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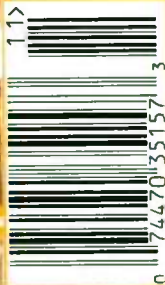
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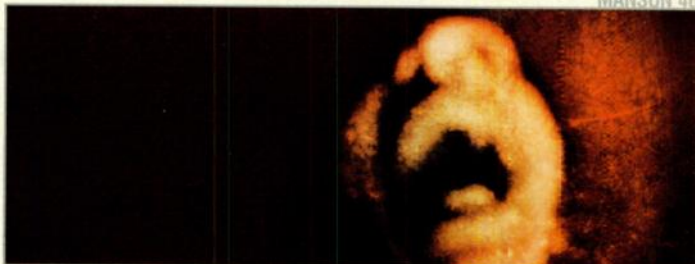
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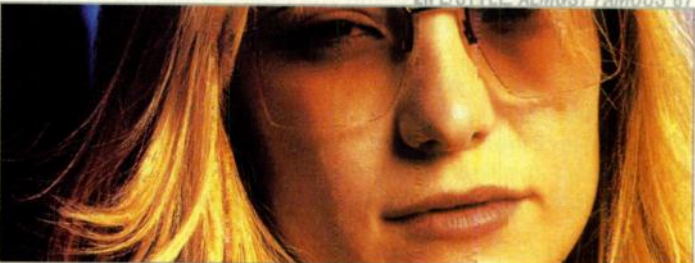
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We would like to know how can we bring Ricky Martin Live Concert in Bali, Indonesia during next Year. If you donot mind please give me a name with his/her email address/ Telephone number, to whom we can make some arrangement for it. We're looking forward your prompt reply, thank you vary much. [sic]
Regards,
Didi Nugrahadhi

Ricky, did you lose our number?—ed.

YO-YO YAHOO

Just wanted to write a quick note to thank Lorne Behrman for the lovely review of *Upper And Downers* by the Yo-Yo's. It's a great CD and they're a great band (and a great bunch of guys), and they deserve this kind of attention (and more), especially here in the US. So thanxx for the exposure!
Lynda D - Greenville, South Carolina

It's always so lovely to hear from a Greenville reader. It's a great town—original stomping ground of the great Shoeless Joe Jackson, so close to the great Clemson University (go Tigers!) and the annual Pee Dee Fall Plant & Flower Festival (save me some tulips!) Thanxx for reading!—ed.

AUREOLA BOREALIS

I recently read your brief article in CMJ #85 about Nipple-titled albums. I know that you missed at least one recent release by that title (by Russell Wolff, who toured with Moxie Fruvous), and wondered if there were any more you may have missed.
Brian-Not-of-Dap [alacrity8@netzero.com]

Don't worry, we've been working around the clock on our new book The Secret History Of Nipple Rock, including chapters on Grace Jones's "Nipple To The Bottle," Coffee Boys' "Nipple Fish" and Cattle Prod's "Nipple Goon." Thanks for asking—and as you might have guessed, the movie is already in the works.—ed.

NOTHING COMPARES TO SPEW

Just got about halfway through your September Quick Fix, and I had to go to the bathroom and vomit. Please, please don't ever waste my time and money on Sinead O'Connor again. I thought I had her buried years ago, only to be dredged up by that 'I am so God-like' interview. Please, these things need time to be forgotten and put behind us. P.S. Needless to say, I did not finish the article. F.Y. Iwasaki - Vancouver, B.C.

Needless to say, we printed this because this person's initials are F.Y.I. Okay, so it's one F.Y. has heard before, but it's kinda funny to me. Not unlike the

Sinead interview in question, because personally, I always thought she was nutty.—ed.

SHOCKED BY ELECTROMEDIA

Well, I have been holding out on writing an e-mail to you guys. When I read the July 2000 issue of CMJ, I got kind of pissed off when I saw the fashion section and the Electromedia one and all of the other sections of the magazine that had nothing to do with music. Well, I waited and read the next two issues of CMJ and after I realized that these sections weren't a one-time thing, I decided that I was gonna tell you what needed to be said. The name of your magazine is CMJ New MUSIC Monthly. Nothing in that title suggests fashion or electronics or anything like that. Your magazine should be about music. I looked so hard to find a magazine solely about music and when I saw yours I was so impressed that I subscribed and I never subscribe to any magazines, in fact for the past year and a half, yours is the only one I have bought. But it looks to me like now you are selling out. And the one thing that I cannot stand is sell-outs. So you can go ahead and continue on making your magazine a sellout magazine, but maybe you should change your name to Teen People or one of those other dumb magazine names because that's what you are becoming. And this may be a huge cliché and I doubt you, as a big company, will even care, but you have just lost yourself a customer.
BONEcrusher03@aol.com

BONEcrusher, it's time for a heart-to-heart. On behalf of the entire staff, I would like to say we're honored (albeit a bit concerned) that you would buy only CMJ New Music Monthly, saddened to hear you call us a sellout (of course The Who Sell Out was a great album, but that's beside the point) and distraught that you would consider us a "dumb" magazine for covering topics beyond music. I remember the first time I bought a box of the Cap'n Crunch cereal Crunch Berries, only to find regular Cap'n Crunch mixed in with the Crunch Berries. After spending nearly two days separating out the berries, my disappointment was much like yours. I didn't shower for weeks, shaved my hair into a mohawk and, well, started stalking Jodie Foster. I wrote the Cap'n more than a few spiteful messages in a bottle. (He's out at sea most of the year, so that's the only way to contact him. Besides, the Police were big at the time and it was the hip thing to do.) Just recently, the Cap'n remedied the situation with the new cereal, Oops, All Berries. Yep, you guessed it, I bought a case. Well, BONEcrusher, we're not such a big company that we don't care about your concerns—we do. We're also not so big that we can start the spinoff magazine, Oops, All Music. In the meantime, I'd like to share something the Cap'n wrote me once: "There's more to life than Crunch Berries."

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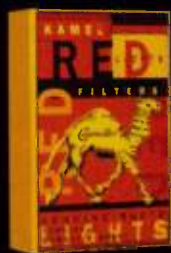
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PASS THE JAM

MEDESKI MARTIN & WOOD FOREGO STRAIGHT-AHEAD FUSION FOR MOSAIC THUMP.

STORY: BRADLEY BAMBARGER PHOTO: JASON TODD

The title of Medeski Martin & Wood's *The Dropper* can be interpreted a few ways, says the avant-groove act's keyboard master, John Medeski. First of all, the band's unlikely co-producer/engineer Scotty Hard, who's twiddled knobs for acts like the Wu-Tang Clan, expertly drops elements in and out of a mix. "We wanted to let the music tell us where to go, but we weren't sure Blue Note was going to like where it took us," says Medeski about the group's unorthodox studio manipulations. "We kept joking that the label was going to drop us—so, the album was potentially 'the dropper.' And the word 'drop' also has its psychedelic meaning, which isn't inappropriate to the music."

Recorded in the funky confines of Shacklyn, the trio's rehearsal space-cum-recording studio in Brooklyn, the record ups the ante on MMW's jazzy urban-jungle soundtracks, employing more of the digital cut-and-paste instituted on the group's 1998 Blue Note debut, *Combustication*. The disc boasts an old-school 12-bar groove, "Note Bleu," but beyond that, *The Dropper* revels in sonic sleight-of-hand, bobbing and weaving like an adept exponent of the sweet science. Yet for all the abstract alchemy, the seedbed of each track is a gritty trio improv; even the overdubs—whether by the band or such guests as downtown guitar hero Marc Ribot and Sun Ra alto sax man Marshall Allen—were kept to organic one- or two-take affairs. The free-minded opener "We Are Rolling" rocks hard, while the Ribot-abetted "Bone Digger" takes things at a more hallucinatory pace; "Shacklyn Knights" is a top-down anthem, and the closing "Norah 6" incorporates a string trio to ambient effect.

Perhaps it's their propensity for genre-jumping leaps of faith that's helped endear the band to the neo-hippie followers of Phish and other jam bands who've adopted the hard-touring MMW. Members of Phish were champions early on, and they helped introduce the group to an audience far beyond downtown Manhattan. (The trio did a similar favor for kindred spirit John Scofield when they backed him up on his Verve disc, *Bump*, and subsequent shows. Now the jazz guitar vet regularly plays to a throng of dread-headed kids.) For three jazz freaks who've admittedly never listened to a whole Grateful Dead album, their rock-kid fanbase comes as a surprise. "Any time an audience gets larger, the common denominator gets lower," Medeski says. "But whatever you think about their scene, the jam-band fans are after the transcendent experience that improvised music at its best can provide, and that's cool."

With the group's sound evolving, MMW feels the need to provide listeners with "what they need, not necessarily what they want," Medeski says. "We always meet people half way. You know, we'll pick them up at the dock, then take them out to sea. We realize that a record like *The Dropper* might make a few of them jump ship. But that's OK; others will come along." **NMM**







TOWER OF BLACK POWER

THE MICRANOTS' OBELISK OVERCOMES SMALL-MINDED RAP.

This is where our ancestors came before they were indoctrinated," says MC I Self Divine about his adopted hometown of Atlanta, "so it's a very important place for us historically."

The sparsely decorated living room of the house Divine shares with fellow Micranot DJ Kool Akiem soon fills with the tale of the duo's journey from their native California to Minneapolis and then to the Big Apple of the South. That 1994 relocation to America's Black Mecca had less to do with the slave trade than the rap game. Limited by the Midwest's hip-hop prospects and looking to stand out in a way they might not have in L.A. or New York, Divine and Akiem—along with a crew of nearly a dozen Minneapolis friends—headed to Georgia. Far from being indoctrinated into the dirty south styles of Jermaine Dupri, though, the Micranots fell in with other transplants, forming an Atlanta underground method that recalls the economical, looping, melodic flows and Afrocentricism of decade-old Brand Nubian and X-Clan records.

Steeped in cultural nationalism, political awareness, Egyptology and old-school creativity, the Micranots' first national full-length release, *Obelisk Movements* (Sub Verse), connects hip-hop to pan-African identity. On the track "Culture," the rappers roll through a series of references, contrasting the old world and the new: "This is original, indigenous, before Columbus or Columbine High gun busts/ Supreme queens glisten in the radiant sun/ Marley Marl, Mantronic, Soulsonic, hold chronic/ Like heaven on earth when the vinyl hits the obelisk."

The album's obelisk refers to European appropriation of African art and accomplishments; the equation of the group's name, (micra + not) "negates smallness." African people are not minorities, the group explains, but are large in number and cultural contribution.

"People are feeling pain but they don't want to deal with it, and music can be like weed, alcohol or any other type of escapism," Self says about *Obelisk Movements'* issue-minded lyrics, "so this is like the sobering."

While *Obelisk Movements'* laid-back vibe echoes the hip-hop vanguard circa 1989, Divine and Akiem didn't set out to revive the style. Having started in the mid-'80s, the Micranots consider themselves children of those times. The duo existed humbly within the culture for over a decade—releasing four homemade tapes and two singles since 1993. Only recently have they acknowledged hip-hop as a way of life, something more than a means of expression.

"KRS-One said if you have hip-hop as your main job, sometimes you're willing to compromise it," Divine considers. "In order for our music to maintain its integrity, we had other jobs. But now we're at the point where it's been 15 years, where we haven't asked anything from hip-hop. We've given a certain amount of our life, livelihood, blood, time, sacrifice, to where now I think we should be able to live off this."

Now the Micranots find themselves indoctrinated into a new and foreign world: the music business. Sprawled across his living-room floor, Divine holds pen and paper in hand. He's not scrawling the conscious, mystical lyrics typical of the Micranots' dense discourse—instead, the 28-year-old rapper is filling out BMI forms to arrange for royalties and copyright help. "You hear all the horror stories in the business of people not paying attention to the details," says Divine, eyeing the paperwork. "Everything's a learning experience." >>>RONI SARIG



JASON TANAKA BLANEY



WEIRD RECORD

The photos adorning the Great Kat's new self-released EP, *Rossini's Rape*, lie somewhere between terrifying and just plain nasty. But they don't compare to the tweaked-out Long Island thrash dominatrix's lyrics: Take, for instance, the speed-metal opus "Castration," where Kat uses her shrill, belt-sander-on-eardrums squawk to sere-nade us with prose like "Slice off his penis/ Cut his disgusting testicles/ Crush his balls/ Smash 'em! Smash 'em! Flog that moron!" As much as that (and the inset photo of Kat in a leather bustier and mask clutching a bloody dildo) might make you want to toss this aside, Kat's got metal chops—on the guitar and, absurdly, the violin—that would give even wank-master Steve Vai the shivers. Her machine-like bowing and picking speed is astounding, but still, *Rape's* interpretations of Rossini's *William Tell Overture* and Bazzini's *The Round Of The Goblins* are an unholy marriage of classical and hair metal that should quickly be annulled. >>>NICOLE KEIPER



IN MY WOMB

HILARIE SIDNEY OF THE APPLES IN STEREO

Ever since Kurt and Courtney popped out Frances Bean, more and more rocker couples seem to be plunging into parenthoo. The latest to find themselves with child are

Hilarie Sidney and Robert Schneider of garage-y psych-rock purveyors the Apples In Stereo, whose latest release is *The Discovery Of A World Inside The Moone* (spinART). When they announced the impending bundle of joy to their bandmates, Sidney admits that "everyone was a little freaked out—including us." These days, though, she's nothing but excited, and in between rehearsing and recording, she searches sonograms for signs of the baby's gender and ponders the effect her rock 'n' roll lifestyle will have on what's In Her Womb. >>>ANN MARIE DOBOSZ



It's never too early to protect your hearing

My doctor told me to put a blanket on top of my stomach when I play drums, because it might be too loud for the baby. I'm not really that concerned. In a lot of the things I've read, hearing doesn't develop until the fourth or fifth month. Plus, they're basically floating around in water, so how loud could it be in there?

We card under, er, nine months

Now that I'm pregnant, people call me less to hang out, mostly because our social life is hanging out in bars and clubs and watching bands, and I'm not hanging out in smoky environments so much. That's another reason we don't want to tour right now.

Snare, cymbals, toms, tummy

I imagine it's going to be really hard to set up my kit as I get more pregnant. My stomach will eventually stick out so far, I can imagine accidentally hitting it with a stick.

Dumb as a rock

They say that classical music makes your kid's brain develop faster—makes them smarter—if you listen to classical while pregnant. But you don't hear much about rock music. Maybe it makes them dumber. I don't know. But because we really love music and we're really into it, it's hard to see how it could adversely affect someone. There's a lot of pregnant women out there who have been in more extreme circumstances than a rock band.

THE BOOTY COUNT

Like ass? Like titties? Well, so does Detroit booty-house mastermind DJ Assault. He's documented that love on the soon-to-be-classic "Ass-N-Titties" 12-inch (sample lyric: "Ass, titties/ Ass 'n' titties/ Ass ass, titties titties/ Ass 'n' titties"), out on his own Assault Rifle Records. In two and a half minutes he mentions each a surely record-breaking amount of times, but which does he love more?

ASS



TITTIES



It's ass by a landslide!

Check out Assault's new mix, *Off The Chain, For The Y2K* (Intuit-Solar) for more ghetto-tech masterpieces.

ELECTROMEDIA

Not everything on the Web is what it appears to be. In particular, politicians who haven't bought up every possible permutation of their site's name are paying the price for it. The Dubya's campaign somehow managed to overlook gw bush.com; it was snapped up by a coalition of satirists who've made it into a harsh but precisely honed parody of the official site.



Georgebush2000.com is more serious, with damning statistics about Bush's



record in Texas. Al Gore takes his lumps from pseudo-official sites too, but his campaign seems to have been a bit more thorough: algore-2000.org is pretty caustic (including a pop-up ad for Rested Tea—"When illegal fundraising makes you thirsty..."), though it's unlikely to be typed into a browser by someone looking for the real thing. The best fake campaign site, though, is duke2000.com—yes, the complete nerve center for Uncle Duke's presidential run in *Doonesbury* (slogan: "Whatever it takes").

Some fakes, though, are a little more...abstract. In the mid-'90s, **Mirsky's Worst Of The Web** was a reliable reference to hilariously awful pages. Late last year, though, its director, Philip Mirsky, did an abrupt about-face: He now directs the site's visitors to mirskt.com, a deeply bizarre fake e-commerce site that hawks imaginary T-shirts with slogans like "I'm Leaving You" and "I Need To Do Laundry." There's not much of a point to it, but if you want something with a point, what are you doing watching Flash animation?

Finally, **www.discoverhiphop.com** sounds like yet another hip-hop news/information site. Actually, it's an elaborate, very peculiar joke, all about how important it is to buy a "Discover Hip-Hop Set": freestyle flashcards, a "learn to be a DJ in 20 minutes" video, etc.

"There are 260 million people in America, and you are one of them," the site declares. "Get With The Program!" >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



THE SAMPLE LIFE

TOM TOM CLUB'S "GENIUS OF LOVE" (Sire, 1981)

Not long after its release, the ebullient singing, rhythms and bassline of the Tom Tom Club's "Genius Of Love" became firmly rooted in the hip-hop lexicon. To date, 35 artists (mostly rappers) have legally sampled the song, and a couple of those tracks sold a million plus. Tom Tom Club, originally formed by members of the Talking Heads, recently emerged with their first album in eight years, *The Good The Bad And The Funky* (Rykodisc). The first single, "Who Feelin' It," revisits the tributary spirit of "Genius Of Love," paying homage to DJs and MCs. Regarding using samples to create new music, bandmember Tina Weymouth says, "It's just paint; it's just that the colors are already mixed." >>>TAMARA PALMER



THE FIRST:

Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five, "It's Nasty" (Sugar Hill, 1981)

Tom Tom Club's Chris Frantz: We were putting together a live album called *The Name Of This Band Is Talking Heads* and Grandmaster Flash came by the studio. We introduced ourselves and I remember that he had probably never been in a real recording studio before because he was really impressed with the reels and stuff. He liked the beat and the melody of "Genius Of Love," the voices and the way the harmonies were real sweet—sort of schoolgirl harmonies.... It wasn't really called sampling [at the time] because they didn't use samplers.... They would get a studio band or some drum machines and recreate the song and do their rap thing over the top.



THE FAVORITE:

Mariah Carey, "Fantasy" (Columbia, 1995)

Tina Weymouth: She must have been quite a little girl when the song came out, like eight or 10 years old. I think it reminds her of a happy time in her life, and what she's done with it is very sweet. Frantz: Her version, "Fantasy," is very true to the spirit of the original. I especially like the Ol' Dirty Bastard version, which is the remix.



BEST USE IN A G-FUNK TRACK:

Ant Banks, "Roll 'Em Phat" (Jive-Novus, 1993)

Frantz: I kinda like the most, shall we say, *minimalist* [uses of the song]. I wouldn't really give [Banks] a lot of credit for his creativity—I just liked the minimalist nature of it.

THE OUTLAW:

Mark Morrison, "Return Of The Mack" (Atlantic, 1997) (Countless other records have also illegally used the track.)

Frantz: It's not like we're going to go after people. But it would be nice to be contacted at least.



THE REJECT:

Frantz: There's only one gangsta-style version that we didn't allow, and it was just because it was so overtly horrible and violent. It was stuff like, "it's all about the bitches" and "throw the niggas in the trunk." It was just too far beyond—I think that's the only time we denied approval.

OTHER RECOMMENDED "GENIUS OF LOVE" TRACKS:

- 2Pac, "High Speed"
- Black Eyed Peas, "Who Needs"
- Busta Rhymes featuring Erykah Badu, "One"
- Dream Warriors, "And Now The Legacy Begins"
- Ziggy Marley, "Tomorrow People (Remix)"
- Wild Pony, "Poppin' In The Club"
- Zimbabwe Legit, "Doin' Damage In My Native Language"

HARD TIMES

SUNNA REMEMBERS WHEN NO ONE WANTED BIG RIFFS.

Back in the mid-'90s, Jon Harris assured all of his commune bunkmates in Israel that he was about to release an album. He gave pals back in the UK the same bulletin. But during the heyday of jangly Britpop, a budding contract fell apart as label executives squelched every screaming, aggressive anthem he put before them.

Several years later, Harris (who now fronts Sunna) documents that experience on "I'm Not Trading," the stomping opener of *One Minute Science* (Melankolic-Astralwerks).

One need not read hard into the bitter, growling chorus of "I don't like you, I don't like you/ And I never will" to understand his take on that experience. Even without a contract, word of Harris's strumming expertise got around England; in '98 he happened into an impromptu jam session and subsequent studio recordings with Massive Attack. By then, sighs Harris, he'd given up talking about songwriting to his mates: "I'd been working on it for so long, nearly 10 years."

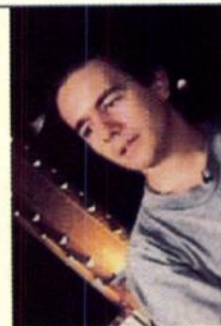
The folks at Melankolic were more empathetic towards Sunna's big-guitar noise and opted to release it. Perhaps surprisingly,

Harris's prehistoric, grinding riffs and AC/DC-style assaults are composed on acoustic guitar. When Harris writes, he'll often home-tape a gingerly plucked version and then listen back for more inspiration. "I'll add what that song suggests to me. And more often than not, something really distorted comes out."

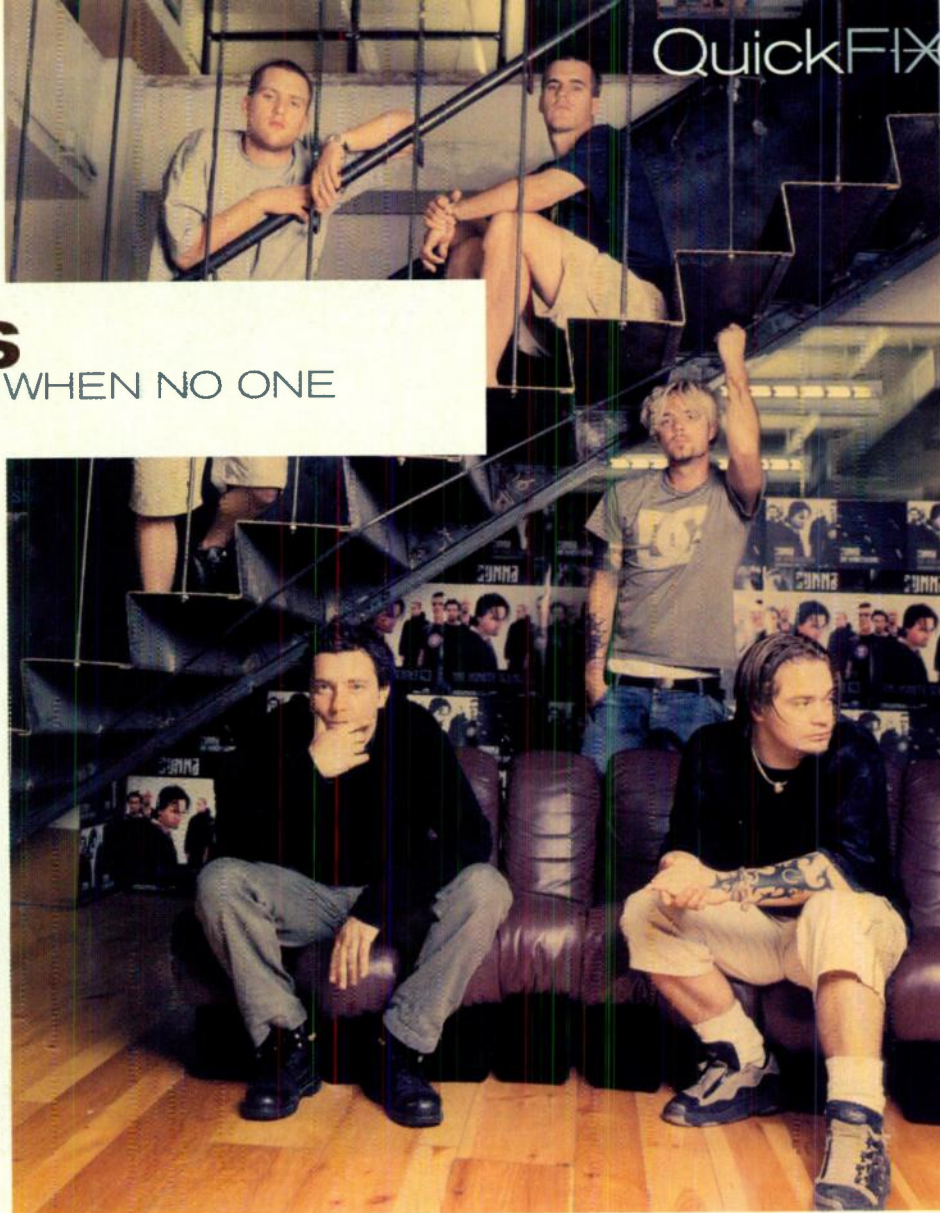
Harris still enjoys taking risks, as he did eking out a living in chilly Norway and during the aforementioned six-month sabbatical in Israel, where softer cuts like "I Miss" were composed. Although the guitar has been a constant friend for many years, Tel Aviv was the one place it couldn't help him. Out of scratch and living on a beach, he tried a bit of street-corner tune-peddling. "But you get more money from begging than you do from busking—unless you're playing the harp or the violin, people don't give a shit." So his ticket home to London came courtesy of lost-luggage stories and pleading for coins from soft-touch Americans. "When you're dressed in rags and have sand in your eyebrows," he recalls, "you'd be surprised how quickly people's compassion tends to come out." >>>TOM LANHAM

LABEL PROFILE: F COMMUNICATIONS

Laurent Garnier was creating and championing Gallic grooves long before Daft Punk spearheaded the French house boom: of the mid-'90s. He was the first artist signed to French music retailer FNAC's nascent dance division, and over the next three years, he and former FRR A&R man Eric Morand brought the cream of French dance music's first wave to the company. But by 1994, Garnier says, "We felt like FNAC was a dead end." So Garnier and Morand left to open F Communications, a fiercely independent, artist-driven home to French electronic music. F Comm's global profile was cemented last year by Mr. Oizo's Flat Eric: a floppy yellow puppet whose Levi's-shilling single "Flat Beat" sold more than two million copies. But trends mean nothing to Garnier. "Our policy has always been, do whatever you want to do as an artist—be creative, try to do your thing," he asserts. This has resulted in a roster stocked with variety, from Laurent's own deep-fried, emotive techno to Aqua Bassino's deep-space dancefloor excursions and Frederic Galliano's jazz and world music-immersed beats. "It's kind of a big family," Garnier stresses. "The only thing we ask them is for me and Eric [Morand] to be pleased with their music." >>>PETER ORLOV



LAURENT GARNIER



DIANE COLLINS

?&A: BOY GEORGE

THE MAN WHO CAME TO DJ

Before crooning "Do You Really Want To Hurt Me?" Boy George earned his keep as a DJ in trendy London clubs. After Culture Club split in 1986, he returned to the wheels of steel, and has become one of Europe's most popular DJs, disproving critics who dismissed him as a novelty act. His new *Essential* mix-CD (London-Sire) hits stores early next year, following the latest US tour by the re-formed Culture Club. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY

Audiences' expectations of a DJ's technical abilities have increased sharply since you started. Was learning to match beats intimidating?

The first time I actually got two records to match perfectly, I rang up everybody going, "I've done it," like it was rocket science. But playing at home and in a club are worlds apart. You have to go out and make mistakes in public. I've played with every big name you can think of, and everyone fucks up. The public, on the whole, doesn't really care. They just want to hear good music.

What do you get out of DJing that singing doesn't give you?

When you sing, you're much more vulnerable and exposed. I've never been that comfortable with the performance side of making music. I've always felt awkward on stage—even though people say to me, "Oh, you're so confident." I've gotten good at pretending. When you DJ, you're protected, in a box, often out of the way of the crowd. It's less vulnerable.

Should Culture Club fans expect any big surprises on your new US tour?

This tour is totally different from the things we've been doing up until now. We're doing a much more dance-oriented show. A lot of the stuff is programmed, it's a bit more modern—which I've been trying to push for since the first tour that we did. We did that, and it was great, but where did it take you? I'm trying to drag Culture Club forward a bit... and they're into it.

You're best friends with newcomer Amanda Ghost. Do you take it personally if she gets bad press?

If you're close to somebody, and they're being criticized, you feel it. But at the same time, I feel that I can advise her in the way that she reacts. I've had so many horrible things written about me—and I just laugh. My one piece of advice is have a sense of humor. I probably wouldn't be around if I hadn't been able to laugh at myself.

Has it been unnerving watching the producers of the film version of your autobiography, *Take It Like A Man*, try to fill your role?

I just hope they find somebody who does a better job of it than I did. The only thing I'm worried about is, I don't want to



"Eminem's probably just desperate for it... and I'm the man to do it!"

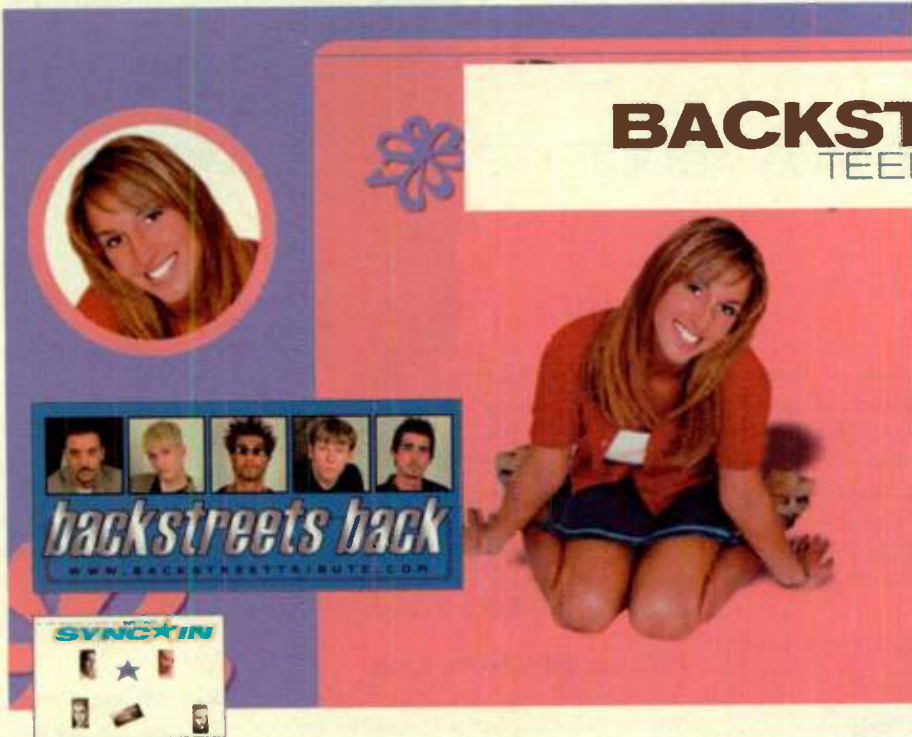
be played as some kind of limp-wristed caricature, because that's not who I am. When people play famous gay characters, they tend to make it too fey, overly camp. I want somebody to get it right.

Your image frightened plenty of parents in the '80s. Who do you perceive as a dangerous character on the pop charts today?

[Laughing] Eminem! I don't know if you read Elton John [in *Interview*] saying that [Eminem is] the most important artist since Bob Dylan, saying you should overlook the homophobia. Well, I find that a little bit difficult [to swallow]. It's possible to admire somebody's technique or sound and yet not appreciate what it is they're saying. Eminem is a reflection of what a lot of people out there feel. A lot of people, particularly men, are really paranoid about their own sexuality. My opinion is we're all as queer as we are straight, made up of equal parts Rambo and Lucille Ball. And that's where the terror lies. Eminem's probably just desperate for a cock up his ass—and I'm the man to do it!

BACKSTREET PLOYS

TEEN POP TRIBUTE BANDS



So you think teen pop stars like Backstreet Boys and Britney are fake? Well, you ain't seen nothin' yet. There's a whole generation of failed artists forming tribute bands to pay homage to the boy-band/girl-pop overlords. But which ones are keeping it real? Such a critique is best left to an expert, so we tapped 17-year-old Natalie Falk to judge (on a scale of 1 to 10) whether this crop of popsters have the, um, "right stuff." She doesn't have a millimeter of bedroom wall space not occupied by 'N Sync's Justin Timberlake and his cohorts, and says she's qualified because "I love boy bands. They're cute. That's why I put them on my walls." Those were credentials enough for us. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

BACKSTREETS BACK, Backstreet Boys tribute (www.backstreettribute.com)

Fun fact: Backstreets Back's Carlos Arevalo's ultimate goal: "To move out of my parents house before I turn 50!" His ideal lady? "Anyone will do."

Hottie quotient: "I think they're ugly. It's a bad idea for them to do this."

Rating: ♥♥♥♥♥ ("And that's being nice.")

SYNC*IN, 'N Sync tribute (members.xoom.com/syncin)

Fun fact: Bulous Abu-Neemer (Sync*In's Joey) "knows more about The Artist Formerly Known As Prince than any human on the planet."

Hottie quotient: "They're really ugly." **Rating:** ♥♥

WESTLIVE, Westlife tribute (www.westlive.co.uk)

Fun fact: The band says they're no Westlife, "but we consider we are definitely the next best thing."

Hottie Quotient: "They're the cutest ones of all these guys." **Rating:** ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

BRITNEY ...ONE MORE TIME, Britney Spears tribute (www.backstreettribute.com/britney)

Fun fact: Though Dena Chiacrossi's Britney works the county fair instead of the Garden, she can actually sing live.

Hottie Quotient: "She's pretty and she looks like Britney, but it's still dumb."

Rating: ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

THE BOYZ, Backstreet, Westlife and Five tribute

(www.hitcorp.dircon.co.uk/boyz_a_tribute_to_backstreet_boy.htm)

Fun fact: The Boyz were put together by a big corporation—just like the real thing!

Hottie Quotient: "Now they are ug-ly." **Rating:** ♥♥

ALL SYSTEMS GO-BETWEENS



The Go-Betweens were one of the '80s' classiest cult favorites. Formed in Brisbane, Australia in 1978, the quintet filled six albums with the kind of bittersweet pop most indie rockers only dream of. After last year's tour as an acoustic duo, co-leaders Robert Forster and Grant McLennan have returned with *The Friends Of Rachel Warth* (Jetset), their first work together in 12 years. McLennan explains: "We were enjoying the tour so much, that about three weeks into it, I just said to Robert, 'Why don't we make another record?'" Recorded in Portland, Oregon, *Friends* features assistance from some unexpected fans. "Sleater-Kinney came to see us in San Francisco, I announced from the stage that we were going to make an album, and Janet Weiss came backstage and said that she wanted to drum on the record," says Forster. The remaining two-thirds of Sleater-Kinney (and Quasi's Sam Coombes) also appear on several tracks. The result ranges from low-key acoustic ruminations to full-band rave-ups that bear the unmistakable hand of their new collaborators. Sleater-Kinney's "Corin [Tucker] and Carrie [Brownstein] use music in a similar way to us," says Forster, "and it's not steeped in Chuck Berry riffs and blues progressions. The attitude toward the guitar and the music business are more skewed than most people's." >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PAUL PENNA

Two notes—one throat.

In the late '80s, while searching for a language program on shortwave radio, Paul happened upon the didgeridoo-like wail of traditional Tuvan throatsinging. Infatuated, the blind singer searched for seven years before anyone could explain what he'd heard. Once identified, the longtime bluesman taught himself the ancient Asian art form. The placement of one's tongue, sometimes curled up to the top of your mouth as if pronouncing an "L," creates the harmonics that enable two notes at once. "Your tongue is just sitting on a fence while the sound moves around it," he explains. "In the '20s, '30s and '40s, blues singers like Charlie Patton and Robert Johnson were doing things similar to throatsinging, but weren't setting it in this way, they were

just doing it as a guttural growl to accent the lyrics."



He's got the *Genghis Blues*.

Although Penna worked with Bonnie Raitt, T-Bone Walker, Muddy Waters, B.B. King and John Lee Hooker in the '60s and '70s, the guitarist wasn't well-known outside aficionado circles until the 1999 Oscar-nominated documentary *Genghis Blues*. The film chronicled his journey to Tuva (a country near Mongolia that's now a part of Russia) for a throat-singing competition—Penna won in two categories and earned the nickname "Earthquake" for his deep, piercing sound. "The response since the documentary has been electric," says Penna. "It gave me a chance to play out and keep things going. It's been really hard to keep a career going."

Paul recorded his "new" album 27 years ago.

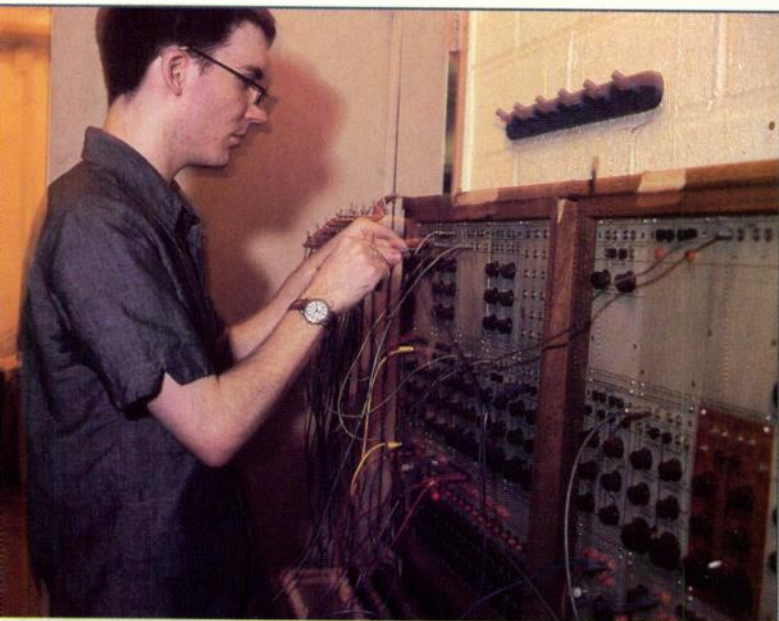
After a critically acclaimed but commercially disappointing debut, Paul Penna invited guests such as Jerry Garcia, Merle Saunders and the Persuasions to make the follow-up, *New Train*, which holds its own against other soul-folk classics, like Van Morrison's *Moondance*, even after all these years. In 1973, Capitol just wasn't hearing it and as a result of some mismanagement, *New Train* never got out of the station. "I thought it sucked," recalls Penna about finding out *New Train's* fate. "We put our hearts and souls into that thing." Hybrid Recordings is now releasing the album, which was reportedly lost for several years.

Steve Miller kept Paul alive.

Soon after recording *New Train*, drummer Gary Malabar (who also played on *Moondance*) gave a tape of the unreleased album to Steve Miller, whose cover of the Penna song "Jet Airliner" went on to become a top-10 single from the 1977 LP *Book Of Dreams*. "I was getting by on the royalties of that song," recalls Penna about the "Jet Airliner" bounty that has helped him greatly over the past 30 years. "It's just about everything, because I wasn't getting a lot of bookings."

Tuvan isn't the only language Paul's fiddled with.

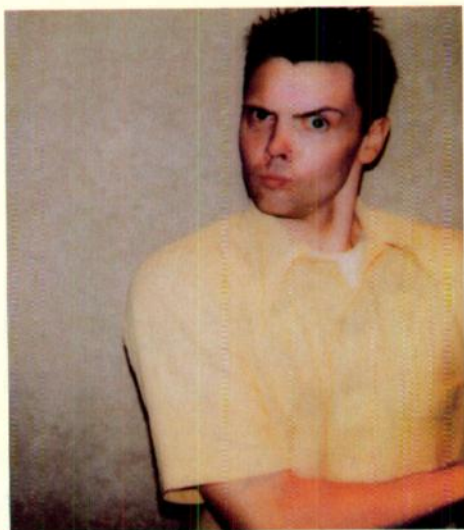
Born in Massachusetts to a family with roots in Cape Verde, Africa, Paul's musician father sent his son to study flamenco guitar in Spain and Portugal. Over the years, Paul has learned Cape Verde Creole, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Japanese and a little Tuvan. "I wouldn't say I have a perfect memory," Penna demurs, "but it was easy for me to remember lyrics and melody." >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



BRENDAN MORAN

TOYS IN THE ATTIC

The Freight Elevator Quartet's otherworldly ambient jungle can't be concocted with any old namby-pamby synth. On *Becoming Transparent* (Caipirinha), keyboardist Luke DuBois uses the Buchla 100 Series Modular Synthesizer, creating seriously warped subsonic lows and spiky, piercing highs by patching metal modules together with cables and twiddling knobs. The switchboard-like monster made DuBois a perfect onstage foil to the quartet's cellist and didgeridoo player. "I had all these cables hanging off me," recalls DuBois, "I looked like a mad professor." But the synth's vintage power system forced it into studio confinement: "They're really sensitive to power fluctuation. Somebody would turn on the light in the ladies' room, and the whole thing would drop in pitch." Live, DuBois now simulates its idiosyncratic sound with a laptop, but he admits to missing the Buchla's blinking lights and more, er, secret qualities: "The lore was that the red modules were laced with LSD," he says, "So you'd be patching cords and touching acid." >>>TOM MALLON

IN MY ROOM:
JAMES SNYDER OF **WESTON**

After years of churning out spirited pop punk, Weston's singer/guitarist James Snyder has traded in his three-chord dreams for more ambitious arrangements on *The Massed Albert Sounds* (Mojo). This sixth full-length is Snyder's crack at the classic pop he so dearly adores, full of complex chord progressions and luxurious *Sgt.-Pepper's-version-2.0* arrangements. "On the second floor of my home, there is a storage room that sounds like an echo chamber," Snyder explains. "I built it into a sort of recording lab." Here, he explains the lab's contents. >>>MIKAEL WOOD

Orchestra of toy instruments:

I'm writing an entire album of childhood sounds. I have a trumpet and a slide whistle and bells and all sorts of lenders to the imagination. I want to build a sound that feels like a first kiss, and to paint the perfect companion to the pre-teen experience.

Antiquated four-track machine:

It's quite the vintage recorder, but it creates the most distinct lo-fi glory I have ever heard. Most of my favorite versions of the songs I write are my home-made four-track recordings. There is a certain honesty that cannot be duplicated on machines any more advanced.

Acoustic guitar/soulmate:

Every song I've ever written, I've written on this guitar. When I first played it, I felt awkward and clumsy and very un-rock 'n' roll. Then one day I just fell in love. I find it wonderfully odd how one can feel connected to an instrument.

Tiny, The Mighty Chihuahua:

My wife Rene gave me this stuffed animal when we got our first apartment. Its ears point straight up. I keep it next to my recorder. It serves as the perfect listener.

Sacred Brian Wilson ticket stub:

I grew up religiously listening to all the early Beach Boys and Beatles records. I think "Fun, Fun, Fun" may have been the first words I ever said. I spent more than I could afford to sit second row center and listen to Brian Wilson and a 55-piece orchestra perform *Pet Sounds* on the opening night of the Pet Sounds Symphony Tour. Musically, it was the night I found God.



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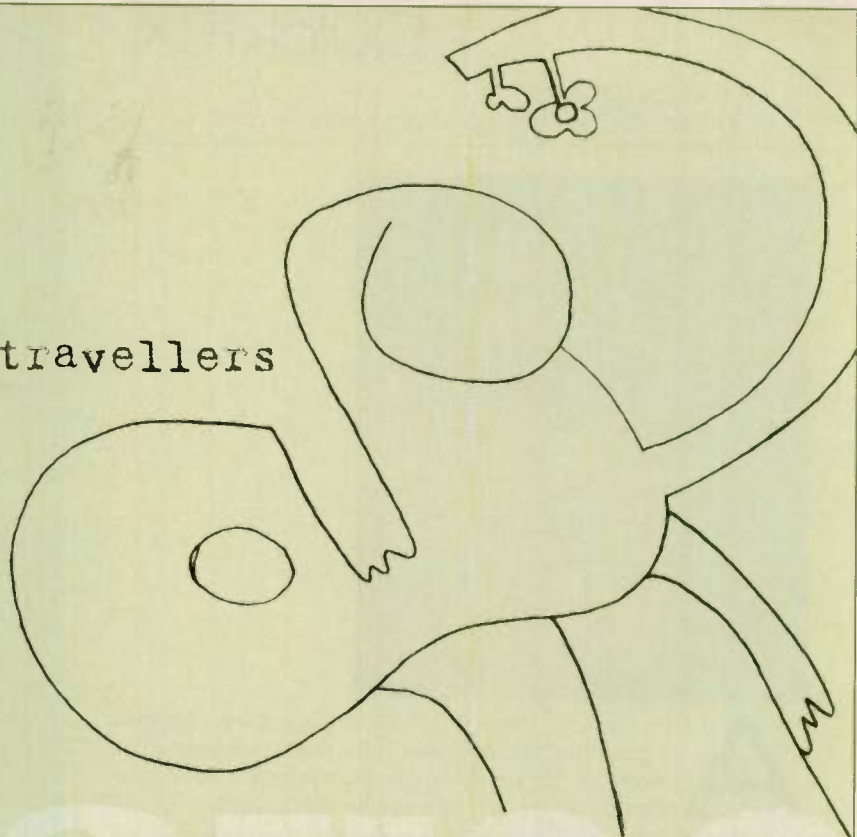


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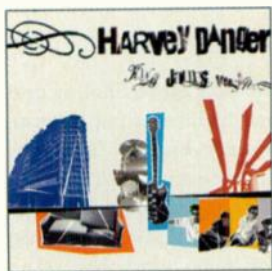
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HARVEY DANGER

King James Version

London-Sire

Harvey Danger's one and (so far) only hit was 1998's "Flagpole Sitta," a rollicking, sneering, semi-irresistible modern-rock chart-topper about staying home to jerk off while the world's stupidity level sky-rockets. Two-plus years in the making, *King James Version* achieves the improbable: It's a case of a band getting better as its chief songwriter (Sean Nelson) figures out how to make assets out of the traits that used to make him annoying. He's still a sarcastic bastard, but now he's up-front about his misanthropy and conscious of the toll that cynicism extracts from its longtime practitioners. And when Nelson gets stuck in the garage (with his bullshit detector), the music's always there to give him a jumpstart. "Sad Sweetheart Of The Rodeo" (which namedrops the Velvet Underground's "Lonesome Cowboy Bill" along with the titular Byrds album) can't decide if its yearning temp-slave protagonists are heroes or pathetic clichés, but then the guitars on the chorus blast off for points west, resolving any ambiguity. Meanwhile, the best one-liner is in the elegiac Seattle/Brooklyn travelogue "Pike Street/Park Slope": When Nelson tells a girl he'd like to "run away and start a little repertory movie-house," she replies, "Sorry, but I think you're just projecting." >>>ALEX PAPPADEMAS

Out

September 19

File Under

Gimme Danger

R.I.Y.L.

Sloan, Matthew Sweet,

Pusies



HYDROPONIC SOUND SYSTEM

Routine Insanity

Sound Evolution

Whether or not you hit the "random play" button, you're never sure what's coming next on Hydroponic Sound System's *Routine Insanity*. Goaded and guided by DJ Skinny Fresh and producer Rube, the Dallas-based downtempo/hip-hop/electro-soul studio funhouse pledges no allegiances. Enlisting help from a slew of likeminded studio musician pals and MC cohorts, this musical aggregation lets ideas flow and sounds fall where they will. Cuts like the fast and funky jazz groover "Rock More Ethereal" (complete with Theremin solo) and the dark, guitar-tinged "Moonwalker" show the group's trip-hop strength. Half the tracks here are instrumentals, with space grooves, unexpected stops, extended lulls and occasional cheeky vocal samples. The straight-up rap tunes come correct with help from Dallas's Skwood X collective (heard most notably on the Sun Ra-inspired "Travelers") and reggae toaster Grand Supreme. Add the flute-driven space disco of "Chakabiakabauka" and the R&B-ish groove ballad "What It's Supposed To Be," and they widen the scope while surprisingly maintaining quality. As the funky click-clack rap of "Dirty Session" flows effortlessly into the soulful cut-up "Spillin' Out Me Pamplemousse" toward the finish line of the Roots-ish "Altercation," *Insanity* is a smooth musical journey whether on the dancefloor or on headphones. >>>BRIAN COLEMAN

Out

October 3

File Under

Eclectic electronic hip-hop

R.I.Y.L.

De La Soul, the Roots,

Cup Of Tea Records



JESS KLEIN

Draw Them Near

Rykodisc

Jess Klein's pop-folk sophomore release, *Draw Them Near*, is a breakup record for people who end their relationships nicely. Filled with escapist imagery—metaphoric prison cells, open windows, birds flying, breathing, air everywhere—even sadness and goodbyes don't dampen the exhilaration of her entanglements. "Maybe I secretly feel set free," she utters quietly as her love interest turns her loose in "Goodbye Goodbye." Such details might sound cloying coming from another narrator, but Klein's voice, which combines the velour textures of Susannah Hoffs with the lilt of Julie Miller, has an alluring quality that draws you into her world. And she kicks her singer/songwriterly tunes up a notch by peppering them with rock, vintage R&B, and pop flavorings thanks to a seasoned cast of sidemen: The slide guitar on the opening track, "Little White Dove," bears the twangy stamp of alt.Nashville axeman Will Kimbrough (Kim Richey, Josh Rouse), and the 4/4 thud of Wilco drummer Ken Coomer resounds throughout the album. It's Klein's delivery on the soul-stung, Stax-style "Love Is Where You Find It" that highlights her greatest gift: Rather than letting the punchy horns and B3 organ bring on some sort of faux soul-sista belt, she simply sings in a heartfelt but unaffected manner. That's right, Klein is the rare honey-voiced lass who knows and respects her limitations. >>>MEREDITH OCHS

Out

August 22

File Under

Honey-throated Americana

R.I.Y.L.

Lucy Kaplansky, Julie Miller,

Stevie Nicks



CHRIS LEE

Chris Lee

Misra

Red-hounds will duly note the production and engineering credits by Sonic Youth's Steve Shelley and ex-dB's/Yo La Tengo bassist Gene Holder. But this debut has merits far beyond its hipster imprimatur. North Carolina-bred Lee had a hand in the death-of-rock house project *Tuba Frenzy*, but here he makes the bold experimental move of, well, writing some songs, and then playing them. For the most part, this is relatively straight soul-pop, with nuggets of unforced catchiness ("Angel C") and loads of Lee's melismatic vocals. As white guys into Al Green and Stevie Wonder go, Lee is more Alex Chilton than Greg Dulli: He's not tricking anyone (including himself) into thinking he's a soul man, but simply singing the songs as he hears them. (The dubbed *Star Search* wails on "The Art Of Self-Destruction" go too far, though.) The songs themselves range from the literary ("(Don't Be My) Maud Gonne," too earnest to be pretentious) to the direct ("I Can't Make Love To You Anymore," with its punky tantrum of an ending). Shelley and Holder take a hands-off approach throughout, simply documenting the leader's busy guitar and scrappy-but-smart rhythm section. That's fine for now: With songs like this, Lee should be making far slicker records before we know it. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

Out

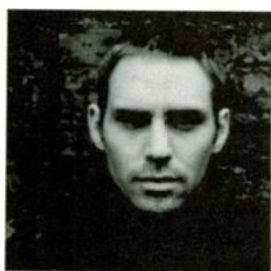
August 29

File Under

Blue-ish eyed soul

R.I.Y.L.

Big Star, Jim O'Rourke,
Edwyn Collins/Orange Juice



PHOTEK

Solaris

Astralwerks

Photek records have never been entirely pleasureless. But the painstaking beat programming and arid minimalism Rupert Parkes has produced under his nom de drum 'n' bass has always had a cold, dispassionate sensibility, his mixes an angular, almost mathematical internal logic. He even described his 1997 debut full-length *Modus Operandi* with the phrase, "The absence of feeling sort of becomes the feeling." So it's more than a little surprising to find Parkes in the mood to, well, party on the new Photek album, the full-blooded *Solaris*. Junglism is kept to a minimum here in favor of downtempo grooves and house tracks. There's even a shameless club anthem, the DJ International-esque "Mine To Give," sung by Chicagoan Robert Owens of Fingers Inc. fame. The tech-nerds in Photek's audience will likely fill message boards with invective, and that's fine. It's about time that Parkes at least experimented with generating enough emotional energy for him to accurately title one cut on *Solaris* "Glamourama." And *Solaris* isn't all fun and games: The last quarter of the disc is restrained enough to put a speed freak to sleep. But the best moments prove that the absence of feeling isn't the only feeling Photek has mastered. >>>MICHAELANGELO MATOS

Out

September 19

File Under

Dark, clubby eclectica

R.I.Y.L.

Fingers Inc., Adam F,
Armand van Helden



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Xen Cuts

Ninja Tune

To celebrate 10 years of blazing the path for abstract and independent hip-hop, Ninja Tune has issued a triple-disc collection that runs the gamut of electronic funk. From nuggets of raw beat power to snippets of sonic absurdity, the Ninja crew—captained by Coldcut's Matt Black and Jonathon More—have collected 44 tracks of new, overlooked and unreleased material. The bass on Mr. Scruff's "Ug" is so squiggly and cuddly it almost tickles, while Roots Manuva wordsmith/producer Rodney Smith's version of Amon Tobin's "Saboteur" adds enigmatic Patois-tinged vocals, a topsy-turvy beat and an elastic bassline to a song that was otherworldly to begin with. On "8 Pt Agenda," Latyxx rappers Lateef The Truth Speaker and Lyrics Born recite a litany of rhyming mandates over an Herbaliser beat that's so sharp and snappy it fits like Armani suit. And that's just the first disc; highlights of the other two include a gorgeous Cinematic Orchestra/DJ Food collaboration and a smoking live Kid Koala track. *Xen Cuts* stands as a testament to Ninja's high success ratio: The dope-beats-per-track average is rarely this high on any collection. And it clearly demonstrates the Ninja credo that anything goes, as long as it's got rhythm. >>>ERIC DEMBY

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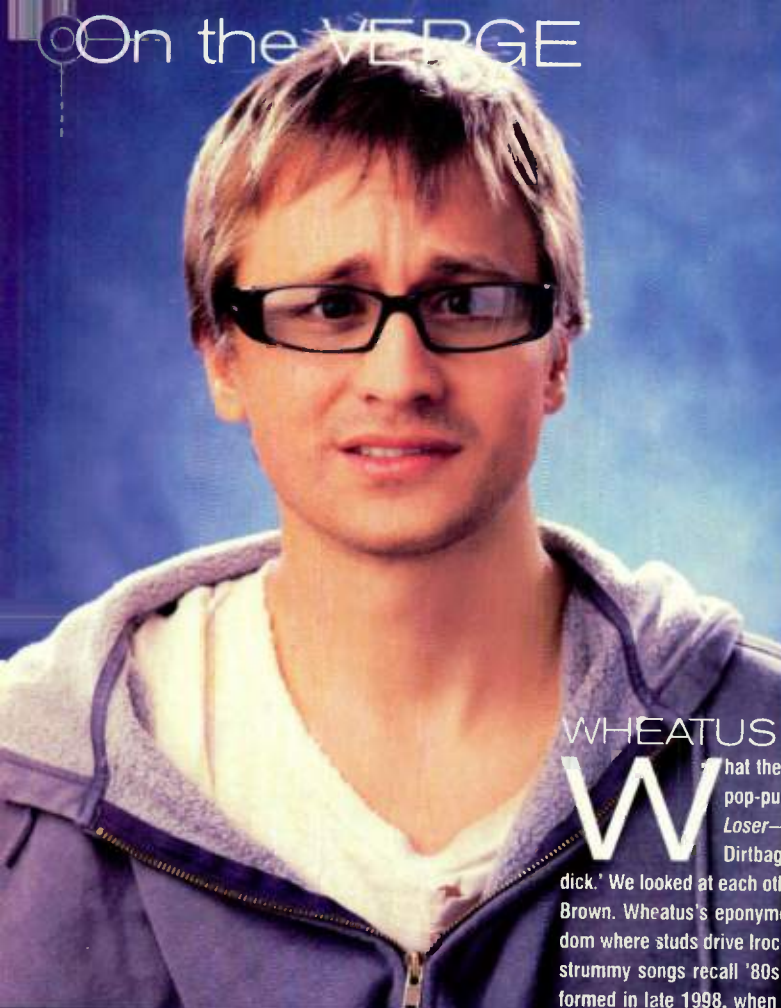
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THE MOONEY SUZUKI

Television and magazines say, 'the rock is coming back, throw up the devil sign!' To us it's about the rock 'n' roll—if doesn't have the 'n' roll,' we're not interested," explains Sammy James Jr., 23, the Mooney Suzuki's guitarist/vocalist and old man (the rest are barely old enough to drink). Despite being named after the two singers of the '70s Krautrock outfit Can—Malcolm Mooney and Damo Suzuki—the New York City-based quartet prefers garage rock. In August of 1999, the band drove five days straight to showcase for Estrus Records (garage rock's most esteemed imprint) and ended up in the studio with famed three-chord rock producer Tim Kerr. The resulting debut, *People Get Ready*, is 12 jolts of high-voltage Motor City-styled rock 'n' roll—think the Stooges and the MC5 laced with gritty, '60s British R&B. The Mooney Suzuki's dress code follows through on the sound: head-to-toe black, pointy shoes and mop-tops dyed oil-slick black. The band's stage antics won't let you down either. They frequently yell "Do you feel alright?!" and destroy everything in sight. "In Dallas we started hanging on this lighting rig, the cables started falling, so we started doing these Tarzan swings from the cables, then the whole lighting rig came down onto the stage," Sammy remembers. "Fortunately everybody was spared injury." >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



WHEATUS

What the hell is a "Wheatus"? For starters, it's a brilliantly puerile Long Island, New York folk-pop-punk quartet whose "Teenage Dirtbag" is prominently featured in the summer teen flick *Loser*—but the bandmembers have a better explanation. "During the video shoot [for 'Teenage Dirtbag'] some guy walked in and was like, 'I heard Wheatus is what David Lee Roth calls his dick.' We looked at each other, and said 'That's what we'll tell people,'" chuckles Wheatus singer/guitarist Brendan Brown. Wheatus's eponymous Columbia debut ripples with modern mish-mash rock and tales of suburban geekdom where studs drive Iroc-Zs, nerds still listen to Iron Maiden, and "love is a mutt from hell." Brown's chimney and strummy songs recall '80s anthems driven by hip-hop-flavored beats and candy-metal guitar accents. The band formed in late 1998, when Brendan left the skate-pop combo Mr. Jones to focus on his homespun compositions. Since the band's drummer is Brendan's brother Pete, it's not surprising that the debut ended up being recorded at Brown family headquarters. "My grandmother was here around the clock making us bologna sandwiches," Brendan recalls. The biggest reward of the whole thing he says is, "knowing that the song that's number three on [New York's] Z-100 is a song I recorded in my mother's basement." >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



GAYLE SAN

like it *groovy!*" exclaims Gayle San, describing the hard, banging techno music she spins. Now one of Europe's most popular techno DJs, she learned the craft hanging around clubs in the late '80s in her native Singapore. By '94, hard work and persistence culminated in a residency at the UK's Universe night, the legendary space that eventually spawned the massive Tribal Gathering dance music festival. "It was the turning point for me," recalls San. "People were traveling from all parts of Europe just to hear me play!" Like fellow high-profile tribal DJs Andrew Weatherall and Darren Emerson, San parlayed the newfound fame into a successful recording career that includes such huge club hits as "Lost In The Eastend," and her recent minimal techno mix, *At The Wheels Of Steel* (Galvanic), which includes cuts by Jeff Mills and Richie Hawtin. "I have always given so much in the studio, trying to make something I feel," San explains. The fact that she's one of but a handful of accredited female producers doesn't faze her, since she prefers to let her music speak for itself. "I've never liked following trends anyway," she emphasizes, "and now, I have a sound that's all my own." >>>ANDY SHIH

Riding St



UGLY DUCKLING KNOWS THE BEAUTY OF A BIG BEAT AND A GOOD LAUGH.

STORY: RICHARD THOMAS PHOTO: CHAPMAN BAEHLER



nly two-thirds of Ugly Duckling are in attendance for this afternoon's photo shoot. The Man has put the clampdown on "Dizzy" Dustin McFarland, one of the group's two MCs. DJ Young Einstein hesitates to discuss Dizzy's trip behind bars for an old bust. "Nothing major," he assures, "Just weed." Dizzy never hurt anyone, really, figures MC Andy Cooper, adding that the thug-life anecdote lends the group well-timed cred with their debut album, *Journey To Anywhere* (1500), about to hit the streets.

Of course, the incident would be more bankable if the group were playing to a jigga, or even wigga image. Watching these hip-hop heads in action doesn't exactly put one in the gangsta mindset. Cooper rips a slice of cheese from the pizza box and slaps it down on his paper plate while Einstein comments: "Andy Cooper can't do a photo shoot unless he eats one slice of pizza. It's in his contract." Suge Knight can rest assured these boys aren't going to throw down anytime soon.

Started when Cooper and company were Long Beach high schoolers, Ugly Duckling forewent the g-funk sound surrounding them in favor of a style akin to Pharcyde and the Jungle Brothers, infusing hip-hop with humor and back-in-the-day schoolyard delivery.

"In the real underground, it's not really cool or acceptable to be the type of group that we are. It's pretty scary, actually."

"With the wax off, wax on, I play you like Zaxxon/ Girls love my song/ Sunbathin' on the back lawn," raps Cooper in "A Little Samba," an Ugly Duckling spit-take on hip-hop posturing. The beats are unobtrusive (Einstein wisely keeps scratches to a minimum) and the skits/vocal interludes are short and sweet. Tracks like "Eye On The Gold Chain" and "Pick Up Lines"—where Dizzy asks an unsuspecting female, "If I said you had a beautiful body, would you hold it against me?"—show that in spite of both MCs' ability to turn a phrase, the group happily plays it for laughs.

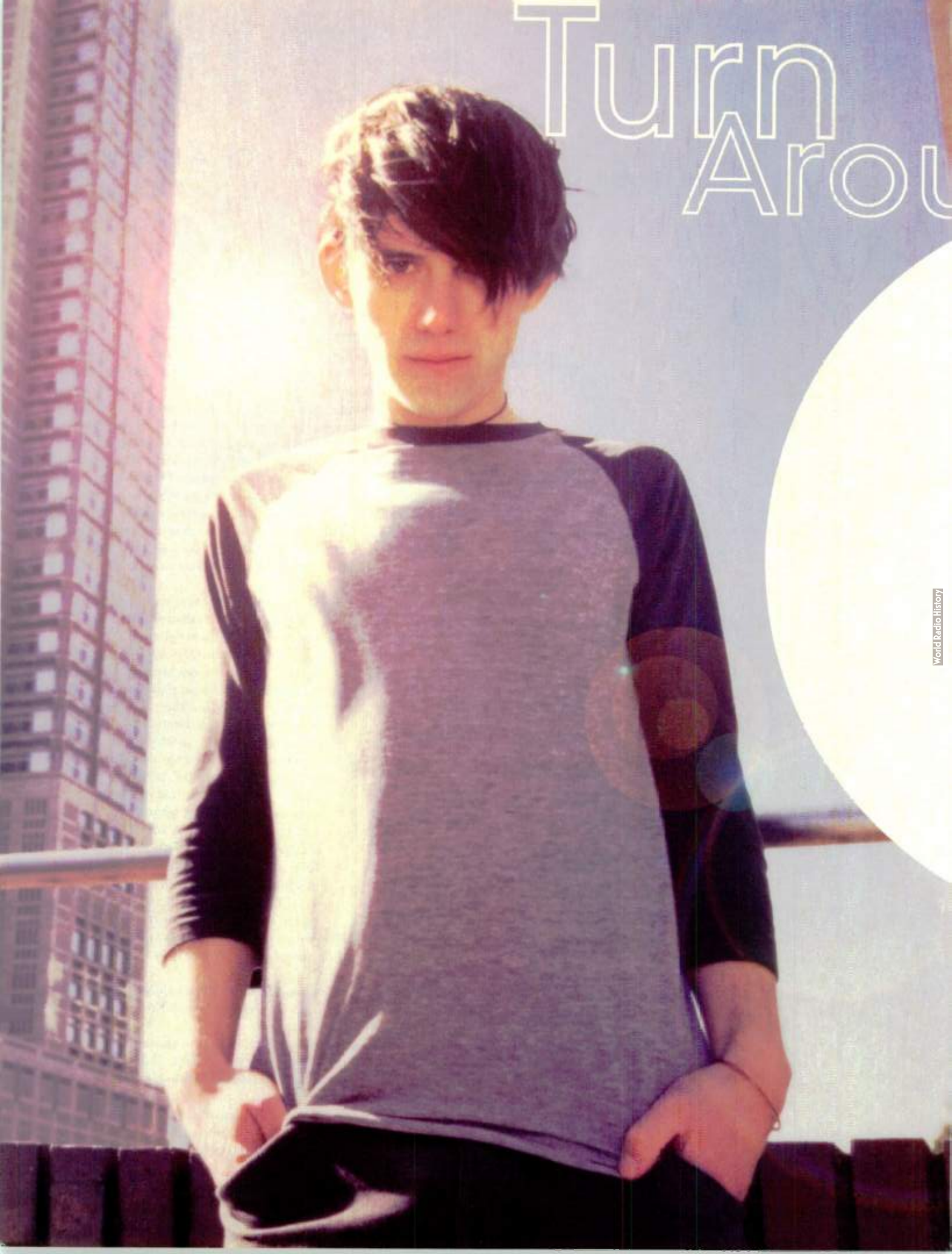
"There is no specific audience we can reach right now," confesses Cooper. "It's either extreme underground or you got commercial hip-hop, and we're kinda happy [rap]. In the real underground, it's not really cool or acceptable to be the type of group that we are. It's pretty scary, actually."

Despite their lack of hardcore content, underground rep or melatonin, Ugly Duckling caught a serious buzz in '97 with their independently released "Fresh Mode" single. Two years later, 1500 Records released the *Fresh Mode* EP to critical acclaim.

But who knows if today's post-thug marketplace is interested. The unassuming members of Ugly Duckling don't exactly drape themselves ghetto-fabulously. Einstein's infamous "eight-pound" dookie chain may be the only pimpin' accessory between the three of them (except, of course, for Dizzy's striped pajamas).

For their photo shoot, the duo clowns it up a little more. Cooper sits in the driver's seat of a Porsche, yackin' to no one on someone else's cell phone while Einstein rides shotgun, his gold rope gleaming against a plain grey T-shirt that reads simply, "I am hip-hop." Um, word. **NMM**

Turn Arou



nd

Bright Eyes

EVERY NOW AND THEN HE FALLS APART.

STORY: NICOLE KEIPER

Watching a Bright Eyes show is as nerve-wracking as watching the plate-spinner at the circus, or the bashful kid at a high school talent show. Singer/songwriter Conor Oberst shuffles nervously onto the stage, plucks his guitar tentatively and shivers through the beginning notes and warbled words of the first few songs. You can't take your eyes off the stage for fear that you'll miss the moment when everything stops teetering and starts crashing.

Miraculously though, Oberst and his revolving troop of supporting musicians keep things spinning. The spindly, floppy-haired 20-year-old maintains the awkward momentum not by tightening his grip on the band, but by stopping songs mid-verse when his guitar's gone hopelessly out of tune, mumbling "The G string has always been my least favorite," and apologizing repeatedly to the crowd when he mashes the wrong note on his keyboard. It sounds messy, and it is. Yet over the course of a show, it evolves into a sparse, painfully pretty brand of indie rock.

On the Omaha, Nebraska native's third full-length, *Fevers and Mirrors* (Saddle Creek) and on stage, his voice trembles, then wavers and wobbles until it opens to a shriek pitched between gasps. The same dynamic rings through his band's bass, flute and drum accompaniment. But the remarkable esthetic of Bright Eyes is less in the whisper-to-fever-pitch whip than in the startling sincerity of the delivery.

Words like "And you lay your head onto my shoulder, pour like water over me/ So if I just exist for the next 10 minutes of this drive that

would be fine," lay out raw emotions while Oberst shakes infectious, stripped-down melodies out of his guitar or keyboard. It's obvious that his tremors are not for show—they're from publicly spilling his every passion and fear. That straight-up honesty is steadily earning Oberst a tribe of obsessors almost guilty of idolatry. The singer is sheepish when asked whether he recognizes the intensity of his followers' worship. "I guess, I mean, I've seen... Yeah I know what you're talking about for sure. [Lots of coughing.] But, no, I know what you mean."

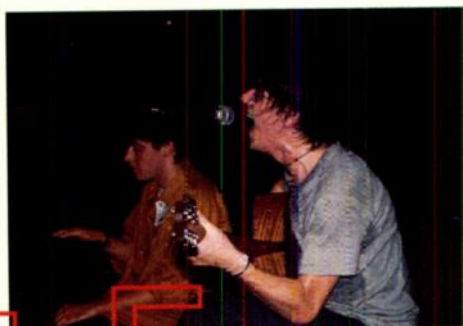
Such uncensored ardor, however, is becoming more difficult as his audience grows. The Bright Eyes that fans know now may not be the Bright Eyes that the future will hold. "Now it seems like there is this totally uncomfortable feeling I have," he explains. "Newer songs I've written, not that I'm not being honest in them, but I feel more the need to kind of bury things in metaphor. People assume that having a bunch of people know who you are and talk about you everywhere is something that's pleasant," he says, "or something you should strive for, but really it's not."

He's hesitant because he never wanted to be a rock star. Granted, everyone says that. But watching Conor Oberst, it's obvious that he's more comfortable playing with friends in his basement than he is in front of sold-out crowds. Oberst relates to the audience like they're all kids sitting in on a practice, and he likes it that way. Back

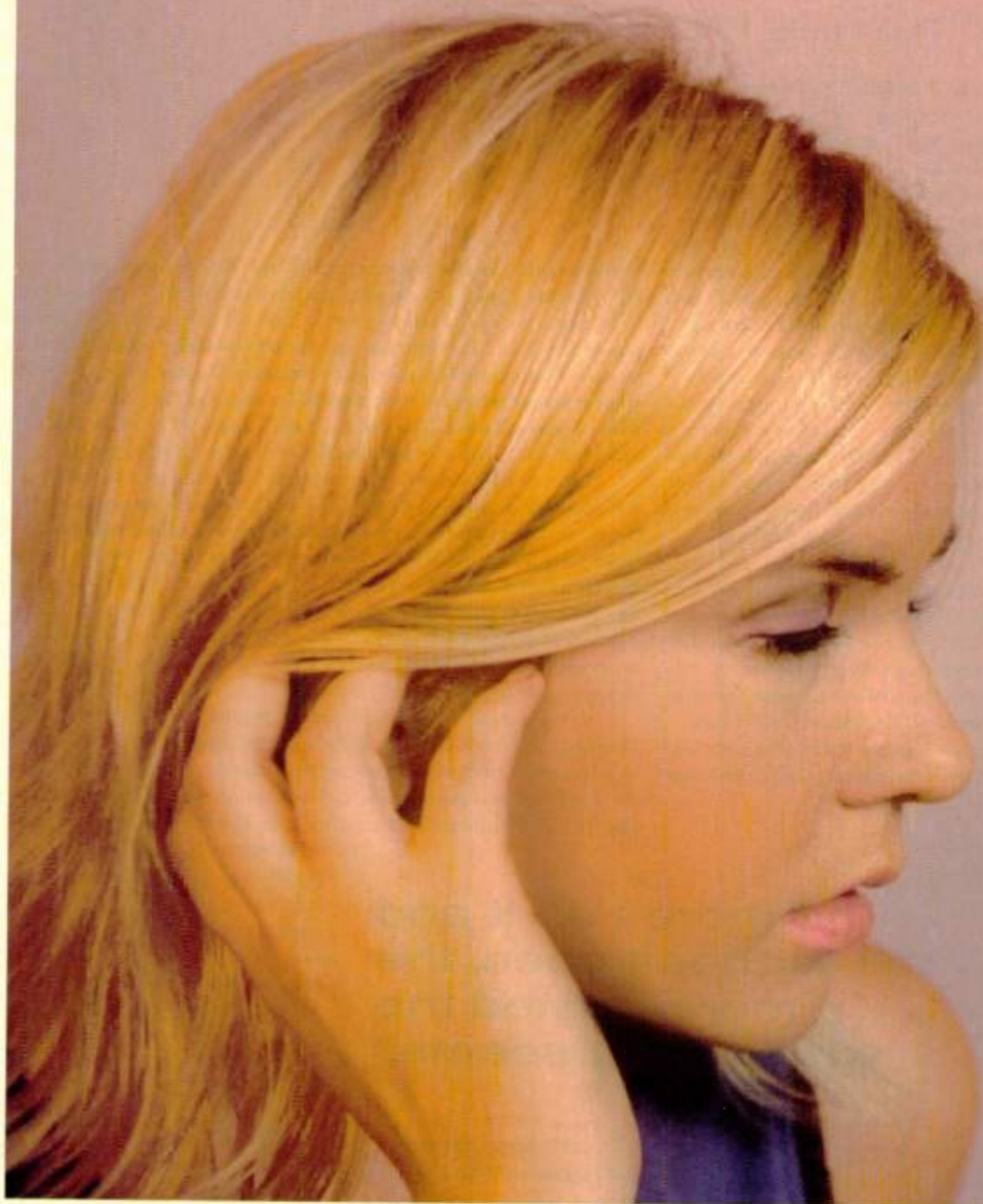
in Nebraska, the band is not working on a follow-up. Oberst says it might be a while, too, because he needs to find something to say first. And what he says this time may be drastically different: "The whole thing with the band is starting to seem like a big contradiction to me," he says, "like the kind of music that it is, and then just the whole idea of going around

and exhibiting it at these places. And even beyond that, like selling fucking souvenirs for it. It seems like the more I do it and the farther it goes, the more twisted the whole thing seems." **NMM**

"The more I do it and the farther it goes, the more twisted the whole thing seems."



Kendall In Wonderland



LADYBUG TRANSISTOR, BLACK BEETLE AND JIM O'ROURKE
ARE ALL INVITED TO MASCOTT'S GARDEN PARTY.

STORY: WAYNE ROBINS PHOTO: JANE HUNTINGTON HAIR & MAKEUP: NEI CRUZ

K

endall Jane Meade's address book must read like an indie-rock who's who: She played keyboard with Helium and bass for the Spinanes, shares a label with campy songwriter Momus and gets production help from the prodigious Jim O'Rourke and the Brooklyn popsters of Ladybug Transistor. Her roommate, Joan Wasser, was in the Dambuilders and now plays in Black Beetle.

Even with her impressive résumé and connections, Meade only reluctantly revealed her new solo project, Mascott. It took prodding from Matthew Jacobson, label poobah of Le Grand Magistry and a friend from her native Detroit, to bring the first Mascott EP, *Electric Poems*, to light last year. "I thought people were going to laugh at me for being so emotional and gentle," says the reformed rocker, whose grrrly punk-pop act Juicy split in 1997. "When it got a few kind reviews, I took a deep breath and started writing more songs and fantasizing about making another album with my friends."

Follow The Sound (Le Grand Magistry), Mascott's first full-length, is as alluring as it is unassuming. "I wrote all the songs in my room on acoustic guitar, but what came out on the record is very interesting—it's originally not what I would have heard," Meade says. That could be because it was recorded in three cities by five producers, and defies simple singer/songwriter fare with synths and violins, electric guitars and Rhodes electric piano. But if a single instrument dominates, it's Meade's voice. Pretty but unpolished, it suggests waking up from a good night's sleep with an edge of anxiety: Lounge music for lounging around in your pajamas partly because you don't know what else to wear.

While Jim O'Rourke produced some tracks at his Chicago studio, and others were cut in Detroit, the record's soul is in Brooklyn, where Meade lives. "Almost all the musicians I know live in Brooklyn," says Meade, who lives in leafy Carroll Gardens. "It's great for artists because it's quiet and inspiring, it's beautiful and not crowded, there's space to think." Which, come to think of it, is a good way to describe *Follow The Sound*. **NMM**

FUTURE Sound of LORE





GILLES PETERSON—THE MAN WHO MADE ENGLAND SWING TO GARAGE, HIP-HOP AND RARE GROOVE—COMES TO AMERICA.

STORY: ADRIENNE DAY

PHOTO: BRENDAN MORAN

W

hile other 15-year-old boys were discovering either soccer or the opposite sex, London-born Gilles Peterson was scooting up the side of buildings to secure equipment for his pirate radio station. "I'd go out with my dad," remembers Peterson. With all the required pieces in hand, the two connected a transmitter to a car battery to an aerial to a tape recorder, started a broadcast of mostly jazz and funk, gave out the "radio station" number (a nearby phone booth) and then

waited. He laughs, "We'd maybe get one call. But that would keep us going for another week."

From this nearly non-existent bandwidth sprung a full-time career as a record-label head, BBC Radio One host and internationally acclaimed club DJ. "I got obsessed with buying records then," he confesses, "and at that age, when you go crazy for something, everything else stops."

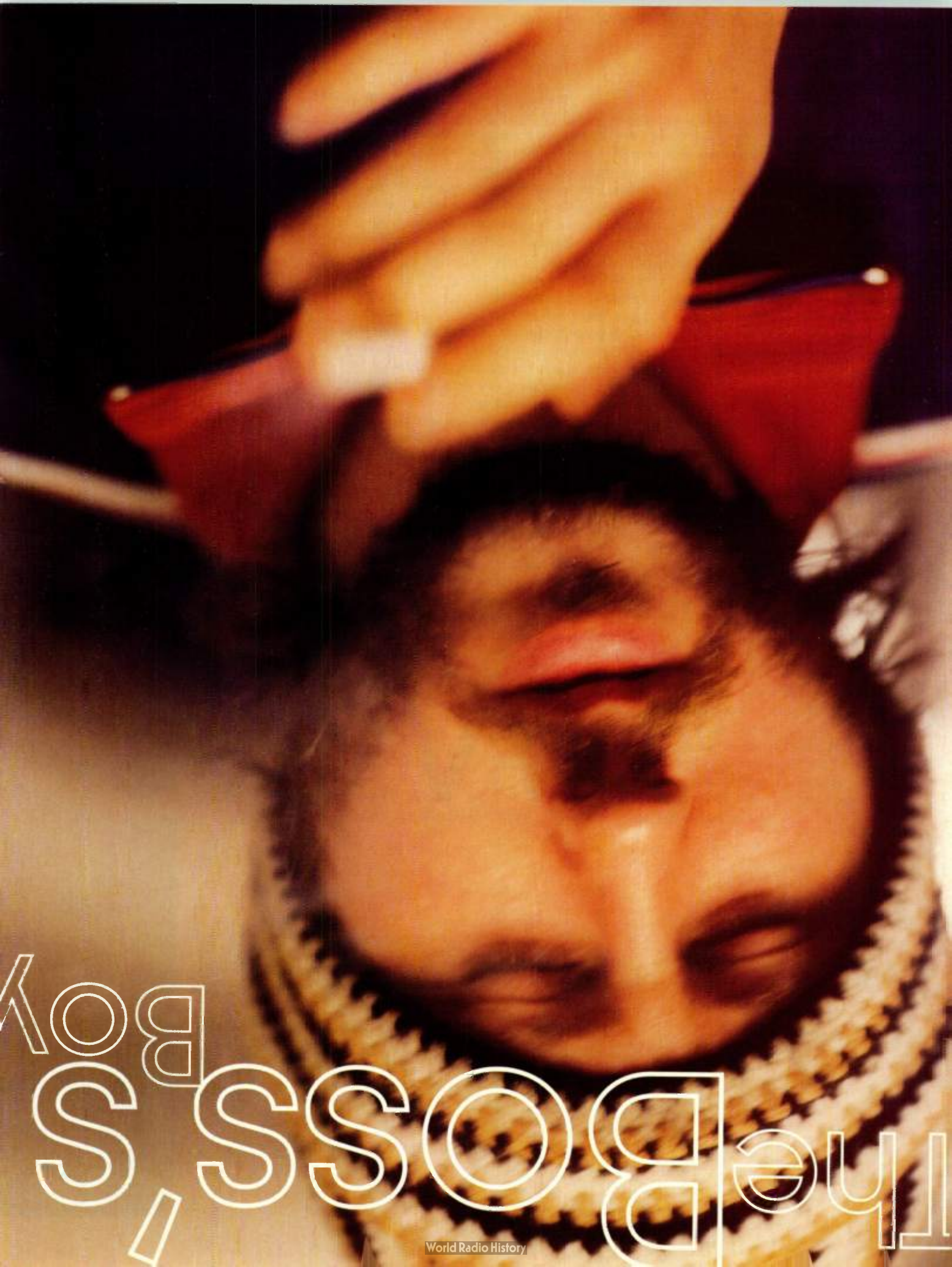
According to Peterson, now 36, his start in DJing depended more on him possessing a car than a wealth of talent. "And lots of energy," he chuckles. He started organizing disco nights for the 15-and-under crowd: "Everybody would spunk off school and go clubbing." Fully enmeshed in the London jazz-dance community by age 19, he was tapped to compile the *Jazz Juice* series of records (for seminal dance-music label Streetsounds), as well as releases for jazz labels Blue Note and Fantasy. This led to his role in launching the Acid Jazz label in '88, as well as various stints on the air and in clubs such as the legendary Dingwalls in London's Camden Town.

The UK is where modern club culture comes from, stresses Peterson, even if the music itself hails from other parts of the world. Dingwalls became a meeting place for the nascent, e-bolstered acid-house community and jazz, funk and hip-hop aficionados, unifying the diverse groups under one aural umbrella.

Peterson left Acid Jazz to launch what is now the Talkin' Loud label, where he focuses on music like garage, hip-hop, rare groove and Latin house—the styles that pulse through his first US mix-CD release, *The INCredible Sounds Of Gilles Peterson* (Giant Step-Epic). Even a quick peek at the Talkin' Loud roster, which includes the Roots (whose debut album the label released in the UK), Terry Callier and Roni Size & Reprazent, illustrates Peterson's diverse taste and desire to discover new sounds. Speaking of his initial introduction to drum 'n' bass, he says, "A lot of the clubs I was doing had gone quite downtempo; the energy was a bit spliffy. Drum 'n' bass was so exciting and uplifting."

Roni Size, the man whose full-length debut, *New Forms*, earned Talkin' Loud a 1997 Mercury Prize, still receives the highest praises. In this revved-up hybrid of breakbeat jungle science, quivering basslines and jump-up vocals, Gilles kindled a new groove. "I always loved Roni's records the best—just devastating," he says, "and live, there's no better band in dance music."

With plans to shop his next release, the new *Worldwide* mix, domestically, Peterson is finally including the States in his master plan. "America's definitely changing, even from a year or two ago." He adds, "People discover me by listening to Sasha And Digweed, and then want something a little bit different." **MMM**



The Boss, Boy

World Radio History

HE'S MOST OFTEN COMPARED TO BECK AND BRIAN WILSON, BUT **BADLY DRAWN BOY** LEFT HIS HEART SOMEWHERE NEAR ASBURY PARK.

STORY: ANGUS BATEY PHOTOS: PHIL KNOTT



s French horns collide with strings on his *The Hour Of Bewilderbeast*, and guitar twang buries itself in your subconscious, you'd figure that English eccentric Damon Gough (who calls himself Badly Drawn Boy) would be swooning for the lo-fi likes of Sebadoh, the air-brushed grandeur of Brian Wilson and the nervous introspection of Nick Drake.

And you'd be quite, quite wrong.

Badly Drawn Boy's biggest influence is far more Jersey Shore.

"I was watching this documentary on Bruce Springsteen in 1984," Gough relates, drawing heavily on his umpteenth cigarette at a London cafe, "and they showed this footage of him playing 'Thunder Road' at Madison Square Garden. It just about changed my life. I watched it and watched it and watched it for about a week—I couldn't fathom what was going on in that song, I'd never seen anything like it. And I just became obsessed. I started going to record fairs to buy any Bruce Springsteen bootlegs with 'Thunder Road' on, 'cause after buying about four, I realized how different all the versions were. But I think it was an important learning curve for me. There's not many versions of my songs on my album that I think are particularly definitive. I like the idea of showing that a song has many different lives."

And, believe it or not, Damon Gough—midwife of songs, wearer of ludicrous knit hats and devotee of The Boss, who even claims to have the same jawline as the great man, his lower teeth closing over his uppers after a childhood accident—is at the point of becoming a most unlikely pop star. After a string of frothingly well-received EP releases, his acerbic and often quite magical debut album has thrust this very private individual into the UK limelight.

The 18-track song cycle maps out an understated but carefully plotted relationship through its birth, life and death. The closing "Epitaph" even marks the vocal debut of Gough's girlfriend, Clare Hewitt, as the pair of them assume the roles of a parting couple, singing "I hope you never die" to one another.

Winner of the Mercury Music Prize (England's Grammy) and hailed as no less than "the indie *Pet Sounds*" by influential UK magazine *Q*, *Bewilderbeast* has seen Gough's stock rise immeasurably. Yet he laments the "extremely surface-level" journalism that has crowned him "the British Beck."

"I've started to redress the balance now though," he smiles. "I've started calling him 'the American Badly Drawn Boy.' But it's ludicrous! It's only been said because I'm a solo artist and I play different instruments. Why's everyone forgotten about somebody like Frank Zappa or Captain Beefheart or Tom Waits, or even some of the early blues musicians who were being eclectic in the '40s? People can't see beyond 1994, when Beck came out, which is to his credit because he made an impact. But I'm sure he's sick of people being compared to him. How can everybody be like you?"

His protestations are merited. In many respects, *Bewilderbeast* most closely resembles Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*, an emotional series of personal observations on universal sentiments, a state-of-the-nation address coming straight from the heart. Yet at their core, BDB's songs are more in tune with the traditions of British folk music, and Gough writes his lyrics intuitively. Even he needed to think twice about the inclusion of the French words *soleil* and *sur la plage*.

"I've traced that back to when I was in primary school, aged 10," he reveals. "I was in a production of *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and I had to sing a solo song

all in French. I came on stage with a big wrought-iron bike and a string of onions round my neck, wearing a beret and a stripy jumper and a painted-on moustache. I remember my brother went on the first night, and after I'd done my song he legged it home to tell my mum, 'cause I hadn't told anyone I would be doing a solo. I don't know if he was impressed or appalled, but he just couldn't believe that I was up on stage singing."

Gough was raised in Bolton, Lancashire, and though he did relatively well at school, he left after his O-levels (the equivalent of completing high school) to work in his parents' printing business. After discovering Springsteen, he invested in a Tascam 144 multi-track tape machine, the same model The Boss recorded *Nebraska* on. A chance meeting over a Jeremy Steig record in a local club led to him to become friends with a neighborhood DJ named Andy Votel, who had just released a single. "I loved it," Gough remembers. "I'd never known anyone who had a record out before, so it was quite a revelation."

Encouraged by Votel, who was looking for an outlet for his design work (his art adorns *Bewilderbeast's* sleeve), the pair set up the Twisted Nerve label and in September '97 pressed a 500-copy limited run of the first Badly Drawn Boy record, the 7-inch vinyl *EP1*. Ten copies were then left on consignment at the Manchester store Piccadilly Records. "We went back three days later, and they'd sold out!" Gough recalls, still slightly perplexed. "We were asking them, 'Who bought them? What did they look like?' Then Rough Trade Records in London ordered 100." The few copies that change hands today do so for around \$250.

That was only the beginning of the coming oddness for Gough. A few weeks later, he was waiting for Votel in his car outside

Manchester's Night And Day when an extremely well-oiled Mark E. Smith, maverick leader of Mancunian musical institution the Fall, stumbled into the passenger seat, demanding to be driven to his home in Stockport.

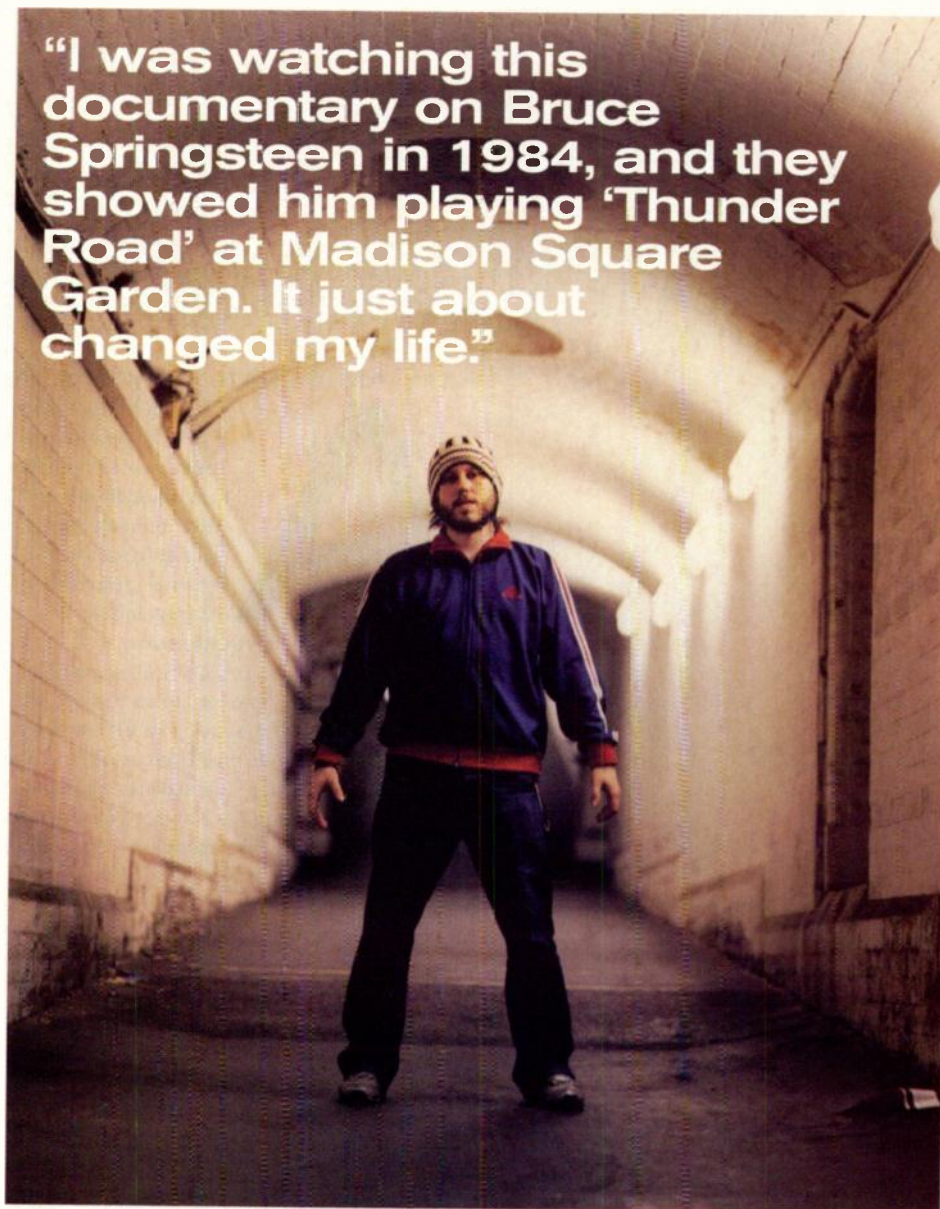
"I said, 'Mark, this isn't a cab,'" Gough chuckles at the memory, "but he was absolutely sozzled so I ended up taking him home, on condition he did a song with me. He's a sort of intimidating character, but for some reason he befriended me, and I did a track with him for a Fall B-side. It wasn't until a year after it happened that I suddenly realized, 'Bloody hell, I've made a record with the Fall!'"

Smith was one of many in the music biz interested in working with Badly Drawn Boy. Further EP releases secured Gough a berth on the DJ Shadow/James Lavelle U.N.K.L.E. project, and major-label interest culminated in a surreal appearance at Manchester's In The City music business convention in 1998, where he played a home movie to the assembled A&R throng, claiming he was too nervous to perform. But by then he was well on his way to a deal with XL Recordings, the label behind the Prodigy.

The only thing Gough hadn't already accomplished, it seemed, was meeting his idol. So when Springsteen last played in Manchester, Damon booked himself and Clare into the city's most expensive hotel (the Crowne Plaza) for the night, on the off-chance that The Boss might turn up. Lo and behold, the Jersey boy strode into the hotel bar a little after midnight, and an awestruck Badly Drawn Boy managed to engage him in conversation.

"I can't remember much of what he said, but he was spot-on," Damon gushes. "I apologized for buying all the bootlegs, but I told him I'd got all the albums anyway. And he said, 'Oh, forget about it, I got used to all that years ago.' And now, I'm actively encouraging people to bootleg me. I can't wait to see a collection of Badly Drawn Boy radio sessions or whatever. It's good. If you start to look at it as losing money, you've obviously got too much of it." **NMM**

"I was watching this documentary on Bruce Springsteen in 1984, and they showed him playing 'Thunder Road' at Madison Square Garden. It just about changed my life."



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Love In The Time Of Science

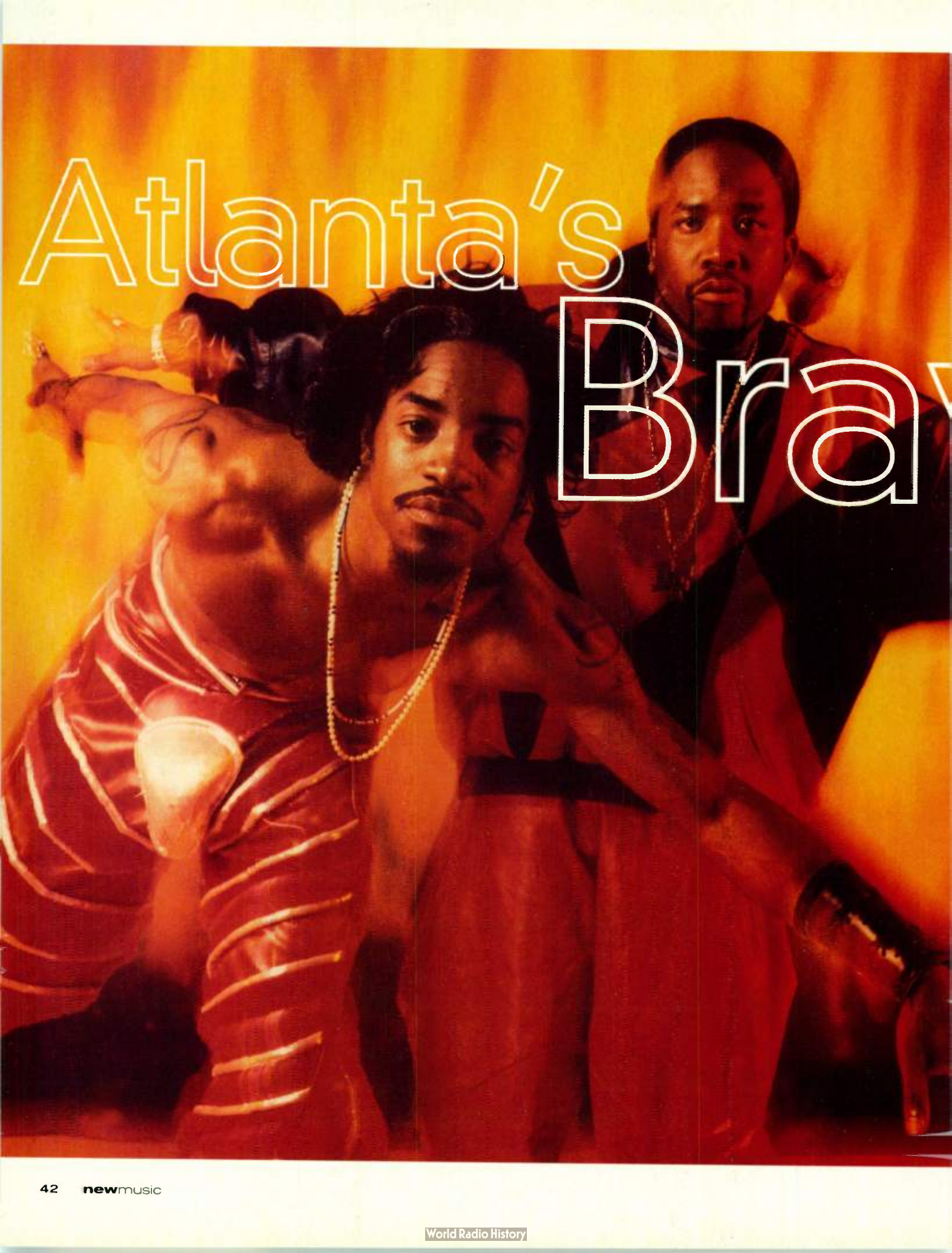


the debut album

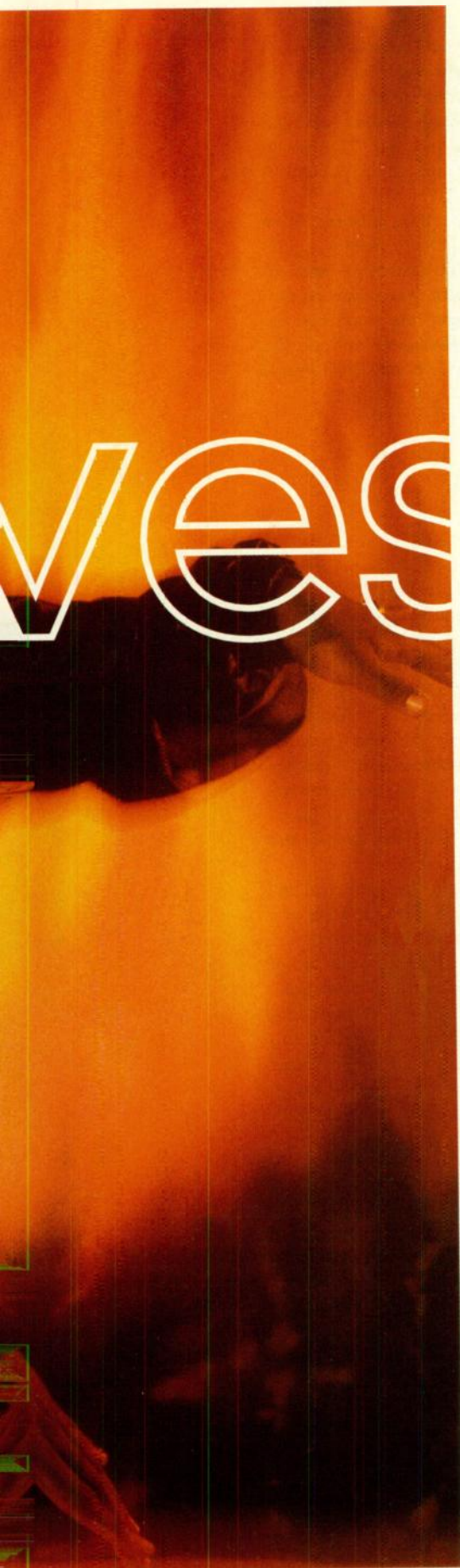


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Atlanta's Brav



JUST WHEN **OUTKAST'S** DRE AND BIG BOI SHOULD BE MILKING THE LAID-BACK HIP-HOP SOUND THEY'VE PERFECTED, THE RAPPERS REVOLT.

STORY: JON CARAMANICA
PHOTOS: MICHAEL LAVINE

On a lazy Saturday at StanKonia, OutKast's suburban Atlanta recording space, melancholy notes emanate from the baby grand sitting in the middle of the main room. Andre Benjamin, a.k.a. Dre, is at the keys. "I really don't know how to play," he demurs, even though he sounds fairly proficient. "I bought one for my house and started making up songs." His partner, Big Boi (pronounced "boy") spends his free time in a more, ahem, leisurely manner. At this moment, he's at his posh digs in the southern Atlanta exurbs, sleeping off a long night on the town with the Goodie MOB's Big Gipp.

Dre is a something of a stylistic and intellectual rollercoaster. He sports polar-fleece overalls, green curly wigs, drum-major outfits and knee-high socks (not all at the same time, but it's probably not out of the question). He talks to Jimi Hendrix in his dreams: "I was sitting at this table across from Jimi Hendrix, and he was like, 'What made you want to play guitar?' and I said [Funkadelic's] 'Maggot Brain.' 'Yeah, that's cool,' he said, 'But what you really need to do is listen to James Brown's guitar player, Jimmy Nolan.' And he just gave me that. I turned around to do something, I was going to ask why and he walked off." Believe it or not, Dre gave up (most) drugs a long time ago. His CD changer hosts Sun Ra, Phonte, Patti LaBelle and, of course, James Brown. And he's recently redubbed himself Andre 3000: "I was tired of all that Y2K bull-shit. 2000's already here. What's the next, next shit?"

Alongside Andre, Antwan Patton—Big Boi—appears somewhat conventional. He still drapes himself in the Atlanta Braves gear he's rocked since the group started. He still rhymes about the streets, albeit in a highly stylized, intelligent manner. He still frequents gentleman's clubs. He still gets bent.

Strange as it may seem, Dre and Big Boi are just two different versions of the same kid. As teenagers, the two were inseparable; the fact that their paths have diverged in their mid-20s hasn't strained the relationship. Instead they've become an odd couple that speaks on several levels simultaneously, raising all sorts of eyebrows and yet still receiving love from mainstream and street audiences alike.

"B.O.B." (as in Bombs Over Baghdad), the first single from OutKast's fourth album, *StanKonia* (LaFace-Arista), pushes those loyalties to the extreme. Bpm's rumble chaotically well into three-digit territory with snares big enough to demolish buildings and bumpy-ride guitars that might have been hijacked from a lost Sly Stone session. On top of that

beguiling mix rides the tightly controlled cacophony of Big Boi and Andre, slightly out of the drawl-tastic comfort zone they built OutKast's reputation on. The two deliver each line as if it's the breakneck final stretch of a sprint and the one who sticks his neck out the farthest wins.

"I was scared [about the single]," Andre confesses, "I was really concerned with how it was going to connect with the street. It's really fast, then it's got a guitar breakdown. The label was like, 'Black radio doesn't want a guitar,' but black radio is hitting flips over it right now, so I'm really happy. People in the street, niggas in the ghetto be like 'Ooooh, this shit is jammin.' It's like introducing them to some shit they thought they would never like in their life."

"And the fast shit is really old-school," Big Boi later concurs. "It's some Southern heritage bass shit, going back to 2 Live Crew, Magic Mike, 'Planet Rock.' We just add the guitars into that gumbo and ride."

"Everybody's paid in hip-hop. There's no struggle. So it's time to crank it up, put a little more rage back into it."

On the heels of *Aquemini*, the ridiculously relaxed 1998 soul-funk album that legitimized Southern hip-hop among critics as a viable art form, *StanKonia* is, as Andre describes it, a "revolt sound."

This may place OutKast in the underdog slot, but that's nothing new. When the pair first appeared in 1993, Southern rap was largely a punchline. "I think there's a prejudice against the South," says Big Boi, "If you really talking street shit, and then dropping dope styles at the same time, sometimes they can't handle it. They don't ever want to give you the credit."

Miami bass essentially poisoned many mainstream critics into viewing the South as chock-full of simple-rhyme-bearing lechers. But while Miami artists may have been light on content, they understood cadence, and elsewhere in the South, groups like the UGKs were quietly building small regional empires where style and substance formed a blissful, pitched-down union.

On LaFace, by far the South's most successful imprint, OutKast was the oddball group. While pop R&B superstars like Toni Braxton and Xscape were being manufactured like marshmallow puffs, Andre and Big Boi A&R'd their own projects, talked about aliens and channeled the crazy ghost of '70s funk into hip-hop for tomorrow. Some just didn't get it. "I'm not lonely [in hip-hop]," Andre says about the reactions he gets from other people in and outside of the business, "but they do make you feel strange. They're like, 'These are the hip-hop freaks.' People actually think I'm crazy for some reason, and I'm just as chill as they are, just not comfortable."

Still, the backyard-barbecue vibe of *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* managed to find a spiritual home with Southern fans and, by dint of its major label push, won converts in other territories. Two years later came *ATLiens*, the understated, forward-thinking rumination on fame and otherness that truly earned the group their hip-hop outsider stripes.

"After the first album we went on tour and we met a lot of the fans," remembers Andre. "They was telling us, 'If y'all didn't make this song, then I wouldn't have graduated from college.' That's when I knew we had a purpose. Then I started thinking that my lyrics really have to mean something. I can't just be bullshitting. Then after a couple of albums, I'm getting bored as a rapper, so I cranked my shit up, turned it up to nine, and I was like, we gotta hit 'em with the snap factor. It's time to put it on the line."

But like any stars' fans, theirs can be fickle. *ATLiens* and

Aquemini are littered with references to the people who desperately want OutKast to fit into a mold of some sort. "Hip-hop is real comfortable right now," Andre laments, "Everybody's paid in hip-hop. There's no struggle. So it's time to crank it up, put a little more rage back into it."

Where OutKast's other albums have lulled themselves into aquatic funk, *StanKonia* prides itself on its energy—musical and lyrical. The duo frets over single parenting, the lack of adequate role models in the black community, and the failure of hope. On "Gasoline Dreams," they chant, "Don't every-

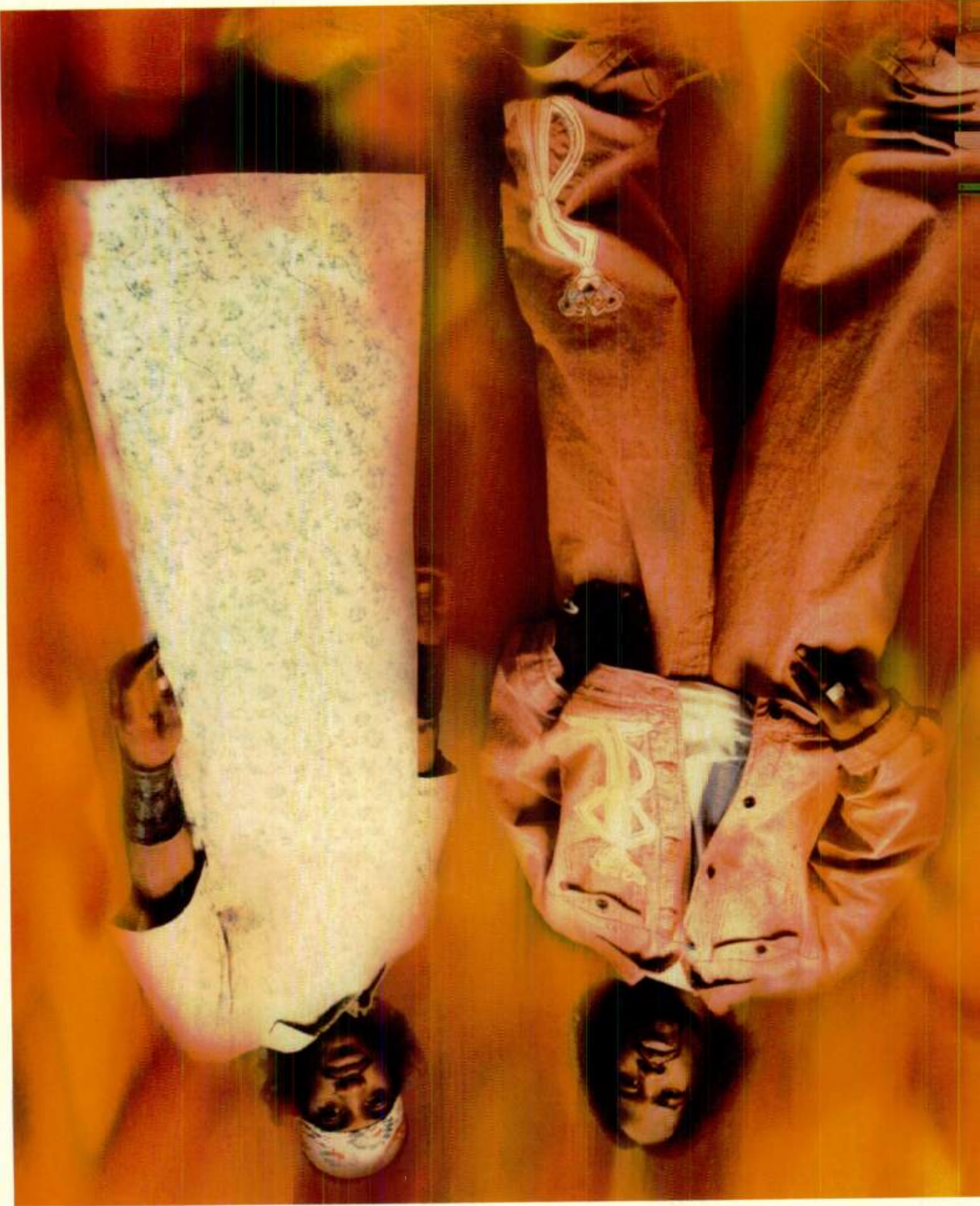
body like the smell of gasoline?/ Well, burn motherfucker, burn American dreams/ The highway up to heaven got a truck on the tow/ You full of fire and y'all know where to go."

"It's just real chaotic times," says Andre, "and the kids right now just don't know what to do. Nowadays you got different drugs on the scene. X done hit the hood. It ain't chronic no more. They on some other speed-up type shit. Some of them on blow, little kids snorting cocaine, so that's why the tempo, the tempo had to get a lot faster."

But as Big Boi warns, there's caution in this new, frenetic pace: "Niggas living this life at a fast speed don't know what's going on around them. If you live fast, you gonna come out of here real fast, so the music need to show that."

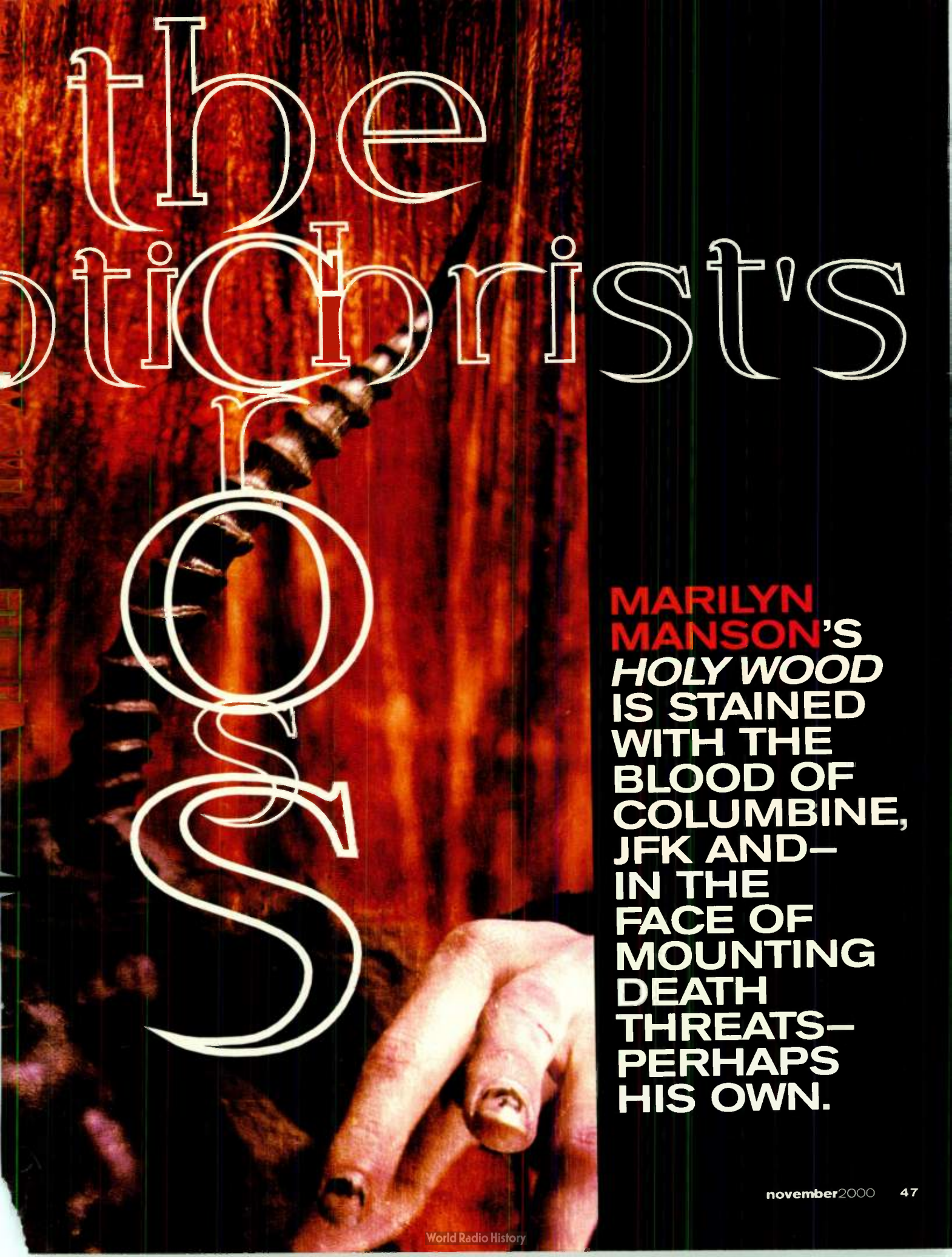
"To me," Andre agrees, "songs like 'B.O.B.'—that's the heartbeat of what's going on right now." Indeed, most of *StanKonia* ups the aggro ante. "Speedballin'" is so thick with guitars and drums it borders on industrial, while "Red Velvet" sounds like Miami neo-electro. Where "Gasoline Dreams" opens with pain-laden guitars, "Ms. Jackson" marries early Prince with late P-Funk. Even mellow, playalistic tracks like "So Fresh, So Clean" feature kicking double-time snares in the background, giving the sense that pandemonium may still be just around the corner.

And that's just the terrain OutKast navigates so well. "Musically, we're trying to get that real revolt sound. We don't want that comfortable sound right now. If the revolt sound can make 'em move...that's the thing with black people, if they can move to it then they kinda cool, so as long as you make the revolt sound movable, I think it's OK. Besides, I still got to find new ways to recreate myself." **MMM**



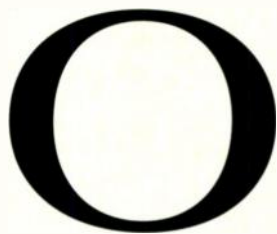


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the notionists

**MARILYN
MANSON'S**
HOLY WOOD
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WITH THE
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FACE OF
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THREATS—
PERHAPS
HIS OWN.



Only the tiniest ray of late-afternoon sun penetrates the office where Marilyn Manson has agreed to meet. The Venetian blinds are shut and the overhead lights turned off in the offices of Posthuman Entertainment, a new venture that promises to be the seat of the dark one's music and movie empire. The macabre darkness recasts a room where framed platinum CDs dot the walls and an MTV award props up some books atop the file cabinet. With the stage set, Manson enters, clad entirely in black, of course, with dark sunglasses shielding his eyes from my gaze. He keeps the sunglasses on throughout the conversation and as much as I try to be blasé, sitting in the dark trying to peer through those glasses to the Antichrist beneath is constantly unsettling. With the stage properly set, his surprisingly slight frame, black nail polish and high-pitched, almost whiny conversational voice seem much grander, more imposing.

Manson has been coolly prepping himself for war, loading the artillery of his new album, *Holy Wood (In The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death)* (Nothing), which promises to rain shrapnel on the right-wing enemy camp. Just thinking about the rage and frustration that gave birth to the album takes Manson back well over a year, to a time when it seemed his Antichrist act might fail him, those dark days after Columbine, when moralists pointed to his music as inspiration for the killings. Protestors descended upon Manson's spring '99 concerts as if they were revival meetings. In Colorado and Nevada, politicians demanded the cancellation of shows. Iowa's Liberal Democratic Senator Tom Harkin said only bad parents would let their children attend a Manson concert. The outcry continued even after Manson cancelled the tour midstream under post-Columbine pressure. Last summer, testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee about disturbingly violent stage antics prompted Senator Joseph Lieberman, the Dems' VP candidate, to declare Manson the sickest act ever promoted by a mainstream record company.

Never mind that Littleton's Klebold and Harris actually hated Manson's music. And never mind that the killers' actual ties to Columbine's pathetic little circle of goths, the Trenchcoat Mafia, were tenuous at best. When kids are lying dead in as nice a neighborhood as you might ever find, someone's got to be at fault. Rumors said the killers were Manson fans and the media found a scapegoat for slaughter.

"I didn't leave the house for three months," remembers Manson about the post-Columbine period. "And that's not a figure of speech. And most of that time was spent in my attic, which I turned into my writing isolation chamber. I was just trying to decide what I wanted to do. Was it worth trying to put my heart and soul into an album if I was going to be treated so brutally and unjustly by religious people and the media?"

This battle isn't new to Manson; it's been a thorn in his crown since childhood, when little Brian Warner, the misfit nerd of Canton, Ohio's Heritage Christian School, was busted and persecuted for distributing his home-brewed *Stupid* zine, which mock-advertised bondage aids with accompanying sketched diagrams. Manson and his adversaries have kept up the grudge match ever since: Warner becomes Manson, consecrates his music to the devil, and the morality police hound him with death threats, hate letters, calls for censorship and album-burning.

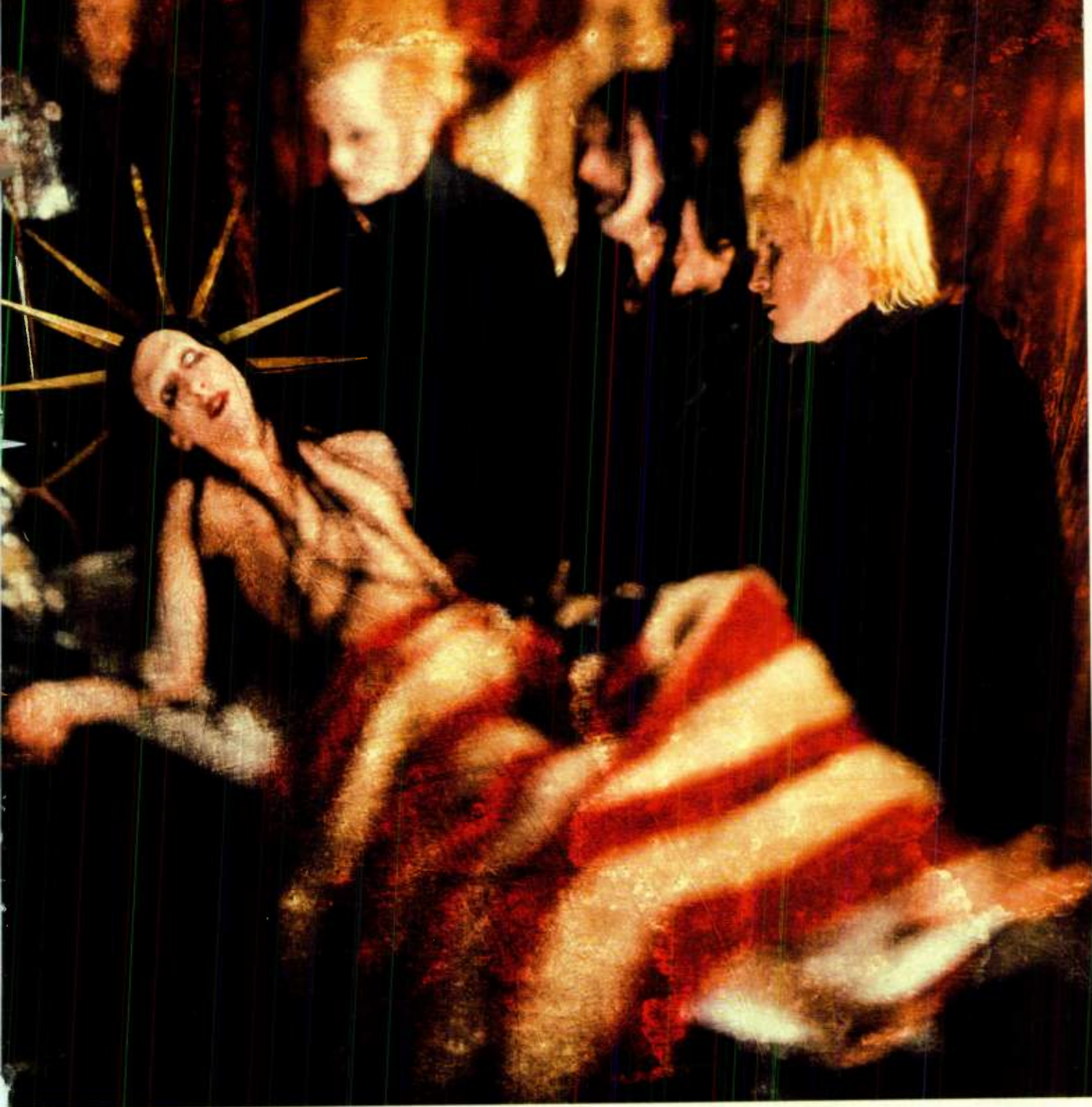
Columbine, however, was different. Today, the memory of that time still crackles in Manson's nasal voice: "We [the band] were united against the whole world. Other people will never know how poorly we were treated. On *Antichrist Superstar*, I enjoyed being vilified or being a scapegoat. But in this situation, when you're being blamed for something that has so many people's emotions wrapped up in it, it's not a winning battle you can fight. I couldn't even go to a restaurant without someone looking at me like they hated my guts, like they wanted me dead or I was responsible for something I didn't do."

Being Marilyn Manson, the most intense of rock stars, he didn't spend his hibernation merely brooding, but studying, reading Jewish mysticism, alchemy, the history of the Tarot, whatever he could get his hands on to help him figure out where he was going. After three months he flew down from his attic with the capping stone of his vision, the third piece of the triptych that began with the hard, industrial rage of *Antichrist Superstar* and journeyed upward into the more melodic, ironic vision of *Mechanical Animals*. *Holy Wood* brings together and ties off the two albums, musically and thematically.

The album, like its predecessors, combines ideas of fame, violence, religion and pop culture into a grand mélange of metaphor through the album's hero, Adam Kadmon, the first man on Earth. "*Holy Wood* is kind of a parable of an innocent that was up in a world that doesn't accept him," explains Manson. "He wants to be part of the grass that's on the other side of the fence with the bigger, more beautiful things that he doesn't feel part of. And when he becomes a part of that finally he finds out that the greener grass on the other side is the same grass that's been treating him like a weed. And that makes him bitter and manifests in revolution. But Adam's revolution does not overthrow this world like he thinks it will. His



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"I'VE POINTED THE FINGER
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STUCK IT
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idea becomes another product and they take him and turn him into something he wasn't."

The album's story, like that on *Antichrist* and *Mechanical Animals*, is told through a progression of angry and complex songs, drawn out in extended metaphors and allusions to the many elements at play in Manson's mind. The album's title, for example, refers not just to the Hollywood sign, Manson explains, but also "the tree of knowledge that Adam took the first fruit from when he fell out of paradise, the wood that Christ was crucified on, the wood that [Lee Harvey] Oswald's rifle is made from and the wood that so many coffins are made of."

Like his imagery, Manson's answer to his critics unfolds in multi-tiered metaphors that don't just shout, "It's not my fault!" but shoot back with a dark and distressing portrait of the world Manson sees, the one he fights against, in which religion, politics and the media combine to glorify violence in a way more disturbing than any Marilyn Manson album.

Holy Wood offers plenty of cannon fodder for hasty critics: "Sing the death song kids/ Because we've got no future/ And we wanna be just like you" (from "The Death Song"). "Cruci-fiction In Space" refers, among other things, to the Kennedy assassination: "If Christ was in Texas/ The hammer, the sickle, the only son/ If Jack was the Baptist/ We would drink wine from his head."

Manson walks straight back into the firestorm that almost consumed him last year with lyrics that offer no quarter to those who say he revels in violence. "The Nobodies," set to a mournful, elegiac dirge, will likely be read as a tribute to the murderers of Columbine: "Today I'm dirty and I want to be pretty/ Tomorrow I know I'm just dirt/ We are the nobodies/ We wanna be somebodies/ When we're dead/ They'll know just who we are."

This, of course, would be missing the point, the one Manson formed up in the attic, his head swirling with images of slain teens, Tarot cards, slaughtered presidents, his old persecutors and the media's blind feeding frenzy. "I've really just pointed the finger back at people who were pointing the finger at me. Or snapped their finger off and stuck it up their ass."

The point, he explains like a committed but weary teacher, is not to glorify violence, but to depict a society drenched in blood. "I make references to the Zapruder film [of the Kennedy assassination] being the most important movie ever made in modern times. And the irony that anyone could complain about violence in films and entertainment when that was shown on the news. Growing up, I saw it so many times, and I've never seen anything so violent in my life. And that's reality. To me, Kennedy was a second Christ because he died and enough people were watching, and so you become a martyr. I think the image of Christ hanging on the cross not only makes him the first real celebrity, the first real icon, but it is also one of the most sexual images ever."

Manson wanted to inflict his theosophical tale upon the world in a hail of fire and brimstone, planning not only to record an album of *Holy Wood*, but to also turn it into a movie. He talked with New Line Cinema about producing the script, which he described as "a parable about man's desire to destroy himself in a world where violence is a religion and everyone is a star"—no doubt just what Hollywood wanted to hear.

It soon became clear, however, that Hollywood was not going to be able to deal with the devil. Producers would not fund Manson's *Holy Wood* in the pure, complete form that he felt he needed to get his message out, to fire back with all his pure and unabated fury. "There were a lot of people interested in working on it but there weren't a lot of people interested in doing it on my terms. People would have watered down what I thought was a strong story, had a lot of strong important religious, political and philosophical points in it that I thought had to be said. So instead, I decided to put the movie on the back burner."

While Manson is stingy with details about his industry talks (still undoubtedly coveting a film career down the road), it is not hard to imagine why the staid, unimaginative film industry wasn't eager to

write a multi-million dollar check to a self-styled Satan wanting to fight back against the Columbine-crazed morality police with a "parable" of assassination and violence in America's celebrity culture. One can imagine the discussions of the development of Adam, Manson's hero:

Film Exec: So this Adam, when he becomes this, er, Antichrist—we're having some problems seeing him as sympathetic. Do you suppose we could write in a love interest? Maybe a childhood sweetheart who can see through to the real Adam?

Manson: He's having an intense love relationship with .9mm high-powered rifle.

Film Exec: Right. We're going to have to take another look here and get back to you.

He then turned the screenplay into a novel, a medium where no one could mess with his vision. The book, which fleshes out the story told on the album, is scheduled to be released simultaneously by Regan Books.

On the album front, though, there was no compromise. The rage, the isolation, as well as the need to top where he had been pushed Manson and the band into a frenzy of writing, recording and mixing, collaborating and experimenting like they'd never done before, he says. They hooked up in an old mansion in Laurel Canyon, the former home of magician Harry Houdini (Manson is inspired by spooky old locales), and started jamming. Working through the rage, Manson and the band tapped into something deep and "we wrote like we'd never written before and it felt like we were more a band than ever."

"I think in making this record I was operating on a subconscious level most of the time because I had lived with and embedded all these ideas into myself over the years. So I didn't have to sit down and think about the metaphors. I didn't have to sit down and think about how this tied into that, that this melody reoccurred 10 songs later in a different key. It just came naturally because this record felt more right and more a part of the band than anything I've ever done."

Befitting the feelings that inspired it, the music recalls the loud, angry screeching of *Antichrist*. But *Holy Wood* is no head-banging industrial rant. Building on the glam sound of *Mechanical Animals*, the songs use techno themes and acoustic instruments and have a poppy sweetness to them, providing as much rich texture as adrenaline. Explaining how he worked his way up to *Holy Wood*, Manson says, "I think there's elements of *Antichrist* that were very strong. I think that's probably just because of the rage and dissonance. It lacked a certain element of melody that was more focused on *Mechanical Animals*, where the rage and dissonance were put on the back burner. On this album, there was a definite need for rage and dissonance because that was being felt by everyone. And there was the knowledge of melody and the desire to make songs that were beautiful in every way, whether it would be even in their sheer ugliness that they were beautiful."

So what happens now, when all that dissonance and rage are released onto the battlefield? Will he, like the characters on his records, find that the revolution has been bought out and walk away? Kill off Marilyn Manson and become Brian Warner again? Will his critics take the bait and rejoin the battle here at the life-and-death level? Or having hit him with their best shot, have they moved on in search of a new whipping boy?

Manson himself champs at the bit. After a year, his day to fire back is at hand. Ominously, in an interview where he has talked openly about assassination, about an album whose hero, his own alter-ego, he compares to Jesus Christ, JFK and John Lennon, Manson talks about the threats that have been made on his life. "Right-wing Christians tend to bring the most death threats, but I stopped being afraid of dying a long time ago, so they can bring on whatever they want." He pauses, and through the dark glasses I feel him fixing me with a hard gaze, blank and pitiless as the sun. "I can't wait to count the death threats. I'm looking forward to it. I don't care, I'm going to do what I'm going to do and I'm not going to stop unless someone really stops me." **NMM**



STORY: B. WERDE PHOTOS: B. WERDE & ERIC JOHNSON

ON BOARD WITH DJ PAUL VAN DYK AND A MILLION WACKY GERMANS AT THE BIGGEST PEACE, LOVE AND TECHNO PARADE IN THE WORLD.

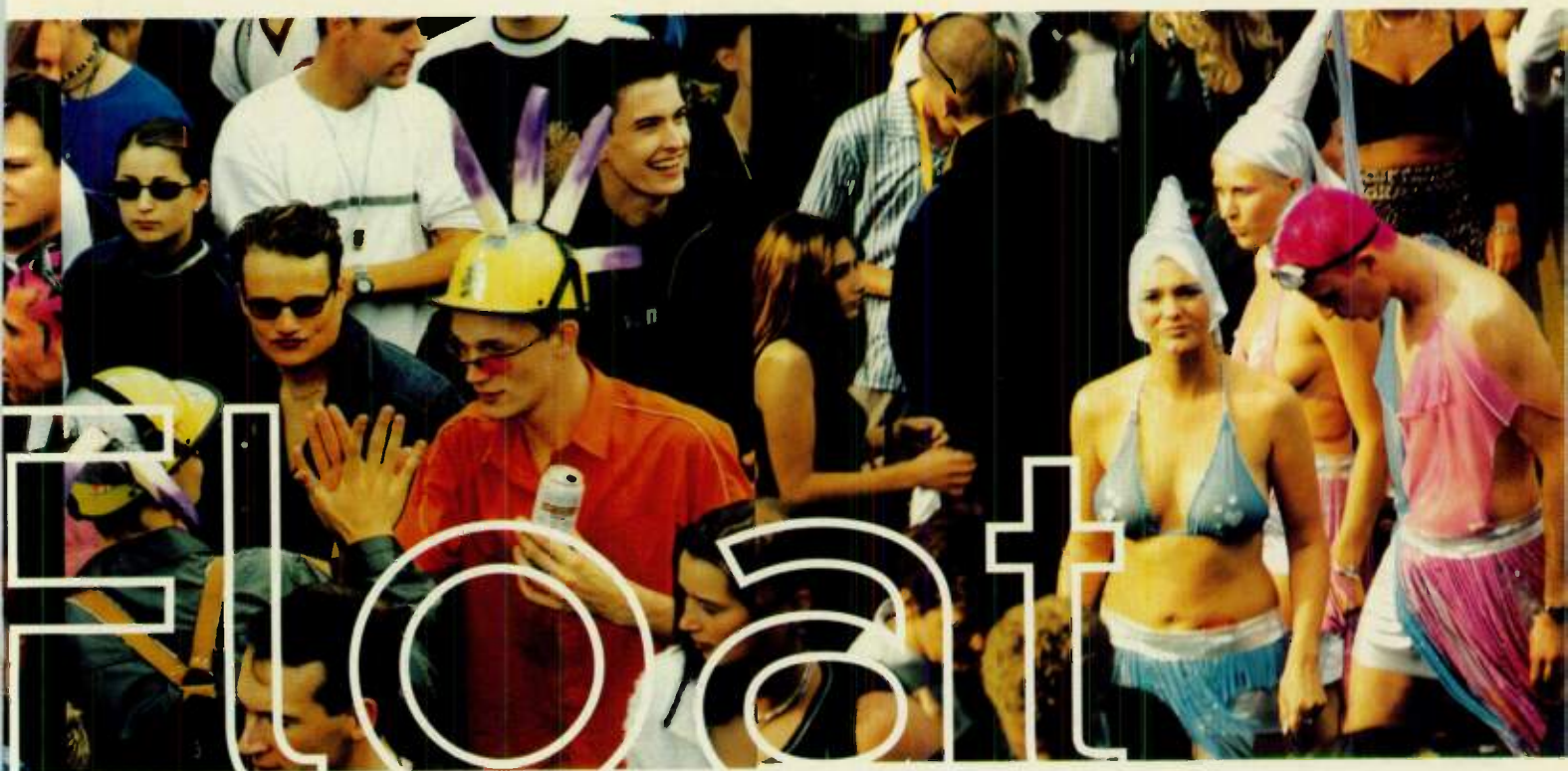
Some of the best ecstasy one could imagine is available, cheap, all around me, but right now I'm disoriented enough by the swarming masses of people. I'm standing on Berlin's Straße des 17. Juni, a road Hitler once widened to accommodate his hate rallies. Today, however, it looks like the world's largest Benetton convention rallying for peace and love. The forest-lined boulevard connects the Brandenburg gate with bustling Ernst-Reuter-Platz. Between the two is the 12-story golden angel of the Victory Column. Disappearing into that horizon at the midpoint is about half a million people. It's two in the afternoon on a cool, sunny July Saturday, and the Love Parade is everywhere.

Only those with passes are allowed aboard Paul van Dyk's truck, or any of the other 50 floats in the Parade. Once aboard, I look down our route at the two-plus-mile stretch of the Tiergarten towards our



final destination, the Victory Column. A girl with pale blue hair and a translucent dress wears see-through underwear (she's not a natural bluenette). Two young German women sport metallic bikinis and dance against the railings. A tan, buff couple who don't speak English do a Sprockets dance in the corner, he in a bright blue Speedo and she showing off a matching, skimpy two-piece, both sans the Mike Myers irony. Inside the railing of the upper deck are turntables, speakers and some fortunate people. Below, a port-a-potty and an enormous cooler of Heineken cans and bottled water ensure that the float is all the home anyone needs for the next six hours.

For some, the sheer volume of the 12th annual Love Parade validates the clout of the global techno scene. The German government and corporations respect the buying power attendees bring to Berlin, while critics deem it a million soulless parties, dancing to sell-out music sold by The Man. It's not just an excuse to do drugs, say skeptics, but an excuse to do a ton of drugs, as well as be targeted by every tobacco, alcohol and electronics company that wants a piece of a million 20-somethings with money (and brain cells) to burn. Certainly, the Love Parade in its current incarnation is as underground as Everest. Fanta's got a float boasting 50 or so revelers, and even McDonald's felt the Love—a few marks buys an "official" Parade tee.



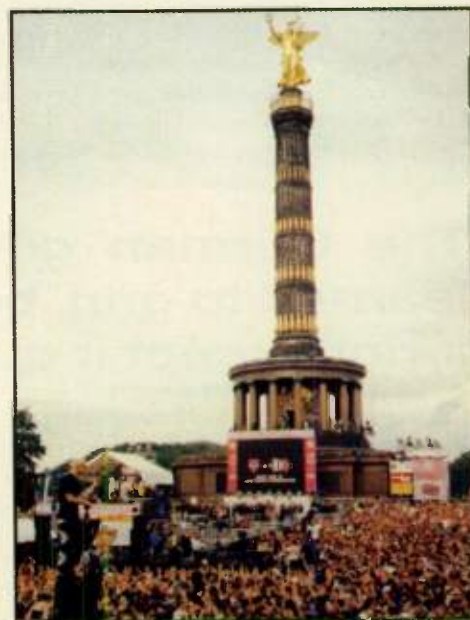
Wherever one goes in Berlin during Love Parade weekend—the basements of warehouse clubs, hotels or taxis—there rests a billboard or flyer announcing a sponsor. But none of the undulating partiers seem to care and my conscience remains unfettered.

Paul van Dyk, he of the ice-melting blue eyes and atmospheric trance melodies, has flown in a few journalists, including me, to witness this spectacle. The DJ grew up in East Berlin before the Wall came down, his ear pressed to a small transistor radio, listening to Depeche Mode and New Order on stations from the other side of the wall. The Love Parade is an opportunity to show his homeland in a new light.

"Some people might not know very much about Germany," he says. "But they hear about the Love Parade, and they talk, and they think about Germany in a very positive context. It's very emotional and moving to see this."

It's not his Parade—he's simply been taking part since '92—but his label sponsored a float this year. Van Dyk can afford it, since his *Out There And Back* (Mute) resides near the top of the charts in virtually every country other than America.

Red-eyed from playing at a party until nine this morning, van Dyk jumps on the truck to little fanfare—it seems most on the float





PAUL VAN DYK

are also still bleary after an hour or two of sleep. And why not? The event fills clubs from the Thursday before to the Tuesday after, invades the Tiergarten en masse on Saturday, and dots city streets with impromptu parties around car speakers and boomboxes. The eve of Love Parade offered top DJs in practically every club in Berlin. "You just get by on adrenaline," says the clean-living van Dyk. Maybe he does.

Over van Dyk's a shoulder, a vast ocean of humanity comes and goes: women in fur-lined leg warmers and tiny miniskirts, wiry, shirtless men with purple hair, even relatively ordinary looking ones in jeans and T-shirts. Most dance for a bit alongside one float's sound system as it inches along, then move on to another. They sway perched on top of the

ing to catch up in many ways. A block from the renowned techno club Tresor, bits of the Wall are left, rusted steel piping exposed beneath chiseled, skeletal concrete.

West Berlin DJ Dr. Motte began the parade in 1989 almost on a whim. Emulating the festivals that were popping up around the UK, he petitioned for a permit to march down the Ku'damm, a shopping street. With speakers mounted on a small truck and a slogan of *Friede, Freude, Eierkuchen* ("Peace, Joy, Pancakes") the first Love Parade drew 150 people from the close-knit West Berlin techno scene. Months later, the Wall fell, and there was new reason to celebrate and new people to celebrate with. "The East Germans were very into it," recalls Motte. "For them,

The German government and corporations have learned to grin, bear and profit from the club scene, if not accept it outright.

streetlights and road signs. Many are blowing whistles, and it seems as if the shrill, incessant drone is the crowd's energy come to life.

Last year's Parade drew an estimated 1.5 million people, and established itself as the largest festival gathering of any kind, ever. If you've never seen a million people, the enormity is the most amazing spectacle the Parade has to offer. "I get asked so often," says van Dyk, "'what is the Love Parade?' and I say it's a million and a half people coming together, having fun in the streets and dancing to electronic music.... It's nothing like this at all, though. But what can you say?"

One is tempted to focus on the political ironies and nuances. Berlin is the most politically significant city of the 20th century, and the evidence of reunification is apparent. An early morning taxi ride back to the hotel after a night of clubbing reveals the formerly Communist East Berlin as a city of scaffolding, construction still rush-

this music was the soundtrack of liberation." The next year, the Parade adopted a more universally intelligible slogan ("The Future Is Ours"), 2000 people showed up, and a tradition was born. And grew. A lot.

"We wanted to make a demonstration of tolerance and for people living peacefully together," says Motte. "It's not about demonstrating for it. It's about demonstrating it." This year's Parade ("One World, One Love Parade") drew about a million, depending on whose count you believe; unseasonably chilly weather dissuaded some from attending. The Love Parade also franchised this year, drawing 300,000 to a simultaneous UK Love Parade in Leeds's Roundhay Park. Tel Aviv held its third Love Parade in October. Tourists for the Berlin Parade are expected to spend more than \$120 million, which partially explains why the city still allows the Love Parade its demonstration permit. Berlin foots much of the bill for

cleanup and security, while the floats are paid for by sponsors, clubs and record labels.

There are two Love Parades, says van Dyk, "one before '94, when it was the techno scene showing off, and one from '95 on, when it began to draw people from nowhere near the techno scene." It doesn't trouble him. "You have to define, 'what is selling out?'" he says. "Anybody who is looking for quality music on every float might be disappointed. It isn't about the techno scene anymore. It is about people coming together and celebrating what is most missing on this planet: tolerance and respect for one another."

But if it's a de facto display for peace and love, the Parade, like other European festivals and the emerging US club and rave scene, underscores another point: Younger generations consider electronic music and its accompanying drug cocktails a perfectly exquisite way to pass a day. Meanwhile, the *polizei*—who estimated that 50 million marks (\$22 million) worth of illicit substances were sold at last year's parade—remain at the fringes of the crowd. It seems you'd have to snort something off their green and white vans to get arrested. The government and corporations have learned to grin, bear and profit from the club scene, if not accept it outright.

The floats each have their own megaspeakers, creating miniature moving parties as they traverse the Parade route. Club hits and mixes—a lowest common techno denominator—fill the air. Later in the evening, selected DJs patch into the master sound system, playing for the whole crowd. Trance and house music reign at Love Parades; the relatively tiny Berlin Fuck Parade offers a home for fans of the more aggressive gabber and hardcore techno.

As van Dyk's float finally approaches the golden angel—now swathed in colored floodlights as the sun sets—I hop off the truck. Here, several streets meet, and the concentration of people is greatest.

Days later, I would read the first reports of the Love Parade in the States. Not surprisingly, the writers focused on drug arrests and the large number of people—mostly overdose cases—who utilized the health stations set up along the route. While it's true that there were nearly 100 arrests made at the Parade, it seems an unfair media focus considering the one-in-10,000 arrest ratio. "You'll always get some nutcases when there's more than a million people," acknowledges van Dyk. "But the theme of the Love Parade is tolerance, so even people who maybe normally aren't as tolerant, they behave that day."

An avalanche of serotonin probably doesn't hurt the mood, either. You get enough people on ecstasy at an event of any size, and the crowd reaches a critical mass of euphoria. At eye-level, what has appeared as a milling, removed amoeba of bodies turns into more intimate contact with smiling faces. I duck through the trees along the route, to find waning rays of sunlight filtering softly onto a grassy slope and a lake. A young German man offers me a cigarette, unprovoked; in the spirit of the day, I let him finish my beer.

I've gone to parties for years in the States. I've seen them shut down by police and fire chiefs for manufactured violations, and on the way home I've been stared at like a freak because my pants (and pupils) were a bit too wide for the typical patrons at a Maryland truck stop, or wherever I was. Even now, supposedly progressive cities like San Francisco and New York target clubs and raves with McCarthyistic zeal. So forgive me if, standing under an enormous, golden angel with a million people surging to an emo-

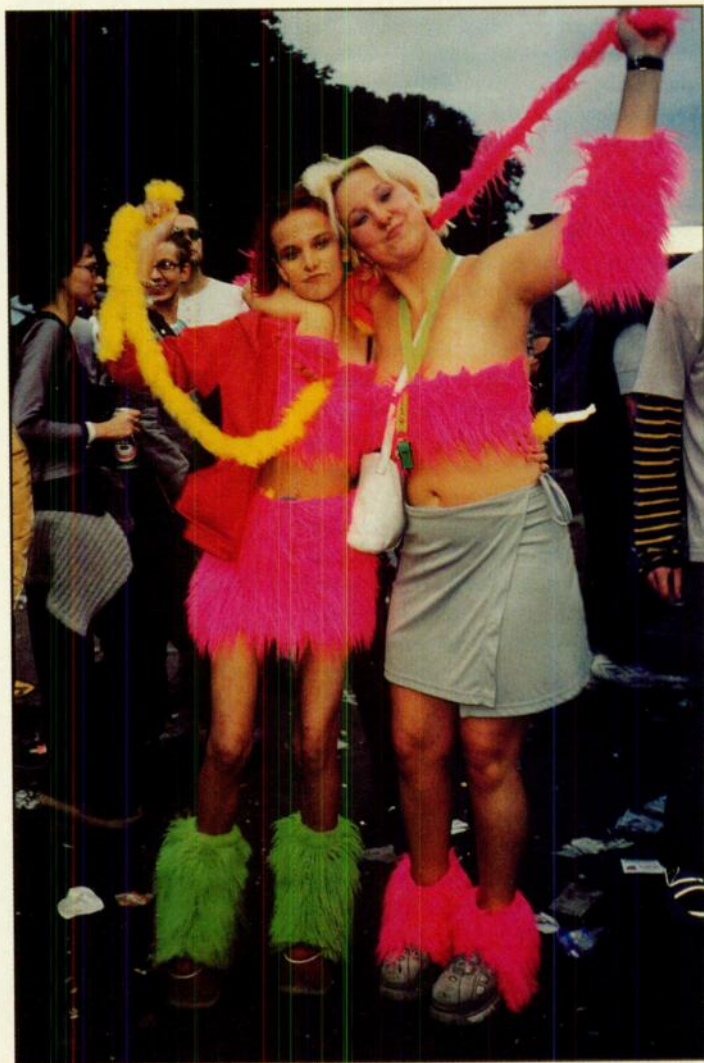
tive techno pulse, I feel like the fat, bratty bumblebee in the Blind Melon video: home at last. A seemingly frivolous afternoon spent

dancing and feeling empathetic with 999,999 of your closest pals, Love Parade welcomes all to show the world what happens when a million folks come together and implicitly agree to be excellent to one another. It's a jaw-dropping statement, and if the cost is cooperation with Fanta, or Berlin's Green party, or even the six men and women in dominatrix gear running a conga line through the crowds, so much the better.

Walking toward the angel, eyes skyward, I bump into a stocky, ruddy-faced German man. He seems to be getting upset, shaking his head sternly as I stammer to apologize in simple English. I'm concerned that I've committed the one cardinal sin at the Love Parade, and been disrespectful. Suddenly he erupts into a huge

grin. The language barrier is irrelevant—he is pleased to have fooled me completely. He grabs my hat from my head, places it on his own, and dances a little dance, laughing, before returning the hat to my head, bear-hugging me, and sending me off into a night of endless parties. **NMM**

For some, the sheer volume of the 12th annual Love Parade validates the clout of the global techno scene.



THE 6THS

Hyacinths And Thistles Merge

Conceptually, the second 6ths album is identical to 1995's much-loved *Wasps' Nests*: Magnetic Fields leader Stephin Merritt takes a batch of his perkily lovelorn songs, arranges them for guest vocalists, and concocts an album title that no lisp-phobic radio announcer will touch. But *Hyacinths* differs significantly in its execution. The lush production on *Wasps' Nests* wrapped the vocals in snappy synth-pop cocoons; *Hyacinths'* music, by contrast, is surprisingly sparse. Many songs feature just one instrument—like zither, accordion or toy piano—to carry Merritt's twinkly cabaret melodies. That means the singers are front and center, without overdubs, as they tackle Merritt's tricky lyrics and structures. Predictably, there are misfires: Marc Almond's melodrama sinks the tiki-tastic "Volcanic," and '60s pop star Melanie simply can't sing anymore (though her performance actually complements the desperate sentiments of "I've Got New York"). But the best tracks are pleasures: The often-campy Momus gives a sweetly understated reading, Bob Mould gets to be a torch singer, and Sarah Cracknell (St. Etienne), Sally Timms (Mekons), Neil Hannon (Divine Comedy) and Katharine Whalen (Squirrel Nut Zippers) fare equally well. The set's unexpected highlight comes from folk/blues singer Odetta, who on "Waltzing Me All The Way Home" unspools her majestic voice like a giant ribbon. On an album full of interesting collisions, it's a meeting-of-the-divas moment that makes it all worthwhile. >>>LISA GIDLEY

Out

September 5

File Under

Indie-kitsch cabaret

R.I.Y.L.

Magnetic Fields, Momus, Kurt Weill

BARENAKED LADIES

Maroon Reprise

Can one staggeringly romantic pop song compensate for a thrillingly bad one? That's the question listeners on the fence about Canadian superstars Barenaked Ladies will have to ask themselves after listening to the quintet's follow-up to 1998's multi-platinum *Stunt*. The comparison couldn't be balder: "Go Home," a perfect pop moment at under three minutes, uses open, airy strumming to propel romantic advice to a friend, with the kind of breathless sweep that should make radio programmers swoon. What a shame that this wonderful and simple Lovin' Spoonful-style confection is all but overshadowed by pop's dark side: the band's ill-advised and unwieldy resurrection of '70s-style death rock in the form of the lugubrious waltz "Tonight Is The Night I Fell Asleep At The Wheel," which bludgeons the disc to a close. True, the light, acoustic hidden track—appropriately called "Hidden Sun"—does something to redeem these Brian Wilson wannabes. And the self-congratulatory humor of *Stunt* has largely been abandoned here, replaced by a sometimes ponderous political conscience ("Helicopters") that nonetheless allows the band's earnest and occasionally lyrical soul to shine through. But if these Ladies really want to be the Beach Boys, they should let a little more sun shine in. >>>CLEA SIMON

Out

September 12

File Under

Earnest acoustic pop-radio superstars

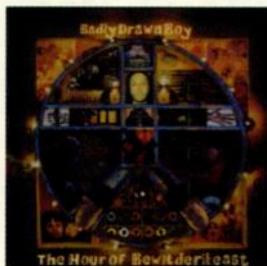
R.I.Y.L.

Dave Matthews Band, late Beach Boys, Lovin' Spoonful

BADLY DRAWN BOY

The Hour of Bewilderbeast Twisted Nerve-XL

Manchester's Damon Gough, a.k.a. Badly Drawn Boy, is such a darling in his homeland that at press time *Bewilderbeast* was a nominee for the Mercury Music Prize, the UK's Grammy. But the versatile Manchester-based songwriter and multi-instrumentalist can't seem to make up his mind. From the opening sweeps of cello and acoustic guitar, it's clear that Gough could attract Belle & Sebastian patrons: His six or so acoustic songs, each with its own run-down castle-in-air, are certainly the best of these 18 tracks. And although most of the other dozen tracks are good, the sheer stylistic span of these disheveled, lonely, semi-rock tunes becomes the album's most prominent feature. The triplet-driven "Stone On The Water" offers Iberian-sounding guitar work, which gives way to the trundling rocker "Another Pearl," which any listener could mistake for Pavement; "Disillusion," a surprisingly authentic Bee Gees-esque soft-disco number whose vapid words can't quash the charm of its bouncy riffs, clashes with a bloopy synth interlude (Gough loves interludes) and a wah-wah driven, California-type '70s AM-radio tune. Gough's smoky, limited, shrug-and-sigh voice (think Elliott Smith) seems more at home in his slacker-rock songs than in the ballads that represent his best writing. Pop kids tend to forgive vocal amateurism. What's harder to ignore is the sense that Gough doesn't always know what he wants to say, and doesn't always mean it when he does. >>>STEPHEN BURT



Out

October 3

File Under

Fold your hands, child, you walk like...a disco dancer?

R.I.Y.L.

Belle & Sebastian, Elliott Smith, Ben Folds Five

BRIGHT

Full Negative Or Breaks Ba Da Bing!

Bright is a two-man multi-instrumentalist team that has, over the span of several mostly home-recorded albums, become remarkably adept at making music that sounds as if it were being performed by an army of Thurston Moores, rather than a couple of guys named Mark Dwinell and Joe LaBrecque. The duo's fourth disc finds Bright returning to a real studio for the first time since their '96 self-titled debut, but still constructing their mostly instrumental songs from sometimes brooding ("Parable Of The Bicycle"), sometimes atom-splitting ("The Spire Will Be Your Landmark") improvisational jams. This extemporaneous approach works beautifully. It organically links the vastly disparate moods and textures with one another, making unlikely connections between, say, the heated, tempestuous bleat of free-form saxophone ("Full Negative") and the cool tidepools of reverb-y electric guitar ("Must I Be Furious?"). Perhaps more importantly, though, it fosters a thrilling sense of movement over wicked, wondrous sonic terrain. Like space-rockers Mogwai and Southpacific, Bright's instinct for drama and timing is what ultimately makes the material work so well. Dwinell's diamond-scarred guitar explorations limn the nether-regions of the band's material songs yet never drift aimlessly or too far from view, while drummer/bassist LaBrecque—necessary anchor that he is—nevertheless encourages his partner onward and outward. >>>JONATHAN PERRY



Out

September 12

File Under

Sonic youth

R.I.Y.L.

Mogwai, Southpacific, Flying Saucer Attack



DAN BRYK**Lovers Leap** Scratchie

Dan Bryk is a sumo champion of nerd pop, that strain of smartly composed, hook-laden, lyrically self-lacerating melodies whose singers make up in aching romanticism and craftsmanship what they lack in social grace or good looks. It's a genre that, if it had any self-esteem, could proudly trace its lineage back through Aimee Mann and Pavement, Elvis Costello and Marshall Crenshaw, all the way back to Brian Wilson, who turned sulking in his room into such a sublime musical experience that he spent half his life there. On *Lovers Leap*, pianist/singer Bryk blurts out his charmingly geeky preoccupations (fat girls, old computer games, fellow Canadian mope Leonard Cohen) while musically evoking the likes of Wilson, Randy Newman, Ben Folds, and, um, the Clash—catch the “London Calling” cop in the intro to “BBW (Chunky Girl).” Where Bryk shines is his combination of polished musicality—rich with candied moments of sha-la-la transcendence—and raw lyrical bitterness, whether at a childhood pal who molested him (in “Fingers”) or at a not-quite-ex-girlfriend (and by extension, himself and his current girl) in “She Doesn’t Mean A Thing To Me Tonight.” The universality of Bryk’s glorious awkwardness is proof that no one ever really makes it out of high school. >>>GARY SUSMAN



Out

October 10

File Under

Nerd pop

R.I.Y.L.

Jonathan Richman, Weezer,

Ben Folds Five

JOHNNY CASH**Solitary Man** Columbia

Johnny Cash's *Solitary Man*, the third album in his Rick Rubin-produced American Recordings series, closes with “Wayfaring Stranger.” It’s a traditional Irish folk tune by way of Appalachia in which a man contemplates his difficult life, finding great solace in the idea that heaven will be a better place. But to say that Cash, who has been in ill health in recent years, chose it for the that reason would be too simplistic—he’s stared into death’s gaping jaws throughout his life and career, and the songs on *Solitary Man* carry a host of remarkable revelations, not all of them of the mortal kind. Weightier than ever, his voice is buoyed by the fat wood tone of the acoustic guitar that guides these minimal piano, organ and fiddle arrangements. Like the first of the series, the album offers stripped-down originals (“Country Trash,” “Field of Diamonds”) alongside a handful of covers: Cash toughens up Neil Diamond’s “Solitary Man,” strips the bombast off U2’s “One,” adds even more chills to Nick Cave’s anti-death penalty tract, “Mercy Seat,” and countrifies Will Oldham’s gothic-folk number, “I See A Darkness.” Tom Petty (whose “I Won’t Back Down” opens *Solitary Man*), Sheryl Crow and June Carter Cash add token harmonies, and Merle Haggard sings on “I’m Leavin’ Now” with a voice as well-worn and welcome as his old friend’s. >>>MEREDITH OCHS



Out

October 17

File Under

American Legend

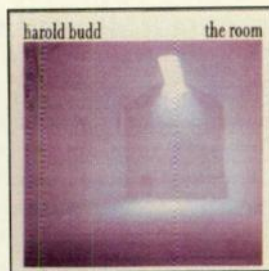
R.I.Y.L.

Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard,

Kris Kristofferson

HAROLD BUDD**The Room** Atlantic

If *The Room* seems remarkably vibrant for the work of a 70-year-old classical composer, bear in mind that Harold Budd’s credits include collaborations with Cocteau Twins and XTC’s Andy Partridge. The California native also helped lay the foundations of ambient on 1980’s landmark *The Plateaux Of Mirrors* with Brian Eno, but 20 years later, Budd’s compositions still hew closer to the minimalist styles of the ‘60s than contemporary electronic “chill-out” fare. On “The Room Of Ancillary Dreams,” a repeated three-note piano motif anchors silvery fillips and chords that float through progressions defused of traditional harmonic tension; the disquieting title track punctuates shimmering upper-register arpeggios with an ominous bass note. Though processed keyboards remain Budd’s preferred timbres, the most captivating tracks diversify his palette: the contemplative “Room Of Stairs,” crowned with chiming finger bells, “The Candied Room,” a vapor trail of phased vocals hovering over rolled chords. When Budd sticks to the ivories alone, the work skirts Windham Hill territory, although he sagely keeps the character of each cut distinct, from the somber “The Room Of Forgotten Children” to the pastoral “The Room Of Corners.” But ultimately, *The Room* is the product of a distinctive esthetic that, like a precious metal, seems delicate but proves surprisingly durable, and has only deepened in character over time. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY



Out

August 15

File Under

Music for exquisite navel-gazing

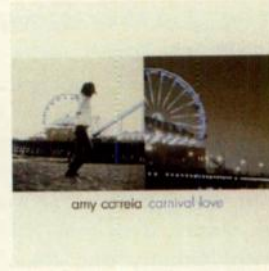
R.I.Y.L.

Brian Eno, Erik Satie,

Michael Brook, David Sylvian

AMY CORREIA**Carnival Love** Capitol

With a Rickie Lee Jones-style smoky voice and intimate story-songs that Victoria Williams would be proud of, newcomer Amy Correia has launched herself into the adult-pop market with panache. Although she can evoke Tom Waits, all vocal dips and drunken swoops on the eerie “Angels Collide,” the young surprise of the Girls’ Room tour clearly has control over her impressive stylings. Those same mannerisms reined in, as on “Starfishin’,” bring the balladry back to a sophisticated blues, while on the playful “Daydream Car” her touch of twang gets to roam from Southern rock to Correia’s own version of rap. Rarely is that restraint overdone (as on “Chinatown”), forcing the idiosyncratic singer from small-town Massachusetts into too many straight notes, ones which other singers can hold better and longer. And arguably, a little more control may be needed on the waltzing title track, lest Correia succumb to carnival excess of her own. For most of this picaresque debut, however, the bad girl goes just as far as necessary. Suitably—which is to say lightly—backed throughout by her own mandolin and baritone ukelele, along with shimmering cymbal washes and light piano comping, Correia has the courage to let her raw rural mysticism take center stage. >>>CLEA SIMON



Out

September 12

File Under

Country-style chanteusery

R.I.Y.L.

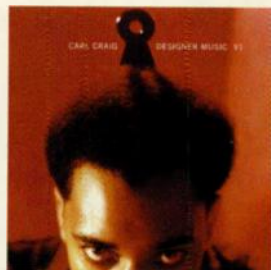
Victoria Williams, Madeleine

Peyroux, Rickie Lee Jones

CARL CRAIG

Designer Music: The Remixes Volume One
Planet E

The history of Detroit techno is rich with tales of DJs who were fond of attaching lofty futuristic concepts to their music. But Carl Craig's allusion to haute couture with *Designer Music* would border on self-indulgent pretension if not for the fact that he's most likely just engaging in a little self-mockery. After all, the going rate for his original "Designer Music" 12-inch is fetching close to what it costs for a pair of Prada shoes. This CD collection may not be the original item, but it's evidence of Craig's consistently strong musical output. He has the Midas touch as a remixer, and minus the pedestrian walk-throughs of UFO's "Planet Plan" and Telex's "Moskow Diskow," he's in top form here. The spacey Latin jazz reworking of Johnny Blas's "Picadillo" shows some of the same versatility he exhibited on last year's Innerzone Orchestra album, while his remix of Incognito's "Out Of The Storm" soars with jazz-soaked keyboards. But it's the older dancefloor mixes that stand the tallest: The whistle-like motif of BT's "Moment Of Truth" and the sharp string swells of Ron Trent's "Altered States" still sound as classy as ever. This stuff never goes out of style. >>>KURI KONDRAK

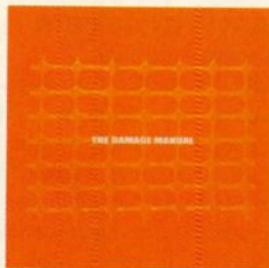


Out
August 29
File Under
Techno haute couture
R.I.Y.L.
Derrick May,
Global Communication,
Spacetime Continuum

THE DAMAGE MANUAL

The Damage Manual Invisible

At first glance, the members of the Damage Manual seem a little like David Bowie circa 1995: old folks taking one last spin around industrial rock. More so than Bowie, however, they've all earned their fare—Chris Connelly with Ministry and Revolting Cocks, Geordie Walker with Killing Joke, Jah Wobble with Public Image Ltd. and Martin Atkins with Pigface and Invisible Records (and PiL back in the day). So they're crusty and past 40—who cares? Their first full-length packs more punch than anything the four of them (or the rest of the genre, for that matter) have put out in years. The most notable songs take the best parts of their respective pasts and use them to create a powerful hybrid. "Age Of Urges" combines a RevCo-style stomp with Connelly's disquieting three-part harmonies and Walker's slashing guitar; Wobble's fuzzed-out bass drives the punk-via-drum 'n' bass assault of "Top Ten Severed"; and Atkins's monster drumming almost turns "Sunset Gun" into a stainless-steel cover of Led Zeppelin's "When The Levee Breaks." At 13 songs and 69 minutes, the album occasionally smacks of excess, but on the whole it's a refreshing portrait of four vets who are more on top of their game than they have been in years. >>>TOM MALLON

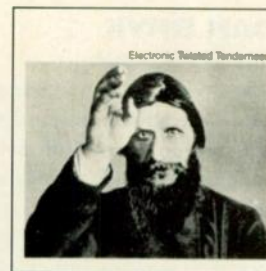


Out
September 5
File Under
Return of the (industrial) rock
R.I.Y.L.
Revolting Cocks, Bowie's
Earthling, the Jesus Lizard

ELECTRONIC

Twisted Tenderness Koch

Back in the '80s, Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr and New Order singer Bernard Sumner each had a signature style that helped define the very notion of an "alternative" rock. But with the alternative '90s came much lower profiles for both artists—Marr with his band the Healers, and Sumner with a much less active New Order and the occasional Chemical Brothers cameo. The two have also worked together from time to time as Electronic, a collaboration which has now yielded three full-lengths in a little more than a decade. All of which raises the question of whether Electronic is the side project or vice versa. Either way, *Twisted Tenderness* suggests that Electronic is both artists' way of tapping into their new wave roots without losing touch with the present. The disc finds this pair of self-admitted perfectionists sounding both futuristic and dated. Hyperdriven breakbeats and odd computer burbles take Electronic in the direction of the Chemical Brothers, while heavy doses of reverb, cold synth melodies, and Sumner's trademark artless vocals steer the songs back onto familiar New Order terrain. Indeed, the disc's strongest moments—solidly melodic tracks like "Vivid" and "Late At Night"—come when Marr and Sumner balance their techno toy-skills with the kind of memorable guitar-based hooks on which they initially hung their reputations. >>>ROB O'CONNOR

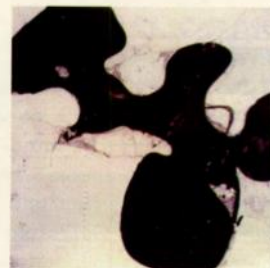


Out
September 12
File Under
New new wave
R.I.Y.L.
New Order, Stone Roses,
the Smiths

ELEVENTH DREAM DAY

Stalled Parade Thrill Jockey

Stalled Parade should only bolster Eleventh Dream Day's status as one of America's great unsung guitar bands. Here the Chicago group's core—guitarist Rick Rizzo and drummer Janet Beveridge Bean—continue to mine the moodier pop veins they've made their musical home since around the time they were dumped by Atlantic in 1995. Tempos are generally slow and deliberate, guitar solos are deployed sparingly, and a sense of foreboding hangs over just about every song. Rizzo and Bean continue to make greater use of their boy/girl vocal harmonies, and Bean finally brings some of the acoustic-based Americana of her other band, Freakwater, into the Eleventh Dream Day mix—"Valrico74" features a touchingly twang-tinged vocal and stripped-down arrangement. None of which keeps the duo from cutting loose from time to time: "In The Style Of..." is Rizzo's chance to embark on a long and winding guitar solo against a stormy backdrop which suggests the song's title might as well have been "In The Style Of Neil Young." Young's influence is also apparent in the title track, which makes good use of a groove reminiscent of "Cortez The Killer," and in "Ice Storm," which borrows its closing riff from "This Note's For You." >>>BRETT MILANO



Out
September 5
File Under
Young and restless
R.I.Y.L.
Freakwater, Built To Spill, X



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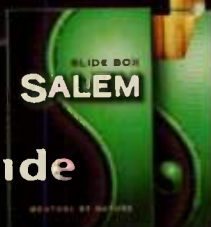
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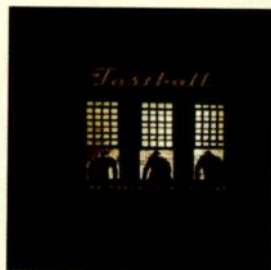
Step Inside



FASTBALL

The Harsh Light Of Day Hollywood

In 1998, Fastball reared back and delivered one of 1998's most perfect No. 1 hits, "The Way," a single with a celebratory gait and an unusually wordy chorus that fans learned to sing along with despite its lack of a karaoke-friendly kicker. It was the type of achievement that's tough to top, and the trio wisely avoids trying on its follow-up. *The Harsh Light Of Day* will surely produce singles, starting with the barroom ramblar "You're An Ocean," which features famed hired gun Billy Preston on piano. But Fastball's third album widens the scope to keep all 12 tracks in the picture. Songwriters Miles Zuniga and Tony Scalzo sound less concerned with roundhouse hooks than with expertly crafted pop tunes, complete with lush orchestral backdrops and passing moments of whimsy. Thoughtfully constructed melodies, strummed and picked pristinely on guitar, lend a breeziness to ditties like the laid-back "Vampires" and the harmony-driven "Dark Street." In the Scalzo effort, "Love Is Expensive And Free," Jose Hernandez and his orchestra provide a flourish of strings and Latin horns while Brian Setzer contributes a restrained, tasteful guitar solo. In its more rambunctious moments, as on the rollicking "Morning Star," Fastball strains for an urgency that sounds misplaced, especially in the not-so-harsh light of this fine album's pleasant sway. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



Out

September 19

File Under

Album-oriented rock revisited

R.I.Y.L.

The Goo Goo Dolls, Foo Fighters, Paul McCartney & Wings, David Garza

FUEL

Something Like Human Epic

Fuel's 1998 hit, "Shimmer," was a Goo Goo-sounding summer patio-bar chug-along that was—by design—almost impossible to distinguish from any other boy-rock song on the radio. On their second disc, the Pennsylvania band continues to follow the lead of its rust-belt neighbors, breaking out the acoustic guitars and Vedder-fixated moans on the ballads and toughening up on the riff-rockers. The pop stuff is about as bland as it gets—going from "Shimmer" to "Hemorrhage (In My Hands)" is an ugly enough move based on the titles, even worse when it turns out the new single isn't much catchier than the old one. Fortunately, the band's rock instincts are sounder. On tracks like "Last Time" and "Prove," the group settles into a thick, surprisingly bloozy groove that's tighter than most of the grunge it draws from. Singer Brett Scallions doesn't have much to say, but he says it with conviction anyway, practically spitting out the words "You shut me down!" at the end of "Down." Fuel might not make as much of a dent in the singles-driven field of nouveau-grunge this time around, but—during its hard rock moments at least—the band sounds like it's having more fun than most of the competition. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON



Out

September 19

File Under

Metal-edged modern rock

R.I.Y.L.

Third Eye Blind, Creed, Stone Temple Pilots

NELLY FURTADO

Whoa, Nelly! DreamWorks

Twenty-one-year-old Nelly Furtado seems like just another alarmingly earnest folkie: She did the second stage at Lilith Fair, she plays the ukelele and she's Canadian. But her major label debut is a funky, off-center enterprise that occupies a strange space between rock, pop and hip-hop-inflected folk. The result sounds fresh without being exactly original. Furtado certainly isn't the only one melding hip-hop with folk-rock these days, and at times she seems like a lower-key, less beat-happy version of Elwood. What's more, Furtado's vocal resemblance to Ani DiFranco is unmistakable; she has DiFranco's borderline affected way of almost scat-singing, and like DiFranco, she never met a metaphor she didn't like. But Furtado is more than the sum of her warring influences, and much of *Whoa, Nelly!* is quite fine, packed with winsome, sturdily constructed love songs and unobtrusive beats executed with almost surgical precision. Strings (sampled and otherwise) abound, and the production has a distinctly NPR-ish world-music feel (thanks in no small part to the fact that Furtado is part Portuguese, and has been known to sing in Hindi). Nevertheless, *Whoa, Nelly!* comes together in the end as a cohesive, assured major-label debut, rather than just a forum for a bunch of whistles and tricks. >>>ALLISON STEWART



Out

October 24

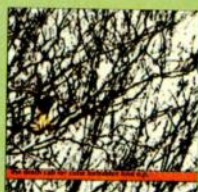
File Under

Beat-savvy folk

R.I.Y.L.

Ani DiFranco, Michal, Luscious Jackson, Beth Orton

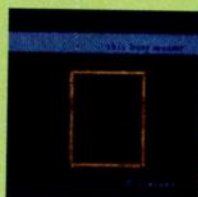
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LAURENT GARNIER

Unreasonable Behaviour v2

Garnier is recognized as both the forefather of French dance music and as one of techno's best DJs—notably setting Manchester's legendary Hacienda club alight with trademark six-hour sets—but his own productions have rarely fired up dancefloors in equal measure. His first two longplayers, *Shot In The Dark* and *30*, were disjointed affairs, sounding like collections of tracks rather than bona fide albums. This time, with the assistance of "sound colorist" Laurent Collat, Garnier has fashioned a much more cohesive effort. *Unreasonable Behaviour* is an album that smoothly connects the dots between techno, house and more angular electronica, rather than flipping erratically between styles. Tracks like "City Sphere" and "Greed" provide obtuse break-bleeps, yet nestle comfortably next to more obvious floor-fillers like "The Sound Of The Big Babou" and "Dangerous Drive." On "The Man With The Red Face," moody synths mushroom into a chugging techno sweatdown, underpinning a hallucinatory nine-minute sax solo. And on "Last Tribute From The 20th Century," Garnier spells out his appreciation for electronica's roots. A delicate female voice pays respect to New York, Detroit and Chicago over a house shuffle so deep you'd think it was fashioned in Atlantis. *Loin de comportement déraisonnable.* >>>KIERAN WYATT



Out
October 17
File Under
Braindance techno
R.I.Y.L.
Daft Punk, Plastikman,
Swayzak

THE GO-BETWEENS

The Friends Of Rachel Worth Jetsat

Down Under Quiz: What was the best Australian album of the early '80s? If your answer included the words Men At Work, please turn off your television and head out in search of the Go-Betweens' *Spring Hill Fair*—or any of the six albums that this practically unknown band released during that fallow decade. Fed up with trying to hip the world to 'em, the Go-Betweens' principal songwriters Robert Forster and Grant McLennan launched productive but still not attention-gaining solo careers, despite crafting some of the most sparkling pop tunes of the '90s. The two remained friends, and last year rekindled their old band's spark during an acoustic tour of the US, which attracted audiences filled with appreciative fans. The members of Sleater-Kinney attended one show, and soon agreed to help round out the duo on a new Go-Betweens' record, even shuttling the Aussies to a Portland, Oregon recording studio. The extra cast—S-K's Janet Weiss on drums, her Quasi-mate Sam Coomes on keyboards—quickly fades into the backdrop as Forster and McLennan's coloristic wordplay and refined melodies take over. Songs like "Magic In Here" and "Heart And Home" sway and rock like an abandoned hammock in the breeze, peaceful and somehow timeless. The assertive, kind of jaunty single "Going Blind" ranks with "Cattle And Cane" and other early favorites, an amazing feat for a band that skipped an entire decade. This ain't no reunion; it's simply another stop on a long trip. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



Out
September 19
File Under
Few and far Between
R.I.Y.L.
The Kinks, Red House
Painters, the Field Mice

THE COMP PILE (Our guide to compilation CDs) BY NICOLE KEIPER AND TOM MALLON

					
TITLE	Latin Travels (Six Degrees)	Monsters Of Rap (Razor & Tie)	Gems Of Italian Cinema (Amsterdamm)	New Beats From The Delta (Fat Possum)	Blitzkrieg Over You! (Nasty Vinyl)
CONCEPT	Brazilian and Afro-Cuban grooves meet with beats	As-seen-on-TV mix of sweet ol'-school hip-hop classics	Soundtrack music from six Italian films from the '60s and '70s	Underground hip-hop gangstas tackle the blues	Sweaty, mostly German folks pay tribute to everyone's favorite mooks, the Ramones
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	Latin lovers and beat junkies	Anyone who knows the answer to, "Does your girlfriend got the butt?"	Eh paesano, can't you read the title?	Those waiting for hip-hop's answer to Moby's <i>Play</i>	Crusty punks and crustier Germans
NAMES TO DROP	Jazzanova, Afro-Mystic, St. Germain	Sir Mix-A-Lot, Run DMC, 3rd Bass, Tone Loc	Piero Umiliani, Gianni Ferrio, Piero Piccioni	Junior Kimbrough & Go-Gittas, T-Model Ford & Big Oomp	Motörhead, Die Toten Hosen, Die Ärzte
SUMS IT UP	"Viva La Revolution!" (Garry Hughes)	"Bust A Move" (Young MC)	"Le Legge Dei Gangsters (Gangster's Law)" (Piero Umiliani)	"Death Letter" (Johnny Farmer/Organized Noise)	"Judy Ist Ein Punk" (Schliessmuskel)
VERDICT	It's like Carnival with glowsticks!	This comp's real thick and juicy. Even white boys got ta shout!	Only Sophia Loren could make tunes about drug-running, gangsters and murder more bella.	Robert Johnson may have made a deal with the devil, but these dudes are just digging for dead presidents.	You gotta love "The KKK Took My Baby Away" recast as "Die Wikingjugend Hat Mein Mädchen Entführt."



GREEN DAY ★

Warning Reprise

Straight off of headlining the summer of 2000's Warped Tour, where they presided over mosh pits from coast to coast, destroyed dozens of drum sets and covered Operation Ivy tunes for kids who were still in diapers when that band was around, Green Day is back with the least "punk" punk album of their career. There appear to be more acoustic than electric guitars on *Warning*, and though his rather one-dimensional voice isn't quite crooner material, Billie Joe now seems to fancy himself a balladeer of sorts. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that the biggest hit off the last album was an acoustic ballad so suitable for prime-time playing that one of the nurses on *ER* sang it for a kid dying of cancer. Add to that some Dylan-style harmonica blowing and an accordion-laced romp that sounds like something a polka band might pull out at a wedding, and you've got a recipe for, well, some kind of disaster. And yet, Billie Joe somehow manages to use his guttersnipe charm and the band's inspired amateurism to hold it all together. In the end, it comes across like three guys having a good time together rather than just overreaching. It doesn't hurt that the first single, "Minority," is a pretty straightforward blast of the old punk pop, either. >>>MATT ASHARE



Out

October 3

File Under

Where do we go from here?

R.I.Y.L.

The Descendents, Blink-182,

Weezer

EMMYLOU HARRIS

Red Dirt Girl Nonesuch

Emmylou Harris has spent 30-plus years illuminating stories penned by dozens of songwriters, including the Louvin Brothers, Dolly Parton and Townes Van Zandt, with her expressive, multi-hued soprano. On her 31st album, she focuses on one underrated songwriter in particular: Emmylou Harris. Chock full of guest stars (Patty Griffin, Luscious Jackson's Jill Cuniff, Bruce Springsteen), *Red Dirt Girl* marks only the second time Harris has written the majority of the material for a full-length. Her lyrics are filled with evocative imagery and Biblical references, and her acute sense of dynamics, tone and color transfigures them like desert landscapes seen through the eyes of Georgia O'Keeffe. Themes of loss (most notably of Harris's father on "Bang The Drum Slowly") permeate these 12 tunes, yet the 53-year-old singer sounds empowered rather than bowed by the experiences. Malcolm Burn's atmospheric production picks up where 1995's *Wrecking Ball* left off, but as poignant readings of even the most straightforward songs reinforce, Harris doesn't need drum loops or synthesizer backdrops to sound distinctive. Occasionally, the studio trickery intrudes on Harris's natural charm—"J'ai Fait Tout" smacks of mid-'80s Stevie Nicks, while "My Antonia," a duet with Dave Matthews, suggests a movie soundtrack castoff. But these episodes are few and easily forgiven. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY



Out

September 12

File Under

Seasoned cowgirl gets the blues

R.I.Y.L.

Roseanne Cash, Luscious

Jackson, Sinéad O'Connor



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Reviews

HESHER

Self-Titled Debut Warner Bros.

Three songs into Hesh's *Self-Titled Debut*, main man Chip Love still hasn't proven he's got any more to offer than a retread of fashionable Everlast or Kid Rock sounds. There's a rote funk-punk opener ("Presto-Change-O") that's passable as a third-generation rip of Bad Brains (for whom Love once worked as "spliff coordinator"), an embarrassingly vanilla rap remake of the Who's "My Generation" (rewritten lyrics: "Why don'tcha all just...fuck off!") that even Everlast and Biz Markie cameos can't save, and a slice of trailer-trash rap-rock ("Crazy American Cheese Sandwiches").

But from there, Hesh changes speeds, tentatively at first with mellow *Whitey Ford*-ish sing-song ("Out My Window"), then more dramatically with Smash Mouth-lite guitar pop ("Anytime Of The Day"), then almost completely with hyper-Hanson breakbeat bubblegum ("Something's Always"). And before you know it, Hesh flips it again with NYC hardcore punk on "Lighter Thief." But just when you've got him pegged as a Beck-styled postmodernist who gets off on his own eclecticism, sincerity be damned, Love hits you with a closing trio of classic rock-type tunes, full of soaring bombast and utter earnestness. It's clear then that Love isn't so much a white-rap poseur or style-hopping savant—he's simply a music fan from Queens with more moods than focus. And ultimately, that's what gives *Self-Titled Debut* its slender measure of distinction and unlikely degree of success. >>>RONI SARIG



Out

September 19

File Under

Outer-borough genre-hopping

R.I.Y.L.

Everlast, Bad Brains, Kid Rock,
Beastie Boys

IDAHO

Hearts Of Palm Idaho

That Idaho's oddly serene, atmospheric sounds emanate from Los Angeles, the fast-paced home of road rage, makes the band somehow more discomfiting and more welcome at the same time. Idaho's Jeff Martin is a sadcore/slo-fi disciple, and his enveloping, personal and introspective soundscapes stand happily apart from the increasingly corporate faction of the music world where "attitude" and "image" signify as much, if not more, than the actual music. There's little attitude, if any, here to undercut the somber, meditative material Martin's developed around guitars, piano, strings and percussion. No pictures of the band (essentially Martin and guitarist Dan Seta for this effort, though Beck/R.E.M. sideman Joey Waronker plays drums on two tracks) hard at work or play adorn the disc—instead, we're provided just two black and white photographs that are as stark as the album's 11 songs, and a relief map of L.A. for listeners to get their bearings. The songs—"This Cloud We're On," "Happy Times" and "Alta Dena" among the best of them—and Martin's résumé (he scored a 1997 independent film, *How To Make The Cruellest Month*) speak for themselves: Like a sunrise in the desert, Idaho's music exists in its own cinematic, if unnerving, universe, waiting for an audience. >>>MARK WOODLIEF



Out

October 10

File Under

Arid downer indie pop

R.I.Y.L.

Low, Codeine, Smog

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KOOL KEITH

Matthew Funky Ass-Threshold

Kool Keith's new disc is devoted to dissing. The MC has been certified schizo on the mic since he emerged from the '80s crew Ultramagnetic MCs to finish out the century with eccentric on-wax personas like Dr. Octagon, Dr. Doom and Black Elvis. With *Matthew*, this master of the brutal put-down further extends the message of his fully extended middle finger. Within the first 40 seconds of album-opener "F-U M.F.," Keith has invited any rapper signed to Epic, Def Jam, Warner Bros, Loud, Columbia, Interscope, Sony 550 or DreamWorks to "suck the interior out of my dick." On "Baddest M.C.," Keith dials in your start-up: "Forget your Internet Web site/ That's no way to step right/ I ain't sittin' by a computer/ I'm goin' to Bermuda." The perpetual put-downs are occasionally leavened by another of Keith's favored tropes, the non sequitur sports-fantasy line. On "Extravagant Traveler" he imagines aloud that "Dallas Mavericks want me as a baldheaded 5'8" guard with a 95-inch vertical leap." Keith's homemade beats, turgid bass drones and single-finger synth lines aren't particularly fresh, but the pure functionality of his production doesn't distract from his vitriol, which is what this is all about. While *Matthew* is neither exciting nor uplifting, Kool Keith's definitely done a marvelous job of getting some stress off his chest. >>>PETER RELIC



Out

August 15

File Under

Anger-mismanagement hip-hop

R.I.Y.L.

Sensational, Eminem,

Dr. Octagon

SARA LEE

Make It Beautiful Righteous Babe

Sara Lee's been making records for more than 20 years, but never under her own name. She's about the closest thing alt-rock has to a star session bassist, with a discography that's gone from Robert Fripp's League Of Gentlemen to the Gang Of Four to the B-52's to her current main gig, playing with Ani DiFranco. Her bass style is cool, spare and non-obvious—she's of the less-is-more school, and sticks to the very low end (few bassists should be permitted a fifth string, but she's earned hers). And she's got a lot of musician pals who turn up on *Make It Beautiful*: Its lyricists include DiFranco, Pal Shazar (of new-wave obscurities Slow Children), and the Indigo Girls' Emily Saliers, composer Peter Scherer produced it, and James Brown's '60s band-leader Pee Wee Ellis even did a horn arrangement. It's not terribly clear, though, why this subdued, humble album exists, other than to give Lee her props. Most of the lyrics are by other people, the music (mostly co-written) is not particularly distinctive adult-alternative, and though Lee's voice is alright, it's thin and characterless, and she spends too much of the album struggling for notes. The only real virtue of the album is its basslines, which are sturdy and supple as ever, but they'd sound even better with one of Lee's collaborators in control. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



Out

September 12

File Under

Give the bassist some

R.I.Y.L.

Aimee Mann, Wendy & Lisa,

Ani DiFranco

doves lost souls



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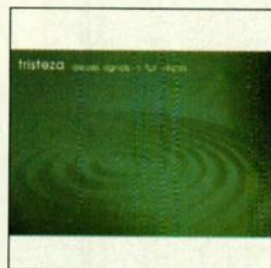
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TRISTEZA

Dream Signals In Full Circles Tiger Style

HIM

Our Point Of Departure Perishable



Out
August 29
File Under
Shifty drifty instrumental post-rock
R.I.Y.L.

Durutti Column, Dif Juz,
Cocteau Twins,



Out
August 29
File Under
The new fusion
R.I.Y.L.

'70's Miles Davis, Euphone,
Isotope 217

Presumably, bands that don't feature lyrics or vocals choose (or fall into) their approaches for as many reasons as bands that do. After all, does the verbiage of the Fall's Mark E. Smith serve the same end as, say, Jewel's? That said, instrumentalism is the specter haunting the underground. From the politically driven overload of Godspeed You Black Emperor! to the high-tech dislocations of Oval, the last several years have found otherwise very different musicians insisting (mutely) that words get in the way. Ironically, Tristeza does have a way with a phrase: The name of their second full-length, *Dream Signals In Full Circles*, pins down their sound better than anything I could come up with, and one song is pithier yet: "Shifty Drifty." A typical Tristeza track involves a down-shifted take on emo's rhythmic lopsidedness, beds of washy, behind-the-beat keyboards, and Christopher Sprague's arpeggiated, effect-drenched guitar melodies. It's all adeptly played, but the point is less individual virtuosity than collective compositional panache. *Dream Circles* cautiously broadens

Tristeza's sonic palette with violin and tricky mixing (courtesy of producer David Trumfio) but the band's shortcoming remains a lack of variety. "I Am A Cheetah" is bubblier than usual, and "Are We People" dronier, but Sprague over-relies on a single, bell-like tone, as if single-handedly trying to resurrect Vini Reilly and the Cocteau Twins' Robin Guthrie as guitar heroes. It's also worth noting that the members have passed through San Diego's art-damaged hardcore scene, playing in Gogogo Airheart, Swing Kids and The Locust. With this pedigree, Tristeza's wordlessness reads as a retreat, or a defeat: ex-punks reluctantly realizing that screaming won't save their lives, or the world.

Where Tristeza emphasizes tight arrangements, Chicago-based HiM leans toward a more improv-friendly style. (Both bands show an affinity for dub-inflected basslines.) *Our Point Of Departure* practically dares you to call it monotonous: All six lengthy tracks are built from studio jams by drummer Doug Scharin and bassist Fred Erskine (both of June Of 44), each in precisely the same tempo. This self-imposed limitation sounds dreadful on paper, but in practice, it's a test of resourcefulness that the other players pass with flying colors. Saxophonist Carlo Cennamo and Erskine (doubling on trumpet) riff joyously on "Liberation Part I/Part II," and the unapologetic jazz phrasing of their solos humanize Scharin's and Royal Trux percussionist Jon Theodore's dense grooves. Despite a few uncomfortably drum-circlish moments, this take on electric-era Miles Davis is less indulgent than many recent similar efforts. (The comparison isn't idle: Beyond the live/studio dynamic, guitarist Sean Meadows is fond of McLaughlin-esque wah-wah.) Minor misstep: Cennamo's awkward, I-love-these-guys liner notes, which offer a good argument for letting his sax do the talking—though his playing itself is an even better one. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO

THE MAYFLIES USA

The Pitty List Yep Roc

On last year's solid and sunny *Summertown*, the Mayflies USA pulled off a successful revival of great '60s-style guitar pop. And on the equally tuneful *The Pitty List*, they leave the '60s behind to tackle the next two decades, the '70s and the '80s. Hooks and harmonies are still high on this band's to-do list, but this time the Mayflies beg comparisons to Big Star and the dB's instead of the Byrds and the Beau Brummels. As the disc's title suggests, the songs are on the moodier side—"I Was The One" is a gorgeous breakup ballad and lost love is a recurring theme. They're also more textured and infused with more of a laid-back Southern feel. It doesn't hurt that a pair of pop heroes—one-time R.E.M. producer Mitch Easter and ex-dB Chris Stamey—collaborate on the production (and on the acoustic-then-electric "Florida To The Radio," Easter proves he hasn't forgotten how to make those shimmering guitar sounds he got on R.E.M.'s *Murmur*). But even if the Mayflies' approach isn't entirely unique—"Getting To The End Of You" is one of the best Matthew Sweet songs Matthew Sweet never wrote, and "Sold On You" could be a lost Velvet Crush track—the delivery is earnest and heartfelt enough to put each song across. >>>BRETT MILANO



Out
September 29
File Under
Moody retro power pop
R.I.Y.L.

Matthew Sweet, Velvet Crush,
Big Star.

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE BAND

Sci-Fi Verve

Christian McBride's fourth and most accomplished work as a bandleader might be Exhibit A in the continuing rehabilitation of fusion: The jazz über-bassist, whose awesome chops, sensitive taste and solid timekeeping have lived more than 100 recordings, and who was once christened a young lion in the Wynton Marsalis mold, is found here digging deep into acoustic-electric textures. McBride, heard throwing a stone-soul party on 1998's *A Family Affair*, again nods to his early listening habits. He salutes the late Jaco Pastorius with a speedy, grooving take on Latin-edged Weather Report favorite "Havona," played on acoustic, and the Police with their hit "Walking On The Moon," colored by McBride's plucked-harmonic melody and James Carter's bass clarinet ministrations. Stanley Clarke is toasted with the bowed-bass declarations and open spaces of "Butterfly Dreams"; Steely Dan's "Aja" is artfully rearranged and given a lift by David Gilmore's fierce guitar blitz; and Herbie Hancock gets props with the exotic jazz funk of "Via Mwandishi." The pianist himself joins the proceedings for the free-minded "Xerxes," and "Lullaby For A Ladybug," a melancholy, wordless ballad sensitively sung by Dianne Reeves. Sci-Fi is less future shock than a time-tripping expedition to a subgenre—fusion—that never quite deserved its nasty reputation. >>>PHILIP BOOTH



Out
September 12
File Under
Modern acoustic-electric fusion
R.I.Y.L.

Zawinul Syndicate,
Headhunters, Victor Bailey

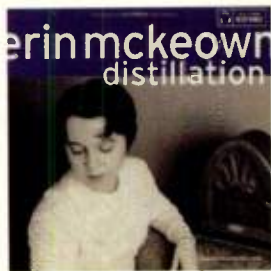


ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD • R.I.Y.L. - RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

ERIN MCKEOWN

Distillation TVP

Erin McKeown may be a young woman whose debut CD offers a beguiling mix of crisp vocals and colorful lyrics set in a bed of soft string instruments and folk-rock accompaniment. But the results are quite a bit quirkier, edgier and out of the ordinary than all that would suggest. For starters, there's a distinctly impolite tone to McKeown's personal poetry and her songs incorporate more than just your average folk strumming and picking, including the blues and what can only be described as something akin to cowboy music. Just 22 years old, the Virginian's soft-focus tunes touch on erotica, fame and friendships. Some of the tracks are sleepwalk-y and nearly ambient, but elsewhere, McKeown is starkly funky and soulful. Her lyrics are fragmented bits of imagery scattered about like the shards of a colorful pottery vase exploding upon impact with the floor. While this leads to plenty of good moments—"you in your half-shirt and lies, me with the half-lit eyes"—her best tunes have a more cohesive and humorous bent, like "The Little Cowboy," with its cocaine and roses, or "Fast As I Can," where McKeown playfully unwraps the layers of meaning on familiar phrases. >>>BILL KISLIUK



Out

October 10

File Under

Folk with attitude

R.I.Y.L.

Dar Williams, Jewel,

Sonya Hunter

MEDESKI MARTIN & WOOD

The Dropper Blue Note

Medeski Martin & Wood's second album of 2000 couldn't be more different from the first. *Tonic*, released in April, was a live collection that reaffirmed MMW's jazz piano trio status. Their new studio recording, *The Dropper*, flips the script with woofer-blowing, frequency-phreaking punk jazz that's more trashy rawk and roar than boho shuffle and jive. With an established fanbase of both jam-band heads and downtown jazz types, MMW can afford to take chances—and they do, eschewing the crowd-pleasing funk and ear-catching hooks that have been past staples. Instead, they stock *The Dropper* with pleasantly challenging surprises like the trashcan trip-hop of "Norah 6," and the spooky soundsculpting experiments of "Illinization." Hip-hop/electronica producer Scotty Hard (Wu-Tang Clan, Gravediggaz) contributes dubby textures and a grubby lo-fi sound quality, but it's John Medeski who leads the way into the out-there. Setting aside his virtuoso chops, he indulges his keyboard stompbox fetish, raising hell and brimstone with effects-laden doses of analog pulse and caustic feedback. Drummer Billy Martin and bassist Chris Wood defy expectations of their own, laying down grooves that are all twitchy stutter and drunken stumble in what amounts to a concerted effort to replace melody with mood, and hip-shake with head-spin. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN



Out

October 24

File Under

Into the out there

R.I.Y.L.

Coldcut, Scotty Hard,

Miles Davis's Bitches Brew

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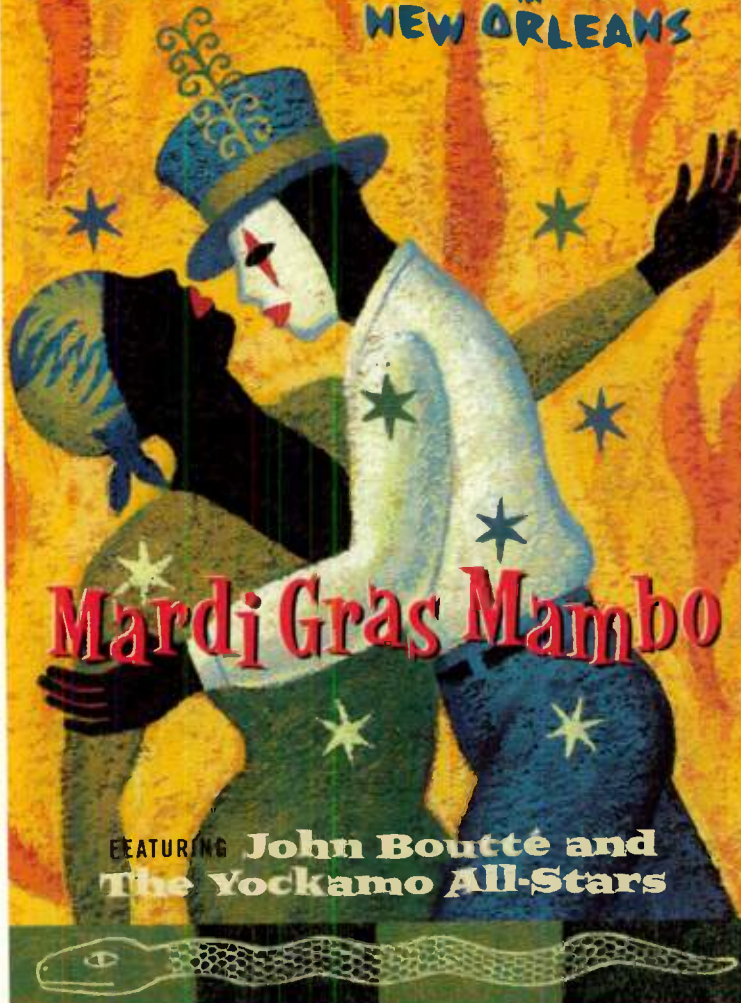
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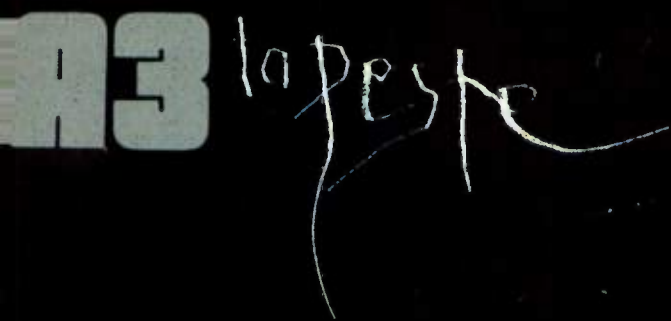
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Reviews

MOCEAN WORKER

Aural & Hearty Palm

Back in the day, before the Clinton era (the George Clinton era, that is), "funk" meant the hard, hard bop and soul-inflected jazz practiced by the disciples of Mingus and Miles. And thanks to the digital revolution, in our time, slabs of this old-school cool have been duly sampled by dozens and dozens of acid-jazz and techno DJs. Twenty-eight-year-old Adam Dorn has a foot in both realms—on the one hand he's a jazz bassist and A&R guy for 32 Jazz, the jazz reissue label he runs with his dad, veteran producer Joel Dorn, and on the other, he's the sample-happy auteur known as Mocean Worker, a DJ/composer/producer who's raided the Dorn catalog and dressed up some vintage grooves in gaudy new strobe-lit attire. The swing influence is less explicit on Mocean Worker's third release than on his previous discs. The densely layered tracks here reveal a composer who has an encyclopedic knowledge of both jazz and the many sub-sub-genres electronica has fragmented into, but who finds the boundaries that separate them entirely irrelevant. If you don't spot the esoteric allusions and jokes (from the punning CD title to the spoofy "Tres Tres Chic" and "Cha Cha Cha" to the unrecognizable vocal cameo by Bono on "Air Suspension"), Dorn won't mind. He just wants you to enjoy this DJ-mix-style CD as the party it's meant to be. >>>GARY SUSMAN



Out

October 10

File Under

Jazz-inflected techno

R.I.Y.L.

Coldcut, DJ Shadow, Herbaliser

MORPHINE

Bootleg: Detroit Rykodisc

When it came to giving concert-goers their money's worth, late Morphine frontman Mark Sandman was more determined than most. His trio, for example, was one of the few acts that dared to perform in Los Angeles during the aftershocks of the 1994 earthquake. And it was fitting, in a way, that his fatal heart attack occurred while he was on stage, during a performance in July, 1999 at a festival in Italy. Those who never saw Morphine live may have wondered what all the fuss was about—how hard could a guitarless band that consisted of just two-string bass (Sandman), baritone sax (Dana Colley), and drums (Billy Conway) really rock? Pretty damn hard, actually, as is clear from *Bootleg: Detroit*. Recorded at a 1994 gig in the Motor City and mixed and edited under Sandman's supervision shortly before his death, the album captures a fiery performance from their star-making *Cure For Pain* tour, when touring, not radio play, was what earned the group such favorable notice. Here, they boil over on "Thursday," "Buena" and other too-cool film-noir Sandman tales of temptation, lust and vice. None of this matches being there in person to see Sandman oozing his honeyed growl into his taxi-dispatcher's microphone or Colley making like Rahsaan Roland Kirk and blowing two saxes at once, but, alas, it will have to do. >>>GARY SUSMAN



Out

September 26

File Under

Low-rock live

R.I.Y.L.

Medeski Martin & Wood, Tom Waits, Treat Her Right

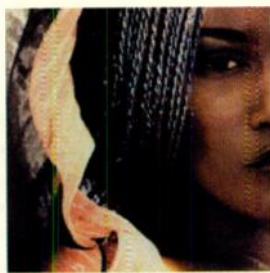


ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD • R.I.Y.L. - RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

KHADJA NIN

Ya Ark 21

Another African diva takes the stage on Ya. Raised in Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire, Khadja Nin sings in African languages and addresses African themes, but beyond that, her music has few root-sy elements. More like Benin's pop diva Angelique Kidjo than like Nin's girlhood hero Miriam Makeba, Nin aims to make music palatable to mainstream international tastes. So we get folky, cycling acoustic guitars, keyboard washes, swelling vocal crescendos, torch songs and easy, familiar rhythms. Nin's remake of Pierre Akendengue's "Afrika Obota" appeals with breezy Afro-swing, but that's about as deep as she goes. Nin does have a beautiful, lustrous voice—worthy of comparison to Kidjo and Makeba—and some of her melodies are quite affecting, as in her tribute to Nelson Mandela, "Mzee Mandela." Though it would be limiting to say that African singers should only be creating African music, Nin's music would benefit overall from a stronger embrace of Africa's musical richness and perhaps some more adventurous production. Kidjo has forged her own sound with unmistakable grit and personality, which Nin has yet to, though she does fare better when she rocks a little as on "Damu Ya Salaam," and the rousing "Shadow Man." >>>BANNING EYRE



Out
October 10
File Under
African divas
R.I.Y.L.
Angelique Kidjo, Neneh Cherry,
Yousou N'Dour

ORGY

Vapor Transmission Elementree-Reprise

Two years ago, Orgy had a hit with an icy cover of New Order's "Blue Monday" that pretty much cleared the docks for the wave of cyberpunk chic *The Matrix* ushered in not long afterward. On the group's second disc, singer Jay Gordon and his crew of heavily made-up pretties bring to the table a trashy, androgynous sex appeal that outdoes Trent Reznor, let alone Keanu Reeves. Ladies and gentlemen alike lust after the "human god" Gordon sings about in "Suckerface"; the teenage loser in "The Odyssey" ditched high school "to get away from the pom-pom boys and the jock strap girls." Orgy's grooves are less lascivious than their lyrics—the band could stand to tone down the fuzz-guitar and bring the more synthetic trappings of its industrial din (chain-metal clinks, beeping synth lines) closer to the forefront. Gordon still sounds like his label head, Korn's Jonathan Davis, with a bad British accent, but the band has taken its first step toward originality by abandoning cover tunes this time around. And with the glam chorus of "Fiction (Dreams In Digital)," the hottest hook on the album, the guys finally manage to sound as good as they look. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON



Out
October 10
File Under
Pervy techno-punk
R.I.Y.L.
Nine Inch Nails, Korn,
Depeche Mode

plastilina mosh juan manuel

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Produced by
Chris Allison (*The Beta Band*)
and keyboardist **Money Mark**
(who also plays on 4 tracks).



US version includes 3 bonus tracks
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recording session footage and
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IRMIN SCHMIDT

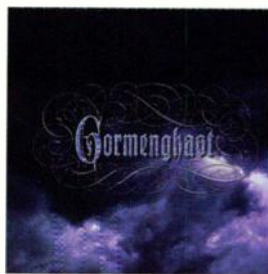
Gormenghast Spoon-Mute

OPERAZONE

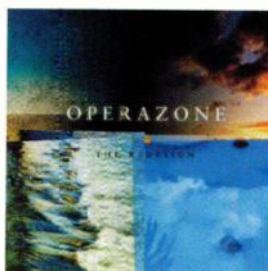
The Redesign Knitting Factory

If you're going to write an opera now, especially one that explicitly deals in pop idioms, you'd better be more than passingly familiar with both classical and pop composition. Few are better qualified than Irmin Schmidt, a former student of Karlheinz Stockhausen and Györgi Ligeti who's much better known as the keyboardist from Can, and a man who keeps his ears open. Adapted from a fantasy trilogy by Mervyn Peake, Schmidt's *Gormenghast* is probably the first full-scale opera whose score involves drum 'n' bass beats. (Special credit goes to librettist and longtime Can collaborator Duncan Fallowell, who gets the flavor of Peake's word-drunk, rococo prose down exactly.) There's a big difference between a lyric tenor and a rock tenor, and Schmidt writes for both specifically here; he's also figured out how to augment a symphonic orchestra with electronics and samples, including a few samples of his old bandmates, without making a big deal out of it—the computerized skid that introduces "Joy," for instance, sounds like a trick that 19th-century composers would have used if it'd been possible for them. Schmidt occasionally covers up for the frailness of his melodies with superfluous beat-jockeying, but the best of these pieces (especially "Be A Happy Carnivorel," sung by Florian Simson as Swelter, the meat-crazed kitchen-master of the castle) are convincing both as drama and as composition.

Of course, Schmidt's got the advantage in that he's starting from scratch. *Operazone*, a studio project dreamed up by producers Alan Douglas and Bill Laswell, attempts to drag operatic themes from Verdi, Puccini and others into the present day with the assistance of a couple of jazz soloists and some contempo-type beats, and ends up dragging them into the muck. Classical themes can be successfully adapted into contemporary idioms if you're willing to be overtly crass (like Malcolm McLaren's Puccini-goes-house album *Fans*) or come up with something genuinely new to do with them (like Uri Caine's adventurous jazz/Mahler projects). *Operazone*, though, is both prissy about its melodies and half-assedly disrespectful about their intended context. Laswell's "reconstructions" of Bob Marley and Miles Davis recordings have demonstrated his unwillingness to leave a good thing alone; his tasteful little pitty-pat beats add nothing but busyness to the string and horn arrangements. Graham Haynes at least negotiates his cornet solos with calm dignity—he seems to be recalling Miles Davis's take on *Porgy And Bess*—but Byard Lancaster's tenor sax leads are gruesomely cheesy. And *The Redesign* gives no indication that these pieces were ever supposed to carry any emotional content; there's nothing left of them but tunes. This is, in its way, as loathsome as any 101 Strings record—smoothed-out, slicked-up, feel-good-and-good-for-you classical music for hipsters who can't handle the real thing. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



Out
August 22
File Under
Rebooting opera
R.I.Y.L.
The weirder stuff on the
Rephlex label, John Harbison,
Michael Nyman

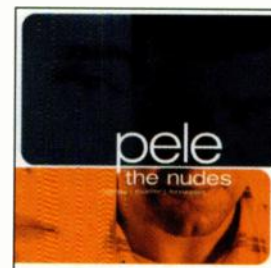


Out
August 22
File Under
Out-of-context opera
R.I.Y.L.
Material, We, Graham Haynes

PELE

The Nudes Polyvinyl

Pele are a Milwaukee-based trio whose tightly arranged, not-so-tightly executed instrumentals fall somewhere between a less agitprop-inclined Minutemen and a less math-rocky Joan Of Arc. The Nudes that make up its fourth album are too unsensual (and un-airbrushed) to count as centerfolds, and hardly serene enough to be the work of Impressionists: They're closest to Duchamp's nudes, the kind that jitter down jagged staircases. Seriously, the title presumably alludes to the unadorned recordings, with piano and vibes functioning as fig leaves on one song apiece. Drummer Jon Mueller often sidesteps the backbeat entirely, filling every otherwise unoccupied inch of "Nude Beach. Pinhole Camera" with hyperkinetic snare-play. (You wouldn't be surprised to find an "I'd Rather Be Playing Jazz" bumper sticker on his trap case.) Bassist Matt Tennesen is less showy, but equally adept, while guitarist Chris Rosenau, with his undistorted tone and odd chord choices, plays a modest (but audible) role. Unfortunately, at album length, the similarity of tempos and structures makes *The Nudes* tough going, with the spacious, acoustic-based "Total Hut" standing out even more than it's meant to. There's a great deal of skill (and a touch of the attendant machismo) here, but less sense of what it serves: A classic case of know-how outstripping know-why. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



Out
September 19
File Under
Jazz-damaged indie rock
R.I.Y.L.
June Of 44, Slovenly, Vermont

THE PRESIDENTS

Freaked Out And Small Musicblitz

It's so rare for pop artists to quit while they're ahead that it was almost shocking when Chris Ballew, the primary force behind the Seattle trio the Presidents Of The United States Of America, threw in the towel after just two albums. (The first of which—a self-titled 1995 CD—was a major platinum-coated modern-rock hit.) Sure, the second didn't perform quite as convincingly. But Columbia was still high enough on the band to throw together a singles/rarities comp, *Pure Frosting*, after their breakup. *Freaked Out And Small* finds the same hyperactive trio back in action, only on a smaller label and with a mercifully shortened name. The corny pop-metal edge of the trio's second album has been set aside in favor of a more '60s punk-pop sound, reinforced by liberal doses of Vox or Farfisa organ, and there's evidence of a growing sci-fi fixation (evident on "Jupiter" and the *Star Wars*-inspired "Death Star"). Ballew's uncanny pop instincts remain, and he and fellow guitarist/bassist/vocalist Dave Dederer find themselves practically stumbling over hooks and catchy melodies as they admire the chemical composition of "Jupiter," joke about playing "black music for white people" ("Jazz Guy"), and perhaps risk overstaying a welcome that should support at least one more hit. >>>MATT ASHARE



Out
September 12
File Under
Childlike power pop
R.I.Y.L.
Weezer, the Tubes,
Dead Milkmen



SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS

Bedlam Ballroom Mammoth

Swing revival leaders the Squirrel Nut Zippers have never been as easy to pin down as retro enthusiasts might think. Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Cab Calloway, Billie Holiday and early Duke Ellington all fed into the Zippers' hot-house hybrid, but so did less obvious influences like Stephen Foster and Charley Patton. More than any other swing or jump blues revivalists, the Zippers created an essentially imaginary musical landscape, the modern viper jazz offspring of "Minnie The Moocher." The new *Bedlam Ballroom* finds them nearly as eclectic as ever, but more generic too. The opening "Bed Bugs"—with its calypso rhythm and devilish lyrics—harks back to their first hit, "Hell." The instrumental "Missing Link" plays with Caribbean hand drums and fiddle. But otherwise, the band forgoes oddball instrumentation and song structure in favor of too much bar-band blues fare like "Do What" and "Stop Drop And Roll." Four out of the dozen tracks go to Holiday-crossed vocalist Katharine Whalen, but even her cha-cha "It All Depends" is so earnest and straight-faced it makes you wonder if the band is beginning to take to heart early criticism that they were campy poseurs. Too bad—truth is, they've been the real thing all along. >>>JON GARELICK



Out

October 17

File Under

Formerly hot

R.I.Y.L.

Bowl Of Fire, Armstrong's Hot
Five and Hot Seven

ST. GERMAIN

Tourist Blue Note

St. Germain's 1995 debut longplayer, *Boulevard*, was one of those electronica albums that cut across listening boundaries, seducing ears with a smooth mix of deep, jazz-infused house and moving a healthy 200,000 copies. The man behind the sound, the notoriously reclusive and press-shy Ludovic Navarre, had tapped into a collective yearning for a more "mature" groove, standing out in a dance scene then dominated by kitschy "handbag house." Then Navarre fell off the radar and has only recently resurfaced with his sophomore effort, *Tourist*. It extrapolates *Boulevard*'s sultry moods but adds splashes of hip-hop and break-beat science. *Rose Rouge*—already a hit with more left-field house DJs—kicks off with a jazzy-luscious drum shuffle before slowly building into a rumbling house groove. Tracks like "Latin Note" and "So Flute" follow similar blueprints, marrying a bossa nova shuffle and piano jam respectively to ice-cool house beats. Meanwhile, "Sure Thing" and "Land Of..." break the beats down to a trip-hop tempo, but still shoot them through with smokey, bluesy vibes. Like *Boulevard*, the album filters Navarre's influences into a seamless, organic whole—and the result is a record that will frazzle your feet as much as it will massage your mind. >>>KIERAN WYATT



Out

September 12

File Under

Jazzmatronic house

R.I.Y.L.

Rockers Hi Fi, Portishead, Air



Once again, with several intriguing collaborators (Amampondo, Alex Paterson, of Orb, and Stef Holweck), Ben Watkins takes Juno Reactor to the farthest extremes in electronic music. The new CD *Shango* and is a perfect blend of trance and techno making the album a milestone trip.



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WILLIAM HOOKER, CHRISTIAN MARCLAY & LEE RANALDO

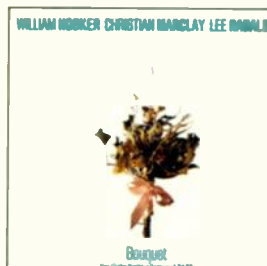
Bouquet (Live @ The Knitting Factory 4.23.99) Knitting Factory

KIM GORDON, DJ OLIVE & IKUE MORI

SYR5 SYR

Like a droning crop duster, Sonic Youth has been seeding New York's downtown avant-garde music scene for decades now, and the band has eased into a comfortable position as genre grandparents, through no-wave to noise rock and everything in between (and to follow). But SY's never been unduly selfish with their fiddling; since their early years they've consistently shared their musical wealth by partnering off with one band or another, and their turn-of-the-decade incarnation is no different, a situation made even simpler by the fruitfulness and diversity of the scene they helped birth. The latest in the SYR EP series sees Kim Gordon team with the avant's turntablist of choice, DJ Olive, and fellow scenester percussionist Ikue Mori. Unlike prior collaborations, this one never truly hits its stride. Throughout, Gordon's vocals feel dislocated from the music, incidental and disposable. While the trio succeeds at creating "songs," they're all too familiar, and simply constructed, to truly excite. There are some intriguing moments, though. On "Fried Mushroom," DJ Olive's cuts sound like distorted raindrops, itching to get out of the clouds. The guitars on "Neu Adult" resonate like a large sheet of metal being vibrated back and forth, complemented by acerbic tone scratches. Yet this track ends abruptly, as if the tape ran out, an apt metaphor for the harried nature of this collaboration. "What Do You Want?" closes with some kind of shrill squeal, as if to shock these guys out of their anomie. It don't wholly work.

Lee Ranaldo's set with free-jazz drummer William Hooker and cut-and-paste turntable artist Christian Marclay has that same first-take feel. But the fact that it's a live recording gives them a bit more leeway. If the trip proves anything, it's that working through a texture on stage can be more exciting than plowing through it in the studio. Marclay displays a gift for creating a fierce wall of sound, opening the set strongly with dragged-out strings and tape-loop drones. Soon, Hooker is rushing to catch up to him, practically collapsing in his own monsoon of percussion as Marclay builds shivering swirls behind him. Here, it's Ranaldo's disruptive, feedback-y guitar that seems most at odds with the esthetic program, though by "Part 4" (of seven) he's tempered his noise to match his comrades, and by "Part 6," he's even conceded to melody, proving that it's not impossible to find the needle in the noodle. >>>JON CARAMANICA



Out

June 27

File Under

No wave updates

R.I.Y.L.

William Hooker, Christian Marclay, Sonic Youth



Out

August 21

File Under

More no-wave updates

R.I.Y.L.

DJ Olive, Ikue Mori, Sonic Youth

STARLIGHT MINTS

The Dream That Stuff Was Made Of

SeeThru Broadcasting

Post-millennial orchestral pop just got a little quirkier—and a little more fun. The Starlight Mints, a quintet out of Norman, Oklahoma (not-so-coincidentally home to the Flaming Lips), certainly share a love of '60s psych-pop with the Apples In Stereo/Olivia Tremor Control-led Elephant 6 collective. Forgoing the self-consciously retro, Beatles-esque sound experiments of OTC, however, Starlight Mints' debut album crackles with a gritty guitar energy that recalls the barbed and quirky hooks and melodies of the Pixies.

Like many tracks here, "The Twilight Showdown" fuses the old with the new: The vintage sound of reverby guitars contrasts with Allan Vest's contemporary indie-type vocals, which split the difference between Pavement-y disaffection and the endearing whine of the Lips' Wayne Coyne. The tremolo-washed, harmony-laden "Sugar Blaster" is a classic garage-rock party tune, while more somber tracks like "Cracker Jack" show off the band's softer side with effective violin and cello arrangements. *The Dream That Stuff Was Made Of* is, on one level, good, old-fashioned tuneful fun. But it's also the work of a band finding its footing in today's indie-pop world. The result could easily have been an incongruous pastiche—but the Starlight Mints manage to weave their disparate influences into what sounds like a very promising start. >>>LYDIA VANDERLOO



Out

August 22

File Under

Psychedelic party pop

R.I.Y.L.

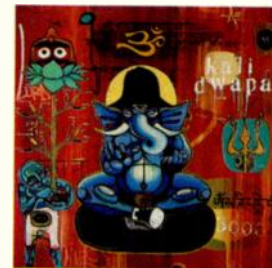
The Olivia Tremor Control, the Pixies, the Flaming Lips

TABLA BEAT SCIENCE

Tala Matrix: Adventures In Electro-acoustic Hypercussion Axiom-Palm

The subtitle *Adventures In Electro-acoustic Hypercussion* highlights the latest CD to arise from the laboratory platform of bassist/dub scientist/producer Bill Laswell. And indeed, the disc pits the frenetic, hypnotizing tabla playing of Zakir Hussain, son of famed tabla master Ustad Alla Rakha, against experiments in techno-ambient breakdown overseen by Laswell and Bollywood punk Talvin Singh. As with most music that Laswell splices and sequences, there is always the risk of botched chemistry: Will the music ignite

into a dynamic, volatile mix of cultures and identities, or will it just fizzle into new-age pap? He achieves both here—the latter being most prevalent in the overproduced meandering of "Devotional"—though the overall results of *Tala Matrix* are quite promising. The strongest tracks are enveloped with an exotic paranoia strangely reminiscent of the writing of William S. Burroughs. Stark electronic beeps like defective phone taps pockmark the air on "Audiomaze," leaving nicks in the ribbon of guitar and chugging tabla. The percussive waterfall on "Biotech" resounds like a beached armada of turtles slapping their flippers, trying to ward off the synthesized growl stalking it. *Tala Matrix* is full of these kinds of urgent communications, a cascading Morse code of drums and clicks that is both riveting and seductive. >>>MICHAEL WOODRING



Out

September 12

File Under

Calcutta techno via the Interzone

R.I.Y.L.

Talvin Singh, The State Of Bengal, Shakti



Last year, the emocore ranks bid a tearful goodbye to two beloved bands: Urbana, Illinois math-rockers Braid, and San Diego ethereal popsters Jejuné. "Will these Led Zeppelins become the Firm?" the sweated masses feared. Thankfully, Jejuné's swan song and the debuts from nearly all the ex-members' new projects escape that frightening fate. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

HEY MERCEDES

Hey Mercedes (EP) Polyvinyl

That three quarters of Braid make up the Mercedes crew certainly points to absent guitarist/screamer Chris Broach as the pebble in the quartet's shoe. It also looks like he was what kept the other three—guitarist/warby singer Bob Nanna, bassist Todd Bell and drummer Damon Atkinson—from indulging in the cogent, frayed-edged pop that *Hey Mercedes* delivers. The opener, "Bells," slams in with familiar dissonant crunch, but it slides into bouncy pop (complete with "whoa-oo whoa-oo" backing vocals) instead of the Braid-patented stop-start breaks, and Nanna's worked his endearing off-key serenade into a clearer croon. It's sparkling Superchunk-ish rock, and it's a delicious next step.

THE FIREBIRD BAND

The Setting Sun And Its Satellites Headhunter-Cargo

Guitarist Chris Broach's side-project-cum-full-time-band's debut was certainly not conceived with the Braid fanbase in mind. Some of the album's 12 tracks do offer tiny tastes of the Broach-led Braid songs, but overall, Firebird's a mash of gritty electronic beats, sparse, plinky guitar and atmospheric samples. The traces of postcore heritage slide in mostly through Broach's vocals, which offer less of his trademark shouted "Yeeah" variety, and more of his Johnny One Note projected talking. This record will appeal more to Cure fans with a penchant for skittering industrial beats than it will to emo-heads, but its standout moments boast elegant songwriting that most wouldn't have expected from Braid's second in command.

JEJUNE

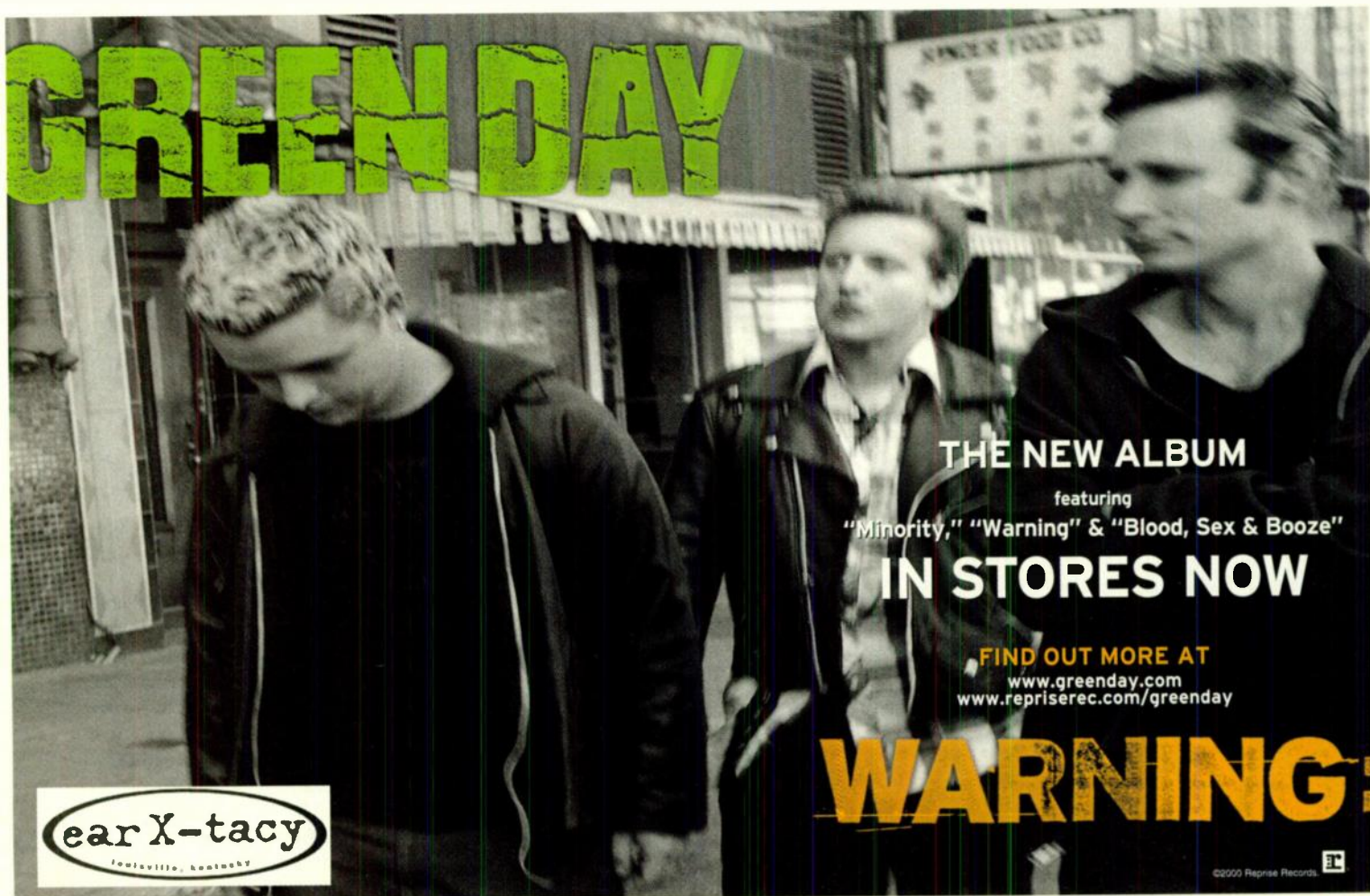
R.I.P. Big Wheel Recreation

If you weren't lamenting the death of Jejuné before, one listen to their final release will cure you of that horrid oversight. The first five tracks are seeds of what would've been the follow-up to last year's *This Afternoon's Malady*—and they taunt us with exactly what we'll be missing. The irresistibly lush, swirling melodic rock of "Record City After World" bounces into the jumpy, Molly Ringwald-dance-inducing pop of "The New State," and then rounds out with the delectably weepy "2000 Miles"; and they're all addictively brilliant. The remaining 7-inch and compilation tracks are nostalgically enjoyable too, but damn, that unfinished new album could've conquered the pop-loving world.

LOVELIGHT SHINE

Makes Out (EP) Big Wheel Recreation

Don't let the sappy name fool you—there ain't no emo in LLS. Though Jejuné's drum/guitar power-duo of Chris Vanacore and Joe Guevara formed the band, there's barely a trace of their former outfit. This EP is full-on rock 'n' effin' roll—it mixes the balls-out guitar chunk and bass thump of KISS with the fist-pumping rhythms of AC/DC, and tops the deliriously fun mess with melodies that'll grab your ass and shake it until you sing along. The band even manages to make hair-metal guitar solos lovable again. Add lyrics like "I'm in love with the God distortion," and it's clear: No self-respecting rock fan could possibly pass this by.



GREEN DAY


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JESS KLEIN



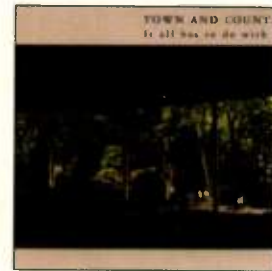
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Reviews

TOWN AND COUNTRY

It All Has To Do With It Thrill Jockey

Last year's *Decoration Day* EP, the previous release by acoustic instrumental quartet Town And Country, was heavily indebted to American avant-classical composer Morton Feldman: distinct tones placed forlornly in space, with harmonic and rhythmic patterning pared to a minimum. This full-length follow-up, on the other hand, is more developed and ultimately more accessible—out of four songs, only "Hat Versus Hand," full of clustery accordion, fails to convince. The waltz of double bass and celeste that opens "Hindenburg" offers a user-friendly entry point into the difficult body of the piece, which also passes through violin/acoustic guitar duets and patches of atonal thumb piano. This track justifies its 10 minutes by variety, but other tracks turn the minimalist trick of making time seem to collapse entirely. In "That Old Feeling," a harmonium drones as dissonantly as Tony Conrad's violin, as the other instruments repeat, and repeat, a pair of simple phrases around it. But the gradual development of those accompanying phrases makes for compelling listening in its own right, which may be what makes *It All Has To Do With It* more satisfying than its predecessor: It still takes Town And Country a while to arrive anywhere, but this time, they're not above giving the listener something to do on the way. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



Out
October 3
File Under
Pastoral post-rock
R.I.Y.L.
Gastr Del Sol, Rachel's,
Pullman

JUNIOR VASQUEZ

Twilo Volume 1 Virgin

The super, mega, monster-sized house-music dance club has never been a place conducive to warm, sensual tones and sexy tempos. Such venues are all about commercialized epic Euro trance and hard-pumping progressive house—sweaty, jam-packed grooves that are offset by laser lights, fog machines, and glowstick-wielding suburbanites. So it comes as no surprise that the Junior Vasquez mix CD, which is 140 minutes culled from his weekly "Juniorverse" night at NYC's Twilo, is harder than a frat boy with a pocket full of roofies. After the first pounding 20 minutes, listeners may feel the need to crawl into a chill-out room, but alas, in the aggressive land of the superclub, such refuges do not exist. Vasquez, who co-launched the original Sound Factory in 1989 and has remixed everyone from Cher to Elton John, begins the bullet-beat journey with cheesy progressive vocal tracks from the likes of System F and Donna De Lory, and builds into soulless hybrids of progressive house and trance from DJ Darkzone and Mind Trap. He eventually brings the dancers back to earth with some grooved-out tribal beats, but on the second of these CDs, he steers the sweaty dancers back into monotonous rock-house terrain. Vasquez's skills as a DJ may be unimpeachable, but his esthetics on this CD certainly are. >>>AMANDA NOWINSKI



Out
September 26
File Under
Hard house
R.I.Y.L.
Danny Tenaglia, David
Morales, Tony Humphries



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

VERSUS

Hurrah Merge

After eight years of chronicling urban alienation and heartbreak, maybe it's inevitable that Versus would crack and start giving their songs titles like "I Love The WB" and "My Adidas." In a world of shiny pop culture, it can't be easy to be the indie-rock standard-bearers for nuanced angst. Hurrah's goofy streak, though, only skims its surface. It mainly presents Versus doing what they've always done: tense, minor-key pop with soothing/dissonant dynamics, winsome but sober vocals from guitarist Richard Baluyut and bassist Fontaine Toups, and occasional forced metaphors (see "Eskimo On Fire," ostensibly about warming that cold li'l thing you call a heart). "My Adidas" (mercifully not a Run DMC cover) concerns an affair's end, comets, and something more foreboding, while the aforementioned "WB" only refers to its title by noting that few relationships have scripted endings. As on their last album, they sometimes break musical form; here "Frederick's Of Hollywood" goes on epic Sonic Youth guitar trips, while "Walkabout" gets mileage from a surging piano. But their best songs—Toups's ruefully prickly "You'll Be Sorry," the softly building "Mermaid Legs" and the previously released "Shangri-La"—work well within the group's standard sweet 'n' mournful formula. They're spinning their wheels, but at least they're stuck in a good place. >>>LISA GIDLEY



Out

October 3

File Under

Indie rock by rote

R.I.Y.L.

The Mendoza Line, the
Dambuilders, Sleepyhead

VOODOO GLOW SKULLS

Symbolic Epitaph

The window of opportunity for ska—and in particular that revved-up sub-genre skacore—opened and then closed almost as quickly as those fleeting temporal holes in the sci-fi flick *Time Bandits*. Bands had a split second to be noticed, lose the horns and make it big, after which the revival was over as far as the industry was concerned. But the Spanish-singing Voodoo Glow Skulls weren't ready to follow the Mighty Mighty Bosstones through the open window. The Skulls have kept their horn section, only they've made other changes over the past few years. For one thing, their albums have gotten tighter and better produced (this time by Epitaph owner Brett Gurewitz). Mark Adkins of Guttermouth sets the mood on the new *Symbolic*, delivering a Jello Biafra-esque opening monologue in which he explains "Even though you can't see me, I'm skanking, skanking, skanking!" And it really feels, for a moment, like Voodoo Glow Skulls are back in the time of their riotous "Insubordination" and their cover of "Here Comes The Sun," one of the best ever recorded. But they're not. *Symbolic* is certainly skankable and even mosh-able. As Mark puts it, "It's good. It's really good." It's just not quite as good as it used to be. >>>ROBIN A. ROTHMAN



Out

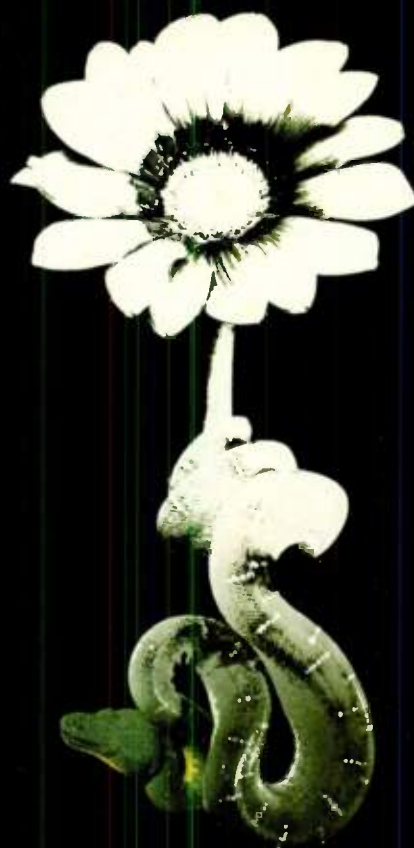
September 12

File Under

Ska en Español

R.I.Y.L.

The Mighty Mighty Bosstones,
Skankin' Pickle



VAST

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STEEL WHEELS, STEEL CITY

by m. tye comer

Sheffield, located about three hours from London, is perhaps the last place you'd expect to find the apex of UK club culture. Like America's Pittsburgh, this quaint English locale established its name as a steel manufacturer during the industrial revolution and dubbed its local sports team the Steelers. These days, neither grey-tinted, blue-collar town offers much besides huge factories, small colleges and Steelers jerseys (football or hockey, depending on the continent). Yet every Saturday night, when the Republic nightclub opens its doors and welcomes the sounds and sights of Gatecrasher, Sheffield boasts



the most unique and uncompromising club night on the Queen's soil. If *Blade Runner* had featured a club scene, Harrison Ford's Deckard would groove at Gatecrasher. Thousands of barely legal Brits dressed in "Crasher Kid" costumes (fluorescent hair, moon boots, and at least one homemade, tight-fitting piece of Technicolor clothing adorned with Gatecrasher's roaring lion logo) come to give unsolicited backrubs and lose themselves in the synthetic soundscapes of trance music in a flamboyant, laser-illuminated wonderland.

Paul Oakenfold, Sasha, Paul van Dyk, Seb Fontaine and other European trance icons often hang their hats here, and the superstar lineups, along with an unblemished reputation for providing the biggest buzz outside of an electric chair, guarantees that every inch of the spacious, three-room venue is filled with bouncing bodies week after week. Career clubbers may scoff at Crasher's day-glo decor and bubblegum beats, yet every UK dance magazine that counts has listed the club as the country's best weekly event every year since Gatecrasher made the Republic its permanent base in 1997.

"We try to create an environment for people to have fun in, where they can be who they want to be," says Simon Raine, Gatecrasher's managing director. "You can be a car mechanic during the day and be something totally different at night when you attend Gatecrasher. The vibe is free and pretty spiritual, I think."

The weekly Sheffield event is only part of the Gatecrasher business plan. The event has grown beyond its "superclub" status and become a brand name for overall clubbing excellence, bolstered by a series of one-off events (its 25,000-person

massive on New Year's Eve 1999 was the largest dance event in UK history) and a Global Sound System tour that sold out cities from Sydney to Singapore and brought debauchery to nearly every continent. Due to popular demand (Raine says he gets about 30 e-mails from US clubbers a day), Gatecrasher embarked on a 30-date tour of the United States in September, successfully adding America to its list of conquered territories. Sheffield regulars Ashley Casselle, Robbie Nelson, Scott Bond and Matt Hardwick united with several homegrown trance crusaders (such as Sandra Collins) on the tour, which will be documented in October with the release of *Global Sound System* (INCredible-Epic), Gatecrasher's first CD for the US market.

The two-CD set documents the music that moved America, including deep, progressive house and full-on trance cuts by artists such as Moby, BT, Bedrock and Paul van Dyk. Despite Gatecrasher's recent one-two punch in the States (with many more blows to follow), Raine insists that the American crusade is not an attempt to cash in on the growing Stateside appreciation of cheesy trance music. He thinks of it more as an invitation to crash their party. "We didn't mold Gatecrasher into becoming what it is," he says. "It evolved over a period of years, which I think most good things do. We're not coming to America...saying, we're going to show you how to [party]. We're just hoping to bring over our project and our DJs, let American clubbers grab hold of the pieces that they like and let it evolve in its own natural way."

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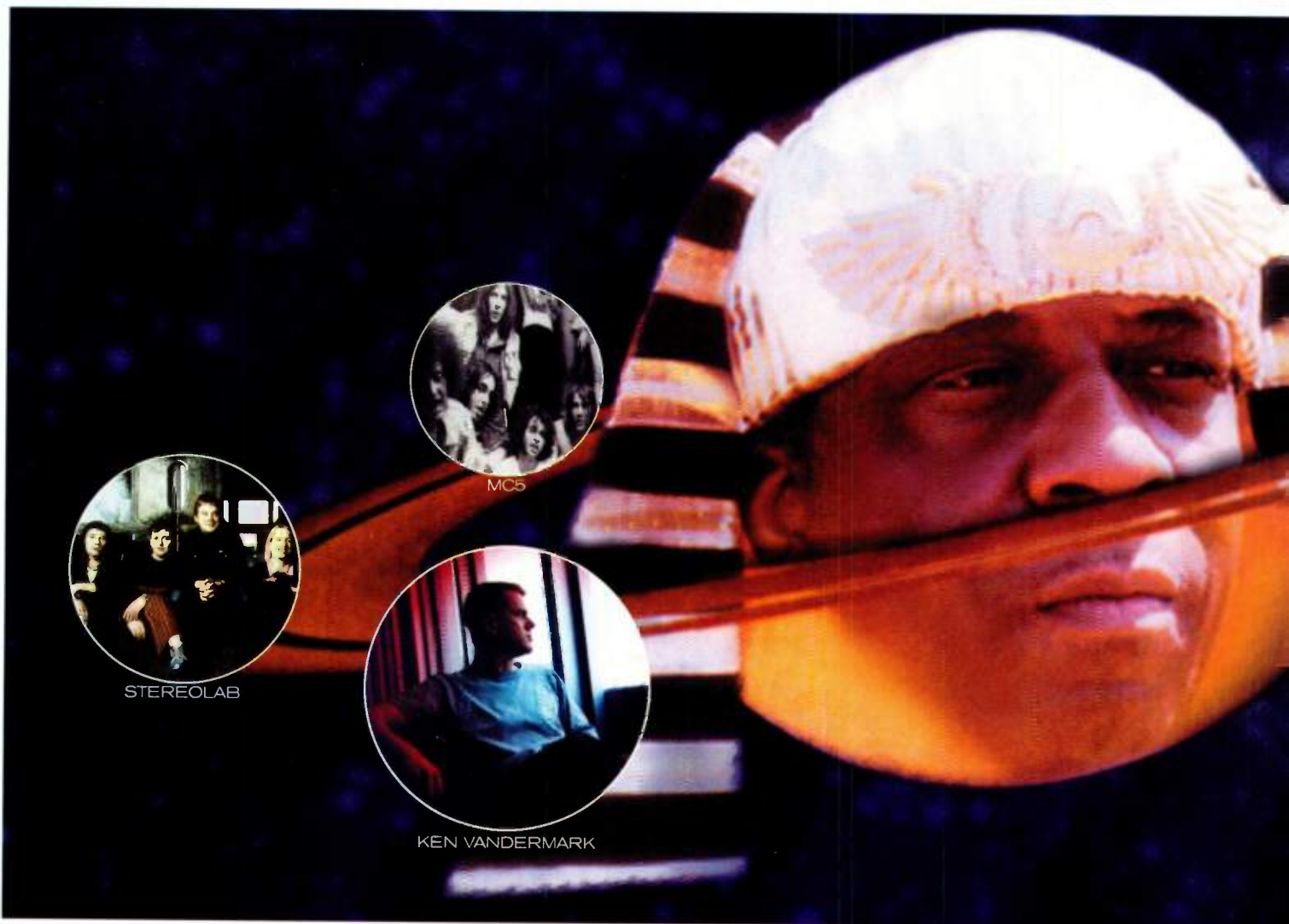
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THE SCENE IS NOW



SUNSTREAMS:

The circuitous flow of jazz innovator Sun Ra.

When one musician is a huge influence on another, the two generally sound at least somewhat alike. Sun Ra is the big exception to that rule: He came out of the jazz tradition and reinvented the rulebook almost from scratch to serve his interests, and generations of his listeners have gone on to make music of their own that's inspired by his spirit, rather than his style.

The facts of Sun Ra's life are fairly clear—they have to do with a jazz pianist named Herman Blount, born in Alabama—but they're not as interesting as the legend. If you want the whole story, check out Yale professor John Szwed's solid 1998 biography, *Space Is The Place: The Lives And Times Of Sun Ra* (Da Capo).

The Sun Ra story according to Sun Ra begins in outer space. In the '50s, he formed a band called the Arkestra, whose performances over the next 40-odd years were as far-out as jazz got. They involved massive, ambitious compositions, funk, free improvisation, tidal

waves of percussion, ornate costumes, movement, chanting and a sort of mystical, space-age mythology that Ra invented.

Ra also made recordings—more than 120 of them, with mountains of unreleased material still being unearthed. (Evidence Records' extensive Ra reissue program has just expanded to include a handful of never-before-issued early-'70s albums, as well as an odd "greatest hits" covering 1956 through 1973.) Some were recorded in proper studios, some surreptitiously documented during live performances, some nothing more than energetic rehearsals crudely blasted onto tape in the Arkestra's communal Philadelphia home.

Arguably, Ra was the father of lo-fi; he was certainly one of the first artists who manifestly didn't care how his records sounded as long as they captured the energy of the performance. And he was definitely the father of D.I.Y. For many years, he refused to deal with big labels. Many of the Arkestra's best records were pressed by their own label, Saturn, in editions of a few hundred copies, and sold only at their own shows.



SATURN: FPG IMAGING: OUR MAN MERV

"His work set the precedent for these artists who now have their own labels," praises composer Ken Vandermark, "that independent maverick attitude."

And then there's the music itself. Curiously, parts of the rock community caught on to the Arkestra's work before many jazz fans had even noticed Ra's existence. "Here was a band that wasn't playing a beat, that wasn't playing chord changes, they were playing galaxies and solar systems and quasars," recalls former MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer. Ra's work is still sometimes consigned to the fringes of jazz culture (though groups like William Parker's Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra have picked up where he left off), but rock bands from the Residents to Brutal Truth have kept his spaceways open. "I don't play a note on the guitar that Sun Ra isn't in," explains Kramer, "playing the electric guitar and [fiddling with] the amplifier, searching for a sound that's only in that moment."

THE MC5

On first thought, '60s hard-rock revolutionaries the MC5 seem to have little in common with Sun Ra's explorations, but they took his lead in their experimental freakouts. "Sun showed me there's music beyond music, there's beats beyond beats and there's keys beyond keys," praises former MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer. The proto-punk band wrote the song "Starship" in Sun Ra's honor, during which the members melodically get into a rocket to travel beyond the solar system. The MC5 also brought Sun Ra out to play shows with them in Detroit in the late '60s. "I once asked Sun Ra what he thought of the MC5," recalls Kramer, "He said, 'I've got to be careful with the MC5, because you're trying to catch up to me.'"

KEN VANDERMARK

The tireless organizer of the Chicago jazz scene is also a major Ra fan. On his new album, *Spaceways Incorporated* (Atavistic), Vandermark, along with drummer Hamid Drake and bassist Nate McBride, play reinterpreted "cosmic standards" by Ra and Funkadelic—another huge ensemble with a suspiciously familiar outer-space cosmology. "The way he worked with an ensemble, the way he composes, the openness in his compositions, the way he organizes sounds and voices and things—it's extremely innovative," praises Vandermark. "He was always incorporating different unusual assemblages of musicians and instruments. [One of his early groups] was an all vocal group, and one group had five drummers."

YO LA TENGO

Known as major fans (and frequent coverers) of a wide range of musicians, the members of Yo La Tengo have a special place in their hearts for the Arkestra. YLT Singer/guitarist Ira Kaplan has said that Ra's singles collection on Evidence is the sole record he can listen to again and again. The band covered Sun Ra's "Rocket #9" on a single and approximated the Arkestra experience with last year's "Now 2000" single; recorded with three horn players from Other Dimensions In Music, it owes a lot to the mood and style of the spacey funk-jazz Ra recorded in the early '70s.

STEREOLAB

"I'll spend £100 on a Sun Ra record," Stereolab's Tim Gane told *Salon*. "And it gives meaning to your life," Laetitia Sadier added. Stereolab's metronomic rhythms and ultra-clean arrangements are a far cry from Ra's glorious mess, but he helped pioneer the early analogue synthesizers that have fueled Stereolab's career—check out Ra albums like *My Brother The Wind Vol. II* for the blips and bleeps that led to *Dots And Loops*. Also, the jazzier songs of Stereolab's last few records owe a lot to the arrangements Ra wrote for sidemen like Marshall Allen and John Gilmore. Stereolab still sometimes writes "Sun Ra" on its set lists to indicate the song the band's fans know as "Brakhage."

OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL

Olivia Tremor Control's Bill Doss remembers his first exposure to Sun Ra vividly. "I was DJing at a college radio station," he says, "and I randomly pulled one of his records out of the library. I couldn't believe it! It was jazz, but it wasn't the kind of jazz I knew. It was *psychedelic*." The Arkestra became a staple in the OTC's tour van, and Sun Ra's pulsing, improvisational chaos filtered its way into the band's own work—the long, clattering, freeform suites on their albums recall similar passages in Ra's wilder compositions (for a taste of that, hunt down OTC's new singles collection *Singles And Beyond* on Emperor Norton-Kindercore). The idea of psychedelia as a collective process, augmented by lots of people trading off instruments, is very much a nod to the man from Saturn.

TOP 75



#1

5 YEARS AGO

SEAWEED
SPANAWAY (HOLLYWOOD)

THE YOUNG GODS
ONLY HEAVEN (INTERSCOPE)

LUNA
PENTHOUSE (ELEKTRA)

FOO FIGHTERS
FOO FIGHTERS (ROSWELL-CAPITOL)

SUPERSUCKERS
SACRILICIOUS SOUNDS OF... (SUB POP)

10 YEARS AGO

PIXIES
BOSSANOVA (4AD-ELEKTRA)

JANE'S ADDICTION
RITUAL DE LO HABITUAL (WARNER BROS.)

BOB MOULD
BLACK SHEETS OF RAIN (VIRGIN)

IGGY POP
BRICK BY BRICK (VIRGIN)

SOUP DRAGONS
LOVEGOD (BIG LIFE)

ARTIST

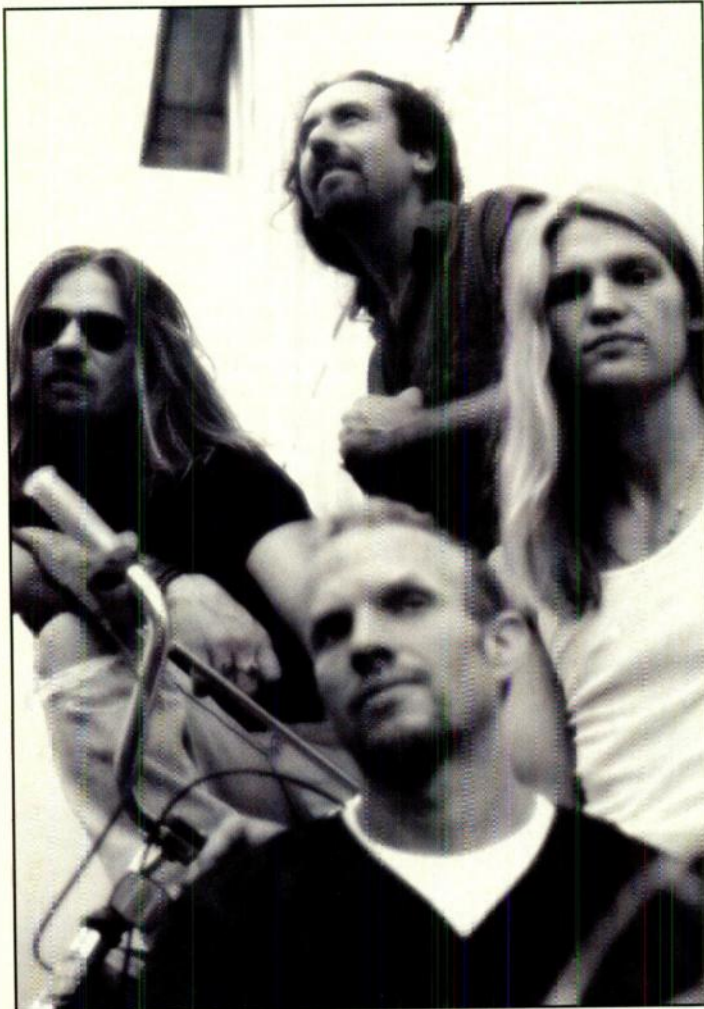
ALBUM

LABEL

1	VARIOUS ARTISTS	The Powerpuff Girls: Heroes & Villains	Rhino
2	RICHARD ASHCROFT	Alone With Everybody	Hut-Virgin
3	JURASSIC-5	Quality Control	Interscope
4	THE DANDY WARHOLS	Thirteen Tales From Urban Bohemia	Capitol
5	LAIKA	Good Looking Blues	Too Pure-Beggars Banquet
6	ARAB STRAP	Mad For Sadness	Jetset
7	DE LA SOUL	Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump	Tommy Boy
8	THE OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL	Singles And Beyond	Kindercore-Emperor Norton
9	MODEST MOUSE	The Moon & Antarctica	Epic
10	764-HERO	Weekends Of Sound	Up
11	SPOOZYS	Astral Astronauts	Jetset
12	ISOTOPE 217	Who Stole The I Walkman?	Thrill Jockey
13	STARLIGHT MINTS	The Dream That Stuff Was Made Of	Seethru Broadcasting
14	BELLE & SEBASTIAN	Fold Your Hands Child, You Walk Like A...	Matador
15	SUPER FURRY ANIMALS	Mwng	Flydaddy
16	SILKWORM	Lifestyle	Touch And Go
17	IDA	Will You Find Me	Tiger Style
18	AT THE DRIVE-IN	One Armed Scissor (EP)	Grand Royal
19	KING BISCUIT TIME	No Style (EP)	Astralwerks
20	DEFTONES	White Pony	Maverick
21	A	Vs. Monkey Kong	Mammoth
22	VAST	Music For People	Elektra
23	GLANDS	The Glands	Capricorn
24	IVORY COAST	The Rush Of Oncoming Traffic	Big Wheel Recreation
25	SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE	The Rising Tide	Time Bomb
26	BEENIE MAN	Art & Life	VP-Virgin
27	LOW & SPRING HEEL JACK	Bomb scare EP	Tugboat
28	TRANS AM	You Can Always Get What You Want	Thrill Jockey
29	HEPCAT	Push 'N Shove	Hellicat-Epithaph
30	SEÑOR COCONUT Y SU CONJUNTO	El Baile Alemán	Emperor Norton
31	JOHN WESLEY HARDING	The Confessions Of St. Ace	Mammoth
32	FIVE-EIGHT	The Good Nurse	Deep Elm
33	GRAHAM COXON	The Golden D	Transcopic-Astralwerks
34	THE EXPLOSION	Flash Flash Flash	Jade Tree
35	THIEVERY CORPORATION	The Mirror Conspiracy	Eighteenth Street Lounge
36	LADYTRON	Commodore Rock	Invicta Hi-Fi
37	MEAN RED SPIDERS	Starsandsons	Teenage Usa
38	DJ CAM	Loa Project (Volume II)	Six Degrees
39	CATHERINE WHEEL	Wishville	Columbia
40	URSULA 1000	All Systems Are Go Go	Eighteenth Street Lounge
41	DA LATA	Songs From The Tin	Palm Pictures
42	JIMMY EAT WORLD	Singles	Big Wheel Recreation
43	HAR MAR SUPERSTAR	Har Mar Superstar	Kill Rock Stars
44	J CHURCH	One Mississippi	Fat Wreck Chords
45	RANCID	Rancid	Hellicat-Epithaph
46	DILLINGER FOUR	Versus God	Hopeless
47	STEVE EARLE	Transcendental Blues	E-squared-Artemis
48	EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN	Silence Is Sexy	Mute
49	AVAIL	One Wrench	Fat Wreck Chords
50	L'ALTRA	Music Of A Sinking Occasion	Aesthetics
51	TOE	Variant	Truckstop
52	SUNNA	One Minute Science	Astralwerks
53	FUTURE BIBLE HEROES	I'm Lonely (And I Love It) (EP)	Merge
54	HANIN ELIAS	In Flames	Fatal-Digital Hardcore
55	TSAR	Tsar	Hollywood
56	EVERCLEAR	Songs From An American Movie: Vol. 1	Capitol
57	B.B. KING & ERIC CLAPTON	Riding With The King	Reprise
58	LOTHARS	Oscillate My Metallic Sonatas	Wobbly-Space Baby
59	PHASER	Skydive (EP)	Phaser Music
60	SILLO THE HUSKIE	Silo The Huskie	Headhunter-Cargo
61	SONIC YOUTH	NYC Ghosts & Flowers	Geffen-Interscope
62	MXPX	The Ever Passing Moment/The Broken...	A&M-Interscope
63	JOHN VANDERSLICE	Mass Suicide Occult Figurines	Tiny Telephone-Barsuk
64	SNAKE RIVER CONSPIRACY	Sonic Jihad	Kinetic-RCA
65	PEDRO THE LION	Progress (EP)	Suicide Squeeze
66	POSIES	In Case You Didn't Feel Like Plugging In	Casa
67	GETAWAY PEOPLE	Turnpike Diaries	Columbia
68	AUTOMATIC 7	Beggar's Life	Vagrant
69	MEST	Wasting Time	Maverick
70	WEAKERTHANS	Left And Leaving	Sub City
71	ELECTRASY	In Here We Fall	Arista
72	SINEAD O'CONNOR	Faith And Courage	Atlantic
73	PETER BRUNTNELL	Normal For Bridgewater	Slow River-Rykodisc
74	GO ROBOT, GO!	Super Vacation	Bandaloop
75	TEGAN & SARA	This Business Of Art	Vapor

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. Lemme see yo checkstub. Get yo own checkstub!

1	IN FLAMES Clayman	NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
2	HALFORD Resurrection	METAL-IS-SANCTUARY
3	IRON MAIDEN Brave New World	PORTRAIT-COLUMBIA
4	TAPROOT Gift	VELVET HAMMER-ATLANTIC
5	HYPOCRISY Into The Abyss	NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
6	KING DIAMOND House Of God	METAL BLADE
7	STUCK MOJO Declaration Of A Headhunter	CENTURY MEDIA
8	EARTH CRISIS Slither	VICTORY
9	ONE KING DOWN Gravity Wins Again	EQUAL VISION
10	DARK TRANQUILITY Haven	CENTURY MEDIA
11	DEFTONES White Pony	MAVERICK
12	NASUM Human 2.0	RELAPSE
13	BENJUMB Withering Strands Of Hope	RELAPSE
14	SOULFLY Primitive	ROADRUNNER



>>>Corrosion Of Conformity's first album in four years, *America's Volume Dealer* (Sanctuary), caps off what drummer Reed Mullin calls "sitting around Raleigh with our collective thumbs up our ass." Label negotiations dragged on after the band's acrimonious split with Columbia, which resulted in extra time that Mullin filled in jail (for being involved in a knife fight), while guitarist/vocalist Pepper Keenan raised his goats, did historical renovations on two houses in New Orleans, hung out with James Hetfield and worked on hot rods—a bug which also bit guitarist Woody Weatherman. Explains Keenan, "Working on hot rods is insanely addictive. I'm up in a damn farm in the middle of nowhere, which is where I got hooked. A bunch of old greaser rednecks that were into it showed me the way." But all was not automotive or agricultural for the band. "We had a lot of time and stuck to our guns and did what COC is supposed to do," Keenan asserts. "These are really thick, thick songs." Adds Mullin, "We've accentuated the heaviness, the major difference being the recording process. We went digital as opposed to the past albums which were more old school and earthy." Look for the band to tour in support of *Dealer* with someone big...like long-time buds Metallica.

NEWS

15	DEICIDE Incineratehymn	ROADRUNNER
16	VARIOUS ARTISTS Nativity In Black II	DIVINE-PRIORITY
17	SIXTY WATT SHAMAN Seeds Of Decades	SPITFIRE
18	(HED) PLANET EARTH Broke	JIVE
19	UNION UNDERGROUND An Education In Rebellion	PORTRAIT-COLUMBIA
20	CEPHALIC CARNAGE Exploiting Dysfunction	RELAPSE
21	RELATIVE ASH Our Time With You...	ISLAND
22	VARIOUS ARTISTS Loud Rocks Sampler	LOUD
23	40 GRIT Heads	METAL BLADE
24	SINERGY To Hell And Back	NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
25	ORIGIN Origin	RELAPSE

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

DIANE COLLINS



SNAPCASE

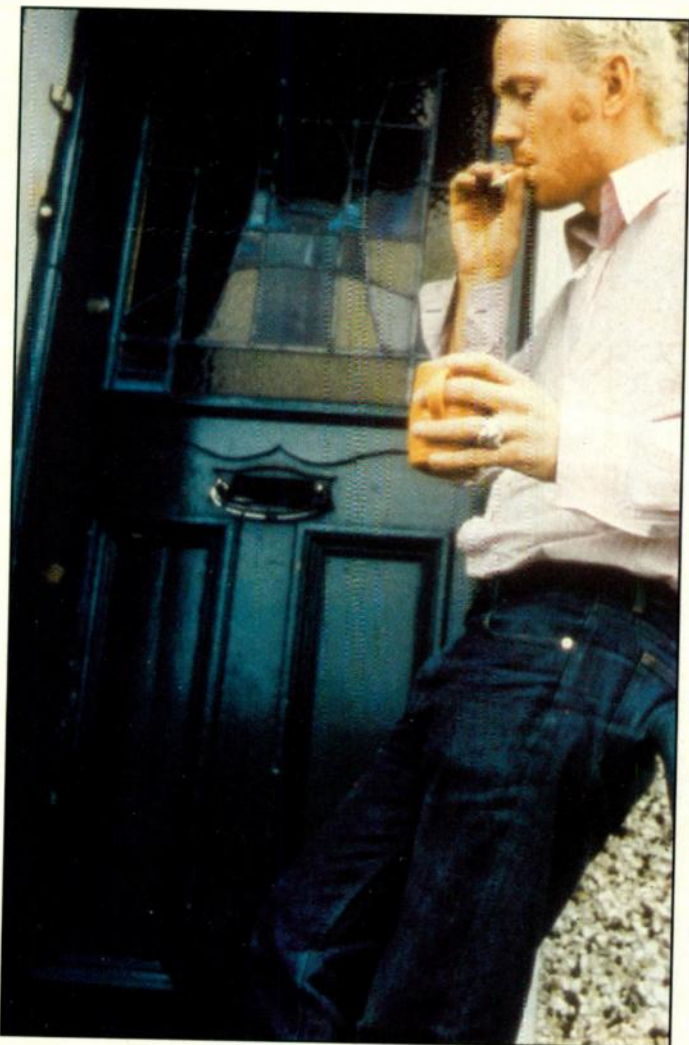
>>>Snapcase is hoping to complete a home video by year's end and producers are looking for footage of the band. Contact Victory Records (www.victoryrecords.com) if you've got any.... Canadian babydoll hardcore act **Scratching Post**—who could be Kittie's older sisters—have self-released the "darker, more evil" *This Time It's Personal* in Canada.... **Savatage's** *Poets And Madmen* (Nuclear Blast) is now delayed until January 2001, mainly because of rush material the band worked on for Ron Howard's *The Grinch*, and the short Trans Siberian Orchestra tour planned for the holiday season.... Hot on the heels of a second **UFO** album with Michael Schenker, vocalist Phil Mogg is working on a solo album which may include many guest stars. Mogg has shelved his Mogg/Way project indefinitely, due to the constant shifts in line-ups.... Speaking of guests, Nazareth's next move will be a live album and DVD, recorded in Glasgow, which features one audio disc of a live performance, and another stuffed with rockers who grew up on the band, showing up for cameos.... The hottest band in death metal right now, **Nile**, has returned with *Black Seeds Of Vengeance* (Relapse), which incorporates sitar, Tibetan doom horns and African choirs.

PICKS

SUPERSHINE'S self-titled debut (Metal Blade) is the groovy, soulful doom-lite marriage between Trouble's Bruce Franklin and King's X's Doug Pinnick.

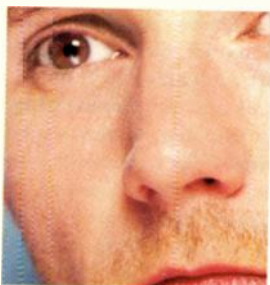
SIXTY WATT SHAMAN's *Seed Of Decades* (Spitfire) captures the handmade work ethic of Clutch, while soaking up twin mud puddles filled with blues and stoner rock.

NOTHINGFACE'S *Violence* (TVT) strikes an intelligent balance between dynamic hardcore, slide-rule grunge circa early-'90s Soundgarden and the riffs of stadium rock.



>>> "Miles Davis never liked to be pigeonholed," says Belfast-based DJ/producer **David Holmes**, when asked about the un-electronic sounds present on his latest, *Bow Down To The Exit Sign* (1500). "He hated the word 'jazz.' He made music that brought in funk, African rhythms, sitars, John McLaughlin playing live guitars, just freakin' out. I'm not trying to make any particular kind of music." What Holmes has made is a soundtrack for the screenplay *The Living Room*: He and writer friend Lisa Barros D'sa worked from each other's inspirations and created the story and music simultaneously. The resulting album is a definite change for Holmes—most notably in his use of a full band. "I wanted to go more organic with this one," he says. "But the electronic elements are still in there." And so are songs that bring out the best in his superstar contributors (Martine Topley-Bird, Bobby Gillespie, Jon Spencer and Carl Hancock Rux). Rux is cast as a baritone Sly Stone on "Compared To What," and most impressively, Holmes's work restores chanteuse Martine to her super-sultry *Maxinquaye* form on the slinky "Outrun," before unleashing her inner screamer on the punk-tinged "Zero Tolerance." They've yet to sign a movie deal at press time, but the album's soul-flavored breakbeats and rock riffs should make it a blockbuster.

NEWS



MOBY

>>>> **Moby** has already licensed all 18 tracks from *Play* (V2) for commercial use (and millions of dollars), but he's not taking it easy—his 31-date tour continues through November 3. No word yet on the tour sponsor, or if they use Moby tracks. Also, ex-Underworld DJ **Darren Emerson** is following up his excellent double-disc *Global Underground: Uruguay* (Boxed) with a late fall tour.... Berlin's jazzy house DJ and producer collective **Jazzanova** will finally be releasing a full album in November, *Remixes 1997-2000* (Jazzanova-Compost). It's not their proper debut full-length (expected some time next year), but *Remixes* explains how DJs who have only released two EPs have developed a global following—and why they've not had much time to make their own records. The double CD will feature 20 remakes for the likes of hot two-step-per MJ Cole, Ian Pooley, Roy Davis and more.... **Richie Hawtin** is celebrating the 10th anniversary of his Plus 8 label (which has released music from Plastikman, John Acquaviva, Speedy J, Ken Ishii and more) with a three-album retrospective, *Plus 8 Classics* (Plus 8), out now.

PICKS

When **DEEP DISH** isn't busy slaying dancefloors with a remix of Madonna's "Music," they're concocting killer house sets. The proof? The two-disc *Renaissance Ibiza* (Yoshi Toshi).

IAN POOLEY returns with *Since Then* (V2), a coquettish mix of house and breakbeat for the discriminating Francophile. It's all insouciant bounce and French whispers.

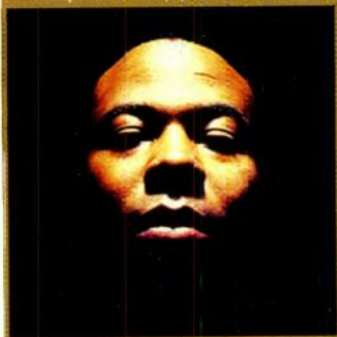
On *Peligroso* (Ubiquity), **DAVE PIKE** plinks his vibraphone atop band leader Bobby Matos's Afro-Cuban beats. It's perfect for the global-minded downtempo set.

1	DJ CAM Loa Project (Volume II)	SIX DEGREES
2	THIEVERY CORPORATION The Mirror Conspiracy	EIGHTEENTH STREET LOUNGE
3	SASHA AND JOHN DIGWEED Communicate	KINETIC-REPRISE
4	SANDRA COLLINS Tranceport 3	KINETIC
5	A GUY CALLED GERALD Essence	STUDIO K7
6	CARL COX Mixed Live	MOONSHINE
7	PAUL VAN DYK Out There And Back	MUTE
8	URSULA 1000 All Systems Are Go Go	EIGHTEENTH STREET LOUNGE
9	SMITH & MIGHTY Bass Is Maternal	STUDIO K7
10	TESTUBE Reconstructive Surgery	DSBP
11	POLE 3	MATADOR
12	BT Movement In Still Life	NETTWERK
13	UP BUSTLE & OUT Master Sessions 1	NINJA TUNE
14	FUNKSTÖRUNG Appetite For Disctruction	STUDIO K7
15	DARREN EMERSON Global Underground: Uruguay	BOXED
16	LTJ BUKEM Journey Inwards	KINETIC
17	SPRING HEEL JACK Disappeared	THIRSTY EAR
18	TRANCE GROOVE Driving South	CALL IT ANYTHING-INTUITION
19	VARIOUS ARTISTS Just Another Taste Of...	EWB-KINDERCORE
20	CUT.RATE.BOX New Religion	GASHED
21	FINK Fresh Produce	NINJA TUNE
22	MOODORAMA Music For Collapsing People	STEREO DELUXE
23	DJ DB The Higher Education...	HIGHER EDUCATION-F111/WARNER BROS.
24	SOUNDTRACK Groove	KINETIC-REPRISE
25	NEGATIVE FORMAT Distant Pulses	GASHED!

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

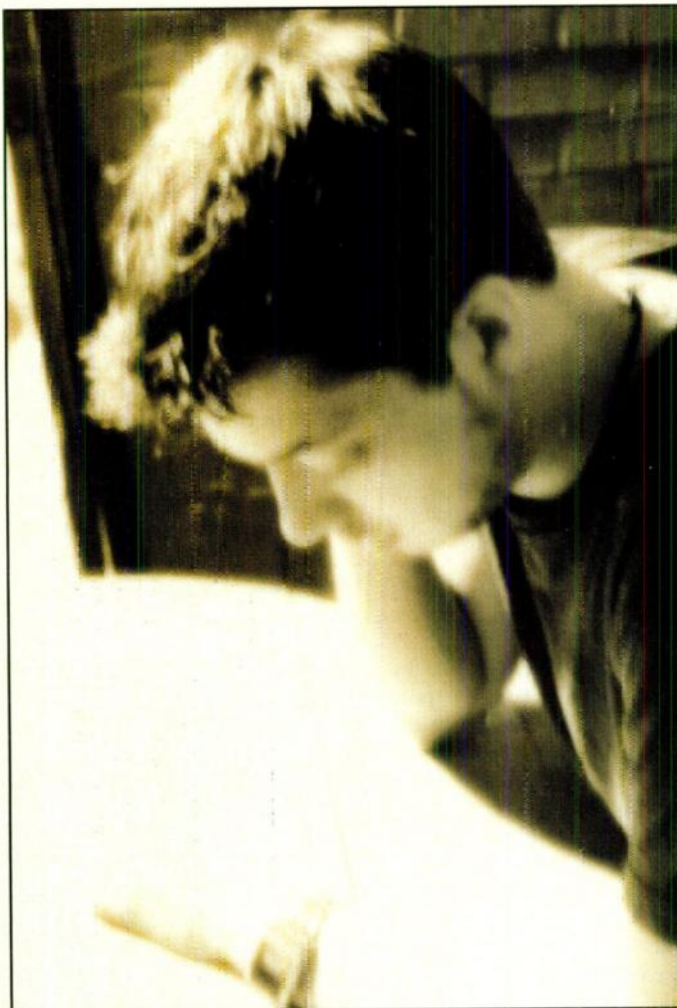
- 1 DE LA SOUL FEAT. REDMAN
"Ooh" TOMMY BOY
- 2 DJ HONDA FEAT. JERU THE DAMAJA
"El Presidente" DJ HONDA
- 3 JURASSIC-5
"Quality Control" INTERSCOPE
- 4 DILATED PEOPLES
"The Platform (Remix)" ABB-CAPITOL
- 5 DJ HURRICANE FEAT. XZ'BIT, BIG
"Connect" TVT
- 6 BLACK EYED PEAS
"BEP Empire" INTERSCOPE

7 DIVINE STYLER
Wordpower 2: Directrix (LP) NO WAX-BEGGARS BANQUET



- 8 MEENO
"I'm That Nigga" PRIORITY
- 9 MC PAUL BARMAN
"How Hard Is That" MATADOR
- 10 TALIB KWELI & PLANET ASIA
"Don't Let Up" MONA-LANDSPEED
- 11 SHABAAM SAHDEEQ
"3D" RAWKUS
- 12 STYLES INFINITE
"Fresh Air" SHADY ACRES
- 13 REKS
"Skills 101" BRICK-LANDSPEED
- 14 SOLE
"Bottle Of Humans" ANTICON
- 15 ALLIES
D-day (EP) ASPHOCAL
- 16 QUASIMOTO
"Come On Feet" STONES THROW-NU GRUV
- 17 CALI AGENTS
"How The West Was One" GROUND-CONTROL-NU GRUV
- 18 PEP LOVE
"Crooked Angels" HERO IMPERIUM
- 19 SHYNE
"Bad Boyz" BAD BOY-ARISTA
- 20 CMA
"The Best" G & E
- 21 BUSTA RHYMES
"Fire" ELEKTRA
- 22 REFLECTION ETERNAL
"Move Something" RAWKUS
- 23 SADAT X
"X-Man" STIMULATED-LOUD
- 24 LIL' KIM
"Notorious K.I.M." QUEEN BEE-UNDEAS-ATLANTIC
- 25 KURUPT
"Ride With Us" ANTRA-ARTEMIS

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



>>>MC/producer **Aesop Rock** claims he's a seer, in the classic sense of the word. He says he views the world differently, and has strange visions—both real and imagined. Confused? So are a lot of his fans. "People often tell me that they don't know what the hell I'm talking about," he states, matter-of-factly. "But they like it." The 24-year-old New Yorker is one of a small group of rappers and producers (Anti-Pop Consortium, Company Flow, Freestyle Fellowship) who've been taking their art to a new level, challenging what it means to be an artist by remembering their roots as fed-up fans. As shown on *Float* (Mush), his lyrical style is multilayered and ever-changing; he throws quick-witted words over and around minimal beats laid down with production partner Blockhead. Atmosphere is *Float's* means-to-an-end, creating moody beds for Aesop to splay his ideas across, and it shows on "Big Bang"'s bass groove and multi-layered stylistics, on the drum-machine-led love/hate TV ode "Basic Cable" and on the accordion-tinged fable "The Mayor And The Crook." But the atmosphere's only icing—Aesop's fanbase is firmly built on respect for the verse he throws over it. Says the MC, "I think that's because I'm honest. I speak in a way that lets people know the reality in the emotion behind the words."

NEWS



BIGGIE'S GEAR AT THE EMP.

>>>>Hip-hop, museum-style: After appropriating a hefty chunk of space at the recently-opened Experience Music Project museum in Seattle (www.experience.org/explore/hiphop), hip-hop will be given another gallery outlet (partially sponsored by the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame) at the Brooklyn Museum Of Art with a show entitled "**Hip Hop Nation: Roots, Rhymes And Rage**," running from September 22 to December 31. For more info, check out www.brooklynart.org. And for more essential history brought into the online age, make sure to check out www.grandmasterflash.com and www.rocksteadycrew.com.... Quannum Projects (formerly Solesides) has signed a distribution deal with Ninja Tune for releases outside North America. All future output in those areas will be jointly released, starting with the two-CD/tour-LP compilation *Solesides' Greatest Bumps*, out October 30.... Three of the coolest hip-hop mix-shows in the country can be caught online, so you don't have to settle for bad radio in your area: Find Sway & King Tech's "Wake Up Show" at www.wakeupshow.com; Oliver "O-Dub" Wang's KALX "O-Zone" show through www.o-dub.com (along with some of his hip-hop journalism); and DJ J-Boogie's always-dope mix show on San Fran's KUSF at www.kusf.org.

PICKS

KOOL KEITH's pumped out another album, *Matthew* (Threshold-Funky Ass) full of lots of industry angst and sprinkled with his patented wry humor.

No, Kool Keith won't go away, so deal with it. On the **ANALOG BROTHERS'** *Pimp To Eat* (Ground Control-Nu Gruv), he teams with Ice-T for an excellent romp into the electro-pimpin' world.

Southern rappers/producers **PARENTAL ADVISORY** return with *My Life Your Entertainment* (DreamWorks)—a slick and grooving album full of quickstep rhymes and playful tales.

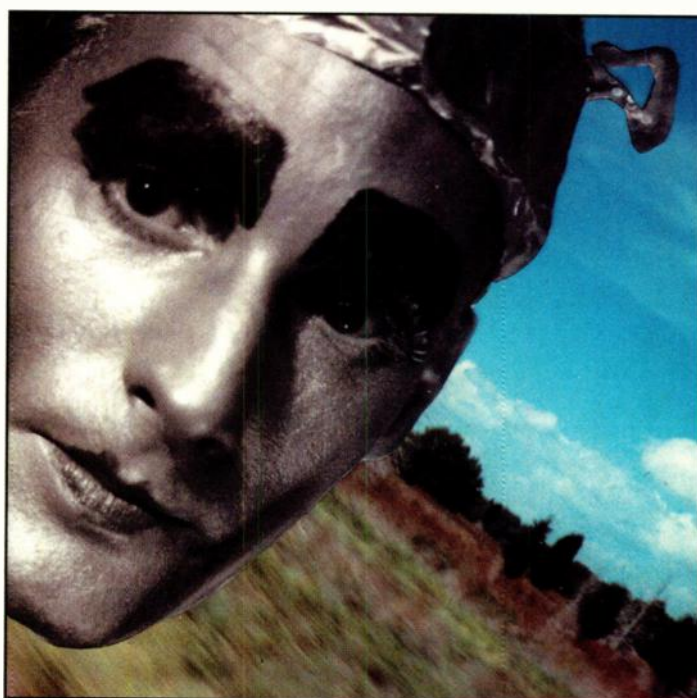


CALVIN JOHNSON

>>>It's been eight years since the last single by **Beat Happening**, Calvin Johnson's first band and the figurehead of American indie-pop for both good and ill (an infamous early-'90s T-shirt read "Calvin Johnson Has Ruined Rock For An Entire Generation"). But they never quite said they'd broken up, because, as it turns out, they never quite did. "Angel Gone" (K), recorded earlier this year, picks up exactly where Beat Happening left off, though it's closer to the Lee Hazlewood side of their repertoire than the Cramps side. They're still sloppy, sweet and casual—the idea, as always, is to sound like they're making up something really inspired on the spot. Calvin croons about "crashing those pearly gates" in the lowest voice in rock, and the band jangles and bats at their instruments like they've just figured out how to work them correctly. The B-side, "Zombie Limbo Time," is even better, with a groove like an ultra-low-tech version of Johnson's more recent band, Dub Narcotic Sound System. In an inspired conflation of garage-rock silliness and eros/thanatos impulses, it also features somebody making kitty-cat noises. There'll be a seven-CD Beat Happening box set coming out in a few months, but it's great to hear that they don't belong entirely to history yet.

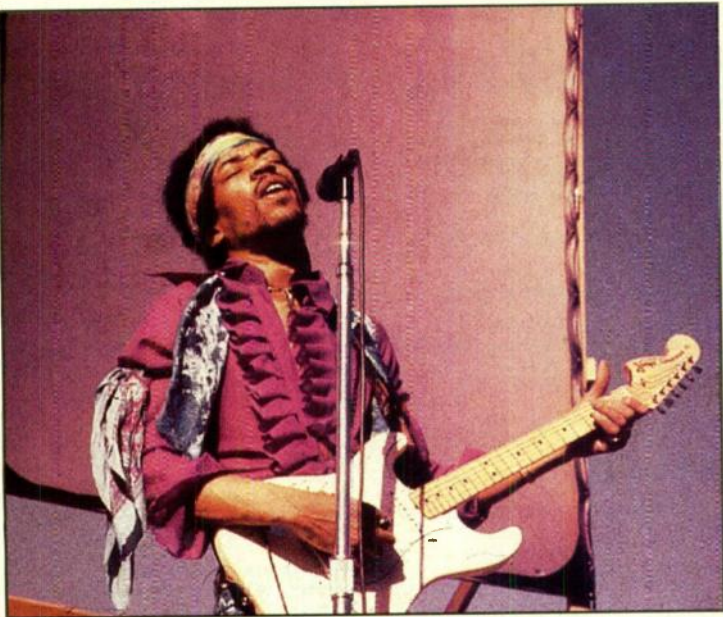
A FEW QUICK DROPS OF THE NEEDLE

>>>"Don't buy the **Alexander Spence** single," the guy at the record store advised me. "It'll ruin the album for you." That's not quite true, but it certainly demystifies it—"the album," of course, is *Oar*, the 1969 solo recording by Moby Grape co-founder "Skip" Spence, a fragile, unique piece of outsider music recorded in the middle of a nervous breakdown and reissued a couple of years ago along with a tribute album, *More Oar*. The never-before-issued "All My Life (I Love You)" was recorded in 1972 with what appears to be the most club-footed rock band of all time—think KISS after an over-enthusiastic lobotomy. Despite its bombast, it's barely a sketch for a song (the title constitutes half the lyrics), and the proto-metalloid guitar solo doesn't help flesh it out much. "Land Of The Sun," on the other side, is a lot more rewarding—recorded by Spence in the '90s to be considered for the *X-Files* soundtrack, and first released as a bonus track on *More Oar*, it sounds like he's in a very bad way (as he was by then), but its sense of horrified burnout is the point.... The English electronic whiz who calls himself **D** has been amassing his discography very slowly—five years have seen little more than a few remixes of the likes of Ui and Ganger—but an excellent new single (on Soul Static Sound) brings him back together with his old collaborators To Rococo Rot. His specialty is flaying a track raw, stripping out its beats, and smearing tiny globules of its timbre around, which he does with the chirping, stumbling buzz of "Smaller Listening." It's not Oval-style pointillism as much as close examination of specific sounds and their natural overtones—the equivalent of zeroing in on a detail of an image and blowing it up to the size of a room. The B-side's "Numbers In Love" is a little more groove-friendly, at least until its bass pulse dissolves like a stream trickling into tributaries.... The Olivia Tremor Control has gone on hiatus and may not return from it, but co-leader Bill Doss (now calling himself, ahem, The Bill Doss) has launched his new project, the **Sunshine Fix**, with an EP, *The Future History Of The Sunshine Fix* (Kindercore). It's not much of a change from the OTC's basic sound—compact '68-style psych with a few trillion instruments pushing for space in the mix—but it's a lot more controlled than the old band's dreamy sprawl, and Doss has added a couple of new twists, notably a breakbeat in "The Many Keys To Reunion." There are a couple of genre exercises here, like "Last Night I Had A Dream (Said I Had A Dream Last Night)" (isn't that parenthesis a little too cute?), a trippier take on "5d"-era Byrds, but "The Sound's Around You" is especially terrific, a lush, assured journey to the center of somebody's mind.... Speaking of



THE SUNSHINE FIX

the **Olivia Tremor Control**, they've finally reissued their astounding first few pop-psychedelic singles on a CD, *Singles And Beyond* (Emperor Norton-Kindercore), along with various compilation tracks. It's not exactly an advance in fidelity—they were made at home with spit and baling wire, and the *California Demise* EP is taped from the vinyl—but it's the best stuff they ever did.... **Barbara Manning's** also compiled most of her early-'90s singles on *Under One Roof: Singles And Oddities* (Innerstate). Long out of print, they're also among her career highlights—a friend has literally worn out two copies of her first solo single, "Don't Let It Bring You Down"/"Haze Is Free," from playing them too much. The set also includes a couple of previously unreleased tracks and the quietly twisted cover of the Beatles' "You've Got To Hide Your Love Away" that Manning and *Bananafish* zine editor Seymour Glass recorded as the Glands Of External Secretion.



>>> Like Sun Ra or George Clinton, **Jimi Hendrix** was a musical visionary who cast himself as a brother from another world. It's simple, really: If you don't like growing up in the broken home of a poor black family, then take your music, hit the road, reinvent yourself and say you were born in outer space. It's a deeper gesture, though, since Hendrix, like Sun Ra or Clinton or so many other master musicians, reminds us at every turn that music comes from Somewhere Else and that the best musicians are merely conduits through which it flows. The long-awaited, eponymous **Jimi Hendrix Experience** box set on MCA-Universal boasts four CDs of new material for Hendrix acolytes and fans to gorge on, virtually all of it previously unreleased. There are crucial flashes of the raw wildness of his early period (documented in a live concert from Paris in late '66), an alternate version of "Purple Haze" (which could renew the controversy over whether Hendrix actually sings "Scuse me while I kiss this guy") and four "new" songs which have never appeared anywhere, even on bootleg. There are tapes from some of the craziest, most legendary live gigs of the '60s, as well as glimpses of the guitarist both in the studio and making intimate home recordings. An instrumental version of "Little Wing" is the capper, showing how graceful and fluid Hendrix's guitar playing was: Even as a backing track it is so full of subtlety, tonal color and melodic invention that it boggles the mind.

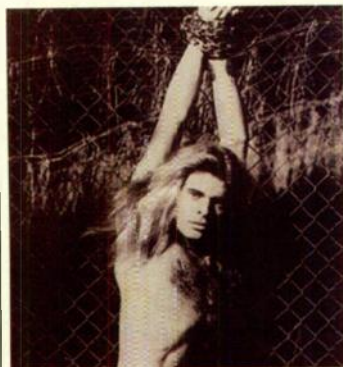
>>> In the pantheon of gnarly American garage rock, there are few greater names to conjure than the **Electric Prunes**. Collector's Choice has just reissued three seminal albums: *I Had Too Much To Dream*, *Underground* and the truly bizarre *Mass In F Minor*, a full Catholic Mass scored for psychedelic rock quintet. Not only were the Prunes masters of the fuzz bass and distorted guitar freakout, the unabashed black-light nihilism of their lyrics makes the members serious contenders for the title of Original Punks.... One would be hard-pressed to find a more universally loved American songwriter than **Hank Williams, Sr.** Mercury Nashville has just released *Alone With His Guitar*, a thrilling collection of solo radio performances and song demos spotlighting the man himself in the prime of his brief career. Cover



HANK WILLIAMS, SR.

artwork is by Jon Langford of the Mekons and Waco Brothers.... **Phil Ochs** found himself disillusioned at the end of the '60s, and in a truly bizarre career twist, the renowned leftist protest singer purchased a gold lamé suit and began playing campy country and rockabilly versions of his earlier songs, inexplicable covers like "Okie From Muskogee" and hiccupped medleys of Elvis tunes, all while his outraged audience booed, hissed and howled for blood. The resulting 1970 live document *Gunfight At Carnegie Hall* (on Collector's Choice) is a ludicrously funny exercise in how to antagonize your fans, and an eerie precursor to Andy Kaufman's confrontational brand of comedy that teeters on the edge of sanity. Ochs even looks a little like Kaufman with his feathery Roy Orbison hairdo.... In the more traditional world of stand-up comedy, few comedians crossed more barriers and pushed more buttons than **Richard Pryor**, whose shocking humor has just been celebrated in a multi-CD box set from Rhino. Much like Lenny Bruce before him, Pryor brazenly cracked jokes about topics that most people wished would stay locked in the closet or swept under the rug. Significantly, Pryor's deepest work made fun of stereotypes on both sides, a world where righteous spades were just as funny as uptight crackers and often the real butt of the jokes was each side's bias.

NEWS



DAVID LEE ROTH AND HIS ROCK-HARD ABS

>>> Warner Brothers has announced the new Remasters series of reissues, kicking off this fall with 20 mainstream titles by the likes of **Dire Straits**, **Eric Clapton**, **Van Halen** and **Red Stewart**. These albums were originally released on CD in the '80s during the "crank-em-out" years before labels paid much attention to mastering and packaging, so if you never replaced your worn-out adolescent vinyl of

Diver Down or *Tonight I'm Yours*, now's the time.... November will see the release of Sony Legacy's long-awaited three-CD box set from **Stevie Ray Vaughan**, which will include a DVD containing live footage of the Texas guitar slinger from the TV show *Austin City Limits*. It's pretty clear that the future of the box set lies in this sort of audio-visual presentation. For one thing, it's a great way for labels to clear the vaults of archival footage that may not be of sufficient quality or length to warrant a full release, and gives consumers further reason to plunk down their cash for a lavish box that won't really fit properly on their CD shelves.... Another Columbia box set waiting in the wings is from the **Electric Light Orchestra**, but don't expect it to have any multimedia footage of Jeff Lynne or Bev Bevan's super-sized '70s Afros in action....

JUST OUT

OCTOBER 3

ARSON Less Perfect Than Death *Resurrection A.D.*
—7-inch.
BADLY DRAWN BOY The Hour Of Bewilderbeast *Twisted Nerve-XL*
BLONDE REDHEAD Melodie Clonique *Touch And Go*.
—Five-song EP.
RICHARD BUCKNER The Hill *Overcoat*.
DON CABBALERO American Don *Touch And Go*.
CAPPADONIA The Yin & The Yang *Epic*.
JIM CARROLL Runaway *Kill Rock Stars*.
—CD single.
CATHARSIS AND THE HUMDRUM *Idols Of The Marketplace*.
ALICE COOPER The Best Of Alice Cooper *Rhino*.
THE CULT The Best Of Rare Cult *Beggars Banquet*.
TRACY DAWN Poetic Aftermath *Warner Bros*.
DIO The Very Best Of Dio *Rhino*.
THE DOOBIE BROTHERS Sibling Rivalry *Rhino*.
DOVES Lost Souls *Heavenly-Astralwerks*.
FLYBANGER Outlived *Gotham*.
—EP.
GREEN DAY Warning *Reprise*.
GUILLERMO GREGORIO Otra Musica Collection *Atavistic-Unheard Music Series*.
THE IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS Let's Get Killed *Estrus*.
—7-inch.
INDIGO GIRLS Indigo Girls; Strange Fire; Nomads Indians Saints; Retrospective; Rites of Passage *Epic*.
—All are expanded releases except for Retrospective, which is a greatest-hits disc featuring two new tracks.
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Nothing We Can Control *Overcoat*.
INTERPRETERS Big Wheel Recreation.
—EP and 10-inch.
JEBEDIAH Of Sordid Shambles *Big Wheel Recreation*.
—Stateside release of Australian hotlives' double-platinum-down-under LP.
JOAN OF ARC The Gap *Jade Tree*.
SVEN-AKE JOHANSSON Schlingerland *Atavistic-Unheard Music Series*.
STEVE LAWLER Nu Breed *Boxed*.
TIM "LOVE" LEE Call Me "Lone Lee" *Tummy Touch*.
LOVE LIGHT SHINE Big Wheel Recreation.
—EP.
MASTERMINDS Joints 2000/Spinners *Ground Control-Nu Gruv*.
—12-inch.
THE MOONEY SUZUKI People Get Ready *Estrus*.
MARK MOTHERSBAUGH Joyeux Mutato *Rhino*.
GEOFF MULDAUR Password *Rhino*.
MY FAVORITE Joan Of Arc Awaiting Trial *Double Agent*.
NIGHTMARES ON WAX DJ Kicks *Studio K7*.
THE PLACES The Autopilot Knows You Best *Absolutely Kosh-Nu Gruv*.
POEM ROCKET Psykogeography *Atavistic*.
RADIOHEAD Kid A *Capitol*.
RED STARS THEORY Red Stars Theory *Touch And Go*.
—EP with two remixes of songs from 1999's "Life In A Bubble Can Be Beautiful" and two new tracks.
THE ROCK-A-TEENS Sweet Bird Of Youth *Merge*.
JA RULE Murder Inc.-Def Jam.
SCARFACE In My Time Of Dying *Virgin*.
SCHLIPPENBACH QUARTET Hunting The Snake *Atavistic-Unheard Music Series*.
THE SCIENCE OF GLASS GARGANTUA Pink & Brown. Lowdown *Toyo-Nu Gruv*.
—EP.
THE SEA AND CAKE Oui *Thrill Jockey*.
SHIPPING NEWS Touch And Go.
SILVER SCOOTER Goodbye *Peek-a-Boo*.
—EP.
PAUL SIMON You're The One *Warner Bros*.
SINCLAIRE Attention Teenage Girls *Sonic Unyon*.
SPOON Love Ways *Merge*.
—EP.
JOHN TCHIAI/RIENE SCHWEIZER QUARTET With The Pig *Atavistic-Unheard Music Series*.
EMILIANA TORRINI Love In The Time Of Science *Virgin*.
TOWN AND COUNTRY It All Has To Do With It *Thrill Jockey*.
TRISTAN PSIONIC Mind The Gap *Sonic Unyon*.
UNISEX Stratosfear *Double Agent*.
VERSUS Hurrah *Merge*.
YANNI If I Could Tell You *Virgin*.
—You know you're DFL with Yanni. Don't even front, sucka.

OCTOBER 9

SLAM VS UNKLE *Soma*.
—12-inch and CD single.
TUTTO MATTO Take My Hand *Tummy Touch*.
—12-inch.
WESLEY WILLIS Rush Hour *Alternative Tentacles*.
—Reissue which proves that CMJ isn't the only place you can enjoy the rantings of schizophrenics.

OCTOBER 10

A3 La Peste *Columbia*.
AMEN We've Come For Your Parents *Virgin*.
ANAL CUNT The Early Years 1988-1991 *Ng-Artemis*.
ARTFUL DOGGER *London*.
BARE JR. Brainwasher *Virgin*.
CEPHAS & WIGGINS From Richmond To Atlanta *Bullseye Blues & Jazz*.
DA GRASSROOTS Body Language *Conception-Nu Gruv*.
—12-inch.
DOGGY'S ANGELS Snoop Dogg Presents Doggy's Angels *Doggystyle-TVT*.
DOGWOOD Building A Better Me *Tooth And Nail*.
PERRY FARRELL The Diamond Jubilee *Virgin*.
G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE 550.
GAZA STRIPPERS *Lookout!*
GHETTO TWINZ Got It On My Mind *Virgin*.
GOMEZ Abandoned Shopping Trolley Hotline *Virgin*.
—A collection of B-sides and unreleased material.
MERLE HAGGARD If I Could Only Fly *Anti*.
TOM HAMBRIDGE *Artemis*.
DJ HURRICANE Don't Sleep *TVT*.
IDAHO Hearts Of Palm *Idaho*.
JAZZANOVA Remixes *Jazzanova*.
JAZZMASTERS Greatest Hits *Trippin-Push*.
LUDACRIS Def Jam South.
ERIN MCKEOWN Distillation *Signature Sounds*.
MICRO Djmixed.com/micro *Moonshine*.
MR. SHORT KHOP Da Khop Shop *TVT*.
NRBQ Scraps *Rounder*.
LAURA NYRO The Best Of Laura Nyro *Columbia Legacy*.
THE OC SUPERTONES Loud And Clear *BEC*.
ORGY Vapor Transmission *Reprise*.
OUTSIDERZ 4 LIFE *Virgin*.
PENNYWISE Live At The Key Club *Epitaph*.
PLENA LIBRE Mas Libre *Fat Wreck Chords*.
IAN POOLEY Since Then *V2*.
RAM-Z *TVT*.
JOSH RYAN DJ Trance Mix *Palm*.
SLASH'S SNAKEPT Ain't Life Grand *Koch*.
SKINDIVE *Palm*.
SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS Liqueured Up And Laquered Down *TVT*.
MICHAEL SPEAKS Praise At Your Own Risk *Epic*.
STRAIGHT FACED Pulling Teeth *Epitaph*.
SWINGIN' UTTERS Fat Wreck Chords.
CHALEE TENNISON This Woman's Heart *Asylum-Warner Bros*.
DJ TËSTO Summer Breeze *Network*.
TITAN Elevator *Tombola-Virgin*.
THE WALLFLOWERS Breach *Interscope*.
WILD ORCHID *RCA*.
WILLIE D Loved By Few, Hated By Many *Virgin*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Alan Lomax Collection: Sing Christmas! *Rounder*.
—A BBC Christmas broadcast from 1957, including performances by Shirley Collins, Ewan MacColl and Lomax himself.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Songs From The Penalty Box Vol. 4 *Tooth And Nail*.
—Features tracks from Ghotti Hook, Calibretto 13, Ninety Pound Wuss and more.

OCTOBER 17

ACETONE York Blvd. *Vapor*.
JOHNNY ADAMS There Is Always One More Time *Rounder*.
ADD N TO X Add Insult To Injury *Mute*.
AMBER Remixed *Tommy Boy*.
LAURIE ANDERSON The Laurie Anderson Anthology *Rhino*.
JEFF BEAL Alternate Route *Unitone*.
BOOZOO CHAVIS Johnnie Billy Goat *Rounder*.
BRAND NEW HEAVIES The Best Of The Brand New Heavies *Rhino*.
RUTH CAMERON Roadhouse *Verve*.
—Disappointingly, this record has nothing to do with the Patrick Swayze film of the same name.
JOHNNY CASH American III *Columbia*.
CUT THROATS NINE Man's Ruin.
DEAD HOLLYWOOD STARS Gone West *Mad Monkey-Nu Gruv*.
AL DIMEOLA Anthology *Columbia Legacy*.
DOWNSET Check Your People *Epitaph*.
HEATHER DUBY/ELEMENTAL Sub Pop.
ELF POWER Winter Is Coming *Sugar Free*.
EUPHONIE Hashin' It Out *Jade Tree*.
EVERLAST Eat At Whitey's *Tommy Boy*.
FAITH NO MORE Introduce Yourself *Rhino*.
—Reissue.
FAULTLINE Closer Colder *Thirsty Ear*.
LAURENT GARNIER Unreasonable Behavior *Mute*.
GEORGIA MIDDLEMAN Endless Possibilities *Giant*.
GWNEMARS Driving A Million *SeeThru Broadcasting*.

JEGA Geometry *Matador*.
JOE ROLAND Joe Roland Quintet *Rhino*.
JUJU Koka (Chica Mala) *Thermal-Nu Gruv*.
—12-inch.
JUNO REACTOR Shango *Metropolis*.
THE LETTER E No. Five Long Player *Tiger Style*.
LIBRANESS Yesterday... And Tomorrow's Shells *Tiger Style*.
—New project from Ash Bowie (ex-Polvo/Hellium).
BOOKER LITTLE And Friend *Rhino*.
MAGNETOPHONE I Guess Sometimes I Need To Be Reminded Of How Much I *4AD*.
THE MISFITS Walk Among Us *Rhino*.
—Reissue.
MOUNTAIN GOATS The Coroner's Gambit *Absolutely Kosh-Nu Gruv*.
KHADJA NIN Ya... *Mondo Melodia*.
NINE INCH NAILS Things Falling Apart *Nothing-Interscope*.
—A collection of remixes from The Fragile.
MARK OLSON & THE ORIGINAL HARMONY RIDGE CREEK DIPPER My Own Jo Ellen *Rhino*.
PARIS TEXAS Brazilian! *Polyvinyl*.
—CD-EP.
PHARCYDE The Best Of Pharcyde *Rhino*.
RICHARD PRYOR ...And It's Deep Too: The Complete Warner Bros. Recordings *Rhino*.
RED SNAPPER Our Aim Is To Please Red Snapper *Matador*.
ROOMFUL OF BLUES The Blues'll Make You Happy, Too *Rounder*.
SCANNER Scannerfunk *Sulfur*.
JIMMY SMITH .com Blues *Verve*.
SPIRITUAL PIECES Soul Food *Tommy Boy Gospel*.
SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS Bedlam Ballroom *Mammoth*.
JEANIE STAHL All Grown Up *Daring*.
—Reissue.
SUBCODE Purple Eggs, Blunt Figure, Blue Sneakers, A Machine *Thermal-Nu Gruv*.
—12-inch.
SUNDAY'S BEST Poised To Break *Polyvinyl*.
SUPERDRAG In The Valley Of Dying Stars *Arena Rock*.
STEVE TAVAGLIONE Silent Singing *Unitone*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS 20,000 Leagues Under The Street Pockets *Limited-Nu Gruv*.
—Underground hip-hop from Planet Asia, Rasco, Zion I and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Afro-American Folk Music From Tate And Panola Counties, Mississippi *Rounder*.
—Traditional African-American folk music from Compton Jones, Lucius Smith and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS This Is Samba! Vol. 1 *Rounder*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS This Is Samba! Vol. 2 *Rounder*.
—A whole bunch o' samba from Wilson Moreira, Luiz Carlos da Vila, Guilherme De Brito and more.
VIOLENT FEMMES Violent Femmes; Hallowed Ground *Rhino*.
—Reissues.
CRISTIAN VOGEL Rescue 137 *Mute*.
THE WACO BROTHERS Electric Waco Chair *Bloodshot*.
BEN WATTY/JAY HANAAN Lazy Dog *Astralwerks*.
—A two-CD mix, featuring one set by Everything But The Girl's Ben Watt.
KIRK WHALLUM Unconditional *Warner Bros*.
XX Give It Up *Tommy Boy Silver Label*.
—12-inch and CD single.

OCTOBER 24

34 SATELLITE Radar *Hiwayway*.
A3 La Peste *Columbia*.
CHRISTINA AGUILERA My Kind Of Christmas *RCA*.
—She just released Mi Reflejo on September 12! What have we done to deserve this?
ACE TROUBLESHOOTER *BEC*.
AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM Release *Real World*.
FRANKIE BONES You Know My Name *Moonshine*.
BRATMOBILE Take The Pain And Use It *Lookout!*
R.L. BURNSIDE Wish I Was In Heaven Sitting Down *Fat Possum*.
CALIBRETTO 13 Enter The Danger Brigade *Tooth And Nail*.
CAPONE N NOREAGA The Reunion *Tommy Boy*.
CRYSTAL SIERRA *Morena* *Virgin*.
CUBA La Navidad Cubana *Narada World*.
THE DELUXTONE ROCKETS Green Room Blues *Tooth And Nail*.
DIESELBOY The Sixth Session *Palm*.
—Two-CD set.
DINNER IS RUINED Ray Charles Kinda Party *Sonic Unyon*.
DISENGAGE Man's Ruin.
DOWNLOAD Effector *Network*.
FOZZY Megaforce.
NELLY FURTADO Whoa Nelly! *DreamWorks*.
PJ HARVEY Stories From The City, Stories From The Sea *Island*.

BARRY HARRIS Circuit Sessions 00.3 *Moonshine*.
HESHER Self-Titled Debut *Warner Bros*.
HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH Scattered Smothered And Covered *Atlantic*.
—The collection of B-sides and rarities that you've been anxiously awaiting.
BRUCE HORNSBY Here Come The Noisemakers *RCA*.
K Total Recall/Trackspill *Thermal-Nu Gruv*.
—12-inch.
KING CHANGO The Return Of El Santo *Luaka Bop*.
LESS THAN JAKE Borders And Boundaries *Fat Wreck Chords*.
LIL MO Based On A True Story *Elektra*.
ABBEY LINCOLN Over The Years *Verve*.
LINKIN PARK Hybrid Theory *Warner Bros*.
JENNIFER LOPEZ A Passionate Journey *Work*.
MEDESKI MARTIN & WOOD The Dropper *Blue Note*.
GOPAL SHANKAR MISRA Out Of Stillness *Real World*.
OUTKAST Stankonia *La Face-Arista*.
PSYCHEDELIC FURS Greatest Hits *Columbia Legacy*.
RAISED FIST Ignoring The Guidelines *Burning Heart*.
OMAR SANTANA Hardcore For The Heads *Moonshine*.
DAN SIEGEL Along The Way: The Best Of Dan Siegel *Columbia Legacy*.
CRYSTAL SIERRA *Morena* *Virgin*.
RONI SIZE In The Mode *Island*.
SPIN DOCTORS The Best Of The Spin Doctors *Epic Legacy*.
TEAR GARDEN Crystal Mass *Network*.
TINGSTAD & RUMBEL Paradise *Narada*.
TARSHA VEGA Diamonds And Monsters *RCA*.
ULTRA V *RCA*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Mantra Mix *Narada World*.
—An album to benefit Tibetan refugees, with tracks from Moby, Madonna, Travis and more.

OCTOBER 30

VARIOUS ARTISTS Solesides Greatest Bumps *Quannum-Ninja Tune*.
—Rare and unreleased tracks from DJ Shadow, Blackalicious and others.

OCTOBER 31

DJ ASSAULT Off The Chain, For The Y2K *Intuit-Solar*.
MC PAUL BACHMAN *Matador*.
—12-inch and CD-EP.
NORMAN BLAKE Blackberry Blossom *Flying Fish*.
CLEARLIGHT/ACID KING Man's Ruin.
DEAD HOLLYWOOD STARS Wagon Of Miracles *Mad Monkey-Nu Gruv*.
—12-inch.
KATHIE LEE GIFFORD Heart Of A Woman *On The Lamb*.
—This record will be followed by Frank Gifford's much-anticipated debut, Praying For Death's Sweet Carass.
GODSMACK Awake *Universal*.
HANGTOWN 11 Reasons *Black Dog*.
INCOGNITO Best Of Incognito *Blue Thumb*.
INSANE CLOWN POSSE Bizar Bazaar *Psychopathic-Island*.
LALEZAR ENSEMBLE Music Of The Sultans, Sufis, & Seraglio Vol. 1: Sultan Composers; Vol. 2: Music Of The Dancing Boys *Traditional Crossroads*.
—If you ain't never been to the Ottoman Empire, don't you ever come to the Ottoman Empire, cause you wouldn't understand the Ottoman Empire!
MELVINS Man's Ruin.
MR. DIBBS Live In Memphis *Stereo-Type-Nu Gruv*.
PASCAL & MISTER DAY High Flying *Glasgow Underground*.
THE PHUZZ American Pop *Birthmark*.
POE Haunted *Atlantic*.
RAINER MARIA *Polyvinyl*.
—7-inch.
SAD ROCKETS Transition *Matador*.
SANTANA The Best Of Santana Vol. 2 *Columbia-Legacy*.
SYNTHETIC 16 Your Water *Resurrection A.D.*.
TWIZZED Freakshow *Psychopathic-Island*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Ecstasy Of The Agony *Alternative Tentacles*.
—30-track label sampler featuring Half Japanese, Lard, Wesley Willis and more.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Traditional Fiddle Music Of The Ozarks Vol. 2: On The Springfield Plain *Rounder*.
—Get your Ozark on with songs like "Leather Britches" and "Pig Ankle Blues."
VARIOUS ARTISTS Traditional Fiddle Music Of The Ozarks Vol. 3: Down In The Border Counties *Rounder*.
—More Ozark, this time daring to ask the question, "Rabbit, Where's Your Mamma?" Which particularly warms the heart of Tom "The Sticky Bun" Mallon.
NICK WARREN Amsterdam *Bored-Global Underground*.
YOUTH ASYLUM We Are Young Americans *Qwest-Warner Bros*.

BEING ALMOST FAMOUS

PHOTOS BY ERIK BUTLER



CAMERON CROWE

FORMER ROLLING
STONE EDITOR BEN
FONG-TORRES
RECALLS THE
TRUTH BEHIND
CAMERON CROWE'S
ROCK 'N' ROLL LIFE.

Cameron Crowe is into details. On the set of *Almost Famous*, which traces his own beginnings as a teenage rock journalist, he's directing a scene depicting a *Rolling Stone* editorial meeting when he trots over to where I'm standing to check a detail about one of the writers we worked with years ago.

"Did Chet Flippo cover the Who tour in '73?" he asks. "I'm not sure," I reply, "but I do know one thing: We always called him 'Flippo,' and not Chet." Immediately, the name is changed.



KATE HUDSON

I'm on the set because I'm portrayed in the movie. Back in '73, I was an editor at *Rolling Stone* and met this gangly kid, Cameron, at a Rolling Stones concert. He said he'd like to write for the magazine. He didn't tell me that he was 15 (and already enrolled at San Diego City College), but he had written for an underground paper, *The San Diego Door*. I gave him his first assignments for *Rolling Stone* and, within a year, he'd profiled Yes, Poco, Deep Purple and Van Morrison, and he'd scored a cover story—on the Allman Brothers. There were questions about me assigning major stories to a teenager, but the quality of Cameron's work was response enough. Besides, several of our editors were amused—even proud—to have such a young guy, with fresh enthusiasm for the rock scene, writing for us.

When he set out to make a movie about those times, he cast a young actor from Vancouver, Terry Chen, to play me. On the set, Chen (looking eerily like me a quarter-century ago) came up to ask how, standing in the hallway, I might place my hands on my hips, how I might adjust my eyeglasses. I admitted I had no idea how I touched my glasses a quarter-century ago. I also thought, "Who could possibly care?" But I remained silent. For a film, I knew, details were everything.

On my way to the set in downtown Los Angeles, I passed the building whose exterior had been decorated to resemble the front of our old San Francisco offices. A set designer had called a month before to quiz me on the MJB Coffee sign in front of the building. I'd



PATRICK FUGIT

described its colors, and the numbers "625" that identified our building on Third Street. And now, here they were on a warehouse building on Figueroa, in L.A.

Cameron's need to get it right has its limits. Although the film is clearly autobiographical, he created a fictional band (called *Stillwater*) as an amalgam of artists he traveled with back in the day. The models, he says, are Led Zeppelin, the Allman Brothers and the Eagles. And, while he searched high, medium and low to cast actors to portray editor Jann Wenner, writer David Felton and me, he himself hides behind an actor (first-timer Patrick Fugit) who looks nothing like the younger Crowe, and gives him the name William Miller.

On the set, he told me that it was tough enough doing such a per-

sonal piece, that to have to give direction to an actor who looked like his 15-year-old self, named Cameron, would have been too much.

"I'm still not prepared to talk about this—the family stuff," said Crowe, whose mother understandably disapproved of her son wading into the gritty rock underworld. But he had to make the film. "I love personal stories. Every time a director does a personal story—like Truffaut with *The 400 Blows*—it's my favorite."

Almost Famous is very personal. And, like Cameron Crowe himself, it's cheerful, charming and smart. Although it's difficult to see him topping his last film, the Oscar-winning *Jerry Maguire*, with a smaller (albeit \$60 million) film with no bigger marquee names than Frances McDormand (*Fargo*), Billy Crudup (*Jesus' Son*) and *Without*



FONG-TORRES AT THE ROLLING STONE OFFICES. CIRCA 1972

Limits) and Kate Hudson (*200 Cigarettes*), he does it.

Set in 1973, *Almost Famous* shows what the rock scene was like back then, and how it was to be a writer, trailing and covering the bands, seesawing between the highs of the music (on stage, on planes and buses, and in hotel and green rooms) and the lows of being a reporter, an outsider—"the enemy," as the fictional band, Stillwater, calls Crowe's character.

The film has its requisite time-warped jokes (one manager advises Stillwater, "You've got to take what you can, when you can, while you can...because if you think Mick Jagger will still be out there trying to be a rock star at age 50, you're sadly, sadly mistaken"), but manages to be timeless. The focus, when all is said and seen, is on a sweet kid, a passionate rock fan who, on his first writing assignment and road trip, learns about family—the one at home in San Diego and the one he encounters with the band—about love, and about loyalty. Yes, there's an acid scene, and yes, there's a bit of sex, and some onstage concert footage—but Crowe has made a rock film that encompasses drugs and groupies without the clichéd, cartoon scenes we've seen in a dozen other period films. There's no dwelling on anything. There's no full song, no drawn-out getting-high-on-pot scene. Crowe's achieved something special because, like his spiritual mentor Billy Wilder, he came to screenplays (in 1981 with *Fast Times At Ridgemont High*) with a reporter's ears, instincts and training.

And, yes, because he's into details, there are authentic on-the-road, backstage and onstage moments, so real that I identified more often with William Miller, the Crowe character, than with my own. There really was nothing quite like the sensation of running along with a rock or pop act—a Stones, a Dylan, a Jackson 5—down coliseum corridors and into an arena illuminated only with the energy of 30,000 fans, standing, at one side of the stage, absorbing it all—the performance, the response, the aftermath—into a notebook and tape recorder, and, finally, meeting an inflexible deadline of *right now*.

Crowe, who apparently kept every single note and piece of memorabilia he gathered during his rock 'n' roll years, scores with true, true moments: the boredom of life on the road and on the bus, broken up by groupies, card games, and the occasional spontaneous sing-along; the conflicts between treating rock 'n' roll as art and as commerce; and, on the writer's side, the frustrations of losing promised interviews to a musician's whims. When William gets one too many "Go aways" from behind a hotel-room door, he flips an unseen bird, rages silently, and finally collapses into tears. It's a moment with which many rock journalists will identify.

Watching the scene, I felt guilty. Back in 1973, sending Cameron off to chase after Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and Rod Stewart and so

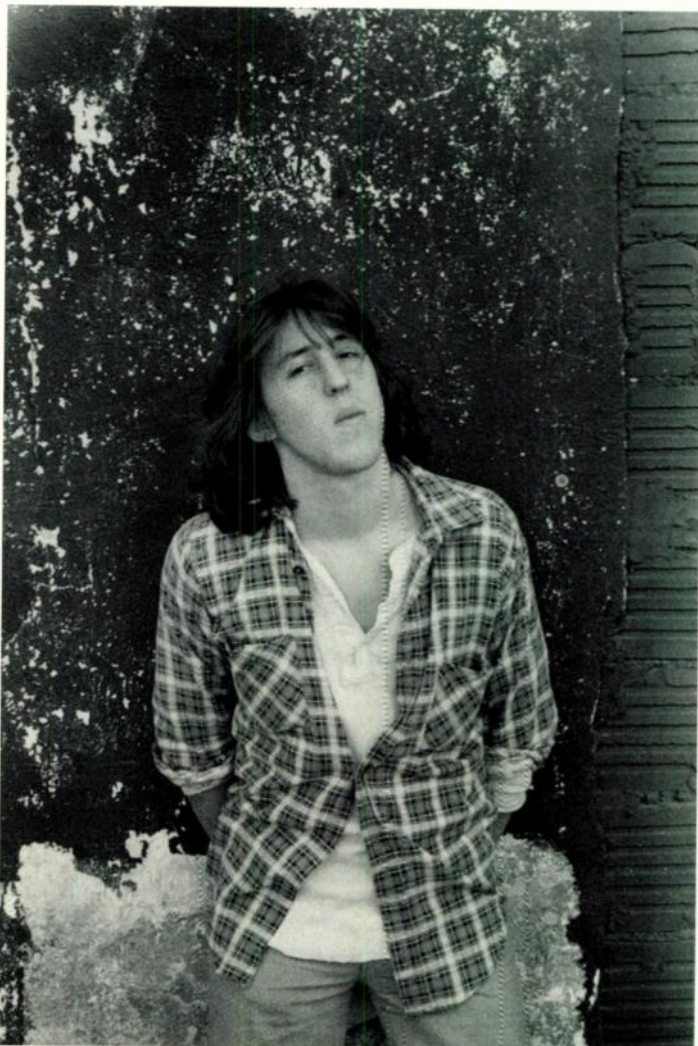
many others, I never thought much about his age, and what it meant to him—and his family—for him to be plunged into the world of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. As an editor, all I cared was that he was a good writer willing and able to score important articles for us.

On screen, that's pretty much how I appear. Overly protective family and friends have said that I come off too "mean," and that Crowe didn't portray my more flippant side. This is true. I was more than a hard-nosed editor—I was on the road half the time, chasing stories along with Cameron and all our other bylines. I had a radio show on Sundays. If memory serves, I had a girlfriend.

But then, Lester Bangs, the late and legendary critic, didn't spend all his time on the phone, counseling a young rock writer, as he's depicted doing in *Almost Famous*. And *Rolling Stone* didn't do to a Cameron Crowe story what the magazine is portrayed doing to "William" in the movie.

But here's the deal: It's a movie. There's also a DJ, named Alice Wisdom. She's based on a real-life radio hero of Crowe's. Except that the real DJ was a man, Gabriel Wisdom. All of us—Lester, the groupies, the rock band, *Rolling Stone* and I—served a purpose. We had a role: to help Crowe tell his story. So, yes, it's partly fiction, partly fact.

For me, it's true enough. **NMM**



TEENAGE CAMERON CROWE



MATT HARTENSTEIN

Rock stars and their addictions. For Pantera's pummeling rhythm section—bassist Rex Brown and drummer Vinnie Paul—it's golf. "We have a lot of free time out on the road and golf takes you away from the heavy, aggressive style of music that we play," says Rex. "The Golf Channel is on at my home 24-7," he says, waxing nostalgic about reruns of *Shell's Wonderful World Of Golf*. A relaxing game, yes, but nerve-wracking, too. "I can stand onstage in front of 30,000 people at night and not be nervous at all," says Rex. "But standing on that

first tee box at a pro-am...the nerves are unbelievable." Vinnie caught the golf bug from Rex, and now his love of the game manifests itself in another downtime activity: He owns a Dallas strip club called the Clubhouse. "It's an upscale, cool, rock 'n' roll-style tit bar," he boasts. "We have a 'back nine' room where we have nine girls at a time on the stage. The original idea was to buy a golf course and have the 19th hole be the strip bar. After finding out how much golf courses cost, I just opted to go for the tit bar." Write your own hole-in-one jokes, folks. >>>STEVE CIABATTONE



ROYAL WRAPPINGS

PRINCESS SUPERSTAR'S STYLISH PACKAGE

The Queen of the Lower East Side (by way of suburban Pennsylvania) reclines in an Angel Rox pink perachute skirt available at Urban Outfitters, a Gucci logo sunvisor available on street corners in Greenwich Village and a vintage "Supercock" jogging top.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MALIKA STYLING: SEANNITA PALMER FOR ARTIST@TIMOTHY PIANO HAIR AND MAKEUP: LISE VARRETTE



The Princess and the Proposition: Baby doll-hustler top available at Hustler L.A., candy-apple red stilettos by Frederick's of Hollywood, vintage Sergio Valente denim jeans and Superstar chain belt designed by Sir Charles Creations NYC.



The Princess, whose most recent album is *Last Of The Great 20th Century Composers* (Corrupt Conglomerate), pays homage to another of the 20th century's great composer's, Mick Jagger, with a Mick Jagger crystal embroidered baby-tee available at What Goes Around Comes Around NYC. The Fila armband completes the "Sticky Fingers" look.



The Crown Jewels: Studded Princess baby tee available at Century 21 NYC. For some reason, Princess didn't model the official Princess Superstar thong, but you can order that at her official site, www.princesssuperstar.com.

THE WHOLE WORLD (WIDE WEB) IN YOUR HAND?

BY JULIE TARASKA PHOTOS BY ANTHONY VERDE

These days, checking e-mail is as important as breathing—or at least as vital as checking the answering machine. But anyone who's lugged around a laptop knows the difficulty of plugging into the Web remotely. Where there's a need, there's a niche, so bring on the Internet appliance—part personal digital assistance (PDA), part portable computer, part e-toy—to bring the Web to your fingertips wherever you are.



PALM VIIX

(\$449 for unit plus \$129 for Palm modem connectivity kit, Internet fees 9.95-\$21.95/month for ISP plus \$9.99-\$44.99/month for Palm.Net, www.palm.net)

Pros: Sends/receives e-mails almost anywhere, synchable with a computer, Web clippings program offers summaries from more than 400 Web sites, contains calendar, address book, to-do list and memo pad, can store 400 e-mails, 8,000 addresses and 100 Web clippings, 30 add-on applications and eight years of appointments

Cons: Limited access to the Web, external antennae/modem, limited wireless capabilities

Ideal for: The wireless user seduced by flash, not substantive dash

EPODS EPODSONE

(\$599.99, Internet service \$21.95/month, www.epods.com)

Pros: 10.1" flat plasma screen, full Web access, automatically updates features and upgrades software, screen can also be used as a digital photo frame

Cons: No local storage drive (can download content, but not save it), mono speakers, slow loading

Ideal for: Aesthetes afraid to commit to an iMac



CIDCO MAILSTATION

(\$99.99, Internet service \$9.95/month or \$99.95/year, www.cidco.com)

Pros: Can store 400 e-mails and 1000 contacts, diminutive size (8"x 6"), external keyboard included

Cons: Cannot open e-mail attachments, limited Web access (only sports, news, weather and financial site summaries), size makes text hard to read, 33.6 modem a little slow

Ideal for: E-mail addicts



BLACKBERRY RIM 957

(\$499, \$39.95/month for Verizon Wireless service plus \$9.95-\$21.95/month for ISP and \$9.95-\$19.95/month for Go.Web access/data compression, www.rim.net)

Pros: Can send/receive e-mail anywhere and (with optional Web compression service) access any site in real-time, synchable with a computer, battery life 10 times the Palm Pilot, built-in keyboard, includes calendar and address book

Cons: Access fees, only sold through ISPs

Ideal for: Business travelers who need 24/7 Web access



COMPAQ'S IPAQ HOME INTERNET APPLIANCE 1A-1

(\$199.99, Internet service \$24.99-\$44.00/month, www.compaq.com)

Pros: Allows almost full Web access, 16 MB hard drive, rechargeable eight-hour battery, accepts data with stylus, on-screen keyboard or external keyboard (sold separately).

Cons: Cutesy page graphics make AOL look sophisticated

Ideal for: Students looking for an inexpensive, portable Web appliance





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VOTE**

BURN TO BE WILD

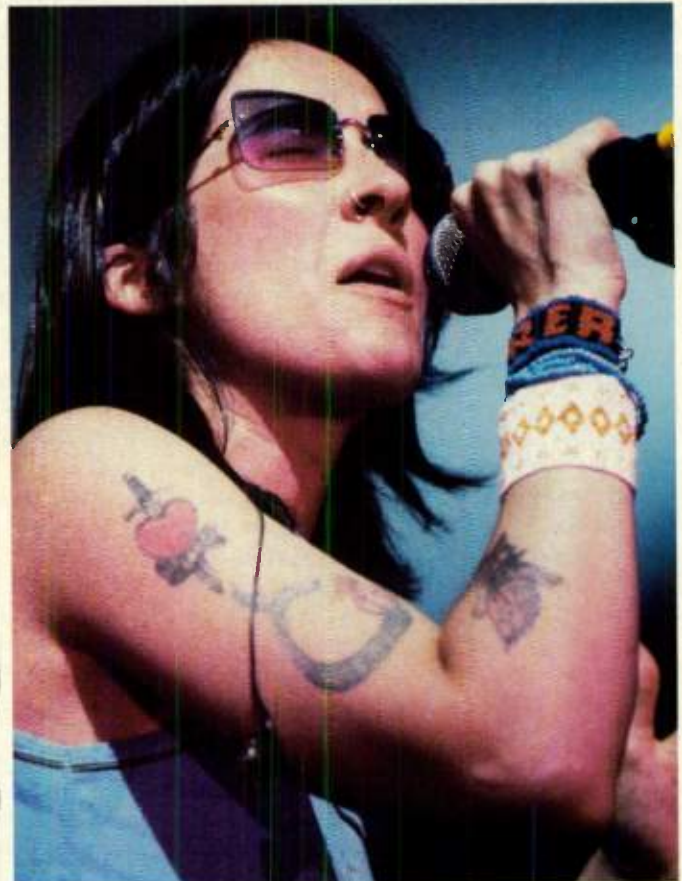
From the last week in August to the first week in September, about 25,000 musicians, performance artists, conspiracy theorists, nudists, hippies and good ol' American freaks gathered in Black Rock Desert, Nevada for the annual Burning Man Festival (www.burningman.com) celebrating anarchism, art and well... you try to figure it out.



WATCHA TOUR AND THE DOOBIES: KERI-ANN LAURITO



On September 16, *High Times* presented the Doobies, an awards show honoring musicians with a higher calling. Top, Fastball's Tony Scalzo; middle left, Kottonmouth Kings' D-Lo; On August 23, the alternative Latin music Watcha tour stopped in New York. Middle right, Andres Gimenez of A.N.I.M.A.L.; bottom, Andrea Echevari of Aterciopelados.





DANES DON'T DANCE

LARS VON TRIER HATES HOLLYWOOD OVERKILL BUT LOVES AMERICAN MUSICALS. GO FIGURE.

You may know director Lars von Trier as the *enfant terrible* who co-penned *Dogme '95*, the cinematic vow of chastity against high-tech Hollywood overkill that several Scandinavian directors have ascribed to. You may have also heard that the Dane grew up a Communist nudist and suffers from anxiety attacks about traveling so severe he rarely leaves his homeland. But did you know this diehard Bowie fan loves American musicals? "I actually tap-danced at one point," admits von Trier of his childhood pastime. "But don't worry, I stopped."

His new movie, *Dancer In The Dark*, pays tribute to Gene Kelly flicks and *West Side Story*, with Björk as a nearly blind machine operator from Czechoslovakia who hears music in her head. Like von Trier's similarly uncomfortable *Breaking The Waves* and *The Idiots* (the latter just released in the US after a two-year delay because of explicit sex), this is a difficult, unwieldy film about violence, moral paradoxes and female sacrifice.

Von Trier set *Dancer* in the States—a country he's never visited—because it's the home of the musical. "Dancing is very un-Danish," he says. "It's very un-Danish to use your body for anything other than drinking beer."

Although this 40-something director may be the toast of the independent film intelligentsia, he knows that his work isn't unanimously loved.

"My films tend to divide people," he laughs, discussing the reception of *Dancer In The Dark*, which brought him the Palme d'Or and Björk the best female performance award at Cannes. Björk also composed much of the *Dancer In The Dark* soundtrack, *SelmaSongs* (Elektra-Fine Line), a handful of tunes that morph elements of classical, drum 'n' bass and jazz into torch songs. "My purpose of making films is to produce a question mark to the person watching, to take them on an emotional ride they might not want to go on. If I was making films that everyone thought were breathtaking, I'd think that I was close to the end of my career."

He's not close yet. So what's next for this mischievous imp, who says Kubrick's audacity is a bigger influence than Bergman's metaphysical gloom? "It would be interesting to do a classical science-fiction film, and I'd like to make a porn film. What I've seen of porno is of such low quality, and it's very strange that you can't deal with one of the most important aspects of life in a quality, artistic way." >>>SCOTT TIMBERG

BILLY ELLIOT

(UNIVERSAL)

Channeling the feel-good spirit of *Flashdance* and *The Full Monty*, *Billy Elliot* is the winning story of a 11-year-old boy in Northern England who longs to become a ballet dancer. This admission, naturally, does not sit well with Billy's manly man



dad and older brother. Even given then trite plot devices (dead mother, for example) *Billy Elliot* still crackles with propulsive fun. By the crowd-pleasing finale, only a cadaver wouldn't crack a stupid grin. (We know you loved *Dirty Dancing*.) Bonus points: *Billy Elliot*'s soundtrack includes chestnuts by T. Rex, the Clash and the Jam. Now get up and dance. >>>JOHN ELSASSER

ANIMAL FACTORY

(FRANCHISE FILMS)

Based on former San Quentin convict Edward Bunker's novel of the same name, *Animal Factory* takes a harrowing look at prison life. Edward Furlong (call him Edward Forlorn here) plays a well-heeled young man sent to the pokey for drug traffick-



ing. To his good fortune, he's befriended by the king of the yard, a bald, badass Willem Dafoe. From there, it's all gang rapes and shivs in the back. Director Steve Buscemi keeps the action taut and terrific. And watch out for a surprisingly effective Mickey Rourke portraying a cross-dressing inmate named Jan The Actress. Who knew Rourke could look so, er, sexy? >>>J.E.

A ROOM FOR ROMEO BRASS

(USA FILMS)

British director Shane Meadows and his screen-writing partner Paul Fraser based the tragicomedy *A Room For Romeo Brass* on their own pre-teen years. A seemingly mismatched pair of friends, Romeo is a husky enforcer while



his next-door neighbor, Knocks, is a bright lad with a limp. To escape the grungy bleakness of their neighborhood, the boys consort with a weird older dude who desires Romeo's sister. Let's just say this drives a wedge between Romeo and Knocks's friendship. The story is funny and sweet one moment, bleak and unsentimental the next. Regardless of the mood swings, *Romeo Brass* remains compelling. >>>J.E.



VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE—REDEMPTION (ACTIVISION) PC

Based on White Wolf's popular pen-and-paper game of warring vampire clans, *Vampire: The Masquerade—Redemption* is yet another tabletop RPG getting a head-turning PC treatment. This game's graphics are wicked. But sadly, the point and click (and click and click) combat and a disappointingly thin plot suck a bit of the blood out of the experience, and your character Christof—a medieval Crusader turned 800-year-old globetrotting vampire—makes Anne Rice's Lestat look like Jim Carrey. Forgive the flaws, and it's easy to get lost in all the sheer gothic grandness. Even with its customizing options, *Masquerade* may not be the immortal event that some fans were hoping for. Where's Buffy when you need her? >>>STEVE TILLEY



VIRTUAL TENNIS

(SEGA SPORTS) DC

The yuppie lifestyle and mainstream gaming are crossing paths. After *Need For Speed: Porsche Unleashed* and *Ferrari F355 Challenge*, who'll complain about a tennis simulator? Besides, *SUV Highway Battle 2001* could learn a thing or two from Sega's latest. Photo-realistic athletes vie for game, set and match on the snazziest courts this side of Wimbledon. Skill levels are irrelevant; the pick-up and play mechanics lend themselves fabulously to the subject matter. Competitors dive for risky returns, smack home aces and fire off backhand smashes with nary a thought. Singles, doubles and world-tour scenarios serve up replay value that's ideal for family audiences. The ease of play's a mixed blessing, however. Top-ranked players can turn matches into endless games of Pong. To quote John McEnroe, "that fucking sucks!" >>>SCOTT STEINBERG



HEAVY METAL: FAKK 2

(GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS) PC

Like the film *Heavy Metal*, *FAKK2* is a racy tribute to sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. What adolescent won't be stoked to hear that porn starlet Julie Strain is the main character? As said sex object, players must rescue the world of Eden—and Julie can only attain peace by navigating a gauntlet of puzzle solving and creature disembowelment. Timothy Leary couldn't have fantasized a more hallucinogenic playground. A psychedelic spectrum of colors breathes unnatural life into bizarre species of flora and fauna. Symphonies of destruction accompany the heroine through jungles, reeking swamps and bio-engineered monsters' dens. Although Julie's no El Mariachi, her double-fisted chainsaw sword/pistol techniques help maneuver the high-difficulty level. Games just don't get weirder—or better—than this. Two strikes against it in my book: no boobies. >>>SCOTT STEINBERG.



ICEWIND DALE

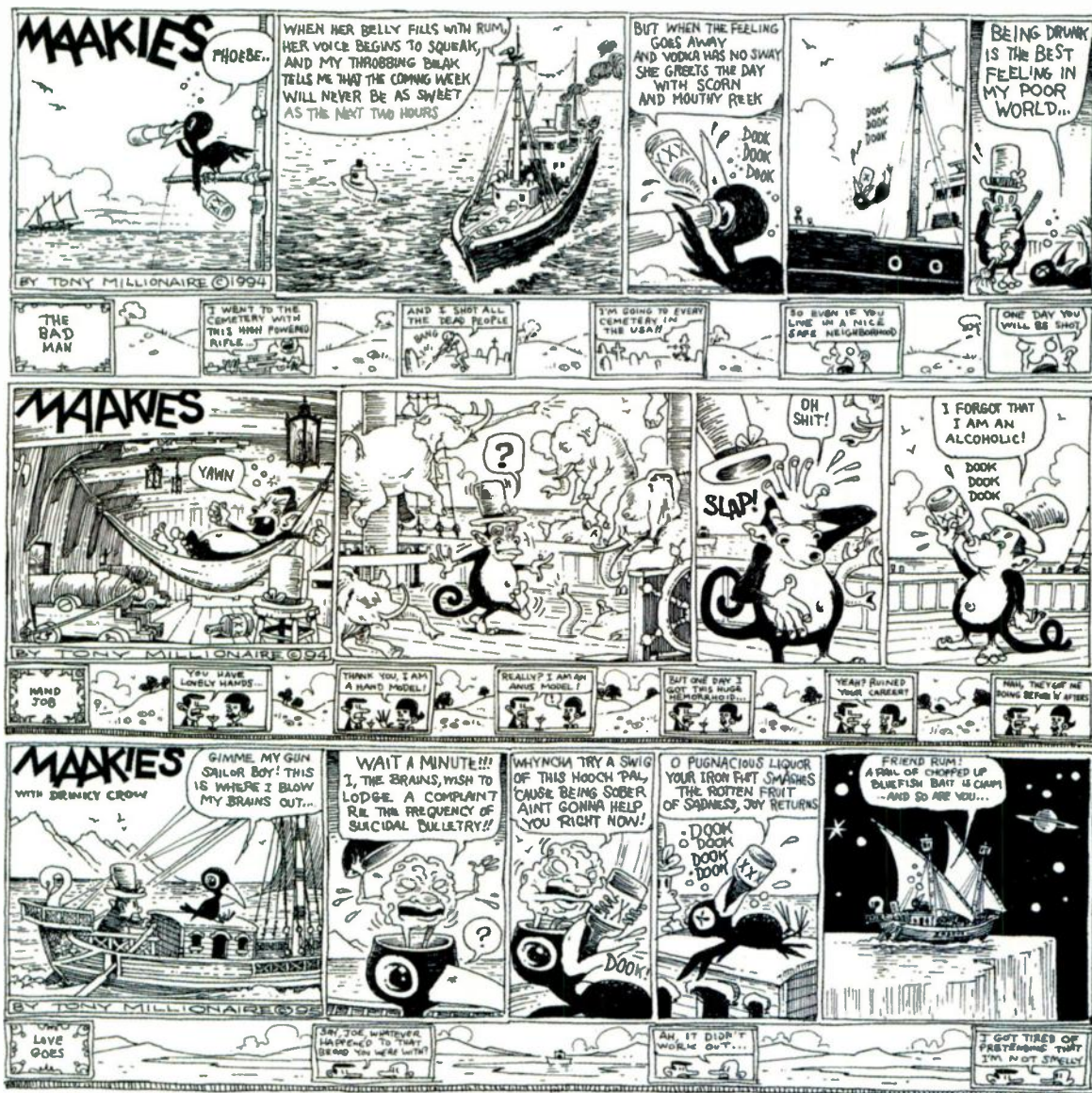
(INTERPLAY) PC

When a company licenses a popular game, the temptation to churn out a limp quickie is strong. Thankfully, *Icwind Dale*, from the *Baldur's Gate* royal family of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons-based RPGs, deftly dodges that slippery pitfall. Evil is emanating from the Spine Of The World mountains, and it's up to you build a party of six adventurers from the ground up (practically a game in itself) and lay a chilly smackdown on ice trolls, frost giants and more undead than you can shake a creamsicle at. Set in the northern wastelands of the Forgotten Realms, this action-driven dungeoneering adventure earns its rightful place alongside fellow family members *Baldur's Gate* and *Planescape: Torment*. There may be nothing overly innovative here, but a good story, tons of monster-killin' and a stirring musical score still make for weeks of icy-smooth role-playing goodness. Brrr! >>>STEVE TILLEY



MAAKIES

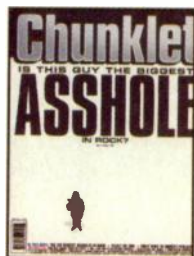
(FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS)



Maakies collects the first six

years' worth of Tony Millionaire's insane, brilliant weekly comic strip about sailors, booze, suicide, alcoholism, existential despair and Drinky Crow (sound effect: "dook dook dook").

Millionaire's got the wildly adventurous spirit of early cartoonists like George Herriman and Elzie Segar (every so often he pastes up some photos and calls that a strip, or calls in a guest artist to draw one), complete with a sense of language as eccentric and painstaking as his drawing. His images of hideous creatures weeping and blowing their brains out suggest D.T.'s, but the passion behind the gorgeously cross-hatched nautical drawings in practically every strip belies his trippy nihilism.



The 15th issue of Henry Owings's zine **Chunklet** (\$5.95 from P.O. Box 2814, Athens, GA 30612) is the most visually ornate yet, and the funniest, reaching its peak with an annotated chart of "The 100 Biggest Assholes In Rock," whose design will seem awfully familiar to readers of our sister publication, *CMJ* New Music Report (on Courtney Love: "Too bad she couldn't get plastic surgery on her evil soul"). Even its interviews with big-name

alt-rockers (Steve Albini and Rocket From The Crypt's John Reis) are original and funny, and Owings gets major points for interviewing Patrick Bossert about his days as a Rubik's Cube prodigy.... Garth Ennis's superb theological Western comic *Preacher* has ended, and now he's blowing off some steam with **Adventures In The Rifle Brigade** (Vertigo), a gaspingly hilarious miniseries that leaves no valiant-British-lads-of-WWII cliché undefenestrated. (And fans of his

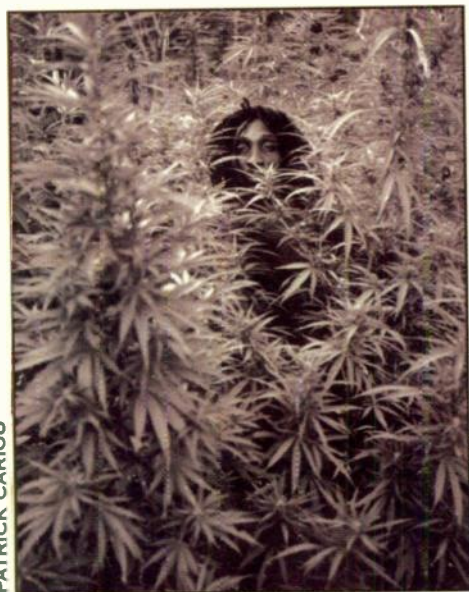
other series *Hitman* know he knows plenty about defenestration.) His characters are drawn to overripe perfection by combat-comics vet Carlos Ezquerro; the best is the savage working-class type whose sole line of dialogue is "YER AHT OF ORDAH!".... John Porcellino, best known for his self-published *King-Cat Comics And Stories*, has published his first graphic novel, **Perfect Example** (Highwater Books). A sweet, delicate autobiographical piece about the summer of 1986, when he'd just graduated from high school, was listening to lots of Hüsker Dü, and discovered love and heartbreak, it accrues carefully remembered details like the stones of a cairn. Porcellino has an ultra-spare, cartoony style—nothing's present except the most essential details—but he knows how to make three pen lines emote....





You can count the career of fashion photographer

Corinne Day among the casualties of heroin chic. Although Day's 1993 cover shoot of Kate Moss for *The Face* put the gangly princess on the road to supermodel status, the photographer's follow-up picture of Moss in nothing but her skivvies for *Vogue* horrified advertisers and sent Day on the path to fashion-world outcast. Since then, she's focused more on her artwork, and the new book **Corinne Day Diary** (D.A.P.) exhibits snapshots taken of her post-grunge circle of friends shooting up, lolling around nude, having sex, recovering from fights—even Day herself heading into surgery for a brain tumor. Like the work of Nan Goldin and Larry Clark, you might look at the quality of Day's snapshots and think anyone could have taken them, but she was there to capture the unsettling reality—and you weren't.



For those who consider Deadheads with matted hair and a VW bus true Rastafarians, the sumptuous black-and-white portraits in **Yes Rasta** (PowerHouse Books) will make you reconsider. Photographer Patrick Cariou relocated to Jamaica's tropical mountainside where devout, back-to-nature Rastafarians can avoid the poisonous toxins of industrialized living, freely build bamboo houses big enough to hold any family, and, well, smoke as much freakin' weed as they damn well please. This impressive collection of dread-head images available features six foot dreads, grey dreads, beard dreads—you name it. Now if only the book were printed on hemp.... Dee Dee Ramone's new biographical blitz, **Lobotomy—Surviving The Ramones** (Thunder's Mouth Press) hashes through the whole sordid Gabba Gabba history: from childhood dreams (Dee Dee wanted to be a hairdresser?) to years of addiction (pawning jewelry for heroin and Hostess cupcakes) and even that night with Nancy Spungeon ("Everybody slept with Nancy once, and then dumped her"). As plainspoken and raw as a tune by the graduating class of Rock 'N' Roll High, Dee Dee summarizes the bitter tell-all with the line "a Ramones story can't really have a happy ending." So, um, who needs to be sedated?.... After some trouble with distribution, stand-up poet Nicole Blackman's collection of wry and dire pieces, **Blood Sugar** (Incommunicado Press) is finally seeing the light of day. Those who've heard Blackman's guest spots on tracks by the Golden Palominos and Recoil are attuned to the insightful neurosis of lines such as "If the black box is the only thing that survives a plane crash then why don't they make a whole plane out of it..." Don't worry, wherever Blackman's flights take off, they usually land in romantic misery.

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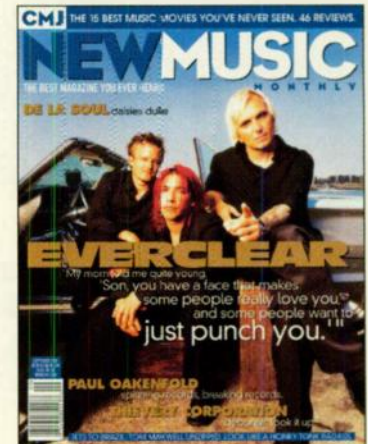
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PHILADELPHIA



JOSH WINK SPINS AT FLUID.

When W.C. Fields famously wisecracked, "I'd rather be in Philadelphia," it was uncertain whether the notorious cynic was merely taking a potshot at the city or slyly implying that there's no place like Philly to match his own sense of self-loathing. Saddled with an inferiority complex (thanks to its proximity to NYC), bristling with contempt for New Jersey suburbanites and gifted with a blunt, working-class edge, this is the town where sports fans once greeted Santa Claus's halftime appearance at an Eagles football game with a flurry of snowballs.

All this, of course, prompts the artistic population's creative juices to swim fervently upstream, making music in near-Liverpudlian defiance of our very own post-industrial port city's wasteland. The '70s brought us Philly soul and legendary songwriting/producing team **Gamble & Huff**, but then the '80s gave us **Hall & Oates**. You take the good with the bad, the quart of Yuengling (fave local swill, rhymes with "jingling") with the brown paper bag that sheathes it. Case in point: When we talk about **the Hooters**, we mean the band, not the titty restaurant with the kick-ass hot wings.

Nobody calls this town "Illadelphia," but credit a fertile hip-hop community (or local heroes **the Roots**) for making a bad pun possible. To give short shrift to a long list of notables, gangsta-rap godfather **Schoolly D** is still around; **Will Smith** isn't. One sure bet for live hip-hop is Tuesday evening at the **Five Spot** (5 S. Bank St.), a

posh, cocktail-clinking post-swing nightclub where two ladies known as the **Jazzfatnastees** host Black Lily, a raucous, soulful hip-hop night where women rule the mic.

"Psychedelphia" was once applied to Philly indie rock with equal futility, labeling a drone-friendly, dilated-pupils space-rock set (**Bardo Pond**, **Asteroid #4**, **Azusa Plane**) that's recently given way to a cadre of manic, if still slightly psychedelic, pop groups. **Lenola** made the switch from swirly guitar rock to more contemplative, even acoustic, fare on the new *The Electric Tickle EP* (Tappersize-File 13), but it's **Mazarin** that sits prettily atop the scene on the strength of its dreamy *Watch It Happen* (Victoria). Stop by record store **Spaceboy** (407 South St.) for the best selection of indie-label releases, but also visit the **Philadelphia Record Exchange** (608 S. 5th St.) for a romp through the dollar vinyl bins and a whiff of the cat-pee smell that gives the cramped store bonus Philly flavor points.

On the turntablist side, **611 Records** (611 S. 4th St.) is party central; its downstairs selection of trip-hop, house, ambient and trance vinyl are part and parcel to the headquarters of Ovum Recordings (home to international jetsetting DJs **King Britt** and **Josh Wink**) upstairs. Wide pants and an armful of 12-inches are ill-suited to long walks, so they built a dance club, **Fluid** (613 S. 4th St.), right next door. Catch Wink, Britt and a host of nightly DJs ply their trade for the booty-shaking brigade.

Dance all you want, but Philly music sounds best when you've been knocked off your barstool. Just ask **Marah**, who make alt-country feasible in a town without twang—just plenty of broken barstools.

OUT WITH THE IN CROWD: WHERE PHILLY'S MOVERS AND SHAKERS SHAKE THEIR MONEY MAKERS

KURT HEASLEY, LILYS

"The wheatgrass counter at the **Fresh Fields Whole Foods Market** (2001 Pennsylvania Ave.). You can see me hucking four or five triple-overdose levels of that stuff some Saturday evenings.

Arnold's Way (4438 Main St., Manayunk) "Crazy Arnold runs a juice shop, and we go in there and sing Pink Floyd songs to Arnold. He's crazy, so we call him Crazy Arnold. He says stuff like, 'If you eat bananas every day, you'd live forever.'"

BLACK THOUGHT, THE ROOTS

"I like it in **Valley Green**, a park that's around the Schuylkill River. I like to drive down Kelly Drive, then park in Valley Green and go for a run or something."

ART DIFURIA, PHOTON BAND

The Khyber (56 S. 2nd St.) "It's like my living room or something. I've played countless gigs [there], as far back as 1985, and in about 10 different bands, and learned how to play darts there. I've also done sound there on and off since 1990, including the famous Smashing Pumpkins/Hole before-they-were-famous show. On my tombstone it will say, 'Wasted best years of life at the Khyber.'"

KRISTIN THOMSON, EX-TSUNAMI

Blue In Green (7 N. 3rd St.) "It's fairly traditional to take visitors here, because of the high quotient of rockers who work here. They serve hip breakfast food and seriously strong coffee."

DiPinto's Guitars (631 N. 2nd St.) Chris DiPinto builds guitars that are so cool-looking, everybody wants one. I heard he was building one for Tom Petersson (Cheap Trick), and Thurston Moore has one, too."

GREGG FOREMAN, DELTA 72

"**Silk City Lounge** (435 Spring Garden St.) has really good, diverse DJ nights. I do an all-soul night on the first Friday of every month called The Turnaround, playing music from the lost era of soul, '64 to '74.

"**Making Time** night at **Transit** (600 Spring Garden St.). It's three floors of youth culture: The bottom floor is soul, the middle floor is Britpop and the top floor is Rock 'n' Roll Overdose, which is '70s punk like the New York Dolls, Richard Hell and the Dead Boys, plus the Stones, the Faces and Humble Pie."

JILL SCOTT

"I really like **Buddakan** (325 Chestnut St.) for the service and the food. I love the food there, I love the ambiance and I love the wait staff.

Jamaican Jerk Hut (1436 South St.) "The first time I went there, the food came to our table and it was so delicious and authentic that my eyes teared up and I started to sing a hymn."

MATTHEW FRITCH IS ASSISTANT EDITOR AT MAGNET MAGAZINE.



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Laser Light Show at the Franklin Institute, 20th St. and Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.

DRINKS AND A MOVIE (AT THE SAME TIME):

The Balcony, 10th and Arch St.

CHEESE FOR THAT CHEESESTEAK:

Whiz

GALLERY OF FREAKY MEDICAL SPECIMENS:

Mütter Museum, 19 S. 22nd St.

ALL-AGES VENUE:

4040, 4040 Locust St.



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MARAH ROCKS THE KHYBER.

THE BANGLES

STORY: LISA GIDLEY ILLUSTRATION: NICHOLAS MEOLA

Many roads to geekdom start with Leonard Nimoy, but my Spock story is a bit different. One afternoon in 1985, when I was 14, I was watching MTV on the tiny TV my family kept in our kitchen in suburban Missouri, eating Cap'n Crunch out of the box and washing it down with Dr Pepper, when a video came on featuring Leonard Nimoy. The aging science-fiction hero looked bemused as he sat in a car with four young women who were singing about Liverpool. It made no sense—even in an era in which MTV played not only actual videos but those of unknown acts—and I couldn't stop watching.

The song was the Bangles' "Going Down To Liverpool," and Nimoy had been drafted into the video by guitarist/vocalist Susannah Hoffs, an old family friend. But while his non-sequitur appearance caught my attention, the song kept it. I loved its jangly, wistful air and had soon scraped up enough lawn-mowing money to buy the cassette of the Bangles' debut album, *All Over The Place* (Columbia).

By the time "Manic Monday" launched the Bangles onto the charts two years later, I was a seasoned devotee. While my friends Laurie and Julie were still busy planning their weddings to Duran Duran's John Taylor, I was scouring *Star Hits* for ways to be more like my jangly girl idols. When guitarist Vicki Peterson praised the Beatles' *Rubber Soul*, I immediately bought it, unceremoniously chucking the Thompson Twins and Naked Eyes tapes that had been in heavy rotation on my bedroom boombox. (My parents' musical taste stopped at Julie London and Herb Alpert, so I perceived getting into the Beatles in 1984 as rebellious.)

I also sussed out as much info as I could about the Bangles' neo-psychedelic "Paisley Underground" scene in L.A., which I imagined as an exotic Technicolor playground where groovy young adults wore go-go boots, burned incense, and danced the night away under swirly lights. Somewhere among the local Laura Ashley stores and Wal-Marts, I came across the very '80s innovation of paisley shirts in cornea-burning fluorescent shades. I was sure they would brand me as an in-the-know Paisley bohemian. In my high school, where Van Halen tees and pale oxfords were the norm, these prompted pained cries of "Ouch!" as I passed in the halls. I just sniffed unrepentantly under my John Lennon sunglasses.

While my friends planned their weddings to Duran Duran's John Taylor, I searched for ways to be more like my jangly girl idols.



But even beyond the Bangles' music and style, the budding feminist in me loved that they were women who played instruments. Of course the Go-Go's had made a splash a few years earlier, but in my mind the Bangles proved that female musicians weren't novelties. Rocking tracks like *All Over The Place*'s "Hero Takes A Fall" fed my wobbly teenage confidence by gleefully taking the piss out of an egotistical guy. I needled my parents for a guitar until I got an acoustic for my 15th birthday. However, with no Bangles songbooks to be found, the first song I learned was Wham's "Careless Whisper." (I tried to make it jangly, to no avail.)

As the Bangles became a pop-culture phenomenon—particularly with the supremely silly "Walk Like An Egyptian"—I began to seek out good songs beyond the realm of radio. These days, my Bangles discs share shelf space with the albums they led me to discover; after all, "Manic Monday" was written by Prince, "September Gurls" (from the Bangles' second album) was penned by Big Star's Alex Chilton, and "Going Down To Liverpool" was a Kimberley Rew number. Even my records by quintessential Paisley Undergrounders the Three O'Clock, who did the Bangles ode "Girl With The Guitar," have retained their fey charm. Eventually, I was so immersed in below-the-radar rock that I didn't even need the Bangles anymore.

That's not to say that I won't be first in line if the rumored Bangles reunion becomes a reality—I'm pleasantly surprised at how well my old Bangles albums stand up, particularly *All Over The Place*. Mercifully, however, my fluorescent paisley shirts have long since fallen apart.

When Lisa Gidley isn't burning an "Eternal Flame" for the Bangles, she's a freelance writer in New York.

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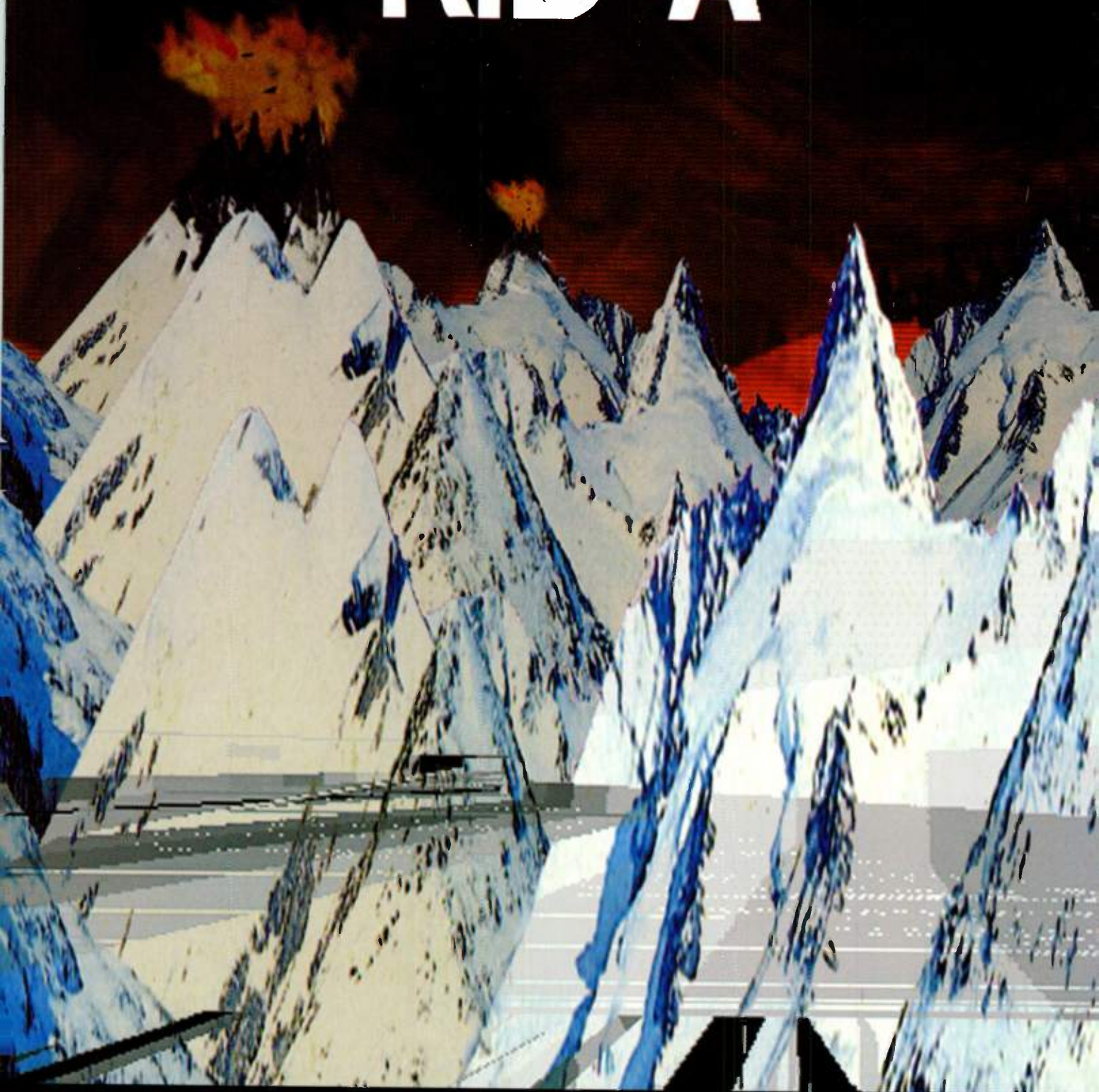
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