridiculously cheerful hook that makes the

DATALOC: Release date: Mar. 18. FILE UNDER: Well-crafted Anglo-Irish jangle. R.I.Y.L.: Pre-Eno James, Del Amitri, Bettie Serveert. subject matter palatable. The low-key wisdom of a line like "I am just like everyone who wants to be someone... so that everyone will want to be like me" is harder to work into a song than Couse and company make it appear. Producer Mike Hedges keeps things clean and unfussy, wisely leaving

the band alone to make its own acoustic-electric clutter on most cuts, and adding the odd flourish (a keyboard line, a sudden switch in arrangement). The nervous, heavily-flanged "My Mind" is the only outright failure here; by and large, *No More Apologies* is as smart and unpretentious a pop album as one could hope for. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*



BACKSLIDERS / Throwin' Rocks At The Moon / Mammoth

Heartbreak, brushes with the law, and heartbreak again are staples of honky-tonk; piano riffs, tweedy organs and scarcely veiled cocaine references are not. The Backsliders mix it all into their straight-up country, grounded firmly in twangy guitars and rough-edged vocals. Like whiskey-spiked lemonade on a blazing humid afternoon, the Raleigh, NC, band satisfies with a kick. It's got a pure roadhouse sound, the kind you imagine you could find in any small-town watering hole but rarely do. Swinging from spare, Ry Cooder-ish guitar ballads like "Crazy Wind" and "Hey Sheriff" to the full-bodied country of "My Baby's Gone," vocalist Chip Robinson sounds like he gets dumped more than he does the

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 18. FILE UNDER: Southern comfort. R.I.Y.L.: John Doe, Rev. Horton Heat, Johnny Cash.

dumping. His lyrics can be as lonesome as a worn-down bastard crying into his beer, but he can still be joyfully macho: "If I was king and ruled the world/I'd order you to be my girl." The Backsliders' easy, rhythmic honky-tonk lulls you into a bittersweet reverie of broken hearts, then

blows into a rocking tune to jolt you back to your senses enough to order another round. *CAROLYN KELLOGG*

"This generation's hardcore female troubadour"-Rolling Stone



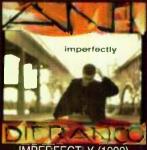
DILATE

"Insurgent and often arrestingly beautiful music..." *–Time*, "Best Music of 1996'

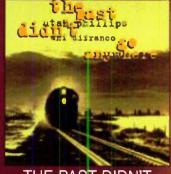
...and don't forget the first seven albums, available in fine record stores everywhere:



OUT OF RANGE (1994)



IMPERFECTLY (1992)

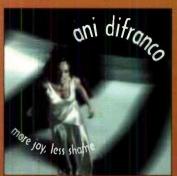


THE PAST DIDN'T GO ANYWHERE

"A groundbreaking mix of storytelling and modern music..." -The Boston Globe, "Top CDs of 1996"

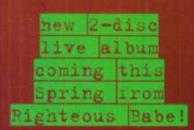
NOT A PRETTY GIRL (1995)

LIKE | SAID (1993)



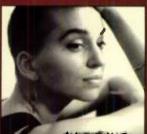
MORE JOY, LESS SHAME

"For DiFranco fans, this record will probably be a missing link..." <u>—The Vancouver Sun</u>





PUDDLE DIVE (1993)



ANI DIFRANCO (1990)

•Check out "Untouchable Face" from Dilate on this month's CD sampler. RIGHTEOUS BABE RECORDS P. O. Box 95 Ellicott Station • Buffalo, NY 14205 • 1-800-ON-HER-OWN

World Radio History

NOT SO SOFT (1991)

ANI DIFRANCO

reviews }



JOHN DAVIS / Blue Mountains / Shrimper

Albums by John Davis—the less famous half of the Folk Implosion—have a light, fragmented composition, which gives them the deceptive quality of being a collection of moments rather than a fluidly assembled whole. While the sparse nature of his music is retained, much of *Blue Mountains* goes in new and entirely successful directions, including taking the *songier* songs into full bloom. "Jeep Cherokee" is good enough to make you want to get one so you can drive around and sing it. Yet every more rock-ist direction that the album goes in is made up for by haunted, stark-sounding juxtapositions, partly the natural result of Davis's sometimes-teetering-on-performance-poetry style of singing and reciting. The eerieness takes other

DATALOG: Released Jan. 14. First single "I'll Burn." FILE UNDER: Post-Sebadoh poetry-rock. R.I.Y.L.: Tall Dwarfs, catchier Smog, non-*Kids* Folk Implosion, Sebadoh.

forms, too: "Tethers" and "Face To The Storm" have the melodic qualities of a child's chant. And everything fits together perfectly. The songs seem to levitate into the air: poetry lightly perched on song-stuffs that aren't grounded in common structures, vocals whose reticence masks the

overtness of every lyrical exaltation and invitation. *Blue Mountains*, for all its lack of smoothness, is a really graceful piece of work. *LIZ CLAYTON*



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 18. FILE UNDER: A pop band wishing itself more normal. R.I.Y.L.: Robert Forster, Ed Kuepper.

HARVEST MINISTERS / Orbit / Setanta-Bar/None

This is a bit of a disappointment after the jagged peaks of the Ministers' A *Feeling Mission*, 1995's asymmetrical masterwork, but it's still a solid showcase for singer William Merriman's off-center songwriting sensibilities. The band sounds a bit more serious these days, going in for more solid rhythmic underpinnings than before, and a live-in-the-studio sound that would be a good idea if the band didn't occasionally sound as if it were trying to play more forcefully than is comfortable. Nonetheless, there's only so normal anyone can make a song like the opening "Think About Me More," in which the sparse funk accompanying Merriman's patented lyric fragments ("Think about me more/How much more

persuading do/You need to hear before/You decide to?") gives way to a slow, organ-washed chorus ("If I hit you on the head, would you think about me more?"), and two different bridges, each with an entirely different feel. Merriman himself doesn't seem at the top of his form this

time out: "A Reluctant Volunteer" and a few others have the cryptic lilt of his best work, but other songs ("The Object Of Your Affection") find him repeating lines and titles to no particular effect. Despite these caveats, *Orbit* is still a fine album, probably best appreciated by those who aren't familiar with its predecessor—which is almost everyone. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*



JAMIROQUAI / Travelling Without Moving / WORK

No, Stevie Wonder hasn't gotten down and funky, that's vocalist Jay K of England's Jamiroquai. A dead-on aural ringer for Stevie, this man of wacky headgear is buoyantly joyous on the band's third U.S. release. There's no one better than Jamiroquai for happy dance grooves. The irrepressible quintet oozes good vibes, and manages to push the narrow dance music envelope a little. "Cosmic Girl" has disco-era synth string sections and delightfully cheesy '70s keyboards; "Use The Force" is heavier on the funk, with African drum beats bubbling like boiling water under a melody sparkling with "Shaft" samples. As on earlier albums, there are a couple of tracks featuring the didjeridoo, a gourd with metal keys that sounds a little

DATALOC: Released Jan. 14. FILE UNDER: Happy, groovy dance. R.I.Y.L.: Brand New Heavies, old Stevie Wonder, the *This Is Acid Jazz* series. bit like a resonant banjo. Somehow, it works, especially in the lush ambient jungle of "Didjerama" (which also includes screeching parrots). Of course, there's a requisite reggae track; a band celebrating "traveling without moving" is singing to the ganja-smoking, trip-taking crowd. The

lyrics are fun, if a bit fluffy; the messages of tolerance and environmentalism highlighted on previous records take a back seat here to boy-girl seductions and celebrations of a booty-shaking good time. *CAROLYN KELLOGG*

NOSIC UNBOONS

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Caroline dis World Radio History



Theli CD NBA 6179 Out Now



reviews }



FREEDY JOHNSTON / Never Home / Elektra

Like the recent work of Mark Eitzel and Matthew Sweet, Freedy Johnston's latest album finds him uneasy with his guitar-troubadour identity and eager to put some power-pop oomph into his act. His band rocks harder than usual, and a few strategically placed songs show off a toughened-up persona. The opener "On The Way Out" is the best example, with Johnston driving the steady 4/4 beat and sneering ever so slightly on lines like "you get what you take anyway." Less successfully, he stomps through a restrained rant on "You Get Me Lost." In general, *Never Home* still leans heavily on Johnston's traditional strong suits. "I'm Not Hypnotized" is a lovable, '80s-style pop song in the tradition of Marshall Crenshaw, while "Western Sky" returns

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 25. FILE UNDER: Folksy power-pop. R.I.Y.L.: Marshall Crenshaw, Matthew Sweet, Mark Eitzel.

Johnston to the role of lonesome storyteller. By the second half of the album, Johnston has mellowed out considerably. His voice on the ballad "Hotel" and the love song "Seventies Girl" is warm, melancholy, and most of all, familiar. Having experimented with varying degrees of distance in his songs,

Johnston seems most at home as an intimate raconteur. ANDREA MOED



MARIA KALANIEMI / IHO / Rykodisc

As one of the few accordionists trained equally in the classical and folk traditions, Finland's Maria Kalaniemi stands poised and determined to make a wide audience appreciate her instrument outside the contexts of weddings and French cafés. This folksy, festive album mixes traditional pieces with Kalaniemi's own compositions, which tend toward refined ballads and almost-pop songs. You could do a Virginia reel to one track, while another could accompany the saddest scene of a movie, with simple piano chords punctuating a meandering melody. A rotating backing band subtly adds relief to the songs, stepping lightly on the downbeats as Kalaniemi embroiders the melodies. While other avant-accordionists like

DATALOG: Released Jan. 21. FILE UNDER: Folk reinventions. R.I.Y.L.: Varttina, Guy Klucevsek, The Klezmatics.

Guy Klucevsek and Tony Cedras make much of the deep heaving effects the instrument can produce, Kalaniemi brings out its nimbleness, creating the kinds of tunes more frequently associated with reed instruments. At the same time, the respiratory tone of the squeezebox creates

unfamiliar phrasings, and dispels what would otherwise be the mood of a recital. ANDREA MOED



DATALOC: Release date: Feb. 25. FILE UNDER: Snotty riot-grrrl rock. R.I.Y.L.: Babes In Toyland, Hole EPs, Breeders.

L7 / The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum / Slash-Reprise

Both as feminist icons and as grunge heroes, L7 already has a big reputation to live up to. Fortunately, *The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum*, the band's third major-label album, reaffirms L7's place as rude rockers who won't take any guff. (Bassist Jennifer Finch has left the band to go back to college, though she plays on the entire album; Gail Greenwood, ex-Belly, will tour with the band.) Crunchy yet sloppy, the album's full of adorably snotty vocals, attitude-filled lyrics, and loud guitars. Vintage moments include the sneering chorus of "I Need", the ultra-heavy riff in "Must Have More." and the twanging "Me, Myself And I." No PC points will be won with "Off The Wagon," which extols the virtues of going on a bar-hopping, purse-losing

bender. But *The Beauty Process* shows many moods in addition to mere loudness. "Moonshine" will appeal to those who wish the Pixies never disbanded, and "Bitter Wine" tells a tale of second chances with distorted guitars against a eerie soundwash of picked bass, electronic drone

and a lost-soul chorus. Bratty, brash and confident, *The Beauty Process* includes just enough self-examination to show that the girls have grown up, but they haven't gotten stale. *HEIDI MACDONALD*

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.

DJ SHADOW / Endtroducing... / Mo Wax-ffrr @

From all that's been written about DJ Shadow the hype and the backlash—it would seem like he's singlehandedly either going to save popular music or destroy it. The answer is "neither." *Endtroducing* doesn't make it clear if he'd last 90 seconds in a showdown with the heavy-duty turntablists of the underground (he might, he might not), and the epithet "Jimi Hendrix of the sampler" suggests that he's an innovator, rather than part of the long continuum in which he explicitly places himself. It also implies a flashy virtuosity that's



not his style—it belongs more to the forefathers he acknowledges in the liner notes, like the Bomb Squad and Steinski. Shadow tends to be slyer and more subtle

about what he's doing on this "instrumental hip-hop" record. Take, for instance, "Changeling": treated as the soundtrack music its texture suggests, it sounds like eight minutes of a single repeating groove, but careful examination reveals that the rhythm never repeats itself exactly, and the music above it is similarly mercurial. Shadow decries the current state of rap (the answer to the songtitle "Why Hip-Hop Sucks In '96": 30 seconds of C-funk and a voice saying "it's the money"), though he's enraptured by its past, and especially by the history of breakbeats, of which he is a master: there are vintage-vinyl breakdowns everywhere here, and not one is familiar. But a great rapper can make a great track instantly thrilling in a way that Endtroducing doesn't pull off much (exception: "The Number Song," a miraculous pousse-café of count-offs and drum breaks). The kicks here are only for listeners willing to give this album the time, attention and space it needs to connect. DOUCLAS WOLK



reviews }



LATIMER / Live From Sour City / World Domination

Since the release of its debut album, *LP Title*, Philadelphia's Latimer has gone through a makeover that would impress even Jose Eber. After a tumultuous break with guitarist Rich Fravel, the band spent a little while as a trio, and eventually recruited Kevin Morpurgo (formerly of the Nirvanawannabe band Dandelion) on second guitar. High-octane power chords, rather than plinky and discordant riffs, fuel Latimer's new songs. Guitarist Geoff Doring and bassist Dylan Cotton double each other almost all of the time now to beef up their melodies. The result is a mix of '77 punk grittiness, with a pinch of glam rock and a dash of fun thrown in. "Citizen Jive" is the kind of stadium rocker designed to get the kids in the nosebleed

DATALOC: Released Jan. 28. FILE UNDER: Auto-shop glam-punk. R.I.Y.L.: Mensclub, KISS, Mott The Hoople, Urge Overkill. seats grunting to the beat. It's easy to picture drummer Rob Sherman spinning his sticks over his head in between snare hits while the guitarists crank out blistering, bluesy leads. Except for the occasional clunker ("Start With Me"), *Live From Sour City* keeps the badass tunes rolling one after

another. This might be the record to get your muscle-car music bin back in gear. *NEIL GLADSTONE*



LONGPIGS / The Sun Is Often Out / Mother-Island

It's no great surprise that one of the first groups signed to U2's Mother Records is (a) exceedingly earnest and (b) fronted by a showy vocalist. Crispin Hunt of Sheffield's Longpigs isn't calling ideologues into battle like a young Bono, but he has a piercing howl that defines the band's sound. The U2 comparisons end there; Longpigs' sound on *The Sun Is Often Out* bespeaks a modern Britpop sensibility, the songs lurching and crashing like Radiohead's without the spacey parts, or Suede with the glam surgically removed. Longpigs have earned a reputation in England for a smashing live show, which this album only hints at. Bassist Simon Stafford and drummer Dee Boyle work up a rollicking stomp on "Happy Again" and "Jesus Christ"

DATALOC: Release date: Feb. 25. FILE UNDER: The new Britpop. R.I.Y.L.: Radiohead, Suede, very early U2.

that, one imagines, would send a town hall crowd into a mad fit of pogoing; on record, though, the band sounds contained, overpowered by a mix that emphasizes Hunt's potent (and too tortured) bray. It's a safe bet that, like Oasis early on, Longpigs are undergoing the long process of

winning over the world after wooing their countryfolk. Catching them live now, on their first U.S. tour, would be a fine way to say you saw them "back when"—before they produced their first spot-on album. *CHRIS MOLANPHY*



DATALOG: Released Nov. 25. FILE UNDER: Armed audio assault. R.I.Y.L.: Throbbing Cristle, Z'ev, Chrome.

MERZBOW/MAN IS THE BASTARD NOISE / Voice Pie / Relapse

Ever stopped to wonder what feeding your head into a jet engine might sound and feel like? Thanks to *Voice Pie*, that sensation is now easy to reproduce at home—just put on headphones, cue it up, and press play. Masami Akita (a k a Merzbow) could probably make a decent living if he applied his skills to churning out mind-bending techno singles, but instead he has chosen to stake out some of the remotest and least hospitable terrain in industrial music, plastering up towering walls of feedback and electronically-generated high-pitched noise, all mastered at speakerblowing levels. It's all toneless, formless, completely exploratory—*musique concrète* taken to apocalyptic extremes. A whole hour of that level of noise

would turn even the most jaded listener's hair white; luckily, once the album has maxed out with its lengthy centerpiece, "Ghost Rider" (the only track to feature anything resembling a bass line), it downshifts a few gears. The second half, by a side project of hardcore band Man Is

The Bastard, is no less abstruse or hair-raising, just mixed a lot lower, so instead of constantly pushing the ultrasonic pain threshold, it sounds more like distant machinery and surf noise. It's a compelling listen, partly in the purity of its abstraction, partly in the Nietzchean fashion of being made stronger by that which doesn't kill you. *DAVID JARMAN*

mixed signals



Ienö made his first mark on American dance culture in 1991 when he and several friends instituted San Francisco's nowlegendary Full Moon parties, a series of free

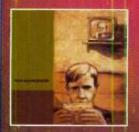
events boasting diverse faces, friendly vibes, and strong, underground sounds. As part of the infamous, influential Wicked crew, he was instrumental in popularizing the brand of funky disco-house that's now the preferred flavor of many Bay Area DJs. Now Jenö joins the ranks of the turntable elite with his contribution to United DIs Of America (DMC-Moonshine), the seventh in an outstanding series celebrating the work of deck pioneers like Josh Wink, Kimball Collins, Doc Martin and Frankie Bones. Keeping with the UDA tradition, a strong track listing keeps the mix authentic to Jenö's personal style. Seraphim Odyssey's "Got To Feel It" and Simon's "Two Crates" are not just similar to the type of music Jenö's known for, they're tracks you'd actually expect him to spin in a live setting. The set makes all the necessary pit-stops, building from funky, acid grooves, peaking with psychedelic disco swirls and winding down with blissful, jazzy loops. A solid, very genuine compilation that reveals why Jenö has become a respected and revered contributor to the scene... If you hear Bad

Boy Bill spin once, you remember his name for the rest of your dancing days. The resident turntable whiz at Chicago's B96 FM, BBB is an expert beat-matcher whose



claim to fame is not just the precision but the pace of his mixes. His second CD offering, *Bangin The Box Vol. o2* (Mix Connection), goes through 42 recent house tracks in a record 60-minute set. Just as soon as you fall into the groove of one track, it's being overlaid with a new one. The technique is exhausting and stimulating at the same time, and guaranteed to keep your ears perked for the entire hour. While the mix often bows to the relentless pounding of hard Chicago house, BBB does make space for almost all the floor-fillers of the past year. If you had a favorite underground house track in '96, chances are BBB will mix it in sooner or later, if only for a minute or two. *M. TYE COMER*

WELCOME TO QUE WORLD



knapsack

Day Three of My New Life Their sophomore release retains its atypical riffs swirting energy, and love of dynamics while exploring darker territory. A whole new recipe for pop chaos,

A095 CD/LP/CS "Out February 25



Archers of Loaf All The Nations Airports

Wickedly aggressive yet I delicately crafted, the Anchers third full length is nothing less than a musical masterpiece.

Aloo LP • Out Now



Trunk Federation

The Infamous Hamburger Transfer

Mind-bending explosive new

rock from outer space. Quirkiness, jet-fueled with a

potent rhythm. Will mark you for life.

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trunk geration

Archers of Loaf Vitus Tinnitus ep Live recordings of all your favorites as well as two new remixes.

Blithe Hardliner b/w The Rainday

Mouth-watering Swedish rock with a distinctive southern flavor. A taste that will leave you hungry for more.

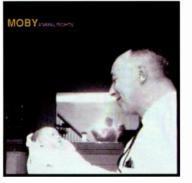
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A large collection of the best videos ever, by Alias bands. Long lost videos from Ye La Tengo, American Music Club, The Sneetches and more. Also contains every Archers of loaf video currently in existence.

Aloi VHS . Out January zi



reviews }



MOBY / Animal Rights / Elektra

Moby's first album was heralded as an electric dance music groundbreaker, leavening the esoteric, songless sensibilities of ambient techno with a bit of pop savvy and old-fashioned rock-star frontsmanship. His newest finds him trying to have it both ways, attempting to consolidate both his rock credentials and his pretensions. Side 1 opens with a calm synthstrumental before launching into a clutch of band-driven numbers powered by hoary punk-metal riffs and grinding rhythms which, despite their technological flourishes, owe as much to '80s hardcore as to current trends. Unfortunately, unlike ambient, interesting structures are a key to making this genre work, and here Moby's ambitions outstrip his skill. Songs like "Heavy Flow" and "Say It's All Mine,"

DATALOC: Released Feb. 12. *The B-Sides* (with an extra CD of remixes) also recently released. FILE UNDER: Through the pretense, loudly. R.I.Y.L.: Nine Inch Nails, Smashing Pumpkins, Jon & Vangelis.

between their dynamically limited performances and the singer's own hoarse Reznorisms ("When you're fucking me it powers up my soul"), are better designed to call attention to themselves as "intense rock songs" than to generate any actual intensity. The second half, almost entirely instrumental,

attempts to achieve ambient's suspension-in-time effects with live players, but here again, a dearth of musical imagination and ponderous length sink most selections. For an artist pegged as a harbinger of music's future, Moby here seems hellbent on making his grand, overserious statements in the spent context of '70s double-album sprawl. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*



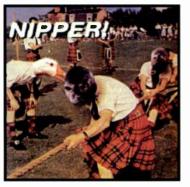
NERF HERDER / Norf Horder / Arista 👄

Call it sillyrock or ironypop—if ever a mini-genre deserved to be labeled and its purveyors pigeonholed, it's this one, if only to isolate it before it completely colonizes the radio dial. A sillyrock song is catchy and banged out on rock instruments, but the lyrics—oy! Some sillyrock songs have their charms; Nada Surf's "Popular" is this mini-genre's best hit (and Cake's "The Distance" is too musically creative to qualify). But Nerf Herder's pointless debut album may well be the apotheosis of sillyrock's brief history. With a band logo patterned after *Star Wars* and songs like "Golfshirt" (in which the Nerfs remember "trying to score with Ms. Pac-Man") and "Nosering Girl," *Nerf Herder* is an album that could only have come out now. The Nerfs have

DATALOG: Released Dec. 20. FILE UNDER: Silly rock. R.I.Y.L.: Weezer, Nada Surf, Weezer.

already enjoyed their big moment, with the minor hit "Van Halen," a loving paean to the metal band's David Lee Roth-era output ("I bought Van Halen I/It was the best damn record I ever owned"). But this idea was explored more fruitfully four years ago by Pavement, in their virtually identical R.E.M.

memoir, "Unseen Power Of The Picket Fence." Come to think of it, Pavement, bless 'em, are probably most to blame for this movement. What's that phrase about history repeating once as farce? CHRIS MOLANPHY



DATALOG: Released Jan. 7. Yes, CMJ is based in Great Neck. No, we don't know the band. FILE UNDER: Young lo-fi-ers on the rise. R.I.Y.L.: Erectus Monotone, Number One Cup, early Grifters.

NIPPER! / Nipper! / ITU 👄

Though Great Neck, NY's Nipper! isn't nearly as cute as its name would suggest, it does fall squarely into the tradition of 4-to-8-track bedroom rock. Contrary to popular belief, this genre stands or falls not on how cryptically the songs are hidden behind primitive recording techniques (though Nipper! does have its share of hiss, detuned guitars, and undermiked drums), but the quality of the material. After all, if you can barely play, you'd better have something to play. And this Nipper!'s Chris, Donna and Andy seem to, most obviously on "Goat," a fresh take on one of the Great Themes of rock 'n' roll from Stockton to Dayton: the dismal suburbs, where "you ride your bike straight into Hell," and the wish to escape them. Even the singer's *de trop* vocal tone has a purpose

here, as his desultory rap gives way to a more melodic chorus with incomprehensible lyrics, suggesting that these kids have more than one trick up their collective sleeve. On the Barlowsensitive "Trip And Fall" and "Seven Minutes," Nipper! shows itself more capable than most of adding some melodic shape

to familiar-sounding chord progressions. None of the many worthwhile songs here would be anything but improved by a *slightly* more polished execution, but that makes Nipper! a whole lot better than the many bands for whom it isn't the case. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*

various artists

The movie When We Were Kings is about the "Rumble In The Jungle," the George Foreman-Muhammad Ali fight that happened in Zaire in 1974. The fight was also the occasion for a major concert of the day's R&B stars, and the soundtrack album has highlights from it. Though not all of it is great, the new appearance of two James Brown live tracks is cause for celebration, and Bill Withers is mighty fine too. There are also a couple of new recordings tacked on, including a nice one by Fugees and friends, and an awful lite-R&B ballad by Brian McKnight and Diana King... Sonic Chimp (Sealed Hotel) is a fabulous if bizarre vinyl-only compilation of "chimp rock," a not-very-well-defined category of mostly Boston-area musicians and non-musicians. It starts with a young woman attempting gamely to sing the Beatles' "Revolution" over completely unrelated chords and rhythms, followed by a bit of a "Sonata For 2 Simons" (that would be Simon, the electronic toy), a banjo solo and a jaunty little home-recorded song with the chorus "He's a sissy/My brother is a sissy." And then it starts getting weird... If you're getting antsy waiting for the next Sonic Youth record, the soundtrack to Richard (Slacker) Linklater's new movie subUrbia (DCC) has three new tracks by them, plus Thurston Moore's "Psychic Hearts." It's also got a few worthwhile oldies (Gene Pitney's "Town Without Pity," the Butthole Surfers' "Human Cannonball"), Beck re-recording his "Feather In Your Cap," and the now-requisite covers of old demi-hits by modern-rock types: Elastica and Pavement's Stephen Malkmus doing a creditable version of X's "Unheard Music," and Boss Hog committing the worst-ever cover of the Kinks' "I'm Not Like Everybody Else"... Gearik Gearman



runs the excellent rock-and-food 'zine *Gourmandizer*. Now he's put together *When I'm Hungry I* Eat (Gourmandizer), a CD with 31 bands doing songs about food. There are some

surprisingly big names, including Low ("Peanut Butter Toast And American Bandstand") and the Coctails ("Pedigree—Small Crunchy Bits"). But it's worth it just to hear normally more-or-less serious bands doing songs with titles like "Snickers Vs. Nutrageous" and "Acres Of Clams." Be warned: Vinnie and the Stardusters' "Bake My Pie" is a new set of lyrics set to "Boys Don't Cry."



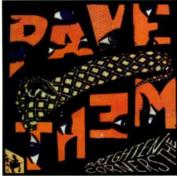
hovercraft

akathisia

street date: february 11, 1997



reviews }



DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 11. First single "Stereo." Working title of album: Appetite For Deconstruction. FILE UNDER: Indie heroes, coasting. R.I.Y.L.: Camper Van Beethoven, Echo & The Bunnymen.

PAVEMENT / Brighten The Corners / Matador-Capitol

Pavement's weakest album to date is still worth hearing. The group's response to becoming indie-rock's heroes has lately been to goof off as much as possible—covering a "Schoolhouse Rock" song, crapping out a lame EP, pretending it's a party band live. Secretly, though, it's still got a titanic work ethic, recording 30 songs to get the 13 on *Brighten The Corners* and hiding lots of details of production and instrumentation under an approach to playing that sounds on the surface like they just knocked it out in the studio. The band's refusal to take itself seriously has kept it from ossifying or getting pretentious, but it also means that the most emotional things Steve Malkmus sings come out in the same tone he uses to wail "the

roast was just so perfectly prepared." And why does he have to cram all his songs with words, especially words like "One of us is a cigar stand/And one of us is a lovely incandescent blue guillotine"? The rock-band-about-being-a-rock-band schtick is wearing thin, too: a joke about Geddy Lee in

"Stereo" is funny, but it also undermines the song by drawing attention away from its better parts. Which are pretty great, which is why it bears up under repeated listening the way an actual joke song wouldn't. And "Embassy Row" and "Shady Lane" are classic Pavement, endless hooks dovetailed into each other. The band is still defending its crown, but it's frustrating that it's pretending not to. *DOUGLAS WOLK*



PIGEONHED / The Full Sentence / Sub Pop

On the second album by this not-quite-side-project, Satchel leader Shawn Smith sings his badass off, alternating between a virile growl and a full-blown falsetto. While Smith also plays guitar, drums and keyboards, Steve Fisk does a brilliant job on keys, looping, and orchestrating this exploratory walk on the white soul side. Smith and Fisk make no attempts to hide the seams of their tinkering, even while reaching for grand proportions: their Casiotone beats meet strings, exotic organ blasts on the title track, and a gospel choir on "Glory Bound." Yet the techno-shack texture of the album is part of what makes Pigeonhed inviting and original: Smith's gutsy, multi-tracked vocals are washed in a swooning ballad one minute, surging funk the next. True to

DATALOG: Released Jan. 25. FILE UNDER: Melange of psychedelic rock, funk and lush ballads. R.I.Y.L.: Isaac Hayes, Prince, Red Hot Chili Peppers.

precedent. Smith uses his falsetto to evoke obsessive, transformational love. He's found an inspired pairing with Fisk, well-regarded keyboardist of Pell Mell and producer of recent albums by the Geraldine Fibbers, the Wedding Present and a host of Northwest bands. Fisk and co-producer John

Goodmanson have a broad sonic palette, and indulge their playfulness to the benefit of the record. *DANNY HOUSMAN*



DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 11. First single "Spying On The Spys." FILE UNDER: Gentle, piano-driven tunefulness. R.I.Y.L.: Superchunk, Rachel's.

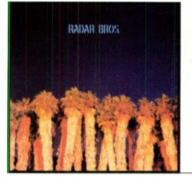
PORTASTATIC / The Nature Of Sap / Merge

Mac McCaughan is best known for jumping around and yelling with Superchunk, but back before he learned to pogo, he was in a number of lowerkey outfits, notably the semi-acoustic Bricks. One of their best songs was called "You Shouldn't Have Smashed Your Guitar," the idea being that sometime you'll think of a great song and need an outlet for it. Well, songinspiration seems to hit Mac a lot: hence, *The Nature Of Sap*, his fourth solo CD (in three years) under the Portastatic name. It's his outlet for his mellower songs, and lately those are his best. Where bits of the last few Superchunk records have sounded forced, here Mac just sounds blissful, playing lots of (not-recently-tuned) piano, toning down his characteristic holler to

> concentrate on carrying his tunes, letting the drums swing a bit, and toying with interesting arrangements (strings, horns, backwards cymbals). Of course, he's something of an anthem magnet, and even the more abstract songs here tend to coalesce into readymade choruses, but he stretches out very

successfully. He even essays a "Telstar"-ish instrumental, "A Lovely Nile," with an exceptionally nice clarinet part. Nothing here is as powerful as Superchunk's best songs, but it's not meant to be: it's entirely unpretentious, and successful on its own terms. *DOUGLAS WOLK*





RADAR BROS. / Radar Bros. / Restless

There's not much to the Radar Bros.: a few lazily strummed chords, Jim Putnam's nasally placating vocals, some minimal percussion that nudges things along quietly. Their entire album sounds as if it happened in spite of itself—the three players barely muster the motivation to raise the tempo or volume above a pleasant whisper. But that's part (or the main selling point) of the band's charm: The Radar Bros. understand the small beauty and reward in taking one's time, and follow it to its logical conclusion, encapsulating the woozy half-moments between sleep and waking that we savor every morning before the alarm hurtles us into the conscious world. Putnam and bassist Senon Williams harmonize gently, stretching their

DATALOC: Release date: Mar. 25. FILE UNDER: Mope rock. R.I.Y.L.: Idaho, early Pink Floyd, Codeine.

high, earnest voices over the most skeletal framework of instrumentation, recalling the wistful, airy emotion of Syd Barrett-era Pink Floyd. Guitar, bass and keyboards are employed as textural afterthought, supporting the band's vocal harmonies with a modest sprinkling of half-solos and

barely-noticeable crescendos and decrescendos. It's all very simple, slow-moving stuff that demands a particular mood to appreciate, so don't say I didn't warn you. *COLIN HELMS*



ROCK*A*TEENS / Cry / Daemon

The Rock*A*Teens take their name from a barely-known one-demi-hitwonder of 1959 (the song was "Woo Hoo"), which—despite their Georgia indie-rock pedigree (Dirt, the Jody Grind)—gives a big clue to their aesthetics. The songs on *Cry*, their second album, recall the time 35 years or so past when pop was about teenage tragedy and teenage tragedy meant something, when walls of sound and 6/8 Southern ballads were the order of the day. The presentation, though, is all '90s: three-guitars-no-drums, untutored yelping for the vocals, jarring/charring bursts of noise everywhere, and a couple of record-collector jokes (song title: "Cherry Red Compilation"). And then there's the matter of the unofficial fifth member of

DATALOC: Release date: Feb. 25. FILE UNDER: New-style wall-of-sound pop. R.I.Y.L.: Roy Orbison, Mekons, Friends Of Dean Martinez. the band, the walloping, canyon-ish reverb that lovingly drenches every song. It all works beautifully together, and even the modern references seem timeless: "Halfway Home" refers to a place, not a condition, but "Your Heart Or Your Life" is a title that somebody *should* have come up with

long ago. And when Chris Lopez yells the chorus of "Losers, Weepers," he's struggling for the notes and there's no chorus behind him, but the bells and organ in the background underscore the fact that it could perfectly well have been a great girl-group single. *DOUGLAS WOLK*



reviews }



RUN ON / No Way / Matador

For a young band, and one with such diversely skilled musicians, Run On is a remarkably consistent unit. In live performance or on record, each song sounds unmistakably like them, regardless of which band member wrote it or which players are most prominent. *No Way* hardly redefines this standing arrangement, but it does show the four of them stretching in their roles and defining their individual interests. Alan Licht's increasingly drone-y guitar work pulls them toward a denser mix, while Rick Brown's percussion is getting simpler and more pronouced. The combination leads to a bewitching rearrangement of 1993's single "Days Away," which they turn into a kind of dirge. Sue Garner's voice is as distinctive as ever, particularly her star turn

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 25. FILE UNDER: Art rock, emphasis on "rock." R.I.Y.L.: Timber, Velvet Underground. on a stormy rendition of "Sinner Man." While longtime fans will miss David Newgarden's trumpeting, violinist and keyboardist Katie Gentille steps easily into his role, carrying the hooks on "Anything You Say" and a cover of Nick Drake's "Road." As on the last album, Run On's greatest

distinction is that it can pile on layers of beautiful hum, buzz, and feedback, starting, stopping, and changing speeds, without ever losing the melody in the shuffle. No matter how adventurous the band gets, the song coheres well enough to leave you humming it by the end. *ANDREA MOED*

SKY CRIES MARY / Noonbathing On Sleeping Leaves / Warner Bros.

There aren't many bands today as unabashed as the Sky Cries Mary in pursuing a '60s-'90s Dionysian fusion. But then, you may have guessed that from the band's name and the title of the album (the band's third with close to the same lineup). Previous label travails have stemmed the Sky Cries Mary's recognition, but the band's growth hasn't stopped. It's managed to remain proudly trippy while loosing the dippy, insular vibe of its early efforts. TSCM writes lush, beautiful melodies with ease, and resists the tendency to overwhelm them. Paul Fox, co-producing with the septet, has helped it realize its unique strength: an intoxicating weave of vocals and sounds. Lead singers Anisa and Roderick Romero achieve more vocal range

DATALOC: Release date: Feb. 25. FILE UNDER: Lush trance-rock. R.I.Y.L.: Dead Can Dance, Spiritualized, Mazzy Star. with each effort, and *Moonbathing* has their best duets yet. "Queen Of Slug Theater" is a sensual groove where the two harmonize and trade lines until the song spills over into a haunting coda. The band provides a profusion of grooves and psychedelic swells, and while the record is over 70

minutes long, it's made of 13 compelling songs, without the Orb-like departures of the previous *This Timeless Turning*. The music often furthers the emotions that the arty-poetic words suggest, as in the gorgeous "Sister," a farewell ode with mixed emotions. *DANNY HOUSMAN*



SPARE SNARE / Westfield Lane / Wabana

Jan Burnett, who is Dundee, Scotland's Spare Snare all by himself this time (the band's second or third album, depending on how you're counting), lists all the equipment he uses on the disc's liner notes. The first few instruments are the most important: a two-string electric guitar with a fuzz pedal hence Spare Snare's minimal but grubby sound—and an analogue delay pedal, with which he builds the snaky, off-center loops behind these songs. "Before Barcodes" has a home-played drum loop that cuts off *just* short of four full beats, accompanied by a two-note guitar drone, various keyboard noises and some kind of horn; "Hit Man, Cha Cha Cha" is a low-key but tense little song, made far more tense by an endless loop of Burnett's voice

DATALOC: Released Dec. 24. FILE UNDER: Grime-covered, homemade pop. R.I.Y.L.: Beat Happening, Land Of The Loops, Gary Clitter.

going "cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha..." He has a way with a lyrical hook ("let's go home and do some drugs," "she signs her name with a heart"), and a knack for making a tiny riff imply an entire arrangement that's not really there. *Westfield Lane*'s sonics are caked with overmodulated fuzz,

and everything was taped at home on a four-track recorder, but it's not, strictly speaking, "lo-fi"—the sounds and their balance have clearly been labored over with enough care that the album has absolute fidelity to what these songs *ought* to sound like. *DOUGLAS WOLK*



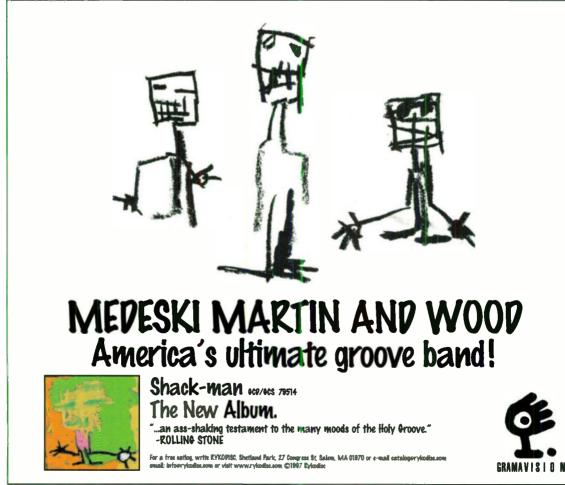


STRAPPING FIELDHANDS / Gobs On The Midway: Singles 1991-1995 / Siltbreeze 👄

Coming on the heels of the middling *Wattle And Daub, Gobs On The Midway* further solidifies how wonderful and uneven the Strapping Fieldhands can be. This 17-song compilation brings together the early vinylonly releases of the psychedelic skiffle outfit, from the 1991 debut EP *The Demiurge* up through 1995's "Albacore Heart" single. The Philadelphia combo began as just a duo of singer-songwriter Bob Malloy and Bob Dickie, eventually becoming a quintet. The early tracks have a woozy, campfire intimacy, with little or no percussion and Malloy strumming away carelessly on an acoustic six-string. The band hits its stride on the rollicking '92 single "Stacey Donnelly," which dips and glides to the tempo of a

DATALOC: Released Dec. 17. Band is now on hiatus. Bob Malloy also records as Ashtabula. FILE UNDER: Lo-fi psychedelic folk. R.I.Y.L.: Syd Barrett, Guided By Voices, XTC. chipper waltz. Malloy's over the top English accent alternately conjures up a late-'60s Syd Barrett and a turn-ofthe-century vaudevillian crooner. This brand of foppish folk has been the blueprint for many of their album's cuts, often to the point of redundancy. What keeps *Gobs On The*

Midway from a similar fate are the offbeat numbers like "Ol' Jimmy Cole" and "Albacore Heart," which respectively take influence from backwoods bluegrass and high-seas work songs. The band is currently on hiatus, but this compilation has enough of the Fieldhands' finest to tide you over for a while. *NEIL GLADSTONE*



eviews }



THRUSH HERMIT / Sweet Homewrecker / Elektra-EEG 👄

This debut full-length from Halifax, Nova Scotia's Thrush Hermit is a frustrating mix of good ideas, modest guitar-band values, and not-quite-there songwriting and execution. The band has an appealingly loose-limbed, live-in-the-studio approach, with little apparent interest in studio trickery; odd breaks and slightly awkward transitions abound. *Sweet Homewrecker* is strong out of the gate, opening with "Skip The Life," a succinct spill of overlapping vocal parts, anticipated beats, and a well-placed key change, and the more deliberate "North Dakota" ("I marked it on the atlas/And taped it to my mattress"), which sews a metallish riff to an insightfully drawn tale of an interstate love-triangle. Unfortunately, the next couple of songs are

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 12. FILE UNDER: Triple-A League indie-rock, brought up to the majors too soon. R.I.Y.L.: Superdrag, Archers Of Loaf, The Figgs.

musically slight and lyrically clumsy ("So sad—this plagiarism battle ignites"?), and the balance of the album, despite genuine standouts (the poppier-than-average "Heartwrenching Man"), has an underdeveloped hit-or-miss feel. The pointless drama of "Puerto Rico" and the botched

AC/DCism of "On The Sneak" could surely have been dropped, while other tunes fail to fulfill their promise—"I'm Sorry That Your Heart Has No More Room" couldn't be a more Superchunky mix of poignant and anthemic, but the terrible, tossed-off lyrics in the verses (the dreaded "want/haunt/taunt" rhyme) blunt its effectiveness. Like a talented ballplayer with an inconsistent rookie season, *Sweet Homewrecker* is worthy of attention more for its promise than its objective virtues. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*



BEN VAUGHN / Rambler 65 / Rhino

Ben Vaughn's taste in cars and music is similar. Like the '65 Rambler in which his new record was recorded (no kidding), his music contains few fancy embellishments. Neither Vaughn nor his car is a Corvette, but there's something cooler about his utilitarian restraint. Vaughn makes records that stick to basics; melody, hook, and lyrics are clear, direct, and memorable, all propelled by a standard beat made for dancing. A wry wit is, as always, at the center of his songwriting, and gives the record a personality. But like the high school dude who drove around in his souped-up rod to mask the fact that he was in his car all alone, there's a secluded, at times bitter, sadness at the heart of *Rambler 65*. Songs about self-

DATALOG: Release date: Feb. 18. Yes, recorded *in* the car. FILE UNDER: Perpetual motion machine. R.I.Y.L.: The Skeletons, Jonathan Richman, Alex Chilton, Graham Parker.

destruction, the days after a breakup, and sorrow add an element of isolation that belies the inherent humor in his recording method. While it's tempting to fault Vaughn for being so relentlessly simple in his approach, deep down there's a master craftsman whose design aesthetic is intentionally sparse. There are few moments of true, adventurous revelation, but the whole record cruises along, a little nugget

adventurous revelation, but the whole record cruises along, a little nugge of timeless rock 'n' roll, built to last. *RANDALL ROBERTS*



VERUGA SALT / Eight Arms To Hold You / Outpost-DGC 👄

Some might say this is a mediocre second album from the best Breeders tribute band in Chicago, but consider this theory: On *Eight Arms To Hold You* (the working title of the Beatles' *Help!*), Veruca Salt has rediscovered the genius of mid-'80s radio hits by Bon Jovi, Belinda Carlisle and Heart. Oversaturated guitars chug through predictable chord progressions equally influenced by pop-metal and new wave. Louise Post and Nina Gordon's vocal melodies are sweet and unobtrusive enough to work great as *Beverly Hills 90210* soundtrack fodder or over the loud speaker at your local mall's food court. A clever video should earn "With David Bowie" some decent chart action—what teenybopper could resist that choppy piano and bouncy

DATALOG: Released Jan. 28. FILE UNDER: Mall rock. R.I.Y.L.: Pat Benatar, the Bangles, Letters to Cleo.

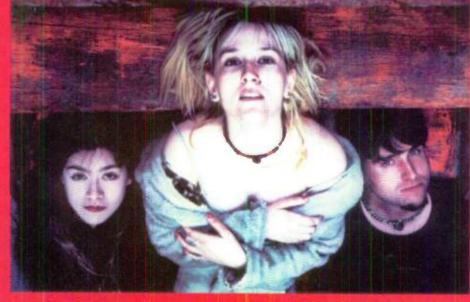
refrain? And "One Last Time" will no doubt make the playlist at many a prom this year. You can almost smell the hairspray and stale corsages as the gang waltzes through this sentimental fuzz ballad, topping things off with a few rounds of "na-na-na-nuh-na-na." Finally, a band that recaptures

the majestic, schlock pop sound of the "totally awesome '80s." NEIL GLADSTONE

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World Radio History

TOP 75

[Alternative Radio Airplay]

	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
	ION SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Now I Got Worry	Matador-Capitol
1 2	JOHNNY CASH	Unchained	American
3	WILCO	Being There	Reprise
4	LUSCIOUS JACKSON	Fever In Fever Out	Grand Royal-Capitol
5	KULA SHAKER	K Pre-Millennium Tension	Columbia-CRG Island
6 7	TRICKY POLARA	Pantomime (EP)	Interscope
8	MAZZY STAR	Among My Swan	Capitol
9	TOOL	Ænima	<i>Z</i> oo
10	LESS THAN JAKE	Losing Streak	Capitol
11	SCREECHING WEASEL	Bark Like A Dog	Fat Wreck Chords Matador
12 13	GUIDED BY VOICES DI SHADOW	Sunfish Holy Breakfast (EP) Endtroducing	Mo Wax/ffrr-London
14	FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON	Dead Cities	Astralwerks-Caroline
15	764-HERO	Salt Sinks & Sugar Plants	Up
16	FIREWATER	Get Off The Cross (We Need The Wood For The Fire)	
17	VIC CHESNUTT	About To Choke	Capitol
18 19	CARDIGANS TANYA DONELLY	First Band On The Moon Sliding And Diving (EP)	Mercury 4AD
20	CHAVEZ	Ride The Fader	Matador
21	MARILYN MANSON	Antichrist Superstar	Nothing-Interscope
22	CAKE	Fashion Nugget	Capricorn-Mercury
23	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Axiom Dub: Mysteries Of Creation	Axiom-Island
24 25	BUSH IOSEPHINE WIGGS EXPERIENCE	Razorblade Suitcase Bon Bon Lifestyle	Trauma-Interscope Grand Royal
25	JOSEPHINE WIGGS EXPERIENCE KORN	Life is Peachy	Immortal-Epic
27	RUSTED ROOT	Remember	Mercury
28	CATHERINE	Hot Saki & Bedtime Stories	TVT
29	SEELY	Julie Only	Too Pure-American
30	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Safe And Sound	Mercury
31 32	RAILROAD JERK SUKIA	The Third Rail Contacto Espacial Con El Tercer Sexo	Matador Nickelbag
33	BOYS LIFE	Departures And Landfalls	Headhunter-Cargo
34	JERU THE DAMAJA	Wrath Of The Math	Payday ffrr-London
35	ELYSIAN FIELDS	Bleed Your Cedar	Radioactive
36	THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS	Factory Showroom	Elektra-EEG
37 38	HEATMISER LEMONHEADS	Mic City Sons Car Button Cloth	Caroline TAG-Atlantic
39	SILVER JEWS	The Natural Bridge	Drag City
40	YO LA TENGO	Genius + Love = Yo La Tengo	Matador
41	MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD	Shack-man	Gramavision-Rykodisc
42	PHISH	Billy Breathes	Elektra-EEG
43 44	STAR PIMP R.E.M.	Docudrama New Adventures In Hi-Fi	Kill Rock Stars Warner Bros.
45	LOIS	Infinity Plus	K
46	HI FI AND THE ROADBURNERS	Wine, Women And Sin	Victory
47	HUEVOS RANCHEROS	Get Outta Dodge	Mint (Canada)
48	MORCHEEBA	Who Can You Trust?	China-Discovery
49 50	CHEMICAL BROTHERS HEADS	"Setting Sun" (5") No Talking Just Head	Astralwerks-Caroline Radioactive-MCA
51	VARIOUS ARTISTS	In Defense Of Animals 2	Caroline
52	PRESIDENTS OF THE U.S.A.	1	Columbia-CRG
53	SOUNDTRACK	Romeo + Juliet	Capitol
54	SISSY BAR	Statutory Grape	Sugar Fix
55 56	COUNTING CROWS	Recovering The Satellites All The Nations Airports	Geffen Alias/Elektra-EEG
57	ARCHERS OF LOAF WEDDING PRESENT	Saturnalia	Cooking Vinyl America
58	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Red Hot + Rio	Antilles-Verve
59	NUMBER ONE CUP	Kim Chee Is Cabbage (EP)	Flydaddy
60	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Mortal Kombat: More Kombat	TVT
61	STEREOLAB	Laminations (EP)	Elektra-EEG K
62 63	HEAVENLY SNEAKER PIMPS	Operation Heavenly "Tesko Suicide"/"Post-Modern Sleaze" (5")	Clean Up-Virgin
64	SATURNINE	Flags For The Unknown Territories	Dirt
65	SOUNDTRACK	Beavis And Butt-Head Do America	Geffen
66	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Pop American Style	March
67	HUMBLE GODS	No Heroes	Hollywood
68 69	PLEXI BT	Cheer Up Ima	Sub Pop Perfecto/Kinetic-Reprise
70	SEPTEMBER 67	Lucky Shoe	The Enclave
71	SPACEMEN 3	Performance	Taang!
72	SUZANNE VEGA	Nine Objects Of Desire	A&M
73	SEBADOH	Harmacy	Sub Pop
74	DESCENDENTS DAVID THOMAS AND THE TWO PALE BOYS	Everything Sucks Erewhon	Epitaph Tim/Kerr
75	DAVID THOMAS AND THE TWO PALE BOYS	Li CWHOIL	a true and the second sec

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.



SANTANA Live At Fillmore West

Before Santana, "ethnic" influences on acid rock had been limited to noodly Charles Lloyd-inspired modal soloing, the quasi-medieval Angloisms of folk-psych, and the cheapcurry Indian flavor of the Beatles and Their Satanic Majesties Request. Then Carlos Santana brought his Latin musical heritage to bear on the untamed beast of early acid rock, and rock music never sounded quite the same way again. This two-CD live set was recorded at the Fillmore West. shortly before the group cut its debut Columbia album. It's a wild and wooly affair, with bare knuckles rapping on congas and bongos, and wild-maned Carlos out front spinning solos with the sinewy fervor that only a 22-year-old musical genius can muster. It's amazing how this concert fits in alongside so much of what's happening in music now-techno records with tribal drum samples, freaky subliminal Santana influences sneaking into dance music recordings by Tranquility Bass or Orbital, and the whole instrumental sprawl of H.O.R.D.E. rockers. In the winter of '68, Santana's music was so good and so new-sounding, it only took the Rolling Stones a year and a half to cop it for their own, on the last six minutes of "Can't You Hear Me Knocking." Do yourself a favor and go back in time to hear this concert.

by James Lien } flashback

IN THE BINS

The best of the four later T. Rex albums which have just been reissued (Chronicles-A&M) is The Slider, Marc Bolan's follow-up to (the already-reissued) Electric Warrior-two of the great rock albums of the '70s. Another album deserving a second look is 1973's Tanx, which finds Bolan losing his magic touch for hits a bit, but playing with some pretty interesting riffs and ideas along the way down. With its heavily phased string sections and Bolan's fragile vocals, it has an eerie undercurrent of sadness about it. Sometimes, halfway through a perfectly cool little song like "Tenement Lady," the melody abruptly ends and turns into a completely different, unrelated, and even more beautiful song. That, and the cosmic gobbledygook song titles ("Electric Slim And The Factory Hen") make it seem a lot closer to Guided By Voices than you'd expect. Zinc Alloy And The Hidden Riders Of Tomorrow isn't so hot, but Dandy In The Underworld is a so-so "comeback" album made right before his death in 1977, featuring a few poignant moments, with Bolan depicting himself as a rock star/sci-fi hero/mob dandy/doomed hero.

The Velvet Underground's Loaded (Fully Loaded Edition) has just appeared on Rhino. It includes the original version of Loaded, the Velvet Underground's last proper album (not counting the one after everybody but Doug Yule quit), a number of bonus tracks from 1995's spectacular box set Peel Slowly And See, and 17 previously unissued outtakes, demos, remixes and alternate versions. The first disc is the



original album, followed by a slew of bonus tracks, and then the whole sequence is repeated again, in order, on disc two with alternate takes. Guess which one you'll listen to more...

Blue Note continues its love-laden reissue program, with a massive multi-CD set of saxophonist **Dexter Gordon**. It's interesting to contrast the cuts recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's legendary New Jersey studio with the ones Gordon laid down abroad, in professional studios in Paris. Even though the Parisian recording dates produced a slicker, more polished sound, with rich natural reverb, the cuts recorded in New Jersey retain a fire and immediacy that is strikingly audible even to untrained ears—they just *sound* more like the way jazz is supposed to sound.

In one of the most innovative bachelor pad marketing moves yet, DCC Compact Classics has just released *Music For A Bachelor's Den: Sex Kittens In Hi-Fi*. This set divides the standard lounge babe fare— Marilyn Monroe, Eartha Kitt, Jayne Mansfield, the ubiquitous Peggy Lee—into two volumes. *The Blondes* spotlights Ms. Monroe, Miss Doris Day, and the sultry Miss Julie London, while *The Brunettes* examines the more mysterious, raven-haired side of the feminine mystique. The good folks at DCC also tell us *The Redheads* is on the way...

And last but not least, MCA has finally rereleased *Electric Mud*, the controversial "psychedelic" album blues giant **Muddy Waters** recorded in 1968 as a reaction to the wave of incoming British blues rock. It's loathed by blues purists and the subject of outright scorn from writers and pundits, but I love it and can sum it up in one phrase: If you want to hear Muddy Waters sounding like *Led Zeppelin I* instead of the other way around, this is it. A checklist of its contents: screaming wah-wah guitar solos that shriek like poltergeists running from speaker to speaker, organs so loud and over-amplified they sound like they're being ripped apart while still plugged in, overdubs of backwards harps (!), and humongous drum beats that bash like a sack of bricks through a window.

metal

RIFFS

Early demo and rehearsal tapes from Norway's **Gehenna** have been remastered for the American release of *Black Seared Heart* (Holycaust). The recordings show a band striving gamely and successfully to live up to the demanding Norwegian black-metal standard. Vocalist Dolgar gurgles and howls with drama, while guitarist Sarcanna sets the symphonics in motion. Various other early members come and go, including drummer Dirge Rep, who lent himself to Emperor for their track on the Celtic Frost tribute album. This respectable Gehenna, by the way, is in total contrast to the jolly, bucolic grunting of the



Gehennah that has just released King Of The Sidewalk on Osmose, and the two bands should not be confused... The perverse ideals of Mr. Bungle resurface on First Grand Constitution And Bylaws (Amarillo), the first release by mysterious San Franciscan double agents Secret Chiefs 3. Though more of an obscurist's delight than a proper metal band, SC3 has enough grindcore drum blasts and high-

speed thematic switches to make it interesting to metal minds... Marduk has popped out the *Glorification* EP, consisting of a remix of "Glorification Of The Black God," a Destruction cover, a Bathory cover, and two covers of the mid-'80s Toronto-based thrashploitation joke band Piledriver. Though the choice of covers is impeccable and the Marduk speed factor is up high as always, this trend of metal eating its own tail by engaging in constant semi-nostalgic self-tribute will spell trouble if it's not soon supplanted by more forward-looking tendencies... *The Grimoire Of Exalted Deeds* (245 Lakeview, Suite 237, Clifton, NJ 07011) is rapidly rising to prominence among the throngs of metal fanzines. *The Grimoire* plays a dual role in the metal community by sniffing out good new death metal bands and severely testing the senses of humor of its readers. Editor Bill Zebub asks a hapless interview subject if he wears inverted cross necklaces, then accuses him of being an "upside-down cross-dresser."

METAL TOP 25

1	KORN Life Is Peachy Immortal-Epic
2	TOOL Amima Zoo
3	CORROSION OF CONFORMITY Wiseblood Columbia-CRG
4	DOWNSET. do we speak a dead language? Mercury
5	MARILYN MANSON Antichrist Superstar Nothing-Interscope
6	STUCK MOJO Pigwalk Century Media
7	VISION OF DISORDER Vision Of Disorder Supersoul-Roadrunner
8	DANZIG Blackacidevil Hollywood
9	EARTH CRISIS Gomerrah's Season Ends Victory
10	MOTORHEAD Overnight Sensation CMC
11	SOUNDTRACK Mortal Kombat. More Kombat TVT
12	OVERDOSE Scars Fierce-FLG
13	PIST-ON Number One Fierce-FLG
14	TYPE O NEGATIVE October Rust Roadrunner
15	CATHEDRAL Supernatural Birth Machine Earache
16	BRUTAL TRUTH Kill Trend Suicide Relapse
17	ACID BATH Paegan Terrorism Tactics Rotten
18	MANOWAR Louder Than Hell Geffen
19	SAMALL Passage Century Media
20	TREE Downsizing The American Dream CherryDisc
21	FLOODGATE Penalty Roadrunner
22	INNER THOUGHT Perspectives Dwell
23	DIO Angry Machines Mayhem-FLG
24	HUMBLE GODS No Heroes Hollywood
25	CROWBAR Broke Gluss Pavement



MORTICIAN Hacked Up For Barbecue Relapse

Mortician is two guys from Yonkers, NY, whose absolute love for metal pushes them to extremes. The band's starting point is plowing into traditional brutal death sounds, but its intensity and idiosyncrasies blossom into a nihilistic progression anchored in metal. It's a no-bullshit example of sonic distortion with a frequency response unlike any other. Inspired by sociopathic gore videos (snippets of which precede nearly every one of Hacked Up's 24 tracks), vocalist/bassist Will Rahmer delivers his gruesome lyrics through a subbass processed style that sounds very, very heavy, like a forklift scraping pavement. Deicide's Clen Benton sings like the Cookie Monster, but Rahmer sounds like a woolly mammoth having a tusk ripped from its head. The album has a relative similarity to hardcore techno like Alec Empire's EC8OR, just based on mechanized noise, though the average speed and grinding power of Mortician far surpass most gabber. Cuitarist Roger Beaujard's 420 BPM drum programming adds a similarly exciting, inhuman element to the sound. His riffs are steady, strong, profoundly downtuned, and 100% death metal. Still, Mortician points its aptitude toward turning out a sound that is barely even music, creating a raw and pessimistic metal achievement.



VARIOUS ARTISTS Go Sonic Ge Sonic

The first release on the Go Sonic label is a terrific eponymous 7" EP with tracks—songs minute-long and otherwise-by ten Michigan artists, mostly affiliated with His Name Is Alive's Warren DeFever and the Time Stereo imprint, or with the state's space-rock scene. Outrageous Cherry follows up the Beach Boys fixation of its recent Stereo Action Rent Party with a new song called "The Vastly Underrated Dennis Wilson Solo LP." His Name Is Alive's experimental alter ego Princess Dragon Mom appears on its own with "Wall, Mirror, Blanket" and in its alter-alter-ego of Little Princess with "Mouse In The Middle," a noise-encrusted a cappella folk song. There's also some pretty ambient stuff (Laughing Gas), a bit of Windy & Carl's spaced-out drone-pop, fragmentary tunes by Godzuki and Asha Vida, and even some interesting punk rock from Mice Termite (love those non-harmony harmonies), as well as some straight-up noise pieces by Crace Brother and Ohms. Everything's short enough to leave you wanting more, and the record's variety and sequence reflect the care that went into compiling it.



HISS & CRACKLE

The seven-piece band Ninian Hawick's is side of a split single with the Shebrews (Grimsey) is "Scottish Rite Temple Stomp," a delight of a song that makes the best use of bagpipes we've heard in a long time, and certainly the best combination of bagpipes, sampler and fuzzbox ever. One of the instruments credited is "lead kick drum," which is about right-it's ridiculously bouncy and percussive. Highlight: Heather McElhatton singing "We did the Scottish temple stomp/And this is how it sounds if you're a bee-onetwothreefourfivesixseveneight!," followed by a blast of noise guitar and a giggle. The Shebrews are a side project of the Legendary Jim Ruiz Group, doing an okay cover of the Liverbirds' "Leave All Your Old Loves": pleasant but not revelatory.

Another not-revelatory cover is the version of Gene Clark's "The French Girl" on a new single by Ashtray Boy (Mind Of A Child). It's the other side that's the revelation, a take on New Order's "Dreams Never End" that strips away the, well, New Orderiness from it and reveals the amazing, haunting song lurking under the original's stylized arrangement. Randall Lee's voice makes a bit of a nod to Ian Curtis's, but he mostly



carries the song with rich, emotive guitar plaving.

And speaking a bit more of covers, Mary Lou Lord sure seems to do a lot of them for somebody who's supposed to be known as a songwriter. The gorgeous "Martian Saints" (Kill Rock Stars) was written by the Bevis Frond's Nick Saloman, who also plays guitar on it and Lord's own less-impressive "Salem '76," and Elliott Smith wrote "I Figured You Out" (and recorded it at his house). But Lord's voice is beautiful, the band sounds good, and every generation deserves its own Joan Baez.

If you miss the days when Palace Music was the Palace Brothers, check out the newest in Will Oldham's endless parade of singles, "Little Blue Eyes" (Drag City). It's two songs recorded for the BBC in 1993, shortly after the release of There Is No One What Will Take Care Of You, and it's very much in that style (the presence of Slint's David Pajo helps). "The Spiders Dude Is Often There" is a country dirge with some sweet-and-sour violin playing, and an early sign of Oldham's weird lyric-writing style. The A-side, though, is just plain beautiful, a brief, gentle tune about love and regret with only a touch of perversity.

The first two albums by mad organist Mr. Quintron have just been reissued on a single disc from Bulb. If you can't get enough of him-or if you want to hear what he sounds like in the context of a band-track down the debut single by Monitor Radio (Radionic), a hyperkinetic instrumental trio including Quintron. "Observe: Spies" and "Halloween" are both storming, in-your-face soundtracks to an imaginary cartoon chase scene. Monitor Radio will soon have a split single with the feted Chicago neo-no-wave supergroup Lake Of Dracula, too.

A couple of quick drops of the needle: True Love Always's melancholy, propulsive debut, "Mediterranean" (TeenBeat), would be the archetypal Air Miami record, except that no members of Air Miami play on it... Apraxia has started a "composer series" of 7" singles; the first is split between pieces by Key Ransone (piano) and Cheryl E. Leonard (clarinet and tape)... Tobin Sprout appears to have left Guided By Voices, and judging by the excellence of his solo EP Popstram (Recordhead), he'll be missed-these three songs are notably better than the ones on his solo album.

dance

HOME ELECTRICIANS

Increasingly, electronic dance music is becoming a misnomer for the material still being produced under that name. Producers are tinkering with equipment that's progressively less sophisticated, which makes them electric musicians of the first order—the sort of people who would be as adept at re-wiring your house as making records for home headphone listening. The pathfinding **Coldcut** team of Matt Black and Jonathan More has been known to dance culture since its 1987 wave of



devastating, post-literate cut-and-scratch symphonies, including a mammoth rereading of Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid In Full." The new single from the pair, after a lengthy hiatus for the Coldcut recording monicker, is going to set the standard for things to come. "Boot The System"/"Atomic Moog 2000," on Black and More's Ninja Tune label, is not

entirely of this world, but firmly within it. With the assistance of such back-bedroom musical futurists as The Herbaliser, Red Snapper, Bedouin Ascent, and Luke Vibert (a k a Wagon Christ), Coldcut moves across terrain that is at once familiar and alienating. On Bedouin Ascent's radical reworking of "Death Moog 2000," a snippet of Eric B. & Rakim's "Microphone Fiend" is buffeted to and fro by a disappearing sonar blip, and the beat goes quiet. "Boot The System"'s coughing, tractor-pull breakbeats are interspersed with anti-nuclear vocal snippets and beats that race to the surface of the mix, only to be flanged out to the edge of the horizon... From the same Ninja Tune camp comes Japanese slo-mo beats prankster DJ Krush, with the Cold Crush Kuts album, which rearranges and re-sequences some of the finest moments from the highly regarded roster of artists on Ninja Tune. Krush, whose recent Meiso album gained considerable critical acclaim, sets his sights on such analog sleight-of-hand artists as DJ Vadim and the London Funk Allstars, and makes a delightful mess of any order that these songs might once have proposed. This is a headphone trip of gargantuan dimensions.

DANCE TOP 25

1	FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON Dead Cities Astralwerks-Caroline
2	VARIOUS ARTISTS Diguized Logic
3	DJ SHADOW Enderoducing MoWax ffrr-London
4	BT Ima Perfecto Kinetic-Reprise
5	TRICKY Pre-Millennium Tension Island
6	PAIN STATION Anxiety Decibel
7	VARIOUS ARTISTS Axiom Dub Mysteries Of Creation Axiom-Island
8	VARIOUS ARTISTS Wipcout XL Astralwerks-Caroline
9	PATRICK LINDSI Y The Phat Jive Harthouse-EyeQ
10	CHEMICAL BROTHERS "Setting Sun"(5") Astralwerks-Caroline
11	VARIOUS ARTISTS Incursions In Illbient Asphodel
12	ELECTRIC SKYCHURCH Together Moonshine
13	VARIOUS ARTISTS Shapeshifter: A Jazzstep Injection S.O.U.R. USA
14	VARIOUS ARTISTS Cup Of lea Compilation Quango-Island
15	BANCO DE GAIA Live At Glastonbury Planet Dog-Mammoth
16	THINK TANK Skullbuggery Hakatak
17	HACH NDA Sunday Atternoon Harthouse-EyeQ
18	INDEX Black Light Twilight COP International
19	EMMANUEL TOP Asteroid NovaMute-Mute
20	ALEX REECE So Far Quango-Island
21	VARIOUS ARTISTS & Storm Of Drones Asphodel
22	CHI MLAB Fast Si le Milita Fifth Column-Metal Blade
23	LAIBACH Jesus Christ Superstars Mute
24	COBALT 60 Elemental Edel America
25	FRONTLINE ASSEMBLY Live Wired Metropolis
	at some och New Mars, Ferrers of the RIM chain colored from the real of errors are radio



CARL CRAIG Carl Craig Planet E Communications

When the history of experimental electronic dance music is written, Carl Craig's body of work will figure largely, on its own indisputable merits but also for its untold influence on a generation of post-Detroit sound makers. From his aching, desolate, surface-of-themoon melodic structures on seminal records like "The Beginning" and "Salsa Life" by Rhythim Is Rhythim and the blippy, cerebral analog injokes of his sometime aliases, Psyche and 69, Craig has amassed a body of work that's begun to secure his reputation beyond devoted cultists. His first, eponymous album will hopefully do just that. Craig ingeniously opens with "ES-30," his rendering of one of techno's sacred texts, Manuel Gottschung's epic "E2:E4," a mid-'70s Cerman analog hymn that remains a much-soughtafter item among the techno cognoscenti. From there, he drifts further into the ether, with the **atmospherics** swamp-gas of "Televised Green Smoke" and the needling, insistent "Goodbye World." Turn the record over, and you'll find the indelicate, beautiful "Dominas," suffused with minor-key melancholia and a powerful rhythmic undertow. Craig's sonic dexterity never fails to shock and delight.



REDMAN Muddy Waters Def Jam-RAL/Mercury

Reggie Noble, a k a Redman, has in his successful career (both 1992's Whut? Thee Album and 1991's Dare Iz A Darkside went gold) effectively followed in the footsteps of his funk mentors EPMD by adopting their formula for success. Although he's a proud product of Newark, NJ, Red's appeal lies in the fact that, like the legendary Erick and Parrish, he caters to different regions with his music. Never is this more clear than on his third release, Muddy Waters. Few rappers can comfortably rhyme over such a diverse assortment of tracks. "Pick It Up" has more low-end boom than the hottest bass jam; "On Fire" is so soothingly smooth and melodic that it should almost bear the Bad Boy insignia; and "Creepin" takes you down South with its creepy Ceto Boysmeets-Dr. Dre landscape. Besides butter beats, let us not forget that Redman is also a superior vocalist. Whether the funk doctor is paired with MCs below his caliber ("Case Closed" and "It's Like That (My Big Brother)"), his Def Squad homies ("Whateva Man" and "Da Ill Out") or with the one and only Method Man ("Do What You Feel"), his metaphors are always the ones that stick in the memory banks. Never slipping, this Redhead kingpin has learned his lessons well.



BONUS BEATS

Okay, we can all say it now: The last batch of albums from the late Tupac Shakur/Makaveli, Dr. Dre and Snoopy Doggy Dogg, were all, to put it bluntly, wick, wick, wack. But hey, before you put the top up and close out all that California sun, look who's coming up from behind us. Take A Look Over Your Shoulder (Def Jam-RAL/Mercury) is Warren G.'s follow-up to his four-million-selling debut, Regulate ... G Funk Era. In case you don't recall, Warren is Dre's young halfbrother, and with his surprisingly solid latest effort, he's aiming to attack the charts once again. Like sardines and pigs' feet, Warren's music is an acquired taste, but one thing is indisputable: This low-key beatmaker sure can make infectious party tracks. "Smokin' Me Out," featuring Ron Isley, "Young Fun," and "Hey D.J." are just a few of the breezy, feel-good grooves that this platter contains. I ain't mad at him... I'm also feeling Frankie Cutlass' compilation Politics & Bullshit (Relativity). The well-connected producer called on some of the hottest rappers in the business to contribute, including Mobb Deep, who rhyme along with M.O.P. on "Know The Game," and Busta Rhymes and Keith Murray, who scream on sucker MCs on "Pay Ya Dues." But the album's standout is "The Cypher: Part 3," a salute to old-school New York rap radio shows that reunites original Juice Crew members Craig G., Roxanne Shante, Biz Markie, and Big Daddy Kane. Props to this Boriqua for having the cojones to put that assemblage back together. That foursome hasn't seen a royalty check in years!... Another new group has jumped into the rap game for the first time. Camp Lo's MCs Sonny Cheeba and Geechie Suede are avid fans of '70s blaxploitation films, a point that's painfully evident on the overly conceptual debut, Uptown Saturday Night (Profile). While their debut shows promise ("Black Connection"), the duo's one-dimensional cool-cat style becomes bothersome by the disc's end. These fellas have seen too many movies. God bless your life.

	HIP-HOP TOP 25
1	GHOSTFACE KILLAH Itonman Razor Sharp-Epic Street
2	JERU THE DAMAJA Wrath Of The Math Payday, ffrr-London
3	ROOTS Illade ph Halflife DGC
4	MOBB DEEP Hell On Earth Loud-RCA
5	KEITH MURRAY Enigma Jive
6	LIL' KIM Hard Core Big Beat-Atlantic
7	DR. DRE Presents The Aftermath Aftermath-Interscope
8	FOXY BROWN III Na Na Def Jam/RAL-Mercury
9	REDMAN "That's How I: Is" (12") Def Jam/RAL-Mercury
10	KRS ONE "Can't Stop, Won't Stop"/"The MC" (12") Jive
11	J-LIVE "Can Get It", Hush The Crowd" (12") Raw Shack
12	DE LA SOUL Stakes Is High Tommy Boy
13	ORIGINOO GUNN CLAPPAZ Da Storm Duck Down-Priority
14	E-40 The Hall Of Game Jive
15	POOR RIGH TEOUS TEACHERS The New World Order Profile
16	RAS KASS Soul On Ice PatchWerk-Priority
17	OUTKAST Athens LaFuce-Arista
18	A TRIBE CALLED QUEST Brats, Rhymes And Lite Jive
19	WESTSIDE CONNECTION Bow Down Priority
20	CAMP LO "Luchiri (This Is It)" (12") Profile
21	NAS It Was Written Columbia-CRG
22	XZIBIT At The Speed Of Life Loud-RCA
23	CHUCK D Autobiography Of Mistachuck Mercury
24	SOUNDTRACK Space Jam Atlantic

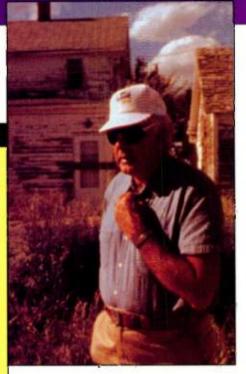
- 25 LARGE PROFESSOR "I Justwannachill" (12") Geffen
 - Commind from the CMFN w Mater. Reports weekly fear this charts, while and from CMFs paid of programmer radia reporters

MIXED MEDIA

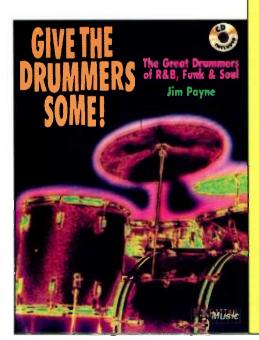
TROUBLESOME CREEK (Artistic License Films) TICK

In this feature-length documentary about a farm crisis in the filmmakers' family, former Iowan Jeanne Jordan and her husband Steven Acher sharply analyze the American dreams and bureacratic/corporate realities that have been fighting it out in the Midwest since the early '80s. *Troublesome Creek* tells the story of the Jordan family farm auction in the wryly solid idiom of the Iowa context it represents. It reveals a deep Iowan sardonicism: when the father has his eyebrows trimmed, he claims to have considered growing them out and combing them back over his forehead to make up for the lost hair. An awareness of this type of compensation for loss by resourcefulness and good humor structures the film. Jordan and Acher show how the family, through textbook "American ingenuity," tenacity and cleverness, doesn't ever really defeat the mortgage company, but manages a sort of pyrrhic victory.

The humor and melancholy of Jordan's voiceover gives a regionally appropriate tone to what is otherwise an unforgiving critique of the Norwest Corporation and the farm's other, wealthier neighbors. The film's insistent use of found footage from classic Westerns seems equally right. Shots of the Jordans in their armchairs reverse to the television, revealing them to be watching *Gunsmoke* and *High Noon*, perhaps quietly considering their own diminished expectations of the American fantasy of democratic land ownership, individual hard work, and homesteading the heartland. Even if the Westerns look like evidence that these notions were *always* imaginary, these shots resonate with what Jordan describes as the feeling of being "on the wrong side of history." *LIZA JOHNSON*

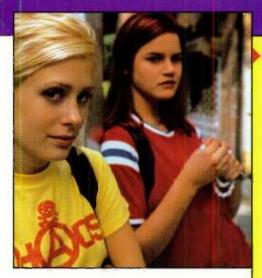


READS



GIVE THE DRUMMERS SOME! by Jim Payne (Warner Bros.-Manhattan Music)

Funk, soul and R&B rhythms have laid the groundwork for countless hip-hop, house and techno tracks, yet even the best DIs aren't blessed with the encyclopedic knowledge found in Give The Drummers Some! Author Jim Payne, who's played with the JB Horns, Mary Wells and Hank Ballard, has tracked down and interviewed a host of seminal drummers who discuss the mystique and technique of laying it down on the one. Fats Domino/Little Richard drummer Earl Palmer, explains how he adapted the rhythms of New Orleans Dixieland marching bands into his playing and helped coin the term "funky." Clayton Fillyau, of James Brown's early band, jokes about his standoffs with the Godfather of Soul. He also explains what he looks for in a drum sound, and gives tips like coating the snare's screws with nail polish to keep it in tune. Sly And The Family Stone's Greg Errico recalls how he would regularly redo his drum parts after all of the other instruments had been recorded to give each song an entirely new feel. Clyde Stubblefield, Maurice White and David Garibaldi are just a few of the other players profiled. The book also includes thorough discographies, rhythm transcriptions and an instructional CD featuring snippets of some of the best beats there have ever been. NEIL GLADSTONE

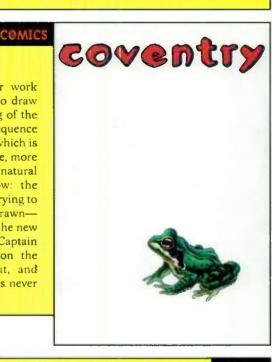


ALL OVER ME (Fine Line Features)

The painful moment when the bonds of friendship begin to unravel is the setting of All Over Me. An excellent young ensemble cast effortlessly portrays the week when two New York teenagers start to grow apart. At the beginning, Ellen (Tara Subkoff of Freeway) hangs out constantly with Claude (Alison Folland of To Die For), whose room's walls are covered with photos of Patti Smith and other rock heroines, overlaid with Polaroids of the two friends hamming it up. Soon, though, Ellen has to leave to see her tough-guy boyfriend Mark (Cole Hauser of Higher Learning), and Luke (Pat Briggs of the band Psychotica) moves into Claude's building and becomes her elder guide to the more accepting world of punk rock. Eventually, the effeminate Luke meets Mark, and when the two don't get along, it drives a wedge between the two best friends. It's a dead-on account of what it's like to be 16 and see the world of possibilities in punk rock open up. Sleater-Kinney, The Softies, Ani DiFranco and Helium provide a sympathetic soundtrack. TOM ROE

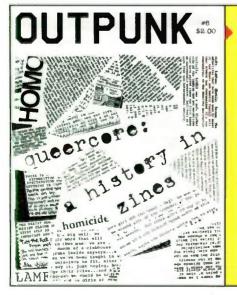
COVENTRY by Bill Willingham (Fantagraphics)

Bill Willingham is a gifted cartoonist, but his earlier work (Elementals, Ironwood) was mostly a string of excuses to draw women peeling off skintight clothes. Near the beginning of the first issue of his new series, Coventry, there's a sequence depicting a woman in baggy sweats bundling up further, which is a good sign. Coventry is set in the fictional state of its title, more or less equivalent to Oregon, in a world where the supernatural exists right along with the natural world we know: the protagonists are a couple of freelance sorcerors who are trying to rid a small town of its plague of frogs (lovingly drawn-Willingham's great at wildlife) and kill time by watching the new Apocalypse Now TV series ("It's pretty good. Every week Captain Willard and the crew go up-river to put one over on the Colonel") The fictional world is richly worked out, and Willingham's ornate, bubbly black-and-white artwork has never looked better. DOUGLAS WOLK



'ZINES

FLICKS



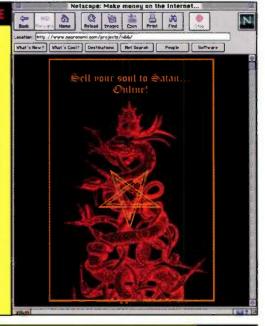
OUTPUNK (\$2.00 from P.O. Box 170501, San Francisco, CA 94117)

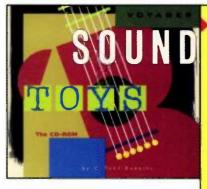
The sixth issue of Matt Wobensmith's excellent Outpunk is a special all-reprints edition: his favorite pieces from queer 'zines of the last five or six years, most of which are now defunct. The "greatest-hits" format means that this issue is almost all killers, including a bunch of pieces that got a lot of play in the 'zine underground when they originally appeared. Highlights include Kathleen Hanna's white-hot furious manifesto from her pre-band Bikini Kill 'zine, the William Conrad-vs.-William Burroughs comic from Double Bill, and the Buzzcocks' Pete Shelley and Steve Diggle coming out in an interview from PC Casualties. There are also some surprising voices heard here: the gay ex-White Power skinhead of GSM, a piece from Her Posse on "Why Homos Should Listen To Gangsta Rap," and drag queen Vaginal Creme Davis's interview with Ian MacKaye ("I promise never to breed, Ms. Davis"). DOUGLAS WOLK

MULTI-MEDIA

SELL YOUR SOUL TO SATAN ONLINE (www.necronomi.com/projects/666/pact.html)

As everyone knows, the Web has revolutionized international commerce. In another case of cutting out the middleman and passing the profits on to you, you can now sell your soul direct to the Devil through this site. Just fill out the form with your name, email address, recent former affiliation and favorite sin, hit the "send" button (no messy blood signatures required), and you can be damned for eternity. In exchange, of course, you'll get wealth and power, grind your enemies into the dirt, and have your life extended for two years and a day. And then there are the perks. "Not everyone can be President at the same time or share Winona Ryder's bed (large and populous though it is)," the site explains, but you can get all sorts of other stuff thrown into the deal: tickets to the annual International Black Mass and Satanic Orgy, membership to the secret Vatican council, that kind of thing. As a bonus, there's an icon on the front page announcing that this has been ranked among the top 666% of all web sites. DOUGLAS WOLK





SOUND TOYS (Voyager)

Sound Toys, as its name indicates, isn't meant to be a serious tool for making music: it's a musical toy, something to experiment with, make pretty sounds, and pass the time. And boy, does time pass-don't try using it unless you've got at least a few hours to kill. Created by C. Todd Robbins, it cleverly re-links space and sound. The disc has a series of screens with more or less abstract designs; pass your mouse over them, or click on them, and they make music-different sounds for different parts of the designs, some samples and some loops, some recognizable instruments and some not. (A screen with an abstracted representation of a guitar is especially neat, with dozens of different guitar sounds that all sound good together.) There are different sound-making paradigms for each screen and "Easter eggs" hidden all over; some things make the same sound every time, some don't. You can also record your creations if you like, and customize the program so you can play your favorite sounds with the keyboard, but it's somehow more fun just to fool around with the program and hear what happens. DOUGLAS WOLK

THE UNOFFICIAL WHITE CASTLE HOME PAGE (www.shadow.net/~colbert/wcmain.html)

WEB SITE

(www.shadow.net/-colbert/wcmain.html) Consumers' devotion to a brand name can be even more passionate than the devotion of people who are paid to come up with advertising. If you want the real source for

passionate than the devolution of people who are paid to come up with advertising. If you want the real source for sliders—uh, make that Slyders—there's a legitimate White Castle home page at www.whitecastle.com, with features including a recipe for turkey stuffing made with the greasy little eat-'em-in-one-bite burgers. But Chris Colbert, who lives far away from the nearest White Castle, has established a shrine to the 75-year-old fast-food company on his own time. It's more than a bit obsessive, but it's great—there are pages of White Castle trivia, a history of the company, information on ordering White Castle clothing, a host of recipes, and lots of general rhapsodizing about the five-hole wonders. Best of all is a page of readers' personal White Castle reminiscences. DOUGLAS WOLK



A LISTING OF LABELS WHOSE ARTISTS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

550 50 Madison Ave., 21st F New York, NY 10022

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

Ali s 2815 W Olive Ave Burbank, CA 91595

Amarillo PO Box 24433 Sari Francisco, CA 94124

Arista 5 W 37th St New York, NY 10019

Bar/None PC Box 1704 Hoboken, NJ 07030

Blue Note 810 Seventh Ave., 4th Fl New York, NY 10019

Bubblecore 250 Million Rd Rye, NY 10580

Capitol 1750 N. Vine St. Hollywood, CA 90028

DCC 8300 Tampa Ave Northridge, CA 91342

Def Jam 6 2 Broadway New York, NY 10012

Discovery 2034 Broadway Santa Monica, CA 90404

Drag City PO Box 476867 Chicago IL 60647

Elektra/EEG 75 Rockefell r Pl.z. New York, NY 10019

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

Epic 550 Madison Ave New York, NY 10022

ffrr/Mo Wax 825 Eighth Ave New York, NY 10019

Geffen/DGC 9130 Sunset Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90069

Go Sonic 49625 Romeo Plank Macomb, MI 48044

Gourmandizer 3010 Hennepin Ave. S. Cornucopia #154 Minneapolis, MN 55408

Grimsey PO Box 541 Stillwater, MN 55082

HI-Ball 657 W Lake St Chic go, IL 60661

Island 825 Lighth Ave New York, NY 10019

ITU P.O. Box 648 New York, NY 10011

Kill Rock Stars 120 NE State, #418 Olympia, WA 98501

Legacy 550 Madison Ave New York, NY 10022

Lookout! PO Box 11374 Berkeley, CA 94712

Mammoth Carr Mill, 2nd Fl Carrboro, NC 27510

Matador 976 Broadwiy, 4th Fl. New York, NY 10012 MCA 70 Universal City Plaza Universal City, CA 91608

Merge PO. Box 1235 Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Mind Of A Child PO. Box 1586 Findlay, OH 45839-1586

Minty Fresh PO. Box 577400 Chicago, II, 60657

Moonshine 8525 Santa Monica Blvd W Hollywood CA 90069

Ng 622 Broadway Room 4B New York, NY 10012

Ninja Tune P.O. Box 373, Westmount Stn Montreal, QUE H3Z 2T5 Canada

Nuclear Blast P.O. Box 251 Millersville, PA 17551

Outpost 8932 Keith Ave Los Angeles, CA 90069

Planet E Communications PO Box 27218 Detroit, MI 48227

Profile 740 Broadway New York, NY 101403

Relapse P.O. Box 251 Millersville, PA 17551

Relativity 79 Fifth Ave New York, NY 10003

Reprise 3300 Warner Blvd Burbank, CA 91505

Restless 1616 Vista Del Mar Hollywood, CA 90028

Rhino 10635 Santa Monica Los Angeles CA 90025

Righteous Babe P.O. Box 95 Ellicott Stn Buffalo, NY 14209

Rykodisc Shetland Park 27 Congress St Salem, MA 01970

Sealed Hotel P.O. Box 603128 Providence, RI 02906

Shrimper P.O. Box 1837 Upland, CA 91785

Siltbreeze P.O. Box 53297 Philadelphia, PA 19105

Sub Pop 1932 First Ave Seattle, WA 98101

TeenBeat PO Box 3265 Arlington, VA 20003

Thrill Jockey P.O. Box 476794 Chicago, IL 60647

Touch And Go P.O. Box 25520 Chicago, IL 60625

Virgin 338 N Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills CA 90210

Warner Bros. 3300 Warner Blvd Burbank, CA 91505

WORK 2100 Colorado Ave Santa Monica, CA 90404

World Domination 3575 Cahunga Blvd. W. Ste 450 Los Angeles, CA 90068

JUST OUT

FEBRUARY 18

SOUNDTRACK Mad About You Atlantic OPTIGANALLY YOURS Spotlight On Optiganally Yours Headhunter-Cargo DANIELSON FAMILY Tell Another Joke At The Ol' Choppin Block Tooth & Nail MICHAEL PENN Resigned Epic DUB NARCOTIC Bone Dry (EP) K SOME VELVET SIDEWALK Generate! K MORTIFICATION Envision Evangelene Nuclear Blast America

FEBRUARY 5

PIZZICATO FIVE Combination Speciale Matador RUN ON No Way Matador VARIOUS ARTISTS From The Vaults Of Abbey Road EMI SHUDDER TO THINK 50,000BC Epic RED RED MEAT There's A Star Above The Manger Tonight Sub Pop KNAPSACK Day Three Of My New Life Alias VARIOUS ARTISTS Feed Your Head 3 Planet Dog-Mammoth SQUIRTGUN Another Sunny Afternoon Lookout! PINHEAD GUNPOWDER Goodbye Ellston Avenue Lookout! SWELL Too Many Days Without Thinking Beggars Banquet FREEDY JOHNSTON Never Home Elektra TROUBLE FUNK Early Singles Infinite Zero-American **OP8 WITH LISA GERMANO Slush Thirsty Ear** L7 The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum Reprise 30 AMP FUSE Saturday Night At The Atomic Speedway Dedicated ILLYAH KURYAHKIN Count No Count Arena Rock Recording Co. ELLIOTT SMITH Either/OK Kill Rock Stars VARIOUS ARTISTS Death Is Just The Beginning Part 4 Nuclear Blast America **EVEREVE** Seasons Nuclear Blast America DREADFUL SHADOWS Buried Again Nuclear Blast America

MARCH 4

G. LOVE AND SPECIAL SAUCE Yea, It's That Easy Epic GENE Drawn To The Deep End A&M-Polydor MODEST MOUSE K NICK CAVE Boatman's Call Reprise MXPX Small Town Minds Tooth & Nail

MARCH II

PULSARS Geffen HANG UPS So We Go Restless MAIN Firmament III/IV Beggars Banquet **COMET GAIN Beggars Banquet** BLONDE REDHEAD Touch And Go **KEPONE** Kepone Quarterstick VANDERMARK FIVE Atavistic SOUNDTRACK Dutch Harbor Atavistic HONOR ROLE Album (The Recorded History) Merge PORTASTATIC The Nature Of Sap Merge STARFISH Trance Syndicate STARFLYER 59 Americana Tooth & Nail MUNDY Jelly Legs Epic BLITHE Verse Chorus Verse Alias US3 Broadway & 52nd Blue Note-Capitol GEOFFREY ORYEMA Night To Night RealWorld-Caroline CROWN HEIGHTS More Pricks Than Kicks American GRACE If I Could Fly Kinetic-Reprise CURSIVE Such Blinding Stars For Starving Eyes ITU DUB WAR Pain Earache

MARCH 18

BIG BACK FORTY A&M-Polydor CAULFIELDS L A&M AEROSMITH Nine Lives Columbia GATO-BARBERIERI Que Pasa Columbia OVERCOME When Beauty Dies Tooth & Nail

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

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In This Issue

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World Radio History

►LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

[by K. Scott Ritcher]

LOCALZINE

Welcome to Louisville! Named in 1780 in honor of King Louis XVI of France (hence the "Louie" pronunciation), Greater Louisville now stands with a population of 952,700 and spreads across 375 square miles of four counties in Kentucky and southern Indiana.

Louisville's music scene is a unique and inspiring element of the community's culture. The Louisville Orchestra has a national reputation, but the influential independent punk and rock scenes have—until recent years—been closely guarded secrets. Louisville's music is overshadowed by the city's notoriety from sporting icons like the Kentucky Derby, the Louisville Slugger baseball bat, University of Louisville basketball, and hometown hero, the Greatest of All Time, Muhammad Ali.

Over the past few years, the national success of several local groups, like the Palace Brothers, Slint, the Rachel's, Love Jones, Freakwater and Rodan, not to mention Joan Osborne, has begun to put America's largest small town into the spotlight. We're also home to several record labels, including X-static, 3 Little Girls and the hardcore champ, Initial Records.

Louisville enjoys an uncommonly low cost of living, coupled with unusually low unemployment and crime rates. Our central location puts us within six hours' drive of 80% of the U.S. population. Louisville has more public park acreage per capita than any other U.S. city.

The main strip where most things happen is along Bardstown Road, in an area called the Highlands. An assortment of record stores, restaurants, clothiers, and guitar shops make this area perfect for a day of walking around.

RECORDS

Louisville goes totally overboard on record stores, offering something for everyone. The





daddy of locally-owned successes is the legendary Ear X-Tacy. Their two stores (1534 Bardstown Rd., 452-1799 and 12619 Shelbyville Rd., 245-4980) total about 15,000 square feet of the most diverse and dense selection in town: hefty assortments in every imaginable genre, from classical to indie rock to cartoon music to desperate rock 'n' roll. Since the store is open until midnight on weekends, it's a great meeting place. Their bulletin boards and employees double as the city's unofficial source for show information.

Up the street is **Better Days** (1591 Bardstown Rd., 456-2394) whose selection is split into several rooms, each catering to specific musical tastes. The main room features mainstream and alternative new and used stuff. Other rooms concentrate on genres such as hardcore and hip-hop.

Ground Zero (1223 Bardstown Rd., 485-9717) is run by Edward Lutz, who also heads the 3 Little Girls label. It's a small but effective store that concentrates almost entirely on independent music. This store is the source for stuff from labels like Gravity and bands like Füxa.

Blue Moon (1382 Bardstown Rd., 485-9300) owner Mike Bucayu got his start in the record business years ago running the Self Destruct label, which recently released a CD of '80s punk legends Solution Unknown. These days, Mike steers away from punk, and fills his store with a respectable mixture of bluegrass and classic country. The store's name is taken from a song by Bill Monroe, a Kentuckian and the father of bluegrass. Also check out the '70s-oriented **Electric Ladyland** (2325 Bardstown Rd., 456-2394) and **The Great Escape** (2433 Bardstown Rd., 456-2216). Both are local landmarks with quality used records.

World Radio History

LOCALZINE



CLOTHES

Need new duds to impress River City folks? Ha! We can spot out-of-towners like Alaskans can spot surfers. There are countless places to shop for clothes, but there's only space to mention a few. **Sasquatch** (1019 Barret Ave., 561-8485) is a genuine paradise: used apparel with a '60s and '70s flavor, awesome old furniture, collectibles, and a few records. **Unique Thrift Store** (617 Carter, 772-9304) is the size of a warehouse and an adventure in Americana. **Clodhoppers** (1561 Bardstown Rd., 458-4044) sells fashionable new accouterments for young women: innumerable fetching dresses, jumpers, and shoes. If I were a girl and had a job, I'd shop at Clodhoppers. **Avalon** (1500 Bardstown Rd., 459-8444) is the place for the hip and with-it crowd, with Dr. Martens and all the stuff people in big cities wear. **Home Skateshop** (627 Baxter Ave., 583-6040) is Louisville's foremost purveyor of skateboards, and is the center of the city's skate culture.

FOOD

The Derby City offers a cornucopia of tasty vittles. All of the following restaurants offer vegetarian items, and many have vegan options as well. The hometown favorite is Tumbleweed (1900 Mellwood Ave., 895-8805). A visit to one of their dozen or so Tex-Mex restaurants is a requirement for your stay in the Gateway to the South. Also in that department is El Mundo (2345 Frankfort Ave., 899-9930). They'll fix the grub right in front of you, so you can say "more cheese," and they're exceptionally nice folks. Lynn's Paradise Cafe (984 Barret Ave., 589-EGGS) is a lusciously decorated restaurant with a score of highly recommended dishes, including one called the Hummer! If you can get a table, Ramsi's Cafe On The World (1293 Bardstown Rd., 451-0700) will deliver a meal worthy of another trip to Louisville. The Cubean Burrito, Roasted Vegetable Sandwich, and Bean Kingdom (a 21-bean soup) have your author drooling all over his Macintosh right now. It's also open until 2 a.m. on weekends. Sugar Doe Cafe (1605 Story Ave., 584-8440) has the breakfast thing down to a science. Twig & Leaf (2122 Bardstown Rd., 451-8944) is an authentic diner that's packed with kids on weekends, when they're open 24 hours. Open Books Cafe, inside all three locations of Hawley-Cooke Booksellers (Shelbyville Rd. Plaza, 893-0133, Gardiner Lane Center, 456-6660, Glenview Point, 425-9100), has light, tasty meals you can munch on while exploring the city's finest bookstores. And Louisville is flooded with free monthly publications-Hard Times, Burt, LEO, Brat, etc.-available at many of the above-mentioned stores and restaurants.

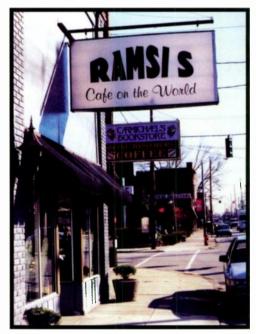
Perhaps the biggest misconception about Louisville is that because there are so many bands, we have dozens of thriving clubs with four-star shows every night. That's simply not the case. More often than not, the best shows end up in unusual places like community centers, rented halls, schools, restaurants, and movie theaters. There are, however, a few good clubs that showcase live music. The all-ages scene has traditionally attracted countless kids, though there's no strictly all-ages venue. A downtown dance club, **Sparks** (104 W. Main, 587-8566), has lately been hosting matinees for popular groups like Guilt, Elliott, Enkindel, and Eleven-11. A red carpet theatre, the **Clifton Center** (2117 Payne St., 896-8480), has been the site of a few shows including Rachel's, the Web, and Metroschifter.

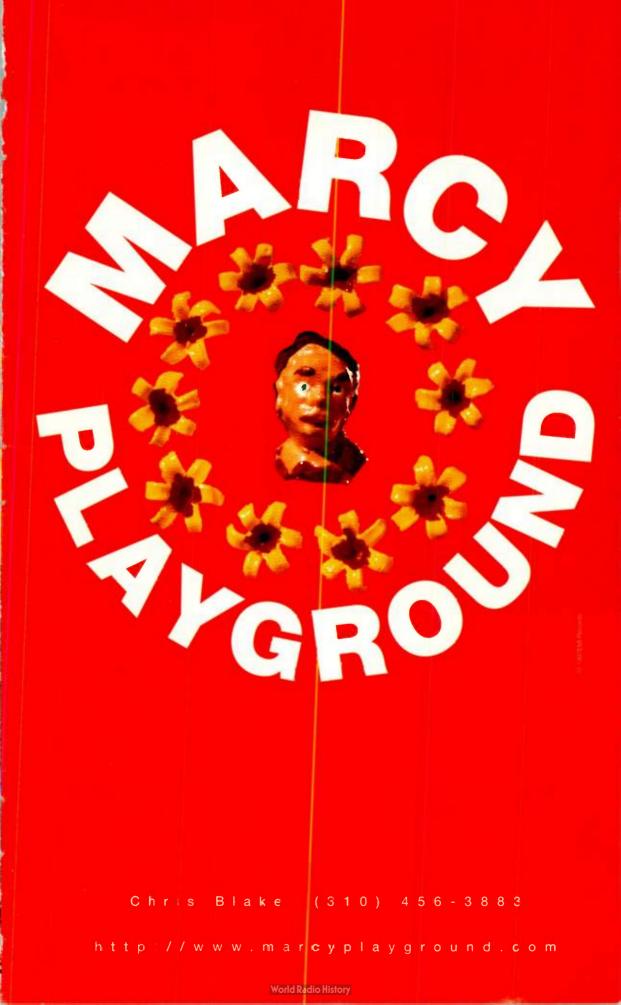
In the 21-and-over department, there's **Butchertown Pub** (1335 Story Ave., 583-2242), a clean, comfortable venue with a good sound system, hosting groups like Crain and Cooler. Then there's the multi-level, 2,000-capacity **Thunderdome** (426 Baxter Ave., 583-3420), which sometimes has concerts for big-name alternative acts, and occasionally hosts local bands like By The Grace Of God and Starbilly.

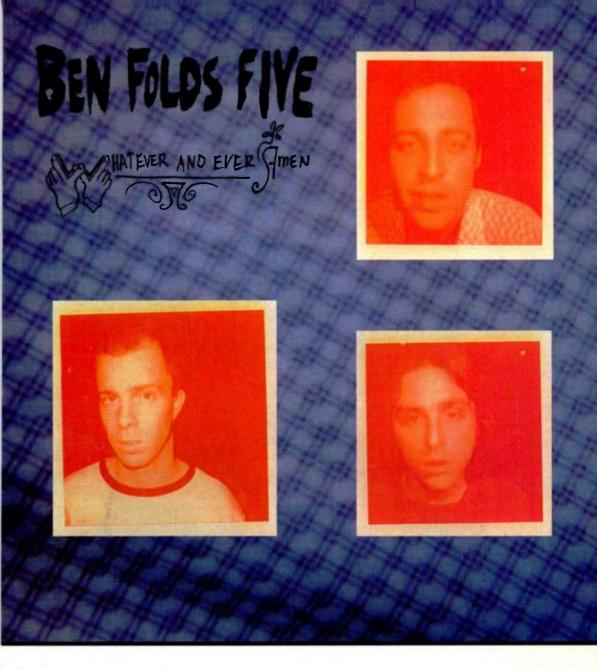
Of course, I could go on for hours, but this forum unfortunately doesn't allow it. A longer, interactive version of this article (with more pictures) can be found on Planet Louisville at http://www.iglou.com/planet/. Louisville is a beautiful city whose residents deliver on their reputation as friendly, hospitable people. Stop in sometime whenever you're passing through.

All phone numbers are in area code 502.

K. Scott Ritcher plays in Metroschifter and operated Louisville's Slamdek Record Company from 1986 to 1995. His 219-page book, Slamdek A to Z, chronicles the history of his label which launched Rodan, Endpoint, Jawbox, Crain and others. It's a meticulously detailed account of Louisville's music culture and includes a 21-track CD. \$13 ppd. from Initial, Box 17131, Louisville KY 40217.







Until March 18th, the only place you can get Ben Folds Five for your very own is the CD you get free in this magazine. "Battle Of Who Could Care Less" is track #2.

TOUR DATES!

Ben Folds Five with Counting Crows 3/31-4/12 Headline US tour 4/13-4/30

Management: Alan Wolmark and Peter Felstead at CEC Produced and recorded at home by Caleb Southern and Ben Folds Mixed by Andy Wallace

Ben Folds Five in cyberspace: www.bffweb.com

