

# CMJ

NEW MUSIC

**39 REVIEWS INCLUDING:**

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ERIC MATTHEWS,  $\mu$ -ZIQ,  
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# prodigy

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**High-Low** Any form of "The Game" may be played high-low; most games in which there are many wild cards, and most Multi-card Stud games, are now played high-low. In a high-low game there are usually two winners of the pot, the player with a major hand taking one-half the pot and the player with the independent hand taking the other half, the major hand taking the odd chip if the pot will not divide evenly. But in some cases there may be a single winner, thus:

**Declarations** — Some play that after the final betting interval, but before the showdown, each player must declare whether he is trying for major, or for independent, or for both. There are three methods of declaring, and the players should agree in advance which will be used.

**Jacks Back** — Regular Jackpots is played, but if no one opens the pot, every player has another chance to open for a Lowball pot. If this pot is not opened (but it almost always is), the deal passes to international distribution.

to be continued

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# LETTERS

## Juxtaposing the first and last sentences is really unfortunate

I'm writing in concern to your May '97 issue about things sucking and not sucking. My advice is this: if you're not a musician (and a damn good one at that), shut the hell up. It is true that some bands can't play a damn thing besides barre chords, but damn, if their rhythm kicks ass, it makes you feel hip. That's all that counts—how it makes you feel. It's not the brush strokes on the painting. It's the overall tone it creates. Just remember, music is not something to stick your dick into.

Dwight Thompson  
Cody, WY

*Oh my God. Douglas, put that Stereolab CD down!... Basically, what Dwight is saying here, in his colorful way, is that it's all a matter of perspective, which each of the following letters bears out in its own way.—ed.*

## Blurring the picture

I was going through my old issues over the weekend and I came across the one from Feb. '95 when you guys proclaimed Veruca Salt and Elastica the "next big things." Obviously, that hasn't panned out so far. Then it was Fiona Apple, which at this point looks better than those previous two choices. How do you come up with these choices? Elastica? No way. First of all, they're British, which will make it doubly difficult, and secondly, I won't let it happen for no other reason than Justine Frischmann goes out with Damon Albarn, who is a complete self-absorbed prick who seems to think that Blur is the only band in England taking any sort of chances these days.

JB

*A self-absorbed prick fronting a rock band? There's a shock. What's next, an embittered, sarcastic music magazine editor? As for our Next Big Things, the only thing worse than a prognosticator is one who gets all defensive about it after the fact. I will say, however, that your, my and Damon's girlfriends will all agree that big is in the eye of the beholder, and I'm happy with the results of all three picks.—ed.*

## Clique and drug

Cut out the crappy techno CDs that basically only druggies listen to anyway.

Matthew Savidis  
Boca Raton, FL

*There are those of us who believe half of the records released in the midst of the*

*electronica hype will be cut-outs soon enough on their own, but discounting an entire genre because of the recreational activities favored by its fans is not exactly the broadest thinking. Let's not forget that drug use has legitimized fringe music for decades. Do you think the hipsters at Warhol's Factory parties liked the Velvet Underground? That hippies would have listened to the Grateful Dead for musical value alone? Of course, there's no excusing those baggy pants.—ed.*

## Locals Only

You should start a magazine plus CD of local groups around the U.S. of A. See how it goes. I have been making my own music for 25 years now. I'm still trying to improve my sound. In the July issue, not one song sounds like it's played from the heart.

Robert Schulz  
Wales, WI

*Ravi Shankar—if only that guy would play from the heart. Bada-bing. Thank you. Remember to tip your waitresses.—ed.*

## Radio Romanov

As a member of a struggling local band, I was struck by a thought after receiving the April issue of *CMJ New Music Monthly*. Bands like White Town, OMC, Fun Lovin' Criminals, Bloodhound Gang, and Geggy Tah are putting out gimmicky, maybe catchy, but totally inane songs. If my band, The Czars, can get signed by writing a song with throw-in lyrics like "the drummer from Night Ranger sings on 'Sister Christian!'" over and over again, we'd do it. I'm not totally against catchy pop, but stop bands like White Town from making me cringe every time I hear them on the radio. If you print this, I just wanted to thank you, while driving in my car.

Chris Pearson,  
Upright Bass, The Czars  
Denver, CO

*Okay, wiseguy, just wait until you do get signed by writing a song about Night Ranger. And then you have to play it every night for drunk crowds that boo your "serious" music... on tour with Rasputina because some joker booking agent who reads "Tours We'd Like To See" thought it sounded cool... only to have tour support pulled because a radio consultant convinced his stations to find another source for the inane, catchy songs that have driven radio in your lifetime. The phrase "Welcome To Hell" mean anything now? —ed.*

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# ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN EVERGREEN

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# QUICK FIX



## REEF

### Chuck Shit Up

What would it be like to be in the bluesy British rock sensation Reef? If you didn't get the hint from *Glow* (Epic), let long-haired growler Gary Stringer tear out a typical page from the band's tour diary. First stop: San Francisco. "I think we were in Portland the night before—we got to SF, did a gig, can't remember where, and after the gig went out for a drink," Stringer fondly recalls. "We went along Haight Street, as you do, me and the band—started having a few more pints at a bar there.

"We got to chattin' with the barman, and it turns out he was born in England—full-on American accent, but he was from Yorkshire, which is right next to our town of Somerset. End of the night comes, he closes down the bar, then gets out a little bit of smoke, so we have a few smokes, some relaxin' rollers. And I don't know what the fuck he put in it, but it was more than skunk. I've smoked some nice, strong skunk in my time—I know what fuckin' strong skunk is! This stuff knocked my block off!

"Most of the band had buggered off by this time. So what happened—I was told later—is, we walked for awhile, got into a cab and went back to the bus, which was parked in a bit of a dodgy area. Played some cards back at the bus, lost a lot of money. Must've gone out walking again, and ended up waking up literally in the gutter, sitting there with this tramp. People were going to work, so it must've been around 8 or 9. I was leaning up against this guy, and we got to chattin'—I think I threw up a few times as well... Then I found my way back to the bus. We did a gig in San Jose that night, and I remember *still* throwing up after soundcheck from the whole experience. You know that bile you throw up from your stomach when you've got no food in you? How you can't stop it, it just comes out?"

Stringer goes on without missing a beat. "I've gotta tell you my *Norway* story now! We went to Norway the other day, and Norway's got a lot of culture there, a lot of galleries. So the lady from the record company takes us past the National Gallery, saying 'On your right, the National Gallery, with the world-famous painting "The Scream" and lots of nice statues.' We went to a restaurant, had a meal, had a few drinks, as you do, and on the way back—down the walk where we'd been told about culture and art, we suddenly realized we were urinating up against the Gallery building! Then we proceeded to go back to the hotel room where some of us threw up. It was quite a funny contrast!" **TOM LANHAM**



## in my room

artists' personal picks

### TALVIN SINGH AND EQUAL-I

Lelonek  
"Tokyo Sub"

Acacia  
"Maddening Shroud (Talvin Singh Remix)"

State Of Bengal  
"Chitragong Chill"

Photek  
"Two Swords"

Equal-I  
"I"

## THE BIZ

music industry  
parlance, explained

### "tracking"

Record labels like their records to get played on the radio. They also like to keep track of where their records are being played—so that they can make sure copies of those records are being sent to those areas for sale, arrange for artists to play there on tour, and so on. So promoters make "tracking" calls to radio stations: Did you get the CD? What'd you think? Isn't it great? Are you playing it? How often? (Or: Do you think you could give it a try?) What would you like for your birthday?

## LABEL PROFILE

### World Domination Recordings

Started six years ago by Dave Allen (Gang Of Four/Shriekback), World Domination Recordings has gone from being a division of a major label (Capitol) to existing as a totally separate independent label, and is now starting to take on some sub-labels of its own—some of which are also involved on the business side with post-punk veterans. Independent Project (run by Savage Republic's Bruce Licher) was the first to team up with World Dom, and the family now includes WMO (devoted to releasing Wire-related recordings), Swim (the American branch of an electronic label run by Wire's Colin Newman and Minimal Compact's Malka Spigel), and the new label AE (which will be releasing the forthcoming Pram album, *Gash*). World Domination's biggest hits to date are its Sky Cries Mary and Loop Guru albums; upcoming releases include new ones from Newman, Spigel and Penthouse this summer, and in October, Loop Guru's *Loop Bites Dog*. (P.O. Box 8097, Universal City Station, North Hollywood, CA 91618-8097; <http://imusic.com/worlddom>; [dominate@world-dom.com](mailto:dominate@world-dom.com))





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THE SEAHORSES Do It Yourself

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MANBREAK Come and See



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# QUICK FIX



## FUTURE BIBLE HEROES

New Wave Dreams

Future Bible Heroes' Chris Ewen isn't quite sure how he and Stephin Merritt came to collaborate musically. The two reportedly met on a Boston miniature golf course in the late '80s; their relationship blossomed, and soon they were living together. While Merritt was engaged with early incarnations of his renowned pop band the Magnetic Fields, Ewen (who had refined his synthesizer finesse in new-wave outfit Figures On A Beach) divided his time between rising to prominence as a club DJ, and crafting evocative, wordless tracks. Ewen reckons that at some point Merritt opined, "Oh, I really think that you should have lyrics on these songs, and not do instrumental things."

"Well, why don't you write lyrics?" he would've retorted. "You're the person whose lyrics I enjoy the most."

Over the course of the next several years, they composed Future Bible Heroes tracks, fine-tuning them in their home studio. Eventually, they released a cassette, *Vacationland*, which mated Ewen's shimmering arrangements with Merritt's wry lyrics and deadpan delivery, yielding sublime morsels like

"She-Devils Of The Deep" and "Blond Adonis." Their debut CD, *Memories Of Love* (Slow River), reprises many of these ditties in re-recorded versions, supplemented with additional vocal turns by Magnetic Fields drummer/manager Claudia Gonson.

Future Bible Heroes' sound is firmly rooted in certain musical traditions of the late '80s. "Lonely Days" pairs phrases like "Nothing good is on TV/No one falls in love with me/And there's nobody to fall in love with/So I don't" with instrumental timbres that could have been plucked from a Pet Shop Boy's sampler. But the band doesn't take its inspirations as literally as Romania or the Rentals. "He combines bubblegum with exotica with electropop," explains Merritt of Ewen's compositions.

With Merritt and Gonson now living in New York, while Ewen still resides in Boston, the songwriting process isn't terribly interactive. Ewen composes, arranges and produces the instrumental tracks, then delivers them to Merritt for words and vocals. Their dialogue concerning the budding songs is minimal. "Which I really don't have any problem with," stresses Ewen. "I like the fact that some of the [instrumental] tracks have very uplifting, pop sensibilities, and the lyrics take you in a completely different direction."

Merritt insists the arrangement isn't constrictive. "I'm free to do what I like with Future Bible Heroes songs. Some of them end up very differently than from how Chris conceived them. I have more freedom than I might seem to have."

For instance? "This is probably an abuse of my freedom," Merritt confesses. "Chris did an industrial track, sort of like Ministry... only interesting. Anyway, it ended up being called 'My Blue Hawaii.' And it was about summer and Hawaii. But that's not on a record yet. Even though it was recorded a long time ago. It doesn't seem to fit on any record." **KURT B. REIGHLEY**

## in my room

artists' personal picks

### THE MUFFS

Kim Shattuck

The Beatles

The Beatles' Second Album

The Beatles

Meet The Beatles

Gerry And The Pacemakers

The Best Of ("First side only!")

Dean Martin

This Time I'm Swingin'

Count Basie

Classics By The Great

Count Basie Band

### < QUOTE >

"So, you are asking, what did go on at *Spin*, for surely nothing, as King Lear said, comes of nothing. Well, behavior went on, certainly. Rock journalism is hardly the kind of endeavor that breeds gentlemen, and *Spin* was no exception. There were 'toxic' people, yes, jerks, yes. Are jerks illegal? Hungover, caffeinated, stressed-out, people with borderline personalities. Who else would be available to edit a rock magazine?"—Celia Farber, in [www.salonmagazine.com](http://www.salonmagazine.com)

### < QUOTE >

## tours we'd like to see

Where There's Smoke...: Tindersticks, Matchbox 20, Ignition, Smokey Robinson, R.L. Burnside, the Fire Engines, Big Flame, Blaze, the Towering Inferno and James Brown And The Famous Flames.

## CULTURAL GUERRILLA MOVE OF THE MONTH

People attending the "electrical parade" for the premiere of *Hercules* this June were handed this alleged "*Hercules* coloring book" by members of a group calling themselves the "Modern Action Club." After two pages of standard kid stuff, it starts going off on a tangent about Hercules merchandise being made in sweatshops in Haiti, and compares the relative salaries of workers for Disney's Haitian contractors and Disney chairman Michael Eisner. All under boldly drawn, coloring-book-style illustrations of Hercules and his pals, of course.

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## THE MUFFS

### Make A Wish

Don't get Kim Shattuck pissed off. The Muffs' frontwoman claims she's gotten over it, but she's pretty evidently still carrying a grudge over the incident that inspired the title of her sugar-and-spikes punk-pop band's new album, *Happy Birthday To Me* (Reprise). "I went into the studio on my birthday," she announces in her smoke-ravaged Californian drawl. "No one else knew. I was just there to make sure they did everything right. It was my birthday, so I called Ronnie"—Ronnie Barnett, the band's bassist and Shattuck's ex—"and he said 'Oh, yeah, yeah, it's your birthday, happy birthday,' and [drummer Roy McDonald] said 'We're going out to see Peter Wolf tonight!'"

"So first I yell at Ronnie—I can't yell at Roy, but I yell at Roy through Ronnie sometimes. So I go 'Fuck you! It's my birthday!' Roy said 'Well, we can get you a ticket, from Warner Bros., it's free.' Like I really want to see Peter Wolf, a horrible gross has-been!" Shattuck declined, but told them to come to the studio afterwards. "So the moral was they promised they were going to take me out for a drink after the show. And they never called, they never came—I was in the studio 'til 3 a.m.! I coulda fucking went home! I didn't talk to them for weeks."

Barnett picks up the narrative. "Kim plays up the victim role in the story. What happened was we were working on our record, Kim was doing guitar overdubs... I called and wished her a happy birthday, even sang the song to her. She was in the studio! She's busy, right? So me and Roy had these other plans, and it just happened to be on her birthday—we didn't knock ourselves out enough."

"A few weeks later, we got this thing sent to our P.O. box, addressed just to Ronnie and Roy: a picture of a girl in front of a birthday cake, saying 'I thought my friends would remember my birthday... I guess I thought wrong.'"

Eventually, the band members kissed and made up, though Shattuck made them pose with a birthday cake in the photo shoot for the album. They'll be going out on tour this summer. "We're trying to get on a tour with a big rock band," Shattuck says. "None of those Sheepfests '97." Besides, as contentious as things get, they all agree they're together for the long haul. "Me and Ronnie are kind of the Sonny and Cher of the group, and Roy's just very cool—it's a good dynamic," she says. Barnett concurs: "Since Roy's been in the band, about three years now, we've only had one fight on stage." **DOUGLAS WOLK**

# The Maxell Mix Tape

We all **MAKE UP TAPES** of our favorite songs. They're driving companions, records of ill-spent summers, letters to girlfriends or boyfriends, whatever. What's your favorite mix? **Tell Us.** And if we pick your entry, the kind folks at Maxell will send you a **bunch of goodies.**

This Month's Winner is



**Allen Pindell !!**



### SIDE-1

The Frogs  
weird  
Me First & The Gimme  
Gimme  
Danny's Song  
Fatima Mansions  
1000%  
Camp Lo  
Kystal Karrington  
Dub Marcotic Sound  
System  
Monke, Hips and Rice  
Sandals  
Changed  
Tricky  
Suicafocated Love (live)  
Dump  
Slow Down  
Pansy Division  
Flower  
Talking Heads  
Sugar On My Tongue  
Meryn Cadell  
Inventor  
Brenda Kahn  
Mint Juleps and Needles  
Emmet Swimming  
Arlington  
Crowded House  
Chocolate Cake

### SIDE-2

Plug  
Me and Mr. Jones  
Meat Beat Manifesto  
Asbestos Lead Asbestos  
Pop Will Eat Itself  
Not Eow James, We're Busy  
Bentley Rhythm Ace  
This is  
Carbootechmodiscotechnobooto  
Dr. Octagon  
Bear witness (remix)  
Negativland  
Escape From Noise  
Violent Femmes  
Country Death Song  
King Missile  
Muji  
Jackson 5  
I want You Back  
Ben Folds Five  
Fair  
Beautiful South  
I Love You  
(But You're Boring.)

Just send your mix (track listings only) to: CMJ New Music Monthly, 11 Middle Neck Rd., STE. 400, Great Neck, NY 11021; also fax us at 516.466.7159 or email at [cmjmonthly@cmjmusic.com](mailto:cmjmonthly@cmjmusic.com).

**Mix it up!**



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NEW MUSIC

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# QUICK FIX



## BARBARA MANNING

### Tinder Hearted

Listening to Barbara Manning describe how she wrote "10 x 10," one begins to understand how she became one of indie rock's most admired and least prolific songwriters. "I wanted the song to start off explaining... where his room is in the house, and how small it is, and how everything in his room is everything that he's ever had, and that he'd like to burn it down. And then I wanted to try and make a love song about a flame, and that's where I had problems... I had little candles flickering in front of me, and I'd stare at them and think about them... about how beautiful fire is... but I still couldn't write a love letter to fire." Though Manning ultimately had to shift her approach a bit, "10 x 10" became the centerpiece of "The Arsonist Story," the 20-minute suite that leads off her new record, *1212* (Matador).

The sweeping, ominous saga of a young misfit obsessed by fire, "Arsonist Story" is a more ambitious piece of

songcraft than a lot of listeners are used to, especially if they never went through a '70s album-rock phase. But if the story itself is farfetched, its thoughtful dance with despair is common to other writers' songs that have attracted Manning lately, and that she plays on stage and on record. Similar moods drive Gram Parsons' "\$1000 Wedding" and Richard Thompson's "End Of The Rainbow," two of her most distinctive recent covers.

It's only April, but Manning's wearing a flowery sundress and looking like someone who's been on vacation. In fact, she recently toured Europe with her current backing band, Joey Burns and John Convertino of Giant Sand and Calexico. She's also just come back from what she describes as a "pilgrimage" to the "Mecca" of New Zealand. "I blew all my money and went," she says. It inspired her to new heights of productivity—she recorded seven songs in six weeks. "They're with all sorts of different people, on different days, getting together and saying, 'let's turn on the four-track or eight-track and let's go,'" she says. "I played with David Kilgour and Graeme Downes from the Verlaines... It was like jumping into the New Zealand soup and swimming around. I feel like I can do that really well, overcome any kind of nervous fear and just work with someone and see what comes out."

Still, she says she'll probably continue recording as many covers as her own songs. "I am keenly aware that people think it's a rip-off if they get a record where not every song is written by the artist who sings it," she notes, a bit ruefully. "To me, that's just an error, because there have always been people doing other people's songs... it's all about the soul and the interpretation." *ANDREA MOED*

## in my room

artists' personal picks

### MADDER ROSE

Mary Lorson

Nicolette

DJ Kicks

Cormac McCarthy

(Book) Blood Meridian

Swell

Too Many Days Without Thinking

Lisa Germano

Excerpts From A Love Circus

Henry Ross

(Book) Mercy Of A Rude Stream

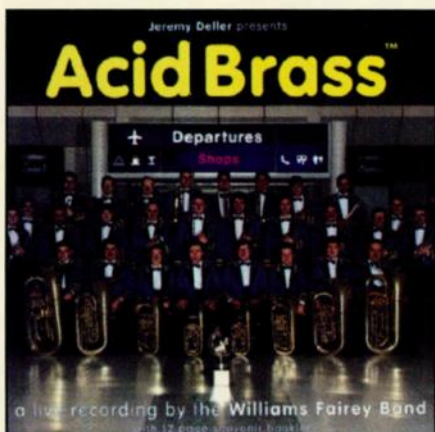
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"It's insulting of the media to suggest 'Girl Power' has only come along since the Spice Girls. It's been there since the Virgin Mary." —  
Sinead O'Connor.

### < QUOTE >

## random fact

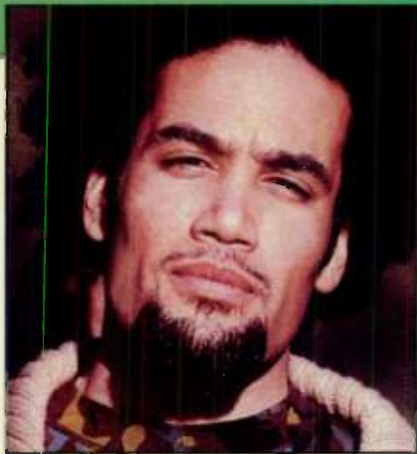
The little boy who appeared on the cover of the U2 albums *Boy* and *War* has his own band, called Pelvis, that is currently being courted by major labels.



## WEIRD RECORD OF THE MONTH

When you think of music that sounds formally appropriate played by a big, old-fashioned British brass band, the phrase "acid house classics" doesn't come to mind. But that's exactly what *Acid Brass* (Blast First-Mute UK) is. With arrangements by Rodney Newton (who mentions in the liner notes that his previous experience with pop music involves buying a Phil Collins record or two, and that's about it), the Williams Fairey Band essays the KLF's "What Time Is Love?," 808 State's "Pacific 202," a medley of Black Riot's "A Day In The Life" and Royal House's "Can U Party," and five other techno gems.





## BEN HARPER

Insatiable

Performers who capture the mind as well as the ears are a rare breed. They capture a kernel of truth about us, and let us see ourselves clearly in the mirror. Ben Harper does that. Coming from what seemed like nowhere three years ago, he's grown in stature ever since. Live, he can blow the roof off any sucker you care to name. And with his third album, *The Will To Live*, his growth continues at an exponential rate. Electric, acoustic, blues, country, ballads, even romping '70s-style funk, complete with horns... it's all in his power.

"I won't say I'm totally satisfied with it," he admits, "but I'm *more* satisfied with it than anything I've ever done before. With the limits and constraints, it's impossible to be completely satisfied."

To a listener, though, that's hardly the case. The acoustic barriers of his first two albums are down, leaving him to wander where he will. As with his other records, there's a spiritual core to it (and not just in the two gospel cuts, either). Is it that music is a spiritual journey for him? "Definitely," he says. "Everything is spiritual, every footstep we take, everything we do. Music is simply my way of expressing myself." Just hear Harper and you'll understand that he *cares*, that it goes beyond words and chords—it means something.

Not many guys playing acoustic slide guitar (even with an ace band behind them) are going to win over crowds that have laid down their money for Luscious Jackson, PJ Harvey or Pearl Jam. But Harper does it every time. He gets them raising their fists and singing along with "I Shall Rise," and tears them apart with versions of "Voodoo Chile" or "Superstition." And soon, hopefully, he'll pack all that concert energy onto an album. "We're planning on doing one this summer, doing it properly. On stage it's all stripped to the bone, it's different from the records. I love touring and being on stage. And this band is so good. We listen to each other, laugh with each other—they're all completely committed to the music."

When Harper was growing up, his parents and grandparents played instruments, so he gravitated toward it naturally. But it wasn't until he came across the Weissenborn, a hollow necked slide guitar made in the '20s, that he found his real niche. "I'd been playing slide, and it sounded all right, but I was copying. Then, with the Weissenborn, it sounded like me, and it became me. But I'm still trying to get good enough to be able to play the music I hear in my head." CHRIS NICKSON

# LIDA HUSIK

## FLY STEREOPHONiC

Dreamy and evocative, building in layers to create filmy, floating structures. AP

Like tripping on mango-flavored acid in a field of blazing poppies. WIRED

Layers of softspoken guitar and vocal to blissfully mesmerize the listener. SPIN



ATZU COTING

# BARRY BLACK

## Tragic Animal Stories

You may know Eric Bachmann as the frontman for the Archers of Loaf, but until you hear his solo project, Barry Black, you haven't really heard him. JUICE

This is an instrumental record that doesn't follow any stylistic rules...the end result is as schizophrenic as you might think, and entirely rewarding. JD MAGAZINE

Bachmann's genius unfolds via the almost-present melody lines so characteristic of his work. BITES



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# best new music

[ the five best releases this month ]



## THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS / *Straight To Video* / Anyway ©

"The philosopher queen is still slee-/Ping with her dolls," Ron House bellows with the kind of instinctual phrasing genius attainable only by the very drunk. Throughout *Straight To Video*—the Slave Apartments' loud, cheap and raw indie follow-up to one of the messiest major-label records ever released—House sounds like he's had about eight too many and is suddenly braver than he's ever been, belligerently spitting out choruses and weaving uncertainly through his own lyrics. He's only playing dumb, though: Listen to the words, and you'll discover they're amazingly funny and twisted. And then there's the white-hot band behind him. Bob Petric's guitar is cracklingly electric,

figuratively and literally (check out the way his harmonics scythe through the sludge of "Outside My Scene," even though House almost blows out the microphone every time he yells the hook), and the rhythm section

staggers along in Siamese-twin unison. The recording is pure press-play-and-record treble (snare sound: *thwip*), but that just makes the whole thing more fun: Every time another almost-together harmony or indelible guitar twiddle connects, it's a little wonder of pop resolving itself out of the muck. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 1. First single "Petty Thief."

**FILE UNDER:** Loud, plastered rock 'n' roll.

**R.I.Y.L.:** New Bomb Turks, The Clash, live Guided By Voices.



## JEN TRYNIN / *Gun Shy Trigger Happy* / Squint-WB ©

Perhaps it stems from the same D.I.Y. initiative that prompted her to release her recordings on her own label long before the majors came calling, but Bostonian Jen Trynin's singing and playing are fortified by an audible self-reliance throughout the superb *Gun Shy Trigger Happy*. Which is a damn fine thing, since lyrically the album is largely concerned with relationships in one awkward stage or another: "Writing Notes" recounts post-breakup loneliness in agonizing detail; an unstable romantic bond is severed on "I Resign"; "Bore Me" saunters unsteadily along the thin line separating pals from paramours. Musically, Trynin oscillates between propulsive power pop (the opening blast of "Go Ahead") and seething slow-burners (the creepy cosmetic surgery meditation "Under The Knife"); wisely, the sequencing keeps the mix lively, alternating tempos and textures. Holding it all together is

consistently solid songwriting and Trynin's reedy voice (extremely reminiscent of a similarly inclined chanteuse, Marti Jones). Her measured vocal delivery serves her lyrics far better than the yelling and/or mannered simpering favored by many other contemporary singer/songwriters; at times she even executes the tricky maneuver of suggesting a different intention from the one her lyrics aim for, without sounding forced ("I Don't Need You"). **KURT B. REIGHLEY**

**DATALOG:** Release date: Aug. 12.

**FILE UNDER:** Moody, pensive power pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Marti Jones, Sam Phillips, Shawn Colvin.





## ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES / Have A Ball / Fat Wreck Chords

Right now, the idea of an album's worth of punk rock covers of schlocky '70s hits seems about as welcome as the mock requests for "Freebird" people haven't figured out *JUST AREN'T FUNNY ANYMORE*. But *Have A Ball* is perfect. It's exactly what you want from this sort of thing: double-time rocked-up renditions of songs you didn't know were this lodged in your brain, rendered with bigger-than-life guitar sounds and the pop sense to retain the melodies. While it's surprising that anyone could make a fist pumper out of "I Am A Rock" or "Danny's Song," this genius doesn't exactly come out of nowhere; the Gimme Gimmes include Fat Mike from NOFX, Joey Cape and "Just" Dave from Lagwagon and Chris Jackson from No Use For A Name. The quintet is rounded out by Spike from the Fat Wreck Chords' mailroom on vocals, and his karaoke chops are on full display on "Nobody Does It Better," "Mandy" and "Rocket Man." And most of all, the self-proclaimed Gutter Punks (as in bowling, hence *Have A Ball*) go easy on the irony; of course no one needs to hear "Seasons In The Sun" in any form again, but damn if covering it as if it were Stiff Little Fingers' version of Marley's "Johnny Was" doesn't make it rock. Perfect. Fucking perfect. *SCOTT FRAMPTON*

**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 17.

**FILE UNDER:** Lite-FM rockin' your ass.

**R.I.Y.L.:** NOFX, Sex Pistols, Stiff Little Fingers, Green Day.

and "Rocket Man." And most of all, the self-proclaimed Gutter Punks (as in bowling, hence *Have A Ball*) go easy on the irony; of course no one needs to hear "Seasons In The Sun" in any form again, but damn if covering it as if it were Stiff Little Fingers' version of Marley's "Johnny Was" doesn't make it rock. Perfect. Fucking perfect. *SCOTT FRAMPTON*



## HIGH LLAMAS / Hawaii / V2

While the specters of the giants of orchestral pop loom large throughout *Hawaii* (a John Barry 007 reference surfaces within the first two minutes), it's a credit to the modest genius of the High Llamas' leader Sean O'Hagan that his influences never eclipse the merits of his own compositions on the British band's second album. As in the case of O'Hagan's earlier outfit, Microdisney, neither melody nor arrangement is subservient to the other in the Llamas' brightest moments; rather, they work in harmony (although the textures and harmonic structures of the Llamas are more sophisticated). Mixing lush strings and discrete electronics with flourishes of trombone and banjo, O'Hagan creates a 77-minute, 29-track odyssey

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 29. Domestic version includes six bonus tracks.

**FILE UNDER:** Exquisite orchestral pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Van Dyke Parks, Brian Wilson, Burt Bacharach.

(with actual songs alternating with brief instrumental passages) loosely based on pioneering life in early North America. His singing voice is pleasantly unaffected, well suited to his impressionistic lyrics. Although the tone of

most of these tunes is sunny, occasional somber moments (the close of "Literature Is Fluff," "There's Nobody Home") lend further dimension to the album's overall emotional patina. Expansive in breadth, yet intimate in construction, the refined, refreshing music of *Hawaii* steers a distinct path through some of pop music's richest terrain. *KURT B. REIGHLEY*



## WHISKEYTOWN / Stranger's Almanac / Outpost ©

You could easily find yourself loving Whiskeytown whether your idea of country-rock hews to Gram Parsons or the Eagles, which is another way of saying the songs on *Stranger's Almanac* aren't as good at upholding musical traditions as they are at finding your heart. What the burgeoning crop of No Depression bands (essentially, new country groups of the Uncle Tupelo school, cobbled into a genre named for the magazine devoted to covering them) needs is exactly this sort of universal appeal to simultaneously legitimize and obviate the genre. The "country" here exists not so much in style cues—though you'll find pedal steel, elegiac fiddles and honky-tonk titles like "Excuse Me While I Break My Own Heart Tonight"—but in a sense of the American songwriting firmament. Evoking George Jones's "She Thinks I Still Care" with "Everything I Do" or the first couple of Tom Petty albums with "Yesterday's News" seems entirely appropriate through the course of

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 29.

**FILE UNDER:** Warmly plaintive country rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Blue Rodeo, Dwight Yoakam, Son Volt, Blue Mountain, *The Last Picture Show*.

*Stranger's Almanac*, because the emphasis is always on the song's emotional resonance. At its barest moments, the record hangs its sweetly mournful tone on lines like "I hang around with the people I used to be" ("Inn Town"). Call it what you want, but Whiskeytown does right by its songs, which is the best homage any set of influences could have. *SCOTT FRAMPTON*



# ON THE VERGE

[ compiled by Lydia Anderson ]

## CALEXICO

Few musicians are as entertainingly prolific as Joey Burns and John Convertino. The two have made up the rhythm section of Giant Sand for years, they played that same role in Friends Of Dean Martinez until recently, and on the side they've recorded an album with Lisa Germano under the name OP8 and backed up Barbara Manning on her latest record, *1212*. Now they've made their side-project, Calexico, an official working entity, inking a deal with



BILL CARTER

Touch And Go sub-label Quarterstick, which has just reissued *Spoke*, an album released last year on vinyl only in Germany. *Spoke* presents a relaxed and varied collection of songs that hint at the boys' previous projects—a striking Southwestern ambience and smoothly delivered vocals—but also dip into new territory, flirting with a playful range of musical styles. Even while the group often sounds as if it's playing a well-worn standard, you know you're listening to something new and colorful. Look for Calexico on tour late in the year, and expect a new album sometime next year. (LA)

## THE VSS

Everything about the VSS is theatrical. From its dramatic brand of angular punk rock to its electrifying stage show—while he's singing, vocalist Sonny Kay operates the band's light show onstage—the quartet is exhaustingly intense. The VSS formed in 1995, after Kay and guitarist Josh



JULIE PEASLEY

Hughes shook off the ashes of their old band, Angel Hair, and wrangled up a couple of kindred musical spirits. Since that time, the group has relocated from Boulder, Colorado, to Berkeley, California; toured both Europe and the States, and released three 7" EPs, a CD collecting those

vinyl recordings, and, this past May, its first proper full-length, *Nervous Circuits* (on the label run by J Church's Lance Han, Honey Bear). The album is an amazing conglomeration of old new wave and new new wave, combining dark, moody synth-punk stylings with furious, dissonant guitar rock. Look for a new 12" on Troubleman Unlimited this fall. JENNY ELISCU

## SAVE FERRIS

The top of the *Introducing Save Ferris* EP offers the handy "file under" category of "ska/pop/swing." The first two are common enough these days, but it's the healthy dollop of swing that saves Save Ferris from endless comparisons to that other pop-leaning, female-fronted Southern California ska band, No Doubt. That, and Monique Powell's big, brassy vocals, which turn zippy little songs about how much it sucks to be underage ("Under 21") and Spam ("Spam") into Broadway show-stoppers. The band's penchant for playing out (reportedly as many as 25 shows a month) paid off this spring when its performance at the NARAS Foundation's national Grammy Showcase competition earned it the best unsigned band award. But Save Ferris didn't stay unsigned for long: Epic recently re-issued *Introducing* and will release the band's first full-length album, *It Means Everything*, in early September. SCOTT FRAMPTON



NATHANIEL WELCH

## WE

New York City's We grew out of a series of club nights put together in Brooklyn by a trio of artists who didn't throw a party so much as they established aural and visual environments. Calling themselves industrial designers, DJ Olive (Gregor Asch), Loop



KIM STRINGFELLOW

(Rich Panciera) and Once 11 (Ignacio Platas) have designed the interior of NYC electronic music shop Liquid Sky and have created the first episode of a "multi-

sensational" opera called "Quarksoup," all under their visual aegis, Multipolyomni. On a musical front, the three call themselves We and have done remix work for artists such as Arto Lindsay and Medeski Martin & Wood, released tracks on compilations like *Axiom Dub* and *This Is Home Entertainment Vol. 2*, and released a full-length album, *As Is* (Asphodel), which takes an arty approach to experimental electronics without ever being dull or overly ambient. *As Is* fuses electronically generated sounds with scratches and samples generated by turntable manipulation, which is the centerpiece of the group's live shows. (LA)



TODD MCFARLANE'S

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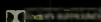
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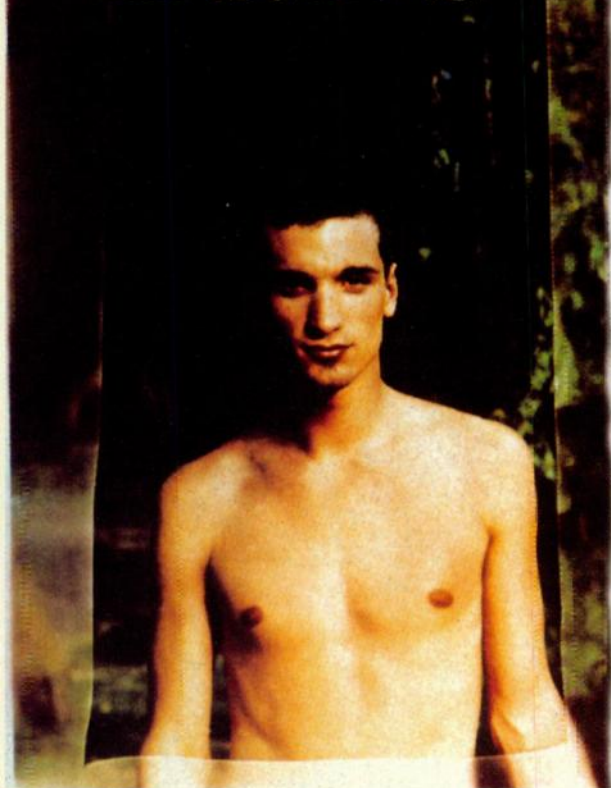
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World Radio History

# Lamb



**O**n first listen, the sounds of Mancunian duo Lamb's debut album are like oil and water. Andy Barlow's jungle-bent breakbeats hyper-thwack through most of the tracks like a flyswatter-armed exterminator in a termite nest; meanwhile, *chanteuse* Louise Rhodes flutters gingerly above the roiling mix, a soft, delicate cecropia moth that's always just out of pest-control reach. After a few spins, however, these ingredients start to homogenize, turning Lamb into a free-floating colloidal system that didn't initially seem possible. Not quite drum-and-bass, not quite techno-diva... What to call this surreal new sound? The last folks to ask, it appears, are the Lambsters themselves. Composing music is the least of worries for 32-year-old Rhodes and 21-year-old Barlow. They're still trying to figure out how to sit together in a room for an hour without seriously injuring one another.

Rhodes is adorned with the trappings of youth: Nikes, knee socks, a sky-blue babydoll dress, her short brown hair pulled back into playful pigtails. But she speaks with educated refinement, discussing at length her prior career as a freelance music/fashion photographer. Her worst assignment? No contest: "It was Mark E. Smith from The Fall. He was a nightmare—I was nearly reduced to tears. He was the most belligerent bastard, not wishing to mince any words. He was drunk, very uncooperative and very aggressive."

A longtime fan of Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon and Cindy Sherman, Rhodes preferred to shoot fashion because "it's very creative. Fashion photography, more and more, is becoming more about the art form and less about the clothes." Her best session ever, she adds, occurred while she was still at college, working on her master's degree. "Part of my dissertation was to go 'round and photograph other photographers and talk to them, because I was concerned about the ethics and the philosophical implications of photographing people, since people are quite often uneasy about being photographed. What is it that makes them uneasy? So I was photographing quite well-known photographers, and one of them was Jane Bown, who's done a lot of books. She's quite old now, so I went to her house, this beautiful little cottage in the middle of the English countryside, and had lunch with her and her sister-in-law.

"They were just two eccentric old ladies, and it was like some sort of Merchant-Ivory film—we had gin-and-tonics on the front lawn. And she'd been quite offish on the phone, saying she didn't have any time, and when I got there... well, it was just one of those experiences that's really moving. I think the thing with photographing people is that sometimes you see something in them that you don't necessarily see otherwise, or maybe you have the excuse to look a bit deeper. Sometimes it's just a look in someone's eyes, but you get a real glimpse of their humanity in the middle of shooting a portrait. And that was one of those times—a really lovely moment."

Barlow—who looks every bit the trip-hopping street kid in his T-shirt, baggy trousers and carefully dyed skull cut—has been sitting quietly all this time, arms folded, scowl cemented in place. Finally, he explodes. "Can we talk about something *real*?" he barks at his stunned partner.

"This is real!" Rhodes snaps.

Barlow rolls his eyes. "Well, it is real... to you! I don't understand all those guys, you know... But I've got a Mapplethorpe book! I own a camera!" The podium his, he proceeds to tell his side of the Lamb tale. How did he become so fascinated with percussion? He grins—he's on familiar turf. "It was

by Tom Lanham



# The Odd Couple

Animal from the Muppets! Animal *ruled* as a drummer! And the simplicity of it is great—you don't have to sing along or get in that sort of a mindset. I think I was about nine, and I just had some saucepans and spoons, and I remember hitting along to Boney M's 'Night Flight To Venus.' And I thought 'Fuck! *This* is the thing for me!'"

Still in his teens, Barlow moved with his family to Philadelphia, where he discovered—and hung out with—hip-hopsters like Cypress Hill. "But hip-hop had heavy drums that didn't *do* anything," he recalls. "That was one of the most important things I learned in America. And funk from before, I realized, was just like you standing there with your dick in your hand a lot of the time."

Rhodes clears her throat. "Sorry? Where does that leave me? And that's a very reductionist view of funk music..."

"Yeah, but I didn't say anything during your *photo thing*," Barlow interjects. "So you've gotta shut up now!"

"Because you *couldn't* say anything!" snickers Rhodes.

After Barlow returned to Britain's thriving techno scene and began landing DJ/engineering gigs, a friend suggested he phone Rhodes, who had decided to sing her poetry and was searching for the right musical collaborator. When did Barlow admit that vocals were necessary? "I never *did*!" he retorts. "And I still completely deny that I need vocals. The world would be a better place without vocals, it really would."

Rhodes raises her hand timidly. "Can I speak now? I take exception to you saying vocals are unnecessary. I love lyrics and vocals and I don't think they're something that you can ever over-use. I even love whistling along to songs. And I don't know how much of this is generational, but there are a lot of boys your age making what you'd call 'boy's music'—electronic music is something that boys have to get out of their system at a certain stage in their lives."

Barlow is aghast. He starts sputtering. "That's... so... not very... politically correct! 'Have to get it out of their systems'? It's a whole way of life!"

"Well, I didn't start writing lyrics until a few years ago," says Rhodes, in almost motherly tones. "And I couldn't have written the lyrics that I write now when I was your age. I didn't *want* to. It's a



need in me to write lyrics. And I'd like to review this argument in ten years' time. And I'm not saying that in a patronizing way, but I really believe that in ten years you'll have found a song with vocals that really moves you."

Barlow doesn't buy it. "And then there'll be someone ten years younger than me, with a new, exciting, *better* kind of sound. It's about change, about getting things done. When I'm ten years older, I won't have nearly as much capacity to make new and different music, because I'll already be set in my ways." He stops for a second, and it suddenly hits him. He and his collaborator have been verbally duking it out for over 15 minutes. Why? "Maybe this is all because... a singer killed my mom! Yeah! *That's* it! We have a breakthrough!"

It's up to rational Rhodes to make sense of the whole affair. "Basically," she sighs, leaning back in her chair, exhausted, "when you talk to Lamb, you're talking to two very distinct opinions. For Andy, vocals are inconsequential and electronic music's where it's at; for me, the song is the central thing."

"But why did we end up arguing?" puzzles Barlow.

If there wasn't air conditioning in the room before, there's sure a chilly breeze right now as Rhodes responds: "Well, you got all stropic because we were talking about photography and you couldn't join in. That's what happened. You just get all *stropic* sometimes."★

photography by  
Karen Lamond





## Same Band, Different Wagon by Chris Nickson

A movie about a junkie, a handful of novels by people with broad wee accents, and Scotland has suddenly become hip. Which means the time might be just right for Glasgow's Teenage Fanclub to come to the front of the pack again with their new album, *Songs From Northern Britain*.

"Maybe we can jump on the bandwagon," Norman Blake offers. "After all, Primal Scream's got a new album, and they're good mates with Irvine Welsh, so maybe we can ride on the back of that! There's a really good music scene in Glasgow right now—good bands, good labels, and better clubs than there have ever been."

The last few years have been a tough slog for the Fannies, and you can blame 1991's glorious *Bandwagonesque*, where Neil Young and Big Star met pure pop for then people. "When we brought it out, there was tons of hype surrounding it," Blake recalls. "We didn't feel that comfortable with the album. We'd recorded it in a month, and we didn't expect that kind of response, which was just over the top. In the long term, I think it's damaged us in America. After that, *13* didn't do well. Then with *Grand Prix*, people came back on our side—which was lucky! But it didn't really happen in America. We would like to do well here. Sometimes it's your time and sometimes it's not, and

there's not much you can do about it. If we get the breaks here, brilliant. But ultimately it's the music you live or die by."

And the music on the new album is a definite return to the nest, remarkably Byrds-ish and more than a tad summery. "I think it's because of the harmonies. We've always used harmonies, and not many people do that anymore, close harmony

**"Sometimes  
it's your time  
and sometimes it's  
not, and there's not  
much you can  
do about it."**

all the way through a song, which the Byrds did. We'd planned to record and mix the album in seven weeks. But after four weeks of recording, we knew we'd be pushing it, so we used the time to record, then mix later. It turned out well, since it gave us a good bit of time away from the songs, and they were fresher. I was listening to Badfinger a lot then. I listen to all sorts of things, old and new. So I'm influenced by contemporary things as well."

Teenage Fanclub has three songwriters and singers (Blake,

fellow guitarist Raymond McGinley, and bassist Gerry Love; Paul Quinn is back in the drum seat), but together they make a seamless whole. "We just kind of split it three ways," Blake says. "We get together and play a load of songs, pick the ones we're happiest with, and they'll go on the album. It's always been quite easy, since we get on pretty well. We're not really confrontational—we work it out. The writer tends to sing his song and be in control of the arrangement. There's less of a burden on one person to write, and it makes it easier to keep up the quality of the work. We've been playing together for a long time now, and after so many records you develop your own style. It's quite intuitive, in many ways. A lot of it's very traditional, but there are things that are definitely ours—the guitar playing, and some of the arrangements."

Teenage Fanclub has the songs, it's got the pedigree, it's got those of-the-moment Scots accents—and bands like Oasis have made its breed of '60s-derived pop fashionable again. "We've been making this kind of music for a long time," Blake observes. "Back in 1990, we were getting slagged off for it in the British press. And now it's okay for people to be very obviously influenced by the Beatles, and plagiarism is acceptable. It's ironic and rather amusing, the way it's come full circle."★





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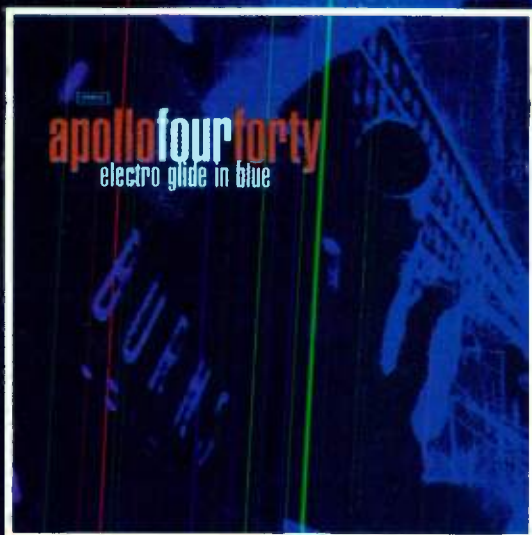
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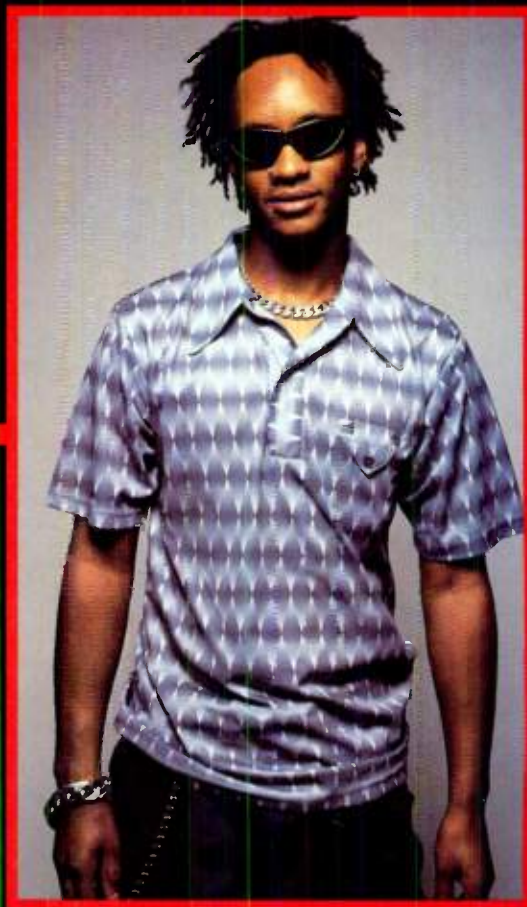
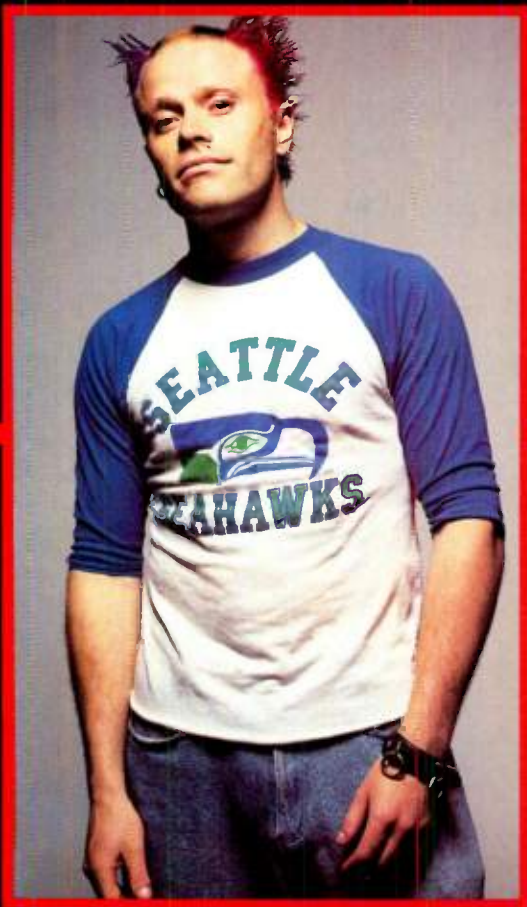
# prodigy

## **Budding world travelers, be advised;**

there are some situations even the most detailed *Let's Go* guides fail to address. Tonight, Leeroy Thornhill, the Prodigy's dancer, is trying his best to cope with one such scenario. Things haven't gotten off to a good start here in Atlanta, the last stop on the quartet's ten-date American tour. First, the airline lost a piece of madman Keith Flint's luggage. Then the band popped by the club, and discovered the sound system hadn't been spruced up since its last visit—four years ago. "We thought we might have gotten a bit of an upgrade," grumbles musical whiz Liam Howlett. Worst of all, they couldn't find anywhere to purchase rolling papers between the airport and their hotel, and have just spent a fruitless hour combing the mega-mall across the highway.

**Photography by Chris Cuffaro**





## We Didn't Start The Fire

L-R: Liam Howlett / Leeroy Thornhill / Keith Flint / Maxim Reality

"Of all the situations," groans Thornhill. "You've got weed and nothing to smoke it in. That's ten times worse than not having any at all!" He ends up performing a delicate marijuana transfusion on a normal cigarette. You have to admire his resourcefulness. But after almost seven years in the pop music game, the Prodigy knows all too well that you have to be prepared for anything when you step off your home turf.

Compared to the rest of the world, mainstream America is discovering the Prodigy very late in the game. In 1991, the band's underground party fave "Charly" (inspired by a classic British cartoon) burst into the U.K. charts and soared to #3, thrusting the foursome—Howlett, Flint, Thornhill and Maxim Reality—into the eye of the pop maelstrom. Elektra picked up the group Stateside, releasing its first album, *Experience*, in 1992. But despite a subsequent series of hits overseas, including "Fire," "Out Of Space" and "Wind It Up," for the most part the Prodigy failed to ignite on Yankee soil. "There is a foundation here, though," stresses Maxim. "We've got quite an underground following, but basically it's small. But it's always there, in most cities."

Story by Kurt B. Reighley

# "We didn't come over with the Chemical Brothers and the Orb as an electronic package from England."

Those were the fans who bought the Prodigy's second album, *Music For The Jilted Generation*, when it first came out in 1994. In March 1996, the Prodigy returned to the European charts with "Firestarter." The tune went straight in at #1 in Britain (the group's first time in the top spot), and stayed there for three weeks. The track fused chunks of guitar, disorienting backwards effects, and a classic Art Of Noise sample into a bristling slice of what the quartet told the media (in jest) was "electronic punk." And front and center was a snarling vocal by Flint. He'd long been the subject of countless deranged photos, but here at last was a voice to match the visage. When the British caught sight of Keith's demented performance (and demonic new haircut) in the accompanying video, *Top Of The Pops* suddenly had a record number of viewer complaints to deflect. In America, video programmers leaped on the clip.

Suddenly, arguments that electronic dance music acts were "faceless" began to crumble. Heavy MTV rotation eventually pushed the single to #30 in America, and moved enough copies to merit gold certification. The Chemical Brothers' remix of the three-year-old

"Voodoo People" has revitalized interest in *Jilted Generation*, which now boasts domestic sales in excess of 250,000. "America just caught on to 'Firestarter,'" sighs Thornhill. "Most people see 'Firestarter' and think we're some new band."

To this day, Howlett can't explain why "Firestarter" has connected with so many people. And he wrote the damn song. "Why the great fuss for the Chemical Brothers, or Underworld's 'Born Slippy'?" he wonders the next morning. "That track just came out of experimenting, messing around in the studio. Not from thinking 'Oh, I've got to write a single, or I've got to write tracks for the album.'" It was originally intended to be an instrumental, but when Keith heard it he had other ideas. "I called him in and said 'Listen to this track—it's the first instrumental for the new album. It's a bit more of a rock vibe.' And he was like 'Yeah, the beats are wicked, I'm really into this—I wouldn't mind having a go at some vocals on this.'"

Liam was hesitant, but acquiesced, and they sat down to cobbling together a lyric. A new arrangement was whipped up, and the duo trotted

off to record Keith's vocals. "I took it up to London, still not fully knowing what Keith's voice would sound like. And then he did the vocals, and to be honest with you, I was really excited." They played it over and over on the drive back home. And then Keith popped on the headphones, and spent another couple of hours holed away in Liam's studio, just hitting "Rewind" and "Play."

It had been over a year since the Prodigy's last single, "Poison," which had already aged a bit by the time it was pulled off *Jilted Generation*. "We quite obviously needed to release something," Liam says.

"Firestarter" proved "a perfect comeback. Something that was raw and hard, and a full-on progression from everything else... When you actually look at the track—the performances, the video, the whole thing—it really does incorporate the Prodigy as a unit, and our whole sound. And because Keith can perform it on stage, and the way he does it, the way he gets his energy across, that obviously helped the track 60 percent."

Keith's charismatic stage presence has always distinguished the band's explosive performances. From the outset, when Howlett first recruited Thornhill, Reality and



Flint to provide on-stage diversion from his frantic knob-twiddling, the Prodigy has been primarily a live act. "Our stage show is always changing," confirms Thornhill. "It's always moving, nothing's ever standing still." Arms flailing, fists pounding, bodies quivering—there might be audiences that don't enjoy the Prodigy's sound, but you'd be hard pressed to drum up the patron who thought its stage show was boring. "I'd like to meet that man," Thornhill chortles. "Because he's probably dead—some stiff at the back of the hall."

Sporting four shades of hair today (black, white, red and purple), Flint is far and away the most recognizable member of the band (Howlett, on the other hand, claims he strolls, unrecognized, through the crowd after gigs all the time). As he dashes through the lobby, the matronly hotel maids insist on fussing over him, even though they aren't exactly sure which rock star he might be. When the Prodigy entourage returns to the hotel in the wee small hours, he scurries around the night janitor like a mischievous crab, trying to unplug



the poor man's vacuum cleaner. But those episodes aside, he's keeping a decidedly low profile as the tour winds down. When I do corner him backstage, he smiles and points out that I've shaved and colored my hair since last we met. Quips about the pot calling the kettle black are exchanged, and that's that. Quality time with Keith is precious these days. "A lot of people are scared of Keith," observes Leeroy. "'Oooh, he's the Firestarter.'" It seems the essential element of humor present in the Prodigy's image has been mistaken by many Americans for menace. "We do photo shoots and they go 'c'mon, be mean, give me some aggression!' That's like someone saying 'show me the faces you make when you're fucking!' Please. I don't do that, unless I'm doing it!"

The triumph of "Firestarter" was arguably the final piece the American mainstream music industry required to appreciate the commercial potential of electronic music. Suddenly, the big boys came calling for Liam and friends. The group ultimately opted for Maverick (purportedly to the tune of five million dollars), due to its proven track record of sticking by all its artists, from the big, commercial ones (Alanis Morissette, Candlebox) to the smaller, eccentric acts (Me'Shell NdegéOcello). The union seems to be proceeding smoothly so far. "We've had meetings with them, and we feel like they understand us," says Leeroy.

Regardless, Maverick is still a big label, and the band has had to put its foot down more than once, refusing excessive radio or press obligations while touring. Fortunately, vanity labels traditionally display a deeper understanding of the needs of their artists, and with Madonna at the helm, the boys seem to be well looked after (although she did express concern regarding the song title "Smack My Bitch Up"). "It's good that Maverick's set up and run the way it is, because obviously they understand that part," concurs Maxim. "A normal record company—EMI, Sony, whatever—is just people that know they've got to push this group to make money. That's their job. They don't understand the goings-on of being on the road."

But refusing to color within the lines rarely wins a "new" band big points. Maxim shrugs. "We've had the same problems everywhere else. For the first three or four years we weren't accepted in England. We didn't follow any of the rules: *Top Of The Pops*, Radio 1 and all the national stuff." In fact, the foursome are so dedicated to hoeing their own row, they even turned down an opening slot on the first leg of the American U2 tour, because they didn't feel they were ready to play for mammoth stadium crowds. They intend to crack America the same way they did Europe, with strong singles and a captivating shows in suitable venues. "That's not going to change here," says Maxim of the game plan. "We're not suddenly going to be this newfangled thing and get taken out of context."

**T**he Prodigy's just-released third album, *Fat Of The Land*, has been hotly anticipated for the better part of a year, despite numerous postponements. Granted, the band had plenty on its plate even before America caught wind of "Firestarter," but what the hell took so long? According to Liam (who writes and produces the tracks virtually single-handedly), expectations were running a wee bit too high "even before 'Firestarter' came out. I'd done demos for tracks I wasn't even sure were gonna be on the album. But the NME printed 'the Prodigy's album will be out in four months,' or something like that." Suddenly, the race was on.

Ideally, Liam likes to devote a full year to writing and recording an album. "That's not a year recording every day," he explains, "but probably doing one track every two weeks, and then I have three weeks off. I didn't want to go into the studio and just go bang-bang-bang with all these tracks." So "working on the album" entailed spending a month snowboarding, going on holiday with his longtime girlfriend, and touring Australia. When the group released the European single "Breathe" (its second U.K. #1) last November, Liam toyed with the notion of cranking out the rest of a record. But he didn't want to rush the creative process just to assuage the fears of nervous record companies. And it was still a bit of a crush at the end; the closer completion drew, the more Liam procrastinated. Eventually, the band even put off its scheduled Stateside jaunt. "We put this American tour back, which we really didn't want to do, but it was the only way I felt I was gonna get it finished."

Ultimately, the main party looking over Liam's shoulder is Liam. "People do find it hard to believe I do everything on my own at this level," he grins. "What, you don't have a producer? An engineer? Someone in there with you?" No, not really. Why? "I've always done it on me own." He works at home, setting his own pace (although he constantly gets feedback and input from the other three, as well as close friends). As time began to drag on, and Liam only had seven cuts in the can, certain folks started making rumblings about getting someone in the studio to stoke his progress. One bummer at the group's U.K. label, XL Recordings, was especially persistent, albeit good-natured. "Sometimes he'd ring me up just to see if he could get ahold of me," laughs Liam. "Why are you answering the phone? You should be holed up in the studio!"

He likens the final days to Bill Murray's role in *Groundhog Day*. "For two months, that was me, recording the album. Every morning, same morning, same thing. The last month was hell." Miraculously, he pulled it off, whipping off the slamming "Serial Thriller" and fine-crafting details of mixing and sequencing even as the others packed their bags for America. "My worries are basically over," he sighs. "I've done my bit of the bargain. I've recorded the record."

**"We've had the same problems everywhere. We didn't follow any of the rules."**

**"Our stage show is always changing. Nothing's ever standing still."**

And what of the jackpot question: How does *Fat Of The Land* sound? "It's not really a club album, but we're not really a club band," says Liam. A couple of tracks, most notably the loopy "Funky Shit," hearken back to the dancefloor-oriented grooves of *Experience*, but for the most part the new album continues the progression that took shape in the summer of '93 with the release of "One Love," placing an increased emphasis on elements of hip-hop and rock. "Basically, [the new album] is a soundtrack for our live show.

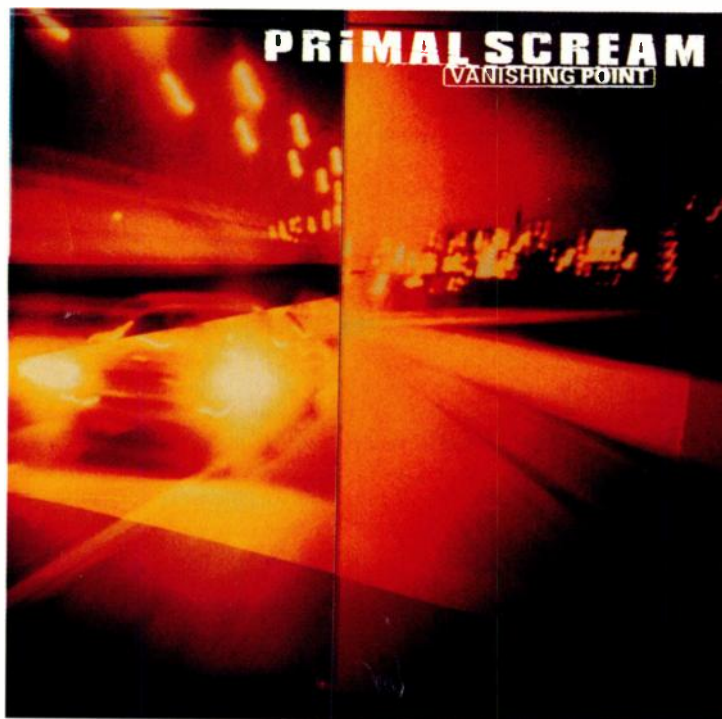
"*Jilted* was the first step towards this record," he adds. He regards the addition of guitars and more vocals as an important strategic move, "just enough to give this band the personality it needed, to take it away from just a keyboard player with three dancers. It's a really important move for us."

*Fat Of The Land* seems a funny title for a record that sounds so consistently lean; not anemic, but sinewy. Stylistically, the album covers plenty of ground, from the moody "Climbatize" to a rapid-fire cover of L7's "Fuel My Fire," featuring backing vocals from Saffron of Republica. And then there's Liam's favorite cut, a collaboration with Kool Keith of Ultramagnetic MCs/Dr. Octagon fame. Having already sampled (and compensated) the rapper on

an early single, "Out Of Space," Liam was ecstatic when his comment in *URB* that he'd love to write something with Keith actually came to fruition. "It became the simplest track on the album, but for me, it's the most solid, in a continuous groove," he says. "I didn't want to fuck with his vocals too much. I really liked the flow of lyrics. I was just giving him respect, saying 'this is all this track needs, I don't need to put all these other sounds in.'"

At the other end of the spectrum is "Narayan," an Eastern-flavored jam featuring Crispian Mills of Kula Shaker. "Originally I was gonna work with Perry Farrell from Jane's Addiction." Porno For Pyros and the Prodigy had toured Australia together with the Big Day Out festival, and Liam found Perry's voice a source of tremendous inspiration. "So I approached him, sent him the track I'd done, and he rung us at home and said 'Yeah, I'm really into it, it sounds wicked—I wanna do this.'" There was just one stipulation. At the time, Farrell was trying to pull off his ill-fated ENIT shows. "And he said to us, 'If you play this festival, I'll do the track.'" Liam looked at his packed concert schedule, and declined. "And he was like 'Well, if you can't do the festivals, I can't do the track.'" Ouch.

Discouraged but undaunted, he scrapped the tune and decided to start from scratch with the slightly



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less in-demand Mills, who had made a good impression on him with Kula Shaker's single "Tattva." He sent Mills a tape of the proposed cut, and the two scheduled a studio date. "He wrote the lyrics on the train, half an hour before he'd arrived, which I thought was pretty cool," says Liam. "He told me after he'd actually recorded it." Crispian nailed the main vocal quickly. "And then he spent the next three hours doing this mantra at the end," he adds. "And I was sitting there, during this mantra recording session, going 'I don't even know if I'm gonna use this for the track, because it's beginning to sound a bit too Kula Shaker.'" But when Liam started mixing the track, he realized that a little something extra was required. "I felt the track needed a few more angles. The original didn't have enough different sections that worked." So he tacked on the mantra, and voilà!

Of course, releasing a hard dance track with Eastern timbres featuring a guest vocal by the leader of a prominent Britpop band isn't going to minimize the persistent comparisons to the other golden boys of electronic music, the Chemical Brothers. "It's chalk and cheese, it really is," insists Liam. "They're a club band. I don't look at the Prodigy as a DJ/club band. The records that

they write, even though they're becoming more songs as time goes on, they're records they can play in clubs, DJ tunes. It's important for them to have an extra 16 bars, to spread the whole thing out. With us, it's more a question of having the most impact. Get rid of the eight bars that makes it drag on a bit too long!"

As a band with a long and well-documented history, the Prodigy is understandably discouraged when it gets lumped under the expansive banner "electronica." "We've been going six and a half years. We didn't come over with the Chemical Brothers and the Orb as an electronic package from England," stresses Leeroy. "Not that we've got anything against the other two groups at all, but we can stand on our own two feet."

"The first sentence we open most interviews with is 'Electronica? What the fuck is that all about?'" agrees Liam. "Why add an 'a' on the end? Why is that there? The whole thing just makes me laugh." He suspects the culprit is some lazy suit who needed a buzzword that crammed a plethora of sounds into a market-friendly term, and dreamt up "electronica." "I think the Chemical Brothers feel the same way I do, too," he adds. "And if we find out who that dude is, we'll slap him."★

☉ "SMACK MY BITCH UP" BY PRODIGY APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

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# TINDERSTICKS

Amid the supple orchestration and pain-wracked piano of *Curtains*, the latest from London's Tindersticks, there's the anomalous "Ballad Of Tindersticks," which breaks from the band's usual dark cabaret so starkly it almost jars the record to an aesthetic halt. Over a distant, lounge-jazzy arrangement (courtesy of organist Dave Boulter), *basso profundo* Stuart Staples recounts, spoken-word style, his band's first immersions in American show biz: "We're so easy/Taking turns having our photo taken... decanters of cheap whiskey in our hand/Driving to Manhattan on a date with a starlet/It's just talent—that's what people pay the money to see/Who are we to argue?" Indeed.

But it's much more than a tour diary, Staples says over afternoon cocktails at his neighborhood London pub. It's the story of how, over the course of recent recording sessions, it was nearly "curtains" for the Tindersticks. After two critically lauded studio discs (and a couple of remarkable live documents), Staples was ready to throw in the towel, to walk away from his high-profile career. The "it's just talent" line, he says, "was actually referring to someone else—looking at someone else and being really appalled, but then realizing that you've got that inside yourself as well. Just believing it and going along with the whole attitude behind this"—and a sneer curls the corners of his lips—"rock 'n' roll *bullshit*."

"And it's not really about your ego," continues Staples, speaking in a husky rasp that's even deeper than his sepulchral singing voice. "It's about losing sense of what's important about what you do. We started this band with this ready-made attitude, and

Isabella Rossellini whispering alongside Staples on the Gainsbourg/Bardot-reminiscent "A Marriage Made In Heaven." Add to this the Tindersticks' recent soundtrack to Claire Denis's quiet little film, *Nenette Et Boni* (the director was so wowed by one of the group's concerts, she pressed them into doing the score), and you've got a pretty optimistic scenario. Staples also looks the part of a star—usually outfitted by Timothy Everest, today he's sporting a classy blue sport jacket with his designer jeans and expensive-looking suede loafers, and his silver-streaked hair is brushed into a subtle but immaculate disarray. As the clock strikes six and laborers begin to fill the bar, their eyes gradually turn from the televised cricket match to Staples; the Oasis-loving lugs know they've just been outclassed, and it seems to rankle them.

Unfazed, Staples ventures on. He views the oddball "Ballad" as perfectly logical for *Curtains*: "To me, the song doesn't make sense *outside* the record—I think it's totally integral to it. And there's

so much on the record about seeing the important things in life, like purity, and whether that's purity in music or the purity of a relationship doesn't matter. But there's so much bullshit to pull you away from that." Such as? Staples takes a drink and thinks for a minute. For example, he continues,

"When I've been on tour in the past, it's just so easy to start playing yourself, to just do what people expect you to do because it's very easy to settle into. It's the idea that you can get away with *anything*—you can just be this idea of what your real self is. It's not like being real, but it's just easy to do."

Films. Books. The Internet. Staples believes that much of what's occurring in today's society is "based on distraction." And modern music? "It just feels at the moment that—even with things I really

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"ON TOUR, IT'S JUST SO EASY TO START PLAYING YOURSELF—YOU CAN JUST BE THIS IDEA OF WHAT YOUR REAL SELF IS. IT'S THE IDEA THAT YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING."

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we never talked about it—everything was natural. So even if people thought we were really awful, we just saw the writing together as the most important thing, and the songs we wrote as *the* thing, and everything else was just secondary to that. And there was definitely a time when we lost sight of that."

Odd, then, that *Curtains* should wind up being the sextet's most cohesive, fully realized work to date. It's also got a pair of all-star duet cameos: Ann Magnuson on the violin-laced "Buried Bones," and





## HIS LATEST FLAME BY TOM LANHAM



want to like—because of their lack of imagination, end up being kind of soulless. I'll go and put on an old Al Green record instead." And believe it or not, he swears, he never discussed these emotions with his bandmates until this year. Until it was almost too late. "I don't think in five years, we've ever had an argument. So the idea of us breaking up is more like me, myself, getting to a stage where I don't want to do this anymore, and that's all it can be for anybody. No one's got the power in the band to say 'You're sacked!'—all you can say is 'I don't want to do this anymore.'"

"So when we actually got to talking about it—which we hadn't done in five years—it became apparent what people actually cared about, what was important. And once we talked about it, we all understood that this is the best time to be in this band. It's better than it's ever been. And I realized that if you actually approach things with the right kind of attitude and passion and you don't do things as a chore, then it comes across." For instance, Staples told himself that "A Marriage Made In Heaven"—which told the tale of a pop singer falling for a vixen from the silver screen—wouldn't be complete until Rossellini was brought into the project. "The only way the song was going to get to

where it had to go was for it to be real," he explains. "It took a long time to make it happen, but we never even considered anybody else but her."

It's a peculiar, melancholy brand of voodoo that the Tindersticks practice. And it stands to reason that, sooner or later, Staples would fall victim to one of his own intoxicating spells. He points out the pub window to a doorway across the street, where—only a few months ago—he was inspired to write his current single "Bathtime" from "this overall feeling of being here and hating everything—I'd simply had enough." But isn't he happy that he has such a cathartic outlet for his emotions? And what got him started singing these dark thoughts in the first place? Staples smiles secretively. "I've got no idea," he answers. "When I started at 16, I probably wanted to be in a band for all the reasons that everyone wants to be in one—this idea of glamour and girls. But you lose that. It turns into something else."

"Like now—I came so close to walking away from it, I had to come to grips with why I wanted to carry on. And the closest I could come to it was, I'm 31 years old now, this is what I do with my life, and I want to be proud of it. I want to be doing something with my life that I think is worthwhile."★

# reviews

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

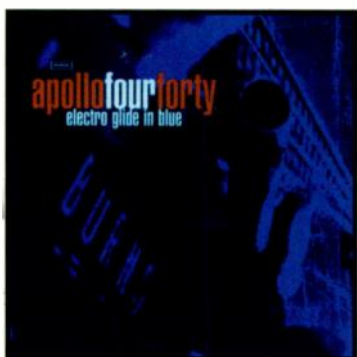
"That was the aura around *Cannibal*, that we were fuckin' murderers, but if we were murderers, we woulda been in jail and not able to put out five, six albums." — **Chris Barnes of Six Feet Under**, on the band's reputation.



**DATALOG:** Released May 27.  
**FILE UNDER:** Ethereal, haunting neo-classical.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Ligeti, Miranda Sex Garden, Rasputina.

## AMBER ASYLUM / *The Natural Philosophy Of Love* / Release

Violinist and avant-garde composer Kris Force has aligned herself with some of rock's most apocalyptic visionaries in the last few years, contributing to recent recordings from artists like Swans and Neurosis. So it's surprising that her own ensemble, Amber Asylum, is a deliberately delicate and understated affair—even a bit frilly in places, thanks to Force's lilting soprano. Amber Asylum is a trio, using violin, cello, and e-bowed guitar to create gentle ballads. Force draws largely on madrigals for inspiration, but there's no vocal harmonizing; her solitary, plaintive voice is the lone landmark rising out of an often atonal background. The atonality is never discordant, though, usually just drone-y and hypnotizing, a gentle syrup lulling the listener into contemplative languor. It's a melancholy, haunting mix, but it also leaves you wondering what else Force is capable of—few songs reach any sort of crescendo, and the drumming never moves beyond a funereal thump. *The Natural Philosophy Of Love* is powerful in its tranquil beauty, but a few outbreaks of tempestuous Swans-style pounding might well have added much to the intensity level. **DAVID JARMAN**



**DATALOG:** Release date: Sept. 9. U.S. version appends "Raw Power."  
**FILE UNDER:** Rock/drum 'n' bass hybrids.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** New Order, Bowie's "Little Wonder," Beats International.

## APOLLO 440 / *Electro Glide In Blue* / 550 ●

The star English remix trio Apollo 440 is firmly entrenched in the European drum 'n' bass scene, but it hasn't given up its love for non-dance music—especially rock. (Their new English single is called "Raw Power.") The difference between @440 and the various not-so-hot hybridizers of pop hooks and double-time breakbeats is that they use rock as an element of drum 'n' bass, not the other way around. When *Electro Glide In Blue* (the group's second album of its own material) came out overseas last year, it scored a humongous hit with "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Dub," which treats an Eddie Van Halen guitar sample as a *rhythmic* hook, gives the David Lee Roth part a Jamaican accent, and works it all into that high-speed clatter-groove. Most of the rest of *Electro Glide* successfully co-opts other non-dance styles into the world of the breakbeat: big-band jazz drum solos in "Krupa," '70s fusion in "White Man's Throat" (named after what Miles Davis said he wanted to die with his hands around), slide guitar on "Tears Of The Gods." Not all of their experiments work out, but only the bathetic "Pain In Any Language" (the final recording by the Associates' Billy MacKenzie) fails altogether. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

AMBER ASYLUM / *The Natural Philosophy Of Love* / Release  
 APOLLO 440 / *Electro Glide In Blue* / 550 ●  
 CATHERINE WHEEL / *Adam & Eve* / Mercury  
 CO'TONMOUTH, TEXAS / *Anti-Social Butterfly* / Virgin  
 DAMBUILDERS / *The Dambuilders* / EastWest-EEG  
 DOWN BY LAW / *Last Of The Sharpshooters* / Epitaph ●  
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 T MODEL FORD / *Pee Wee Get My Gun* / Fat Possum  
 GREG GARING / *Alone* / Revolution-WB  
 GEEZER / *Black Science* / TVT  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS / *Great Jewish Music*: Burt Bacharach / Tzadik  
 GRAHAM HAYNES / *Tones For The 21st Century* / Antilles-Verve  
 LICORICE ROOTS / *Melodeon* / Moodfood  
 ARTO LINDSAY / *Mundo Civilizado* / Bar/None  
 ARTO LINDSAY / *Hyper Civilizado* / Gramavision-Rykodisc  
 PAT MACDONALD / *Pat MacDonald Sleeps With His Guitar* / Ark 21 ●  
 ERIC MATTHEWS / *The Lateness Of The Hour* / Sub Pop  
 MONACO / *Music For Pleasure* / Polydor-A&M  
 MOPRISSEY / *Maladjusted* / Mercury  
 μ-Ziq / *Lunatic Harness* / Astralwerks  
 PLEXI / *Cheer Up* / Lava-Atlantic  
 DARREN PRICE / *Under The Flightpath* / NovaMute  
 PRIMUS / *The Brown Album* / Interscope  
 RESERVOIR / *Pink Machine* / Zero Hour  
 RYE COALITION / *Hee Saw Duh Kaet* / Cern Blandsten  
 SCANNER / *Delivery* / Primitive-Rawkus  
 20 MILES / *20 Miles* / Fat Possum  
 VALENTINE SIX / *Valentine Six* / PCP  
 LUKE VIBERT / *Big Soup* / Mo Wax/Hfr/London  
 WEEN / *The Mollusk* / Elektra  
 PAUL WELLER / *Heavy Soul* / Island  
 YATSURA / *jPu:pol* / Primary ●  
 DWIGHT YOAKAM / *Under The Covers* / Reprise





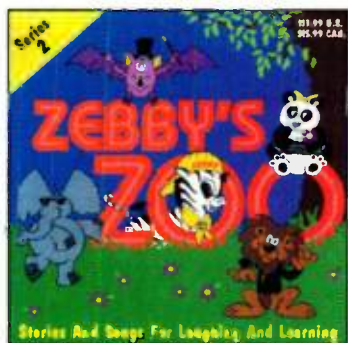
**DANIELLE'S MOUTH**



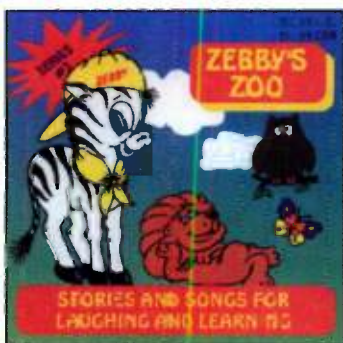
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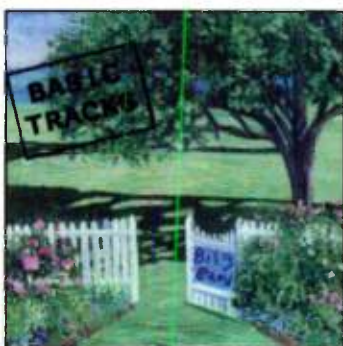
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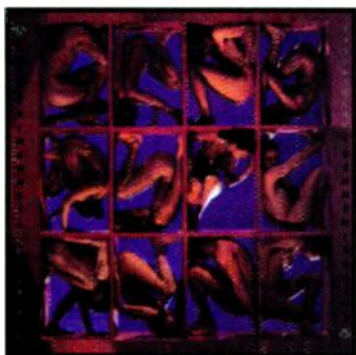
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**CATHERINE WHEEL / Adam & Eve / Mercury**

England's Catherine Wheel may never again harness the dark magic that coursed vibrantly through "Black Metallic," the shimmering single from the group's 1991 debut *Ferment*. But guitarists Rob Dickinson (who also sings) and Brian Futter have been there, done that, and moved on to rockier terrain. They haven't entirely abandoned the swirling surges and deep textures that made *Ferment* such a beguiling head trip. But they've learned to focus the echo, hum, and churn of post-My Bloody Valentine guitars into Pixies-like dynamic explosions, hard-driving psychedelia reminiscent of The Cure's *Disintegration*, and soul-searching pop tunes that bring to mind the heavier side of Radiohead. As a vocalist, Dickinson shares Thom Yorke's penchant for moody introspection, for melodramatic falsetto flourishes, and for seeding clouds of distortion with lyrics that linger intriguingly ("How you gonna feel if Superman and Sonic Youth are fairy tales?" he wonders on "Phantom Of An American Mother"). Elsewhere, Dickinson calls himself "a rock 'n' roll Joe with tales of woe." But the waves of blackly metallic guitars that well up behind his voice throughout *Adam & Eve* make it clear that things will probably never be quite that simple for Catherine Wheel. **MATT ASHARE**

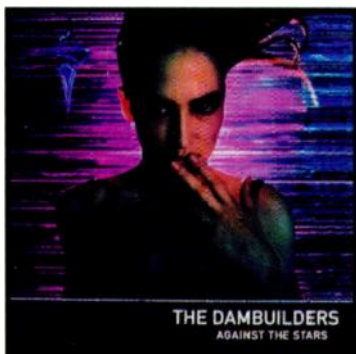
**DATALOG:** Release date: Aug. 26.  
**Produced by** Pink Floyd producer Bob Ezrin.  
**FILE UNDER:** Brit-rock.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Radiohead, The Cure, House Of Love.



**COTTONMOUTH, TEXAS / Anti-Social Butterfly / Virgin**

Jeffrey Liles is the voice behind Cottonmouth, Texas, a spoken word project that fuses his wry and desperate texts with music and drum beats courtesy of his Decadent Dub Team. The current Dub Team, many of whom worked in MC 900 Ft. Jesus, provides the moody din that mimics the noises a big city makes. Liles's big city is Dallas, where, by his telling, gun-toting suburbanites hunt for sport, growing up means smoking pot and drinking beer in a Zeppelin T-shirt, and slacker is king. Liles tells his tales as one who has been to the edge and back, and who isn't afraid to dive back into the wreck to give us the details. *Anti-Social Butterfly* has witty up-front soundbites about being blissfully baked, surviving a near-fatal overdose, pining for a stripper, and dealing with an irritating "dude" who you wish didn't remember your face. In a lighter, but still telling mode, "Hoops" shows Liles philosophizing out loud while shooting hoops. A swish means yes; a brick means no. "I wonder if I should stop sellin' pot," he asks. Swish. "Is there a God?" he asks. Brick. "Wait, let's try this again." Brick. Third try? Swish. **STEVE CIABATTONI**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 15.  
**FILE UNDER:** Banter with beats and no rhymes.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Jim Carroll, William S. Burroughs' *Spare Ass Annie* And *Other Tales*, Soul Coughing.



**DAMBUILDERS / Against The Stars / EastWest-EEG**

If the summer heat has stultified your mind, rest those brain cells with *Against The Stars*. A mindless mix of mid-tempo pop, unrequited love songs and dancey tunes, the Boston quartet's sixth album is likeable and catchy, though it surprisingly reverts to the formulaic. The crisp production betrays cheesy, often boring guitar licks and drumming. Joan Wasser's violin, once a gird-your-loins weapon, never asserts itself as anything but an ornamental afterthought, and Dave Derby's lyrics descend into meaningless dumbness ("To the girl who has everything/From the boy with no clue"). Cribbing his vocal style from Bono, David Lowery and even Bryan Adams, Derby bogs down the ballads when he tries to get by on clearly borrowed sincerity. Wasser fares better, her singing by turns cool, sarcastic and flighty. Sometimes the clichés work, particularly on the boppier tracks, appealing to the reptile brain's involuntary nod-instincts with the familiar beats and Ace Of Base bass lines of "J.P. Jams" and "Discopolis." "Her Story" is also notable, if only as a desexualized version of Def Leppard's "Pour Some Sugar On Me." Still, the band refuses to break out of the polite stuff to get crazy. The album is Ken-doll music: It's clean-cut, harmless and fun, but sadly without heart, brains or balls. **ANNE MARIE CRUZ**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 8.  
**FILE UNDER:** Modern rock lite.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** The Primitives, the Cardigans, Redd Kross.





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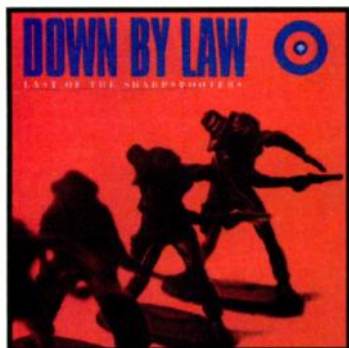


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**DOWN BY LAW / Last Of The Sharpshooters / Epitaph ●**

*Last Of The Sharpshooters* could have come out five years ago, or it could come out five years from now. Down By Law hasn't taken very many chances over the course of its five albums, but then again, it hasn't had to. Frontman Dave Smalley (the guy who started Dag Nasty and sang on All's first two records) is an invaluable commodity: No matter how fast a song's tempo, Smalley *always* sings his vocals instead of just spitting them out. He can put melodic spin on the speediest turn of phrase, and if he has to, he'll drag out a one-syllable word across three notes, just to squeeze in another little melody. In fact, Smalley occasionally sounds like a double-time Elvis Costello. At the same

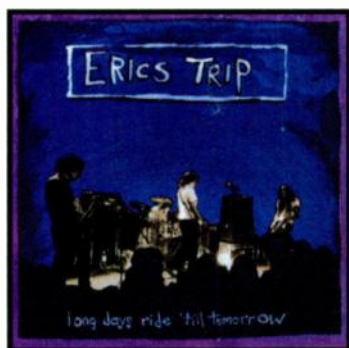
time, bristling guitar lines and speedy tempos give these punk-pop tunes their oomph, and the double-axe work (Smalley on rhythm, Sam Williams on lead) separates DBL from some of its genre's more workaday bands. There are a few missteps here ("Urban Napalm" is

cheesily funky, and some of the lyrics sound like a teenager's socio-political journal scribbles), but that's why you've got a fast forward button, right? Now get back to pogoing. **JENNY ELISCU**

**DATALOG:** Release date: Aug. 26.

**FILE UNDER:** Punk-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** All, Descendents, Black Train Jack.



**ERIC'S TRIP / Long Days Ride 'Till Tomorrow / Sappy**

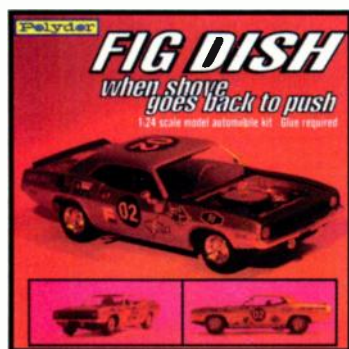
*Long Days Ride 'Till Tomorrow*, a 1990-96 rare-track retrospective, finds Eric's Trip tangled up in its usual preoccupation: being sad and misunderstood. But these (now disbanded) youngsters from Halifax, Nova Scotia somehow always make their self-absorption endearing. You just want to hug them. Rich White and Julie Doiron Clayton sing about lingering regrets and stale promises as if they're too tired or unsure to be angry. The opening song, "Dreaming," uncovers the band's penchant for muting the edges of its sharper emotions, as Clayton softly intones, "It's nothing/You're never here." On "Beatings," when White yells, "Well, fuck!" and Clayton screams back, "Leave me alone!", it's a small, diffident stab at misanthropy. Only the bass and guitars vent any real aggression, at times churning with stinging, stretchy feedback. The band offsets the minor squalls with bell tones and quiet strumming. Mark Gaudet's c'mon-guys-I'll-race-ya drumming tugs the group along, preventing

his bandmates from becoming whiny sulkers. Forever sounding like some random bystander accidentally pushed a record button, Eric's Trip squeezes out every last bit of charm from this basement-tape document with the requisite door squeaks, interview snippets and inside-joke giggling. *Long Days...* chronicles a band perfecting heartfelt resignation and a fitfully apologetic, thoroughly engaging sound. **ANNE MARIE CRUZ**

**DATALOG:** Released May 27.

**FILE UNDER:** Punk's grandchildren, through mists of tape noise.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Husker Du, Small Factory, Sebadoh.



**FIG DISH / When Shove Goes Back To Push / Polydor-A&M ●**

The songs on Fig Dish's second album sound immediately familiar, like you've heard them before and you just can't figure out where. The group sounds kind of like the Replacements, and they've obviously listened to the Beatles, but (except for the deliberately Beach Boys-esque backing vocals on "When Shirts Get Tight" and "Pretty Never Hurts") it's not as though they've copped their style from any one particular pop predecessor. In fact, the Chicago quartet's crunchy, upbeat songs are so damn catchy that they're instantly memorable. Vocalist Blake Smith has one of those guy-next-door voices that never sounds aggravated or kvetch-y, just really earnest. His vocal melodies are relatively light-

hearted, but the snarl of chords and aggressive rhythms that blast alongside him are just dynamic enough to get your blood pumping. What's truly masterful, though, is the way these pieces come together. Every hook is so carefully placed, each shift between verse and chorus so

perfectly timed, that almost every one of these songs will stick to your brain like musical super-glue. Fig Dish isn't reinventing the wheel here, but not everything needs reinventing. **JENNY ELISCU**

**DATALOG:** Release date: Sep. 9.

**FILE UNDER:** Good, clean fun.

**R.I.Y.L.:** *Pleased To Meet Me*-era Replacements, the Figgs, Cheap Trick.



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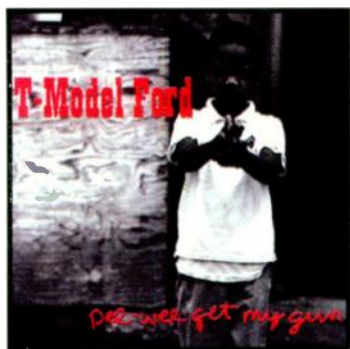
featuring "Sexy Sucker"



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## T MODEL FORD / *Pee Wee Got My Gun* / Fat Possum

Like the engine on a 50-year-old jalopy, once T Model Ford's music starts, it can keep cruising until it runs out of gas or into a brick wall. It backfires, sputters, kicks, and rumbles, but it'll go forever. Fat Possum Records has been pulling this stuff out of the woodwork for the past few years, conjuring up the real-deal Delta Blues like some sort of voodoo alchemist. *Pee Wee's* formula is simple—guitar, drums, and The Blues work together as a unit, with no pretension, little bravado, and a gut-level moan that T Model probably ekes out whether he's in front of a mic or a judge. These ingredients blend naturally and recklessly; T Model pegs a simple groove and follows it to the natural conclusion, and the result is revelation where there might only have been history. But T Model stands only a few inches below the greats of the Delta, and is perhaps more interesting than even fellow Fat Possums R.L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough. This is the timeless blues, so alive and mysterious that it could have been recorded 60 years or 60 minutes ago. **RANDALL ROBERTS**

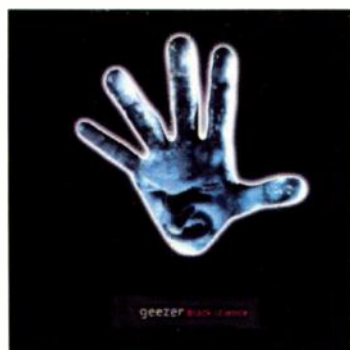
**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 17.  
**FILE UNDER:** Timeless Delta blues.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Jesse Mae Hemphill, R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, John Lee Hooker.



## GREG GARING / *Alone* / Revolution-WB

Singer-songwriter Greg Garing is referring to his emotional state with the title *Alone*, because musically, he gets a lot out of working with producer/engineer David Kahne. A romance-'n'-heartbreak crooner with an appealingly supple alto, Garing never uses florid confession where a classic phrase or a poetic feint will do. His delivery is poised between the heated drama within easy reach of his voice, and the stylish restraint and clean-cut corners that lend his songs punch. Garing has a deep Western streak animating his music; he's not the least bit ashamed of manipulating each song's dynamics to create a little drama. To that end, Kahne differentiates each track, adding an updated sheen using synth loops and processed guitars. While these touches spike up the mix, they're also organically integrated by Garing. Whether it's bent guitar notes squalling over an organ and backup singers in "How The Road Unwinds" or a feverish fiddle solo in "Don't Cry Baby," the songs benefit from a studio hothouse approach. While Garing steps in Eagles or Alan Parsons goo once or twice, and his lyrics could use a broader scope, he's got style and flair to spare. **DANNY HOUSMAN**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 15.  
**FILE UNDER:** Romantic modern troubador.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Jeff Buckley, Jeff Lynne-produced Roy Orbison, Chris Isaak.



## GEEZER / *Black Science* / TVT

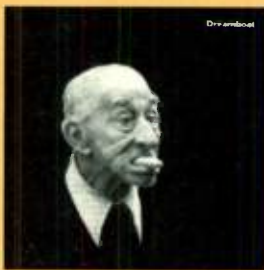
Former Black Sabbath bassist Terry "Geezer" Butler doesn't pretend he approaches songwriting any differently when working with his new band Geezer. So it's not that surprising to hear a similarity between the two bands in their grinding, chromatic riffs. But since Butler is co-writing with guitarist Pedro Howse instead of Tony Iommi and Ozzy Osbourne, Geezer's chord progressions tend to be more rudimentary and thuddy than Sabbath's. Howse's saturated guitar only occasionally defects from the throbbing wall of distortion. This isn't always a bad thing, though. When the band is syncopating its chunky guitars with industrial beats (which is fairly often), the elements form a strong rhythmic foundation. Unfortunately, new vocalist Clark Brown doesn't have a powerful enough delivery to embellish this mesh with demonic fire. (He was recruited because the former Geezer frontman, Fear Factory's Burton C. Bell, couldn't devote enough time to the band.) Brown grunts his way through most of the verses indecipherably. He fares better in the minor-melodic choruses, crooning with an Ozzy inflection, but these moments are too infrequent to redeem the overall sound. Towards the end of *Black Science*, Geezer experiments with guitar samples and drum 'n' bass loops, which ends up sounding unnecessarily forced. Geezer may have his dark side down to a "science," but his band could use a little more black magic. **NEIL GLADSTONE**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 1.  
**FILE UNDER:** Industrial death-metal.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Black Sabbath, Fear Factory, Nine Inch Nails.



# various artists

**Spawn—The Album** (Immortal-Epic/Sony Music Soundtrax) is the soundtrack to the *Spawn* movie, featuring 14 collaborations between electronic types and hard-rock/metal types, organized by the same folks who put together the rock/hip-hop collaborations on the soundtrack to *Judgment Night* a few years ago. Though it doesn't all quite mesh, a couple of the combinations are naturals—come on, Slayer and Atari Teenage Riot *belong* together—and there are a couple of unexpected treats, like D.J. Spooky's intense, swirly drum 'n' bass remix of Metallica's "For Whom The Bell Tolls." Other pairings include Filter and Crystal Method @, Korn and the Dust Bros., and Henry Rollins and Goldie... Talvin Singh is one of the hottest DJs in the U.K.—the lines for his weekly "Anokha" nights at the Blue Note club in London are around the block. **Anokha: Soundz Of The Asian Underground** (Quango-Island) collects a dozen of the Asian/drum 'n' bass tracks that Singh specializes in, including tracks by State Of Bengal @, Singh himself, and the legendary Indian film composer A.R. Rahman. The rhythms are familiar, but the instrumental timbres they're paired with belong more to the worlds of raga and *filmi*. It's neat stuff... **Cheapo Crypt Sampler #2** (Crypt) is just what it sounds like: a bargain-priced sampler of stuff on the garage-rock/sleaze-o-phonic label Crypt, 31 tracks in all. Besides previously released tracks from the likes of the Oblivians, Los Ass-Dragers, the Pagans, Nine Pound Hammer and the Cheater Slicks, it's got a couple of new tracks, including a sharp little "Kashmir" ripoff by the Country



Teasers called "Black Change"... The Cambridge, MA, label Cassiel has put together **Dreamboat**, a 23-track cross-section of indie-pop as it is popped in mid-1997. Stalwarts like Spare Snare, the

Cat's Miaow and Olivia Tremor Control appear alongside interesting newcomers like Stage 65 and Bright, there's a lovely posthumous track by Twig, and the also-recently-disbanded Holiday continue their Magnetic Fields fixation with "Claudia Goes To Grad School"... Blues guitarist and songwriter Rainer Ptacek isn't exactly a household name, but he's what you call a musician's musician, and *The Inner Flame* (Atlantic), a tribute compilation to the ailing Ptacek, has some *big* names on it—PJ Harvey (who does a creepy, chilling version of his "Losin' Ground"), Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, Evan Dando, Jonathan Richman, and Buffalo Tom's Bill Janovitz all turn up. A lot of these songs haven't been released in any form before—even by Ptacek—and the record's a fascinating twist on the tribute-album concept. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

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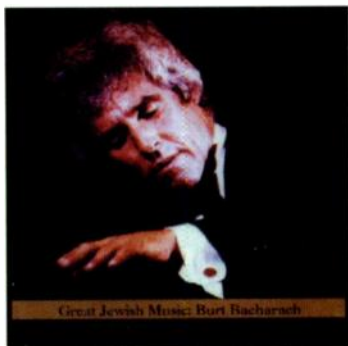
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## VARIOUS ARTISTS / Great Jewish Music: Burt Bacharach / Tzadik

The art-damaged musicians associated with John Zorn's Tzadik label seem such strange bedfellows for the orchestral pop of Burt Bacharach that the idea of a Zorn-organized tribute to the latter initially seems like a bad joke. But Zorn's liner notes make his sincerity clear, both in his respect for Bacharach's music (which is quite harmonically and formally advanced, as pop songs go), and in his desire to reclaim him as part of the history of Jewish musicians in American popular culture. This last point doesn't mean that we get two discs of klezmerized "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head." Zorn wisely gives the artists license to play fast and loose with these familiar compositions. Still, the most successful

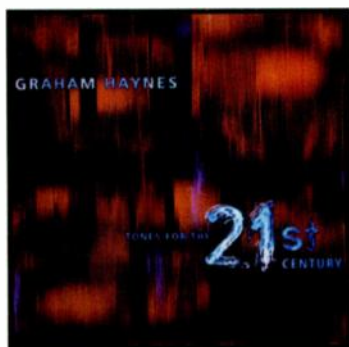
**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 15. Other artists include Lloyd Cole, Marc Ribot, and Medeski, Martin And Wood.

**FILE UNDER:** (Mostly) non-ironic rehabilitation of a versatile composer.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The Kurt Weill tribute *Lost In The Stars*, Dionne Warwick.

renditions here play the music fairly straight and don't bother with the uneven lyrics of Hal David (Bacharach's longtime collaborator): Bill Frisell's solo guitar turn on "What The World Needs Now Is Love," Marie McAuliffe's Gil Evans-ish reharmonization of "I Say A Little Prayer,"

and the always reliable Guy Klucsevsek's accordion medley are all solid performances, free of arty baggage. Not everyone is so respectful: Shelly Hirsch's "What's New Pussycat" (punctuated with shouts of "Pussy!") chops up the song without mercy. Some vocal-based tracks don't come off (Sean Lennon is no Dusty Springfield), but this tribute is a highly listenable blend of reverence and its opposite. **FRANKLIN BRUNO**



## GRAHAM HAYNES / Tones For The 21st Century / Antilles-Verve

While its title might lead one to expect grand-scale compositions along the lines of Stravinsky and Ornette Coleman, Graham Haynes's new album instead makes gentle explorations into a not-entirely-new global village. The most immediately striking aspect of *Tones* is its spare use of cornet, the instrument for which Haynes is best known. While he blows a few choice phrases here and there, the synthesizer dominates, followed by the mixing board. Haynes has designed each song around an organic instrument such as African harp (which sounds like a thumb piano), sitar, or cornet, but the glassy keyboards keep the whole album afloat like a pleasant head fog. The spoken-word segments also function

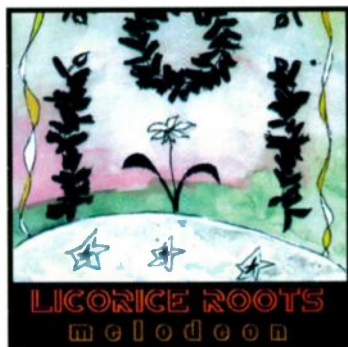
as atmosphere more than poetry, since Tracie Morris and DJ Spazekraft intone their words so slowly and far apart that you'd have to listen in fast-forward to put them together. Morris, especially, may evoke a yoga instructor, which is not a bad thing when you're chilling

out at night. Haynes achieves a delicate cascade of global space jazz, but ultimately *Tones* is less than a vision statement. He gets little friction from pushing the disparate elements together; instead, he lays them side by side and pats them to sleep. **DANNY HOUSMAN**

**DATALOG:** Released Aug. 5.

**FILE UNDER:** Mellow, ambient-jazz fusion.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Ben Neill, Miles Davis's *Sketches Of Spain*, The Orb.



## LICORICE ROOTS / Melodeon / MoodFood

At a time when "spacey music" and "out sounds" usually describe sterile jams, the Licorice Roots are refreshing, if not downright surprising. Trapped in time somewhere between 1967 and 1969, the band (which used to be called Raymond Listen) finds warmth in psychedelic space. A sound so narrowly specialized runs the risk of the style overwhelming the substance, but the Licorice Roots interpret that style through their songs, and not the other way around. "Melodeon" and "Oval River" are two of the most engaging tracks here: poppy, but not cleanly so; trippy and jammy in a way that's not self-indulgent. While the band doesn't always maintain the momentum of its catchiest and best moments, *Melodeon's* weaker spots

don't drag it down—they seem more to just flow along with the light, carefree mood. What's most surprising of all, though, is how uncontrived the record comes off: It sounds totally retro and frighteningly familiar, but it's genuinely good in its own right. Expansion from a fixed

point is rarely done this well, or to this degree of depth. **LIZ CLAYTON**

**DATALOG:** Released July 1.

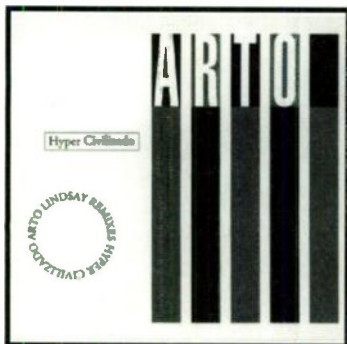
**FILE UNDER:** Late-'60s-style drug-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** "Strawberry Fields Forever," T. Rex, David Bowie's *Hunky Dory*, the Llys.



**ARTO LINDSAY / Mundo Civilizado / Bar/None**  
**ARTO LINDSAY / Hyper Civilizado / Gramavision-Rykodisc**

Arto Lindsay is a musician come unstuck in time and place. With a career that has taken him to the epicenters of many musical communities and vogues (no wave pioneer in late-'70s New York, glossy art rocker in the downtown scene of the '80s, pop producer in early-'90s Brazil), he can't hope to incorporate it all cumulatively into



each new album. Instead, he picks up one thread at a time, making traditional Brazilian music one year, explosive rock the next. Now, by the increasingly sophisticated means of the mix, Lindsay is

finally going for a sort of synthesis. On *Mundo Civilizado*, he employs dozens of acoustic and electronic instruments and collaborators from every point in his career in unique interpretations of dance music, R&B, ballads, even a Prince song. On *Hyper Civilizado*, handpicked DJ's reinterpret the interpretations. Texture is, if not everything on *Mundo*, at least everything distinctive about it.

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 1 (*Mundo*),  
Jul. 9 (*Hyper*).  
**FILE UNDER:** Curus of global fusion.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** David Byrne, Thomas Dolby.

Sometimes, the textures are beautifully unexpected, like the match of the

*tamborims* with Don Byron's sinuous bass clarinet on "Titled." Sometimes they're dark and weird, like the stereo ping-pong of live percussion and samples on "Horizontal." Like David Byrne, Lindsay uses vocals to lighten up the experiments with a sidewise, mocking tone: "How biological can this clock really be/If it doesn't get you going until midnight?" he muses on "Complicity." Behind him, the surdos, djembes, and bacurinha express more tension than he is willing to.

The DJ's who appear on *Hyper Civilizado* mostly work in a laid-back illbient mode that echoes Lindsay's vocal tone. DJ Spooky's "Mundo Civilizado Inversion Mix" is typically lush and dreamy, blurring the sharp instrumental breaks of the original into an extended haze. SPIT takes the opposite approach, husking "Complicity" down to its vocal, adding keyboard noise and drums so spare and cool to the ear that Lindsay's shadowy voice is the most warm and luminous thing on the track. As a rule, the DJ's are great at isolating individual really cool elements of the tracks, as Mutamussik does with "Complicity"'s *surdo* drumbeat, or knitting them into neat little studies in one dynamic, as with Elated System's take on the same song. Unfortunately, their interpretations often feel static, treating a rhythm or riff like a jewel in an elaborate setting. They're lovely in and of themselves, but none of them do justice to Lindsay's uncanny flair for mating the unlike parts of his three decades' work. **ANDREA MOED**

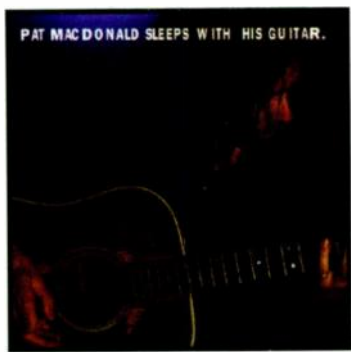
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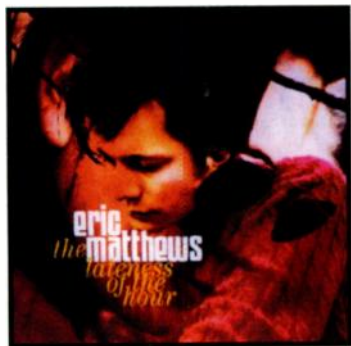
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## PAT MACDONALD / Pat MacDonald Sleeps With His Guitar / Ark 21 ●

Timbuk 3 is now just Timbuk 1, as Pat MacDonald has split with wife Barbara and moved on to a solo career. As you might deduce from the title, this is a breakup album, but not a wallow. Although a few guests, including Timbuk 3 percussionist Wally Ingram, step in, this album is mostly about MacDonald playing the guitar. Gone are the studio layerings of Timbuk 3, leaving his voice and lyrics clothed only in their poetic cynicism. His characters are desperate to be remembered and doomed in their obsessions. "I'm gonna mine you/Refine you/'Til you turn on/'Til you turn on me," he sings in "Turn On Me," while in "Drive Me Around" a man kills himself in a car, then haunts the abandoned vehicle, longing for someone to fill the driver's seat. MacDonald is still more comfortable with a too-clever image (one song is called "Metaphor Ya Baby"), and sometimes bites off more than he can chew ("History Of Man"). But then there's a flash of raw emotion, as in the haunting "Daddy's Down In The Mine." Listening to this album is like walking into a coffee house and finding the strange guy playing the guitar is a brilliant songwriter. Savor the moment. *HEIDI "NO RELATION" MACDONALD*

**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 17.  
**FILE UNDER:** Pickin' up the pieces, Austin style.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Townes Van Zandt.



## ERIC MATTHEWS / The Lateness Of The Hour / Sub Pop

Oregon tunesmith Eric Matthews has been on the verge of discovering the way to San Jose, Burt Bacharach-style, since he emerged as the savvy arranger/instrumentalist half of Cardinal back in 1994. (Australian singer/songwriter Richard Davies was the other half.) But, as good as he's gotten at wrapping artfully restrained guitar pop in plush orchestral arrangements (featuring string sections, saxophones, and Matthews on trumpet, piano, and fluegelhorn), there's still something crucial missing from the richly textured, melancholy of his solo work—namely the kind of memorable hooks, choruses, and melodies that made Bacharach such a consistent winner back in the day. Matthews can be tasteful to the point of dullness, bringing to mind the well-intentioned sterility of some of Paul Weller's mid-'80s Style Council experiments in soul. But just when you've given up on anything interesting happening, a gorgeous string motif whooshes pleasantly through the mix, a bright and punchy guitar lead breaks through the gray, or an invigorating alto sax solo wakes up Matthews' sleepy whisper of a voice. A little more of that would go a long, long way. *MATT ASHARE*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Aug. 26.  
**FILE UNDER:** Chamber pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** The Zombies, Elliott Smith, Aztec Camera.



## MONACO / Music For Pleasure / Polydor-A&M

If you want an example of a sum that's greater than its parts, try New Order. Collectively, its members form one of the most important pop groups to come out of the post-punk era; individually, they've filled the long gaps between New Order albums with some pretty execrable solo material. Bassist Peter Hook was no exception—his early-'90s product *Revenge* tried to sound as little like New Order as possible, opting for an ill-advised fusion of dance tracks and metallic grooves. With *Music For Pleasure*, Hook and his co-conspirator, David Potts, try again with a new name and a new sound... or actually an old sound, for Monaco harks back quite nicely to mid-'80s New Order, when the band was making its first steps away from studied, melancholic minimalism to full-blown but edgy pop. Potts is a dead ringer for Bernard Sumner's detached vocals, as well as his guitar style. But Hook's distinctive and melodic high-on-the-neck bass playing is what carries the day; it pulls the band through its finest tracks, like its perfect summertime single, "What Do You Want From Me?" There's plenty of filler to round out the album, ranging from Euro-disco fluff and a stab at Britpop to a few casually blatant bits of self-plagiarism, but Monaco's best moments are the best of the post-N.O. extracurricular activities. *DAVID JARMAN*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Aug. 12.  
**FILE UNDER:** New Order spinoff.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** New Order, Electronic.



# mixed signals

Like Electric Skychurch, for which he's the official DJ, **JOHN KELLEY** made his mark not in dark, steamy nightclubs, but under moonlit desert skies. Playing a prominent role in California's infamous full moon desert parties, Kelley's hard and funky acid breakbeat style is a staple of the scene, taking crowds to new euphoric heights every time he hits the decks. *Funkydeseartbreaks2* (Moonshine) follows Kelley's widely popular '96 release. While *FDB2* delivers similar goods to the first, this installment presents a smoother, more hypnotic, more enrapturing collection of tracks, mixed down by Kelley's capable hands. If the first installment represented West Coast rave at its peak, *FDB2* delivers the sound of the dawn... Los Angeles DJ **SIMPLY JEFF**'s style is just as his name implies—devoid of fanfare and superstar trimmings. His dedication



to underground dance music and love of diverse artists like Afrika Bambaataa, Joy Division and Earth, Wind & Fire played an important role in his rise as one of the States' finest turntable talents and up-and-coming producers. *Funkdafried* (City Of Angels) is a dynamic mix of the funky breaks, beats and scratches that has made Jeff one of America's most sought-after talents. Anchored by an excellent track selection, featuring Friction & Spice, Uberzone, and Freaky Chakra vs. Single Cell Orchestra, Jeff's energetic and adventurous take on the mix boggles the mind and flirts with the feet...

**CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE** is a favorite of the L.A. rave circuit, a "Blue-Haired Trance Messiah" whose deep, mesmerizing progressive trance sets have made him one of the scene's most beloved sons. *Rise* (Fragrant) is a journey of mind and body that travels from moody, hypnotizing synth cuts to bright, uplifting melodic anthems, highlighting Lawrence's technical skills as well as his ability to build and layer tracks to reach fever pitch and beyond. This disc may be a little harder to find than this month's other California-flavored picks, but if you've been touched by the sound of the trance underground, *Rise* is worth the extra leg-work. **M. IYE COMER**

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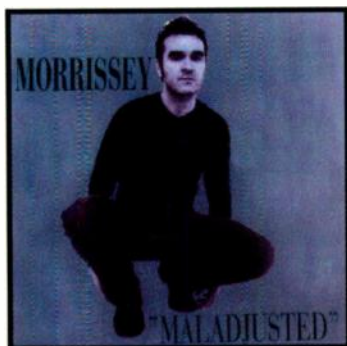
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## MORRISSEY / *Maladjusted* / Mercury

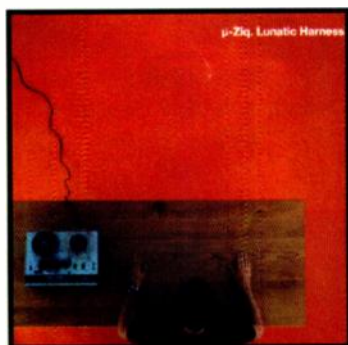
With the exceptions of *Viva Hate* and, perhaps, *Your Arsenal*, all of Morrissey's solo records are uneven affairs: backing bands and songwriting collaborators that fade into anonymity, a few songs with the appropriate *frisson* of glammy guitar, and sundry attempts at stylistic expansion that scream "filler" and fail more often than they succeed. *Maladjusted* doesn't vary these proportions greatly: the closing "Satan Rejected My Soul" ("so take it, it's free") is a winner, while "Alma Matters" and "Ammunition" are patented mid-tempo pop. "Ammunition" is also interesting for its surprisingly upbeat sentiment, "I have no time or space in my life anymore for revenge," which begs the question of why anyone

would pay attention to a well-adjusted Morrissey. Beyond these highlights, we get string-arranged maunders ("Ambitious Outsiders") and character sketches à la Ray Davies or *Tommy*-era Pete Townshend. Strangest of all is "Sorrow Will Come In The End," a screed against the

British justice system recited against a sinister Scott Walker-ish waltz, complete with whipcracks. *Maladjusted* isn't poor enough to disappoint the King of All Trainspotters' fans, but neither is it consistent enough to convince those who haven't acquired the taste already. **FRANKLIN BRUNO**

**DATALOG:** Release date: Aug. 12.

**FILE UNDER:** Uneven Anglo-pop, a bit more cheerful than usual.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** The Kinks, Radiohead, the Bluetones.



## µ-ZIQ / *Lunatic Harness* / Astralwerks

µ-Ziq (pronounced "myoo-zeek") is one of the prime exponents of "bedroom techno," which certainly didn't get its name because it's replacing Barry White as the proper accompaniment for candles and satin sheets. In fact, given its lack of vocals, its discordant synths, its stop-start flurries of drum programming, and its droning ambient passages, it's hard to imagine a *less* romantic album than *Lunatic Harness*. "Bedroom techno" is actually the product of cerebral techies camped out at home with their equipment, who think less in terms of facile dance-floor success and more about creating a challenging, aesthetically geared listening experience. µ-Ziq's sole perpetrator, 24-year-old Mike Paradinas, isn't always as sonically out-there as he might be; a number of the songs on *Lunatic Harness* add spastic and frantically kinetic beats to the familiar-sounding drum 'n' bass formula. But much of the album's second half sees Paradinas staking out turf that's often wildly otherworldly. The closing suite,

"Midwinter Log," has repetitive strings and celestial noises that draw more on 20th-century classical and *musique concrète* than on the latest club singles. *Lunatic Harness* secures µ-Ziq's place among the vanguard of those artists using "electronica" to rethink how music can sound. **DAVID JARMAN**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 29.

**FILE UNDER:** Cerebral techno experiments.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Aphex Twin, Spring Heel Jack, the Orb.



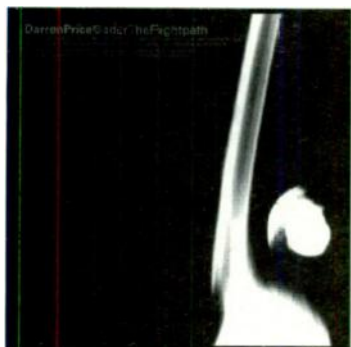
## PLEXI / *Cheer Up* / Lava-Atlantic

Warning: don't buy this CD if you already own a copy of Plexi's Sub Pop debut. It's the same album. Of course, if more people had bought *Cheer Up* the first time, then Atlantic probably wouldn't be reissuing it. But by some twist of commercial fate, *Cheer Up* turned out to be one of the best rock albums of 1996 that most people never heard. Maybe the L.A.-based trio's tuneful fusion of portentous Goth-rock moods and heavy-metal guitars just wasn't Nine Inch Nails enough. Or perhaps the visceral punk drive of Michael Angelos's bass and Norm Block's drums was too artfully offset by the psychedelic textures of Michael Barragan's alternately churning and swirling waves of guitar mutilation. Either way, *Cheer Up* is the kind of album Bauhaus might have made if it had had as much rock band muscle as art-school theory—if it had written tunes like "Ziggy Stardust" instead of just covering them. But it's more ambitious than that. Plexi pulls off everything from early Cult-like anthems ("Fourget") and buoyant New Order-style minor-key pop ("Mountains"), to high-speed guitar assaults ("Dimension") and reflective, cello-laced power ballads ("Star Star"), without coming off as merely eclectic. The band, and the album, deserve their second chance. **MATT ASHARE**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 29.

**FILE UNDER:** Gothic metallic pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Chameleons U.K., Sisters Of Mercy, The Cult's *Love*.

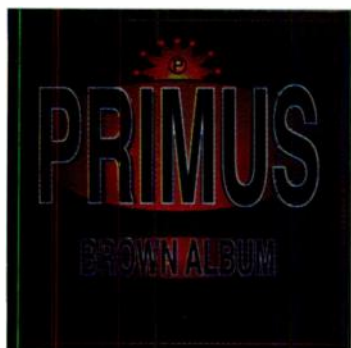




**DARREN PRICE / Under The Flightpath / NovaMute**

On his debut full-length, U.K. DJ Darren Price concocts an intoxicating hybrid of classic electro (minus any obnoxious processed vocals) and Detroit-style techno. The former influence surfaces on the opening "Airspace" (Price records in a studio in the shadow of Heathrow Airport) when, after 90 seconds of atmospherics, percolating pitter-patter that would do Whodini or Herbie Hancock's "Rockit" proud kicks in. On cuts like "Lose No Time," Price's approach to construction recalls Underworld (with whom he toured internationally throughout '96, serving as their official DJ), although the tracks of *Under The Flightpath* favor leaner arrangements and tighter structures; while these tunes seem remarkably concise, the average track length here is just under seven minutes. Keeping melodic noodling on top to a minimum, he builds cuts up by stacking harmonic washes atop busy but uncluttered swarms of beats; "Blueprints" creates an aura of tension by contrasting dark chords with jittery rhythms. Although the immediately discernable influence of house on Price's sound is nominal, he manages to generate tremendous warmth via string fills and synthesizer swells. The aesthetic of this celebrated 26-year-old may not be as immediately recognizable as that of the assorted masters he's obviously digested, but his delivery ranks alongside the best. **KURT B. REIGHLEY**

**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 17.  
**FILE UNDER:** Techno and electro have a very handsome baby.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Juan Atkins, Carl Craig, Underworld.



**PRIMUS / The Brown Album / Interscope**

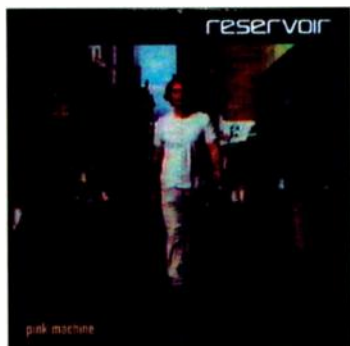
If anyone was afraid that Primus was going to sell out, *The Brown Album* will quickly put those fears to rest. Picking up right where band leader Les Claypool's solo album left off, this is a bizarre, Zappa-like journey through the more fleeting parts of Claypool's brain. (In fact, a riff from the solo album shows up in "Fisticuffs.") Drummer "Herb" Alexander has departed, and he seems to have taken Primus' explosive crunch with him. New drummer Brain thumps bravely along through the eccentric tweedlings of Claypool and guitarist Larry Lalonde. They're highly entertaining in many places—take the duet between Claypool's bass muttering and Lalonde's tortured guitar that opens the album—but don't look for anything too big, too loud or too exciting. Still, you have to love a song called "Shake Hands With Beef," and the utter quirkiness of it all has charms of its own. But if the music has gotten muddier, Claypool's tale telling skills are as sharp as ever, the rock equivalent of a bunch of guys sitting on a porch, drinking beer, spitting and discussing life and what they did when they were 14. *The Brown Album* isn't so much a matter of the well going dry as the water tasting funny. **HEIDI MACDONALD**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 8.  
**FILE UNDER:** Prog weirdness.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Frank Zappa, *King Of The Hill*.

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## RESERVOIR / *Pink Machine* / Zero Hour

Much of the music Jud Ehrbar makes with his bands Space Needle and Reservoir sounds best at about 3 a.m.; his tone tends to be moody and hazy, with an underlying stillness that works well in a dank apartment with a single bulb burning. It's not that his music is sleepy or boring, though; distortion boxes do kick in, and Ehrbar's voice does rise. But there's a resolution in his guitars, drums, synthesizer, and most obviously, voice, that manifests itself deep in the music. Even when a steady beat infiltrates a song, which happens often on *Pink Machine*, there's a confessional woe at the song's heart. Some of the songs sound like they were recorded in an airplane hangar; a vast aluminum echo permeates them, with synths that creep in and out from some distant corner, and a steady beat that sneaks in to change the direction. The most impressive aspect of *Pink Machine* is the way it carries the listener from tune to tune, more like a log flume than a roller-coaster. In each track there's a kernel of a song that

aches to appear, and sounds wash in around it. At times Reservoir could use a good editor—a few songs last a tad too long—but in *Pink Machine*'s case, a bit of excess is much better than a scarcity. **RANDALL ROBERTS**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 29.  
**FILE UNDER:** Loudly quiet 3 a.m. confessional.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Space Needle, Smog, Jessamine.



## RYE COALITION / *Hee Saw Dhuh Kaet* / Gern Blandsten

As you can guess from their first album's title, the members of the explosive punk band Rye Coalition are young enough to remember *Hooked On Phonics*; they formed the group before they were scattered to separate colleges, and cranked out a series of awesome 7"s within a few months. Rye's songs tend to hit a climax straight out of the gate, stay there for three minutes, and disappear without warning—"development" is not their style. *Hee Saw Dhuh Kaet* comes off as mindless, directionless energy at first—the band is tight as a noose, hard and shiny as shellac, making hairpin turns to avoid the rhythmic clichés of emo-core, but there's nothing to latch on to, conventional-hook-wise, within their atonal guitar combustion, weird time signatures and impassioned yelling. Listen a few times, though, and the operative part of that complaint becomes "conventional." Even when they're navigating through their jarring, discordant 14/8 quasi-riffs, they focus on the bits that hit

the bullseye: "I wish I could know you better" snarled as a threat in "Fucking With Beautiful Posture," the crosstalk cowbell of "300 Foxes," a rhythm-section body slam in "The Higher The Hair The Closer To God." Reportedly, they're spending their next semester on the road together; this is an amazingly hot, chaotic preview of their live glory. **DOUGLAS WOLK**

**DATALOG:** Released May 21.  
**FILE UNDER:** Rhythmically tricky emo-core.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Shellac, Rites Of Spring, Unwound.

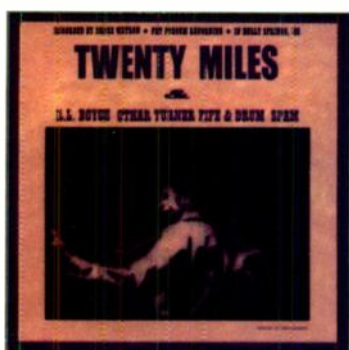
## SCANNER / *Delivery* / Primitive-Rawkus

Remember the flap a few months back when some naughty Floridians intercepted a cellular phone conversation between Newt Gingrich and his lawyers? Scanner (a.k.a. Robin Rimbaud) is a kindred spirit to such technological snoops. While stealing bits of broadcast radio and other people's records is plagiarism at worst, "reappropriation" at best, at least such material was meant to be heard. In principle, Scanner's methods are far more ethically suspect. In practice, though, most of the pieces on *Delivery* are built around fairly innocuous found elements: dial tones, the surface noise of the phone system, incomprehensible

crosstalk. It's not surprising that the results are hit-and-miss, even within one "song": the theremin-and-cricket effect that opens "Throne Of Hives" is genuinely evocative, but six minutes of rhythm-loop and synth-trumpet later, the same track is the sonic equivalent of standing on a corner waiting for something interesting to happen. But when Scanner happens on a fully audible speaker (like the desperate Eurotrash boyfriend of "Heidi"), the results gain little from their instrumental setting. Thus the paradox of Scanner: the more compelling his source material, the less necessary his processing of the material becomes. **FRANKLIN BRUNO**

**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 29.  
**FILE UNDER:** Electronica for stalkers.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** David Shea, DJ Spooky, the Jerky Boys.





## TWENTY MILES / *Twenty Miles* / Fat Possum

Country blues is inherently durable. Its relative simplicity and straightforward nature dictate limited room for variation, but precisely because of its bare boned structure—guitar, throat, and in Twenty Miles' case, drums and an occasional fife—any departure creates a drastically different sound. Usually, a unique guitar style does the trick, and anyone who's seen singer/guitarist Judah Bauer with his other band, the Blues Explosion, knows that he can *play the guitar*. The band's formula doesn't stray much from a path laid 70-odd years ago; only the addition of drums, courtesy of Bauer brother Donovan, sets it apart from the founding fathers' music. Judah's guitar rolls along with loads of homemade distortion from a shitty

amp, and Donovan's drums struggle to keep up, barely succeeding. When Twenty Miles are *on*, about half the time, they get a groove going that could set any Delta dive on fire in a matter of moments. That said, they're about as innovative as Sha Na Na: it's just that they're tapping a

different well of inspiration. Judah lacks the shredded set of vocal chords that makes the country-blues growl, but his fingers can work some magic, and that's the highlight here. **RANDALL ROBERTS**

DATALOG: Released Jun. 17.

FILE UNDER: Blues implosion.

R.I.Y.L.: Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Doo Rag, R.L. Burnside, John Lee Hooker.



## VALENTINE SIX / *The Valentine Six* / PCP

Listening to the Valentine Six's debut is like taking in a road film. Romanticizing the underbelly of American life, it ham-fistedly evokes images of lonely neon lights, creepy, smoky hotel lounges, scenes of tawdry sex and desperation, love and life gone violently wrong in seedy motel rooms outside the city limits of long-forgotten towns. Dark, cinematic and sax-driven, the music itself is used primarily to frame the *noir-ish* scenes described by singer/saxophonist Parker Valentine. Although this shtick's a little bit tired, the idea sounds fairly compelling on paper. Something, however, goes woefully wrong in the execution, and *Valentine Six* becomes maddeningly samey, songs drifting by

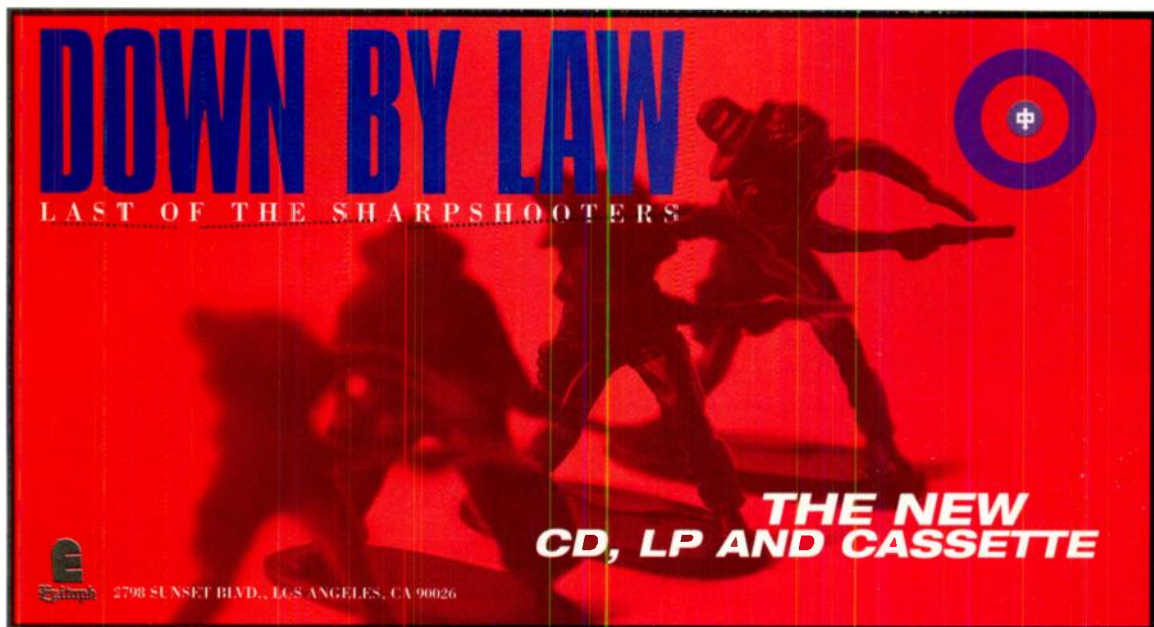
unmemorably (hey, even those living on the dirty side of the curb appreciate a good, healthy hook), eventually becoming interchangeable. Valentine's lyric delivery is downright cartoonish, as he tunelessly mumbles and slurs lyrics, and the band runs syncopated rhythms,

quiet/loud dynamics, and boozy, smoky sax blowing into the ground. Indeed, the most intriguing and memorable tune here is "Kill Street," a jazzy instrumental theme carried by a quirkier, more complex arrangement and some nice, noisy blowing by Valentine. **LOWE STOKES**

DATALOG: Released Jun. 24.

FILE UNDER: Noir-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Nick Cave, Tindersticks, David Lynch.





## LUKE VIBERT / Big Soup / Mo Wax/ffrr-London

One of the most important ingredients of a good electronic record, and the one most sorely missing in the majority, is depth. Without thickness, the music ends up sounding like either deep urban Muzak or spineless, antiseptic crumbs of rhythm too delicate to hold weight. But sometimes when the cracks are filled with texture, an entire landscape emerges. Luke Vibert understands that just because technology makes creating some of this music relatively easy, it doesn't mean you can slack. In the records and remixes he's created under his pseudonyms Wagon Christ and Plug, and especially on *Big Soup*, layers of mysterious samples get crammed inside tight, evenly paced beats. Serpentine strings, mumbling old men, demons, giggles, bells, and Lord knows what else weave in and out of his mixes, demanding of the listener an undivided attention—as in perfectly placed speakers turned up way too loud—in order to fully appreciate the calculated chaos. On occasion, Vibert even constructs complex melodies out of the samples. He even proves that he can pull The Funk out of a hat almost as effortlessly as he paints a beautiful mess of samples on an swath of wallpaper. **RANDALL ROBERTS**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 15.  
**FILE UNDER:** Calculated electronic chaos.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Chemical Brothers, Kraftwerk, Spring Heel Jack.



## WEEN / The Mollusk / Elektra

Over the past couple of years, Ween has gone from being a lo-fi luminary to indulging in enough studio slickery to create an amazingly accurate facsimile of Philly cheese-steak soul ("Spirit Of '76") and an album's worth of finely seasoned C&W, proving that it is indeed possible to have your cake and crap on it too, as long as you make it all look nice and pretty. *The Mollusk* finds the Ween "brothers" returning from the Nashville stylings of *12 Golden Country Greats* to the safety and comfort of their own living room, bedroom, basement, or wherever it is they record, for another artful and offensive hit-and-run job on an array of genres, including the drunken swagger of the Irish bar-song parody "The Blarney Stone," the broken-down polka of "Polka Dot Tail," and the absurdist folk-pop of the fey title track, which features the wonderfully meaningless couplet "Bring forth the mollusk, cast unto me/Let's be forever let forever be free." There's plenty to offend the thin-skinned listener, including a two-minute-long joke called "Waving My Dick In The Wind." But there's no point in debating whether Dean and Gene are two of the most obnoxious pranksters to have ever pissed up the rope-ladder of success, or a couple of clever bastards. Really, they're both. **MATT ASHARE**

**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 17.  
**FILE UNDER:** Twisted parody pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** They Might Be Giants, the Residents.

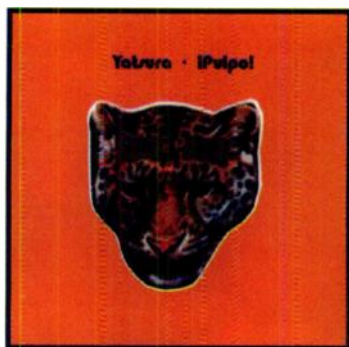


## PAUL WELLER / Heavy Soul / Island

When Paul McCartney was Paul Weller's age, he was doing *London Town*; when Van Morrison was his age, he was doing not much of anything; when Joe Cocker was his age, he was doing the soundtrack to *An Officer And A Gentleman*. For the last few years, Weller's been on a low-key blue-eyed soul odyssey, much like Cocker in the later '70s. He hasn't made any real clunkers, but he hasn't really bowled anybody over, either. The distinctively British part of Weller's art is his ability to rewrite American constructs into something new. Thus, on his latest, "Up In Suze's Room" works better than his earlier cover of Dr. John's "Walk On Gilded Splinters," even though the new song is very much a rewrite of the cover's mood, feel and arrangement. In its worst spots, *Heavy Soul's* title track ends up sounding just a hair short of Humble Pie: big rumbling drums, splashy guitars, and hooks that don't go anywhere transcendental. Like Weller's last couple of albums, this is a fine, warm-sounding record with a strong '60s production vibe, and given the aforementioned comparisons, things could be a whole lot worse. But coming from someone who at one time was so important, it still leaves me waiting for his next big breakthrough. **JAMES LIEN**

**DATALOG:** Released Aug. 5.  
**FILE UNDER:** Elder statesman for the young generation of Brit music.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Traffic, Style Council, Ocean Colour Scene.

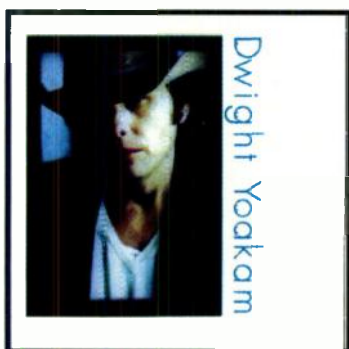




**YATSURA / iPulpo! / Primary**

**DATALOG:** Released Jun. 10.  
**FILE UNDER:** Neoprimitive punk-pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Bis, the Pastels, early Superchunk.

"Hey, kids," Yatsura addresses us at the beginning of "Kozee Heart," "this song was inspired by Stephen Malkmus and the magic of Pavement, so before you're going to write in and start taking the piss out of us and all that, remember we could be doing this all the time." While it doesn't do exactly that all the time, Yatsura is so thoroughly grounded in its place and tradition that someday historians will turn to its records to describe a whole cohort of mid-'90s Scottish Pastels/Pavement/punk-derived bands, including Bis and Mogwai. This compilation of Yatsura's recent singles is boisterous from the start, guitar-driven and primitive sounding, with na-na choruses you can yell along to. In this limited but lovable vein, the band hits its homer with "Miramar," which steps out from the pack with a brilliantly swinging guitar and drum riff. Not all of its songs connect the same dots, though. "The Love That Brings You Down" is an uncommonly long, slow number that builds up a good head of steam with its dirgelike, then head-banging delivery. Sometimes, Yatsura even betrays an unexpected musical tendency or two. It may not be a *huge* stretch for a band doing Superchunk-ish rollicking rockers to come up with a ballad that sounds like it could've been written by J Mascis, but "Pampered Adolescent" makes for a nice change of pace anyway. **ANDREA MOED**



**DWIGHT YOAKAM / Under The Covers / Reprise**

**DATALOG:** Released Jul. 15.  
**FILE UNDER:** Country cover albums.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Lyle Lovett, k.d. lang.

Country covers albums are proliferating like Tennessee jackrabbits, and the often tepid results (*Common Thread: Songs Of The Eagles, Rhythm Country & Blues*) may as well be rabbit stew. So it is with great trepidation that one approaches *Under The Covers*. Why would the leading light of the Bakersfield sound sully his track record with an album of remakes? *Under* is better than you might expect, but Dwight fans, who know how talented he is, are less likely to be impressed than newcomers and country-pop crossover fans. Yoakam does well to stick to his country idiom. From a twangy, yelping run through Roy Orbison's "Claudette" to his driving Fender-fiddle-drums version of the Stones' "The Last Time" to a road-weary take on Lennon-McCartney's deceptively dark "Things We Said Today," Yoakam shows no one makes urban pop work better in a rural setting. But his smoking-jacket take on the Kinks' "Waiting For You," more cocktail lounge than rodeo bar, seems ill-conceived and over-thought. His selections aren't terribly creative, either: Here again is Jimmy Webb's Glen Campbell standard "Wichita Lineman," there again is The Clash's "Train In Vain" (Dwight improves upon Annie Lennox's dull *Medusa* version, but still loses the Clash's energy). Fortunately, *Under The Covers* is affectionate and, mostly, unironic. The cover-album concept may not be acquitted, but Dwight, that sly dog, still is. **CHRIS MOLANPHY**

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THE SOUNDTRACK TO AN IMAGINARY SPY MOVIE FROM THE COSMIC DJ COLLECTIVE — UFO:  
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# TOP 75

[ Alternative Radio Airplay ]



ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1 PRIMUS	Brown Album	Interscope
2 YO LA TENGO	I Can Hear The Heart Beating As One	Matador
3 GUIDED BY VOICES	Mag Earwhig!	Matador
4 WEEN	The Mollusk	Elektra-EEG
5 CHARLATANS UK	Tellin' Stories	MCA
6 CAN	Sacrilege	Mute
7 SMOG	Red Apple Falls	Drag City
8 MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO	Original Fire (EP)	Nothing-Interscope
9 BEN HARPER	The Will To Live	Virgin
10 BLINK 182	Dude Ranch	Cargo-MCA
11 FOLK IMPLOSION	Dare To Be Surprised	Communion
12 SLEATER-KINNEY	Dig Me Out	Kill Rock Stars
13 LARD	Pure Chewing Satisfaction	Alternative Tentacles
14 BEN LEE	Something To Remember Me By	Grand Royal
15 HIS	New Transistor Heroes	Grand Royal-Capitol
16 MUFFS	Happy Birthday To Me	Reprise
17 ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES	Have A Ball	Fat Wreck Chords
18 MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT	A Crime For All Seasons	Red Ant
19 FUTURE BIBLE HEROES	Memories Of Love	Slow River
20 OLD 97'S	Too Far To Care	Elektra-EEG
21 FOO FIGHTERS	The Colour And The Shape	Roswell-Capitol
22 SUPERGRASS	In It For The Money	Capitol
23 BUCK-O-NINE	Twenty-Eight Teeth	TVT
24 RADIO IODINE	Tiny Warnings	Radio Universe-Universal
25 SUMMERCAMP	Pure Juice	Maverick-Reprise
26 BELLE AND SEBASTIAN	If You're Feeling Sinister	The Enclave
27 SOUNDTRACK	Austin Powers	Hollywood
28 BLUE MEANIES	Full Throttle	Thick
29 DR. OCTAGON	Dr. Octagonecologist/The Instrumentalist	Bulk-DreamWorks
30 WU-TANG CLAN	Wu-Tang Forever	Wu-Tang/Loud-RCA
31 MAD CADDIES	Quality Soft Core	Honest Don's
32 CHEMICAL BROTHERS	Dig Your Own Hole	Astralwerks-Caroline
33 SHALLOW	High Flyin' Kid Stuff	Zero Hour
34 MARK EITZEL	West	Warner Bros.
35 DANDY WARHOLS	...The Dandy Warhols Come Down	Tim/Kerr-Capitol
36 SINEAD O'CONNOR	Gospel Oak (EP)	Chrysalis-EMI
37 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Deep Concentration	Om
38 DAVID BYRNE	Feelings	Luaka Bop-WB
39 LAMB	Lamb	Fontana-Mercury
40 LIMP BIZKIT	Three Dollar Bill, Y'all\$	Flip-Interscope
41 SON VOLT	Straightaways	Warner Bros.
42 KENICKIE	At The Club	Warner Bros.
43 THAT DOG	Retreat From The Sun	DGC
44 ANI DI FRANCO	Living In Clip	Righteous Babe
45 ERIC'S TRIP	Long Days Ride 'Till Tomorrow	Sappy-Sonic Unyon (Canada)
46 SILKWORM	Developer	Matador
47 CAKE LIKE	Bruiser Queen	Vapor
48 FROGS	Starjob (EP)	Scratchie
49 LONDON SUEDE	Coming Up	Nude/Columbia-CRG
50 KATEL KEINEG	Jet	Elektra-EEG
51 PAVEMENT	Brighten The Corners/Shady Lane (EP)	Matador-Capitol
52 SPIRITUALIZED	Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space	Dedicated-Arista
53 MOUNTAIN GOATS	Full Force Galesburg	Emperor Jones-Trance Syndicate
54 TOAD THE WET SPROCKET	Coil	Columbia-CRG
55 FAITH NO MORE	Album Of The Year	Slash-Reprise
56 GALAXIE 500	Copenhagen	Rykodisc
57 RYE COALITION	Hee Saw Dhuu Kact	Gern Blandsten
58 MISFITS	American Psycho	Geffen
59 TREBLE CHARGER	Maybe It's Me	RCA
60 VARIOUS ARTISTS	KAOS Theory	Cottleston Pie/Mayonnaise-K
61 REGRETS	New Directions: Results Beat Boasts	Crank!
62 MADDER ROSE	Tragic Magic	Atlantic
63 EDITH FROST	Calling Over Time	Drag City
64 FEAR FACTORY	Remanufacture (Cloning Technology)	Roadrunner
65 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Source Lab 3	Source-Caroline
66 NOTHING PAINTED BLUE	Emotional Discipline	Scat
67 PAPAS FRITAS	Helioself	Minty Fresh
68 LEO KOTTKE	Standing In My Shoes	Private Music
69 YATSURA	¡Pulpo!	Ché-Primary
70 RULE 62	Rule 62	Maverick-WB
71 DARREN PRICE	Under The Flightpath	NovaMute-Mute
72 INDIGO GIRLS	Shaming Of The Sun	Epic
73 MR. T EXPERIENCE	Big Black Bugs Bleed Blue Blood	Lookout!
74 BEVIS FROND	Son Of Walter	Flydaddy
75 ABRA MOORE	Strangest Places	Arista Austin

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.





## GABOR SZABO

The Sorcerer

Impulse!

Born in Budapest, the late Gabor Szabo emigrated to the U.S. and soon made a name for himself in the early '60s as a proto-psychedelic gypsy jazz guitarist, playing with Charles Lloyd and Chico Hamilton before fronting his own bands. His music was characterized by a droning, melancholy tone that could be mesmerizing. He experimented with feedback before Jimi Hendrix, used a sitar before the Beatles, and brought Third World influences into the pop mainstream years before Santana. While some of his attempts to fuse pop and jazz were not so successful, resulting in a hit-or-miss back catalog, his own playing was always intriguing and his music makes far more sense today than it did during his lifetime. Impulse! has just re-released his finest work, 1963's *The Sorcerer*, and the bonus tracks include most of his equally exciting follow-up *More Sorcery*. Szabo pulls the listener deeper and deeper into a cavern of guitar tone and restrained, meditative playing. Later in his life, he entangled himself in drug addiction, and died tragically young and unappreciated at the end of the '70s. If you find you dig his otherworldly sound, there's also a compilation of his late-'60s/early-'70s recordings, *The Szabo Equation*, on DCC Compact Classics.

[ by James Lien ]

# flashback

IN THE BINS

When it comes to musicians causing controversy by plugging in and "going electric," Miles Davis probably trumped Bob Dylan. Davis's '70s albums were a radical, sprawling about-face from his previous work, a maelstrom of psychedelic funk and heady Afro-urban jazz. *Bitches' Brew*, *Pangaea* and *Agartha* are landmarks, and Columbia has just reissued five more titles from his incredible string of '70s albums: *Black Beauty*, *At Fillmore East*, *Live-Evil*, *In Concert* and *Dark Magus*. At the time, these albums were scoffed at and scorned by the critics, some not even released in the States, but 20-odd years later, they sound damn great. Miles was making Jeep beats years before there were sound systems capable of playing them. Funk artists of the same decade like James Brown or Sly Stone had to make a record that *made sense*: you had to have a hook and a coherent chorus; you had to start, go somewhere specific, and then stop. Miles's electric music has none of these—it's just hours of pure freedom and limitless, wild, crashing funk. From Davis's essential funk/fusion albums, producer Bill Laswell has also created a "sampler" that adds previously unreleased material from the same sessions. It's a real knockout, but you may buy one and find yourself wanting to hear them all.



In one of the biggest reissue coups of recent times, Rhino acquired the masters for virtually the entire Ray Charles catalog, and now the label has released a massive, unbelievably cool five-CD box set, *Genius + Soul*, as a showcase for five decades of Brother Ray. Charles' classic music spanned blues, jazz, gospel, rock, pop and country, an all-American amalgamation of sounds and styles. Many great performers, and even whole new genres of music, have sprung up in his wake, but he's never been equaled.



In my last column I raved about Lee "Scratch" Perry's recent box set for Island records. If three discs of prime Perry simply wasn't enough for you, you might want to check out *Upsetter In Dub* (Heartbeat). It contains over an hour of vintage Perry culled from rare 7" singles and B-sides, including dub versions of some of the songs on the Island box, most of which have been utterly unobtainable for nearly 20 years. Incredible, incredible stuff.

There's no denying that the music of the first few seasons of *Sesame Street* (1969-75) gave rise to some of the greatest, most memorable songs of our era. Much to my delight, I recently stumbled across a CD called *Sesame Street Platinum Too* (Sony Wonder) in the children's section of a big chain store. Some of the compilation's songs aren't so hot, but I'm happy to report that longtime Muppet favorite, the mysterious "Mah Na Mah Na," has finally made it to CD. And you know what? It still sounds delightfully funny even 27 years later. A tip for devoted members of the *Sesame Street* generation: if you're ever in New York, you can relive your childhood watching vintage '70s episodes of the most popular children's show in history at the Museum Of Television And Radio in Manhattan.

's rewarding to watch new bands use interesting new styles to surp the powers that be. What's surprising and hard to understand is the tendencies of some groups to backslide as they row. Starting out with an innovative progressive black metal pound, **Dark Tranquillity** has matured into a very traditional euro-metal act on its latest CD, *The Mind's I* (Osmose). Melodic heavy metal with death vocals has certainly been done better before, so this ends up being a record I can take or leave... **Therion**, another example: the unbearably bulbous *A'arab Zaraq Lucid Dreaming* (Nuclear Blast America) sees the former Swedish death metal band bogged with the excesses of the Barmbek Symphonic Orchestra, the North German Radio Choir, and the Siren Choir. Besides a lot of tedious orchestral rock, Therion plays some Judas Priest and Scorpions covers and delivers a couple of wretched soccer anthems... For its fifth and most visible release, San Francisco's **Oxbow** submerges in a sad swim of impossible private passions. The band tokes at the haze of '40s California seediness with songs of wild sex and civilized drugs, yet remains coolly aloof. The actual Marianne Faithfull was exhumed and recorded to contribute to the atmosphere; Steve Albini presumably ate the rest of the recording budget. Ultimately, *Serenade In Red* (SST) is a softly deranged type of intoxication, like a piano-bar Jesus Lizard... as it's impaled on the horns of Beelzebub's seven libelous rangutans, **Hatewave** is blindingly fast and irate. The band's first, self-titled, demo tape is as manic as Cryptic Slaughter and Vehmacht, and reminiscent of the same late-'80s metal/hardcore/peedcore outlook. Drummer Weasel Walter leads the fast march with his constant panicked blasts, while guitar-singer Sasha Tai and guitarist Mark Rucker struggle to keep pace. This two-guitar/no-bass line-up locks the sheets of noise into the higher frequencies of chaos. The full-length tape features good song titles including "Alien Lizard," "Violencium" and "Slit The Catholic Throat" (c/o 2038 LeMoyne, Flr. 1-R, Chicago, IL 60622).



## DIMMU BORGIR

### Enthrone Darkness Triumphant

Nuclear Blast America

Dimmu Borgir may rightfully take a lot of heat for being the most ridiculous-looking clutter of Norwegians to yet prance down the fjord, but its pompous black metal has merit to match the costumes. Good in every way the plodding *Cradle Of Filth* is unbearable, Dimmu Borgir injects the oversubscribed formula of synths, folk music, choirs, guitar noise, and hate vocals with energy and momentum. Don't misunderstand: The melodic twin guitars have got to go, but overall Dimmu Borgir is more of a legitimate black metal pop act than anything. Leave it to Immortal, Enslaved, and certainly Emperor to create true innovation. If the Norwegian sound is going to be exploited, let it be by Dimmu Borgir, master musicians and melodramaticists. The band mixes up the middle and *presto* tempos well, combining lush arrangements with little bits of animal intensity. The keyboardist (presumably the character pictured in Jack The Ripper drag?) tosses in strings and carousel sounds without sounding clichéd. Over and over, *Enthrone Darkness Triumphant* recalls the latest *Cradle Of Filth* effort, but Dimmu Borgir beats its English counterparts in every recognizable way: melody, majesty, music, and meanness.

## AL TOP 25

1. VARIOUS ARTISTS	Ozz-Fest Live	Ozz-Red Ant
2. SEVENDUST	Sevendust	TVT
3. FEAR FACTORY	Remanufacture (Cloning Technology)	Roadrunner
4. TESTAMENT	Demonic	Mayhem-Fierce
5. NAPALM DEATH	Inside The Torn Apart	Earsache
6. MACHINE HEAD	The More Things Change...	Roadrunner
7. MEGADETH	Cryptic Writings	Capitol
8. SNOT	Get Some	Geffen
9. LIMP BIZKIT	Three Dollar Bill, Y'all!	Flip-Interscope
10. OBITUARY	Back From The Dead	Roadrunner
11. SNAPCASE	Progression Through Unlearning	Victory
12. BRUCE DICKINSON	Accident Of Birth	CMC International
13. VARIOUS ARTISTS	Death...Is Just The Beginning IV	Nuclear Blast America
14. FLOTSAM AND JETSAM	High	Metal Blade
15. MOTLEY CRUE	Generation Swine	Elektra-BEG
16. SLO BURN	Amusing The Amazing (EP)	Malicious Vinyl-Red Ant
17. PRIMUS	Brown Album	Interscope
18. W.A.S.P.	K.F.D.	Castle
19. COAL CHAMBER	Coal Chamber	Roadrunner
20. MISFITS	American Psycho	Geffen
21. NOVEMBER 17	Trust No One	Slipdisc
22. LARD	Pure Chewing Satisfaction	Alternative Tentacles
23. ROLLINS BAND	Come In And Burn	DreamWorks
24. FAITH NO MORE	Album Of The Year	Slash-Reprise
25. AMORPHIS	My Kantele	Relapse

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





## SONIC YOUTH "Anagrama" SYR

Sonic Youth's last few albums have mostly found them adhering more and more to song-form. With this instrumental four-song EP, the first in a series of 12-inch singles (and CD singles) they're releasing on their own SYR imprint (which shares an address with drummer Steve Shelley's label Smells Like Records), they're stretching out, and you can tell what a joy it is for them. The band reportedly practices for hours every weekday, and "Anagrama" is an example of the payoff: a loose, electric nine-minute-plus piece that's all about group instrumental chemistry. Nobody's showing off, and everybody knows when to hold back, but they all play off each other with a sureness born of endless practice and fundamental compatibility. "Improvisation Ajoutée" and "Tremens" are both pedal-hopping group jams, the latter held together by Shelley's cracker-crisp drumming. The disc's highlight is "Mieux: De Corrosion," a sound-experiment with a suggestion of a choking punk riff near the end, industrial in the old sense of the word: built from approximations of the noises of heavy industry. It's great to hear that after 15 years, this band can still take daring leaps.

The Other Side is an old-fashioned New York funk crew that bears roughly the same relation to the Soul Providers (whose *Soul Tequila* was reviewed in our June issue) as, say, Maceo & The Macks did to Fred Wesley & The JB's. Which is to say they're effectively the same people. Their debut single, "Diggin' Up The Yard" (Desco), has a pure 1971 label design, right down to the "Guaranteed Heavy Heavy Funk" slogan, and a groove, arrangement and recording that could have come straight off a single on James Brown's People label. The B-side is "You Do Something I Don't Do Nothing," co-written by one Titus King, who seems to have given a good long listen to Brown-produced numbers like "Keep On Doing What You're Doing."

The first release on the new label Friendly Science Enregistrments is "Loin Des Sambas," credited to **E.S.P. Neighborhood**. E.S.P.-anything as a band name is a good sign that Warren Defever of His Name Is Alive is probably involved (his other projects include E.S.P. Summer, E.S.P. Family and the E.S.P. Beetles), and a quick listen to this reveals the unmistakable touch of Defever's way-retro production. The two songs and two soundpieces (bird-chirps, bell-peals) here are all processed through antique equipment, making them sound trebly, crackling and faint, as if they'd been recorded on wax cylinders.

**Edith Frost** doesn't have much of a discography yet—one EP, one album, and the new single "Ancestors" (Trade 2)—but she's already got a reputation as a tremendous songwriter, with the timeless, graceful simplicity of Hank Williams or Barbara Manning. This single was produced by Kramer, who added bass and synthesizer—the only accompaniment to Frost's haunting twang and gently strummed guitar here—and surrounded these three songs in his usual mists of echo, which only accentuates their mystery and gentleness.



A few quick drops of the needle: **Cha-Cha Cohen**'s "Spook On The High Lawn" (Chemikal Underground) is a big leap for this former guitar band into the world of sample-centric weirdness, driven by booming, woozy drums, shredded piano riffs, a dubbed-out bass part and ex-Dustdevils singer Jaki's free-associating moan. The CD single appends remixes by Ui and Hood... **Guided By Voices** completists have their hands full with all the singles, live records and side projects that pour out of GBV, but the *Wish In One Hand 7"* EP (Jass) is worth keeping an eye out for: three hot little pop songs, recorded last year by an interim lineup of the band... When singer/drummer/locally famous music writer David Nichols left the long running Australian semi-pro pop group the **Cannanes** last year, it might have spelled the end of the band. Thankfully, it didn't, and the three songs on their side of a split EP with the like-minded **Sleepy Township** (Chapter Music), featuring the new lineup, are excellent, with typically wise lyrics: "I never thought that you would fall in my estimation," Francesca Bussey sings... Glen Johnson of **Piano Magic** describes the band as "a morphing entity... me and anyone else who fits at the time." On the spare, gorgeous "Wintersport/Cross-Country" 12" (i-Che), he's joined by six people two credited with "voice" and four with "sound," and the group comes up with a series of peculiar textures, from an awkwardly thudding crunch to smooth electronic drones and hums.



## HIP-HOP/BE-BOP REVISITED

I borrowed the phrase above from Man Parrish, that gay electro pioneer of yore, and it's strangely appropriate given the hard-bop and be-bop leanings in the extraordinarily inventive work of Brazilian expatriate **Amon Tobin**, also known as **Cujo**, and



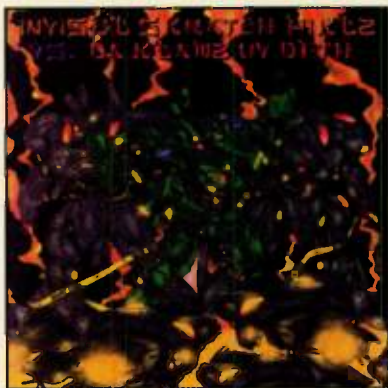
Graham Sutton, one half of British band Bark Psychosis, who records under the name **Boymerang**. Strip away the percussion and bass lines from much of what passes for jazzy drum-and-bass, and what you get is tepid jazz lite. Tobin and Sutton have been toiling around the periphery of that domain known as "experimental drum-and-bass" for some time, and their work is now available

domestically. Under the Cujo nom de plume, Tobin's *Adventures In Foam* (Shadow) is one of the most challenging fusions of hard angular jazz and sinuous, speeding breakbeats. He goes into even harder bass textures on the outstanding album recorded under his own name, *Bricolage* (Ninja Tune), which has some of the spookiest electronic passages heard in a long time, offset by detuned upright-bass chords and choppy, staccato percussion. The disturbing, asymmetrical breakbeats on the Boymerang album *Balance Of The Force* (Regal) are set against the dense, nearly song-structured moments like "The River (V.I.P.)," which is co-written and produced by Rudy Tambala of A.R. Kane. What makes this album so intriguing is that it takes drum-and-bass percussion as merely the starting point for an enormous range of ideas and stylistic innovations. Over four sides of vinyl, Boymerang moves from contemplative, reflexive tracks to jump-up and tech-step monstrosities. Both Tobin and Sutton are particularly adept at re-working conventional drum-and-bass structures, occupying them and turning them inside out. The result is an agonizing and pleasurable suspense that cements all three of these records.

## DANCE TOP 25

1 CAN	Sacrilege	Mute
2 MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO	Original Fire (EP)	Nothing-Interscope
3 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Deep Concentration	Om
4 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Blame Presents Logical Progression Level 2	frr-London
5 DARREN PRICE	Under The Flightpath	NovaMute-Mute
6 DEATHLINE INT'L	Arashi Syndrom	COP International
7 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Source Lab 3	Source-Caroline
8 WE	As Is	Asphodel
9 DEGREE	Wake Of Devestation	Decibel
10 DAFT PUNK	Homework	Virgin
11 CHEMICAL BROTHERS	Dig Your Own Hole	Astralwerks-Caroline
12 HANZEL UND GRETYL	Transmissions From Uranus	Energy
13 THIEVERY CORPORATION	Sounds From The Thievery Hi-Fi	Eighteenth St. Lounge
14 DJ SOULSLINGER	Don't Believe	Liquid Sky
15 SPEEDY J	Public Energy No. 1	Plus 8-Never
16 CARL CRAIG	More Soaps About Food And Revolutionary Art	Planet E
17 CRYSTAL METHOD	"Busy Child" (12")	City Of Angels-Outpost
18 FULL FREQUENCY	Momentum	Gonzo!
19 AMON TOBIN	Bricolage	Ninja Tune
20 BENESTROPHE	Auric Fires	RAS DVA
21 ORB	Orblivion	Island
22 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Drug Test Two	Invisible
23 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Talvin Singh Presents Another Sounds Of The Asian Underground	Quango-Island
24 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Sunshine State Of Mind	frr-London
25 MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT	A Crime For All Seasons	Red Ant

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



## INVISIBL SKRATCH PIKLZ

Invisibl Skratch Piklz Vs.  
Da Klamz Uv Deth

Asphodel

This is the moment when the boundaries collapse and all the rules are changed. I'm talking about a 15-minute excursion into a domain of turntable manipulation that alters the trajectory of electronic music irrevocably. Simply put, this jagged Technics 1200 symphony, composed by the unholy trinity of Q-Bert, Mixmaster Mike, and Shortkut, is like the trick candles on a birthday cake that can't be blown out: the fire simply continues to burn. This piece reinserts turntable alchemy back into the center of electronic music culture, revivifying an art form that died a silent death with the rise of the DAT and sampler, as Charlie Chase of the legendary Cold Crush Brothers put it at the B-Boy Summit '97 in San Diego recently. The work of the Skratch Piklz came to the attention of many on Bill Laswell's *Altered States* compilation, and Q-Bert's turntable terrorism has made itself known at several of the DMC World Championships, in which his surreal retooling of the instruments of the trade vaulted him to godhead status among the international turntablist federation. This EP makes clear that hip-hop's most dangerous moments are only a bat's squeak away from techno's post-industrial impulses.





## COMPANY FLOW

### Funcrusher Plus

Official-Rawkus

Every couple of years a record comes along that has the potential to shake up the rap world, or at least make it reconsider its direction. Whether said record actually accomplishes this goal is, of course, a matter of how much exposure it receives. With that in mind, let's hope that the whole world gets a chance to hear the debut album from New York City's proud underground sons, Company Flow. Comprised of El-P (who produces most of the material here), Bigg Jus and their DJ Mr. Len, this trio takes 1997's bloated, materialistic rap aesthetic and stomps on it until it's left with rap's DNA: beats and lyrical skills. Using the rawest and hardest drums imaginable with lots of claustrophobic background static, these rappers mow down track after track with their slashing wit, mind-bending metaphors, headstrong sense of purpose and cutthroat flows, constantly challenging other rappers (especially major-label ones), as well as the notion of hip-hop as a way of life. Going out on a limb like this is risky, but Co-Flow has arrived, and it looks like the group plans on staying for a while. This is hands-down the most important rap release of 1997 thus far.

[ by Brian Coleman ]

# hip-hop

BONUS BEATS

The hype leading up to the **Wu-Tang Clan's** long-overdue follow-up to 1993's groundbreaking debut *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* can finally be put to rest. And it's certainly been worth the wait for the masses of frothing Wu fans who can't get enough of producer and conceptual mastermind RZA's aural world. On the filler-free two-CD opus *Wu-Tang Forever* (Loud-RCA), this rap juggernaut shows that it's still representing with strength, from the reflective "A Better Tomorrow" to the future classic "For Heaven's Sake" to Dirty's (formerly known as Ol' Dirty Bastard) abstractly absurd "Dog Shit," with crates full of hardcore beats and always-impressive tag-team rhymes in between... Speaking of Shaolin, ahem, Staten Island, another posse from that frequently underrated borough has stepped forward to make some noise. **GP WU's** debut *Don't Go Against The Grain* (MCA) is a mix of accomplished street styles and often dope beats from a quartet that features Pop Da Brown Hornet, Down Low Recka, June Lover and Rubberbandz. Not every track on this self-produced debut is completely mind-blowing, but there is significant promise here, with "Black On Black Crime," "1st Things 1st," "Hit Me With That Shit" and "Chamber Danger" picking up the slack for the rest of it... And finally, Queens' oft-overlooked sickos the **Beatnuts** are back after a three-year recording hiatus with *Stone Crazy* (Relativity), reminding heads out there that original hip-hop never dies—it's usually just hiding. Rappers/producers Psycho Les and Ju Ju are in prime form, taking listeners through a dense musical jungle, with their odd combination of impeccably well-produced tracks, smooth flows and hard talk. Dope-ass riddims like "Bless The Mic," "Stone Crazy," "Do You Believe" and the Ennio Morricone-inspired "Super Supreme" and "Niggaz Know," with amusing musical skits in-between, make for a strong return by one of the more inventive production teams around today.



## HIP-HOP TOP 25

1	WU-TANG CLAN	"Triumph"/Wu-Tang Forever	Wu-Tang/Loud-RCA
2	KRS-ONE	"Step Into A World"/I Got Next	Jive
3	O.C.	"My World"	Payday/ffrr-London
4	NOTORIOUS B.I.G.	"Mo' Mo'ry, Mo' Problems"/Life After Death	Bad Boy-Arista
5	BOOGIEMONSTERS	"The Beginning Of The End"	Pendulum-EMI
6	LOST BOYZ	Love, Peace & Nappiness	Universal
7	RAMPAGE THE LAST BOY SCOUT	"Take It To The Streets"	Elektra-EEG
8	BOOT CAMP CLIK	"Heads Are Reddee Pt. II"/For The People	Duck Down/Boot Camp-Priority
9	THA ALKAHOLIKS	"Hip Hop Drunkies"	Loud-RCA
10	JUNGLE BROTHERS	"How Ya Want It"/Raw Deluxe	Gee Street-V2
11	REDMAN	"Pick It Up"/Muddy Waters	Def Jam/RAL-Mercury
12	WU-TANG CLAN	"We Trying To Stay Alive"	Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
13	SOUNDTRACK	"Who You Wit"/Sprung	Qwest-WB
14	DR. OCTAGON	"The Flowers"/Dr. Octagon's Legacy Instrumental	Bulk-DreamWorks
15	CRU	"Pronto"	Def Jam/Violator-Polygram
16	LADY OF RAGE	"Get With Da Wheelz"/Necessary Roughness	Death Row-Interscope
17	SCARFACE	"Smile"/The Untouchable	Noo Trybe/Rap-A-Lot-Virgin
18	WHORIDAS	"Taxin'"	Southpaw-Delicious Vinyl
19	LIL' KIM	"Not Tonight"/Hard Core	Big Beat-Atlantic
20	SAUCE MONEY	"Action"	Roc-A-Fella-Geffen
21	TRIBUTE TO THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.	"I'll Be Missing You"/"We'll Always Love Big Poppa"	Bad Boy-Arista
22	CRAIG MACK	"The Return"	Street Life
23	HURRICANE G	"Underground"	H.O.L.A.-Island
24	SUGA FREE	"If U Stay Ready"/Street Gospel	Unfadeable/Sheppard Lane-Island
25	DEFARI	"Change And Switch"	ABB

Compiled from the CMJ New Music Report's weekly four Brix charts, collected from CMJ's panel of progressive radio reporters.



# MIXED MEDIA

## ▶ EVE'S BAYOU

(Trimark)

A full-on Southern Gothic genre film, *Eve's Bayou* comes complete with fancy domestic interiors, swooning ladies, bourgeois courtly manners, appearances by ghosts, extraordinary secret-keeping, the threat of incest, and an obsession with the vagaries of desire and memory. But the all-black cast and culture already makes a break with the expectations of the genre, not to mention that the film's protagonist is a ten-year-old girl, Eve, expertly portrayed by ten-year-old Jurnee Smollett. When Eve's father, the town doctor (Samuel Jackson), permits his philandering to become an open secret, the family response ranges from aggressive secrecy to passive aggression to spiritualist voodoo treatments. Eve's inability to keep her mouth shut is endearing as she reckons with her worn-down mother, her psychic aunt, her daddy's-girl sister, and the charming dirty dog that is her father. Much of the plot hinges on her sense of justice and her belief in her own power to change things in her family. Writer-director Kasi Lemmons bravely shows the incestuous desires of Eve's slightly older sister, and the culture's practice of hybrid forms of Afro-Caribbean/Christian magic. The film's worst moment comes at its epilogue, when Lemmons fails to let the narrative speak for itself, and sums up with a clumsy voiceover about the woven tapestry of memory. Lemmons should know her film does what the genre is best at—exploring interior states and their tender coexistence in the family, and looking at the damage that is wrought there. **LIZA JOHNSON**

## MOVIES



CHRIS HELGEMAN/RENE

## ▶ RAMBLIN' ROSE: The Life And Career Of Rose Maddox

by Jonny Whiteside (Vanderbilt University Press/  
Country Music Foundation Press)

## BOOKS

*Ramblin' Rose* may not have the tortured honky-tonk decadence of George Jones or Hank Williams bios, but Rose Maddox's life is as fascinating and important as any in the annals of country music. After a joads-esque trek from Alabama to California by boxcar, 11-year-old Rose and her brothers bluffed their way onto local radio as the Maddox Brothers and Rose in 1937, with the family virtually learning to play their instruments on the air. Over the next 20 years, they merged traditional reverence with twisted invention and a bizarre sense of showmanship into unhinged, infectious fun records, employing wild guitar boogie, slap bass and an array of wisecracks, cackles and screams. With her brothers and as a solo act, Rose cultivated a tough, sexy persona that took Patsy Montana's cowgirl/pal shtick and updated it with a healthy dose of compelling raunchiness. Author Jonny Whiteside did meticulous research, including extensive interviews with Ms. Maddox and family as well as various country luminaries, and his loving care for his subject comes through on every page. Add a stunning series of photos of the band in their most garish, outrageous Western costumes, and you have an exemplary book. **LOWE STOKES**







## JOYSTICK NATION

by J.C. Herz (Little, Brown)

BOOKS

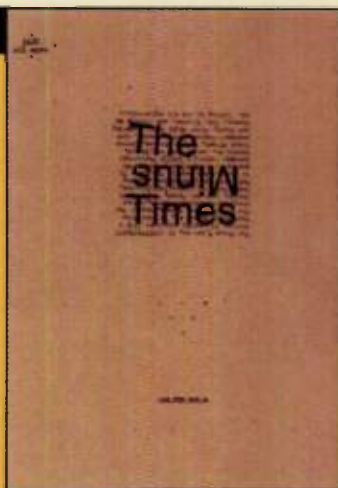
Do you ever find yourself trying to explain the simple beauty of *Pong* to a kid with Sega? Do you remember the day that Atari released a home version of *Pac-Man*? If you do, then *Joystick Nation* is for you. Author J.C. Herz looks back on the first 25 years of video games, from 1961's *Spacewar* to last year's Sony Playstation. Along the way, she plays a game of anthropological *Tetris*, stacking issues neatly together. What's more violent, *Destroyer* or dodgeball? Were all of those video-game arcades really breeding grounds for juvenile delinquents? Why was *Frogger* one of the few games that appealed to girls? Herz uses testimony from programmers and psychologists to support some interesting arguments. No one will ever relish the Sega the way they do *Pong*, she says: it's like comparing a '57 Chevy to a '79 Mustang. She also delves into the relationship between the Department of Defense and the video game industry, and hangs out at her local mega-arcade to compare today's mall-rat moms with those of yesteryear. NEIL GLADSTONE

## THE MINUS TIMES

(c/c Drag City, P.O. Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647)

With all the PageMaker-enhanced cookie-cutter 'zines out there and all the web sites devoted to the most extreme minutiae imaginable, it's nice to be slapped with a dose of reality like *The Minus Times*. There's not one mention of music, computers, or *The X-Files* within. Instead, the reader is treated to imaginative, extremely well written short essays and stories. The only cohesive theme to the 'zine is brevity and quality; none of the pieces is more than two pages long, and the entire publication is a quick 16, which wouldn't seem like many in less able hands. But editor Hunter Kennedy knows some terrific writers. The hook for music fans is the inclusion of writing by Pavement's Bob Nastanovich and the Silver Jews' David Berman. But these are no tedious fanboy interviews, just a page each from both (Nastanovich waxes on about horse racing, Berman has a story), and they stand out no more or less than the others. Equally impressive is the 'zine's aesthetic: The only cutting and pasting is done with scissors and glue, the font is early Smith Corona, and there's a substance that belies its meager page count. Because the writing is so precise and imaginative, *The Minus Times* is as dense as most 'zines quadruple the size. RANDALL ROBERTS

'ZINE



## THUNDERBOLTS

(Marvel)

COMICS

Genuinely original superhero comics are practically a redundancy at this point—it's hard to come up with anything interesting and new within the confines of that more-or-less played-out genre. Writer Kurt Busiek has come up with a great, twisted premise for *Thunderbolts*, though, and readers have responded by making it the runaway hit of the season. The high concept is this: Most of the world's superheroes have vanished, and a new long-underwear team, the Thunderbolts, has stepped in to take their place. The first twist is that the Thunderbolts are actually a group of super-villains who have decided this is the perfect opportunity to assume new names and gain the world's trust, the better to betray it later. The second twist is that a couple of them have started to like being heroes, and they're having doubts about their teammates' nefarious plans. The third twist is that one Thunderbolt is a legitimate heroine who has no idea what's up with the rest of them. Like the '80s cult favorite *Suicide Squad*, the last major comic to focus on the bad guys, *Thunderbolts* is of its genre through-and-through, but as suspenseful and full of triple-agent backstabbing as a great spy story—you never really know who's on what side. DOUGLAS WOLK



# MULTI-MEDIA

## PARMA ENDORIAN

([www.xenite.org/parma2.htm](http://www.xenite.org/parma2.htm))

Despite the fact that he's indirectly responsible for all those bad fantasy novels about elves and dwarves and little people and all-powerful dark lords, J.R.R. Tolkien shouldn't be despised too much. His only crime was creating a fictional world so complete that people feel compelled to return to it time and time again. (After all, he spent some 50 years dabbling with it.) But while many have loved *The Lord Of The Rings*, few have dared to enter the rather scary 12-volume *History Of Middle Earth*. For those understandably too daunted, here's a cool site that collates some of the interesting tidbits to be gleaned from *H.O.M.E.* Site creator Michael Martinez has done the scholarship so you don't have to, and presents well-written essays on such topics as "Orcs And Other Foul Things" and "What Does An Elf Do In Aman?" (Answer: probably not very much. Tolkien's heaven was pretty boring.) A useful chronology of events and an opinionated listing of the seven wonders of Middle Earth are probably worth a trip all by themselves. Even mild-mannered Tolkien dabblers will be impressed by the amount of research that Martinez has put into this site, and be reminded anew of the power of Tolkien's invented world. **HEIDI MACDONALD**

## WEB STUFF



## YESTERLAND

([www.mcs.net/~werner/yester.html](http://www.mcs.net/~werner/yester.html))

It's understandable that Disney has a web site with a substantial area devoted to Disneyland. It also stands to reason that a handful of fans have put together their own massive Disneyland-based sites (check out the scarily enthusiastic Mr. Whoopee's Disneyland Adventure, [www2.csn.net/~jmholmes/Disneyland/mainpage.html](http://www2.csn.net/~jmholmes/Disneyland/mainpage.html)). And then there's Werner W. Weiss's "theme park on the net," Yesterland, devoted to Disneyland attractions that have closed. Turns out Michael Jackson's "Captain Eo" quietly vanished earlier this year, for instance, though Weiss notes that it can still be seen in Disneyland Paris. Rocket To The Moon opened in 1955, then became Flight To The Moon in 1967, Mission To Mars in 1975, and a "former attraction" in 1992 (Weiss says its site is rumored to become the new Pizza Planet). That kind of thing. He's yet to find pictures of the Aluminum Hall Of Fame or the Bathroom Of Tomorrow, but almost everything else that a nostalgic former Disneyland attendee could remember is lovingly documented here, in photos and tongue-in-cheek prose. **(DW)**



## WEB SITE

## JAMBOOZLES

([www.mindspring.com/~shand/](http://www.mindspring.com/~shand/))

Misheard song lyrics are an endless source of jokes—there have even been a few books collecting them, notably *'Scuse Me While I Kiss This Guy*. The Jamboozles site runs with the concept a little further, inviting web-surfers to contribute their own lyric-understanding Freudian slips. Some of them are amazingly far off the mark—"Oh, Papa Smurf, don't eat my cereal" is kind of hard to map to the hook of "Spirits In The Material World"—and some really do sound like they're attempts to hear something else ("Take your pants off/And make it happen," as Irene Cara didn't quite sing). A few artists seem to be more prone than others to the bitter fruit of mushmouthedness: In fact, there's an entire page devoted to mishearings of the Steve Miller Band's "Jet Airliner." Jamboozles also has a page of fairly lame trivia, but the main section (with the confused parties responsible attributed wherever possible) is one giggle after another. You're such an owl, how can you say I go about things the wrong way? **(DW)**

## WEB SITE





## AUGUST 12

**320 Madison Ave., 21st Fl.**  
New York, NY 10022

**A&M Polydor**  
1410 N. La Brea Ave.  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**Alias**  
2813 W. Olive Ave.  
Burbank, CA 91505

**Antilles**  
825 Eighth Ave., 26th Fl.  
New York, NY 10019

**Anyway**  
P.O. Box 83444  
Columbus, OH 43202

**Ark 21**  
1030 Hayden Ave.  
Culver City, CA 90232

**Asphodel**  
P.O. Box 51, Chelsea Stn.  
New York, NY 10113-0051

**Atlantic**  
1200 Ave. Of The Americas  
New York, NY 10104

**Bar None**  
P.O. Box 1708  
Holmdel, NJ 07733

**Caroline Astralwerks**  
104 W. 29th St., 4th Fl.  
New York, NY 10001

**Cassiel**  
P.O. Box 1638  
Cambridge, MA 02236

**Chapter Music**  
P.O. Box 4292  
Melbourne University  
Parkville 3052 Australia

**Che U.K.**  
P.O. Box 952  
London, E18 2NX U.K.

**Chemikal Underground**  
P.O. Box 3609  
Orange CA 92711 U.K.

**City Of Angels**  
1000 N. Vine St., Ste. 806  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**Columbia**  
330 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

**Crypt**  
1250 Long Beach Ave., Ste. 310  
Los Angeles, CA 90031

**Disco**  
78 Fifth Ave., 6th Fl.  
New York, NY 10011

**Elektra EGG**  
75 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, NY 10019

**Epice**  
350 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

**Epitaph**  
6201 Warner Blvd., Ste. 111  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**Fat Possum**  
P.O. Box 1923  
Oxford, MS 38955

**Fat Wreck Chords**  
P.O. Box 193680  
San Francisco, CA 94119

**Fragrant**  
7039 Hollywood Blvd., #606  
Los Angeles, CA 90028

**Gern Blandsten**  
P.O. Box 356  
Romy Edge, NJ 07061

**Heartbeat**  
One Camp St.  
Cambridge, MA 02140

**Honey Bear**  
P.O. Box 400340  
San Francisco, CA 94141-0346

**Impulse!**  
363 W. 57th St., 10th Fl.  
New York, NY 10019

**Interscope**  
10609 Vinshire Blvd., Ste. 1230  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

**Island**  
615 Eighth Ave., 24th Fl.  
New York, NY 10019

**Jazz**  
2100 N. 4th St.  
Columbus, OH 43201

**Legacy**  
330 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

**London**  
330 Eighth Ave., 24th Fl.  
New York, NY 10019

**Maverick**  
8000 Beverly Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90048

**M.A.**  
70 Universal City Plaza  
Universal City, CA 91608

**Mercury**  
1361 Kildare Farms Rd., Ste. 246  
Cary, NC 27511

**Moodfood**  
1361 Kildare Farms Rd., Ste. 246  
Cary, NC 27511

**Moonshine**  
8525 Santa Monica Blvd.  
W. Hollywood, CA 90069

**Mute**  
140 W. 22nd St., Ste. 104  
New York, NY 10011

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

**Nuclear Blast America**  
P.O. Box 1587  
Tampa, FL 33684-0877

**Osmose**  
BP 57  
62803 Beaumontville, France

**Outpost**  
8852 South Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90008

**PCP**  
P.O. Box 1699  
Grand Central Stn.  
New York, NY 10009

**Primary**  
72 Spring St., 10th Fl.  
New York, NY 10012

**Rawkus**  
676 Broadway, 4th Fl.  
New York, NY 10012

**REA**  
Bertelsmann Bldg.  
1540 Broadway, Times Sq.  
New York, NY 10036

**Regal**  
43 Brock Green  
London W6 7EF U.K.

**Relativity**  
79 Fifth Ave.  
New York, NY 10003

**Release**  
P.O. Box 251  
Millersville, PA 17551

**Reprise**  
3300 Warner Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91505

**Rhino**  
10635 Santa Monica Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

**Rykodisc**  
Shetland Park  
27 Congress St.  
Salem, MA 01970

**Sappy**  
P.O. Box 25097  
Moncton, NB E1C 9M9  
Canada

**Shadow**  
114 E. 14th St., #338  
New York, NY 10003

**Sony**  
350 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

**SST**  
P.O. Box 1  
Lanndale, CA 90480

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

**SVR**  
P.O. Box 6179  
Hoboken, NJ 07030

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

**Trade 2 UK**  
60 Golborne Rd.  
London W10 5PS U.K.

**TVT**  
23 E. Fourth St., 3rd Fl.  
New York, NY 10003

**Tradik**  
61 E. Eighth St., Ste. 126  
New York, NY 10003

**V2**  
14 E. Fourth St.  
New York, NY 10003

**Virgin**  
330 N. Fifthhill  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**Warner Bros.**  
3300 Warner Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91505

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

**ANDREW DORFF** Hint Of Mess **WORK**  
**BIOHAZARD** No Holds Barred Live **Roadrunner**  
**BLUE RAGS** Rag N' Roll **Sub Pop**  
**CALEXICO** Spoke **Quarterstick**  
**CHRISTIAN MARCLAY** Records **Atavistic**  
**CRESCENT** Electronic Sound Constructions **Atavistic**  
**DENISON/KIMBALL TRIO** Neutrons **Touch And Go**  
**DOWN BY LAW** Last Of The Sharpshooters **Epitaph**  
**FIG DISH** When Shove Goes Back To Push **Polydor-A&M**  
**G.P. WU** The Grain **MCA**  
**GENEVA** Further **WORK**  
**MELONY** Satisfaction **DGC**  
**MOG STUNT TEAM** Amphetamine **Reptile**  
**PANSY DIVISION** More Lovin From Our Oven **Lookout!**  
**SONORA PINE II** Quarterstick  
**SUPERCHARGER** Wall To Wall Moustache **China-Discovery**  
**THE DELTA 72** The Soul Of A New Machine **Touch And Go**  
**ZION TRAIN** Single Minded/Alive **China-Discovery**

## AUGUST 19

**CHEMICAL PEOPLE** Arpeggio Motorcade **Cruz**  
**KILLER TWECKER BEES** Twecker Blues **SST**  
**ORANGE PEELS** Square **Minty Fresh**  
**PINEAL VENTANA** Breathe As You Might **Altered-Ichiban**  
**PIZZICATO FIVE** Happy End Of The World **Matador**  
**ROGER MILLER** Binary System **SST**  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Dubmission 2 **Quango-Island**  
**WHITE HASSLE** National Chain **Matador**

## AUGUST 26

**BLUE STRINGAYS** Epitaph  
**CRYSTAL METHIOD** Vegas **Outpost-DGC**  
**DWARVES** The Dwarves Are Young & Good Looking **Epitaph**  
**ERIC CLAPTON** Reprise  
**ERIC MATTHEWS** The Lateness Of The Hour **Sub Pop**  
**FEMININE COMPLEX** To Be In Love **TeenBeat**  
**JULIE DOIRON** Loneliest In The Morning **Sub Pop**  
**LYNC** Remembering The Fireballs **K**  
**MADNESS** Total Madness: The Best Of Madness **Geffen**  
**MELVINS** Singles Collection **Amphetamine Reptile**  
**MR. T EXPERIENCE** Revenge Is Sweet And So Are You **Lookout!**  
**OASIS** Be Here Now **Epice**  
**OLIVE** Extra Virgin **RCA**  
**SCANNER/SIGNS OV CHAOS** Scanner Vs. Signs Ov Chaos **Earache**  
**STEREOLAB** Dots And Loops **Elektra**  
**SWEET 75** Fluorescein **DGC**  
**TANYA DONNELLY** Love Songs For Underdogs **Reprise**

## SEPTEMBER 2

**EIGHT FYED SPY** Collection **Atavistic**  
**GLENN BRANCA** Selections From The Symphonies **Atavistic**  
**MAN OR ASTROMAN?** Made From Technetium **Touch And Go**  
**MOUSE ON MARS** Thrill Jockey  
**SCOTT WALKER** Tilt **Drag City**  
**SMEGMA** Pigs For Lepers **Tim/Kerr**  
**SMOKING POPES** Destination Failure **Capitol**  
**SUPERCHUNK** Indoor Living **Merge**  
**TRAVIS** Good Feeling **Epice**

## SEPTEMBER 9

**AMY GRANT** Behind The Eyes **A&M**  
**CORNERSHOP** Warner Bros.  
**CRABS** What Were Flames Now Smolder **K**  
**ELEVATOR TO HELL** Eerieconsilation **Sub Pop**  
**FATBOY SLIM** Better Living Through Chemistry **Astralwerks-Caroline**  
**FRETBLANKET** Home Truths From Abroad **Polydor-A&M**  
**GRIFTERS** Full Blown Possession **Sub Pop**  
**MARY LOU LORD** WORK  
**SAVE FERRIS** It Means Everything **Epice**



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World Radio History

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1. Cut along dotted line.
2. Fold in half.
3. Slip into our CD holder or a jewel box.
4. Get ready for some big changes in *CMJ* next month (trust us, you'll like them).



PAT MACDONALD



THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS

**15** You may remember Peter Tatgren and his musical incarnation Pain from the *CMJ New Music* July CD. When not working on his own projects, he's also got a hand in nearly every pot of death metal that Norway cooks up. **DIMMU BORGIR's** new album, *Enthrone Darkness Triumphant* (Nuclear Blast America), was produced by Tatgren at his Abyss Studios. But DB's members have previous credits all their own. Vocalist Shagrath used to play guitar in Fimbulwinter, bassist Nagash played in Covenant and drummer Tjodalv is an active member of Old Man's Child. Listen to "Spellbound" and be afraid. (See Metal, pg. 50)

**16** Technically, **BARRY BLACK** is not a person. But, in musical terms, Eric Bachmann's side-band is clearly the alter-ego of his main project, Archers Of Loaf. Black gives Bachmann the opportunity to stretch out a bit and explore how various sounds work with, and against, each other. "I don't think things have to make melodic sense all the time," Bachmann explains. *Tragic Animal Stories* (Alias) is BB's second long-player, and "Tropical Fish Revival" is one of the only songs on the record that includes vocals.

**17** These songs seem to be mostly about looking for something, and not always knowing what it is," says **PAT MACDONALD** (formerly of Timbuk2) on his solo debut, *Pat MacDonald Sleeps With His Guitar* (Ark 21). "I'm not trying to bring anyone down here—music is supposed to be uplifting. But there's two ways to lift something: you can come from up above and pull, or you can get down underneath and push. I guess that the latter is what I am trying to do now." "To Track You Down" is the album's first single. (See review, pg. 38)

**18** "There are a lot of bands now who constantly make reference to their heroes, or try to emulate them," says **TRAVIS's** vocalist, Francis Healy. "I've never done that because I've never had a hero. The only one's been Madonna in 1995, when I had to buy 'Crazy For You.'" But, that disclaimer aside, we're willing to bet that Healy's also a pretty big fan of a young blonde who, like himself, dropped out of art school to form his own fab four. (Hint: We don't mean Oasis.) "All I Want To Do Is Rock" is taken from the Glaswegian band's debut album, *Live Through This* (Independiente Epic).

**19** **HEADSWIM** had been playing together for about a year when, at the end of 1994, tragedy struck the Essex quartet. Matthew Glendinning, the 19-year-old brother of guitarist/vocalist Dan and drummer Tom, died of leukemia. "His death pretty well stopped the band for some time," says Dan. "But at a certain point I got hold of myself, began writing songs, and managed to turn things around for us." Many of the songs written during that period, including "Hype," can be heard on the band's domestic debut, *Despite Yourself* (550).

**20** **THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS** singer Ron House's cackle has been heard on great Ohio records for ages, starting with his old bands Moses Carryout and Great Plains, and continuing through to *Straight To Video* (Anyway), on which "Lightnin' Rod" appears. When House isn't on stage with the Slave Apartments, he can be found behind the counter of Used Kids Records, the legendary Columbus, Ohio, record store. (See Best New Music, pg. 12)

**CMJ**  
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VOLUME 49 • SEPTEMBER 1997

**1** **PRODIGY** producer Liam Howlett writes tracks that sway and inspire entire movements of music. From pioneering breakbeat rave anthems to dark and devious techno-rock, Prodigy (which also includes sidemen/vocalists/dancers Maxim, Keith Flint, and Leeroy Thornhill) has broken boundaries and crossed barriers other electronic artists didn't even realize existed. The eye-popping "Smack My Bitch Up" is the first cut on the group's highly anticipated third release, *Futuristic* (Maverick). (See cover story, pg. 20)

**2** "We love remixing—there's nothing like completely messing up a non-dance track," says **APOLLO 440's** Trevor Gray, explaining the London techno group's penchant for crafting drum 'n' bass versions of rock classics. The quintet's last record, *Millennium Fever*, included a tranceed-out cover of Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear The Reaper," and the new *Electro Glide In Blue* (550) features a jungle version of Van Halen's "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love." "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Dub." (See review, pg. 26)

**3** 1993's *Judgment Night* soundtrack joined rockers and rappers for a collection of songs that struck a chord with music fans across the board. The same masterminds are behind this summer's *Spawn* soundtrack (Immortal-Epic), which takes genre crossing to the next level, pairing rockers with up-and-coming electronic/techno producers. "(Can't You) Trip Like I Do," joining **FILTER** with **THE CRYSTAL METHOD**, is one of the soundtrack's peak moments. (See Various Artists, pg. 35)

**4** Dave Smalley of **DOWN BY LAW** has been a punk rock singer for 15 years now—he started the legendary Boston straightedge band DYS in 1982, then Dag Nasty in '86, sang on the first two All albums, and finally settled down into DBL. His hand-in-gloves are punk vets too: guitarist Sam Williams was in Slap Of Reality and Balance, and bassist Angry John DiMambro was in the Clay Idols and the Leonards. "Question Marks And Periods" comes from their fifth album, *Last Of The Sharpshooters* (Epitaph). (See review, pg. 32)



DOWN BY LAW



TEENAGE FANCLUB

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FIG DISH



LAUREN HOFFMAN



TALVIN SINGH

**5** Shortly after the release of her major-label debut, **JEN TRYNIN** drew some heat for requesting not to have any female acts open for her band. Trynin defends her request as having been a reaction to "lazy, sexist and closed-minded" booking agents who continually booked Trynin's band with other girl groups, even if they weren't "musically appropriate." She says, "I knew it was going to come back to haunt me. But... this is 'ultra-pro-feminism.' Treat me as a fucking person." **"Get Away—February"** is taken from *Gun Shy Trigger Happy* (Warner Bros.). (See Best New Music, pg. 12.)

**6** "You don't really know what to expect next on this album," says **TEENAGE FANCLUB** guitarist/vocalist Norman Blake of *Songs From Northern Britain* (Creation-Columbia). "There are loads of extremes. All the things we've used before, except they're more prominent on this one." With more harmonies, more emotion, more melodies, and more attention to sonic detail, tracks like **"Take The Long Way Round"** showcase the revitalized, revamped and refocused Scottish quartet that insists that its best is yet to come. (See feature, pg. 18.)

**7** Power pop that seems to jump out of the stereo doesn't happen by accident, and songs like **"Come On, Don't Come On,"** from *When Shove Goes Back To Push* (Polydor-A&M), indicate that **FIG DISH** takes what it does pretty seriously. But considering that this Chicago foursome named itself for the phonetic transcription of an epithet launched its way following an early gig at German restaurant (essentially, a Bavarian "fuck you") and tends to frame any information about itself in in-jokes and sarcasm, that would pretty much be the only indication. (See review, pg. 32.)

**8** For a woman barely out of her teens, **LAUREN HOFFMAN** has accomplished a lot. The singer/songwriter started playing bass when she was 11, and began playing guitar and writing her own songs at 13. At 17, she spent six months touring as the bass player for September '67, in the three years since, she's released two of her own singles (one on David Lowery's Pitch-A-Tent label) and, this past spring, her debut long-player, *Megiddo* (Virgin), from which **"Rock Star"** is taken.

**9** There's nothing like a little "Proud Mary" to get the creative juices flowing. When **REEF** was recording *Glow* (Epic), producer George Drakoulas (Black Crowes, Maria McKee, Beastie Boys) forced the band to listen to Creedence Clearwater Revival. "I'd never really heard of them before," admits vocalist Gary Stringer. "[George] sat me down and said, 'Listen to that; now that's fuckin' playing!' We'd go 'Yeah!'—and knew we had to try to be as good as that." Did they pass the test? Check out **"Consideration"** and judge for yourself. (See Quick Fix, pg. 6.)

**10** "To me, Loretta Lynn is punk rock. Listening to her, I get the same feeling as when I'm listening to the Bad Brains," says **WHISKEYTOWN** vocalist/guitarist Ryan Adams. "It's the same pathos. She was writing songs about her husband fucking around on her. It's the same as Black Flag or the Minutemen singing about getting beaten up because they didn't fit in. Both are so intense—purposeful and timeless." **"16 Days"** is taken from the band's second album and major-label debut, *Strangers Almanac* (Outpost). (See Best New Music, pg. 13.)

**11** "The best gigs, for me, are the ones where we start and there's a lot of noise in the crowd and nobody's taking any notice of us. But something we do makes them shut up, and we finish the song in total silence. I love gigs like that," says the **TINDERSTICKS'** Stuart Staples. Listening to the British sextet in the privacy of your own home is a remarkably similar experience. Songs like **"Bathtime,"** from *Curtains* (London), are unexpectedly breathtaking. (See feature, pg. 26.)

**12** British producer/DJ Talvin Singh put together the *Anokha: Sounds Of The Asian Underground* compilation (Quango-Island), featuring the records he plays at his club nights of the same name, including **STATE OF BENGAL's** **"Flight IC408"** (which appears here in an edited version). The group has its roots in Jah-Bhangra, the British bhangra group that also spawned Fun-da-mental and the Asian Dub Foundation. (See Various Artists, pg. 35.)

**13** Before truncating its name to **YATSURA**, this Glaswegian quartet went by Urusei Yatsura, which happens to be the name of a Japanese comic book whose title basically translates as "Those Annoying Aliens." Got that? No worry, because this sort of semiotic jumble is a nice introduction to what the NME has called "the most exciting noise humanly possible." **"Strategic Hamlets"** comes from *Pulpo!* (Primary), a collection of the group's recent singles assembled as a Stateside follow-up to the acclaimed *We Are Yatsura*. (See review, pg. 45.)

**14** **SAVE FERRIS** has had a good year. This past spring, the Orange County, CA septet won the Grammy Showcase contest for unsigned artists and was awarded a Gibson guitar, \$2000 in prize money and a week's worth of recording time at a studio in Massachusetts. The greatest value, however, was the attention the band received after it won. Shortly after the contest, the band signed a major label deal, and its first album, *It Means Everything* (Epic), which features **"Come On Eileen,"** will be released in early September. (See On The Verge, pg. 14.)



ANOKHA



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## ► MEMPHIS, TN

[ by Matt Hanks ]

About a year ago, I was driving with a friend through one of Memphis's seedier neighborhoods. "You know, Memphis is probably more like it was in the '70s than any other city in the country," he observed. Memphians, as a general rule, are blissfully unaware of the ebb and flow of popular culture. When you live in the birthplace of rock 'n' roll and bar-b-que, how can you be expected to take post-rock or vegetarians seriously? Most folks here don't.

But living in a selective cultural vacuum has its liabilities. Until recently, it seemed that the city viewed its own legacy with the same apathy as it does the rest of the country. Keen observers have since realized that there's gold in them thar musical vestiges (Graceland and Beale Street are the city's biggest tourist attractions by a long shot), but the current trend toward preservation came a little too late for a few landmarks, like the Stax Studio (demolished in 1989). Still, history beckons at every turn in Memphis. Here's a survey of some of the Bluff City's still-extant treasures.

### RECORD SHOPPING

As you'd expect from its musical heritage, Memphis is a great place to buy records. For starters, you'll want to hit **Shangri-La** (1916 Madison Ave., 274-1916). Located in the heart of midtown, Shangri-La is more than a record store. It's also home to the venerable Shangri-La label (Grifters, Simple Ones, Memphis Goons et al.), the Grifters' practice space, and a makeshift "'70s museum." Shangri-La is the only game in town for indie rock, and its electronic section is growing exponentially too. A few blocks west of Shangri-La is **Audiomania** (1698 Madison Ave., 278-1166), which deals almost exclusively in vintage, well-preserved vinyl. Prices run high, but if you're looking for, say, an original pressing of *Brian Jones Presents The Pipes Of Pan At Jajouka*, this is the only place likely to have it.

Next, head northeast to Summer Avenue, and the vinyl motherlode of **Nostalgia World** (2492 Summer Ave., 327-6522). From its dilapidated exterior and foreboding "One student at a time!" sign on the front door, Nostalgia World may not seem like a very friendly place. And it's not. But this is the place for used vinyl. Past the stacks of baseball cards and old porn mags, there's a cavernous room where old record

collections come to die. Most of the stock at Nostalgia World isn't alphabetized, but despite the disarray of the place, I always find enough records to fill a grocery bag, most of them under \$3.

If your budget isn't completely shot by now, you'll also want to check out a few of the antique malls on Summer Ave. The **Antique Warehouse** (2563 Summer Ave., 323-0600) and **Bo-Jo's** (3400 Summer Ave., 323-2050), particularly, have some impressive collections lurking in their booths.



PHOTO BY MATT HANKS

### EATS

If you're of the mind that everybody has to die sometime, Memphis cuisine will suit you fine. If you're looking for a healthy meal, try Nashville.

Of course, Memphis is best known for its bar-b-que, and after no small amount of research I can confirm that you won't find a better plate of pork ribs anywhere than **Cozy Corner** (745 N. Parkway, 527-9158). If you're really in for a workout, ask for the "super-hot" ribs and you'll be breaking a sweat in no time flat. If bar-b-que sandwiches are your preference, head for **Payne's** (1762 Lamar Ave., 272-1523). A short drive from Easley Studio, lunch at Payne's was purportedly a daily ritual for Sonic Youth while they were recording *Washing Machine* there. They even thank Payne's in the album's liner notes.

Now that breakfast is taken care of, you'll want to start planning lunch. **Ellen's** (601 S. Parkway E., 942-4888) offers some of the city's best soul food. The fried chicken and catfish are superb, and the free johnny cakes are worth the price of a meal alone.



Another source for authentic Southern cuisine is **The Buntyn** (3070 Southern Ave., 458-8776), the meatloaf and vegetable beef soup being a couple of their signature items. Be warned, though: It's easy to fill up on the incredible softball-sized rolls that precede your entree.



What better way to top off your day of artery-clogging than with a juicy 16-ounce steak? Actually, the steaks are only half the story at the **Western Steakhouse** (1298 Madison Ave., 725-9896). This restaurant and lounge was one of the King's favorite haunts back in the day, and the staff at the Western have built a shrine around "Elvis' Favorite Booth" (call ahead if you want to be seated there). Elvis impersonators perform on weekends, and bibs come with every meal.

## DRINKS

There's a saying around here that "no one has ever gone out of business selling alcohol in Memphis." But the truth behind it may lie more in the supply than in the demand. Fact is, if you fancy a drink, your tolerable options are few. Two places worth hitting in midtown are the **Lamplighter Lounge** (1702 Madison Ave., 726-1916) and the **P&H Cafe** (short for Poor & Hungry, 1532 Madison Ave., 726-0906). The Lamplighter has a pool table, a decent jukebox, and a plentiful selection of beers under two dollars. The same goes for the P&H, but it tends to be more crowded.

Another comer in the midtown fray is the **Young Avenue Deli** (2119 Young Ave., 278-0034). The Deli is located in the heart of the Cooper-Young neighborhood, probably the closest approximation of a "hip" part of town that Memphis has ever seen. The beer selection at the Deli is vast, if overpriced, and the newsstand/coffee shop adjacent to the bar is open late most nights. The Deli has also evolved into an impressive rockabilly venue, hosting everyone from Ronnie Dawson to Guitar Wolf to Wayne Hancock in recent months.

## OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

First things first. Skip Graceland. Tacky and overpriced, the King's former castle is one of the city's biggest rackets. Rather than shelling out the requisite ten bucks to set foot on the premises, suffice yourself with a drive-by and keep on going. Eventually you'll reach a little side street called Hale Road. Head west on Hale until you see the **Full Gospel Tabernacle** (787 Hale Rd., 396-9192). It's a modest little building, but this is probably the only church in the country that can claim a member of the Rock 'N' Roll Hall Of Fame as its pastor. Mr. Soul himself, Al Green, has been delivering the Good Word at the FGT for over 20 years. The Rev. Green's touring commitments keep him on the road a fair amount, but with any luck you can catch him (and his dad) preaching, singing and inciting Pentecostal havoc on Sunday morning.

A visit to the FGT is an experience you'll never forget, and it's worth planning your trip around. Services start at 11 AM.

I'm tempted to steer you away from Beale Street too. After decades of neglect, this most famous of musical byways has been gentrified with a vengeance, at the expense of its original charm. These days Beale resembles one big Hard Rock Cafe, save for a few choice exceptions. Chief among these is the **Center For Southern Folklore** (209 Beale St., 525-3655). The CSF is a combination museum and bar that hosts some of Memphis's unique and thoroughly Southern artists. What's more, it's probably the only place in town where you can listen to a gospel choir (the popular "gospel in the afternoon" series takes place the first Sunday of every month) and drink a beer at the same time.

## FINALLY

Upon your arrival you'll want to pick up a copy of the *Memphis Flyer*. This free weekly paper is a good reference for goings-on about town, and they do their best to keep up with Memphis's ever-changing nightclub landscape. As for driving music, **WEVL** (89.9 FM) is—as the DJs will tell you every five or ten minutes—"Tennessee's only listener supported community radio station." For my money, it's the best radio station in Memphis.



All phone numbers are in the 901 area code.

When he's not working his day job at Autotonic, an indie press and promotion company, Matt Hanks does a fair share of freelance writing and runs his own indie label, *Sunday Driver*.



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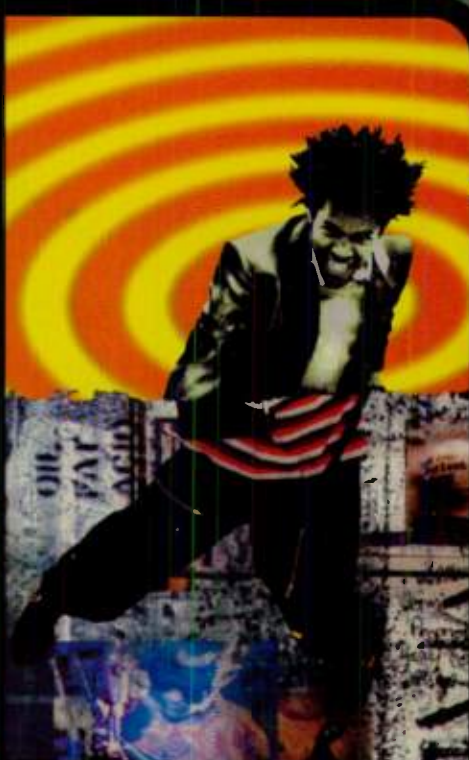
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